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Correction Notice

ST41: International comparisons

A production error was discovered in Figure 8 on page 14, originally published on 11 November 2010.

The figure title and corresponding text incorrectly read 'foreign born population' when it should have read 'foreign citizens'.

This error has now been corrected.

ONS apologises for any inconvenience caused.

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International comparisons

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This is the first Social Trends chapter to focus on international comparisons. Its aim is to give an overview of the UK in an international context; drawing on international trends and comparisons. Comparing statistics across countries is increasingly important with the rise of globalisation. It also enables the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies in international communities such as the European Union (EU).

The chapter covers a variety of topics including the economy, health, education and crime. In previous editions of Social Trends a limited number of international comparisons have been included in each topic chapter and further international comparisons may still be found in topic articles where relevant.

Key points:

The economy and concerns over the economic situation

- For both the UK and USA GDP per head peaked in 2007 at 29,200 and 37,800 purchasing power standards (PPS) respectively, (PPS is an artificial currency unit that allows comparison between countries). For the EU-27 the peak was in 2008 at an average of 25,100 PPS per head
- In 2008 the level of income inequality in the UK at 34 per cent was joint fifth highest in the EU (alongside Lithuania), up from eighth highest in 2007. This was as a result of income inequality increasing in the UK and falling in both Greece and Estonia

Education and employment

- Between 2000 and 2007, the UK annual average unemployment rate remained relatively stable at around 5 per cent of the labour force, but between 2007 and 2009 it increased by 2.3 percentage points to 7.6 per cent
- The EU average rate of unemployment showed a slightly different pattern, remaining relatively stable at just under 9 per cent between 2000 and 2005 before falling by 1.9 percentage points between 2005 and 2008, returning to the 2005 level in 2009
- Between 2000 and 2008 the proportion of young people aged 15–24 not in education or employment increased in three of the G7 countries. The second largest increase was in the UK with an increase of 1.4 percentage points to 13.0 per cent

Crime and criminal justice

- In spring 2010, 28 per cent of people in the UK selected crime as one of the two most important issues facing the UK, compared with 16 per cent of people across the EU-27
- In 2008, the size of the prison population relative to the total population in the UK ranked ninth highest in the EU and, at 151.2 prisoners per 100,000 population, was higher than the EU-27 average of 125.4

- In 2008 in the UK and most other EU countries the highest proportion of prisoners were sentenced for robbery and other thefts
- A higher proportion of prisoners in the UK in 2008 were sentenced for assault and battery (17.3 per cent) or rape and other sexual offences (10.8 per cent) than in most other EU countries

Population

- Between 2004 and 2009 net migration and natural population change contributed relatively equally to population change in the UK, averaging 3.4 and 3.0 people per 1,000 inhabitants per year respectively
- The proportion of the UK population in 2008 who were foreign citizens was slightly higher than the EU average at 6.6 per cent compared with 6.2 per cent
- Population structures across the EU vary widely with 0.1 per cent of the population of Romania in 2008 being foreign citizens compared with 42.6 per cent of the population of Luxembourg
- Between 1950 and 2010 the world's population has more than doubled from 2.5 to 6.9 billion people. The UK population also increased over this period, though at a much slower rate, from 50.6 million to 61.9 million
- Population in all areas outside Europe grew at a much faster rate between 1950 and 2010 so that Europe's share of world population halved from 21.6 to 10.6 per cent
- In 2010 Asia accounted for 60.3 per cent of world population and the country with the largest population was China with 1.4 billion people

Health

- Between 1997 and 2007 both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy have increased for men and women in the UK
- In comparison with the EU-27 average, men could expect to live 1.6 years longer and women 0.3 years less in the UK than in the EU
- Healthy life expectancy in the UK was higher for both men and women than the EU-27 average in 2007
- In the UK in 2007 the death rate from all cancers for men was lower than the average for the 25 EU countries for which data are available, at 212.3 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants compared with 228.7. However, the opposite was true for women with the UK recording 153.7 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants for women from all cancers compared with an average of 131.5 deaths for the 25 EU countries for which data are available
- In 2008 health expenditure as a percentage of GDP in the UK was the second lowest among G7 countries at 8.7 per cent. This compares with 16.0 per cent of GDP in the USA, which had the highest expenditure
- In 2008, 82.6 per cent of total healthcare expenditure in the UK came from public sources, the highest proportion of all G7 countries. The lowest public expenditure on healthcare as a proportion of the total was recorded by the USA at 46.5 per cent

- In autumn 2009, 70 per cent of citizens across the EU and 86 per cent of citizens in the UK rated the quality of healthcare in their country as 'good' or 'very good'

Political engagement

- Trust in political parties in the UK fell from 18 per cent in autumn 2008 to 9 per cent in autumn 2009
- However, interest in politics in the UK increased in the years leading up to the 2010 General Election, with 12.6 per cent of people saying they were 'very interested' in politics in 2008 compared with 10.9 per cent in 2006

Environment

- Only 4 per cent of people in the UK and across the EU-27 considered the environment to be one of the two most important issues facing their country in spring 2010
- In both the UK and across the EU-27 minimising waste and recycling was regarded as the action that would have the highest impact on solving environmental problems, with 34 per cent of people in the UK and 30 per cent of people across the EU-27 selecting this option in 2009
- Over the period 1998 to 2008 the quantity of municipal waste generated had increased by 4.1 per cent in the UK and 5.6 per cent across the EU-27. However, the quantity of waste sent to landfill or incinerated had fallen by 26.4 per cent in the UK and 13.2 per cent across the EU-27. This could be an indication that more waste is being sent for recycling
- Between 1998 and 2008 the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions has fallen both in the UK and across the EU-27. The fall in UK greenhouse gas emissions was larger than the fall across the EU-27, 10.7 per cent compared with 4.4 per cent

The economy and concerns over the economic situation

This section gives an overview of the economies of the UK and other countries, starting with Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is a key economic indicator, measuring the total economic activity of a country. Expressing it per head adjusts for the population size. **Figure 1** shows that the patterns of change in GDP per head since 2000 for the UK, the EU-27 average, and the USA have been very similar.

Figure 1 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head in PPS¹: EU/UK/USA comparison

Thousands

¹ Expressing GDP in purchasing power standards (PPS) eliminates differences in price levels between countries, and calculations on a per head basis allows for the comparison of economies significantly different in absolute size.

Source: Eurostat (table tec00001)

Purchasing power standards (PPS) allow the conversion of GDP from national currencies into an artificial common currency which tells us how many currency units a given quantity of foods and services costs in different countries. Looking at GDP per head in PPS:

- For both the UK and USA GDP peaked in 2007 at 29,200 and 37,800 respectively. For the EU-27 the peak was in 2008 at an average of 25,100
- Over the period 2000 to 2009 the UK experienced an average annual change in GDP per head of 2.1 per cent, this compares with 2.4 per cent for the EU-27 and 1.3 per cent for the USA
- Of the EU-27 member states, Luxembourg had the highest per head GDP in 2009 at 63,000, more than twice the UK's GDP of 27,400 (Eurostat table tec00001)

Following the recession inflation has become an increasing concern. **Table 1** shows the 12-month percentage change in consumer prices across the EU-27 in June 2010.

Table 1 **Annual percentage change¹ in consumer prices:² EU comparison, June 2010**

Percentage change			
Hungary	5.2	France	0.8
Romania	4.6	Malta	0.7
Poland	3.5	Belgium	0.6
Greece	2.7	Spain	0.5
United Kingdom	2.6	Germany	0.4
Sweden	2.1	Netherlands	0.4
Bulgaria	1.6	Czech Republic	0.3
Luxembourg	1.6	Slovakia	0.3
Denmark	1.4	Estonia	0.0
Slovenia	1.3	Portugal	-0.3
Finland	1.3	Latvia	-1.6
Cyprus	1.0	Ireland	-2.5
Italy	0.9		
Lithuania	0.9		
Austria	0.9	EU-27	1.3

1 Twelve-month average rate of change.

2 All item Harmonised Indices of Consumer Prices (HICP), a set of EU consumer price indices (CPIs) calculated according to a harmonized approach and a single set of definitions to allow comparisons across countries.

Source: Eurostat (table prc_hicp_mv12r)

The Harmonised Indices of Consumer Prices (HICP)ⁱ allow inflation levels to be compared across EU member states. In June 2010 Hungary had the highest level of inflation at 5.2 per cent while inflation was fifth highest in the UK at 2.6 per cent, twice the average for the EU-27 (1.3 per cent).

Prices, as measured by the HICP, fell between June 2009 and June 2010 in Portugal, Latvia and Ireland, with Ireland recording the largest fall at -2.5 per cent.

While indicators such as GDP per head give an indication of the overall state of an economy they do not give a complete picture of economic wellbeing as, for example, they do not take into consideration the distribution of income and wealth across the economy. The extent of household income inequality is commonly measured using the Gini coefficientⁱⁱ for which higher values represent higher levels of inequality, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 Household income inequality: EU comparisons, 2008

Gini coefficient¹

¹ The Gini coefficient can take a value between 0 and 100.

Source: Eurostat (table ilc_di12)

The level of income inequality in the UK in 2008, at 34 per cent, was joint fifth highest in the EU (alongside Lithuania). In 2007 the UK had the eighth highest level, moving up to fifth in 2008 as a

result of income inequality increasing in the UK and falling in both Greece and Estonia (Eurostat table ilc_di12).

It appears that the recession has had a mixed impact on income inequality in the EU with increases between 2007 and 2008 for 11 countries, including the UK with an increase of 1.2 percentage points indicating greater income inequality. There were decreases for 13 countries, with Estonia recording the biggest fall of 2.5 percentage points while three countries remained at the same level (Eurostat table ilc_di12).

There have been changes in the concerns of EU citizens over the course of the 2008–09 recession. In spring 2007, 20 per cent of people in the EU-27 and just 6 per cent of people in the UK identified the economic situation as one of the two most important issues facing their country (European Commission, 2007). By spring 2009 concern about the economic situation had increased to 42 per cent across the EU and 31 per cent in the UK (European Commission, 2009a). This proportion, increased again in the UK to reach 38 per cent in spring 2010, but fell to 40 per cent for the EU-27, as shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 **Key concerns of citizens: ¹ UK/EU comparison, spring 2010**

Percentages

¹ Respondents aged 15 or over were asked 'What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment? (MAX. TWO ANSWERS)'.

Source: Eurobarometer 73, (European Commission, 2010a)

While the key concern for UK citizens in spring 2010 was the economic situation, the main concern of EU citizens as a whole in spring 2010 was unemployment, with 48 per cent of people identifying unemployment as one of the two most important issues facing the country.

Unemployment was the second most important concern in the UK at 32 per cent, an increase of 24 percentage points from spring 2007 (European Commission, 2007). The joint third highest concerns of UK citizens in spring 2010 were crime and immigration at 28 per cent each. The following sections will look at these concerns in turn, starting with unemployment.

Education and employment

During and after the recession annual average unemployment rates have increased in the UK and across the EU-27.

Figure 4 **Annual average unemployment rates: ¹ UK/EU comparison**

Percentages

¹ The unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people employed and unemployed, where employed persons are those who worked at least one hour for pay during the reference week, or were temporarily absent from such work, and unemployed persons are those aged 15–74 (16–74 in Spain, Sweden and UK) who were not employed during the reference week.

Source: Eurostat (table tsiem110)

Between 2000 and 2007 the UK annual average unemployment rate remained relatively stable at around 5 per cent of the labour force, but between 2007 and 2009 it increased from 5.3 per cent to 7.6 per cent. The EU average rate of unemployment showed a slightly different pattern, remaining relatively stable at just under 9 per cent between 2000 and 2005 before falling from 8.9 per cent to 7.0 per cent between 2005 and 2008. However, this fall was reversed between 2008 and 2009, with the unemployment rate moving back to the 2005 level of 8.9 per cent. In comparison, the USA saw a rise of 5.3 percentage points between 2000 and 2009, to reach 9.3 per cent. Between 2000 and 2009 Ireland saw the biggest rise in unemployment within the EU-27, increasing by 7.7 percentage points to 11.9 per cent. However, Spain recorded the highest unemployment rate in 2009 at 18.0 per cent (Eurostat table tsiem110).

Along with overall unemployment, a recent concern has been the number of young people not in education or employment.

Figure 5 Youths aged 15 to 24 not in education or employment: ¹ G7ⁱⁱⁱ comparison

Percentages

¹ Youths in education include those attending part-time as well as full-time education, but exclude those in non-formal education and in educational activities of very short duration. Employment covers all those who have worked for pay for at least one hour in the reference week of the survey.

Source: OECD Education database

Between 2000 and 2008 the proportion of young people aged 15–24 not in education or employment increased in three of the G7 countries (**Figure 5**). The largest increase was in the USA with an increase of 1.6 percentage points, to 12.1 per cent, followed by the UK with an increase of 1.4 percentage points, to 13.0 per cent. However, Italy recorded the highest proportion of young people not in education or employment across the G7 in both 2000 and 2008, despite also experiencing the biggest fall of 5.0 percentage points over the period.

The charity the Prince's Trust has expressed concern about the number of young people not in education or employment saying that 'all too often unemployed young people face a downward spiral towards a loss of self-confidence, or even crime, homelessness and drug-use.' (Telegraph, 2010).

The following section will look at crime and criminal justice across Europe.

Crime and criminal justice

In spring 2010, 28 per cent of people in the UK selected crime as one of the two most important issues facing the UK, compared with 16 per cent of people across the EU-27 (**Figure 3**).

Table 2 **Fear of violent crime: ¹ European Social Survey participant country comparison, 2008**

Percentages

	All or most of the time	Some of the time	Just occasionally	Never		All or most of the time	Some of the time	Just occasionally	Never
Croatia	0.5	5.6	17.9	76.1	Belgium	3.0	23.7	29.9	43.5
Turkey	2.7	16.7	6.5	74.1	Spain	4.3	21.8	33.4	40.5
Cyprus	0.9	10.5	19.4	69.3	Sweden	2.0	17.9	40.6	39.5
Switzerland	1.2	13.1	28.7	57.0	United Kingdom	4.3	18.6	38.4	38.7
Netherlands	0.9	14.0	28.7	56.5	France	3.8	25.8	34.0	36.4
Israel	3.2	15.6	25.6	55.7	Finland	1.0	17.3	46.4	35.4
Slovenia	0.6	4.7	39.3	55.4	Estonia	2.0	23.0	39.8	35.3
Norway	0.6	6.6	37.4	55.4	Slovakia	4.6	29.6	30.5	35.3
Denmark	1.1	9.1	36.8	53	Greece	6.9	33.5	24.7	34.9
Germany	1.6	12.3	34.0	52.1	Latvia	2.0	10.2	53.3	34.5
Romania	4.6	23.4	20.8	51.1	Russian Federation	3.5	12.6	50.0	34.0
Czech Republic	0.8	6.6	44.9	47.7	Bulgaria	13.0	26.8	31.0	29.3
Hungary	2.5	11.6	40.3	45.7	Ukraine	2.3	13.3	57.1	27.3
Portugal	5.1	23.3	25.9	45.7					
Poland	2.0	5.0	48.3	44.7					

¹ Respondents aged 15+ asked 'How often do you worry about becoming a victim of violent crime?'

Source: European Social Survey 2008

In 2008 more than a fifth of UK residents stated that they feared becoming a victim of violent crime some (18.6 per cent) or all or most (4.3 per cent) of the time (**Table 2**). Of those countries participating in the European Social Survey, Croatia had the highest proportion of people stating they never feared violent crime at 76.1 per cent, compared with 38.7 per cent of people in the UK.

The relationship between fear of crime and crime rates is not straightforward as fear of crime in the UK has remained high despite falls in actual crime rates (Home Office, 2010). However, it is difficult to compare crime rates across countries because of differences in definitions of crime and traditions of policing. Also comparing crime data from societies that are fundamentally different may ignore cultural differences that affect levels of reporting.

While it is difficult to compare crime rates across countries, the Council of Europe does collect information on prison populations and staffing in Europe.

Figure 6 Prison population: EU comparison, 2008¹

Prison population rate per 100,000 inhabitants

¹ Data are point estimates with different countries taking estimates on different days of the year

Source: SPACE I (Council of Europe, 2010)

In 2008 the size of the prison population relative to the total population in the UK ranked ninth highest in the EU-27 and, at 151.2 prisoners per 100,000 population, higher than the EU-27 average of 125.4 (**Figure 6**). Prison population was highest in Latvia at 291.4 prisoners per 100,000 population. It should be remembered that countries may have different sentencing and remand policies which may affect the size of the prison population.

The Council of Europe also gather data on the main offences for which prisoners were sentenced. A higher proportion of prisoners in the UK in 2008 were sentenced for assault and battery (17.3 per cent) or rape and other sexual offences (10.8 per cent) than in most other EU countries, as shown in **Table 3**. However, in most countries shown in the table, including the UK, the highest proportion of the prison population in 2008 had been sentenced for robbery and other thefts. The only exceptions were Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden, where the highest proportion of the prison population had been sentenced for drug offences and Denmark and France, where the highest proportion were sentenced for assault and battery.

Table 3 **Sentenced prisoners by main offence: EU comparison,¹ 2008²**

Percentages

	Homicide ³	Assault and Battery	Rape and other sexual offences	Robbery and other thefts	Drug offences		Homicide ³	Assault and Battery	Rape and other sexual offences	Robbery and other thefts	Drug offences
Belgium	4.7	10.9	10.5	32.8	13.9	Malta	3.1	4.7	7.1	20.5	20.2
Bulgaria	12.1	1.6	6.8	56.9	5.5	Netherlands	14.0	3.6	2.8	23.7	19.8
Cyprus	9.0	2.1	8.6	31.8	20.7	Poland	6.7	..	3.6	40.8	..
Czech Republic	0.6	22.1	2.5	31.9	13.1	Portugal	12.7	1.6	5.0	26.9	21.3
Denmark	7.9	27.6	5.6	24.0	24.2	Romania	24.6	0.8	6.9	51.3	4.0
Estonia	23.3	..	3.5	37.2	15.2	Slovenia	11.8	6.9	12.9	34.1	10.3
Finland	20.1	19.6	2.9	22.1	16.1	Spain	5.6	5.2	6.3	41.5	27.1
France	7.1	22.9	16.2	18.0	14.2	Sweden	10.1	14.2	9.1	16.2	30.5
Germany	7.3	12.0	8.0	33.0	15.4	United Kingdom	10.7	17.3	10.8	28.7	15.7
Hungary	11.8	7.9	4.9	46.2	2.5						
Ireland	10.9	14.3	9.0	28.5	19.3						
Italy	22.7	0.3	10.3	25.3	36.1						
Latvia	9.2	6.9	7.3	58.3	12.0						
Lithuania	25.5	5.3	5.9	42.6	6.5						
Luxembourg	12.0	4.5	8.0	20.1	44.6						

1 Data not available for Austria, Greece and Slovakia.

2 Data are point estimates with different countries taking estimates on different days of the year.

3 Including attempted homicide.

Source: SPACE I (Council of Europe, 2010)

Population

Immigration was of equal concern to UK citizens as crime in the spring 2010 Eurobarometer (**Figure 3**). There are two components of population change: natural change, being the difference between births and deaths, and net migration, the difference between the numbers of people immigrating and emigrating. In the 10 years to 2009 net migration was the main driver of overall population change in the EU (Eurostat, 2009).

Figure 7 Population change: EU comparison, 2004–2009¹

Average rates per 1,000 inhabitants per year

¹ ONS publishes UK components of population change relating to mid-year population estimates. UK figures published by Eurostat relate to 1 January.

Source: Eurostat (table demo_gind: natgrowrt and cnmigratr)

Between 2004 and 2009 net migration and natural population change contributed relatively equally to population change in the UK, averaging 3.4 and 3.0 people per 1,000 inhabitants per year respectively. The average rate of net migration in the UK was joint 11th highest in the EU (alongside Malta and Greece) and slightly higher than the EU average of 3.2. Averaged across the EU-27 the natural rate of population change was 0.9 people per 1,000 population per year.

Ireland had the highest level of population change at an average increase of 16.8 people per 1,000 inhabitants per year with the majority (9.3) resulting from natural change. Luxembourg had the highest average rate of net migration at 12.6 people per 1,000 population per year.

Over the period 2004 to 2009 eight EU countries saw negative rates of natural population change (that is, more deaths than births). Bulgaria had the lowest rate of natural population change averaging -4.8 people per 1,000 population per year.

Figure 8 **Foreign citizens:¹ EU comparison, 2008**

Proportion of total population

1 Total number of foreigners including citizens of other EU Member States and non-EU citizens, usually resident in the reporting country.

Source: Eurostat (table demo_gind: jan and tps00157)

The proportion of the UK population in 2008 that were foreign citizens was slightly higher than the EU-27 average at 6.6 per cent compared with 6.2 per cent (**Figure 8**). Population structures across the EU vary widely with 0.1 per cent of the population of Romania in 2008 being foreign citizens compared with 42.6 per cent of the population of Luxembourg.

Luxembourg is a small country with a long tradition of immigration, in particular labour migration that started with the first wave of German and Italian labour immigration during the early stage of industrialisation around 1875. Immigration has increased with the founding and expansion of the EU (European Commission, 2004).

Table 4 **World population¹**

	Percentages						
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010 ²
Asia	55.5	56.0	57.7	59.1	60.1	60.5	60.3
Africa	9.0	9.4	10.0	10.9	12.1	13.4	15.0
Europe	21.6	20.0	17.8	15.6	13.6	11.9	10.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	6.6	7.3	7.8	8.2	8.4	8.5	8.5
Northern America	6.8	6.8	6.3	5.7	5.3	5.2	5.1
Oceania	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
World (=100%) (millions)	2,529	3,023	3,686	4,438	5,290	6,115	6,909
United Kingdom (millions)	50.6	52.4	55.7	56.3	57.2	58.9	61.9

¹ As of 1 July.

² Data for 2010 are projections.

Source: *World population prospects (United Nations, 2009)*

Between 1950 and 2010 the world's population has more than doubled from 2.5 to 6.9 billion people (**Table 4**). The UK population also increased over this period, though at a much slower rate, from 50.6 million to 61.9 million. The total population in areas outside Europe grew at a much faster rate between 1950 and 2010 so that Europe's share of world population halved from 21.6 to 10.6 per cent. In 2010 Asia accounted for 60.3 per cent of world population and the country with the largest population was China with 1.4 billion people.

The United Nations estimates that world population will reach 7.7 billion in 2020 with the population of Europe remaining fairly stable and the population of Africa increasing by nearly a quarter and Asia by 10 per cent (United Nations, 2008).

The previous sections have compared the UK and other countries in terms of their economy, unemployment, crime and population structure, all of which were key concerns of UK respondents in the spring 2010 Eurobarometer survey. The following sections analyse two other components of societal wellbeing, namely health and political and social engagement.

Health

Life expectancy at birth is often used as a key indicator of population health. However, over recent years there has been growing interest in healthy life expectancy, the proportion of a person's life that they are expected to be free from illness. An increase in healthy life expectancy is one of the main goals for European health policy as this would not only improve the situation of individuals but would also result in lower levels of public healthcare expenditure (Eurostat, 2009).

Table 5 **Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy:¹ UK/EU comparison, 2007**

	Males		Females	
	UK	EU-27	UK	EU-27
Life expectancy at birth (years)	77.7	76.1	81.9	82.2
Life expectancy at 65 (years)	17.5	17	20.2	20.5
Health life expectancy at 65 - as a proportion of life expectancy at 65	58.8	51.1	56.9	43.2

¹ The indicator Healthy Life Years (HLY) measures the number of remaining years that a person of a specific age is still expected to live in a healthy condition. A healthy condition is defined by the absence of limitations in functioning/disability.

Source: Eurostat (tables hlth_hlye)

Between 1997 and 2007 life expectancy increased for men and women in the UK (Eurostat table hlth_hlye). The increase in life expectancy was larger for men than women but life expectancy for women remains greater (81.9 years at birth for women in 2007 compared with 77.7 years at birth for men). In comparison with the EU-27 average, men could expect to live 1.6 years longer at birth in the UK in 2007 and women 0.3 years less (**Table 5**).

Turning to healthy life expectancy at 65, that is the proportion of life after 65 that individuals can expect to be free from illness, the UK performs better than the EU-27 average for both men and women. In 2007, women in the UK could expect to live 57 per cent of their life after the age of 65 in a healthy state, compared with 43 per cent for the EU on average. Men in the UK had a healthy life expectancy after the age of 65 of 59 per cent compared with 51 per cent for the EU average. In the UK healthy life expectancy increased between 1997 and 2007 by 1.3 percentage points for men and 5.2 percentage points for women.

Cancer was the second most common cause of death for both males and females in the UK in 2008 (ONS, 2009). The most recent data available for international comparisons are for 2007.

Figure 9 Deaths from cancer:¹ EU comparison,² 2007

Standardised death rate³ by 100,000 inhabitants

1 Following World Health Organisation's International Classification of diseases. Includes primary and secondary malignant neoplasm and malignant neoplasm of independent (primary) multiple sites.

2 Data not available for Belgium and Denmark.

3 The (age-) standardised death rate is a weighted average of age-specific mortality rates.

Source: Eurostat (table hlth_cd_asdr: C)

In the UK in 2007 the death rate from all cancers for men was lower than the average for the 25 EU countries for which data are available, at 212.3 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants compared with 228.7 (**Figure 9**). However, the opposite was true for women with the UK recording 153.7 deaths

per 100,000 inhabitants for women from all cancers compared with an average of 131.5 deaths for the 25 EU countries for which data are available.

Breast cancer is the most common form of female cancer in England and Wales. It is also the second most common cause of cancer deaths in women, after lung cancer (ONS, 2009). Between 2000 to 2007 death rates from breast cancer in women have fallen in both the UK and the EU, by 3.7 and 3.2 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants respectively. However the death rate from breast cancer for women in the UK has remained higher than the EU in 2007 at an average at 26.8 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants compared with 23.6 (Eurostat table hlth_cd_asdr).

In most OECD countries, spending on health is a large and growing share of both public and private expenditure. Health spending as a share of GDP varies widely across countries, reflecting market and social factors as well as the diverse financing and organisational structures of the health system in each country (OECD, 2010a).

Figure 10 Total expenditure on health as proportion of GDP: G7 countries, 2008

Percentages

¹ Data for Japan are for 2007.

Source: OECD Health Data 2010 (OECD, 2010b)

In 2008 health expenditure as a percentage of GDP in the UK was the second lowest among G7 countries at 8.7 per cent (**Figure 10**). This compares with 16.0 per cent of GDP in the USA, which had the highest expenditure. Health expenditure as a percentage of GDP in the UK has grown from 7.0 per cent in 2000 (OECD, 2010b).

In 2008, 82.6 per cent of total healthcare expenditure in the UK came from public sources, the highest proportion of all G7 countries. The lowest public expenditure on healthcare as a proportion of the total was recorded by the USA at 46.5 per cent (OECD, 2010b). However, even though the public share of health spending is much lower in the USA than in the UK, public spending on health per head is substantially higher in the USA than in the UK.

A recent Special Eurobarometer^{iv} survey asked EU citizens about their perceptions of healthcare quality.

Figure 11 Satisfaction with healthcare quality: ¹ EU comparison, autumn 2009

Percentages

¹ Percentage of respondents, aged 15 and over, who stated 'good' or 'very good' in response to the following question: 'How would you rate the overall quality of healthcare in OUR COUNTRY'.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 327, (European Commission, 2010)

When asked in autumn 2009, 47 per cent of UK and an average of 50 per cent of EU citizens thought it 'likely' that patients could be harmed by hospital care, on average 70 per cent of citizens across the EU rated the quality of healthcare in their country as 'good' or 'very good' (**Figure 11**).

An average of 86 per cent of citizens in the UK rated healthcare as 'good' or 'very good' as compared with 97 per cent in Belgium and 25 per cent in Romania.

Political engagement

Figure 12 Trust in political parties:¹ EU comparison, autumn 2009

Percentages

¹ Respondents, aged 15 and over, who responded 'tend to trust' when asked 'I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. Political parties.'

Source: Eurobarometer 72 (European Commission, 2010c)

Trust in political parties in the UK fell from 18 per cent in autumn 2008 (European Commission, 2009a) to 9 per cent in autumn 2009. This is lower than EU average of 16 per cent for autumn

2009 (**Figure 12**). Trust by EU citizens as a whole in their political parties also fell but to a lesser extent, from 20 per cent in 2008. The steep fall in trust in the UK may in part have been prompted by public concern about the level and nature of claims for expenses made by Members of Parliament.

However, interest in politics in the UK has increased in the years leading up to the 2010 General Election, with 12.6 per cent of people saying they were 'very interested' in politics in 2008 compared with 10.9 per cent in 2006 (**Table 6**).

Table 6 Interest in politics: ¹ European Social Survey participant country comparison

Percentages																	
	Very interested		Quite interested		Hardly interested		Not at all interested			Very interested		Quite interested		Hardly interested		Not at all interested	
	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008		2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008
Austria	14.0	..	36.5	..	39.2	..	10.3	..	Latvia	..	4.7	..	31.2	..	49.2	..	14.9
Belgium	8.2	8.3	36.6	40.1	33.6	32.4	21.6	19.2	Netherlands	10.8	9.7	52.3	57.1	26.1	23.3	10.8	9.9
Bulgaria	7.5	9.5	39.2	36.4	27.5	28.7	25.8	25.4	Norway	9.4	10.0	38.5	37.1	44.3	45.1	7.7	7.7
Croatia	..	6.9	..	23.9	..	33.6	..	35.5	Poland	6.4	6.5	32.2	35.0	43.8	39.1	17.6	19.4
Cyprus	10.6	17.3	27.6	25.2	39.6	33.5	22.2	24.0	Portugal	5.0	4.0	23.4	25.0	33.4	32.2	38.2	38.8
Czech Republic	..	2.8	..	15.1	..	48.5	..	33.6	Romania	..	6.7	..	36.0	..	32.8	..	24.5
Denmark	18.7	21.7	49.1	50.1	25.9	24.5	6.2	3.7	Russian Federation	8.0	8.1	35.0	40.0	34.4	34.4	22.7	17.5
Estonia	6.9	8.4	34.3	36.7	44.3	42.3	14.4	12.6	Slovakia	6.5	8.5	31.2	33.2	48.4	43.6	14	14.7
Finland	7.3	8.1	40.3	40.3	40.5	40.8	11.9	10.8	Slovenia	7.1	7.2	36.3	41.8	35.2	35.4	21.5	15.6
France	12.5	14.9	32.7	36.5	35.8	35.4	18.9	13.3	Spain	5.7	5.3	20.1	20.8	38.4	39.7	35.7	34.1
Germany	16.1	18.3	37.7	43.4	36.0	32.8	10.2	5.6	Sweden	14.9	13.0	46.9	45.7	29.8	32.9	8.4	8.4
Greece	..	7.3	..	23.3	..	36.8	..	32.5	Switzerland	14.5	16.1	42.1	41.8	32.7	31.4	10.7	10.7
Hungary	9.7	8.3	32.2	29.0	35.4	37.1	22.8	25.6	Turkey	..	9.6	..	30.1	..	21.1	..	39.2
Ireland	9.9	..	35.6	..	29.2	..	25.4	..	Ukraine	11.0	9.9	36.2	35.4	38.7	38.5	14.1	16.2
Israel	..	13.9	..	34.3	..	25.6	..	26.2	United Kingdom	10.9	12.6	41.3	43.9	28.2	28.3	19.7	15.2

¹ Respondents, aged 15 and over, asked 'How interested would you say you are in politics?'

Source: European Social Survey 2006 and 2008

Interest in politics was highest in Denmark in 2008, with 21.7 per cent of the population stating that they were 'very interested' in politics, while interest was lowest in the Czech Republic, at 2.8 per cent.

Environment

Only 4 per cent of people in the UK and across the EU-27 considered the environment to be one of the two most important issues facing their country in spring 2010 (see **Figure 3**). A recent Flash Eurobarometer^v looked at the attitudes of Europeans towards sustainable production and consumption. **Figure 13** shows those actions which people believe would have the highest impact on solving environmental problems.

Figure 13 **Actions thought to solve environmental problems:¹ EU comparisons, April 2009**

Percentages

¹ Respondents, aged 15 and over, were asked 'In your opinion, which one of the following actions would have the highest impact on solving environmental problems?'

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 256 (European Commission, 2009b)

In both the UK and across the EU-27 minimising waste and recycling was regarded as the action which would have the highest impact on solving environmental problems, with 34 per cent of people in the UK and 30 per cent of people across the EU-27 selecting this option in 2009.

The following items look at changes in waste generation and greenhouse gas emissions.

Figure 14 **Municipal¹ waste generation and treatment:² EU/UK comparison**

Kg per person per year (Index 1998 = 100)

1 Municipal waste is mainly produced by households, though similar wastes from sources such as commerce, offices and public institutions are included.

2 Waste disposed of through landfill or incineration.

Source: Eurostat (tables tsien120 and tsien130)

Over the period 1998 to 2008 the quantity of municipal waste generated in kilograms per person had increased by 4.1 per cent in the UK and 5.6 per cent across the EU-27. However, the quantity of waste sent to landfill or incinerated had fallen by 26.4 per cent in the UK and 13.2 per cent in across the EU-27. Although this is an indication that a higher total quantity of waste is being recycled, the percentage of waste sent to landfill or incinerated in the UK was still higher than across the EU-27 in 2008. In the UK waste sent to landfill or incinerated had decreased from 90.8 per cent of all waste in 1998 to 64.2 per cent in 2008, compared with a decrease from 71.8 per cent in 1998 to 59.0 per cent in 2008 in the EU-27 (see Eurostat tables tsien120 and tsien130).

The EU's sixth environment action programme, adopted in 2002, is a 10-year policy for the environment. It identifies a number of key issues including four key priorities including increasing recycling and waste prevention and achieving the EU's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 8 per cent by 2008–12 (Eurostat, 2010).

Figure 15 **Greenhouse gas emissions:¹ EU/UK comparison**

Index (100=1998)

1 One thousand tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, weighted according to the global warming potential of each gas.

Source: Eurostat (table env_air_gge: Tot_x_5)

Between 1998 and 2008 the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions has fallen both in the UK and across the EU-27. The fall in UK greenhouse gas emissions was larger than the fall across the EU-27, 10.7 per cent compared with 4.4 per cent.

Looking to the future, the Eurostat Yearbook 2010 sets out the policy aims for 2020:

International negotiations for reaching a global agreement related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the period after 2012, when key provisions of the Kyoto Protocol expire, have been at the forefront of policy activity in recent months. The EU formulated a policy response to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the shape of an integrated energy and climate change policy, which was adopted in December 2008 and includes the following three key targets:

- cut greenhouse gases by at least 20 per cent of their 1990 levels (30 per cent if other developed countries commit to comparable cuts) by 2020
- increase the use of renewables (wind, solar, biomass, etc.) to 20 per cent of total energy production by 2020, including a 10 per cent biofuel target for transport
- cut energy consumption by 20 per cent in relation to projected 2020 levels – by improving energy efficiency

(Eurostat, 2010: page 513).

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Notes

ⁱAll item Harmonized Indices of Consumer Prices (HICP), a set of European Union consumer price indices (CPIs) calculated according to a harmonized approach and a single set of definitions to allow comparisons across countries.

ⁱⁱThe Gini coefficient can take a value between 0 and 100. A value of zero on the Gini coefficient indicates complete equality in the distribution of income (all people in the population receive exactly the same income), while a value of 100 indicates complete inequality (one person in the population receives all the income, others receive none).

ⁱⁱⁱThe G7 is the meeting of the finance ministers from a group of seven industrialized nations. It was formed in 1976.

^{iv}Special Eurobarometer reports are based on in-depth thematic studies carried out for various services of the European Commission or other EU Institutions and integrated in Standard Eurobarometer's polling waves.

^vFlash Eurobarometers are ad hoc thematic telephone interviews conducted at the request of any service of the European Commission. Flash surveys enable the Commission to obtain results relatively quickly and to focus on specific target groups, as and when required.