

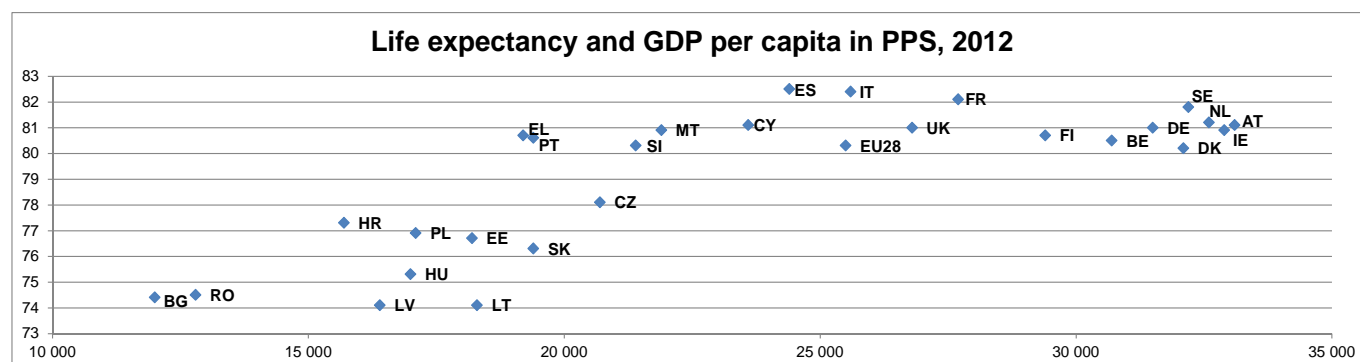
GDP and beyond

Measuring quality of life in the EU

What is quality of life and how can its different aspects be measured appropriately? This question can be answered by a new online publication on **Quality of life indicators**¹ released by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union on the occasion of the **International Day of Happiness**² established by the United Nations and celebrated throughout the world on 20 March. These quality of life measures complement the one indicator, GDP, traditionally used for measuring economic, and often social, development³. Two examples from health and education, which are important determinants of the quality of life of individuals, are presented below.

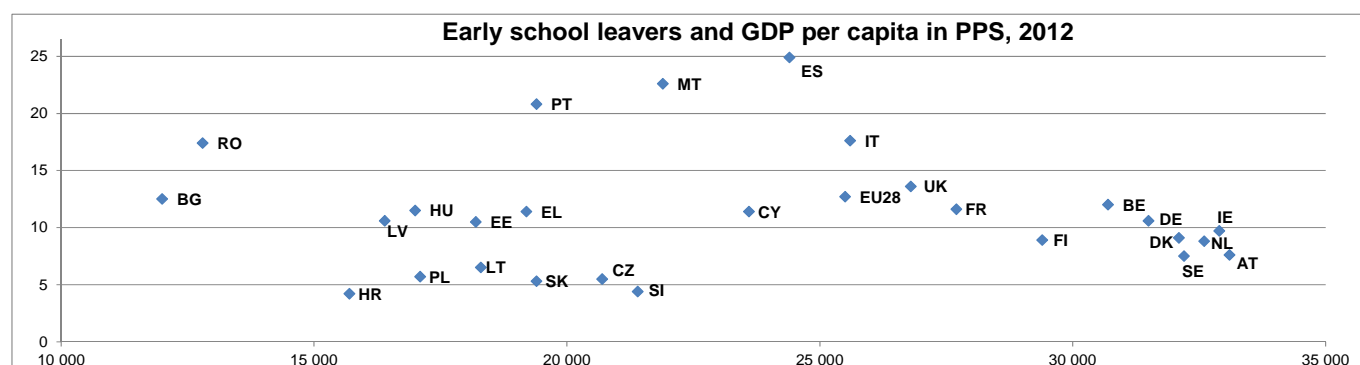
Life expectancy

The overall health level of a society is related to its GDP, but the correlation becomes weaker after a certain level of economic development is reached. Based on the relation between the two, EU Member States can be broadly divided into three groups. Those in the central and eastern EU have relatively lower life expectancy and relatively lower GDP per capita. Those in the southern EU, have a higher GDP per capita and a life expectancy which reaches the highest values, while those in the western and northern EU have the highest GDP per capita, but life expectancy at around the same level as in some of the southern Member States, or even slightly lower.



Early school leavers

Early school leavers face a higher risk of social exclusion and poverty, according to research, and societies need to strive to reduce the number of young people in this situation. There is no clear correlation between GDP per capita and the proportion of early school leavers: while most of the western and northern Member States have high GDP per capita and shares of early school leavers lower than the European average, the lowest shares of early school leavers have been achieved in a group of Member States mostly in the central and eastern EU, all with lower GDP per capita.



For country codes, see footnote 4. Data for Luxembourg are not included in this chart, due to the high level of GDP per capita. A summary table by Member State highlighting these two indicators and eight others can be found on the last page.

Eurostat's 8 + 1 quality of life dimensions

Life expectancy and early school leavers are only two of the indicators that are included in Eurostat's framework for measuring quality of life, on which the online publication, presenting a detailed analysis of the 8+1 dimensions, is based. The first 8 dimensions, which encompass both objective factors and subjective perceptions, are: material living conditions, productive or main activity, health, education, leisure or social interactions, economic & physical safety, governance & basic rights and natural & living conditions. These are complemented by 1 dimension measuring the perception of overall experience of life. Ideally all the 8+1 dimensions should be considered simultaneously, together with GDP per capita, as in the table below.

1. For more information, see Statistics explained articles on the Eurostat web site:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Quality_of_life_indicators
Data presented in this News Release could differ from the data published in the articles, due to updates made after the data extractions used.
2. For more information, see <http://www.un.org/en/events/happinessday/>
3. For more information on the topic GDP and beyond:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/gdp_and_beyond/introduction
4. Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).
5. **PPS** is a common currency that eliminates the differences in price levels between countries allowing meaningful volume comparisons of GDP between countries.
The median income is the income value which divides a population, when ranked by income, into two equal sized groups: exactly 50% of people fall below that value and 50% are above it.
The income quintile share ratio is the ratio of total income received by the 20% of the population with the highest income (top quintile) to that received by the 20% of the population with the lowest income (lowest quintile). Income relates to the equivalised disposable income.
Long term unemployment is the share of those who have been unemployed for 12 months and more in the total active population (employed and unemployed).
Life expectancy is the mean number of years that a new born child can expect to live if subjected throughout his life to the current mortality conditions.
Early school leavers refers to persons aged 18 to 24 who have finished no more than a lower secondary education and are not involved in further education or training.
Unable to afford unexpected expenses: Those persons unable to face unexpected financial expenses as a share of the total population.
Homicides rates refer to the number of homicides on average in 2010 to 2012 per 100 000 population.
The gender pay gap represents the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees.
PM10 exposure is the population weighted annual average concentration of fine particulate matter (PM10 – particulates with a diameter of less than 10 micro metres) in micrograms per cubic metre of air to which the residents of cities with more than 100 000 inhabitants are exposed. Source: European Environmental Agency
Life satisfaction: Self-assessed rating on the satisfaction with life in general on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). Source: Eurofound.

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Quality of life indicators*, 2012

	GDP per capita in PPS	Material living conditions		Productive or main activity	Health	Education	Economic and physical safety		Governance and basic rights	Natural and living environment	Overall experience of life
		Median income in PPS	Income quintile share ratio (S80/S20)	Long term unemployment	Life expectancy	Early school leavers	Unable to afford unexpected expenses	Homicide rate (aver. 2010- 2012)	Gender pay gap	PM10 exposure (2011)	Life satisfaction (2011)
EU28	25 500	:	5.1	4.7	80.3	12.7	40.2	1.1	16.4	27	7.1
Belgium	30 700	18 058	3.9	3.4	80.5	12.0	25.4	1.7	10.0	27	7.4
Bulgaria	12 000	5 793	6.1	6.8	74.4	12.5	68.6	1.9	14.7	58	5.5
Czech Rep.	20 700	10 182	3.5	3.0	78.1	5.5	42.4	0.9	22.0	29	6.4
Denmark	32 100	18 660	4.5	2.1	80.2	9.1	28.2	1.1	14.9	:	8.4
Germany	31 500	18 996	4.3	2.5	81.0	10.6	33.4	0.8	22.4	23	7.2
Estonia	18 200	7 686	5.4	5.5	76.7	10.5	44.7	5.7	30.0	13	6.3
Ireland	32 900	:	:	9.1	80.9	9.7	:	1.2	14.4	18	7.4
Greece	19 200	9 949	6.6	14.4	80.7	11.4	40.5	1.6	:	:	6.2
Spain	24 400	12 319	7.2	11.1	82.5	24.9	42.1	0.8	17.8	23	7.5
France	27 700	18 696	4.5	4.1	82.1	11.6	33.0	0.9	14.8	25	7.2
Croatia	15 700	7 375	5.4	10.3	77.3	4.2	67.3	1.4	18.0	:	6.8
Italy	25 600	15 597	5.5	5.7	82.4	17.6	42.5	1.0	6.7	32	6.9
Cyprus	23 600	19 048	4.7	3.6	81.1	11.4	50.5	1.3	16.2	36	7.2
Latvia	16 400	6 005	6.5	7.8	74.1	10.6	73.6	4.6	13.8	23	6.2
Lithuania	18 300	6 595	5.3	6.6	74.1	6.5	60.4	6.7	12.6	23	6.7
Luxembourg	67 100	26 660	4.1	1.6	81.5	8.1	24.8	1.0	8.6	18	7.8
Hungary	17 000	7 386	4.0	4.9	75.3	11.5	74.3	1.3	20.1	33	5.8
Malta	21 900	14 628	3.9	3.0	80.9	22.6	25.0	1.3	6.1	:	7.2
Netherlands	32 600	19 007	3.6	1.8	81.2	8.8	22.0	0.9	16.9	25	7.7
Austria	33 100	20 499	4.2	1.1	81.1	7.6	22.2	0.8	23.4	27	7.7
Poland	17 100	8 529	4.9	4.1	76.9	5.7	54.1	1.1	6.4	39	7.1
Portugal	19 400	9 561	5.8	7.7	80.6	20.8	35.9	1.1	15.7	27	6.8
Romania	12 800	3 509	6.3	3.2	74.5	17.4	53.1	1.8	9.7	39	6.7
Slovenia	21 400	14 125	3.4	4.3	80.3	4.4	45.7	0.7	2.5	31	7.0
Slovakia	19 400	9 574	3.7	9.4	76.3	5.3	36.1	1.6	21.5	34	6.4
Finland	29 400	18 202	3.7	1.6	80.7	8.9	27.9	2.0	19.4	12	8.1
Sweden	32 200	19 696	3.7	1.5	81.8	7.5	17.6	0.9	15.9	17	8.0
United Kingdom	26 800	17 636	5.4	2.7	81.0	13.6	42.9	1.1	19.1	21	7.3

* Source Eurostat for all indicators, except life satisfaction, which has Eurofound as a source and PM10, which has the European Environmental Agency as a source.

: Data not available

For the definition of the indicators, see footnote 5.

For the dimension leisure or social interactions, data currently available refer to 2006 and are therefore not included in the table above. More recent data will become available in the near future.