

# CHANGES IN THE SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN LATVIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: RESULTS OF EUROPEAN QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY 2016

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**Abstract.** Assessment of quality of life covers a variety of areas - economic conditions, housing, local environment, employment, education, household structure and family relations, work-life balance, health and healthcare, subjective well-being, quality of society. The assessment of quality of life does not always coincide with the macroeconomic indicators of the country, e.g. GDP. It includes a number of subjective indicators, which frequently show a different situation and trends than the macroeconomic indicators. The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) is a tested tool of monitoring and analysing the quality of life in the EU and is seeing its fourth issue in 2016.

The purpose of this article is to inspect changes in individual subjective well-being indicators among the Latvian society, as presented in the EQLS 2016 in the context of the EU countries, comparing to the EQLS results for 2011-2012.

The following **tasks** were set to achieve that goal:

- 1) provide an insight into the current understanding of and problems relevant to the concept of quality of life and subjective well-being,
- 2) analyse the data resulting from the EQLS 2016, as opposed to the data of the EQLS 2011-2012, in Latvia and in the EU countries in general.

Methods of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis used in the study. The sources of information used are the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions databases for 2011-2012 and 2016, available from the UK Data Archive.

Conclusions from the statistical analysis:

Comparison between the indicators for Latvia and the average for the EU in both 2016 and 2011 revealed a lower self-assessment of well-being, on a scale of 10, among the residents of Latvia than among those of the EU in general. In the EU, seven out of eight of the selected subjective well-being elements retained the same assessment level as in 2011. In Latvia, the assessment dropped in 6 indicators. Only one indicator increased both in the EU and Latvia, and that is the satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country. On the subjective well-being ratings of the EU, Latvia places 21st (Satisfaction with education, Satisfaction with job and Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country) to 28th (Satisfaction with accommodation). The EQLS data shows that the economic growth, social and economic reforms, social security efficiency in the surveyed five years of post-crisis in the EU have not significantly contributed to their personal assessment of quality of life.

**Key words:** *Quality of life, subjective well-being, life satisfaction*

**JEL code:** D69, J28, Q10

## Introduction

In its essence, the human drive for a better life, higher quality of life is a priority to every person and therefore to the entire community. This is confirmed by the government documents developed over the past ten years in Latvia, e.g.

Latvija 2030 (LR Saeima, 2010). The necessity for quality of life indicators encompassing not only the traditional economic indicators, like the GDP, is currently recognized in economics, sociology and other fields. The European society is changing rapidly. Some of the reasons for this change are globalization, aging, and transfer to the knowledge economics. These changes can cause people's view of life to become pessimistic and increase dissatisfaction even when economic factors indicate growth and general improvement (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2010).

### **Theoretical aspects of quality of life**

Quality living means a person can, as far as possible, achieve their personal goals and choose their preferred lifestyle. The concept of quality of life is broader than access to living conditions, which focuses on the material resources available to individuals.

Even though interests and value priorities, ideas of a good and happy life, differ between people, are subjective and deeply personal and prone to change throughout one's life, the most important desires for any person focus generally on the vital factors of well-being, security, sustainability. These are the main factors forming quality of life and consist of various closely related aspects. Quality of life is a complex social, economic, political concept including a vast range of living conditions of a country's inhabitants. Quality of life includes both objective and subjective indicators and the body of their mutual interaction, which is reflected in a certain level of well-being depending on the individual's resources and knowledge. When objective and subjective living conditions are considered together, it is possible to evaluate quality of life better. Assessment of quality of life covers many areas, such as economic conditions, housing, local environment, employment, education and skills, household structure and family relations, work-life balance, health and healthcare, subjective well-being, quality of society.

Quality of life allows for both broad and narrow definitions. For instance, the survey of 2005 defined quality of life in Latvia as people's satisfaction with their life, security of their future and ability to take action to improve their living conditions and achieve their goals. The concept of quality of life can be narrowed down to a handful of basic values and symbols surrounding an individual's life: material well-being (symbolized by money), choice, creative activity (Tisenkopfs, 2006). Characteristics of quality of life more frequently represent a listing of objective indicators and assessment – living and material conditions, income, living environment, education, health, employment - and address the people's own subjective assessment of quality of life to a lesser extent. Measurement of quality of life includes as an important factor the subjective well-being and its components, i.e. satisfaction with life and its various aspects, success, feelings of happiness. Historically, these components have formed into the inductive category of subjective well-being (SWB) - a complex construct of a great variety of aspects.

The subjective well-being is a multifactor concept including emotional and cognitive components (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). It reflects an individual's rational and emotional assessment of their own feelings of happiness at a given moment. The subjective well-being component include: positive and negative emotions experienced by the individual and their general conclusion on their satisfaction with life (Diener & Seligman, 2004). Satisfaction with life reflects an individual's cognitive process and general assessment of quality of life (Pavot, W., & Diener, E., 2008). Other authors note that satisfaction with life can reflect an individual's assessment of specific areas of life, i.e. family, environment, friends, oneself (Suldo & Huebner, 2006). The assessment of satisfaction of life is influenced by many other processes. For example, the quality of an individual's relationships with their social contacts and partners, professional success, general physical health, positive mental health etc. (Pavot & Diener, 2008).

However, scientists are yet to come to agreement on a universal definition for the concept of quality of life, and even now there are several theoretical models that differ in their evaluation of the importance of the objective indicators (including objective conditions) and subjective indicators (including satisfaction) (Koroļova, 2011).

The options for measuring quality of life are multidimensional and, according to scientists, pose more than one methodological problem, e.g. the objective and subjective quality of life indicators can produce contradicting results; tackling this issue requires defining a benchmark of subjective comparison of quality of life in time and space (Grünfelde, 2010).

## **Research results and discussion**

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) is a tested tool of monitoring and analysing the quality of life in the EU. The EQLS of 2003, 2007, beginning of 2011 and end of 2012, and 2016 document the living conditions and social situation of the people of Europe. The surveys include subjective and objective assessment: attitude and choice, resources and experience. The Eurofound approach is based on the idea that the concept of “quality of life” is a broad and characterizes both personal well-being and the quality of social services and society (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2018, a). The surveys provide an overview across multiple dimensions: subjective well-being, living standards and deprivation aspects, responsibilities of care, work-life balance; healthcare, long-term care, childcare and other social services; social insecurity, social exclusion and tensions, trust and engagement in society and community (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2014, a; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2018, a).

The EQLSs include the EU member and candidate states at the time of the survey. The fourth EQLS in last quarter of 2016 surveyed almost 37 thousand people in 33 European countries (28 EU member countries and 5 candidate countries). The EQLS 2016 consists in a total of 104 questions and 262 units. The previous survey questionnaire was reviewed in consultation with the interested politicians and experts in the field of survey research. An approximate 66% of the EQLS 2011 questionnaire remained in the form of questions addressing trends, while 51% of the EQLS 2016 questionnaire retains similarity to the previous questionnaires (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2018, c; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2014, a, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2014, b). A part of the questions require a response in the form of a rating on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 - very satisfied, while in others the rating is on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 - strongly disagree (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2018, b).

The EQLS 2016 surveyed 1000 respondents from Latvia, of which 33.1 % indicated their household size as 1, whereas household size 2 was indicated by 38%, household size 3 – 15.8 %, household size 4 and more – 13.1% (the respective results in the EU countries were -21.8%, 33.4%, 18.6% un 26.2%) ; male respondents 36%, female – 64% (in the EU, 43% and 57% respectively); aged up to 30 - 13%, 31-50 years - 25%, 51-62 years - 22%, 63 or older - 40% (in the EU, 18,%, 35%,20%, 27% respectively); 47% of the respondents were employed, 40% - retired (in the EU, 47% and 29% respectively), the rest – in a different category. The authors of the current article review only a small part of the subjective well-being aspects from the 2016 and 2011/2012 surveys in comparison with the common EU indicators.

The third EQLS (2011/2012) coincided with the global crisis and the beginnings of recovery. In the following years, the EU in total saw fairly rapid economic growth: for instance, the GDP per person grew in all EU member states by an average of 14.4% in 2016, compared to 2011/2012, and as a macroeconomic indicator it implies an improvement of the quality of life.

When comparing the subjective well-being indicators in Latvia against the EU average (table 1), it leads to conclude that on the 10 point scale in the subjective well-being questions Latvians rated their well-being lower than the EU countries in total both in 2016 and 2011. Seven out of eight of the selected subjective well-being elements retained their rating on the EU level equal to that of 2011 or slightly lower (by tenths or hundredths).

Table 1

**Subjective well-being indicators in Latvia and the EU**

Question of satisfaction (1 very dissatisfied, 10 very satisfied)	2016		2011	
	Latvia	EU total	Latvia	EU total
1. Life satisfaction	5.95	6.95	6.15	7.06
2. Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?	6.57	7.31	6.54	7.33
3. Satisfaction with education	6.85	7.10	7.13	7.20
4. Satisfaction with job	7.12	7.38	7.23	7.50
5. Satisfaction with standard of living	5.77	6.79	5.78	6.83
6. Satisfaction with accommodation	6.44	7.60	6.62	7.73
7. Satisfaction with family life	6.96	7.86	7.16	7.95
8. Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country	3.90	4.85	2.89	4.06

Source: author's calculations based on EQLS, 2016; EQLS, 2011-2012. Data Files UK Data Archive, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2018, d

In Latvia, the rating decreased in 6 indicators and grew by hundredths in *How happy would you say you are*. Only the satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country increased in both the EU and Latvia.

Life satisfaction in 2016 decreased from 2011 in both the EU and Latvia. Of the 28 countries, 22 showed a decrease in life satisfaction, and the difference was greatest (-0.5 to -0.2 points, from 2016 to 2011) in Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal, Cyprus, Romania, Poland, Latvia, which are essentially the countries that have taken the lower places of various social and economic process assessment ratings over the past ten years. Life satisfaction assessment in turn increased from 0.03 to 0.14 in the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Estonia. Latvia had the third lowest life satisfaction rating in 2016; it was lower only in Hungary and Bulgaria. It was the highest in Denmark (8.4), Sweden and Finland (8.1).

Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are: this indicator remained unchanged at 7.3 in the EU. It grew in Latvia, but is still the second lowest among the EU countries in 2016, with Bulgaria taking the last place. Assessment of How happy would you say you are decreased between the subject periods in 12 countries, where five of the most radical decreases were in Croatia (-0.38 points), Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Lithuania. The change in the feelings of happiness showed a positive increase in 12 countries, including Latvia (+0.03 points), with the greatest increase in Estonia (+0.16 points), Greece (+0.26 point) and Malta (+0.37 points). The ratings of happiness were highest in Sweden (8.0 points), Finland and Denmark (8.2 points). In theory, life satisfaction reflects the cognitive process of individuals (feelings, perception, attention, memory, thinking and language) and their general assessment of quality of life as a whole, which is often indicative of the individual's assessment of specific aspects of their life. The survey calculated Spearman's rank correlation coefficients of the surveyed characteristics, which provide an insight into the significance of various quality of life aspects in the life satisfaction assessment. In the EU in total, the correlation coefficient for life satisfaction and How happy would you say you are is 0.682 (p=0.000); in Latvia, the same correlation coefficient is 0.648 (p=0.000),

which leads to conclude that the feeling of happiness of the people of Latvia represents 42% of the life satisfaction, as opposed to the 47% in the EU in total.

A significant subjective well-being indicator is satisfaction with education, since a higher level of education enables greater opportunities on the employment market and in satisfying individual personal interests and desires. At the same time, people with a higher level of education tend to be more critical of the current processes in society and of their own ability. Both in the EU and Latvia, the assessment of satisfaction with education has decreased. It may be due to the ever growing presence of digital economics in people's daily lives, where certain age groups are faced with their current skills and future possibilities in the context of making full use of the digital environment. Satisfaction with education has fallen in 20 countries, and it was most obvious in Lithuania, Romania, Cyprus, Spain (-0.42 points), Austria (-0.41 points), Portugal (-0.34 points), Belgium, Croatia (-0.3 points). Meanwhile satisfaction with education grew (from +0.01 to +0.33 points) in Slovakia, Poland, Malta, Luxembourg, Netherlands, France and Italy. In terms of satisfaction with education, Latvia places at the eighth lowest rating, leaving behind seven countries, i.e. Hungary, Slovenia, Lithuania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Poland, Greece (6.28 points). The highest satisfaction with education was in Finland (7.6 points) and Denmark (8.0 points). In Latvia, satisfaction with education decreased by -0.28 points between the subject periods, possibly due to the aging population and certain categories of people not being able to keep up with the ongoing digital processes and globalization. The correlation coefficient for satisfaction with education and life satisfaction in the EU is 0.310, which implies that approximately 10% of the EU people's life satisfaction can be explained with their satisfaction with education. In Latvia, the coefficient is 0.227 ( $p=0.000$ ), implying that only 5% of Latvians' life satisfaction is due to their satisfaction with education. This could be related to the fact that the respondents from Latvia had a greater proportion of people aged 60 or older, which makes other subjective well-being elements more important and relevant to them in terms of satisfaction with life than education.

Satisfaction with job as a subjective well-being assessment decreased in both Latvia and the EU in total by -0.1 points to 7.1 in Latvia and 7.4 in the EU. The decrease was greatest (from -0.44 to -0.2 points) in Cyprus, Romania, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Croatia, Netherlands, whereas Malta, Sweden and Greece saw an increase, however minor, from +0.03 to 0.09 points). Among the EU countries, Latvia ranked 21st in terms of satisfaction with job, leaving behind Italy, Hungary, Portugal, Croatia, Poland, Greece and Bulgaria (6.69 points). The assessment was highest in Sweden (7.87), Finland (8.02) and Denmark (8.23). The correlation coefficient for satisfaction with job and life satisfaction was 0.329 ( $p=0.000$ ) in Latvia and 0.431 ( $p=0.000$ ) in the EU. The results indicate that satisfaction with job has a lower impact on Latvians' life satisfaction (11%) than that of the EU residents in total (19%). The decrease in satisfaction with job in the EU countries and Latvia, as shown by the responses to other questions of the survey, could be related to the long working hours, which people from almost all of the countries would like to see reduced, thus mitigating the conflict between working hours and family or social responsibilities outside work. Adding to the work-life balance conflict, another significant factor that might have affected satisfaction with job is the mental and physiological state of people at the end of the working day. In 2016, an average of 57% of the EU-15, 64% of the EU-13 respondents came home from work too tired to do any house work at least several times per month; in addition, this aspect has seen the most radical change in the EU since 2011, i.e. +31 percentage points. In Latvia, 2016, such a situation was common for 66% respondents, as opposed to the 37% in 2011. These results indicate that the intensity and complexity of jobs is growing and people are failing to keep up. 40% of the EU respondents said that they had trouble performing their family responsibilities several times a month due to the time they spent at work, and this aspect has seen an increase of 20 percentage points in the EU over five years. The situation is worse in Latvia: such situations were noted by 47%, i.e. twice as many as in 2011.

Both in Latvia and the EU on average, the assessment of satisfaction with standard of living remained unchanged in the subject period. In 16 countries, the satisfaction with standard of living among the respondents decreased, for example Cyprus (-0.46 points), Austria (-0.29), Portugal (-0.21), Slovakia (-0.19), while in 12 countries it increased, for example Greece (+0.22 points) and Malta (+0.32 points). The assessment in Latvia (5.8) is still in the 27th place, only ahead of Bulgaria (4.6 points). The lower end of the ratings table, below 6 points, includes also Lithuania, Croatia, Hungary, which joined the EU as of 2004. The first nine places on the ratings table are populated by the EU-15 countries, and two of them exceeded 8 points on the satisfaction with standard of living - Sweden (8.04) and Denmark (8.38). This shows that the countries that joined the EU after 2004 have still a long way to go to the average EU living standards. The correlation coefficient for satisfaction with standard of living and life satisfaction in Latvia is  $r = 0.660$  ( $p=0.000$ ), and in the EU it is  $r = 0.627$  ( $p=0.000$ ), which signifies that life satisfaction of Latvians is explained to 44% by their satisfaction with standard of living, whereas in the EU it is a little lower – 39%.

Satisfaction with accommodation decreased in 2016 from 2011 both in Latvia and the EU in total. It is possible that the economic crisis is still keeping the people of both Latvia and the EU from improving their home conditions, and people are also more careful with regard to taking loans. Over the past decade, smart devices and systems have entered the daily home maintenance, which has increased people's desire for home improvements, but the practical possibilities are limited. In only seven countries satisfaction with accommodation has grown, i.e. Germany, Belgium, Malta, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Sweden and Greece, and the increase varies from 0.02 to 0.13 points, while in the rest of the countries the indicator decreased, most of all in Croatia (-0.58 points) and Cyprus (-0.66 points). In terms of satisfaction with accommodation, Latvia placed last in the 2016 ratings, exchanging places with Bulgaria. The correlation coefficient for satisfaction with accommodation and life satisfaction for the Latvian respondents is  $r = 0.375$  ( $p=0.000$ ), in the EU it is  $r = 0.437$  ( $p=0.000$ ), which shows that satisfaction with accommodation explains only 14% of life satisfaction, as opposed to 19% in the EU.

Satisfaction with family life decreased in the subject period in Latvia (-0.2 points) and in the EU. The most rapid decrease of 18 countries belongs to Cyprus (-0.57 points), followed by Croatia (-0.46 points), Austria (-0.35 points), Ireland (-0.29 points) etc. There was a positive change in only 10 of the countries, ranging from Malta (0.03 points) to the Czech Republic (0.19 points). In Latvia, satisfaction with family life was 27th in 2016, just ahead of Bulgaria (6.7 points), and the rating was highest in Denmark (8.7 points). The correlation coefficient for satisfaction with family life in Latvia is 0.316 ( $p=0.000$ ), in the EU it is  $r = 0.446$  ( $p=0.000$ ), which shows that satisfaction with family life explains 10% of life satisfaction in Latvia, as opposed to 20% in the EU.

Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country increased in 2016 from 2011 both in Latvia and the EU. Two countries saw a decreased satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country from 2016 to 2011 - Finland (-0.7 points) and Italy (-0.1 points). For the rest of the EU countries, satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country grew: by more than 1.0 points in countries such as Romania, Portugal, Poland, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic; by more than 2 points in Hungary, Malta, Ireland. Latvia ranked 21st in satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country in 2016, leaving behind Slovenia, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece (2.4 points); the rating was highest in Luxembourg (7.2 points). The correlation coefficient for satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country and life satisfaction in Latvia is 0.398 ( $p=0.000$ ), as opposed to 0.310 ( $p=0.000$ ) in the EU, indicating that satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country explains 16% of Latvians' life satisfaction and 10% of that of the EU countries. The decreased satisfaction in this aspect among the EU respondents could be related to the generous EU-15 social security systems, which practically do not deteriorate their residents' satisfaction with life during an economic recession or crises and respectively does not make the residents reconsider the country's economic achievements or their impact on each individual's quality of life.

In light of the comparison of changes in the above subjective well-being aspects between Latvia and the EU in total (table 2), it can be concluded that only two of the subject characteristics show a statistically significant change from 2011 to 2016 in both Latvia and the EU countries: satisfaction with job ( $p=0.048$  in Latvia and  $p=0.041$  in the EU countries) and satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country ( $p=0.000$  in Latvia and  $p=0.005$  in the EU countries).

Table 2

### Comparison of changes in the subjective well-being aspects in 2016 and 2011 between Latvia and the EU

Satisfaction (1 very dissatisfied, 10 very satisfied)	Latvia			EU total		
	Mean differences	Z	Sig.	Mean differences	t test	Sig
1.Life satisfaction	-0,2	-0,241	0,810	-0,11	-3,658	0,506
2.Taking all things together how happy would you say you are?	0,03	-1,894	0,058	-0,02	-0,221	0,956
3.Satisfaction with education	-0,28	-0,522	0,601	-0,1	-10,613	0,128
4.Satisfaction with job	-0,11	-1,979	<b>0,048</b>	-0,12	-6,373	<b>0,041</b>
5.Satisfaction with standard of living	-0,01	-1,664	0,096	-0,04	-0,95	0,887
6.Satisfaction with accommodation	-0,18	-0,14	0,889	-0,13	-3,652	0,292
7.Satisfaction with family life	-0,2	-0,774	0,439	-0,09	-2,884	0,357
8.Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country	1,01	-11,174	<b>0,000</b>	0,79	-5,889	<b>0,005</b>

Source: author's calculations based on EQLS, 2016;EQLS, 2011-2012.Data FileS UK Data Archive, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2014,c; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2018, d

The changes of satisfaction with other aspects were not statistically significant between 2016 and 2011 and are influenced by random factors since, as is well known, the subjective well-being includes the positive and negative emotions of the moment, as experienced by the individual in both short and long term, adding to their general judgement of an element of satisfaction with life. When comparing the shifts in 2016 and 2011 assessment comparison, they are mathematically rather insignificant. It should be noted that statistically significant differences even with the same results is determined by the number of respondents, which may vary across the subjective well-being aspects included in the survey. Correspondingly, from the point of view of statistical analysis, it can be said that the reviewed subjective well-being aspects assessment ratings of 2016 and 2011 can be considered, with the exception of satisfaction with job and satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country, to be similar, with no significant rating changes over five years in Latvia or the EU in total.

### Conclusions, proposals, recommendations

1. The residents of Latvia assessed their well-being lower than the EU in total in both 2016 and 2011. Seven out of eight of the selected subjective well-being elements retained their rating on the EU level equal to that of 2011 or slightly lower (by tenths or hundredths). Latvia saw a decrease in the ratings of six indicators, but an increase by hundredths in the rating of feelings of happiness. Only one of the indicators grew in both the EU and Latvia: satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country.

2. Satisfaction with life in the EU averaged to 6.9 points (on a scale of 1–10) in 2016. Satisfaction with life improved from 2011 to 2016 in six member states - the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Ireland, Malta and Estonia - and decreased in the rest, including Latvia. Latvia ranked 26th on the life satisfaction ratings table, leaving behind Hungary and Bulgaria.

3. The indicator of how happy would you say you are remained unchanged in the EU in total at 7.3 points, as opposed to 6.6 in Latvia, which places Latvia 27th on the ratings table (last being Bulgaria).

4. Although education is assessed on the whole highly, satisfaction with education decreased in both the EU (7.1 points) and Latvia (6.85 points). It may be influenced by the ever growing presence of the digital economy in people's daily lives and the increasing gap between the education content received by various generations as the population ages. People of a certain age may grow dissatisfied with education in light of their current skills and future possibilities for enhancing their education. The level of satisfaction with education decreased in 20 countries, most radically in Lithuania, Romania, Cyprus. Satisfaction with education slightly decreased between the subject periods in Latvia as well. Latvia ranked 21st in satisfaction with education among the EU countries, and it is one of the most highly assessed subjective well-being elements among the Latvian respondents. The respondents of France and Italy were the least satisfied with their education.

5. Satisfaction with job as a subjective well-being aspect decreased among both Latvian (7.1 points) and the EU (7.4 points) respondents. The greatest decrease was in Cyprus, Romania, Austria, while it increased in Malta, Sweden and Greece. Among the EU countries, Latvia ranked 21st in satisfaction with job. The decrease in satisfaction with job in the EU and Latvia, as indicated by responses to other questions of the survey, could be due to the long working hours, which residents of nearly all countries wish to reduce.

6. Both in Latvia (5.8 points) and the EU (6.8 points) retain unchanged average satisfaction with standard of living in the subject period. In terms of this indicator, Latvia ranks 27th, ahead of Bulgaria. The first nine places on the ratings table are populated by the EU-15 countries. This shows that the countries that joined the EU after 2004 have still a long way to go to the average EU living standards. In addition, satisfaction with standard of living is one of the lowest-rated subjective well-being elements among the respondents from Latvia.

7. Satisfaction with accommodation decreased in 2016 from 2011 both in Latvia and the EU in total, to 6.4 points in Latvia and 7.6 points in the EU respectively. This indicator grew in only seven of the EU countries: Germany, Belgium, Malta, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Greece. Latvia ranked last in satisfaction with accommodation in 2016, indicating significant problems with housing quality in our country and, in a way, an inability to fundamentally solve these problems.

8. Satisfaction with family life vērtējums pētāmajā periodā decreased in both the EU and Latvia, to an average of 7.0 in Latvia and 7.2 points in the EU. The most radical decrease of 18 countries is in Cyprus and Croatia. Latvia ranked second to last (Bulgaria) in satisfaction with family life in 2016, and while this is one of the highest-rated subjective well-being indicators (after satisfaction with job), other EU countries assessed this aspect a lot higher.

9. Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country in 2016 increased from 2011 both in Latvia and the EU, but the 2016 rating is lower than that of 2011 for Finland and Italy. Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country is one of the most dynamically assessed indicators. Latvia ranked 21st in satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country in 2016, showing an improvement on 2011 by 1 point.

10. In terms of the correlation of life satisfaction and the other subjective well-being indicators, which can in a way be viewed as factors determining life satisfaction, 42% to 47% of life satisfaction are explained by people's feelings of happiness, 39% to 44% are explained by satisfaction with job and satisfaction with standard of living. The rest of the subjective well-being factors show a lesser influence on life satisfaction, i.e. 10% to 20%: Satisfaction with job,

Satisfaction with accommodation, Satisfaction with family life, and Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country. The smallest role in life satisfaction both in Latvia and the EU belongs to education, which can be explained by the sufficiently high general education level in the EU, as well as the fact that education, as a subjective element of satisfaction with life, remains outshadowed, is not changed fast enough, and possibly remains outside the chain of causality affecting one's personal life.

11. While many countries mark 2011-2012 as the end of the economic crisis, coinciding with the third EQLS, the EQLS results indicate a significant change in only two of the subjective well-being aspects: Satisfaction with job, which indicates a decrease in its assessment, and Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country, which indicates positive changes in this aspect's assessment. The rest of the subjective well-being indicators analysed show that the economic growth, social and economic reforms, social security efficiency over five years do not significantly contribute to the way people view their personal quality of life.

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