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**EU Youth Report**

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Status of the situation of young people in the European Union  
Chapters 1-4**

*Accompanying the document*

**COMMISSION COMMUNICATION**

**Draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of  
the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field  
(EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018)**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

#### *The EU Youth Strategy*

In 2009, the Council endorsed the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), known in short as the EU Youth Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Its objectives are to:

- (i) create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market, and
- (ii) promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

The EU Youth Strategy advocates a cross-cutting approach, branching out into eight different policy areas ('fields of action'), which are the following: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Culture and Creativity, Volunteering, and Youth and the World.

The EU Youth Strategy and its implementation are based on the Open Method of Coordination, addressing both the Commission and Member States to take specific actions in the above-mentioned 'fields of action'. To this end, it proposes a set of instruments which include: evidence-based policy-making; mutual learning; regular progress-reporting; dissemination of results and monitoring; Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations; and mobilisation of EU programmes and funds.

The EU Youth Strategy invited the Commission and Member States to implement the strategy by fostering cooperation that cuts across all of the various policy fields concerned. Such an approach should be pursued at all levels, and policies can be improved by sharing good practices. Youth work should be supported, developed and recognised for its economic and social contribution.

#### *EU Youth Report: reporting on progress and looking ahead*

The period covered by the EU Youth Strategy is divided into three-year cycles, with the requirement to produce an EU Youth Report at the end of each cycle, the first of which will be drawn up in 2012 and 'consist of [...] a joint Council-Commission report (political part), and supporting documents (statistical and analytical part). The EU Youth report will evaluate progress made towards the overall objectives of the framework, as well as progress regarding the priorities defined for the most recent work cycle and identify good practices. [...] The EU Youth Report should also serve as a basis for establishing a set of priorities for the following work cycle.'

This Staff Working Document supports the Commission Communication which presents the draft EU Youth Report to the Council. It provides a comprehensive picture of the situation of young people in Europe based on the latest available data, statistics and research. It portrays trends and developments in young people's conditions in different areas, corresponding to the 'fields of action'. It builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators, which is an overview of 41 indicators that measure the most crucial aspects of the lives of young people in Europe<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, pp. 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> SEC(2011) 401. This document presents 40 indicators. One additional indicator has since been added, bringing the total number of EU Youth Indicators to 41.

The second Staff Working Document supporting the Commission Communication on the EU Youth Report summarises the results of the first cycle (2010-2012). It presents the actions taken at EU-level and in Member States, as well as initiatives taken by young people themselves. Separate chapters report on achievements in all eight 'fields of action' of the strategy, the general organisation and approach to youth policy, and the Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers. The references made to Member States' activities are based on National Youth Reports submitted by them<sup>3</sup>. Young people are represented in the report by the European Youth Forum, which is an umbrella organisation of approximately 40 National Youth Councils and more than 60 international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe.

### **Status of the situation of young people in the European Union**

In addition to the EU Member States, information and analysis cover, as far as data allows, the acceding country of Croatia, the five EU candidate countries (Montenegro, Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) as well as the EFTA countries Norway, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland

The period when a person is considered to be 'young' differs across Europe according to national context, socio-economic development of a society and time<sup>4</sup>. Common to all countries, however, is the fact that the period of youth is marked by important life transitions. For statistical purposes the target population is primarily the age category between 15 and 29 years of age.

These transitions provide opportunities for youth to excel and prosper, but can also leave them vulnerable and deprived. With the current economic crisis, many young people are unable to find jobs that allow them to live on their own. This period of transition has become longer and harder, leading to the risk of a 'lost generation'. The statistical evidence points to the following:

**More school, less work** – Between 2005 and 2009, the share of young people either in full-time education or employment was relatively stable. Since then, the situation has increasingly diverged: while the share of students is going up, that of young employees is going down. Young people who lose their job are returning to education in greater numbers than before.

**Increase in the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)** – After several years of decline, the share of NEETs levelled out in 2007, but has increased sharply since 2008. This shows a link to the current financial crisis, as NEETs are over-represented in families with a low work intensity and low household income.

**Increasingly difficult labour market** – The unemployment rate of young people (aged 15 to 24) rose sharply from 15 % in February 2008 to an unprecedented 22.6 % in June 2012. This amounts to an increase of 50 % in four years. Among those unemployed, more than 30 % have been without a job for the past year. Temporary employment is also much more common among young people aged 15 to 24 than for those aged 25-59. While 42.5 % of young people in employment were on a temporary contract in 2011, this was the case for only 11 % in the older age-group. Between 2008 and 2011, temporary employment among young people increased by almost two and a half percentage points while it increased by less than one

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<sup>3</sup> Separate contributions were submitted by the three language communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EFTA-countries, which are programme countries under the Commission's Youth in Action programme, were invited to submit National Youth Reports.

<sup>4</sup> The age-span of eligibility in the Youth in Action programme is 13 to 30.

percentage point for the general working population. This suggests that young people are more likely than the general population to get a temporary job (which often means precarious work). Even if a young person achieves a high level of education, employment is no longer guaranteed.

**Fewer early school leavers** – Progress has been made in reducing the share of early school leavers to reach the headline target of less than 10% by 2020. Although the share fell from 14.9% in 2008 to 14.1% in 2010, any further reduction is becoming a major challenge.

**Young people at serious risk of social exclusion and poverty** – A headline target of Europe 2020 is to reduce the share of the EU population at risk of social exclusion and poverty by 20 million, or 25%, by 2020. The share of young people at such risk is higher than that of the general population. Between 2009 and 2010, the increase in the number of young people at risk was significantly higher than for the total population.

**Young people's well-being under pressure** – While high unemployment rates have resulted in more low-income families and jobless households, and with young people being most at risk of poverty and social exclusion, the crisis has also had an impact on the health and well-being of young people. Unemployment, impoverishment, inadequate housing conditions and family disruptions significantly increase the risk of mental health problems such as depression, alcohol abuse disorders and suicide. As detriments to health and well-being can often last for life, they have a particularly serious impact on young people.

**But young people remain active** – the participation of young people in democratic life has not suffered as a result of the crisis. On the contrary, young people have spearheaded social movements in Europe and beyond. While youth turnout in elections is low (only 29% of young people aged 18 to 30 voted in the 2009 European Parliament elections, for example), young people do not appear to experience any major disenchantment with policy issues and causes in general – only a clear and growing mistrust of a political establishment which young people feel does not represent their interests. The results of a 2011 Eurobarometer survey supports the claim that young people are interested in politics: 78% of eligible young people up to the age of 30 declared that they had voted in a political election at local, regional, national or EU level in the last three years. The survey also documents the active participation young people in society: half of the young people in the EU participated in activities of a youth organisation, leisure and/or sports club in the past year, while a quarter took part in organised voluntary activities.

A tendency towards above-average participation by young people can be identified in countries which have established regulations and policies on volunteering, created systems of financial support for volunteers, and operate a system of recognition of the competencies acquired. As far as the various indicators for cultural participation, computer and internet use and creative education are concerned, there seem – with some significant exceptions – to be few differences between countries. The general trend common to all countries is, however, that, these aspects of cultural engagement are interrelated.

Whilst many young people are very committed to global issues such as climate change or poverty, active participation by young people in structures that address global issues is fairly limited. There are only a few EU Member States in which a considerable portion of the youth population participate in NGOs dedicated to global causes or are involved in projects aimed at cooperating with young people from other continents. Young people taking part in education and training are more likely to dedicate their time to global causes.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report, which is a supporting document to the Commission Communication on the EU Youth Report, presents data and information on the current situation of young people in Europe<sup>5</sup>. Following an introductory chapter on demographics, which presents the main trends in the youth population over the last years, separate chapters are dedicated to the eight ‘fields of action’ identified in the Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018)<sup>6</sup>: Employment and Entrepreneurship, Education and Training, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Culture and Creativity, and Youth and the World.

The period during which a person is considered to be ‘young’ differs across Europe according to the national context, the socio-economic development of a society and time<sup>7</sup>. Common to all countries is that the period of youth – the transition from being a child to being an adult – is marked by important life transitions: from being financially dependent to being in control of one's own budget, from living in the family home to having set up one's own household - maybe with a partner, from being in education to having a full-time job, and from being a child to being responsible for one's own children.

For statistical purposes, this report needs to rely on age categories. The target population is primarily the age category between 15 and 29 years of age, for which there is a good statistical basis using Eurostat data and other data sources. The analysis focuses on the age groups 15 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 29. In some cases, a more limited age range or different age groups are used, either because certain conditions mainly affect a particular age group (e.g. early school leavers) or the analysis relates to a specific perspective (e.g. child population at risk of poverty or social exclusion). In other cases, the analysis is limited to certain age groups due to the availability of data.

In addition to the EU Member States, information and analysis cover, as far as data allows, the acceding country of Croatia, the five EU candidate countries (Montenegro, Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) as well as the EFTA countries Norway, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland

It was not possible to select a single reference year for the information presented in the report, due to variation in the sources of data. However, the report focuses on the most recent years (2010 and 2011) in order to depict the most up-to-date situation of young people. Wherever data are available, comparisons with past years and relative trends are included.

This report builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators, an overview of 41 indicators which measure the most crucial aspects of the conditions of young people in Europe. The dashboard was released by the European Commission in spring 2011. With input from an expert group, the Commission reviews the dashboard on an annual basis to ensure that the indicators reflect the changing realities of young people. Wherever the report uses these indicators, this is highlighted in the text. The dashboard of EU youth indicators is presented as an annex to this report.

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<sup>5</sup> The data from Eurostat databases was extracted in June 2012.

The special value ‘.’ indicates that the data is not available for a country. The special value ‘⊗’ indicates that the respective country is not participating in the survey.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, pp. 1-11.

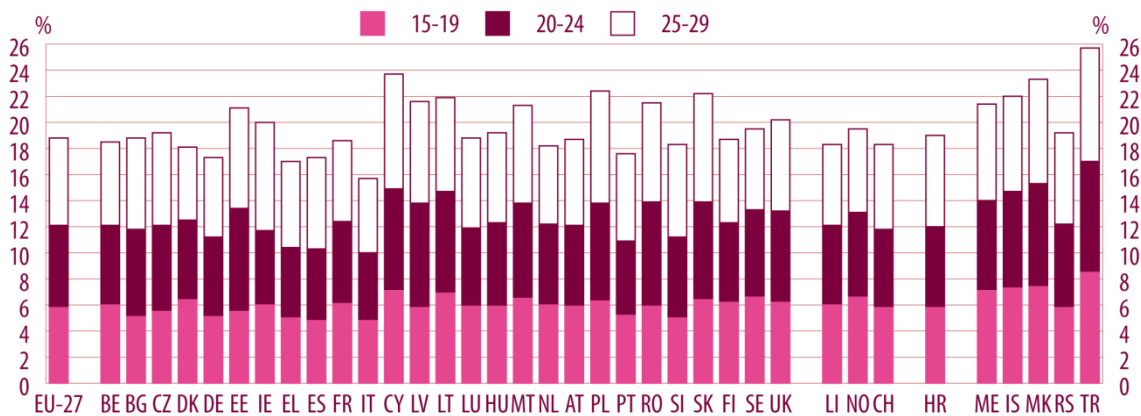
<sup>7</sup> The age-span of eligibility in the Youth in Action programme is 13 to 30.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHY

### 2.1. How many young Europeans are there?

In January 2011, around 95.2 million young people aged between 15 and 29 lived in the EU-27. The acceding country Croatia and five candidate countries to the EU (Montenegro, Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) added approximately 22 million young people to this figure<sup>8</sup>. Figure 2-A shows the percentage share of young people in the overall population, which ranges from 15 % in Italy to over 23 % in Cyprus and 22 % in Poland and Slovakia. EU candidate countries have shares of young people above the EU-27 average, particularly in Turkey where those aged between 15 and 29 account for more than a quarter of the total population.

Figure 2-A: EU youth indicator: Share of young people in the total population, by age, 1 January 2011



Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: demo\_pjanind

Note: EU-27, Belgium, Cyprus, Romania, and Switzerland: data are from 2010.

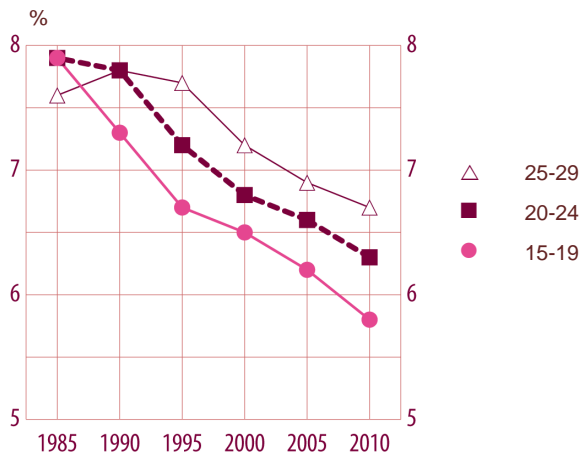
### 2.2. Past and future trends in European youth population

#### 2.2.1. The number of young people continues to decrease

The share of young Europeans in the total population has declined steadily over the last 25 years (Figure 2-B). This is due to a reduction in the fertility rate in Europe following the end of the demographic boom of the 1950-60-70s. Fewer births, longer life expectancies and the ageing of those baby-boomers since then have led to a fall in the youth population and a parallel increase in the proportion of older age groups as the increase of the old is now mainly driven by the ageing baby-boomers.

<sup>8</sup> Eurostat – online data code: demo\_pjangroup.

**Figure 2-B: Share of young people in the total population, EU-27 average, by age, 1985-2010<sup>9</sup>**



Source: Eurostat 2010. Online data code: demo\_pjanind  
Note:

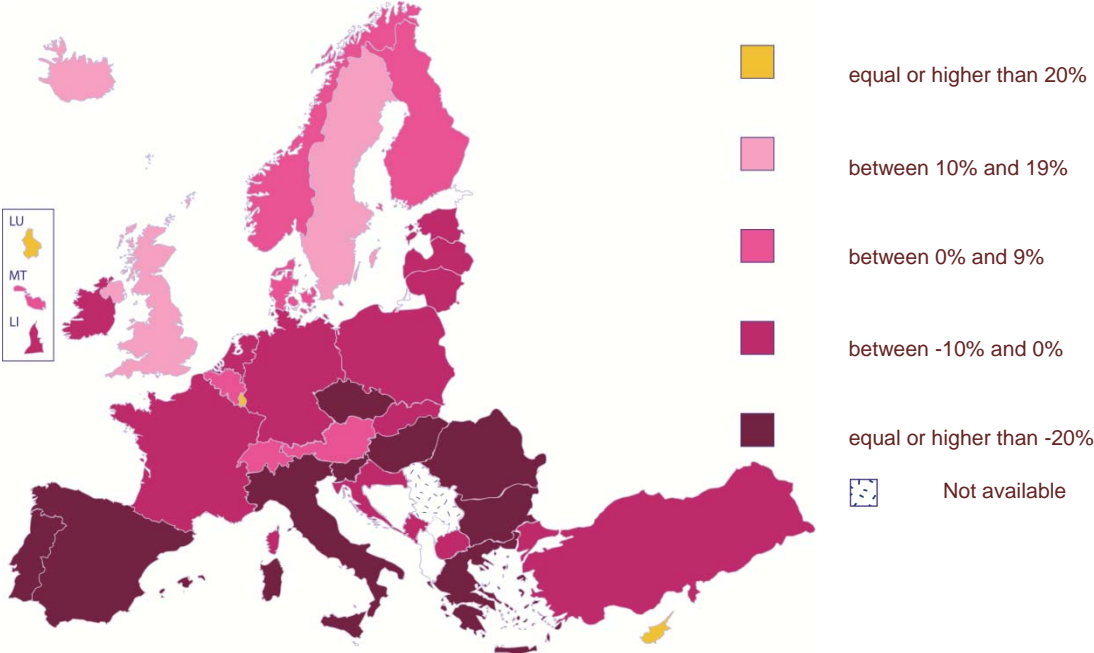
In line with the long-term decline since 1985, the number of young people decreased steadily by over 4 million between 2000 and 2010. The 15 to 19 age group has been most affected by the decline, in particular since 2006, and the youth population will fall even more sharply in the near future.

Yet this trend was not common to all countries during the decade in question. From closer examination of national variations (Figure 2-C), it is possible to identify cases in which the youth population actually grew between 2000 and 2010. Cyprus, Luxembourg and, to a lesser extent, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland all experienced such increases. Otherwise the number of young people has fallen in the majority of countries and by as much as a fifth in Bulgaria and Greece.

<sup>9</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.



**Figure 2-C: Youth population (aged 15-29), change between 1 January 2000 and 1 January 2010**



Source: Eurostat 2010. Online data code: demo\_pjangroup  
 Note: EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate countries covered.

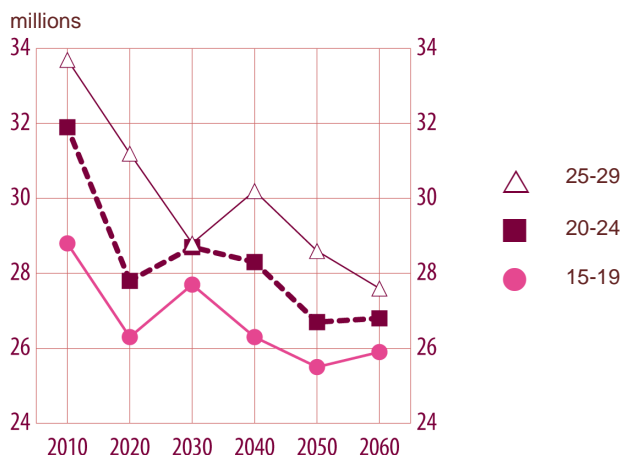
In recent decades, EU-27 countries have generally been having fewer children<sup>10</sup>. A total fertility rate<sup>11</sup> of around 2.1 children per woman is considered to be the replacement level, that is, the average number of children per woman required to keep the population size constant in the absence of inward or outward migration.<sup>12</sup> Between 2002 and 2010, the total fertility rate in the EU-27 rose slightly from just under 1.45 to 1.6 children per woman, reversing an earlier steady decrease, however still far below the replacement level. According to Eurostat population projections EUROPOP2010, the share of young people in the total population is expected to fall in the years up to 2060 (Figure 2-D).

<sup>10</sup> Eurostat – online data code: demo\_frate.

<sup>11</sup> The main indicator of fertility is the Total Fertility Rate (TFR): this is the mean number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her lifetime if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of a given year.

<sup>12</sup> Eurostat 2011b, p. 28.

**Figure 2-D: Projected youth population, EU-27, by age, 2010-2060<sup>13</sup>**

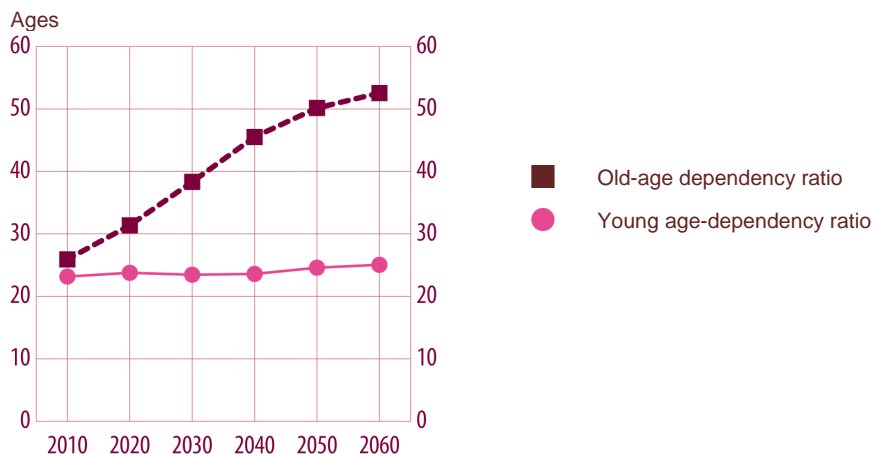


Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: proj\_10c2150p

If the decline is not reversed, the youth population of the European Union could fall by a further 14 million in the next 50 years.

One of the most significant outcomes of the decrease in the numbers of young people in Europe, taken with the rise in average life expectancy, is the steady ageing of the European population overall. This scenario is illustrated by means of the projected dependency ratios in the decades ahead (Figure 2-E).

**Figure 2-E: Projected young-age and old-age dependency ratios in the EU-27, 2010-2060**



Source: Eurostat – EUROPOP2008. Online data code: not available

The age dependency ratios compare the number of people – young (0 to 14 years old) or old (65 years old or over) to the working age population (15 to 64 years old). According to EUROPOP2008, while the young-age dependency ratio would change little over the next 50 years, the old-age dependency ratio would increase by almost 30 percentage points. This means that each person in working age will potentially support the same number of young people, but about twice as many older people.

<sup>13</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

### 2.2.2. Increase in youth immigration from third countries

#### Glossary

*Citizenship*: the particular legal bond between an individual and his or her State, acquired by birth or naturalisation, whether by declaration, choice, marriage or other means under national legislation.

*EU citizen or EU national*: a citizen of a Member State of the EU-27.

*Foreigners or foreign population* refer to persons who are not citizens of the country in which they reside, including persons of unknown citizenship and stateless persons.

*EU foreigners*: persons who have citizenship of an EU-27 Member State and who are usually resident in another EU-27 Member State.

*Non-EU foreigners or third-country nationals*: persons who are usually resident in the EU and who have citizenship of a country outside the EU.

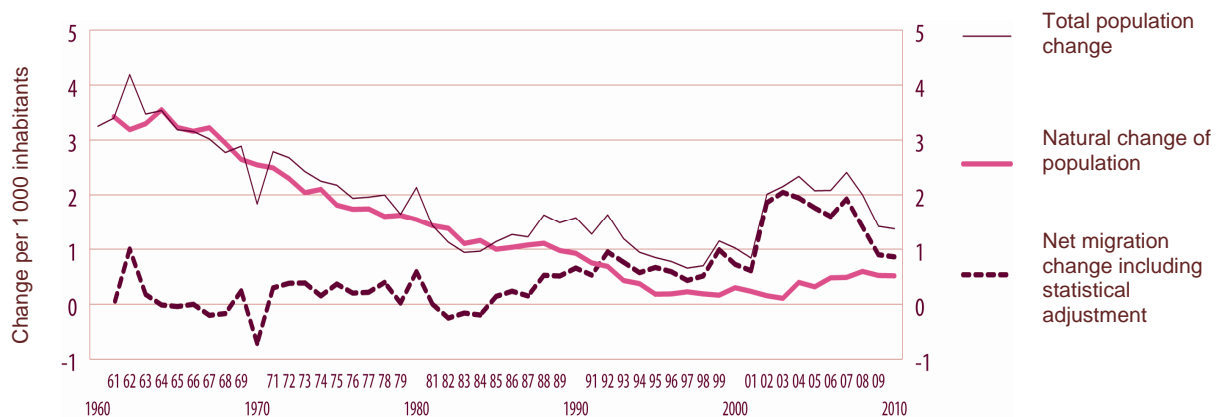
*Foreign-born*: a person whose place of birth, or residence of the mother at the time of the birth, is outside the country of his/her usual residence.

Source: Eurostat, 2011

The steady decline in the youth population over the last decade has been partially offset by the increase in net immigration flows.

Figure 2-F shows that, despite periodical downturns, the growth in immigration from third countries over the last 30 years has significantly offset the steady decrease in the population of EU nationals.

**Figure 2-F: Crude rates of population change, EU-27, 1960-2010<sup>14</sup>**



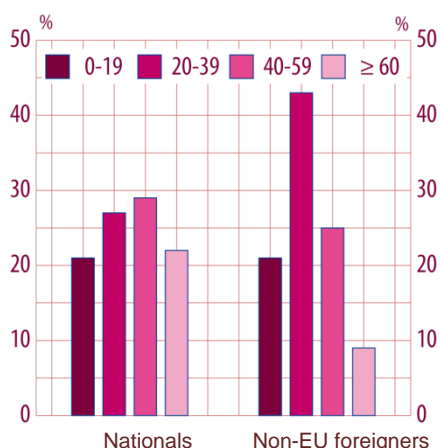
Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: demo\_gind

Furthermore, whereas the median age of nationals of all EU-27 Member States was 40.6 years in 2009, the median age of non-EU nationals was 27.5 years<sup>15</sup>. Figure 2-G illustrates differences in the average ages of EU-27 and non-EU nationals. Immigrants arrive typically when they are between 25 and 35, i.e. in their prime working and child-bearing ages. Thus they contribute twice to rejuvenating the populations they join; firstly, because they themselves are relatively young; secondly, because they bear children.

<sup>14</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission 2011c, p. 46.

**Figure 2-G: Age distribution of EU nationals and non-EU foreigners, EU-27, 1 January 2010**

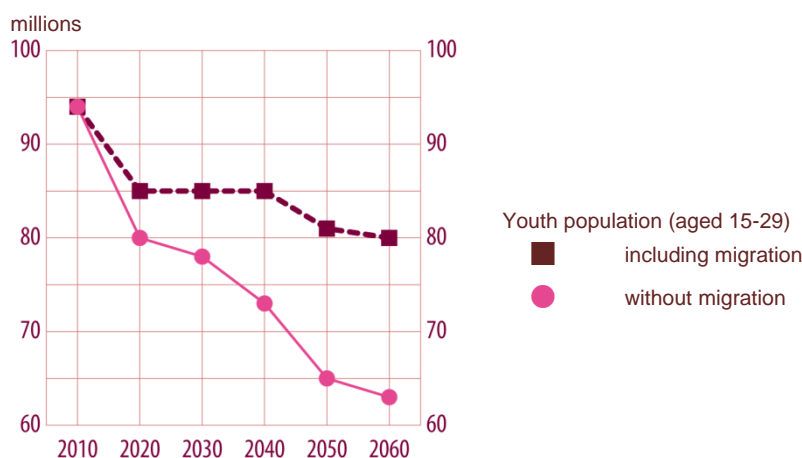


Source: Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 34/2011.  
Online data code: migr\_pop2ctz

As shown in Figure 2-G, while the proportions of EU nationals in the four age groups considered are fairly even, non-EU foreigners in the 20 to 39 age group are over-represented in comparison to the other groups, accounting for over 40 % of the total third-country population. The immigrants from non-EU countries who partially offset the decrease in the numbers of EU nationals are predominantly young.

According to the assumptions of EUROPOP2010 the levels of youth migration could affect the projected EU-27 youth population as a whole (Figure 2-H).

**Figure 2-H: Projected youth population (aged 15-29) – with and without migration, EU-27, 2010-2060<sup>16</sup>**



Source: Eurostat 2010. Online data code: proj\_10c2150zmp

### 2.3. Increase in the mobility of young Europeans

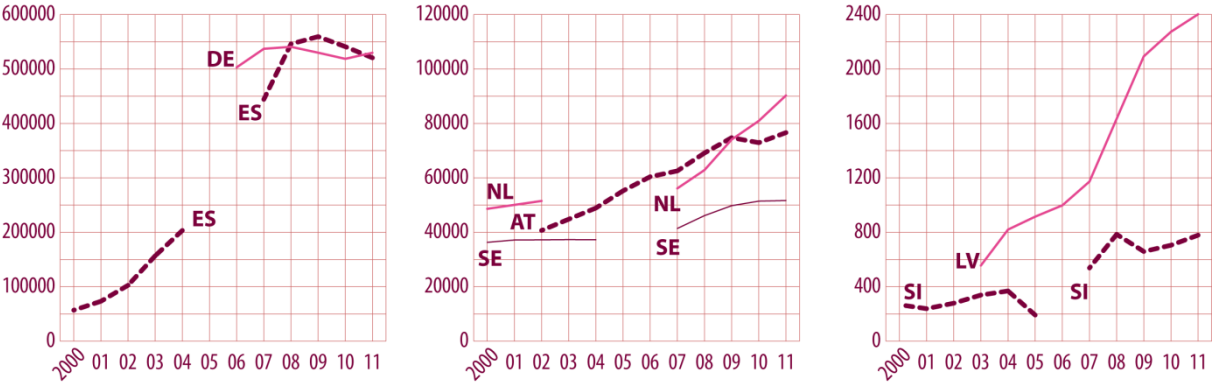
Young people in the EU-27 have become increasingly mobile. Crossing national borders to study, to work in the paid employment or voluntary sectors, or to travel for pleasure has become increasingly common.

Based on available information, there is a general growth in the numbers of young people choosing to live in a different Member State. Among people who have experienced studying or working abroad, young adults are over-represented. There are a few exceptions to this trend: in Sweden the number of young EU foreigners started to increase only since 2006; in

<sup>16</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

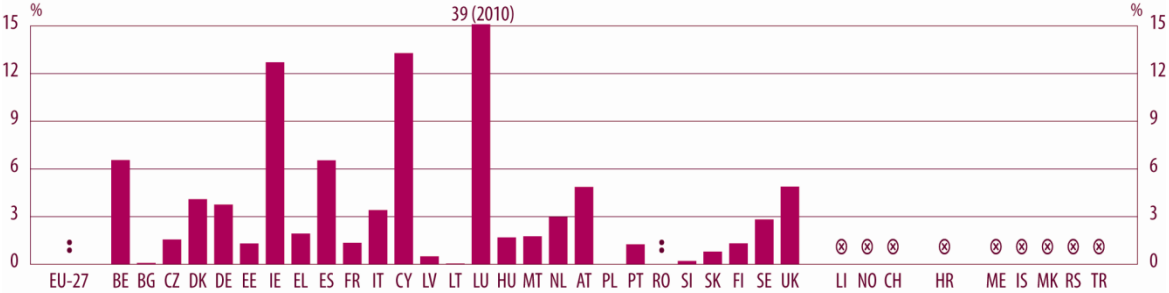
Germany it started to fall in 2008 following several years of increase. The leveling out or decrease in youth mobility after 2008 is one of the more general effects of the current economic crisis on intra-EU student and professional mobility (Figure 2-I)<sup>17</sup>.

**Figure 2-I: Trends in the EU population of young foreigners (ES, DE, LV, NL, AT, SI, SE)<sup>18</sup>**



Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: migr\_pop1ctz  
 Note: Countries, for which time series are available. Slovenia – break in series between 2008 and 2009 due to a change in the definitions and methods used.

**Figure 2-J: Young EU foreigners (aged 15-29), 1 January 2011**



Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: migr\_pop1ctz  
 Note: Latvia, Poland, United Kingdom: provisional data. Luxembourg: 2010 data.

The share of young EU foreigners varies from one country to another (Figure 2-J). Luxembourg is the Member State with the highest share of young EU foreigners (almost 40 %) in its youth population<sup>19</sup>. Other countries with a high proportion of EU foreigners are Belgium, Ireland, Spain, and Cyprus. By contrast, the youth population in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia is more homogeneous in terms of nationality. It is important to bear in mind that the data shown here is based on citizenship, and that naturalisation policies of countries (under which it may be relatively hard or easy to acquire the new nationality) will affect official measurements of the EU foreign population.

Between 2010 and 2011 migration increased by an average of 45 % from southern EU Member States, an increase of 52 % from Spain and 90 % from Greece. It was underlined that the majority of migrants were well educated young people with qualifications in the tertiary sector<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> European Commission 2011d, p. 255.  
<sup>18</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.  
<sup>19</sup> The immigration of large numbers of Portuguese citizens during the 1960s and 1970s appears to be the main reason for this.  
<sup>20</sup> European Commission 2012f.

### **3. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The current crisis has severely affected employment. This is of special concern to young people, who are more vulnerable to the effects of unstable economic cycles in the labour market.

Indeed, the youngest workers are the first hit by unemployment because they are the least experienced and more often employed under temporary contracts. The labour market is also more competitive during a crisis, in the sense that there are more young applicants for fewer job offers<sup>21</sup>. In addition, some groups of young people are more at risk of unemployment than others. Those who are only modestly qualified or entering the labour market for the first time are especially vulnerable in times of economic crisis<sup>22</sup>. Even those who are employed can experience precarious situations with low pay, poor quality working conditions and weak social security coverage. Lack of family – work-life reconciliation measures, discrimination, and absence of skills required by the current labour market may constitute further barriers of youth employment.

#### **3.2. Transition from education to employment**

The transition from education and training to employment can be defined as a period in which young people should ideally finish their formal education, find employment to match their qualifications, and thereby achieve financial autonomy. Yet the existence throughout Europe of other possible career paths that, for example, combine studies with part-time work, or alternate education and training with professional activity, calls for a closer examination of precisely how young Europeans have experienced this transition in recent years. The research focus on school-to-work transition is therefore moving from treating the transition as a single event towards treating it as a sequence, involving multiple transitions in a given period of time.

##### *3.2.1. Between 20 and 24: an age of transition*

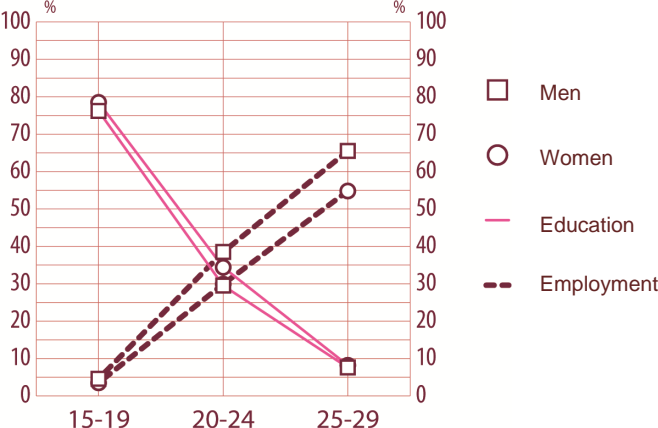
As shown in Figure 3-Abelow, the period of transition occurs for most young Europeans between the ages of 20 and 24. This is the age group in which the proportion of young people who are exclusively in education and training falls below 50 % to be gradually overtaken by the proportion of those who are exclusively employed.

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<sup>21</sup> Eurofound 2011a, pp.6-9.

<sup>22</sup> ODI 2010, pp.14-17.

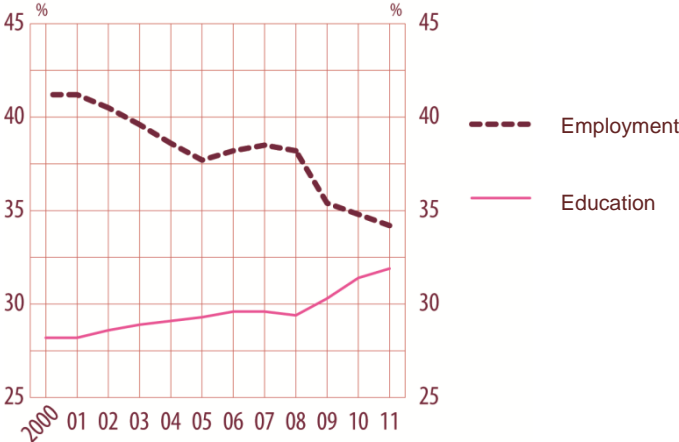
**Figure 3-A: Full-time education rate and full-time employment rate of young people, EU-27 average, by age and by sex, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – Labour Force Survey (LFS). Online data code: edat\_lfse\_18

The transition occurs slightly later for women aged between 20 and 24 than men. A gap emerges between them, as more women than men in that age group continue their studies and postpone joining the labour market. The employment gap is maintained in later years, whereas participation exclusively in education and training simply drops to similar rates for both men and women.

**Figure 3-B: Full-time education rate and full-time employment rate of young people (aged 20-24), EU-27 average, 2000-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: edat\_lfse\_18

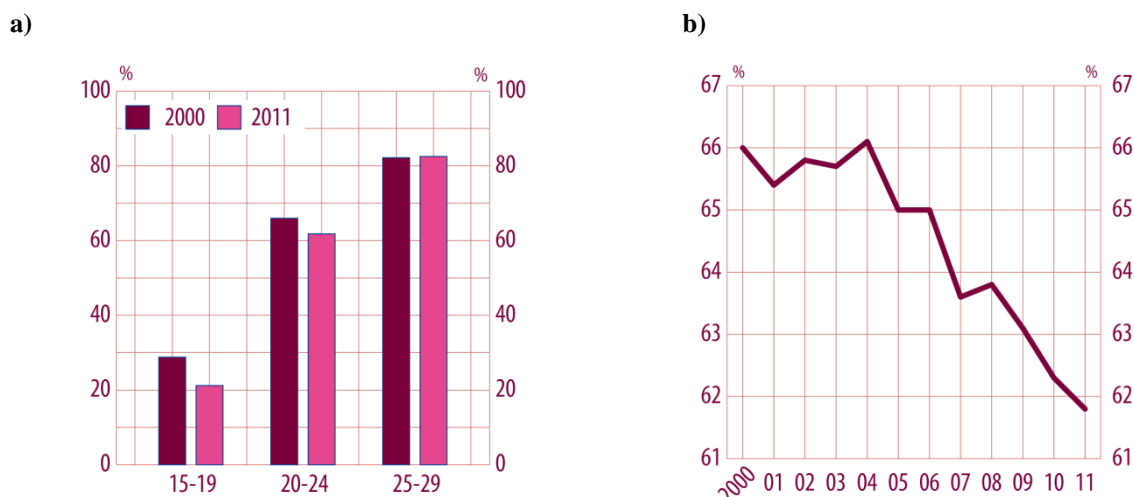
Since 2000, the proportion of the 20 to 24 age group enrolled in education and training but not employed has been growing. Between 2000 and 2011, there was an increase of 3.7 percentage points (Figure 3-B). Conversely, the proportion of young people in the same age group exclusively working and not participating in education and training fell from 41.2 % in 2000 to 34.2 % in 2011.

Figure 3-B shows that this trend has become more pronounced since 2008. Since the economic downturn, more young people aged between 20 and 24 increasingly devote a longer time to education and training exclusively, while a decreasing share is active in employment but not in education and training. Therefore, while this remains the age category with the highest share of youth in transition from education to employment, an increasing number of young people stay in education longer than the age of 24.

### 3.2.2. Economically active young people

The postponement of the transition discussed above has clearly been changing the proportions of young people in the economically active population, defined as those who are either employed or searching for a job<sup>23</sup>. Figure 3-C shows how the activity rate has changed between 2000 and 2011 among the three main age groups i.e. 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29.

**Figure 3-C: Activity rates of young people (aged 15-19, 20-24, 25-29), EU-27 average, 2000 and 2011 (a) and (aged 20-24) variations of the EU-27 average, 2000-2011 (b)**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_argan

There appears to have been little change for the 25 to 29 age group, whose activity rate stands at around 82 %. This does not apply to the other two age groups. Young people aged 15 to 19 have always been the least active, as most of them are still enrolled in education and training programmes. Their activity rate has decreased further in 2011, however, for this age group this is a good development providing that they go or stay in education. As Figure 3-C shows, the proportion of those in the transition age group (20 to 24) in the active population has also decreased in the last ten years. Since 2007, their activity rate has fallen faster, sinking to 61.8 % in 2011.

This decrease in the activity rate and the postponement of the transition from education (or training) to work are interrelated. Chapter 0 on Due to the high unemployment rates in southern European countries, mobility intentions are high (especially among young people) and labour mobility from those countries has increased, contrasting with an overall decline in intra-EU mobility since 2008. Emigration from these countries has increased, notably in the form of return migration, but there are also early signs of new patterns of emigration of nationals (e.g. from Ireland to Australia).

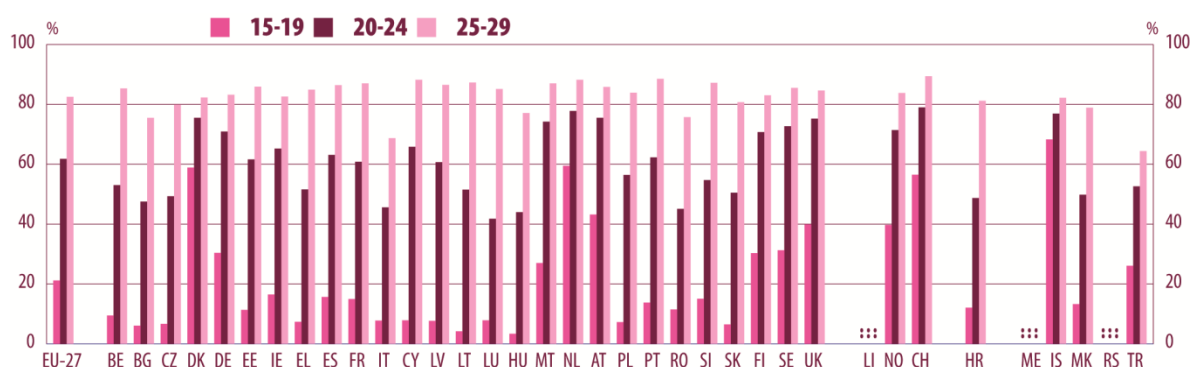
Education and Training sets out that there has been a counter-trend in terms of rising enrolments in post-secondary level and tertiary education in Europe in recent years, which is in line with EU education targets. However, this prolongation of studies may also be partly attributable to difficulty in finding employment<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> According to the definition provided by the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and used by Eurostat for collecting data, the economically active population comprises employed and unemployed persons. Inactive persons are those who are classified neither as employed nor as unemployed.

<sup>24</sup> ILO 2012, p. 8.



**Figure 3-D: Activity rates of young people (aged 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29), by country, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_argan

The most recent data on youth activity rates in the EU-27 complete the picture (Figure 3-D). In several countries, such as Belgium, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia, the postponement of the transition from education to work is clear. Activity rates are very high for the 25 to 29 age group while for 20 to 24 year olds rates are below the EU-27 average, as many of them continue studying and only become economically active when aged 25 or over.

However, in many other countries including Denmark and the Netherlands, the activity rates observed in the three age groups (15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29) are the highest, at far above the EU-27 average. In these countries, a majority of young people combine studies and work as both trainees and apprentices under the dual education system, or as students working while in tertiary education.

There are also young people who drop out of education or training and are unable to access the labour market, thus comprising the vulnerable group known as NEETs – those who are not in employment, education or training. The NEETs are a group consisting of ‘persons typically aged between 15 and 24 years who, regardless of their educational level, are disengaged from both work and education’<sup>25</sup>. They are also a mixed group. For instance, they may include young persons who are ‘not seeking jobs or applying for education and are not constrained from doing so’<sup>26</sup> alongside active but unsuccessful job seekers or vulnerable groups of young people who are farther from the labour market. Yet despite such distinctions, all NEETs are more likely to be disengaged from work and education for longer periods and thus more vulnerable to social marginalisation (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion on NEETs).

### 3.3. The position of young people in the labour market

#### 3.3.1. Aspects of unemployment

Young people in Europe are hindered in their efforts to start a rewarding professional career and more generally to achieve their long-term career goals. Indeed joblessness ‘prevents them from accumulating work experience, which reduces their entire human and social capital, and can be reflected in lower future wages’<sup>27</sup>. Going through a joblessness situation early in life may leave long-term scars<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, difficulty in finding a job may ultimately lead to

<sup>25</sup> Eurofound 2011a, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

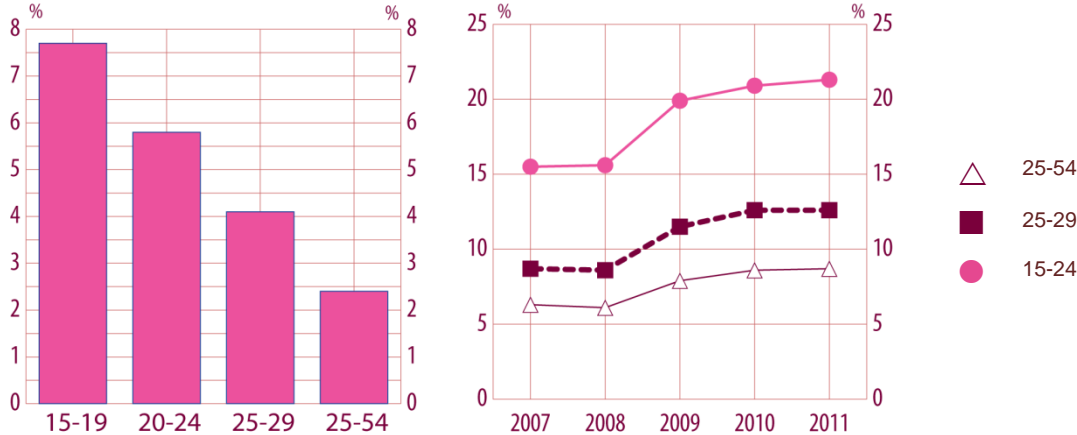
<sup>27</sup> European Commission 2010a, pp. 132-133.

<sup>28</sup> OECD 2011, p. 12.

economic and social exclusion and result in a psychological hindrance for young people if they feel unable to contribute fully to society<sup>29</sup>.

Youth unemployment rates<sup>30</sup> have been consistently higher than that of the population as a whole. As shown in Figure 3-E, the increase in the share of youth unemployed has been significantly greater than for the older active population since the start of the financial crisis in spring 2008. In spring 2012, more than one in five young people aged below 25 in the labour market in the EU-27 was jobless.

**Figure 3-E: Increase of unemployment rates of young people, EU-27 average, by age, 2007-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: une\_rt\_a

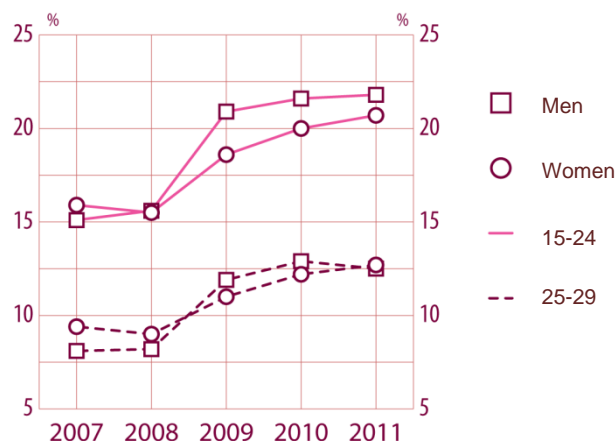
As shown in Figure 3-F, the proportion of unemployed young women aged 15 to 24 in the EU-27 was slightly higher than that of young men until 2008. In that year, both rates were equal. The same trend applies to the active population of the 25 to 29 age group. Since then, the opposite has occurred with greater proportions of unemployed young men, although almost identical proportions of women and men aged between 25 and 29 in the active population were unemployed in 2011.

<sup>29</sup> SALTO-Youth 2011.

<sup>30</sup> The unemployment rate for a given age group expresses unemployed people in that age group as a percentage of the total labour force (both employed and unemployed).

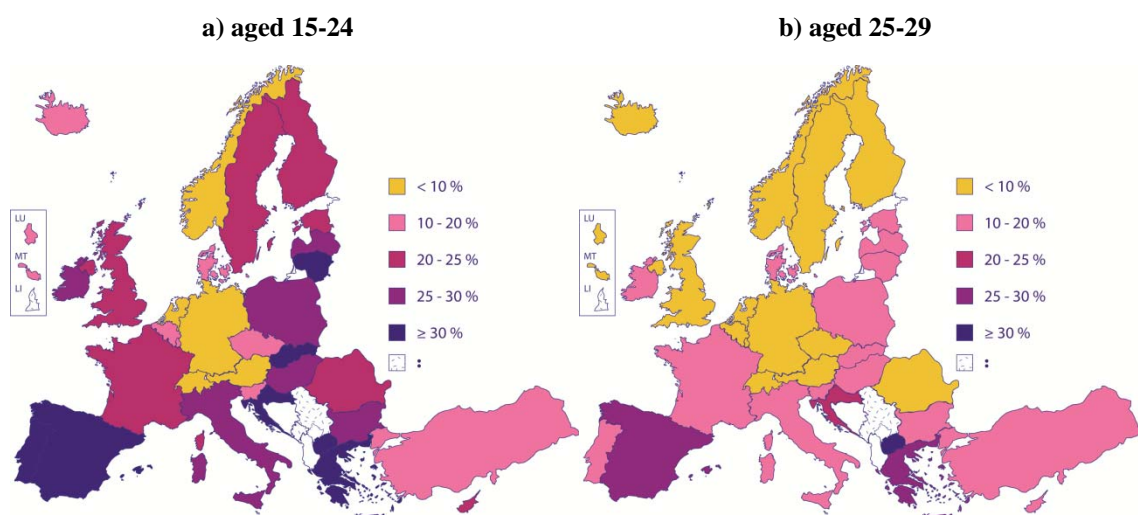
An unemployed person is defined by Eurostat, in accordance with ILO guidelines, as someone aged 15 to 74 (or 16 to 74 in Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway) who is a) without work during the reference week; b) available to start work within the following two weeks (or has already found a job to start within the next three months); and c) who has actively sought employment at some time during the preceding four weeks.

**Figure 3-F: EU youth indicator: Unemployment rates of young people, EU-27 average, by age and by sex, 2007-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfs\_urgan

**Figure 3-G: Unemployment rates of young people (aged 15- 24 and 25-29), by country and by age, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_urgan  
Note: EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate countries covered.

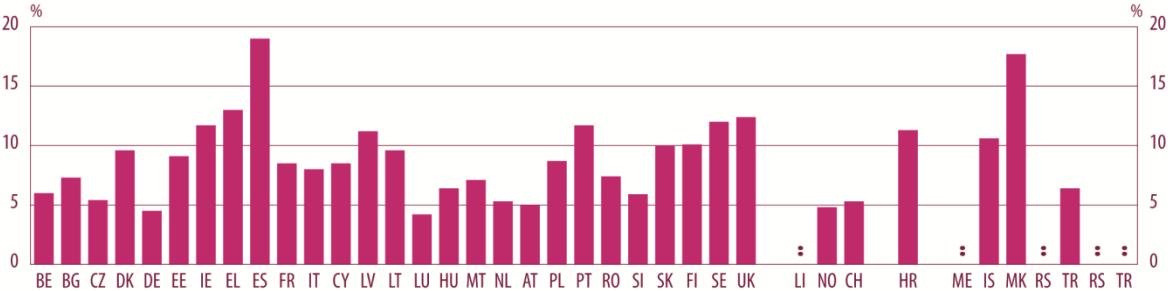
Almost everywhere in Europe, the active population of the 15 to 24 age group has been more often affected by unemployment than that of those aged 25 to 29. In the case of the former (map a) in Figure 3-G), unemployment rates in 2011 were below 10 % only in a few countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Austria as well as in Norway and Switzerland. By contrast, the proportion of unemployed in the active population in the same age group (15 to 24) was three times as high in Lithuania, Portugal and Slovakia while in Spain and Greece it reached 45 %. Although unemployment rates for the 25 to 29 age group were lower (second map in Figure 3-G), they were still above the EU-27 average of 12.6 % in the same countries as in the case of 15 to 24 year olds. In 2011, rates ranged from 13.9 % in Estonia to 26.9 % in Spain and 29.6 % in Greece.

Figure 3-H shows unemployment ratios <sup>31</sup> for the 15 to 24 age group in European countries in 2011. This indicator offers a better insight into youth unemployment since it does take

<sup>31</sup> The Youth unemployment rate (15 to 24) is the proportion of unemployed people over the active population in the same (15 to 24) age group.  
The Youth unemployment ratio (15 to 24) is the proportion of unemployed people over the total population in the same (15 to 24) age group.

account the large proportion of young people still enrolled in education. The data reveals how youth unemployment levels in Europe vary widely from one country to the next.

**Figure 3-H: EU youth indicator: Unemployment ratio of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsi\_act\_a

In some countries, unemployment affects only a small minority of the 15 to 24 age group with ratios below or close to 5 %. This applies to the Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Austria as well as to Norway and Switzerland. As already mentioned, the dual education system in these countries, which combines courses at school with company apprenticeships, helps to account for low unemployment among those aged between 15 and 24. At the other end of the spectrum, Spain has the highest proportion of jobless young people in the same age group (18 %), followed by around a dozen countries in which the unemployment ratio is above the EU-27 average of 9.1 % (10 % for men and 8.2 % for women). Ratios range from 9.6 % in Denmark and Lithuania to 13 % in Greece.

These two different approaches towards understanding how unemployment affects the youth population of Europe via unemployment rates and ratios respectively, point to a disturbing situation in Spain, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia. Jobless young people in these countries constitute a relatively high proportion of both the entire labour force and the 15 to 24 age group.

The length of the period during which young persons search for a job after having completed education is likely to depend on various factors. Foremost among them will be the level of their educational qualifications. In general, tertiary education graduates experience shorter search periods than those who completed secondary school. Indeed in 2009, the average time taken by graduates to find a ‘significant’ job<sup>32</sup> was put at around half that required by those who had at most completed lower secondary education, namely 5 months compared to 9.8 months<sup>33</sup>.

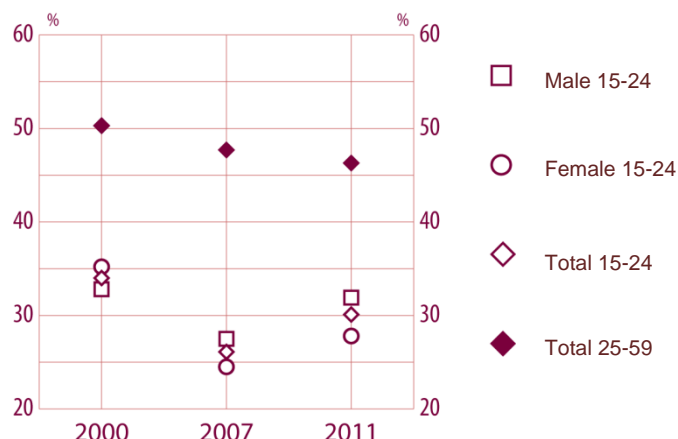
In 2011, a third of the unemployed aged 15 to 24 were unemployed for a year or more<sup>34</sup> (Figure 3-I). While the long-term unemployment rate was lower than in the case of the active population in the 25 to 59 age group (in which it was 46.3 %), the situation has worsened for the active population of young people in the last five years. Whereas the long-term unemployment rate of the 25 to 59 has been steadily falling since 2000, it suddenly started increasing for the 15 to 24 age group in 2007. Since then, a higher proportion of young men than young women among the labour force have experienced long-term unemployment (31.9 % compared to 27.8 %).

<sup>32</sup> A job lasting at least three months.

<sup>33</sup> Eurydice/EACEA and Eurostat 2012, pp. 178-179.

<sup>34</sup> The long-term unemployment rate is the proportion of persons who have been unemployed for 12 months or more, in the total number of unemployed persons in the labour market.

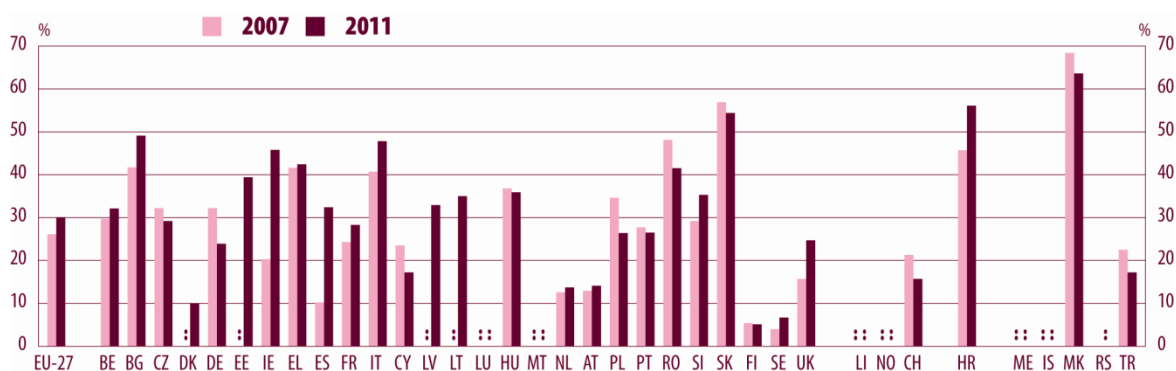
**Figure 3-I: Long term youth unemployment rates of young people, EU-27 average, by age and by sex, 2000, 2007 and 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_upgal

Since 2007, there have been diverging trends between EU countries concerning the number of young people who have spent long periods job-hunting (Figure 3-J). In eleven countries, long-term unemployment rates have decreased, while in ten countries the trend is the opposite with rates increasing between 2007 and 2011. The extreme case is in Spain in which the proportion of those aged 15 to 24 in the active population being in long-term unemployment is three times higher than four years ago, reaching 32.4 % in 2011. Furthermore, in one third of EU-27 countries, over a third of the unemployed aged 15 to 24 had been jobless for one year or more in 2011. The highest long-term unemployment rates were in Slovakia (54.4 %), Bulgaria (49.8 %), Italy (47.1 %) and Ireland (45.8 %). In Denmark, Finland and Sweden, the situation seems to be more favourable for 15 to 24 year olds in the active population who have tended to find a job quickly, with fewer than 10 % of them were unemployed for 12 months or longer in 2011. Outside the EU-27, the long-term unemployment rate was over 50 % in Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

**Figure 3-J: EU youth indicator: Long term unemployment rate of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2007 and 2011**

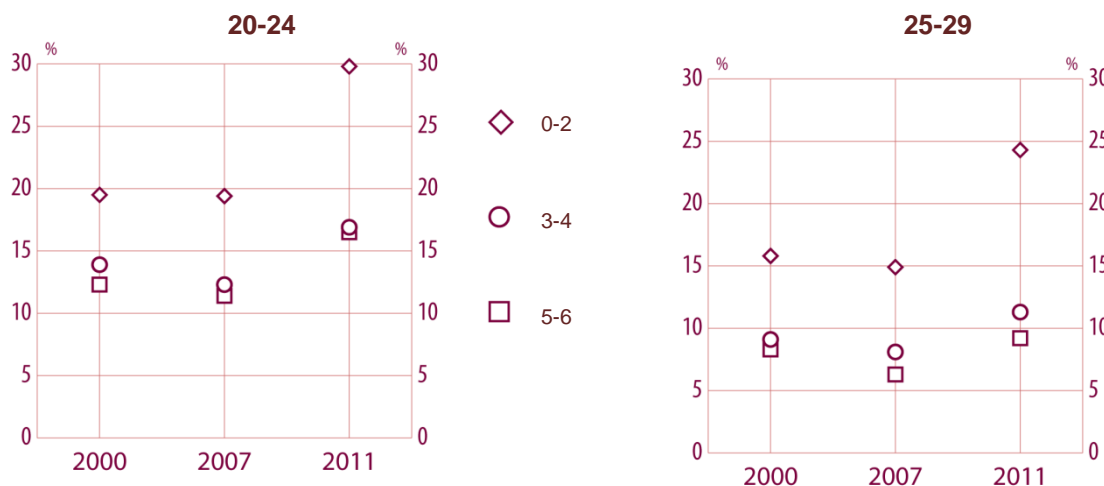


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_upgal

Figure 3-K suggests that the more young people are educated, the better they are protected against unemployment. In 2011, the unemployment rate was indeed much lower for young graduates from tertiary education than for those with the lowest levels of education in the EU-

27<sup>35</sup>. Rates among the active population aged 25 to 29 were 9.2 % and 11.3 % for those who had completed tertiary education and upper secondary education, respectively. However they are twice as high in the case of the active population of the 25 to 29 year olds, whose qualifications were obtained only in or prior lower secondary education (24.3 %).

**Figure 3-K: Unemployment rate of young people, by highest educational attainment level, EU-27 average, by age, 2000, 2007 and 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_urgaed

Note: Educational levels as defined by the 1997 ISCED.

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 = tertiary education (first stage) and ISCED 6 = tertiary education (second stage).

However, the risk of unemployment has increased also for higher educated young people since 2007. The economic crisis has affected them too, albeit to a lesser extent. However, the situation in some countries is rather different (Figure 3-L). This is especially pertinent in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal and Romania, where graduates are at a greater risk of unemployment than young people with lower qualifications, including those who have not completed secondary education. In these countries, the economic crisis has exacerbated the situation of ‘overqualified’ graduates<sup>36</sup>. There appears to be a mismatch between the skills acquired in tertiary education and those needed for available jobs. Beyond the EU-27, graduates in Croatia, the Former Republic of Macedonia and Turkey face similar problems. Vulnerable groups of young people like migrants, Roma or other minorities, youngsters with a disability or mental health problem, homeless youth experience increased difficulties to get a job.

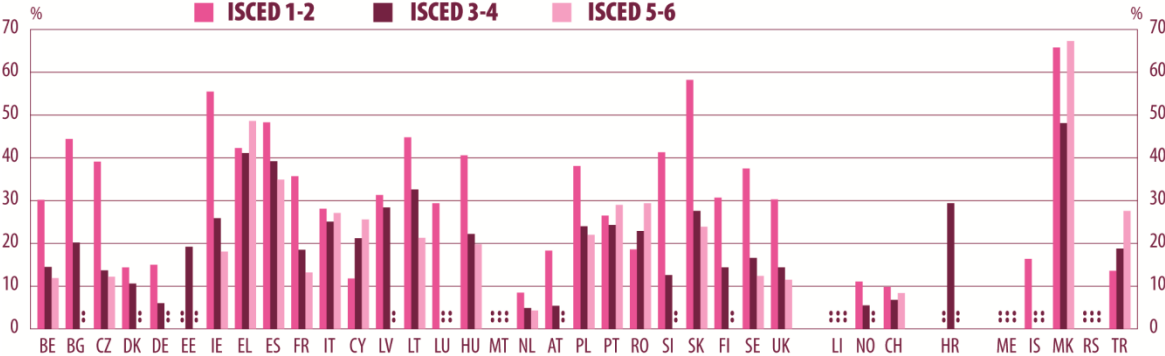
<sup>35</sup> Please see the definition of the educational levels according to the 1997 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED – UOE) in Chapter 0 on Due to the high unemployment rates in southern European countries, mobility intentions are high (especially among young people) and labour mobility from those countries has increased, contrasting with an overall decline in intra-EU mobility since 2008. Emigration from these countries has increased, notably in the form of return migration, but there are also early signs of new patterns of emigration of nationals (e.g. from Ireland to Australia).

Education and Training.

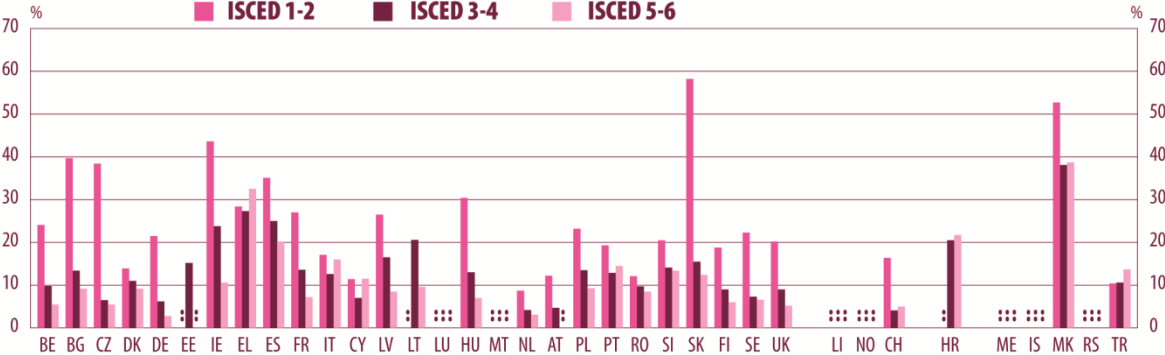
<sup>36</sup> Eurofound 2011a, p. 2.

**Figure 3-L: Unemployment rate of young people, by the highest educational attainment, by age and by country, 2011**

**a) aged 20-24**



**b) aged 25-29**

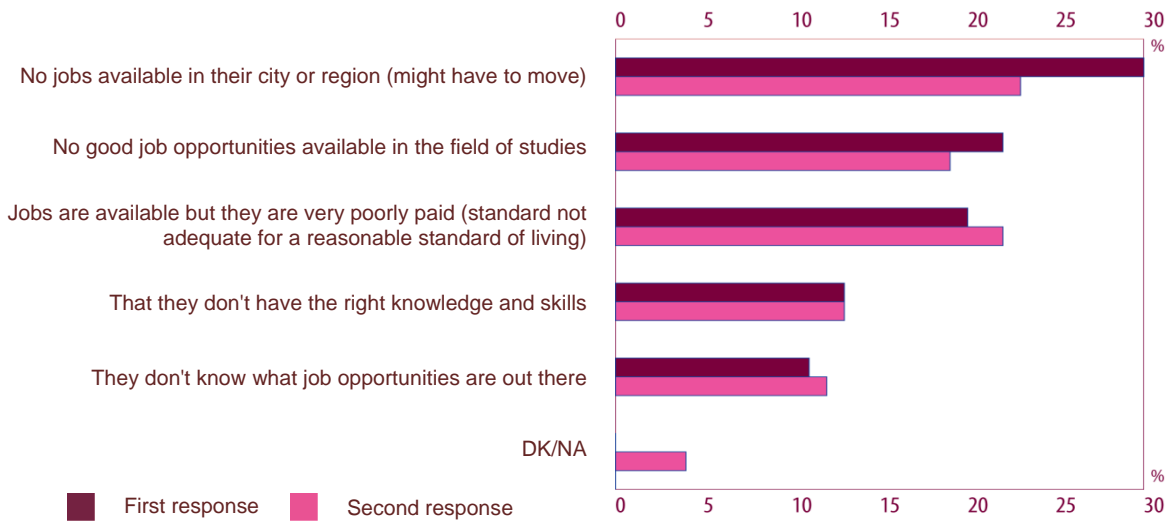


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_urgaed

The ‘Youth on the Move’ Flash [Eurobarometer](#) gives some insight into the main concerns of young Europeans when seeking a job on completion of their education (Figure 3-M).

The majority of respondents (53 %) identified a structural factor, namely ‘no available jobs in their city or region’ as their first or second main concern. Many also highlighted ‘poorly paid available jobs’ and ‘low employability in the field of studies’ (42 % and 41 %). Possible personal reasons for their difficulty, such as lack of ‘the right knowledge and skills’ and ‘unawareness of job opportunities’ were the least cited.

**Figure 3-M: Young people having difficulties in finding a job, EU-27 average, 2011**

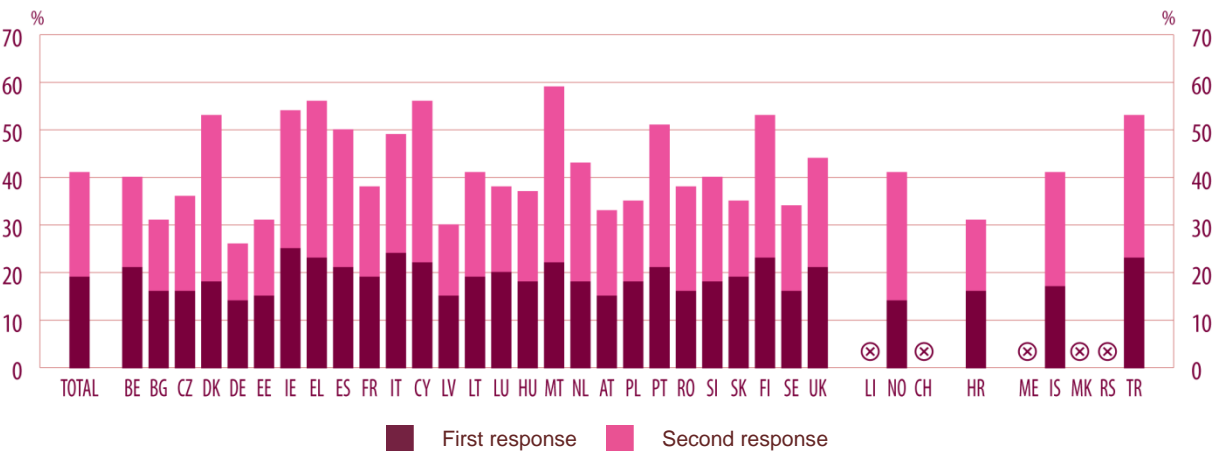


Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'  
 Note: The question was 'Finding a relevant and suitable job after finishing education is often a challenge. In your opinion, what is the main concern of young people in your country regarding getting a job after finishing education? And the second main concern?'

Answers by educational level show that the main difficulty for those who are better qualified is the mismatch between skills and jobs. Indeed, young people who were in tertiary education or had completed it were more likely to indicate a lack of good job opportunities in their field of study (47 %) than their counterparts at lower levels of education. Conversely, 54% of young people who had dropped out of lower secondary education and were the least qualified said that poorly paid jobs were their main concern, as opposed to 42% in the case of those who had pursued their education further.

When looking at country variations, a lack of good job opportunities in young people's fields of study is the main concern of over half of the respondents in one third of European countries (Figure 3-N). They include countries in which youth unemployment is the highest in Europe, both in general and among tertiary education graduates (for example, Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal).

**Figure 3-N: Young people considering that there are no good job opportunities in their field of studies, by country, 2011**

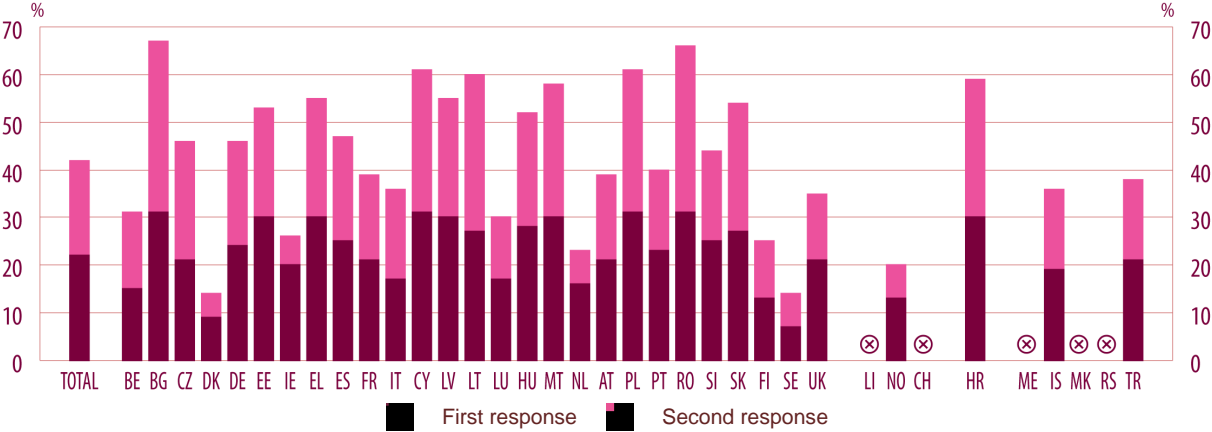


Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'  
 Note: The question was 'Finding a relevant and suitable job after finishing education is often a challenge. In your opinion, what is the main concern of young people in your country regarding getting a job after finishing education? And the second main concern?'



In other countries, the main concern is that jobs are very poorly paid (Figure 3-O), e.g in Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus, Poland and Lithuania. Conversely, poor pay was a minor concern reported by fewer than 20% of young people in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland.

**Figure 3-O: Young people considering that jobs are available but they are very poorly paid, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'  
 Note: The question was 'Finding a relevant and suitable job after finishing education is often a challenge. In your opinion, what is the main concern of young people in your country regarding getting a job after finishing education? And the second main concern?'

3.3.2. Working patterns of young employees

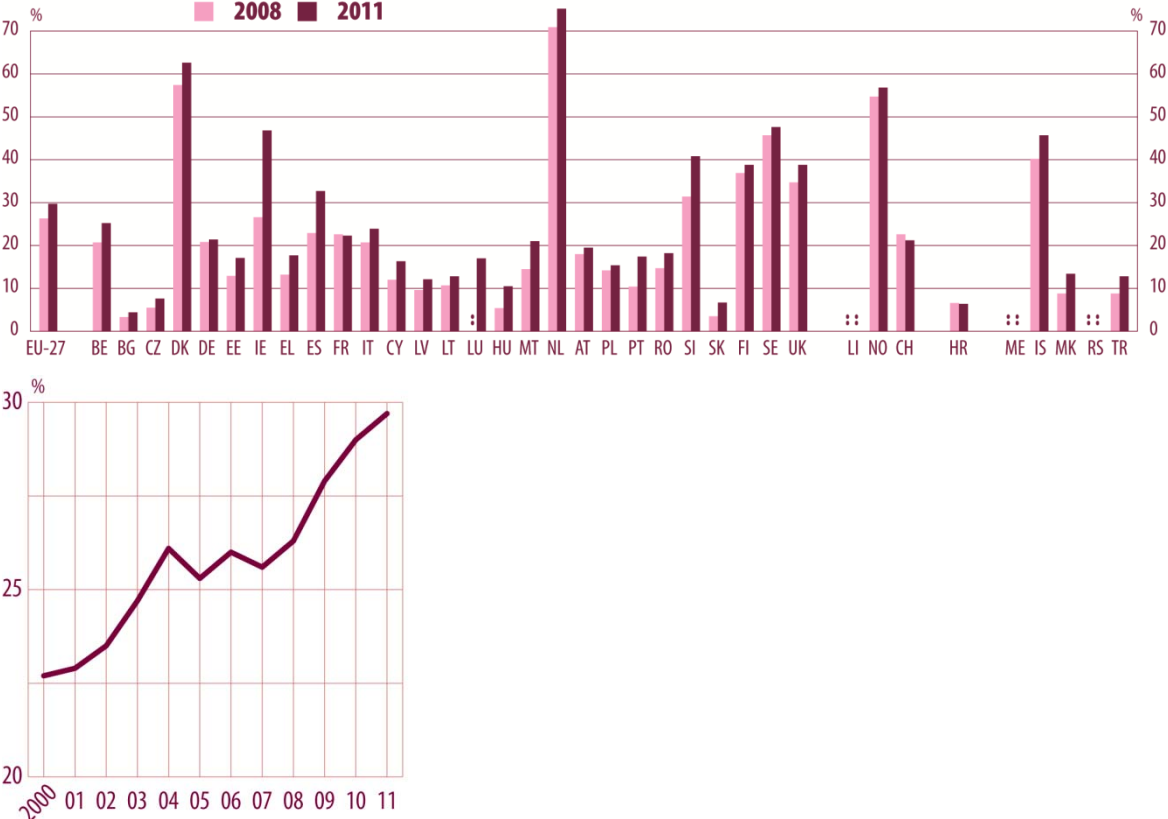
Young people are more likely to be employed on a temporary contract or part-time basis. And they more commonly have jobs with atypical and unusual schedules, including shifts and weekend or night-time work.

Since 2000, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of the 15 to 24 age group who work on a part-time basis<sup>37</sup>. In 2011, nearly one in three employed 15 to 24 year olds had a part-time job (Figure 3-P). The situation is different among the working population aged 25 to 54, with its part-time employment rate of around 16 % over the last ten years.

In some countries, the trend for the 15 to 24 age group is even more marked. For example, in Ireland, the proportion of part-time workers in this group almost doubled. In Denmark and the Netherlands, the rates were already among the highest in Europe in 2008 and continued to increase reaching 62.6 % and 75.2 % respectively. By contrast, in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, part-time employment of 15 to 24 year olds was still uncommon in 2011 with rates of just 4.4-7.6 %.

<sup>37</sup> As explained when defining full-time employment, the distinction between full-time and part-time work is based on a spontaneous response by the respondent (except in the Netherlands, Iceland and Norway where part-time is determined if the usual hours are fewer than 35 hours and full-time if the usual hours are 35 hours or more, and in Sweden where this criterion is applied to the self-employed). It is not possible to establish a more precise distinction between full-time and part-time employment, since working hours differ between Member States and between branches of activity.

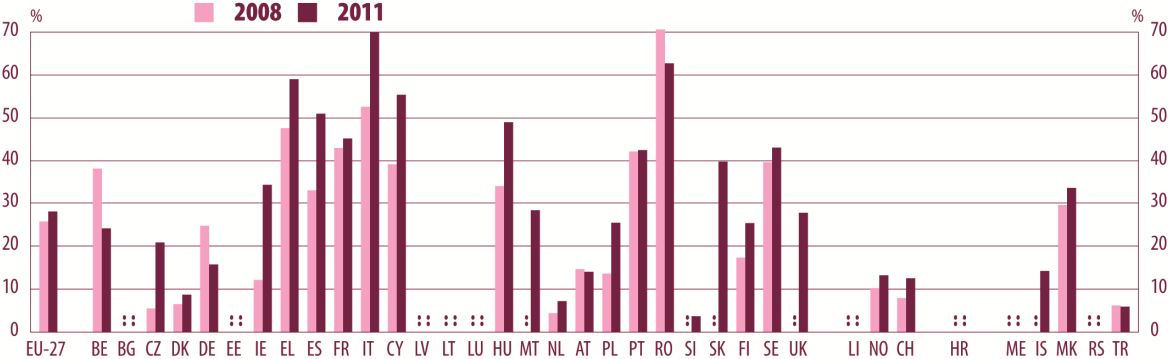
**Figure 3-P: Part-time employment rate of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2008 and 2011, and EU-27 average 2000-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_eppgan

Part-time work among young people often implies apprenticeship either under a vocational education programme or in a job while studying. This accounts for the high part-time rates reported in many countries and their increase in recent years.

**Figure 3-Q: Involuntary part-time employment rate of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2008 and 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_eppgai

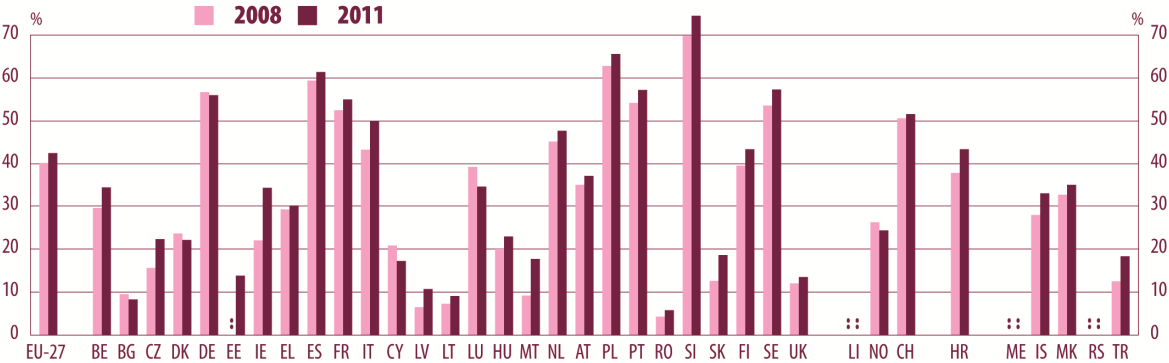
That said, many young people work part-time because they cannot find full-time employment.

Figure 3-Q shows the high rates of involuntary part-time employment among 15 to 24 year olds in several European countries. In Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Romania, over half of young people aged under 25 worked part-time because they had no choice. Since 2008, involuntary part-time youth employment has increased in most parts of Europe. By contrast,

in Denmark and the Netherlands, in which the most of those aged 15 to 24 work part-time, it is clear from the data that they do so deliberately.

From 2008 to 2011, the percentage of young people with temporary employment contracts <sup>38</sup> rose from 40.2 % to 42.5 % in the EU-27 (Figure 3-R). Even before the economic downturn, the great majority of 15 to 24 year olds in several countries was employed under fixed-term contracts. This was the case in Germany, Spain, France, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. However, in a few countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania and the United Kingdom, the opposite was true with just a small minority of those aged 15 to 24 employed under temporary contracts.

**Figure 3-R: Employees with a temporary contract among young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2008 and 2011**



Source : Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_etpga

Temporary employment occurs among a far greater proportion of young workers aged 15 to 24 than in the case of those aged between 25 and 59. In 2011, the difference was one of nearly 30 percentage points in the EU-27 (11 % against 42.5 %). This is indicative of a labour market segmented into workers with long-term contracts and those with temporary jobs.

Temporary contracts may help young people in the transition from education to full-time employment, by giving them work experience and making it easier to enter the labour market or providing training opportunities as stepping-stones to permanent jobs. However, high rates of temporary employment may be indicative of insecure jobs. Temporary employees face a worse social security coverage and more precarious working conditions. Where this is the case, young people may lack the stability enabling them to live independently. They can be trapped in a cycle of alternating temporary contracts and unemployment, which may adversely affect their status into their thirties or beyond. The lack of a degree or professional experience is among the factors that may hinder the transition from a temporary to a permanent contract. Finally, there is evidence that the longer people spend searching for a job, the less likely they are to secure a permanent contract. Research showed that in 2006-2007, the younger workers (15 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groups) especially in Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and in the United Kingdom, had good chances of moving to a permanent contract <sup>39</sup>.

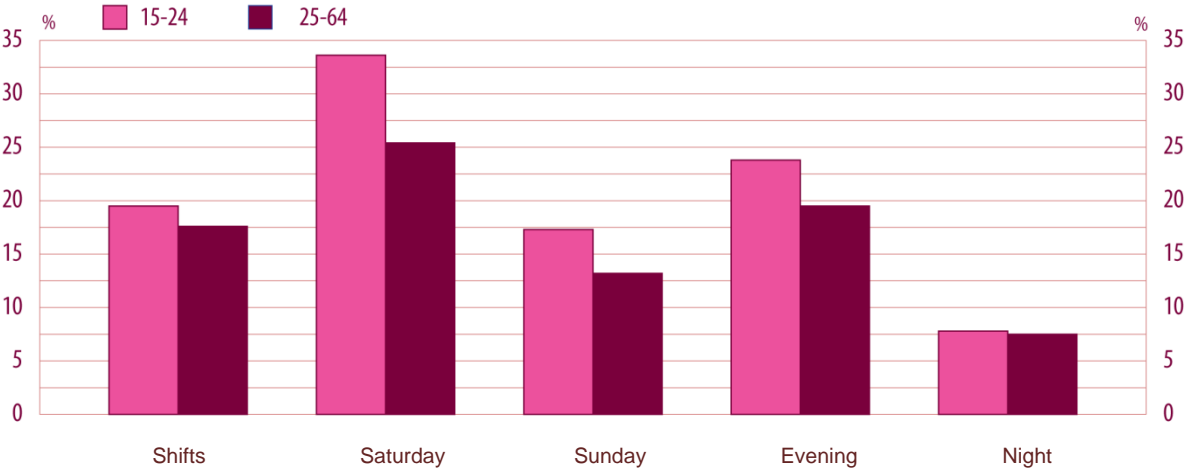
In 2011, the proportion of employed young people in the 15 to 24 age group which had atypical working hours was also much higher than for those aged 25 to 64. This was

<sup>38</sup> A temporary contract is a fixed-term contract which will terminate if certain objective criteria are met such as the completion of an assignment or the return of the employee who has been temporarily replaced (Eurostat).

<sup>39</sup> European Commission 2010a, p. 141

especially true of work on Saturday, with proportions of 33.6 % and 25.4 % respectively (Figure 3-S). The proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 which worked on Sundays and in the evenings was also around four percentage points higher than that of their elders in the 25 to 64 age group. The percentage of employees doing night work was the same in both age groups – the only exception to the overall trend. A higher proportion of 15 to 24 year olds did shift work (19.5 %), almost two percentage points higher than the proportion of their elders.

**Figure 3-S: Share of employees working in atypical and asocial working hours among young people, EU-27 average, by age, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data codes: lfsa\_ewpshi (shift); lfsa\_ewpsat (Saturday); lfsa\_ewpsun (Sunday); lfsa\_ewpnig (night); lfsa\_ewpeve (evening)

There are wide variations in these trends from one EU-27 country to another. In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, over 40 % of young employees aged 15 to 24 did shift work. In Belgium, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, the corresponding proportion was below 10 %. In Greece, the proportion of employed young people aged 15 to 24 who worked in the evening (42.9 %) was almost twice the EU-27 average. Conversely, at less than 12 %, the proportion was around half that average in Belgium, Cyprus, Latvia, Austria and Poland. Proportionally more young employees in the 15 to 24 age group in Slovakia did night work (21.9 %) than everywhere else in the EU-27. In addition, a high proportion of young employees in Greece and the Netherlands worked on Saturdays (54.9 % and 46.5 % respectively), while the approximately 25 % of 15 to 24 year olds who worked on Sundays in Ireland and Slovakia exceeded the EU-27 average of 17.3 %. Finally, the proportions of young employees aged 15 to 24 working at weekends or other less usual times were lowest in Poland<sup>40</sup>.

3.3.3. *Young entrepreneurs*

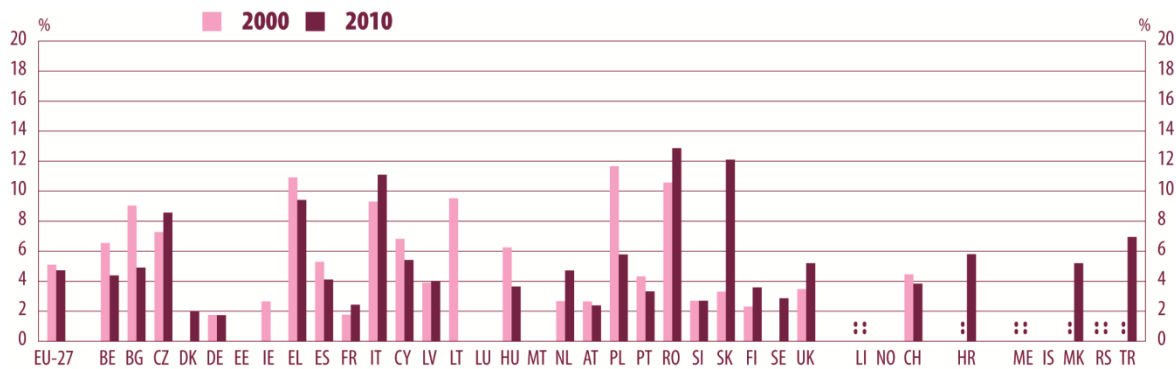
Young people aged 25 to 29 seem far more likely to set up their own business than 20 to 24 year olds. In 2010, the EU self-employment rate of the higher age group was double that of the younger group, and already close to double that of ten years earlier.

Figure 3-T shows that, in 2010, the proportions of young self-employed people in the 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 age groups in the EU-27 were smaller than ten years earlier. However, the proportions have grown among the 20 to 24 age group in the Czech Republic, Romania and Finland and in both age groups, in France, the Netherlands and Slovakia.

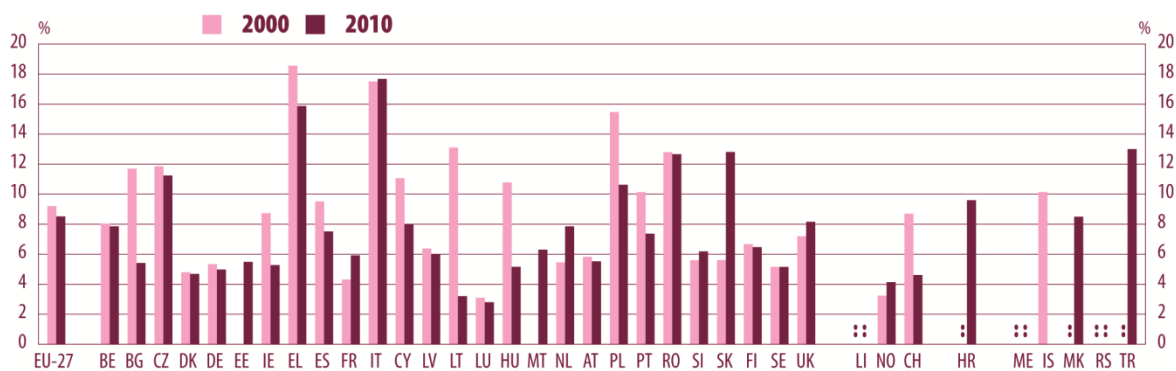
<sup>40</sup> Eurostat – online data codes: shift work: lfsa\_ewpshi; evening work: lfsa\_ewpeve; night work: lfsa\_ewpnig; Saturday: lfsa\_ewpsat; Sunday:lfsa\_ewpsun.

**Figure 3-T: EU youth indicator: Self-employed rate of young people, by country and by age, 2000 and 2010**

**a) aged 20-24**



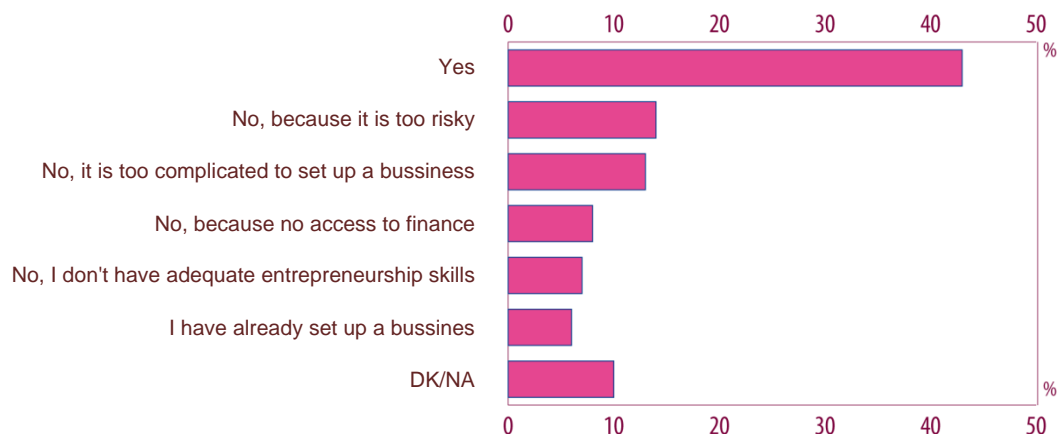
**b) aged 25-29**



Source: Eurostat – LFS

Eurobarometer gives some insight into the thinking of young people aged between 15 and 29 towards entrepreneurship. Figure 3-U reports the response rates to one of the questions on the attitudes of young people to setting up their own business, revealing that 40 % of respondents would like to do this and 6 % of them had done so already.

**Figure 3-U: EU youth indicator: Young people's desire to set up their own business, EU-27 average, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Would you like to set up your own business in the future?'

Among those who answered that they did not wish to set up their own business, similar percentages thought that it was either too risky or too complicated. Almost half as frequent

were answers related to lack of financial resources (8 %) or in adequate entrepreneurial skills (7 %). Although there were gender differences regarding willingness to set up a business (47 % of men were willing, compared to 39 % of women), the decline in interest became more noticeable with age. While 50 % of 15 to 19 year olds wanted to start a company, only 34 % of 30 to 35 year olds did so. Willingness also appeared to vary with educational level. Young people still in vocational and secondary education were keener to start up a business (53 % and 50 %, respectively) than those still in tertiary education (47 %).

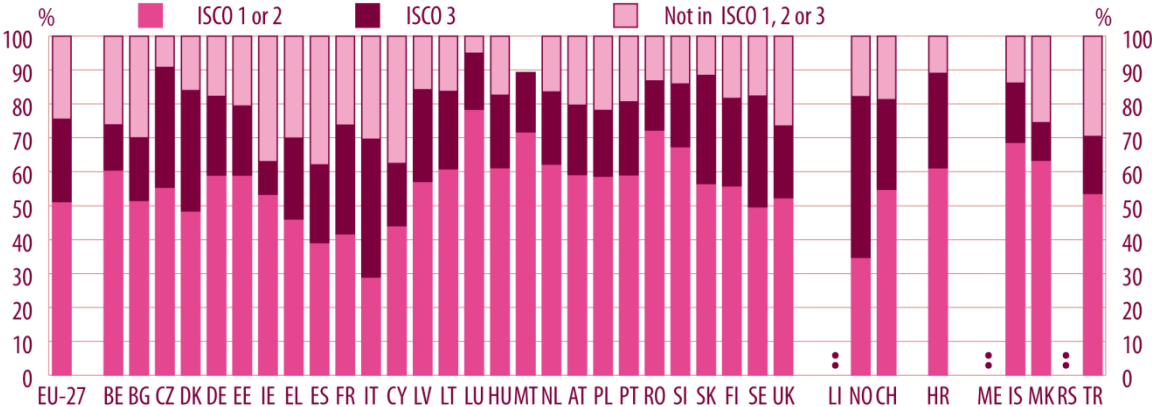
**3.4. Support for the transition to employment**

*3.4.1. Skills forecasting and career guidance*

Young people entering the labour market are one of the groups in society most affected by the issue of skills-to-job mismatch. Research has found that, without work experience, they are more likely to find that they have inappropriate skills or are overqualified. If there is a mismatch between the acquired and required level of education or skills, they may be considered ‘overqualified for the job’<sup>41</sup>.

Figure 3-V shows that ‘vertical skills mismatch’ or ‘over-qualification’ among young people with tertiary education qualifications is widespread in Europe, by relating their qualifications to their jobs as classified in the International Classifications of Occupations (ISCO). In 2010, on average just over one fifth of the 25 to 34 age group was either inappropriately qualified or overqualified. The highest proportions of overqualified young people were in Spain, Cyprus and Ireland, in which almost one in three young people were employed in a job which did not require their tertiary qualifications<sup>42</sup>.

**Figure 3-V: Distribution of young people (aged 25-34) with tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) employed in ISCO 1 or 2 (legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals), in ISCO 3 (technicians and associate professionals), and not in ISCO 1, 2 or 3, by country, 2010**



Source: Eurostat.  
 Note: ISCO 1, 2 and 3 are categories of occupations usually requiring tertiary qualifications.

Clearly, the impact of skill forecasting in helping young people to plan their studies and enter the labour market is most effective when integrated into a career guidance system<sup>43</sup>. However, the evidence from the [Eurobarometer](#) survey ‘Employment and Social Policy’ is that a

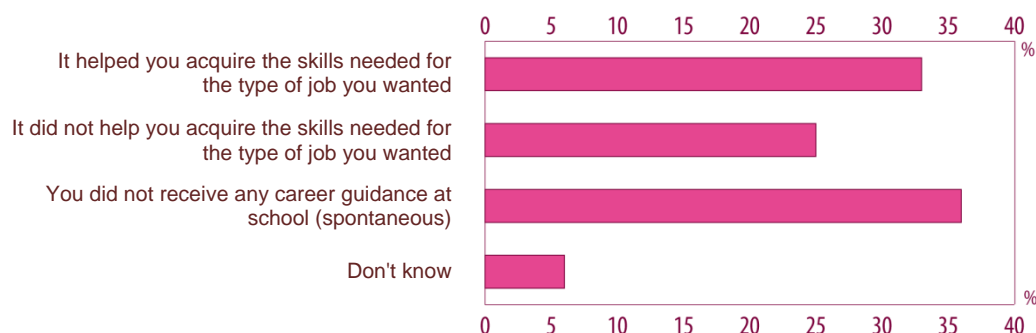
<sup>41</sup> Cedefop 2010, p. 34.  
<sup>42</sup> The forthcoming 2012 European Commission's report on Employment and Social Developments in Europe will explore in more details the problem of skills mismatch in the EU.  
<sup>43</sup> For the development of career guidance policies see: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network ([www.elgpn.eu](http://www.elgpn.eu)), For an insight onto existing career guidance provided at school in Europe, see Eurydice/EACEA 2010, pp. 61-64 and Eurydice/EACEA 2011c, pp. 48-53.

majority of respondents received no guidance during education, while one in four of those who did were not satisfied (Figure 3-W).

**The Eurydice study ‘New Skills for New Jobs’**

Policy initiatives in the field of education: Short overview of the current situation in Europe (2010) reports on the measures taken by Member States in the field of the early identification of skills requirements. Several actions are recognised. The first is related to conducting studies on skills supply and requirements in the labour market, i.e. forecasting labour market developments and planning education and training provision. The second concerns developing a monitoring system based on both quantitative and qualitative methods, aiming at providing a deeper understanding of the regional and national labour market trends and requirements. The third relates to setting up the networks of organisations to establish a well-functioning communication system, and constructing a coherent system of informing and planning.

**Figure 3-W: Career guidance offered at school and its support on acquiring the skills needed for the type of job wanted, EU-27 average, 2011**



Source: 2011 Special Eurobarometer 377 ‘Employment and Social Policy’

Note: the question was ‘Which of the following statements best describes the career guidance you received at school? It helped you acquire the skills needed for the type of job you wanted; it did not help you acquire the skills needed for the type of job you wanted; you did not receive any career guidance at school (spontaneous); don't know.’

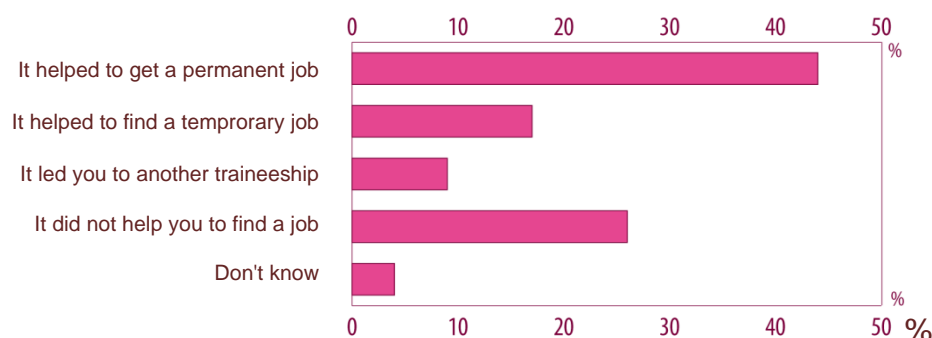
In a few countries (Estonia, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary and Portugal), a majority of young respondents said they received no career guidance at school. By contrast, very high proportions of students were involved in guidance activities in France, Poland and the United Kingdom. Around half the respondents in the Czech Republic, France, Slovenia and Slovakia, greatly appreciated the quality of these activities. This differs from the situation reported in Germany, Ireland, Greece and Finland, in which only one in four students found career guidance an effective means for preparing for the job market.

**3.4.2. High-quality traineeships and internships**

Young people often have difficulty in finding a job because they lack experience, and special measures such as traineeships and internships can help to broaden their experience. In the 2011 ‘Employment and Social Policy’ Eurobarometer survey, which explored the topic of traineeships, 61 % of respondents acknowledged that work experience was the most important factor in employability. The survey then went further by focusing on their participation in such training programmes and how this might help them to get a job. All respondents except students were asked whether they had completed one or more traineeships either during or immediately after completing their education<sup>44</sup>. Although almost two-thirds (63 %) said that they had not completed any training programmes, and a third (34 %) has completed at least one traineeship. Out of this third, 16 % completed one, 8 % two, and 10 % three or more. The six countries whose citizens completed at least one traineeship are: Denmark (51 %), Estonia (57 %), Lithuania (55 %), Luxembourg (54 %), Finland (56 %), and Sweden (53 %). Young people in the remaining 21 Member States predominantly had not completed any traineeship either during or immediately after finishing their education.

<sup>44</sup> The question was ‘I would like you to think about traineeships. Did you complete one or more traineeships either during or immediately after you completed your education?’

**Figure 3-X: Traineeship and its importance on finding a job, EU-27 average, 2011**



Source: 2011 Special Eurobarometer 377 'Employment and Social Policy'

Note: The question was 'Thinking about the traineeship(s) you have completed, which of the following statements best corresponds to your situation? It led you to another traineeship; it helped you to find a temporary job; it helped you to get a permanent job; it did not help you to find a job; don't know'.

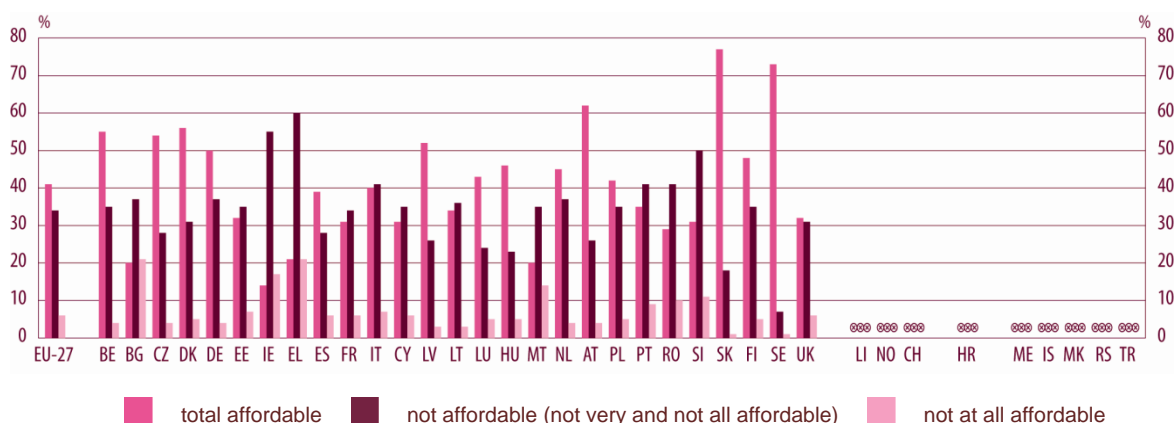
Base: those who completed a traineeship = 31 % of the total sample.

As shown in Figure 3-X, 44 % of respondents who reported they had completed a traineeship felt that it helped them to get a permanent job. A lower percentage (17 %) reported a similar opinion with regards to a temporary job. By contrast, 26 % stated that a traineeship was not helpful. Finally, almost one in ten respondents reported that their traineeship led to another one.

### 3.4.3. Support for young households to reconcile work and private life

Early childhood education and care are provided and subsidised, albeit organised differently from one country to another<sup>45</sup>.

**Figure 3-Y: Affordability of childcare services, by country, 2010**



Source: 2010 Special Eurobarometer 355 'Poverty and Social Exclusion'

Note: The question was 'And thinking now about the affordability of childcare services in your country, would you say that they are – Very affordable, Fairly affordable, Not very affordable, Not at all affordable, Nothing to pay/free?'

Figure 3-Y shows the opinions of EU citizens on affordability of childcare (collected in 2010 by a special Eurobarometer). Childcare services were considered generally affordable by 44 % of respondents. On the other hand, 34 % reported that these services were 'not affordable'<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> See Eurydice/EACEA 2009b for more information on how early childhood education and care is provided for and organised in the EU.

<sup>46</sup> See more data on accessibility, affordability of childcare, other reconciliation measures in the SPC report on Tackling and preventing child poverty (Social Protection Committee, 2012).

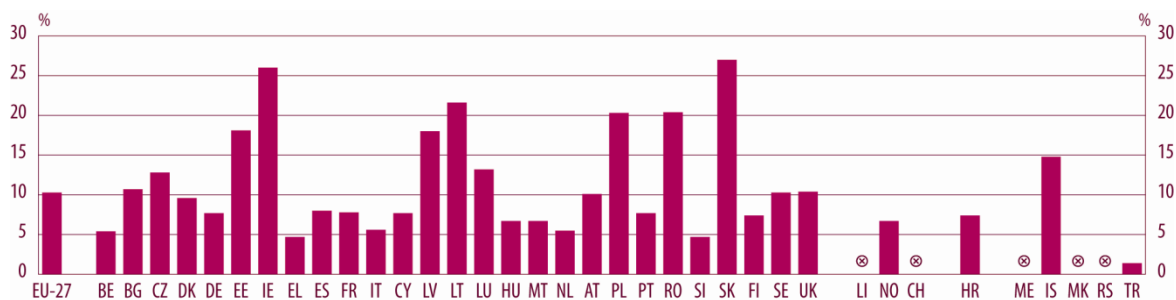


### 3.4.4. Geographical career mobility

The Flash Eurobarometer survey ‘Youth on the Move’ (2011) contains findings on young people's experience and willingness to move to another EU country. First, 77 % of them said that they had not experienced living in another country. Conversely, 20 % said that they had gone abroad for at least one month for other than leisure purposes. Of this 20 %, only about half replied that they had already worked abroad. Among the survey respondents, more young men (10.8 %) had been abroad than young women (6.9 %). And it was unsurprising that higher proportions of older respondents had gone abroad to work than in the case of the young. The steadily increasing proportions for the age groups of 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 years were 1.7%, 7.5%, and 10.9 % respectively.

Figure 3-Z reveals substantial differences between European countries in the proportions of young people who have gone abroad to work even for short periods. The highest proportions came mainly from central Europe, ranging from around 20 % in Poland and Romania to 27 % in Slovakia. But Ireland fell within the same range with 26 %. By contrast, the proportions in Belgium, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovenia were no more than around 5 %.

**Figure 3-Z: Young having stayed abroad for working purposes for at least one month, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b ‘Youth on the Move’

Note: The question was ‘Apart from vacation or tourism, learning or training, have you ever stayed abroad for at least one month for working purposes?’

Base: all respondents, % of ‘mentions’ shown, total.

Due to the high unemployment rates in southern European countries, mobility intentions are high (especially among young people) and labour mobility from those countries has increased, contrasting with an overall decline in intra-EU mobility since 2008. Emigration from these countries has increased, notably in the form of return migration, but there are also early signs of new patterns of emigration of nationals (e.g. from Ireland to Australia)<sup>47</sup>.

## 4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 4.1. Introduction

Education is at the centre of a young person's life. At school and in other learning environments, young people acquire the skills needed in order to make appropriate choices with a view ultimately to achieving fulfilment and independence in adult life. Between the age of 15 and mature adulthood, young people progress gradually through the different routes offered by education and training system. As they gain successive qualifications, they ideally become better equipped to find their preferred jobs and play an active part in society.

<sup>47</sup>

European Commission, 2012f

## 4.2. Formal education

Formal education here means ‘education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions. It normally constitutes a continuous “ladder” of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at the age of 5 to 7 and continuing to up to 20 or 25 years old’<sup>48</sup>.

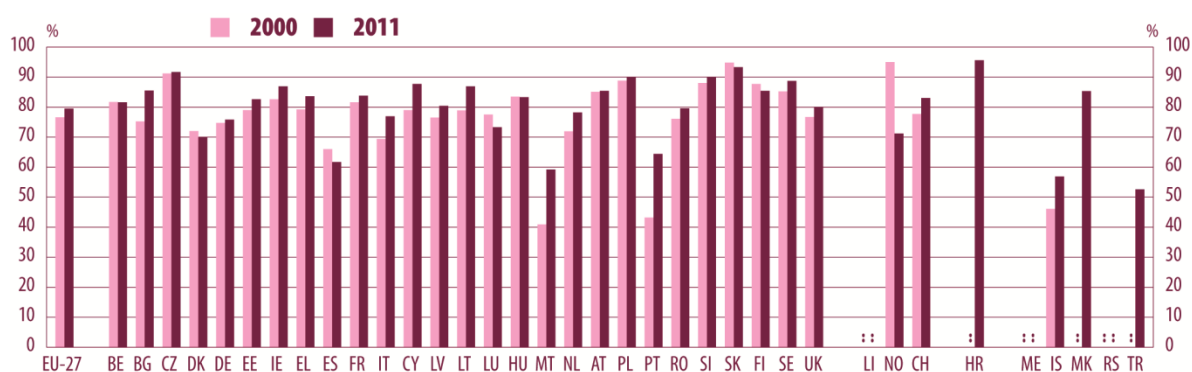
### 4.2.1. Participation and attainment

Today, young people expect to spend an average of 17 years in education during their lifetime. This estimation varies from one country to another, ranging for example, in 2011, from Luxembourg and Slovenia with 15 years to Finland with 20.5 years<sup>49</sup>.

Since 2005 the duration of education is extending. This is related to efforts to extend the length of compulsory education in many countries, by either bringing forward the start of formal education or by extending full-time/part-time attendance at upper secondary level. In addition, participation rates in education in the two years following the end of compulsory education has increased or stayed stable, as observed in the 2000/09 period<sup>50</sup>.

Figure 4-A shows data on the proportion of the 20 to 24 year olds who had at least completed upper secondary education in 2010. On average, the EU-27 rate was 79 %, marking a slight increase across the European countries since 2000 when the rate was 76.6 %. The increase has been the greatest in Malta and Portugal.

**Figure 4-A: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 20-24) having completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3), by country, 2000 and 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: tsiir110

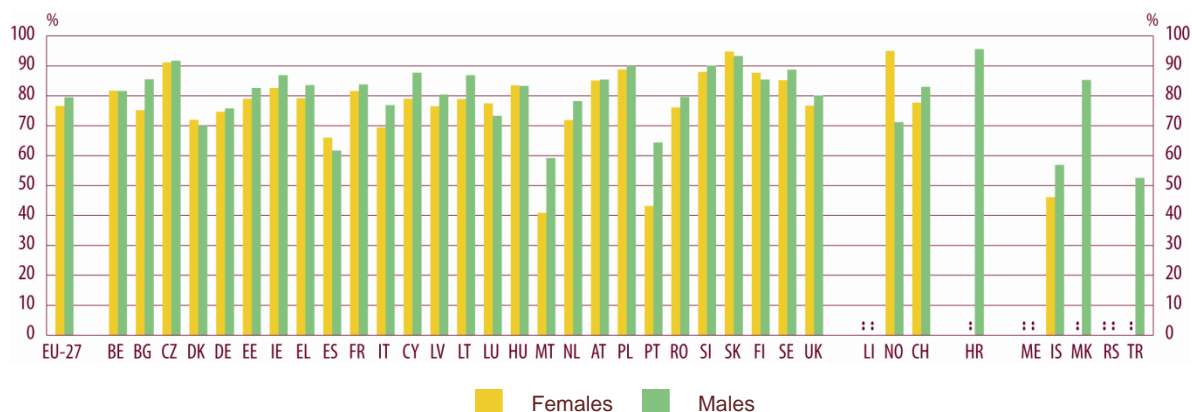
Despite this overall positive trend, there were still countries where many 20 to 24 year olds did not complete upper secondary education in 2011, such as Malta and Spain. In Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain and Finland, the proportion of young people having completed at least upper secondary level has decreased compared to 2000. By contrast, in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, almost all young people aged 20 to 24 years old had completed upper secondary level. Outside the EU-27, Iceland and Turkey had the lowest share of young people having completed upper secondary education (nearly half) whereas in Norway, the rate decreased by more than 20 percentage points in eleven years.

<sup>48</sup> Eurostat 2006, p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> Eurostat – online data code: educ\_igen.

<sup>50</sup> Eurydice/EACEA and Eurostat 2012, pp. 77/78.

**Figure 4-B: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 20-24) having completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3), by country and by sex, 2011**



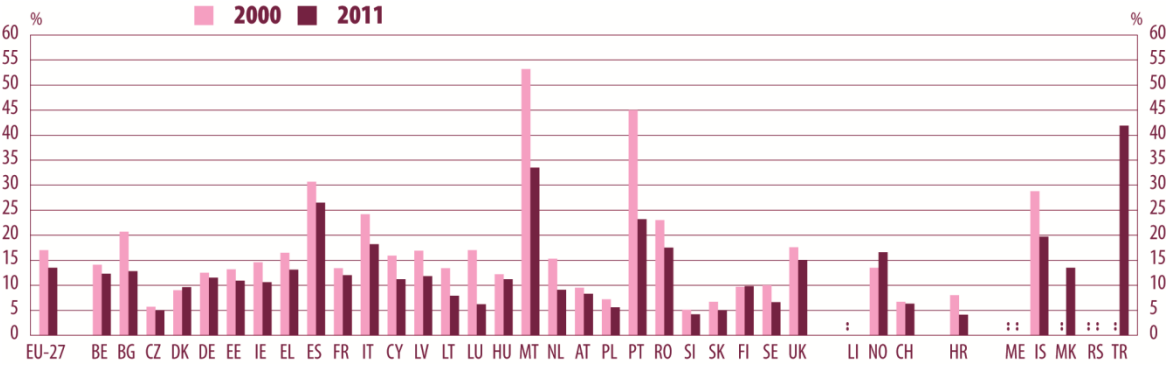
Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: tsiir110

Differences by gender are significant. Figure 4-B indicates that at EU level (2011), the proportion of women among the 20 to 24 year olds who have at least completed upper secondary education was greater than that of men: 82.4 % against 76.7 %. This picture applies to all Member States but Bulgaria. The gap between women and men is the greatest in Denmark, Spain, Malta and Portugal with more than 10 percentage points difference between the genders.

There is a significant share of young people not having completed upper secondary education. Early leavers from education and training are defined as people aged 18 to 24 who have only lower secondary education or less and are no longer in education or training. It means that they have only achieved pre-primary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than two years.

Students facing strong difficulties in the school education system might feel compelled to end their education prematurely without having gained relevant qualifications or a school certificate. Many factors can explain why young people find themselves in such a situation. Some reasons lie in personal backgrounds, for example coming from a socially disadvantaged background which does not support school attendance and academic performance. Other reasons relate to school and education systems, for instance, the lack of support for those who repeat a year and are left behind. Early leavers from education and training tend more to be unemployed, get less secure and jobs and earn less. They are therefore more at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

**Figure 4-C: EU youth indicator: Early leavers from education and training<sup>51</sup> (population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education, ISCED 3c, and not in further education or training), by country, 2000 and 2011**

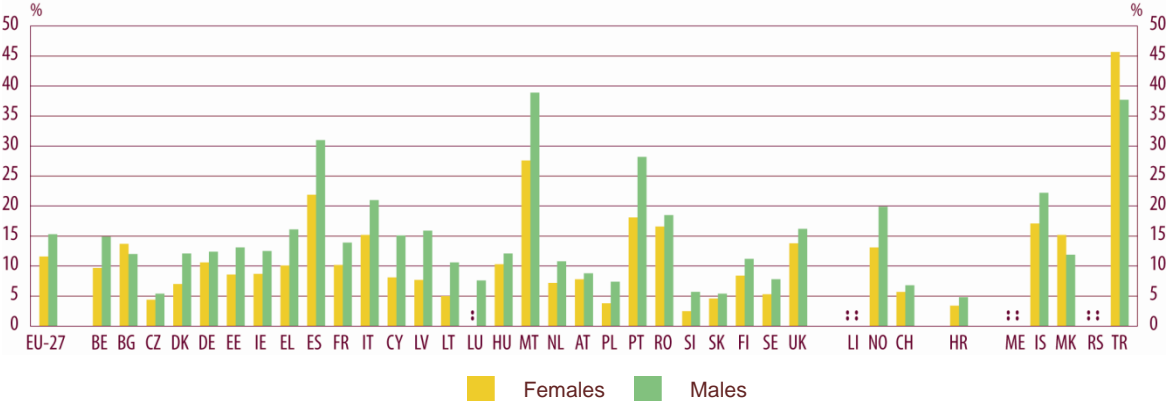


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_40  
 Note: 2000: Data are from 2001 for BG, PL and SI; Data are from 2002 for CZ, IE, LV, SK and HR.

Figure 4-C shows a decreasing trend in early leaving from education and training. In 2011, the EU-27 rate was 13.5 %, or 3.5 percentage points less than in 2000. Early leaving is rather uncommon in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia with rates below 5 %. Bulgaria, Malta and Portugal are among the countries where the share of early leavers decreased the most. Malta still had the highest rate with 33.5 % followed by Portugal and Spain and Portugal with respectively rates of 23.2% and 26.5 % Outside the EU-27, in Iceland and Turkey early leaving stood at respectively 19.7 % and 41.9 % while in Croatia it affected only a minority.

Early leaving has a strong gender dimension: on average in the EU-27, men are more affected than women with 15.3 % against 11.6 %. The extreme case is Portugal where the male early school leaving rate (28.2 %) is ten points higher than the female rate (18.1 %). Although in Denmark and Lithuania, the early leaver rate is rather low in total, the rate for men is twice as high as that of women. An exception is Bulgaria, where the share is slightly higher among women.

**Figure 4-D: EU youth indicator: Early leavers from education and training (population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education, ISCED 3c, and not in further education or training), by country and by sex, 2011**

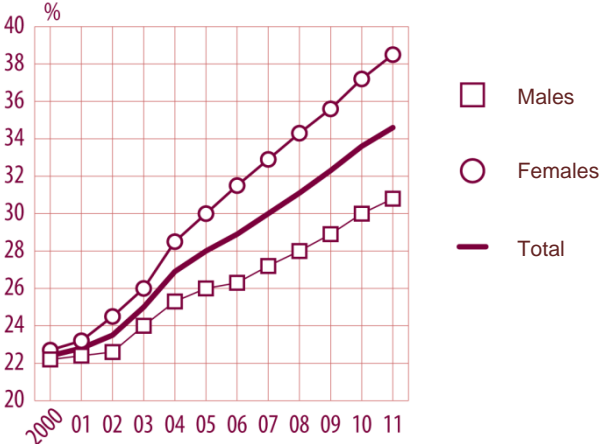


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_40

<sup>51</sup> Further harmonisation of concepts used in the EU Labour Force Survey hampers the comparability of data between 2000 and 2010 in particular in Denmark, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Iceland and Norway.

There are still opportunities for young people who have prematurely left school to re-enter mainstream education or to gain the qualifications they need. The recognition and validation of such learning outcomes are also a means of (re)integrating education and training systems, enabling students to progress further and possibly access tertiary education or equivalent courses.

**Figure 4-E: EU youth indicator: Trends in the tertiary educational attainment of people aged 30-34, EU-27 average, by sex, 2000-2011**

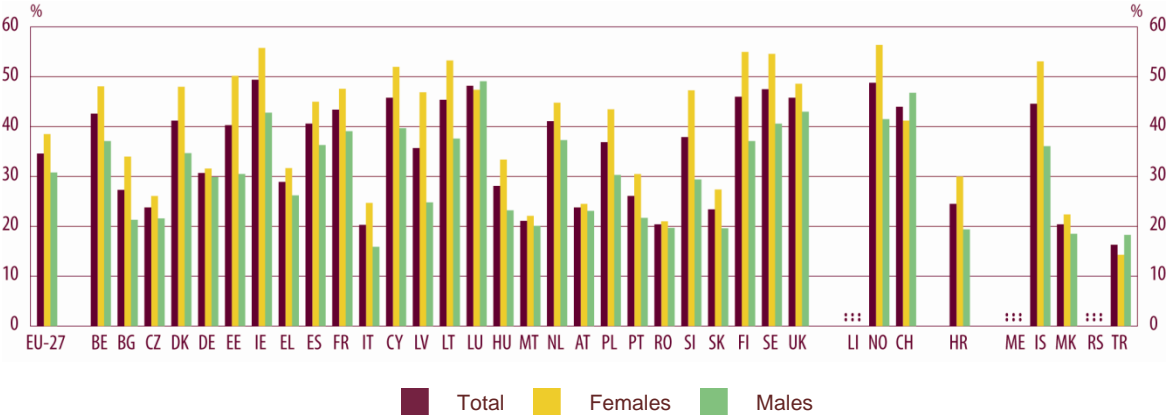


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_41

The trend observed during the 2000-2011 period shows an increase of nearly 50 % in the attainment rate in tertiary education or equivalent at EU level. There are still opportunities for young people who have prematurely left school to re-enter mainstream education or to gain the qualifications they need. The recognition and validation of such learning outcomes are also a means of (re)integrating education and training systems, enabling students to progress further and possibly access tertiary education or equivalent courses.

Figure 4-E).

**Figure 4-F: EU youth indicator: Tertiary educational attainment of people aged 30-34, by country and by sex, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_41

According to Figure 4-F, the highest attainment rates are to be found in Luxembourg and Ireland where almost half of the young people aged 30 to 34 have graduated from tertiary education. At the other end, in Italy and Romania this rate is nearly a fifth of 30 to 34 year olds.

The gender gap regarding tertiary educational or equivalent attainment is widespread in the EU-27. The proportion of women gaining qualifications is higher than that of men with nearly more than 20 percentage points difference in Estonia, Latvia and Finland. In Germany, Austria, Malta and Romania, the attainment rate for women was almost equal to that for men.

Notwithstanding the positive overall trend, not all students entering tertiary education complete their studies. The average completion rate for programmes leading to a Bachelor degree was 72 % in 2008<sup>52</sup>.

4.2.2. Skills achievements

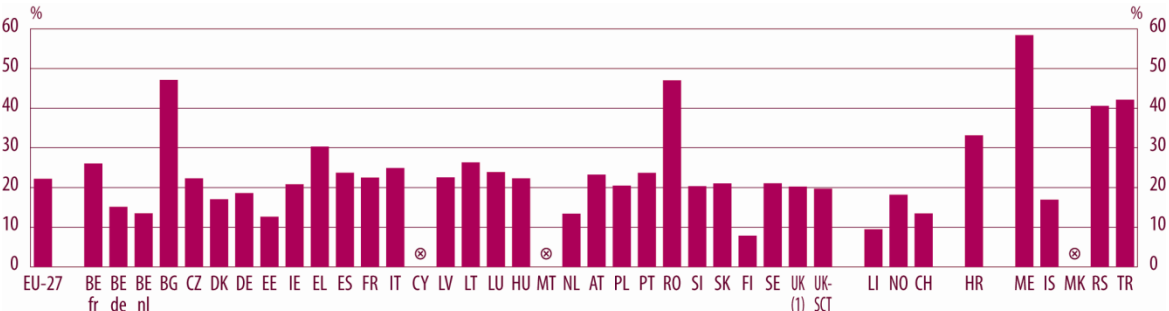
Figure 4-G shows the percentage of low achievers<sup>53</sup> in reading, mathematics and science (2009). Regarding the EU average, the highest proportion of low achievers is to be found in mathematics (22.2 %) while in reading and science, rates are 19.6 % and 17.7 % respectively.

Figure 4-G: Low-achieving 15 year-old students in reading, mathematics and science, by country, 2009

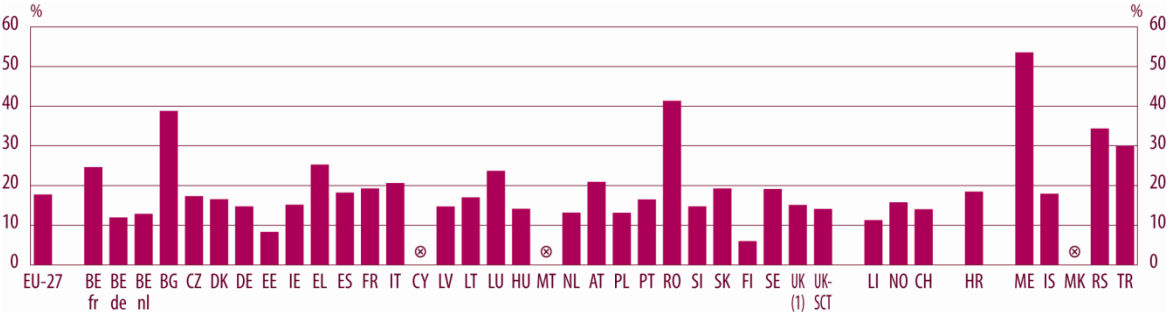
Reading



Mathematics



Science



<sup>52</sup> Eurydice/EACEA 2012, p. 106.

<sup>53</sup> The Council of the European Union has defined low achievers as students who have been marked below Level 2 in the PISA surveys.

Source: OECD – PISA 2009 databases.

Note: UK (1) stands for United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

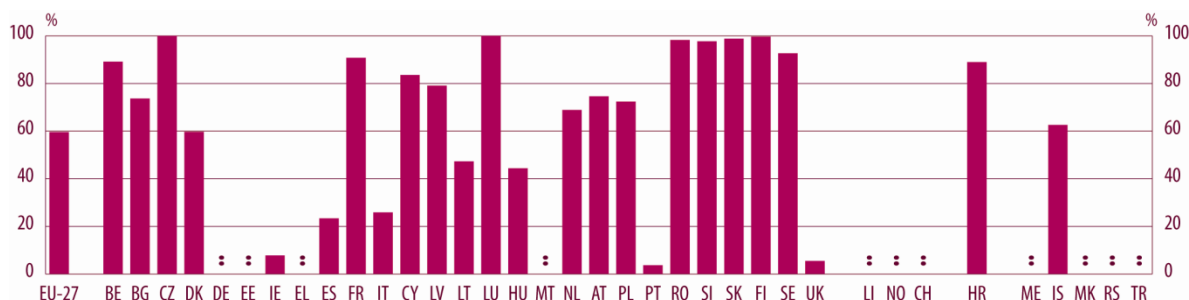
Belgium (the Flemish and German-speaking communities), Estonia, the Netherlands and Finland are the countries in which the share of low achievers is among the lowest in at least two of the three basic skills fields. Bulgaria and Romania are the EU-27 countries in which the proportion of low achievers is highest in the three fields, with rates of sometimes 40 % or over.

Young people with a disadvantaged background are prone to have a higher share among low-achievers<sup>54</sup>.

Communication in another language than one's mother tongue enables young people to discover and understand different cultures and is also important for mobility, either to study or to work in an international environment abroad.

Nearly 60 % of students in upper secondary education in the EU-27 were learning at least two foreign languages in 2010. Yet, there are high discrepancies between countries. Every upper secondary student enrolled in general education in the Czech Republic and Luxembourg was learning two or more foreign languages. In four others (Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Finland), rates stand above 95 %. By contrast, in Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom less than one in ten upper secondary students were learning two or more foreign languages.

**Figure 4-H: EU youth indicator: Young people in upper general secondary education (ISCED 3 Gen) learning two or more foreign languages, by country, 2010**



Source: Eurostat data collection on language learning in schools. Online data code: educ\_ilang

Comparing 2010 with 2005 and 2007, a few countries (e.g. Estonia and Malta) registered an increase, whereas there was a decline in Portugal and the United Kingdom. These diverging trends can be explained by differences in educational regulations regarding teaching of foreign languages at school. In most countries, students have to learn a minimum of two foreign languages for at least one year during full-time compulsory education.

### 4.3. Non-formal education and training and youth work

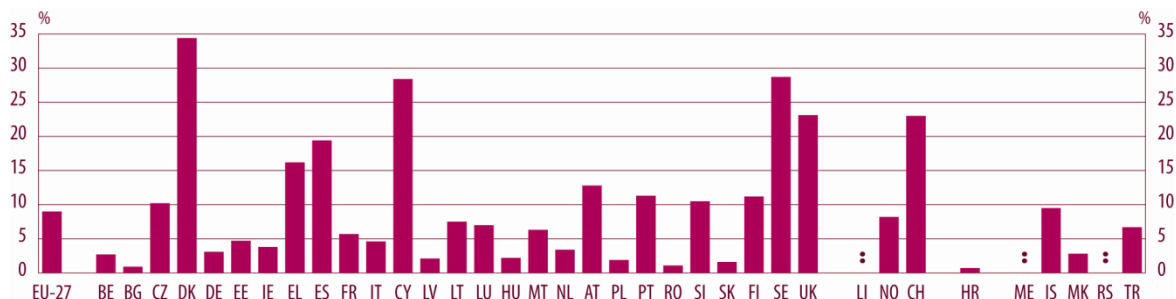
Formal education and training is the most visible and recognised form of learning in society. Yet, non-formal education and training is increasingly acknowledged as an essential part of the lifelong learning process of any individual. Non-formal education covers a range of educational programmes: ‘adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. It may take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages’<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Social Protection Committee 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Eurostat 2006, p. 13.

Figure 4-I shows 2011 data on the proportion of young people between 15 and 24 who had taken part in non-formal learning activities in the four weeks preceding the survey. The participation rate in the EU-27 was 9 %. This percentage has remained rather stable since 2004, fluctuating between 9.1 % and 9.5 %.

**Figure 4-I: Participation in non-formal learning of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2011**



**Figure 4-J: Participation in non-formal learning of young people (aged 15-24), by country and by sex, 2011**

	EU	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT
Total	9.0	2.7	0.9	10.2	34.4	3.1	4.7	3.8	16.2	19.4	5.7	4.6	28.4	2.1	7.5	7.0	2.2	6.3	3.4	12.8
Males	8.7	2.5	:	9.3	32.5	2.9	3.4	3.4	14.5	18.3	5.7	4.6	27.4	2.0	7.5	7.0	2.0	:	3.6	12.4
Females	9.3	2.8	1.2	11.1	36.3	3.3	6.0	4.3	17.8	20.5	5.8	4.6	29.3	2.2	7.5	7.0	2.5	7.8	3.2	13.1
	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK		LI	NO	CH		HR		ME	IS	MK	RS	TR
Total	1.9	11.3	1.1	10.5	1.6	11.2	28.7	23.1		:	8.2	23.0		0.7		:	9.5	2.8	:	6.7
Males	1.8	10.6	1.2	9.5	1.5	9.8	26.7	23.1		:	8.9	20.4		:		:	8.8	3.0	:	6.5
Females	2.0	11.9	1.0	11.6	1.7	12.7	30.8	23.2		:	7.5	25.6		:		:	10.2	2.6	:	6.9

Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: trng\_lfs\_09

There are however significant differences among the countries. In Denmark, nearly 35 % of the 15 to 24 age group, or triple the EU-27 average, were attending non-formal learning activities. Also, in Cyprus, Sweden and the United Kingdom, participation rates ranged from 23.1 % to 28.4 %. Yet, in nearly half of the EU countries, less than about 5 % of the 15 to 24 year olds took part in non-formal learning activities in 2011. In Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, participation rates are below 2 %.

Figure 4-J shows that young women take part in non-formal learning activities more extensively than young men almost everywhere in Europe. This trend is especially marked in e.g. Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Finland and Sweden.

Non-formal education and training takes mainly place in the context of youth work. Youth work refers to ‘activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature.’ In addition, ‘youth work increasingly deals with unemployment, educational failure, marginalisation and social exclusion.’<sup>56</sup> Youth work plays a fundamental role in supporting young people in their personal education and fulfilment and in consolidating their identity among their peers and within society, as they are encouraged to take an active part in any field of interest to them. Youth work activities also sometimes target young people who are especially at risk of social marginalisation and poverty.

<sup>56</sup> Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth 2007, p. 20.



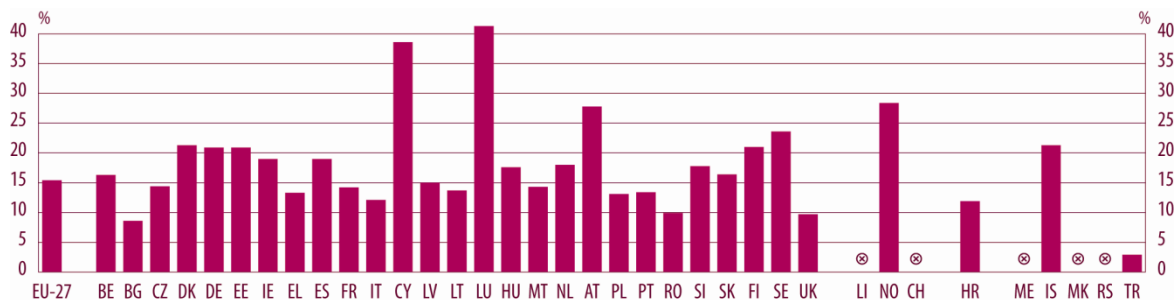
A study on youth work as carried out in some countries<sup>57</sup> showed that such activities are offered to a broad age range encompassing childhood and early adolescence (seven and eleven years old respectively in Estonia and Austria) as well as mature adulthood (36 years is the ceiling age in Italy). However, in all countries the young people most intensively involved appear to be aged between 15 and 29. Finally, while in general they mainly take part in extracurricular youth education and recreational activities, many other types of services are on offer. The latter may be internationally oriented or may focus on the local community; they may promote active civic and democratic participation of young people, or the prevention of social exclusion; or they may be concerned with youth information and counselling on matters such as school problems and career guidance.

#### 4.4. Learning mobility

Going abroad for learning purposes is an experience that brings many benefits: from learning a foreign language and discovering a different culture to widening job opportunities and career prospects.

The Eurobarometer survey ‘Youth on the Move’ conducted in 2011 inquired about mobility of young people aged between 15 and 29 in Europe. As Figure 4-K shows, the vast majority of respondents reported never to have stayed abroad for learning or training purposes. Only 13.5 % of them and 15.4 % at EU level studied in another country. At national level, percentages vary greatly: 41.3 % of the respondents from Luxembourg and 38.6 % in Cyprus studied abroad. At the other end of the scale, in Bulgaria, Romania and the United Kingdom less than one in ten respondents went abroad for learning purposes.

**Figure 4-K: Young people who have stayed abroad for learning or training purposes (aged 15-29), by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b ‘Youth on the Move’

Note: The question was ‘Have you ever stayed abroad for learning or training purposes (outside the country where you received your prior education) or are you currently abroad?’

Base: all respondents, % by country.

According to the survey, of the respondents who had stayed abroad, 43% said they had studied abroad as part of their higher education studies and the same proportion answered that they had done so as part of their lower or upper secondary school education. In Greece, Ireland, Cyprus and Luxembourg the share of respondents who studied abroad as part of higher education was more than 67 %. In Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Sweden, more than 50 % of respondents had studied outside their country at secondary level of education.

Vocational education and training (VET) students were less likely to study abroad (33 %). Nonetheless, in Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Poland the rates are nearly 45 %.

<sup>57</sup>

Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth 2007.

Undertaking a traineeship abroad either within higher or vocational education abroad was less prevalent among the respondents with 26 % and 21 % respectively. The highest rates within higher education were in Luxembourg and France (36 % and 38 %) and in vocational education and training in Bulgaria and Romania (32 % and 31 %).

The duration of learning mobility periods varies according to the type and level of education programmes. Respondents who went abroad for studying in higher education were more likely to stay longer i.e. more than one year (21 %).

According to the Eurobarometer survey, the most important reason why respondents did not go abroad is lack of interest (28 %), followed by lack of funding or the stay being too expensive (20 %). In addition, 13 % have reported family commitments as the first main reason.

The Eurobarometer survey also shows that students used various types of financial resources for their studies abroad. Figure 4-L shows that they mostly used their private funds and savings (65.7 %). This is particularly the case of countries such as Germany, Spain, Greece, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria and the United Kingdom, where nearly half of the respondents reported doing so. Young Europeans used the three other types of financial resources almost equally during their studies or traineeships: employers' support (18.4 %), regional or national study loans and grants (17.3 %) and EU funded mobility programmes such as Erasmus, and Youth in Action (15.2 %).

**Figure 4-L: Type of financial resources used during the longest stay abroad by young people (aged 15-29), by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'  
 Note: The question was 'Thinking about your longest stay abroad, how did you finance your stay?'  
 Base: respondents who have been abroad for at least one of the tested learning mobility periods, % of mentions 'shown', total.

Behind this overall picture, young people financed their longest stays differently in the different countries. In Luxembourg, national or regional study loans and grants financed the

longest stays of more than half of the young people surveyed. In Ireland, the Netherlands, Romania and the United Kingdom, more than a third of the respondents had their stay partially paid by the employer.

EU funded mobility programmes were used by a significant percentage of young respondents from Lithuania and Finland (around 35 %). Finally, in Belgium, Finland and Sweden, more than one in ten respondents who stayed abroad have had other grants and awards for financing their longest stay abroad.

Annual data on the Erasmus programme<sup>58</sup> show that in 2010/11, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Liechtenstein and, Spain, Austria and Finland were the countries with the highest share of students who went abroad in the overall student population of students. The countries which sent most students abroad under the Erasmus programme in 2010/11 were by order of numbers Spain, France followed by Germany, Italy and Poland. The most popular destinations among students were first Spain and France, followed by the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy.

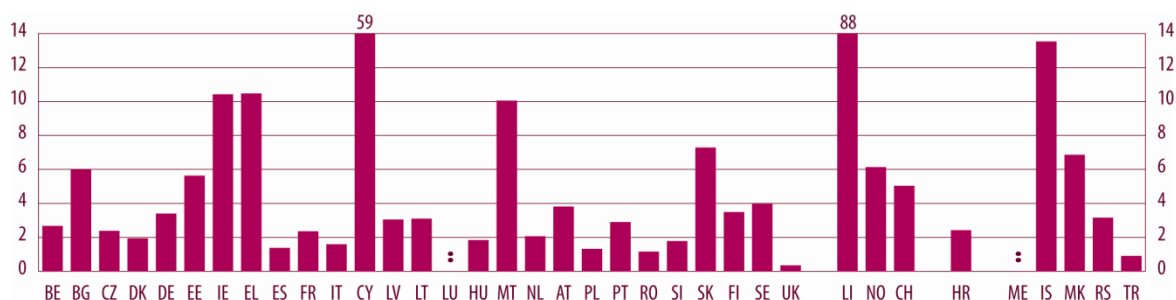
**Figure 4-M: Outward degree tertiary education students from the EHEA to abroad outside the EHEA, by country of origin, 2008/09**



Source: Eurostat – UOE data collection

Figure 4-M reveals that 48 % of the students who went abroad outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)<sup>59</sup> in 2008/09 were from Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Turkey. This type of mobility i.e. outward degree mobility<sup>60</sup> was also significant in numerical terms in Spain, Italy and Sweden.

**Figure 4-N: Tertiary education graduates from a country of the EHEA, graduating inside the EHEA, as a percentage of the total number of graduates of the same country of origin, 2008/09**



Source: Eurostat –UOE data collection

<sup>58</sup> European Commission 2012c.

<sup>59</sup> The countries considered as outside the EHEA were Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States.

<sup>60</sup> Outward degree mobility refers to students that moved out of a country in order to acquire a whole degree or certificate in the country of destination.

Figure 4-N shows that most graduates from Cyprus (58 %) have graduated abroad but within the EHEA. However this was truly exceptional case among the EU-27 countries, as in Greece, Ireland and Malta, the rates ranged from 10 % to 13.5 %, while in the remaining countries, they were much smaller so that the total average rate was below 2 %.