



## **Fact sheet on education and training at European level**

2 October 2008

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The fact sheet provides evidence-based information and data about education and training in the 27 Council of Europe member states that are also members of the European Union.

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## INTRODUCTION

The multifaceted picture of Europe, its different countries and regions, is also reflected by the very wide variety of education and training systems. The differences in the systems are also reflected in the available statistics, which make comparisons between countries difficult. This fact sheet provides a concise set of indicators showing and comparing (where possible) various aspects of educational investment, performance and outcomes of recent years. The most relevant information on these indicators is summarised in the fact sheet. Links guide you to further in-depth information that cannot be covered within the limits of this introductory text.

## SELECTION OF INDICATORS

The selection process applied was based on the 16 core indicators for monitoring progress towards the European Union's Lisbon objectives in education and training. This coherent framework was approved by the Education Council conclusions on 25th May 2007 (Council of the European Union 2007). These 16 core indicators include 5 benchmarks to be achieved by 2010, of which four are considered of relevance for the fact sheet. "Participation in lifelong learning", "Learning to learn skills" (development of an indicator still in progress) and "Civic skills" (no data for all dimensions available) are not included here<sup>1</sup>.

### INDICATORS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) Number of school students and higher education students       | 2) Ages of school students and duration of full-time compulsory education |
| 3) Investment in education and training                          | 4) Completion of upper secondary education                                |
| 5) Early school leavers  | 6) Higher education graduates   |
| 7) Number of tertiary graduates in Maths, Science and Technology | 8) Cross-national mobility of students in higher education                |
| 9) Language skills (Foreign languages learnt per pupil)          | 10) ICT skills  |
| 11) Low reading achievement                                      | 12) Education and working status of 15- to 24-year-                       |

<sup>1</sup> Please visit the download centre of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) for the latest developments at <http://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/CRELL%20publications.htm>

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
|   | olds in the EU |
| 13) Labor force statistics by educational attainment of 15-24 year olds |                |

## DATA SPECIFICATION

Where possible data has been taken into account fulfilling the requirements outlined in points a) to d) below. In cases where this has not been possible, annotations on the available data are made in the text.

- 27 member states of the EU (Austria[AT], Belgium[BE], Bulgaria [BG], Cyprus [CY], Czech Republic [CZ], Denmark [DK], Estonia [EE], Finland [FI], France [FR], Germany [DE], Greece [EL], Hungary [HU], Ireland [IE], Italy [IT], Latvia [LV], Lithuania [LT], Luxembourg [LU], Malta [MT], Poland [PL], Portugal [PT], Rumania [RO], Slovak Republic [SK], Slovenia [SI], Spain [ES], Sweden [SE], The Netherlands [NL], United Kingdom [UK]).
- Age group (0-30)<sup>2</sup>.
- Data reference year 2005 or later.<sup>3</sup>
- Where available and appropriate, gender-specific breakdowns.

## STATISTICAL INDICATORS

### YOUTH POPULATION IN EUROPE

In 2007 an estimated 495.090.000 people (254 Mio females) lived in EU-Europe (27 countries), of which 28,4% (~140.605.560) were 24 years or younger. The proportion of the people considered as young people has been steadily decreasing since 1975.

| Proportion of population aged 0-24 years - share of total population (%) |       |       |       |       |       |       |      |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|
|  | 1996  | 2000  | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005 | 2006  | 2007  |
| EU - 27  | 31,9% | 30,5% | 30,1% | 29,8% | 29,5% | 29,3% | 29%  | 28,7% | 28,4% |

The proportion of the population younger than 14 years (as a share of the total population) in 2007 was lowest in Bulgaria (13,4%), Germany (13,9%) and Latvia (14,0%) and highest in Denmark (18,6%), France (18,6%) and Ireland (20,3%).

<sup>2</sup> Statistics provided by the standard reference sources generally define the youth population as those aged under 25 (depending on the issue at hand, either 0-24 or 15-24) and the adult population as those aged 25 and older. The working-age population is defined as those aged 25-64. Contemporary youth studies understands the life-phase 'youth' as extending from around 13 to around 30 years old. Therefore it includes both 'tweenies' and 'young adults'. This means that many statistical breakdowns cover only part of the social group 'young people'. Bringing statistical definitions into line with the theoretically and empirically informed understandings of 'youth' in Europe would constitute an enormous challenge. Since most comparative statistics are based on datasets collected at national level, which can introduce another layer of definitional difference into the picture, it is extremely difficult to resolve the problem in the short-term.

<sup>3</sup> Links to statistics are only valid for a limited amount of time – Eurostat only provides a limited amount of data in predefined tables – others have to be defined by the user – therefore it is not possible to define links to these tables.

URL: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00010>

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2007

## 1. NUMBER OF SCHOOL STUDENTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

The number of school students and higher education students in EU-Europe (27) decreased from 98.318.300 in 2005 to 93.900.800 in 2006. The countries with the highest numbers of school students and higher education students were Germany (14.393.500), United Kingdom (12.735.800) and France (12.320.500). The countries with lowest numbers of school students included Cyprus (146.000), Malta (78.100) and Luxemburg (77.100). These numbers include the total number of persons who were enrolled in the regular education system in each country. It covers all levels of education from primary education to postgraduate studies.

| Breakdown of total number of school students and higher education students (% of total) |        |        |                            |      |                                    |      |   |      |                    |      |
|---|--------|--------|----------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|---|------|--------------------|------|
|   | Total  |        | Primary level of education |      | Lower secondary level of education |      | Upper and post-secondary non-tertiary education |      | Tertiary education |      |
|   | 2000   | 2005   | 2000                       | 2005 | 2000                               | 2005 | 2000  | 2005 | 2000               | 2005 |
| <b>EU-27</b>  | 95.840 | 98.318 | 32,5                       | 29,3 | 23,7                               | 23,8 | 27,2  | 27,9 | 16,6               | 18,8 |

URL:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00051>

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=2693,70381876,2693\\_70592044&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=2693,70381876,2693_70592044&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2006/2005

Note: Pre-primary education is not included in this data

## 2. AGES OF SCHOOL STUDENTS AND DURATION OF FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

In most European countries full-time compulsory education finishes at the age of 15 or 16 and lasts nine or ten years. Compulsory education is significantly higher in Hungary (13 years), the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (both 12 years). Since 2000 several European countries have begun (or have completed) a process of restructuring their educational system. As a result compulsory education has been extended in Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Slovakia and Poland by one year and two years in Latvia, Hungary and Romania. In some countries (such as Germany) young people must continue education or training (for example in the dual system of apprenticeship) until the age of 18. This participation need not be full-time (typically: apprenticeship system) and it may not involve school attendance at all (for example, youth training projects with integrated learning and working).

URL: <http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/FigurePage?pubid=052EN&figCode=052B1>

Country coverage: EU - 27

Latest data available: 2005

## 3. INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ANNUAL EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PER SCHOOL STUDENT / HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS)

The estimated expenditure per school student/higher education student in public and private institutions increased in recent years to the amount of 5.646,9 € per year:

|       | 2001     | 2002     | 2003     | 2004     | 2005     |
|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| EU-27 | 5058.6 € | 5281.1 € | 5388.2 € | 5466.8 € | 5646.9 € |

This overall number covers huge differences between EU-member states: In Austria investment is highest with 8.292,8 € (followed by Denmark (8.243,6 €) and Sweden (7.203,6 €)) and lowest in Romania 1.454,2 € (Bulgaria (1.993,2€), Lithuania (2.475,5 €)). The data for investment in education and training as a proportion of GDP show a different picture. The European average is 5,03% with Denmark (8,28%) and Sweden (6,97%) still on top but closely followed by Cyprus (6,92%); Romania (3,81%), Luxembourg (3,81%) and Malta (2,93%) return the lowest levels. In addition, countries vary a lot with respect to the relative proportions they expend on different sectors (e.g. primary schooling in comparison with tertiary education).

URL: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00067>  
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1996,45323734&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/edtr/educ/educ\\_finance&language=en&product=EU\\_MASTER\\_education\\_training&root=EU\\_MASTER\\_education\\_training&scrollto=0](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/edtr/educ/educ_finance&language=en&product=EU_MASTER_education_training&root=EU_MASTER_education_training&scrollto=0)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2005

Note: Expenditure per school students /higher education student in public and private institutions measures how much central, regional and local levels of government, private households, religious institutions and firms spent per pupil/student. It includes expenditure for personnel, other current and capital expenditure.

#### 4. COMPLETION OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

The completion of upper secondary education is one of the five benchmarks for the Lisbon strategy in the field of education: In 2010 a rate of 85% of upper secondary attainment of young people (aged 20-24) by 2010 should be achieved. However, the share of young people (aged 20-24) who have completed upper-secondary education has only slightly improved (by 1,5 percentage points) since 2000 to an EU (27) average of 78,1% (2007). Currently, young women are more likely to achieve upper secondary school completion than young men. Overall, the difference is not to great (about 5% more young women complete), but there are noticeable variations according to country.

URL: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=2693,70381876,2693\\_70592044&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=2693,70381876,2693_70592044&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2007

#### 5. EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS

The percentage of early school leavers is one of the five benchmarks for the Lisbon strategy in the field of education (rates to be reduced to 10% by 2010). The percentage of early school leavers slightly decreased from 17.6% in 2000 to 14.8%. The proportion of male early school leavers (16.9%) was slightly higher than for females (12.7%) in all 27 EU countries.

| Early school leavers (%) |       |       |       |       |        |       |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
|                          | Total |       | Male  |       | Female |       |
|                          | 2000  | 2007  | 2000  | 2007  | 2000   | 2007  |
| EU-27                    | 17,6% | 14,8% | 19,7% | 16,9% | 15,6%  | 12,7% |

URL: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1073,46870091&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&\\_product\\_code=TSISC060](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46870091&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&_product_code=TSISC060)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2007

Note: Early school leavers refers to persons aged 18 to 24 in the following two conditions: the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short and respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (numerator).

## 6. HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES

|       | Total | Humanities and arts | Social sciences, business and law | Science, math. and computing | Engineering, manuf. and construction | Agriculture and veterinary | Health and welfare | Services |
|-------|-------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| EU-27 | 3.753 | 430                 | 1.359                             | 376                          | 478                                  | 60                         | 535                | 148      |

In 2005 3.75m people graduated, regardless of their degree subject; social sciences, business and law graduates are the most numerous (1.359m). The overall proportion of those aged 25-64 who hold a tertiary education qualification varies quite widely between countries, ranging from under 15 % (in the Czech Republic, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia) to over 30 % (in Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Finland and Norway). The weighted European average is 22.3 %. The percentage of persons having a degree is higher in younger age groups in nearly all EU-member states.<sup>5</sup>

URL:

<sup>4</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=2693,70381876,2693\\_70592044&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=2693,70381876,2693_70592044&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice/PubContents?pubid=088EN/>

[http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0\\_integral/052FN.pdf](http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0_integral/052FN.pdf)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2004/2005

## 7. NUMBER OF TERTIARY GRADUATES IN MATHS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The number of tertiary graduates in mathematics, science and technology (MST) is one of the five benchmarks for the Lisbon strategy in the field of education: between 2000 and 2010, the number of MST graduates should increase by 15%, at the same time achieving greater gender balance. The number of MST students has increased by more than 29% since 2000 with particular strong growth in Malta, Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Cyprus. For some countries, however, the number of MST students stagnated or even declined, as was the case in 2000/2001 in Austria. At EU level the female share of MST graduates increased, from 30.7 % in 2000 to 31.6% in 2006 still showing a high gender imbalance.

|       | Number of graduates (in 1000) |       |       | Per 1000 inhabitants aged 20-29 | Growth in graduates per year | Growth in graduates |
|-------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
|       | 2000                          | 2005  | 2006  | 2006                            | 2000-2006                    | 2006                |
| EU-27 | 686.2                         | 873.5 | 886.1 | 13.0                            | 4.4                          | 1.4                 |

URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html)

Country coverage: EU-27  
 Latest data available: 2006

## 8. CROSS-NATIONAL MOBILITY OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (MOBILITY OF STUDENTS IN THE ERASMUS PROGRAMME)

The total number of Erasmus students increased by 3.2 % in 2006/07 (2.3% in EU) compared with the previous year. Over 600.000 EU students now study abroad, an increase of about 50% compared to 2000. Three in four of these study in another EU member state. About 1.7 million students have taken part in the Erasmus mobility scheme since it started in 1987. Almost all European universities take part in Erasmus.

| Cross-national mobility of students in higher education |               |                   |                           |                   |
|---|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
|   | Students sent | Students received | Per 1000 students 2005/06 |                   |
|   | 2006/07       | 2006/07           | Students sent             | Students received |
| EU-27   | 153396        | 155070            | 8.2                       | 8.3               |

URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html)

Country coverage: EU - 27  
 Latest data available: 2007

## 9. LANGUAGE SKILLS (FOREIGN LANGUAGES LEARNT PER PUPIL)

In 2002, the Barcelona European Council recommended that at least two foreign languages should be learnt from a very early age by each pupil. This recommendation has been implemented to varying extents, e.g. in lower secondary education pupils each learn on average 1.4 foreign languages; this value rises to 1.6 in upper secondary general education. 86% of school students in EU member states were learning English in 2006. 7.9% of pupils were learning Spanish in 2006, which indicates an increase of more than 50% from 2000.

URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html)

Country coverage: EU-27  
 Latest data available: 2006

## 10. ICT SKILLS

Almost 90% of young EU-Europeans aged 16 to 24 years old have used a computer in the last three months. Whereas in older age groups higher levels of educational attainment are related to higher computer and internet use, there are smaller differences between the well-educated and those with low levels of education for the youngest cohorts. School infrastructure also exerts an important influence on ICT skills: 90% of schools in the EU are connected to the internet; 67% of all schools have broadband internet connection and 63% have their own website; on average, there are fewer than 10 pupils per computer in schools in the EU.

Usage of the Internet is significantly higher among younger cohorts, e.g. 95% of 14-19 year olds in Germany use the Internet.<sup>6</sup>

| ICT infrastructure |                                    |  |                   |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
|                    | Number of computers/<br>100 pupils | Broad band connection<br>in schools in % | Own web page in % |
| <b>EU-25</b>       | 11                                 | 67                                       | 63                |

URL:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html)

<sup>6</sup><http://www.yprt.eu/assets/includes/sendtext.cfm?aus=11&key=857>

Country coverage: EU-25

Latest data available: 2006

## 11. LOW READING ACHIEVEMENT

The percentage of low-achieving 15 year olds in reading literacy is one of the five benchmarks for the Lisbon strategy in the field of education: By 2010 the percentage should be decreased by at least 20% compared with 2000. In fact, the proportion of low performers in reading literacy has increased, from 21.3% in 2000 to 24.1% in 2006. The lowest proportion of low performers in reading has Finland (4.8%) followed by Ireland (12.1%) and Estonia (13.6%). Young people in these countries also achieve the highest overall rates of reading literacy levels in the world.

URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2006

## 12. EDUCATION AND WORKING STATUS OF 15-24 YEAR OLDS IN THE EU

The proportion of 15-24 year olds enrolled in formal education increased by 4% at EU level (2005) compared with 2000. There are huge country differences, with participation ranging from more than 65% in the Scandinavian countries to 42% in Cyprus and Malta. In almost half the EU countries, under one-third of 15-24 year olds *not* in education and training *are* in paid work, with especially high employment rates exceeding 50% in Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom. One year after leaving school many young Europeans were still without paid work – for example, in 2004 about one in five in The Netherlands and Denmark – and these are the countries that perform best in this respect. The risk of unemployment for young people is much higher for those with poor educational qualifications. But high-level qualifications are not necessarily a good protection against unemployment – it also depends on where one lives and the kinds of qualifications one has achieved. In most countries, youth unemployment levels are higher than those for people aged at least 25.

| Labour force statistics of 15- to 24-year-olds in the EU |                     |                       |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Employment rate (%) | Unemployment rate (%) |
| EU-27 Average  | 36,3                | 17,4                  |

URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2006/2004

### 13. LABOUR FORCE STATISTICS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF 15- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS

The level of educational attainment refers to the highest degree of education an individual has completed. Younger age groups everywhere tend to have higher educational attainment levels, so that in most EU member states (except Germany and Luxembourg) recent years have seen a general rise in the average educational levels of the working-age population as a whole. The overall tendency is clear across European countries – the higher the educational attainment, the higher the employment rate.

In 2015 around 30% of jobs are expected to require higher education (tertiary level) qualifications and almost half of all jobs will require at least medium-level (equivalent to upper secondary education level) qualifications.

| Education and working status of 15-24 year olds in the EU |                                  |            |              |                                     |            |              |                                   |            |              |
|---|----------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
|   | Low educational attainment level |            |              | Medium educational attainment level |            |              | High educational attainment level |            |              |
|   | Activity                         | Employment | Unemployment | Activity                            | Employment | Unemployment | Activity                          | Employment | Unemployment |
| EU-27 Average   | 31,6                             | 25,3       | 19,9         | 56,3                                | 48,8       | 13,3         | 69,7                              | 61,7       | 11,4         |

URL: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html)

Country coverage: EU-27

Latest data available: 2006

## RESOURCES

Commission of the European Communities: Commission staff working document: Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2007. Brussels, 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress06/report_en.pdf)

Commission of the European Communities: Commission staff working document: Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Indicators and benchmarks 2008. Brussels, 2008

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress08/report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progress08/report_en.pdf)

Council of the European Union: Council conclusions of 25 May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. C311, 25.5.2007

European Commission / Eurydice: Key data on education in Europe 2005. Luxembourg, 2005

[http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0\\_integral/052EN.pdf](http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0_integral/052EN.pdf)

European Commission / Eurydice: Key data on higher education in Europe 2007. Luxembourg, 2007  
[http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0\\_integral/052EN.pdf](http://www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0_integral/052EN.pdf)

Schenk, M., Wolf, A., Wolf, M. and Schmitt-Walter, N.: Nutzung und Akzeptanz von Internet und E-Commerce. [Internet and E-Commerce Use and Acceptance.] 7<sup>th</sup> Report. Stuttgart/Munich, 2008  
<http://www.yprt.eu/assets/includes/sendtext.cfm?aus=11&key=857>

### **Websites**

EUROSTAT – Statistical Office of the European Communities  
<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>

EURYDICE – The information network on education in Europe  
<http://www.eurydice.org>