



# QUALITY OF LIFE IN POLAND

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# INTRODUCTION

For many years the Central Statistical Office has published a wide range of information allowing for the in-depth analysis of particular quality of life aspects. In this publication, we present a set of core indicators that enable the assessment of important areas of quality of life. It has been assumed that core indicators refer to individuals or households and include both the objective and the subjective measures. Both types of indicators should be considered as complementary.

The concept of measuring the quality of life, as adopted by the CSO, refers to both international recommendations and the rich tradition of Polish research in this respect. According to this approach, a statistical measurement of quality of life takes into account the multidimensional nature of this concept. It is assumed, that the measurement includes not only all objective circumstances in which a human lives, but also the subjective quality of life, as experienced by individuals, which is also known as the subjective well-being.

Living conditions in a broad sense include for instance such specific thematic areas (also called as domains) as the material living conditions, health, education, economic activity, leisure time and social relationships, personal safety, the quality of the state and the fundamental rights, as well as the quality of the environment at the place of residence. The measurement of subjective well-being covers the perceived quality of life, i.e. the satisfaction that people get from various aspects thereof and from the life as a whole, as well as the elements related to the emotional states and value system.

Most of the presented indicators of quality of life will be calculated every year. In some cases – for substantial reasons (e.g. small variation of a phenomenon within a short time) or because of the frequency of data collection – the rates will be calculated every few years. It is planned to publish an updated set of core indicators of quality of life in Poland on an annual basis. This study presents the most up-to-date information mainly for 2013.

## MATERIAL LIVING CONDITIONS





INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Average monthly available income	Available income means the sum of current household income from various sources reduced by the advance payment of personal income tax and the social security and health insurance contributions. Available income consists of income in cash and in kind, including the natural consumption and goods and services received free of charge. The indicator is presented per equivalent unit using the original OECD equivalence scale. The equivalence scales allows to compare households with various demographic composition (due to the number of persons and their age).
Available income quintile share ratio	The ratio of the sum of income received by 20% of the population with the highest income (the 5th quintile) to the total income received by 20% of the population with the lowest income (the 1st quintile). The indicator is calculated on the basis of equivalent income of households with regard to the original OECD equivalence scale.
At risk of extreme poverty rate	The percentage of persons in households in which the level of expenditure (including the value of goods received free of charge and the value of natural consumption) was lower than the accepted threshold of extreme poverty (subsistence minimum). The subsistence minimum is calculated by the Institute of Labour and Social Affairs (IPISS). It includes only those needs whose satisfaction can not be postponed and consumption below this level leads to biological destruction.
At risk of multidimensional poverty rate	The percentage of households affected by the following three forms of poverty at the same time: income poverty, living conditions poverty and poverty in terms of the lack of budget balance..
Indicator of good self-assessment of household's budget	The percentage of households that have enough money to afford a lot without savings or can afford a certain degree of luxury.
Indicator of poor self-assessment of household's budget	The percentage of households that manage their money very economically each day, or their money is not enough to meet basic needs.
Share of expenditure on food and non-alcoholic beverages in the total expenditure	The share of household expenditure earmarked for food and non-alcoholic beverages in the total expenditure (including the value of goods received free of charge and the value of natural consumption).
Share of expenditure on the maintenance of flat in the total expenditure	The share of household expenditure earmarked for housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels in the total expenditure (including the value of goods received free of charge and the value of natural consumption).
Indicator of poor sanitary conditions	The percentage of households that do not have hot running water or a toilet with running water flush or a bathroom with a bathtub/shower in their flat.
Households living in too large dwellings	The percentage of households that find their dwellings too large for the needs of their household
Households living in too small dwellings	The percentage of households that find their dwellings too small for the needs of their household
Lack of money for food (% of households)	The percentage of households in which – for financial reasons – not all adults could afford to eat meat, poultry, fish or vegetarian equivalents and fresh fruits and vegetables every other day.
Lack of money for at least one week of holidays once a year (% of households)	The percentage of households in which – for financial reasons – not all adults could afford at least one week of holidays (a trip outside the place of residence regardless of the season) once a year.
No car for financial reasons (% of households)	The percentage of households without at least one passenger car or a passenger and delivery car for financial reasons.

## MAIN ACTIVITY, WORK





INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Employment rate	The share of employed persons (total or for a given group) in the total population aged 15 and older (total or for a given group).
Unemployment rate	The share of unemployed persons (total or for a given group) in the number of economically active people (total or for a given group).
Long-term unemployment rate	The percentage of unemployed persons looking for work for over 12 months (13 months or more) in the number of economically active population.
NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)	The percentage of persons aged 18-24 who do not work (i.e. they are unemployed or inactive) and are not in further education or training (they have not participated in any form of education within the four weeks preceding the survey). In the data published by Eurostat, this indicator is referred to as NEET (not in employment and not in any education and training).
Employees with long working hours	The percentage of employees who usually have extended working hours in a week (50 hours or more).
Employed persons with fixed-term contracts	The percentage of employed persons working under fixed-term employment contracts in relation to all employed persons.
Median gross earnings	The value means that half of the employees earn less than this amount and the other half more than it. The median gross earnings applies to gross wages per full-time job.
Median pension	The value means that half of pensioners receive benefits lower than this amount and the other half higher ones. The median pension applies to gross pension benefits paid by the Social Insurance Institution.
Overall job satisfaction	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare they are satisfied with their current job.



INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Persons with limited ability to perform daily activities	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare to have a limited ability to perform activities that people usually do for 6 months or longer.
Indicator of good health self-assessment	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who self-assessed their overall health condition as good or very good.
Indicator of poor health self-assessment	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who self-assessed their overall health condition as poor or very poor.
Persons aged 15 and more with overweight and obesity	The percentage of persons aged 15 and older with overweight and obesity. Monitoring of overweight and obesity in the population is possible with a use of a special measurement referred to as body mass index (BMI). Obesity occurs when BMI has a value of at least 30 and overweight when it is at least 25.
Daily tobacco smokers	The percentage of persons aged 15 and more who declare they smoke tobacco every day.
Unmet need for consulting a medical specialist due to long waiting lists or lack of a referral letter	The percentage of persons aged 16 and more who reported the need for consulting a medical specialist, but have not taken advantage of the consultation because of long waiting lists or lack of a referral letter.
Unmet need for consulting a medical specialist due to financial reasons	The percentage of persons aged 16 and more who reported the need for consulting a medical specialist, but have not taken advantage of the consultation for financial reasons.



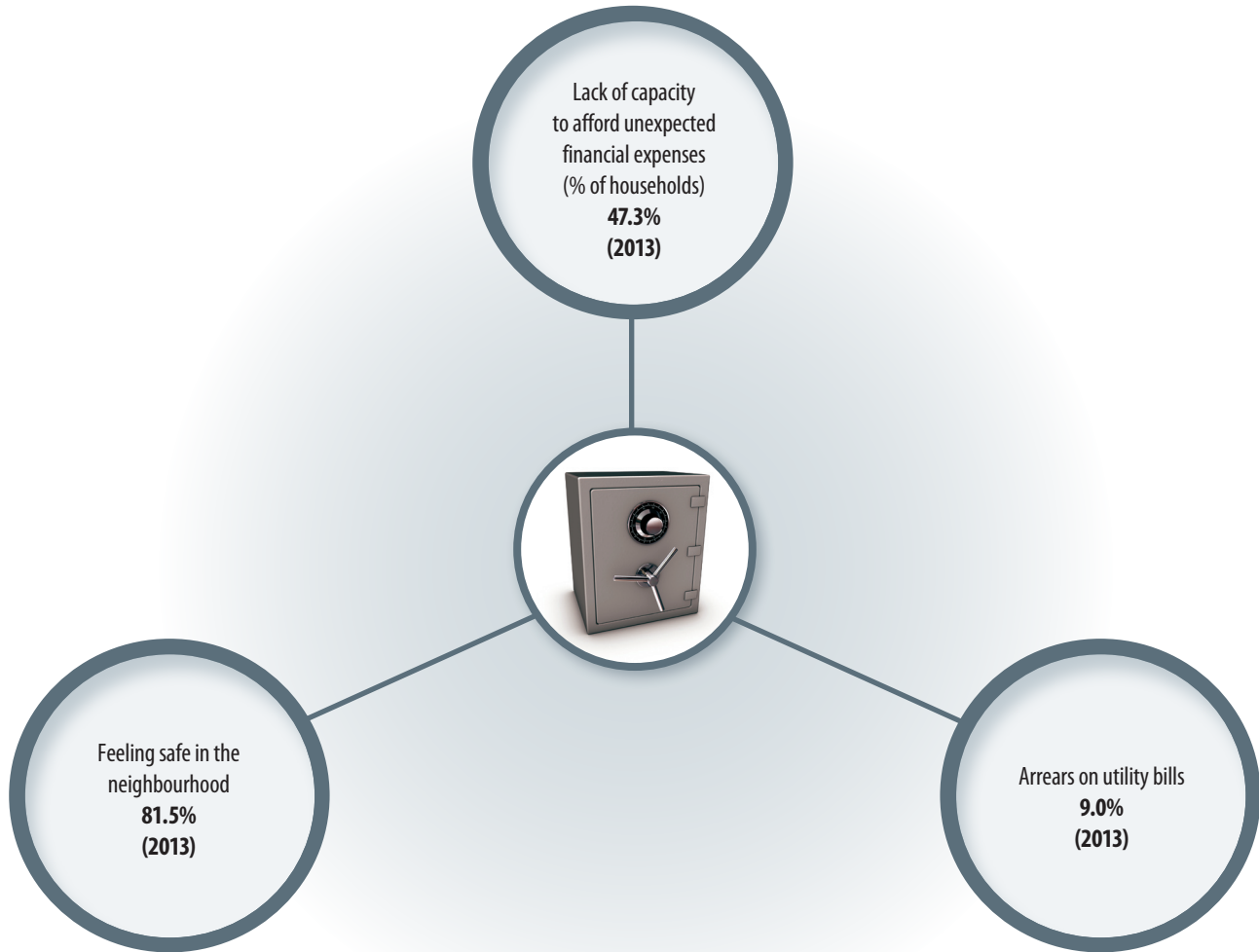
INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Persons who have a command of foreign languages	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they have command of at least one foreign language at communicative level or higher (ability to use basic expressions and use the language to describe familiar things and situations).
Persons aged 16-74 who use a computer	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16-74 who have used a computer within the last 3 months.
Persons aged 16-74 who use the Internet	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16-74 who have used the Internet within the last 3 months.
Persons aged 25 and more with higher education	The percentage of persons aged 25 and more with higher education (ISCED level 5 or higher).
Persons aged 25 and more with at most lower secondary education	The percentage of persons aged 25 and more with at most lower secondary education (ISCED level 2 or lower).
Persons aged 15-64 in education and training	The percentage of persons aged 15-64 in education and/or further education among the population in the same age group (within the 4 weeks preceding the survey).
Children aged 3-4 in preschool education	The percentage of children aged 3-4 in pre-school education institutions (in relation to the population of children of the same age).

## LEISURE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS





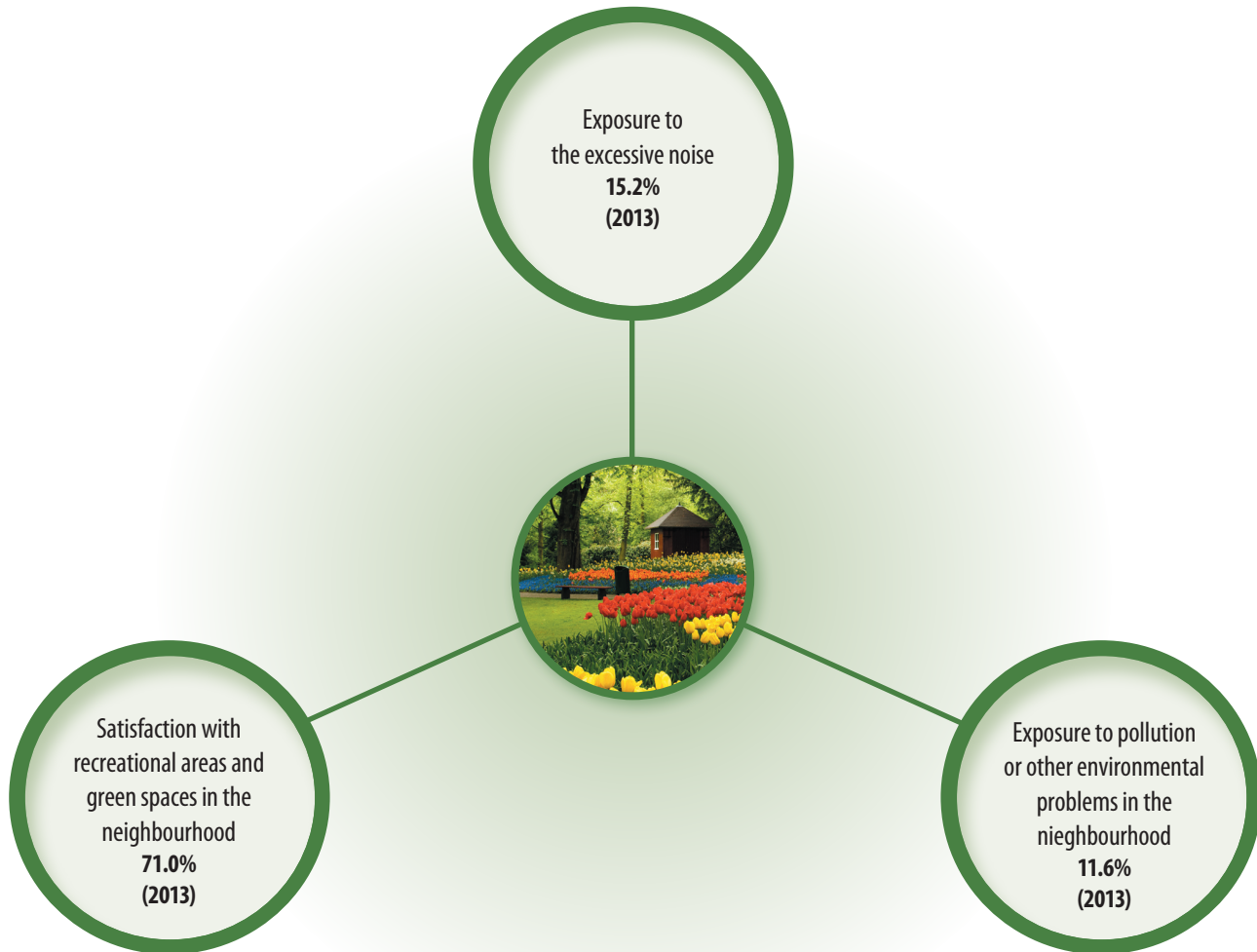
INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Lack of leisure time	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that during the weekday they do not have enough leisure time even to perform the necessary activities, or it is enough only for what they need to do, but they do not have any free time for themselves.
Satisfaction with the amount of leisure time	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of leisure time they have.
Satisfaction with the way of spending leisure time	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the way of spending their leisure time.
Social isolation indicator	The percentage of persons aged 16 and more with observed low intensity of social contacts (or lack thereof) with people outside the household.
Persons performing unpaid work individually (working for others)	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 15 and more who performed unpaid work individually (e.g. running office errands, childcare and elderly care, help with shopping, cleaning) outside their own household within the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Unpaid work performed individually, i.e. outside any organisational structures, is generally directed towards specific people (relatives, friends or strangers) or for the environment or the community.
Possibility of receiving support from other people	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they have relatives, friends, acquaintances or neighbours whom they can ask for help (e.g. for financial or moral assistance).
Trust in other people	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that in general most people can be trusted (selection of a value greater than or equal to 7 on a ten-point scale).



INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Lack of capacity to afford unexpected financial expenses (% of households)	The percentage of households claiming to the lack of capacity to pay through their own resources for unexpected financial expenses amounting to PLN 1,000.
Arrears on utility bills	Percentage of households, which due to financial reason, within the 12 months preceding the survey, two or more times were unable to pay on time the utility bills, such as gas bills, electricity, water, sewage, rubbish bills, property tax and other bills for the main dwelling.
Feeling safe in the neighbourhood	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they feel very safe or fairly safe when walking alone at night in the area of their place of residence.



INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Trust in the political system	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they trust in the political system as a whole (selection of a value greater than or equal to 7 on the ten-point scale).
Trust in the legal system	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they trust in the legal system (selection of a value greater than or equal to 7 on the ten-point scale).
Trust in the police	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they trust in the police(selection of a value greater than or equal to 7 on the ten-point scale).
A sense of being discriminated against	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who consider themselves as belonging to a social group that for any reason is treated less favourably (discriminated) than other groups in Poland.
Persons who provide voluntary work in organisations	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who provided voluntary work in organisations within the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Voluntary work in non-profit organisations means unpaid work provided within the organisational structure of, for instance: associations and similar social organisations, foundations, churches, communities or religious organisations, trade unions, political parties, as well as business, professional or employer associations, government or local government institutions and the institutions they run.
Voter turnout in the elections to the Sejm	The proportion of the number of votes cast (valid ballot papers) to the total number of persons entitled to vote in the elections to the Sejm (i.e. the lower house of the Polish parliament), expressed as a percentage.





INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Exposure to the excessive noise	The percentage of households experiencing the excessive noise coming from neighbours or from the outside (traffic, industrial plants, economic activity) in their place of residence.
Exposure to pollution or other environmental problems in the neighbourhood	Percentage of households experiencing the following problems related to the place where they live: pollution, grime or other environmental problems in the local area (smoke, dust, unpleasant smells or polluted water).
Satisfaction with the recreational areas and green spaces in the neighbourhood	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that in general they are satisfied (including very satisfied) with the recreational areas and green spaces in the neighbourhood (selection of a value greater than or equal to 7 on the ten-point scale).

## SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING



INDICATOR	DEFINITION
Overall life satisfaction	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that they are generally satisfied with their lives (selection of a value greater than or equal to 7 on the ten-point scale).
Aggregate indicator of good emotional well-being	The percentage of persons aged 16 and more who declared the co-occurrence of 2 positive emotional states (they felt happy, calm and relaxed) and the absence of (or very rare occurrence) of 3 negative symptoms of malaise (they did not feel stressed, they did not feel downhearted, they did not feel depressed, so that nothing could cheer them up) within 4 weeks preceding the survey.
Aggregate indicator of poor emotional well-being	The percentage of persons aged 16 and more who experienced at least 3 of the 5 symptoms of poor emotional state (they never or rarely felt happy, they never or rarely felt calm and relaxed; they felt very stressed, they felt downhearted, they felt depressed, so that nothing could cheer them up) within 4 weeks preceding the survey.
Sense of meaning in life	The percentage of persons (in households) aged 16 and more who declare that what they do in life is valuable (selection of a value greater than or equal to 7 on the ten-point scale).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEYS

A multidimensional measurement of the quality of life requires a combination of information from multiple sources. Below you can find a brief description of the surveys conducted by the Central Statistical Office that formed the basis for the calculation of indicators of quality of life in this publication.

### **EU STATISTICS ON INCOME AND LIVING CONDITIONS (EU-SILC)**

It is a representative household survey that has been conducted by the CSO since 2005 on an annual basis. The main goal of the EU-SILC is to provide comparable data on quality of life in member states of the European Union. The results of the survey are used to calculate e.g. indicators of income, poverty, material deprivation, and selected aspects of social exclusion. EU-SILC contains a module set of questions, which fulfil the current policy needs of the European Union. The 2013 module concerned the subjective wellbeing.

### **SOCIAL COHESION SURVEY (BSS)**

It is a cyclic, representative household survey. The first BSS edition was carried out in 2011. The next survey will be conducted in 2015.

The aim of the social cohesion survey is to gather information allowing a comprehensive assessment of the quality of life, understood as a multidimensional category (including the economic and social aspects) and evaluated from the perspective of both objective and subjective indicators.

Owing to the integration of individual data, it is possible for instance to determine in which groups of the society there is an accumulation of favourable or unfavourable aspects of the quality of life, which factors determine these situations, and which relationships exist between various dimensions of the quality of life. A wide range of collected information enable e.g. to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the level and diversity of lifestyles as well as a multidimensional analysis of poverty, social exclusion, social capital and subjective well-being.

### **HOUSEHOLD BUDGET SURVEY**

It has been carried out on an annual basis since 1957. It is a representative household survey.

The survey covers mainly household budget, i.e. the amount of revenues and outgoings (in cash and in kind) of all members of a given household and the quantitative consumption of selected goods and services.

It allows to analyse the material aspects of living conditions of the population and to assess the impact of various factors on the level and diversity of the living conditions of the basic groups of households.

**LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (LFS)**

The study has been carried out in Poland since 1992 and improved in accordance with Eurostat recommendations. It is conducted using the representative method. It covers all persons aged 15 and older who reside in randomly selected dwellings. The observation of the population covered by the survey is conducted in the households.

The goal of the survey is to assess the economic activity of the population. The basic criterion for the breakdown of the population into the employed, the unemployed and economically inactive persons is constituted by work (meaning the performance of work, the fact of having a job or searching for a job). The adopted order for identification of various population categories guarantees the classification of each person in only one category.

**EUROPEAN HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY (EHIS)**

It was conducted by the CSO for the first time in 2009. It is a representative survey aimed at assessing the health condition of the Polish population, taking into account the overall assessment of subjective overall condition of health, both the physical and mental one.

It covers e.g. the issues such as the frequency of incidence of the most serious, long-term health problems (e.g. the chronic ones), the level of fitness and limitations hindering the exercise of basic living activities, as well as emotional states. The survey also makes it possible to monitor selected aspects of healthy and unhealthy behaviours.

The survey is repeated every five years.

**ICT USAGE IN HOUSEHOLDS AND BY INDIVIDUALS (ICT)**

It has been conducted in Poland since 2004. It is a representative survey on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in households and by individuals, and it is carried out according to the methodology harmonised with European Union guidelines. It is conducted annually using the personal interview method. An interview on the use of ICT is conducted in households that consist of persons aged 16-74.

The ICT survey is aimed at satisfying the information needs arising from the rapid development of information and communication technologies by alternating inclusion of modules dedicated to selected research topics, including information competencies, the use of advanced internet services, mobile internet access and the use of social media.

### **UNPAID WORK OUTSIDE THE HOUSEHOLD (PNZ)**

The survey was conducted for the first time in 2011 as a module for the labour force survey. Its goal is to measure the economic and social dimension of work provided voluntarily and free of charge by Polish residents who have reached the age of 15.

Apart from social work provided in various organisational units (e.g. associations, foundations, churches, trade unions, etc.), the survey also covers the work performed free of charge outside any organisational structures, e.g. for relatives and friends outside their own household, for strangers, as well as for the environment, local community and the society.

### **SALARY STRUCTURE SURVEY**

The survey has been conducted since 1999 (since 2002 every two years). It is a representative survey covering the entities of the national economy employing 9 persons or more.

The survey results make it possible to analyse the differentiation in salaries (average monthly and hourly remuneration) and their structure according to the characteristics of individuals such as sex, age, education, work experience, occupation and characteristics of the employers of these people, and hence the type of activity, property sector, company size and geographic location. The survey also makes it possible to describe the structure of employment according to the above-mentioned characteristics. On the basis of the results, the breakdowns of the employees by salary and basic measures of wage differentiation are also developed.