

Quality of life indicators - overall experience of life

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in December 2025
Planned update: December 2026*

Highlights

In 2024, the average life satisfaction in the EU was 7.2 out of 10 – with scores ranging from 6.2 in Bulgaria to 7.8 in Finland. Younger people (16-29) in the EU rated in 2024 their life satisfaction highest on average, except in Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands. People living in households with children in the EU rated their life satisfaction higher in 2024, on average, than those living in households without.

This article is part of the Eurostat online publication [Quality of life indicators](#), providing statistics on the quality of life in the EU. It focuses on overall experience of life, the last dimension of the '8+1' [quality of life indicators](#) framework. The first eight quality of life dimensions focus on various individual aspects such as material living conditions and living environment or employment, which are often analysed from both an objective and a subjective perspective. This article aims to capture the trends in the subjective well-being based on the 'life satisfaction' indicator (self-assessed on a 0-10 scale) collected as part of the [statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#).

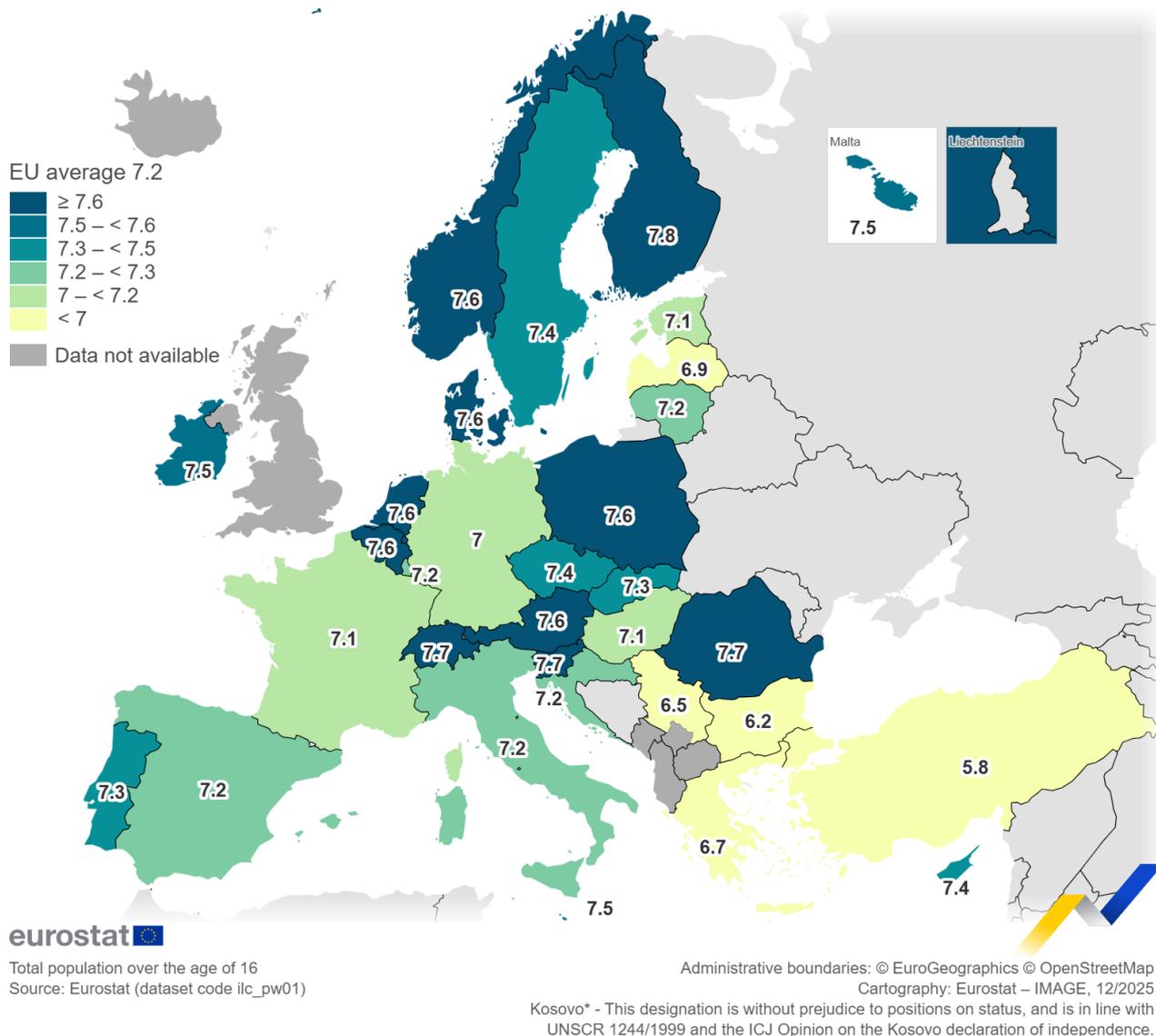
EU citizens were generally satisfied with their lives in 2024

In 2024, EU residents expressed an average life satisfaction rating of 7.2 out of 10. Finland had the highest rating at 7.8, followed by Romania and Slovenia both at 7.7, while Bulgaria had the lowest rating at 6.2, with Greece at 6.7 and Latvia at 6.9.

All EU countries had average life satisfaction scores above 6, indicating respondents being more satisfied than dissatisfied (see Map 1).

Overall life satisfaction, 2024

(mean scale 0-10)



Map 1: Overall life satisfaction, 2024 Source: Eurostat (ilc_pw01)

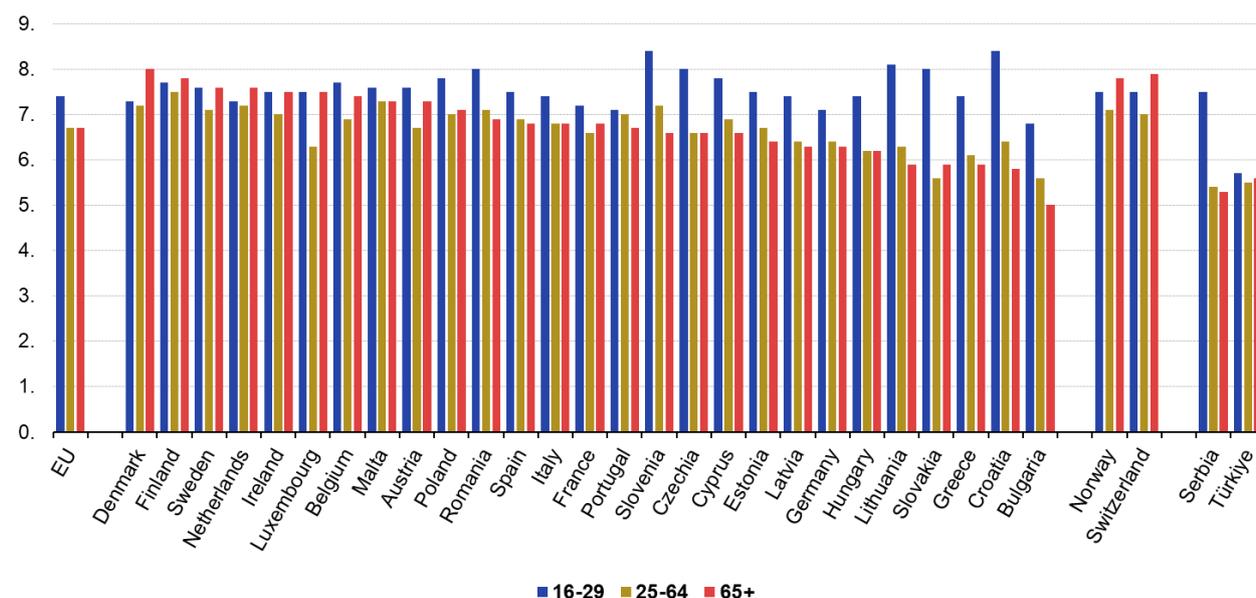
The level of satisfaction may be influenced by many factors such as age, level of education, family and financial situation. Some of these factors are analysed below.

Young people in the EU were more satisfied with their lives

In 2024, at EU level, people aged 16-29 reported higher life satisfaction than those in other age groups, although this pattern varied by country.

Overall life satisfaction by age group, 2024

(mean scale 0-10)



France, Hungary, Poland, Portugal: low reliability. Lithuania: provisional data.

Source: Eurostat: ilc_pw01

eurostat

Figure 1: Overall life satisfaction by age group, 2024 Source: Eurostat (ilc_pw01)

In most EU countries, life satisfaction levels decreased with age in 2024. However, people aged 25-64 and those over 65 had similar life satisfaction levels on average; the difference between these groups was smaller than that between either group and the 16-29 age group. The most significant differences between young (16-29) and older (65+) age groups were in Croatia (2.6 points) and Lithuania (2.2).

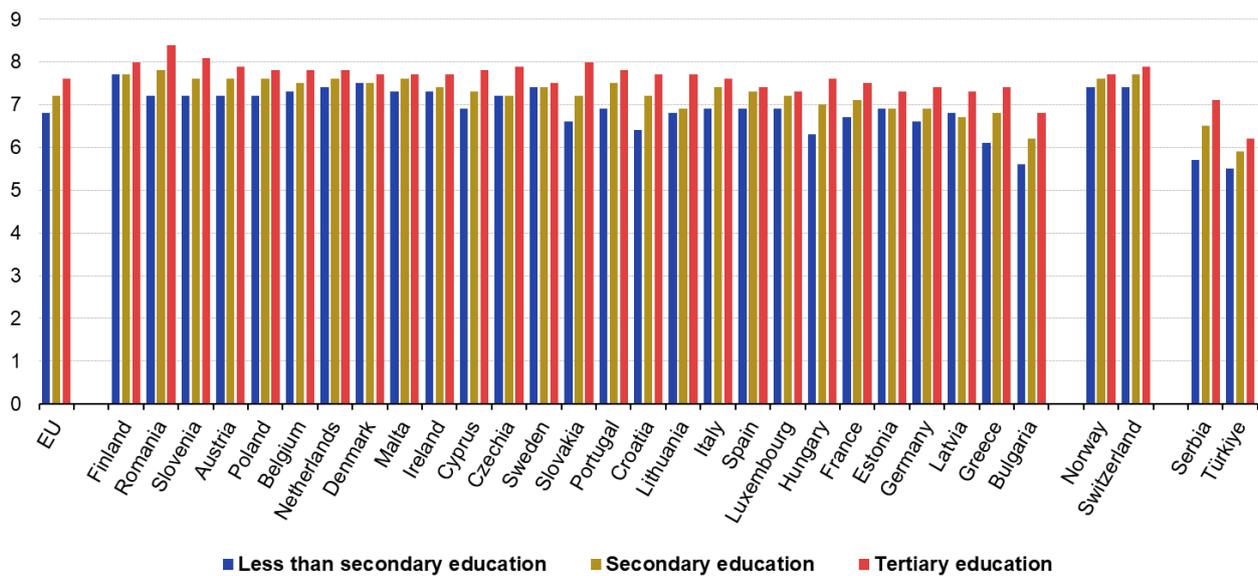
In 11 EU countries (Slovakia, Poland, France, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Ireland, Luxembourg, Finland, the Netherlands and Denmark), the middle age group (25-64) had the lowest average life satisfaction (see Figure 1). In Denmark, Finland and Netherlands, those over 65 reported the highest life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction increased with level of education

At both EU and national levels, life satisfaction increases with [educational attainment](#).

Among those with less than secondary education, average satisfaction ranged from 5.6 in Bulgaria to 7.7 in Finland. Those with secondary education were least satisfied in Bulgaria (6.2) and most satisfied in Romania (7.8). People with tertiary education rated their life satisfaction ranging from a low of 6.8 in Bulgaria to 8.4 in Romania. The largest gap in satisfaction between those with less than secondary education and those with tertiary education was observed in Slovakia (a 1.4-point difference) and Greece, Croatia and Hungary (all 1.3) (see Figure 2).

Overall life satisfaction by education level, 2024 (mean scale 0-10)



France, Hungary, Poland, Portugal: low reliability. Lithuania: provisional data.
Source: Eurostat: ilc_pw01



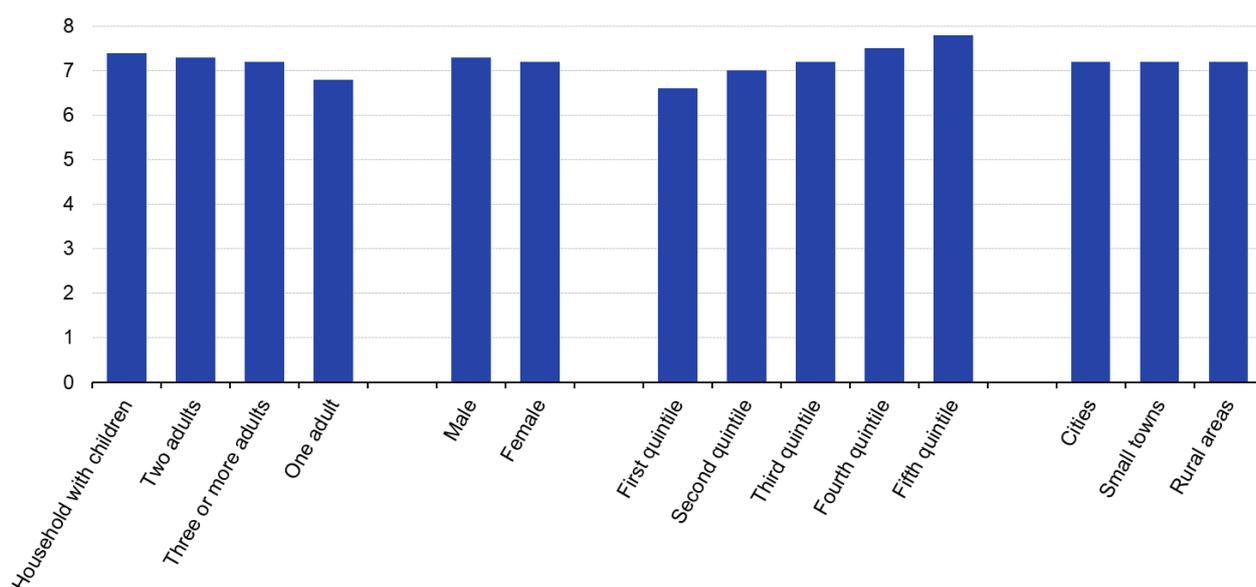
Figure 2: Overall life satisfaction by education level, 2024 Source: Eurostat (ilc_pw01)

Other factors: income, household type, sex and level of urbanisation

Individuals with a higher income and those living in a household with children rate their life satisfaction higher

Figure 3 shows that life satisfaction at EU level mainly varied according to household composition and income level.

Overall life satisfaction by socio-economic characteristics at EU level, 2024 (mean scale 0-10)



Source: Eurostat: ilc_pw01, ilc_pw02

eurostat

Figure 3: Overall life satisfaction by socio-economic characteristics at EU level, 2024 Source: Eurostat (ilc_pw01) Source: Eurostat (ilc_pw02)

Households with dependent children consistently reported the highest levels of life satisfaction among different household types. At the EU level in 2024, this was 7.4, compared with 7.3 for 2 adults living together, 7.2 for households with 3 or more adults without dependent children, and 6.8 for single-person households. The proportion of EU residents living in a single-person household is increasing (see [Young people - family and society](#)). The fact that households with dependent children were more satisfied than those without, is rather specific to the European context, as [research](#) on other continents has often found the opposite.

Very little difference (0.1 points) was found in the average life satisfaction of people by sex.

People in the highest [income quintile](#) rated their their life satisfaction higher than those with the lowest earnings (7.8 compared with 6.6). But even most people in the lowest income quintile rated their life of satisfaction on average above 6, meaning they were more satisfied than dissatisfied. The relationship between income quintile and life satisfaction seems to have remained constant over the past decade.

At the EU average level, there was no difference in life satisfaction between people in urban and rural areas, although country-level differences exist: in some EU countries, urban residents are more satisfied, while in others, rural residents report higher satisfaction.

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Quality of life - Overall experience of life](#)

Data sources

The data in this article come primarily from the [EU statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#), which measures income, living conditions and various aspects of quality of life in the EU at both individual and household levels.

A subjective assessment of well-being comprises 3 distinct but complementary aspects:

- life satisfaction (or life evaluation) – an overall assessment of one's life;
- affect – the presence of positive feelings such as joy and the absence of negative feelings like sadness or anger;
- eudaimonia – the sense that one's life has meaning and purpose, as defined in the [OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being](#) .

The life satisfaction indicator used in this article is collected annually in the EU-SILC core survey. Indicators related to affect are collected through a special ad hoc well-being module every 6 years. Data on eudaimonia were collected only once, in the 2013 ad hoc module, and have not been repeated since.

This article focuses exclusively on the 'life satisfaction' indicator.

Context

Measuring well-being has an inherent appeal: promoting the well-being of people in Europe is one of the EU's principal aims, as set out by the [Treaty on European Union](#) .

Measuring subjective well-being produces valuable insights into the role of objective capabilities in well-being levels. Social structures, norms and cultural backgrounds shape differing priorities and values, and these vary between countries. Consequently, the importance individuals assign to each objective dimension of quality of life may differ based on their country of residence.

Rating life satisfaction involves cognitive and evaluative reflection on past and present experiences, providing a more stable perspective. However, this comprehensive outlook complicates statistical measurement of life satisfaction: for respondents to deliver an unbiased overall evaluation of their life, they must exert conscious effort, and the outcome may depend on the timing and circumstances.

Temporary experiences, such as weather conditions, could influence assessments, as could the time of day and the day of the week when the assessments occur. These effects should balance out in a large sample.

The metric's entirely subjective nature presents an additional methodological challenge: in other aspects of quality of life, which focus on functional capabilities, assessments based on perceptions can often be verified against objective measures. However, life satisfaction lacks such an objectively measurable counterpart. Nevertheless, it remains a measure that is easily understood and communicated.

Footnotes

Explore further

Other articles

- [Living conditions in Europe - income distribution and income inequality](#)
- [Quality of life indicators](#) (online publication)

Database

- [Quality of life](#) , see:

Material living conditions (qol_mlc)

Productive or other main activity (qol_act)

Health (qol_hlt)

Education (qol_edu)

Leisure and social interactions (qol_lei)

Economic security and physical safety (qol_saf)

Governance and basic rights (qol_gov)

Natural and living environment (qol_env)

Overall experience of life (qol_lif)

Thematic section

- [Quality of life](#)

Publications

- [Quality of life in Europe - Facts and Views](#)

External links

- [OECD Guidelines on measuring subjective well-being](#)
- [Capability approach](#)