

Quality of life

Age and quality of life: Who are the winners and losers?



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Introduction

Much policy is developed and operationalised through the prism of age. Age is a precondition of access to many social services and entitlements: think of the mandatory schooling age, the pension age, and so on. A birth cohort is often used directly or indirectly for applying or changing entitlements, for example in healthcare or labour market reform.

Addressing differences in the economic and social circumstances of different age groups continues to be a concern of policymakers. Age-related differences were highlighted most strikingly in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, when large numbers of young people joined the unemployment statistics while older workers by and large retained their jobs. Concern also persists about the inequality lying in store for future generations of working-age Europeans, who will have to support an ever-growing older dependent population.

This policy brief looks at age-related inequalities in quality of life, examining differences across six age groups using data from the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS). It also looks for change between 2011 and 2016: the survey from 2011 captured the

lasting impact of the recession and its effects on different age groups; comparing these data with those of the 2016 survey enables one to assess the extent to which this impact has decreased and for which age groups. The comparison also enables inferences to be drawn on the way labour markets and the welfare state have mitigated the effects of the crisis.

The study examines five dimensions of quality of life:

- difficulty making ends meet
- political participation in society
- perceived social exclusion
- mental well-being
- life satisfaction

Differences in quality of life exist across the Member States. Previous research by Eurofound, for instance, found that life satisfaction is consistently and sometimes markedly lower for older age groups in eastern Europe. To capture variation within the EU, the analysis is conducted across a country typology that groups Member States into seven clusters.



Policy context

Age demarcates not only different life stages and the standard risks in life as people go through education, have families, take up employment and so on, but also the social and economic circumstances at different periods – including employment and welfare policies – that may vary from one Member State to another. Age therefore has an impact on quality of life as a direct result of the ageing of specific cohorts, through the process of socialisation into society and through the timing of historical events. Some birth cohorts have better life chances as, for example, they profit from educational expansions or graduate from education when jobs are plentiful, while for other cohorts higher education may have been unaffordable or employment hard to find. Some cohorts, as a result, can accumulate a good pension while others have had to survive on minimum state pensions.

Welfare policy and age

Welfare policy usually makes reference to age, sometimes to cohorts and, in exceptional cases, to periods that have affected a large number of people. Social services usually address the particular needs of social groups according to their age, such as the age range

for compulsory education, students up to a certain age, the working-age population, people of pensionable age, and the elderly in need of care. This rigid categorisation of welfare state recipients comes with problems due to the lack of flexibility that has adverse effects on the support structure for some groups.

New social risks have emerged as a result of post-industrial labour markets and family structures (Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Bonoli, 2005) and include, for example, early school-leaving, non-participation of young people in education or employment, long-term unemployment, employment in the gig economy and income loss among pensioners. This has led to the emergence of a new, more heterogeneous, class of welfare recipients whose needs do not fit the traditional welfare models. Therefore, those social protection services that are linked to a standard biography of a regular full-time worker living in a typical nuclear family are unlikely to protect individuals from the new social risks.

Welfare models such as the corporatist/continental model, where stratification of entitlements and the contributory principle are central (Esping-Andersen, 1990), and the southern

model, where entitlements are linked to occupational status and support is family-based (Ferrera, 1996), are adjusting awkwardly to the new social risks of a post-industrial Europe. Only the Scandinavian social-democratic model, with a high level of social welfare as a universal right, seems to do better, but this has also come under pressure lately. The essence of a European model is largely absent from the eastern European welfare systems (Ferge, 2001, pp. 147–150). In eastern European Member States, recent reforms emphasising the role of the family and the private market above social welfare institutions, alongside a decentralisation of welfare (Szatur-Jaworska, 2001; Marek and Baun, 2002), have decreased the ability of public actors to care for vulnerable groups and, in particular, older generations.

EU policies for social cohesion and equity

The EU seeks to achieve its goals through strengthening solidarity between different social groups, including generations, as expressed through the concept of social cohesion. Article 2 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community states that one of the Union's objectives is 'to promote economic and social progress and a high level of employment and to achieve balanced and sustainable development [...] through the strengthening of economic and social cohesion'.

The European Pillar of Social Rights addresses inequalities across several dimensions, many of which have an age component. Principle 3 promotes equal treatment and opportunities:

Regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public.

Principle 14 states that 'everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits, ensuring life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services'. Regarding income in old age, the Pillar asserts that every retired worker has the right to a pension in relation to their contributions while ensuring an adequate income, and that women as well as men should have equal opportunities to acquire pension rights. Equal access to social services is another tenet of the Pillar.

Considerations on intergenerational fairness arise from concerns about the erosion of a long-standing implicit societal contract between generations (Chauvel, 2007, 2010). These concerns have been raised most recently in the Commission's annual *Employment and social developments in Europe* report for 2017. The report notes that the challenge for the EU and its Member States is to ensure that, beyond economic growth, 'every citizen is given the chance to make full use of their productive potential, but also that the distribution of resources across generations is fair' (European Commission, 2017, p. 3). One of the report's arguments is that the structural changes in labour markets, technological progress and international trade are changing the world of work for young people, in particular, in the EU today, with a lasting impact on their whole working lives. This may put youth at a relative disadvantage to older generations, who were less exposed to such developments and, depending on where they live, are currently enjoying the protection of welfare arrangements. If this is left unchecked, social cohesion could be undermined and political stability threatened.

Key findings

- There are substantial differences in quality of life across age groups in Europe. An east–west and a north–south divide are apparent in these differences. The older generations in general enjoy better quality of life than younger age groups in western Europe, while the younger generations are better off in eastern Europe.
- **Difficulty making ends meet:** Difficulty making ends meet decreases with age after mid-life in western Europe. However, it increases continuously with age in most of eastern Europe, with the exception of the Baltic states. This is most likely linked to the economic transformation of the former socialist republics of central-eastern Europe and a failure to address the pension situation of citizens who spent most of their lives under a planned economy.
- **Social exclusion:** In western Europe and the Mediterranean, the feeling of being socially excluded generally rises until middle age and declines towards old age. There is little difference across age groups in eastern Europe, apart from the Balkan cluster (Bulgaria and Romania), where it is slightly higher among people aged 75 and over.
- **Political participation in society:** Political participation in society rises until mid-life across all Member States, with the lowest levels at older ages. Levels of political participation in society are below the EU average in all eastern European Member States.
- **Mental well-being:** Mental well-being increases with age in the Nordic and the Western islands (Ireland and the UK) clusters. There is little variation across age groups in the Continental cluster. In all other country clusters, mental well-being declines with age, particularly in the Balkan cluster, where the oldest old appear to be at particular risk of depression.
- **Life satisfaction:** Life satisfaction markedly and significantly declined for older people in the Mediterranean, Central and eastern, Baltic and Balkan clusters between 2011 and 2016. The traditional U-shape curve over the life course – which indicates falling life satisfaction until middle age, when it rises again – flattened at older ages.



Exploring the evidence

This policy brief analyses differences in the quality of life of different age groups as these reflect, directly or indirectly, differences in life chances and accumulated advantage or disadvantage over the life course. Quality of life is a broader measure than just income and tells a more complete story of the welfare of Europeans of different ages under different welfare regimes. The analysis examines five indicators that represent key aspects of quality of life:

- difficulty making ends meet
- social exclusion
- political participation in society
- mental well-being
- life satisfaction

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How different is the quality of life for consecutive age groups in the EU?
- How does the quality of life vary for age groups across country clusters?
- Is there any significant change in quality of life for different age groups between 2011 and 2016?

The EU Member States have been grouped into seven clusters for this analysis, described in Table 1, to provide larger sample sizes and more robust results.

The age groups chosen are 18–34 years, 35–44 years, 45–54 years, 55–64 years, 65–74 years and 75 years and older. These age bands are in line both with major breaks in the life course and with changes in the trend of attitudinal variables.

The data are taken from the EQLS, a representative, questionnaire-based survey that interviews individuals aged 18 years or older in all EU Member States about their life circumstances.

In the sections that follow, a short context and description are given for each of the indicators. Each is examined in light of changes between 2011 and 2016 by age group and country cluster. Each is also presented graphically along three dimensions: geographical (seven clusters), time (comparing data from 2011 and 2016) and age band.

Table 1: Member State clusters for analysis

Country cluster	Sample (n) 2011	Sample (n) 2016	Countries included
Nordic	3,051	3,125	Denmark, Finland, Sweden
Continental	9,383	7,058	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands
Western islands	3,303	2,315	Ireland, the United Kingdom
Mediterranean	7,786	7,187	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain
Central and eastern	7,307	6,098	Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
Baltic	3,145	3,006	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania
Balkan	2,542	2,020	Bulgaria, Romania

Source: Eurofound (2014)

Common trends and differences are highlighted and explained in terms of welfare state types and historical transformations. Institutions like the pension system, healthcare provision, family policies and other services may prescribe different entitlements for different cohorts so that older age cohorts have or have had a higher level of entitlement than younger cohorts, or vice versa.

A regression analysis was conducted on the indicators to determine whether the differences found between age groups and years are statistically significant, meaning they are unlikely to have arisen randomly. The discussion of the findings notes when differences are significant.

The analysis controlled for demographic characteristics such as sex, education, household size, marital status, lone parent status, disposable household income and the urban/rural context. These factors were held constant, so do not affect the outcome: the measured outcome depends only on the age of the respondent and the date of the survey in each cluster.

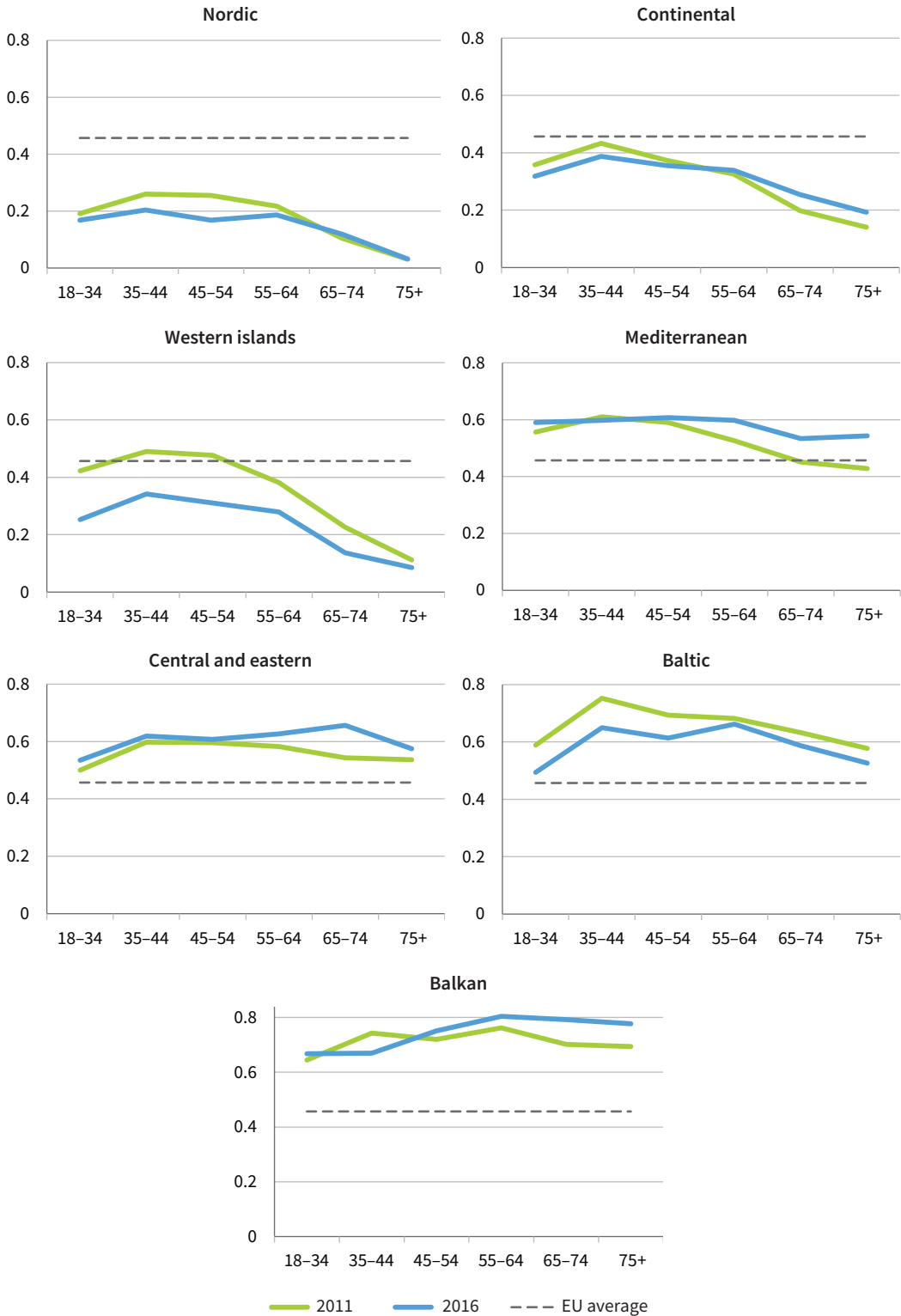
Difficulty making ends meet

Asking how difficult it is for a household to make ends meet is a means of capturing the household's income situation without asking respondents to specify their income directly. It also takes needs into account and measures the respondent's assessment of whether the household has enough income to meet its needs. This is an advantage over using a relative level of income to measure poverty, such as the Eurostat at-risk-of-poverty indicator that assesses each household's income level relative to all other households, without taking needs into account.

Difficulty making ends meet increases from young adulthood to mid-life, after which the need for financial resources naturally starts to decrease as children leave the household, mortgages are paid off and so on. This creates the hump-shaped curves in the plots for almost all the clusters in Figure 1.

The Balkan cluster and the Central and eastern cluster are exceptions, where difficulty making ends meet increases with age, especially in 2016, although it drops for the 75-and-over age group in the Central and eastern cluster. In this latter cluster, difficulty making ends meet in 2016 increases from the youngest group to the 65–74 age group and is high across all age groups, well above the EU average. Comparing 2011 and 2016 in this cluster, there was a nearly significant increase in difficulty making ends meet for people aged 65 or more, while the situation did not change for younger age

Figure 1: Difficulty making ends meet in seven Member State clusters, 2011 and 2016



Note: A value of 1 indicates great difficulty making ends meet.

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groups. Nor did the situation of younger people change in the Mediterranean cluster, while the oldest old group experienced the greatest deterioration.

Pension levels in many southern European countries are not fully adjusted to inflation in the same way wages are, which leads to a loss of purchasing power among pensioners in these countries. The financial crisis provoked a reversal of the shift towards funded pensions in central and eastern Europe by governments responding to the crisis. Given the severe economic crisis and fiscal constraints, eastern European governments revisited their pension strategies and refocused on public pay-as-you-go systems (Ebbinghaus, 2015). This will certainly affect future pensioners and will also decrease the legitimacy of the social contract with younger generations. In addition, the cost of living has increased, particularly medical costs, to the disadvantage of most pensioners.

In all other clusters, people encounter the greatest difficulty between the ages of 35 and 54, probably due more to increased financial demands on the household than to actual income levels. Difficulties diminish significantly after the age of 65 in the Nordic, Continental and Western islands clusters, thanks in part to the intervention of traditional welfare states. Difficulty making ends meet, however, was still significantly higher for younger respondents in 2016 than for those aged over 65 in all three clusters.

Overall, difficulty making ends meet is lowest in the Nordic cluster, and has slightly eased in this cluster for the prime age group (45–54) since 2011.

Differences between age groups are most marked in the Western islands cluster. The situation significantly improved here since 2011 for all those younger than 55. The improvement is certainly related to the recovery from the recession in Ireland and the UK, but, on the other hand, today's pensioners are secure, while those depending on market income are most vulnerable.

In the Baltic cluster, all age groups are significantly above the EU average with regard to difficulty making ends meet. The worst affected in 2011 were 35–44-year-olds, whose situation has improved significantly since then, as has that of the youngest age group, those under 35. One factor that may have influenced this shift is the emigration of many in that age group to seek their fortune elsewhere. Between 2008 and 2017, the 18–34 age group in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania decreased by between 2% and 4% in their relative share of the population (see also Atoyán et al, 2016).

Social exclusion

People's sense of social exclusion is measured by asking respondents whether they feel:

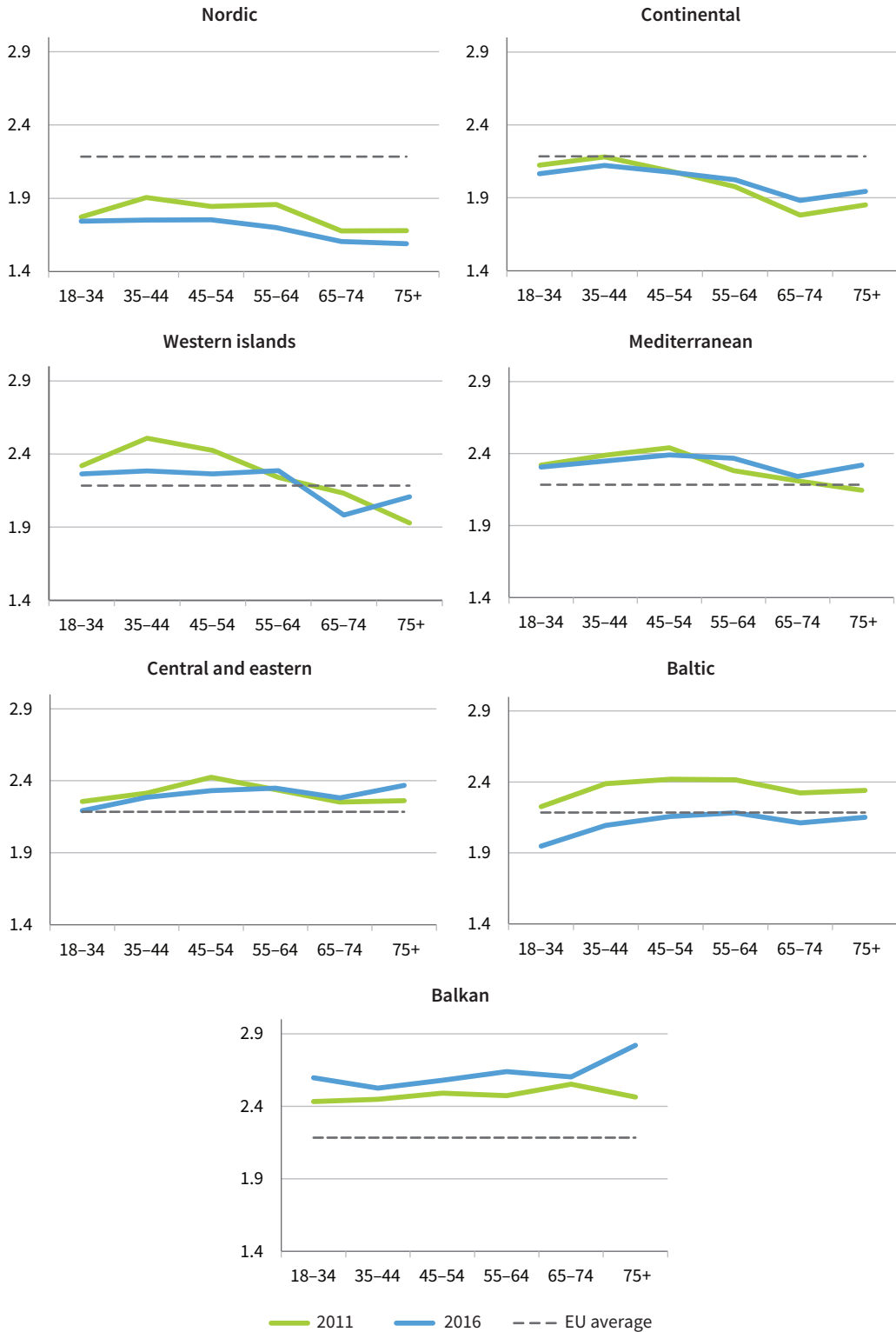
- left out of society
- that life has become too complicated to find one's way
- their needs are not recognised by others
- looked down upon by some people

Research indicates that feeling excluded increases sensitivity to social threats (Baumeister et al, 2002; Gerber and Wheeler, 2009; Riva et al, 2017). Analysis of the 2016 EQLS shows that people's perception of exclusion rises significantly with lower interpersonal trust and mental well-being. A German study found that social exclusion was also associated with accidents at home among older people and could lead to increased health spending (Hajek and König, 2017).

As Figure 2 illustrates, the perception of social exclusion is hump-shaped along the age continuum in all clusters, with the exception of the Balkan cluster.

Exclusion is perceived least in the Nordic cluster, where there is no significant variation with age in 2011 but some significant differences seem to appear in 2016 between people aged 65 and over and the youngest cohorts. The level of perceived social exclusion fell significantly between 2011 and 2016 in this cluster for 35–44-year-olds and 55–64-year-olds.

Figure 2: Social exclusion in seven Member State clusters, 2011 and 2016



Note: Social exclusion is scored on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

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In the Continental cluster, the feeling of exclusion did not change between 2011 and 2016, but there are marked differences across age bands, with older people feeling significantly less excluded. The group that feels most excluded in this cluster is the 35–44-year-olds. As with the Nordic cluster, the feeling of being excluded is below the EU average.

For the Western islands cluster, the perception of social exclusion declined towards the EU average for age groups between 35 and 54 from 2011 to 2016, and the reduction is statistically significant.

In the Mediterranean countries, perceived exclusion is slightly above average, and no change occurred since 2011 except for the oldest age group, where the perception increased significantly.

In the Baltic countries, the perception of exclusion decreased significantly for all age groups between 2011 and 2016, and is significantly lower in the youngest age group than in the other age groups in both years. This finding has to be treated with care, however, as an exodus of disadvantaged groups in the population may have had an influence on the results.

A particularly interesting result was obtained for the Balkan cluster, as social exclusion increased for all citizens between the two surveys, but significantly only for those aged 75 years and older. This raises a question about the situation of older people in Bulgaria and Romania, as this age group reports the highest level of social exclusion in the EU and, as will be noted later, the poorest scores for mental well-being.

Political participation in society

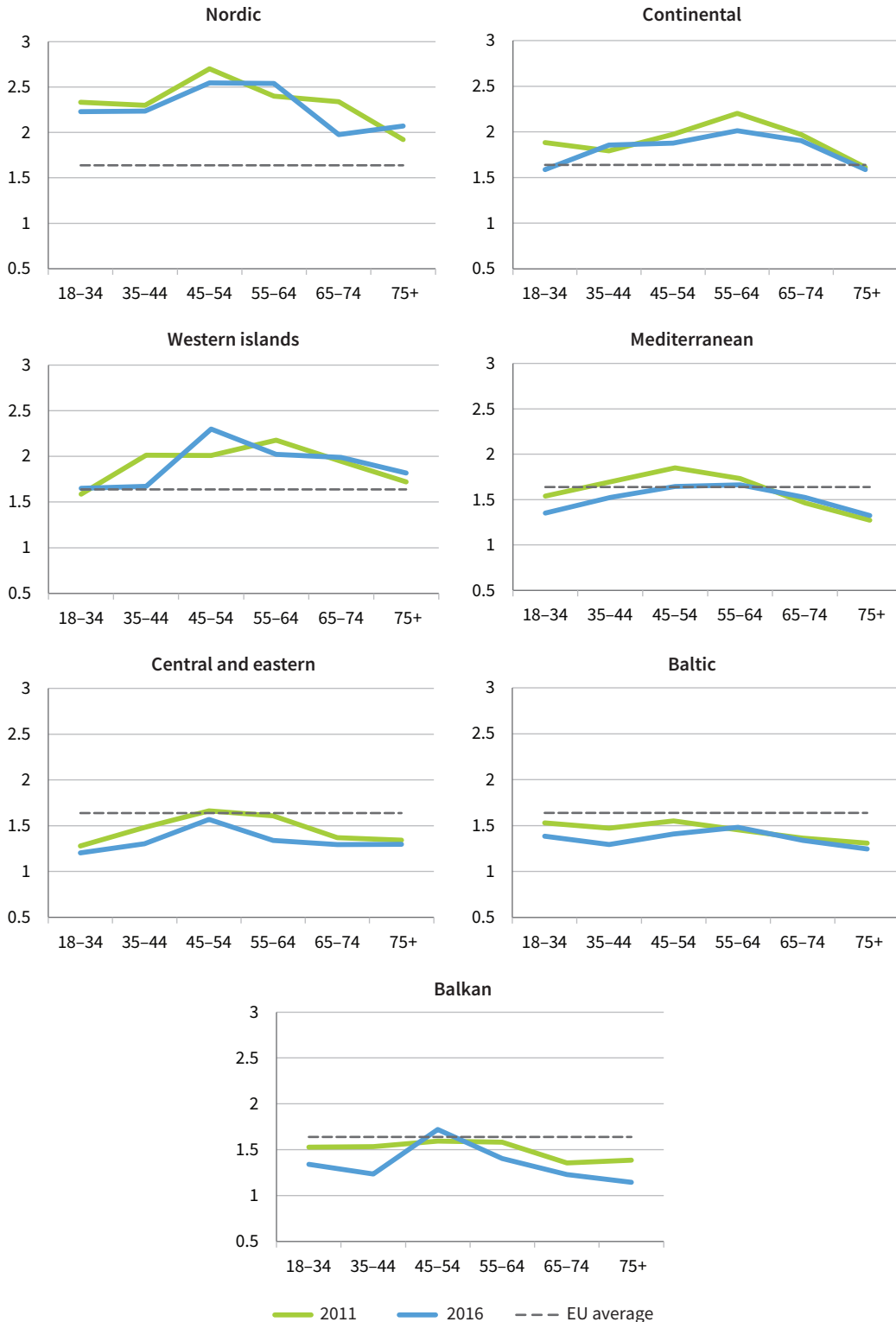
Participation and involvement in local activities help to foster social cohesion by providing a sense of belonging to the local community, especially in rural areas. Participation in terms of political involvement is measured by the EQLS using two items:

- whether the respondent attended a meeting of a trade union, a political party or political action group
- whether the respondent contacted a politician or public official

Political participation seems to have declined over 2011–2016 across the age continuum everywhere, but not significantly (Figure 3). The profile of the curve is again hump-shaped, with a peak for middle age groups in all the country clusters. The lowest participation rates are measured for older citizens, but the variation is also highest in this group, so that a polarisation of political participation at older ages is more likely than an overall decline: some are highly active while others are totally uninvolved.

In the Continental and Mediterranean clusters, participation has declined significantly only in the youngest age group (aged 18–34), while in the Western islands and Balkan clusters, the decline is among 35–44-year-olds. Overall, the highest levels of participation are found in the Nordic cluster, followed by the Western islands and Continental clusters. An interesting finding is the changing political participation of 35–44 and 45–54-year-olds in the UK between 2011 and 2016: the political participation of the first age group dropped in 2016, while the participation of the slightly older group increased compared to 2011 (see also BBC News, 2016).

Figure 3: Political participation in seven Member State clusters, 2011 and 2016



Note: Political participation is scored on a scale of 0–10.

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The lowest levels of political participation are found in former socialist republics of central-eastern Europe, and there is no significant change over time. The culture of low participation in civic society persists in these countries, confirming findings by other scholars (Voicu, 2014; Voicu and Telegdy, 2016). Furthermore, new political parties have to appeal to voters with little experience of political engagement.

Mental well-being

A widely used concept of mental well-being defines it as a 'dynamic state that refers to individuals' ability to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community' (Beddington et al, 2008, p. 1057). Lack of mental well-being may contribute to disease and mental disorders (Wittchen and Jacobi, 2005).

The EQLS uses the World Health Organization Mental Well-being Index (WHO-5) to capture respondents' mental well-being. It is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, and people with a WHO-5 score of 50 or lower are considered to be at risk of depression (Topp et al, 2015).

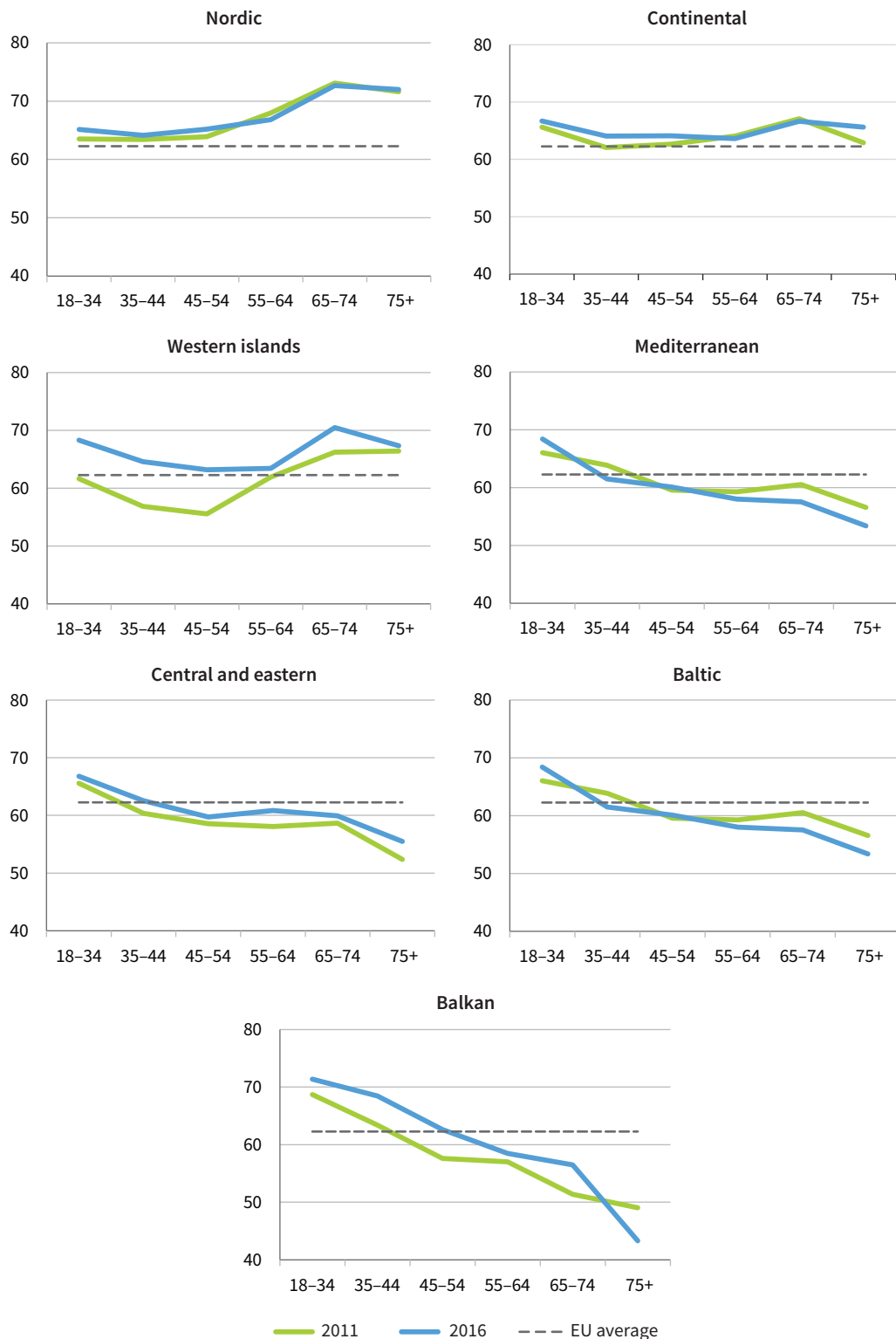
For this aspect of quality of life, the shape of the curves in the Mediterranean and the Central and eastern clusters is nearly a mirror image of that of the curves for the Nordic, Continental and Western islands clusters (Figure 4). While the younger age groups in the Nordic cluster are at average levels, the older age groups enjoy significantly better mental well-being. The curve is similar for the

Continental cluster but much less differentiated, being slightly U-shaped, with lower mental health values among the middle-aged. The mental health of people over 75 has improved, putting them at the same level as the 65–74 age group in 2016.

A marked improvement between 2011 and 2016 is visible for all ages below 55 in the Western islands cluster, most likely reflecting the significant boost in the economic situation here and people's prospects after the recovery from the post-2008 recession. The more pronounced S-shaped curve indicates a somewhat higher level of mental well-being for people aged 65 years and older. The changes between 2011 and 2016 for the Nordic and Continental clusters are not significant.

In the other four clusters, mental well-being declines with age, with the lowest levels being found in the oldest age groups. There has been no significant change between 2011 and 2016 in most of these clusters. Just a slight improvement was measured in the Central and eastern and the Baltic clusters, which is statistically significant for the 35–44 age group only. In the Mediterranean cluster, the decline in the mental well-being of age groups from 65 onwards between 2011 and 2016 is nearly significant. For the Balkan cluster, there has been a significant improvement for the 35–44 and 45–54 age groups. However, the situation of the 75-and-over age group dramatically deteriorated to levels below 50 on average, indicating that in 2016 a high proportion of people over 75 in the Balkan cluster were at risk of depression.

Figure 4: Mental well-being in seven Member State clusters, 2011 and 2016



Note: Mental well-being is measured on a scale of 0-100.

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Life satisfaction

The EQLS captures life satisfaction using the question: 'All things considered, how satisfied would you say you are with your life these days?' This conventionally produces a U-shaped curve across the life course, where young generations feel the most satisfied, middle-aged individuals feel the least satisfied, and the level rises again in later life (Blanchflower and Oswald, 2008). Other scholars have been more cautious about accepting that life satisfaction increases with age (Freund and Baltes, 1998). There is a need to consider other factors such as health status, as well as birth year and, in general, what cohort is analysed. The relationship between age and satisfaction can change depending on what cohort is analysed because the experiences a person has while growing up are crucial for satisfaction in later life.

The EQLS data, nevertheless, using the same method as the previous analyses, show that life satisfaction was U-shaped in most clusters in 2011. Since then, the curve of life satisfaction associated with age has straightened somewhat.¹

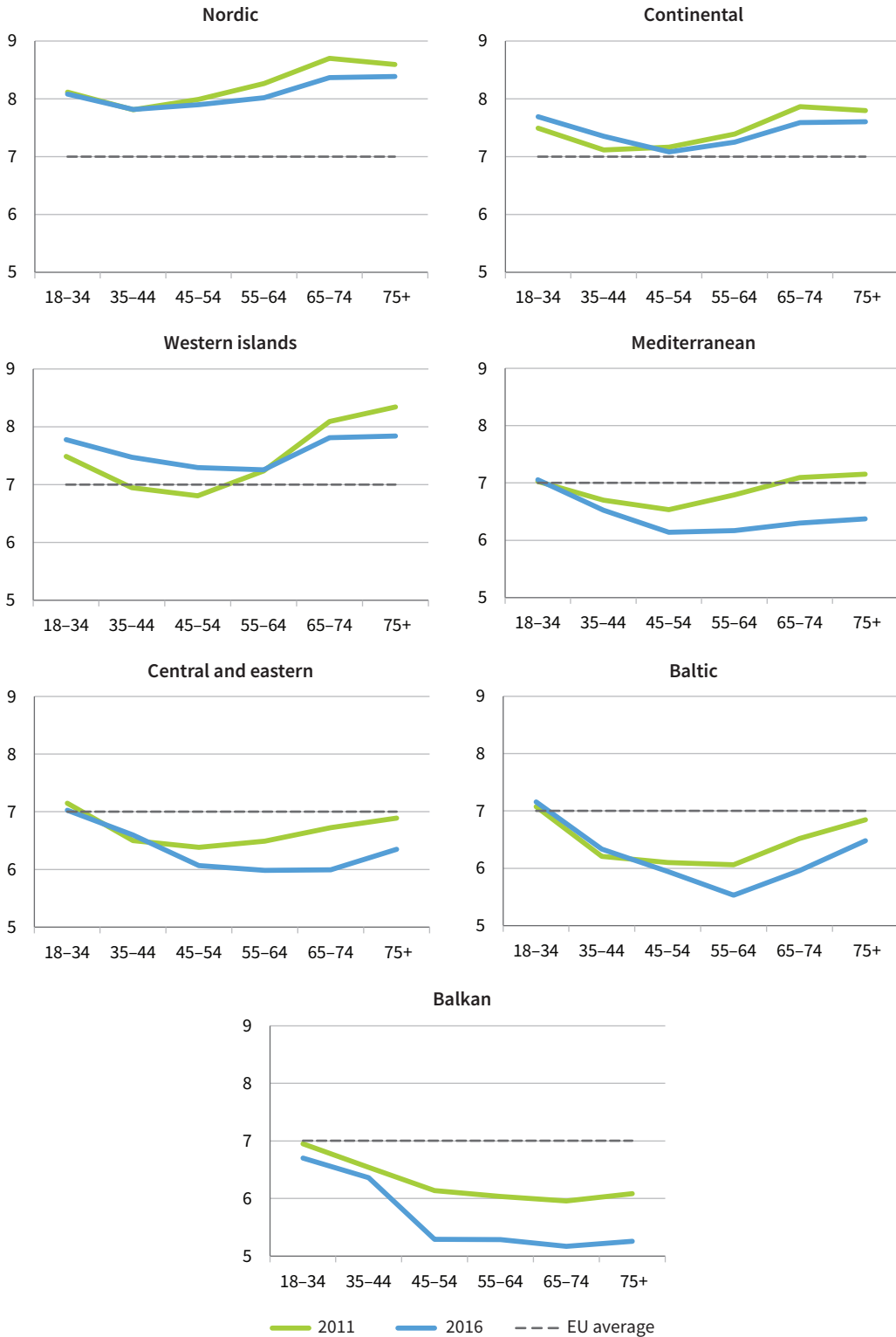
In the Western islands cluster, life satisfaction increased for younger groups since 2011 but decreased for older age groups, resulting in a

flatter profile of the curve. Similar changes can be seen in the Nordic and Continental clusters. The differences between years are, however, barely significant in these three clusters, with the exception of the Western islands cluster, where 35–44 and 45–54-year-olds experienced a significant increase in life satisfaction between 2011 and 2016. Still, these two age groups are the least satisfied of all age groups in the UK, as a study by the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2016) confirms. That study proposes that the multiple responsibilities of people in middle age could be taking a toll, with many facing the double pressures of looking after young children and ageing parents at the same time.

The situation is rather different in the other country clusters, most of which have seen life satisfaction significantly decrease for the age groups from 45–54 upwards (or 55–64 in the case of the Baltic cluster) since 2011. The most dramatic decrease took place in the Balkan cluster, where life satisfaction dropped dramatically for the 45–54 age group and levelled off at a constant low level up to the age of 75 and beyond. While the 2011 results seem to confirm that the relationship of age and satisfaction is U-shaped, the 2016 results point to life satisfaction decreasing with age at least in some countries (Eurofound, 2017).

¹ This result is slightly different from what was reported in the overview report for the 2016 EQLS (Eurofound, 2017). It can be explained by the fact that this policy brief uses six age groups, while the overview report used three.

Figure 5: Life satisfaction in seven Member State clusters, 2011 and 2016



Note: Life satisfaction is measured on a scale of 0–10.

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Policy pointers

Europe is a heterogeneous grouping of Member States with different histories. The life course is not only different for each individual but is strongly shaped by historic developments, political structures, and economic successes and failures – individually and collectively. The results presented in this policy brief highlight, in particular, some of the accumulated impacts of different developments on eastern Europe, especially for older generations.

Recognising the needs of a diverse society

- Inequalities develop over individuals' life courses, which are increasingly diverse and differentiated across the European population. Welfare systems play a major role in levelling inequalities, including in quality of life, but these systems must focus not only on traditional life stages (such as education, family and retirement) but also on new social risks (such as organisation of work, technological change and reduced social protection).
- While economic developments have favoured the older generations in western Europe, who can look back at lifetime careers in a mostly favourable economic

climate, the advantage in eastern Europe lies with the younger generations, who have been able to adapt quickly to the post-transformation economic context. Many older people in eastern Europe, who spent most of their lives under communist rule with poor working conditions, low levels of pension entitlements and a lack of social services, are not doing well. The situation of people aged 75 and over in eastern Europe seems particularly disadvantaged, especially regarding social exclusion and mental health.

Promoting intergenerational fairness

- Social policies should take intergenerational fairness into account, including renewal of the generational contract – the principle that the younger generation will support the older generation in return for the support it has received. A new social contract between generations has to be bidirectional; perhaps the more affluent among the older generation should contribute more to guarantee that today's youth are better skilled and competitive in order to contribute their share to the economy.

Conversely, youth should be more ready to support and provide for the care needs of the elderly, particularly those who are family members.

- The burden of contributing to the welfare state lies mainly on the shoulders of the working-age population, who are themselves paying increasingly more for services and support measures like childcare, education expenses, medical costs and contributions to old-age pensions. The changing character and balance of contributions by different age groups should be systematically assessed in terms of impact on quality of life.

Addressing the needs of the oldest old

- Mental health decreases with age in several EU Member States, particularly the Mediterranean countries and eastern Europe. The situation is particularly bad for those aged 75 and above, and especially worrying in Bulgaria and Romania in terms of social exclusion, life satisfaction and mental health. These dimensions of quality of life appear to have worsened over time and might need to be addressed proactively by professional services with hotlines and help centres.
- While a sense of social exclusion is a problem for the younger generations in some clusters, the situation for the oldest old has recently deteriorated in several clusters: the Western islands, Mediterranean, Central and eastern, and Balkan clusters. Projects in some countries in Europe have sought to support older people of pension age to form networks and engage in community work to strengthen intergenerational solidarity and combat isolation; more efforts are needed with people aged 75 and over.

Addressing the needs of young people

- The cost of housing is increasing in many Member States, which is especially hard on young people, who find it difficult to emulate older generations in terms of purchasing their own property. This probably contributes to lower quality of life and merits special attention (Resolution Foundation, 2018).

Improving political participation in eastern Europe

- Political stability and a fight against corruption is an absolute prerequisite for any positive evolution in many former socialist republics. There is a need to build trust in the relatively new political institutions and motivate citizens of all ages to engage more in political processes.



Resources

All Eurofound publications are available at www.eurofound.europa.eu

EQLS results by country and the key breakdowns are available online at <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/european-quality-of-life-survey>

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Much policy is developed and operationalised through the prism of age, and addressing differences in the economic and social circumstances of different age groups is an ongoing concern of policymakers. This policy brief looks at inequalities in the quality of life of Europeans across six age groups. It examines developments between 2011 and 2016 to assess whether the impact of the economic crisis on quality of life has decreased with the economic recovery, for which age groups and in what countries. The analysis finds that, broadly speaking, older generations enjoy better quality of life than younger age groups in western Europe, while in eastern Europe the younger generations are better off.

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