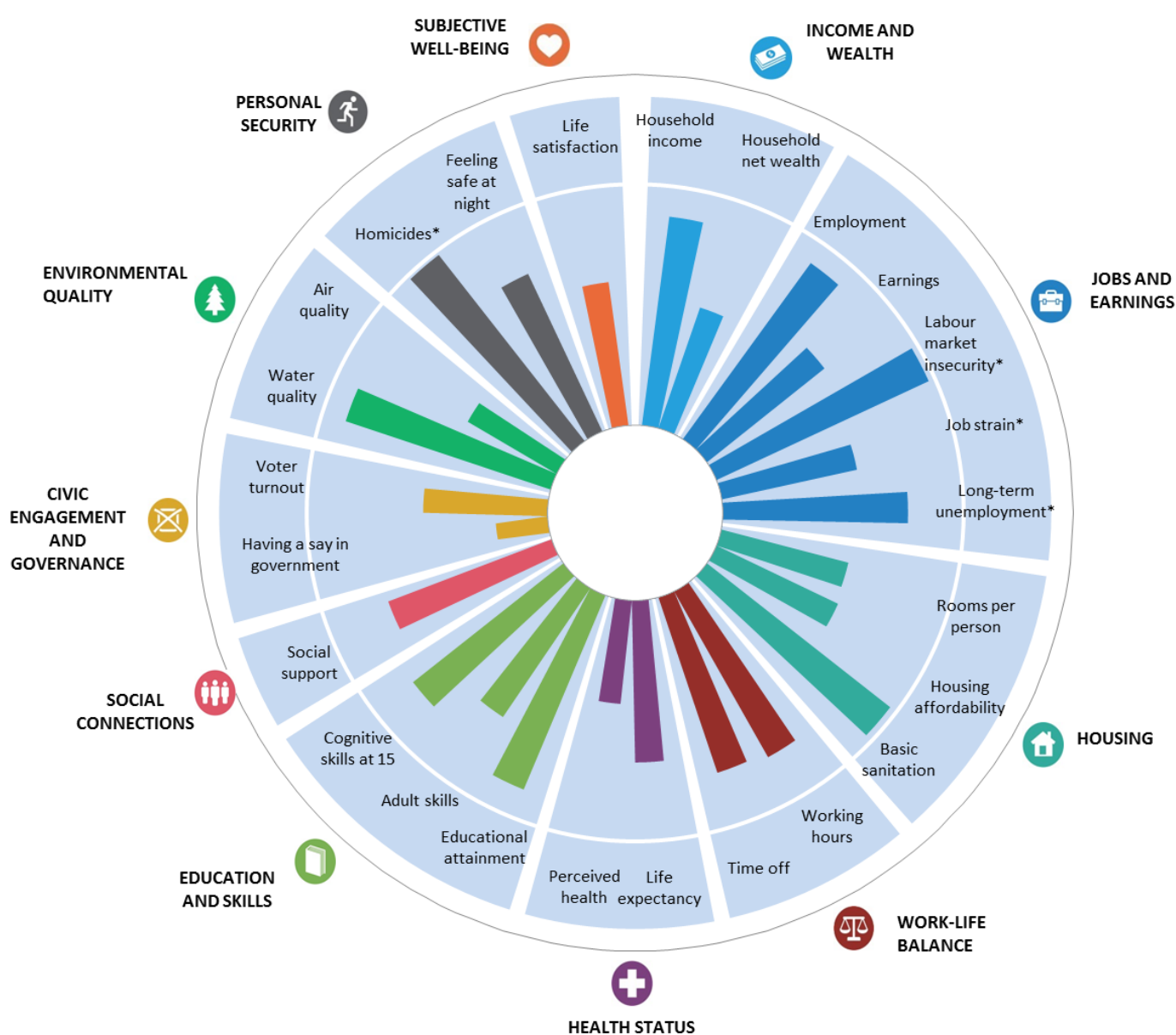


# How's Life in Germany?

Relative to other OECD countries, Germany performs well across most well-being dimensions. **Household net adjusted disposable income** is above the OECD average, but **household net wealth** is just below it. At 75%, the **employment rate** is well above the OECD average of 67%, and both average **earnings** and **long-term unemployment** are close to OECD average levels. Germany benefits from one of the lowest levels of **labour market insecurity** in the OECD, and although one-third of German workers were affected by **job strain** in 2015, this is still below the OECD average level (38%). At 81 years, **life expectancy** in Germany is close to the OECD average, but the share of German adults who **perceive their health** as “good” or “very good” (65%) is just below the OECD average (69%). Personal security, social support and education and skills are generally all areas of strength, but Germany performs less well on civic engagement and governance – with only one-quarter of Germans feeling that they **have a say in what the government does**.

## Germany's current level of average well-being: Comparative strengths and weaknesses














Note: This chart shows Germany's relative strengths and weaknesses in well-being when compared with other OECD countries. For both positive and negative indicators (such as homicides, marked with an "\*\*"), longer bars always indicate better outcomes (i.e. higher well-being), whereas shorter bars always indicate worse outcomes (i.e. lower well-being). If data are missing for any given indicator, the relevant segment of the circle is shaded in white.

Additional information, including the data used in this country note, can be found at:


[www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2017-country-notes-data.xlsx](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-2017-country-notes-data.xlsx)


## Change in Germany's average well-being over the past 10 years

| Dimension  | Description   | Change                |
|--|---|-----------------------|
|  <b>Income and wealth</b>       | German household net adjusted disposable income has grown steadily over the last decade, and is currently 9% higher than in 2005. Household net wealth in 2014 was 22% higher than in 2010, in real terms.  | ↗<br>↗                |
|  <b>Jobs and earnings</b>       | There has been an increase in the employment rate (by 2 percentage points) and a fall in the long-term unemployment rate (by just below 1 percentage point) since 2011, the earliest year for which comparable data are available for both indicators. After a period of slow growth, average earnings picked up in 2010, and are now 11% higher than 10 years ago. Labour market insecurity has also improved, and is now lower than its pre-crisis level, having peaked in 2009. Finally, the share of employees experiencing job strain has fallen by 15 percentage points between 2005 and 2015, more than in any other OECD country over the decade. | ↗<br>↗<br>↗<br>↗<br>↗ |
|  <b>Housing conditions</b>      | There has been a minor improvement in the number of rooms per person since 2005, yet the level remains just below the OECD average. Housing affordability has improved slightly, with the share of household income spent on housing costs decreasing by around 1 percentage point from 2005. The percentage of people living in dwellings without basic sanitary facilities has been cut by two-thirds over the last decade.   | ↗<br>↗<br>↗           |
|  <b>Work-life balance</b>     | At 5%, the share of employees working 50 hours or more per week in 2016 is slightly below the level reported in 2011 (earliest year for which comparable data are available).   | ↗                     |
|  <b>Health status</b>         | Despite falling by six months between 2014 and 2015, life expectancy at birth has increased overall by one-and-a-half years since 2005. The percentage of adults reporting to be in “good” or “very good” health has meanwhile increased by 4 points since 2005.  | ↗<br>↗                |
|  <b>Education and skills</b>  | The 10-year change in upper secondary educational attainment cannot be assessed, due to a recent break in the data. However, between 2014 and 2016, attainment rates in Germany have remained relatively stable.  | ↔                     |
|  <b>Social connections</b>    | There has been little change in reported social support since 2005.   | ↔                     |
|  <b>Civic engagement</b>      | Voter turnout in the 2013 federal elections increased very slightly compared to 2009, but remained below the 78% turnout in 2005. This is in line with the OECD average trend, which has decreased by 2.4 points since 2005.  | ↘                     |
|  <b>Environmental quality</b> | Both satisfaction with local water quality and the annual exposure to PM <sub>2.5</sub> air pollution have remained broadly stable in Germany relative to 2005 levels.  | ↔<br>↔                |
|  <b>Personal security</b>     | The number of deaths due to assault stayed at a relatively low level over the last 10 years. Feelings of safety when walking home alone at night have also remained relatively stable, which has been the case in only about one-third of OECD countries.   | ↔<br>↔                |
|  <b>Subjective well-being</b> | People's life satisfaction has risen gradually since 2005, from an average of 6.5 to 7 (measured on a 0-10 scale).  | ↗                     |


Note: For each indicator in every dimension: ↗ refers to an improvement; ↔ indicates little or no change; and ↘ signals deterioration. This is based on a comparison of the starting year (2005 in most cases) and the latest available year (usually 2015 or 2016). The order of the arrows shown in column three corresponds to that of the indicators mentioned in column two.


## Germany's resources and risks for future well-being: Illustrative indicators

|  <b>Natural capital</b> |      |                         |
|---|------|-------------------------|
| Indicator   | Tier | Change                  |
| Greenhouse gas emissions from domestic production   | 2    | ↗ 2005-2015             |
| CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from domestic consumption   | 2    | ↗ 2001-2011             |
| Exposure to PM <sub>2.5</sub> air pollution   | 2    | ↔ 2005-2013             |
| Forest area   | 3    | ↔ 2005-2014             |
| Renewable freshwater resources  | 3    | .. Long-term annual avg |
| Freshwater abstractions   | 2    | .. 2013                 |
| Threatened birds  | 3    | .. Latest available     |
| Threatened mammals  | 3    | .. Latest available     |
| Threatened plants   | 3    | .. Latest available     |

|  <b>Economic capital</b> |      |             |
|--|------|-------------|
| Indicator  | Tier | Change      |
| Produced fixed assets  | 1    | ↗ 2005-2015 |
| Gross fixed capital formation  | 2    | ↗ 2005-2016 |
| Financial net worth of total economy   | 1    | ↗ 2005-2016 |
| Intellectual property assets   | 1    | ↗ 2005-2015 |
| Investment in R&D  | 1    | ↗ 2005-2014 |
| Household debt   | 1    | ↗ 2005-2015 |
| Household net wealth   | 2    | ↗ 2010-2014 |
| Financial net worth of government  | 2    | ↗ 2005-2015 |
| Banking sector leverage  | 3    | ↘ 2005-2015 |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Top-performing OECD tier, latest available year    |
| 2 | Middle-performing OECD tier, latest available year |
| 3 | Bottom-performing OECD tier, latest available year |

|  <b>Human capital</b> |      |              |
|--|------|--------------|
| Indicator  | Tier | Change       |
| Young adult educational attainment   | 2    | ↔ 2014-2016  |
| Educational expectancy   | 1    | .. 2015      |
| Cognitive skills at age 15   | 1    | .. 2015      |
| Adult skills   | 2    | .. 2011/2012 |
| Long-term unemployment   | 2    | ↗ 2011-2016  |
| Life expectancy at birth   | 3    | .. 2005-2015 |
| Smoking prevalence   | 2    | ↗ 2005-2013  |
| Obesity prevalence   | 3    | .. 2012      |

|  <b>Social capital</b> |      |              |
|---|------|--------------|
| Indicator   | Tier | Change       |
| Trust in others   | 3    | .. 2013      |
| Trust in the police   | 2    | .. 2013      |
| Trust in the national government  | 1    | ↗ 2005-2016  |
| Voter turnout   | 2    | ↘ 2005-2013  |
| Government stakeholder engagement   | 2    | .. 2014      |
| Volunteering through organisations  | 1    | .. 2011/2012 |

|    |                     |
|----|---------------------|
| ↗  | Improving over time |
| ↘  | Worsening over time |
| ↔  | No change           |
| .. | No data available   |

## HOW LARGE ARE WELL-BEING INEQUALITIES IN GERMANY?

**What is inequality and how is it measured?** Measuring inequality means trying to describe **how unevenly distributed** outcomes are in society. *How's Life? 2017* adopts several different approaches:

- Measures of “**vertical**” inequalities address how unequally outcomes are spread across all people in society – for example, by looking at the size of the gap between people at the bottom of the distribution and people at the top.
- Measures of “**horizontal**” inequalities focus on the gap between population groups defined by specific characteristics (such as men and women, young and old, people with higher and lower levels of education).
- Measures of “**deprivation**” report the share of people who live below a certain level of well-being (such as those who face income poverty or live in an overcrowded household).

In Germany, **vertical inequalities** in wealth, working hours and having a say in government are more pronounced than in the majority of OECD countries. For example, the share of total net wealth owned by the wealthiest 10% of the population is close to 60%, 8 percentage points higher than the OECD average. By contrast, the country is ranked in the top (i.e. most equal) third in terms of adult skills.

Relative to other OECD countries, women in Germany are at a comparatively large disadvantage in several **gender gap** indicators – including earnings, low pay, adult skills, voter turnout and having a say in government. Yet the gaps are narrower than in other OECD countries when it comes to perceived health, time devoted to leisure and personal care and the cognitive skills of 15-year-old students.

Most indicators suggest that the gaps between **young** and **middle-aged** people are close to the OECD average. Exceptions include relative unemployment and earnings: young Germans are less disadvantaged than their peers in most countries in terms of unemployment, but they are more disadvantaged in terms of their earnings.

Generally, people with a **tertiary education** tend to fare better than those with only a **secondary education** across a range of well-being outcomes. In Germany, these education-related gaps are larger than in the OECD on average for outcomes such as wealth, unemployment, perceived health, adult skills and civic engagement. However, they are comparatively narrow for employment and cognitive skills at 15. Furthermore, people with a tertiary education in Germany are more likely to work long hours and less likely to be satisfied with their local water quality, relative to those with a secondary education.

Germany is “mid-ranking” according to most **deprivation** indicators, but has comparatively low deprivation levels in 6 out of 20 indicators, including unemployment, housing cost overburden, low educational attainment and dissatisfaction with water. By contrast, comparatively high levels of deprivation are found in perceived health and long working hours.

**Well-being inequalities in Germany**

|                            | Vertical inequality | Horizontal inequality by |                               |                                | Deprivation |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
|                            |                     | Gender                   | Age                           | Education                      |             |
|                            |                     | Women relative to men    | Young relative to middle-aged | Secondary relative to tertiary |             |
| Household income           | ●                   |                          | ●                             |                                | ●           |
| Household net wealth       | ●                   |                          | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Earnings                   | ●                   | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              |             |
| Low pay                    |                     | ●                        |                               |                                | ●           |
| Employment                 |                     | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              |             |
| Unemployment               |                     | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Housing affordability      |                     |                          |                               |                                | ●           |
| Rooms per person           |                     |                          |                               |                                | ●           |
| Life expectancy            | ○                   |                          |                               |                                |             |
| Perceived health           |                     | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Working hours              | ●                   | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Time off                   |                     | ●                        | ●                             |                                |             |
| Educational attainment     |                     | ●                        | ●                             |                                | ●           |
| Cognitive skills at 15     | ●                   | ●                        |                               | ●                              | ●           |
| Adult skills               | ●                   | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Time spent socialising     |                     | ●                        | ●                             |                                |             |
| Social support             |                     | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Voter turnout              |                     | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Having a say in government | ●                   | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Air quality                |                     |                          |                               |                                | ●           |
| Water quality              |                     | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Homicides                  |                     | ●                        |                               |                                | ●           |
| Feeling safe at night      |                     | ●                        | ●                             | ●                              | ●           |
| Life satisfaction          | ○                   | ○                        | ○                             | ○                              | ●           |
| Negative affect balance    |                     |                          |                               |                                | ●           |

Legend:

- top third of OECD countries
- middle third of OECD countries
- bottom third of OECD countries
- data gaps
- no measures

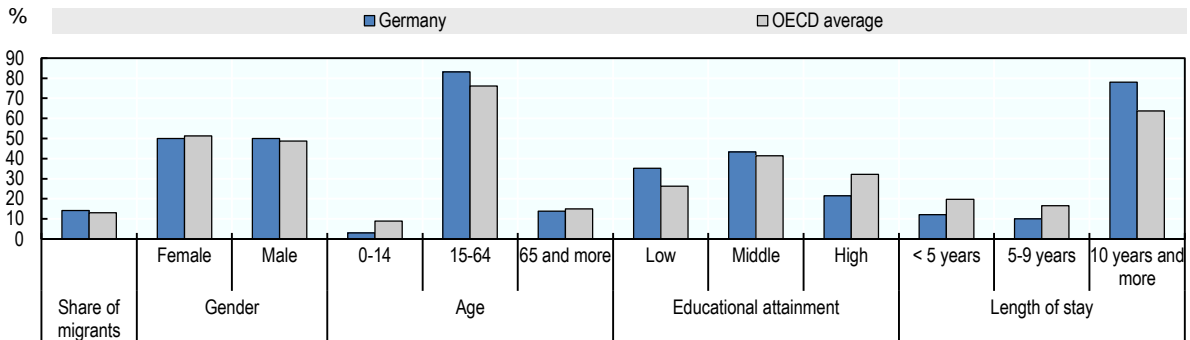
## HOW'S LIFE FOR MIGRANTS IN GERMANY?

Migrants (defined as people living in a different country from the one in which they were born) represent an important share of the population in most OECD countries. Capturing information about their well-being is critical for gaining a fuller picture of how life is going, and whether it is going equally well for all members of society.

### Who are the migrants in Germany and OECD?

In Germany, 14% of people were born elsewhere, similar to the OECD average (13%), and 50% of them are women (51% for the OECD average). Migrants in Germany are more likely to be of working age than in the OECD on average (83% of them are aged 15 to 64, as compared to 76% across the OECD), and they are more likely to have a low or a middle educational attainment than a high level. Almost eight in ten migrants arrived in Germany ten years ago or more.

Share of migrants in the total population and selected characteristics

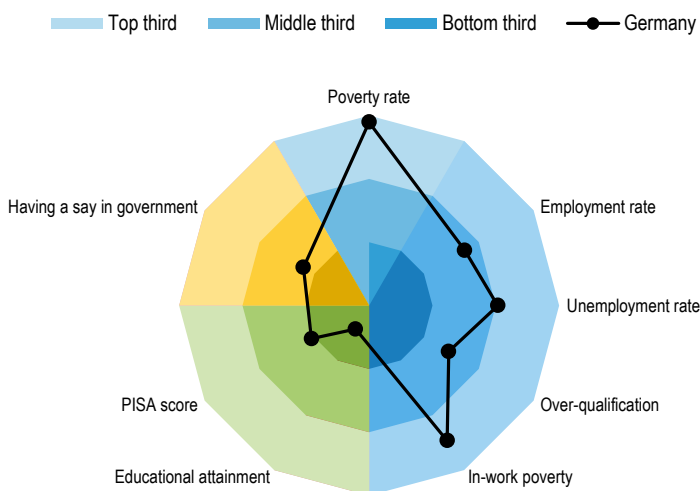


### How is migrants' well-being in Germany?

Compared with the migrant populations of other OECD countries, migrants living in Germany have a relatively good situation regarding poverty and in-work poverty. Migrants settled in Germany rank in the middle third of OECD-country migrants for employment, unemployment, over-qualification, PISA performance and having a say in government. They are in the bottom third for educational attainment.

As in many other OECD countries, migrants in Germany tend to experience lower well-being outcomes than the native-born population: in Germany, this is the case for 7 out of 10 selected well-being indicators. However, migrants in Germany are just as likely as the native-born to report the same level of perceived health, perceived safety, and social support.

Comparing well-being outcomes for migrants in Germany with the migrant populations of other OECD countries



Comparison of migrants' and native-born well-being in Germany

|                               | Migrants have a worse situation | Same situation | Migrants have a better situation |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Household income              | ▲                               |                |                                  |
| Wealth                        | ▲                               |                |                                  |
| Physical health risks at work | ▲                               |                |                                  |
| Literacy scores               | ▲                               |                |                                  |
| PISA score                    | ▲                               |                |                                  |
| Perceived health              |                                 | ▲              |                                  |
| Social support                |                                 | ▲              |                                  |
| Perceived safety              |                                 | ▲              |                                  |
| Having a say in government    | ▲                               |                |                                  |
| Life satisfaction             | ▲                               |                |                                  |

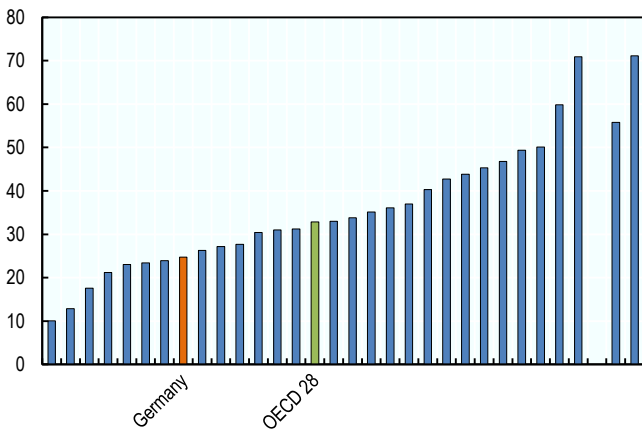
# GOVERNANCE AND WELL-BEING IN GERMANY

Public institutions play an important role in well-being, both by guaranteeing that people’s fundamental rights are protected, and by ensuring the provision of goods and services necessary for people to thrive and prosper. How people experience and engage with public institutions also matters: people’s political voice, agency and representation are outcomes of value in their own right.

In Germany, almost 25% of the population feels that they have a say in what the government does, lower than the OECD average of 33%. In recent years, voter turnout in Germany has decreased, with almost 72% of eligible voters casting a ballot in 2013, compared to nearly 78% in 2005. When asked about whether or not corruption is widespread across government, 35% of Germans answered “yes”, as compared to an OECD average of 56%. Since around 2006, the share of people in the OECD who report that they have confidence in their national government has fallen from 42% to 38%.

## Having a say in what the government does

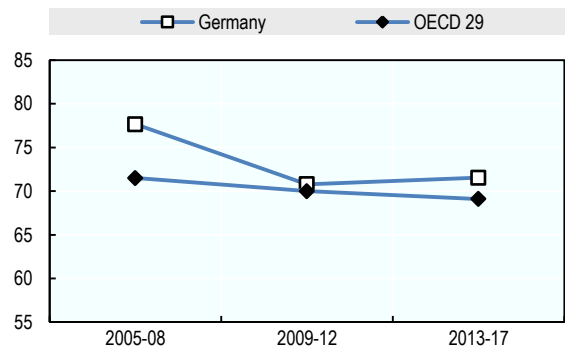
Percentage of people aged 16-65 who feel that they have a say in what the government does, around 2012



Source: OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC database)

## Voter turnout

Percentage of votes cast among the population registered to vote



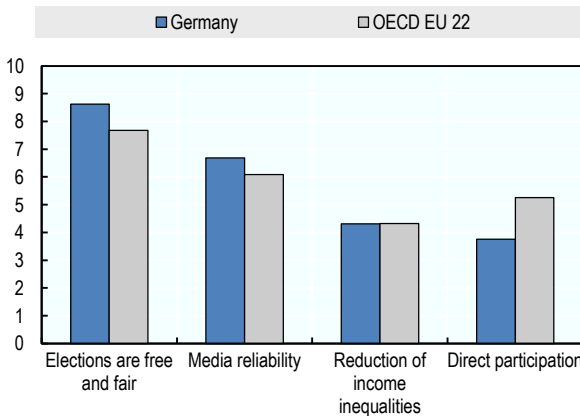
Note: Data refers to parliamentary elections. If more than one election took place over the time period indicated, the simple average voter turnout from all elections is shown. The OECD average sums elections that occurred over the time periods shown in 29 OECD countries.

Source: IDEA dataset

Overall, satisfaction with the way democracy works in Germany varies, depending on which aspect is considered. While people in Germany tend to be reasonably satisfied with the freedom and fairness of elections (8.6 on a scale of 0-10), they are much less satisfied with policies to reduce inequalities (4.3) and with the existence of direct participation mechanisms at the local level (3.8). Meanwhile, satisfaction with public services varies according to whether people have used those services in the last year. In Germany, satisfaction with education services is similar to the European OECD average levels, but satisfaction with health services is slightly above average. However, in both cases, people with direct experience of using those services recently are more likely to be satisfied than those without.

## Satisfaction with different elements of democracy

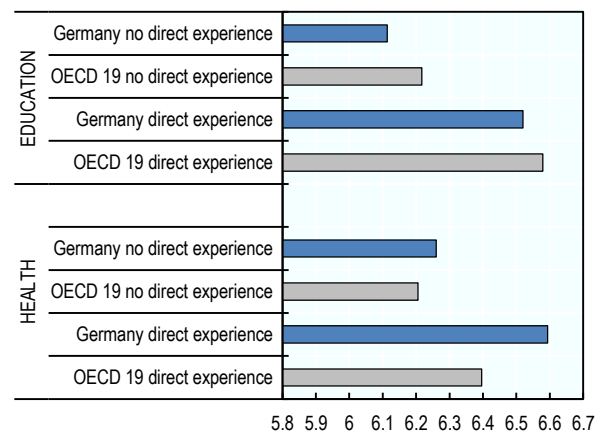
Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with elements of democracy, 2012



Source: OECD calculations based on wave 6 of the European Social Survey (ESS), special rotating module on citizens’ valuations of different elements of democracy.

## Satisfaction with public services by direct experience

Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction, 2013



Source: OECD calculations based on the EU Quality of Government (QoG) for 19 European OECD countries.

## BETTER LIFE INDEX

The **Better Life Index** is an interactive web application that allows users to compare well-being across OECD countries and beyond on the basis of the set of well-being indicators used in *How's Life?*. Users chose what weight to give to each of the eleven dimensions shown below and then see how countries perform, based on their own personal priorities in life.

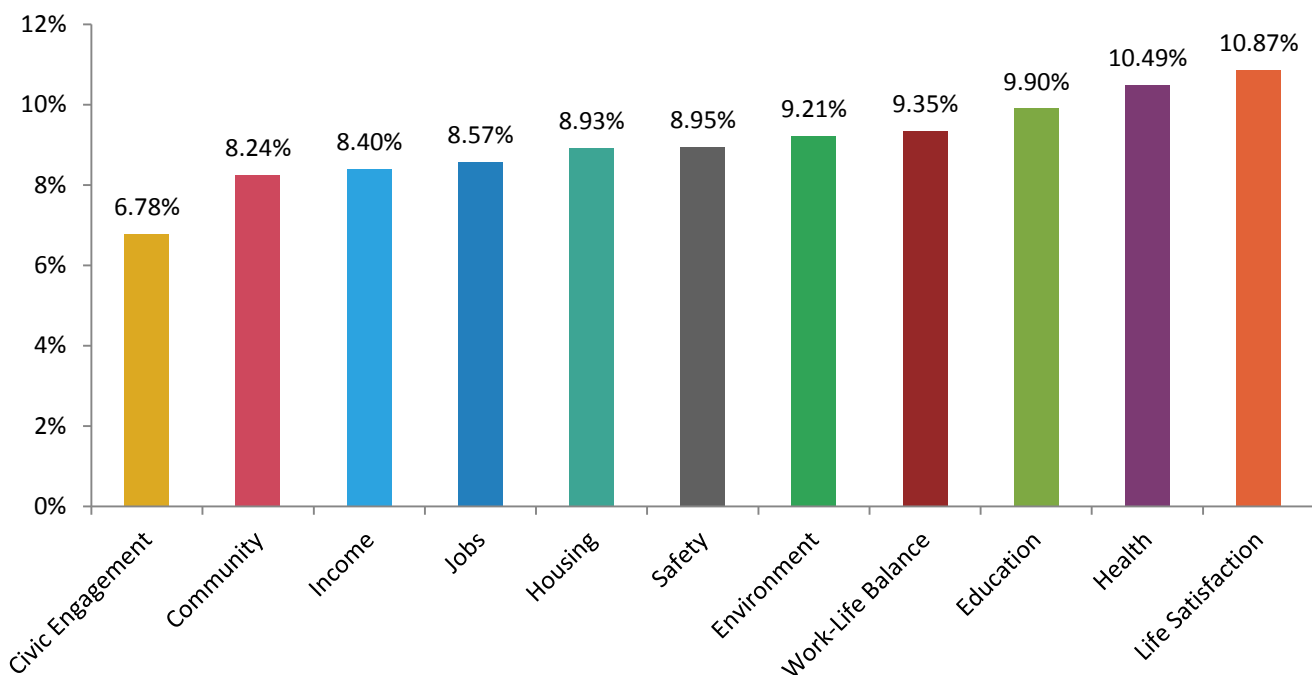


Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, and how these preferences differ across countries and population groups.

## WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN GERMANY?

Since its launch in May 2011, the Better Life Index has attracted **over ten million visits from just about every country on the planet** and has received over **22 million page views**. To date, over 451,000 people in Germany have visited the website making Germany the 7th country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Berlin (13% of visits), Munich, Hamburg, Cologne and Frankfurt.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared with the OECD by 11,600 website visitors in Germany. Findings are only indicative and are not representative of the population at large. **For German users of the Better Life Index, life satisfaction, health and education are the three most important topics** (shown below).<sup>1</sup> Up to date information, including a breakdown of participation in each country by gender and age can be found here: [www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#DEU](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#DEU).



<sup>1</sup> User information for Germany is based on shared indexes submitted between May 2011 and September 2017.

The **OECD Better Life Initiative**, launched in 2011, focuses on the aspects of life that matter the most to people and that shape the quality of their lives. The Initiative comprises a set of regularly updated well-being indicators and an in-depth analysis of specific topics, published in the *How's Life?* report. It also includes an interactive web application, the *Better Life Index*, and a number of *methodological and research projects* to improve the information base available to understand well-being levels, trends and their drivers.

The OECD Better Life Initiative:

- Helps to inform policy making to improve quality of life.
- Connects policies to people's lives.
- Generates support for needed policy measures.
- Improves civic engagement by encouraging the public to create their own *Better Life Index* and share their preferences about what matters most for well-being
- Empowers the public by improving their understanding of policy-making.

This note presents **selected findings for Germany from the *How's Life?* 2017 report** (pages 1-6) and shows what **German users of the Better Life Index** are telling us about their **well-being priorities** (page 7).

## HOW'S LIFE?



*How's Life?*, published every two years, provides a comprehensive picture of well-being in OECD and selected partner countries by bringing together an internationally comparable set of well-being indicators. It considers eleven dimensions of current well-being including: income and wealth; jobs and earnings; housing; health status; work-life balance; education and skills; social connections; civic engagement and governance; environmental quality; personal security; and subjective well-being. It also looks at four types of resources that help to sustain well-being over time: natural, human, economic and social capital.

The *How's Life?* 2017 report presents the latest data on well-being in OECD and partner countries, including how lives have changed since 2005. It includes a special focus on inequalities, the well-being of migrants in OECD countries, and the issue of governance – particularly how people experience and engage with public institutions. To read more, visit: [www.oecd.org/howslife](http://www.oecd.org/howslife).

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