



Well-being in 2030

Aggregate report

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Well-being in 2030

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1 Executive Summary

This report is based on qualitative research conducted in March/April 2011 in eight member states – Estonia, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the UK.

Three discussion groups were reconvened in each country, stratified by different socio-economic and age groups, and by urban and rural areas. Respondents who participated in the first stage also participated in this stage.

The aim of the second stage of the research was to understand people's priorities for societal well-being in 2030 and the trade-offs they would make when presented with specific scenarios.

Well-being of society in future

- For many, the economy is perceived to be the most important factor in driving the well-being of society in the future. The economy is believed to be the foundation on which the other factors depend and consequently on which the well-being of society depends.
- The second most important factor driving the well-being of society is society and community. Social inequality was the main concern and was a recurring theme throughout the research. There was clearly a desire to eliminate social inequalities as there was in the first stage of the research. We see this theme throughout the research and the scenarios that implied inequality as an outcome did not sit comfortably with respondents.
- Resources for the future was a difficult concept for people to grasp because it included public financing and pensions as well as natural resources. People tended to think in terms of natural resources only in this context.
- Some feel that the environment is the main driver of societal well-being, as the most basic need is a viable living environment, without which the other factors are meaningless. The impact of the Fukushima disaster in Japan and its impact on destabilising the country were raised in this context. However concerns about the environment were not as strongly expressed as in the first stage.
- Many spontaneously expressed that all four factors are inter-related and that changes to one will impact on another. This resistance to prioritising between the different factors described was another recurring theme of the groups. When faced with difficult choices, participants were often reluctant to make them.

Personal well-being

- Most found it difficult to prioritise one area (health, education or employment) over another in terms of personal well-being and in many countries priority differed by age, although there was no consistent trend in importance by age group.
- Employment is seen as being important because it provides economic security and access to health and education; the current state of the

economy made employment particularly pertinent to personal well-being for some. Education on the other hand is viewed as being the key to employment and consequently well-being as a whole. While good health is fundamental to being able to function in society and thus is fundamental to well-being.

Health services – priorities for spending

- It was extremely difficult for respondents to prioritise the various aspects within healthcare expenditure and there was a lack of consensus driven by age and locality in several Member States. Nearly everything was given equal priority.
- Even so, it appears that 'promotion of prevention behaviours' and 'strengthening of healthcare structures' are prioritised most consistently across the eight Member States. 'Extension of publicly funded treatments' and 'investment in medical research' were not far behind. However, investment in healthcare staff was clearly the lowest priority.
- Reactions to the healthcare scenarios revealed that universal access is the most important aspect in healthcare provision. Respondents were most angered by the prospect in one of the scenarios tested that treatment would not be accessible to all. The option of paying for private healthcare or medical insurance received a mixed response, some recognised the system but others did not and felt it would also discriminate against the poorest in society and discounted it on that basis. The depersonalisation of healthcare was the most viable of the three scenarios for respondents – there were clearly some limitations but there were also some benefits.

Education – priorities for spending

- The eight Member States were mostly agreed that 'attention to quality of teaching' should be the priority for education spending. Quality teaching is recognised as being the single factor that determines the basis of a good education system.
- Some Member States were of the opinion that their education system is already in a state of disrepair and so expenditure should be on addressing this, while others felt that expenditure should be to maintain the standard of teaching in their country.
- Not surprisingly, given the desire for social equality and the priority of education expenditure on quality teaching, the most important factors in education are education accessibility and quality. Reactions to the scenarios which compromised access or quality received comparatively negative responses as respondents did not want to compromise on either aspect. However when forced to make a choice between quality and access, access again emerged as the driving principle. Education was seen as a right for all.
- Vocational education was viewed more positively. Respondents identified potential benefits of this approach whilst debating limitations and concerns. Relatively few reacted negatively.

Employment / income – priorities for spending

- Most Member States agreed that the focus of public spending should be on creating employment.
- Respondents identified several factors of importance with regard to employment / income but all of which are inter-connected and related to strengthening the economy; specifically they were reducing unemployment, economic growth and increasing competitiveness.
- Social considerations were less important than for health and education. Social protection is the most important factor or one of the most important factors in only two Member States; Greece and Germany. In Greece respondents claimed they would sacrifice economic growth in order to provide greater social protection for citizens. German respondents feel that the employee and the economy are equally important.

Summary

- Social equality remains a key factor of social well-being for citizens, second to the economy. People are evidently angered and uncomfortable at the prospect of increased inequality in the future. This principle informed most of the discussions and decision-making in the groups when talking about health and education.
- Increasing employment to strengthen the economy, while at the same time decreasing inequality were the key drivers which tended to underpin the choices that respondents made in the groups. Alongside a desire to grow the economy was an even stronger desire to ensure the best possible healthcare and education for all.
- Respondents found it difficult to prioritise expenditure in 2030, particularly in the area of healthcare. As one would expect, the current economic context coloured their view and often they reverted to the present as opposed to the future, referring to for example the 'current economic crisis' to explain their perspective.

2 Overall summary

This report is based on qualitative research conducted in March/April 2011 in eight member states – Estonia, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the UK.

Three discussion groups were reconvened in each country, stratified by different socio-economic and age groups, and by urban and rural areas. Respondents who participated in the first stage also participated in this stage.

The aim of the second stage of the research was to understand people's priorities for societal well-being in 2030 and the trade-offs they would make when presented with specific scenarios.

2.1 Background and objectives

There is increasing interest amongst policy makers in the quality of life and well-being of citizens and how policies can enhance these in the long run. This is reflected in initiatives such as the European Commissions' communication of 20 August 2009, 'GDP and Beyond' or the report by the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussy Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, presented in September 2009.

The Commission also supports a reflection project "Well-being 2030" which seeks to investigate the major trends and developments that could influence Europe's policy options for improving its citizens' well-being by the year 2030. In this context, research is required to understand citizens' hopes and fears for the longer-term future, what challenges they perceive are facing society, what choices they would make among different, realistic options to address some of these issues and what possibilities there are for maximizing well-being in the long run. This envisaged research should help European policy makers design longer-term visions, taking into account the views and concerns of citizens.

The objectives for the research can be broadly summarized as follows:

- Explore citizens' fears and hopes for the future (2030 and the future in general)
- Understand what kind of society European citizens want
- Investigate citizen's perceptions of the challenges facing society
- Explore the choices they would make with regard to specific trade-offs / scenarios.

2.2 Methodology

Asking citizens to think about the future is difficult – especially when the time frame is 20 years. People tend not to think this far ahead, and if they do it tends to be purely in terms of changes in their own life stage – e.g. children, career, retirement.

It was necessary to guide respondents to think of the "bigger picture" as the research was not focused on the concept of well-being at a personal and emotional level, but rather on the macro-level determinants of well-being.

Understanding how or if citizens perceive the impact of wider society and social and other policies on their own sense of well-being was an important part of the research – do they struggle to relate their subjective state to the wider context, or is the interdependence between key aspects of well-being (health, standard of living, employment) and broader society clearly understood?

The method used was to reconvene the groups. What this means is that the same respondents who take part in the first group also take part in the second group. This is a valuable approach in several ways:

- Findings and ideas discussed at the first session can be developed and presented back to the group for discussion
- Respondents can be given exercises to complete between stages and also encouraged to discuss the topic with family and friends (acting as peer researchers). Knowing that they will be coming back to discuss the topic again helps to ensure that such conversations take place
- Having more time to debate and consider the issues can lead to more informed and thought through responses in the second session, something which will be essential for the success of this project

This report is based on the second stage of group discussions conducted in March/April 2011.

The research returned to the same eight Member States encompassed in the first stage, namely Estonia (EE), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (EL), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Sweden (SE), and the UK.

The discussion groups covered a range of respondents stratified by:

1) **Age:**

- Young adults (aged 18-29)
- Adults (aged 30-44)
- Older people (aged 45+)

2) **Economic situation:**

- Low
 - Medium/ High
- (referred to as low or medium/high in the illustrative verbatim quotes)

3) **Locality**

- Urban
- Rural

Each group lasted about 120 minutes and each group was conducted with the same participants as Stage 1.

2.3 Stage 1 findings

The overall aim of the first stage of the research was to understand how people think society will change over the next 20 years; what are their hopes and fears for the future; what factors will play a role in shaping society and what actions they think need to occur in order to create the society they would like.

The major differences seen between now and 2030 are that communication and health are seen as likely to improve but people are pessimistic about living standards and publicly funded services. Climate change and the economy are the areas about which people feel least certainty.

Generally it's a pessimistic view of the future. Some member states tend to be more optimistic than others; Sweden, Germany, Estonia are the most optimistic; France and (to a lesser extent) Poland are more neutral; UK, Greece and Romania are the least optimistic.

Ways that society will be better

There is a widespread belief that improvements in medicine and technology will both be the key contributors to improvements in society in Europe in the future; specifically they will improve everyday lives in terms of health, communication and energy alternatives.

The Western member states in particular see an increase in people's sense of personal responsibility while those in the East anticipate improvements in opportunities for education, work and mobility.

The impact of these improvements are expected to be longer life, improved health, easier access to education, better work opportunities, an increase in living standards, the emergence of energy alternatives to fossil fuels and perhaps a more responsible and caring society.

Ways that society will be worse

The area that people feel is most likely to deteriorate most in the future is the environment. Climate change is a unifying issue - people in Europe, across all member states, fear for the future on this key issue and expect things to deteriorate.

For most other areas, such as standard of living and future job opportunities, opinions are less uniform - there are as many who feel that there will be improvements as those who think things will get worse. Expectations appear to largely be driven by the current state of each Member State's economy.

There are considerable differences in what aspects of society are anticipated to get worse according to where people live – in particular in relation to Western Member States compared with Eastern Member States.

Three areas of concern which are the most commonly talked of, apart from the environment and the economy, are:

- The likely widening wealth gap
- Increased isolation due to advancement in communication technology and use of computers:
- Technology taking away jobs

The impact of these issues on society is described in many ways - a more divided society with social unrest, more difficulties for the vulnerable, more superficial human contact, weakening national identity, issues with employment and housing due to continued population growth, the pressure of an ageing population on pensions, social and health systems.

The main effects of climate change are generally perceived in terms of extreme weather and natural disasters.

Main areas of concern

There is considerable disparity between the member states in the emphasis given to the different areas of concern. Climate change and environmental issues have the most widespread concern. Four out of the eight Member States select this as the area that most concerns them.

Health is top of the agenda for two member states, as is the standard of living for two others with education and employment being the other main issues

With less widespread importance – but still of major concern - are social security and welfare, technological development, government and politics – but none of these were chosen as “the” most important area to any individual Member State.

Climate change is mentioned spontaneously in all countries and citizens in Germany and France in particular were concerned about it. Only in Greece and Sweden is there any optimism about it. People envisage problems but are not yet able to talk knowledgably about likely impacts.

Health services are an area where people tend to be more optimistic. Such services are seen as having a huge impact on well being. People are positive about the impact of medical advances but are concerned about the state's ability to pay for improvements in medical treatment. The cost of healthcare for the elderly is a particular concern.

Education is high on people's agenda but specific concerns vary a great deal according by member state, from the cost of materials in some Eastern Member States to the content of the curriculum in Sweden and Germany.

Maintaining universal access to good education and health services is a major concern for the future.

Key drivers of change

The state of the economy and ability of each member state's government to manage it, are seen as the major factors which will affect the future. Other factors which are seen as likely to effect change included pensions and the ageing population, immigration, co-ordinated action on climate change between nations, the need to support the poor and ensure wider opportunities (in life, in education and jobs, in access to healthcare) to prevent a widening wealth gap.

Responsibility for dealing with these issues is seen as belonging to the state - to fund research, support new industry and jobs, control the media and in some cases, improve legislation.

However there is also an acknowledgement and perceived need for this responsibility to be shared - for people to take more personal responsibility for their actions across a wide spectrum of activity (health, climate change, political involvement).

Actions for tackling concerns for the future centre around the three main areas of concern – the environment and climate change, health and health care, education and jobs.

There is widespread support for the idea of a coordinated approach to tackling climate change, involving negotiation between nations at both European and global level. While people feel that governments must take a lead on this (e.g. subsidising research into alternative energy sources, encouraging good practice and conservation of energy in business, providing technology advice to others outside their own country, re-forestation, public information campaign), they are also very aware of their own responsibilities citing such personal actions as recycling and using public transport.

Continued state funding of health and education services is seen as essential to safeguard the future. This includes the continued sponsorship of health research and also to maintain the provision of health care and education to all. While citizens in Western member states tend to talk in more abstract and more ethical terms, those in Eastern countries are more focused on logistics and infrastructure (e.g. the provision of educational materials).

Stage 1 conclusions

Citizens across the member states are able to think about the future in wider societal terms, not just about themselves and their own lives although their concerns for the future often reflect their own life stage and personal priorities.

Few are sure about what the future holds and while most are pessimistic about some areas, they remain optimistic in others. Nationality had much more impact on perceptions of the future than other demographic factors such as age and attitudes often seemed to be largely related to the health of the national economy. There are some differences between high and low income and rural and urban, but these related more to specific actions rather than the underlying concerns which were generally shared.

There is a sense that people wish for things to be “better”, and that this is largely the responsibility of governments which need to act with society’s benefit at their heart, for funding to be maintained and ideally increased. There is also an acknowledgement of individual accountability for the shape of the future, and for a wider change in attitudes and behaviours.

Generally, they look to their own national government for leadership, but there is a feeling that industry, the media and others also play a role and that the EU needs to be involved in setting the agenda for the future, most importantly on the climate change issue.

People feel relatively powerless in determining how society will change over the next twenty years. They do not take society’s well-being for granted. Indeed there is a realisation that society has to change if it is to be the society they want in the future and that they as citizens must change with it.

2.4 Well-being of society in future

The second stage of the research focused more on the policy decisions that will shape the future, both in terms of societal and personal well being.

The discussions in each group in each country started with an exploration of views on the choices, constraints and trade-offs at the high society level.

The broad areas under consideration were:

- Society and community (e.g. social inequalities, social cohesion, values, crime, isolation, sense of shared values)
- Economy (e.g. growth, globalization, productivity and competitiveness)
- Resources for the future (e.g. sustaining resources, public financing, environment for future generations)
- Environment (for example having to adapt to climate change)

Many spontaneously expressed that all four factors are inter-related and that changes to one will impact on another. This resistance to prioritising between the different factors described was another recurring theme of the groups. When faced with difficult choices, participants were often reluctant to make them.

Overall, **the economy** closely followed by **society and community** were considered to be the most important areas of society well-being.

“But the economy makes the world go around, without economics there wouldn’t be a society – whether or not good or bad, it won’t be here” (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

“It’s all about care for the people, for me that’s the most important” (UK, 18-29, low, female, urban)

Economy

For many, the economy is perceived to be the most important factor in driving the well-being of society in the future. The economy is believed to be the foundation on which the other factors depend and consequently on which the well-being of society depends.

“Economy is an important factor at the global level, not only for me or other citizens. The crisis has also an influence now but anyway, a stable and sustainable economy means well-being for the society and the people” (Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

“An affluent society will take good care of the environment and everything else – such a society will have money to spend. This will affect everything else.” (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/ medium)

“Everything depends upon it, education, employment, benefits, council’s budgets” (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

However, many Germans felt that the economy was the least important because they assumed that measures to improve the economy would be to the benefit of companies and the individuals running them rather than the community as a whole. In addition, some felt that there are already sufficient measures in place to support the economy:

“Today the politicians seem to put economy above all. Social issues are dismissed as social romanticism, and everybody agrees that environmental activists are crazy. Instead they bloat the economic issues, and that’s our core problem.” (Germany, urban, 45+, male, high/medium)

Across the Member States it seems to be the older respondents who are prioritising the economy in the well-being of society slightly more than others.

The perceived limitations facing policy makers centred around three themes:

1. Local government / EU commission
2. Local economy
3. Geography

Society and Community

Opinions were divided on the importance of society and community in the well-being of society. About half of the countries felt that society and community was not the most important area of societal well-being, whereas half felt that it was one of the most important areas of social well-being.

"The first point is the most important one – it affects everything – the economy and resources for the future – they all require cooperation and compromise." (Poland, rural, 30-44, male, low)

"The following three depend on the first one. If we change this, other things will also change..." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

Social inequality was the main concern and was a recurring theme throughout the research. There was clearly a desire to eliminate social inequalities as there was in the first stage of the research. The scenarios which were presented to participants that implied any form of inequality as an outcome were all responded to negatively by the groups with many refusing to accept them as legitimate choices.

Resources for the future

The concept of resources for the future was a difficult concept for people to grasp because it included public financing and pensions as well as natural resources. People tended to think solely in terms of natural resources in this context.

Resources for the future were considered to be of less importance than the economy or society and community in societal well-being. Some respondents assumed that before current resources are completely, alternative sources will be developed (EE).

A few respondents feel that resources for the future are one of the most important aspects of society well-being (younger RO, DE, EL) because it is the legacy of the current population to the future generation.

"It's the starting point, we don't want to further ruin what we have left and lapse into an even worse starting position. We want to improve, not worsen." (Germany, rural, 18-29, male, high/medium)

Environment

Some feel that the environment is the main driver of societal well-being, as the most basic need is a viable living environment, without which the other factors are meaningless. The impact of the Fukushima disaster in Japan and its impact on destabilising the country were raised in this context. However concerns about the environment were not as strongly expressed as in the first stage.

Opinions are mixed as to the relative importance of the environment in social well-being.

For some respondents the environment is the most important area of social well-being because unless the environment is intact there is nowhere to live and the other factors are meaningless:

"I'm thinking about the last one. If Estonia should suffer from a terrible flood or something, we would have nothing to do with this society. I think the last two also coincide, I mean getting used to climate changes. For others the society is the main issue, but for me it is the climate change." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

"The environment is extremely important. You can see that with what is going on in Japan. It destabilises a country very quickly. The nuclear policy could be questioned." (France, rural, 45+, female, medium/low)

Although, others felt that, in the context of societal well-being, environment ranked below other aspects they also recognised the importance of the environment as a global issue.

"If you don't have a world you don't have any of the others" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

Others felt that although the environment is not of primary importance currently that it should be of greater importance as they believe that climate changes and pollution caused by the continuous deterioration of the environment can lead to natural disasters (RO).

"It was seen in many countries [that the environment is important], in fact, the best example we have in Japan which was prepared for the earthquake, but not prepared for the tsunami..." (Romania, urban, 30-44, male, medium/high)

2.5 Personal well-being

The discussion then moved onto areas of concern which were identified in the first stage as a concern for individual well-being.

These were as follows:

- Health services (access/affordability of new treatments)
- Education (cost, quality/ content of curriculum)
- Employment (increasing unemployment, income, work-life balance and retirement age)

Most found it difficult to prioritise one area (health, education or employment) over another in terms of personal well-being and in many countries priority differed by age, although there was no consistent trend in importance by age group.

Some respondents found it difficult to prioritise one area over another within personal well-being (RO, UK, SE, EE, FR). They felt that all three areas are equally important.

“No one should be neglected, all 3 are important!!! (Romania, rural, male, 45+ years, low)

*“All these things impact on each other – they are all equally important”
(UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)*

Employment is seen as being important because it provides economic security and access to health and education; the current state of the economy made employment particularly pertinent to personal well-being for some. Education on the other hand is viewed as being the key to employment and consequently well-being as a whole. While good health is fundamental to being able to function in society and thus is fundamental to well-being.

2.6 Health services – priorities for spending

It was extremely difficult for respondents to prioritise the various aspects within healthcare expenditure and there was a lack of consensus driven by age and locality in several Member States. Nearly everything was given equal priority.

Even so, it appears that ‘promotion of prevention behaviours’ and ‘strengthening of healthcare structures’ are prioritised most consistently across the eight Member States. ‘Extension of publicly funded treatments’ and ‘investment in medical research’ were not far behind. However, investment in healthcare staff was clearly the lowest priority.

Of the aspects explored in the three scenarios, equal accessibility is evidently the most important. Respondents felt that it is imperative for healthcare to be accessible to everyone, irrespective of their social status or income. The concept that medical treatment could be compromised because of an individual’s social status or income clearly angered many respondents and as a consequence they felt scenario one was the least acceptable of the three.

Overall, the option of paying for private healthcare or medical insurance was viewed as more acceptable among respondents. Many recognised this system as one that already operates in their country and they felt it alleviates pressure on the state system. However, there were others for whom this system was unfamiliar and they likened this scenario to that of unequal accessibility; they felt that again the poorest in society would be compromised in this scenario.

The depersonalisation of healthcare through the introduction of technology received the most positive response; there was no introduction of inequality. Respondents recognised that there were benefits to be gained for the health service and themselves but that there were also potential limitations in the extent to which technology could be used to replace the interaction with the doctor.

2.7 Education – priorities for spending

Overall, education accessibility and quality are the most important factors across the Member States. On the whole, there was a generally positive reaction to the idea of a more vocationally based education system.

The eight Member States were mostly agreed that 'attention to quality of teaching' should be the priority for education spending. Quality teaching is recognised as being the single factor that determines the basis of a good education system.

Some Member States were of the opinion that their education system is already in a state of disrepair and so expenditure should be on addressing this, while others felt that expenditure should be to maintain the standard of teaching in their country.

Reactions to Scenario 1 (*The quality of education will increase, but it may not be accessible to everybody, because of increasing costs and higher degree of privatization*) and Scenario 2 (*Publicly financed education systems may be more affordable but less competitive in light of the increased competitive pressure at global level*) were similarly negative. Most respondents did not want to see inequalities in the provision of education and they did not want to compromise on the quality of the education system.

Some Member States were accepting of a degree of change in accessibility and quality, notably respondents in the UK were accepting of changes in both.

The most positive response across Member States was to Scenario 3 (*Job-oriented schools and universities can provide more practical skills, but a lower level of theoretical/general knowledge*), with some Member States instantly recognising potential benefits from this approach. In comparison to Scenarios 1 and 2 respondents were considerably less negative towards the vocational approach. Nevertheless, this scenario is not without concerns.

2.8 Employment / income – priorities for spending

Most Member States agreed that the focus of public spending should be on creating employment.

Across the Member States, the factors of most importance to citizens are related to strengthening the economy, namely employment / decreasing unemployment, economic growth and increasing competitiveness. These factors are often viewed as being related and so if employment increases the economy will strengthen and the market will become more competitive.

Social considerations were less important than for health and education. Social protection is the most important factor, or one of the most important factors, in only two Member States; Greece and Germany.

Only in Greece did citizens specify that increasing social protection is equally if not more important. They felt that economic growth is an important goal but they feel it is particularly difficult to achieve and they would be prepared to compromise the rate of growth in order to provide greater social protection to Greek citizens.

German citizens prioritised employee well-being, in particular that:

- Employees should be paid fairly
- Employees should be able to combine their career and family by having access to day care services
- Unemployed people should be encouraged and supported back into work so they do not become long-term unemployed

2.9 Stage 2 conclusions

Social equality remains a key factor of social well-being for citizens, second to the economy. People are evidently angered and uncomfortable at the prospect of increased inequality in the future. This principle informed most of the discussions and decision-making in the groups when talking about health and education.

Increasing employment to strengthen the economy, while at the same time decreasing inequality were the key drivers which tended to underpin the choices that respondents made in the groups. Alongside a desire to grow the economy was an even stronger desire to ensure the best possible healthcare and education for all.

Respondents found it difficult to prioritise expenditure in 2030, particularly in the area of healthcare. As one would expect, the current economic context coloured their view and often they reverted to the present as opposed to the future, referring to for example the 'current economic crisis' to explain their perspective.

3 Objectives and Methodology

3.1 Background and objectives

There is increasing interest amongst policy makers in the quality of life and well-being of citizens and how policies can enhance these in the long run. This is reflected in initiatives such as the European Commissions' communication of 20 August 2009, 'GDP and Beyond' or the report by the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussy Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, presented in September 2009.

The Commission also supports a reflection project "Well-being 2030" which seeks to investigate the major trends and developments that could influence Europe's policy options for improving its citizens' well-being by the year 2030. In this context, research is required to understand citizens' hopes and fears for the longer-term future, what challenges they perceive are facing society, what choices they would make among different, realistic options to address some of these issues and what possibilities there are for maximizing well-being in the long run. This envisaged research should help European policy makers design longer-term visions, taking into account the views and concerns of citizens.

The objectives for the research can be broadly summarized as follows:

- Explore citizens' fears and hopes for the future (2030 and the future in general)
- Understand what kind of society European citizens want
- Investigate citizen's perceptions of the challenges facing society
- Explore the choices they would make with regard to specific trade-offs / scenarios.

3.2 Methodology and sampling

Asking citizens to think about the future is difficult – especially when the time frame is 20 years. People tend not to think this far ahead, and if they do it tends to be purely in terms of changes in their own life stage – e.g. children, career, retirement.

It was necessary to guide respondents to think of the "bigger picture" as the research was not focused on the concept of well-being at a personal and emotional level, but rather on the macro-level determinants of well-being.

Understanding how or if citizens perceive the impact of wider society and social and other policies on their own sense of well-being was an important part of the research – do they struggle to relate their subjective state to the wider context, or is the interdependence between key aspects of well-being (health, standard of living, employment) and broader society clearly understood?

The method used was to reconvene the groups. What this means is that the same respondents who take part in the first group also take part in the second group. This is a valuable approach in several ways:

- Findings and ideas discussed at the first session can be developed and presented back to the group for discussion

- Respondents can be given exercises to complete between stages and also encouraged to discuss the topic with family and friends (acting as peer researchers). Knowing that they will be coming back to discuss the topic again helps to ensure that such conversations take place
- Having more time to debate and consider the issues can lead to more informed and thought through responses in the second session, something which will be essential for the success of this project

This report is based on the second stage of group discussions conducted in March/April 2011.

The research returned to the same eight Member States encompassed in the first stage, namely Estonia (EE), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (EL), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Sweden (SE), and the UK.

The discussion groups covered a range of respondents stratified by:

1) Age:

- Young adults (aged 18-29)
- Adults (aged 30-44)
- Older people (aged 45+)

2) Economic situation:

- Low
- Medium/ High
(referred to as low or medium/high in the illustrative verbatim quotes)

3) Locality

- Urban
- Rural

Each group lasted about 120 minutes and each group was conducted with the same participants as Stage 1.

4 Well-being of society

The discussions in each group in each country started with an exploration of views on the choices, constraints and trade-offs at the high society level.

The broad areas under consideration were:

- Society and community (e.g. social inequalities, social cohesion, values, crime, isolation, sense of shared values)
- Economy (e.g. growth, globalization, productivity and competitiveness)
- Resources for the future (e.g. sustaining resources, public financing, environment for future generations)
- Environment (for example having to adapt to climate change)

4.1 Society and community

Opinions were divided as to the importance of society and community in the well-being of society. About half of the countries surveyed felt society and community was not the most important area of societal well-being whereas, half felt that it was one of the most important areas of social well-being.

"The first point is the most important one – it affects everything – the economy and resources for the future – they all require cooperation and compromise." (Poland, rural, 30-44, male, low)

"The following three depend on the first one. If we change this, other things will also change..." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

A variety of constraints were discussed, those mentioned in more than one Member State, are as follows:

- **Social inequality:**
 - The disparity between rich and poor (RO, EL, FR). The Greek respondents felt that the economic crisis had been felt more keenly by the medium and low socio-economic classes than the higher classes. Some of the older Romanian respondents reminisced over times of communist rule when the gap between rich and poor was seemingly less:

"Why was it possible during Ceausescu's time? In those times, the director of the enterprise was earning only double comparing to what I was. Now, they earn 50 times more! Why is there such a big difference between us? (Romania, rural, 45+, male, low)

"Eradicating poverty, the social problems linked to the economy, poverty." (France, urban, 18-29, male, high/medium)
 - Disparities in education and comprehension – as this will impact on the effectiveness of any action (DE)

"People who have little access to education probably also have little access to information, and even if they do, they probably cannot assess and understand it as well as somebody who had access to higher education." (Germany, urban, 30-44, female, low)

- **Language and cultural barriers** – it was felt that the different cultures of each Member State would make it difficult to adopt a single EU policy (SE, DE)
- **Immigration** – the impact is felt on the countries in which the immigrants arrive and from where the immigrants leave:
 - A lack of shared values in the country that immigrants move to
 - Secondly, there is a perception that the economic crisis is worse because of the influx of immigrants as they are also looking for employment and there is a perception that the crime rate increases as unemployment increases among both immigrants and local people (EL)
 - There is also a perception that the lack of employment opportunities is increasing the rate of emigration from some countries and depleting the remaining skills base (FR)

"Going abroad to work is serious, it's a form of brain drain." (urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

In addition, the following constraints were mentioned by individual Member States:

- **Corruption** within political and administrative levels (RO)

"Corruption, yes, this is everywhere. If they don't have a personal interest, they do nothing." [Romania, urban, 30-44, female, medium/high]
- The **scale** of the problems and the **time** it will take to deal with them (UK)

"The 'Big Society' in itself ... the problem is so huge" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)
- **Policy and decision-making** – respondents questioned whether policy tackling social cohesion could work; they doubted that there could ever be sufficient delivery mechanisms in place to enforce ideas in practice (UK)

"There's a lot of chiefs but not enough indians" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)
- The **cost** associated with community initiatives within a typically wasteful government culture (UK).

"I think the sector of the government that needs sorting out is local government... so much waste" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

Interestingly, others felt that funding was not a constraint as they felt that governing forces could do little to impact society and community anyway (DE).

- **Lack of community values/ individualistic attitudes** – people have different values and beliefs and tend to act in their own interests rather than those of the community (EE)

“Each and every one of us has different values and then we are at war. The war involves even tanks and planes in other parts of the world. Here, things are done with rude words and talking behind each other’s back. This is where problems arise – crime and social inequality are rising, etc...”
(Estonia, urban, 45+, male, low)

- **Lack of opportunities for graduates** (FR) – young French respondents feel that they cannot find work on graduation and that a degree does not confer what it used to, as a result
- **Market apathy** – there is a perception that instead of taking action, people tend to complain and do nothing themselves nowadays, this apathy in the population could make it difficult for policy makers to shift attitudes in the community or engage people in policy (EE).

“It’s simpler to complain than to think along and be positive and make some decisions. It’s simple and mundane psychology, to take the easier way out like ... if everyone was making an effort to ensure welfare.”
(Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

4.2 Economy

Economy is felt to be the most important area of societal well-being in many Member States. It is believed that a strong economy is the foundation on which the other areas of well-being depend.

“Economy is an important factor at the global level, not only for me or other citizens. The crisis has also an influence now but anyway, a stable and sustainable economy means well-being for the society and the people”
(Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

“An affluent society will take good care of the environment and everything else – such a society will have money to spend. This will affect everything else.” (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/ medium)

“Everything depends upon it, education, employment, benefits, council’s budgets” (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

However, many Germans felt that the economy was the least important because they assumed that measures to improve the economy would be to the benefit of companies and the individuals running them rather than the community as a whole. In addition, some felt that there are already sufficient measures in place to support the economy:

“Today the politicians seem to put economy above all. Social issues are dismissed as social romanticism, and everybody agrees that environmental activists are crazy. Instead they bloat the economic issues, and that’s our core problem.” (Germany, urban, 45+, male, high/medium)

Across the Member States it seems to be the older respondents who are prioritising the economy in the well-being of society slightly more than others.

The perceived limitations facing policy makers can be grouped into three themes:

4. Local government / EU commission
5. Local economy
6. Geography

Local government / EU:

- **Corruption** at a political and administrative level (RO, DE)

“There are certain interests, many people benefited from exploiting the economy. There are people from the government, from the senate, they all have companies making money for themselves.” (Romania, rural, 45+, male, low)

“The politicians are often involved with the companies and therefore bound by the companies’ constraints and interests. And then they get lulled by lobbyists. In the end, the companies decide and not the politicians.” (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

In this context, German respondents also expressed that they feel the economic lobbies are acting only in the best interests of large companies. Consequently, there is a perception that the lobby groups cannot be trusted to act in the best interests of the general public.

- **Conflicting goals** within different sectors (DE, EL) – some respondents felt that the goals of the different areas (e.g. environment, economy) are conflicting and so focussing on one area would inevitably be to the detriment of another

“If I try to strengthen one, I usually have to take away something from the other. It’s always been like that.” (Germany, urban, 30-44, female, low)

- **Diverse markets within the EU** (younger EE) – younger respondents in Estonia found it difficult to understand how it would be possible to satisfy the economies of all Member States with a single policy given that some markets are clearly faring much better than others:

“If we look at it from the level of the European Union, it is impossible to get the economy back on track ... because situations are so different. While Greece is down, some other countries are doing a bit better. But actually when the European Union was established, it was intended to create one wholesome Europe, but this has not worked out. Countries still stick together and are towards others... large countries are still against those in Eastern Europe and this is how they act... there is no common economic policy in Europe.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

- **Bureaucracy and hierarchy / inefficiencies** (younger EE, UK) – the bureaucracy involved in policy-making is seen as a constraint/inefficiency in itself. Added to which, UK respondents felt that a lack of forward planning is a further obstacle.

“All these laws and different regulations and the whole political landscape in this huge gray area. It’s impossible to find your way in it.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

“Good times and bad times are ahead, but it’s about planning for the future” (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

Local Economy

- **Impact of the economic crisis on local economies** (EL, UK)
 - The **current poor state of the national economy** – Greek respondents find it difficult to believe there is hope for growth given the poor state of the national economy at present and the lack of available investment to generate business and jobs.

“At this stage we are talking there can be no development, because there are no funds. How a citizen or a business can do something new and different if there are no funds to support the change?” (Greece, urban, 35-44, male, low)
 - **Retraction of spending** (UK) – in the UK there have been substantial government spending cuts and in light of that respondents felt it would be difficult for policy-makers to justify spending in the future

“It’s difficult because there’s almost not enough money to go around” (UK, 45+, high, female, urban)
 - **Short-term investment time frame** – some Swedish respondents are of the opinion that companies are only viewing investments in the short-term and that unless they change this view to think longer-term this could limit their survival into the longer-term (SE)

“Politicians have a shortage, because they do not dare to look long term”. (Sweden, urban, 30-44, male).
 - **Low wages** preventing people moving up the social scale, which gives rise to frustration and resentment (RO)

“If we’d be better paid, we would be more productive, we would have money to take care of our health. If not, we don’t have the nerves. The lack of education starts from poverty and standard of living. I am educated for example. But, is I lack all sort of things and cannot afford to live decently I act badly.” (Romania, urban, 30-44, male, high/medium)

Geography:

- **Migration** of young people to other countries, in search of higher wages/a better standard of living, depleting the national workforce of skilled and educated people (RO)
- **Increasing population increasing pressure on government budgets** (UK) as a result of inbound immigration and so decreased expenditure per capita
- **World events** – such as the earthquake and tsunami in Japan (UK), social uprising in Bahrain, Egypt and Libya. Respondents felt that as a nation they should help with these events but they also recognised that they are unpredictable and that their economy can also be damaged as a result of helping others

"The cost of wars as well, bailing out countries – Ireland wants billions from us" (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

4.3 Resources for the future

Some respondents found 'resources for the future' difficult to grasp as a concept as it included public financing and pensions as well as natural resources and their instinct was to think of it as the environment and natural resources only (EL, DE, UK).

Resources for the future were considered to be of less importance than the economy or society and community in societal well-being. Some respondents assumed that once the resources are consumed alternative sources will be developed (EE).

A few respondents feel that resources for the future are one of the most important aspects of society well-being (younger RO, DE, EL) because it is the legacy of the current population to the future generation.

"It's the starting point, we don't want to further ruin what we have left and lapse into an even worse starting position. We want to improve, not worsen." (Germany, rural, 18-29, male, high/medium)

The younger Romanian respondents felt that resources for the future are important because:

- a) Resources for the future affect the lives of their actual or future children
- b) The exploitation of current resources can lead to tragedies, changes in the environment and ultimately natural disasters
- c) The current behaviour of using raw materials leading to rarefaction of resources can create conflict between nations

"Natural resources. They tend to disappear, see Libya now for example. The less resources, the bigger the fight. The fight over resources, it will always be. If only there was a source of energy to cover all these things..." (Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

Some Greek respondents felt that the areas of public financing and pensions, which fall under resources for the future, are particularly important and yet are the second hardest to improve after the economy.

The main constraints for policy makers in the area of resources for the future are considered to be:

- **Lack of interest:**
 - **Political** (RO, UK) – British respondents felt this was demonstrated by a lack of research and development into alternatives.

"They don't even think about natural resources. They are not interested at all" (Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

"It costs a lot to look into these things" (UK, 18-29, low, female, urban)

- **Public (UK)**

"People are a barrier to policy makers because they want to consume and live how they always have done" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

- **Economic pressure:**

- Pressure from the economy / industry to keep resources affordable (DE)
- Pressure from markets selling resources – those markets selling the resources may not be willing to agree to resource shifting or restructuring (DE, RO)

"There is one more constraint towards resources. The interests to sell oil are too high. They make a lot of money from selling oil. Of course these profits would fall if we all used natural resources." (Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

- **Lack of long-term political planning (EL, SE).** There was a desire for more long-term planning from both Greek and Swedish respondents. Greek respondents felt that it was poor organisation/consistency that led to poor planning irrespective of whichever political party was in favour.

- **International conflict relating to natural resources (UK)** – the recent crisis in Libya has heightened awareness among respondents that international disputes often relate to countries competing needs for limited global resources.

"I think a big thing is going to be wars over things like oil... we didn't talk about this last time, but with things like what's happening in Libya going on, it makes you think" (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

"If you cast your mind back to the oil crisis in the 70's, the middle east enjoyed a shift of power and I can see that happening again... like in Russia for gas and Ukraine." (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

- **The diversity of markets within the EU** was again expressed by the younger respondents in Estonia. They felt that it would be difficult to create and manage a single policy to apply across the different Member states when the resources in each country are different

"This union will never manage this because resources are so different by countries. Ensuring resources should be national priority, at the level of Estonia, for example. Estonia itself should put things into perspective." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

- **Lack of funding (EL)**

4.4 Environment

Opinions are mixed as to the relative importance of the environment in social well-being.

For some respondents the environment is the most important area of social well-being because unless the environment is intact there is nowhere to live and the other factors are meaningless:

"I'm thinking about the last one. If Estonia should suffer from a terrible flood or something, we would have nothing to do with this society. I think the last two also coincide, I mean getting used to climate changes. For others the society is the main issue, but for me it is the climate change." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

"The environment is extremely important. You can see that with what is going on in Japan. It destabilises a country very quickly. The nuclear policy could be questioned." (France, rural, 45+, female, medium/low)

Although, others felt that, in the context of societal well-being, environment ranked below other aspects they also recognised the importance of the environment as a global issue.

"If you don't have a world you don't have any of the others" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

Others felt that although the environment is not of primary importance currently that it should be of greater importance as they believe that climate changes and pollution caused by the continuous deterioration of the environment can lead to natural disasters (RO).

"It was seen in many countries [that the environment is important], in fact, the best example we have in Japan which was prepared for the earthquake, but not prepared for the tsunami..." (Romania, urban, 30-44, male, medium/high)

The main constraints to environmental policy-making are believed to be:

- **Co-operation from:**
 - **Consumers** (EE, DE) – it is felt that environmental policies that require consumers to behave differently are liable to be met with resistance because consumers have become used to a comfortable lifestyle and so they are unlikely to adopt behaviours that are less convenient / more uncomfortable for the sake of the environment

"Concerning the topic of environment, those various programmes which have been developed to decrease the amount of carbon dioxide and so on, they do not work... I think it's because people have become so comfortable. Why should they ... if they have a car, they drive it because it's comfortable for everyone – why leave the comfort-zone? All masses should behave accordingly because if just a few people changed their lifestyle, it would have no impact on the big picture." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

“People want to have everything the cheapest way possible. This does not go well with our environment” (Germany, rural, 18-29, male, high/medium) “If people continue to go to the bakery by car or keep buying electronics that increase the energy demand, that’s not something that can be solved by law. The whole society needs to change and have the will to change.” (Germany, rural, 18-29, female, high/medium)

- **Companies and corporations (UK, FR)**

“It’s the companies that need to get their act together more than the public” (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

- **Countries / politicians** to adopt environmental measures as set out (UK, FR)

“A lack of political will. Even when there’s the will, there aren’t always the means for it.” (France, urban, 30-44, male, high/medium)

- **Financial:**

- **The cost of environmentally-friendly equipment, machinery and products** (EE, DE) – respondents felt that using environmentally-friendly products and so on is expensive and deters people/companies from using them

“Environmentally-friendly things are always twice as expensive, it’s as if the prices of those are high on purpose, so that as few people as possible would consume them.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

- **Lack of funding** (DE, EL, UK) – in order to make environmental changes economically feasible. In markets which are economically stressed, such as Greece, there is the perception that there are no funds available to invest in a more “green” economy.

“For example, they subsidised solar energy and managed to really stimulate the market for solar panels, so now they can step-by-step reduce the subventions again. It works.” (Germany, rural, 18-29, male, high/medium)

“If you care about the environment you need to put money in” (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

- **Conflict of interests and priorities:**

- **Conflict of priorities** between environment and other factors – some of the younger Estonian respondents felt that found there is a conflict between improving the environment and improving economy, for example through the sale of pollution permits to improve the economy but at the expense of the environment.

“Well this environment and economy, which came out now – if one didn’t sell the pollution permits, the economy would start going down again.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

- **Conflict of business interests** – some politicians in Romania also have businesses in wood processing and so do not view environmental policies favourably

“Personal interests are put before environment protection. They cut down forests and sell wood as raw material to China.” (Romania, urban, 30-44, female, medium/high)

- **Level of development/affluence of each Member State (RO)** – it was felt that northern European countries are more affluent and developed countries can afford to focus on protecting the environment, whereas in Romania people cannot afford the luxury of doing so as they have other day to day matters to contend with

“What can I say... In Northern countries for example, they take care of the environment. But in a society like ours... Everything is messed up. What environment can you have in such a society? Who cares about it?” (Romania, urban, 30-44, male, medium/high)

- **Assessing the value of environmental measures already in place (UK)** – are these measures (e.g. recycling) really making a difference

“I think there’s a great improvement as far as recycling is concerns but all the waste is taken with the other waste and we don’t know about it” (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

- **Unpredictable natural disasters (UK)**

“Natural disasters, they can stop everything” (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

- **Lack of interest in environmental issues** among politicians, national leaders and international leaders (RO). In addition, there is a belief that in Romania funds for environmental interests are diverted into other business interests

- **Lack of energy independence (FR)**

“France must be much more autonomous, independent. We’re not independent for uranium which mainly comes from Africa.” (France, urban, 30-44, female, high/medium)

4.5 Choices and priorities

Many respondents felt that all four areas were inter-dependent on each other (RO, SE, UK, FR) they believed that if one area were to improve then the others would also. For example, if the environment is taken care of there will be more resources available for longer, alternatively if the economy is doing well the progress will be felt by the society and community in many ways.

“I think all these things are linked into each other anyway” (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

“You cannot focus solely on one. If you do this the others suffer. If you only do things for society the economy will reduce because the people who

earn the money will leave France. You have to be able to do everything together.” (France, urban, 18-29, male, high/medium)

Ranking of aspects of well-being of society by country

	RO		UK	SE	PL	EE	EL	DE	FR
	18-29	30+							
Society & community	4	3	1 & 2	1		1	2		1 18-29
Economy	2	1	1 & 2	1	1	2	1		
Resources for future	1	4	3			1 & 4	4		1 45 +
Environment	3	2	4				3	1	1 30-44

Overall, **the economy** closely followed by **society and community** were considered to be the most important areas of society well-being.

“But the economy makes the world go around, without economics there wouldn’t be a society – whether or not good or bad, it won’t be here” (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

“It’s all about care for the people, for me that’s the most important” (UK, 18-29, low, female, urban)

In Romania, opinion was divided by age. Younger respondents (18-29 year olds) placed greater emphasis on resources for the future, while older respondents (30 years and older) felt that the economy was the most important followed by the environment, they ranked resources for the future last.

Estonian respondents were also divided to some extent, with some 30-44 year olds feeling that resources for the future are the most important area. While, others felt resource were the least important because they felt that once exhausted an alternative would be found.

“I’d also go for resources because the creation of common values is a very long-term process. It’s easier to make decisions which would truly regulate the sustainability of resources and preservation of the environment for future generations.” (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

“I’d suggest new resources for the future because whenever there is the danger, people can come up with something new, they simply concentrate on solving the problem. When there is a problem, a solution will simply be found, all sorts of...” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

Only in Germany is the environment the most important factor. The German respondents reasoned that the environment is the basis of human existence and so it is of most importance.

“The question is whether economy will even exist once we ruined our environment so much that there’s nothing left to build upon.” (Germany, rural, 18-29, female, high/medium)

Some respondents felt that the ideal society, combining all four of these factors, is unachievable in the next 20 years or even their lifetime given the current economical situation (RO, EL, EE). Nevertheless, it was felt that this was no excuse for not attempting to work towards it (EE).

"Well, considering Romania, about 120 years. We need to change some generations. In our country nothing was done in the last 20 years." (Romania, urban, 30-44, male, medium/high)

"Not in absolute terms, but a society which is moving in this direction is certainly possible." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

Conversely, other respondents felt that it is possible to have a society which combines all of these factors (UK, PL). However, they felt that in order to achieve this there would have to be some fundamental changes in government strategy and funding so that national society well-being becomes a priority (UK, PL). Polish respondents were particularly disillusioned with local politicians, believing that they have only their own best interests at heart rather than those of the local people.

Every politician will have his own way and in the end, nothing will change. No law will be passed but politicians will just quarrel with one another. We know that they are doing it just for show because later they go to one restaurant together and have fun." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/medium)

5 Personal well-being

The discussion then moved onto areas of concern which were identified in the first stage as a concern for individual well-being.

These were as follows:

- Health services (access/affordability of new treatments)
- Education (cost, quality/ content of curriculum)
- Employment (increasing unemployment, income, work-life balance and retirement age)

5.1 Policy priority

Some respondents found it difficult to prioritise one area over another within personal well-being (RO, UK, SE, EE, FR). They felt that all three areas are equally important.

"No one should be neglected, all 3 are important!!! (Romania, rural, male, 45+ years, low)

"All these things impact on each other – they are all equally important" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

Ranking of aspects of personal well-being by country

	RO	UK	SE	PL	EE	EL	DE	FR
Health Services		1	1	1		2/3	1	1
Employment	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	1
Education	1	1	3	3	1	3/2	1	1

Within many Member States there was no clear consensus at a country level, and opinion tended to differ by age group (RO, UK, SE, EE, FR). However, there was no consistent trend in importance by age group.

Employment was most important for many as it is felt to provide economic security and because it facilitates health and education services (RO, FR). While others felt that employment provides psychological, cultural and emotional benefits (UK).

"As priority, the employment. If I have a job, and I'm well paid, I have the money for health services as well, I'm not nervous, and also the education is related with the lack of money." (Romania, urban, male, 30-44 years, high)

"Yes people want to work, its making people feel good about themselves as well as working for a living" (UK, 18-29, low, female, urban)

"Employment is the first lever: when you have an income you invest, you consume if everyone had a job that would re-launch the economy, you feel better in your head. Income opens the floodgates on many things." (France, urban, 30-44, male, high/medium)

Some felt that employment is the most important aspect currently because of the current state of the economy (RO, EL, EE).

“Everything is related to employment, in order to not to leave the teachers in England to take care of the elderly and stay here to teach our next generations.” (Romania, urban, female, 30-44 years, high)

“Education is important in the long-term perspective, but currently the problem of unemployment is way too big. Income is low and people in Estonia compare themselves with other European countries where life is much better.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

In addition, older Romanian respondents felt that employment was most important because it ensures an active population is paying social security and pensions for current retirees, evidently an issue most relevant to older respondents.

“Employment because the employees’ number will continue to decrease and then will not be money for pensions....” (Romania, rural, male, 45+ years, low)

However, there are others who felt that employment is the most important aspect for future generations because it impacts on people’s personal development and feelings of self-fulfilment (PL).

“The state does not want to get involved in creating jobs but it should influence the development of such economic sectors that would create new jobs for people.” (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/medium)

Only German respondents gave the lowest priority to employment. They reasoned that employment would benefit from improvements in health and education and so it would not be necessary to focus on this area as well.

“If I enjoy a good health and education, I will find work.” (Germany, urban, 45+, female, high/medium)

Those who felt that **education** is more important felt that it is the cornerstone to employment and consequently accessing other aspects of personal well-being (RO, UK, FR). It was seen as being a lifelong investment in people’s lives (PL).

“All the others originate in it. If you don’t have a good education you cannot have a good health condition, you cannot have a job. If you have no education, or you have 3 or 4 grades or 3 universities graduated without knowing something, because there are many who graduated a university without reading a book, then how could someone, who wants to make money based on my work, hire me/give me employment, and pay me for this?” (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years, low)

“Education because then they can look after themselves more.” (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

“I am of the same opinion – the key is life-long learning. The same thing – if you have training possibilities, some additional resources for people to learn something new and become employed again.” (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

However, in Poland, although respondents feel education is important, they fear that the quality of it is declining.

"Education - because its quality has been falling and when I hear how young people who are 15 or 16 years old express themselves, I am really scared. The quality of education has been falling and the young cannot even write properly. They are unable to speak or write properly but can only communicate with the use of emoticons or by texting or sending e-mails - this is what they do best. I don't know if teachers are too lazy or the school curriculum is badly prepared. The curriculum is such that instead of essays we used to write, students do only stupid tests, which are full of errors." (Poland, urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

While those who prioritised **health services** over the other aspects did so primarily because they feel that without good health society would not be able to operate (UK, PL, DE). In addition they felt that impact of health is vast, being across both current and future generations and throughout the whole life of an individual (PL). Others reasoned that people are living longer and consequently have greater demands for health care (FR).

"I think you need to prioritise health because if you've not got health, you've got nothing" (UK, 30-44, low, female, urban)

"The healthcare service – one cannot work without being healthy. Even if one finds a job, one will have no energy to work." (Poland, rural, 30-44, female, low)

"People are living to be older and older. There are continually fewer people in health [services]. You have to change place because there's less staff, or means." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

6 Health services – priorities for spending

6.1 Background

Trend: People will need to take more responsibility for maintaining health, e.g. concerning prevention of lifestyle related diseases (obesity, heart disease...)

Trend: Ageing population will result in increase of age-related diseases, increased pressure on healthcare systems and higher cost of healthcare

Opportunity: Development of medicine, medical research and healthcare systems will improve health and quality of treatment

Risk: Growing pressure on health resources may cause a switch from public to private healthcare, affecting the access to health services for those who cannot afford it

6.2 Priorities for spending

Participants were asked to consider the following areas in terms of which should be prioritised for public spending

a. Investment in medical research

b. Extension of publicly funded medical treatments

c. Strengthening of health care structures: modern, efficient and well-equipped hospitals

d. Investment in healthcare staff: higher salaries and better working conditions for doctors, health personnel, medical researchers

e. Promotion of prevention behaviours (e.g.: education, food regulation, awareness campaigns, screening programmes)

Health service priorities for spending by country

	RO	UK	SE	PL	EE	EL	DE	FR
Investment in medical research		1	1		1	1		
Extension of publicly funded treatments			1	1	1	1	1	
Strengthening of health care structures	1		1	1	1	1		1
Investment in healthcare staff								
Promotion of prevention behaviours	1		1	1	1	1	1	

There was a lack of consensus in many Member States because opinion differed by age and locality (SE, PL, EE, EL). The table above shows all the areas of most importance identified in each Member State.

Whilst it was difficult for respondents to prioritise where spending should be directed, it appears that 'promotion of prevention behaviours' and 'strengthening of health care structures' were identified most consistently across the eight Member States. This was closely followed by 'extension of publicly funded treatments' and then 'investment in medical research'. 'Investment in healthcare staff' was consistently identified as being the lowest priority.

6.2.1 Investment in medical research

Investment in medical research is a priority for some because of the human life it has the potential to save. Respondents referred to the steps made in cancer research to illustrate this point (UK).

"You have to cure things today so research is extremely important, look at cancer research, you have to continuously advance because that saves lives" (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

Notably, both British and older French respondents feel that charities should not be the only source of medical research.

"Investing in research, that's important. We expect we'll discover something. However more and more people are affected by aids, cancer. It is important that research continues. You can't only just count on charity associations." (France, rural, 45+, female, medium/low)

Some respondents felt public spending in research is a priority to increase understanding about different diseases (EE, EL).

Greek respondents felt that increasing public investment in medical research would also benefit employment by increasing the number of jobs and research positions for young people in this field.

Estonian respondents also felt it is important for public investment in medical research because they suspect the motives of pharmaceutical companies conducting medical research are for profit rather than the good of the public.

"If a private pharmaceutical company invests in medical research, there will be no benefit for people. The company will be the only benefactor in terms of profit and actually I'm not at all convinced these days whether all the stuff they tell us about research is right. Take all these vaccinations, for example, all these talks about whether or not they are altogether necessary and perhaps it is the state who should interfere more." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

Conversely, German respondents felt that medical research is the responsibility of the pharmaceutical companies and as a result they believed that public investment in this area is unnecessary.

Furthermore, respondents from other Member States do not see investment in medical research as a priority because they believe there are other more immediate priorities, such as hospitals and prevention campaigns that require more important attention to keep people healthy (RO). Others feel that knowledge of diseases is sufficiently advanced (younger FR).

6.2.2 Extension of publicly funded medical treatments

Respondents prioritising extension of publicly funded medical treatments felt that everyone should have equal access to healthcare (SE, PL, EE).

“The basket of the basic health services is the most urgent matter, the most needed. Prevention and other things are also very important but we can wait for them a bit longer while the immediate and direct treatment is a priority.” (Poland, urban, 45+, female, high/ medium)

In the UK, the understanding was that the extension might help to address the ‘postcode lottery’ of unequal healthcare provided across the UK.

There was some confusion around the meaning of this statement in the UK as all medical treatments are publically funded and very few accessed private medical care.

A few respondents who use private medical care and are aware of the cost of treatment through their private healthcare feel that this statement is unrealistic because of the financial cost it would place on the healthcare system (PL).

6.2.3 Strengthening of health care structures: modern, efficient and well-equipped hospitals

The strengthening of health care structures was felt to be an important consideration in the sense of better equipment, access to hospitals, and better systems that made sure the healthcare system runs more smoothly and provides better patient care (UK, RO, SE, PL, EE, EL).

“I think that if hospitals are modernized and receive better equipment, health will get better. For example, if you go to a hospital now, you can go sick of something and return home sicker or sick of something else because of the filth that is there.” (Romania, urban, 18-29, female, low)

“I think that strengthening of the healthcare structures is the most important – it does not matter whether it is a public or a private facility, what is important is a possibility that one can be thoroughly examined in just one hospital. Now it is profitable to build new hospitals while at the same time, the old ones are being closed down – this does not make any sense. The healthcare structures should be maintained while the rest – salaries of medical staff, reimbursement of drugs are less important. It is the most important for people to find real care and treatment in hospitals.” (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/ medium)

“The other thing, for example, is that you do not have the equipment to ... the simplest thing, something you can do the X-rays or magnetic tomography with – you cannot use the ordinary binocular for this, can you? However, unless you have an educated person, no one can operate this big machine. These two things walk hand in hand.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

In Sweden there is a perception that more resources are needed to reduce waiting lists.

However, in the UK many questioned the need for further structural intervention in light of the current government restructure of the NHS and they doubted whether this would improve patient care.

“But this brings us back to bureaucracy which is preventing us from having a good health service” (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

Only German respondents felt that strengthening of healthcare structures was of least importance because they are already of sufficient quality.

6.2.4 Investment in healthcare staff: higher salaries and better working conditions for doctors, health personnel, medical researchers

Some felt that there was a need to invest in healthcare staff in order to keep them motivated and to maintain an expert workforce (UK).

“It’s not just the doctors that are written here it’s the nurses and the maternity nurses, they are the ones that need the money... the best ones all leave to become managers otherwise” (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

Others felt that there should be investment in staff training and staff numbers to improve their working conditions (FR).

“I think that will happen more by investment in medical personnel. If you want hospital personnel to work better you have to improve their working conditions, increase the number of nurses.” (France, urban, 18-29, male, high/medium)

In many Member States investment in healthcare staff was the least important area (UK, RO, PL, EL).

Some British respondents felt that the focus should be on patients and their care rather than the staff.

“This doesn’t say anything about the patients it’s just the doctors and the nurses not the health service” (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

Respondents in Romania felt that investment in staff is not a priority. They believe that if Romanian healthcare staff left Romania for higher salaries they were of the opinion that healthcare staff from poorer countries (e.g. India) would come to Romania to take their place.

Meanwhile, Greek respondents felt that the salaries of healthcare staff are high enough when compared to those of other public and private sector employees and so they felt there was no need to invest in them further.

Investment in healthcare staff is also one of the least important for the majority of Polish respondents. Polish respondents reported that it is still common place to give a bribe to see a specialist, to have an operation completed or even to reduce the waiting time for an operation. Despite efforts by the government to stop this corruption, bribery is still common among the medical profession. Consequently, respondents see no need to increase the salaries of doctors further.

“In my opinion, employees of the national healthcare service are not so badly remunerated in comparison to us. They make good salaries in relation to how they treat us. In fact, it is the doctors who have a higher position – they form a separate caste.” (Poland, urban, 18-29, female, high/ medium)

6.2.5 Promotion of prevention behaviours (e.g.: education, food regulation, awareness campaigns, screening programmes)

Promotion of prevention behaviour was felt to be a priority by respondents because it keeps people healthier and ultimately it would lessen the burden on the healthcare system (UK, RO, PL, EE, DE); prevention is perceived to be cheaper than treatment.

“The higher the awareness of the public of health dangers – what diseases they can fall victims to and what can happen to them, the less they will have to use the medical services and stay in hospitals, etc. If not for preventive examinations and social campaigns, the awareness of the public would be even lower.” (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

“I would say that promoting preventive behaviour because I once heard that in Canada they had welfare society already 20-30 years ago. They kept increasing the quality of hospital treatment and saw that the results were not actually getting much better. But then they started to promote health and only then the results begun to improve substantially. And this is tens of times cheaper than treating people.” (Estonia, urban, 45+, female, low)

“There’s too little done in this area, people have to be sensitised, we shouldn’t wait until they’re ill but rather teach them how to keep themselves healthy.” (Germany, urban, 45+, female, high/medium)

Respondents in Romania felt that campaigns should be accentuated in less well developed countries like theirs where they are currently almost non-existent.

“Exactly. These campaigns should start from school and teach children to cook and eat healthier, not just scrambled eggs and French fries. I don’t want to go against McDonald’s or KFC, but an educated man should know that food from McDonald’s doesn’t do him good.” (Romania, urban, 18-29, female, low)

The campaigns targeting obesity and smoking were viewed as particularly useful as they could save lives and money for the healthcare system in the long-term (UK).

“Prevention is sometimes better than cure... for me it’s even more important than research” (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

Respondents were of the opinion that promoting prevention behaviours could benefit the economy (DE); some reasoned for example that the resulting healthier population would take fewer days of sick leave, which would benefit the economy (SE).

“In the end the companies profit from healthy workers.” (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

Conversely, some respondents were unsure how there could be further focus and expenditure in this area (UK).

"You already see that, there's already a lot of information". (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

For some prevention was among the least important. Some felt that the cost of living a healthy lifestyle is too high for some (PL). Others felt that screening measures would be ineffective because many would not go if they did not have symptoms and others might be too frightened of what they might find (PL).

"This will not convince the public at large – maybe only a small group- so it will be a waste of public money. They will tell us to eat healthy foods but three meals made from healthy foods cost PLN 150 or PLN 200 (equivalent to 40-50 euro) and only a few Poles will be able to afford to eat in this way so most Poles will just ignore such advice and continue to live in the same way." (Poland, rural, 30-44, male, low)

"[Preventive examinations] – it all depends – one person will want to take advantage of them while another person will be afraid. (...) Many people will not go for such examinations out of fear that doctors will discover something wrong. If I feel no pain, there is nothing wrong with me." (Poland, rural, 30-44, female, low)

6.3 Health Scenario 1 - accessibility

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

The quality of medical treatment will increase, but it may not be accessible to everybody.

The majority of Member States strongly rejected this scenario as they felt that it introduces inequality into the healthcare system (UK, RO, SE, PL, EL, DE, FR). The assumption in many Member States was that the least wealthy in society would be most affected by this scenario (UK, RO, SE, PL, DE).

"It wouldn't be fair to the people who can't afford it." (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

"This falls from the beginning. Out of the question. What happens to people that can't afford it? In Romania, 90% of them will die." (Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

"The poor would die because they cannot afford to pay for medical treatment. It is sick, it is discrimination." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

"Everybody should be treated equally. Equally well." (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

Furthermore respondents believed that this scenario would undermine the health of the country (RO).

"This means cutting the population to half, more frequent heart condition deaths, more diseases, no way..." (Romania, rural, 45+, female, low)

Although the respondents did not like this scenario, some respondents in the UK discussed that it could be the result of rising medical treatment costs not being covered by state payments.

"I think we're going to have to accept that what we pay in terms of national insurance and income tax, doesn't cover the cost of the NHS" (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

There was a belief among some that this scenario of inequality in treatment currently exists to some degree (EE, FR).

"But I mean those who have the possibility, they do not need to wait for half a year, he has the possibility to see a private doctor, because he can afford it. However, the one waiting in the long line may never even make it to the doctor." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

"It's not a development, it's not progress, it's already happening. If people haven't got private insurance, there will be a sort of improvement in the quality of treatment. This is already what's happening, now." (France, urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

Instead of adopting this scenario, some respondents feel a better alternative would be to use means testing to determine who should pay for healthcare services and who should receive them free (RO).

“Offer it according to income. If you earn more, you have to pay for it. If you are poor, you go to public hospitals but still, you can benefit from the same treatment as people with money.” (Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

Similarly, German respondents believe that everyone should have access to basic medical treatment and additional services (e.g. elective cosmetic surgery) should be available but not from public money.

“Of course a boob job is not the business of public health spending, but the basic provision of necessary medical treatment is.” (Germany, rural, 18-29, female, medium/high)

6.4 Health Scenario 2 – private healthcare

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

Private and insurance-based healthcare systems would alleviate the burden on public finances, but they may not be accessible to everybody

There were mixed reactions to this scenario. Some Member States were quite accepting of it as they feel this situation already exists in their country (UK, EL). They accept the fact that wealthier people pay for their healthcare and that this alleviates the burden on the state healthcare system.

“It’s happening now – if you want to pay for private treatment some people pay for insurance monthly” (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

Others recognise the system as being in existence but they are not accepting of it (FR). They dislike the two tier system and feel it is morally unacceptable as it is only accessible to those who can afford it.

“They had a good solution. The social security system worked well. But private care is negotiating with people’s health. Commercialising people’s health.” (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

While at the other extreme, others felt this scenario represents inequality in healthcare (as in scenario 1) and as a consequence they felt it is an unacceptable scenario (RO, DE). They explained that this scenario leaves the poorest in society without adequate healthcare (RO, SE).

“So what if I will be able to pay? What about the poor? It still is the same thing. More quality with less access. Same thing as the first one.” (Romania, urban, 30-44, male, med/high)

Within some Member States there was a mix of views, as some respondents were accepting of this scenario, as they had experienced this situation, and others felt it was unacceptable, as they were unaware of its existence in their country (SE, PL).

"But the second scenario has already been implemented – let's look at the dental care – 90% of people go to private dental surgeries and pay for services and it is OK. And there is no problem." (Poland, urban, 45+, female, high/ medium)

"It would be better, if nothing like this happened. When someone gets sick – we do not know what can happen to us tomorrow – and is unable to work or has to take care of a sick person, he/ she will not be able to pay for medical treatment if the healthcare system is privatized. It seems to me that privatization does not make sense." (Poland, rural, 30-44, male, low)

The main concerns with this scenario were that:

- This system would result in some important clinical treatments not being available on the state system (such as those linked to smoking) and as a result there is a fear that patients could be denied treatment (DE).

"I fear that there might be areas that are super important and yet they are excluded from the public service." (Germany, rural, 19-28, female, medium/high)

- Private healthcare should not be seen as the solution to the country's healthcare needs and so it should operate alongside the state healthcare system (UK).

"If you're paying for that fine, good luck to you but we do need the NHS services." (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

- Citizens should not be obliged to pay a medical insurance premium (EL). Respondents felt that medical insurance should be voluntary and should not affect the quality of treatment received, as that should be the same irrespective of whether a patient is a private or public patient.
- While some respondents were of the view that using private and insurance-based systems is a realistic solution to the long queues in the state system some respondents were sceptical that insurance companies would pay out on claims (younger EE).

Romanian respondents felt that a fairer solution would be to adopt a progressive means tested approach (as they did when presented with the previous scenario). Those earning more would pay progressively more insurance whilst those on lower incomes would pay less proportionately, while both would benefit from the same healthcare services.

"These private insurance should be progressive, like public contributions. You should pay a percent of your income. And when you need healthcare and go to the hospital, no one should ask you how much you earn." (Romania, urban, 18-29, male, low)

While Polish respondents suggested that citizens who pay for private healthcare or medical insurance should also pay an additional fee towards the state medical healthcare system in order to help finance basic medical care for those who are financially worse off.

"People who engage in such practices should pay a special tax so we can fix a budget hole with this money or possibly spend it on medical

equipment or allocate some of this money to raise salaries. A higher tax should be imposed.” (Poland, rural, 30-44, female, low)

French respondents felt that the healthcare system should be safeguarded and that costs should be cut elsewhere. They suggested improving efficiencies within the social security system and identifying fraud to release additional budget for healthcare.

“Regulating help better, fighting fraud.” (France, urban, 30-44, male, high/medium)

6.5 Health Scenario 3 - technology

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

The use of technology can make healthcare more affordable, but it will involve depersonalization and less face-to-face contact.

Of the three scenarios, all Member States felt that this depersonalisation scenario to make healthcare more affordable was the most palatable. Their responses were most negative when they thought that technology was going to replace the majority of human interaction.

"Robots or machines can never replace humans." (Germany, urban, 45+, female, medium/high)

The potential benefits seen with this scenario are:

- In Romania, some respondents felt that the use of technology would help to eliminate the corruption currently in the healthcare system

"Yes, you can eliminate bribes with this one. For me it is a plus, it's better not to see the doctor because he pretends to not understand what I say until I put my hand in my pocket and give him something." (Romania, urban, 30-44, female, med/high)

- More efficient:
 - Potentially cost saving, which would allow funds to be redirected elsewhere (e.g. into patient services) (UK, DE)

"If it's going to make it more cost effective, I can't object to that..." (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

- Potentially time saving (SE)

"For me it's positive as it saves time. I can do my own treatment at home." (Germany, rural, 30-44, male, low)

- Good for those who do not like visiting the doctor face-to-face (UK, FR)

"I like it because I don't really want to go to the doctor" (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

- It could replace the unnecessary doctor appointments (PL)

"It is cool because when I go to the doctor, I feel no need to talk to him/her or to go out with him/her for a beer or to exchange telephone numbers. I see no problem in depersonalizing the system and limiting the amount of personal contact. It is not a social meeting but I just want to receive medical treatment." (Poland, urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

Whilst the concerns of introducing technology are:

- Loss of the 'human touch' which has benefits both in diagnosis and psychologically, in making people feel better (RO, SE, EL, DE, PL, FR) – older respondents tended to feel this slightly more keenly than others

"A lack of the face-to-face contact is not something that I like – I have to ask my doctor some questions because this concerns my body and it is very important. I cannot imagine that I don't have any personal contact with my doctor." (Poland, urban, 45+, female, high/ medium)

"You feel reassured, confident when you're dealing with humans. If there's nothing opposite you, you're groping in the dark." (France, rural, 45+, female, medium/low)

- Potential for misdiagnosis by computers – diagnosis is an art not a science and it is not as simple as entering an individual's symptoms into a computer to obtain a diagnosis of their condition (RO)

"Maybe diagnoses are difficult. The doctor may have some blood levels from me but there are diseases that are not easy to identify and where you'd need a real doctor and they are taking too little time for their patients even today." (Germany, rural, 18-29, female, medium/high)

- Not acceptable if the patient is at risk as a result of no longer having the interaction with the doctor (UK, PL)

"I would prefer to be personally examined by a specialist while the further treatment might be administered by e-mails, but the first visit has to be face to face." (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/ medium)

- Loss of healthcare jobs (UK, PL)

"As long as it doesn't impact on employment" (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

- Some specialists need to be seen in person (e.g. psychiatrists) (PL)

"Nothing will replace personally seeing a psychiatrist or a psychologist. Yesterday a surgery was performed by a machine and it was completely safe and successful but it was a surgeon who guided the machine. I do not see anything wrong with this but not in the case of every medical procedure." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

- Whether it is suitable for all patients, in particular the elderly (DE)

"I've been to the doc a lot lately and they always saw me for 5 minutes and sent me away again. If a machine could do this, that would be fine with me. But I wouldn't like a machine that takes care of older patients or does body care on older people." (Germany, rural, 18-29, female, medium/high)

- Some technologies are not universally available, for example, not everyone has access to the Internet and so if Internet only registration for visits to doctors is introduced there is concern about how those who do not have access would make appointments (PL)

- Technical problems / doubts about efficiency of depersonalisation (FR)

"They see everything. They're just bloody machines. But when they break down?" (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

6.6 Health summary

Of the aspects explored in the three scenarios, equal accessibility is evidently the most important. Respondents felt that it is imperative for healthcare to be accessible to everyone, irrespective of their social status or income. The concept that medical treatment could be compromised because of an individual's social status or income clearly angered many respondents and as a consequence they felt scenario one was the least acceptable of the three.

Overall, the option of paying for private healthcare or medical insurance was viewed as more acceptable among respondents. Many recognised this system as one that already operates in their country and they felt it alleviates pressure on the state system. However, there were others for whom this system was unfamiliar and they likened this scenario to that of unequal accessibility; they felt that again the poorest in society would be compromised in this scenario.

The depersonalisation of healthcare through the introduction of technology received the most positive response; there was no introduction of inequality. Respondents recognised that there were benefits to be gained for the health service and themselves but that there were also potential limitations in the extent to which technology could be used to replace the interaction with the doctor.

7 Education – priorities for spending

7.1 Background

Trend: Education will become critical in the process of global competition. Creativity and innovation will be extremely important

Trend: The link between education and work needs to be strengthened, by promoting both vocational/practical education and cooperation between schools/universities and businesses

Opportunity: Educational opportunities and educational systems will improve

Risk: Higher and better education will become more expensive

7.2 Priorities for spending

Participants were asked to consider the following areas in terms of which should be prioritised for public spending

- a. *Investment in infrastructure and teaching materials*
- b. *Increased accessibility of education for vulnerable groups (e.g. students with disabilities, with learning difficulties, with migration backgrounds)*
- c. *Financial assistance to students and their households (e.g. textbooks, vouchers)*
- d. *Attention to quality of teaching: upgrading of teachers' skills and training, increased meritocracy*
- e. *Incentives for selected and deserving students, such as grants and scholarships*

Public spending priorities by country

	RO	UK	SE	PL	EE	EL	DE	FR
Investment in infrastructure & teaching materials	1 18-29 2 30-44	3				2	2 30+	
Increased accessibility of education for vulnerable groups	2 45 +	5		1 rural		5	2 18-29	
Financial assistance to students & households	2 18-29	2		1 rural		3/4	2 18-29	
Attention to quality of teaching	1 30+	1	1	1 urban	1	1	1	1
Incentives for selected and deserving students		4				3/4	5	

7.2.1 Investment in infrastructure and teaching materials

There were mixed views about whether infrastructure should be a priority for investment both between and within Member States.

Some respondents felt that the education infrastructure and materials deserved priority funding (young RO respondents, EL, older DE respondents, urban PL) because they felt this was an area of shortcoming currently and investment could improve the quality of education.

“Investment in infrastructure and teaching materials, in the first place, because with it should be start. You cannot increase the accessibility if you didn't make any investments.” (Romania, urban, female, 18-29 years, low)

“When a school is well equipped, looks good and has suitable computer equipment and sports fields, there are special conditions encouraging children not to stay at home but to come to school and learn.” (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

Others were of the opinion that investment in this area would be relevant after the investment in training to ensure teachers have the appropriate tools for their jobs (UK).

However, within some Member States there was a difference of opinion:

- Respondents in Germany were not agreed about the state of the infrastructure. Young German respondents were of the view that the infrastructure is sufficient and so there is no need for additional investment, whilst the older German respondents (30 years +) feel there is a lack of resources and so additional investment should be focused in this area.

“The key word is the ‘living environment called school’. Schools need to be better equipped. There aren't even enough computers. There need to be decent working environments for students and teachers.” (Germany, urban, 45+, male, high/medium)

- Estonians also differed in their view as to whether infrastructure is a priority. Young Estonians feel that a move to digital materials is inevitable and as such investment is required, whereas older respondents did not feel this is an area of priority.

“I think that perhaps it would, indeed, be reasonable to buy some sort of a tablet than to keep printing books every year in huge numbers.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

7.2.2 Increased accessibility of education for vulnerable groups

Views differed wildly as to whether there was a need to focus investment on increasing accessibility of education; some felt accessibility had already been addressed whereas others felt it still needed attention.

Some respondents felt that access should be increased to those with disabilities or learning backgrounds (EE, EL, PL). Older Romanians felt that this area should be prioritized. They reasoned that that increasing accessibility will ultimately help society as a whole. They thought that as education of vulnerable groups improves

and these groups integrate into the workplace, the burden on the social benefit system should be reduced (RO).

“Accessibility for vulnerable groups, some of them are smarter than the ones well-offs.” (Romania, rural, female, 45+ years, low)

In other Member States this was the least concerning issue as it is believed that the education system already accommodates vulnerable group accessibility (UK).

In some Member States respondents differentiated between students with disabilities or learning difficulties and migration backgrounds and migrants were not seen to need increased assistance. Greek respondents felt that people of ‘migration’ backgrounds already study in Greek schools and universities and there is no need to provide further assistance. Estonians were of mixed views, some felt that the migrants (typically Russians) do not need further help but others felt that it could benefit society if their access to education was increased.

“But Russians also have a migrant background and they make up the risk group with high rate of unemployment – they do not know what to engage in and then the crime rate rises. In this respect there are two different things. B is the one that creates problems in the society because the people do not know what it is that they should start doing and this is why they cannot be used and they themselves cannot find their place in the society or on the labour market.” (Estonia, urban, 45+, female, low)

7.2.3 Financial assistance to students and their households

Financial assistance was thought to be important, to provide everyone with the opportunity to an education (RO, UK, EL, DE, PL).

“I’m in the same situation – if I had an extra pound... it’s all down to financials for me without money you can’t get there in the first place” (UK, 18-29, low, female, urban)

“It is a problem because textbooks are very expensive. These textbooks cannot be used again by the younger children and we face the same problem every year.” (Poland, rural area, 30-44, female, low)

Some were of the opinion that financial assistance should be provided only to those who need it rather than across the board (RO, UK, EE).

“Financial assistance to students and their households. There are many who cannot afford to attend a school, specifically a university and they have to be stimulated.” (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years. Low)

“Not all students have the same financial assistance.” (UK, 18-29, low, female, urban)

“Depending on income. Also, subsidies and child support depending on income... free food for those students who need it. Like if your income is smaller than a certain sum, you get a subsidy. The same should be the case with study books. If you are affluent, you can pay for it yourself.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

However, respondents in Germany feel that education should be free to all so that everyone has equal and fair access.

Polish respondents felt that the state should make it possible for a wider group of people to go to university by the provision of student loans. They discussed a previous student loan system they felt worked well, whereby after graduation students had to remain within Poland, thereby benefiting the economy as well.

“There used to be students loans - I don't know if they still exist – they were a good idea. In the past, university graduates were forced by law to work for five years and only then they were free to do what they wanted. If that system was re-imposed...” (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/medium)

7.2.4 Attention to quality of teaching

There was consensus in all Member States that spending should be focused on the quality of teaching as this is the cornerstone of a good education system.

“If you have a competent teacher, she will do very well even without a textbook.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

In some Member States this is because the current quality of teaching is felt to be sub-standard (RO, DE, PL urban).

“If we have high skilled teachers we are not obliged to pay tutors. So the education system with regard to teachers' skills is very poor at this point.” (Romania, urban, male, 30-44 years, high)

“Without qualitatively sensible teaching all other aspects are wasted and useless. I can have best infrastructure and lots of computers and still the kids are not going to be properly educated if the teachers are not capable of teaching them.” (Germany, rural, 18-29, male, high/medium)

“Changes should be introduced from the way up. Teachers should be people who are respected and whom the young people want to emulate, it cannot be like today that students have no respect for their teachers.” (Poland, urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

Whilst in others it was thought that investing in the quality of teaching is important to ensure that the standard of education does not decline (UK).

“If you don't invest and do not teach teachers what good is the education” (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

In some Member States there appears to be a perception that not all teachers are professionally qualified and as a consequence there is a call for them to be so (SE, DE).

“I would introduce pedagogic qualification tests for teachers and doctors. Lots of people choose these professions because they're highly valued in society or because you have lots of school holidays, and later they're completely overstrained. They need to know what challenge they're facing, and we need to know whether they're capable of mastering it.” (Germany, urban, 45+, female, high/medium)

'Meritocracy' was cautioned as a concept by some (UK). They reasoned that in fact it is the students who have the most difficulties learning who need the best teachers to help them learn.

"I really like the idea of meritocracy but I think it's wrong – in reality I think that instead if the best teachers going to teach the best students, the best teachers should be sent to the hardest students, the ones that find it hard to learn" (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

7.2.5 Incentives for students

Incentives for selected and deserving students received a mixed response from the eight countries surveyed.

Those for the incentives felt that:

- Targeting grants and scholarships to those who do best could motivate students to achieve better grades (RO, EE, PL).

"The students who achieve good results should get scholarships because then they will work even harder." (Poland, rural, 30-44, female, low)

- Older Greek respondents who have already experienced the financial burden of putting their children through University felt that deserving students should receive grants and scholarships.

While those against incentives felt that:

- Incentives could create greater disparity in society (DE). They were of the opinion that it would be better to focus on students who are not doing well educationally (the vulnerable groups) in order to improve their opportunities in later life and to ensure they integrate into the job market later.

"I think it's totally unfair to even further support someone who has already best chances in life. Whereas others are completely excluded from education and don't even get the chance to enjoy any kind of higher education." (Germany, rural, 18-29, female, high/medium)

- Grants and scholarships are not a priority for funding as they are also the responsibility of the economy and companies (DE, EE).

In the UK, there were mixed opinions as respondents reflected on previous funding which they felt had inappropriately allocated funds. As a result some respondents felt the definition of 'deserving' needed clarification to ensure that funds were not wasted.

"They've just taken away the money for EMA and they didn't need the money they just had it because their parents had split up but they got it anyway... such a waste." (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

7.3 Education Scenario 1 - accessibility

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

The quality of education will increase, but it may not be accessible to everybody, because of increasing costs and higher degree of privatization

This scenario was met with negativity by almost all respondents as it is perceived as being unfair and would increase societal inequalities (PL, RO, DE, EL, SE, EE, FR). Only the wealthy would be able to afford a quality education under this scenario and as a consequence the less well off would be poorly educated.

"But it should not be like this if there are private and public schools and there will be worse conditions in public schools and the quality of education will also be inferior there in comparison to private schools." (Poland, rural, 30-44, male, low)

"Would be something like discrimination...anyway we should not discriminate those who are well-off." (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years, low)

"In this system, you become successful because your parents are. Even if you're actually dumb you get premium education and succeed in life." (Germany, rural, 30-44, male, low)

"A child who is born in a rich family, everything's fine. And one who is born in a poor family has nothing. No, it's not acceptable." (France, rural, 45+, female, medium/low)

There was some acceptance of the scenario:

- British respondents were accepting of this scenario to some degree as they are under the impression that it already exists in the form of privatised and fee-paying schools the UK. However, they were also concerned about the extent of privatisation and cautioned that this could have a detrimental impact on accessibility.

"The government is already trying to do this with independent schools which I don't know if I agree with because it is putting other children at a disadvantage – so long as other children are not put at a disadvantage I don't mind" (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

- Some respondents felt that this scenario is acceptable only if it runs alongside the existing state system, so citizens have an option to pay for private education but the free state education system remains (RO, UK).

"The private system to be an alternative only." (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years, low)

- There was some acceptance of this scenario if it applies to university education as respondents are of the opinion that a university education is not essential for everyone (PL, EE). Even so, the Polish respondents felt that a system of scholarships should be available for poorer students so that they can access university.

"We might follow the American or West European example but we should not consider primary and secondary schools here because everywhere this system of education is funded by the state and accessible to all. If this scenario was introduced at the level of university education, then be it – not everyone has to become an engineer or a M.A. graduate – this is true in every country." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

"It will never be the case that all people will go to acquire higher education. But everyone must have at least some level of education." (Estonia, urban, 45+, male, low)

However, Greek respondents felt that even higher education should not be privatised in this way and should be free to all.

French respondents suggested that schools and universities seek partnerships with businesses to obtain funding instead.

"Businesses are going to look for students in schools and will finance their studies; in counterpart the student will work in the company for a few years." (France, urban, 30-44, female, high/medium)

7.4 Education Scenario 2 – quality

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

Publicly financed education systems may be more affordable but less competitive in light of the increased competitive pressure at global level

Reactions were mixed to this scenario.

Some respondents reacted negatively to this scenario, they felt that:

- They did not want the quality of the education in their country to be compromised and felt it should remain as it is currently or be improved (PL, EL, EE)

"Yes, we don't want this. One way or another we need to constantly struggle to keep up with other countries." (Estonia, urban, 45+, female, low)

- This scenario would create inequalities between countries; the divide between rich and poor countries would increase (RO)

"This is not at all acceptable because it will mean that, taking into account the globalization, all people from rich countries will be engineers and all those from the poor countries will be high schools graduates only." (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years, low)

Conversely, others felt that competitiveness is not as important as accessibility:

- German respondents felt that improved accessibility with the country would be more beneficial than educational competitiveness. They felt that economical performance would be better in the long-run and that ultimately this was more important

"If education is available for everyone, other abilities and competences can develop and support the competitiveness." (Germany, rural, 18-29, male, high/medium)

- There was a degree of acceptance of this scenario among British respondents. They felt that it was acceptable for people to be taught at different levels but that a general education should be of the highest possible standard and affordable to all.

"You can't teach everybody on the same level but a basic education should be given to all" (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

French respondents again suggested forging links between business and education as a way forward. They felt that partnerships with business and education establishments could enhance competitiveness and maintain accessibility of education to all.

7.5 Education Scenario 3 – vocational focus

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

Job-oriented schools and universities can provide more practical skills, but a lower level of theoretical/general knowledge

Reaction to this scenario was the most positive of the three education scenarios. Many respondents pointed out positive aspects with this scenario:

- Training students in practical skills is a realistic and useful preparation for the workplace (EL, UK, EE, FR)

"I really agree with this. A heck of a lot of people come out of schools without the proper tools and education they need" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

"I agree that we need more practical skills." (Estonia, urban, 45+, male, low)

"Doing a week in a company, a week in a school, it's very good, it opens the doors to a job." (France, urban, 30-44, female, high/medium)

- Some felt that unemployment would decline as students are being trained for jobs rather than studying a degree that might not be needed in the employment market once they graduate (EL)
- Some pointed out that this scenario already exists successfully in their country (PL, SE)

However, there was caution about some aspects of this scenario:

- Although respondents had recognised the benefits of combining practical and theoretical knowledge they also felt that it was important to maintain a balance to ensure that students learn both and not just practical skills (PL, DE, SE)

"There must be a balance – not just purely practical matters or the theoretical ones." (Poland, rural, 30-44, male, low)

"Moderation is best" (Sweden, urban, 18-29, female)

- Others felt that the balance of theory and practical depends on the vocation (EE)

"It should be vocationally balanced – some vocations need to be more practice-oriented and others ... for example mathematics, where most things are theoretical, but if we speak about a construction worker, then practical skills are elementary. I can also read a book, but I don't think I would be a good house painter." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

- It was felt that the courses should have a recognised goal of training students to be recognised experts in a field so that they can find employment easily (as opposed to simply teaching them many unrelated subjects) (PL)
- Prior to beginning practical training a general theoretical education must be provided to everyone so that everyone has the same basic foundation (RO, UK)
- Some respondents felt that a variety of options should be available for students to choose from. It was felt that both practical skills and theoretical knowledge have a role in society and neither should be seen as better than the other (UK)

"We need to value both – can't say that one should be forgone for the other" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

Conversely, some respondents reacted negatively to this scenario because:

- They felt the general knowledge perspective/culture of citizens will be narrowed because their general knowledge base will be reduced (PL, FR)

"When you are speaking to someone with a M.A. degree, you expect that such a person to be able to express their opinion on some topics in a coherent way. If we lower the level of general knowledge, such a person will only be able to speak about issues tied to their field of expertise." (Poland, urban, 18-29, female, high/ medium)

"Some of what we learn is not always useful but it stays. You need some general culture. French and maths are important and the rest as well. General culture is important." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

- They felt the classical model of teaching is more appropriate for some subjects, such as the arts (PL)
- A few German respondents felt that it is inappropriate to teach vocational skills at university, they felt that vocational skills should be learnt on the job, from the employer, rather than at university

7.6 Education summary

Overall, education accessibility and quality are the most important factors across the Member States surveyed. On the whole, there was a generally positive reaction to the idea of a more vocationally based education system.

Reactions to Scenario 1 (*The quality of education will increase, but it may not be accessible to everybody, because of increasing costs and higher degree of privatization*) and Scenario 2 (*Publicly financed education systems may be more affordable but less competitive in light of the increased competitive pressure at global level*) were similarly negative. Most respondents did not want to see inequalities in the provision of education and they did not want to compromise on the quality of the education system.

Some Member States were accepting of a degree of change in accessibility and quality, notably respondents in the UK were accepting of changes in both.

The most positive response across Member States was to Scenario 3 (*Job-oriented schools and universities can provide more practical skills, but a lower level of theoretical/general knowledge*), with some Member States instantly recognising potential benefits from this approach. In comparison to Scenarios 1 and 2 respondents were considerably less negative towards the vocational approach. Nevertheless, this scenario is not without concerns.

8 Employment/ income – priorities for spending

8.1 Background

Trend

- Europe will face increasing competition from emerging economies, especially in labour-intensive sectors
- European economies are undergoing a long-term transformation towards a more service-based economy

Opportunity:

- Better education will result in better jobs and increasing job opportunities, including abroad
- Technologies and progress in research and innovation could create new jobs in new sectors

Risk:

- Immigration and growing population will increase the pressure on the labour markets
- Developments in technology as well as globalization could take away jobs
- High unemployment rate could force young people to move away with negative effect on national identity
- The growth in new, green jobs might be insufficient to balance out the decline in jobs in 'old' industries
- The broad challenges Europe is currently facing may force people to work longer hours

8.2 Priorities for spending

Participants were asked to consider the following areas in terms of which should be prioritised for public spending

- Support to job creation and entrepreneurship (e.g. by reducing non-wage labour cost or start-up costs)*
- Targeted actions, such as training opportunities, for vulnerable groups*
- Investment in research and innovation to create new jobs*
- Investment in new services, such as more flexible childcare, to create jobs and improve work-life balance*
- Increased social protection to protect citizens against risks.*

Public spending priorities by country

	RO	UK	SE	PL	EE	EL	DE	FR
Support to job creation & entrepreneurship	1 18-29 45 +		1=	1		1	3=	1
Targeted actions				4			3=	
Investment in research & innovation	2		1=	1		2	2	
Investment in new services	1 30-44		1=	3			1	
Increased social protection			5	5			3=	1

NB: overall ranking not given for UK and Estonia due to time pressure

Most Member States felt the priority should be on creating employment with less support across Member States for social considerations to protect citizens.

8.2.1 Support to job creation and entrepreneurship

Supporting job creation and entrepreneurship is the priority for many Member States as unemployment is the biggest issue in society currently (RO, PL, EL).

"I think the most important is support to job creation and entrepreneurship because at this point there is an urgent need for jobs." (Romania, urban, 18-29 years, low)

Others welcome investment in this area and feel that government initiatives had already begun (UK).

"I think the government already cares about this because of the new tax relief for new businesses" (UK, 45+, high/medium, male, urban)

While others felt that state support is lacking but is important (EE, FR).

"I'd like to say that the creation of jobs and entrepreneurship is very important. Right now we can see that the state is not really supporting any of this. I experience this a lot in my work. It's a problem that the state should deal with." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

"There is not really much help when you open a business. The small artisan is crumbling under taxation. We are all agreed on supporting jobs: it should be simpler, quicker, it shouldn't just be for a year." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

Only German respondents doubted the efficacy of investments for entrepreneurs. They questioned whether more jobs would be created from the investment or whether businesses would simply bank it.

"I suppose these investments would just go into the companies' pockets and into their profit, but not into new investments or creating jobs." (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

Some Romanian respondents did not understand how this area would impact them as employees:

"If I look here, reducing non-wage labour cost I don't understand what means for me as an employee..." (Romania, urban, male, 30-44 years, high)

8.2.2 Targeted actions for vulnerable groups

There were mixed views about the priority to be given to 'vulnerable groups' and also what defines a 'vulnerable group'.

Some recognized that targeting vulnerable groups could play an important role in reducing the social benefits budget by getting them into work (PL, RO).

"And then the state would not have to pay them disability benefits and such people would be able to earn their living and additionally, they would feel satisfaction. I also understand poor families as those who belong to the vulnerable groups." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

"I think B is more important than A because these people are not at all trained and they are a burden for the social protection budget. So if to those vulnerable groups are not given some opportunities then we will have a problem of social protection..." (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years, low)

Some of the older respondents felt that vulnerable groups could include those over 50 years who are out of work. They reasoned that it is particularly difficult for those over 50 years of age to find employment and that they need assistance and training to find work in other sectors (EL).

While some felt that training is useful there were others who were skeptical as to whether training is really effective. They doubted the qualifications of the trainers themselves and as a result the effectiveness of the training (PL).

Others felt that training opportunities would be welcomed by everyone, not just vulnerable groups (UK).

"I know people that would benefit from this, and things like flexible working hours for young mums who want to work but can't take the job" (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

Others were not clear what was meant by 'vulnerable groups' and so left the statement out of the discussion (FR).

8.2.3 Investment in research and innovation to create new jobs

Many respondents felt that this point is similar to point 'a' as it also deals with creating jobs, as such many felt that both are important (PL, EL, RO).

"It is important to create new jobs so people will be able to work. To me, point "a." is the most important, followed closely by point "c." because, in my view, these two go together. Investment in research and innovations in order to create new jobs – they are also tied to each other." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

"Investment in research and innovation to create new jobs because, in the same way as for hospitals and education, first of all we need infrastructure in order to develop something. Then I will chose support to job creation and increased social protection because it is very important to have some security. Less important I think is investments in new services." (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years, low)

Some Member States felt that investing in jobs is particularly important to maintain a competitive edge in the future (DE, SE).

"If we remain leading edge in research and innovation, our economy will be saved. The other nations will buy from us because they say, German goods are so advanced, let's buy that. And this will consequently create new jobs and we can also afford higher salaries then because we're the very best." (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

Some respondents did not understand the meaning of this statement and only prioritized it because of the promise of new jobs included in the statement (UK).

"Yeah I guess so, anything that will create new jobs" (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

Estonian respondents felt that investment in science and research is important in order to encourage young scientists to stay in the country and because they feel it is lacking investment currently. However, there is recognition that Estonia is a relatively small country with limited funds and so instead of a scatter gun approach it is felt that the investment should be carefully targeted.

"Right now the government seems to think that this ... we also were thinking here that science will develop by itself, but in my opinion this system is greatly under-financed and this is why emphasis on development of science should be stronger." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

"Well, as it was very well-put earlier, it is not really necessary to invest substantially in science, you just need to select the right direction and start developing it and let's say Estonia is not able to pay for some scientific research at the world's level, but if we were able to take some business to the world's level, then we would also be covering the costs to the entrepreneurs." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

8.2.4 Investment in new services to create jobs and improve work-life balance

There was some difference of opinion as to the relative importance of this area.

Those who felt it was important did so because:

- Flexible childcare allows women to go back to work after having children (PL, EE) – not surprisingly, the most positive response to this was seen amongst those who have had children themselves

“What is important for the mother is flexible working hours and a possibility of working part time. It is important to make it easier for mothers to go back to work after having children. A mother who has two children has very little chance of finding a job.” (Poland, rural, 30-44, female, low)

“Well, yes, child support right now is for 18 months and this money is given to you so that you could be at home with your child, but after these 18 months you would like to go to work in order to have an income, but you have no place in the kindergarten for your child because the waiting time for kindergartens is 4 years and you cannot hire a babysitter for ... I don't know what sum of money.” (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

- Improving the work-home life balance would ultimately be beneficial for the economy by improving the work efficiency (RO, SE) and health of employees (RO)

“I think foremost is to go home from work satisfied, I will see my husband different and he as well or if I came home nervous from work, then ...to hell with the home and everything.” (Romania, urban, female, 30-44 years, high)

- Without adequate childcare some couples are forced to choose between a career and children – investment in this area will allow couples to have children and both to return to work (DE).

“Nowadays people have to choose between family and career and that is an unacceptable situation. People must have the possibility to have both, like it was in the old days. That is a retrogression!” (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

- Since the economic crisis, flexible childcare is important as employers have asked employees to work overtime without additional pay and employees need childcare assistance (EL)

Views in some Member States were mixed:

- In France, some understood this point as being able to create a favourable work- life balance (and so making people feel happy to go to work) while others viewed it negatively. They felt that it could lead to the development of insecure, part-time jobs which would impact negatively on an individual's home life.

"The person has to do several jobs. The new service jobs that's it. Not full time. It creates jobs but small jobs do not allow a work-life balance. It even destroys the life of the couple. You don't work at the same time; you don't have the same time-table." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

- In Romania, while young respondents feel that this is a priority for investment older respondents do not. The older respondents were of the opinion that such services were only commonplace in developed countries where people can afford them and also in Romania the culture is for grandchildren to be raised by their grandchildren.

"This is abroad because they don't have a family culture. Here you will not see a parent who is retired not helping his children with the grandchildren care." (Romania, rural, female, 45+ years, low)

8.2.5 Increased social protection to protect citizens against risks

This was the area of least importance for most.

- Some respondents stated that they are satisfied with their social protection system and so they did not see any reason to increase investment to it (SE, UK).

"No I don't want to pay for people that are sat indoors. Okay fair enough if you have lost your job give you a bit of money for a couple of weeks but people would take advantage of it and be sitting on benefits forever" (UK, 30-44, low, female, urban)

- In some Member States it was felt that the social benefits system should be 'tightened up' rather than having more money invested in it. There is a perception that there are many citizens claiming from the benefits system who are not eligible. As a consequence, there is a call for the system to be made more efficient and for those in dire straits only (PL).

"In my opinion, 'social protection' means such situations when the sole provider in a family loses his/ her job. Such people really need help because the benefits they get are very low. I do not mean the same as in the UK where entire families do not work but live quite well on welfare at the state expense. I am talking about situations where people are beginning to lose their will to live because they cannot find any work or people who have just entered the labour market and make PLN 1,000 (equivalent to 250 euro) a month so they are unable to support their families with their earnings." (Poland, urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

Some respondents felt there was potential for investment in social protection:

- Estonian respondents talked about the social benefits system not working properly in Estonia and so that it should be focussed on in future.

"I am thinking about the most important thing that the state should do, something they cannot avoid doing and social security system is definitely it because no one else will deal with it." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

- While some Greek respondent's experience of the economic crisis, the unemployment and wage cut backs, lead them to favour increased investment in social protection even if it further burdened the state economic system (EL).
- Some Romanian respondents discussed social protection with regard to the needs of the employed. They felt that increased social protection for the employed would lead to increased efficiency, sustainability and well-being of employees.

8.3 Employment/ income Scenario 1 – lower employment

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

Changes in our economy - including technological advances and increased competitiveness - may result in longer working hours and fewer jobs, especially for vulnerable groups

Many respondents were confused by this statement. They could not understand how an advance in technology could result in deterioration in efficacy/longer working hours (PL, EE, FR, UK). In addition, some could not understand how increased competitiveness could result in fewer jobs (UK).

"Technological progress might lead to a decrease in the number of jobs – it is true but would it mean longer working hours? I do not think so." (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/ medium)

"I simply don't get the logic: they say technological development makes people's working days longer. I find this quite absurd." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

"We don't know that we'll work more but it will reduce available jobs" (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

Conversely others recognised this scenario as a realistic one; they felt that it was already starting to take place in the market (EL) and they could envisage the situation happening / worsening in future (DE, SE, EE, FR). They felt that the jobs performed by people without qualifications will be automated and as a consequence only specialists will be required, which will put increasing competition on specialist positions.

"The fact that even highly qualified people like automobile engineers only get limited contracts of employment is embarrassing. You study for five years and you still don't have assurance and actually can't plan a family." (Germany, urban, 45+, male, high / medium)

"Working longer hours, you're almost obliged to. Global competition means you have to match up." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

The main concerns were about the impact of the longer working day and the loss of jobs on society as a whole:

- British respondents were generally supportive of the principle of technological advances. However, lowering unemployment was a primary focus for the future and therefore any trade-off that involves increasing unemployment is not acceptable. Longer working hours, to a degree, were

seen as unpleasant but acceptable as long as the employee had gainful and secure employment.

- While, for some of the Swedish respondents the increased efficiency as a result of the technological advances had gone too far and created an 'inhuman' climate. As a result this scenario represented a decline in development.
- Some felt that the longer working hours would ultimately impact productivity as employees would become de-motivated over time (EE).

"I don't like these longer working days at all because every human being has the right to have its own time when he can enjoy life. Otherwise he/she wouldn't have any motivation to work and then he will not work well and then the downward spiral will begin..." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, male, low)

- It is felt that this scenario will exacerbate the inequalities in society (DE, FR), which is clearly not desirable for 2030.

"That'll increase inequalities and so delinquency, insecurity." (France, urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

- Romanian respondents were particularly negative about this scenario and felt it would lead to an increase in unemployment, crime and suicide.

German respondents felt that a potential solution could be to invest the earnings from the rationalisation into the education and employment of people to improve their employment potential.

"All this technological advancements help save costs in the end, as workers are being replaced and things are made more efficiently. And this money that is saved from innovation, this should be invested into the education of the workers." (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

8.4 Employment/ income Scenario 2 – migrant labour

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

Migrant labour force can fill gaps in the labour market and support the social security and pension systems but also increase pressure on jobs and competition among workers

There was general recognition that migrant workers are already being used in the Member States surveyed (UK, FR, PL) or that citizens of the Member State are going elsewhere and are the migrant workforce themselves (RO, EE, PL, SE).

"The doctors come from Romania, they are less well paid. Immigration is important but you have to manage it well." (France, urban, 30-44, male, high/medium)

"Just like they wrote today, we have known for a long time that our own skilled workforce has left the country and then we need to import for example welders from the Ukraine. Our own welders are mostly working in Finnish shipyards." (Estonia, urban, 45+, male, low)

"Poles do the same – two sides of coin have to be considered. If Poles can go abroad and work there, then, by the same token, Ukrainians can come here." (Poland, urban, 18-29, female, high/ medium)

Those who tend to be migrant workers themselves in other countries pointed out that this scenario is most appropriate in developed markets, because in order to be attractive the wages must be higher than in the migrants own country (RO). In addition, some explained that the economic climate in their country is such that migrants would not be attracted to work there (EE).

"For Romanians working abroad it is good...but for Romania... I mean Romanians have lower wages abroad as compared with the level of wages there." (Romania, urban, male, 30-44 years, high)

"With the current unemployment rate I don't think that all the unemployed people that we have couldn't fill in the gaps on the labour market. Or rather, if a vacancy is announced, there are hundreds of applicants. Right now that the economic conditions are bad, we are said to be the least popular country for migrants. This news came just yesterday." (Estonia, urban, 45+, male, low)

There is a perception that migrant workers will not support the social security and pension system because:

- Many migrants are working illegally and as a consequence they are not paying into the social security and pension systems (PL, EL)
- Migrant workers are on lower wages than most people in society and will be contributing little (EE)

"The first statement that migrant labour force will fill the gaps on the labour market is definitely true, but this is also where it ends. I don't think it would contribute greatly to our social security system because these people are mostly hired because they agree to work at a lower wages than our own people." (Estonia, urban, 18-29, female, low)

Nevertheless, some are prepared to accept that migrant workers do not support the social security and pensions system because the migrants are doing jobs that local people will not (PL).

"There are some jobs which we do not want to do because they are beneath us while people who come to Poland from Ukraine or Belarus are happy to take because in their countries, the situation is much worse. They are happy to find work at all and they can make enough money to live a good life." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

Given the current economic situation and the risk of unemployment, some felt that the increased pressure of migrant workers on jobs in this scenario is not acceptable (UK, DE). Added to which they believe that migrant workers are going to be used to replace existing employees (UK, DE).

"Yeah but you know with our jobs, there's people coming in from other countries and the boss looks at us and then looks at other people from other countries and says well I can get it for cheaper from you and you get the sack" (UK, 30-44, low, male, urban)

"Nobody wants to expose themselves to harder competition when trying to find a job. Already now it's hard to find a job even if you have a good qualification. We should not try to worsen that situation." (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

In addition to the increased competition for jobs, there was a perception that migrant workers can have a negative impact on society as a result of increased crime (RO, EL) and interethnic conflict (RO).

Others were worried about the welfare of migrant workers, they are concerned that:

- Migrant workers are being exploited by being paid lower salaries than others doing the same job and that this situation will worsen (FR, SE)

"The migrants haven't got the same salaries. The major transport companies take Polish drivers so they don't have to pay them as much. They're not paid very much they're exploited at home as well. If we let them do this, there'll be many problems. The migrants are taking the jobs but at what price?" (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

- Migrant workers are being thought of only as economical variables to be used only to benefit the economy; they are people who should be thought of as such and not disposable assets (FR)

"You can't take people when you need them and send them back afterwards." (France, urban, 18-29, male, high/medium)

Potential solutions to the problems identified included:

- Regulate / use quotas to ensure that the appropriate positions are filled and the employment market is not put under undue pressure as a result (UK, SE)

"It's just about finding a balance I think like the green card system where they recruit people that they need to fine like the US system" (UK, 18-29, low, female, urban)

- Legalise the migrant workers who are currently working in the country according to the needs of the country and repatriate those who are surplus to requirements (EL)
- The local unemployed should be forced to take the vacant jobs that are being taken by migrant workers (FR)

"There is a solution concerning the unemployed who have a qualification and refuse to take a badly paid job. That person should take the job, they should have to take the job by giving them a means tested allowance for a while. Rather than the person staying unemployed or instead of giving it to an immigrant give the job to the unemployed person by giving them some extra money for a while." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

8.5 Employment/ income Scenario 3 – workforce retention

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

A highly skilled and young work-force may look for better job opportunities elsewhere and be hard to retain

It is widely accepted that the individual's freedom to choose where they work is part of living in a free society (UK, RO) and this scenario is already a reality (UK, RO, EE, PL, FR, EL, DE).

"It's a fact of life! People can look wherever they want to" " (UK, 45+, high/medium, female, urban)

"Because everyone is free to decide where to live and work. And why should I try to keep them here where the environment didn't allow them to perform instead of let them free to do something good for the humankind..." (Romania, urban, male, 18-29 years, low)

Some respondents in Sweden felt that the whether this scenario is a positive or negative depends on where individuals migrate to. If people stay within the EU Member States it should be viewed as positive.

The main attractions of migration are:

- Higher salaries are felt to be the main appeal (RO, EE, FR).

"But they do not leave because they want to they leave because they are not paid well, because of this they are leaving!!!" (Romania, rural, male, 45+ years, low)

"Me, I'm expecting to leave France because I know that I'll be paid better, it's the story of progress." (France, urban, 18-29, male, high/medium)

- The difficulty of getting a job in one's own country (FR)

Nevertheless, migration is not attractive to everyone and there is debate in some Member States as to who has stayed and who has been tempted away (PL).

"A lot of young people who have high qualifications are not leaving at all. It is not that everybody is going abroad. (...) I know people who have houses, cars, yachts and don't have to go abroad in search of work." (Poland, urban, 45+, male, high/ medium)

In addition, some are of the view that individuals may leave temporarily but will eventually return (FR, SE). While others are of the view that migrants seldom return to their home country (SE).

"I think that people leave for their first years and then come back." (France, urban, 30-44, female, high/medium)

"I work at university and I can see it every day. Every student who wants to make the most of his situation is leaving the country, most of them. But nobody comes from abroad to work here. They just come for studying but then they're gone again." (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

Although the option to migrate was viewed as being part of living in a free society it is also recognised as being an educational cost to the state (RO, DE).

Some expressed the view that it is the responsibility of the country to retain their workforce through:

- Providing job opportunities through investment in businesses (UK)
- The provision of better salaries (RO, FR) and working conditions (RO)

"Better work conditions, better wages in order to keep them because it is not fair to educate them and then let them leave." (Romania, urban, female, 30-44 years, high)

"Young graduates are going to emerging countries or the United States. They must be encouraged to stay by paying them properly." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

- Employees making jobs more attractive to encourage citizens to stay (DE)
- On completion of their studies, students should be obliged to work for a few years in the country where they were educated, as a form of 'payback' for the investment in their education (DE)

8.6 Employment/ income Scenario 4 – social protection

Participants were asked to consider the following scenario:

Increased social protection could help the more vulnerable and protect citizens against risks throughout their lives (unemployment, sickness, retirement...) but also lead to increased taxation and slower growth (due to less incentives to work)

The degree to which respondents felt they could accept this scenario was mixed between and within Member States.

Many respondents rejected this scenario, they explained that:

- People should be encouraged to work rather than being encouraged to remain out of work and dependent on the state (FR, RO, PL)

"No, don't agree. Increasing taxes you can't increase unemployment benefit again, too many advantages. I'm happy to have them but I know there are abuses sometimes." (France, urban, 30-44, female, high/medium)

"It encouraging the laziness...no one would want to work!!!" (Romania, rural, female, 45+ years, low)

- The combination of lowering growth and increasing tax is detrimental to any economy (RO, PL)
- Social protection is sufficient currently and taxes are already high enough and so there is no need to increase taxes to increase investment (DE, SE)
- In the current climate they could not bear a further increase in tax (UK)

"I don't like the look of it at all, it's just more money going out" (UK, 18-29, low, male, urban)

- This scenario, of increasing taxes to increase social protection, would encourage emigration (FR)
- They resented paying the unemployment benefit and pensions of other individuals and they would prefer a system whereby each individual pays their own contributions (FR)

"By contributing you are paying for those who are retired. The same thing for the unemployed. I think that everyone should pay contributions for themselves." (France, urban, 18-29, female, high/medium)

Greek and Estonian respondents and older respondents from France and Germany accepted this scenario as a potential approach, they reasoned that:

- This scenario represents a philosophical principle of EU countries and is one that should be maintained. It was noted however that the taxation rate should be carefully graded according to income, so that those on higher incomes pay more tax than those on lower incomes (EL)

- Increasing social protection, preventing people from being exploited, will make people feel secure and healthy (EE)
- The money had to be obtained from somewhere and increasing taxes was acceptable (older FR)

"This is the price to pay. You are obliged to increase taxes and the money has to be found from somewhere." (France, rural, 45+, male, medium/low)

- It is important to prevent unemployed people from descending into a downward spiral and so it would be acceptable to increase investment to get these people back into work (DE)

"You have to take care of these people. If you just let them fall out of the employment system, their number will increase and then you need the higher taxes to finance that." (Germany, urban, 30-44, male, low)

Several respondents suggested that changes to the social protection system could yield the required finances instead of increasing taxes:

- However, some were of the view that the additional money could be obtained from efficiency savings rather than just increasing taxes (FR, EE).

"For me, for instance, this fourth statement does not necessarily mean higher taxes. The state simply must deal with it more effectively and achieve it not by increasing taxes." (Estonia, rural, 30-44, female, medium/high)

- Also, others felt that there were some legislative changes that could be made that would not need additional expenditure (EE).

"Very often you don't need money. You just need rules that prevent people from working themselves to death. For this you have to keep the employers on their toes. You must have stronger frames that would prevent the employers from over-exploiting their employees. And this does not need money." (Estonia, urban, 45+, female, low)

- Polish respondents felt that the social benefits system should be scrutinised in order to check that only those who really need assistance are given it. They believe that if this is done there would be enough funds in the system to provide sufficient benefits and increase pension payments, which they believe are currently very low.

"Verifications of bank accounts and money transfers. If there is more than PLN 2,000 (equivalent to 500 euros) in the account, the bank informs the tax revenue service. Maybe even we should lower this amount and introduce more control. I do not know if this is a good approach." (Poland, urban, 18-29, male, high/ medium)

8.7 Employment/ income summary

Across the Member States, the factors of most importance to citizens are related to strengthening the economy, namely employment / decreasing unemployment, economic growth and increasing competitiveness. These factors are often viewed as being related and so if employment increases the economy will strengthen and the market will become more competitive.

Social protection is considered the most important factor in only two Member States:

- Only in Greece did citizens specify that increasing social protection is equally if not more important. They felt that economic growth is an important goal but they feel it is particularly difficult to achieve and they would be prepared to compromise the rate of growth in order to provide greater social protection to Greek citizens.
- German citizens prioritised employee well-being, in particular that:
 - Employees should be paid fairly
 - Employees should be able to combine their career and family by having access to day care services
 - Unemployed people should be encouraged and supported back into work so they do not become long-term unemployed

9 Annex 1 – Discussion Guide

WELL-BEING 2030 SURVEY DISCUSSION GUIDE – FINAL

1) Introductions (5 minutes)

This section is primarily intended to provide respondents with an opportunity to begin to get to know each other and to feel comfortable in the context of the group. The moderator sets the ground-rules for the session, introduces the topic and we gain an initial insight into respondents' personal circumstances and situations.

Moderator

- Self
- TNS
- Independent

Process

- Confidential
- No right or wrong answers
- All views equally important
- The scenarios and trade-offs identified in stage 2 are examples

Topic

- Policy choices for a better future Follow up to previous stage

Respondents

- Name
- Personal situation (home, family, work etc.)

2) Recap and detailed introduction (5 minutes)

The introduction is primarily intended to recall the objective of this qualitative research and to inform participants about the results of stage 1. The moderator can briefly recall the questions covered in stage 1.

FOR MODERATOR:

PLEASE FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR STAGE 1 FOR YOUR COUNTRY

PLEASE RECAP THE OVERALL EU HEADLINES FOR THE BENEFIT OF PARTICIPANTS AS BELOW:

The priority areas of concern for the future, identified across the EU were:

- Environment/Climate Change
- Health
- Standard of living
- Education
- Employment

The objective of this discussion is to see what choices you think policy makers should make to deal with these challenges to society.

The key things we will discuss today are the constraints which exist when trying to deal with these issues and the consequent choices that have to be made.

3) Well being of **society** (30 minutes)

In this section we will explore your views on the choices, constraints and trade-offs at the high society level. The broad factors to be considered are:

- **Society and community** (e.g. social inequalities, social cohesion, values, crime, isolation, sense of shared values)
- **Economy** (e.g. growth, globalization, productivity and competitiveness)
- **Resources for the future** (e.g. sustaining resources, public financing, environment for future generations)
- **Environment** (for example having to adapt to climate change)

Of these four broad factors – which is most/ least important? Why?

What do you think are the main constraints which face policy makers in dealing with these issues?

PROBE:

Money – how to fund policies

Conflict of priorities between different factors (e.g. green taxes can improve the environment but affect the poorest hardest)

Can we achieve a society which combines all of these factors? Why? Why not?

PROBE: What choices/ priorities need to be made?

4) **Personal well being** (80 minutes)

Policy priority (10 minutes)

We're going to move on to discuss the main areas of concern which were identified in the first group as a concern for the more personal well being of people in the future.

These were as follows:

- **Health services** (access/affordability of new treatments)
- **Education** (cost, quality/ content of curriculum)
- **Employment** (increasing unemployment, income, work-life balance and retirement age)

Overall which is the policy area which you would prioritize if national governments had additional money to invest? Why?

PROBE: Which is most urgent? For you? For the next generation? Which is least important? Why?

HEALTH SERVICES (20 MINUTES)

BACKGROUND – RECAP FROM STAGE 1: EACH PARTICIPANT WILL BE SENT THIS AS PART OF THE ADVANCE DOCUMENTATION

- *Trend: People will need to take more responsibility for maintaining health, e.g. concerning prevention of lifestyle related diseases (obesity, heart disease...).*
- *Trend: Ageing population will result in increase of age-related diseases, increased pressure on healthcare systems and higher cost of healthcare*
- *Opportunity: Development of medicine, medical research and healthcare systems will improve health and quality of treatment*
- *Risk: Growing pressure on health resources may cause a switch from public to private healthcare, affecting the access to health services for those who cannot afford it.*

Section 1: Priorities for public spending in relation to health: EACH PARTICIPANT WILL BE SENT THIS AS PART OF THE ADVANCE DOCUMENTATION AND ASKED TO CONSIDER PRIORITIES

- Investment in medical research*
- Extension of publicly funded medical treatments*
- Strengthening of health care structures: modern, efficient and well-equipped hospitals*
- Investment in healthcare staff: higher salaries and better working conditions for doctors, health personnel, medical researchers*
- Promotion of prevention behaviours (e.g.: education, food regulation, awareness campaigns, screening programmes)*

Which of these should be the priority for public spending?

Which are less of a priority?

Why?

Section 2: Choices for health policy

Growing pressure on health resources may cause a switch from public to private healthcare, affecting the access to health services for those who cannot afford it. With this in mind I am going to present you with some potential scenarios for the future.

SCENARIO 1

- The quality of medical treatment will increase, but it may not be accessible to everybody.

SCENARIO 2

- Private and insurance-based healthcare systems would alleviate the burden on public finances, but they may not be accessible to everybody

SCENARIO 3

- The use of technology can make healthcare more affordable, but it will involve depersonalization and less face-to-face contact.

FOR EACH SCENARIO EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING:

Initial reaction – is this a reasonable “price to pay”?

If not – what is a better solution?

TO SUM UP END OF SECTION

What factors are most important in making policy decisions about health?

PROBE: Equality, cost, service

EDUCATION (20 MINUTES)

BACKGROUND – RECAP FROM STAGE 1: EACH PARTICIPANT WILL BE SENT THIS AS PART OF THE ADVANCE DOCUMENTATION

- *Trend: Education will become critical in the process of global competition. Creativity and innovation will be extremely important*
- *Trend: The link between education and work needs to be strengthened, by promoting both vocational/practical education and cooperation between schools/ universities and businesses*
- *Opportunity: Educational opportunities and educational systems will improve*
- *Risk: Higher and better education will become more expensive*

Section 1: Priorities for public spending in relation to education: EACH PARTICIPANT WILL BE SENT THIS AS PART OF THE ADVANCE DOCUMENTATION AND ASKED TO CONSIDER PRIORITIES

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">Investment in infrastructure and teaching materialsIncreased accessibility of education for vulnerable groups (e.g. students with disabilities, with learning difficulties, with migration backgrounds)Financial assistance to students and their households (e.g. textbooks, vouchers)Attention to quality of teaching: upgrading of teachers' skills and training, increased meritocracyIncentives for selected and deserving students, such as grants and scholarships |
|---|

Which of these should be the priority for public spending?

Which are less of a priority?

Why?

Section 2: Choices for education policy

SCENARIO 1

- The quality of education will increase, but it may not be accessible to everybody, because of increasing costs and higher degree of privatization.

SCENARIO 2

- Publicly financed education systems may be more affordable but less competitive in light of the increased competitive pressure at global level

SCENARIO 3

- Job-oriented schools and universities can provide more practical skills, but a lower level of theoretical/general knowledge

FOR EACH SCENARIO EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING:

Initial reaction – is this a reasonable “price to pay”?

If not – what is a better solution?

TO SUM UP END OF SECTION

What factors are most important in making policy decisions about education?

PROBE: Access, cost, quality/ content of curriculum, competitiveness

EMPLOYMENT/ INCOME (25 MINUTES)

BACKGROUND – RECAP FROM STAGE 1: EACH PARTICIPANT WILL BE SENT THIS AS PART OF THE ADVANCE DOCUMENTATION

- Trend: - Europe will face increasing competition from emerging economies, especially in labour-intensive sectors.
 - European economies are undergoing a long-term transformation towards a more service-based economy.
- Opportunity: - Better education will result in better jobs and increasing job opportunities, including abroad
 - Technologies and progress in research and innovation could create new jobs in new sectors.
- Risk: - Immigration and growing population will increase the pressure on the labour markets
 - Developments in technology as well as globalization could take away jobs.
 - High unemployment rate could force young people to move away with negative effect on national identity.
 - The growth in new, green jobs might be insufficient to balance out the decline in jobs in 'old' industries.
 - The broad challenges Europe is currently facing may force people to work longer hours.

Section 1: Priorities for public spending in relation to employment/income/ skills/work-life balance: EACH PARTICIPANT WILL BE SENT THIS AS PART OF THE ADVANCE DOCUMENTATION AND ASKED TO CONSIDER PRIORITIES

- a. Support to job creation and entrepreneurship (e.g. by reducing non-wage labour cost or start-up costs)
- b. Targeted actions, such as training opportunities, for vulnerable groups
- c. Investment in research and innovation to create new jobs
- d. Investment in new services, such as more flexible childcare, to create jobs and improve work-life balance
- e. Increased social protection to protect citizens against risks.

Which of these should be the priority for public spending?

Which are less of a priority?

Why?

Section 2: Choices for employment policy/ income

SCENARIO 1

- Changes in our economy - including technological advances and increased competitiveness - may result in longer working hours and fewer jobs, especially for vulnerable groups

SCENARIO 2

- Migrant labour force can fill gaps in the labour market and support the social security and pension systems but also increase pressure on jobs and competition among workers

SCENARIO 3

- A highly skilled and young work-force may look for better job opportunities elsewhere and be hard to retain

SCENARIO 4

- Increased social protection could help the more vulnerable and protect citizens against risks throughout their lives (unemployment, sickness, retirement...) but also lead to increased taxation and slower growth (due to less incentives to work)

FOR EACH SCENARIO EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING:

Initial reaction – is this a reasonable “price to pay”?

If not – what is a better solution?

TO SUM UP END OF SECTION

What factors are most important in making policy decisions about employment?

PROBE: Economic growth, competitiveness, high employment, national interest

5) Closing comments (5 minutes)

Thank all participants for their time and close the session