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Greater happiness for a greater number: How can that be achieved?

Abstract: This conference is about the promotion of ‘wellbeing’ in public policy, but wellbeing is too broad a concept to allow fact-based choice. We better focus on happiness; how much people like the life they live. Happiness is the most comprehensive indicator of how well people live in a country, especially when combined with longevity. This approach fits the utilitarian ethic that governments should aim at greater happiness for a greater number.

Governments can foster happiness of citizens by 1) providing good living conditions and 2) strengthening life-ability in the population. Empirical happiness research provides indications of which living conditions and life-abilities are the most relevant in contemporary modern societies. Data on that matter are gathered in the World Database of Happiness.