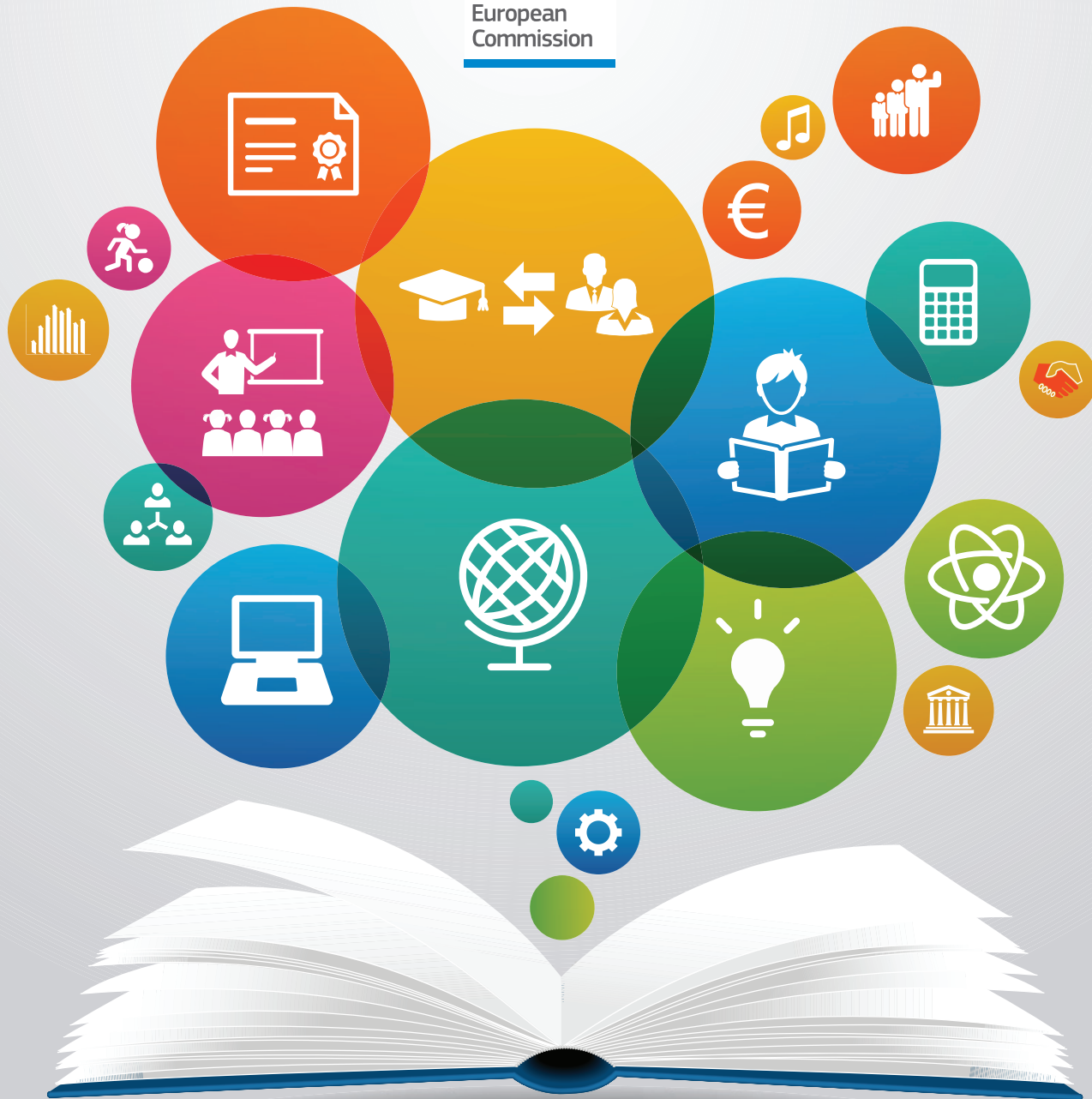




European  
Commission



# Education and Training Monitor 2016

Executive Summary

# **Education and Training Monitor 2016**

## **Executive summary**

Highlights of the cross-national analysis  
Highlights of the country analysis

The Education and Training Monitor 2016 was prepared by the Directorate-General of Education and Culture (DG EAC), with contributions from the Directorate-General of Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) and the Eurydice Network. DG EAC was assisted by the Education and Youth Policy Analysis Unit from the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), the JRC's Centre for Research on Education and Lifelong Learning (CRELL) and Institute of Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS), Eurostat and Cedefop. The Members of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB) were consulted during the drafting phase.

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*Additional contextual data can be found online ([ec.europa.eu/education/monitor](http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor))*

# Executive summary

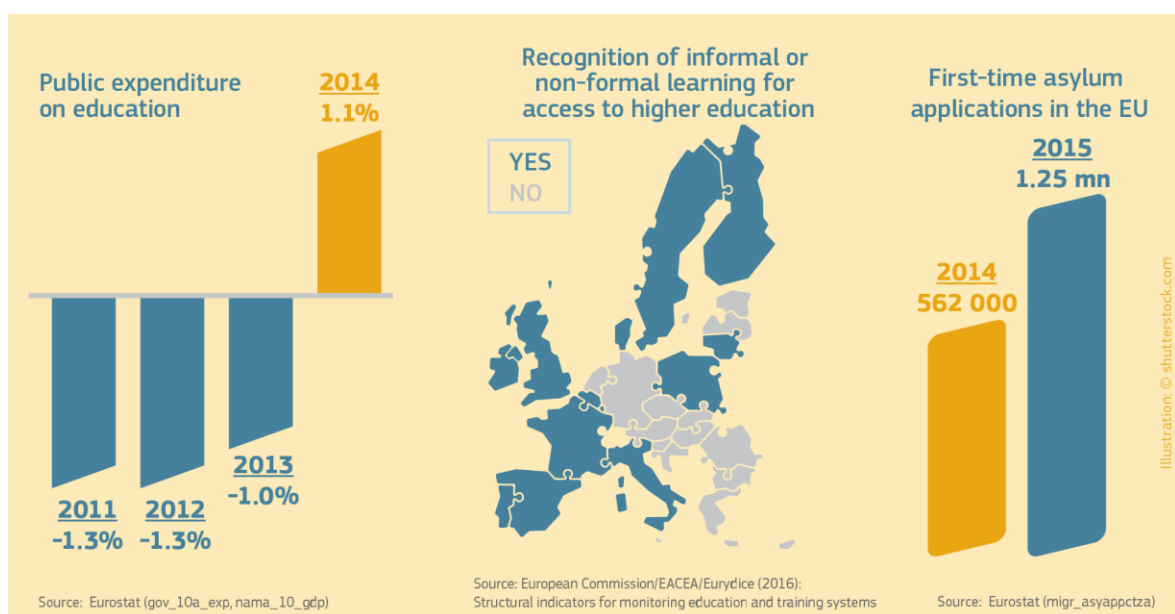
## Highlights of the cross-national analysis

This year's Education and Training Monitor explores societal challenges in more depth and addresses migration, demography and the key competences that education should help develop. The Monitor then analyses progress in raising educational outcomes — by reducing early school leaving and underachievement and increasing tertiary educational attainment — at EU level and in individual Member States. Finally, via the cross-national comparison of education systems and in the country analysis, the report presents and examines plenty of policy initiatives that can help make education more responsive to societal and labour market needs.

### Challenges impacting on education and training

Europe's population is ageing. In six EU Member States, the 5-18 age group will shrink by at least 20 % by 2040. Another six Member States are facing decreases of between 10 % and 20 % in the same age group. At the same time, first-time asylum requests filed in the EU have increased by a factor of three since 2013, with more than 80 % of asylum applicants in 2015 being below the age of 34. As it has been shown in previous editions of this report, and as the analysis of available data shows, patterns of inequalities in education opportunities and outcomes still persist. Yet education and training are powerful policy levers to promote social, economic and cultural inclusion.

While Europe's populations are changing, employment is changing too. Living and working in a technologically advanced and globalised economy requires individuals to acquire a higher level of skills. A higher level of educational qualifications is associated with a higher level of basic skills, and translates into higher employment rates. Recent graduates holding tertiary education degrees in 2015 had an employment rate of 81.9 %, which was 11.1 percentage points higher than those holding at most an upper secondary or a post-secondary non-tertiary diploma. Upgrading skills, particularly of low-qualified and disadvantaged groups, is therefore one of the main objectives of the New Skills Agenda.

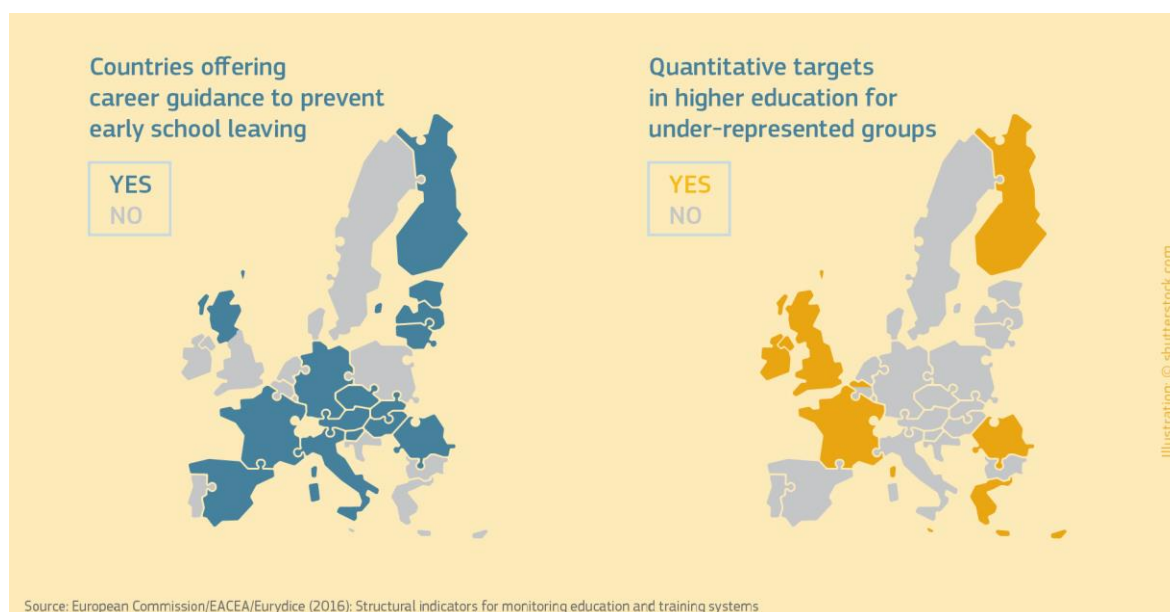


In addition to equipping students with knowledge and skills, and in light of the recent wave of populism and extremisms in Europe, all levels of education, including adult education, can also promote citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination, in accordance with the 2015 Paris Declaration and the Conclusions of the European Commission's first annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights<sup>1</sup>. More than half of the EU's Member States have recently introduced policies to ensure that children and youths acquire social, civic and intercultural skills. Policy action to increase education's potential to respond to societal challenges has been introduced mainly at primary and secondary school level.

Effective education requires adequate investment. For the first time in three years, public expenditure on education increased in 2014, by 1.1 % in real terms. About two thirds of Member States raised spending, and the increase was greater than 5 % in six of them (BG, LV, HU, MT, RO and SK). The challenge of financing education lies in investing both sufficiently and effectively.

### Raising participation rates and tackling educational poverty

Participation rates in education are increasing across the EU. This applies to early childhood education and continues, after the period of compulsory school education, into tertiary education.



In early childhood education and care, participation of children from the age of 4 is generally high in the EU. In fact, in 2014, the EU was less than 1 percentage point away from meeting the 95 % participation target under the education and training 2020 framework (ET2020). Some further improvements are needed, however, to reach the Barcelona objective of having at least 33 % of children under 3 participating in ECEC: in 2014, the EU rate of participation of the youngest children (0-2) stood at 28 %, and it was below 20 % in 10 EU MS. Increasing the participation of children from disadvantaged groups is an important challenge for education in Europe, given the increasing recognition of the potential of quality ECEC in reducing disadvantage and laying a good foundation for further learning.

<sup>1</sup> Informal meeting of European Union education ministers (17.03.2015), *Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education*; Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights (2015), *Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe*: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/colloquium-fundamental-rights-2015/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/colloquium-fundamental-rights-2015/index_en.htm).

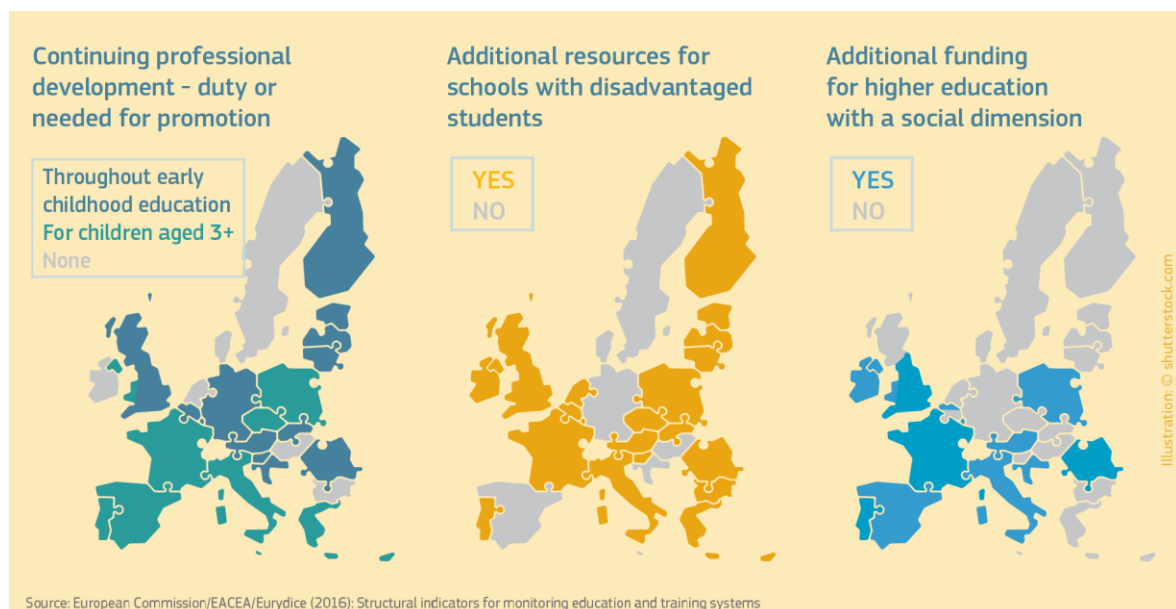
At tertiary level, completion rates rose considerably across the EU in 2015. With a tertiary attainment rate of 38.7 %, and an increase of 0.8 percentage points since 2014, the EU is heading towards reaching the objective of having 40 % of tertiary graduates among the population of 30-34 year-olds by 2020. Nonetheless, average values mask major disparities in the achievement of different groups. Qualification levels still vary between women and men, native- and foreign-born individuals, and regions and countries.

As the 2015 Monitor showed, Europe has a persistent problem of educational poverty, defined as a failure to reach minimum standards in education. Underachievement among 15 year-olds remains worryingly high, especially in mathematics. Progress towards reducing early leaving from education and training has been considerable over the last decade, but has slowed somewhat in recent years. Between 2014 and 2015, the proportion of the population aged 18-24 and not having an upper secondary diploma decreased by only 0.2 percentage points in the EU, and reached an overall EU average of 11 %. Targeting early school leaving also means reducing regional disparities and patterns of inequalities; for example, early school leaving for the non-EU born was twice that of the native born (19.8% vs. 10.1%) in 2015.

## Responsive education and training systems

Reforming early childhood and primary education involves action on staff, curriculum and evaluation. The professionalization of educational staff in ECEC can drive more systematic professional development and positively impact the well-being and development of children. For example, MT, IE and BE have introduced a blend of requirements for higher qualifications to enter the profession, as well as systems to maintain staff skills and performance through continuing professional development.

Comparative research points to the role of teaching staff in driving school innovation, which in turn can make education respond better to the needs of society and learners. In light of increasing diversity in schools, staff shortages and waning interest in teaching, a diverse teaching force, including men, young people and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds can offer pupils and students a wealth of role models. For example, in 2014 85 % of primary teachers in the EU were women, with four countries counting more than 95 % female teachers in the same educational level.



Higher education, as well as secondary and tertiary professionally-oriented programmes, have a specific role in preparing individuals for the job market. Recent vocational graduates who are no longer in education or training had in 2015 an employment rate of 73 %, while the employment rate of recent upper-secondary education graduates from general orientation programmes was at 61.2 %. Nonetheless, vocational programmes generally tend to be less attractive than

general orientation programmes. Elements that could be used to make vocational education and training (VET) more attractive and relevant to labour market needs include: taking work-based learning components into account across all VET programmes; improving permeability between VET and higher education; and better preparing young people for increasingly internationalised labour markets, including through foreign-language teaching.

Higher education holds great potential for promoting upward social mobility and improving employment prospects. Policy measures to increase innovation and the relevance of higher education include personalised career guidance, graduate tracking and work-based learning. In particular, graduate tracking is increasingly common in higher education institutions; nine countries make systematic use of the information collected to improve career guidance and adjust study programmes accordingly (BE, DK, EE, IE, IT, PL, SK, SE, UK). The growing internationalisation of higher education is widely seen as an important positive factor in boosting its quality and relevance. Available evidence shows that learning mobility is a predictor of better employability prospects and career development.

Learning does not end when individuals complete their formal education. Reaching the EU target of having 15 % of adults participating in lifelong learning is proving difficult. The average adult learning rate stood at 10.7 % in 2014 and did not increase in 2015. Furthermore, in a number of EU Member States, the gap in accessing learning between the average population and adults with a disadvantaged status persisted or even increased. Policy measures to bring the EU closer to reaching the target on lifelong learning and increase employability would start from assessment, validation and certification of existing skills. Ideally these steps would be followed by further actions to improve all learners' willingness to learn, encourage employers to take a more active role, provide dedicated support to disadvantaged groups, and ensure quality, relevance and effectiveness of adult learning systems.

## Highlights of the country analysis

- AT** The early school leaving rate is markedly better than the EU average, and participation in early childhood education and care has increased. National and international tests show deficiencies in basic skills, and a strong impact of socioeconomic and migrant backgrounds on education results. Implementation of the November 2015 education reform has started. Additional resources are generated from a bank levy. Austria is taking various measures to ensure the integration of the high number of recently arrived refugees into education and training. Against the background of increasing student numbers, the 2016-2021 plan for higher education sets strategic objectives and emphasises better teaching, but the funding available falls short of the identified needs. Participation in vocational education and training is high and provides relevant skills.
- BE** Major schools reforms have been launched which aim to improve equity, key competences and vocational education and training. New modes of governance should increase efficiency and enhance collaborative approaches. Measures are taken to address shortages in educational infrastructure. Belgium faces significant equity challenges. Pupils' performance is strongly linked to their socioeconomic background, particularly for those of migrant origin. This is all the more serious because the disadvantaged groups within the school population are those forecast to increase the most. The early school leaving rate is slightly better than the EU average, but disparities across the Communities and Regions persist. Disadvantaged schools lack experienced teachers and heads. Teachers need support to teach in an increasingly diverse environment. The higher educational attainment rate is above average. Initiatives are taken to address the low proportion of students and graduates in science and technology which is a concern for future innovation capacity.
- BG** Bulgaria is taking the first steps in the implementation of the Pre-school and School Education Act with the adoption of several state educational standards. The early school leaving rate increased and shows large regional variations. In terms of educational outcomes, vulnerable groups such as Roma and pupils from rural areas perform significantly below average. In tertiary education, attainment rates continue to increase

and a model for performance-based financing was introduced, but several challenges remain including insufficient labour market relevance. General government expenditure on education remains among the lowest in the EU.

- CY** Cyprus has considerably improved its performance on early school leaving and has maintained a very high rate of tertiary educational attainment. It has also initiated a strategic reform of the vocational education and training sector, both at upper-secondary and post-secondary levels. This effort aims to achieve a better balance between that sector and mostly private higher education, which strongly predominates at present. However, the persistence of relatively low levels of basic skills and the continued lack of efficiency of public spending in the education system are still major challenges for the country. Cyprus has established a new Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in higher education. The question of ensuring proper quality assurance and accreditation of institutions and programmes— and particularly in private colleges — will constitute a test case for Cyprus in the future.
- CZ** Educational outcomes and the employability of school and higher education graduates are generally good. But the national early school leaving rate, although still outperforming the EU average, has been worsening over the past years. Pupils' socioeconomic background strongly influences educational performance, and the participation of Roma in mainstream education needs to increase. Authorities have taken major measures to support the implementation of the pro-inclusive legislation adopted in 2015. Teachers' salaries remain low compared to other countries and the teacher population is ageing, requiring further measures to increase the attractiveness of the profession to talented young people. Levels of tertiary educational attainment continue to increase rapidly and the long-awaited reform of higher education was adopted. On-going reforms have been subject to extensive consultations and awareness-raising campaigns. These aim to make best use of the knowledge and expertise of subject experts and stakeholders and increase ownership by actors on the ground.
- DE** Participation in all forms of education increased and outcomes improved, including for disadvantaged groups. Socioeconomic background however still has a major impact on education outcomes. Integrating the high number of recently arrived refugees is a major challenge. A large proportion of the refugees are young and poorly qualified. Almost half of a youth cohort start higher education. Higher education is also attracting an increasing number of international students, in particular in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines. The well-established dual training system is struggling to attract enough apprentices in certain regions and sectors. Combined with negative demographic trends, this may lead to a lack of skilled workers. Addressing the key challenges will require additional investment in education, which remains low by international comparison.
- DK** Denmark has low early school leaving rates, but the gender gap is higher than in neighbouring countries. The tertiary educational attainment rate is one of the highest in the EU. Denmark has the highest proportion of vocational education and training students in work-based programmes of all the EU countries; also adult participation in lifelong learning is one of the highest in the EU. In view of the fact that Denmark's expenditure on education is the highest in the EU and to reduce costs and improve efficiency in the public sector, the financial bill for 2016 made budgetary cuts across the education sector. The 'Growth and Development Strategy' (*Vækst og Udvikling i hele Danmark*) announces the intention to support quality of teaching and online learning in school education and tertiary education. The 2016 reform of general upper secondary education aims to raise academic standards, provide a solid preparation for higher education and encourage more young people to choose a vocational education and training pathway.
- EE** Estonia continues to have a well-performing education system combining a low proportion of under achievers with a low impact of socio economic status on education outcomes. Tertiary educational attainment is one of the highest in the EU. The employment rate of recent graduates has recovered after the economic crisis. Estonia is implementing a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy. This brings a new approach to learning by emphasising individual and social development, and the acquisition of skills at all levels



and in all types of education. The main challenges are to adapt to demographic trends, increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession, further reducing early school leaving, and narrowing the performance gap between Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking students.

- EL** Early school leaving and tertiary educational attainment rates improved significantly and are now better than the EU average. Performance is disappointing on basic skills attainment by young people and adults, and on participation in vocational education and training as well as in adult learning. A national dialogue on education and a review of the education system are highlighting key problems such as serious underfunding, teacher staffing, equity and efficiency. The reversal of previous reforms aimed at increasing transparency, accountability and evaluation in schools and higher education is a matter of concern. Greece has adopted sectorial strategies on higher education, vocational education and lifelong learning. Their implementation will be a challenge. The impact of the refugee crisis on the Greek education sector remains fairly limited for the time being, but might have more far-reaching consequences in the future.
- ES** The 2016 political impasse has limited progress on education reforms: the future of the 2013 Organic Law for Improvement of the Quality of Education (LOMCE) is questioned and the reform of the teaching profession remains on hold. Spain has increased the education budget since 2015, but the previous accumulated financial cuts have reduced equity in education, and the effectiveness of education spending can be improved. Enrolment and transition rates in the 'basic vocational education and training' programme are below expectations after the first two years of implementation. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport is making significant efforts to prevent violence in schools and promote civic education and fundamental values. A new tracking system for graduates should help to improve the relevance of university programmes and graduates' employability rates. The Government takes initiatives to support cooperation between universities, businesses and research centres but university governance and financing systems do not create a favourable environment.
- FI** The Government identified six key 'knowledge and education' projects in its strategic 'Vision: Finland 2025' and has to implement these in a fiscal consolidation environment. The educational outcomes of 15-year-olds are still some of the best in the EU, but have decreased recently across all groups. Curricula are being modernised at all levels of education. The tertiary educational attainment rate is amongst the highest in the EU. Higher education is undergoing reform to increase its efficiency and relevance. The proportion of students in vocational education and training, and of adults in lifelong learning, is amongst the highest in the EU.
- FR** France is engaged in three major reforms across all sectors and levels of education and training. Reforms in compulsory education, higher education and vocational training aim to improve equity and efficiency through early prevention, collaborative teaching and new governance models. Pupils' performance is strongly linked to their socioeconomic background. Too many young people leave education with few or no qualifications. There are large performance gaps between schools. Disadvantaged schools benefit less from experienced teachers, and school segregation reflects socioeconomic, academic and migrant backgrounds as well as residential segregation. The tertiary educational attainment rate is high. However, the university system, with its relatively low tuition fees and open access, is under pressure from steadily rising student numbers. Despite greater priority given to primary education, spending remains uneven between the different education stages. By international comparison, spending per student is significantly higher for upper secondary education.
- HR** The very low early school leaving rate and the high proportion of secondary vocational school graduates entering higher education are the main strengths of the system. International studies point to skills deficiencies among 15-year-olds in numeracy, literacy and reading skills. Political disagreements have slowed down the implementation of the landmark Strategy for Education, Science and Technology and the associated curricular reform. Participation in early childhood education and care and in adult education are extremely low compared to other EU countries. Aligning vocational, higher and adult

education with the labour market needs by developing qualification standards in consultation with social partners is a praiseworthy but lengthy process that has not yet yielded tangible results.

- HU** Hungarian education faces important equity challenges. Students' performance is strongly linked to their socioeconomic background, and the participation of disadvantaged groups, in particular Roma people, in inclusive mainstream education needs to increase. From 2015/2016 the compulsory starting age for early childhood education and care was lowered from five to three years to better prepare children for school and so reduce the risk of children dropping out later on. The government announced the transfer of the operation of public schools from the municipalities to the state and the decentralisation of the state school maintainer organisation as of January 2017. Dual study programmes were introduced in higher education in 2015/2016 to improve the labour market relevance of degree programmes. A new core curriculum was introduced for vocational grammar schools in 2016/2017, under which the teaching hours for vocation-specific subjects were increased at the expense of science subjects.
- IE** Ireland performs very well on early school leaving and tertiary educational attainment and has made significant progress in improving the provision of basic skills. The growing fiscal space created by the recent and rapid economic recovery lessens pressure on public expenditure on education and allows for substantially increased capital investment, i.e. in developing educational infrastructure. The affordability and full-time provision of quality early childhood education and care remain a challenge. Equity and access to higher education for disadvantaged groups are still issues. There are emerging skills shortages in certain sectors of the economy (e.g. ICT) and a need to further up-skill and reskill the adult population, in particular by increasing participation in further education and training.
- IT** The 2015 school reform and the national system for the evaluation of schools are being implemented and could improve school outcomes. Although still above the EU average, the early school leaving rate is steadily declining. Participation in early childhood education is high for four- to six-year-olds. More attention is being paid to the quality of higher education and the framework for allocating public funding to universities has significantly improved in recent years. Italy has the lowest tertiary educational attainment rate in the EU for 30- to 34-year-olds. The higher education system is underfunded and faces the problem of ageing and declining teaching staff. Transition from education to work is difficult, even for highly qualified people. This is causing a 'brain drain'.
- LT** Lithuania is reforming the teacher profession to improve its attractiveness, the quality of initial teacher training and continuous professional development. Lithuania has a very low early school leaving rate, but pupils' reading and maths skills are below the EU average. According to national tests, almost one fifth of 16-year-olds lack basic knowledge and skills. The participation rate in early childhood education and care is low when compared to the EU average, and there are significant disparities between urban and rural areas. The Government has taken several measures to increase participation rates and quality. Lithuania has the highest tertiary educational attainment rate in the EU. The quality and innovation outcomes of higher education, in particular the quality of teaching and provision of soft skills, and practical training in higher education remain challenges. Only a small percentage of adults participate in lifelong learning. As vocational education and training remains an unattractive option for students and their parents, there is a need to improve its quality and cooperation with companies.
- LU** In Luxembourg virtually all children participate in early childhood education and care from age four. Recent measures aim at improving the quality of these services, particularly to reduce socio-economic disadvantages. The proportion of early school leavers is still below the EU average but increased in 2015. All students learn two foreign languages in lower-secondary education. Trilingual education, however, represents a challenge for many students and affects their success in all school subjects. Luxembourg has the EU's second-highest tertiary educational attainment rate among 30-34 year-olds and has significantly increased funding in this sector in recent years.

- LV** In recent years, Latvia has made remarkable progress in reducing its early school leaving rate and improving basic skills attainment. Latvia is gradually introducing a new financing model in the higher education system, with elements to reward quality. Measures on accreditation are promising, although implementation is still at an early stage. The tertiary educational attainment rate is high, but supplying graduates to knowledge intensive sectors and attracting international students remain a challenge. Vocational education and training is undergoing significant reform, but there is still considerable scope for expanding the work-based learning components and updating the curricula. The gender gap in education is a challenge across the board, with women outperforming men significantly both in terms of qualifications and basic skill proficiency.
- MT** Malta is investing heavily in its education and training system. Recent positive measures on school education aim to modernise curricula, improve teaching quality and promote digital skills. Transition from education to the labour market is easier than in most other EU countries. Despite recent progress, the early school leaving rate remains the second highest in the EU and the tertiary educational attainment rate is still low. Participation of low-skilled adults in lifelong learning is rather low.
- NL** The Dutch education system is among the best performing in the EU as regards participation in early childhood education and care, the share of low achievers among 15-year-olds and tertiary educational attainment. The changes in the funding system for higher education provide room for investment in improving quality, but the impact on accessibility and educational inequality will need careful monitoring. Measures taken to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession are especially important because a shortage of teachers is expected. Differentiating teaching methods according to students' learning needs in increasingly diverse classrooms, in order to help and motivate all students to reach their full potential, remains a challenge.
- PL** Poland is one of the best performing EU countries on early school leaving and basic skills achievement, but faces challenges in the teaching of transversal skills. The new government has launched a major reform of school education. Participation in early childhood education and care has increased significantly in recent years. However, quality of provision, particularly for children under the age of three, is a challenge and regional differences in access persist. The recent decision to raise the school entry age to seven is not following international evidence stressing the importance of early learning. While tertiary educational attainment is high, the quality of higher education and its labour market relevance remain challenges. The government launched a major consultation process on the future of the Polish higher education system. The quality and labour market relevance of vocational education and training is still limited. A new form of dual education is being introduced. Adult participation in lifelong learning is one of the lowest in the EU, and the basic skills levels among adults are comparatively poor, particularly in ICT. The introduction of the integrated qualifications system and national qualifications framework is a step forward.
- PT** The Portuguese Government has announced a series of measures to improve equity in education and fight school failure. The 2016 budget for education does not provide for significant increases from the previous year: it is envisaged that financial support for the reforms will come from increased expenditure efficiency and a decline in grade repetition. Citizenship and intercultural education are becoming more relevant in the school curricula and the integration of migrants into the education system is being strengthened. The downward trend in university enrolment, together with the high rate of highly qualified Portuguese nationals migrating to other European countries, is aggravating the country's demographic crisis and could hamper its competitiveness. The new higher education technical vocational courses are raising enrolment in polytechnic institutes and opening up new avenues of cooperation with the business sector.
- RO** Romania is modernising school curricula towards competence-based learning. Early school leaving continued to increase in 2015 and is the third highest in the EU. Students from rural areas, poor families and Roma are particularly exposed to the risk of drop-out and educational poverty. Participation in pre-school education is expected to increase following the introduction of cash-conditional transfers for children from poor families. Tertiary

educational attainment has risen so that it is now very close to the national target, but it is still one of the lowest in the EU and ensuring labour market relevance of higher education is a challenge. Vocational education and training qualifications and curricula are not sufficiently attuned with labour market needs and adult participation in lifelong learning is the lowest in the EU. Despite some improvements, public expenditure on education continues to be very low.

- SE** Sweden invests heavily in education and training, with general government expenditure on education being among the highest in the EU. Sweden has one of the highest tertiary educational attainment rates in the EU for 30-34 year-olds and the employment rate of its recent tertiary graduates is very high. School education outcomes in terms of basic skills proficiency declined continuously over the past decade. This could translate into declining skill levels of adults in the future. The increasing performance gap between foreign-born and native-born students is a challenge: school segregation may well have increased in a system with greater school choice. Integrating the large number of newly arrived students in the education system is a major challenge; Sweden can however build successfully on its policy tradition and current efforts.
- SI** With a growing number of tertiary-educated people and a low rate of early school leaving, Slovenia has already met its national targets under the Europe 2020 strategy. Fluctuating demographic trends pose a great challenge to maintaining a consolidated network of schools and an efficient system of school funding. The proportion of tertiary graduates among the unemployed has been on the increase, pointing to youth employability issues. The higher education sector is undergoing reforms which aim to increase completion rates, encourage internationalisation and strengthen internal quality assurance. Vocational education is attended by a large number of young people, yet apprenticeships are being reintroduced to engage employers further and improve transition to the labour market.
- SK** The new Government has embarked on ambitious reforms at all education levels and begun preparing a 10-year education strategy. It has also committed to engaging in wide consultations to support these processes. Pupils' socioeconomic background has a high impact on educational performance and the participation of Roma in mainstream education needs to increase. While the national early school leaving rate remains low compared with the EU, it has been worsening since 2010 and is particularly high in the eastern regions and among the Roma. The capacity of early childhood education and care is being strengthened to enable higher participation rates. This could in particular benefit the educational outcomes of socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils. Making the teaching profession more attractive to talented young people and strengthening all phases of teacher education will be key to improving educational outcomes and reducing educational inequity. The higher education sector is subject to a wide reform covering accreditation, funding, cooperation with employers and widening the social makeup of the student population.
- UK** Despite differences in approaches to addressing certain challenges, the education systems in the UK perform well in many areas monitored as part of the Education and Training 2020 framework. The UK has a very high tertiary educational attainment rate and a declining early school leaving rate. Compared to other EU countries, the UK performs well in participation in early childhood education and care for children aged four and over, and in adult participation in lifelong learning. The main challenges for the UK's education systems include improving the level of basic skills of 15-year-olds (especially maths among girls) and widening access to higher education for students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Ambitious reforms of the skills system are underway to improve the quality and transparency of post-16 vocational routes as equal alternatives to academic routes.

## The Education and Training Monitor – Country Analysis

The Education and Training Monitor consists of *Volume 1*, providing analysis from cross-national and thematic points of view, and *Volume 2*, comprising 28 country reports. Each country report includes a box presenting a topical issue in the country:

Country	Topic
AT	Integrating refugees into education and training
BE	Reform of compulsory education in the French Community ( <i>Pacte pour un Enseignement d'Excellence</i> , 2015-2025)
BG	Changes introduced by the Pre-School and School Education Act
CY	The new quality assurance and accreditation system for higher education
CZ	Education of Roma children and inclusive education
DE	Integrating refugees into education and training
DK	Integration of refugees and asylum seekers through education
EE	Upper secondary school network reform
EL	The national dialogue on education
ES	Early school leaving and the new basic vocational education and training path
FI	Integrating refugees into the education system
FR	Mobilising education and research to fight violent radicalisation
HR	Ongoing debate on the curricular reform
HU	Dual programmes in higher education
IE	The new 'National Skills Strategy 2025 – Ireland's Future'
IT	Addressing the decline in funding and teaching staff
LT	Making the teaching profession more attractive
LU	The challenges of trilingual education
LV	Making special needs education more inclusive
MT	Improving initial teacher education and continuous professional development
NL	'Excellent schools'
PL	The 2016 school education reform
PT	Cooperation between higher education institutions and the business sector
RO	Rural – urban gap in education
SE	Integration of newly arrived students in the school system
SI	Higher education reform ticking all the right boxes
SK	Education of Roma children and inclusive education
UK	A move towards complete autonomy of schools in England

## The Education and Training Monitor – Website and visualisation tool

Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the Education and Training Monitor, together with the Monitor's visualisation tool and interactive maps can be found at:

[ec.europa.eu/education/monitor](https://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor)

