

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

All people enjoy personal safety and security and are free from victimisation, abuse, violence and avoidable injury.

# Safety

## INTRODUCTION

Safety is fundamental to wellbeing: at their most extreme, violence and avoidable injury threaten life itself. In other cases, they reduce quality of life for the victim and other people in a multitude of ways.

Both safety and security are important. Safety is freedom from physical or emotional harm, while security is freedom from the threat or fear of harm or danger. The desired outcomes recognise that threats come in many forms, ranging from deliberate violence to accidental injury.

Violence and injury corrode quality of life in many ways. Physical injury causes pain and incapacity, reducing victims' enjoyment of life and ability to do things that are important to them. They may be prevented from working, reducing their economic standards of living and social contact. They may be prevented from taking part in family life or social groups, creating feelings of isolation and frustration. Even after their injuries have healed they may face ongoing health problems.

Property crime, such as burglary, also affects people's wellbeing. In addition to the direct losses associated with crime of this sort, evidence suggests the threat of burglary is a more significant worry for many people than the threat of violence.<sup>59</sup>

The psychological effects are as important as the physical ones. Victims of violence or injury often retain emotional scars long after their physical wounds have healed. They may suffer from depression or face other mental health issues.

Injury affects not only individuals but also society as a whole. The victim's family and friends are likely to suffer grief and anger. They may have to care for someone who is temporarily or permanently incapacitated, and may suffer from loss of livelihood.

Crime affects whole communities by increasing general levels of fear and anxiety, and sometimes by creating tensions between different social groups. Fear and mistrust can also corrode social networks, reducing overall levels of 'social capital' - the glue that holds society together.

People's choices about how to live their lives may be restricted. For example, they may avoid certain areas or avoid going out because of a fear of crime. Costs to society as a whole range from the costs of hospital care and law enforcement to the loss of the victim's input to their work and community.

Children who grow up surrounded by violence may themselves become violent adults, perpetuating a negative cycle.

## INDICATORS

Four indicators are used in this chapter. They are: child abuse and neglect; criminal victimisation; safety perceptions; and road casualties. The first three indicators combine to provide a picture of the level and impact of violence in the community. Together, the indicators directly address the question of how free New Zealanders may be from victimisation, abuse, violence and avoidable injury.

Child abuse and neglect are major social problems. They cause physical and psychological harm which are often long-lasting. Child abuse figures are relevant to current levels of wellbeing as well as pointing to future social problems.<sup>60</sup> This indicator uses the proportion of children assessed as abused following notification to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, which is likely to underestimate the true level of violence against children. This under-reporting makes it difficult to interpret trends over time, and also difficult to draw conclusions from trends: an increase in the rate of reported child abuse may in fact be positive if it reflects higher levels of awareness and reporting of abuse, rather than higher levels of abuse itself.

Measuring criminal victimisation is difficult, as much crime is not reported to the Police. This is particularly true of burglary, domestic violence, and child abuse. The first indicator uses survey results to give a more comprehensive picture of the level of criminal victimisation in society, including the level of violence.

Feeling unsafe harms quality of life by producing anxiety and reducing people's options in life. Fear is often not linked to the actual risk of becoming a crime victim - for example, people may feel unsafe and have their quality of life reduced even when the actual likelihood of them being victimised is relatively small.

People should also be able to live in a society where they are free from the risk of avoidable death or injury. The leading cause of avoidable injury and death is motor vehicle crashes. Injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes bring enormous personal, social and economic costs and are a major cause of premature death and disability.<sup>61</sup> In economic terms, the social cost of motor vehicle crashes has been estimated at \$3.1 billion annually.<sup>62</sup>

Workplace accidents are another form of avoidable injury. They are discussed in the chapter on Paid Work.

# Child abuse and neglect

## DEFINITION

The number of children assessed as abused (physically, emotionally, sexually) or neglected following a notification to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS), as a proportion (per 1,000) of all children under 17 years of age.

## RELEVANCE

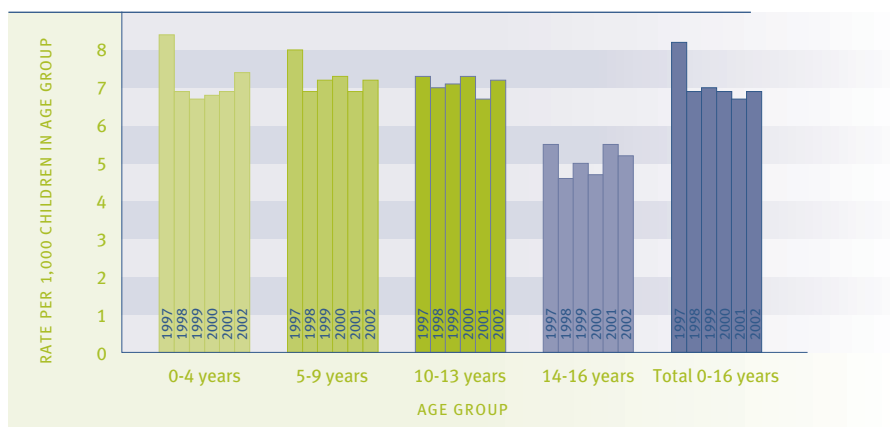
Abuse or violence can seriously damage a child's physical and psychological health, with the consequences often experienced well into adolescence and adulthood. Protecting the lives and health of children and future adults by reducing child abuse is a critical component of improving social wellbeing in New Zealand.

## CURRENT LEVEL AND TRENDS

In the year to June 2002, there were 27,507 care and protection notifications to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS). On a population basis, this represented 27.7 notifications per 1,000 children aged 0-16 years. Annual fluctuations in these figures do not necessarily reflect changes in the prevalence of child abuse. They may be influenced by the level of resources made available, and by changes in administration and reporting patterns.<sup>63</sup> More than one notification can be made for individual children.

In the year to June 2002, 6,892 children were assessed as abused or neglected by CYFS. This was a substantiated child abuse rate of 6.9 children for every 1,000 children under 17 years of age, a slight increase from the (revised) rate of 6.7 percent in 2001.<sup>64</sup>

Figure SS1.1 **Substantiated child abuse and neglect rate, by age group, 1997-2002**



Source: Ministry of Social Development, SWIS (1997-2000), CYRAS (2001, 2002)

Note: The rate is based on individual children who were assessed as abused (physically, emotionally, sexually) or neglected. 2001 rates have been revised

## AGE AND SEX DIFFERENCES

Rates of substantiated child abuse are higher for children under 14 years than for older children. In 2002, just over seven per 1,000 children in age groups under 14 years were the subject of substantiated reports of abuse or neglect, compared with just over five per 1,000 for 14-16 year olds.

There is little sex difference in rates of abuse among children under 10 years but females aged 14-16 are much more likely to be abused than males of that age. In

2002, the rate of substantiated child abuse among 14-16 year old females was 6.9 per 1,000, nearly twice the rate for males (3.5 per 1,000). These age and sex differences have been consistent over the past five years. Sexual abuse is the only type of child abuse that has a clear sex bias. Rates of sexual abuse are much higher for females than for males.

Table SS1.1 **Children reported to CYFS who were assessed as abused or neglected, by age and sex, years ended 30 June 2001, 2002**

Age group	Rate per 1,000 children in each age group					
	2001			2002		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4 years	6.7	7.0	6.9	7.4	7.0	7.4
5-9 years	6.7	7.0	6.9	7.0	7.3	7.2
10-13 years	5.7	7.6	6.7	6.2	8.0	7.2
14-16 years	3.6	7.3	5.5	3.5	6.9	5.2
Total	6.0	7.3	6.7	6.3	7.3	6.9

Source: Ministry of Social Development, CYRAS  
Note: 2001 rates have been revised

## ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Māori children are more likely than non-Māori children to be assessed as abused and neglected. In 2002, the rate per 1,000 was 10.3 for Māori and 5.9 for non-Māori.

While equivalent rates are not available for Pacific children, they are not over-represented among children assessed as abused, accounting for 12 percent of such children in 2002, about the same representation as they have in the child population.

Table SS1.2 **Children reported to CYFS who were assessed as abused or neglected, by Māori, non-Māori ethnicity and sex, years ended 30 June 1998-2002**

Age group	Rate per 1,000 children aged 0-16					
	Māori			Non-Māori		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1998	11.8	13.9	13.0	4.6	5.5	5.1
1999	12.3	14.3	13.4	4.5	5.5	5.0
2000	11.1	13.2	12.3	4.7	5.6	5.2
2001	9.3	10.8	10.1	4.9	6.2	5.6
2002	9.4	10.9	10.3	5.3	6.2	5.9

Source: Ministry of Social Development, CYRAS  
Note: 2001 rates have been revised

## INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Comparison of child abuse statistics of different countries is difficult. The only recent attempt to compare international rates of abuse was published in 1993 and was based on infants under one year who had died from 'undetermined causes', a category which includes accidents as well as intentional harm. This study suggested that the 'presumed childhood abuse mortality' rate for infants in New Zealand is relatively high by international standards. However, the comparison needs to be treated with caution, as in countries such as New Zealand with a small population, the number of homicides of infants is relatively low, and small changes in the number of deaths can lead to large fluctuations in rates from one year to the next.<sup>65</sup>

# Criminal victimisation

## DEFINITION

The proportion of the population aged 15 and over who have been the victims of one or more incidents of criminal offending as measured by the 2001 National Survey of Crime Victims.

## RELEVANCE

The criminal victimisation rate provides a broad measure of personal safety and wellbeing. Surveys of criminal victimisation generally provide a more comprehensive picture of victimisation than police data, as not all offending is reported or recorded.

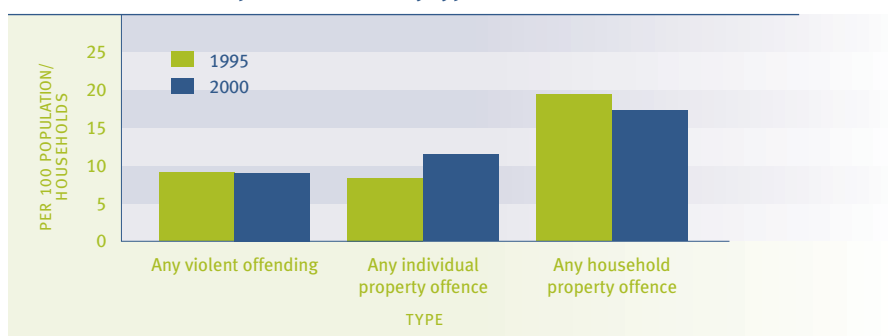
## CURRENT LEVEL

Survey data shows that 30 percent of New Zealand adults aged 15 and over experienced victimisation during 2000. This is similar to the level in 1995 (31 percent).

A breakdown by the type of offence shows that nine percent of the adult population reported they had been the victim of violent offending in 2000, the same level as in 1995. More than one in 10 people (11 percent) reported they had been subject to an individual property offence, such as theft or wilful damage, up from eight percent in 1995. The proportion of people who were the victim of a household property offence was 19 percent in 1995 and 17 percent in 2000.

A small number of individuals accounted for the vast majority of violent victimisations. Less than two percent of the adult population were victims of violence five or more times, but they experienced 55 percent of the violent victimisations. Violent victimisations comprised slightly less than half of the total volume of victimisations disclosed by the 2001 survey.

Figure SS2.1 Criminal victimisation prevalence rate by type of victimisation, 1995, 2000



Source: Morris et al 2003, Tables 2.6, 2.8 and revised 1995 figures

## AGE DIFFERENCES

Young adults are more likely than older adults to experience victimisation. In the 2001 survey, 46 percent of the 15-24 year age group had experienced victimisation compared with 33 percent of those aged 25-39, 28 percent of the 40-59 age group and 13 percent of those aged 60 and over. Youth were more than twice as likely to experience violent victimisation as the 25-39 year age group, the next closest group. Younger adults were also more likely than older people to experience an individual property offence, though the difference by age was less pronounced than for violent offences.

Table SS2.1 Criminal victimisation rate by major offence type and age, 2000

Offence type	Rate per 100 persons in each age group				
	15-24	25-39	40-59	60+	Total
Any violent offending (including sexual assault)	23.5	9.5	5.6	1.3	9.0
Any 'individual' property offence	18.3	13.2	10.3	5.0	11.5
Any victimisation (including household victimisation)	45.9	32.9	28.2	12.7	29.5

Source: Morris et al 2003, Tables 2.6, 2.8, 2.13 and additional data.

## SEX DIFFERENCES

The overall rate of victimisation did not vary by sex, with 30 percent of women and 29 percent of men reporting they had experienced victimisation in 2000. This is similar to 1995 when 31 percent of women and 32 percent of men experienced victimisation. While men and women were equally as likely to report being the victim of violence, more men than women disclosed violence by someone not well known to them (12 percent compared with eight percent).

Survey information on partner violence shows that more than one in four women (26 percent) and just under one fifth of men (18 percent) had been abused or threatened with violence by a partner at some time in their adult life. Changes in methodology between the 2001 and 1996 surveys on criminal victimisation mean it is not possible to compare changes in partner victimisation over time.<sup>66</sup>

Women's lifetime experience of sexual interference or assault was considerably higher than men's (19 percent compared with five percent).

## ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

In 2000, Māori were considerably more likely to experience victimisation (41 percent) than Pacific people (28 percent) and Europeans (29 percent). The difference was greatest for violent victimisation, with one fifth of Māori experiencing offending of this type, compared to 11 percent of Pacific people and eight percent of Europeans. Māori were also more likely to experience individual property offences, though the difference was less marked than for violent offending. Pacific peoples were the least likely of any group to experience offending of this type. The proportion of Māori women who had been abused or threatened with violence by a partner at some time during their adult life was very much higher (49 percent) than for European women (24 percent) and Pacific women (23 percent).

Table SS2.2 Criminal victimisation rate by major offence type and ethnicity, 2000

Offence type	Rate per 100 persons aged 15+			
	European	Māori	Pacific	Other
Any violent offending (including sexual assault)	8.4	19.5	11.3	2.6
Any 'individual' property offence	11.5	14.7	8.2	11.9
Any victimisation (including household victimisation)	28.9	40.9	28.3	26.4

Source: Morris et al 2003, Table 2.14 and additional data

# Perceptions of safety

## DEFINITION

The proportion of people who reported they felt unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night. People who said they did not walk alone at night were asked how they thought they would feel.

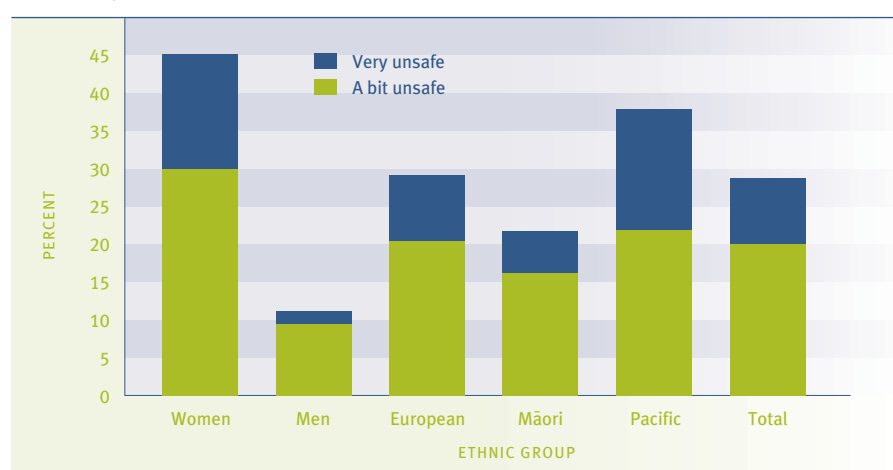
## RATIONALE

Feeling safe is fundamental to wellbeing. Anxiety and worries about victimisation detract from wellbeing in themselves, and may cause people to alter their behaviour to avoid being victimised. This limits people's options and can reduce their freedom. People's subjective perceptions about safety are not always linked to the actual risk of becoming a crime victim.

## CURRENT LEVEL AND TRENDS

In 2001, 29 percent of New Zealanders reported feeling unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood at night. A fifth (20 percent) reported feeling only 'a bit unsafe', while nine percent felt 'very unsafe'.

Figure SS3.1 **Proportion of the population who felt unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, 2001**



Source: Morris et al 2003

People's perceptions varied widely according to their behaviour. Of people who reported they did not walk alone at night, 30 percent reported feeling it would be a bit unsafe and 16 percent said they felt walking alone was very unsafe. People who reported they walked alone at night were much less likely to feel unsafe. Only 10 percent felt a bit unsafe and one percent felt very unsafe.

## SEX AND AGE DIFFERENCES

Women were considerably more likely than men to report feeling unsafe about walking alone after dark (45 percent for females and 11 percent for males). Women were over three times more likely than men to report feeling a bit unsafe and over eight times as likely to report feeling very unsafe.

Table SS3.1 **Proportion of adults aged 15 and over who felt unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark by sex, 2001.**

	Age group					Sex	
	15-16	17-24	25-39	40-59	60+	Male	Female
A bit unsafe	17.7	19.6	22	18	21.5	9.5	30.1
Very unsafe	8.8	7.3	8	7.2	12.4	1.7	15.1
A bit unsafe or very unsafe	26.5	26.9	30	25.2	33.9	11.1	45.2

Source: Morris et al 2003

There is relatively little age difference in perceptions of safety. Just over a third (34 percent) of those aged 60 and older said they felt it would be unsafe to walk alone in their neighbourhood after dark. This compares with 27 percent of people aged between 15 and 24. At all ages, women, felt less safe than men.

## ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Pacific people were much more likely than other ethnic groups to report feeling unsafe about walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark. Over a third (38 percent) of Pacific people said they would feel unsafe, compared to 29 percent of the European and Other ethnic groups. The difference is greatest with regard to the proportion of people who felt very unsafe. Māori, by way of contrast, generally felt safer than other ethnic groups. Just over one fifth (22 percent) of Māori said they would feel unsafe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhood, while six percent stated they would feel very unsafe.

Females were more likely to report feeling unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark than males for all ethnic groups. Pacific males were more than twice as likely as European and Māori males to report feeling unsafe. In contrast, a similar proportion of Pacific and European females reported they felt unsafe, while the proportion among Māori females was much lower. Pacific females, however, were considerably more likely to report feeling 'very unsafe' compared to other groups.

Table SS3.2 **Proportion of adults aged 15 and over who felt unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark by ethnicity, 2001.**

	European	Māori	Pacific people	Other
<b>A bit unsafe</b>				
Male	9.1	7.9	16.5	12.3
Female	31.2	24.2	27	33.5
Total	20.5	16.3	21.9	22.8
<b>Very unsafe</b>				
Male	1.7	1.2	5.1	0.4
Female	15.2	9.7	26	13.1
Total	8.6	5.5	15.9	6.7
<b>A bit unsafe or very unsafe</b>				
Male	10.8	9.1	21.6	12.7
Female	46.4	33.9	53	46.6
Total	29.1	21.8	37.8	29.5

Source: Morris et al 2003



# Road casualties

## DEFINITION

The number of people killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes as a proportion (per 100,000) of the total population.

## RELEVANCE

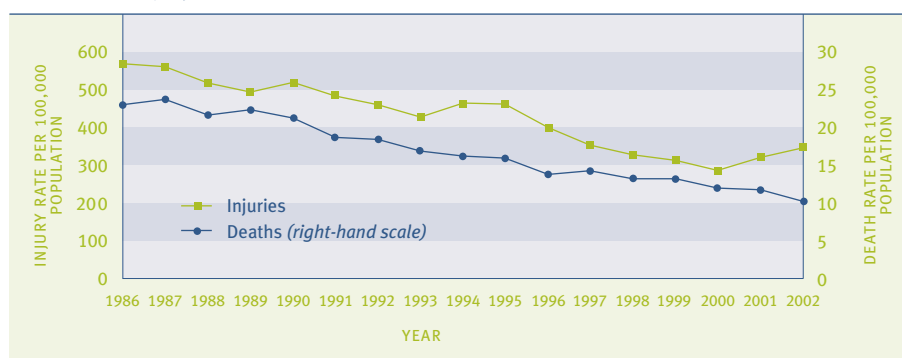
Road deaths are a major cause of premature death, especially among young adults. Deaths, injuries and disability resulting from motor vehicle crashes inflict considerable pain and suffering on individuals, families and communities, as well as on other road users, emergency service providers, health workers and others.

## CURRENT LEVEL AND TRENDS

In 2002, 404 people died as a result of motor vehicle crashes, a rate of 10.3 deaths per 100,000 population. A further 13,742 people were injured, a rate of 349 injuries per 100,000 population.<sup>67</sup> Deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes have declined substantially since 1986, when the rates were 23.1 and 569.6 per 100,000 respectively. The number of people killed in motor vehicle crashes was 47 percent lower in 2002 than it was in 1986. Although there was a rise in the number of people injured in the last two years, there were 27 percent fewer injured in 2002 than in 1986.

There is no conclusive evidence on what has driven this trend, but better roads, better vehicles, as well as legislation, enforcement and education aimed at reducing road casualties may have contributed to an improvement in drivers' attitudes and behaviour.

Figure SS4.1 Road traffic injury and death rates, 1986-2002



Source: Land Transport Safety Authority. 2002 data is provisional

## AGE AND SEX DIFFERENCES

Youth aged 15-24 years are far more likely than other age groups to be injured in a motor vehicle crash, with a rate more than double that of the population as a whole (786.9 per 100,000 in 2002). The risk of dying is relatively low in middle age, then increases sharply at older ages, partly because of increasing fragility among the very old.

Males are much more likely than females to be injured or killed in motor vehicle crashes. In 2002, the injury rate was 402.2 per 100,000 for males and 297.1 per 100,000 for females; the death rate was 13.9 per 100,000 for males and 6.7 per 100,000 for females.

Table SS4.1 **Road casualty rates by age and sex, 2002**

Age	Rate per 100,000 population in each group					
	Reported injury rate			Death rate		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Under 15	162.8	112.9	138.9	3.5	3.5	3.5
15-24	912.9	650.1	786.9	27.1	9.2	18.3
25-34	545.1	384.5	465.5	21.1	7.7	14.3
35-44	385.3	277.5	330.2	10.8	5.4	8.0
45-54	288.0	230.3	259.5	13.8	5.0	9.3
55-64	234.7	233.7	234.7	10.4	7.5	9.0
65-74	234.2	207.6	221.6	9.8	11.4	10.6
75+	268.9	197.6	225.8	26.4	9.9	16.3
Total	402.2	297.1	349.7	13.9	6.7	10.3

Source: Land Transport Safety Authority (provisional 2002 data); Statistics New Zealand, 2001-based estimated resident population as at 30 June 2002

## ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Māori are much more likely than other ethnic groups to die in motor accidents, though their age-standardised death rate declined from 26 per 100,000 in 1996 to 19 per 100,000 in 1999. In comparison, the death rate for European/Other ethnic groups was 12 per 100,000 in 1999 and for Pacific peoples, eight per 100,000.

Table SS4.2 **Motor vehicle death rates by ethnicity, 1996-1999**

	Māori	Pacific people	European and Other	Total
<b>Age-standardised rate per 100,000</b>				
1996	26	14	12	14
1997	25	10	12	14
1998	21	12	12	13
1999	19	8	12	13

Source: New Zealand Health Information Service, cited in Ministry of Health 2000, Table 1; unpublished data for 1998, 1999 from NZHIS

Māori and Pacific peoples are less likely to drive than Europeans, but they are at greater risk of injury and death from motor vehicle crashes. A 1998 survey showed that, per distance driven, the risk of being hospitalised as a result of a crash was more than three times as high for Māori drivers, and only slightly less than three times as high for Pacific drivers compared to Europeans.

## INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

While the road death rate in New Zealand has fallen substantially since the mid-1980s, it remains considerably higher than that of several other countries. With a rate of 11.8 per 100,000, New Zealand ranked 16th among 28 OECD countries in 2001, but performed better than the United States (14.8) and France (13.8). The countries with the lowest road death rates in 2001 were the United Kingdom (6.0 per 100,000), Norway (6.1), Netherlands and Sweden (each 6.2).