

20 March 2015: International Day of Happiness

## How satisfied are people with their lives in the European Union?

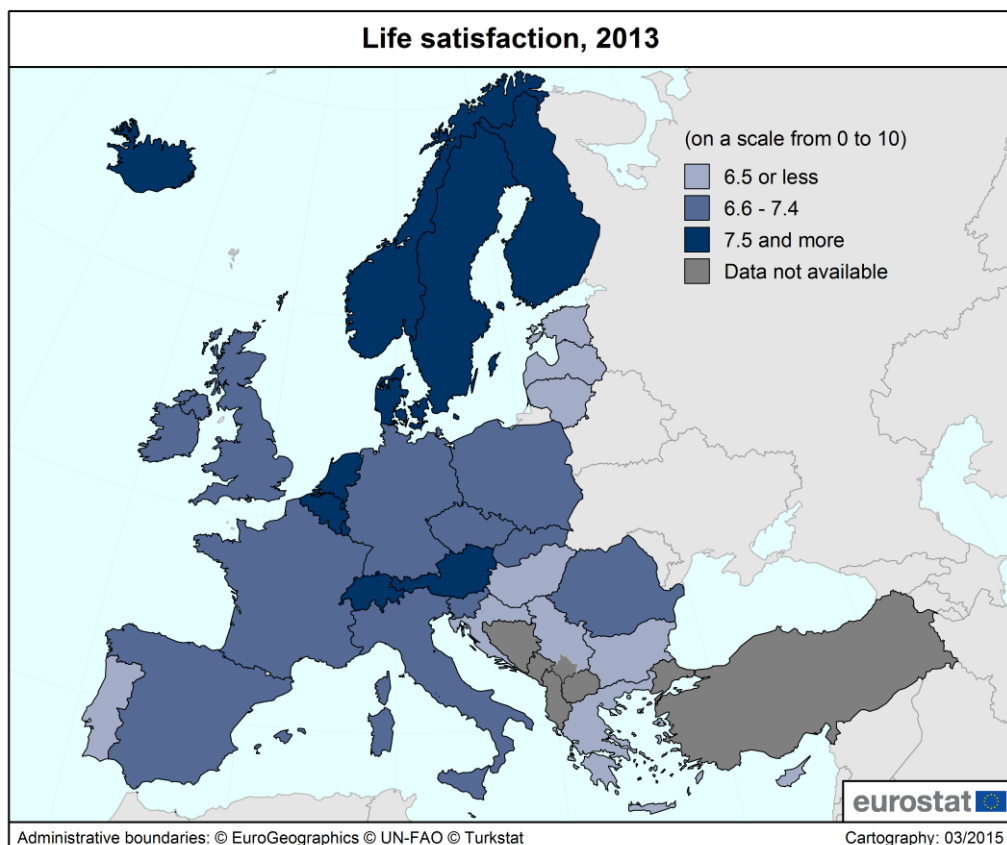
A new multi-dimensional data collection

“Overall, how satisfied are you with your life these days?” people across the **European Union** (EU) were asked. Life satisfaction<sup>1</sup> represents how a respondent evaluates or appraises his or her life taken as a whole. It has a prominent role as it can be regarded as a key indicator of subjective well-being. On a scale<sup>2</sup> from 0 (“not satisfied at all”) to 10 (“fully satisfied”), nearly 80% of residents aged 16 and over in the **EU** rated their overall life satisfaction in 2013 at 6 and higher, with an average (mean) satisfaction of 7.1.

Life satisfaction is a multi-dimensional concept, which is very much shaped by various socio-demographic factors which lead to different living situations as well as to different expectations and preferences. While women and men are almost equally satisfied, health condition appears to be one main determining factor in life satisfaction, ahead of factors such as financial position, situation on the labour market or social relations.

On the occasion of the International Day of Happiness<sup>3</sup> on 20 March 2015, **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, publishes a selection of subjective indicators on well-being of people in Europe. These data on subjective evaluations and perceptions in different domains have been collected for the first time in a comparable way in European official statistics.

The figures in this News Release, as well as those presented in a [dedicated article](#)<sup>4</sup> on the Eurostat website, represent the first findings from among the large amount of quality of life indicators which will be published in June 2015 as part of a comprehensive package.



## Highest life satisfaction in the Nordic Member States

In 2013, mean life satisfaction, measured on a scale of 0 to 10, varied significantly between EU Member States. With an overall average of 8.0, inhabitants in **Denmark, Finland** and **Sweden** were the most satisfied with their lives in the EU, followed by those in the **Netherlands** and **Austria** (both 7.8). At the opposite end of the scale, residents in **Bulgaria** (4.8) were by far the least satisfied, followed by those in **Greece, Cyprus, Hungary** and **Portugal** (all 6.2).

### Life satisfaction in the EU Member States by age group, 2013

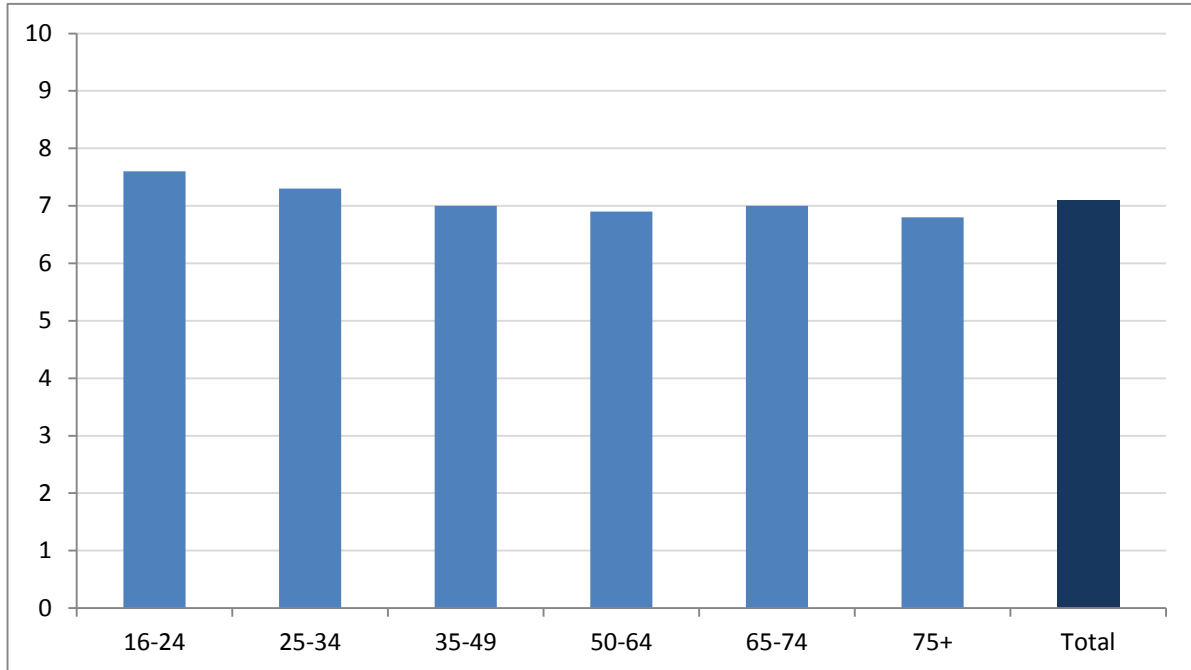
(on a scale from 0 "not satisfied at all" to 10 "fully satisfied")

	Total	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75 and over
<b>EU</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.8</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	7.6	7.8	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.4
<b>Bulgaria</b>	4.8	5.8	5.4	4.9	4.6	4.3	3.8
<b>Czech Republic</b>	6.9	7.7	7.3	7.0	6.6	6.6	6.5
<b>Denmark</b>	8.0	8.1	7.8	7.8	7.9	8.6	8.4
<b>Germany</b>	7.3	7.6	7.3	7.2	7.0	7.4	7.5
<b>Estonia</b>	6.5	7.2	7.1	6.5	5.9	6.1	6.0
<b>Ireland</b>	7.4	7.7	7.4	7.2	7.3	8.0	7.8
<b>Greece</b>	6.2	7.0	6.4	6.3	6.0	5.9	5.5
<b>Spain</b>	6.9	7.4	7.1	6.9	6.7	6.9	6.4
<b>France</b>	7.0	7.6	7.3	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.7
<b>Croatia</b>	6.3	7.5	7.2	6.4	6.1	6.0	6.0
<b>Italy</b>	6.7	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.3
<b>Cyprus</b>	6.2	6.9	6.4	6.1	5.7	6.1	6.0
<b>Latvia</b>	6.5	7.3	7.0	6.4	6.2	6.1	6.0
<b>Lithuania</b>	6.7	7.8	7.3	6.7	6.3	6.5	6.1
<b>Luxembourg</b>	7.5	7.8	7.7	7.4	7.3	7.4	7.3
<b>Hungary</b>	6.2	7.1	6.7	6.2	5.8	5.9	5.6
<b>Malta</b>	7.1	7.6	7.5	7.1	6.9	7.1	7.0
<b>Netherlands</b>	7.8	7.9	8.0	7.6	7.7	7.9	7.9
<b>Austria</b>	7.8	8.4	8.1	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.6
<b>Poland</b>	7.3	8.1	7.8	7.4	7.0	6.9	6.9
<b>Portugal</b>	6.2	7.5	6.8	6.3	5.7	5.9	5.6
<b>Romania</b>	7.2	8.0	7.5	7.4	6.9	6.7	6.2
<b>Slovenia</b>	7.0	7.8	7.4	7.1	6.6	6.6	6.4
<b>Slovakia</b>	7.0	7.6	7.4	6.9	6.6	6.7	6.1
<b>Finland</b>	8.0	8.2	8.3	8.1	8.0	8.0	7.7
<b>Sweden</b>	8.0	7.9	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.3	8.1
<b>United Kingdom</b>	7.3	7.5	7.3	7.1	7.1	7.7	7.5
<b>Serbia</b>	4.9	6.1	5.5	4.9	4.6	4.8	4.6
<b>Iceland</b>	7.9	8.2	8.0	7.9	7.8	7.9	8.1
<b>Norway</b>	7.9	8.0	7.8	7.8	7.9	8.1	7.9
<b>Switzerland</b>	8.0	8.1	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.4	8.4

## Young people tend to be more satisfied with life

When looking at age groups, life satisfaction in the **EU** was highest in 2013 among young people (an average of 7.6/10 among the EU population aged 16-24), and lowest for elderly people (an average of 6.8/10 among the EU population aged 75 and over). It should be noted that life satisfaction at EU level tends to decrease with rising age, with the exception of the age group 65-74, which is for most people the period right after retirement.

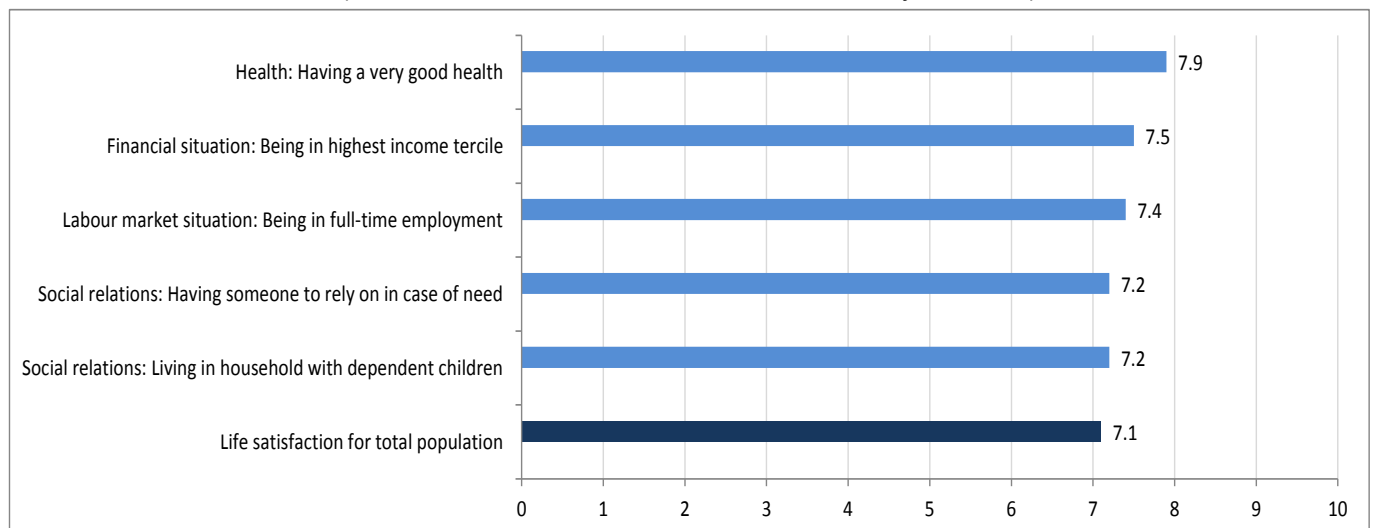
**Life satisfaction by age group in the EU, 2013**  
(on a scale from 0 "not satisfied at all" to 10 "fully satisfied")



## Income is not the most influential factor for life satisfaction

In 2013, the highest average rating of life satisfaction in the **EU** was to be found among the population reporting a very good health condition (7.9/10). Factors such as financial situation (an average of 7.5 among the population in the highest income tercile), and social relations (an average of 7.2 among the population having someone to rely on in case of need as well as among people living in households with dependent children) also appeared to be significant in influencing life satisfaction, albeit less so than health.

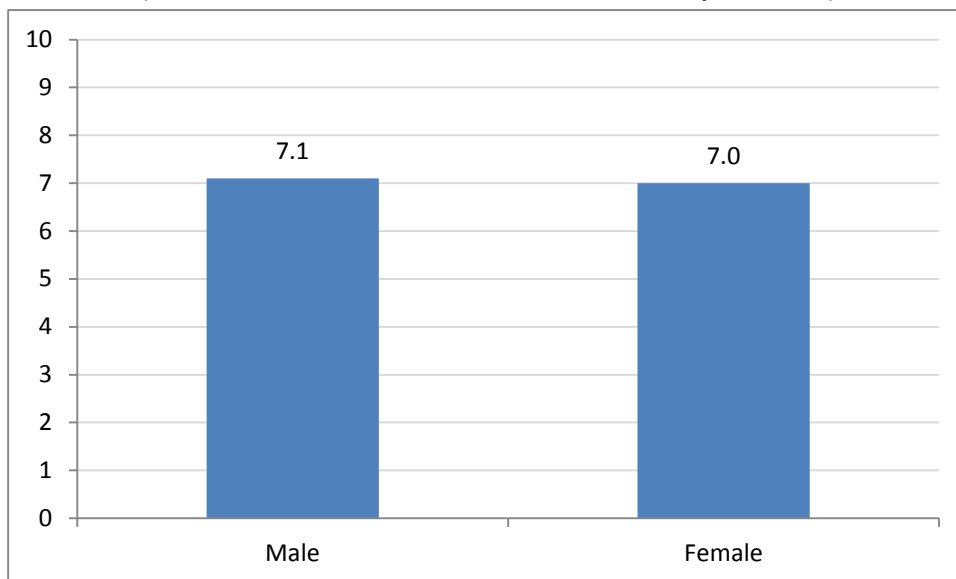
**Life satisfaction in the EU by selected factors, 2013**  
(on a scale from 0 "not satisfied at all" to 10 "fully satisfied")



## Men and women are equally satisfied with their lives

Another finding of the data collected by Eurostat on subjective well-being is that there is a very narrow gender gap in life satisfaction. Males (7.1/10) and females (7.0/10) living in the EU reported on average a nearly identical level of life satisfaction in 2013.

**Life satisfaction in the EU by sex, 2013**  
(on a scale from 0 “not satisfied at all” to 10 “fully satisfied”)



1. The measurement of life satisfaction is intended to cover a broad appraisal the respondent makes of his or her life. The term “life” is intended here as all areas of a person’s existence. The variable therefore refers to the respondent’s opinion/feeling about the degree of satisfaction with his/her life. The survey covered the population aged 16 and over.
2. Life satisfaction is measured on an 11 point scale which ranges from 0 (“not satisfied at all”) to 10 (“fully satisfied”).
3. For further information on the 2015 International Day of Happiness: <http://www.un.org/en/events/happinessday/>
4. Eurostat, Statistics Explained article “**Quality of life in Europe – facts and views – overall life satisfaction**” available on Eurostat’s website: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quality\\_of\\_life\\_in\\_Europe\\_-\\_facts\\_and\\_views\\_-\\_overall\\_life\\_satisfaction](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quality_of_life_in_Europe_-_facts_and_views_-_overall_life_satisfaction)

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