

Quality of Education and Training

The quality of education and training is a critical factor for generating **smart growth** — training the staff needed for research, development and innovation and providing a highly productive and adaptable workforce. It is also instrumental for **sustainable growth** to off-set the impact of demographic ageing on the workforce by increasing employment, reducing skills mismatches. Facilitating the access to quality education and training is crucial to achieving **inclusive growth** by breaking the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next through higher employability. This requires in particular, tackling the problem that almost 20% of young people lack the most **basic skills**, which renders them effectively non-employable.

To boost **growth and jobs** and to prevent skills bottlenecks and shortages, education and training systems have to **deliver quality**; they have to equip people with skills that pave the way for a **smooth transition to the labour market**; and, what's more, a more pro-active management of **skills supply** can drive innovation, create new markets and induce the emergence of dynamic growth sectors.¹

1. Key statistical indicators

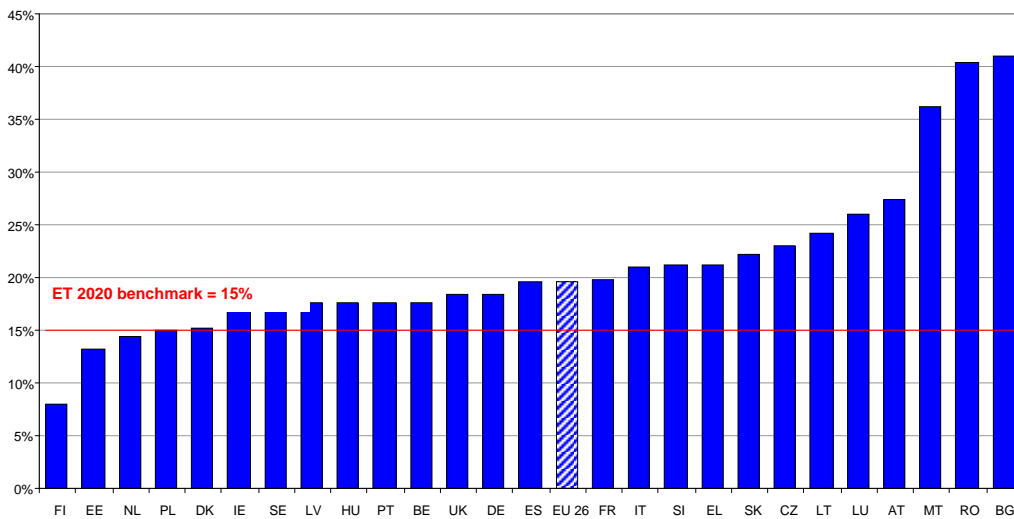
In addition to the Europe 2020 headline target for educational achievement, the following three key indicators can help to assess the **quality of education and training** in the Europe 2020 context: the share of low achievers in basic skills, adult participation in lifelong learning and the share of those completing education and training who are in employment. These indicators correspond to three benchmarks that have been established under the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020').²

(1) High-quality education and training relies on solid basic skills for all. In view of the long-term trend towards increasingly higher skills requirements on the labour market, the risk of un- and under-employment is bound to increase further for persons lacking basic skills. Failing to reach a minimum level of basic skills leads to social exclusion, limited ability to increase skills further in life. A large share of EU Countries still have a too high proportion of "**low achievers**" in basic skills, as only three Member States reached the benchmark of no more than 15% low achievers in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy (see graph below).

¹ See also "Re-thinking Education - Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes" COM(2012)xxx

² OJ C 119 of 28.5.2009. The benchmark on the employment rate of graduates from education and training has been set up by the Council in May 2012.

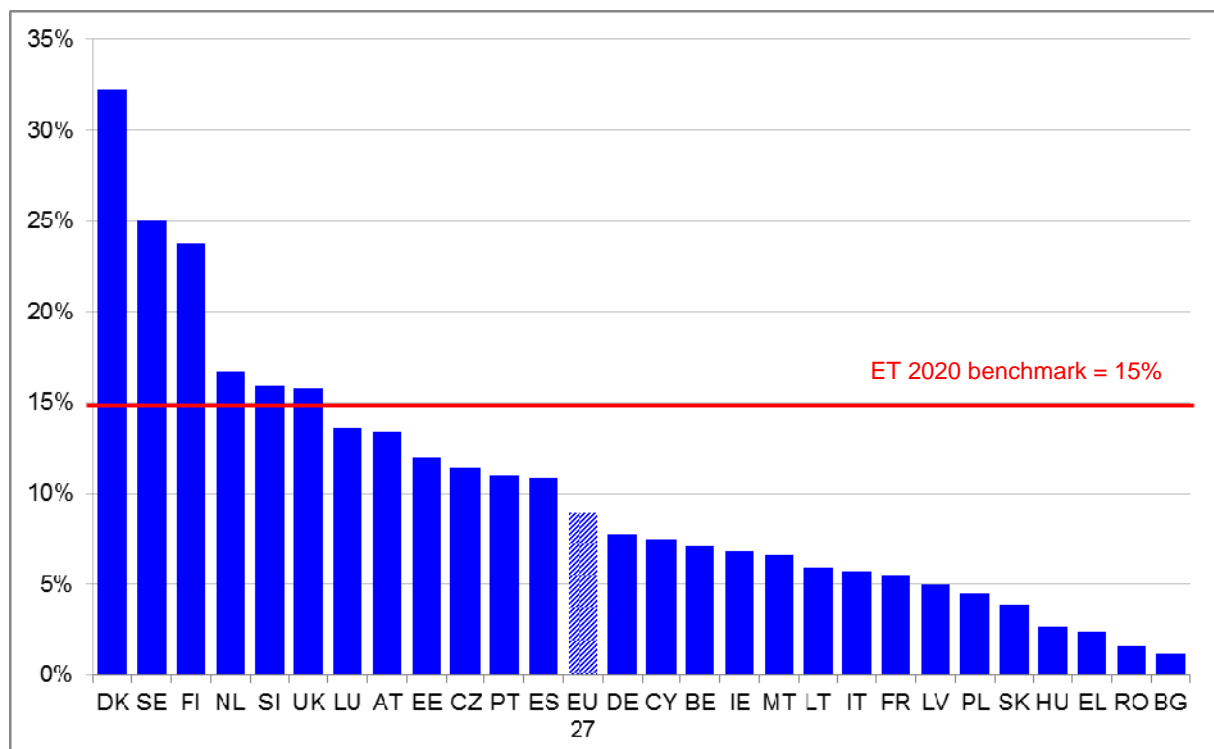
Percentage of low achievers in reading (15 year olds, %), 2009



Data source: OECD (PISA). Under the open method of coordination in the field of E&T ('ET 2020'), Member States agreed a benchmark that the share of low-achieving 15-years old in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15% by 2020. Currently the share of low achievers (data for 26 EU countries) amounts to 19.7% in reading, 22.2% in mathematics and 17.7% in science.

(2) In order to assess the quality of education and training, the information on young people needs to be complemented by data on learning activities of **workers of all ages**. Extensive **participation by adults in lifelong-learning activities** suggests a high degree of investment in skills and competences throughout the life-cycle, which is of increasing importance for sustaining growth in times of quick technological progress and a shrinking workforce and for sustained competitiveness in times of globalisation.

Participation in adult lifelong learning (population aged 25-64), 2011

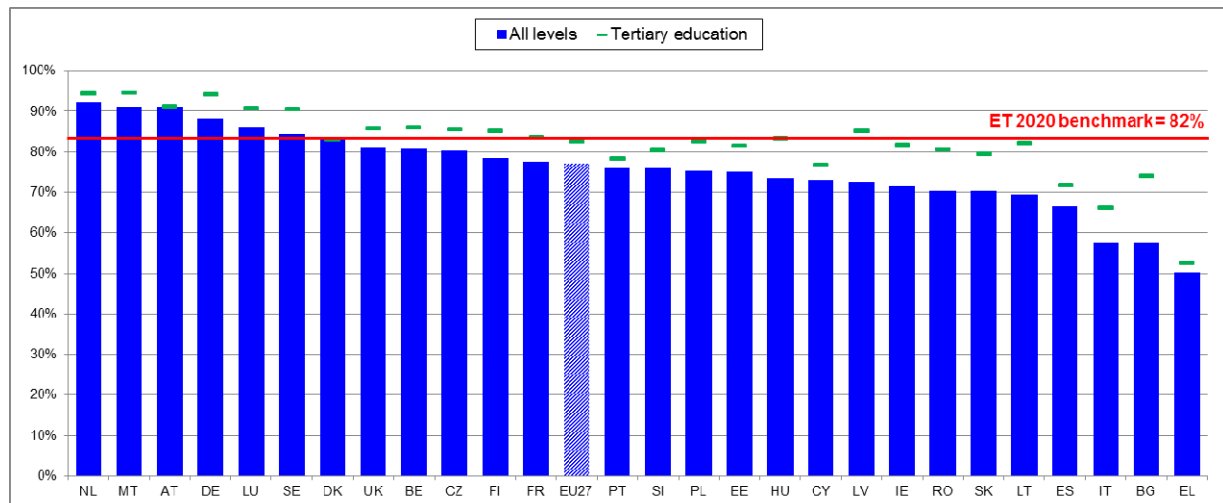


Data source: Eurostat (LFS)

Data on adult participation (25 – 64) in lifelong learning, Under the open method of coordination in the field of E&T ('ET 2020'), Member States agreed a benchmark of 15% to be reached by 2020 (the average performance in 2011 was 8.9%).

(3) Another key question is whether education and training systems are in tune with labour market conditions and skills needs, and equip people with skills that ensure their **employability**. While many factors influencing employability lie beyond the scope of education and training policy (labour market regulation, trends in the overall economic situation), education and training policies prepare the ground for a smooth transition from education to employment by equipping young people with relevant knowledge and skills.

Employability: Share of employed graduates from education and training (20-34), 2011



Data source: CRELL, based on Eurostat (LFS)

The benchmark indicated in the chart has been adopted by the Council in May 2012; the benchmark of 82% is to be achieved by 2020. In 2011, the EU27 average amounted to 77.2%.³

2. Assessment of the main challenges in the Member States

The PISA results for **low achievers** reveal that about one fifth of the tested 15 year olds cannot read for understanding and an even higher share has insufficient mathematical competence (for details, see annex, tables 1.1 to 1.4). Twice as many boys (26.6%) are poor readers than girls (13.4%). The performance of **Bulgaria, Romania and Malta** — with **more than 35%** of low achievers — is particularly poor; however, the first two are improving. Only the Netherlands, Estonia and Finland meet the benchmark of 15%. While the share of people with migrant background in education systems has increased and is bound to increase further, education systems are not yet adapted to make the most out of diversity. There is a persistent **achievement gap** across the EU between people with migrant background and natives (compare also table 1.4. in the annex).

The failure of European education and training systems to impart the most basic skills to **20% of pupils** creates high opportunity costs. This highlights not only the **size of the challenge** to improve the performance of E&T institutions but also the huge potential **gains** in terms of increased growth, employment and financial sustainability, if this share of barely-

³ The indicator on which the benchmark is based is defined as the share of all young people (aged 20 – 34) who graduated from at least upper secondary education in the last three years who are in employment and who are not currently enrolled in any further education or training activity.

employable persons could be reduced. More than 73 million adults still suffered from the consequences of low levels of basic skills (ISCED 2 or less) in 2011.

In terms of **participation by adults in lifelong learning**, **Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Greece** and **Slovakia** show alarmingly low levels of **below 4%** (compared to the benchmark of 15%). Poland, Latvia, France, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Ireland, Belgium, Cyprus and Germany also face a challenge as they are **below the European average of 8.9%**. It is incommensurate that the **EU average** has been stagnating for years and has even decreased slightly since 2008 when it stood at 9.4%⁴.

In terms of **employability**, data suggest that **Greece, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, and Lithuania** face a serious challenge as their employment rates for young graduates (20-34 year olds) not in education and training amount to **less than 70%**. Slovakia, Romania, Ireland, Latvia, Cyprus, Hungary, Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and Portugal are **below the European average of 77.2%**. The great difference between the employment rates of young graduates emerging from upper secondary education and tertiary education is also noticeable. In countries such as Bulgaria, Ireland, Spain, Lithuania, Latvia and Romania, the difference is more than 20 percentage points, indicating a substantially greater risk of low employability for upper-secondary graduates.

The **average employment rate** for EU 27 has been decreasing since 2008 (when it stood at exactly 82%); this is a development that is certainly affected by the crisis. Against this background, it is positive that Austria, Germany, Estonia, France, Latvia, Austria and Sweden show increasing rates.

3. Horizontal issues

Bringing down the share of '**low achievers**' requires early diagnosis and intervention, starting in the phase of early childhood. This implies providing up-scaling support for tackling learning difficulties and an ambition to get everyone up to standard in basic skills from the first years in school. This requires a more holistic approach to the learning process (in- and outside of school) addressing all the needs of the children (cognitive, emotional; social, and physical) and consequently a renewal of the school environment, the teaching methods and teacher competences around more personalised learning, including through ICT.

Increasing the level of **participation in lifelong-learning** activities requires tackling obstacles such as financing, incentives and reconciling work and training. Member States should review the use of incentives, rights and obligations, in order to facilitate and encourage participation. Effective measures can consist of financial support to priority target groups (e.g. low skilled or older people, SMEs, etc.), better services in the areas guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning, measures to promote learning at the workplace, such as provisions in labour law that ease access to training, more flexible modes of lifelong-learning delivery and work organisation to make participation possible.

With a view to boosting **employability**, the E&T systems should be adapted to reflect labour-market conditions and skills demand. This requires gathering, processing and disseminating information about evolving patterns of skills needs, so as to anticipate them. The responsiveness and reaction speed of E&T systems to labour-market developments can be increased through closer cooperation with the social partners and business (e.g. sector skills alliances, knowledge alliances and Sectoral Skills Councils), in particular with a view to keeping curricula in tune with labour-market needs, or by integrating theoretical and work-

⁴ A slight decrease is even visible when taking into account breaks in time series in several countries which lead to lower, even though more realistic figures.

based elements so that learning outcomes are relevant and operational. Improving the quality of teachers and trainers, particularly in the field of vocational education and training, is another way of achieving more accurate skills acquisition.

In conclusion, **improving the quality** of education and training requires a comprehensive approach: it entails tackling the most blatant short-comings (cf. also the thematic fiches on early school-leaving and on tertiary or equivalent attainment), but this is not enough. Education and training systems need to be modernised and be more flexible in how they operate in order to provide the skills for future growth and to increase their responsiveness to labour market needs. However, to achieve better results in times of tight public finance is challenging: it requires growth friendly investment (cf. thematic fiche on public finance and growth-friendly expenditure) and improving the **efficiency of education and training systems** through **structural reforms**. The Commission explores this issue in greater depth in its new policy initiative on "Re-thinking Education - Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes".⁵

⁵ COM reference to be added once available.

ANNEX: Additional statistical indicators

1.1: Low achievers: PISA results in reading

Low achievers in reading and average score

	Low achievers in reading. %						Average score
	All				Boys	Girls	All
	2000	2003	2006	2009	2009	2009	2009
EU 18 countries	21.3	:	24.1	20.0	26.6	13.4	493
EU 25 countries	:	:	23.1	19.6	25.9	13.3	
Belgium	19.0	17.9	19.4	17.7	21.5	13.8	506
Bulgaria	40.3	:	51.1	41.0	52.0	29.1	429
Czech Republic	17.5	19.4	24.8	23.1	30.8	14.3	478
Denmark	17.9	16.5	16.0	15.2	19.0	11.5	495
Germany	22.6	22.3	20.0	18.5	24.0	12.6	497
Estonia	:	:	13.6	13.3	18.9	7.3	501
Ireland	11.0	11.0	12.1	17.2	23.1	11.3	496
Greece	24.4	25.2	27.7	21.3	29.7	13.2	483
Spain	16.3	21.1	25.7	19.6	24.4	14.6	481
France	15.2	17.5	21.7	19.8	25.7	14.2	496
Italy	18.9	23.9	26.4	21.0	28.9	12.7	486
Latvia	30.1	18.0	21.2	17.6	26.6	8.7	484
Lithuania	:	:	25.7	24.3	35.5	13.0	468
Luxembourg	(35.1)	22.7	22.9	26.0	32.9	19.1	472
Malta	:	:	:	36.3	48.4	24.3	442
Hungary	19.0	17.9	19.4	17.7	23.6	11.4	494
Netherlands	(9.5)	11.5	15.1	14.3	17.9	10.7	508
Austria	19.3	20.7	21.5	27.5	35.2	20.3	470
Poland	23.2	16.8	16.2	15.0	22.6	7.5	500
Portugal	26.3	22.0	24.9	17.6	24.7	10.8	489
Romania	41.3	:	53.5	40.4	50.7	30.4	424
Slovenia	:	:	16.5	21.2	31.3	10.7	483
Slovakia	:	24.9	27.8	22.3	32.0	12.5	477
Finland	7.0	5.7	4.8	8.1	13.0	3.2	536
Sweden	12.6	13.3	15.3	17.4	24.2	10.5	497
United Kingdom	(12.8)	:	19.0	18.4	23.1	14.0	494
Croatia	:	:	21.5	22.5	31.2	12.6	476
Iceland	14.5	18.5	20.5	16.8	23.8	9.9	500
Turkey	:	36.8	32.2	24.5	33.4	15.0	464
Liechtenstein	22.1	10.4	14.3	15.6	21.2	9.4	499
Norway	17.5	18.2	22.4	14.9	21.4	8.4	503
USA	17.9	19.4	:	17.7	21.4	13.6	500
Japan	10.1	19.0	18.4	13.6	18.9	7.9	520
Korea	5.8	6.8	5.7	5.8	8.8	2.5	539
Shanghai (China)	:	:	:	4.1	6.6	1.5	556

Source: OECD (PISA).

Overall situation, general trends:

After a decline in performance between 2000 and 2006, EU-level results have considerably improved since 2006. In general, countries with an above-average share of low achievers have succeeded in improving their performance more than countries with a low share of low achievers. The performance gap has thus in general narrowed. It remains, however, large. There is also a very big performance gap between boys and girls, with boys having twice as high a share of low achievers than girls. The low achievers share for girls is already below the 15% benchmark.

Selected trends in performance:

Countries that have improved their performance most since 2006 (> 5 percentage points) include Portugal, Greece, Spain, Italy, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

1.2: Low achievers: PISA results in mathematics

Low achievers in mathematics and average scores

	% low achievers in mathematics				Average scores	
	All		Boys	Girls	All	
	2006	2009	2009	2009	2006	2009
EU 25 countries	24.0	22.2	21.0	23.5	497	497
Belgium	17.3	19.1	16.8	21.4	520	515
Bulgaria	53.3	47.1	48.2	45.9	413	428
Czech Republic	19.2	22.3	21.7	23.1	510	493
Denmark	13.6	17.1	14.7	19.4	513	503
Germany	19.9	18.6	17.2	20.2	504	513
Estonia	12.1	12.7	11.9	13.5	515	512
Ireland	16.4	20.8	20.6	21.0	501	487
Greece	32.3	30.3	28.4	32.1	459	466
Spain	24.7	23.7	21.4	26.1	480	483
France	22.3	22.5	21.6	23.4	496	497
Italy	32.8	24.9	23.5	26.4	462	483
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	:	:
Latvia	20.7	22.6	23.2	22.0	486	482
Lithuania	23.0	26.2	28.1	24.4	486	477
Luxembourg	22.8	23.9	22.2	25.7	490	489
Hungary	21.2	22.3	21.7	22.9	491	490
Malta	:	33.7	37.4	30.1	:	463:
Netherlands	11.5	13.4	11.2	15.6	531	514
Austria	20.0	23.2	21.3	25.1	505	496
Poland	19.8	20.5	21.2	19.9	495	495
Portugal	30.7	23.7	22.6	24.7	466	487
Romania	52.7	47.0	46.9	47.2	415	427
Slovenia	17.7	20.3	20.9	19.7	504	501
Slovakia	20.9	21.0	21.4	20.7	492	497
Finland	6.0	7.8	8.1	7.5	548	541
Sweden	18.3	21.1	21.4	20.8	502	494
United Kingdom	19.8	20.2	17.5	22.8	495	492
Croatia	28.6	33.2	31.8	34.6	493	460
Iceland	16.8	17.0	17.9	16.1	506	507
:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Turkey	52.1	42.1	40.4	44.1	424	445
Liechtenstein	13.2	9.5	7.7	11.5	525	536
Norway	22.2	18.2	18.0	18.3	487	498
USA	28.1	23.4	20.6	26.3	489	487
Canada	10.8	11.5	10.9	12.1	527	527
Japan	13.0	12.5	12.9	12.0	531	529
Korea	8.8	8.1	9.1	7.0	547	546
Shanghai (China)	:	4.9	5.5	4.3	:	600

Source: OECD (PISA); average scores for 16 EU countries.

Overall situation, general trends:

There was a small improvement in performance in the period 2006-2009. However, average scores have remained stable. Boys do slightly better than girls. In general, countries with an above-average share of low achievers have succeeded in improving their performance more than countries with a low share of low achievers. The performance gap has thus in general narrowed. It remains, however, large.

Selected trends in performance:

Countries that have improved their performance most since 2006 include Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania.

In Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Malta, Slovakia, Finland Sweden and Slovenia, girls outperform boys.

1.3: Low achievers: PISA results in science

Low achievers in science and average scores

	Share of low achievers				Average scores	
	All		Boys	Girls	All	
	2006	2009	2009	2009	2006	2009
EU 25 countries	20.3	17.7	18.6	16.8	498	502
Belgium	17.0	18.0	17.9	18.2	510	507
Bulgaria	42.6	38.8	43.3	34.0	434	439
Czech Republic	15.5	17.3	17.9	16.5	513	500
Denmark	18.4	16.6	15.2	17.9	496	499
Germany	15.4	14.8	15.0	14.5	516	520
Estonia	7.7	8.3	8.6	8.1	531	528
Ireland	15.5	15.2	16.0	14.3	508	508
Greece	24.0	25.3	28.2	22.4	473	470
Spain	19.6	18.2	18.3	18.2	488	488
France	21.2	19.3	20.5	18.0	495	498
Italy	25.3	20.6	22.3	18.9	475	489
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	:	:
Latvia	17.4	14.7	16.8	12.6	490	494
Lithuania	20.3	17.0	20.0	14.0	488	491
Luxembourg	22.1	23.7	24.0	23.4	486	484
Hungary	15.0	14.1	15.3	12.9	504	503
Malta	:	32.5	38.7	26.3	:	461
Netherlands	13.0	13.2	12.3	14.0	525	522
Austria	16.3	:	21.6	20.3	511	494
Poland	17.0	13.1	15.5	10.8	498	508
Portugal	24.5	16.5	18.4	14.7	474	493
Romania	46.9	41.4	44.7	38.2	418	428
Slovenia	13.9	14.8	17.8	11.6	519	512
Slovakia	20.2	19.3	20.4	18.2	488	490
Finland	4.1	6.0	7.5	4.5	563	554
Sweden	16.4	19.1	20.3	17.9	503	495
United Kingdom	16.7	15.0	14.6	15.5	515	514
Croatia	17.0	18.5	20.5	16.3	493	486
Iceland	20.6	17.9	19.3	16.6	508	496
Turkey	46.6	30.0	33.3	26.5	424	454
Liechtenstein	12.9	11.3	9.2	13.7	522	
Norway	21.1	15.8	16.9	14.5	487	500
USA	24.4	18.1	17.0	19.3	489	502
Canada	10.0	9.6	9.9	9.2	534	529
Japan	12.0	10.7	13.1	8.1	531	539
Korea	11.2	6.3	7.5	5.0	522	538
Shanghai (China)	:	3.1	3.8	2.5	:	575

Source: OECD (PISA)

Overall situation, general trends:

There was an improvement in performance in the period 2006-2009. However, average scores have only slightly improved. Girls do slightly better than boys. In general, countries with an above-average share of low achievers have succeeded in improving their performance more than countries with a low share of low achievers. The performance gap has thus in general narrowed. It remains, however, large.

Selected trends in performance:

In Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK, boys outperform girls. Bulgaria and Malta show the biggest performance gap in favour of girls.

1.4: Low achievers: PISA results in reading, by migration background

PISA 2009 Overall reading — comparison between native and migrant students

	% of students with an immigrant background		Average scores			
			Students with an immigrant background		Difference in performance between native students and migrant students	
	2000	2009	2000	2009	2000	2009
EU (14 countries)	8.1	11.0	449	445	53	56
Belgium	12.0	14.8	417	451	106	68
Bulgaria	0.4	0.5	:	:	:	:
Czech Republic	1.1	2.3	463	457	38	22
Denmark	6.2	8.6	424	438	80	63
Germany	15.2	17.6	423	455	84	56
Estonia	:	:	:	:	:	:
Ireland	2.3	8.3	552	473	-24	29
Greece	4.8	9.0	413	432	65	57
Spain	2.0	9.5	457	430	37	58
France	12.0	13.1	464	444	48	60
Italy	0.9	5.5	450	418	39	72
Latvia	22.1	4.5	452	474	11	11
Lithuania	:	:	:	:	:	:
Luxembourg	:	40.2	:	442	:	52
Hungary	1.7	2.1	489	507	-7	-12
Netherlands	:	12.1	:	470	:	46
Austria	11.0	:	409	:	93	:
Poland	0.3	0.0	:	:	:	:
Portugal	3.1	5.5	457	466	14	26
Romania	0.2	0.3	:	:	:	:
Slovenia	:	:	:	:	:	:
Slovakia	:	:	:	:	:	:
Finland	1.3	2.6	476	468	71	70
Sweden	10.5	11.7	465	442	58	66
United Kingdom	:	10.6	:	476	:	23
Iceland	0.8	2.4	:	423	:	81
Liechtenstein	20.6	30.3	419	479	81	31
Norway	4.6	6.8	454	456	56	52
USA	13.6	19.5	472	484	39	22
Canada	20.5	24.4	526	521	12	7
Japan	0.1	0.3	:	:	:	:
Korea	:	0.0	:	:	:	:

Source: OECD (PISA), average scores for 14 EU countries with comparable data

Overall situation, general trends:

Native students outperform migrants by more than 50 score points (that corresponds to more than one year of schooling), with the gap remaining stable since 2000. The average score of students with an immigrant background has slightly declined since 2000. At the same time, the share of students with an immigrant background is tending to increase.

Selected trends in performance:

Countries with a relatively small performance gap between migrant students and native students include the UK, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Portugal and Ireland. In Hungary, migrants outperform native students.

Countries with a large performance gap between natives and migrants include Belgium, France, Italy and the Nordic countries.

2.1: Adult lifelong learning (25-64): Overall results

	25-64 year olds						55-64 old	Difference in PP	Difference in %
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	2011	2011
EU 27	9.5	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.1	8.9	4.3	-4.6	-51.7%
Belgium	7.5	7.2	6.8	6.8	7.2	7.1	3.9	-3.2	-45.1%
Bulgaria	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.2	u	u	u
Czech Republic	5.6	5.7	7.8	6.8	7.5	11.4	5.1	-6.3	-55.3%
Denmark	29.2	29.2	30.0	31.6	32.8	32.3	24.0	-8.3	-25.7%
Germany	7.5	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.7	7.8	2.9	-4.9	-62.8%
Estonia	6.5	7.0	9.8	10.5	10.9	12.0	4.6 u	-7.4	-61.7%
Ireland	7.3	7.6	7.1	6.3	6.7	6.8	3.2	-3.6	-52.9%
Greece	1.9	2.1	2.9	3.3	3.0	2.4	0.4	-2.0	-83.3%
Spain	10.4	10.4	10.4	10.4	10.8	10.8	5.0	-5.8	-53.7%
France	6.4	6.1	6.0p	5.7p	5.0p	5.5	2.3	-3.2	-58.2%
Italy	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.0	6.2	5.7	2.4	-3.3	-57.9%
Cyprus	7.1	8.4	8.5	7.8	7.7	7.5	4.1	-3.4	-45.3%
Latvia	6.9	7.1	6.8	5.3	5.0	5.0	2.2 u	-2.8	-56.0%
Lithuania	4.9	5.3	4.9	4.5	4.0	5.9	2.1 u	-3.8	-64.4%
Luxembourg	8.2	7.0	8.5	13.4p	13.4	13.6	6.0	-7.6	-55.9%
Hungary	3.8	3.6	3.1	2.7	2.8	2.7	0.5	-2.2	-81.5%
Malta	5.4	6.0	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.6	3.2 u	-3.4	-51.5%
Netherlands	15.6	16.6	17.0	17.0	16.5b	16.7	8.4	-8.3	-49.7%
Austria	13.1	12.8	13.2	13.8	13.7	13.4	6.5	-6.9	-51.5%
Poland	4.7	5.1	4.7	4.7	5.3	4.5	0.8	-3.7	-82.2%
Portugal	4.2	4.4	5.3	6.5	5.8p	11.0	4.5	-6.5	-59.1%
Romania	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.6	u	u	u
Slovenia	15.0	14.8	13.9	14.6	16.2	15.9	6.8	-9.1	-57.2%
Slovakia	4.1	3.9	3.3	2.8	2.8	3.9	1.3	-2.6	-66.7%
Finland	23.1	23.4	23.1	22.1	23.0	23.8	13.5	-10.3	-43.3%
Sweden	18.4p	18.6p	22.2b	22.2p	24.5	25.0	17.2	-7.8	-31.2%
United Kingdom	26.7	20.0	19.9	20.1	19.4	15.8	9.6	-6.2	-39.2%

Source: Eurostat (LFS), p= provisional; u= unreliable, b= break

Overall situation, general trends:

The indicator shows the percentage of adults (25-64 years old) participating in formal or non-formal education and training in the 4 weeks prior to the survey. There are major differences between countries, with the Nordic countries showing the highest participation rates and south-eastern European countries the lowest. Since 2006, there has been a slight downward trend in adult lifelong learning⁶ (LLL). Adult LLL tends to decline with age but increase with the education level attained. It is four to five times higher for those with tertiary attainment compared to those with only lower-secondary education. The age structure (within the 25-64 years cohort) and the educational attainment of the population of a country accordingly have an impact on results.

Selected trends in performance:

Countries with a high overall LLL participation like Denmark or The Netherlands tend to also have high participation rates for older workers (55-64), while countries with low participation

⁶ See footnote 3

rates tend to show bigger differences between age groups and tend to show very low rates for the population 55 and older.

2.2: Adult lifelong learning (25-64), by gender and gender differences

	females				males				Diff in pp 2011	Diff in % 2011
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2008	2009	2010	2011		
EU 27	10.2	10.2	10.0	9.6	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.2	1.4	14.6
Belgium	7.2	7.2	7.4	7.4	6.4	6.4	7	6.7	0.7	9.5
Bulgaria	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.0	0.0
Czech Rep.	7.9	7.0	7.7	11.6 b	7.7	6.5	7.3	11.2 b	0.4	3.4
Denmark	35.2	37.2	39.1	39.0	24.8	25.3	26	25.6	13.4	34.4
Germany	7.8	7.7	7.6	7.7	8	7.8	7.7	7.9	-0.2	-2.6
Estonia	12.6	13.2	13.0	14.5	6.6	7.6	8.6	9.2	5.3	36.6
Ireland	8.1	7.0	7.2	7.2	6	5.7	6.3	6.3	0.9	12.5
Greece	3.1	3.3	2.9	2.3	2.8	3.2	3.1	2.6	-0.3	-13.0
Spain	11.3	11.3	11.6	11.6	9.5	9.6	10	10	1.6	13.8
France	6.4	6.1	5.4	5.9	5.6	5.3	4.6	5.2	0.7	11.9
Italy	6.6	6.4	6.5	6.0	6.1	5.6	5.9	5.3	0.7	11.7
Cyprus	8.9	7.8	7.9	7.8	8.1	7.8	7.5	7.2	0.6	7.7
Latvia	9.0	6.9	6.5	6.1	4.3	3.6	3.4	3.8	2.3	37.7
Lithuania	6.1	5.4	4.8	7.1	3.7	3.6	3.2	4.6	2.5	35.2
Luxembourg	9.5	13.5 p	14.0	13.0	7.6	13.4 b	12.8	14.2	-1.2	-9.2
Hungary	3.5	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.6	0.3	10.3
Malta	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.9	6.3	5.9	6	6.3	0.6	8.7
Netherlands	17.2	17.5	17.2 b	16.9	16.8	16.5	16 b	16.5	0.4	2.4
Austria	14.2	14.7	14.7	14.5	12.2	12.8	12.7	12.2	2.3	15.9
Poland	5.2	5.1	5.9	5.0	4.2	4.3	4.8	4	1.0	20.0
Portugal	5.6	6.8	5.7	12.1 b	5	6.2	5.8	11.1 b	1.0	8.3
Romania	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.6	-0.1	-6.7
Slovenia	15.4	16.4	18.3	18.2	12.5	12.9	14.1	13.7	4.5	24.7
Slovakia	4.0	3.3	3.3	4.4	2.6	2.2	2.2	3.4	1.0	22.7
Finland	26.9	25.9	27.1	27.7	19.3	18.5	18.9	19.9	7.8	28.2
Sweden	28.4 b	28.5 b	31.1	31.9	16.1 b	16.1 p	18	18.4	13.5	42.3
United Kingdom	23.2	23.3	22.4	17.5 p	16.6	16.8	16.4	14 p	3.5	20.0

Source: Eurostat (LFS), p= provisional, b= break

Overall situation, general trends:

In most countries, females show slightly but not always significantly higher LLL participation rates than males.

Selected trends in performance:

Countries that show (probably statistically not significant) higher participation rates for men include Germany, Luxembourg, Romania and Greece. Many of the countries with high LLL participation rates, e.g. Sweden, Finland, Denmark, show big gender differences in LLL participation in favour of females.

2.3: Adult lifelong learning (25-64): by migrant status

Adult LLL participation (25-64)

	2006			2011		
	Total	Born abroad	Natives	Total	Born abroad	Natives
EU-27	9.3	10.5	9.1	8.9	9.9	8.7
Belgium	7.5	9.2	7.2	7.1	8.6	6.7
Bulgaria	1.3	:	1.3	1.2	:	1.1
Czech Republic	5.6	6.2	5.6	11.4	10.2	11.5
Denmark	29.2	29.4	29.2	32.3	33.3	32.1
Germany	7.5	6.3	7.8	7.8	6.4	8.1
Estonia	6.5	:	7.3	12.0	(6.1)	13.0
Ireland	7.3	9.5	6.9	6.8	7.9	6.5
Greece	1.9	1.2	2.0	2.4	1.2	2.6
Spain	10.4	8.2	10.7	10.8	8.6	11.2
France	6.4	5.7	6.5	5.5	5.1	5.6
Italy	6.1	4.0	6.3	5.7	3.4	6.0
Cyprus	7.1	5.2	7.6	7.5	5.3	8.3
Latvia	6.9	(3.2)	7.4	5.0	(3.0)	5.3
Lithuania	4.9	:	4.9	5.9	:	6.0
Luxembourg	8.2	7.8	8.4	13.6	12.1	15.2
Hungary	3.8	5.1	3.7	2.7	(3.2)	2.7
Malta	5.4	:	5.4	6.6	:	6.5
Netherlands	15.6	19.1	15.0	16.7	19.5	16.2
Austria	13.1	10.6	13.6	13.4	11.2	13.9
Poland	4.7	(5.1)	4.7	4.5	:	4.5
Portugal	3.8	5.2	3.7	11.0	13.9	10.6
Romania	1.3	:	1.3	1.6	:	1.6
Slovenia	15.0	(8.9)	15.6	15.9	(7.2)	16.9
Slovakia	4.1	:	4.1	3.9	:	3.9
Finland	23.1	25.5	23.0	23.8	25.9	23.7
Sweden	18.4	18.9	18.3	25.0	25.5	24.9
United Kingdom	26.7	32.4	25.9	15.8	19.6	15.0

Source: Eurostat (LFS), figures in brackets not reliable because of small sample size

Overall situation. general trends:

In the EU as a whole LLL participation rates for migrants are slightly higher than for natives. Possible reasons are the age structure of migrants — they are on average younger than natives and younger people participate more in adult LLL, the need for some migrants to attend language courses, the fact that in some countries migrants include a high share of mobile tertiary students and the impact of training for unemployed as unemployment rates are in many higher among those born abroad.

Selected trends in performance:

There is no clear correlation visible between the overall level of participation and which group participates more in LLL. Countries where natives' participation was persistently higher since 2006 are Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Austria, which lie both below and above average in total participation.

3.1: Employment rate (20-34 year olds): overall rate

Employment rate of 20-34 year olds who graduated from at least upper secondary education 1, 2 or 3 years before (and are not currently attending any education or training)

	All education levels					Upper secondary	Tertiary
	2006	2008	2009	2010	2011	2011	2011
EU27	79.0	82.0	78.3	77.5	77.2	71.3	82.7
Belgium	81.1	83.9	81.0	81.3	80.8	73.5	86.0
Bulgaria	69.6	79.6	73.6	68.7	57.5	48.4	74.0
Czech Republic	82.8	87.9	84.5	81.3	80.3	76.1	85.6
Denmark	89.0	90.6	87.9	83.5	83.0	82.9	83.1
Germany	82.1	86.5	85.3	86.1	88.2	84.5	94.2
Estonia	84.9	82.3	67.6	64.3	75.1	(68.4)	81.5
Ireland	88.5	85.7	75.5	71.5	71.4	52.6	81.7
Greece	66.6	67.9	64.7	58.5	50.2	46.2	52.5
Spain	82.3	81.9	72.6	70.4	66.4	51.4	71.8
France	79.0	83.3	77.2	77.4	77.6	68.5	83.5
Italy	66.2	65.2	60.6	57.7	57.6	50.6	66.1
Cyprus	80.5	85.8	81.2	78.6	73.1	57.6	76.7
Latvia	78.5	83.1	71.4	64.6	72.7	56.9	85.1
Lithuania	83.3	79.3	72.9	73.6	69.4	(48.2)	82.2
Luxembourg	91.1	86.9	85.5	89.5	86.1	78.5	90.7
Hungary	79.8	80.1	75.6	74.4	73.5	63.5	83.3
Malta	91.2	95.7	94.1	93.8	91.2	85.6	94.7
Netherlands	92.7	93.6	92.9	92.6	92.2	89.1	94.4
Austria	90.1	90.6	88.6	88.7	91.0	91.0	91.2
Poland	71.3	79.3	78.4	76.5	75.4	65.7	82.6
Portugal	82.9	82.7	82.6	80.7	76.0	73.5	78.3
Romania	74.7	84.8	77.6	71.2	70.4	58.8	80.7
Slovenia	80.8	83.4	82.3	80.7	76.0	(68.7)	80.3
Slovakia	77.5	81.4	74.4	69.4	70.3	61.7	79.5
Finland	79.7	82.3	77.8	79.7	78.4	73.6	85.1
Sweden	83.3	85.9	81.7	82.7	84.4	79.5	90.5
United Kingdom	86.3	83.6	80.0	81.6	81.2	75.6	85.7

Source: Eurostat (LFS)/CRELL — figures in brackets not reliable because of small sample size

Overall situation, general trends:

The employment rate in the first years following graduation is a powerful indicator of the labour market's perception of the quality of degrees produced by education and training institutions.

The employment rate in the years after graduation is strongly affected by business cycles. As a result of the economic crisis, employment rates in EU 27 decreased in the period 2008-2011, with a 4 percentage point decrease for the ISCED 5-6 graduates, as against a 6 percentage point decrease for the ISCED 3-4 graduates.

Selected trends in performance:

Italy, Bulgaria and Greece show the lowest employment rate of graduates, especially on the tertiary level. This might indicate that the labour market has reservations about the pertinence (quality) of the knowledge and skills acquired through education and training. Malta, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands show the highest employment rate of graduates 1-3 years after graduation.

3.2: Employment rate (20-34 year olds), by gender

Employment rate of (20-34 years old) who graduated from at least upper secondary education 1, 2 or 3 years before (and are not currently attending any education or training)

	females				males				Diff in pp 2011	Diff in % 2011
	2006	2009	2010	2011	2006	2009	2010	2011		
EU 27	76.7	77.0	75.5	75.1	81.5	79.7	79.5	79.4	4.3	5.4
Belgium	79.9	80.8	80.6	81.4	82.4	81.4	82.2	80.2	-1.2	-1.5
Bulgaria	69.2	71.2	71.3	58.9	69.9	75.8	66.4	56.2	-2.7	-4.8
Czech Rep.	76.4	79.5	76.7	73.9	88.9	89.3	85.5	86.1	12.2	14.2
Denmark	85.7	86.9	82.3	78.3	92.6	89.0	84.6	87.7	9.4	10.7
Germany	81.2	84.9	84.5	87.6	82.9	85.7	87.7	88.8	1.2	1.4
Estonia	77.4	(60.6)	(57.2)	68.6	94.5	(75.1)	(72.4)	82.2	13.6	16.5
Ireland	86.6	77.9	72.7	71.5	91.1	72.6	70.1	71.2	-0.3	-0.4
Greece	63.0	62.3	56.9	48.8	71.6	68.0	60.7	52.2	3.4	6.5
Spain	79.1	72.4	70.0	65.5	85.7	72.8	71.0	67.4	1.9	2.8
France	76.1	76.7	75.8	75.7	82.0	77.8	79.1	79.7	4.0	5.0
Italy	61.7	57.4	55.4	55.0	70.8	64.0	60.2	60.4	5.4	8.9
Cyprus	80.8	79.5	78.7	72.2	80.3	84.0	78.4	74.1	1.9	2.6
Latvia	68.7	69.0	64.4	72.5	90.4	74.1	64.9	72.8	0.3	0.4
Lithuania	79.8	74.3	76.7	67.7	87.4	71.4	69.8	71.0	3.3	4.6
Luxembourg	91.0	84.7	84.4	83.2	91.3	86.2	93.8	89.7	6.5	7.2
Hungary	77.5	73.8	74.7	71.4	82.3	77.4	74.1	76.0	4.6	6.1
Malta	92.0	94.1	93.2	89.3	90.4	94.1	94.4	92.9	3.6	3.9
Netherlands	91.6	92.7	91.4	92.0	94.0	93.2	93.9	92.4	0.4	0.4
Austria	88.2	87.7	87.7	89.9	91.7	89.3	89.4	92.0	2.1	2.3
Poland	69.3	75.2	73.4	70.8	73.6	82.0	79.9	80.3	9.5	11.8
Portugal	80.6	80.3	79.4	73.8	86.0	85.7	82.2	78.7	4.9	6.2
Romania	75.4	76.3	70.5	68.6	74.1	79.0	71.9	72.4	3.8	5.2
Slovenia	75.8	81.3	77.2	73.4	86.1	83.3	84.0	78.4	5.0	6.4
Slovakia	72.9	72.6	69.6	66.6	82.5	76.3	69.3	73.8	7.2	9.8
Finland	76.6	76.5	76.6	75.3	83.4	79.2	82.9	81.4	6.1	7.5
Sweden	81.3	82.2	81.7	83.3	85.3	81.3	83.7	85.4	2.1	2.5
United Kingdom	85.3	79.7	78.6	79.1	87.4	80.4	84.9	83.7	4.6	5.5

Source: Eurostat/CRELL — figures in brackets not reliable because of small sample size

Overall situation, general trends:

Overall, in the period 2006-2011 there was a persistent gap in the employment rate of new graduates in favour of men.

Selected trends in performance:

In Bulgaria, females have a higher employment rate compared to males. Countries with a good gender balance in employment rates after graduation include Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Latvia and the Netherlands.