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Being young in Europe today

2015 edition

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Foreword

Investing in children and youth is the key to making the future prosperous, both economically and socially. In 2009, the European Union set up a Youth Strategy (2010–2018) for more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market, promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. The EU Member States also agreed to place greater emphasis on committing to human capital, hence investing in children from an early age. Quality and inclusive education systems, early childhood education and care as well as increased access to better and safer healthcare for all children are high priorities for the European Union.

The children and youth statistics play an important role in evaluating the progress toward these goals. In order to assist evidence-based policy-making, Eurostat gathers various statistics related to children and young people, ranging from demographic data to health, education, employment, poverty, social inclusion as well as computer and internet usage. A selection of these statistics are analysed in this publication.

This flagship publication on children and young people, focusing on their concerns and interests, also illustrates Eurostat's efforts to be closer to EU citizens by addressing specific themes that are highly relevant for the general public. It aims to provide an insight into the past, current and future situation of our youngest fellow citizens. The objective is to shed the light on what it means 'to be young in Europe today', ranging from attending school and participating in sport and leisure activities, to leaving the parental home and entering the professional life.

I am convinced that the topics covered in this publication are all issues which young people throughout the EU are concerned about. I therefore feel that it will be particularly appealing to young people, parents and teachers.

The emphasis in this publication has been placed on the most recent data available, but analyses of changes over a period of five or ten years have also been presented when relevant. You can find the content of this publication in a richer online format in Statistics Explained and more detailed data can be downloaded from the Eurostat website.

This flagship publication is released along with a more interactive and playful dissemination tool. Our infographic called 'Young Europeans' can be accessed through the Eurostat website. It has been primarily designed for young people aged 16–29 but I encourage all of you to have a look at it, being a really nice addition to this publication.

I hope you enjoy reading this publication.

Mariana Kotzeva
Deputy Director-General and Chief Editor, Eurostat

Abstract

Being young in Europe today presents some of Eurostat's most interesting data on children and young people in the European Union. It gives an insight into the past, current and future situation of our youngest fellow citizens, ranging from attending school and participating in sport and leisure activities, to leaving the parental home and entering the professional life. Data are presented for the European Union and its Member States as well as for the EFTA countries.

Being young in Europe today provides an overview of the wealth of information that is available on Eurostat's website and within its online databases.

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For more information please consult

Eurostat website: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat

Statistics Explained: http://ec.eurostat.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained

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Executive Summary

Executive summary

The EU is growing older…

The European Union (EU) is continuing to age and the share of children and young people in its population has been decreasing continuously over recent years. In 2014, the EU population stood at 507 million people, of whom only 169 million (or 33.3 %) were children or young people (aged under 30). Furthermore, the number of elderly people (aged 65 or more) has been exceeding the number of children (aged under 15) since 2004. Although this ageing phenomenon has been recorded across the world's industrialised societies, it has impacted the EU population more than others. There were however some disparities between individual EU Member States. Whereas Ireland and Cyprus boasted young population shares at around 40 % , other countries such as Italy or Germany recorded shares around the 30 % mark. The proportion of children and young people also varied significantly between EU regions. These proportions are projected to keep decreasing until 2050, to afterwards slowly and continuous increase until 2080 without nevertheless reaching their actual rate.

As a consequence, the median age has risen on average by four months each year over the last two decades in the EU. It stood at 35 years in 1990 and had grown to 42 years in 2013. This was the result of the combination of decreased fertility rates and increased life expectancy.

…while its families are evolving and adapting to changing societies

The share of households with children has generally declined in the EU over the last few years. Single-person households and couples without children made up the majority of households in the EU, although the figures varied between EU Member States.

The EU is a diverse entity, made up of different Member States with their own specific cultural and normative characteristics. Yet despite those differences, features common to all young Europeans have begun to appear, such as the widespread trend of delaying the transition into adulthood. Young people tend indeed to leave the parental home and to get married later than before in all EU Member States. Also more or more babies in the EU have been born outside marriage.

Although these changes that the EU young generation has to face, life satisfaction was the highest among the age group 16-24 in 2013, with an average score of 7.6 on 10 for this age group at the EU level, while the score was 7.1 for the whole EU population.

Young people are also aware of the importance of the physical wellbeing — a majority of them has been practising some kind of physical activity in the last few years. Despite this, health inequality continued to exist in the EU, mainly due to socio-economic differences: people who were less well-off tended to be in poorer health than others.

Health matters…

One of the EU's main objectives is to improve the health inequality situation in Europe, although the general health situation of the EU citizens has been improving continuously over the years. Today's young people are expected to live longer than ever before, the result of a combination of economic development, better education, rising living standards, improved life style and greater access to health services. Infant mortality rates in the EU have decreased by 90 % since 1961.

As far as their self-perceived health status is concerned, the vast majority of young EU citizens rated it as good or very good. However differences according to gender and income levels stood out. Generally speaking, the young EU population was not particularly prone to obesity. On the other hand, smoking was still a regular past-time of young people in the EU, although here again, numbers varied substantially between EU Member States.

…and so does education

In an ever more competitive world economy, a good educational and training system plays an increasingly important role. Over the last few years, the EU has launched a series of initiatives aimed at helping its Member States achieve their goals in terms of better education. These range from early childcare to university education.

Over the years, early childcare has become more and more important to ensure that women can combine their private and professional lives. Although the availability of early childcare facilities has generally improved throughout the EU, the situation was still very diverse between Member States. In 2013, half of children under 3-year old in the EU were cared for only by their parents and informal childcare concerned one in three children of that age.

The enrolment rates for primary and secondary education are very high in the EU Member States, but large discrepancies exist between EU Member States in enrolment for tertiary education, especially in order age groups.

One of the most important assets required to take advantage of the EU single market is language skills: the more languages you speak, the more opportunities you have. Historically, several EU Member States have been providing multilingual education to their pupils. However, more and more countries have been catching up in the last few years. Broader language skills also make student mobility a much easier process (which is also simplified through the popular Erasmus programme). This said language skills are only one of the three basic skills taken into consideration to assess curricular development, the other ones being maths and science skills. In this context, the PISA study is used as an assessment tool to monitor progress across EU Member States and main results of this study are described in this publication.

Looking at tertiary education, an increasing amount of young people graduated with a tertiary degree in 2013 compared to previous years. Among these graduates, a majority were women — a general trend across the EU.

The difficult transition to the labour market

The general perception of the labour market today is one of hardship. Many young people in the EU leaving education in the last few years found it increasingly difficult to get a job. This may explain why an increasing number of young people have opted to spend more time in education before entering the labour market. Improved education seems to be increasingly perceived as providing better job opportunities.

Unemployment of young people has indeed turned into a major problem in some EU Member States, especially those that were hardest hit by the financial and economic crisis of 2008. However, the issue of youth unemployment was a problem for the entire EU in 2013 — 20.9 % of young people aged 25–29 in the EU were neither in employment nor in education and training. The unemployment rate of young people in the EU has increased in the past few years, especially since the 2008 financial and economic crisis. Although unemployment rates varied substantially between Member States, the trends were broadly similar. Young people were also hit by long-term unemployment, especially in EU Member States that were particularly affected by the global financial and economic crisis.

Children's lives in the EU — a mixed picture

Although most children in the EU grew up in favourable conditions, 3 out of every 10 were at risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2013. Certain EU Member States were worse affected than others. The EU has addressed this issue through several initiatives including the recommendation 'Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage'.

Out of all the forms of poverty and social inclusion, monetary poverty was the most widespread among children in the EU in 2013. It was also on the increase, especially since the onset of the 2008 global financial and economic crisis.

There also appeared to be a clear link between the level of education of the parents and the exposure to poverty or social exclusion of their children: the higher the level of education, the smaller the risk of exposure to poverty.

The digital world — opportunities and challenges

In many ways, the digitalisation process is a two-sided coin: although it has revolutionised the way we live our daily lives, it has also opened up a new rift in society, the so-called digital divide. Access to the internet is now within anyone's reach — provided they own or have access to a compatible device — the skills required to use it to its fullest extent however, are not.

The presence of children in an EU household seemed to have a positive impact on the access of these households to the internet. In 2014, nearly 9 out of ten young people aged 16-29 in the EU-28 accessed the internet on a daily basis, which was substantially more than the average for the whole population. The internet was increasingly accessed from mobile devices, such as smartphones, at the expense of computers. The highest proportion of young people using the internet daily was found amongst younger users with a higher level of formal education.

As avid users of digital devices, young people in the EU tended to be more highly ICT skilled than the population as a whole. Data on young people generally indicated a more diligent use of the internet than the general population on a wide array of activities ranging from online gaming to social networking and carrying out civic activities. The challenge for the EU and its Member States is to combine the social and economic benefits they reap from the early take-up of ICT by their young populations with the safe use of these innovative technologies by the most vulnerable members of society.

Introduction

About this publication

In late 2013, Eurostat introduced a new type of publication, the 'flagship publication', with the aim of providing statistical analyses related to important social, economic or environmental phenomena. The goal for these publications was to address specific themes highly relevant for the general public and the European Union policy-making.

Being young in Europe today is part of this new breed of publications and presents some of Eurostat's most interesting data on the state of today's young population in the EU. *Being young in Europe today* does not claim to be an exhaustive publication, but it gives an overview of the wealth of information that is available on Eurostat's website and within its online databases. It provides a balanced set of indicators, with a broad cross-section of information.

What can you find in this publication?

Being young in Europe today is divided into 7 chapters covering population, family and society, health, education, access and participation to the labour market, living conditions and the digital world.

Each chapter contains data and background information relating to a very wide range of European statistics. More information can be found on Eurostat's website, which contains subject-specific publications and online databases.

Infographic 'Young Europeans'

To complement this publication on children and young people, Eurostat has recently developed an infographic that provides information to young internet users in a fun way. The infographic covers four main areas: family, work, free time & studies and the internet. The infographic can be accessed through the homepage of Eurostat's website.

The European Union (EU) has set up several initiatives to either provide information about all policies that can help strengthen the capacities of children and their families or promote dialogue between the young population and policy-makers.

About initiatives from the European Union

The European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC)

In February 2013, the European Commission (EC) adopted the Recommendation 'Investing in Children — breaking the cycle of disadvantage' as part of the Social Investment Package, which proposed a long-term social strategy to support children and to help mitigate the effects of the current economic crisis. The Recommendation provides guidance for EU Member States on how to tackle child poverty and social exclusion through measures such as family support and benefits, quality childcare and early-childhood education. Social investment in individual capacities during the early years is particularly beneficial for children from a disadvantaged background and can provide large social returns. They are also a crucial factor in breaking cycles of intergenerational transmission of poverty.

The European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) is an evidence-based online platform that provides information about policies that can help children and their families face the existing challenges. It also helps EU Member States implement the Recommendation. EPIC is used to collect and disseminate innovative practices that were found to have a positive impact on children and families in EU Member States.

The EU Youth Strategy

In 2009, the European Council adopted Resolution 2009/C 311/01 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010–18), which set the stage for the EU Youth Strategy. The Resolution was the outcome of the European Commission's efforts to promote dialogue between the EU young population and policy-makers, with the aim of increasing active citizenship, foster social integration, and ensure inclusion of the young in EU policy development.

The EU Youth Strategy for 2010–18 pursues two overall objectives:

- to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the job market; and
- to encourage young people to actively participate in society.

To achieve these objectives it proposes initiatives in eight fields of action:

- Education and training;
- Employment & entrepreneurship;
- Health & wellbeing;
- Participation;
- Voluntary activities;
- Social inclusion;
- Youth & the world; and
- Creativity & culture

The first 3 years of the EU Youth Strategy (2010–12) were jointly assessed by the European Commission and the European Council in the EU Youth Report 2012. For the period 2013–15, three top priorities were put forward:

- Employment;
- Social inclusion (particularly those with fewer opportunities); and
- Health and wellbeing.

About Eurostat and the European statistics

Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union, situated in Luxembourg. Its task is to provide the EU with statistics at a European level that enable comparisons between countries and regions. Eurostat's mission is to be the leading provider of high-quality statistics on Europe.

Accessing European statistics

The simplest way to access Eurostat's broad range of statistical information is through its website (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat). Eurostat provides users with free access to its databases and all of its publications in portable document format (PDF) via the internet. The website is updated daily and gives access to the latest and most comprehensive statistical information available on the EU, its Member States, EFTA countries, as well as acceding and candidate countries.

Eurostat online data codes — easy access to the freshest data

Eurostat online data codes allow easy access to the most recent data on Eurostat's website. In this publication the online data codes are given as part of the source below each table and figure. In the PDF version of this publication, the reader is led directly to the freshest data by clicking on the hyperlinks that form part of each online data code. Readers of the paper edition can access the freshest data by typing a standardised hyperlink into a web browser — http://ec.europa. eu/eurostat/product?code=<data_code>&mode=view — where <data_code> is to be replaced by the online data code listed under the table or figure in question. Online data codes lead to either a two- or three-dimensional table in the TGM (tables, graphs, maps) interface or to an open dataset which generally contains more dimensions and longer time series using the Data Explorer interface.

Online data codes can also be fed into the 'Search' function on Eurostat's website. The results from such a search present related dataset(s) and possibly publication(s) and metadata.

Note that the data on the Eurostat's website are frequently updated and that the description above presents the situation as of April 2015.

Statistics Explained

Statistics Explained is part of Eurostat's website. It provides easy access to statistical information concerning the EU. It can also be accessed via an icon at the right-hand end of the top menu bar on most Eurostat webpages, or directly at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained.

Statistics Explained is an online publishing system about EU statistics which uses MediaWiki technology and resembles Wikipedia. This wiki-

based system presents statistical articles which together form an encyclopaedia of European statistics, completed by a glossary of the statistical concepts and terms used. In addition, numerous links to the latest data and metadata as well as to further information are provided, making Statistics Explained a portal for regular and occasional users alike.

It is possible to search for articles using the 'Search' function on the top-right of the webpage, as to get a PDF version of the article, to print, to bookmark or forward content easily.

The content of this flagship publication Being young in Europe today is also available on Statistics Explained and can be found under the online publication with the same title.

1

Demographic trends

Introduction

This chapter presents a range of demographic statistics for children (defined here as those aged 0–14 years) and young people (defined here as those aged 15–29 years) across the European Union (EU). As Europe continues to age, the historical triangular age pyramid associated with an expanding population has been reshaped, with a smaller proportion of children and young people and an increased share of elderly persons.

The analysis begins with a set of basic statistics that portray the existing demographic structure of the EU-28, focusing on the relative importance of children and young people. It continues with some international comparisons, which highlight the relatively small share of the EU's population that is accounted for by children and young people when compared with many other countries. It then moves on to examine a range of demographic phenomena that may be linked to the falling share of children and young people in the EU's population, such as: the rising median age of the population; the low level of fertility rates; the increased longevity of the EU's population; and the potential impact that these drivers of demographic change could have on the EU's population in the coming decades.

EUROPE'S DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

Numerous studies have concluded that the EU's population is likely to shrink in the coming decades as a result of a prolonged period of relatively low fertility rates (assuming no change in migratory patterns). This falling number of children and young people in the total population could result in labour market shortages in specific countries / regions and in particular occupations. By contrast, life expectancy (for both men and women) in the EU continues to rise and the baby-boom generation [1] is in a transition into retirement. As such, the number and share of the elderly in the total population continues to increase and this will probably drive demand for a range of specific services catered to the needs of the (very) old. These two changes at either end of the age spectrum will affect the structure of the EU's population and could lead to a number of challenges, for example:

- how to propagate sustainable economic growth during a period when the number and proportion of working-age people will decline; a lower number of working-age people could lead to a reduction in revenue-raising powers, for example, from income tax and social security contributions;
- how to safeguard social welfare models, such as pensions and healthcare, if there are a growing number of (very) old people who are making increasing demands on these systems.

[1] A baby-boomer generation is a demographic phenomenon describing a period marked by considerably higher than average birth rates within a certain geographical area. The baby-boomer generation is often used to refer to those people who were born post-World War II, between the years 1946 and 1970 in Europe and the United States.

Past, present and future demographic developments: children and young people

Figures for 2014 suggest that there were just under 507 million inhabitants in the EU-28. Of these, 79 million were children (aged 0–14), which was 10 million fewer than the number of young people (aged 15–29). As such, one third of the EU-28's population — almost 170 million inhabitants — were under the age of 30 in 2014, with children accounting for a 15.6 % share of the EU-28's population and young people for a slightly higher share, 17.7 %.

The combined share of children and young people (those aged 0–29) in the EU's population fell from a high of 40.6 % in 1994, through 36.1 % in 2004, to 33.3 % by 2014 (Table 1).

Table 1: Children and young people in the population, EU-28, 1994, 2004 and 2014 ([1])

	1994 ([2])		2004		2014 ([3])	
	population (thousands)	share (%)	population (thousands)	share (%)	population (thousands)	share (%)
Children (0–14 years)	88 628	18.6	80 724	16.4	79 106	15.6
Young people (15–29 years)	104 574	22.0	97 219	19.7	89 634	17.7
Children and young people (0–29 years)	193 202	40.6	177 944	36.1	168 740	33.3

([1]) Data refer to 1 January of each reference year.
([2]) EU-27 instead of EU-28.
([3]) Provisional data given the non-availability of detailed data for Greece.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_pjangroup)

Just under 170 million children and young people in the EU-28 in 2014

The rate of change in the number of young people was relatively constant over the period under consideration, while the decline in the proportion of children slowed somewhat during the period 2004–14.

As the share of children and young people in the EU's population decreased, the relative importance of the elderly (≥ 65 years old) grew. In 2014, those aged 65 or more accounted for almost one in five (18.5 %) of the EU-28's population. The proportion of elderly persons in the total population climbed at a steady pace from 14.5 % of the population in 1994, through 16.4 % in 2004 to reach its relative high of 18.5 % at the end of the time series. The pace of demographic ageing quickened somewhat during the period 2004–14, as the relative share of the elderly rose at a slightly faster pace than it had done over the period 1994–2004.

The number of elderly people in the EU exceeded the number of children for the first time in 2004

To give some idea of the speed of demographic change, there were 88.6 million children in the EU-27 in 1994 compared with 68.9 million elderly persons. Nine years later in 2003 the gap between the number of children and the number of elderly persons had narrowed considerably to 2 million for the EU-28, with 81.5 million children and 79.6 million elderly. By 2004, there were, for the first time ever, as many elderly people as children in the EU-28 (80.7 million). The growth in the number of elderly people continued in the intervening years (while the number of children remained relatively unchanged) and by 2014 there were 93.9 million people in the EU-28 aged 65 or more, compared with 79.1 million children.

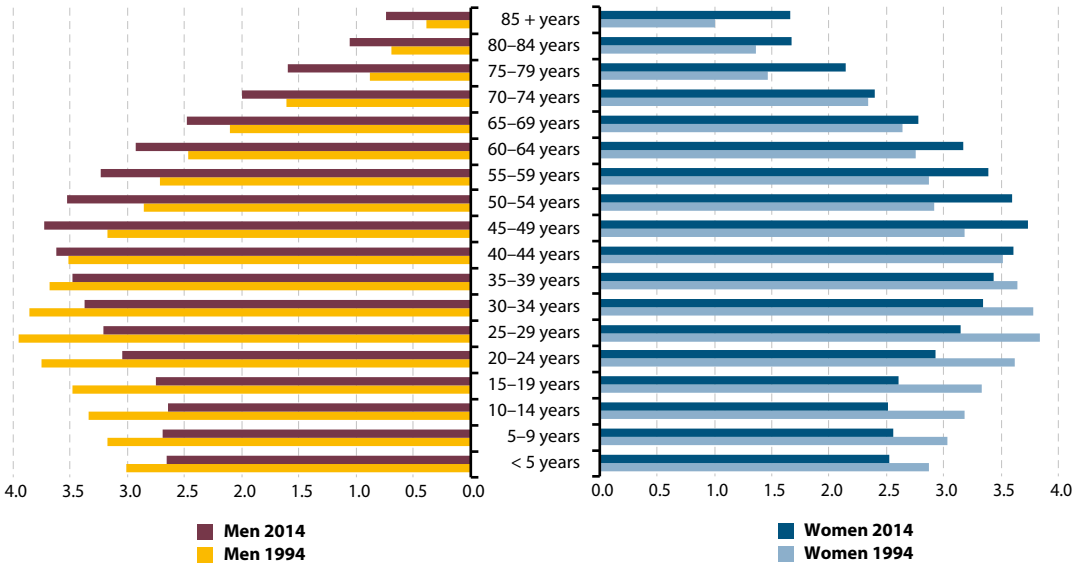
This rapid acceleration in the share of the elderly was accompanied by an increase in the share of persons aged 30–64. People in this age group accounted for 44.9 % of the EU-28's population in 1994 rising to 47.5 % by 2004 and increasing further still to reach 48.2 % by 2014; these increasing shares may be attributed to the impact of ageing among the baby-boomer generation, as those born in the 1960s accounted for a growing share of the EU's working-age population. Population projections suggest that the share of the working-age population in the total population will start to decrease in the coming years, once more of the baby-boomer generation has moved into retirement.

Figure 1 presents the EU's age pyramid (a graphical representation of its population structure), with information shown for the proportion of men and women within each five-year age group as a share of the total population.

Reshaping the population pyramid: a decreasing share of children and young people

The two pyramids, for 1994 and 2014, provide evidence of the ageing of the EU's population: there is a clear bump present in both pyramids, which can be associated with the tail end of the baby-boomer generation. In 1994, the highest share of the population was accounted for by those aged 25–29 — in other words, children born towards the end of the 1960s. By 2014, this same group had aged an additional 20 years and moved into the age group of persons aged 45–49 years old and again accounted for the highest share of the population among any of the five-year age groups.

Figure 1: Population structure by five-year age groups and sex, 1993 and 2013, EU-28 ([1])
(% share of total population)



([1]) Data refer to 1 January of each reference year. 1993: EU-27 instead of EU-28.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_pjangroup)

In 2014, the three five-year age groups that together cover the aggregate for children (those aged less than 5, 5–9 years and 10–14 years) accounted for the smallest shares of the EU population in terms of 5-year age groups, apart from the elderly (see below for more details). And among the young people those aged 15–19 were the least represented; they corresponded to a smaller share of the EU population than each of the two other age categories covering 15–29 years (those aged 20–24 and 25–29).

Figure 1 shows a reduction in the relative share of children and young people in the total EU population between 1994 and 2014. Nevertheless, the reduction is more important for the two 5-year age groups covering 20–29 years than for the youngest age groups. This may be linked to the postponement of childbirth, thereby causing a decrease in the number of births which has subsequently stabilised.

The other notable difference between the pyramids for 1994 and 2014 is the increasing share of the elderly in the total population. This was particularly true among the elderly women (defined here as those aged 85 or above), their longevity increasing at a rapid pace over the last two decades.

Boys outnumbered girls in the EU

There were more male (than female) children in the EU-28 in 2014; boys accounted for 51.3 % of the population aged 0–14. This is consistent with the time series for births which shows higher numbers of boys being born than girls. There were also more young men (aged 15–29) than there were young women, although the difference across the EU-28 narrowed to 50.9 % against 49.1 % in 2014.

The share of children and young people in the EU's population was considerably lower than the world average

Children and young people (0–29 years) accounted for just over one third (34.4 %) of the EU-28 population in 2010, while their share in the world population was considerably higher, at 52.4 % — see Tables 2 and 3. Children accounted for 15.7 % of the EU-28's population in 2010, which was nearly 11 percentage points lower than the world average, while young people represented 18.7 % of the EU-28's population, which was slightly closer to the world average, 7 percentage points lower. The relative importance of children and young people across the world was influenced, to some degree, by relatively high birth rates in Africa and some parts of Asia.

Table 2: Share of children (0–14 years) in the population, 2000 and 2010 ([1])

	2000	2010	Change, 2000–10
	(%)	(%)	(percentage points)
EU-28 ([2])	**17.3**	**15.7**	**– 1.6**
Australia / New Zealand	21.1	19.2	– 1.9
Brazil	29.6	25.5	– 4.1
China	25.6	18.1	– 7.5
India	34.2	30.2	– 4.0
Japan	14.6	13.3	– 1.3
Russia	18.2	14.9	– 3.3
United States	21.3	19.8	– 1.5
World	30.1	26.6	– 3.5

([1]) Mid-year population for non-member countries.
([2]) Data refer to 1 January of each reference year. 2000: EU-27.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_pjangroup) and the United Nations, 'World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision'

Table 3: Share of young people (15–29 years) in the population, 2000 and 2010 ([1])

	2000	2010	Change, 2000–10
	(%)	(%)	(percentage points)
EU-28 ([2])	20.4	18.7	– 1.8
Australia / New Zealand	21.1	21.5	0.3
Brazil	28.2	26.3	– 2.0
China	25.2	25.5	0.3
India	27.6	27.5	– 0.1
Japan	20.4	15.9	– 4.5
Russia	22.9	23.2	0.4
United States	20.9	20.9	0.0
World	25.9	25.8	– 0.2

([1]) Mid-year population for non-member countries.
([2]) Data refer to 1 January of each reference year. 2000: EU-27.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_pjangroup) and the United Nations, 'World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision'

The relative weight of children and young people in the EU-28's population was considerably lower than in many of the industrialised and rapidly emerging economies presented in Tables 2 and 3. For example, children accounted for almost one third (30.2 %) of the total population in India, a quarter (25.5 %) of the population in Brazil and one fifth (19.8%) of the population in the United States. There were however a couple of exceptions: as the relative share of children in the Japanese population in both 2000 and 2010 which was lower than the EU-28 average, while the same was true in Russia in 2010.

Signs that the fall in birth and fertility rates is spreading to other developed and emerging economies

Worldwide, there was a general decline in the relative share of children in the global population between 2000 and 2010. Their share decreased by 3.5 percentage points, which was a much larger decline than in the EU-28 (– 1.6 percentage points). The largest decrease (among those countries shown in Table 2) was observed in China, where the share of children in the total population fell by 7.5 percentage points during the period under consideration. With the exceptions of Japan and the United States, the decline in the share of children in the total population was more substantial for each of the countries shown in Table 2 than for the EU-28.

The global share of young people in the population declined by a relatively small amount (down by 0.2 percentage points) over the period 2000–10. The share of young people remained relatively stable in the majority of the countries shown in Table 3, as Japan and Brazil were the only countries where the share of young people fell faster than it did in the EU-28. Japan was the only country to record a share of young people in its total population (15.9 %) that was lower than the EU-28 average (18.7 %) in 2010.

The information presented in Tables 2 and 3 confirms that the pattern of decreasing birth and fertility rates observed across the EU-28 and Japan appears to be in the process of establishing itself across a range of other industrialised and emerging economies. As this is often a relatively new phenomena, the most rapid changes in population structure are apparent among populations of children, although in the coming years the lower number of children will gradually impact upon the number of young people too, as the effect of lower birth and fertility rates moves up through each national population pyramid.

Ireland and Cyprus: the most youthful Member States

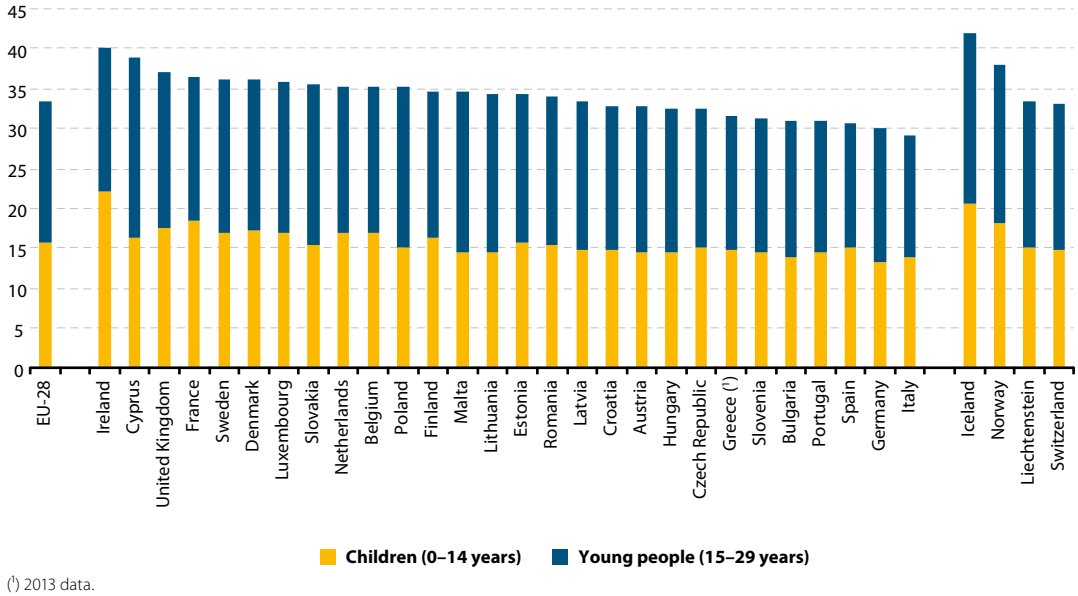
Ireland and Cyprus stood out as the most youthful nations in the EU-28, as the share of their population aged less than 30 accounted for around 4 out of every 10 people in 2014 (Ireland 40.1 % and Cyprus 39.0 %). At the other end of the spectrum, the share of children and young people was lowest in Italy (29.2 %) and Germany (30.1 %).

Among the EU Member States, Ireland had the highest share of children in its population in 2013.

Children accounted for more than one in five (22.0 %) of the Irish population in 2014 — the highest share — while France (18.6 %) and the United Kingdom (17.6 %) recorded the second and third highest shares. By contrast, children accounted for 13.1 % of the German population in 2014, while they also represented a relatively small share of the population in Bulgaria (13.7 %) and Italy (13.9 %).

Cyprus (22.7 %) and Slovakia (20.4 %), recorded the highest proportions of young people in their respective populations in 2014, while young people also represented at least one in five of the total number of inhabitants in Poland and Malta (both 20.2 %). Each of these four countries was characterised by children accounting for a much lower share of the total population than young people, suggesting that the birth rates and fertility rates of these countries had fallen over the last 15 years. At the other end of the scale, the share of young people in the total population of Italy fell to 15.3 %, while there were also comparatively low shares in two other southern EU Member States, namely Spain (15.6 %) and Portugal (16.3 %).

Figure 2: Share of children and young people in the population, 1 January 2014
(%)



(1) 2013 data.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_pjangroup)

Children and young people accounted for a low share of the population in many eastern German and northern Italian and Spanish regions

While there was a considerable degree of variation in the share of children and young people between the EU Member States, the differences were even more pronounced across Europe's regions. Among NUTS level 2 regions, Guyane (a French overseas department) was the only region in the EU where children and young people represented more than half of the population in 2014, some 56.8 % of the total number of inhabitants being aged less than 30. The second highest share was also recorded in a French overseas department, namely, Réunion (44.8 %), while the Spanish Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla (44.5 %) and two urban conurbations in the United Kingdom — Inner London (43.4 %) and the West Midlands (41.8 %) — made up the top five in the ranking (Table 4). More generally, those regions which featured near the top of the ranking with the highest shares of children and young people in their respective populations were often from France, Ireland, the United Kingdom or Belgium.

Table 4: Highest and lowest shares of children and young people (0–29 years) in the total population, by NUTS 2 regions, 1 January 2014 ([1])
(%)

Top 10 regions — highest shares		
Guyane	France	56.8
Réunion	France	44.8
Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla	Spain	44.5
Inner London	United Kingdom	43.4
West Midlands	United Kingdom	41.8
Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta	Spain	41.3
Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest	Belgium	40.3
Outer London	United Kingdom	40.3
Southern and Eastern	Ireland	40.2
Border, Midland and Western	Ireland	40.1
Bottom 10 regions — lowest shares		
Castilla y León	Spain	26.3
Toscana	Italy	26.2
Thüringen	Germany	26.1
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Italy	25.7
Galicia	Spain	25.6
Brandenburg	Germany	25.3
Sachsen-Anhalt	Germany	25.3
Chemnitz	Germany	24.7
Liguria	Italy	24.2
Principado de Asturias	Spain	23.6

([1]) Regions in Greece: 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_r_pjangroup)

By contrast, those regions with the lowest shares of children and young people in their total number of inhabitants included the northern Spanish Principado de Asturias (23.6 %) and the northern Italian region of Liguria and (24.2 %), as well as the eastern German regions of Chemnitz, Sachsen-Anhalt and Brandenburg (each within the range of 24.7 % to 25.6 %). These regions were quite representative of a more general pattern, as many of the regions at the bottom end of the ranking were from Germany, Spain and Italy, and for which the share of children and young people was less than 27 %.

Outside of overseas departments and autonomous cities, the two Irish regions had the highest shares of children in their respective populations

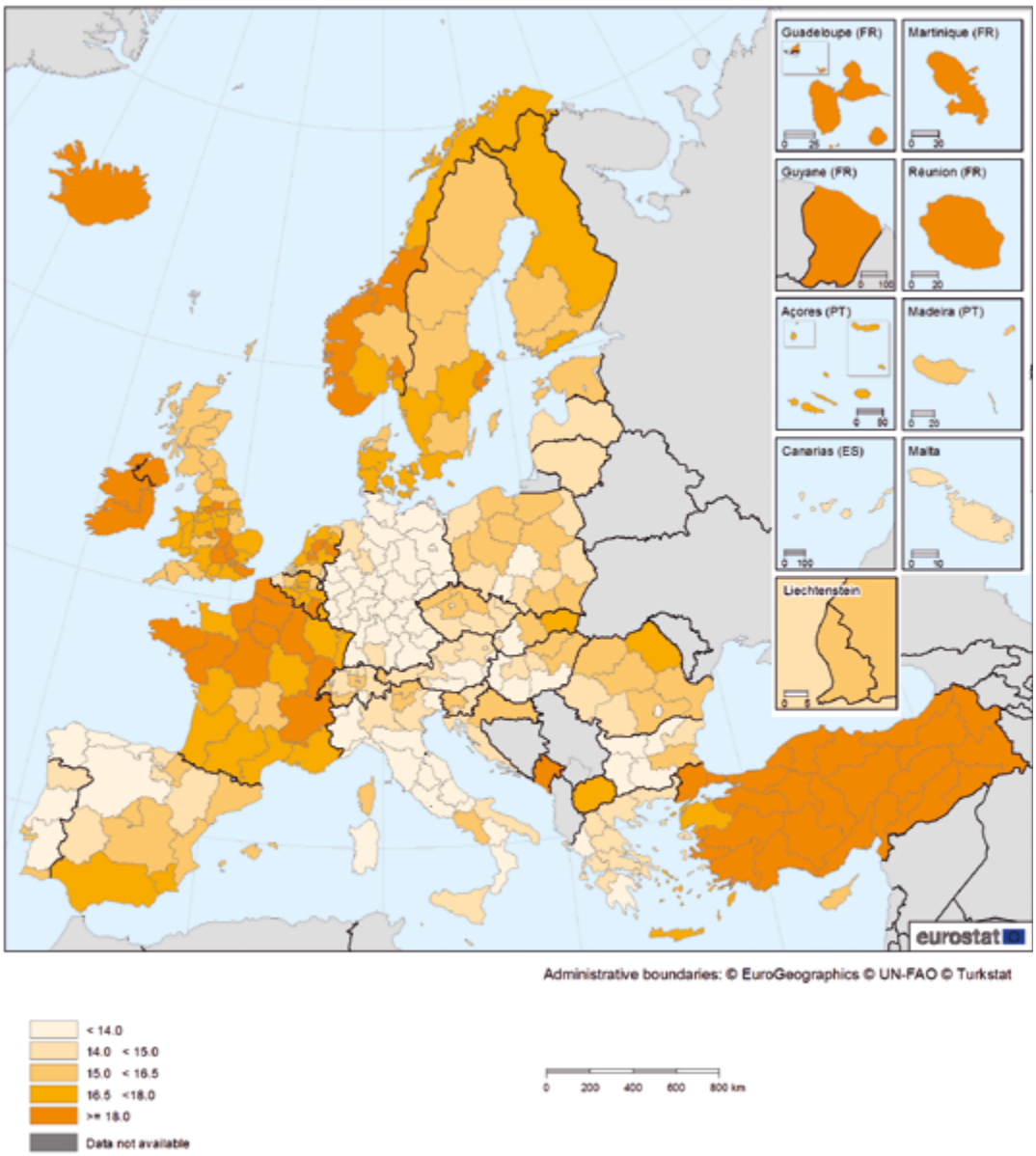
Map 1 presents the relative share of children in the regional populations of NUTS 2 regions in 2014. Excluding the French overseas departments of Guyane (33.8 %) and Réunion (23.9 %) as the Spanish Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla (23.6 %), the highest shares were recorded for the two Irish regions of Border, Midland and Western (22.9 %) and Southern and Eastern (21.7 %). There were four other regions in the EU-28 where children represented more than one fifth of the regional population in 2014: Ciudad Autónoma de Ceuta (the second autonomous Spanish city), Guadeloupe (another French overseas region), the Dutch region of Flevoland and the mainland French region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

At the other end of the range, the Principado de Asturias (Spain) recorded the lowest share of children (11.0 %). In line with the general patterns observed at a national level, some of the regions with the lowest shares of children were located in Germany: for example, Sachsen-Anhalt (11.3 %), Saarland (11.4 %), Chemnitz (11.6 %) and Thüringen (11.7 %)

Inner London had the highest share of young people

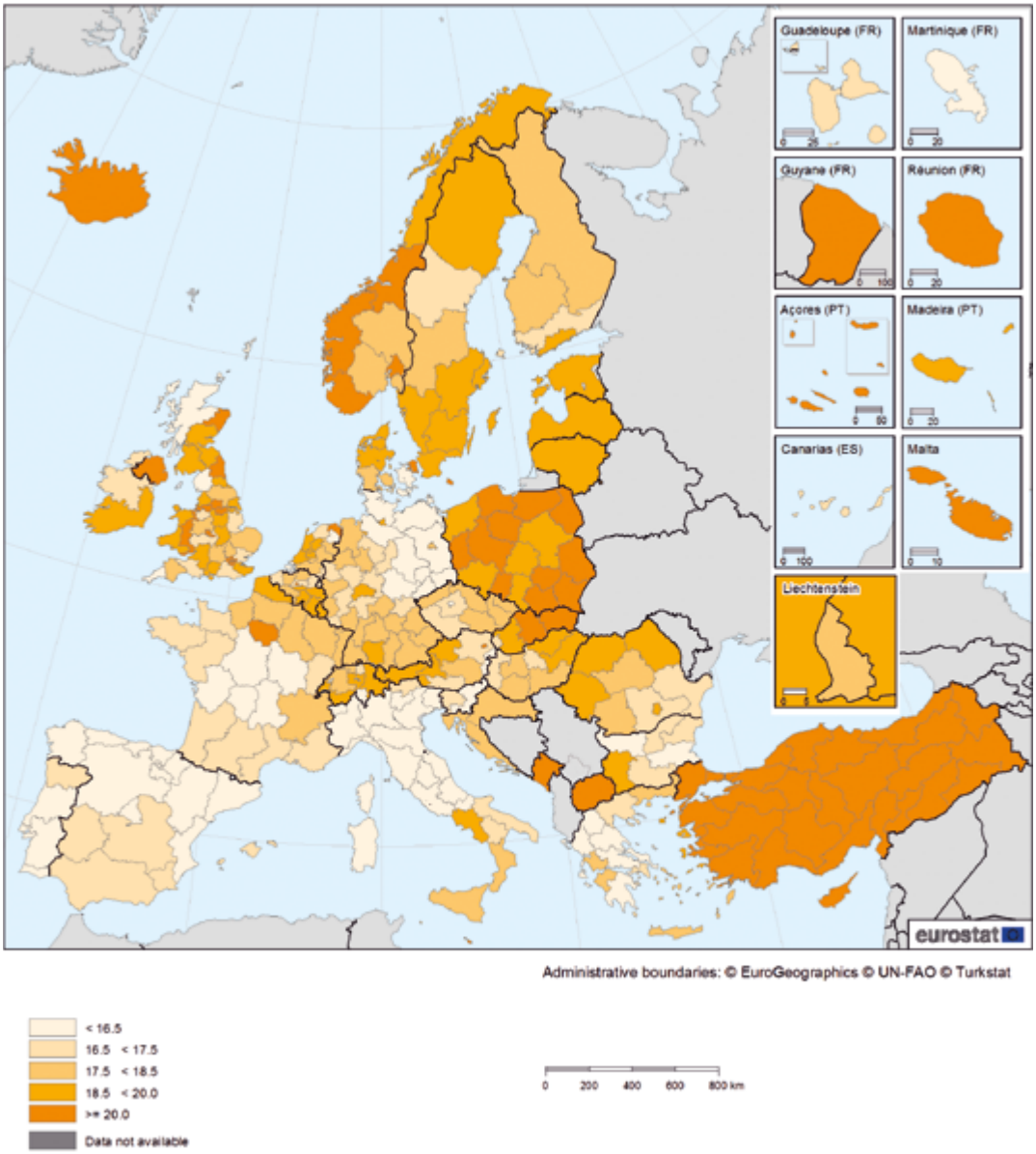
Map 2 presents a similar set of information to the previous map, but this time based on the share of young people in the regional populations (NUTS 2 regions). Inner London had the highest share of young people (25.7 %) in 2014, which can probably be explained not only with its above average birth rate, but also with the appeal of this city to younger generations; the presence of numerous higher education institutions may also have an impact on the proportion of young adults living in this region. The next highest shares were recorded in the French overseas region of Guyane (23.0 %) and in Cyprus (22.7 %).They were followed by several Polish regions and several other metropolitan regions from the United Kingdom, as well as the Dutch region of Groningen and the Slovakian regions of Východné Slovensko for which this share was more than 21 %.

Map 1: Share of children (0–14 years) in the population, by NUTS 2 regions, 2014 ([1])
(%)



([1]) 2013 data for Greece.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_r_pjangroup)

Map 2: Share of young people (15–29 years) in the population, by NUTS 2 regions, 2014 (1)
(%)



(1) 2013 data for Greece.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_r_pjangroup)

EUROSTAT'S POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections gives a picture of what the future population may look like based on a set of assumptions for fertility and mortality rates as well as for migration.

EUROPOP2013 is a set of population projections produced by Eurostat based on the cohort-component method. These are essentially 'what-if' scenarios, providing information about the likely future size and structure of the population at national level, by sex and single-years of age. EUROPOP 2013 covered the time period from 1 January 2013 to 1 January 2080.

The projections presented in this chapter relate to what is referred to as the 'main scenario', based on a set of assumptions relating to future fertility, mortality and net international migration. The main scenario is one of five main variants (different what-if scenarios) presented by Eurostat. The other scenarios concern variants for no migration, higher life expectancy, reduced migration and lower fertility.

By contrast, the share of young people was particularly low in the northern half of Italy, northern Spain and eastern Germany, the lowest shares were recorded in the Italian regions of Liguria and the Spanish Principado de Asturias (both 12.6 %).

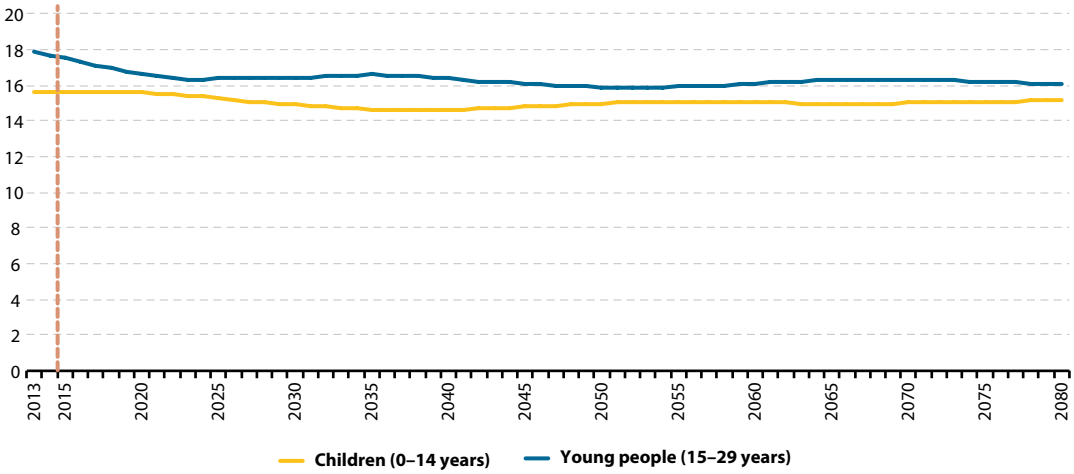
The proportion of children and particularly young people in the total population of the EU-28 is projected to slightly fall in the coming decades

According to the main scenario of EUROPOP2013, which corresponds to the latest Eurostat population projections round, by 2080 the number of children and young people in the EU-28 is likely to be 162.2 million, which is 7.8 million less than in 2013. Although the EU-28 total population is projected to keep growing through to 2050, reaching 525.5 million, the share of children and young people in the total projected population will decrease from 33.5 % in 2013 to 30.8 % in 2050. Then, from 2050 to 2080, the share of children and young people is projected to slowly and continuous increase (31.2 % in 2080) without nevertheless reaching its actual rate (33.5 % in 2013).

Figure 3 shows the EU-28 shares of children and young people in the projected population up to and including the year 2080. The share of children is projected to decrease from 15.6 % (or 79.2 million children) in 2013 to a relative low 14.6 % (or 76.3 million children) by 2035, followed by a slight increase up to 15.0 % (or 78.6 million children) in 2050, then the share is projected to remain almost constant until the year 2080.

The projected development of the young people in the EU-28 population shows a decline in the first years of the time period followed by a relative stability until 2080. From 90.8 million in 2013, representing 17.9 % of the total EU-28 population, the population aged 15–29 is projected to decrease to 84.4 million, or 16.3 % of the total population, in 2025. A slight increase is projected for the following decade, 2025–35, the share of young people reaching 16.6 % (or 86.3 million young people) in 2035, followed by a slight, plateau-like decrease, to just over 16 % (or 83.5 million young people) by 2080.

Figure 3: Current and projected shares of children and young people in the population, EU-28, 2013–80 (1)
(%)



(1) Data refer to 1 January of each reference year.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: proj_13npms)

EUROPEAN DEMOGRAPHY FORUM

The EU frequently reviews and adapts its policies in relation to demographic challenges, such as the ageing population, relatively low birth and fertility rates, atypical family structures and migration.

The European Demography Forum (held every two years since 2006) gives policymakers, stakeholders and experts from all over Europe the opportunity to share their knowledge and discuss how to address demographic change. To underpin these debates, the European Commission presents a biennial European Demography Report; this sets out a range of facts and figures concerning demographic change and discusses appropriate policy responses.

The fourth forum took place in 2013 and covered, among other issues:

- supporting youth opportunities;
- improving the work–life balance;
- enabling people to be active longer;
- successful inclusion of second-generation migrants;
- regions in rapid demographic and economic decline and inequalities within regions.

For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=10228&langId=en

Changes in numbers of children and young people: causes and consequences

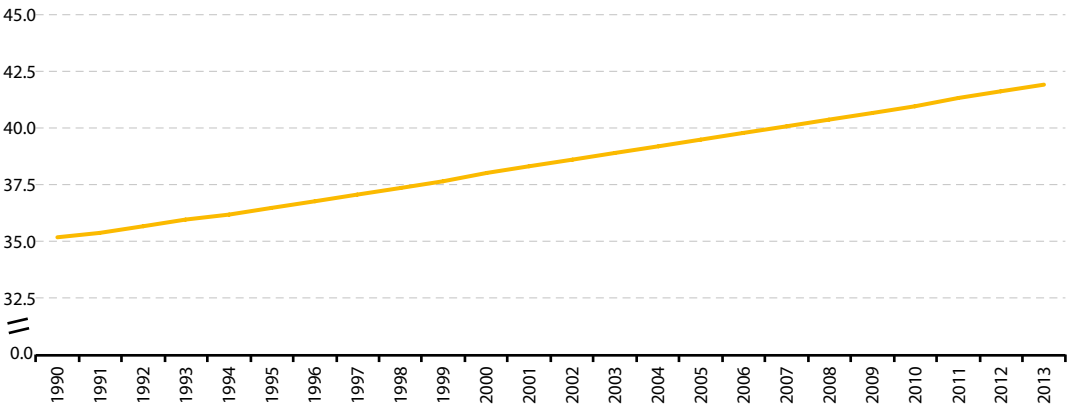
HOW TO DETERMINE IF A POPULATION IS AGEING?

The ageing or greying of the EU's population can be measured by an analysis of the median age of its population. The median age of the population is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups; that is, with half the people younger and half older. In other words, if all of the people in the EU were ranked according to their age, the person standing in the middle of the line dividing those into two equal groups would have the median age.

Median age — the greying of the EU's population

Ageing is one of the EU's main demographic challenges which may result in considerable political, economic, budgetary and social challenges. The median age of the EU-28 has risen in recent years as a direct consequence of two principal factors: a reduction in the share of children and young people in the total population (resulting from lower fertility rates and women giving birth to fewer children at a later age in life) and a gradual increase in life expectancy that has led to increased longevity.

Figure 4: Median age of the population, EU-28, 1990–2013 ([1])
(years)



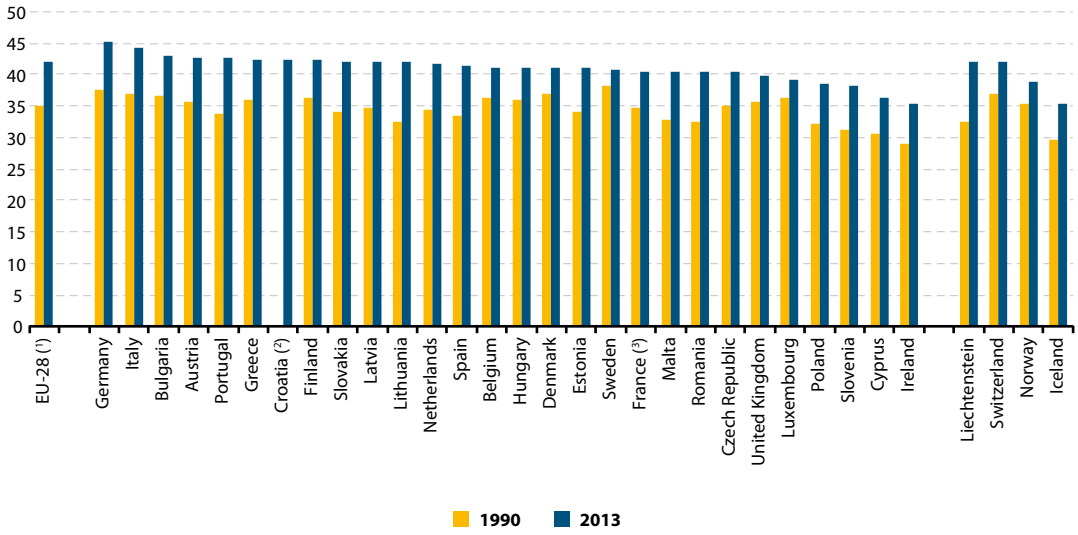
([1]) 1990–2000: EU-27.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_pjanind)

The median age of the EU population rose, on average, by almost four months each year over the last three decades

The median age of the EU-28 population was 41.9 years in 2013. It rose at a relatively rapid and consistent pace from 35.2 years in 1990 (for the EU-27), as shown in Figure 4.

At national level, the median age of the EU Member States in 2013 was the lowest in the relatively youthful societies of Ireland (35.5 years) and Cyprus (36.5 years), while Slovakia, Poland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom were the only other EU Member States to record median ages of less than 40 years. By contrast, there was a more rapid greying of society in Germany, where the median age was 45.3 years, while Italy (44.4 years) was the only other EU Member State to record a median age that was over 43 years.

Figure 5: Median age of the population, 1990 and 2013
(years)



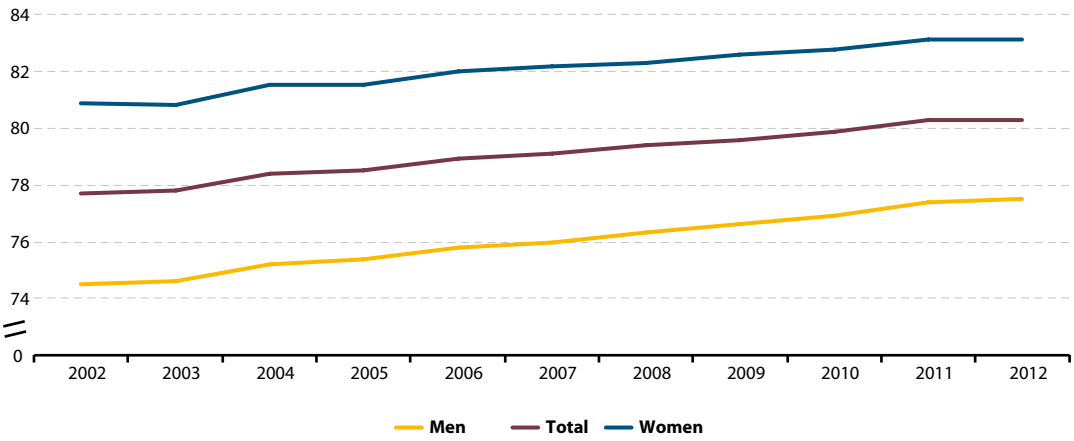
(1) 1990: EU-27.
(2) 1990: not available.
(3) 1991 instead of 1990.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_pjanind)

The median age of the population within each EU Member State rose between 1990 and 2013. This ageing of the population was particularly stark in Lithuania, where the median age rose by almost 10 years over the period under consideration, while there were increases of more than 8 years in Portugal and Slovenia. By contrast, the median age of the population rose in Sweden and Luxembourg at a relatively slow pace, up by 2.5 and 2.8 years respectively between 1990 and 2013 (Figure 5).

Life expectancy — people are living longer

As noted above, increasing longevity is one of the principal reasons why there has been an increase in the median age of the EU's population. Between 2002 and 2012 there was an increase of more than 2.5 years in life expectancy at birth (Figure 6). The life expectancy of men increased at a somewhat faster pace than that of women, rising by 3.0 years compared with an increase of 2.2 years for women. These increases in life expectancy may be attributed to a range of factors, including medical progress and different types of health and community care, a general increase in health education, or people making different lifestyle choices (for example, stopping smoking, reducing alcohol intake, paying more attention to their diet, or exercising more) ([2]). There has also been a gradual change in workplace occupations, whereby fewer people (mainly men) are employed in labour-intensive activities, for example, agriculture, mining or heavy manufacturing industries.

Figure 6: Life expectancy at birth, EU-28, 2002–12
(years)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_mlexpec)

([2]) See 'Health at a glance 2014 available through http://ec.europa.eu/health/reports/docs/health_glance_2014_highlight_en.pdf, 'Health at a glance 2011' available at http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/49105858.pdf and Sassi, F. (2010), Obesity and the Economics of Prevention – Fit not Fat, OECD Publishing, Paris.

MEASURING FERTILITY

The total fertility rate represents the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with the current age-specific fertility rates.

The age-specific fertility rates are, in their turn, computed as the ratio of the number of live births from women of a given age to the number of women of the same age exposed to childbearing (usually estimated as the average number of women in that year).

The replacement level represents the average number of live births per woman that would keep the population level stable and its age structure unchanged (in the absence of migratory flows or any change in life expectancy). It is generally agreed that the replacement level is about 2.1 children per woman in developed world economies.

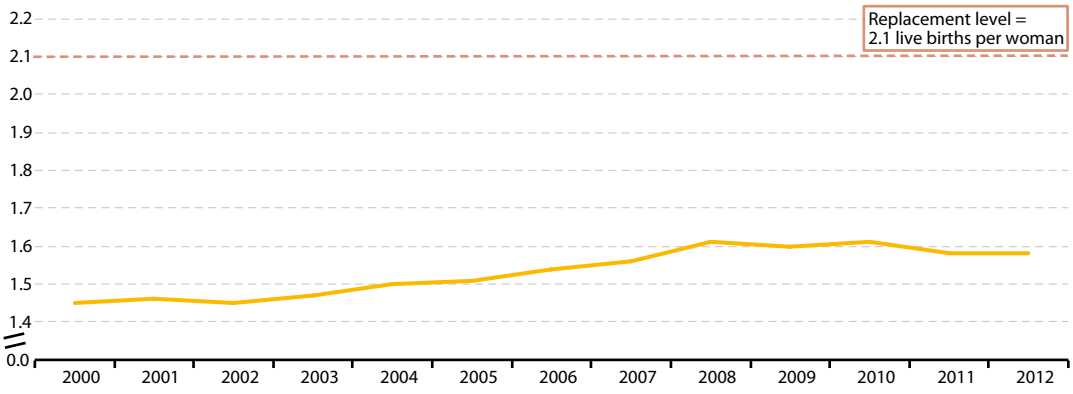
Life expectancy steadily rising in the EU

The EU's future population size and age structures will, to some degree, be determined by the pace at which life expectancy continues to increase. While higher levels of life expectancy and increased longevity result in a higher median age across the population, at the other end of the age spectrum the fertility rate has the potential to provide a counterbalance to the on-going ageing process — this is analysed in more detail in the next section.

Fertility rates — less children are being born

Figure 7 shows that while fertility rates in the EU-28 rose at a modest pace during the period 2000–08, they remained well below the replacement level. Having peaked in 2008 at an average of 1.61 children, the fertility rate subsequently fell by a small margin, perhaps reflecting economic hardships and a decline in real incomes in the period following the global financial and economic crisis. In 2012, the EU-28 fertility rate stood at 1.58 children, while the replacement level is considered to be at 2.1.

Figure 7: Fertility rates, EU-28, 2000–12 (1)
(number of live births per woman)



(1) 2000: EU-27.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_find)

(3) Demography Report 2010, EC DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Eurostat.

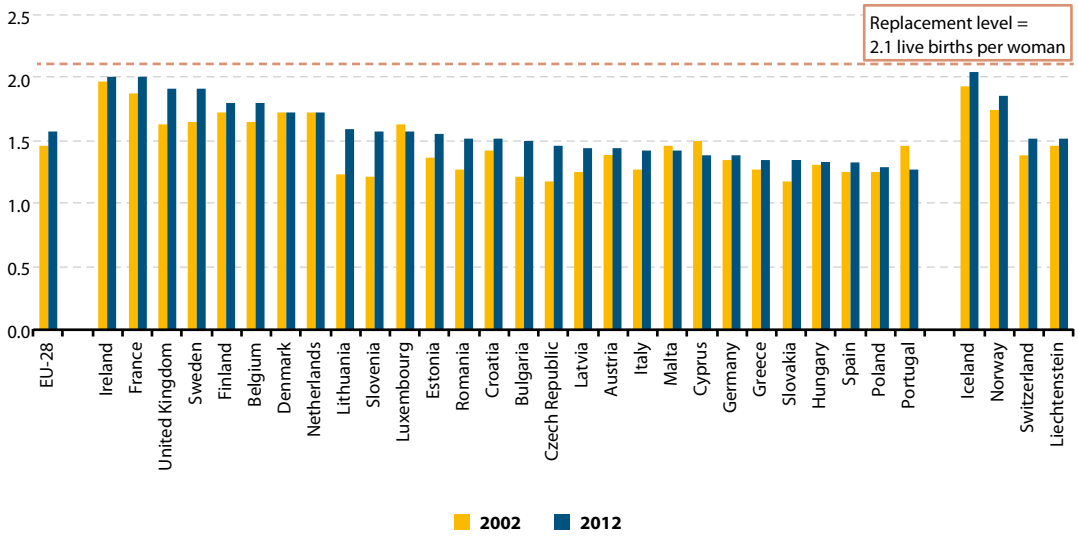
The general increase of the fertility rate during the period 2000–08 may, in part, be attributed to a catching-up process, following a postponement of the decision to have children ([3]); when women postpone giving birth until later in life, the total fertility rate first decreases and then subsequently recovers.

Ireland and France: the highest fertility rates

Among EU Member States, the highest fertility rates in 2012 were recorded in Ireland and France, both recording rates of 2.01 live births per woman. Figure 8 shows they were followed by the United Kingdom (1.92 live births per woman) and Sweden (1.91 live births per woman). The lowest fertility rates were registered in Portugal (1.28 live births per woman), Poland (1.30 live births per woman) and Spain (1.32 live births per woman).

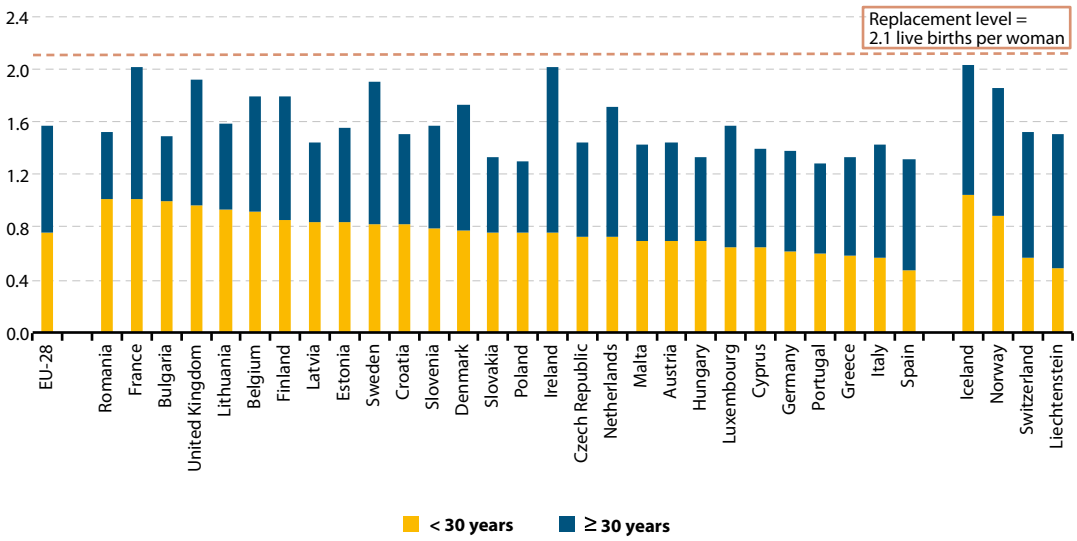
Looking at women under 30 years old, their fertility rate in the EU-28 was 0.76 live births per woman in 2012, which is slightly less than half of the EU-28 total fertility rate that year (1.58 live births). This means that on average in the EU a little less than half (48 %) of babies were born to mothers who were below the age of 30.

Figure 8: Fertility rates, 2002 and 2012
(number of live births per woman)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_find)

Figure 9: Fertility rates by age of mother, 2012
(number of live births per woman)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_frate)

Among Member States, Romania, France and Bulgaria corresponded to the highest fertility rate for women aged less than 30 (with 1.00 live birth or more). By contrast, Portugal, Greece, Italy and Spain recorded the lowest fertility rate for women aged less than 30 (with 0.60 live births or less).

In Bulgaria and Romania, the fertility rate of women aged less than 30 corresponded to more than two thirds (67 %) of the national fertility rate in 2012. By contrast, the fertility rate of women of that age represented less than 40 % of the national fertility rate in Spain, Ireland and Italy, meaning than less than 40 % of babies in these countries were born to mothers aged less than 30.

Portugal, Greece, Italy and Spain were the EU Member States recording in 2012 the lowest fertility rate for women aged less than 30.

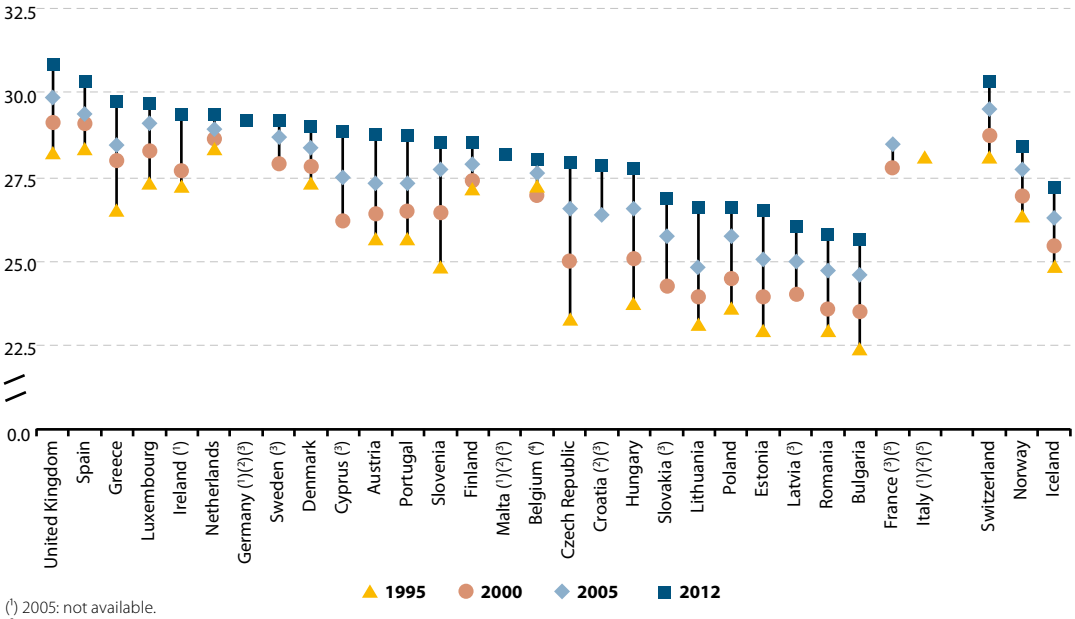
The mean age of women giving birth to their first child was over 30 years in Spain and the United Kingdom

The mean age of women at the birth of their first child increased across all EU Member States in the last three decades. This can be explained in particular by a higher proportion of women continuing their studies into higher education, a larger proportion of women entering and remaining in the workforce, as well as changes in traditional family units (less people getting married, getting married later, etc.) (4).

Figure 10 provides information on the mean age of women at first childbirth. There were only two EU Member States where the mean age of women at the birth of their first child was above 30 years in 2012: the United Kingdom (30.8 years) and Spain (30.3 years). By contrast, the lowest mean ages for women at the birth of their first child were recorded in Bulgaria (25.6 years) and Romania (25.7 years).

The average age of women when giving birth to their first child rose in each of the EU Member States (for which data are available) on the basis of a comparison between 1995 and 2012. This pattern was particularly pronounced towards the central and eastern part of the EU, the largest increase being recorded in the Czech Republic (4.6 years higher), followed by Hungary (3.9 years). By contrast, the pace of change was generally much slower in other parts of the EU, especially in those Member States where the average age of giving birth to a first child was already relatively high. The smallest increase was recorded in Belgium, where the mean age of women at the birth of their first child rose by 0.7 years between 1995 and 2010, with a slightly larger increase (0.9 years) recorded in the Netherlands between 1995 and 2012.

Figure 10: Mean age of women at birth of first child, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2012 (years)



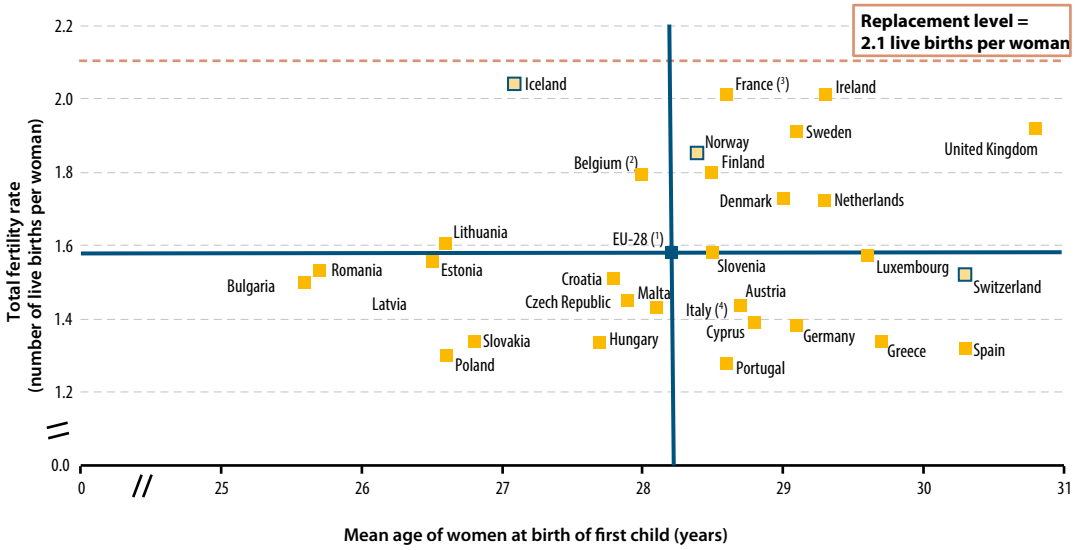
(1) 2005: not available.
(2) 2000: not available.
(3) 1995: not available.
(4) 2010 instead of 2012.
(5) 2012: not available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_find)

(4) See 'Why do people postpone parenthood? Reasons and social policy incentives' Melinda Mills, Ronald R. Rindfuss, Peter McDonald, Egbert te Velde, 2011, available at http://humupd.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/06/06/humupd.dmr026.full.

Highest fertility rates among several Member States where women gave birth to their first child at a relatively late age

There appears to be little evidence to support the view that higher fertility rates may be expected in those EU Member States where the mean age of women at the birth of their first child was low. Rather, while women in central and eastern EU Member States were more likely to give birth at a relatively young age, they were also more likely to have fewer children, as their total fertility rates were below the EU-28 average.

Figure 11: Mean age of women at birth of first child and total fertility rate, 2012



(1) Mean age of women at birth of first child: estimate based on simple average of the EU Member States. The blue lines show the intersection for the EU-28 average.
(2) 2010.
(3) 2006.
(4) 1997.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_find)

By contrast, Figure 11 shows that the only EU Member States that had fertility rates that were close to the replacement level were also characterised by women, on average, giving birth to their first child at a later age (above the EU average). This group — in the top right quadrant of Figure 11 — was composed of EU Member States from northern and western Europe.

The bottom right quadrant of Figure 11 contains most of the southern EU Member States, as well as Germany, Austria and Luxembourg. These countries were characterised by women giving birth to their first child at a relatively late age and by relatively low fertility rates.

AGE DEPENDENCY RATIOS

The young-age dependency ratio is the ratio of persons aged 0–14 years divided by the number of persons conventionally considered to be of working age (15–64 years).

The old-age dependency ratio is the ratio of the number of persons conventionally considered to be economically inactive (those aged 65 or over) divided by the number of persons conventionally considered to be of working age (15–64 years).

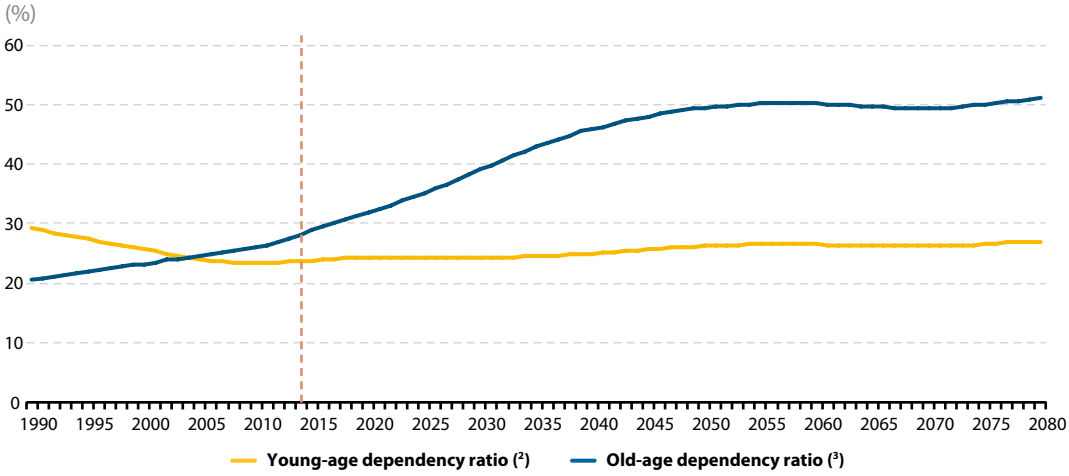
Dependency ratios — an increasing responsibility for those of working age

Age dependency ratios may be used to analyse the potential support that may be provided to children and to the elderly by those of working age. In 2013, the EU-28 young-age dependency ratio was 23.6 %, while the old-age dependency ratio was 27.5 %. This difference of almost 4 percentage points is likely to increase in the coming years, as the proportion of elderly people in the EU's population rises, while the share of children will continue to fall before stabilising (as presented before).

The size of the working-age population in the EU-28 will start to fall once the baby-boom generation have completed their move into retirement. As the working-age population declines and the number of children is likely to remain relatively unchanged, population projections suggest that the young-age dependency ratio will start to rise, while the number of elderly people (especially those aged 85 and above) will increase at a rapid pace in the coming decades, such that they will account for a considerably larger share of the total population.

Figure 12 shows the development of age dependency ratios and their projected path from 1990 until 2080, and provides clear picture of the challenges that lie ahead on the projected working-age population.

Figure 12: Development and projections of young and old-age dependency ratios, EU-28, 1990–2080 ([1])



([1]) 1990–2000: EU-27.
([2]) Children (0–14 years) in relation to the working-age population (15–64 years).
([3]) The elderly (≥ 65 years) in relation to the working-age population (15–64 years).
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_pjanind and proj_13ndbims)

Conclusions: What consequences from a declining share of children and young people?

If we add up the share of young and old-age people who will depend on the working population, today's generation of children are facing an increased burden in relation to supporting the remainder of the population as they move into work. For example, maintaining welfare systems, pension schemes and public healthcare systems is likely to pose a challenge, while the overall demand for such services is likely to increase, due to the rising number of elderly people. As such, policymakers are concerned about how to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances in the face of a declining share of economically active people.

Data sources and availability

The data presented in this chapter are principally drawn from Eurostat's population statistics, and more specifically from a range of demography indicators at a national and regional level (providing information on the structure of populations), fertility measures, and population projections (EUROPOP2013).

In this chapter, children are considered as those persons aged 0–14 years. Although there is no clear-cut definition of 'youth' or 'young people' since these terms are often used to describe the transitory phase between childhood and adult life, the EU's youth strategy has confirmed that for statistical purposes the most useful definition is to cover those aged 15–29. Demographic statistics have a wealth of information for this age breakdown, while they can also provide statistics at a more detailed level, for example, by five-year age groups (such as less than 5 years, 5–9 years and 10–14 years).

Eurostat carries out annual collections of demography data from national statistical authorities, including statistics concerning population and vital events, the latter including for example live births, deaths, marriages and divorces. These data are used to compute and disseminate demographic indicators at a country and regional level. Population data refer to the situation on 1 January of the reference year and are generally based on the usual resident population.

2 Children and young people in family and society

Introduction

This chapter presents the situation of children and young people in families and society across the European Union (EU). Family structures in the EU Member States vary, reflecting cultural and normative differences across the EU. The general postponement of material and tenure independence by young people indicates a delayed transition to adulthood. This chapter also depicts the subjective wellbeing of young people and households with children as well as the social and political participation of young people in EU society.

The vast majority of the data used in this chapter is derived from Eurostat's population statistics, and more specifically from a set of demography indicators, the EU labour force survey (LFS) and EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC). However, in order to provide a global view of the main issues such as family composition, other data sources, for example, data from the United Nations were also used.

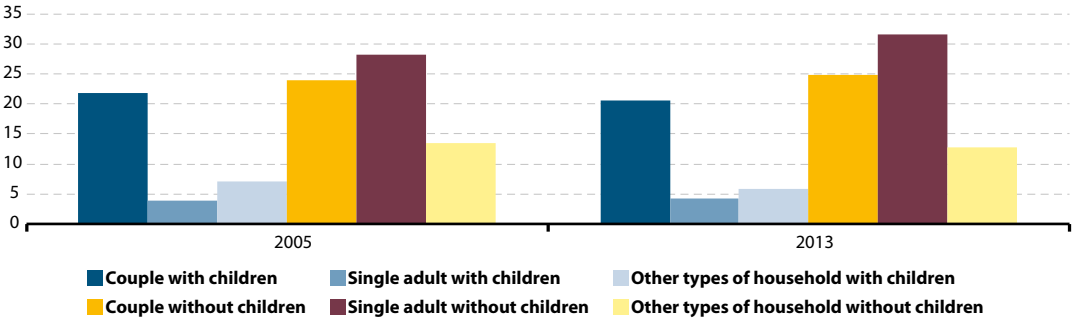
Family composition and household structure

The share of households with children is decreasing in the EU

Less than one third (30.7 %) of all households in the EU-28 had children in 2013 according to data from the EU labour force survey. Couples with children represented one in five (20.5 %) EU households, while single adults with children accounted for 4.3 % of the total number of households. Other types of households with children, for example, households where grandparents, parents and their children lived together, made up 5.8 % of all households.

Looking at developments since 2005, the share of EU-28 households with children decreased by more than 2 percentage points in only eight years (from 32.9 % in 2005 to 30.7 % in 2013), couples with children becoming relatively less frequent. The share of single adults with children was, nevertheless, higher in 2013 than in 2005 (rising from 4.0 % in 2005 to 4.3 % in 2013). Over the same period, the proportion of couples without children and the proportion of single adults without children rose from 24.0 % to 24.8 % and from 28.3 % to 31.7 % respectively.

Figure 1: Private households by household composition, EU-28, 2005 and 2013
(% of private households)



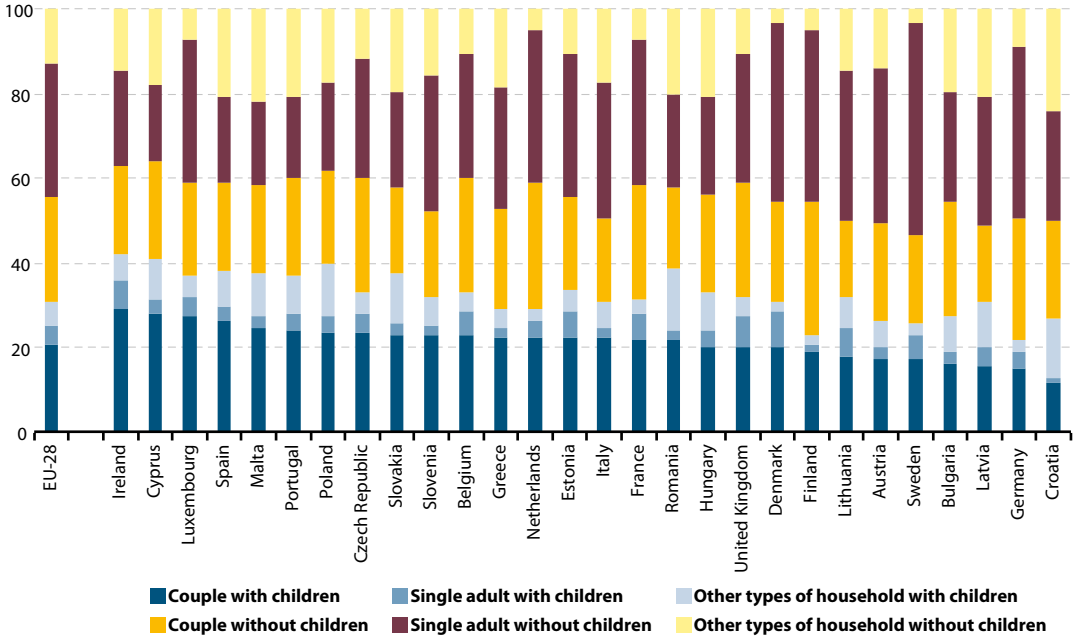
Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfst_hhnhtych)

Important variations in household composition between EU Member States

Figure 2 extends the analysis of household composition to the EU Member States, presenting data for 2013. Ireland recorded the highest share of couples with children (29.0 %), followed by Cyprus (27.7 %). These were also the only two EU Member States to have more than 40 % of their households with children (42.1 % and 40.7 % respectively). Ireland moreover registered a high proportion of single-parent households (6.8 %). Only three EU Member States, namely Denmark, the United Kingdom and Lithuania, recorded a higher proportion of households composed of single adults with children (8.7 %, 7.2 % and 7.1 % respectively).

By contrast, the share of households with children was at its lowest level in Germany (21.8 %), a share that was nearly half of the corresponding proportion in Ireland. Sweden and Austria followed Germany, with around one quarter (25–26 %) of all households with children. Looking at couples with children, Germany also recorded one of the smallest shares (15.0 %), again close to half of the corresponding proportion in Ireland. Nevertheless, the EU Member State with the lowest share of couples with children was Croatia (11.5 %). This very low proportion was counterbalanced by other type of households that contained children, for example, multigenerational households, which accounted for 14.0 % of all households in Croatia. The lowest proportion of single-parent households was also recorded in Croatia (1.4 %), while the same share was also registered in Finland. Romania and Greece were the only other EU Member States where households composed of single adults with children accounted for less than 2 % of the total number of households (both 1.9 %).

Figure 2: Private households by household composition, 2013
(% of private households)



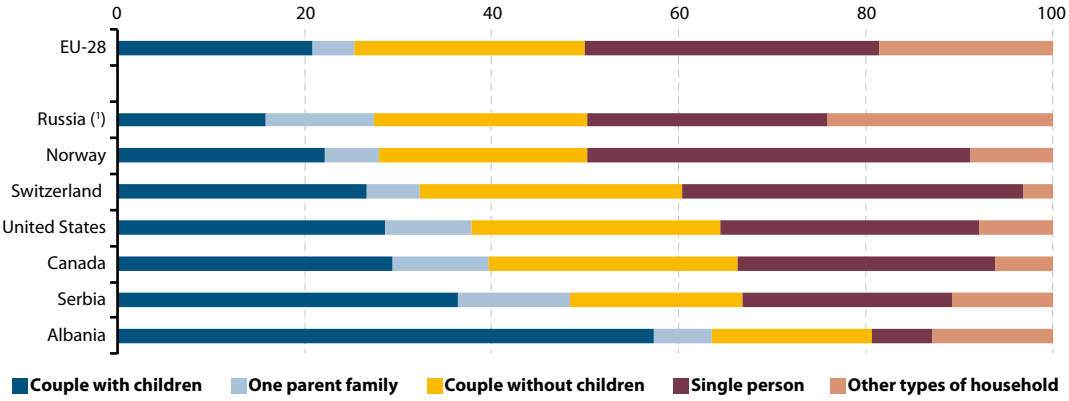
Source: Eurostat (online data code : lfst_hhnhtych)

Single persons and couples without children constitute over 50 % of the total households in the developed world

Couples with children are becoming less common in many parts of the world, including the EU. They represented, in 2011, less than 30 % of the total number of households in Canada (29.4 %), the United States (28.6 %), Switzerland (26.7 %), Norway (22.2 %), the Russian Federation (15.9 %) and the EU (20.9 %) (Figure 3). The traditional 'nuclear family', composed of a couple with children, was seen to be in decline in the EU as a higher proportion of people chose to live alone (31.4 %) or as couples without children (24.7 %). Indeed, among those countries presented in Figure 3, the EU-28 had one of the lowest shares of one-parent families (4.4 %), with the proportion of one-parent families being more than twice the EU average in Serbia (12.0 %), Russia (11.5 %) and Canada (10.3 %).

By contrast, two-parent families still constituted the most common type of household composition in some countries: for example, couples with children made up 57.3 % of households in Albania, while childless couples accounted for 17.2 % .

Figure 3: Household structure, selected countries, 2011
(% of private households)



(1) 2010.
Source: UNECE and Eurostat (online data code: lfst_hhnhtych)

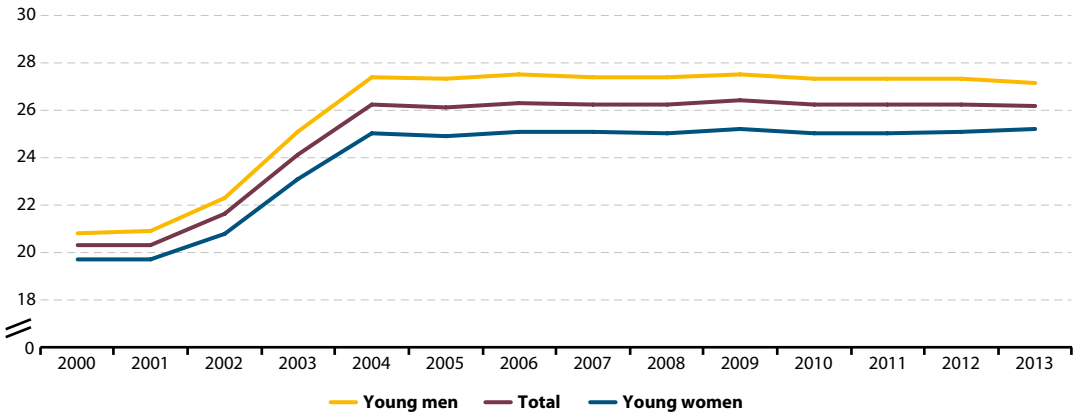
Transition to adulthood: young men leave the family home later than young women

The transition from childhood to adulthood is characterised by a number of crucial decisions / life choices, such as leaving the parental home to study or work, being materially independent, moving in with a partner or getting married, and the choice of whether or not to have children. However, the path to independence is not straightforward and young people face a range of challenges which may result in some of them returning to the parental home.

Among others, the decision of young people to leave the parental home can be affected by: whether or not they are in a relationship, whether or not they are studying full-time, their level of financial (in)dependence, labour market conditions, living costs and the cost of housing. Figure 4 indicates that in 2013, on average across the whole of the EU, young people were not inclined to leave the parental home until the age of 27 for men and 25 for women. Between 2000 and 2004, there was a rapid increase in the average age at which young

people tended to leave the parental home — after which there was little change through to 2013. Indeed, the average age for leaving the parental home increased by six years for boys (from 21 to 27 years old) and by five years for girls (from 20 to 25 years old) between 200 and 2004.

Figure 4: Estimated mean age of leaving the parental household, by sex, EU-28, 2000–13 ([1]) (years)



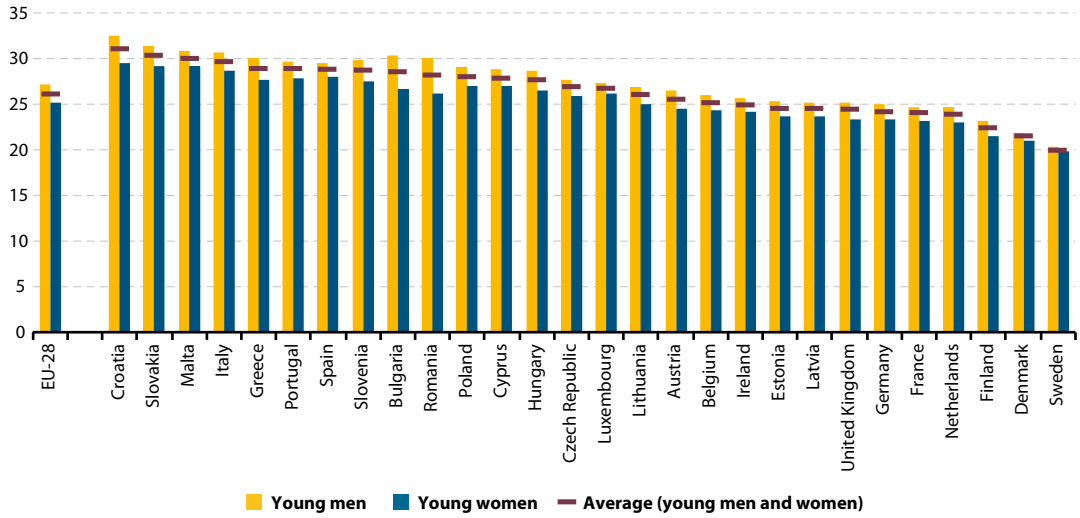
([1]) 2000 and 2001: EU-27 instead of EU-28. 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_demo_030)

In northern EU Member States, young people leave home in their early twenties while in southern and eastern EU Member States they tend to leave home in their early thirties

There are significant differences between EU Member States regarding the norms that apply to co-residence between the generations (for example, parents living with their adult children). Figure 5 shows that there are substantial disparities between on the one hand, southern and eastern EU Member States — where multi-generation households were a more common phenomenon — and northern and western Member States, where children were more prone to leave the family to live on their own (or with others).

In Croatia, Slovakia, Malta and Italy, the mean age of leaving the parental home was 30 or above in 2013. Greece, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland followed with a mean age that was higher than 28. By contrast, young people in Sweden, Denmark and Finland left the parental home, on average, before the age of 23. The Netherlands and France both recorded a mean age of 24 for 'flying the family nest'.

Figure 5: Estimated mean age of leaving the parental household, by sex, 2013 (years)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_demo_030)

Young women moved out of the parental home earlier than young men, although there were considerable variations observed between EU Member States. In 2013, young women in Sweden left the parental home, on average, before the age of 20, while women also left the parental home at a relatively young age (20–21 years) in Denmark and Finland. These figures could be contrasted with the situation in Croatia, where the average age for women leaving the parental home was nearly 30 years, while young women in Slovakia, Malta and Italy were also relatively old when leaving the parental home (more than 29 years).

The results for young men were very similar, with the lowest average age for leaving the parental home recorded in Sweden (20 years old), Denmark (22) and Finland (23) and the highest in Croatia (33 years old), Slovakia, Malta and Italy (all three 31 years), Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Slovenia, Portugal and Spain (all six 30 years).

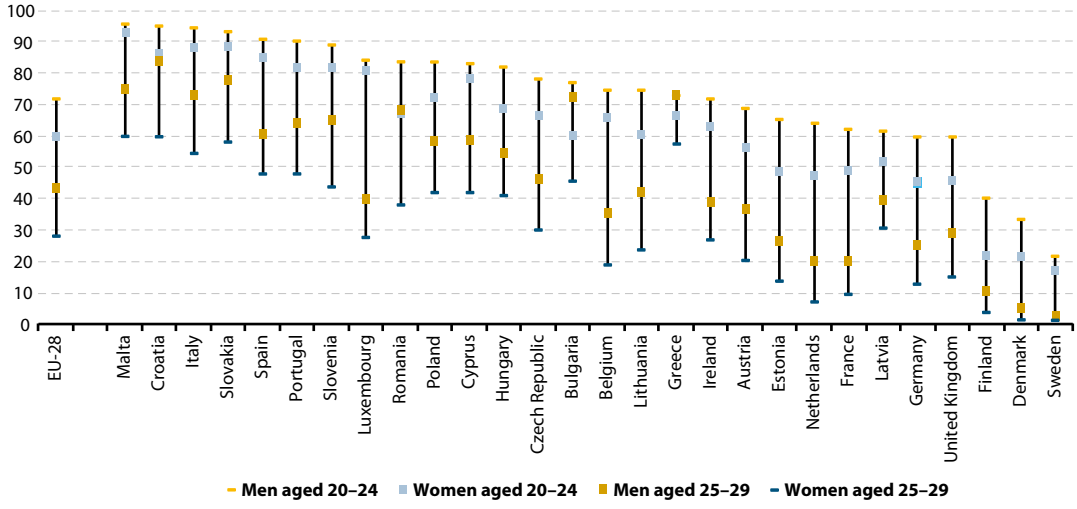
The largest gender gaps between the average ages of women and men leaving the parental home were observed in Bulgaria and Romania (four years difference), followed by Croatia (three years difference). By contrast, the smallest gender gaps were recorded for Sweden, Denmark and Luxembourg (a difference of one year or less between the sexes).

Men under the age of 30 tended not to fly the nest in many of the southern EU Member States

At an EU level, figures show that 71.9 % of young men aged 20–24 lived with their parents in 2013, while the corresponding share was 60.0 % for young women of the same age (Figure 6). Looking at the age group 25–29 years, the proportion of young men living in the parental home decreased to 43.0 % and the share for young women shrank to 28.1%.

A high proportion of young men aged 25–29 still lived in their parent's home in Croatia (83.8 %), Slovakia (77.7 %), Malta (74.8 %), Italy and Greece (both 72.9 %). By contrast, young men in Sweden, Denmark and Finland were more likely to leave the parental home in search of independence (as only 2.5 % , 5.2 % and 10.2 % of young men aged 25–29 years were still living with their parents in 2013). Focusing on Sweden, which recorded the lowest shares of young people living with their parents, only 16.8 % of young women aged 20–24 still lived in their parent's home, while the corresponding share for young men of the same age was 21.8 % . In Denmark and Finland the pattern was similar, with 21.2 % and 21.7 % of young women aged 20–24 years still living with their parents, while the corresponding rates for young men of the same age were 33.5 % and 40.3 % respectively.

Figure 6: Young people (aged 20–29) living in the parental household, by age group and sex, 2013
(% of young people)



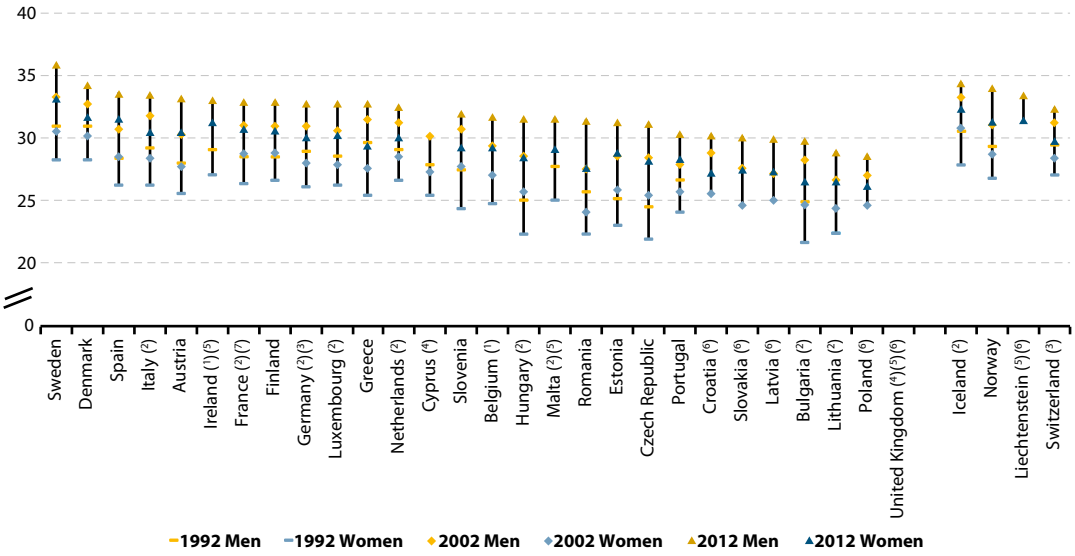
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_demo_050)

Important gender discrepancies on age of first marriage

The age of first marriage has considerably increased over the two last decades in all of the EU Member States (Figure 7). A simple average based on those EU Member States for which national data are available in 2012 suggests that the average age for women to be wed for the first time was 29 years old, while that for young men was 32 years old. Back in 1992 the average age of first marriage had been 25 years for young women and 28 years for young men. As such, the average age for getting married a first time increased by four years for both men and women between 1992 and 2012.

Despite these delays before deciding to get married, the gender gap in the age of first marriage remained relatively unchanged in most of the EU Member States. In 2012, it was generally about three years difference between the sexes, with the largest gaps observed in Romania (3.8 years), Greece and Bulgaria (both 3.3 years).

Figure 7: Mean age at first marriage, by sex, 1992, 2002 and 2012
(years)



(1) 2010 instead of 2012.
(2) 2011 instead of 2012.
(3) 2001 instead of 2002.
(4) 2010–12: not available.
(5) 2000–02: not available.
(6) 1992: not available.
(7) 1992: metropolitan France only.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_nind)

Poland was the EU Member State that reported the youngest average age for women getting married the first time (26.3 years old in 2012). At the other end of the range was Sweden, where the average age of women getting married for the first time was 33.3 years old. The pattern across EU Member States for men was similar to that observed for women, as Poland had the youngest average age for men getting married the first time (28.7 years old) and Sweden the oldest (35.6 years old).

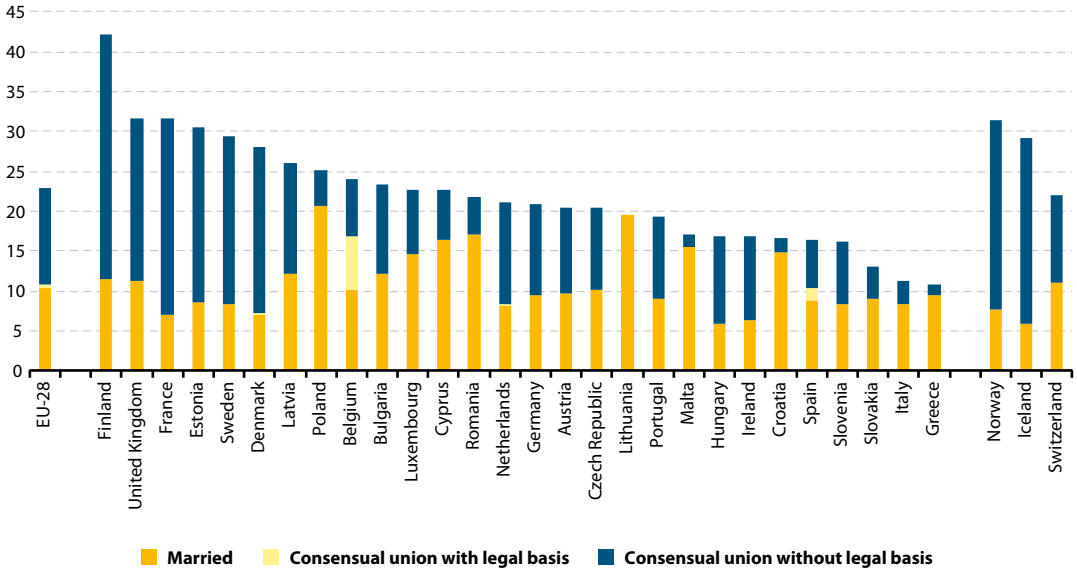
New patterns in family units

Getting married is not the only way for partners to live together: indeed, living in consensual union a growing phenomenon across the EU, whether it is with or without a legal basis.

According to the EU-SILC, in 2013 some 12.2 % of young people aged 16–29 years in the EU-28 were living in a consensual union without a legal basis, while 10.7 % of the same age group were living as married couples or in consensual union with a legal basis. Although the difference in relative shares was not substantial at an EU level, different laws and customs across the EU Member States have affected how quickly or otherwise alternative types of family units have become established.

Northern EU Member States have higher shares of young people living in a consensual union without legal basis (30.7 % in Finland, 21.2 % in Sweden, 20.9 % in Denmark), as did France (24.6 %), Estonia (21.8 %) and the United Kingdom (20.3 %). By contrast, in Mediterranean, central and eastern EU Member States (for example, Cyprus, Malta, Croatia, Italy, Greece, Romania and Poland) a considerably higher proportion of young people lived together in partnerships that had a legal basis (whether or not this was marriage). Hungary was atypical, insofar as the proportion of young people living together in a consensual union without a legal basis was almost twice as high as the share of those living in partnerships with a legal basis (11.1 % compared with 5.8 %).

Figure 8: Young people (aged 16–29) who are married or in a consensual union (with or without legal basis), 2013
(% of young people)

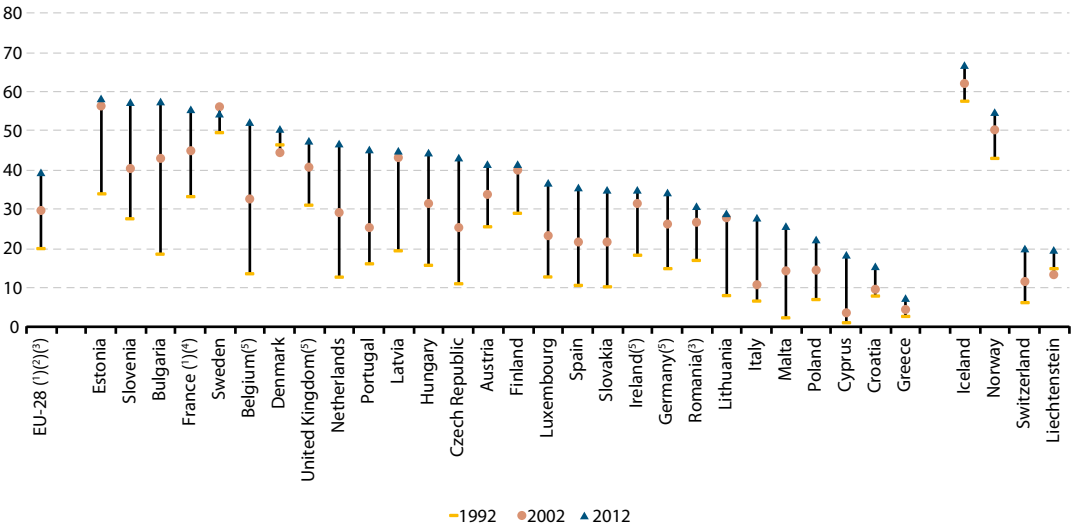


Source: Eurostat (EU-SILC 2013)

Births outside of marriage are on the increase in the EU

The proportion of live births outside marriage increased across the EU over recent decades, reflecting the changing patterns of family structures. More and more couples decide to become parents without getting married and those that do marry tend to do so at a later age. The share of children born outside of marriage rose from 20 % in the early 1990s to reach almost 30 % by 2002, before continuing to increase during the most recent decade for which data are available, reaching almost 40 % by 2011 (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Live births outside marriage, 1992, 2002 and 2012
(% of live births)



(1) 2011 instead of 2012.
(2) 2011: provisional data.
(3) 1993 instead of 1992.
(4) 1992: metropolitan France only.
(5) 2012: provisional data.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_find)

In 15 of the EU Member States the share of births outside marriage was above the EU average: the highest shares in 2012 were recorded in Estonia (58.4 %), Slovenia (57.6 %), Bulgaria (57.4 %), Sweden (54.5 %), Belgium (52.3 %) and Denmark (50.6 %), while there was also a high share in France (55.8 % in 2011). By contrast, Greece (7.6 %), Croatia (15.4 %) and Cyprus (18.6 %) recorded the lowest proportions of live births outside of marriage in 2012.

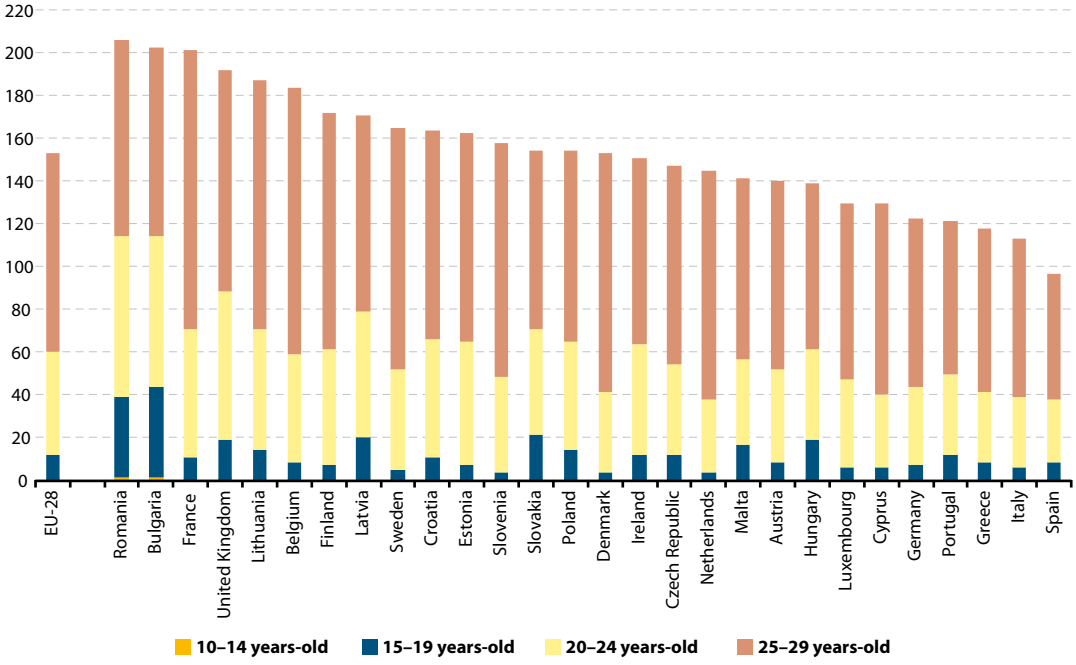
Between 1992 and 2012, the proportion of births outside of marriage grew in all EU Member States. Bulgaria (up 38.9 percentage points), Belgium (38.7 percentage points), the Netherlands (34.2 percentage points) and the Czech Republic (32.7 percentage points) recorded the largest increases, while Denmark (up 4.2 percentage points), Sweden and Greece (both 5.0 percentage points) registered the smallest gains.

In 2012, more than half of all births occurred outside of marriage in Estonia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Sweden, Belgium and Denmark; the same was true for France in 2011

Highest number of live births during adolescence and early youth in Bulgaria and Romania

Complementing the analysis of fertility rates and of the mean age of mother's when having their first child (as presented in Chapter 1), Figure 10 shows the fertility rates of women aged less than 30, by five-year age groups. At an EU level, the fertility of young women was very low among those aged 10–24 years, at 60.9 live births per 1 000 women in 2012. For girls aged 10–14 years, fertility rates were considerably lower, at 0.2 live births per 1 000 girls, in other words, there were, on average, just two live births for every 10 000 girls of this age, while the corresponding rate for girls / women aged 15–19 years was 12.6 live births per 1 000 girls / women.

Figure 10: Fertility rates for women aged less than 30, by age group, 2012
(live births / 1 000 women)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_frate)

There were considerable differences across EU Member States as regards fertility rates during adolescence and early youth; these differences may reflect, among others, sex education at school and attitudes towards discussing these matters within families. For example, in 2012 the fertility rate for girls below the age of 20 was lower in France than the EU-28 average (10.7 live births per 1 000 girls), while it subsequently increased above the EU-28 average for young women aged 20–24 (59.9 live births per 1 000 young women) and peaked at 130.9 live births per 1 000 women among those aged 24–29 years, which was the highest rate for any of the EU Member States. Besides France, those EU Member States with the highest fertility rates for women aged 25–29 included Belgium and Lithuania (124.7 and 117.0 live births per 1 000 women respectively).

By contrast, the fertility rate for girls / women under the age of 20 was relatively high in Bulgaria and Romania (44.1 and 39.0 live births per 1 000 girls / women aged 10–19 years) and these two countries continued to record the highest fertility rates in the EU among women aged 20–24 years (at over 70 live births per 1 000 young women). Slovakia, Latvia, the United Kingdom and Hungary recorded the highest fertility rates for the girls / women aged 15–19 years (at 21.6, 20.3, 19.7 and 19.2 births per 1 000 girls / women respectively).

The number of abortions has gone down significantly

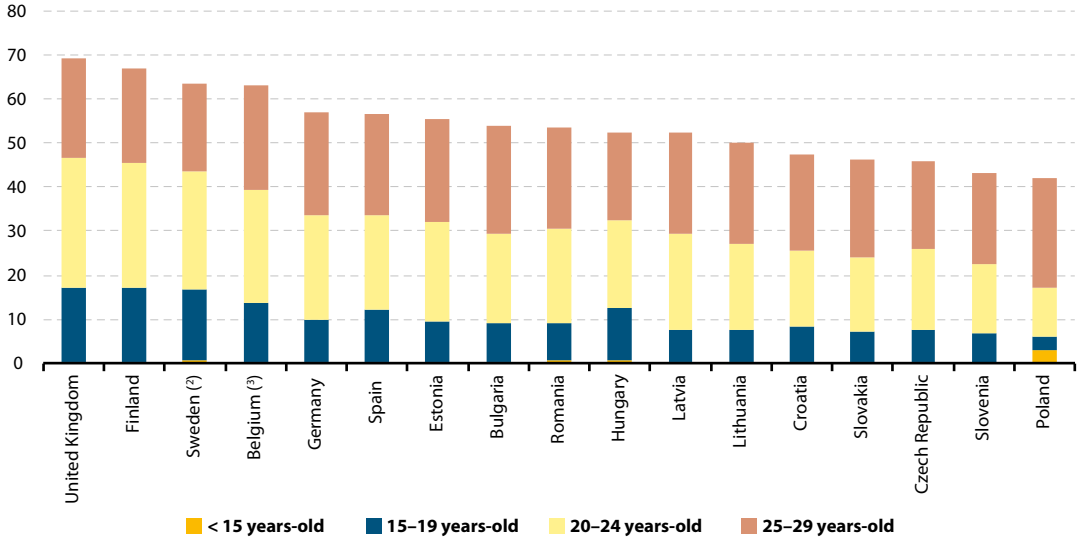
The ability of families to plan as to if and when they want to have children is fundamental. Yet, family planning remains a neglected public health priority ([1]) and unmet needs for contraception and advice lead to unintended pregnancies which may impact upon lives and wellbeing.

In 2012, there were about 642 000 legally induced abortions in the 17 EU Member States for which data are available. This figure marks a reduction of 41 % when compared with the 1.1 million abortions that were registered in 2002.

While most pregnancy terminations in 2002 and 2012 concerned young women aged under 30, the most recent data suggests that there has been a decrease in abortions performed on girls aged under 20. For instance, in the United Kingdom in 2002 more than 21 % of all legal abortions concerned teenagers (less than 20 years old), a share that had been reduced to 17.1 % by 2012. The same development was recorded in Finland, Germany, Latvia, Slovakia, Sweden, Spain, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Belgium and Bulgaria (Figures 11a and 11b).

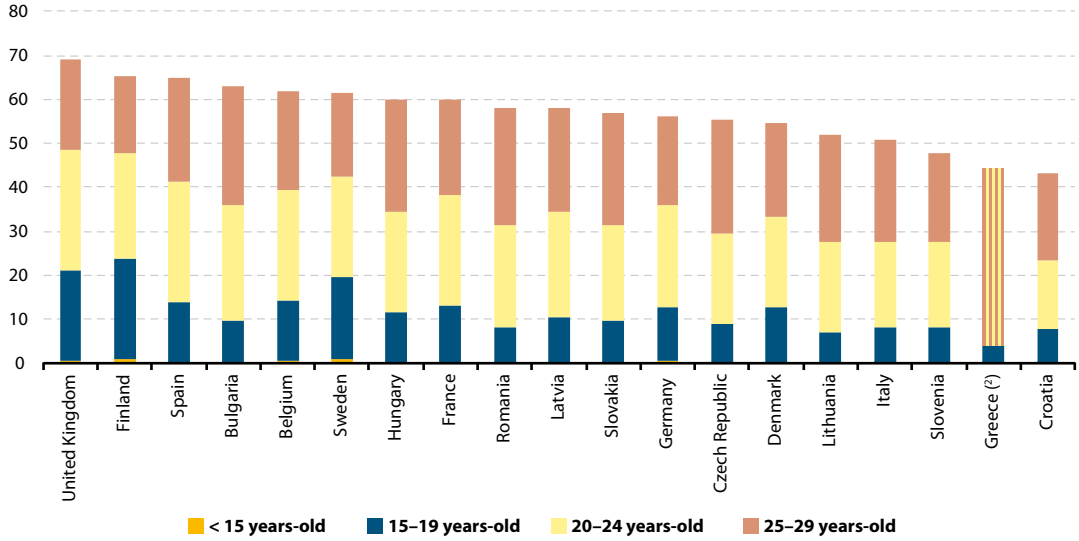
([1]) Cf. 'Choices and planning. Entre Nous No. 79', World Health Organization (see http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/sexual-and-reproductive-health/publications/entre-nous/entre-nous/choices-and-planning.-entre-nous-no.-79).

Figure 11a: Legally induced abortions among young women, by age group, 2012 (1)
(% of legally induced abortions)



(1) Denmark, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Austria and Portugal: not available.
(2) 2010.
(3) 2011.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_fabort)

Figure 11b: Legally induced abortions among young women, by age group, 2002 (1)
(% of legally induced abortions)



(1) Estonia, Ireland, Poland and Portugal: not available.
(2) Those aged 20–29 years-old: no breakdown available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_fabort)

Foreign-born children and young people in the EU

Citizens from EU Member States have the freedom of movement within the EU's internal borders. Being free to move from one European country to another may help promote intercultural understanding and contribute to the creation of a common European identity. Furthermore, this freedom allows EU citizens to work, study and reside in another Member State.

Migration policies within the EU are increasingly concerned with attracting particular migrant profiles, often in an attempt to alleviate specific skills shortages. Selection can be carried out on the basis of language proficiency, work experience, education and age. International immigration, especially of young people, may be used as a tool to solve specific labour market shortages but also to have a positive impact on the age structure of the destination country. However, migration alone will almost certainly not reverse the ongoing pattern of population ageing that is being experienced in many parts of the EU.

Migration is influenced by a combination of economic, political and social factors, global events, linguistic and / or historical ties, which may have a direct impact on the size and composition of the EU's foreign population.

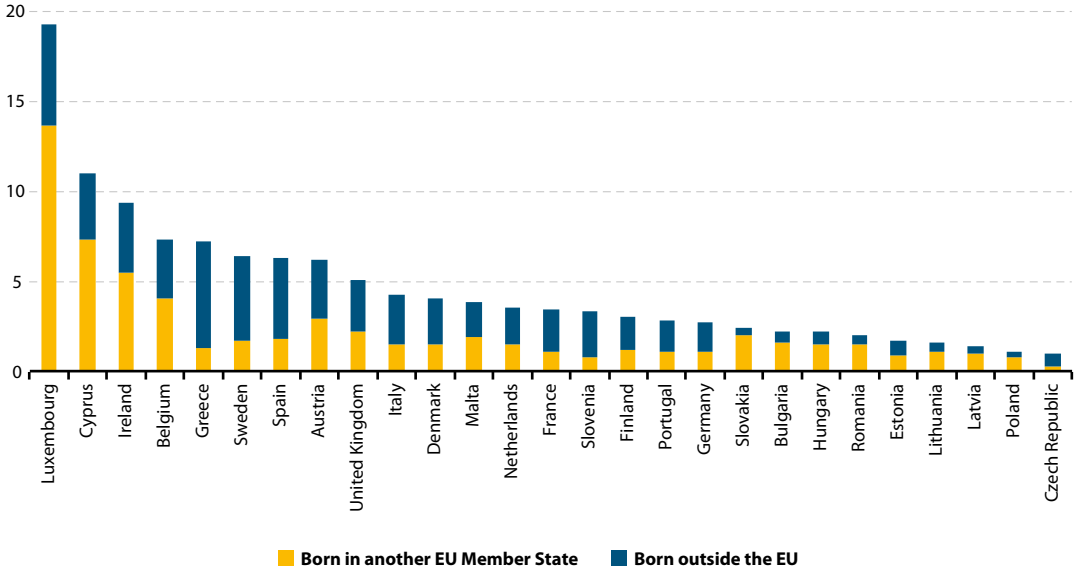
Nearly one in five children and two in five young people in Luxembourg were born outside the country

Looking at the population of children aged less than 15, Luxembourg was the EU Member State where the share of foreign-born children was highest in 2013, with 13.7 % of all children born in an EU-27 Member State (data for Croatia not included) and 5.5 % of all children born in a non-member country, resulting in almost one fifth (19.2 %) of children being born outside the national territory (Figure 12). Cyprus and Ireland had the next highest shares of foreign-born children, with 7.3 % and 5.5 % of children born in another EU Member State, and 3.7 % and 3.8 % in a non-member country, giving a total of around one tenth (10.9 % and 9.3 %) of all children being foreign-born. Greece recorded the highest share of children born outside of the EU (5.9 %), while its share of children born in another EU Member State was relatively low (1.3 %). By contrast, the Czech Republic and Poland recorded the lowest shares for children being born outside of their national territory (about 1.0 % of the total).

Similarly, the highest share of young people (those aged 15–29) born in a foreign country was also recorded in Luxembourg (39.3 %), followed by Cyprus and Ireland (where 28.5 % and 21.8 % respectively of all persons aged 15–29 were born abroad). Figure 13 shows that the majority of these foreign-born young people were born in other EU Member States. The five EU Member States with the highest proportions of non-EU foreign-born young people were registered in Spain (13.3 %), Cyprus and Sweden (both 13.2 %), Luxembourg (11.8 %) and Greece (11.2 %).

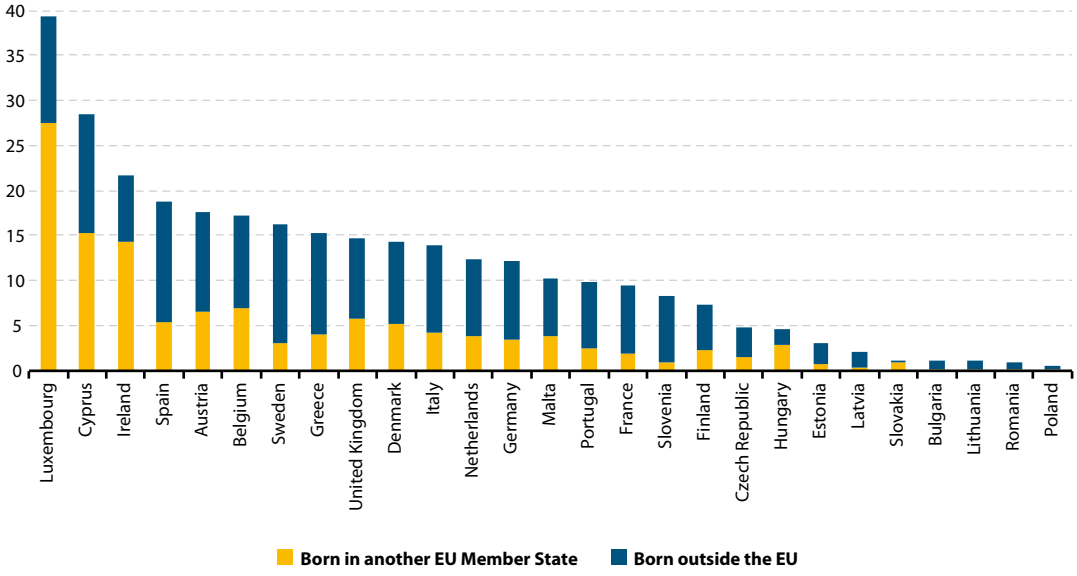
On the other hand, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia had the lowest shares of young foreign-born persons, as these accounted for approximately 1 % of the total population of those aged 15–29.

Figure 12: Foreign-born children (aged 0–14), 2013 ([1])
(% of all children aged 0–14)



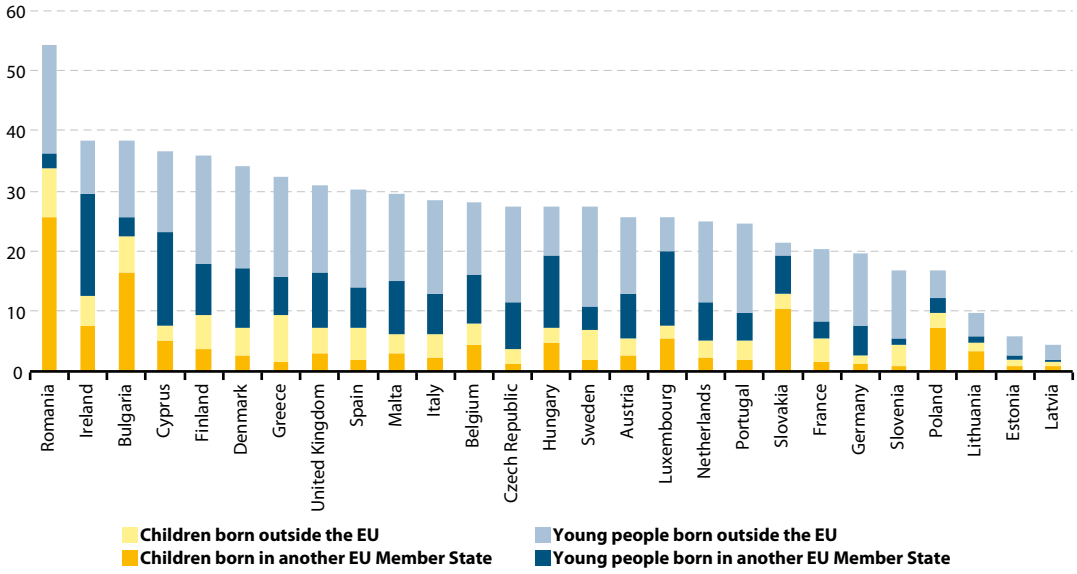
([1]) Croatia: not included.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop3ctb)

Figure 13: Foreign-born young people (aged 15–29), 2013 ([1])
(% of all youths aged 15–29)



([1]) Croatia: not included.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop3ctb)

Figure 14: Share of foreign-born children and young people in the total number of foreign-born persons, 2013 (1)
(% of foreign-born population)



(1) Croatia: not included.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_pop3ctb)

In most EU Member States, at least one fifth of the foreign-born population was composed of children and young people.

Figure 14 focuses on the age structure of the foreign-born population within each EU Member State and particularly the share of children and young people (aged 15–29) compared with the total foreign-born population.

In 2013, Romania had the highest share of children and young people in its foreign-born population, as those aged less than 30 accounted for more than half (54.3 %) of the total foreign-born population. Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Denmark, Greece, the United Kingdom and Spain followed with shares for children and young people that were higher than 30 % of the total foreign-born population. Generally speaking, at least one fifth of the foreign-born population of the EU Member States consisted of children and young people. The only exceptions to this rule were the three Baltic Member States (Latvia, 4.4 % ; Estonia, 5.8 % ; Lithuania, 9.6 %), Poland (16.8 %), Slovenia (16.9 %) and Germany (19.6 %).

Subjective wellbeing

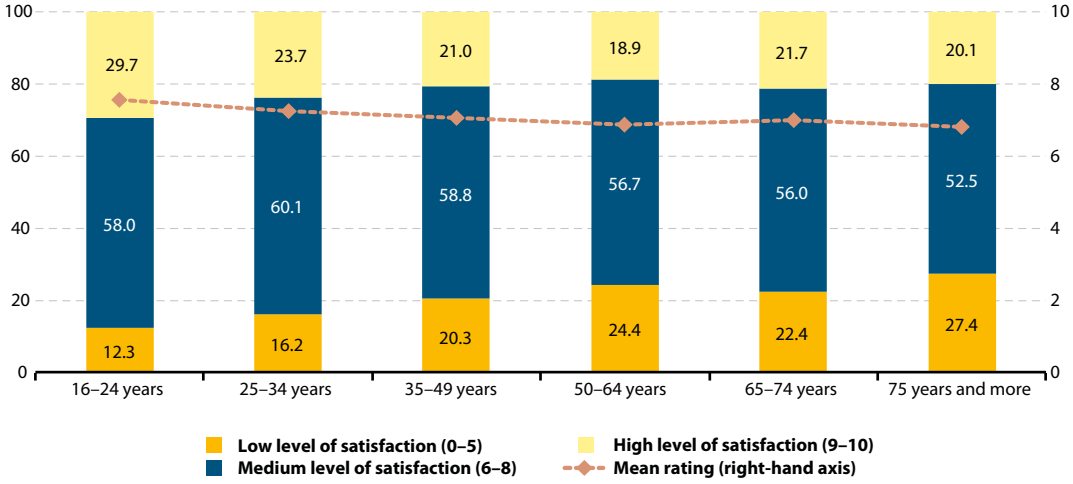
The level of integration of people in the society can be reflected through subjective measures, such as overall life satisfaction or the degree of happiness. A 2013 EU-SILC ad-hoc module covered these aspects of subjective wellbeing, and provides a range of interesting results for young people and EU households with children.

Young people tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction

Life satisfaction can be measured on an 11-point scale which ranges from 0 ('not satisfied at all') to 10 ('fully satisfied'). In order to aid interpretation and to facilitate analyses, answers were grouped into low, medium and high satisfaction, based on the following thresholds: scores of 0–5 were classified as a 'low' level of satisfaction, 6–8 as 'medium' levels of satisfaction, and 9 and 10 as 'high' levels of satisfaction.

As can be seen in Figure 15, life satisfaction in 2013 was highest in the EU-28 among the youngest age group, as 29.7 % of young people aged 16–24 reported that they were highly satisfied with life (scores of 9 or 10); this high share pushed up the average level of satisfaction among people aged 16–24 to 7.6 (on a scale of 0–10).

Figure 15: Life satisfaction, by age group, EU-28, 2013
(left-hand axis: % share of the population by satisfaction level; right-hand axis: mean rating)



Source: Eurostat (EU-SILC 2013)

Generally, life satisfaction within the EU population decreased as a function of age, with the exception of those aged 65–74 (the period in life when most people take their retirement), where satisfaction levels were slightly higher than for those aged between 50 and 64 (7.0 versus 6.9).

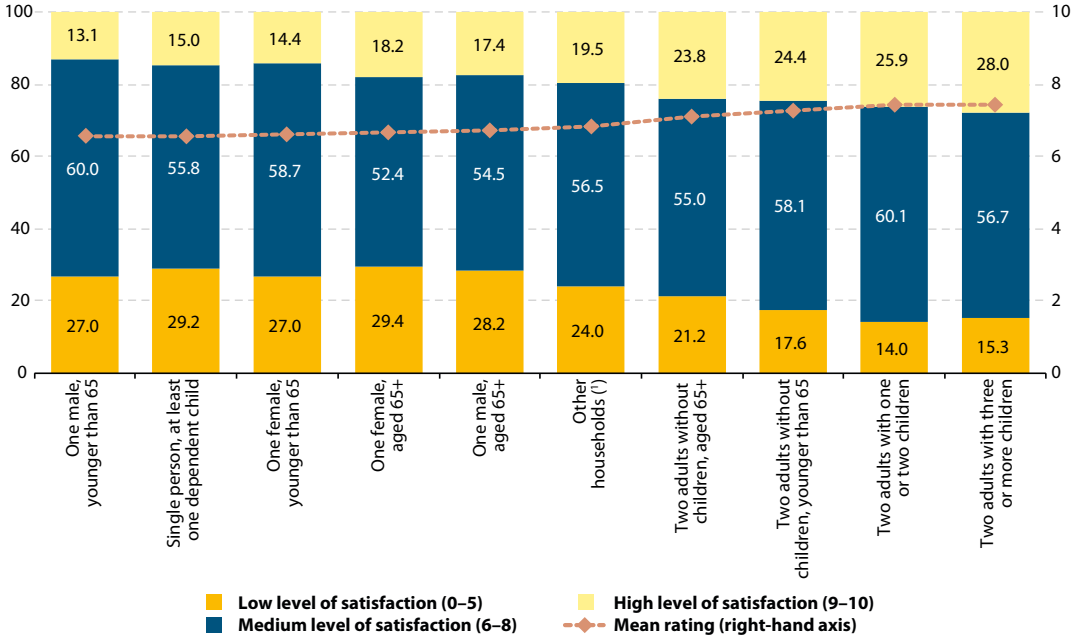
In most EU Member States, the youngest age group reported the highest overall scores for life satisfaction, exceptions being Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Norway where people aged 65 and above were more satisfied than the young.

Life satisfaction is higher among couples with children

Figure 16 shows that life satisfaction for people living alone in the EU was below the average level for couples (with and without children). Two adults living with children reported the highest levels for life satisfaction (7.4). The lowest level of life satisfaction, on the other hand, was recorded for single-person households younger than 65 and for lone parent households (both 6.6).

Single, elderly women (aged 65 and above) most frequently reported a low level of life satisfaction; almost one third (29.4 %) of this sub-population gave their life satisfaction a score of 0–5. A similar share (29.2 %) of lone parent households had a low level of life satisfaction. By contrast, some 28.0 % of people living in a couple with three or more dependent children reported a high level of life satisfaction, which could be contrasted with only 15.3 % of this sub-population which stated they had a low level of life satisfaction.

Figure 16: Life satisfaction, by household type, EU-28, 2013
(left-hand axis: % share of the population by satisfaction level; right-hand axis: mean rating)

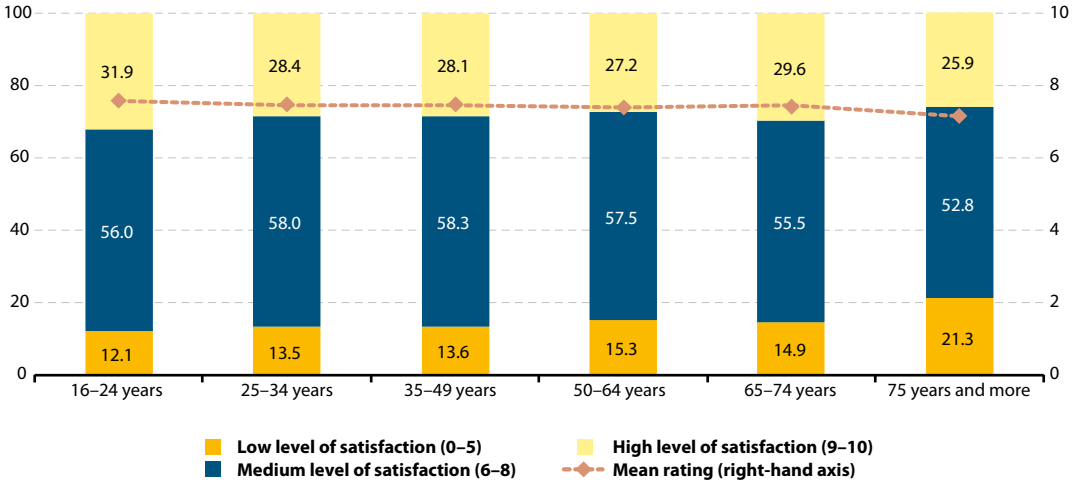


(1) Other types of household with and without dependent children.
Source: Eurostat (EU-SILC 2013)

Similar patterns for meaning of life and happiness

The meaning of life is measured here as a feeling that one's life has a sense and purpose. Results for this subjective indicator show an almost identical pattern to those for life satisfaction, with the difference, however, that the meaning of life was consistently rated at a higher level than life satisfaction in the EU; in other words, people were generally were more positive regarding the meaning of life (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Meaning of life, by age group, EU-28, 2013
(left-hand axis: % share of the population by satisfaction level; right-hand axis: mean rating)

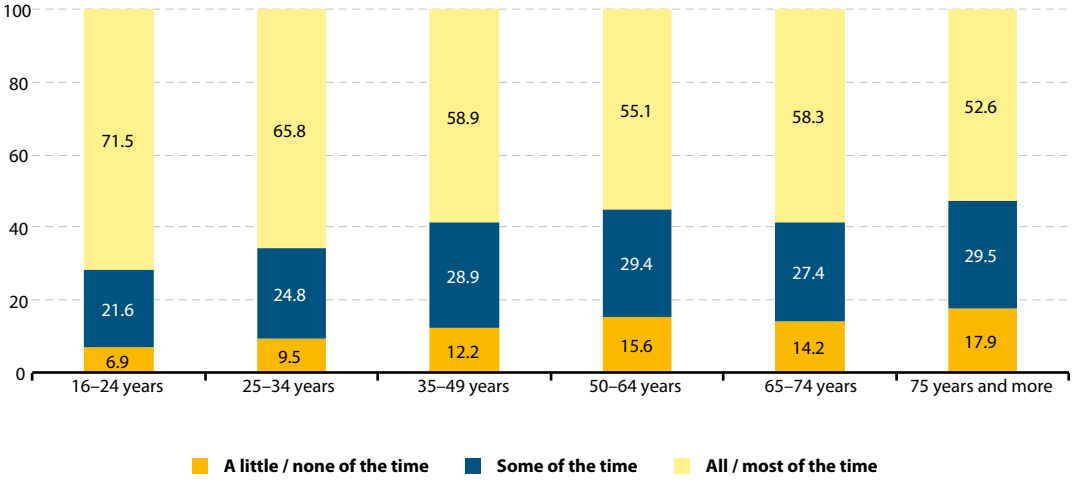


Source: Eurostat (EU-SILC 2013)

In EU-SILC, happiness is measured by the following question: 'How much of the time over the past four weeks have you been happy?' Although this question was asked on a verbal five-point scale and can therefore not be directly compared with results for life satisfaction, there were similar patterns regarding differences between various age groups and types of household.

As can be seen in Figure 18, happiness (as for life satisfaction and the meaning of life) was highest in the EU among the youngest age group (16–24 years), with 71.5 % of this sub-population reporting to have been happy all or most of the time over the four weeks prior to the survey. Happiness then decreased as a function of age through to those aged 50–64, before rising slightly post-retirement (those aged 65–74) and then subsequently falling to its lowest level for those aged 75 or more, where more than one sixth (17.9 %) of respondents cited that they were 'happy little or none of the time'.

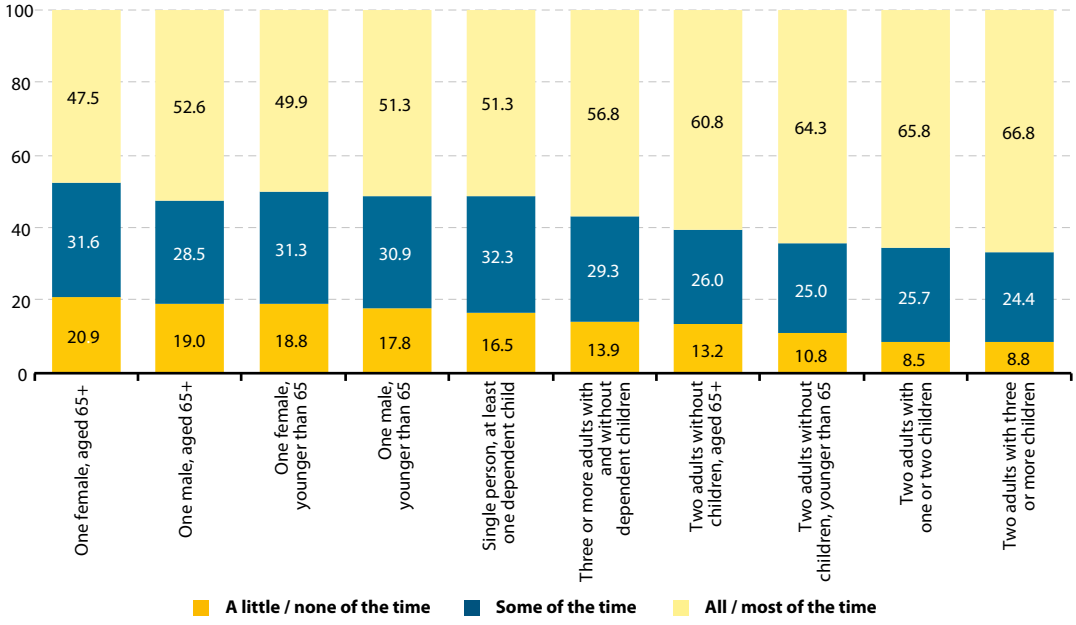
Figure 18: Frequency of being happy during the four weeks prior to the survey, by age group, EU-28, 2013
(% share of population for each age group)



Source: Eurostat (EU-SILC 2013)

Figure 19 illustrates that generally two adult households (in many cases couples) were happier than people living on their own and that households with children were the happiest (with the exception of single parents who reported rather low happiness levels). Two thirds (66.8 %) of people living in households with two adults and three children and 65.8 % of households with two adults and one or two children were happy all or most of the time. At the other end of the scale, women aged 65 and above living alone were the most unhappy group, as just over one fifth (20.9 %) of this sub-population said that they were 'happy little or none of the time'; they were followed by men aged 65 and above (19.0 %) and women under the age of 65 living in single-person households (18.8 %).

Figure 19: Frequency of being happy during the four weeks prior to the survey, by household type, EU-28, 2013
(% share of population for each household type)



Source: Eurostat (EU-SILC 2013)

Young people's participation in society

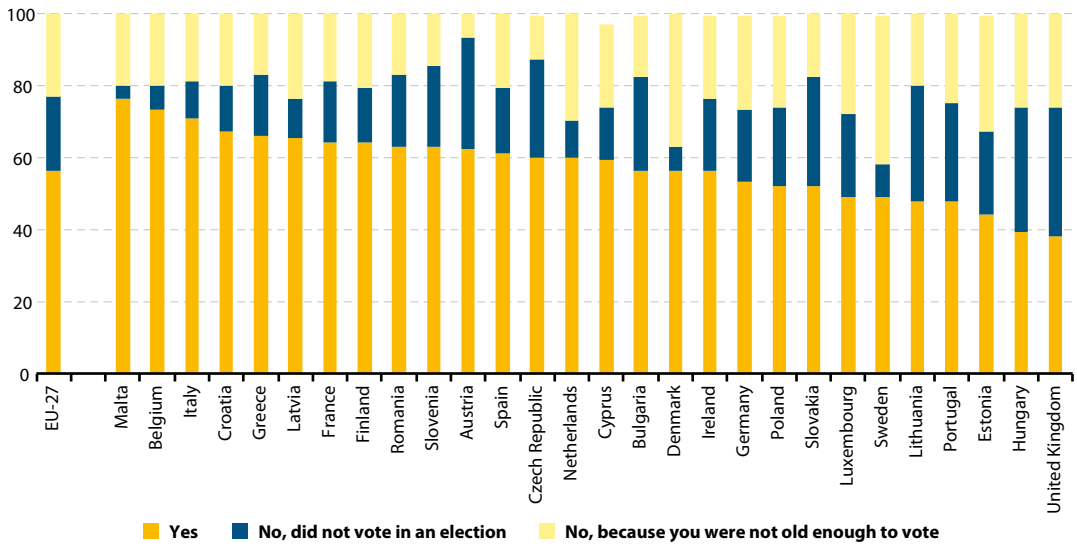
Social and political participation of young people is considered one means of encouraging a more inclusive and democratic society. The active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level enhances their capacity to influence decision-making and allows them to contribute to building a better society.

Taking active part in democracy

The results of Flash Eurobarometer 375, titled 'European youth: participation in democratic life', which was conducted in 2013, indicate that over half (56 %) of all people aged 15–30 had voted in an election during the previous three years, while 44 % had not voted, either out of choice (21 %) or because they had not yet reached the legal voting age (23 %).

Figure 20 shows that voting among young people was particularly high in Malta (76 %), Belgium (73 %) and Italy (71 %). By contrast, in seven EU Member States, less than half of all respondents aged 15–30 had voted. In the United Kingdom and Hungary, fewer than two out of every five (38 % and 39 % respectively) young people that had been surveyed declared that they had voted in the previous three years, while in Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal, Luxembourg and Sweden less than half of the young people surveyed had voted (shares within the range of 44 % to 49 %). The fact that voting is compulsory in some EU countries could have an influence on the results, as could the frequency with which some countries vote and the last time that there was a general election or local elections prior to the survey being conducted.

Figure 20: Youth (aged 15–29) participation in political elections, 2013 ([1])
(%)

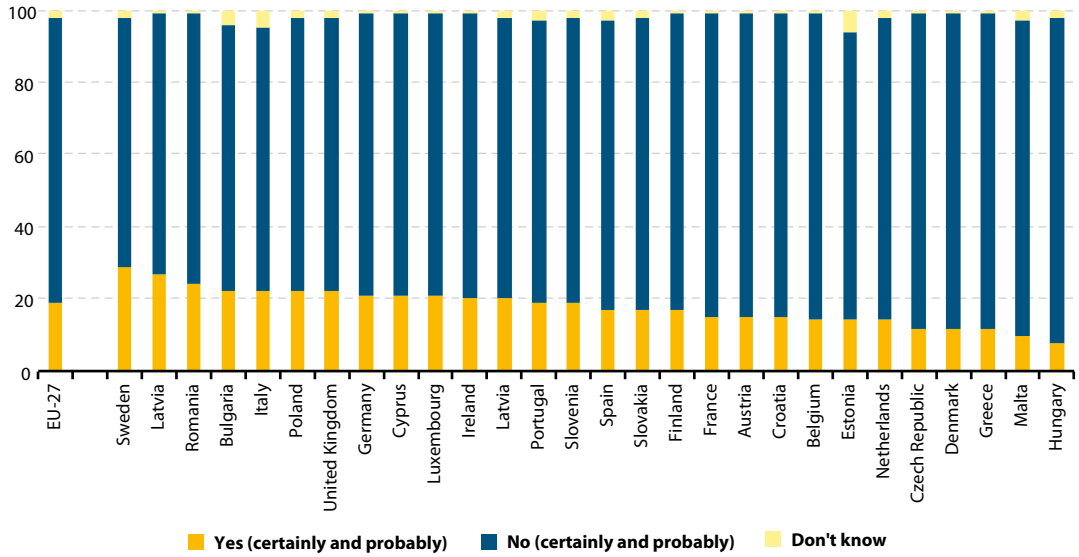


([1]) Respondents were asked: 'During the last three years, did you vote in any political election at the local, regional or national level? If you were, at that time, not eligible to vote, please say so'.
Source: Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013

Only 19 % of the young people surveyed in the EU said they would consider standing as a candidate in an election, while an overwhelming majority (79 %) said they would not consider such an option (Figure 21). Within the 19 % who were considering the idea, only 5 % said that they would certainly stand, while 14 % replied that they would probably do so. There were however considerable variations between EU Member States: the highest proportions of young people who would consider standing in an election as a candidate were found in Sweden (29 %), Latvia (27 %) and Romania (24 %), whereas at the other end of the range, just 8 % of respondents in Hungary said that they would consider standing for election, a share that rose to 10 % in Malta and 12 % in Greece.

Figure 21: Youth (aged 15–29) intentions regarding the possibility of standing as a candidate in a political election, 2013 ([1])

(%)



([1]) Respondents were asked: 'Would you consider standing as a candidate in a political election at some point in your life?'

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013

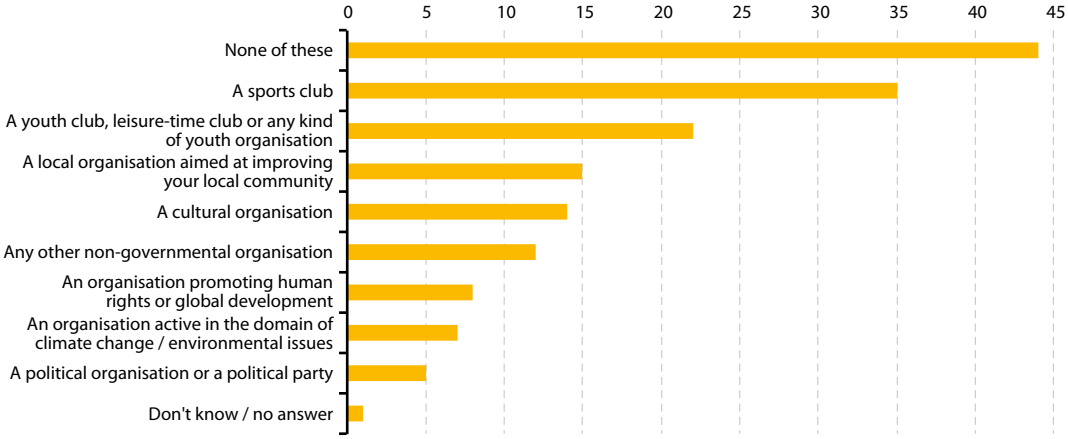
Participating in organised activities can potential impact young people and stoke their interest in politics or elections (Figure 22). Young respondents in the EU who participated in at least one organised activity were more likely to consider standing as a candidate in a political election at some point in their life (23 % versus 14 % for those who had not participate).

The results from Flash Eurobarometer 375 indicate that, despite a majority of respondents having participated in organised activities, there remained a considerable proportion that had never taken part in such an activity (44 %).

The most popular organised activities in which young people participated were those linked to sports clubs. Over one third (35 %) of respondents across the EU reported having participated in sports club activities within the past year, while the next most frequent activity was being involved in a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation (22 %). Participation rates for young people involved in local organisations aiming to improve the local community were lower (at 15 %), followed by those active in cultural organisations (14 %) and non-governmental organisations (12 %). Other types of organisation, such as those promoting human rights or global development (8 %), organisations on climate change and environmental issues (7 %), as well as political organisations or political parties (5 %) were less popular.

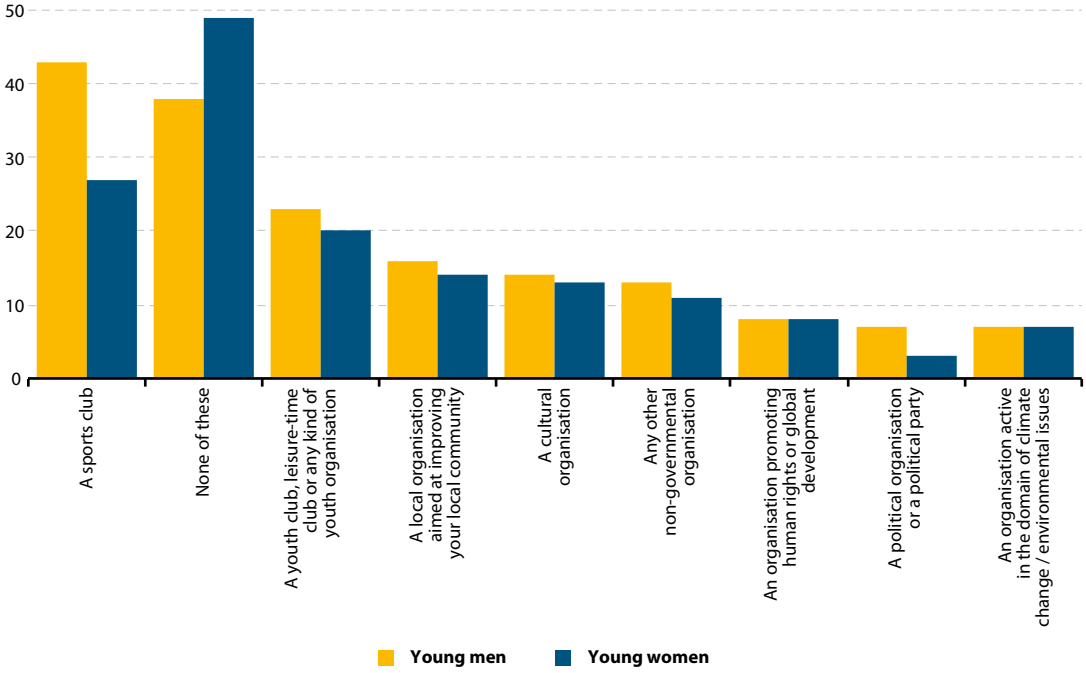
Figure 23 shows that young men were more likely to participate in any type of organisation than young women — 49 % of young women stated that they had not participated in any organisation during the year prior to the survey.

Figure 22: Youth (aged 15–29) participation in various organisations, 2013 ([1])
(%)



([1]) Respondents were asked: 'Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?'; multiple responses were allowed.
Source: Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013

Figure 23: Youth (aged 15–29) participation in various organisations, by sex, EU-27, 2013 ([1])
(%)

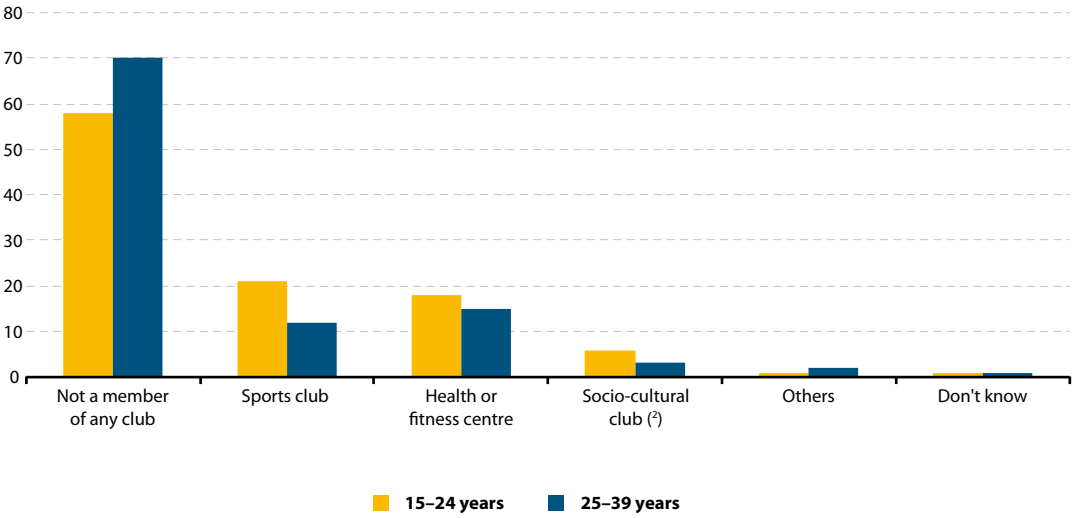


([1]) Respondents were asked: 'Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?'; multiple responses were allowed.
Source: Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013

Sports and physical activity — a sound mind in a healthy body

A 2013 Special Eurobarometer on 'Sport and physical activity' confirmed that sports clubs were the most popular type of organisation that young people joined. According to this survey, only 21 % of young people in the EU aged 15 to 24 were members of a sports club; although an additional 6 % of this age group were members of cultural clubs that included physical activities. The proportion of people aged 25 to 39 who were members of a sports club fell to 12 % . By contrast, a majority of young people were not members of any type of club: 58 % of those aged 15–24 and 70 % of those aged 25–39.

Figure 24: Young people's membership of sports clubs or other activity centres, EU-28, 2013 ([1]) (%)



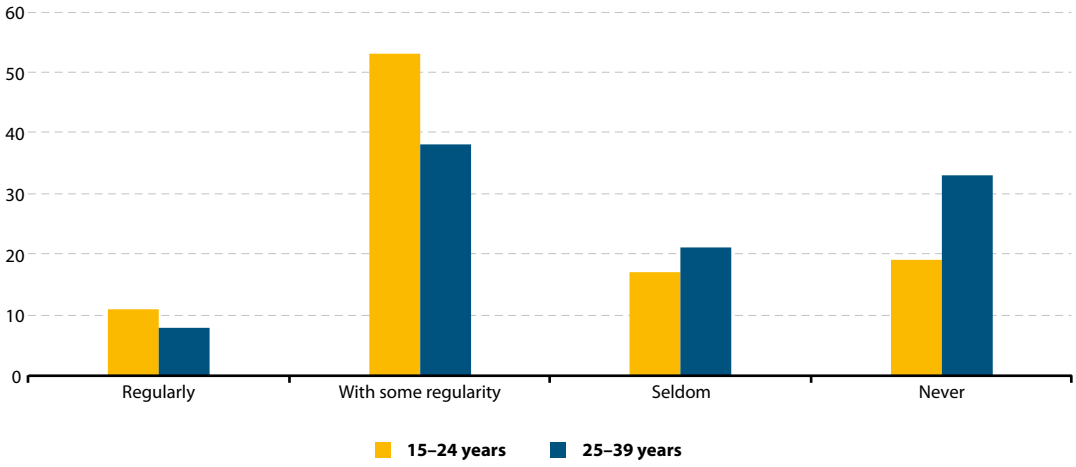
([1]) Respondents were asked: 'Are you a member of any of the following clubs where you participate in sport or recreational physical activity?'; multiple responses were allowed.
([2]) Clubs that include sport in their activities, for example, employees clubs, youth clubs, school and university-related clubs.
Source: Special Eurobarometer 412, 2013

However, it would appear that a higher proportion of young people practice sports and physical activities more informally. As illustrated in Figures 25 and 26, the majority (64 %) of young people exercise and play sports regularly or with some regularity, mostly outdoors in parks, at home, or on the way between home and school or home and work.

Generally, young men in the EU exercise (play sports or engage in other physical activity) more than young women. This disparity is particularly striking among those aged 15–24, where boys / young men tend to regularly exercise or play sports considerably more than girls / young women (74 % versus 55 %).

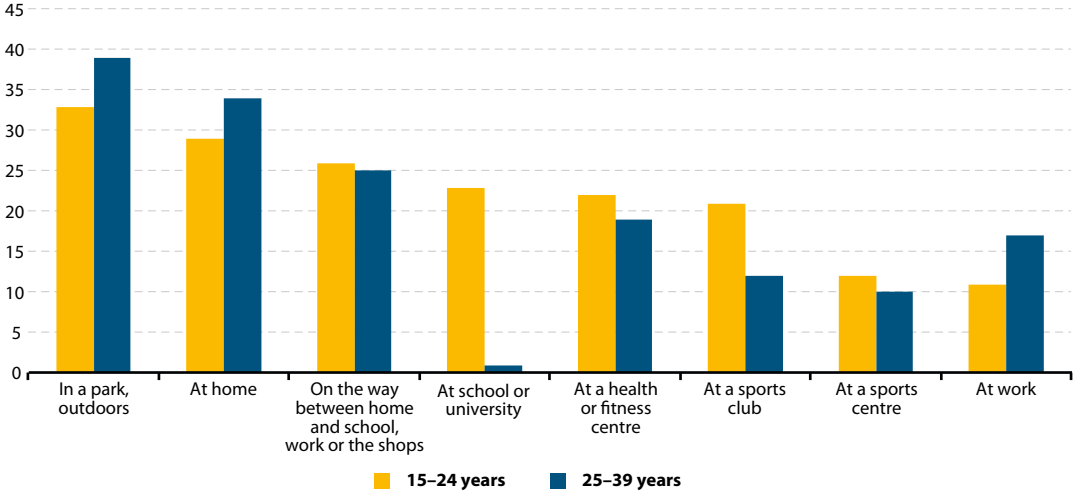
When questioned about their personal motivations for deciding whether or not to engage in sport or physical activity, individual respondents cited improving their health as the most common reason for engaging in sport or physical activity. Other popular reasons cited by young people included improving their physical appearance (38 %) and having fun (43 %).

Figure 25: Young people's frequency of exercising or playing sports, EU-28, 2013 ([1])
(%)



([1]) Respondents were asked: 'How often do you exercise or play sport?'
Source: Special Eurobarometer 412, 2013

Figure 26: Places where young people engage in physical activity, EU-28, 2013 ([1])
(% of respondents who engage in some form of sport or physical activity)



([1]) Respondents were asked: 'Earlier you said you engage in sport or other physical activity, vigorous or not. Where do you engage in sport or physical activity?'; multiple responses were allowed.
Source: Special Eurobarometer 412, 2013

Data sources and availability

The data used in this article are primarily derived from demography data that is collected by Eurostat on a range of issues related to population developments, household structure, non-national population stocks, marriages and fertility. Data are collected on an annual basis and are supplied to Eurostat by the national statistical authorities of the EU Member States.

In addition, the EU labour force survey (EU-LFS) covers a range of statistics on number, characteristics and typologies of households. Under the specific topic 'Family composition and household structure', the EU-LFS presents statistics on household composition, the number and size of households, as well as on the estimated age that young people leave the parental home. The reader should bear in mind that the survey covers only citizens living in private households and excludes those in collective or institutional households. In order to provide a worldwide comparison for household structures, data from the UNECE database have also been utilised.

Figures on consensual union (with or without a legal basis) are derived from EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC). The 2013 ad-hoc EU-SILC module on subjective well-being provided data on life satisfaction, the meaning of life and happiness.

Data from Eurobarometer surveys have been used to depict the situation concerning social and political participation by young people. Eurobarometer surveys are opinion surveys which address a wide range of topics, for example: EU enlargement, the social situation, health, culture, information technology, the environment, the euro, or defence issues.

3

Health

Introduction

Health is important for citizens in the European Union (EU), who expect today to lead long and healthy lives, to be protected against illness and accident as well as to receive appropriate healthcare services. Health is also a key measure of the quality of life and a healthy population is the keystone for economic growth and prosperity.

Health is clearly a topic of high interest both for EU citizens and policy makers. According to the EU treaty, one of the EU's roles is to ensure that human health is taken into consideration in all of its policies. The EU also supports its Member States in their actions aimed at improving public health, preventing human illness and eliminating sources of danger to physical and mental health.

This chapter presents a range of health indicators on children and young people in the EU. In order to get a clear picture of the health of the young EU citizens, indicators such as life expectancy, mortality rates and cause of death are analysed. Indicators on health status and health determinants are also presented, as highly relevant and necessary to establish a health policy based on factual information.

WHAT IS THE 'HEALTH PROGRAMME ?

The main instrument for implementing the EU's public health strategy is the 'Health programme', which contributes to funding projects on health promotion, health security and health information.

In March 2014, the third 'Multi-annual programme of EU action in the field of health for the period 2014–20' was adopted (Regulation (EU) No 282/2014). The programme has four overarching objectives:

- Promote health, prevent diseases and foster supportive environments for healthy life styles taking into account the 'health in all policies' principle.
- Protect EU citizens from serious cross-border health threats.
- Contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems.
- Facilitate access to better and safer healthcare for EU citizens.

The most important drivers of health inequality originate in socio-economic differences. Poorer people and those living in poorer areas tend to be in worse health and die younger than people who are better off. Other factors, which are often linked to overall economic circumstances, also play an important role. These factors include living and working conditions, diet, physical activity, tobacco use, harmful alcohol consumption, provision and quality of health services, and related public policies — including social protection.

SOLIDARITY IN HEALTH

A specific EU action on health inequality was set out in the 2009 communication on health inequalities entitled 'Solidarity in health'. It aims to support EU Member States and stakeholder action as well as provide support from EU policies in areas such as public health, employment, social policies, research and regional policy towards addressing health inequalities. The latest progress report on the implementation of this communication was published in September 2013.

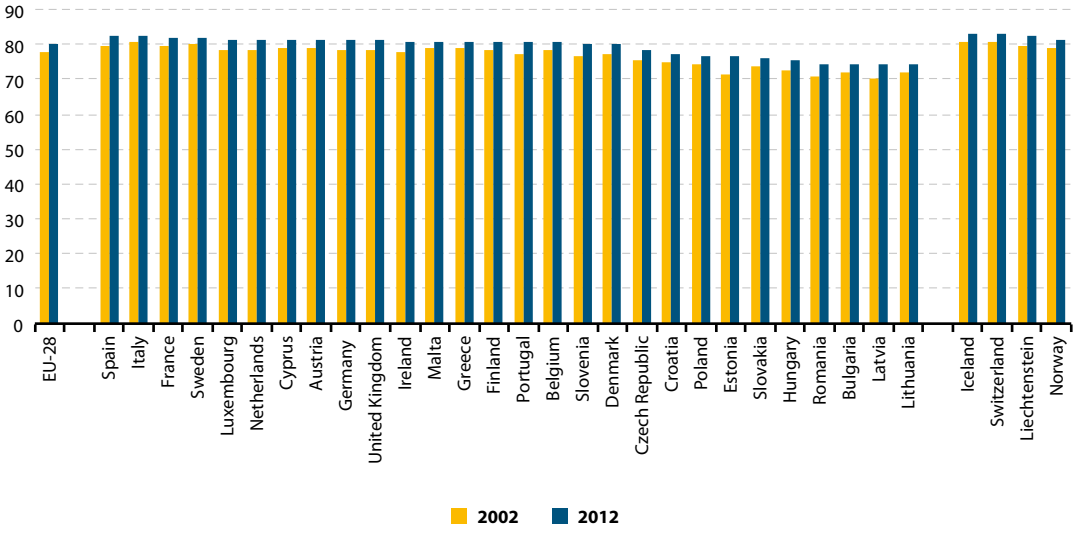
Life expectancy and mortality rates

Today's young people are expected to live longer than ever before

The indicator most commonly used to analyse mortality levels is life expectancy at birth. Life expectancy at birth in the EU-28 is higher than in most regions of the world (1) and is continuing to increase, reflecting reductions in mortality rates at all ages. Economic development, better education, rising living standards, improved life style, as well as greater access to health services across Europe have contributed to this continuous increase. As shown in chapter 1, the life expectancy of a new-born baby in the EU-28 was 80.3 years (83.1 years for females and 77.5 years for males) in 2012. During the 2002–12 decade, life expectancy at birth in the EU-28 increased by 2.6 years, from 77.7 to 80.3 years (2.2 years for females and 3.0 years for males).

Life expectancy is rising in all EU Member States (Figure 1), although there are major differences between countries. With an average of 82.5 years in 2012, Spain is the EU Member State where one can expect to live the longest. Life expectancy at birth in 2012, was also above 82 years in Italy and France. In total 18 EU Member States recorded a life expectancy at birth above 80 years. In contrast, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania reported the lowest life expectancy at birth, below 75 years.

Figure 1: Life expectancy at birth, 2002 and 2012
(years)

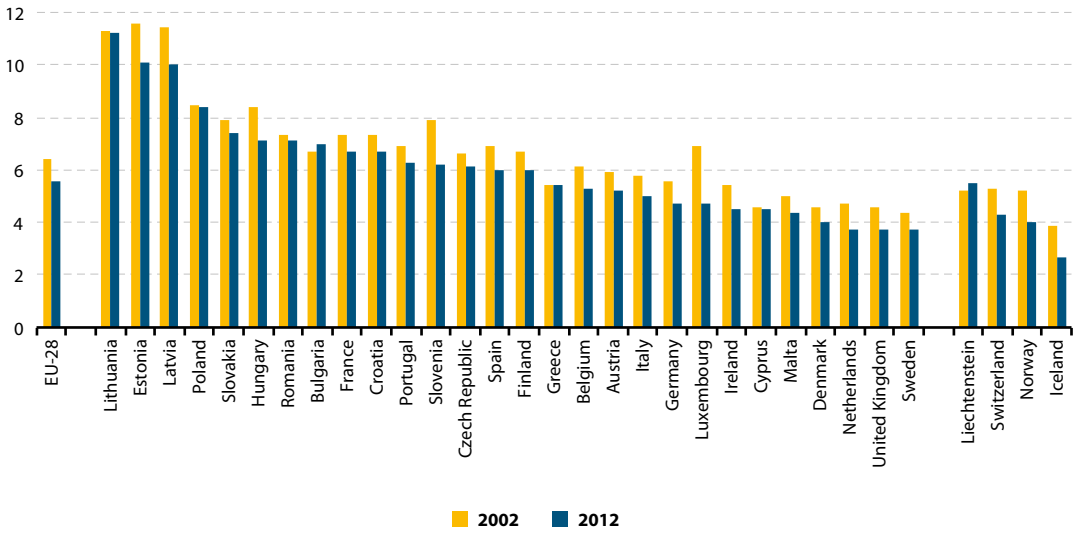


Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_mlexpec)

(1) The EU in the world 2013, a statistical portrait, statistical book, Eurostat.

The gender gap in life expectancy also varies between countries, even if the life expectancy at birth for women is always higher than the one for men (Figure 2). Why do women tend to live longer in the EU-28? Both biological and behavioural factors are likely to have led to the differences in life expectancy between men and women. Men are more likely to die from lung and prostate cancer, tuberculosis, cirrhosis of the liver and coronary heart disease as well as from injuries, whether unintentional or intentional (suicide). These far outweigh the female mortality rate from breast cancer and cervical cancer ([2]). In 2012, the gender gap in life expectancy at birth in the EU-28 was 5.6 years in favour of women. In the Baltic EU Member States, women are expected to outlive men by more than 10 years. In 2012 the largest differences in life expectancy at birth between the genders were found in Lithuania (11.2 years) followed by Estonia (10.1 years) and Latvia (10.0 years), whereas the smallest were found in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden (all three 3.7 years). However, this particular gender gap was shrinking: between 2002 and 2012, the difference between men and women decreased by 0.8 years on average in the EU-28.

Figure 2: Gender gap in life expectancy at birth, 2002 and 2012
(years)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_mlexpec)

([2]) Santrock, John (2007). Life Expectancy. A Topical Approach to Life-Span Development (pp. 128–132). New York, New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
World Health Organization (2004). 'Annex Table 2: Deaths by cause, sex and mortality stratum in WHO regions, estimates for 2002' (PDF). The world health report 2004 — changing history. Retrieved November 1, 2008.

WHAT IS THE CRUDE DEATH RATE?

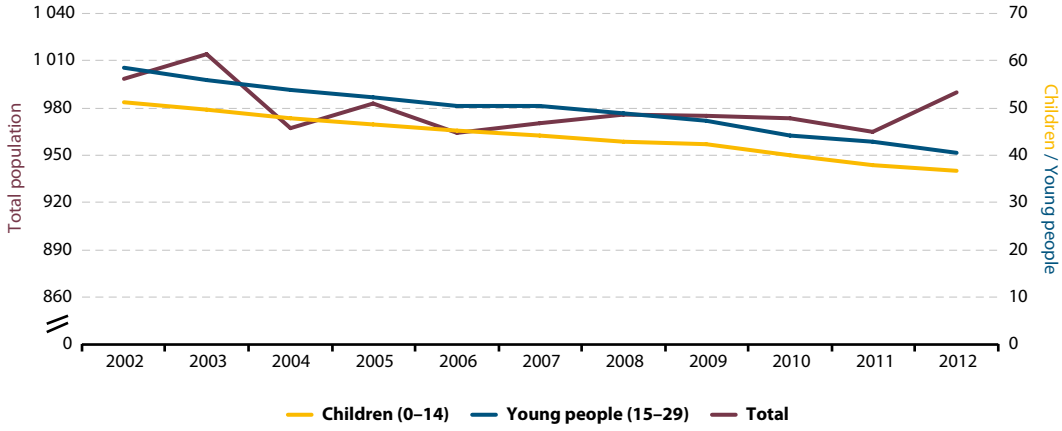
The crude death rate is the ratio of the number of deaths during the year (in general, or due to a specific cause) to the average population in that year. It is expressed in units of number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants and is calculated as the number of deaths recorded in the population for a given year divided by population in that year and then multiplied by 100 000.

Mortality rates for children and young people have been declining in the EU

The crude death rate for the total EU-28 population has generally been following a downward trend over the last decades. Rising living standards, improved life styles, better education, as well as advances in healthcare and medicine have gradually led to the reduction of mortality rates and to the rapid increase of life expectancy at birth in the EU-28.

Figure 3 illustrates the evolution of the crude death rates for children (aged 0–14) and young people (aged 15–29), during the 2002–12 time period. Since the number of deaths in a population increases with age, the crude death rates for children and young people was relatively low compared to the total EU population, while the mortality of young people was slightly higher than that of children.

Figure 3: Crude death rate of children, young people and total EU-28 population, 2002–12
(number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants/children/young people)



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_magec and demo_pjan)

In absolute terms, 29 043 children and 36 918 young people died in the EU-28 during 2012, which corresponds to a crude death rate for children and young people of 37 and 41 deaths per 100 000 inhabitants respectively. Between 2002 and 2012, the crude death rate for children and young people followed a significant downward trend, with a decline by 28 % (from 51 to 37) and 31 % (from 58 to 41) respectively.

Analysing the rates by gender, male mortality in the EU-28 exceeds female mortality for children and young people (Table 1). In 2012, boys (aged 0–14) and young men (aged 15–29) accounted for 56 % and 74 % of the total deaths of children and young people respectively.

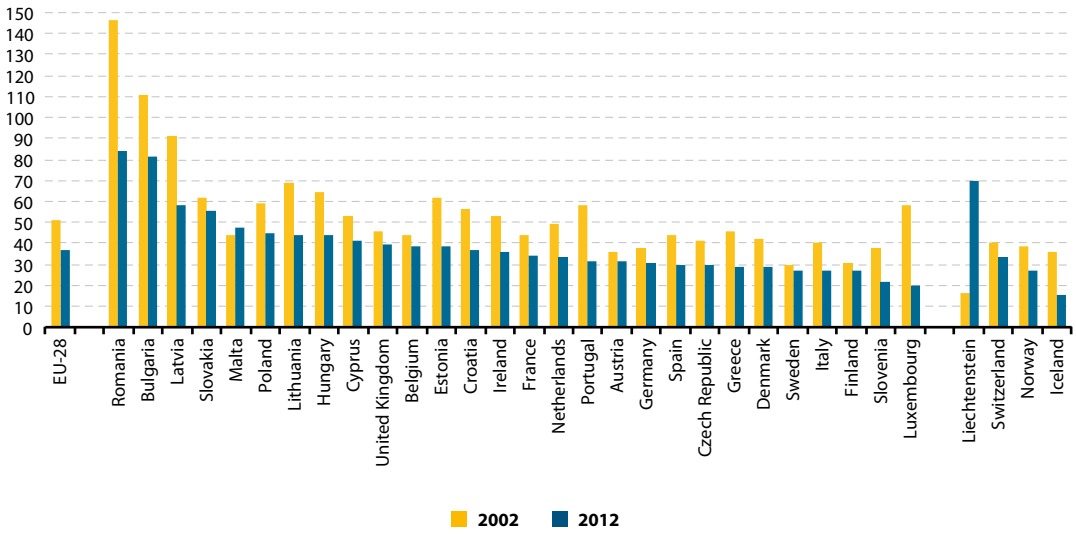
Table 1: Crude death rates, by sex and age groups, EU-28, 2012
(number of deaths per 100 000 children or young people of each age group)

	0–1	1–4	5–9	10–14	15–19	20–24	25–29
Total	384.1	17.8	9.4	10.9	28.3	42.7	48.8
Males	416.3	19.8	10.3	13.0	38.9	63.1	71.3
Females	350.3	15.8	8.6	8.7	17.2	21.6	25.8

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_magec and demo_pjan)

At country level, Romania (83.7), Bulgaria (81.2), Latvia (57.8) and Slovakia (55.9) had the highest crude death rates for children in 2012, whereas Luxembourg (19.9), Slovenia (22.0), Finland (26.6) and Italy (27.1) had the lowest rates (Figure 4). In all EU Member States, except Malta, the crude death rate for children has decreased between 2002 and 2012. The largest drops were registered in Luxembourg (– 66 %), Portugal (– 46 %), Romania (– 43 %) and Slovenia (– 42 %).

Figure 4: Crude death rates for children (0–14 years old), 2002 and 2012
(number of deaths per 100 000 children)

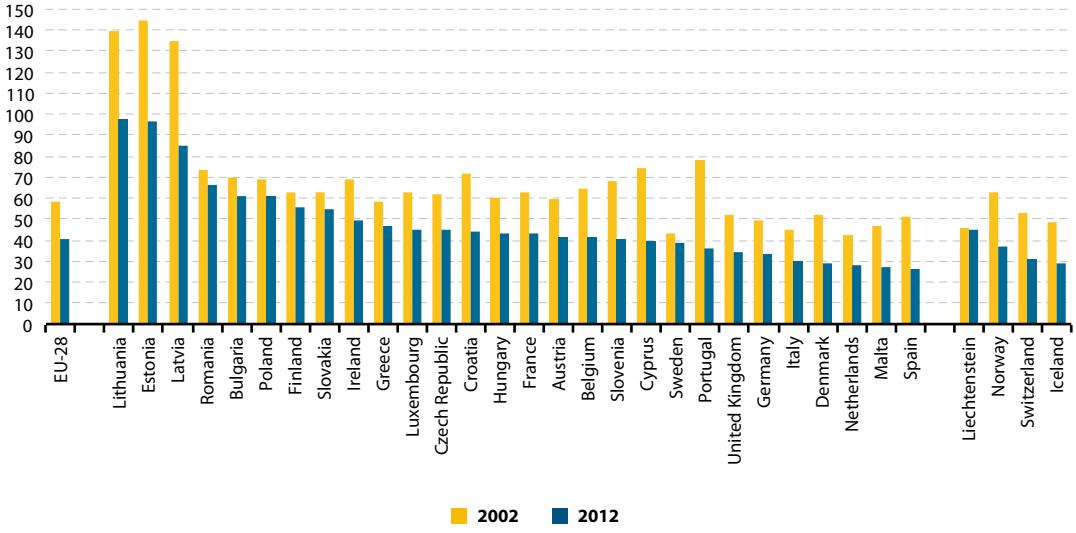


Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_magec and demo_pjan)

Looking at the crude death rates for young people, Spain (26.5), Malta (26.8), the Netherlands (28.2) and Denmark (28.6) recorded the lowest rates in 2012, while the three Baltic countries (Lithuania with 97.8, Estonia with 96.9 and Latvia with 84.7), Romania (66.6), Bulgaria (60.9) and Poland (60.8) recorded the highest (Figure 5). The largest decreases between 2002 and 2012 were seen in Portugal (– 53 %), Spain (– 49 %), Cyprus (– 47 %), Denmark (– 45 %) and Malta (– 43 %). None of the EU Member State registered an increase in crude death rate for young people in the decade preceding 2012.

Mortality rates for children and young people of all ages have fallen significantly in the past years in the EU-28. However, disparities by age group, gender and country persist.

Figure 5: Crude death rates for young people (15–29 years old), 2002 and 2012
(number of deaths per 100 000 young people)



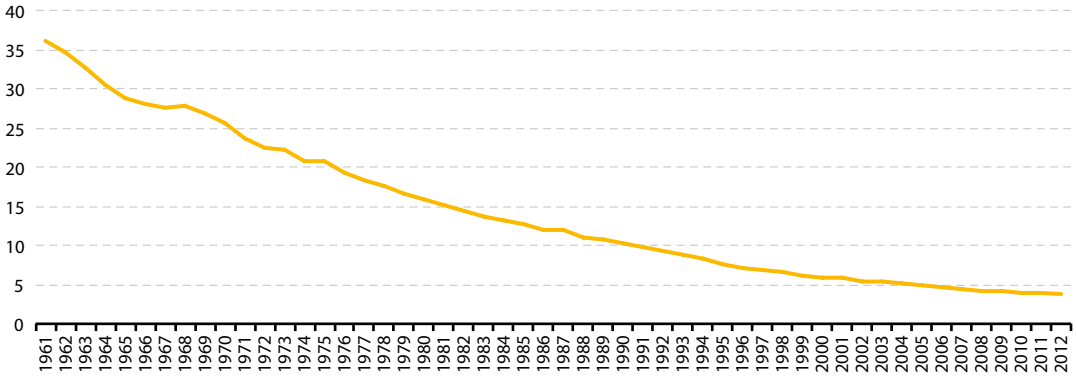
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_magec and demo_pjan)

The **infant mortality rate** represents the ratio of the number of deaths of live-born children aged less than one year to the number of live births in a given year. The value is expressed per 1 000 live births.

Since 1961, the infant mortality rate has decreased by 90 % in the EU

The infant mortality rate in the EU-28 has decreased by 90 % since 1961 reflecting improvements in heath conditions. Scientific advancements in medical treatment, higher quality in the delivery of healthcare services, as well as better prevention of premature deaths, are also mirrored in this significant drop.

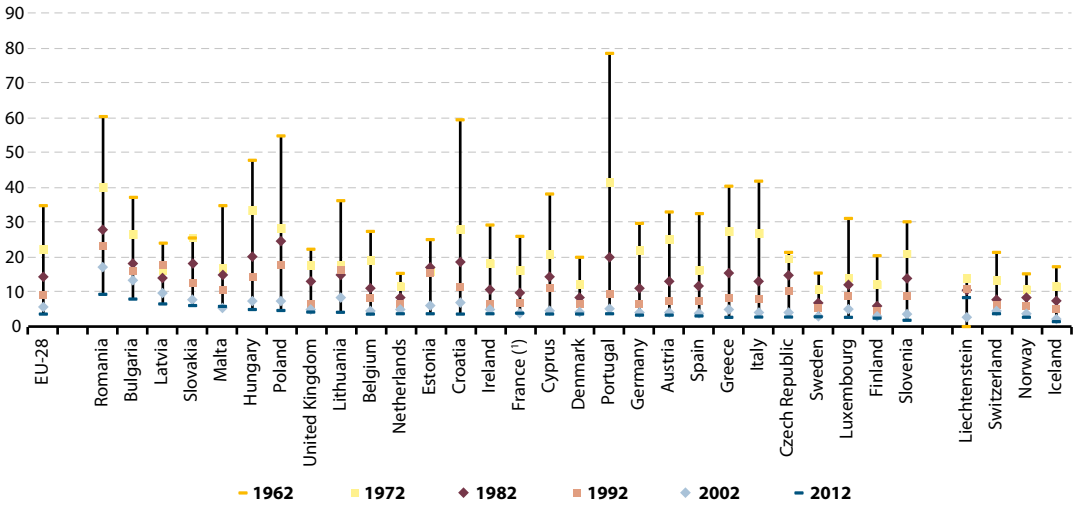
Figure 6: Infant mortality rate evolution, EU-28, 1961–2012
(number of deaths per 1 000 live births)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_minfind)

In 2012, around 17 100 children died before reaching one year in the EU-28, resulting in an infant mortality rate of 3.8 deaths per 1 000 live births. In the 1996–2012 period, the infant mortality rate in the EU-28 declined by almost 50 %. The most significant reductions in infant mortality were generally recorded within those EU Member States which tended to record higher levels of infant mortality, compared with the EU average.

Figure 7: Infant mortality rate, 1962–2012
(number of deaths per 1 000 live births)



(1) France metropolitan until 2002.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_minfind)

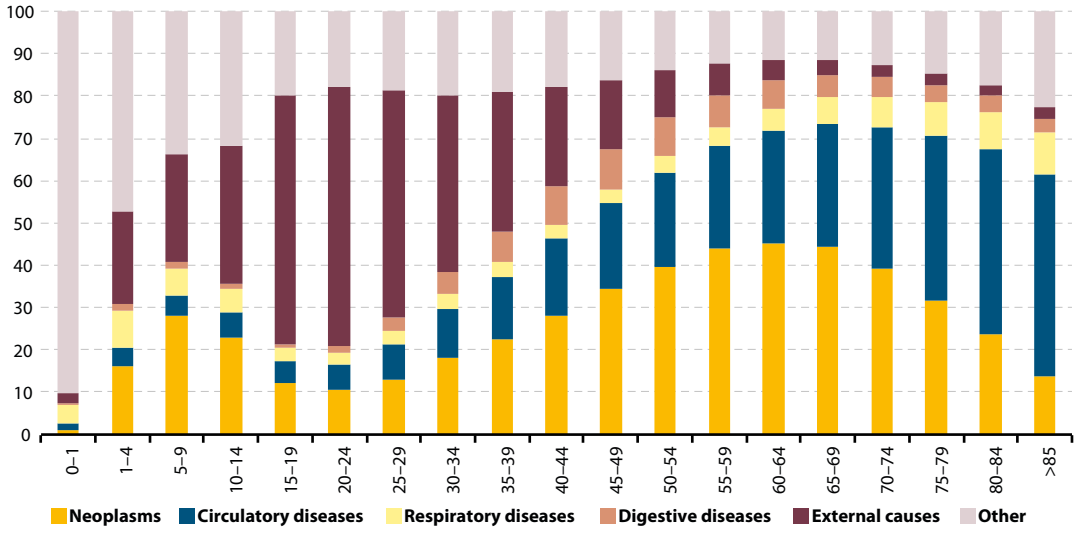
At national level, Slovenia appeared to have the lowest infant mortality rate within the EU-28 in 2012 (1.6 deaths per 1 000 live births), while rates of 2.6 deaths per 1 000 live births or less were recorded in Finland, Luxembourg, Sweden and the Czech Republic (Figure 7). In contrast, the highest rates were found in Romania (9.0 deaths per 1 000 live births), Bulgaria (7.8) and Latvia (6.3), although all of these EU Member States reported sharp declines, down from 23.3, 15.9 and 17.6 deaths per 1 000 live births in 1992 for example.

Causes of death

External factors are the main cause of death for children and young people

Causes of death vary substantially according to age groups (Figure 8). For instance, the most frequent causes of death for people over the age of 45 appear to be cancer, circulatory and respiratory diseases. In contrast, most young people generally die due to external factors, such as transport accidents, intentional self-harm, accidental falls and assault.

Figure 8: Causes of death, by age group, EU-28, 2011
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth_cd_acdr2)

For children aged 1–4, the most common causes of death are external factors (22 % in 2011). In particular, 20 % of deaths in children aged 1–4 occurred due to accidents (transport accidents, falls, drowning and submersion, poisoning and other external causes). Congenital malformations, deformations and chromosomal abnormalities were the next common cause of death, accounting for 17 % of total causes, followed by neoplasms (16 %) and diseases of the nervous system and of the respiratory system (both 9 %).

Neoplasm is the main cause of death among children aged 5–9 (accounting for 28 % of total causes for this age group in 2011), followed by external causes of death (25 %). For children aged between 10 and 14 years, external factors are the most common cause of death (32 % of deaths in 2011), followed by neoplasms (23 %).

In 2011, external causes accounted for 59 %, 61 % and 54 % of deaths among young people aged 15–19, 20–24 and 25–29 respectively. The biggest part of these was caused by transport accidents, with 28 %, 26 % and 17 % of deaths respectively in the three 5-year age groups. The second most important cause of death for young people was the intentional self-harm, amounting to 15 % of deaths for those aged 15–19 and 18 % of deaths for the young people in their twenties.

In absolute terms, about 8 800 young people aged 15–29 died in 2011 as a result of transport accidents in the EU-28. Examining the numbers by age group and gender (Table 2), young men aged 20–24 were the age group most involved in fatal transport accidents. In the same time period, about 6 900 young people died due to intentional self-harm, the second most common cause of death for young people. Over 5 600 of them (or 82 %) were young men. For all external factors, the number of young victims is higher among men than women, especially for those aged 20–29.

Table 2: External causes of death of young people (15–29) by sex and age group, EU-28, 2011
(number of deaths of residents in or outside their home country)

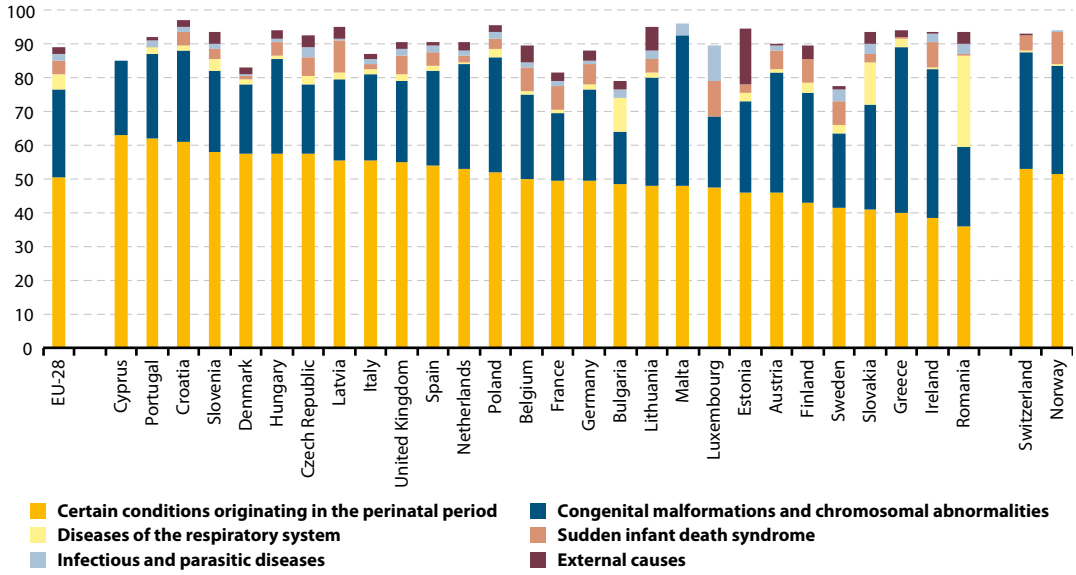
	Total				Males				Females			
	Total (15–29)	15–19	20–24	25–29	Total (15–29)	15–19	20–24	25–29	Total (15–29)	15–19	20–24	25–29
Total external causes	22 654	4 979	8 771	8 904	18 543	3 836	7 266	7 441	4 111	1 143	1 505	1 463
Transport accidents	8 822	2 395	3 647	2 780	7 255	1 855	3 027	2 373	1 567	540	620	407
Intentional self-harm	6 915	1 287	2 623	3 005	5 638	966	2 180	2 492	1 277	321	443	513
Accidental drowning and submersion	844	250	315	279	761	219	291	251	83	31	24	28
Accidental poisoning by and exposure to noxious substances	1 513	171	510	832	1 212	121	403	688	301	50	107	144
Assault	759	148	267	344	538	103	189	246	221	45	78	98
Falls	672	142	212	318	565	116	184	265	107	26	28	53
Other external causes	3 129	586	1 197	1 346	2 574	456	992	1 126	555	130	205	220

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth_cd_aro)

Certain perinatal conditions and congenital malformations are the most common cause of infant mortality

Looking at the cause of infant deaths, it appears that certain conditions originating in the perinatal period ([3]) are the most common cause of death for infants ([4]) (Figure 9). In 16 EU Member States, at least 50 % of infant deaths were caused by certain perinatal conditions in 2011. In Cyprus, Portugal and Croatia certain perinatal conditions accounted for up to 60 % of total causes of infant mortality. Congenital malformations are another common cause, found mostly in Greece (49 % of infant deaths), Malta and Ireland (both 44 % of infant deaths).

Figure 9: Main causes of infant deaths, 2011
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth_cd_anr)

TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

A transport accident is any accident involving a device designed primarily for, or being used at the time primarily for, conveying persons or goods from one place to another.

A traffic accident is any vehicle accident occurring on the public highway (i.e. originating on, terminating on, or involving a vehicle partially on the highway).

A vehicle accident is assumed to have occurred on the public highway unless another place is specified, except in the case of accidents involving only off-road motor vehicles, which are classified as non-traffic accidents unless the contrary is stated.

Source: WHO International Classification of Death Causes

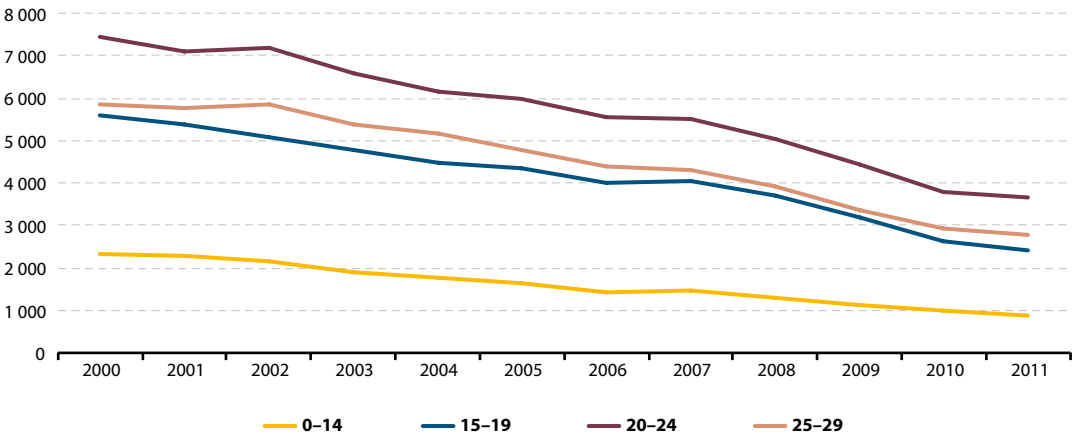
([3]) Conditions include birth trauma, respiratory and cardiovascular disorders, infections specific to the perinatal period, etc.
([4]) Children aged between 0 and 1 year.

Transport accidents are the leading cause of death among young people

Transport accidents are an important cause of death, especially for young people. Main risk factors for fatal transport accidents are speed, alcohol abuse, exposing vulnerable road users to motorised traffic, poor visibility and not using protective equipment ([5]).

As seen before, the number of deaths of young people aged 15–29 from transport accidents in the EU-28 amounted to 8 800 in 2011, meaning that on average nearly one in 9 000 young people died as a consequence of a transport accident. This corresponds to a decrease in absolute terms by 53 % compared to 2000 (from 18 916 in 2000 to 8 822 in 2011). Looking at age groups, the number of deaths of young people aged 15 to 19 has decreased by 57 %, while the respective number for those aged 20–24 and 25–29 has decreased by 51 % and 53 % respectively (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Number of deaths of children and young people caused by transport accidents, by age group, EU-28, 2000–11



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hlth_cd_anr and hlth_cd_aro)

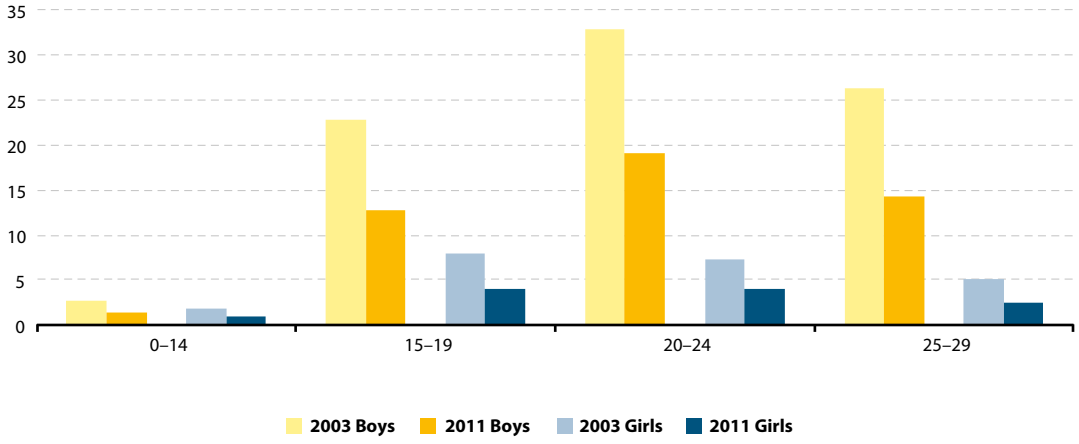
There were 878 children aged less than 15 who died in transport accidents in 2011 in the EU-28. This corresponds to a sharp drop of 62 % compared with the figures of the year 2000 (2 329 children).

For both children and young people, crude death rates were higher for boys or young men than for girls or young women (Figure 11). Differences are nevertheless more pronounced among young people than children. The biggest gender gap can be observed for the age group 20–24.

At country level, the lowest crude death rates for children and young people in 2011 were recorded in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Malta and Hungary (Figure 12). In contrast, Croatia, Greece, Poland and Luxembourg recorded high death rates for the age group 20–24.

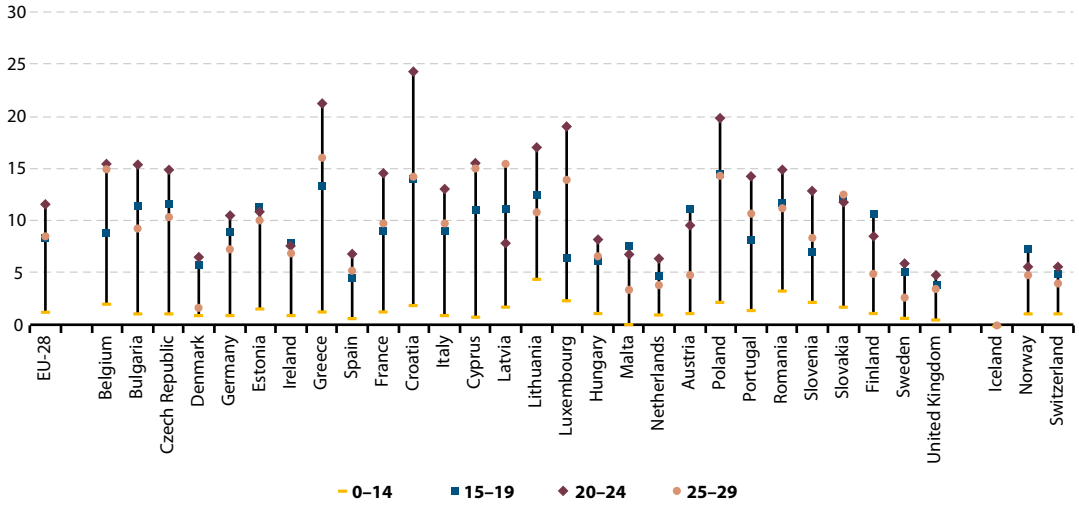
([5]) Young drivers, the road to safety, OECD and ECMT, 2006.

Figure 11: Crude death rates for children and young people from transport accidents, by sex, EU-28, 2003 and 2011
(number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants)



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hlth_cd_acdr and hlth_cd_acdr2)

Figure 12: Crude death rates for children and young people from transport accidents, by age group, 2011
(number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants)

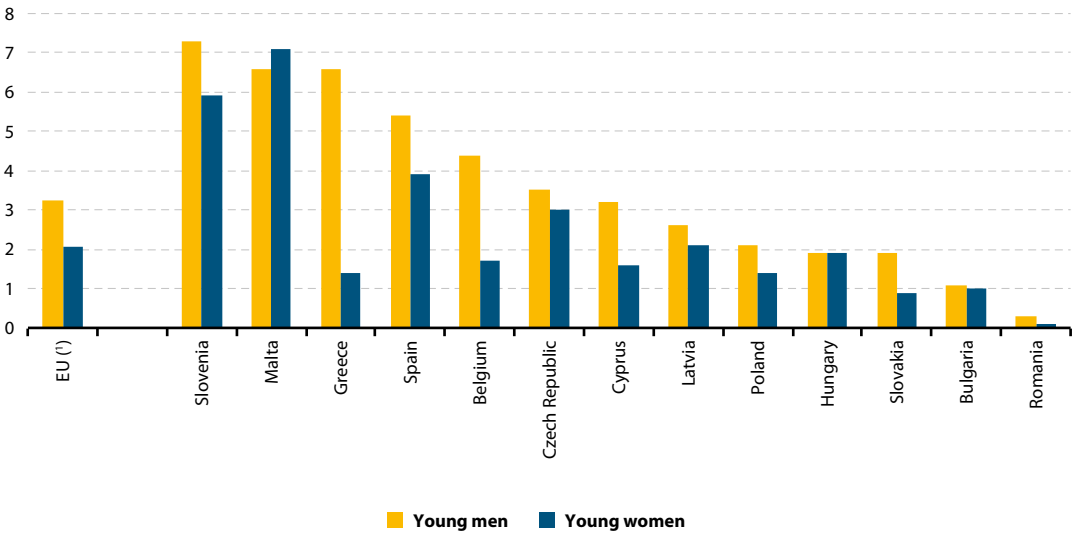


Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth_cd_acdr2)

Injuries following road accidents more frequent among men

Car accidents are one of the most prevalent causes of death among young people. Injuries following road accidents can be more or less serious, or even deadly. Figure 13 shows that on average about 2 % of young women and 3 % of young men aged 15–29 had injuries following a car accident in 2008. In Romania and Bulgaria the rate of young people with injuries due to a road accident is below 1 %, whereas in Malta and Slovenia it is around 7 %. In general, young men tend to get injured more frequently following road accidents than young women. The highest gender gap was registered in Greece (a difference of 5 percentage points). However in Hungary and Bulgaria no difference between men and women was noted. In Malta, the gender gap is negative with more young women than young men having injuries following a car accident.

Figure 13: Injuries following road accidents for young people (aged 15–29), by sex, 2008
(%)



(1) This is the population-weighted average computed for the EU Member States for which data were available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_050)

Intentional self-harm implies purposely self-inflicted poisoning or injury and (attempted) suicide.

Suicide is the act of deliberately killing oneself. Risk factors for suicide include mental disorder (such as depression, personality disorder, alcohol dependence or schizophrenia), and some physical illnesses, such as neurological disorders, cancer, and HIV infection.

Source: WHO International Classification of Death Causes

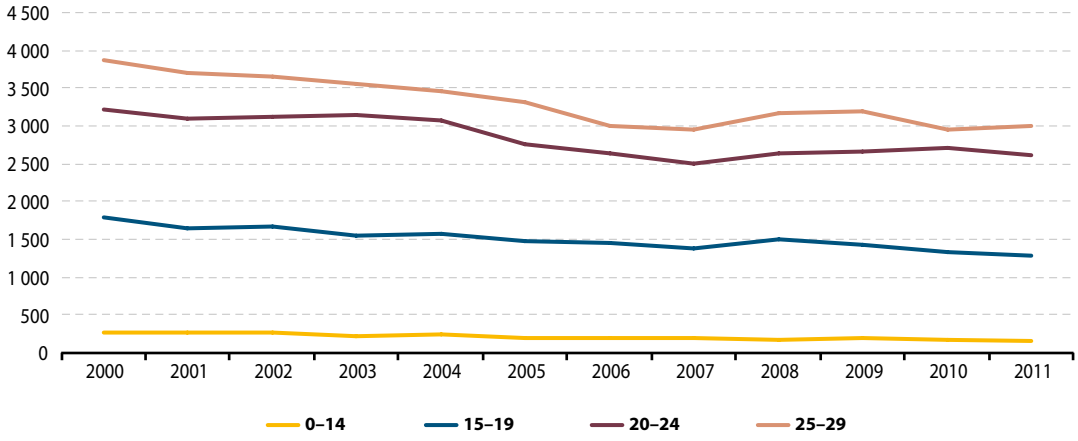
Intentional self-harm remains a challenge in northern European countries

The most important risk factors for suicidal behaviour are psychological and social in nature. Social factors may include discrimination (e.g. bullying at school), social isolation, relationship conflicts with family and friends, unemployment or poverty. Mental and psychological problems play a key role in the emergence of suicidal behaviour, with depression and hopelessness being associated with nine out of ten cases of suicide. Drug abuse and alcohol use are also determinants. Almost one quarter of suicides involve alcohol abuse. Intentional self-harm may also be the consequence of severe painful and dissembling physical illnesses, in combination with social isolation. Suicide rates also increase during periods of economic recession and unemployment (6).

Young people are especially vulnerable to the threat of suicide, as intentional self-harm is the second most frequent cause of death among young people aged 15–29.

Crude death rates related to intentional self-harm by children and young people have decreased by 40 % and 22 % respectively from 2000 to 2011 in the EU. In absolute numbers, the cases of intentional self-harm dropped from 263 to 159 for children aged 0–14 and from 8 874 to 6 915 for young people aged 15–29 (Figure 14). Some groups are at higher risk of suicide than others. Young women tend to be substantially less affected by suicide and intentional self-harm, with crude death rates being four to five times lower than those of young men in the EU-28 (Figure 15). The 25–29 age group seems to be the most confronted with intentional self-harm, with 3 000 cases in 2011.

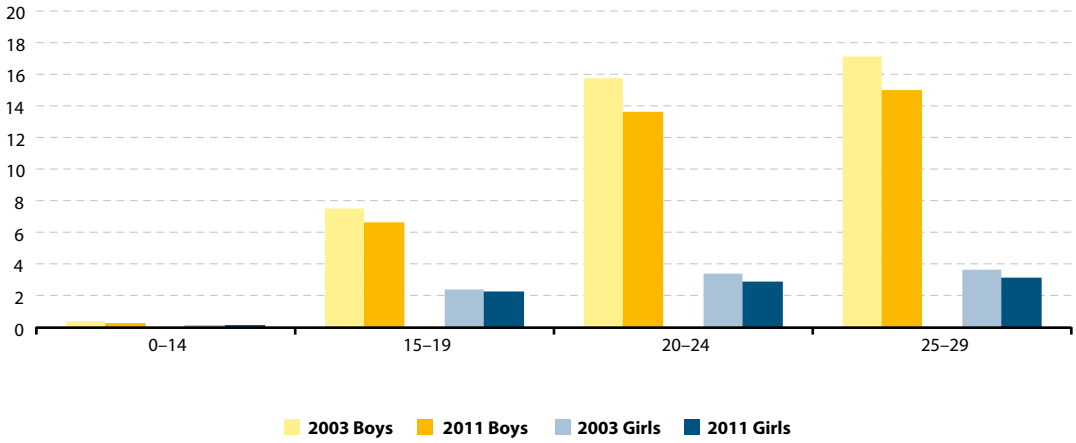
Figure 14: Number of deaths of children and young people caused by intentional self-harm, by age group, EU-28, 2000–11



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hlth_cd_anr and hlth_cd_aro)

(6) Health statistics — Atlas on mortality in the European Union, Statistical Book, Eurostat, 2009 edition. http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/

Figure 15: Crude death rates for children and young people from intentional self-harm, by sex, EU-28, 2003 and 2011
(number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants)

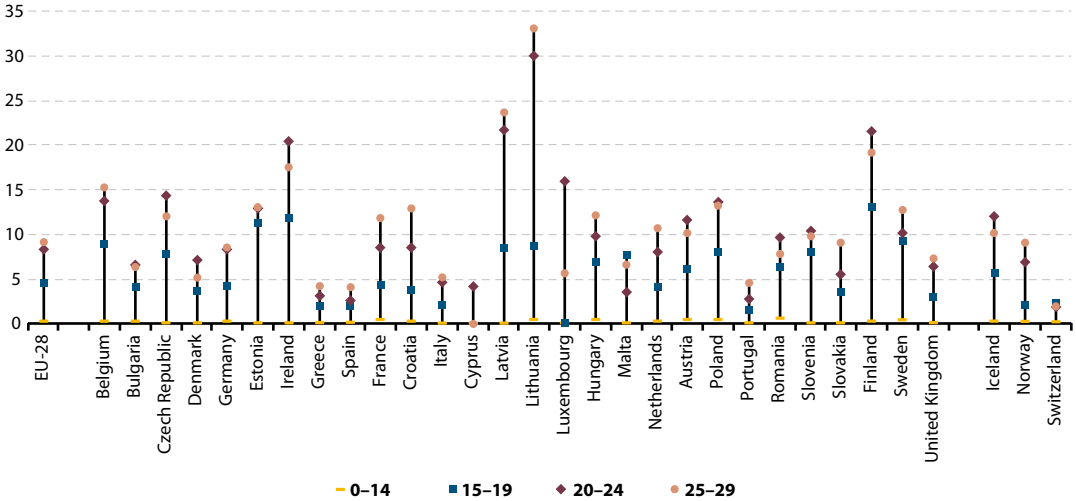


Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hlth_cd_acdr and hlth_cd_acdr2)

Looking at EU Member States, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland were the countries with the largest crude death rates from intentional self-harm in 2011 (Figure 16). In contrast, the southern EU Member States (Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Portugal) reported the smallest rates. People in their twenties were also more affected than their youngest peers in all EU Member States.

Consequently, young men aged 20–29 in the northern EU Member States seem to be the most vulnerable to intentional self-harm.

Figure 16: Crude death rates for children and young people from intentional self-harm, by age group, 2011
(number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth_cd_acdr2)

Health status

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity', which points to its multidimensional nature. It also implies different ways of measuring health, such as collecting objective data from health care providers or more subjective data on physical functioning, emotional well-being, pain or discomfort, and overall perception of health from respondents participating in surveys. This section focuses on three key indicators describing the levels and distribution of health status: the self-perceived health, long-standing illness or health problem and activity limitation.

EUROPEAN CORE HEALTH INDICATORS

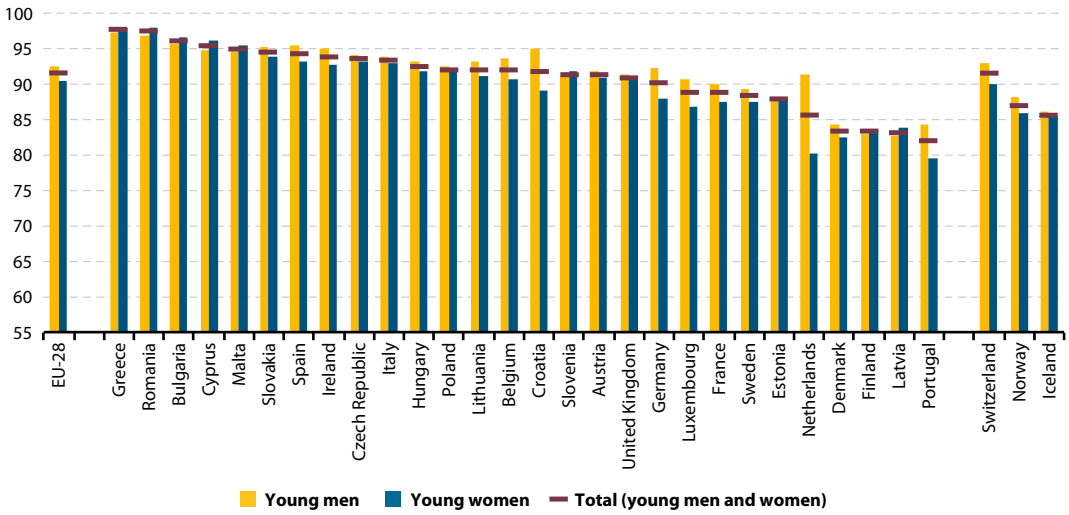
The European Core Health Indicators (ECHI) project established a list of 88 indicators which focus on general public health issues and are designed to provide a comprehensive overview on health.

The vast majority of young people perceived themselves in good or very good health

Generally, young people are in a better health condition and feel healthier than older age groups. However, this period of life requires special attention since health-related behaviour establishes itself during adolescence and is strongly influenced by social and environmental factors. In 2013, 92 % of the EU's young population aged 16–29 declared that they were in 'good' or 'very good' health. The self-perceived health status varies to some extent between EU Member States (Figure 17). The lowest proportions of young people who declared to be in a very good or good health were registered in Portugal (82 %), Latvia, Finland and Denmark (all three 83 %). In Greece and Romania more than 97 % of young people perceived their health as being good or very good. Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta were also on the top of the list with 95 % or more of their young people perceiving themselves in good or very good health.

Figure 17: Self-perceived health — young people (aged 16–29) in good and very good health, by sex, 2013

(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_070)

Young men generally declared more often to be in a very good or good health than young women in the EU-28 (93 % versus 91 %) but the gender gap varied across EU Member States. The Netherlands recorded the biggest gap (11 percentage points) in favour of the young men. In Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Finland and Latvia the share of young women perceiving their health as being good or very good was however higher than the one of young men.

Besides the objective health status, the differences across EU Member States in the self-perceived health may relate to general health standards in a country, and to cultural differences, i.e. how people talk about their personal health or how they disclose their health problems.

Looking at the relation between self-perceived health status and income situation (Figure 18), a clear trend can be observed in almost all EU Member States: the higher the income, the higher the probability of young people reporting good or very good health.

On average in the EU-28, 89 % of the young population in the first income quintile group perceived their health as good or very good compared with 95 % in the fifth quintile group. This pattern was observed in all EU Member States. The largest difference between the groups with highest and lowest income was recorded in Finland (14 percentage points) and Portugal (13 percentage points). Differences higher than

In nineteen EU Member States, more than 90 % of the young Europeans declared themselves in good or very good health in 2013.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND INCOME QUINTILES

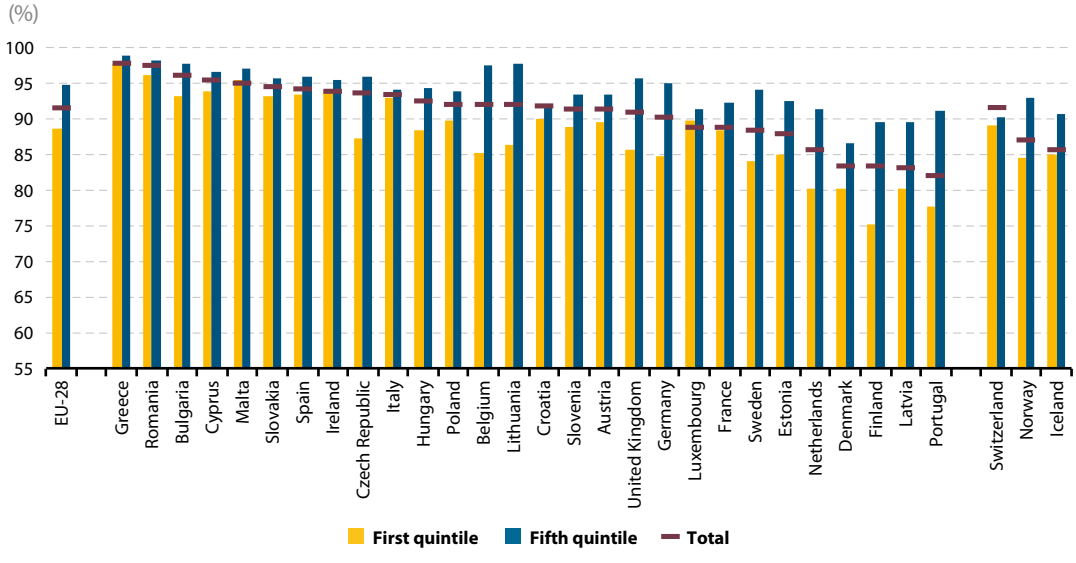
The income quintiles are key indicators of the distribution of the (equivalised disposable) income across the whole population of a given geographical entity.

The total income of a household, after tax and other deductions, which is available for spending or saving, is divided by the number of household members converted into 'equivalised' adults. Household members are equivalised or made equivalent by weighting each of them according to their age, using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale: the scale gives a weight of 1.0 to the first adult, 0.5 to any other household member aged 14 and over and 0.3 to each child below the age of 14.

Income quintiles refer to the position in the frequency distribution. Quintiles divide a distribution into five parts so that we find 20 % of total observations in each quintile group. The quintile cut-off value is obtained by sorting all observations by income from lowest to highest, and then choosing the value of income under which 20 % (lower limit), 40 % (second limit), 60 % (third), 80 % (fourth) and 100 % (upper limit) of the sample are located. A quintile group refers to the segment between the cut-off values of two quintiles. The first quintile group includes population with income below the lower quintile cut-off (20 %) and the fifth quintile group includes population with income greater than fourth quintile (representing 20 % of the richest population).

10 percentage points were also observed in Belgium, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom. In contrast, small differences between the first and the fifth income quintiles, i.e. below 2 percentage points, were seen in Greece, Malta, Ireland, Italy and Luxembourg.

Figure 18: Self-perceived health — young people in good and very good health, by income quintile, 2013



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_070)

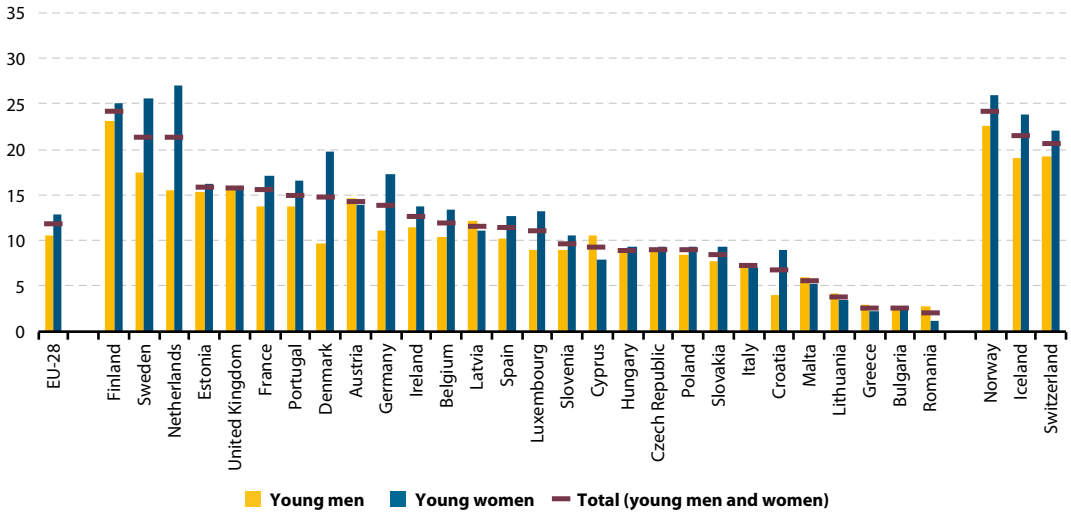
Long-standing health problems vary according to gender and income level

According to the WHO, long-standing health problems or chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, are by far the leading cause of mortality and disability worldwide, representing 60 % of all deaths. Some chronic diseases can be positively influenced through a healthy life style. Their consequences, such as premature death and disability, could be reduced by an adequate and timely diagnosis and treatment. Although the prevalence of long-standing health problems is lower in young people, the psychological burden may be more serious and it can have important implications on their social integration.

In 2013, 12 % of the EU-28 young population (aged 16–29) reported suffering from a chronic illness or long-standing health problem. The lowest prevalence of chronic health problems was observed in Romania, Bulgaria and Greece (all less than 3 %). The highest rate of young people having chronic health problems was registered in Finland, where roughly one out of four young people reported a long-standing health problem (24 %). High rates were also observed in Sweden and the Netherlands (both 21 %).These differences between countries could also be related to cultural differences in self-perception and in practices for diagnosis, managing and treatment of chronic health problems.

Figure 19: Young people (aged 16–29) suffering from a long-standing illness or health problem, by sex, 2013

(%)



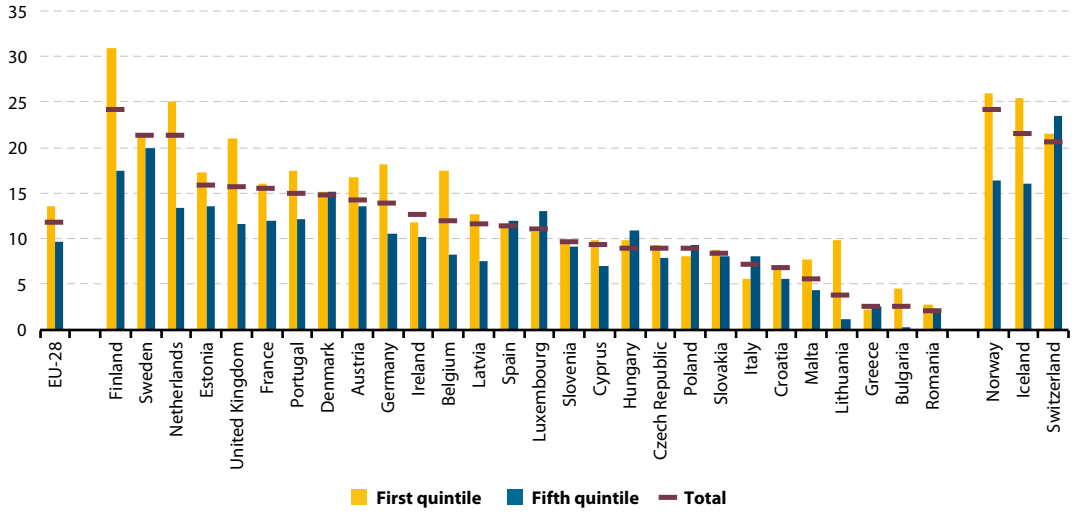
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_080)

Overall there were 11 % of young men versus 13 % of young women declaring chronic health problems in the EU-28. The biggest gap between young men and young women was observed in the Netherlands, with a difference of 12 percentage points, followed by Denmark (10 percentage points). In 19 EU Member States, young men reported long-standing health problems less often than young women. In the remaining EU Member States there were almost no differences between young men and women or a slightly higher proportion of young men declaring a chronic health problem compared to young women. In Cyprus, Romania and Latvia the difference was between one and three percentage points in favour of women.

Chronic health problems vary according to the income level. On average, 14 % of the EU young population in the first income quintile group versus 10 % in the fifth income quintile reported a chronic health problem in 2013 (Figure 20). This pattern is observed in most EU Member States, i.e. all except Spain, Luxembourg, Hungary, Poland, Italy and Greece. The difference was the largest in Finland (13 percentage points) followed by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Lithuania with a difference of more than 8 percentage points.

Figure 20: Young people (aged 16–29) suffering from a long-standing illness or health problem, by income quintile, 2013

(%)



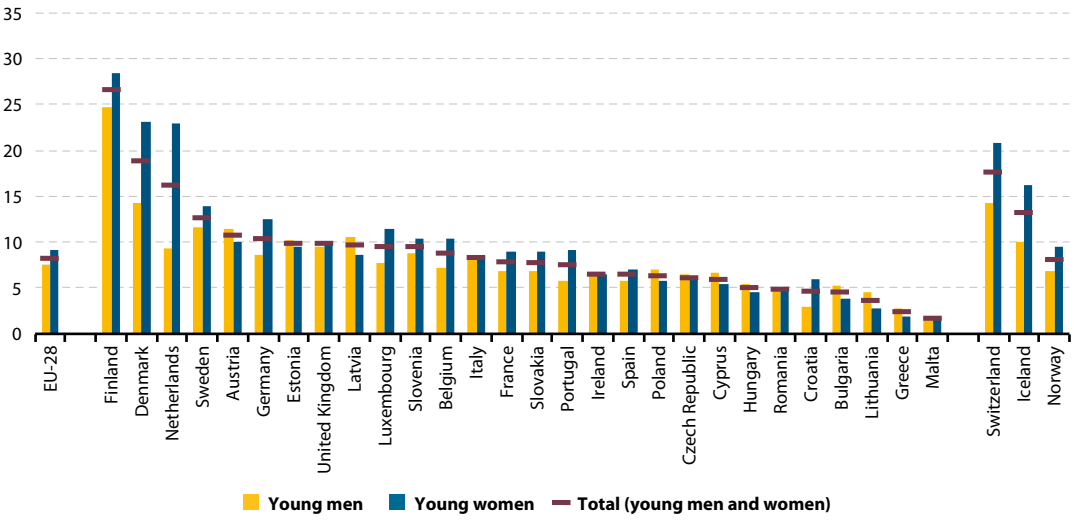
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_080)

Limitations in usual activities also vary according to gender and income level

People with long-standing health problems can experience difficulties in accomplishing everyday activities, which affects their quality of life. Data on the degree of limitation in usual activities due to health problems is used as a proxy measure for disability.

In 2013, 8 % of people aged 16 to 29 living in the EU-28 reported health-related long-term (longer than 6 months) limitations in usual activities. The prevalence of activity limitation was highest in Finland (27 %) followed by Denmark (19 %) and the Netherlands (16 %). The lowest prevalence of activity limitations was reported in Malta and Greece (both around 2 %) and Lithuania (4 %).

Figure 21: Young people (aged 16–29) with some activity limitations, by sex, 2013 (%)



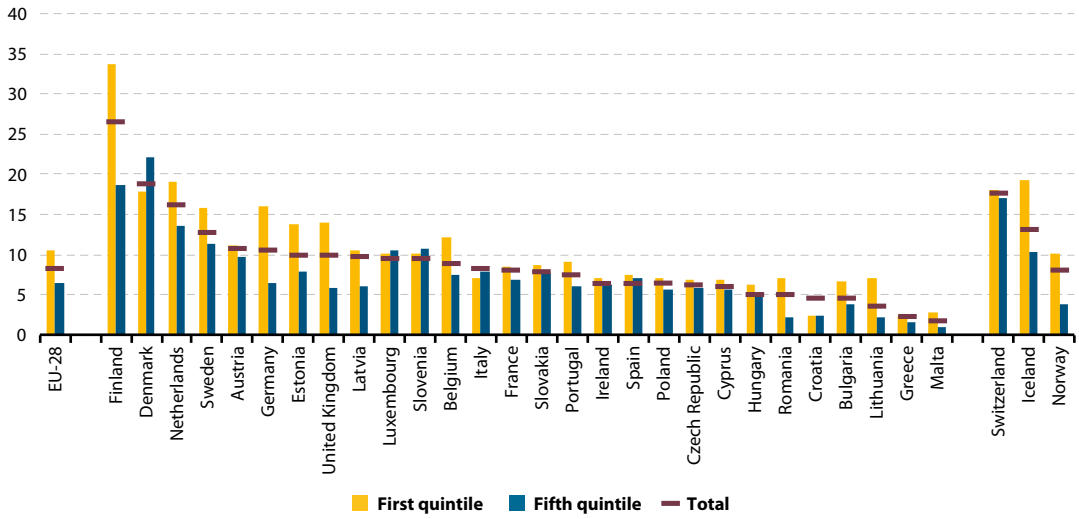
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_090)

Similarly to long-standing health problems, young women reported limitations in usual activities due to health problems more frequently than young men, in most EU Member States. As previously, the greatest gender gap was observed in the Netherlands, where the difference between young women and men was 14 percentage points, followed by Denmark (9 percentage points). Nevertheless, in 11 EU Member States proportionally more young men declared being limited in usual activities due to health problems than young women. In Latvia and Lithuania, the difference between young men and women was about two percentage points.

Income level was again a differentiating factor for activity limitations in almost all EU Member States. At EU level, 6 % of young people among the top income quintile group against 10 % young people from the bottom quintile group declared some long-standing limitations in usual activities.

The discrepancies varied considerably across EU Member States. The largest difference between the first and fifth quintile groups was registered in the Finland (15 percentage points), followed by Germany (10 percentage points) and the United Kingdom (8 percentage points).

Figure 22: Young people (aged 16–29) with some activity limitations, by income quintile, 2013 (%)



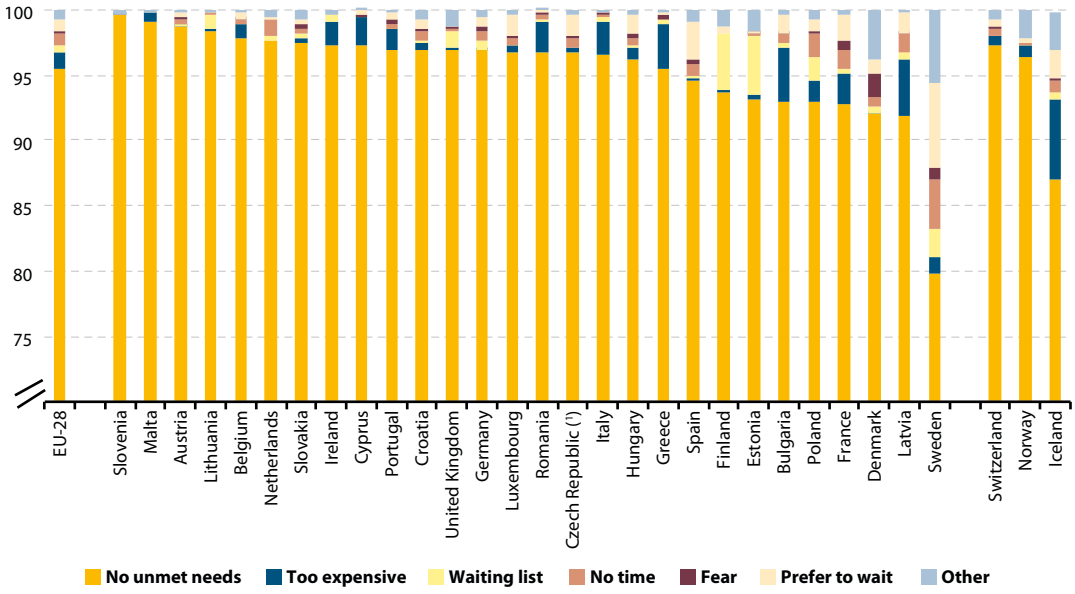
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_090)

Medical needs of young people in the EU-28 are not always covered

Differences in health status may be partly related to access to healthcare. At EU level, 4 % of young people declared in 2013 having had unmet needs for medical examination during the past 12 months. For almost half of these, the reasons were that the medical services were too expensive, too far away or that the waiting lists were too long. More than 1 % of young people considered that the medical services were too expensive, and 1 % wanted to wait and see if problem got better on its own.

However, the situation varied widely between EU Member States. While in Slovenia, Malta, Austria, Lithuania, Belgium, the Netherlands and Slovakia almost all young people did not face any unmet needs for medical examination in the last 12 months, more than one in five young people in Sweden declared having experienced unmet needs, although the reasons were rather different than cost or distance of medical services. On the other hand, more than 3 % of young Latvians, Bulgarians and Greeks faced limited access to medical services for reasons of cost, and more than 4 % of young Finns and Estonians because of waiting lists.

Figure 23: Unmet needs of young people for medical examination by reasons of barriers of access, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_060)

EUROPEAN HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY

Most data on health determinants come from the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), which consists of four modules on health status, health care use, health determinants and socio-economic background variables. The first wave of EHIS (EHIS wave 1) was conducted under a gentlemen's agreement between 2006 and 2009. Only 19 EU Member States took part in this first survey but not all of them implemented all modules and variables. The second wave (EHIS wave 2, 2013–15) is held on the basis of a Commission regulation, which makes the survey compulsory for all EU Member States.

Health determinants

The health status of an individual results from a combination of several factors: genetic and biological characteristics, personal behaviour, socio-economic background (income and education level) and physical environment. This section focuses on some health determinants that are linked to life style related behaviours like obesity, drugs and alcohol consumption.

BODY MASS INDEX EXPLAINED

The body mass index (BMI) is a measure of a person's weight relative to height that correlates fairly well with body fat. The BMI is accepted as the most useful indicator of obesity in adults when only weight and height data are available.

BMI is calculated by dividing body weight (in kilograms) by height (in metres) squared.

The following subdivisions are used to categorise the BMI into four categories:

- < 18.5: underweight;
- ≥ 18.5 and < 25: normal weight;
- ≥ 25 and < 30: overweight (excluding obesity);
- ≥ 30: obesity.

Obesity increases with age

Obesity is a serious public health problem, as it significantly increases the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes, hypertension, coronary-heart diseases and certain cancers. Moreover, obesity is linked to a higher risk for psychological problems. For society, obesity has substantial direct and indirect costs that put a strain on national healthcare systems, economic productivity and social resources.

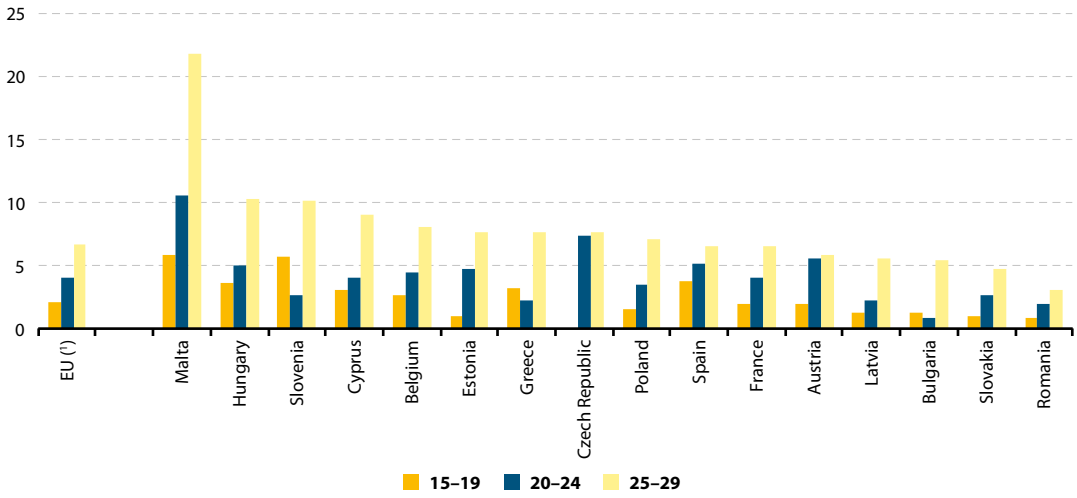
In 2008, a proportion of 4 % of young women and young men aged 15 to 29 were classified as obese according to the body mass index (BMI), which can be a consequence of their dietary habits and life styles.

The highest share of obese young people was registered in Malta (13 %); the lowest in Romania (2 %), Bulgaria, Slovakia and Latvia (all three 3 %). In the remaining eleven EU Member States having participated in the EHIS survey, the share of obese young people varied between 4 % and 7 %.

The share of obese young people increases with age. There is a clear pattern in most EU Member States: the older the age, the higher the share of obese persons will be. The only exceptions were found in Slovenia, Greece and Bulgaria where the trend was less uniform for the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups.

Figure 24: Obesity amongst young people, by age group, 2008

(%)

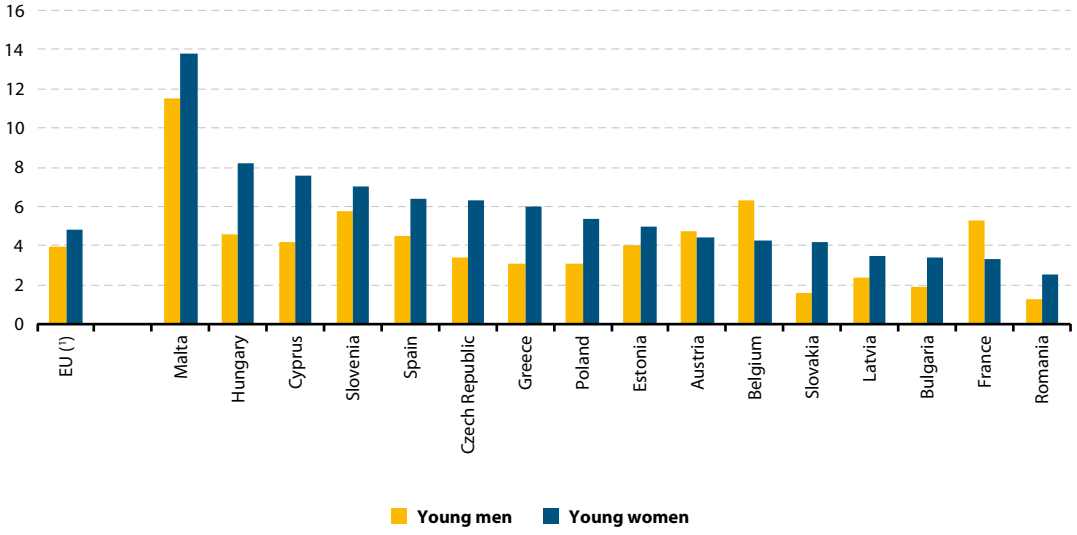


(1) This is the population-weighted average computed for the EU Member States for which data were available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_021)

Figure 25: Obesity amongst young people by sex, 2008

(%)



(1) This is the population-weighted average computed for the EU Member States for which data were available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_021)

In most EU Member States for which data were available, more young men than young women were classified as obese. The largest gender differences were observed in Hungary, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Greece, where the difference between obese young men and women was around 3 percentage points. In Belgium and France more young women than young men were classified as obese, the difference being 2 percentage points.

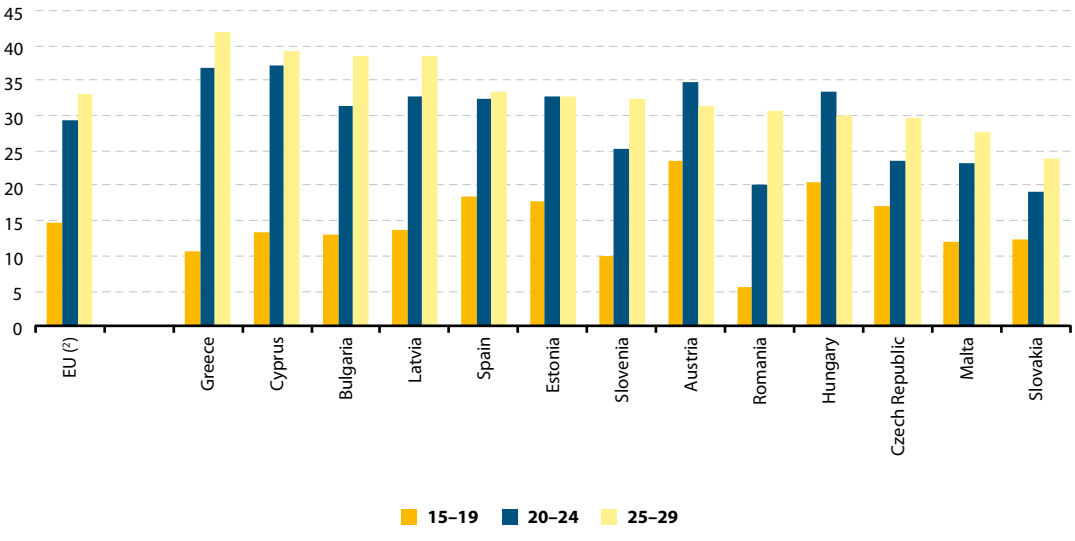
More than 30 % of young people in Greece and Cyprus are daily smokers

The health consequences of regular smoking are both immediate (such as addiction to nicotine, respiratory difficulties and diseases) and long-term (such as specific types of cancer and coronary heart diseases). Smoking has been identified as a serious cause of premature illness and death. Although the majority of smoking-related deaths occur among middle-aged and elderly people, smoking behaviour is very often acquired at younger ages. Among the 13 EU Member States for which data are available and reliable, the number of young people who smoke is quite large. However, the relative number of young smokers varies greatly between EU Member States. Greece had the highest proportion of young smokers aged 15 to 29 with 32 %, closely followed by Cyprus 31 % and Austria 30 %. The lowest proportions of regular smokers among young people aged 15–29 (around 19 %) were found in Romania and Slovakia.

The number of regular smokers increases with age. An important increase in the rate of regular smokers occurs especially between the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups. At EU level, the rate of regular smokers aged 20–24 is more than double the rate of regular smokers aged 15–19. This pattern is present to a varying extent in all 13 EU Member States. Between the 20–24 and 25–29 age groups, the increase in the number of regular smokers slows down in almost all EU Member States. In Austria and Hungary we can even observe a 3 percentage point decrease in the rate of regular smokers.

Figure 26: Young daily smokers by age group, 2008 ([1])

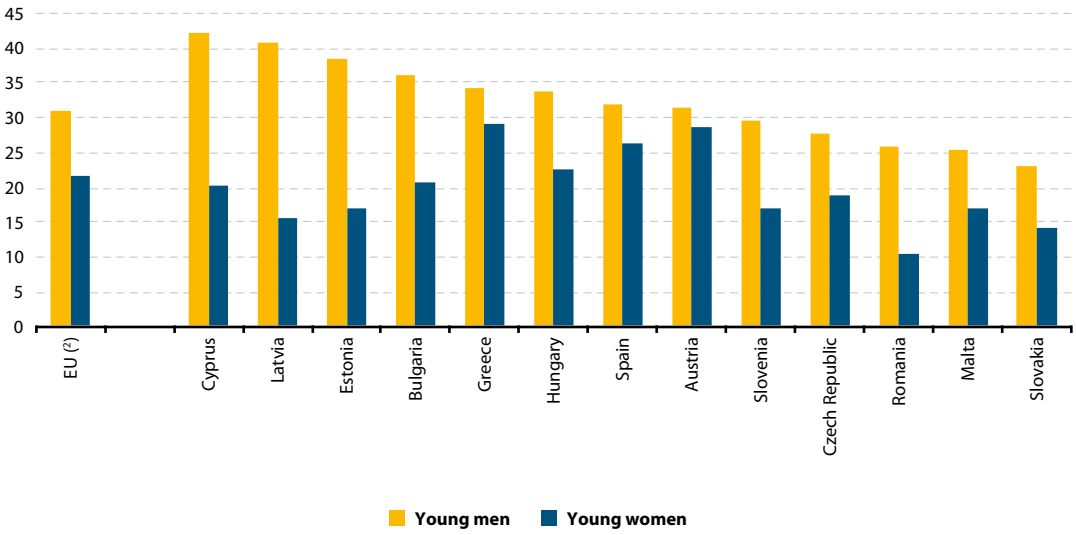
(%)



([1]) Countries with unreliable data were removed from analysis.
([2]) This is the population-weighted average computed for the EU Member States for which data were available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_010)

Among young people aged 15–29 in 2008, young men were more likely to smoke than young women. At EU level, 31 % of young men declared themselves daily smokers, against 20 % of young women. The same pattern applied to all EU Member States taking part in this survey. The highest proportion of young male smokers was observed in Cyprus (42 %) and Latvia (40 %). Concerning young female smokers, the highest rates were registered in Greece (29 %) and Austria (28 %). The gender gap was the most noticeable in Latvia, where the percentage of young male smokers represented more than double of the percentage of young female smokers. In contrast, the share of young male smokers only slightly exceeds the rate of female smokers in Austria (by 3 percentage points).

Figure 27: Young daily smokers, by sex, 2008 ([1])
(%)



([1]) Countries with unreliable data were removed from analysis.
([2]) This is the population-weighted average computed for the EU Member States for which data were available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_hlth_010)

Young men are more likely to use cannabis than young women, except in Romania and Finland

The use of illicit drugs or psychoactive substances can not only affect an individual's physical and mental health, but also their relationships and integration in the society. Especially in young people, who undergo a period of neurological development, consumption of illicit substances may have more serious effects since it can impact the brain maturation processes.

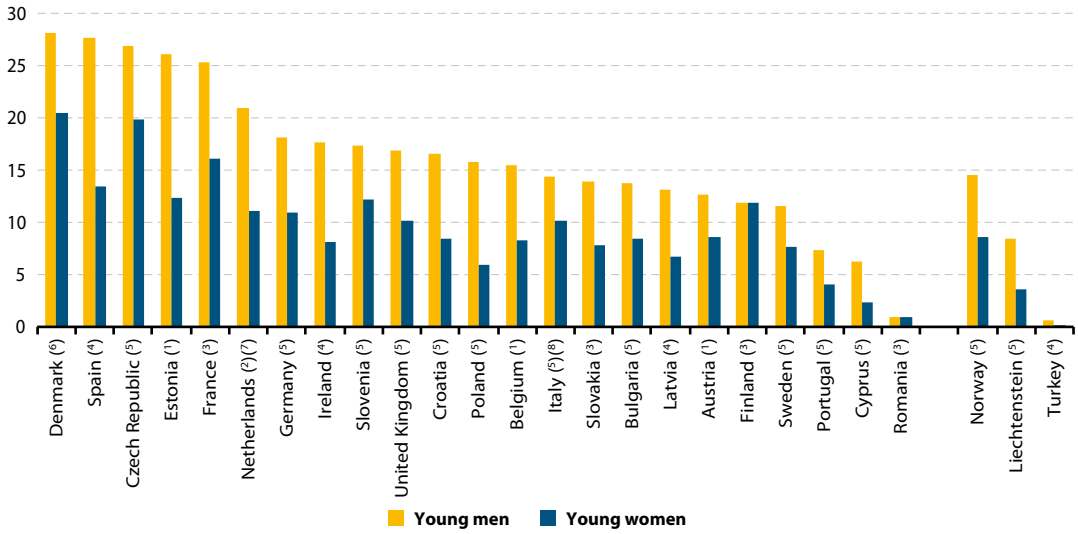
Cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug. Data coming from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) show that cannabis consumption amongst young people aged 15–24 varies largely between EU Member States. The lowest use rate was reported in Romania (1 %), followed by Cyprus and Portugal with around 5 %. The highest rates were reported in Denmark and the Czech Republic (both with rates above 23 %), closely followed by France and Spain (21 %).

EU DRUGS STRATEGY

In 2012, the European Council endorsed a new EU Drugs Strategy (2013–20). In addition to the two traditional aims of reducing both the supply and demand of drugs, the new strategy introduces the 'reduction of the health and social risks and harms caused by drugs' as a policy objective.

Figure 28: Last year prevalence of cannabis use amongst young people (aged 15–24), by sex, 2008–13

(%)



(1) 2008.
(2) 2009.
(3) 2010.
(4) 2011.
(5) 2012.
(6) 2013.
(7) The most recent general population survey reported by the Netherlands displays a wide variation in results compared with 2005 which may reflect methodological differences. The data is provided for information, but given the lack of comparability between surveys, should be treated with caution.
(8) The most recent general population survey reported by Italy displays a wide variation in results compared with the previous surveys which may reflect methodological differences. The data is provided for information, but given the lack of comparability between surveys, should be treated with caution.

Source: EMCDDA (table GPS-010)

Looking at the issue from a gender perspective, it can be noted that in all countries, except Romania and Finland, the rate of drug users was higher for young men than for young women. In Spain and Estonia, the rate of young men who had used cannabis during the last year was around 14 percentage points higher than that of young women.

Table 3: Frequency of marijuana or hashish use during the last 12 months amongst 15–16 year-old students, 2011

(%)

	Number of occasions						
	0	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–19	more than 20	at least once
EU ([1])	80	8	4	2	2	4	20
Belgium ([2])	80	7	4	2	2	4	19
Bulgaria	82	8	3	3	2	2	18
Cyprus	93	3	1	1	1	1	7
Czech Republic	70	13	6	3	3	5	30
Germany ([3])	85	7	3	1	1	2	14
Denmark	85	8	3	2	1	1	15
Estonia	83	9	3	2	1	2	17
Greece	93	4	1	1	0	1	7
Spain	78	7	5	2	2	5	21
Finland	91	5	2	1	1	1	10
France	65	10	7	4	5	9	35
Croatia	87	6	2	2	1	2	13
Hungary	85	8	3	1	2	2	16
Ireland	86	6	2	2	1	2	13
Italy	82	7	3	2	2	4	18
Lithuania	84	9	3	1	1	2	16
Latvia	91	4	2	1	1	1	9
Malta	92	4	2	1	1	1	9
Netherlands	77	8	5	2	3	5	23
Poland	81	9	4	2	2	2	19
Portugal	84	6	3	2	2	3	16
Romania	94	3	1	1	0	1	6
Sweden	94	3	1	0	0	1	5
Slovenia	81	8	4	2	2	3	19
Slovakia	81	10	3	2	1	3	19
United Kingdom	79	9	3	2	3	4	21
Iceland	91	4	2	1	1	1	9
Liechtenstein	84	8	4	0	1	3	16
Norway	96	3	1	0	0	0	4

([1]) This is the population-weighted average of the number of occasions, weighted by the population size of each country. As in Belgium and Germany not all regions participated in the survey, the weighted average was computed with the assumption that these regions were representative of the respective country.
([2]) Only the region of Flanders participated in the survey.
([3]) Only five Bundesländer participated in the survey.
Source: ESPAD report 2011

Data coming from the 2011 ESPAD ([7]) report shed light on the drug consumption behaviour of very young people, namely those aged 15–16 (Table 3). The highest rate of young people aged 15–16 who had never used cannabis during the year preceding the survey were found in Romania and Sweden (94 %), while the lowest rate was registered in France (65 %). At the same time, France accounted for the highest rate of young people who have used cannabis on more than 20 occasions during the last year (9 %). As for the rate of young people who have used cannabis only once or twice during the last year (the so-called 'experimental users'), the highest proportions were observed in the Czech Republic (13 %), followed by Slovakia and France (both 10 %). At the other end of the scale we find Cyprus, Romania and Sweden, all with 3 % of 'experimental users'.

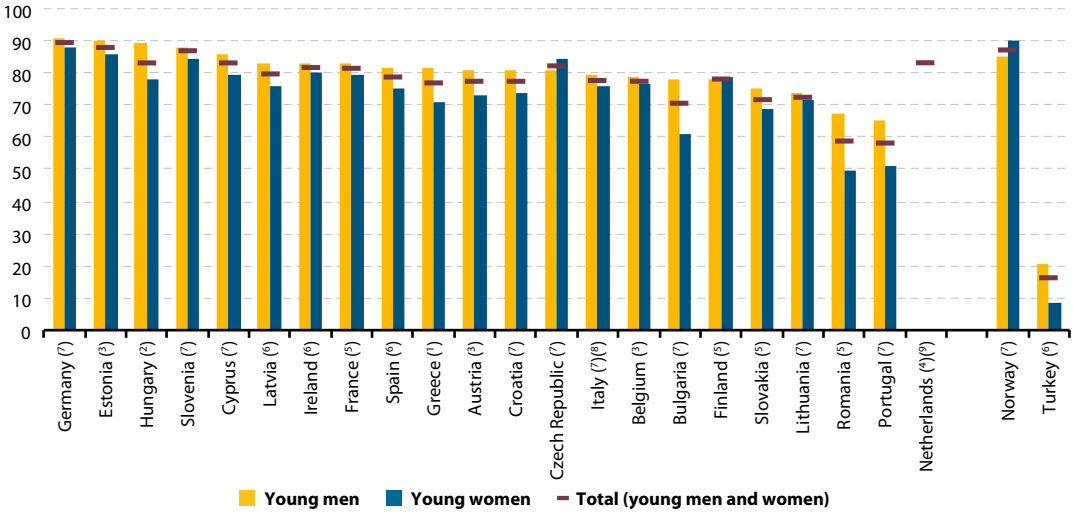
Germany and Estonia have the highest rates of young people having consumed alcohol

In many societies, consumption of alcoholic beverages is a regular feature of social gatherings. However, alcohol is a psychoactive substance with dependence-producing properties. Depending on the quantity and drinking patterns it can have serious negative consequences on health (such as toxic effects on organs and tissues, intoxication, dependency) and increases the chances of being involved in risky situations resulting in injuries. For adolescents, alcohol consumption may facilitate social interaction and influence one's image among peers. According to the WHO, children, adolescents and elderly people are more vulnerable to alcohol-related harm than other age groups. Furthermore, the early onset of alcohol consumption is associated with increased risk of alcohol abuse and addiction at later ages.

Data gathered by the EMCDDA show that in all countries for which data were available, the majority of young people aged 15–24 has consumed alcohol during the year preceding the survey. The proportion of those who have consumed alcohol ranges from almost 90 % in Germany and Estonia, to slightly below 60 % in Portugal and Romania. In general, young men tend to consume more alcohol than young women. The largest differences between young men and women were recorded in Romania (18 percentage points) and Bulgaria (17 percentage points), followed by Portugal (14 percentage points). In some countries, like Belgium and Lithuania, the difference between young men and women is almost non-existent (below 2 percentage points), whereas in others, like the Czech Republic and Finland, the proportion of young women slightly outnumbered that of young men.

([7]) European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

Figure 29: Last year prevalence of alcohol use amongst young people (aged 15–24), by sex
(%)



(1) 2004.
(2) 2007.
(3) 2008.
(4) 2009.
(5) 2010.
(6) 2011.
(7) 2012.
(8) The most recent general population survey reported by Italy displays a wide variation in results compared with the previous surveys which may reflect methodological differences. The data is provided for information, but given the lack of comparability between surveys, should be treated with caution.
(9) The most recent general population survey reported by the Netherlands displays a wide variation in results compared with 2005 which may reflect methodological differences. The data is provided for information, but given the lack of comparability between surveys, should be treated with caution.
Source: EMCDDA (table GPS-115)

Alcohol intoxication or drunkenness occurs when the quantity of alcohol consumed leads to the impairment of a person's mental and physical abilities (e.g. stagger when walking, not being able to speak properly, throwing up or loss of memory). Data collected through the ESPAD survey (Table 4) reveal that on average 40 % of 15–16-year-old students were drunk at least once during the year preceding the survey. Approximately half of them were drunk once or twice, whereas 2 % experienced drunkenness on more than 20 occasions.

Table 4: Frequency of being drunk during the last 12 months amongst 15–16 year-old students, 2011 (%)

	Number of occasions						
	0	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–19	more than 20	at least once
EU (1)	60	23	9	4	3	2	40
Belgium (2)	86	12	2	1	0	0	14
Bulgaria	57	27	8	4	3	1	43
Cyprus	77	15	4	2	1	1	23
Czech Republic	50	32	10	4	3	2	50
Germany (3)	52	29	12	3	2	2	48
Denmark	31	29	18	9	8	5	69
Estonia	59	29	7	3	1	1	41
Greece	70	22	5	2	1	0	30
Spain	53	18	17	5	9	4	47
Finland	53	23	12	6	4	2	47
France	59	24	9	4	3	1	41
Croatia	58	25	9	4	3	2	42
Hungary	51	28	10	5	4	2	49
Ireland	57	21	9	6	4	3	43
Italy	72	18	4	3	1	1	28
Lithuania	57	28	8	4	2	2	43
Latvia	56	29	8	4	2	2	44
Malta	63	22	8	4	2	1	37
Netherlands	64	22	8	4	2	1	36
Poland	68	21	6	3	1	1	32
Portugal	71	18	7	3	2	1	29
Romania	76	16	4	2	1	1	24
Sweden	68	18	7	4	2	1	32
Slovenia	55	28	9	4	2	2	45
Slovakia	50	28	11	5	3	3	50
United Kingdom	52	23	11	7	4	3	48
Iceland	81	12	3	2	1	0	19
Liechtenstein	55	26	10	3	2	4	45
Norway	70	19	7	3	1	0	30

(1) This is the population-weighted average of the number of occasions, weighted by the population size of each country. As in Belgium and Germany not all regions participated in the survey, the weighted average was computed with the assumption that these regions were representative of the respective country.
(2) Only the region of Flanders participated in the survey.
(3) Only five Bundesländer participated in the survey.
Source: ESPAD report 2011

Belgium was the country where alcohol consumption in harmful quantities was the least spread among 15–16-year-old students: 86 % of them declared not to have been drunk during the last year, 12 % experienced drunkenness on one or two occasions and no one declared to have been drunk on more than 20 occasions. Similar patterns were encountered in Cyprus, Romania and Italy. At the other end of the spectrum we find Denmark, where 70 % of the surveyed students declared to have been drunk at least once, 29 % on one or two occasions and 5 % on more than 20 occasions.

Data sources and availability

Eurostat provides information on a wide range of demographic data, at national and regional level on an annual basis, including statistics on the number of deaths by age, by year of birth, as well as according to gender, educational attainment, legal marital status, citizenship and country of birth. Statistics are also collected for life expectancy, infant mortality and late foetal deaths. The completeness of information depends on the availability of data reported by the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). A series of mortality indicators are produced, which may be used to derive a range of information on subjects such as crude death rates by age, gender or educational attainment.

Health statistics collected during the period up to and including reference year 2010 were submitted by EU Member States to Eurostat on the basis of a gentleman's agreement. Regulation 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work provides the legal basis for compiling statistics on: causes of death; healthcare; health status and health determinants; accidents at work; occupational diseases and other work-related health problems. Within the context of this regulation, an implementing regulation on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work, as regards statistics on causes of death (328/2011) was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 5 April 2011; it provides a legal basis for the collection of statistics in each EU Member State from reference year 2011 onwards and will result in a broader range of statistics being collected.

A wide range of comparable statistics, for example, on healthcare systems, health-related behaviour, diseases and causes of death and a common set of EU health indicators, upon which there is EU-wide agreement regarding definitions, data collection and use is in the process of being established within the framework of the open method of coordination for health issues.

The causes and groups of medical causes of death chosen have been selected from the summary list of 86 causes compiled by Eurostat in the 'European shortlist 2012', which is based on the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) developed and maintained by the World Health Organization (WHO). Statistics on causes of death are based on information derived from death certificates. The medical certification of death is an obligation in all EU Member States. All deaths are identified by the underlying cause of death, in other words, the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death (a definition adopted by the World Health Assembly). Although definitions are harmonised amongst EU Member States, the statistics may not be fully comparable as classifications may vary when the cause of death is multiple or difficult to evaluate and because of different notification procedures.

Health interview surveys (HIS) are the source of information for describing the health status and the health-related behaviours of the European population. The European health interview survey (EHIS) aims at measuring on a harmonised basis and with a high degree of comparability among Member States the health status, life style (health determinants) and health care services use of EU citizens.

4

Education

Introduction

The right to education for children and young people contribute to their overall development and consequently lays the foundations for later success in life in terms of employability, social integration, health and wellbeing. Education and training play a crucial role in counteracting the negative effects of social disadvantage. The European Union (EU) therefore wants all children and young people to be able to access and benefit from high-quality education, care and training.

Each EU Member State is responsible for its own education and training systems and the EU's role consists in coordinating and supporting the actions of its Member States as well as addressing common challenges. The EU offers a forum for exchange of best practices, gathers and disseminates information and statistics, and provides advice and support for policy reforms.

This chapter presents a range of statistics covering children's and young people's education in the EU, the main sources of data being the joint UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) questionnaires on education statistics, which constitute the core database on education. Childcare data, coming from the EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), complement the analysis for the youngest children. Data on outcomes of education collected through the EU labour force survey (LFS) are also analysed in this chapter in terms of educational attainment and early school leavers.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training up until 2020 (ET2020) has been drawn up in 2009 with the main aim to support EU Member States in further developing their educational and training systems. These systems should better provide the means for all citizens to realise their potentials, as well as ensure sustainable economic prosperity and employability, with a view to creating a knowledge-based Europe and making lifelong learning a reality for all.

In order to measure progress achieved on these objectives, the framework defines benchmarks for 2020:

- at least 95 % of children (from 4 to compulsory school age) should participate in early childhood education;
- fewer than 15 % of 15-year-olds should be under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science;
- fewer than 10 % of young people should drop out of education and training;
- at least 40 % of people aged 30–34 should have completed some form of higher education;
- at least 15 % of adults should participate in lifelong learning;
- at least 20 % of higher education graduates and 6 % of 18–34 year-olds with an initial vocational qualification should have spent some time studying or training abroad;
- the share of employed graduates (20–34 year-olds having successfully completed upper secondary or tertiary education) having left education 1–3 years ago should be at least 82 %.

Childcare attendance and participation in education

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) can potentially increase children wellbeing, advance children's rights and ensure that all children have a fair start in life. A number of studies during the last decade showed indeed the crucial effect of early life experiences on cognitive function, education performance and life chances ([1]).

Increasing access to high-quality ECEC is one of the goals of the strategic framework in education and training (ET2020) that calls for the participation of at least 95 % of children between the age of 4 and compulsory school age by 2020, addressing child poverty and preventing early school leaving, two of the headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Childcare services for children under the age of 3 are also at the heart of the EU policies. The 'Barcelona target' defined in 2002 by the European Council to improve the provision of childcare in the EU Member States, through an agreement to 'remove disincentives to female labour force participation and strive […] to provide childcare to at least 33 % of children under three years of age' ([2]) is still valid today.

Improvements still need to be made in the availability of childcare services, especially in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland

Figure 1 shows the proportion of children under the age of 3 cared for under formal arrangements, namely in day-care centre, in 2013. The rates are broken down by the number of hours during which care is provided (over and under 30 hours per week).

In 2013, the EU-28 average was below the Barcelona target for childcare facilities with 27 % of children up to 3 years attending formal childcare (versus 33 % for the target). Nevertheless, large differences could be observed across countries. Nine EU Member States reached the Barcelona objective, with attendance rates higher than one third in Denmark (62 %), Sweden (55 %), Luxembourg (47 %), Belgium and the Netherlands (both 46 %), France and Slovenia (both 39 %), Portugal (38 %) and Spain (35 %). In contrast, the rate of attendance in childcare services for children aged less than 3 years was very low in the Czech Republic (2 %), Slovakia (4 %) and Poland (5 %).

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FORMAL AND INFORMAL CHILDCARE?

Formal childcare:

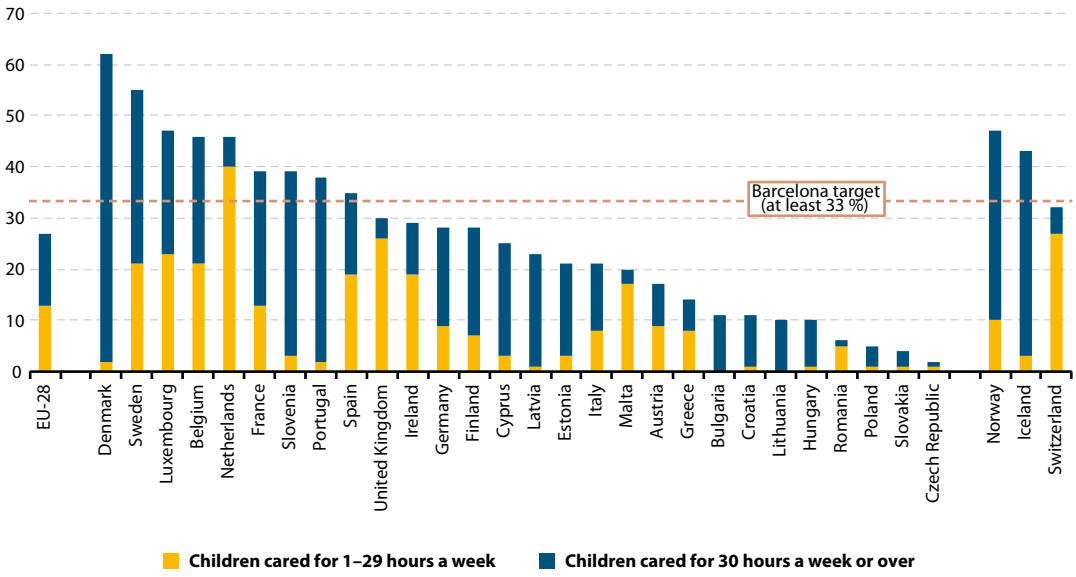
- Childcare at day-care centre organised/controlled by public or private structure.

Informal childcare:

- Childcare by a professional child-minder at child's home or at child-minder's home;
- Childcare by grandparents, other household members (outside parents), other relatives, friends or neighbours.

([1]) Augustine J.M. et al. (2009): Maternal Education, Early Child Care and the Reproduction of Advantage. Social Forces 2009 September; 88(1): 1–29
Gamoran A. (1999): Effects of Non-maternal Child Care on Inequality in Cognitive Skills, Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper n°1186–99
Heckman, J.J. (2008): Schools, Skills and Synapses. Economic Enquiry, Vol. 46, N°3, July 2008, 289–324
Vandell D.L. et al (2010): Do Effects of Early Child Care Extend to Age 15 Years? Results from the NICHD study of early child care and youth development, Child Development 81(3): 737–756
([2]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/71025.pdf

Figure 1: Children up to 3 years of age cared for by formal arrangements by weekly time spent in care, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_caindformal)

Among countries that have reached the Barcelona target, Denmark, Slovenia, Portugal and Sweden had the highest childcare attendance in 2013 when taking into account the 30-hours a week threshold (with 60 %, 36 %, 36 % and 34 % respectively of children cared for 30 hours a week or more).

Participation in early childhood education increasing steadily

Children who have attended pre-primary education tend in most countries to perform better in school than those who have not, even after accounting for the socio-economic background. Early childhood education helps to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and to ensure fair access to later learning opportunities. Many countries have recognised this by making pre-primary education almost universal for children by the time they are 3 or 4 years old ([3]).

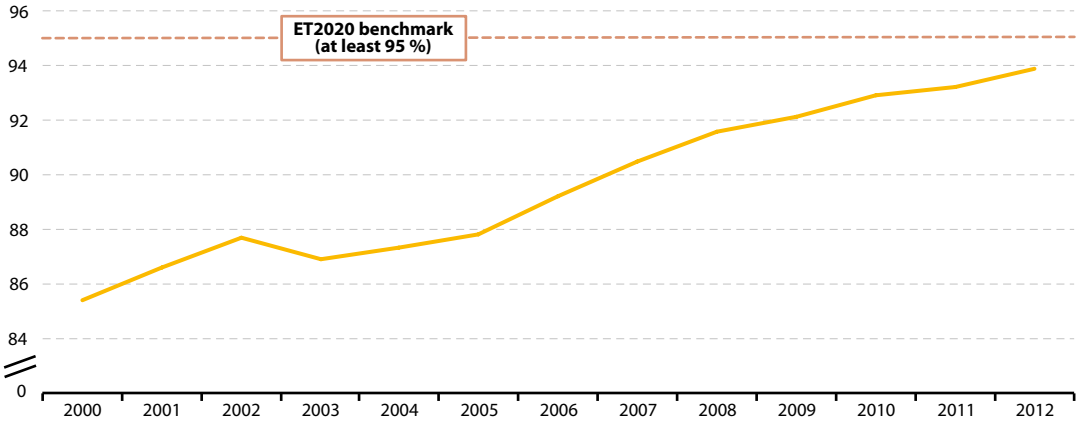
As presented in Figure 3, the ET2020 benchmark calling for the participation of at least 95 % of children between the age of 4 and the starting age of compulsory education was almost achieved in 2012, with 93.9 % of ECEC attendance. The percentage of children in early education at EU-28 level increased steadily from 2000 to 2012, except for a slight drop in 2003–04, reaching its highest rate so far in 2012.

Compulsory school age is reached by children who are 6 years old in thirteen EU Member States, while in nine EU Member States compulsory education starts at the age of 5 (Figure 2). Luxembourg is the only country in the EU-28 where children start compulsory education at the age of 4, whereas in Sweden, Estonia, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Finland children compulsory education starts at the age of 7.

Figure 2: Starting age of compulsory education, 2014–15
(years)

Source: DG EAC (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/compulsory_education_EN.pdf)

Figure 3: Participants in early education (aged between 4 years and the starting age of compulsory education), EU-28, 2000–12
(% of children of the corresponding age group)

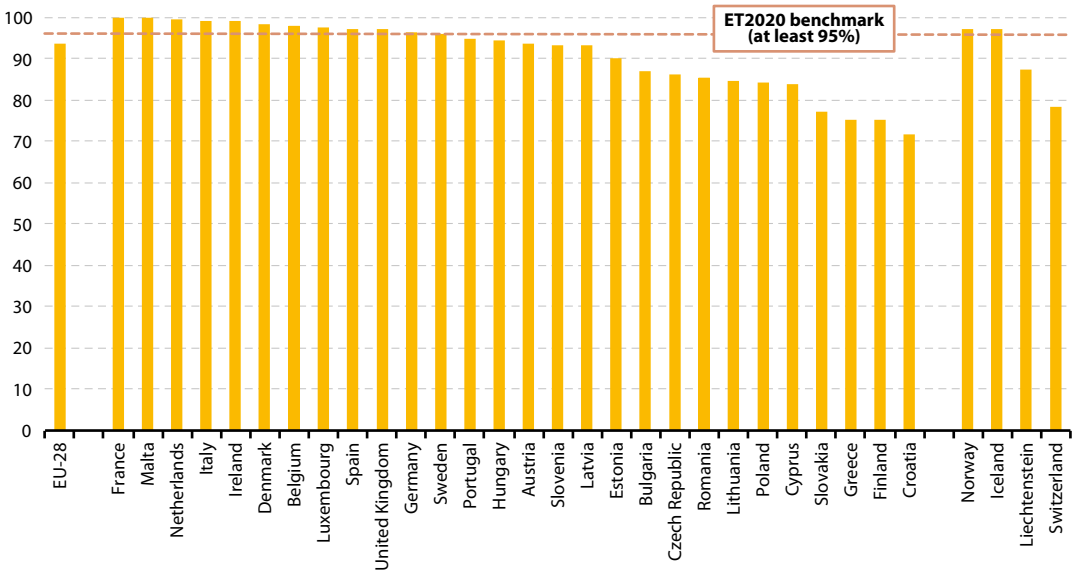


Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_ipart)

At country level (Figure 4) the highest percentages of children in early education were found in 2012 in France and Malta (100 %), followed by the Netherlands (99.6 %), Italy (99.2 %) and Ireland (99.1 %). In nearly half of the EU Member States (13 of 28 EU Member States), the participation rate was higher than the ET2020 benchmark. Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Latvia and Estonia were close to the target with rates between 90 and 95 %. The rates of ten EU Member States were consequently below 90 %, with the lowest rates seen in Croatia (71.7 %), Finland (75.1 %) and Greece (75.2 %).

There is a trend towards requiring children to start education at a younger age, with several countries having lowered their school starting ages recently and others making pre-school attendance compulsory.

Figure 4: Participants in early education (aged between 4 years and the starting age of compulsory education), 2012
(% of children of the corresponding age group)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_ipart)

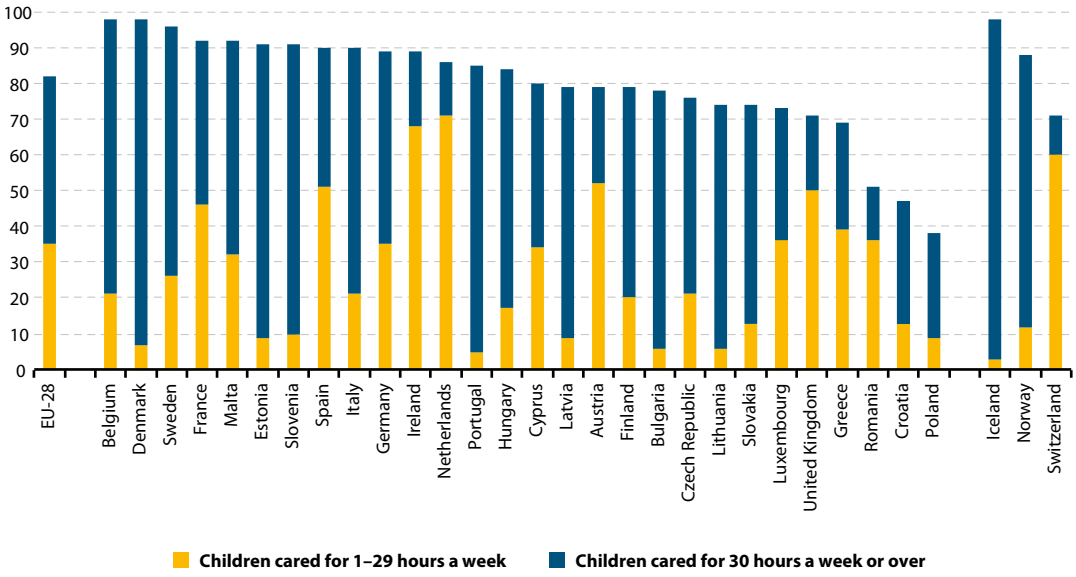
The number of hours per week that young children attend formal care arrangements (including pre-school education, childcare at centre-based services outside school hours and childcare at day-care centres) is another important dimension to consider. Indeed, a longer day enables children to receive more individualised instruction and to have more time interacting with their peers, as well as enables parents to engage in gainful employment.

Available data shows that on a total of 82 % of children from the age of 3 to the minimum compulsory school age who attended formal care in the EU-28 in 2013, 47 % attended ECEC 30 hours a week or more, while 35 % did it between 1 and 29 hours a week (Figure 5).

EU Member States with the highest share of children between 3 years old and the minimum compulsory school age cared for by formal

arrangement 30 hours a week or more are Denmark (91 %), Estonia (82 %), Slovenia (81 %) and Portugal (80 %). In contrast, the Netherlands and Romania (both 15 %) as well as Ireland and the United Kingdom (both 21 %) recorded the lowest proportion of children of that age attending formal care 30 hours a week or more.

Figure 5: Children from 3 years to minimum compulsory school age cared for by formal arrangements by weekly time spent in care, 2013
(%)



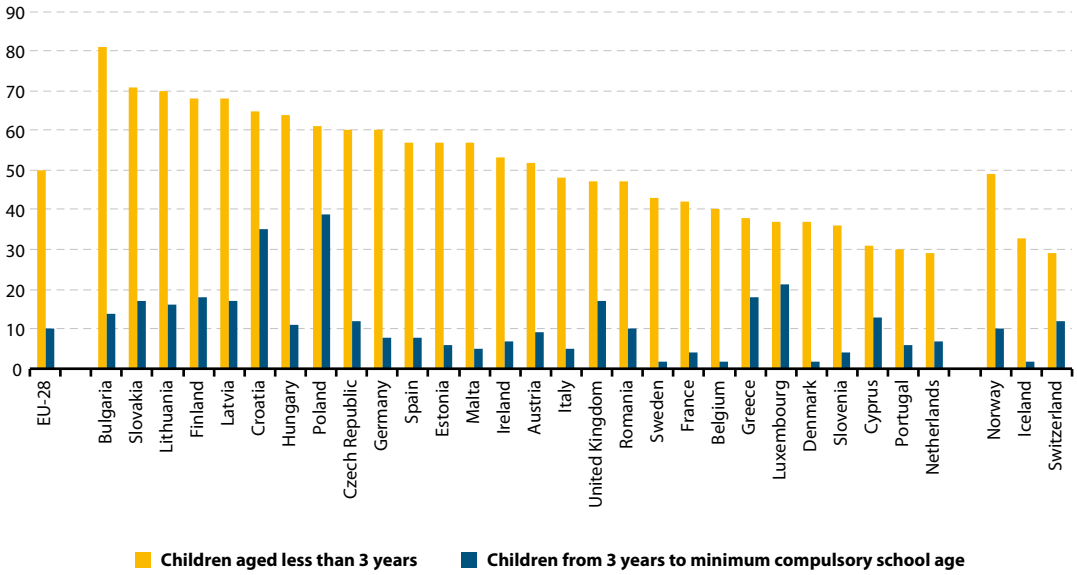
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_caindformal)

Half of the children aged less than 3 years are cared for only by their parents

Early childhood education and care arrangements vary in different countries and families have generally a range of options from which to choose. Some parents choose to care for their children themselves without making use of childcare services. At EU-28 level, just half (50 %) of children aged less than 3 years were cared for only by their parents in 2013 (Figure 6). The highest rates amongst EU Member States were found in Bulgaria (81 %), Slovakia (71 %) and Lithuania (70 %), while the lowest rates were found in the Netherlands (29 %), Portugal (30 %) and Cyprus (31 %).

Looking at children from 3 years to the starting age of compulsory education, the share of children only cared for by their parents drops substantially in the EU-28, to only 10 % in 2013. The countries with the highest rates of children from 3 to compulsory school age cared for only by their parents were Poland (39 %) and Croatia (35 %). The lowest rates were found in Belgium, Denmark and Sweden (all three 2 %), followed by France and Slovenia (both 4 %).

Figure 6: Children cared for only by their parents, by age group, 2013
(% over the population of each age group)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_caparents)

Informal childcare concerns 30 % of children aged less than 3 years

Some children are cared for by other types of informal childcare meaning they are cared for either by a professional child-minder at the children's home or at the child-minders' home or cared for by grand-parents, other household members (outside parents), relatives, friends or neighbours.

As presented in Figure 7, 30 % of children aged less than 3 years were cared for by other types of childcare in the EU-28 in 2013, against 29 % of children from 3 to compulsory school age.

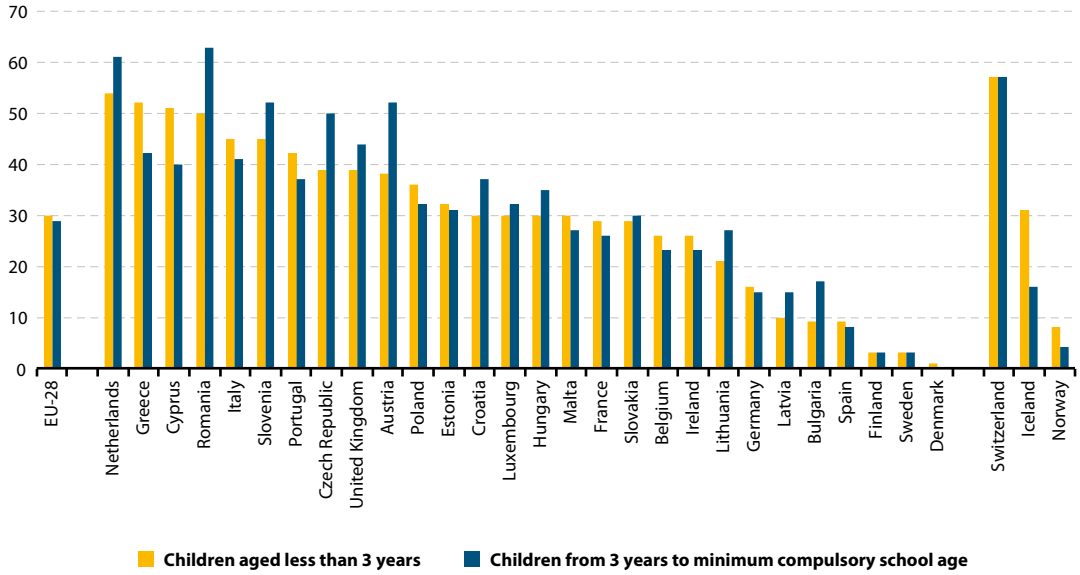
Informal childcare can — although it does not have to — be combined with formal childcare, meaning that some of the children who are recorded as cared for under informal childcare also attended formal childcare for part of the week.

At country level, the highest rates of children aged less than 3 years attending informal childcare were found in the Netherlands (54 %), Greece (52 %), Cyprus (51 %) and Romania (50 %). In contrast, the northern EU Member States Denmark (1 %), Sweden and Finland (both 3 %) presented the lowest rates. As regards children aged from 3 to compulsory school age, Romania (63 %), the Netherlands (61 %) and Slovenia (52°%) had the highest rates, whereas the lowest were recorded in the same three northern countries Denmark (0 %), Sweden and Finland (both 3 %).

More data and contextual information on ECEC can be found in the Eurydice Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe 2014 report ([4]). The Education and Training Monitor annual series produced by DG Education and Culture also provides more detailed information on the progress on the ET2020 benchmarks ([5]).

([4]) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/166EN.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm

Figure 7: Children cared for by other types of childcare (1 to 30 hours or over), 2013
(% over the population of each age group)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_caindother)

Very high enrolment rates in primary and secondary education in most EU Member States

The net enrolment rate for primary education was 95 % or above in 20 EU Member States in 2012, and even above 97.5 % in 14 EU Member States (namely Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Cyprus, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The enrolment rates for secondary (lower and upper secondary together) education were a bit lower, but still higher than 95 % in five EU Member States, on the basis of available data (namely Ireland, Greece, Spain, France and Lithuania) (Table 1).

The lowest participation rates in primary education were registered in Romania (85.8 %), Hungary (91.3 %) and Luxembourg (92.3 %), while Malta (81.6 %), Latvia (83.6 %) and Bulgaria (85.3 %) bottom ranked in enrolment rates for secondary education.

It should be noted that the legal requirements concerning the start and end of compulsory education influence the level of educational enrolment, and consequently the national enrolment rates in education depends on the national regulation in terms of compulsory education.

Despite the resource mobilisation campaigns and political commitments, the share of children attending compulsory education decreased in several EU Member States over the last decade. Nevertheless, the enrolment rates in compulsory education are still close to 100 % in most EU Member States.

Table 1: Net enrolment rates in primary and secondary education, EU-28, 2002 and 2012
(%)

	Primary education			Secondary education		
	2002	2012	Difference	2002	2012	Difference
Belgium	98.9	98.7	–0.1	:	:	:
Bulgaria	95.4	95.0	–0.5	87.6	85.3	–2.3
Czech Republic	:	:	:	:	:	:
Denmark	99.9	97.9	–2.0	91.1	91.1	0.0
Germany	96.5	97.9	1.5	:	:	:
Estonia	97.0	94.7	–2.3	87.6	90.7	3.0
Ireland	94.9	95.3	0.4	89.7	99.1	9.4
Greece (1)	96.0	99.8	3.8	85.4	99.2	13.8
Spain	99.9	99.7	–0.2	91.7	95.6	4.0
France	98.2	98.2	0.1	91.6	96.7	5.1
Croatia	89.1	89.3	0.3	85.2	93.7	8.4
Italy	98.7	96.4	–2.3	90.6	91.3	0.7
Cyprus	95.9	97.9	2.0	91.7	91.8	0.2
Latvia	:	97.7	:	:	83.6	:
Lithuania	95.4	95.8	0.5	94.7	96.8	2.1
Luxembourg	96.1	92.3	–3.8	80.0	85.7	5.7
Hungary	89.2	91.3	2.1	89.0	92.2	3.1
Malta	:	95.1	:	73.6	81.6	8.0
Netherlands	99.3	98.4	–0.8	90.3	90.2	–0.1
Austria	:	:	:	:	:	:
Poland	96.7	96.6	0.0	91.9	90.5	–1.4
Portugal	98.5	98.6	0.1	79.3	:	:
Romania	92.8	85.8	–7.0	:	:	:
Slovenia	93.8	97.7	3.9	92.6	93.3	0.7
Slovakia	:	:	:	:	:	:
Finland	99.4	98.8	–0.6	94.5	92.4	–2.2
Sweden	99.5	99.5	0.0	97.4	92.8	–4.7
United Kingdom	99.9	99.8	–0.1	95.5	94.6	–0.8
Iceland	99.5	98.1	–1.4	85.0	88.7	3.8
Liechtenstein (2)	94.5	91.1	–3.4	94.0	92.1	–1.9
Norway	99.7	99.4	–0.3	94.2	94.9	0.7
Switzerland	95.2	93.4	–1.8	83.2	81.0	–2.1

(1) 2010 instead of 2012 for secondary education.
(2) 2003 instead of 2002 for primary and secondary education.
Source: UNESCO-UIS

Table 2: Net enrolment rates in primary and secondary education around the world, 2002 and 2012 (%)

	Primary education			Secondary education		
	2002	2012	Difference	2002	2012	Difference
World	84.4	89.1	4.7	53.7	64.6	11.0
Australia	94.4	96.8	2.4	87.4	85.3	–2.2
Burkina Faso (1)	36.7	66.4	29.6	8.0	19.7	11.7
Cuba	95.3	96.4	1.1	82.4	86.7	4.3
Ecuador	97.6	95.2	–2.5	50.4	74.0	23.6
Ghana (2)	61.9	81.8	19.9	34.7	51.5	16.8
Indonesia	92.7	92.2	–0.5	51.7	76.1	24.4
Israel (3)(4)	97.9	96.7	–1.2	99.6	98.1	–1.5
Jordan (4)	95.3	97.1	1.8	83.9	87.9	4.0
Japan	100.0	99.9	–0.1	100.0	99.1	–0.9
Kazakhstan	91.4	86.0	–5.4	89.5	86.3	–3.2
Korea, Rep.	99.2	99.1	–0.1	94.2	96.0	1.7
Lao PDR	75.0	95.9	20.9	29.9	41.4	11.4
Moldova	91.4	87.9	–3.4	78.9	77.9	–1.0
Mexico	96.5	96.3	–0.2	58.7	67.9	9.2
Mongolia	89.6	97.3	7.8	71.6	83.1	11.5
Mozambique	56.1	86.2	30.1	4.3	17.7	13.5
New Zealand	96.7	98.4	1.7	91.4	97.0	5.5
Oman	84.3	96.3	12.0	73.7	83.6	9.9
Panama	97.1	91.2	–5.9	60.6	76.4	15.8
Russian Federation	:	96.2	:	:	:	:
El Salvador	86.0	93.4	7.4	48.6	61.6	13.0
Turkey	96.7	94.0	–2.7	71.4	82.1	10.7
Ukraine	91.9	97.9	6.0	86.6	85.6	–0.9
United States	94.0	91.8	–2.2	84.9	86.9	2.0
Venezuela, RB	93.1	92.3	–0.8	56.6	74.3	17.7

(1) For secondary education: 2001 instead of 2002.
(2) For secondary education: 2013 instead of 2012.
(3) For primary education: 2011 instead of 2012.
(4) For secondary education: 2011 instead of 2012.
Source: UNESCO-UIS

The net **enrolment rate in primary (respectively secondary) education** is the percentage of children of the primary (respectively secondary) school age who are enrolled in primary (respectively secondary) education.

Although primary and secondary school enrolment figures remain low in countries around the world, they are on the increase

The enrolment rate at world level for primary education was 89.1 % in 2012 with, using the data available, Japan (99.9 %), the Republic of Korea (99.1 %) and New Zealand (98.4 %) recording the highest rates. In contrast, Burkina Faso (66.4 %), Ghana (81.8 %), Kazakhstan (86.0 %) and Mozambique (86.2 %) corresponded to the lowest rates.

For secondary education the world enrolment rate was lower than for primary education, at 64.6 % in 2012. Japan (99.1 %), Israel (98.1 %), New Zealand (97.0 %) and the Republic of Korea (96.0 %) however recorded rates above 90 %. Mozambique (17.7 %) and Burkina Faso (19.7 %) stood at the other extreme of the range with enrolment rates below 20 %.

Comparing figures from 2002 and 2012, world enrolment rates in primary (+ 4.7 percentage points) and secondary (+ 11.0 percentage points) education have increased significantly. At country level, on the basis of available data, the biggest increases in enrolment rates in primary education were recorded in two African nations: Mozambique (+ 30.1 pp) and Burkina Faso (+ 29.7 pp). The largest decreases in primary education, on the other hand, were registered in Panama (– 5.9 pp) and Kazakhstan (– 5.4 pp). The largest increases in secondary education enrolment rates were found in Indonesia (+ 24.4 pp) and Ecuador (+ 23.6 pp), while the largest decreases were registered in Kazakhstan (– 3.2 pp), Australia (– 2.2 pp) and Switzerland (– 2.1 pp).

PRIMARY ENROLMENT TARGETS IN EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) AND IN THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

At the turn of the 21st century, the international community reached a consensus and pledged to achieve universal primary education (UPE) and gender parity. In 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action and the United Nations Millennium Declaration reaffirmed the notion of education as a fundamental human right.

EFA Goal 2
The goal is to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality (UNESCO, 2000).

MDG Goal 2
The goal is to ensure that, by the year 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (United Nations, 2000).

Table 3: Enrolment rates in education, by age group, 2012
(%)

	15–19	20–24	25–29	15–29
EU-28	85.5	41.1	13.7	44.8
Belgium	93.1	47.5	17.1	51.4
Bulgaria	77.9	38.1	10.7	38.7
Czech Republic	90.2	42.0	11.0	43.9
Denmark	87.4	55.3	30.0	58.8
Germany	89.7	46.3	19.9	49.5
Estonia	89.3	45.0	16.6	46.3
Ireland	93.3	37.3	8.6	43.3
Greece	84.8	41.8	37.7	52.7
Spain	86.4	44.6	14.3	44.5
France	84.1	35.3	6.5	42.0
Croatia	83.4	36.0	7.2	40.3
Italy	82.4	34.0	11.0	40.7
Cyprus	64.1	21.6	7.6	29.2
Latvia	93.5	45.8	11.0	46.1
Lithuania	94.8	56.0	15.6	56.1
Luxembourg	76.6	20.9	5.6	32.8
Hungary	89.5	44.3	12.0	48.0
Malta	66.7	25.2	5.2	30.7
Netherlands	93.3	53.2	17.5	54.5
Austria	79.1	34.1	18.2	42.5
Poland	92.5	54.1	10.5	47.8
Portugal	86.5	38.3	11.7	43.9
Romania	81.0	44.0	8.6	42.4
Slovenia	92.3	56.3	14.9	50.2
Slovakia	85.4	35.6	8.2	39.6
Finland	85.9	52.3	31.6	56.2
Sweden	85.6	43.3	28.8	52.3
United Kingdom	77.2	28.8	10.5	37.7
Iceland	88.4	53.4	28.3	56.9
Norway	86.7	41.7	17.1	48.6
Switzerland	83.8	36.7	14.9	43.2

Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_enrl1tl)

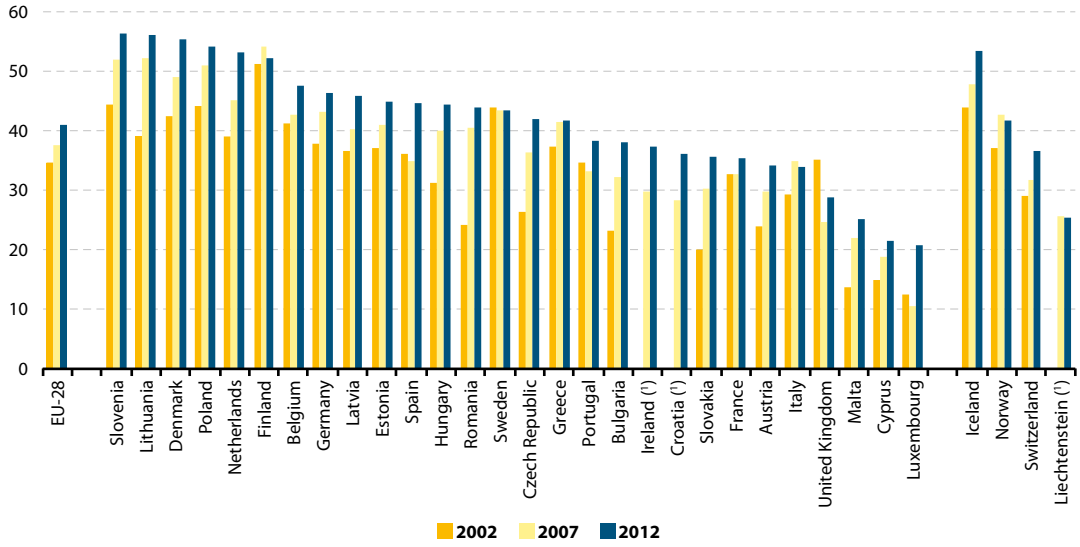
Larger discrepancies between EU Member States in enrolment in education for young people than for children, especially in older age groups

From the 91.8 million young people aged 15–29 living in the EU-28 in 2012, approximately 41 million were enrolled in education. While at EU level the enrolment rate was 45 %, it varied between about 30 % and 60 % across countries. In eight EU Member States over 50 % of young people attended an educational programme. Denmark was the country with the highest share (59 %), followed by Finland, Lithuania and the Netherlands (around 55 % each). The lowest rates were registered in Cyprus (29 %), Malta (31 %) and Luxembourg (33 %), which are all countries where many young people study abroad.

The enrolment rate decreases with age. On average, 85 % of the young people aged 15–19 are enrolled in education. This proportion decreases almost by half for young people aged 20–24 (41 %), while only 14 % of young people aged 25–29 are still in education.

Over the last 10 years enrolment rates have generally increased in the EU. While there was a continuous growth between 2002 and 2012 for the 20–24 age group, with the EU enrolment rate going from 35 % in 2002, to 38 % in 2007 and 41 % in 2012, the EU enrolment rate for the age group 25–29 was stable between 2002 and 2007 (both years at 11 %) growing afterwards to reach 14 % in 2012. Different patterns can nevertheless be found across EU Member States. Figures 8 and 9 illustrate the differences in enrolment rates between countries and their evolution over time for the 20–24 and 25–29 age groups.

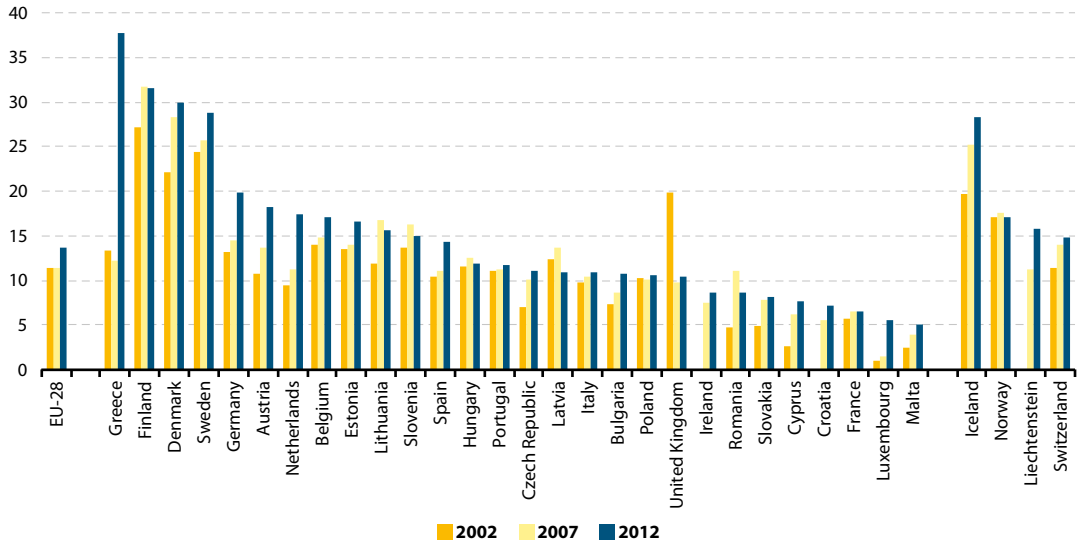
Figure 8: Enrolment rates in education of young people aged 20–24, 2002, 2007 and 2012 (%)



(1) Data missing for 2002.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_enrl1tl)

The first thing to be noted is that there are large differences between EU Member States with regard to the participation in education of young people aged 20–24. In 2012, the highest enrolment rates were observed in Slovenia and Lithuania (56 %), while the lowest rates were seen in Luxembourg and Cyprus (about 20 %), followed by Malta and the United Kingdom (with rates below 30 %). Taking into consideration the evolution between 2007 and 2012, an increase in enrolment rates can be observed in almost all EU Member States. The largest increase was observed in Luxembourg, the country with the lowest enrolment rate for this age group. Compared to 2007, the percentage of people aged 20–24 enrolled in education in 2012 was two times higher. A possible explanation for this could be the expansion of the University of Luxembourg, which was founded in 2003. Important growths could also be observed in Spain (+ 10 pp), the Netherlands, Croatia and Ireland (all three + 8 pp).

Figure 9: Enrolment rates in education of young people aged 25–29, 2002, 2007 and 2012 (%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_enrl1tl)

For the 25–29 age group the disparities between EU Member States are even higher. While in Malta and Luxembourg only around 5 % of people aged 25–29 were enrolled in education in 2012, in Greece the enrolment rate of 38 % was almost eight times higher. High enrolment rates for this age group can also be observed in Finland, Denmark and Sweden (around 30 %). The analysis of the time trend reveals that in most EU Member States the proportion of young people aged 25–29 enrolled in education increased between 2007 and 2012. The highest increase, from 12 % in 2007 to 38 % in 2012, was registered in Greece. In Luxembourg, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands, a more moderate increase, between 4 and 6 percentage points, occurred.

The disparities between EU Member States result from a combination of several factors: country specific organisation of education systems, legal requirements concerning the end of compulsory education, accessibility and affordability of non-compulsory education, and situation on the labour market. While the enrolment rate of young people aged 15–19 is rather linked to country-specific legal requirements on compulsory education, the enrolment rate for people aged 20–29 is linked more to socio-economic criteria, especially the employment situation (in many cases, young people stay longer in education as they cannot find a job).

While 85 % of the boys and girls aged 15–19 in the EU-28 were enrolled in education in 2012, 41 % and 14 % of young people aged 20–24, and 25–29 respectively, were still in education.

More skills, more languages — increasing your opportunities in the EU

The ability to speak foreign languages promotes the intercultural dialogue in Europe, improves employability and facilitates the free movement of workers across the EU. Furthermore, research has shown that at individual level, learning foreign languages at an early age in general fosters the cognitive capacities of children, such as comprehension, expression, communication and problem-solving ([6]).

The share of pupils in primary education (ISCED level 1) who learned two or more foreign languages was 4.7 % in the EU-28 in 2012. This represents nearly 2 percentage points more than 5 years before (2.9 % in 2007).

At the 2002 Barcelona European Council, targets were set for the **'mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age'**. Since then, linguistic diversity has been encouraged throughout the EU, in the form of learning in schools, universities, adult education centres and company training.

The European Commission adopted in 2008 the Communication 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment' (COM(2008) 566 final), which was followed by a Council Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism (2008/C 320/01). Addressing multilingualism in the broader context of social cohesion and economic prosperity, the Communication urges the EU Member States to do more in order to achieve the Barcelona objective of enabling the citizens of the EU to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue.

In 2014, these recommendations were endorsed in the Council Conclusions on multilingualism and the development of language competences ([7]) which stated that EU Member States should assess and monitor progress in developing language competences in the national context. Such assessment should cover all four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. EU Member States agreed to adopt and improve measures aimed at promoting multilingualism from an early age and at enhancing the quality and efficiency of language learning and teaching.

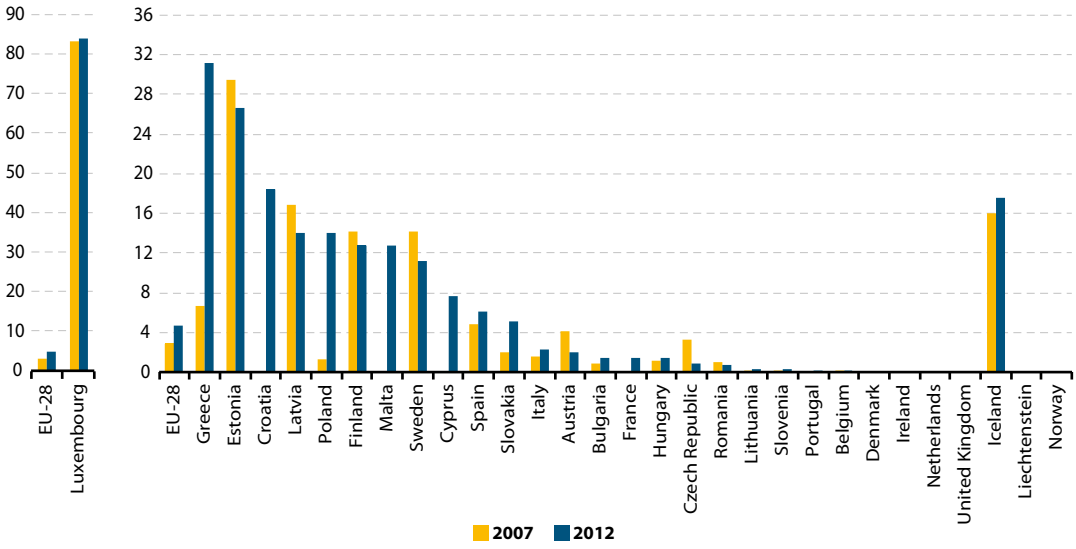
Luxembourgish kids are the most multilingual in the European Union — more than 8 out of 10 in primary school learn two or more foreign languages.

Figure 10 shows that Luxembourg topped the list of EU Member States for the percentage of pupils at ISCED level 1 learning two or more foreign languages, both in 2007 and 2012 (83.0 % and 83.9 % respectively). Greece (31.1 %), Estonia (26.6 %) and Croatia (18.4 %) also recorded high shares of ISCED 1 pupils learning two or more foreign languages in 2012.

Several EU Member States managed to significantly increase their share of pupils learning two or more foreign languages in primary education in the 5-year period, namely Greece (+ 24.4 pp between 2006 and 2012) as well as Poland and Malta (both + 12.7 pp between 2007 and 2012).

Figure 10: Percentage of pupils at ISCED level 1 learning two or more foreign languages, 2007 and 2012 ([1])

(%)



([1]) Data not available for Germany. 2006 instead of 2007 for Greece, Austria and Portugal.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_thfrlan)

([6]) Commission Staff Working Paper, 2011
([7]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142692.pdf

THE ISCED STANDARD

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is an instrument suitable for assembling, compiling and presenting comparable statistics and indicators on education. It presents standard concepts and definitions and classifications. Applied until 2013, the ISCED 97 classification comprises seven levels of education:

Level 0: Pre-primary education — the initial stage of organised instruction; it is school- or centre-based and is designed for children aged at least three years.

Level 1: Primary education — begins between five and seven years of age, is the start of compulsory education where it exists and generally covers six years of full-time schooling.

Level 2: Lower secondary education — continues the basic programmes of the primary level, although teaching is typically more subject-focused. Usually, the end of this level coincides with the end of compulsory education.

Level 3: Upper secondary education — generally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entrance age is typically 15 or 16 years. Entrance qualifications (end of compulsory education) and other minimum entry requirements are usually needed.

Level 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education — between upper secondary and tertiary education. This level serves to broaden the knowledge of ISCED level 3 graduates.

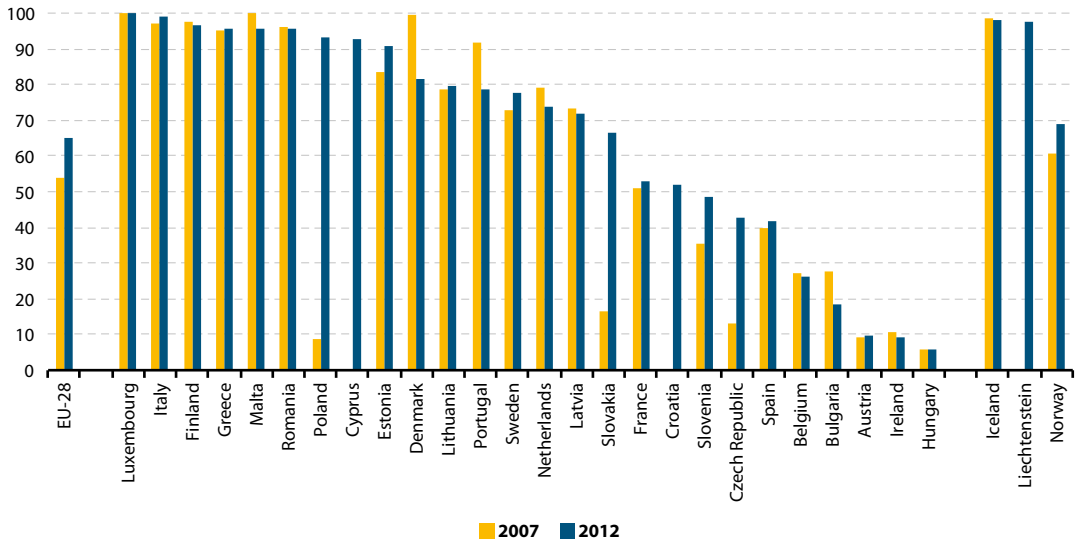
Level 5: Tertiary education (first stage) — entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4. This includes tertiary programmes with academic orientation (type A) which are largely theoretical and tertiary programmes with an occupational orientation (type B).

Level 6: Tertiary education (second stage) — leads to an advanced research qualification (Ph.D. or doctorate)

Figure 11 reveals significantly higher rates of pupils studying two or more foreign languages at ISCED level 2 than level 1 across the EU Member States. The EU-28 share of pupils in lower secondary education learning two or more foreign languages reached 64.8 % in 2012. Looking at the evolution over time, this share grew by nearly 10 percentage points in the last 5 years (53.9 % in 2007).

At country level, the highest figures were registered in Luxembourg, Italy, Finland, Greece, Malta and Romania for both 2007 and 2012 with values exceeding 95 %. The lowest figures in 2012 were seen in Hungary (6.0 %), Ireland (9.2 %) and Austria (9.7 %). Poland who recorded one of the lowest percentages in 2007 (8.5 %) ranked the in the top 10 in 2012 with 93.4 % of pupils in lower secondary education learning two or more foreign languages.

Figure 11: Percentage of pupils at ISCED level 2 learning two or more foreign languages, 2007 and 2012 (1)
(%)



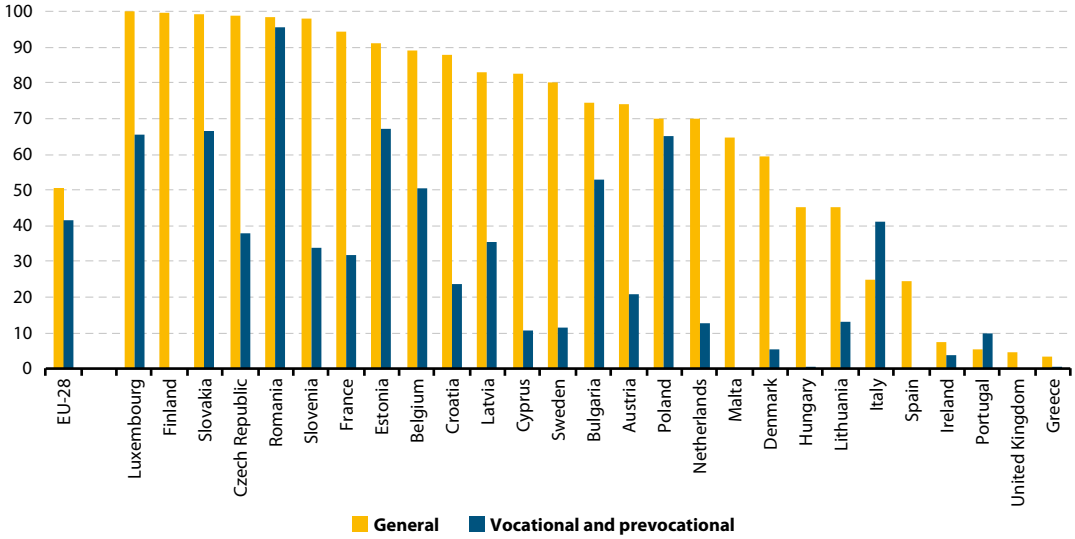
(1) Data not available for the United Kingdom and Germany. 2006 instead of 2007 for Greece, Malta, Estonia, Portugal and Austria. 2006–07 data not available for Cyprus, Croatia and Liechtenstein.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_thfrlan)

Learning foreign languages in upper secondary schools: different programmes, different opportunities

School is the most important place to acquire foreign languages, and in many EU Member States the upper secondary education curricula include at least one foreign language. Figure 12 depicts the situation of language learning in upper secondary education taking into consideration the programme orientation: either general or vocational/prevocational.

At EU-28 level, 51 % of pupils enrolled at ISCED level 3 learned at least two foreign languages at school in 2012, against 42 % of pupils enrolled at that level in vocational/prevocational training. In Romania, almost all pupils enrolled in ISCED level 3 were taught at least two foreign languages at school. The situation varied across the other EU Member States. In Luxembourg, Finland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia, France and Estonia more than 9 in 10 pupils enrolled in a general ISCED 3 programme learned at least two foreign languages at school. Learning two or more foreign languages at school remains uncommon in only a few countries: Greece (3.5 %), the United Kingdom (4.4 %), Portugal (5.3 %) and Ireland (7.6 %) with percentages below 10 %.

Figure 12: Students at ISCED level 3 learning at least two foreign languages at school, 2012 ([1]) (%)



([1]) Data not available for Germany.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_educ_040)

Reading, mathematical and science skills: there is room for improvement in most EU Member States

Competences in reading, mathematics and sciences are considered to be basic skills as they are key elements for a successful professional and civic life. Having recognised that they are also vital for the full participation in the knowledge society and to ensure the competitiveness of modern economies, the Council has adopted an EU-wide benchmark (ET2020 framework) to reduce the proportion of 15-year-olds underachieving in these areas of learning, to less than 15% by 2020. Data on reading, mathematics and science achievement of 15-year old students are collected through the PISA survey.

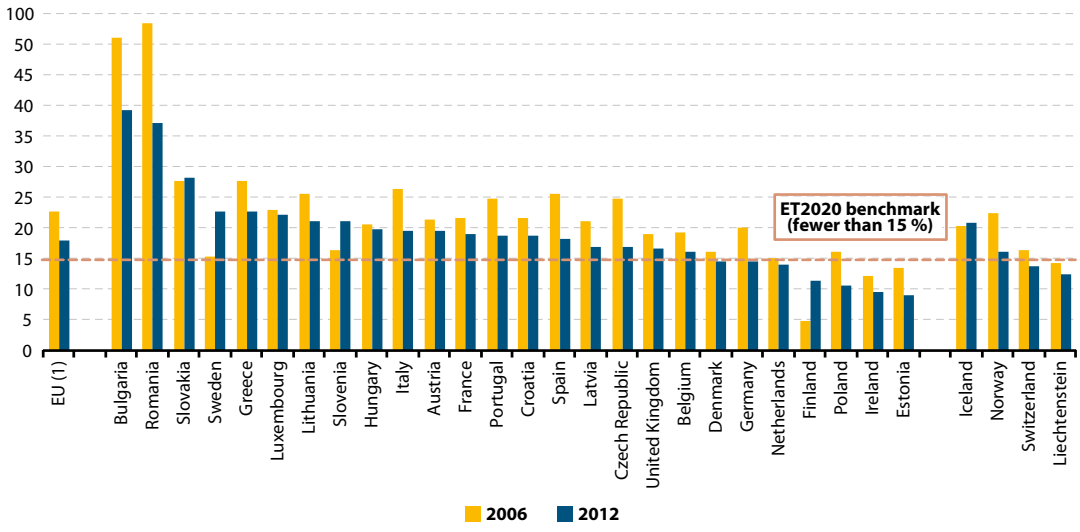
PISA results on low-achievers in reading literacy for 2012 showed large differences between EU Member States. Estonia, Ireland, Poland and Finland stood out for their low rates of low-achievers in reading competence (around 10%). At the other end of the scale we found Bulgaria and Romania with high rates of low-achievers in reading (37.3% and 39.4%). In 2012 only seven countries reached the EU benchmark of less than 15% (Estonia, Ireland, Poland, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark).

WHAT IS PISA?

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is an internationally standardised assessment, developed by the OECD and conducted in almost all EU Member States but Malta and Cyprus. It measures the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science. It also collects contextual information on the individual characteristics and socio-economic background of the students. The PISA scores are divided into six proficiency levels ranging from the lowest, level 1, to the highest, level 6. Low achievement is defined as performance below level 2.

Nevertheless, overall across the EU there is a steady trend towards improvement in reading skills. In almost all EU Member States the low-achieving rate declined between 2006 and 2012. The most important progress was observed in Romania (a difference of 16 pp), followed by Bulgaria (almost 12 pp). But in three EU Member States (Sweden, Finland and Slovenia) the proportion of low-achievers went up in comparison to their 2006 level.

Figure 13: Share of 15-year old students below level 2 on the reading scale in PISA, 2006 and 2012 (%)



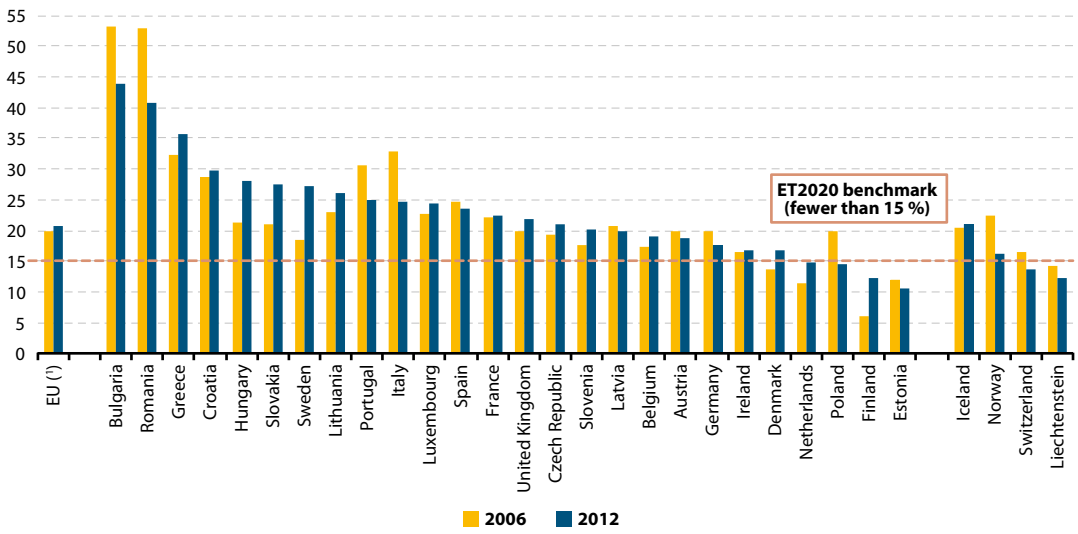
(1) The EU figure is the population-weighted average for the Member States for which data were available.
Source: PISA 2012 results: What students know and can do (Volume I, revised edition, February 2014) - © OECD 2014, Annex B1, Table I.4.1b

In PISA, reading literacy is defined as understanding, using and reflecting written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society.

The rates of low-achievers in mathematics vary widely across the 26 EU Member States covered by the PISA programme. The lowest rates were found in Estonia (10.5 %) and Finland (12.3 %) in 2012, while the highest were in Bulgaria (43.8 %) and Romania (40.8 %). The situation is less encouraging than that for reading literacy. The rates of low-achievers in mathematics were below the EU benchmark in only four countries (Estonia, Finland, Poland and the Netherlands) in 2012. Moreover, taking the time dimension into account, the share of low-achieving students in mathematics in 2012 remained on average the same as in 2006. An important drop in the rates of low-achievers in mathematics (more than 5 percentage points) was nevertheless registered in five EU Member States: Poland, Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania. In the other EU Member States no significant decrease or even increase in the proportion of low-achievers occurred.

Figure 14: Share of 15-year old students below level 2 on the mathematics scale in PISA, 2006 and 2012

(%)

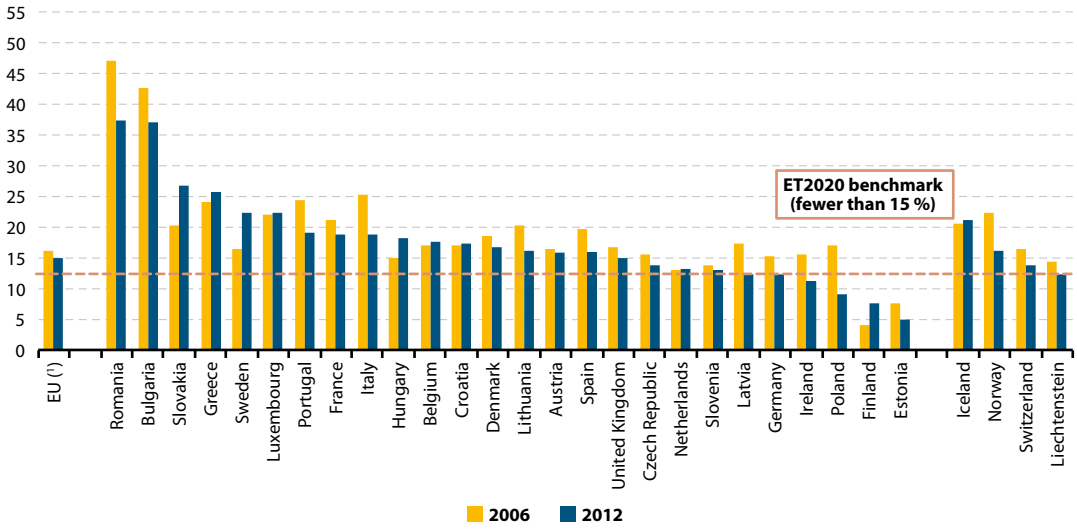


(1) The EU figure is the population-weighted average for the Member States for which data were available.

Source: PISA 2012 results: What students know and can do (Volume I, revised edition, February 2014) - © OECD 2014, Annex B1, Table I.2.1b

With regard to science literacy, the situation is similar to that of mathematics: the best performers in 2012 were Estonia, Finland and Poland, with rates between 5 % and 9 %, while the worst performers were Romania and Bulgaria with low-achieving rates of around 37 %. Between 2006 and 2012, a decline in the proportion of low-achievers could be observed in two thirds of the EU Member States. The highest reduction took place in Romania (9.6 pp) and Poland (8.0 pp). Significant increases (more than 3 pp difference) only occurred in four EU Member States (Hungary, Finland, Sweden and Slovakia).

Figure 15: Share of 15-year old students below level 2 on the science scale in PISA, 2006 and 2012 (%)



(1) The EU figure is the population-weighted average for the Member States for which data were available.
Source: PISA 2012 results: What students know and can do (Volume I, revised edition, February 2014) - © OECD 2014, Annex B1, Table I.5.1b

Overall, the 2012 results of PISA indicate that performance in reading, mathematics and science correlate with each other. EU Members States that show certain skill levels in one of the areas tend to perform similarly in the others. The main factor explaining this situation is the general organisation of the education system in each EU Member State. However, other factors such as socio-economic background, participation in early childhood education or migrant status were also found to play a role ([8]).

Early school leavers: situation improving in almost all EU Member States, especially for women

Secondary education is an important stage in an individual's personal and professional development. Unfortunately, many young people leave the education system without the skills necessary for a successful integration in the labour market.

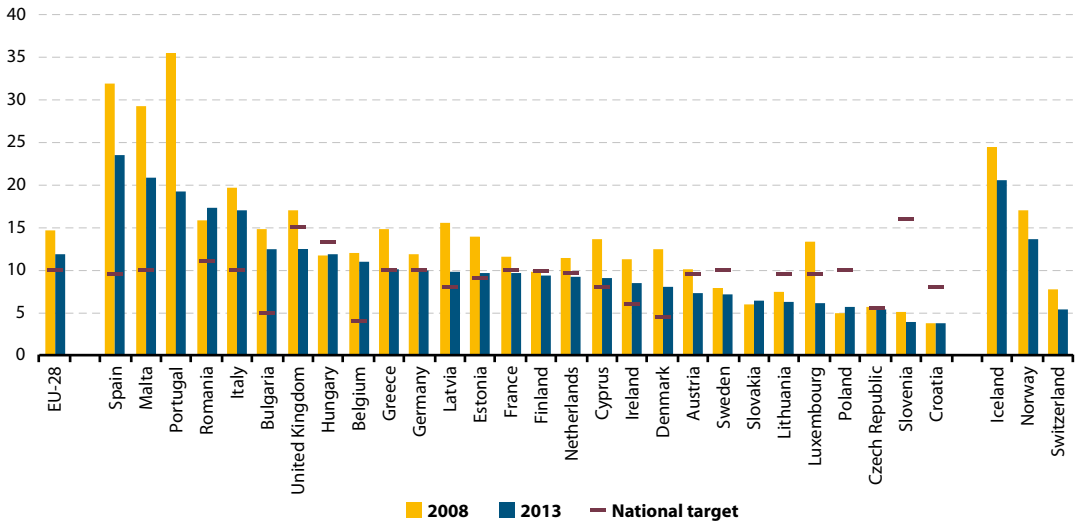
WHO IS CONSIDERED AN EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER?

'Early leavers from education and training' refers to persons aged 18–24 with at most lower secondary education attainment and who are no longer in education or training.

([8]) DG EAC: PISA 2012: EU performance and first inferences regarding education and training policies in Europe

The Europe 2020 benchmark is to bring the proportion of early leavers from education and training in the EU down to below 10 %. On this basis, the EU Member States have set national targets that reflect their starting position and national circumstances. In 2013, 11 EU Member States had already met or exceeded their national target for this indicator (Figure 16). At EU level, about 12 % of young people aged 18–24 were early school leavers. Early school leaving was rare in Croatia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Poland, with rates below 6 %. The highest rates were observed in Spain (24 %), followed by Malta (21 %) and Portugal (19 %). A reduction can be observed in most EU Member States over the last five years and in 2013 the EU-28 average was three percentage points lower than in 2008 (15 %). The largest drop (16 pp) was registered in Portugal.

Figure 16: Early leavers from education and training aged 18 to 24, 2008 and 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_14)

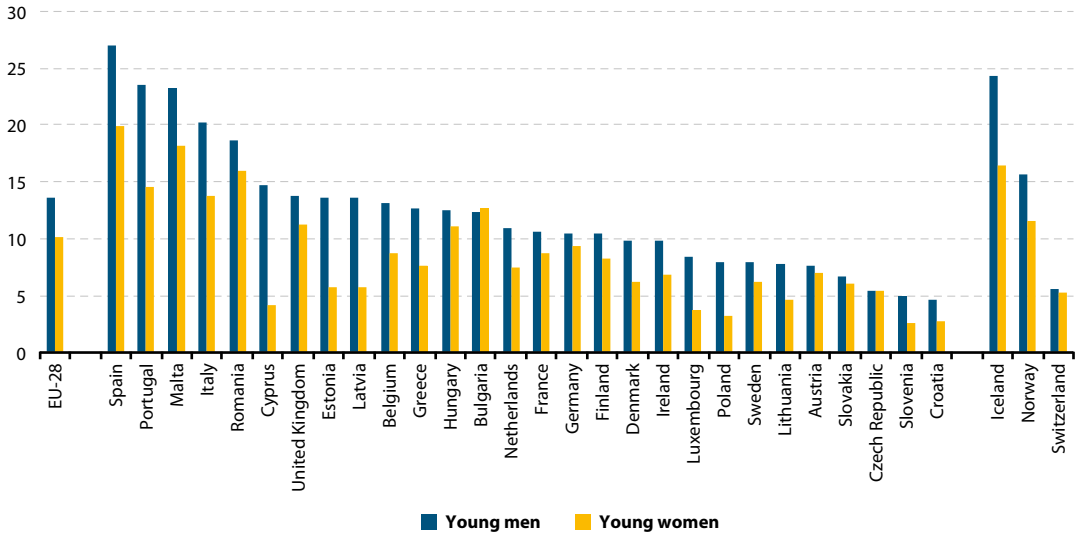
On average, more young men (14 %) than young women (10 %) leave school. This trend applies to all EU Member States except Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, where the proportion was slightly higher among young women. The most pronounced gender gap was visible in Cyprus, where the rate for men was 11 percentage points higher than that for women, closely followed by Portugal, with a difference of 9 percentage points (Figure 17).

Tertiary education: an increasing number of graduates, especially among women

Tertiary education — provided by universities and other higher education institutions, such as colleges, seminaries, institutes of technology, etc. — plays a key role in a knowledge-based society. The Europe 2020 benchmark stipulates that by 2020, at least 40 % of the population aged 30–34 should have completed tertiary education. This target was transposed into specific national targets to reflect the specificities of each EU Member States (Figure 18).

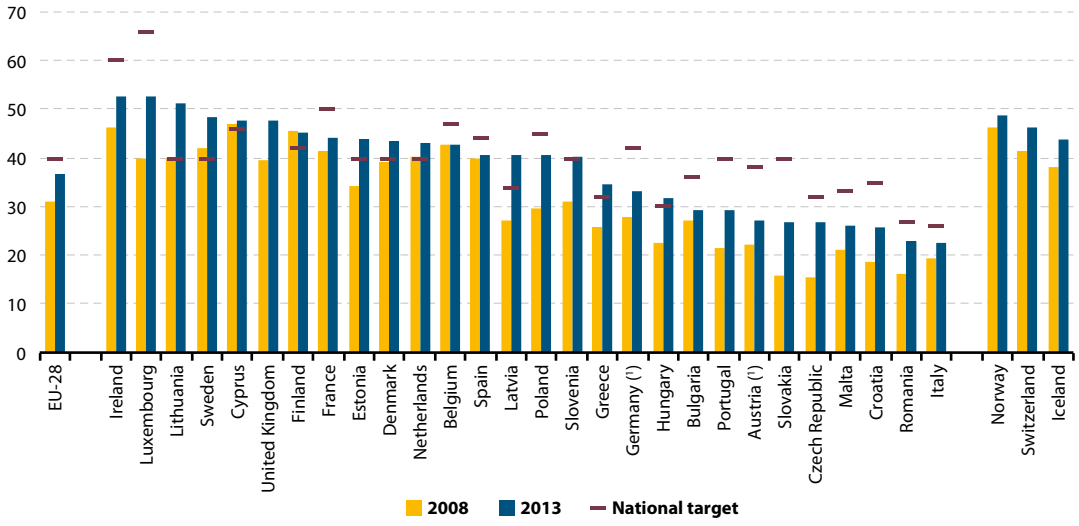
At EU level, over one third (37 %) of the population aged 30–34 had completed tertiary education in 2013 (41 % of women and 31 % of men). In Ireland, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Lithuania, the overall proportion of 30–34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment stood at around 51 %. In contrast, the figures for Italy and Romania in this age group were around 22 %.

Figure 17: Early leavers from education and training aged 18 to 24, by sex, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_14)

Figure 18: People aged 30-34 with tertiary educational attainment, 2008 and 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_07)

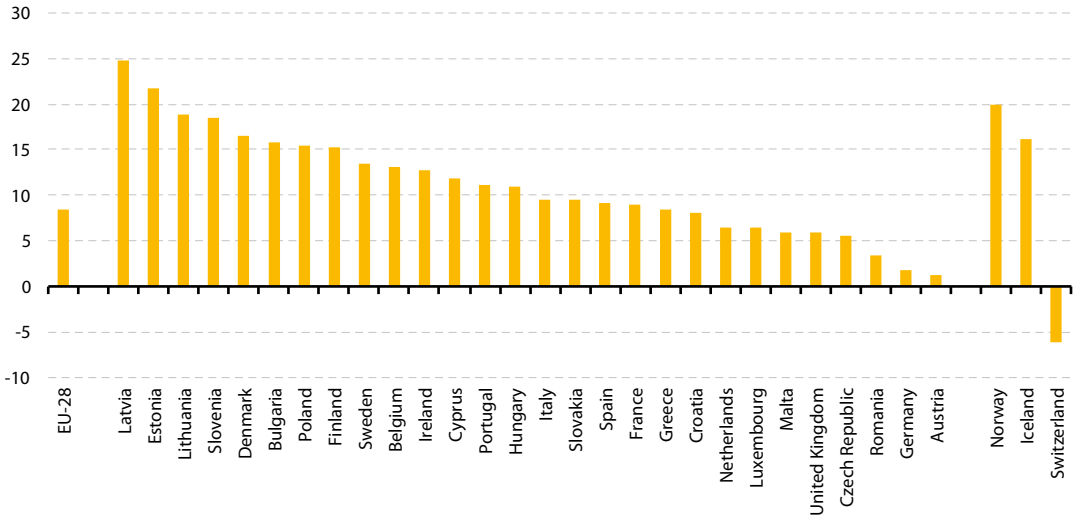
Compared with 2008, there were more people with a tertiary educational level in 2013 in almost all EU Member States. The biggest increases were seen in Latvia (14 pp) and Luxembourg (13 pp).

The proportion of women with tertiary educational attainment was higher than that of men in all EU Member States (Figure 19). The gender gap was widest in Latvia (25 pp), followed by the other two Baltic States, Estonia and Lithuania (both around 20 pp). The smallest gender difference (around 2 pp) was registered in Germany and Austria.

Student mobility: room for improvement in most EU Member States

Student mobility is seen as improving young people's employability by helping them acquire key skills and competences, such as communication in a foreign language, intercultural understanding, social and civic participation, entrepreneurship, problem-solving skills and creativity in general. The EU set a benchmark referring both to mobility of graduates from higher education and mobility in vocational education and training (VET).

Figure 19: Tertiary educational attainment: difference between women and men aged 30–34, 2013 (percentage points)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_07)

BENCHMARK ON STUDENT MOBILITY

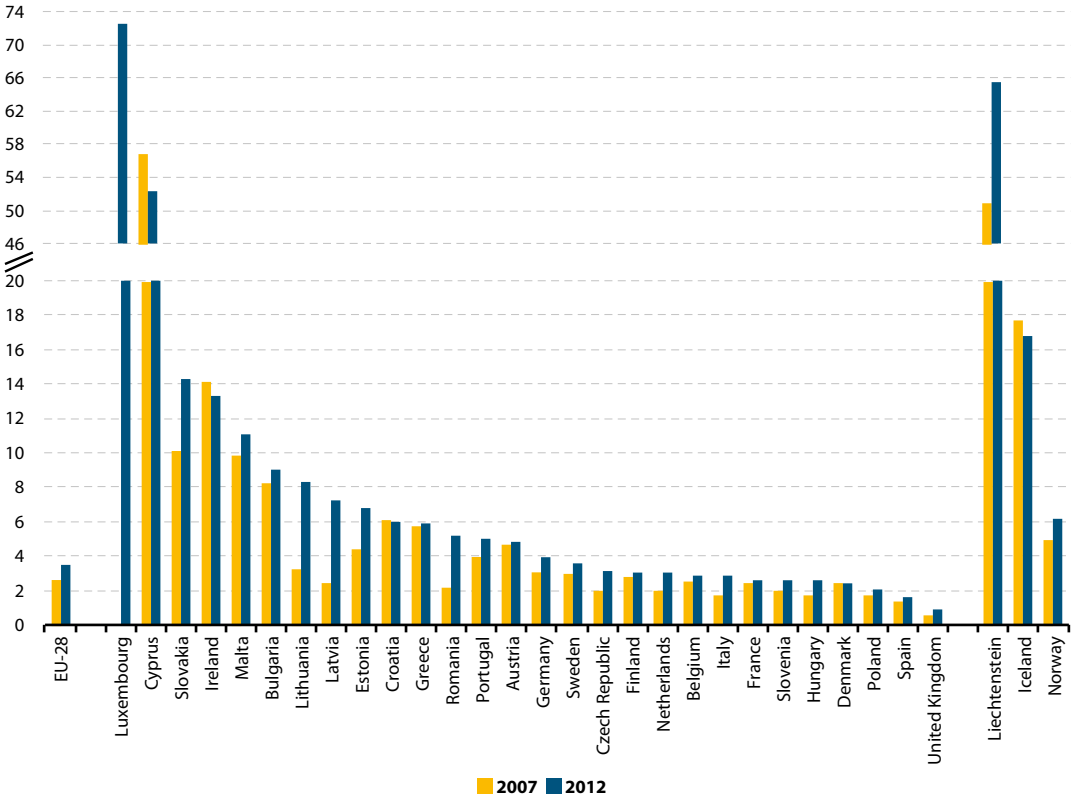
In November 2011 the Council adopted a dual benchmark at EU level for 2020 on student mobility:

- 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;
- at least 6% of 18–34-year-olds with an initial vocational education and training (VET) qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks.

To monitor this benchmark, only partial data exist: the number of currently enrolled students who have spent some time in another EU Member State, EEA or candidate country. Figure 20 shows the percentages of students enrolled in a tertiary education institution in an EU Member State, EEA or candidate country other than their own in 2007 and 2012. Data reflect the mobility of students to obtain their degree or diploma but does not include students enrolled in credit mobility programmes.

In 2012 the highest student mobility rates were registered in Luxembourg (72 %) and Cyprus (52 %), followed by Slovakia (14 %), Ireland (13 %) and Malta (11 %). This could be explained by the fact that students often leave these countries to study in neighbouring countries with the same language and more diversified tertiary education systems. Students from the United Kingdom (1 %) and Spain (2 %) had the lowest mobility rates. In most countries, the outward mobility rate has slightly increased over the last five years.

Figure 20: Students (ISCED 5–6) studying in another EU-27, EEA or candidate country as a percentage of all students in the country, 2007 and 2012
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_thmob)

The Erasmus programme, launched in 1987, is a Community action aimed at enhancing student mobility. It enables higher education students to study, train or work abroad for a period of at least three months as part of their studies. The programme guarantees that the period spent abroad is recognised by their university when they come back, as long as they fulfil previously agreed requirements.

Almost 250 000 EU students participated in the Erasmus programme in 2012/13. This represents less than 1 % of all EU students enrolled in tertiary education, but is still a measure of the programme's success. The number of Erasmus students has increased in all EU Member States in the past five years.

Quality of childcare and school life

Nordic countries provide the most available, accessible and affordable early childcare services in the EU.

High-quality early education and childcare for young children improves their health and promotes their development and learning. While child poverty and labour market participation of parents are affected by a number of factors, there is no doubt that high-quality, affordable early-years and after-school services are essential both to the reduction of child poverty and to the labour market participation of parents, especially single parents ([9]).

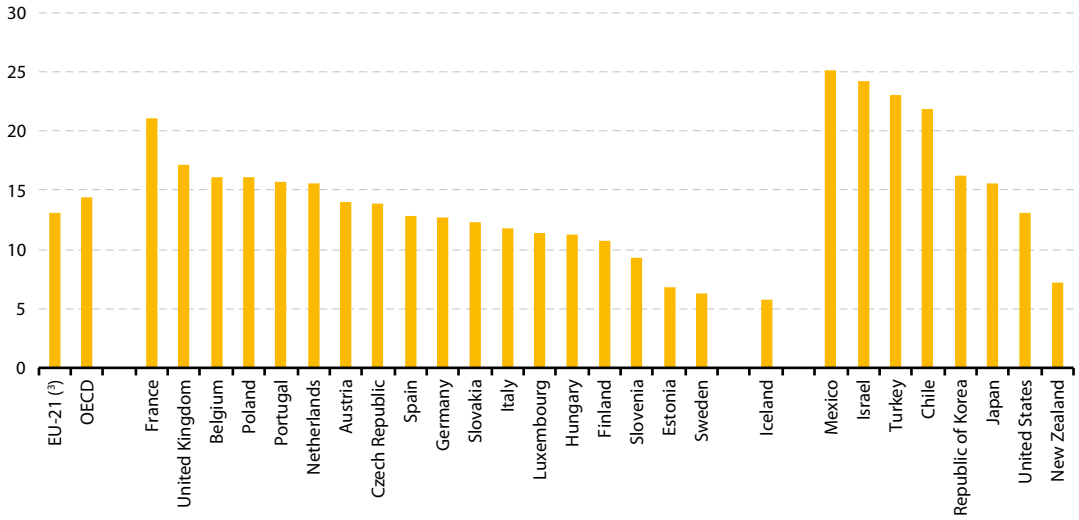
Measuring the quality of formal childcare and education is difficult since there is no single indicator that adequately reflects the quality of the educational environment and the interaction between teachers and pupils. However some indicators can be taken into consideration; those linked to class sizes or to staff-to-child ratios: the lower the ratio, the better the quality of school life can be assumed. More specifically, quality of school life can be assessed through the study of multiple indicators such as the school likeness, the pupil-teacher ratio in all levels of education, class size and negative experiences such as bullying ([10]).

To that end, smaller pupil-teacher ratios often have to be weighed against higher teacher salaries, increased professional development and teacher training, greater investment in teaching technology, or more widespread use of assistant teachers and other paraprofessionals, whose salaries are often considerably lower than those of qualified teachers. As larger numbers of children with special needs are integrated into mainstream classes, more use of specialised personnel and support services may limit the resources available for reducing pupil-teacher ratios ([11]).

([9]) Barnardos and Start Strong, Towards a Scandinavian childcare system for 0–12-year-olds in Ireland?, 2012
([10]) See chapter 7 'Children and young people in the digital world' of this publication
([11]) OECD, Education at a glance, Paris, 2011

The pupil-teacher ratio in pre-primary education (ISCED 0) for 2012 is shown in figure 21. Based on data available, the EU-21 average — meaning the average for the 21 EU Member States which are also members of the OECD (i.e. the 28 EU Member States except Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Romania) — stood at 13 pupils per teacher. This figure nevertheless hides large disparities among the 21 countries. The lowest ratios in the EU were observed in Iceland (5 pupils), Sweden (6 pupils) and Estonia (7 pupils) while the highest were recorded in France (21 pupils) and the United Kingdom (17 pupils).

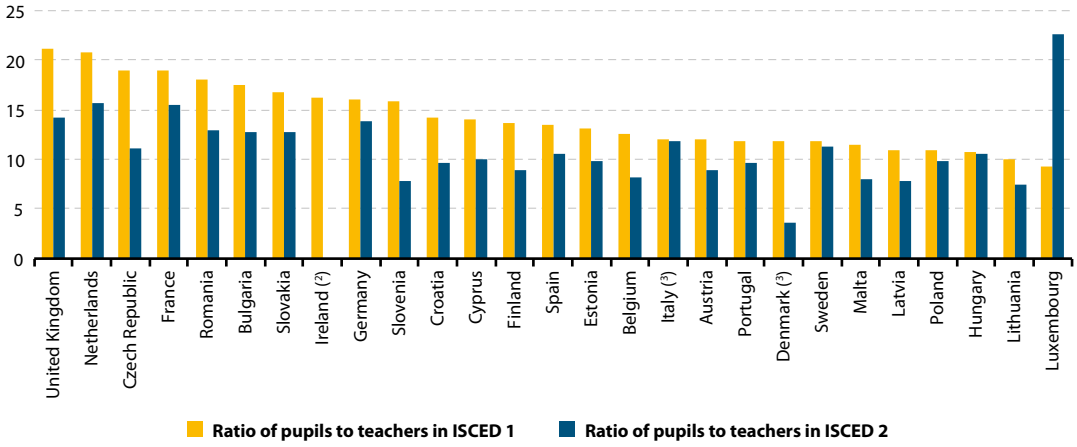
Figure 21: Ratio of pupils to teaching staff in pre-primary education, 2012 ([1])([2])
(calculations based on full-time equivalents)



([1]) Includes only general programmes in upper secondary education and public institutions (for Australia, at tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes only; for Canada, at the tertiary level only; for Ireland, at tertiary level only). Excludes independent private institutions.
([2]) Year of reference is 2011 for non EU countries.
([3]) EU-21: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.
Source: OECD, Education at a Glance, 2013; China: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (World Education Indicators Programme); Saudi Arabia: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Observatory on Higher Education; South Africa: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).

Figure 22 presents the pupil-teacher ratio in ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 among the EU-28 Member States in 2012. In ISCED 1, Luxembourg's ratio stands at 9 pupils per teacher, followed by Lithuania (10 pupils), Hungary, Latvia and Poland (all three 11 pupils). The highest ratios are about twice as much as pupils per teacher and are found in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands (both 21 pupils), France and the Czech Republic (both 19 pupils). The corresponding ratios in ISCED 2 vary from 4 to 23 pupils per teacher. The lowest ratios are found in Denmark, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Malta and Belgium (8 pupils or less) while the highest are recorded in Luxembourg (23 pupils), the Netherlands and France (both 16 pupils).

Figure 22: Ratio of pupils to teachers in ISCED 1 and 2, 2012 ([1])
(number of full-time-equivalent pupils and students in the specific level of education by the number of full-time-equivalent teachers at the same level)



([1]) Data not available for Greece.
([2]) No ISCED 2 data available.
([3]) Definition differs for Italy and Denmark.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_iste)

How does class size vary around EU Member States?

Class size (another indicator provided by countries) is a vastly debated topic and an important element of education policy among EU Member States. Smaller classes allow teachers to focus more on the needs of individual pupils and reduce the amount of time spent dealing with disruptions. Smaller class sizes may also influence parents when they select a school for their children. In this respect, class size may be viewed as an indicator of the quality of the school system. Yet evidence on the effects of differences in class size upon student performance is mixed ([12]).

As shown in Figure 23, all EU Member States had, on average, more than 15 pupils per class at ISCED 1 in 2012. Taking into consideration EU Member States with available data, the national average class size varies widely from about 15 to 25 pupils per classroom. The lowest figures were found in

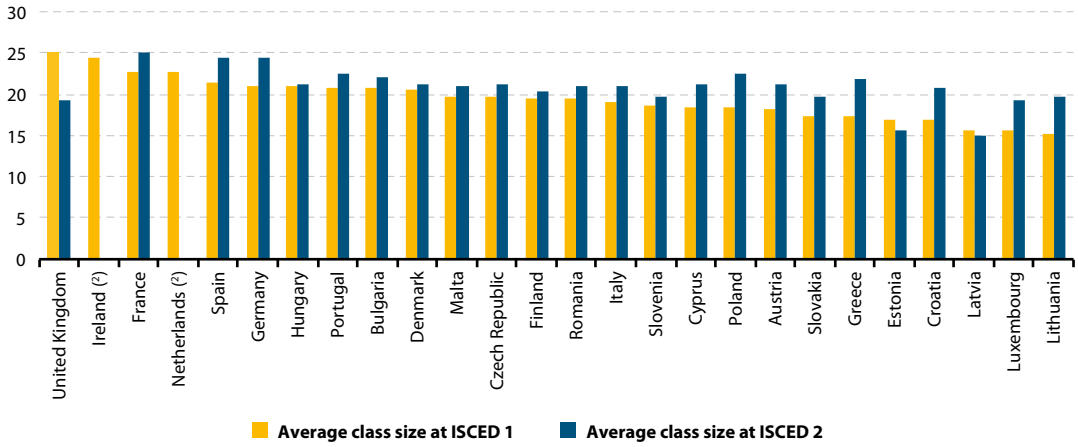
([12]) OECD, Education at a glance, Paris, 2011

Lithuania (15 pupils), Latvia and Luxembourg (both 16 pupils), while the highest were found in the United Kingdom (25 pupils), Ireland (24 pupils), France and the Netherlands (both 23 pupils).The range at ISCED 2 was similar, varying from 15 pupils per classroom in Latvia, 16 pupils in Estonia and 19 pupils in Luxembourg and the United Kingdom to 25 pupils per classroom in Spain, Germany and France.

How much do countries spend on childcare and education?

Strong educational performance cannot be expected without sufficient resources invested in childcare and education services to ensure their effectiveness. However, increasing budget devoted to childcare and education does not automatically lead to improved education outcomes; the way the resources are used also matter ([13]).

Figure 23: Average class size at ISCED 1 and 2, 2012 ([1])
(number of pupils)



([1]) No ISCED 1 and ISCED 2 data available for Belgium and Sweden.
([2]) No ISCED 2 data available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_iste)

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND PUBLIC SPENDING

Public expenditure on childcare and early educational services are a public financial support for families with children participating in formal day care services and pre-school institutions (including kindergartens and day-care centres, which usually provide an educational content as well as traditional care for children aged 3–5 years).

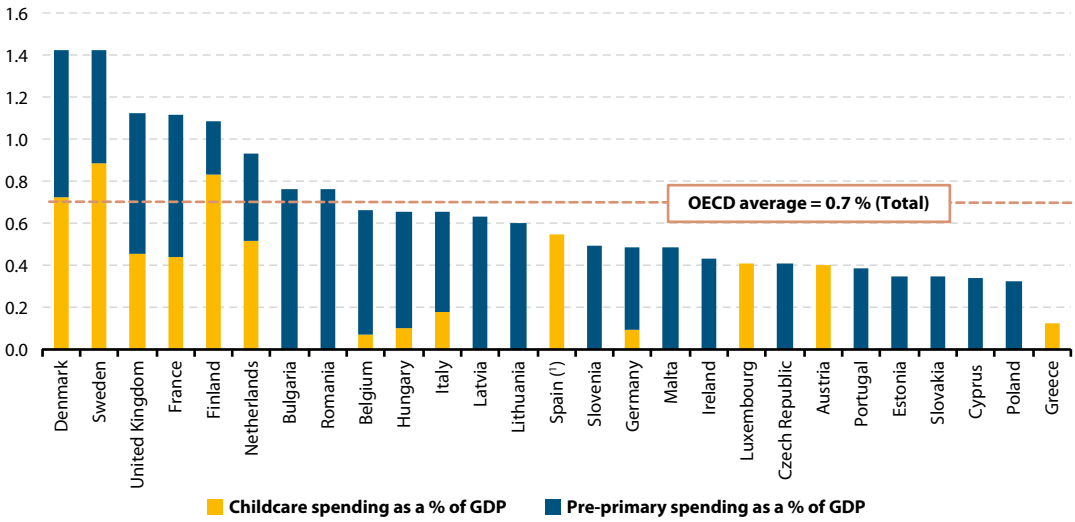
Public spending on childcare support per child relates to the expenditure on childcare divided by the number of children in that country aged under three, while public spending on pre-school care and education per child is calculated by dividing public spending on educational institutions by the number of children enrolled in those programs.

([13]) See the 'Education and Training Monitor 2014' (http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor14_en.pdf)

As shown in Figure 24, total public spending on childcare and early educational services in 2009 stood at over 1 % of GDP in Denmark, Sweden (both 1.4 %), the United Kingdom, France and Finland (all 1.1 %), while the OECD average was 0.7 %. The Slovak Republic (0.4 %), Cyprus, Poland (both 0.3 %) and Greece (0.1 %) were at the other end of the scale, below the OECD average.

Most countries spend more on pre-primary school care than childcare. This could partly be a reflection of coverage of a larger group of children.

Figure 24: Expenditure on childcare and pre-primary education, 2009
(% GDP)

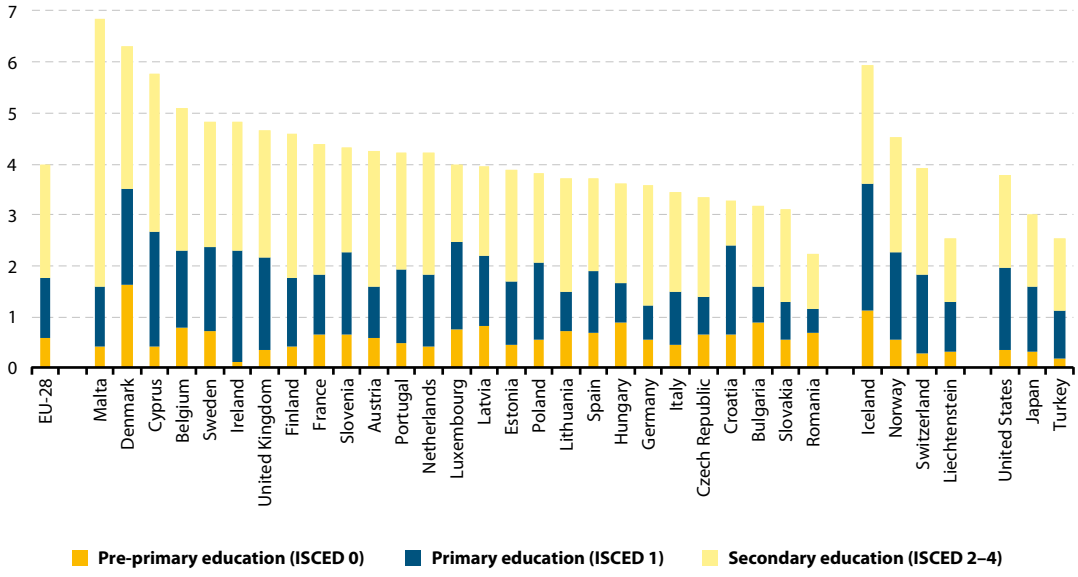


(1) Figures for Spain cannot be disaggregated by educational level.
Source: Social Expenditure database 2013; OECD Education database; Eurostat for non-OECD countries.

Comparison of education expenditure as a percentage of GDP between the different education levels shows that expenditure for the secondary level of education (ISCED 2–4) were higher (2.23 % of GDP) in 2011 than for the primary (1.19 % of GDP) and pre-primary education (0.57 % of GDP) at the EU level. This was observed in all EU Member States, except Croatia and Luxembourg, where primary education corresponded to the highest expenditure.

For the combined pre-primary, primary and secondary education in the EU-28 the total expenditure amounted on average to 4 % of GDP in 2011, with Malta and Denmark recording the highest rates, between 6 and 7 % of their GDP.

Figure 25: Total public expenditure on education as % of GDP, at ISCED 0, 1 and 2–4, 2011 ([1])
(% GDP)



([1]) Data not available for Greece.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ_figdp)

Data sources and availability

The aim of the education statistics is to provide comparable statistics and indicators on key aspects of the education systems across Europe. The data cover participation and completion of education programs by pupils and students, personnel in education and the cost and type of resources dedicated to education.

The main sources of annual data are the joint UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) questionnaires on education statistics, which constitute the core database on education. The UOE data collection is an administrative data collection, compiled on the basis of national administrative sources, reported by Ministries of Education or National Statistical Offices. Countries provide data, coming from administrative records, on the basis of commonly agreed definitions. The UOE data collection is overseen jointly by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation — Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-UIS), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Eurostat. Data on regional enrolments and foreign language learning are collected additionally by Eurostat.

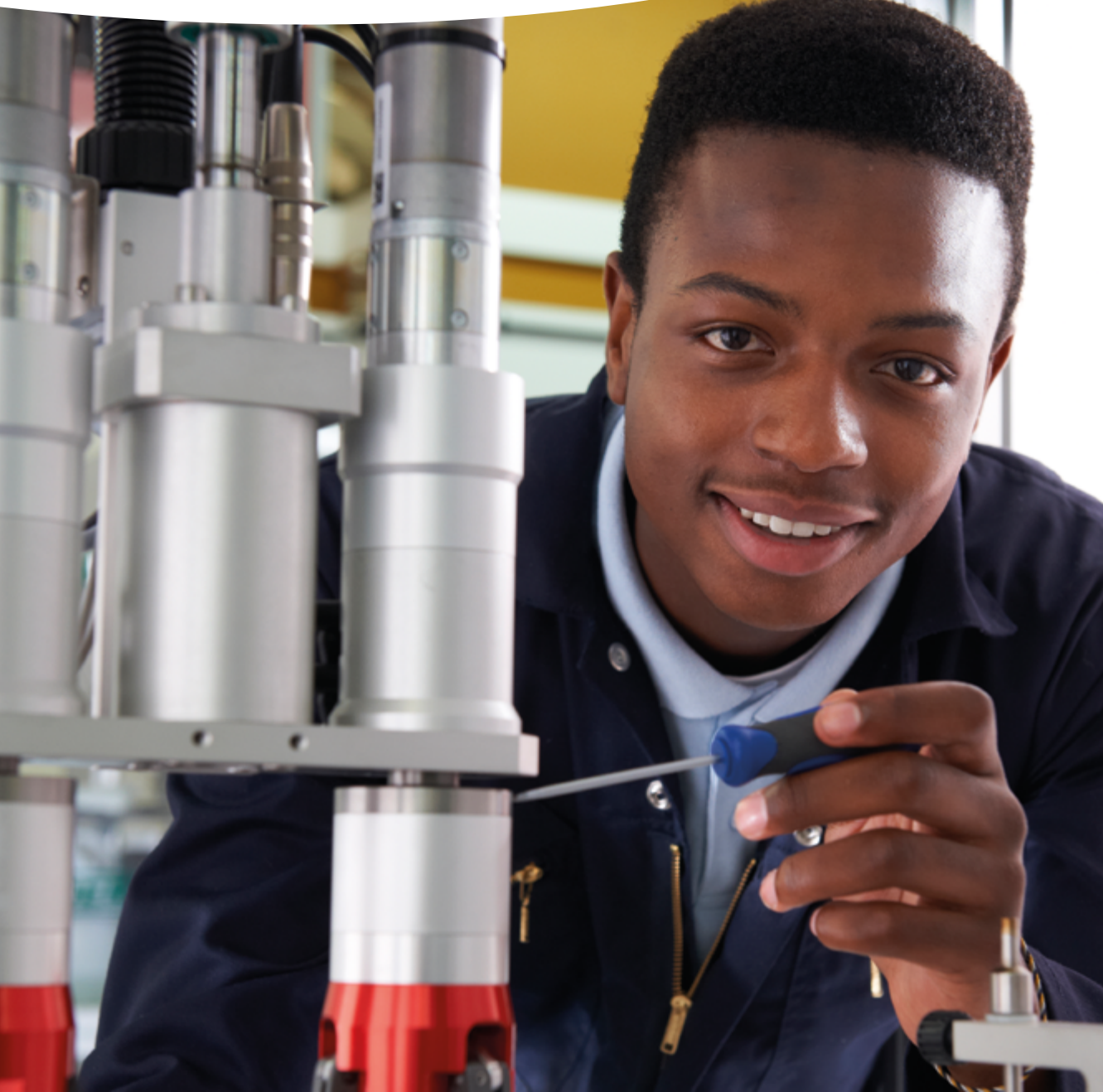
Commission Regulation No 88/2011 regarding statistics on education and training systems is the EU legal base covering the above mentioned data. 2012 was the first year of application of the Regulation. The first data provided according to that Regulation refers to the school academic year 2010/2011 and, as far as data on education expenditure are concerned, to the financial year 2010. Data for previous years were reported on a voluntary basis from countries (i.e. so-calledgentlemen's agreement).

Data on formal and Informal childcare are collected through the EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), which is the reference data source for indicators related to income, living conditions and social inclusion.

On the other hand, statistics on educational attainment and early leavers come from the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is another major source for European education statistics. The LFS is a large sample survey among private households which provides detailed annual and quarterly data on employment, unemployment and inactivity.

5

Labour market: access and participation



Introduction

Youth employment is a key aspect of Europe's prosperity. Young people represent an important source of skills, creativity and dynamism. A better harnessing of these qualities could help Europe's economy grow and become more competitive. However, the youth unemployment rate has been rising steadily over the last few years, turning it into a major concern for the EU.

This chapter looks at the labour situation of young people from different perspectives. First, the education and employment patterns characteristic of young people will be examined. Next, the focus will be put on the transition from education to the labour market by looking into the average age when leaving formal education, the average time elapsed between leaving formal education and starting the first job, and the employment rates after leaving education. In the third part, the situation of young people on the labour market will be described by analysing the employment rates, the working arrangements, such as part-time and temporary work contracts, as well as their unemployment levels.

The Europe 2020 strategy has dedicated two of its flagship initiatives to improving the employment situation of young people: 'Youth on the move' which promotes mobility as a means of learning and increasing employability, and 'An agenda for new skills and jobs' (COM(2010) 682), which aims to improve employability and employment opportunities for young people.

In order to reduce youth unemployment and to increase the youth employment rate in line with the goals identified in the Europe 2020 strategy, a set of measures were adopted at EU level:

- The 'Youth employment package', adopted in 2012, includes a set of measures to facilitate school-to-work transition. The 'Youth guarantee' is one of these measures. It helps to ensure that all young people aged under 25 get good-quality employment offers, continued education, or an apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.
- The 'Youth employment initiative' (2013) reinforces and accelerates measures outlined in the 'Youth employment package'. It supports particularly young people not in education, employment or training in regions with a youth unemployment rate above 25 %.

Education and employment patterns

A gradual change from education to employment

After the age of 18, compulsory schooling ends in all European countries and, as can be seen in the chapter on education, 45 % of young people (aged 15–29) were still in education in 2013. In addition, the age of 15 (or 16 in Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom) marks the beginning of the working age in all EU Member States. In some countries, young people start working much earlier than in others, e.g. in the shape of summer or student jobs. It is also possible to be in education and to have a job at the same time, causing an overlap. Subsequently, young Europeans may find themselves in a number of different situations when it comes to education and employment.

Employed persons are all persons aged 15 or more who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference week or were temporarily absent from such work.

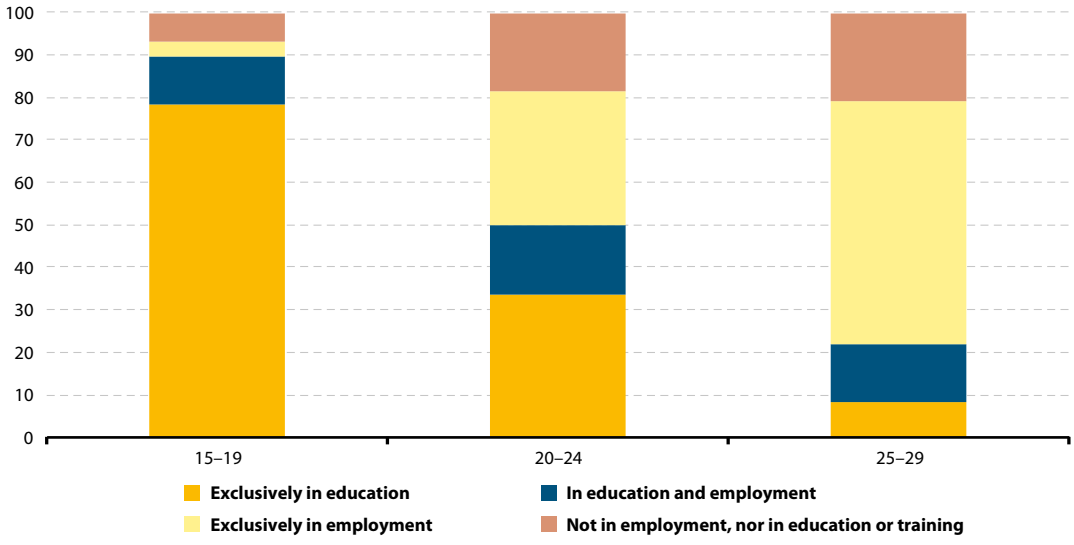
Taking both the education (formal and non-formal) and employment situations into consideration, young people can be divided into four broad categories:

- exclusively in education;
- both in education and in employment;
- exclusively in employment; and
- neither in employment nor in education or training.

Education and employment patterns differ considerably according to the age group

While in the 15–19 age group the majority of young people were in education, in the other two age groups the education and employment patterns changed considerably. In 2013, at EU level, 78 % of young people aged 15–19 were exclusively in education, 11 % combined education and employment, whereas only 3.5 % were exclusively in employment. The situation for the 20–24 age group differs considerably from the previous one: the percentage of those exclusively in education was reduced by half (34 %) and the percentage of those exclusively in employment was nine times higher (31 %). The percentage of those combining education and employment has slightly increased by 5 percentage points, from 11 % to 16 %. In the 25–29 age group, the reverse situation for the 15–19 age group can be observed: the highest proportion (57 %) was exclusively in employment, while only 8 % were exclusively in education. The last category — neither in employment nor in education or training — represents a special case and will be discussed at the end of this section.

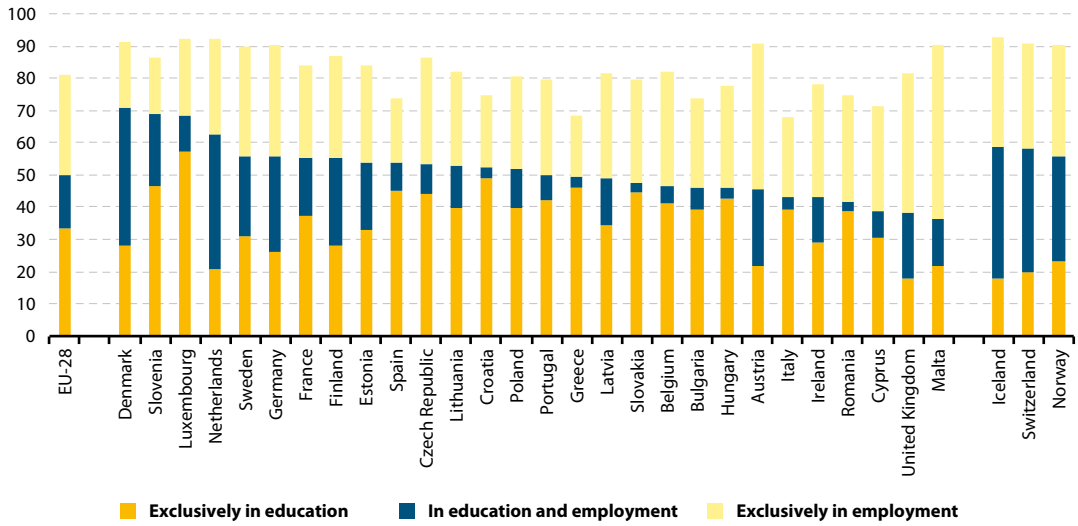
Figure 1: Employment and education patterns by age group, EU-28, 2013 (%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_18)

Considering the 20–24 age group, an analysis at country level shows important differences across EU Member States. Figure 2 presents the education and employment patterns, with countries ranked by decreasing share of young people aged 20–24 in education (exclusively or in combination with employment). In some countries almost one in two young people were exclusively in education: Luxembourg (57 %), Croatia (49 %), Slovenia (47 %), Greece (46 %) and Spain (45 %). In others, only about one in five persons was exclusively in education: Austria (22 %), Malta (22 %), the Netherlands (21 %) and the United Kingdom (18 %). However, a certain proportion of young people also combined education and employment: the Netherlands and Denmark stood out for their high proportion of young people combining education and employment (about 42 % in both countries). Combining education and employment was less common in Italy (4 %), Hungary, Greece, Croatia, Slovakia and Romania (all with 3 %). Focusing on the employment situation, a variation of 36 percentage points was observed between EU Member States. The highest proportion of young people aged 20–24 exclusively in employment was recorded in Malta (54 %), followed by Austria (45 %)

Figure 2: Education and employment patterns for the age group 20–24, 2013
(%)



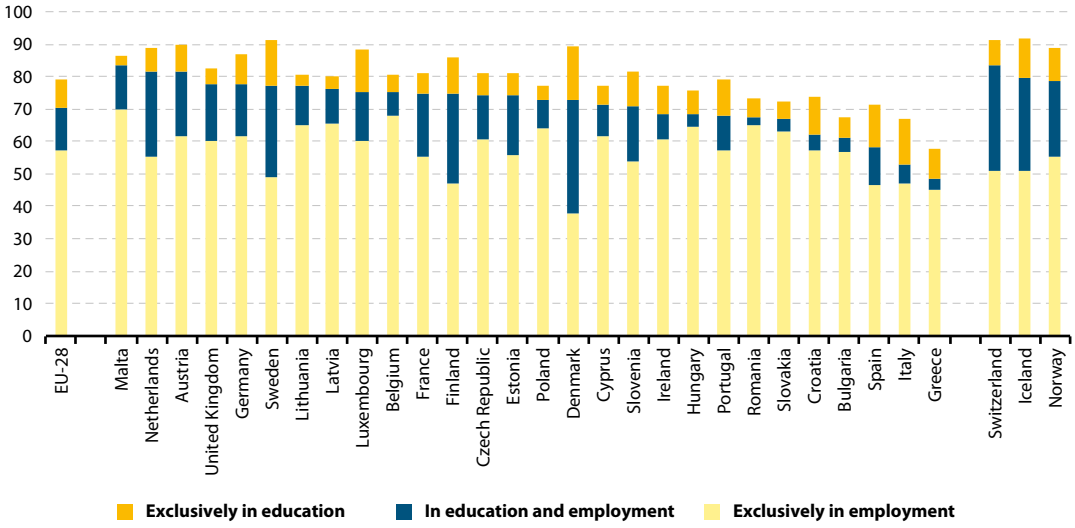
Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_18)

and the United Kingdom (43 %). In three countries the proportions of those exclusively in education was below 20 %: Spain, Greece and Slovenia.

Particularly for people aged 25–29, access to the labour market is essential for entering independent life. Figure 3 presents the education and employment patterns where countries are ranked by decreasing share of young people aged 25–29 in employment (exclusively or in combination with education).

In 2013, 70 % of young Europeans in this age group were in employment — 10 % of them were combining education and employment. In three EU Member States more than four fifths of young people were in employment: Malta (83 %), the Netherlands (82 %) and Austria (81 %). At the other end of the scale we find Greece and Italy, where approximately one in two people aged 25–29 were in employment (49 % in Greece and 53 % in Italy).

Figure 3: Education and employment patterns for the age group 25–29, 2013
(%)



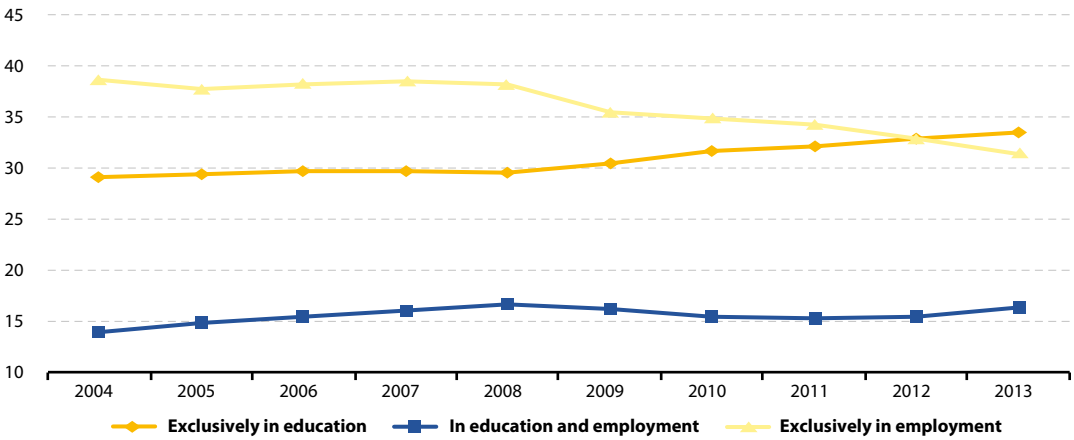
Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_18)

Combining education and employment still occurs among people aged 25–29, although it differs considerably from country to country. The highest proportion of people combining education and employment was found in the Nordic countries: 35 % in Denmark, 29 % in Sweden and 28 % in Finland, while the lowest were recorded in Greece (3 %) and Romania (2 %). As for the share of people aged 25–29 exclusively in education, the disparities between EU Member States ranged from 16 % in Denmark to 3 % in Lithuania and Malta.

The structure of the educational system is a very important factor to explain the differences between countries. Looking at Figures 2 and 3 similar patterns can be observed in both age groups (20–24 and 25–29) in relation to combining education and employment. Denmark and the Netherlands, where most study programmes include a traineeship, stood out for their high proportion of young people in both age groups combining education and employment. In countries like Romania, Greece, Slovakia, Croatia and Hungary the percentage of those combining education and employment was below 5 % in both age groups.

The education and employment situation of young people aged 20–24 has changed over the last decade: while in 2004 more were exclusively working than exclusively in education, in 2013 the rate of those exclusively in education exceeded the rate of those exclusively in employment.

Figure 4: Education and employment patterns of people aged 20–24, EU-28, 2004–13
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_18)

At EU level, the education and employment situation of young people aged 20–24 has changed over the last 10 years. As can be seen in Figure 4, the most important changes occurred in the situation of people exclusively in education and exclusively in employment. While in 2004 the rate of young people exclusively in employment exceeded that of young people exclusively in education by 10 percentage points, in 2013 the opposite situation occurred: the rate of those exclusively in education exceeded the rate of those exclusively in employment by two percentage points — the latter losing about seven percentage points over the last 10 years. The percentage of young people aged 20–24 in employment strongly decreased in countries like Cyprus (– 24 %), Spain (– 23 %) and Greece (– 22 %) while it was stable or even increased in countries such as Germany (7 %), Poland (5 %), Finland and the United Kingdom (both 4 %), Lithuania (3 %), Austria and Sweden (both 1 %).

As for the 25–29 age group, the education and employment situation has remained relatively stable at EU level over the last ten years. Only the proportion of those exclusively in employment saw a small and gradual fall from 62 % in 2004 to 57 % in 2013.

Young people neither in employment nor in education or training

Potentially any type of education or training (formal or non-formal) should improve skills and employability. People who are neither in employment nor in education and training are often disconnected from the labour market and have a higher risk of not finding a job, which could lead to poverty or social exclusion. They are monitored through both education and labour market policies. Reducing the number of young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training is one of the EU's top priorities.

As laid out at the beginning of this chapter, a higher proportion of the population in the 15–24 age group was still studying, while most people in the 25–29 age group had already left the education system. For this reason, the focus for the rest of this chapter will be on the 15–24 and 25–29 age groups.

In 2013, 13 % of people aged 15–24 and 30 % of people aged 25–29 were neither in employment nor in education or training in the EU. The lowest proportions of people aged 15–24 not in

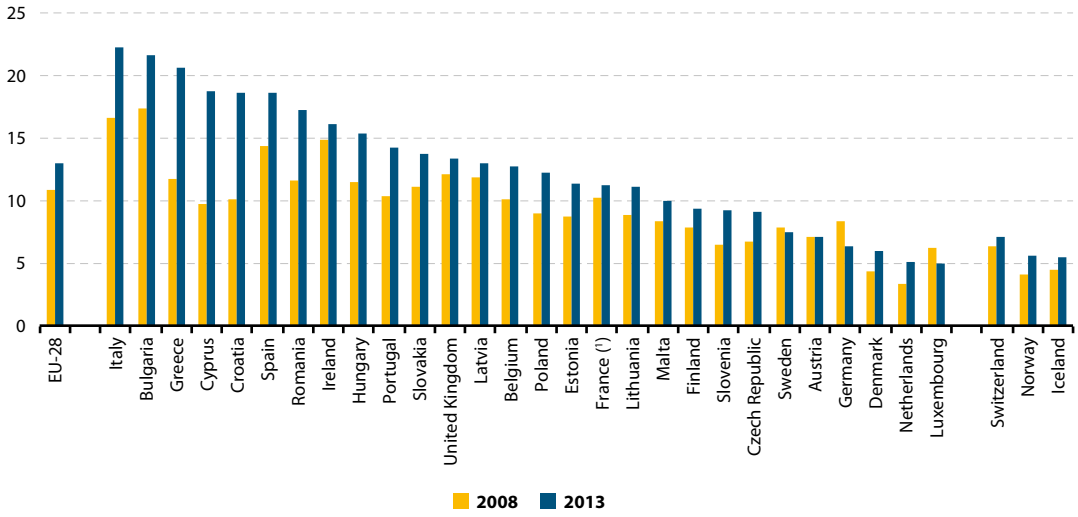
Young people **neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs)** are defined as the percentage of the young population that is both not employed and not involved in further education and training.

employment, education or training were recorded in the Netherlands and Luxembourg (both 5 %) followed by Denmark and Germany (both 6 %), while the highest were recorded in Italy, Bulgaria (both 22 %) and Greece (21 %). Along with Cyprus and Croatia, Greece was one of the three countries where the highest increase in the rates of persons not in employment, education or training (nine percentage points) was registered between 2008 and 2013 (Figure 5).

Considering the 25–29 age group, the share of people not in employment, education or training stood at 21 % in 2013 in the EU (Figure 6). Looking at individual EU Member States the highest proportion was again recorded in Greece (42 %), followed by Italy (33 %) and Bulgaria (32 %). The lowest rates were found in Sweden (9 %), Austria (10 %) and Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (all three with 11 %).

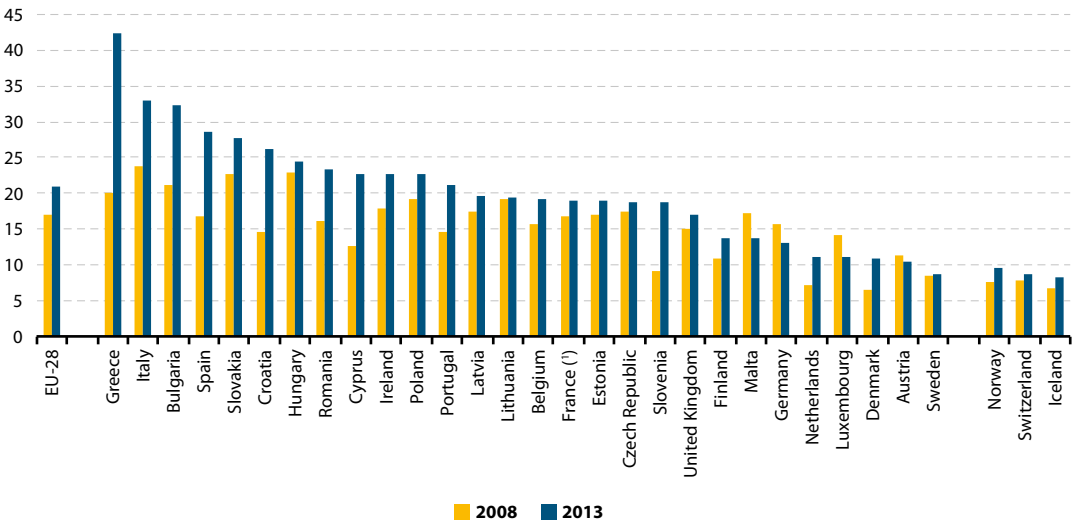
Compared with the situation in 2008, 2013 saw a small reduction (of three percentage points) in the proportion of people not in employment, education or training in four EU Member States: Malta, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria. In the other EU Member States the situation worsened. The highest growth was recorded in Greece (22 percentage points), followed by Spain and Croatia (12 percentage points).

Figure 5: People aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training, 2008 and 2013 (%)



(1) 2013: break in time series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_150)

Figure 6: People aged 25–29 not in employment, education or training, 2008 and 2013
(%)



(1) 2013: break in time series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_150)

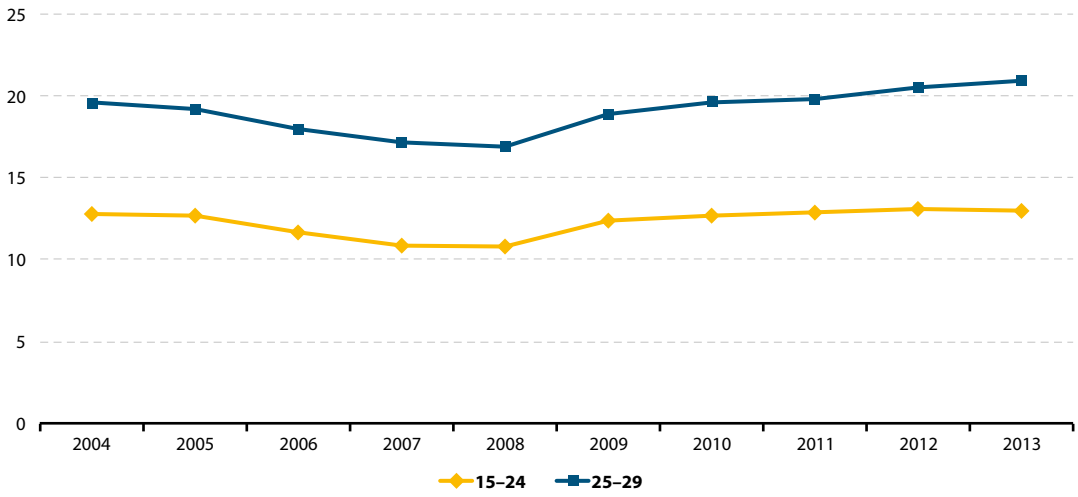
Figure 7 shows that in the years leading up to the financial and economic crisis, the percentage of people not in employment, education or training rate had been decreasing gradually. However, the financial and economic crisis reversed this development — 2008 saw a steady increase in both age groups: two percentage points in the 15–24 age group and four percentage points in the 25–29 group.

Young people outside education and employment are more numerous in the older age group and among women

In the 25–29 age group, gender differences were registered in the proportion of persons neither in employment nor in education or training (Figure 8). In 2013, at EU level, 25 % of women aged 25–29 versus 17 % of men aged 25–29 were neither in employment nor in education or training. This pattern is found to a varying extent in all EU Member States. In Greece, almost half of the women (49 %) aged 25–29 were neither in employment nor in education or training. The lowest rates were found in Sweden (10 %), the Netherlands (12 %), Denmark, Austria (both 13 %) and Luxembourg (14 %). The highest gender gap was found in the Czech Republic (20 percentage points), followed by Slovakia (17 percentage points) whereas in Spain, Croatia, Ireland and the Netherlands the difference between women and men was below two percentage points.

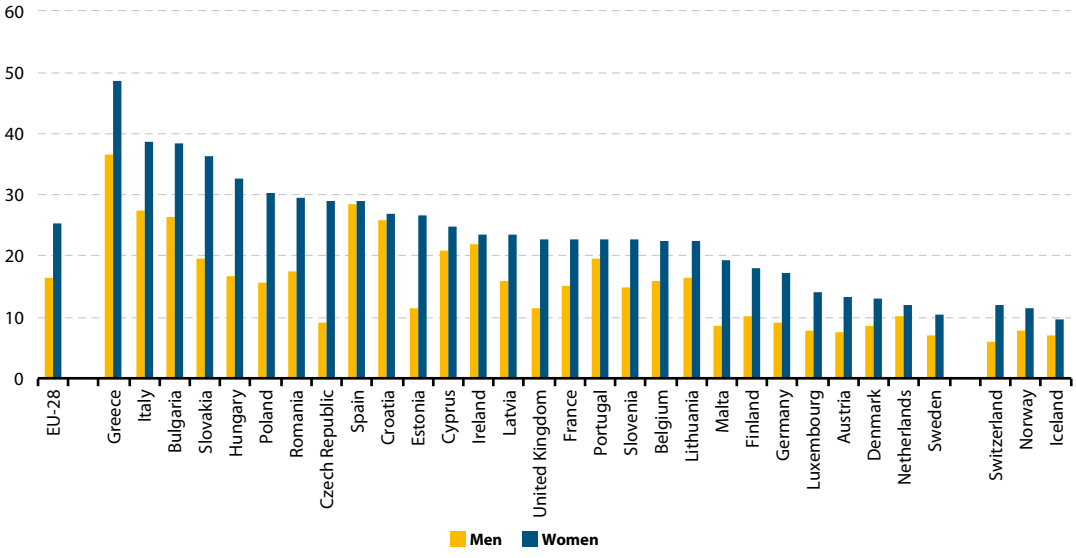
A possible reason for the fact that, in general, more women are neither in education nor in employment or training could be that, due to family responsibilities, they are not seeking employment and consequently, according to the definition, inactive on the labour market.

Figure 7: Young people not in employment, education or training, by age group, EU-28, 2004–13
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_150)

Figure 8: People aged 25–29 not in employment, education or training by sex, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_150)

School-to-work transition

An important aspect of the transition from childhood to adulthood is the transition from school, i.e. formal education, to working life, which can be more or less gradual. Depending on the organisation of the education systems, the situation on the labour market and personal choice, this transition can have varying lengths and can be achieved in several ways: some young people switch directly from a life spent exclusively in education to full employment; while for others the change is steadier, combining formal education and employment for a certain period.

Data on the transition from school to work were collected in 2009 through the ad-hoc module on the entry of young people into the labour market which supplemented the regular EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). Two of the indicators on school-to-work transition, 'Average age when leaving formal education' and 'Employment rate after leaving formal education' stem from this data collection, while the third 'Average length of the transition from school to work' is taken straight from the regular EU-LFS.

Average age when leaving formal education

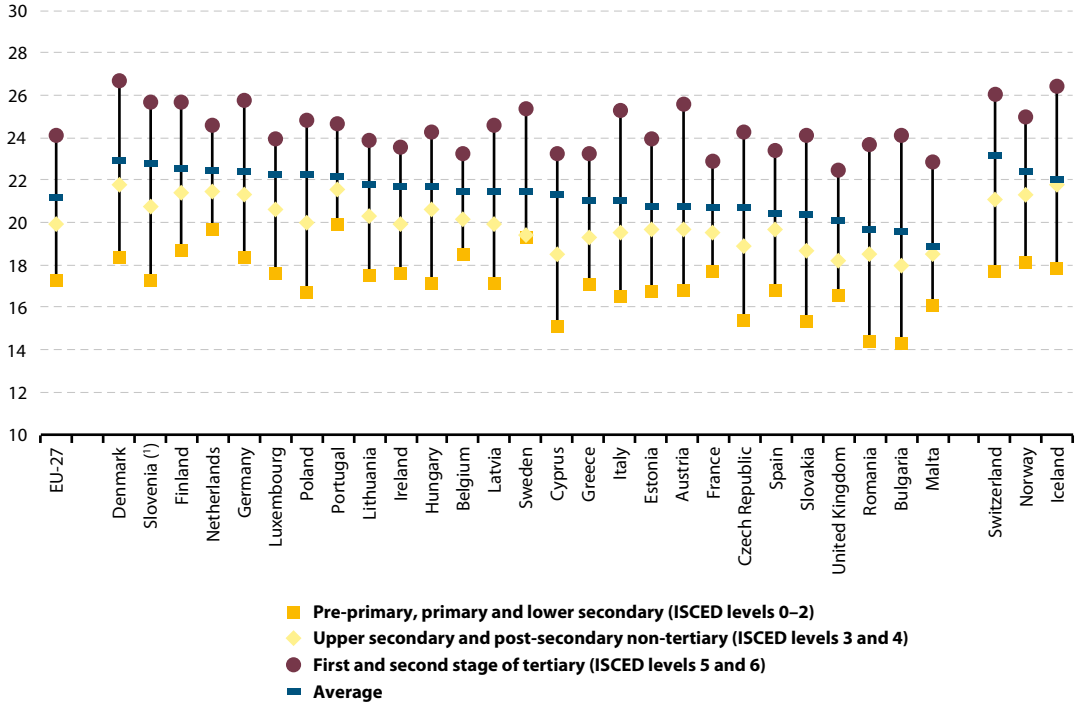
A first indicator on the school-to-work transition process is the average age when people leave the formal education system. In the EU in 2009 the average age of those who left formal education in the preceding five years was 21. However, there is some variation between EU Member States: while in Malta, Bulgaria and Romania, people exit the education system between the ages of 19 and 20, in Denmark, Slovenia and Finland people leave formal education around the age of 23. The overall educational attainment explains much of these results: high participation in tertiary education brings the values up; early school leaving brings the average down.

As shown in Figure 9, the level of educational attainment is an important factor in determining the age at which people leave the education system. On average, people with at most lower secondary education leave education at the age of 17, people with upper secondary education at the age of 20, and people with tertiary education at the age of 24. However, there were important variations across EU Member States: whereas in Bulgaria and Romania people with lower secondary attainment left education at the age of 14 (on average), in the Netherlands and Portugal they left close to the age of 20. The age of leaving formal education of people with upper secondary attainment varied between the age of 18 in Bulgaria and the United Kingdom and 22 in Portugal and Denmark (on average). Similarly, the average age when leaving formal education for those with tertiary educational attainment varied between 23 years in the United Kingdom, Malta, France, Cyprus, Greece, Belgium and Spain to almost 27 years in Austria, Slovenia, Finland, Germany and Denmark.

The differences between EU Member States reflect the characteristics of the national educational systems in terms of length, organisation or educational practices. As such, longer upper secondary education brings the average up. Moreover, the practice of repeating classes brings the average up on one side, but allows higher ISCED level on the other side. The phenomenon of early school leaving ([1]), which varies across EU countries, also has an influence on the average age of leaving education: leaving school early is linked to lower ISCED level and lower age of leaving education.

([1]) For more details on early school leavers, see the chapter on education.

Figure 9: Average age when leaving formal education for persons aged 15–34 who left within the last 5 years, by highest education level, 2009



(1) Low reliability for the group 'ISCED levels 0–2'.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfso_09t1)

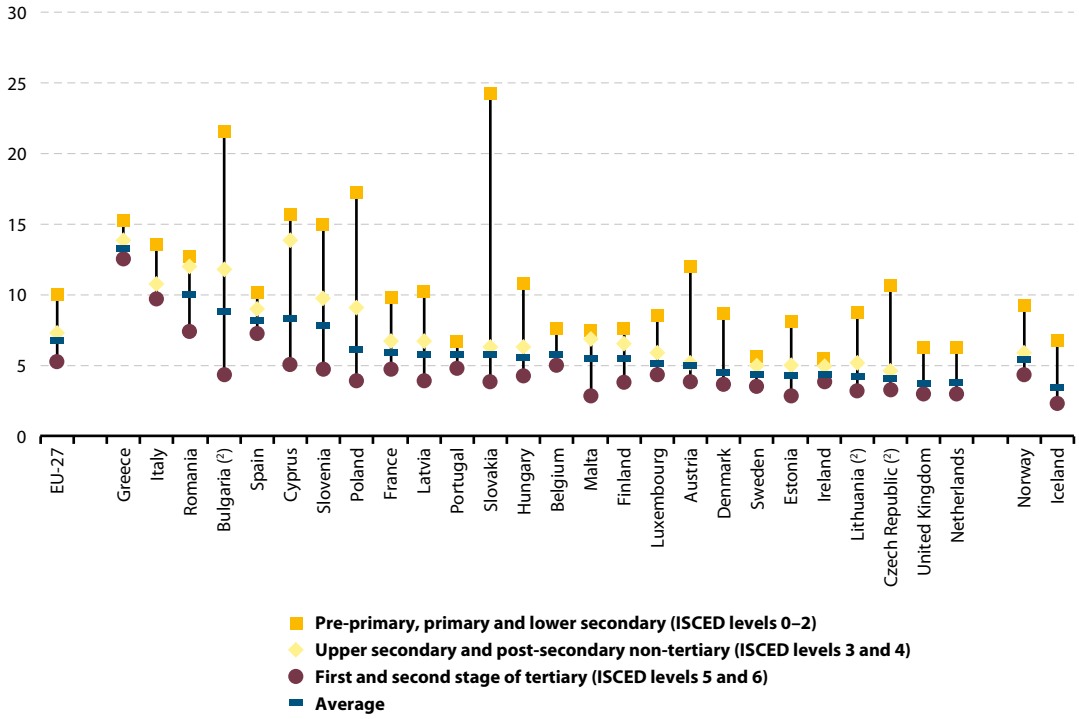
Average length of the transition from school to work

The period elapsed between leaving formal education and the first significant job (i.e. lasting more than 3 months) is an indicator of the length of the school-to-work transition process. On average, in 2009, young people in the EU had the first significant job 6.5 months after leaving formal education — considering all education levels (Figure 10). The longest transition period — between 10 and 13 months — was registered in Greece, Italy and Romania. By contrast, young people in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands had their first job only 3.5 months after finishing education.

The level of education is a key factor for a successful transition to the labour market

The level of the highest educational qualification has an obvious impact on the transition from school to work. In the EU, the average duration of the transition period to the first significant job was five months for people with tertiary qualification but twice as long for people with lower qualification (about 10 months), and nearly seven months for those with upper secondary qualification.

Figure 10: Average time (in months) between leaving formal education and starting the first job for persons aged 15–34 who left within the last five years, by highest education level, 2009 (1)



(1) Germany was not considered due to lack of comparable data.
(2) Low reliability for the group 'ISCED levels 0 -2'.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfso_09t2)

The discrepancies between EU Member States increased considerably when taking the education level into account. In Greece, the transition period for people with tertiary education (12 months) was more than double the EU average and four times the duration of the best performing countries (Malta, Estonia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic). The shortest transition period for people with upper secondary education was registered in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Denmark (around 4 months), while the longest was registered in Greece and Cyprus (14 months).

People with at most lower secondary education had the longest transition period: 10 months on average. While in Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands the transition period was around 6 months, in Slovakia it was 24 months and in Bulgaria 22 months. Another interesting fact was that while in some countries, like Ireland and Portugal, the transition period was almost the same for all three education level groups, in others the level of education revealed important disparities. In Cyprus and Bulgaria for instance, people with upper secondary education needed between 8 and 9 months more than people with tertiary education to find a job. In Slovakia, people that had finished education with at most a lower secondary degree needed 18 more months to find a job than people with upper secondary education.

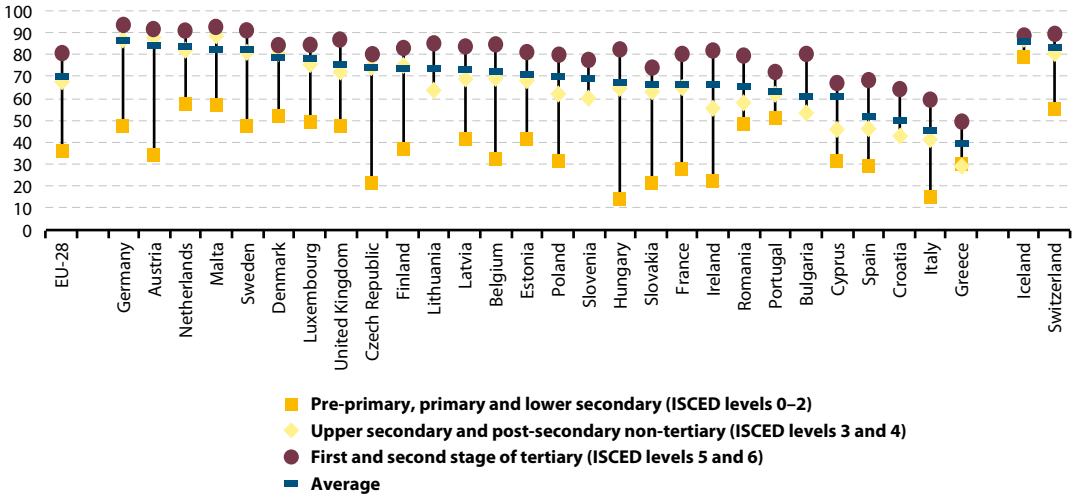
Employment rates after leaving formal education

At EU level, 73 % of young people who left formal education in the period 2008–13 were employed in 2013 (Figure 11). The highest values were recorded in the Netherlands where 88 % of young people successfully entered the labour market, followed by Austria (84 %), Luxembourg (82 %), Cyprus and Denmark (both 81 %), Slovenia and Germany (both 80 %). The lowest employment rates were recorded in Italy (59 %) and Spain (60 %).

The education level is again an important differentiating factor. While in the EU-27 84 % of young people with tertiary education were employed, this rate was almost twice as lower (45 %) for people with at most lower secondary education. The highest employment rates among people with tertiary education were found in the Netherlands (95 %) and Malta (94 %), while the lowest rates were registered in Italy (70 %), Spain (73 %) and Greece (74 %). The differences between EU Member States increased with the education level: the highest employment rates among people with secondary education were again found in the Netherlands and Malta (around 89 %), while the lowest rates were registered in Spain and Romania (both 57 %). The largest differences between EU Member States appeared for the people with at most lower secondary education: while in Cyprus, Portugal, Denmark and the Netherlands, between 67 % and 70 % of young people were employed, in Slovakia and Bulgaria only around 20 % of young people with lower secondary education were employed in 2009.

The **employment rate** is the percentage of employed persons in relation to the comparable total population. For the overall employment rate, the comparison is made with the population of working-age; but employment rates can also be calculated for a particular age group and/or gender in a specific geographical area.

Figure 11: Employment rates of the population aged 15–34 who left education in the last 5 years by highest education level, 2013
(%)



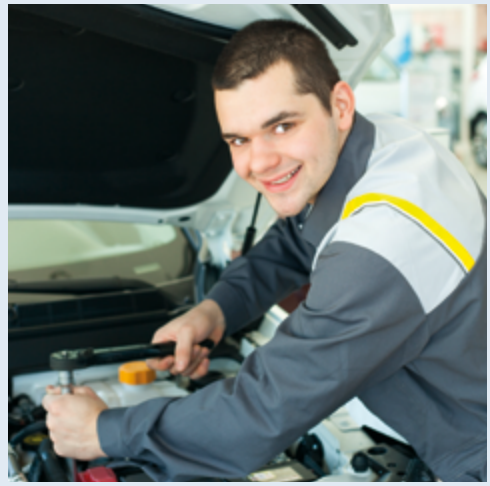
Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_24)

Youth employment

The employment rate is an essential indicator for monitoring the labour market situation. For the 15–29 age group it is calculated as the share of people aged 15–29 who are employed in the total population of this group.

The employment situation of young people varies according to gender, age and educational attainment

In 2013, the EU-28 employment rate for persons aged 15–29 stood at 46 %. However, an analysis by age group delivers a more nuanced image of the labour situation of young people. In 2013, 32 % of young Europeans aged 15–24 were employed, while the employment rate among young Europeans aged 25–29 stood at 71 %.

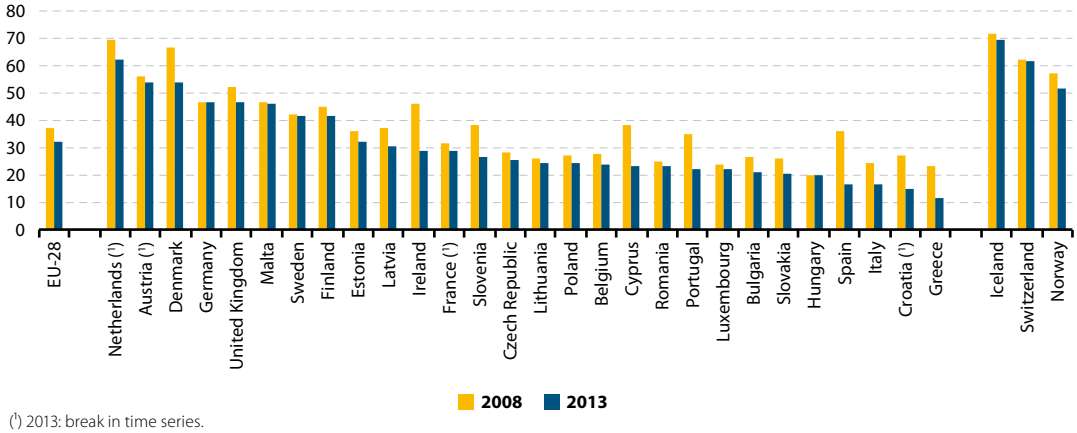


The employment rate in 2013 for young people aged 25–29 amounted to 71 %, while the one for those aged 15–24 was 32 %.

Characteristics of youth in employment

Figures 12 and 13 show large differences between EU Member States for both age groups. In the 15–24 age group, the highest employment rates in 2013 were recorded in the Netherlands (62 %), followed by Austria and Denmark (both with 54 %). The lowest rate (12 %) was registered in Greece. In the age group 25–29, the highest employment rates were recorded in Malta (83 %), the Netherlands (82 %) and Austria (81 %), while the lowest were again found in Greece (49 %), followed by Italy (53 %) and Spain (58 %).

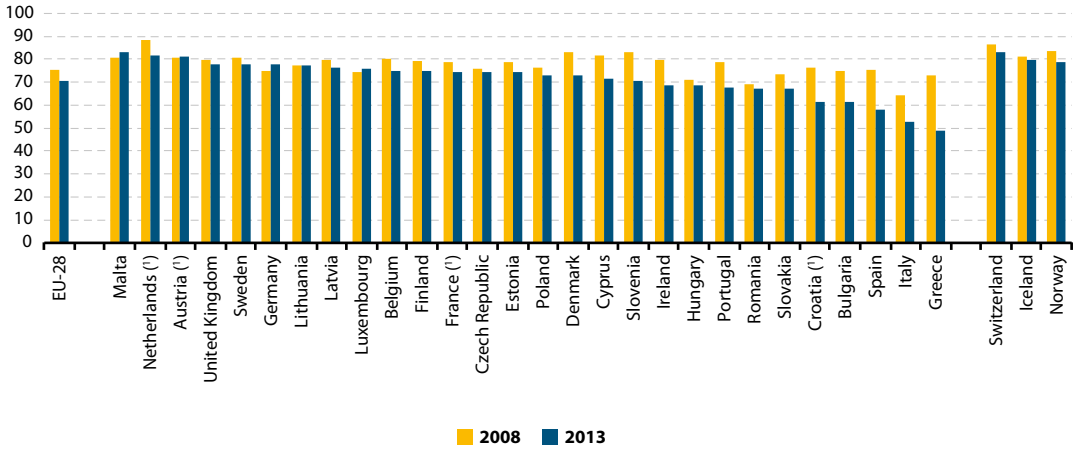
Figure 12: Employment rates of people aged 15–24, 2008 and 2013
(%)



(1) 2013: break in time series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_010)

However, between the beginning of the financial and economic crisis and 2013, there were important developments in the labour situation of young people. While in both age groups the overall employment rate for the EU-28 in 2013 remained five percentage points below its 2008 level, the EU Member States performed differently as regards the labour situation of young people. The labour situation of people aged 15–24 deteriorated the most in Spain (19 percentage points) and Ireland (17 percentage points), while in four EU Member States (Germany, Hungary, Sweden and Malta) it remained almost unchanged (difference below one percentage point). The labour situation of people aged 25–29 shows even bigger differences between EU Member States: while in Greece the percentage of those employed decreased by 24 percentage points between 2008 and 2013, in Germany and Malta it increased slightly (around three percentage points).

Figure 13: Employment rates of people aged 25–29, 2008 and 2013
(%)



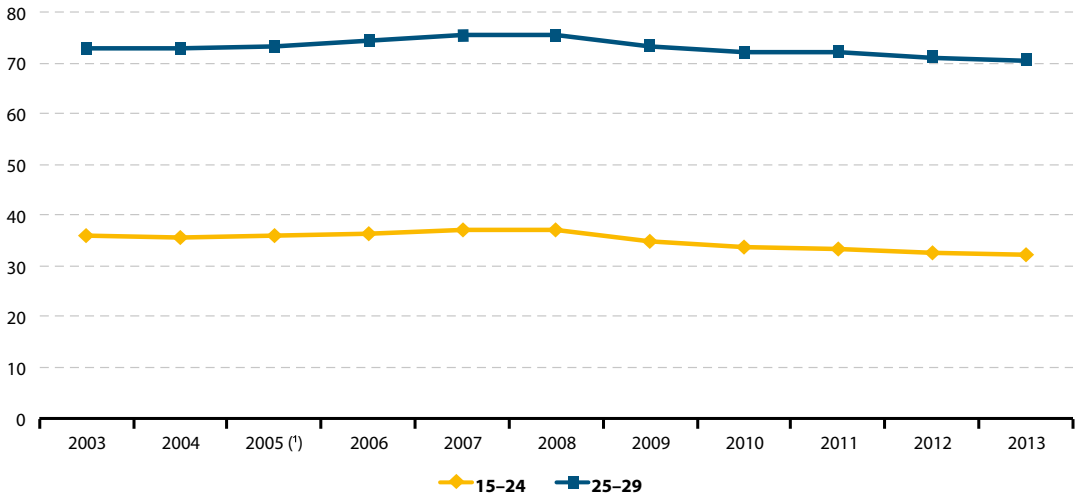
(1) 2013: break in time series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_010)

Figure 14 illustrates the evolution of the employment rates for the age groups 15–24 and 25–29. The employment rates for these two age groups in the EU-28 evolved in a similar fashion: in 2008, they peaked at 37 % for the age group 15–24 and at 76 % for the age group 25–29 and decreased continuously in the following years.

Employment rates were generally lower among women (Figure 15). In 2013, the employment rate of young Europeans aged 15–29, stood at 49 % for men and at 43 % for women. With a few exceptions (Ireland and the Netherlands) this pattern was present in every EU Member State albeit in different degrees. The highest difference between men and women was recorded in the Czech Republic (14 percentage points difference), followed by Poland and Slovakia (12 points).

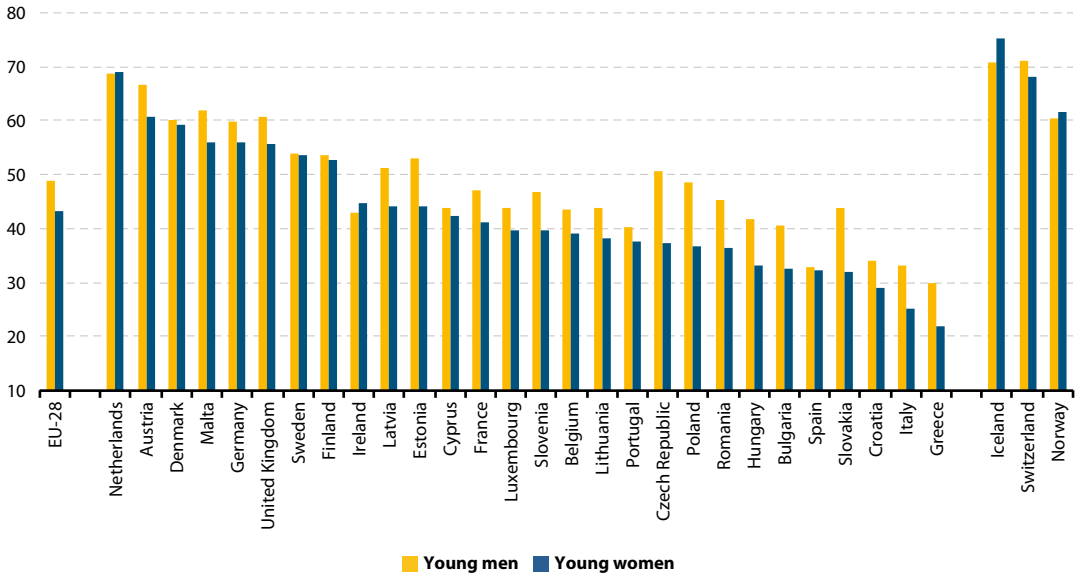
Employment rates among young people varied considerably according to their level of educational attainment (Figure 16): the employment rate of those who had completed a tertiary education was 71 % across the EU-28 in 2013, almost three times higher than the rate of those who had attained no more than primary or lower secondary qualifications (26 %). The EU-28 employment rate of persons with at most upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications stood at 54 %.

Figure 14: Evolution of employment rates by age group, EU-28, 2003–13
(%)



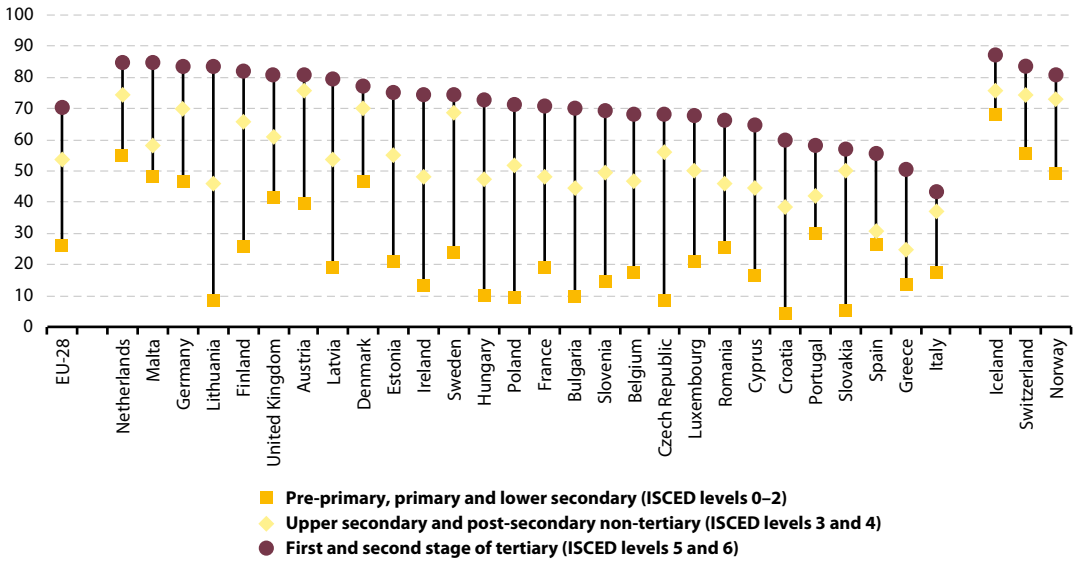
(1) Break in time series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_010)

Figure 15: Employment rates of people aged 15–29, by sex, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_010)

Figure 16: Employment rates of people aged 15–29, by highest educational level, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_010)

Temporary and part-time work contracts

Temporary and part-time work contracts are two types of agreement young people come across when entering the labour market.

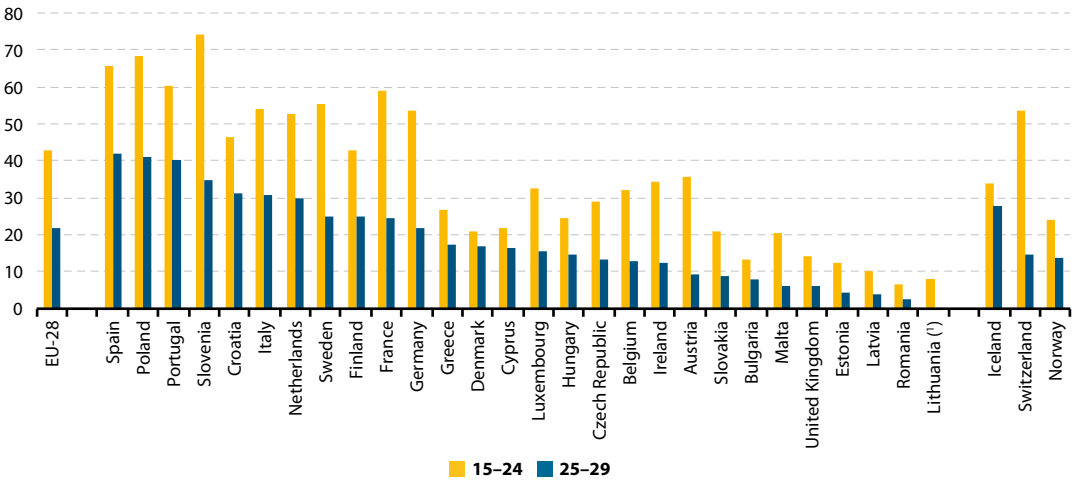
Temporary work contracts are quite common among young people entering the labour market. These types of contract, which often include seasonal employment, allow employers to adapt to demands on the labour market, and young people without work experience are more likely to accept them. Besides, employers often use temporary work contracts to assess the capabilities of new recruits before offering them a permanent position.

As shown in Figure 17, temporary work contracts were more widespread in the younger age group: in 2013, 43 % of the people aged 15–24 and 22 % of the people aged 25–29 were employed under temporary work contracts in the EU — a pattern which can be observed in all EU Member States.

Temporary employment includes work under a fixed-term contract, as against permanent work where there is no end-date. A job may be considered temporary employment (and its holder a temporary employee) if both employer and employee agree that its end is decided by objective rules (usually written down in a work contract of limited life). These rules can be a specific date, the end of a task, or the return of another employee who has been temporarily replaced.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), **part-time employment** is defined as regular employment in which working time is substantially less than normal.

Figure 17: Share of young temporary employees, by age group, 2013
(%)



(1) Low reliability.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_050)

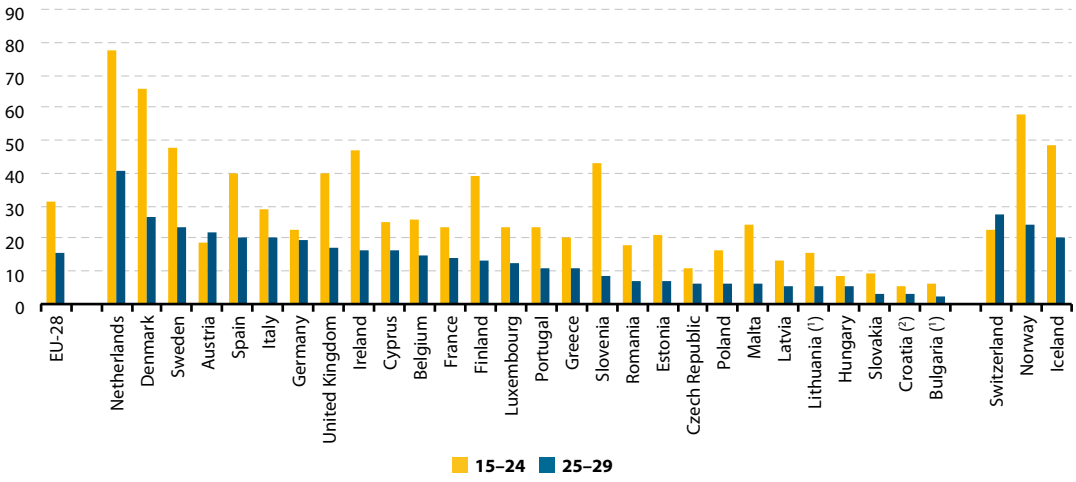
There are however substantial differences between EU Member States: the rates of young people (both age groups) working with temporary work contracts in 2013 were the highest in Slovenia, Poland, Spain and Portugal. Slovenia stood out for the high temporary employment rate in the age group 15–24 (74 %). At the other end of the spectrum, Romania and Latvia were amongst the countries with the lowest temporary employment rates in both age groups. In Romania only 6 % of people aged 15–24 and 3 % of those aged 25–29 were temporary employees. Country-specific regulations on temporary work contracts (e.g. maximum duration, renewal possibilities) and differences in national education systems relating to traineeships were some of the factors behind these differences.

For many young people part-time work is a good method for combining education and employment, but it may also be dictated by family or other personal reasons. As is the case for temporary work, part-time work is also more widespread in the younger age group. At EU level, the part-time employment rate among people aged 15–24 stood at 32 % in 2013, while it was twice as low for the 25–29 age group (Figure 18). The highest part-time employment rates in the 15–24 age group were recorded in the Netherlands (78 %) and Denmark (66 %) and the lowest in Croatia and Bulgaria (both 6 %). A similar situation was encountered for the 25–29 age group: the highest part-time employment rates were found in the Netherlands (41 %) and Denmark (26 %) and the lowest in Slovakia (3 %) and Hungary (5 %).

The percentage of those working part-time has increased over the last ten years in both age groups (Figure 19). While between 2003 and 2008, the numbers were stagnating, they increased steadily between 2008 and 2013: from 26 % to 31 % in the age group 15–24, and from 12 % to 15 % in the age group 25–29.

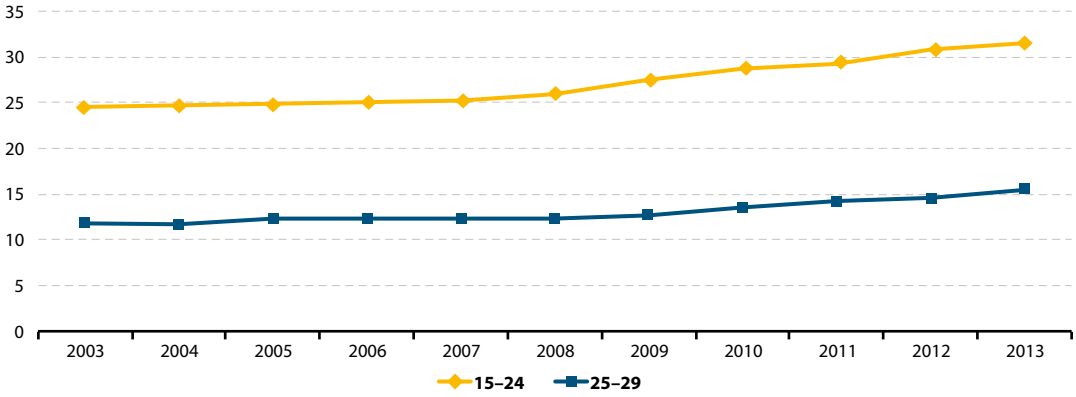
Part-time employment is not always a matter of personal choice — some people may be working part-time because they cannot find a full-time job.

Figure 18: Share of part-time employees, by age group, 2013
(%)



(1) Low reliability for the age group 25–29.
(2) Low reliability for both age groups.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_060)

Figure 19: Share of part-time employees in EU-28, by age group, 2003–13
(%)



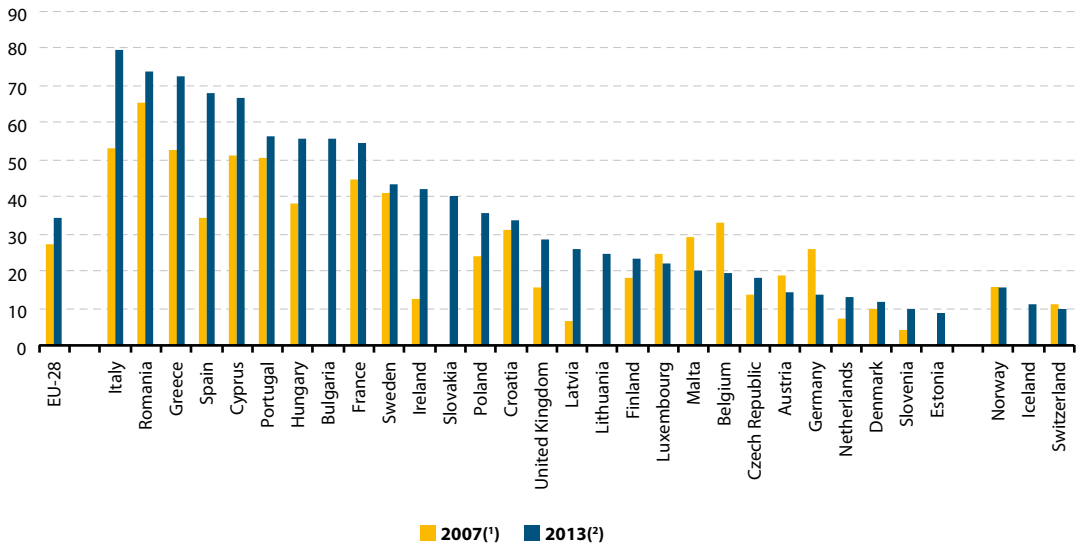
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_060)

From 2007 to 2013, the share of involuntary part-time employees has generally increased in all EU Member States, although there were a few exceptions (Figure 20). The highest increases were recorded in Spain (34 percentage points), Ireland (30 percentage points), Italy (26 percentage points) and Greece (20 percentage points). The share of involuntary part-time workers has decreased in several countries as well, most notably in Belgium (13 percentage points), Germany (12 percentage points) and Malta (9 percentage points).

The prevalence of part-time work contracts differed significantly between men and women (Figure 21). In 2013 the rate of young women working part-time (31 %) was almost twice as high as the rate of men (16 %) in the EU-28. The highest difference between women and men was observed in the Netherlands and Sweden (24 percentage points). Romania on the other hand had slightly more men working part time than women (a difference of almost two percentage points), the only such occurrence among EU Member States.

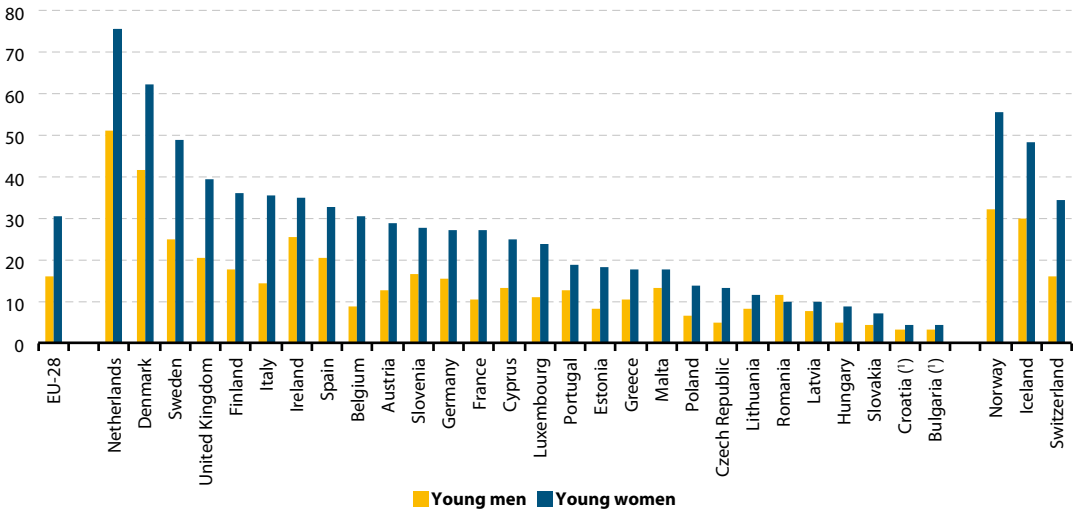
Involuntary part-time employment refers to part-time workers who declare working part-time because they could not find a full-time job.

Figure 20: Involuntary part-time employment as percentage of the total part-time employment for people aged 15–29, 2007 and 2013
(%)



(1) Low reliability for Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia and Iceland.
(2) Low reliability for Estonia, France, Croatia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden. Break in time series for France, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_080)

Figure 21: Share of part-time employees aged 15–29, by sex, 2013
(%)

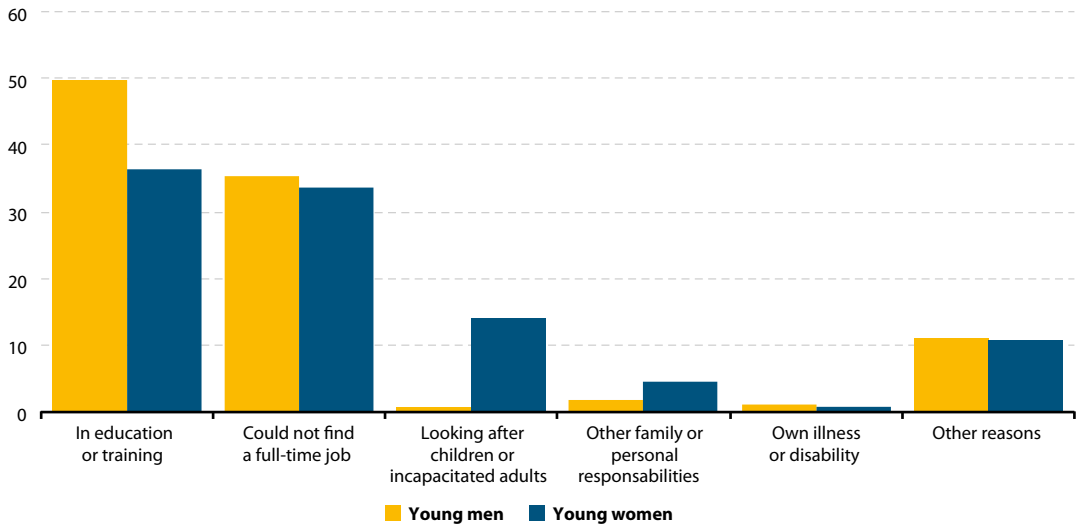


(1) Low reliability.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_060)

The differences between women and men with regard to part-time employment could be related to the fact that women dedicate more time to family responsibilities. Figure 22 illustrates that looking after children or adults in need of care was a reason for part-time work for 14 % of young women against 1 % of men. On the contrary, being in education or training was a more important reason for men (50 %) than for women (36 %).

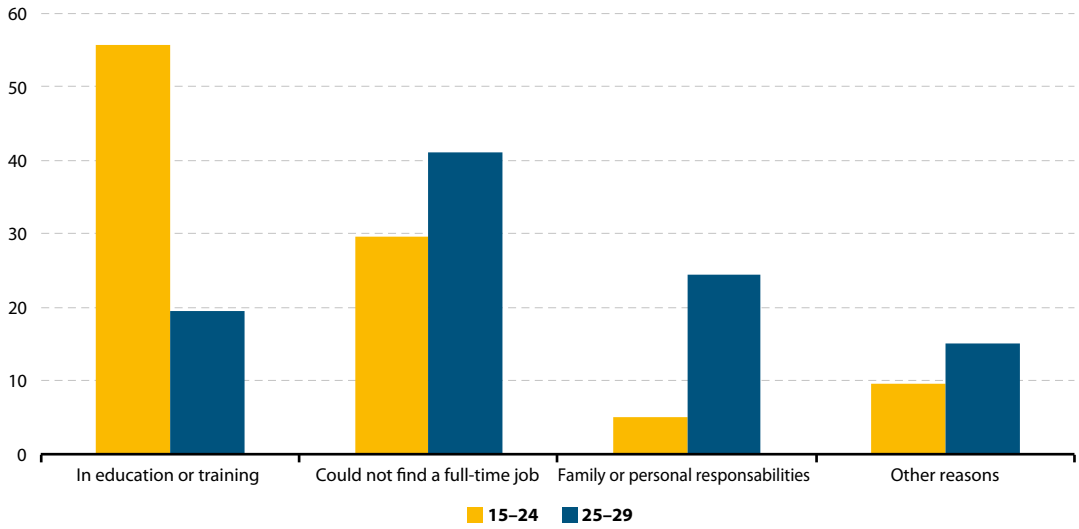
Looking at the main reasons for part-time employment by age group, participation in education or training (56 %) and the impossibility of finding a full-time job (30 %) topped the list for the younger age group (15–24). The reasons for the 25–29 age group were slightly different: for 40 % of them, the main reason were the impossibility of finding a full-time job, followed by family or personal responsibilities (24 %) and the participation in education or training (20 %) (Figure 23).

Figure 22: Main reasons for part-time employment of people aged 15–29, by sex, EU-28, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_070)

Figure 23: Main reasons for part-time employment, by age group, EU-28, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_070)

Youth unemployment

The unemployment rate of young people has been increasing in the years following the financial and economic crisis, reflecting the difficulties faced by young people in finding a job. In labour market policies, the main indicator for youth unemployment is called the 'youth unemployment rate' and refers to the age group 15–24.

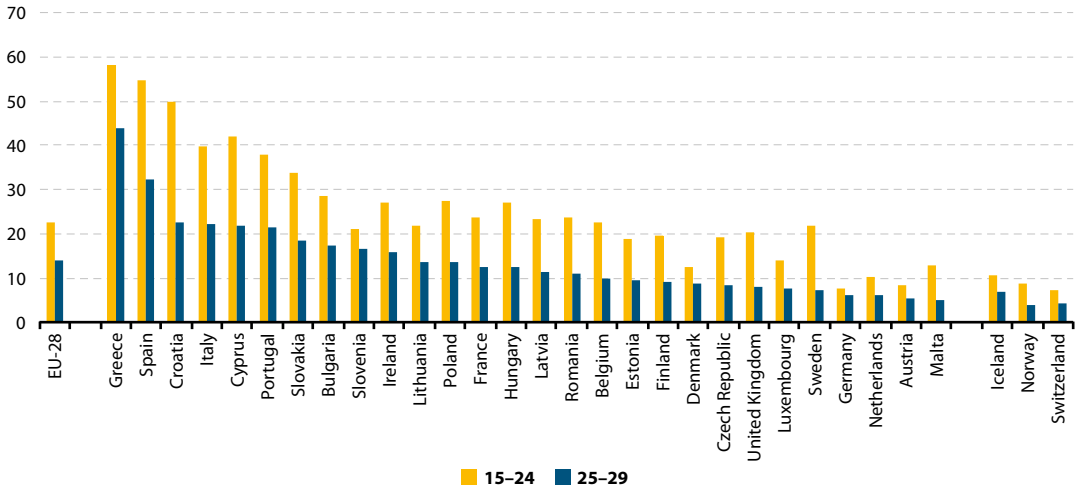
Unemployment among young people

In 2013, 23 % of the EU's labour force in the 15–24 age group and 15 % of its labour force in the 25–29 age group were unemployed (Figure 24). In all EU Member States the unemployment rates were higher in the younger age group. The unemployment situation of young people varied largely between EU Member States, but similar trends in the performance of national labour markets could be observed for both age groups. In both groups, the highest unemployment rates were recorded in Greece, Spain and Croatia, while the lowest rates were registered in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Malta. As such, the unemployment

The **youth unemployment rate** is the percentage of unemployed young people in the age group 15–24 compared to the total labour force in that age group.

The **active population**, also called **labour force**, includes both employed and unemployed people, but not the economically inactive, such as pre-school children, school children, students and pensioners.

Figure 24: Unemployment rate, by age group, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_100)

rate in Greece stood at 58 % for people aged 15–24 and 44 % for people aged 25–29. In Spain the unemployment rates stood at 56 % and 33 % respectively. The lowest unemployment rates for the 15–24 age group were found in Germany (8 %) and Austria (9 %). For the 25–29 age group, unemployment rates slightly below 7 % were recorded in Malta, Austria and Germany.

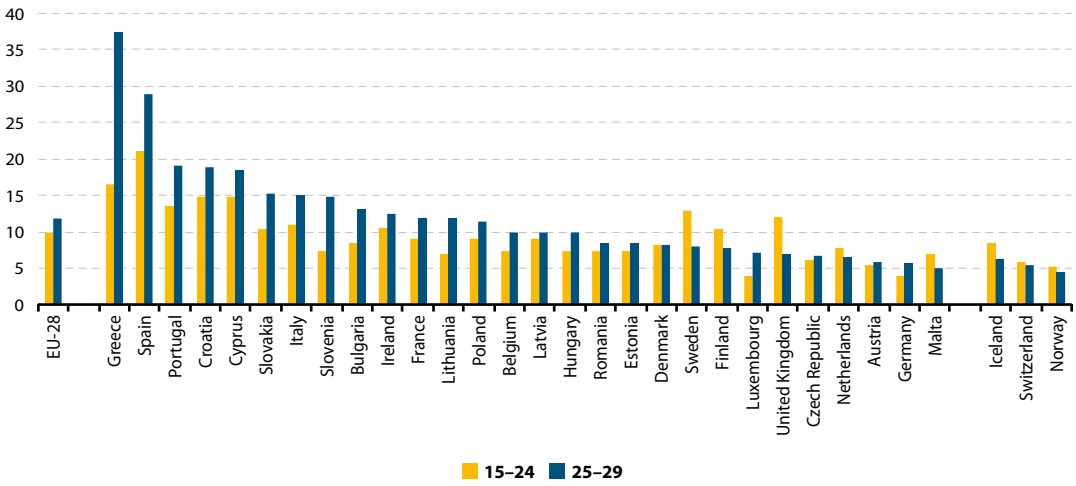
Since many young people are still studying full time, they are not available for work and are considered as being outside the labour force. Therefore, when presenting the labour situation of young people, the main indicator for unemployment, the unemployment rate, is often complemented by another indicator, the unemployment ratio, which compares the number of unemployed with the total population, and not only the labour force.

The unemployment ratio, which not only takes into account the size of the young labour force, but the young population (active and inactive) as a whole, provides a more accurate reflection of the unemployment situation of young people. Thus, in 2013, the unemployment ratio in the EU-28 stood at 10 % for the age group 15–24 and at 12 % for the

The youth unemployment ratio is the percentage of unemployed young people in the age group 15–24 compared to the total population of that age group (employed, unemployed and inactive).

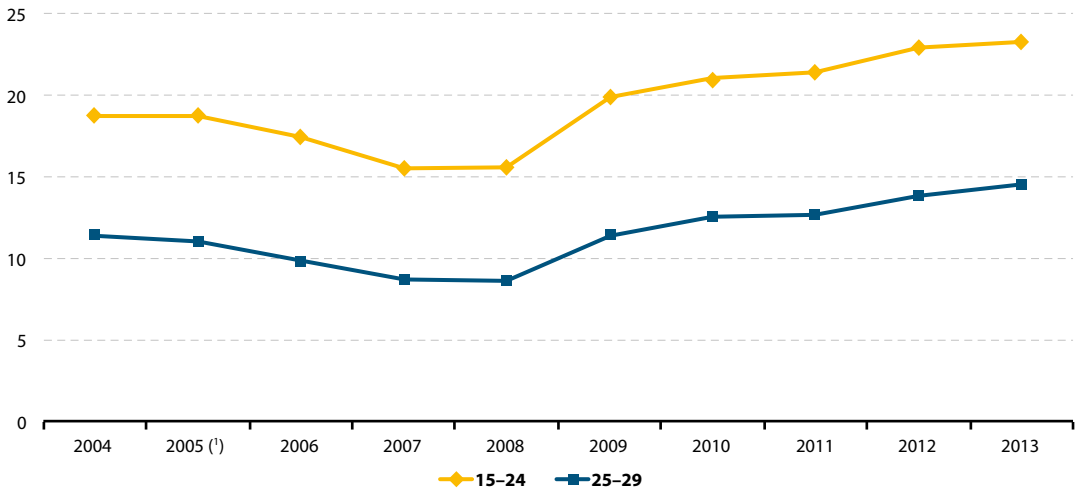
Inactive persons are persons who are not in the labour force (employed or unemployed). The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example. Provided they are not working at all and either not available or looking for work; some of these may be of working-age.

Figure 25: Unemployment ratio of young people, by age group, 2013
(%)



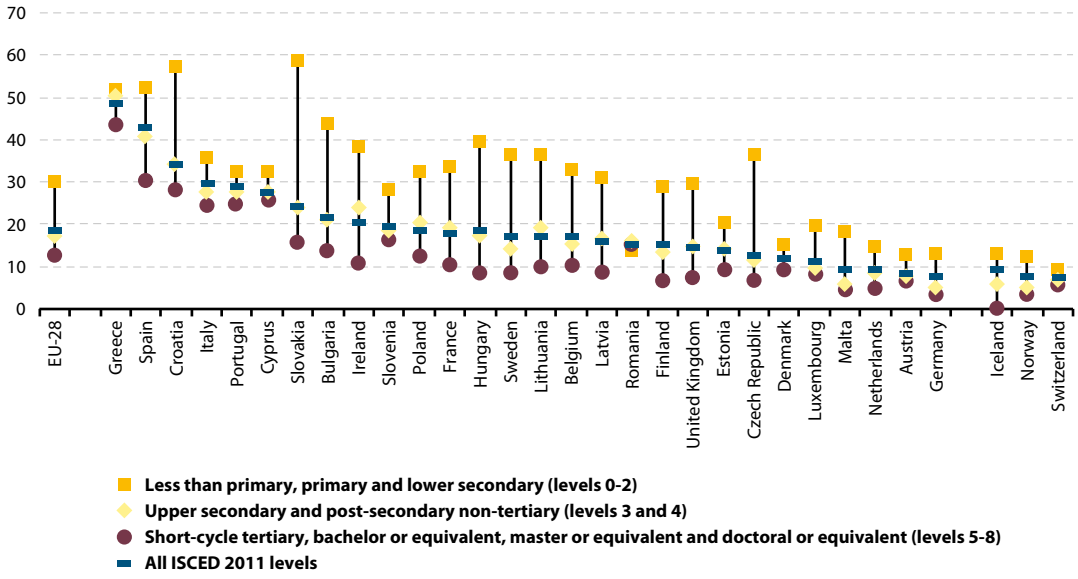
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_140)

Figure 26: Unemployment rate of young people, by age group, EU-28, 2004–13
(%)



(1) Break in time series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_090)

Figure 27: Unemployment rate of people aged 15–29, by highest level of educational attainment, 2013
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_090)

age group 25–29 (Figure 25). The unemployment ratio is by definition always smaller than the unemployment rate.

As shown in Figures 24 and 25, the difference was bigger for the age group 15–24. Moreover, although the employment rates were higher for the age group 15–24, the unemployment ratios were higher for the age group 25–29. This is due to the fact that more people in the younger age category were in education and thus unavailable for work. For the age group 15–24, the highest unemployment ratios were found in Spain (21 %) and Greece (17 %) and the lowest in Germany and Luxembourg (both 4 %). For the age group 25–29, the highest unemployment ratios were found in Greece (37 %) and Spain (29 %) and the lowest in Malta, Germany and Austria (all three slightly below 6 %).

Looking at the evolution of the unemployment rates over the last ten years (Figure 26) shows that they decreased for both age groups between 2004 and the beginning of the financial and economic crisis. Since the crisis however they have increased steadily, reaching their highest levels for 10 years in 2013. From 2008 to 2013 the unemployment rate increased by almost 8 percentage points for the 15–24 age group, and by 6 percentage points for the 25–29 age group.

Educational attainment is an important differentiating factor when assessing the magnitude of unemployment rates. In all EU Member States, except Romania, it appears that the higher the education level, the lower the unemployment rate.

Young people, especially those with lower qualifications, still face difficulties in finding a job

On average, the unemployment rate of people with at most lower secondary education (30 %) was almost two times higher than the unemployment rate of people with tertiary education (Figure 27).

Long-term unemployment among young people

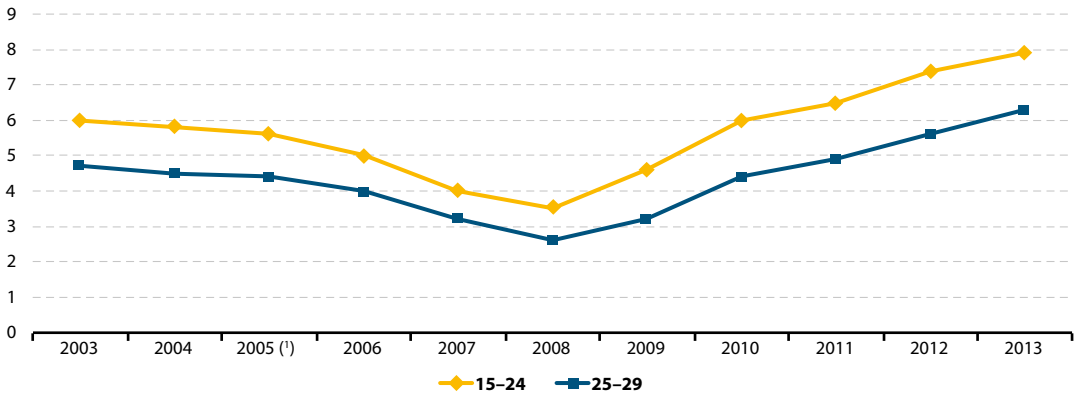
Long-term unemployment is one of the main concerns of policymakers. Apart from its financial and social effects on personal life, long-term unemployment negatively affects social cohesion and, ultimately, may hinder economic growth.

In the EU-28 the percentage of young people who were long-term unemployed has steadily grown after the financial and economic crisis. The same pattern was observed for both age groups (15–24 and 25–29): a gradual decrease of nearly 2.5 percentage points was registered between 2003 and 2008 followed by a gradual increase of 4 percentage points between 2008 and 2013 (Figure 28).

Long-term unemployment varied considerably across EU Member States (Figure 29). Greece stood out with high long-term unemployment rates in both age groups: 30 % of the active young people aged 15–24 and 29 % of active young people aged 25–29. High long-term unemployment rates for the age group 15–29 were also recorded in Croatia (25 %) and Spain (22 %). At the other end of the spectrum the long-term unemployment rates for both age groups of young people in Austria, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany were below 2 %.

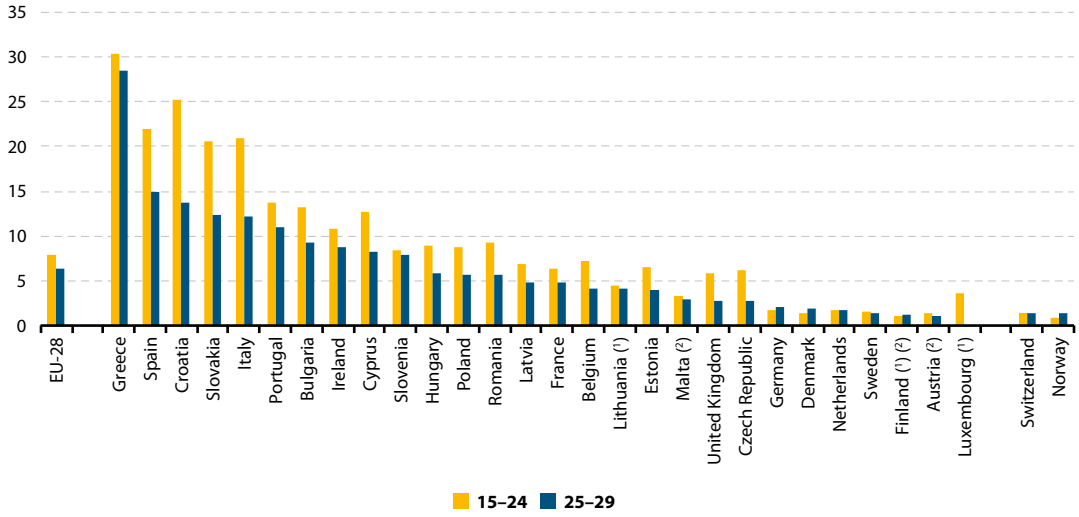
The **long-term unemployment rate** is defined as the share of unemployed persons since 12 months or more in the total number of active persons in the labour market.

Figure 28: Youth long-term unemployment rate, by age group, EU-28, 2003–13
(%)



(1) Break in time series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_120)

Figure 29: Long-term unemployment rate, by age group, 2013
(%)



(1) Low reliability for the age group 15–24.
(2) Low reliability for the age group 25–29.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_120)

Data sources and availability

The main source of the data presented in this chapter is the EU labour force survey (EU-LFS), a large sample survey among private households which provides detailed annual and quarterly data on employment, unemployment and inactivity. The data can be broken down along many dimensions including age, gender, educational attainment, and distinctions between permanent/temporary and full-time/part-time employment.

The concepts and definitions used in the EU-LFS follow the guidelines of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The data on young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) correspond to the percentage of the population of a given age group and gender not employed and not involved in further education or training.

Context

Young people are a priority for the European Union's social vision, and the current crisis compounds the need to sustain young human capital. In November 2009, the Council of Youth Ministers adopted the EU Youth Strategy for 2010–18 which has two overall objectives:

- to provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market; and
- to promote active citizenship and social inclusion for all young people.

The Open Method of Coordination supports the implementation of the strategy which should create favourable conditions for young people to develop their skills, fulfil their potential, work, and actively participate in society. In this framework youth statistics are an essential tool to support evidence-based policy-making in the various domains covered by the strategy.

The focus on young people was reinforced with the adoption in June 2010 of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth which includes a number of concrete initiatives to support them in getting jobs and dealing with related challenges during this crisis. Quality education and training, successful labour market integration and increased mobility are key to unleashing all of the young people's potential and achieving the Europe 2020 objectives.

Youth on the Move presents a framework of policy priorities for action at national and EU level to reduce youth unemployment by facilitating the transition from school to work and reducing labour market segmentation. Particular focus is put on the role of public employment services, promoting the Youth Guarantee scheme to ensure all young people are in a job, in education or in activation, creating a European Vacancy Monitor and supporting young entrepreneurs.

The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting of May 2012 concluded that 'the current economic crisis accentuates the importance of the education to work transition. Ensuring that young people leave education and training with the best possible support to obtain their first job is critical. Young people who face unemployment or a slow transition may experience long-term adverse effects in terms of future labour market success, earnings or family formation. This may in turn jeopardise public and private investment in their education and training, which results in a loss for society as a whole. This is particularly true in the context of demographic challenges, which put added pressure on Europe's increasingly scarce young people to integrate quickly and effectively into the labour market'. This meeting allowed an EU benchmark to be set for the year 2020 which focuses on the transition from education and training into the labour market and facilitates policy exchanges under the Education and Training 2020 (ET2020) framework on measures to enhance the employability of graduates.

6

Living conditions for children

Introduction

This article presents a range of statistics covering children's (aged 0–17) living conditions in the European Union (EU), the vast majority of the data is derived from EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), a wide-ranging source of information for analysing poverty and social exclusion. This article provides, among others: information relating to the risk of monetary poverty among children; details concerning the ease with which families with / without children can afford a range of goods; information on the housing conditions in which children live; as well as evidence linking a child's risk of poverty and deprivation to their parents' labour market situation and educational attainment.

Policymakers agree that children should ideally grow up in families with sufficient resources to meet their essential needs, while their future well-being is enhanced through ensuring they have access to a range of services and opportunities including, among others, early childhood education and recreational, sporting and cultural activities. Most EU Member States have a range of policies that aim to tackle child poverty: these tend to be based around promoting children's rights, although there are differences in the balance struck between promoting universal measures and targeting support at specific (vulnerable) groups. ([1])

GIVING CHILDREN A LIFE CHANCE

Many people would argue that a child's opportunities in life should, in an ideal world, not be pre-determined by the characteristics of the family into which they are born. However, a range of studies suggest that this is indeed the case and that children growing up in poverty or social exclusion are less likely to do well at school, enjoy good health, or achieve their full potential later on in life.

The risk of poverty among children appears to be closely linked to the composition of the household into which they are born, in particular, the labour market situation and educational attainment of their parents. Some commentators believe that such a cycle of poverty and social exclusion may be broken by targeting children in their early years. However, in light of the global financial and economic crisis, there has been an increase in the risk of poverty among children, which may at least in part be attributed to austerity measures and decreasing investment in children.

Poverty and social exclusion

Figure 1 shows the proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU since 2005, with information presented for children (aged less than 18 years) and for the whole population. There was some progress made in reducing the risk of poverty or social exclusion up until the onset of the global financial and economic crisis in 2008. However, during the crisis and thereafter there was an increase in the share of the population that was at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

([1]) See 'SPC advisory report to the European Commission on tackling and preventing child poverty, promoting child well-being' of 27 June 2012 (http://europa.eu/epic/news/2012/20121213_council_conclusions_on_preventing_and_tackling_child_poverty_and_social_exclusion_and_promoting_childrens_well_being_en.htm)

Almost 3 out of every 10 children in the EU was at risk of poverty or social exclusion

This was particularly true for children, as the gap between the rate for children and that for the whole population was wider following the crisis (a difference of 3–4 percentage points over the period 2009–13). By 2013, almost 3 out of every 10 children living in the EU-28 — some 27.6 % — was living at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

EU POLICY MEASURES IN RELATION TO POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION AMONG CHILDREN

The European platform against poverty and social exclusion is one of seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy which advocates not only smart and sustainable — but also inclusive — growth. The European Council adopted in June 2010 a headline target for social inclusion, namely, that by 2020 there should be at least 20 million fewer people in the EU who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This headline indicator measures the number of people affected by at least one of three forms of poverty: monetary poverty, material deprivation or low work intensity. To meet the overall target, individual EU Member States have set their own national targets, these are generally expressed as absolute numbers of people to be lifted out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion (compared with national levels for 2008). The EU financially supports such actions through its social investment package and through the EU's funds, in particular the European Social Fund.

A European Commission Recommendation, Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage (2013/112/EU) addresses poverty and social exclusion among children, promoting children's well-being. It encourages the EU Member States to go beyond ensuring children's material security, by promoting equal opportunities so that all children can achieve their full potential, providing a focus on children who face an increased risk due to multiple disadvantages. It stresses the need to develop integrated strategies based on three pillars:

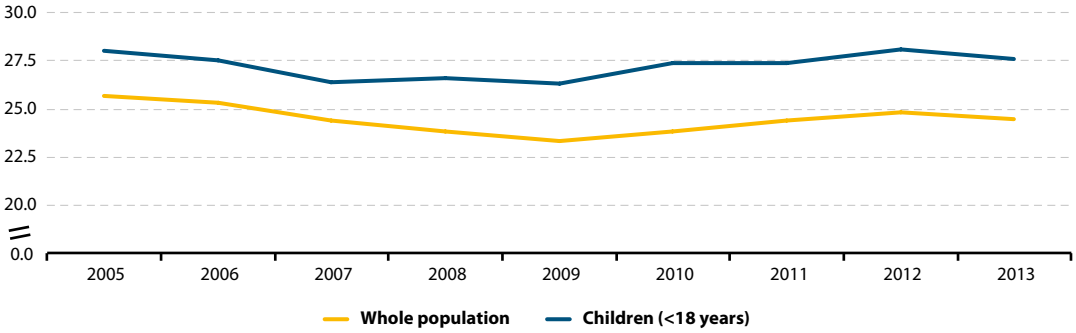
- access to adequate resources (for example, providing children with adequate living standards through a combination of benefits);
- access to affordable quality services (for example, reducing inequality by investing in early childhood education and care, or improving the responsiveness of health systems to address the needs of disadvantaged children); and
- promoting children's right to participate (for example, supporting the participation of children in play, recreation, sport and cultural activities).

Children accounted for more than one in five of those at risk of poverty or social exclusion

In absolute numbers, a total of 123 million persons in the EU-28 were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013; this figure included 26 million children. As such, children accounted for just over one fifth (21 %) of the total number of persons in the EU-28 at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013.

Households with children are usually financially worse off when compared with households without children, as the former face more expenditure linked to the cost of bringing up children. Indeed, the number of children in a family directly influences the risk of monetary poverty shown through statistics, as each child in a family increases the family size and so reduces average income per family member. Governments may choose to target specific types of family units through social transfers and allowances (for example, child allowance or tax credits), often with the goal of encouraging people to have children. These transfers may balance, to some degree, the income situations of families with and without children, with social benefits and taxation likely to mitigate some of the differences.

Figure 1: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, EU, 2005–13 ([1])
(% of the whole population and % of children)



([1]) 2005–09: EU-27. 2010–13: EU-28. 2005–06: estimates. 2013: estimates
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_peps01)

The three conditions of the risk of poverty and social exclusion

The headline indicator covering the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion is defined as the share of the population in at least one of the following three conditions: i) at risk of poverty, which means living below the poverty threshold, ii) in a situation of severe material deprivation, iii) living in a household with low work intensity.

Monetary poverty was the most widespread form of poverty or social exclusion among children affecting almost 11 % of children in the EU-28 in 2013.

DEFINING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Persons at risk of poverty are those living in households with an equivalised disposable income below the risk of poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers). The risk of poverty is a relative measure, which is conventionally set against a threshold of 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income — this means the poverty threshold varies between countries, as well as over time.

Severe material deprivation concerns those persons whose living conditions are constrained by a lack of resources and experience of at least four out of nine deprivation items, in other words, those who cannot afford: i) to pay rent/mortgage or utility bills on time, ii) to keep their home adequately warm, iii) to face unexpected expenses, iv) to eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, v) a one week holiday away from home, vi) a car, vii) a washing machine, viii) a colour television, or ix) a telephone (including mobile telephones).

People living in households with very low work intensity are those aged 0–59 who live in households where the adults aged 18–59 worked, on average, less than 20 % of their total work potential during the past year; students are excluded.

Household income is 'equivalised' (or adjusted) so that the incomes of different types of households can be compared — based on the premise that household income is shared and there are some economies of scale which result from living together. To do so, total household disposable income is divided by the household's size. Eurostat uses the 'modified OECD equivalence scale' which gives a weight of 1.0 to the first adult, 0.5 to any other household member aged 14 and over, and 0.3 to each child below the age of 14. The resulting average income figure is allocated to each member of the household, whether they are an adult or a child.

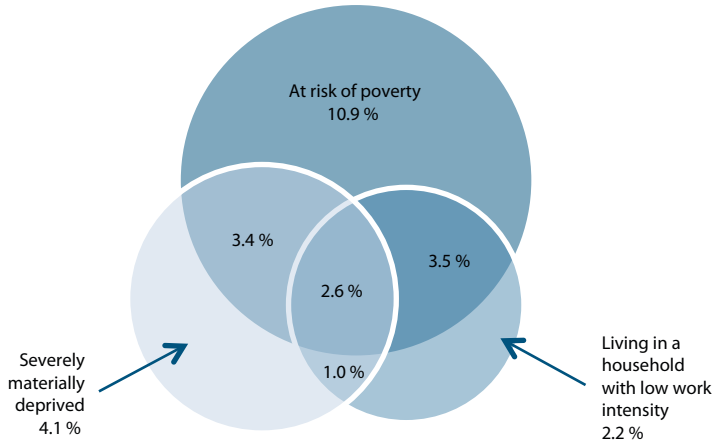
It is sometimes said that it is impossible to abolish poverty as the poverty line is always moving, and as income increases so too does the poverty line. However, it is possible for incomes to increase without affecting the median level of income: for example, a tax break for high wage earners would increase their disposable income without changing the median, while the introduction of a new social transfer targeted specifically at the poor could result in some households being pulled above the poverty threshold without a change in the median level of income.

Figure 2 presents how these three conditions can overlap — note that a person can experience none, one, two or all three of these poverty and / or social exclusion conditions. Outside of the three circles shown in Figure 2, almost three quarters (72.4 %) of the children in the EU-28 did not experience any form of poverty or exclusion in 2013, while the corresponding share for the whole population was higher still, at 75.5 %.

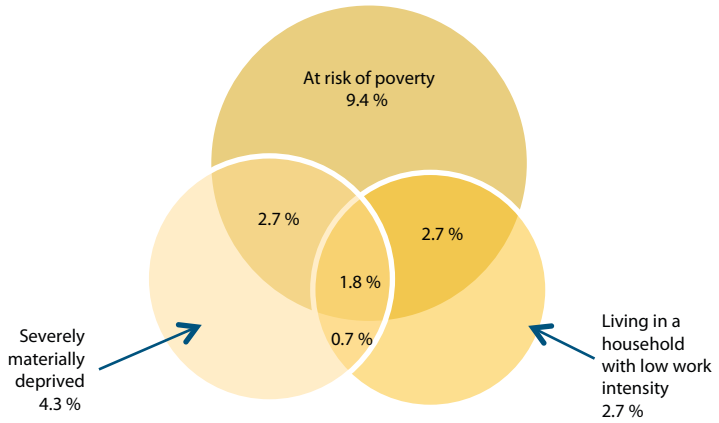
Among the 26 million children in the EU-28 who were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013, just below 10 million were simultaneously affected by more than one of these three conditions. Of these, 3.2 million children were at risk of poverty and severe material deprivation, 3.3 million were at risk of poverty and living in a household with low work intensity, 1.0 million were both materially deprived and living in a household with low work intensity, while 2.4 million were touched by all three conditions (in other words, those simultaneously at risk of poverty, in a situation of severe material deprivation and living in a household with low work intensity). As such, the proportion of children in the EU-28 experiencing all three poverty and social exclusion conditions was 2.6 % in 2013 — again this was higher than the corresponding average for the whole population (1.8 %).

Figure 2: The three dimensions of poverty — an analysis of those at risk of poverty or social exclusion, EU-28, 2013 ([1])
(% of the whole population and % of children)

Children (<18 years):
– neither at risk of poverty,
– nor severely materially deprived,
– nor living in a household with low work intensity
= 72.4 %



Whole population:
– neither at risk of poverty,
– nor severely materially deprived,
– nor living in a household with low work intensity
= 75.5 %



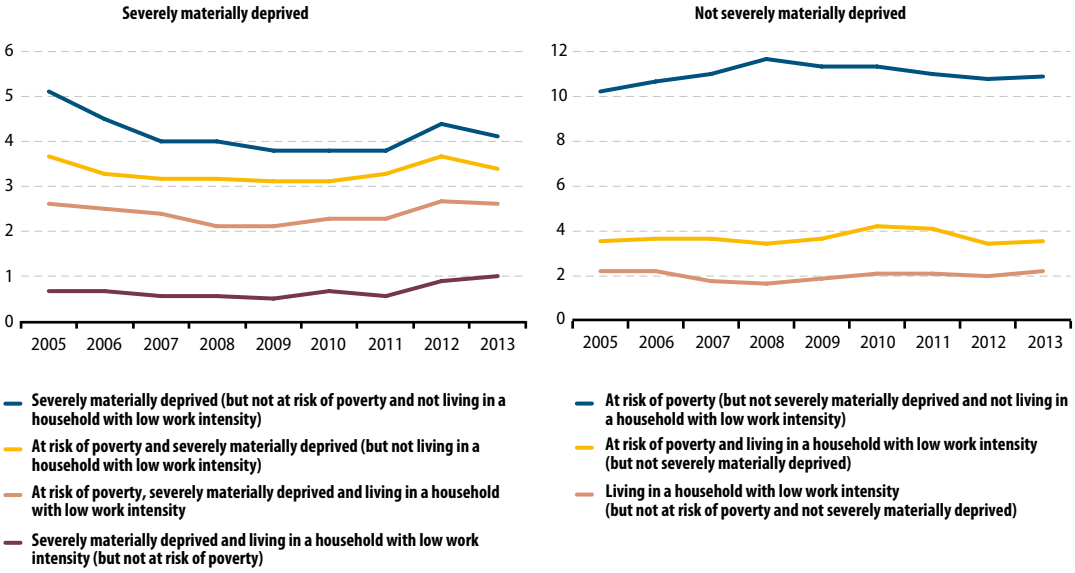
([1]) Estimates.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_pees01)

Monetary poverty was the risk that most affected children

Figure 3 shows developments over time for the proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion; it provides an analysis for the three conditions described above. Breaking down the headline indicator, it is clear that monetary poverty — the proportion of children at risk of poverty (but not severely materially deprived and not living in a household with low work intensity) — was the most widespread form of poverty or social exclusion among children, affecting between 10 % and 12 % of all children in the EU during the period 2005–13. The proportion of children affected by any form of monetary poverty (in other words, on its own or in combination with other conditions) rose to just over one in five (20.4 %); this was higher than the proportion of the whole EU-28 population (children and adults) that was affected by any form of monetary poverty (16.6 %).

Between 2009 and 2013, about half a million additional children in the EU experienced all three poverty and social exclusion conditions simultaneously — this was likely due, at least in part, to the effects of the financial and economic crisis.

Figure 3: Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, EU, 2005–13 ([1])
(% of children)



([1]) EU-27: 2005–09. EU-28: 2010–12. 2005–06: estimates. 2013: estimates. Note the difference in scales for the two parts of the figure.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_pees01)

The proportion of children suffering from severe material deprivation rose rapidly in 2012 then slightly decreased…

Prior to the financial and economic crisis, the proportion of children in the EU-28 that were exclusively facing severe material deprivation or living in households with low work intensity fell, as the EU economy grew, disposable incomes and employment levels tended to rise, and with more people in work, the average household had more money to purchase goods and services. With the onset of the crisis, there was a subsequent increase in the proportion of children in the EU-28 that were living in households with low work intensity in 2010; this was probably linked to persistently high unemployment levels and precarious labour markets. The share of children suffering from material deprivation (exclusively or in combination with other conditions) rose rapidly in 2012, likely reflecting a contraction in real wages and living standards. In 2013 the proportion of children materially deprived slightly decreased, but not reaching yet its level prior to the crisis, as shown in the left-hand part of Figure 3.

…while the share of children at risk of monetary poverty rose at the onset of the financial and economic crisis and abated before 2012

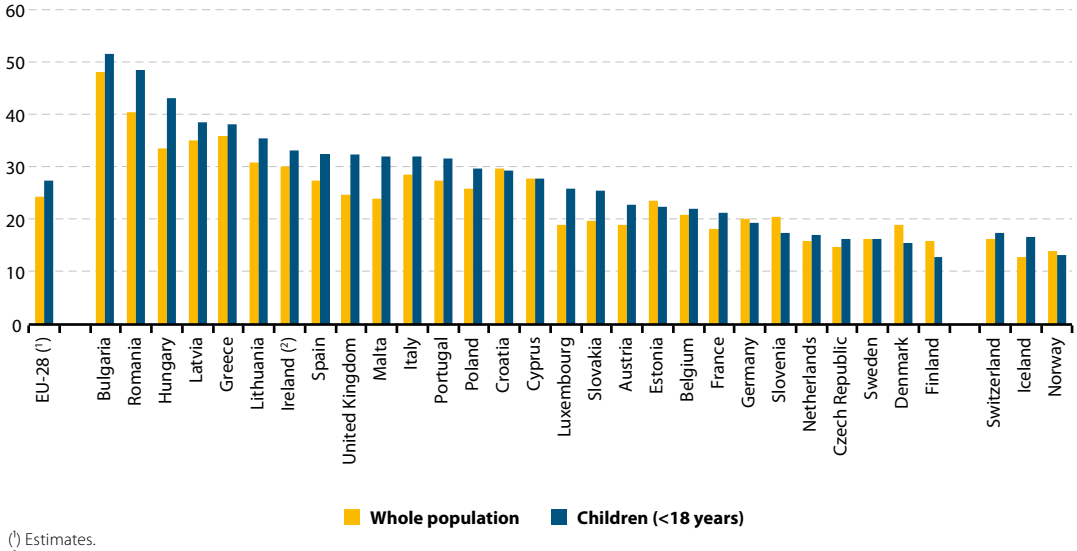
During a period of economic expansion (2005–08) in the EU, the share of children that were exclusively at risk of poverty (but not facing severe material deprivation or living in a household with low work intensity) rose. While this may seem a perverse result, it may be explained through an increasing degree of inequality in relation to the distribution of incomes. Although those at the lower end of the income scale saw their living standards rise during the period 2005–08, the rate at which their incomes rose was slower than the average for the whole population, and as such a higher proportion of children fell into relative poverty. Following the onset of the financial and economic crisis, the proportion of children that were at risk of monetary poverty started to fall (from 2009) — a pattern that continued through to 2013.

Among EU Member States, where the overall risk of poverty was high, the severity of poverty among children also tended to be high

As already shown, children (27.6 %) in the EU-28 were at a greater risk of poverty or social exclusion than the average rate for the whole of the population (24.5 %) in 2013. Figure 4 shows that a similar pattern existed across the majority of the EU Member States, with the gap between the two rates particularly high in Hungary, Romania, Malta, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg, where the risk of poverty or social exclusion for children was at least 7 percentage points above the national average. By contrast, there were eight Member States where a lower proportion of children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion — Slovenia, Estonia, Germany, Croatia, Cyprus and the Nordic Member States.

In Bulgaria more than half of all children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013, while relatively high rates — more than 35 % of all children — were recorded in Romania, Hungary, Latvia, Greece and Lithuania. By contrast, the proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion was much lower in Finland (13.0 %), while fewer than one in five children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Denmark, Sweden, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Germany.

Figure 4: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2013
(% of the whole population and % of children)



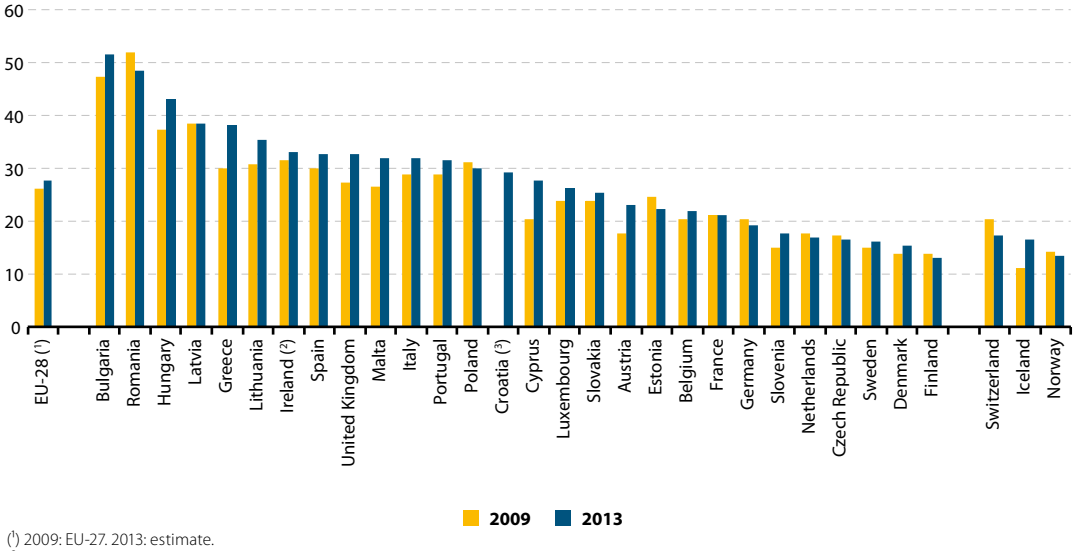
(1) Estimates.
(2) 2012 data.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_peps01)

Figure 5 shows that from a relative low of 26.3 % in 2009, the proportion of children in the EU-28 at risk of poverty or social exclusion rose to 27.6 % by 2013; this average conceals considerable variations among the EU Member States. During this period, which for most Member States can be described as post-crisis, some EU Member States made progress in reducing their share of vulnerable children in society. The largest reductions in at risk of poverty or social exclusion rates for children were recorded in Romania (– 3.5 percentage points), Estonia (– 2.2 percentage points) and Poland (– 1.2 points). Germany, Finland, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands were the only other Member States to report a lower share of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013 than in 2009.

The proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion was particularly high among some of the EU Member States that were most deeply affected economically by the financial and economic crisis

By contrast, some of the EU Member States where the proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion rose at its most rapid pace between 2009 and 2013 were characterised as having been deeply affected by the financial and economic crisis, for example, Greece and Cyprus. Alongside a contraction in economic activity, these countries were also characterised by austerity measures, which probably impacted upon a range of measures and services designed to support children.

Figure 5: Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2009 and 2013
(% of children)



(1) 2009: EU-27. 2013: estimate.
(2) 2012 instead of 2013.
(3) 2009: not available.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_peps01)

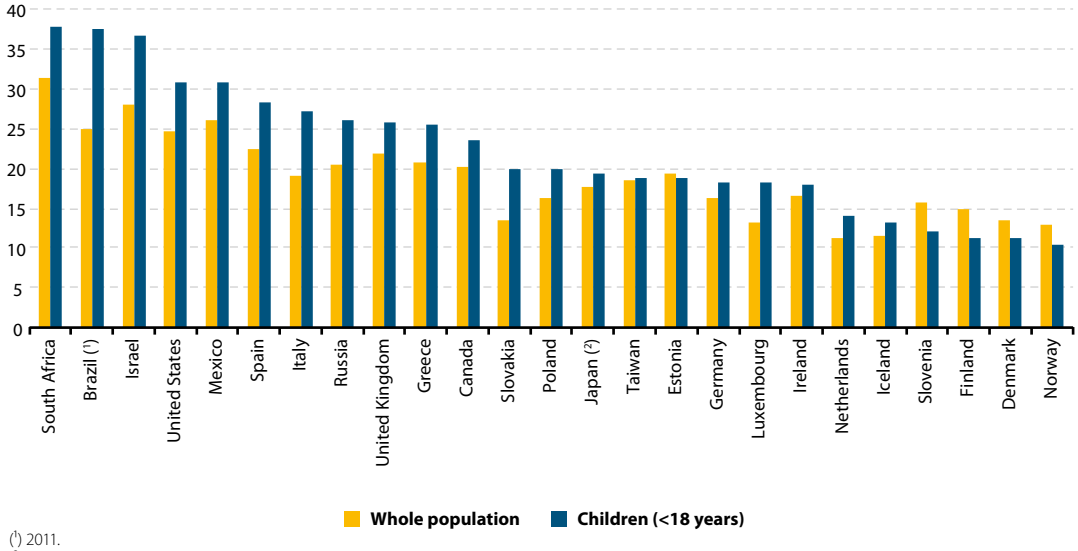
World comparison: the poverty situation for children living in non-member countries is often less favourable than in the EU

Of the 2.2 billion children in the world, almost half are thought to live in poverty, one in three without adequate shelter, one in five without access to safe water. According to UNICEF, an average of 21 000 children across the world died each day in 2010 (down from 33 000 in 1990). The main causes of death were malnutrition, unsafe drinking water and a lack of access to medical services (for example, vaccines).

The Luxembourg Income Study Database (LIS) provides income statistics for upper and middle-income countries. Note that the equivalence scale employed for household size is different to that used by Eurostat in the EU-SILC and is based on the square root of the number of household members, regardless of age. Figure 6 shows that at risk of poverty rates for children were particularly high in South Africa, Brazil and Israel, where more than one in three children were living with less than 60 % of the median level of income.

Among those EU Member States shown in Figure 6, at risk of poverty rates for children and the whole population were consistently below the rates recorded in South Africa, Brazil, Israel, the United States or Mexico. The Nordic countries had some of the lowest at risk of poverty rates for children, across both EU Member States and the non-member countries of Iceland and Norway.

Figure 6: Relative poverty rates, 2010
(% of the whole population below 60 % of median income and % of children)



(1) 2011.
(2) 2008.
Source: LIS Inequality Key Figures

What impact does a parent's education and job have on a child's risk of poverty?

Many people would argue that the opportunities afforded to children as they grow up should not be determined by the characteristics of the family into which they were born. That said, each child is born with a unique set of genes that may, at least in part, predispose them to certain abilities or levels of health. Furthermore, parents can influence the life outcomes for their children, through nurturing, encouraging aspirations and investing time and money in their education and health, while external social, cultural and economic environments may also play a role in shaping a child's development. These determinants define a child's life chances as they mature into adults, look for work, leave the parental home and start to establish their own family unit.

PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

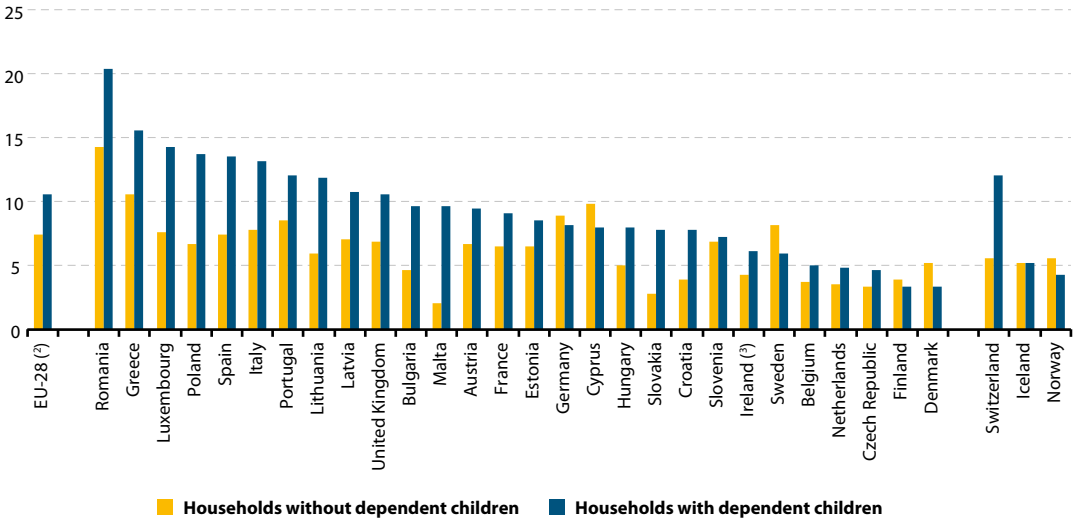
Intergenerational poverty may be analysed in relation to the educational attainment of a child's parents. The international standard classification of education (ISCED 1997) covers seven levels of education:

ISCED 0 — pre-primary education;
ISCED 1 — primary education;
ISCED 2 — lower secondary education;
ISCED 3 — (upper) secondary education;
ISCED 4 — post-secondary non-tertiary education;
ISCED 5 — first stage of tertiary education;
ISCED 6 — second stage of tertiary education.

More than 1 in 10 households with dependent children were affected by in-work poverty

There is an old saying that work is the surest way to get out of poverty. However, in recent years there has been a sharp rise in precarious forms of employment, such as short-term contracts, low-pay or part-time work. Low wage growth, households where only one adult is in employment and households where those in work only have limited contracts are some of the reasons why an increasing share of working families remain in poverty. Furthermore, it is likely that some parents choose to work a limited number of hours each week in order to balance their professional and private lives; while for some this may be a lifestyle choice, the proportion of people that do so may, at least in part, be linked to the availability of adequate childcare arrangements for working parents (2).

Figure 7: In-work at risk of poverty rate by household type, 2013 (1)
(%)



(1) The share of persons who are at work and have an equivalised disposable income below the risk of poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers).
(2) Estimates.
(3) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_iw02)

In-work poverty is defined as the proportion of persons who are at work and have an equivalised disposable income below the risk of poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers). Some 10.6 % of households in the EU-28 with dependent children faced the risk of in-work poverty in 2013, a share that was 3.2 percentage points higher than the rate recorded among households without dependent children. Romania (20.5 %) recorded the highest rate of in-work poverty for households with dependent children, followed by Greece (15.6 %) and Luxembourg (14.3 %).

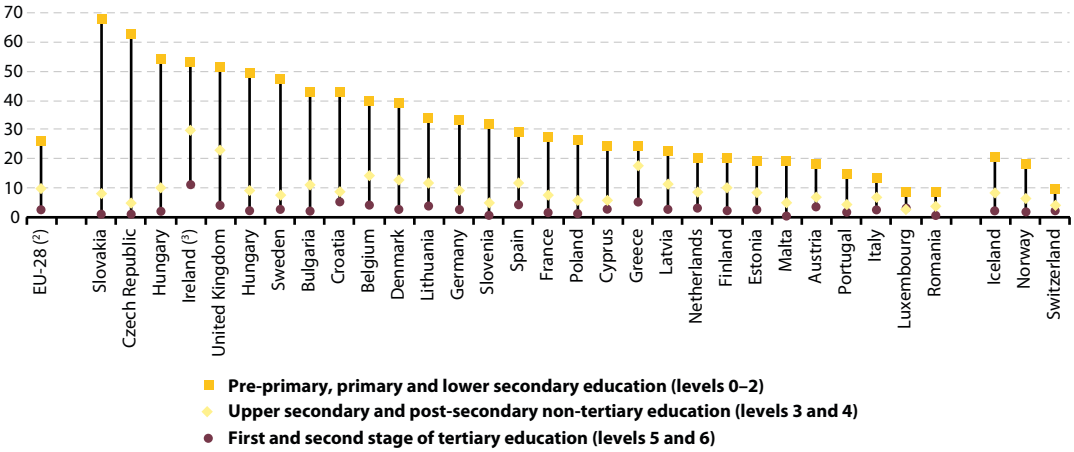
(2) See the publication 'Gender equality in the workforce: Reconciling work, private and family life in Europe' available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/140502_gender_equality_workforce_ssr_en.pdf

The in-work at risk of poverty rate was higher among households with dependent children (compared with those without children) in the majority of EU Member States. The biggest differences were recorded in Malta (where the in-work at risk of poverty rate was 7.7 percentage points higher among households with dependent children). There were also relatively large differences in Poland, Luxembourg, Romania, Spain and Lithuania (6 percentage points or more).

One out of four children whose parents had no more than a lower secondary level of education lived in households characterised by low work intensity

Figure 8 extends the analysis by looking at the share of children who live in households with low work intensity presented for each EU Member State by the highest level of education attained by either parent.

Figure 8: Children living in households with low work intensity by highest education level of their parents, 2013 ([1])
(% of children)

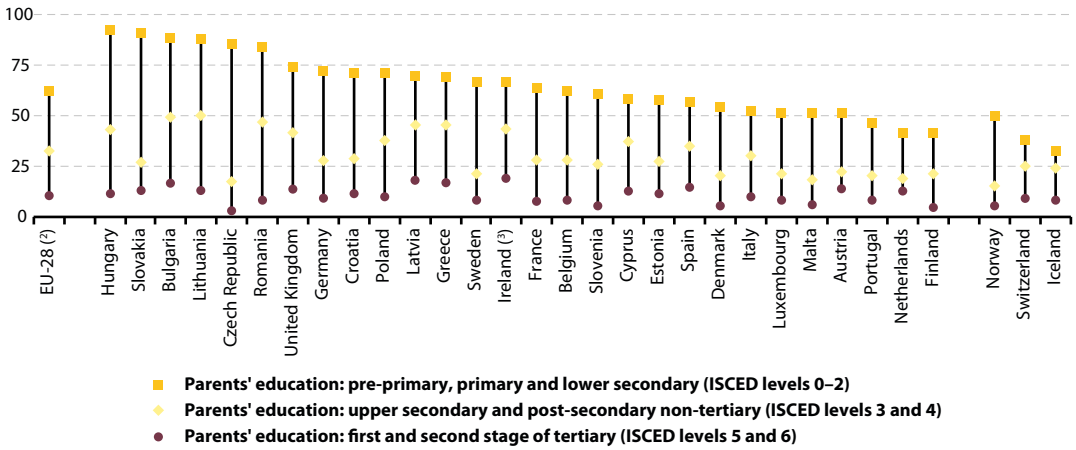


([1]) ISCED 1997. The work intensity of a household is the ratio of the total number of months that all working-age household members have worked during the income reference year and the total number of months the same household members theoretically could have worked in the same period. Low work intensity is defined as any ratio below the threshold of 0.20.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013..
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_lvhl60)

Over one quarter (26.1%) of all children in the EU-28 whose parents had no more than a lower secondary level of education (ISCED levels 0-2) lived in a household with low work intensity in 2013. The share living in households with low work intensity was considerably lower among those children whose parents remained longer in the education system, falling to 9.7% for those whose parents had no more than an upper secondary level of education (ISCED levels 3 and 4), and to 2.8% for those whose parents had a tertiary level of education (ISCED levels 5 and 6).

This pattern was repeated in each of the EU Member States. Among children whose parents had no more than a lower secondary level of education, more two thirds (68.1 %) of the children in Slovakia found themselves living in a household with low work intensity, a share that fell to less than 10 % in Luxembourg and Romania. By contrast, the proportion of children whose parents had completed a tertiary level of education and who found themselves living in households with low work intensity was considerably lower, with 16 of the Member States reporting shares below the EU-28 average of 2.8 %.

Figure 9: Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion by highest education level attained by their parents living in the same household, 2013 ([1])
(% of children)



([1]) ISCED 1997.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_peps60)

Children whose parents had a higher level of education were, on average, exposed to a lower risk of poverty or social exclusion

Almost two thirds (62.2 %) of all children in the EU-28 whose parents had attained no more than a lower secondary level of education were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013. This group of children were almost twice as likely to face the risk of poverty or social exclusion as children whose parents had at most an upper secondary level of education (32.2 %). The risk of poverty or social exclusion was considerably lower among those children whose parents had a tertiary level of education (10.5 %).

([3]) J. W. Lynch and G. Kaplan, *'Socioeconomic position'*, in Social Epidemiology, L. F. Berkman and I. Kawachi, Eds., pp. 13–25, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, USA, 2000 (http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/51520/Lynch%20J,%20Socioeconomic%20Position,%202000%20%28chapter%29.pdf;jsessionid=199EBEB4DC1E1CAC694E1E1AC3442304?sequence=1)

([4]) See *'Raise household income to improve children's educational, health and social outcomes'* at http://www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/news/archives/2013/10/CASEJRFReport.aspx

This pattern was repeated in each of the EU Member States with the risk of poverty or social exclusion for children highest among those children born to parents with low levels of educational attainment. Even in the Member States where the differences were at their smallest — the Netherlands, Austria, Finland and Portugal — children whose parents had a low level of educational attainment were about thirty percentage points more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion than children whose parents had a tertiary level of educational attainment. The level of parental educational attainment had a far greater impact on a child's risk of poverty or exclusion in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Lithuania and Bulgaria, as children whose parents had a low level of educational attainment had a risk of poverty or social exclusion that was more than 70 percentage points higher.

Children of wealthier and more educated parents appear to have a higher chance of succeeding at school, better health ([3]), and (upon starting work) earn higher incomes, while the converse is true among those born into poorer families ([4]). This section has shown that both in-work poverty and parental educational attainment may be closely linked to the risk of poverty or social exclusion. This evidence supports the notion of intergenerational transmission of poverty, in other words, a cycle of poverty being passed from one generation to the next among those less fortunate members of society.

Material deprivation of children: the inability to afford a range of goods and services

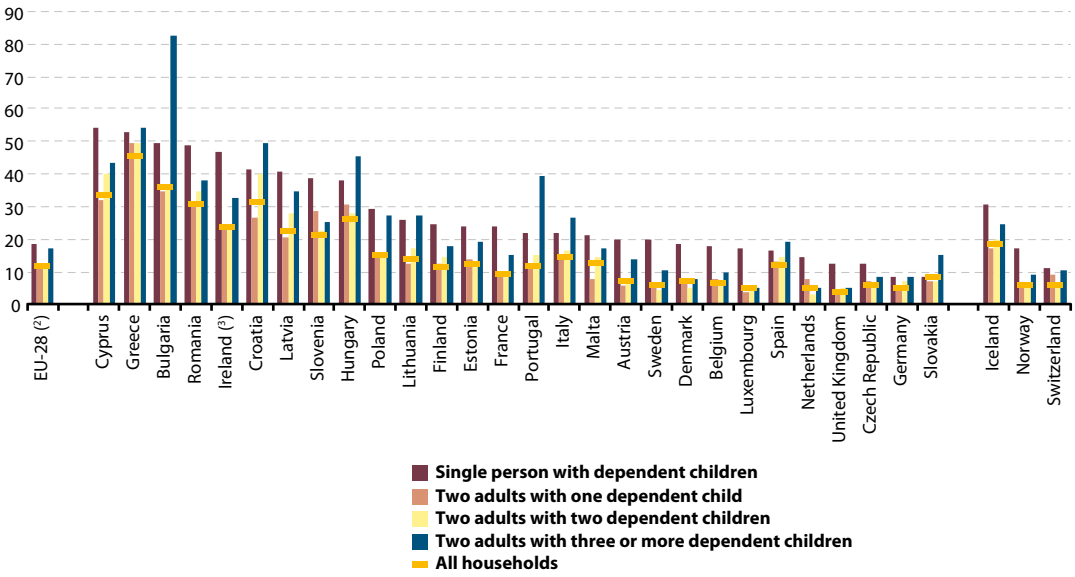
The majority of the information presented in this article so far has been focused on relative measures of poverty, referring to national poverty thresholds. Material deprivation is a more absolute measure of poverty and provides a useful complement to analyse poverty and social exclusion; for a definition of material deprivation and severe material deprivation, see the box titled 'Defining poverty and social exclusion'. The indicators included in this section are defined in relation to the enforced inability to afford a range of goods and services, considered to be desirable or even necessary to lead an adequate life. A number of examples are presented, starting with the proportion of households that are in arrears on regular payments, before moving on to the (in)ability of households to afford a computer or a range of goods and services that cater for the specific needs of children.

A higher proportion of households with children were in arrears for regular monthly payments

Figure 10 provides an analysis by EU Member State in relation to the proportion of households that faced arrears in paying their mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase items; in other words, people who could not keep up with the regular monthly payments that most households face as part of their budget each month. The information presented shows that, on average, single parent households with dependent children and households with two adults and three or more dependent children were more likely to face difficulties in making these regular monthly payments than was typical for all households.

Figure 10: Households with arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase), by selected type of household, 2013 ([1])

(%)



([1]) Figure is ranked on single persons with dependent children.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mdes05)

Almost 12 % of all households in the EU-28 had arrears (for mortgage or rental payments, utility bills or hire purchase payments) in 2013. This figure rose to nearly one in five (18.8 %) households among those composed of a single parent with dependent children, while households with two adults and dependent children generally faced less difficulty in making regular monthly payments. This was particularly the case for two adult households with a single or two dependent children, as between 12 % and 13 % of such households faced difficulties with arrears in 2013, which was almost the same rate as the average for all households. Those households with a higher number of dependent children — three or more — faced more difficulties (17.4 %).

Among the EU Member States, more than half of all single parent households in Cyprus (54.2 %) and Greece (52.8 %) and about 49 % of single parent households in Bulgaria (49.4 %) and Romania (48.6 %) had arrears in 2013. The proportion of single parent households in arrears was higher than the average for all households in each of the EU Member States. In five Member States, namely Ireland, Cyprus, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia, the proportion of single person households with dependent children that faced arrears was even more than 17 percentage points ([5]).

([5]) As 2013 data are not yet available for Ireland, 2012 results have been used for this country.

Some 17.4 % of households composed of two adults with three or more dependent children in the EU-28 faced arrears in 2013. This share rose to more than four in five (82.8 %) of such households in Bulgaria, while it was just over half (54.4 %) in Greece. By contrast, less than one on twenty households composed of two adults and three or more dependent children in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (4.9 %) faced arrears. In the Netherlands and Luxembourg the proportion of these households that faced arrears was similar to the rate recorded for all households (5.0 % and 5.2 % respectively).

Single person households with dependent children faced greater difficulty in being able to afford a computer

Just over 1 in 20 households (5.1 %) across the EU-28 faced difficulties in being able to afford a computer in 2013. Among those households where a single person was living with dependent children, this proportion rose to 8.6 %. By contrast, households composed of two adults with dependent children faced less difficulty in being able to afford a computer (Figure 11).

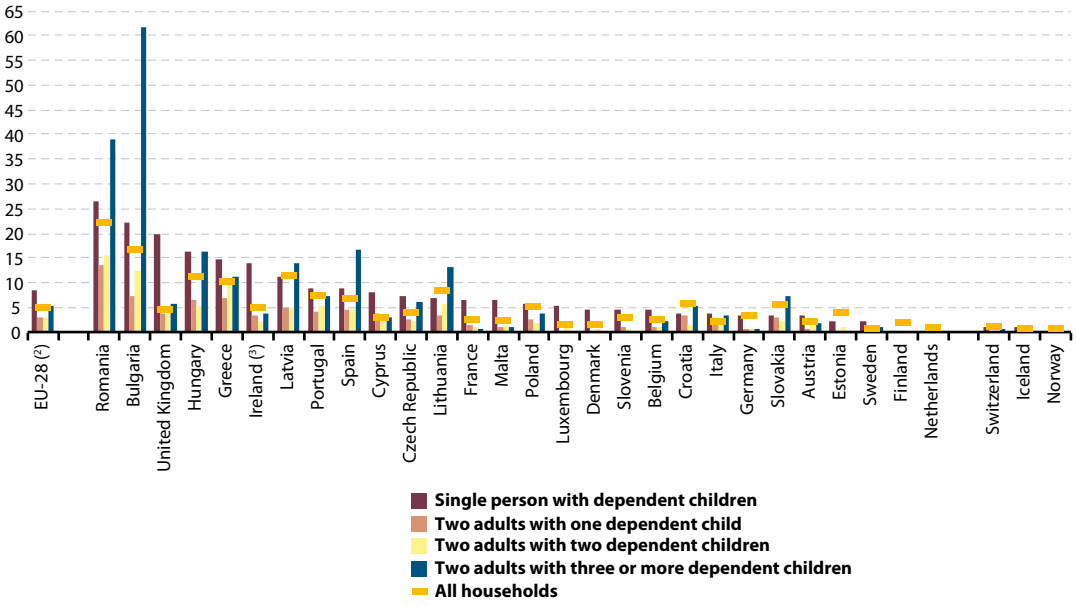
However, among the EU Member States, those households facing the greatest difficulty in being able to afford a computer were those in Bulgaria and Romania composed of two adults with three or more dependent children. More than three in five (61.8 %) of these households in Bulgaria faced an enforced lack of a computer in 2013, a share that fell to 39.1 % in Romania, which was nevertheless more than twice as high as the two next highest shares, 16.6 % and 16.3%, recorded for Spain and Hungary respectively. In Bulgaria, the proportion of households composed of two adults with three or more dependent children unable to afford a computer was 45.2 percentage points higher than the average for all households, while In Romania the difference was 16.8 percentage points. By contrast, in 16 of the EU Member States the proportion of households composed of two adults with three or more dependent children that faced difficulties in being able to afford a computer was lower than the national average for all households.

Some 26.3 % of single person households with dependent children in 2013 faced difficulties in being able to afford a computer in Romania. In excess of one in five (22.2 %) single parent households in Bulgaria experienced the same difficulty, while corresponding shares were above one tenth of single parent households in the United Kingdom, Hungary, Greece, Ireland ([6]), Latvia and Portugal. By contrast, single person households with dependent children in Slovakia, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland and the Netherlands faced less difficulty in being able to afford a computer than the average for all households. The gap was the widest in Slovakia, where the proportion of single parent households facing difficulties in being able to afford a computer was 2.5 percentage points lower than the average for all households, followed by Estonia where this gap was 2.0 points, Croatia 1.9 points and Lithuania 1.8 points.

Households composed of two adults and no more than two dependent children often reported less difficulty in being able to afford a computer than the average for all households. Indeed, with the exception of Romania, the proportion of households with two adults and a single or two dependent children that faced difficulties in being able to afford a computer was consistently lower than one tenth, other than for households with two adults and two dependent children in Bulgaria (12.4 %) and Greece (10.5 %).

([6]) Data for Ireland is from 2012 instead of 2013.

Figure 11: Households with an enforced lack of a computer, by selected type of household, 2013 ([1]) (%)



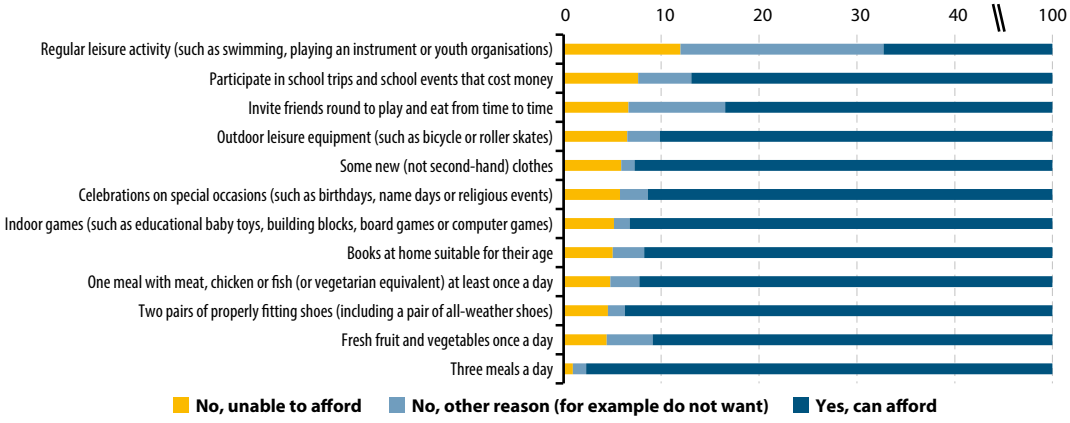
([1]) Figure is ranked on single persons with dependent children.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mddu03)

A third of all children in Romania were deprived of having books at home suitable for their age

An ad-hoc module conducted as part of the 2009 EU-SILC exercise provides information focused on specific items linked to material deprivation among children. Note that the coverage of the module referred to children aged 1–15 years and if one child in the household missed a specific item then all children within the household were considered to be deprived of that particular item. The statistics distinguish between the inability to afford a good or service and other reasons why people do not own particular goods or participate in particular activities (for example, some households may choose to live without a car or a television, while some children may not want to participate in particular leisure activities).

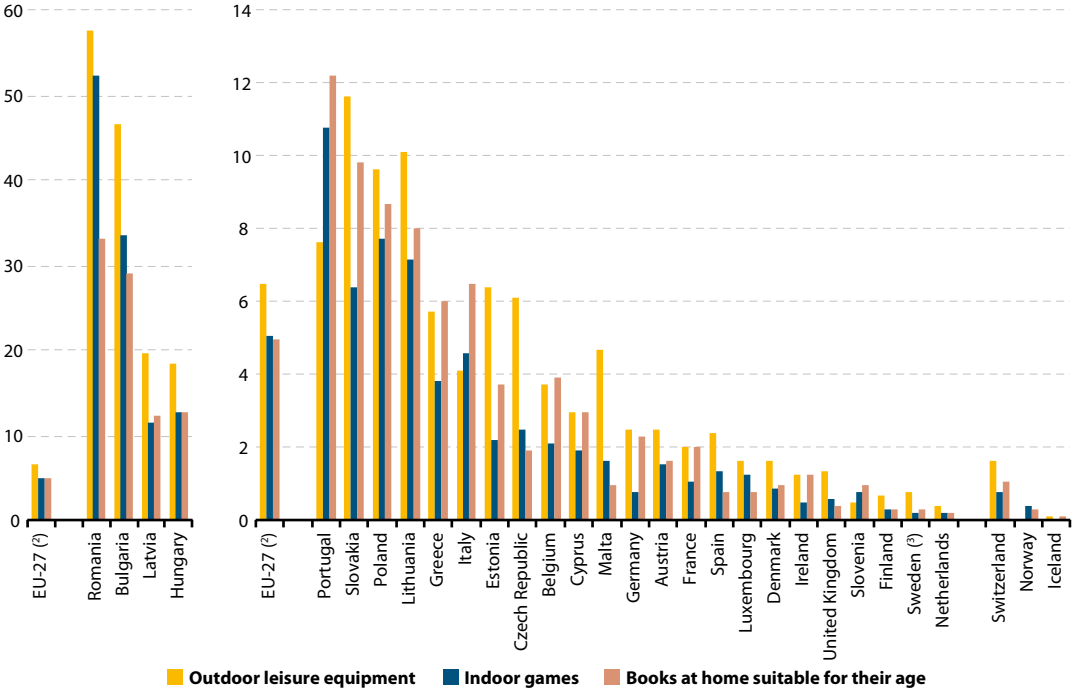
In 2009, a 12.0 % share of children (aged 1–15) in the EU-27 were deprived of practising a leisure activity — such as swimming or playing a musical instrument — as a result of an inability to pay, while 7.6 % were deprived of participating in school trips or events that cost money. While the vast majority (90 %–95 %) of children in the EU-27 enjoyed a childhood with a wide range of goods and services, there were disparities across the EU Member States (as shown in Figure 13). For example, while 1 in 20 children in the EU-27 in 2009 were deprived of having books at home that were suitable for their age, this share rose to one in three (33.0 %) children in Romania, nearly 3 in10 (28.9 %) children in Bulgaria, and around one in eight children in Latvia (12.4 %), Hungary (12.5 %) and Portugal (12.2 %).

Figure 12: Households' ability to purchase selected children's items, EU-27, 2009 (1)
(% of children aged 1–15 years)



(1) Estimates.
Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad-hoc module (2009, variables HD100–HD210)

Figure 13: Households unable to afford selected children's items, EU-27, 2009 (1)
(% of children aged 1–15 years)



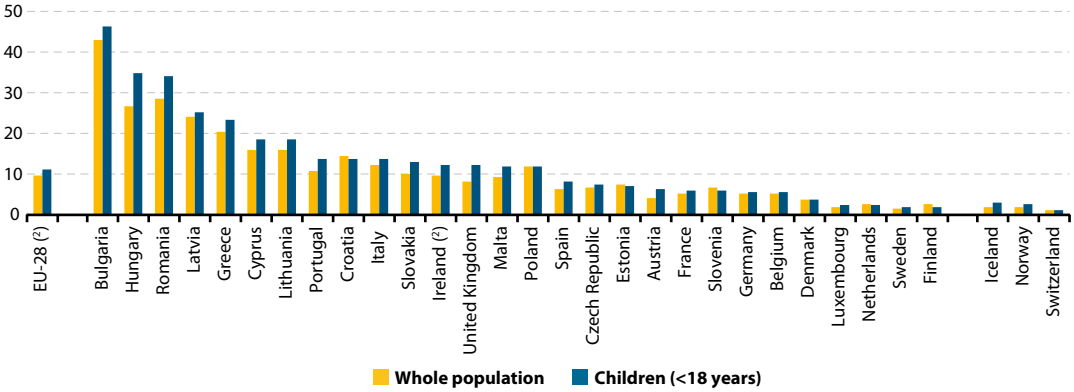
(1) Note the difference in scales for the two parts of the figure. Figure is ranked on the average of the three selected items. Croatia: not available.
(2) Estimates.
(3) Unreliable.
Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad-hoc module (2009, variables HD150–HD170)

Severe material deprivation was slightly lower for children (than for the whole population) in Croatia, Finland, Slovenia, Estonia, the Netherlands and Poland

The proportion of children in the EU-28 experiencing severe material deprivation was 1.4 percentage points higher than the corresponding ratio for the whole population and stood at 11.0 % in 2013. While the share of children experiencing severe material deprivation was generally higher than that for the whole population, this pattern was not repeated across all of the EU Member States. Indeed, in Croatia, Finland, Slovenia, Estonia, the Netherlands and Poland a lower proportion of children faced severe material deprivation in 2013, albeit with rates that were only marginally lower than for the whole population.

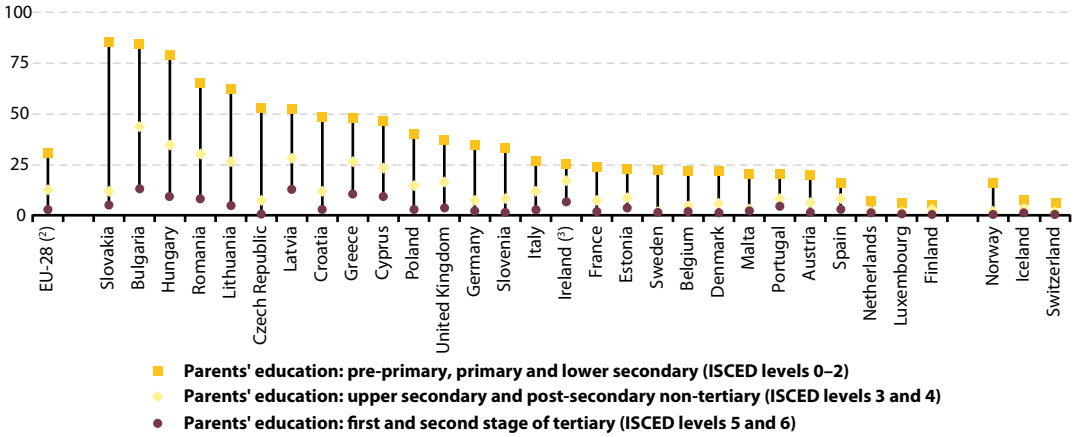
There were 13 EU Member States where the proportion of children experiencing severe material deprivation in 2013 was at least 2 percentage points higher than the national average. The gap was largest in the United Kingdom, Romania and Hungary; in the latter the severe material deprivation rate for children was 8.2 percentage points higher than the average for the whole population.

Figure 14: Severe material deprivation rate, 2013 ([1])
(% of the whole population and % of children)



([1]) Material deprivation refers to a state of economic strain, defined as the proportion of the population that cannot afford (rather than choosing not to purchase) the following items: i) to pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills; ii) to keep their home adequately warm; iii) to face unexpected expenses; iv) to eat meat or proteins regularly; v) to go on holiday; vi) to buy a television set; vii) to buy a washing machine; viii) to buy a car; ix) to buy a telephone. Severe material deprivation rate is defined as the enforced inability to pay for at least four of the above-mentioned items.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mddd11)

Figure 15: Severe material deprivation rate for children by highest education level of their parents, 2013 ([1])
(% of children)



([1]) Material deprivation refers to a state of economic strain, defined as the proportion of the population that cannot afford (rather than choosing not to purchase) the following items: i) to pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills; ii) to keep their home adequately warm; iii) to face unexpected expenses; iv) to eat meat or proteins regularly; v) to go on holiday; vi) to buy a television set; vii) to buy a washing machine; viii) to buy a car; ix) to buy a telephone. Severe material deprivation rate is defined as the enforced inability to pay for at least four of the above-mentioned items.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mddd60)

Severe material deprivation among children inversely related to parental educational attainment

Across the EU-28, severe material deprivation in 2013 affected almost one third (30.4 %) of children whose parents had attained no more than a lower secondary level of educational attainment. The proportion was considerably lower among children whose parents had attained an upper secondary level of education (12.5 %) or a tertiary level of education (2.7 %).

The share of children whose parents had a tertiary level of educational attainment experiencing severe material deprivation was less than 1 % in 2013 in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and the Czech Republic. By contrast, at least three out of every four children whose parents had no more than a lower secondary level of educational attainment in Slovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary faced severe material deprivation.

Housing quality and satisfaction

The cost and quality of housing are key elements that contribute to overall living standards and well-being. Indeed, the risk of poverty is strongly linked to the burden of sustaining a household and is therefore especially difficult for those with low qualifications and those in relatively poorly paid jobs.

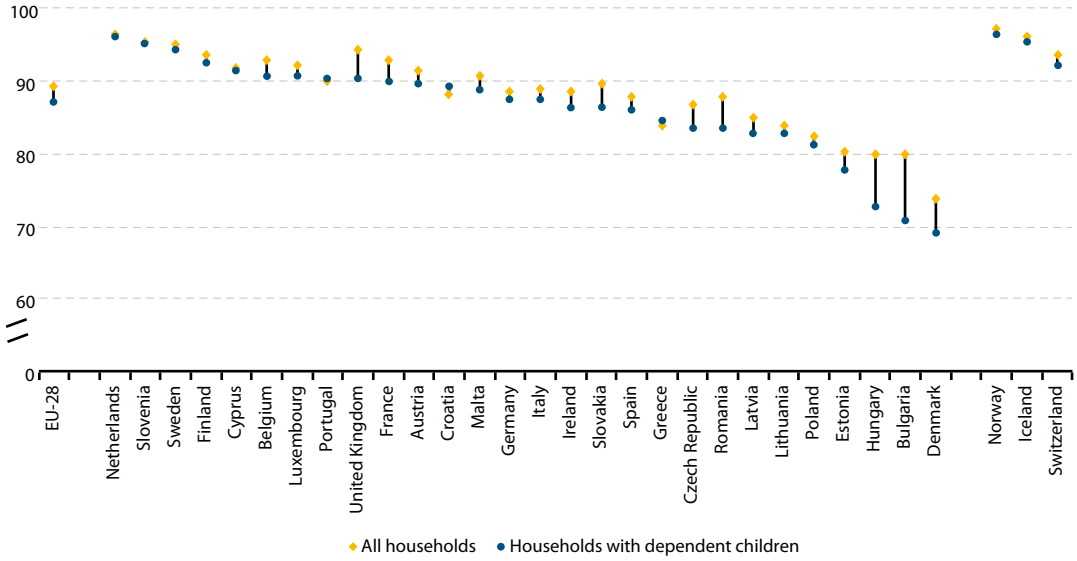
As such, indicators that measure the quality, facilities and space available within dwellings may provide complementary information for assessing the material conditions of different groups within society. Housing quality can be assessed by looking at a range of housing deficiencies, such as a lack of sanitary facilities (a bath or shower, or indoor flushing toilet) and problems in the general condition of the dwelling (a leaking roof, or a dwelling that is considered to be too dark). Note that the statistics presented in this section

refer to questions that were asked only once for all members of each household surveyed.

The vast majority of people in the EU-28 were satisfied with their overall housing conditions in 2012 (see Figure 16). Among the EU Member States the highest degrees of satisfaction — for both the whole population and for households with children (aged less than 18 years) — were recorded in the Netherlands and Slovenia, with both rates in excess of 95 %.

The lowest levels of satisfaction with housing conditions among households containing children were recorded in Hungary (72.7 %), Bulgaria (70.9 %) and Denmark (69.2 %). These were the only three EU Member States where less than three quarters of the households containing children were satisfied with their housing conditions in 2012. The same three Member States also recorded the largest differences in satisfaction rates between households containing children and the whole population, as the level of satisfaction among households with children was 9.1 percentage points lower than for the whole population in Bulgaria, 7.3 points lower in Hungary, and 4.5 points lower in Denmark. Indeed, households with children were generally less inclined to be satisfied with their housing conditions, although this pattern was reversed in Portugal, Greece and Croatia.

Figure 16: Overall satisfaction with housing conditions, 2012 (1)
(% of households and % of households with children)



(1) Overall satisfaction is defined as the proportion of the population who were satisfied or very satisfied with their dwelling.
Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad-hoc module (2012, variable HC080)

More than one in five households with children complained about a lack of space

A shortage of space is one among a range of reasons that may be cited in relation to dissatisfaction with a dwelling. The proportion of households with children in the EU-28 reporting a shortage of space was 22.0 % in 2012 (some 7.2 percentage points higher than the corresponding share for the whole population); this is perhaps not surprising given that many children have to share a bedroom with their siblings.

Around one third of households with children in Bulgaria, Romania and Poland reported a shortage of space in their dwelling in 2012, this share peaking in Latvia at 36.3 %. By contrast, less than one in five households with children reported a lack of space in eight of the EU Member States, with the lowest shares being recorded in the Czech Republic (15.1 %) and the Netherlands (14.8 %).

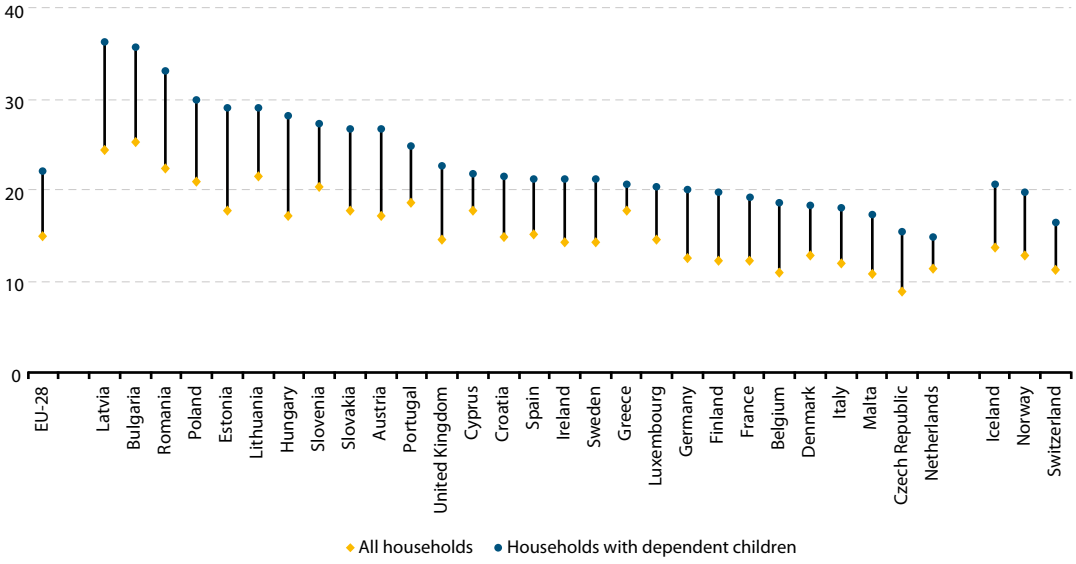
The proportion of households reporting that they did not have enough space was consistently higher among those containing children when compared with the average for the whole population in 2012; the difference was generally with the range of 5–10 percentage points, although it was higher in Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

Almost one quarter of all households with dependent children suffered from overcrowding

To some degree the indicators presented above may be considered as subjective, insofar as they are based upon the perception of each respondent.

The cost and quality of housing are key elements that contribute to overall living standards and well-being.

Figure 17: Population reporting a shortage of space in their dwelling, 2012
(% of households and % of households with children)



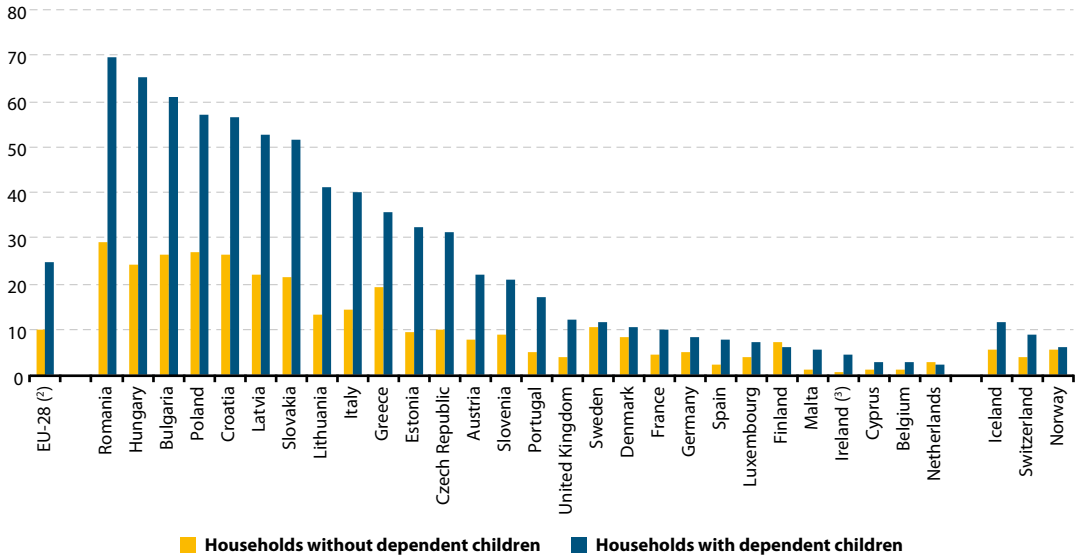
Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC ad-hoc module (2012, variable HC010)

The analysis of housing quality and satisfaction can be extended and balanced by referring to a range of objective indicators. Indeed, EU-SILC provides a measure of overcrowding that is based on the number of rooms and the number of people living in a household. In 2013, the overcrowding rate for households with dependent children in the EU-28 was 24.8 %, which was 15.0 percentage points higher than the corresponding share for households without dependent children.

The highest rates of overcrowding among households with dependent children were observed in Romania (69.5 %), Hungary (65.0 %), Bulgaria (60.8 %), Poland (56.9 %) and Croatia (56.4 %); each of these reported overcrowding rates for households without dependent children in the range of 25 %–30 % (which also marked the highest rates among the EU Member States).

There were 9 EU Member States in 2013 with overcrowding rates for households with dependent children that were less than 10 %; the lowest shares (less than 4 %) were recorded in Cyprus, Belgium and the Netherlands. The Netherlands and Finland were the only EU Member States to report that their overcrowding rate for households with dependent children was lower than their rate for households without dependent children (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Overcrowding rate by household type, 2013 ([1])
(%)



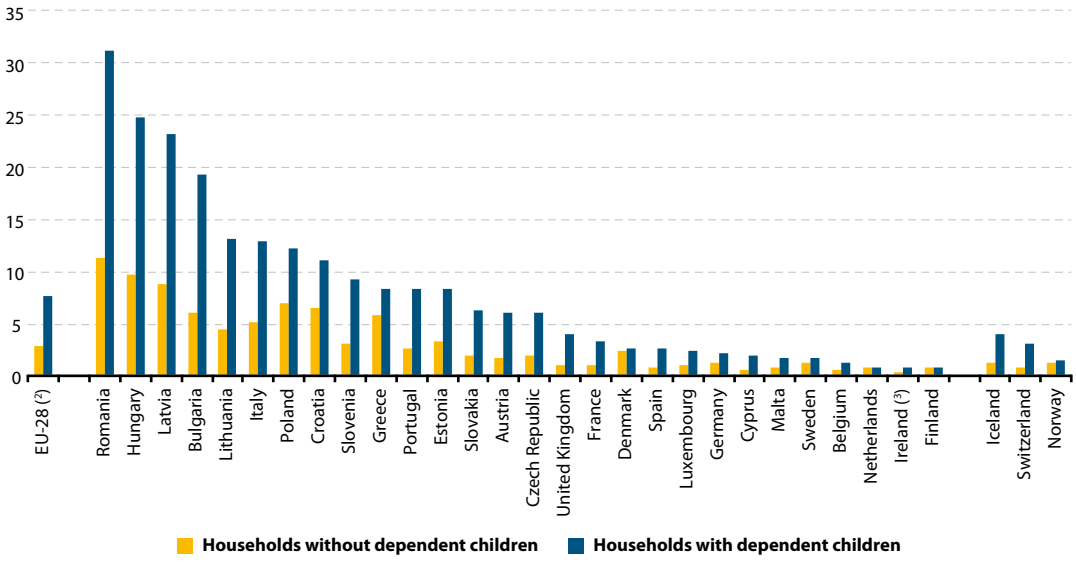
([1]) The overcrowding rate is defined as the proportion of the population living in an overcrowded household — those households which do not have at their disposal a minimum number of rooms equal to: one room for the household; one room per couple in the household; one room for each single person aged 18 or more; one room per pair of single people of the same gender between 12 and 17 years of age; one room for each single person between 12 and 17 years of age and not included in the previous category; one room per pair of children under 12 years of age.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_lvho05b)

Severe housing deprivation is defined in relation to insufficient space and poor amenities. In 2013, the severe housing deprivation rate for households with dependent children in the EU-28 was 7.6 %, which was 2.5 times as high as the corresponding rate for households without dependent children (2.9 %).

The highest severe housing deprivation rates among households with dependent children were exhibited by Romania (31.2 %), Hungary (24.8 %) and Latvia (23.2 %); none of the remaining EU Member States recorded a rate that was above 20 %. By contrast, the severe housing deprivation rate was less than 1 % for households with dependent children in the Netherlands, Ireland ([7]) and Finland.

All EU Member States reported severe housing deprivation rates for households with dependent children higher than those for households without dependent children, except the Netherlands and Finland for which the rates were similar (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Severe housing deprivation by household type, 2013 ([1])
(%)



([1]) Housing deprivation is a measure of poor amenities and is calculated by referring to those households with a leaking roof, no bath/shower and no indoor toilet, or a dwelling considered too dark. Severe housing deprivation rate is defined as the proportion of the population living in a dwelling which is considered as overcrowded, while also exhibiting at least one of the housing deprivation measures.
([2]) Estimates.
([3]) 2012 instead of 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mdho06b)

HOUSING

One dimension for assessing the quality of housing conditions is the availability of sufficient space in a dwelling. The overcrowding rate describes the proportion of people living in an overcrowded dwelling, as defined by the number of rooms available to the household, the household's size, as well as its members' ages and their family situation.

The severe housing deprivation rate is defined as the share of the population living in dwellings which are considered as being overcrowded, while at the same time having at least one of the following housing deprivation measures: no bath/shower and no indoor toilet; a leaking roof; or a dwelling considered too dark.

([7]) Data for Ireland is from 2012 instead of 2013.

Conclusions: what does the future hold for child poverty and social exclusion in the EU?

Children that grow up in poverty are more likely to suffer from social exclusion and other outcomes in life and are also less likely to develop to their full potential in the future. Breaking this cycle of disadvantage in a child's early years can potentially reduce the risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Although tackling poverty and social exclusion can lead to benefits not only for the individuals concerned but also for society at large, the current economic climate of austerity measures has done little to help policymakers face these widespread challenges. Furthermore, in recent years there have been signs that the (re-)distribution of income is becoming increasingly unequal while real incomes have stagnated or even fallen in a number of EU Member States that were particularly affected by the crisis. This has resulted in an increasing share of the EU's population suffering from a lack of work, monetary poverty and / or social exclusion and material deprivation. The impact of the crisis has been proportionally greater across those households with children.

This article has shown that the risk of poverty is more common among children than it is for the population as a whole. This is particularly the case when children live in households that are characterised by the presence of a single parent or a low degree of work, while parental educational attainment also appears to have a marked impact upon the risk of poverty or social exclusion experienced by children.

Data sources and availability

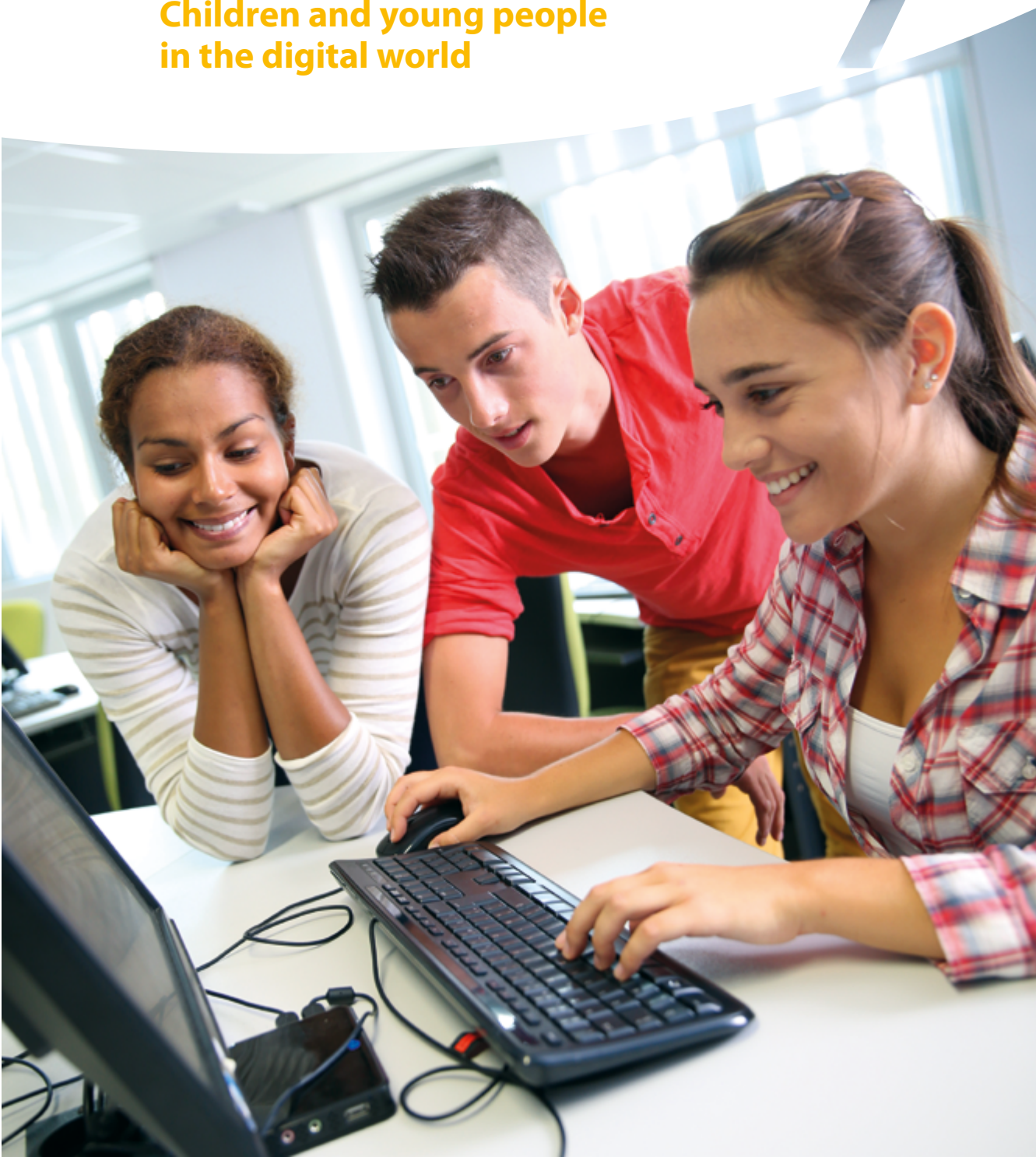
The data used in this article are primarily derived from EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), established under 'framework' en more Regulation 1177/2003. EU-SILC is a multi-purpose instrument that focuses mainly on income, but also gathers information on social exclusion, material deprivation, housing conditions, labour market participation, education and health. It is carried out annually and has a reference population of all private households and their current members residing in the territory of EU Member States; persons living in collective households and in institutions are generally excluded from the target population. The EU-28 aggregate is a population-weighted average of individual national figures. Children are defined as persons aged less than 18.

In a 2009 EU-SILC module, information was collected in relation to child deprivation; this covered children aged 1–15 living in households which could not afford (an enforced lack) a range of goods and services: i) some new (not second-hand) clothes; ii) two pairs of properly fitting shoes, including a pair of all-weather shoes; iii) fresh fruits and vegetables daily; iv) three meals a day; v) one meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent daily; vi) books at home suitable for the children's age; vii) outdoor leisure equipment; viii) indoor games; ix) a suitable place to do homework; x) to consult a dentist when needed; xi) to consult a general practitioner (GP) when needed; xii) regular leisure activities (for example sports and youth organisations); xiii) celebrations on special occasions; xiv) to invite friends round to play and eat from time to time; xv) to participate in school trips and school events that costs money; xvi) outdoor space in the neighbourhood to play safely; xvii) one week's holiday away from home.

Note that data covering the material deprivation of children (as collected for the ad-hoc EU-SILC module in 2009) will in the future form part of the standard EU-SILC exercise. The European Statistical System (ESS) has agreed to include the collection of a wide range of child-specific indicators for material deprivation from reference year 2013 onwards.

7

Children and young people in the digital world



Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICT) affect people's everyday lives in many ways, whether in the workplace or educational establishment, at home or on the move. Mobile phones, tablets, netbooks, laptops and computers are just some of the devices used frequently — often daily — by a large proportion of the population of the European Union (EU), particularly by young people.

The use of ICTs is widespread among children from a very young age as they access technology in the home or at friends' or relatives' houses and at school.

By the time young people in the EU leave compulsory education most of them have regularly made use of computers and the internet for a variety of activities. ICTs are used by schools and other educational establishments not only to develop ICT skills but also to support the teaching of traditional subjects such as mathematics or foreign languages.

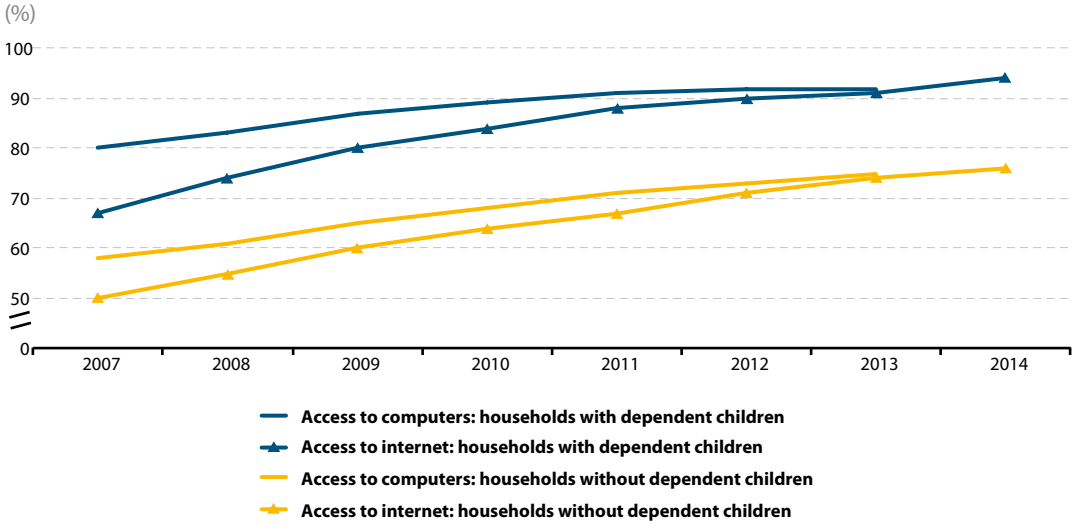
A DIGITAL AGENDA FOR EUROPE

In May 2010, the European Commission adopted its Communication concerning A Digital Agenda for Europe (COM(2010) 245 final), a strategy designed to encourage a flourishing digital economy by 2020. The Digital Agenda for Europe is one of the seven flagship initiatives under the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It outlines policies and actions aimed at maximising the benefit of the digital era to all sections of society and economy. The agenda focuses on seven priority areas for action: creating a digital single market, greater interoperability, boosting internet trust and security, providing much faster internet access, encouraging investment in research and development, enhancing digital literacy skills and inclusion, and applying ICT to address challenges facing society like climate change and the ageing population.

A digital age divide

Looking at access to ICTs at home, four fifths (81 %) of all households in the EU-28 had internet access in 2014; the corresponding share in 2007 (the start of the time series for the EU-28) was 55 %. Between 2007 and 2014 the proportion of households with dependent children that had access to internet was consistently higher than that for households without dependent children (Figure 1). The gap between households with dependent children and those without continued to grow between 2007 and 2009 before stabilising and then narrowing between 2011 and 2014. Nevertheless, rates of internet access continued to increase in 2014 among both types of households.

Figure 1: Proportion of households with access to computers and the internet at home, EU-28, 2007–14 ([1])



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: isoc_ci_in_h and isoc_ci_cm_h)

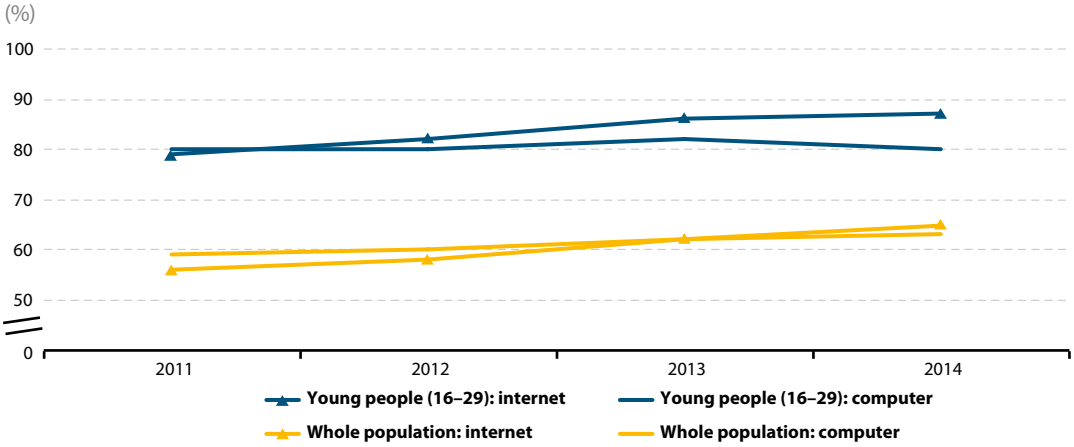
Households with dependent children more likely to have access to a computer and the internet at home

A broadly similar situation could be observed for households having access to a computer: a higher proportion of households in the EU-28 with dependent children had access to a computer than those without. An analysis of the gap between households with and without dependent children shows a different development for access to a computer than for internet access. The gap between households with dependent children and those without narrowed slightly as the share of households with dependent children with access to computer approached saturation; it appears to have stabilised at just over 90 %. In 2013, the gap nevertheless remained substantial, as the proportion of households with dependent children that had a computer was 17 percentage points higher than that for households without dependent children (92 % versus 75 %).

Daily internet use overtook daily computer use among young people in 2012

Shorter time series, from 2011 to 2014, are available for indicators concerning the daily use of a computer or the internet. This information is available for young people (defined here as those aged 16–29) and the whole population (Figure 2). In the EU-28 a far higher proportion of young people made use of a computer and the internet on a daily basis than the rest of the population. Four out of every five (80 %) young people used a computer on a daily basis in 2014, nearly 20 percentage points higher than among the whole population (63 %). The rate for young people was in 2014 two percentage points lower than in 2013 and the same as in 2011, while over this period (2011–14) the rate of daily computer use among the population as a whole increased by four percentage points.

Figure 2: Proportion of people who used a computer or the internet on a daily basis, EU-28, 2011–14



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: isoc_ci_ifp_fu and isoc_ci_cfp_fu)

In comparison, developments in daily internet use across the EU-28 were more uniform, with the rates for young people and for the whole population showing an upward path between 2011 and 2014. Interestingly, in 2012 the rate of daily internet use overtook daily computer use among young people, reflecting the use of the internet on a range of alternative devices, such as smart phones. The gap between young people and the whole population for daily internet use was 22 percentage points in 2014, slightly higher than for daily computer use.

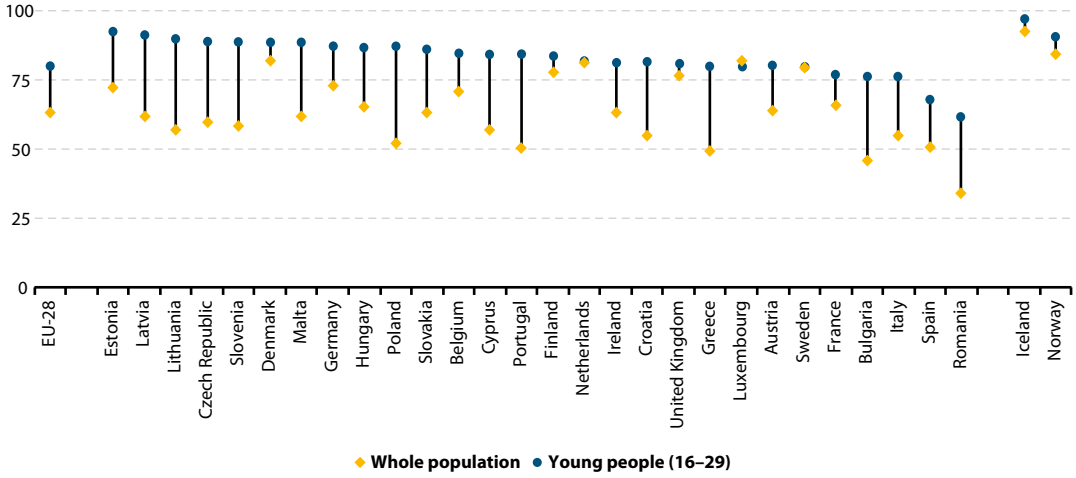
In 2012, for the first time, a higher proportion of young people made daily use of the internet than of a computer — reflecting increased uptake in the use of a range of alternative devices, such as smart phones.

The highest shares of daily computer use among young people were recorded in the Baltic countries…

The analysis of daily computer and internet use may be extended to the EU Member States, as shown in Figures 3 and 4, which present data for 2014. In 23 EU Member States, more than four out of every five young people (aged 16–29) used a computer on a daily basis. The highest rates of daily computer use among young people were recorded in Estonia (93 %), Latvia (91 %), Lithuania (90 %), the Czech Republic and Slovenia (both 89 %). In contrast, the lowest proportion of young people making daily use of a computer was recorded in Romania (62 %), followed by Spain (68 %).

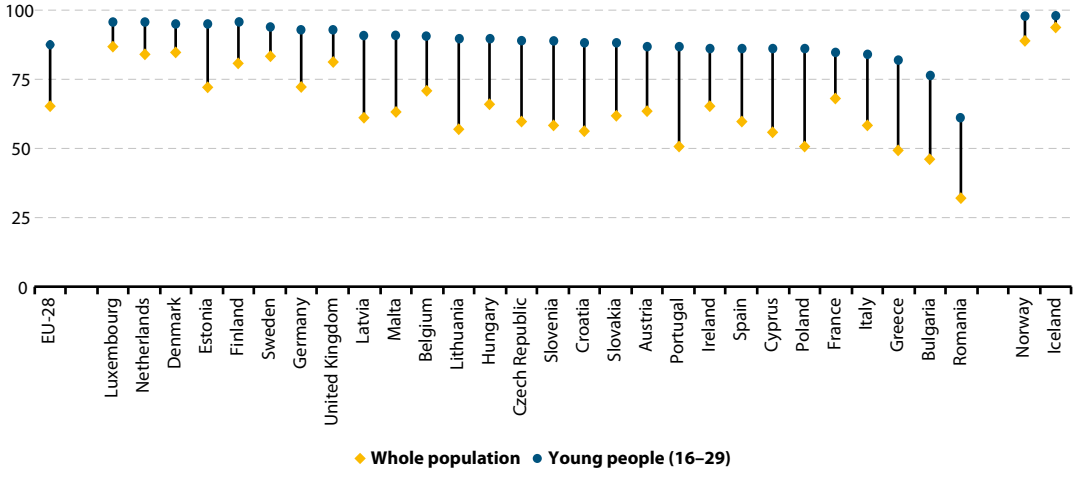
Poland, Portugal, Lithuania, Greece, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Cyprus, Malta, Croatia all recorded rates for the daily use of computers among young people that were at least 25 percentage points higher than for the whole population. In contrast, the disparities between the share of young people and the share of the whole population making daily use of a computer were relatively small (less than 6 percentage points) in the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Finland and Denmark. Luxembourg was the only EU Member State where the rate among young people was lower than for the population as a whole.

Figure 3: Proportion of people who used a computer on a daily basis, 2014
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_cfp_fu)

Figure 4: Proportion of people who used the internet on a daily basis, 2014
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ifp_fu)

…while northern and western Europe recorded the highest daily use of the internet among young people

All six EU Member States with the highest rates (above 80 %) of daily internet use among the whole population in 2014, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, also reported the highest rates of daily internet use among young people.

Portugal, Poland, Greece and Lithuania recorded the biggest differences in daily use of the internet between young people and the whole population, each recording a gap of at least 33 percentage points. Despite relatively low average rates of daily internet use (around 60 %) across their whole populations, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, the Czech Republic and Slovenia each recorded at least 9 out of every 10 young people making daily use of the internet. There were 13 EU Member States where daily use of the internet was at least 90 % among young people, a share that rose to a peak of 95 % in Denmark, Estonia and Finland and 96 % in Luxembourg and the Netherlands. At the other end of the scale, Romania and Bulgaria were the only EU Member States where in 2014, less than 80 % of young people used the internet on a daily basis.

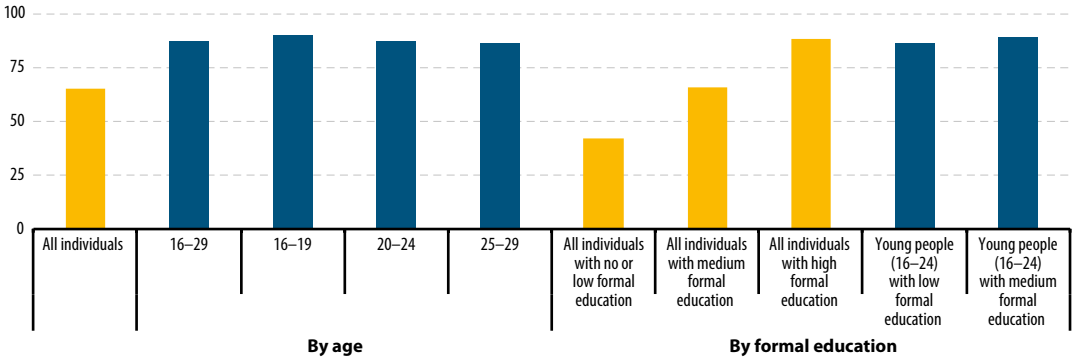
The highest proportion of daily internet users was recorded among those aged 16–19 years and those with a higher level of formal education

Figure 5 shows the proportion of people making daily use of the internet by age groups and by formal educational attainment. It can be seen that a considerably higher proportion of young people made daily use of the internet and that the highest propensity was among those aged 16–19. Indeed, 9 out of every 10 young people aged 16–19 in the EU-28 made daily use of the internet in 2014; this share fell to 86 % among young people aged 25–29.

Figure 5 also shows that daily internet use rises — across both the whole population and young people — as a function of the level of formal education. The analysis by education for young people only covers those aged 16–24 and is only presented for those with a low or medium formal education. The proportion of young people (aged 16–24) in the EU-28 with a low level of formal education making daily use of the internet was 86 % in 2014, considerably higher than for all people with a low level of formal education (42 %). Among young people with a medium level of formal education this share reached 89 %, again considerably higher than for the whole population (66 %).

Figure 5: Proportion of people who used the internet on a daily basis, by age and by formal education, EU-28, 2014

(%)

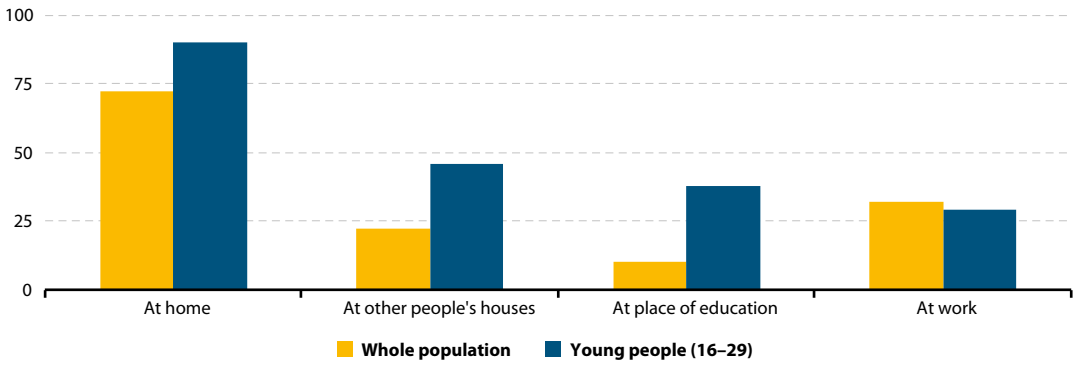


Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ifp_fu)

The vast majority of young people used the internet at home, while about half made use of the internet at other people's houses and about 40 % at a place of education

An analysis of where people in the EU-28 used the internet in 2013 (Figure 6) contains a number of expected patterns: for example, the proportion of young people (aged 16–29) that used the internet at work was below the average for the population as a whole, while the reverse was true for use of the internet at a place of education. The use of the internet at home as well as at other people's houses was higher among young people than for the population as a whole, reflecting, at least to some degree, the overall higher use of the internet by young people. In particular, the use of the internet at other people's houses was twice as high among young people as among the population as a whole.

Figure 6: Proportion of people who used the internet in specified places, EU-28, 2013 ([1])
(%)



([1]) Question not surveyed in 2014.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ifp_pu)

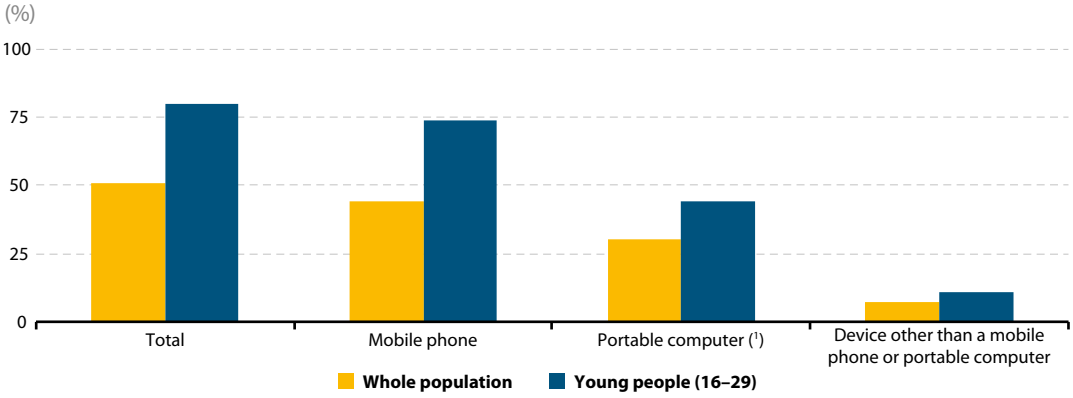
BETTER INTERNET FOR OUR CHILDREN

As well as providing opportunities for work, study, leisure activities and social interaction, the internet contains hazards for all users. The basis of the European Commission's Communication 'European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children' (COM(2012) 196 final) is to protect children and to make children and young people more aware of the risks involved with using the internet, while teaching digital literacy so that children may benefit fully and safely from being online. The strategy, which was adopted in May 2012, is constructed around four pillars: stimulate quality content online for young people; step up awareness and empowerment; create a safe environment for children online; and fight against child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

Figure 7 shows that in 2014 over half (51 %) of the population used a mobile device such as a portable computer (includes laptops and tablets) or a handheld device to connect to the internet when away from home or work and this proportion reached four fifths (80 %) of all young people aged 16–29.

The use of mobile phones for internet connections away from home or work was considerably higher than that of portable computers. For the population as a whole, the proportion of people that used a mobile phone to connect to the internet was 14 percentage points higher (44 %) than the use of a portable computer (30 %). For young people, the difference was even greater, some 30 percentage points higher for mobile phones (74 %) than for portable computers (44 %). This pattern reinforces the information that a higher proportion of young people in the EU-28 use handheld devices — mainly mobile phones — to connect to the internet, rather than portable computers.

Figure 7: Proportion of people who used mobile devices to access the internet away from home or work, EU-28, 2014



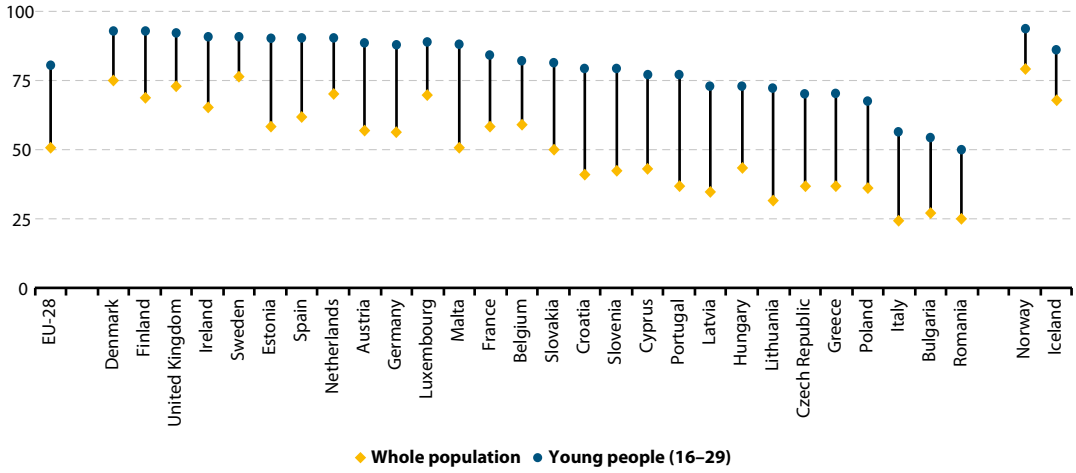
(1) Laptop, notebook, netbook or tablet computer.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ifp_pu)

Nine out of ten young people used a mobile device to connect to the internet on the go in eight EU Member States

An analysis of the use of portable computers and handheld devices to connect to the internet when away from home or work in 2014 shows that these were used by at least 9 out of 10 young people aged 16–29 in Denmark, Finland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Estonia, Spain and the Netherlands (Figure 8) while in Italy, Bulgaria and Romania the proportion was less than three fifths; note that each of these three countries was characterised by a generally low level of internet use, so it is perhaps not surprising that they also recorded low proportions for mobile internet usage.

Generally such devices were used to connect to the internet by a higher proportion of young people in northern and western EU Member States and by a lower proportion of young people in the eastern and southern EU Member States. A comparison between the whole population and young people shows that the largest differences (in percentage point terms) in the use of such mobile devices to connect to the internet were recorded in Portugal, Lithuania, Latvia, Croatia, Slovenia and Malta, and the smallest in Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom.

Figure 8: Proportion of people who used mobile devices to access the internet away from home or work, 2014
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ifp_pu)

Information and communications technology skills

Information and communications technology (ICT) skills are regarded as being essential to benefit from and contribute to a knowledge-based economy and society. The analysis presented here shows that young people report, on average, a higher level of computer skills and internet skills than the population as a whole ([1]).

The shares of young people reporting experience in computer programming and web page design were almost twice the respective shares for the whole population

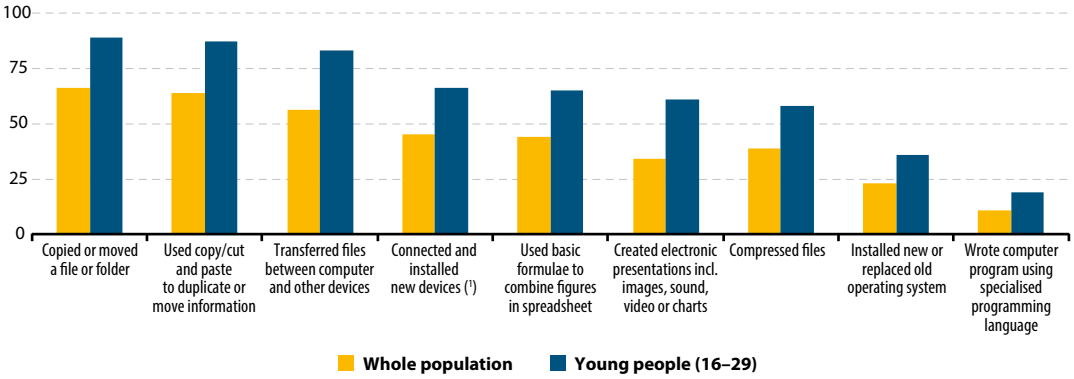
Nearly nine out of every then young people in the EU-28 reported, in 2014, that they had (at any time in the past) performed basic computer tasks such as copying or moving files (89 %) or duplicating / moving information (cut, copy and paste) within files (87 %), while three fifths or more had connected and installed a device (66 %) or used basic formulae within a spreadsheet (65 %) and over a half (58 %) had compressed files. The proportion of young people that reported having carried out these basic computing tasks was around 20 percentage points higher than the average for the whole population.

More technical competences, such as writing a computer programme using a specialised programming language, were less widespread as just 19 % of young people reported that they had ever carried out such an activity, although this was nearly double the 11 % recorded for the population as a whole (Figure 9).

The most recent information available for internet skills (Figure 10) is for 2013. This shows a similar pattern, with high rates among young people in the EU-28 for basic skills such as using a search engine (94 %) or sending an e-mail with attachments (87 %), while more than two thirds of young people posted messages online (72 %), just over half used the internet for calling people (53 %) and around one third (32 %) used peer-to-peer file sharing services. As for computer skills, the proportion of young people that reported that they had carried out these basic internet tasks was around 20 percentage points higher than the average for the whole population, with the exception of posting messages online where the difference was even greater (34 percentage points).

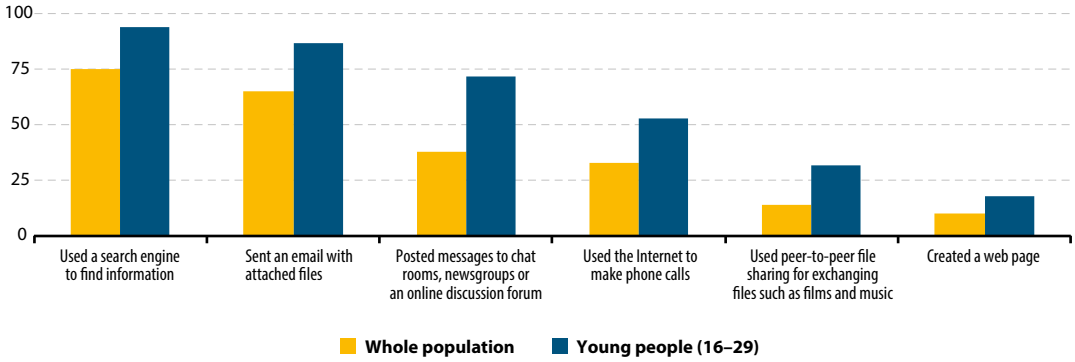
([1]) Note that the digital skills are measured by looking at certain activities carried out prior to the survey, and are not directly tested or observed through the survey.

Figure 9: Proportion of people who used selected computer skills, EU-28, 2014
(%)



(1) For example a printer or a modem.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_sk_cskl_i)

Figure 10: Proportion of people who used selected internet skills, EU-28, 2013 (1)
(%)



(1) Question not surveyed in 2014
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_sk_iskl_i)

Table 1: Individuals who wrote a computer program using a specialised programming language, 2014

	Whole population	Young people (16–29)	Difference
	(%)		(percentage points)
EU-28	11	19	8
Belgium	9	16	7
Bulgaria	5	10	5
Czech Republic	4	7	3
Denmark	12	19	7
Germany	12	24	12
Estonia	11	24	13
Ireland	8	12	4
Greece	10	15	5
Spain	14	27	13
France	11	20	9
Croatia	11	27	16
Italy	9	17	8
Cyprus	7	13	6
Latvia	5	13	8
Lithuania	9	21	12
Luxembourg	15	20	5
Hungary	6	13	7
Malta	10	24	14
Netherlands	10	16	6
Austria	12	24	12
Poland	6	14	8
Portugal	8	19	11
Romania	4	8	4
Slovenia	8	16	8
Slovakia	7	13	6
Finland	28	38	10
Sweden	22	27	5
United Kingdom	14	21	7
Iceland	18	22	4
Norway	18	21	3

Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_sk_cskl_i)

More technical internet skills were less widespread, with just under one in five (18 %) young people having created a web page; this was also nearly double the average (10 %) for the population as a whole.

A relatively high proportion of Croatia's young people had experience in programming

The proportion of young people who reported having written a computer programme using a specialised programming language ranged, in 2014, from more than 30 % in Finland to less than 10 % in the Czech Republic and Romania. In Croatia the difference between young people and the whole population for this particular skill was the biggest (16 percentage points), followed by Malta (14 percentage points), Spain and Estonia (both 13 percentage points). In contrast, in the Czech Republic, Ireland and Romania the difference was less than 5 percentage points.

Youth online: a way of life

Figures 11 and 12 present a selection of online social and civic activities performed in the EU-28 by both young people (aged 16–29) and the population as a whole in 2014 (2013 for few activities). A higher proportion of young people performed each of the selected activities; this was particularly true for social activities. The smallest difference between the young people and the whole population was recorded for sending filled in forms to government agencies / public authorities, and for taking part in online consultations or voting to define civic or political issues, for which the proportion for young people was only 1 percentage point higher than for the overall population.

INSAFE

Insafe is a European network, co-funded by the EU, made up of 31 national awareness centres, in 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Serbia. The national centres implement awareness and educational campaigns, run helplines and work closely with young people to ensure an evidence-based, multi-stakeholder approach to creating a better internet. The Insafe network aims 'to empower children and young people to use the internet, as well as other online and mobile technologies, positively, safely and effectively. The network calls for shared responsibility for the protection of the rights and needs of citizens, in particular children and youths, by government, educators, parents, media, industry and all other relevant actors'.

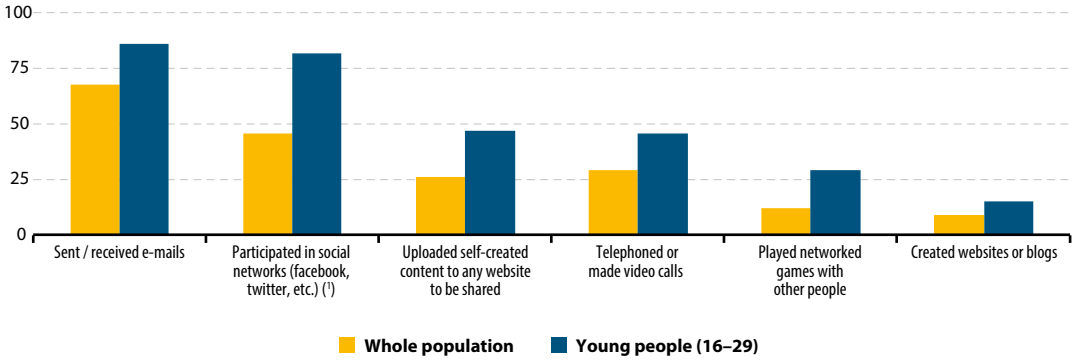
A slightly higher proportion of young people (than the whole population) carried out civic activities online …

Among the online civic activities presented in Figure 12, the most common for young persons were related to online interaction with public authorities, most notably obtaining information from websites of public authorities (note that this data refers to those persons who made use of such a site within the 12-month period prior to the survey). Some 18 % of young people in the EU-28 posted their opinions on civic or political issues via websites (within the 3-month period prior to the survey); this was a higher share than the average across the whole population (11 %), the 7 percentage point difference being the largest among the six civic activities shown.

…while a much higher proportion of young people (than the whole population) made use of social networks

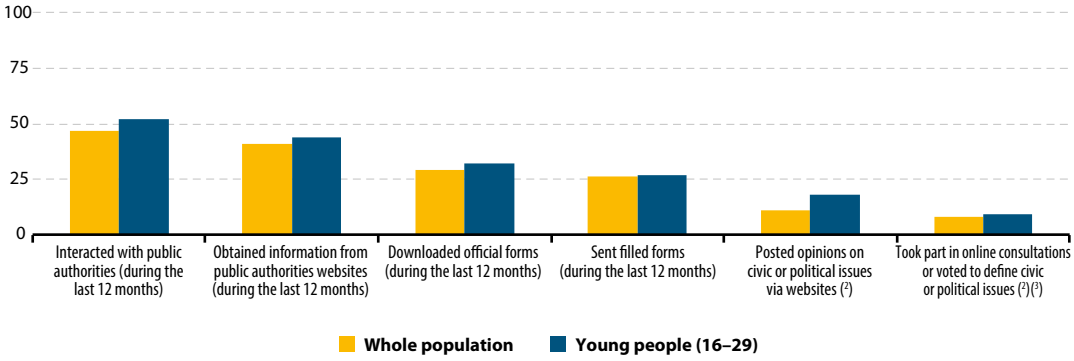
The most common online social activities for young people in the EU-28 in 2014 included sending and receiving e-mails (86 %) and participating on social networking sites — for example, Facebook or Twitter, by creating a user profile, posting messages or making other contributions — (82 %), while close to half (47 %) of all young people in the EU-28 uploaded self-created content, such as photos, videos or text to the internet.

Figure 11: Proportion of people who used the internet for social activities, EU-28, 2014
(%)



(1) For example, created a user profile, posted messages or other contributions.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i)

Figure 12: Proportion of people who used the internet for civic activities, EU-28, 2014 (1)
(%)



(1) Respondents carried out the task during the 3-month period prior to the survey (unless otherwise stated).
(2) 2013.
(3) Such as urban planning or petitions.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i)

A comparison between the proportion of young people and the proportion of the whole population engaged in online social activities shows that the largest difference between these two groups was recorded for participation on social networking sites (36 percentage points), and the smallest for creating websites or blogs (6 percentage points), telephoning / making video calls over the internet (17 percentage points) and for playing network games (17 percentage points). However, young people were more than two times as likely (as the whole population) to use the internet for multiplayer online gaming.

Figure 13 provides more detailed information by EU Member State on participation on social networking sites in 2014. At least 9 out of 10 young people in Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary and the Netherlands used social networking sites, while the majority of EU Member States reported that between 80 % and 90 % of young people participated in these activities. At the other end of the scale, there were five EU Member States where between 70 % and 80 % of young people participated on social networking sites, a share that fell to 66 % in Romania.

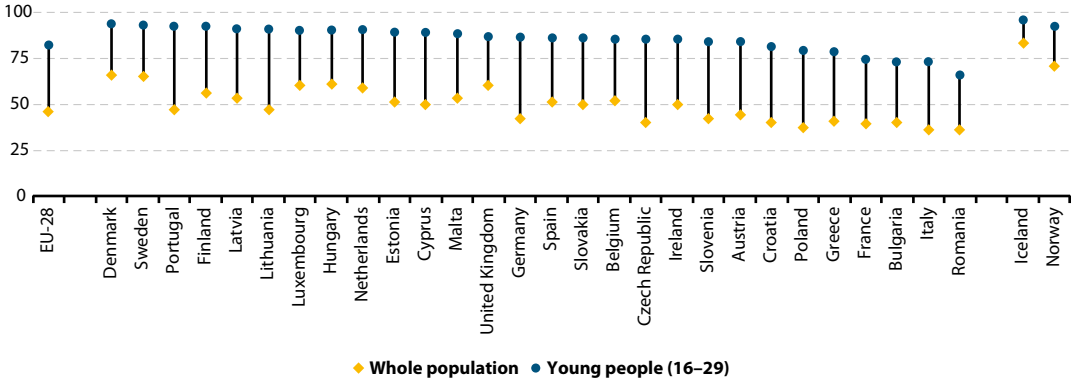
Cyberbullying is repeated verbal or psychological harassment; it is particularly prevalent among children and young people and may be spread via e-mail, mobile phones or web services (such as social networks, chat rooms and instant messaging).

Young people participated more on social networking sites than the population as a whole. The average difference across the EU-28 was 36 percentage points in 2014 and the pattern was similar in all EU Member States, with the gap ranging from 45 percentage points in Portugal and the Czech Republic to 27 percentage points in the United Kingdom.

CYBERBULLYING

One of the issues related to the safety of the internet for children is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is regarded as a serious threat with a potentially long-lasting impact. Repeated verbal or psychological harassment may come from an individual or a group and may involve, for example, mockery, insults, threats, rumours or gossip. E-mail, mobile phones and web services such as social networks, chat rooms and instant messaging provide opportunities for cyberbullying. More information is available from the European platform for investing in children.

Figure 13: Proportion of people who participated on social networking sites ([1]), 2014
(%)

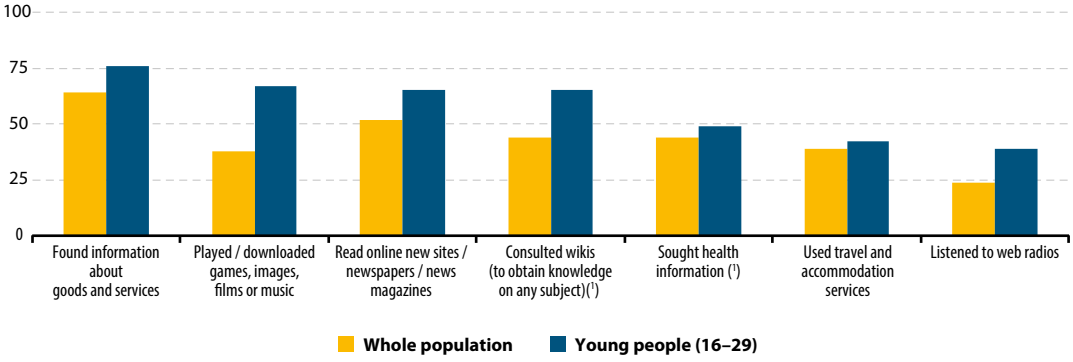


([1]) For example, created a user profile, posted messages or other contributions to facebook, twitter, etc.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i)

The use of wikis by young people was generally higher in northern and western EU Member States

The internet is widely regarded as a source of information and a selection of other activities related to finding or exchanging information is presented in Figure 14, which also covers the use of the internet for downloading content. Among the seven selected activities, using the internet for travel and accommodation services and to listen to web radios were the two least commonly undertaken tasks by young people. The difference between the proportion of young people and the whole population using internet for travel and accommodation services and to find health information was as low as 5 percentage points. In contrast, the largest gap was recorded for playing / downloading games, images, films or music, an activity performed by 67 % of young people compared with 38 % of the whole population.

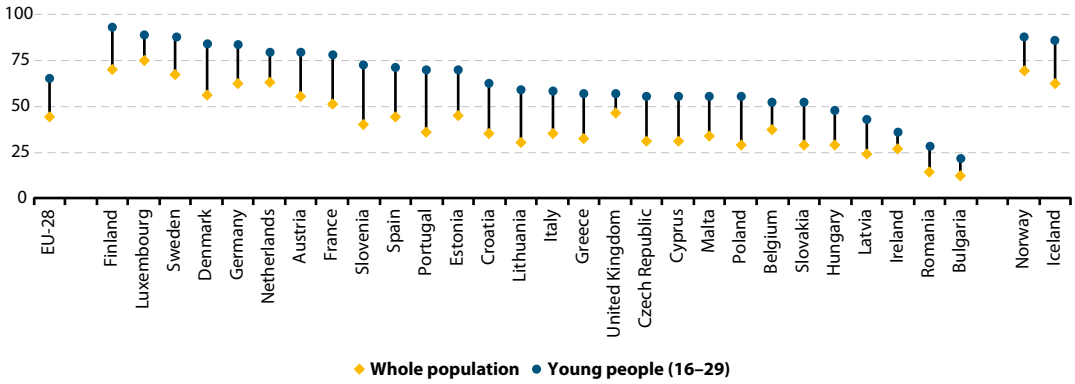
Figure 14: Proportion of people who used the internet for finding information and downloading content, EU-28, 2014
(%)



([1]) 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i)

Consulting wikis, such as Wikipedia, was also a popular online activity undertaken in 2013 by almost two thirds (65 %) of young people in the EU-28. Figure 15 shows how this activity varied among the EU Member States, with a generally higher proportion of young people in northern and western EU Member States making use of wikis and a lower proportion in eastern EU Member States. Portugal and Slovenia were the two EU Member States where the difference between the proportion of young people using wikis and the average for the whole population was highest, in both cases just over 30 percentage points; the smallest differences (9 or 10 percentage points) were reported for Bulgaria and Ireland.

Figure 15: Proportion of people who used the internet to consult wikis (to obtain knowledge on any subject), 2013
(%)



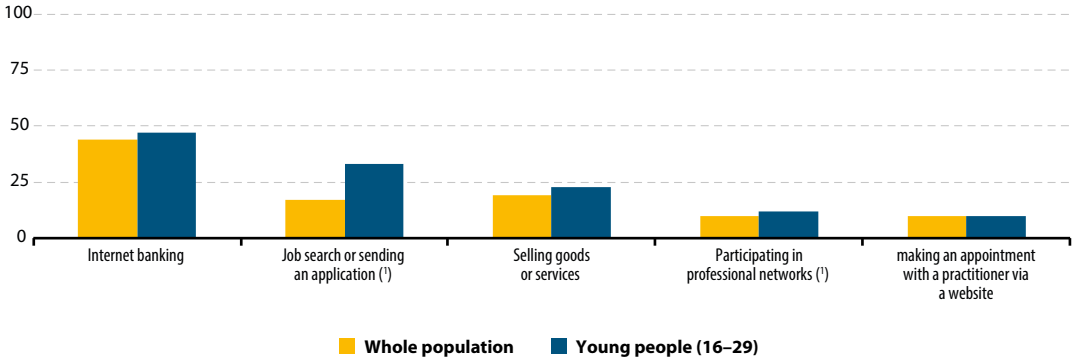
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i)

Young people were almost twice as likely to use the internet to look for a job or to submit a job application

Online banking and participating in professional networks (such as LinkedIn) are two internet activities used to a similar degree by young people and the whole population (Figure 16). In 2014, 47 % of young people used online banking in the EU-28, only 3 percentage points higher than the whole population. Online professional networks were used by only 12 % of young people, broadly in line with the 10 % share for the whole population (2013 data), although it should be noted that many young people are likely to still be studying and therefore not yet looking to establish such networks.

For the two remaining activities shown in Figure 16, young people in the EU-28 were almost twice as likely to use the internet to look for a job or to submit a job application (33 % compared with 17 % for the whole population in 2013), while nearly a quarter (23 % in 2014) of young people sold goods or services over the internet (for example, by using online auctions) compared with just under one fifth (19 % in 2014) of the population as a whole.

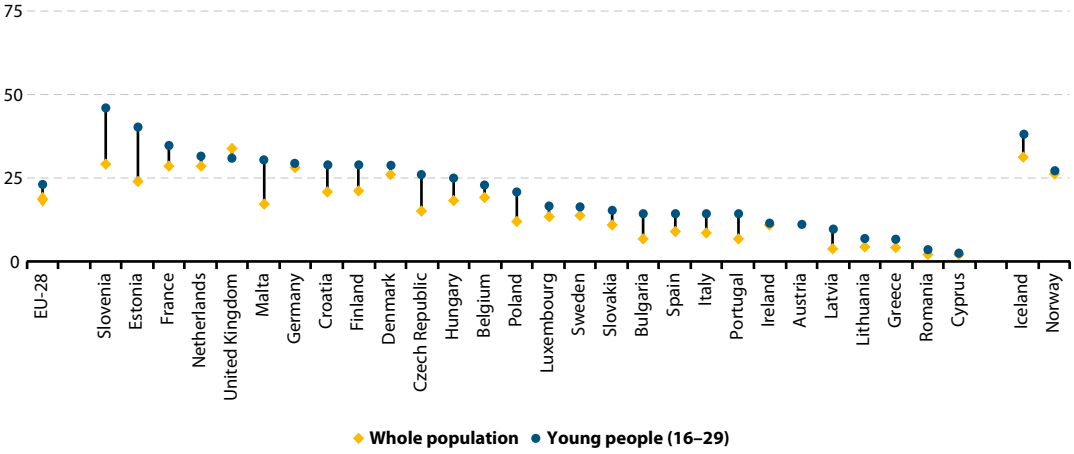
Figure 16: Proportion of people who used the internet for web banking, professional purposes and selling online, EU-28, 2014
(%)



(1) 2013.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i)

The proportion of young people selling goods or services online varied greatly between the EU Member States in 2014 (Figure 17). Hardly any young people made online sales in Cyprus or Romania, while the proportion remained below 10 % in Greece and Lithuania. In 14 EU Member States the proportion exceeded one fifth (20 %), rising to 40 % in Estonia and peaking at 46 % in Slovenia. The proportion of young people selling online exceeded the average for the whole population most notably Slovenia, Estonia, Malta and the Czech Republic. In contrast, the proportion of young people selling online was below the average for the whole population in the United Kingdom.

Figure 17: Proportion of people who used the internet to sell goods or services, 2014
(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc_ci_ac_i)

Conclusions: what future for young people in the digital world?

Young Europeans spend an increasing amount of their time consuming digital media. While time spent watching television may be falling, their use of online media has grown rapidly, facilitated through a range of services such as video streams, chat rooms, blogs or social media. Although the internet can provide a place for young people to share their experiences and to exchange their views, there are also risks.

Some concerns over the use of the internet centre on the safety of children and young people and their behaviour, for example, increasing solitude as young people withdraw to a private place to go online. Furthermore, some children and young people may have their privacy violated when they are online or alternatively they may be exposed to potentially harmful content, which may create dependency, anxiety or aggression.

This chapter has shown that the use of ICTs is widespread among children and young people and is, in some instances, reaching saturation. Young people generally possess a wider range of ICT skills (than older generations) and it seems likely that this pattern will continue for future generations with young people likely to remain at the forefront of adopting new technologies (be these hardware or software / services). The challenge for policymakers within this domain will be to ensure that the social and economic benefits from exploiting ICTs are delivered in unison with the safe use of digital media, in particular for more vulnerable sections of society.

Data sources and availability

Information and communications technology

The data presented in this chapter come from Eurostat's survey on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) usage in households and by individuals, which is updated on an annual basis to ensure that the data collected remain relevant for policy use. The surveys reflect modern ICT use while keeping a core part relatively stable so that analyses over time can be made. ICT surveys initially concentrated on access and internet connectivity issues, but their scope has subsequently been extended to cover a variety of subjects, including for example internet security or the use of social media and cloud services. The results of the survey can be analysed according to a range of socioeconomic categories, including age, educational differences and whether there are children or not in a household. In most EU Member States the surveys are carried out in the second quarter of each year asking about activities in the first quarter of the same year; sometimes questions (for example, on e-commerce or e-government) are asked about activities during the previous 12 months.

ICT surveys cover those households having at least one member in the age group 16–74 years old. Households with children are those with at least one member aged less than 16. Within this chapter statistics that refer to the whole population cover those aged 16–74. Young people is a collective term used to describe those aged 16–29; note that this age range was unavailable for some of the analysis presented and in these cases the coverage of young people has been modified to those within the age range of 16–24.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Geographical aggregates and countries

EU-28	The 28 Member States of the European Union from 1 July 2013 Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy,Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom)
EU-27	The 27 Member States of the European Union from 1 January 2007 (Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom)

Note that EU aggregates are back-calculated when enough information is available — for example, data relating to the EU-28 aggregate is presented when possible for periods before Croatia joined the EU in 2013 and before the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, as if all 28 Member States had always been members of the EU.

Units of measurement

:	No data available
%	Percentage
EUR	Euro

Abbreviations

BMI	Body Mass Index
EEA	European Economic Area
EC	European Commission
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECHI	European Core Health Indicators
EFA	Education For All
EHIS	European Health Interview Survey
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

EPIC	European Platform for Investing in Children
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
ESS	European Statistical System
ET2020	Strategic framework in Education and Training
EU-LFS	EU Labour Force Survey
EU-SILC	EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIS	Health Interview Surveys
ICD	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LIS	Luxembourg Income Study Database
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEET	Neither in employment nor in education and training
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-UIS	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization — Institute for Statistics
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UOE	UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WHO	World Health Organization

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Being young in Europe today provides an overview of the wealth of information that is available on Eurostat's website and within its online databases.

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