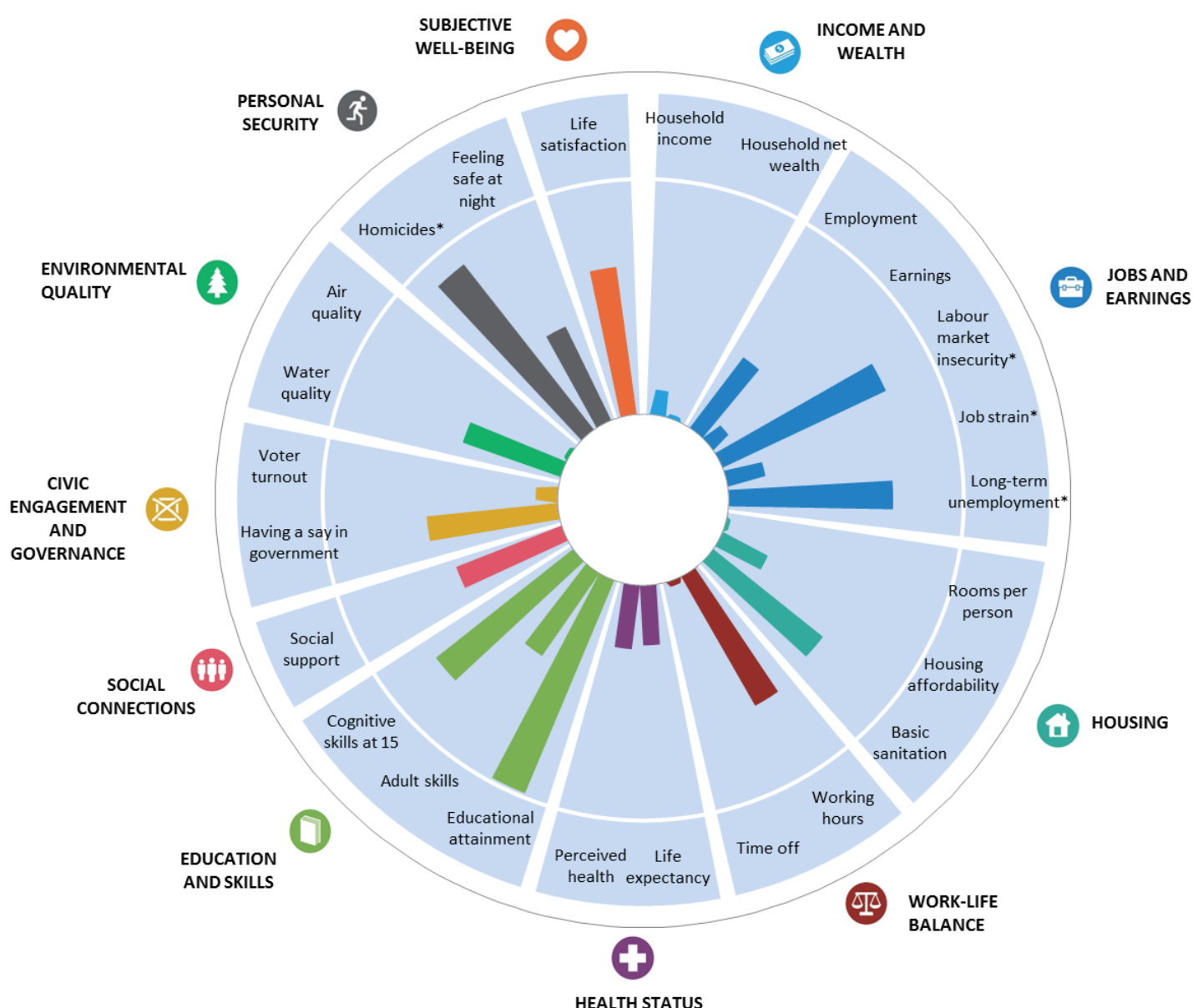


# How's Life in Poland?

Relative to other OECD countries, Poland's average performance across the different well-being dimensions is mixed. Material conditions are an area of comparative weakness: the average **household net adjusted disposable income** was around 19 000 USD in 2015 (60% of the OECD average level); earnings are low; and the incidence of **job strain** among Polish workers is comparatively high. Full-time employees also report having less **time off** (i.e. time spent on leisure and personal care) than the OECD average. However, only 7% of employees regularly **worked long hours** in 2015, compared to 13% in the OECD on average. **Life expectancy** in Poland, at 78 years in 2015, is among the lowest in the OECD, and only 58% of Polish adults **perceive their health** as "good" or "very good", compared to an OECD average of 69%. However, 91% of the adult working-age population have attained at least an upper secondary education (compared to an OECD average of 75%), and **cognitive skills** among 15-year-olds are also above the OECD average.

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














Note: This chart shows Poland'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 Poland's average well-being over the past 10 years

Dimension	Description	Change
 <b>Income and wealth</b>	Household net adjusted disposable income has increased by 35% cumulatively over the past decade, but still remains considerably lower than the OECD average.	↗
 <b>Jobs and earnings</b>	The employment rate has risen by almost 12 percentage points since 2005, which is more than in any other OECD country. Although real earnings have improved steadily and are currently 24% higher than in 2005, labour market insecurity has also increased. The long-term unemployment rate is 7 percentage points lower than a decade ago, but the incidence of job strain in 2015 is similar to that seen in 2005.	↗ ↗ ↘ ↗ ↔
 <b>Housing conditions</b>	The number of rooms per person has improved slightly since 2005, but remains below the OECD average. Despite having improved in 2005-2008, housing affordability has worsened in recent years, standing slightly above the OECD average. However, the percentage of people living in dwellings without basic sanitary facilities has been reduced by almost half.	↗ ↘ ↗
 <b>Work-life balance</b>	The share of employees working very long hours has registered a sustained fall since 2005, and it is currently one-third lower than it was a decade ago.	↗
 <b>Health status</b>	Life expectancy at birth has increased by almost 2 years since 2009 (the earliest year for which comparable data are available). The percentage of adults reporting to be in “good” or “very good” health has also increased, by nearly 4 points since 2005.	↗ ↗
 <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 Poland increased by just under 1 percent.	↗
 <b>Social connections</b>	The percentage of people who have relatives or friends whom they can count on to help in case of need has remained broadly stable since 2005-07.	↔
 <b>Civic engagement</b>	In contrast to the OECD average, voter turnout has increased by 4.4 percentage points since 2005, to reach 55.3% in the 2015 presidential elections.	↗
 <b>Environmental quality</b>	The percentage of Poles satisfied with their local water quality is currently 14 points higher than 10 years ago. Annual exposure to PM <sub>2.5</sub> air pollution is now 4% lower than in 2005, but remains above the OECD average.	↗ ↗
 <b>Personal security</b>	The number of deaths due to assault has almost halved compared to 2005. On the other hand, feelings of safety when walking alone at night are similar to their levels 10 years ago, but slightly lower than the OECD average of 69%.	↗ ↔
 <b>Subjective well-being</b>	Life satisfaction has seen little change in Poland over the past decade.	↔


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.


## Poland'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	1	↔ 2001-2011
Exposure to PM <sub>2.5</sub> air pollution	3	↗ 2005-2013
Forest area	2	↔ 2005-2014
Renewable freshwater resources	3	.. Long-term annual avg
Freshwater abstractions	1	.. 2015
Threatened birds	1	.. Latest available
Threatened mammals	1	.. Latest available
Threatened plants	2	.. Latest available

 <b>Economic capital</b>		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Produced fixed assets	3	↗ 2005-2014
Gross fixed capital formation	3	↘ 2005-2016
Financial net worth of total economy	3	↘ 2005-2015
Intellectual property assets	3	↗ 2005-2014
Investment in R&D	3	↗ 2005-2014
Household debt	1	↘ 2005-2015
Household net wealth	3	.. 2013
Financial net worth of government	2	↘ 2005-2016
Banking sector leverage	2	↘ 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	1	↔ 2014-2016
Educational expectancy	2	.. 2015
Cognitive skills at age 15	2	.. 2006-2015
Adult skills	2	.. 2011/2012
Long-term unemployment	2	↗ 2005-2016
Life expectancy at birth	3	↗ 2009-2015
Smoking prevalence	3	↗ 2009-2014
Obesity prevalence	2	↔ 2008-2014

 <b>Social capital</b>		
Indicator	Tier	Change
Trust in others	2	.. 2013
Trust in the police	3	.. 2013
Trust in the national government	3	↗ 2005-2016
Voter turnout	3	↗ 2005-2015
Government stakeholder engagement	1	.. 2014
Volunteering through organisations	3	.. 2011/2012

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

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

**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).

Poland has mixed outcomes on **vertical inequalities**. On one hand, the share of net wealth held by the richest 10% of households as well as the gaps between top and bottom performers in cognitive skills and adult skills are smaller than in most OECD countries. On the other hand, earnings and life expectancy are more unequally distributed than in the OECD on average.

Across OECD countries, **women** typically fare worse than **men** on earnings, low pay and employment. In Poland women are 20% less likely than men to be employed, a gap that is larger than for the OECD on average. However, gender gaps in earnings and low pay are small compared to the OECD average. The Polish gender divide in favour of men is larger than in the OECD on average for outcomes such as perceived health, time off and voter turnout.

In all OECD countries, **young people** are at disadvantage on the job market, compared to **middle-aged adults**. In Poland age-related gaps in both employment and unemployment are larger than for the OECD on average. Nonetheless, young Poles experience narrower gaps than their peers in most OECD countries in terms of wealth and earnings.

**Well-being inequalities in Poland**

	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					●

In most OECD countries, people with a **tertiary education** tend to fare better than those with only a **secondary education** across a range of well-being outcomes. In Poland, this gap is often comparatively large, with the exceptions of net wealth, - where it is one of the smallest in the OECD – and feelings of safety.

Most indicators of **deprivation** in Poland fall in the bottom or middle third of OECD countries. Comparatively poor outcomes include high share of overcrowded households (35%) as well as the high share of individuals who are asset poor (64%), did not cast a vote in national elections (almost 50%), and are exposed to high levels of air pollution (95%).

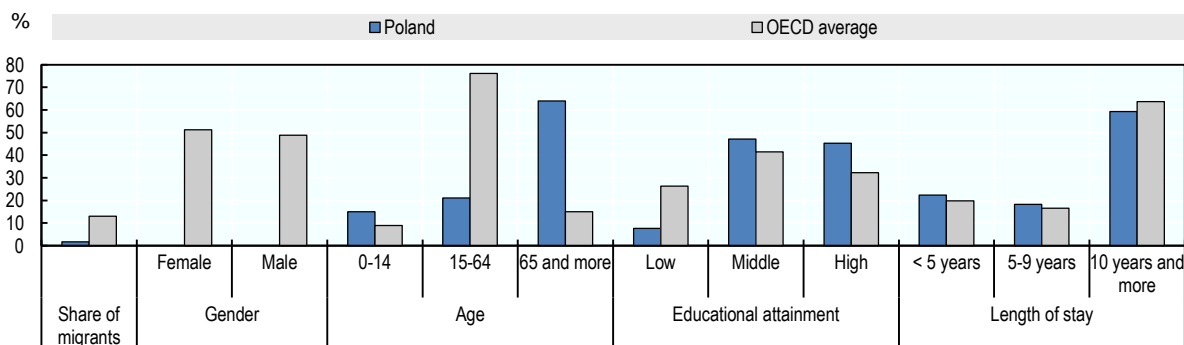
## HOW'S LIFE FOR MIGRANTS IN POLAND?

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 Poland and OECD?

Only 2% of people living in Poland were born elsewhere, far below the OECD average (13%). Migrants in Poland are more likely to be elderly (64% of them are aged 65 or over, as compared to 15% across the OECD). Migrants in Poland are more likely to have a middle or a high educational attainment than a low level. Three in five migrants arrived in Poland 10 years ago or more.

Share of migrants in the total population and selected characteristics

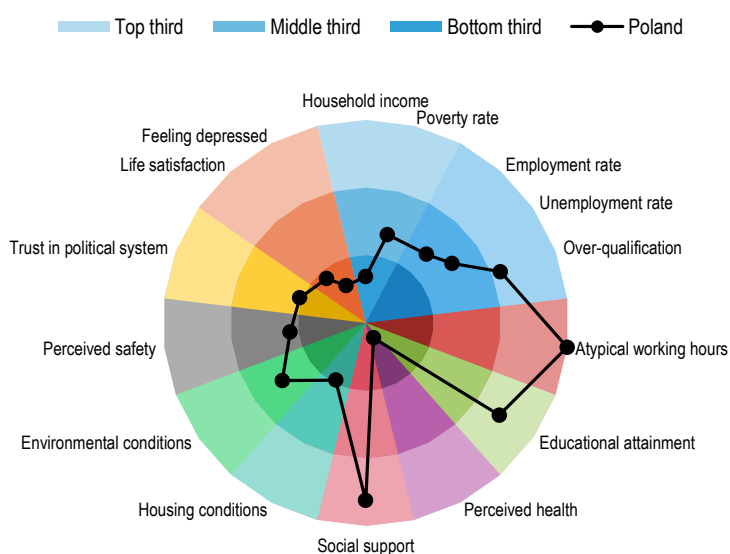


### How is migrants' well-being in Poland?

Compared with the migrant populations of other OECD countries, migrants living in Poland have a relatively good situation for over-qualification, atypical working hours, educational attainment and social support. Moreover, migrants settled in Poland rank in the middle third of OECD-country migrants for 6 out of 15 selected well-being indicators. They are in the bottom third for household income, perceived health, housing conditions, life satisfaction and feeling depressed.

As in many other OECD countries, migrants in Poland tend to experience lower well-being outcomes than the native-born population: in Poland, this is the case for 5 out of 10 selected well-being indicators. However, migrants in Poland are just as likely as the native-born to report similar levels of household income, social support and housing conditions, while they report a better situation for atypical working hours and trust in the political system.

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



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

	Migrants have a worse situation	Same situation	Migrants have a better situation
Household income		▲	
Atypical working hours			▲
Perceived health	▲		
Social support		▲	
Housing conditions		▲	
Environmental conditions	▲		
Perceived safety	▲		
Trust in political system			▲
Life satisfaction	▲		
Feeling depressed	▲		

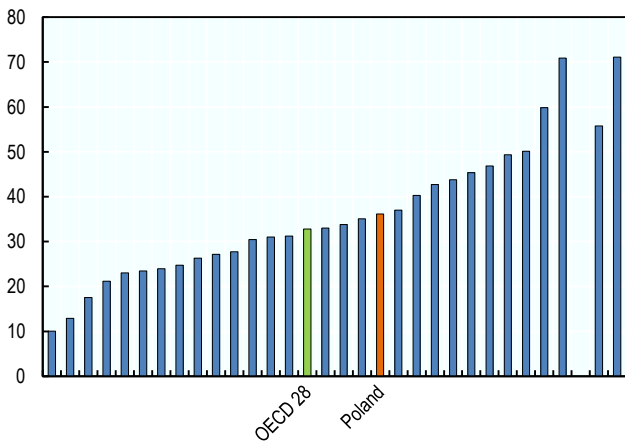
## GOVERNANCE AND WELL-BEING IN POLAND

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 Poland, slightly over 36% of the population feels that they have a say in what their government does, which is just above the OECD average of 33%. In recent years, voter turnout in Poland has slightly increased, with 55% of registered voters casting a ballot in 2015, compared to 51% ten years prior. When asked about whether or not corruption is widespread across government, 61% of Poles answered "yes", as compared to the 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

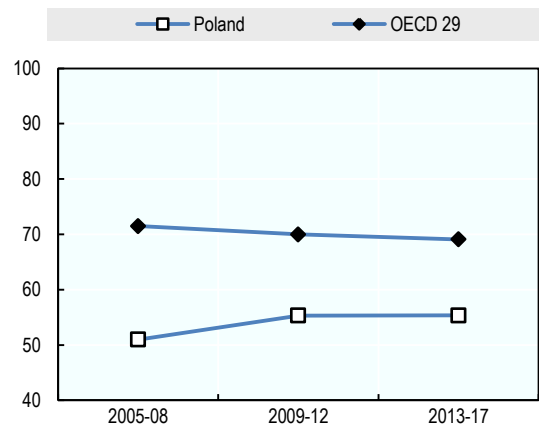
Percentage of people aged 16-65 who feel that they have a say in what the government does, around 2012



Source: OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC database)

### Voter turnout

Percentage of votes cast among the population registered to vote



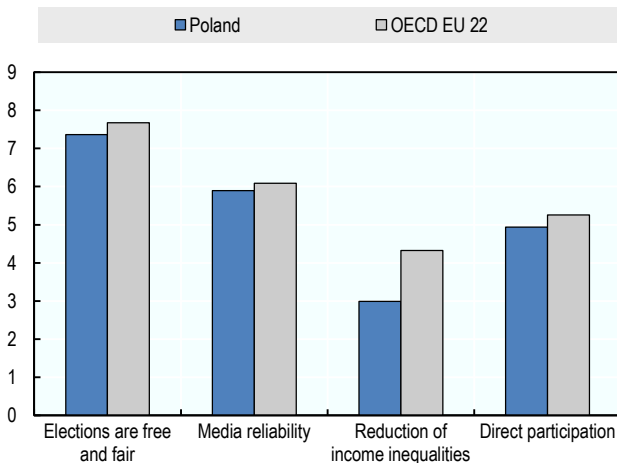
Note: Data refers to presidential elections. If more than one election took place over the time period indicated, the simple average voter turnout from all elections is shown. The OECD average sums elections that occurred over the time periods shown in 29 OECD countries.

Source: IDEA dataset

Overall, Polish satisfaction with the way democracy works in their country is consistently below the OECD European average. People in Poland tend to be relatively satisfied with the freedom and fairness of elections (7.4 on a 0-10 scale), while they are much less satisfied with policies to reduce income inequalities (3.0) or with the existence of direct participation mechanisms at the local level (4.9). Meanwhile, satisfaction with public services varies according to whether people have used those services in the last year: People with direct recent experience of using health and education services tend to be satisfied than those without. In Poland, satisfaction with education services is close to OECD European average levels; whereas satisfaction with health services is below.

### People’s satisfaction with different elements of democracy

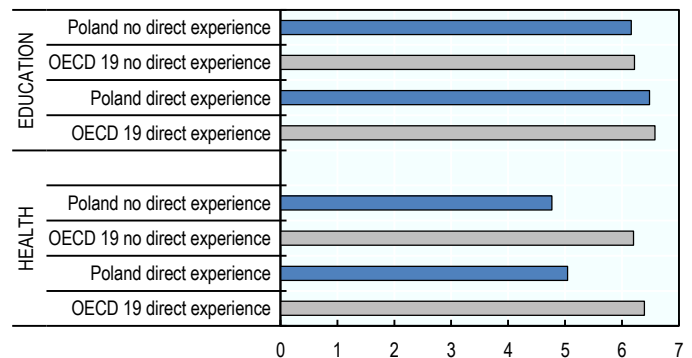
Mean score on a 0-10 scale, with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with elements of democracy, 2012



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.

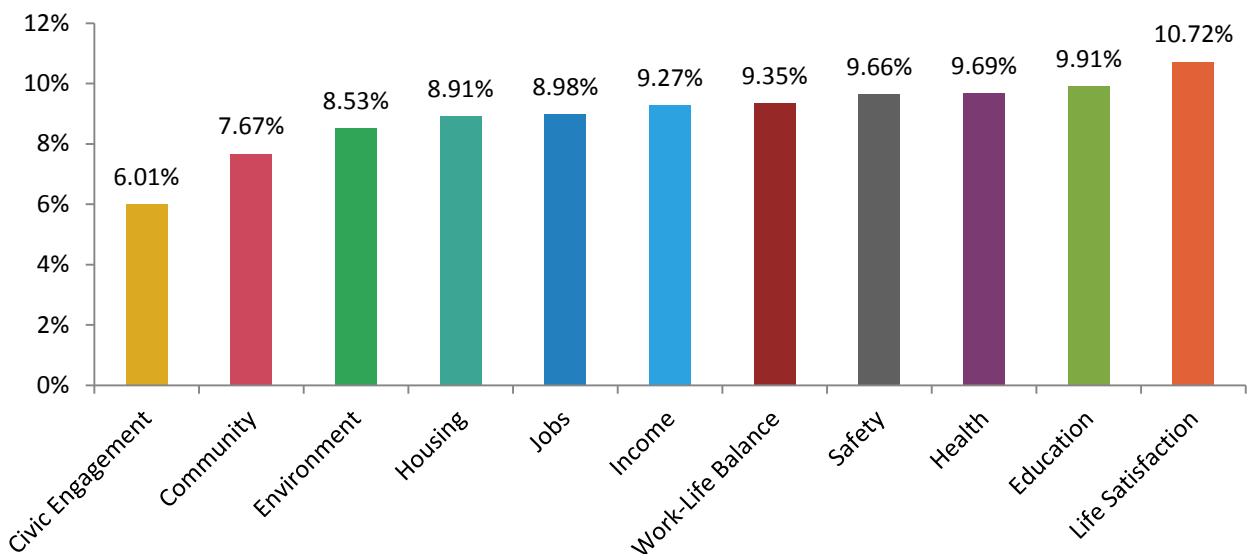


Users can also share their index with other people in their networks, as well as with the OECD. This allows the OECD to gather valuable information on the importance that users attach to various life dimensions, and how these preferences differ across countries and population groups.

## WHAT MATTERS MOST TO PEOPLE IN POLAND?

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 129,000 people in Poland have visited the website making Poland the 19th country overall in traffic to the website. The top cities are Warsaw (34% of visits), Krakow, Wroclaw, Poznan, Katowice and Gdansk.

The following country findings reflect the ratings voluntarily shared with the OECD by 1,387 website visitors in Poland. Findings are only indicative and are not representative of the population at large. **For Polish users of the Better Life Index, life satisfaction, education and health are the three most important topics** (shown below).<sup>1</sup> Up to date information, including a breakdown of participants in each country by gender and age can be found here: [www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#POL](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/responses/#POL).



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

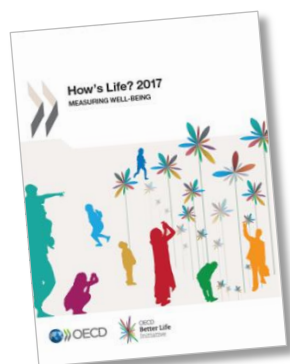
The **OECD Better Life Initiative**, launched in 2011, focuses on the aspects of life that matter the most to people and that shape the quality of their lives. The Initiative comprises a set of regularly updated well-being indicators and an in-depth analysis of specific topics, published in the *How's 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 Poland from the *How's Life? 2017 report*** (pages 1-6) and shows what **Polish 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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