



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Quality of life in Europe 2003–2007



Second European Quality of Life Survey

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Foreword

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) was conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) for the first time in 2003, covering 28 countries (the 15 EU Member States, 12 forthcoming Member States and Turkey). Eurofound's second round of the EQLS, which was carried out in 2007, offers a wide-ranging view of the diverse social realities in 31 countries – the current 27 EU Member States, Norway and the candidate countries of Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Many of the questions posed in the first EQLS in 2003 were asked again, on issues such as employment, income, education, housing, family, health, work–life balance, life satisfaction and perceived quality of society. In 2008, Eurofound commissioned secondary analyses of the EQLS data around key policy themes. The selected themes for the first round of secondary analysis are the following: trends in quality of life in Europe 2003–2007; living conditions, social exclusion and mental well-being; family life and work; subjective well-being; and quality of society and public services.

In addition to these secondary analysis reports, Eurofound will publish an update on quality of life in the EU based on data collected by Eurobarometer in September 2009. The Eurobarometer survey included 19 questions used in the 2007 EQLS. The questions focused on economic strain and deprivation, the perceived quality of society and public services, but also covered areas such as employment and job quality, work–life balance and well-being. This 2009 update will show how the economic crisis has impacted on the quality of life of European citizens.

This analytical report focuses on the first selected theme – *Trends in quality of life in Europe 2003–2007*. It draws on the two rounds of the EQLS in order to assess under what circumstances and to what extent quality of life in Europe is being maintained, advancing or deteriorating. It does so by comparing patterns of stability and change in the EU's new and 'older' Member States, and also by comparing people with adequate and inadequate incomes, young and old people, and men and women.

We hope that this report will inform the social policy debate on pressing challenges arising from economic instability, declining employment rates, demographic trends, changing families and social exclusion.

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Director

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Country codes

- EU15 15 EU Member States prior to enlargement in 2004 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom)
- NMS12 12 New Member States, 10 of which joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) – and are sometimes referred to as the NMS10 – and the remaining two in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania)
- EU27 27 EU Member States
- CC3 3 candidate countries (Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey)

EU27

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

Candidate countries

HR	Croatia
MK ¹	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
TR	Turkey

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

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Executive summary

Introduction

The quality of life concept focuses on areas of life important to ordinary people, such as relations with family and friends, as well as issues relevant to public policy, such as housing and social tensions. Two European Quality of Life Surveys (EQLS), carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) in 2003 and 2007, provide evidence of change in all 27 EU Member States. Each study assessed public opinion in Member States through nationally representative sample surveys.

This study reviews patterns of stability or change in the quality of life of the EU population as a whole. It analyses the extent to which EU enlargement has altered the quality of life in new Member States, as well as the degree of change among people with an inadequate income, different age groups, and men and women. Moreover, it assesses the vulnerability of particular groups to the current economic recession.

Policy context

European citizens and EU policymakers share a common concern regarding quality of life. Policymakers are responsible for promoting positive change and offering social protection against the effects of negative occurrences and trends. Governments can help individuals to improve their quality of life by providing collective services such as schools, hospitals, infrastructure and security. The extent to which efforts are successful depends on feedback from citizens about how they evaluate their quality of life and whether these judgements are changing.

Achieving social cohesion, a major policy priority of the EU's Renewed Social Agenda, means that citizens of all Member States have equal access to a good standard of quality of life. However, the 2003 EQLS study found substantial differences between countries and between social groups in relation to many aspects of quality of life. Social groups with a below-average quality of life need to make progress at a faster rate than leaders in this regard.

Because many influences on the quality of life have a transnational as well as national dimension, EU institutions have a unique responsibility for advancing the quality of life across the EU. The financial crisis which began in the second half of 2008 is a fresh challenge to the EU to demonstrate effectiveness in this regard at a time of international economic difficulty.

Key findings

Where the quality of life is high – for example, in terms of relations within the family – the objective is to maintain this level. Across Europe, between 2003 and 2007, quality of life has remained relatively stable. Most of the changes that the EQLS identifies are positive, but they are also small – for example, increased satisfaction with public services and the decline of deprivation among the minority of people in economic difficulties.

In countries which joined the EU in 2004 (NMS10), quality of life has tended to improve at a faster rate than in older Member States (EU15), thus promoting greater social cohesion. This is true of public services as well as of satisfaction with private spheres of life. It is also true of economic conditions. However, although Bulgaria and Romania had a longer period of time to prepare for EU entry in 2007, the quality of life in these countries improved much less and gaps remain with the NMS10 and even more so with the EU15.

Income is a much more important influence on quality of life than age or gender. However, EQLS evidence finds that disparities in this regard have tended to diminish between 2003 and 2007. In particular, the quality of life of various income groups differs less with regard to access to public services than in relation to personal life satisfaction.

Overall, the EQLS shows the importance of subsidiarity in the multi-level system of European governance. National governments and social partners must tackle differences in quality of life within their country, particularly for those with inadequate incomes.

The vulnerability of individuals to the present economic crisis is much less than the vulnerability of banks. A large majority of Europeans are not directly exposed to the sub-prime mortgage crisis because they do not have a mortgage, as they own their home outright or are tenants. A minority of those with a mortgage have difficulties making ends meet. Mortgage holders are more numerous in the EU15 than in the NMS.

Vulnerability to loss of household income through unemployment is lessened in households that have two incomes, which reflects the largest group of households in the EU. Among those in employment, public sector workers have more job security than those in private employment; the majority of public sector workers are women. Pensioners are sheltered from anxieties about losing their income from unemployment because they draw on state funds.

Although there is widespread popular recognition that national economies are facing major difficulties at present, many people do not see this as causing economic difficulties in their household. Eurobarometer survey data from 2009 show that no substantial change has occurred since the beginning of the economic crisis in how people evaluate their overall quality of life.

Policy pointers

- Since significant differences with regard to different aspects of quality of life remain, there is a need to maintain momentum through EU policies promoting social cohesion in conjunction with national governments and social partners, particularly in relation to Bulgaria and Romania. The European Commission should continue to encourage these governments to improve their standards of governance.
- As income differences tend to reduce quality of life more than age or gender differences, promoting social cohesion requires actions that target the problems of those who have the most trouble making ends meet based on their current income.
- The most direct policy response to deal with material deprivation is to raise the income of those who are the worst off financially. This can be done through minimum wage legislation, means-tested cash benefits and other adjustments to benefits and taxes. Such measures are primarily the responsibility of national governments, augmented by such EU instruments as the open method of coordination.
- While the European Commission seeks to increase cohesion by developing a common European identity, both rounds of the EQLS show there is also a need to address tensions that can be obstacles to this goal. Tensions arise as much from income inequalities as from inequalities of social status, respect and influence. These are issues that the EU can address through its Renewed Social Agenda.
- With tensions emerging in neighbourhoods that are not only changing their cultural composition but also experiencing declining services, this situation challenges public agencies and social partners

to give priority to maintaining European standards in neighbourhood services, in schools and at work. There is a need to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged groups and for policies to support better housing and environmental conditions.

- Because the current economic crisis is a collective crisis affecting the whole of the Single European Market, EU institutions and national governments are facing additional pressures to act. The longstanding commitment of the EU and its social partners towards cooperation between management and workers can encourage the recognition of a collective interest in measures to promote economic recovery.
- Maintaining the existing level of quality of life in Europe is a condition for promoting increased social cohesion through policies that help groups identified in this EQLS analysis as not sharing fully in previous periods of prosperity.

European citizens and institutions have a common interest in quality of life. The quality of life of individuals and households reflects what they gain from the state, the market and from their own personal and household resources (Rose, 1986). Government can help individuals to advance their quality of life by providing collective services that people cannot provide for themselves, such as schools, hospitals, infrastructure and collective security. No institution has a monopoly of the services that contribute to the quality of life. Important services affecting individuals and households are delivered locally. Delivery of services may be through public or private sector organisations as well as civil society institutions. National governments are responsible for policies that provide social benefits and for financing such benefits.

Because many influences on the quality of life have a transnational as well as national dimension, European Union institutions have a unique responsibility for advancing the quality of life across a continent with almost half a billion people. According to the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (Liddle and Lerais, 2007):

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

Quality of life is associated with the social cohesion of societies as well as individual well-being. Eurostat (2001) defines social cohesion as ‘the degree to which individuals and groups within a particular society are bound by common feelings of consensus, share common values and goals and relate to one another on a cooperative basis’ (see also Council of Europe, 2009). Social cohesion is also related to solidarity between people in different societies. The promotion of social cohesion is a long-standing goal of the EU, and a major policy priority of the EU’s Renewed Social Agenda is to prevent Europe from being divided between ‘insiders’ who have a satisfactory quality of life and those who are socially excluded (European Commission, 2008b).

Promoting quality of life can strengthen the legitimacy of the EU in the minds of its citizens. Whereas national governments may draw legitimacy from being directly accountable at the ballot box, the European Commission is not directly linked to Europe’s electorate. The low turnout at the European Parliament elections – only 43% voted in 2009 – indicates that most Europeans are not engaged with the European institutions. Researchers have argued that the EU need not depend on popular election for its legitimacy; this can be gained by demonstrating effectiveness in improving quality of life for EU citizens (Scharpf, 1999; Majone, 2005). The financial crisis which began in 2008 is a fresh challenge to the EU to demonstrate effectiveness at a time of international economic stress.

To promote quality of life, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso (2007), has declared the need to ‘go beyond’ gross domestic product (GDP), because this indicator of economic activity ‘was not intended to be an accurate measure of well-being’. GDP reduces many forms of economic activity to a single cash sum. However, it does not define what the money is spent on, how governments use the share of money they claim in taxation or how citizens evaluate the effect of public expenditure on their lives. In the succinct judgement of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, ‘economists and psychologists should try harder to understand what people think and how they act in real life’ (Thornhill, 2009). French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s Commission on the Measurement of Economic

Performance and Social Progress has identified ways in which this can be done and the report,² which contains two lengthy chapters on the quality of life, explicitly endorses the survey approach of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). The EU's Renewed Social Agenda has recognised the need to develop 'a mix of different policy tools to achieve the objectives set out in the renewed social agenda' (European Commission, 2008b). In the words of economist Richard Layard, 'if policymakers are to make well-being a central objective, they have to have ways of measuring it' (New Economics Foundation, 2008, p. 1).

Eurofound has a broad base, with a governing council representing employers, trade unions and governments of the EU's 27 Member States (EU27). It has pioneered the use of a familiar social science tool – sample surveys of public opinion – to enable Europeans to assess their quality of life in areas ranging from home and family to the workplace, public services and relations between men and women, young and old people, and different racial and ethnic groups. The first European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) in 2003 interviewed nationally representative samples of the population in the 12 countries that subsequently joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 – referred to as the 12 new Member States (NMS12) – as well as the 15 existing Member States (EU15).³ In 2007, the second EQLS study collected data about the quality of life of people in the EU27 (for overviews, see Alber et al, 2008; Anderson et al, 2009). This report draws on the two rounds of the EQLS in order to assess under what circumstances and to what extent quality of life in Europe is being maintained, advancing or deteriorating. It does so by comparing patterns of stability and change in the EU's new and 'older' Member States, and also by comparing people with adequate and inadequate incomes, young and old people, and men and women.

² <http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/en/index.htm>.

³ The micro-data from two rounds of the EQLS (2003 and 2007) were not weighted by using the same weighting scheme. The latest round has used the regional (NUTS2) distribution of the population as the additional weighting variable, while this was not the case in the 2003 survey. In order to have data from two survey rounds more comparable, it has been decided to adjust the weighting scheme for the 2003 EQLS. The data have been re-weighted by using the full set of weighting variables (age groups, sex, household size, NUTS-2 region) as was used in the 2007 edition of the survey. Due to the re-weighting, there might be some minor differences in figures generated from the initial 2003 EQLS dataset (and published in earlier Eurofound reports) and figures generated from the re-weighted 2003 dataset which are presented in this report.

Multiple qualities

The familiar phrase 'quality of life' is invoked in a multiplicity of theoretical and political contexts. It can be used to refer to everything from people feeling happy to societies being prosperous and well governed. To claim that one or another definition of 'quality of life' is the right one misses the point: there are a multiplicity of ways in which people assess the quality of their lives (for the EQLS approach, see Fahey, Nolan and Whelan, 2003; Watson et al, 2009; Nussbaum and Sen, 1993; Rapley, 2003; Phillips, 2006).

Shifting attention from abstract definitions to their application focuses attention on familiar and tangible features of everyday life. Here, an individual's quality of life is seen as having a radius extending from face-to-face interactions which not only involve psychological feelings but also social relationships with others. In addition, everyday life has a physical environment, as housing and the quality of the immediate neighbourhood where an individual lives are also important. Work takes an individual out of the home and earnings affect the extent to which households have the means to live without being deprived of necessities and normal pleasures such as a holiday or a meal with friends. The radius of contacts extends to the government when individuals make use of health, education and social security services that the government delivers in cooperation with the social partners. Through the national media as well as through personal contact, individuals become aware of different views about society, reflecting potential tensions between men and women, young and old people, and groups differing in race and ethnicity.

The quality of an individual's life depends on the quality of society as well as on their immediate face-to-face relationships on a daily basis. It is harder for an individual to be satisfied with life if the person is worried about losing their job or about unsatisfactory public services on which their family must rely for educating children and healthcare. Because quality of society concerns relations between collective institutions and individuals, they go beyond the assessment of individual conditions found in poverty studies or subjective assessments of an individual's well-being (Böhnke, 2005; Wallace et al, 2007; Alber et al, 2008; Watson et al, 2009).

Empirical analysis shows that different aspects of quality of life are multi-dimensional. For example, the determinants of the quality of family life differ from those affecting perceptions of tensions in society as a whole, and the ability to rely on others for help can be independent of public services. Evaluations that Europeans make about quality of life can vary according to topic. For instance, people are more likely to be satisfied with their informal relations with friends and family than with their income. Systematic statistical analysis finds that judgements about society and public services must be separated into at least half a dozen different multi-indicator indices of social life (Rose and Newton, 2009). There can be a positive change in one quality of life, a negative move in another and no change in a third. Thus, to monitor change, the analysis should not concentrate on a single measure; it is necessary to compare what happens in a multiplicity of areas of social life.

Measures of individual well-being are often categorised as objective or subjective (Fahey and Smyth, 2004; Anderson et al, 2009, chapters 2 and 6). Objective characteristics are those that can be reliably measured; for example, individual health can be assessed by clinical evaluations of physical symptoms and the financial reward for work can be valued by wages. By contrast, subjective characteristics are those that reflect individual attitudes and perceptions. Job satisfaction is not only about maximising earnings but also about being satisfied with conditions of work and job security, relations with fellow workers and using skills to do a job well.

Stability and change: a dynamic process

The answer to the question regarding how long it takes for change to emerge in society is the same as that to a question about how long is a piece of string. It depends on the context. The media monitor society looking for what is new from one hour to the next. Changes in the economy are calculated on a monthly basis, quarterly or yearly, and a growing economy can reverse into recession within the span of a few quarters. The institutionalisation of public policies can maintain stability from one parliament to the next (Rose and Davies, 1994). A policy to increase the number of university graduates will take decades before it will substantially raise the proportion of graduates in the total adult labour force.

Whereas the logic of economic development is that more is better, social stability is a major theme in sociology. When people enjoy a good quality of life, their objective is not to change but to maintain it; for example, people satisfied with their neighbourhood want to conserve it rather than see it rebuilt. Anxieties associated with the current financial crisis increase the desire of people who are satisfied with their life to retain what they have. However, for those dissatisfied with one or more aspects of quality of life, change is the objective. Healthcare is needed to cure a debilitating illness or injury, and better environmental services are required to make a disadvantaged neighbourhood more liveable. Achieving change requires both individual and collective efforts; for example, an individual can improve his or her own house, but action by a public agency is necessary to reduce neighbourhood litter and air pollution. For citizens in low income countries, where the current financial crisis adds to existing problems of limited resources, then positive change remains a high priority.

If there is a high level of social cohesion, then it is possible to have a consensus about maintaining stability in the quality of life. However, if the quality of life differs greatly between social groups or between European societies, then social cohesion can only be achieved through change. To reduce gaps, social groups and societies that rank below average need to make progress in their quality of life. However, this will be insufficient if leaders are also making progress. Catching up with the leaders in terms of quality of life not only requires countries to make progress but also to improve at a faster rate. Otherwise, disparities will remain or even widen (Rose, 1995). It is the responsibility of national governments and of the EU institutions to maintain a dynamic equilibrium – that is, a positive balance between influences that exert conflicting pressures for stability and change in European societies.

In principle, the EU is prepared to accept countries that differ greatly in terms of quality of life (Rehn, 2006; Rose, 2008a). In assessing applications for EU membership, the EU takes a dynamic approach. It not only considers quality of life in a country at present, but also how this aspect has been changing and the expected effect of granting EU membership on quality of life. The impact of EU membership is expected to be particularly influential on countries that are initially well below the EU average in a quality of life perspective. Steps taken to qualify for EU admission can create a momentum for change that will be sustained following EU membership (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Sjørnsen, 2002; Vachudova, 2005). If this is the case, new Member States that are lagging behind will begin to catch up with leading countries in the EU, thus promoting social cohesion. The need for active policies to promote social cohesion has gained significance by the enlargement of the EU from 15 to 27 countries, which has increased the diversity of histories and social conditions of Member States. The importance of solidarity has also been boosted by the global economic crisis, which creates challenges to protect those who are most vulnerable to its effects.

Making people count

To assess changes in the quality of life of Europeans, it is necessary to complement aggregate official data about countries with survey data in which Europeans speak for themselves. In order to see whether change has occurred, it is necessary to have at least two surveys far enough apart in time to demonstrate continuing stability or a degree of change. In order to determine whether findings from a single country reflect specific national circumstances or Europe-wide influences, it is necessary to have evidence from many EU Member States. Eurofound's EQLS meets these three conditions.

The EQLS helps to make people count by asking them to evaluate many aspects of quality of life. The survey questionnaire, developed in consultation with European teams of social scientists, provides insights into the everyday lives of Europeans by going well beyond the subject matter of economic statistics and national censuses. Questions range from relations between men and women to satisfaction with major public services.⁴ Tables and figures that combine individual assessments are important in order to represent both those whose situation is stable and those whose circumstances have changed.

The EQLS covers the whole of the EU from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea. In the autumn 2003 round of the survey, Intomart GfK interviewed 27,008 respondents face-to-face in nationally stratified random samples of what are now the 27 EU Member States, plus Turkey and Norway (for technical details, see Ahrendt, 2003; for analyses, see Alber et al, 2008). In the 2007 round of the survey, TNS-Opinion conducted face-to-face interviews with randomly selected respondents in the EU27 plus Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Norway (for full details, see Anderson et al, 2009). Since the fieldwork for the first EQLS began just before the 2004 phase of EU enlargement, it provides a benchmark for assessing the immediate impact of entry to the EU on eight new Member States that had been part of the former Communist bloc as well as on the Republic of Cyprus and Malta. Bulgaria and Romania were admitted to the EU months prior to the beginning of the second round of the EQLS in the autumn of 2007. Looking at the situation in so many countries, it is possible to test the robustness of generalisations by looking at groups of countries, both prosperous and less prosperous, and at old and new EU Member States.⁵ Comparisons are concentrated on important questions repeated in both rounds of the EQLS in the EU27.

Invariably, sample surveys find that citizens of a country are divided in their views on the quality of life. Differences within a country cannot be explained by invoking cultural values that are meant to be shared by everyone in a society. Nor can national averages take into account the extent to which individual differences in income, education, gender or age are of primary importance. When social divisions appear important within a single country, this raises a question regarding the extent to which the determinants of variations in individual aspects of quality of life are similar across national boundaries.

Comparing countries at a single point in time encourages the construction of static league tables in which one country ranks highest and another lowest. However, it is uncertain how durable such differences may be. Comparing countries at two points in time adds a dynamic dimension; it becomes possible to see how much or how little each country has changed on a given measure. The shorter the

⁴ For the complete text of the questionnaires, see <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/qualityoflife/eqls/2007/methodology.htm>.

⁵ Comparison with trends in Turkey is not feasible within the scope of this report. For a full analysis of Turkey in a European perspective, see the EQLS analysis by Rose and Özcan (2007).

time scale, the more likely that changes will be small or even random fluctuations. The longer the time scale, the greater is the prospect of real and significant changes.

The four years between the first and second EQLS provide factual evidence that can be used to test how much or how little support there is for statements about ‘new’ or ‘unchanging’ quality of life in Europe.⁶ The time period is long enough for a degree of change to emerge. Insofar as there are good reasons for expecting changes to continue – for example, the demographic increase in the proportion of the population with a higher education since universities became widely available to young people – there are reasons to extrapolate into the future even small changes.

The dynamic analysis of social cohesion, a crucial issue for the EU’s Renewed Social Agenda, begins in the next chapter, which outlines the extent to which Europeans have seen their quality of life improve in the period between the two EQLS studies. Chapter 4 examines the extent to which enlargement has altered the quality of life in the 10 new Member States (NMS10) that joined the EU in 2004 compared with the EU15; furthermore, changes in Bulgaria and Romania are compared with those in the NMS10. Developments in the conditions of social groups – such as young and old people, men and women, and those with adequate and inadequate incomes – are explored in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 reports on EQLS evidence of differences in the capacity of individuals and households to withstand the effects of the macroeconomic crisis that began in 2008.

⁶ The EQLS shows net aggregate changes in quality of life. It cannot document the total gross change, insofar as some individuals cancel each other out as their situation moves in opposite directions. To capture this would require a very elaborate panel study (see Tóth and Kolosi, 1998 and later years for an example from Hungary of a panel survey).

While it is possible to measure with arithmetic precision the amount of change that has occurred between the two rounds of the EQLS, there is no rule for distinguishing between change and stability. Statistically speaking, sample surveys ought to show random fluctuations of a few percentage points from one survey to the next, particularly when they are taken in many different countries by different survey organisations four years apart. Because the EQLS interviews tens of thousands of persons, even changes of a few percentage points are likely to appear statistically significant; however, this does not guarantee that it is substantively important. The many tables and figures in this report show each indicator's pattern of responses in 2003 and 2007 in simple arithmetic terms. This enables each reader to evaluate for himself or herself the extent to which the results indicate stability or change.

Satisfaction with everyday life

Given the limitations of drawing inferences about individual attitudes from aggregate national economic statistics, the EQLS asks people: 'All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days?' Each person rates their satisfaction on a 10-point scale, with the lowest number representing very dissatisfied and 10 meaning very satisfied. In the 2003 EQLS survey, Europeans on average gave a positive rating of 7.0. Four years later, the average satisfaction with life remained stable: the rating was again 7.0. A similar pattern of satisfaction was found across eight different domains of everyday life (see Table 1). On a 10-point scale, the average rating was consistently high, ranging, in 2003, from 8.0 for family life and 7.6 for accommodation to 6.9 for education and standard of living. Given a high level of satisfaction, there is more scope for it to fall rather than rise; however, this did not happen in the second round of the survey. In the second EQLS four years later, there was no change in satisfaction in relation to four domains: accommodation, social life, life in general and standard of living. Although the mean level of satisfaction with family life declined, it only fell by one percentage point (0.1), and there was a similar fluctuation in health. Job satisfaction dropped by two percentage points. However, the evaluation of education, where satisfaction was least high in the first EQLS, increased the most. Across all eight areas of everyday life, the average level of satisfaction was stable between the two EQLS rounds. This conclusion is further substantiated by the small amount of change in each EU Member State between the two surveys.

Table 1: Satisfaction with everyday life, 2003 and 2007

Satisfaction with:	2003	2007	Change
Q.40.5 Family life	8.0	7.9	-0.1
Q.40.4 Accommodation	7.6	7.6	0
Q.40.6 Health	7.4	7.3	-0.1
Q.40.2 Job	7.3	7.1	-0.2
Q.40.7 Social life	7.2	7.2	0
Q.29 Life	7.0	7.0	0
Q.40.1 Education	6.9	7.2	0.3
Q.40.3 Standard of living	6.9	6.9	0

Notes: Apart from the question on life in general (Q.29), the results are based on the responses to Q.40: 'How satisfied are you with each of the following?' Figures presented are the mean scores on a 10-point scale. The data cover the EU27 and are weighted by population.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Technological divide

Technological developments can create fundamental, structural changes by introducing new goods and services. Before an innovation is introduced, all people are equal in this regard: nobody has what is not yet in the marketplace. The internet is an example of an innovative technology. When the product is new, societies may be divided between those who can afford a relatively expensive new product and those who cannot. In the 2003 EQLS round, 42% of adults reported that they used the internet at least occasionally, while 58% did not. Moreover, substantial gaps arose between countries in the level of usage. In Sweden, 71% reported that they were internet users, whereas in Greece only 20% did so, and fewer still reported usage in Bulgaria and Romania.

The logic of continuing diffusion implies that a divide is temporary; a distinction arises between countries where an innovation is adopted sooner or adopted later. In the 2007 EQLS round, there was an increase of 15 percentage points in internet use, to 57% of the EU adult population. Not only did internet use rise in every country, but it also increased the most – in absolute as well as relative terms – in countries where it had been lower four years earlier. While internet use in Sweden rose by less than the European average, in Bulgaria and Romania it grew by 21 and 18 percentage points respectively thus reducing but not eliminating cross-national differences. Internet users changed from being a minority to a majority of the continent's adult population; the proportion among young people was even higher than 57%.

Social support network

The quality of an individual's everyday life is supported by family, friends, neighbours or workmates to whom they can turn for help when everyday routines are disturbed. In the first EQLS, overwhelming majorities of respondents felt that they could rely on informal help when ill, needing advice, feeling depressed or in an emergency where they wanted to borrow as much as €1,000.⁷ The only difference was in the near unanimity of having support at hand for psychological or health problems, compared with one in six respondents being unable to rely on others if they were in need of cash assistance (Figure 1). Given the pervasiveness of informal support in all sections of society, keeping things as they are is a meaningful goal. The second EQLS found that stability was achieved. There was no significant difference in the almost universal access to informal support for each of the four indicators.⁸ Nonetheless, some of the NMS10 achieve small but significant positive changes in informal support.

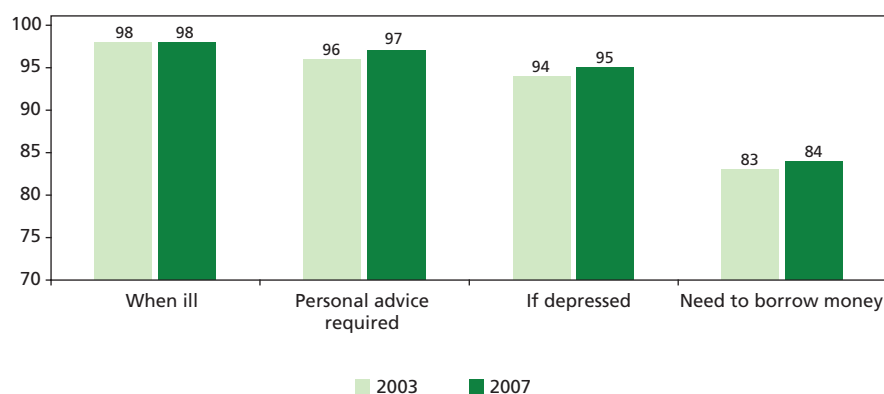
Social cohesion involves trust in other people, and this is the case whether trust is seen as a cause or a consequence of informal social networks (Dasgupta, 1988). In a very trusting society, it may extend from face-to-face relations to the whole population and to political institutions as well. However, the radius of trust is as limited in Europe as it is in the United States of America (US) (Putnam, 2000). When the EQLS asks, 'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?', the answers are less positive than with regard to the level of confidence reported by respondents in being able to get help from family, friends or neighbours when confronted with personal difficulties. On a 10-point scale, the average response of 5.6 was midway between the two extremes of trusting most people and needing to be very careful in dealing with people. Thus, it cannot be assumed that trust in others is boundless and capable of generalisation from face-

⁷ In EU15 countries, a loan of €1,000 was specified; in the NMS, people were asked about their ability to borrow the equivalent of €500 in their national currency.

⁸ For the minorities who are socially excluded, see Layte et al (2009). Change in social exclusion cannot be measured here because comparable questions were not asked in the first EQLS.

to-face relations to the level of the national government (Putnam, 2000; Newton and Norris, 2000); this is not the case.⁹ In the second EQLS, trust in most people fell below the mid-point of 5.5 on the scale between 1 and 10, to 5.2.

Figure 1: Respondents reporting ability to rely on others for help, 2003 and 2007 (%)



Note: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.35: 'From whom would you get support in each of the following situations? For each situation, choose the most important person. Partner/spouse; Other family member; Work colleague; Friend; Neighbour; Someone else; Nobody.'

a. Needed help around the house when ill

b. Needed advice about a serious personal or family matter

d. Feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to

e. Needed to urgently raise €1,000 (€500 in the NMS and candidate countries) to face an emergency.'

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Income

Informal quality of life is important but material conditions matter too. Household income provides the means to buy both necessities and goods and services that are regarded as part of a normal standard of living in European societies today (Anderson et al, 2009, chapter 1). Differences in national currencies, their inflation rates and purchasing power add to the difficulties of an international comparison of incomes for households differing in the number of adults and children present. Therefore, the EQLS asks people to evaluate their income in terms of whether it is adequate or inadequate to meet their monthly needs. This question prompts a good response on a potentially sensitive subject; only 1% of respondents refused to answer or expressed uncertainty.

The EQLS finds that the proportion of people living without difficulty on their income remained stable between the two versions of the EQLS. However, the implications are the opposite for the 60% of people reporting that their income is adequate and the almost 40% of Europeans having difficulties making ends meet (Table 2). Among those who reported having difficulties in the 2003 survey, a majority of respondents indicated that these financial problems were not large. Nonetheless, 16% found it difficult or very difficult to make ends meet. For this group, the priority was to catch up and have enough income to make ends meet without difficulty. However, the 2007 EQLS found relatively little progress in this regard; the proportion of those finding it difficult and very difficult to make ends meet declined by three percentage points. In other words, 13% of Europeans still reported significant or substantial difficulties in this regard.

⁹ The 2007 EQLS included a range of questions about trust in political institutions; the survey found that trust in representative institutions such as the parliament and political parties was a full point lower on the scale than trust in most people (Rose and Newton, 2009, chapter 7).

Table 2: Respondents' perceptions of ability to make ends meet, 2003 and 2007 (%)

Easy/difficult to make ends meet	2003	2007	Change
Very easy	9	9	0
Easy	23	24	1
Fairly easy	29	29	0
Income adequate	(61)	(62)	(1)
Some difficulty	22	24	-2
Difficult	10	8	2
Very difficult	6	5	1
Income difficulties	(38)	(37)	(1)

Notes: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.57: 'Thinking of your household's total monthly income, is your household able to make ends meet?' The percentage data add up to less than 100% due to rounding of data.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

An alternative way of evaluating incomes is to ask whether people have enough money to pay for essential or normal goods, such as heating or a week's holiday. To achieve social cohesion, every household in a society should have access to necessities and normal activities. To make progress towards this goal means that fewer people should lack these goods and services. The size of the minority of respondents going without essential goods or services varies substantially. One in three people reports that they cannot afford a week's holiday or replacing worn out furniture, and one in eight cannot afford meeting friends for a meal or drink, buying new clothes or keeping their house warm. One in 12 respondents frequently goes short of meat, chicken or fish, not because they are vegetarians but because they are poor (Table 3). Between the two EQLS rounds, the proportion of respondents experiencing deprivation has consistently fallen but only by two or three percentage points.

Because people want to buy numerous goods and services, deprivation is a matter of degree. People who are a little short of money may sometimes do without one or two items, while people who are very poor will frequently do without a holiday, new clothes or going out with friends. In the 2003 EQLS, 59% of respondents reported that they did not have to do without any normal purchases and an additional 22% only did without one or two items that most Europeans can afford. However, 19% of respondents reported doing without at least three items. An increase in social cohesion would require a decrease in those doing without certain goods or services. However, the second EQLS found very little change in this regard. The majority of respondents who were able to afford all six items referred to in the survey had risen by only two percentage points and the proportion of those unable to afford four or more necessities had fallen by three percentage points. Thus, European societies remain divided between a substantial majority of people who are able to pay for all or almost all of these normal goods and services, and one in six people who have to do without many of these items.

Table 3: Respondents who cannot afford normal goods and services, 2003 and 2007 (%)

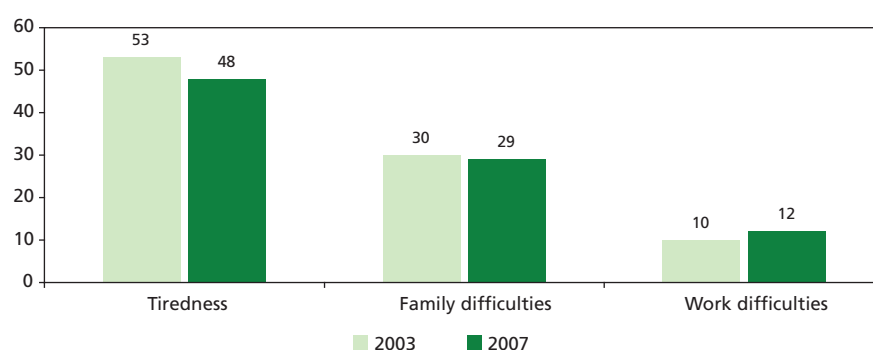
Normal good or service	2003	2007	Change
Meat, chicken or fish meal, at least every second day	9	7	-2
Keeping house warm	12	9	-3
Buying new, not second-hand clothes	14	12	-2
Having others for a drink or meal monthly	14	12	-2
Replacing worn-out furniture	31	29	-2
Annual week's holiday	33	30	-3

Note: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.19: 'There are some things that many people cannot afford, even if they would like them. For each of the following things on this card, can I just check whether your household can afford it if you want it?'

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Work–life balance

People in employment are not only concerned with how much money they earn but also in achieving a balance between the rewards and demands of work and those of family life. This is recognised in European Commission (2008a) policy initiatives addressing topics such as working time, childcare and leave arrangements. These concerns are also shared by Eurofound (Anderson et al, 2009, chapter 3; Kotowska et al, 2009). In the 2003 EQLS, a majority of employees reported that they came home from work too tired to do household jobs at least several times a month and only one in eight respondents said that they were never too tired after work. In addition, one in three employees stated that, because of the demands of work, they sometimes found it difficult to fulfil their family responsibilities and only one in four revealed that this was never a problem. On the other hand, family responsibilities rarely impaired activities at work (Figure 2). In the second EQLS, there was positive evidence of a small change in one indicator of work–life balance: a decrease of five percentage points in those saying that several times a month they felt too tired because of work to deal with their household tasks. However, no significant change was apparent among the minority groups who found that work sometimes did not leave enough time for them to fulfil their family responsibilities or that family life got in the way of work.

Figure 2: Respondents reporting work–life balance difficulties, 2003 and 2007 (%)

Note: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.11 (asked of people in paid employment): 'How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year? Several times a week; Several times a month; Several times a year; Less often/rarely; Never.'

- I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done
- It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend on the job
- I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities.'

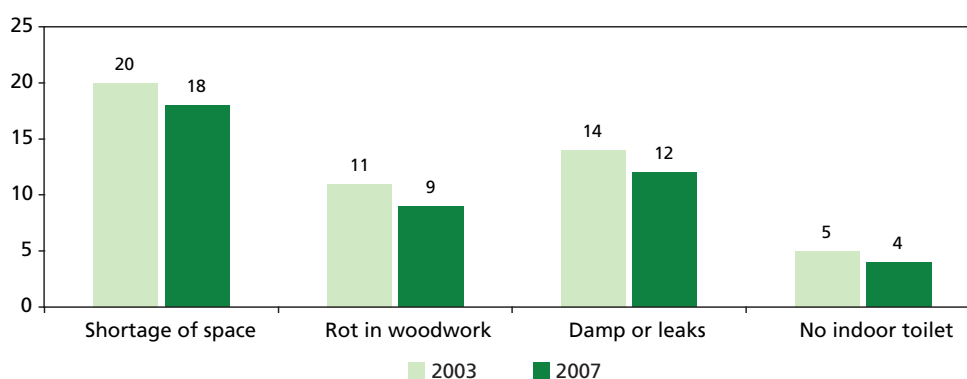
Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Housing

Housing quality reflects a combination of market prices, what individuals can afford to pay and public policies that regulate or even subsidise housing standards, credit and rental agreements. At the time of the 2003 EQLS, 66% of respondents were living in a house that they fully owned or had bought with the help of a mortgage. Four years later, the number of homeowners, with or without a mortgage, had increased by four percentage points, and this was almost exactly matched by a decline in the minority who were tenants in social housing (see Chapter 6).

When asked whether their accommodation had structural defects, the most frequently cited shortcoming was a lack of storage space, mentioned by one in five respondents (Figure 3). This problem could be associated with households accumulating more goods; they may also be living in accommodation with small rooms. Problems that could cause health difficulties, such as damp in the walls or roof or dry rot in woodwork, were mentioned by about one in 10 respondents and the lack of an indoor toilet by one in 25 respondents. Between the two versions of the EQLS, there was a consistent but small reduction of about two percentage points in the proportion of houses with each specific defect. While this is hardly significant statistically, it is consistent with the fact that improvements in the total housing stock can only be gradual since houses are lived in for about a century or even longer. Thus, 69% of the 2003 EQLS respondents had accommodation without any structural defects; four years later, the proportion of respondents with housing in good condition on every count had risen by two percentage points.

Figure 3: Respondents reporting problems with housing, 2003 and 2007 (%)



Note: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.17: ‘Do you have any of the following problems with your accommodation?’

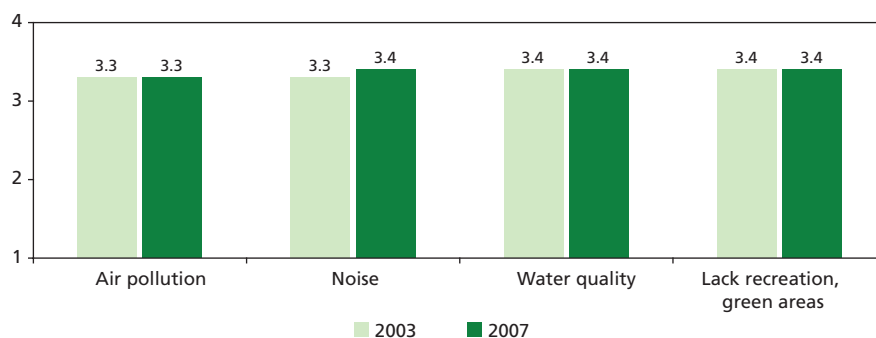
Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Local environment

The quality of the environment in a neighbourhood is a direct responsibility of public agencies. When asked whether they had any complaints about these services, in the first EQLS, 66% of the respondents stated that they had no complaints about access to recreation or green areas, 64% had no problems regarding water quality, 56% had no complaints about air pollution and 55% had no problems with noise. Notable minorities declared a few reasons for complaining but no more than 7% voiced many complaints. Since there were four alternatives for each question, Figure 4 presents scores for each neighbourhood characteristic, with 4 representing no complaints. For each attribute, the mean evaluation is well above 3, indicating a high level of satisfaction among respondents with

neighbourhood services. When the questions were repeated in 2007, the high ratings were maintained with no statistically significant change.

Figure 4: Problems with neighbourhood environment, 2003 and 2007



Notes: Results are based on the responses to Q.54: 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? (4 = no reason to complain; 1 = very many reasons). The figures given are the mean scores on a four-point scale.

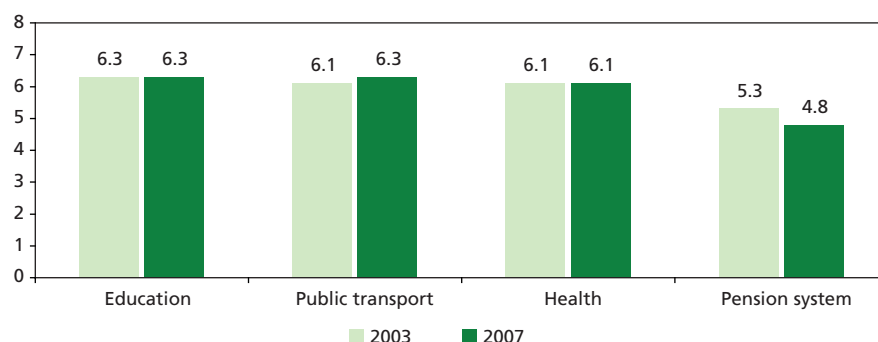
Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Public services

Major public services such as health and education are badges of social citizenship to which everyone in society is entitled. Pensions and public transport are also available to everyone, albeit fares may be charged or contributions required to a state pension fund. In the first EQLS round, each of the four services received a positive rating, although the response regarding the pension system was on the border line. Instead of registering improvement in the subsequent four years, the quality of the state pension has gone past the border line and is now negative. Concurrently, the rating for public transport has improved a little, while satisfaction with education and health has remained steady (Figure 5).

There should be a direct link between how satisfied an individual is with their education and health and how they evaluate public provision of these services. However, people consistently show more satisfaction with their own circumstances than with public services. There is a difference of more than a full point on the 10-point scale in the ratings of education and health (see Table 1 and Figure 5). One interpretation of this discrepancy is that people tend to project a general distrust of political institutions onto public services while accurately assessing their personal circumstances (Rose and Newton, 2009).

Figure 5: Quality of public services, 2003 and 2007



Notes: Results are based on the responses to Q.56: 'In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [our country]? a. Health services; b. Education system; c. Public transport; f. State pension system.' The figures presented are the mean scores on a 10-point scale.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Social tensions

In every modern society, the population can be divided in a multiplicity of ways, for example along lines of age, gender or economic resources. EU policies celebrate social diversity and this is reflected in the Member States having 23 different languages and histories. The philosophy of social cohesion recognises differences while also emphasising the importance of positive ties between groups that differ in social, economic and cultural characteristics. However, these differences can also produce competing demands. When, for example, labour relations are good, they can be resolved by collective bargaining between the social partners. However, if the differences are not resolved by agreement, this can produce tensions in society (Rose and Newton, 2009).

When asked to characterise their society as having a lot, some or no tension, there is a strong tendency for respondents to choose the middle option, seeing some tension in all kinds of social relations. However, the degree to which there is a lot of tension varies according to the topic. In 2003, the highest level of perceived tension was between different racial and ethnic groups; 44% of respondents reported a lot of tension, the same amount saw some tension and only one in eight perceived no tension. Three out of eight respondents reported considerable tension between management and workers, as well as between rich and poor people. On the other hand, only one in six respondents cited a lot of tension between old and young people, and one in eight respondents reported considerable tension between men and women (Table 4).

Table 4: Perceived tensions in society, 2003 and 2007 (%)

Social groups	2003	2007	Change
Poor and rich people			
A lot	36	30	-6
Some	50	55	5
None	14	15	1
Management and workers			
A lot	36	32	-4
Some	54	58	4
None	10	10	0
Different racial and ethnic groups			
A lot	44	40	-4
Some	44	49	5
None	11	11	0
Men and women			
A lot	12	12	0
Some	52	58	6
None	36	30	-6
Old and young people			
A lot	17	18	1
Some	54	58	4
None	29	24	-5

Note: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.25: 'In all countries there sometimes exists tension between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between: poor and rich people; management and workers; different racial and ethnic groups; men and women; old and young people?'

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Between the two EQLS rounds, tensions were reduced where they had been highest before. Tension between different races and religions declined by four percentage points, and there were similar reductions in the proportion of respondents perceiving a lot of tension among rich and poor people as well as among management and workers. Tensions between old and young people as well as between men and women remained as low as before. Thus, the relative importance of different sources of tension remained the same, with race and religion strongest, followed by economic sources.

Conclusion

In general, the EQLS assessments of different aspects of quality of life show a high degree of stability in European society between 2003 and 2007.¹⁰ There have, of course, been significant changes in the circumstances of individuals, but overall many have tended to cancel each other out, leaving pan-European totals much the same. Nonetheless, given the population of the EU, an improvement or deterioration of four percentage points can positively affect upwards of 20 million Europeans. If there are signs of change, they tend to be positive, for example, in the small but significant reduction of tensions in society and in the quality of housing stock. However, the small scale of changes emphasises the extent to which developments in the quality of life tend to proceed slowly, taking a decade or more to mature. Insofar as stability is associated with divisions within European society – and this is apparently the case when three in eight households continue to have difficulties in making ends meet

¹⁰ A systematic analysis of all comparable questions in both EQLS rounds confirms the conclusion illustrated in the above tables and figures.

– it shows the need for positive action to remove or reduce the economic difficulties of a large minority of European households.

Because a pan-European perspective requires combining evaluations from 27 different countries, it overshadows differences between countries and social groups. Hence, the following chapters disaggregate results by regions of Europe and by social structure in order to determine whether stability tends to be pervasive at all levels. The report will consider to what extent social cohesion may be increasing because those who were not so well off in 2003 have been catching up with leaders or, alternatively, whether they are falling behind.

Rapid transition effects

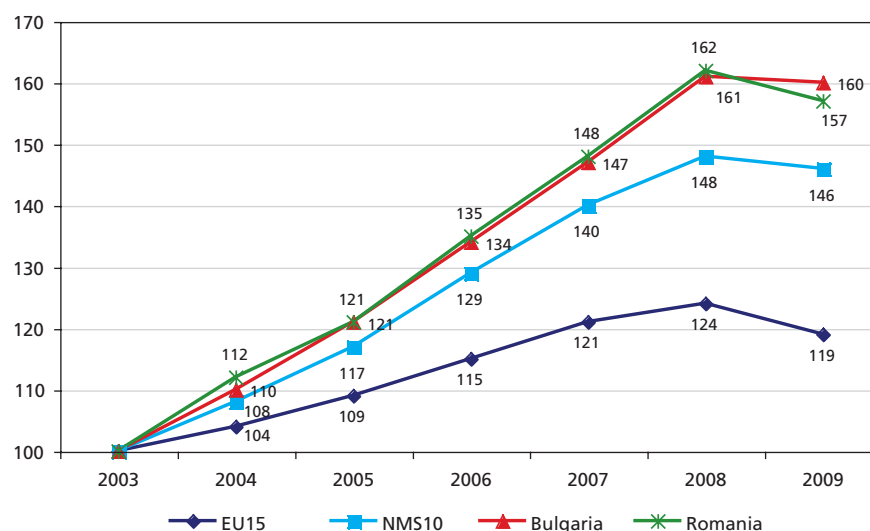
In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, countries that had been part of the former Communist bloc had a lot of progress to make to match the quality of life in western European countries. Where comparisons are readily possible, as is the case for life expectancy, significant gaps were apparent. Male life expectancy in the EU15 was 72.7 years, while it was 5.8 years less in countries that subsequently became new Member States.¹¹ Gaps were evident not only between countries at the extremes of the range, such as Nordic societies and Baltic states, but also between countries that had been similar with regard to certain aspects at the end of the Second World War but had then gone separate ways. For example, male life expectancy was 6.6 years higher in Austria than in Hungary (Rose, 2009, chapter 3).

Economic comparisons at the start of the transformation are hampered by the fact that, in western European countries, prices reflected transactions in market economies whereas, in eastern European countries, they were artificial constructs of bureaucratic planners (Winiecki, 1988; Kornai, 1992). Notwithstanding this, the demand for a base line for measuring change after economic transformation led to the imputation of gross domestic product (GDP) figures by a World Bank team (Arvay, 1995). On this basis, in 1989, GDP per head of population in what were to become new EU Member States in 2004 was less than half that in the EU15. In Bulgaria and Romania, GDP per head of population was less than two fifths that of the EU15 group. The short-term costs of the treble transformation of economy, polity and society that followed were marked by a contraction in the official economies of societies in transition.

Once national independence was regained, people began to take greater control of their lives and governments began to develop new institutions in the hope of a 'return to Europe'. The EU offered governments both money and technical advice to assist with this process. Even more importantly, it offered the prospect of EU membership if applicant countries could achieve European standards (Rehn, 2006; Ilonszki, 2009). New market economies entered a period of sustained economic growth at rates at least twice as high as that of western Europe (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), 2008). Between the trough of 1992 and 2003, GDP per head of population increased by 88% across the region. However, since the GDP of western European countries was also growing, a gap remained between them. Whereas, in 1992, eastern European countries had a GDP per head of population that was 39% of the western European rate, by the time of EU entry it was 49%. By 2003, male life expectancy had increased by 3.2 years in the 10 accession states that subsequently joined the EU in 2004. However, instead of catching up with older EU Member States, the NMS remained behind, because life expectancy in the former EU15 had also increased by 3.4 years (Rose, 2009).

The 'big bang' enlargement of 2004 could not close the economic gap between old and new Member States, but it has reduced it. In the favourable economic climate between the first and second EQLS rounds, all of the EU27 experienced economic growth. Consistent with the purpose of enlargement, the economies of the NMS10 grew by 40% in the four-year period between the surveys, almost double the growth rate in EU15 economies. Economic growth in Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU in 2007, was even more rapid (Figure 6). The result was that, by the end of 2007, GDP per head of population in the NMS10 had risen to 56% of the EU15 mean, and that of Bulgaria and Romania had grown from 28% to 34% of that mean.

¹¹ This report follows the EU practice of including in the category of new Member States Cyprus and Malta, two countries that were never part of the Communist bloc. It also includes Slovenia, which was part of the former Yugoslavia, a country that deviated from Soviet-style institutions; moreover, Slovenia was a prosperous outlier in relation to the southern republics of Yugoslavia.

Figure 6: Economic growth, 2003–2009


Notes: GDP per head of population in purchasing power standards (PPP) and USD. 2003 = 100. €1 = USD 1.47 as at 23 September 2009.

Source: Calculated from International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook Database*, April 2009, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2009/01/weodata/index.aspx> (accessed on 3 June 2009)

In the two decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of central and eastern Europe (CEE) have made substantial gains and achieved their goal of making a ‘return to Europe’. However, the community that these countries have joined is not the same as that when the Iron Curtain came down in 1948 or when the European Economic Community was founded in 1957. In such circumstances, to improve social cohesion, the NMS must not only make progress but also do so at a significantly faster rate than in western European states. As long as this happens, gaps between the two regions will narrow where they are now wide and, where the disparities are limited, change will be a step forward in the process of catching up.

New Member States making progress and increasing cohesion

The larger the number of countries combined in a single index, the greater the statistical likelihood that differences between countries will tend to cancel out, as the overall EQLS score is a mid-point position between countries that are above or below the mean. Dividing EQLS respondents into the EU15 and the NMS12 thus provides a robust test of the extent to which the apparent stability shown in Chapter 3 masks differences between old and new Member States. As enlargement has not only helped new Member States to make progress but to do so at a faster rate, more change should be evident and this is often the case.

Satisfaction with everyday life

When the 2003 EQLS asked people to evaluate eight different areas of social life, there was widespread satisfaction among respondents (see Table 1). However, when satisfaction in the EU15 is compared with that in the 10 countries that were about to join the EU in 2004, differences were found. On a 10-point scale, the average level of satisfaction in the former EU15 was 7.5, while in the countries awaiting EU entry it was 6.5. On all eight measures of satisfaction with everyday life, citizens in older Member States were more positive about their lives and the gap was as much as 1.2 points for the generalised measure of satisfaction with life (Table 5).

Table 5: Reducing the gap in satisfaction with everyday life, by country group, 2003 and 2007

Satisfaction with own:	EU15		NMS10		Gap reduced
	2003	2007	2003	2007	
Q.40.5 Family life	8.1	7.6	8.0	7.8	0.3
Q.40.4 Accommodation	7.8	7.7	6.7	7.1	0.5
Q.40.6 Health	7.6	7.4	6.9	7.0	0.3
Q.40.7 Social life	7.4	7.3	6.3	6.7	0.5
Q.40.2 Job	7.4	7.2	6.9	6.9	0.2
Q.29 Life	7.3	7.2	6.1	6.6	0.6
Q.40.3 Standard of living	7.2	7.1	5.7	6.2	0.6
Q.40.1 Education	7.0	7.3	6.4	6.5	-0.2
(Mean)	(7.5)	(7.4)	(6.5)	(6.8)	(0.4)

Notes: Results are based on the responses to Q.40: 'How satisfied are you with each of the following?' Figures represented are the mean scores on a 10-point scale. NMS10 covers the mean for the 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

When satisfaction levels were measured again in 2007, citizens in the NMS were substantially more satisfied with many aspects of their everyday lives. Satisfaction with life in general increased by half a point across the NMS as a whole, and an overall rise was found in a large majority of individual NMS populations. Whereas in new Member States, the average rise in satisfaction was four tenths of a point, in older EU members, satisfaction tended to remain relatively steady or to have fallen slightly. Satisfaction decreased by as much as half a point regarding family life and also declined a little in six other areas. The average change was small but negative at one tenth of a point. Thus, although satisfaction with everyday life was still lower, the NMS were beginning to catch up. The gap between old and new Member States across eight areas of everyday life averaged 0.9 of a point in the first EQLS round and 0.6 in the second EQLS.

Technological divide

Internet use shows that even when there is substantial progress in the EU15, it is still possible for the NMS to narrow the gap between them. In 2003, in EU15 countries, 45% of people were already using the internet and there was a gap of 20 percentage points with pre-accession states, where only 25% of people were using the internet. By the second EQLS round, internet users had increased by 15 percentage points in EU15 countries. However, the NMS were starting to catch up as internet use increased by 22 percentage points between both surveys, thus reducing the gap between both country groups by one third.

Social support network

While a modern state has a comparative advantage in paying pensions or offering healthcare, it cannot easily provide comfort for people feeling depressed or wanting advice about a family matter. For CEE citizens, informal help was of particular significance as institutions of the party-state were often not trusted, corrupt or inadequate. According to the blunt Bulgarian epigram, 'without friends you are dead' (Rose, 2009, chapter 2). In the first EQLS, there was no significant difference between citizens in EU15 and pre-accession countries in terms of getting help when ill, advice about a serious personal matter, or having someone to talk to if feeling depressed. Virtually everyone had others on whom they could rely. Moreover, although large differences could be found in GDP per head of population, there

was only a small difference among respondents in being able to borrow money.¹² In the EU15, 86% of respondents could arrange a loan informally and, in countries awaiting accession to the EU, 78% of those surveyed could do so. Accession reduced the difference in being able to mobilise social networks for material help: 85% of respondents felt able to arrange an informal loan in EU15 countries, and 81% could do so in the NMS.

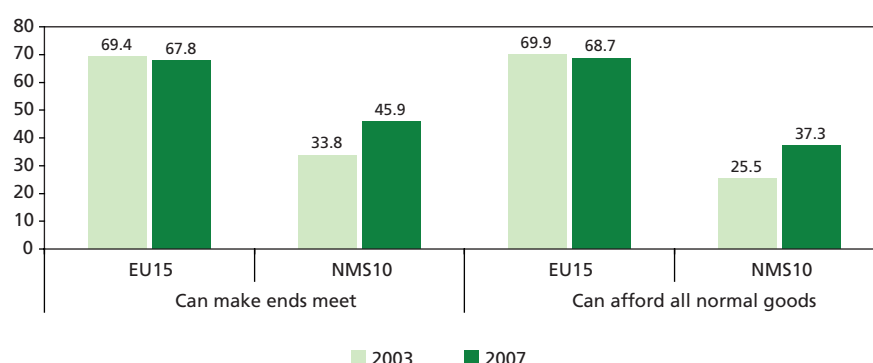
Having reliable family and friends is not the same as having trust in most people. Communist regimes left a legacy of distrust in political institutions that tended to foreshorten the radius of trust. While the mean score for trust in most people in society was 5.8 in the EU15 in 2003, it was a full point lower in countries about to enter the EU. When the question was repeated in the 2007 EQLS, the gap had almost halved. This was not because people in the NMS had shed their legacy from the past but because citizens in the EU15 had become much less trusting of others. Whereas in the first EQLS the mean level of trust in others in the EU15 was 5.8 on a 10-point scale, it dropped to 5.3 in the second round of the survey, while in the NMS it fell by only one tenth of a point from an initial score of 4.8.

Income

The distortions of Communist economic systems meant that, on the eve of enlargement, there were significant cross-national differences in the proportion of people facing economic difficulties. In the 2003 EQLS, twice as many people in EU15 countries as in the NMS stated that their monthly income was sufficient to make ends meet. The continuing high level of economic growth in the four years that followed resulted in 46% of respondents in the NMS becoming able to make ends meet by 2007. Since the proportion of those making ends meet remained virtually constant in the EU15, this reduced the gap between old and new EU societies by a third (Figure 7). The increase was most dramatic in Poland, where there was an increment of 20 percentage points in the proportion of those able to make ends meet. Moreover, in four of the former communist countries – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia – half or more of the survey respondents could now make ends meet without difficulty (Table A2 in the Annex to this report).

While most EU citizens can make ends meet, a minority are subject to a degree of deprivation, doing without such normal things as a holiday or meeting friends, or even doing without food or heating. In 2003, those deprived of one or more everyday goods in the accession countries were 2.5 times the proportion of this group in the EU15 (Figure 7). Since the Index of Deprivation was steady as well as low in the EU15, social cohesion has increased as the NMS have been catching up. On the six-item scale of deprivation, the mean in the NMS fell from 2.3 to 1.8 items. While there is still a substantial difference between groups of countries, the earlier gap has narrowed by almost one third. Moreover, in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia, the level of deprivation became similar to that in several EU15 countries (Table A2).

¹² As noted earlier, to address the differences in GDP, the EQLS adapted the suggested loan amount to €1,000 in the EU15 countries and the equivalent of €500 in their national currency in the NMS and candidate countries.

Figure 7: Economic difficulties before and after enlargement, 2003 and 2007 (%)


Note: Normal goods as defined in Table 3.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Work-life balance

The shift from a state-controlled planned economy to a market economy in central and eastern Europe brought about a radical change in working conditions as well as pay. This meant less job security and fewer fringe benefits but also a reduction in stress from ‘storming’, namely the hectic push to meet monthly production targets followed by days in which little work was done. Opportunities arose for people to go into business by themselves and to change employers if dissatisfied with their current position (Rose and Bobak, 2010). At the time of the 2003 EQLS, work-life balance in the 10 accession countries was less satisfactory than in the EU15 Member States (Table 6). Between the two country groups, there was a difference of eight percentage points in the proportion of people sometimes feeling too tired to do household jobs, a gap of 13 percentage points in having time for family responsibilities and a disparity of three percentage points in being distracted at work by family responsibilities. Instead of improving as a result of EU enlargement, work-life balance has tended to remain stable (Wallace and Pichler, 2008).

Table 6: Respondents reporting work-life balance difficulties in old and new EU Member States, 2003 and 2007 (%)

Type of difficulties experienced by workers	EU15		NMS10		Gap reduced
	2003	2007	2003	2007	
Tiredness	51	46	59	57	-3
Family difficulties	27	26	40	41	-2
Work difficulties	10	11	13	15	-1

Notes: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.11 (asked of people in paid employment): ‘How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year?’ Figures presented represent the percentage of workers reporting difficulties at least ‘several times a month’. For further details, see also Figure 2.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Housing

The collapse of a Marxist economic system in which private property could be characterised as ‘theft’ brought about a radical transformation in the ownership of housing. The state surrendered its position as owner or landlord of tens of millions of homes, and ownership was often transferred to those who had previously been tenants. By the time of the 2003 EQLS, 72% of residents in the then accession countries were homeowners compared with 64% in EU15 countries. The second EQLS four years

later found that the gap had actually increased, as 61% of residents in the EU15 were homeowners compared with 74% in the NMS. Moreover, in the wake of the collapse of the Communist system, banking and financial institutions had not developed enough to provide mortgages on a scale similar to that prevalent in the EU15 countries, where more than a quarter of nominal homeowners were paying a mortgage (Table A4).

The quality of housing in the EU15 countries has continued to be better than in the NMS. For example, the initial EQLS in 2003 found that more homes in the NMS were affected with rot; the difference amounted to 18 percentage points. Furthermore, disparities between the two country groupings were also found in relation to damp problems (six percentage points), lacking a flush toilet (nine percentage points) and inadequate storage space for household goods (seven percentage points). The second EQLS in 2007 found that the problem of rot had been significantly reduced in houses in the NMS; only 15% of houses were now affected by the problem, compared with 11% in EU15 countries. There was no significant change between eastern and western countries in terms of other housing conditions. Altogether, 54% of respondents in the NMS lived in houses free of all defects in 2003, compared with 72% in the EU15 countries. Four years later, the EQLS 2007 revealed that the NMS were closing the gap in this regard: 60% of respondents in the NMS reported living in houses free of defects, which amounts to 14 percentage points less than in the EU15.

Local environment

There has, however, been divergence between old and new Member States in the way that residents evaluate the quality of their local environment. Instead of near parity, a double-digit gap has emerged between them in terms of satisfaction with recreational space, noise levels and air pollution (Table 7). In the first EQLS, an average of 61% of respondents in EU15 countries had no complaints about their neighbourhood, three percentage points more than in the NMS. In the second round of the EQLS, the evaluation of neighbourhood quality rose by two percentage points in EU15 countries but declined to 49% in the NMS. Complaints were, however, usually minor (see Figure 4). The increase in complaints was highest in Poland and Bulgaria.

Table 7: Respondents reporting no complaints with quality of neighbourhood in old and new Member States, 2003 and 2007 (%)

Type of problem	EU15		NMS10		Gap reduced
	2003	2007	2003	2007	
Lack of access to recreational or green areas	66	68	67	55	-14
Noise	55	58	58	48	-13
Air pollution	58	58	53	42	-11
Water quality	67	69	56	50	-8

Notes: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.54: ‘Do you have very many reasons, many reasons, a few reasons, or no reason at all to complain about each of the following problems? Lack of access to recreational or green areas; Noise; Air pollution; Air quality.’ Figures represent the responses of those with no complaints.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Public services

Public services provided nationally have tended to improve in the NMS since EU enlargement (Table 8). In the 2003 EQLS, on a 10-point scale, the mean rating of education, health, public transport and state pensions was 5.3 in the NMS, almost a full point below that for the EU15 countries. In the second round of the EQLS, on a 10-point scale, the mean score rose to 5.6 in the NMS, while in the EU15 it declined to 6.0. This ‘scissors’ effect has reduced the public services gap between old and new Member

States to half a point on the scale. Closing this gap has led to more cohesion, since in all 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004 citizens now give public services a higher average rating than citizens in, for example, Greece and Portugal (Table A3).

Table 8: Respondents' views of public services, 2003 and 2007

Type of service	EU15		NMS10		Gap reduced
	2003	2007	2003	2007	
Education system	6.4	6.3	5.8	6.5	0.8
Health services	6.5	6.4	5.0	5.4	0.5
Public transport	6.2	6.4	5.6	6.2	0.4
State pension system	5.5	5.0	4.6	4.4	0.3

Notes: Results are based on the responses to Q.56: 'In general, how would you rate the quality of each of the following public services in [our country]? a. Health services; b. Education system; c. Public transport; f. State pension system.' The above data are the mean scores on a 10-point scale.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Social tensions

Consistent with the idea that a lower standard of living encourages economic tension, 47% of respondents in the NMS on the eve of accession to the EU in 2004 thought that there was considerable tension between management and workers, compared with 34% of respondents in the more prosperous EU15 countries. Four years later, after the NMS had experienced a high and continuing level of economic growth, the second EQLS found that new Member States had almost caught up with old Member States in this regard: a lot of tension was felt by 35% of respondents in the NMS, compared with 32% in the older Member States. There was also a reduction in the perceived tension between rich and poor people. Just before EU accession, 52% of the survey participants in central and eastern Europe reported considerable tension between rich and poor people, which amounted to 20 percentage points more than in EU15 countries. In the second EQLS, 40% of respondents in the NMS felt that there was a lot of tension between rich and poor people, while the respective figure in the EU15 declined to 28%.

Economic tensions create divisions within countries much more than between countries. No significant difference exists in terms of economic tensions between old and new Member States.¹³ Countries considered to be above average in terms of the rate of economic tension include France and Germany as well as the Czech Republic and Hungary, while those below average include Bulgaria and Latvia as well as Ireland and Sweden (Rose and Newton, 2009).

Economic conditions can indirectly affect tensions by attracting migrants from abroad. EU15 Member States with the highest GDP per head of population have the highest proportion of migrants from elsewhere in Europe and other continents. Because living standards are not as high in central and eastern Europe, the larger countries – such as Poland and Romania – have supplied a substantial number of migrants to EU15 countries. So too have countries from predominantly Muslim regions (see Rose and Newton, 2009).

When the 2003 EQLS asked about the existence of tension between racial and ethnic groups in the respondent's country, 44% of survey participants reported a lot of tension and there was a difference of 13 percentage points between the EU15 and NMS10. However, contrary to the usual pattern, the gap is in favour of the NMS. Only 34% of respondents in the NMS10 reported considerable tension in their country between racial and ethnic groups, while 47% of people in EU15 countries did so

¹³ The coefficient of variation between countries for the Economic Tensions Index stood at 0.17 in 2003 and remained at the same level in 2007.

(Table 9). In the 2007 EQLS, tension fell significantly in most countries and sometimes by double-digit figures. However, the overall pattern remained unchanged: ethnic and racial tensions were higher in the most prosperous parts of Europe. In particular, in the Netherlands, Italy and France, more than half of the survey respondents report a lot of tension. In the NMS, tensions are lower, reported by one fifth of respondents or fewer not only in Poland, which is now relatively homogeneous ethnically, but also in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as in Bulgaria, all of which have large established ethnic minorities. The low level of ethnic tension in these countries may reflect the fact that Russian minorities have been settled in the Baltic states for more than half a century while Turkish people have been living in Bulgaria for many centuries. By contrast, the ethnic and racial minorities in EU15 countries tend to be relatively recent arrivals (American Political Science Association Organized Section in Comparative Politics (APSA-CP), 2009). Because EQLS surveys represent a cross-section of each country's population, by definition, assessments of tensions constitute the views of the majority racial and ethnic group. Minorities are too few in number and geographically concentrated to be represented satisfactorily in a national sample.

Table 9: Prevalence of racial and ethnic tensions in EU Member States, 2003 and 2007 (%)

	2003	2007	Change
NL	61	58	-3
IT	40	54	14
FR	64	53	-11
CZ	55	53	-2
HU	55	50	-5
BE	60	44	-16
MT	50	43	-7
UK	51	42	-9
AT	38	42	4
EU15	47	42	-5
LU	24	37	13
SE	43	36	-7
DK	38	36	-2
EL	54	36	-18
ES	42	34	-8
IE	47	34	-13
FI	36	33	-3
DE	39	33	-6
SI	42	30	-12
RO	32	30	-2
NMS10	34	29	-5
BG and RO	27	25	-2
CY	17	23	6
PT	37	22	-15
SK	42	22	-20
EE	11	20	9
PL	23	19	-4
LT	11	16	5
LV	19	15	-4
BG	13	12	-1
EU27 (mean)	44	40	-4
(Standard deviation)	13	12	

Notes: Results are based on the proportion of responses to Q.25: 'In all countries there sometimes exists tension between social groups. In your opinion, how much tension is there between different racial and ethnic groups in this country?' Figures presented reflect the percentage of people in each country stating that there is 'a lot of tension' between racial and ethnic groups.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Conclusion

Comparing the quality of life in new and old EU Member States reveals that the pan-European stability reported in Chapter 3 sometimes reflects changes in opposite directions, with old and new EU Member States cancelling each other out. There are more positive signs of change in aspects of quality of life in countries that joined the EU just after the first round of EQLS interviews were conducted. In some cases, such as tension between management and workers, the NMS are catching up because they are changing for the better more than the EU15. In other instances, the gap is closing because the situation of people in the NMS has been changing for the better while there has been no significant change in older Member States – as is the case with the ability to make ends meet economically. Where the initial difference was large – for example, in terms of having an adequate income – a substantial gap remains between old and new EU Member States. However, the wider the gap, the greater is the need to make progress in order to increase social cohesion.

Differences with Bulgaria and Romania

When 10 accession countries were admitted to the EU in 2004, Bulgaria and Romania were kept under review because of perceived deficiencies in their capacity to meet political and administrative standards, a perception shared by many of their citizens (Mărginean et al, 2006; Rose, 2008a). Their national economies were also falling behind in achieving stable economic growth (EBRD, 2008). The estimated GDP per head of population in Bulgaria and Romania was only half that of the average for the 10 NMS that joined the EU in 2004 and both economies lagged even further behind the former EU15 Member States.

Delay in EU admission was intended to encourage Bulgaria and Romania to raise the quality of society and governance (Rehn, 2006, chapter 3). Their entry to the EU in 2007 was on a qualified basis with exceptional conditions requiring additional improvements in governance. The economies in both countries responded positively. By the end of 2007, Bulgarian GDP per head of population had expanded by 47% and that of Romania by 48% (see Figure 6). However, European Commission (2009a; 2009b) monitoring reports have found that the two countries have yet to meet all of the set conditions for improved governance.

The critical EU assessment of governance in Bulgaria and Romania implies that the accession process has not had the same positive effect on quality of life in these countries as in the 10 NMS that joined the EU in 2004. To test this hypothesis, this study systematically compares the performance of the two countries with that of the NMS10 on the same quality of life measures. Differences in their economies and governance can explain why their position in 2003 was less favourable than that of the countries about to enter the EU in 2004. Since the second EQLS was undertaken after Bulgaria and Romania became EU Member States, their conditions should have improved in the process of preparing for accession. In addition, the rate of progress of both countries should be sufficient to keep in line with progress in the NMS10. If this does not happen, the combined effect of the two-stage enlargement of the EU would only serve to reverse social cohesion, as not only would Bulgarian and Romanian quality of life be lower than in the EU15 and NMS10, but also the gaps between them would be widening.

The accession of Bulgaria and Romania presents challenges to social cohesion. At the time of EU entry, the quality of life in both countries was often at or beyond the range of variation in the already existing 25 EU Member States. This is evident not only in terms of GDP but also with indicators such as the

Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).¹⁴ In such circumstances, Bulgaria and Romania need to make consistent progress at a faster rate than the EU norm if social cohesion is to be strengthened rather than permanently ‘stretched’ by countries substantially below the European average. Increasing rather than stretching social cohesion requires, as a minimum, that Bulgaria and Romania not only make progress but also do so at a rate as high as or better than the NMS. However, since the NMS are improving their quality of life, the two Balkan countries in southeastern Europe must catch up with a moving target.

It is also important to examine change separately in the two countries to ensure that generalisations about them do not mask differences between them. These disparities have been historically great before and during the Communist era and since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Up to a point, both countries joining the EU in 2007 have tended to move together. This is true in fields where they are making progress and catching up with the other EU Member States; it is also true in areas in which they are falling behind the NMS10. Table 10 details the extent to which Bulgaria, Romania and the NMS10 have changed their quality of life across all indicators.

Social support network

In the NMS, the ability to rely on informal social capital networks to provide psychological and material help has improved since EU accession, and it has improved more in Bulgaria and Romania than in the NMS10. Across four different indicators, the proportion of Bulgarians who have people to whom they can turn for help with difficulties has increased by 13 percentage points; among Romanians, the increment between 2003 and 2007 amounts to 14 percentage points. Since progress in the NMS10 was less, Romania has thus been able to catch up with standards in these countries and the gap between Bulgaria and other NMS has halved.

Economic growth has not eroded the ability of people to rely on friends for a loan in an emergency. Instead, it has increased the number of friends who have the money to lend. In the 2003 EQLS, 78% of respondents in the NMS10 stated that they could rely on others to help them out materially, compared with 63% of survey participants in Bulgaria and 65% in Romania. After EU entry, there was an increase of 14 percentage points in Bulgaria and 13 percentage points in Romania in the proportion of those confident that they could call on an informal loan in the event of a household financial crisis. This informal social safety net is now almost as widespread in the two Balkan countries as in the NMS10.

Having reliable family and friends is not the same as trust in a wide spectrum of people. Even by the standards of post-Communist societies, trust in most people is low in Bulgaria. In the first EQLS round, on a 10-point scale, the mean Bulgarian score of 4.4 was four tenths of a point lower than in the NMS10. In the second EQLS, the gap widened to six tenths of a point as trust in people declined more in Bulgaria than elsewhere. By contrast, Romanians appear more trusting than the average in the NMS. According to the second EQLS, the mean level of trust among people in Romania was eight tenths of a point higher than the average for the NMS10.

Social tensions

Economic tensions place a strain on social cohesion throughout the NMS. In the first EQLS, a sense of tension between rich and poor people was practically the same in the 2004 and 2007 EU entrants and much higher than in the EU15. In the second EQLS, the perception of considerable tension between rich and poor people declined so much in Bulgaria that it is now lower than the average in

¹⁴ The CPI ranks 180 countries by their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys (http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi).

both the old as well as the new EU Member States. In Romania, it decreased to a lower level than in the NMS10. The pattern for tension between management and workers is similar. The decline in this regard in Romania has moved towards the level reported by the EU15 Member States. Tension between management and workers was initially lower in Bulgaria and has now fallen below the EU average. Thus, the latest EU entrants (Bulgaria and Romania) have not only made progress in this regard but also caught up with or even surpassed conditions in the NMS10.

Table 10: Quality of life in Bulgaria, Romania and NMS10, 2003 and 2007

	NMS10		Bulgaria		Romania	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
Can rely on others for help (%)	73	78	58	71	63	77
<i>Percentage point change in four areas</i>	+5		+13		+14	
Can borrow money from friends/family (%)	78	81	63	77	65	78
<i>Percentage point change</i>	+3		+14		+13	
Trust in most people (mean)	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.1	5.4	5.5
<i>Mean change</i>	-0.1		-0.3		+0.1	
A lot of tension between:						
Rich and poor (%)	52	40	53	27	52	37
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-12		-26		-15	
Managers and workers (%)	47	34	36	17	48	34
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-13		-19		-14	
Different racial and ethnic groups (%)	34	29	13	12	32	30
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-5		-1		-2	
Can make ends meet without difficulty (%)	34	46	10	17	23	31
<i>Percentage point change</i>	+12		+7		+8	
Number of deprivations (mean)	2.3	1.8	3.8	2.7	3.4	2.4
<i>Mean change</i>	-0.5		-1.1		-1.0	
Work-life balance						
Too tired for household jobs (%)	59	57	72	65	66	65
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-2		-7		-1	
Hard to meet family responsibilities (%)	40	41	39	45	37	47
<i>Percentage point change</i>	+1		+6		+10	
Hard to concentrate at work (%)	13	15	12	18	10	17
<i>Percentage point change</i>	+2		+6		+7	
Own home (%)	72	78	87	90	83	90
<i>Percentage point change</i>	+6		+3		+7	
Quality of housing						
Shortage of space (%)	24	24	24	28	30	22
<i>Percentage point change</i>	0		+4		-8	
Rot in woodwork (%)	25	15	21	17	30	14
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-10		-4		-16	
Dampness or leaks (%)	18	15	25	13	29	16
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-3		-12		-13	
Lack an indoor flushing toilet (%)	10	7	29	25	40	35
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-3		-4		-5	
No complaints about neighbourhood						
Noise (%)	57	48	63	35	44	61
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-9		-28		+17	
Air pollution (%)	52	42	52	32	42	57
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-10		-20		+15	
Green spaces (%)	67	54	60	38	58	66
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-13		-22		+8	
Water quality (%)	56	50	44	28	51	56
<i>Percentage point change</i>	-6		-16		+5	
Public Service Index (mean)	5.3	5.6	4.1	4.5	5.9	5.5
<i>Mean change</i>	+0.3		+0.4		-0.4	
Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index (mean)	6.5	6.8	5.7	5.6	7.1	7.1
<i>Mean change</i>	+0.3		-0.1		0	

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Substantial and longstanding minority populations can be found in both Bulgaria and Romania. The latest Bulgarian census classifies 9% of the population as being Turkish ethnic and 5% as Roma people; in Romania, 6% of people are recorded as Hungarian and more than 2% as Roma. Politically, the countries differ: a party representing a significant proportion of the Turkish minority has been integrated into Bulgarian politics, whereas Romania has political parties mobilising a significant vote for traditional nationalist views. This difference is reflected in the level of racial and ethnic tension in the two countries. In Bulgaria, only one in eight respondents consistently perceives a significant amount of racial and ethnic tension while, in Romania, three out of every 10 people surveyed consistently perceive such tensions.

Income

The challenge of making progress and bridging gaps is evident not only in macroeconomic statistics but also in the degree of deprivation among Bulgarians and Romanians. The number of items that people reported as doing without decreased by one item in both countries, a degree of improvement twice that of the NMS10. However, because Bulgaria and Romania were so far behind initially in this regard, the gap has not yet been closed. In the second EQLS, people in the NMS10 were deprived of an average of 1.8 normal goods and services; in Romania, this total stood at 2.4 and, in Bulgaria, it amounted to 2.7 items. Similarly, between the two EQLS rounds, the proportion of Bulgarians and Romanians able to make ends meet without difficulty increased by seven and eight percentage points respectively. However, in the NMS10, this proportion increased by an additional 12 percentage points. Thus, even after good progress, the two Balkan states found that the income gap is widening in relation to neighbouring countries. Whereas almost half of people in the NMS10 can make ends meet without difficulty, less than one third of Romanians and one fifth of Bulgarians can do so (Table 10).

Work–life balance

Economic progress has added to pressures on work–life balance. In Romania, the proportion of respondents stating that they have trouble balancing family and work responsibilities has increased by eight percentage points; in Bulgaria, the increment in this regard is six percentage points. Meanwhile, little change is reported in the NMS10. There has been a reduction among those sometimes feeling too tired from work to look after household matters. However, the proportion of people subject to such stress remains significantly higher in Bulgaria and Romania than in the NMS10, where a majority of workers are also subject to tiredness after work.

Housing

In the area of housing, there are signs of Bulgarians and Romanians making progress and also catching up with the NMS10. In the first EQLS, home ownership was higher in these two countries than in the NMS10 or EU15 countries (Table A4). The second EQLS found an improvement in this regard so that 90% of the respondents in each country are now homeowners. While the increase was a little higher in the NMS10, those Member States still lag behind the two Balkan countries.

The physical condition of housing is improving in the Balkan countries. The incidence of defects such as rot, damp and no indoor toilet declined by an average of 10 percentage points in Romania and four percentage points in Bulgaria. However, because housing standards in the NMS10 initially tended to be higher and likewise improved, significant differences remain. In the NMS10, an average of 19% of houses had a defect, compared with 25% in Bulgaria and 32% in Romania. In Bulgaria, half of the rural houses lacked an indoor toilet in the 2007 EQLS, compared with 5% of urban residences; in Romania, the pattern was similar. In the NMS10, only 11% of rural residences lacked an indoor toilet, compared with just 1% in EU15 countries.

Local environment

Changes in the neighbourhood quality of life have been different in Romania compared with Bulgaria and other NMS. There has been an average improvement of 11 percentage points with regard to the proportion of Romanians having no complaints about the level of noise and air pollution, availability of green spaces and quality of tap water in their neighbourhood. By contrast, a six percentage point decrease is found in the average proportion of people reporting complete satisfaction with each neighbourhood service in the NMS10, while in Bulgaria the decline has averaged 16 percentage points. Thus, in the second EQLS, an average of 60% of Romanians reported no complaints about a neighbourhood condition, which was substantially higher than the 48% average in the NMS10 and 34% in Bulgaria.

Public services

During negotiations about accession, EU officials repeatedly expressed concerns about the quality of governance and public services in Bulgaria and Romania. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, these concerns appear to be well founded (Table 10). In the 2003 EQLS, Bulgarians consistently gave public services low ratings. On a 10-point scale, this index averaged more than a point below that of the NMS10 and more than two points below the EU15. In the second EQLS, Bulgaria's public services index improved by four tenths of a point. However, it continued to lag behind the NMS10 by more than a point, because the rating of the latter countries also rose.

The trajectory of public services in Romania has been unsatisfactory in a different way. In the first EQLS, Romanians appeared relatively satisfied with their public services. The overall index was 5.9, more than a half point higher than in the NMS10. However, after accession to the EU, a different pattern was found. The rating of individual services had decreased, reducing the overall index score to 5.5. Concurrently, the index was rising among the NMS10. Thus, public services in the NMS10 are now rated more positively than in Romania.

Satisfaction with everyday life

According to the broadest measure of the effect of EU enlargement on quality of life – the eight-item Index of Satisfaction with Everyday Life (see Table 1) – there has been relative stability in the Balkans. In the 2003 EQLS, Romanians showed a high level of life satisfaction, registering a mean score of 7.1 on the 10-point scale. Satisfaction averaged 6.5 in the NMS10 and 5.7 in Bulgaria. In the second round of the survey, satisfaction with everyday life increased by three tenths of a point in the NMS10 while falling by a tenth of a point in Bulgaria and remaining steady in Romania. As a consequence, satisfaction with everyday life is now similarly high in the NMS10 and Romania, while it is more than a point lower in Bulgaria (Table 10).

Conclusion

Conclusions about the impact of EU accession on Bulgaria and Romania must be tentative, as the second EQLS was carried out shortly afterwards, and the delay in their accession reflected EU concerns about the difficulties that these countries were experiencing in making economic and social progress. Nonetheless, the areas where they have made progress outnumber those where conditions have been deteriorating. Given different starting points, disparities between both countries and the NMS10 still remain substantial. Moreover, noteworthy differences arise between Bulgaria and Romania, often to the advantage of the latter country. In summary, EU accession can be associated with positive developments; however, whether and to what extent this occurs depends not only on decisions taken by the European Commission but also on actions taken by national governments both before and after achieving EU membership.

Effects of differences in income, age and gender

5

Both EQLS rounds show that differences in income, age and gender can influence individual quality of life, although they do not do so with equal effect (Alber et al, 2008, Part III; Anderson et al, 2009). Since even the most cohesive EU Member States register a degree of inequality on the Gini index¹⁵, it is unrealistic to expect differences associated with income to disappear entirely. The greater the difference between various groups in society, the more important it is to examine the dynamics of change. It is useful to consider to what extent social groups with a lower quality of life are making progress. Moreover, the extent to which they are doing so at a faster rate than those who are better off should also be explored. Whatever the extent of differences due to income, age or gender, as long as the disparity is diminishing, social cohesion is increasing.

Lower income people making progress and catching up

Income

The proportion of respondents who report finding it easy or very easy to make ends meet has not changed significantly between the two rounds of the EQLS; this proportion was 38% in the first round and 37% in the second round of the survey. The size of the median group, comprising those who find it relatively easy to make ends meet, was the same, at 29%, in each survey. Of those reporting problems with their income, only one in 20 people stated that it was very difficult to make ends meet (see Table 2). A low income is a double disadvantage: it not only makes it difficult for households to buy what they need but also has an effect on many aspects of quality of life. However, income is not the only determinant of quality of life. While living in a planned economy, people in the now NMS developed many ways of maintaining or improving their quality of life and have maintained these skills since EU membership (Rose, 2009, Part II).

The EQLS measures of deprivation, such as being unable to afford eating meat regularly, heating or new clothes, usually reveal that a substantial majority of people can afford each everyday benefit, while a minority of people have to do without such normal features of life. In the first EQLS round, those who found their income to be inadequate on average did without 2.3 of the six normal goods and services referred to in the survey, while those whose income was adequate almost never had to do without normal items. Between the two phases of the EQLS, there was a notable improvement in the ability of those with income difficulties to afford such items as heating or a week's holiday. On average, they could afford four normal goods and services, while sometimes going without two of the six items referred to in the survey. Although this reduced the difference in the level of deprivation, it still remained large at 1.7 points on the six-point deprivation scale (Table 11).

Social support network

For three measures of informal help from others in the case of illness, needing advice or sympathy when feeling depressed, 95% of people in higher and lower income groups felt that there was someone to whom they could turn for help. In fact, the result was the same in both EQLS rounds. Moreover, a very large majority of people, including three quarters of those with income difficulties, can rely on friends, neighbours and others outside their household for a loan in an emergency situation. This is only 10 percentage points less than the proportion of better off people who are able to rely on their informal social capital for material assistance (Table 11).

¹⁵ The Gini coefficient is a measure of the income inequality in a society. It can range from 0 to 1 or it can be multiplied by 100 to range between 0 and 100. A low Gini coefficient indicates a more equal distribution, with 0 corresponding to perfect equality, while higher Gini coefficients indicate more unequal distribution, with 1 corresponding to perfect inequality.

Although people who are short of money may have friends to rely on in an emergency, their radius of trust in people is much smaller than those whose income is adequate. When the 2003 EQLS asked whether most people can be trusted or whether a person should be careful in terms of whom to trust, respondents with economic difficulties were inclined to be sceptical of people in general; on a 10-point scale, the mean score in this regard was 5.1, almost a full point less trusting than persons with more income. In the second round of the survey, those with an adequate income had become less trusting of other people. However, trust in most people had also fallen among those with income difficulties. The difference between the two income groups in their degree of trust remained significant at eight tenths of a point.

Table 11: Changes in quality of life, by income groups, 2003 and 2007

	Adequate income			Inadequate income		
	2003	2007	Change	2003	2007	Change
Number of deprivations (mean)	0.3	0.3	0	2.3	2.0	-0.3
Can rely on others for help (%)	84	84	0	70	73	+3
Can borrow money from friends, family (%)	88	88	0	75	78	+3
Trust in most people (mean)	6.0	5.5	-0.5	5.1	4.7	-0.4
Work–life balance						
Too tired for household jobs (%)	49	44	-5	61	58	-3
Hard to meet family responsibilities (%)	26	26	0	37	38	+1
Hard to concentrate at work (%)	8	10	+2	15	16	+1
Homeowner (%)	71	74	+3	59	65	+6
Quality of housing						
Shortage of space (%)	14	14	0	29	25	-4
Rot in woodwork (%)	5	5	0	21	16	-5
Dampness or leaks (%)	8	8	0	23	18	-5
Lack an indoor flushing toilet (%)	2	2	0	10	8	-2
No complaints about neighbourhood						
Noise (%)	58	60	+2	50	49	-1
Air pollution (%)	60	60	0	51	48	-3
Green spaces (%)	70	70	0	59	57	-2
Water quality (%)	70	70	0	56	56	0
A lot of tension between:						
Rich and poor people (%)	28	25	-3	49	39	-10
Managers and workers (%)	31	28	-3	46	40	-6
Different racial and ethnic groups (%)	45	38	-7	43	42	-1
Public Service Index (mean)	6.3	6.2	-0.1	5.5	5.5	0
Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index (mean)	7.8	7.7	-0.1	6.4	6.5	+0.1

Note: Income adequate: can make ends meet each month very easily, easily or fairly easily. Income inadequate: somewhat difficult, difficult or very difficult to make ends meet.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Work–life balance

Both rounds of the EQLS reveal that those with lower incomes not only receive less money but also have more difficulties in maintaining a balance between work and family life. In the first EQLS, 49% of

people without income difficulties reported that they came home from work very tired at least several times a month, compared with 61% of those with inadequate incomes. The second survey found that conditions had improved for both groups, but the strain of working for less pay had not been reduced. Similarly, the difference remained unchanged for those who found that their family life was unaffected by work demands; the proportion in this case was 74% among those who are better off economically compared with 62% among those with income difficulties. A six percentage point difference also remained between the small minorities who reported that their family life interfered with their work.

Housing

Accommodation claims the largest proportion of most household incomes and a majority of Europeans are homeowners. Predictably, home ownership is higher among those with an adequate income. The 2003 EQLS found that 59% of those with income difficulties were homeowners, compared with 71% of those with a better income. In the second EQLS, home ownership increased by three percentage points among those with an adequate income and by six percentage points among those reporting income difficulties.

The standard of housing of those with income difficulties is not as high as those who have an adequate income. However, the differences are of degree, not kind. In the first EQLS, an average of one in five respondents among lower income groups reported defects with their accommodation such as rot, damp or lack of space, compared with 7% of those with an adequate income. Four years later, the housing of lower income groups was improving, especially with regard to such problems as dampness and rot. Since there was no change in the housing conditions of those who are better off financially, the net result was a reduction by almost one third in the difference in housing conditions between the two groups (Table 11).

Local environment

Respondents to the EQLS reported less satisfaction with neighbourhood conditions for which municipal agencies are responsible. In the first EQLS, an average of 36% of those without income difficulties voiced at least a few complaints about noise, air pollution, lack of green spaces or poor tap water in their neighbourhood, and 46% of respondents with income difficulties did so. In the second round of the survey, slight changes were found in the number of complaints about neighbourhood services in both income groups, but the effect was not significant. Thus, a 12 percentage point gap remained in the quality of neighbourhood services of those who have better and lower incomes.

Social tensions

Economic tensions are immediately relevant to all income groups; however, an asymmetry arises in how Europeans perceive such tensions. In the first EQLS, only 28% of those easily able to meet their needs revealed that there was considerable tension between rich and poor people, compared with 49% of persons with economic difficulties. The second survey found a significant reduction of tension in both groups, but the gap in the perception of tension remained large at 14 percentage points. Likewise, in the first EQLS, 46% of people having trouble making ends meet perceived a considerable amount of tension between management and workers, compared with 31% of those without economic difficulties. In the second EQLS, the proportion of respondents reporting a high level of worker-management tension declined more among those who are worse off economically. However, the difference in perception remained: 40% of people experiencing economic difficulties reported considerable tension between workers and management, compared with 28% of those without economic difficulties (Table 11).

Europeans tend to perceive more tension between racial and ethnic groups than with regard to economic tensions (see Table 4). A variety of theories suggest that ethnic and racial tensions are more likely to be found among those who are worse off economically because of competition for low-wage jobs and that the education associated with higher incomes is more likely to make people tolerant (for further details, see Lipset, 1960). However, in the first EQLS, 45% of respondents with adequate incomes perceived considerable tension on ethnic and racial grounds, two percentage points more than among those with income difficulties. In the second EQLS, those in a better financial position were slightly less likely than in 2003 to report a high amount of tension. This finding is not surprising when one takes into account that tension on ethnic and racial grounds is substantially higher in the EU15, where more people also have adequate incomes (see Tables 9 and A2).

Public services

When citizens were asked to evaluate four public services – education, health, pensions and public transport – those without economic difficulties gave an average rating on a 10-point scale of 6.3 in the first EQLS round, while among people with economic difficulties the rating was 5.5. No significant change emerged for either group in the second EQLS. Thus, citizens with equal entitlements to public services are not equally satisfied with the services that they receive.

Satisfaction with everyday life

An adequate income makes for greater satisfaction with everyday life. In the first EQLS, the mean score for people with an adequate income on the eight-item everyday life index was 7.8, compared with 6.4 for people with an inadequate income. Differences are consistently greater than one full point for each measure in the Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index. Differences of more than two points can be seen for popular satisfaction with the standard of living and with housing, and 1.5 points for quality of life as a whole. Between the first and second EQLS, there have been only limited reductions in these differences. Among those who can live without difficulty on their income, the Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index has been virtually stable, while rising slightly among those having difficulty in making ends meet. There thus remains a gap between the two income groups of 1.2 points in relation to satisfaction with everyday life (Table 11).

The quality of life of the majority of Europeans with an adequate income is consistently positive. This is true not only with regard to directly income-related measures such as housing, but also for satisfaction with all areas of everyday life and informal networks that can be relied on when feeling ill or depressed. The minority of Europeans with income difficulties are divided between those who evaluate their quality of life positively and those who are dissatisfied, often with good reason – for example, living in damp and cramped housing. Where changes in the quality of life have occurred between the two rounds of the EQLS, they are usually positive. A change in the quality of life of two or four percentage points may appear small in absolute terms but, if maintained over a decade, it can cumulatively raise living standards by up to 10 percentage points. Since those with the greatest income difficulties are a clear minority of Europeans, such a change would have an even bigger impact on reducing inequalities between income groups and promoting social cohesion.

Age differences few and usually stable

The life cycle divides every country's population into: young people who are studying or not yet settled; middle-aged people settled in their occupation and family circumstances; and an increasingly large number of older people who are retired. Insofar as stages of the life cycle create differences between social groups, these are not fixed inequalities between individuals, since in the course of life almost

every individual will go through all stages in the life cycle and thereby benefit from age-specific effects. Moreover, some differences will disappear from one generation to the next. For example, the striking contrast between 83% of people under 35 years of age and 14% of those aged 65 years or above being internet users will gradually disappear as generations who grew up with access to the internet at school will replace cohorts who felt too old to learn new activities when the internet was introduced (Kohli, 2007).

EU policy is against discrimination on the grounds of age, race or gender, and social cohesion is lessened if age groups differ in terms of their quality of housing or access to public services. However, some differences in the life cycle inhibit a comparison between diverse groups. For example, asking retired people about their working conditions is not immediately meaningful. Life-cycle differences also support hypotheses about why age should make a difference to quality of life. For example, younger people may be considered to be more satisfied with their quality of life since they have better health than older people, and health is a major determinant of overall life satisfaction. However, older people may be more satisfied with their quality of life as a result of major structural changes in society, such as the absence of war in Europe and decades of economic prosperity. Older people may also be more satisfied because they may have had most of a lifetime to adapt their assessments to accept what they can attain. Making comparisons between the youngest and the oldest groups in society increases the likelihood of finding significant differences, since people in the middle age brackets are likely to fall between these two groups with regard to many of their attitudes.

Income

A systematic review of the two phases of the EQLS finds that differences between age groups are much fewer than between income groups (see Tables 11 and 12). Although younger and older people differ radically in their involvement in the labour market, there is no significant difference in the proportion having an adequate income. In the first EQLS, 62% of young and 64% of older Europeans reported that they could live within their monthly income without difficulty. Four years later, no significant change was evident in this regard. The first EQLS found a slight difference of 0.2 on the six-point measure of doing without everyday goods and services, and no significant change occurred in the second survey. However, as both groups could enjoy five out of six normal goods and services, this arithmetic difference cannot be interpreted as a sign of material deprivation among either young or old people (Table 12).

Social tensions

Given the extent and pace of change in Europe between the Second World War, which the oldest generation of Europeans experienced, and when younger Europeans began to come of age in the 1990s, there are grounds to expect tensions between young and old people. However, formative youthful life experiences for a person aged 65 years old were less likely to be depression and war but the pop music revolution, the student revolt of 1968 and the spread of the permissive society, attitudes also often associated with young people today.¹⁶ The proportion of the population believing that there is a lot of tension between young and old people is less than one in five among both age groups. Moreover, no change has been recorded between the two rounds of the EQLS. In the first survey, 16% of young people perceived considerable tension, three percentage points less than among older Europeans. In the 2007 EQLS, 18% of people in each age group reported a significant amount of tension.

¹⁶ For people caught behind the Berlin Wall, youthful experiences were very different but, for very different reasons, unlikely to encourage nostalgia for a return to the 'good old days' of Budapest in 1956 or Poland under martial law (Munro, 2006).

Housing and local environment

Where differences do exist, they tend to be in favour of older people. For example, young people are less likely than older persons to have the money to buy a home or a desire to settle down in a home that they own rather than rent. The first EQLS recorded a 15 percentage point difference between young and old people with regard to the level of home ownership; this widened to a 20 percentage point gap in the second EQLS. People later in the life cycle have had time to achieve a better quality of housing. In the first survey, an average of 14% of young people lived in quarters that had material defects, such as damp, rot or a shortage of space, while among older persons 10% reported these problems. In the second round of the survey, slight improvements were reported by respondents in both groups, but the differences between them remained stable. Furthermore, older people tended to have no complaints about their neighbourhood by a margin of six percentage points on average (Table 12).

Table 12: Changes in quality of life, by age group, 2003 and 2007

	Young people			Older people		
	2003	2007	Change	2003	2007	Change
Can make ends meet without difficulty (%)	62	62	0	64	63	-1
Number of deprivations (mean)	1.0	0.9	-0.1	1.2	1.2	0
A lot of tension between:						
Young and old people (%)	16	18	+2	19	18	-1
Rich and poor people (%)	36	32	-4	33	28	-5
Managers and workers (%)	36	32	-4	32	29	-3
Different racial and ethnic groups (%)	46	40	-6	39	34	-5
Homeowner (%)	56	57	+1	71	77	+6
Quality of housing						
Shortage of space (%)	25	25	0	9	8	-1
Rot in woodwork (%)	12	10	-2	11	9	-2
Dampness or leaks (%)	15	14	-1	13	10	-3
Lack an indoor flushing toilet (%)	4	4	0	6	6	0
No complaints about neighbourhood						
Noise (%)	52	53	+1	57	62	+5
Air pollution (%)	54	51	-3	60	62	+2
Green spaces (%)	61	58	-3	72	73	+1
Water quality (%)	61	61	0	69	71	+2
Work–life balance						
Too tired for household jobs (%)	53	50	-3	34	28	-6
Hard to meet family responsibilities (%)	28	31	+3	17	23	+6
Hard to concentrate at work (%)	10	13	+3	4	8	+4
Can rely on others for help (%)	87	86	-1	68	71	+3
Can borrow money from friends or family (%)	90	89	-1	73	76	+3
Trust in most people (mean)	5.6	5.2	-0.4	5.8	5.3	-0.5
Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index (mean)	7.4	7.4	0	7.1	7.1	0
Public Service Index (mean)	5.9	5.9	0	6.3	6.1	-0.2

Notes: Young people: aged 18–34 years. Older people: aged 65 years or more.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Social support network

The life cycle confers a continuing advantage for younger people in having others on whom they can rely for help. Young people can have an active social life that creates and maintains supportive friendships, whereas health limitations make it harder for people to maintain social contacts as they move into their seventies and face the prospect of having old friends, relatives and household partners die. Thus, the EQLS finds that an average of seven eighths of those aged 18 to 34 years have friends on whom they can rely for personal support, compared with just over two thirds of older people. For example, while 89% of younger Europeans were confident that they could raise a loan informally in an emergency, 76% of older Europeans felt confident that they could do so. Meanwhile, no substantial difference was found in the tendency of young and old persons to trust or distrust most people in their society.

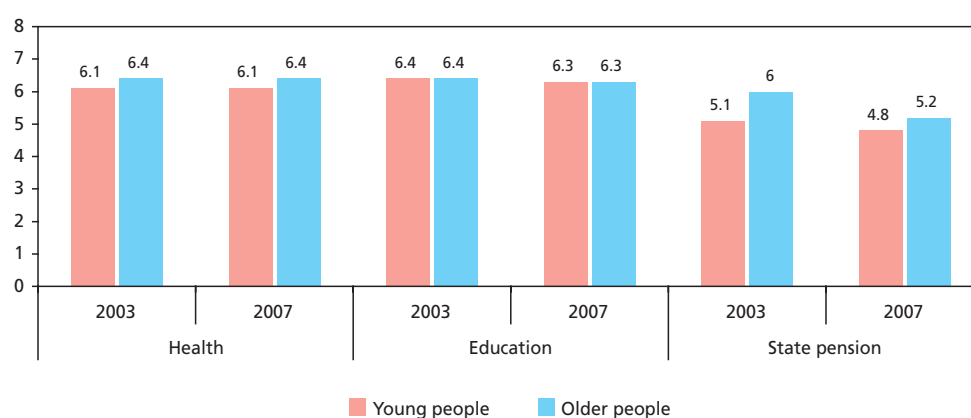
Satisfaction with everyday life

Younger people have a small but persisting tendency to do better on the Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index by a margin of 0.3 points on the 10-point index. Moreover, the advantage was the same in both rounds of the EQLS.

Public services

Public services tend to be evaluated positively by young and old people, with a tendency for older people to be a little more positive. In the first EQLS, younger people gave a range of public services a mean rating of 5.9; among older persons, the rating was 6.3. In the second round of the survey, while the evaluation of public services by younger people remained the same, the gap was halved by a reduction in the positive assessment given by older people (Table 12). Evaluations of education and health, which are particularly relevant to specific age groups, in fact are similar among young and old people (Figure 8). In the first EQLS, the average rating of the education system was the same among young and old persons, and the slight decline in the second round was also the same. In the first survey, older people were inclined to give the pension system a rating almost a full point higher than younger persons. The difference between age groups was halved in the second survey, as both age groups lowered their assessments.

Figure 8: Satisfaction of respondents with public services, by age group, 2003 and 2007



Note: Data presented are the mean scores on a 10-point scale.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Gender differences stable

Some social differences between men and women are categorical, such as childbearing; other differences can be significant in scale, such as participation in the labour force; and in some cases, differences are to the advantage of women, for example, in terms of longer life expectancy. Insofar as gender differences in the quality of life have deep-rooted causes, little change would be expected between the first and second EQLS.

Social tensions

Across the great majority of quality of life measures, no significant differences emerge between men and women in either the first or second EQLS rounds. This is most strikingly evident in reply to questions about tensions between men and women, racial and ethnic groups, as well as economic tensions.

Table 13: Changes in quality of life, by gender, 2003 and 2007

	Men			Women		
	2003	2007	Change	2003	2007	Change
A lot of tension between:						
Men and women (%)	10	10	0	13	13	0
Rich and poor people (%)	34	28	-6	37	32	-5
Managers and workers (%)	36	31	-5	37	33	-4
Different racial and ethnic groups (%)	44	39	-5	44	41	-3
Homeowner (%)	67	71	+4	66	70	+4
Quality of housing						
Shortage of space (%)	20	18	-2	19	18	-1
Rot in woodwork (%)	11	8	-3	12	10	-2
Dampness or leaks (%)	13	11	-2	14	13	-1
Lack an indoor flushing toilet (%)	5	4	-1	5	4	-1
No complaints about neighbourhood						
Noise (%)	55	56	+1	55	56	+1
Air pollution (%)	58	56	-2	55	55	0
Green spaces (%)	66	66	0	66	65	-1
Water quality (%)	65	66	+1	64	64	0
Work-life balance						
Too tired for household jobs (%)	53	48	-5	54	49	-5
Hard to meet family responsibilities (%)	30	30	0	29	28	-1
Hard to concentrate at work (%)	9	11	+2	12	13	+1
Can rely on others for help (%)	78	79	+1	78	81	+3
Can borrow money from friends or family (%)	84	84	0	82	84	+2
Trust in most people (mean)	5.6	5.2	-0.4	5.6	5.2	-0.4
Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index (mean)	7.3	7.3	0	7.2	7.2	0
Public Service Index (mean)	5.9	5.9	0	6.0	5.9	0.1
Can make ends meet without difficulty (%)	64	64	0	58	60	+2
Number of deprivations (mean)	1.0	0.9	-0.1	1.2	1.1	-0.1

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Europeans were least likely to perceive tensions between men and women. In the first EQLS, 10% of men and 13% of women reported that they thought there was a lot of gender tension in their society. Four years later, these proportions were the same, resulting in a stable difference of three percentage points in the minority of women and of men who reported considerable gender tension in their society (Table 13).

Other aspects of quality of life

In terms of housing and local neighbourhood quality, the virtually identical answers given by men and women reflect the fact that most accommodation has both a male and female resident. The absence of differences extends into areas where men and women are not similarly engaged – for example, in relation to work-life balance (Kotowska et al, 2009). In the first EQLS, just over half of men and women reported that their work sometimes made them too tired to do household tasks. After a five percentage point decline in this regard in both groups, just under half of the men and women surveyed in 2007 reported sometimes feeling too tired from work to do household tasks. Significant gender differences were also absent with regard to the relationship between work and family responsibilities. Likewise, men and women are equally able to rely on help from others. Men and women also tend to have the same high level of satisfaction with everyday life and similar views on major public services.

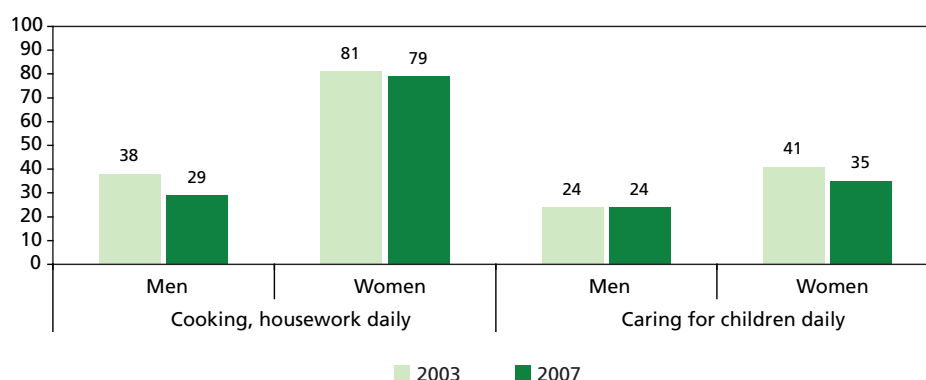
Income

There is some evidence of a gender effect in material circumstances. In the first EQLS, 64% of men stated that their income was adequate, compared with 58% of women. The proportion of men with an adequate income was unchanged in the second round of the survey, while 60% of women reported having no difficulty in living on their monthly income. On the six-point index of deprivation, the score for men was two tenths of a point better than that for women. The minority of women subject to deprivation declined slightly in the second EQLS round, as did that of men.

Housework

Housework remains the area where gender differences are both large and appear to be increasing (Figure 9). In the first EQLS, a gap of 43 percentage points was found between men and women with regard to being active in housework on a daily basis. Four years later, this gap had increased to 50

Figure 9: Gender differences in housework, 2003 and 2007 (%)



Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

percentage points. There is a less unequal division of activity among parents. In the first survey, 41% of women and 24% of men stated that they cared for children daily, reflecting a gap of 17 percentage points. In the second round of the survey, the proportion of women caring for children declined while the proportion of men did not; this reduced the gender gap to 11 percentage points.

Susceptibility to economic shock

6

The enlargement of the EU was intended to be a benign shock stimulating rapid economic growth in the NMS and it succeeded in doing so (see Chapter 4). However, months after the completion of the autumn 2007 EQLS study, all EU27 Member States were subjected to a bad shock, the worldwide financial crisis. The full effects of the crisis have yet to unfold, but the magnitude of the shock to national economies is already clear, with countries facing a recession on a scale unmatched in more than a generation.

In the EU as a whole, GDP per head of population began contracting on a quarterly basis in 2008 and contraction has continued since. In its July 2009 World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund (2009) forecast that the contraction in the economy would be largest in absolute value in the EU15 and would be severe in the NMS. While such statements are approximate and national differences are evident within Europe, very prosperous as well as less prosperous EU countries are under pressure. The challenge of maintaining economic stability or replacing recession with economic growth is not confined to the NMS; it is now a general goal throughout the EU. It affects all levels of government from the EU itself to municipalities in Europe's most depressed regions. It also affects social partners in commerce and industry, and unionised as well as non-unionised workers.

The current economic and financial crisis raises significant questions about maintaining the quality of life. However, global economic problems do not have the same effect on every household: some are more at risk of suffering pain than others, for example people having difficulty making ends meet before the economic crisis. The EQLS findings can thus illuminate two critical questions relevant to maintaining social cohesion in conditions of macro-economic stress. Whose quality of life is most vulnerable? To what extent is the quality of life relatively insulated from macroeconomic shocks?

Employment issues

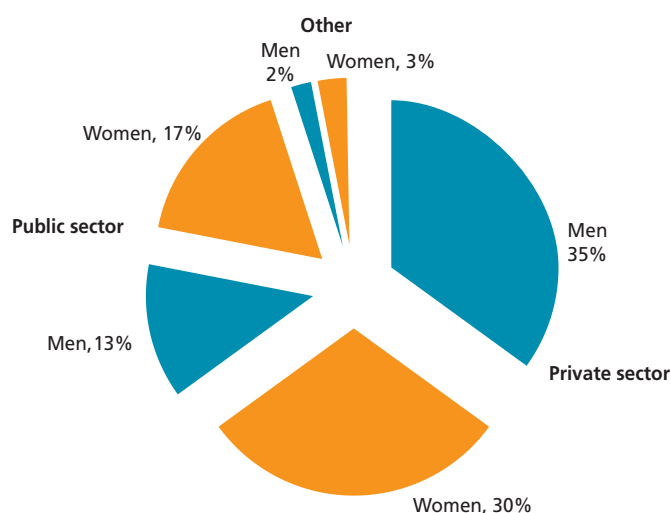
An obvious example of the importance of individual differences is that people in employment are more at risk of losing their income by becoming unemployed than are persons living on a state pension. National differences also matter: the loss of income is more severe in countries where the value of unemployment benefits is lower.

Vulnerability to unemployment

Within the labour force (that is, the part of the adult population in work or actively seeking a job), an unemployment level of 10%–20% would be considered very high and would usually only occur during a difficult economic period. Such a high level nevertheless implies that up to 90% of the labour force are still in work, even if working part time or temporarily on leave of absence without pay. Among those in the labour force, vulnerability to unemployment is not evenly distributed. Workers in the public sector do not rely on their employers to prosper by selling services or exporting goods. Civil service jobs tend to carry the legal or implicit expectation of being permanent. So-called cuts in public employment can take the form of freezes on hiring new employees when existing employees retire or leave for other reasons. Such recruitment freezes separate insiders from outsiders – for example, trained teachers already in employment from newly trained teachers seeking a job.

Private sector employees are much more vulnerable to losing their job because their employer is under financial pressure to reduce costs due to falling demand and unprofitability. Within the European labour force, the private sector accounted for almost two thirds of all jobs at the time of the 2007 EQLS, while the broadly defined public sector represented up to three in 10 jobs (Figure 10). Although the public sector employs a lesser proportion of the labour force, it nonetheless accounts for tens of millions of jobs in Europe.

Figure 10: Public and private employment, by gender (%)



Note: Results are based on the responses to Q.5: ‘Do/did you work in the...? Private sector; Public sector; Joint private-public organisation or company; Not-for-profit sector, non-governmental organisation (NGO); Other.’

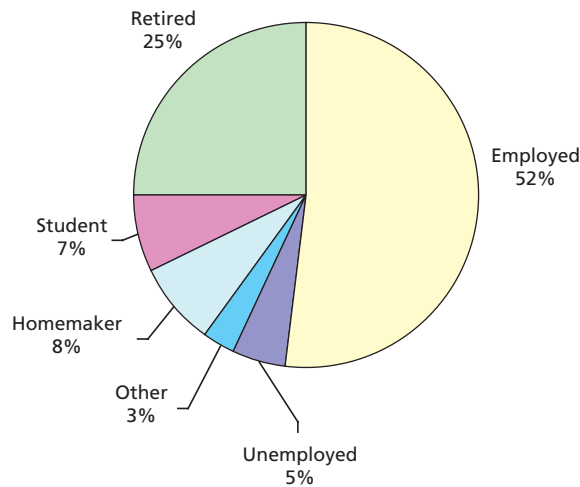
Source: EQLS, 2007

Men are more at risk of unemployment than women, because 70% of men are employed in the private sector, where jobs are more vulnerable in the current situation – for example, manufacturing industries. Women appear to be in more secure jobs: they constitute 57% of all public sector employees. In the health sector, which is disproportionately female-dominated, there are strong demographic pressures to increase employment.

Income security

The people with the most secure incomes in a recession are outside the labour force and drawing a pension. By definition, retired pensioners cannot be made unemployed. The income of pensioners is backed by the taxing power of the state; moreover, most people receiving a pension usually have additional assets (Rose, 2008b). Insofar as the monetary value of a pension is fixed, a characteristic that is a hindrance in times of inflation, this is a benefit when there is price stability or deflation in a recession.

Of Europe’s adult population, little more than half of the people are in the labour force (Figure 11). A quarter of all adults are retired and, notwithstanding the rise in female labour force participation, one in 12 people describe themselves as full-time homemakers. Students may have casual or summer jobs, but their work is often outside conventional employment measures. The 5% rate of unemployed and disabled people may normally qualify for income-maintenance grants that provide a degree of cash support, even if at little more than subsistence level. However, because this income is financed by the state, it is not as vulnerable as a better-paying wage.

Figure 11: Economic status of adults (%)

Note: Results are based on the responses to Q.HH2d (referring to principal economic status): 'Which of these best describes your situation?'

Source: EQLS, 2007

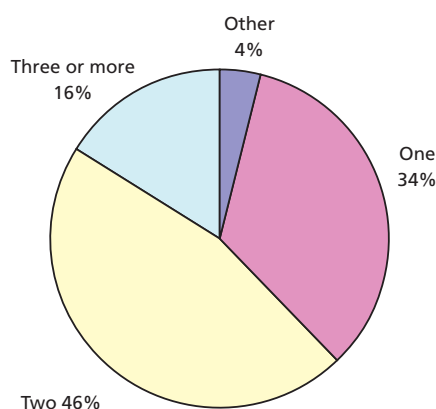
Household context

The vulnerability of a household to unemployment depends on the number of its members with a regular income. The risk is greatest if a person is employed and living alone; in such circumstances, the loss of a job is a major disruption of earnings. However, less than one in six Europeans lives alone, and in more than half of these households a secure pension is the primary source of income. Only 5% of people live alone and are employed. Although a pension amounts to less than a person's former wage or salary, it provides a solid basic level of household income. An unemployed person can often claim a cash benefit as compensation for loss of income. Tax rebates gain in significance with a rise in unemployment among middle-class persons, who are more likely to be subject to higher marginal rates of taxation.

The largest group of European adults, 46%, lives in a two-income household and an additional 16% live in households in which there are at least three regular incomes (Figure 12). For more than three in five Europeans, the loss of one job diminishes household income but does not disrupt it entirely. The households vulnerable to the harshest impact of unemployment are the proportion with a single wage-earner, two adults and often children as well – amounting to about a sixth of the total.

The extent to which the loss of a job affects a multiple-income household depends on expenditure patterns as well as income. There is now a widespread diffusion of household consumer durables throughout Europe: 98% have a television set, 73% a DVD player, 72% a car and 66% a home computer. People feeling economically vulnerable can postpone upgrading these durables. Although this immediately creates problems for manufacturers and retailers of flat-screen televisions or faster computers, postponing purchases reduces problems for those who thereby avoid incurring debts on their credit card. In the NMS, where household durables are not as fully diffused, individuals became experienced in deferring the purchase of consumer durables while living in non-market 'shortage' economies (Kornai, 1992; Rose, 2009, chapters 6–9).

Figure 12: Number of incomes in household (%)



Notes: Results are based on the responses to Q.HH2d on economic status and Q.HH3d on relationship to the respondent: 'Which of these best describes your situation?' The category 'Other' in the figure covers disability or unemployment benefits, or miscellaneous forms of income.

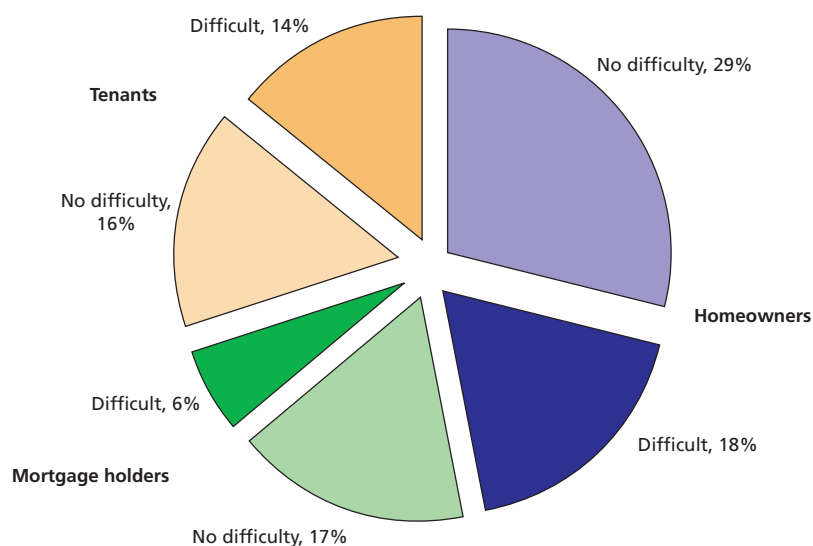
Source: EQLS, 2007

Vulnerability to losing a house

Housing is the biggest single cost in the budget of a typical household. The current worldwide economic and financial crisis was triggered by a collapse of the housing market because financial institutions gave mortgages to purchasers whose limited income meant that, even in the best of times, they could only meet monthly repayments with difficulty. The collapse increased the likelihood of default by people with mortgages. By definition, mortgage default does not apply to people who rent their accommodation. The EQLS 2007 survey found that 30% of Europeans are tenants. The 70% who are nominally homeowners can be divided into two distinct groups: those who own their home outright and those who are purchasing with a mortgage. Across the whole of Europe, 47% of people own their home outright, more than double the proportion who have to make monthly mortgage repayments (Figure 13).

Groups with income difficulties

Whether residents can meet monthly mortgage repayments depends on their income. The 2007 EQLS found that almost three quarters of those buying a home with a mortgage have no difficulty in making ends meet (Figure 13). In terms of housing tenure, the largest group of people with economic difficulties comprises those who own their home outright – that is, 18% of the total European population. The second largest proportion of people having trouble making ends meet are tenants (14%). Their problems can be alleviated in countries that have policies for subsidising the cost of housing for low-income tenants or by landlords facing market pressures to reduce rental payments or risk their properties being left vacant. In 2007, only 6% of the European population were obliged to make regular mortgage repayments and at the same time had trouble making ends meet with their current income. This group is most vulnerable to the effects of the sub-prime mortgage crisis that originated in the US. The crisis has triggered an increase in such defaults, but the change is occurring from a low base.

Figure 13: Housing tenure and income, by difficulty in making ends meet (%)

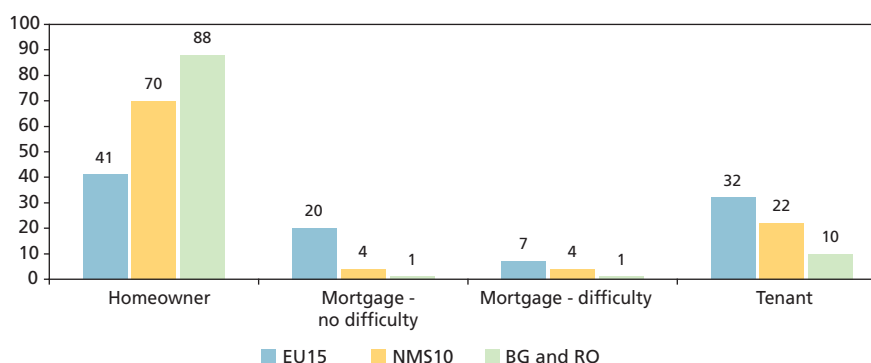
Notes: Each tenure group is divided into those having difficulty or not having difficulty in making ends meet. Results are based on the responses to Q.16 on housing tenure ('Which of the following best describes your accommodation?') and Q.57 on the household's ability to make ends meet.

Source: Calculated from EQLS 2007

Situation in old and new Member States

Former Communist countries are less vulnerable to sub-prime mortgage problems than the EU15. The collapse of the Communist system resulted in the wholesale conversion of properties that were once state, municipal or employer-owned into owner-occupied housing. The politics of the time encouraged democratic governments to grant ownership to residents without invoking the complex debt obligations of western markets. Moreover, the economics of the time ruled out the widespread granting of mortgages. Thus, the 2007 EQLS found that 70% of people in the NMS10 owned their home outright and seven eighths of people in Bulgaria and Romania were in this position. By contrast, only two fifths of people in the EU15 were outright homeowners (Figure 14).

Most people vulnerable to the crisis in housing finance live in older EU Member States, where more sophisticated financial markets created structured investment vehicles that encouraged sub-prime lending. Given the greater population of the EU15 countries, almost nine out of 10 Europeans who have a mortgage and have encountered difficulties in making ends meet live in these Member States. This includes some of the small proportion of people who took out mortgages in a foreign currency in order to gain a lower interest rate, but who now find that exchange rate changes are pushing their monthly mortgage payments to the limit of what they can afford.

Figure 14: Housing tenure in old and new EU Member States (%)


Note: Results are based on the responses to Q.16 on housing tenure and Q.57 on the household's ability to make ends meet.
Source: EQLS 2007

Within both old and new EU Member States, differences exist in the level of exposure to mortgage risks (Table A4). In Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain, at least one in 10 people have a mortgage and also have difficulties making ends meet, whereas only one in 20 people find themselves in this position in Austria, Denmark and Germany. Similarly, more than one in eight Cypriots and Hungarians have mortgages and problems with their household budgets compared with one in 50 people in Lithuania and Poland. From a pan-European perspective, the threat of financial destabilisation depends on the number of people at risk. The three old EU Member States with double-digit risks from mortgage lending – Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain – together have more than six times the population of the highest risk enlargement countries. Moreover, even though the percentage of mortgage holders with economic difficulties in Germany and the UK is below the EU15 average, the absolute number of people at risk in these countries is greater than that in the NMS12 combined.

Micro-level insulation from macro-level shocks

Up to a point, macroeconomic shocks affect everyone indirectly or directly. However, it is misleading to treat people as if their lives were passively determined by such events. The sub-prime housing mortgage crisis has had a much more negative effect on banks and financial institutions than on the majority of Europeans, who are insulated from its direct consequences.

Social support network

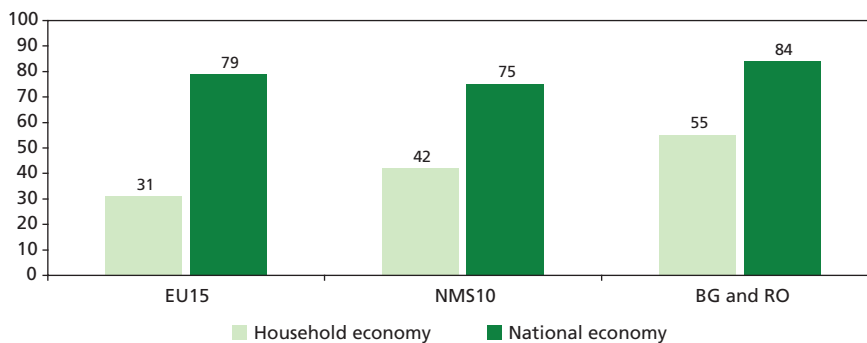
In times of difficulty, people can and do turn for support to informal social capital networks in which friends can help if they are ill, listen and advise on personal troubles and, if necessary, lend money without demanding the security of a bank or the paperwork and delays of a government agency. At the time when the economic crisis struck, almost every European was integrated in informal networks that they could turn to for support and more than five sixths could borrow up to €1,000 in an emergency (see Figure 1).

Perceptions of vulnerability to economic crisis

The extent to which Europeans see themselves as vulnerable to the economic crisis is documented in Eurobarometer surveys which, like the EQLS, cover all 27 countries of the EU. In a Eurobarometer survey in the autumn of 2007, just before the economic crisis began to take hold, Europeans were divided almost equally in evaluating their national economy: 49% of respondents considered the situation as good and 51% stated that it was bad. When the question was repeated in the first two

months of 2009, there was a radical shift: only 18% of respondents thought that their national economy was in good shape, while 79% believed that it was in poor shape. However, in early 2009, only 35% of people described their personal economic situation as bad and even fewer stated that their personal job situation was bad. Thus, a gap of 44 percentage points is evident between Europeans who consider the state of the national economy to be full of problems and those judging their own household circumstances as bad (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Respondents perceiving household and national economies as bad, 2009 (%)



Source: European Commission, 'The Europeans in 2009: Annex', Special Eurobarometer 308, fieldwork January–February 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_308_anx.pdf (accessed on 8 October 2009), pp. 6 and 10

Influences on quality of life

An individual's material conditions can have a significant influence on some aspects of quality of life. For example, people whose material standards decline are more likely to feel economic tensions. However, a systematic statistical analysis of the 2007 EQLS finds that influences on quality of life vary according to whether personal concerns, such as health, or national concerns are being evaluated (Rose and Newton, 2009). The rating of both national and neighbourhood public services and of trust in political institutions is influenced as much or more by the perceived integrity or corruption of governments as it is by an individual's economic or social characteristics or a country's GDP. The problems created by public officials who are inefficient, ineffective or corrupt can affect everyone who uses public services. For example, the European Commission has especially emphasised the need for integrity in governance in its policies toward Bulgaria and Romania both before and after their accession to the EU.

Racial and ethnic tension is as high as economic tension in Europe today, and careful analysis of EQLS data shows that its causes are a heightened awareness of cultural differences rather than bad economic conditions. Such tensions are felt most strongly in EU15 countries subject to a greater influx of migrants from other continents, especially Muslim countries (Rose and Newton, 2009).

Influences on overall life satisfaction are multiple too (Watson et al, 2009). Health is important for life satisfaction and it changes much more with age than with changes in household income or in the national economy. Life satisfaction is influenced by individual *anomie*, a psychological term that describes a person becoming socially excluded because of being unable to relate to other people satisfactorily (Layte et al, 2009; Böhnke, 2005).

Life satisfaction is holding up in a time of economic crisis. When the Eurobarometer asked people in 1995 how satisfied they were with the life they led, 80% of respondents reported being very or

relatively satisfied. When the question was repeated in a much enlarged EU in the autumn of 2004, life satisfaction was equally high among 81% of respondents. As the economic crisis entered its second year in January 2009, the proportion of people reporting high life satisfaction had only slightly changed: 77% of people were still satisfied with the life they led (European Commission, 2009c, p. 9).

The 2004 phase of enlargement of the EU has been associated with an improved quality of life for citizens of the NMS10 and there has also been some catching up with EU15 countries (see Chapter 4). Since significant differences in quality of life still exist, this underlines the need to maintain momentum through EU policies promoting social cohesion in conjunction with national governments and social partners. However, the EQLS evidence shows that people in Bulgaria and Romania have not progressed to the same extent and, in a number of respects, their quality of life lags behind the NMS10 and the EU15. This finding supports the actions that the European Commission is taking to encourage the Bulgarian and Romanian governments to implement post-accession improvements in standards of governance that were conditions of their EU membership.

Income

EQLS evidence shows that income differences tend to reduce quality of life more than age or gender differences. To promote social cohesion requires actions that target the problems of those who have the most trouble making ends meet based on their current income. This group was substantial in size during the prosperous period when both rounds of the EQLS were undertaken. Between 2003 and 2007, people having difficulty in making ends meet did achieve a degree of improvement in their quality of life. This progress reduced but did not close pre-existing gaps between those who are better off financially and those who are not well off. A limited minority of people suffer from deprivation of a number of goods or services that most European households take for granted, such as heating, buying new clothes and a week's holiday. The most direct policy response to deal with material deprivation is to raise the income of those who are worst off. This can be done through minimum wage legislation, means-tested cash benefits and other adjustments to benefits and taxes. The principle of subsidiarity makes such measures primarily the responsibility of national governments, augmented by EU instruments such as the open method of coordination.

Social tensions

Social cohesion is also about psychological solidarity. While the European Commission seeks to increase cohesion by developing a common European identity, both rounds of the EQLS show that there is also a need to address tensions that can be obstacles to this goal. A substantial minority of Europeans report a lot of tension between management and workers, albeit the size of this group was lower in 2007 than in the previous survey. Furthermore, an asymmetry arises in how economic tensions are perceived. A majority of people with income difficulties perceive considerable tension, while among those with an adequate income only a minority do so. Tensions arise as much from income inequalities as from inequalities of social status, respect and influence. These are issues that the EU can address through its Renewed Social Agenda.

Cultural tensions between different racial and ethnic groups declined somewhat between the two rounds of the EQLS but remain higher than economic tensions. The two types of tensions are sporadically combined in protests against the employment of 'foreign' workers who make use of the opportunity for labour mobility arising from the Single European Market and EU openness to increased transnational mobility. Labour shortages in high-income EU countries have attracted migrant workers from other continents, and particularly from Muslim countries such as Algeria, Pakistan and Turkey. As a result, tensions are found in neighbourhoods that are not only changing their cultural composition but also appear to be experiencing declining services. This situation challenges public agencies and social partners to give priority to maintaining European standards in neighbourhood services, in social services and at work.

Impact of economic crisis

The present global economic crisis creates additional pressures for both EU and national governments to act. Concurrently, the crisis is reducing tax revenues and encouraging governments to spend money to stimulate the economy. Since the inability to afford a number of everyday necessities and amenities is limited to one in eight Europeans, meeting their basic needs makes a limited claim on public finances under pressure. As this group is also going short on consumption, funds targeted at assisting this group have the best chance of providing an economic stimulus by being spent promptly.

Because the economic crisis is a collective predicament affecting the whole of the Single European Market, EU institutions have a special responsibility. The mass public reaction against payments to failed banks and bankers shows the intensity of public feeling and the need for measures that are not only acceptable to financial technicians but also do not add to pre-existing economic tensions. In this respect, the longstanding commitment of the EU and its social partners to cooperation between management and workers can encourage the recognition of a collective interest in measures promoting economic recovery.

The current economic crisis raises novel structural issues because its impact is felt not only in declining industries and regions but also in the services sector, and above all financial services, which were previously heralded as a major engine of economic growth. Geographically, the impact of the crisis is not at the periphery of national economies but at the centre of operations – for example, the City of London and other leading European financial centres. The crisis has major implications for people who have been among the most highly paid Europeans, such as bankers and middle-class private sector employees. Paradoxically, this may increase social cohesion insofar as it creates common concerns across traditional socioeconomic divisions.

The principle of subsidiarity is relevant to quality of life as well as to policymaking in a system of multi-level governance. While public policies can and do make an impact on quality of life, these are also influenced by factors beyond the control of government, such as family life and informal relations with friends and neighbours. Turmoil in financial markets does not translate directly into turmoil in family life; its negative effects are indirect and contingent. Thus, the EQLS evidence cautions against over-reaction.

The widespread popular recognition that governments face a macroeconomic crisis gives policymakers scope for taking unpopular but necessary actions. Because most Europeans now expect economic news to be negative, painful measures to halt the recession and stimulate economic recovery will not necessarily add to existing levels of anxiety about national conditions. Instead, tough but effective measures that will make economic conditions better than expected can produce a sense of reprieve and relief, as happened in western European countries after the economic crisis of the mid 1970s (Rose, 1980). Maintaining the current level of quality of life in Europe is a condition for promoting increased social cohesion through policies that help groups identified in this EQLS analysis as not sharing fully in previous periods of prosperity.

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Annex: Indicators used and data tables

Table A1: EQLS indicators used in analysis

	Minimum	Maximum	2003		2007	
			Mean	Std.Dev.	Mean	Std.Dev.
Q.40, Q. 29 Satisfaction with Everyday Life Index: mean of 8 questions	1 very dissatisfied	10 very satisfied	7.27	1.48	7.27	1.51
Q.56 Public Service Index: mean of 4 questions	1 very dissatisfied	10 very satisfied	5.98	1.66	5.92	1.63
Q.35 Can rely on others for help: mean of 4 questions	0 no	1 yes	0.78	0.41	0.80	0.40
Q.35.5 Can borrow money from friends or family	0 no	1 yes	0.83	0.38	0.84	0.37
Q.23 Trust in most people	1 can't be too careful	10 can trust most people	5.61	2.16	5.20	2.27
Q.57 Can make ends meet without difficulties	0 no	1 yes	0.61	0.49	0.62	0.49
Q.19 Number of deprivations	0 none	6 deprivations	1.10	1.67	0.98	1.54
Q.11 Work-life balance						
Too tired for household jobs	0 no	1 yes	0.53	0.50	0.48	0.50
Hard to meet family responsibilities	0 no	1 yes	0.30	0.46	0.29	0.46
Hard to concentrate at work	0 no	1 yes	0.10	0.30	0.12	0.32
Q.16 Own home	0 no	1 yes	0.66	0.47	0.71	0.45
Q.17 Quality of housing						
Shortage of space	0 no	1 yes	0.20	0.40	0.18	0.38
Rot in woodwork	0 no	1 yes	0.11	0.32	0.09	0.29
Dampness or leaks	0 no	1 yes	0.14	0.35	0.12	0.32
Lack an indoor flushing toilet	0 no	1 yes	0.05	0.22	0.04	0.20
Q.54 No complaints about neighbourhood						
Noise	1 many complaints	4 none at all	3.30	0.92	3.36	0.85
Air pollution	1 many complaints	4 none at all	3.31	0.92	3.33	0.87
Lack of access to recreational or green areas	1 many complaints	4 none at all	3.44	0.89	3.48	0.82
Water quality	1 many complaints	4 none at all	3.43	0.89	3.45	0.85
Q.25 Tension between:						
Rich and poor people	0 none	2 a lot	1.22	0.67	1.15	0.65
Management and workers	0 none	2 a lot	1.27	0.63	1.22	0.61
Different racial and ethnic groups	0 none	2 a lot	1.32	0.67	1.28	0.65
Old and young people	0 none	2 a lot	0.88	0.66	0.94	0.64
Men and women	0 none	2 a lot	0.75	0.65	0.82	0.62

Notes: Numbers refer to full text of questions as reported in Anderson et al (2009, Annex 1). For details of indices and other indicators, see chapters 3 to 5 in the main text of Anderson et al (2009). Numerical results are for the EU27, weighted by population.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Table A2: Increased social cohesion among income groups, 2003 and 2007

Country	% making ends meet			Mean no. of items household cannot afford		
	2003	2007	Change	2003	2007	Change
PT	59	67	8	2.1	1.2	-0.9
ES	52	59	7	0.9	0.7	-0.2
NL	73	77	4	0.3	0.3	0.0
SE	84	86	2	0.3	0.3	0.0
UK	77	79	2	0.7	0.6	-0.1
DK	86	87	1	0.2	0.3	0.1
FI	80	81	1	0.6	0.4	-0.2
FR	62	63	1	0.6	0.6	0.0
IE	78	78	0	0.7	0.5	-0.2
EL	34	33	-1	1.8	1.6	-0.2
DE	76	74	-2	0.6	0.8	0.2
LU	86	83	-3	0.3	0.3	0.0
BE	72	67	-5	0.6	0.7	0.1
AT	83	75	-8	0.4	0.6	0.2
IT	73	57	-16	0.5	0.7	0.2
EU15	69	68	-1	0.7	0.7	0.0
PL	29	49	20	2.5	1.9	-0.6
LT	17	36	19	3.1	2.1	-1.0
EE	31	50	19	2.5	1.3	-1.2
SK	41	57	16	2.4	1.8	-0.6
LV	23	37	14	2.8	2.1	-0.7
SI	59	62	3	0.8	0.7	-0.1
CZ	52	51	-1	1.4	1.2	-0.2
CY	45	43	-2	0.9	1.5	0.6
HU	33	25	-8	2.3	2.3	0.0
MT	78	64	-14	1.3	1.6	0.3
NMS10	34	46	8	2.3	1.8	-0.5
RO	23	31	8	3.4	2.4	-1.0
BG	10	17	7	3.8	2.7	-1.1
BG + RO	19	27	8	3.5	2.5	-1.0
EU27	61	62	1	1.1	1.0	-0.1

Note: See Tables 2 and 3 in the main body of the report for the full text of the questions.

Source: EQLS, 2003 and 2007

Table A3: Index of public services, by country, 2003 and 2007

	Public service index (mean scores on a scale of 1–10)		
	2003	2007	Change
SE	6.4	6.9	0.5
LU	6.8	7.2	0.4
NL	6.5	6.8	0.3
FR	6.2	6.4	0.2
ES	6.2	6.3	0.1
DK	7.0	7.0	0.0
UK	6.2	6.2	0.0
BE	7.1	7.0	-0.1
FI	7.6	7.5	-0.1
IE	6.0	5.9	-0.1
AT	7.2	7.1	-0.1
EL	5.2	4.9	-0.3
PT	5.2	4.9	-0.3
DE	6.2	5.7	-0.5
IT	5.8	5.3	-0.5
EU15	6.2	6.0	-0.2
SK	3.9	5.8	1.9
CZ	5.5	6.1	0.6
MT	6.3	6.8	0.5
EE	5.9	6.2	0.3
PL	5.2	5.5	0.3
LT	5.6	5.6	0.0
SI	5.8	5.8	0.0
HU	5.5	5.3	-0.2
CY	5.6	5.3	-0.3
LV	5.4	5.1	-0.3
NMS10	5.3	5.6	0.3
BG	4.1	4.5	0.4
RO	5.9	5.5	-0.4
BG and RO	5.4	5.2	-0.2
EU27	6.0	5.9	-0.1

Note: The index is the mean score of ratings of health, education, public transport and the state pension system, as reported in Figure 5 in the main text of the report.

Source: EQS, 2003 and 2007

Table A4: Housing tenure, by country (%)

	Tenant	Own home outright	Mortgage: no difficulties	Mortgage: difficulties
AT	44	33	18	5
DE	49	27	18	5
DK	32	15	48	5
UK	33	30	31	6
EL	23	68	2	7
FR	32	49	11	7
IT	20	62	11	7
PT	35	42	16	7
LU	21	48	24	7
FI	18	46	28	7
IE	26	38	30	7
SE	29	14	51	7
ES	19	53	18	10
NL	31	7	52	10
BE	27	39	24	11
EU15	32	41	20	7
LT	11	84	2	2
PL	25	70	3	2
MT	24	68	4	4
SK	11	80	5	4
LV	48	44	3	5
SI	10	81	5	5
CZ	31	57	7	6
EE	16	69	9	6
CY	19	62	6	13
HU	9	74	4	13
NMS10	22	70	4	4
RO	10	88	1	1
BG	10	87	1	2
BG + RO	10	88	1	1
EU27	29	48	17	6

Note: Results from the responses to Q.16 on housing tenure and Q.57 on the household's ability to make ends meet.

Source: EQLS, 2007

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Quality of life touches on areas of life relevant to everybody, such as relations with family and friends, as well as on issues pertaining to public policy, such as housing and social relations in the community. This report draws on two rounds of the European Quality of Life Survey, carried out by Eurofound in 2003 and 2007, to give a wide-ranging picture of the diverse social realities in Europe today. It explores patterns of stability and change in the quality of life of the EU population as a whole and questions whether overall quality of life is deteriorating or improving in the different countries. It examines the extent to which EU enlargement has altered the quality of life in the new Member States, as well as the degree of change among people with an inadequate income, different age groups, and men and women. Finally, it explores people's vulnerability regarding housing, income and employment in the current economic recession.

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