

# Central Europe has never lived happier

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Young people of the former communist countries in Central Europe have never lived healthier and happier lives, recent studies indicate.

Many young people are leaving Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia seeking better jobs in Western Europe, but booming economies along with a better diet, and reduced drinking and smoking have considerably increased the quality of life in their homelands, Germany's Spiegel Online reported Wednesday.

Those who remained in their post-communist countries found life expectancy in Slovakia now exceeds 70 for men, compared to 67 20 years ago.

Slovakia's women now live nearly 78 years, up from 75 in the 1980s, the Slovak public health office said.

Slovaks enjoy less beer, halving the amount of pure alcohol to 7.4 liters per capita in 2003 from 13.7 liters in 1991.

Life expectancy in Poland rose to nearly 71 years for men and 79 for women on average, both about four years more than in the 1980s.

Poles also smoke much less -- only about 8 million of the country's 38 million population compared with 15 million in the 1980s.

In the Czech Republic, about 81 percent of the population declared themselves satisfied, with life expectancy figures similar to those in

Poland, the report said.

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