

Loneliness

an unequally shared burden in Europe

Population ageing, the rising number of people living alone and the increased use of digital technologies for communication have led many to posit that loneliness is on the rise. The European Commission's Joint Research Centre has analysed the incidence and the determinants of loneliness across Europe.



How lonely are Europeans?

Loneliness is measured with two indicators:

- 1 **Lonely individuals** are those who report feeling lonely 'most of the time', 'almost all' or 'all of the time' in the past week



- 2 **Socially isolated individuals** are those who meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues at most once a month



7% frequently feel lonely

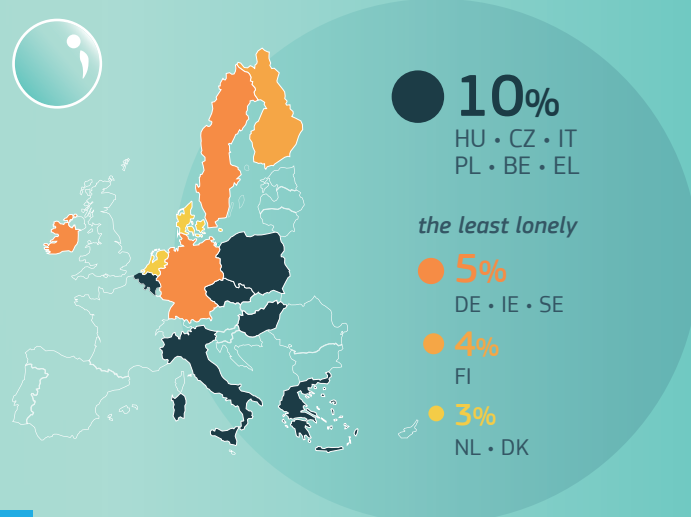
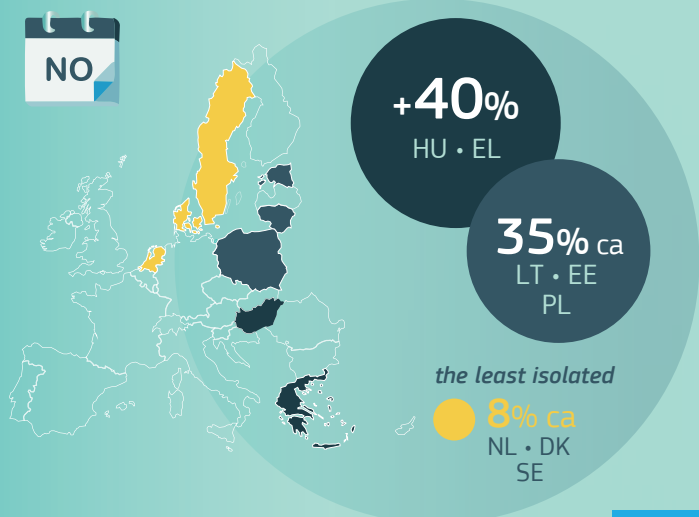
18% meet others at most once a month

of all Europeans aged over 15

Eastern and Southern Europeans are lonelier and more socially isolated than Western and Northern Europeans

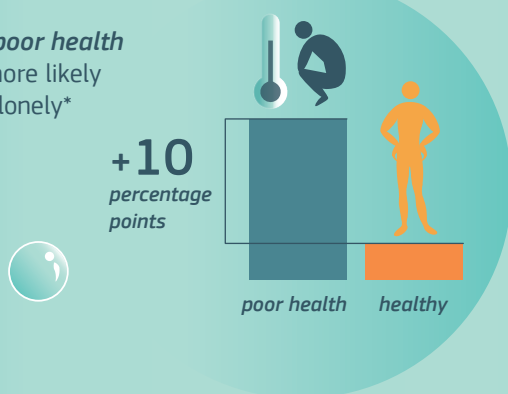
People not socialising more than once a month*

People frequently feeling lonely*



People in poor health, the unemployed and those with low incomes suffer more from loneliness

Individuals with **poor health conditions** are more likely to be frequently lonely*

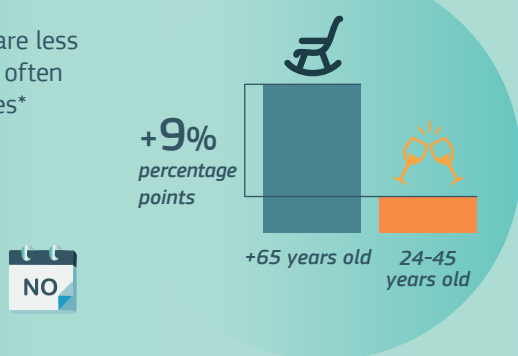


The **poor unemployed** face a higher risk of frequent loneliness*



Elderly people may be more socially isolated but they are not feeling lonelier

Elderly people are less likely to engage often in social activities*



Nevertheless, they are **not more likely to be frequently lonely**

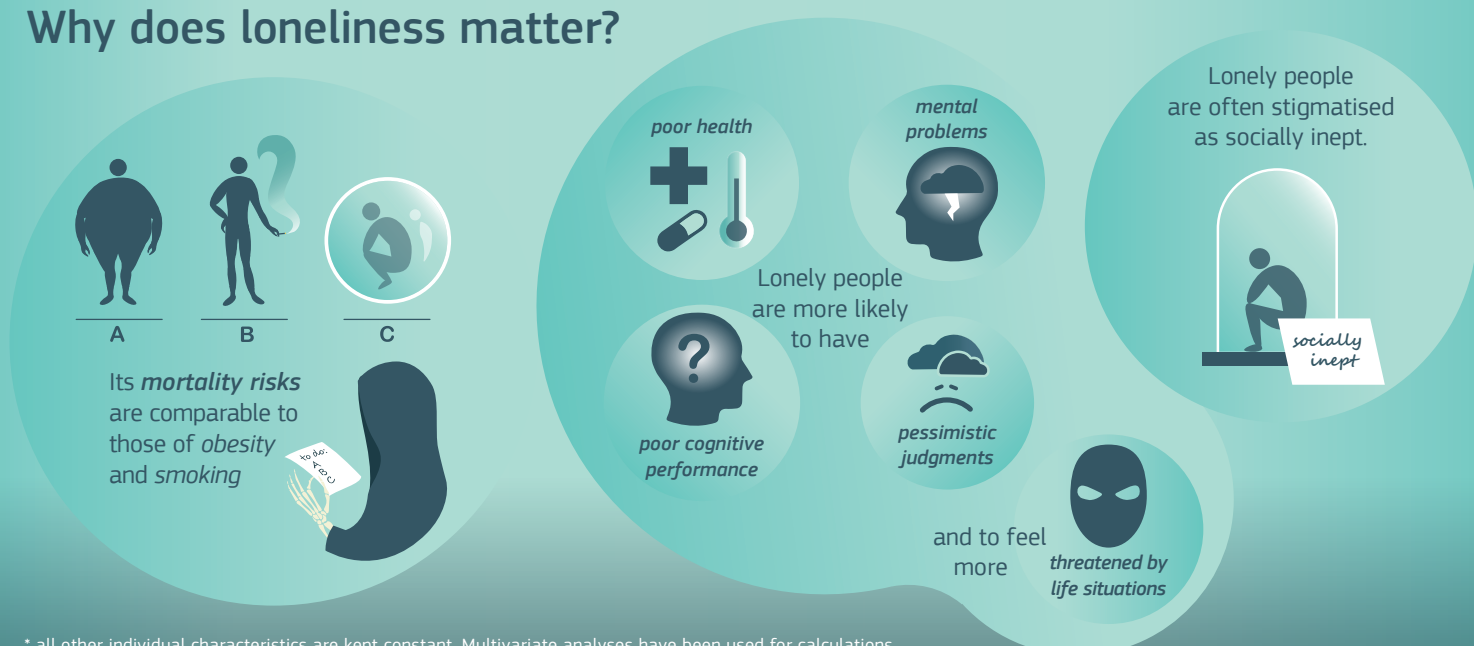


Europeans living in cities are not any more lonely or isolated than everyone else

The proportion of people feeling lonely in **rural areas** is comparable to that in **urban areas***



Why does loneliness matter?



* all other individual characteristics are kept constant. Multivariate analyses have been used for calculations.

This study is part of a multi-year research project to analyse different aspects of fairness, including inter alia income inequality and other measureable inequalities, social mobility, social isolation, segregation and people's perceptions and attitudes regarding fairness.
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research/crosscutting-activities/fairness/>