



Quality education *for* quality jobs



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

March 2012

With the financial support of the European Commission

Final report – Quality education for quality jobs



Contract VP/2011/07

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

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We should thank the national trade union confederations who were kind enough to respond to the questionnaire. The usual disclaimer applies.

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Introduction

In many European countries, the economic crisis is not still over and young people are still experiencing major difficulties in their attempts to enter the labour market. The fact that young people have been hit hard by the crisis is not a secret: national and European institutions have been talking about it for almost two years now (European Commission 2010b; 2010c).

Although transitions from school to work had already been identified as increasingly uncertain (Dubar 2001), the economic crisis has increased the precariousness of this key phase of personal and working life.

Concerns about the unemployment rate and the lengthy transitions of young people affect not only the 'sub-protective' (Walther et al. 2009) countries – such as Italy, Spain and Portugal – where social provision is scarce for those out of the labour market, but also countries such as Finland where unemployment has increased by 25 per cent among young people (Eurofound 2011). The same can be said of the UK, where young people – even the highly skilled – are finding it increasingly difficult to find a job. This is confirmed by Eurofound (2011), according to which lengthy transitions are not only a problem of lack of skills: skills and school-based competencies are not a straightforward advantage that directly open the doors of the labour market.

In most member states, to date young men have been harder hit by the crisis (Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the UK). This is due mainly to the strong impact of the crisis in so-called 'gendered' sectors – in other words, in which the employment rate is higher among men – such as construction (Eurofound 2011).

Skyrocketing unemployment has put the issue of the relevance and quality of education and training high on the policy agenda, at both national and European level. Education and training represent a key element in improving better matching between skill demand and supply, and in enlarging young people's labour market opportunities.



The present report is aimed at providing a general overview of the educational/training, labour market and social situation of young people in Europe.

The report is structured as follows. First, a brief introduction provides an overview of European education and training, including major developments. Second, the framework of analysis is presented, in two parts: the first briefly presents the main obstacles young people experience during their transition from school-to-work; the second provides the framework for analysis of education and training systems in Europe and their labour market links. This framework is intended to help in analysing Eurostat data and responses to the survey carried out among ETUC affiliates. Third, some key indicators on students' participation in vocational training and higher education are presented, together with some remarks on gender issues and employability. Moreover, since the role played by mobility and languages has been claimed to be fundamental in the context of workers' mobility and also an efficient tool for boosting employability (European Commission 2010b), some indicators concerning mobility and language learning are also included. Fourth, young people's labour market integration is presented in terms of employment and unemployment statistics, particularly from an educational and training perspective. The fifth part deals with social aspects of education and training and the labour market. It considers in particular the issues of early school leavers (young people with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training), so-called 'NEETs' (young people 'not in employment, education or training') and at-risk poverty and in-work poverty for young people. Finally, the report summarises the results of a survey conducted among ETUC affiliates between September and November 2011. This survey investigated the social partners' perspectives on youth transitions. It was conducted mainly for three reasons: (i) to gauge the extent to which trade unions were aware of and involved in youth transitions from school to work; (ii) to raise the 'hot' issue of traineeships and get the social partners' points of view; and (iii) to explore the most important concerns and to promote exchange of good practices on the occasion of the ETUC Youth Committee Conference (Krakow 2011).



1. Education and training and the European Union: overview

There is a long tradition of cooperation in vocational education and training in Europe. Since the establishment of the European Economic Community the importance of vocational education and training has been recognised as a fundamental tool for upgrading the skills of members' workforces, mainly through the European Social Fund and European social policy (Pepín 2006: 15). Due to the essentially economic nature of the agreement and the flourishing economic situation, particular attention was paid to providing the best answers to labour market needs – workforce skills – rather to general education. This special attention to vocational education and training developed further with the creation of a European agency for vocational education, and the 'independence' of DG Education and Training and embraced also general education (1973: see Pepín 2006: 65).

Increasing interest in general education became clear at the end of the 1990s when, through an intergovernmental agreement, cooperation among member states took off in Paris and Bologna (in the so-called Bologna Process which later became the European Higher Education Area¹).

With the aim of providing an overarching framework for initiatives that were clearly divided among different DGs (Education and Training, Employment and Social Affairs, Research and Development) the concept of 'lifelong learning' was introduced (Pepín 2006: 17). The notion of lifelong learning has several strategic readings: Verdier (2007) underlines that it explicitly emphasises the multiplicity of sources and forms of knowledge at micro- and macro-level. Thus, on the one hand, there is the relevance of the individual's entire learning trajectory, regardless of age, while, on the other hand, lifelong learning supports the European Employment Strategy, whose 2001 guidelines 'stress the need for Member States to set out coherent overall strategies on lifelong learning' (Verdier 2007).

¹ See: <http://www.ehea.info/>

Education and training policies had to be continuously redefined in order to account for national diversities while setting European objectives. Education and training are 'subsidiarity domains' of EU competences, which means that there is no legal basis in the Treaty for 'hard law' interventions, even though some court cases have had some impact on national education systems, namely in the equal treatment of foreign students compared to nationals (for example, the Gravier's case in 1986 – Pepin (2006) and the Directive of the Council ('Social Affairs') on the education of the children of migrants in 1980 – Pepin (2006)).

In order to overcome the EU's limited legal impact on a strategic policy area for EU economic growth, the European Union launched the Open Method of Coordination in Education and Training (EC 2002), which later included other international processes, such as the Bologna Process (with the Sorbonne Declaration 1998²), and the Copenhagen Process (European Council 2003). This 'soft mode of governance' also overlapped and complemented existing initiatives – among others, the European Employment Strategy (EC 1997) and the Open Method of Coordination in Social Protection and Social Inclusion, and the Youth Policies actions (EC 2009) – which already included (directly or indirectly) training and education among their actions. As for cooperation in education and training, the Open Method of Coordination (EC 2003) was launched in 2002 with three strategic objectives: improving quality and effectiveness, facilitating access for all to education and training systems and 'opening them up to the wider world'.

With the establishment of an open method of coordination and all its tools (Gornitzka 2006), countries are not legally obliged to adapt but are strongly advised to implement policies contributing to European objectives. Through the process of peer-reviewing, mutual learning and reporting, the member states and European institutions involved propose and share best practices, as well as possible improvements.

Moreover, among policy initiatives dealing with best practice exchange, the European Union recognised the importance of having well-coordinated – despite national differences – national education and training systems. This need is closely linked with free movement of the workforce and the need to increase the competitiveness of European economies at the international level (the knowledge-based economy). In practical terms, this has meant the enhancement of transparency, quality and recognition of national qualifications for inter-country and intra-education system mobility (translated into initiatives such as ECTS – the European Credit Transfer System, ECVET – European Credit Transfer systems for vocational education and Training, and EQF – the European Qualification Framework³). In order to support the ambitious project of the lifelong learning umbrella framework (which will gradually include international processes such as the Bologna and Copenhagen Processes, as well as early childhood education), the Commission set aside 7 billion euros for 2007–2013.⁴

Within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination in Education and Training, five major benchmarks were to be reached in 2010 at European level: (i) to reduce the percentage of early school leavers to no more than 10 per cent; (ii) to ensure that at least 85 per cent of young (20–24 year old) people complete upper secondary education; (iii) to cut the percentage of low-achieving pupils in reading by at least 20 per cent; (iv) to increase the number of university graduates in mathematics, science and technology (MST) by at least 15 per cent and to decrease the gender imbalance in these subjects; and finally (v) to have 12.5 per cent of adults (25–64) participating in lifelong learning.

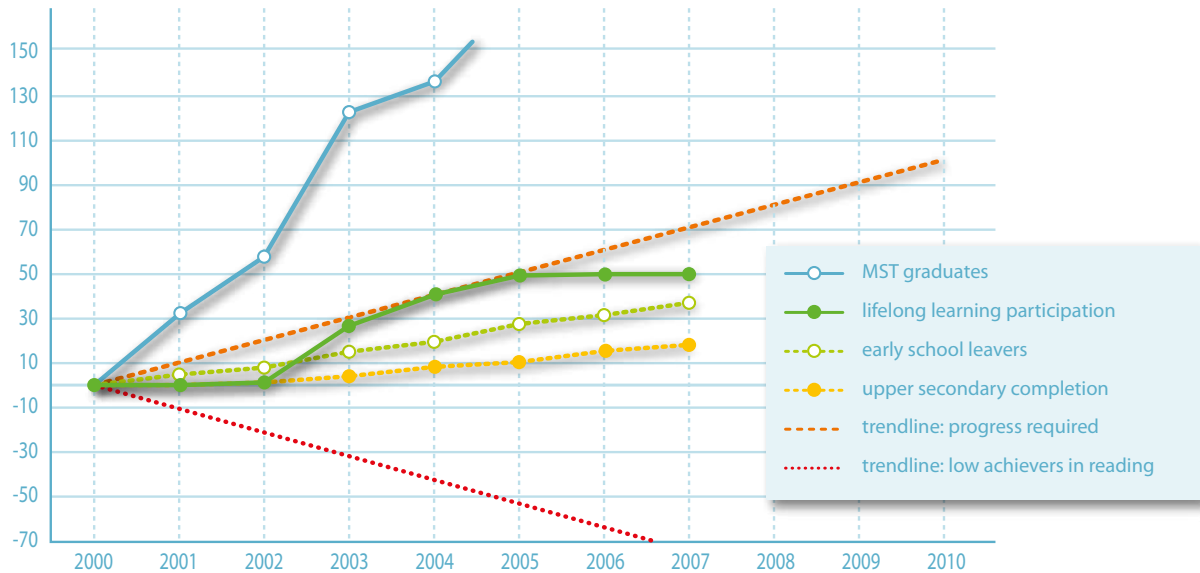
2 See: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/SORBONNE_DECLARATION1.pdf

3 On ECTS, see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc48_en.htm; on ECVET, see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc50_en.htm; on EQF, see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

4 See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm on funding.

In 2009, the stocktaking of OMC in Education and Training, launched in 2002, revealed no dramatic changes: only one of the five benchmarks was in fact attained (increase in the share of maths, science and technology graduates) (European Commission 2009c).

Figure 1 Five benchmarks on education and training



Source: European Commission DG Education and Culture (2009).

Figure 1 shows the progress made towards the benchmarks set and the dotted line indicates the effort still required to meet them. The progress made by ET2010 was not what had been expected: the only objective to have been clearly achieved is the share of university graduates in mathematics, science and technology. Lifelong learning participation did not attain the expected results and its share has been increasing on average only fairly slowly (from 7.1 per cent in 2000 to 9.3 per cent in 2009). As for the share of early school leavers no major improvement was observed (falling from 17.6 per cent in 2000 to 14.4 per cent in 2009). The most striking figure is the negative trend of the share of low-achieving pupils in reading, which has been deteriorating over time. The same applies to the share of young people with upper secondary education: this figure has been increasing very slowly (up to 78.6 per cent in 2009), still a considerable distance from the 85 per cent target set by the benchmark (ETUC/ ETUI 2011).

If the ET2010 benchmarks were set to contribute to building up the 'most competitive knowledge-based society in the world' (European Council 2000), the benchmarks of renewed cooperation (ET2020) are now intended to serve as a yardstick for 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' (EC 2010c).

Two out of the five ET2020 benchmarks became headline targets in the Europe 2020 Strategy: reducing the share of early leavers from education and training to below 10 per cent and raising the share of 30–34 year-olds with tertiary educational attainment to at least 40 per cent.

Europe2020 is supported by 10 'integrated guidelines' aiming to ensure a coherent framework for national strategies. Guideline 9 – 'Improving the performance of education and training systems at all

levels and increasing participation in tertiary education' (Council 2010) – deals with education and training specifically, but other guidelines also refer to education and training as tools for achieving smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. The flagship initiatives are also important in implementing the strategy as a whole: the 'Youth on the Move' initiative on education is linked with three other flagship initiatives, 'New Skills for Jobs', 'Innovation Union' and 'European Platform against Poverty' (EC 2010c).

The 'Youth on the Move' initiative has four main lines of action to be picked up by member states, addressing the issues of *labour market integration, vocational/higher education, employability and mobility*.

This report presents these four lines of action using harmonised European data from Eurostat and the OECD. A social perspective on youth education is also investigated.



2. Youth and transitions: a framework of analysis

2.1 What does transition mean?

There are several reasons why the issue of young people's transitions from school to work should be tackled. They include: an economic crisis which is still hitting young people disproportionately hard (high rate of unemployment) (Quintini et al. 2007); the agreed conclusion in the literature that transitions are not as smooth as they were in the 1980s (Dubar 2001)(Bell and Blanchflower 2011), and finally, the existence of some blind spots that should be investigated as they represent a 'grey zone' between education policies, labour market policies and social policies (Lassnigg et al. 2007; Ryan 2001; Machin 2006). Moreover, if one was to extend the analysis to an individual level and adopt a sociological and psychological perspective, one should also consider that the transition from school to work often coincides with a critical youth development phase, as people take their first steps into adulthood (Walther et al 2009).

The term 'transition' generally conveys an idea of 'movement'. However, it is not clear from which point this movement starts, where it is heading, whether it is uphill or down and, finally, whether this 'journey' ends somewhere and when.

Raffe (2003) explains that in the literature the word 'transition' and the related concept have changed over time. In the 1960s the main idea was that young people were asked to successfully enter adulthood without too much emphasis on labour market participation as labour demand was on the rise. Starting from the 1970s and 1980s transitions became increasingly difficult, thus encouraging use of the word 'trajectories', signalling that multiple factors were involved and could change the trajectory. In the 1990s the word 'navigation' appeared, highlighting that young people did not have a passive role but, on the contrary, an active role in shaping their paths towards labour market and adult age. This also seems to be in line with the new approach to labour market policies, that mostly target the supply side and strongly accent the young unemployed person's efforts to reintegrate in the labour market (Serrano Pascual 2004).

At the same time, in education policies and reforms more attention has been paid to educational outcomes of students rather than inputs and resources provided to institutions.

This has meant an increasing interest in actors' (directors, teachers, students, parents and so on) decisions rather on resources themselves (CEDEFOP 2008; EC 2011).

When exploring school-to-work transitions in Europe, the problem of comparability arises. There are more than 27 education systems in the EU27, characterised by significant differences: different durations of compulsory education (ranging from 16 to 18), structures, actors and so on (for example, the strongly rooted 'dual system' in Germany and Austria).

Besides, the notion of 'relevant work experience' – understood as the end of the transition period – might be fairly flexible and interpreted differently according to a country's transition patterns. For the purpose of this report the age ranges 25–24, 25–29 and 18–24 were used according to the data available and the relevance of the age group for the specific indicator. The data are from Eurostat, namely the Labour Force Survey, Education and Training and the Survey on Social and Living Conditions. They are thus harmonised, and whenever possible national divergences and peculiarities are highlighted.

2.2 Transitions: what obstacles in the education system?

Education policy since the Second World War has gradually come to recognise the link between education and the economy, especially due to continuing labour shortages (Tomlinson 2005). School-based education plays an important role in determining people's chances of getting into the labour market, but the structure of the market itself contributes greatly to making this interaction better (good skill match) or worse (skill mismatch: underqualification and overqualification) (Quintini 2011; Wolbers 2006).

For example, within the framework of lower secondary education school practices of pupil evaluation may have an impact on young people's educational trajectories and delay their labour market entry. An example is provided by Belgium, where a decentralised and discretionary evaluation system, combined with a quasi-market in education, has contributed to misuse of the instrument of making pupils repeat school years. This is associated with a progressive shift of 'failing pupils' – those considered weaker – from general secondary education to vocational education. Pupils stay longer in education, are often transferred to less attractive schools and often suffer from being stigmatised in the labour market once they have left the education system. Most of these students come from less advantaged families and are prone to accumulate social and economic disadvantages (Vandenberghe 2000), thus hindering upward social mobility.

Another example is how vocational training has an impact on transitions depending on how it is organised and connected with labour markets. The idea is that the more successful education systems are in providing standardised and specific vocational qualifications of immediate and clear labour market value to prospective employers, the more these employers will use educational signals (rather than, for example, experience) in labour market allocation decision-making (Saar et al. 2005). In other words, in some production and labour market systems, employers – knowing the education system – might look more at experience when hiring young people for jobs requiring vocational training than at their qualifications. These two ways in which the education system affects labour market signalling as it pertains to young people are known as (i) *internal labour markets* (in which the labour force is more connected to 'on-the-job training') and (ii) *occupational labour markets* (in which jobs are strictly connected to vocational tracks in the education system) (Saar et al. 2008).

In systems dominated by internal labour markets, there are no clear and regulated connections between the education system and labour market opportunities. Such systems are more likely to produce a workforce lacking the skills required for growth (for example, Italy, Spain and Portugal).

This gives rise to the concept of skills mismatch. This has increasingly been at the top of the education agenda, not only vocational training (CEDEFOP 2010), but also higher education. Studies highlight that apprenticeship schemes seem to get young people into employment faster than school-based – and thus more theoretically oriented – vocational schools. However, this transition is more likely not to have a career development trend, which means that young people who found their work through apprenticeship might have fewer opportunities to change their job and improve their employment status (Raffe 2003).

Skills mismatches tend to be only temporary before young people find work best fitting their competences and expectations (CEDEFOP 2010c). Nonetheless, in times of crisis, high youth unemployment due to a lack of good job opportunities can engender different reactions among young people: for example, over-qualification – for the highly educated – followed by a deterioration of skills over time, or exit to other (foreign or national) labour markets.

2.3 Transitions: what obstacles in the labour market system?

The integration of young people into the labour market differs considerably across European countries (Wolbers 2006): there are marked differences in unemployment rate, but also in terms of job quality and mismatch between skills possessed and skills required (Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003; European Commission 2010a).

However, studies have highlighted that in most EU countries young people are increasingly entering the labour market via precarious employment in the first year and also more often work part-time involuntarily (Math 2011). Due to uncertain working conditions there has been a decline in earnings among younger workers relative to older workers. Young people have also been concentrated in low-skilled and low-paying industries, even though they are better educated than prime age workers were at their age.

Favourable labour market integration for low qualified young people seems more problematic because their lack of skills is a handicap in looking for work, especially during economic downturn (Wolbers 2006). When the economy slows down, employers are less likely to hire young people due to the higher cost of training them (Wolbers 2006).

Labour market regulation (employment protection) has been also studied as it plays a role in determining what opportunities young people have available when entering the labour market. The general view is that tight employment regulation – for example, high dismissal costs – are detrimental for youth employment opportunities, as employers are less likely to incur the high cost of hiring young persons who are believed to be less productive, and then also face other costs when dismissing them.

However, employment protection is said to have a number of positive effects for young people newly arrived in the labour market. This seems possible if there is a strong union presence, with centralised collective bargaining and cooperative relationships between trade unions/social partners and corporate partners. These elements are considered capable of creating institutional conditions favouring young people during

the education–work transition (Saar et al. 2008). Among other things, a strong, regulated and cooperative trade union presence in the regulation of apprenticeships in upper-secondary and tertiary training can be translated into wage moderation to enhance young people's labour market entry (by sector or industry) or – and this is what has mainly been done in Germany (Ryan 2001) – establish common training standards.

A counterexample of trade union absence – or at least weakness – from apprenticeship regulation is provided by the United Kingdom, where the weakness of collective action has impeded the policy of reviving apprenticeships (Ryan 2001).

Furthermore, Saar et al. (2008) report that work-based systems of vocational training are more likely to reduce the potentially negative influence of tight employment protection legislation.

To conclude, it seems that the effects of employment regulation on young people's employment chances are not clear-cut (Gautié 2009; OECD 2010), and that the role played by employment protection as an obstacle or an advantage in youth labour market outcomes is not straightforward and its impact extremely difficult to disaggregate and measure.

2.4 Regimes of transition: clustering European countries

Studies on young people's transitions from school to work have focused on a number of aspects: concepts that shape transition (Raffe 2003), labour market outcomes and social protection institutions (Quintini et al. 2006; OECD 2010, 2011); psychological and sociological aspects of entering the labour market (Bynner and Parson 2001); and the institutions involved and their interaction mechanisms (Verdier 2007; Walther 2006; Walther et al. 2009).

Two studies, one based on the work of Verdier (2007) and the other on the European project on transitions (Walther et al. 2009), will help to establish the context of analysis of this report. These two comparative contributions will help to cluster countries according to their similarities and identify them, when the data allow it.

These two works are interesting for their European comparative perspective on education and training systems, their focus on education/training and labour market inter-linkages and the underlying principles of education and training systems.

Decommodified and market-oriented regimes

Verdier's study (2007) identified *five public policy regimes for lifelong learning*. The analysis provides a broad picture of the normative beliefs on which the system is based and the interrelations between different actors taking part in initial and continuing training.

As the author points out, these are ideal types that can be used for a first, pragmatic classification (Verdier 2007). Obviously, reality is much more complex and any attempt at comparison should not rely on these macro-schemes alone.

The question at the basis of Verdier's clustering is how political principles, actors' logic and rules and available instruments interact.

For example, what principles of justice and efficiency are applied in education and training? What is the conception of individuals integrated into vocational communities, line organisations, networks or social citizenship? Who assumes responsibility for qualification- and employment-related risks (unemployment, precarious employment, skill obsolescence and so on): the individual and/or social insurance/the state? What conception of knowledge is to be applied: primacy of academic knowledge, work-related knowledge or an absence of distinctions between different kinds?

The classification identifies five regimes: three of them, labelled 'Corporatist', 'Academic' and 'Universal', refer to decommodification (Esping-Andersen 1999); the other two are market-oriented but with different principles: 'pure market competition' and 'organised market'.

2.4.1 'Decommodified regimes'

The 'corporatist', 'academic' and 'universal' systems consider education and training as a decommodified public policy: in other words, education and training are services that reduce individuals' reliance on the market (and their labour, which is the primary good that people can exchange) for their well-being.

If a country provides services to intervene when labour is not enough to ensure well-being, it has a decommodified welfare system (Esping-Andersen 1990). Verdier extends this analysis to the education and training system. Despite sharing a decommodified view of initial training, the three regimes turn out to be based on quite dissimilar rules: *selection (academic regime)*, *calling (corporatist regime)* and *cohesion (universal regime)*.

The academic regime – France

France represents the academic regime. It is a decommodified system, together with Germany and the Nordic countries, and it is strongly based on the principle that equity of school-based competition should be guaranteed by a legitimised public actor. The role of the State is clearly emphasised in this regime type, where there is in fact a highly centralised regulated education and training system. Although there has been increasing attention to the necessity of matching competences furnished at school with labour market needs (Winterton 2009), the French system is still strongly reliant on the 'objective criterion' of academic performance (Verdier 2007). This means that educational performance is not analysed and assessed in terms of labour market outcomes, but rather by a yardstick internal to the education system itself, namely diplomas and certificates. For this reason, education and initial training are more detached (compared to employment centred regimes) from external (market) needs, as this might compromise the integrity of the merit principle (Verdier 2007). Thus, individuals themselves must add his personal value to the diploma in order to give a positive signal to labour market, for example by engaging in traineeships or working experiences.

The corporatist regime – Germany and Austria

The corporatist regime is identified with Germany and Austria. These systems are strongly based on the recognition of professional identities. This highly regulated system of qualification is coupled with a peculiar conceptualisation of 'competence' (Kompetenz): occupational competence is rooted in the concept of *Beruf*, a concept referring to occupational identity (Winterton 2009).

Thus, on the one hand there is the individual committed to a 'vocation', while on the other hand there are strong corporatist employers' associations, but also social partners that regulate the provision of training as they are involved in the organisation of apprenticeship schemes. The transition from the education and

training system to the labour market relies, then, on the (positive or negative) signals that the certificate/diploma sends and its potential link with a legitimised and recognised profession.

During the crisis the German and Austrian dual system has been praised because it seems to have acted as a buffer against pressures on youth employment.

Universal regimes – Nordic countries

The underlying principle of this system is the role of education and training as a mechanism of compensation for initial inequalities. Early childhood education has high coverage and high quality services as it is believed to level off potential inequalities. Moreover, there is no 'early tracking' of pupils in lower education since students follow the same common path until they are 17 years old, when they decide whether to take up vocational or more general education courses. This late tracking is believed to reduce the influence of parental or family background on pupils' decisions to pursue one educational track rather than another.

Early childhood education is an essential element of lifelong learning. It is coupled with strong attention to second-chance schools and continuing training during the whole working life. Educational and working choices are fairly reversible as individuals are supported by educational (second-chance schools) and labour market institutions (continuing training) which are meant to be flexible enough to adapt to individuals' different trajectories.

2.4.2 Market-oriented regimes

Verdier introduces other regimes with more market-oriented regulation: regimes organised around networks associating public and private actors, and 'pure market competition'.

Both systems consider education and training in a utilitarian way, as functions of labour market demand, and training is regulated by market demand and rules (for example, prices, trade-offs between taking up training or not). If this is not strictly the case for continental European countries, the 'organised' market principle does partially represent the UK. In fact, the author talks about a 'near-market' in the Anglo-Saxon countries, meaning that there is 'free choice' for trainees to choose the best trainer. Trainers are also free to compete. These characteristics constitute a 'quasi-market'. Market competition is expected to regulate access, and public authorities intervene by guaranteeing that consumers have clear information about the quality and prices of training organisations, so as to avoid market distortions.

The public authorities try to make competition, prices and quality as clear as possible, while the individual has the responsibility to make the right choices about education and training. That is why in the UK, for example, there are individual incentives to take up training through individual training accounts to which individuals, public agencies and employers can contribute. On the contrary, in France, a law on training approved in 2003 entitles all workers to training, thus the State guarantees, at least in principle, access to training without relying on individual's initiative (Lambert and Vero 2007).

To conclude, in the market, public and private establishments are asked to work together and to play according to market rules. Individuals do the rest by managing their own training opportunities.

[See Table 1 and Table 2 in the annex for further details on this classification]

2.4.3 Another taxonomy of transitions

The other taxonomy of transition regimes was developed by Walther, Stauber and Pohl (2009) within the framework of the European comparative project Up2Youth.

Their taxonomy of transition regimes considers how the institutional setting influences trajectories of young people who are experiencing transitions from school to work and towards adulthood. Models are developed on the basis of the already identified welfare regimes (Esping Andersen 1990): social-democratic/universalistic; conservative/corporatist/employment-centred; and liberal and Mediterranean/sub-protective.

Typologies developed by Walther et al. (2009) closely investigate the transitions from school to work, while the taxonomy proposed by Verdier (2009) analyses lifelong learning regimes as a whole. Focused on youth transitions to the labour market, the study by Walther et al. (2009) also considers sociological and culture aspects with both a personal and an institutional impact on policies.

[See Table 3 in the annex for further details on this classification]

The liberal regime

As in the model proposed by Verdier (2007), the 'Anglo-Saxon' countries (Ireland and the United Kingdom) are considered to be liberal regimes, in which success or failure with regard to transition is based on individual responsibilities. Early economic independence is advocated for young people and increasing attention is being paid to the 'perverse dependence mechanisms' that might be caused by welfare provisions. One side effect of this is an increasing risk of disadvantaged youths becoming NEETs (*not in employment, education or training*). Some of the major studies on NEETs have been conducted in the United Kingdom (Furlong 2006; Sachdev et al. 2006)

Furthermore, young people entering the labour market are often subject to a high degree of flexibility (Worth 2003). While opportunities might seem likely to be more numerous in a very flexible youth labour market, this is offset by a high degree of uncertainty, also due to the reduced social security net for young people and the diminishing financial support for further education or training.⁵ From a gender perspective, female employment is high, although it tends to be part-time in nature and in low-skilled or unskilled service occupations (Walther et al. 2009).

The universalistic regime

In this taxonomy the Nordic countries are identified as universalistic. This implies an integrated education system, in which important school choices are made late in the educational career (no early tracking). Just as Verdier highlighted the idea of cohesion as the initial training rationale of these countries, Walther et al. (2009) identify the construction of a citizenry.

Most students combine work with study as they leave the parental home fairly early (see employment statistics in the following sections). An extensive social security system, free higher education and access to study grants are important institutional characteristics shaping youth trajectories and choices.

⁵ For example, the coalition government recently decided to reduce the Education Maintenance Allocation: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/2011/02/21/scrapping-ema-and-fairness/>

The subprotective regime

The Mediterranean countries are again identified as sub-protective: youth transitions in these countries often include long periods of unemployment and long series of fixed-term contracts, which can have a 'scarring' effect on working life (Math 2011). The social protection system is fairly weak and the family is expected to step in as institutional actor instead of the state, where the latter is absent (Council of Europe 2011). The role of high education is particular problematic. It does have a recognised status but does not provide economic independence or high private economic returns. This comes out clearly from employment statistics for Italy. Employment rates for women are normally lower than those for men, as women start to engage in family-related tasks early on.

The employment-centred regime

The fourth category includes the employment-centred regimes of continental countries – for example, France, Germany and Austria – where the school system is highly selective and there is a highly gendered and standardised vocational education system. Young people are expected to find their own vocations and to specialise and socialise in the workplace besides a school-based environment, in order to prepare for the labour market. However, it is worth recalling here the differences that Verdier (2007) highlighted between the academic regime in France and employment-centred countries such as Germany and Austria. While Walther, Stauber and Pohl (2009) do not distinguish between these two countries, Verdier specifies the significant differences more clearly, recognising academic predominance in France and professional regulation in Germany and Austria.

Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are also investigated in the Up2Youth report: what emerges are a number of common trends, but also significant differences and divergences.

These two taxonomies of transition regimes help in the identification and interpretation of trends – in accordance with Eurostat and OECD data – in the education and labour market outcomes of young people in the European Union in recent years. Several important differences in labour market and educational outcomes are highlighted in this report, between countries, age groups, sex and level of educational attainment.



3. Youth and education

3.1 Upper secondary education

Transitions to the labour market and educational attainments have attracted increased attention both at national and European level. Numerous initiatives have been launched that emphasise the important contribution that quality education and training can make to recovery and growth (European Commission 2010c). Moreover, in the past 15 years, vocational training and general education have been at the heart of important European initiatives, ranging from the Copenhagen Process to the Bologna Process.

This section presents some of the major indicators concerning upper secondary education and higher educational attainment. In the last part, some data on foreign language competence and mobility are presented. These indicators are particularly important since mobility is – together with access, quality and internationalisation – one of the main objectives laid down by the European Union. Before presenting any data, however, it is worth recalling some of the definitions used at European level.

Upper secondary education is identified in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) as corresponding to level 3. Upper secondary education begins at the end of compulsory education (usually between 15 and 16 years of age) and is classified according to programme orientation (CEDEFOP 2008).

General education includes programmes not designed explicitly to prepare participants for a specific occupations or trades or for entry into further vocational or technical education programmes. Less than 25 per cent of their programme content is vocational or technical. These programmes are often defined as ISCED 3A and they are often meant to provide direct access to ISCED 5A (academically oriented higher education).

Pre-vocational education includes programmes mainly designed to lead students towards the world of work and prepare them for entry into further vocational or technical education. Since successful completion does not lead to a labour-market relevant vocational or technical qualification, these programmes are defined as pre-vocational. Normally, at least 25 per cent of their content is vocationally oriented. These programmes are normally identified with ISCED 3B and are designed to give access to ISCED 5B higher education vocational training.

The third type is vocational education. These programmes prepare participants for direct entry, without further training, into specific occupations. Successful completion of such a programme leads to a labour-market relevant vocational qualification. These programmes are called ISCED 3C and are not designed to lead directly to ISCED 5A or 5B (higher education), but open onto ISCED 4 programmes or other ISCED 3 programmes.

Increased cooperation as regards VET in the EU was signalled by the Copenhagen Process in 2002 and it is revised every two years.⁶ The launch of the Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiatives, as well as of renewed cooperation in education and training has revitalised interest in VET and its potential for upgrading workforce skills, as well as serving as a vector for sustainable and inclusive growth. VET is not only promoted as first choice for students making their transition from primary general education, but also as a second chance for students who dropped out from secondary general tertiary education (Arjona Perez et al. 2010). Although much attention has been paid to promoting VET as an attractive alternative (European Council 2003) and there is balanced participation among young people in general in vocational education and training (ISCED 3), there is still a general perception of VET as second best. For example in Belgium – especially in the French-speaking part – VET is often the last chance for young students who have failed in general and technical education (that is, ‘cascade transitions’, see Vanderberghe 2000: failing students can only make ‘downwards movements’ towards VET, which is considered less attractive and easier). Another example is provided by Tomlinson (2005: 176), who argues that vocational training also has lower status in the Anglo-Saxon systems (the United Kingdom has different education systems in Scotland, Wales and England). Tomlinson underlines that the middle classes tend to avoid the relegation of their children to vocational education and practical learning. A general education is still seen by parents as the best choice for their children if they want to be competitive and have better opportunities in the labour market. As already mentioned, the United Kingdom does not have a long tradition of structured vocational education and it has been organised in a more ad hoc manner, not to mention more market driven (although some difference should be highlighted for the Scottish system, which is more similar to an employment –oriented system, i.e. with a more valued and more varied vocational education and training options).

As regards people’s attitudes to VET, a recent survey conducted by Eurobarometer (Eurobarometer 2011) has analysed perceptions of vocational training from three different perspectives: (a) the relevance of VET qualifications to the labour market; (b) the quality of VET provisions; and (c) the perception of VET occupational status.

It is interesting to note that there are inconsistencies between VET participation rates and positive/negative attitudes. Generally speaking, VET is widely considered an attractive option in most EU member states. However, in countries such as Cyprus or the United Kingdom there is a positive perception of VET (in the United Kingdom 70 per cent answered positive or fairly positive, with 75 per cent in Cyprus) despite their low student participation in VET (ISCED 3 - 12.8 per cent in Cyprus and 30.5 per cent in the United Kingdom).

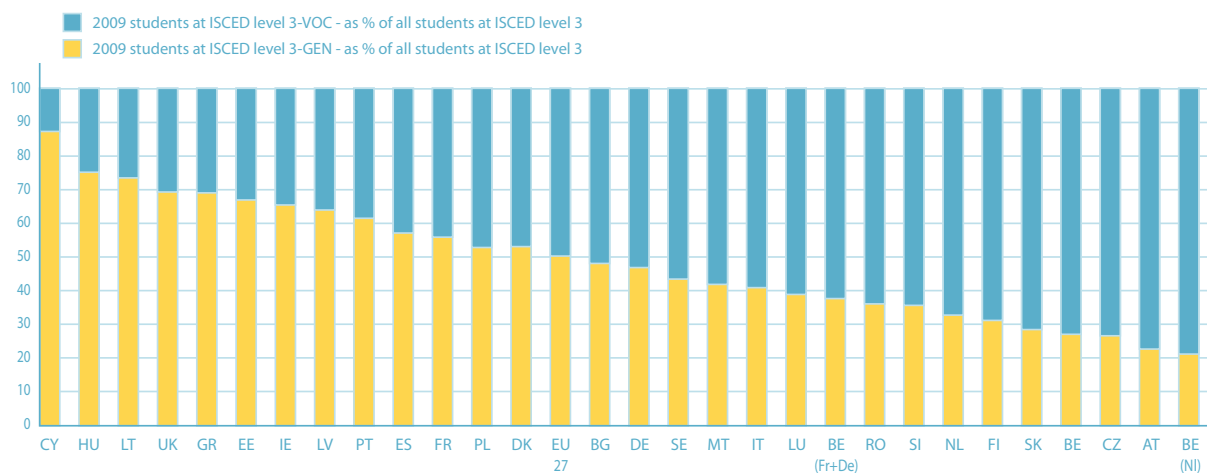
Positive attitudes towards VET seem not to be linked to gender or age but rather to educational level. The survey underlines that people who have exited early from the education system (with at most a low educational level) are more likely to have a positive attitude towards vocational education (76 per cent). This is less evident among people with a higher education degree (ISCED 6).

⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news2388_en.htm (accessed 17 October 2011)

The general positive attitude also concerns VET outcomes in terms of labour market skills: the EU average is around 80 per cent. The case of Cyprus is surprising because it scores very high in terms of positive attitudes towards VET but its VET participation rate is the lowest in the EU27.

In recent decades, education and training have increasingly been required to provide not only 'hard' and 'traditional' skills but also competences. Although there is no clear international definition of competences (for a comparative country perspective see CEDEFOP 2005 and Winterton 2009), it is widely accepted that there are some soft and transversal skills that need to be developed together with more practical and academic competences (Theodoropoulou 2010). These transversal skills – such as communication and teamwork – have been more associated with highly-skilled workers. However, it seems that most people perceive VET as a source of soft skills (53 per cent), although the proportion is not as high as for the other questions asked.

Figure 2 Participation in vocational education and general education (ISCED 3)



Note: Pre-vocational education is included in general education in these indicators; data for Greece from 2008.
Source: Eurostat education.

Figure 1 identifies students participating in ISCED 3 (note that ISCED 4 – upper non-tertiary education – is not taken into account here) and compares percentages of students enrolled in general and vocational education, the first normally giving access to general higher education and the latter to qualifications to enter the labour market or to higher vocational education (ISCED 5B).

It is possible to discern, although it is not clear-cut, that countries with a highly regulated vocational system also have higher participation in vocational education (such as Austria, where 80 per cent of students opt for a vocational path, but also Slovenia and Belgium).

While policymakers have been paying increasing attention to vocational training and qualifications, advocating more horizontal and vertical flexibility across fields, as well as increased attention on quality of apprenticeships, the economic crisis has hit VET and further education funding hard. For example the CEDEFOP 2010 (CEDEFOP 2010c) report on the United Kingdom declares that 133,000 apprenticeships have been lost (and perhaps even more: data are not yet available) in 2010–2011 due to budget cuts and that 25 per cent of the total education budget will be cut over the next four years (CEDEFOP 2010c).

One important feature of VET that cannot be captured in the figure is whether vocational training at ISCED 3 leaves the way open for a higher education degree. For instance, the Italian system allows every student with any kind of ISCED 3 (long type – five years) degree to enrol on a university course on the same conditions as students coming from general education. This is important because it guarantees the possibility of reversing school choices and also allows easier implementation of lifelong learning as individuals can enrol easily in programmes to upgrade their skills.

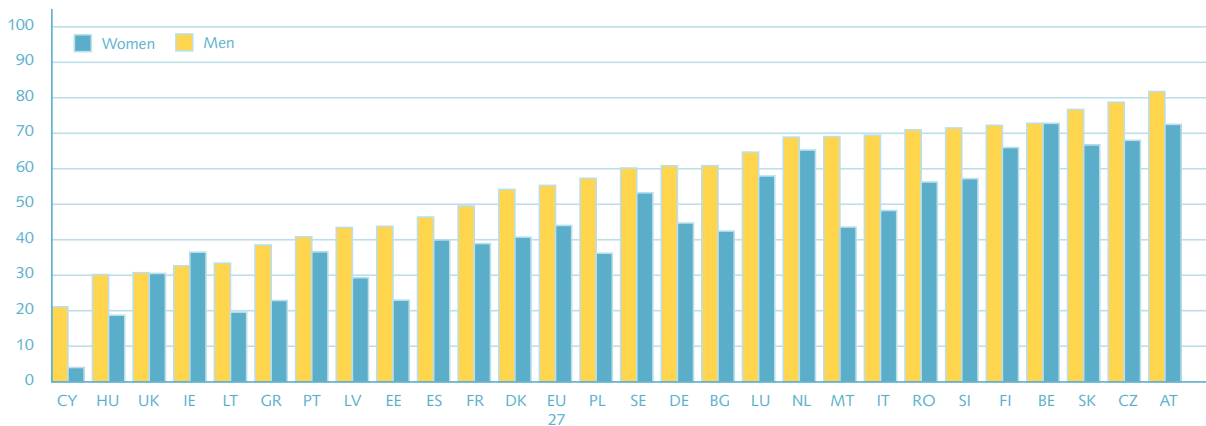
There is a pressing need to improve students' mobility, not only geographically, but also horizontally and vertically within education systems (from general to technical and vocational and vice versa), as well as between disciplines by means of the credits systems and recognition of previous experience.

A closer look at central and eastern European member states fails to reveal a clear pattern. While the three Baltic countries exhibit a fairly similar division between general and vocational enrolment, there are much more differences between the other countries that joined the European Union in 2004 and later.

For example, Poland is slightly under the EU average. However, it seems that there has been an increase in enrolment in vocational education in recent years, especially since EU accession (school year: 2006/07) (CEDEFOP 2011b). This increase has been explained by changes in the labour market connected with the gradual opening up of European labour markets to Polish workers. External demand for qualified workers and their migration to other member states prompted an increase in national demand for workers with certified qualifications in particular occupations, thus increasing the number of young people opting for vocational education (CEDEFOP 2011b). This may also be analysed as a 'European brain drain' of highly skilled Polish students. This brain drain can be reversed only if students are able to go back to their country and if they are able to find a job at the same level (Horváth 2004). In other CEE countries, such as Slovakia, Romania and the Czech Republic, high proportions of students are enrolled in vocational education (72.8 per cent, 63.7 per cent and 73.3 per cent, respectively).

Finally, among the Nordic countries, Finland has the highest share of students in vocational education (almost 70 per cent). Historically, vocational educational and training have not been organised centrally in Finland. Major reorganisations have taken place since the Second World War (in the 1960s and 1980s). Today, the regulations bestow significant independence on local providers which adapt education and training to local needs (CEDEFOP 2011a). Finnish students who engage in vocational education and training can have direct access to university degrees, both general and vocational. This permeability is also in line with the idea, often found in universalistic systems, that education paths should be flexible enough to provide solid basic competences (no early tracking or selection until 17 years of age) and a range of educational opportunities.

The Finnish CEDEFOP report on VET also underlines that the popularity of vocational education and training has increased since the early 2000s. The report puts forward a number of different explanations, including several campaigns organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the social partners, as well as annual national skills competitions. On the other hand, many youngsters feel that some academic qualifications offer lower employment and salary levels than vocational qualifications (CEDEFOP 2011a).

Figure 3 Participation in vocational education (ISCED 3), by gender, 2009

Note: Data for Greece from 2008.
Source: Eurostat education.

Figure 2 shows the shares of female and male students who are enrolled in vocational secondary education (ISCED 3). In most countries, more male students tend to opt for vocational education than females. This difference may be less marked in countries with extensive vocational education (ranging from male dominated sectors such as mechanical professions to female dominated sectors such as health care and hairdressing). This consideration seems to hold for countries with high and widespread participation in vocational education (Belgium (Flanders) and Belgium as a whole, Austria, the Netherlands), but also in countries where participation is lower for both genders (the United Kingdom and Ireland where females are more numerous than male students). On average, there is a difference of 9.4 per cent between males and females at the European level.

Although it may not be evident from the figure, attention should be directed towards the horizontal gender segmentation within vocational education and training. In the United Kingdom, for example, there is evidence that females are increasingly taking part in vocational programmes in ICT, but this leads them into a cul-de-sac and they get stuck in low-paid jobs because they do not pursue their educations further (for example, they become clerks or assistants instead of engineers: women tend to acquire soft ICT skills and men harder ICT skills) (Krikup 2011). This also means that, although superficially there may be equal participation among male and female students, there might also be hidden horizontal segmentation. Thus segmentation can translate later on into different labour market outcomes (in terms of both employment rates and pay differentials) (Krikup 2011) (see Figure 1 in Annex showing participation in vocational education of young women and men across sectors in Germany (Krikup 2011)).

Looking at labour market outcomes disaggregated by type of ISCED 3 in order to compare whether female or male students completing their studies have more opportunities in the labour market with a general or a vocational upper secondary qualification, it seems that for the EU21, the average (disaggregated data are available only from the OECD) employment rates of women are lower than those of men for all three types of ISCED (OECD 2011).

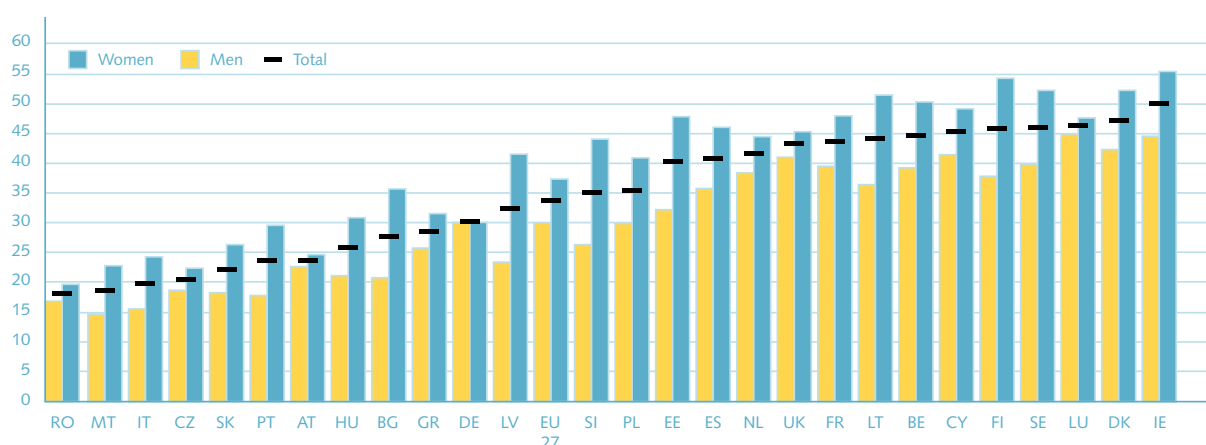
While there is no significant difference among males' employment rates for different types of ISCED, a wider gap is registered among women: females with short ISCED (3C – leading directly to the labour market) have 10 per cent lower rates of employment compared to female workers with a long general

ISCED (3A), which normally leads to higher education. This might be one factor, among other less visible ones, that pushes young female students to go on to higher education. This is apparently confirmed by women's higher participation in higher education in most EU countries (Figure 3).

3.2 Tertiary Education

Improving the tertiary educational attainment of young people (ISCED 5–6) has been set as a target in the Europe 2020 Strategy (EC 2010): at least 40 per cent of people aged between 30 and 34 years old should have a degree by 2020. Figure 3 presents data for all member states by gender.

Figure 4 Graduates aged between 30 and 34 by gender, 2010



Source: Eurostat education.

Female participation in higher education is higher than that of males in all European countries, with significant differences for example in the Baltic countries, Slovenia, Bulgaria but also Finland, Ireland and Denmark. The EU27 average is 33.6 per cent, although around half of EU countries present higher averages. The EU average is lowered by the significantly low rates of graduates in Romania, Malta, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, but also Austria and Portugal (less than 25 per cent). It may be noted that some countries with strong traditions in vocational education have lower percentages of graduates (Austria and Germany), or that averages are pushed up by high enrolment of female students (Slovenia).

Despite increasing percentages of well qualified people (in 2010, people aged between 25 and 34 years old made up 33.1 per cent of those with a tertiary educational qualification, while those aged between 55 and 74 made up only 17 per cent, Eurostat data not shown), there is considerable variance as regards access to and completion of higher education among social groups.

The strong increase in educational attainment should not be mistaken for increased 'democratisation' of educational attainment: the so-called 'massification of education' (Altbach and McGill Peterson 1999) does not entail a more equal distribution of opportunities for young students when it comes to entering the labour market.

Several self-reinforcing factors can reduce the positive impact of even a well performing education system: poor social environment (family, community, personal difficulties), low employment opportunities, low incomes and, consequently, poor opportunities (ETUC/ETUI 2012).

Studies have confirmed that in Western Europe considerable variance remains with regard to educational attainment. Machin (2004) found an increase in social immobility in the United Kingdom, with children from better off families benefiting more from increased participation in higher education. Reimer and Pol-lak (2009) argue that in Germany vertical and horizontal variance persists despite increased participation in education and social background still has a strong impact on obtaining access to a university education.

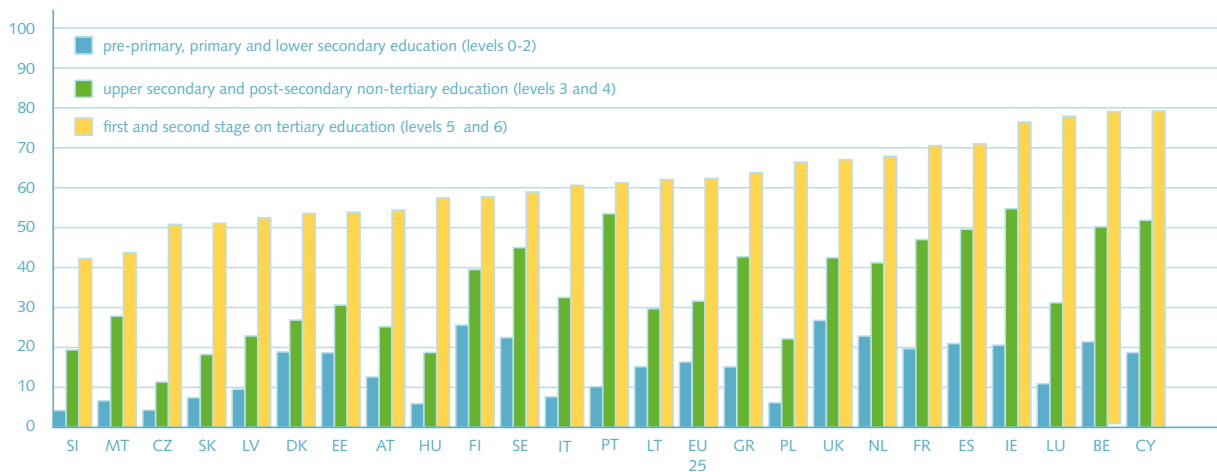
Another example of how personal background is a factor in hindering participation in higher education is provided by Heath et al. (2008). The authors compared the educational attainment of second-generation immigrants in France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Their study highlighted that young students with an immigrant background tend to perform worse than natives and that the explanatory variables include socio-economic and minority back-ground, language skills, lack of aspiration and family encouragement, as well as discrimination and reduced access to citizenship (ETUI/ETUC 2012). A quantitative study carried out by Oppesidano and Turati (2011) found that for France, Germany, Italy, Greece Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom poorer educational attainment is associated with both 'school effect' and social background.

Figure 4 shows how parents' educational attainment can be a good predictor of children's tertiary attain-ment. In the EU25 (most recent data from 2005) the average difference between the percentage of student graduates with parents with a lower educational level and those of student graduates with parents with high educational attainment is 47 per cent.

This confirms that family background still plays an important role in students' educational choices and attainments, since it is not solely a matter of financial support, but also involves social, cultural and geo-graphical aspects, such as access to cultural resources or the quality of educational provision in the area where a family lives (ETUI/ETUC 2011).

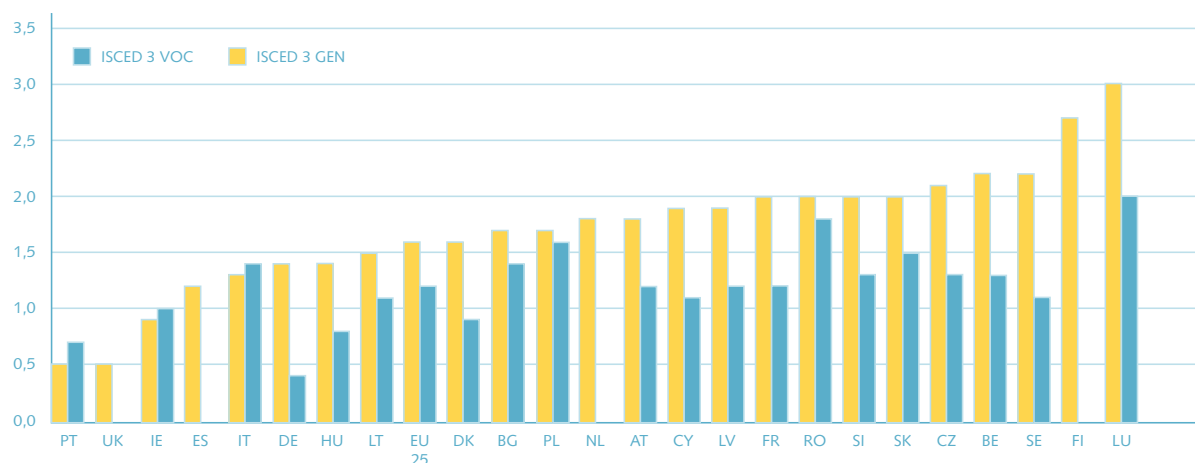
That is why education is seen as an element in discussions on both preventing social exclusion and promot-ing better access to the labour market.

Figure 5 Higher education attainment by parents' educational attainment, 2005



Source: Eurostat education.

Figure 6 Average number of languages learned by pupil at ISCED 3 general and vocational, 2010



Note: No data available for Estonia, Greece, Malta, Spain (vocational), Finland (vocational) or the United Kingdom (vocational).
Source: Eurostat education.

Figure 5 shows the languages taught at general and vocational education institutions (ISCED 3 – data refer to 2010). Languages are crucial for fostering labour market and learning mobility.⁷ It should be noted that this is the average number of languages learned: a score of 0.5 per cent (Portugal – general education) should be interpreted as a mean that among all participants in upper secondary general education.

Although Figure 5 says nothing about the quality of language teaching or whether these languages are actively used at school and in everyday life, it is clear that there are major differences between young people in general upper secondary education and in vocational education. One of the few countries where language teaching is more prevalent in vocational education than in general education is Italy, although this is probably due to the fact that language learning and schools for tourism are considered vocational education.

The existence of specific language-oriented upper secondary institutions naturally influences the volume of language learning. In countries that are naturally bi/multilingual (for example, Luxembourg and Belgium), in theory, average language learning should be higher. However, the difference between vocational and general education is still very significant.

A recent Eurostat publication (2010) gives an overview of the level of language learning at primary, low secondary and upper secondary level, as well as perceptions of language knowledge. The data indicate that there has been a significant increase in primary school pupils learning foreign languages since 2000. However, the increase is far less marked in upper secondary education. When it comes to (self-reported) perceptions of knowledge of foreign languages in the EU27 among people aged between 25 and 64, more

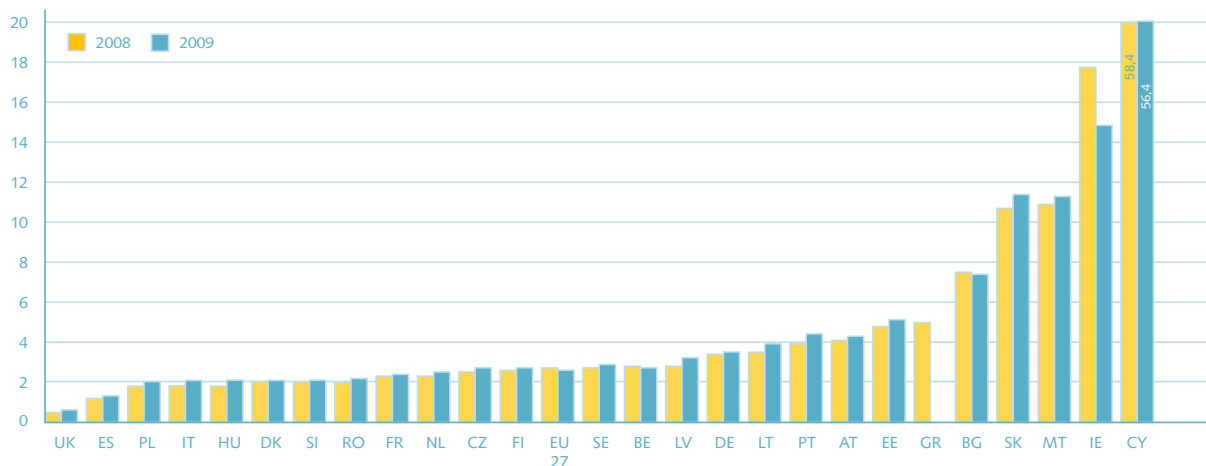
⁷ See: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/71025.pdf. See also the Council Conclusions in 2002 on the objectives to be reached on education and training in 2010.

than one-third of adults state that they do not know any foreign languages. By contrast, a higher proportion of young people self-report a knowledge of foreign languages.

There are also important national differences at the upper secondary education level: while in 15 countries out of the 22 for which data are available, more than three out of four students in general upper secondary education learn at least two foreign languages, while in Ireland and the United Kingdom 19 per cent and 51 per cent, respectively, are not studying any foreign languages.

Together with languages, learning and work experience abroad play an important role in the learning and working mobility of students and future workers (EC 2010b). Figure 6 presents the 2010 learning mobility of students from higher education in 2009 and 2008.

Figure 7 Students (ISCED 5–6) studying in another EU27 country (as a percentage of all students)



Note: No data on Luxembourg; no data on Greece for 2009.
Source: Eurostat education.

Figure 6 presents the outflow of higher education students in the EU27 that decided to study in another EU country. These figures do not report Erasmus students who study abroad for a number of months, but only those who are officially enrolled in a foreign higher education institution. Percentages are very low: for most countries they do not reach 1 per cent of the student population. Countries which have a significant outflow of students are Malta, Cyprus and Slovakia. Since 2008 there have not been major changes, except in Ireland and Cyprus. While the Erasmus programme has attracted an increasing absolute number of students⁸, students seem less likely to enrol for several years in a foreign country. Many obstacles can be identified: administrative procedures are not always clear, language barriers, the economic burden of moving and living alone and a lack of information on study opportunities abroad.

⁸ See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc920_en.htm#09 for absolute numbers on Erasmus students.



4. Employability and labour market outcomes for young workers

The concept of employability, despite its extensive use, is very vague. On the one hand, it is dependent on multiple internal, external and contextual factors (Gautié 2009); on the other hand it has different connotations according to the life-period under consideration (Boateng et al. 2011). Employability is defined by the CEDEFOP as the 'combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment and to progress during their career' (CEDEFOP 2008).

Thus, employability plays a role in preparations for employment (during and just after having left formal education and training), as well as in the transition to employment and during working life.

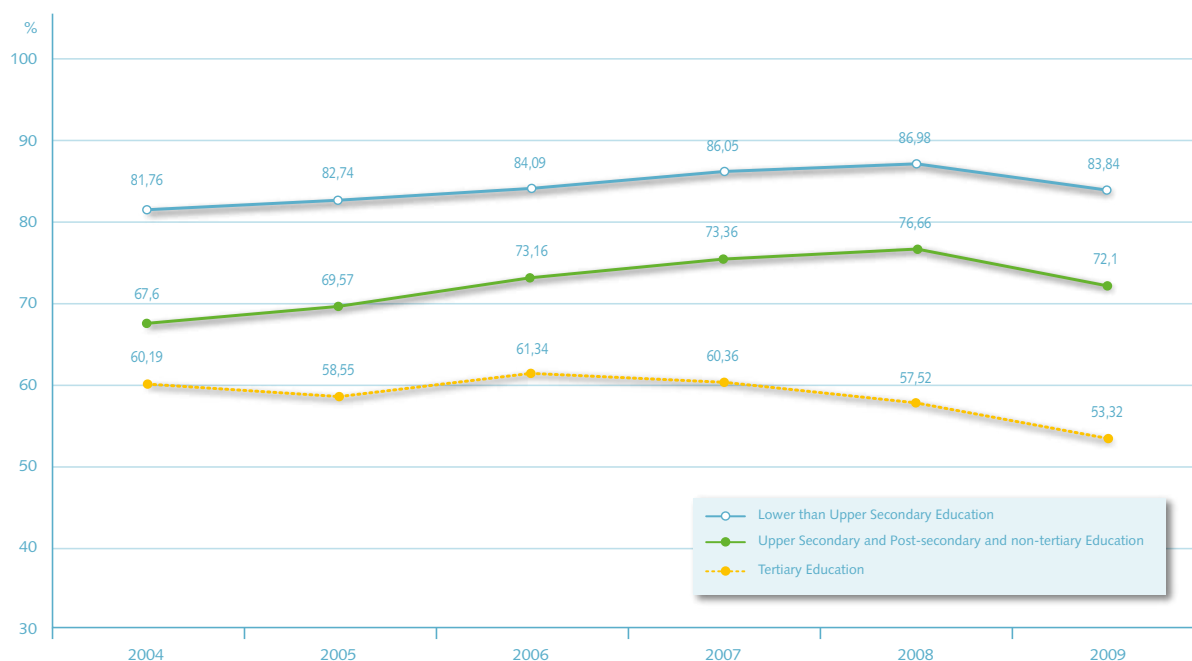
One of the main factors considered fundamental in the development of employability is educational attainment, which is a good predictor of labour market outcomes.

However, measuring employability only on the basis of level of education gives a very limited and incomplete picture, as important complementary aspects are overlooked. First, the educational qualification attained often depends on social background and quality of education cannot be captured by data. Moreover, the economic structure plays an important role in deciding which kind of educational degree enhances employability more than others (for example, in Italy differences in levels of employment between lower and upper secondary young people are not dramatically lower than among young graduates. This has been explained by the structure of the Italian economy which is strongly dependent on small and medium-sized enterprises with considerable demand for low- and medium-skilled workers (Persano 2011). When measuring young people's employability, an analysis focused solely on educational attainment also overlooks the role of work experience (as well as informal education) in people's chances of entering the labour market, as well as, at macro-level, the role played by the economic cycle and its impact on different sectors requiring different skills.

Finally, a transition to the labour market achieved by a high level of employability does not say anything about the quality of the first job obtained (Boateng et al. 2011).

Boateng et al. (2011) has tried to retune the indicator of employability based on employment rate after graduation. Despite the incompleteness of the data on the contribution of education to employability – it still does not count variables affecting qualifications or the role of informal education and work experience – it is interesting to look at the percentages of young people aged 20–34 employed during the three years following graduation. The results are reported by level of education.

Figure 8 Percentage of 20–34 year olds employed during the three years following graduation, by level of educational attainment



Source: CRELL calculations based on Eurostat.

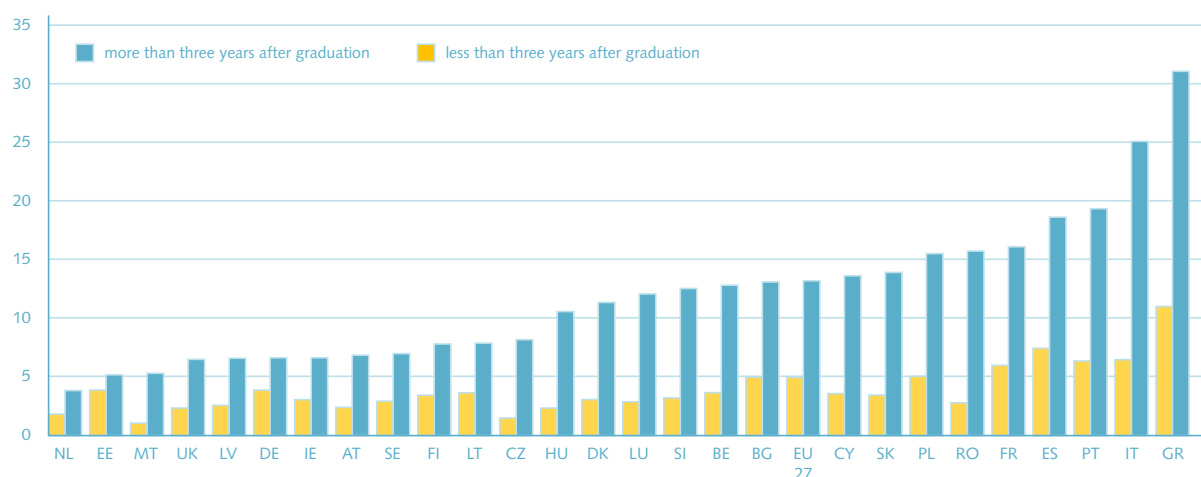
The authors' calculations are based on Eurostat's 2009 ad hoc module on transitions from school to the labour market. For each year since 2004 they provide a snapshot of the employment rate of young people aged between 20 and 34 (the age range was chosen to be in line with the employment and education benchmarking of the Europe 2020 Strategy) between one and three years of graduation (Boateng et al. 2011).

Young people with a lower educational level have lower employment rates than medium and higher skilled workers. Well qualified young people had a 31 per cent higher employment rate in 2004 compared to lower skilled workers. A clear fall in young people's employment rate in the transition from initial education to the labour market was recorded in 2009, when the economic crisis hit labour markets. It should also be noted that the crisis seems to have hit the lower educated first, as their rate started to decrease already in 2008.

Additional Eurostat data, collected within the framework of the Bologna Process, present the average unemployment rate of higher education graduates (ISCED 5–6) from 2003 and 2007; thus the recent economic crisis is not reflected. The two columns refer to the unemployment rate three years and more than three years after graduation. Important national differences are found between member states not only right after graduation but also three years later. However, quantitative research has found that

transition outcomes in Europe may start to converge five years after graduation (Van der Velden and Wolbers 2008).

Figure 9 Unemployment rate of persons aged 20–34, by number of years since graduation (ISCED 5–6) and gender (2003–2007)



Source: Eurostat education

Figure 8's two extremes show that in the Netherlands less than 5 per cent of all graduates are still unemployed after less than three years, while in Greece more than 30 per cent of young graduates are still looking for employment. Twelve out of the 27 countries have rates below 10 per cent for the first three years after graduation, including the Baltic countries, the United Kingdom, Malta, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Germany and Austria. The remaining 15 countries present higher rates, although these differences fall significantly after three years. Apart from France, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece, all countries present unemployment rates higher than 10 per cent.

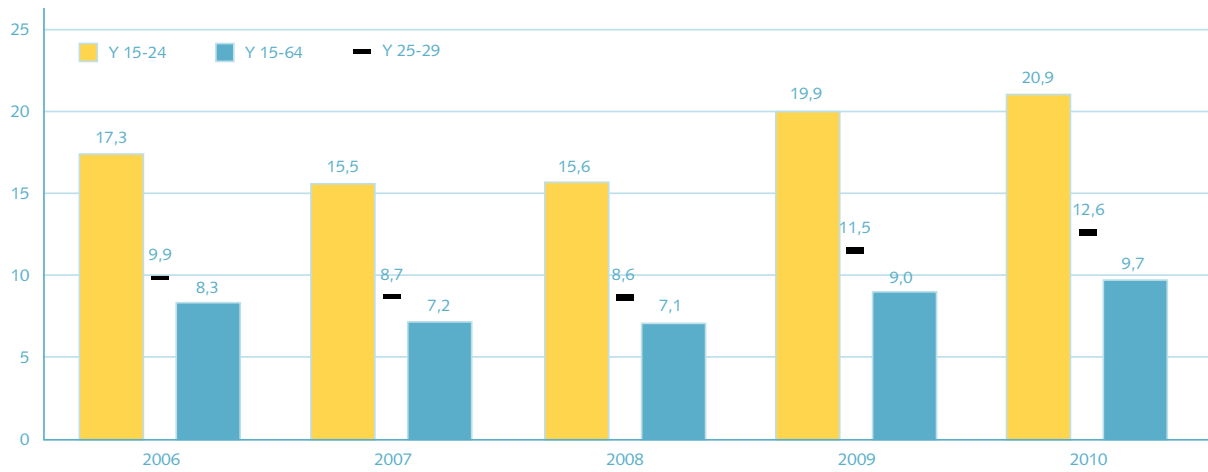
4.1 Unemployment statistics

In this section we examine the contribution of education to employability and labour market outcomes, comparing the unemployment and employment of young people and adults with different educational levels over recent years.

Since 2006, both young people (15–24 year-olds and 25–29 year-olds) and adults have experienced significant increases in unemployment but younger people seem to have suffered most since the onset of the financial crisis. Between 2008 and 2010 their unemployment rate rose, averaging across Europe, by more than 4 percentage points (from 15.6 per cent to 19.9 per cent).

The unemployment rate of 'older youths' (25–29 year-olds), who are expected to have completed their studies and acquired some work experience, has also been affected by the crisis: since 2008, constant increases have been recorded in their unemployment rate.

Figure 10 Unemployment by age group, EU27, 2010

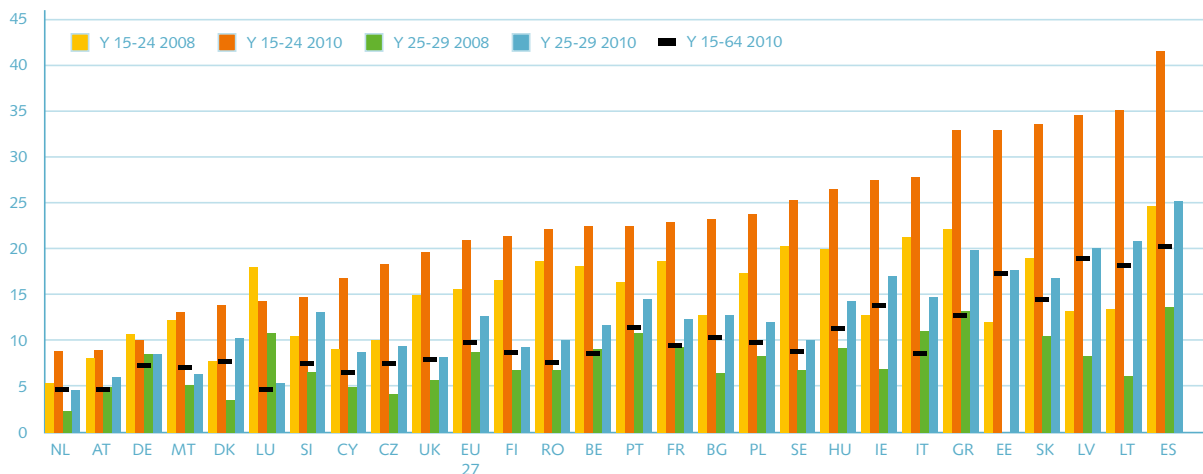


Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

A rate of 12.6 per cent was reached in 2010, an increase of 4 percentage points compared to the pre-crisis period.

Even though unemployment rates for young people might be overestimated as most students are still in education and thus not counted as part of the active population (Lefresne 2003), unemployment rates for this group have certainly increased dramatically since 2008.

Figure 11 Unemployment rates by age group, 2008 and 2010 (%)



Source: Labour Force Survey Note: data missing for young people aged 25–29 for EE and MT.

Figure 10 shows the unemployment development of young people aged 15–24 and 25–29, as well as the overall unemployment rate for all EU member states.

Unemployment rates for young people, although 'normally' higher for a number of reasons, such as lack of human capital (Ball and Blanchflower 2011), skyrocketed in 2010 not only for the very young but also for those aged 25–29, who are supposed to have accomplished the education–work transition. All countries have seen their rates increasing proportionately with the same percentages as for the younger group. This means that finding a job has become more difficult not only for younger people, who usually have lower qualifications and less experience, but also older young people.

In almost all countries young people have experienced an unemployment increase. The most striking increases have been in Spain, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Ireland. In Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain many young people were working in the construction sector before the crisis, which was hit hard by the real estate crisis (Bell and Blanchflower 2011). The data underline that an increase in youth unemployment was recorded in these countries already in 2007 (not shown), indicating the difficulties encountered early on in some sectors, such as finance, real estate and construction (Math 2011).

Some countries, such as Greece or Italy, experienced a lower unemployment increase because the pre-crisis rate was already above 20 per cent: the economic crisis has 'merely' exacerbated an already fragile labour market situation (Persano 2011).

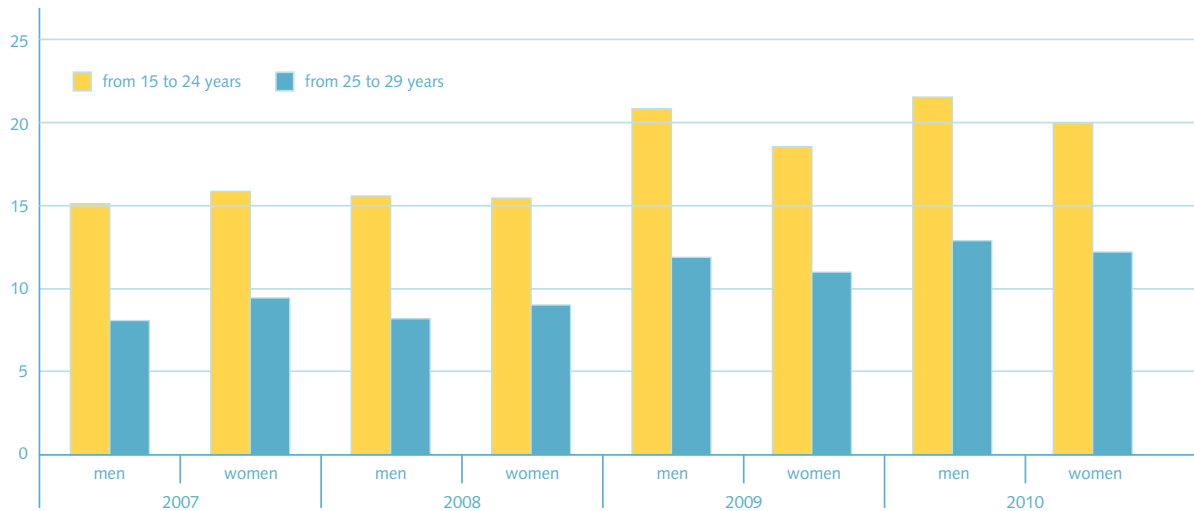
Some of the countries with significant unemployment rate increases in 2010 also show an increase in the rate of NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training, and thus unemployed but not actively looking for work, as well as the inactive) aged 15–24 and some also for those aged 15–19 (Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom – Eurostat data not shown).

The unemployment rates of young people aged 25–29 have risen in most countries, the only exceptions being Germany, Luxembourg and Poland, where this age group was performing better in 2010.

The favourable youth unemployment in Germany can also be attributed to the well-developed VET system and short-term working arrangements (Ball and Blanchflower 2011). This is in line with the clustering presented above. Austria and Germany, as well as the Netherlands, present an employment-oriented transition regime: in other words, young people usually receive on-the-job training. Besides, a very broad definition of employment⁹ allows them to include in employment – in other words, to exclude them from the unemployment statistics – all young people currently in on-the-job training or combining study with working experiences.

⁹ Eurostat employment and unemployment definition are both based on the ILO definition. Employed persons are defined as aged 15 and over who work during the reference week (at least one hour) for pay, profit or family gain http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Employed_person_-_LFS

Figure 12 Annual average unemployment rates for males and females, by different age groups, 2007–2010 (EU27 and all levels of education)



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

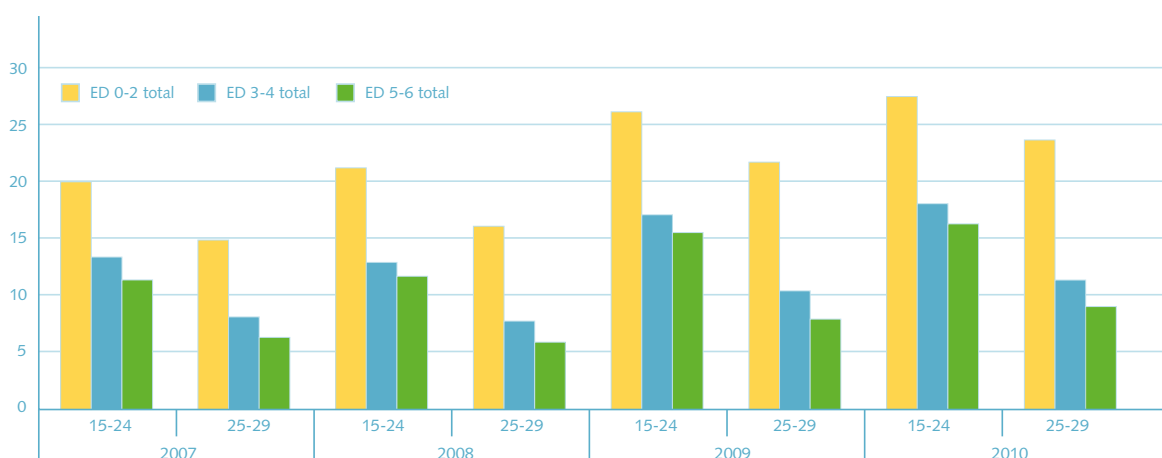
Figure 11 shows average unemployment rates for three different groups of young people: 15–24 and 25–29 years of age. The data concern the EU27 between 2007 and 2010.

Rates have increased for both female and male workers. In 2010, young females (15–24) had slightly lower unemployment rates than males of the same age. On average, both female and male younger workers (15–24) have been hit harder by the crisis: their unemployment trends in recent years have ascended steeply, reaching 20 per cent. During the crisis there has also been a parallel increase in part-time work among men, although women are still overrepresented in that form of employment (Eurostat LSF, data not shown).

It is also important to note that, although the unemployment rate of the younger age group (15–24) can be overestimated due to the construction of the unemployment indicator (Lefresne 2003), the unemployment rate for young people aged 25–29 is still considerably higher than for older workers. This might be due to a combination of effects, including their lower work experience, the fact that they have just entered the labour market and are more exposed to the ‘last in, first out’ rule (Gautié 2009) or that they were hired on a fixed-term or agency contract – as is often the case among younger people – and, due to the economic crisis, their contracts were not renewed. This is also consistent with a rise in the temporary employment share of young workers (ETUC/ETUI 2012).

It should be noted that when comparing EU averages, significant differences within countries are overlooked. However, while labour market differences between males and females strongly depend on the country (among other factors, labour market and welfare institutions), age is a differentiating element in all countries with regard to labour market outcomes (Gautié 2009).

Figure 13 Unemployment by age and educational attainment, 2007/2010 (EU27 average)



Source: Labour Force Survey.

Figure 12 shows the average unemployment rate for young people aged 15–24 and 25–29 and by educational level.¹⁰ Data are shown from 2008 to 2010 and refer to the EU27.

Unemployment increased for all age groups from 2008; however, differences can be discerned by level of education.

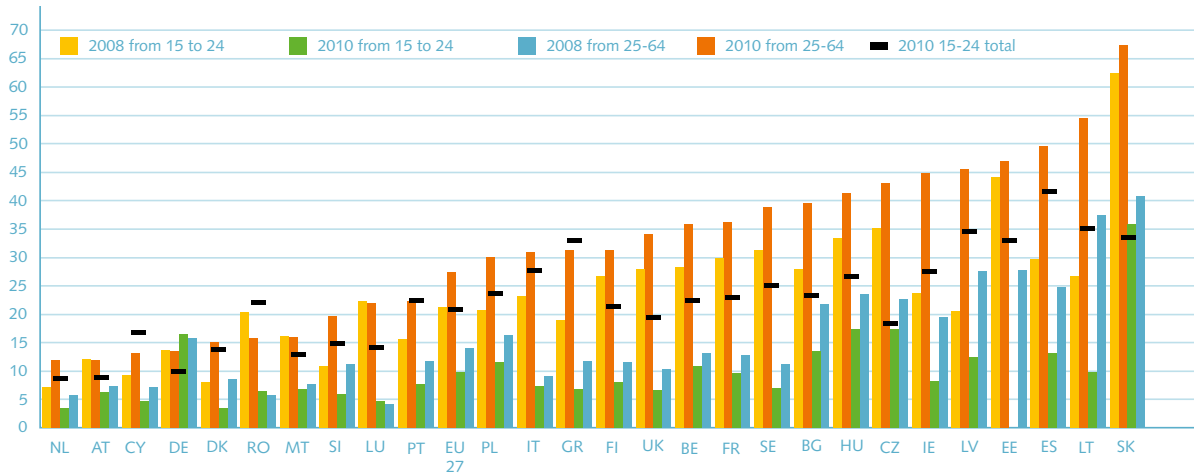
For young people of all ages with only pre-primary, primary or lower secondary qualifications (ISCED 0–2), the increase in the unemployment rate has been much more pronounced than for other age groups with medium and higher qualifications. The age groups had clearly different unemployment rates before the crisis: those aged 15–24 had the highest rate (20 per cent) in 2007, rising to around 27 per cent in 2010. The same steep increase is found in the 25–29 age group, whose rate increased by around 7 percentage points from 2008 to 2010 (from 16.2 per cent to 23.7 per cent).

Young people with an upper secondary education are characterised by the same trend, but with a lower unemployment rate. Better qualifications seem to bestow better chances of entering – or not exiting – the labour market. As for the highest qualifications (ISCED 5–6) there is a high unemployment rate in the first age group, but this clearly falls once young people have entered the labour market and can count on work experience.

The strong increase in the unemployment rate between 2008 and 2009, and the clear differences between the unemployment rates of those with different levels of educational attainment calls for a closer look at individual countries. There are significant differences between member states that need to be taken into consideration, especially because the crisis has hit some sectors and member states harder than others.

¹⁰ The educational levels are designated '3' in the international classification adopted in 1997 by UNESCO (see Annex). For more information on the international classification of educational attainments, see: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/isced97-en.pdf>

Figure 14 Youth and adult unemployment before and during the crisis, by educational attainment and age (EU member states – low educational level)



Note: No data for Estonia for 2008.

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

Figure 13, based on EU unemployment statistics, shows that *adult and young low-skilled workers* have been hit hardest by the crisis. Skyrocketing unemployment figures for young people are found in Slovakia (67.3 per cent) and in the Baltic countries, but also Sweden, Spain and Ireland, too, rates rose above 40 per cent.

Some countries – such as Germany, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Romania and Malta – present relatively low unemployment rates for low-skilled workers compared to other member states. For these countries unemployment rates for lower-skilled young people are equal to or lower than the EU average. This means that they present lower unemployment rates than medium and high-skilled young workers. However, despite relatively lower rates for young people, the scope of changes and trends are important: in Denmark, for example, youth unemployment doubled in two years.

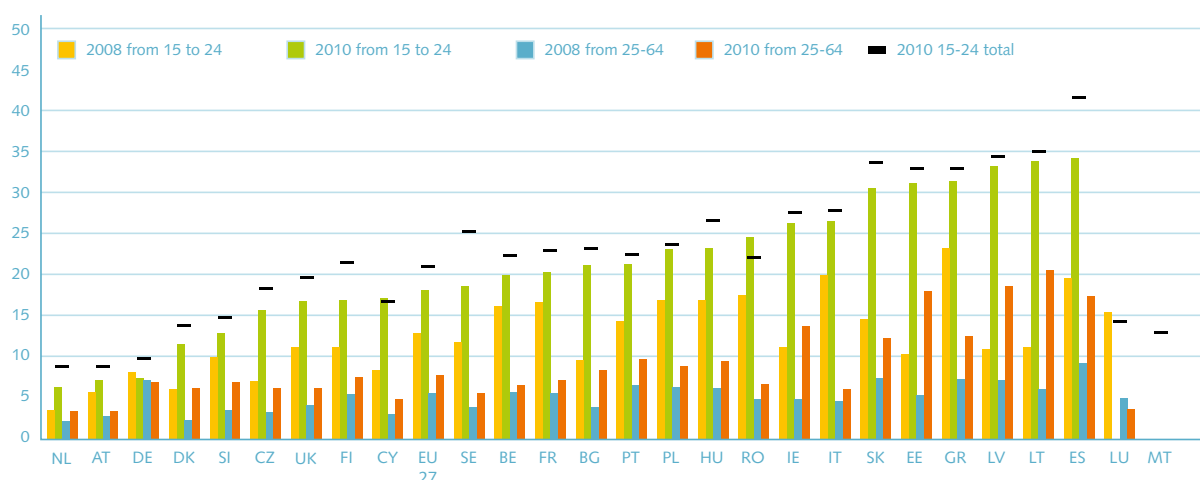
Youth unemployment has risen so dramatically because in many countries the sectors most adversely affected are construction, hotels and tourism, and small manufacturing, where low- and medium-skilled young workers predominate.

Adult workers with at most an educational level of ISCED 0–2 (pre-primary, primary or lower secondary) saw their unemployment rate increase (by amounts ranging from 1 percentage points in Austria and 27 percentage points Lithuania) from 2008 to 2010. As in the case of younger workers, only Germany, Romania and Luxembourg present slightly lower unemployment rates for both groups between 2008 and 2010. The case of Romania is particularly interesting as the unemployment rate is significantly higher for medium and highly educated young workers than for the lower skilled (in 2010 24.6 per cent for medium skilled and 28.9 per cent for highly-skilled). This might also be due to the economic structure of the country: most of the job losses were in manufacturing, but also in services, such as education and health care, where low wages encourage people to emigrate (employment among young teachers fell by 16.5 per cent in 2009¹¹). By

11 See: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1101019s/ro1101019q.htm>

contrast, a small rise was recorded in agriculture (5.6 per cent). This might be explained by the growing influx into the primary sector of young people, who are finding it increasingly difficult to enter the secondary and tertiary sectors (mostly young people with medium and higher skills) (Eurofound 2011; ETUC/ETUI 2012).

Figure 15 Youth and adult unemployment before and during the crisis, by educational attainment and age (EU member states – medium educational level)



Note: No age group data for Malta; no 2010 youth data for Luxembourg and Estonia.

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

Figure 14 presents medium-skilled workers unemployment in the EU27, comparing two groups: young people (15–24) and adults (25–64) in 2008 and 2010. The overall unemployment rate in 2010 for both groups shows that, on average, medium-skilled workers have a lower employment rate than their age group (for all educational levels). This confirms that the less qualified are suffering considerably from unemployment.

In 2010, unemployment rates for young people increased significantly in all countries, except for Germany, where the unemployment rate for young *medium-skilled workers* saw a slight reduction (0.7 percentage point).

The Baltic countries, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Slovakia recorded the highest rates (ranging between 30.6 per cent for Slovakia and 34.3 per cent for Spain), but also in Italy and Ireland (both around 26 per cent), Portugal (21.3 per cent) and in a number of Central and Eastern European countries – such as Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary – youth unemployment shares are higher than 20 per cent. France, Belgium and Sweden have rates around 20 per cent: the increase in Belgium and France between 2008 and 2010 was around 3 percentage point, while in Sweden the crisis has led to a significant 7 percentage point increase in unemployment among young people. The Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Finland and Cyprus have rates below the (high) EU27 average (18.1 per cent) (ETUC and ETUI 2012). Comparing 2008 to 2010 for young people, important changes emerge: in Slovakia, for example, the unemployment rate has doubled; Latvia and Lithuania recorded an increase of almost 23 percentage points; and significant change has been recorded also in Czech Republic and Cyprus, with increases of more than 8 percentage points.

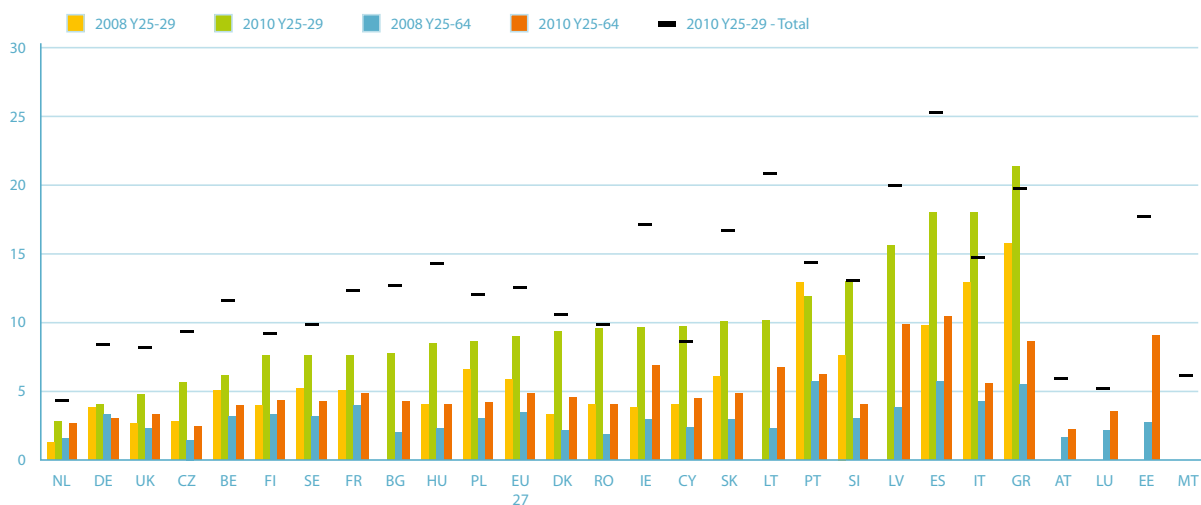
Differences between adults and young workers are disproportionately high in most countries: for instance, in Italy and Greece the unemployment rate differences between the two age groups are 20.4 per cent and 18.8 per cent, respectively. The average rate differential between young people and adults in the EU27 is 10.3 per cent. Moreover, the increase in the adults' rate has been significantly less pronounced than for young workers: only in the most adversely affected countries have older workers been severely affected job losses.

In 2010, the other member states had medium-skilled youth unemployment rates of between 6.4 per cent (Netherlands) and 12.9 per cent (Slovenia). Some member states recorded increases below 3 percentage points from 2008 and 2010, namely the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Slovenia: as already mentioned, they have well developed vocational systems that are known to ease labour market transitions. However, a less direful economic situation, especially in Germany, as well as several 'buffer' labour market mechanisms – such as short-time working – also explain the lower increase in youth unemployment. In fact, despite the well-developed link with the labour market and the very low unemployment rate in this group in 2008, the economic crisis has increased the unemployment rates for young people in countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands. Both almost doubled their figures in 2010, Denmark rising from 6.1 per cent to 11.5 per cent and the Netherlands from a very low 3.6 per cent to 6.4 per cent. It might be argued, however, that these rates are still extremely low compared to the worst affected countries.

The latest unemployment developments (quarterly data for 2011 – see ETUC/ETUI 2012 for further analysis) among medium-skilled workers in the second quarter of 2010 and 2011 generally show some minor reductions. However, in some countries there have been significant reductions: the most striking example is Estonia which recorded a 15 per cent fall in the medium-skilled unemployment rate, while Belgium experienced a fall just above 6.5 percentage points.

By contrast, Spain and Greece saw their rates increase by 8.3 and 12.4 percentage points (second quarter of 2010–second quarter of 2011), respectively, suggesting bleak unemployment prospects.

Figure 16 Unemployment rate for young people (25–29) and adults (25–64) with high educational attainment, EU member states, 2008–2010



Note: No data on young people for Estonia, Luxembourg and Austria. Only total rates are shown for Malta.
Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

Figure 15 shows data for young people aged 25–29 and adults aged 25–64. We have chosen to present this older age group for young people because data for 15–24 year-olds are rather patchy as regards those with high qualifications (Lefresne 2003). Moreover, this age group seems more appropriate for analysis since in most EU countries many people have not finished their studies at the age of 24. The drawback of this figure is that young people are compared to another age group that includes the younger group. However, it is clear that for young people, even those with high qualifications, unemployment rates are higher than for adults and the increase since 2008 has been bigger, especially in countries that have seen a dramatic overall increase in their unemployment rates, such as Spain, and Greece, Italy and Ireland, where the 2008 increase was more than 5 percentage points. Denmark also recorded a significant increase that brought its rate above the EU27 average (9 per cent).

The overall unemployment rate for the two age groups shows that for most countries, the unemployment average for both age groups is higher than for highly skilled workers. This means that highly skilled workers in general have lower unemployment rates than less qualified workers in the same age group. However, it should be noted that while this difference is generally pronounced for the older age group (25–64), for Romania, Slovenia and Denmark the overall unemployment rate (for all levels of education) of people aged between 25 and 29 years old is very similar to the rate for the highly qualified.

Even more strikingly, highly qualified young people in Italy, Greece and Cyprus have a higher unemployment rate than the average of their age group (for all levels of education). The differentials are quite significant: 3.3 per cent (14.7 per cent and 28 per cent) for Italy, 1.6 per cent (19.7 and 21.3 per cent) for Greece, and 1 per cent for Cyprus (8.7 per cent and 9.7 per cent).

Furthermore, in all member states differences in unemployment rates between younger and older workers with tertiary education are pronounced. For example, in Italy, Greece and Spain the rates for young people are 18 per cent, 21.3 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively. But in Romania and Slovakia, too, young graduates are much more likely to be unemployed than adult workers. The most dramatic developments in highly-skilled youth unemployment have been recorded in Greece, Spain but also Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland.

Despite their high qualifications, highly qualified young workers more easily lose their jobs and are less likely to find another than highly qualified adults. They are not in a much better position compared to medium- and lower-qualified workers in the same age group. This underlines that higher education is not always a crisis-proof shelter, even for workers who, presumably, have some work experience.

The case of Italy is emblematic in this regard: the unemployment share of young people with a degree is higher than that of the medium and lower qualified. The crisis has highlighted this peculiar structure of the Italian labour market (Persano 2011). The explanation of this phenomenon should be sought in persisting high demand for low qualified workers (Persano 2011). Moreover, the increasing pressure of rising unemployment has pushed many Italian graduates to emigrate, thus reducing the unemployment rate that would have been even higher. Over the long term, the positive contribution that these highly qualified young people could have made to the national economy may be lost (Persano 2011).

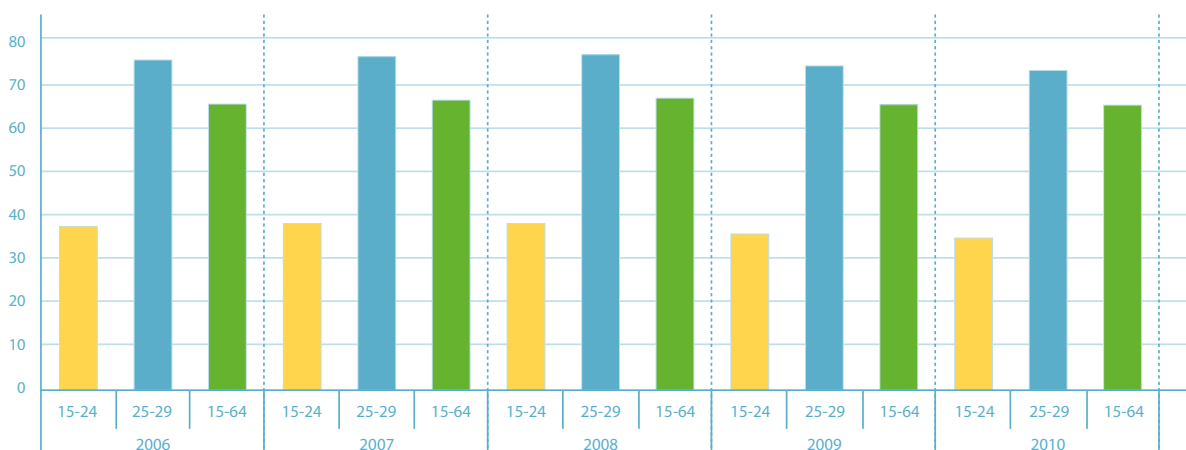
4.2 Employment statistics

Figure 16 shows the employment rate of young people aged 15–24, the employed population aged 25–29 and the overall employment rate for the active population (15–64) for the EU27 between 2006 and 2010. The employment rate represents employed or active persons as a percentage of the same age group.

Younger people have markedly lower employment rates than older workers. This is also because most are still in education, which reduces the denominator in calculating the unemployment rate: students are not taken into consideration as they are not actively seeking employment and are not available in the labour market and thus do not count as unemployed.

The employment rate presented in Figure 16 seems much more favourable for young people aged 25–29. This is because the overall employment rate is diminished by the low employment rate of older workers (55–64), which in some European countries is below 50 per cent (ETUC/ETUI 2012). If the employment rate of young people aged 25–29 is compared to that of prime-age workers, younger people fare worse.

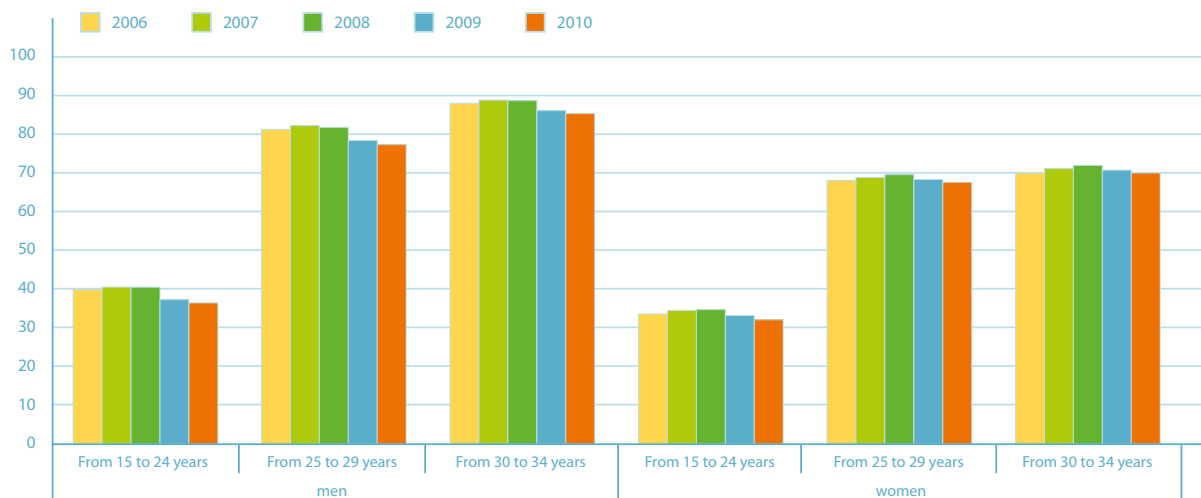
Figure 17 Employment rates by age groups, EU27, 2006–2010 (%)



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

The most significant employment rate reductions have been recorded in the two young workers' groups, especially starting from 2008: young people aged 15–24 experienced a reduction of 2.6 percentage points between 2008 and 2010, while those aged 25–29 experienced a reduction of 3.5. The decrease for the overall population was smaller, at 1.7 percentage points.

European average employment rates hide important national differences not only across countries but also across gender and educational attainments. These differences are graphically presented in the following figures.

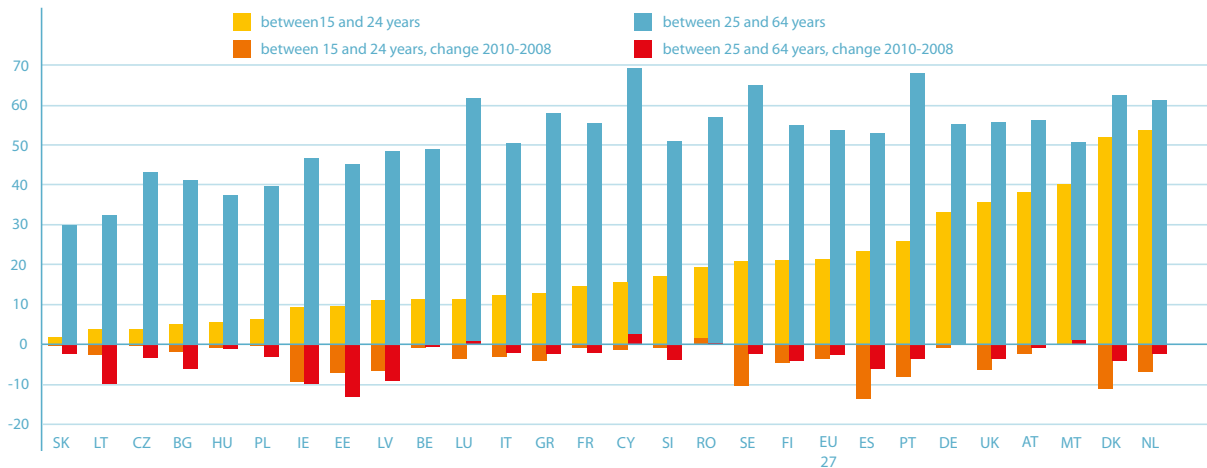
Figure 18 Employment rates by gender and age group, EU27, 2006–2010 (%)

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

Figure 17 presents employment rates for male and female workers of different age groups between 2006 and 2010. Differences between age groups and gender are very significant: female workers have clearly lower employment rates, which becomes more significant when comparing the two older age groups: in 2010, female workers aged 30–34 had an employment rate 15.3 per cent lower than their male counterparts; for the other two groups the differentials were smaller, although still significant (9.7 per cent for 25–29 year-olds and 4.4 per cent for 15–24 year-olds).

Looking at trends over time it is evident that this gap between the female and male employment rates has been falling since 2008 for all three groups. This is not due to an increase in the employment of females, but rather to the fall in employment among men. Despite this convergence (towards lower rates for all) the gender differential is still significant. National differences are also important, especially between Southern and Nordic countries, where the employment rate for women is almost as high as that of males. Average rates that are not full-employment-equivalent also hide other important differences between countries, because in some of them the use of part-time contracts for women is very pronounced (ETUI/ETUC 2011).

Figure 19 Employment rate for young people and adults with low educational attainment (ISCED 0–2)



Source: Labour Force Survey.

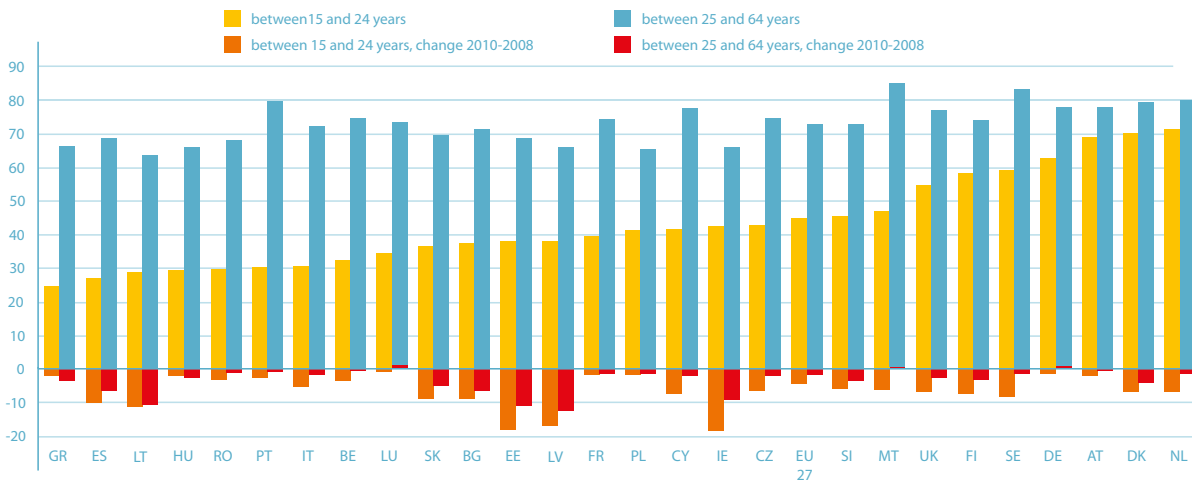
Important differences are also found within countries and within generations with different educational attainments. Figure 17 shows employment rates and changes in the employment rate (below the axis); changes were included as they show more clearly the interesting developments which have affected not only countries hit hardest by the crisis (Ireland, the Baltic countries, Spain, Portugal), but also the less expected ones (such as Denmark) (ETUI/ETUC 2012).

The figure highlights the negative changes in employment rates for low-skilled workers with at most pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education in all EU member states and for both age groups. Countries hit particularly hard by the crisis – Spain, Latvia, Estonia, Ireland and Portugal – have significant employment reductions for young people ranging from –9.2 percentage points in Latvia to –13.6 percentage points in Spain. However, also in countries with overall – at least before the crisis – high employment rates, such as Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, young people suffered major reductions in employment rates compared to smaller contractions for adult workers. In Denmark, youth employment rates fell from 62.9 per cent in 2008 to 51.8 per cent in 2010; a similar trend was recorded in the Netherlands where the high youth employment rate – 60.8 per cent in 2008 – decreased significantly to 53.9 per cent in 2010. Only Romania, Malta, Luxembourg and Cyprus present modest increases, particularly for adults.

On average, the employment rate of lower qualified young people in the EU27 fell by a significant 3.5 percentage points (from 24.9 per cent to 21.4 per cent).

Contractions in employment rates among low-skilled young workers are due to job losses in transport, warehousing and communications, but also manufacturing and construction. Some exceptions are Malta, Luxembourg and Germany, which show no reduction – or a very low one – in youth employment rates.

Figure 20 Employment rate for young people and adults with medium-level educational attainment (ISCED 3–4)



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

Figure 19 compares employment rates for 2010 for individual age groups and changes (2008–2010) in medium-skilled youth and adult employment levels (ISCED 3–4).

Ireland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain – some of the countries hardest hit by the crisis – experienced deteriorating values for these groups in particular. Nevertheless, significant negative changes have been recorded among both young people and older workers.

The deterioration of employment rates conceals very different starting levels among EU member states. In 2010, despite decreasing employment rates, the Nordic countries (around 60 per cent for Finland and Sweden and more than 70 per cent for Denmark) and the Netherlands (71.5 per cent) still had higher employment rates for medium-skilled young people.

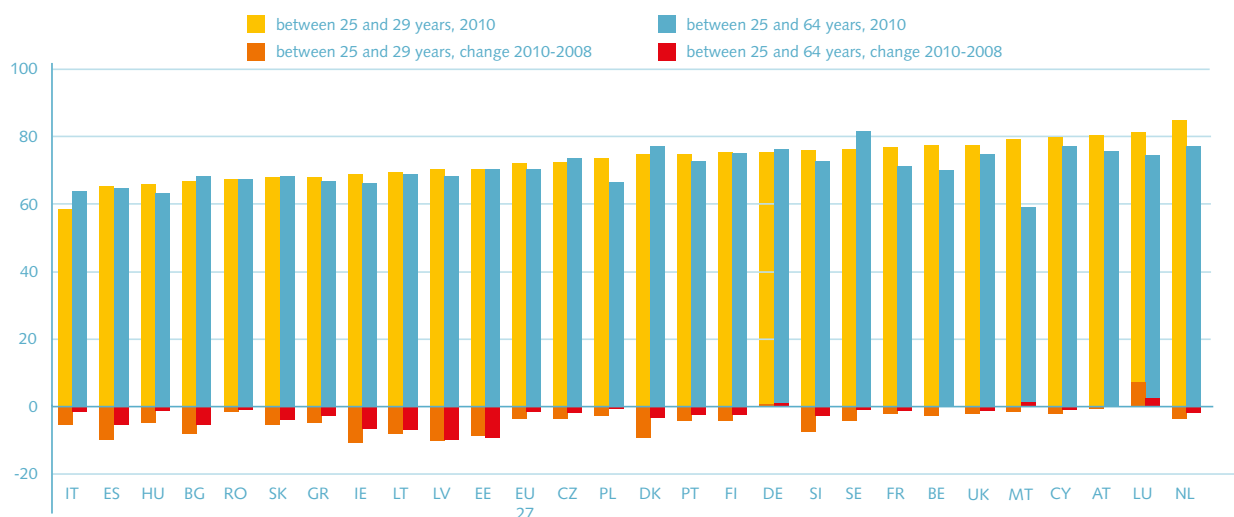
Such high employment rates for Nordic countries as well as for the Netherlands, Germany and Austria can be a little inflated by their extremely broad concept of employment. In fact, as presented in the typologies of transition regimes, these countries tend to promote a concept of youth that strongly taps into the idea of economic and personal independence, also in terms of social and education policies that ease the acquisition of autonomy in transitions to adulthood (for example, free university education, regulated student jobs, wider access to grants). That is why it is customary for young persons to take up employment in conjunction with their studies.

Eurostat figures for 2009¹² confirm that the Nordic countries show high rates of working students with part-time contracts (in 2009 in Denmark, and also in the Netherlands, almost 50 per cent of students aged

¹² Eurostat (2009) *Young people - education and employment patterns*.
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Young_people_-_education_and_employment_patterns.

between 18 and 24 had either full-time or part-time jobs); in Germany, meanwhile, more than 20 per cent of students (18–24) are working under a training contract in the context of apprenticeships combining in-work training and school-based vocational education.

Figure 21 Employment rates for young people and adults with high qualifications (ISCED 5–6)



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey.

Figure 20 shows employment rates for highly qualified young people aged 25–29 compared to workers aged 25–64 (thus with a partial overlap).

Compared to Figure 19 the changes in employment rates among 25–29 year-olds were less dramatic than older workers' rates.

Ireland, Latvia and Spain confirm their negative trend in employment rates also for this 'older' group of young workers, at around –10 percentage points.

In contrast, Austria, Germany and Luxembourg recorded a very small reduction (–0.3 per cent for Austria) and even an increase (0.8 for Germany and more than 7 percentage points for Luxembourg).

Despite a generally good performance, Denmark confirms also for this group the strong negative impact of the crisis on the Danish labour market: the employment rate for this relatively young group decreased markedly (–9.1 percentage points).

Employment rates for young persons aged 25–29 appear to be higher than those for older workers. However, as explained previously, this is a distortion, mainly due to low employment rates among workers aged between 55 and 64 years old.

Again, as already mentioned with regard to the unemployment rate of tertiary educated young workers, higher education in Italy appears to be the least valued in Europe as the employment situation of graduates

is by far the worst: in 2010, only 54.2 per cent of young people aged between 25 and 29 years old were in work (17.5 percentage points lower than Greece which has the second lowest rate in Europe) (ETUI/ETUC 2012).

This short overview of young people's labour market situation by gender and educational level has presented a bleak picture, especially for the lower qualified.

Some have raised fears that this may become a lost generation because of the lack of stable and decent job opportunities, not to mention the 'scarring' effect that prolonged periods of unemployment and underemployment can have on future earnings and social returns (Math 2011).

While education has been claimed to be a key factor in breaking the cycle of disadvantage (Nicaise 2010), data show that education is not a crisis-proof shelter.

The following part aims at providing an overview of the some major indicators on educational attainments of youth and confront the data with the main features of the transitions regimes previously presented.

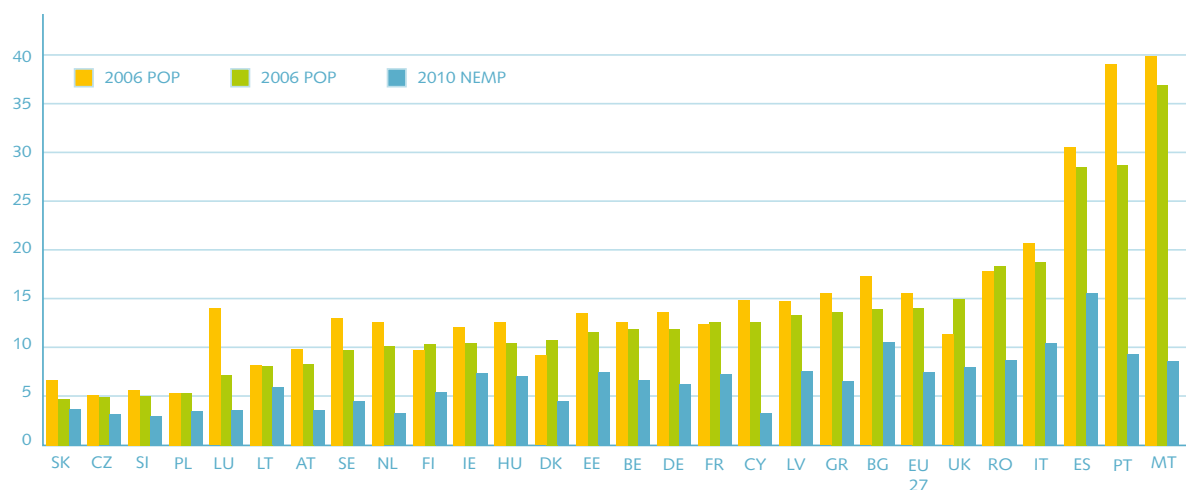


5. Exploring the socio-economic aspects of young people in education and work

5.1 Early school leavers

The effects of the crisis are not always negative. Figure 21 shows that the percentages of early school leavers – defined as young people aged 18–24 years old with at most a low secondary qualifications and not in education or training – have slightly decreased in some countries, while falling significantly in countries where the crisis has hit hardest: for example, Spain, but also Portugal and Iceland. This can probably be explained by the fact that young people tend to stay longer in education (that is, beyond ISCED 3) as there are fewer opportunities in the labour market. However, as already shown, even for young people with higher qualifications, transitions to the labour market have become less smooth. This means that they are likely to face similar problems once they leave the education system, even though they can aspire to better paid jobs. Thus, it can be said that, perversely, the crisis might have contributed to participation in education.

Figure 21 Early school leavers, by employment status, 2010



Source: Eurostat education.

Early school leavers are aged 18–24 and have at best a lower secondary education. In the EU27, more than half of all early school leavers were unemployed or inactive in 2009, almost the same as in 2006. This means that there has been a decrease in absolute numbers but the percentages are still very high.

Early school leavers do not constitute a homogeneous population. However, they tend to be male, to come from socially disadvantaged families or vulnerable groups (enrolled in schools for special needs, or with physical and mental problems), or to have a minority or migrant background (NESSE 2010).

Although the EU27 average seems to be reasonably close to the target (10%), it should be noted that the downward trend of the indicator is hardly significant, falling by no more than 2.6 percentage points over seven years (from 17 per cent in 2002 to 14.4 per cent in 2009). As for the situation of individual member states, some of the new ones have already reached the target, while old member states – such as Italy and the United Kingdom – will find it more difficult to tackle the problem.

The problem of early school leavers seems to be not exclusively attributable to particular institutional settings or features of education systems or the number of years of compulsory schooling. Belgium and Germany, for example, have different kinds of education systems, but exactly the same percentage of early school leavers. Nonetheless, the lack of short, but high-quality vocational paths that can ensure access either to the labour market or to further education and vocational training at a higher level is likely to play a role in the rate of early school leavers. The attractiveness and accessibility of shorter vocational paths are additional important features of education systems which may limit drop-outs, together with quality and the ability to match labour market opportunities.

Not only is the phenomenon of early school-leaving problematic because of the ‘waste’ of potentially valuable human capital which ought to contribute to the achievement of full employment; it constitutes a present and future priority also because the young people who drop out of school are victims of social situations which cause them to run higher risks of falling – as adults – into the trap of poverty and social exclusion (see Section 5). This link seems to be confirmed by Marlier et al. (2011) who argue that, if the three outliers (Malta, Portugal and Spain) are disregarded, there is a tendency for countries with higher at-risk-of-poverty rates to have higher levels of early school-leaving (the correlation is $R\ 0.45$). Recently, experts have also argued (NESSE 2010) that the tendency to describe early school-leavers as young people ‘at risk’ rather than ‘marginalised young people’ is a means of shifting attention to individual responsibility: this fails to grasp the element of community and institutional responsibility for this social phenomenon (ETUC/ETUI 2011).

Policymakers need to be aware that early school-leaving is a cumulative process, entailing a wide range of factors. Identification of the interactions between these factors is paramount with regard to the implementation of sound and effective solutions that do not stigmatise individuals but seek to combine family and individual measures (for example, mentoring and financial aid) with school and community interventions (for example, curricula reforms, second-chance schools and promotion of early childhood participation) (NESSE 2010).

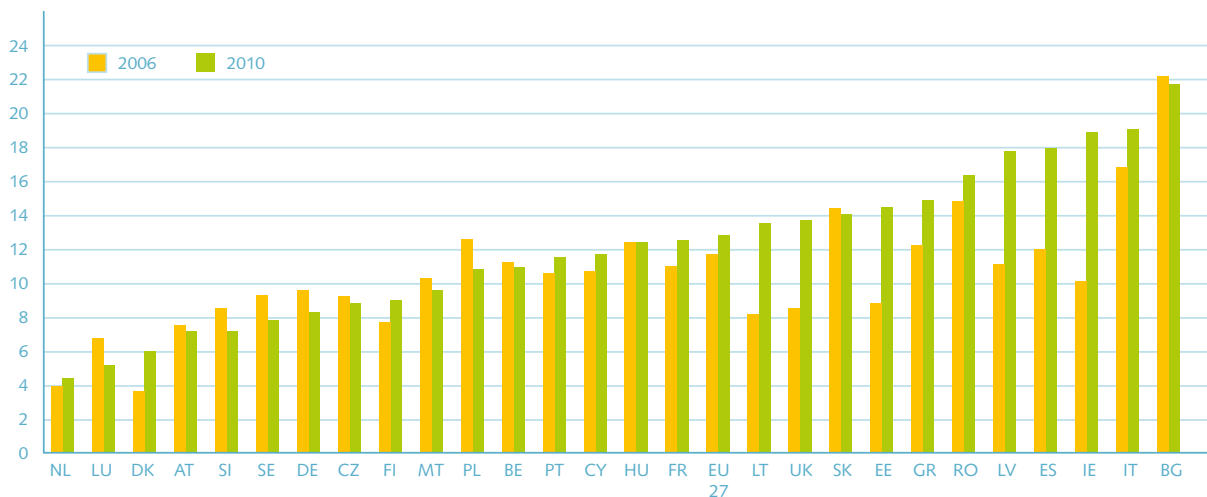
5.2 NEETs: young people not in employment, education or training

The degradation of the labour market that we have observed so far can push young people into migration, inactivity or unemployment (Math 2011): NEET status covers the last two categories.

In fact, unemployment and employment rates remain useful indicators of young people's labour market performance. Compared to other age groups, young people are particularly likely to drop out of the labour force and become inactive when jobs are hard to find.

At the same time, the increase in the inactivity rate is partly accounted for by the growing share of young people who tend to stay in education beyond the age of compulsory schooling and it would be inappropriate to count these young people as a high-risk group (Quintini et al. 2007).

Figure 22 NEETs aged between 15 and 24 (unemployed and inactive)



Source: Eurostat education.

The NEETs indicator represents all young people who are not in education, employment or training and thus more at risk of being unemployed or remaining inactive in the future. The term 'NEET' appeared in the 1980s in the Anglo-Saxon context (especially the UK), defining people not only economically inactive but also in an 'unconstructive (and potentially threatening)' social position (Robson 2008). This group may face difficulties finding work or may drop out of the labour force altogether due to discouragement or other unspecified reasons (as opposed to those who are inactive because of family commitments, military service, travel or leisure).

Quintini et al. (2007) point out that higher educational attainments reduced the probability of people becoming NEETs, although there are countries where the NEET rate remains high among those with only an upper secondary education, notably in Belgium, Hungary, Italy and Turkey.

However, the study by Quintini et al. (2007) shows that longitudinal data better grasp the 'turnover' of young people experiencing inactivity or unemployment.

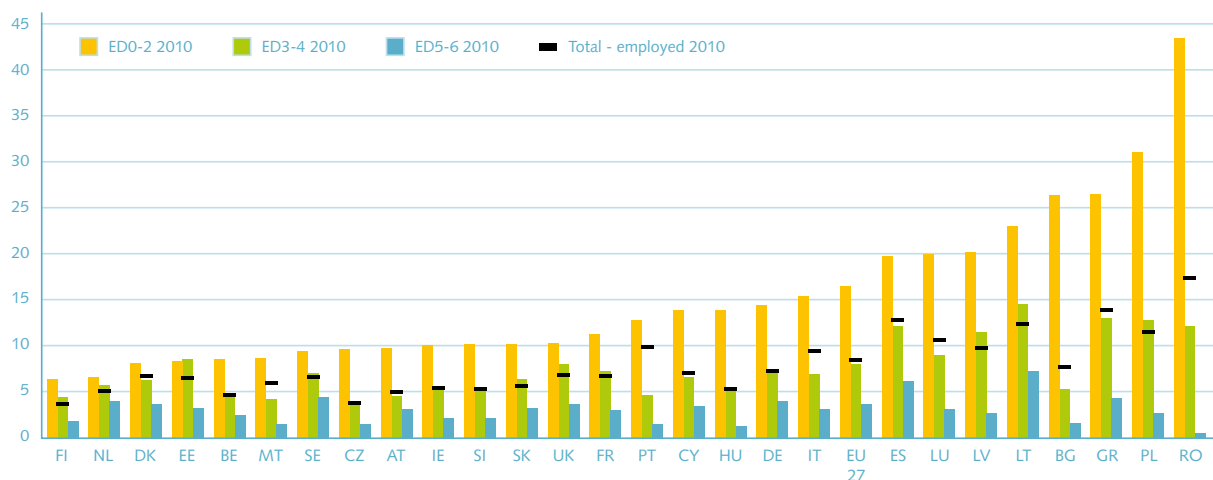
Thus, although a brief spell of NEET status is normal in transitions, in Austria and Finland between 1995 and 2001 there was some turnover in the NEET group. This means that there was considerable activity into and out of education/training, short-term employment and longer spells of unemployment. However, the study also shows that a hard core of young people with NEET status over the entire five-year period can be identified in several European countries. The share of young people in the 'always NEET' category is high in Italy (about 30 per cent) and Greece (approximately 20 per cent), and also exceeds 10 per cent in several other countries, including France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain (Quintini et al. 2007).

NEETs include a large share of young people (15–24) and cover all levels of education. It thus provides a wider picture of the most fragile young population. In Figure 22 we can see that the countries that have experienced the highest increase in the number of NEETs in this age group are those that have been particularly hard hit by the economic crisis: Ireland, Spain, Latvia and Estonia. However, we also find countries that have not been – or to a lesser extent – affected by the crisis but show an increased percentage: the United Kingdom and Finland. The case of the United Kingdom is particularly worrying as it has also experienced a higher increase in early school leavers. Obviously there might be some overlap between the two populations, but still the situation of the young and very young seems to be deteriorating significantly, rendering transition more uncertain. This will have long-term consequences as it is unlikely that those students will enter education or training in the near future. They are more likely to end up in activation measures with brief training that does not enhance their skills or improve their employability in the long term as it promotes a quick, and sometimes not favourable, labour market integration. (Lindsay et al. 2007; van Berkel and Valkenburg 2007).

Other evidence from the literature highlights the prediction factors of a population that, although largely heterogeneous, does present some commonalities: low levels of aspiration, no qualifications, school exclusion, previous truancy, low skilled parents, living in a household where neither parent works full-time, having children at an early age, living outside the family home, having health problems or disabilities, and having parents living in rented accommodation (Robson 2008).

Finally, some evidence-based studies (Maguire and Rennison 2005) show the extent to which financial incentives to remain in full-time study prevent young people from entering the NEET group. The case study was carried out in the United Kingdom and focused on the piloting of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in England. Evidence suggests that paying young people to stay on at school has a positive impact on preventing some from entering the NEET group.

However, education allowances have proved to be less effective in persuading young people back into full-time education once they have become NEETs. This means that preventive measures are necessary to pre-empt complete detachment from education and NEET status (Persano 2011; for a UK example of combating NEET status, see Maguire and Rennison 2005). Other comparative studies have also highlighted that countries where young people are ineligible for alternative benefits (allowances, unemployment or disability benefits) and where there is a strong informal economy and little trust in government also tend to have a higher share of NEETs (Pohl and Walther 2007).

Figure 23 In-work at risk of poverty by education

Source: EU-SILC.

Figure 23 presents in-work at-risk-of-poverty data from the EU-SILC database. The definition used to calculate these data is based on household income. This means that the at-risk-of-poverty indicator results from the addition of the personal income received by all household members and the income received at household level (work-related and social transfers, as well as private income from properties and transfers between households – Eurostat 2011) (ETIC/ETUI 2012).

This statistical definition implies that young people who decide to leave the parental home are considered to be more at risk. This indicator thus has limits, especially for the Nordic countries where young people tend to move out their parents' home earlier (this is characteristic of universalistic countries).

While previous indicators analysed some at-risk groups (early school leavers and NEETs) who often lack qualifications, Figure 23 shows the extent to which a lower educational level might lead to a significant increase in the risk of in-work poverty for people aged 18–64.

Dramatic differences as regards educational attainment are recorded in Romania, Poland and Bulgaria (in Romania, lower-skilled in-work poverty is 44 times higher than for the highly skilled). Such differences are also marked in Southern European countries (Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal). Finland and the Netherlands show less inequality among workers with different educational levels (3.6 per cent and 5.1 per cent, respectively). Despite in-work at-risk-of-poverty rates of around 5 per cent, Belgium, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia show pronounced differences between groups.

Differences in in-work at-risk-of-poverty rates by level of education depend not only on average remuneration, but also on social transfers. The latter play an important part in reducing the risk of falling into poverty. In the Southern European countries, as well as in Eastern Europe, mechanisms of social redistribution are weaker than in Northern Europe (ETUI/ETUC 2012).



6. Hot topics: social partners have their say – the ETUC survey

6.1 Purpose and structure of the survey

To obtain the social partners' views on the situation of young people in the EU a survey was sent to ETUC affiliates.

The purpose of the survey was to collect more specific information on current labour market policies and training opportunities. Information was also sought on the situation of young people in traineeships and internships in the different member states. The latter¹³ is particularly topical, as the critical economic situation seems to have boosted this phenomenon in several member states.¹⁴ Further input was provided by the European Youth Forum and other support organisations (including ETUC Youth), which wrote the Charter of Quality Internships and Apprenticeships,¹⁵ because it is widely recognised that many internships lack a legal framework and quality guarantees (see previous footnote on information gathered from some European and national websites).

The survey was structured in two main parts ('General transition measures' and 'Hot topic: traineeships'). 'General transition measures' included questions on: guidelines in general and vocational schools; the youth labour market situation; institutional dynamics with regard to collaboration; labour market policies and measures implemented (paying particular attention to changes driven by the crisis); the role of the social

13 Internships/traineeships were defined as on-the-job training done voluntarily outside formal education, while apprenticeships are practical working experiences acquired in a formal vocational education and training framework.

14 For further information on traineeships and internships and initiatives in other member states: see (IT) <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2011/11/19/stage-gratuiti-una-piaga-non-solo-italiana/171797/>; <http://www.repubblicadeglistagisti.it/>; (UK) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2011/nov/04/interns-work-paid-lawyers>; (FR) <http://www.lefigaro.fr/entreprise/2011/01/10/05011-20110110ARTFIG00718-le-debat-sur-les-stages-abusifs-resurgit-avec-les-soldes.php>; <http://www.generation-precaire.org/index.php> (IE) <http://www.irishtimes.com/news-paper/weekend/2011/0702/1224299906628.html>; <http://rosneypublicrelations.blog.com/2010/07/06/public-relations-internships/>

15 See: <http://www.qualityinternships.eu/>

partners in skills councils and vocational education policies and institutions. The second part deals with internships and traineeships in terms of numbers of young people involved; relevance of the topic for the country; characteristics and conditions of internships; institutional measures; and finally opinions on the steps needed to adapt social partners' actions to young people's emerging social and labour market needs.

Because of the topic (a significant number of questions concerned educational issues, which are not in all countries a traditional trade union domain) and the complexity of the survey, the response rate was fairly low (25 questionnaires returned out of the 84 sent out to the national confederations). Nevertheless, 17 countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Malta, Cyprus, France, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) were represented, permitting a broad picture of the member states. However, answers cannot be considered representative of the various countries or transition regimes.

Moreover, it must be kept in mind that the answers represent the trade unions' particular perceptions and knowledge of the topic. Often the person who filled in the questionnaire had no specific knowledge of the issue, which might explain some differences in the answers to similar questions from the same country but different social partners. Besides, it seems, having checked the answers against alternative sources, that some questions were misunderstood. This might be due to the terminology, which is not homogenous around Europe, especially regarding traineeships, apprenticeships and internships, but also the fact that in some countries – especially in Scandinavia – some social issues are not considered as such (for example, unpaid internships without a legal basis) and thus not recognised as a problem.

In this section we present the trade unions' answers, structured in terms of the transition regimes already categorised.

6.2 Main obstacles in the labour market and education systems

Main problems and challenges linked to the education system

Sub-protective regime (Italy, Spain and Portugal): these countries highlighted difficult access to higher education, especially due to a lack of adequate financial support, low quality and poorly developed vocational training. Spain complained of the rise in higher education study fees as the result of increasing privatisation of the sector. The trade unions also underlined a significant lack of coordination among actors in the education and labour market systems but also students and parents, as well as difficulties in implementing existing policies.

Universalistic regime (Norway and Sweden): Sweden highlighted the need to improve equality of access to higher education, as well as the quality of secondary education. While the social partners in Norway were satisfied overall with the existing cooperation network, the Swedish affiliate perceived a lack of cooperation and highlighted the need to strengthen the collaboration network.

Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, Bulgaria and Romania): these countries belong to a mixed group that the academic literature finds difficult to classify. Although a number of major trends can be identified, homogeneity is lacking. The most important challenges concern skills mismatches, a lack of practical education and unattractive vocational training. Also noted were insufficient funding of companies providing training

and a lack of company investment in youth training, as well as a lack of effective collaboration between actors, especially the business sector. The lack of guidance and the presence of strongly disadvantaged groups – for example, in Bulgaria – were also mentioned as important issues.

Employment-centred regimes (Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Austria and the Netherlands): these countries pointed to a lack of career information both in the education system and at labour market level. France also reported a lack of practical experience as an obstacle to easier labour market transitions for young people.

Market-driven regimes (Ireland and the United Kingdom): as also underlined in the abovementioned typologies, the role of the social partners is less central in these countries compared to other employment-centred member states (for example, Austria). The social partners in Ireland and the United Kingdom stressed the need for more cooperation and a strengthening of their own role.

Cyprus and Malta are not often included in comparative studies on transition regimes. Answers from the two countries reveal that the social partners seem to play an important role when it comes to vocational training at national level, as members of ad hoc councils or committees.

Main problems and challenges linked to labour market and social policies

Sub-protective regime: these countries pointed out access difficulties facing young people, which are increasing because of skills mismatches. Labour market access is also characterised by precarious and unstable conditions: this is also due to misuse of apprenticeships as well as to their lack of quality and relevance for the students' personal and career development.

Universalistic regimes: Sweden stressed the lack of safety nets for young graduates, inefficient employment services lacking knowledge of the labour market and more exposure of young people to temporary and part-time contracts. Closer collaboration with the business sector was deemed necessary.

Central and Eastern European countries: they have high unemployment rates at all levels of education, which means that labour market transitions are difficult not only for low-skilled workers, as statistics tend to highlight. The role of the informal economy is also important. Skills mismatches are also prevalent in these countries, together with a lack of social services that could help young people to reconcile their private-family lives with their working lives. Moreover there is increasing use of precarious contracts for young people.

Employment-centred regimes: Belgium reported the unattractiveness of vocational training. The need for safety nets and more guidance was also expressed, together with the need for more opportunities for young people without work experience.

Market-driven regimes: Ireland and the United Kingdom both complained about the lack of good information, guidance and placement services (youth services have recently been cut in the United Kingdom, Melrose 2012). Ireland also mentioned the abuse of internships, the lack of measures for tackling youth unemployment and the need to improve the conditions of young temporary and agency workers.

Cyprus reported possible mismatches after university studies have been completed.

Coordination, networking and cooperation between different stakeholders involved in transitions from school to work: evaluation and structure

Sub-protective regime: cooperation among the actors is lacking or scarce. Trade unions also mentioned the need to increase young people's participation and more targeted state intervention on working conditions. Concerning the institutionalisation of cooperation, Spain reported that it exists at national and regional level but it remains very weak; besides that, the national council for vocational education has not been meeting and the government has been indecisive. In Italy, there seems to be a complete lack of national coordination.

The social partners called for improved dialogue with civil society. This was particularly strong in Spain, where it can be linked with the increasing involvement of civil society in demonstrations against the economic and social situation and recent government measures. The social partners from these countries also feel the need for more better articulation between levels of organisation. In Spain, for example, decentralisation and increasing devolution of competences to the regions (Comunidades) may make central coordination more problematic (for example, competence for vocational training is at regional level). In Spain and Portugal, the role of the social partners in negotiations on education, training and labour market entry (for example, negotiating working conditions) is perceived as crucial. However, the crisis in Spain is definitely making improvements difficult, while in Italy bilateral negotiations with labour market actors and in schools make dialogue fragmented and incoherent.

Universalistic regimes: some trade unions from Norway report good cooperation between actors, although they also stress that there is a need to capitalise on the work done locally and at company level. The social partners from Sweden argue for increased coordination: cooperation seems weak, despite the good will of the social partners.

Central and Eastern European countries: trade unions from these countries underline the lack of partnerships as well as the lack of implementation of existing agreements that could foster better cooperation. However, Bulgaria seems to enjoy good social dialogue between the social partners and institutional actors. Both respondents from this country underlined that cooperation in the organisation of vocational training is fairly good, mentioning the role played by NAVET. NAVET was established by the Vocational Education and Training Act in 1999. It is a Council of Ministers' body responsible for licensing activities in the VET system, as well as for the coordination of institutions related to vocational guidance, training and education. Its main responsibilities include the keeping of a register of licensed centres for vocational training, supervising these centres in accordance with a system for quality assurance and monitoring training provisions. It is also responsible for developing national educational standards and elaborating and updating the List of Professions for VET, aiming to provide VET which meets the needs of the labour market. The presence of the social partners is very important for maintaining the quality of education and training. Social partnership takes place through social dialogue between institutions and social partner representatives (employers and trade unions). The activities of NAVET are considered a good example of social dialogue.

In Poland, however, it seems that coordination is lacking and that while some good practices may be found at local level (such as the north-east cluster of digital education and the cluster of business environment institutions financed from EU funds) they are not institutionalised at national level.

Employment-centred regimes: the social partners are present in many institutions at national and regional levels dealing with skills, employment, vocational training and initial training (this is the case in France).

While this institutionalised structure seems to correspond to the idea of organised transitions, the social partners perceive their role as reduced either by the limited number of their representatives (France) or by the sectoral nature of negotiations (the Netherlands). However, they seem to have developed some activities of their own to orient and inform both students and employers.

Market-driven regimes: more cooperation is perceived as necessary also in Ireland and the United Kingdom, especially in the current crisis. In Ireland, employers have started to play a more relevant role in cooperation on skills development; trade unions are less influential in the definition of vocational education programmes but are closely monitoring developments. In the United Kingdom, the service providing orientation and career counselling will be devolved to schools, thus implying reduced trade union influence on efforts to smooth transitions from school to labour market. The United Kingdom needs a good quality and well-funded career service.

In Cyprus, the social partners seem to be actively involved in vocational training/skills-related committees or institutions (for example, in the Consultative Committee on Technical and Vocational Education). In Malta, a national institutionalised setting is lacking, while initiatives have been reported at the level of individual social partners. Malta also reports that trade unions are not involved in the transition phase as relations are usually developed between employers, students and educational institutions.

Guidance at school: structure and evaluation

Sub-protective regime: Guidance seems present in Spain, starting from general and vocational lower secondary institutions. Differences in the management of guidance systems in Spain might be due to the different approaches taken by individual Comunidades Autonomas. However, the overall perception on these measures is positive in helping young people to get a first knowledge of the labour market. In Italy, this is seldom found unless at the initiative of schools.

Universalistic regimes: While the trade union from Sweden sees a lack of resources for guidance services, especially with regard to the provision of information on labour market opportunities, the trade union from Norway reports the good experience of young people involved in VET as they obtain a deeper understanding of the labour market. However, in both countries guidance services are found in schools, starting from lower secondary.

Central and Eastern European countries: in Bulgaria and Poland guidance services are not present in all schools; although the regulations exist, and sometimes human resources are inadequate (Poland). In Romania, guidance is mostly provided by teachers who advise pupils according to their vocations and abilities. Moreover, the service is not implemented or effective at all school grades (in Bulgaria it seems more developed at upper secondary and university). Guidance services in all three countries are perceived by the social partners as insufficient, inadequately established or provided for too brief a time.

Employment-centred regimes: the trade unions in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Austria report that guidance services are present mostly from lower education onwards (for example, at the end of 'college' in France) and in all types of school, whether vocational or general education.

Market-driven regimes: in Ireland and the United Kingdom guidance systems are implemented starting from upper secondary education. However, in Ireland the service is not compulsory and thus might be mar-

ginalised. In order to make this service more efficient, the social partners suggest starting it earlier, at the lower secondary level, so as to help young people get a clearer idea of future opportunities.

The trade unions from Malta and Cyprus report the presence of guidance systems implemented from lower secondary level. However, in Cyprus the guidance service seems absent from on-the-job training. The evaluation of these services is more positive for Malta, while in Cyprus they are perceived as inadequate and underfinanced.

Monitoring and specific initiatives for at-risk students and early school leavers: national, local and trade union initiatives

Sub-protective regime: in Spain, Italy and Portugal there seem to be no nationally coordinated programmes to prevent early school leaving, although there are some initiatives at local or regional level. Assessment of these initiatives is not always positive; they are often perceived as inefficient or poorly implemented, also due to lack of resources. Social partners rarely participate in these programmes, but in Portugal, for example, the trade union (CGTP-IN) is participating in a project to eliminate child poverty. In Spain, the participation of social partners seems more institutionalised (for example, the Comisiones Obreras and UGT take part – within the framework of Social Dialogue – in the design of policies preventing early school leaving); there are also some examples from Italy. However, collaboration in this country seems patchy.

Universalistic regimes: early school leaving seems to be tackled in both Sweden and Norway. Integration policies for young migrants (for example, language courses) are implemented in Norway to help prevent these pupils from dropping out.

Central and Eastern European countries: in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania there are programmes at national, regional or local level that tackle early school leaving. In Bulgaria and Romania, programmes to combat the social exclusion of young minorities are also implemented. These measures are perceived in all three countries as inefficient; also there are fewer job opportunities for at-risk young people. Even if support is provided at school, there are no good opportunities once young people are in the labour market.

Employment-centred regimes: all the employment-oriented countries seem to have coordinated policies or programmes for early school leavers. The evaluation of these programmes appears to be fairly positive (answers from Belgium and the Netherlands). The social partners do not seem directly involved in these programmes, however. Furthermore, the social partners have not developed their own programmes for young people at risk or to prevent early school leaving but are more involved – for example, in France – in the job coaching of disadvantaged young people once they have left school and entering the labour market.

Market-driven regimes: Ireland and the United Kingdom report systematic monitoring of early school leaving. The trade union from Ireland also reports that the National Educational Welfare Board, established in 2002, is meant to promote school attendance: in the case of systematic absenteeism, the school should notify the Board, which will investigate individual cases. Moreover, Ireland reports the implementation of a national programme (Youthreach) aimed at giving unemployed early school leavers opportunities to obtain certified qualifications. Trade unions from both countries also report initiatives for at-risk students. The social partner from Ireland reports that the initiative 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools' identifies disadvantaged schools in order to ensure adequate financing, although they fear that the crisis might limit the programme's success. The social partners are not involved in these programmes in either country, but in the United Kingdom the social partners' representatives give talks about work in schools and also provide

advice on the sector they represent to familiarise students with labour market realities.

The trade union from Malta reports that monitoring of early school leavers and at-risk students is carried out by academic institutions via reports (for example, the University of Malta's faculty of education); no programmes for these students seem to be implemented in the country.

In Cyprus, some priority zones have been identified in order to tackle at-risk students from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

6.4 Social partners and vocational education

Trade unions and vocational education: structures, institutions and trade union involvement

Sub-protective regime: in all three countries the social partners are involved in the framework of vocational education and training. For example, in Portugal and Spain they provide vocational training in training centres. Both Spain and Italy report that the effectiveness of the social partners' involvement also depends on the collaboration developed at regional level (most of the competence on vocational training belongs to the *Regioni* or *Comunidades Autónomas*). Trade unions also say they are involved in consultations and negotiations on apprenticeships: in Spain the social partners are involved in the National General Council of Vocational Training and the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training and in Italy the social partners were recently (end of 2011) involved in the reform of apprenticeships. The trade unions from these countries also report that the crisis has altered the conditions under which apprenticeships are implemented: in Spain, difficult labour market prospects have pushed young people to stay longer in education (see also the figure on early school leaving). In Portugal, recent reform of apprenticeships included apprentices in the social security system but reduced financial assistance. In Italy, companies use apprenticeship contracts less frequently; when they are used, it is often because of their lower cost.

Universalistic regimes: the social partners are involved in vocational education and training via interaction through social dialogue (Norway) and individual workers (Sweden). Neither of these countries reports a significant impact of the crisis on apprenticeships.

Central and Eastern European countries: the social partners seem to be involved in several national processes (for example, via social dialogue in Poland or taking part in exam committees in vocational education and training institutions), as well as through their own initiatives (for example, organising information campaigns). The crisis has had an adverse impact on apprenticeships, especially because of employer bankruptcies (Romania and Bulgaria). In Poland, overuse of apprenticeships has been noted, especially due to reduced labour costs for employers but also limited social rights for apprentices.

Employment-centred regimes: as expected, in these countries the presence of the social partners in bodies dealing with vocational training is institutionalised: in France the social partners are involved in continuous vocational training; in Austria they are involved in regulating VET; and in Luxembourg the social partners are present in committees on vocational curricula and exams. Social partners normally participate in negotiations or consultations on vocational education and training, although approaches differ by country ('*chambres professionnelles*' in Luxembourg; in France the social partners can negotiate training contracts for unemployed young people and employers' associations provide 'on-the-job' training/'formation en

alternance'). The crisis seems to have had an impact particularly in the Netherlands, Belgium and France where fewer apprenticeships are available. (Labour market figures for young people in these countries reveal an increase in unemployment.) In Austria, the social partners do not report any impact of the crisis; this is confirmed by Eurostat figures that show a very low level of youth unemployment.

Market-driven regimes: in Ireland trade unions sit on joint labour committees together with employers and have negotiated, for example, an employment agreement on rates of pay for training. The social partners are also present on the board of the state training service and, via this institution, they contribute to shaping national apprenticeship policy. In the United Kingdom, unions are present on the sector skills boards and some are also involved in the design of vocational programmes. Both countries report that apprenticeships have been affected by the crisis. As expected, in Ireland apprenticeships in construction have been hit hard. In the United Kingdom, following the rise in university fees, social partners foresee an increase in demand for apprenticeships as an alternative to university.

In Cyprus, the social partners are involved in identifying educational and training needs and the setting of priorities. Involvement takes place via participation in developing vocational qualification standards. The social partners are also involved in the dialogue on education reform.

According to the social partners from Malta, they are not directly involved in vocational training, but via the Employment and Industrial Relations Act. In Cyprus, negotiations and consultations on vocational education and training are carried out within the framework of the apprenticeship board. In Malta, as in most member states, apprenticeships are sometimes seen as cheap labour; in Cyprus, the crisis has led to a decrease in jobs, especially in construction and construction-related sectors, confirming the dire employment situation in this sector across Europe. For the coming year a subsidy scheme aimed at promoting employment and in-company training of apprentices in the private sector has been approved.

6.5 After-school transition measures: labour market policies for transition

The focus of this section is labour market measures targeting young people, ranging from guidance to training programmes as well as covering some organisational/governance aspects.

Guidance for young people outside the education system: structures, institutions and trade union involvement

Sub-protective regimes: both in Spain and Portugal the trade unions report that there are guidance services for unemployed young people, mainly implemented by the public employment services. A different situation is described in Italy where there are no specific services to orient the young unemployed and implementation relies on local initiatives on the part of public and private employment services.

Universalistic regimes: in both Sweden and Norway the young unemployed can benefit from guidance service, delivered mainly by the employment agencies. In Norway, young unemployed under 25 years of age are a priority group for the Labour and Welfare Service (NAV). Measures for the young unemployed include various programmes according to age and length of unemployment. In both countries public and private institutions are involved in delivering labour market services. In Sweden, the social partners seem directly involved in these services.

Central and Eastern European countries: in all countries job search sessions (individual and collective) and other forms of guidance are provided for unemployed young people. As in other EU member states, private and public agencies are involved in delivering these services, along with the social partners.

Employment-centred regimes: young unemployed from France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria and Belgium can benefit from job search sessions and other counselling services, mainly provided by public services. Social partners are generally involved: for example, in France public employment services or NGOs implement these programmes, previously negotiated by the social partners.

Market-driven regimes: in Ireland and the United Kingdom there are services addressing young unemployed people, mainly with regard to job opportunities. In Ireland, the community employment programme, for instance, is aimed at reintegrating the long-term unemployed and other young people from disadvantaged groups. In both the United Kingdom and Ireland these services are delivered locally and the social partners are involved. According to the Irish trade union, the cuts in social security benefits in 2009 threaten to result in the reduction of programmes reintegrating long-term and disadvantaged unemployed people.

Both Malta and Cyprus report employment schemes providing guidance and training for both the unemployed and people who want to change jobs. In Cyprus, these services have been intensified during the crisis in order to help the increasing number of people coping with job loss. In both countries public institutions are the main providers of these services and the main social partners participate in their negotiation and design via existing bodies (for example, the Cyprus Human Resource Development Authority or HRDA).

6.6 Skills and training

Acquiring further skills and training after school: institutions, trade union involvement and evaluation

Sub-protective regimes: both in Spain and Portugal the trade unions report that training programmes are available for young people after finishing school. These programmes are considered a good labour market opportunity for the young unemployed. However some report a lack of resources and job creation, which are needed to make training programmes worthwhile. The trade unions report that training programmes suffered cuts in 2011 and are likely to be cut again in 2012 (Portugal) within the framework of major social expenditure reductions. Italy remains the outlier of the group as it seems that only some training initiatives can be identified, largely inadequate.

Universalistic regimes: in both Sweden and Norway young people can benefit from training programmes after finishing school. The crisis has affected these measures but in the opposite direction from most other EU member states, because more resources have been allocated to this. This seems to confirm what emerges from the transition regime typologies presented in the first part: universalistic regimes attach particular importance to lifelong learning and activation to help people change career or retrain.

Central and Eastern European countries: training opportunities in these countries exist, although they are perceived by the social partners as inadequate in terms of improving young people's labour market chances. Social partners are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of such policies, but not in all countries.

Employment-centred regimes: Belgium and France report that training opportunities are usually organised for young people finishing school. However, access to training courses seems limited in France. Employees gain access to training once they have been hired, but access via the employment service is more difficult. In France, these measures were subject to significant reforms in June 2011 ('Accord national Interprofessionnel').

Market-driven regimes: the Irish trade union reports that the government, in response to the crisis, recently launched a national internship programme, 'Jobbridge', providing participants with 50 euros on top of their weekly welfare payments when participating in internships. The Springboard programme foresees 6,000 free part-time higher education and training places for unemployed jobseekers. In the United Kingdom, training opportunities are sometimes of poor quality and the skills provided are often low or intermediate. A majority of short training programmes, mainly aimed at short-term labour market reintegration, were also identified as a feature of the market-oriented lifelong learning regime in the UK. The search for training is generally left to individuals, thus leading to 'client-like' behaviour on the part of job-seekers. As an effect of the crisis, the UK trade union reports that the government has cut £200 million from the careers budget for face-to-face careers advice and guidance for young people.

Malta and Cyprus report two significantly different situations. In Cyprus, there seems to be a variety of training opportunities for young people, such as accelerated initial training courses, job placement and training of unemployed tertiary education graduates, but also schemes co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and Cyprus's Human Resource Development Authority. While the contribution from Malta underlines some changes in the education system, mainly linked to school curricula in order to achieve partial comprehensive education, the contribution from Cyprus reports the implementation of specific programmes to prevent or reduce unemployment (Action Plan), including the provision of in-house initial and ongoing training, temporary in-company programmes for training unemployed people, projects staffing enterprises with university graduates and accelerated initial training programmes.

6.7 Entrepreneurship and employment incentives

Entrepreneurship is an alternative form of employment for young people that is also supported by the European Union with incentives and programmes to promote self-employment among young people.

Incentives for employers and fiscal incentives for young workers

All the trade unions who answered the questionnaire reported that in their countries young people who want to start their own business can obtain support in the form of grants (Italy), loans (Romania) and various forms of assistance and guidance (France, Belgium). The crisis seems to have affected these measures, however: entitlement criteria have become stricter or resources have been reduced.

Incentives have been offered to employers to boost young people's labour market participation. They are aimed mainly at reducing the cost of labour, reducing employers' social security contributions.

A trade union in Spain reports that many types of contract have been subsidised. Young people, together with women and the long-term unemployed, are a particular target. During the current crisis the Spanish government has adopted a law aimed at reducing youth unemployment by creating new jobs with part-time contracts and reducing employers' social security contributions. However, the trade unions believe

that these incentives should not inflate the use of short-term contracts, which are more likely to increase the precariousness of youth employment. In Italy and Portugal there are also incentives for hiring young people (in Italy this is currently under revision).

Norway and Sweden report no particular incentives for employers to hire young people. In the Eastern European countries there are employment subsidies for hiring young people and in Bulgaria and Romania social partners find these initiatives positive in helping young people to find a job. In all the employment-centred countries (France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Austria) subsidies to promote youth employment are reported. They consist mainly of social security contribution reductions for employers, at least in the initial years of a contract (France and Luxembourg). In the United Kingdom and Ireland, by contrast, respondents report no specific measures to encourage employers to hire young people, although there have been measures to cut VAT in hotels and tourism, where many young people are employed. Malta and Cyprus present a similar situation, according to the respondents: there seem to be no specific incentives for employers to help young people.

6.8 Traineeships

The last section of the questionnaire focused on traineeships. Because of the diversity of answers and the lack of official information on this issue, the answers to the questions are not reported by transition regime, but based on the most relevant contribution received from the ETUC affiliates.

Trade unions and traineeships: statistics and monitoring

Austria, Belgium, Norway, Romania, Bulgaria and Malta do not see the issue of traineeships as relevant for their countries, in contrast to most of the other countries.

Moreover, not all trade unions in the countries in which this phenomenon has become a social and labour market problem have done anything about it. For example, in France and Spain the issue is tackled by the youth committee of some trade unions, but not by specific internal services, even when it is highly relevant to the trade unions.

No country reported the collection of statistics, with the exception of Ireland, where data are gathered within the framework of the Job-bridge programme, recently launched by the government. However, this kind of internship can be considered under active labour market policy rather than work experience since it applies only to young people on unemployment benefit. Other countries that confirm the existence of records were probably reporting the existence of statistics on apprenticeships (VET), which are usually regulated within the framework of education programmes or professional agreements. (For example, Cyprus and Belgium answered that statistics have been available since the end of the 1990s or even 1980s; thus, when the traineeship phenomenon, as it was meant in this questionnaire, was still in its infancy.)

The questions on internships were not always easy to explain to the trade unions. This is surely due to the varying relevance of the problem in the EU member states and the elusive terminology. This was confirmed during panels of youth representatives organised at the ETUC conference in Krakow in November 2011: for example, representatives from the Nordic countries said that the problem of internships has not reached the same worrying proportions as in southern European countries, such as Spain and Italy, but also in Turkey.

The difficulty of producing a survey that is neutral but also detailed enough to capture the range of circumstances in European countries was also acknowledged by the trade unions themselves. For example, the Irish contribution made a helpful distinction concerning the use of traineeships in Ireland, where they are linked to job activation measures for the unemployed, with little structured mentoring and training.

Two countries – Romania and Spain – reported that between 20 and 30 per cent of students in secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education are involved in traineeships; in Bulgaria and Portugal, these figures are between 10 and 20 per cent. Some additional comments by a Spanish affiliate underline the misuse of internships, especially for highly qualified young people. Working without a proper contract reduces social security costs for the employer, while preventing social partners from exercising close supervision of such contracts.

The French trade union adds that, according to CEREQ (a French research centre for the study of vocational professions) two-thirds of students have done an internship (Giret and Issehnan 2010). Moreover, in France the 2008 plan to create a committee to monitor internships has never been implemented. The UK affiliate expressed its concern about the rapid increase of unpaid internships that are not regulated or monitored.

In contrast, the Netherlands reports that it is compulsory for students to do an internship to get a higher education diploma. As a result, such internships are regulated and institutional actors are involved.

Traineeships, trainees, sectors and recent developments

Some countries report that young people have their first internship experience at around 18 years of age (sometimes before that). We assume that the term 'traineeship' was associated by these countries with 'apprenticeship' rather than 'internship'. Countries that reported other age ranges referred more frequently to 18–20 and 20–23 years of age for young people engaging in internships.

Information is scarce on interns' social background; answers to this question were fairly patchy. Italy and Belgium answered that interns there tend to have a middle class/upper middle class social background, while a trade union in Spain reported that most of the students seem to have a lower to middle class background. It is very difficult to say, however, as no data are available in most countries.

Several countries (France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Bulgaria, Romania, Luxembourg, Norway and Spain) reported that the service sector – for example, banks and consultancies – most frequently offers internships. Together with the private service sector, Spain, Norway, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Ireland and Cyprus also mention the public sector (public services and public administration). In the United Kingdom and Ireland, the media sector also seems to be popular for internships. Spain, Malta, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and Bulgaria, among others, report internships also in the industrial sector (for example, in goods manufacturing). Italy also listed services linked to the tourist sector.

Only Cyprus, Belgium, and Bulgaria mention international organisations or public administration abroad. It seems that internships are mostly carried out in the country of residence and are not primarily seen as an opportunity for mobility.

Spain, Portugal and Italy answered that the internship trend has been rising steeply, while Norway and Sweden report a slight increase in internships in the past five years. In Bulgaria and Poland the numbers have increased, but in the former there is a perception that the global crisis has reduced it: the situation

seems to be the contrary in Norway, Spain and Ireland. France, the United Kingdom, Malta and Cyprus also report an increase in the past five years.

It is interesting that both Spain and the United Kingdom underline that the most significant increase has been in the media.

Traineeships: reasons and financial support

The importance of acquiring work experience seems to be one of the main reasons for the increase in popularity of traineeships. Several countries mentioned that traineeships are an important stepping stone to the labour market (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Bulgaria, Poland). However, some countries – Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden, Portugal and Spain – also underlined that internships are chosen because no other job opportunities are available.

Only a few countries mentioned traineeships as an opportunity to go abroad (Portugal, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Malta). Almost all countries answered that traineeships are often used to substitute regular work, with abuse particularly rife in Italy, Spain, Romania and Bulgaria. Traineeships, according to most trade unions, seldom or rarely (for example, Italy) become regular contracts. However, there are countries that report a reasonable level of conversion of traineeships into regular contracts, such as Bulgaria, Romania and Malta.

Most countries replied that the traineeships are unpaid, or that the mode of payment or in-kind benefits – accommodation, public transport, expenses, meals – differs from one company to another. Norway, however, reported that usually they are paid; this is also the case in the Netherlands, France and Malta, as well as, in some cases, Cyprus.

The case of France is particularly interesting because, according to the law, all internships lasting more than two months should be paid at least 30 per cent of the minimum wage. Employers can decide to go beyond this legal threshold, however: for example, for internships involving highly qualified young people remuneration can go up to the SMIC (minimum wage). In most countries, even if payments are made, they seem insufficient for core living expenses, such as rent; although in Norway and Cyprus (only for particular traineeships organised by the Human Resources Development Agency) pay seems to be enough to cover at least part of living expenses.

Financial support from the family is important for young people (although a few countries did not answer the question and the United Kingdom and Norway did not mention this option). Several countries also reported scholarships provided by schools or universities (United Kingdom, Cyprus, France, Bulgaria, Romania, Norway, Spain and Portugal). In Spain and Cyprus, however, students can take out loans to finance – at least partly – traineeships.

Regulations: institutions and rules

The United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden answered that there are no regulations on traineeships, although in Sweden collective agreements regulate paid internships. France reported that at national level all traineeships are regulated, although the trade union specifies that interns in the public administration are not included in the regulations concerning traineeships modified in 2006 and 2009. Cyprus answered that only some traineeship programmes are regulated (for example, graduates working in enterprises). The remaining countries reported regulations at national, regional or company level, but it is difficult to

establish the extent to which these questions are clearly related to traineeships and not to the regulation of apprenticeships within the framework of vocational education and training programmes. One of the Spanish trade unions also underlines that internships without an agreement with an educational institution are not considered work contracts and not protected by labour law. For that reason, such internships should be considered illegal: Spanish labour law provides a specific contract for recent graduates.

Generally, if there is legislation – whether concerning apprenticeships or traineeships – it usually regulates wages/allowances and insurance in the workplace. The country with the most complete legislation on internships seems to be Norway, where contracts not only regulate wages and workplace insurance, but also the content of traineeships, their recognition, social security entitlements and everything else applying to regular work contracts. Belgium is the only country reporting legislation regulating safety and working time. Spain and Italy reported that if an apprenticeship is found to be disguising a regular work relationship, according to the law, it must be converted into a regular employment contract. While these answers refer to apprenticeships, Poland distinguishes between internships and apprenticeships: the Polish trade unions specified that while apprenticeships are regulated by law, other forms of internships are not, and thus conditions are often determined unilaterally by the employer.

Most countries declared that there is no legal age limit for internships. Only Poland (15 years of age or above) and Bulgaria and Malta (16 or above) replied that there was a minimum age for traineeships.

Recognition and certificates

Recognition is an important aspect of traineeships and apprenticeships: the recognition of acquired competences can give future employers positive and more precise information on skills possessed and those to be developed. However, it seems that – although there may have been confusion between traineeships and apprenticeships – in many European countries recognition/certification is not always provided. A young person may finish their internship without a certificate (Italy, Sweden, Bulgaria, Romania, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Cyprus). In contrast, in France internships are compulsory and organised within the framework of initial training or recognised vocational training. Poland also reported official certificates for students.

The presence of a monitoring body often depends on the kind of internship/apprenticeship: for example, in Portugal for apprenticeships the competent institution is the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (although the monitoring carried out by this institution is considered inadequate). The situation is similar in Sweden and Bulgaria. In the Netherlands companies are keen to be known for providing good quality traineeships. In Malta the institutions of reference are the National Commission for Higher Education and the Qualification Recognition Centre. Malta and Sweden confirm the existence/implementation of the European Qualification Framework, while in France internships are recognised but the use of European Credits for Vocational Education and Training is not systematic. In Poland, Italy, Spain and Cyprus the Europass is known, introduced between 2005 (Italy) and 2007 (Spain).

These survey results, despite their incompleteness, provide an interesting picture of how the trade unions in the various countries perceive the economic and social challenges facing their societies and what strategies they would advocate to improve the situation. It also seems that countries with similar transition regimes, as identified in the literature, have similar outcomes.



Conclusions

The literature on transitions from school-to-work stresses the importance of coordinating several policy fields in order to ensure the smooth entry of young people into the labour market. An OECD report of 2000 (OECD 2000) stated that successful transitions into the labour market need a healthy economy; well-coordinated pathways; an education system coupled with workplace experience; but also adequate safety nets as well as information and guidance. These elements are particularly important because: a) as the scarcity of jobs has, among other things, a negative effect on structural unemployment and increases competition between low-skilled and high-skilled young workers; b) better coordination between education and labour market institutions should prevent mismatches but, at the same time, not distort or reduce the wider social goal of education to mere economic goals; c) adequate unemployment benefits, scholarship programmes for young workers who have not succeeded in making the transition. Finally, e) information and guidance are crucial not only at school level but also on the job as well as during other critical periods when young people are most or willing to reorient their professional lives and need to find a job that matches their expectations and competences in the best possible way.

In the last two years most of these dimensions have been particularly difficult to achieve in most European countries, where the situation of young people (15-29) in transition to the labour market has become bleaker. The transition is taking even longer and some commentators and researchers have advanced the hypothesis that we might be facing a "lost generation" (Math 2011) if major steps are not taken to combat serious social and economic problems.

This means that not only are young people now dealing with increasing labour market and social precariousness; but that they will also be more likely to experience unemployment and reduced social security in the future as several member states have focused mostly on deregulating labour markets while overlooking the importance of adequate social security systems.

Despite an increasingly educated young population, young people have been greatly affected by the crisis. Furthermore, a decline in the quality of jobs held by young people has been recorded with an increase in temporary and involuntary part-time jobs, which are likely to undermine young people's living standards as well as their capacity for building an autonomous future (Math 2011).

Moreover, the dramatic social situation may be exacerbated by some political decisions aimed at reducing public expenditure in order to combat increasing economic losses: in the UK for instance, funds for creating

new jobs for youth were withdrawn, as well as the allowance for disadvantaged young people for staying longer in education (Melrose 2012). In addition, in several European countries public spending cuts have affected education systems, thus undermining their efficiency and quality: freezing/cutting teachers' salaries, but also reducing material and services as well as direct funding (such as in Ireland, Italy and Romania) (ETUCE 2010). Reduced funding for higher education (EUA 2011) in some EU member states will probably have a greater impact on young people coming from more disadvantaged backgrounds – who will find it more difficult to access higher education – but cuts might also lead to reduced services and quality in higher education institutions that cannot always rely on alternative private investments.

Some member states have adopted temporary solutions to combat mounting youth social problems: in Italy, for example, temporary access to (reduced) social benefits has been extended to fixed-term, temporary agency workers as well as to apprentices (EEOR 2011); in Belgium, for instance, incentives for employers to hire young people have been reinforced as a response to the crisis (Viprey 2011).

The crisis has pushed governments to reconsider some institutional arrangements that have shown themselves to be limited in easing the transition from school to work: in Italy, a country where vocational education is not considered an attractive option and where unpaid traineeships have proliferated at all educational levels, a new reform of traineeships and apprenticeships has recently been approved¹⁶ with the aim of encouraging employers to look at young people as a good investment, providing a clear and more binding legal framework as well as more guarantees for young people.

Social partners have also decided to commit themselves to tackling youth unemployment and to proposing joint solutions both at the national level (the bipartite 2011 agreement in France) and at the European level. In fact, the EU social partners will negotiate a framework of actions on Youth employment in 2012 within the context of their 2012-2014 work programme.

The data emphasises the fact that the situation of young people differs greatly from member state to member state: in some countries poor labour market outcomes might be contingent on a temporarily hard economic and social situation; while in other member states the economic downturn has unveiled profound structural problems that demand short-time interventions and long-term investments and policies.

The literature on transitions tends to group countries in a few clusters on the basis of their educational systems, their labour markets and their welfare systems. However, different patterns of transitions have also been shown to depend on personal, social and geographical factors, as well as their shared aspects.

Together with the quality of the labour market participation (e.g. temporary employment, overqualification, underemployment, involuntary part time, work-life balance), education systems are often criticised for not providing young people with the marketable and suitable skills that are needed by the labour market.

In this respect, the main ideas put forward in the EU documents dealing with youth, education, labour market and social policies seem to be that policies should aim at increasing employability, educational and job mobility.

¹⁶ http://www.lavoro.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/D492B74F-D788-4EDF-A491-41F8CB3B9C83/0/20110813_DL_138.pdf

While these concepts are indeed crucial in creating the knowledge economy, they could be too limited if they do not take into account the element of employability, including geographical differences mainly dependent on the place of residence and the composition of people in that place (Gautié 2009), thereby neglecting the importance of creating real and long-lasting job opportunities, and the role played by the demand side. In the last 20 years, in fact, labour market policies have been targeting the supply side, based on the widespread rationale that gaining employability is first and foremost an individual responsibility (Lødemel and Trickey 2001). On the other hand, less attention has been paid to the role that the demand side could play (meaning, for instance, investing resources or creating learning-friendly legal and economic arrangements) in training young people who are leaving the education system.

The role played by the demand side (private and public employers) is crucial in filling some of the gaps that the education systems fails (or is not meant) to do. Traineeships and internships may be a good method if they are quality working experiences, limited in time and meant to really invest in youth skills and competences. Unfortunately, in some EU member states, these on-the-job experiences have often been misused or considered as a substitute for flexible and cheap (or free) work (see the section on the ETUC survey).

It seems that this crisis has pushed young people in four main directions: inactivity, unemployment, and return to school or emigration. Rates of inactivity (people who are not looking for employment and are discouraged) and also belonging to the "grey zone" of being unemployed but not actively looking for work have increased in several countries (Math 2011). An increase of inactivity has been shown in the statistics of NEETs, which can be considered as an indicator of people at risk of social exclusion (Persano 2011), especially if it becomes more difficult to find a way out. Mobility, or emigration, is another exit option that young people consider in these hard times. Despite the lack of recent or accurate statistics, it has been widely reported that this has been the case for young Italians, Spanish and Irish (Math 2011, Persano 2011). This should therefore prevent a blindly positive analysis of the increased mobility of young people in Europe as it might not be due to a deliberate decision but as the last option left for escaping a gloomy future. Moreover, educational or job mobility might become a one-way outflow from some countries, leaving them without important human and social capital if educational and job opportunities are not created to attract young people back or attract young people from other countries.

The same hope of finding better opportunities in the future has also forced some young people into staying longer in education in order to postpone dealing with the current difficult situation. However, they might also have to face it in the coming years if the situation is not tackled properly now.

Finally, demonstrations organised by new spontaneous youth and social organisations have positively contributed to putting the youth situation high on the social and economic agendas in several member states.



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Annexes

Table 1 Policy regimes focused on initial education and training

Regimes	Vocational	Academic	Universal
Principle of justice	Access to an occupational or craft community (vocation)	School-based merit system ('rank' and selection)	Compensation of initial inequalities ('solidarity' and social cohesion)
Conception of skills in initial education and training	Overall mastery of a trade or profession	Education and training levels	Reconciliation of knowledge and skills
Certification	Recognised qualification	Certification by an academic authority	National diploma
Nature of programme	Content determined by negotiation	Discipline-based standards	Interaction between different kinds of knowledge
Area of recognition	Occupational labour market	Internal and hierarchical market	'Multi-transitional' labour market
Key actor in initial education and training	Company	Public education institutions	Community of partners
VOTEC objective	Professional rules	Signs of abilities	Social citizenship
Main risk	Stigmatisation of those without qualifications	Sharp inequalities in schooling	Increased collective costs
Key actor in institutional regulation	Social partners at occupational branch level	Educational institution	Public authorities
Continuing training objectives	Higher levels of professional mastery	Short term adaptation of skills	Social autonomy
Political responsibility for employability	Collective agreements at occupational branch level	Companies and public bodies	National tripartism
Funding of continuing training	Professional academies and individuals	Companies and employers' groups	Public agencies and mutual funds

Source: Verdier (2007)

Table 2 Non-hierarchical policy regimes

Regimes	Market	Public and private networks
Principle of justice	Utility of services provided	Fair price for quality
VOTEC objective	Human capital	Social capital
Conception of skills in initial education and training	Meeting a demand (possibly on the job)	Portfolio of operational skills
Certification	Level of remuneration (matching)	Attestation of skills
Nature of programme	NA	Quality procedure
Area of recognition	Immediate transaction (spot market)	External 'organised' markets
Key actor in initial training	Individuals as consumers	'Guided' individuals
Main risk of failure	Under-investment in training	Inefficient incentives
Conception of continuing training	Utility of service provision	Diversified skills portfolio
Political responsibility and employability	Individuals	'Active' individuals and agencies
Funding	Individual and direct payment, loans	Training vouchers, individual training accounts

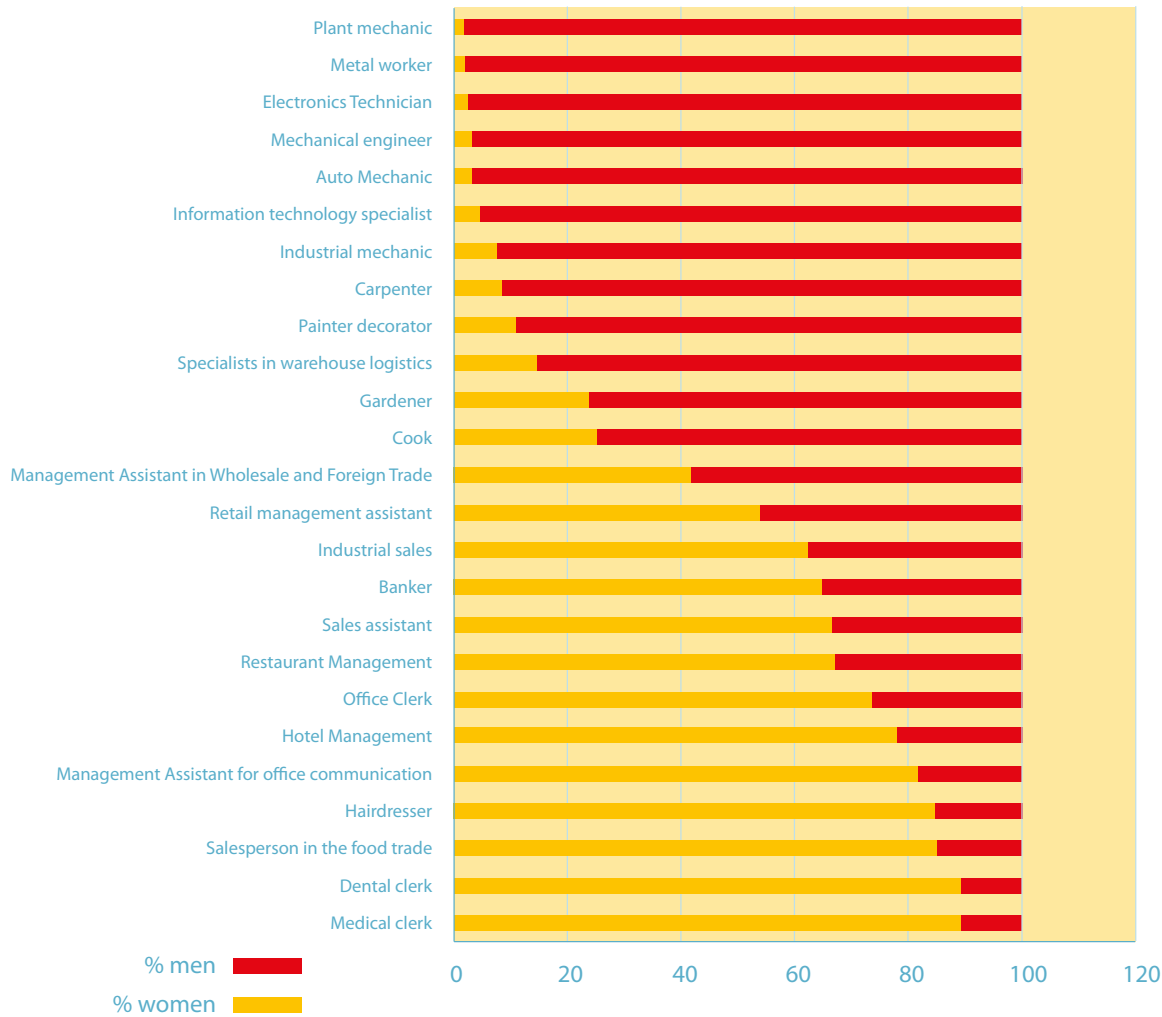
Source: Verdier (2007)

Table 3 Transition regimes across Europe

Dimension Regime	Country	School	Training	Social security	Employment Regime	Female Employment	Concept of Youth	Concept of Disadvantage	Focus of Transition Policies	Expenditure* Educ/F&C/ALMP	Policy trend
Universalistic	Denmark Finland	Not selective	Flexible standards (mixed)	State	Open Low risks	High	Personal development, Citizenship	Individualized and structure-related	Education Activation	DK: 8,3 / 3,8 / 1,5 FI: 6,3 / 3,0 / 0,7	Liberal (more labour market orientation)
Employment-centred	Austria Germany France Netherlands	Selective	Standardized (dual)	State / family	Closed Risks at the margins	Medium	Adaptation to social positions	Individualized	(Pre-) vocational training	A: 5,4 / 3,0 / 0,5 D: 4,5 / 3,3 / 0,6 F: NL:	Liberal (more activation)
Liberal	Ireland UK	Principally not selective	Flexible, low standards (mixed)	State / family	Open, High risks	High	Early economic independence	Individualized	Employability	IE: 4,8 / 2,5 / 0,5 UK: 5,5 / 1,6 / 0,1	Liberal (more education)
Sub-protective	Italy Portugal Spain	Not Selective	Low standards and coverage (mainly school)	Family	Closed High risks (Informal work)	Low	Without distinct status	Structure-related	Some status (work, education, training)	IT: 4,4 / 1,1 / 0,5 PT: 5,4 / 1,2 / 0,5 ES: 4,2 / 1,2 / 0,6	Liberal (deregulation) and employment-centred (training)
Post-socialist countries	Bulgaria Romania Slovakia Slovenia	Principally not selective	Standards in process of transformation (mixed)	Family state	Closed High risks	Low (except Slovenia)	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	BG: 4,5 / 1,1 / 0,4 RO: 3,5 / 1,4 / 0,1 SK: 3,9 / 1,9 / 0,2 SI: 5,8 / 1,9 / 0,2	BG, RO: Employment-centred SK: Liberal SI: Universal

Source: Walther, Stauber and Pohl (2009)

Figure 1 Trainees on VET programmes in Germany in 2010 by gender



Source: Kirkup (2011)

Abbreviations

Austria	AT
Belgium	BE
Bulgaria	BG
Croatia	HR
Cyprus	CY
Czech Republic	CZ
Denmark	DK
Estonia	EE
European Union (27 countries)	EU27
Finland	FI
France	FR
Germany (including former GDR from 1991)	DE
Greece	GR
Hungary	HU
Ireland	IE
Italy	IT
Latvia	LV
Lithuania	LT
Luxembourg	LU
Malta	MT
Netherlands	NL
Poland	PL
Portugal	PT
Romania	RO
Slovakia	SK
Slovenia	SL
Spain	ES
Sweden	SE
United Kingdom	UK

Educational Attainments

ISCED 0	(ISCED 0) is defined as the initial stage of organised instruction, designed primarily to introduce very young children to a school-type environment, that is, to provide a bridge between home and a school-based atmosphere.	Pre-primary education
ISCED 1	It usually begins at ages five, six or seven and lasts for four to six years (the mode of the OECD countries being six years). Programmes at the primary level generally require no previous formal education	Primary education
ISCED 2	Continues the basic programmes of primary education, although teaching is typically more subject-focused, often employing more specialised teachers to conduct classes.	Lower secondary education
ISCED 3	Final stage of secondary education that normally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entrance age is usually 15 or 16 years. Entrance qualifications (completion of compulsory education) and other minimum entry requirements are generally needed. Instruction is often more subject-oriented than lower secondary education (ISCED 2). The typical duration of ISCED level 3 varies from two to five years.	Upper secondary education
ISCED 4	These programmes straddle the boundary between upper secondary and tertiary education. They serve to broaden the knowledge of upper secondary education graduates. These programmes are designed to prepare students for studies at the first stage of tertiary education or for direct labour market entry. They do not lead to a tertiary qualification.	Post-secondary non-tertiary
ISCED 5	This level includes tertiary programmes with: academic orientation (type A) largely theoretical; (b) occupation orientation (type B) usually shorter and geared to the labour market.	Tertiary education
ISCED 6	Advanced Research Qualifications refer to tertiary programmes that lead directly to the award of an advanced research qualification, for example, PhD. The theoretical duration of these programmes is three years full-time in most countries.	Tertiary education

Source: CEDEFOP Terminology of European education and training policy A selection of 100 key terms, 2008 and OECD Statistical Glossary Online.

Questionnaire

I. FIRST PART – GENERAL TRANSITION MEASURES

A. Trade unions' perspective on actors' cooperation involved in transitions

1. What are the main problems and challenges linked with the education system that should be tackled to ease the transition to the labour market?

.....

.....

2. What are the main problems and challenges linked with labour market and social policies that should be tackled to ease the transition to the labour market?

.....

.....

3. Coordination, networking and cooperation between the different stakeholders (school, employers, trade unions, social partners, parents' associations, students' associations) participating in transitions from school-to work are often described as crucial.

- 3.1 How would you evaluate this cooperation among relevant actors in your country?
(actors: school, training institutions, employers, trade unions, social partners, parents' associations, students' associations,...)

.....

.....

- 3.2 Is this cooperation institutionalized and regulated? How? And among which actors?
Could you please give an example (e.g. at national/local/regional level)?

.....

.....

- 3.3 If you consider this cooperation among actors to be weak, how would you suggest strengthening it?

.....

.....

- 3.4 Which role does your union have in this cooperation? And how would you evaluate it?

.....

.....

B. At school - Preventive measures for transitions

These questions deal with the characteristics and measures implemented at school level which aim at preventing a long transition period after school and the labour market, they usually target both pupils/students as well as early school leavers.

Guidance

1. Guiding and orienting young people who are about to leave or have just left education is crucial in making a good first step into the labour market. (e.g. individual, collective information meeting, meeting with counsellor...)
 - 1.1 In your country are guidance measures implemented at school level?
 Yes No
 - 1.2 From which school level are they implemented? (Low secondary, upper secondary...)
 Yes No
 - 1.3 Are they generally found in every kind of school?
 Yes No
 - 1.4 Are guidance and orienting programmes also usually provided to apprentices involved in on-the-job training (VET)?
 Yes No
 - 1.5 How would you evaluate these measures in terms of improved familiarity and knowledge of job opportunities?
 Yes No
2. Is there any systematic monitoring of early school leavers (with at most low-secondary education)?
 Yes No
 - 2.1 Are there specific (national, regional, local) programmes targeting early school leavers in order to bring them back to school, shorter qualifying training programmes or second chance schools?
 Yes No
3. Is there any systematic monitoring of at-risk students (e.g. minorities, disadvantaged background- family, at-risk neighborhood...)? At what level?
 Yes No
 - 3.1 Are there specific (national, regional, local) programmes targeting *at-risk students* in order to better orient them, provide them with shorter qualifying training programmes, specific language training or second chance schools?
 Yes No
4. How would you evaluate these measures in terms of improved job opportunities?
5. Are trade unions/social partners actively involved in these programmes for early school leavers and/or at-risk youth?
 Yes No

5.1 Have they developed their own programmes/initiatives or do they collaborate within the school?

.....
.....

Social partners and vocational education

1. In the context of *vocational education*, to what extent and how are social partners involved?

.....
.....

2. Are trade unions/social partners involved in consultations/agreements/negotiations which regulate apprenticeships?

.....
.....

3. To what extent has the crisis had an impact on apprenticeships? (availability, quantity, quality of training provided, renegotiation of previous agreement with employers associations, schools....)

.....
.....

C. After-school transition measures : labour market policies for transition

These questions deal with labour market policies which are intended to provide skills, guidance, and fiscal support to students who have completed education and are entering the labour market.

Guidance

1. Are guidance measures provided to unemployed young people (with and without unemployed benefit)? (e.g Job search sessions, individual and collective meetings with counsellors, online ...)

.....
.....

2. Do they target some specific groups? (Long-term unemployed, less educated young people, from disadvantaged young people?)

Yes No

3. Who provides these guidance programmes? Public and/or private institutions? At which level?

.....
.....

4. Are trade unions/social partners involved in the design/implementation/monitoring of these policies?

Yes No

Skills and training

Skills and knowledge acquired at school often need to be completed/improved with further work-place oriented training.

1. Which training opportunities are available for young people after finishing school?
(e.g. language training, specific job training, short vocational training courses,...)

Are they particularly targeted to a specific group?

Yes No

2. How would you evaluate these measures in terms of increased labour market chances?

.....
.....

3. Have one or more of these policies been modified as response to the crisis? How?

(e.g. budget allocated, numbers of actors involved, increased population target, change in the access requirements,...)

Yes No

How?

4. Are trade unions/social partners involved in the design/implementation/monitoring of these policies?

Yes No

Entrepreneurship

1. Can young people receive support to start up their own business ? How?
(e.g. guidance, reduced loan rate, reduced taxes for starting up, subsidies...)

Yes No

How?

2. Have one or more of these policies been modified as an answer to the crisis? And How?

(e.g. budget allocated, numbers of actors involved, increased population target, change in the access requirements,...)

Yes No

How?

Incentives for young people and employers

1. Are fiscal incentives adopted which reduce young people's work cost to the employer or support young people's wages?

Yes No

2. Are they particularly targeted to specific groups and/or sectors of activity?

Yes No

3. How would you evaluate these incentives and subsidies?

.....
.....

4. Have one or more of these policies been modified as an answer to the crisis? And How?

Yes No

How?

II. SECOND PART – AN “ATYPICAL” TRANSITION MEASURE: TRAINEESHIPS

Internships/traineeships, defined as on-the-job training done voluntarily outside formal education, have been dramatically on the rise.

Due to very different (and still largely unexplored) arrangements in member states, your additional comments to questions are very welcome whenever you feel more details will give a better picture of the situation in your country

Section A: Traineeships

1. Are records or statistics collected about traineeships in your country ?

Yes No

If **yes**, since.....

If **yes**, are they available to the public?

Yes No

2. Could you estimate how many young people out of the student population have engaged in traineeships in the last year?

- Less than 10% of students of (secondary, post-secondary /tertiary education).
- Between the 10% and 20% of students (secondary, post-secondary/tertiary education).
- Between the 20% and 30% of students (secondary, post-secondary/tertiary education).
- Between the 20% and 30% of students (secondary, post-secondary /tertiary education).
- More than 30% of students (secondary, post-secondary /tertiary education).
- Other (please specify).....

3. Do you know the exact absolute number for each category? (secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education)?

..... of students in or with a secondary school diploma

..... of students in or with a post-secondary school degree

..... of students in or with a tertiary school degree

Additional comments

4. In which sectors are students more often engaged in traineeships in your country?

(please tick one or more boxes below if applicable)

- In the service sector (e.g. banks, consulting agencies)
- In the industrial sector (e.g. production of goods)
- In the public sector (e.g. public services and public administration)
- In the public administration but in foreign countries (e.g. embassies, consulates,...)
- Abroad and mostly in the service sector
- Abroad and mostly in the industrial sector
- In international organisations (e.g. UN, NATO)
- Other *(please specify)*.....

Additional comment

5. How old are young people **at their first** traineeship experience?

- less than 18 years old
- between 18 and 20 years old
- between 20 and 23 years old
- between 23 and 25 years old
- More than 25 years old

6. Do you know or what would be your estimation of the trend of traineeship in the last 5 years? (strongly increased, increased, remained stable,...decrease)

.....
.....

7. Which sector(s) has(have) experienced the highest increase?

.....
.....

8. Who usually engages in traineeships according to social background?

- All students regardless their socio-economic background
- Mostly students with a medium/high socio-economic background
- Mostly students with a medium/low socio-economic background
- Data on social-background is not estimated/available
- I don't know

9. How do students usually finance resources if traineeships are not paid?

(please tick one or more boxes if applicable)

- students' bank loans
- financial support from family/parents
- scholarships provided by the school/university

- scholarships provided by private institutions
- scholarships provided by national or regional bodies
- other (please specify)

10. Which are the main reasons for taking up a traineeship? (please tick one or more boxes if applicable)

- no regular (fixed, long-term, part/full time) job opportunities are available for young people without working experience
- students prefer trying different tasks before engaging in long-term contracts
- traineeships are a valid stepping stone to enter into regular labour market
- traineeships are a good opportunity to go abroad
- traineeships are the only way to get some practical experience
- other (please specify)

Section B: regulations

11. Do national or regional laws regulate traineeships? And if so, from when and at what level? (please tick one or more boxes below if applicable)

- Yes, there are regulations at the *regional* level , from.....
- Yes, there are regulations at the *national* level, from
- Yes, there are regulations both at the *national and regional* level, from.....
- Yes, there are formal regulations at *industrial sector* level
- Yes, there are formal regulations at *company/institution* level
- No, there are *no* formal regulations for traineeships either at national/regional level or at company/sector level
- Additional comment

12. If you ticked YES in the question above, could you please indicate the reference of the law or regulation?

.....

.....

13. What does this legislation regulate? (please tick one or more boxes below if applicable)

- wage and/or allowances
- insurance at the workplace and/or on the way to the workplace
- the content of the traineeship
- the quality of the traineeship
- the recognition of the traineeship
- social security entitlements
- it leaves complete freedom to the parts involved in the agreement
- it has the same structure and dispositions of a normal contract
- other (please specify)

14. Is there a legal age limit to engage in a traineeship?

Yes No

I don't know

If Yes, it is

15. Are students paid during the traineeships?

Yes, they usually receive a wage/allowance

No, usually they are not paid but they often receive benefits (rent for the apartment; free meals; other discounts)

No, usually they are not paid

It depends on the company/institution arrangement

other (*please specify*)

Additional comment

.....

16. If trainees are paid, is the amount given..... (wage/allowance plus benefits if present)

Insufficient to allow the trainee to pay core living expenses
(i.e. the rent and other fundamental living costs)

Enough to pay only part of core living expenses and other financial resources are necessary
(parents', family's help, bank loans...)

Usually enough to cover all core living expenses

Additional comment

.....

17. If students receive other benefits, what can they be? (please tick one or more boxes below)

rent (or part of it) for housing

free meals

free public transport

discount for purchasing company services or goods (e.g. reduced fees for bank accounts,...)

other (*please specify*)

Additional comment

.....

18. Are trainees covered by social security?

yes as regular workers

yes but with different provisions compared to regular workers

it depends on the company/sectors of the traineeship

No

other (*please specify*)

19. Is there any legal sanction that is applied in case of “traineeship exploitation” (e.g. for engaging trainees to do normal jobs, i.e. substitution; for bad working conditions; for not respecting the agreement with the trainee or with the educational institution) by employers?

.....
.....

Section C: Labour market

20. Which is the average number of traineeships usually done?

0 1 2 3 more than 3

21. Traineeships usually result in regular contracts (fixed/open-end contract - full/part time job)

very often often seldom rarely

22. Traineeships are used as substitute for regular work....

very often often seldom rarely

Section D: Certificates and quality

23. Are official certificates used to certify skills and competences acquired by the trainee?

(please tick one or more boxes below if applicable)

- Yes, there is/are one/more official national/regional certificate/s
 Yes, each company/institution usually has its own certificate which is normally recognised
 No, there is no official certificate and students might conclude their traineeships without any certificate
 other *(please specify)*

Additional comment

.....

24. Is there any official institution/body/office which assures/controls/assesses the quality of traineeships?

.....

25. Are European certificates and frameworks used to certify competences, skills acquired and their quality?

Europass ECVET EQF None of them

other *(please specify)*

26. If European certification tools are used, could you indicate from when they have been implemented?

.....

.....

Section E: trade unions and traineeships

27. Do you think that traineeships have become a social issue in your country?

Yes No

28. Does your confederation/federation have a specialist or dedicated youth representative for dealing with traineeship problems? *(please tick one box)*

Yes No

29. Could you specify what kind of support your federation/confederation provides to trainees?

.....

30. If you ticked NO in the above question, is your federation or confederation planning to set up this service?

.....

31. There could be a range of activities organised for helping/advising trainees. If one or more of the activities mentioned below are applied, how useful are those activities in practice for advising/helping trainees? *(please tick one box for each activity and in case the activity is not organised tick the 'non applicable' box)*

	Very effective	Effective	Intermediate	Ineffective	Very ineffective	Not applicable
Providing a magazine or newsletter for trainees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing special services for trainees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping trainees with administrative procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing advice in case of legal issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lobbying governments and employers' associations to have traineeships skills nationally and internationally recognised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing advice on job opportunities after the traineeship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establishing and maintaining informal networks of trainees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

32. There could be various channels to reach trainees and students. If one or more of the channels mentioned below are applied, how useful are those channels in practice for reaching “the trainees population”? (please tick one box for each channel and if the channel is not used tick the ‘non applicable’ box)

	Very effective	Effective	Intermediate	Ineffective	Very ineffective	Not applicable
Active at university campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Active in <i>ad hoc</i> job fairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Active on websites (<i>blog, Facebook, ...</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Active at job information conventions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertisement on youth television channels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertisement in youth magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

33. What do you think would be the greatest challenges for the trade unions in their project of helping/supporting trainees?

.....

.....

34. If you think about topics to reach trainees, what was in general the dominant issue of concern? (please tick as many boxes as are appropriate)

- Job tenure
- Wages/allowances
- working conditions
- Job security
- Traineeships quality
- Skills recognitions (e.g. official certificates)
- Other benefits
- Another issue (please specify)

Section F: Respondent and trade union details

35. The researchers engaged on this project may be interested in talking to representatives who completed the questionnaire to ascertain more details on traineeships regulation and the action of your confederation/federation.

36. Would you be interested in participating in such a discussion? If you are interested in participating, please write your name and contact details below.

Name:

Position:

Contact details:



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