



Satisfaction with the situation at the country level and with personal circumstances

About 33 and 13 per cent of respondents believe that the economic and the political situation in Estonia were better in 2016 than four years prior to the survey. Both figures are above the corresponding averages for the transition region and in line with those for Germany. Only one in five Estonian respondents believe that corruption was reduced in the four years preceding the survey, a number below the average for central Europe and the Baltic states (CEB) and the transition region average of 23 per cent.

44 per cent of respondents report that they are satisfied with their current financial situation and 41 per cent believe that households in their country live better than they did four years prior to the survey. Both figures show a steep increase in satisfaction levels relative to 2010, when only 38 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their financial situation and only one in four Estonians thought that households had a better life at that time than before.

Life satisfaction levels substantially increased from 54 per cent in 2010 to 71 per cent in 2016, and they are now higher than the CEB average (54 per cent), the transition region average (43 per cent) and the corresponding figure for Italy (42 per cent). This value is the fourth highest in the transition region, and is just one percentage point below the average for Germany, where as many as three in four respondents report being satisfied with their life. Levels of satisfaction are highest among young people and lower in the lower income bracket.

Optimism about future generations has dropped slightly since the last survey, with 52 per cent of respondents believing that future generations will have a better life than the present generations. However, this value is still higher than the average for Germany and Italy, the CEB region and the entire transition region. There is also little variation in optimism across different age and income groups.

Attitudes towards democracy and the market economy

Support for democracy and a market economy has remained stable since 2010. About 38 per cent of respondents favour a market economy over any other economic system and 55 per cent prefer democracy over any other alternative. These figures are in line with the averages for CEB, just above the corresponding numbers for the transition region, but still well below the averages for Germany.

Estonia has some of the highest percentages of respondents who believe that the following institutions are in place in the country: free elections, law and order, freedom of speech, an independent press, a strong political opposition and a fair court system. When asked which democratic institutions exist in the country, 72 per cent of respondents mentioned freedom of speech, followed by peace and stability, law and order and gender equality at 69, 63 and 63 per cent, respectively. While these figures are above the averages for the transition region and in line with the corresponding numbers for Italy, Estonia still fares worse than Germany on most accounts, with the only exceptions being the existence of an independent press and of a strong political opposition.

Priorities for government spending

About 36 per cent of respondents think that additional expenditure on health care should be the first spending priority for the government, a number that is higher than the averages for Germany and Italy (22 and 23 per cent, respectively). This is followed by investment in education (27 per cent), helping the poor (15 per cent) and improving pensions (14 per cent). Additional analysis of the LiTS III data shows that 54 and 42 per cent of Estonians would be willing to pay more taxes in order to have better public health care and an improved education system, respectively.

CHART 1. Life satisfaction: percentage of respondents who are satisfied with life, all things considered



Sources of information

The main daily sources of information for Estonians are the television and the radio; internet and social media; and discussions with family, friends or colleagues, mentioned by 76, 65 and 61 per cent of respondents, respectively. 37 per cent of Estonians read newspapers daily, as compared with 31 per cent of Germans, 22 per cent of Italians and only 9 per cent of the respondents residing in the transition region.

Self-assessed health

Only 43 per cent of Estonians consider their health to be “good” or “very good”, a 3 percentage point decline relative to 2010 levels, and a rather low figure in comparison to an overall average of 54 per cent for the transition region. Estonia does not fare well either when compared with the CEB region, Germany and Italy, where 60, 68 and 54 per cent of the respondents report being in good health, respectively. Further analysis shows that the only groups that compare well with their counterparts in the comparator countries are the younger generation and respondents in the middle- and upper-income brackets.

Quality of public services

The majority of Estonian respondents report that they are satisfied with the general quality of all public services in their country. Satisfaction rates for all services but heating are among the highest in the transition region, and they range from 58 per cent for local roads to 97 per cent for the provision of pipeline gas. All these figures, except for the one related to local roads, are above the averages for Germany.

Social and economic mobility

When respondents were asked from a list of options what they thought were the most important factors for success in life in their country, 56 per cent of them chose “intelligence and skills”, the highest result for that specific response option in the transition region and also well above the percentages for Germany and Italy. On the other hand, only 22 per cent of respondents identified “effort and hard work” as the main factor to succeed in life, the lowest value in the transition region overall.

Attitudes towards women

Only 51 per cent of Estonian men consider female business executives to be as competent as male business executives and 49 per cent of male respondents also believe that men make better politicians than women. The corresponding figures for female respondents are lower, at 43 and 40 per cent, respectively. Moreover, only around 42 per cent of respondents think that it is important that their daughter achieves a university education, a value that is among the lowest in the transition region and that is significantly below the averages for the western European comparators (63 per cent in Germany and 71 per cent in Italy). On the bright side, only 23 per cent of respondents believe that a woman should do the household chores, even if her husband is not working, and 41 per cent of respondents favour a traditional family arrangement where the man works and the woman takes care of the house and children, two of the lowest percentages in the transition region.

CHART 2. Optimism: percentage of respondents who are optimistic about the future of the younger generation

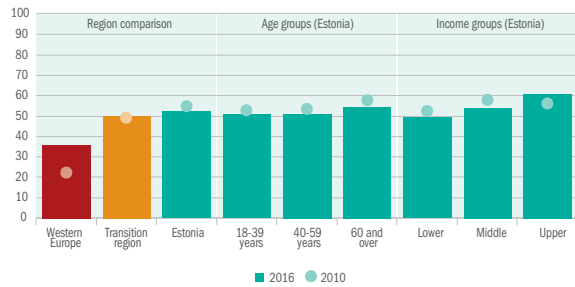


CHART 3. Market economy and democracy: percentage of respondents who prefer a market over a planned economy and democracy over an authoritarian government

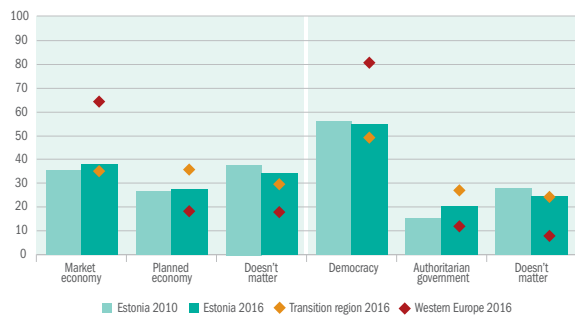


CHART 4. Basic democratic institutions: percentage of respondents who agree that the country has these basic democratic institutions

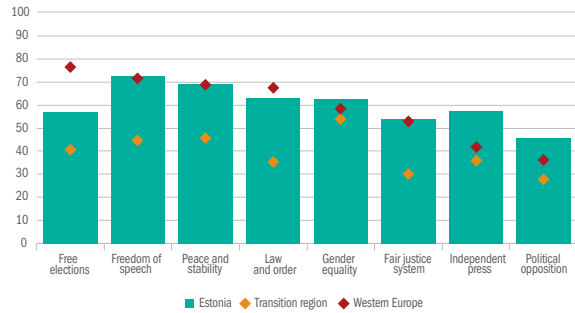


CHART 5. Priorities for government spending

Panel A: Percentage of respondents who identify a given area as a priority in terms of government spending



Panel B: Breakdown of preferences for the top priority (health care)

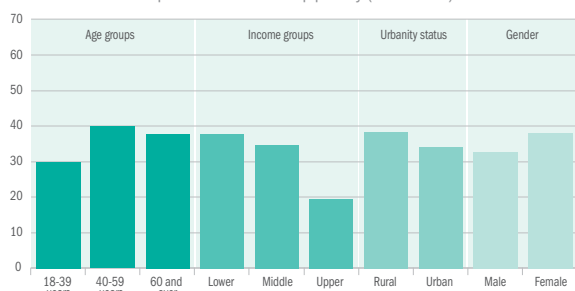


CHART 6. Sources of information: percentage of respondents who use these different sources of information

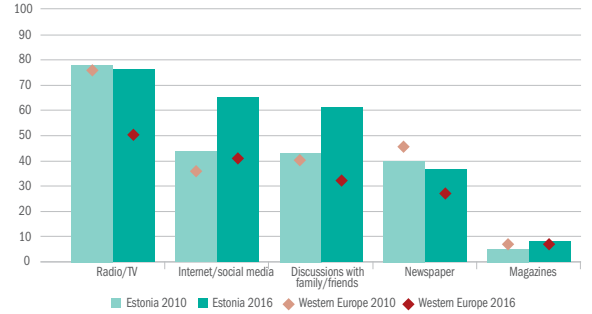


CHART 7. Health assessment: percentage of respondents who report themselves to be in good health (self-assessed)

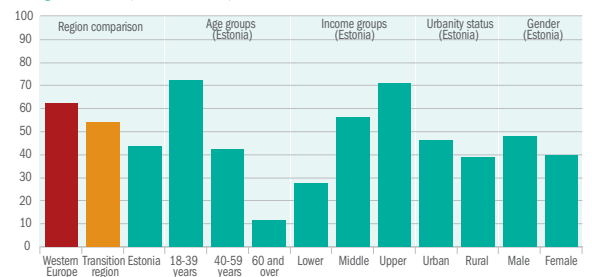


CHART 8. Quality of services: percentage of respondents who are satisfied with the quality of public services, by category

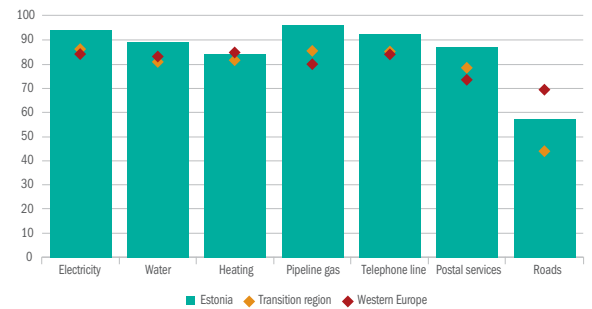


CHART 9. Factors for success: percentage of respondents who identify the given factor as the most important for success, by income level

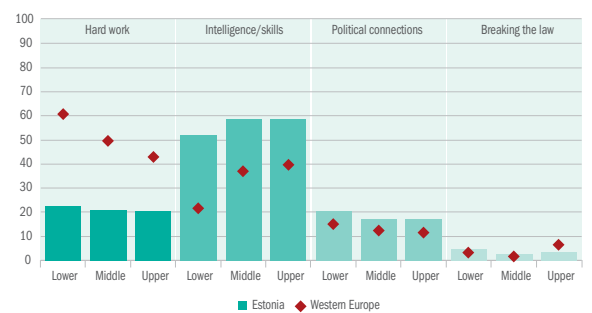


CHART 10. Attitudes towards women: percentage of respondents who agree with the statements below

