

## HAPPY COUPLES ARE MORE LIKELY TO SHARE THEIR FINANCES

- ING has found a connection between couples who share their finances and happiness
- Over half (55%) of individuals in a relationship who report being happy share their finances
- The Dutch bank also finds a relationship between savings comfort and individual happiness levels

A new study finds that couples who are happy are also more likely to combine their finances.

This finding comes from the [ING International Survey Savings 2018](#) – the seventh in an annual series covering 13 countries in Europe as well as the USA and Australia.

More than half of Europeans (55%) in a relationship who report being happy say they share their finances. Only 46% of those who are unhappy and in a couple combine their finances.

Furthermore, nearly one third (32%) of the unhappy group say they have largely separate finances compared with only 23% of the happy group. It seems that people who are happy and part of a couple are much more likely to combine their finances than those who are less satisfied overall.

### Combined, happy and close

Most of the individual countries follow this pattern. Figures for the USA (69%) and Australia (64%) are higher than the average in Europe of 55%. See Figure 1 for country comparisons.

The strongest correlation between combined finances and happiness is found in Romania (76%) and Spain (68%). In these two European countries, couples with separate finances are much less likely to say they are happy than those who combine them.

Following on from this, financial researchers find a link between couples who manage their finances jointly and the closeness of their relationship. Almost three out of four (72%) of those Europeans in couples who manage their finances together indicate they have a very close relationship, versus just 45% of those who manage their finances separately.

### Something hidden away

The study finds that three per cent of Europeans who define themselves as part of a couple have a money secret they've kept from their partner. One in five (21%) indicate that they might hide some spending, savings or debt from their partner, though, in some circumstances.

When asked, coupled-up people in Europe with money secrets have a range of reasons for doing so – including not wanting their partner to know how much they spent (16%) or wanting to keep debt secret (9%).

ING's research follows a growing body of economic and psychological research looking at happiness and money<sup>1</sup>. Alongside data on couples' joint finances and happiness, the Dutch bank also finds a relationship between savings comfort and individual happiness levels.

### Ian Bright, senior economist and managing director of Group Research at ING, comments:

*"When it comes to happiness, sharing money management with your partner isn't necessarily what would spring to mind. But it's exactly this connection that we've found in our research."*

*“Couples who keep their finances separate may do it because they feel less close in their relationship, but it’s also possible that combining finances may boost how close they feel.”*

*“Money might not be able to buy happiness, but how we handle it in a relationship might well help.”*

**- ENDS -**

<sup>1</sup> Dunn, E. et al (2016) Valuing Time Over Money Is Associated With Greater Happiness  
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1948550615623842>

**Figure 1:**

**Country comparisons of combined finances and happiness levels**

	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Happy sometimes</b>	<b>Unhappy</b>
Selection: Europe	55%	50%	46%
Romania	76%	63%	59%
Spain	68%	53%	67%
Netherlands	66%	55%	50%
Turkey	61%	60%	46%
Italy	59%	52%	49%
Belgium	56%	43%	41%
Poland	54%	49%	51%
Luxembourg	52%	46%	24%
Germany	51%	50%	35%
Czech Republic	49%	46%	47%
France	48%	51%	52%
United Kingdom	41%	36%	32%
Austria	35%	41%	34%
USA	69%	59%	37%
Australia	64%	54%	50%

**About the research**

The ING International Survey Savings 2018 was conducted by Ipsos using internet-based polling. Fifteen countries were surveyed: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States of America. Polling took place from 19 to 31 October. The full report is at [www.economics.com/ing\\_international\\_surveys](http://www.economics.com/ing_international_surveys) and also on [www.slideshare.net/ING](http://www.slideshare.net/ING)

The ING International Survey is produced several times a year by ING eZonomics. It is about money and life - combining ideas around financial education, personal finance and behavioural economics to produce regular and practical information about the way people manage their money.

**For further information, please contact:**

**Press enquiries**

Beth Hardwick/Tim Amoui  
 Third City PR  
 +44 20 3657 9773



+44 7919 592 408  
+44 7710 529 953  
[ingteam@thirdcity.co.uk](mailto:ingteam@thirdcity.co.uk)

Carolien van der Giessen  
ING Group  
+31 20 576 6386  
[Carolien.van.der.Giessen@ing.com](mailto:Carolien.van.der.Giessen@ing.com)

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ING Group shares are listed on the exchanges of Amsterdam (INGA AS, ING.AS), Brussels and on the New York Stock Exchange (ADRs: ING US, ING.N).

Sustainability forms an integral part of ING's strategy, which is evidenced by the number one position among 395 banks ranked by Sustainalytics. ING Group shares are being included in the FTSE4Good index and in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (Europe and World) where ING is among the leaders in the Banks industry group.

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