



EUROBAROMETER

Well-being

Aggregate report

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Eurobarometer Qualitative studies

Well-being

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Country Abbreviations employed in this report

| Country | Abbreviation |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Belgium | BE |
| Bulgaria | BG |
| Czech Republic | CZ |
| Denmark | DK |
| Estonia | EE |
| France | FR |
| Germany | DE |
| Greece | EL |
| Hungary | HU |
| Italy | IT |
| The Netherlands | NL |
| Poland | PL |
| Portugal | PT |
| Romania | RO |
| The United Kingdom | UK |

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TNS Qual+ was commissioned to undertake a qualitative research exercise in 15 EU Member States to investigate the issue of well-being in the European Union. 35 focus group discussions were conducted in February and March 2010, each lasting two hours. The results were analysed at a country level and then aggregated to produce this overall report.

1.1 *Factors contributing to well-being*

The following table provides a brief overview of the broader categories that were used to group what respondents identified as the factors contributing to well-being.

| Factors contributing to well-being |
|---|
| 1. Subjective well-being |
| 2. Economic and employment situation |
| 3. Education and intellectual development |
| 4. Health and nutrition |
| 5. Infrastructure |
| 6. Interpersonal relationships |
| 7. Civic life |
| 8. Cultural and spiritual activities |
| 9. Environment |

- Subjective well-being:** Respondents identified how a person's **mood** can have a positive or negative effect on their well-being; and in turn, how experiencing well-being can affect a person's mood. This is to a large extent dependent on an individual's character and general outlook on life. A person's subjective well-being is furthermore influenced by a number of **uncontrollable factors, such as luck, fate, genetics and personality** over which people can exercise very little influence. A factor that one is able control is the **specific set of values** that one holds, i.e. well-being can result from cultivating the values of sharing, altruism and being outward-looking. Satisfaction that stems from **feeling good about oneself / having belief in yourself and your values / self-realisation / recognition / and success** can be a great positive contributor to a person's well-being. While **personal growth and development** positively influences well-being, so does **stability and predictability** in one's life and work. Respondents from a number of different countries mentioned the importance of **individual self-determination** and the value of living in a society that provides a variety of possibilities for self-realisation that one can choose from and also provides the

opportunities to make those choices. Finally, for respondents from Italy, the UK, Portugal and Poland, subjective well-being is influenced by one's ability to have **expectations**, to set yourself goals, to have dreams, and to fulfil your desires.

- **Economic and employment situation:** Respondents in the majority of countries were unanimous about the **importance of money in order to attain a state of well-being**. Money is seen as the foundation of well-being and provides access to other factors that influence well-being, such as participating in cultural activities, buying books, buying a house, practicing hobbies, etc. **Meeting basic needs** (such as housing, food, heat, clothes, etc.) is a goal in itself, but also makes it possible to have a peaceful family life as the stressors caused by lack of basic resources and needs are avoided. **Non-essential spending**, on the other hand, is characterised as being able to share, to spoil yourself and others, indulge in one's passions, to save, and to travel when going on holiday. At its most basic level **employment** relates to well-being because of the need and importance of just having a job (that lasts) and an income. However, at a higher level than just being employed and being satisfied with having a job, **job satisfaction** (having the job one wants and being satisfied in one's job) is an important contributing factor to well-being.
- **Education and intellectual development:** **Educational attainment** does not only relate to gaining knowledge in a formal sense but also to the general desire to expand one's knowledge and to be exposed to new ideas. For many respondents **educational opportunities** not only related to their own professional development, but it was important to have the financial means to send their children to the schools they would like them to attend.
- **Health and nutrition:** Good **personal health** was regarded as a very important influencing factor on well-being and respondents defined health in a number of ways. It was seen as the absence of illness, suffering or any weakening or break with social life. Related to a person's health is their **physical fitness** and exercise which affects one's level of energy, heart, fitness and physical shape. Similarly, **nutrition** has an influence on a person's health and consequently on well-being. The influence of nutritional intake on well-being includes having something to eat, eating quality food, what you eat, and the relationship between food and money. Respondents see it as a contributing factor to well-being to be able to get **health care** when they need it. This is also regarded as the closest connection between health and money - more money means access to better services, medication and nursing homes, which can, at least to some extent, influence health itself.
- **Infrastructure:** The **quality of one's residence** is influenced by what one can afford (the relationship between housing and money) and just having a roof over one's head was seen as important. Cleanliness (graffiti-free and not dirty), safety, security, sufficient

parking in the neighbourhood, accessibility to a range of services, quality of public services in the area (transport, schools, refuse collection), proximity to nature, and the absence of air and noise pollution were mentioned by respondents as **contributing factors to the quality of the living area** and therefore to well-being. In addition to the quality of one's living area, being in nature and the **quality of natural resources** can influence well-being either positively or negatively. For example, environmental problems can have a negative influence on well-being.

- **Interpersonal relationships: Friends** contribute to well-being in the following ways: being company in good and bad times, having fun together, supporting one another, sharing, relying on one another emotionally or materially, being a source of strength and power. **Family relationships** are regarded by respondents as a contributing factor to well-being, and can either have a positive or negative influence depending on the nature of the relationships and the presence or absence of family. Emotionally close relationships such as **marriage and partnerships** were considered to be a great source of love which has a strong positive influence on well-being. **Children** were considered an important source of energy and in that way contribute to a sense of well-being. The growth and development of children and grandchildren (i.e. seeing and experiencing different **generations**) was seen as having a positive influence on well-being. For a few respondents **other relationships**, such as those with their pets, were also important.
- **Civic life:** Respondents recognised the influence of their **current governments**, politics and politicians on their everyday lives through the decisions and laws that politicians and government officials implement; through the creation of economic and political stability; the provision of services (including social and health services), jobs, and investment in cultural facilities such as museums. When referring to **trust in political institutions**, respondents referred to the influence on well-being of democratic systems, human rights, and law and order. **Freedom to express your opinion** and saying what you think and feel without sanction from the authorities is seen as a key factor of well-being. A feeling of general certainty that individual's **rights are respected** and that one is to some degree protected by the authorities, gives respondents piece of mind and therefore positively influences their well-being. It was only a few respondents who explicitly mentioned **discrimination** in the unprompted discussion, also regarding it as going hand-in-hand with respect. Respondents referred to factors that are part of the **general political and economic environment** that has an influence on their well-being, such as the global financial situation and unemployment. Finally, respondents discussed the influence of the general state of **society** on their well-being and specifically mentioned aggression, consumerism and negative images and messages in the media.

- **Cultural and spiritual activities:** A **cultural activity** is a factor that contributes to well-being and examples might include going to theatres, concerts and museums, having the freedom and resources to attend cultural programmes and, thereby, developing yourself personally. **Leisure activities** serve a number of purposes, all of which contribute to well-being: they provide relaxation, de-stressing, entertainment, an escape from reality, and an escape from one's daily routine; they give one the opportunity to be creative and practice hobbies. Although **spirituality and religion** were considered by some respondents to contribute to their sense of well-being, the two concepts are not considered to be the same and respondents spoke of themselves more in relation to being spiritual rather than religious. For example, some of the respondents in Denmark and Portugal would consider themselves to be spiritual as this has a broader definition, going beyond organised religion, but none would think of themselves as religious.
- **Environment:** In roughly half of the countries respondents mentioned the influence of the **weather** on people's well-being. Respondents saw it as a positive influence on their well-being that they do not have to contend with **natural disasters** like earthquakes in their countries.

1.2 Relative importance of factors

- After consideration of the definitive lists of factors contributing to well-being that were drawn up by each of the groups and countries, an **overall definitive list** was compiled that stretches across all of the groups. There were **five factors** that were included on the definitive lists of all of the groups – **employment, personal financial situation, health, leisure time and job satisfaction**. However, the definitive list was expanded to further include factors that were mentioned by **all but one or two groups**. This makes possible the addition of another **four factors** to the list: **housing, education, family and friends**. These nine factors make up the overall core definitive list and can be clearly distinguished in their importance from the other factors presented on the pre-prepared list used in the research and contributors to well-being that appeared on the respondents' own lists.
- The results of the **clustering exercise** show that a fairly broad pattern exists in terms of how people clustered the different factors and **which factors were consequently seen as more important than others**. In general terms the factors that appeared most frequently as **key factors** where the ones that spoke directly to people's most immediate needs and/or the factors that had a direct connection to their personal well-being. This included factors such as employment, personal financial situation, health, housing, etc. The factors that were most likely to be relegated to **secondary importance** are the factors that do not

have such an immediate or direct impact, but are related to activities that respondents participate in, or to broader structural aspects, such as government, the economy, cultural life, leisure activities, diet, etc. The **relatively unimportant / irrelevant factors** were those that did not directly impact on their lives, such as discrimination and religion/spirituality.

- A minimum of five of the nine factors that appear on the **overall definitive list** were clustered as key factors in all of the groups and countries; while in five countries, eight out of the nine factors on the overall definitive list were listed as key factors. The **factor** on the overall definitive list that was **most likely to be listed under secondary factors was leisure time** which was listed as a secondary factor in six countries and as relatively unimportant / irrelevant in two cases. This illustrates that even within the list of overall definitive factors some factors are regarded as of greater import than others.
- The **ranking exercise** again showed that factors on the **overall definitive list were considered to be most important** and that between those factors **some were regarded as more important than others**. There was a broad pattern to how the factors on the overall definitive list were ranked.
 - Almost all of the factors on the definitive list were generally highly ranked, with the exception of **leisure time** that was generally ranked lower than any of the other factors and quite low on the lists overall.
 - The factor that stands out as the most important and that was top ranked in 20 groups is **health**.
 - The factors that were most included as part of the top three rankings are **health, family and employment**.
- Similar to the clustering exercise where the more immediate or concrete factors were listed under key factors, in the ranking exercise it was again these factors **that were ranked the highest** with more abstract items such as religion/spirituality, government, the economy and discrimination ranked lowest. The exception to this is the inclusion of either government and/or the economy in the top five rankings of the following groups or countries: Greece (government in the higher social scale group (education) and economy in the lower social scale group; Romania where both the higher and lower social scale groups (education) included both the government and the economy; Estonia, where the older group included the economy; and the Netherlands where the older group included government.
- The findings of the **scoring exercise** supported the findings of the ranking exercise; health was the factor most listed at number 1 and health, family and employment were the factors that were most ranked in the top three. In the scoring exercise the **most important factors and their mean scores were: health (9.6), family (9), employment (8.8), and personal financial**

situation (8.8). In line with the findings of the clustering exercise where **leisure time** was often regarded as of secondary importance, leisure time in the scoring exercise had the lowest overall mean score (7.1) of factors on the overall definitive list. As was to be expected from the clustering and ranking exercises, **government** (5.6), the **economy** (6.6) and **spirituality/religion** (4.5) had some of the lowest scores.

- Two factors that scored highly, but that are not part of the overall definitive list were **personal relationships** (a mean score of 8.1 but only mentioned in 29 groups) and **personal freedom / rights** (a mean score of 8.2 but only mentioned in 30 groups).

1.3 Differences by demographic or Member State

- A number of **smaller differences** were noted at a group (attributable to the primary focus variable) or Member State level and these are covered in the various national reports. However, this aggregate report has focussed on the **differences that appeared most significant, or meaningful**, and seemed to reflect a notable difference in how respondents view well-being.
- Throughout this report **specific examples of differences based on the primary focus variable are presented** as and when they become relevant. However, in sum, the following general differences appear most apparent.
 - **Higher social scale groups vs. lower social scale groups:** It appears that for some respondents in the lower social scale groups the meeting of more basic and concrete needs is a more immediate issue than more abstract needs; while respondents in the higher social scale groups mention more abstract factors, probably because their immediate needs have been met. Examples include:
 - Factors mentioned more by the lower social scale groups: security, a job that suits your skills, a satisfactory salary, having enough money to pay the bills, having a secure pension, diet (ample food), and decent standard of living.
 - Factors mentioned more by the higher social scale groups: Spirituality, recognition, harmony, calmness, happiness, leisure time.
 - **Younger vs. older groups:** It appears that the younger groups mention more factors that relate to enjoyment while the older groups speak more of stability, comfort and health. Examples include:
 - Factors mentioned more by the younger groups: Time for oneself; luck; food and drinks; external appearance (looks).

- Factors mentioned more by the older groups: stability, security, comfort.
- **Men vs. women:** The distinctions here are less clear and the groups have much in common, such as professional realization and leisure time. However, there is a slight indication that the men in the groups might be more inclined towards status and perhaps self-gratification by mentioning social status, marital status and sex, although it is difficult to base such a conclusion solely on the limited data presented.

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Background and objectives

This Qualitative Eurobarometer study into the subject of well-being was commissioned by the Research and Speechwriting Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communication. The study consisted of a programme of 35 qualitative group discussions, conducted amongst a range of citizens in fifteen Member States of the European Union in February and March 2010.

The overall objectives of the study were:

- To establish the **full range of factors** those contribute to personal "well-being".
- To understand the **language** people use when describing and discussing these factors, so that the quantitative questionnaire will be presented in a way respondents will understand.
- To gain an initial indication of the **relative importance of these factors**, to feed into the development of a weighting algorithm for the quantitative data.
- To provide insights in view of the development of a comprehensive quantitative questionnaire on well-being.

The findings from the different national reports are combined in this aggregate report reflecting the views of citizens across all fifteen Member States covered by the study.

2.2 Methodology and sampling

2.2.1 Design

The study consisted of qualitative group discussions in each country, with a carefully designed structure for each Member State. This structure included the identification of a 'primary focus variable' in each country which formed the main basis of the design. The aim of the primary focus variable was to understand the impact of this specific variable at country level. The three primary variables are:

- Age
- Social scale (education / employment)
- Gender

The full design is summarised in the table below.

| COUNTRY | AGE | SOCIAL SCALE | GENDER | LOCATION | DATE | PRIMARY FOCUS VARIABLE |
|----------------|---------|---|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Belgium | 30 + | Low + Mid level of education | Men & women | Antwerp | 1 March 2010 | Regional differences |
| Belgium | 30 + | Low + Mid level of education | Men & women | Liège | 5 March 2010 | Regional differences |
| Bulgaria | 45 + | High + Mid level of education | Men | Sofia | 2 March 2010 | Men / women |
| Bulgaria | 45 + | High + Mid level of education | Women | Sofia | 3 March 2010 | Men / women |
| Czech Republic | 30 + | Professionals, high-skilled workers | Men & women | Prague | 4 March 2010 | Social scale |
| Czech Republic | 18 - 44 | Low-skilled workers, homemakers | Men & women | Prague | 4 March 2010 | Social scale |
| Denmark | 30 + | Professionals, high-skilled workers | Men & women | Copenhagen | 3 March 2010 | Social scale (still working) |
| Denmark | 18 - 44 | Low-skilled workers, homemakers, unemployed | Men & women | Copenhagen | 3 March 2010 | Social scale |
| Estonia | 45 + | Low + Mid level of education | Men & women | Tallinn | 2 March 2010 | "Communist age" divide |
| Estonia | 18 - 44 | Low + Mid level of education | Men & women | Tallinn | 3 March 2010 | "Communist age divide" |
| France | 30 - 59 | Professionals, high-skilled workers | Men & women | Paris | 4 March 2010 | Social scale |
| France | 18 - 44 | Low-skilled workers, homemakers, unemployed | Men & women | Tours | 2 March 2010 | Social scale |
| France | 60 + | High + Mid level of education | Men & women | Nogent le Rotrou, nr. Chartres | 3 March 2010 | Rural area |
| Germany | 30 - 59 | Professionals, high-skilled workers | Men & women | Hamburg | 2 March 2010 | Social scale |
| Germany | 60 + | Mid + Low level of education | Men & women | Rural area, nr. Augsburg | 4 March 2010 | Older people 60 + |
| Germany | 18 - 44 | Low-skilled workers, homemakers, unemployed | Men & women | Leipzig | 3 March 2010 | Social scale |

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|--------------------|---------|--|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Greece | 18 - 44 | High level of education | Men & women | Athens | 1 March 2010 | Education |
| Greece | 30 + | Low level of education | Men & women | Xanthi | 2 March 2010 | Education |
| Hungary | 18 - 44 | Professionals, high-skilled workers | Men & women | Debrecen | 9 March 2010 | Social scale |
| Hungary | 30 + | Low-skilled workers, homemakers, unemployed | Men & women | Füzesabony | 4 March 2010 | Social scale |
| Italy | 30 - 59 | High level of education | Men & women | Dalmine (Bg) | 24 February 2010 | Education |
| Italy | 45 + | Mid level of education | Men & women | Rome | 25 February 2010 | Older people 45 + |
| Italy | 18 - 44 | Low level of education | Men & women | Naples | 26 February 2010 | Education |
| Netherlands | 18 - 29 | High level of education + mid level of education | Men & women | Amsterdam | 9 March 2010 | Young |
| Netherlands | 60 + | High level of education + mid level of education | Men & women | Amsterdam | 9 March 2010 | Older people 60 + |
| Poland | 45 + | High + Mid level of education | Men & women | Warsaw | 1 March 2010 | "Communist age" divide |
| Poland | 18 - 44 | High + Mid level of education | Men & women | Warsaw | 1 March 2010 | "Communist age" divide |
| Poland | 30 + | Mid + Low level of education | Men & women | Zambski Koscielne | 3 March 2010 | Rural area |
| Portugal | 18 - 44 | Low + Mid level of education | Men | Lisbon | 2 March 2010 | Men/women |
| Portugal | 18 - 44 | Low + Mid level of education | Women | Lisbon | 3 March 2010 | Men/women |
| Romania | 30 + | High level of education | Men & women | Bucharest | 9 March 2010 | Education |
| Romania | 18 - 44 | Low level of education | Men & women | Bucharest | 9 March 2010 | Education |
| The United Kingdom | 30 - 59 | Mid + Low level of education | Men & women | Rural area, nr. Northampton | 3 March 2010 | Rural area |
| The United Kingdom | 18 - 44 | Low level of education | Men & women | London | 1 March 2010 | Education |
| The United Kingdom | 45 + | High level of education | Men & women | Bristol | 4 March 2010 | Education |

As can be seen in the above table two or three focus groups took place per country. The groups consisted of between 8 and 12 respondents, with a roughly equal mix of men and women in each group, with the exception of the focus groups carried out in Bulgaria and Portugal where the primary focus was set on the gender variable. The focus groups were approximately two hours in length.

2.2.2 Discussion content

In all the groups the discussion began with a **review of respondents' understanding of the concept of well-being**, what initial associations they made with it, and why. The discussion then moved to the development of a **comprehensive list of the different components of well-being** drawing on the respondents' examples, experiences, and the language they used. Following this, a list of suggested attributes developed prior to the groups was introduced to respondents. They evaluated their own lists against this list and, in the process, provided valuable information on whether the suggested list matched their own perceptions. Based on this discussion, each group came up with what it considered to be a **definitive list of factors that influence well-being**. The definitive list was further explored through **three ranking** exercises.

The three approaches adopted were:

- A three group **clustering exercise** – key factors, secondary factors and relatively unimportant / irrelevant factors
- A **ranking exercise** – where all factors needed to be put in an order of relative importance
- A **scoring exercise** – where each factors was given a rating out 10 for importance.

The discussion guide and recruitment screener used in the study are included in the appendix of this report.

2.3 Contextual considerations

The contextual issues mentioned in the country reports that might have had an influence on the respondents' perception of influences on their well-being, can be grouped under three broad headings.

Political considerations:

- Various countries mentioned recent political developments that might have influenced respondents' perceptions of the current government in their respective countries, the politicians, and the political climate in general. Examples from the country reports include:
 - The poor quality of public services. (IT, EE)

- Political corruption and the misuse of power. (IT, HU)
- People feeling excluded and neglected. (DE)
- Mistrust of politics and politicians. (FR, CZ, UK)

Economic considerations:

- Roughly half of the country reports made mention of the effect of the global economic crisis on their respective countries (HU, EL, FR, EE, DK, BG, PT, UK). The extent of the impact on the different countries and the degree to which this impact is felt on an individual level, might have influenced how respondents viewed the economy in relation to their own well-being.
- In addition to the global financial crisis, the country reports mentioned other national or local aspects of the economic situation that respondents might have had in mind when they reflected on their own well-being. Examples from the country reports include
 - Growing unemployment. (PL, IT, FR, DK)
 - The country's position in, and relationship with, the EU. (EL)
 - Increasing public debt. (CZ)
 - Cuts in consumer and business credit. (RO)
 - Rising internal economic inequality. (UK)

Society:

- Some mention was made of particular aspects of society, or recent incidents that respondents find worrying and that they might have regarded as having an impact on their well-being. Examples from the country reports include:
 - Safety (IT)
 - Alcohol consumption and anti-social behaviour (UK)
 - Obesity (UK)
 - Immigration and cultural differences (UK)
 - Negative messages conveyed in the media (UK)
 - The effect of an ageing population on an expanded social security system that has been able to satisfy basic needs. (BE)

3 THE CONCEPT OF WELL-BEING

3.1 Key learnings

Unprompted associations with well-being

- The respondents' associations with well-being can be broadly categorised into **four** themes: **economic or financial** factors, **physical** factors, **psychological or personal** factors, and the **environment**.
- Of these four themes the one that emerges most **strongly is associations with psychological or personal factors**, followed almost equally by economic/financial factors and physical factors.

How others might see well-being

- Respondents identify **five** factors that might influence why others take a different view of well-being; **economic factors, age, time, rural vs. urban, and personal considerations** related to the individual. In addition, respondents mention a number of associations that others might make with well-being, when these associations of the other are taken collectively and compared to the respondents' own collective associations, they are in principle very similar.

Well-being and happiness

- The respondents have a range of different views on the relationship between well-being and happiness and their views can broadly be categorised as those who make a **distinction** between the two concepts and do **not** really see them as **related**, those who see them as **identical**, and the majority of respondents who view well-being and happiness as **relational** in some way.

Well-being and quality of life

- Respondents are much more unclear in their understanding of quality of life and its relationship with well-being than they are in the discussion of happiness. Again, respondents hold a broad range of views that can be categorised as: those who are **unable to clearly understand** what is meant by quality of life, those who think the phrase is **very similar to well-being**, those who see **no correlation** between the terms, respondents who see quality of life as a **contributing factor to well-being**, and those who view it as **external to, or broader than well-being**.

Primary focus variable

- With three exceptions the influence of the primary focus variable has not been visible across countries:
 - In the discussion on respondents' unprompted associations with well-being there is some indication that some respondents in the **lower social groups emphasise the importance of employment and making money** as associations with well-being. This is possibly because of their lower financial status and lack of financial security.
 - Again, in the discussion on respondents' unprompted associations with well-being, some respondents in the higher social groups **focus more on psychological associations with well-being** than other practical factors.
 - In the discussion on how others might view well-being, a notable difference is that some of the low social scale (education) groups have **difficulty thinking in an abstract way** about well-being and going beyond their own conceptualisation.

3.2 Views on well-being

In all the groups the discussion began with a review of respondents' understanding of the concept of well-being, its associations, how they think others might view the term, and the way it differs from such concepts as happiness or quality of life. This section will discuss each of these aspects in turn and illustrate the findings with verbatim quotes from the respondents.

3.2.1 Unprompted associations with well-being

Respondents were asked what images come to mind when the phrase "well-being" is mentioned and why those associations are made. This section summarises the respondents' associations with well-being which can broadly be grouped around **four** themes: **economic or financial** factors, **physical** factors, **psychological or personal** factors, and the **environment**. The following tables summarises these responses according to the frequency with which they were mentioned.

| PSHYCOLOGICAL/PERSONAL ASSOCIATIONS | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Association | Example | Respondents from: |
| Contentment and enjoyment / happiness | Inner satisfaction Relation to the body – harmony between body and mind Calm Happy with one's self Serenity and peace of mind Emotional stability <i>"Laughter...well-being for me is happiness"</i> | CZ, DE, FR, EL, RO, IT, UK, EE, NL, BE, BG, PT |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| | <i>as well as health, I want to be laughing, people who make me laugh.” (UK)</i> | |
| Interpersonal relationships | Partnership/marriage Family Social networks Love Children Friends <i>“To give someone a present.” (BE)</i> <i>“To look after other people, in the sense of voluntary work.” (FR)</i> | DK, FR, EL, RO, EE, NL, PL, BE, BG |
| Leisure | Relaxation Cultural and natural experiences Social activities Going on holiday / travel with the family Following one’s passion, e.g. fishing Going to the theatre Recreation / taking time out <i>“For me, well-being means intellectual calm, i.e. I enjoy the here-and-now, and my thoughts are not preoccupied with my job and what will happen tomorrow.” (DE)</i> Work/life balance | DK, HU, DE, FR, EL, UK, BE, PT |
| Intellectual and personal development | <i>“That you succeed in life and live up to your own expectations can be a great contributor to well-being.” (DK)</i> Changing perception of well-being in an individual’s life over time Education for all | DK, DE, BE |
| Civic rights | Personal freedom Equality Respect for all human beings | DK, EL, NL |
| Recognition | <i>“To be recognized maybe for a piece of music that I play or some art that I do really makes me thrive so I feel better with myself.” (DK)</i> Being able to participate in memorable events | DK, HU, |
| Spirituality | <i>“I have a spiritual well-being and an interior peace, otherwise I don’t think I would have made it these days, it’s very hard to live!” (RO)</i> | RO |
| Others’ bad fortune | Some people are happy when other people face troubles. Some people are able to enjoy the misfortune of others. | PL |

| ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL ASSOCIATIONS | | |
|--|---|--|
| Association | Example | Respondents from: |
| Security / status / standard of living / money | Financial security and getting one's basic needs fulfilled <i>"A sensation of wellness. If you don't have money, you will never have such a sensation."</i> (RO) | DK, HU, CZ, RO, IT, UK, EE, NL, RO, BG, PT |
| Employment | Having a (any kind of) job with a salary | HU, EL, IT, EE, BG |
| Decent work environment | Having a not too stressful work environment <i>"Having friendly co-workers and working in a nice environment makes me feel better and happier every day."</i> (EL) | HU, EL, BE |
| Professional development | Acquiring new skills and knowledge Recognition of one's work <i>"Personal development is very important looking at it from a work perspective."</i> (DK) | DK |

| PHYSICAL ASSOCIATIONS | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Association | Example | Respondents from: |
| Health | Being and staying healthy Free from illness and disease <i>"Health conditions everything. When we are in pain we are unable to feel well-being of any kind."</i> (PT) Taking care of oneself Good health services Care for the disabled | DK, HU, DE, FR, RO, IT, UK, EE, NL, BE, BG, PT |
| Exercise/fitness | Sport and physical release Dance | DK, DE, FR, UK, BE, PT |
| Nutrition | Eating good/delicious food can be both healthy and unhealthy | DK |
| The weather | Associated with sun, holiday and leisure | PL |

| ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATIONS | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Association | Example | Respondents from: |
| Housing / home environment | Having a house Beautiful, safe and peaceful home Affordable housing | IT, EE, NL, RO, BE, BG |
| Neighbourhood safety | Feeling safe at home and on the street | NL |
| Transport | <i>"To keep the public transport attractive."</i> (BE) | BE |
| Relation to nature | Seeking authenticity and calm | FR |

- It should be clear from the data in the above tables that in their initial reactions to the concept of well-being respondents associate the term **predominantly with psychological or personal aspects**, followed by economic or financial associations, and associations with physical well-being. Some associations were made with the respondents' general environment, but this was to a lesser extent.
- It is possible to note some differences in responses across countries that are attributable to the **primary focus variables**:
 - There was some indication that respondents in the **lower social groups emphasise the importance of employment and making money** as associations with well-being, possibly because of their lack of financial security. Examples of this are the low social group (employment) in Greece, and the low social group (education) in Italy. The high social group (employment) in Denmark, for example, emphasise the balance between work and leisure time and professional development as contributing factors to well-being. Such emphasis perhaps relates to their greater financial security; the basics (having a job and financial security) are not at issue, but development is.
 - In two instances respondents in the higher social groups **focus more on psychological associations of well-being** than other practical factors. Examples are the higher social scale group (education) in Greece and the higher social scale group (education) in Italy.

4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WELL-BEING

The largest component of the group discussions took the form of an exploration of the respondents' views on all the things they could think of that might influence well-being. The emphasis in this section of the discussion was on their personal experiences and on obtaining the anecdotal evidence to support their suggestions.

This chapter presents each of the factors identified during the groups and explains the respondent thinking that lies behind them. Throughout the discussion mention will be made, as and when relevant, of differences as a result of the primary focus variable.

The table below provides a summary of the factors identified, which will then be discussed in detail.

| Factors contributing to well-being | Mentioned by respondents from: |
|--|--|
| Subjective well-being | |
| Satisfaction | DK, HU, CZ, DE, IT, FR, BE, PT, UK |
| Freedom of choice | DK, HU, CZ, DE, NL, PT, BE |
| Expectations | IT, UK, PT, PL |
| Mood | CZ, DE, FR, PT |
| Uncontrollable factors – luck, fate, genetics, personality | CZ, EE, UK, PT |
| Values | FR |
| Evolution of subjective well-being | DK |
| Stability and predictability | EE |
| Economic and employment situation | |
| Job satisfaction | DK, HU, CZ, DE, FR, EL, RO, IT, UK, PL, BE, PT, EE, NL |
| Income | DK, HU, CZ, DE, FR, RO, IT, BG, PT, EE |
| Non-essential consumption | HU, FR, PL, BE, BG |
| Basic needs | DK, FR, PL, BE |
| Debt and savings | EE, BG |
| Education and intellectual development | |
| Educational opportunities | DK, HU, RO, IT, BE, UK, DK, NL, IT, PT |
| Educational attainment | DK, CZ, RO, UK, NL, PT, BG |
| Intellectual aspirations | FR |
| Health and nutrition | |
| Personal health | HU, CZ, DE, FR, EL, IT, DK, UK, NL, BE, PT, PL, RO, EE, BG |
| Nutritional intake | DK, CZ, EL, RO, IT, EE, NT, PT, UK, BG, PL |
| Health care | HU, CZ, NL, BE, BG, PL, |

| | |
|--|--|
| Physical fitness | EE DK, DE, FR, IT, PT |
| Infrastructure | |
| Quality of living area (neighbourhood, town, city) | DK, CZ, DE, FR, RO, IT, CZ, UK, EE, NL, BE |
| Quality of residence | DK, HU, CZ, FR, IT, UK, BE, BG |
| Quality of services | CZ |
| Interpersonal relationships | |
| Friends | DK, HU, CZ, DE, FR, EL, RO, IT, EE, BE, UK, NL, PL, PT |
| Family situation | DK, HU, CZ, DE, FR, IT, UK, DE, PL, BE, BG, PT, EE, UK |
| Overall satisfaction in marriage / partnership | DK, HU, CZ, DE, IT, UK, BE, EE, NL |
| Overall satisfaction with children | CZ, FR, UK, NL, PL |
| Generations | DK |
| Other relationships | NL |
| Civic life | |
| Current government | DK, HU, CZ, RO, UK, EE, NL, PL, HU, RO, BG |
| Freedom of expression | DK, HU, DE, IT, UK |
| General political and economic situation | DK, DE, EL, UK, PT |
| Trust in political institutions | CZ, EL, IT |
| Respect for rights | DK |
| Discrimination | NL |
| Cultural and spiritual activities | |
| Time for leisure activities | DK, HU, CZ, DE, FR, EL, RO, IT, UK, EE, PL, BE, PT, NL |
| Spirituality / religiosity | DK, FR, PT, UK, BG, BE |
| Cultural life | DK, HU, NL, BG |
| Environment | |
| The weather | DK, CZ, FR, PT, NL, EE, UK |
| Natural disasters | DK, CZ |

4.1 Latent Structures and key variables

Taking the sampling and composition of groups into account, one can observe slight differences between groups in one country but the differences within the countries are clearly related to the key focus variables, which were employed to define the groups. However, if we cluster countries on the basis of the key focus variables used we can analyse trends based on these variables.

As we perform such analysis it becomes clear that there is a strong correlation between various key focus variables in terms of the impact they have on respondent views. From this we can infer the existence of some broader, more wide-ranging latent variables which are driving the variation we are observing.

The most important differences we observe are related to the meaning of concepts; understanding of certain concepts and the way in which some issues are viewed, referred to and combined (e.g. health and fitness) differs between groups within key focus variables. Those effects we can find in almost every grouping structure.

The impact of the two most discriminating clusters of key focus variables and our hypotheses regarding the underlying latent variables are described below:

4.1.1 Levels of education and social grade

- The meaning of concepts such as health/ fitness, job satisfaction/ employment and the financial situation as well as hobbies/ leisure time differs quite a lot between groups. The latent variable behind the differences seems to be money or the financial situation.
- People with low levels of income/ low skills/ education do not value job satisfaction as much as people with high income, education or skill levels. It is interesting to note that views on health and fitness also vary markedly; less educated and less skilled people tend to see this aspect in terms of illness and costs, whereas fitness is only for well situated people.
- Educated people and people with a higher occupational status combine health and fitness and show a much more sophisticated understanding of health. They mention the relation between health and well-being in a much broader and more positive attitudinal way.
- On the other hand we have relatively few differences with regard to the meaning of family and friends. For the less educated and people with low levels of skills, friends are less important than the family. The Family seems to be a refuge for these people. People with higher levels of education and higher levels of skills rate friends and family in almost the same way. However, they also see a relationship between the dimensions, whereas the other group differentiates between family and friends.
- Another interesting pattern is the meaning which is attached to government and economy by the two groups. Whereas less educated and less skilled people tend to see the economy and the government as responsible for well-being, the more affluent and better educated group does not see a connection between well-being and economy and the government. For them the concepts are disconnected and tend to be scored low in rating exercises or are not even included.
- One could interpret this as an indication that less skilled and less educated people place more importance on these external factors; for them the government as well as the economy is responsible for their well-being.

- This correlation appears to supersede all other variables. So, for example, even the West-East cleavage vanishes, if we control for the effects of education and economic status; the understanding of well-being is so closely related to a persons' financial situation wherever in Europe they live.

4.1.2 Young / Old

- The other latent variable appears to be age; the groups of older people (45+) tend to put more emphasis on those factors that are related to their lives or pensions, an overall evaluation of the economy and the performance of the government. They see a quite close link between individual well-being and these external factors.
- Younger people see links between well-being and their financial situation, education possibilities and their employment status.
- Younger groups were more inclined to mention factors that relate to enjoyment while the older groups speak more of stability, comfort and health. Examples include:
 - Factors mentioned more the younger groups: Time for oneself; luck; food and drinks; external appearance (looks)
 - Factors mentioned more by the older groups: stability, security, comfort.

4.1.3 Gender

- Differences by gender tended to be less pronounced
- Generally speaking men and women had much in common, such as professional achievements, job satisfaction and leisure time.
- However, there was a slight indication that the men in the groups might be more inclined towards status and perhaps self-gratification, mentioning social status, marital status and sex, although it is difficult to be sure of such a conclusion based only on the data available.

4.1.4 Communist age divide

- Differences between the communist age divide generally reflected those seen between older and younger people generally
- Freedom to express your opinion and saying what you think and feel without sanction from the authorities was seen as a key factor of well-being by those respondents whose countries had previously experienced communist governments.

- They gave higher importance to personal freedom and rights providing the explanation that, since they are from a country with a history of communism, such freedom is something they particularly value.
- The older group of respondents in Estonia valued stability and predictability in their lives (work, income, stable relationships at home) and saw it as a factor that contributes to their well-being.
- Security and a crime-free neighbourhood was of particular importance.

"I believe if you go out in the park and it is nice, clean, you have a plus, you feel better, it contributes to your well-being. The fact that you go out of the house and the alleys and everything is nice and clean...gives you a good feeling." (RO)

- Access to housing and quality housing was seen as an issue for younger people in a way that it hadn't been during the communist era.

"Formerly, [during the communist era] they [young people] were simply assigned a flat. These days, they have to take a mortgage." (CZ)

4.1.5 Rural vs urban

- Generally the same determinants of well-being emerged from the rural groups. However there was an emphasis on community which emerged more strongly amongst participants living in rural areas. This encompassed having a good relationship with one's neighbours which was of importance to respondents in rural areas
- Respondents in the rural group in the UK wanted to feel like they were part of a community (inclusion or a sense of belonging) through, for example, having friendly neighbours. Similarly, respondents in the rural group in Poland felt that good relationships with neighbours are important as one is, to a certain extent, 'stuck with' to one's neighbours. The sense of community was also linked to altruism which was seen as a source of satisfaction for rural respondents.
- Weather also appeared to have more impact on the well-being of rural respondents.

4.2 Subjective well-being

4.2.1 Satisfaction

- Satisfaction is **linked to a number of other terms** such as inner harmony, inner peace, serenity, being relaxed, being stress-free, composure, calmness, and equilibrium. These are all seen as preconditions for individual well-being. (HU, IT, DE)
- There is some correlation between these terms and one's **age or personal development** – the older one becomes and the more life experience one has, the more one is able to recognise things that really matter in life. (DE)
- Satisfaction and its link to well-being also relates to **feeling good about oneself / having belief in yourself and your values / self-realisation / recognition / and success** (CZ, HU, DE, DK, UK, FR, BE, PT). This speaks to self-realisation more generally, not just at work (CZ) and also stems from the feedback one gets from the environment one is in which can make you feel good about yourself, make you feel valued (HU, DE, DK, UK). Everyone is felt to have their own level at which they feel content (CZ) and successful (FR).

“When I’m satisfied with myself then I’m satisfied with others and other things and I see things differently; in a more positive manner.” (HU)

“We have to be able to love ourselves.” (BE)

- Another sources of satisfaction that respondents identified is **helping others or selflessness** and stems from giving up time or money to help others, for example through donations, or generally being kind and selfless. (higher social scale group, education, and rural group, UK)
- In one instance a **gender related dimension of self-realisation was put forward**. In the Czech Republic, the higher social status group (employment) put forward the opinion that self-realisation has historically been more important for men than for women. This is, they argue, because men are more ambitious and self-realisation means more for them than it does for women. The perceived historic background for this is that men are expected to provide for the family. (CZ)
- Satisfaction can result from experiencing different kinds of **pleasures** such as a good meal, a glass of good wine, a good book to read, enjoyment of nature. (DE)

“The sensation of beauty, whether it is connected with pleasure or it is a landscape, everything that has to do with your senses, is for me an essential prerequisite for my feeling of well-being.” (DE)

- Knowing where you are in life and **being comfortable with one’s own life path** or situation is regarded as a contributing factor to well-being (UK). This is also related to acknowledging one’s **achievements** and taking pride in both small and big achievements (UK).

“I left school with no qualifications and ended up going, doing a college course in gas and I got a diploma in Corgi... and I passed and I was over the moon!” (UK)

- Satisfaction is also related to having a **passion** for something.

“When you’re passionate, you can be self-fulfilled; in the artistic sphere, painting is a form of fulfilment.” (FR)

- A factor related to satisfaction and well-being that was only mentioned by the group of men in Portugal is **sex**.

“Sex is an important factor that contributes to my well-being.” (PT)

- A close relationship exists between feelings of **satisfaction and other factors that contribute to well-being**, such as employment, housing, and family relationships (HU, DK).

4.2.2 Freedom of choice

- Respondents from a number of countries mentioned the importance of **individual self-determination** and the value of living in a society that provides a range of life paths that one can choose from and also provides the opportunities to make those choices. (HU, CZ, DE, DK, NL, PT)

“It’s important that you are free to follow your dreams, to do the things you want in life. That you are free to make up your own mind.” (DK)

- A synonymous concept is that of **independence** – remaining free to do what you want, not being obliged to accept something and being free from pressure. (Wallonia, BE; PT, PL)

4.2.3 Expectations

- For respondents from Italy, the UK, Portugal and Poland well-being is influenced by one’s ability to have expectations, to **set yourself goals, to have dreams, and to fulfil your desires**. This provides

a sense of fulfilment. It is important to **work towards where you want to be** both on a personal and professional level.

4.2.4 Mood

- A person's **mood can have a positive or negative effect on their well-being**, and in turn, experiencing **well-being can affect a person's mood**.
- Mood is influenced by **individual character** and the unique qualities of each individual (CZ). Character and mood can work against personal well-being if an individual is lazy, negative, resigned, and unprepared (CZ). Conversely, one's frame of mind – having a resolutely positive view of life, being joyful, making plans, looking at the bright side of life, and not getting bogged down by life's constraints and annoyances - can have a positive influence on one's mood, and consequently one's personal well-being (FR, PT).

“Being positive, keeping your problems to yourself and listening to others. There are people who will never be joyful, make plans, have goals or projects.” (FR)

- A good mood can be generated by a number of **different experiences**, such as the company of other people or the influence of good weather (DE).

4.2.5 Uncontrollable factors – luck, fate, genetics, personality

- This category is made up of a collection of factors that respondents thought influences well-being but **over which one has no control**.
- Having **good luck** might influence one's well-being, but it is not possible to change or control one's fate (CZ; younger group, EE).

“You might try to do your best for your well-being, but having bad luck might be a real problem.” (CZ)

- Well-being could also be influenced by one's **personality and genetics**; ‘the hand one was dealt’. Having an optimistic or pessimistic personality could have a strong effect on how you view your own well-being. (high social scale group, education, UK; PT)

4.2.6 Values

- Well-being can result from having a **specific set of values**, i.e. the well-being which results from cultivating values such as sharing, altruism and being outward-looking. (FR)

4.2.7 Stability and predictability

- The older group of respondents in Estonia valued **stability and predictability** in their lives (work, income, stable relationships at home) and saw it as a factor that contributes to their well-being.

4.3 Economic and employment situation

4.3.1 Job satisfaction

- At its most basic level employment relates to well-being because of the need and importance of **just having a job (that lasts) and an income** (IT, DK, HU, UK, PL, BE, PT). One respondent in Greece didn't care much about the precise nature of their employment; they simply saw it as a way of getting money.

"I have changed job a number of times; when I found a job that offers me more money, I change, and it is all about money. When I see that I am getting money I feel very happy." (EL)

"The dream job; think about it, if you had the job you've always wanted, that could be brilliant, something like that. To look forward to go to work everyday when you get up in the morning and feel excited because you are getting paid for doing what you love the most." (DK)

Having a job gives one direction and a sense of purpose in life as it is 'something to get out of bed for'. (UK)

- **Unemployment**, on the other hand, can have a **negative impact on well-being** by negatively affecting other people's perception of you and could lead to negative feelings of depression, boredom and feeling dispirited. (UK)

"My friend, she got made redundant, and she's really, really depressed. I saw her today and she's really depressed. Her curtains are closed and she's sitting inside with the dogs. It's hit her really hard." (UK)

Being unemployed can also put strain on family relationships. (EE)

- At a level above simply being employed and being happy with having a job, **job satisfaction** (having the job one wants and being satisfied in your job) **relates to well-being** in a number of ways:
 - Work stability: a stable and secure job gives peace of mind and freedom from worry. (IT, UK)
 - Doing a job that is gratifying and therefore enjoyed. (IT, UK, EE, NL, PL, BG, PT)

“Your well-being is positively influenced when you have a stimulating job.” (NL)

- A source of recognition that makes one feel good about oneself (HU, EE)
- Having a workplace environment where one likes spending time and where one can feel relaxed and safe and get along with work colleagues. (HU, EL, EE, NL, PL)
- Self-realisation at work - having a job that one enjoys and finds personally satisfying (CZ)
- Professional recognition (FR, DE)
- Professional development; in their jobs people can benefit from training and obtaining qualifications which can make them better and more suitable for different positions, especially in times of a financial crisis. (RO, FR)
- Having a good job implies earning more money and making more friends. (RO, FR, EL)

“Having friendly co-workers and working in a nice-environment makes me feel better and happier every day.” (low social scale, EL)

4.3.2 Income

Relationship between money and well-being

- Respondents in a number of countries (CZ, FR, RO, DE, IT, BG, PT). were unanimous about the **importance of money in order to attain a state of well-being**. Money is seen as the foundation of well-being and provides access to other factors that influence well-being, such as participating in cultural activities, buying books, buying a house, practicing hobbies etc. Money, it is felt, ‘can’t buy you happiness, but it helps’ (FR). Respondents felt quite strongly about the link between money and well-being and stated that you cannot even talk about well-being in the case of poverty and lack of money (RO).

“Money is the foundation without which well-being cannot exist.”
(CZ)

- The amount of money an individual has is measured by his/her **possessions** so these are also a key contributor to well-being. (CZ)
- Not all respondents were convinced of the link between money and well-being. The male group of respondents in Bulgaria argued that one’s **social status** is not so much related to money but to a complicated mix of intellectual, material and social factors. Many examples were given of people with fewer material opportunities

but very high social status, such as intellectuals, artists and journalists.

Attitude towards money

- People's attitudes towards money and **how much they regard as enough** can either be determined by the individual, influenced by one's family of origin and the way one was brought up, or can be dependent on a person's values and the country he or she lives in. (CZ, EE)
- Intelligence is important in determining **how to work with one's money**.

"When someone fritters all their money away, then nothing is going to be left. But someone intelligent cares about their money, so as not to lose it. Or even to enlarge it for themselves or for future generations." (CZ)

Financial security / financial independence

- Respondents noted the **importance of financial security and financial independence** (DK, HU, IT, CZ, FR). It refers to a guarantee of stability and serenity (FR) and provides peace of mind (IT).
- A **gender dimension** was noted when it was mentioned how important material security is for guaranteeing women's independence. (FR)

"It means being free in your financial choices, not having to depend on someone. It's very important for women, not to be vulnerable." (FR)

4.3.3 Non-essential consumption

- Non-essential spending is seen as being able to **share, to spoil yourself and others, indulge in one's passions, to save, and to travel when going on holiday**. (FR, HU, PL, BE)

"Occasionally something extra: to travel, to go to the restaurant, the cinema, clothes, etc." (BE)

- Non-essential consumption is also a reflection of **material status**. Higher income gives people higher material status expressed in the ownership of more expensive cars and clothes and increased access to luxury foods and entertainment. (BG)
- A difference attributable to the **primary focus variable** is how respondents in Italy view consumption. For the higher social scale

group (education) it is important to be able to count on a certain patrimony, to have movable and immovable assets, and to be able to buy costly goods. For the lower social status group it is important to just 'get through the month with no worries'.

4.3.4 Basic needs

- Meeting basic needs (such as housing, food, heat, clothes, etc.) is a **goal in itself**, but also makes it possible to have a **peaceful family life** as the stressors caused by lack of basic resources are avoided. (FR, DK, PL, BE)

"So that at the end of the month you are able to pay all invoices and you do not owe anything to anybody." (BE)

4.3.5 Debt and savings

- It was only in Estonia that respondents explicitly referred to **debt** as a factor influencing well-being. Having debt is a source of great insecurity.
- Only in Bulgaria respondents expressed concern about the **pension system**, because although they have enough money to currently live a 'normal life' low pensions (100-300 Euros) are considered a very serious barrier to their well-being in future.

"We pay our taxes all our life and at the end they give you nothing. We will be very vulnerable at that moment – not able to work, without additional income, with many illnesses, etc. In that moment we will be in trouble." (BG)

4.4 Education and intellectual development

4.4.1 Educational opportunities

- Respondents linked educational opportunities with having the opportunity to study and to acquire **professional skills**, which was seen as important for well-being. (IT)
- Others related educational opportunities to having the **financial means** to send their **children to schools** that they would like them to go to, and would appreciate high quality schools that are within their **geographic reach** (HU, RO, BE). It is also important to make extracurricular activities affordable to all children (Flanders, BE). If children do well in school it also contributes to their parents' well-being (UK). Some of those with experience of the welfare state valued **equal access** to education (DK).

“That you know that you can get an education, that families don’t have to work the rest of their lives to send their kids to school, and that everyone has the possibility to send their kids to school. Whether they use that option or not, that’s another thing.” (DK)

Similarly, respondents in the Netherlands valued that education was **accessible** to everyone and that it was **affordable** to everyone.

- It was not only formal education that was regarded as important for well-being, but, more generally, **access to the sources of information** and being informed. (IT)
- **Not all respondents agreed on the link between education, educational opportunities and well-being.** In Italy, many of the respondents in both the lower and higher social scale group (education) were not convinced of this link and maintained that, at times, being ignorant can help people to live better lives.

“There is even the saying: ignorance is bliss.” (IT)

In the UK, as an instance of the link between education and well-being not always operating, an example was given of someone being highly qualified, having seven degrees, and being unable to find work.

4.4.2 Educational attainment

- Educational attainment does not only relate to **gaining knowledge in a formal sense**, but also to the general desire to **mentally explore new worlds** (DK); engaging in **general learning** such as learning how to drive a car (UK); developing on a **personal level** through cultural activities or doing additional courses (NL); or simply being educated into how to be a polite and civil member of society (PT).

“To keep an open view of the world.” (NL)

- Various **links exist between educational attainment and well-being.** A lack of education can result, it is felt, in individuals not realising or understand that better possibilities are attainable (RO). The well-educated are considered to be more independent; to have more self-confidence; a better ability to care of themselves and attain well-being; have better job opportunities and better salaries; are more satisfied with what they have, and value their social status more (CZ, RO, NL, BG, PT).

“If you have higher education, you have more options in society.” (RO)

A person's education level has an overall **impact on society** as investments in education translate into better societal conditions which in turn facilitate higher levels of well-being (CZ). There is also felt to be a **relationship between education, health and well-being**.

"For example, less educated people smoke more and, thus, harm their health." (CZ)

4.4.3 Intellectual aspirations

- Respondents in France commented on the link between **intellectual enrichment and well-being**. This was seen as the opportunity to expand one's knowledge, general culture and connections with the world. This issue was not raised in any other countries.

4.5 Health and nutrition

4.5.1 Personal health

- Health was **defined in a number of ways** by respondents. It was seen as the absence of illness or suffering, anything which weakens or breaks into one's social life (IT, FR, DE, EL, UK, NL, BE, PT). Experiencing poor health is what makes people become aware of health as a factor of well-being (FR). However, in a more extended sense health was not only understood as the absence of illness but also as freedom from pain and fear (DE). Health referred not only to how one feels, but to having an aesthetically pleasing body (EL). Distinction was also made between short-term illnesses and serious long-term illnesses (PL). In the case of Bulgaria, average life expectancy was regarded an important indicator of health.
- Respondents saw it as important to remain healthy by living a healthy lifestyle (HU). **Health can contribute positively or negative to well-being** in a number of different ways: depending on its severity, a lack of health can act as a barrier to well-being, and a lack of health has consequences for other aspects of well-being such as income, as one might not be able to work and participate in leisure activities (CZ, RO, EE).

"Without good health, there is no well-being. Imagine I have to lie in a hospital on a drip – I couldn't enjoy any well-being." (CZ)

Conversely, if you are healthy you are able to take advantage of a lot of other factors which contribute to well-being such as spending time with family, practicing hobbies, taking part in cultural life and going to work. (DE)

- **Factors which might influence a person's personal health** include: stress (PL, BG), the environment and air quality, eating habits, sports, smoking, relationships at home, spending too much time on the computer and watching TV (EE). Money also has some influence, as people with money are seen to prioritise their health more (EE).
- Personal health includes not only one's physical health, but also **mental or psychological health**. This is regarded as just as important as physical well-being, although there is not necessarily a correlation between the two. However, mental health is interconnected with other aspects of well-being such as whether one is satisfied in one's job or residence or one's family life (IT, DK, UK).
- Some mention was made of the relationship between **health and age** - the older the person, the more important the factor of health becomes in relation to overall well-being. (CZ)
- A person's well-being is also affected by the **health of others**, such as those in the immediate family because of responsibilities of care. (UK, PL)

"If I am sick, my entire family is sick too. They suffer because they look at me suffering and want to help, but they can't." (PL)

4.5.2 Nutritional intake

- The influence of nutritional intake on well-being includes **having something to eat, eating quality food, what you eat, and the relationship between food and money**.
- **Having something to eat** and having a sufficient amount of food and water, is the most fundamental link respondents made between nutrition and well-being. (EL, CZ, EE, NL, PT)
- This was followed by **eating quality food** or a balanced diet such as good quality vegetables, meat, fish, the right mix of foodstuffs, organic food and not too much fat (EL, IT, CZ, UK, BG, PT). Eating good food and the **enjoyment of food** can have a positive effect on one's well-being. (UK)

"It becomes something you look forward to." (UK)

- What one eats can have an effect on diseases, e.g. the risk of getting diabetes, and on one's physical conditions; and therefore **influences one's health** which in turn influences well-being. (DK, RO)

“Health depends on diet but you also need to know how to eat properly.” (IT)

Here **alcohol** also has an influence and respondents in Poland mentioned the negative effect of alcohol abuse on health.

- **Money can influence diet** and, therefore, well-being; whoever has money can buy food in sufficient amounts and quality. (CZ)

“I would have to eat only bread and butter if I didn't have enough money.” (CZ)

- However, not all respondents were convinced of the importance of food for one's well-being (lower social status group, education, UK).
- Sometimes eating something **enjoyable** (that makes one 'feel good' and satisfied), like a burger, can have a **negative impact on health** and well-being in the long run (EE). There is therefore a distinction between food and immediate feelings of well-being (instant gratification) and longer-term impact. The converse also seems to hold true; experiencing a lack of enjoyable food can impact negatively on one's immediate well-being. (PL)

“When we go somewhere, outside Poland, and have no favourite meals, we feel terrible. Angry. Just like that.” (PL)

4.5.3 Health care

- Respondents see it as a contributing factor to well-being to be able to get healthcare when they need it (HU, NL, BE, BG, PL). This is also regarded as the closest **connection between health and money**; more money means access to better services, medication and nursing homes which can, at least to some extent, influence health itself. (CZ, EE)

“The chance to have myself cured if I was sick and to be able to buy the medication for my children when they are sick. To be able to get to the hospital and get a doctor.” (HU)

- The need for **confidence in health facilities and treatments** that are available is also seen as a factor that influences health and well-being. (UK, BG, PL)

4.5.4 Physical fitness

- Exercise affects one's level of energy, heart, fitness and physical shape (DK, PT). As such it has an **influence on both mental and physical health** and helps one achieve what you want (FR).

“After running, I feel very tired but at the same time I have this wonderful sense of well-being.” (PT)

- Physical fitness is an important factor in de-stressing and maintaining a good **work/life balance** (DE).
- For **older people** who are no longer working, exercise contributes to well-being by helping people **remain supple** and preventing or alleviating illness. (DE).
- Not all respondents perceived a clear link between exercise and well-being. Some experience **exercise more as an obligation** for maintaining health and, therefore, somewhat removed from the concept of well-being. (FR)

“Well-being for me doesn’t mean doing aerobics or abdominal exercises. The approach is different depending on whether it’s to feel good or to lose weight.” (FR)

Fitness is often more associated with the concept of beauty than with health. (IT)

4.6 Infrastructure

4.6.1 Quality of living area (neighbourhood / town / city)

- Cleanliness (graffiti-free and not dirty), safety, security, sufficient parking in the neighbourhood, accessibility to a range of services, quality of public services in the area (transport, schools, refuse collection), proximity to nature, and the absence of air and noise pollution were mentioned by respondents as **contributing factors to the quality of the living area** and therefore to well-being. (DK, CZ, IT, RO, FR, CZ, UK, EE, NL)

“My home is my castle. My own four walls are very important to me. That is my personal sanctuary. And I feel secure and happy there.” (DE)

“Living in nature, in a city free of cars, where you can get around on your bike, with more green areas and less cement.” (IT)

For older respondents in the Netherlands the accessibility of services was particularly important.

“To use the elevator is an easy way.” (NL)

- **Good housing conditions and a pleasant neighbourhood** was particularly important for the **older group** in Germany as older people spend a lot more time at home because they are not working. They want to feel at home and foster good relationships

with their neighbours. For the older group in Estonia, security and a crime-free neighbourhood was of particular importance.

“I believe if you go out in the park and it is nice, clean, you have a plus, you feel better, it contributes to your well-being. The fact that you go out of the house and the alleys and everything is nice and clean...gives you a good feeling.” (RO)

- A difference that can be attributed to the **primary focus variable** is the case of the Czech Republic where the higher social scale group (employment) saw the residential environment as important, while the lower social scale group saw it as important to just have a roof over one’s head. This is one very clear example of the influence of socio-economic status on how well-being is defined.

A good **relationship with one’s neighbours** was of importance to respondents in Denmark and, to a lesser extent, in Belgium. Respondents in the rural group in the UK wanted to feel like they were part of a community (inclusion or a sense of belonging) through, for example, having friendly neighbours. Similarly, respondents in the rural group in Poland felt that good relationships with neighbours are important as one is, to a certain extent, ‘stuck with’ to one’s neighbours.

4.6.2 Quality of residence

- Respondents identified a number of **factors that relate to the quality of one’s residence**; size, the interior or decor, the idea of a comfortable and pleasant dwelling, the safety of the house, owning a healthy and eco-friendly house, liking the home you are in, being able to choose where to live, as well as the social standing that a house symbolises. (DK, HU, FR, IT, UK, BE)
- The quality of residence is, however, influenced by what one can afford (the **relationship between housing and money**) and just having a roof over one’s head was seen as important (BE). Access to housing and quality housing can be difficult.

“Formerly, [during the communist era] they [young people] were simply assigned a flat. These days, they have to take a mortgage.” (CZ)

“If one is financially secure, there is no danger of living under a bridge.” (CZ)

The quality of residence and whether one is able to rent or buy a house is therefore related to other aspects of well-being, such as work (income) and financial security. (IT)

- **Owning one’s own house** was also regarded to be better for well-being than renting. (IT, BG)

4.6.3 Quality of services

- Respondents in the Czech Republic mentioned the importance of civic amenities as a factor contributing to well-being.

4.7 Interpersonal relationships

4.7.1 Friends

- Respondents mentioned the importance of **social networks/contacts** in general, of which their friends are part. Members of these social networks can include friends, acquaintances, neighbours and co-workers (DK, CZ, FR, EE, BE). Harmony in social relations is seen as an antidote to stress (IT), is concerned with the exchange of ideas and emotions (BE) and was identified as one of the few factors that influence well-being that does **not have a straightforward connection to money** (CZ).

“If I had millions but people didn’t like me, the money wouldn’t bring me well-being.” (CZ)

- One way of staying in touch with people and making new friends is through the medium of **social networking sites**, making these a contributor to well-being for some.

“Facebook, the social network, lets you interact with other people, meet people, see what’s new and the outward-looking.” (FR)

- Friends are felt to **contribute to well-being** in the following ways: being company in good and bad times, having fun together, supporting one another, sharing, relying on one another emotionally or materially, being a source of strength and power (HU, CZ, DE, IT, UK, EE, NL, PL, BE, PT). As a result of these contributions to well-being, friends and an individual’s social environment were rated by respondents in Germany as a **more important** contributing factor to well-being **than money**.

“They [friends] end up being people that have been sharing our life.” (PT)

- There was some debate in the groups about the **importance of family versus friends in their contributions to well-being**. In France some felt that some close friends can be considered to be almost like family. In Romania some respondents were of the opinion that good friends can substitute for a family and help alleviate the effect of a lack or absence of family on one’s well-being. For the respondents in the higher social scale group (education) in Greece friends were more important than family as their social lives are more important to them, while for those in the lower social scale group family was more important than friends.

Some respondents in Estonia were of the opinion that friends are more important when you are young but, later on in life, family becomes more important, while respondents in Belgium talked about the fact that you can choose your friends, as opposed to your family.

"Yes, if you have true friends, you don't really need a family to enjoy well-being." (RO)

4.7.2 Family situation

- Relationships with close relatives are regarded by respondents from a number of countries as a factor which can have either a **positive or negative influence** on well-being, depending on the nature of the relationships and the presence or absence of family. (DK, HU, CZ, DE, FR, UK)
- The **benefits** to well-being stem from having a calm, loving, united, stable, balanced, affectionate, open, relaxed and supportive family that provides emotional stability and the opportunity to share; and avoiding the quarrels that result from shortcomings in other areas of life, such as work. (HU, CZ, FR, DE, IT, UK, PL, BE, BG, PT)

"Life is difficult, it is important to have a family that supports you." (IT)

For respondents in Estonia there was also a link between family and home; the family is what makes a house a home.

"Alone you don't get a feeling of home." (EE)

- However, family can also **negatively impact** on one's well-being if family members are ill, going through a bad time, or are emotionally upset. (UK)
- A link was also made between having close family ties and the benefit of this to the **well-being of society as a whole**; those raised properly make positive contributions to society. (CZ)

4.7.3 Overall satisfaction in marriage / partnership

- These emotionally close relationships were considered to be a **great source of love** which has a strong positive influence on well-being. (HU, CZ, DE, DK, IT, UK, BE)

"Love is everything to me. Having someone to love, to have some[one] love me; I cannot think of anything more important." (DK)

- These relationships also have **other qualities** which positively contribute to well-being: trust, balance, security, stability, mutual support and understanding in harder times, devotion, consideration and mutual give-and-take, helping to deal with stress, being at peace, sharing (DK, HU, EE, BE).
- It affects one's well-being **negatively** if a partner dies (NL); but a divorce or separation might not have a negative impact (BE).

"I was married, now I am separated, but I feel good. It has no impact at all upon well-being." (NL)

4.7.4 Overall satisfaction with children

- Establishing a family through the birth of children was considered a **personal achievement, part of a life plan**. (FR)

"The idea of children: we create them, they're ours. We're no longer the way we are with our parent. We have our own family." (FR)

- Children were considered an **important source of energy** and in that way contribute to a sense of well-being (CZ). Seeing their children happy contributes to respondents' well-being, while difficulties with children impacts negatively on well-being (UK, NL, PL).

"The children arguing and misbehaving, that has a massive short-term effect on my well-being." (UK)

- The data highlighted a **gender dimension**, with some respondents arguing that societal pressures have caused mothers to work for economic reasons instead of being with their children. (CZ)

4.7.5 Generations

- The growth and development of children and grandchildren was seen as having a positive influence on well-being.

"Seeing things grow; the plants in your garden or your children and grandchildren; anything really. Seeing them thrive and grow, that's well-being." (DK)

4.7.6 Other relationships

- For the older target group in the Netherlands their relationships with their **pets** contribute positively to their well-being.

4.8 Civic life

4.8.1 Current government

- Respondents recognised the **influence of politics and politicians** on their everyday lives through the decisions and laws that politicians and government officials implement and through the creation of economic and political stability; the provision of services (including social and health services) and jobs; and investment in cultural facilities such as museums (CZ, RO, HU, UK, EE, NL, PL). However, few respondents who spoke about the influence of their current governments had anything positive to say; in many instances current governments are felt to have a **negative influence** on well-being.
- The behaviour of politicians was highlighted as having a negative influence on well-being in a number of countries (UK, HU, CZ, RO, PL, BG). In Hungary there is an interesting difference between the higher social scale and lower social scale (employment) groups. Those in the higher social scale group live in a large city and, although they are critical about corruption in government at a national level, this does not have a direct impact on their well-being. Those in the lower social scale group claim to feel the impact of governmental shortcomings more strongly; the government has not provided the necessary jobs for them which has led to financial problems and, having a significant effect on well-being.
- However, some positive comments were made about governments and their impact on well-being. An example of this comes from Denmark where respondents commented how the current Danish government ensures free health care and equal educational opportunities for all, which is very important for well-being and gives respondents a sense of security.
- **Not** all respondents saw a **clear link** between their personal well-being and national government or politics (lower social group, employment, UK). For those in the UK who did see such a link, respondents felt a sense of “helplessness” as it could affect their well-being but was out of their control.

4.8.2 Freedom of expression

- **Freedom to express your opinion** and saying what you think and feel without sanction from the authorities is seen as a key factor of well-being. (DK; HU; IT; rural group, UK)
- It was also highly valued by some respondents whose countries had previously **experienced communist governments**.

“It is very important to me to be able to speak my mind openly, to say what I think without being punished for it. In the past you used to have to be very careful what you said and, in the worst case, to expect severe consequences.” (low skilled workers, DE)

4.8.3 General political and economic situation

- Although most respondents in Denmark felt they had not been affected by the **global financial crisis**, they nevertheless mentioned it as something that could influence well-being. Respondents in the UK felt that they had been directly affected through the banking crisis and ‘credit crunch’ in the UK.
- Respondents in Germany and Greece saw a **link at the national level** between stable economic conditions that the government creates and their own **personal financial well-being**. This was especially true for the lower social scale group (employment) in Germany, specifically those who are unemployed who are of the view that when the economic situation in Germany is in upturn, they will have better prospects in the job market. Similarly, a few respondents in Italy mentioned the economic and technological development of a country as a factor that can influence social and individual well-being. Respondents in Portugal held a similar view on the relationship between the national economy and a person’s employment situation.

“The economy is bad, as we all know, and concretely it is conditioning my job. Therefore it is affecting my well-being.” (PT)

4.8.4 Trust in political institutions

- Respondents referred to the influence on well-being of **democratic systems, human rights and legal order**.
- The **state system, a free and democratic society**, sets up conditions for both the economic and political situation in society which influences each individual personally and creates the context for living.
“If I was living in a society with some economic or political restrictions, I couldn’t live in well-being.” (CZ)
- **Human rights** were closely related to well-being as they are perceived to be a very strong indicator of a state’s functioning and a government doing its job. (EL)
- **Rule of law** was seen as a further contributing factor to well-being (EL). Social security depends on having rules for co-existence that are clear and observed by everyone (IT).

4.8.5 Respect for rights

- A feeling that individual's rights are respected and that one is to some degree protected by the authorities, gives respondents piece of mind and therefore positively influences their well-being (DK).

4.8.6 Discrimination

- Respondents from the Netherlands were the only ones to explicitly mention discrimination, also regarding it as going hand-in-hand with respect. For the older group **age discrimination** was an important factor; that they should be able to do new things, such as change jobs or start a course at an older age.

"They always look for cheaper employees, that's age discrimination!" (NL)

These respondents felt that **ethnic, religious, sexually related or gender discrimination** were all things that could work against the well-being of individuals and societies.

4.8.7 Society

- At the national political level, respondents in Greece, Poland and Bulgaria saw **safety and peace** (a lack of social turbulence) as important for their personal well-being, while respondents from the Czech Republic saw **cheats, bureaucrats and tyrants** as threats to well-being. Some respondents in Italy, where many people have a strong perception of a lack of safety, associated this issue with the problem of **immigration** as they were of the opinion that there is a link between clandestine immigration and delinquency.
- The **general state of society** also has an influence on personal well-being and factors such as lack of respect for people and the law, aggression in society and consumerism leading to peer pressure and materialistic values can all have a negative impact. (UK)
- The **media** is felt to have a negative impact on the well-being of some respondents through the continual reporting of bad news and negative stories. Other media content, especially promoting unattainable lifestyle and body images also had a negative effect.

"It really does affect my well-being. I know it's silly but adverts with very slim women getting into very expensive cars really upset me!" (UK)

- News from other countries, or **world affairs** (such as wars more generally and specifically that in Afghanistan, famine, the Haiti

earthquake, etc.) can similarly impact negatively on respondents' sense of well-being. (rural group, UK).

4.9 Cultural and spiritual activities

4.9.1 Time for leisure activities

- Leisure activities serve a **number of purposes**, all of which contribute to well-being: they provide relaxation, de-stressing, entertainment, an escape from reality, and an escape from one's daily routine (DK, HU, CZ, FR, IT, UK, EE, PL, BE, PT); they give one the opportunity to be creative and practice hobbies. (HU, FR, IT).
- These activities can take a **number of forms** which include: personal care (massages), a walk, a drive, a nap, listening to music, going to the cinema, restaurants, having meals with friends, practicing sport (FR, NL); going to parks, bars, clubs, cafes, exhibitions, the theatre and the cinema (RO); socialising with friends (UK); hobbies such as sport (BE), singing in a choir, knitting, Nordic walking, reading; time for oneself by, for example, travelling (EE); a hobby such as stamp collecting (PL). The more enjoyable these activities are, the more positive the effect on well-being. (RO)

For those living in cities and who are employed, such as those in the higher social scale group (employment) in Germany and the higher social scale group (education) in Greece, leisure activities are an important way of finding a **work/life balance**. Leisure time as a way of finding work-life balance was also considered important by respondents in the UK.

4.9.2 Spirituality / religiosity

- Religion and spirituality are **not considered to be the same**, and respondents spoke of themselves more in relation to being spiritual, for example, some of the respondents in Denmark and Portugal would consider themselves to be spiritual as this has a broader meaning, but none would think of themselves as religious.
- In France, respondents saw spirituality as being supported or comforted by a belief or a **way of seeing life**, so as to be less affected by its struggles and challenges, while in Romania respondents saw it as **faith or a set of values**.

"Faith, believing in something, whether religion or even philosophy. Even without religion you can have faith in fellow beings." (FR)

- In the UK, two or three respondents in the higher social status group (education) mentioned the influence of spirituality on one's **emotional state and health**.

4.9.3 Cultural life

- Cultural activities are a factor that contributes to well-being and **examples** might include going to theatres, concerts and museums (DK), having the freedom and resources to attend cultural programmes (HU) and, thereby, developing yourself personally (NL). What constitutes a cultural experience can vary; for example, in Denmark, respondents in the higher social status group (employment) talked about theatre, concerts and museums, while those in the lower status group mentioned reading a book or listening to music, the difference apparently being a result of levels of disposable income.

4.10 Environment

4.10.1 The weather

- Respondents from seven countries (Denmark, the Czech Republic, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, the younger group in Estonia and the higher social status group, education, and rural group in the UK) mentioned the influence of the weather on people's well-being. This is the case because snow, bad weather and the darkness of winter days influence well-being negatively as the absence of light causes **depression** (DK). The weather also has an influence on one's capacity to be outward-looking and to get things done (FR).

"When it rains, you don't feel like going out. You have the blues. When the sun is shining, you feel like being active, doing all sorts of things, going shopping." (FR)

4.10.2 Natural disasters

- Respondents saw it as a positive influence on their well-being that they do not have to contend with natural disasters like earthquakes in their countries. (DK, CZ)

"There was an earthquake in Haiti recently and they don't have anything there now." (CZ)

5 EVALUATION OF SUGGESTED FACTORS

Following the unprompted discussion on the factors the respondents perceived to be contributors to well-being; they were presented with a suggested list of factors, based on the list developed prior to the research and then presented to respondents during the discussion. This section summarises the reactions of the respondents to this list.

5.1 Employment

As already discussed in the previous section, this is seen as a key factor of well-being for many. The only country where there was not an extensive discussion of the relationship between employment and well-being when respondents drew up their own list of factors was Germany. However, this can be directly attributed to the make-up of the sample in Germany; work no longer plays a role in the lives of the pensioners, the unemployed have come to terms with not having a job at the moment, and the highly skilled respondents took it for granted that people have jobs. Here respondents saw a stronger relationship between job satisfaction and well-being, than just having a job. Respondents in France similarly felt that professional satisfaction is more closely related to well-being than just being employed which, through its primary links with income and money has a different type of impact of on well-being.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Unemployment (HU, EL, RO) | Employment |
| My job (HU, IT, NL) | Other suggestions for overall description |
| Work (FR, EL, IT, UK, NL) | Employment and employment security (Flanders group, BE) |
| Job opportunities (RO) | |
| Being in and out of a job (UK) | Having a job (EE) |

5.2 Leisure time

Leisure time as a factor influencing well-being was discussed in detail in the previous section. For some groups it did not form part of the list of contributing factors they had initially drawn up: the lower social scale group (employment) in the Czech Republic, the lower social scale group (education) in Romania, and the older group with mid-level education in Italy. However, these respondents added this factor to their list once it was suggested. They made the connection between leisure time and money; those with more wealth have more leisure time (CZ) and saw it as important in finding the right work/life balance (RO). However, in Bulgaria the general opinion is that leisure time as a category is a consequence of well-being and not a contributing factor.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|--|
| Free time (RO) | Leisure time |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Free time (IT) Social life (rural group, UK) Leisure activities and hobbies (younger group, EE) Time for oneself and resting (younger group, EE) Relaxation (BE) |

5.3 The government

This factor also appeared on the list respondents drew up themselves. However, as noted in the previous section, respondents generally had a negative perception of their national governments and not all could see a link between government and their personal well-being.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|---------------------------|--|
| System of government (FR) | Government (CZ, UK, lower social scale group, education, EL) |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Political and economic situation (DK) Society (high social scale group, employment, CZ) Politics (higher social scale group, education, EL) Good government (IT) Government/Politicians (higher social scale group, education, UK) The State (EE) Facilities/services of the government (NL) Authority (BE) |

Just as there was some disagreement about the extent to which government influences individual well-being, there was also some debate about the best overall term to describe this factor.

5.4 Housing

Housing was discussed under 'quality of the residence' in the previous section. There were some respondents who had not included this term as part of their initial lists but subsequently included it. These respondents were from: the higher social scale group (employment) in the Czech Republic; the lower social scale group (education) in the UK; respondents from Poland; and the group of men in Portugal. Others, such as respondents from Romania, who had left it off their lists initially, continued to do so.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|--|
| My home (EE) | Housing |
| Secure home (EE) | Other suggestions for overall description |
| My own place (EE) | Having a house (IT) |

5.5 Fitness

Fitness was mentioned under 'physical ability' in the previous section. From the discussions about the pre-prepared attribute list it is evident that respondents were not certain about whether fitness should be a subsection of health, or whether it should stand alone (HU, CZ). For example, respondents from Romania did not add this factor to their list as they saw fitness as a subsection of health, and respondents from Italy did not regard it as contributing to well-being. However, it was added to the list of the lower social scale group (employment) in Hungary and the lower social scale group (education) in the UK.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|--|
| | Fitness (CZ; EL; older group, NL; lower social scale group, education, UK) |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Physical well-being (DK) |
| | Being in physical shape (DK) |
| | Health and fitness (higher social scale group, employment, CZ; rural group and higher social scale group, education in the UK) |
| | Health (EE; younger group, NL) |
| | Physical and mental fitness (older group, Estonia) |
| | Good physical condition (BE) |
| | Sport (BG) |

The debate about whether fitness should be a standalone factor or a sub-section of health is reflected in the suggestions offered for the overall description of the factor. Fitness, on its own, might therefore not be the best descriptor in all countries.

5.6 Personal financial situation

Individuals' personal financial situation was discussed in the previous section under a number of different sub-headings such as income, basic needs and non-basic consumption.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|--|
| | Personal financial situation (EL, RO, NL, BE) |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Money (higher social scale group, employment, CZ; FR; younger group, EE) Financial independence (lower social scale group, employment, CZ) Financial security (IT) Financial peace of mind (IT) Financial security (UK) Financial/material security (older group, EE) Income (younger group, EE) Personal financial situation and income (Wallonia, BE) |

Although respondents from four countries regard personal financial situation as the best overall term, respondents from three countries suggested that a better term would be 'money'.

5.7 Discrimination

Discrimination was not something that was mentioned by respondents (other than those from the Netherlands) when they drew up their original lists of factors that influence well-being as they didn't see how it affected them personally (DK, UK, CZ). However, respondents from some countries subsequently included it as they acknowledged that it could affect others, although respondents had different grounds for discrimination in mind – ethnic minorities (DK); race, gender disability (UK); minority groups or foreigners (BE). Respondents from a number of countries preferred a more positive term to discrimination, such as

tolerance (DE, FR, IT). Finally, there was some discussion about whether discrimination should be a standalone factor or incorporated into a broader category, such as society (CZ)

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|--|
| | Discrimination |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Equal access to opportunities (higher social scale group, employment, CZ) Equal access to resources (higher social scale group, employment, CZ) Fairness (DE) Justice (DE) Equal treatment (DE) Security (DE) Tolerance (higher social scale group, employment, France; IT; BE) Racism (EL) |

5.8 Friends

As discussed in the previous section, friends were seen as an important contributing factor to well-being. This term proved to be fairly uncontroversial in the discussion of the suggested list. There was some discussion in Germany, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic about whether friends should be a standalone factor, or part of a broader category of personal relationships and this discussion is reflected below in the alternative suggestions for the overall description of the factor. It was only in the male group in Bulgaria that friends were not felt to be a contributing factor to well-being. They argued that each person is responsible for his/her own well-being.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|--|---|
| Conviviality (older group in the rural area, FR) | Friends |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Personal relationships and friends (higher social scale group, employment, CZ) Personal relationships (DE, older group NL) Friends/family/partner (younger group, NL) |

5.9 Spirituality / religion

Spirituality and religion was discussed in the previous section but respondents from a number of countries did not mention this spontaneously (HU, CZ, DE, lower social status group, education, RO, IT). A number of points should be noted from the discussion of the suggested attribute list: Some respondents were of the opinion that the two terms should be separated (DK; high social scale group, education, EL; IT; younger group, NL; BG); very few respondents saw organised religion in the traditional sense as part of their lives while spirituality is seen as a broader, more flexible and subjective concept (DK, HU, DE); in France there was some debate about the term religion as it is felt to exclude the possibility of atheism; in Estonia, the older group wanted religion included on the list, but not spirituality as they associated the latter purely with curiosity.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|---|--|
| Transcendence (high social status group, employment, HU) | Spirituality/religion (CZ, FR, RO, UK, PL, BE) |
| Personal philosophy (higher social scale group, employment, FR) | <p>Other suggestions for overall description</p> <p>Spirituality (higher social status group, employment, DE; higher social scale group, employment, DK; IT; NL; Wallonia, BE, PT)</p> <p>Religion (older group, EE; NL; Wallonia, BE; women's group, BG)</p> |

Although respondents from six countries supported the use of term spirituality/religion, the sensitivity that some groups had to the word religion and the suggestion that the terms be separated should be noted.

5.10 Health

Health was discussed under the heading of personal health in the previous section. The discussion on fitness in 5.5, and whether health is a broader term that includes fitness and, possibly, nutrition was also reflected when respondents debated whether health was the best overall description in this case.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|--|---|
| Healthy lifestyle (HU) | Health |
| Physical and psychological health (EL) | <p>Other suggestions for overall description</p> <p>Health and fitness (higher social scale group, employment, CZ; rural group and higher social scale group, education, UK)</p> |

From the suggestions offered it appears that most respondents were very comfortable to have health as the best overall description of the factor and generally saw it as either inclusive of fitness (HU, DE, EL, RO, IT, EE, BG), or listed fitness as a separate factor (DK; lower social scale group, employment, CZ; lower social scale group, education, UK; younger group, NL, PL, PG). Some respondents felt more comfortable having the link between health and fitness reflected clearly by including both terms as part of the description.

5.11 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was discussed in detail in the previous section. In the discussion on the list, the higher social scale group (employment) in the Czech Republic saw job satisfaction as part of a broader category of self-realization. For respondents in a number of different countries it was important that job satisfaction be separated from employment, which was seen to refer simply to having a job. (UK, EE, NL, PL, PT).

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|---|--|
| Creativity at work (higher social scale group, education, EL) | Job satisfaction |
| Personal achievements (RO) | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Work as a hobby (lower social scale group, employment, CZ) |
| | Self-realization (higher social scale group, employment, CZ) |
| | Personal and professional achievements (higher social scale group, employment, FR) |
| | Pleasure in job (NL) |

5.12 Personal relationships

Personal relationships were discussed under the heading of interpersonal relationships in the previous section. In the discussion of the pre-prepared list this term caused some confusion amongst respondents especially since the terms family and friends were already on the list. In Denmark respondents viewed personal relationships as too broad a term as it can refer to relationships with your partner, family and friends. Since both friends and family situation is already on the list, they suggested the term partnerships. Other respondents regarded personal relationships as synonymous with friends (higher social scale group, employment, CZ; RO). The younger group in Estonia divided this factor into family and friends and respondents in Germany saw personal relationships as the overall category that encompasses both family and friends.

Respondents in the lower social scale group (education) in Greece did not really understand the term personal relationships as they considered it too broad and were unclear whether it is supposed to mean friends, relatives or sexual partners.

The higher social scale group (education) in the UK preferred the term relationships in order to cover relationships outside family and friends, such as relationships with work colleagues. The older group in Estonia felt the same and renamed the term 'relationships between people'.

In Bulgaria respondents held that personal relationships were not regarded as something substantial, since they are perceived as something personal, intimate and not corresponding to a general concept of well-being.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|---|--|
| Interpersonal relations (IT) Family (EE) Relationships at home (EE) | Personal relationships (DE, FR, higher social scale group, education, EL, lower social scale group, education, UK, BE, PT) |
| Friends (EE) | <p data-bbox="794 958 1359 1023">Other suggestions for overall description</p> Partnerships (DK) Interpersonal relationships (lower social scale group, employment, CZ) Social network (higher social scale group, employment, FR) Relations with others (older group in the rural area, FR) Social relations (IT) Relationships (higher social scale group, education, UK) Relationships between people (older group, EE) Social relationships (NL) |

Although the term personal relationships had some support in six countries, it appears that including this term on the list alongside such terms as family or friends might be confusing for respondents.

5.13 Education

Education was discussed in the previous section in terms of educational attainment and opportunities. In the discussion of the suggested list the lower social scale group (employment) in France was unsure whether this term referred to formal education or the way in which parents raise their children. The group in Wallonia, Belgium shared this view and suggested

that if the term is meant to refer to formal education then it should be changed to 'instruction'

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|----------------------------|---|
| Knowledge (EL) | Education |
| Learning (EL) | Other suggestions for overall description |
| Information/knowledge (IT) | Civic education (lower social scale group, employment, FR) |
| | Educational opportunities (higher social scale group, employment, UK) |

5.14 Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood was discussed under the quality of the living area in the previous section. In many instances the term neighbourhood seems to have a very narrow meaning for people (the people who live next to them, close to them and their very immediate surroundings). In the alternative suggestions for the best overall term to use it can be seen that respondents suggest terms that specifically broaden the interpretation. An example of this is respondents in Denmark who suggested the term living area; neighbourhood is the small concentrated area a person lives in, while living area can involve the block, the immediate area and the city and is therefore more appropriate for the kinds of issues the respondents face. Similarly, in Estonia it was interpreted to mean direct neighbours and people living close to you and the term living environment was suggested. In the Czech Republic the term neighbourhood was also not clear as it could mean the people or place around you and it is suggested that surrounding or environment [prostředí] is used.

There were also countries where neighbourhood was not regarded as a factor influencing well-being. For the older group in Germany it was more the relationships with neighbours that were important, rather than the neighbourhood as a whole. In France the word neighbourhood was considered to be 'too anecdotal' to be considered a real factor, and in Greece the higher social scale group (education) felt that the concept of neighbourhood is more relevant to provincial or rural areas.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|------------------------|---|
| Environment (RO) | Neighbourhood (EL; RO; low social scale group, education, UK; PL; BE; group of men in PT) |
| Living conditions (NL) | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Living area (DK) |
| | Surroundings (CZ) |
| | Environment (CZ) |
| | Area/environment you live in (IT) |

| | |
|--|--|
| | Housing area (IT) District you live in (IT) Neighbourhood/safety/security (group in rural area, UK) Living environment (EE) Surroundings [leefomgeving] (NL) |
|--|--|

Although the term neighbourhood was endorsed by groups in six countries, it might be necessary to use another term or additional word(s) to convey the scope of the term to those respondents who understood it very narrowly.

The term or concept neighbourhood could be widened to living area or district, to cover those aspects, which are related to living conditions and every day personal life experience.

5.15 Diet

Diet was discussed under nutritional intake in the previous section. In the discussion of the suggested list, the primary debate amongst respondents was whether diet should be a standalone factor or whether it is a sub-factor of the health and/or fitness category. Respondents who saw diet as a sub-factor of health include: the higher social scale group (employment) in Hungary; the older group in Germany; respondents in Italy; the rural group in the UK; the older group in the Netherlands and respondents in Bulgaria.

However, diet was not only seen in relation to health. For respondents in the lower social scale group (employment) in Hungary diet related to having enough food to eat, which seemed to be a factor that directly affected them. However, for others diet referred to tasty food (good food and wine) which relates to well-being through the aspect of pleasure and not as part of health (DE, PL).

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|------------------------------|--|
| | Diet |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Nutrition (EL) |
| | Food (EL) |
| | Nutrition/eating (EE) |

5.16 Cultural life

Cultural life was discussed in the previous section of this report. In the discussion of the suggested list there was again some debate about whether cultural life should be a standalone factor; for example, the higher social scale (employment) group in the Czech Republic and the groups in Germany saw cultural life as part of leisure time, as did some respondents in Italy and the male group in Portugal. Not all respondents were clear on what is meant by the term; for example, respondents in Italy were not sure whether cultural life should be equated with culture or with education (a cultured life); and respondents in the UK were not sure whether it referred to arts or to national culture, in which case 'society' would be a more appropriate term.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|--|
| Culture (EL) | Cultural life |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | |

5.17 Family situation

Family situation was discussed in the previous section under the broader heading of interpersonal relationships. In the discussion of the pre-prepared list there emerged a dislike for the 'situation' part of the phrase. Respondents in the Czech Republic argued that the situation might change in the family but what matters is that there is a family as such; respondents in France felt that 'situation' describes the family composition but 'family' refers to its existence and its contribution to the individual; and respondents in the UK saw 'situation' as confusing because it can be equated with marital status.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Relationships between people (EE) | Family situation (DK, DE, NL, PL, BE, PT) |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Family (CZ, EL, UK, EE) Family background (CZ) |

Although the term 'family situation' received support from respondents in six countries, there was also support for the idea of just using the term 'family'.

5.18 Personal freedom / rights

Personal freedom / rights was discussed under three headings in the previous section; freedom of choice, freedom of expression, and respect for rights. In the discussion of the suggested list mention was again made

of whether personal freedom / rights should be a standalone factor. The higher social scale group (employment) in the Czech Republic considered it to be a sub-factor of 'society', while the higher social status group (education) in the UK also thought it was implicit in other factors such as government and discrimination. The younger group in Estonia considered it to fall under state or government. Not all respondents considered it to be a contributing factor to well-being, for example, respondents in the higher social scale group (education) in Romania were of the opinion that rights and freedoms is something everyone should have, it is self-evident; yet it is also something that gets ignored and is therefore not a contributing factor to well-being.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|---|
| | Personal freedom / rights |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | Freedom (IT) Freedom of expression and of speech (IT) Personal freedom (BE) |

5.19 The economy

In the previous section of the report the economy was discussed under the heading of general political and economic situation/climate. In the discussion of the suggested list some respondents did not consider the economy as a factor contributing to well-being as it was considered too abstract and beyond the influence of the ordinary citizen (DE, PL). Others were of the opinion that it should not be a standalone factor and had already been addressed in discussions of other factors such as society, government and money (higher social scale group, employment, CZ; BG; higher social scale group, education, UK; younger group, EE). As can be seen from some of the suggested alternative descriptors, respondents were not always clear about which economy was being referred to; global, national, regional, etc.

| Other terms discussed | Best overall term to describe the factor |
|-----------------------|--|
| The economic system | The economy (DK, FR, EL, RO, UK, older group EE, NL, BE, PT) |
| | Other suggestions for overall description |
| | State stability / the economy (lower social status group, employment, CZ) Economy of the country/nation (lower social scale group, education, IT) Economy of the zone/region (lower social scale group, education, IT) |

6 DEFINITIVE LIST OF FACTORS

Based on the respondents' spontaneous suggestions and reactions to the suggested list with which they were presented, a definitive list of factors was agreed within each group. Based on the findings the following list of attributes has been developed.

6.1 Factors common to all groups

There were **five factors** that were included on the definitive list of all of the groups across all fifteen Member States – **employment, personal financial situation, health, leisure time and job satisfaction**. However, the definitive list has been **expanded** to also include factors that were mentioned by **all but one or two groups**. This makes possible the addition of another **four factors** (housing, education, family and friends) to the list. The following table presents the overall core definitive list, the different descriptions given to each factor, and the groups which mentioned the factors.

| Factor | Different terms used | Countries/groups |
|------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Employment | Employment (DK, CZ, PL) Work (HU, IT) Employment / work / job (DE, PT) Employment / work (FR) Employment / work / unemployment / money (EL) Employment / job opportunities (RO) Employment / work/ having a job (UK) Employment / job (EE) To have a job or not / work / job (NL) Employment / employment security (BE) Work / work satisfaction (BG) | All groups |
| Personal financial situation | Personal financial situation (DK, NL, PL, PT) Financial security and financial independence (HU) Money / financial independence (CZ) Financial position / finances / affluences / material goods / stable conditions (DE) Money / personal financial situation (FR) Personal economical situation (EL) Personal financial situation / money (RO) Personal financial peace of mind / financial | All groups |

| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| | <p>security (IT)</p> <p>Financial security / personal financial situation (UK)</p> <p>Financial security / money (EE)</p> <p>Personal financial situation / income (BE)</p> <p>Incomes / money (BG)</p> | |
| Health | <p>Health (DK, HU, FR, EL, RO, IT, EE, NL, PL, BG, PT)</p> <p>Health / health and fitness (CZ, UK)</p> <p>Health / physical fitness (DE)</p> <p>Health care services (BE – Flanders)</p> | All groups |
| Job satisfaction | <p>Job satisfaction (DK, IT, UK, EE, PL, BE)</p> <p>The chance to create / self-actualization at work (HU)</p> <p>Self-realisation / work as a hobby (CZ)</p> <p>Professional and social recognition (DE)</p> <p>Professional satisfaction / achievements (personal and professional) (FR)</p> <p>Job satisfaction / creativity (EL)</p> <p>Pleasure in job (NL)</p> <p>Work / work satisfaction (BG)</p> <p>Job satisfaction / professional fulfilment (PT)</p> <p>Professional achievements / job satisfaction (RO)</p> | All groups |
| Leisure time | <p>Leisure time (CZ, EL, IT, NL, PL, RO)</p> <p>Free time / leisure time (DK, PT)</p> <p>Having the chance of resting, going on vacation / holiday and relaxation / having and doing hobbies and having spare time one can control (HU)</p> <p>Leisure time / free time / cultural life (DE)</p> <p>Leisure time / entertainment (FR)</p> <p>Leisure time / social life (UK)</p> <p>Leisure time / leisure activities and hobbies (EE)</p> <p>Leisure time / relaxation (BE)</p> <p>Leisure time and hobby (BG)</p> | All groups |
| Housing | <p>Residence (DK)</p> <p>Housing (HU, CZ, UK, NL, PL, BE, EL, RO, PT – male group)</p> <p>Flat / housing conditions (DE)</p> <p>Housing / living environment /</p> | All groups, except the women in Portugal |

| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| | <p>surroundings (FR, PT)</p> <p>House and home (IT)</p> <p>Housing and home (EE)</p> <p>Home / apartment (BG)</p> | |
| Education | <p>Education (DK, CZ, EL, RO, EE, NL, PL, PT, BG, HU, DE, IT – higher and lower social scale groups, education)</p> <p>Education, civic education and intellectual enrichment (FR)</p> <p>Education / educational opportunities (UK)</p> <p>Education / instruction / educational possibilities (BE)</p> | All groups, except the older group in Italy |
| Family | <p>Family situation (DK, EL, NL, PL, BE, PT)</p> <p>Family background and the strength one can received from loved ones (HU)</p> <p>Family / family background (CZ)</p> <p>Family / good family life (DE)</p> <p>Family situation / family (FR – higher and lower social scale groups, employment)</p> <p>Family situation / family achievements (RO)</p> <p>Family / family situation (IT)</p> <p>Family (UK, BE)</p> <p>Family / family and love (EE)</p> | All groups, except the rural group in France |
| Friends | <p>Friends (DK, HU, EL, RO, IT, UK, EE, PL, PT, BG – women’s group)</p> <p>Personal relationships and friends / friends (CZ)</p> <p>Circle of friends / acquaintances / neighbours (DE)</p> <p>Friends / conviviality (FR)</p> <p>Friends / family / relations NL – younger group)</p> <p>Friends / to have friends (BE)</p> | All groups, except the older group in the Netherlands and the men in Bulgaria |

6.2 Factors occurring in only some groups or countries

In this discussion of the factors occurring in only some groups or countries it is worth noting how the factors that appeared controversial in section 5 of the report were incorporated (or not) by respondents in their definitive lists. These are the factors that respondents were not sure whether to list together or separately.

- In section 5 respondents were unclear about whether **fitness** and **diet** should be listed separately or incorporated into the broader category of **health**. The category of health is included in the definitive list of factors. However, this does not seem to have precluded respondents from also listing fitness and diet separately.
 - In addition to listing health, respondents in six countries also listed fitness separately (DK, DE, PL, BE, PT, UK – lower social scale group, education)
 - In addition to listing health, respondents in eight countries also listed diet separately (DK, DE, EL, EE, NL, PL, BE, PT)
 - In addition to listing health, respondents in 5 countries also listed both fitness and diet (DK, DE, PL, BE, PT)
 - Two countries listed health and fitness together as one factor (CZ, UK – higher social scale group, education)
 - Five countries listed health on its own with no separate mention of fitness or diet (HU, FR, RO, IT, BG)

- In section 5 respondents were unclear about whether **friends** and **family** should be incorporated into the broader heading of **personal relationships**. Both **friends** and **family** are included in the overall list of definitive factors.
 - Only respondents in Bulgaria mentioned family, but not friends or personal relationships.
 - Only respondents from the Czech Republic mentioned family and included friends and personal relationships in the same category.
 - Respondents from all groups in 12 different countries mentioned friends, family and personal relationships (DK, HU, CZ, DE, FR, EL, RO, IT, NL, PL, BE, PT) while another three groups also included personal relationships on their list (the higher and lower social status groups (education) in the UK, but not the rural group; the older group in Estonia, but not the younger group).
 - From those who included personal relationships as well as friends and family, it cannot be assumed that they see personal relationships as equivalent to marriage or partnerships.
 - Where it seems that personal relationships might refer to marriage or partnerships: (DK, HU, CZ, DE, PT)
 - Where it seems that personal relationships might refer to a broad category of relationships: (CZ, DE, FR, IT, UK, EE, NL, BE)
 - Where it is unclear: (EL, RO, PL)

There appear to be some differences between factors mentioned in groups distinguished by the **primary focus variable**.

- **Higher social scale groups vs. lower social scale groups:** It appears that for some respondents in the lower social scale groups the meeting of more basic and concrete needs is felt to be of more immediate relevance to well-being than more abstract needs; while respondents in the higher social scale groups mention more

abstract factors, probably because their immediate needs have been met fully. Examples include:

- Factors mentioned more by the lower social scale groups: security, a job that suits your skills, a satisfactory salary, having enough money to pay the bills, having a secure pension, diet (ample food), decent standard of living.
 - Factors mentioned more by the higher social scale groups: Spirituality, recognition, harmony, calmness, happiness, leisure time.
- **Younger vs. older groups:** It appears that the younger groups mention more factors that relate to enjoyment while the older groups speak more of stability, comfort and health. Examples include:
 - Factors mentioned more the younger groups: Time for oneself; luck; food and drinks; external appearance (looks)
 - Factors mentioned more by the older groups: stability, security, comfort.
 - **Men vs. women:** The distinctions here are less clear and the groups have much in common, such as professional achievements, job satisfaction and leisure time. However, there is a slight indication that the men in the groups might be more inclined towards status and perhaps self-gratification, mentioning social status, marital status and sex, although it is difficult to be sure of such a conclusion based only on the data available.

The following table presents a list of factors that appeared on the definitive lists in some countries and on the pre-prepared, suggested attribute list presented to respondents.

| FACTOR | MENTIONED BY |
|---------------------------|---|
| Cultural life | DK, DE, FR, EL, EE, NL, PL, BE, BG |
| Discrimination | DK, DE, EL, UK, NL, PL, BE |
| The economy | DK, FR, EL, IT, NL, PL, PT |
| The government | EL, IT, UK, EE, NL, BE |
| Neighbourhood | DK, HU, CZ, DE, EL, RO, IT, UK, EE, PL, BE |
| Personal freedom / rights | DK, HU, DE, FR, EL, IT, NL, PL, BE, PT |
| Spirituality/religion | CZ, FR, UK, NL, PL, BE, PT, DK (higher social scale group, employment) |
| Fitness | DK, DE, PL, BE, PT, RO, EE, HU, UK (lower social scale group, education), NL (older group), EL (lower social scale group), CZ (lower social scale group), FR (lower social scale group and older group) |
| Diet | DK, DE, EL, EE, NL, PL, BE, PT, HU, RO, CZ (lower social scale group), IT (lower social scale group), UK (lower and higher social scale groups) |

Full discussions of each of these factors are included in sections 4 and 5. They were mentioned sufficiently frequently to suggest that they should be included in a quantitative questionnaire looking to evaluate fully the concept of well-being and its component elements.

7 RANKING / IMPORTANCE

Once a definitive list of the factors influencing well-being had been established with each group, a series of ranking / prioritisation exercises were undertaken. These exercises were intended to provide some insight into both how easy respondents find it to differentiate between factors and which sort of ranking approach is likely to be the most effective in later quantification.

The three approaches used were:

- A three group clustering exercise – key factors, secondary factors and relatively unimportant / irrelevant factors
- A ranking exercise – where all factors needed to be put in an order of relative importance
- A scoring exercise – where each factor was given a rating out of 10 for importance.

7.1 Clustering exercise

In the clustering exercise the focus was on the respondents' individual personal well-being and what they thought influences it. The respondents were asked to think about their personal situation, i.e., about the factors that contribute to their own well-being. They had to structure the factors along three categories: 1. key factors, 2. secondary factors, 3. relatively unimportant factors.

The task seems to be easy for most of the respondents in all the different countries. But it was somewhat criticized, as all the factors are interdependent and therefore the differentiation between most important and relatively unimportant was recognised as problematic.

7.1.1 Main findings

- There was a general pattern in the data in terms of **where most of the factors were clustered**. In 13 of the 15 countries most of the factors were clustered under 'key factors', with the majority of the remaining factors clustered under 'secondary factors', with very few factors in the 'relatively unimportant / irrelevant' cluster. It was only in Italy and Estonia where there were fewer key factors than secondary factors.
- There was a general pattern to the **clustering of the factors that form part of the overall core definitive list**.
 - In none of the countries or groups were all 9 factors on the overall core definitive list clustered as key factors.

- In five countries, eight out of the nine factors on the overall core definitive list were listed as key factors. (UK, DK, FR, PL, BE)
- In seven countries, six or seven of the factors on the overall core definitive list were clustered as key factors. (RO, HU, DE, CZ, PT, EL, NL)
- In three countries, five of the nine factors on the overall core definitive list were clustered as key factors. (IT, BG, EE)
- The factor on the overall core definitive list that was most likely to be listed under secondary factors was leisure time which was listed as a secondary factor in six countries (CZ, DE, EL, RO, PL, BE) and as relatively unimportant / irrelevant in two cases (IT, BG).
- Other factors on the overall core definitive list that were occasionally listed as secondary include:
 - Employment (DE, NL, older group)
 - Job satisfaction (EL, IT, UK, EE, NL, older group)
 - Friends (RO, IT, EE)
 - Family (BG)
- A fairly broad pattern exists in terms of **where the different factors were clustered**.
 - In general terms the factors that appeared most under **key factors** were the ones that spoke directly to people's most immediate needs and/or the factors that had a direct connection to their personal well-being. This included factors such as employment, personal financial situation, health, housing, etc.
 - The factors that were most likely to be relegated to **secondary importance** are the factors that do not have such an immediate or direct impact but are related to activities that respondents participate in, or to broader structural aspects, such as government, the economy, cultural life, leisure activities, diet, etc.
 - The **relatively unimportant / irrelevant factors** were those that did not directly impact on their lives, such as discrimination and religion/spirituality.

7.1.2 Effectiveness of approach

- The moderators comment that respondents generally found this an **easy exercise** that did not take long to complete. The exception to this is Greece where respondents found it difficult to group the different factors.
- There were **mixed responses on the effectiveness of the tool**.
 - One view was that the clustering exercise was an effective tool to assess how respondents prioritise the different factors (DK, PL, IT, PT).
 - **Concerns** listed by the moderators **about the effectiveness** of the tool include:

- Respondents didn't use all of the clusters and made very little use of the third cluster, and the exercise might therefore be not as effective in revealing which are key factors and which are less important. (CZ, BG, EE, NL, BE)
 - That the sample was too small to really get a sense of differences by primary focus variable. (EL, BE)
 - Contradictory conclusions about the importance of factors across the different exercises. For example, from the clustering exercise one would conclude that personal freedom is a key factor in Belgium, but the other two exercises refute this.
- Suggested ways in which to **improve the tool** include:
 - Respondents had difficulty categorising some of the factors that influence well-being as unimportant/irrelevant and tended to list them under secondary factors. A suggestion is to have four clusters: key, secondary, relatively unimportant, irrelevant. (IT)
 - Limiting the number of factors that can be listed under each of the clusters, e.g. five factors under key variables, five factors under secondary factors. (NL)

7.2 Ranking exercise

In the ranking exercise respondents had to work together to sort the factors in order of importance. In this instance they had to think about what influences the well-being of the people in their country as a whole.

7.2.1 Main findings

- There was a broad pattern to how the factors on the **overall core definitive list** were ranked.
 - Almost all of the factors on the core definitive list were generally highly ranked, with the exception of leisure time that was generally ranked lower than any of the other factors and quite low on the lists overall.
 - The factor that stands out as the most important and that was ranked at number 1 (the most important) in 20 groups is **health**.
 - The factors that were most included as part of the top three ranking are **health, family** and **employment**.
- Similar to the clustering exercise where the more immediate or concrete factors were listed under key factors, in the ranking exercise it was again these factors **that were ranked the highest** with abstract terms such as religion/spirituality, government, the economy and discrimination ranked lowest. The exception to this was the inclusion of either government and/or the economy in the top five rankings of the following groups or countries: Greece where

government was included by the higher social scale group (education) and economy by the the higher social scale group; Romania where both the higher and lower social scale groups (education) included both government and the economy; Estonia, where the older group included the economy; and the Netherlands where the older group included government.

- The ranking exercise made it possible to more clearly see differences based on the **primary focus variable**. In general the different groups **ranked the factors in a very similar way**, but amongst the differences by primary focus variable, the following can be highlighted:
 - In Denmark **education** was a top priority for respondents in the higher social scale group (employment), but less so for respondents in the lower social scale group. In Italy the converse is seen and respondents in the lower social scale group (education) assign a higher ranking to education than those in the higher social status group.
 - In a number of countries the higher social scale group (employment or education) assigned a lower ranking to **employment** than their counterparts in the lower social scale group (HU, CZ, FR, EL, UK). Similarly, in Germany respondents in the higher social scale group (employment) assigned a lower ranking to employment than the lower social status group. However, it was the pensioners in the older group who ranked employment higher than even the lower social scale group.
 - Also in Germany, the pensioners assigned **neighbourhood** a higher ranking than the other groups. The lower social scale group (employment) gave higher importance to **personal freedom and rights** providing the explanation that, since they are from eastern Germany with its history of communism, such freedom is something they particularly value.

7.2.2 Effectiveness of approach

- There were **mixed responses** from the moderators **on how easy the groups found the exercise**. In some countries respondents found the ranking exercise quite difficult (HU, IT, UK, NL), while others found it easy (CZ).
- Views on the **effectiveness of the tool** in differentiating between different factors include:
 - It is an effective tool to measure how the different factors are weighed by the different groups. (DK, FR, EL, RO, NL)
 - Respondents found it difficult to think in terms of how the different factors would be prioritised at national level as they regard well-being as very individual with the possibility of large variation between people. (UK, NL)

- Some respondents struggled with factors that did not seem important to them at the moment but had had a big effect on them at specific times, such as World Issues. (UK)
- Some respondents had difficulty determining what the most important factor is that influences well-being. (EE)
- Respondents found it easy to distinguish between factors that are the most and least important (HU, CZ). However, they had difficulty in raking the factors in the middle (HU, CZ). This was difficult because:
 - The factors are not independent from one another (HU) and this interrelatedness and similarity in meaning presented respondents with some difficulty, e.g. employment and job satisfaction; personal relationships, family and friends. (DE, UK, PT)
 - Equal rankings were not possible. (HU, DE, NL, PL, BE, PT)
 -
- Suggestions for improving on the tool included:
 - Ask respondents to rank the first ten most important key factors as this might allow respondents to give a more reliable ranking. (RO)
 - Ask respondents to rank how the factors relate to themselves rather than to the country as a whole. (NL)

7.3 Scoring exercise

In this exercise respondents again worked by themselves and were asked to score the factors based on the influence they have on their personal well-being.

7.3.1 Main findings

The following table summarises the overall **mean scores** for the factors on the final core definitive list.

| Factor | Mean score |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Health | 9.6 |
| Family | 9 |
| Employment | 8.8 |
| Personal financial situation | 8.8 |
| Housing | 8.7 |
| Friends | 8 |
| Job satisfaction | 7.9 |
| Education | 7.6 |
| Leisure time | 7.1 |

- These findings **support the findings of the ranking exercise** where health was the factor most listed at number 1; and health, family and employment were the factors that were most often ranked in the top three. This might suggest that respondents view

factors that are important for well-being at a national level (the ranking exercise) as similar to well-being in their personal lives.

- In line with the findings of the clustering exercise where **leisure time** was often regarded as of secondary importance, leisure time in the scoring exercise had the lowest overall mean score of factors on the final core definitive list.
- Two factors that scored highly, but that are not part of the overall core definitive list were **personal relationships** (a mean score of 8.1 but only mentioned in 29 groups) and **personal freedom / rights** (a mean score of 8.2 but only mentioned in 30 groups).
- As was to be expected from the clustering and ranking exercises, **government** (5.6), the **economy** (6.6) and **spirituality/religion** (4.5) had some of the lowest scores.
- The **scoring between groups** at country level was in many cases **very similar** and moderators in Denmark, Germany and Portugal specifically highlighted this. However, of the differences in the scoring that can be attributed to the **primary focus variable**, the following is worth highlighting:
 - In Romania, the lower social scale group (education) gave government quite a low score (4.4) compared to 8.8 from the higher social scale group.

7.3.2 Effectiveness of approach

- Moderators from five countries explicitly mentioned that they thought the scoring exercise an **effective tool** for differentiating between factors. (RO, EE, BE, BG, PT)
- One of the strengths of the exercise was that respondents were able to **express their own opinions** and **score factors at the same level** (BE). The 1-10 scale also gives the respondents the opportunity to express their opinion in a more specific way, highlighting the personal position of each respondent, thereby providing a more nuanced view of the factors. (PT, IT, EE, NL)
- The scoring exercise generally supported the findings from the clustering and ranking exercises (DK, HU). Although the scoring exercise took a bit more time than the clustering exercise (DE), respondents **generally found the exercise easy** to do. (CZ, RO, UK)
- In some cases moderators noted **inconsistent scoring** between respondents on the same variable. This was mostly the case with spirituality/religion (DE, PL), the state, economy, fitness and government (CZ). Therefore, the final mean score for each country does not always reflect the debate that occurred within the group

between various positions (IT, FR). The wide variation of scores on the same factor within each group might also indicate that the method might be more sensitive to individual differences in perceptions (UK, BE, BG).

- A number of points should be noted about how respondents **tended to award the scores**:
 - Moderators from three countries specifically mentioned how respondents from the lower social scale group seemed, in general, more likely to score all the factors higher than those in the higher social scale groups (DK, IT, UK). It seemed as if the high status respondents were more critical and more reluctant to give a high score.
 - Although some respondents used the full breadth of the scale, there is evidence that many did not. For example, it was noted that in Italy respondents from the lower social scale (education) and older groups tended to use a narrow range of scores (many factors with scores of 8 and 9), while respondents from the higher social scale group used a wider range of scores (IT). Similarly, in the UK, in the lower social scale group (education) and the rural group, some respondents scored nothing under 5 and in the higher social scale group one respondent scored nothing over 8. In the Netherlands some respondents used 1 as the lowest score, while others used 5 as the lowest; others gave the most important factor a 10, while some only an 8. Finally, the moderator from the Czech Republic noted that, apart from the obviously less important factors, like religion, respondents limited their scores to 5-10, so there is not an equal spread over the range, as with the clustering exercise (CZ).

7.4 Quantitative recommendation

Taking into account all the factors discussed in this chapter, our recommendation for the quantification exercise is that a **scoring approach** along the lines of that described in section 7.3 would be the most appropriate to adopt. The reasons for this recommendation are:

- Respondents found the exercise relatively quick and easy to complete.
- Although there were some issues with respondents not using the lower end of the scale, it is clear that differentiation between different is being achieved.
- The moderators indicated that there were no major concerns about this approach.

- Both the other tested approaches showed significant weaknesses; insufficient differentiation in the clustering exercise and respondents struggling to separate some factors in a full ranking exercise.

8 QUESTIONNAIRE RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Factors for quantification

It is recommended that the factors to be used in the quantitative questionnaire should include the nine that appear on the overall core definitive list. They are:

- Employment
- Personal financial situation
- Health
- Job satisfaction
- Leisure time
- Housing
- Education
- Family
- Friends

In addition, including the following nine factors would provide a full coverage of the issues included in the definitive lists of the 35 groups which constituted this research study.

- Cultural life
- Discrimination
- The economy
- The government
- Neighbourhood
- Personal freedom / rights
- Spirituality/religion
- Diet
- Fitness

Of the list of suggested factors introduced to respondents during the groups, only personal relationships is not included as part of this final list of factors. Although fitness and diet were sometimes viewed as part of 'health', there appears to be sufficient differentiation between the three for most respondents to be able to consider them as discrete factors. However, respondents find the concept of personal relationships difficult to differentiate from factors such as family (which includes spouse / partner) and friends (which could include other romantic attachments). For this reason we have not included the factor in our final list.

8.2 Suggestions for weighting process

This section provides some guidance on the kind of approach that might be appropriate for weighting the quantitative data based on the qualitative findings. The following table summarises the means of the different factors from the scoring exercise.

| Factor –definitive list | Mean score |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Health | 9.6 |
| Family | 9 |
| Employment | 8.8 |
| Personal financial situation | 8.8 |
| Housing | 8.7 |
| Personal freedom / rights | 8.2 |
| Friends | 8 |
| Job satisfaction | 7.9 |
| Education | 7.6 |
| Fitness | 7.4 |
| Leisure time | 7.1 |
| Diet | 6.8 |
| Cultural life | 6.8 |
| Neighbourhood | 6.7 |
| The economy | 6.6 |
| Discrimination | 5.9 |
| The government | 5.6 |
| Spirituality/religion | 4.5 |

- It can be seen that **health** is regarded as the factor with the most influence on well-being. This finding is supported by the ranking exercise where health was also the factor most ranked at number one. Clearly it is a more important factor and should have a higher weighting than other factors on the list.
- At the other end of the list is **leisure time** with a mean of 7.1. The smaller influence of leisure time on well-being was consistently noted throughout the ranking exercises, for example in the clustering exercise leisure time was the factor in the overall core definitive list that was most likely to be ranked as of secondary importance.
- **Employment** and **personal financial situation** received identical scores. This might reflect the interdependence of the two factors as one's personal financial situation is very closely linked to the employment one has and remuneration received. These two factors should be weighted equally.
- **Family** and **friends** did not receive equal scores – family has a mean of 9 and friends a mean of 8. This highlights that not all relationships are regarded as having an equal influence on well-being and it is therefore important that the two relationships should be assessed separately and weighted differently.

The ten point scale scoring approach appears to be the most appropriate of those tested in the qualitative stage. It provides a clear differentiation between factors, without forcing respondents to distinguish between factors which they deem equally important.

ANNEX – DISCUSSION GUIDE

QUALITATIVE EUROBAROMETER – WELL-BEING GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE – FINAL

This discussion guide is intended to establish with European citizens the various factors which contribute to personal 'well-being' and to gain some initial insights into the relative importance of the various factors identified. The discussion is in three main sections; an unprompted discussion of the issue, a test / validation of a current hypothesis (see Moderator Appendix – Well-Being Hypothesis) and a section on prioritization / weighting.

1) INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

This section of the guide is intended to allow the respondents to begin to feel relaxed, to start to get to know one another and for the moderator to begin to establish a rapport with the group. We will also gain some initial impressions of the respondents and their life experience.

Moderator

- Self
- TNS / local institute
- Independent

Process

- Confidential
- No right or wrong answers
- All views equally important / valid
- Audio / video recording and viewing (as appropriate)

Subject

- Well-being; what it is and what contributes to it
- Part of a pan-European study to develop an in-depth understanding and measurement tool

Respondents

- Name
- Personal situation (work, family, home life etc.)
- Hobbies and interests

2) WELL-BEING – INITIAL REACTIONS (15 minutes)

This short section is designed to introduce the concept of well-being, to understand how the respondents perceive it and, if necessary, to agree / provide a working definition which will set the context for the rest of the session.

When I say the phrase 'well-being' what images does it bring to mind

- why those images
- what makes you think of those things

How might other people respond to the phrase

- what other reactions might there be

- why do you think other people might see it differently

In what ways do you think well-being differs from or is similar to:

- happiness
- quality of life

IF NECESSARY, EMPHASISE AT THIS POINT AND DURING THE DISCUSSION THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE WELL-BEING OF THE INDIVIDUAL (I.E. NOT OF A COMMUNITY, COUNTRY ETC.)

3) WELL-BEING – PERSONAL EXPERIENCE (40 minutes)

In this section we will work with the respondents to develop as comprehensive a list as possible of the components of well-being. As well as exploring the components, we will also try and draw out examples and experiences so that we can understand the language that citizens use when considering these sorts of issues. This will provide us with valuable information to help frame questions that people will find it easy to understand and answer in the quantitative stage.

GIVE RESPONDENTS TASK SHEET 1 – ASK THEM TO NOTE DOWN ALL THE THINGS THEY CAN THINK OF THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE WELL-BEING

FLIP CHART EXERCISE

I would now like to think about all the things that might contribute to well-being

- what things do you think contribute to well-being
- what else

And what are the things that might undermine or work against well-being

- what else

ESTABLISH AS FULL A LIST OF FACTORS AS POSSIBLE – EMPHASISING THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN ALL VIEWS AND PERSPECTIVES, EVEN IF THEY ARE APPARENTLY CONTRADICTIONARY

ALTHOUGH OUR FOCUS IN THE GUIDE IS ON THE OBJECTIVE AND EXTERNAL, IF RESPONDENTS ALSO TALK ABOUT INTERNAL / SUBJECTIVE ISSUES (INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY, PERSONALITY ETC.) PLEASE ALSO TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT

ONCE A LIST HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, TAKE EACH FACTOR IN TURN AND EXPLORE IT IN MORE DETAIL WITH THE GROUP

What do you think about this as a possible contributory factor to well-being

- do you think this is something that all Europeans would recognize as contributing to their well-being
- why (not)
- is this the best way of phrasing it
- how else could it be expressed

In what way does this factor have an impact on well-being

- can you give me examples of how this would work
- what does this look like in the real world
- is this something that changes over time

What impact does it have on well-being if this is absent

- can you give me examples of how this would work

- what does this look like in the real world

What lies behind this factor

- are there other factors which influence this one
- is this actually a combination of other, more detailed factors

4) HYPOTHESIS EVALUATION (20 minutes)

Having established, in some detail, how our respondents view well-being, this section will allow us to introduce the list developed by DG COMM to evaluate it against the respondents' views. This will provide us with more valuable information on whether the items we have on our list are comprehensive and whether they fit with citizens' perceptions. In this section we will also establish a definitive list of attributes to be included in the final section of the group.

GIVE RESPONDENTS COPIES OF SHOW CARD 1

How well does this list match the one we have come up with

- is there anything on this list which we should add to ours

Is there anything on this list which we feel doesn't belong

- why should it not be there
- is there something similar that could / should be included

If we wanted to adapt this list to make it fully comprehensive, what would we add / change

DISCUSS AND AGREE EACH SUGGESTED CHANGE SO THAT THE FINAL LIST IS AS COMPREHENSIVE AS POSSIBLE FROM THE GROUP'S POINT OF VIEW

5) RANKING / IMPORTANCE (30 minutes)

Having arrived at an agreed list of components at the end of section 4 this section will provide us with some indications of the relative weight / importance of each component. We will use both individual and group exercises to try and understand different perspectives.

GIVE EACH RESPONDENT A COPY OF TASK SHEET 2 – ASK THEM TO MODIFY / DELETE / ADD FEATURES AS APPROPRIATE BASED ON SECTION 4

THEN ASK THEM TO USE COLUMN 2 (SEGMENT) TO ASSIGN EACH FEATURE TO ONE OF THREE GROUPS, BASED ON THEIR PERSONAL SITUATION (I.E. WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR OWN WELL-BEING)

1 = KEY FACTORS

2 = SECONDARY FACTORS

3 = RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT (OR IRRELEVANT) FACTORS

WHILST THEY ARE DOING THIS THE MODERATOR SHOULD PREPARE A SET OF SORTING CARDS, COVERING THE SAME LIST OF ATTRIBUTES

PUT THESE CARDS ON THE TABLE AND ASK RESPONDENTS TO WORK TOGETHER TO SORT THE CARDS IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE FROM THE FACTOR WHICH HAS THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON WELL-BEING, TO THE ONE THAT HAS THE LEAST. IN THIS INSTANCE THEY SHOULD THINK ABOUT PEOPLE IN <COUNTRY>, AS A WHOLE.

ONCE THE CARDS HAVE BEEN SORTED (THE MODERATOR SHOULD READ OUT THE ORDER TO ENSURE IT IS CAPTURED ON THE AUDIO RECORDING):

Why did you put them in this order

- what makes the ones at the top most important
- and the ones at the bottom less important

Which factors were the most difficult to position

- which were most contentious
- why
- who particularly disagrees with where this factor has been placed
- why is that

THEN ASK RESPONDENTS TO RETURN TO TASK SHEET 2 AND, IN THE FINAL COLUMN (SCORING) GIVE EACH ATTRIBUTE A SCORE OUT OF TEN, TO INDICATE HOW IMPORTANT A FACTOR IT IS IN THEIR PERSONAL WELL-BEING, WHERE 10 IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT AND 1 EXTREMELY UNIMPORTANT.

6) WRAP-UP AND CLOSING REMARKS (5 minutes)

This final section gives us a last opportunity to capture any respondent views and opinions that have not already been covered and for the moderator to ask any final questions that have not been fully addressed earlier in the group.

Is there anything that anyone wants to add

- any relevant issues we haven't discussed
- anything you haven't had a chance to say

Thank respondents and finish the group

TASK SHEET 1

Name: _____

WELL-BEING, INFLUENCING FACTORS:

SHOW CARD 1

Employment

Leisure time

The government

Housing

Fitness

Personal financial situation

Discrimination

Friends

Spirituality / religion

Health

Job satisfaction

Personal relationships

Education

Neighbourhood

Diet

Cultural life

Family situation

Personal freedom / rights

The economy

MODERATOR APPENDIX – WELL-BEING HYPOTHESIS

| CLUSTER | ITEM |
|--|---|
| 1. Subjective well-being (SWB) | a. Mood |
| | b. Satisfaction |
| | c. Evolution of SWB |
| | d. Potential changes |
| | e. Freedom of choice |
| | f. Expectations |
| 2. Economic and employment situation | a. Debt and savings |
| | b. Income |
| | c. Basic needs |
| | d. Non-basic consumption |
| | e. Job satisfaction |
| 3. Education and intellectual development | a. Educational attainment |
| | b. Educational opportunities |
| | c. Intellectual aspirations |
| | d. Post-materialist values |
| 4. Health and nutrition | a. Personal health |
| | b. Physical ability |
| | c. Nutritional intake |
| 5. Infrastructure | a. Quality of residence |
| | b. Quality of living area (neighbourhood / town / city) |
| | c. Quality of natural resources |
| | d. Quality of services |
| 6. Interpersonal relationships | a. Friends |
| | b. Inclusion |
| | c. Family situation |
| | d. Overall satisfaction in marriage / partnership |
| | e. Overall satisfaction with children |
| | f. Generations |
| 7. Civic life | a. Current government |
| | b. Trust in political institutions |
| | c. Freedom of expression |
| | d. Respect for rights |
| | e. Discrimination |
| 8. Cultural and spiritual activities | a. Cultural life |
| | b. Cultural tolerance |
| | c. Time for leisure activities |
| | d. Spirituality / Religiosity |
| | e. Time dedicated to spiritual / religious activity |