European Commission

Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe 2016

*Eurydice Background Report
to the Education and Training Monitor 2016*

Education and Training

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Training Systems in Europe

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This document is published by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA, Education and Youth Policy Analysis).

This document is also available on the Internet (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurydice).

Text completed in October 2016.

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INTRODUCTION

This Eurydice report provides the background information to a number of structural indicators examined in the Education and Training Monitor 2016 [1]. The Education and Training Monitor is published annually by the European Commission. It follows the progress made by EU Members States towards achieving the targets set by the Europe 2020 and the Education and Training 2020 reform processes [2].

Selection of Structural Indicators

Based on several recent Eurydice reports, the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) has identified a limited number of policy relevant indicators in six key areas: early childhood education and care (ECEC), achievement in basic skills, early leaving from education and training, higher education, graduate employability, and learning mobility. These indicators have been discussed with the Eurydice National Units and country representatives in the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB).

Eurydice background report 2016

This report complements the information published in the Education and Training Monitor 2016 [3]. It provides updated figures, definitions, country notes and a short analysis of policy changes and reforms [4]. The chapters of the report cover five of the six key areas:

1. Early childhood education and care

2. Achievement in basic skills

3. Early leaving from education and training

4. Higher education

5. Graduate employability

National information on the structural indicators on learning mobility for the 2015/16 school year will be available in the 2016 update of the Mobility Scoreboard [5] and has therefore not been included in this report.

The reference year for all indicators in this report is the 2015/16 school and academic year. A direct comparison with the Eurydice information in the Education and Training Monitor 2015 is not possible due to changes in some indicators and definitions.

Relevant recent Eurydice reports containing earlier versions of the indicators are referenced in each chapter. Within these reports, each indicator has been developed within a larger framework in order to allow readers to better understand a particular topic.

Country coverage

This report provides information on all EU Member States, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey.

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor

[2] Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, COM (2010) 2020 final; Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/education/monitor

[4] Further information on national reforms is available in the Eurydice National descriptions of education systems, Chapter 14: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Ongoing_Reforms_and_Policy_Developments

[5] European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, forthcoming. *Mobility Scoreboard: Higher Education Background Report.*

CHAPTER 1: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Introduction

Early childhood education can positively influence children's development ([1]). The European Commission therefore wants all young children to be able to access and benefit from high quality education and care ([2]). Reliable information on early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems in Europe is essential in order to understand what challenges are facing European countries, what we can learn from each other, and what new solutions might be developed to meet the needs of the youngest members of society.

The structural indicators in this chapter provide an overview of key developments in ECEC systems. The choice of indicators was underpinned by two key European documents: the 2011 Commission Communication on ECEC ([3]) and the 'Proposal for key principles of a quality framework for early childhood education and care' (European Commission, 2014) produced by the ECEC thematic working group under the auspices of the European Commission. In addition, the selection drew on the extensive analysis of the research literature carried out for earlier publications, which helped to identify the main elements of ECEC provision that contribute to providing children with the best possible start in life (for an overview, see EACEA/Eurydice, 2009b; OECD, 2012).

The 'Proposal for key principles' referred to above (European Commission, 2014) identified five main aspects of quality in early childhood education and care: access, workforce, curriculum, evaluation/monitoring and governance/funding. Seeing children as active participants in their own learning, the proposal highlights that parents ([4]) are the most important partners and their participation is essential if high-quality ECEC is to be delivered. It also stresses that determining what constitutes high-quality ECEC should be a dynamic, continuous and democratic process.

However, considering the vast range of possible system-level information and having in mind the limitations of scope and time, only several essential and robust indicators have been chosen for yearly monitoring. The diagram below indicates the ECEC structural indicators covered in the 2016 Eurydice data collection:
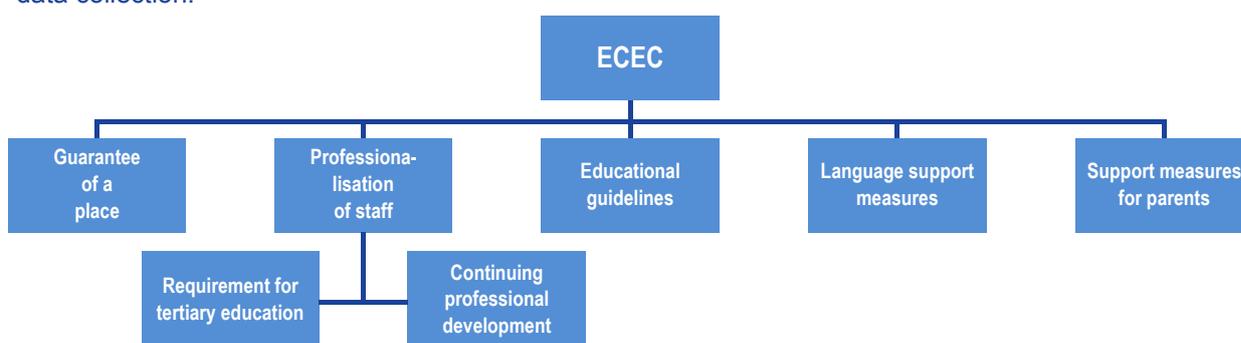
More detailed information on these and other ECEC areas can be found in the Eurydice report *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe 2014* (European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2014a), the main findings of which are summarised in the Eurydice Brief (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014b). More detailed information about the ECEC systems in each country can be found in *Early Childhood Education and Care Systems in Europe: National Information Sheets 2014/15* (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015d).

([1]) COM (2006) 481: Communication from the Commission to the Council AND to the European Parliament – Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems.

([2]) COM (2011) 66 final: Communication from the European Commission (2011) – Early childhood education and care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow.

([3]) COM (2011) 66 final.

([4]) The term 'parent' in this report includes mothers, fathers, foster carers, adoptive parents, step-parents and grandparents.

The definition of **early childhood education and care (ECEC)** used in this report is

> provision for children from birth through to primary education that is subject to a national regulatory framework, i.e., it must comply with a set of rules, minimum standards and/or undergo accreditation procedures. It includes public, private and voluntary sectors. Only centre-based provision is considered.

Many European countries structure ECEC services according to the age of the children. Usually, the transition from the first phase to the second takes place when children are around 3 years old. In order to reflect the different regulations, a distinction between provision for 'children under 3 years old' and provision for 'children of 3 years and over' is often made in this chapter. However, it is important to keep in mind that in some countries the transition can be as early as 2½ years or as late as 4 years of age. National System Information Sheets specify when children move from one phase of ECEC to the next in each country (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015g).

Some European countries have several types of ECEC provision. The indicators show if a certain measure is available in the main type of ECEC provision for each age group.

1.1. Ensuring universal access: legal entitlement and/or compulsory ECEC

In light of the research revealing the numerous benefits of participating in ECEC (Del Boca, 2010; Heckman et al., 2010; Almond and Currie, 2011; Felfe and Lalive, 2011; and Havnes and Mogstad, 2011), there is an aspiration in the European Union countries that ECEC should be available to and affordable for all children ([5]). The 2011 Communication states that the provision of universally available, high-quality inclusive ECEC services is beneficial for children, parents and society at large ([6]). Moreover, the Communication emphasises that providing universal access to quality ECEC is more beneficial than provision targeted exclusively at vulnerable groups.

Currently, in Europe, there are two approaches to providing universal access to ECEC. Some countries provide a **legal entitlement** to an ECEC place, while others make ECEC attendance **compulsory**.

> **Legal entitlement to ECEC** refers to a statutory duty on ECEC providers to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status, require a place for their child.

It is important to note that a 'right to ECEC for every child' expressed in legislation in general terms, but without adequate funding and the necessary policies to ensure the delivery of sufficient places is not considered a legal entitlement. Similarly, the existence of some publicly subsidised ECEC settings providing places for limited numbers of children is not considered a legal entitlement if public authorities are not obliged to provide a place. A legal entitlement to ECEC exists when every child has an enforceable right to benefit from ECEC provision. An enforceable right means that public authorities guarantee a place for each child whose parents request it (in the age-range covered by the legal entitlement), regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status. It does not necessarily imply that provision is free, only that it is publicly subsidised and affordable.

> **Compulsory ECEC** refers to the obligation for children to attend ECEC settings when they reach a certain age.

([5]) For the Netherlands, see country specific note to Figure 1.1.

([6]) COM (2011) 66 final.

A targeted legal entitlement or targeted compulsory ECEC that applies only to certain groups of children (e.g. disadvantaged learners, children of parents who are in employment, certain minorities, etc.) are not considered in this report.

Most European countries have, however, committed themselves to guaranteeing an ECEC place for all children, either, as mentioned above, by establishing a legal entitlement to ECEC or by making attendance compulsory (see Figure 1.1). However, there are significant differences in the age at which children qualify for a guaranteed ECEC place. Only seven EU-28 countries, namely Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden, as well as Norway, guarantee a legal right to a place in ECEC for each child soon after its birth, often immediately after the end of childcare leave. In most of these countries, this right is not expressed in terms of hours of provision, but usually implies a full-time place. Typically, parents are expected to co-finance the provision until the beginning of compulsory education. However, the fees are rather low. Only in Latvia is public ECEC provision free, while other types of ECEC provision are heavily subsidised.

> In **Denmark**, since 2001, the regulatory framework obliges municipalities to ensure ECEC provision for all children between the ages of six months and six years (when compulsory primary education begins). Municipalities are sanctioned financially if they fail to comply and therefore all municipalities now meet the requirements. Parents may have to meet up to of 25 % of a centre's operating expenditure.

> In **Sweden**, all children from the age of one are legally entitled to ECEC. When parents require a place for their child in ECEC, the municipality should offer one within four months. Parents may choose a place in an ECEC institution run by another organisation or in another municipality. Since 1995, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has been able to take action against a municipality that does not offer a place within the time limit, for example by imposing a fine. A recent government report (SOU, 2013:41) shows that supply meets demand in most municipalities.

Despite the legal framework that guarantees a place in ECEC for all children from a very early age, in reality some municipalities in some countries still struggle to balance supply and demand. In Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia, despite the efforts to widen access to ECEC, the number of places for the youngest children still does not meet parental demand. In Germany, the availability of ECEC services varies significantly between *Länder*.

In the three Communities of Belgium, as well as in Spain, France, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Scotland), a place in publicly subsidised ECEC is guaranteed from the age of 3 or a little earlier. In all of these countries, children are entitled to ECEC free of charge (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014b, Figure D5). Usually, the hours of free ECEC provision correspond to a typical school day, except in the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Scotland), where the free entitlement is between 10 hours (Wales) and 16 hours (Scotland) a week. In most of these countries, supply more or less meets demand from the start of the legal entitlement. Poland will also soon be among this group as it is introducing an entitlement to ECEC for 4-year-olds from September 2015 which will be extended to 3-year-olds from September 2017.

> In **Belgium (French and Flemish Communities)**, children from birth to 3 years may attend different types of centre-based settings or regulated home-based care. However, children are only legally entitled to free early childhood education from age 2-and-a-half, in the *école maternelle/kleuterschool* (23 hours per week). This provision falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Education. Primary education starts at age six.

Around a quarter of European education systems provide guaranteed places from around age 5 or a little earlier. In Bulgaria, where primary education starts at age 7, this implies two years of compulsory ECEC. Poland also guarantees a place for the last two years of ECEC – from age 4. Children have a guaranteed place for the last year of ECEC in the Czech Republic and Portugal, which provide a legal entitlement. In Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Serbia the last year of ECEC (pre-primary classes) is compulsory. The minimum weekly

duration of compulsory pre-primary education varies between 15 hours per week in some Austrian *Länder* to 26.5 hours per week in Cyprus.

Figure 1.1: Age from which a place in ECEC is guaranteed, 2015/16
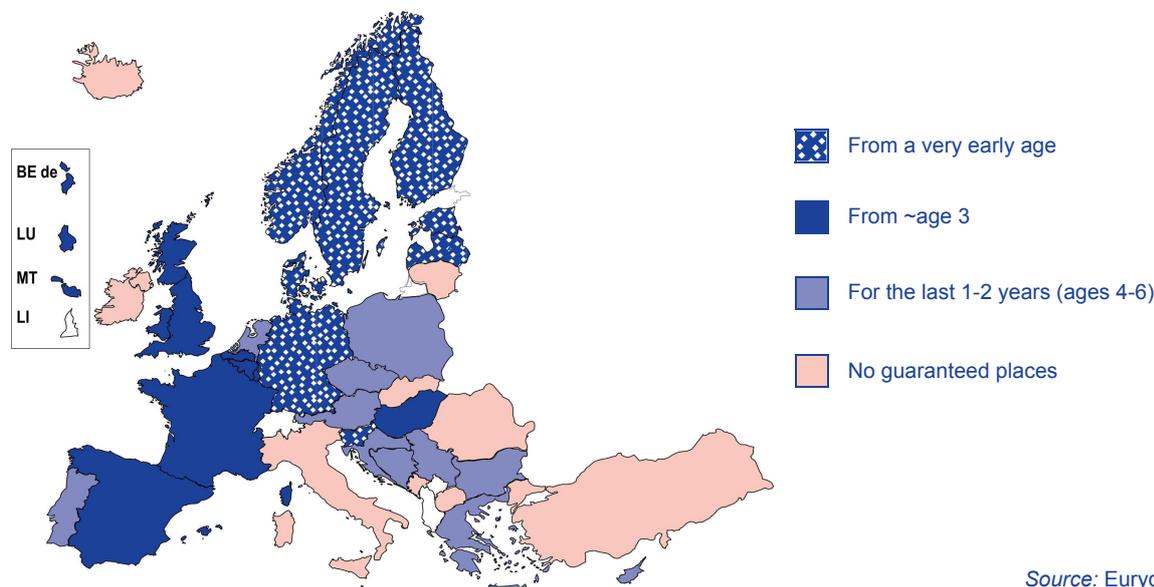
Source: Eurydice.

	BEfr	BEde	BEnl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT
Starting age of **legal entitlement** (years)	2½	3	2½		5	½	1	1½	-		3	3		-		1½	-	3		2¾
Starting age of **compulsory ECEC (years)**				5						5			6		4⅔	5		4	3	
Weekly entitlement (hours)	23	23	23	20-24	40	40	⊗	40	-	22.5	25	24	(4)	-	26.5	⊗	-	18 [26]	20	30

	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT		BA	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
Starting age of **legal entitlement** (years)	:		4	5	-	¹¹/₁₂	-	¾	1	3	3	-	3		-	-	-	1		-
Starting age of **compulsory ECEC (years)**	5	5	5					6							5½				5½	
Weekly entitlement (hours)	-	15-20	25	25	-	40	-	40 [18]	15	15	10	-	(16)		(10.5)	-	-	40	20	-

⊗ No central regulations

Explanatory note

Where the weekly entitlement is marked in brackets, the figure was calculated by dividing the annual hours of entitlement indicated in regulations by 38 – the most common number of weeks in a school year. Information about age and hours of legal entitlement is blue; information about age and hours of compulsory ECEC is red. Where the weekly entitlement and hours of compulsory ECEC differ, the square brackets indicate the hours of compulsory ECEC. Weekly hours are truncated at 40.

Country-specific notes

Belgium: 28 periods of 50 minutes.
Bulgaria: Compulsory ECEC: 5-year-olds – 20 hours; six-year-olds – 24 hours.
Netherlands: Stresses the importance of accessibility and freedom of choice for parents in ECEC provision. Universal entitlement and progress towards this goal are not supported as they do not match the Netherlands ECEC system, which combines a demand-driven structure for children under 4 and supply-side arrangements for all children aged 4 and up, or for those aged 2-and-half to 4 from disadvantaged backgrounds. This combined system has led to a 90 % participation rate for 3 year old children and 100% participation rate for children aged 4 and up.
Austria: Weekly hours of compulsory ECEC vary between *Länder*.
United Kingdom: In England and Wales, children reach compulsory school age at the start of the school term following their fifth birthday. Part of the reception year (classified as ISCED 0) is compulsory for children whose birthdays fall in the earlier part of the school year.

In 2014, only six EU-28 education systems, namely Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) as well as Iceland, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey had not provided a guarantee to an ECEC place. However, in some of these countries, despite the absence of a legal entitlement or obligation to attend, governments may still make a substantial investment to ensure that all children can access some ECEC provision, at least during the year or two prior to the commencement of primary education. For example:

In **Ireland**, the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme currently provides for free pre-school for up to 15 hours per week for 38 weeks for children aged over 3 years 2 months and less than 4 years 7 months on 1 September of the year that they will be starting. There is universal eligibility for the scheme and take up for the current scheme is in excess of 90 %.

In **Slovakia**, children attending ECEC one year before starting compulsory primary school receive state allowances for education and care. Priority admittance is given to children a year before compulsory school attendance (5-year-olds).

In the **United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)**, there is no legal entitlement but commitment in the Programme for Government means that a funded pre-school education place is available from age 3 to almost all families who want it. Compulsory primary education begins at age 4.

Recent policy developments

Countries with recent reforms on the provision of guaranteed places include Hungary, Poland and Finland.

In **Hungary**, instead of the previous legal entitlement, from September 2015, ECEC became compulsory for children from the age of 3.

Poland extended the legal entitlement to 4-year-olds from September 2015.

Finland introduced compulsory ECEC for one year prior to starting school from August 2015.

Some countries plan reforms in the near future:

In **the Czech Republic**, from 1 September 2017, pre-primary education will be compulsory from age 5, namely one year before primary education. At the same time, the legal entitlement will be extended to 4-year-olds, and later on also to 3-year-olds (from 1 September 2018) and 2-year-olds (from 1 September 2020).

In **Estonia**, a new legislation on ECEC is currently being prepared. The planned changes will give local governments the possibility to create new kindergarten or childcare places that meet the needs and preferences of families. EUR 47 million will be invested during the years 2014-2020 enabling to create approximately 3 200 new ECEC places.

In **Ireland**, from September 2016, children will be able to start in free pre-school when they reach age 3 and to remain in free pre-school until they transfer to primary school.

Greece is planning legislation for lowering the starting age of compulsory ECEC years from 5 to 4.

In **Hungary**, from January 2017, every local government will have to provide care for children under 3 if there are 40 children under 3 living in the area, or the parents of at least five children express their wish for care. At present, this is a requirement for local governments where the population in the area is more than 10 000.

Italy is planning legislation to establish an integrated or unitary ECEC system catering for children from birth to six years of age. If the legislation is passed, a plan would be developed to guarantee more provision.

In **Lithuania**, from 1 September 2016, pre-primary education will be compulsory (20 hours per week) for all children for one year before primary schooling.

In **Poland**, from September 2016, compulsory ECEC starts at age 6 instead of 5. From September 2017, the legal entitlement will be extended to 3-year-olds.

Portugal will establish a legal entitlement for 4-year-olds from 2016/17 and for 3-year-olds in the following years.

In **Finland**, the right to ECEC was limited to 20 hours per week as from 1 August 2016. The full-time entitlement remains for children whose parents are working or studying. A child is also entitled to full-time ECEC if it is necessary due to his or her development, support needs or family circumstances, or if it is otherwise considered to be in the interest of the child.

1.2. Professionalisation of ECEC staff

ECEC staff have a major role in shaping children's experiences and determining their learning outcomes (Winton and McCollum, 2008). The 2011 Commission Communication ([7]) states that staff competences are key to high quality ECEC. Research conducted by the OECD stresses that there is strong evidence to suggest that better educated staff are more likely to provide high-quality teaching approaches and stimulating learning environments, which lead to better learning outcomes (Lijtens and Taguma, 2010). In this report, progress towards the professionalisation of staff is assessed by examining current initial training requirements and regulations on continuing professional development.

> **ECEC staff** refers here only to those professionals who have regular, daily, direct contact with children and whose duties involve education and care. These staff have the main responsibility for groups of children in an ECEC setting. Their duties usually include designing and delivering safe and developmentally appropriate activities in accordance with all relevant programmes/curricula.

The term ECEC staff does not include heads of ECEC settings, medical/healthcare staff (such as paediatricians, physiotherapists, psychomotor therapists, nutritionists, etc. providing support for children's physical development), professional specialists (such as psychologists), assistants/auxiliary staff who perform only domestic or maintenance roles (such as preparing food and cleaning premises).

1.2.1. ECEC staff qualification requirements

The indicator on the requirement for at least one staff member per group of children in ECEC to be qualified to a minimum of Bachelor level in the field of education (i.e. a minimum of three years at ISCED 6 according to the ISCED 2011 classification) aims to show whether education staff in the sector are highly qualified. This is important as staff who are highly qualified in education can provide leadership to other team members when designing and delivering developmentally appropriate activities for children and thus raise the quality of provision.

Programmes at **ISCED level 6, at Bachelor's or equivalent level**, are often designed to provide participants with academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level are typically theoretically-based but may include practical components and are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice. They are traditionally offered by universities and equivalent tertiary educational institutions, but do not necessarily involve the completion of a research project or thesis (UNESCO, 2012).

Figure 1.2 shows that in about a third of European education systems there must be at least one staff member who has tertiary level education in educational sciences for all groups of children across the entire phase of ECEC.

In **Finland**, the minimum requirement for an ECEC teacher is a Bachelor level degree. Other types of staff (child care workers or 'practical nurses') must hold at least a vocational qualification in the field of social welfare and health care (upper secondary education ISCED 3). Legislation requires that a minimum of one in three members of staff in ECEC settings catering for children up to age 6 must have a higher education degree (Bachelor of Education, Master of Education or Bachelor of Social Services). All teachers in pre-primary education for six-year-olds must have a Bachelor's or Master's level university degree in education.

([7]) COM (2011) 66 final.

The requirement for at least one member of staff to have a tertiary qualification in educational sciences applies only to groups of children aged 3 years and over in more than a third of European education systems (Belgium (French and Flemish Communities) ([8]), Bulgaria, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia).

In **Italy**, ECEC teachers working with children aged 3 years and over are required to have at least five years of university education, which corresponds to ISCED 7 (Master's degree level). The minimum qualification requirement for educational staff working with younger children is set at upper secondary (ISCED 3), but some regions employ educators (*educatore dell'infanzia*) with tertiary education degrees. In settings for children under 3, regional regulations make provision for auxiliary staff (*educatore, operatore*) and their requisite qualifications.

Figure 1.2: Requirement for at least one staff member per group of children in ECEC to have a tertiary qualification in education (minimum 3 years ISCED 6), 2015/16

For the entire period of ECEC

Only in settings for children aged 3 and over

No such requirement for children of either age group
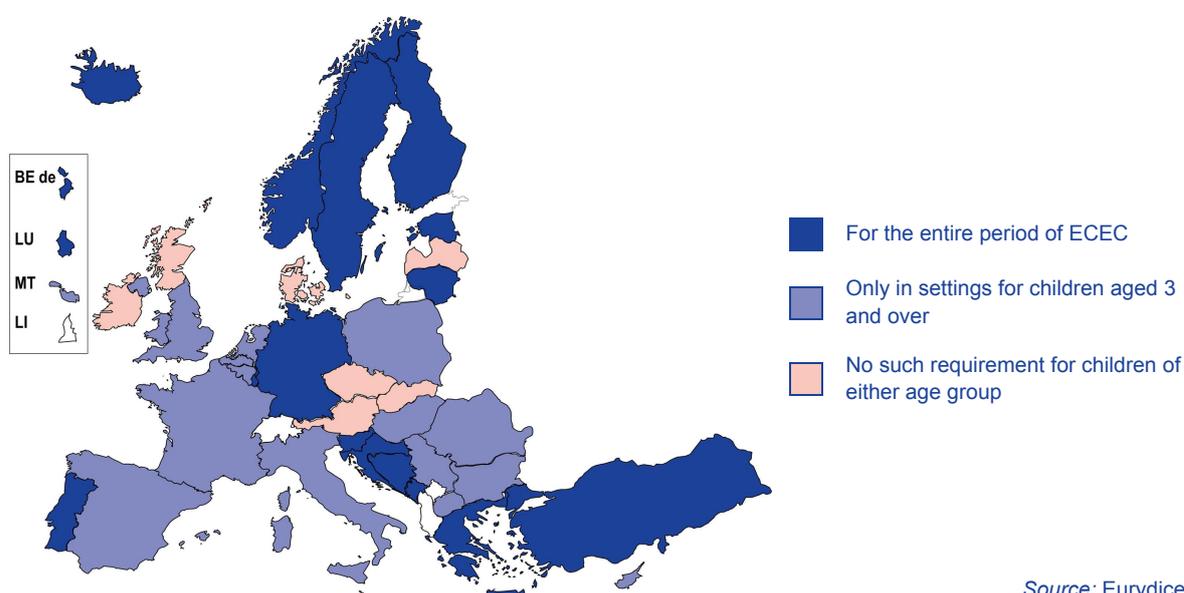
Source: Eurydice.

Country-specific notes

Germany: The vocational training for kindergarten teachers is classified as ISCED level 6, which includes programmes at Bachelor's or equivalent level.
France: For children under 3 in *crèches et autres structures collectives*, no qualified staff member is required in settings catering for up to 24 children. In settings with 25 to 49 children, at least a 0.5 post must be held by a staff member with a tertiary qualification in education (minimum 3 years ISCED 6) is required. In settings with 50-69 children, a full post must be held by a staff member with this level of qualification. At least a 0.5 additional tertiary level post must be provided for each group of up to 20 children. For all children attending *école maternelle* (from age 2), at least one full-time post must be held by a staff member with a tertiary qualification in education for each group.
Netherlands: Only in settings for children of 4 years and over.

There is no requirement for one member of staff per group to have a minimum of 3 years' tertiary education in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Latvia, Austria, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (Scotland) for either children under or over 3 years of age. However, in some of these countries, although there is no central requirement, staff educated to ISCED level 6 may still be employed and/or there may be a requirement for staff to have undertaken vocational training or short-cycle ECEC related tertiary education.

In **Denmark**, local authorities are responsible for recruiting staff, there is no central regulation. In practice, teams have a pedagogue (*pædagog*) with 3.5 years of ISCED 6 education and a pedagogical assistant (*pædagogisk assistent*). Staff without specialist educational or childcare qualifications are also used.

([8])   In settings for children from 2½ years.

15

In **Latvia**, ECEC staff are required to have completed a first level tertiary education (ISCED 5) study programme or second level (ISCED 6) higher pedagogical education programme and have a pre-school teacher qualification.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, ECEC practitioners must hold at least a recognised vocational qualification at ISCED level 3. Although there is no longer a requirement for qualified teachers to be based full-time in ECEC settings, the government has a policy that all pre-school children should receive access to a qualified (ISCED level 6) teacher. Access to a teacher can be considered either as teacher involvement in a specific centre on a full/part time basis or sustained peripatetic support that contributes positively to the learning experience for children (The Scottish Government, 2009). Moreover, all managers of ECEC centres are required to have, or be working towards, a BA in Childhood Practice (ISCED level 6), which has content on both early education and care.

Recent policy developments

A few education systems are introducing reforms to staff qualifications.

In **Ireland**, from 31 December 2016, all staff working directly with children in the early years' service must hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework (ISCED 4), or the equivalent. The Room Leader working with children of 3 years and over must hold a qualification on Level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework (ISCED 5).

In **Italy**, the School Reform Law (L. 107/2015, art. 1 c. 181e) envisages future legislation establishing at least a 3-year university degree for educational staff working in 0-3 settings.

In **Malta**, from 2015/16, the required level of qualification for staff working in kindergarten centres was raised to Bachelor's degree level with four years of study or two years of study for holders of the MCAST Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in Early Years (and which would have been preceded by a two-year MCAST Advanced Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development).

1.2.2. Continuing professional development of ECEC staff

Establishing the initial qualification requirements for staff working with children is only the starting point for ensuring a well-qualified workforce. Continuing professional development (CPD) is an important means by which employees can upgrade their knowledge and skills throughout their career. In certain cases, participating in training also allows staff to upgrade their qualifications. The 'Proposal for key principles of a quality framework for early childhood education and care' (European Commission, 2014) highlights that continuing professional development has a huge impact on the quality of staff, on the teaching methods and approaches used and on children's outcomes.

Continuing professional development is defined as participation in formal and non-formal professional development activities, which may, for example, include subject-based and pedagogical training. In certain cases, these activities may lead to further qualifications.

Professional duty means a task described as such in working regulations/contracts/ legislation or other regulations on the teaching profession.

European countries usually regard CPD as a professional duty and/or necessary for the promotion of staff who already hold higher-level qualifications, namely ECEC teachers. In many countries, CPD is an integral part of the teacher's role, including ECEC (or pre-primary) teachers. However, for the categories of staff who are not required to have a minimum of 3 years' training in education at ISCED level 6, CPD is often optional. For example,

In the **United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)**, CPD is a professional duty for teachers with qualified teacher/registered status and, for England only, those with Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) or Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS). CPD is optional for all other categories of staff (those with a level 2 or 3 qualification).

As shown in Figure 1.3, continuing professional development is a professional duty and/or necessary for the promotion for staff working in settings for children under 3 years of age in only half of European countries. For example:

In **Malta**, there is no obligatory or specifically organised continuing professional development for staff working with children under 3 years of age in childcare settings. However, for ECEC staff working with children aged 3 years or over, CPD sessions are held once per term after school hours (three two-hour sessions per school year).

In **Poland**, CPD is necessary for promotion for all teachers in pre-school and school education, but CPD is not required for staff working with children under 3 years old.

In **Slovakia**, all pedagogical employees are obliged to develop their professional competences through continuing education and self-education. CPD is necessary for promotion and allows teachers to reach higher salary scales. For ECEC staff working with children under 3 years old no formal teacher qualification is required and CPD is optional.

In many countries, however, pre-primary teachers work throughout the entire ECEC phase and CPD is a professional duty and/or necessary for promotion.

In **Lithuania**, according to the Law on Education (2011), each teacher must upgrade his/her qualification. Each teacher is entitled to at least five days' paid annual leave of absence for his/her continuing professional development.

In **Slovenia**, CPD is a professional duty and a right according to the Organisation and Financing of Education Act and the Collective Agreement for Education. Pedagogical staff have the right to five days' in-service training a year or 15 days over three years.

Figure 1.3: Status of continuing professional development (CPD) for ECEC staff, 2015/16

CPD is a professional duty and/or necessary for promotion for staff over the entire period of ECEC

CPD is a professional duty and/or necessary for promotion only for staff working with children of 3 years and over

CPD is optional

Source: Eurydice.
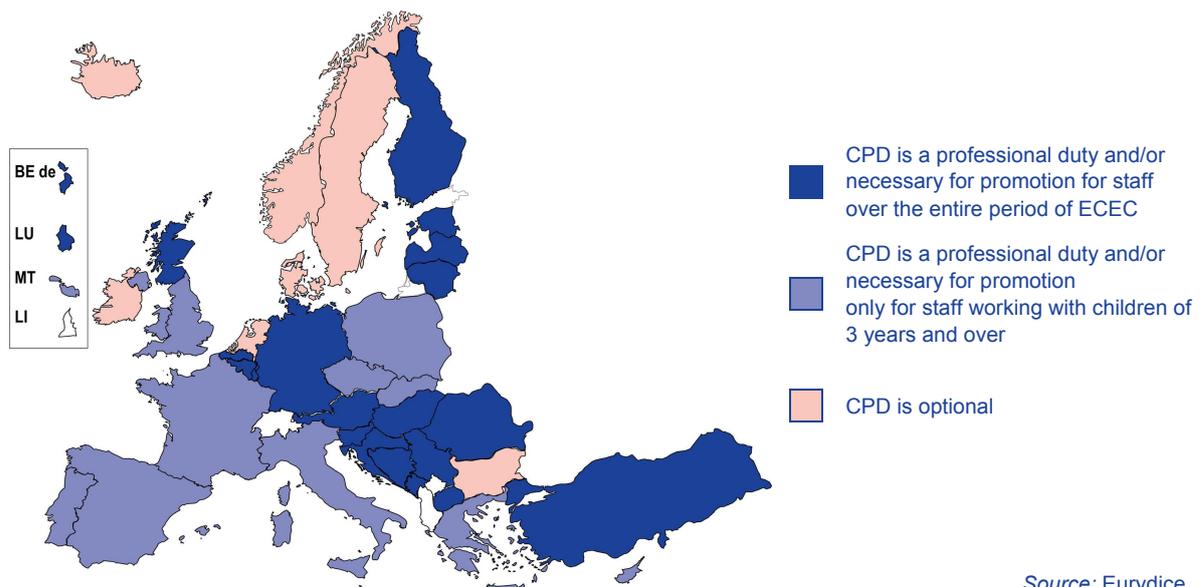
Explanatory note

CPD is shown here as a professional duty and/or necessary for promotion even if the requirement only applies to one category of staff.

Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE nl): Although CPD is considered as a professional duty, training activities cannot be mandatory unless the school head or school board deem them necessary for individual teachers.
Germany: Varies between *Länder*. In most *Länder*, CPD is necessary for promotion, however it is usually a 'soft' professional duty or optional. A fixed number of days available for CPD are agreed in work contracts.

Continuing professional development may also be seen as helping to compensate for a lack of initial training, and in several education systems it is required of all ECEC staff regardless of the level and type of their education.

In **Slovenia**, CPD is also a professional duty for assistants.

The **Scottish** Social Services Council, which is responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training, stipulate that all workers in day care services for children must engage in 10 days or 60 hours of CPD over the course of their five-year registration period.

For ECEC staff working with children aged 3 years and over, CPD is a professional duty and/or necessary for promotion everywhere except in Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Iceland and Norway. However, even in these education systems, CPD may be required of certain types of ECEC staff, for example:

In the **Netherlands**, all ECEC settings are obliged to have a 'staff development plan'.

Recent policy developments

Four countries reported reforms regarding CPD for ECEC staff.

The 2014 **Flemish** Parliament Act on Childcare for babies and toddlers requires an annual assessment to be carried out by ECEC providers to identify and meet the training needs of practitioners working with babies and toddlers (under 3 years old). Providers offering more than 18 places must incorporate this process into their quality assurance manual.

In **Bulgaria**, according to the Pre-school and School Educational Act, from 1 August 2016 all teachers and educators are obliged to improve their qualifications on an annual basis. CPD becomes an integral part of appraisal and is monitored through a system of qualification credits. ECEC settings are obliged to create conditions for at least 16 academic hours of CPD annually for each educator.

In **Ireland**, from 31 December 2016, all staff working directly with children in early years services must hold a minimum level of qualification in a relevant area. Any staff currently employed without the relevant qualifications will have to undertake CPD to meet this criterion.

In **Italy**, the recent School Reform Law (L. 107/2015, art. 1 c. 181e) envisages future legislation that stipulates compulsory CPD for staff across the entire period of ECEC.

1.3. Educational guidelines

The activities that children love – playing games, movement, talking, singing, drawing, eating, gardening, dancing, etc. – can be used to provide learning experiences, develop children's personal and social skills and strengthen their confidence and self-esteem. Rich and varied activities, based on well-defined objectives that ensure progress towards the desired learning outcomes, encourage communication between children and staff and involve parents and the local community, are essential elements of high quality education and care (see EACEA/Eurydice, 2009b and European Commission, 2014). At national level, policy-makers seek to influence children's learning experiences by issuing a detailed ECEC curriculum or by publishing official guidelines outlining the main principles of education for this age group.

The **ECEC curriculum** as defined in the EC quality framework (European Commission, 2014) covers developmental care, formative interactions, learning experiences and supportive assessment. It promotes young children's personal and social development and their learning as well as laying the foundations for their future life and citizenship. The ECEC curriculum is set out in formal documentation issued by the responsible authorities.

The learning opportunities to be provided to young children can also be communicated through official **educational guidelines** which explain the content and teaching approaches incorporated into legislation as part of, for example, an ECEC education programme or reference framework. The guidelines often refer to skills, educational standards, curriculum criteria or care/education plans; they may also offer practical advice for ECEC practitioners.

All European countries issue official educational guidelines to help settings improve their provision. However, in around a quarter of European countries, educational guidelines or curricula are not provided for settings for children under 3 years old (see Figure 1.4).

Depending on how formal or binding they are, educational guidelines allow varying degrees of flexibility in the way they are applied in ECEC settings. There may be more than one document applicable to the phase in a particular country or region within a country, but they all contribute to establishing the basic framework in which ECEC staff are required (or advised, where mandatory requirements do not exist) to develop their own practice to meet children's needs. Recommendations are usually quite broad, and often institutions are free to develop their own curricula and choose their own methods.

In federal systems with significant regional autonomy, as is the case in Germany and Spain, the central recommendations contain general principles and objectives, but the education authorities of the *Länder* and the Autonomous Communities are responsible for providing more detailed programmes of study for ECEC including objectives, content and assessment methods, etc. For example:

> In **Germany**, a Common Framework for Early Education in Childcare Centres defines general goals, principles, developmental areas, conditions for the implementation of educational objectives and facilitating the transition to primary school. The 16 curricular frameworks of the federal states (*Bundesländer*) further develop the overall ECEC goals, pedagogical practices and learning areas stated in the Common Framework.

In other countries (e.g. Estonia, Denmark, Lithuania (ages 0-5), Sweden and Finland), the guidelines and principles established in the national framework provide a reference point for producing local curricula at the municipal level or within ECEC settings.

Figure 1.4: ECEC educational guidelines, 2015/16

Educational guidelines
for the entire period of ECEC

Educational guidelines
only for children 3 years and over
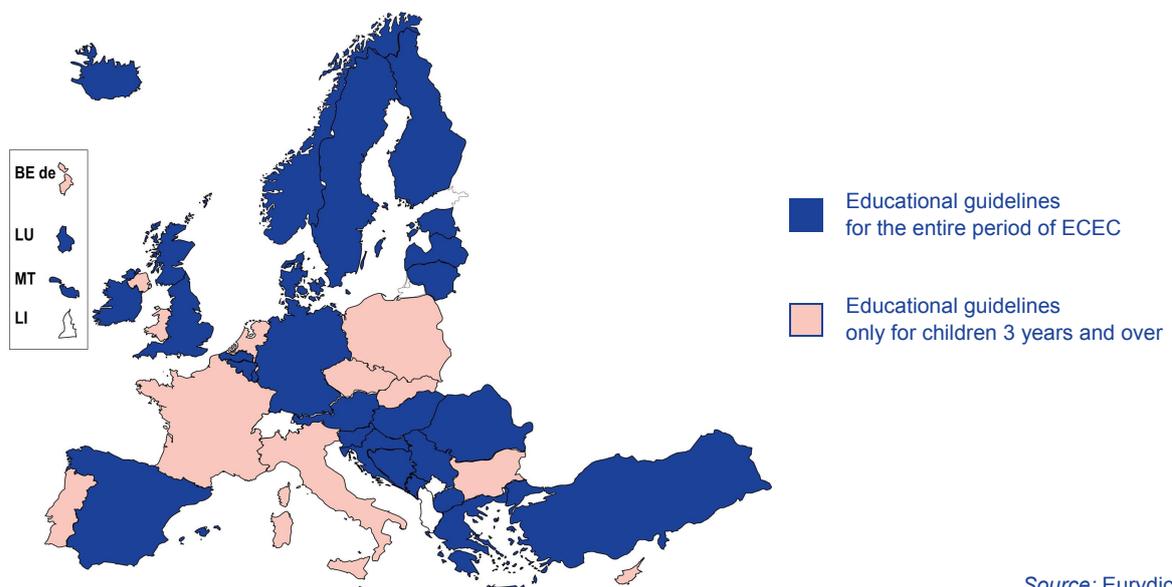
Source: Eurydice.

Often the curriculum is more detailed at the later stages, i.e. the last year or two of the pre-primary stage. For example:

In **Bulgaria**, educational guidelines cover only the compulsory pre-primary preparation for school (last two years of ECEC). There is a detailed programme based on a modular system, which offers content suited to the educational needs of: children who have been attending kindergarten; children who have not attended kindergarten prior to their enrolment in the preparatory group; and children whose mother tongue is other than Bulgarian and who have not attended kindergarten. The programme includes the following educational fields: the Bulgarian language, mathematics, the social world, the natural world, play culture, arts and literature for children, music, technology and every-day life, and physical education.

Every setting in **Lithuania** develops its own curricula (pre-school programme) on the basis of the Outline of Criteria for the Pre-school Education Curriculum. The Ministry of Education also provides detailed recommendations on how to prepare such curricula. However, for the last year of ECEC, there is a detailed pre-primary curriculum.

Even when there are no official guidelines at central level, often ECEC providers are required to draw up their own education and care plan in order to become accredited. Settings are required to outline, for example, their proposed socio-pedagogic activities, the education and support provided for children, and information about their cooperation with parents. For example:

In the **Netherlands**, based on a national pedagogical plan, each ECEC setting for children under 4 is obliged to develop its own curriculum programme. In *basisonderwijs* for 4 and 5 year olds, core objectives (*vroegschoolse educatie*) exist. Targeted ECEC settings for children from 2.5 to 4 are obliged to make use of one of the several educational programmes that exist (*vve programma*).

Recent policy developments

Several education systems are reviewing or introducing new educational guidelines or curricula.

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, a pedagogical framework for childcare settings for babies and toddlers (under 2-and-a-half years) has been available since 2014 and is being implemented from 2015/16. It has been commissioned by the 'Child and Family Agency' (*Kind en Gezin*) and developed by two university research teams. The framework outlines pedagogical practice, describes what is understood by pedagogical quality and provides points of departure to develop appropriate pedagogical activities. The framework aims at helping ECEC settings to check and improve their work.

In **Bulgaria**, according to the Pre-school and School Educational Act, from 1 August 2016, the compulsory pre-primary preparation for school phase (last two years of ECEC) follows an innovative system approach as an integral part of the development strategy for the ECEC setting (school).

In **Poland**, from September 2016, the development of reading and mathematical skills as well as preparation for the acquisition of writing skills will be reintroduced into the pre-school core curriculum. This is due to the raising of the starting age of compulsory education in primary school from 6 to 7.

In **Portugal**, the Educational guidelines for children aged 3 and over have been reviewed and updated (published in July 2016). Moreover, a set of educational guidelines for *crèches* (ECEC settings for under-3s) is in preparation.

In **Slovakia**, a new State Educational Programme for Pre-primary Education has entered into force on 1 September 2015. In the academic year 2015/16, the new state educational programme will be implemented on a voluntary basis. It will be applied in all ECEC facilities for 3- to 5-year-olds from 1 September 2016.

In **Finland**, a new national core curriculum for pre-primary education was adopted in December 2014 and local curricula based on the new core curriculum will be implemented by August 2016. In August 2015, the Finnish National Board of Education assumed the duties of the national development agency in ECEC. At the same time, preparation started for a national core curriculum for ECEC that will replace the current national ECEC curriculum guidelines in August 2017.

1.4. Specific language support measures

Some children at certain developmental stages might need additional support in order to reach their full potential. Language is essential for interaction and it forms a foundation for learning, therefore children who face difficulties in their language development need to get timely additional support. There are many and varied language support measures available in European countries, often tailored to meet the specific needs of certain linguistic groups or even specific children. Three types of language support measures are shown in Figure 1.5:

a) measures for children who have speech, language and communication needs in the language of instruction;

b) measures to improve the language of instruction for children who speak other language(s) at home;

c) mother tongue teaching: measures to improve children's skills in the language they speak at home where it is not the language of instruction.

Language of instruction refers to the main language that is officially used in education at ECEC and school level. It may not be the first or home language for all pupils.

The limitation of this indicator relates to the fact that only central level recommendations are reported, therefore regional and local practices are not reflected even when they are widespread. Languages spoken in a country often vary in different regions and localities, therefore many measures are taken at these levels. Nevertheless, most European countries have introduced some language support measures in ECEC at central level. In some countries, these language measures are funded at the central level, providing additional/specialist staff or grants to settings implementing these measures. Learning guidelines and materials are often provided, as well as language assessment tools and training for staff.

Although many European countries provide central language support measures for the entire period of ECEC, some countries specifically target children only from the age of 3 (Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, France, Cyprus, Italy, Luxembourg, Hungary and Malta). There are no central level language support measures in Ireland, Slovakia, the United Kingdom (Scotland), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. However, these countries may still have some language support measures. For example:

In **Slovakia**, according to the pedagogical-organisation guidelines (2015/16), ECEC centres with a minority language of instruction should also develop a programme to improve and develop language skills in the state (Slovak) language.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, instead of targeted programmes, the measures taken are individually tailored. Children for whom English is a second language receive additional help.

Figure 1.5: Language support measures in ECEC, 2015/16

Source: Eurydice.

Note: Some support measures may not apply in all settings.

The principal group of language support measures is designed for all children who have speech, language and communication needs in the language of instruction. These are broad measures, targeted at all children, including those that speak the language of instruction at home.

In the **Czech Republic**, speech therapy is generally provided by pedagogical and psychological counselling centres (outside the ECEC settings). However, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports funds additional language support to be provided in ECEC centres for 3-year-olds and over, under the annual programme 'Speech-language Support and Prevention in Pre-primary Education' (*Podpora logopedické prevence v předškolním vzdělávání*) [9]. Financial support is provided for teachers' CPD, school projects for speech development and for acquiring modern equipment.

In **Portugal**, speech therapy may be provided under the National System for Early Intervention, targeted at children aged 0-6 years who are at risk of poor outcomes in their education and who need additional support in order to achieve their full potential.

In European education systems, there are increasingly more children who speak a different language to the language of instruction at home because they are recently arrived immigrants. They are expected to learn the language of instruction so that they are able to communicate and access education. Responding to refugee flows, many countries have introduced additional measures recently.

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, ECEC centres for children younger than 3 years must provide a language policy that covers measures to support the acquisition of Dutch and devotes attention to languages spoken at home. As a temporary measure for 2015-2016, ECEC centres for children over 2-and- a-half years receive an extra EUR 950 for every new non-Dutch speaking pupil who has had less than 9 months of education in Dutch but needs further support in the language. Additional instruction hours are given to pupils aged 5 and over that need support in Dutch.

The **Czech** Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports programme 'Support of Activities to Aid the Integration of Foreigners in the Territory of the Czech Republic' [10] provides grants for schools or other institutions with pupils in ISCED 0-3. This includes the development of approaches to and methods of teaching the Czech language as a foreign language; the development of skills among educational staff to work with migrant children; and the production and distribution of modern text books and teaching aids.

The **German** Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) is running a programme 'Early-Years Language Learning: Because Language is the Key to the World' (*Sprach-Kitas: Weil Sprache der Schlüssel zur Welt ist*) [11] from 2016 to 2019. The aim of this national programme is to support ECEC centres in developing children's language skills as well as helping them cope with diversity and strengthen their cooperation with families. The programme will be run in approximately 3 500 ECEC centres until 2019. ECEC centres will receive an additional, specially qualified language-intervention professional to support the team. ECEC centres will also receive support from professional education consultants for all issues relating to language and inclusion.

In **Malta**, students who are not able to communicate in either Maltese or English are temporarily enrolled on a language induction course to prepare them for mainstream education. The course lasts one academic year.

Portugal has recently introduced guidelines on Portuguese as a second language in pre-school education.

Countries that grant a right to **mother tongue teaching** believe that fluency in the language spoken at home also increases a child's ability to master the language of instruction. Moreover, such teaching is seen as a way in which a child's linguistic expertise is recognised and their cultural heritage is valued. Some countries grant the right to mother tongue teaching to all children irrespective of the language or background.

Although there is no individual right to mother tongue teaching, in the **United Kingdom (England)**, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states that 'for children whose home language is not English, providers must take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home'. There is an information resource for parents which sets out the types of support available [12].

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[9] http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zakladni-vzdelavani/podpora-aktivit-v-oblasti-integrace-cizincu-na-uzemi-cr-v

[10] http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zakladni-vzdelavani/dotacni-program-msmt-na-podporu-vzdelavani-v-jazycich-3?highlightWords=integrace+romsk%C3%A9+komunity

[11] http://sprach-kitas.fruehe-chancen.de/programm/ueber-das-programm/

[12] http://www.afasic.org.uk/download/101/

According to the **Norwegian** Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, ECEC institutions must support minority language children in using their mother tongue, while working actively to promote their Norwegian language skills. There is an earmarked state grant to municipalities aimed at enhancing language development for minority language children in and/or outside ECEC. The state grant is designed to strengthen local work on language learning and multiculturalism.

Some countries provide mother tongue teaching for a specific language or languages, usually the regional or minority languages.

Estonian Ministry of Education and Research financially supports Sunday schools that provide mother tongue teaching for 3 to 18 year-old children from ethnic minorities.

Spain has bilateral agreements with several countries, for example Portugal and Romania [13], to promote knowledge of the respective languages to students from these countries in order to safeguard their identity and culture respecting the host country. For example, the Autonomous Communities of Extremadura [14] and the Comunidad de Madrid [15] are running the 'Programme of Portuguese Language and Culture' in ECEC and primary schools. In these schools, the teaching activities in Portuguese are part of all school activities. Other activities include student exchanges, study visits, cultural weeks, etc.

Luxembourg provides an assistant for supporting the learning of the mother tongue for all children from Portuguese origin.

In **Poland**, at the request of parents, mother tongue teaching may be carried out in national minority languages (e.g. Lithuanian, German, Belarusian and Ukrainian) for children aged 3 and over.

Portugal has a bilateral agreement with Romania to offer Romanian language and culture classes for students with Romanian origin, with an aim to develop their identity and cultural background. However, these classes are open to all students.

Slovenia provides bilingual settings in the areas inhabited by Italian or Hungarian minorities. Educational authorities have issued a Supplement to the Curriculum for working in the ethnically mixed areas. Bilingual settings are entitled to receive extra funds for specific CPD. Moreover, these settings may benefit from such advantages as smaller group size, extra staff or a higher level of education among staff.

Montenegro has pre-school activities in Albanian in certain areas. Also, Roma speaking staff are employed to foster the language development of Roma children.

In some cases, both approaches to mother tongue teaching are supported, namely providing a support framework for all languages as well as giving additional funding/status for specific minority languages. For example:

In **Sweden**, the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) stipulates that 'Pre-school shall contribute to giving children with a mother tongue other than Swedish the opportunity to develop both the Swedish language and their mother tongue' [16]. In addition, special minority rights protection is given to Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli in so-called 'administrative areas' (*förvaltningsområden*). This gives individuals the right to use Sami and Finnish in their dealings with the authorities and also the right to pre-school partly or completely in the minority language. The municipalities within the administrative areas are allocated government funding for the additional costs.

Even when there is no central regulation on mother tongue teaching, it can be provided in ECEC settings. For example:

In **Germany**, bilingual ECEC centres exist, particularly in larger towns. In these centres, native speakers of German and another language are employed. In addition, specific programmes to improve children's skills in a non-German language are usually put in place on the initiative of staff or an ECEC provider.

For information on language support for students in primary and secondary education who have a mother tongue other than the language of instruction, see Figure 3.3.

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[13] http://www.madrid.org/dat_capital/upe/impresos_pdf/CircularCulturaRumana1516.pdf

[14] http://www.educarex.es/pub/cont/com/0004/documentos/Ins_24_2013.pdf

[15] http://www.madrid.org/dat_capital/upe/impresos_pdf/CircularCulturaPortuguesa1516.pdf

[16] http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800#K8

1.5. Support measures for parents

Parent participation in their children's education is essential; therefore, parents are the most important partners in delivering high-quality ECEC, according to the 'Proposal for the key principals of a quality framework for early childhood education and care' (European Commission, 2014). The Proposal also states that the 'family should be fully involved in all aspects of education and care for their child' and that ECEC services should support the learning and care provided by families.

Most European countries emphasise the importance of partnership with parents and encourage settings to include specific measures in their planning. Moreover, many countries recommend the types of support that settings should provide to parents. Figure 1.6 shows whether central regulations/recommendations and/or curriculum for ECEC specify the following support measures for parents:

a) Information sessions and parent-teacher meetings in the ECEC setting.

b) Home learning guidance, which refers to fostering the child's learning at home, by providing information and ideas to families about how to help their children with curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.

c) Parenting programmes, which refer to formal parenting classes to help families establish home environments that support children as learners. Parents attend formal courses covering a variety of topics related to children's education and development (for example, speech/language development, effective discipline, building self-esteem, understanding challenging behaviour).

d) Home visits.

This variety of measures is intended to respond to the various needs of different types of families, as well as the various needs of families parenting children of different ages. Many education systems therefore have a comprehensive approach to parenting support, which incorporate several of the measures listed above.

In **the United Kingdom (Wales)**, *Parenting in Wales: Guidance on engagement and support* ([17]) acknowledges that a 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to be successful. It sets out a range of possible parent support measures. It sets out overall principles that parenting support is about working with parents to reduce risks; strengthen parenting capacity; develop and build resilience and sustain positive change with the overarching aim of improving outcomes for children.

Figure 1.6: Support measures for parents, 2015/16

Source: Eurydice.

Note: Some support measures may not apply in all settings.

([17]) http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/cyp/140910-parenting-in-wales-guidance-en.pdf

Figure 1.6 shows that the most common form of cooperation between parents and settings is through **information sessions and parent-teacher meetings**, which should form the basis of a regular dialogue between families and ECEC practitioners. Parents receive information on their child's progress and development as well as advice on their child's education. Some countries specify the frequency or format of such meetings, for example:

In **Austria**, so called *Elternabende* (parents' evenings) are required twice a year by law in most *Länder*. Many services offer meetings and guidance more often than is required by law.

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, three types of information sessions are organised with parents in ECEC settings: (1) group meetings with parents, (2) workshops and (3) open days.

In the countries which have no specific recommendations on the forms of support to be provided to parents, informal meetings between staff and parents are also common practice.

Home-learning guidance is centrally recommended or included in educational guidelines in more than a third of European education systems. With the aim of boosting children's language development, cognitive development and academic achievement, this is sometimes referred to as the 'home curriculum' (OECD, 2012). Home learning guidance aims to inspire parents to offer their children all kinds of learning experiences at home, both implicit and explicit, e.g. by involving children in routine activities (making grocery lists, shopping, preparing meals, getting dressed, making phone call, etc.) and by enriching these activities with stimulating discussions.

The **Irish** curriculum framework for ECEC contains information not only for ECEC practitioners but also for parents. The information is intended to help parents 'plan and provide challenging and enjoyable learning experiences enabling children to grow and develop as competent and confident learners'.

The **Croatian** National Curriculum for Early and Pre-primary Education contains a number of notes and guidelines regarding support for parents whose children attend ECEC institutions.

Parenting programmes have similar objectives to those set for guidance on home learning. The main distinction between these two types of support lies in their organisation: in the case of parenting programmes, parents attend formal courses covering a variety of topics related to children's education and development.

In **Estonia**, for instance, within the framework of the Strategy for Children and Families and its associated development plan, parenting programmes have been operating since 2012 covering such topics as child health and development, bullying in ECEC settings, and children's and parents' rights. Some training courses are provided within ECEC settings.

A few countries/regions specify that parenting programmes are often directed at the most vulnerable groups. For example:

In **France**, an initiative 'Open School for Parents for the Success of Children' (*Ouvrir l'école aux parents pour la réussite des enfants*) [18] aims to facilitate the integration of newly arriving immigrant families. Parents learn French in order to be able to understand written documents relating to the education of their children and participate in oral exchanges about the education of their children. Parents also acquire knowledge of the functioning and expectations of the school as well as values of French society.

Home visits involving ECEC staff (teachers or specialists) are recommended in about a third of European education systems. These visits are mostly intended to support families from disadvantaged backgrounds, but they are also often available for parents of children with learning difficulties. The purpose of such visits is twofold: on the one hand, staff provide advice to parents, while on the other hand, staff learn more about a child's family environment, and can therefore improve their understanding of the child's needs.

In **Romania**, home visits may be carried out when a child has difficulties in adapting to a new ECEC setting and/or communicating with staff or other children.

([18]) http://eduscol.education.fr/cid49489/ouvrir-l-ecole-aux-parents-pour-la-reussite-des-enfants.html

In **Slovenia** and **Slovakia**, home visits are mostly targeted at Roma families with a view to creating links with the Roma community and promoting the importance of using ECEC services.

Where no central recommendations exist, local authorities and/or ECEC services are free to choose their own ways of cooperating with and providing assistance to families. For example:

In the **Czech Republic**, according to the curriculum, teachers should regularly inform parents about their children's achievements and progress, and nursery schools (*mateřské školy*) should support family education and provide guidance. However, the ways this should be done are not prescribed and systematic support is not usually provided in practice.

In **Denmark**, many municipalities and ECEC settings work with parents in order to inform them about learning environments at home. At state level, several projects are available to support municipalities with providing knowledge, cooperation and resources (e.g. 'Early Intervention – Long Lasting Effect' (*Tidlig Indsats – Livslang Effekt*) ([19]), 'Day Care in the Future' (*Fremtidensdagtilbud*) ([20])).

In **Italy**, in keeping with the principle of schools' organisational autonomy, central guidelines may not set down which measures schools should implement. In addition to regularly held mandatory class councils with parent representatives to discuss children's overall development and the work being carried out by ECEC teachers, many schools also organise individual and/or group meetings with parents.

In the **Netherlands**, ECEC settings are not obliged to involve parents in their work but the inspectorate of educational programmes monitors ECEC settings in this respect.

In **Norway**, the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergarten, which is a regulation of the Kindergarten Act, states that parents and ECEC staff are to have regular contact for information exchange and discussion. Even though it is not regulated in detail by law, the majority of ECEC settings organise information sessions and bilateral parent-teacher meetings at least twice a year.

It is important to note that ECEC settings are not the only providers of support.

In several **German** *Länder*, family centres (*Familienzentren* or *Eltern-Kind-Zentren*) as well as ECEC settings offer other family-oriented services including, for instance, parenting programmes and counselling for parents.

In **Cyprus**, government organisations such as pedagogical institutes or non-governmental organisations such as parent's unions (locally financed) run educational seminars for parents.

In **Austria**, different bodies (mostly non-governmental organisations) run centrally financed education projects for parents.

In **Finland**, the tasks of municipal child health clinics also include monitoring the wellbeing of the whole family and supporting parenting.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, within the framework of the National Parenting Strategy launched in 2012, all parents, regardless of whether their children are enrolled in ECEC services, benefit from support through parenting clubs and courses, and have access to books, toys and web-based resources to encourage development through play.

Recent policy developments

In **Bulgaria**, the new Pre-school and School Educational Act (effective from 1 August 2016) determines that parents have a right to receive information, support and counselling at the kindergarten or school on issues related to the education, career orientation and personal development of their children at least once a year.

On the basis of the new ECEC General Curriculum, which came into force on 1 September 2015, the **Lithuanian** Ministry of Education and Science issued new editions of guidance materials for parents, e.g. 'Your child – a pre-schooler', 'Second language at an early age' and 'Your child – Pre-primary'. These publications are intended to help parents better understand their child, to help them develop their knowledge and to help them track their child's development.

In **Portugal**, a pilot parenting programmes' project is underway with 30 playgroups working nationwide.

In **Finland**, the revised Early Childhood Education and Care Act, adopted in May 2015, emphasises the participation and role of parents.

([19]) http://socialstyrelsen.dk/projekter-og-initiativer/born/om-tidlig-indsats-livslang-effekt

([20]) http://www.fremtidensdagtilbud.info/

CHAPTER 2: ACHIEVEMENT IN BASIC SKILLS

Introduction

Underachievement in the basic skills of literacy (in the language of instruction), mathematics and science is a concern for many European countries (European Commission, 2013c). It is an issue associated not only with the effectiveness of teaching and learning, but also with providing an equitable system of education. Moreover, becoming fully integrated into society and being able to respond to the changing demands of the competitive global economy is a significant challenge for many young people who have not yet acquired the key basic skills. Recognising the need for targeted action, in 2009 the Council adopted an EU-wide benchmark related to basic skills, which aims to reduce the proportion of 15-year-olds underachieving in reading, mathematics and science to less than 15 % by 2020 ([1]).

However, underachievement, defined as performing below Level 2 in the PISA test, continues to be a serious challenge across Europe. The latest PISA results from 2012 show that 22.1 % of European students had low achievement in mathematics, 17.8 % in reading, and 16.6 % in science (European Commission, 2013c).

The analysis of results of international surveys, as well as other research evidence, point to the complexity of the problem. The importance of out-of-school factors, including students' socio-economic background and the educational level of parents or the language spoken at home cannot be overstated. Significantly reducing the proportion of low achievers, therefore, would require a combined approach that simultaneously targets a range of factors both in and out of school. The following 2016 structural indicators, however, concentrate primarily on factors that can be directly influenced by education policies.

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │   Achievement       │
                        │   in Basic Skills   │
                        └─────────────────────┘
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| Nationally standardised tests | Recent national reports on achievement | Use of performance data in school evaluation | Student underachievement as a topic in ITE | Additional support to schools with disadvantaged students |
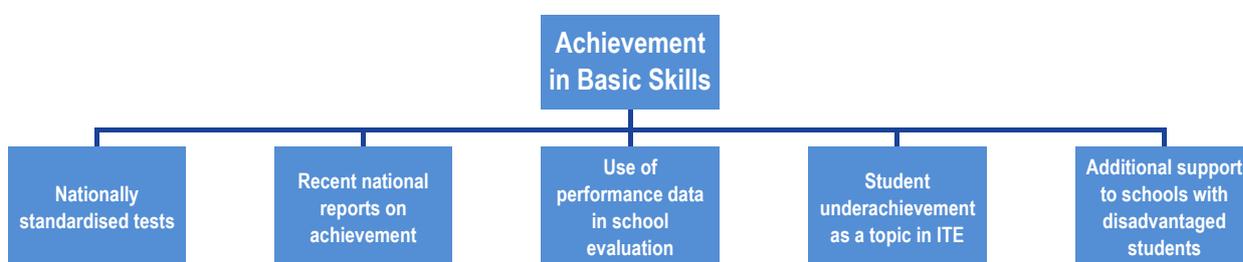
These structural indicators relate to compulsory education, which in the majority of countries corresponds to ISCED 1 and 2. In this report, underachievement refers to student performance that is below the expected level of attainment. It does not address the provision of support exclusively related to special needs education. The indicators build on several recent Eurydice reports which include extensive reviews of academic research and policy evidence and provide further information on national policies in teaching the basic skills in Europe ([2]).

A number of constraints needed to be taken into account when constructing the structural indicators on achievement in the basic skills.

([1]) Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

([2]) EACEA/Eurydice, *Teaching Reading in Europe: Contexts, Policies and Practices* (2011d), EACEA/Eurydice, *Mathematics Education in Europe: Common Challenges and National Policies* (2011a), EACEA/Eurydice, *Science Education in Europe: National Policies, Practices and Research* (2011c), European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, *Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy* (2012), European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, *Key Data on Education in Europe* (2012).

In the majority of European countries, central education authorities prescribe or recommend measures to tackle underachievement in a range of subjects. However, the level of this involvement varies, ranging from compulsory, comprehensive national programmes to support for a limited number of activities such as teacher training courses, research projects or data banks of learning resources. In some countries, in line with the high degree of decentralisation of the school system and teaching autonomy, the design and implementation of measures to tackle underachievement are left entirely to the discretion of teachers, schools and school providers. In addition, when examining national policies to tackle underachievement, it is often difficult to distinguish between measures to improve the performance specifically in basic skills and measures to improve performance in general (across all subject areas).

The selected indicators relate to competences in three distinct areas, i.e. literacy, mathematics and science. These are often treated separately and given different emphasis in national policies. Evidence shows that usually there is more focus on literacy and numeracy, than on science ([3]).

Moreover, national policies on measures to tackle underachievement, curriculum development, teaching approaches, student assessment and teacher education and training are often non-prescriptive and can lack detail. This is often a direct consequence of the significant degree of school and teacher autonomy, as well as the autonomy of teacher training institutions ([4]).

Therefore, no indicators on curriculum development or teaching approaches have been proposed at this stage. General national guidelines in these areas are not a good indicator of actual practice in the classroom and country averages – on which this exercise is built – do not capture the relevant variations. Moreover, most guidelines on curricula and teaching approaches are specific to each basic skill and therefore have a limited use for the purposes of this project.

2.1. Nationally standardised tests in literacy, mathematics and science

National tests used for either summative or formative purposes, or for system monitoring, provide comparable and standardised information about the performance of students, schools and education systems. The information gathered is used to measure and monitor progress and to design improvement measures. This indicator examines the extent to which the three basic skills are assessed in national tests during compulsory education.

In this report **national testing** is defined as 'the national administration of standardised tests and centrally set examinations'. These tests are standardised by the national education authorities or, in the case of Belgium, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, by the top-level authorities for education. The procedures for the administration and marking of tests, as well as the setting of content and the interpretation and use of results are decided at central level. National testing is carried out under the authority of a national or centralised body and all examinees take the tests under similar conditions. Tests for detecting developmental problems, which are administered to certain children at the beginning of compulsory education, as well as tests organised for admission to secondary schools that specialise in the teaching of certain specific subjects, are not included. Various standardised

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([3]) For instance, the language of instruction accounts for the largest proportion of instruction time in compulsory education, and this is especially true in primary education. Mathematics represents the second largest share in primary education, and nearly equals that of the language of instruction in secondary education. The proportion of time spent on natural sciences is less significant in primary education but increases considerably in secondary education where it represents the same percentage as for each of the first two subject areas. For further information on instruction time, see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2016), *Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe 2015/16.*

([4]) For further information on policies on the teaching profession, see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2015c), *The Teaching Profession in Europe: Practices, Perceptions and Policies.*

guidelines and other tools designed to assist teachers in undertaking forms of pupil assessment other than national testing are not included (^{5}).

This indicator includes national testing for both summative and formative purposes. Both compulsory and optional tests are considered, as are sample-based national tests.

The national testing of students has emerged as an important instrument of education policy. It is a widespread practice in Europe but takes different forms. The national information collected for the 2016 update shows that all European education systems, except Belgium (German-speaking Community) (^{6}), Greece, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina organise nationally standardised tests in compulsory education (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Standardised national tests in literacy, mathematics and science (ISCED levels 1 and/or 2), 2015/16
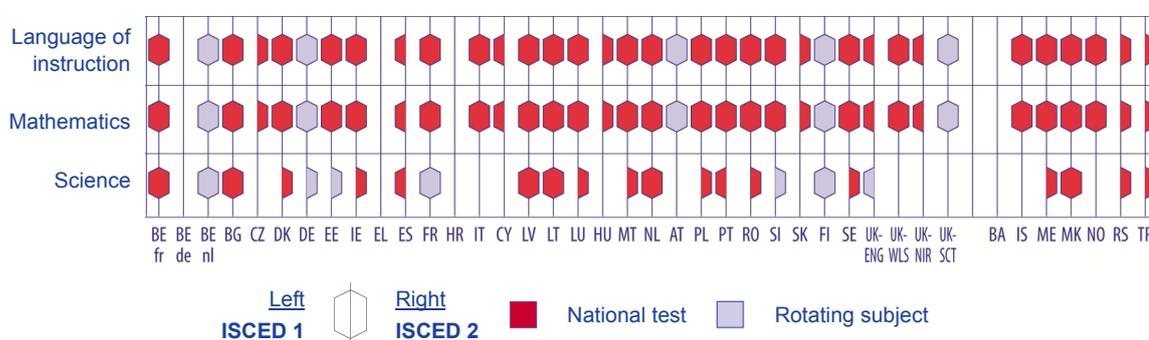
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure refers to the national administration of standardised tests and centrally set examinations. Both compulsory and optional tests are considered, as are sample-based national tests.

The science tests and examinations under consideration cover integrated science subjects and/or the separate subjects of chemistry, biology and physics.
Rotating subjects are not tested on an annual basis but according to a system of rotation determined by the central authorities.

Country-specific notes

Ireland: The language of instruction in any school could be either Irish or English.
Spain: The tests reported in this figure were administered in all Autonomous Communities, except the Basque country where no tests were organised in the 2015/16 school year. Science was assessed in all Autonomous Communities, except Catalonia. The Autonomous Communities may administer additional tests.
Luxembourg: The national tests are in German and French, which are the official languages, along with Luxembourgish.
Cyprus: At ISCED 2, the language of instruction, mathematics, science and history are assessed at school level at the end of each school year. Although these tests are not fully nationally standardised, they are prepared following central guidelines on content, duration and assessment by class teachers.
United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR): GCSEs, nationally regulated examinations taken at the end of full-time compulsory education at age 16, are classified as ISCED 3 if five good passes are achieved and therefore not shown in the figure. GCSEs are single subject exams in a range of subjects including English, Welsh for Welsh-speaking schools in Wales, mathematics and science.

In the majority of European countries, standardised national assessments in compulsory education focus on the language of instruction and mathematics, and to a much lesser extent on science. While all countries organise national tests in both the language of instruction and mathematics, around a third of all countries do not organise national tests in science. Moreover, a number of countries

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(^{5}) For further information on national tests see Eurydice, *National Testing of Pupils in Europe: Objectives, Organisation and Use of Results* (2009a).

(^{6}) In 2015/16, in Belgium (German-speaking Community), third year students participated in the *Vergleichsarbeiten* (VERA) test in mathematics and eighth year students in the same tests in reading. In addition, a sample of 15-year-old students participated in the PISA 2015 test.

administer science tests only in lower secondary education (ISCED level 2) or as a rotation subject (see definition under Figure 2.1) which is not tested annually.

Indeed, national tests in some education systems (Belgium (Flemish Community), Austria, Finland and the United Kingdom (Scotland)) are exclusively based on a system of rotating subjects. This policy is linked to the specific objectives of each test, as well as concerns for balancing the need for performance data with keeping the burden of testing to a minimum.

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, the National Assessment Programme (NAP) collects system level information on the share of pupils who reach the attainment targets and developmental objectives. Schools participate in sample-based tests on a voluntary basis. The tested subjects (mathematics for the 2015/16 school year) are determined according to a rotation system determined by the central authorities.

In **Germany**, in the framework of the *Ländervergleich* (National Assessment Study – NAS) German, mathematics and science are tested on a rotation basis. In school year 2015/16, German was tested at ISCED levels 1 and 2 and mathematics at ISCED level 1. In addition, German or mathematics are tested annually through the *Vergleichsarbeiten* (VERA) tests, depending on the choice of the individual *Länder*.

In **Austria**, national tests in the language of instruction and mathematics are organised according to a rotation system determined by the Federal Ministry of Education. In the 2015/16 school year, German was tested in grade 8.

In **Finland**, student achievement tests in compulsory education involve 5-10 % of all basic education schools. Tests usually cover only one subject on a rotating basis, either language of instruction, or mathematics, or less often, a third subject or cluster of subjects according to national priorities. In school year 2015/16, mathematics, Sámi, Romany and sign language were tested.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) is a voluntary annual sample survey which monitors national performance in literacy and numeracy in alternate years (literacy for school year 2015/16). The survey involves 8 % of pupils at two stages within ISCED 1 (P4 and P7) and one stage within ISCED 2 (S2).

Recent policy developments

National tests are shaped by and evolve in accordance with national policy agendas and educational structures. In the past few years, national authorities in some European countries have moved from pilot national tests to the establishment of regular testing systems (the Czech Republic, Spain and Austria). Other countries have added new tests in specific years (Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and the United Kingdom – England and Scotland). In Croatia, national testing has been discontinued.

In **Ireland**, at primary level, all schools are required to administer standardised tests annually and to submit the aggregated results to the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in English and in Mathematics; and in Irish-medium schools, in English, Irish, and Mathematics. In addition, the Educational Research Centre (ERC), on behalf of the DES, carries out national surveys of achievement in a representative sample of primary schools every five years, in English and in Mathematics. These national assessments do not have an effect upon students' progression or certification. At the end of lower secondary level, Language 1 (mother tongue), mathematics and science are tested in the Junior Certificate examination. It is proposed to expand this in the coming years by the introduction of national standardised tests in these three areas outside of these state examinations.

In **Spain**, the gradual implementation of the assessment system of key basic competences ([7]) includes the organisation of national tests in the language of instruction, mathematics and science in grade 6 of primary education (ISCED 1) in school year 2015/16.

In **Latvia**, a new science diagnostic test in year 9 took place in February 2016. It focuses more attention on science knowledge and evaluates student abilities to solve practical problems in the natural sciences as recommended in the Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020.

In **Lithuania**, participation in national tests in years 2, 4, 6 (from school year 2015/16) and 8 is not compulsory and could be initiated by schools or municipalities. The aim is 1) to identify the strong and weak points of participating schools or municipalities and 2) to take appropriate measures to improve the situation. All tests, except the one in year 8, are provided in Lithuanian, Russian and Polish.

([7]) *Calendario de implantación de la* LOMCE (implementation timeline)
http://www.mecd.gob.es/educacion-mecd/mc/lomce/lomce/calendario.html

In the **United Kingdom (England)**, revised tests have been developed for use from 2016. They reflect the content of the new National Curriculum in English and mathematics. The biennial sampling test for science, administered for the second time in 2016, was also reviewed against the new curriculum.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, as part of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education ([8]), the Scottish Government is planning to introduce standardised national assessments in literacy and numeracy for pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3. The data from assessments will sit alongside a range of evidence to support teacher judgement data on the achievement of literacy and numeracy levels. The assessments will be piloted in 2016 and introduced in 2017. Over time the new assessments will replace the SSLN.

In two countries national tests have been either discontinued or made optional.

In **Croatia**, a pilot project on national testing on a rotation basis, which was run by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education, came to an end in 2015. There are no immediate plans to resume national testing.

In **Sweden**, from January 2016, national tests in sciences are no longer compulsory at ISCED 1. Optional national tests are accessible to schools in a national database, but mandatory tests in these subjects now only apply to ISCED 2.

2.2. Recent national reports on achievement in basic skills

Collecting evidence and publishing reports at national level on performance trends, factors contributing to underachievement, and effective approaches for raising attainment can provide significant support for the policy making process. This indicator relates to such reports published since 2011, which focus exclusively on achievement in basic skills or include achievement in one or more of these skills as a main topic.

The majority of European countries publish national reports on achievement in each of the basic skills (see Figure 2.2) based on national performance data.

Figure 2.2: Recent national reports (since 2011) on achievement in basic skills (ISCED levels 1 and/or 2)

Left — **ISCED 1** — Right — **ISCED 2** — ■ Reports based on national data — ▨ Reports based only on international survey data

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure refers to national reports on student achievement in either ISCED 1 and/or 2 published since 2011. These reports are based on national data and/or international survey data.

In several countries, the PISA tests take place in ISCED level 3.

In many cases, these reports are complemented by reports based on the country results from international surveys such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS. Only in Bosnia and Herzegovina are there no recent national reports on achievement in basic skills based on this type of national or international information. In around a third of countries, national reports are based solely on the results of international surveys.

([8]) *National improvement framework for Scottish education – achieving excellence and equity* (Scottish Government, January 2016) at http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/01/8314/downloads#res491758

In terms of the competences covered by these reports, as with the previous indicator on national testing, it appears that performance in the language of instruction and mathematics is analysed much more often than performance in science. In the area of science, only a third of countries have produced reports based on national sources of information. An equal number of countries rely only on the results of international surveys (PISA and others) and a third group do not report any recent analyses of student performance in science.

The sources, scope and content of recent reports vary greatly. The following country examples provide illustrations of some of the existing practices in European education systems.

In **France**, a number of briefing notes summarise the main results of the sample subject tests CEDRE (*Cycle des évaluations disciplinaires réalisées sur échantillon*). These tests take place every six years for the same subject and evaluate student performance at the end of primary and lower secondary education. For instance, the 2014 CEDRE tests in mathematics point to the fact that students have very diverse attainment levels at the start of lower secondary education. At the end of lower secondary education the test results reveal that there is a sharp rise of the proportion of low achievers [9].

In **Spain**, there have been no recent reports based on national sources. However, several recent reports have analysed the PISA 2012 country data. The results show that the performance of Spanish students in the three basic skills remains stable in comparison with earlier PISA tests. It is significantly below the OECD average in all three areas. In terms of equity, it is apparent that the variability in students' performance is associated with individual characteristics rather than with the institutional characteristics of the school. School autonomy is still much lower in Spain than the average for OECD countries [10].

In **Lithuania**, the results of the 2014 National Survey of Student Achievement revealed that 4th graders perform poorly in reading and 8th graders in mathematics. Other important results include increasing differences in achievement between students from metropolitan/urban schools and those in rural areas, very low skills in finding information and self-regulation and self-evaluation, as well as insufficient levels of individualised learning and support [11].

In the **Netherlands**, the government has developed the benchmark framework for literacy and numeracy skills. The latest report on progress towards the benchmarks was published in October 2015. In addition, the inspectorate of education produces an annual education report on the performance of students and schools in primary and secondary education [12].

In the **United Kingdom (Wales)**, the Programme for Government 2011-2015 set a number of targets for the education system including: the percentage of children achieving the expected level of learning or above at the end of the Foundation Phase (age 7); Key Stage 4 results (age 16); and performance in OECD PISA (age 15). Performance against the goals was mapped both to assess how Wales was performing as a country (outcome indicators) and how actions taken by the Welsh Government made a different (tracking indicators). A new Government took office in May 2016 and has not yet announced how it will measure progress.

2.3. Use of student performance data in external school evaluation

Across Europe, the evaluation of schools has become increasingly important for monitoring the overall quality of education. In most cases, school evaluators examine a variety of data from different sources, which could include different types of student performance data. The evaluation process usually results in evaluators issuing a set of judgements and recommendations. Depending on the national context, this may trigger the implementation of a variety of remedial and support actions to help schools address any shortcomings or weaknesses [13].

The **external evaluation of schools** is conducted by evaluators who report to a local, regional or central/top level education authority; they are not directly involved in the activities of the school under evaluation. This type of evaluation covers a broad range of school activities, including teaching and

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[9] http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid81218/methodologie-du-cycle-des-evaluations-disciplinaires-realisees-sur-echantillon-cedre-en-fin-d-ecole-et-fin-de-college.html

[10] See for instance PISA 2012. Spanish report. Results and context. 2013. Volume I. National Institute of Educational Evaluation at: http://www.mecd.gob.es/dctm/inee/internacional/pisa2012/pisa2012.pdf?documentId=0901e72b8195d643

[11] National Survey on Students' Achievement 2012. http://www.nec.lt/failai/4681_Apzvalga_NMPT2012.pdf

[12] http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Onderwijsverslagen/2015/onderwijsverslag-2013-2014.pdf

[13] For further information on national policies on school evaluation, see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, *Assuring Quality in Education: Policies and Approaches to School Evaluation in Europe* (2015).

learning and/or all aspects of school management. Evaluation which is conducted by specialist evaluators and is concerned solely with specific administrative tasks (related to accounting records, health, safety, archives, etc.) is not regarded as external school evaluation ([14]).

In the vast majority of countries where the external evaluation of schools is practised, evaluators take student performance data into account in order to form their judgement on school quality (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Use of student performance data in external school evaluation, 2015/16

■ Student performance data **used**

■ Student performance data **not used**

▨ No external evaluation of schools

▨ Situation varies within the country

Source: Eurydice
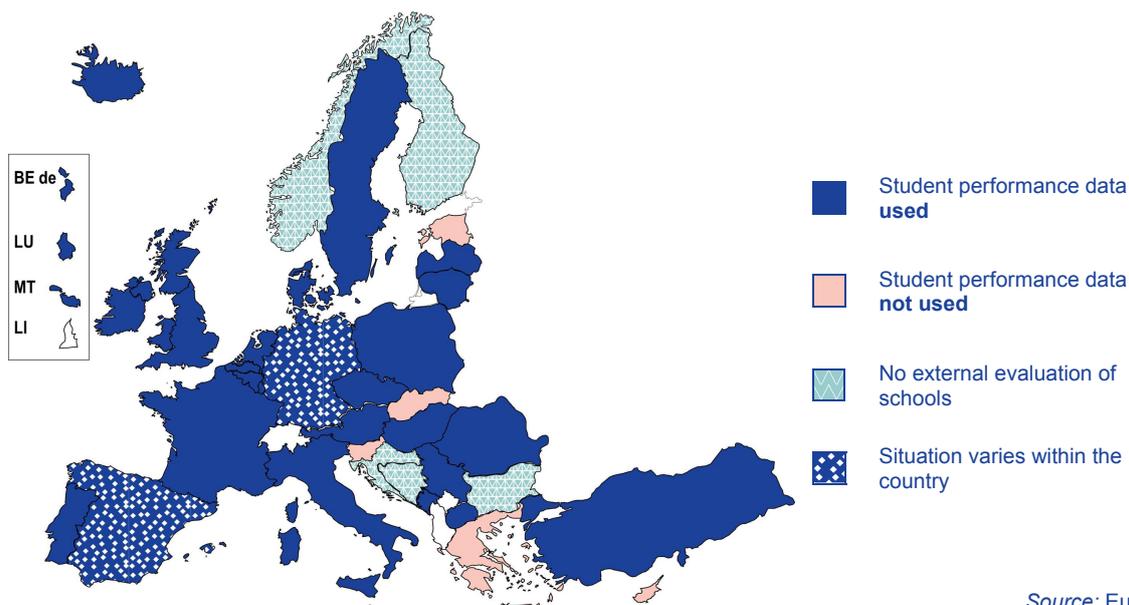
Explanatory note

The figure shows whether student performance data is used as an information source in external school evaluation.

The category 'situation varies within the country' applies to Germany and Spain and reflects the federal structures in these countries.

Country-specific notes

Germany: School inspectors use student performance data in 5 of the 16 *Länder*.
Spain: School inspectors use student performance data in 13 of the 17 Autonomous Communities and in Ceuta and Melilla.

This is not the case in Estonia, Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia and Slovakia, where external school evaluation is concerned with school processes and compliance with regulations. Moreover, several countries do not carry out any external school evaluation (Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Norway).

The **student performance data** used in external school evaluation may include students' results in centrally set examinations and nationally standardised assessments. Also used are student results in teacher assessment; data on student progression through school; student results in international surveys; as well as, although less frequently, outcomes in the job market and student or parent satisfaction.

> In **Denmark**, information used in school inspections includes, amongst other things, each school's pupil achievement results, including performance in national tests and final examinations and statistics on the transition to secondary education; these are benchmarked against national averages.

([14]) Ibid, p. 54.

In **Ireland**, for ISCED 1, performance data includes the results of standardised tests and data on student progression. For ISCED 2, this data comprises results in centrally set examinations, results in teacher assessment; and data on student progression. None of this data is published in any evaluation reports but may be used to inform the evaluation.

In **Portugal**, the key data in the external evaluation of schools is student performance in nationally standardised examinations. Attainment targets are determined using contextual variables such as the age of the students; parents' educational background, socio-economic status, stability of teaching staff, and class size.

Recent policy developments

The majority of European countries do not report any recent policy developments in this area, except for the rolling out of the national evaluation system in Italy.

In **Italy**, the implementation of the National System for Evaluation of Schools (SNV) started in 2014/15 with the introduction of mandatory school self-evaluation, where student performance data (results of the annual INVALSI tests) are one of the elements taken into consideration. From the 2015/16 school year, the school self-evaluation report will be followed by an external evaluation, coordinated by an inspector. The external teams aim to visit up to 10 per cent of all schools each year. The school self-assessment report and the results of the improvement process over a three-year evaluation cycle will be made public.

2.4. Central guidelines on addressing student underachievement in initial teacher education (ITE)

There is a well-documented link between the quality of teaching and teacher education on the one hand and student attainment on the other (OECD 2005). Effective teaching depends to a large extent on the expertise of teachers; consequently their knowledge of the subject and their professional training are crucial.

Teachers' ability to deal with student difficulties and their skills in managing students with a range of different abilities and needs are crucial. A number of countries stipulate that such competences should be acquired during initial teacher training programmes. The Council conclusions on effective teacher education from 20 May 2014 emphasise the importance of teachers' skills and encourage European countries to promote the development of 'comprehensive professional competence frameworks for teachers' ([15]).

This indicator shows whether central level regulations, recommendations or guidelines for ITE programmes identify any final competences related to the knowledge and skills needed for addressing underachievement in basic skills or whether higher education institutions have full autonomy with regard to the content of ITE programmes.

The majority of European countries that provide central level regulations, recommendations and/or guidelines for ITE programmes specify that prospective teachers should learn how to address student difficulties during their training (see Figure 2.4). However, in some cases, only general guidelines are provided without specifying particular subjects. Again, science, rather than the language of instruction/mother tongue or mathematics, is the area that is less likely to be mentioned explicitly. It is also significant that in twelve countries, higher education institutions are completely autonomous in determining the content of their teacher education programmes.

For instance, in the **Netherlands**, all initial teacher education programmes are expected to address low achievement, as the ability to differentiate between levels of skill are part of the required teacher competences. There are, however, no central guidelines on how ITE programmes must address this, or on any ITE content. Teacher training institutions have, however, drawn up their own guidelines on the minimum knowledge that should be covered in the different ITE programmes. These guidelines are called 'knowledge bases'.

([15]) Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on effective teacher education, OJ C 183, 14.6.2014.

Figure 2.4: Central guidelines on addressing student underachievement as a topic in ITE, 2015/16

	Language of instruction	Mathematics	Science

BE fr | BE de | BE nl | BG | CZ | DK | DE | EE | IE | EL | ES | FR | HR | IT | CY | LV | LT | LU | HU | MT | NL | AT | PL | PT | RO | SI | SK | FI | SE | UK-ENG | UK-WLS | UK-NIR | UK-SCT | | BA | IS | ME | MK | NO | RS | TR

■ Central guidelines indicate addressing underachievement in ITE

▨ No central guidelines on addressing underachievement in ITE

□ No central guidelines on any ITE content/full autonomy of HEIs

Source: Eurydice.

Central level involvement in determining the content of ITE programmes varies between countries. The diverse approaches are reflected in the differing degrees of detail in guidance documents and the variety of practices both at national level and at the level of individual higher education institutions.

In **Belgium (French Community)**, the central authorities prescribe the minimum amount and content of courses in initial teacher education. Prospective teachers are required to take a course of 30 hours on differentiated learning, detection of learning difficulties and remedial action. In addition, some higher education institutions offer related training.

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, central level regulations stipulate the competences that a beginning teacher should possess according to the level of education. Each set of competences consists of ten 'job components', which include competences to deal with student difficulties, although none of them is written in a subject specific context.

In **Poland**, the central guidelines for teacher training standards are stipulated in the Regulation by the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 17 January 2012 on initial teacher training standards. This Regulation defines both general and detailed learning outcomes for initial teacher education. Among others, the regulation refers to competences related to:

- diagnosis of pupils' individual needs;
- learning difficulties and underachievement at school;
- undertaking individual work with pupils including those with SEN;
- adapting teaching to pupils' needs and abilities, including the specific progress of pupils with SEN and or those with a different ethnic or national background, immigrants and others;
- learning difficulties – prevention, diagnosis, psychological and pedagogical support.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) publishes the Guidelines for initial teacher education programmes in Scotland. The guidelines state that: 'Programmes must prepare teachers to be responsive to the range and diversity of the needs of all pupils including those with additional support needs. ITE programmes will therefore develop in student teachers, broad knowledge of the nature and range of additional support needs, effective ways of supporting those with such needs and knowledge of inclusion and equalities legislation' ([16]).

Recent policy developments

In terms of recent policy developments, in some countries, the central guidelines on initial teacher education and teacher competences are being updated to take into account new policy documents

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([16]) http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/guidelines-for-ite-programmes-in-scotland.pdf

and reforms. However, these changes rarely concern specific recommendations for the areas or topics to be covered in ITE programmes.

In **Austria**, in the context of the 'New Teacher Training Scheme' a central guideline on professional competences of teachers is being implemented from the 2015/16 school year. This document puts more emphasis on addressing low achievement which is treated as a general issue, without specifying subjects. HEIs have limited autonomy and curricula are drafted by the university colleges of teacher education and are approved by the *Qualitätssicherungsrat* (Quality Assurance Council), as well as the ministry.

In **Hungary**, the 'Training Outcome Requirements' Ministerial decree was last modified in December 2014.The specifications for teacher training topics and competences include references to 'teachers' tasks regarding pupils who may be disadvantaged or discriminated against, and pupils with special education needs'. It covers the 'background and stages of special educational needs, differentiated instruction, principles of inclusive pedagogy, methods of integration and development strategies for low achieving pupils' [17]. However, teacher training institutions enjoy a high degree of autonomy regarding the content and organisation of study programmes and therefore the focus given on underachievement varies greatly.

In **Ireland**, in light of the implementation of the 2011 *National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People,* central guidance and requirements are being extended across teacher education at ISCED levels 1 and 2 and in pre-school contexts also. Many initial teacher education programmes have had an additional year provided, which will lead to an extra focus on teaching for literacy and numeracy, though not science.

2.5. Additional support for schools enrolling large numbers of disadvantaged students

Research evidence and data from international surveys point to the fact that disadvantaged students are much more likely to be underachievers. The analyses of PISA 2012 demonstrate that poor performance at age 15 results from the cumulative effects of a range of disadvantages. Risk factors include aspects of a student's background, as well as school composition, the learning environment and the availability of resources (OECD, 2016).

This indicator examines whether central education authorities allocate additional resources to schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students. The scope of the indicator, for which data is collected for the first time, is in line with the conclusions that have been reached by the ET 2020 Thematic Working Groups on Basic Skills and Early School Leaving [18].

There are a number of links that can be established between policies that seek to address underachievement in the basic skills (Chapter 2) and early leaving from education and training (Chapter 3). Therefore, it is useful to consider measures in these two areas in parallel. Moreover, it should be noted that the present indicator on additional support to schools is related to an earlier Eurydice indicator on the existence of positive discrimination policies/measures to reduce early school leaving [19]. The previous focus on policies such as educational priority zones and similar initiatives to support students and schools in disadvantaged areas has been now enlarged.

In this report, **additional support to schools** refers to nationally allocated financial and/or other resources that require additional funding (extra educational staff, special allowances, professional development opportunities, reduced teaching time, scholarships, career advice services, etc.).The central education authorities can allocate these resources to the regional, local or school level directly.

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[17] 15/2006. (IV. 3.) OM rendelet az alap- és mesterképzési szakok képzési és kimeneti követelményeiről.

[18] The Thematic Working Groups on Mathematics and Science Education and on Early School Leaving (reports: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/archive/documents/wg-mst-final-report_en.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/doc/esl-group-report_en.pdf).

[19] European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014. *Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures.* p. 57-59.

Disadvantaged students (groups at risk or vulnerable groups) are defined at national level. Possible criteria are socio-economic status, ethnic origin, having a migrant background or others depending on the national context.

Socio-economic status refers to a combined economic and sociological measure of an individual's or his/her family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Parents' educational attainment is often taken as a proxy measure for socio-economic status.

Figure 2.5a provides an overview on whether or not central education authorities allocate additional resources to schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students. Across Europe, such resources are provided in around two thirds of all education systems and there are a variety of approaches in terms of the organisation of the support, the target groups and actions funded.

Figure 2.5a: Additional resources provided to schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students, 2015/16

Additional resources provided by central authorities

Additional resources **not** provided by central authorities

Situation varies within the country
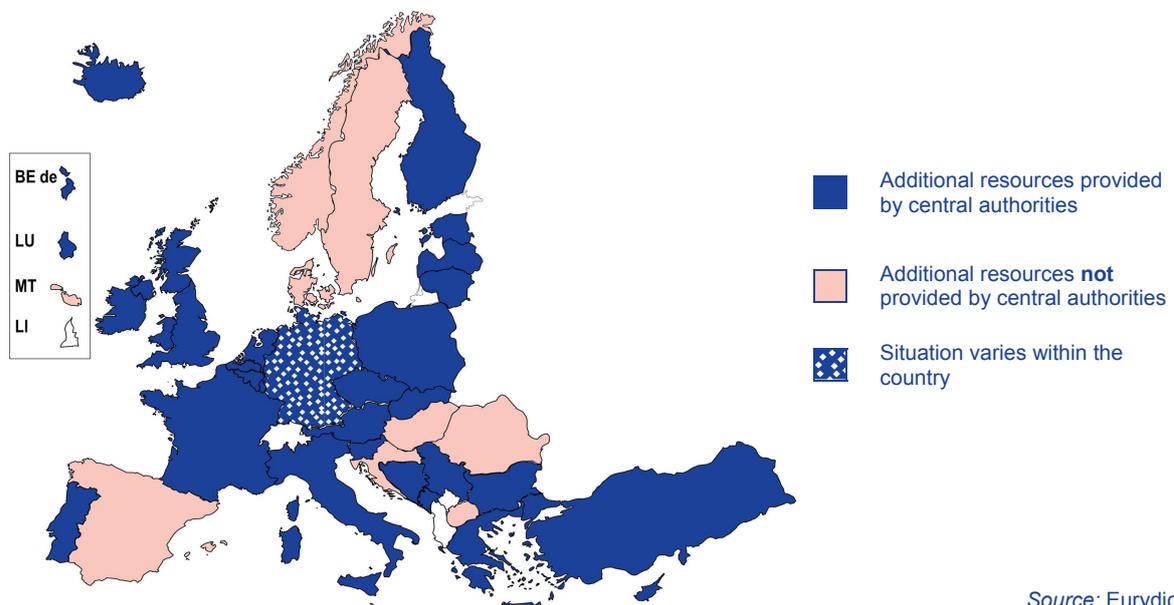
Source: Eurydice

Explanatory note

The figure shows whether central education authorities allocate additional financial and/or other resources to schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students.

The category 'situation varies within the country' applies to Germany and Spain and reflects the federal structures in these countries.

Country-specific note

Germany: Almost all *Länder* have provisions for the allocation of additional funds for schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students. Nine *Länder* use clearly defined indicators for this.

In most countries, schools receive the additional funding directly from the central authorities, although in many cases local authorities are also involved. In some countries, financial flows are rather complex because several levels of authorities (central, regional, local) are involved in the allocation of funding. Moreover, in some cases, in addition to the centrally allocated funding, education providers/schools can apply for extra funds for specific purposes.

In **Finland**, the central authorities pay an increased government transfer to education providers who are, in most cases, local authorities (not schools directly). Education providers can also apply for subsidies for specific purposes such as additional classes in

the language of instruction (Finnish or Swedish) for students whose mother tongue is different, or for additional instruction in the students' mother tongue in other subjects.

In terms of the allocation methods for the additional funds, there is a great diversity of approaches. It appears that most often schools receive lump sums automatically and in addition they can apply for specific funding.

In **Poland**, various types of additional support are distributed through local, regional and central authorities. Based on the data in the Education Information System, local authorities receive additional funds (education subsidy) automatically. Local authorities decide on the amounts to be allocated to individual schools. In addition, funds for social grants and academic achievement grants, as well as social benefits are distributed as part of government programmes. Moreover, NGOs and local authorities can apply to the Ministry of National Education for funds from the government programme for the integration of the Roma community (2014-2020) and for the implementation of duties such as support for refugees and national minorities.

In several countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Serbia), the only way for schools to receive additional funding is by applying to the central authority or other education authorities.

In **Italy**, funding is distributed following applications in response to open calls published by the Ministry of Education. For instance in school year 2015/16, additional support is allocated via projects to improve the integration of disabled students, unaccompanied foreign minors, Roma and other disadvantaged groups, as well as for preventing early school leaving in peripheral metropolitan areas with high rates of school drop out.

In rare cases, additional support is provided to students on an individual basis only and is not linked to the proportion of disadvantaged students in any given school. This is the practice in Austria where individual support concerns students from a migrant background who lack German language skills and SEN students.

In the cases where the central authorities **do not** allocate additional resources (Denmark, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Malta, Romania, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Norway), there are a number of alternative approaches. Several countries note that the financing of schools, including the re-distribution of additional resources for disadvantaged students, is devolved at the level of autonomous communities (Spain), *Länder* (Germany) or municipalities (Denmark, Sweden and Norway).

In **Spain**, the Autonomous Communities are responsible for providing resources to schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged pupils. Typically these resources are used to fund support programmes, introductory classes, 'preferential' teaching positions and schools.

In **Norway**, the share of immigrant children in each municipality is taken into account in the formula for calculating the annual grant. The municipalities allocate the funds to schools.

In other countries, additional resources for these purposes are provided mainly through social programmes (Romania) or EU and other international projects (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). In certain cases (Denmark, Hungary and Serbia), central level support is not financial, but focuses on reinforcing the professional development of teachers, providing remedial classes and other educational support.

In **Denmark**, the municipalities are responsible for the funding of schools. The Ministry of Education supports the efforts of the schools with disadvantaged students through other means such as the provision of targeted in-service training for teachers for the inclusion of SEN and bilingual pupils. The teaching of bilingual pupils has been included in the mandatory initial teacher training. As part of the 2014 school reform, a national corps of 'learning consultants' and a related resource centre have been established. A further project concentrates on 'what works' in improving the skills of disadvantaged students in reading and mathematics.

In **Hungary**, schools have no financial autonomy and they do not receive any additional budget. Central authorities do not allocate additional funding but finance catch-up classes which have an impact on the number and the workload of teachers (up to 32 hours per week). All schools are eligible for additional catch-up classes.

Figure 2.5b focuses on the student characteristics on which the allocation of additional resources is based.

Figure 2.5b: Student characteristics taken into account in the allocation of additional support to schools, 2015/16

Socio-economic status
Ethnic origin
Migrant status
Disability
Geographic location
Other

BE fr · BE de · BE nl · BG · CZ · DK · DE · EE · IE · EL · ES · FR · HR · IT · CY · LV · LT · LU · HU · MT · NL · AT · PL · PT · RO · SI · SK · FI · SE · UK-ENG · UK-WLS · UK-NIR · UK-SCT · BA · IS · ME · MK · NO · RS · TR
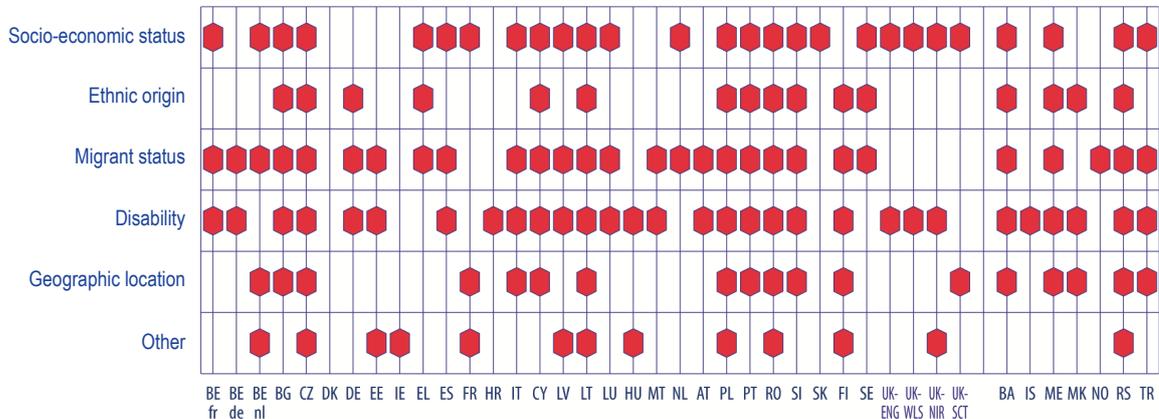
Source: Eurydice.

Across Europe, most commonly, additional support is linked to socio- economic background, migrant status and disability. Criteria like geographical location and ethnic origin are used less often. In some countries, additional characteristics like attainment (Hungary, the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)), grade repetition (France), behavioural problems (Estonia, Poland) and education background of parents (Finland) are also taken into account.

The majority of countries include several categories in the wider group of 'disadvantaged' students.

In **Lithuania**, schools are funded on the principle of *the money follows the pupil*. Each pupil's 'basket' is increased by between 20 % and 35 % if the pupil belongs to an ethnic minority group, is a migrant, attends a school in a multilingual area, or has special education needs. Social support is provided separately by the local authorities.

In the **Netherlands**, the central authorities allocate extra funds for students who have learning disabilities, reside in deprived neighborhoods, or are new entrants to the system (recently arrived immigrants, asylum seekers and others). For example, the definition of a 'new entrant' (*nieuwkomer*) in secondary education is a student who has been in the Netherlands for less than two years and does not have Dutch nationality. The size of the grant depends on how long the student has already been living in the Netherlands. The extra funding is EUR 5 100 per student who has been in the Netherlands for less than a year. It is up to the school to spend the extra funding as it sees fit and to select the most suitable type of education for the new pupil.

In the **United Kingdom**, the Pupil Premium in **England** and the Pupil Deprivation Grant in **Wales** are allocated to schools on the basis of the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. In **England**, schools receive extra Pupil Premium for looked after children (those in the care of the local authority) and those whose parents serve in the armed forces.

In **Turkey**, additional funds and other support are available through the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. In this context, certain types of schools (boarding schools, special education and rehabilitation centres, special education schools, mobile schools, schools and temporary training centres for Syrian refugees) are supported centrally.

However, several countries allocate additional support to students in a single category. For instance, this could be low socio-economic background (Slovakia) or disability (Croatia and Norway).

Some countries combine information from several data sources in order to identify the schools that are eligible to receive additional support.

In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, participating schools are identified on the basis of four indicators that have a noticeable impact on school careers: education attainment of the mother, entitlement for a study grant (means-tested basis), language spoken at home and, in the case of operational budgets, place of residence.

In **France**, the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research has constructed a **social index** that measures the social difficulties of students and parents and the impact on learning. This index is used to identify the schools eligible for additional support. It is linked to the share of students in each of the following categories:

- parents in disadvantaged social and professional categories;

- students receiving scholarships;

- students residing in 'sensitive urban zones';

- students that have repeated grades before the start of secondary education.

In **Ireland,** the aim of the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) programme is to ensure that the educational needs of students from disadvantaged communities are prioritised and effectively addressed. The following criteria were used to identify schools for inclusion in DEIS:

- In the **primary** sector, the identification process was based on a survey carried out by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) in May 2005. The analysis of the survey identified the socio-economic variables that collectively best predict achievement: unemployment, local authority accommodation, lone parenthood, travellers, large families (5 or more children) and pupils eligible for free books.

- For **second-level** schools, the ERC analysed centrally-held data on attainment and retention from the Post-Primary Pupils and State Examinations Commission databases. Medical card data (2002-2004) for Junior Certificate post-primary candidates was also used.

A review of the DEIS Programme including the identification criteria is taking place in school year 2015/16.

In contrast, in **Serbia**, the categories of disadvantaged students are not defined at national level. The evaluation process is highly individual and focuses on the need for additional learning support rather than the origins of these needs. The assessment considers but is not limited to the characteristics listed in Figure 2.5b.

Another interesting aspect of policies for additional support concerns the types of activities that are being funded. Figure 2.5c provides an overview of the typical activities funded as part of the support for schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students.

Figure 2.5c: Activities funded by additional resources, 2015/16

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG	UK-WLS	UK-NIR	UK-SCT	BA	IS	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
Extra educational and/or other staff	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●	●		●			●					●	●	●	●	●
Special allowances for students/their families				●			●	●		●			●			●	●	●			●	●																		●
Special allowances for teachers/other educational staff				●	●		●	●					●		●				●			●					●									●				
Professional development opportunities	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●		●	●	●				●				●			●	●	●	●		
Reduced teaching time for teachers							●	●					●						●			●	●														●			
Scholarships for students				●						●		●		●						●	●	●	●													●			●	●
Career advice services for students				●	●	●		●			●	●	●	●					●			●	●	●											●					●
No information due to school autonomy			◆																		◆							◆		◆	◆	◆		◆						

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The category 'No information due to school autonomy' refers to the cases where schools are free to spend the allocated funds as they see fit.

Targeted funds are used most often to provide additional staff – educational or other professionals. These staff are involved in remedial and additional language classes (Germany and Poland); providing support for SEN pupils, Roma pupils (Bulgaria, Slovenia and Montenegro) and students at risk of early school leaving (Portugal). In addition, specialist support is provided by psychologists, speech therapists and other specialists.

In **France**, several categories of additional education and other staff are employed in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students: an extra teacher in every primary school in a priority zone, extra staff to cover the longer school day and help with homework, technical advisers at each *académie* and in some *départements*, coordinators of local networks of *académies*, prevention and security officers to improve the school climate as well as additional nurses and social workers.

In **Poland**, funding is used for additional Polish language tuition, teaching of a national or ethnic minority language, teaching of ethnic/minority history and culture and provision of additional remedial classes in compulsory subjects. Teachers specialised in SEN, support teachers, specialists (psychologists, behaviour therapists, sign language translators, etc.) or non-pedagogical employees are employed in integrated and mainstream schools/classes. Teaching assistants can be employed in all types of primary schools in grades 1-3 as well as in day care units in schools to support teachers and carers in their duties.

Another wide-spread policy option is the creation of specific professional development opportunities to improve teachers' competences in providing inclusive education.

In **France**, the government has launched a special plan for the continuing professional development and support of teachers in priority zones. Staff who work in the most difficult areas are guaranteed to have three days of training per year. Additional mentoring for new teachers and special training for executive staff (management staff, inspectors and school heads) are also provided.

Measures related to career advice services are also widely reported.

In **Latvia**, career education support is part of the curriculum. In some schools, career support is provided by a teacher-career consultant. In 2017, schools will have one consultant for 700 students. Preparations have started for the implementation of the 'Career Education Implementation Plan for State and Local General and Vocational Educational Institutions for 2015-2020', which was adopted in December 2015. It also envisages career guidance support for students with health and learning disabilities, including career information, education and advice ([20]).

([20]) http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=278999

Special allowances for students/and or their families, or scholarships are reported less. This could be due to the fact that in some cases such allowances are provided directly to families and schools are not involved.

Special allowances for teachers or other education staff are used in around a third of European education systems.

In **France**, in 2015, the special allowances for all teachers in priority education have been increased by 50 %. Teachers in the most difficult areas have received a 100 % increase. Further benefits in terms of career advancement are being planned.

The option of reducing teaching time is much less popular and has been reported by only six countries.

In **Serbia**, in some secondary schools with a high number of Roma students, teachers act as mentors and monitor students' achievements, socialisation process and participation in classes. Mentors are exempt from some school activities. Although the mentorship programme is in the pilot phase and sponsored through IPA funds, new regulations at central level on this matter are expected in near future.

The central authorities in several countries (Belgium (Flemish Community), the Netherlands, Finland, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Bosnia and Herzegovina) do not centrally collate information about all activities that are funded, as schools spend funds as they deem most appropriate.

Nevertheless, in some cases information on funded activities is available through various monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

In the **United Kingdom (England)**, schools can use the Pupil Premium flexibly, in the best interest of eligible pupils. Schools must publish details of how they spend the Pupil Premium and the effect this has had on attainment. Reports by Ofsted ([21]) and the NFER ([22]) show that the most frequent use of the funding is to pay for additional staff to deliver one-to-one support and small group tuition, typically in English and mathematics. Additional staffing is also used for interventions such as booster classes, reading support or 'raising aspiration' programmes, and to reduce the size of classes. In secondary schools, the funding is frequently used to employ 'learning mentors'. The funding is also commonly used to enable eligible pupils to participate fully in after-school clubs and activities and to provide financial support for educational visits.

Similarly in the **United Kingdom (Wales)**, schools are free to decide how to spend the Pupil Deprivation Grant. It must be used to support disadvantaged students, but does not have to be tracked to those learners. The grant may also be used for whole-school strategies that disproportionately benefit disadvantaged students. Based on research evidence, schools are provided with examples of activities that have significant impact ([23]).

([21]) The Pupil Premium: an update
([22]) Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: Articulating success and good practice
([23]) Guidance for using the Pupil Deprivation Grant: What really works?
    Making effective use of the pupil deprivation grant a resource for education leaders and practitioners

# CHAPTER 3: EARLY LEAVING FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Introduction

Early leaving from education and training (ELET) is a serious issue in many EU countries and has attracted the attention of many researchers, policy-makers and educators. Although the situation varies between countries and the underlying reasons for leaving school early differ from student to student, the process leading up to it has a number of common elements, including learning difficulties, socio-economic problems, and a lack of motivation, guidance or support.

As a consequence of leaving education and training early, young people may be faced with reduced opportunities in the labour market and an increased likelihood of unemployment and socio-economic disadvantage; and they may be less inclined to participate in political, social and cultural spheres of life. On the other hand, there is an abundance of research indicating that a higher level of education can lead to many positive outcomes for the individual as well as for society. They include improved employment prospects, higher salaries, better health and well-being for young people; and improved social cohesion, lower public and social costs, and higher productivity and growth for societies.

Dealing with the underlying causes of the problem and developing ways to overcome it is therefore a central aim in Europe. One of the twofold headline targets for education in the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce the rates of early leaving to below 10 % by 2020 ([1]). In June 2011, education ministers agreed on a 'Framework for coherent, comprehensive, and evidence-based policies' to tackle early leaving ([2]). Since then, working groups at European level, bringing together national policy-makers and practitioners, have looked at examples of good practice and promoted an exchange of experiences on fostering educational success and preventing early leaving ([3]). In November 2015, the conclusions of the Education Council reiterated the need to actively pursue efforts to achieve, and where possible even exceed, the Europe 2020 target ([4]).

The latter document further invites Member States to continue the process of developing and implementing comprehensive strategies or integrated policies. These should comprise evidence-based prevention, intervention and compensation measures, which are embedded in high-quality education and training programmes. Many education policies and measures therefore have the potential to contribute to reducing early leaving. For the 2016 structural indicators on early leaving, a selection of key policies that together cover the three important areas of action – prevention, intervention and compensation – has been made, and is illustrated in the diagram below.
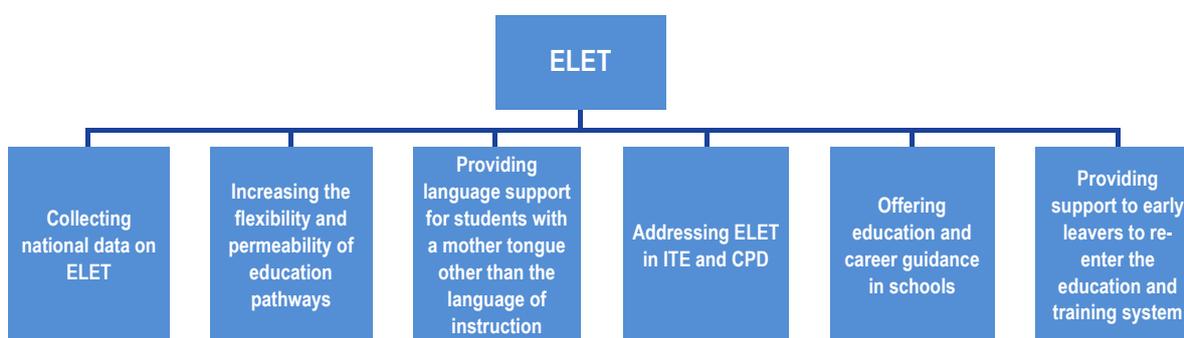
([1]) Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, COM (2010)2020.
(http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)

([2]) Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, OJ C 191, 1.7.2011.
(http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:191:0001:0006:en:PDF)

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/early-school-leavers_en.htm

([4]) Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school. OJ C 417, 15.12.2015.
(http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14441-2015-INIT/en/pdf)

The indicators focus on school education: primary education and general secondary as well as school-based initial vocational education (IVET) (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3). Adult education may be covered too in the context of compensation policies (see Section 3.6 on providing support to early leavers to re-enter the education and training system).

In this analysis, 'early leaving from education and training' refers to students leaving education and training before completing the upper secondary level and obtaining a corresponding school leaving certificate. This broad definition encompasses the young people who according to their own country's definition are considered to be early leavers. This includes, for example, young people who leave (or drop out of) school without completing what is considered in the national context as basic education (usually primary and lower secondary education).

More detailed information on the topic of early leaving from education and training can be found in the Eurydice report *Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures* (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014). The main findings of this report are also presented in the Eurydice Brief *Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training* (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015e).

3.1. Collecting national data on ELET

In order to develop and implement targeted policies to address early leaving from education and training, the scale of the problem and the reasons behind it must be understood. To this end, most European countries have developed specific data collection systems in addition to the data gathered for the EU-Labour Force Survey (see Figure 3.1). The exceptions are the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where ELET data is gathered only through the EU-Labour Force Survey; and in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Serbia there is no data collection on early leaving.

Figure 3.1: Sources for the collection of national data on ELET (other than Eurostat LFS), 2015/16

BE de

LU

MT

LI

Student register

Surveys

LFS only

None
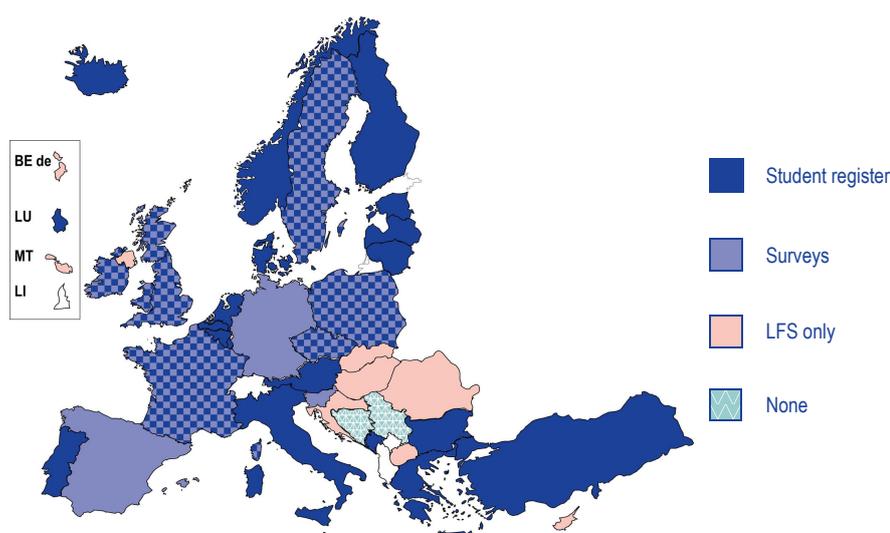
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

ELET data from student registers is collected automatically from school administration systems based on students' personal data. They can be used for an ad hoc assessment of the scale of early leaving at different public authority levels. Quantitative and qualitative surveys are other tools being used for gathering ELET data, which can also contribute to a better understanding of the reasons for early leaving.

In the large group of countries where national data on early leavers is being collected, the main data source is the student register. Although the register may not have been developed with the specific objective of measuring early leaving, the fact that these registers are based on individual student data means that an exact number of early leavers can be obtained by comparing records from one school year to the next. This can also be useful when evaluating the effectiveness of policies to reduce early leaving. Last but not least, student register based data can be employed to monitor absenteeism, thereby acting as an early warning system to alert schools and authorities if they need to intervene to help students at risk of leaving early.

The majority of countries collecting ELET data through student registers do so with the objective of producing statistical data. However, in some countries ([5]), these data collections are also intended to be used to track and follow up on individual students; in some cases, this is the main purpose of the data collection.

An example of a data collection used to produce statistics on early leaving can be found in **Poland** where the Education Information System (*System Informacji Oświatowej,* SIO) gathers information about the total number of students who drop out of school in a given school year. It covers the whole population of students up to the age of 18 (ISCED 1-3) in both general education and IVET. The data, which is collected twice a year and aggregated at central, regional, local and school level (except ISCED 3 data, which is only aggregated at central, regional and local level), is used for several purposes: 1) policy-making in education at all levels of administration; 2) supporting an effective funding system for education; 3) analysing the efficiency of the use of public resources on education; 4) coordinating the pedagogical evaluation system across the country and enhancing the quality of education.

In **France**, the ELET data collection based on the student register mainly serves to identify and support individual early leavers. The Inter-Ministerial System for Information Exchange (*Système interministériel d'échange d'informations,* SIEI) makes it possible to identify, contact and support students over 16 years of age who have left the education and training system (general education and IVET) without obtaining a qualification. It is managed by the General Directorate for School Education in the Ministry of Education. Data is collected twice a year and is aggregated at national, regional, local and institutional level. The data is confidential and only available to designated people.

Moreover, eleven countries/regions ([6]) refer to national or regional surveys that have been or are currently being carried out on the subject of early leaving. Their main purpose is the production of sample based statistical data on early leaving; in some cases this is accompanied by qualitative information.

In the **Czech Republic**, for example, the National Institute for Education (NUV) has been carrying out several surveys on an ad-hoc basis providing in addition to quantitative data, facts and contextual information on early leaving from general education and vocational education and training. The latest one, the 2013 'Study on early leaving from education' (*Zpráva o předčasných odchodech ze vzdělávání*) ([7]), provides an overview of the current state of the problem as well as best practices at both national and international level in reducing it, with particular emphasis on success factors. It also provides recommendations for measures to tackle the problem at school level, service provision level and policy level.

In the **United Kingdom (Scotland)**, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) records the qualification attainment of Scottish school leavers, and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) undertake an annual destination of school leavers survey. The SQA database and the SDS survey are complementary; they are combined to present a picture of how achievement at school influences what happens within the first year after leaving.

In all European countries, data collections on early leaving, based either on student registers or on surveys, cover general education and IVET. The exception is Ireland where only general education is

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([5]) French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden, the United Kingdom (Wales and Scotland), Norway and Turkey

([6]) The Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Scotland)

([7]) http://www.nuv.cz/uploads/Predcasne_odchody_12_2013.pdf

considered. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, ELET data is also gathered at the level of adult education (VAVO) in addition to general education and IVET.

Given that ELET data produced from a student register is based on individual records, any level of data aggregation is possible, the only limitation being the provisions of data protection and privacy. In most countries, the data is aggregated at the top, regional and local level; school level ELET data can also be obtained in around half of the European countries. Student register based ELET data can be updated in real time through the schools' administrative systems; however, it is generally processed once or twice a year. Most countries publish the data, with the exception of Denmark, Montenegro and Turkey.

ELET data based on surveys is often only aggregated at national level. The data is mostly collected once a year or on an ad hoc basis, and it is published in all the European countries.

Recent policy developments:

Changes made in relation to the collection of data on early leaving have occurred in a number of countries over the last few years, including the implementation of new data collection instruments:

> In **Poland**, a qualitative survey is currently being carried out in the context of the 'Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe' (RESL.eu) project ([8]) in addition to the already established student register based ELET data collection. The information gathered through the survey can be used to gain an understanding of young peoples' underlying reasons, opinions and motivations for leaving education and training early.

In several other countries, existing ELET data collections have been expanded or modified:

> In **Estonia**, data on early leavers is now also being aggregated at regional and local level in addition to national and school level; and in **Lithuania**, statistical data on young people who have left the education and training system early is now being produced twice a year instead of once a year.

> In **Greece**, a ministerial decision was issued on 31 December 2015, which envisages the expansion of the 'MySchool' data collection system, from which ELET data is derived, to schools and institutes of vocational training (SEK and IEK). Moreover, advanced mechanisms will be developed for displaying figures related to early leaving by making use of specific technologies for geographical representations. Advanced information and communication technologies will also be applied for the management of ELET data to facilitate a systematic study of the issue, the factors influencing it and its development over time. And finally, training will be provided to the teaching community in the use of these new applications.

Two other countries are planning future adaptations of their ELET data collection:

> The 2015 concept note 'Together against school drop-out' in the **Flemish Community of Belgium** announces plans to integrate ELET data with other indicators (e.g. truancy) to provide more comprehensive information.

> In **Hungary**, where there is currently no data collection on early leaving, a pilot data analysis is planned using the Public Education Information System (*Közoktatási Információs Rendszer,* KIR). The implementation of an early warning system is also planned for the second half of 2016. This tool will be mainly used by schools, which will then also be responsible for providing support.

Finally, in contrast to the examples mentioned above, two countries have reduced their ELET data collection activities:

> In **Malta**, no other ELET data is being collected apart from that gathered in the context of the EU-Labour Force Survey.

> In **Norway**, the 'New Possibilities' project, which was a national initiative to increase the successful completion of upper secondary education and training, ended in 2013. As a result, the Directorate for Education and Training has reduced the frequency of the ELET data collection from twice a year to the original once a year.

([8]) https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/resl-eu/

3.2. Increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways

Having to make early choices between education pathways can result in demotivation for students who have not been guided well. Education pathways that are too rigid can, moreover, create obstacles to completing upper secondary education (European Commission, 2013a). Policies aimed at increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways have the potential to facilitate a smooth transition between education levels or different types of education, e.g. between general education and vocational education and training (VET), thus helping to prevent early leaving.

Across Europe, all countries apart from Luxembourg, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey report having introduced such policies, some only in recent years (see Figure 3.2). Most countries have developed alternative ways for students to pursue education and training and obtain a qualification. This includes efforts to strengthen the VET sector.

> For example, in **Italy**, the reform of upper secondary education in 2010, with a full roll-out in 2014/15, is providing a more coherent and flexible framework of pathways in general, technical and vocational education. Upper secondary education now comprises six types of general education *lyceum* (arts, classical studies, scientific studies, foreign languages, music and dance and humanities) offering five-year programmes. Technical institutes offer five-year programmes, mainly in economic and technological fields (comprising 11 pathways); and vocational institutes under the Ministry of Education offer five-year programmes, mainly in the fields of services, industry and handicrafts (comprising six branches). In both technical and vocational institutes, system flexibility will allow the VET content of study to be widened to meet needs, including the demand for skills in the local labour market. This flexibility is expressed in terms of adapting annual curriculum time. Moreover, in order to provide extra flexibility in education pathways in secondary education, a further IVET offer called 'IeFP' targets 14-17 year-olds to help them comply with their obligation to stay in education and/or training until the age of 18 or at least until they acquire a 3-year vocational qualification, if they do so before they reach this age.
>
> In **Finland**, 'Flexible basic education' at lower secondary level has been found to be an effective measure to prevent early leaving from education and training. According to the Basic Education Act, a local authority may provide flexible basic education activities as part of grades 7-9 of basic education to the extent decided by the local authority. The objective is to reduce drop-out from basic education and to prevent exclusion. Instruction is provided in small groups at school, in workplaces and in other learning environments, making use of multidisciplinary cooperation, support and counselling services. Admission to the activities is based on an application submitted by a student or his/her parents or guardians. Flexible basic education activities aim to reinforce students' motivation to study and develop their life skills in a holistic manner. In addition to completing the basic education syllabus, the objective is to support students in their transition to upper secondary level and to strengthen their capacities to cope with their studies. Special attention is focused on working approaches that consolidate the common educational work of parents and guardians and everyone working within 'Flexible basic education'.

Figure 3.2: Focus of policies and measures for increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways, 2015/16

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Policies for increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways generally seek to minimise the risk of early leaving by offering students a wider choice of programmes or alternative pathways (academic, technical or vocational), as well as providing opportunities for students to change tracks or programmes which do not meet their needs. Other policies are designed to ensure a smooth transition between education levels and programmes (especially from general education to VET programmes). Measures to improve the recognition of skills and qualifications can help students progress to the next level or re-engage in education or training if they have left the system prematurely.

Around half of European countries aim to increase the flexibility and permeability of education pathways through policies that facilitate transitions between levels of education or from general school education to VET programmes.

> For example, in **Spain**, the 2013 'Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education' aims to increase flexibility in compulsory and post-compulsory education by, amongst other things, building bridges between all training pathways as well as within them so that students' decisions are not irreversible. For instance, students who hold the basic vocational training certificate may obtain the lower/compulsory secondary education certificate by sitting the final test at the end of compulsory secondary education; similarly, students holding a technical or advanced technical certificate may obtain the upper secondary (*Bachillerato*) certificate by sitting the final test at the end of upper secondary education. Another example of a bridge between training pathways applies to students who do not successfully complete the vocational training cycles but, nevertheless receive a certificate for the modules, units or subjects they passed. This certificate has academic validity and provides partial accreditation of the professional competences acquired in relation to the 'National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training'.

> One of the areas of focus of the strategic plans undertaken by the **Maltese** Ministry for Education and Employment is on providing improved support for the transition of young people both within different tracks of the education system as well as from education to employment. One such measure is the setting up of a network across sectors and among different educational institutions to provide information to students and parents about the different education and training pathways available, thereby enabling students to make more informed choices and helping to avert early leaving. The methods used include online blogs, career fairs, and the provision of qualified career advisors throughout the summer.

Finally, in several countries/regions ([9]), the policies for increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways encompass the recognition of skills and/or qualifications acquired through prior learning, including in some cases through non-formal learning.

Recent policy developments:

Policies to increase the flexibility and permeability of education pathways play an important role in ensuring that students successfully complete their education and training and obtain a qualification. Therefore, many European countries have either implemented new policies in this area in recent years, or they have further developed and adapted existing policies. Amongst the latest reforms are those to improve vocational education and training programmes:

> In the context of the second volume of the 'Regional Development Project' (REK, 2015-2019) in the **German-speaking Community of Belgium** and the 'Long-term Plan for Education and the Development of the Education System of the **Czech Republic**' (2015-2020) emphasis is being put on increasing the permeability of vocational education by, amongst other things, reinforcing the common elements of the vocational fields of education.

> The 'Education development guidelines 2014-2020' in **Latvia** provide young people with an opportunity to undergo training in short (12 to 18 months) vocational education programmes. Similarly, the education reform in **Iceland** aims to increase the number of graduates until 2018 by investigating ways to shorten vocational programmes. Vocational education is being reviewed in order to simplify basic programmes and develop a tertiary vocational education level.

Other reforms to be implemented from the 2016/17 school year are intended to facilitate transitions within or between education and training programmes and to improve the recognition of skills and/or qualifications acquired through prior learning:

> With the implementation of the new **Bulgarian** 'Pre-school and School Education Act', which will become effective as of August 2016, conditions will be provided for the validation of the competences acquired through non-formal learning and informal learning. It is envisaged that the validation, which will compare the competences acquired through non-formal education and informal learning with those required for the completion of the grade, stage or level of education and/or a professional qualification, will be used to issue an official document that will allow access to the education system, access to training for vocational qualifications and facilitate access to the labour market.

([9]) French and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Finland and Montenegro

Amendments to legislation in **Greece** ([10]) are reforming the secondary cycle of VET from the 2016/17school year. The streamlining aims to reduce early leaving by improving links with work settings. It also enhances the permeability between programmes within a more flexible framework so as to increase the number of students enrolling and staying in education and professional training.

In **France**, young people who fail the examinations of a general, technical or vocational programme will be able to keep the benefit of any pass marks and simply re-visit the topics that they have failed; they will also receive individualised support throughout the year. Moreover, a period of consolidation and confirmation will be implemented at the beginning of vocational education and training programmes to enable students to change their specialty or be re-directed towards general education or technical programmes in the case of a mismatch.

In **Croatia**, 'Regulations on the Conditions for and Methods of Continuing Education for Higher Level Qualifications' were passed in January 2016 by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, which enable students who obtained a low level qualification at ISCED 3 (mostly in VET) to continue their studies in order to achieve the qualification required to enrol in higher (university) education.

Finally in the **Netherlands**, from the 2016/17 school year, institutions will also be able to offer a continuous learning route across different pathways: from VMBO to MBO level 3 (in addition to the route for craftsmanship to level 2). Moreover, institutions can also offer a continuous learning route from VMBO (middle-management vocational (KB), combined (GL), theoretical (TL)) to MBO level 4. This is an expansion of the technology route. The government expects that this will help young people to see vocational education as an attractive alternative to general education.

3.3. Providing language support for students with a mother tongue other than the language of instruction

Empirically, young people born abroad tend to be over-represented among those leaving education and training early in many European countries ([11]). Insufficient skills in the language of instruction are amongst the factors that can have an impact on the education attainment of students from a migrant or ethnic minority background (European Commission, 2013b). They may therefore require support to acquire or improve their competences in the language of instruction in order not to fall behind in their studies.

Providing language assistance for students who have a mother tongue other than the language of instruction is part of the on-going support in many European countries (see Figure 3.3; and for information on language support provided in ECEC see Figure 1.5). In most countries, the focus is on providing support in learning the language of instruction; and a few countries, such as Denmark, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden, systematically provide lessons or assistance in the migrant students' mother tongue. Countries reporting that there are no policies for language support for students with a mother tongue other than the language of instruction include Hungary, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

([10]) Law: 4386/11.05/2016/(Gov.Gazette: A' 83): www.minedu.gov.gr/eidiseis/20132-09-05-16-oi-allages-stin-texniki-epaggelmatiki-ekpaidefsi-mia-nea-arxi-gia-ta-epal.

([11]) Eurostat (EU-LFS, 2014) [edat_lfse_02]

Figure 3.3: Links between ELET policies and language support policies for students whose mother tongue is other than the language of instruction, 2015/16

Policies for language support directly linked to policies for tackling ELET

Policies for language support indirectly linked to policies for tackling ELET

No policies for language support

Source: Eurydice.
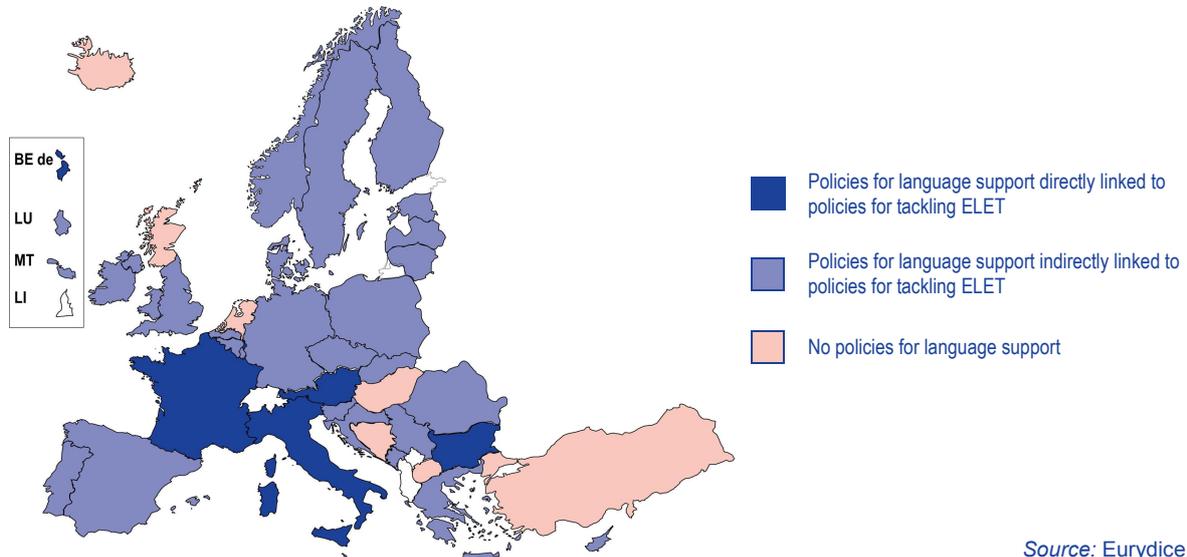
Explanatory note

Students with a mother tongue other than the language of instruction include first- and second-generation migrants as well as students from an ethnic minority background.

Where policies for language support exist, in most cases they are not directly aimed at reducing the numbers of students leaving education and training early, but rather to help students from a migrant/minority background access the curriculum and adapt to school life. However, in five countries – the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy and Austria – the policies for language support are clearly linked to measures for tackling early leaving.

In both **Bulgaria** and **Austria**, additional support in the language of instruction for students with a different mother tongue is included as an action in the respective strategies for reducing the numbers of those leaving education and training early.

In the **German-speaking Community of Belgium**, **France** and **Italy**, policy documents concerned with the integration of newly arrived migrant students refer to language support as an essential measure to promote the achievement of these students and reduce the risk of them leaving education and training early.

Recent policy developments:

Several countries have introduced recent changes to their policies on language support that are indirectly linked to efforts to reduce early leaving from education and training:

In December 2015, the **Estonian** Ministry of Education and Research and the Foundation Innove signed a contract under which the Foundation will provide additional financial support in 2016 for Estonian language studies in basic schools. It will be used for remunerating teachers who work with students in content and language integrated study groups or with newly arrived migrant students acquiring Estonian as the language of instruction.

In both Italy and Cyprus, the recent developments target in particular unaccompanied foreign minors:

In **Italy**, special attention is being dedicated during the 2015/16 school year to resourcing and monitoring schools attended by unaccompanied foreign minors through a specific project with earmarked resources. The Ministry's regional branches have selected 60 projects submitted by schools or networks of schools following the criteria specified in a national call. The call made specific reference to the number of unaccompanied foreign minors registered in Italy since June 2015, with particularly significant figures in the regions of Sicily, Latium, Lombardy and Calabria.

The **Cypriot** Ministry of Education and Culture, applying European directives for the education of all underage persons, has prepared a special programme for the education of unaccompanied minors. During the 2015/16 school year, the programme is being implemented in two general secondary schools and two vocational schools in Cyprus and involves 55 unaccompanied minors. These children take classes in Greek as a second/foreign language as well as common core courses.

Finally, in Latvia, the language support measures envisaged for the near future are intended to directly impact on the number of students leaving the education and training system early:

Educational support (through formal and non-formal education activities) for students with a different mother tongue is included in the **Latvian** curriculum. Under the objective of 'reducing early school leaving by implementing preventive and intervention measures' in 2017, the support for students with a different mother tongue will be intensified.

3.4. Addressing ELET in initial teacher education and continuing professional development

The role of the teacher is key in helping learners fulfil their potential. If students are to succeed in school, it is particularly important that teachers know how to detect learning difficulties and signs of disengagement at an early stage. Strengthening teachers' capacities to take immediate action to support students who are struggling at school is therefore essential for tackling some of the root causes of early leaving. The skills teachers need include the ability to provide active and differentiated teaching and learning, undertake formative assessment, manage diversity, build relationships (including with parents and external partners) and resolve conflicts. Initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) should address these and other related issues. Teachers should be provided with opportunities to gain practical experience in dealing with the educational needs of students at risk and as well as the chance to engage in peer learning and to collaborate with other teachers and schools confronted with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and school drop-out (European Commission, 2015).

Because higher education institutions as well as the providers of teacher training are usually autonomous institutions, this means in practice that the content of ITE and CPD is often unknown at government level. However, national policies promoting the inclusion of matters related to ELET within teacher training can help ensure that student teachers as well as those who are already part of the teaching workforce can gain skills or improve their practice in this area.

Across Europe, only five countries – Germany, Ireland, France, Austria and Slovenia – have policies in place that promote the inclusion of early leaving or related issues in ITE (see Figure 3.4a). In Germany, France and Austria, ELET is explicitly addressed in ITE policies:

In **Germany**, the 'Action Framework for Reducing the Number of Early Leavers from Education and Training' ([12]) specifies the need to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers with regard to the pedagogical and psychological foundations of teaching and learning through ITE. This includes training in analysing students' competences, developing adapted forms of learning assessment and providing individually tailored learning support.

The **French** 'Framework of Professional Skills for Teachers' states that teachers must take into account student diversity and learn to detect early signs of possible dropping-out. They must also be aware of the role of the various stakeholders involved in preventing early leaving and base the support provided on teaching and learning plans. This framework underpins the Master's ITE programme 'Careers in Education, Teaching and Training' (*Métiers de l'enseignement, de l'éducation et de la formation,* MEEF). Moreover, since September 2015, the 'National Training Plan for Initial and Continuing Training' has included a specific module on early leaving (i.e. training in identifying early signs of disengagement and potential drop-out). This training module is part the 'National Plan to Combat Early Leaving'.

([12]) http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2007/2007_10_18-Handlungsrahmen-Schulabbrecher_01.pdf

In the process of implementation of the 'New Teacher Training' scheme in **Austria** in 2015/16, a 'Central Guideline on Professional Competencies for Teachers' ([13]) is being applied. With regard to leaving education and training early, this guideline highlights that future teachers must be provided with the skills to understand the challenge of early leaving, detect early warning signs and be aware of their own role in supporting students at risk. The curricula are drafted by the university colleges of teacher education and are approved by the Quality Assurance Council (*Qualitätssicherungsrat*) as well as the Ministry of Education.

While in Ireland and Slovenia, early leaving is not explicitly mentioned in ITE policies, curriculum content and teacher competences directly related to the prevention of early leaving are included in official regulations. In both countries, requirements for the inclusion of topics related to early leaving are included in the criteria for the accreditation of teacher education programmes:

All ITE programmes in **Ireland** must have accreditation from the Teaching Council. The Council's 'Criteria and guidelines for programme providers' ([14]) specify mandatory areas of study and outcomes for graduates, which include specific course content on diversity, groups at risk of social or school exclusion and cooperation and collaboration with parents and external agencies. According to the 'Criteria and guidelines', the graduate teacher is required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the factors that promote and hinder learning, the impact of students' backgrounds and identities on learning and the need to provide for the holistic development of the learner, particularly through differentiated approaches.

Similarly, in **Slovenia**, the 'Criteria for the accreditation of the study programmes for teacher education' determine that graduates must acquire specific competences, including taking account of developmental differences in learners; effectively personalising learning content and differentiating between students; using diverse methods of monitoring and assessing students' learning progress and giving constructive feedback; creating a safe and supporting learning environment where students feel accepted, where differences are respected and where independence and responsibility is promoted; expressing positive attitudes towards students, based on understanding and knowledge of their social, cultural, linguistic, religious background as well as other personal circumstances; and gaining the cooperation skills needed to work with colleagues, education specialists and parents.

Figure 3.4a: Policies to encourage the inclusion of ELET and related issues in ITE, 2015/16

Policies exist to encourage the inclusion of ELET and related issues in ITE

No policies to encourage the inclusion of ELET and related issues in ITE / ITE institutions are autonomous
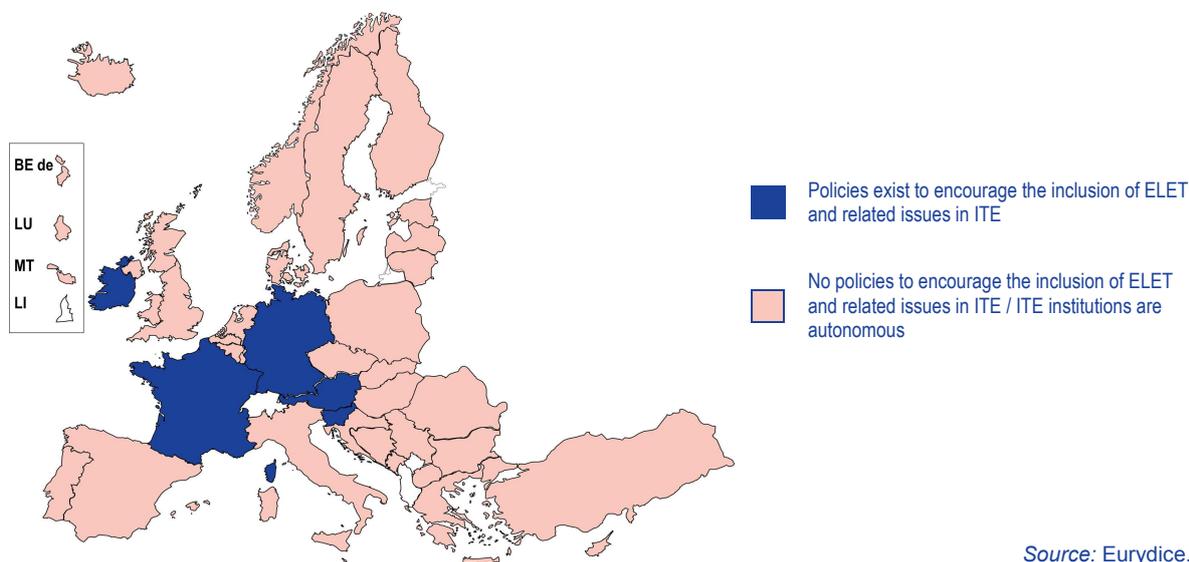
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Including ELET issues in ITE serves to improve teachers' understanding of the challenge of early leaving. Policies cover, for example, the underlying causes, the main triggers and early warning signs, as well the teacher's own role in both preventing early leaving and supporting students who are at risk. ELET related issues include, for example, support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and diversity awareness.

([13]) https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/lehr/labneu/paedagoginnenkompetenzen_26988.pdf?4dzgm2
([14]) http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Publications/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education-Criteria-and-Guidelines-for-Programme-Providers.pdf

With respect to CPD and the inclusion of issues related to early leaving, nine European countries/regions – all three Belgian Communities, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Latvia and Austria – have policies in place that ensure relevant training for teachers (see Figure 3.4b). The French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Germany, Spain, France and Austria are amongst those countries with policies ensuring CPD for teachers on the specific issue of early leaving.

> For example, every three years the government of the **French Community of Belgium** publishes its priorities in terms of the direction and themes for teachers' CPD organised by the Institute for In-service Training (*Institut de la Formation en Cours de Carrière,* IFC). For the past two years as well as for 2016/17, early leaving has been one of the priorities. IFC offers two specific courses addressing early leaving in its annual training programme. The first one is open to all teachers, regardless of the education level at which they teach, as well as to the employees of the psycho-medico-social centres (*Centres psycho-médico-sociaux,* PMS). The second programme is targeted at teachers at secondary education level and PMS centre employees. The issues covered during the (voluntary) training programmes include: identifying factors and situations that can increase the risk of early leaving; exchanging information between the various professionals in contact with the students in difficulty; providing education and career guidance; and using different strategies that can help students to re-engage in their studies.

Existing policies in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Ireland and Latvia, on the other hand, address issues which are associated with early leaving.

> In **Ireland**, for example, 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion', is the Department of Education and Skills' policy instrument to address and prioritise the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years). CPD is provided to primary and post-primary teachers teaching in schools designated disadvantaged under the DEIS programme. It includes in-service training and school-based support in gathering relevant data, analysis of this data, development of related targets, identification of actions, implementation of actions and review.

**Figure 3.4b: Policies to encourage the inclusion of ELET and related issues in CPD, 2015/16**

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Policies exist to encourage the inclusion of ELET and related issues in CPD

No policies to encourage the inclusion of ELET and related issues in CPD / CPD institutions are autonomous
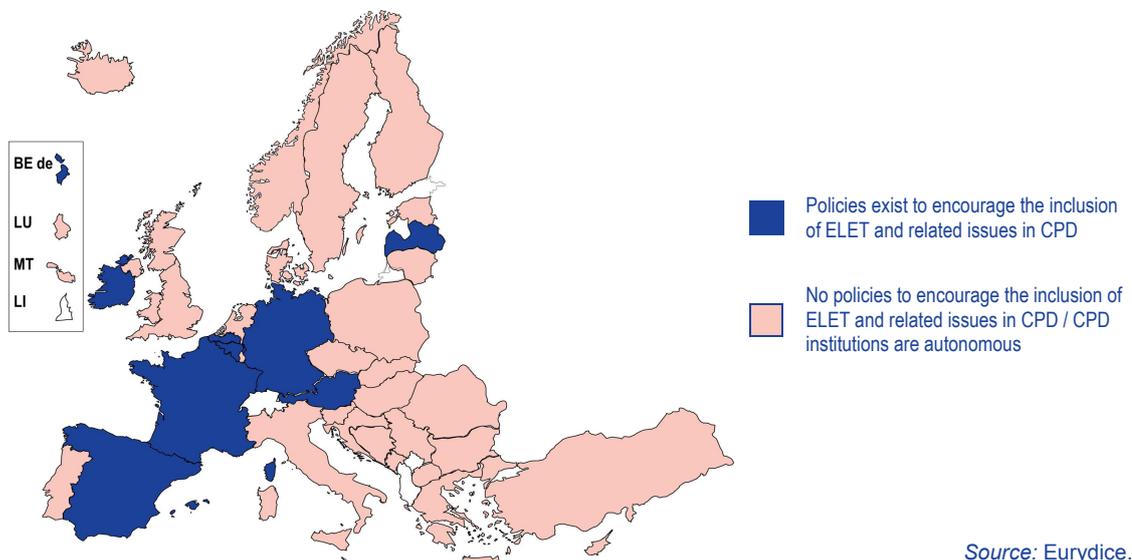
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Including ELET issues in CPD serves to improve teachers' understanding of the challenge of early leaving. Policies cover, for example, the underlying causes, the main triggers and early warning signs, as well the teacher's own role in both preventing early leaving and supporting students who are at risk. ELET related issues include, for example, support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and diversity awareness.

Recent policy developments:

In addition to the above mentioned recent developments in the French Community of Belgium, France and Austria, some current reforms to strengthen teachers' skills in dealing with issues related to early leaving can be found in the German-speaking Community of Belgium and in Spain:

> In the **German-speaking Community of Belgium** the project 'Personalised Support for Pupils', which is part of the 'Regional Development Project' (REK, 2015-2019), envisages the further development of education and training for teachers in various fields linked directly or indirectly to the aim of reducing early leaving ([15]). Amongst other topics, CDP is provided on intercultural pedagogy and integrated language support as well as on supporting students with additional learning needs.
>
> Each year, the **Spanish** Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, through the National Institute of Educational Technologies and Teacher Training (INTEF), issues instructions for teacher training activities. In the instructions for 2015, leaving education and training early has been emphasised. This includes, in particular, training in the different dimensions of diversity in schools and its implications, as well as the identification and early treatment of learning difficulties and meeting students' educational needs. Other areas of focus are collaborative working and coordinating teaching strategies, and managing tools and resources to support student diversity and prevent early leaving.

In Greece and Malta, reforms are planned which will promote the inclusion of early leaving related issues in the training of teachers:

> The 'Strategic Policy Framework for Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training' in **Greece** adopted by the Ministry of Education envisages an action plan for the support and reinforcement of teachers in early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education with the aim of averting early leaving from education and training ([16]).
>
> The **Maltese** Faculty of Education is currently engaged in reforming ITE. One of the objectives of the reform is to ensure that student-teachers receive training on how to identify students at risk of early leaving and on how to assist them in their learning experience.

3.5. Offering education and career guidance in schools

Education systems generally have a duty to provide education and career guidance as one of the main elements of the education process. Its role in preventing students from leaving education and training early has been widely acknowledged. Moreover, education and career guidance can help to ease transitions between education levels or pathways and between education and training and employment (European Commission, 2015).

Education and career guidance is traditionally delivered through formally established school-based guidance or counselling services available to students (mainly on an individual basis). However, it has become increasingly popular as an area within national core curricula which have guidance-related objectives to be implemented in the classroom (Sultana, 2004). Consequently, when educational and career guidance is a compulsory curriculum subject, it is systematically provided to all students, thus acting as a preventative measure to help all students stay in education and training. However, when it is left to guidance services to deliver, it may reach only those with specific needs, therefore serving rather as an intervention measure for those already at risk of leaving early (or a compensation measure for those who have left the education and training system early, see Section 3.6).

Figure 3.5 presents these two main approaches to delivering education and career guidance in schools in Europe. It also shows which countries provide educational and career guidance only through external services. External guidance services are provided in all European countries. They are often set up as public agencies, specialised in education, training and/or employment, but they may also be NGOs or private enterprises. They often have a wide portfolio and so may complement the services provided within schools. Their role is especially important where guidance is not included in the compulsory curriculum or provided by the school guidance service, as in the case of the French Community of Belgium (at primary level), Croatia (at primary and upper secondary level), Bulgaria (at upper secondary level), and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (at primary, lower and upper secondary level).


([15]) http://www.dglive.be/PortalData/2/Resources/downloads/rek/REK4-72dpi-KORR_23sept.pdf

([16]) http://www.minedu.gov.gr/espa

The figure shows that all European countries have arrangements in place to make education and career guidance available to students in at least one level of education. However, it also demonstrates that in 12 countries/regions ([17]), guidance is provided to students in secondary education and is not available to those at primary level. Examples of countries where education and career guidance is provided in the classroom as a compulsory part of the curriculum at primary level include Austria and the United Kingdom (Scotland).

In **Austria**, education and career guidance is provided through the primary school curriculum subject 'Personal and Social Education' (*Sachunterricht*), a subject familiarising pupils with scientific and technical phenomena as well as with social, economic and historical aspects of their environment. As part of this subject, pupils' parents come into school to talk about their profession and working life, and themed visits are made to firms and work-places, thus giving children practical experience and their first taste of career guidance.

The 'Career education standard 3-18' ([18]) in the **United Kingdom (Scotland)** is one component of the all age careers service delivered in Scotland. It recognises the journeys that children and young people make as they progress from age 3-18 and aims to ensure that young people can relate their learning to a future career path of their choosing and through this drive up attainment.

Figure 3.5: Education and career guidance in schools, 2015/16

Primary education (ISCED 1)

Lower secondary general education (ISCED 2)

Upper secondary general education (ISCED 3)

■ Guidance is a compulsory part of the curriculum and provided in the classroom

■ Guidance is provided by the school guidance service

☐ Guidance is provided only by external guidance services

▨ No guidance is provided

Source: Eurydice.
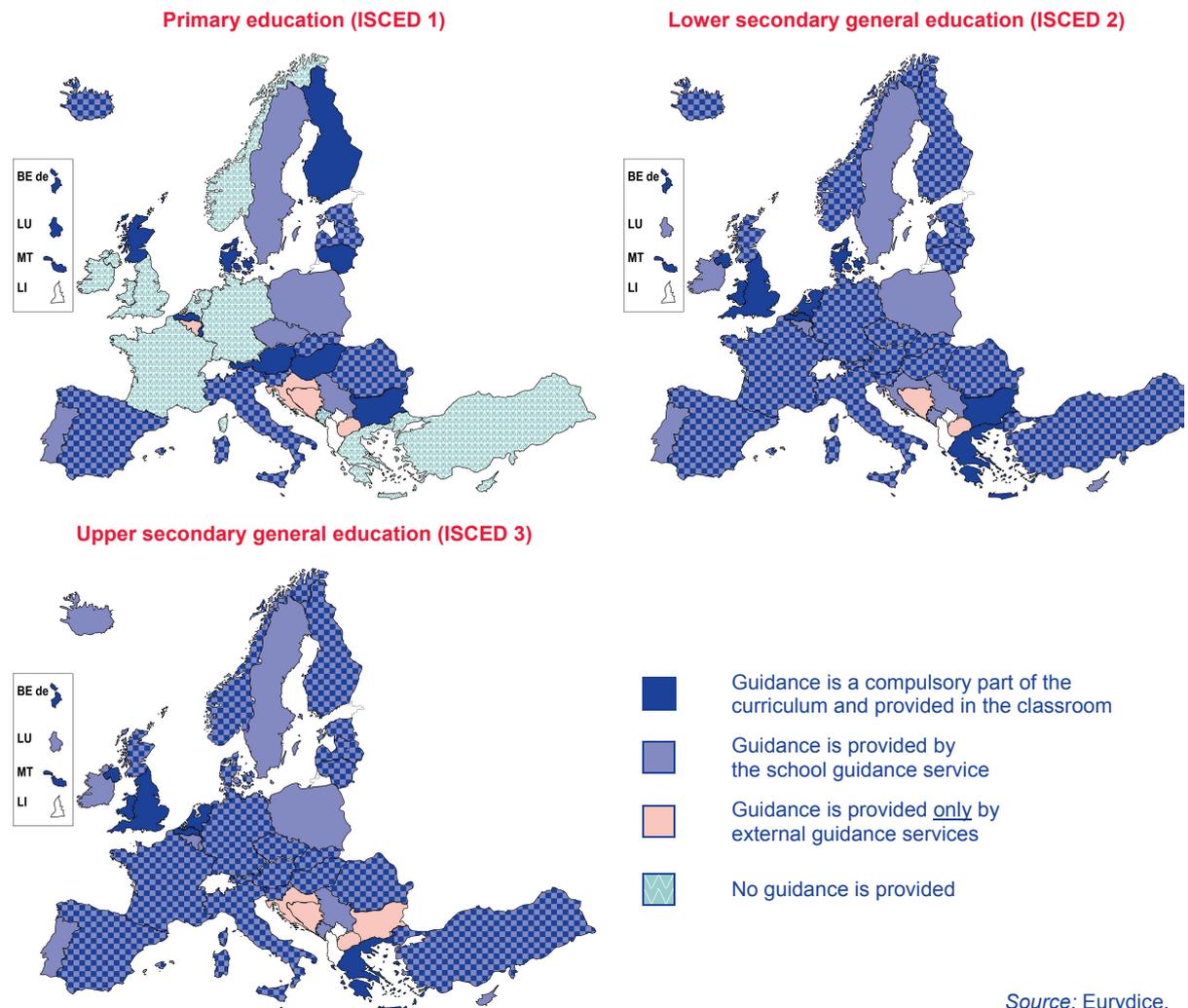
([17]) Germany, Ireland, Greece, France, Cyprus, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Montenegro, Norway and Turkey

([18]) https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CareerEducationStandard0915_tcm4-869208.pdf

Education and career guidance is a service that provides pupils and students with information as well as support for developing their decision-making and other skills important for managing their educational and/or career choices. Guidance may also include psycho-social work or counselling to help students, in particular those at risk of leaving early, as they progress through education and training. Education and career guidance may be part of the curriculum (included in official steering documents), offered through a formally established in-school guidance service, and/or provided through an external guidance service, i.e. outside of schools.

Country-specific note

Germany: At upper secondary level, education and career guidance is currently provided through the curriculum in five out of 16 *Länder* (North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Thuringia, Hamburg and Hessen); the aim is to put this approach in place in the remaining 11 *Länder*. The 'Skills Analysis' tool used (which is part of the 'Educational Chains' initiative), is being implemented in all schools. The Federal-*Länder* agreements currently being negotiated (see below in the section on recent policy developments) are expected to lead to a country-wide implementation of this approach in the near future.

When looking in more detail at the ways in which education and career guidance is provided across the three levels of education, it becomes clear that at secondary level, slightly more countries deliver support for students through a school guidance service than through the curriculum. In some countries, this is the only way guidance is provided in schools, or it is the only form of guidance provision at certain levels of education. This is the case at primary level in the Czech Republic; at lower secondary level in Croatia; at lower and upper secondary level in the French Community of Belgium, Ireland, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Poland and Montenegro; at upper secondary level in Germany and Iceland; and at all three levels of education in Portugal, Sweden and Serbia.

Education and career guidance may also be an integral part of national curricula at one or more education levels. About half of all education systems provide curriculum-based guidance in the classroom starting at primary level, but more countries do so at the level of lower and/or upper secondary education. European countries generally recommend a broad approach to education and career guidance which links the different forms of provision and incorporates a wide range of methods. However, it should also be noted that the high level of school autonomy in some countries, means schools are free to plan and organise their own guidance activities.

Recent policy developments:

As a result of recent policy developments, the provision of education and career guidance has been strengthened in Germany and in France:

In **Germany**, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) consolidated and expanded certain funding measures for education and career guidance. The 'Educational Chains' initiative (*Abschluss und Anschluss – Bildungsketten bis zum Ausbildungsabschluss*) aims to provide 'Skills Analyses' for students in school, and career start coaching for up to 115 000 students at around 2 550 schools between 2015 and 2018. These activities will be supplemented by careers orientation measures, career entry support activities and special training support measures. Negotiations between the Federal and *Länder* governments are almost finalised, which will ensure the successful implantation of the 'Educational Chains' approach in the regular *Länder* education and training systems through Federal-*Länder* agreements.

In **France**, the 'Future Journey' initiative (*Parcours avenir*) has been rolling out since September 2015 resulting in the provision of information, guidance and experience of the economic and professional world to individual students at lower and upper secondary level through the compulsory curriculum. During compulsory education, the knowledge and competences that students acquire in the framework of this initiative are taken into account in the evaluation of learning outcomes.

In two other countries – Latvia and Cyprus – education and career guidance, which was previously also provided as a compulsory part of the curriculum in the classroom, is now only provided through in-school guidance services:

In **Cyprus**, from the 2015/16 school year career guidance will still be provided by an in-school guidance service, but not as part of the curriculum at lower secondary level. In practice, guidance practitioners visit school classes, at both lower and upper secondary level,

and introduce students to the principles of career education for between 3-6 teaching hours in one school year. Outside of this, students can obtain education and career guidance through school guidance services and further time can be spent on personal or group guidance interviews.

The 'Career education plan for general education institutions and vocational education institutions 2015-2020' in **Latvia** promotes career education and counselling in schools and fosters career competence for teachers ([19]). However, as a result of this plan, guidance at primary level is provided only through the school guidance service and is no longer part of the compulsory curriculum.

Finally, two countries/regions have announced future plans for the development of education and career guidance in school:

In the **German-speaking Community of Belgium**, the second volume of the 'Regional Development Project' (REK, 2015-2019) envisages a more intensive use of the 'Skill guide to career choice preparation and career guidance' (*Rahmenplan: Schulische Berufswahlvorbereitung und Berufsorientierung*) providing students with information and guidance on educational and vocational paths as well as employment opportunities.

In **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, career guidance provided in schools is currently being planned and prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science. Under the supervision of experts in the field, a pilot project for career guidance is being developed in several schools in the country. The national Centre for Vocational Education and Training may become involved in the process of providing career guidance for students in VET.

3.6. Providing support for early leavers to re-enter the education and training system

Whilst effective policies for reducing the numbers of students leaving education and training early should be focussed on its prevention, compensation measures are also necessary for students who, for different reasons, have left the education system prematurely. Such measures are intended to help early leavers re-engage in education and training and obtain necessary qualifications and skills (European Commission, 2013a).

All European countries/regions (except for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia) have such policies and measures in place (see Figure 3.6). In most cases, they are second chance schemes, which provide early leavers with alternative education and training pathways leading to a formal qualification and/or they prepare them for employment.

For example in the **Flemish Community of Belgium**, early leavers are identified by the Flemish Employment Services and Vocational Training Agency (VDAB). The VDAB offers several qualification pathways for young people who have left school with or without a qualification. Well-known pathways, are the so-called OKOT-pathways (Dutch acronym for pathways leading to an educational qualification) where a jobseeker with a VDAB training contract follows a qualifying pathway in an educational centre. These OKOT-pathways focus on job sectors in which there is a shortage of skilled workers. The qualifications obtained through these OKOT-pathways are at different levels: vocational, general secondary education or a professional bachelor's degree. Second chance education provided through this programme is fully subsidised by VDAB and organised in cooperation with the institutions for adult education.

In **Poland**, as in many other countries offering second chance schemes as a compensation measure for early leavers, young people over 18 years, who are no longer under the compulsory education obligation, can complete or complement their general education and/or gain a professional qualification directly in adult education institutions. This pathway offers a range of education and training opportunities, including general skills training according to the general education core curriculum, training based on the core curriculum for particular professions and professional skills training run in cooperation with the labour offices and based on labour market needs.

In several countries/regions, including the French and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, Malta and Slovenia, the main emphasis of second chance schemes is on individually tailored programmes that focus on the re-integration of early leavers into mainstream education.

([19]) http://likumi.lv/ta/id/278999

For example in **Slovenia**, a non-formal, publicly recognised and funded programme helps early leavers gain basic skills and become motivated to re-enter formal education (or in some cases to enter employment). The programme is targeted at young people age 15 to 25, who have left education early and have not completed basic or upper secondary education. It mainly aims to help young people improve their knowledge and skills and increase their opportunities to re-enter formal education. It combines different approaches for raising the participants' level of basic skills, enhancing their motivation to learn, and providing them with career guidance and support to develop a vision for their lives.

Figure 3.6: Focus of policies and measures to help early leavers re-enter the education and training system, 2015/16
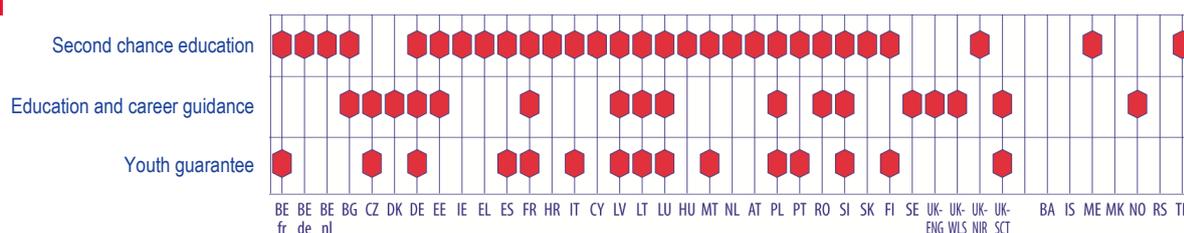
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Policies and measures that help young people who have left education and training early to re-enter the system include initiatives aiming to identify and contact individuals, provide special education and training programmes that allow early leavers to complete their studies and obtain a qualification, and offer guidance and counselling services.

In more than one third of the European countries/regions, the main emphasis of these compensation measures is to provide the young people with education and career guidance. Often this is combined with practical skills training, one-to-one or group counselling and similar support measures.

An example of this approach can be found in **Denmark**, where the municipal youth guidance centres receive information from the central data base and contact young people up to the age of 25 who have not completed an education programme and are not in education, training or employment. The guidance counsellors discuss with the young person different options and schemes that may help them get back into education, training or employment. Cooperation across sectors is a key concern for this guidance service. The aim is to ensure a coherent guidance system and a regular exchange of experience, knowledge and best practice. The youth guidance centres are thus obliged to cooperate closely with primary and lower secondary schools and youth education institutions as well as with local businesses and the public employment services.

Finally, in fifteen countries/regions ([20]), some of the main efforts to help early leavers re-engage in education and training and obtain a qualification take place within the context of 'Youth Guarantee' related policies and measures. The 'Youth Guarantee' is an approach to tackling youth unemployment, endorsed by the EU countries in April 2013 ([21]). It seeks to ensure that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good quality, definite offer within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. This offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continuing education and should be adapted to each individual's need and situation.

For example, as part of the Youth Guarantee scheme in **Portugal**, apprenticeship courses are offered that are initial professional training courses designed for young people between 14 and 24 years of age who have not completed upper secondary education. The aim of these courses is to enable young people to continue their studies and to prepare them for working life. The apprenticeship courses, which are part of the National Qualification System, are equivalent to upper secondary education and training and award dual certification, academic and vocational. They include several support measures for trainees, such as study grants and meal and transport allowances.

([20]) French Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland and the United Kingdom (Scotland)

([21]) Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee. OJ C 120, 26.4.2013. (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426(01))

Similarly in **Finland**, the 'Young Adults' Skills Programme' (NAO), administered by the Ministry for Education and Culture, was implemented in 2013-2016 as a part of the Youth Guarantee system. The target group of the programme is young adults aged 20-29 who do not have an upper secondary qualification. They are offered the opportunity to obtain a vocational upper secondary qualification, a further vocational qualification or a specialist vocational qualification or to get credits for parts thereof. The programme has been implemented in approximately 60 educational institutions across the country.

Recent policy developments:

Changes to the policies and measures to help early leavers re-enter the education and training system focussing on the three broad areas mentioned above – second chance education, youth guarantee and education and career guidance – have occurred recently in the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece and the United Kingdom (England and Wales).

In the **French Community of Belgium**, one of the objectives for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in 2016 is to strengthen the coordination of provision. Through the initiative 'Find-Mind-Bind' of the Brussels-Capital Region, this area and two community committees, the Flemish Community and the Walloon Region, collaborate to identify young people who have left school but are not registered as job seekers. These youths are then provided with the guidance and support needed to start a training course, an internship or employment.

In **Bulgaria**, a new regulation has been in place since January 2015 which allows for the recognition of the professional knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal education or learning. It also facilitates access to training that leads to a professional qualification which, in turn, provides access to the labour market.

The **Greek** 'Strategic Policy Framework for the Elimination of ELET' (2014-2020) includes as a priority the establishment of a system of second chance schools as a point of reference for early leavers. It promotes a model of cooperation between the different institutes offering second chance education. This requires greater access to and permeability of programmes as well as investing in training for teachers to use more relevant pedagogies that meet the needs of the early leavers. The strategic framework further highlights the need to make concerted efforts to identify and support persons with disabilities who are not in education, training or work.

A recent policy development in the **United Kingdom (England and Wales)**, the 'Youth Obligation', means that from April 2017, young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) will participate in an intensive regime of support from the first day of their benefit claim, and after six months they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work-based skills, or go on a mandatory work placement to give them the skills they need to move into sustainable employment.

In the **United Kingdom (Wales)**, additional funding was announced in October 2015 to help reduce the number of young people who are NEET. Under the 'Communities for Work' programme, youth mentors and Job Centre Plus specialist employment advisors based in Wales' in 52 'Communities First' areas will provide intensive, one-to-one guidance to help young people access education, training and employment. The project will support them to overcome the challenges they are facing, such as a lack of confidence, skills or experience, and help with the costs which may be a barrier to getting a job, such as the travel costs of attending an interview or buying suitable clothing.

CHAPTER 4: HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

In 2008, the Council adopted an EU-wide benchmark on tertiary education, stating that by 2020 at least 40 % of 30-34 year-olds should have a tertiary or equivalent level qualification [1]. This benchmark has since become part of the double headline target on education within the Europe 2020 growth strategy.

The following structural indicators, as shown on the diagram below, have been developed in relation to this headline target, and guided by the Commission's communication, 'Supporting growth and jobs: An agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems' [2]. Among the Communication's main objectives are two key inter-linked policy goals: increasing and widening participation, and improving the quality and relevance of higher education.

In light of the widening participation agenda in higher education, the selected indicators seek to show how different countries are pursuing this goal in terms of target setting, the implementation of systematic monitoring procedures and the efforts made to broaden entry qualifications. The last two indicators look at both inputs (the social dimension of funding mechanisms) and outputs (the requirement to monitor completion rates). The latter is particularly important as the successful completion of programmes is a pre-requisite for meeting the national higher education attainment targets.

Some constraints need to be borne in mind when interpreting these structural indicators on higher education. National policies on the issues surrounding the social dimension of higher education need to be understood in context, as the same measure in different countries may have a different purpose, and consequently may lead to different outcomes. Any individual indicator therefore has limited power to shed light on reality. The structural indicators in this chapter are based on two Eurydice reports (EACEA/Eurydice, 2011b; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014c). Within these reports, rather than providing stand-alone indicators, each one has been developed within a larger framework, with a view to providing a better understanding of the particular issues involved.

The structural indicators selected for the 2016 Eurydice data collection examine the following issues related to publicly funded higher education institutions and publicly subsidised private institutions with over 50 % public funding:

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                              ┌──────────────────┐
                              │     Higher       │
                              │    Education     │
                              └──────────────────┘
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| Targets for widening participation of under-represented groups | Monitoring of the characteristics of the student body | Recognition of informal and non-formal learning | Requirements to monitor completion rates in Quality Assurance | Performance-based funding with a social dimension |

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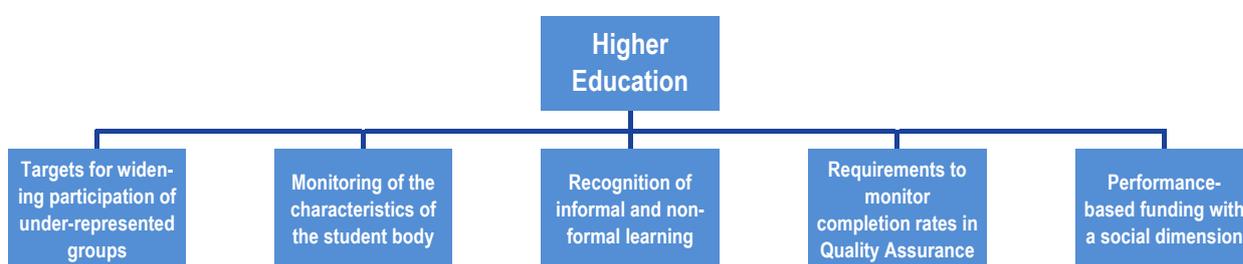
[1] Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

[2] Communication from the European Commission, 2011. 'Supporting Growth and Jobs: an Agenda for the Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education Systems'. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities [COM (2011) 567 final].

4.1. Targets for widening participation of under-represented groups

In a social and economic environment where the skills and competences acquired and refined through higher education are becoming increasingly important (European Commission, 2010), it is a societal imperative to widen participation in higher education as broadly as possible. Equitable education and training systems should aim to provide 'opportunities, access, treatment and outcomes that are independent of socio-economic background and other factors which may lead to educational disadvantage' ([3]).

In recent years, European policy has increasingly stressed the social dimension of higher education, with countries making commitments to develop strategies and define measurable targets through the Bologna Process, the modernisation agenda and the EU 2020 strategy. In order to achieve the EU-level 'headline' target mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, EU countries have set their own national participation and attainment targets to be reached by 2020.

This indicator encompasses quantitative targets which focus on **widening or increasing participation** among the groups currently under-represented in higher education. However, as mentioned above, equity in treatment is also important, so targets related to **improving completion rates** for these groups are also considered here. Examples of under-represented groups might include people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic groups, lower socio-economic status groups, women/men, etc.

While this indicator focuses on the quantitative targets for increasing the number of students from under-represented groups, it must be underlined that many countries have other types of policy measures and financial support systems to support the widening participation agenda, as was reported in the 'Modernisation of higher education' report and Eurydice Brief (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014c, 2015f).

Figure 4.1 shows that less than a third of countries have quantitative targets related to under-represented groups. Where such quantitative targets do exist, they are aimed specifically at entry to or participation in higher education (Greece, Malta, Romania, Finland, the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland) and Serbia), but in some countries these are combined with targets for the completion of higher education or finding employment (France, Ireland and United Kingdom (Wales and Scotland)).

([3]) Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the social dimension of education and training, OJ C 135, 26.05.2010, p. 2.

Figure 4.1: Quantitative targets for widening participation in and/or completion of higher education by under-represented groups, 2015/16

Quantitative targets
for **entry to and/or participation** in higher education

Quantitative targets
for the **completion** of higher education **and/or** finding **employment**

No quantitative targets

Source: Eurydice.
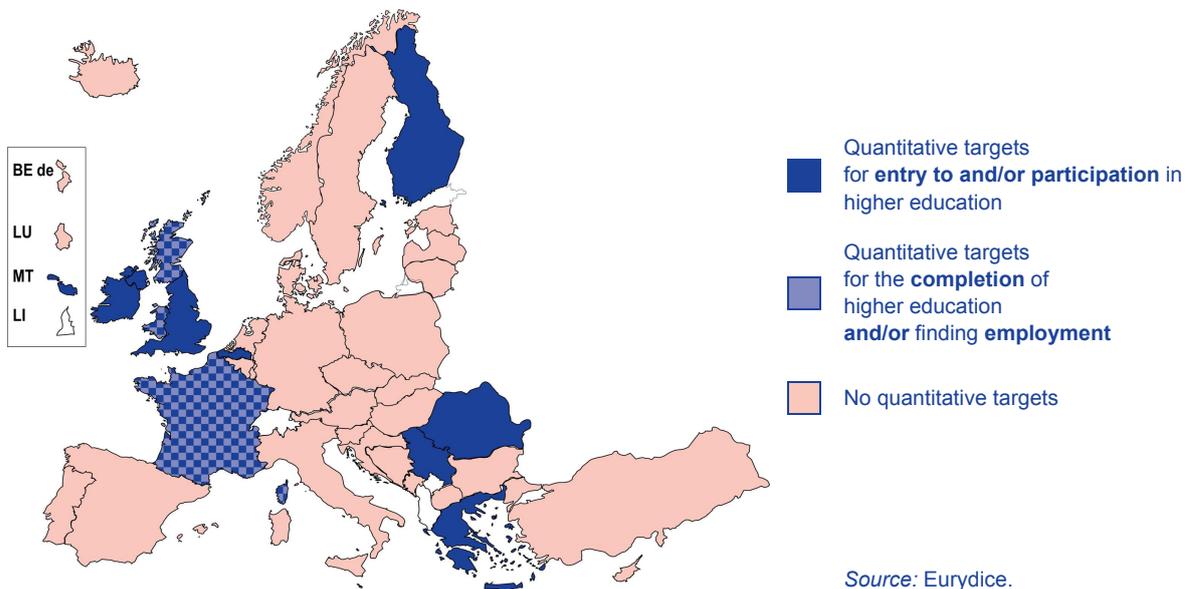
Recent policy developments:

In most countries, the targets have been in place for some time, but there have been some recent developments.

In **the United Kingdom (England)**, the higher education white paper 'Success as a knowledge economy: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice' ([4]) sets out the government's plans to reform the higher education and research system. It includes two targets, set by the Prime Minister: to double the proportion of people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering university in 2020 compared to 2009, and to increase the number of black and minority ethnic (BME) students going to university by 20 % by 2020.

4.2. Monitoring of the characteristics of the student body

For this indicator, **systematic monitoring** refers to the process of systematic data gathering, analysis and use of data to inform policy. It aims to capture how the higher education system operates and whether it is reaching its objectives and targets. It can take place at various stages: on entry to higher education, during studies (refers to student retention), at graduation (refers to completion rates) and after graduation (refers to graduate destinations – employment or further study). Systematic monitoring must include mechanisms for cross-institutional data gathering and allow cross-institutional data comparability.

This indicator focuses on the systematic monitoring of the **socio-economic status of students**, defined as a combined measure of students' or their families' economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analysing a family's socio-economic status, the household income (combined and individual) is examined as well as the education and occupation of earners. Parents' educational attainment is often taken as a proxy measure for socio-economic status.

([4])   https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-white-paper

As can be seen in Figure 4.2, the systematic monitoring of some characteristics of the student body (for example, in terms of disability, ethnic status, and qualification achieved before entry to higher education) is very common in Europe.

Figure 4.2: Monitoring the socio-economic characteristics of the student body, 2015/16

BE de
LU
MT
LI

■ Systematic monitoring of the characteristics of the student body

▨ Systematic monitoring of socio-economic characteristics

▨ No systematic monitoring
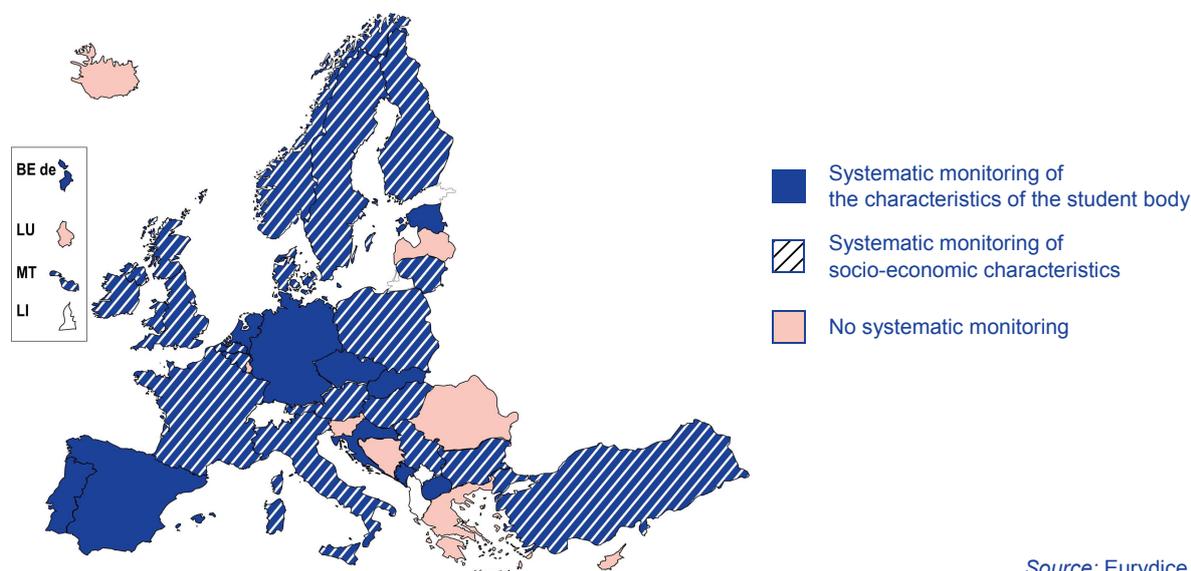
Source: Eurydice.

However, systematically monitoring socio-economic characteristics is less common, and is carried out in slightly less than half of all higher education systems. Nevertheless, many countries should still have a considerable body of information and data to draw on with regard to the changing profile of higher education students. However, it was reported in the Eurydice Brief that this data is not necessarily always exploited (EACEA/Eurydice, 2015f). In eight countries (Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iceland), there is no systematic monitoring.

4.3. Recognition of informal and non-formal learning for entry to higher education, 2015/16

The recognition of prior learning has been addressed in various policy documents on higher education, including the Bologna communiqués and the European Universities Charter on Lifelong Learning (EUA, 2008). According to these documents, prior learning refers to any type of learning – be it formal, non-formal or informal. However, while higher education institutions are relatively open to recognising prior formal learning, in particular studies at other higher education institutions, the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning remains underexploited.

In 2012, the EU institutions provided support for further developments in this field, adopting a recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning ([5]). This recommendation covers all sectors of education and training, including the higher education sector, and invites Member States to 'have in place, no later than 2018, in accordance with national circumstances and specificities, and as they deem appropriate, arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning' ([6]).

([5]) Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

([6]) Ibid.

This indicator focuses on prior informal and non-formal learning. **Informal learning** means learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective. Examples of informal learning outcomes are skills acquired through life and work experiences such as project management or ICT skills acquired at work; languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country; ICT skills acquired outside work; skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports and youth work; and through home-based activities (e.g. taking care of a child).

Non-formal learning means learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives and learning time), where some form of learning support is present (e.g. from a tutor); it may cover programmes to deliver work skills, adult literacy, and basic education for early school leavers. Very common examples of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT skills, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target groups or the general public.

As Figure 4.3 shows, informal and non-formal learning are recognised for entry in all institutions in nine education systems (Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Denmark, Luxembourg, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Montenegro and Norway), and in some institutions (two or more) in seven countries (France, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and the United Kingdom).

> In the **United Kingdom**, each individual institution has autonomy over the qualifications that it will accept for entry to its courses. Many institutions welcome applications from mature candidates who have had appropriate experience but may lack formal qualifications. Institutions may give credit for prior study and informal learning acquired through work or other experiences: Arrangements for assessment of prior learning vary between individual higher education institutions.

In the majority of countries, however, prior informal or non-formal learning is not recognised for entry to higher education, which is the case mostly in Eastern Europe. However, in most countries where recognition occurs in all or in some institutions, access to these procedures is a legal right.

Figure 4.3: Recognition of informal and non-formal learning for entry to higher education, 2015/16

Recognised in **all** higher education institutions

Recognised in **two or more** higher education institutions
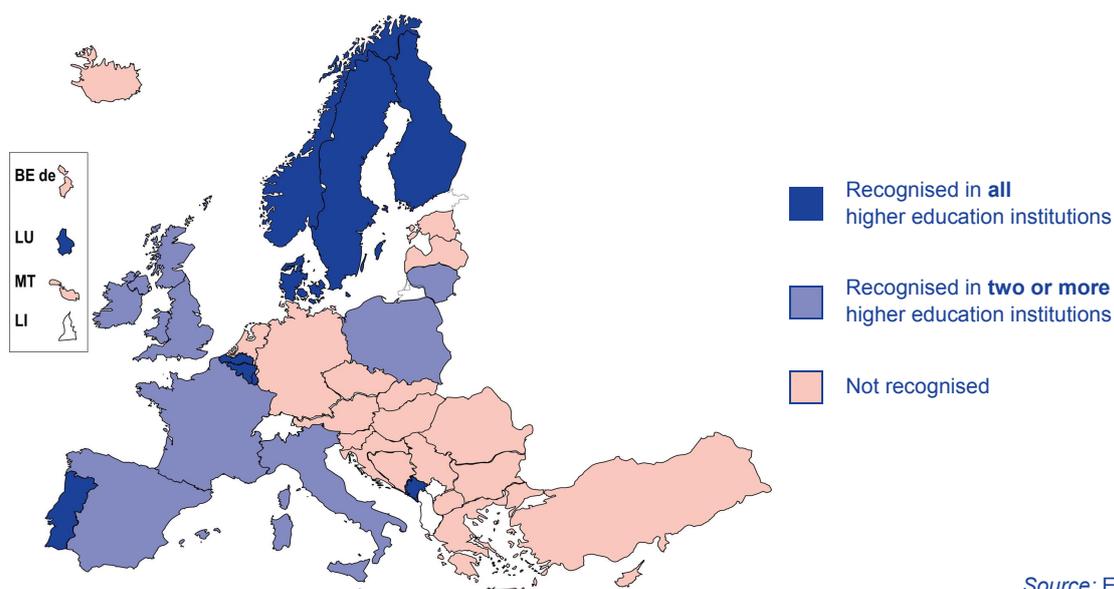
Not recognised

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Access to recognition procedures is a legal right in all the countries that recognise prior learning, except in Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

4.4. Completion rates as a requirement in external quality assurance

This indicator focuses on the use of completion rates as one of the criteria included in external quality assurance procedures for higher education institutions/programmes. Where the monitoring of completion rates is a requirement, it gives a good indication that they are measured in practice and that the information is likely to be used in policy making. The **completion rate** indicates the percentage of students who complete the higher education programme they have started.

Figure 4.4 shows that the monitoring of completion rates is a requirement either at institutional and/or programme level in about half of European countries. Furthermore, in Belgium (French Community), Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, monitoring completion rates is a requirement at both levels.

In **Belgium (French and German-speaking Communities)**, the evaluation framework of the independent quality assurance agency (QAA) includes a dimension related to the efficiency and equity of programmes. Through this dimension, the QAA evaluates the processes and mechanisms in place within programmes to monitor student progress, including whether they successfully complete their studies.

In France, the monitoring of completion rates is a requirement only at programme level but optional at institutional level. No data is available for Germany.

Figure 4.4: Requirement to monitor completion rates as part of external quality assurance procedures, 2015/16

Required at institutional and/or programme level

Optional at institutional or programme level

Not part of external quality assurance procedures

Not available

Source: Eurydice.
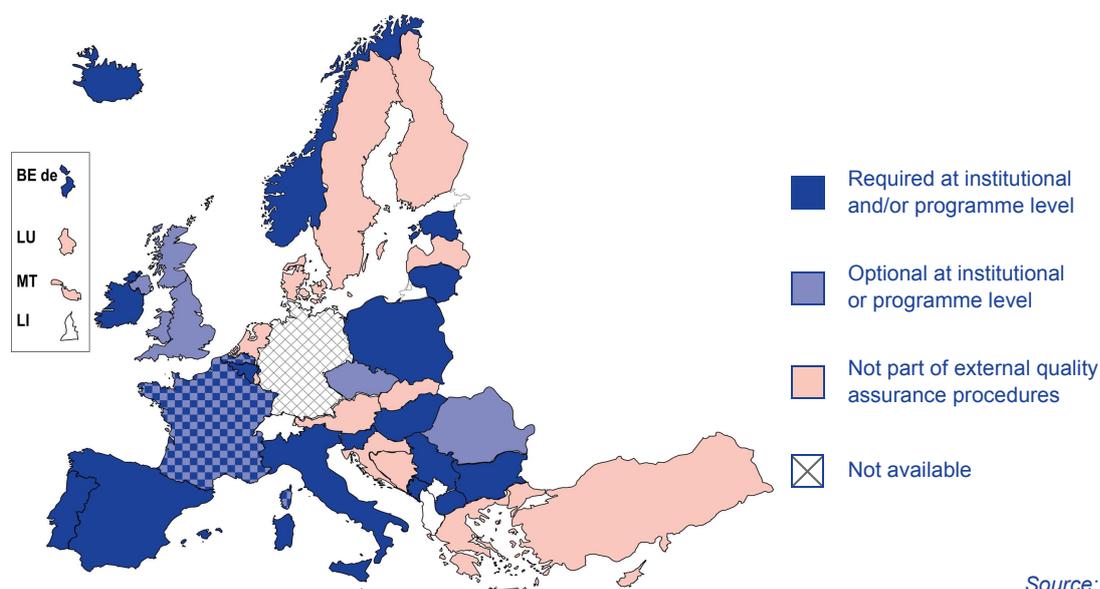
4.5. Performance-based funding mechanisms with a social dimension

Performance-based funding mechanisms with a social dimension enable funding to be provided to higher education institutions if they meet a defined level of performance in relation to social objectives. The performance may refer to people – staff or students – with defined characteristics in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, migrant status, etc.

Figure 4.5 shows that performance-based funding mechanisms, which give institutions extra funding if certain targets are met, exist in only 13 countries.

Figure 4.5: Performance-based funding mechanisms with a social dimension (students and staff), 2015/16
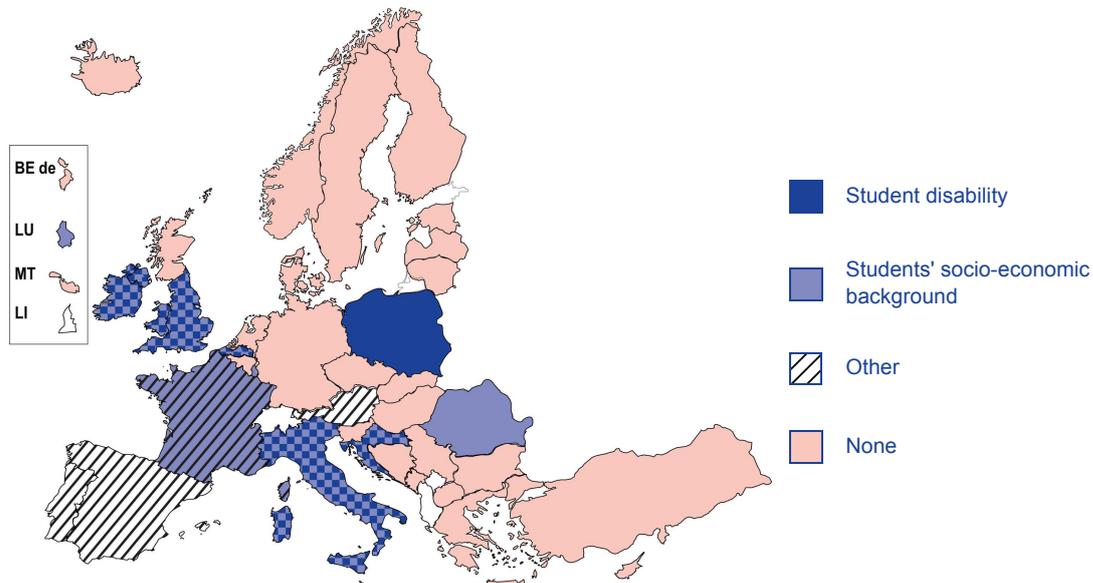
The group which most commonly attracts extra funding is students with disabilities (Belgium (Flemish Community), Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)). Socio-economic background is also a common area of interest (Belgium (Flemish Community), Croatia, Ireland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Romania and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)). Examples of other criteria on the basis of which extra funding is awarded (not necessarily shown on the map) are gender (Ireland, Spain and Austria), returning to study (Portugal), geographical location (Luxembourg) and age (Ireland). Few countries reported performance-based funding mechanisms related to staffing; those that do include France for staff with disabilities and Spain and Austria for the gender of staff.

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CHAPTER 5: GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

Introduction

Employability plays a central role in the Europe 2020 strategy as well as in the Education and Training 2020 ('ET 2020') ([1]) and higher education modernisation strategies (European Commission, 2011). Within the ET 2020 strategy, the Council of the European Union adopted a benchmark on graduate employability in 2012 ([2]). According to this benchmark, 'by 2020, the share of employed graduates (20-34 year-olds) having left education and training no more than three years before the reference year should be at least 82 %' ([3]). In this context, the term 'graduates' refers not only to those finishing higher education (HE) but also to those graduating with upper secondary or post-secondary, non-tertiary qualifications. Public authorities and higher education institutions (HEIs) have a major role to play in achieving this goal.

European Commission policy stresses the role of higher education in equipping graduates with the knowledge and transferable core competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations. It also underlines the importance of involving employers in the design and delivery of higher education programmes, and ensuring that programmes include an element of practical work experience. Furthermore, the monitoring of graduates' career development by HEIs has also been identified as crucial in increasing the relevance of programmes (European Commission, 2011). The employability of graduates is also an important issue in the European Commission's New Skills Agenda for Europe ([4]), which proposes various actions to improve the skills of graduates to meet labour market needs.

The issues being addressed therefore extend beyond the simple monitoring of graduate employment rates. At a time where the economic crisis has had a very significant impact on youth unemployment, there are many areas of action which can help countries regain ground, and support young people in finding employment. The proposed selection of structural indicators is an illustration of the broad range of policy measures that can help improve graduate employability.

In the context of this exercise, many structural indicators could be considered relevant, and the formulation, development and use of indicators for this purpose is challenging. In the 2016 data collection, the chosen structural indicators describe the following issues related to publicly funded higher education institutions and publicly subsidised private institutions with over 50 % public funding:
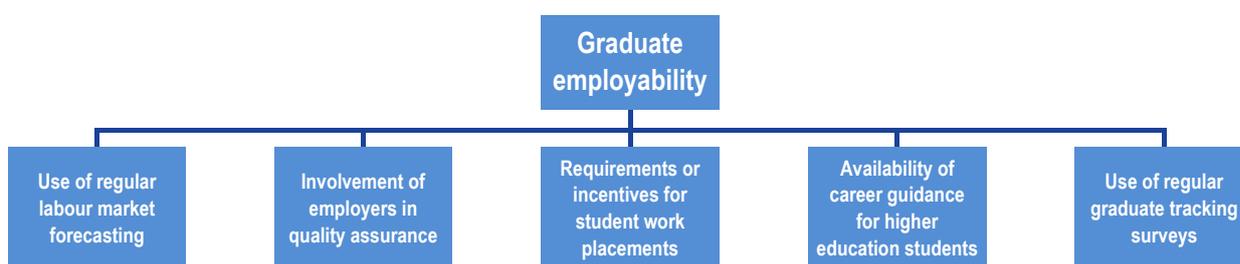
([1]) Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJ 2009/C 119/02, 28.5.2009.

([2]) Council conclusions of 11 May 2012 on the employability of graduates from education and training, OJ 2012/C 169/04, 15.6.2012.

([3]) Ibid., p. 10.

([4]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions: A New Skills Agenda for Europe, COM (2016) 381 final, 10.6.2016.

Though the benchmark on graduate employability concerns both higher education graduates and those with upper secondary or post-secondary, non-tertiary qualifications, the indicators selected for this exercise are related to *higher education graduates only*. The information presented in this section is also limited in terms of scope; further details on these policy areas can be found in the *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability* report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014c, 2015f) as well as in the *Bologna Process implementation Report* (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015b).

5.1. Use of regular labour market forecasting

The first indicator linked to graduate employability concerns **labour market forecasting**. This process involves

> estimating the expected future number of jobs available in an economy [in the medium or long term] and their particular skill or qualification requirements (demand). Skills needs forecasts are complemented by forecasts of the number of people (supply) with particular skills. The comparison of demand and supply can indicate potential imbalances or skill mismatches in future labour markets (Cedefop 2012, pp. 11-12).

This indicator looks specifically at whether:

1) Countries carry out regular labour market forecasting;

2) Educational authorities and recognised stakeholders make systematic use of information from labour market forecasts through established mechanisms.

Despite its limitations (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014c), labour market forecasting is a common way of anticipating labour market needs in terms of the demand and supply of skills. This process is usually carried out in order to help different stakeholders – employees, employers, students and parents, social partners, and policy makers – to take informed decisions and appropriate actions with respect to the labour market. On the one hand, labour market forecasting can inform policy planning relating to, for example, the planning and design of study programmes, determining the number of state-funded places, or the allocation of public funding. On the other hand, guidance and information services can use labour market information to guide (potential) students towards fields in which there are skills shortages. Labour market forecasting is usually conducted according to occupation and qualification levels (Cedefop, 2012). Regular labour market forecasting is conducted repeatedly, at regular intervals.

As Figure 5.1a shows, in the majority of education systems (23), labour market forecasting is conducted regularly.

Figure 5.1a: Labour market forecasting, 2015/16

Labour market/skills forecasting is done at regular intervals

Labour market/skills forecasting is done on an ad hoc basis

No forecasting of labour market/ skills
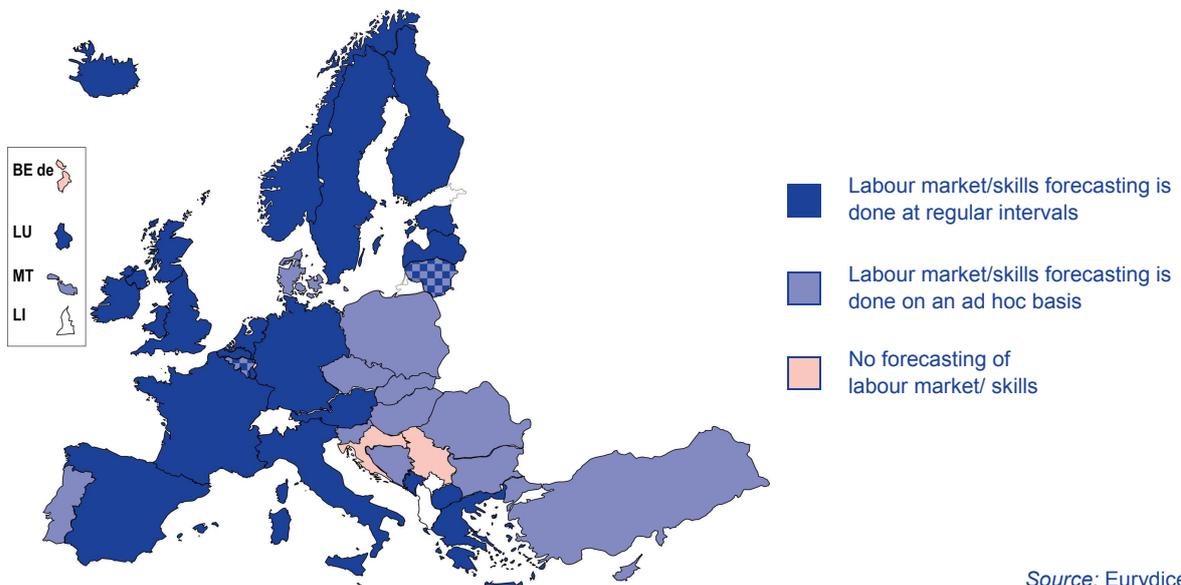
Source: Eurydice.

Ad hoc forecasting takes place in 16 education systems. Labour market forecasting is not conducted in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Croatia or Serbia. Nevertheless, in Serbia, a survey addressing future labour market needs is conducted regularly among employers.

Figure 5.1b: Using labour-market and skills forecasting in central planning, 2015/16

Systematic use by educational authorities

No systematic use by educational authorities
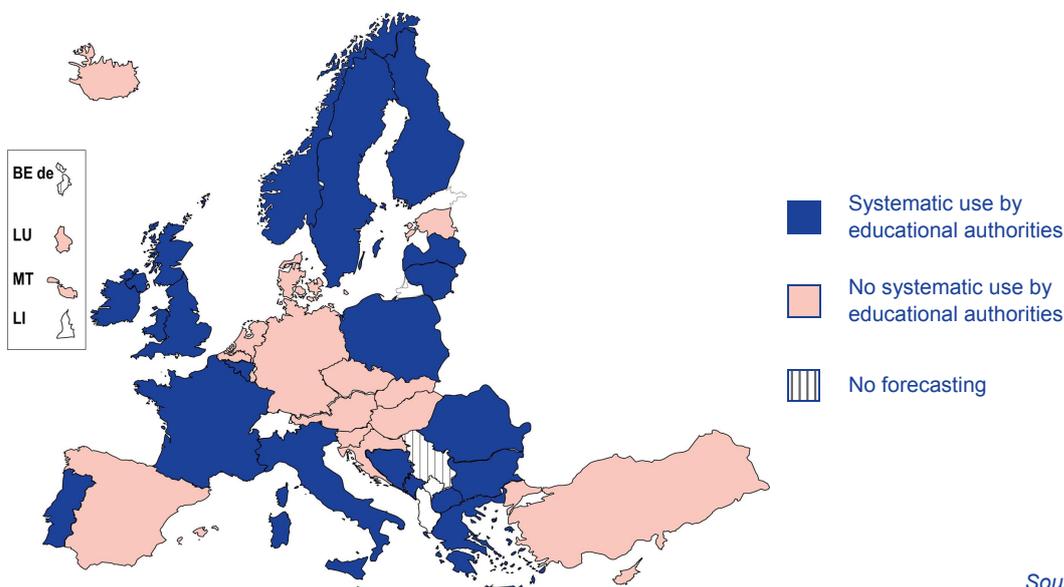
No forecasting

Source: Eurydice.

While labour market forecasting is conducted in almost all countries, only around half of the countries conducting these forecasts take the results into account in higher education planning at central level (Figure 5.1b). In Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Norway, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, labour market information is used to determine enrolment quotas or the number of state-funded places in some or all fields of higher education. In Belgium (French Community), France ([5]), Poland, Portugal, Romania and Sweden, the forecasts are taken into account when setting up or accrediting new study programmes, and/or when adapting the content of

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([5])   In France, this is limited to professionally-oriented programmes.

existing programmes to labour market needs. Some countries also reported that labour market forecasts are used to identify priority areas for additional funding (e.g. in Bulgaria and Ireland). Nevertheless, while central authorities do not always use labour market information systematically, higher education institutions (sometimes in cooperation with central authorities) can still use them in planning programmes or career guidance provision (e.g. in Belgium (Flemish Community) and Estonia).

Recent policy developments

Establishing regular labour market forecasting is becoming a priority in an increasing number of countries, and there have been some recent developments:

> In **Greece**, an Action Plan for labour market forecasting was drafted by the Ministry of Labour and the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources in May 2015. It was approved by the European Commission on 15 May 2015 and implementation started immediately. The Ministry of Labour is the supervising body for the project and the National Institute of Labour and Human Resources is responsible for its implementation. Social partners, regional authorities and other ministries and institutes are collaborating on the project. Based on the Action Plan, a permanent mechanism has been established that produces results twice a year on the dynamism of sectors and occupations and skill mismatches. Results were produced in June 2015 and December 2015. As part of this mechanism, a team of expert administrative personnel has been assembled at the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, which is responsible for setting the inflow data as well as the outflow data for the entire Greek educational system, and for detecting and forecasting problems in youth employability.

5.2. Involvement of employers in external quality assurance (QA) procedures

Consulting or involving employers, employers' organisations and business representatives in the planning, development and evaluation of higher education programmes is a direct and more decentralised method of ensuring that the needs of the labour market are reflected in higher education provision. Employers and business representatives are aware of the skills graduates need when entering the labour market, involving them in the quality assurance process is therefore a way of using this knowledge for the benefit of higher education institutions, and encourages institutions to be responsive to the needs of the labour market.

Higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area usually monitor the employment outcomes of their graduates as part of their quality assurance procedures. However, some countries have introduced other procedures to ensure that institutions meet standards of performance with respect to graduate employability. For example, in some countries, employability criteria form part of performance agreements between education authorities and higher education institutions. Elsewhere, higher education institutions' performance with respect to employability affects the level of funding they receive (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015b).

The second indicator developed for this exercise shows whether employers are required to be involved in quality assurance procedures in higher education. Under such regulations, a distinction is sometimes made between professional and academic strands, with employer involvement being more common in professionally-oriented programmes. Since this indicator aims to cover all higher education programmes, only regulations applicable to all HEIs are taken into account.

As Figure 5.2 depicts, employers are involved in external QA procedures in the majority of education systems.

Figure 5.2: Involvement of employers in external quality assurance processes, 2015/16

Source: Eurydice.
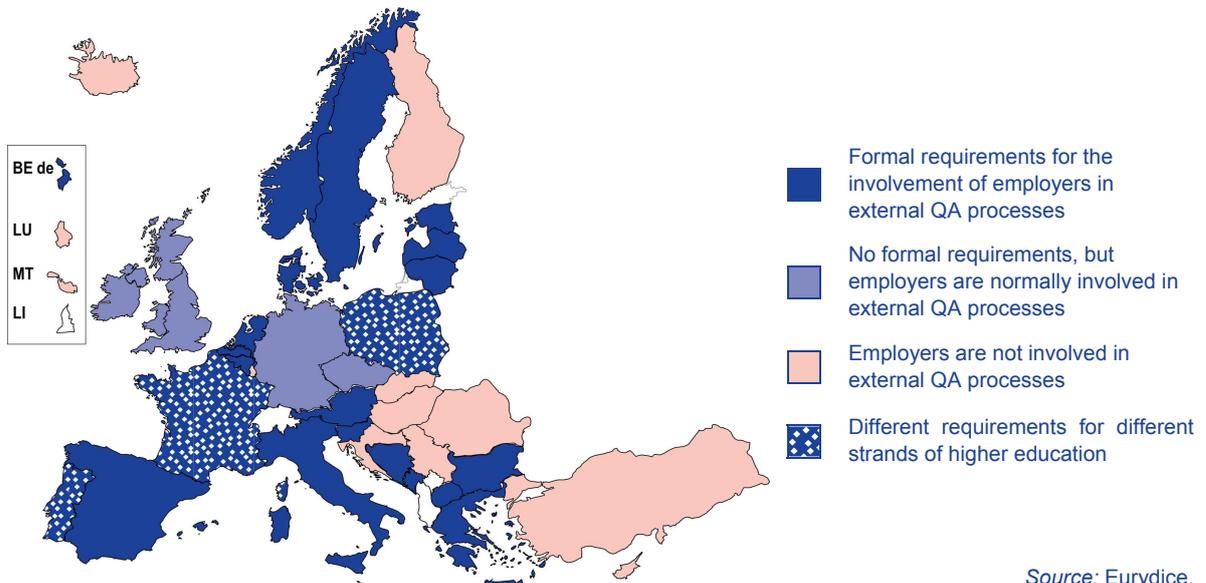
Moreover, this is usually because they are required to participate. There are four countries (seven education systems) where employers are normally involved in external QA without it being a requirement: The Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Employers do not participate in quality assurance procedures in 11 education systems.

In most countries there are no differences between 'academic' and 'professional' strands in the requirements for external quality assurance. However, in France and Poland for example, employers are more directly involved in the professional than academic strand. In Portugal, it is required in more programmes in professional higher education than academic strands.

Recent policy developments

In **Greece**, the system of academic certification of the curricula of HEIs developed by the Hellenic Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (HQA) is based on the participation of the social partners (representatives of professional/scientific organisations and students of HEIs), and experts from abroad. The system involves external assessment by a team of experts of HEIs from abroad with compulsory participation of representatives of professional organisations or chambers of commerce, especially for the professions protected by law. However, this system is not yet fully operational.

## 5.3. Requirements or incentives for student work placements

In the context of employability, an important role of higher education institutions is to provide graduates with the skills that will enable them to find jobs after graduation. One common way to ensure that graduates gain the necessary competences is to include work placements as part of higher education programmes. Data from both European comparative studies and national reports show that students who participated in practical training before graduation are more likely to find jobs than their counterparts without relevant work experience (see e.g. Blackwell et al., 2001; Garrouste and Rodrigues, 2012; Mason, Williams and Cranmer, 2009; van der Velden and Allen, 2011). Thomas and Jones (2007) also emphasise the importance of work experience for non-traditional learners. Therefore, it is important to examine whether there are systems in place (by means of regulations or incentives) to extend the provision for structured work placements or practical training as part of higher education programmes.

The term '**work placement**' refers to two types of experience in a working environment. Firstly, it is the placement of students in supervised work settings (e.g. through internships) so they can apply the knowledge and skills learned during their studies. Secondly, it refers to a period of voluntary work (also referred to as 'student-community engagement') that is intended to allow students to become familiar with the working environment in general, whilst also conveying some benefit to the community (Bourner and Millican, 2011). This second type of placement should also be integrated into tertiary programmes in order to have a positive impact on graduate employability (Ibid.).

The following indicators show whether public authorities in European countries have taken steps to improve graduate employability by ensuring that higher education institutions include work placements/practical experience as part of their education programmes. Figure 5.3a examines requirements and Figure 5.3b looks at incentives (financial or other) given to institutions.

Figure 5.3a: Requirements to include work placements/practical training in higher education programmes, 2015/16

Requirements apply to ALL higher education programmes

Requirements apply to SOME higher education programmes

No requirements

Not available

Source: Eurydice.
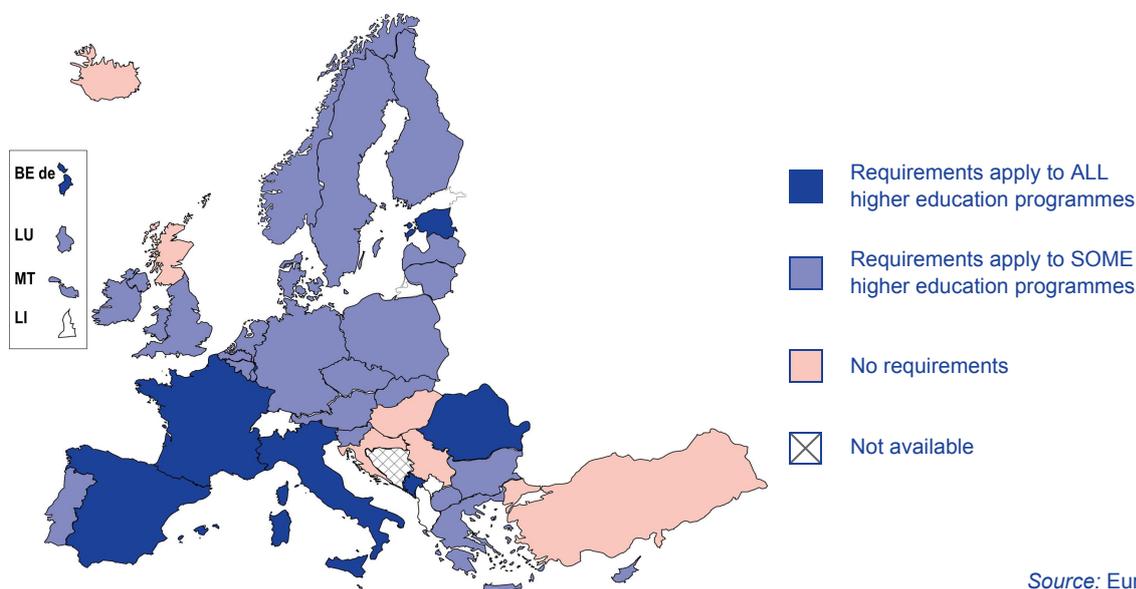
Figure 5.3b: Incentives to include work placements/practical training in higher education programmes, 2015/16

Incentives apply to ALL higher education programmes

Incentives apply to SOME higher education programmes

No incentives

Not available

Source: Eurydice.
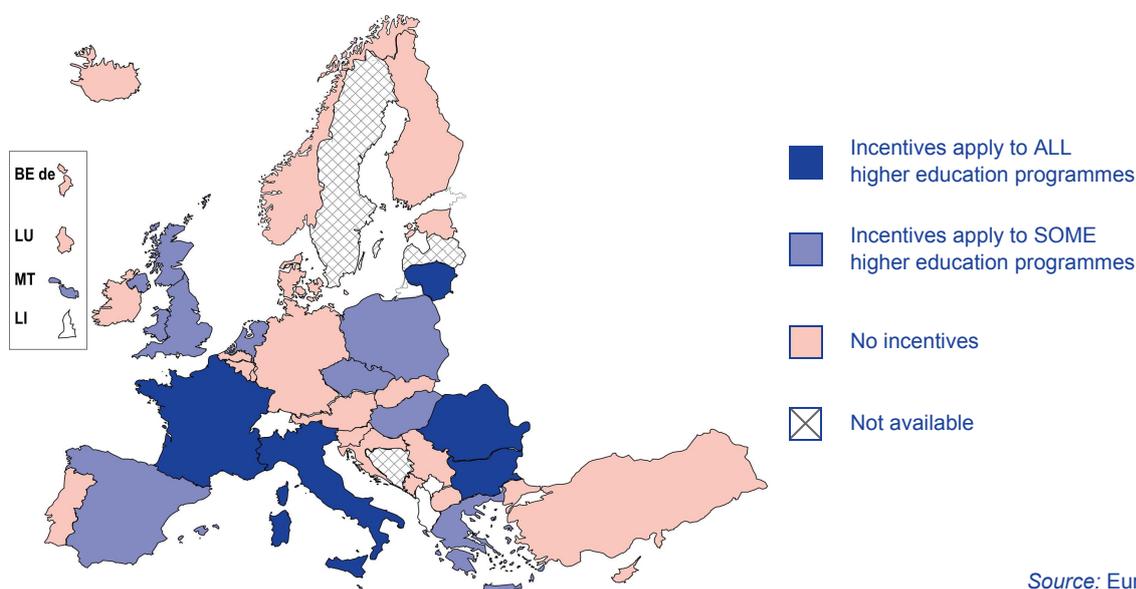
The strongest regulatory approaches require higher education institutions to include work placements in all study programmes. Figure 5.3a shows that there are requirements for work placements in 26 countries for some institutions, and in seven countries for all institutions. For example, in Belgium (German-speaking Community), Estonia and Spain, work placements are regarded as integral parts of all higher education programmes. However, in Estonia, the requirement for a minimum proportion of a programme to be allocated to work placement applies only to professional higher education (15 %). In Lithuania and Romania, all first cycle students are required to undergo practical training. Montenegro has also recently introduced this requirement for all first cycle students and students in professional programmes. In addition, as part of the accreditation process for new study programmes, higher education institutions are obliged to conclude cooperation agreements with businesses to ensure practical training for students.

In the European Union (EU), Directive 2005/36/EC (amended by Directive 2013/55/EC) on the recognition of professional qualifications ([6]) regulates the embedding of practical training into certain, professionally oriented programmes of study (e.g. for medical or pharmaceutical studies). However, in most countries, beyond these regulated professions, higher education institutions are generally free to decide whether to include such structured work experiences in their programmes.

Nevertheless, some countries make the inclusion of work placements compulsory for certain types of institutions. For example, in Denmark, practical training is required at Business Academies and University Colleges for first cycle students. Similar regulations exist in Greece (regarding Technological Educational Institutions), in Austria (regarding *Fachhochschulen* (Universities of Applied Sciences)), in Malta (in the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology) and in Finland (for first cycle Polytechnic degrees). In other countries, practical training is required for certain degree types (e.g. for professionally-oriented and/or short-cycle programmes, as in Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia).

Apart from using a regulatory framework, education authorities in some countries also use financial incentives to encourage institutions to include work placements as part of study programmes by funding the costs of these placements either in full or in part. Figure 5.4b shows that in five countries, there are incentives for all institutions, and in 11 countries for some institutions.

Recent policy developments:

Work placements and on-the-job training have been growing in importance in recent years. The latest developments have taken place in Romania and Montenegro, and plans also exist in Malta to introduce work-based learning in higher education. In addition, France and Lithuania passed laws in 2014 to create better conditions for young people to gain practical work experience.

> In **Italy**, the legislative decree No. 81/2015 (Article 45) regulates higher education level and research apprenticeships leading to university degrees, including research doctorates and higher technical education certificates. This measure is considered useful as it strengthens the links between the training system and work.

> In **Romania**, Law No. 9 adopted on 7 January 2015 (complementing Law 258 of 2007 on the practical placements of students) ensures that organisers of work placements, education units and institutions benefit from additional funds, equivalent to 5 % of the annual allowance for each pupil or student. This funding is provided by the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research for the specialisations in which practical training is a mandatory curriculum requirement.

> In **Montenegro**, under the new Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of Montenegro, 44/2014) adopted in October 2014, practical work experience became compulsory for all first cycle students as well as for students of professionally-oriented programmes. Practical knowledge, skills and competences can be acquired either in an institution's laboratories or workshops or through on-the-job training.

([6])   Directive 2005/36/EC (amended by Directive 2013/55/EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, OJ L 255, 30.9.2005.

5.4. Availability of career guidance to higher education students

Besides practical training, career guidance is another way to provide students with labour-market relevant skills. Career guidance services can help students acquire the job-hunting skills they need to find work. Career guidance is regarded as particularly important for non-traditional learners, especially if it is provided throughout their course of study, not only in their last year(s).

Indicator 4 therefore looks at whether career guidance is available to all home ([7]) students in higher education institutions throughout their course of study. Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to support students in making educational, training and occupational choices and to help them manage their careers (OECD 2004, p. 10). Career guidance is regarded as being *available* if students are able to access the services throughout their course of study (from entering tertiary education until the completion of studies). However, it does not necessarily mean they have used the services. Information on the proportion of students actually using these services is, in fact, limited.

As with previous indicators, requirements and practices may differ between the professional and academic strands of higher education. The same approach will therefore be used: where differences exist, the requirements and practices applying to both strands are considered.

Figure 5.4a shows the availability of career guidance services across Europe. As the figure depicts, career guidance services are available to all students in higher education institutions throughout their course of study in the vast majority of education systems. These services are available only to some students in Latvia and Serbia. In Latvia, in the institutions which have career guidance centres (they do not exist in all higher education institutions) the services are available to all students. In Belgium (German-speaking Community), career guidance services are available only to students in the year before they graduate. There are no career guidance services available in higher education institutions in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Figure 5.4a: Availability of career guidance services within higher education institutions, 2015/16

Services are available within HEIs to ALL students throughout their course of study

Services are available within HEIs to SOME students throughout their course of study

Services only available within HEIs to students in the year before they graduate

No career guidance available in HEIs

Source: Eurydice.
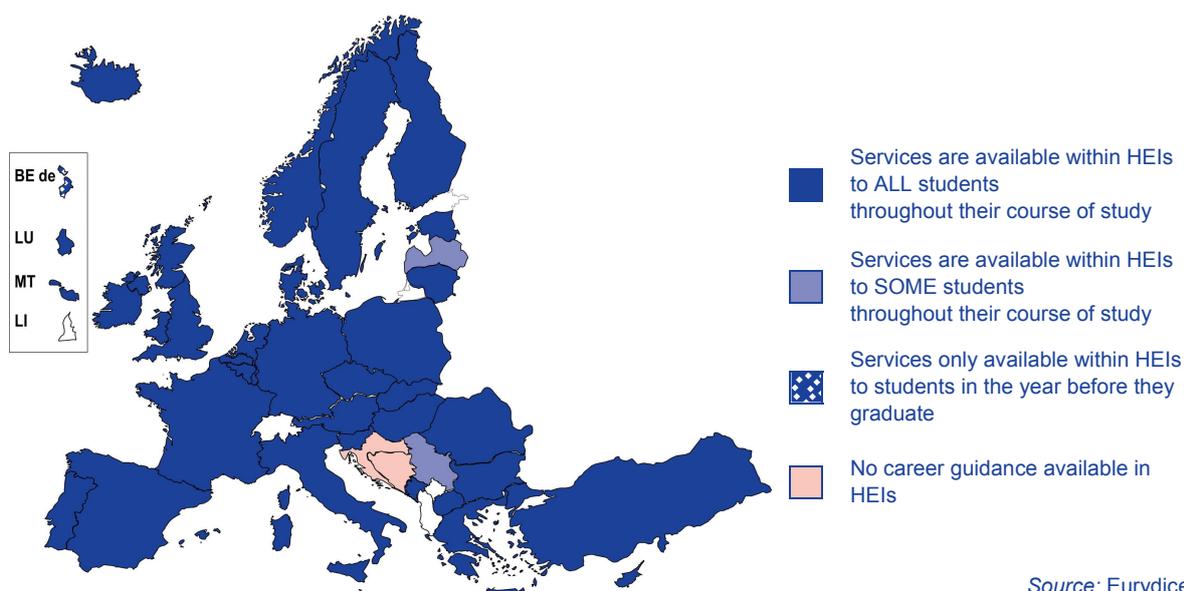
In addition to the career guidance services within higher education institutions, students may also have access to external career services. However, since links between internal and external services are rare, students might find this difficult due to lack of information. External guidance services exist in

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([7]) Home students are students that are either nationals of a country or are treated in the same manner from a legal perspective (e.g. EU citizens studying in another EU Member State).

more than half of all education systems, and in most cases they are, in principle, accessible to all higher education students (see Figure 5.4b). External services are available to some students only in Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania.

Figure 5.4b: Availability of external career guidance services, 2015/16

External services are available to ALL students throughout their course of study

External services only available to SOME students throughout their course of study

No external career guidance services

Not available
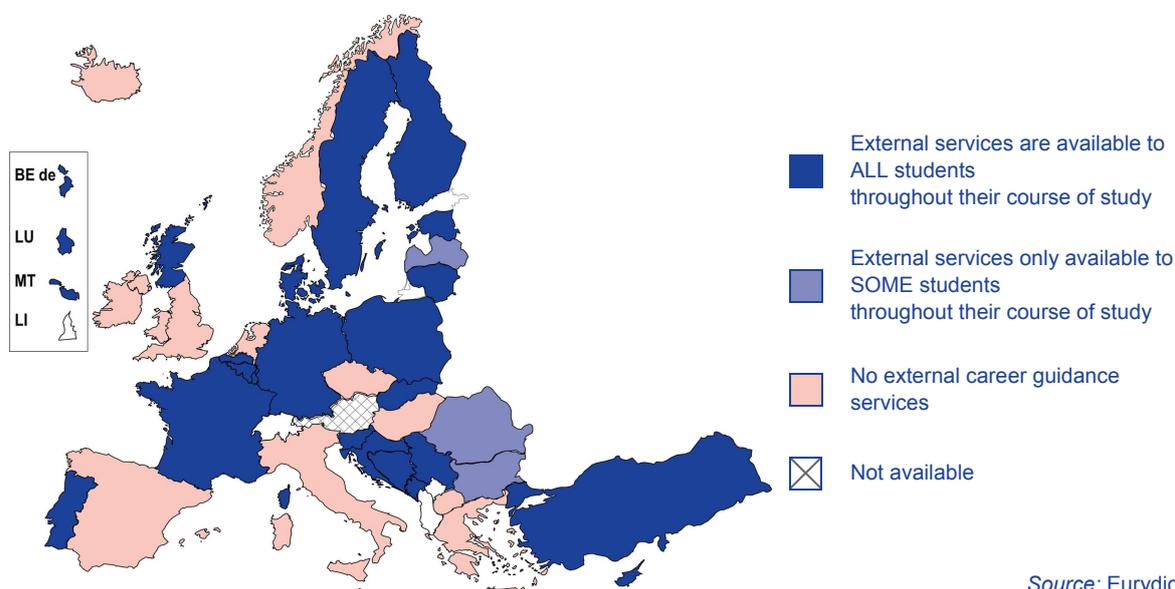
Source: Eurydice.

5.5. Use of regular graduate tracking surveys

Graduate tracking surveys seek to track the employment destinations and early careers of higher education graduates (Schomburg, 2003). Relying on the self-assessment of graduates, these surveys are valuable tools for evaluating graduate employability. They not only provide the means to measure the percentage of graduates finding employment after graduation, but they are also able to describe the quality of jobs, the time it took to find a job, graduates' job satisfaction, and the match between graduates' skills and job requirements (see Teichler, 2011). Furthermore, based on graduate surveys, it is possible to conduct analyses on the relative impact of graduates' individual characteristics and the higher education programme they attended (Ibid.). In this way, these surveys are useful tools for a multi-dimensional evaluation of employability in higher education, particularly when there are established mechanisms by which both education authorities and HEIs can make use of the information gathered. Graduate tracking is also an action in the European Commission's New Skills Agenda, which proposes an initiative on tertiary graduate tracking in 2017 to support Member States in improving information on how graduates progress on the labour market ([8]).

Figure 5.5a shows the nature and availability of graduate tracking surveys across Europe. As the figure depicts, regular graduate surveys are conducted at national and/or regional level in the majority of the education systems covered. In Belgium (French Community) and Lithuania, there are both regular and ad hoc surveys. Only ad hoc graduate surveys take place in six education systems (the Czech Republic, Croatia, Latvia, Malta, Austria and Romania), while only institutional surveys are conducted in nine systems (Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Serbia and Turkey). However, institutional surveys may be widespread and the data may also be used by education authorities. There are no graduate surveys in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

([8]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions: A New Skills Agenda for Europe, COM (2016) 381 final, 10.6.2016.

Figure 5.5a: Types of graduate tracking survey, 2015/16

Regular surveys
at national and/or regional level

Ad hoc surveys
at national and/or regional level

Only institutional surveys

No surveys conducted
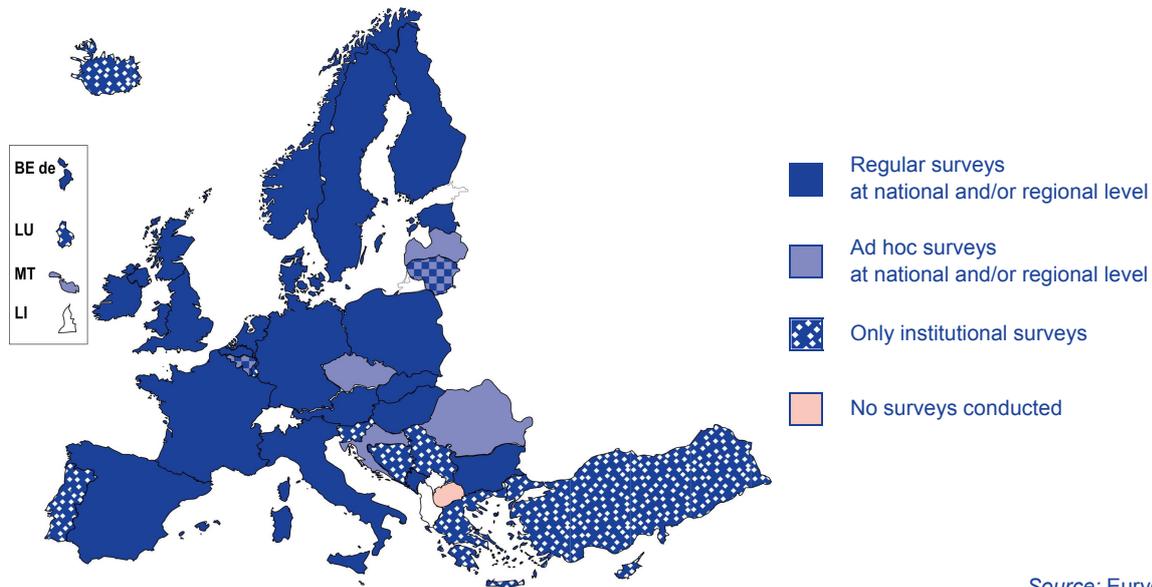
Source: Eurydice.

While graduate tracking surveys are conducted in nearly every country, only 16 education systems make systematic efforts to use the information collected (see Figure 5.5b). Graduate surveys are most often used in quality assurance procedures. Alternatively, graduate surveys can be used to make employability-related information on higher education study programmes accessible to the public. This can inform current and future students on their potential career prospects.

Most systems for graduate tracking have been in place for many years, but one recent development can be reported.

Recent policy developments:

Lithuania started working on the new student tracking tool from 2015/16, and from the 2016/17 school year the new survey, popularly called 'professional qualification mapping', will be carried out regularly.

Figure 5.5b: Use of graduate tracking surveys by educational authorities, 2015/16

Information from graduate surveys
used systematically

Information from graduate surveys
not used systematically

No graduate surveys

Not available

Source: Eurydice.

GLOSSARY

Country codes

EU/EU-28	European Union		**NL**	The Netherlands
BE	Belgium		**AT**	Austria
BE fr	Belgium – French Community		**PL**	Poland
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community		**PT**	Portugal
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community		**RO**	Romania
BG	Bulgaria		**SI**	Slovenia
CZ	Czech Republic		**SK**	Slovakia
DK	Denmark		**FI**	Finland
DE	Germany		**SE**	Sweden
EE	Estonia		**UK**	United Kingdom
IE	Ireland		**UK-ENG**	England
EL	Greece		**UK-WLS**	Wales
ES	Spain		**UK-NIR**	Northern Ireland
FR	France		**UK-SCT**	Scotland
HR	Croatia			
IT	Italy		**EFTA/EEA and Candidate countries**	
CY	Cyprus		**BA**	Bosnia and Herzegovina
LV	Latvia		**ME**	Montenegro
LT	Lithuania		**MK***	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
LU	Luxembourg		**NO**	Norway
HU	Hungary		**RS**	Serbia
MT	Malta		**TR**	Turkey

MK*: ISO code 3166. Provisional code which does not prejudge in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place under the auspices of the United Nations (http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists.htm)

Statistical codes

:   Data not available   (–)   Not applicable

Key definitions

Additional support to schools refers to nationally allocated financial and/or other resources that require additional funding (extra educational staff, special allowances, professional development opportunities, reduced teaching time, scholarships, career advice services, etc.).The central education authorities can allocate these resources to the regional, local or school level directly.

Completion rate indicates the percentage of students who complete the higher education programme they have started.

Compulsory ECEC refers to the obligation for children to attend ECEC settings when they reach a certain age.

Continuing professional development (CPD) refers to in-service, formal and non-formal professional development activities, which may, for example, include subject-based and pedagogical training. In certain cases, these activities may lead to further qualifications.

Disadvantaged students (groups at risk or vulnerable groups) are defined at national level. Possible criteria are socio-economic status, ethnic origin, having a migrant background or others depending on the national context.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC): provision for children from birth through to primary education that is subject to a national regulatory framework, i.e., it must comply with a set of rules, minimum standards and/or undergo accreditation procedures.

Early leaving from education and training (ELET) refers to all forms of leaving education and training before reaching the end of upper secondary level and an equivalent school leaving certificate. This broad definition encompasses countries' own definitions of who in the national context is considered to be an early leaver. It includes, for example, countries who refer to young people who leave (or drop out of) school without completing what is considered in the national context as basic education (usually primary and secondary education), as well as those who define early leavers as young people who leave school without an upper secondary school leaving certificate.

ECEC curriculum as defined in the EC quality framework (European Commission, 2014) covers developmental care, formative interactions, learning experiences and supportive assessment. It promotes young children's personal and social development and their learning as well as lays the foundations for their future life and citizenship. The ECEC curriculum is set out in formal documentation issued by the responsible authorities.

Education and career guidance refers to a service seeking to provide pupils and students with information as well as to develop their decision-making and other skills important for managing their educational and/or career choices. It may also include psycho-social work or counselling to help students, in particular those at risk of early leaving, in their progression through education and training. Education and career guidance may be part of the curriculum (included in official steering documents), offered through a formally established in-school guidance service, and/or provided through an external guidance service, i.e. outside of schools.

Educational guidelines: regulations on ECEC content and teaching approaches, which may be incorporated into legislation as part of an education programme, as a reference framework of skills, care and education plans, educational standards, criteria for developing local curricula or practical guidelines for ECEC practitioners.

ELET data may be collected through student registers, i.e. retrieved automatically from school administration systems based on students' personal data. They can be used for an ad hoc assessment of the scale of early leaving at different public authority levels. Quantitative and qualitative surveys are other tools being used for gathering ELET data, which can contribute to a better understanding of the correlations and reasons for early leaving.

External evaluation of schools is conducted by evaluators who report to a local, regional or central/top level education authority; they are not directly involved in the activities of the school under evaluation. This type of evaluation covers a broad range of school activities, including teaching and learning and/or all aspects of school management. Evaluation which is conducted by specialist evaluators and is concerned solely with specific administrative tasks (related to accounting records, health, safety, archives, etc.) is not regarded as external school evaluation (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015a).

Graduate tracking surveys seek to track the employment destinations and early careers of higher education graduates (Schomburg, 2003). Relying on the self-assessment of graduates, these surveys are valuable tools for evaluating graduate employability. They not only provide the means to measure the percentage of graduates finding employment after graduation, but they are also able to describe the quality of jobs, the time it took to find a job, graduates' job satisfaction, and the match between graduates' skills and job requirements (see Teichler, 2011).

Home learning guidance refers to fostering the child's learning at home, by providing information and ideas to families about how to help their children with curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning. With the aim of boosting children's language development, cognitive development and academic achievement, this is sometimes referred to as the 'home curriculum' (OECD, 2012).

Informal learning means learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Initial teacher education (ITE) comprises both pre-service, general education and professional training. The latter provides prospective teachers with both a theoretical and practical insight into their future profession. In addition to courses in psychology and teaching methods, it usually includes unremunerated in-school placements.

Labour market forecasting involves estimating the expected future number of jobs available in an economy [in the medium or long term] and their particular skill or qualification requirements (demand). Skills needs forecasts are complemented by forecasts of the number of people (supply) with particular skills. The comparison of demand and supply can indicate potential imbalances or skill mismatches in future labour markets (Cedefop 2012, pp. 11-12).

Legal entitlement to ECEC refers to a statutory duty on ECEC providers to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status, require a place for their child.

National testing is defined as 'the national administration of standardised tests and centrally set examinations' (Eurydice, 2009a). These tests are standardised by the national education authorities or, in the case of Belgium, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, by the top-level authorities for education. The procedures for the administration and marking of tests, as well as the setting of content and the interpretation and use of results are decided at central level. National testing is carried out under the authority of a national or centralised body and all examinees take the tests under similar conditions.

Non-formal learning means learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives and learning time), where some form of learning support is present (e.g. from a tutor); it may cover programmes to deliver work skills, adult literacy, and basic education for early school leavers. Very common examples of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT skills, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target groups or the general public.

Language of instruction refers to the main language that is officially used in education at ECEC and school level. It may not be the first or home language for all pupils.

Parenting programmes refer to formal parenting classes to help families establish home environments that support children as learners.

Professional duty means a task described as such in working regulations/contracts/ legislation or other regulations on the teaching profession.

Performance-based funding mechanisms with a social dimension focus enable funding to be provided to higher education institutions if they meet a defined level of performance in relation to social objectives. The performance may refer to people – staff or students – with defined characteristics in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, migrant status, etc.

Policies for increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways have the objective to ensure a smooth transition between education levels (esp. from compulsory to post-compulsory education) or between education pathways (academic, technical or vocational). They generally aim to minimise the risk of early leaving by increasing the study choices as well as the opportunities to change to a different track or programme.

Second chance education is typically defined by the type of participant, usually young people who have left the school system prematurely or who have otherwise disengaged from school. It offers alternative education and/or training pathways leading to a formal qualification and/or preparing young people for employment**.**

Socio-economic status of students is defined as a combined measure of students' or their families' economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analysing a family's socio-economic status, the household income (combined and individual) is examined as well as the education and occupation of earners. Parents' educational attainment is often taken as a proxy measure for socio-economic status.

Systematic monitoring refers to the process of systematic data gathering, analysis and use of data to inform policy. It aims to capture how the higher education system operates and whether it is reaching its objectives and targets. It can take place at various stages: on entry to higher education, during studies (refers to student retention), at graduation (refers to completion rates) and after graduation (refers to graduate destinations – employment or further study). Systematic monitoring must include mechanisms for cross-institutional data gathering and allow cross-institutional data comparability.

Work placement refers to two types of experience in a working environment. Firstly, it is the placement of students in supervised work settings (e.g. through internships) so they can apply the knowledge and skills learned during their studies. Secondly, it refers to a period of voluntary work (also referred to as 'student-community engagement') that is intended to allow students to become familiar with the working environment in general, whilst also conveying some benefit to the community (Bourner and Millican, 2011).

Youth guarantee is an approach to tackling youth unemployment, endorsed by the EU countries in April 2013 ([1]), which ensures that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education and be adapted to each individual need and situation.

([1]) Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee. OJ C 120, 26.4.2013. (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426(01))

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Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe – 2016

This Eurydice report contains more than 30 detailed structural indicators, up-to-date figures, definitions, country notes and a short analysis of recent key policy developments and reforms in five areas: early childhood education and care, achievement in basic skills, early leaving from education and training, higher education and graduate employability.

The report provides background and complementary information on a number of structural indicators examined in the Education and Training Monitor 2016, the annual publication of the European Commission which describes the evolution of Europe's education and training systems based on a wide range of evidence. It follows the progress made by the EU Members States towards achieving the targets set by the Europe 2020 and the Education and Training 2020 reform processes.

Information for the year 2015/16 covers 40 European education and training systems.

The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice.

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