

Challenge #9

**BROADEN THE
FOUNDATIONS
OF OUR FUTURE
WELL-BEING**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A country's economic, scientific and institutional progress only makes sense if, ultimately, it serves to increase the well-being of its citizens. Spain's progress over the last four decades has contributed to this purpose: according to the latest available data, more than 85% of the population considers themselves to be "satisfied" with their life, ranking us above the EU average and among the "happiest" countries in the world.
- Our strengths include our good health, the quality of our leisure time and our personal relationships. However, we still have an issue to be resolved - namely, the high levels of economic and job-related dissatisfaction, which stems from high levels of unemployment and job insecurity. Dissatisfaction in these areas is creating a notable gap among the population and is preventing us from converging with the most advanced countries in Europe.
- Between now and 2050, the evolution of how satisfied we are with our lives will depend on our ability to face the social, economic, environmental and technological challenges and opportunities set out in this Strategy. To secure our place among the happiest countries in Europe, we will have to move towards a pattern of economic growth based on productivity gains, the creation of quality jobs and the sustainable use of natural resources. Only in this way, we will be able to finance the social safety nets and public services we need to ensure that the population is satisfied with its life.
- Among other things, the quality and coverage of health and care services will need to be further expanded and aligned to new social realities such as increasing longevity, the prevalence of mental disorders and loneliness. We should also focus on education as a way to teach basic socio-emotional skills and tackle problems such as smoking, consumption of antidepressants and obesity early on. Similarly, redistributive and social protection mechanisms should continue to be strengthened to mitigate phenomena such as poverty and inequality.
- New technologies and the ecological transition will be key allies in this process. Well used, they will serve to improve our health, facilitate the work-leisure balance, better assist the elderly, and allow us to enjoy greener and more liveable spaces.

THE PAST: ACHIEVEMENTS

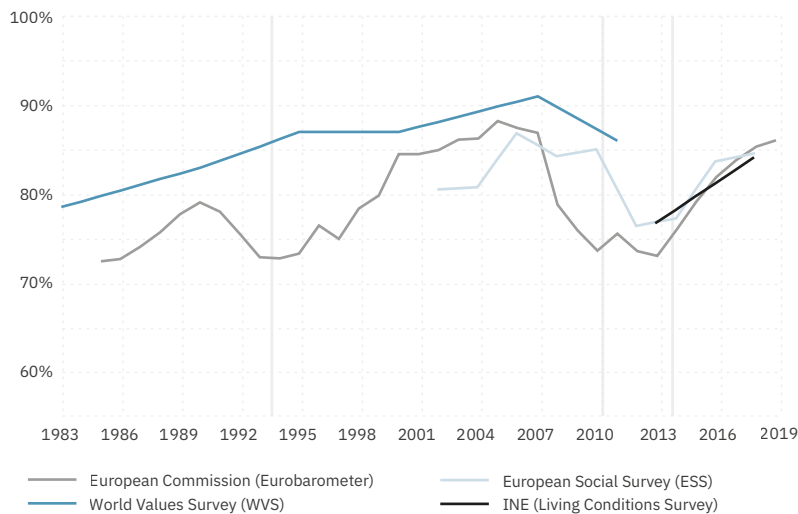
Enjoying a good life is one of the main aspirations of human beings and facilitating it should be the ultimate goal of any government.¹ This was recognised under the first *Spanish Constitution* (drafted in Cadiz in 1812), Article 13 of which states: "The object of Government is the happiness of the Nation, since the purpose of every political society is none other than the well-being of the individuals who compose it."² Economic growth, technological development and legislative advances are tools to achieve that purpose. For this reason, more and more people are calling on governments to go beyond indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP)³ or the United Nations *Human Development Index*⁴ when defining the progress of nations, and instead place **the well-being of citizens at the heart of designing, implementing and evaluating public policies.**

Today, many of the goods and services that are essential to our daily lives - such as instant messaging applications, email and Wikipedia - have little impact on the calculation of GDP, although they provide us with considerable personal well-being.⁵ Similarly, GDP does not incorporate dimensions such as environmental protection and sustainability or inequality,⁶ which have very significant impacts on the well-being of present and future generations. In fact, in recent years, proposals for alternative measures to GDP have, in addition to income, looked at consumption, inequality, life expectancy, leisure, care, environmental quality, public safety, political freedoms, social cohesion, generosity, social support, and corruption, as variables that represent the well-being of citizens.⁷

The first challenge in placing well-being at the centre of public policies consists in defining the population's "subjective well-being" in a specific and functional way. This is not easy,⁸ since it is a complex experience that relates to present issues (what we experience today), but also to future issues (such as expectations about tomorrow). Furthermore, it has to do with emotions (emotional reactions - positive or negative) as well as **the extent to which people are satisfied with their life**, when we assess the progress of our lives, compare ourselves with others and analyse how we are doing in achieving our goals.⁹ In this chapter, we will take levels of satisfaction with life as the main point of reference, as it is a reliable indicator of people's experience of well-being. It is also sensitive to factors that public policies can influence.

In this light, we ask ourselves: **Are the citizens of Spain satisfied? According to the available data, most of them are.** In 2019, more than 85% of people in our country considered themselves satisfied with their lives,¹⁰ compared to 15% who said they were not. This represents **a notable improvement compared to previous decades, despite the deterioration noted during the years of economic crisis.** It highlights the real impact of the social and economic progress experienced by the country since the transition to democracy [Fig. 1].

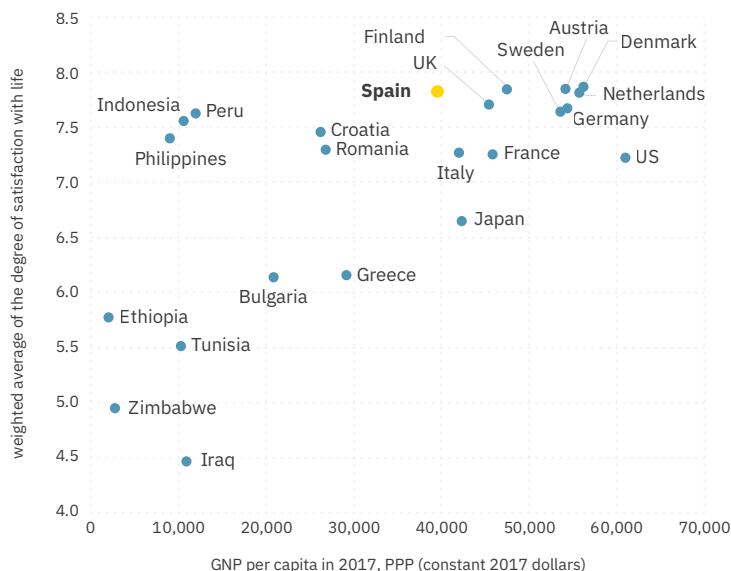
Fig. 1. Proportion of people satisfied with their life in Spain according to different sources



Source: Authors' own, based on data from the European Commission, World Values Survey, European Social Survey and INE. ¹¹

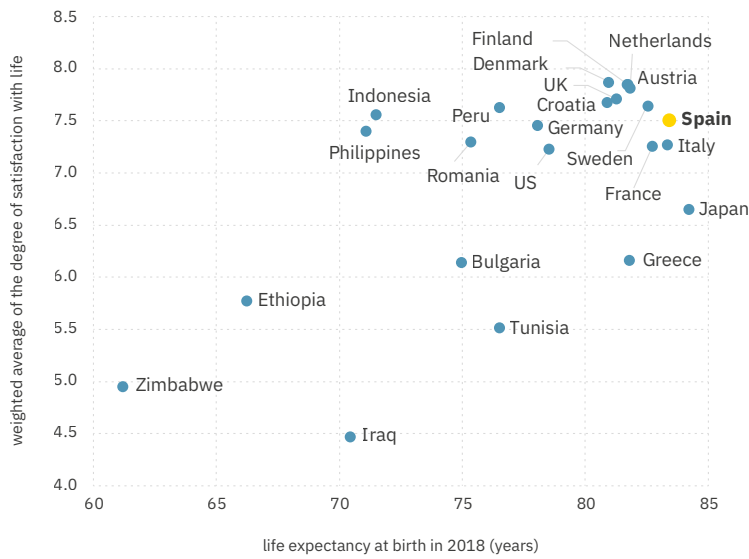
As discussed in previous chapters of this Strategy, over the last 40 years, Spain's per-capita income has doubled, the employment rate has risen by more than 15 points, the educational level of the population has improved significantly, public benefits and services have greatly increased their coverage and quality, and life expectancy has continued to grow [Figs. 2 and 3]. Society has also reached very high levels of freedom, tolerance and security, and has strengthened its institutions, all of which have a positive impact on the well-being of its citizens.

Fig. 2. Per-capita income and satisfaction with life



Source: Authors' own, based on data from the World Values Survey and the World Bank. ¹²

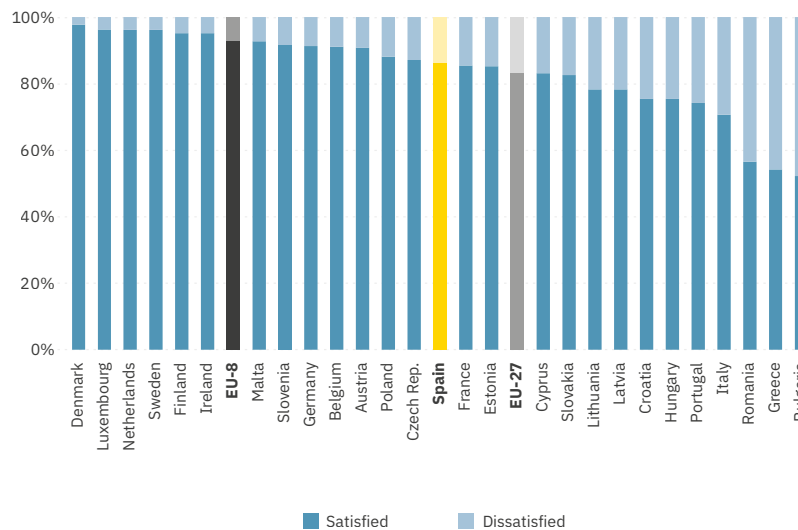
Fig. 3. Life expectancy at birth and satisfaction with life



Source: Authors' own, based on data from the World Values Survey and the World Bank.¹³

As a result, **Spain is today among the "happiest" countries in the world, with levels of satisfaction with life that are above the European average (EU-27) and neighbouring countries such as France and Italy [Fig. 4].**

Fig. 4. Satisfaction with life (% of population), 2019



Source: Authors' own, based on European Commission data.¹⁴

THE PRESENT: WAYS TO IMPROVE

In spite of the progress recorded over the last four decades, there are still many **material and immaterial issues that negatively affect the well-being of citizens** in Spain and which prevent the country from catching up with the EU's most developed countries - grouped here under the label "EU-8"¹⁵ [Fig. 4]. Here we point out three issues to be resolved.

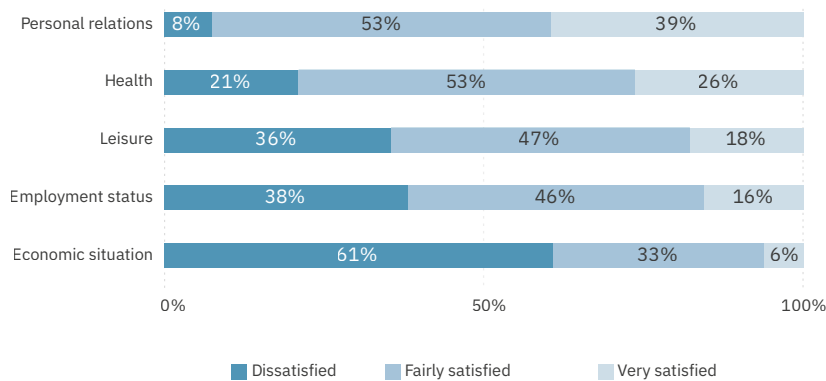
The first is to do with the proportion of people who still say that they are dissatisfied with their life: in 2019, 10% of the population considered themselves to be "not very satisfied" and 2% "not at all satisfied". Reducing these figures is a challenge in itself, especially if we are to catch up with European countries that have higher levels of well-being.

The second issue to be resolved has to do with the fragility of subjective well-being in Spain - something that is very sensitive to economic crises. They impact both the magnitude of recessions when they occur and the time it takes to recover to previous levels. Thus, levels of satisfaction with life prior to the 1992 crisis did not recover until 5 or 6 years later, whereas **in 2016 (8 years after the 2008 financial crisis), satisfaction levels were still far below those at the beginning of the decade.** The destruction of employment and the reduction of income, together with an increase in uncertainty about the future brought about by economic recessions in our country, explain this deterioration in subjective well-being and is something that particularly affects people in insecure and low-skilled jobs.¹⁶

Our third issue to be resolved is closely linked to the previous one and is to do with the heterogeneity among the Spanish population's level of satisfaction with the different areas that explain it. These are grouped here into 1) economic and labour situation, 2) physical and mental health, and 3) social capital.¹⁷ The latter refers both to the relational environment closest to the person (family, friends) and to aspects linked to society's general behaviour (norms and values, spirit of cooperation and trust in institutions).¹⁸ Although many of the factors that make us more or less happy are still unknown, it is known with certainty that the following three domains are key to how satisfied people are with life: the countries with the greatest well-being are those in which the majority of the population have a good job, good health and good social relations with their nearest environment and community.

In Spain, a positive scorecard in these three domains is not achieved - mainly due to people's dissatisfaction with their economic and labour situation, which offsets the better ratings for health and personal relationships and is to a certain extent conditioned by those in leisure¹⁹ [Fig. 5]. **If by 2050 we want to converge in terms of satisfaction with the happiest countries in Europe, we will need to register significant improvements in the areas of income and employment.**

Fig. 5. Average satisfaction by domain of life in Spain



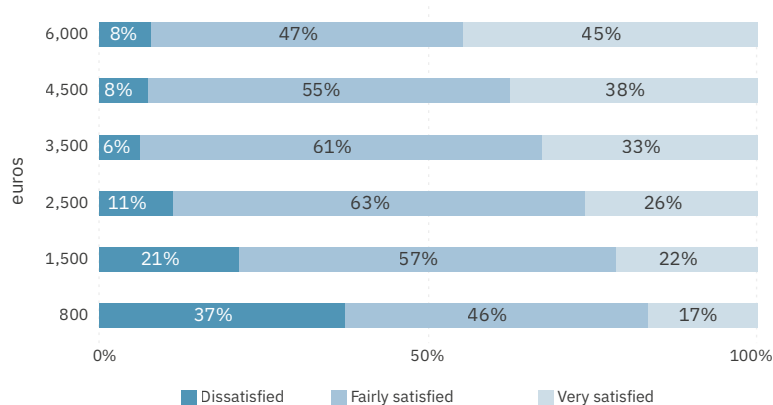
Source: Author's own, based on Iglesias de Ussel et al data.²⁰

I. Economic and labour situation

If the Spanish population is not as satisfied with their lives as their equivalents in Scandinavian countries, it is mainly because of their economic and labour situation. In Spain, structural unemployment is high, temporary employment rates are unusually high [see chapter 7] and labour productivity growth is lower than in more advanced countries [see chapter 1]. This translates into comparatively low wages and longer working hours than our European neighbours. If we add to this the impact that economic crises have in terms of job destruction and deterioration of the business sector, it is not surprising that their economic and employment situation is the main source of dissatisfaction for Spanish citizens. Raising our per-capita income and at the same time improving working conditions are essential for increasing our population's levels of satisfaction with life in the future.

Whilst it is true that money cannot buy happiness, **income is one of the key factors for people's subjective well-being - especially when it is low and uncertain.**²¹ Uncertainty is especially important for the middle classes. For people on low incomes, the total amount of income is the determining variable. People with higher income tend to be more satisfied with their lives than those with lower income.²² In Spain, **37% of people earning less than 1,000 euros per month are dissatisfied with their lives, while among those earning 2,500 euros or more, the proportion of dissatisfied people falls below 12%** [Fig. 6].

Fig. 6. Monthly household income and percentage level of satisfaction with life, on average, in Spain



Source: Author's own, based on Iglesias de Ussel et al data.²³

This positive relationship between income and subjective well-being hides some issues that are closely related to each other and which are fundamental to designing public policies.

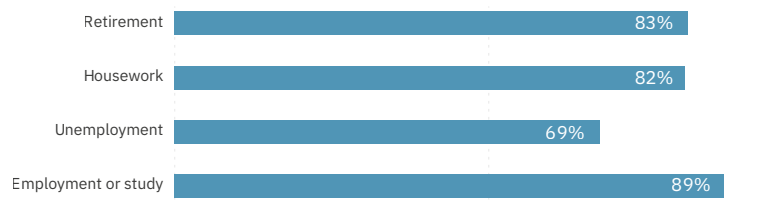
First issue: **differences in levels of satisfaction with life are greatly reduced between people with high and very high income.**²⁴ For example, among those earning 4,500 and 6,000 euros per month in Spain, the level of dissatisfaction is practically the same. This suggests that, beyond a certain point, more money does not bring more happiness and that, if we want to increase well-being of society as a whole, it may be more efficient to direct income increases to the poorest segments of the population in order to reduce the risk of poverty.²⁵

Second issue: the economic situation creates asymmetrical effects in terms of satisfaction with life. **Where income falls, perceived well-being levels fall sharply**, as it is often accompanied by job losses, increases in poverty and greater uncertainty. **However, when income rises, well-being rises relatively little.** The latter is, on the one hand, due to the fact that, above a certain level of income, subjective well-being does not increase ("satiety" effect); and, on the other hand, to the fact that the population is adapting to the new income situation and other aspects that are equally important for their quality of life begin to come into play.²⁶ This particular phenomenon can also be seen when people assess whether or not their income is sufficient.²⁷ Thus, Spaniards who are dissatisfied with their financial situation display a lower level of well-being than those who are satisfied with it.²⁸

Third issue: **for gains in well-being to be sustained, it is not only income gains that matter, but also how those gains are achieved** (whether they are socially and environmentally sustainable) and where the additional resources go. This last point is directly related to the way in which public policies are oriented.²⁹

Beyond people's economic situation, **their employment situation is equally key to satisfaction with life.**³⁰ **Employed people in Spain are more satisfied with their lives.**³¹ **Satisfaction drops among those who perform household chores and are retired, and falls markedly among the unemployed** [Fig. 7]. This is because unemployment not only determines current income³² and future income expectations, but also affects other issues that are fundamental to well-being, such as health (lack of routines and greater propensity to loss of self-esteem, anxiety, depression or alcoholism³³) and leisure (the unemployed tend to opt for more passive leisure activities).³⁴

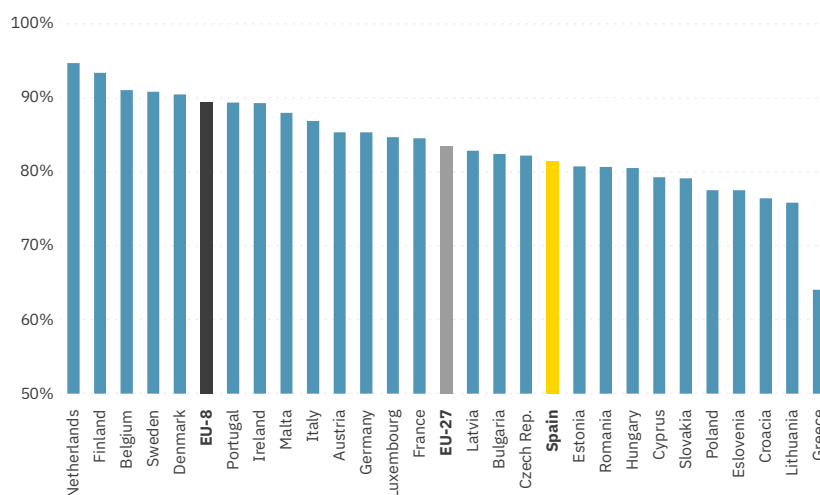
Fig. 7. Employment situation and levels of satisfaction with life in Spain (% of total), 2016-18



Source: Authors' own, based on European Social Survey data.³⁵

Even if job stability is a determining factor for how satisfied people are with life, by reducing uncertainty about future income, this does not invalidate the fact that **work can and should be a source of satisfaction in itself**, insofar as it fosters learning, personal development, self-esteem and social interactions.³⁶ However, in our country, employment insecurity and long working hours mean that it is perceived by a significant part of the population as a "necessary evil", and **more than half of employed people suffer stress in their jobs (a higher proportion than the EU and OECD average).**³⁷ Therefore, if Spain wants to achieve well-being levels similar to those of the most advanced countries in Europe, it must significantly improve the levels of motivation³⁸ and job satisfaction among its population. These levels are currently lower than those of the EU-8 [Fig. 8].

Fig. 8. Percentage of people satisfied with their job, 2016

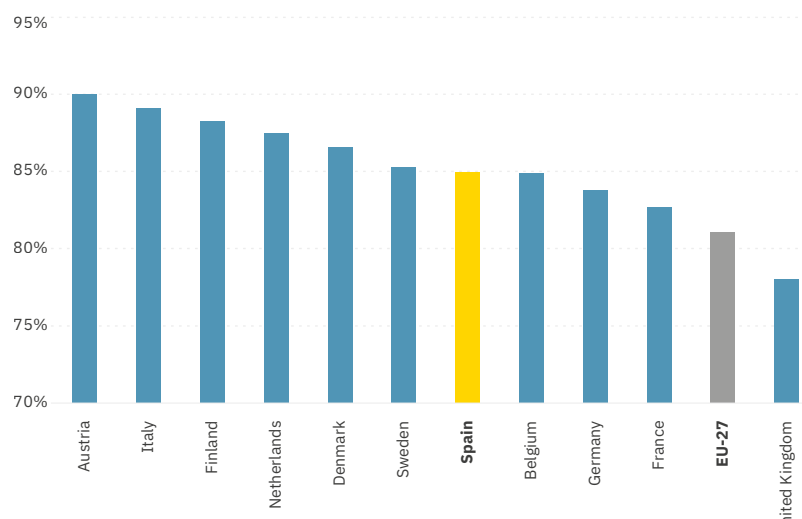


Source: Authors' own, based on Eurofound data.³⁹

II. Physical and mental health

Health (physical and mental)⁴⁰ and subjective well-being are closely linked: the former has a direct impact on the latter and, conversely, well-being contributes to improved health and perception of health.⁴¹ In general, **satisfaction with health in our country is quite high [Fig. 9].⁴²**

Fig. 9. Percentage of people satisfied with their health, 2016



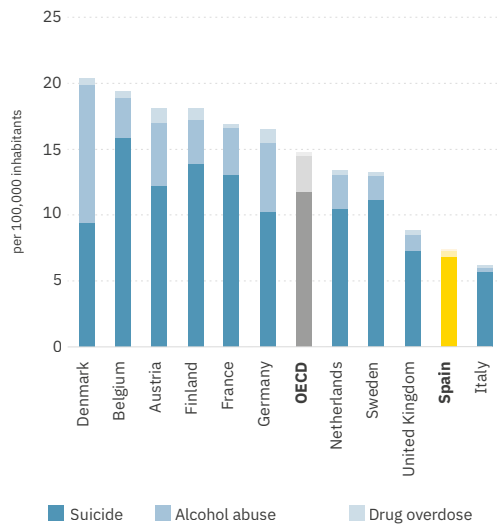
Source: Authors' own, based on Eurofound data.⁴³

The data support this. Spain is today one of the countries in the world with the highest life expectancy at birth, enjoys more years in good health⁴⁴ at older ages, and has one of the most advanced health care systems,⁴⁵ in spite of the cuts in public health expenditure in over the last decade and the shortcomings evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. This does not, of course, mean that the health of the Spanish population is perfect, nor that there is not much to be done to reduce inequalities between different groups [see chapter 5]. Physical illnesses such as back and neck pain, cardiovascular problems, Alzheimer disease and cancer (to name but a few) reduce the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of Spaniards every day.

As do **mental disorders such as depression and anxiety.⁴⁶ Several studies suggest that these reduce our satisfaction with life to a greater extent than physical illnesses.⁴⁷** In 2017, 13% of the Spanish population was diagnosed with some type of mental disorder: 5.3% suffered from anxiety, 3.5% from depression, and 1.5% had disorders associated with consumption of drugs.⁴⁸ However, the incidence of these problems and their manifestations varies greatly between groups and is substantially higher among women (the data show that they suffer from depression and anxiety twice as much as men of the same age), people who are unable to work and are unemployed, and people with a low level of education.⁴⁹

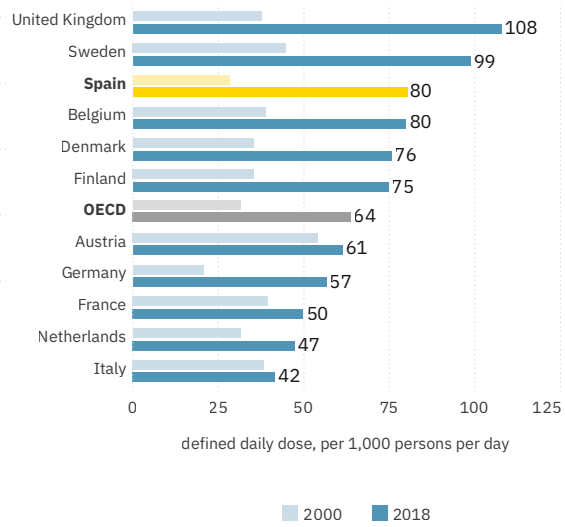
The prevalence of this type of disorder and psychological problems in Spain is not higher than it is in other European states. Nor is the number of deaths due to alcohol, drugs or suicide (in fact, suicide rates are substantially lower than in EU-8 countries such as Denmark, Belgium and Austria) [Fig. 10]. However, it should be noted that **our consumption of antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs has sky-rocketed in recent years,⁵⁰** placing Spain above the OECD average in the use of these drugs [Fig.11].

Fig. 10. Deaths due to suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, 2016



Source: Author's own based on data from the OECD.⁵¹

Fig. 11. Consumption of anti-depressants



Source: Author's own based on data from the OECD.⁵²

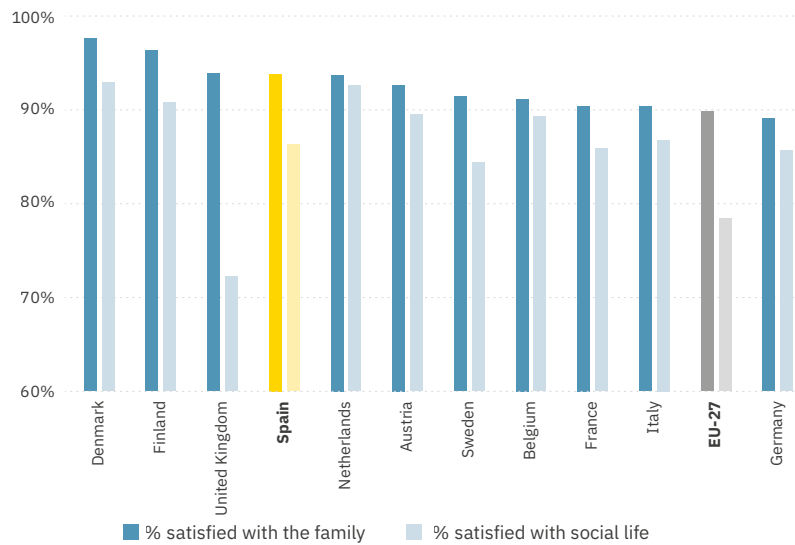
Changes in our lifestyle, loneliness⁵³ and the greater frustration we feel in the face of everyday problems may explain part of this increase, although **the way in which mental disorders are treated in our country also has a great influence.** In most cases, medication⁵⁴ prescribed by primary care doctors (rather than by professionals with expertise in mental health)⁵⁵ is used instead of other methods such as psychotherapy or positive psychology techniques. The excessive consumption of these drugs and the potential side effects they cause when they are not correctly administered constitute **a source of risk for the health and future well-being of our citizens. And it is one that should be corrected.**

III. Social capital

Satisfaction with life does not come exclusively from material goods. Human are social beings and need people around them to provide emotional support, approval, a sense of belonging and affection.⁵⁶ **Subjective well-being has, therefore, a relational dimension⁵⁷** that is nourished by two sources: on the one hand, the satisfaction that comes from the interpersonal relationships (family, friends, work colleagues); and, on the other hand, the satisfaction that comes from the society in which we live. In Spain, citizens seem to obtain a great deal of satisfaction from the former and somewhat less from the latter, although close relationships have a greater impact on well-being than general social capital.⁵⁸

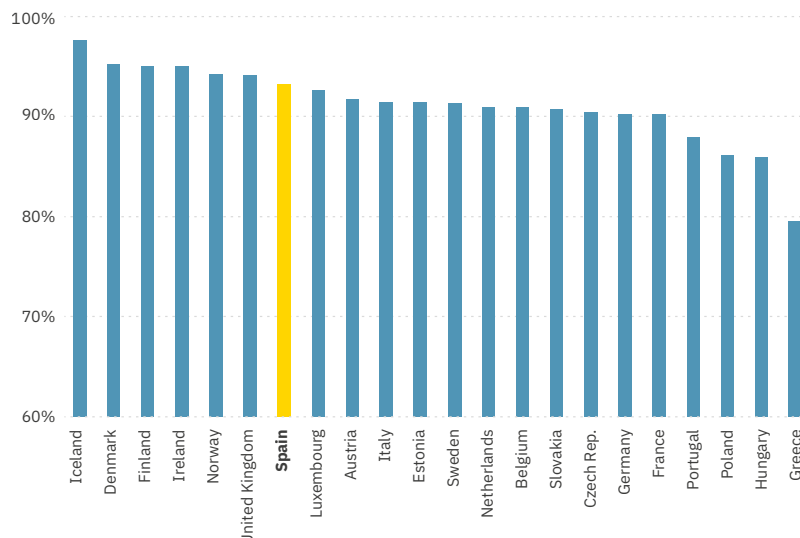
Our closest social circle is a great source of satisfaction with life for Spaniards, and is one of Spanish society's unique strengths. More than 85% of citizens are satisfied with their family and social life [Fig. 12], and 93% have a friend or relative they can confide in when they need to - one of the highest percentages among OECD countries [Fig. 13]. These good data, however, should not lead us to downplay the need to continue improving them in the future, and focusing, above all, on people who still obtain a low level of satisfaction in their close relationships.

Fig. 12. Percentage of people satisfied with family and social life, 2012



Source: Authors' own, based on Eurofound data.⁵⁹

Fig. 13. Percentage of people with relatives or friends they trust, 2018



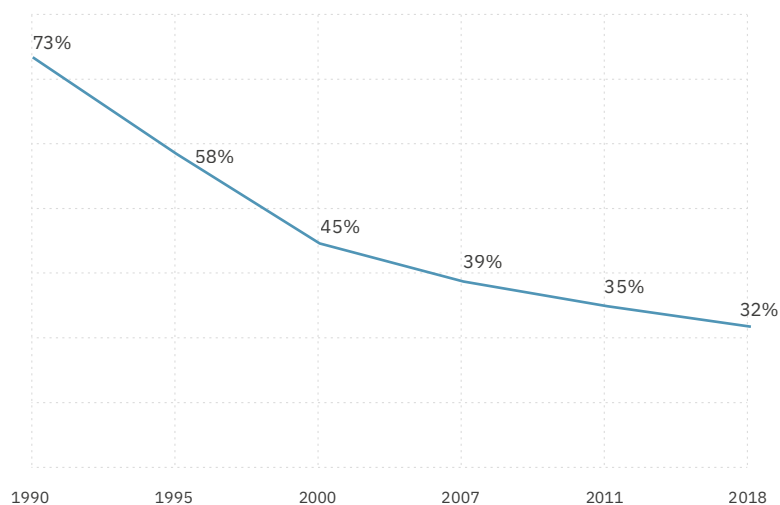
Source: Author's own based on data from the OECD.⁶⁰

An essential issue that **we must focus on** is the **persistence of old gender roles** that negatively affect the way people see themselves and relate to each other.⁶¹ They perpetuate archaic prejudices and stereotypes, transform sexual difference into social inequality, and lead to all kinds of social phenomena that dent happiness. One of the most serious is violence against women. This takes various forms - from psychological violence (harassment, threats) to physical and sexual violence.⁶² It is estimated that, in Spain, half of women (57.3%) aged over 16 have suffered some of these forms of violence during their lives.⁶³ In fact, in 2019 alone, more than 4 million women

in Spain suffered from it.⁶⁴ These kinds of violence have all kinds of consequences: depression, shame, fear, anxiety, frustration, and even changes in the way people use public spaces.⁶⁵ Although to a less severe extent, the persistence of old gender roles also affects thousands of men, victims of a traditional vision of masculinity associated with glorifying competitiveness, toughness, aggressiveness and physical strength⁶⁶ that often limits the development of good self-esteem and prevents healthy management of emotions.⁶⁷

In clear contrast with the high levels of satisfaction gained from those closest to them, **Spaniards show a relatively high degree of disaffection with society**,⁶⁸ which has worsened in recent decades. This trend, which is shared by other countries in Southern Europe,⁶⁹ is reflected in indicators relating to general confidence and relating to people's involvement in civic life. For example, less than half of Spaniards believe that most people can be trusted, which places Spain in an intermediate position in terms of "social trust" - far below countries such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden, where trust levels are between 60% and 70%.⁷⁰ With regard to social participation, the percentage of people who involved in an association in our country barely reaches 31%, whereas at the beginning of the 1990s it was over 70% [Fig. 14]. This proportion places us far behind countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and Finland, where more than 70% of the public participate in associations.⁷¹ In fact, the OECD's *Civic Commitment Index* - which, in addition to electoral participation, incorporates citizens' involvement in government decision-making - ranks Spain among OECD countries that have a low level of civic engagement.⁷²

Fig. 14. Percentage of Spaniards who belong to at least one association



Source: Authors' own, based on World Values Survey data. ⁷³

Low levels of trust and civic engagement have crucial repercussions for a country's development, as they impact citizens' willingness to put the general interest before their own interests and to accept far-reaching economic and social reforms. But they also have a direct influence on social cohesion and well-being, resulting in people being less satisfied with their lives and more frustrated with the world. Their disaffection means that they do not feel the need to take part in processes of change.⁷⁴

Well-being synergies

It is important to bear in mind that **subjective well-being is not just "the result" of issues such as economic and employment status, health and social capital. It is also a catalyst that affects these situations, and transforms them.** For example, empirical evidence shows that students who are satisfied with their lives perform better academically and tend to stay in school longer, thus contributing to a more skilled workforce and a better educated, more involved and less unequal population.⁷⁵ It has also been shown that satisfied workers generate increased customer loyalty, take less time off work, tend to be more creative and are also more productive.⁷⁶ People with a high level of subjective well-being live longer and are ill less often, which helps to reduce pressures on health spending.⁷⁷ They also tend to take part more in the life of their community,⁷⁸ fostering a greater sense of belonging and social cohesion.⁷⁹ More broadly, the data show that countries that have a higher quality of life tend to attract more foreign investment and talent. This, in turn, affects their ability to innovate and grow over the long term.⁸⁰

This means that **there is a symbiotic relationship between the major challenges facing our country and achieving national well-being.** The social and economic improvements achieved in recent decades are the basis on which Spain's well-being is based. At the same time, well-being is an essential aspect of ensuring that these improvements are consolidated and continue to expand in the future.

For this symbiotic relationship to be strengthened over the coming decades, Spain will have to implement far-reaching reforms that will enable substantial progress to be made in the main areas of life that define how satisfied the population is with life. Among other things, we will need to address our economic and work-related weaknesses, strengthen health gains, resolve emerging health challenges, and continue to strengthen social ties to consolidate Spain's position as a prosperous, sustainable and socially cohesive country.

THE FUTURE: POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

The short term: subjective well-being in the time of coronavirus

Although we will need to wait years to ascertain the true nature and magnitude of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the well-being of the Spanish population, incoming data allow us to anticipate its effects.⁸¹ Some studies refer to **considerable psychological damage**⁸² that could have affected all age groups - although older people were the hardest hit by the virus. It is estimated that **1 in 3 people in Spain had significant symptoms of anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder during the March 2020 lockdown**. This was seen more frequently among women, young people⁸³ and people who already had underlying psychological problems.⁸⁴ Spanish children also suffered the effects of social isolation. In fact, a third of parents picked up a greater sense of irritability, nervousness, feeling of loneliness and, above all, a greater absent-mindedness⁸⁵ among their children during the months of lockdown.

A year after the start of the pandemic, there are two results that lead us to anticipate a decline in well-being over the medium term. First: a significant loss of trust among the general public ("social trust") has been detected. Second: there is a significant deterioration in people's mood ("pandemic fatigue") - especially among **young people**, who have seen their routines greatly disrupted and have been through three economic crises in a relatively short period of time.⁸⁶

How long-lasting will these psychological effects be? That will depend on the use and effectiveness of vaccines, and on whether or not the pandemic leads to drastic and permanent changes in how people interact socially. Previous studies suggest that human beings have a great capacity for recovery, and that we tend to overcome very traumatic episodes (such as terrorist attacks) within about six months.⁸⁷ In any event, this information refers to the general population. Victims or people who had to deal with the issue more directly often experience significantly slower recoveries. For example, **two and a half years after the 2003 SARS crisis, 1 in 3 patients who survived the virus still showed some kind of psychiatric disorder** (mostly post-traumatic stress disorder and depression).⁸⁸ Similarly, hospital staff who fought the virus on the front line reported more emotional problems and increases in alcohol consumption.⁸⁹ In the case of Covid-19, initial studies in Spain reveal rates close to 50% of hospital staff manifesting significant symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress and emotional exhaustion, and with a greater impact among female healthcare workers.⁹⁰

The duration of the psychological damage from coronavirus will also depend on how severe and prolonged the effects of the economic downturn turn out to be. The main risk is that the increase in unemployment and inequality⁹¹ will become chronic, and the education gap will not be corrected [see chapters 2, 7 and 8]. In that case, the negative effects on our country's long-term well-being will be very high. On the one hand, the degree of public dissatisfaction with their economic and labour situation will grow. And, on the other, the state of health of the most vulnerable groups will deteriorate sharply.⁹² This was indeed the case **following the 2008 crisis, which had severe psychological effects on a significant portion of the population, raising rates of depression and reducing levels of satisfaction with life in Spain for years**.⁹³

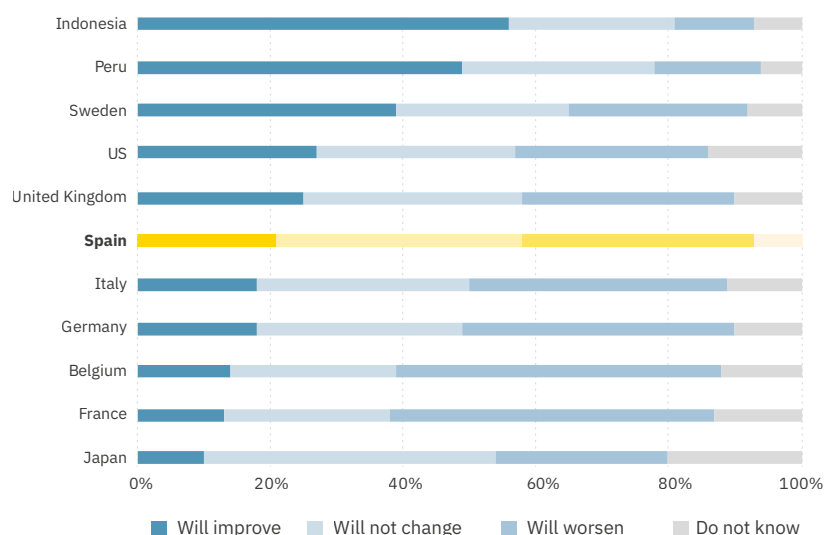
Spain's population will, in any case, eventually overcome the setback and may even emerge stronger from it. There are studies that show how some of the most traumatic episodes of the past contributed to an improvement in the society, strengthening individuals and institutions, and

resulting in an increase in behaviour that is empathetic, altruistic and philanthropic.⁹⁴ Although we cannot anticipate what will happen in this case, it is possible that the pandemic will have a similar effect over the medium and long term, instilling among the public a greater desire for that which is public and collective; the need to rethink urban spaces; the connection between cities and the rural areas; improve the care system for the elderly; tackle the issue of climate change forcefully; and begin to prepare for similar crises.

The medium and long term: the challenges for increasing our country's well-being

When Spaniards are asked about their expectations for living conditions over the next 15 years, only 21% expect them to be better than they are now [Fig. 15]. This pessimism about the future is shared by most countries in Western Europe and, although it is partly explained by a distorted perception typical of the most developed countries around the world, it may also reflect a legitimate concern on the part of people regarding the evolution of some essential issues for well-being.

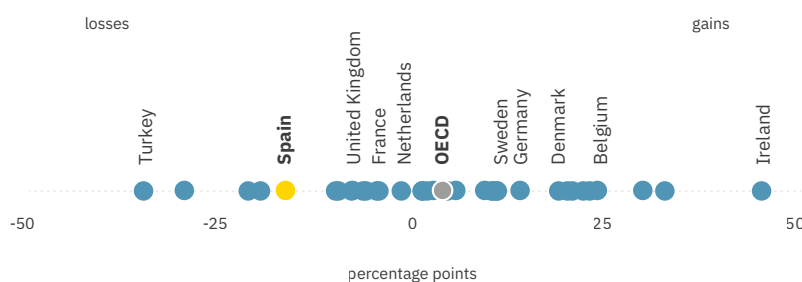
Fig. 15. The citizens' views on how living conditions will evolve in the future, 2017



Source: Authors' own based on Ipsos data.⁹⁵

As we have seen, people's satisfaction is affected by a range of objective realities (employment, health) without which it is more difficult to be happy. The data reveal that, over the last two decades, access to many of these material realities has deteriorated in our country. In fact, an **OECD report released prior to the pandemic ranked Spain among the countries with the greatest challenges for future generations' well-being**, precisely because of the potential losses on these fronts⁹⁶ [Fig.16].

Fig. 16. Gains and losses relating to resources for future well-being compared to the current situation



Source: Author's own based on data from the OECD.⁹⁷

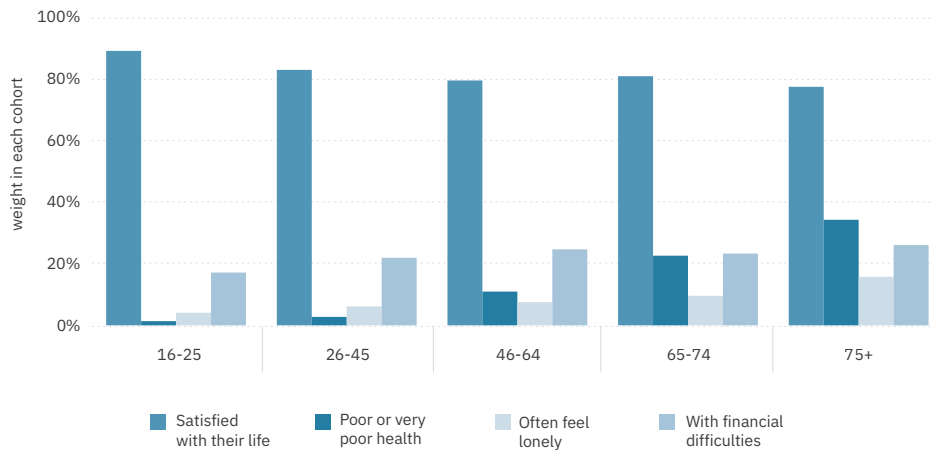
What are these challenges? Here, we highlight five:

First, there are concerns about the future of our economy and, along with it, of our welfare state. As we have already discussed, unless there are deep changes in the next decade, **Spain could experience reduced economic growth in the long term** [see chapter 1]. Although economic growth *per se* is no guarantee of higher levels of well-being, the fact is that if income generation were to be greatly reduced, public revenues would decline also, which would make it more difficult to maintain current social benefits. Social transfers (e.g. retirement pensions, Minimum Living Income, unemployment benefits), and access to and quality of public services could be compromised, leading to an increase in inequality [see chapter 8] and a loss of well-being among the population. This would be particularly intense among the most vulnerable groups and those who at a greater risk of poverty.

The second challenge for our future well-being is related to weaknesses in our labour market. If over the coming decades we fail to resolve current issues such as high levels of structural unemployment and employment insecurity (temporary and part-time work) and long working hours, technological changes and new forms of work could lead to a further deterioration in working conditions in our country [see chapter 7]. This would further increase job dissatisfaction, which is, as we have seen, already the key source of frustration in Spain.

The third challenge for the future well-being of the Spanish people may be due to population ageing. Older age does not necessarily imply a substantial increase in dissatisfaction with life - even though people at older ages suffer from greater health problems or are more likely to feel lonely [Fig. 17]. This is partly explained by their greater maturity and the improvements seen in their quality of life over the years, but also by material issues such as the economic and psychological support provided by the pension system. Or the fact that the vast majority of Spaniards over 65 own the home in which they live. However, these material realities could change in the future [see chapters 5 and 6]. If the necessary reforms are not carried out, the quality of our social protection could experience a significant setback, insofar as many of the social benefits of our welfare state are linked to employment. It is not out of the question that future working careers will become more erratic and discontinuous [see chapter 7]. Similarly, the difficulty many young people face today in accessing housing could mean that, by 2050, the proportion of older people owning a home will fall considerably [see chapter 6]. Rental payments would reduce their availability of income for other expenses or savings, and this could result in lower levels of satisfaction with their economic situation.

Fig. 17. The Spanish population's satisfaction with life, by age, 2018



Source: Authors' own, based on European Social Survey data.⁹⁸

Furthermore, although life expectancy in "good health" is expected to continue to increase over the coming decades [see chapter 5], **the prevalence of certain diseases - and especially common mental disorders -** could become a source of dissatisfaction among our population (both for those suffering from them and for their families). The changes in certain social patterns (for example, smaller households and greater inter-territorial mobility) and the population's distribution across the country (such as the depopulation of rural areas) could also lead to a **decrease in social interactions** and a **possible increase in loneliness** caused, among other reasons, by families' geographical remoteness.

The fourth challenge for the future well-being of the Spanish population is climate change and environmental degradation. If we do nothing, the environmental impacts that occur in the coming decades will worsen our quality of life.⁹⁹ In fact, air pollution in Spain is already among the top ten risk factors for health,¹⁰⁰ and the evidence shows that rising temperatures and deteriorating air quality do indeed reduce well-being.¹⁰¹ Spain in 2050 will be warmer and more arid. There will be more droughts, more fires, more heat waves, more torrential rains and more disease transmission through food, water and animals [see chapter 4]. These are all issues that could reduce the well-being of our citizens.

Finally, the well-being of the Spanish people could be diminished by the changes that will occur in the way the population is distributed around the country between now and 2050. On the one hand, depopulation and the loss of economic and employment dynamism in many rural areas could negatively affect the well-being of the 12% of the Spanish population who will reside in them [see chapter 6]. This is especially true for the elderly in small towns, who will have difficulty accessing certain services (banking, health and transport) and will see their social interactions and capacity for personal and family development reduced. On the other hand, the growth of large cities and the possible intensifying of current challenges such as access to housing and social segregation could reduce the satisfaction among the urban population, prolonging and extending elsewhere a trend that is already visible in some large cities.¹⁰²

Opportunities in the future to increase citizens' life satisfaction levels

The threats described above can of course be avoided or mitigated if we carry out the necessary transformations that will enable us to guarantee a prosperous and sustainable tomorrow, **thus bequeathing the potential for greater well-being to future generations**. The key is to convert these challenges into opportunities, as explained in this *Strategy*.

If we are able to base our economic growth on sustained productivity gains, **we will not only be able to avoid a scenario of reduced growth, but also minimise our vulnerability during times of economic recession; generate better working conditions; have more time for leisure and human relations; and preserve and expand our welfare state, ensuring the provision of quality public services and greater social equality**. One of the keys to increasing our future well-being is to achieve socially inclusive growth that reduces our high levels of poverty risk and income inequality. This will also require a profound reorganising of public revenues (the tax system) and expenditure (social benefits and public services). We will need to collect more and better in order to spend more and better on items that are essential to our future well-being, such as health and long-term care services [see chapter 8].

Technological change can be a key ally in this process of economic modernisation. If properly managed, the development and spread of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and advanced robotics could translate into significant productivity gains (this, in turn, would boost government revenues) and deliver a dramatic improvement in working life. Such innovations could eliminate repetitive and physically erosive jobs; make working hours more flexible; expand the opportunity for teleworking; and reduce working hours, freeing up time for leisure, rest, personal development and social relations. All of this would have a very positive impact on the satisfaction of our population. We will need, however, to pay attention to the possible perverse effects that new technologies can have on the mental health of our population - such as stress caused by excessive use of social networks and being online 24/7, which blur the boundaries between work and private life.

Training and re-skilling our population will also be fundamental. Not only because improving education is the most effective way of increasing a country's productivity and quality of employment,¹⁰³ but also because - if approached holistically - education can enhance individuals' level of satisfaction with life by developing psychosocial and emotional skills such as empathy, critical thinking and introspection, as well as the acquisition of the knowledge necessary to lead a healthy life and establish positive relationships with others. For example, domestic violence, smoking, alcohol consumption, abusing antidepressants, and childhood obesity¹⁰⁴ - all of which are serious threats to the future health of Spain's population - can be corrected from an early age through educational programmes. For this reason, **schools should be viewed not only as places where knowledge is acquired, but also as places for socialisation**, where skills are taught and the necessary tools are offered to be happy in adult life¹⁰⁵ [see chapter 2].

To avoid a deterioration in older people's levels of satisfaction with life, it will be essential to strengthen the National Health System and social services. Over the last few years, Spain's public spending on health has stagnated: in terms of GDP, it has remained at around 6.5% since 2012, and in per-capita terms in 2018 it was at similar levels to 2009 [see chapter 5]. This has occurred despite the increase in the health needs of the population¹⁰⁶ as a result of (among other things) progressive demographic ageing and the incorporation of new technologies and the latest generation of drugs. In the coming decades, we will need to break this trend: our health spending must be adapted to incorporate medical and therapeutic innovations as they emerge, to offer a quality service to the population as a whole and thus become another means of increasing life expectancy in "good health". We must also commit to creating a leading system, which meets the growing needs of a long-living society and which increasingly prioritises autonomy, personalised care and the "home" model in residential care homes services [see chapter 5]. Strengthening professional and guaranteed social services and promoting interpersonal relationships in the community will also be essential to reduce loneliness and dissatisfaction among the population.

The green transition could also result in a less polluted country, with greener and more liveable cities, and citizens with better health and with access to more alternatives for leisure. The natural environment has a direct impact on well-being,¹⁰⁷ meaning that all the improvements that occur within it will result in greater levels of satisfaction with life. For example, the availability of natural spaces and green areas helps to reduce stress, encourages physical exercise, and facilitates social interaction and a sense of community.¹⁰⁸ To minimise the potential impacts of climate change and move towards a carbon-neutral and resource-sustainable economy, we will need to change the way we move around, produce goods and services, and consume. If the green transition is executed well, fairly and equitably, these changes should not result in increased public dissatisfaction, but rather the opposite.

The changes anticipated in our country could also result in greater well-being. Technology will help to close part of the service gap that exists today between cities and rural areas, bringing employment, training, medical and leisure opportunities to even the smallest villages. This could lead to a significant improvement in opportunities and quality of life in rural areas, along with improved levels of life satisfaction. At the same time, the proposed reforms could result in an increase in the number of cities that are more liveable, community-oriented and cohesive, leading to improved well-being, especially among the elderly and the most vulnerable households [see chapter 6].

How can we make these improvements happen? In the following pages we suggest a number of measures to supplement those described in previous chapters.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ACHIEVE GREATER WELL-BEING

Spain's main medium- and long-term goal must be to preserve the levels of subjective well-being that have been achieved in recent decades and to continue increasing them, to ensure its position as one of the "happiest" countries in the world in 2050. To achieve this, it will be essential to successfully overcome the challenges set out in this Strategy, developing a pattern of growth based on increased productivity, environmental sustainability and an inclusive society, strengthening income redistribution mechanisms, and adapting our welfare state to megatrends such as technological change and demographic ageing, so that it can continue to promote social cohesion. Improving levels of economic and job satisfaction [see chapters 1 and 7] is crucial to raising Spanish citizens' levels of life satisfaction, while preserving the high levels of satisfaction achieved in other areas of life such as close social relations and preventing low levels of satisfaction among some groups from becoming chronic.

Goal 50. Progressively raise the extent to which the Spanish population is satisfied with life, to approach the current levels seen among the EU-8 by 2050.

Table of indicators and targets

| Indicators | Place | Average 2015-2019 or latest data available* | Targets | | |
|--|-------|---|---------|------|------|
| | | | 2030 | 2040 | 2050 |
| 50 Percentage of people satisfied with their life ¹⁰⁹ | Spain | 83% | 86% | 89% | 92% |
| | EU-27 | 82% | - | - | - |
| | EU-8 | 92% | - | - | - |

Below we offer some recommended measures to complement those set out in previous chapters and enhance their impact on subjective well-being:

Front 1: Put well-being at the heart of public policy and develop new tools to measure it

The State must ensure that decisions at all times, and above all, pursue the well-being of citizens. We therefore suggest:

- **Introducing the protection and expansion of citizens' well-being as an explicit and fundamental objective when designing, implementing and evaluating all public policies.** A decisive step in this direction would be to establish a "well-being budget," similar to the way New Zealand has recently done.¹¹⁰
- **Improve measurement tools.** Several countries (such as Germany,¹¹¹ Austria,¹¹² the UK,¹¹³ and New Zealand¹¹⁴) have started to develop metrics and new tools to quantify and track the well-being of their populations more closely.¹¹⁵ Spain should do the same, expanding the availability of data¹¹⁶ and longitudinal studies associated with well-being, and creating a dashboard that is regularly updated,¹¹⁷ so that there is a system of national well-being measurements that complement the traditional metrics of GDP and national income.

Front 2: Improve job satisfaction among citizens

This involves correcting the major deficiencies of our labour market (unemployment and temporary jobs) and improving working conditions for the entire population, so that work is not an impediment to good physical and mental health, family life, leisure and participation in the community. In this regard, the following will be important:

- **Being more rigorous about combatting practices such as overwork and encouraging greater flexibility in regard to working hours**, harmonising the criterion of productivity with workers' well-being. We need once and for all to overcome the culture of having to be present, and promoting an efficient use of working time as well as supporting the idea of setting aside time for leisure activities and/or social and family relations.¹¹⁸ An interesting example of this is the UK's *Flexible Working Act*¹¹⁹.
- **Promoting practices among companies (including SMEs) that incorporate well-being into human resources management and the value that is placed on the private sector's contribution to society.**¹²⁰

Front 3: Ensure the quality of the National Health System by improving the prevention and treatment of physical illnesses and mental disorders that undermine people's well-being.

In addition to the measures proposed in chapters 4 and 5, we highlight the following:

- **Strengthen the provision of mental health services delivered by primary care and by care services that are accessible to the general population** (such as social services) and special groups (for example, people in prisons) - with a view to:
 - **Reduce waiting times for mental health diagnosis and care.** Although there are notable variations between regions, it is common for waiting times to exceed 30 days for the first consultation in the National Health System's specialist centres. We need to reduce this waiting time and bring it into line, at least, with that of other primary care health services.
 - **Provide minimally adequate mental health treatments to reduce the use of psychotropic drugs.** Today, only 25% of people with a clinical problem of depression receive "minimally adequate" treatment. The goal should be that at least 2 out of 3 people receive these effective treatments to comply with international recommendations.¹²¹
 - **Substantially reduce the percentage of people who do not receive any treatment within 12 months.**
 - **Reduce health inequalities between different social groups.**

To achieve these changes, it will be necessary to **strengthen the integration of mental health care into the “National Health System Portfolio of Services”**,¹²² incorporating staged procedures for psychological intervention ranging from low-intensity interventions to interventions that require specialist mental health services.¹²³ At present, all that exists are pilot projects or projects of limited scope for providing psychological care within some health centres in certain regions. Most of these show good results in terms of cost and outcomes.¹²⁴

- **Introduce training programmes for teachers and health personnel to identify mental health issues early on.**¹²⁵ Half of the most common mental health problems arise before the age of 15 and 75% start before the age of 25.¹²⁶ Proactive policies are therefore needed for prevention, detection and effective treatment of these problems from childhood,¹²⁷ within educational and health environments as well as in the community.
- **Increase the number of mental health professionals in the National Health System.** The Spanish system's psychological care in mental health is still in its early stages. In clinical psychology, there are 6 professionals per 100,000 inhabitants compared to 18 per 100,000 inhabitants in the rest of Europe.¹²⁸ The number of psychiatrists (10.9 per 100,000 inhabitants) is also among the lowest in the EU-27 (above only Poland and Bulgaria).¹²⁹

Front 4: Promote "education for well-being" within our educational plans

Over the next few years, **our schools and colleges** (primary, secondary and tertiary) **will need to introduce the acquisition of socio-emotional and humanistic knowledge and skills** into their curricula to help students better manage their emotions, deal with phenomena such as failure, success, and pain, to lead healthy lives,¹³⁰ maintain positive interpersonal relationships, and "be happy". This type of training is already being used in Spain, but is not formally or extensively included in educational plans. Research shows that it not only improves the quality of teaching and student outcomes and engagement,¹³¹ but also helps foster a sense of community in schools, reduces conflict (such as bullying) and reduces teacher dissatisfaction.¹³² We therefore suggest the following:

- **Introduce socio-emotional skills into autonomous communities' education legislation and teacher training** so that education offers skills for quality human relations, greater enjoyment of leisure time, responsible exercise of citizenship, respect for and appreciation of diversity, health care, sensible eating habits, and environmental conservation, among other things.
- **Include these programmes in school curricula and teaching programmes, education faculty curricula and training for active teaching staff** through teacher training centres (including management teams).

- In line with the recommendations of the Council of Europe,¹³³ **introduce and apply positive parenting programmes**, preferably in school or social/health care settings,¹³⁴ to include teaching effective communication skills, positive reinforcement, conflict management based on non-violence, and problem solving, with educational content adapted to different educational stages.
- **Implement programmes to encourage peaceful coexistence and training on non-sexist values** aimed at the population as a whole, with greater emphasis on the adolescent population. This would involve developing coeducation programmes based on values, in which schools and families themselves should participate. It is also necessary to reflect on the role models conveyed by the media (for example, different attitudes adopted when presenting the same event, and hyper-sexualisation) and look at the behavioural models portrayed in new media (such as Twitch and Instagram).

CHALLENGE 9: BROADEN THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FUTURE WELL-BEING

¹ Note that progress in means and end do not always go hand in hand. For further details, see: Comte-Sponville, André, Delumeau, Jean, and Arlette Farge. *La historia más bella de la felicidad*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2005; Darrin M. McMahon. *Una historia de la felicidad*. Madrid: Anagrama, 2006; Darrin M. McMahon. "The History of Happiness and Contemporary Happiness Studies." In Amitava Krishna Dutt, and Benjamin Radcliff (eds.). *Happiness, Economics and Politics*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849801973.00007>; and Nisbet, R. *History of the Idea of Progress*. Basic Books, 1980.

² Cortes Generales. *Constitución política de la Monarquía española*. Cádiz, 1812.

³ Gross Domestic Product is the sum of the value of all final goods and services produced in a territory during a given period of time.

⁴ For further details, see: United Nations Development Programme. "Human Development Reports." United Nations Development Programme, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>.

⁵ For further details, see: Andrés, Javier, and Rafael Doménech. *La era de la disrupción digital*. Barcelona: Ediciones Deusto, 2020; Brynjolfsson, Eric, Avinash Collis, and Felix Eggers. "Using massive online choice experiments to measure changes in well-being." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 116, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1815663116>; and Brynjolfsson, Eric, et al. "GDP-B: Accounting for the Value of New and Free Goods in the Digital Economy." *NBER Working Paper*, n.º 25695, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w25695>.

⁶ Many of the alternative proposals to GDP try to incorporate John K. Galbraith's classic idea that in post-industrial societies human welfare does not depend solely on the continued growth of production, and that we should distinguish between those products and activities that have a positive impact on people (e.g. education) and those that have a negative impact (e.g. crime), irrespective of their market value. Refer to: Galbraith, John Kenneth. *The Affluent Society*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958; Mazzucato, Mariana. *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy*. Penguin Books, 2017; Pilling, David. *The Growth Delusion: Wealth, Poverty, and the Well-Being of Nations*. London: Tim Duggan Books, 2018; Rojas, M. "The 'Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress' Report and Quality of Life: Moving Forward." *Social Indicators Research* 102, n.º 1, 2011. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41476473>; and Stiglitz, Joseph E., Amartya Sen, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*. 2009. <https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/oekonomi/ECON4270/h09/Report%20in%20English.pdf>.

⁷ This includes the measurement of "equivalent consumption well-being", which incorporates consumption level, life expectancy and leisure time, as well as inequalities in consumption and leisure time. Taking into account this broader definition of well-being, the differences, for example, between the US and the more developed countries of Europe are drastically reduced. Also interesting is the human

development index adjusted for planetary pressures (HPDI), which adjusts the standard HDI by each country's carbon dioxide emissions and ecological footprint (both variables expressed in per capita terms). In the case of Spain, its position in the international ranking improves by 11 places when comparing the HPDI with the HDI, moving from 23rd to 12th out of 169 countries. See: Andrés, Javier, and Rafael Doménech. *La era de la disrupción digital*. Barcelona: Ediciones Deusto, 2020; y Jones, Charles I., and Peter Klenow. "Beyond GDP? Welfare across Countries and Time." *American Economic Review* 106, n.º 9, 2016. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.2011.0236>; and United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report 2020. The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene*. Nueva York, 2020. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2020>.

⁸ Refer to: Diener, Ed. *Assessing Well-Being: The Collected Works of Ed Diener*. New York: Springer, 2009; Rojas, M. *El Estudio Científico de la Felicidad*. Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2014; Rojas, M. "The Subjective Object of Well-Being Studies." In G. Brulé and F. Maggino (eds.). *Metrics of Subjective Well-Being: Limits and Improvements*. Springer, 2017. 43-62; and Vázquez Valverde, Carmelo, and Gonzalo Hervás Torres. *La ciencia del bienestar: Fundamentos para una psicología positiva*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2009.

⁹ Subjective (emotional/hedonic) well-being consists of good states of mind, which includes both affective reactions to different experiences and the full range of positive and negative assessment people make of their lives. For further details, see: Diener, Ed. "New findings and future directions for subjective well-being research." *American Psychologist* 67, n.º 8, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029541>; OECD. *Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en>; and Rojas, M., and R. Veenhoven. "Contentment and Affect in the Estimation of Happiness." *Social Indicators Research* 110, n.º 2, 2013. 415-431.

¹⁰ In a scale from 1 to 10, satisfied persons are those with a score of 6 or above.

¹¹ For further details, see: European Commission. *Eurobarometer survey 2019*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP_19_2528; World Values Survey. *WVS Wave 6 (2011-2014)*. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSNewsShow.jsp?ID=249>; European Social Survey. Satisfaction with life. <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/country/spain/>; and INE. *Living conditions survey 2019*. https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176807&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976608.

¹² Refer to: World Bank. *GNI per capita, PPP (constant 2017 international \$)*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP_19_2528; and World Values Survey. *WVS Wave 7 (2017-2020)*. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>.

¹³ For further details, see: World Bank. *Life expectancy at birth, total (years)*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP_19_2528; and World Values Survey. *WVS Wave 7 (2017-2020)*. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>.

¹⁴ The EU-8 and EU-27 are constructed as the simple average of the values of the individual countries. For further details, see: European Commission. *Eurobarometer survey 2019*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/IP_19_2528.

¹⁵ For further details on the construction of the EU-8, see the *Apunte metodológico número 1*.

¹⁶ For example, after the 2008 crisis, the gap between the percentage of satisfied highly educated and uneducated doubled to 10 percentage points. For further details, see: European Social Survey. *Satisfaction with life*. <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/country/spain/>.

¹⁷ Herreros Vázquez, Francisco. “¿Son las relaciones sociales una fuente de recursos? Una definición del capital social.” *Papers: revista de sociología*, 2002. <https://papers.uab.cat/article/view/v67-herrerros>; and Rojas, M. “The Complexity of Well-Being: A Life-Satisfaction Conception and a Domains-of-Life Approach.” In Ian Gough y Allister McGregor (eds.). *Researching Well-Being in Developing Countries: From Theory to Research*. Cambridge University Press, 2007. 259-280.

¹⁸ Paldam, Martin. “Social Capital: One or Many? Definition and Measurement.” *Journal of Economic Surveys* 14, n.º 5, 2000. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6419.00127>; and Rojas, M. “Relational Wealth: Quantity and Quality of Interpersonal Relations.” In M. Rojas (ed.). *Well-Being in Latin America: Drivers and Policies*. Springer, 2020. 103-124.

¹⁹ Leisure is a source of well-being in itself: participation in leisure activities, especially more active ones (such as participation in artistic and cultural activities), substantially increases people's well-being. The results of citizen satisfaction with leisure are explained by both the availability of free time and the satisfaction obtained from it. The availability of time is highly conditioned by the length of the working day, to which commuting time is added, hence the work situation explains, to a certain extent, the degree of dissatisfaction shown by a part of Spanish citizens in the “leisure” dimension. On the other hand, satisfaction with personal relationships would partly offset this effect, given that many leisure activities are carried out in the company of friends or family, and in this domain the satisfaction of the Spanish population increases notably. See: Ateca-Amestoy, Victoria, et al. “How do cultural activities influence happiness? Investigating the relationship between self-reported well-being and leisure.” *Estudios Económicos* 31, 2016. <https://estudioeconomicos.colmex.mx/index.php/economicos/articulo/view/16>.

²⁰ The “dissatisfied” incorporates the categories of those who are “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” as well as those who are “dissatisfied or not satisfied at all”. This survey is based on a categorical scale (5 categories), so the overall satisfaction results are not comparable with the Eurobarometer results shown above. For further details, refer to: Iglesias de Ussel, Julio, et al. *La felicidad de los españoles*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2017.

²¹ García-Muñoz, María Teresa, Juliette Milgram-Baleix, and Omar Odeh. “Inequality and Life Satisfaction in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: The Role of Opportunity.” *Societies* 9, n.º 2, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc9020037>; and Guardiola, Jorge, and Monica Guillen-Royo. “Income, unemployment, higher education and wellbeing in times of economic crisis: Evidence from Granada (Spain).” *Social Indicators Research* 120, n.º 2, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-014-0598-6>.

²² Kahneman, Daniel, and Angus Deaton. “High Income improves evaluation of life but not emotional wellbeing.” *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences of the United States* 107, n.º 38, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1011492107>; and Stevenson, Betsey, and Justin Wolfers. “Economic growth and subjective well-being: Reassessing the Easterlin Paradox.” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2008. <https://www.brookings.edu/bpea-articles/economic-growth-and-subjective-well-being-reassessing-the-easterlin-paradox/>.

²³ Iglesias de Ussel, Julio, et al. *La felicidad de los españoles*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2017.

²⁴ Easterlin, Richard A. “Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot? Some Empirical Evidence.” *Nations and Households in Economic Growth*. Academic Press, 1974. <https://huwdixon.org/teaching/cei/Easterlin1974.pdf>; and Jebb, Andrew T., et al. “Happiness, income satiation and turning points around the world.” *Nature Human Behaviour* 2, 2018. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0277-0>.

²⁵ The moderation of the effect of income on well-being is due to the fact that it is not only the absolute level of income that matters, but also relative income, especially among high-income earners. In this respect, two effects have to be taken into account: the first is psychological, which assumes that well-being is relative to an individual benchmark (income level) that also increases when income increases; and the second is social, whereby well-being also depends on the comparison with the income of the social reference group, which dampens the effect of an increase in individual income on well-being. This relative income effect is smaller among low-income people, whose well-being is more dependent on the absolute level of income. See: Budría, S., and Ada Ferrer-i-Carbonell. “Life Satisfaction, Income Comparisons and Individual Traits.” *Review of Income and Wealth* 65, n.º 2, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1111/roiw.12353>; Ferrer-i-Carbonell, Ada. “Income and well-being: an empirical analysis of the comparison income effect.” *Journal of Public Economics* 89, 2005. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2004.06.003>; McBride, Michael. “Relative-income effects on subjective well-being in the cross-section.” *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 45, 2018. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167268101001457>; y Rojas, M. “Economía de la Felicidad: Hallazgos Relevantes sobre el Ingreso y el Bienestar.” *El Trimestre Económico* LXXVI, n.º 3, 2009. <https://www.eltrimestreeconomico.com.mx/index.php/te/articulo/view/489/633>.

²⁶ De Neve, Jan-Emmanuel, et al. “The Asymmetric Experience of Positive and Negative Economic Growth: Global Evidence Using Subjective Well-Being Data.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, n.º 2, 2018. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/tpr/restat/v100y2018i2p362-375.html>.

²⁷ Easterlin, Richard A. “Income and happiness. Towards a unified theory.” *The Economic Journal* 111, 2001. <http://www.uvm.edu/pdodds/research/papers/others/2001/easterlin2001a.pdf>.

²⁸ Pena-López, José Atilano, and Manuel Sánchez-Santos. “Ocupación, desempleo y felicidad.” In Iglesias de Ussel, Julio and Rebeca de Juan Díaz (coords.). *La felicidad de los españoles*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2017. 171-200.

²⁹ Sánchez, Angeles, and María J. Ruiz-Martos. “Europe 2020 Strategy and Citizens’ Life Satisfaction.” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 19, n.º 8, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-017-9928-0>.

³⁰ Salanova, Marisa, and Wilmar B. Schaufeli. *El “engagement” en el*

trabajo. *Cuando el trabajo se convierte en pasión*. Madrid: Alianza, 2009.

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their community. For further details, see: WHO *Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice*. Ginebra, 2004. https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/promoting_mhh.pdf. According to a World Bank/WHO global study on diseases and illnesses, chronic back pain, headaches and depression are the main obstacles to a fulfilling life. For further details, see: GBD 2017 Disease and Injury Incidence and Prevalence Collaborators. "Global, regional, and national incidence, prevalence, and years lived with disability for 354 Diseases and Injuries for 195 countries and territories, 1990-2017: A systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017." *The Lancet*: 392, n.º 10159, 2018. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)32279-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32279-7).

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