EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 20.12.2011
SEC(2011) 1607 final

Commission Staff Working Document

Accompanying document to the

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF REGIONS**

Education and Training for a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe

**Analysis of the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in
education and training (ET2020) at the European and national levels**

{COM(2011) 902 final}
{SEC(2011) 1608 final}

1. **INTRODUCTION**

    This Staff Working Document accompanies the Commission Communication proposing the draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020).

    ET 2020

    The **Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)** adopted by the Council in May 2009[1] sets out four long-term strategic objectives that should guide European cooperation in the period up to 2020:

    - making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

    - improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;

    - promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;

    - enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

    In order to focus the work under ET 2020 on the most relevant key issues, the Council also identified, for each of the four strategic objectives, a number of mid-term priority areas, the first ones covering the years 2009 – 2011. The 2012 Joint Report will report on the progress made during this first ET 2020 cycle.

    The Joint Report

    The **2012 Joint Report** marks a fresh start in two respects. It is the first since the ET 2020 Strategic Framework was set up. Not only does it take stock of the progress achieved so far, it also sets out a new set of priority areas for the second cycle 2012 – 2014 that are consistent with the Europe 2020 objectives and will contribute towards achieving the headline targets set for education and training.

    The report is also the first report since the European Union agreed in 2010 the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Europe 2020 sets out a new overall policy framework in which ET 2020 operates. Successful implementation of ET 2020 is essential if objectives of Europe 2020 are to be reached in the education and training area.

    The Staff Working Document

    This **Staff Working Document** complements the draft 2012 Joint Report insofar as it provides its analytical basis. It contains a summary of the work accomplished at European and national level, combined with an in-depth cross-country analysis of the

---

[1]   OJ 119, 28.5.2009, p.2.

progress achieved in a number of key policy areas, such as the Europe 2020 education headline target.

Its main aims are:

- to take stock of developments and achievements at European level within the ET Strategic Framework implementing the open method of coordination in the field of education and training;

- to gauge, on the basis of a cross-country analysis, progress in key policy areas since 2009 against the backdrop of the strategic objectives established under ET 2020 and in the light of the objectives and headline target set within Europe 2020 ;

- to review progress made at national level towards the ET 2020 objectives.

The cross-country analysis is primarily based on the national progress reports provided by the competent authorities of the ET 2020 countries[2] in the first half of 2011 in response to a common questionnaire. They also take into account the information contained in the Member States' National Reform Programmes submitted in the framework of the first European Semester. In some cases, reference is also made to other official sources of information, such as Cedefop and Eurydice.

The concrete examples reported here are intended to illustrate progress. They are not necessarily examples of good practice.

Structure and content of the Staff Working Document

This Staff Working Document is structured by topic. The implications of a specific topic are reviewed with respect to all education sectors. For obvious reasons, the chapters on early school leaving and on tertiary attainment have a strong — but not exclusive — focus on school and higher education respectively. Although none of the chapters is explicitly devoted to VET or adult learning, the impacts of the Copenhagen Process and the implementation of the Action Plan on Adult Learning are covered extensively in a number of relevant chapters.

Chapter 2 introduces the link between ET2020 and the outcome of the Europe 2020 European Semester.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the implementation of the open method of coordination at European-level within ET 2020, its working bodies, methods and outcomes.

It is followed by a cross-country analysis on progress made in key policy areas.

Chapter 4 specifically addresses the challenge of financing investment in education and training in the current financial and economic crisis, its impact on public finance and Member States' shared concerns to maintain expenditure on growth enhancing policies.

---

[2] The following countries participated in the first ET 2020 work cycle: the 27 EU Member States, the EFTA-EEA countries, Croatia and Turkey.

Chapter 5 focuses on early school leaving, one of the two elements of the education headline target set by Europe 2020. It analyses the information provided by the various countries in the light of the principles established in the *Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving* of 2011.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the second dimension of the Europe 2020 headline target in education, which is to increase the share of the population having completed tertiary education or equivalent. It is consistent with the policies inspiring the Commission Communication on the contribution of higher education to the goals of Europe 2020, adopted in September 2011.

Chapter 7 takes stock of the strategies and policies supporting the fundamental principle of lifelong learning underpinning ET2020, which has also shaped the rationale of the Europe 2020 integrated guidelines, in particular against the background of recent policy milestones such as the *Council conclusions on early childhood education and care*, the Commission Staff Working Paper on the achievements and results 2008-2010 of the Action Plan on Adult Learning and the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020.

Chapters 8 and 9 cover learning mobility and the assessment of skills needs — two focus areas of two Europe 2020 flagship initiatives — *Youth on the Move* and the *Agenda for New Skills and Jobs* — that have far-reaching impacts on education and training systems and policies, as well as on European labour markets and economies.

Chapter 10 discusses a revision of the existing framework of indicators and presents key data on the Europe 2020 headline targets and the ET2020 benchmarks.

2. **ET 2020** AND THE OUTCOME OF THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER 2011 AS REGARDS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The first European Semester for the coordination of the economic policies of the Member States of the European Union highlighted the need for effective action, not only in the economic and financial field, but also in areas such as education and training. During the Semester, the Commission and the Council repeatedly raised Member States' awareness of the fact that, in order to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives, expenditure in sectors such as education and training should be prioritised despite the budgetary restrictions imposed by the economic and financial crisis, in order to ensure sustainable growth.

The European Semester ended with the Council issuing specific recommendations to a number of Member States. Sixteen of these country-specific recommendations (CSRs) provide Member States with targeted guidance relevant for education and training, taking account of the challenges and bottlenecks identified in their National Reform Programmes submitted in the framework of Europe 2020. The texts of the individual CSRs and actions undertaken by the Member States are contained in the country summaries in the second Staff Working Document accompanying the draft ET2020 Joint Report.

Before the crisis, Member States had already started to tackle many of the challenges highlighted during the European Semester. After the onset of the crisis, however, in many Member States the seriousness of the new situation required a stronger impetus to cope with the negative impact of the crisis and support future economic development. The CSRs respond to a need for more dynamic action.

Ten of the CSRs concern the Europe 2020 headline targets. Five focus on **early school leaving** and target the following Member States: **AT, DK, ES, MT, UK**.

Five CSRs focus on **tertiary education attainment** and target the following Member States**: BG, CZ, MT, PL, SK.**

Three CSRs relating to **BG, DE** and **EE** focus **on equity and pre-school education** while one CSR, targeting **Bulgaria**, concerns **school education**.

The majority of the CSRs (12 in all) focus on the role education and training can play in reducing unemployment. They span a broad spectrum of sectors (including **lifelong learning, VET and skills for the labour market)** and target the following Member States: **AT, CY, DK, EE, ES, FI FR, LU, MT, PL, SI, SK**.

3.   IMPLEMENTATION OF ET 2020 AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

This chapter summarises the activities undertaken at European level to support the implementation of the first work cycle of ET 2020. The focus is on the concrete outputs achieved and on the policy events where these outputs were discussed.

In line with the ET 2020 Council conclusions, mutual learning under the 4 strategic objectives took place through peer-learning activities, conferences and seminars, high-level forums or expert groups, panels, studies and analyses, involving the relevant stakeholders. Outputs were in the form of compendia with overviews of policy measures and examples of good practice, analytical papers on critical factors in a given policy field, guidelines and handbooks for policy implementation, etc.

To enhance visibility and impact at national and European level, the outcomes of European cooperation were disseminated among relevant stakeholders and discussed at the level of Directors-General or Ministers.

The first part of this chapter lists the main methods and tools used during the 2009-2011 ET2020 work cycle. The second part of the chapter shows how the different elements of this 'toolbox' were used to develop work on each of the 2009-2011 priority areas.

3.1.   Working methods and tools under the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

In accordance with the principles and working methods set out in the Council conclusions on ET2020, joint work at European level within the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) can be undertaken in a number of different ways.

▪ **Groups/networks implementing legal instruments**: Such groups and networks have been established through specific legal instruments, such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF), with the aim of implementing the respective instruments according to the mandates set out in the legal texts. Within this context, these groups and networks have also organised peer learning activities.

▪ **Thematic working groups (TWG)** to address specific priority areas. These working groups:

    - work on defined themes with the aim of achieving a planned output within a pre-determined period ranging from 6 months to a maximum of 2 years;

    - are composed of experts and policy makers appointed by the countries interested in working together on the specific theme in question, as well as experts appointed by the Commission and, where appropriate, key stakeholders (relevant education organisations and social partners);

    - set their own work programme and objectives within the remits of their overall mandate, including the planning of peer learning activities;

- prepare major dissemination events at the end of their mandate, involving high-level experts, key policy makers from Member States and relevant stakeholder organisations. Some events were organised as thematic seminars or included in meetings of Directors General or stakeholder conferences.

> During 2009 – 2011, **thematic working groups** have been active in the following areas: ICT and Education; Modernisation of Higher Education; Assessment of Key Competences; Professional Development of Teachers; Mathematics, Science and Technology; Languages and Employment. The following new groups have been set up in 2011: Entrepreneurship Education; Professional Development of VET Trainers; Quality Assessment in Adult Learning; Financing of Adult Learning; Early School Leaving.

- **Sectoral working groups:** these groups addressed broad policy agendas such as the Adult Learning Action Plan and the Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education, as defined in the respective Council conclusions (including synergies with the Bologna Follow-up Group on higher education).

- **Stakeholder involvement:** This was organised through **partnership forums** such as the University/Business Forum bringing together policy makers and stakeholders at different levels, by means of formal public consultations launched through Green Papers (such as the one on mobility in 2009) or the annual **stakeholder forum.**

- **Expert Groups** were organised to build up both technical support and visibility for developing a specific policy agenda. The experts were selected by the Commission either for their high personal prestige or for their technical expertise**.**

- **One-off peer learning activities (PLAs) were** organised on a limited number of themes by the Commission, in cooperation with a Member State willing to act as host.

These activities, which involved Member State representatives, stakeholders and independent experts in different forms, were supported by **research, data collection and analysis** carried out through Cedefop[3], ETF[4], Eurydice[5], CRELL[6], EENEE/NESSE[7], and the FP7[8] programme on Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH).

The **Lifelong Learning Programme** (LLP) supported the OMC through **studies, multilateral or bilateral projects** on innovative approaches as well as **networks** of countries or stakeholders working on specific policy priorities.

---

[3] European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

[4] European Training Foundation

[5] Network for Information on education systems and policies in Europe

[6] Centre for research in education and lifelong learning

[7] European network on economics of education /Network of experts in social sciences of education

[8] 7th EU Framework Programme for research and technological development

3.2. Summary of results achieved at European level

The following section offers a brief overview of the most significant outcomes of cooperation between 2009 and 2011 for each of the four ET2020 strategic objectives, using the various tools of the open method of coordination. Details can be found in the table at the end of the section.

(1) Under the first strategic objective, *'Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality'* the main milestone has been the shift from planning and development to actual implementation of the **European reference tools**, in particular the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European credit transfer and accumulation system in vocational education and training (ECVET).

Activities at European level have focused on mutual learning among Member States and their contact points via exchanges on countries' progress, peer learning activities (PLA) and Presidency conferences on topics such as quality assurance, recognition and validation of qualifications, or enhancing mutual trust. The Commission has set up several on-line tools, including a portal, newsletters and an e-community, to assist the mutual learning process.

Mutual learning among Member States in the field of **validation of non-formal and informal learning** was supported by an updated Inventory on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and several PLAs. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network produced material on **effective guidance systems**.

The activities deriving from the Action Plan on Adult Learning (studies, inventories) led to a new phase of the renewed **European Agenda for Adult Learning** putting *stronger emphasis on low-skilled and non-skilled adults*.

The Europe 2020 flagship initiative **Youth on the Move** set out a number of European-level measures to promote learning mobility across different educational levels within Europe and worldwide and was followed up by a Council Recommendation on the promotion of mobility.

(2) The activities carried out under the strategic objective, *'Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training'* led to the development of support material for policy makers, such as policy handbooks, inventories and surveys, supported by dedicated PLAs, conferences and seminars.

Policy handbooks were produced on **induction programmes for newly qualified teachers** and on **early language learning**.

In the area of multilingualism these were complemented by a report on **languages for employability** and the 'Languages and Business' platform, which focused on language skills as factors contributing to an individual's employability. The Council conclusions on language competences to enhance mobility highlight the role of languages in higher and better educational attainment. Finally, an **inventory** of European level activities in the field of multilingualism demonstrated the wide-ranging relevance of language skills.

Concerning **teachers,** the policy handbook was supported by: a PLA report on classroom practice in initial teacher education; PLAs on the competences of teacher educators and on school leadership policies; and a study on key competences for adult learning professionals.

The promotion of **quality in vocational education and training** has been strengthened by the establishment of a European network for quality assurance in VET promoting the implementation of the EQAVET reference tool.

The new Commission Communication on the Modernisation of Higher Education gives policy makers guidance with respect to addressing governance, funding, and the adaptation of curricula.

The **Agenda for New Skills and Jobs**, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative, has set out a series of measures at European level to enable education and training systems to anticipate the future skills demand and adjust accordingly. The Agenda has been supported by a number of OMC activities, such as the setting up of a high-level expert group, a ministerial seminar and Council conclusions on basic skills, an inventory of good practice on the up-skilling of low-skilled adults, the establishment of sector skills councils, a stakeholders conference on ESCO, and a PLA on new skills in higher education, as well as Cedefops forecast on future skills and its report on skills for green jobs.

(3)   Under the third strategic objective 'Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship' significant milestones were achieved at the political level.

The Europe 2020 includes the headline target of lowering the rate of **early school leavers** to less than 10 %. This has been underpinned by a Commission communication on 'Tackling early school leaving', accompanied by a policy handbook with examples of good practice, and a Council recommendation.

A Commission communication and Council conclusions on **early childhood education and care** (ECEC) highlighted the importance of pre-primary education for preventing early school leaving and preparing for lifelong learning. This topic was also discussed at a Hungarian presidency conference.

Regarding **migrants**, the Council conclusions on the education of **children with a migrant background** and on the **social dimension** of education and training increased awareness of these issues, while three studies from Eurydice and NESSE looked specifically into early childhood education and care and the integration of immigrant children in schools.

In contrast, there were no significant activities in the area of **learners with special needs**.

(4)   The fourth strategic objective 'Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training' aims to prepare the ground for building genuine knowledge-based economies.

In the priority area of **transversal key competences,** the main milestones were a Joint Progress Report on **key competences** for a changing world and

the Council conclusions on the **new skills for new jobs initiative** and on **education for sustainable development.**

The priority area of **innovation-friendly institutions** was one of the highlights of the **2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation**. The OMC also focused on **ICT in education** and **entrepreneurship education** through reports of expert working groups, conferences and workshops.

The '**partnership**' priority area focused on cooperation between education and training providers (higher education institutions but also secondary vocational schools) and business. The four editions of the **University–Business Forum** were major milestones and were complemented by ad-hoc thematic forums at university, VET and schools level and a compendium with examples of good practice. The Council adopted conclusions on enhancing the partnership between education and training institutions and social partners, in particular employers.

3.3. Main outputs according to the ET 2020 strategic objectives

Strategic objective: 1. Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

Priority area: 1.1 Lifelong learning strategies

Complete the process of implementation of national lifelong learning strategies, paying particular attention to the validation of non-formal and informal learning and guidance.

Outputs

– Fourth **report** of the **European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning** (October 2010) (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/projects/validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory-scope.aspx)
– **European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning**. September 2009 (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/5059.aspx)
– Report on the results of the work of the **European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)** published, September 2010. Synthesis of the main messages for policy makers (http://ktl.jyu.fi/img/portal/8465/ELGPN_report_2009-10.pdf?cs=1284966063).
– **Bruges Communiqué** on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020 of 7 December 2010. (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)
– **Analytical report** on **critical factors for lifelong learning** drafted with the support of a group of LLL experts. See also "Peer learning seminar in Vienna".
– **Commission Staff Working Paper** – Action Plan on Adult Learning: Achievements and results 2008-2010, SEC(2011)271 final. (http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st07/st07169.en11.pdf)
– **Council resolution** on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning (November 2011)
– **Study on awareness-raising strategies in adult learning** completed (for publication by the end of 2011).

Policy events

– **Peer learning seminar** *"Critical factors for the implementation of Lifelong Learning"* 19-21 May 2010 in Vienna based on a draft analytical report on critical factors for lifelong learning. (http://www.kslll.net/Documents/Summary%20report%20-%20seminar%20critical%20factors%20for%20LLL%20implementation.pdf), the results were presented at the **Belgian Presidency conference** on education & training and social inclusion, Ghent, 28/29 September 2010.
– **PLA** on "Higher Education systems to support lifelong learning", Malta, 11-13 October 2010.
– "It is always a good time to learn" final **Conference** on the Action Plan on Adult Learning, 7-8 March 2011.
– **PLAs** on the validation of informal and non-formal learning on 15–16 November 2010 (Vasteras), 2-3 March 2011 (Brussels) and 7-8 November 2011 (Warsaw).

Priority area: **1.2 European Qualifications Framework**
In accordance with the April 2008 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, relate all national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010, and support the use of an approach based on learning outcomes for standards and qualifications, assessment and validation procedures, credit transfer, curricula and quality assurance.

Outputs

– National **referencing reports** setting out the links between national qualifications systems and the EQF. http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/documentation_en.htm
– **EQF notes series**: A series of guidance notes to support national implementation. Latest Note no. 4: Using learning outcomes. November 2011 http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/documentation_en.htm
– A public **internet portal dedicated to the EQF** was launched on 25 May 2011. http://ec.europa.eu/eqf
– **EQF Newsletter**: Latest issue published in August 2011. http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/newsletter_en.htm
– Overview on **national qualifications framework** prepared by Cedefop (latest report October 2011). http://cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6108_en.pdf
– **EQF Implementation e-Community** http://europa.eu/sinapse/directaccess/qualification_framework

Policy events

– **PLAs** on how the **learning outcomes approach, NQFs and quality assurance** support lifelong learning (Istanbul 29-30 June 2010); on the role of **quality assurance** in defining, describing and assessing learning outcomes (Helsinki 29-30 November 2010); **international experiences** with qualification frameworks, with ETF and EU-Australia Policy dialogue (Brussels, 13-14 December 2010), and on **school leaving qualifications** giving access to higher education (Tallinn, 20-21 September 2011), on the role of national qualifications frameworks in promoting the **validation of non-formal and informal learning**, (Warsaw, 7-8 November 2011), on the use of learning outcomes and quality assurances in vocational education and training – increasing **synergies** between the implementation of **EQAVET, ECVET and EQF** (14-15 November 2011, Bonn).
– **Conference** on **EQF and Qualification Frameworks of the European Higher Education Area** as tools for lifelong learning, Dublin on 15 April 2010.
– **Joint seminars of the EQF National Coordination Points and national correspondent to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area**, Strasbourg 26 October 2010, Warsaw, 10 November 2011.
– First meeting of the European Commission and Council of Europe joint working group on **synergies between qualifications frameworks and the recognition of qualification qualifications for further learning purposes**, 2 May 2011, Brussels; .
– Hungarian **Presidency conference on the implementation of the EQF** in Budapest on 25-26 May 2011.
– **International conference** on the implementation of **national qualifications frameworks worldwide**, organised by ETF on 6-7 October 2011, Brussels.
– **Conference** on **Academic Validation** in the Context of the European Qualifications Framework - Using learning outcomes in higher education – implementing the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, Warsaw, 9 November 2011.
– **Conference** on EQF with **social partners** organised by Cedefop, Brussels, 24-25 November 2011.

Outputs

– **European Credit System for vocational education and training (ECVET).** updated ECVET Users' Guide Questions and Answers (February 2011) www.ecvet-team.eu; Users' guide part II Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility; CEDEFOP monitoring report (working paper no 10, The development of ECVET in Europe, 2010).
– **Commission Communication** on The **Youth on the Move** flagship initiative on 15 September 2010 http://europa.eu/youthonthemove/europe2020_en.htm
– **Council Recommendation 'Youth on the Move' - promoting the learning mobility of young people**,20 May 2011.   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:199:0001:0005:en:PDF
– **Staff Working Document on new benchmarks, including benchmarks on mobility,** 24 May 2011. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/sec670_en.pdf
– **Council conclusions** on a benchmark for learning mobility**,** covering the areas of higher education (by 2020 target of 20% of graduates with learning mobility experience) and initial VET (6%) on 28 November 2011

Policy events

– **Spanish Presidency conference** "Internationalisation of Higher Education. A foresight exercise for 2020 and beyond" on 19-20 April 2010.
– **Belgian Presidency conference** on learning mobility and the Youth on the Move flagship initiative, 5-6 October 2010, Antwerp.
– **Conference "Europass 2005-2020",** 24-25 February 2011, Brussels.
– **Polish Presidency conference** "Eastern Dimension of Mobility" on 6-7 July 2011, Warsaw.
– **Polish Presidency Conference,** 'Mobility as a tool to acquire and develop competences from childhood to seniority'-19 October, Sopot.

Strategic objective: **2. Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training**

Priority area: **2.1 Language learning**
To enable citizens to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue, promote language teaching, where relevant, in VET and for adult learners, and provide migrants with opportunities to learn the language of the host country.

Outputs

– **Policy handbook** containing an overview and recommendations on **early language learning** at pre-primary level, March 2011.
http://ec.europa.eu/languages/pdf/ellpwp_en.pdf
– **Report on languages for employability,** including recommendations concerning VET, adult education and language learning for migrants.
http://ec.europa.eu/languages/pdf/languagesforjobs-report.pdf
– **European Survey on Language Competences.** Pretesting of the language testing materials (October 2009); Field trial in all participating countries (January 2010); Main Study (1st quarter 2011) http://www.surveylang.org/
– **Inventory of the Community actions in the field of multilingualism,** Update July 2011.
http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/inventory_en.pdf
– Report on the implementation of Council Resolution of 21November 2008 on European strategy for multilingualism, July 2011, Commission Staff Working Document
http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/sec927_en.pdf
– **Council conclusions** on language competences to enhance mobility, November 2011**.**

Policy events

– **Stakeholder platform** promoting multilingualism for business. 5 plenary meetings September 2009 – June 2011. http://ec.europa.eu/languages/pdf/business-platform-report2011_en.pdf
– **EU-China conference** on multilingualism and Language learning as well as an European Union-India policy dialogue between Senior Officials on Education and Multilingualism, May 2011.
– **Polish Presidency Conference "Multilingual competences for professional and social success in Europe"** 28-29 September 2011, Warsaw, follow-up at the informal **ministerial conference.**

Priority area: **<u>2.2 Professional development of teachers</u>**

Focus on the quality of initial education and early career support for new teachers and on raising the quality of continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, trainers and other educational staff (e.g. those involved in leadership or guidance activities.).

Outputs

– **Handbook for Policymakers**: Developing coherent and system-wide **induction programmes for beginning teachers** (Cion Staff Working Document SEC(2010)538) http://www.kslll.net/Documents/Teachers%20and%20Trainers%202010%20Policy%20handbook.pdf .
– Report on practical **classroom training** within initial teacher education prepared by the Teachers and Trainers cluster, October 2009. http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/pla09_en.pdf
– **Peer learning conclusions** on the competence requirements, the selection and the professional development of **teacher educators** http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/prof_en.pdf from PLA held in Reykjavik (ISL), June 2010.
– **Peer learning conclusions** on the successful policies on School **Leadership for Learning** from PLA held in Limassol (CY), October 2010.
– **Peer learning conclusions** on the definition of Teacher's competences from a PLA held in Naas (IE), October 2011 (to be complemented by a PLA in Warsaw in November 2011 about equipping teachers with the competences they need).
– Establishment in July 2011 of the **European Policy Network on School Leadership**, which brings together Ministries, School Leadership academies, academic experts and stakeholder groups.
– **Study**: 'Key competences for adult learning professionals' http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2010/keycomp.pdf

Policy events

– The Handbook for Policymakers on induction was presented in the meeting of **Directors-General for Schools**, July 2010.
– The **expert group** on developing indicators for measuring **teachers' professional development** met two times to develop the section on teachers' professional development within TALIS 2013 (the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey)
– Result of the **study:** 'Key competences for adult learning professionals' discussed at **Grundtvig conferences** in Hasselt, December 2009 and Brussels January 2010.

Outputs

VET

–   **EQAVET**: European quality assurance in VET – European network for quality assurance in VET operational as of first half of 2010, EQAVET **Website** and virtual community of practice. www.eqavet.eu
–   EQAVET guidelines for national reference points to design their national approach. http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/guidelines-for-implementing-the-framework.aspx
–   **Cedefop** reports on **financing vocational education and training.** http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/projects/financing-training/index.aspx)

Higher education

–   **Independent studies on progress in implementing Higher Education Reforms,** February 2010:
    i) Curricula   http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1290_en.htm;
    ii) Funding;
    iii) Governance - both available at
    http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news2259_en.htm
–   Eurydice **Key Data publication** on the **social dimension of higher education** with a strong focus on higher education funding, student contributions and student support 2011. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/131EN.pdf
–   **Commission** Communication 'Supporting growth and jobs: an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems', 20 September 2011.
–   **Council conclusions** on the modernisation of higher education, 28 November 2011.

Adults

–   **Study**: "Impact of ongoing reforms in education and training on the adult learning sector", December 2010.
    http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/moreinformation139_en.htm

Schools

–   NESSE network independent expert report on private supplementary tutoring in the European Union. http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports/activities/reports/the-challenge-of-shadow-education-1

Policy events

–   **Belgian Presidency conference** on **quality and transparency in Education and VET**, Bruges, 6 December 2010
–   2 **Annual Forums** of the **EQAVET** network in April 2010, Madrid, and March 2011, Budapest.
–   **Conferences** on "**Tax incentives** for education and training" (22 Sep 2010) and on "**Sharing the costs** for education and training in newer Member States" (15-16 Oct 2010)
–   Workshop **Financing adult learning** in times of crisis, Brussels, 18-19 October 2010

- **Peer Learning Activities** on 'Transparency tools', 16 February 2011, Brussels; on "Profiling higher education institutions in changing landscapes – diversity and governance in the light of recent mergers and other changes", 30 March-1 April 2011, Oslo. The conclusions fed into the DGHE meeting focusing on governance, 11-12 April 2011, Budapest, and on 'Good governance of higher education institutions", 5-7 December 2011, Ljubljana.
- **EQAVET sectoral seminars in** May 2011 Stavenger, Norway on quality assurance in the Healthcare sector in Europe, http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/sectoral-seminars/sectoral-seminar-healthcare.aspx; and in December 2011 Dortmund, Germany on quality assurance in the Tourism and catering sector; http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/sectoral-seminars/sectoral-seminar-tourism.aspx
- Polish presidency conference on the modernisation of higher education, 24-25 October 2011, Sopot.

Outputs

- **Council conclusions** on basic skills, November 2010.
- **Eurydice study** on **reading literacy** "Teaching Reading in Europe: Contexts, Policies and Practices", May 2011,
  http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/130EN.pdf
- **Eurydice studies** on **mathematics and science education** including review of national policies for raising attainment levels, autumn 2011,
  http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/SITEP.php
- **Basic Skills Provision for Adults** : **Policy and Practice Guidelines**, November 2010,
  http://www.kslll.net/Documents/ALWG_Basic%20skills%20guidelines_final%20report.pdf
- **Peer learning conclusions** on addressing low achievement through learning support and teacher professional development from PLA held in Finland and Estonia, September 2011.
- **Study on Family literacy** in Europe: using parental support initiatives to enhance early literacy development (July 2011) http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/doc/2011/literacy_en.pdf
- **Inventory of good practices**, Enabling the low skilled to take their qualifications "one step up" case studies and analysis of success factors http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/moreinformation139_en.htm
- **Adults in formal education: Policies and practice in Europe,** Eurydice, February 2011

Policy events

- Workshop at the **Grundtvig dissemination conference** A Decade of European Innovation in Adult Learning in January 2010, Brussels.
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc2152_en.htm
- Belgian presidency **ministerial seminar,** 9 July 2010.
- Polish presidency ministerial seminar, Gdansk, 11 October 2011 on diversity of systems leading to best results.
- Polish presidency conference "Effective competencies for the development of competencies for youth in Europe", Warsaw, 16-18 November 2011.
- **High Level Expert Group on Literacy** launched in February 2011.

> **Priority area: <u>2.5 New skills for new jobs</u>**
>
> *Ensure that the assessment of future skill requirements and the matching of labour market needs are adequately taken on board in education and training planning processes.*

Outputs

- **Final report** of the Expert Group on New Skills for New Jobs **"New Skills for New Jobs: Action now"** in February 2010.
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/focus/focus2043_en.htm
- **Communication** on an **"Agenda for new skills and jobs"** set out the Europe 2020 flagship initiative, November 2010. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0682:FIN:EN:PDF
- **Cedefop forecast** on future skills supply and demand by 2020 (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/15540.aspx)
- **Cedefop report** on "Skills for green jobs"
  http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/16439.aspx
- **Feasibility study** on the set-up of **EU sector skills councils**
  http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=782&newsId=743&furtherNews=yes
- **Staff Working Document on new benchmarks** including a benchmark on employability adopted on 24 May 2011.

Policy events

- **Restructuring forum** on "Sectors' New Skills for New Jobs" (December 2009); stakeholders from the worlds of education, training and work discussed 18 studies on skills needs in sectors and explored the feasibility of sector skills councils.
- **Conference** for the presentation and discussion of the expert group report "New Skills for New Jobs: Action Now" in February 2010, Brussels.
- **Stakeholder conferences** in Brussels on ESCO[9] in March 2010, on Europass developments in February 2011, and the European Skills Passport in September 2011.
- **PLA** on New Skills for New Jobs organised within the working group on the **modernisation of higher education** in March 2010, Oslo.
- **Spanish Presidency conference** on New Skills for New Jobs in April 2010, Barcelona.
- **Workshop** on Improving **quality in the adult learning sector** on 30 June - 1 July 2010, Brussels.
- **Conference** 'Catch the Train – Skills, Education and Jobs' to discuss education and training in view of enhanced employability on 20-21 June 2011, Brussels.

---

[9] European Skills, Competences and Occupations framework

Strategic objective: 3. Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

Priority area: 3.1 Early leavers from education and training

Strengthen preventive approaches, build closer cooperation between general and vocational education sectors and remove barriers for drop-outs to return to education and training.

Outputs

– **INTMEAS Report on Inclusion and education in European countries** in August 2009
  http://www.docabureaus.nl/INTMEAS.html
– **Study** 'Enabling the low skilled to take their qualifications "one step up"'
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/more-information/moreinformation139_en.htm
– **NESSE network independent expert report** on 'Early School Leaving', 2010.
  http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/activities/reports
– **Commission Communication** addressing the Europe 2020 headline target on the reduction of Early School leaving in January 2011 "Tackling early school leaving. A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda" http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlycom_en.pdf
– Commission Staff Working Paper on policies against early school leaving in January 2011.
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywp_en.pdf
– **Council Recommendation** on policies to reduce early school leaving in June 2011.
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlyrec_en.pdf

Policy events

– **Stakeholder meeting** on policies against early school leaving, June 2010.
– **Ministerial seminar** on 9 July 2010 organised by the Belgian Presidency.
– Workshop on early school leaving as part of **Belgian Presidency conference** on social inclusion and education in Ghent on 28-29 September 2010.
– **Education Council** debate of November 2010 on education, poverty, inequalities and social exclusion.

Priority area: **<u>3.2 Pre-primary education</u>**
Promote generalised equitable access and reinforce the quality of provision and teacher support.

Outputs

– **Eurydice study** on tackling social and cultural inequalities through Early Childhood Education and Care, 2009.
   http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/098EN.pdf
– **NESSE report** on Early Childhood Education and Care, Key lessons from research for policy makers, 2009. http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activites/rapports/ecec-report-pdf
– **Commission Communication** "Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow" in February 2011. (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0066:FIN:EN:PDF)
– **Council Conclusions** on early childhood education and care, May 2011.

Policy events to date

– Workshop dedicated to Early Childhood Education and Care in the **Belgian Presidency conference** (Ghent) *Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage – the role of social inclusion in and through education.*
– **Hungarian Presidency conference** on early childhood education and care, February 2011, Budapest.

Outputs

– **Eurydice study** Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe, 2009.
  http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/101EN.pdf

– **Commission staff working document** Results of the consultation on the education of children from a migrant background, August 2009.
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/sec1115_en.pdf

– **Council conclusions** on the **education of children with a migrant background** (26 Nov 2009). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:301:0005:0008:EN:PDF

– **Council conclusions** on the **social dimension of education and training** (11 May 2010). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:135:0002:0007:EN:PDF

– First results on **monitoring the achievement gap between migrant and native students**, published in 2011 as part of the Commission's annual progress report on indicators and benchmarks. (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/report10/chapter3_en.pdf)

Policy events

– **Conference** on **Migration and mobility** – Challenges and opportunities for EU education systems in October 2009, Brussels.

– Workshop at the **Grundtvig dissemination conference** in January 2010, Brussels. http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc2154_en.htm

Priority area: **3.4 Learners with special needs**
Promote inclusive education and personalised learning through timely support, the early identification of special needs and well-coordinated services. Integrate services within mainstream schooling and ensure pathways to further education and training.

Outputs

– **NESSE network independent expert report** on the links between education and disability/special needs http://www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports

Policy events

– **Workshop** at the **Grundtvig dissemination conference** (January 2010): http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc2158_en.htm

Strategic objective: 4. Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

Priority area: 4.1 Transversal key competences

In accordance with the December 2006 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, take greater account of transversal key competences in curricula, assessment and qualifications.

Outputs

- 2010 **Joint Progress Report** of the Council and the Commission "Key competences for a changing world http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1532_en.htm
- **Council conclusions** on **competences supporting lifelong learning and the "new skills for new jobs" initiative**, May 2011. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:135:0008:0011:EN:PDF
- Council conclusions on **education for sustainable development** adopted 19 November 2010. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:327:0011:0014:EN:PDF

Policy events

- **Commission Conference 'Can creativity be measured?"** on Indicators for creativity and innovation in May 2009, Brussels. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1427_en.htm
- **Workshop** on education for active citizenship in the context of the **Belgian Presidency conference** on education and social inclusion, Ghent, September 2010.
- **Hungarian Presidency Informal ministerial meeting** discussed a need for Citizenship Education, March 2011, Budapest.
- **Peer Learning activities on the assessment of key competences** on May 25-27, Arnhem, (NL) and **on the implementation of effective assessment policies** on 26-28 September 2011, Madrid.

Priority area: **4.2 Innovation-friendly institutions**
Promote creativity and innovation by developing specific teaching and learning methods (including the use of new ICT tools and teacher training).

Outputs

– **Final report** by the ICT cluster 'Main lessons learnt on Learning, innovation and ICT' (Jan 2010): http://www.kslll.net/PeerLearningClusters/clusterDetails.cfm?id=8
– **Final report** from the High-Level Reflection Panels on Entrepreneurship Education (March 2010): http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/education-training-entrepreneurship/reflection-panels/files/entr_education_panel_en.pdf
– Report on the **2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation**, including further policy recommendations as well as the external evaluation report http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/education/2010/eycreport_en.pdf
– **Future Learning in Europe in 2020:** New Ways to Learn New Skills for Future Jobs, a foresight project providing visions on the key components of creative and innovative learning. http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/EAP/ForCiel.html which includes also: **The Future of Learning: European Teachers' Visions** http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC59775_TN.pdf
– **Eurydice Key data** on learning and innovation through the use of ICT at school in Europe, June 2011. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/129EN.pdf

Policy events

– Spanish presidency conference on ICT integration in education 16-18 March 2010. http://www.ite.educacion.es/congreso/modelostic/index.php?lang=en
– 4 Workshops organized within several conferences
  – on Media & Learning, 25-26 November 2010, Brussels. http://www.media-and-learning.eu/files/pdf/Media-and-Learning-2010_public_report.pdf and a conference on 24-25 November 2011. http://www.media-and-learning.eu/;
  – on Mainstreaming ICT (eLearning) and 'Digital literacy and e-inclusion: the stakeholders' voice', Digital Assembly, 16-17 June 2011, Brussels (co-organised with DG INFSO). http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/documents/daa/daa11eu_final_report.pdf;
  – on Digital literacy (organized by DG INFSO) at Innovation for digital inclusion, 5-7 October 2011, Gdansk. http://innodig.eu/en/ and
  – on 'Empowering educators for creative learning: A European view' at OnLine EDUCA, Berlin, 1-3 December 2011.
– High-Level Symposium on Entrepreneurship Education – teacher training as critical success factor, 7-8 April 2011, Budapest (co-organised with DG ENTR) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/education-training-entrepreneurship/teacher-education-entrepreneurship/index_en.htm

Priority area: **<u>4.3 Partnership</u>**

Develop partnerships between education and training providers and businesses, research institutions, cultural actors and creative industries, and promote a well-functioning knowledge triangle.

Outputs

– **Commission Communication** on **the European Forum for University Business Dialogue,** March 2009. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0158:FIN:EN:PDF
– **Council conclusions** on **enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and social partners, in particular employers, in the context of lifelong learning,** May 2009. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/policy/council0509_en.pdf
– **Resolution of the European Parliament on university-business dialogue: a new partnership for the modernisation of Europe's universities**, May 2010. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:161E:0095:0103:EN:PDF
– **Outcomes** of the different plenary and thematic **university-business forums** http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1261_en.htm
– **Compendium** with 30 examples of good practice. http://www.kslll.net/PeerLearningClusters/Default.cfm

Policy events

– **4 European University-Business Forum meetings**. http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1261_en.htm
– Thematic forum "**From the Crisis to Recovery - the Role of Higher Education Institutions and Business Co-operation",** February 2010, Brno.
– **Thematic forum** on **schools-business partnerships** in Brussels on 24-25 March 2010 http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc2279_en.htm
– **Thematic Forum** on cooperation between universities and SMEs and presentation of the findings of a **study** aimed at getting a better understanding of university-business cooperation in Europe, November 2011, University of Twente, The Netherlands.

4. **INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

FINDINGS

- *Between 2001 and 2008, before the outbreak of the economic and sovereign debt crisis,* **public expenditure** *on education as a* **percentage of GDP** *remained* **stable***. There were, however,* **significant differences between countries** *in terms of their levels of spending. European countries share a common feature: the* **level of private investment is low** *(compared to the USA for example),although it increased before the crisis.*

The ET2020 National Reports show that in some countries the economic and debt crisis has **seriously affected** *public education and training budgets.*

Several countries **did not increase, or even decreased***, public investment in education and training by reducing teaching posts, freezing teachers' salaries, cutting down expenditure on infrastructure and reorganising educational provision by merging institutions and increasing class sizes.*

These cuts were intended to consolidate public finance, but also, in some cases, to increase efficiency and give priorities to other areas.

For many countries the **priorities have been higher education and the reduction and prevention of unemployment in the framework of vocational training and adult learning***. However, this sustained investment may not be enough to meet increasing demands.*

The scarcity of public resources has revived the debate on the level of private investment and the efficiency and equity of funding mechanisms which rely on private resources (tuitions fees for example).

4.1. Policy and economic context

Improving evidence of the sustainability of public investment in education and training was a priority of the first cycle of ET 2020. At the same time, investment in education and training has become a central issue in the Europe 2020 strategy. The European Council conclusions of 4 February 2011 state that 'in conducting fiscal consolidation, Member States should give priority to sustainable growth-friendly expenditure in areas such as research and innovation, education and energy.' Moreover, the Commission Communication of 7 June 2011, concluding the first European semester of economic policy coordination and providing guidance for national policies in 2011-2012, calls for careful attention to the quality of public spending and tax structures to preserve or reinforce growth-friendly items, such as investment in research, education and energy efficiency.

Against this background, this chapter provides information on recent trends in education and training budgets. Since the latest Eurostat data are from 2008 and the crisis started to be felt from 2008 onwards, it is not yet possible to have a clear picture

of the effects of the economic and debt crisis on education and training budgets in a fully comparable way.[10] However, the 2008 data do provide information on the respective starting points of the Member States of the European Union and the national reports contain information on trends and measures taken by governments in their respective countries.[11] The overview shows the areas of expenditure that have been most affected by the budget cuts and those which have been given priority status for further investment in a period of budget consolidation.

4.2. General trends

In 2008 public expenditure on education represented 5.07 % of GDP in the European Union (27 countries), corresponding to 11 % of total public expenditure. Annual expenditure per student was 6458.7€

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP did not change much between 2001 (4.99 %) and 2008 (5.07 %). Nor did expenditure per pupil/student follow a clear trend between 2001 and 2008 (Figure 1). The share of education expenditure in total public expenditure has only slightly increased over the decade (10.8 % in 2000, 11 % in 2008).

---

[10]   Comparable data will only be available in 2013.

[11]   In analysing the information in the National Reports the following caveats should be borne in mind: National Reports are generally based on estimations and governments' budget predictions (sometimes from different ministries), rather than real spending. In several countries the education system is financed both by the central government and by regional and/or local governments, and decentralised financing may make it more complex for some countries to assess the overall effects of the financial crisis on investment in education. Some reports devote more attention to areas where cuts have been introduced, whereas others underline priority areas which have been protected from severe cuts or where investment has increased.

Figure 1.

Public expenditure on education (percentage of GDP) and annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions **per pupil/student** (in EUR PPS (purchasing power standard), for all levels of education combined, based on full-time equivalents, reported to GDP per capita). European Union (27 countries).
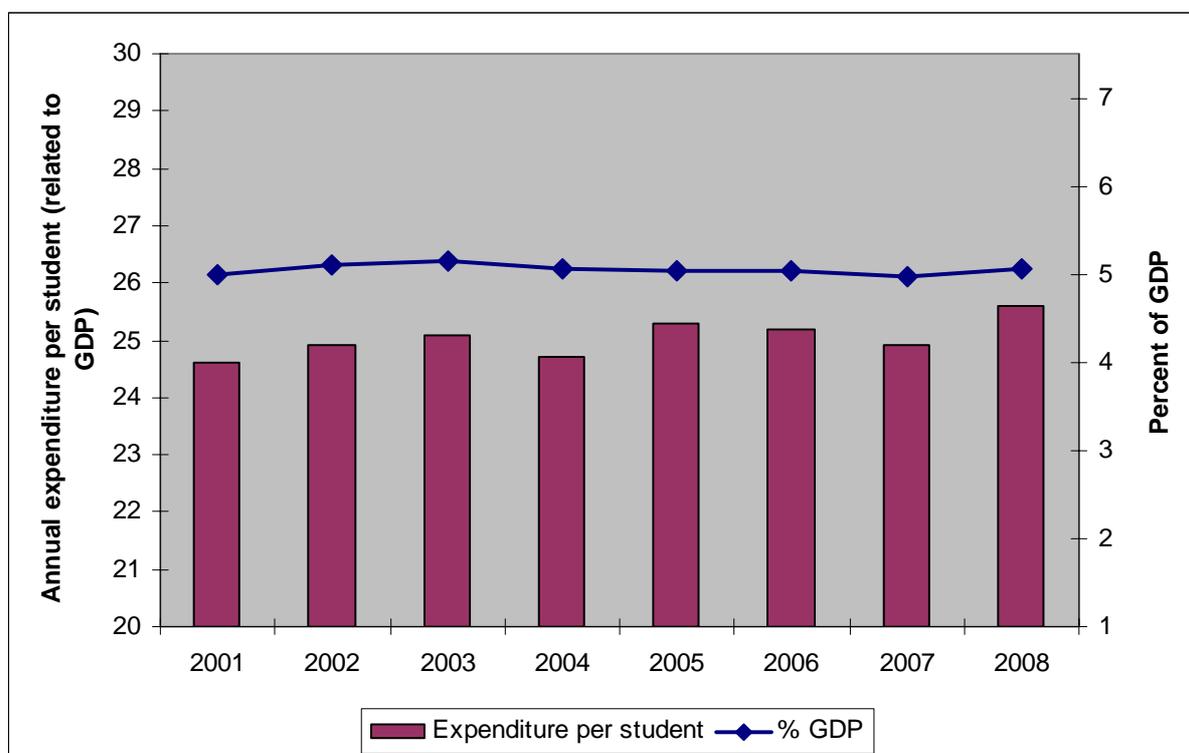
However, this information at European level conceals a **considerable difference between countries**. The countries[12] that spend a higher percentage of GDP on education are **Denmark** (7.75 %), **Iceland** (7.57 %) and **Cyprus** (7.41 %); the countries that spend a lower percentage are **Liechtenstein** (2.11%), **Slovakia** (3.59 %) and the **Czech Republic** (4.08 %). Expenditure per student varies between less than EUR 3000 per year in **Bulgaria** (EUR 2840.1) and nearly EUR 9000 in Austria (Figure 2).

---

[12]   Data not available for Greece, Luxemburg, Romania or Turkey.

Figure 2.

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP in the Member States of the European Union.
Year 2008.
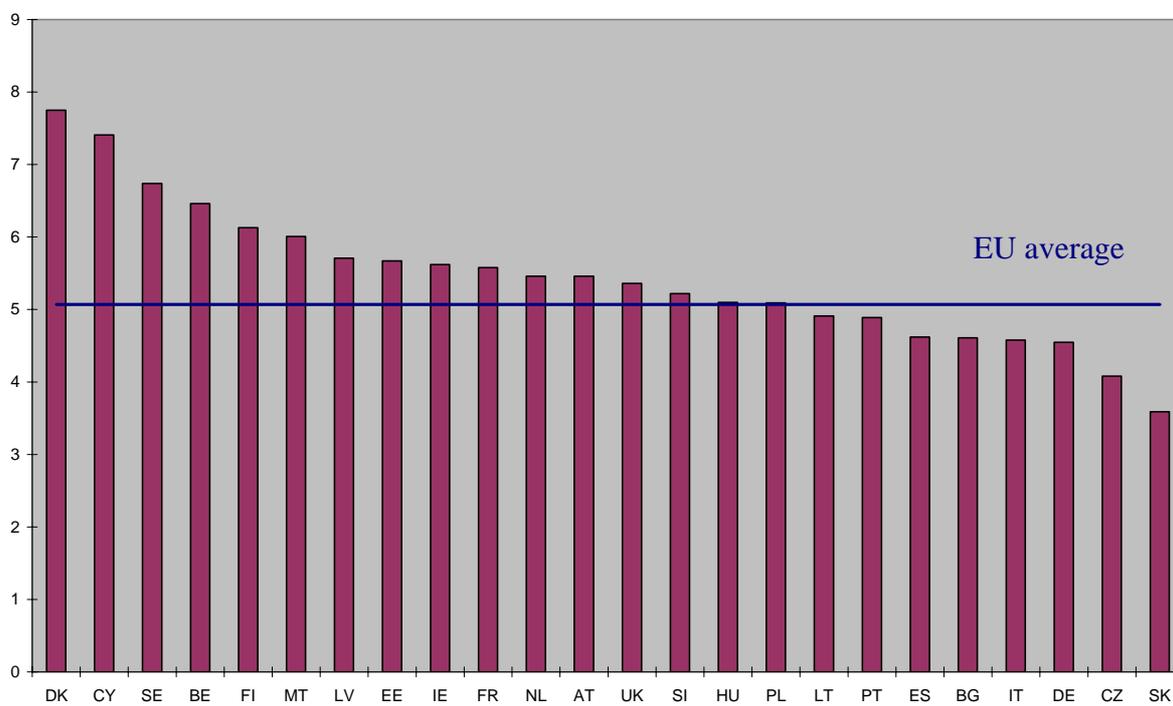
Note: Data not available for Greece, Luxembourg, Romania

Source: Eurostat, 2011

Figure 3

Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions **per pupil/student** (in EUR PPS, for all levels of education combined, based on full-time equivalents, reported to GDP). Year 2008.

Note: Data not available for Greece, Luxembourg, Romania, Ireland, Hungary or Slovakia

Source: Eurostat, 2011

According to the National Reports, strict budgetary constraints meant that **several countries could not increase, or had to decrease, public investment in education and training** in the last few years. In some countries, investment in education and training has been increasing in recent years (DE, PL). However, even in those countries where the budget is increasing, measures are being put in place to improve the efficiency of public spending in education and training. This is becoming a necessity due not only to budget constraints but also to an increase in demand for post-compulsory education, particularly in vocational education and training, adult and higher education, observed in a few countries (**EE, HU, UK**).

Time frames differ, depending on each country's respective economic development. For example, in **Spain** the education budget did not decrease until 2011, while local governments in **Iceland** started to cut costs in education in autumn 2008 after the country's economic collapse. In other countries a decrease in budget at the onset of the crisis has been followed in recent years by an increase (e.g. in **Estonia** the 2009 budget of the Ministry for Education and Research was reduced compared to 2008 and then increased in 2010, mostly relying on foreign assistance). Finally, stimulus packages adopted early on in the crisis, sometimes covering education and training expenditure, have been followed by a more parsimonious use of public funds in 2010-2011.

Budget trends in the main education and training sectors

More than two thirds of public expenditure on education and training goes to schools (primary and secondary levels together, including initial vocational education and training). The pre-primary level accounts for 10 % of public expenditure and the tertiary level 22 %. Data on post-secondary education is very fragmented (apart from tertiary education). A significant part of adult education and training is borne by employers and by individuals themselves. Nevertheless, public authorities do support adult education and training, in particular through active labour market policies. Data collected via public employment services shows that training undertaken in the framework of labour market policies represented 0.2 % of GDP in 2008.[13] There is, however, a need to strengthen the evidence for the nature and origins of expenditure in post-secondary education and training.

In general, expenditure per student increases with the level of education. On average across the European Union, the annual total expenditure per pupil is around EUR 9296 at tertiary level, compared to EUR 5347 at primary level and EUR 6607 at secondary level. Expenditure per student at tertiary level is more than twice expenditure at primary level in almost a third of Member States (**BG, CZ, DE, FR, MT, NL, FI, SE**). Expenditure per student in upper-secondary vocational programme is higher than in general programmes.

Trends are different from one sector to another (see figure 4): at primary level expenditure per pupil increased between 2001 and 2008, but this is probably due to demographic evolution involving a decrease in the number of young children. Hence, there was a slight decrease in class sizes in many European countries until 2008.[14] Expenditure at secondary level did not follow a clear trend between 2001 and 2008.

Expenditure per pupil (compared to GDP) diminished at tertiary level between 2001 and 2008. This was because of an increase in the number of students undertaking post-secondary education. Higher education institutions face an increasing demand. They also rely more and more on private funding to complement public expenditure.[15]

---

[13] See http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/labour_market/labour_market_policy.

[14] See Education at a Glance, 2011.

[15] See also Education at a Glance, 2011.

Figure 4.
Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil (based on full-time equivalents), in Purchasing Power Parities compared to GDP per capita.
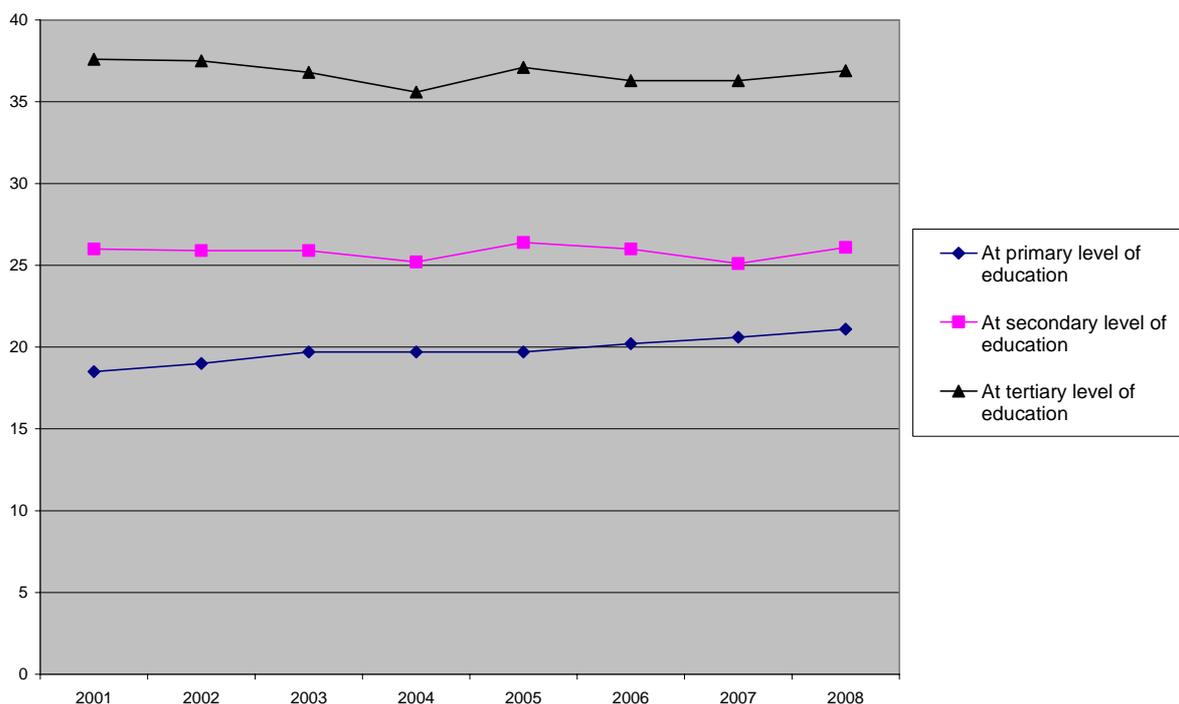
Source: Eurostat, 2011

Trends in private investment

The private sector does not invest massively in education and training in the European Union. Investment from private sources represents less than 1% of GDP in almost all European countries, except Cyprus (1.6%) and the UK (1.7%).[16] According to the 2008 survey on labour costs, continuous training represented 0.77% of total labour costs.[17] Nevertheless, expenditure on education and training from private sources has slightly increased in the European Union over the last decade (from 0.63% of GDP in 2000 to 0.75% in 2008).

- Several schemes have been developed to encourage private investment, particularly in higher education.

- Some countries (**IE, UK**) have increased **fees and charges**. According to the EUA[18], the authorities in **the Netherlands** are considering increasing tuition fees for students

---

[16] In many countries, the private expenditure on education contained in some indicators is not comprehensive. This is in particular the case for payments from other private entities (e.g. firms, non-profit organisations, religious institutions) to educational institutions, that are often very difficult to track back through administrative records. This can sometimes result in a significant under-evaluation of private expenditure on education, that has to be taken into account when interpreting indicators for education finance statistics.

[17] http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/labour_market/labour_costs/database

[18] European University Association

who exceed their programme completion deadline by more than one year- Bachelor and Master programmes are separate programmes; the average time to complete their degree, while in **Sweden** and **Finland** universities have started to introduce tuition fees for non-European Union/EEA[19] international students.

- In 2011 the Hungarian government limited the state-subsidised enrolment quota but, within the total enrolment rate, increased the quota for science and technology. In **the Netherlands**, the government has proposed cutting the budget for government-funded higher education institutions as of January 2012. **Sweden,** however, temporarily expanded state-subsidised enrolment in higher education, as a counter-cyclical measure to absorb the unemployed into higher education during the economic downturn.

At country level there are three broad groups of **incentives to stimulate demand and supply of learning** in a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective:

- Many countries seek to attract individuals to learning through grants/vouchers/fee exemption (**BE fr, BE n BG, DE, FI, IE, LT, MT, NL,** SE, **UK-Scotland, UK-England**) or tax incentives/allowances (**FI, NL**), often focused on low skilled/unemployed groups.

- A number of Member States of the European Union have introduced incentives for **LLL providers** (educational establishments but also employers, social partners, civil society organisations, public employment services, and higher education institutes in particular) to broaden their LLL services and adjust them to the needs of underrepresented groups (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, IE, NL, SE, DE**).

- A number of countries (**DK, HU, LU, SI, SK**) have introduced incentives for employers to provide employees with work-based learning or other forms of training, although there are many different programmes across Europe (e.g. Cedefop report on 'Employer-provided vocational training in Europe' 2010).

Example of effective financial incentives for LLL supply and demand

The legal framework in Finland has been changed so that receiving unemployment benefits no longer conflicts with student status. In **Belgium-Flanders** higher education institutions receive a premium if they support non-traditional learners through adapted services. In **the Netherlands** employers receive a tax reduction if they facilitate the training of their employees in certain sectors of professionally oriented higher education (regulated by law WVA).

- In **Iceland** a VET fund has been established to support companies that provide work-based learning/apprenticeships, which in return allows the government to impose certain guidelines and the use of in-training log-books.

- Several countries mention the fact that the **European structural funds** play an important role, especially in the measures for reducing and preventing unemployment (**BG, DE, HU, IT, LV, HR**) and funding higher education (**LV, RO, SK, HR**).

---

[19] European Economic Area

4.3. Areas most affected by budget restrictions

Governments are trying to control budgets by rationalising expenditure and establishing policy priorities. The cutbacks in education and training budgets were either part of restrictions imposed on public services across the board, or were targeted at specific education and training activities, as outlined below:

- **Cuts in staff**: reduction in number of posts (**ES, FR, IE, LV,**[20] **IS, RO**), salary cuts or freezing (**BG,**[21] **EL, ES, HU, IE, PT, RO**), other measures related to teachers' incomes (**HU, PT, RO, SI, IS**) and other measures related to staff (**BE NL, FR, HR, IS**). Nevertheless, some countries have increased teachers' salaries (**FR, MT, PL**). Eurydice data on salaries and allowances for teachers and school heads in 2009-2010 point to a great diversity across Europe.[22]

  Cuts in teaching posts and salaries usually affect all education sectors and, in several cases, the majority of public servants (**ES, IE, PT, RO**). However, this is not the case in **France,** where the solution of replacing only one out of two public servants who retire will not be applied in higher education or research. In **Hungary** the freezing of salaries is said to affect vocational education and training specifically.

- **Cuts in infrastructure maintenance and equipment** and restrictions on the building of new facilities (**BE NL, BG, IE, RO, HR, IS**) may affect the whole education system, but several countries specifically mention cuts in school education (**BE NL, HR**). Nevertheless, some countries are also **investing** in the improvement of school facilities (**DE, HU, LV, MT, PT**) or higher education facilities (**LV**).

- Some countries have reduced educational provision in pre-primary (for 2 year-old children in **FR**), postponed or slowed down the implementation of planned reforms (**BG, HR**), or implemented other specific measures such as the temporary non-renewal of innovation projects or reductions in student financial support (**BE nl, IE, PT**).

4.4. Main priorities for expenditure

There is no uniform trend in terms of the priorities set by countries for future education and training spending. The priority areas vary between countries: areas that are given priority in some countries may be subject to spending cuts in others. Many countries are increasing public investment in vocational education and training and in adult and higher education.

Some countries prioritise investment in pre-primary (**DE, HU, SK, UK**), or primary and secondary (**HU, NO**). Others are making cuts in upper secondary (**BG, IS**),

---

[20] In Latvia, according to the national report, this is due to a decrease in the number of pupils.

[21] Only for 2008-2009.

[22] http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/tools/salaries.pdf

although it is important to bear in mind that for demographic reasons[23] some of the cuts in school education may be explained by the reduction of the number of pupils enrolled in primary and secondary education

In addition to the priorities identified above, several countries highlight support to students from specific groups (e.g. from disadvantaged backgrounds in **BE fr, BG, CY, FR, HU, IE, PT, SK, UK** and for best-performing students in **IT**) and some have established specific priority areas (e.g. entrepreneurship in **BE fr** and **BG**).

The areas of education and training expenditure that have recently been given priority include:

- In the framework of **vocational and adult education,** measures to reduce and prevent unemployment (**BE fr, DE, BG, CY, DE, HU, IT, IE, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, UK, IS**). These measures vary between countries. In **Hungary, f**or instance, the most significant anti-recession measures targeted the promotion of adult education. At the same time, the financing of vocational education and training was reduced. In **Poland,** too, training for the unemployed and job seekers is subject to financial constraints, although funding for adult learning has not been reduced. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** has made savings in the budget for the coordinating structure for adult education centres.

- Some countries have given priority to **expenses for scholarships and grants** (**BE FR, IT, ES, PT**) or **student loans** (**UK, IS**). Student loans are established for the sector of higher education (**UK, IS**) or further education (**UK**), to offset, as in the UK, parallel increases in tuition fees. While the increase in expenditure on scholarships and grants tends to affect different sectors, in **Italy** and **Portugal** the budget for grants has been increased only for higher education. Against the general trend, **IE** is cutting down on training allowances and **NL** and **HU** on grants. In **LV** in 2010 there was also a slight decrease in the number of state-subsidised students at higher education institutions compared to 2009.

- **Higher education is a priority in many countries** (**AT**, **BE fr, DE, FI, FR, MT, NO, PT, RO, SE**). Some countries have specifically protected research funding or have raised funds for particular research activities (**NO, PT**). As a general trend, funding is increasingly targeted towards achieving specific objectives, usually in line with strategic national priorities. However, **higher education** has been subject to budget restrictions in certain countries throughout the crisis (**BE NL, BG, LV, SK, IS**).

- **Training for jobseekers**, in particular by PES (public employment services), which are major providers of training and guidance, faced an increased number of people out of work and limited job vacancies during the crisis. Taken as a whole, PES spending increased over the period 2008-2010, but has since decreased. Staff numbers in PES have increased in some countries. In other cases, PES decided to increase the number of front-line staff by redeploying administrative staff. Most

---

[23] The decrease in enrolment in general school education is specifically mentioned in the Latvian and Hungarian reports..

PES reported that an increase in budgets for active labour market policies (including training), but not enough to meet demand.[24]

4.5. Improving spending efficiency

Some countries are stepping up their efforts to increase **spending efficiency,** thus combining investment and reform. Examples include measures to increase autonomy and competences in the governance and human resource management of schools (**PT**) and higher education institutions (**DE, FR**); strengthening the link between the funding of higher education institutions and the quality of education and academic excellence (**PL, EL**); or giving schools and local authorities greater flexibility with respect to their budgets (**UK**). Other measures include the adoption of a biennial result-oriented programme budget in **Slovenia** and the 'money follows the pupil' funding model in **Latvia,** which aims to encourage competitiveness among learning institutions through the diversification of educational programme offerings. The EUA also notes that public funding, which on average represents close to 75 % of European universities' financial structures**,** is increasingly subject to conditions or to growing accountability requirements.

Some countries are **reorganising educational provision** by merging institutions or grouping schools (**EL, FR, PL, PT, IS**), closing educational institutions (**LV,** due to a smaller number of pupils), merging classes or increasing class sizes[25] (**FR, LV, HR, IS**) or other organisational measures (**FR, IS**). Nonetheless, **Austria** is reducing class sizes in order to promote individualised learning. Although these measures mainly concern schools, according to the European University Association [26] they can also affect higher education.

4.6. Work at European level

The capacity of public spending to preserve or reinforce growth-friendly items such as investment in education will continue to be monitored in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy. The exchange of good practice that has taken place in the context of ET2020 includes two conferences in 2010 on '**Tax incentives for education and training'** and '**Sharing the costs of education and training in the newer Member States**', and a workshop, also in 2010, on '**Financing adult learning in times of crisis**'. The adult learning conference 'It's always a good time to learn' held in March 2011 included a workshop on '**The financial and economic** challenges of implementing adult learning: Conditions for co-financing strategies'. A thematic working group on '**Funding in adult learning**' is to be set up by the end of 2011. While **Eurydice** has announced the publication of a report on the 'Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe 2011 — Funding and the Social Dimension', with a chapter on student fees and support, a **PLA** on the **diversification of funding streams** for higher education is planned in 2012.

---

[24] 'PES adjustment to the crisis: update 2011Q1. Summary report', paper prepared for the European Commission by the European Job Mobility Laboratory.

[25] Even if there is no minimum or maximum class size regulation.

[26] *Impact of the economic crisis on European universities*, European University Association, January 2011. .

5.   **EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING (ESL)**

FINDINGS

*Nearly all ET 2020 countries state that reducing early school leaving is a priority in education and training policies. Several are developing **comprehensive approaches** and report increased efforts, especially in preventing students from dropping out.*

*The reports indicate that there is a serious lack of data and information on early school leaving, which hampers the development of effectively targeted policies. As a result, in most countries there is a need to **improve the collection, monitoring and analysis** of data and information on the incidence and drivers of early school leaving, as a basis for more effective policy measures.*

*Current weaknesses in policy development concern limited **cross-sector cooperation**, low levels of **involvement of stakeholders** from other policy areas and inadequate **cooperation with parents and local communities**. Most of the measures to reduce ESL need to be implemented at local or school level. Reforms at system level can often only lay the foundations for concrete measures in schools and municipalities. However, the mechanisms for cooperation are not always clear, and different forms of financing and administrative barriers often hamper cooperation. Many schools find it difficult to get parents involved in measures against truancy and early school leaving.*

***Many countries show imbalances** in the relative importance of **prevention, intervention and compensation measures.** Compensation measures are still overrepresented in relation to measures focusing on preventing drop-out. Extending the offer and improving the quality of **early childhood education and care** are some of the most effective ways of reducing early school leaving. More individualised learning approaches and measures such as better targeted support for pupils at risk of dropping out, early warning systems, and extra curricular activities to broaden opportunities for learning and personal development have all proved to be successful in reducing drop-out. Teacher education plays a crucial role in preventing early school leaving. Teachers are the first contact points for pupils at risk of dropping out and can make a difference to the learning experience of young people.*

*ESL should also be addressed in the area of **initial vocational education and training (VET)**. While too many young people drop out of VET, high quality VET has great potential to reduce early school leaving. However, VET is often viewed as a remedial measure for those at risk of dropping out or who have already abandoned general education. ESL could be substantially reduced by better use of the potential of VET and the development of measures such as: more **permeability** between VET and general education; apprenticeship systems; **alternating VET and general education** as early as lower secondary education; and giving young people a chance **to acquire work skills** while still in general education.*

*More intensive efforts at European level to identify and **exchange good policies and practices** and stimulate experimentation and innovation could help countries develop more effective policies. Specific issues include: how to monitor and analyse the incidence of early school leaving; the most effective forms of cross-sector cooperation; involvement of stakeholders; and upstream measures to prevent drop-out, including the role of VET in the context of prevention and intervention measures.*

> - *In addressing the problem of social disadvantage, it is important to introduce enrolment rules which guarantee a **greater social mix** of the school's student population.*

Share of Early School Leavers (population 18-24)

	All			Males	Females
	2000	2009	2010	2010	2010
EU 27	**17.6**	**14.4**	**14.1**	16.0	12.2
Belgium	13.8	11.1	11.9	13.8	10.0
Bulgaria	20.5 (01)	14.7	13.9	13.2	14.5
Czech Republic	5.7 (02)	5.4	4.9	4.9	4.8
Denmark	11.7	10.6	10.7	13.6	7.5
Germany	14.6	11.1	11.9	12.7	11.0
Estonia	15.1	13.9	11.6	15.2u	:
Ireland	14.6 (02)	11.3	10.5	12.6	8.4
Greece	18.2	14.5	13.7	16.5	10.8
Spain	29.1	31.2	28.4	33.5	23.1
France	13.3	12.3	12.8	15.4	10.3
Italy	25.1	19.2	18.8	22.0	15.4
Cyprus	18.5	11.7	12.6	16.2	9.8
Latvia	16.9(02)	13.9	13.3	17.2	9.4
Lithuania	16.5	8.7	8.1	9.9	6.2u
Luxembourg	16.8	7.7	7.1u	8.0u	6.0u
Hungary	13.9	11.2	10.5	11.5	9.5
Malta	54.2	36.8	36.9p	41.0p	32.4p
Netherlands	15.4	10.9	10.1b	12.2b	7.9b
Austria	10.2	8.7	8.3	8.4	8.2
Poland	7.4 (01)	5.3	5.4	7.2	3.5
Portugal	43.6	31.2	28.7	32.7	24.6
Romania	22.9	16.6	18.4	18.6	18.2
Slovenia	6.4 (01)	5.3u	5u	6.4u	3.3u
Slovakia	6.7 (02)	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.9
Finland	9.0	9.9	10.3	11.6i	9i
Sweden	7.3	10.7	9.7p	10.9p	8.5p
UK	18.2	15.7	14.9	15.8	14.0
Croatia	8.0 (02)	3.9 u	3.9u	4.9u	2.8u
Iceland	29.8	21.4	22.6	26.0	19.0
MK*	:	16.2	15.5	13.7	17.5
Turkey	:	44.3	43.1	37.8	47.9
Norway	12.9	17.6	17.4	21.4	13.2

Source: Eurostat (LFS) b = break in series, p = provisional u= unreliable,: = not available, (01) = 2001, (02) = 2002, *MK = former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Trends: In the 27 Member States of the European Union, the share of early school leavers (population 18-24) steadily declined from 17.6 % in 2000 to 14.4 % in 2009 and 14.1 % in 2010 (females: 12.2 %. males: 16.0 %).

Best EU performers: Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia

5.1. The challenge

In 2010, 14.1 % of all 18-24 years old in the European Union left education and training with only lower secondary education or less. Reducing the share of early school leavers in the European Union to less than 10 % by 2020 is one of the headline targets of the *Europe 2020* strategy and is underpinned by national targets adopted by all European Union Member States except the UK.

Recent data suggest that on current trends the 2020 target will not be reached.

Thus, more and better-targeted policy efforts will be needed in the short term, in order to have a beneficial impact in time to meet the target date.

Although some countries have succeeded in reducing their early school leaving (ESL) rates significantly over the last decade, several others — including some large Member States — have rates which change little from year to year, and so can be said to be stagnating. A sustained lack of progress in reducing ESL in the larger Member States will result in a failure to meet the Europe 2020 target, whatever happens in the other countries.

ESL 2010 rates[27] and national targets

- Performance in 2010 (%)

- National target for 2020 (%)
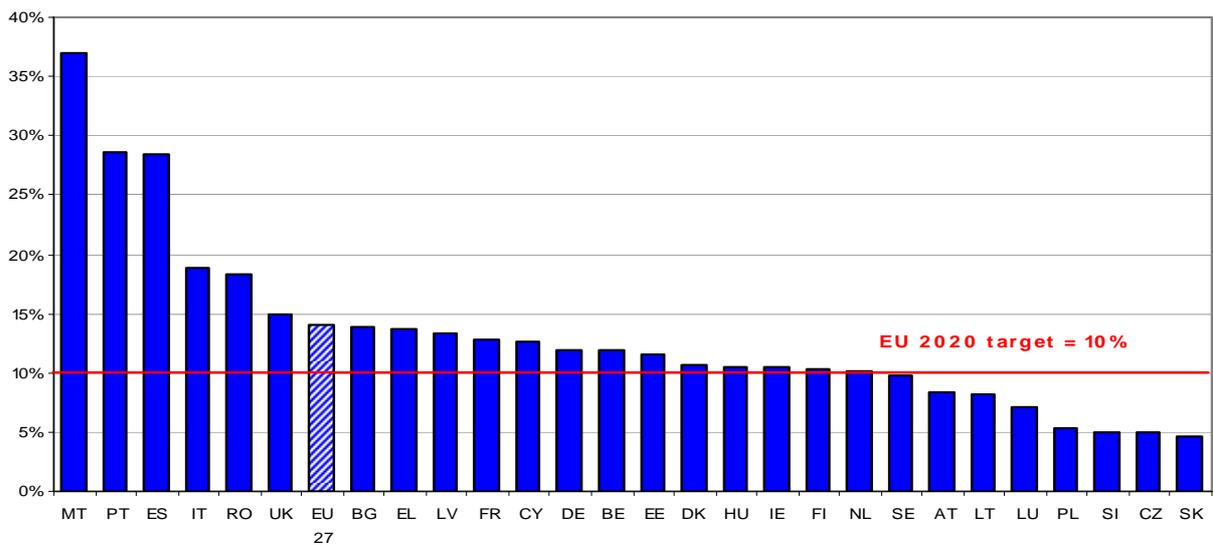
MT	PT	ES	IT	RO	UK	EU27	BG	EL	LV	FR	CY	DE	BE	EE	DK	HU	IE	FI	NL	SE	AT	LT	LU	PL	SI	CZ	SK
29	10	15	15 16	11	:	10	11	10	13	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	8	8	8	10	10	9	10	5	5	6	6

Many countries which have ESL rates below the European average and close to the 10 % benchmark also show a stagnating trend. This might be due to the fact that early school leavers in these countries tend to be young people with multiple social and

---

[27] Source for 2010 data: Eurostat (LFS).

educational problems who are difficult to reach. Evidence from countries in a similar situation which do manage to achieve a declining trend (e.g. NL) shows that well-targeted measures within the setting of a comprehensive policy strategy can lead to a sustained decline in ESL rates year-on-year.

Despite considerable progress in recent years, there are still 3 Member States with ESL rates above 20%. For the first time since 2002, the **Spanish** ESL rate improved significantly in 2010 and is now below 30%. It will be necessary to ensure that this progress is consolidated in future years. **Portugal** has achieved steady improvements since 2002 and has now reduced its ESL rate to less than 30%, but strong efforts are needed to reduce ESL further. **Malta** still has the highest percentage of early leavers from education and training in the European Union (36.8%), but has made significant progress to reduce it. However, the national target set for 2020 (29%), shows that ESL will remain an important challenge in the future.

Developments 2000 – 2010
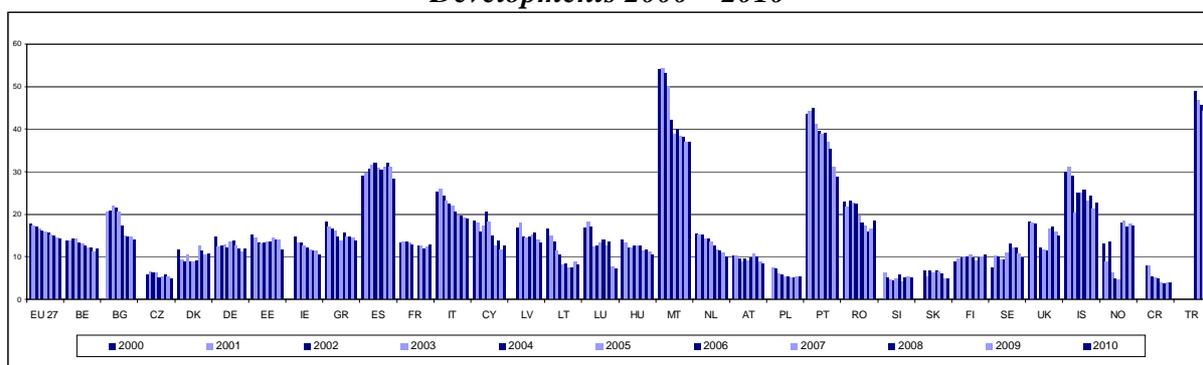
Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat 2000-2010

Note : Breaks in series hamper the comparablity of data between 2000 and 2010 in DK, DE, CY, MT, NL, PT.

5.2. Policy context

One of the priorities of the ET 2020 Strategic Framework is to reduce early school leaving.

On 20 May 2011 the Education Council adopted a Recommendation[28] to support Member States in pursuing their ESL national targets under Europe 2020. The Recommendation underlines that countries need to shift from implementing individual measures, which are often not well coordinated or not effectively targeted,[29] to introducing **comprehensive policies** against ESL based on a solid analysis of the incidence of ESL and its drivers. The Recommendation proposes a framework for coherent, comprehensive and evidence-based policies to combat ESL, addressing the problem at all levels of education and training and involving stakeholders from all relevant areas, including youth policy, social and employment policies and the health sector. It comprises prevention, intervention and compensation measures.

- ▪ Prevention seeks to avoid the kind of conditions in which the processes leading to ESL can thrive.

---

[28] OJ C 191 of 1.7.2011.

[29] See Special Report No 1/2006 of the Court of Auditors on the contribution of European Social Funds to combating early school leaving OJ 2006/C99/3 and 7.

- Intervention addresses difficulties as they emerge and tries to stop them from leading to school drop-out.

- Compensation measures offer education and training opportunities to those who have dropped out.
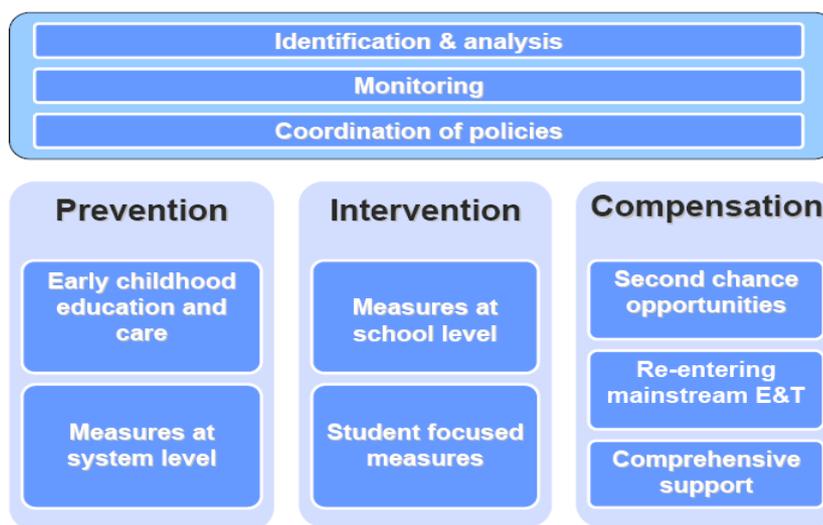
The Recommendation invites Member States to ensure that these comprehensive strategies against ESL are in place by 2012. It invites the European Commission to support Member States in their efforts, monitor developments and facilitate exchange among them.

The following analysis of the current situation in Europe is based on this framework for the design of comprehensive strategies to reduce ESL. Based as far as possible on the ET 2020 National Reports, it gives a picture of the level of policy development in countries and proposes areas in which further investment might be required.

5.3. Analysing and monitoring early school leaving

At European level, ESL rates are defined as the proportion of the population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education or less and no longer in education or training.[30] Sometimes different definitions are used at national level. They are often more closely linked to the specific structure of the school education system in the country concerned, the definition of compulsory education, and the qualifications expected or required at the end of compulsory education. Whereas the European indicator provides information on the share of young people between 18 and 24 years old without a set level of qualification, national data can provide more detailed insights into drop-out rates, the type of education or training abandoned, and the point at which young people leave education and training systems prematurely.

More detailed data and information, going beyond the European indicator, may also offer a better insight into the characteristics of pupils at risk of dropping out and the specific difficulties within a region, municipality or school type. Some countries are already quite advanced in collecting and analysing data, others still need to invest in this essential first step towards more effective policy development.

---

[30] Council conclusions on 'Reference levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training (Benchmarks)', May 2003. .

There are several tools and methods which countries can use to collect data and information on ESL, depending on their statistical and administrative systems and the solutions adopted for ensuring data protection.

- In recent years some countries have introduced an individual pupil number or central student register to track the educational careers of young people on an anonymised basis (**EE, HU, IT, LU, NL, UK, TR**). In combination with socio-economic data these systems provide a rich source for identifying and analysing the main factors leading to ESL in a specific region, municipality or even school. In **Italy**, the National Pupil Registry is also used to monitor school attendance and to keep track of early school leaving, absenteeism or irregular attendance with a view to implementing ad-hoc preventive measures.

- Some countries are developing databases on educational attainment (**BG, DE, LV, PL, SK**); current systems often provide only aggregated data and do not allow the educational pathways of pupils to be tracked.

- Other countries use data provided by their national statistical offices or administrative data and combine these with findings of surveys or national and international studies (**BE fr, DK, ES, FR, FI, MT, PT, SI**). In several countries schools are obliged to report absenteeism and drop out and to transmit the data to their municipalities or to a national agency (**BE fr, BE nl, DK, FR, IE, NL, LT, SE**).

Surveys and other systems for following up young people who leave education and training early can provide more in-depth information on the motivation of these young people. In **Luxembourg** all early school leavers are contacted and interviewed in order to learn more about their reasons for dropping out. In seeking tailored solutions for the young people concerned, the authorities can also gather more knowledge on the main factors triggering drop out in general. The various offers that education systems can make to young people can be fine tuned in the light of this knowledge. In 2006 **Hungary** launched a 'Career Survey' to track the school career of 10 000 students who were in 8th grade in May 2006. After three years 90 % of all students were still in daytime school, but only 60 % of Roma students. The survey also showed that drop out was especially frequent in vocational schools.

There is a general gap in the area of monitoring and evaluating existing measures to combat ESL. Only a very few countries (**NL, NO**) report monitoring at local level leading to the production of regular situation reports. Without a system for monitoring developments it is more difficult to target policy measures effectively. Thus, the fact that so few countries report that they have such systems is a cause for concern. Publishing recent and detailed data on ESL and educational attainment can also help to strengthen the links between actual developments in ESL, problem analysis, and the development of targeted policies and measures.

5.4. Priority areas in reducing early school leaving

National Reports do not indicate a clear trend in the priority areas addressed by countries. Most reports do not refer explicitly to the criteria underpinning the definition of such priorities — for example the results of a prior analysis of the characteristics of ESL, based on detailed information and analyses of the drivers for ESL at national, regional or local level. It is therefore not yet possible to have a robust understanding of the different factors leading to ESL in each country.

5.4.1. Target groups

Unsurprisingly, country reports confirm that the most disadvantaged groups in society are those most affected by ESL. The groups most frequently mentioned are:

- children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, BG, DE, DK, ES, HU, HR, IE, IT, LV, NL, PL, RO, SK, UK**);

- low-performing pupils (**AT, BG, DE, ES, FR, EL, NO, IS, SE**);

- children and young people with a migration background and/or insufficient command of the language of instruction (**BE fr, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IT, PL, SE, IS**);

- other target groups such as Roma (**BE nl, BG, CZ, FI, IT, HU, RO, SI, SK**), children and young people with special educational needs (**AT, ES, FR, HR, HU, PL, RO, SE**) and young people in rural areas with only a limited educational offer (**PL, RO**).

While it is important for policies to be targeted at specific groups such as children with a migration background and Roma, where these are under-performing, it is worth remembering that they represent a minority of early school leavers and so should not be the exclusive focus of policy measures. With regard to the proportion of migrant children in schools in Europe, despite high early school leaving rates, on average only about 14 % of all early school leavers in the European Union are non-nationals.[31] Moreover, not all young people dropping out of education and training are low performers. Policies need to balance support for specific groups at increased risk of dropping out with measures addressing all pupils at such risk, whatever their background.

5.4.2. Policy areas

Most ET 2020 countries indicate prevention measures as priority areas for policy action.

- The most popular are developing new curricula, strengthening competence-based teaching, ensuring high quality teaching and increasing the flexibility and permeability of learning pathways (BE fr, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FR, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, UK, NO, IS, TR).

- Strongly linked to this are ambitions to improve the quality of VET provision and to make VET more attractive and accessible for young people as one of the routes for completing upper secondary education (**BE fr, DK, ES, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, TR**).

- Improving guidance and counselling is defined as a priority in **AT**, **DK**, **EE, FI, FR**, **IT, LT, LU**, PT and **RO** and also mentioned as an important measure in other countries.

The trend to steer policy development towards preventing early school leaving is confirmed by a report on policies to reduce early school leaving recently published by

---

[31] Calculation based on Eurostat data.

the European Parliament.[32] The report analyses developments in nine Member States of the European Union, concluding that countries are increasingly addressing ESL within a broader policy framework.

5.5. Preventive measures to reduce early school leaving

Preventive measures to combat ESL aim to alleviate or remove any conditions which might lead to ESL. They often address the structure of education systems and focus on systemic changes. Increasing participation in good quality **early childhood education and care (ECEC)** is one of the most effective ways of improving educational attainment.

5.5.1. Preventive measures at system level

- Some countries have extended compulsory education for younger children by introducing a **compulsory pre-school year** (**AT**, **BG, CY, DK, EL, HU, PL, RO, TR**). This measure is specifically targeted at children from disadvantaged backgrounds and is designed to support them in developing the necessary competences for a good start at school.

- Other countries (**BE nl, DK, ES, IE, PT, RO, UK, TR**) mention extending the non-compulsory offer of **ECEC** and improving its quality, but this is not a prominent feature in most National Reports. **England** intends to offer 15 hours of ECEC to the 20 % most disadvantaged two-year olds.

- Seven countries (**BE nl, DK, NL, IT, PL, PT** and **UK** (**England**)) have **extended compulsory education for older students** or report that they are planning to do so in the near future. This should force more young people to stay in education and training, but the longer-term effects of this measure have not yet been evaluated. In all countries mentioned, the extension of compulsory education is accompanied by measures to increase the success rate in upper secondary education. These include increasing the flexibility of educational pathways, improving the educational offer, alternating school and work experiences and providing financial and social support for disadvantaged students.

- By far the most frequently mentioned measures to reduce ESL **are general measures** to improve educational provision, its structure and quality. Reforms of secondary education affect both the **organisation of teaching** (modularisation and increased flexibility of educational pathways) and the **curricula** (competency-based teaching and improved teaching of basic skills). They address educational factors leading to ESL and aim to improve the quality of the educational offer, to avoid failure and the repetition of school years (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, FR, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, UK, IS, NO, TR**). While improving the quality and relevance of the education and training system is an important preventive factor, it is not clear from the National Reports whether this has been conceived with the aim of reducing ESL,

---

[32] Study of the European Parliament on 'Reducing early school leaving' (GHK, 2011), p. 45, forthcoming. The 9 countries examined in detail are: Ireland, Greece, France, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Finland and the UK.

whether its impact on ESL will be subject to monitoring and evaluation, or whether these measures will be adjusted to maximise the impact on ESL as a result..

- Some countries which **traditionally** provide only half-day schooling (**AT, BG, CY, DE, EL, RO**) are providing **all-day schooling**, combined with an extended educational offer. An extended educational offer provides all children with additional learning opportunities, but can be particularly helpful to pupils at risk of dropping out of school, as they can receive better learning support and can take part in non-curricula learning activities which increase their motivation to learn.

- On the issue of socio-economic disadvantage, some countries have, or plan to have, specific support measures or extra funding for **schools with a disadvantaged intake** (**BE fr, BE nl, CY**, **FR, EL, IE, PT, RO**), or to provide free educational materials and free school meals (**BG, CY, HR, HU, RO, UK**). Another important measure in this context, highlighted by **BE fr, BG, IT**, and **PL**, is the de-segregation of schools by introducing enrolment rules, for example, which aim for a greater social mix of the school's student population.

Programme ÉCLAIR (France)

The ÉCLAIR programme focuses on a limited number of education institutions. It aims to support pupils in their education, to help them develop key competences and to raise their educational ambitions. It also helps schools to combat violence and to improve the school climate. It implements three types of innovation in the participating institutions: (1) innovative pedagogical methods and school development; (2) individual support and involvement of families; and (3) more freedom in recruitment of staff according to the needs of the institution. Extra teacher education is also provided, particularly in classroom management and conflict resolution.

http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid52765/le-programme-clair-pour-les-colleges-et-lycees.html

---

- To increase the educational attainment of children with a migrant background, several countries will be taking specific measures to support such children in learning throughout their educational career. The promotion of multilingualism in schools and special support for newly arrived migrant children are mentioned by **AT, BE fr, BE nl, BG, CY, DE, ES, FI, FR, EL, IE, LU, NL, PT, SI, UK, IS**.

- Improving the **quality of vocational education and training**, allowing for more permeability between VET and general education pathways and introducing apprenticeship systems are mentioned by **AT, BE fr, BE nl, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, UK, NO**. Initiatives to alternate VET and general education as early as lower secondary education and to give young people a chance to acquire work skills while still in general education are reported by **BE fr, BE nl, CY, DK, DE, MT, IT, PT, NO**.

- Cooperation with other policy sectors such as **health and social services** or **the police** was highlighted by **BE nl, DE, ES, FI, FR, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO** and **UK**. Several countries stress the importance of involving the local community in school work and especially in measures to reduce drop-out rates

(**DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SI, UK, NO**). Several reports indicate that cooperation with other policy areas and parents needs further development. There are hardly any examples of measures which systematically involve other players.

- Finally, **extra support for teachers** working with pupils at risk of dropping out is mentioned by **CY, DE, FI, MT, NL, RO,** and **NO**. Countries' references to teacher education are often linked to the need to manage and benefit from increased diversity in the classroom, multilingualism and intercultural education, forming the basis for a better understanding of, and response to, pupils facing multiple disadvantages, to the extent that they come from poor and low-education backgrounds and have to cope with social and family problems. Given the important role of teachers in this context, there are very few references to initial or continuous teacher education, which would seem to merit more attention than currently received in the National Reports.

5.6. Intervention measures to reduce early school leaving

Intervention measures address emerging difficulties at an early stage and try to stop ESL processes before they lead to drop out. They can focus on a whole school or training institution or they can address individual pupils who are at risk of discontinuing their education or training.

5.6.1. Intervention measures at school level

Most of the measures to reduce ESL, including those described above, need to be implemented at local or school level; reforms at system level can often only lay the foundations for concrete measures within schools and municipalities. Some countries have put specific policy measures in place in order to **involve schools and municipalities** as the leading players in reducing ESL. In **the Netherlands**, agreements with schools and municipalities refer explicitly to their main responsibility for targeting drop outs and ESL, define how the level of financial support from central government is dependent on achieving targets in ESL, and offer incentives for reducing drop-out rates. In **Denmark**, VET institutions have to develop action plans which include measures to reduce drop out. In general upper secondary education, too, schools are expected to take action in the face of high drop-out rates. **Norway** and **Denmark** have obliged municipalities to follow up early leavers from education and training and to offer them education or training opportunities. **Finland** has introduced financial incentives for schools which succeed in reducing drop-out rates.

At school level, reported measures mainly address the following aspects:

- Promoting more **individualised learning** in order to help improve learning outcomes and to lower drop-out rates in **AT, BE nl, CY, DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, HU, LU, LV, MT, PT, SE, NO**, and **IS**.

- Reacting early and efficiently to the first signs of ESL processes in **AT**, **BE nl, ES, IE, LT, NL, IS, NO** and **TR**. **Early warning signs** can be a decline in performance or absenteeism. **Belgium** (**Flanders**) has introduced a so-called 'Truancy Action Plan' which aims to follow up truancy more comprehensively and across sectors, involving social services, for example.

- **Improving the school climate** and promoting social learning and anti-violent behaviour are designed to reduce the risk of ESL by turning schools into places where young people want to be and where they can enjoy learning and companionship with their peers. Measures to support this are being developed in **AT, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, NO**, and **IS. BE fr** intends to create an observatory for violence in schools to help teachers and pupils who are confronted with violence in their schools.

School Completion Programme (Ireland)

The School Completion Programme is part of a broader action plan for 'delivering equality of opportunity in schools' (DEIS) and is therefore embedded in measures targeted at schools in disadvantaged areas. It aims to retain young people in formal education and improve educational attainment. Local projects are required to engage in a consultative and planning process bringing all stakeholders together. School staff, parents and local representatives and agencies develop an annual retention plan providing in-school and out-of-school measures to prevent early school leaving and support young people at risk of dropping out of school. Home-school-community liaison services are closely linked to these activities. They aim to involve parents and guardians more in school by raising awareness and helping parents enhance their children's educational process by supporting them to develop appropriate skills.

http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=17216&ecategory=34299&language=EN

5.6.2.   Intervention measures at individual level

Children and young people at risk of dropping-out of education and training need targeted, individual support. They frequently need help to cope both with the demands of school work and with personal problems in their family or neighbourhood.

- Extra educational support**, mentoring or tutoring** for low-performing pupils and pupils at risk of dropping out is planned or already available in **AT, BE fr, BG, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, EL, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI, NO, IS, HR**, and **TR.**

- Additional **social and psychological support** for pupils in need is planned in **AT, DK, DE, LT, NL, MT, PL, PT and HR**). In **Belgium (Flanders)** young people finding it difficult to keep up with the demands of school work have the opportunity to quit school for a short period of up to two weeks, focus on addressing their specific problems and then re-enter school.

- Several countries (**BE nl, BG, CY, FR, HU, IE, PL, PT, RO, UK, HR**) provide **financial support** for disadvantaged pupils in the form of grants, free school meals or teaching materials.

- Leaving education or training prematurely may also be the result of a lack of motivation or of poorly perceived educational and professional prospects. Improving **guidance and counselling** for young people is very prominent in many countries' reports (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO NO**). In some countries guidance and

counselling is also accompanied by programmes to help low-performing pupils to develop the necessary skills to enter the labour market.

Programme for pupils at risk (Finland)

The JOPO® project was launched in 2006 to prevent early school leaving by developing new teaching methods. Pupils at risk of dropping out are taught in small groups of 10. Each school has a JOPO team comprising teachers and a youth or social worker. In 2009 the total number of pupils participating in JOPO amounted to 1 200. Success factors include a sufficiently small group and sufficient resources, as small teaching groups and the involvement of a youth worker increase the costs of instruction. The programme has been evaluated and has been found to be particularly effective for lower secondary pupils at risk of dropping out.

http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2008/JOPO_toiminnan_vaikuttavuuden_arviointi.html?lang=&extra_locale=en

---

- Increased attention on pupils with **special educational needs (SEN),** one of the groups at higher risk of ESL, is highlighted by **DE**, **DK**, **EE, FI, FR, HU, LT, SI, SK, SE HR**. Initiatives are focusing on improving inclusive education by providing better support to schools, up-dating curricula and specific study materials or developing individual development plans for students with SEN. **EE** and **HU** underline the important role of counselling centres.

5.7. Compensation measures

Compensation measures create opportunities for those who left education and training prematurely to obtain at a later stage the qualifications they missed. They can also help to reintegrate young adults at risk of social exclusion by offering them education and training opportunities tailored to their needs and circumstances. The most important thing about all these measures is that they take account of, and seek to avoid or compensate for, the difficulties which led the young people to drop out in the first place. Moreover, they provide the necessary support and recognition of prior learning, so that people do not start from zero again, leading either to re-entry into mainstream education or training, or to a recognised qualification. This means that the second chance really is a chance and not just a disguised dead-end).

- Schools or institutions which offer **second chance** education exist in nearly all ET 2020 countries (**AT, BE fr, BE nl CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, EL, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, UK, NO, IS, HR**). In some cases their offer is geared specifically to young drop-outs, in others to low-skilled adults.

- Opportunities for adults to **achieve basic skills while working** provide another form of second chance education (**BE fr, BG, CY, EE, ES, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV**, **NL, PL, PT, SI, SK, IS NO**). Working and non-formal learning at the work place can be combined with formal education. This form of learning is less targeted towards young people and their specific difficulties and needs. Often, it may not lead to a qualification and is therefore not always appropriate to compensate for early school leaving.

- In addition to second chance education, measures which focus on **better integration into vocational education and training** and into the labour market are the most common. These measures are sometimes provided by employment services (**AT, PL**) or are based on an extension of VET provision (**SE**, **UK, NO TR**). Several countries have introduced the possibility of starting VET without fulfilling the formal entry requirements or without having a school leaving certificate (**BG, EE, ES, MT SK**). Often it is possible to combine VET with general education, thereby obtaining a school leaving certificate (**DK, DE, EE, ES, IT, PL, PT SE**). Another approach to opening up VET to a wider range of young people is through the organisation of preparatory courses or **pre-vocational training**. Such courses can compensate for missed learning and allow people to follow VET programmes under the same conditions as other students (**DE, ES, FI, HU and LU**).

- Measures to **reintegrate young people into education and training** directly after dropping out range from specific guidance for drop-outs, transition classes and preparatory courses to non-formal learning possibilities. They exist in **AT, BE fr, BE nl, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, LU, NL, RO, SE, SI, UK, NO**, and **TR.** Micro-lycées in **France** offer young people the opportunity to finish general education in small working groups and with different forms of learning. Re-integration classes (établissements de réinsertion scolaire) provide pupils who have severe learning and behavioural problems with opportunities for personal development and new forms of learning in a different environment.

KUTSE, Estonia

The KUTSE programme supports drop outs in completing their studies in vocational education, taking into account their work experience and recognising earlier educational results. All regular student rights and obligations are enforced for those continuing their education. This includes the right to study allowances. Other examples of validation of non-formal and informal learning for specific target groups are presented in the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2010 Update.[33]

(http://www.hm.ee/index.php?0511487)

- Young people with multiple problems, such as drug abuse or social and psychological problems, face particular difficulties when re-entering education and training. They are often hard to locate and engage and need different forms of motivation and support to continue learning. The Youthreach Programme in **Ireland** offers young people a combination of education and training and work experience. The two-year programme lays a strong emphasis on personal development, basic skills and ICT. Youth workshops to promote life skills, social empowerment and finding a personal educational and professional pathway (**FI**), voluntary youth projects including Voluntary Labour Corps (**PL**) and other forms of non-formal learning are reported as possible ways getting young people involved again. Counselling and targeted support are seen as especially crucial for these people (**ES**).

---

[33] See Thematic study: Validation and its target groups, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/projects/validation-of-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory-scope.aspx

Compensation measures are a last resort. Coming in the aftermath of drop out, they are not a reliable way of preventing young people from leaving the education system without sufficient qualifications and are always a response to an experience of failure. Compared to prevention and intervention measures, they are a less efficient way of overcoming the problem of early school leaving. Nevertheless, compensation measures are the only means of ensuring that drop out is reversible and not a life sentence, and so play an essential role in addressing ESL in Europe.

5.8. Need for comprehensive policies

The Council Recommendation on policies to reduce ESL underlines the need to develop and implement comprehensive policies, which are based on evidence, address all educational levels and involve stakeholders from other relevant policy areas. In recent years several countries have started to develop such policies (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, LU, NL NO**). However, while some are already quite advanced in implementing comprehensive policies, others are not and from a European perspective imbalances are visible.

Frequency of measures against ESL mentioned in National Reports[34]
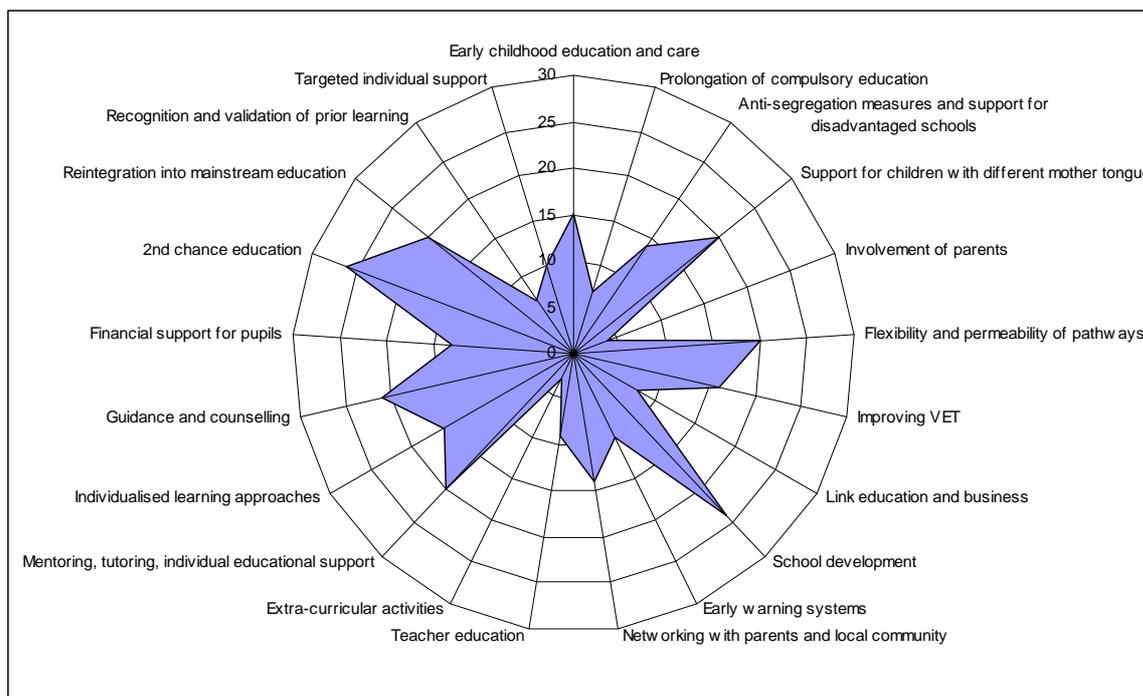
Based on the frequency with which measures are cited in the National Reports, the analysis shows **imbalances** with respect to the relative importance of prevention, intervention and compensation measures, the involvement of different sectors of education and training as well as non-educational players in policies to reduce ESL.

---

[34] The graphic presents the different measures described in the framework for comprehensive policies to reduce early school leaving, annexed to the Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving. It shows how often each type of measure was mentioned by countries in their National Reports.

- The reports point to a strong risk that policies **over-rely on a number of individual measures**, which are used too much and often inappropriately, such as second-chance education (= compensation), while **others are relatively neglected**, such as supporting teachers and schools in their efforts to reduce absenteeism and drop out (= prevention and intervention). They contain less frequent references to measures reflecting cross-sector approaches, **balancing the three dimensions of prevention, intervention, and compensation** according to the guidelines agreed at European level and adapted to the specific situations in the countries.

- Improving and widening access to **VET** is reported by several countries as an important measure to reduce ESL, although very often in the context of compensation for those who are struggling to learn or who have already dropped out. Thus, the **potential of VET** in the context of prevention and intervention measures needs to be better exploited. Similarly, there is a need to tackle **ESL in initial VET**, which is not addressed specifically in any of the National Reports.

- A limited number of countries highlight the involvement of **parents (CY, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT PL), teacher education (CY, DE, FI, NL, RO, SE** and **NO), early warning systems (AT**, **BE nl, ES, LT, NL, IS, NO TR)** or **extra curricular activities (CY, EE, IE)** in their national reports, despite evidence that these measures help prevent drop out and are highly cost effective. Moreover, the reports indicate that in most countries involvement of the **local community** and cooperation with **non-education actors** are underdeveloped. As mentioned above, only a few countries involve municipalities and their youth services systematically or cooperate with companies in organising job placements, for instance.

  A comparison of countries reporting on a wide range of measures to reduce early school leaving with those indicating less then 10 measures in their National Reports, demonstrates, despite the methodological limits of this comparison, the extra efforts made by the more active countries. Nearly all countries report s**econd chance education, support for low-achieving pupils** and **school development** measures. Other frequently cited measures are the provision of **extra educational support** (reflected in the graphic by the high level of mentoring and tutoring activities) and **support for children with a different mother tongue**. **VET** is also frequently cited, but as noted above usually in the context of compensation.

  Countries with a **broader approach** to tackling early school leaving also mention guidance and counselling, networking with parents and the local community, linking education and business, extra-curricular activities and teacher education.

  In most countries there is a focus on **general reforms** of education and training systems to improve performance and reduce drop-out (**AT, BE fr, CY, DE, EL, FR, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, SE, IS**). This is partly reflected in the high number of countries highlighting school development measures. Some of the reforms described include specific measures against ESL which are embedded into a system-level approach. In other countries, and depending on the overall situation within the education and training system, improving the educational offer is seen as a major contribution to reducing ESL. Effective monitoring will be necessary to verify whether the general reform set out in the National Report does actually help reduce early school leaving; this will lead to a better identification of success factors for reducing ESL within general reform programmes as well as better targeting of reforms.

5.9. Work at European level

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in most European countries there is a serious lack of data and information on ESL and monitoring is not used effectively to support policy development. This creates a major obstacle to further policy development and hinders the introduction of effectively targeted actions. There is a need for more exchange of practice and research to identify the main drop out triggers and the conditions under which these effects can be avoided.

In response to the invitation contained in the Council Recommendation of June 2011, the Commission will establish a **working group** to facilitate the identification and exchange of good policies and practices between countries using the open method of coordination, as well as experimentation with promising innovative approaches. It will also launch **comparative studies and research** in the field. The results of this work will feed into the work of the European Semester, and the next round of National Reports under the Education and Training 2020 process.

As the **implications of ESL for VET** were considered in the Council conclusions on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training of November 2010 and the subsequent Bruges Communiqué, the relevant follow-up work will also need to address specific VET aspects of early school leaving.

6.   TERTIARY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

FINDINGS

*- Policy to increase or maintain tertiary education attainment is frequently focused on greater **participation in higher education by under-represented groups**, both in countries with current levels of attainment which are comparatively high and in those with lower attainment rates. There is very little information available on improving the transition from vocational education and training (VET) to higher education or on increasing attainment levels in tertiary level VET. Measures to attract professional high school and vocational education graduates to higher education are not widespread.*

*- Many countries report specific measures to reduce **drop-out rates** and improve tertiary education **completion**. The most common measures are improved **guidance and counselling** and linking **financial support** or reductions to successful and timely completion of studies. A few countries refer to measures to help higher education drop-outs resume their studies, such as recognition of prior learning and work experience to help individuals **re-enter the system.***

*- Measures that facilitate access and completion **for the student population in general** may include 'free' HE (no tuition fees or tuition fees exemption) as well as universal student support systems and career guidance. Another tool is **direct financial support and incentives**. The two main types used are payments **to students** to reduce the individual financial burden or financial incentives **for HE institutions**. Students (or families) may also enjoy benefits in kind such as tax reductions, discounts for transport, accommodation, subsistence, sport, cultural activities or health insurance.*

*- To support specific groups, countries also apply **regulatory measures,** such as quantified targets for participation by specific student groups, or quotas for first-time applicants. Other regulatory provisions may include the obligation for institutions to offer flexible courses, such as short-cycle (vocational) programmes or part-time courses to facilitate participation by **older learners** already in the labour force. Introducing greater flexibility into education systems (in the form of alternative pathways between types and levels of education and training, for example) is generally viewed as critical for widening access to HE.*

*- The majority of countries report measures — most commonly financial support — to promote HE participation and attainment among **lower-income** groups and **disabled** people. Only a limited number of countries mention specific support measures for people from minority ethnic and migrant groups, or for older learners.*

*- **Guidance and counselling** services — in general or for specific groups of (prospective) students — are used to support individuals in making choices at the pre-admission stage and during HE. Many countries stress the importance of identifying as early as possible those **at risk of dropping out,**, even before they start HE; some countries mention specific measures to reduce the drop-out rate among those at risk. In addition, guiding students towards educational pathways leading to good employment opportunities and measures to support entry into the job market at the end of studies can sometimes increase the overall attractiveness of courses.*

Tertiary educational attainment (30-34 year olds)

	All 2000	All 2009	All 2010	Males 2010	Females 2010
EU 27	**22.4**	**32.3**	**33.6**	30.0	37.2
Belgium	35.2	42.0	44.4	39.0	50.0
Bulgaria	19.5	27.9	27.7	20.7	35.5
Czech Republic	13.7	17.5	20.4	18.6	22.3
Denmark	32.1	48.1	47.0	42.2	52.1
Germany	25.7	29.4	29.8	29.9i	29.7i
Estonia	30.8	35.9	40.0	32.2	47.7
Ireland	27.5	49.0	49.9	44.4	55.3
Greece	25.4	26.5	28.4	25.7	31.4
Spain	29.2	39.4	40.6	35.7	45.9
France	27.4	43.3	43.5	39.3	47.7
Italy	11.6	19.0	19.8	15.5	24.2
Cyprus	31.1	44.7	45.1	41.3	48.9
Latvia	18.6	30.1	32.3	23.4	41.4
Lithuania	42.6	40.6	43.8	36.3	51.2
Luxembourg	21.2	46.6p	46.1p	44.8p	47.4p
Hungary	14.8	23.9	25.7	21.0	30.7
Malta	7.4	21.1p	18.6p	14.6u	22.7p
Netherlands	26.5	40.5	41.4b	38.4b	44.4b
Austria	:	23.5	23.5	22.5	24.5
Poland	12.5	32.8	35.3	29.8	40.8
Portugal	11.3	21.1	23.5	17.7	29.4
Romania	8.9	16.8	18.1	16.7	19.6
Slovenia	18.5	31.6	34.8	26.4	44.0
Slovakia	10.6	17.6	22.1	18.2	26.2
Finland	40.3	45.9	45.7	37.7	54.0
Sweden	31.8	43.9p	45.8	39.8	52.1
UK	29.0	41.5	43.0	40.9	45.1
Croatia	16.2(02)	20.5u	22.6	19.0u	26.4u
Iceland	32.6	41.8	40.9	34.5	47.5
MK*	:	14.3	17.1	16.2	18.0
Turkey	:	14.7	15.5	17.3	13.6
Norway	37.3	47.0	47.3	39.7	55.2

Source: Eurostat (LFS), b = break in series, p = provisional u= unreliable,: = not available, (02) = 2002, *MK = former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Trends: In EU 27 the share of early school leavers (population 18-24) steadily declined from 17.6 % in 2000 to 14.4 % in 2009 and 14.1 % in 2010 (females: 12.2 %. males: 16.0 %).

Best EU performers: Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia

6.1. Policy context

The ET 2020 strategic framework introduced a new target for higher education attainment as one of the five key European benchmarks. Given the increasing demand for high-level skills in the European economy,[35] Member States agreed to make every

---

[35]   CEDEFOP (2010) Skills supply and demand in Europe: Medium-term forecast up to 2020.

effort to increase the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment to at least 40 % by 2020..

In June 2010, the Member States agreed to adopt the established ET 2020 benchmark on increasing higher education attainment,[36] along with the benchmark on reducing early school leaving, to form together the core education headline target within the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.[37] As part of the Europe 2020 process, Member States subsequently adopted their own national targets for higher education attainment.

It is not enough, however, just to increase graduate numbers. As stressed in ET 2020 and in the European Union's modernisation agenda for higher education, the quality of higher education is of utmost importance. In order to contribute to the key objectives of Europe 2020, good quality higher education should nurture talent and be attuned to the needs of the labour market. It should promote excellence through strong links to research and innovation and foster development at national and regional levels. It should be backed up by efficient governance structures and adequate funding, maximising the benefits to be derived from learning mobility and cross-border cooperation.

Nevertheless, ensuring that a sufficient number of people enter higher education in the first place is a crucial pre-requisite for a successful mass higher education system. Widening the opportunities to advance to the highest levels of education and training is also an important part of the ET 2020 equity agenda. Moreover, one of the most important characteristics of a modern, effective, high-quality higher education system is that as high a proportion as possible of those entering the system leave with high-quality, valuable qualifications.

Hence, in this round of ET 2020 reporting, countries were asked, firstly, to outline any measures taken to increase tertiary education attainment since 2009 and, secondly, to report on any measures designed to increase completion rates and reduce drop out.

This chapter presents an overview of the responses provided by countries in their National Reports. In the first place it describes national efforts to increase tertiary education attainment in context, highlighting current attainment rates and national attainment targets. It then examines the different types of measure that countries report they are implementing to boost participation and attainment in general, before reviewing specific measures taken to increase attainment among currently under-represented groups. The last part of the chapter looks at measures which address a specific aspect of tertiary education attainment policy: action to improve completion rates.

---

[36] The definition used for the ET 2020 benchmark, where tertiary education is restricted to ISCED levels 5 and 6, was slightly amended to include education 'equivalent' to tertiary education, allowing advanced vocational courses formally categorised as post-secondary, non-tertiary (ISCED 4) to be included within the national targets.

[37] COM(2010) 2020 final of 3 March 2010.

6.2. Quantitative targets for increasing tertiary education attainment

The quantitative target for higher education attainment, first formulated as part of ET 2020 and subsequently taken up as part of Europe 2020, aims to raise the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education courses (or equivalent) from the current (2010) level of 33.6 %[38]to at least 40 % by 2020. As part of their National Reform Programmes, all Member States except the **Netherlands** and the **UK** have established national targets, which should help to achieve the overall European-level target.

The figure below shows current levels of tertiary education attainment in the countries participating in ET 2020, as well as the Europe 2020 national targets established by 25 Member States of the European Union.[39] Reaching the 25 national targets alone will not guarantee that Europe as a whole meets the 40% target, although current trends in higher education participation suggest the headline target is likely to be met[40].

The figure below shows current levels of tertiary education attainment in the countries participating in ET 2020, as well as the Europe 2020 national targets established by 25 European Union Member States.

Tertiary education attainment: 2010 levels and national targets[41]

- *Performance in 2010 (%)*

- *National target for 2020 (%)*
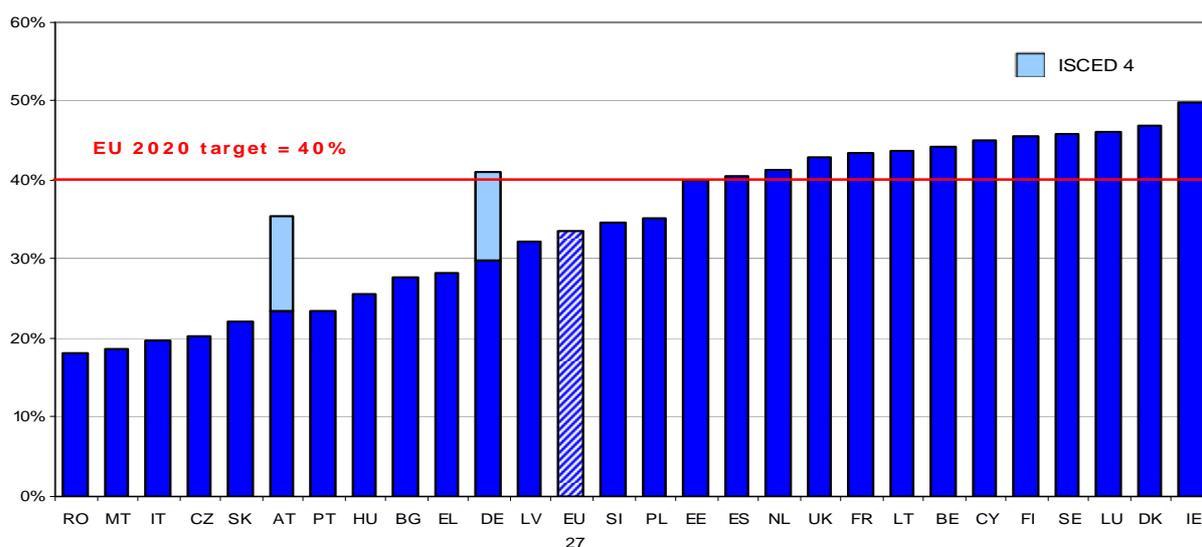
RO	MT	IT	CZ	SK	AT	PT	HU	BG	EL	DE	LV	EU	SI	PL	EE	ES	NL	UK	FR	LT	BE	CY	FI	SE	LU	DK	IE
26	33	26 27	32	40	38	40	30	36	32	42	34 36	40	40	45	40	44	45	:	50	40	47	46	42	40 45	40	40	60

---

[38]   Source: Eurostat .

[39]   Annual Growth Survey, Annex 1 — Progress report on Europe 2020, COM(2011) 11-A1/2, Annex 1.

[40] Not including the UK. If the UK were included, the headline target figure would be reached.

[41]   Source for 2010 data: Eurostat (LFS). ISCED levels 5 – 6. For DE, the target also includes ISCED 4, for AT ISCED 4A.

Figure 1 shows that attainment levels among 30-34 year olds vary considerably across the European Union. In all, 13 European Union Member States, as well as **Iceland** and **Norway**, already have attainment levels equal to or above the European 40 % benchmark. Seven European Union Member States (**RO, MT, IT, CZ, SK, AT, PT**), as well as Croatia and Turkey, have attainment rates of under 25 %.

Nine Member States (**BE, CY, DE, ES, FI, FR, IE, PL, SE**) have set national targets at levels above the 40 % European target and seven (**DK, LU, LT, EE, SI, PT, SK**) at the level of the European target. Nine Member States (**AT, BG, CZ, EL, HU, IT, LV, MT, RO**) have targets below 40 %.[42] The Netherlands and the UK have not set national targets. On the basis of the 2010 figures, six Member States (**DK, EE, FI, LT, LU, SE**) have already reached their national targets.

In the latest ET 2020 National Reports, a limited number of countries refer to other national quantitative objectives or targets for tertiary education attainment, which are not always the same as the Europe 2020 targets in terms of scope and/or coverage.

- **Austria** and **Germany** have established national targets based on a slightly wider definition of attainment than that used by other Member States. These include post-secondary, non-tertiary qualifications which provide a broadly similar level of qualification to tertiary degrees, namely ISCED level 4a for Austria and ISCED level 4 for Germany. The study programmes covered by this definition are typically advanced vocational qualifications.

- **France** has introduced a series of policy objectives to increase the number of graduates at bachelor level, formulated in an action plan covering the period 2008-2012.[43] This action plan focuses on completion of higher education and sets the target whereby 50 % of 17-33 year-olds should have a higher education qualification, including short cycle qualifications, by the end of 2012.

- In **Slovenia**, the Resolution on the National Programme for Higher Education 2011-2020 aims to increase participation in higher education to 75 % of 19-24 year- olds by 2020.

- In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, the 'Flanders Learning Society' (the education and training component of the wider 'Flanders in Action' plan) has set the objective of

---

[42] Austria and Germany have included post-secondary, non-tertiary, vocationally-oriented courses (ISCED 4) within the scope of their national targets. In Austria, in 2010, the level of ISCED 4 attainment among 30-34 year olds was 13.5 %, meaning the combined tertiary education and ISCED 4 attainment rate stood at 37 %. In Germany in 2010, ISCED 4 attainment among the same age group stood at 11.6 %, resulting in a combined tertiary and 'equivalent' attainment level of 41.4 % (data from Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey).

[43] *Plan pluriannuel pour la réussite en licence 2008-2012*.

increasing the rate of first-time applicants ("first generation students") to higher education[44] to 60 % of all applicants by 2020.

Some countries report general objectives for increasing tertiary education attainment as such, referring to the need for more graduates in the labour market or expected falls in the typical student age cohort in the years to come (**EL, FR, TR**). The stated objective in these cases is to recruit more students overall, with the recruitment of students from currently under-represented groups representing one opportunity to increase the student population.

Other countries (**BE fr, BE nl, DE, LT, PL, PT, RO, SI, UK, NO**) report that they focus first and foremost on *diversifying* the student population as a way of increasing overall levels of attainment. These countries refer principally to measures they are planning or have already implemented to recruit students from under-represented groups. This corresponds closely to the objective of the 'social dimension' of higher education as defined by governments participating in the European Higher Education Area.[45]

Despite these differences in the explicit emphasis placed on recruitment from under-represented groups in national strategies for tertiary education attainment, a majority of countries indicate that they expect increases in student/graduate numbers to go hand in hand with a diversification of the backgrounds from which students are recruited.

6.3. Measures to increase tertiary education attainment

Turning from objectives to practical measures, the latest ET 2020 National Reports highlight a range of policy initiatives which have been developed to promote tertiary education attainment. The most frequently reported types can be broadly categorised as follows:

1. Direct financial support and incentives.[46] Countries highlight two main types of direct financial instrument used to support participation and attainment: payments to students (mainly grants and subsidised loans), designed to reduce the individual financial burden of studying; and financial incentives to higher education institutions (to support recruitment from under-represented groups, for instance). Students (or their parents) may also benefit from tax reductions, discounts on transport, accommodation, subsistence, sport or cultural activities or health insurance, all of which may be viewed as 'benefits in kind' designed to reduce the financial burden of studying.

2. Targets, quotas and other regulatory measures. Measures related to the regulatory framework for higher education include quantified targets for participation by specific student population groups, or, as in the case of Finland, quotas for the number of first-time applicants. Governments may stipulate a minimum

---

[44] In their National Reports, both the Flemish and French Communities in Belgium refer to students who enter higher education for the first time as 'first generation' students.

[45] See the London Communiqué: 'We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations'.

[46]   See Section on measures to improve completion.

proportion of students from specific social groups (migrants, female students, disabled students, language minority, etc.) in higher education programmes or, as in the case of Hungary, for example, arrange for preferential treatment in the admissions scheme. Other regulatory provisions include the obligation for institutions to offer flexible courses (**BE nl, DE, EL, ES, IS, LT, LU, LV, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE**), such as short-cycle programmes and part-time courses to cater for older learners already in the labour force (**BE nl, FI, FR, LU, MT, PL, SE**). The introduction of greater flexibility into education systems, including alternative 'pathways' between types and levels of education and training, is generally viewed as a crucial element in widening access to higher education. [47]

3. Guidance and counselling.[48] Governments and education institutions may establish guidance, counselling and support services for (prospective) students — in general or for specific target groups — in order to facilitate entry and completion of higher education. National Reports highlight measures to support individuals in making choices at pre-admission stage and during their studies. In addition, measures to support entry into the job market at the end of studies are sometime highlighted as a way of increasing the overall attractiveness of courses.

4. Preparatory courses. A few countries refer to courses to prepare entry to higher education, such as methodological support (**AT, BE fr, LU**) and language provision for foreign students or students from immigrant backgrounds.

5. Administrative streamlining. **Bulgaria** highlights administrative simplification measures to reduce the cumbersome registration process.

    Some financial measures are conditional on recipients achieving a certain level of performance. Such financial incentives to support institutions in widening access to under-represented groups could be awarded only if institutions achieve the agreed target in terms of those groups' participation rate (**BE fr BE nl, PL, RO, SI, SE**).

    Although countries were asked to respond separately about measures aimed at increasing entry and those aimed at increasing completion rates, there is often no clear-cut distinction and many countries highlight measures with effects on both entry and completion. For example, financial support for students from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds may make it easier for such individuals to enter higher education in the first place and also increase their chances of completing their studies, given that financial considerations will have less of an impact.

    Although many of the measures designed to increase attainment do target specific, under-represented groups, countries also highlighted measures that make access and completion easier for the student population in general. These include the provision of 'free' higher education (absence of fees) and universal student support systems, as well as career guidance.

---

[47]   See, for example, OECD (2008) *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society* or Eurydice (2011) *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Funding and the Social Dimension.*

[48]   See Section on measures to improve completion .

Pointing students towards educational pathways leading to good employment opportunities is seen as a measure to make higher education a more attractive option. Some countries (**ES, FI, FR, MT, PL, PT, RO, IS, NO**) have adopted initiatives to facilitate entry into the labour market (including finding internships). This highlights and reinforces the link between participation in higher education and employment and contributes to the employability of graduates. For example : **Iceland** and **Norway** promote periods of practical work experience in degree programmes and mobility as ways of facilitating entry to the job market.

- **Romania** offers financial support to companies which recruit young graduates and supports their training, including participation in further higher education courses.

Attuning higher education to labour market needs in Romania

In recent years, higher education in Romania has been characterised by both rapid growth and wide-ranging reform, with a new Education Bill adopted in 2011. As part of the wider reform process, the Romanian authorities highlight particular efforts to increase the relevance of higher education provision to labour market needs. Measures include improving intelligence on graduate employment outcomes, through a national monitoring study, changes to course design and incentives for companies. Work placements or internships have been, or will be, made a compulsory part of many bachelor courses; while Master programmes are being reorganised to distinguish better between research-focused programmes and more vocationally oriented courses of study. A project has also been established offering financial support to companies providing training opportunities to students during their studies.

The different types of measure outlined above are generally launched by public authorities at national, regional or local level and draw primarily on public funding. Generally speaking, the funds are additional to the usual higher-education funding streams in place in the country. However, a few countries specified that they also use European Structural Funds (in particular the European Social Fund) to support participation and completion in higher education (**AT, BG, EE, FI, LT, RO, HR**). [49]

---

[49] Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and European Social Fund.

> **Using Structural Funds to support higher education students in Bulgaria**
>
> In Bulgaria, the Human Resources Development Operational Programme of the European Social Fund, has been used to fund the "Student Scholarships and Awards" project[50], which provides scholarships for high-achieving students, including and specific awards for success in priority disciplines, such as the natural sciences, bio-technology or subjects related to bio-diversity and climate change. The objective of the project is to complement the mainstream student support system in Bulgaria to support equal access to higher education and create specific incentives for students to achieve good results – thus combining a focus on both equity and excellence.

6.4. Measures aimed at increasing the participation rates of under-represented groups

Increasing participation by groups currently under-represented in the student population is highlighted as a policy priority by all countries in accordance with the principles of lifelong learning (see chapter on lifelong learning). Nevertheless, the emphasis on under-represented groups within wider strategies to increase student numbers varies between countries. Furthermore, different countries focus their policies on different population groups.

A few countries report measures targeting under-represented groups in general (as opposed to specific population groups) as part of a wide-ranging approach to diversifying the student population.

> **Targeting under-represented groups in Slovenia**
>
> As part of the Slovenian National Higher Education Programme for 2011-2020, the national authorities are analysing the current structure of the student population in order to gain a better understanding of the social groups currently under-represented in the Slovenian higher education system. On this basis, an indicative budget of EUR 1.5 million per year has been earmarked within the "development pillar" of the higher education budget to fund selected projects submitted by higher education institutions to improve participation of key target groups. Activities funded are likely to include improved facilities for those with special needs, support centres for students and training and support for staff in dealing with a more diverse student population.

A few countries mention measures targeting international students (**NO, PL, SE**) as one possible way of increasing attainment among the population of those aged 30-34, provided that students remain in their country of study.

---

[50] http://eurostipendii.mon.bg/

> **Institutional Access Agreements (United Kingdom — England)**
>
> Along with the introduction of variable tuition fees in England in the 2006-07 academic year, the UK Government established the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to 'promote and safeguard fair access to higher education for lower income and other under-represented groups'.[51] It does so by approving and monitoring so-called access agreements, in which institutions determine how they will promote access (in particular for low-income groups) through bursaries, other financial support and outreach work. As part of the recent reform of tuition fees and student support, institutions wishing to charge undergraduate tuition fees above the basic level (currently £1310 and £6000 from 2012) — in practice the majority of institutions — must submit and comply with the conditions of an access agreement. Institutions which break their access agreements can be fined or have the right to charge higher fees withdrawn.

Other countries report more explicitly targeted approaches, with measures focused on specific population groups. Almost all countries report measures targeting students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and students with disabilities. Fewer countries provide information on measures focused on students from migrant backgrounds or ethnic minorities. Some countries also mentioned measures to facilitate the participation of students who may come up against additional barriers to entering higher education because of their family situation, their age or their professional situation. The following sections review in more detail the types of action reported.

6.4.1.   Support for low income groups

The majority of countries report an explicit aim of ensuring students can participate in tertiary education and complete their studies, irrespective of their socio-economic background (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, NO, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK, IS, TR**). In most cases policy measures implemented in this area aim to ease the financial burden imposed on families by additional years of education.

- In 2010, **Belgium (French Community)** extended tuition fee exemption (partial or total) to a larger number of disadvantaged students. Institutions which suffer a loss of revenue as a result of this measure receive financial compensation.

- **Poland** has raised the income threshold below which students can apply for social grants and benefits.

- **Cyprus** has created a specific 'student financial support package' based on socio-economic criteria. It covers accommodation, university text books, students' food allowance and computer purchase. The financial support applies to European undergraduates and is provided on the basis of socio-economic criteria.

- Low-income groups are a primary target group of the new student loan facilities offered in **Romania** to students who agree to undertake their professional activity in a rural or disadvantaged area for at least five years.

---

[51]   See http://www.offa.org.uk

However, research shows that low levels of participation in higher education among individuals from disadvantaged families are not solely related to the affordability of studies.[52] Issues such as the low aspirations of students from certain communities and the lack of role models negatively influence young people's entry to higher education. Such issues need to be addressed from an early age.

"Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning" in Norway

In a 2007 White Paper[53], the Norwegian government set out a new strategy to allow the education system to make a greater contribution to social equality. Recognising that those from low income backgrounds and those with parents with low educational attainment tend to be under-represented at the higher levels of the education and training system, the Government's strategy pinpoints early intervention – from early childhood education – as key to ensuring children become motivated to learn and access the opportunities to gain knowledge and skills open to them. Measures, focused on pre-school and school levels, include access to early years care, teacher training; initiatives to raise teachers' expectations of pupils in school and improved guidance and counselling. This system-wide approach is seen as key to achieving greater equity in access to higher education.

In **France**, in order to diversify the population attending the elite *grandes écoles*, the government has established a target whereby at least 30 % of students attending these institutions should come from lower-income backgrounds and has launched specific preparatory courses targeting potential students from these groups. In addition, France has widened eligibility for student grants, increased their level, and extended their duration from nine to ten months. **Hungary** is operating a peer mentoring programme for first-year students from disadvantaged families in order to facilitate their integration into student life and their respective higher education institutions, thereby reducing their chances of dropping out.

6.4.2.   Support for students with disabilities

Many countries also report on measures that aim to facilitate access to students with disabilities or chronic illnesses (**AT, BE nl, BG, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, IE, HU, IT, LV, LT, MT, NO, PL, SE, SK, TR**). At a strategic level, all institutions in **Norway** are required to have an action plan to facilitate participation by disabled students. **Poland** has provided public funding for measures to provide disabled students with conditions that allow their 'full participation in the educational process and scientific studies', as well as specific social grants for disabled doctoral students.

Promoting flexibility accessibility in Estonia

The ESF-supported BeSt project has brought together 16 Estonian higher education institutions to develop and implement e-learning tools with the specific aim of making higher education programmes more accessible, in particular for disabled

---

[52]   See, for example, Mullen F (2010) *Barriers to Widening Access to Higher Education*, Report to the Scottish Parliament, 19 February 2010.

[53]   Report No. 16 (2006-2007) to the Storting "Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning"

people and those from remote regions. ESF resources have also been used to fund scholarships or assistance for those with special needs. Assistance includes ongoing services, such a sign-language interpreters, transport support for those with mobility difficulties or help with one-off purchases of services, such as specialist IT equipment.

In **Bulgaria**, not-for-profit organisations provide additional counselling and guidance to students with impaired vision or hearing. In **Slovakia**, higher education institutions must create adequate conditions for students with disabilities, allowing for individual study plans or waiving those students' tuition fees where the duration of studies is extended.

6.4.3. *Support for students with migrant status and/or ethnic, religious and language minorities*

A few countries (**BE nl, EE, IS, FI, NO**) report specifically on measures targeting migrant students or students from ethnic and language minorities. For example, **Finland** aims to raise the ratio of students with immigrant backgrounds to equal their ratio in the general population by 2015. A few countries report having adopted measures related to specific professional disciplines:

- In **Denmark** and **Norway**, campaigns to recruit more students into teacher training programmes specifically target the migrant population, in order to make sure that the future teacher population reflects the future pupil population. Danish institutions are also working towards increasing the number of students from ethnic minorities studying music. Norway also offers Norwegian language courses to migrant students.

- In **Bulgaria**, a scholarship programme for medical students of Roma origin aims to promote this group's inclusion in higher education. Integrating Roma medical students is also expected to help improve health services in the Roma community and to overcome discrimination in the health care system.

- In **Greece**, members of the Muslim minority of the western region of Thrace have been allocated additional places on higher education courses.

6.4.4. *Support for older learners and alternative pathways*

In the light of the increasing demand for high-level qualifications, an important element in strategies to raise overall levels of tertiary attainment is helping those who are already part of the labour force to enter or re-enter higher education. This often requires efforts to make entry routes into higher education more flexible, by promoting access for graduates of vocational education and training, for instance, and taking into account skills acquired outside formal education and training (recognition of prior learning — RPL).

A number of countries (**AT, DE, FI, LT, MT, NO, PL, PT, SI**) have introduced measures to promote access and participation in higher education for older learners. In **Slovenia**, for instance, the aim is for students over 29 years old to represent one fifth of all students in higher education by 2020, while **Malta** has removed the age limit (30 years old) for receiving the monthly Student Maintenance Grant.

Other countries (**DE, FI, LT, MT, NO, PL, SI**) target specific support measures for first-time applicants to higher education. By definition, this includes those who did not complete higher education as part of their initial education. The measures seek to provide such individuals with additional support to enable them to complete tertiary education successfully and (re-) enter the labour market. Some countries (**DE, FI, LT, MT, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI**) highlight measures to increase the offer of flexible courses for part-time workers as a way of facilitating their entry (or re-entry) into the system.

Attracting students with short-cycle courses in Belgium

In both the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium short-cycle vocational higher education programmes[54] are particularly targeted at students who do not have the time (part or full time workers) or the capacities to complete a Bachelor cycle in the typical amount of time. These programmes give such individuals the opportunity to participate in higher education and prepare their entry into the labour market, but also to progress towards the Bachelor level at their own speed.

In **Belgium (Flemish and French Communities)**, for example, short-cycle vocational higher-education programmes[55] are targeted specifically at students who, as part-time or full-time workers, do not have the time or the capacity to complete a Bachelor's course in the usual amount of time. These programmes give such individuals the opportunity to participate in higher education and prepare their entry into the labour market, but also to progress towards Bachelor level at their own speed. There is support for elearning/blended learning, which facilitates access for non-traditional learners.

Similarly, **Malta** and **Portugal** offer short-cycle higher-education programmes for those who do not wish, or do not have the capacity, to complete a full Bachelor's course.

A few countries (**DE, FR, LU, TR**) refer to the introduction of measures to attract professional high-school and vocational-education graduates to higher education.

Individuals who have followed this type of training pathway do not traditionally obtain qualifications which allow them to enter higher education. Creating alternative access routes, through foundation courses or similar programmes, is crucial to overcoming this type of barrier. Tests in Germany have shown that additional financial support can also be used to encourage people with a vocational background and professional experience to pursue higher education..

Aufstiegsstipendien / Advancement Grant in Germany

Germany reports on a range of measures which have been introduced to improve the permeability of the education system and, in particular, to make it easier for individuals to access higher education if they have followed vocational training pathways or are already working. As part of its broader *Qualifizierungsinitiative*

---

54   HBO5: short-cycle programmes ranging from 90 to 120 ECTS credits

55   HBO5: short-cycle programmes ranging from 90 to 120 ECTS credits.

(qualification initiative), the German government has introduced the *Aufstiegsstipendien* (advancement grant) to provide financial support to particularly motivated and talented individuals with professional experience who wish to pursue a higher education qualification.[56] Full-time students receive EUR 670 per month, with additional allowances for study materials and for students with children. Since its launch in 2008, the grant programme has funded over 3000 individuals.

Ireland also reports on a set of measures to increase the number of mature students, by setting up higher education access/foundation courses to facilitate this target group's entry into higher education. This measure is also underpinned by measures to facilitate the recognition of prior learning.

A number of countries (**DE, FI, LT, MT, PL, PT, SI, NO**) also note measures to help higher-education drop outs resume their studies. **Malta** also reported efforts in terms of recognition of prior learning and work experience, in order to make it easier for people to re-enter the system. **Estonia** has created opportunities for individuals who have interrupted their studies to enter the labour market, and who would like to re-enter higher education. A majority of these students were enrolled in mathematics, sciences and technology (MST),[57] which are priority disciplines for Estonia.

6.4.5. Support for other specific groups

A limited number of the measures presented in national reports aim at balancing gender representation in higher education, or more precisely in particular disciplines. **Denmark** has launched promotion campaigns to recruit more male students to teacher training and more female students to some music studies. **Norway** has introduced gender quotas in learning (MST programmes and pre-school teacher training), as well as on institutional boards. In **Italy**, the under-representation of female students in some subjects has been addressed through national campaigns in universities and upper secondary schools, focusing on improving the disciplinary skills and tackling the psychological factors that influence young women's choices regarding higher education.

A few countries (**EE, IS, TR**) highlight specific measures to facilitate access to higher education for students from isolated geographical areas. In **Estonia** the e-Learning methods and tools highlighted above are also designed to make it easier for students living in rural areas to participate. In **Iceland**, the government supports a collaborative network among institutions to maintain a strong and varied higher-education provision in all parts of the country. The use of distance education is also promoted, with a view to offering a variety of educational opportunities nationwide.

In a similar vein, a few countries (**BG, EL, ES**) adopted measures aimed at students with disadvantaged family situations, such as those with children or individuals raised in children's homes (**BG**). In **Spain**, an action plan for students from large families provides grants, tuition fee exemptions and support services for these

---

[56] http://www.sbb-stipendien.de/aufstiegsstipendium.html.

[57] Mathematics, sciences and technology.

students, as well as financial measures to compensate for institutions' loss of revenue as a result of these exemptions.

6.5. Measures to improve completion

Countries also reported on measures to increase completion rates, that is the share of higher-education entrants who graduate. While for the majority of countries widening access is a way of increasing attainment, a minority of countries (**AT, IT, LU, NL, SE**) emphasise that greater openness may have a negative impact on completion rates. This may be because students make inappropriate study decisions or because students are not adequately prepared for the demands of a higher-education programme. The distinction between measures aimed at increasing entry rates and those aimed at increasing completion rates is not always clear. The measures described below were specifically introduced with the objective of bringing drop-out rates down and thus increasing completion rates.

- Many countries stress the importance of identifying those at risk of dropping out as early as possible, even before they start higher education; some countries (**FR, LU, NL, SE**) report specific measures to reduce drop out among those at risk. Measures aimed at **early identification** of those at risk of drop out include the following.

  - **France** and **Luxembourg** have adopted pre-entry measures in order to prepare secondary school pupils for higher education. These measures include targeted guidance to support their study choices.

  - **The Netherlands** have also piloted interviews with prospective students to guide their study choices, thus bringing them to learning pathways where they have the greatest chances of success.

- Other countries have adopted a selective approach to admission.

  - **Sweden** has combined early identification with selection, making the entry requirements to the first cycle harder, in order to ensure that all students have the required level on entry, thus maximising their chances of completing the course.

  - **The French Community of Belgium** has introduced new prerequisites regarding the level of knowledge of the language of instruction.

  - In **Hungary**, the performance level required for admission to higher education (an aggregate of academic results and certain additional achievements, including certified knowledge of foreign languages and professional qualifications) has been increased gradually since 2009 in order to reinforce the quality requirements for admission to higher education.

  - In **Italy**, universities are asked to assess the level of competences required to enrol in a first or second cycle programme and to provide additional courses to meet gaps in students' knowledge..

  - In a few countries (**FR, LU, NL, SE**), students also benefit from a new kind of guidance, counselling, extra tutoring and other services to help them complete their studies successfully.

- In **Estonia**, a beginner-student course has been designed to help students adapt to higher education studies and improve their learning skills.

- The **Netherlands** propose intensive supervision and syllabus design to ensure that students are motivated, challenged and committed.

- **Finland** highlights study guidance and preparation for working life, future-oriented services, information services relating to studies and supervision, study skills and communality, traineeship, business partnerships, and alumni activities.

- In **Hungary**, tertiary institutions must, by law, provide academic, health/mental hygiene and career consulting for students.

- In a few countries, institutions can benefit from targeted financial measures to support improvement in completion rates.

  - In **Norway**, there is a financial incentive for institutions to improve student completion rates as budget allocations take into account the number of successfully completed 60 ECTS units, the average number of ECTS per student and the number of credits obtained in relation to the targets set in students' individual education plans.

  - **Iceland** has introduced a system whereby institutions receive funding depending not only on the number of students who sit the exams, but also on the number of students who graduate.

  - **Spain** has set up a specific grant system for institutions to develop tutoring; counselling and labour integration; and student service programmes to improve completion rates.

- Some countries report that they link financial support for students to specific requirements for beneficiaries, designed to encourage students to finish their studies successfully and on time. These incentives may depend on reaching a threshold mark in the final examination, graduation within a reasonable time or regular attendance at courses (FR, NL).

  - In **Croatia**, students receive free higher education in their first year of study, but a financial contribution to the following years may be required, depending on their academic results and other criteria defined by each institution.

  - In **Norway,** loans are converted into grants only if students complete their studies on time.

  - **Lithuania** reimburses part of the study costs to the best performing students.

  - In **Slovenia**, doctoral students who receive funding but do not complete their studies successfully may have to return the funds received.

  - In the **Netherlands**, students who take more than one extra year to complete their studies are charged €3 000 on top of the normal tuition fee.

> **Individual Learning Accounts (Belgium — Flemish Community)**

Since 2008, both in Flanders and in Dutch-speaking higher education in Brussels, all students are allocated a learning account of 140 credits — equivalent to ECTS credits — which they use to compose their programme of study. At the beginning of the academic year, the number of credits for which the student has registered (60 credits for a full year) is subtracted from their learning account and they then 'earn back' the credits they pass, and lose those they fail. The objective is to encourage both students and institutions to focus on appropriate selection and successful completion of study programmes. Both students and institutions are thus given more responsibility for their own performance. The system is still flexible to the extent that students may change study tracks after failing in their initial choice, but it provides clearer incentives to succeed than the previous system of free access. Institutions can refuse to register students with depleted learning accounts or charge them a higher registration fee.

6.6. Work at European level

Policy work to support increasing tertiary attainment will be carried forward on the basis of the Commission Communication on the modernisation of Europe's higher education system adopted in September 2011 and the subsequent Council conclusions of November 2011.[58]

Already during the first ET 2020 work cycle much of the work carried out on lifelong learning — in particular on lifelong guidance, the validation of informal and non formal learning, qualification frameworks or adult learning — was relevant to the challenge of strengthening tertiary participation and attainment. Activities specifically focusing on higher education included: a peer learning activity on higher education systems to support lifelong learning (Malta, October 2010); a Bologna experts training seminar on the modernisation of curricula and student centred learning (Oslo, June 2011); and a conference on EQF and the Qualification Frameworks of the European Higher Education Area as tools for lifelong learning (Dublin, April 2010). Moreover, the work carried out in the framework of University-business cooperation prompted discussions on how to improve participation and attainment levels in higher education, in particular by making learning pathways more flexible. Increasing permeability and access from VET to higher education (and vice versa) is one of the main objectives of the Bruges Communiqué adopted in December 2010.Finally, work on the social dimension of education and training has been relevant to the issues of access, participation and completion rates in tertiary education. In May 2010, the Spanish Presidency hosted a conference on the social dimension of higher education. A training seminar for national teams of Bologna experts was held in Cyprus in November 2010 on the social dimension in higher education. Eurydice has also recently produced a key data publication on the social dimension of higher education, focusing on funding, student contribution and support.[59]

---

[58] COM(2011) 567 final

[59] *Eurydice (2011) Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe : Funding and the Social Dimension*

7.   LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

FINDINGS

- *Progress towards the establishment and **implementation of lifelong learning (LLL) strategies continues to lag behind.** Only a few countries have a **coherent and comprehensive strategy** underpinning the development and implementation of lifelong learning across sectors.*

- ***Segmented and sector-centric action** still seems the predominant model of policy making in most national and regional administrations. Often, LLL strategies focus on the skills development of the current work force rather than on structural reform aimed at sustainably equipping the entire population with competences and opportunities for self-directed learning throughout life.*

- *Nevertheless, **in the majority of countries the LLL approach is now recognised across the framework that governs education and training.** There is also an increasing awareness of the need to cooperate with the labour market and social policies, and many countries are pursuing reforms in areas that are important building blocks for LLL, including early childhood education and care, reduction of early school leaving, more flexible learning pathways and implementation of European-level agreed LLL tools such as EQF/NQF, ECVET and EQAVET.*

*However, **declining rates of adult participation in LLL** indicate that so far the impact of such policies on individuals is limited. LLL opportunities are not yet sufficiently adapted to the needs of specific target groups, often because learning providers lack the incentives to do so. Moreover, there is little evidence that already established flexible pathways are sufficiently promoted to potential 'clients'. Although an important part of LLL takes place outside the formal education and training system (lifewide), it would seem that the great opportunities the work place and civil society provide for learning are not sufficiently valued or stimulated.*

*Regarding **more flexible pathways,** the development of **National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)** is progressing, but some countries restrict the higher levels to qualifications awarded by HE institutions or apply parallel strands for academic and vocational qualifications, which may limit flexibility of learning pathways and progression. Moreover, **coordinated lifelong guidance** provision seems to be of growing importance in all countries, many of which are working on improving the **validation of non formal and informal learning**, although at very different stages of development. Finally, some countries mention reforms that aim to **remove barriers at the institutional level**, in particular by opening up higher education institutions and adapting their learning offers to the needs of under-represented groups.*

*A number of countries have identified raising the **attractiveness of VET** as an important priority of their LLL policy, including. initiatives to stimulate the provision of apprenticeship places. Many countries underline the importance of better targeting **continuing training for adults**, in particular for the low-skilled, the unemployed, older workers and migrants. Also, **quality assurance** in Education and Training is considered to be an important element of LLL policy in some countries.*

Making lifelong learning a reality is a key priority under the Strategic Framework ET2020. This has been re-emphasised by the Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiatives, notably the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, which sets out four principles that should underpin the implementation of comprehensive lifelong learning policies: shared responsibility and partnership, effective financing mechanisms, flexible pathways, and quality initial and targeted continuing training.

The European Union'sconcept of lifelong learning embraces **all learning activity undertaken throughout life**. It aims to improve knowledge, skills/competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons and has a twofold societal target: **employability** and **social inclusion**. Consequently, all areas of learning activities are covered by the European Union's 's coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks.[60] It may be adapted in the light of ET2020.

Lifelong learning (LLL) is seen as a continuous process requiring strong early childhood education and quality initial education and training as the basis for all later learning in adulthood. While post-initial education and training needs an increasing amount of attention, it is not enough to focus only on this level if lifelong learning participation is to be effectively enhanced. LLL systems should provide people with flexible learning opportunities throughout their lifetime, interlinking learning in formal settings with skills and competences acquired at the workplace and in civil society (i.e. 'lifewide' learning).

Since European Union Member States undertook a decade ago to develop a coherent and comprehensive approach to lifelong learning,[61] progress has been made towards this objective as documented in the Joint Reports of 2006, 2008 and 2010. In particular, the development and implementation of specific LLL instruments, such as national qualifications frameworks linked to the European Qualifications Framework, validation of non-formal and informal learning, as well as transversal lifelong guidance policies, have increasingly been the focus of attention at national level.

7.1. Mixed progress towards LLL strategies

Member States agreed[62] to promote LLL by developing coherent and comprehensive[63] lifelong learning strategies (LLLS), conducive to priority setting, cross-sector policy coordination and the sharing of responsibility for LLL provision among the relevant public and private stakeholders. However, despite their long-standing commitment, most countries have not yet achieved this objective.

Today, only in a small number of countries (**AT, CY, DK, SI, UK SC**) **can LLL strategies** be considered to be **coherent and comprehensive,** in that they identify

---

[60] Council conclusions of 25 May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training (2007/C311/10).

[61] European Council of June 2000 and Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning (OJ C 163/1, 9.7.2002).

[62] See COM(2001) 678 final.

[63] OJ C 163/1, 9.7.2002 and 2004 Joint Progress Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2020 work programme.

long-term priorities for lifelong learning development across sectors, concrete implementation measures and performance targets, as well as cooperation and monitoring arrangements.

Explicit LLL strategies have also been developed in other countries, but these focus primarily on continuing VET and adult learning (BG, BE nl, EL, LV, LT, PT, SK, NL).

Finally, some countries with a strong track record in all relevant LLL areas state that, since their whole education system is traditionally constructed and developed around the LLL concept, there are no plans for developing an explicit strategy (FI, IS, NO, SE).

What is clearly positive, however, compared to the 2009 analysis, is that a greater number of countries are now developing a LLL strategy (BE fr, ES, LU, MT, RO, PL). Other countries report that their current LLL strategy is being renewed (EE), or that renewal is under consideration (BE nl, SK, HR).

After a decade of LLL strategy debate the importance of the LLL approach seems to be widely acknowledged among policy makers and stakeholders. Today, in the majority of countries, the LLL concept is part and parcel of the framework that governs the education and training sector (AT, BE fr, BE nl, CY, DE, EE, FI, FR, IE, IS LU, NL, NO, PT, SE, UK). Moreover, national reports indicate that in most countries increasing attention is being given to building better bridges between the education and training sector and labour market policies (see also chapter on anticipating and matching skills and jobs).

Developing a comprehensive LLL strategy in *Austria* was a process that took several years. Intense cross-sector stakeholder consultation in several loops and different forums helped to identify the main obstacles and to agree on a broad common understanding of LLL. The European context, including the development of outcome-based learning instruments, was an important driving factor. In July 2011 four ministries (responsible for the sectors of education and training, science and research, economics, family and youth, and labour and social affairs), backed by the social partners and all key stakeholders, agreed on a joint *'LLL: 2020'* strategy. The strategy is based on a set of guiding principles, benchmarks until 2020, and 10 action lines including operational measures for LLL implementation:

1) *Strengthening pre-primary education.*

2) *Basic education and equal opportunities in school and initial training.*

3) *Free second-chance provision of upper secondary qualifications and basic competences ensured throughout adulthood.*

4) *Broadening alternatives for young people's transition to work.*

5) *Facilitating re-orientation in education and work while ensuring work-life balance.*

6) *Reinforcing community education through communal structures and civil society.*

7) *Promoting a working environment conducive to learning.*

8) *Promoting continuing education to ensure employability and competitiveness.*

9) *Improving quality of life through education after retirement.*

> 10) *Procedures for the validation of skills and competences acquired non-formally and informally in all education and training sectors.*
>
> *http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/20916/IIIarbeitspapier_ebook_gross.pdf /*

7.2. Implementation of the main LLL principles and instruments

The following trends can be identified in relation to the principles for the establishment and implementation of comprehensive national LLL strategies[64] and policies.

7.2.1. Quality initial education and targeted continuing training

A comprehensive lifelong learning concept links all levels and forms of education and training and aims to ensure — based on high-quality initial education and training — individuals' learning motivation and engagement after initial education and training. It is generally agreed that participation in early childhood education, tackling of early school leaving and adult-learning offers adapted to the needs of specific target groups are highly important in this regard. Consequently, as part of their LLL strategies, countries have identified weaknesses in the provision of, and access to, certain levels or sectors of education and training and are now implementing measures to close these gaps.

A number of countries refer explicitly to policy reforms that aim to improve **the quality of early childhood education and care and access to it** (**IE, PL, PT, SI, SE, NO**, **TR**). Overall developments are positive in this area as the Commission Progress Report on indicators and benchmarks 2011 shows: average participation in early learning has risen in the European Union over the last decade to 92.3 % in 2008. In several countries, rates are already above 95 %, implying almost general school attendance from age 4. This is the case in **Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Spain**. The vast majority of other countries have rates above 90 %, while another group (**Cyprus** and **Romania)** shows steep growth towards rates exceeding 82 %.

The main aim of **VET** is to prepare people for a smooth and rapid transition into the labour market, but it also needs to ensure that people have broader options enabling them to progress towards higher qualifications levels, update their qualifications or re-qualify. Following up the Copenhagen Process,[65] the Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020 [66] presents a vision of a modern and attractive VET system providing maximum access to lifelong learning and opportunities to learn at any stage in life, and making routes into education and training more open and flexible. Some countries (**BE FR, CY, PL, SE, SI, RO, DK**) emphasise that improving the attractiveness of VET systems is an important aspect of their current LLL policy, including initiatives to stimulate the provision of apprenticeship places in companies

---

[64] These principles were identified in the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, COM(2010) 682 final.

[65] 'A bridge to the future — European policy for vocational education and training 2002-2010', CEDEFOP 2010 .

[66] http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf.

(**DK, IS**), the establishment of structured VET pathways up to post-secondary or higher level VET (**BE NL, CY, SE, FR, LU, PT**) and quality assurance (e.g. 'quality patrols' in **DK** aim to promote the exchange of good practice among schools). The latter contributed to the implementation of the EQAVET Recommendation on establishing a European quality assurance reference framework for VET.

The measures reported by the ET 2020 countries to **promote adult learning** are broadly consistent with the report on the achievements of the 2008-2010 Action Plan on Adult learning,[67] which notes that work has been initiated in all priority areas, albeit at different speeds in each country. Adult learning reforms are increasingly rooted in broader developments in education and training, namely the establishment of national qualifications frameworks and lifelong learning strategies, and non-formal and informal learning, which represent much of adult learning, are increasingly being recognised and validated.

With a view to providing **targeted continuing training for adults** many countries (**AT, BE fr, DE, DK, EL, ES, FR, HR, IE, MT, PT, SI**, **UK**) report that they focus policies and support systems on specific target groups, namely the low-skilled, the unemployed, older workers or migrants, involving basic skills and second chances to upper secondary attainment, often linked to validation of prior learning. However, at the European average level, the overall participation of adults (25-64) in LLL declined between 2006 (9.8 %) and 2009 (9.2 %). In 2009 only 8 countries exceeded the 2010 benchmark and only 5 the 2020 benchmark (**DK, FI, SE, UK, NL**).

Quality assurance in adult learning has been raised as an important issue and some countries report recent progress in developing the professional profile and training of adult learning professionals and the accreditation of adult learning providers (**BG, DE, IT**).

7.2.2. Flexible pathways

▪ The introduction of more flexible learning pathways with a view to facilitating **progression between different sub-sectors and levels of the education and training system** is considered an important way to encourage individuals to engage in LLL. It is increasingly supported through learning outcomes-based policy approaches developed at European level, namely the EQF, validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL), lifelong guidance and credit transfer systems (ECVET/ECTS).

▪ Today all countries are working on a **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**. In many cases this is an important catalyst for national reform. It aims to make qualifications systems more transparent, coherent and permeable and often also tries to redefine the way the different sub-systems of education and training and their qualifications relate to each other. To date, 14 countries have already established an NQF (**BE nl, DK, EE, FR, IE, LV, MT, PT, UK**) or

---

are close to the formal adoption of an already agreed NQF (**CZ, FI, HR, LT, LU, NL**).

▪ The vast majority of NQFs can be defined as comprehensive frameworks, covering all levels and types of qualifications.[68]

▪ Some NQFs span all levels of education and training, the point being an easy progression between different sectors and levels. Moreover, higher level qualifications may be awarded by bodies other than traditional higher education institutions (**FR, IE, MT, NL, UK-SC**).

▪ In two NQFs, qualifications levels linked to EQF levels 1-5 and 6-8 are treated separately (**DK, PT**). These NQFs restrict the higher levels to qualifications awarded by higher education institutions in accordance with the Bologna process.

▪ The BE nl NQF currently divides levels 6-8 into parallel strands, one covering academic qualifications and the other one vocational or professional higher level qualifications not awarded by higher education institutions. This NQF is still comprehensive in that it covers all levels and types of qualifications. However, it is not obvious how it supports flexible learning pathways and progression.

▪ While a number of the established NQFs are to some extent open to qualifications awarded outside the formal system (FR, UK, IE), several of the new and emerging qualifications frameworks are treating this as a priority and are seeking to open up towards certificates and diplomas awarded by sector-specific organisations, chambers, companies and other private providers (**BE nl, DE, DK, NL, SE**).

▪ To support flexible pathways many countries are also striving to improve their systems for the **validation of non-formal and informal learning** (**AT, BE fr, DK, ES, FR, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO, TR**, **LU, HR, IS**). In some cases these are already linked to their NQF (**DK, EE, IE, PT**). There is evidence of activities in these areas in all countries, albeit at very different stages of development.[69]

▪ The most advanced countries have established practices for validation, encompassing all or most sectors of learning, which already show a significant level of take-up (**FI, FR, NL, NO, PT**).

▪ In some countries a national system or a framework of systems for validation exists, but take-up remains relatively low; in others a particularly well-established system of validation in a certain sector shows a high level of take-

---

[68] Cedefop (2011) The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe xxx *[adoption in Nov. 2011] add final reference xxx* .

[69] See 'European inventory on validation of informal and non-formal learning 2020', CEDEFOP 2010; and Commission Staff Working Paper SEC(2011) 271 'Action Plan on Adult Learning: Achievements and results 2008-2010'.

up, but there is no national framework in place (**DK, DE, ES, LU, RO, SE, UK**); another group of countries have a validation system in one or more sectors but are facing limited take-up (**AT, BE fr BE nl, CZ, EE, IE, IT, LT, SK, SI, HR, IS**).

▪ Finally, some countries are in the process of developing or adopting legislation or policy relating to validation, or tools which might support the introduction of a process of validation such as occupational profiles, also where very little activity, if any at all, is taking place (**BG, CY, EL, HU, LV, MT, PL, TR**).

▪ As indicated above, potential users of tools to support flexible pathways must be aware of their existence if they are to become effective on a larger scale. Hence, many countries give an important role to **lifelong guidance policies** as an effective means of promoting flexible learning pathways (**AT, DK, DE, FI, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, NL, TR**) and in some cases an explicit link is made to raising awareness of the benefits of lifelong learning (**EE, ES**), including counselling for companies (**DK**). There are also efforts to integrate existing services better, particularly with respect to guidance provided by education and training institutions and public employment services (PES). *Lifelong guidance policy forums* have now been formally established in all countries. They aim to foster cooperation and coordination among national education, training and employment authorities, to improve policy-making and decision-making, to build leadership capacity, to manage reform and innovation processes and to rethink demanding cross-sector cooperation arrangements.[70]

▪ Some countries mention reforms that aim to **remove barriers at institutional level**, in particular by *opening up higher education* institutions and adapting their learning offers to the needs of under-represented groups, older learners or learners already in the labour force wishing to enter or re-enter higher education, including offers for continuing higher education (**AT, DE, FI, IE, PT**). See chapter on Lifelong Learning Strategies for further details.

▪ Finally, other countries report that they promote the *modularisation of learning programmes*, particularly in the areas of VET and CVET, as a means of providing more flexible learning pathways (**BE nl, DK, ES, HU, PL, PT**)..

7.2.3. *Shared responsibility/partnership*

A key principle of the LLL approach is to *improve coordination of policies* across different sectors (education and training, labour market, social affairs, etc.) and levels (national/regional/local) in order to **reduce fragmentation** of LLL systems, improve provision and access for individuals, and deploy resources more efficiently. Likewise, effective delivery of LLL services (validation, guidance, targeted learning offers) often depends on *sharing responsibility and partnership* among various actors from the public and private sector (employers, NGOs, providers of LLL), including individuals.

---

[70] See 'Lifelong guidance across Europe — Reviewing policy progress and future prospects', Cedefop, 2011.

Many countries have set up permanent **structures for** horizontal (cross-sector) and vertical (linking national/regional/community levels) **coordination of LLL policy**. These can be inter-sector LLL councils, committees or groups at national (**BE NL, EL, PL, SI**) or regional level (**ES**), and many of these bodies also give a voice to stakeholders, in particular the social partners and education and training providers (**CY, FI, HR, IE, TR, BE NL**).

A number of countries point out that, because of the institutional division of competences, the implementation of LLL is a **shared responsibility** among national, regional and local levels (**AT, DE, ES, SI, SE**). However, there is little information available on effective mechanisms for sharing responsibility for LLL development and implementation among public and private actors, and individuals (**DK, IS**).

Denmark has promoted shared responsibility between government and the social partners for the financing of CVET. In 2008, private sector social partners agreed within their collective agreements to enhance employees' rights to training and adopted a new financing scheme according to which companies pay a 'levy' per employee to competence funds set up within sectors in order to promote workforce participation in CVET, including adult vocational and in-service training.

Some countries mention that **cooperation and partnership** among government, social partners, businesses, training providers, etc. play an important role in the development and delivery of their lifelong learning policies at both national and regional levels. Some have encouraged the establishment of regional and local/community networks for LLL (**BE fr, DE, IE, NL**); or have institutionalised mechanisms to involve the social partners in the revision of curricula, in particular for VET (**AT, DE, FR, HR, IS**); or have concluded sector-specific agreements to improve LLL provision (**BE fr, BE nl, FR**). However, there is little evidence of any attempts to make more systematic use of the important capacity NGOs and civil society organisations for activating people and offering learning in non-formal and informal contexts.

Examples of lifelong learning partnerships

- In **NL** the 'Leren en Werken' programme has improved regional and sector-specific infrastructure for learning and working by supporting (through financing and counselling) the creation of networks linking companies and LLL providers. *http://www.lerenenwerken.nl/*

- In **IS** the social partners are involved in all education and training reforms and are also in charge of running training centres for CVET.

- In **DE** *'Lernen vor Ort'* and its predecessor programme *'Lernende Region'* aim to stimulate LLL cooperation at regional/community level with the support of the European Social Fund. *http://www.lernen-vor-ort.info/*

- In **BE fr** and **BE nl** 33 sector-specific agreements have been concluded between sectors and government to improve guidance, availability of work-place learning and competence policy.

7.2.4.   Effective financing mechanisms

Lifelong learning is often difficult to stimulate. This is to do with the provision of an appropriate offer through education and training institutions and employers, but also the engagement of individuals in learning. According to the Adult Education Survey 2007, financial limitations are an important obstacle, but even more often family obligations and unfavourable work schedules are seen as barriers to learning participation.[71] LLL policies should ensure that financial support is channelled towards those who need it the most (in particular low-skilled people, the unemployed, older workers etc.), but also where it has potentially the highest impact (e.g. by supporting Small and Medium Enterprises or LLL providers that offer learning tailored to target groups).

For further details on financing mechanisms for LLL see chapter 7

7.3.   Work at European level

The **critical factors for lifelong learning** were discussed in an analytical report, a PLA and at a **Belgian Presidency** conference on social inclusion in 2010.

Specific work focused on:

- the implementation of the **European Qualifications Framework**, including the development of national qualifications frameworks;

- the **validation of non-formal and informal learning**, through the publication of guidelines and a PLA; further work is planned in this area, with a PLA and the preparation of a Council Recommendation;

- **adult learning**, with the publication in 2011 of a Staff Working Document on the implementation of the Action Plan on Adult Learning, which was presented at the Grundtvig 10th anniversary conference, and a Eurydice study on education and training opportunities for under-qualified adults, also covering policies and measures for enhancing the participation of adults in higher education; further work is planned under the renewed agenda for adult learning adopted by the Council in November 2011 and within thematic working groups on quality assurance and financing of adult education;

- **higher education**, with a PLA on HE systems to support lifelong learning and a training seminar for Bologna experts on the modernisation of curricula and student centred learning in 2011;

- the follow up to the December 2010 Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in **vocational education and training**, in particular the implementation of the European Credit system for VET (ECVET) and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET).

---

[71] Adult Education Survey 2007, Eurostat.

8.   **LEARNING MOBILITY**

> *FINDINGS*
>
> *- National measures to support mobility for students or educational staff are **most frequently reported in the area of higher education**, with fewer initiatives highlighted at school level and in VET. Very few countries report on mobility initiatives for **adults**. Disadvantaged learners are the subject of specific targeted support in several countries.*
>
> *- Although many national reports highlight national **funding** schemes to support mobility, which either top up or are in addition to European programmes, only a few report having implemented policies for mobility covering all education sectors. Very few countries report that they have introduced **portability** of educational grants and loans.*
>
> *- Although national reports contain examples of measures in support of **staff mobility** (including information and funding schemes), countries generally place less emphasis on activities in this area.*
>
> *- Many countries report initiatives to measure the extent of incoming and outgoing mobility in their territories and to assess obstacles to that mobility. Introducing more **flexibility into curricula**, **language learning** and implementation of **European-level tools** such as EQF and ECVET are the most frequently cited measures to overcome barriers to mobility.*
>
> *- Improved academic **recognition** of foreign qualifications is reported in some countries. **ECVET** is specifically mentioned as a means to support recognition of learning outcomes achieved during mobility in VET.*
>
> *- Some countries report making changes to **curricula** to facilitate mobility. Others are seeking to improve **language learning** both at school and HE level.*

The European Union has been encouraging Member States and education and training institutions to integrate learning mobility in their strategies and planning and to improve the framework conditions for mobility in areas such as the recognition of learning outcomes gained abroad. Making mobility a reality is part of the first strategic objective of the ET 2020 framework and has been one of the priority areas for the 2009-2011 cycle under this objective.

Learning mobility has been embedded in the Commission's Europe 2020 strategy through the *Youth on the Move* flagship initiative, which the Council has consistently endorsed through its recommendation of 8 June 2011 '*Youth on the move — promoting the mobility of young people*'. The main requirements for learning mobility advocated in the Recommendation are: providing information and guidance on mobility opportunities, in particular for disadvantaged learners, and strengthening motivation; ensuring adequate preparation and quality of mobility experiences and the recognition of mobility outcomes; and simplifying administration and providing adequate funding, including through partnerships with public and private stakeholders.

The European Union also supports the mobility of learners and teachers by providing direct financial support through its education and training programmes.

However, despite European support, the number of learners and teachers taking up learning mobility opportunities in Europe is still limited. Action at national level — but also at regional and educational establishment levels — is therefore crucial to widen access to mobility experiences in education and training.

This section reviews the measures taken by ET 2020 countries to promote incoming and outgoing mobility for both students and educational professionals, as well as the measures taken to identify and reduce obstacles to mobility, as outlined in the countries' National Reports.

8.1. Main target groups for learning mobility

The National Reports note a differing emphasis on learning mobility between the education and training sectors. While nearly all countries discuss measures to support mobility in higher education, which is also the sector that appears to receive most additional funding from national sources (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FR, LU, LV, NL, PT, SE, SK**), reporting on mobility in VET is less frequent (**BE NL, BG, DK, ES, HU, MT, RO, UK, HR, IS,**). A few countries (**BE NL, BG, DE, ES, HR, IS, MT, RO, UK**) describe specific *national* measures focusing on school pupils. Pupil mobility is most commonly promoted through international curricula or programmes. In the **Netherlands**, for example, more than 100 of the 532 secondary schools now offer an international programme, while international curricula have also been established in secondary schools in **Estonia**. Very few countries refer to national measures aimed at adults (**BE fr, DE**). **Lithuania** is the only country to mention measures aimed at youth or volunteers outside formal education.

Although the promotion of mobility among disadvantaged learners is a specific target of the Council Recommendation, only a few countries mention measures to promote mobility among disadvantaged students at different levels of education and training (**AT, BE nl, EL, ES, FR, LT**).

8.2. Strategic measures to support mobility

Most National Reports acknowledge the added value of transnational mobility for both students and teachers. In line with the emphasis on quality in the Council Recommendation, a few countries have developed national strategies or action plans to support learning mobility (**DK**, **EE, ES, FI, IE, NL, PT, HR**), while others are working on them (**BE NL, EL**). These strategies generally outline national priorities for mobility and identify the resources available to support these objectives. **Croatia**, for example, has adopted an Action Plan for fostering, and removing obstacles to, international mobility in education for 2010-2012, which includes 12 measures to promote mobility. **Belgium (French Community)** has included mobility among its priorities in the period 2009-2014, while **Slovenia** has given student mobility a prominent place in the National Higher Education Programme 2011-2020. The **Netherlands** presented an internationalisation agenda for secondary vocational education (MBO) in 2009, which contains measures to strengthen the international outlook of secondary vocational education. **Belgium (Flemish Community)** is preparing an Action Plan, with an accompanying budget allocation, to promote the mobility of higher education students and teachers, with a particular focus on groups under-represented in current mobility programmes.

A few countries (**BE fr, FR, HR**) have set up specific advisory bodies or working groups to support the development of learning mobility. In **Belgium (French Community),** the Higher Education Council for Student Mobility, established in 2007, oversees funding for mobility in higher education and acts as an advisory body to the government on mobility issues. In **France**, education regions (*académies*) are encouraged to establish advisory councils and strategies to develop the European and international dimension in the education sector and to appoint teachers whose role will be to relay these strategies and related measures to schools. In **Italy,** a group of experts appointed by the Ministry has proposed a plan to support internationalisation and mobility in the higher education system.

Several countries (**BE nl, BG, DE, ES, HR, IS, MT, RO, UK**) mention national-level legislative measures to support learning mobility directed towards different target groups:

- **Luxembourg** has adopted legislation giving apprentices in areas where there is limited or no provision in Luxembourg the option of following theory-based training abroad, while doing the practical training in a business in Luxembourg.

- As a means of improving the language skills of upper-secondary students, **France** requires (via a 2010 decree) all upper secondary schools (*lycées*) to develop a sustainable partnership with a foreign partner school with clear pedagogical objectives.

- In **Sweden** the government proposed an amendment to the Higher Education Act to enable Swedish institutions to award joint degrees with other Swedish and foreign higher education institutions.

Finally, Belgium (French Community) is currently discussing the option of making mobility a required element of all higher education programmes. Such a requirement is already in place for study mobility in **Luxembourg**.

8.3. Funding measures to support mobility of learners

Many countries report on national funding measures to support learning mobility, over and above the funding available through European programmes (**AT, BE nl, BG, DE, DK, EE, ES, FR, LU, MT, RO, UK, HR, IS**). A few countries mention the allocation of top-up grants to *supplement European funding* for mobility, in particular for Erasmus mobility (**AT, ES, FI, SI, SK**). In **Germany** the national agencies managing mobility receive additional funding from the federal government

Another group of countries (**BE nl, BG, DE, ES, HU, MT, RO, UK, HR, IS**) point out that they have created or enhanced specific national funding programmes *in addition to European funding* or that they plan to do so. In **Sweden**, for example, new scholarship programmes for outgoing students were established in 2009. New outgoing mobility programmes for students are being set up in **BE nl**. In **Estonia** between 2002 and 2009 nearly 3 000 Estonian higher education students were funded through national mobility schemes (i.e. excluding Erasmus). National schemes in **Slovenia** provide support for higher education students to follow courses that are rare or unavailable in Slovenia. The participating countries (**EE, FI, LT, LV, SE**) refer to the Nordplus programme, which supports mobility at school, higher education and adult learning levels among the Nordic Council member countries.

Several Central European countries (**AT, BG, CZ, HR, PL, RP, SK, SI**) participate in the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS), which is financed from national resources..

In line with the Council Recommendation, three countries (**DE, FI, FR**) refer to specific regional or institutional funding sources. **Finland** reports that one in five mobility periods is funded by higher education institutions and that 40 % of mobility in VET is funded from education and training institutions' own resources. **France** provides considerable additional funding at regional level.

Another form of financial support is the provision of one-off funding for education and training institutions to set up partnerships and develop international cooperation. **Lithuania**, for example, has allocated specific funds for institutions to strengthen mobility (for students or teachers). **Sweden** has increased funds for raising awareness of Swedish higher education abroad. **Spain** points out that it compensates higher education institutions for the management costs associated with student mobility.

Measures to ensure the portability of loans in higher education are highlighted by **Denmark**, **Germany**, **Hungary**, **Norway,** the **Netherlands, Portugal and Iceland**. The **Netherlands** adds that grants for VET students will also become portable.

Finally, a few countries (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, DE, FR, LT, ES**) mention specific scholarships targeted towards helping disadvantaged learners to undertake international mobility periods. In **Belgium** (**Flemish Community**) under-represented groups will receive additional financial and academic support, while in **France,** students from low-income backgrounds receive an additional allocation of €400 per month if they take part in a mobility period as part of their programme. In **Lithuania** students with a disability can receive additional support to contribute towards the costs of an accompanying person during their mobility period.

Portable Grants — Mobilitätsstipendium (Austria)

Since 2008-09, students from Austria who would normally be eligible for financial support (Studienbeihilfe) within Austria can obtain grant-based support if they choose to follow an entire degree programme (for example Bachelor degree or Masters) at a foreign university within the European Economic Area. The eligibility conditions for the so-called Mobilitätsstipendium (Mobility Grant) are essentially the same as the conditions for applicants for domestic student support.

8.4. Other types of support for learners and institutions

In addition to direct funding measures, some countries specify other forms of support for individuals: strengthened language support (**AT, BE fr, BE nl, DE, FR, LT, ES**), the development of the education and training offer in foreign languages (particularly English) (**BG, CY, EL, HU, LV, HR, IS, NO**); and the provision of information and advice to prospective mobile learners (**BG, CY, EL, HR, IS, LV, NO**).

At institutional level, in line with the Council Recommendation, several countries promote joint and double degrees in higher education (**BE fr, DK, FR, EL**). Luxembourg highlights the establishment of a regional transnational upper secondary school. Some countries refer to improved academic recognition of foreign qualifications and/or periods of study abroad (**AT, CY, DE, FI, FR, IS, LU, MT, PT,**

RO, SE, UK). In a few countries (**EE, FI, FR, PL, SE**), the implementation of ECVET is specifically mentioned as a means to support recognition of the learning outcomes achieved during mobility in VET.

8.5. Measures to promote teacher mobility

In line with the Council Recommendation, which advocates learning mobility as part of the initial and continuous training of teachers and other educational staff, countries highlight both non-financial and financial measures to support teacher mobility. Some countries have introduced information and promotion campaigns on mobility opportunities (**BG, IE, MT, SE**). A few countries also referred to training measures to prepare teachers for mobility activities (**BE NL, BG, DE, EL, ES**).

Some countries offer financial support to teachers in addition to the funding available through European programmes (**DE, ES, FI, NL, RO, SE, TR**). As with student funding, such financial support may top up European funding. This is the case in **Romania**, where additional funds are provided by the European Social Fund to encourage secondary and vocational school teachers to take part in Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci projects. Similarly, the UK provides financial compensation to cover the cost of replacing teachers on Comenius placements, while in Austria there are cooperation agreements between institutions to help find interim solutions to replace teachers taking part in mobility programmes.

In other cases, countries highlight specific national funding schemes, independent of European programmes. **Sweden** and **France**, for example, have launched programmes to enable teachers to teach abroad.

The Jules Verne Teacher Mobility Programme (France)

The Jules Verne programme was introduced by the French government in 2009 to support teachers from lower and upper secondary education who spend a school year teaching abroad. The programme is based on agreements signed with the relevant authorities in the destination country, while the French teachers are paid by their home education authority. The programme seeks to encourage reciprocal exchanges, with foreign teachers coming to teach in French schools. In 2010, 162 teachers went abroad to teach in 20 countries. In addition, since 2009, school inspectors in France must spend a period abroad (in or outside Europe) as part of their initial training. This experience is also strongly recommended for future school leaders.

http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid50124/programme-de-mobilite-internationale-jules-verne.html

---

Some countries have taken non-financial measures to promote teacher mobility, or envisage doing so. In **Lithuania**, mobility is taken into account in teachers' appraisals and in BE NL the forthcoming action plan on mobility will underpin the recognition of teachers' mobility for their career advancement. In **France,** academic job specifications (previously rigidly expressed in teaching hours, etc.) have been made more flexible to facilitate the mobility of teaching and research staff in higher education. Among other things this measure enables teaching or research activities abroad to be taken into consideration for staff appraisals.

8.6. Identifying and reducing obstacles to learning mobility

Many countries refer to their efforts to measure the extent of learning mobility and identify obstacles to it, although these activities tend to be concentrated in the area of higher education (**DE, ES, FI, FR, IE, NL, RO, SE, TR**). The reports identify a range of measures designed to address obstacles to mobility.

- In line with the Council Recommendation, some countries (**BG, EE, FR, IE, IT, MT, PL, RO, LV, IS, SE**) refer to efforts to improve information on mobility opportunities as a way of overcoming barriers at all education and training levels. A few countries (**BG, FR, LV, HR, TR**) report on specific brochures/websites launched to attract incoming students.

- Some countries specifically highlight changes to curricula to facilitate mobility (BE nl, **BG, EE, FI, NL, IT, LV, MT, PL, RO, SE, IS**). This includes implementing international curricula at school level (such as the International and European Baccalaureates), which is the case in **Estonia.** In higher education, the mainstreaming of mobility in most curricula (**IT**), courses taught in foreign languages (**BG, CY, EE, EL, HR, IS, LV, MT, NO, PL, RO, SE, SK**) and the development and implementation of joint study programmes with institutions in other countries (**EL, LV, PT, SE, TR**) are also presented as ways of promoting internationalisation and mobility.

- Some countries report they are seeking to improve language learning, both at school and higher education levels (**BG, CY, ES, FR, IS, LV, LT, PL**)**.** In **Poland**, for example, a compulsory external examination in a modern foreign language has been introduced into lower secondary schooling.

- Several countries stress the implementation of European tools at national level as an important element in removing barriers to mobility. The tools most commonly cited are the European Qualifications Framework (**CY, EE, EL, FR, HR, HU, PL, NL, SE**), ECVET (**AT, EE, FI, FR, PL, SE**) and Europass (**AT, CY, ES, FR, IE, PL, RO, SK**).

- **Estonia, Ireland and France** all report progress in amending their visa-related rules in order to make it easier for students from outside the European Union to study in their countries, while **Spain** reports it is reviewing its rules in this area.

- **Iceland** reports on support systems in higher education institutions for international students, while **Germany** has increased the number of mobility counsellors both in higher education institutions and in VET at the chambers of commerce and industry and crafts.

8.7. Work at European level

The key milestones at European level have been the integration of the **Youth on the Move** flagship initiative into Europe 2020, the adoption of a Council Recommendation on the promotion of the mobility of young people in May 2011 and the adoption of a new benchmark on learning mobility in November 2011, setting the target that at least 20 % of higher education graduates should have a period of study or training abroad and at least 6 % of 18-34 year olds with an initial vocational education and training qualification should have had a study or training abroad.

Learning mobility was also the main focus of a conference on the internationalisation of higher education hosted by the **Spanish Presidency** in April 2010, a conference

hosted by the **Belgian Presidency** in October 2010, and a training seminar for **Bologna experts** in March 2011.

In order to improve the availability of statistical data on learning mobility, the European Union carried out a survey among young people with the focus on learning mobility (Eurobarometer survey of February 2011). Furthermore, a study on higher education learning mobility covering 22 Member States.

The relevance of **European tools** to support learning mobility was highlighted at the **Europass** conference held in February 2011; this aspect will continue to be stressed throughout the development of both the **European Skills Passport** and the European Credit for Vocational education and training (**ECVET**).

9.   **ANTICIPATING AND MATCHING SKILLS AND JOBS**

FINDINGS

*- While only some European countries already have well-developed systems, an increasing number of them are **developing comprehensive and coordinated systems** for anticipating and assessing skills needs, relying on a variety of tools, involving various levels and sectors, and using the results in a coordinated way.*

*- Progress has been made in various areas. Some countries mention improving **forecasting** methodology or developing skills forecasts. Some have launched, or deployed, **employers' surveys** on skills needs. Many have decided to improve their **monitoring of the transition** from school to work through a survey to **track the career** of school leavers and graduates. The aim of all these initiatives is to improve the evidence base for policy and practices.*

*- Information on skills needs is made available by the dissemination of research results and cooperation with the world of work, through **institutionalised bodies at sector level.** Many countries also consider **guidance** to be instrumental in improving the matching of skills supply and demand. Several countries use the **employability of students** as part of their **quality assurance** mechanisms.*

*- However, only a few countries seem to have a coordinated strategy for **disseminating results**. The knowledge transfer mechanisms in education and training planning at regional or sector-specific level tend to replicate **the segmentation of education and training systems.***

9.1.   The challenge

Growth and employment in Europe crucially depend on its population having the right skills. However, skill mismatch is a widespread phenomenon in Europe. The incidence of over-education is around 30 % on average, while at the same time a substantial share of the population is under-educated (Cedefop 2010). Economic restructuring is gaining additional pace as a consequence of the economic crisis. Unemployment of workers from declining sectors goes hand in hand with recruitment bottlenecks in expanding sectors, and skills requirements are also changing in many existing jobs. Better anticipation of future skills needs and better matching of skills are vital for future growth and employment.

9.2.   Policy context

Better anticipation and matching of skills and labour market needs to foster employability has been a policy priority at European level since 2008, when the

Commission adopted the **'New Skills for New Jobs' Communication,**[72] subsequently endorsed by Council conclusions.[73]

The ET 2020 strategic framework of 2009 emphasises the need to ensure that the assessment of future skill requirements and the matching of labour market needs are taken on board in education and training planning processes. With a view to strengthening the evidence base for policy exchanges in this context, in May 2011 the Commission submitted a Staff Working Paper on the development of a **benchmark** on education and training **for employability .**[74]

The Europe 2020 flagship initiative **'An agenda for new skills and jobs**'[75] stresses the importance of equipping people with the right skills for employment, announcing the launch of an 'EU skills Panorama' in 2012, to improve transparency by providing updated forecasts of skills supply and labour market needs up to 2020 for jobseekers, workers, companies and public institutions.

The need to tackle increasing skills bottlenecks by better matching educational and training outcomes with the labour market was confirmed as a priority in the **Commission Communication concluding the first European Semester** of economic policy coordination.[76]

The 'Leuven-Louvain la Neuve Communiqué' of 2009 and the 'Bruges Communiqué' of 2010 also emphasised the need to improve the respective capacities of Higher Education and of Vocational Education and Training (VET) to respond to the changing requirements of the labour market.

9.3. Anticipating and assessing skills needs and skills mismatches

Nearly all countries have systems or tools for assessing current and future skills needs, for monitoring skills mismatches and for informing education and training providers, labour market participants and individuals at either national, regional, trade or sector level. However, the anticipation and assessment of skills needs is more reliable, and more relevant, if it is embedded in a **comprehensive and coordinated system** involving various stakeholders, using different methods and gathering evidence from various sources: medium-term macro-level projections, sector studies, regular surveys among employers, surveys to track the career paths of students and pupils, scenario developments with experts and stakeholders, as well as discussion and dissemination of findings at sector-specific and regional level (see figure below). Until a few years ago,

---

[72] COM(2008) 868, 16.12.2008, not published in the OJEC.

[73] Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on competences supporting lifelong learning and the 'new skills for new jobs' initiative, OJEC 2010/C 135/03, 26.05.2010 .

[74] SEC(2011) 670 final, 24.05.2011.

[75] COM(2010) 682 final, 23.11.2010.

[76] COM(2011) 400 final, 7.06.2011 .

only some European countries had such well-developed systems:[77] **AT, DE, DK, FI, FR, NL, SE, UK**. Now, more and more countries (**BE fr**, **BE nl, CY, EE, HU, IE, IT, LV, PL, PT**) are building comprehensive systems relying on a variety of tools, involving various levels and sectors, and using the results in a coordinated way. Some countries use the Structural Funds to build a sustainable system of anticipation (**PL, IT**).

Example of a coordinated and comprehensive system: France

France has a well-developed system for anticipating and assessing skills needs at national level. The *Centre d'analyse stratégique,*[78] which is under the Prime Minister's authority, uses economic forecasting and foresight analysis to anticipate growth areas, future jobs and skills needs. Anticipation of future jobs is complemented by surveys on career pathways. Analysis at national level is disseminated, used and complemented at regional level (*Observatoires régionaux de l'emploi et de la formation*) and at sectoral level (*Observatoires des métiers*).

Macro level

↑

Projections of skills supply and demand

Public employment services

Monitoring of shortages and vacancies

Studies on transversal issues (green jobs)

Education and training

Tracking surveys

Employers' surveys

World of work

Update of certifications and programmes

Sector Skills Councils

Update of occupation standards

↓

Sector level

---
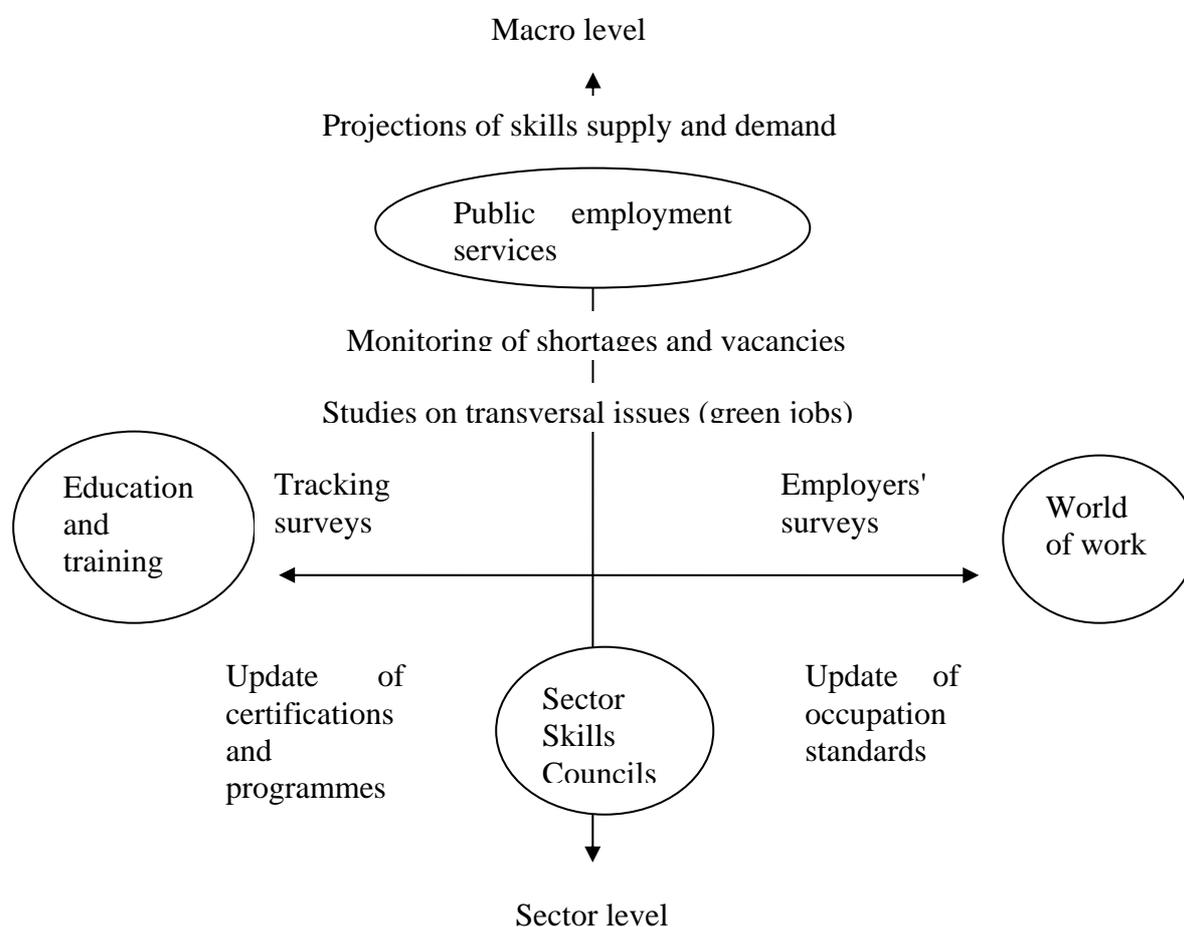
[77] Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication 'New Skills for New Jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs', SEC(2008) 3058.

[78] http://www.strategie.gouv.fr.

- In addition to the development of such systems, many European countries have also launched other new initiatives to gather better evidence on skills needs, skills mismatches or graduates' employability.

- Some mention improving **forecasting methodology** (**FI, NO**) or **developing skills forecasting** at national level (**BG, EE, HU, LV, PL, PT**). Some are developing the **monitoring of current surplus and shortages**, which is often undertaken by public employment services or temporary work agencies.[79] **Poland**, for example, publishes a report on current mismatches yearly or half-yearly.[80]

- A few countries (**IT, PL, PT, SK, HR**) are developing or updating detailed **occupational standards** to help education and training providers and public employment services improve their understanding of the skills and qualifications requirements in each occupation.

- Some countries have launched or deployed **employers' surveys on skills needs**. The **UK** has developed the first UK-wide skills survey — the UK Employer Skills Survey (ESS). In **Cyprus**, the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), which provides long-term employment forecasts, also collects and analyses the views of employers' organisations, trade unions, district labour offices and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation. In **Poland**, a set of studies was conducted at the request of employers of university graduates, showing that employers primarily need engineers and ICT specialists, graduates in construction and transport and specialists in the physical sciences and mathematics.

- Employer organisations also develop labour market intelligence themselves. The Business Alliance of **Slovakia** (PAS), in cooperation with the organisation Uni2010 (comprising experts from business practice and universities) carried out the qualitative research 'Professions 2010-2020'. In **Italy**, the network of Italian chambers of commerce (Unioncamere) has been carrying out a survey on job demands and skills needs based on a sample of 3 000 000 enterprises in the framework of a project funded by the Ministry of Labour called 'Employment and Training Information System, Excelsior'.

- In the face of youth unemployment or underemployment, many countries have decided to monitor more closely the transition from school to work by launching and extending a **survey to track the career** of school leavers and graduates (**RO, LU, NL, PT, AT, HU, FR, LV**). Some countries already have well-established and widely-used surveys (Almalaurea in IT).

> *Example of tracking survey: Hungary*
> In **Hungary**, the Higher Education Act requires all higher education institutions to monitor graduates' career paths, which the government wishes to support with a standard career monitoring system established using European funds. One of the aims is to provide feedback on the competences which the economy needs and present these requirements to higher education institutions. The **Hungarian** Chamber of Commerce

---

[79] See the European Vacancy Monitor for an overview of findings:
http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=955&langId=en.

[80] posted on the website www.psz.praca.gov.pl.

and Industry regularly conducts surveys among companies on how higher education graduates succeed at the workplace. These surveys also address the current and potential educational needs of higher education.[81]

- If evidence of future skills needs is crucial at national level, education and training providers, employment and guidance services also need information at **regional level.**

- Equally, to match labour market needs precisely and provide accurate counselling, information at macro level is not enough; it has to be collected and made available at **sector-specific level**.

- Many countries have launched studies or reflections on **skills needs in sectors** that are crucial for their economy or that are undergoing rapid change: **AT, BE fr, CY, FR, IE, MT, PL, PT, UK-Scotland**.

Identifying Future Skills Needs in Ireland and measures to take results on board

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) advises the Irish Government on the economy's current and future skills needs. It produces sector-specific reports quantifying skills and labour requirements in the medium term and making recommendations as to how skills needs can be met. For providers this can entail, for example, the development of new modules that build on existing qualifications of graduates or new programmes to upskill existing employees.

See: http://www.skillsireland.ie/

- Apart from *ad hoc* studies in key sectors or on transversal issues, most countries rely on **institutionalised bodies at sector-specific level** (councils, committees, observatories) for assessing skills needs, describing job tasks and adapting qualifications and curricula. The mandate, composition and scope of these councils can vary, but they frequently involve vocational providers, employers and trade unions.[82] While most sector skills councils are well-established institutions, two countries (**SK, HR,**) have set them up only recently. Sector skills councils frequently play a crucial role in assessing skills needs and in improving the relevance of education and training (**DK**, **ES, LU, NL, FR**). Most aim at improving the relevance of VET and do not cover all education sectors. Separate mechanisms often exist in the higher education area.

- The majority of existing mechanisms (sector councils, agencies), seem to replicate the **segmentation** of education and training systems. However, the example of **Croatia** shows that their initial remit can also evolve. Sector councils were established in Croatia to identify the qualifications needed in the VET system. As part of the development of the Croatian Qualifications Framework, it is now planned to upgrade them into comprehensive groups involving stakeholders across all levels of education.

---

[81] The latest survey was published in 2011: http://www.gvi.hu/index.php/hu/research/showItem.html?id=136), Graduate Career Starters and Higher Education Institutions from a Corporate Perspective — 2010.

[82] Ecorys (2010), Sector Councils on Employment and Skills at EU level. A study into their feasibility and potential impact: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=782&newsId=743&furtherNews=yes

- Some countries have also established institutional mechanisms to ensure that education and training are responsive to **regional and local needs** (**PL, HU, IE, SK**). In **Italy**, an agreement between State, regions and social partners establishes a national monitoring centre for assessing and forecasting regional and sector-specific skills requirements.

> **In Poland,** the Regional Labour Market Observatories (*RORP*), operated by the regional labour offices, conduct research and determine the needs of employers for jobs, qualifications and skills. They analyse factors affecting success on the labour market, study the effectiveness of, and need for, adult vocational training and support cooperation between educational institutions and labour market institutions.
>
> In **Hungary**, the Regional Development and Training Committees (RFKBs) determine for the regional integrated vocational training centres — and indirectly for the vocational schools — the direction and proportion of vocational training conducted as full-time education. They also decide on development subsidies for a given region. The RFKBs make suggestions about classifying certain qualifications as scarce and are in charge of identifying the qualifications required by the region's economy.

9.4. Exploiting the results of skills assessment and anticipation

As well as producing knowledge about future skills requirements, it is of utmost importance to promote institutional mechanisms, communication and cooperation ensuring that such knowledge is also incorporated into any relevant education and training planning processes.

- Skills needs anticipation is used in strategic documents at national or regional level and in the definition of curricula and qualifications at sector-specific level, in particular through **skills councils** (**DE, FR, IE, NL, PT, RO, UK NO**). A number of countries have mechanisms in place to **disseminate and transfer** knowledge on skills needs, including regular dialogue with employers and experts. At this stage, however, only the more advanced countries seem to have a coordinated strategy for disseminating results and a specific focus on **improving publications and communication tools** (**UK, FR, DE, AT, IE**), tailoring them to specific needs (**DE, PL**) and disseminating findings at all relevant levels.

- Many countries have developed policies to reinforce **cooperation with labour market representatives**. They are involved in the definition of curricula and in education governing bodies both in higher education and VET.[83] For example, the **Swedish** agency for higher vocational education will include business representatives. During the period 2010-2014, **Estonia** is allocating special funds to innovative curriculum development projects carried out in partnerships between higher education and enterprises and responding to labour market needs.

- A number of countries are using skills needs anticipation to determine the number of students in different academic disciplines. While some have used it for **top-down planning** (**FI**), others have developed **incentives** to encourage students and

---

[83] See for example, EUA 'A decade of change in European Higher Education', Cedefop 'A bridge to the future: European policy for vocational education and training' 2002-10'.

education and training providers to react to labour market needs. In the **Netherlands,** qualification, education and training provisions are more likely to be approved and accredited in sectors with shortages. **Hungary** has put in place financial incentives to support students who enter education and training in response to current shortages. Businesses offering training places related to occupations suffering from shortages also receive higher financial support.

- Many countries have taken measures to use the employability of students as part of their **quality assurance mechanisms**. Some countries plan to use tracking surveys to assess the performance of universities and the relevance of specific courses in terms of employability (**DK**, **HU, FR, PL, LV**). In **Hungary**, the Higher Education Act requires career monitoring and other labour market information to be presented and taken into account during planning. In **Poland**, the 2011 Act reforming the higher education system aimed to reduce the number of courses whose graduates have difficulties in finding a job.

- Many countries present **guidance** as instrumental in improving the matching of skills supply and demand. Several report plans to expand and redesign guidance services, including those offered by universities (**BE fr, EL, ES, FR, , IE, IT,, RO, SK, SI**), and efforts by public employment services to start describing jobs supply and demand in terms of skills (**AT, BE fr, DE PL**). In **Slovenia**, guidance services help to improve the attractiveness of VET, which is a major issue in this country.

- Finally, **National Qualifications Frameworks** are seen as enabling employers and the public to understand qualifications, to the extent that they show how education and training respond to skills requirements. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** reports that the Qualification Structure it adopted in 2009 will facilitate communication among stakeholders, including the social partners. [84]

In **Ireland**, through the work of the National Centre for Guidance in Education and professional development services for teachers, the competent department supports best practice in guidance in schools and adult education centres. This is backed by a course database (www.qualifax.ie), and by up-to-date information on the labour market through www.careersportal.ie, an initiative developed by the private sector which is widely used as a guidance resource.

In **Spain**, the Ministry of Education's plan for an integrated system of vocational guidance aims to help people select training and career pathways from a lifelong learning perspective by offering advice on opportunities for training, employment and professional skills recognition. Not only does it include interventions in the four priority areas established by the European Commission for career orientation, but it pays special attention to synergies between guidance services at national, regional and local levels.

In **Italy**, the Agreement of 17 February 2010 signed between the State, the Regions and the Social Partners on the '2010 Training Guidelines' establishes a special operational unit at the Ministry of Labour for the collection of skills requirements and professional profiles as needed in territories and in different business sectors and industries. This

---

[84] See also Eurydice 'New Skills for New Jobs. Policy initiatives in the field of education: short overview of the current situation in Europe' (November 2010). .

will provide trainers with a clear indication of the knowledge, skills and competences that need to be promoted for workers to be adequately employed.

9.5. Delivering the right mix of skills

A major trend in reforming education and training is the development of curricula based on skills and competences that are crucial for working life. The move towards **competences-based education** is mentioned as a priority (**A, DE, LU**), as is a renewed focus on **basic skills** (**EE, FR, IE, LT, PT, UK**). A number of countries also refer to measures taken to encourage pupils and students to pursue studies and careers in **mathematics, science and technology** and to increase achievement levels in this field (**AT, BE nl, DE, FR, PL, LT, IE**).[85] Others have put measures in place to develop a spirit of **entrepreneurship** and creativity among pupils (**ES, EE, BG, LT, FR**), **career management skills** (**EE, ES**, and the European Lifelong Guidance Network[86]), **language skills** and **environmental awareness** (**FR, LT**).

In addition to introducing a competences-based approach, countries are strengthening **project-based** and **work-based learning**[87] and encouraging apprenticeships. **Italy** has recently adopted the Action Plan for Youth Employability, which integrates apprenticeship and employment. **England** is extending apprenticeships to adults. In 2010, **Latvia** started to implement a reform of further education for teachers, the aim being to strengthen teachers' and trainers' awareness of industry needs. **France** is also developing apprenticeships and is putting in place a national plan for developing alternance learning.

In **Lithuania**, the Qualifications and Vocational Training Development Centre carried out an analysis in 2010 to estimate how much attention was devoted to environmental issues in the curriculum of formal VET and how much attention those issues actually required. In the same year, guidelines were drawn up to improve entrepreneurial training as a subject in the curriculum of formal VET.

In **Estonia**, the new general education curriculum adopted in 2010 will contribute to developing entrepreneurial competencies and support pupils in career planning. All schools must provide *economic and entrepreneurial studies* in upper secondary school as an elective course and must make *career guidance* available in both basic and upper secondary school. A cross-curriculum theme set for all stages of study is '*Planning one's lifelong learning and career*'. The freedom of choice of subjects in upper secondary school has been widened to improve the match between the needs of pupils and society**.**

In **Spain**, vocational training certificates are being revised to adapt technical and professional skills to the definitions in the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications, and to enable students to acquire the key personal and social skills

---

[85] See also the report of Euschoolnet covering 16 European countries 'Efforts to increase students' interest in pursuing mathematics, science and technology studies and careers'. .

[86] ELGPN (2010), Lifelong Guidance Policies: Work in Progress:
http://ktl.jyu.fi/img/portal/8465/ELGPN_report_2009-10.pdf?cs=1284966063

[87] See also the report of Euschoolnet (2010) covering 16 European countries 'Efforts to increase students' interest in pursuing mathematics, science and technology studies and careers'. See Cedefop (2010) 'A bridge to the future: European policy for vocational education and training' 2002-10'.

which are necessary to join the labour market as active citizens**. Entrepreneurship** is promoted through the inclusion of a compulsory module for all qualifications.

9.6. Work at European level

The adoption in November 2010 of the **Commission Communication on an 'Agenda for new skills and jobs'**, the flagship initiative under Europe 2020, was one of the milestones of the first ET2020 work cycle. A number of outputs and events paved the way for the Communication: a report from an expert group 'New skills for new jobs: Action now' in February 2010, a PLA of the working group on the modernisation of higher education and a conference on New Skills for New Jobs, hosted by the Spanish Presidency in April 2010.

The implementation of the Communication started with preparatory activities for the development of an **EU Skills Panorama**, representing an institutionalised platform at European level on skills anticipation methodologies and systems and relying on a network of national anticipation observatories.

Other preparatory activities involved setting up **ESCO** and **European sector skills councils**, which will enable observatories and councils to exchange information and work together on diagnosing the evolution of skills and jobs in specific sectors.

To complete the existing framework of indicators and benchmarks within the open method of coordination for education and training, a benchmark on languages will be proposed by the end of 2012. The benchmark will be based on the results of the first European Survey on Language Competences carried out in Spring 2011 in 12 European countries (BE- all three communities, BG, EE, FR, EL, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, ES, SE)[88] plus Croatia. A benchmark on languages will make it possible to measure progress towards the Barcelona objective of 'mother tongue plus two foreign languages' for all.

Another milestone was the proposal for a new **benchmark on education and training for employability** in the framework of the Commission Staff Working Document on new benchmarks published in May 2011.

Other relevant activities include stakeholder surveys and forums, a workshop on improving the quality of adult learning in 2011, support for the Euroskills occasional skills competition and a series of CEDEFOP events and publications, including the 'Catch the train — Skills, education and jobs' conference in June 2011 and the report on 'Skills for green jobs'.

---

[88] England is going to implement the survey in October-November 2011.

10. STATISTICAL DATA AND ANALYSIS

10.1. A revised framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the ET 2020 strategic objectives

On 25 May 2007 the Council adopted the following coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training.[89]

Table 1: 2007 core indicators

1.	Participation in pre-school education
2.	Special needs education
3.	Early school leavers
4.	Literacy in reading, maths and science
5.	Language skills
6.	ICT skills
7.	Civic skills
8.	**Learning to learn**
9.	Upper secondary attainment of young people
10.	Professional development of teachers **and trainers**
11.	**Higher education graduates**
12.	Cross-national mobility of students
13.	Participation of adults in lifelong learning
14.	Adults' skills
15.	Educational attainment of the population
16.	Investment in education and training

Since the adoption of this framework in 2007, there have been some major policy developments: in May 2009 the Council adopted Conclusions on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training ('ET 2020'),[90] while in 2010 the Commission adopted — and the Council endorsed — the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

These developments call for the framework of indicators to be updated accordingly.

The Council Conclusions on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET2020) established four **strategic objectives** or areas for European cooperation:

(1) Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality.

(2) Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training.

(3) Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship.

(4) Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

---

[89] Official Journal C 311 p.13-15 of 21.12.2007.

[90] Official Journal C119 P.2-10 of 28.5.2009.

They set five **benchmarks**, to be reached **by 2020**:

– *at least 95% of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education;*

– *the share of low-achieving 15-years olds in reading, maths and science should be less than 15%;*

 the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%;

– *the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40%;*

– *an average of at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning.*

The last benchmarks on early school leaving and tertiary attainment have subsequently been adopted as a headline target of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Council also invited the Commission to develop **new benchmarks** in the areas of mobility, employability and language learning and to **review the existing framework of indicators**, adjusting it to the new strategic objectives and priorities.[91]

In November 2011, the Council adopted conclusions establishing a sixth benchmark - on mobility – which is defined as follows:

– *By 2020, an EU average of at least 20 % of higher education graduates should have had a period of higher education-related study or training (including work placements) abroad, representing a minimum of 15 ECTS credits or lasting a minimum of three months.*

– *By 2020, an EU average of at least 6 % of 18-34 year olds with an initial vocational education and training qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks[92], or less if documented by Europass*

Review of the framework of indicators

Most of the core indicators adopted in 2007 are still relevant and match the ET 2020 strategic objectives. However, in order to take policy developments into account, it would be appropriate to **remove** one indicator area, **add** a new one and **adjust** the formulation in three other areas. This also takes into account the fact that, in the case of several indicators, the development of new surveys has changed the situation regarding the availability of data.

---

[91]   Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') (2009/C 119/02).

[92]   = 10 working days

Indicator areas removed

The indicator *'Upper secondary attainment of young people'* should be removed from the list.

The educational attainment of young people is captured by the indicator on the educational attainment of the population, which allows for a breakdown by age group and levels of education, including upper secondary attainment level, as well as by orientation of education: general education or vocational education and training (VET).

New indicator area

- *'Education and training for employability'*

In its conclusions on ET 2020, the Council asked the Commission to work on developing possible new benchmarks relating to two policy issues not hitherto covered, namely: the role of education and training in raising people's employability; and learning mobility. In April 2011, the Commission responded to this request in a staff working paper[93] by proposing a **concrete indicator measuring the transition between education and training and employment.**

Indicator areas adjusted:

The formulation of the indicator *'cross-national mobility of students'* should be modified to *'cross-national learning mobility'* in order to align to the mobility benchmark adopted by the Council in November 2011.

The indicator *'learning to learn'* should be enlarged to *'cross-curricular competences'*, including not only learning to learn, but also creativity and entrepreneurship. The areas of creativity and entrepreneurship are referred to specifically in the ET2020 Council Conclusions.

To capture VET better, it would be appropriate to introduce a specific reference to *'Attainment levels in initial VET'* in the breakdown of the indicator *'Educational attainment of the population'*. This would be in line with the Bordeaux Communiqué (2008), which stressed the need to continue to work on improving the scope, comparability and reliability of VET statistics and to develop a more explicit VET component within the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks. In the Bruges Communiqué (2010), Member States stated that monitoring is an integral part of the VET strategy of the European Union and underlined the importance of obtaining reliable and timely data on initial VET students, mobility and employability.

Core indicators and strategic objectives

The new set of **sixteen core indicators** could be linked to the four ET2020 strategic objectives as outlined in the table below.

Table 2: 16 core indicators and corresponding ET2020 strategic objectives

---

[93] SEC(2011) 670 final.

Indicator title	ET 2020 objective	Status
Europe 2020 Headline targets supported by national targets		
Tertiary educational attainment (tertiary graduates)	II	Confirmed
Early school leavers (Early leavers from education and training)	III	Confirmed
European benchmarks adopted within the ET 2020 framework		
Participation of adults in lifelong learning	I	Revision of the reference period to be studied
Cross-national learning mobility	I	New agreed benchmark (November 2011)
Literacy in reading, maths and science	II	Confirmed
Participation in pre-school education	III	Confirmed
New European benchmarks proposed within the ET 2020 framework		
Education and training for employability	II	Foreseen for adoption in 2012
Foreign language skills	II	Possible new benchmark to be proposed in 2012, depending on the results of SurveyLang.
European indicators within the ET 2020 framework		
Adults' skills	II	Confirmed
Educational attainment of the population	II	Confirmed (it is intended to be broken down to cover initial vocational education and training and upper secondary general education from 2014 based on ISCED 2011).
Professional development of teachers and trainers	II	Confirmed
Investment in education and training	II	Confirmed
Special needs education	III	The specific indicator needs to be further defined.

Civic skills	III	The specific indicator needs to be further defined.
ICT skills	IV	The specific indicator needs to be defined.
Cross-curricular competences (learning to learn, creativity and entrepreneurship	IV	The specific indicator needs to be defined.

Monitoring progress and performance

A succinct annual report 'Education and Training Monitor' will replace the existing 'progress report' and set out progress on the ET2020 benchmarks and core indicators and the corresponding Europe 2020 headline target on education and training, including the national targets. The purpose of this report will be to provide data and research findings to underpin European cooperation on education and training and to support the analysis of progress made towards the Country specific recommendations under Europe 2020.

The analysis will reflect:

– the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks;

– the outcome of the quantitative analysis of the Joint Assessment Framework to monitor the Employment Guidelines under the Europe 2020 strategy;

– the outcome of an examination of the progress made towards the national targets set within the framework of the European headline target on early school leaving/tertiary completion;

– the contextual, qualitative information underpinning progress (or bottlenecks) in achieving the ET2020 benchmarks.

The Monitor will highlight examples of good performance and progress that have the potential to inspire others to improve. Moreover, the Monitor will point to possible areas for the exchange of information, experience and mutual learning, the core purpose of ET 2020, and to areas where concerted action across Member States, as envisaged under Europe 2020, could transform Europe's educational performance. The Monitor will be accompanied by country fact sheets, reporting on the performance and progress of individual countries.

Table 3: Overview of indicator framework and data sources

Existing indicators	Adjusted indicators	Data source (for 2011 indicators)
I. Indicators which can be based on existing data and whose definition is already broadly established		
Participation in pre-school education		Eurostat (UOE)
Early school leavers (Early leavers from education and training)		Eurostat (LFS)
Literacy in reading, maths and science		OECD (PISA)
Professional development of teachers and trainers		OECD (TALIS)
Participation of adults in lifelong learning		Eurostat (LFS)
Higher education graduates		Eurostat (LFS, UOE)
Cross-national mobility of students	Cross-national learning mobility (graduates from HE and IVET)	Higher education: Eurostat (UOE) VET: (source to be defined)
Educational attainment of the population (will be broken down to cover Initial Vocational Education and Training and upper secondary general education).		Eurostat (LFS)
Investment in education and training		Eurostat (UOE)
-	Education and training for employability	Eurostat (LFS)
II. Indicators which can be largely based on existing data and whose definition needs further clarification		
Special needs education		Special needs agency, and Eurostat (UOE)

Existing indicators	Adjusted indicators	Data source (for 2011 indicators)
	ICT skills	Eurostat (ICT Survey), from 2014: IEA (ICILS)
	Civic skills	IEA (ICCS)
III. Indicators whose data are still being developed in cooperation with other international organisations.		
	Adults' skills	OECD (PIAAC) from 2013
IV. Indicators still being developed, which would be based on data from already available survey instruments		
	Language skills	European pilot Survey on language competences based on SurveyLang 2012
Learning to learn skills	Cross-curricular competences (learning to learn, creativity and entrepreneurship)	To be defined

10.2. Performance on the headline target of the Europe 2020 strategy

Early school leavers (early leavers from education and training)

Trends: In the 27 Member States of the European Union the share of early school leavers (population 18-24) declined from 17.6 % in 2000 to 14.4 % in 2009 and 14.1 % in 2010 (females: 12.2 %. males: 16.0 %).

Best EU performers: Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia

	All			Males	Females
	2000	2009	2010	2010	2010
EU 27	**17.6**	**14.4**	**14.1**	16.0	12.2
Belgium	13.8	11.1	11.9	13.8	10.0
Bulgaria	20.5 (01)	14.7	13.9	13.2	14.5
Czech Republic	5.7 (02)	5.4	4.9	4.9	4.8
Denmark	11.7	10.6	10.7	13.6	7.5
Germany	14.6	11.1	11.9	12.7	11.0
Estonia	15.1	13.9	11.6	15.2u	:
Ireland	14.6 (02)	11.3	10.5	12.6	8.4
Greece	18.2	14.5	13.7	16.5	10.8
Spain	29.1	31.2	28.4	33.5	23.1
France	13.3	12.3	12.8	15.4	10.3
Italy	25.1	19.2	18.8	22.0	15.4
Cyprus	18.5	11.7	12.6	16.2	9.8
Latvia	16.9(02)	13.9	13.3	17.2	9.4
Lithuania	16.5	8.7	8.1	9.9	6.2u
Luxembourg	16.8	7.7	7.1u	8.0u	6.0u
Hungary	13.9	11.2	10.5	11.5	9.5
Malta	54.2	36.8	36.9p	41.0p	32.4p
Netherlands	15.4	10.9	10.1b	12.2b	7.9b
Austria	10.2	8.7	8.3	8.4	8.2
Poland	7.4 (01)	5.3	5.4	7.2	3.5
Portugal	43.6	31.2	28.7	32.7	24.6
Romania	22.9	16.6	18.4	18.6	18.2
Slovenia	6.4 (01)	5.3u	5u	6.4u	3.3u
Slovakia	6.7 (02)	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.9
Finland	9.0	9.9	10.3	11.6i	9i
Sweden	7.3	10.7	9.7p	10.9p	8.5p
UK	18.2	15.7	14.9	15.8	14.0
Croatia	8.0 (02)	3.9 u	3.9u	4.9u	2.8u
Iceland	29.8	21.4	22.6	26.0	19.0
MK*	:	16.2	15.5	13.7	17.5
Turkey	:	44.3	43.1	37.8	47.9
Norway	12.9	17.6	17.4	21.4	13.2

Source: Eurostat (LFS) b = break in series, p = provisional u= unreliable,: = not available, (01) = 2001, (02) = 2002, *MK = former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

1.2 Tertiary attainment

Trends: Tertiary attainment of 30-34 year olds continuously increased from 22.4 % in 2000 to 33.6 % (females: 37.2 %, males 30.0 %) in 2010 and hence by over 10 percentage points.

Best EU performers: Ireland, Denmark and Luxembourg

	All			Males	Females
	2000	2009	2010	2010	2010
EU 27	**22.4**	**32.3**	**33.6**	30.0	37.2
Belgium	35.2	42.0	44.4	39.0	50.0
Bulgaria	19.5	27.9	27.7	20.7	35.5
Czech Republic	13.7	17.5	20.4	18.6	22.3
Denmark	32.1	48.1	47.0	42.2	52.1
Germany	25.7	29.4	29.8	29.9i	29.7i
Estonia	30.8	35.9	40.0	32.2	47.7
Ireland	27.5	49.0	49.9	44.4	55.3
Greece	25.4	26.5	28.4	25.7	31.4
Spain	29.2	39.4	40.6	35.7	45.9
France	27.4	43.3	43.5	39.3	47.7
Italy	11.6	19.0	19.8	15.5	24.2
Cyprus	31.1	44.7	45.1	41.3	48.9
Latvia	18.6	30.1	32.3	23.4	41.4
Lithuania	42.6	40.6	43.8	36.3	51.2
Luxembourg	21.2	46.6p	46.1p	44.8p	47.4p
Hungary	14.8	23.9	25.7	21.0	30.7
Malta	7.4	21.1p	18.6p	14.6u	22.7p
Netherlands	26.5	40.5	41.4b	38.4b	44.4b
Austria	:	23.5	23.5	22.5	24.5
Poland	12.5	32.8	35.3	29.8	40.8
Portugal	11.3	21.1	23.5	17.7	29.4
Romania	8.9	16.8	18.1	16.7	19.6
Slovenia	18.5	31.6	34.8	26.4	44.0
Slovakia	10.6	17.6	22.1	18.2	26.2
Finland	40.3	45.9	45.7	37.7	54.0
Sweden	31.8	43.9p	45.8	39.8	52.1
UK	29.0	41.5	43.0	40.9	45.1
Croatia	16.2(02)	20.5u	22.6	19.0u	26.4u
Iceland	32.6	41.8	40.9	34.5	47.5
MK*	:	14.3	17.1	16.2	18.0
Turkey	:	14.7	15.5	17.3	13.6
Norway	37.3	47.0	47.3	39.7	55.2

Source: Eurostat (LFS), b = break in series, p = provisional u= unreliable,: = not available, (02) = 2002, *MK = former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

10.3. Performance on ET 2020 benchmarks

Pre-school participation

Trends: Pre-school participation has increased significantly by more than 6 percentage points since 2000. France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain have the highest participation rates. Recent figures continue to show a small increase to 92.5 %.

Best EU performers: Belgium, France, Netherlands

	2000	2008	2009
EU 27	**85.2**	**91.2**	**91.7**
Belgium	99.1	99.5	99.3
Bulgaria	73.4	78.4	78.5
Czech Republic	90.0	90.9	90.0
Denmark	95.7	91.8	91.9
Germany	82.6	95.6	96.0
Estonia	87.0	95.1	95.7
Ireland	75.0	72.5	73.4
Greece	69.3	70.2	:
Spain	100	99.0	99.3
France	100	100	100
Italy	100	98.8	98.2
Cyprus	64.7	88.5	86.4
Latvia	65.4	88.9	89.6
Lithuania	60.6	77.8	79.6
Luxembourg	94.7	94.3	94.6
Hungary	93.9	94.6	94.8
Malta	100	97.8	93.9
Netherlands	99.5	99.5	99.5
Austria	84.6	90.3	91.3
Poland	58.3	67.5	70.9
Portugal	78.9	87.0	88.2
Romania	67.6	82.8	82.3
Slovenia	85.2	90.4	91.3
Slovakia	76.1	79.1	77.9
Finland	55.2	70.9	71.9
Sweden	83.6	94.6	94.7
UK	100	97.3	97.3
Croatia	:	68.0	68.8
Iceland	91.8	96.2	95.1
MK*	17.4	28.5	28.5
Turkey	11.6	34.4	32.5
Liechtenstein	69.3	83.2	85.9
Norway	79.7	95.6	96.6

Source: Eurostat (UOE);: = not available, *MK = former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Low achievers

a) Reading

Trends: In the European Union (comparable data available for 18 countries) performance improved from 21.3 % low performers in reading in 2000 to 20.0 % (girls: 13.3 %, boys: 26.6 %) in 2009.

Best EU performers: Finland, Estonia and the Netherlands

	All				Boys 2009	Girls 2009
Figure 2.2a: Low achievers in reading, % below level 2						
	2000	2003	2006	2009		
EU 18 countries	**21.3**	**:**	**24.1**	**20.0**	**26.6**	**13.4**
EU 25 countries	**:**	**:**	**23.1**	**19.6**	**25.9**	**13.3**
Belgium	19.0	17.9	19.4	17.7	21.5	13.8
Bulgaria	40.3	:	51.1	41.0	52.0	29.1
Czech Republic	17.5	19.4	24.8	23.1	30.8	14.3
Denmark	17.9	16.5	16.0	15.2	19.0	11.5
Germany	22.6	22.3	20.0	18.5	24.0	12.6
Estonia	:	:	13.6	13.3	18.9	7.3
Ireland	11.0	11.0	12.1	17.2	23.1	11.3
Greece	24.4	25.2	27.7	21.3	29.7	13.2
Spain	16.3	21.1	25.7	19.6	24.4	14.6
France	15.2	17.5	21.7	19.8	25.7	14.2
Italy	18.9	23.9	26.4	21.0	28.9	12.7
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	:	:
Latvia	30.1	18.0	21.2	17.6	26.6	8.7
Lithuania	:	:	25.7	24.3	35.5	13.0
Luxembourg	(35.1)	22.7	22.9	26.0	32.9	19.1
Hungary	19.0	17.9	19.4	17.7	23.6	11.4
Malta	:	:	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	(9.5)	11.5	15.1	14.3	17.9	10.7
Austria	19.3	20.7	21.5	27.5	35.2	20.3
Poland	23.2	16.8	16.2	15.0	22.6	7.5
Portugal	26.3	22.0	24.9	17.6	24.7	10.8
Romania	41.3	:	53.5	40.4	50.7	30.4
Slovenia	:	:	16.5	21.2	31.3	10.7
Slovakia	:	24.9	27.8	22.3	32.0	12.5
Finland	7.0	5.7	4.8	8.1	13.0	3.2
Sweden	12.6	13.3	15.3	17.4	24.2	10.5
United Kingdom	(12.8)	:	19.0	18.4	23.1	14.0
Croatia	:	:	21.5	22.5	31.2	12.6
Iceland	14.5	18.5	20.5	16.8	23.8	9.9
MK*	:	:	:	:	:	:
Turkey	:	36.8	32.2	24.5	33.4	15.0
Liechtenstein	22.1	10.4	14.3	15.6	21.2	9.4
Norway	17.5	18.2	22.4	14.9	21.4	8.4

Source: OECD (PISA) ( ) = not comparable.

Cyprus and Malta have not yet participated in the survey. EU result: for 18 countries with comparable data.

b)   Mathematics

Trends: In the European Union (comparable data available for 25 countries) performance improved from 24.0 % low performers in mathematics in 2006 to 22.2 % (girls: 23.5 %, boys: 21.0 %) in 2009.

Best EU performers: Finland, Estonia and the Netherlands

Figure 2.2b: Low achievers in mathematics, % below level 2				

	% low achievers in mathematics			
	All		Boys	Girls
	2006	2009	2009	2009
EU 25 countries	**24.0**	**22.2**	**21.0**	**23.5**
Belgium	17.3	19.1	16.8	21.4
Bulgaria	53.3	47.1	48.2	45.9
Czech Republic	19.2	22.3	21.7	23.1
Denmark	13.6	17.1	14.7	19.4
Germany	19.9	18.6	17.2	20.2
Estonia	12.1	12.7	11.9	13.5
Ireland	16.4	20.8	20.6	21.0
Greece	32.3	30.3	28.4	32.1
Spain	24.7	23.7	21.4	26.1
France	22.3	22.5	21.6	23.4
Italy	32.8	24.9	23.5	26.4
Cyprus	:	:	:	:
Latvia	20.7	22.6	23.2	22.0
Lithuania	23.0	26.2	28.1	24.4
Luxembourg	22.8	23.9	22.2	25.7
Hungary	21.2	22.3	21.7	22.9
Malta	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	11.5	13.4	11.2	15.6
Austria	20.0	23.2	21.3	25.1
Poland	19.8	20.5	21.2	19.9
Portugal	30.7	23.7	22.6	24.7
Romania	52.7	47.0	46.9	47.2
Slovenia	17.7	20.3	20.9	19.7
Slovakia	20.9	21.0	21.4	20.7
Finland	6.0	7.8	8.1	7.5
Sweden	18.3	21.1	21.4	20.8
United Kingdom	19.8	20.2	17.5	22.8
Croatia	28.6	33.2	31.8	34.6
Iceland	16.8	17.0	17.9	16.1
Turkey	52.1	42.1	40.4	44.1
Liechtenstein	13.2	9.5	7.7	11.5
Norway	22.2	18.2	18.0	18.3

Source: OECD (PISA); average scores for 16 EU countries

c) Science

Trends: In the European Union (comparable data available for 25 countries) performance improved from 20.3 % low performers in mathematics in 2006 to 17.7 % (girls: 16.8 %, boys: 18.6 %) in 2009.

Best EU performers: Finland, Estonia and Poland

Figure 2.2c: Low achievers in science, % below level 2

	Share of low achievers			
	All		Boys	Girls
	2006	2009	2009	2009
EU 25 countries	**20.3**	**17.7**	**18.6**	**16.8**
Belgium	17.0	18.0	17.9	18.2
Bulgaria	42.6	38.8	43.3	34.0
Czech Republic	15.5	17.3	17.9	16.5
Denmark	18.4	16.6	15.2	17.9
Germany	15.4	14.8	15.0	14.5
Estonia	7.7	8.3	8.6	8.1
Ireland	15.5	15.2	16.0	14.3
Greece	24.0	25.3	28.2	22.4
Spain	19.6	18.2	18.3	18.2
France	21.2	19.3	20.5	18.0
Italy	25.3	20.6	22.3	18.9
Cyprus	:	:	:	:
Latvia	17.4	14.7	16.8	12.6
Lithuania	20.3	17.0	20.0	14.0
Luxembourg	22.1	23.7	24.0	23.4
Hungary	15.0	14.1	15.3	12.9
Malta	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	13.0	13.2	12.3	14.0
Austria	16.3	:	21.6	20.3
Poland	17.0	13.1	15.5	10.8
Portugal	24.5	16.5	18.4	14.7
Romania	46.9	41.4	44.7	38.2
Slovenia	13.9	14.8	17.8	11.6
Slovakia	20.2	19.3	20.4	18.2
Finland	4.1	6.0	7.5	4.5
Sweden	16.4	19.1	20.3	17.9
United Kingdom	16.7	15.0	14.6	15.5
Croatia	17.0	18.5	20.5	16.3
Iceland	20.6	17.9	19.3	16.6
Turkey	46.6	30.0	33.3	26.5
Liechtenstein	12.9	11.3	9.2	13.7
Norway	21.1	15.8	16.9	14.5

Source: OECD (PISA)

*MK: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; see Annex 2

Adult lifelong learning participation

Trends: At European level participation increased from 7.1% in 2000 to 9.1% in 2010 (population 25-64; males 8.5%. females: 10.2%). A considerable part of this increase was, however, a result of breaks in time series around 2003. From 2009 to 2010, participation slightly decreased.

Best EU performers: Denmark, Sweden and Finland

	All			Males	Females
	2005	2009	2010	2010	2010
EU 27	**9.8**	**9.3 p**	**9.1**	8.3	10.0
Belgium	8.3	6.8	7.2	7.0	7.4
Bulgaria	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.3
Czech Republic	5.6	6.8	7.5	7.3	7.7
Denmark	27.4	31.6	32.8	26.3	39.3
Germany	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.6
Estonia	5.9	10.5	10.9	8.6	13.0
Ireland	7.4	6.3	6.7	6.3	7.2
Greece	1.9	3.3	3	3.1	2.9
Spain	10.5	10.4	10.8	10.0	11.6
France	7.1	6.0	5	4.6	5.4
Italy	5.8	6.0	6.2	5.9	6.5
Cyprus	5.9	7.8	7.7	7.5	7.9
Latvia	7.9	5.3	5	3.4	6.5
Lithuania	6.0	4.5	4	3.2	4.8
Luxembourg	8.5	13.4 p	13.4	12.8	14.0
Hungary	3.9	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.9
Malta	5.3	5.8 p	5.7	5.2	6.1
Netherlands	15.9	17.0	16.5 b	15.9b	17.1b
Austria	12.9	13.8	13.7	12.7	14.7
Poland	4.9	4.7	5.3	4.8	5.9
Portugal	4.1	6.5	5.8 p	5.8p	5.7p
Romania	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.4
Slovenia	15.3	14.6	16.2	14.1	18.3
Slovakia	4.6	2.8	2.8	2.2	3.3
Finland	22.5	22.1	23.0	18.9	27.1
Sweden	17.4 p	22.2 p	24.5	18.0	31.1
UK	27.6	20.1	19.4	16.4	22.4
Croatia	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.2u	1.8u
Iceland	25.7	25.1	25.2	21.1	29.4
MK*	:	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.4
Turkey	1.9	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.4
Norway	17.8	18.1	17.8	16.4	19.2

Source: Eurostat (LFS) b = break in series, p = provisional u= unreliable,: = not available, *MK = former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Overview of progress towards the 2020 benchmarks

Figure 2.4

Trends towards the five benchmarks for 2020 (2000-2010)

Progress towards the 2020 education benchmarks, Evolution 2000-2010

Pre-primary participation

progress required

Tertiary attainment

Early school leavers

Low achievers in reading, maths, science

Adult lifelong learning
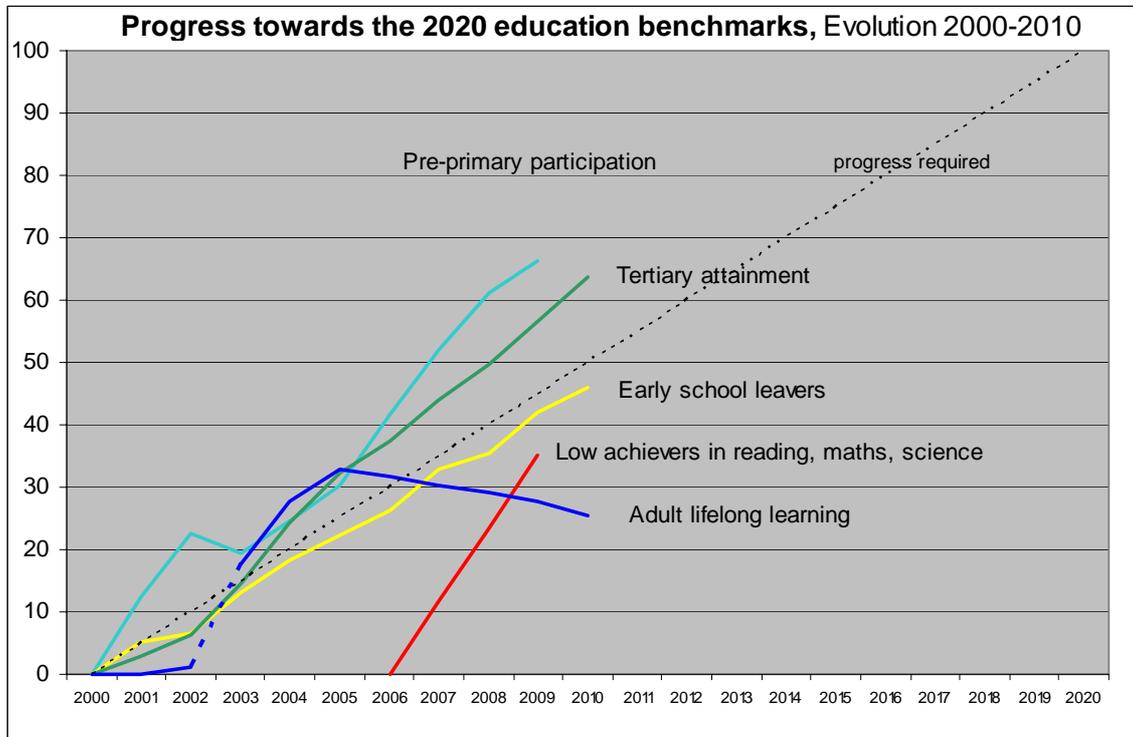
Source: European Commission — DG EAC

3. The future benchmarks

3.1 Learning mobility

The indicators to monitor the learning mobility benchmarks adopted on 28 November 2011 will be identified during 2012. The following shows a selection of available data on learning mobility.

a) Long-term (diploma) mobility in tertiary education

Trends: At European level the percentage of students studying in another EU-27, EEA or candidate country (long-term mobility) increased from 2.1 % in 2000 to 2.7 % in 2009.

Best EU performers: Luxembourg and Cyprus are the countries with the highest share of students studying abroad.

Figure 3.1.1: Percentage of all tertiary students (ISCED levels 5 and 6) enrolled outside their country of origin

	Students (ISCED levels 5 and 6) studying in another EU-27, EEA or candidate country — as % of all students		
	2000	2008	2009
EU-27	2.1	2.7	2.7
Belgium	2.4	2.9	2.7
Bulgaria	3.2	7.9	7.8
Czech Republic	1.3	2.6	2.7
Denmark	2.7	2.4	2.5
Germany	1.8	3.5	3.6
Estonia	2.5	4.9	5.2
Ireland	9.4	17.7	14.8
Greece	12.4	5.2	:
Spain	1.1	1.2	1.3
France	1.8	2.3	2.4
Italy	1.7	1.8	2.1
Cyprus	46.5	58.4	36.4
Latvia	1.3	2.9	3.3
Lithuania	1.8	3.6	4.0
Luxembourg	74.5u	:	:
Hungary	1.7	1.8	2.1
Malta	8.2	10.9	11.4
Netherlands	1.9	2.3	2.5
Austria	3.8	4.3	4.4
Poland	0.9	1.8	2.0
Portugal	2.3	4.0	4.4
Romania	1.5	2.0	2.3
Slovenia	2.2	2.1	2.2
Slovakia	3	10.7	11.4
Finland	3.2	2.7	2.8
Sweden	2.7	3.0	3.2
United Kingdom	0.6	0.6	0.6
Croatia	:	6.0	6.4
Iceland	16.9	18.2	19.5
MK*	6.2	8.4	7.9
Turkey	3.3	1.5	1.5
Liechtenstein	:	67.9	71.8
Norway	4.7	5.1	5.3

b)   Short term (credit mobility) in tertiary education

Trends: At European level Erasmus mobility has increased from 106 400 students in 1999/2000 to 159 750 students in 2008/09 or by about 50 %.

Best EU performers: Luxembourg, Malta and Spain have the highest number of Erasmus students sent per 100 students, while Malta, Denmark and Ireland have the highest relative figures as regards students received.

Figure 3.1.2: Mobility of Erasmus students, 2008/09

| | Students sent 2008/09 | Students received 2008/09 | Per 100 students 2008/09 | |
			Students sent	Students received
EU-27	159750	159750	0.8	0.8
Belgium	5041	5283	1.2	1.2
Bulgaria	1283	393	0.5	0.1
Czech Republic	5440	3764	1.3	0.9
Denmark	1648	5273	0.7	2.2
Germany	23407	17722	1.0	0.7
Estonia	551	591	0.8	0.9
Ireland	1421	4061	0.8	2.2
Greece	2737	1946	0.5	0.3
Spain	24399	28175	1.4	1.6
France	23560	20955	1.1	1.0
Italy	17754	15530	0.9	0.8
Cyprus	144	234	0.5	0.8
Latvia	1104	401	0.9	0.3
Lithuania	2425	1117	1.2	0.5
Luxembourg	426	53	14.2	1.8
Hungary	3518	2205	0.9	0.6
Malta	142	355	1.4	3.4
Netherlands	4902	6894	0.8	1.1
Austria	4053	4039	1.3	1.3
Poland	11784	4528	0.5	0.2
Portugal	4834	5732	1.3	1.5
Romania	3064	990	0.3	0.1
Slovenia	1132	991	1.0	0.9
Slovakia	1703	787	0.7	0.3
Finland	3436	6115	1.2	2.1
Sweden	2413	8206	0.6	1.9
United Kingdom	7429	16065	0.3	0.7
Iceland	186	353	1.1	2.1
Turkey	6920	2360	0.2	0.1
Liechtenstein	20	34	2.7	4.5
Norway	1317	3041	0.6	1.4

Source: European Commission, DG Education and Culture

113

b) Incoming mobility (long-term mobility) in tertiary education

Trends: At European level the share of foreign tertiary students increased from 5 % in 2000 to 8 % in 2009 (no European data available for mobile tertiary students).

Countries with the highest levels of incoming mobility: Luxembourg, Cyprus, the UK and Austria have the highest share of foreign tertiary students, while the UK, Cyprus (and probably Luxembourg) have the highest shares of incoming mobile tertiary students.

Figure 3.1.3: Foreign and mobile tertiary students as % of all tertiary students (ISCED levels 5 and 6) enrolled in the country (2000-2007)

	Foreign tertiary students			Mobile tertiary students			Annual growth in number of foreign tertiary students
	2000	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2000-2008
EU-27	5.0	7.8	8.0	:	:	:	8.3
Belgium	:	12.2	11.8	6.4	8.6	8.7	1.3
Bulgaria	3.1	3.5	3.5	:	3.5	3.4	1.8
Czech Rep.	2.2	7.1	7.4	5.6	:	:	22.5
Denmark	6.8	8.3	9.6	5.5	2.8	5.4	5.6
Germany	9.1	10.9	10.6	:	9.3	9.0	3.6
Estonia	1.6	3.6	3.7	1.4	1.5	1.6	27.9
Ireland	4.6	8.8	8.6	:	:	:	8.3
Greece	:	4.2	:	:	:	:	21.0
Spain	1.4	3.6	4.7	1.8	2.1	2.7	13.0
France	6.8	11.2	11.5	10.8 (05)	:	:	7.9
Italy	1.4	3.4	3.3	:	:	:	13.7
Cyprus	19.4	30.2	34.7	25.1	27.9	31.8	21.1
Latvia	6.6	1.2	1.3	1.1	:	:	-10.2
Lithuania	0.4	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.4	1.3	25.8
Luxembourg	:	43.8	:	:	:	:	:
Hungary	3.2	3.7	4.3	3.0	3.3	3.7	4.7
Malta	5.6	4.6	4.6	0.0	:	:	4.2
Netherlands	2.9	9.8	7.3	4.7	7.8	3.9	21.1
Austria	12.4	18.7	19.4	12.4	:	:	7.7
Poland	0.4	0.7	0.8	:	:	:	12.0
Portugal	3.0	4.9	4.8	:	2.1	2.5	7.6
Romania	2.8	1.3	1.4	:	:	0.9	1.5
Slovenia	0.9	1.5	1.7	1.0	1.2	1.8	10.1
Slovakia	1.2	2.4	2.8	0.9	2.3	2.7	24.3
Finland	2.1	3.7	4.3	:	3.1	3.7	9.3
Sweden	7.4	8.5	9.4	5.4	5.6	6.7	4.3
UK	11.0	19.9	20.7	14.9	14.7	15.3	10.0
Croatia	:	0.7	0.8	2.5	:	0;5	8.6
Iceland	4.2	4.9	5.5	:	4.3	4.6	10.5
MK*	0.7	2.0	2.2	1.5	2.0	:	:
Turkey	1.7	0.8	0.8	:	:	:	2.5
Liechtenstein	:	87.7	88.9	86.5	82.7	74.4	16.9
Norway	4.6	7.6	8.0	2.2	2.1	2.3	8.1
United States	3.6	3.4 (07)	:	3.4	3.4	3.5	:
Japan	1.5	3.2	3.4	2.9	2.9	3.1	10.4

Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

Additional notes: DE, SI: Students in advanced research programmes (ISCED level 6) in these countries are excluded.
RO 2000: data exclude ISCED level 6.
Mobile tertiary students: students with residence or prior education in a foreign country
*MK: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; see Annex 2

3.2 Contribution of education to employability

The graph below illustrates the challenges of integrating young people during the recession. The share of 20-34 year olds in employment deteriorated between 2008 and 2009. While for the highly educated, the share in employment decreased by approximately 3 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 (from 87% in 2008 to 83.8 %), for those educated to a medium level it decreased by close to 4.5 percentage points (from 76.7.6 % to 72.1 %). Likewise, for the less educated, more than half of the 8 percentage points' decrease since 2006 (from 61.3 % in 2006 to 53.3 % in 2009) occurred between 2008 and 2009.[94]

3.2.1 Employment of graduates 1-3 years after graduation

Figure 2

Percentage of 20-34 year-olds employed during the 3 years following their highest graduation, by level of educational attainment
(Source: CRELL computations based on Eurostat, EU-LFS)
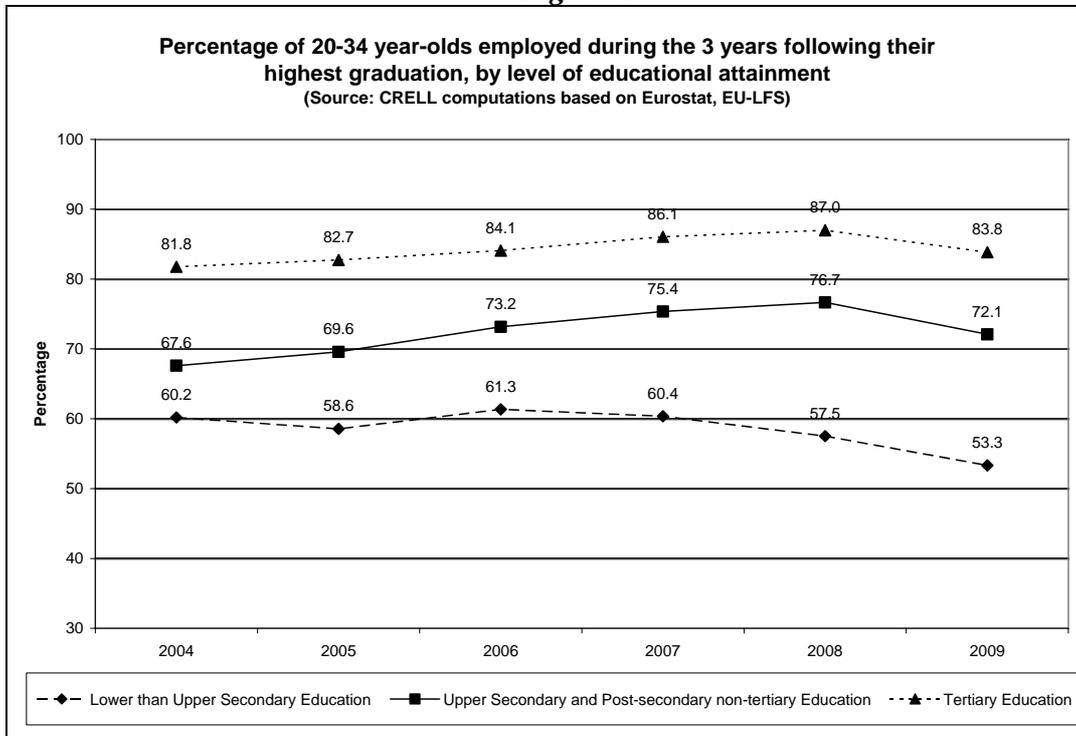
Note: Lower than Upper Secondary Education corresponds to ISCED levels 0-2 (including 3c short); Upper Secondary and Post-secondary non-tertiary Education to ISCED levels 3-4 and Tertiary Education to ISCED levels 5-6.

---

[94] For an overview of country performance see Annex 2, table 1.

Employability is measured as an average of employment rates 1, 2 and 3 years after highest graduation.

Trends: At European level, employment rates tended to increase until 2008, especially for those with upper secondary attainment. In the recession year 2009 employment rates decreased at all levels.

Best EU performers: Two European Member States (Malta and Romania) show high employment rates (> 80 %) for those with only lower secondary education.
Member States with high employment rates (> 80 %) 1-3 years after graduation) for those with upper secondary attainment include Austria, Denmark, Malta and the Netherlands.
Member States with high employment rates (> 90 %) 1-3 years after graduation) for those with upper tertiary attainment include Austria, Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands.

	Lower than Upper Secondary Education						Upper Secondary and Post-secondary non-tertiary Education						Tertiary Education					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	60.2	58.6	61.3	60.4	57.5	53.3	67.6	69.6	73.2	75.4	76.7	72.1	81.8	82.7	84.1	86.1	87.0	83.8
AT	64.0	44.7	65.0	69.6	73.0	m	75.9	82.9	85.5	85.9	86.5	83.8	90.0	88.3	89.9	91.7	94.1	90.8
BE	63.6	58.6	60.2	68.1	59.8	52.3	79.8	68.1	72.0	73.2	73.6	71.9	88.3	87.2	87.5	88.5	90.8	87.8
BG	m	m	m	m	m	m	54.1	55.4	54.4	60.0	74.1	63.7	76.6	81.1	81.8	85.0	87.2	85.2
CY	81.7	65.8	89.2	75.5	78.7	m	49.7	49.6	59.6	59.9	67.7	61.8	84.7	84.2	82.3	84.6	85.8	82.5
CZ	m	m	m	42.7	21.0	m	m	m	80.9	86.1	87.6	81.7	m	m	87.5	91.2	88.5	89.0
DE	42.9	40.6	48.5	47.7	41.3	43.1	72.5	74.1	76.7	79.2	81.8	79.3	90.6	89.3	91.1	92.1	93.8	93.4
DK	96.5	76.6	73.9	68.4	64.1	m	83.3	84.1	88.5	89.0	89.3	83.1	81.3	88.5	88.7	93.5	89.8	90.4
EE(a)	23.6	31.0	46.2	56.2	69.4	m	77.2	65.5	77.1	78.8	77.7	60.9(a)	63.4	80.7	90.1	90.6	82.4	70.9(a)
ES	71.4	72.6	80.9	79.0	60.3	55.9	73.9	71.9	77.7	81.7	74.5	63.8	78.9	79.9	84.0	87.4	85.1	76.1
FI	m	m	m	m	m	m	64.9	69.7	68.6	77.1	73.6	69.1	83.0	84.7	87.4	85.1	87.5	84.1
FR	58.8	60.5	54.7	59.2	58.9	52.5	74.0	73.8	72.0	73.2	75.3	69.4	79.3	82.8	82.2	84.6	88.5	83.1
GR	80.8	60.3	62.8	64.5	60.4	61.4(a)	59.7	53.7	62.6	64.2	62.9	60.1	67.4	65.3	69.2	69.9	70.8	67.7
HU	22.7	32.7	21.7	25.2	51.1	m	76.0	62.1	71.8	72.9	71.7	66.4	86.0	88.4	87.7	86.9	87.4	84.7
IE	57.1	20.1	46.5	57.5	60.5	m	74.2	77.9	82.0	81.2	79.2	60.8	91.5	89.0	91.4	90.4	88.7	82.8
IT	47.5	53.2	53.9	52.4	45.7	m	58.4	59.5	63.7	62.6	60.5	56.0	67.2	62.6	69.0	70.0	70.5	66.1
LT	m	61.7	50.0	71.8	55.8	m	62.3	67.8	74.7	72.8	67.8	56.9	78.7	87.6	90.4	92.5	87.6	84.6
LU	75.1	74.7	71.4	71.0	61.8	m	87.2	87.6	86.5	87.7	80.1	79.3	92.3	92.9	95.8	88.3	92.9	90.4
LV	28.3	62.8	79.9	77.3	57.8	m	66.7	75.0	73.1	77.9	77.7	59.2	82.8	87.8	85.0	86.5	87.7	82.1
MT(a)	81.5	91.4	65.0	72.8	85.9	m	91.2	91.6	87.0	89.9	93.2	88.1(a)	94.4	93.5	94.2	96.5	95.3	97.8(a)
NL	90.3	64.4	60.6	62.4	64.5	62.8	88.6	89.3	90.7	91.9	91.4	91.3	93.8	95.0	94.5	96.6	95.4	94.2
PL	22.1	17.5	35.9	36.2	44.9	m	50.3	54.4	60.7	64.9	70.1	68.8	80.7	80.9	81.6	84.4	87.0	85.7
PT	79.0	77.1	79.8	78.5	74.0	76.8	77.8	80.4	80.7	79.7	81.9	79.9	85.2	84.7	84.3	82.0	83.2	84.2
RO	49.0	68.8	71.3	62.6	84.5	m	58.9	59.0	62.0	70.7	77.1	69.1	83.3	84.1	86.2	89.0	92.9	85.8
SE	100.0	59.8	63.6	62.6	57.5	55.6(a)	75.5	73.6	77.6	80.2	80.4	74.0	86.5	85.4	88.2	89.9	90.7	89.9
SI(a)	m	m	76.9	m	40.1	42.8	69.9	72.3	77.4	78.0	79.8	73.3(a)	78.3	86.7	84.5	84.9	86.7	88.7(a)
SK	m	m	m	m	m	m	59.1	66.0	71.7	77.8	79.5	67.9	74.6	84.5	87.9	86.4	84.3	83.5
UK	72.7	45.1	60.7	53.7	56.5	49.6	83.9	83.7	84.6	82.1	79.5	74.9	91.0	90.1	87.8	89.3	87.3	84.0

Source: CRELL computations based on Eurostat, EU-LFS.

Notes: m = missing or inconsistent data; (a) = Provisional estimates, i.e. low reliability due to small sample size.

3.3 Languages

Trends: At European level the average number of languages learned per pupil doubled in primary education from 0.5 in 2000 to 1.0 in 2008. In lower secondary education it increased in the same period from 1.3 languages per pupil to 1.4; in general upper secondary from 0.9 to 1.4; and in prevocational and vocational education at ISCED level 3 from 0.9 in 2000 to 1.1 in 2008.

Best EU performers: Luxembourg and Greece are the best performers in primary education, Luxembourg and Finland in secondary education.

Figure 3.3: Average number of foreign languages learned per pupil in general lower and upper secondary education, and in pre/vocational programmes in upper secondary education in 2000 and 2008

Country	ISCED level 2 General	ISCED level 2 General	ISCED level 3 General	ISCED level 3 General	ISCED level 3, prevocational and vocational	ISCED level 3, prevocational and vocational
	2005	2010	2005	2010	2005	2010
EU 27	1.4	1.4 (09)	1.5	1.6 (09)	1.1	1.1 (09)
Belgium	1.2	1.2 (09)	2.2	2.2	1.3	1.3 (09)
Bulgaria	1.2	1.2	1.8	1.7	1.1	1.4
Czech Republic	1.0	1.2 (09)	2.0	2.0 (09)	1.2	1.3 (09)
Denmark	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.6	0.9	0.9
Germany	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	0.5	0.4
Estonia	2.0	2.0 (08)	2.3	2.3 (08)	1.8	1.8 (08)
Ireland	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0
Greece	1.9	2.0 (08)	1.1	1.1 (08)	0.8	:
Spain	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.0 (09)
France	1.5	1.5	2.0 (04)	2.0	1.1 (04)	1.2
Italy	1.4	2.0	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.4
Cyprus	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.2	1.1
Latvia	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	:	1.2
Lithuania	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.5	0.9	1.1
Luxembourg	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	1.9	2.0
Hungary	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4	0.7	0.8
Malta	2.2	:	1.0	:	:	:
Netherlands	2.2	2.1	2.6	1.8	:	:
Austria	1.1	1.1	1.9	1.8	1.3	1.2
Poland	1.1	1.3	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.6
Portugal	1.9	:	0.7	:	0.9	:
Romania	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.2	1.8
Slovenia	1.2	1.4	2.0	2.0	1.3	1.3
Slovakia	1.1	1.4	2.0	2.0	1.3	1.5
Finland	2.2	2.2	2.8	2.7	:	:
Sweden	1.7	1.8	2.2	2.2	1.1	1.1
United Kingdom	1.0	1.0 (09)	0.7	:	:	:
Croatia	1.2	1.5 (09)	2.0	2.0 (09)	1.2	1.3 (09)
Iceland	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.8	0.8	0.6
MK*	1.5	1.8	:	:	:	:
Turkey	:	:	:	:	:	0.9 (09)
Norway	1.5	1.7	:	1.0	:	0.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE
*MK: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; see Annex 2
For notes see: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Foreign_language_learning_statistics

4. Investment

a) Public expenditure

Trends: At European level public spending on education increased from 4.9 % of GDP in 2000 to 5.1 % in 2008.

Countries with the highest spending levels: Denmark and Cyprus are the countries with the highest level of public spending on education (as a percentage of GDP).

Figure Int. 4.1: Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP in European countries

	2000	2007	2008
EU-27	**4.88**	**4.96**	**5.07**
Belgium	:	6.02	6.46
Bulgaria	3.97	4.13	4.61
Czech Republic	3.97	4.20	4.08
Denmark	8.29	7.83	7.75
Germany	4.46	4.50	4.55
Estonia	6.10	4.85	5.67
Ireland	4.28	4.90	5.62
Greece	3.39	:	:
Spain	4.28	4.35	4.62
France	6.03	5.59	5.58
Italy	4.55	4.29	4.58
Cyprus	5.35	6.93	7.41
Latvia	5.64	5.00	5.71
Lithuania	5.90	4.67	4.91
Luxembourg	:	3.15 (1)	:
Hungary	4.42	5.20	5.10
Malta	4.49	:	6.01
Netherlands	4.96	5.32	5.46
Austria	5.74	5.40	5.46
Poland	4.89	4.91	5.09
Portugal	5.42	5.30	4.89
Romania	2.86	4.25	:
Slovenia	:	5.19	5.22
Slovakia	3.93	3.62	3.59
Finland	5.89	5.91	6.13
Sweden	7.21	6.69	6.74
United Kingdom	4.46	5.39	5.36
Croatia	:	4.07	4.33
Iceland	5.81	7.36	7.57
MK*	:	:	:
Turkey	2.59	:	:
Liechtenstein	:	1.92	2.11
Norway	6.74	6.76	6.51
United States	5.03	5.29	5.40
Japan	3.66	3.45	3.44

Data source: Eurostat (table educ_figdp, August 2011)

(:) Missing or not available, *MK: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, (1) tertiary education level not included

b) Private expenditure

Trends: At European level public spending on education increased from 0.63 % of GDP in 2000 to 0.75 % in 2008.

Countries with the highest spending levels: The United Kingdom and Cyprus show the highest levels of private spending on education (> 1 % of GDP)

Figure Int. 4.2: Private spending on education institutions as a percentage of GDP (2000-2008)
Expenditure on educational institutions (all levels of education) from private sources as % of GDP and average annual change

	2000	2007	2008
EU-27	**0.63 i**	**0.73 i**	**0.75**
Belgium	0.42 i	0.34	0.37
Bulgaria	0.65	0.62	0.58
Czech Republic	0.42	0.51	0.57
Denmark	0.27 i	0.53	0.55
Germany	0.97	0.69	0.70
Estonia	:	0.32 i	0.30
Ireland	0.30	0.24 i	0.34
Greece	0.22 i	:	:
Spain	0.60	0.61 i	0.66
France	0.56	0.53	0.60
Italy	0.44	0.40	0.41
Cyprus	2.59	1.27	1.35
Latvia	0.63 i	0.56	0.60
Lithuania	:	0.45	0.52
Luxembourg	:	:	:
Hungary	0.57	:	:
Malta	0.48 i	:	0.31
Netherlands	0.82	0.90	0.92
Austria	0.33	0.48	0.50
Poland	:	0.50 i	0.74
Portugal	0.08 i	0.46 i	0.49
Romania	0.25 i	0.50	:
Slovenia	:	0.73	0.63
Slovakia	0.15 i	0.53 i	0.70
Finland	0.11	0.14	0.15
Sweden	0.19	0.16	0.17
United Kingdom	0.76 i	1.75 i	1.72
Croatia	:	0.35	0.36
Iceland	0.54 i	0.77 i	0.71
MK*	:	:	:
Turkey	0.04 i	:	:
Liechtenstein	:	:	:
Norway	0.08 i	:	0.09
USA	2.23	2.58	2.10
Japan	1.18	1.64	1.66

Data source: Eurostat (table educ_figdp, August 2011)

(i) See: Eurostat database, (:) Missing or not available,
*MK: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia