

What do citizens want?

What survey results reveal about values, attitudes and preferences

EPC Issue Paper No.62

January 2011

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The logo for 'well-being 2030' features the words 'well' and 'being' in a blue sans-serif font, with '2030' below them in a larger, bold blue font. A red arrow points upwards from the 'i' in 'being' towards the '0' in '2030'.

'Well-being 2030' is a two-year research project, co-funded by the EPC and the European Commission, which started running in April 2009. Based on a belief that policy can shape our future, the project is seeking to establish a strategic vision for the long-term development of social policy in Europe. To that end, the project investigates what policy choices are most inclined to deliver a higher level of well-being for European citizens by the year 2030. The reflection on the future of Europe's economic and social models including the trends, challenges and constraints framing policy choices for improving citizens' quality of life are at the core of the project.

The reflection of this forward-looking project is stimulated through a range of activities, from analysis to research, panels and communication activities, which aim to deliver three key outputs:

- to bring the insights of the research on well-being definition and measurement into the policy debate over the long-term future of Social Europe;
- to analyse Europeans' values and preferences in order to sketch a picture of a future society delivering higher level of well-being for its citizens;
- to identify the strategic policy choices (social, economic and environmental) reflecting Europeans' preferences and considering the current challenges as well as resources available to deal with these challenges.

The project analyses the main policy areas that impact on citizens' quality of life, with a particular emphasis on areas where there is a specific European policy interest. This includes labour market policies, health/lifestyles, education, demographics/migration, integration and inequalities, and public finances/financial sustainability. The key question of how to 'measure' well-being, the challenges and factors which influence social conditions, and what kind of social provision citizens want in the European Union of the future is also addressed. Moreover, the project pays particular attention to highlighting trade-offs or synergies among policy areas.



With financial support from
the European Commission

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
I. Context and methodology of the analysis	7
II. Values, attitudes and preferences of European citizens on issues related to social policy at the national level	9
III. Values, attitudes and preferences of European citizens on issues related to European and EU social policies	31
Conclusions	55

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Vilius Stanciauskas for his invaluable assistance in selecting, sourcing and organising the Eurobarometer data used in this paper; Claire Dhéret for her suggestions and help with the Eurobarometer data analysis; and Fabian Zuleeg for his insightful input into designing this research and comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

Introduction

This publication explores European citizens' values, attitudes and preferences in number of areas that relate to social policy and well-being at the national and European level. It is published under the auspices of the 'Well-being 2030' project, a joint initiative between the European Policy Centre and the European Commission.

At a time when the 'European Social Model' is facing a number of potential challenges, this two-year project is exploring the components of well-being in order to determine the most appropriate policy responses for maintaining and increasing quality of life across the Member States of the European Union. The project has three key objectives. It aims to:

- bring the insights provided by the research on the definition and measurement of well-being into the policy debate on the long-term future of Social Europe;
- analyse Europeans' values and preferences in order to sketch a picture of a future society that delivers a higher level of well-being for its citizens;
- identify the strategic policy choices (social, economic and environmental) that reflect European citizens' preferences and consider the current challenges as well as the resources available to address them.

This paper aims to contribute to meeting the second of these objectives. To this end, two parallel strands of research were pursued:

1. Eric Harrison and Elissa Sibley sourced and analysed data from several waves of international surveys, such as the European Social Survey, the European Values Study and the European Quality of Life Survey.
2. Sotiria Theodoropoulou and Benedetta Guerzoni analysed data from several Standard Eurobarometers exploring citizens' attitudes and preferences in relation to the role of Europe and the EU on relevant policy issues.

Chapter I of this publication outlines the context underlying the analysis and provides some necessary methodological background. Chapter II presents the results of the analysis of values, attitudes and preferences in relation to national policies. Chapter III presents the results of the analysis in relation to EU policies. The final chapter summarises the main messages that emerge from this.

I. Context and methodology of the analysis

An initial paper by Sotiria Theodoropoulou and Fabian Zuleeg in 2009 reviewed the broader field of subjective well-being, examining existing methodological and substantive research into the quality of people's lives. It focused on life satisfaction as its primary definition of well-being, on the basis that this is widely and consistently measured. However, in doing so, it acknowledged that research in this area is not limited to recording how satisfied citizens are with their lives, but also seeks to identify the aspects of quality of life that are most important in shaping perceptions of satisfaction.

The paper underlined that too little is known about the relative importance of these domains and the way they interact in contributing to greater well-being. It concluded that there were three priorities for further research:

1. Given the many different policy areas which have the potential to contribute to overall quality of life, policy-makers need to know more about citizens' preferences in relation to the policy trade-offs involved. This should go beyond ranking issues in terms of importance to actually elaborating explicit scenarios which provide information about constraints and offer specific choices.
2. Policy-makers need a better understanding of the associations between each aspect of quality of life and overall life satisfaction (in particular, whether these relationships are causal) and exactly how social policy levers can bring about changes in each area that lead to increased satisfaction.
3. Data is normally presented in terms of country aggregates, and more information is required about the situation and preferences of particular socio-economic and demographic groups.

This paper attempts to address some of these issues in order to: a) provide more detailed information about a range of policy areas; and b) highlight the limitations of existing data and suggest areas for future research.

The focus here is not on reported behaviour or on respondents' perceptions of what other people generally think, but rather on their own values, attitudes and preferences.

It is worth distinguishing between these three categories, although in truth they are best seen as points on a continuum from the most abstract (values) to the most concrete. We consider a *value* to be a basic and general statement of one's personal position, from which one might infer a range of views on social, political and economic issues. An *attitude* is a view on the acceptability of a proposition or otherwise, or reactions to a thing, person or issue. We reserve the term *preference* for a response that requires the individual to choose between one or more alternative states of affairs or solutions. In this context, these are likely to relate to an area of public policy.

Which of these is the most important to measure in the context of well-being in 2030? Each end of the spectrum has its drawbacks. It can be difficult for respondents to make questions couched in very abstract terms 'real' in their own minds or to use them in cross-national surveys if the abstract concept does not 'travel well'. There are, of course, remedies for this problem, for instance the inclusion in the question of situations that illustrate the application of the concept (so-called 'anchoring vignettes'). On the other hand, questions that deal with very detailed concrete scenarios can be very demanding for respondents to process, particularly if they increase the length of the question or if the response options are themselves quite complex. Moreover in the context of policy choices, they can assume too much familiarity on the part of respondents with the workings of the relevant social or political institutions.

One response to this would be a form of methodological triangulation in which data is collected on all three categories, and we then examine the relationships between them: for instance, the extent to which an individual's 'values' can be said to predict their attitudes and preferences in accordance with what is known in the literature. However, this approach immediately comes up against the limitations of the existing data. In order to address the priorities already outlined, analysts need data relating to a large

number of areas within the overarching concept of well-being. These need to be supplemented with substantial information about a range of individual characteristics and circumstances that are likely to influence, or at least help to predict, quality of life outcomes.

None of the Europe-wide surveys currently available is sufficiently comprehensive in this regard. Eurostat's major harmonised data sources – the Labour Force Survey and the Survey of Income and Living Conditions – focus on respondents' circumstances, but do not pay much attention to values and attitudes. The European Values Study includes the greatest number of questions about values, but these are not couched in policy terms and so far have only been conducted once every nine years. The European Social Survey carried questions relating to a number of areas in its first four rounds, but it has not consistently gathered opinions about satisfaction with service provision. It also has a specialist module on 'universal human values' that more resemble personality traits, and a wide variety of attitudinal questions, but very few – if any – that are specifically directed at policy options. The European Quality of Life survey has useful questions gauging respondents' satisfaction with a number of areas of public service provision. It also crucially asks respondents to identify the level of importance they attach to a number of different areas of their life, thus providing some indication of policy priorities. However, with the exception of a single left-right scale question, there are none about core values in the survey.

This patchiness of coverage is a major limitation in terms of the types of analysis which are possible, for two principal reasons. Firstly, where questions are not asked together in the same survey to the same respondents, it is not possible to measure the inter-relation between the different domains and judge the relative importance of particular areas. Secondly, even if we can cope with questions being spread across different questionnaires instruments, it is not a simple matter to mix and match the results. Sampling frames and designs can differ between surveys, as can the way in which they are administered, the level and composition of non-responses, and the wording and translation of the questions.

In the light of these data restrictions, it is not possible to pursue the three priorities set out by Theodoropoulou and Zuleeg fully. Instead, this paper addresses a more modest agenda. In the remaining sections, the range of aspects of quality of life are organised under four broad headings that appear to be important for European policy, and we ask the following questions:

- Can we identify a single 'European position' on one or more issues; i.e. a consensus across national boundaries?
- If there is no single set of European values, attitudes and preferences, how large is the overall variation between countries?
- Within the overall pattern of variations, are there countries that can be clustered together in terms of their results?
- Do certain countries generally appear in the same position in the rankings, regardless of the variable being measured? Aside from differences between countries, are there other variables that enable us to predict particular attitudes, levels of satisfaction or distinct policy preferences? Are there substantial and consistent differences between subgroups of the European population, based on, for example, age or educational qualifications?

One final note of introduction: the available datasets for studying quality of life cover a very wide range of countries, not all of which are members of the European Union. In what follows, we present results for a reduced subset of countries participating in cross-national surveys, but do not always restrict the analysis to EU countries. There are two justifications for this: the EU is not a sociological unit, but rather a political one, and Eurostat routinely includes non-member countries like Norway and Switzerland and candidate countries such as Turkey in its surveys.

II. Values, attitudes and preferences of European citizens on issues relating to social policy at the national level

The numerous dimensions of well-being covered in this paper can be grouped under four themes:

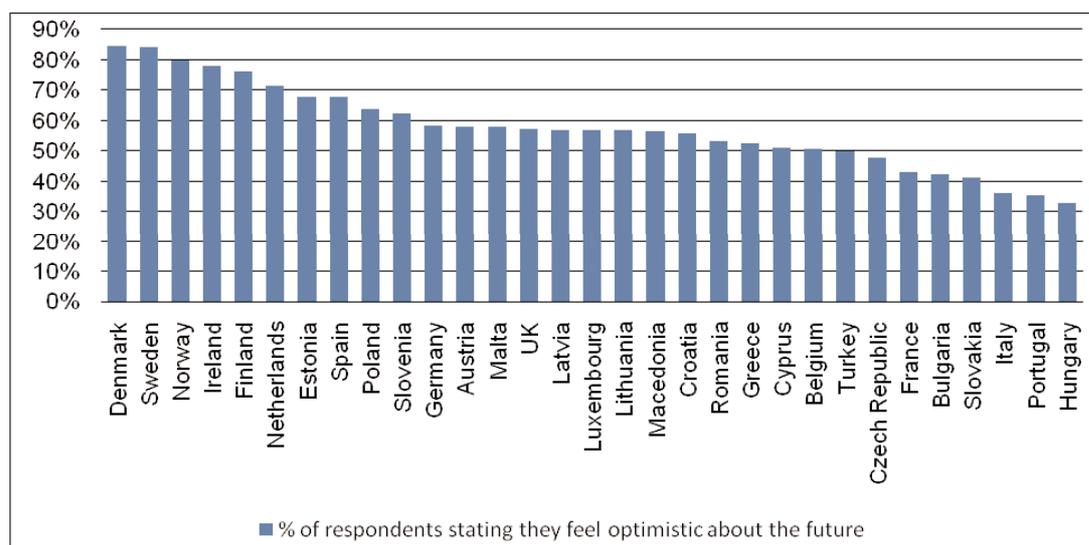
1. General values and attitudes (what people want, the role of the state, orientation towards the future etc.)
2. Labour market and work (what is important in a job, the importance of work versus leisure etc.)
3. Public services (the perceived quality of provision in health, education, transport, etc.)
4. Cohesion (the perception of tensions between groups on religious/ethnic grounds)

In each case, we use a combination of descriptive statistics and more complex models which are able to estimate the effects of many variables on the outcome at the same time (multivariate analysis) to produce insights into transnational patterns across a range of indicators relating to citizens' attitudes to – and experiences of – well-being. Under each of the four thematic headings, we present data drawn from a range of measures in a number of transnational surveys. Each section also has a table or tables summarising the multivariate models used and highlighting the individual and/or national characteristics that are significantly associated with particular dimensions of well-being.

General values and attitudes

One very simple and straightforward measure of well-being is how optimistic a person is. As Samuel Johnson said: "Hope is a species of happiness." In contrast to survey evidence about people's actual living conditions, a majority of respondents in many countries are generally optimistic about the future. There are, however, considerable differences across Europe between countries, age groups and levels of educational attainment (see figures 1-3).

Figure 1: Feeling optimistic about the future by country

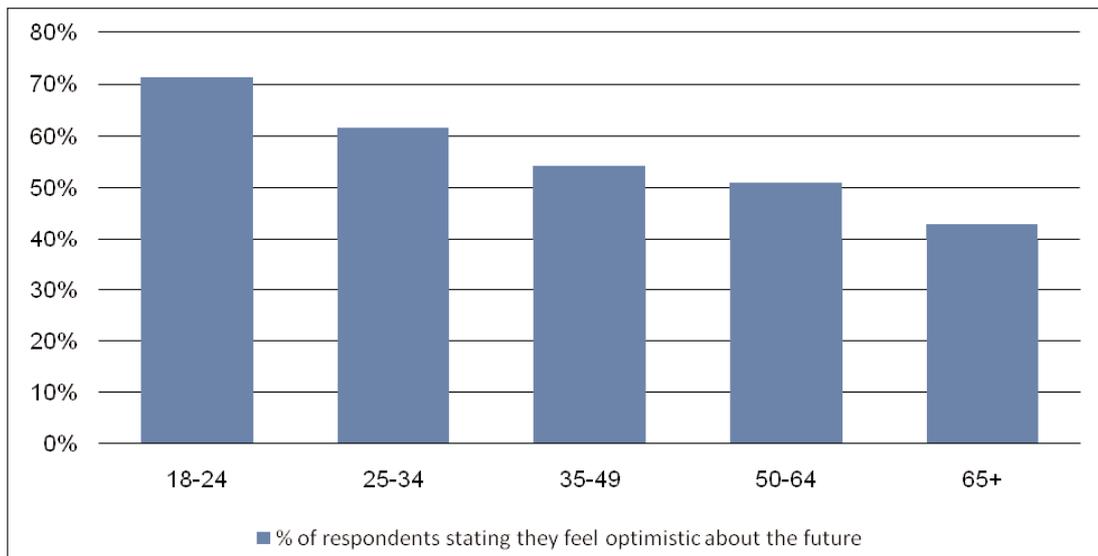


Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2007

After controlling for country of origin, the surveys show that under-35s are significantly more likely to be optimistic than those aged over 65; those who have completed higher education are generally more optimistic than those who have not; and those further up the income distribution are more

optimistic than those in the bottom quarter. People who attend church regularly are also more optimistic than those who do not.

Figure 2: Feeling optimistic about the future by age group



Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2007

There are effects at the aggregate level as well as the individual level: living in a country with a higher unemployment rate reduces the likelihood that individuals feel optimistic, just as living in a country where the overall level of education is higher increases it. The policy implications of this are that governments need to encourage and promote participation in education, and focus on helping those suffering from forms of social disadvantage and deprivation to enhance overall well-being.

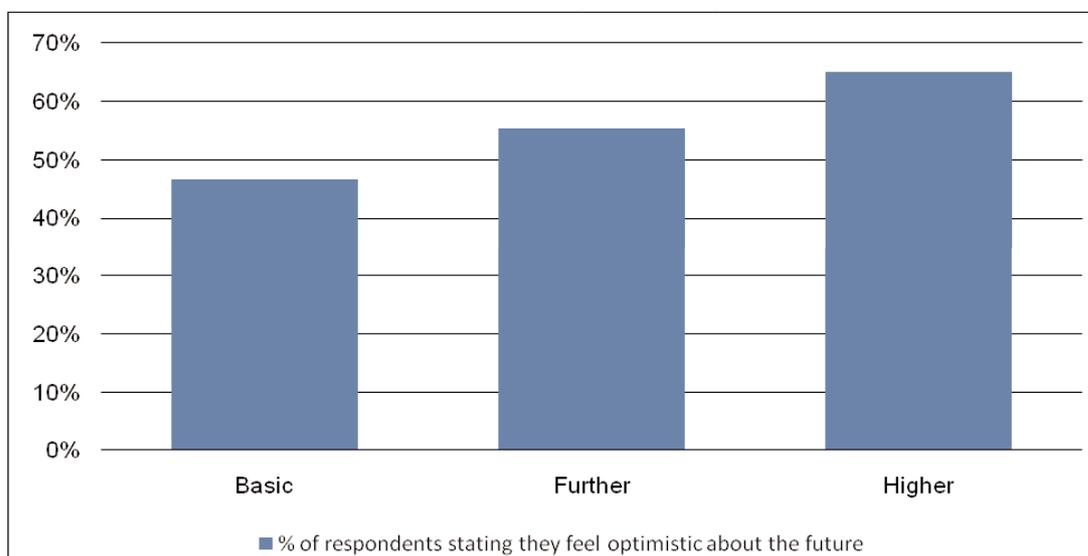
It is not possible to tell from cross-sectional survey data whether the age group differences represent a more general trend towards greater optimism in successive generations, or whether respondents simply become less positive about the future as they get older.

One of the aims of this research has been to assess citizens' preferences for future policy directions. In order to approximate these, we looked at respondents' attitudes towards eight potential future scenarios. Each was couched in quite general terms in the surveys, without a specific reference to a policy mechanism, and the response options – 'good, bad, don't mind' - were not optimal for individuals to express their level of enthusiasm for a particular direction. These really gauge general values rather than policy preferences, but the results do produce some patterns that are noteworthy.

By subtracting the percentage of 'bad' responses from the 'good' and treating the 'don't minds' as neutral, we produce a 'net score' for each suggested scenario.

The proposition that there might be a "decrease in the importance of work in our lives" produced a negative reaction in every country except the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, Belgium and Luxembourg. The scenario that produced the highest average net score across all countries was that there might be "more emphasis on family life". These results suggest that the aspects of life that respondents feel most strongly about are the availability of work and the quality/quantity of family life. The problem for policy-makers is that these are two issues that can frequently be in conflict.

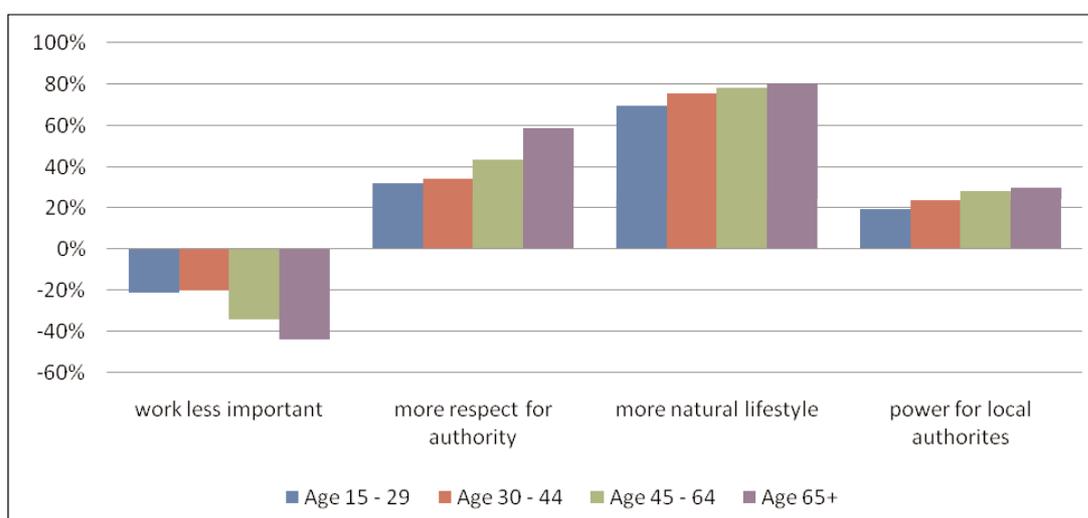
Figure 3: Optimism about the future by level of education



Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2007

As regards the other six variables, there was an enormous variation in the net scores across countries, and this may reflect the rather general way in which scenarios were described, which was exacerbated during translation. Across all countries, the descriptive statistics showed a variation between age groups in relation to four of the suggested changes: a decline of work, greater respect for authority, a move to more natural lifestyles and more power for local authorities (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Reaction to possible future scenarios (net score= % good – % bad)



Source: European Values Study 1999

When a range of individual and country characteristics are controlled for, respondents in countries with higher levels of GDP are more likely to express a positive reaction to what might be called 'post-materialist values' - i.e. less emphasis on possessions and work, and more on family life and nature. There are also

pronounced gender differences: men are nearly twice as likely to welcome a greater emphasis on individual development and less than half as likely to feel the same way about family life and more natural lifestyles. Regular church-goers are significantly different from other respondents in terms of their reaction to every scenario – more positive on all of them, but to a lesser degree on work and an increase in new technology.

In terms of policy, the implications are that any future changes in the nature of society may cause divisions along gender, age, education and religious lines, and this possibility needs to be considered at the policy-making stage.

The World Values Survey (2005) asks some questions about whether potential future changes would be good or bad. Here, we briefly compare data from European respondents with that from respondents in the United States and China. The figures quoted relate to the proportion of respondents on each continent who rated the potential change as ‘good’ (therefore providing a measure of optimism or positive attitudes).

The figures regarding increasing respect for authority (ranging from 40.6% to 53.6%) and increasing the emphasis on family life (from 87.5% to 90.4%) were relatively consistent across all three. However, responses regarding a potential decrease in the importance of work in our lives (-46.6% to -1.1%) and an increase in the emphasis on the development of technology (42.9% to 87.4%) were more divided. On both of these measures, respondents in Europe generated a score falling between those generated by respondents in the US and China.

Table 1: Net scores for Europe, the USA and China (% of respondents who rate the proposed change as ‘good’)

NB: a negative score indicates that a higher proportion of respondents rated the change as ‘bad’

	Decrease in the importance of work in our lives	More emphasis on the development of technology	Greater respect for authority	More emphasis on family life
Europe ^a	-28.4	57.7	40.6	89.9
USA ^b	-1.1	42.9	53.6	87.5
China ^b	-46.6	87.4	49.8	90.4

a Source: EVS 1999

b Source: WVS 2005

It is possible that some of the difference between Europe and the US and China is due to the fact that the surveys were carried out at different times: various national and international events between 1999 and 2005 may have influenced the responses, so it would have been useful to generate a score for Europe from the WVS 2005 survey. Unfortunately, the dataset is currently incomplete and the European figures would therefore have been based on a non-representative sample.

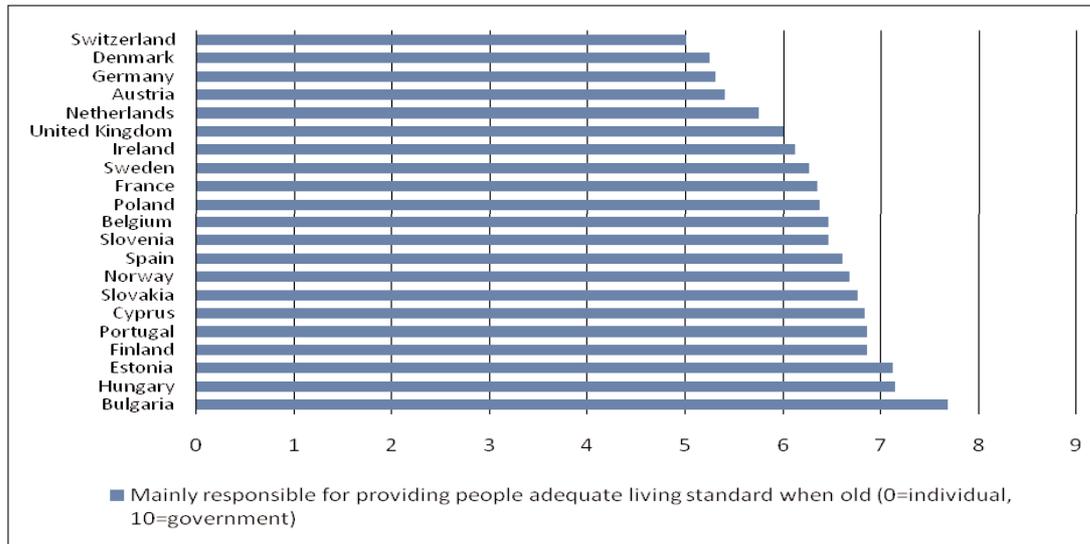
Government intervention

Another area of concern for policy-making is the extent to which citizens want their preferred social outcomes to be delivered by the government. The results in this area are both complex and contradictory.

Two rounds of the European Social Survey have addressed this issue. In 2006/07, a single question asked respondents whether they thought responsibility for providing for old age lay with the individual (0) or the government (10). There was considerable variation in the level of enthusiasm for government intervention (see figure 5). The EU’s new Member States and countries in the Mediterranean with strong traditions of family support recorded the strongest support for the provision of pensions by the state. Those with higher levels of educational attainment demonstrated a weaker commitment to state provision and, not surprisingly, support for state pension provision was higher among older respondents. After

controlling for a range of factors, richer countries veer more towards a belief in individual responsibility for old age, as do countries with a relatively high proportion of Catholics or elderly people. . People in countries with high unemployment rates are also more inclined towards government intervention.

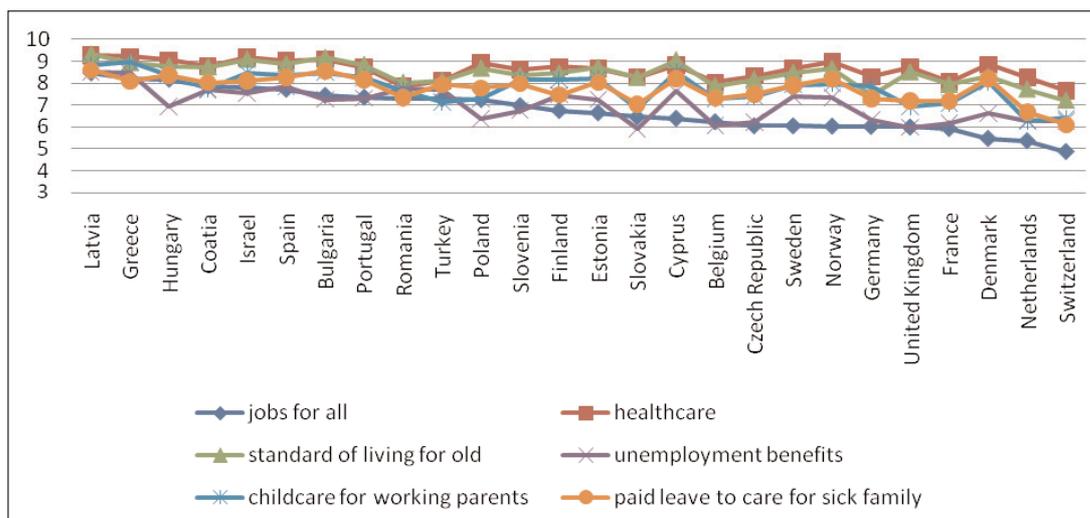
Figure 5: Mainly responsible for providing people adequate living standard when old



Source: European Social Survey 2006/2007

Figure 6 draws on the fourth round of the European Social Survey (2008/09) to examine attitudes to state intervention in relation to six areas of social policy. This shows two main trends: firstly, there is some variation between countries and this is fairly consistent (Latvia, Greece and Hungary have the highest levels of support for state intervention on most measures and the Netherlands and Switzerland have the lowest); and secondly, the average level of support for intervention varies according to the issue.

Figure 6: Support for government responsibility for aspects of welfare provision



Source: European Social Survey 2008/2009

These issues can be placed into three bands:

1. Health care, and maintaining a standard of living for the elderly – support is high and consistent across countries.
2. Childcare for working parents and paid leave for those who need to look after sick family members – support is on average between 1 and 1.5 points lower than on band 1 issues and varies more between countries.
3. Full employment and maintaining the standard of living for the unemployed – support drops by another scale point on average and there are variations between countries.

After controlling for a wide number of variables, there are still statistically significant differences between countries but these are much reduced.

Living in a country with a higher level of GDP and a higher percentage of Catholics/Eastern Orthodox believers generally increases support for government intervention very slightly. The influence of a country's unemployment rate is much more marked, particularly in relation to the two unemployment-related questions. Higher unemployment strengthens support for the government to ameliorate the consequences. There are also statistically significant differences between individuals: those with the highest household incomes, educational qualifications and occupational status are less likely to support state intervention, even after adjusting for where they lie on a left-right scale of political belief. People under the age of 30 are less likely to support state intervention in relation to any issue, while those between 30 and 44 generally oppose the government having responsibility for creating full employment, but support government provision of childcare and paid leave to care for family members. Men are less inclined than women to think it is the government's responsibility to intervene in any of the six areas.

Comparing evidence from the International Social Survey Programme 2006

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and World Values Survey (WVS) are different to the surveys hitherto discussed in this report. Rather than focusing solely on Europe, they draw data from across the world and allow comparisons to be made between the average attitudes expressed by respondents in Europe and in the US and China.

The ISSP included questions about whether the government “definitely should” be responsible for a series of social provisions: (a) providing a job for everyone who wants one; (b) providing health care for the sick; (c) providing a decent standard of living for the old; (d) providing a decent standard of living for the unemployed; (e) reducing income differences between the rich and the poor; and (f) providing decent housing for those who can't afford it.

- (a) The proportion of respondents who believed the government should definitely be responsible for providing a job for everyone who wants one varied across Europe, with the highest level of support in Croatia (63.6%), Poland (57.8%) and Hungary (52.5%) and the lowest in Switzerland (10.4%), the UK (17.1%) and the Netherlands (20.3%).
- (b) The proportion of respondents who believed the government should be responsible for providing health care for the sick also varied, with the highest levels of support in Norway (90.3%), Ireland (88.6%) and Denmark (86.5%) and the lowest in Switzerland (25.5%), Germany (54.5%) and Latvia (55.7%).
- (c) The proportion of respondents who felt that the government should definitely be responsible for providing a decent standard of living for the elderly was highest in Norway (84.5%), Ireland (82.7%) and Portugal (80.5%), and lowest in Switzerland (28.0%), Germany (47.9%) and France (51.5%).
- (d) The proportion of respondents who believed that the government should definitely be responsible for providing a decent standard of living for the unemployed was highest in Spain (49.7%), Croatia (47.2%) and Portugal (47.0%), and lowest in Switzerland (5.0%), the Czech Republic (9.8%) and Great Britain (11.4%).

- (e) The proportion of respondents who believed that the government should definitely be responsible for reducing income differences between the rich and poor was highest in Portugal (61.3%), Croatia (55.5%) and Poland (54.3%), and lowest in the Czech Republic (20.4%), Switzerland (26.2%) and the UK (27.2%).
- (f) The proportions of respondents who believed that the government should definitely be responsible for providing decent housing for those who cannot afford it varied across Europe, with the highest levels of support in Spain (61.4%), Portugal (52.3%) and Croatia (51.9%), and the lowest in Switzerland (9.7%), the Czech Republic (15.4%) and Germany (22.4%).

On all measures, the proportion of US respondents who agreed that each area “definitely should” be the government’s responsibility was lower than the average support for this view across Europe as a whole. On the question of the provision of a job for everyone who wants one, 16% of people in the US and 37.3% in Europe felt this should definitely be the government’s responsibility; 55.4% of Americans believed that it should definitely be the government’s responsibility to provide health care for the sick, compared with 70.2% of Europeans; 56.3% of Americans and 65.6% of Europeans felt the government should definitely be responsible for providing a decent standard of living for the elderly; 15.5% of Americans believed that the government should definitely be responsible for providing a decent standard of living for the unemployed compared with 29.4% of Europeans; 27.2% of Americans and 43.7% of Europeans felt that the government should definitely be responsible for reducing income differences between the rich and the poor; and finally, 32.2% of Americans and 36.2% of Europeans believed the government should definitely be responsible for providing decent housing for those who cannot afford it.

Who pays? Using ISSP and WVS to examine attitudes to government expenditure

The the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP, 2006) also examined respondents’ views on government spending. Respondents were asked about the extent to which they were in favour of: (a) cuts in government spending; and (b) less government regulation of business.

Across Europe, the proportion of respondents “strongly in favour” of cuts in government spending varied quite considerably. The greatest support for this idea was seen in France (67.9%), Poland (56.8%) and Latvia (56.7%), and the lowest in Finland (6.8%), Switzerland (9.3%) and Great Britain (10.8%). There was less somewhat variation in the proportion of respondents who reported being strongly in favour of less government regulation of business, with the greatest support for this in Germany (37.9%), France (27.4%) and the Netherlands (26.8%), and the lowest in Finland (5.6%), Spain (7.2%) and Switzerland (7.5%). A higher proportion of Europeans than Americans were strongly in favour of cuts in government spending (26.9% versus 32.8% respectively). The proportion strongly in favour of less government regulation of business was, however, very similar, at 17.5% in the US and an average of 18.5% in Europe.

Similarly, respondents were asked whether government should spend “much more” on: (a) the environment; (b) health; (c) police and law enforcement; (d) education; (e) old-age pensions; and (f) unemployment benefits. We examine these in turn.

- (a) There were relatively small variations across Europe in the proportion of respondents who felt that the government should spend much more on the environment, with the highest levels in Ireland (23.4%), Denmark (22.1%) and Croatia (20.8%), and the lowest in Norway (8.8%), the Czech Republic (9.2%) and the Netherlands (9.7%).
- (b) Broader variations were evident in the proportion of respondents who wanted the government to spend much more on health: the highest figures were in Hungary (55.1%), Portugal (47.9%) and Croatia (47.1%), and the lowest in Switzerland (11.2%), Germany (19.5%) and the Netherlands (19.9%).
- (c) Again, there was slightly less variation in relation to spending on police and law enforcement: on average, respondents in Ireland (37.8%), Spain (25.3%) and Denmark (20.2%) demonstrated the most support for this, whilst those in Switzerland (6.1%), Croatia (7.4%) and Slovenia (8.7%) showed the least.

- (d) Opinions on increasing spending on education varied quite widely: on average, respondents in Ireland (54.9%), Croatia (46.5%) and Germany (41.3%) recorded the highest levels of support, whilst those in Finland (8.0%), Sweden (13.3%) and Norway (13.9%) recorded the lowest.
- (e) Support for increasing government spending on old-age pensions was highest in Ireland (55.1%), Croatia (49.3%) and Poland (47.5%), and lowest in the Netherlands (9.2%), Switzerland (11.8%) and Norway (13.8%).
- (f) Support for greatly increasing government spending on unemployment benefits was comparatively low, with less than 10% in favour of this in ten of the 18 countries surveyed. The lowest figures were in Norway (3.2%), Switzerland (3.3%) and Great Britain (3.3%), and the highest in Croatia (26.7%), Portugal (20.7%) and Ireland (20.2%).

The average proportion of respondents in Europe who supported the government spending much more was, in most cases, similar to US levels. In relation to spending on the environment, the figures were also very close, with Europe (15%) only slightly lower than the US (17.2%). Similar differences were observed in relation to spending on health (Europe 33.7%, US 36.1%), police and law enforcement (Europe 15%, US 16.4%), and old-age pensions (with the difference in the opposite direction – Europe 26.7%, US 24.2%). There was no difference at all in the mean scores on spending on unemployment benefits (both 10.5%), but quite significant differences in attitudes to spending on education (Europe 27.3%, US 41.2%). The European average appears to have been generally brought down by the Nordic countries and the Netherlands.

The message for policy-makers from all this is complex. Many of the public services or benefits that citizens believe are important for their lives and the lives of others need to be underwritten by central government. As with beliefs about the future direction of society, preferences in relation to the role of government are correlated with age, gender, education and income. Equally however, the data provides pointers to a rank-order of priorities for government intervention, with health care and pensions emerging as those commanding the greatest cross-national consensus.

Table 2: General values and attitudes: Summary of significant predictors

January 2011

	EVS Less emphasis on money and material possessions	EVS Decrease in the importance of work in our lives	EVS More emphasis on the development of technology	EVS Greater emphasis on the development of the individual	EVS Greater respect for authority	EVS More emphasis on family life	EVS A simple and more natural lifestyle	EVS More power to local authorities	EQLS Optimism for the future
GDP									
GDP per capita	+++	+++		--		+++	+		
Age									
Age 15-29 (EVS)/ Age up to 24 (EQLS)		+++	--		--	--	--	--	+++
Age 30-44 (EVS)/ Age 25-34 (EQLS)		+++	--		--	--	--	-	+
Age 45-64 (EVS)/ Age 35-49 (EQLS)		+++	-		--	--			
Age 50-64 (EQLS)									
Age 65 and above	Ref								
Household income (annual)									
1 (low)-10 (high) scale (EVS)			+++	+++	--	++	-		
Lower quartile (EQLS)									Ref
3 rd quartile (EQLS)									+
2 nd quartile (EQLS)									+++
Upper quartile (EQLS)									+++
Educational attainment									
ISCED Level 0-1	Ref								
ISCED Level 2-4		--	+++		--			--	
ISCED Level 5-6	+++			+++	--	--		--	
Gender									
Female	Ref								
Male	--	+		+++	--	--	--	+++	++
Placement on left-right scale									
1 (left)-10 (right; EVS)	--	--	+++		+++	+++	--	++	
Attendance at religious services outside special occasions									
Less than once per month	Ref								
Once per month or more	+++	--	-	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	+++
Occupation									
Other	Ref								
Managerial/professional		--	+	++			-		+++
Contextual variables									
% Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox (EVS)	--	--	+++	+++	--	+++	+++	+++	
% aged 65 and above	--	+++	--		--	++	+++	--	
% unemployed	+++	--	+++		--	+++	+++	+++	--
% educated to ISCED Level 3	--	--	+++	+++	--	++	--	+++	+++
Years life expectancy at birth		+	--	+++	--	--	--	+++	
Key: + or - indicates direction of association between predictor and outcome measure. The number of pluses or minuses indicates the level at which this relationship is statistically significant.									

General Values and attitudes (cont)

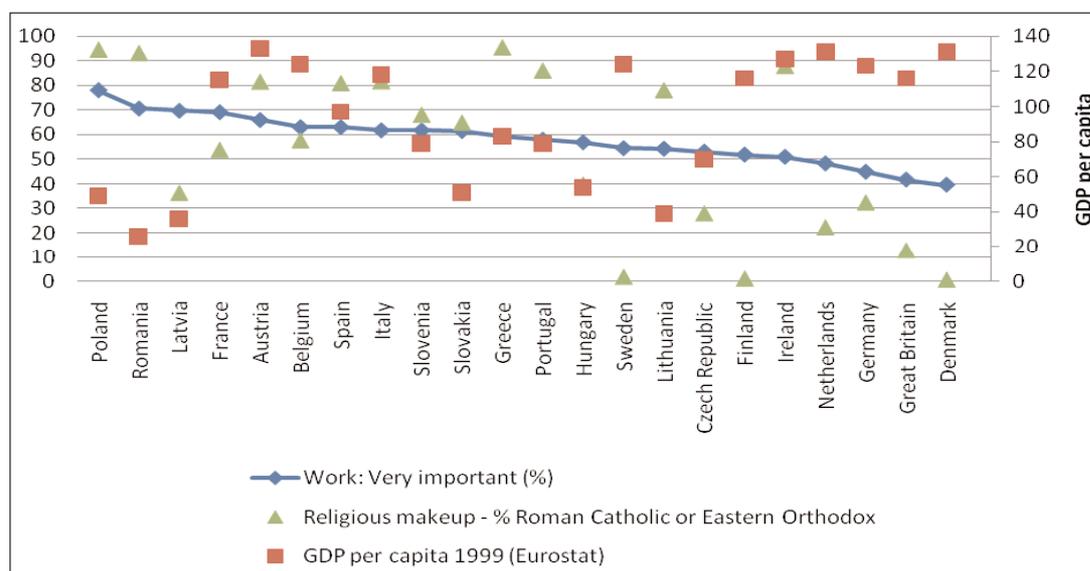
	ESS3 Responsibility for standard of living in old age	ESS4 Ensure a job for everyone	ESS4 Ensure adequate health care for the sick	ESS4 Ensure reasonable standard of living for old	ESS4 Ensure reasonable standard of living for unemployed	ESS4 Ensure sufficient child care services for working parents	ESS4 Provide paid leave from work for people to temporarily care for sick family members
GDP							
GDP per capita	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
Age							
Age up to 29	--		--	--	--		--
Age 30-44		--		--	--	+++	
Age 45-64	+	-				+	
Age 65 and above	Ref						
Educational attainment							
ISCED Level 0-1	Ref						
ISCED Level 2-4	--	--		--	--	--	--
ISCED Level 5-6	--	--		--	--	--	--
Household income (annual)							
0-1800	Ref						
1800-3600	++						
3600-6000	+	+++					
6000-12000		++		++			++
12000-18000		++			+		
18000-24000							
24000-30000							
30000-36000	-						
36000-60000	--						
60000-90000	--	--		--	--	--	--
90000-120000	--						
120000 and above	--						
Gender							
Female	Ref						
Male	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Placement on left-right scale							
0 (far left)-10 (far right)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Attendance at religious services outside special occasions							
Less than once per month	Ref						
Once per month or more			--	--		--	
Occupation							
Other	Ref						
Managerial/professional	--	--	-	--	--	--	--
Contextual variables							
% Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox	--	+++	+++	++	+		+
% aged 65 and above	--	++		--	+++	+++	
% unemployed	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
% educated to ISCED Level 3	--	--	--	--	+	--	--
Years life expectancy at birth	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Work and family

We have already seen that work still looms large as a priority in people’s lives. The second section of our analysis looked at a range of issues related to work, the labour market and the family.

Firstly, how important relatively are work and leisure to citizens? Overall, work was rated as “very important” by a greater proportion of respondents than leisure. We would expect countries which attached strong importance to work to attach less importance to leisure time; i.e. for there to be an inverse relationship between the two. It is not quite that neat – in fact, some countries recorded high percentages for both – but the graphs (Figures 7 and 8) give some indication of this and also illustrate the kind of contextual variables that can be used to explain the pattern of country differences.

Figure 7: Importance of work(% rating as very important)



Source: *European Values Study 1999*

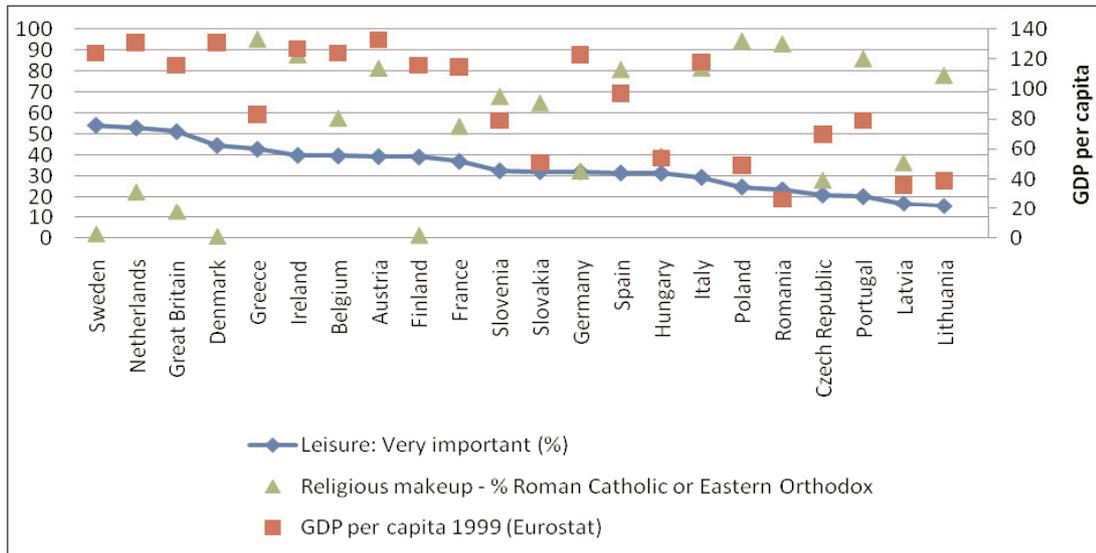
People in richer countries attached more importance to leisure and less to work than those in poorer countries, but this is not a straightforward linear relationship. Younger people placed more value on leisure than older cohorts and the more highly-educated attached more importance to this than those without qualifications.

Initial comparisons with the fourth round of the European Values Study in 2008 shows that the proportion of respondents reporting that work is very important in their lives has increased in several countries (with the biggest increase in Luxembourg – approximately 15%) and decreased in several others (with the biggest decrease in Poland – around 20%). The proportion of respondents reporting that leisure time is very important in their lives has increased in the majority of countries (with the largest increase in Ireland – around 15%; followed by Poland – around 12.5%). For the remaining countries, little difference is observed between survey rounds.

What do people want from a job?

Given the central role that work continues to play in people’s lives, coupled with the widespread belief that the government has a substantial role to play in ensuring high and stable employment, it is clearly crucial to understand what it is that citizens want out of a job.

Figure 8: Importance of leisure time (% rating as very important)



Source: European Values Study 1999

This largely depends on the characteristics of the individual. The 1999 European Values Study asked respondents to rate the importance of a long list of features of paid work. Across Europe as a whole, respondents under 30 rated good pay, pleasant colleagues, promotion prospects, interesting work and meeting people as more important than their older colleagues. The highly-educated were less likely to regard pay and job security as important than those with low or no qualifications, and twice as likely to seek opportunities to use their initiative. Those in managerial and professional occupations were much more likely to value a job that carries responsibilities, enables them to make a contribution to society and allows them to use their abilities than workers in any other part of the occupational hierarchy.

Between 1999 and 2008, the proportion of respondents reporting that good pay was important rose in nine countries, with the biggest increase in Latvia and Luxembourg (each of around 15%), and fell in six, with the biggest falls in Belgium and Slovenia (each of around 10%). For the remaining countries, little difference was observed. The proportion of respondents mentioning job security as being important rose in eight countries (with the largest increase in Latvia, around 25% higher than in 1999) and fell in another eight (with the largest decrease in Spain and France, both around 20%). Finally, there was an increase in the proportion of respondents who mentioned the potential to use their initiative as being important in nine countries (with the largest increases in Portugal and Luxembourg – both around 25% higher than in 1999) and a decrease in another nine (with the largest fall in Hungary – a massive 45%, followed by Belgium, Greece, Slovenia and Spain – all 20% lower than in 1999).

This data can be compared with a shorter set of questions posed in the European Social Survey of 2004/05. Here, respondents were limited to five aspects of a job: security, income, promotion, using initiative, and combining work and family responsibilities. Unlike in the EVS questions, respondents were given the opportunity to assess the degree of importance of each of these on a five-point scale.

There were bigger differences between countries on distinct elements of a job. In all countries, more than 70% of respondents rated job security as very important or important, and more than 60% ranked the use of initiative and work-family balance in this way. The highest and lowest values for each aspect of work were: security: 97.8% (Turkey) to 70.5% (Denmark); pay: 94.2% (Poland) to 49.3% (Netherlands);

promotion: 90.0% (Greece) to 32.8% (Denmark); using initiative: 92.1% (Sweden) to 69.8% (Czech Republic); work and family: 96.2% (Turkey) to 65.4% (Finland).

Across Europe as a whole, job security was seen as slightly less important among older age groups; 85% of the youngest age group regarded pay as important, compared with only 78% of those over 65; promotion seemed most important for the 15-to-29 year olds; and those aged between 30 and 44 attached most importance to work-family balance.

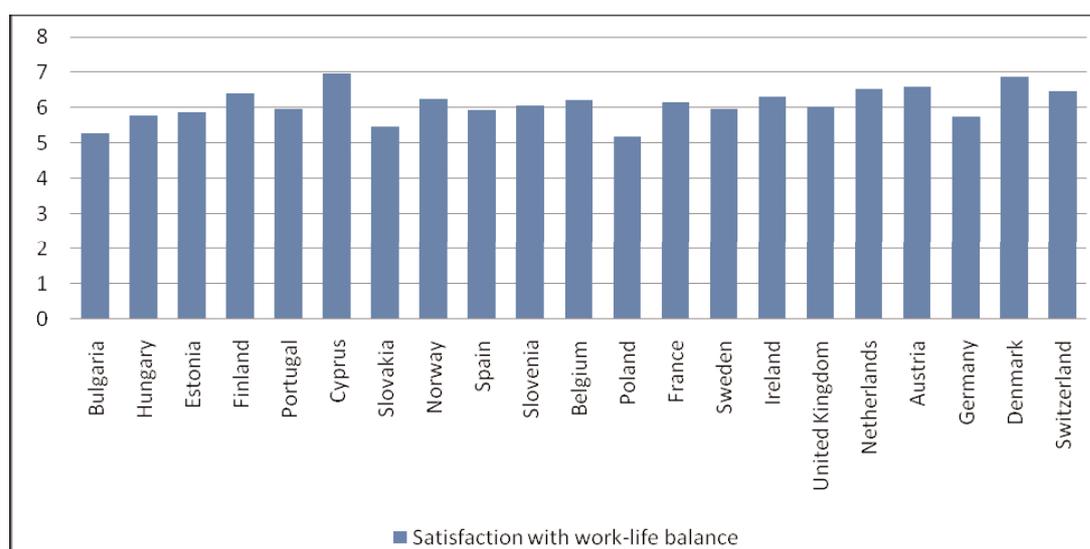
Job security, pay and promotion opportunities were most important to the least well-educated. Having the chance to use one’s own initiative was rated as most important by the highest proportion of the best educated group. In multivariate analysis, individuals who identified themselves as being more right-wing in their politics generally regarded high income and good promotion opportunities as the important considerations in choosing jobs. Frequent church-goers were less likely to rate these aspects as important, but did report valuing work-family balance.

Those in richer countries were generally more likely to select job security and promotion opportunities as important. Respondents in Catholic/Orthodox countries attached greater importance to every aspect of a job than those in other countries. Countries with older populations generally put greater emphasis on security, income, promotion and work-family balance, and less on using initiative in a job. Higher unemployment rates in a country are associated with a significantly higher likelihood of valuing job security, a high income, good opportunities for promotion and the potential to use their initiative.

Striking a work-life balance

Round three of the European Social Survey included a question about reported satisfaction with the time respondents spend on paid work and on other aspects of their lives. The data illustrated in Figure 9 shows that satisfaction with work-life balance was highest in Cyprus and lowest in Poland. It was lowest among the 30-44 age group and highest among the over 65s, and highest among the least well-educated.

Figure 9: Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance



Source: European Social Survey 2006/2007

After controlling for a large number of individual and aggregate characteristics, a country’s GDP increases its citizens’ average level of satisfaction with their work-life balance, as does having a higher proportion of

elderly people in the population. Countries with a higher unemployment rate, a higher life expectancy and a higher proportion of Catholic/Orthodox believers recorded lower than average levels of satisfaction with work-life balance. Individuals who attend church at least once a month were more likely to be satisfied with their work-life balance, as were those who consider themselves more right-wing in their politics.

Family values

Moving back from the public sphere of the labour market to the private sphere of the family, there is wide cross-national variation in what might be called 'moral disapproval' of a range of non-traditional but increasingly common forms of social and cultural behaviour.

The highest level of disapproval as well as the widest range of values cross-nationally were in relation to a person's decision not to have children. The pattern of responses to the question about re-entering the labour market with a child under the age of three was slightly differently from the other items, with three of the highest levels of disapproval recorded in wealthier countries: Switzerland (37.5%), Austria (36.2%), Estonia (31.7%) and the Netherlands (29.8%). The data does not allow for more than speculation as to the reasons for this. One hypothesis is that where adequate alternative financial support is available, full-time employment may be seen as a decision that benefits the parent(s) rather than the child, whilst in countries where little support is offered, employment during a child's early years may be regarded as a necessity or a legitimate compromise.

After controlling for a range of individual characteristics, strong religious feelings are a key driver of 'moral disapproval'. Frequent church-goers were over three times more likely to disapprove of cohabitation and raising children with a co-habitee than other respondents. Those living in countries with high proportions of Catholics/ Orthodox believers were more likely to disapprove of childless couples, people returning to work despite having a small child, and those who divorce when their children are young.

People aged between 30 and 44 were less disapproving than the over 65s on all five forms of behaviour, but those under 30 were more disapproving, perhaps reflecting the values of their parents while they are growing up.

Work and family (cont)

	ESS3 Satisfaction with balance between job and other aspects of life	ESS2 A secure job	ESS2 A high income	ESS2 Good promotion opportunities	ESS2 Enables you to use initiative	ESS2 Allows you to combine work and family	EVS Work	EVS Leisure time
GDP								
GDP per capita		+++		+++			--	
Age								
Age 30-44	--	+	+++		+++	+++	+	+++
Age 45-64	+++	+		--	+		+++	+++
Age 65 and above	Ref							
Educational attainment								
ISCED Level 0-1	Ref							
ISCED Level 2-4	--		--		+			++
ISCED Level 5-6	-	---	-		+++	+		+++
Household income (annual)								
0-1800 (ESS)	Ref							
1800-3600 (ESS)								
3600-6000 (ESS)								
6000-12000 (ESS)								
12000-18000 (ESS)								
18000-24000 (ESS)								
24000-30000 (ESS)								
30000-36000 (ESS)								
36000-60000 (ESS)					+			
60000-90000 (ESS)					+			
90000-120000 (ESS)		-						
120000 + (ESS)		--			+			
1 (low)-10 (high) scale (EVS)								+++
Gender								
Female	Ref							
Male	--		+++		+++	-	+++	+++
Placement on left-right scale								
0 (far left) - 10 (far right)	+++		+++	+++			++	---
Attendance at religious services outside special occasions								
Less than once per month	Ref							
Once per month or more	++		---	---		++		-
Occupation								
Other	Ref							
Managerial/professional		---	--	+++	+++		+	---
Contextual variables								
% Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox		+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	---
% aged 65 and above	+++	+++	++	+++	-	+++	++	---
% unemployed	---	+++	+++	+++	+		++	---
% educated to ISCED Level 3		+++	+++	---			++	---
Years life expectancy at birth		++	+++		+++			+++

Work and family (cont)

January 2011

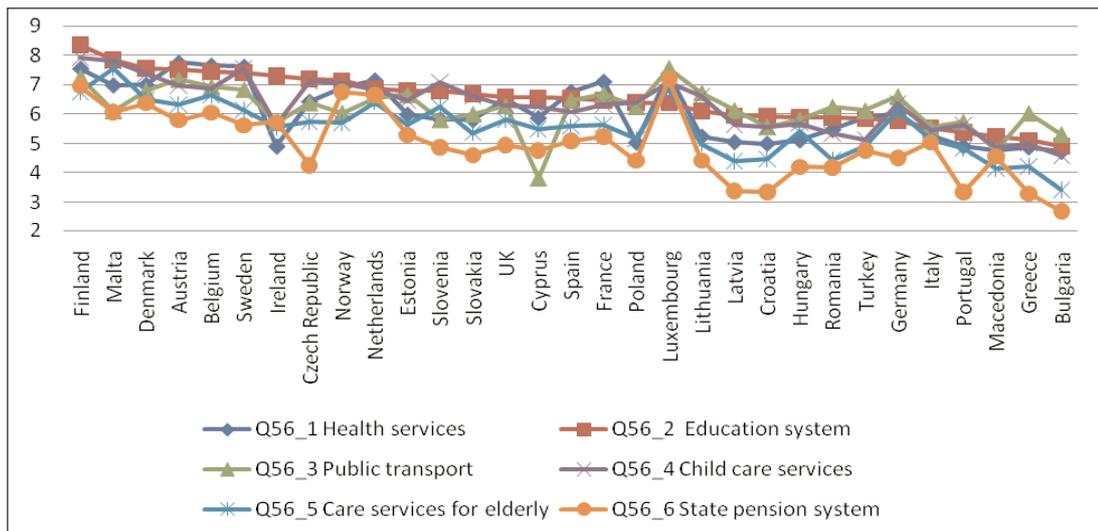
	ESS3 ... chooses never to have children	ESS3 ... lives with a partner not married to	ESS3 ... has child with partner not married to	ESS3 ... has fulltime job with child under 3 years	ESS3 ... gets divorced with child under 12 years
GDP					
GDP per capita	---		-	--	+++
Age					
Age up to 29	+		++		+++
Age 30-44	--	--	---	--	---
Age 45-64					
Age 65 and above	Ref				
Educational attainment					
ISCED Level 0-1	Ref				
ISCED Level 2-4	---	---	---	---	---
ISCED Level 5-6	---	---	---	---	---
Household income (annual)					
0-1800	Ref				
1800-3600			+		
3600-6000					
6000-12000					
12000-18000					
18000-24000					-
24000-30000		-			--
30000-36000	-	--		-	---
36000-60000	---	---		--	---
60000-90000	---	---		---	---
90000-120000	---	---		---	---
120000 and above	--	--		-	-
Gender					
Female	Ref				
Male	+++			+++	+++
Placement on left-right scale					
0 (far left)-10 (far right)	+++	+++	+++		+++
Attendance at religious services outside special occasions					
Less than once per month	Ref				
Once per month or more	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
Occupation					
Other	Ref				
Managerial/professional		+			
Contextual variables					
% Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox	+++		---	+++	+++
% aged 65 and above	-	---	---	---	---
% unemployed	+++			--	+++
% educated to ISCED Level 3	+++			+++	+++
Years life expectancy at birth	+++			+++	++

Public services

Every respondent in the European Quality of Life Survey is asked to rate their satisfaction with six areas of public service provision. The results partly mirror those concerning preferences in relation to government intervention versus individual responsibility.

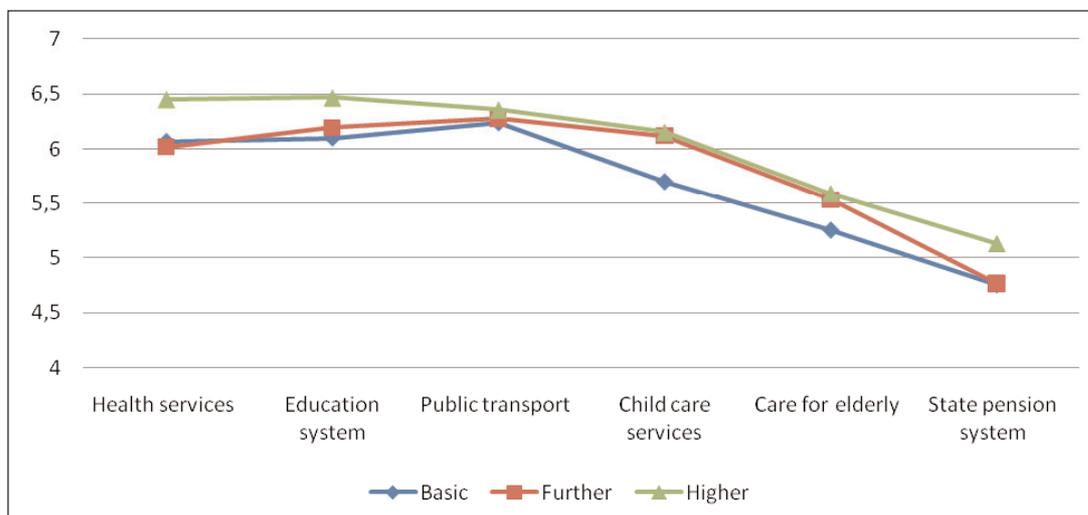
As Figure 10 shows, an analysis of the data organised by country shows that education was the service with the highest ratings, although there was considerable variation between the highest and lowest scores (Finland, 8.4% and Bulgaria, 4.9% respectively). Health was also rated quite highly, with a similar range of values. Younger and older people recorded the highest levels of satisfaction with all six areas of public services. More highly-educated people also exhibited higher than average levels of satisfaction, particularly in relation to health, education and pensions (see Figure 11). In multivariate analysis, societies with a higher GDP recorded higher levels of satisfaction with public services. In countries with a higher aggregate level of education, ratings were higher in relation to every area of public service. Societies with higher proportions of population aged over 65 recorded lower satisfaction levels on all measures apart from public transport.

Figure 10: Ratings of the quality of six public services



Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2007

Figure 11: Quality of public services as perceived by levels of educational attainment



Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2007

For policy-makers at the European level, the large disparities between countries is a matter of concern in terms of the wider objective of convergence. The considerable differences between age cohorts and groups with different levels of educational attainment indicate that access to adequate levels of public service provision may be systematically skewed.

Table 4: Public services: summary of significant predictors

	EQLS Health services	EQLS Education system	EQLS Public transport	EQLS Child care services	EQLS Care services for elderly	EQLS State pension system
GDP						
National GDP	+++		+++		+++	+++
Age						
Age up to 24						
Age 25-34						
Age 35-49						
Age 50-64						
Age 65 and above	Ref					
Educational attainment						
ISCED Level 0-1	Ref					
ISCED Level 2-4						+++
ISCED Level 5-6	+++	+++				+++
Income						
Lower quartile	Ref					
3 rd quartile		++		+++	++	
2 nd quartile	+++	+++		+++	++	
Upper quartile	+++	+++		+++		+
Gender						
Female	Ref					
Male	+++	+++	---	+++	+++	+++
Attendance at religious services outside special occasions						
Less than once per month	Ref					
Once per month or more		+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
Occupation						
Other	Ref					
Managerial/ professional		-				
Contextual variables						
% aged 65 and above		---	+++	---	---	---
% unemployed	---	---	+++	---	---	---
% educated to ISCED Level 3		+++	+++	+++	+++	++
Years life expectancy at birth	+++	+++	---	+++	+++	+++

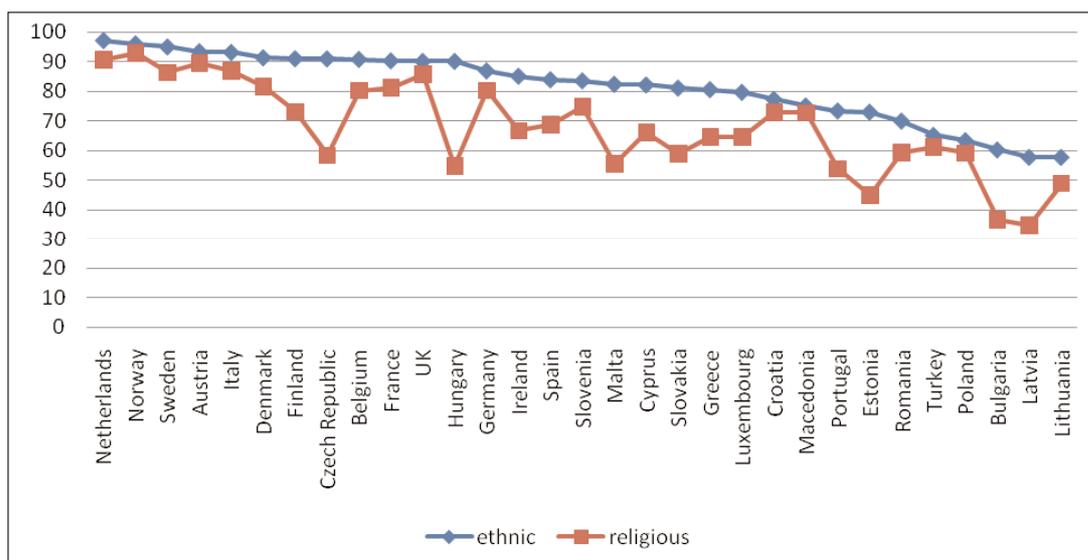
Cohesion

The overall well-being of a society should be consistent with a high level of perceived cohesion among its population. The EQLS contains questions about whether respondents perceive tensions between particular groups in society. Given the high levels of migration into and within Europe in recent years, it is relevant to examine measures of religious and ethnic tensions.

There were significant differences in the proportion of respondents who perceived “a lot of tension” between the specified groups in different countries. As Figure 12 shows, the Baltic republics reported the lowest levels

of both ethnic and religious tension, while the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark recorded the highest. The variation in religious tension tended to follow the cross-national differences in ethnic tension, but at a generally lower level. There were no apparent systematic differences between different age groups. Perceptions of high levels of tension increased steadily in line with an individual's educational achievement.

Figure 12: Ethnic and religious tension



Source: European Quality of Life Survey 2007

In multivariate models, higher household income also increased the likelihood of perceptions of ethnic tension but not religious tension. In countries with older populations and where larger proportions of the population are highly educated, people reported greater tensions, while those who attend church regularly were less likely to perceive ethnic tension.

There were no discernible differences between age cohorts, with the exception of those aged over 65, among whom a lower proportion perceived both ethnic and religious tension. There was a strong relationship between levels of education and perceptions of tension. In relation to both ethnicity and religion, there was a step increase from 'low' to 'medium' education and 'medium' to 'high' education.

Table 5: Cohesion: Summary of significant predictors

	EQLS Different racial and ethnic groups	EQLS Different religious groups
GDP		
National GDP		
Age		
Age up to 24		
Age 25-34		
Age 35-49		
Age 50-64		
Aged 65 and above	Ref	
Educational attainment		
ISCED Level 0 1	Ref	
ISCED Level 2 4	+++	+
ISCED Level 5-6	+++	
Income		
Lower quartile	Ref	
3 rd quartile	++	
2 nd quartile	+++	
Upper quartile	+++	+
Gender		
Female	Ref	
Male	+++	+++
Attendance at religious services outside special occasions		
Less than once per month	Ref	
Once per month or more	---	
Occupation		
Other	Ref	
Managerial/professional		
Contextual variables		
% aged 65 and above		++
% unemployed	--	
% educated to ISCED Level 3	+++	+++
Years life expectancy at birth	+++	+++

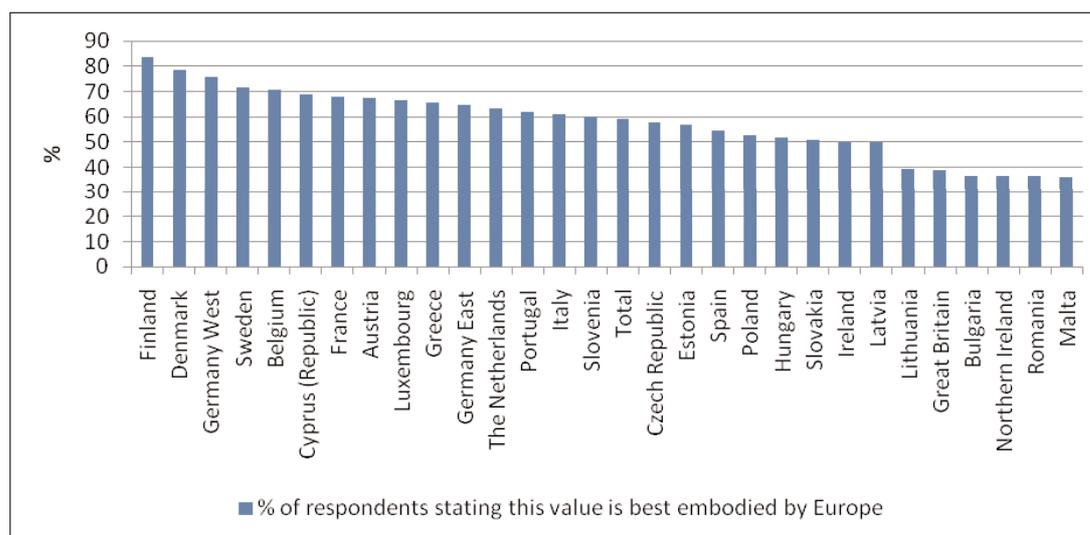
III. Values, attitudes and preferences of European citizens on issues relating to European and EU social policies

In addition to citizens' values, attitudes and preferences in relation to policy areas linked to social policies, we also examine these issues with regard to Europe and the EU. Using data from various Standard Eurobarometer surveys between 2004 and 2007, we examined four broad categories of attitudes and preferences:

- What values does Europe embody more than other areas in the world, in its citizens' perception?
- How do they evaluate the impact of the EU and its policies on a number of areas relating to Social Europe and well-being in the longer-run?
- Do they prefer more decision-making to take place at the EU level?
- What areas should EU policy-makers prioritise?

What does Europe stand for in the eyes of European citizens?

Does Europe embody the value of social equality/solidarity more than other groups of countries in the world?



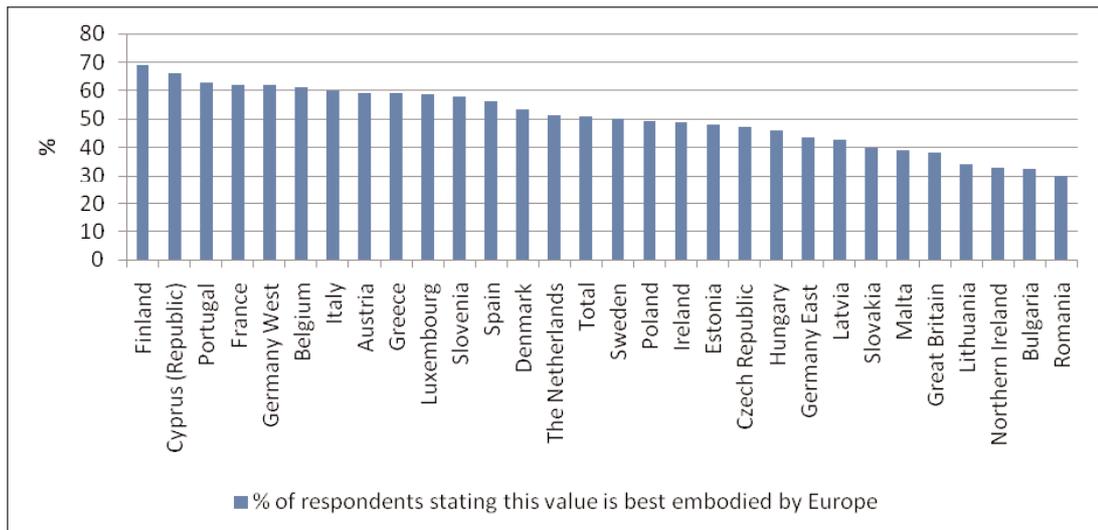
Source: EB 67.1 Feb-March 2007

A relatively large proportion of Europeans considered that Europe embodies values such as social equality/solidarity and tolerance/openness more than other groups of countries in the world. More specifically, 59% of European respondents thought that Europe embodies equality and solidarity more than other groups of countries in the world, ranging from 36% in Malta to 84% in Finland. There seems to be a pattern of responses by country, with Scandinavians at the top, closely followed by countries with 'continental' welfare states and most Mediterranean countries (except Spain). At the other end of the spectrum, the responses from people in the new Member States and in countries with 'Anglo-Saxon' welfare regimes ranked below average.

In other words, respondents from countries whose welfare state policies have been long inspired by the values of equality and solidarity generally think that Europe embodies these values more than other parts of the world. This is not a surprising finding, not least given that 'Europe' does not refer here to the EU but rather to the region as a whole. Therefore, people in countries whose welfare states embody these values also consider that Europe as a whole embodies these values.

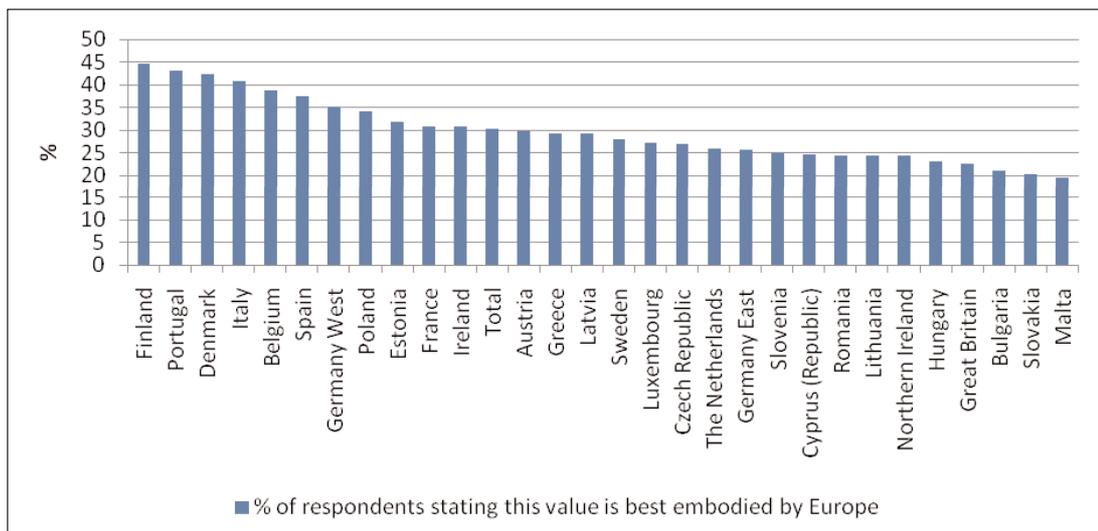
According to the Eurobarometer, an average of just over half of Europeans thought that Europe embodies tolerance and openness more than other groups of countries. This perception ranged from 70% in Finland to 30% in Romania. Most respondents whose replies to this question were below the EU average came from new Member States, Ireland and the UK. There was no clear-cut national pattern among respondents reporting above average replies.

Does Europe embody the value of tolerance/openness more than other groups of countries in the world?



Source: EB 67.1 Feb-March 2007

Does Europe embody the value of entrepreneurship more than other groups of countries in the world?



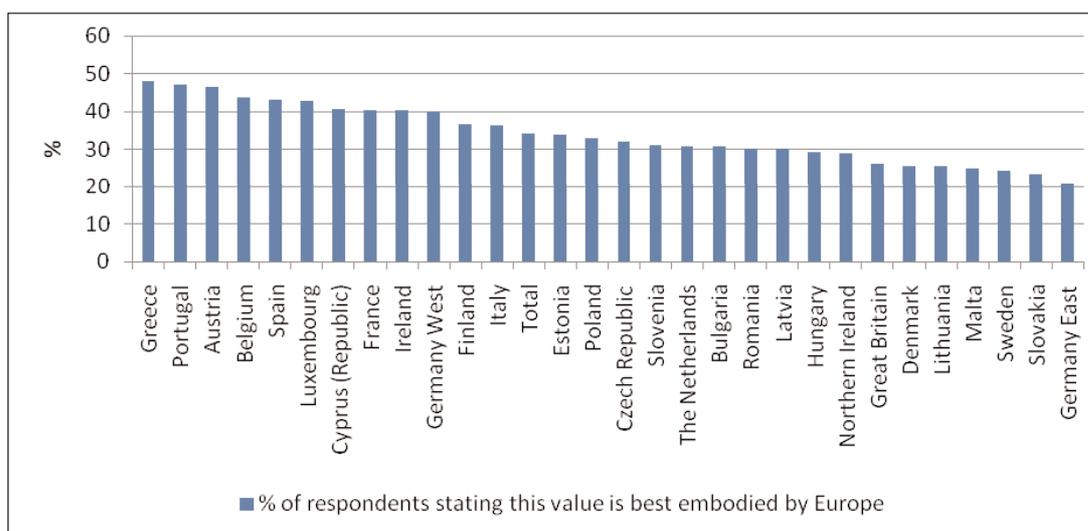
Source: EB 67.1 Feb-March 2007

At the other end of the spectrum, only a minority of Europeans – on average, three out of ten – thought that Europe embodies entrepreneurship more than other groups of countries. The differences between Member States were not all that big, with the most positive responses reported in Finland (45%) and the

least positive ones in Malta (20%). There did not seem to be a clear pattern in the distribution of countries around the average rate of positive responses, except perhaps that the responses from people in new Member States were generally lower than average.

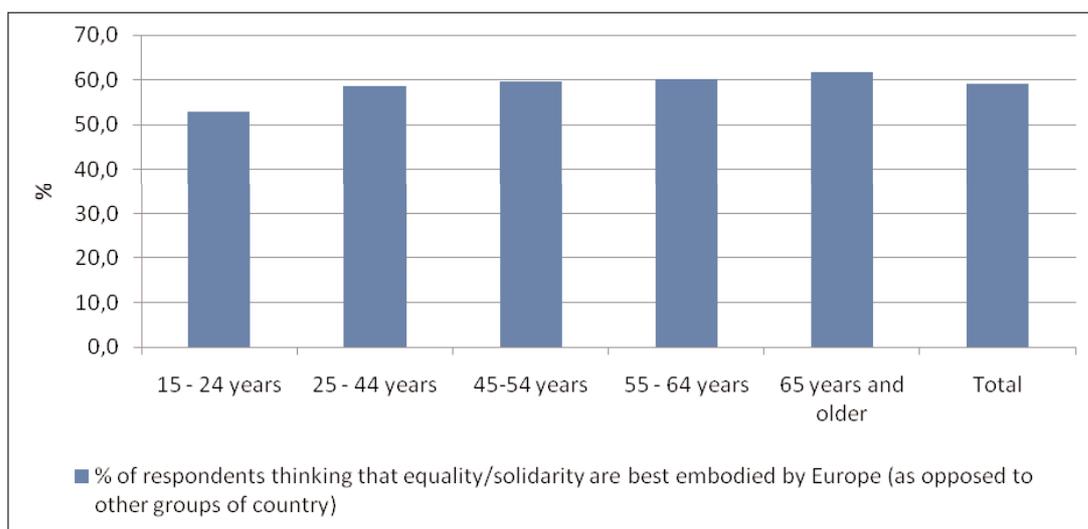
Last but not least, an average of around one in three respondents in the EU thought that Europe embodies the value of cultural diversity more than other groups of countries in the world. The variation in perceptions with regards to this issue was relatively limited across member states.

Does Europe embody the value of cultural diversity more than other groups of countries in the world?



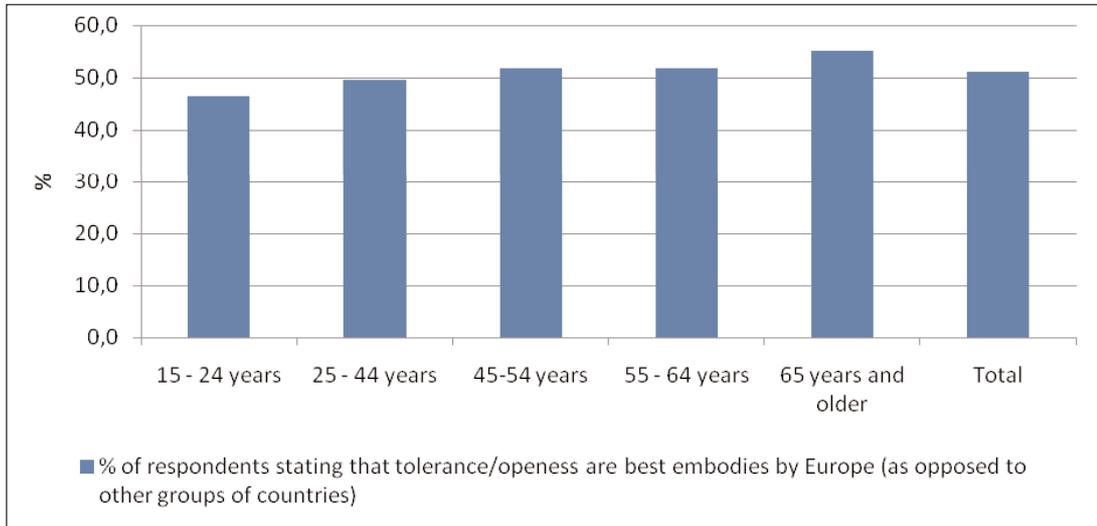
Source: EB 67.1 Feb-March 2007

Does Europe embody the value of equality/solidarity more than other groups of countries in the world?



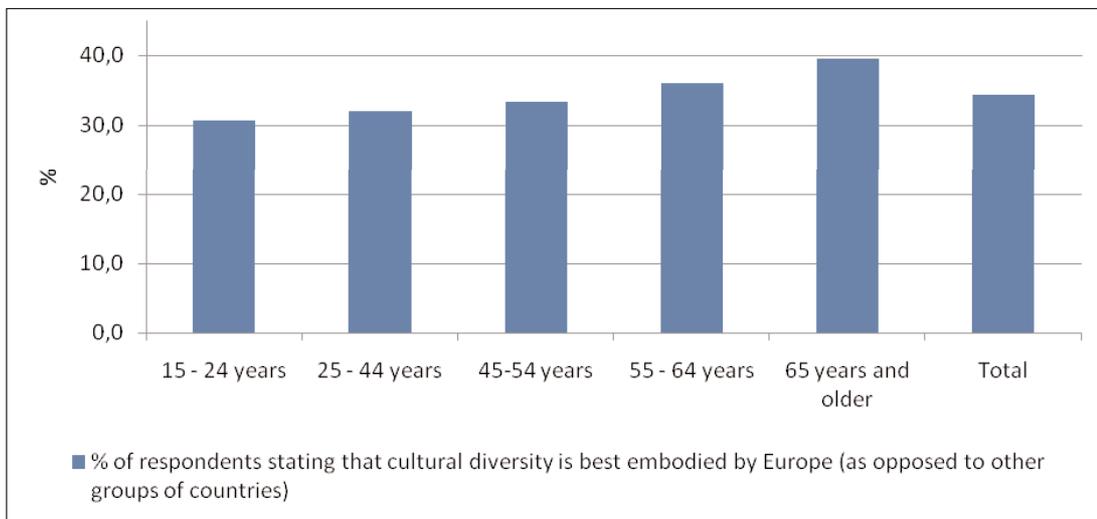
Source: EB 67.1 Feb-March 2007

Does Europe embody the value of tolerance/openness more than other groups of countries in the world?



Source: EB 67.1 Feb-March 2007

Does Europe embody the value of cultural diversity more than other groups of countries in the world?



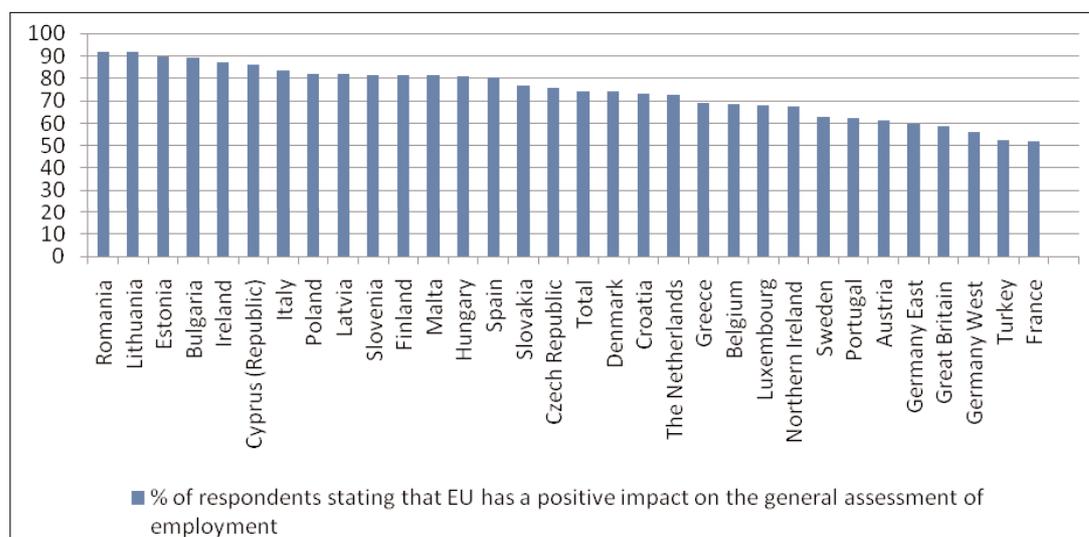
Source: EB 67.1 Feb-March 2007

Looking at the age distribution of European citizens who believed that Europe embodies certain values more than other groups of countries in the world, the proportions tended to increase with age. More specifically, in relation to social equality, tolerance, cultural diversity and entrepreneurship, the over-65s registered the highest percentages of people believing that those values are best embodied by Europe, while the 15-24 cohort was the least inclined to agree. However, the differences in all cases were fairly limited, especially in relation to entrepreneurship – the value with the lowest average.

What impact does the the EU have on social policies?

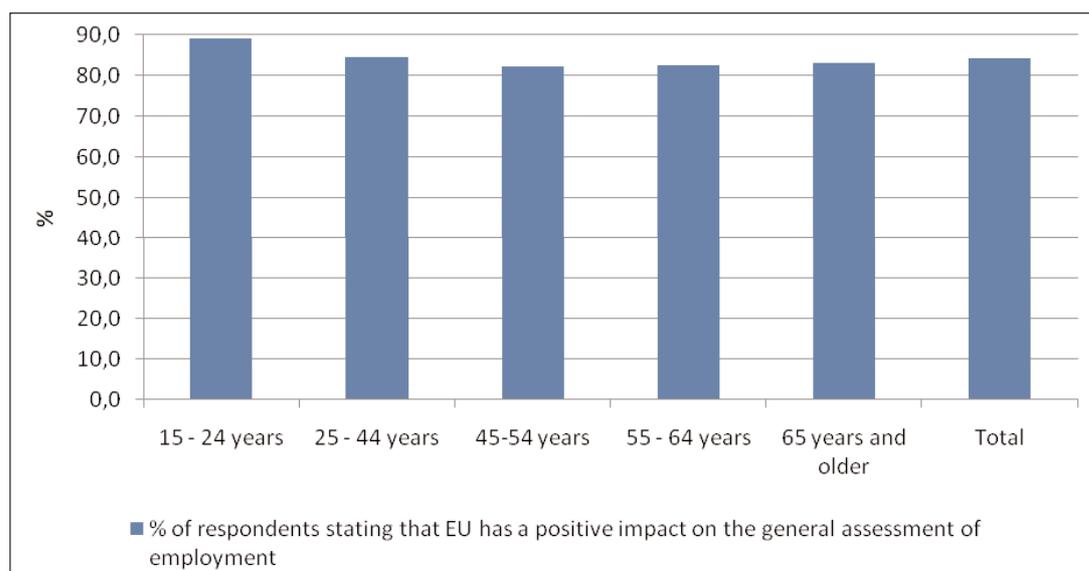
Around three out of four Europeans considered that the EU's actions have had a positive impact on employment and social affairs (EB 65.3, 2006), although there were quite significant differences between countries: only about half of the respondents in France judged the EU's impact to be positive, compared with nine out of ten in Romania and Lithuania. Respondents from the new Member States appeared to regard the EU's achievements in this area more positively than respondents from old Member States.

Positive impact of EU policies in employment and social affairs



Source: EB 65.3 May-June 2006

Positive impact of EU policies in employment and social affairs



Source: EB 65.3 May-June 2006

When asked about other specific areas of employment and social affairs policy, such as setting the requirements for working conditions, fighting unemployment, providing access to training and education, promoting best practice and coordinating reforms, respondents across the EU generally had positive perceptions, averaging 80% and above. The variation in these perceptions across countries was not very high.

The 15-24 age group recorded the highest proportion of respondents who believed that European policies have a positive impact on employment and social affairs. The 45-54 cohort were the most sceptical, although the differences here were very slight, with all the values ranging from 82.2% to 88.9%.

Evaluation of the EU's performance

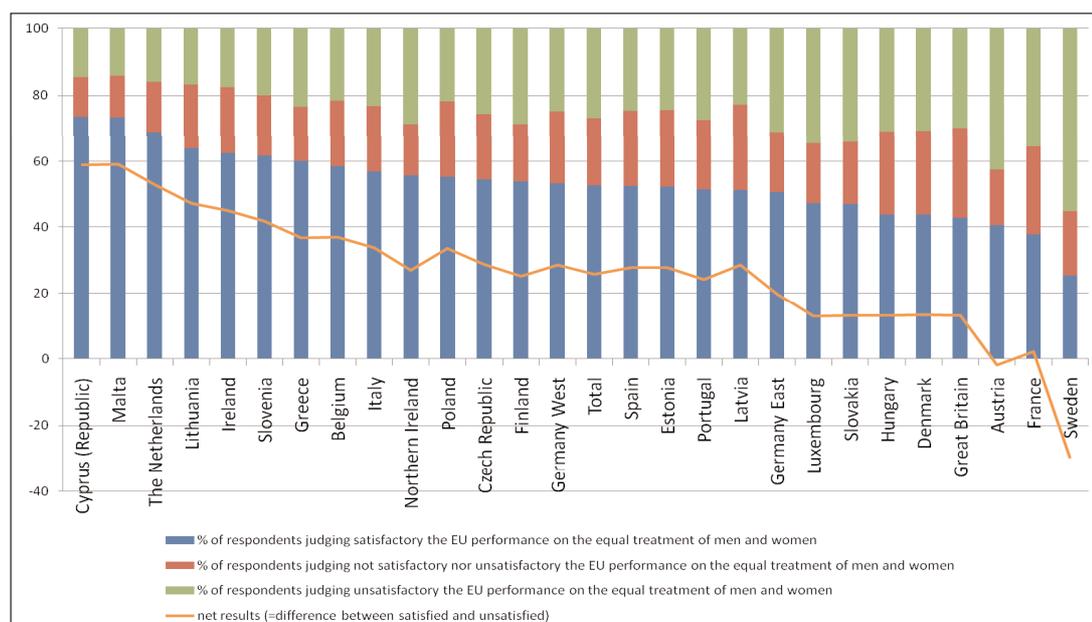
How do European citizens evaluate the EU's performance in various areas that are relevant for social policies?

In the context of the Standard Eurobarometer 65.1 (2006), survey respondents were asked whether they judged EU performance in a number of policy areas to be satisfactory, unsatisfactory or neither. We have subtracted the percentage of respondents who stated they were 'dissatisfied' from the percentage of respondents who stated they were 'satisfied' with the EU's performance to produce a 'net' satisfaction rate for each policy area.

Gender equality, major health Issues and environmental protection were all areas where a clear majority of respondents judged the EU's performance to be satisfactory. Favourable and unfavourable opinions were balanced in relation to the EU's performance on economic growth and helping the poor, but there was an unfavourable balance of views on its track record in the areas of unemployment and social rights.

Gender equality was among the areas pertaining to social policies and well-being for which the EU performance was evaluated as the most satisfactory overall: on average, the number of those who were satisfied was almost 28% higher than the number who were dissatisfied. This is probably no surprise, given that equal treatment is one of the social policy areas where the EU has had competence for a long time.

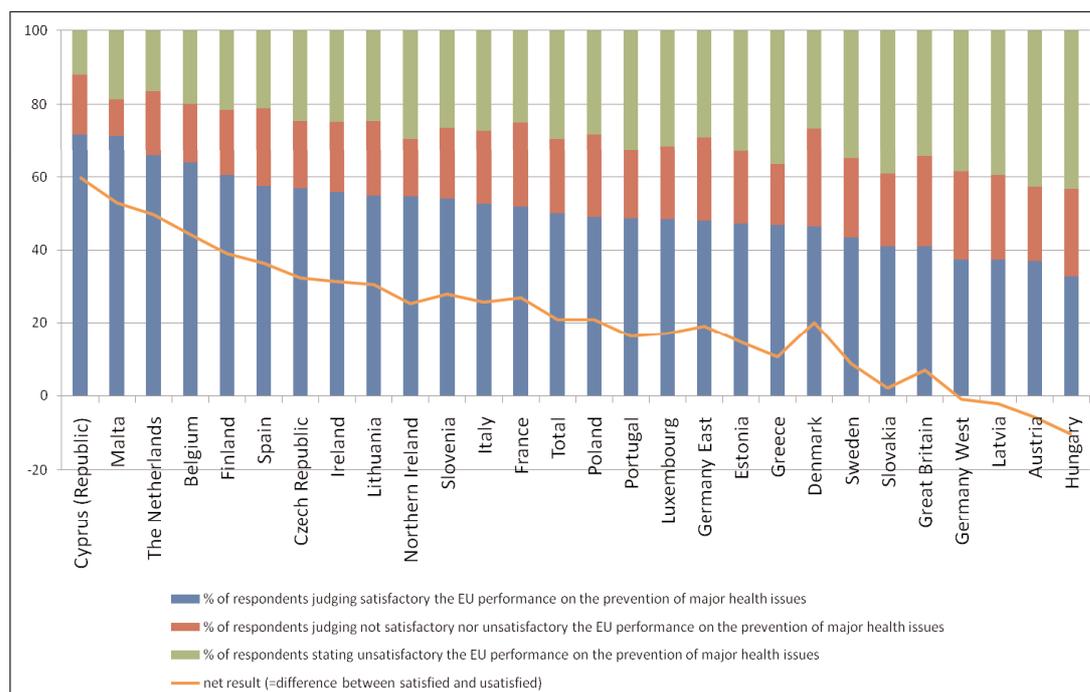
EU performance: Gender equality



Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

There were, however, wide variations in these perceptions between countries. At the top end, the ‘net’ satisfaction rate in Cyprus and Malta reached 60%; at the bottom, the number of Swedes who were dissatisfied with the EU’s performance on gender equality issues was 30% higher than the number who were satisfied. The distribution of country responses around the average did not seem to follow any predictable pattern.

EU performance: Major health Issues

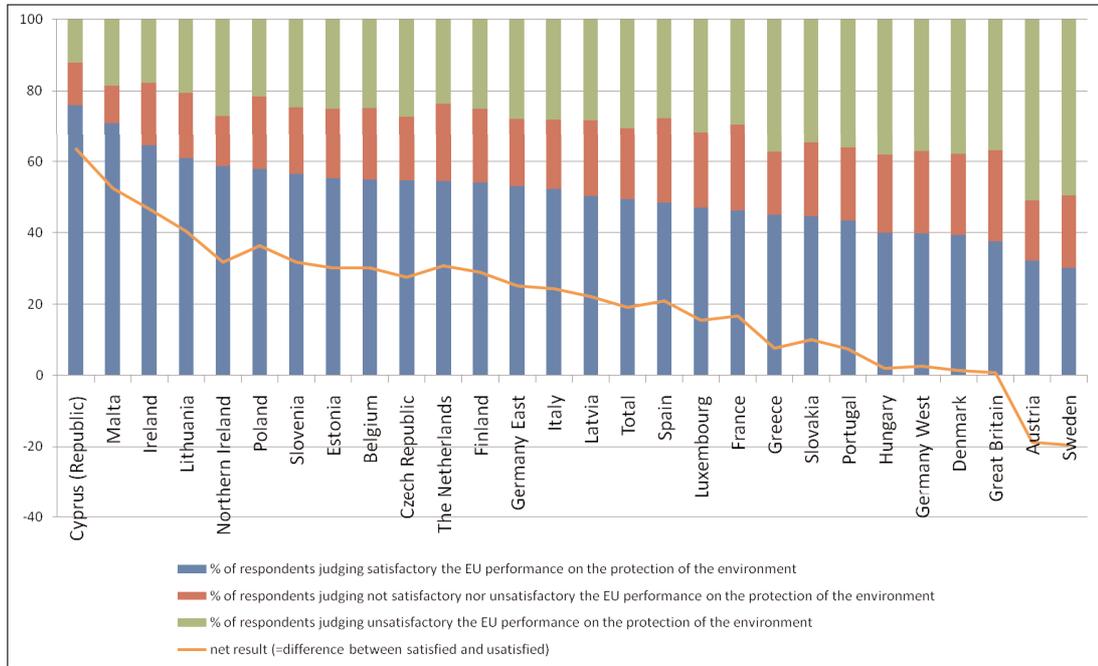


Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

The EU’s performance in relation to major health issues was also perceived as positive in the Eurobarometer survey. On average, the numbers of those satisfied exceeded the numbers of those dissatisfied by 20%. The differences between countries was somewhat smaller than in the case of gender equality. Cyprus was again top of the rankings, with a ‘net’ satisfaction rate of 60%, while Hungary was at the bottom with a ‘net’ dissatisfaction rate of 8%. The distribution of Member States around the average did not follow any discernable pattern.

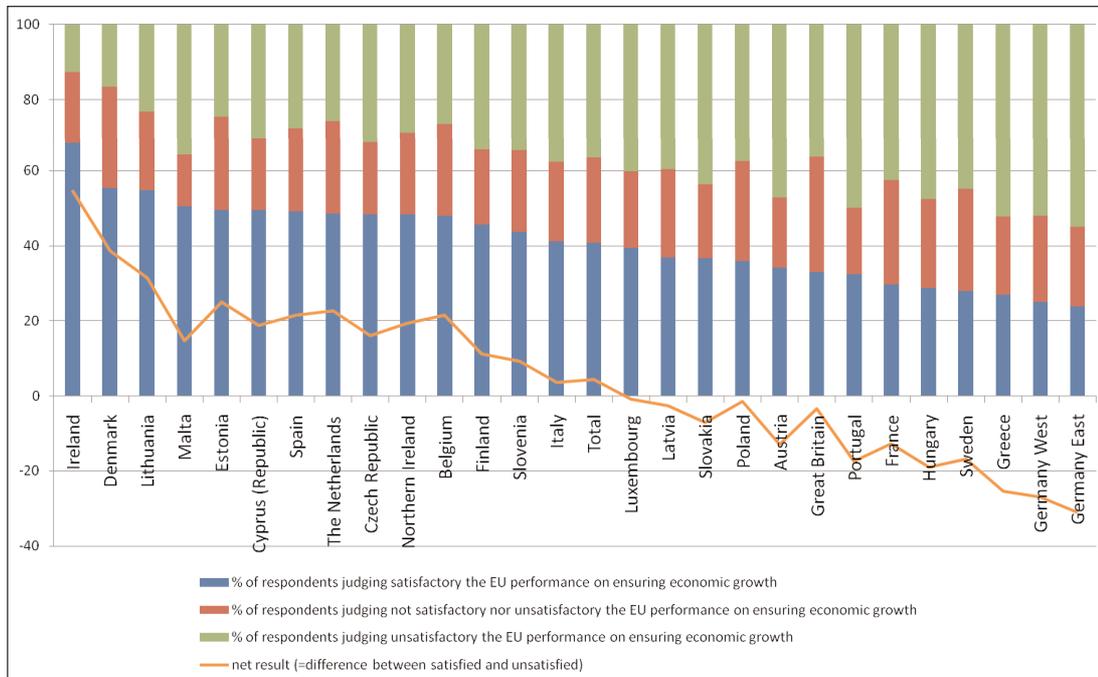
The third policy area which is relevant for well-being and for which the ‘net’ assessment of the EU’s performance was generally positive was environmental protection. Overall, 20% more respondents were satisfied than dissatisfied. Again, there were significant differences between Member States, with Cyprus topping the list with 62% more satisfied than dissatisfied respondents, and Sweden and Austria trailing at the bottom with 20% more dissatisfied than satisfied respondents. Here, there was a discernable pattern in the distribution of Member States around the average, with respondents in several countries known for their high environmental standards (notably, Denmark and Germany, as well as Sweden and Austria) particularly dissatisfied with the EU’s performance in this respect.

EU performance: Environment protection



Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

EU performance: Economic growth

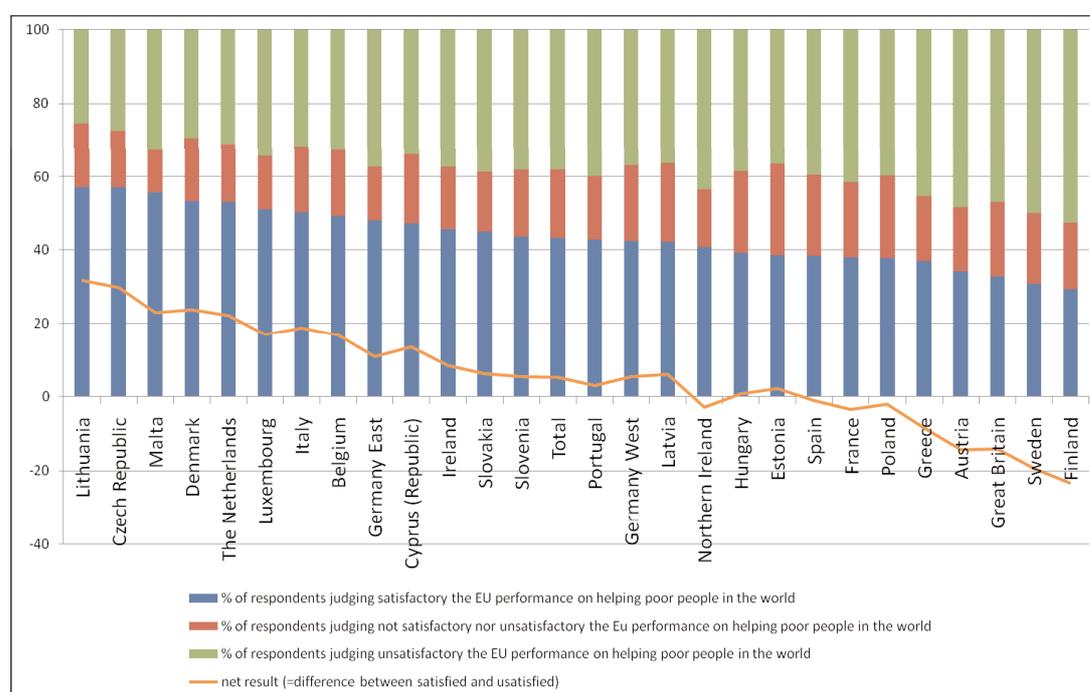


Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

The EU's performance on economic growth was on average rated slightly more satisfactory than unsatisfactory: about 4% more respondents said they were satisfied than said they were dissatisfied. In Ireland, the number of those who said they were satisfied exceeded the number of those dissatisfied by almost 60% percent, whereas in Germany (both East and West), 30% more were dissatisfied than were satisfied.

Perceptions of the EU's performance in helping people were also balanced, with those who were satisfied on average exceeding those dissatisfied by about 5%. The variation in national responses on this issue was relatively limited: Lithuania topped the table with around 30% more satisfied than dissatisfied respondents, compared with 20% in Sweden and Finland, the countries at the bottom of the table.

EU performance: Help poor people

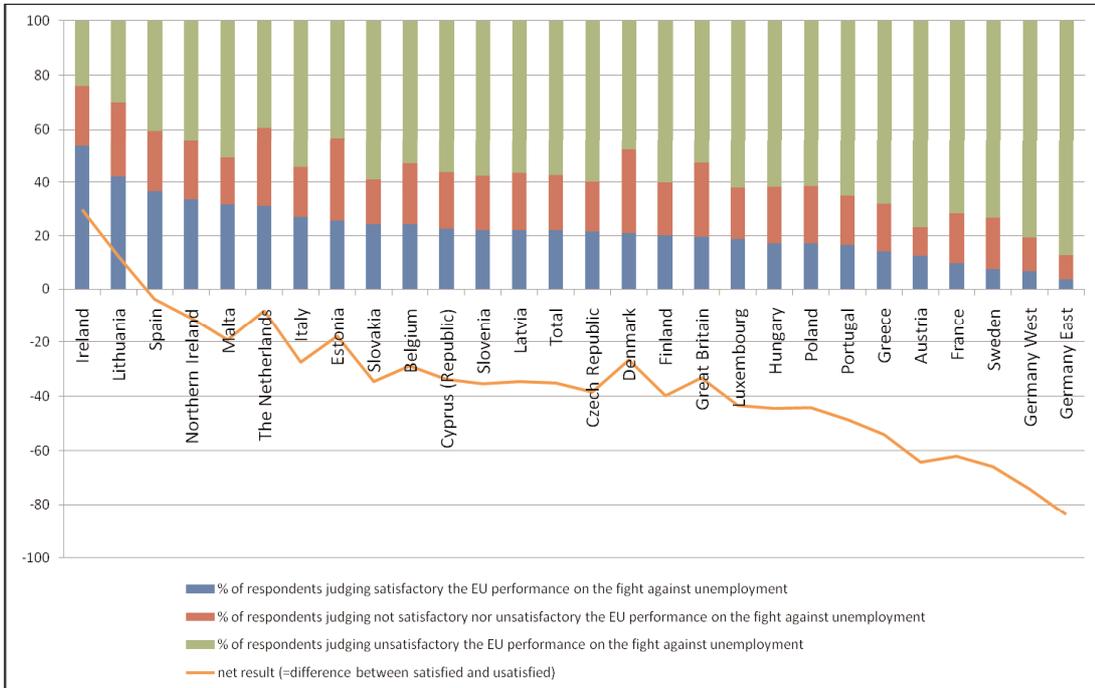


Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

When it comes to the fight against unemployment, on average almost 40% more respondents were dissatisfied than satisfied. Only Ireland and Lithuania recorded a higher proportion of respondents who were satisfied than dissatisfied. In Spain, the size of the two groups was balanced. At the other end of the spectrum, in Germany, the number who were dissatisfied exceeded the number who were satisfied by almost 80%, with Greece, Austria and Sweden following with a balance of dissatisfied versus satisfied of between 50% and 60%.

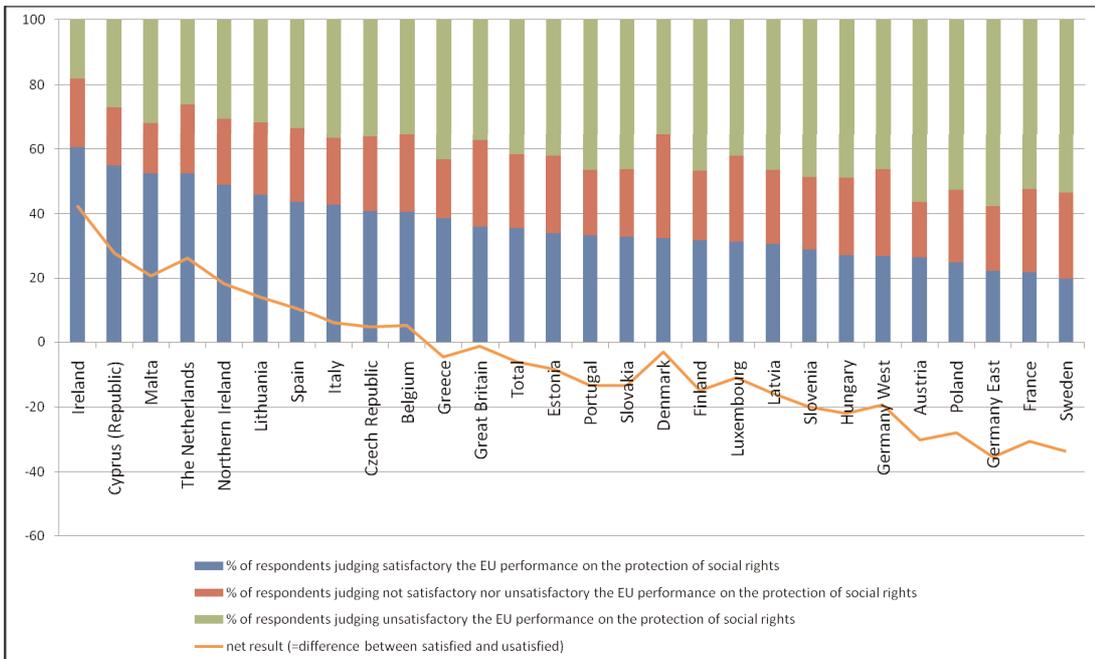
The evaluation of the EU's performance in protecting social rights was somewhat more positive than perceptions of its role in fighting unemployment. This should come as no surprise, given that the EU has had competence for some social rights, such as health and safety and equal treatment, for a relatively long time. On average, the proportion of those dissatisfied exceeded the proportion of those satisfied by only about 10%. In several countries, respondents who were satisfied outnumbered those dissatisfied – for example, in Ireland, 40% more were satisfied than dissatisfied, but in Sweden, the dissatisfied outnumbered the satisfied by about 35%. The distribution of countries around the EU average does not suggest any systematic differences between, for example, northern and southern or eastern Europeans; between respondents from rich and poor countries; or between respondents from countries whose welfare state has been characterised as 'Anglo-Saxon', 'Nordic', 'continental', 'Mediterranean' or 'Eastern European'.

EU performance: Unemployment



Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

EU performance: Social rights



Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

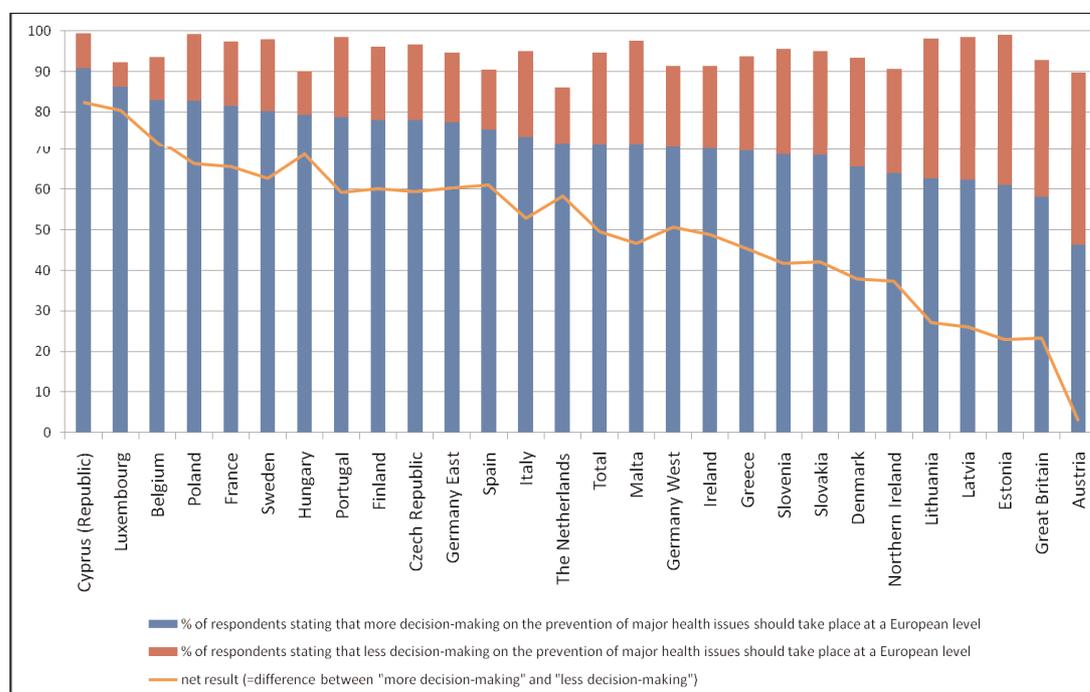
Do European citizens want more or less decision-making at the EU level?

European citizens have fairly diverse views on whether they want more or less decision-making at EU level in areas relating to 'Social Europe'.

Again, we have subtracted the percentage of respondents who wanted less decision-making at the EU level from the percentage of respondents who wanted more to produce a 'net' preference for more decision-making at the EU level for each country and for the EU as a whole.

We found a greater (net) appetite for more decision-making at the EU level in areas such as 'major health issues' and 'economic growth' and less on issues such as 'fighting unemployment' and 'social rights'. (Sources, Standard Eurobarometer, 65.1, February-March 2006).

EU decision-making: Major health issues



Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

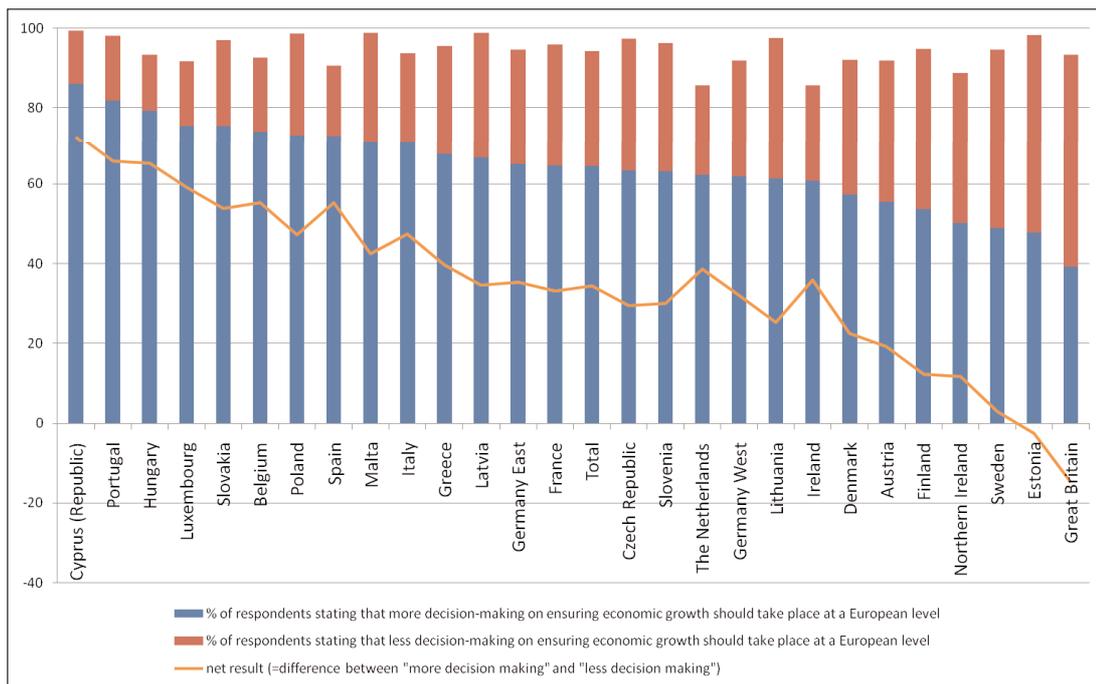
Among the topics relevant for social policy, an average of 50% more respondents said they would like to see more decisions made at the EU level on 'major health issues' than those who said they would like to see less. This compares with an average of 20% more respondents saying they were satisfied with the EU's performance on major health issues than those who said they were dissatisfied.

'Net' responses ranged from over 82% in Cyprus to about 2% in Austria. Most notably, Sweden and Finland ranked above the EU average in this respect, while continental welfare state countries such as France, Belgium and Luxembourg ranked among the highest. At the other end of the spectrum, Austria, Britain and all three Baltic states were among those where the 'net' preference for more decision-making at the EU level on major health issues was relatively low.

Turning to the issue of economic growth, the number of respondents who wanted more decision-making at the EU level was on average about 35% higher than the number who wanted less. The largest difference

in preferences in favour of the EU level was in Cyprus (with 70% more respondents wanting more decision-making at EU level than those who wanted less) and the lowest was in the UK (with 18% more respondents calling for less decision-making at EU level than those who wanted more). The greatest divisions on this issue were found in Estonia, Sweden, Northern Ireland and Finland, while respondents in the new and Mediterranean Member States were generally more in favour of EU-level decision-making in this area.

EU decision-making: Economic growth



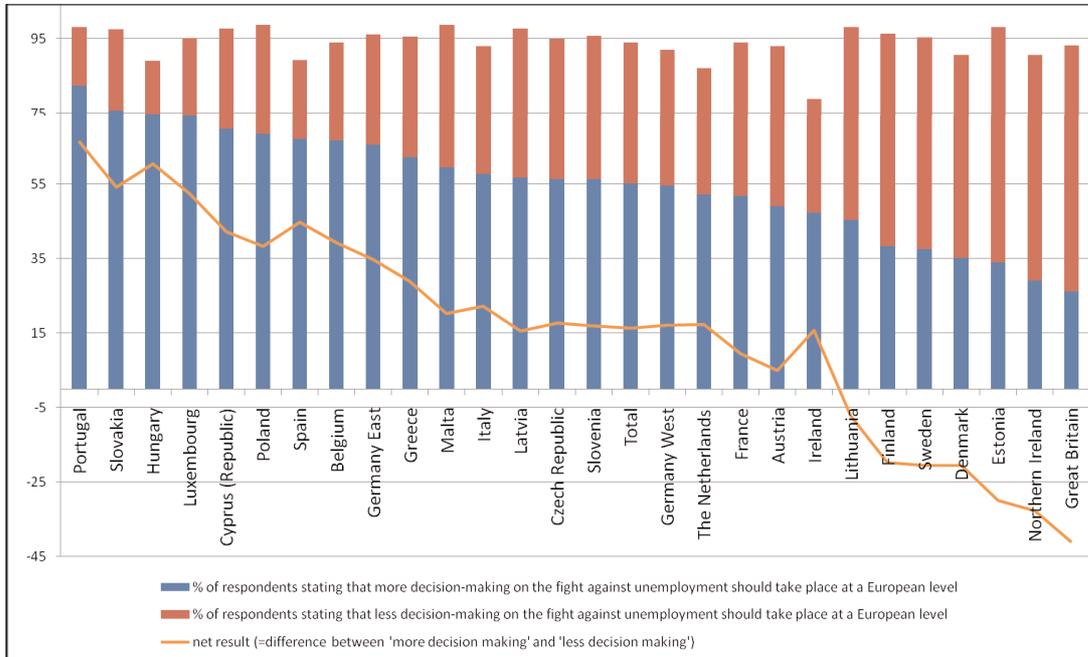
Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

Just over half of European citizens wanted to see more decision-making at the EU level in the fight against unemployment, while around two out of five wanted to see less, bringing the 'net' average preference for more decision-making at the EU level to just 15%.

The 'net' scores ranged from 65% in Portugal to -40% in Britain (that is, 40% more respondents wanted to see less decision-making at the EU level than wanted to see more). The preference for more EU-level decision-making was mostly higher in the new and Mediterranean Member States, and negative among Scandinavians, the Irish, Lithuanians and Estonians. Most northwestern European, continental welfare state countries were close to the average, with the exception of Belgium. Among the old Member States, it is notable the majority of respondents who were not in favour of more EU-level decision-making in the fight against unemployment were mostly in those countries with relatively low unemployment rates.

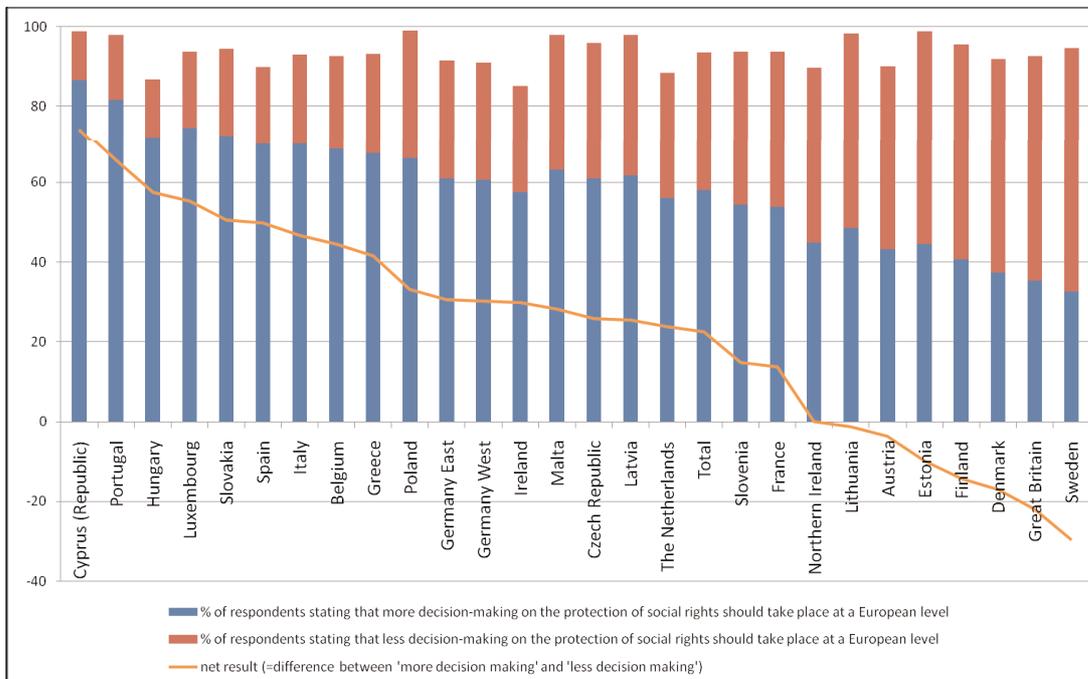
A very similar picture emerges with regards to social rights. On average, around 20% more respondents in the EU wanted to see more decision-making at the EU level than those who wanted less. The highest 'net' proportion of respondents who wanted more EU decision-making in this area was found in Cyprus (around 75%). At the other end of the spectrum, in Sweden only 30% more respondents wanted to see more decision-making on social rights at the EU level than wanted to see less. The distribution of Member States above and below the average was very similar to that on the issue of fighting unemployment.

EU decision-making: Unemployment



Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

EU decision-making: Social rights



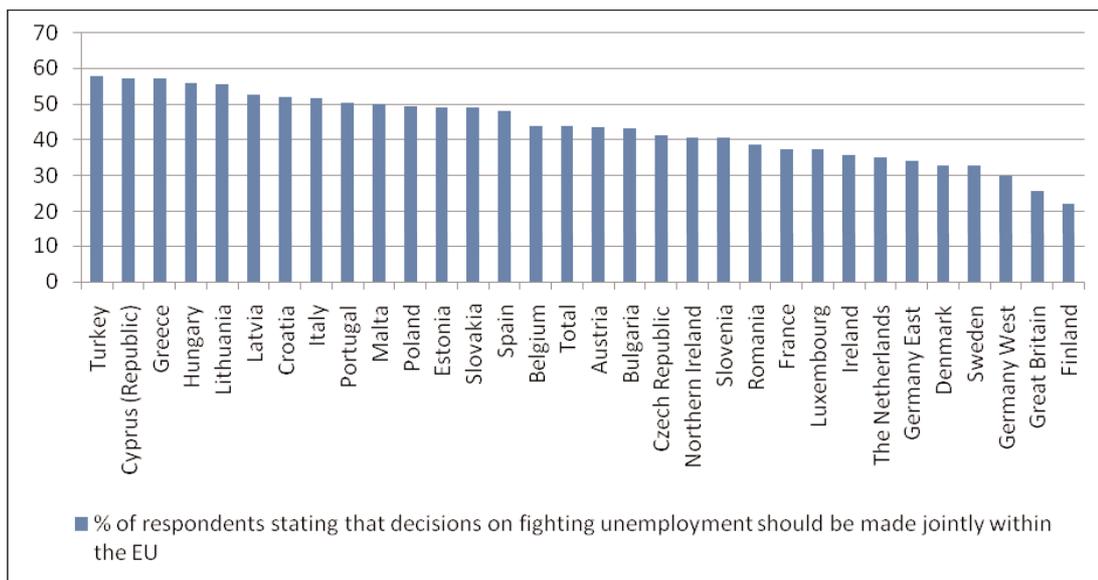
Source: EB 65.1 Feb-March 2006

Should more decisions be made jointly within the EU?

Although on average the majority of respondents said they would, on balance, like to see more decision-making taking place at the EU level, they appeared to be less supportive of *joint* decision-making within the EU on a range of issues relating to social policy. It should be noted that the responses outlined below are not ‘net’ responses, but rather the percentages of respondents reporting that they thought decisions in certain policy areas should be made jointly within the EU. The Standard Eurobarometer 64.2 (October-November 2005) explored this question.

Notably, fewer than half of the respondents said decisions on fighting unemployment should be made jointly in the EU. Even in the countries where citizens voiced most support for this (Cyprus and Turkey), the percentage was only just above 50%, while only just over one in five respondents agreed with this in Finland. New and Mediterranean Member States dominated among those countries whose citizens were more in favour of joint decision-making in this area than the average, although some new Member States were also among those whose citizens were less in favour than average.

Should decisions on fighting unemployment be made jointly within the EU?



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

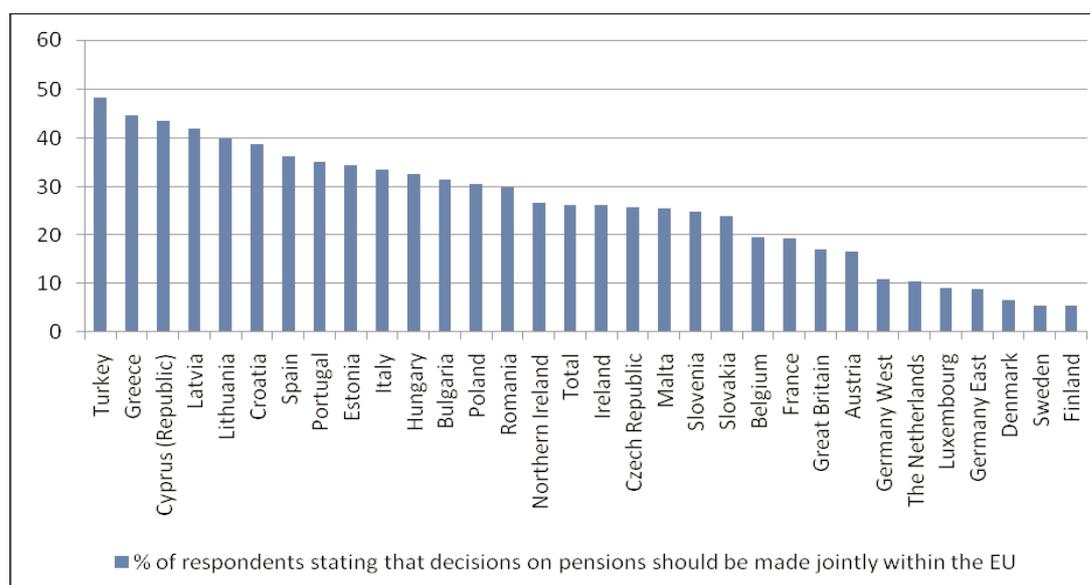
The preferences in relation to decisions on pensions issues being made jointly within the EU are even weaker. On average, about one in four respondents supported this, with Turkish, Greek and Cypriot respondents most strongly in favour – although even in these countries, support peaked at just 42-48%. Respondents from the three Scandinavian Member States were least in favour of joint decision-making in this area, at below 10%. Once again, the countries where support for this proposition was higher than average were predominantly new and Mediterranean Member States, with a few exceptions.

The generally weak desire of EU citizens to see decisions related to their pension systems being made jointly at the EU level probably reflects the fact that pension systems rely on long-term ‘contracts’ between citizens and their national governments. The reforms that have been introduced in recent decades have been equally dependent on particular political and socio-economic conditions in each Member State.

Taxation is similarly an area where there is a relatively weak preference for decisions to be taken jointly within the EU. On average, only about 28% of respondents supported this, with only a few countries (most

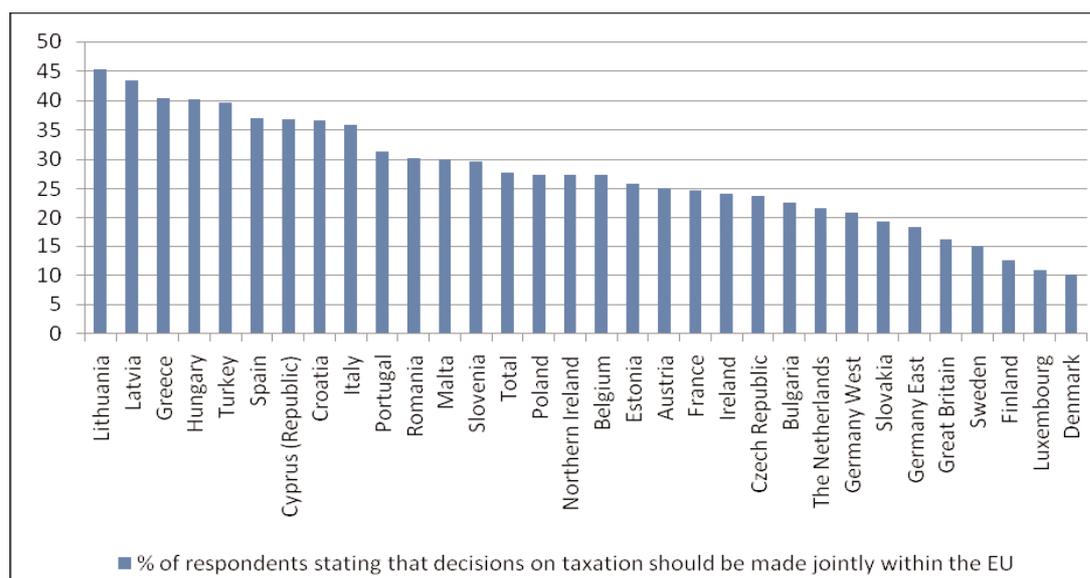
notably, Lithuania, Latvia and Greece) recording higher percentages. At the other end of the spectrum, we again find the Scandinavians, Luxembourg and Great Britain. This is an interesting finding, given that these countries are characterised by very different taxation systems: the Scandinavians have some of the highest tax revenues as a share of their GDP in the EU, while Britain has some of the lowest. Luxembourg on the other hand, has special tax regimes that often create frictions with its EU partners because of the tax competition they create.

Should decisions on pensions be made jointly within the EU?



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

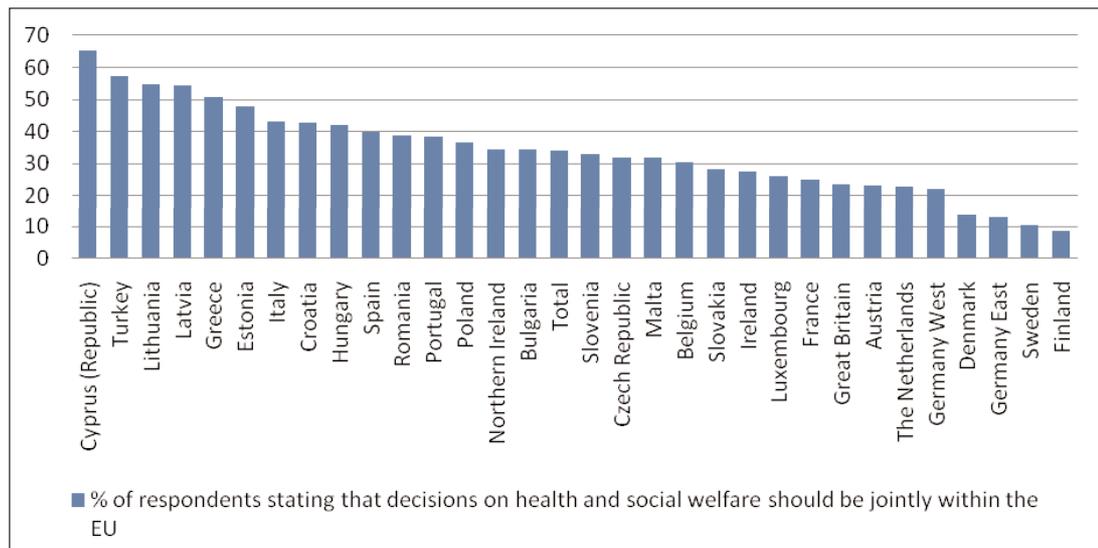
Should decisions on taxation be made jointly within the EU?



Source: EB 64.2 Sept-Oct 2005

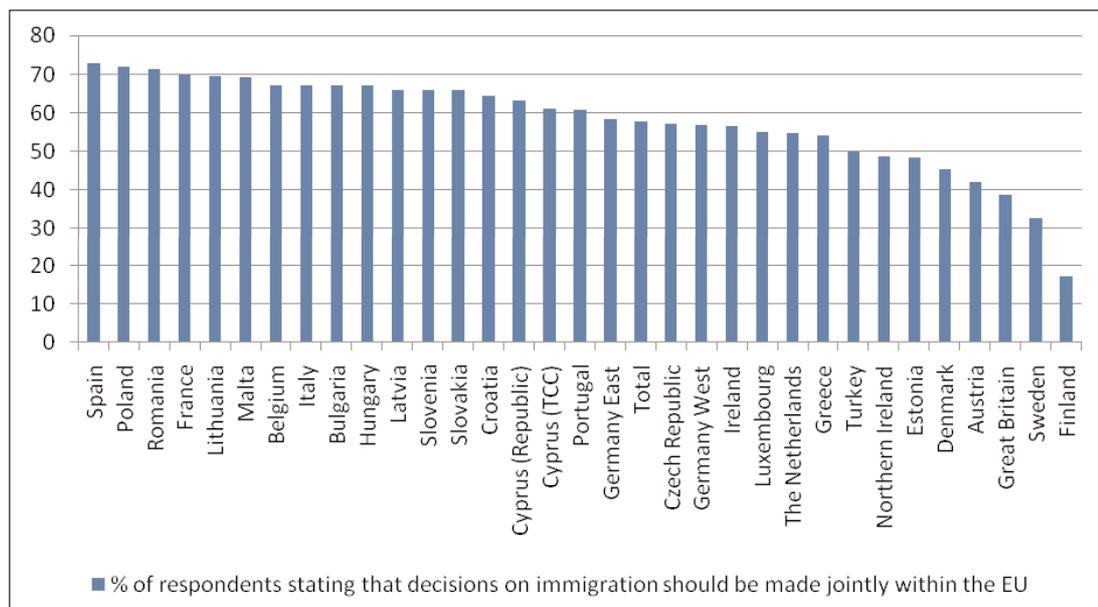
The average proportion of EU citizens who would like to see decisions on health and social welfare taken jointly in the EU was slightly higher than in the case of taxation and pensions, but lower than in the case of fighting unemployment, at just below 35%. The proportion was highest, at between 40% and 45%, in Lithuania, Latvia and Greece; and lowest in Denmark, at just 10%. The distribution of countries around the average does not follow a clear pattern in terms of geography, income, or how long they have been members of the European Union.

Should decisions on health/social welfare be made jointly within the EU?



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

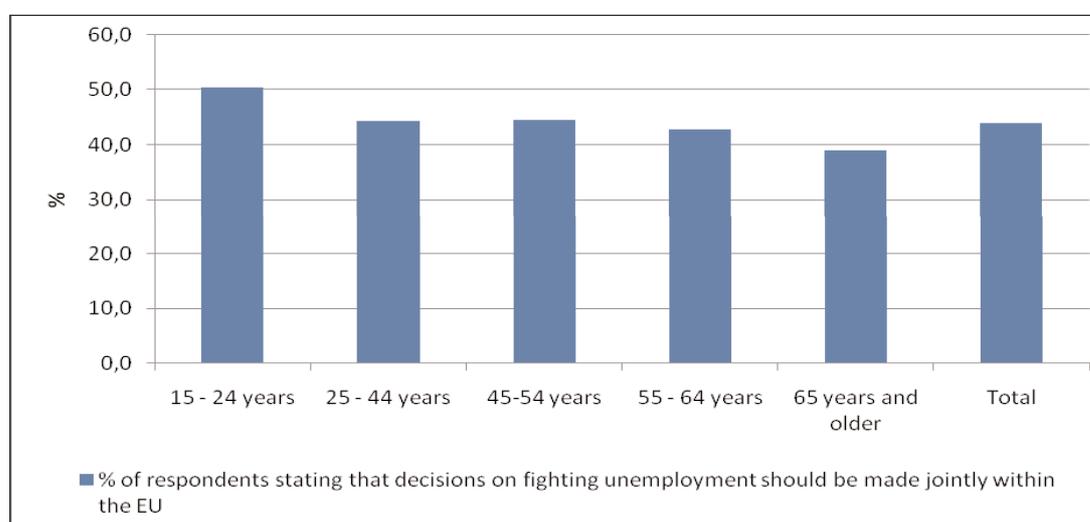
Should decisions on immigration be made jointly within the EU?



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

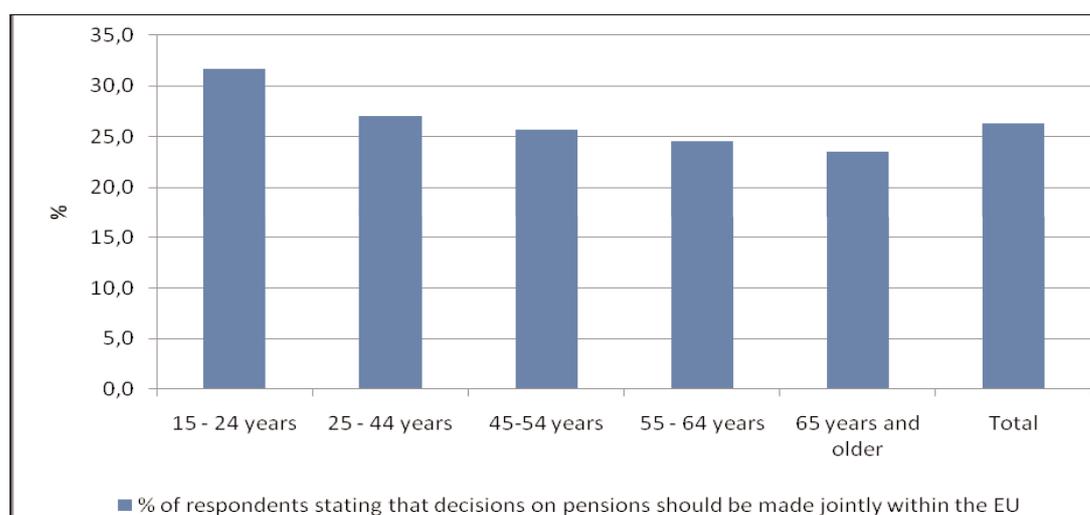
Immigration is the one policy area for which the majority of respondents thought that decisions should be made jointly within the EU. On average, almost 60% of respondents supported this. In Spain (a country that is an entry point for many immigrants, especially from Africa), Poland, Romania, France and Lithuania, around 70% of respondents wanted joint decision-making in this area. Finland was at the other end of the spectrum, with just below 20%. Other Scandinavian countries, along with Britain and Austria, also showed relatively weak preference for joint decision-making on this issue, although much higher than in Finland, ranging from 30% to over 40%. The multiple facets of immigration – ranging from the question of how to differentiate between economic and political immigrants to how to attract high-skilled migrants and manage temporary and circular migration, and the way in which the impact of these policy choices spill over across the EU as a result of the right to free movement – probably explain these trends in responses.

Should decisions on fighting unemployment be made jointly within the EU?



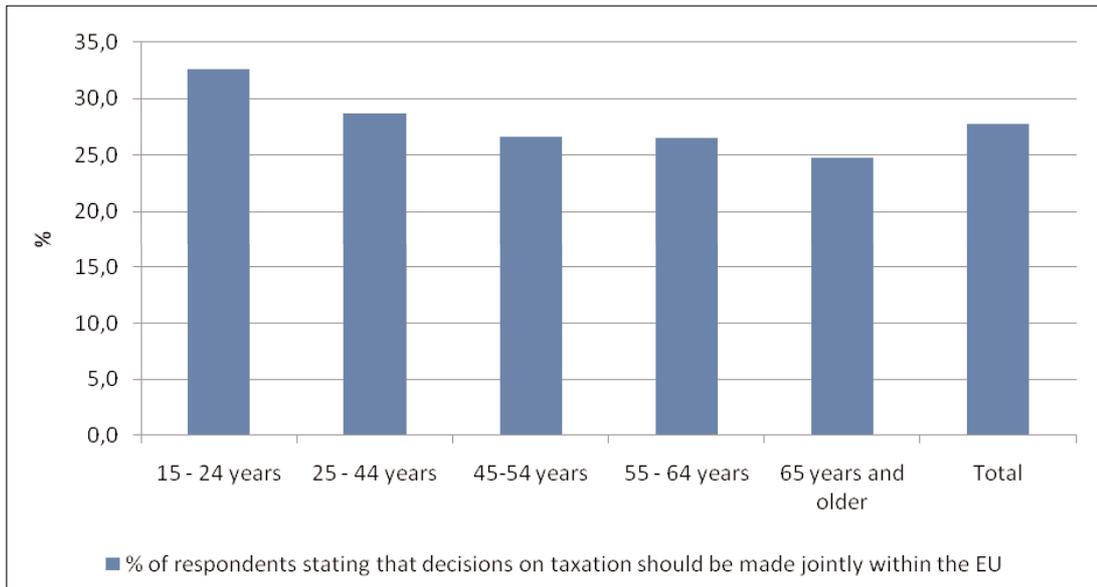
Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

Should decisions on pensions be made jointly within the EU?



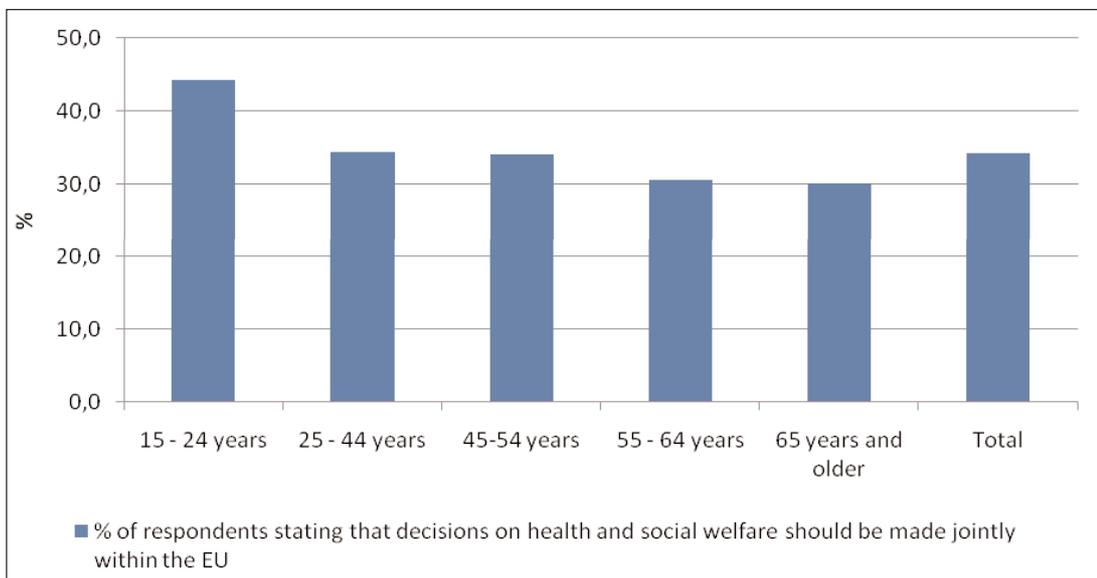
Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

Should decisions on taxation be made jointly within the EU?



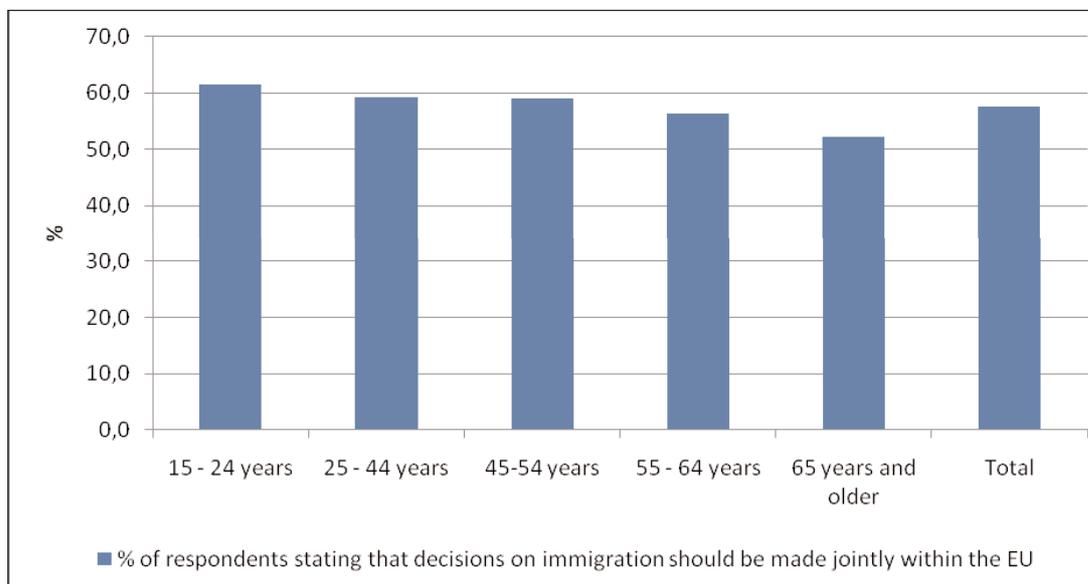
Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

Should decisions on health/social welfare be made jointly within the EU?



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

Should decisions on immigration be made jointly within the EU?



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

From an age-group perspective, choices about whether decisions in certain policy areas should be made by national governments or jointly within the EU followed a pattern. There was an inverse relationship between the percentage of citizens who believed in the effectiveness of EU-level decision-making and the age of the respondents; i.e. the older people are, the less inclined they are to consider decision-making at EU level to be effective.

Health and social welfare is the policy area with the biggest variations in responses, with significant differences between the 15-24 cohort (44.2% support) and other age groups (from 30.1% to 34.4%). When it comes to decisions on fighting unemployment, pensions, taxation and immigration, the downward trend in support for joint decision-making within the EU as people get older is not as sharp.

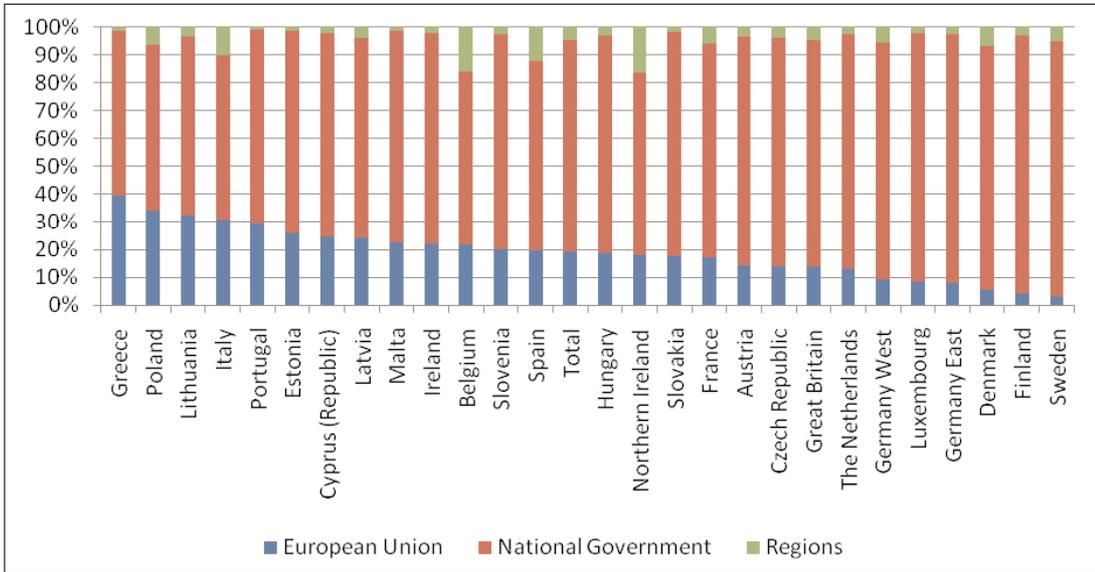
What is the most suitable policy level – EU, national or regional – for providing solutions to different policy problems?

When asked about the relative suitability of the EU, national or regional policy levels for providing solutions to various policy problems, Eurobarometer respondents appeared on average to be divided between, on the one hand, the EU and, on the other, the national and regional level in relation to addressing economic growth (Standard Eurobarometer 62.1). When it comes to providing solutions to environmental problems, average views across the EU were divided between the Union and the national level, while about 15% of respondents thought the regional level was the most suitable for providing solutions in this area.

On problems relating more directly to social policies, such as pensions, unemployment and professional training, respondents generally clearly regarded the national level as the most suitable for providing solutions, although there were, of course, national variations in respondents' views on these issues.

On the issue of pensions, the new and Mediterranean Member States, Ireland and Belgium recorded a higher than average proportion of respondents who regarded the EU level as more suitable for providing solutions. Higher than average proportions of respondents favouring the national level were found predominantly in Scandinavia, Member States with continental welfare states (Germany, France, Austria, the Netherlands), the UK, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

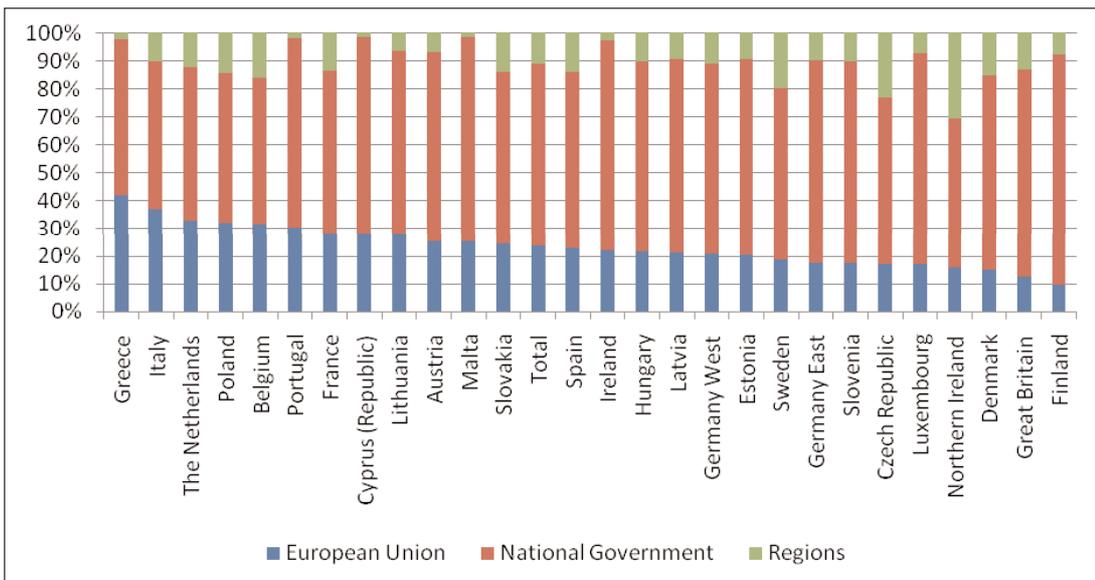
Most suitable policy level for providing solutions for pensions



Source: EB 62.1 Oct-Dec 2004

The pattern of variation in responses across Member States was somewhat different on the issue of unemployment. Member States where a higher than average proportion of respondents regarded the EU level as more suitable for providing solutions included several continental welfare state countries, Mediterranean Member States, plus Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia. At the other end of the spectrum were, once again, the Scandinavian countries and Britain, as well as several new Member States from central and eastern Europe.

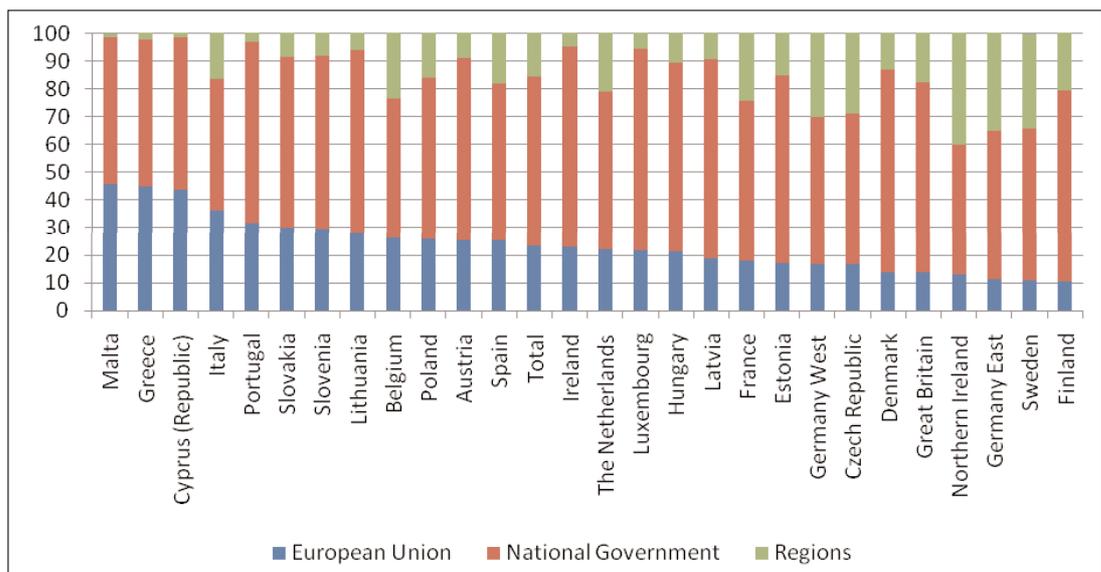
Most suitable policy level for providing solutions for unemployment



Source: EB 62.1 Oct-Dec 2004

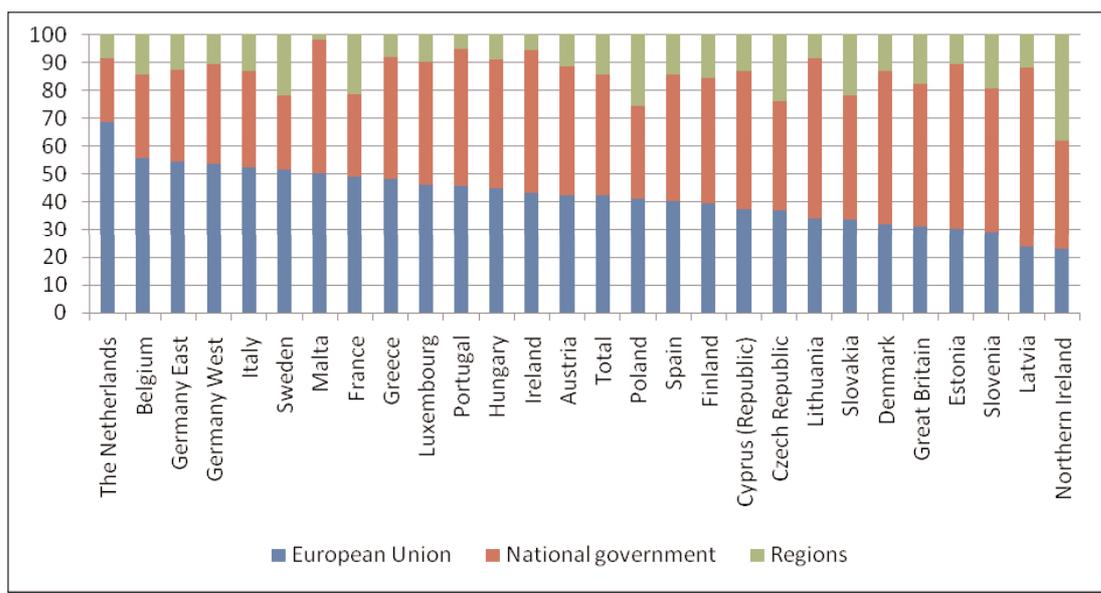
A very similar picture emerges in the national variations on the question of which policy level is most suitable for providing solutions on professional training issues. Responses were fairly balanced between favouring the EU and the national level in Greece and Malta. On the other hand, and strikingly, in several Member States, more respondents identified the regional level as more suitable for providing solutions to professional training issues than the EU level.

Most suitable policy level for providing solutions on professional training



Source: EB 62.1 Oct-Dec 2004

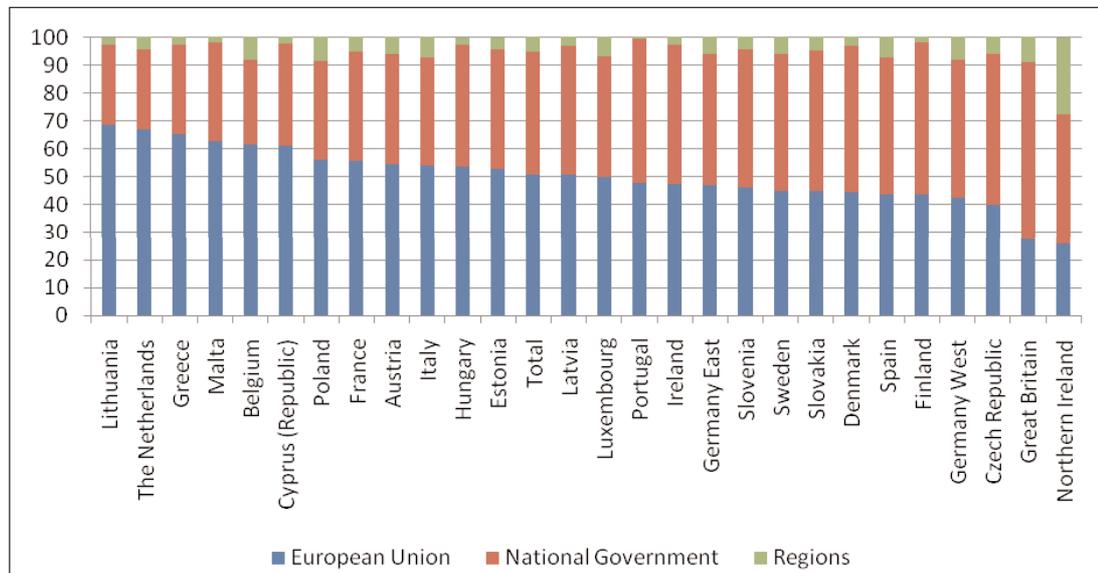
Most suitable policy level for providing solutions for the environment



Source: EB 62.1 Oct-Dec 2004

The variation in responses to the question of which policy level is the most suitable for providing solutions to environmental problems was similar in magnitude, but different in pattern. The proportion of respondents favouring the national/regional as opposed to the EU level was higher than average predominantly in the new Central and Eastern European Member States, as well as in Britain, Denmark and Northern Ireland. One potential reason for this could be the attempts by older EU Member States to impose higher environmental standards on new Member States, and some long-held Euroscepticism in countries like Denmark and the UK.

Most suitable policy level for providing solutions on economic growth



Source: EB 62.1 Oct-Dec 2004

Last but not least, there were no particular patterns in the responses regarding the most suitable level for dealing with economic growth issues in relation to national income, geography or the type of welfare state. The highest proportion of responses favouring the EU level was seen in Lithuania (almost 70%), with the lowest in Britain and Northern Ireland (around 25%).

Priorities for the EU

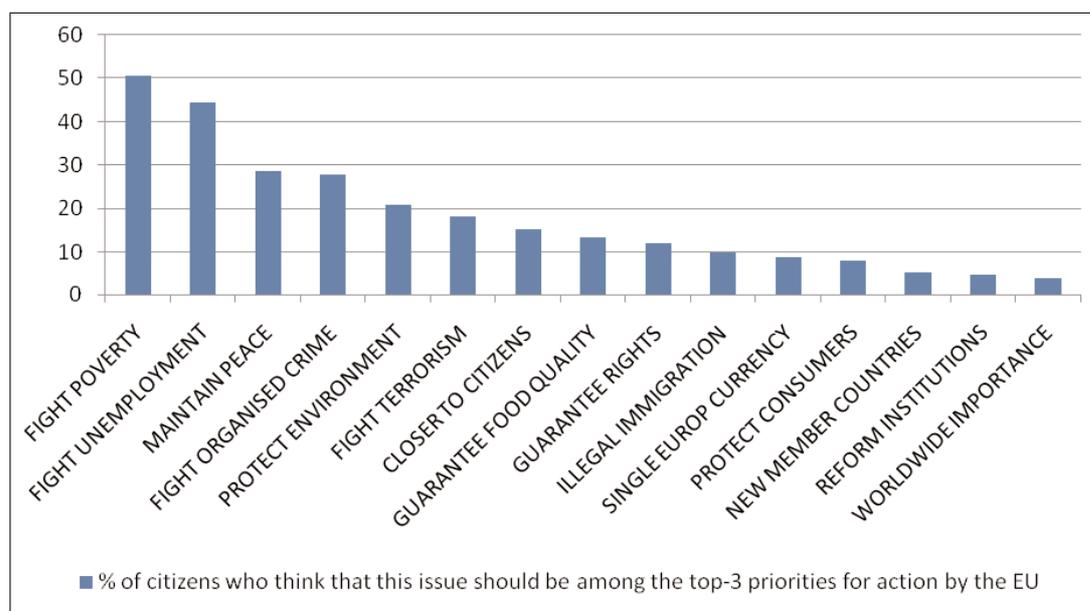
Most European citizens thought that fighting poverty and unemployment should be among the EU’s top priorities for action, by a significant margin. It is worth noting that this finding comes from a Eurobarometer survey carried out in 2005; i.e. well before the crisis and the serious impact it has had, and is expected to continue to have, on poverty and unemployment.

There were, however, quite wide variations in the proportion of citizens in each country who thought that fighting poverty should be among the top three priorities for action at the EU level, ranging from almost 70% in Latvia and Bulgaria to around 30% in Malta, Turkey and Britain. Support for this was mostly above the EU average in new Member States and some candidate countries, but also in Belgium, Greece, France and Finland. The Scandinavian countries, in particular, were scattered around the average.

The variation in national responses was even larger in relation to making the fight against unemployment an EU priority, with support for this ranging from just above 70% in Poland down to only just above 10% in Britain. Towards the low end of the spectrum, the fall in the number of people who thought fighting poverty should be among the EU’s top three priorities for action was particularly steep in Spain, Northern

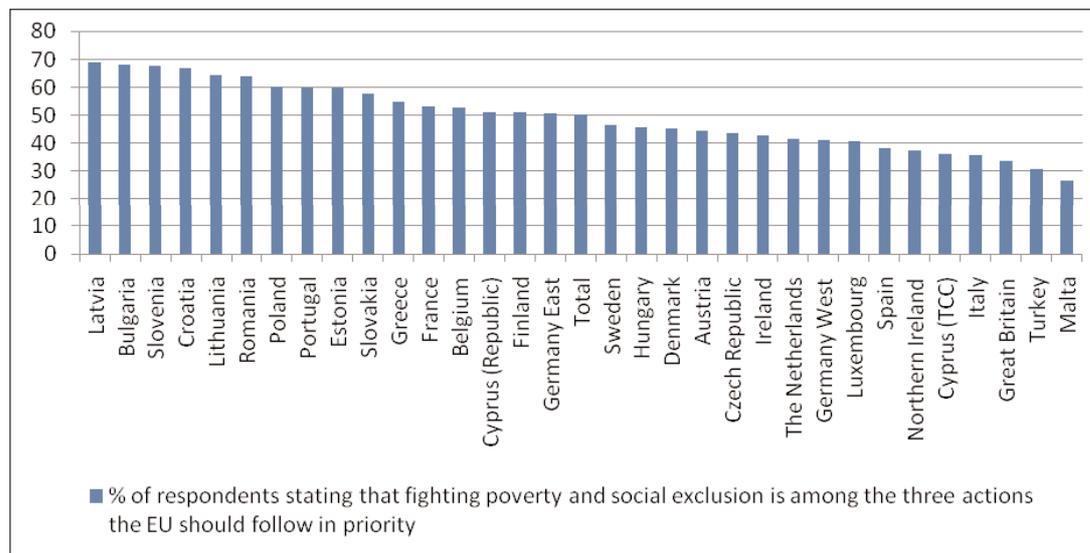
Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland and Britain. These are all countries which, when the survey was carried out in 2005, either had relatively low or falling unemployment rates.

Priorities for action in the European Union



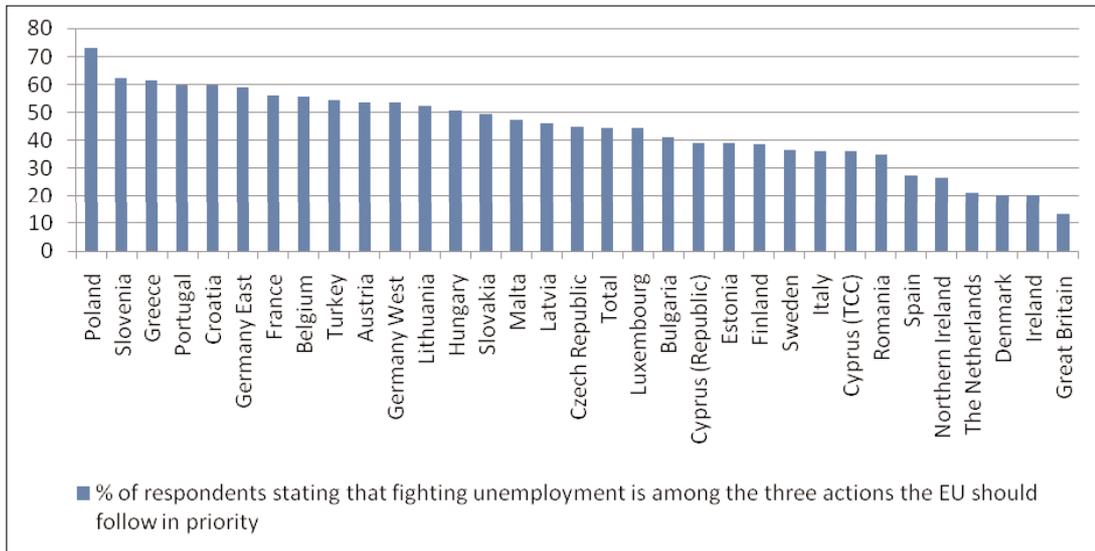
Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

Priorities for action in the European Union: Fight poverty



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

Priorities for action in the European Union: Fight unemployment



Source: EB 64.2 Oct-Nov 2005

Conclusions

This paper has used evidence from several surveys conducted in Europe to sketch a picture of citizens' values, attitudes and preferences in relation to policy areas pertaining to well-being and social policies at the national and the European level.

Defining and mapping a multi-dimensional concept like well-being across the population of a continent stratified by demographic, socio-economic and contextual differences is a challenging task. If one major conclusion emerges from the data presented in this paper, it is that there is no single set of 'European values' and no single answer to the question 'what do European citizens want?'

However, the following key messages can be derived from our research overall:

- It is unwise to focus solely on 'headline' differences between countries, or between social groups. These are often due to the fact that certain socio-demographic groups are over- or under-represented in the samples collected in different places. Such 'crude differences' between countries often disappear in multivariate analysis.
- The lack of discernible patterns which existing theories would have predicted with regards to European citizens' preferences and attitudes towards the role of the EU in social policy-making further confirms this finding. (An exception to this is perhaps the consistently low ranking of Britain, with its long-standing Euroscepticism, which scored well below the average in questions relating to evaluating the EU's performance and whether more decisions should be taken at the EU level or jointly within the Union.)
- There are enormous variations in the extent to which individuals feel optimistic and this cannot be explained by a country's GDP. Young, affluent, well-educated people feel more optimistic than other sections of the population.
- When presented with different potential social futures, reactions within individual countries vary significantly. However, overall, Europeans are positive about likely future trends, with the exception of the prospect of a decline in the centrality of work.
- There is a high and stable level of support for the idea that government has a responsibility to provide welfare services and support for its citizens. The sick and the elderly are seen as the most deserving recipients of government assistance.
- Young people are less likely to support government intervention in any area. However, they tend to have a more positive attitude towards EU-level decision-making than older age groups.
- Work remains central in the lives of European citizens. It is seen as more important than leisure in virtually every country. Countries with higher levels of GDP tend to attach greater importance to leisure.
- Attitudes to public morality differ widely across Europe, depending upon religious beliefs and the prevalence of religious practice in particular countries.
- Societies with higher levels of GDP generally have higher levels of satisfaction with public services.
- Countries with older populations generally have lower levels of satisfaction with most types of public service. Better-educated individuals are more satisfied with these services.
- There are wide differences between countries in terms of perceived tension along ethnic and religious lines. Those with higher household incomes and higher levels of educational qualifications are most likely to perceive a lot of tension between ethnic and religious groups.

Data limitations and suggestions for the future

In attempting to map patterns of values, attitudes and preferences that could influence well-being in Europe, we encountered a number of obstacles in terms of the data available.

Surveys are not usually designed specifically to measure well-being (with the exception of the European Quality of Life Survey). As a result, analysts have to merge sets of questions from different surveys that have been carried out using different methodologies (for example, the sampling designs, the mode of administration and the fieldwork conventions). This weakens the confidence we can have in the precision and reliability of figures within and between countries.

Different elements of well-being are measured using a variety of styles of question and different measurement scales. This compounds the problem of merging data from different sources to produce an overall picture of well-being.

Surveys usually concentrate either on respondents' values, their social attitudes or their policy preferences. Coverage of all three is necessary in order to establish robust relationships between them to indicate what are the 'drivers' of well-being and which policies are most likely to maximise it.

Surveys are usually limited to national samples which are sufficiently large to produce nationally representative estimates with a margin of error of +/-3%. These numbers do not allow similarly robust conclusions to be drawn about smaller subgroups of the population that are likely to be the focus of policy interventions. Supplementary samples need to be drawn from these groups in order to facilitate more targeted investigation.

The way forward

The results of our analysis suggest that if social policy choices are to maximise the well-being of European citizens in the long run, they should at the very least continue to foster diversity in the means and tools used to deliver the outcomes that broadly define the 'European Social Model' – outcomes that set it apart from models for delivering welfare in other advanced industrialised economies.

However, being aware of the diversity that characterises – and is likely to continue to characterise – citizens' preferences is necessary, but not sufficient, to make the appropriate policy choices. Policy-makers also need more information and analysis of the trade-offs, constraints and opportunities created by general trends such as globalisation, demographic ageing and technological advances, and what impact the policy choices they make now will have on efforts to maximise citizens' well-being in the long run. This will be addressed by the next phase of the Well-being 2030 project.