



EU Youth Report 2015





EU Youth Report 2015

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Print:	ISBN 978-92-79-53491-1	doi:10.2766/67156	ISSN 2467-0200	NC-AO-15-001-EN-C
PDF:	ISBN 978-92-79-53490-4	doi:10.2766/272452	ISSN 2467-0219	NC-AO-15-001-EN-N

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016

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Printed in Luxembourg

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Foreword of the European Commission



Who are the 90 million young people in Europe? What are their hopes, their dreams, their views? And what is the EU doing to help them make the transition to adult life, to become active citizens

fully involved in their communities, to find their place in the labour market? The 2015 EU Youth Report provides both a picture of these young people and of youth policies at EU level and in Member States. It presents what EU countries and the European Commission have done to implement the EU Youth Cooperation framework over the past three years, and how this has helped to improve the lives of young people.

Based on shared policy objectives, the EU cooperation framework has given a strong impulse to national youth agendas, reinforced or even prompted a reorientation of youth policy priorities at national and sometimes at regional or local levels. With the support of the Erasmus+ programme, we have focused on employment, inclusion and participation in democratic life - themes which remain among the priorities for the coming years.

The report clearly shows that today's young generation is better educated than any other before it: one third of 30 to 34 year olds in Europe hold a tertiary degree, and 82% of the 20 to 24 year olds have completed upper secondary education. There are also signs that the situation on the job market is improving: between September 2014 and September 2015, youth unemployment decreased by 500 000. But we still need to make a lot more progress on this front.

At the same time, there is a growing 'youth divide': not all young people have access to the opportunities open to their generation, and obstacles tend to accumulate for those who are disadvantaged to start with. The economic crisis and its impact on the labour

market have put large numbers of young Europeans at risk of social exclusion. In fact, the report provides evidence that some young people are increasingly excluded from social and civic life.

Recent tragic events have reminded us that exclusion can lead to radicalisation and even violent extremism. We will therefore have to use all our resources to prevent young people from drifting to the margins of society.

This is why, together with Member States, we have agreed the following priorities for the next three years: 1) increasing social inclusion of all young people, 2) ensuring a stronger participation of all young people in democratic and civic life, and 3) helping young people make an easier transition from education into the labour market.

We must work together to ensure that all young people have fair and equal opportunities. This of course requires efforts across all policy areas, as the report rightly points out. Youth policy cannot deliver alone here. We must seek to cooperate with decision-makers and practitioners in sectors such as employment, health, education, culture and sport. And to support this approach, we must take full advantage of national and regional resources as well as EU funding instruments such as Erasmus+, the European Social Fund or the Youth Employment Initiative.

I would like to thank all Member States and especially the Council of Youth Ministers for their efforts, and for expressing a shared commitment to addressing young people's concerns and interests, as shown in the EU Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018. I also thank the European Youth Forum for its voice in developing EU actions in the youth field and for its input feeding into this reporting exercise.

Tibor Navracsics,
Commissioner for Education,
Culture, Youth and Sport

Foreword of the Luxembourg Presidency



What are the conditions and barriers young Europeans face in the process of becoming full citizens in the European Union? Who are they and which place do they have in our societies in

the early 21st century? What has been achieved and how should youth policies in Europe respond to their challenges during the coming years? Those are some of the questions at the core of this European Youth Report, adopted under the Luxembourg chairmanship by the Council of European Youth Ministers as the 2015 Joint Report of the Council and of the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European Cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018).

Responding to young people's challenges in order to create the best possible opportunities for them to grow up in inclusive, open and democratic societies, these topics of this report have also been guidelines for us during the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union, especially in the youth and education fields. We have invested a lot of energy in the discussion of this European Youth Report as well as into the preparation of the 2016-2018 EU Work Plan for Youth. This Work Plan is a first step for the implementation of the priorities defined in the European Youth Report through concrete actions that the Council of European Youth Ministers will take over during the next years.

The diversity of young people in Europe is very broad, whereas the questions they

face stay very similar. The priorities for future action defined in this report are certainly the central issues for young people in Europe today. Becoming full citizens, getting opportunities to study and integrate the labor market, being included in open and democratic societies that listen to young people and take on board their opinions - those are the big priorities that come out of this report. This is true for all young people, but we must also face the evidence that it is a lot harder for some of them. These groups, whether we call them disadvantaged, with fewer opportunities or at risk of marginalization, force us to take a closer look at how our policies fail to reach all young people to the same extent. We must strengthen our efforts to make them benefit from the policies we develop, especially those groups defined in the report as particularly vulnerable.

Aside from being a common definition of overall political priorities for the 3rd cycle of the implementation of the European Youth Strategy, the report and its statistical materials are an inestimable source of knowledge on the situation of young Europeans today. I sincerely hope and wish that many opportunities will be created to undertake common discussion and understanding of the knowledge contained in this report. It is only through fora for continuous exchange and creation of common understanding that we are able to produce good policies for young people, but also, ultimately, make lively democracies in Europe happen.

Claude Meisch
Minister of Education,
Children and Youth
Luxembourg

**Joint Report of the Council and the
Commission on the implementation
of the renewed framework for European
cooperation in the youth field
(2010-2018)**

Young people's human and social capital is one of Europe's greatest assets for the future. The European Union and its Member States need to invest in the potential that 90 million young Europeans represent in terms of skills, creativity and diversity.

The economic crisis has hit young people particularly hard. It has widened the gap between those with more and those with fewer opportunities. Some young people are increasingly excluded from social and civic life. Worse still, some are at risk of disengagement, marginalisation or even violent radicalisation.

This is why the Commission and the Member States continued working together in the period 2013-2015, to improve young people's employability, their integration in the labour market, their social inclusion and participation. In the face of a growing socio-economic divide, policy must continue tackling the deep social problems that many young people are facing. We need to identify sustainable solutions to fight youth unemployment, strengthen social inclusion and prevent violent radicalisation. This requires more systematic cooperation across a range of policies at EU and Member State level, such as employment, education, training, non-discrimination, social policy, citizenship (including citizenship of the Union) and youth, but also culture, sport and health.

In 2016-2018, the cooperation framework for youth ⁽¹⁾ should aim to empower more and more diverse young people, especially those at risk of exclusion. It should help them find quality jobs and participate in social life. EU funding under the Erasmus+ programme will complement policy cooperation on youth work, voluntary activities and participation in democratic life. Other instruments, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), will provide funding targeted at the inclusion of young people in the labour market and at developing their human capital.

1. Introduction

The EU supports young people's employment, employability and social inclusion, especially under its agenda for jobs, growth and investment, the Europe 2020 strategy and through EU funds such as Erasmus+, ESF and YEI.

Furthermore, the EU supports, coordinates and supplements Member States' actions through a cooperation framework in the youth field in accordance with Articles 6 and 165 of the TFEU. The cooperation framework calls upon the EU and the Member States to:

- create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market; and
- promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

Through actions including evidence gathering, mutual learning and dialogue with youth, the framework supports action in eight fields: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world, and creativity and culture.

This report evaluates progress towards the goals and priorities of the cooperation framework in the period 2013-2015, based on an assessment of young people's situation and policy measures taken at EU and Member State level.

2. Young Europeans today ⁽²⁾

Since 2013, the effects of the crisis continued to resonate strongly on young people. Transitions from child to adulthood have become more complex and individualised, a trend that has risen sharply since

1 Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1-11.

2 For details and data sources underpinning the analysis, see staff working document SWD (2015)169 on the situation of young people in the EU.

2008. These transitions are marked by key changes - from education to work, from being financially dependent to managing one's own budget - and a need to acquire autonomy which exposes young people to fluctuating economic, social and environmental conditions. Policies should accompany young people in this journey and help them realise their full potential.

The data below provide a snapshot of the situation of youth aged 15-29. ⁽³⁾

This generation of young people is better educated than any other ...

Education indicators reveal positive trends. Although considerable divergences across the EU remain, early school leaving is now in decline. ⁽⁴⁾

Higher-education attainment rates improved from 33.8 % in 2010 to 37.9 % in 2014. ⁽⁵⁾ Even if the EU unemployment rate increased for those with tertiary education, it is still much lower than for those with the lowest levels of education. Yet, these groups can also be confronted with under-employment and being overqualified for the opportunities in the labour market.

Many young people build social networks combining global connectivity with local roots: 82 % participated in online social networks in 2014. Young people engage in new forms of political participation, often using social media, but tend to vote less than older generations. Still, many remain active members of their local community; about one in two belonged to at least one organisation in 2014; one in four is a volunteer. ⁽⁶⁾ This differentiated picture of young people's engagement challenges

current understandings of the concept of citizenship.

... but the crisis has created new divisions

Many young people struggle to find quality jobs which seriously hampers their path towards independence. In spite of a decrease in most Member States after its 2013 peak, youth unemployment remains a serious concern: 8.7 million young Europeans cannot find work ⁽⁷⁾ and the proportion facing long-term unemployment or involuntary part-time work remains high.

In total, 13.7 million are neither in employment nor education or training (NEETs). ⁽⁸⁾ Close to 27 million are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Poverty rates are higher for young people than for the overall population and involuntary part-time work or protracted temporary positions expose this generation to a risk of long-term poverty. ⁽⁹⁾

Inactivity, poverty and exclusion do not strike evenly. Those starting life with fewer opportunities tend to accumulate disadvantages. Young people with a migrant background, low educational achievers or young people with health issues are more likely to become NEETs. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Unemployment among native-born youth with immigrant parents is almost 50 % higher than among other young people in the EU. ⁽¹¹⁾

The gap is widening between young people who study, are confident of finding a job and engage in social, civic and cultural life, on the one hand, and those with little hope of leading a fulfilling life and who are at risk of exclusion and marginalisation, on the other hand.

3 Unless otherwise indicated.

4 Eurostat indicator 'early leavers from education and training', from 13.9 % in 2010 to 11.1 % in 2014 for the age group 18-24 (high percentages persist notably in Spain, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Romania).

5 Eurostat, population aged 30-34 with tertiary education attainment.

6 Flash Eurobarometer survey 408, 2014.

7 Eurostat, 2014.

8 Eurostat, 2014.

9 *Rising inequality: youth and poor fall further behind*, OECD, 2014.

10 'NEETs', Eurofound, 2012 and OECD, 2015.

11 *Indicators of immigrant integration - Settling in 2015*, joint OECD and European Commission study.

These divides threaten to undermine the social fabric and sustainable long-term economic growth. ⁽¹²⁾ Europe's ageing population makes integrating all young people (while respecting their diversity) even more necessary and urgent.

Young people on the wrong side of this divide find it difficult to express their political voice. The less educated or less involved they are in social activities, the less they take part in voting, volunteering or cultural activities. ⁽¹³⁾ For instance, NEETs have less trust in public institutions and participate less in social and civic activities than their peers.

No single policy has the solution, but all policies can help

All young people deserve fair and equal opportunities, but this demands long-term investment. In their respective areas of competence, the EU and its Member States need to mobilise all policies that can help improve young people's prospects.

To convert recent signs of recovery into lasting and sustainable growth, the EU has taken action to boost job creation, growth and investment, including efforts to help the young back into quality jobs. The EU and the Member States can build their efforts on the Youth Guarantee, ⁽¹⁴⁾ the European Social Fund and the Investment Plan for Europe.

Jobs are crucial but not always enough to ensure full inclusion. Education and training can provide young people with skills needed in the labour market and help overcome inequalities and promote upward social mobility. The urgent challenge for education and training across the EU is to invest and modernise quickly enough to realise this potential. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Youth policy, operating

outside the classroom, can also help young people acquire the right mix of skills to prepare them for life and work.

Young people should be able to grow up in inclusive and pluralist communities, based on European democratic values, the rule of law and fundamental rights. To safeguard tolerance, diversity and mutual respect, the EU Security Agenda involves action to address the root causes of extremist violence and prevent radicalisation, including by promoting inclusion and participation of young people. ⁽¹⁶⁾ This year's terrorist attacks, starting in Paris and Copenhagen, have brought new urgency to these complex challenges. In a declaration adopted in Paris in March 2015, EU education ministers and the Commission committed themselves to taking further action to preserve European values.

3. EU and Member State action in 2013-2015 ⁽¹⁷⁾

3.1. EU action: employability, inclusion and participation

Action across EU policy areas

Youth employment and employability remained top priorities throughout 2013-2015.

To improve educational outcomes, Member States took action under the European Semester to bring down early school leaving and promote higher-education attainment to reach the Europe 2020 headline targets. Their efforts were underpinned by the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training as well as the Erasmus+ programme. Since 2012, following the

12 *In it together: why less inequality benefits all*, OECD, May 2015.

13 Flash Eurobarometer survey 408, 2014.

14 Council recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1.

15 Education and Training 2020 Joint Report, COM(2015) 408.

16 COM(2015) 185.

17 More details are provided in the staff working document (SWD(2015)168) on the results of the open method of coordination in the youth field; http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.htm.

Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, Member States are starting to introduce measures to allow young people make the most of what they learn outside formal education.

The EU and Member States undertook to reduce youth unemployment by easing transitions from education to work. In 2013, the Youth Guarantee was introduced as a structural framework to offer young people a job, an apprenticeship, traineeship or continued education within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. The ESF and the YEI set aside at least €12.7 billion for youth activation and employment. Around €27 billion of ESF funding will be spent on education measures from 2014 to 2020. Young people will also benefit indirectly from around €11 billion of ESF funding for other initiatives such as modernising employment services or supporting self-employment. Actions under the YEI are expected to foster cooperation across different institutions and services to assist especially NEETs in an integrated way.

Since 2013, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships has drawn support from the private sector, while since 2014 the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships⁽¹⁸⁾ aims to facilitate quality learning and fair working conditions. The Commission improved information for young jobseekers under the EURES system for information-sharing on job offers and launched 'Your first EURES job' to help young people find a job abroad.

Further to the EU Security Agenda and the Paris Declaration, Member States undertook to step up efforts to foster the inclusion and participation in society of all young people. Through actions including the European Youth Week, the Commission

mobilised civil society to work on inclusion, citizenship and intercultural dialogue. All these areas will enjoy greater funding under Erasmus+. These efforts complement the work of the EUfunded Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) which points to the preventive role of education and the teaching of critical thinking and democratic values in tackling radicalisation. In this context, the Commission has been emphasising the importance of encouraging young people to think critically about extremist messages⁽¹⁹⁾ and stressing the potential of Erasmus+ in supporting learning mobility and partnerships between stakeholders, which can ultimately help youth develop resilience to extremist views⁽²⁰⁾.

Specific youth policy actions

EU cooperation focused on social inclusion and youth empowerment, including access to rights and political participation. The Council called for a greater contribution from youth policy to the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy and confirmed its intention to better include NEETs and promote youth entrepreneurship.

Youth work has been high on the EU youth agenda since 2013. A Commission study showed the value of youth work for young people in different aspects of their lives⁽²¹⁾ and in 2015, the Second European Youth Work Convention identified the most urgent challenges and called for a European agenda for youth work.⁽²²⁾ Furthermore, the Council invited the Commission to consider making a proposal for a Council Recommendation on Youth Work, in the light of the results of the relevant studies and work of the expert group.

In light of concerns about young people's withdrawal from traditional forms of

18 OJ C 88, 27.3.2014, p. 1.

19 COM(2013) 941 'Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Strengthening the EU's Response'.

20 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-prevent/index_en.htm

21 Study on *Value of youth work in the EU*, 2014; expert group reports on the creative and innovative potential of young people and quality approaches in youth work.

22 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8491-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

participation, the Commission gathered evidence ⁽²³⁾ that they are still keen to participate, but that they ask for more and *different* channels of participation. The challenge to policy-makers will be to work out how best to respond. The 2015 Council Resolution on encouraging political participation of young people in democratic life in Europe provides a framework to answer this challenge.

From policy to change on the ground: Erasmus+

In 2014, the EU launched the Erasmus+ programme for education, training, youth and sport. With a budget of €14.7 billion for the period to 2020, Erasmus+ supports the learning mobility of four million young people and educators, with 10 % of the budget reserved for youth activities, which fund an estimated 400 000 participants in youth exchanges and 100 000 in the European Voluntary Service (EVS). This represents an 80 % increase in funding as compared with the previous Youth in Action programme.

Erasmus+ better links policy and programme than before. It funds strategic partnerships between education providers, stimulating cross-sectoral cooperation. Youthpass ⁽²⁴⁾ continued to support the recognition of non-formal and informal learning: National Agencies for youth have delivered nearly 250 000 certificates since its inception. To widen the impact of Youthpass, the Council proposed to introduce in other sectors and to support the use of national recognition tools inspired by it.

Widening outreach

Using both online and offline tools, the Commission undertook to better inform young people about the opportunities offered by EU policies and programmes. More importantly, it sought to listen to their views and ideas. With 1.5 million unique visitors in 2014, the European Youth Portal has become the pillar

of these activities, advertising opportunities for crossborder volunteering and connecting to EURES information on job and traineeship offers. In 2015, the Commission collected ideas from young people in 'Ideas Labs' during the European Youth Week, which overall reached 137 000 people in events and 1.2 million via social media.

The Commission will further improve the design and functionality of the European Youth Portal and other online platforms. It will work more closely with networks in direct contact with young people, such as the Eurodesk network with its 1 200 information specialists.

3.2. Action by Member States

Member States increasingly pursue transversal youth policies, with employment, social and civic inclusion as primary concerns. They have taken many measures to integrate young people into the labour market, often as part of Youth Guarantee schemes and backed by EU funds available under the ESF and the YEI. In addition, 18 small scale pilot projects were carried out in 2014 with direct Commission support. All Member States have submitted Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans. Progress on their implementation is assessed within the European Semester. Most Member States involved youth organisations, and two thirds involved youth services in the partnerships set up in the context of the Youth Guarantee.

In response to concerns about the growing social exclusion of young people, nearly all Member States took measures to enhance the inclusion of NEETs. Most undertook to improve young people's access to quality services and 80 % supported youth work and youth centres. However, youth work has suffered from budget cuts across Europe ⁽²⁵⁾, while the growing share of youth at risk of poverty and exclusion increases the demand for intervention.

23 Study on *Youth participation in democratic life*, 2013.

24 Youthpass is a recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning in youth work; it is used for projects funded by the youth part in Erasmus+. <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>.

25 Study on *Value of Youth Work in the EU*, 2014.

As to participation, 27 Member States developed mechanisms for dialogue with young people; 25 provided public support for youth organisations and two thirds promoted the use of online media and provided greater opportunities for debate. Although Member States have sought to involve young people across the socio-economic spectrum, given the persistently lower participation among some groups, policy-makers at all levels can still do more to involve under-represented groups.

4. Governance and implementation of the youth cooperation framework in 2013-2015

Member States' reports on the implementation of the cooperation framework provide a solid basis from which to continue EU youth cooperation. The framework helped advance national youth agendas and cross-sectoral cooperation in support of young people, backed by relevant evidence and exchanges of experience.

To make the framework's implementation more effective, the Commission and Member States could improve the sharing of relevant data and other evidence outside the youth field. At the same time, they could use these as a basis for more output-oriented youth policies. Both should support uptake of youth concerns in other policies. At EU level, mutual learning can be diversified, for example by creating additional opportunities for peer learning tailored to different needs of Member States. The Structured Dialogue with youth should be made more inclusive.

The main activities and instruments are reviewed in detail below.

The framework as an agenda setter

The framework gave a strong impulse to national youth agendas. Nearly all Member

States have introduced initiatives or tools in this field since 2010. In two thirds, the framework reinforced national youth policy priorities and in one third it influenced the local and regional level. 11 Member States reoriented their national youth policy in line with the framework.

The framework encouraged cross-sectoral cooperation. Nearly all Member States have institutionalised mechanisms to ensure a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, such as inter-departmental structures and regular inter-ministerial meetings.

The first Council EU Work Plan for Youth (2014-2015) aimed at boosting the framework's implementation, and most Member States took part in its activities. Twenty-three felt that the Work Plan succeeded in its aim and reflected the national priorities well, but some warned of risks of incoherent or parallel approaches to the nine-year framework.

Evidence-based policy-making: quantitative and qualitative developments

The situation of young people in the EU is measured regularly on the basis of a dashboard of 41 indicators on conditions affecting young people. ⁽²⁶⁾ Member States are increasingly using these indicators, even if this has not yet produced systematic output-oriented youth policies.

The indicators and further evidence from Eurostat, Eurofound and the partnership between the Commission and the Council of Europe, notably through analysis by the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR), will help Member States and the Commission to discern new trends and adapt priorities accordingly.

The Commission and the Member States need to share this evidence - beyond the remit of youth policy - with others working with young people. At EU level, the new youth

monitor ⁽²⁷⁾ provides user-friendly online access to data. As of 2016, a new youth wiki will provide up-to-date information on national policies, legislation and programmes in the youth field. This will be complemented by a new Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee, for which first data will be expected end 2015.

Mutual learning: exchange of experience

Member States have learned from each other, primarily through participating in expert groups. In 2013-2015, experts addressed ways of supporting the creative and innovative potential of young people, the contribution of youth work to young people's challenges in the crisis, and youth-work quality. The findings fed into work in the Council as well as into discussions in the Education, Training and Youth Forum. ⁽²⁸⁾ The 2015 report on quality youth work ⁽²⁹⁾ informed Council conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies ⁽³⁰⁾, which called for a reference and guidance tool on quality for national youth work organisations.

Member States also learned from each other through activities organised in partnership between the Commission and the Council of Europe; smaller groups of Member States organised specific exchanges on matters of common interest, such as local youth work.

To make the most of the various mutual learning activities, the next work plan should include the development of a flexible framework to facilitate access to information and the outcomes of the activities. It should encourage uptake of findings and help match partners with shared interests.

Structured Dialogue: increasing outreach and anchoring dialogue in the policy agenda

The EU Structured Dialogue between policy-makers, young people and their representatives is widely seen as a promising tool for listening to young people. Its first 18-month cycle, which ended in 2011, helped to shape subsequent EU initiatives on youth unemployment. In 2013-2015, the Dialogue addressed social inclusion and youth empowerment and its recommendations have subsequently been addressed in the Council.

The Structured Dialogue has evolved since 2013 and is better anchored in the youth policy agenda. The number of participants has more than doubled and some 40 000 young people responded in the last cycle, many of them on behalf of larger groups. Also, national dialogue processes are taking inspiration and beginning to emerge.

The Structured Dialogue has yet to fulfil its full potential: It still fails to reach a wider group of young people with fewer opportunities and a weaker political voice. The Commission encourages greater outreach through Erasmus+ grants in support of national efforts and an online consultation tool launched in 2014. A further challenge is to monitor the uptake of the Dialogue's results in EU and national policy. Finally, in the interest of accountability and to motivate young people to stay engaged, policy-makers at all levels should provide better feedback on their responses through the European Youth Portal and national working groups. The findings of the 2015 EU Youth Report and of the ongoing interim evaluation of the EU cooperation framework for youth can inspire future improvements of the Structured Dialogue.

27 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/index_en.htm.

28 Council resolution on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015, 20 May 2014.

29 *Quality Youth Work - A common framework for the further development of youth work*, http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf.

30 May 2015.

5. The way forward in EU youth cooperation (2016-2018)

Equal education, job and participatory opportunities in inclusive communities

On the basis of the EU's political priorities, Member States' reports on the implementation of the Framework, data and evidence gathered, the future work cycle of the cooperation framework should prioritise:

- increased social inclusion of all young people, taking into account the underlying European values;
- stronger participation of all young people in democratic and civic life in Europe;
- easier transition of young people from youth to adulthood, in particular the integration into the labour market.

With regard to these priorities, and while Member States and the Commission's action shall be directed towards all young people, particular emphasis shall be given to the following groups:

- Young people at risk of marginalisation
- Young people neither in employment nor education or training (NEET)
- Young people with a migrant background, including newly arrived immigrants and young refugees.

The Commission and Member States will take action in these areas, including through the EU Work Plan for Youth, the framework's instruments and cooperation with other policies as appropriate, to promote:

- social inclusion and outreach practices to reach young people of diverse

backgrounds, especially those suffering from disadvantages, to ensure their full participation in social and civic activities;

- the capacity of youth work, youth organisations and networks to act as forces of inclusion by assisting young people to engage, volunteer and drive positive social change in communities;
- the recognition of quality youth work, building its capacity for outreach and responsiveness to emerging societal, behavioural and technological changes;
- new forms of participation in democratic processes and access to political decision-making through both online and offline tools;
- evolving skills demands, including citizenship, media and digital literacy, critical judgment and intercultural understanding;
- young people's access to their fundamental rights and of the practice of nondiscrimination and intercultural understanding; and
- volunteering, including through EU programmes such as the EVS and the new EU Aid Volunteers Initiative, as a way of combining learning with civic engagement⁽³¹⁾; greater complementarity between national and international actors to scale up cross border volunteering and better link national volunteering with the EVS.

Reflecting these priorities, the EU Structured Dialogue with youth should promote the inclusion of all young people in tolerant, diverse and democratic societies. The next Dialogue must reach a much wider audience of youth groups, especially those that have not engaged in the Dialogue so far, among others by using lighter engagement tools tailored to the needs and habits of young people.

31 At EU level, in spite of doubling the number of beneficiaries under EVS, cross-border volunteering remains modest.

Youth policy within a broader EU agenda

Youth policy cannot work in isolation. Cooperation and complementarity with policies such as employment, education, training, health and well-being, culture, digital media, sustainable development, citizenship and sport is essential.

The cooperation framework can underpin such cooperation through its mechanisms. Through the EU Work Plan, the Commission and Member States can further implement and refine cross-sectorial structures and working methods. This contributes to reaching the overall objectives in the youth field: to create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market and promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

European cooperation in the youth field should be part of a broader political agenda

for young people. To have real impact, policy-makers at EU and Member State level must work together with practitioners, service providers, educators and businesses on the ground to mobilise resources and funds to reach a critical mass of young people. They should aim to deliver innovative solutions to the complex phenomena that are marginalisation, exclusion and lack of participation.

Ultimately, there is an urgent need to scale up efforts. To offer more young people the genuine prospect of becoming full and engaged members of their communities, we need a comprehensive approach to match the challenge ahead. This requires a coherent policy agenda, backed by Erasmus+, the Youth Guarantee and EU funding instruments with greater outreach, such as the ESF or the YEI. National and regional resources must support these efforts where possible.

Results of the open method of coordination in the youth field with a special focus on the second cycle (2013-2015)

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1 Introduction

In 2009, the Council endorsed a **renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)**, also known as the EU Youth Strategy.⁽¹⁾ The period covered by the framework is divided into three-year work cycles. At the end of each cycle, a European Union (EU) Youth Report should be drawn up by the Commission. The Council specified that the report ‘shall consist of two parts: A joint Council-Commission report (political part), and supporting documents (statistical and analytical part). The EU Youth Report will evaluate progress made towards the overall objectives of the framework, as well as progress regarding the priorities defined for the most recent work cycle and identify good practices’. At the same time, the report should serve as a basis for establishing priorities for the following work cycle.

The **analytical part of the report** assesses the state of play at EU and national level, focusing in this instance on the second three-year work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy; relevant information about the previous cycle is also provided. Separate chapters cover all eight ‘fields of action’ of the strategy, looking first at the priorities of the most recent cycle – youth employment, social inclusion and youth participation. One chapter is given over to the ‘Structured Dialogue’ process, which is seen as crucial to youth participation. Another chapter provides details on the EU Youth Strategy’s financial instrument, the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessor Youth in Action.

Each chapter consists of three sections. The first provides an overview of initiatives taken at EU level since 2010, with a focus on the period from 2013 to 2015. The second summarises and assesses the initiatives and action taken at national level; a distinction is made between action deriving from the **2009 Council resolution** on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field and initiatives implementing subsequent Council agreements (resolutions and conclusions). The information presented in this section is based on National Youth Reports submitted by all 28 Member States⁽²⁾ plus Iceland, Serbia and Turkey. These reports were drawn up in response to a comprehensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the EU Youth Strategy and can be downloaded from the Commission website.⁽³⁾ Finally, considering the framework’s invitation to encourage and support the involvement and participation of young people and youth organisations in policy-making, implementation and follow-up, the third section reports on youth-led initiatives and action by the European Youth Forum⁽⁴⁾ (YFJ). The YFJ, which – together with the Commission – is the only EU-level stakeholder in the European Steering Committee of the Structured Dialogue, brings together 99 national youth councils⁽⁵⁾ and international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe. In the Erasmus+ regulation⁽⁶⁾ the YFJ is invited to provide the Commission with regular, updated information regarding its fields of activity.

1 Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1-11.

2 Separate contributions were submitted by the three Communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EEA EFTA States were also invited to submit National Youth Reports.

3 <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/publication/EUyouthreport2015part1>, <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/publication/EUyouthreport2015part2>.

The National Youth Reports cover mainly the period from 2010 until the end of 2014 and include a preview of planned activities for 2015, as the questionnaire had to be returned by early 2015.

4 <http://www.youthforum.org/>

5 National youth councils represent youth organisations at national level and therefore act in the interests of young people in order to voice their concerns to policy-makers.

2 General overview of youth policy

2.1. Evidence-based youth policy

The EU Youth Strategy stresses the importance of evidence as a basis for policy-making. This EU Youth Report was drawn up around a framework for reporting and monitoring of youth data, research and policy activities.

Definitions of young people vary between countries. The age range 15-29 is often selected for statistical purposes at EU level.⁽⁷⁾ The situation of young people is measured through a dashboard of EU youth indicators⁽⁸⁾ developed in 2011. There are now 41 indicators in all eight fields of action of the strategy. The latest available data for these indicators can be found in a specific subsection on youth on the Eurostat website.⁽⁹⁾ In addition, the Commission conducted Flash Eurobarometer surveys on youth in 2011, 2013 and 2014. Data collected on those occasions further contributed to the dashboard of indicators and can now be consulted through the recently developed EU Youth Monitor.⁽¹⁰⁾

The evidence base was further enriched by findings from studies on youth participation in democratic life and on the value

of youth work in the European Union. Eurofound – which has prioritised youth in its recent research activities⁽¹¹⁾ – is another source of knowledge. In its evidence-based approach to youth policy the Commission also works in partnership with the Council of Europe,⁽¹²⁾ managing the Pool of European Youth Researchers and the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency provides additional help in monitoring data and statistics in the youth field and is assisting the Commission in the current development of a youth wiki tool. The agency also prepared the statistical part of this EU Youth Report.

The Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (FP7) supported 20 European, large-scale, multi-stakeholder research projects with a contribution of about €63 million. ‘The young generation in an innovative, inclusive and sustainable Europe’ was addressed in a call for proposals under Horizon 2020⁽¹³⁾ (Societal Challenge 6, Work Programme 2014-2015). The call covered five different research topics – job insecurity, mobility, lifelong learning, participation and engagement (for an indicative budget of €29

6 Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing ‘Erasmus+’: the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50-73.

7 Under the Erasmus+ programme, various opportunities are available for young people aged 13 to 30.

8 SEC(2011) 401 final of 25.3.2011.

9 <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/data/database>

10 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/dashboard/index_en.htm

11 <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/spotlight-on/youth/overview-youth-issues-a-top-priority>

12 <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home>

13 Horizon 2020 is the EU’s research and innovation programme (2014-2020). FP7 was the funding programme for 2007-2013.

million). Eight new research projects ⁽¹⁴⁾ started in 2015.

2.2. Legal framework and national youth policy environment

This section provides a general overview of how Member States and participating non-EU countries structure their youth policy in terms of legislation, policy strategies and interministerial cooperation. It also looks at how these countries perceive the impact of the EU Youth Strategy at the national and local levels as well as other linkages between youth policy at national and EU level.

2.2.1. Youth laws or national legislation on youth

Most countries report that during the period 2010-2014 they maintained or introduced legislation that specifically refers to youth issues or contains a section which addresses the needs and/or rights of young people.

However, these legal acts can differ in scope: many of them have to do with youth work activities (Flemish and German-speaking Communities of **Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Austria, Slovakia, Finland**); some are more related to education (**France**); and others are more focused on youth participation (**Cyprus, Croatia, Luxembourg**)

Table 1: Overview of youth laws or national legislation on youth ⁽¹⁵⁾

Youth law or national legislation on youth	
Belgium	German-speaking Community: <i>Dekret vom 6. Dezember 2011 zur Förderung der Jugendarbeit</i> (Decree of 6 December 2011 regulating the funding of youth work http://www.dglive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-111/418_read-38242/); <i>Sonderdekret zur Gründung eines Zentrums für die gesunde Entwicklung von Kindern und Jugendlichen vom 20. Januar 2014</i> (Special decree of 20 January 2014 on the establishment of the centre for the healthy development of children and young people) http://www.dglive.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-107/4314_read-43515/) Flemish Community: <i>Decreet van 20 januari 2012 houdende een vernieuwd jeugd- en kinderrechtenbeleid</i> (Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children's rights) French Community: no youth law
Bulgaria	Decision of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria for adoption of the Youth Law (from 5 April 2012, prom. SG. 31/20 April 2012, effective as from 20 April 2012, amend. SG. 68/02 August 2013, effective as of 2 August 2013) www.mpes.government.bg http://mpes.government.bg/Pages/Documents/Law/default.aspx
Czech Republic	No youth law
Denmark	No youth law
Germany	<i>Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) – Achtes Buch (VIII) – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe vom 26.6.1990 in der aktuellen Fassung von Mai 2013</i> (Social Code, Book VIII – Child and Youth Welfare Act – Article 1 of the Act of 26 June 1990 – current version of May 2013) https://www.juris.de/purl/gesetze/_ges/SGB_8
Estonia	<i>Noorsootöö seadus</i> (Youth Work Act) https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/512012015003/consolide

14 Details about the FP7 and Horizon 2020 research projects can be found in: European Commission (2015), *Their future is our future – Youth as actors of change. Research projects on youth inclusion, employment and participation supported by the European Union's Research Framework Programmes*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

15 Roman alphabetical order of the countries' geographical names in the original language(s).

Youth law or national legislation on youth	
Ireland	Youth Work Act 2001 http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2001/en/act/pub/0042/
Greece	Laws on youth issues are stipulated and incorporated in the legislation of various Ministries concerning the following policy areas: education, employment, sports, health, culture, family, military service, deviant behaviour, etc. such as for instance: Νόμος 2413/1996 για τη Διαπολιτισμική Εκπαίδευση (Law 2413/1996 on intercultural education https://nomoi.info/%CE%A6%CE%95%CE%9A-%CE%91-124-1996-%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%BB-1.html Νόμος 4027/2011 για την ελληνόγλωσση εκπαίδευση στο εξωτερικό και άλλες διατάξεις (Law 4027/2011 on greek language education abroad and other provisions) https://nomoi.info/%CE%A6%CE%95%CE%9A-%CE%91-233-2011-%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%BB-1.html Νόμος 3443/2006 για τα ΤΟ.ΣΥ.Ν. (Law 3443/2006 on Local Youth Councils) http://www.neagenia.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp?cpage=RESOURCE&crest=134&cnode=29 Νόμος 4115/2013 για την οργάνωση και λειτουργία του Ιδρύματος Νεολαίας και Διά Βίου Μάθησης (INEDIBIM) και του Εθνικού Οργανισμού Πιστοποίησης Προσόντων και Επαγγελματικού Προσανατολισμού (Law 4115/2013 concerning the organisation and functioning of the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation and the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance) http://www.edulll.gr/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/NOMOS_4115_INEDIBIM_EOPPEP.pdf Σχέδιο Δράσης για την ενίσχυση της απασχόλησης και της επιχειρηματικότητας των νέων (Action Plan for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship) https://www.espa.gr/elibrary/Youth%20Action%20Plan%20el.doc http://www.esfhellas.gr/en/Pages/YouthActionPlan.aspx (in English)
Spain	There is no specific legislation on youth at national level neither is it expected. The competences in this field have been transferred to the Autonomous Communities (hereinafter called CCAAs). These laws exist in 11 out of the 17 CCAAs. The existing youth regional laws and their dates of enactment are listed below: Castilla y León: Youth Regional Law 11/2002 of 10 July. Madrid: Youth Regional Law 8/2002 of 27 November. La Rioja: Youth Regional Law 7/2005 of 30 June. Islas Baleares: Integral Law of Youth 10/2006 of 27 July Aragón: Youth Regional Law 3/2007 of 21 March Murcia: Youth Regional Law 6/2007 of 4 April Government of Canarias: Youth Regional Law 7/2007 of 13 April Cataluña: Youth policies Law 33/2010 of 1 October Autonomous Community of Valencia: Youth Regional Law of 30 December Navarra: Youth Regional Law 11/2011 of 1 April Galicia: Youth Regional Law 6/2012 of 19 June.
France	<i>Loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'Ecole de la République du 8 juillet 2013</i> http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027677984&categorieLien=id
Croatia	<i>Zakon o savjetima mladih – Narodne novine broj 23/07</i> (Law on Youth Advisory Boards – Official Gazzete 23/07) adopted in 2007 http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/297305.html <i>Zakon o savjetima mladih – Narodne novine broj 41/14</i> (Law on Youth Advisory Boards – Official Gazzete 41/14) adopted in 2014 http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2014_03_41_724.html
Italy	No youth law
Cyprus	No youth law
Latvia	<i>Jaunatnes likums</i> (Youth Law) http://izm.izm.gov.lv/laws-regulations/3903.html

Youth law or national legislation on youth	
Lithuania	<p>2003 m. gruodžio 4 d. Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas, Nr. IX-1871 (įsigaliojo 2003 m. gruodžio 18 d.) (Valstybės žinios, 2003, Nr. 119-5406)</p> <p>Law on Youth Policy Framework of the Republic of Lithuania, 4 December 2003, No IX-1871 (in force from 18 December 2003) (Official Gazette, 2003, No 119-5406)</p> <p>http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_p?p_id=267613</p>
Luxembourg	<p>Loi du 4 juillet 2008 sur la Jeunesse (Youth Law introduced on 4 July 2008) – A draft law amending the Youth Law of 4 July 2008 is within the legislative process, possible adoption in 2015</p> <p>www.chd.lu/wps/PA_RoleEtendu/FTSByteServletImpl?path=/export/exped/sexpdata/Mag/195/016/109145.pdf</p>
Hungary	<p>There is no single youth law.</p> <p>1995. évi LXIV. törvény a Gyermekek és Ifjúsági Alapról, a Nemzeti Gyermekek és Ifjúsági Közalapítványról, valamint az ifjúsággal összefüggő egyes állami feladatok ellátásának szervezeti rendjéről (The 1995th LXIV. law Children and Youth Fund, National Children and Youth Public Foundation and the state's responsibilities for particular youth related tasks) 2/1999. (IX. 24.)</p> <p>ISM rendelet a Gyermekek és Ifjúsági Alaprogram és a Regionális Ifjúsági Irodák működéséről (Regulation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports 2/1999 (IX.24.) Functioning of the National Children and Youth Fund and the Regional Youth Services)</p>
Malta	<p>Aġenzija Żgħażaġh (Establishment as an Agency) Order, 2010</p> <p>http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=21605&l=1</p>
Netherlands	<p>Jeugdwet (Youth Law)</p> <p>http://www.voordejeugd.nl/ondersteuning/downloads/factsheets</p>
Austria	Federal Act governing the promotion of extracurricular youth education and youth work (Federal Youth Promotion Act)
Poland	No youth law
Portugal	No youth law
Romania	No youth law
Slovenia	<p>Public Interest in Youth Sector Act</p> <p>http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZJIMS_ENG.pdf</p> <p>Youth Councils Act</p> <p>http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZMS-NPB1__ANG.pdf</p>
Slovakia	Zákon č. 282/2008 Z. z. o podpore práce s mládežou (Act No 282/2008 Coll. on support of youth work)
Finland	<p>Nuorisolaki (Youth Act) (72/2006), amendments 693/2010 and 937/2013</p> <p>http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2006/20060072</p> <p>In English: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Nuoriso/lait_ja_saaeadoekset/Youth_act_Nuorisolaki_amend_2010_en.pdf,</p> <p>Valtioneuvoston asetus nuorisotyöstä ja –politiikasta (Government Decree on Youth Work and Policy) (103/2006)</p> <p>http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/smur/2006/20060103</p> <p>In English: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisopolitiikka/liitteet/Valtioneuvoston_asetus_en.pdf</p> <p>Several other laws refer to youth issues and address the needs and rights of young people, e.g. Lastensuojelulaki (Child Welfare Act) (417/2007), Perusopetuslaki (Basic Education Act) (642/2010)</p>
Sweden	No youth law
United Kingdom	<p>There is a range of legislation relating to youth that exists in the UK. For example in Wales: The Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure (2011).</p> <p>For more examples of youth laws introduced before January 2010 and maintained please see UK contribution to 2012 EU Youth Report: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/report_en.htm</p>
Iceland	<p>Youth law</p> <p>http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf/youth_act70_2007.pdf</p>
Serbia	<p>Zakon o mladima, 'Sluzbeni glasnik RS' broj 50/11 (Law on Youth, Official Gazette of the RS, no 50/11)</p> <p>http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf</p>
Turkey	<p>The Ministry of Youth and Sports was established by the Decree Law No 638 dated 3 June 2011 (published in the Official Gazette No 27958 dated 8 June 2011)</p> <p>http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Aspx?MevzuatKod=4.5.638&MevzuatIlski=0&sourceXmlSearch=</p>

and/or youth well-being (**Germany, Spain, Latvia, Wales in the United Kingdom**).

Half of the reporting countries mention the existence of a cross-sectoral dimension in the implementation of these laws.

2.2.2. National youth strategies

The vast majority of reports (31 out of 33) mention the existence of a specific youth strategy; this trend already present in 2012 is clearly confirmed for 2015. Only **Cyprus**

and **Greece** declare that they do not have a youth strategy. **Poland** used to have one until 2012 but has since then opted for a horizontal approach to issues related to education and youth.

Some of the youth strategies are new (German-speaking Community of **Belgium, Romania**) or still in the making (**Ireland and Malta** within the EU, **Iceland and Serbia** outside the EU). In 80% of the cases mentioned, youth strategies were developed after 2010, and the more recent ones tend to have a greater cross-sectoral emphasis.

Table 2: Overview of youth strategies

National youth strategies	
Belgium	German-speaking Community: <i>Jugendstrategieplan</i> (Youth Strategy Plan) 2013-2015 (effective) and 2016-2020 adopted by the Parliament of the German-speaking Community on 26 January 2015 French Community: <i>Plan Jeunesse 12-25 ans</i> (Youth Plan 12-25) www.plan12-25.be – project in stand-by Flemish Community: <i>Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan 2011-2014</i> (Flemish Youth Policy Plan 2011-2014) http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/vjkb.aspx
Bulgaria	Council of Ministers' Decision of 6 October 2010 for the adoption of National Youth Strategy (2010-2020) www.mpes.government.bg
Czech Republic	<i>Koncepce podpory mládeže na období 2014-2020</i> (National Youth Strategy for 2014-2020) adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic, Decree No 342 of 12 May 2014 http://www.msmt.cz/file/33599/ <i>Koncepce státní politiky pro oblast dětí a mládeže na období 2007-2013</i> (Government policy on children and young people for 2007-2013) adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic, Decree No 611 of 4 June 2007 http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/zakladni-vzdelavani/koncepce-statni-politiky-pro-oblast-deti-a-mladeze-na-obdobi
Denmark	Youth Package 1 + 2, Youth Package 3 (2012-2016) – also local youth strategies with general focus on young people's well-being and early intervention.
Germany	<i>Entwicklung einer Eigenständigen Jugendpolitik, Phase I</i> (ab 1.10.2011) (Development of a modern Youth Policy) http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Kinder-und-Jugend/eigenstaendige-jugendpolitik.html <i>Phase II</i> (ab 30.10.2014): <i>Umsetzung der Eigenständigen Jugendpolitik „Handeln für eine jugendgerechte Gesellschaft“</i> (Implementation of the modern Youth Policy 'Acting for a child- and youth-friendly society')
Estonia	<i>Noorsootöö strateegia 2006-2013</i> (Estonian Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013) http://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/noorsootoo_strateegia_eng.pdf
Ireland	Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020 http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf The Government, in partnership with stakeholders, is developing a National Youth Strategy for 2015-2020 which will have its basis in the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People.
Greece	No youth strategy as such
Spain	Youth Strategy 2020 – approved by the Spanish Government on 12 September 2014
France	<i>Plan priorité jeunesse</i> (Youth Priority Plan) www.jeunes.gouv.fr

National youth strategies	
Croatia	<i>Nacionalni program za mlade za razdoblje od 2014. do 2017.</i> (National Youth Programme 2014-2017) http://www.mspm.hr/novosti/vijesti/nacionalni_program_za_mlade_za_razdoblje_od_2014_do_2017_godine Former programmes: <i>Nacionalni program djelovanja za mlade od 2003. do 2008. godine</i> (National Programme of Action for Youth 2003-2008); <i>Nacionalni program za mlade od 2009. do 2013. godine</i> (National Youth Programme 2009-2013)
Italy	<i>Diritto al futuro</i> (Right to the future) http://www.diamoglifuturo.it/
Cyprus	No youth strategy as such
Latvia	<i>Jaunatnes politikas pamatnostādnes 2009. - 2018.gadam</i> (Youth Policy Guidelines for 2009-2018) http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=2994
Lithuania	Order No A1-660 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 December 2013 'On the Approval of the Action Plan 2014-2016 for the Implementation of the National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011-2019' The Action Plan of Strengthening Regional Youth Policy for 2015-2017 was approved by the Order of Minister of Social Security and Labour on 9 January 2015 No A1-11 <i>Dėl Regioninės jaunimo politikos stiprinimo 2015-2017 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo</i> (Due to the Approval of the Action Plan of Strengthening Regional Youth Policy for 2015-2017)
Luxembourg	<i>Pacte pour la Jeunesse 2012-2014</i> (2012-2014 Youth Pact) www.jugendpakt.lu
Hungary	National Youth Strategy – adopted by the Hungarian National Assembly in 2009 (88/2009) Action plan for 2014-2015 – adopted by the Government in 2014. (1847/2014 (XII.30.))
Malta	National Youth Policy 2010-2013 http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijasghazagh/downloads/0662_001.pdf A Shared Vision for the Future of Young People. Draft National Youth Policy Framework 2015-2020 http://cdn02.abakushost.com/agenzijasghazagh/downloads/Draft_National_Youth_Policy_Framework_2015-2020_Discussion_Document.pdf
Netherlands	<i>Beleidsbrief 'Geen kind buiten spel'</i> (No child excluded) http://www.voordejeugd.nl/ondersteuning/downloads/communicatie-met-de-tweede-kamer
Austria	Austrian Youth Strategy introduced in 2012 http://www.bmfj.gv.at/ministerium/jugendstrategie/dokumentation-jugendstrategie/publikationen.html
Poland	A specific Youth Strategy was in force between 2003 and 2013 Report on Youth 2011 http://zds.kprm.gov.pl/sites/default/files/youth_2011_internet.pdf Currently, the system of development strategies includes 9 integrated strategies and 2 principal documents, defining the medium- and long-term development strategy of the country. The integrated strategies are thematically related to key policy areas of the Government. None of those documents is devoted to a particular social group. Issues related to education and youth are included in a horizontal manner in all these documents.
Portugal	Laws on IPDJ: Dec lei 98/2011 21 sept; Dec lei 132/2014 3 sept 11/2012 11jan; <i>Livro Branco</i> (White Paper on Youth): Resolução 11/2013 youth organisations laws Dec lei 23/2006 23 jun and dec lei 40/2006 24 aug <i>Livro Branco da Juventude</i> (White Paper on Youth) was developed between 2012 and 2014 and is to be published in 2015. Young people and representative structures have been consulted to draw up a document at national level to define a global strategy and an action plan in the youth field. http://microsites.juventude.gov.pt/Portal/LBJ/OQueE/
Romania	National Strategy for Youth Policy 2015-2020
Slovenia	Resolution on the National Programme for Youth – adopted in 2013
Slovakia	<i>Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre mládež na roky 2014-2020.</i> (Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014-2020) http://www.rokovania.sk/File.aspx/ViewDocumentHtml/Mater-Dokum-164154?prefixFile=m_
Sweden	<i>Med fokus på unga – en politik för goda levnadsvillkor, makt och inflytande</i> (Focus on young people – a policy for good living conditions, power and influence) (new bill) http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/236143

National youth strategies	
Finland	<p><i>Lapsi- ja nuorisopolitiikan kehittämissuunnitelma 2012-2015</i> (Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012-2015) http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/OKM8.pdf?lang=en</p> <p><i>Lapsi- ja nuorisopolitiikan kehittämissuunnitelma 2007-2011</i> (The Finnish Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme 2007-2011) http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2008/liitteet/opm21.pdf?lang=fi</p>
United Kingdom	<p>England: Positive for Youth www.education.gov.uk/positiveforyouth</p> <p>Northern Ireland: Priorities for Youth – Improving Young People's Lives through Youth Work (October 2013) http://www.deni.gov.uk/19-priorities-for-youth.htm</p> <p>Scotland: Our Ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/communitylearninganddevelopment/youngpeople/youthwork/strategy/index.asp</p> <p>Wales: The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youthengagement/?lang=en</p>
Iceland	Youth strategy in preparation
Serbia	<p><i>Nacionalna strategija za mlade</i>, „Official Gazette of the RS, no. 55/08 Akcioni plan za sprovođenje Nacionalne strategije za mlade za period od 2009. do 2014. godine, “Official Gazette of the RS, no. 7/09”</p> <p>The Republic of Serbia adopted the first National Youth Strategy in 2008 and one year later an Action plan for its implementation for the period 2009-2014. http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Serbia_National_Youth_Strategy.pdf http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Action%20plan%20of%20the%20National%20Youth%20Strategy.pdf</p> <p>In accordance with the Law on Youth (Article 11), the process of drafting a new National Strategy was launched in mid-2014. The new strategy shall cover the period of 10 years (2015-2025). It is expected to be adopted during February 2015. The three-year Action plan for its implementation will be endorsed during March 2015.</p>
Turkey	<p>National Youth and Sports Policy Paper published in January 2013 http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/main.aspx?home=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/01/20130127.htm&main=http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/01/20130127.htm</p> <p>Ministry of Youth and Sports Strategic Plan 2013-2017 http://dergi.gsb.gov.tr/2013-2017-GSB-STRATEJIK-PLAN/</p> <p>10th Development Plan published in July 2013 (section on 'Child and Youth') http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Yaynlar/Attachments/518/Onuncu%20Kalk%C4%B1nma%20Plan%C4%B1.pdf</p>

2.2.3. Youth work

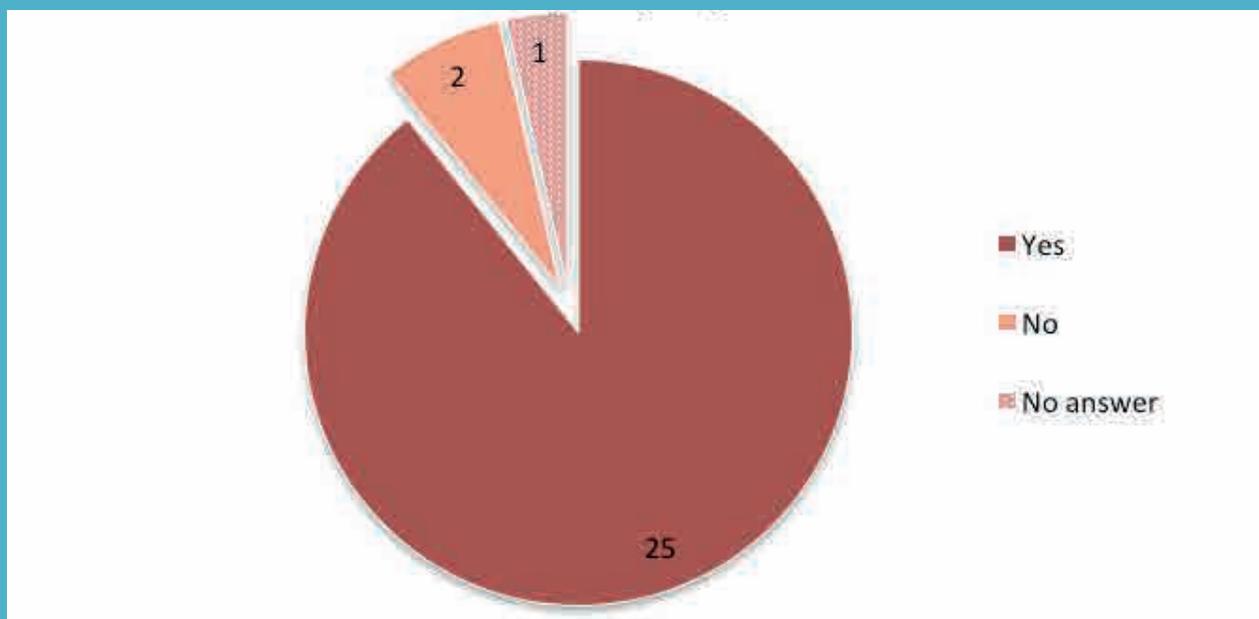
Most countries refer to particular strands or aspects of their youth strategies or laws addressing the role of youth work. Many mention their funding in favour of youth work (the three Communities of **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic**, **Slovenia**). Other countries, for instance **Malta** and **Portugal**, stress the regulation of the youth work profession in their country.

There are, however, some exceptions which highlight specific youth work strategies, especially at regional or local level. In Wales (**United Kingdom**), a national youth work strategy was launched in February 2014, setting out how youth work can support the Welsh Government's priorities of narrowing

the gap in educational achievement and reducing the number of young people who are not engaged in employment, education or training (NEETs). In **Latvia**, local governments develop their own youth work strategy, and it is expected that youth work strategies will be in place for all local governments at the latest in 2015 (and maintained till 2018). **Germany** underlines the work done on the national implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, as well as its efforts to do so at local level – e.g. the framework concept for youth work of the city of Bremen.⁽¹⁶⁾

Here again, the activities developed since 2010 are generally based more on cross-sectoral cooperation than before.

Figure 1 Number of Member States having established an institutionalised mechanism to ensure a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy



2.2.4. Institutional mechanisms aimed at cross-sectoral youth policy

It seems that only two countries, **Cyprus** and **Denmark**, do not have an institutional mechanism for ensuring a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, but some countries have several. In total, 35 cross-sectoral tools are known to exist, half of which were already in place before 2010.

Most of the countries have set up interdepartmental working groups or committees, many of which are connected with youth strategies and are aimed at implementing these through a cross-sectoral approach. They meet mostly at technical level, sometimes coupled with meetings at ministerial level.

Spain – Interministerial youth committee

This interministerial committee meets at least twice a year under the presidency of the Minister of Health, Social Policy and Equality. The General Director of the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) is the vice-President, and each Ministry is represented by a member with the status of General Director.

Its aims are:

- to propose youth policy programmes to the Government that highlight the economic, social, political and cultural factors affecting young people's inclusion into active social life;
- to study youth problems and propose programmes and measures to resolve them;
- to coordinate proceedings between different ministerial departments, especially on youth-related issues.

This committee approved the Spanish Youth Strategy 2020 in September 2014.

2.2.5. Linkages between youth policy and youth research

Institutionalised and regular cooperation between the ministry responsible for youth and the youth research community is common practice in around two thirds of the countries. The **Spanish** Youth Institute INJUVE has developed a research programme whose most important study is the Spanish youth report produced every four years. In **Finland**, the Finnish Youth Research Society and Finnish Youth Research Network are very active. Once per legislative period, the Federal Minister responsible for Youth in **Austria** has to report on the situation of young people. Upon request by the

Bulgarian Ministry of Youth and Sports, sociological studies on 'Identifying the effect of youth policies on young people in the country' are carried out in order to analyse the situation of young people and prepare annual youth reports. In **Croatia**, cooperation with representatives of the research community takes place within the youth advisory board of the Government.

When such cooperation between youth policy and youth research exists, it includes the following actors:

Table 3: Cooperation between youth policy and youth research – actors involved

	Youth institutes	Universities	Research centres	Other
Belgium – Flemish Community	●	●	●	
Bulgaria			●	●
Czech Republic	●	●	●	
Germany	●	●	●	
Estonia		●	●	
Ireland		●		
Greece	●		●	
Spain	●	●	●	●
France	●			
Croatia				●
Italy		●	●	
Lithuania		●		●
Luxembourg		●		
Hungary	●		●	
Malta		●		
Netherlands	●	●	●	
Austria	●	●	●	●
Portugal		●		
Romania	●		●	
Slovakia		●	●	
Slovenia		●	●	●
Finland		●	●	●
United Kingdom	●	●	●	
Iceland		●	●	
Turkey	●	●	●	

Slovenia – Cooperation with the Educational Institute

The Office for Youth has supported and promoted cross-disciplinary research relating to young people and their living conditions for a long time.

In 2014, the office strengthened its cooperation with the Educational Institute with the aim of developing knowledge on youth, the youth sector and youth policies in Slovenia.

Concrete measures to be implemented in 2015 are:

- establishing a platform for monitoring of the National Programme for Youth along the lines of ‘children’s observatory’ (development and monitoring of indicators);
- setting up a national database for monitoring youth policy in Slovenia;
- strengthening cooperation with the existing knowledge network at EU level.

2.2.6. Budgetary allocation for youth

It is difficult to provide estimates on a general budget for youth; some countries have nevertheless succeeded in presenting relevant data.

Table 4: Overview of budgetary allocation for youth

	National budget for the youth field	National budget for youth in general	EU budget for the youth field ⁽¹⁷⁾	EU budget for youth in general
Belgium – German-speaking Community	€1 695 000	Overall budget for education, employment and VET €104 828 000. There also were €4 580 000 youth care.	Management costs of Youth in Action Agency: €28 217. Eurodesk Agency: €6 102	
Belgium – Flemish Community	€71 085 000			
Belgium – French Community	Estimate 2013 for the Wallonia-Brussels Federation: €47 615 000			
Bulgaria	The funds spent by the specialised administration in the Ministry of Youth and Sports for 2013 are BGN 1 138 335 (funds for policies, administration of National Youth Policy (2011-2015) and subsidies for funding of project proposals). Funds spent by the governmental institutions, district administrations and municipal structures for 2013: BGN 161 770 019		Under the Youth in Action programme for 2013, 259 contracts for the total amount of €3 538 059 were concluded Eurodesk, (National Centre European Youth Programmes and Initiatives): BGN 38 200.	
Czech Republic	Subsidy programmes supporting youth work: CZK 170 million; Czech-German cooperation in the field of children and youth: CZK 3 381 500.	Funds supporting gifted children and young people (Programme Excellence): CZK 20 million and funds supporting festivals for young people, and knowledge-based and skill-based competitions for young people: CZK 35 million.	ESF Project 'Keys for Life': CZK 15 298 202 from EU budget (national co-financing: CZK 2 699 682)	
Denmark	n/a			
Germany	2013 German expenditure on public child and youth support agencies: €35 526 752 000 for youth work, youth social work, educational child and youth protection, child day-care services, educational support, employee further training, other expenditure and personnel costs			
Estonia	€7 386 520		€7 001 682 (EU funds without Youth in Action)	

17 The countries generally referred to the relevant budget of the former Youth in Action programme (2007-2013).

	National budget for the youth field	National budget for youth in general	EU budget for the youth field⁽¹⁷⁾	EU budget for youth in general
Ireland	Department of Children and Youth Affairs: Youth Affairs Budget of €51 748 000 (2013) current and €500 000 capital in 2015			
Greece		€355 775 582. This amount includes EU funds and other programmes/funds.		
Spain	€25 924 000 (budget INJUVE)	€1 600 000	€10 953 105	
France	€244 551 876	€80.47 billion		
Croatia		In 2013 the budget allocations targeting young people were HRK 344 247 024.9 million. This amount includes state budget, lottery funds and EU funds.		
Italy	National Fund for Youth of €5 278 360 million in net cuts for the spending review allocated to the interventions of Communes (€659 795), Provinces (€264 445), Regions (€3 298 447) and the Central State (€1 055 672). Fund for the civil service net of cuts for the spending review: €126 859 716 Fund Cohesion Action Plan 'Youth for the noon': €63 600 000		The appropriations provided with the Youth in Action programme in 2013 amounted to €11 966 525.	
Lithuania	€1 700 000		€3 million	
Malta	€680 000 (Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ budget)		€1 802 833	
Austria	From 2009 to 2013 the Federal Budget Reform was implemented in two stages. It now defines for instance a new budget structure as well as outcome oriented budget management. https://english.bmf.gv.at/budget-economic-policy/BMF-HHRR_folder_E.pdf?4cxx82	There is no special dedication to the youth field in each Federal Ministry. In addition, there is supplement financial support from the Federal Provinces and local authorities	€3 804 548 (Erasmus+ Youth in Action)	
Portugal	€11 000 000			
Slovakia	Support of youth work activities via financial 'Programmes for youth', amount: €2.5 million	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family runs specific initiatives for young people especially in the field of unemployment	National projects targeted on youth work development financed under European Social Fund. Amount: €12 million	Targeting youth unemployment 'Youth Guarantee' is used. Amount: €76 million
Slovenia	€200 million	€70 million		
Sweden	SEK282 million		SEK4.2 million	
Finland	€74 million total (71% of the total budget is allocated from the Lottery funds and the rest from the ordinary budget)	€976 million (general education), €737 million (vocational education), €2 739 million (university education)	€3 million	

	National budget for the youth field	National budget for youth in general	EU budget for the youth field ⁽¹⁷⁾	EU budget for youth in general
United Kingdom			Responsibility for youth sits across various Government departments and Devolved Administrations and so it is difficult to provide a total figure of the estimated budget allocation	
Serbia	€ 8 400 000		€ 1 361 259	
Turkey	TRY 5 596 536 251 (Ministry of Youth and Sports budget, includes administrative costs)			

2.3. Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy

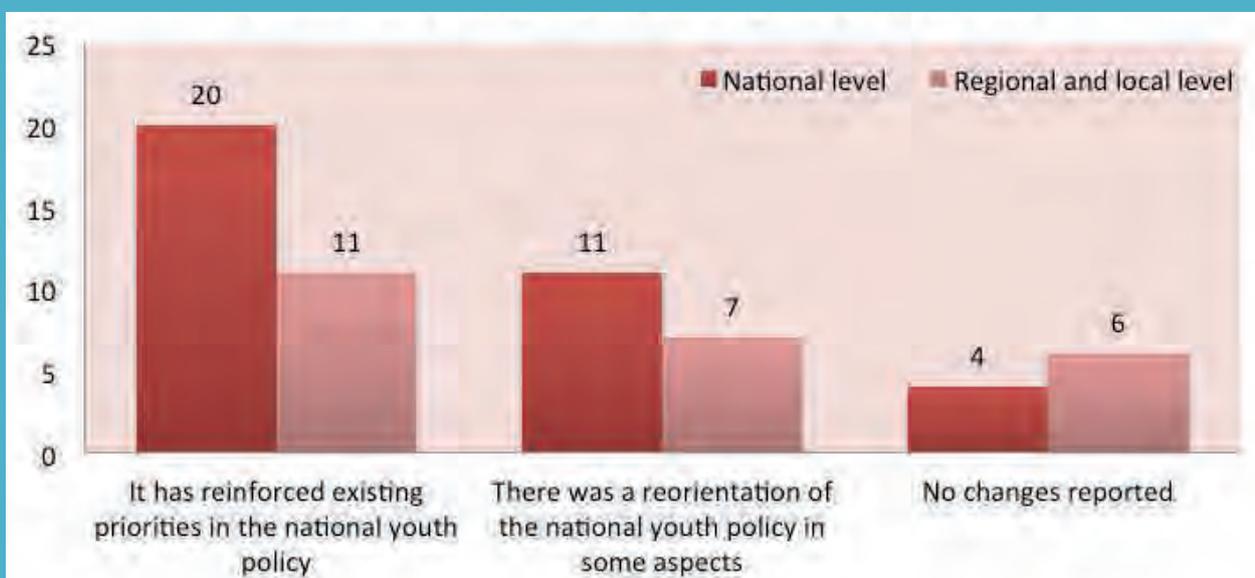
2.3.1. Impact of the EU Youth Strategy on national, regional or local level

Twenty-two reports confirm that the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced existing youth priorities at national level. Many national youth strategies take their cue from the EU Youth Strategy by using the same principles, goals and fields of action (**Austria**, Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Croatia**, **Ireland**, **Malta**) or by getting inspiration from its instruments like the

Structured Dialogue and support for youth participation (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Germany**, **Italy**, **Portugal**).

Spain, **Sweden**, the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **Estonia**, **Slovakia**, **Italy**, **Slovenia**, **Bulgaria**, **Lithuania** and **Poland** as well as **Serbia** point out that the EU Youth Strategy has to some extent triggered a shift in their national youth policy. **Slovakia**'s new national strategy follows the same structure as the EU Youth Strategy, which is gradually being reflected in the country's regional youth strategies. In some countries, such as **Italy** and **Slovenia**, the European strategy has influenced the development of a cross-sectoral approach.

Figure 2 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the impact of the EU Youth Strategy on national, regional and local level



2.3.2. Assessment of the EU Youth Strategy at national, regional or local level

One third of the national reports indicate that the EU Youth Strategy was assessed in the respective countries. In many cases, this was done when evaluating the national strategy (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Finland**, **United Kingdom**). For instance, the annual assessment of the Finnish Child and Youth Policy programme concluded that more attention should be paid to developing opportunities for all children and young people to participate.

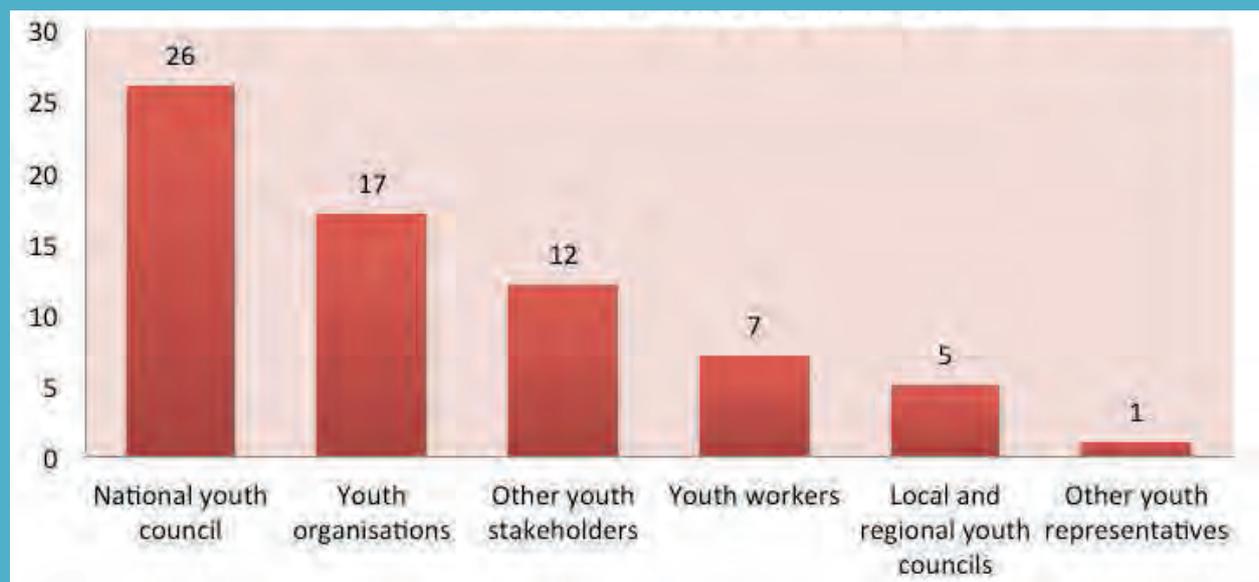
The **German** Youth Institute (*Deutsches Jugendinstitut*, DJI) evaluated the first implementation phase in Germany (2010–2013). The assessment focused on the governance panels set up by the federal government and federal states, which monitor and coordinate the German implementation process. It was found in particular that effective cooperation had been established between the government, the federal states and relevant civil society

stakeholders and that this cooperation has to be seen as a normative process. The existing panels may be enlarged to include further relevant actors at any time. The National Working Group for Structured Dialogue has, for example, included youth representatives from the European youth conferences.

2.3.3. Consultation of young people and other youth stakeholders

Young people were consulted in most of the countries when the national reports were being prepared. **Slovakia** was the only country that did not organise a specific consultation, relying instead on the results of a previous consultation on the country's new youth strategy, for which a youth conference was organised in March 2014. Slovakia therefore used the information gathered at the conference, which was updated by various stakeholders and umbrella organisations.

Figure 3 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the type of stakeholders involved in the consultation



2.3.4. EU Work Plan for Youth

In May 2014 the Council adopted a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 aiming to sharpen implementation of the EU Youth Strategy and better align activities in the youth field with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. This was done by focusing on a given number of priorities, supported by expert groups and other forms of mutual learning.

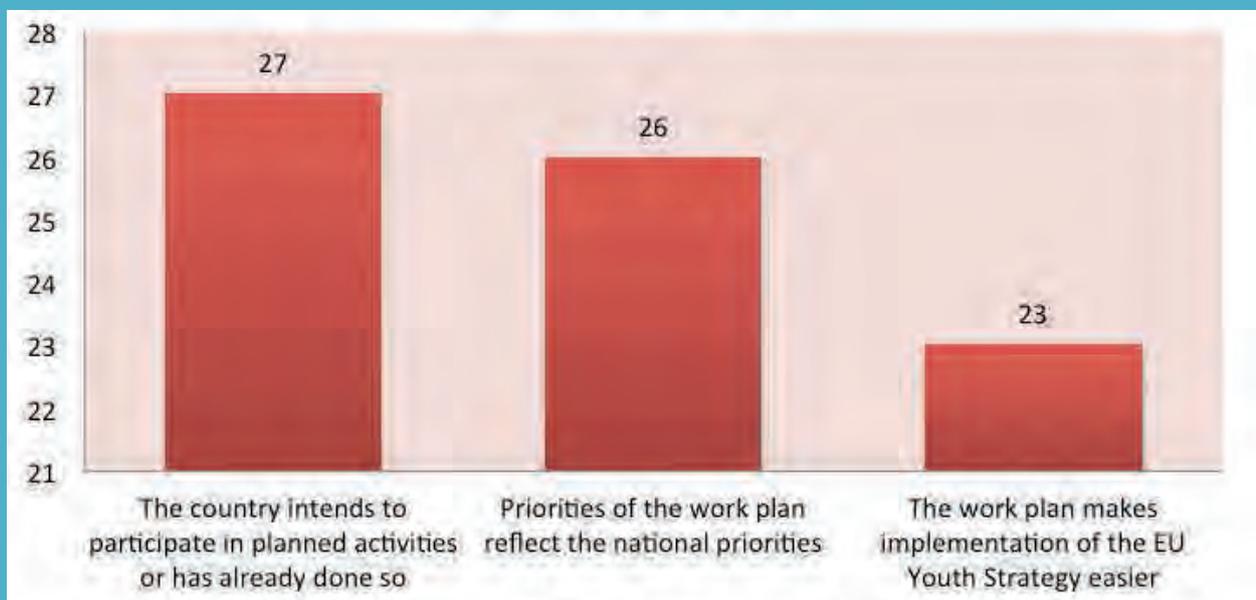
Most countries take the view that the EU work plan reflects national priorities. **Spain** emphasises that the cross-sectoral handling of youth employment issues, promoting non-formal learning and empowerment, is essential to drawing up youth policies in the context of the current crisis. **Malta** points out that its new National Youth Policy (2015-2020) has a dual strategic approach that is focused on youth work and non-formal learning on the one hand, and on a cross-sectoral dimension on the other hand. When drafting its youth strategy for 2014-2020, the **Czech Republic** took the opportunity to link national priorities to the priorities of the EU work plan. In **Ireland**, the three priorities of the work plan are reflected in the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People; they will also be picked up in the

forthcoming national youth strategy. Both policy documents recognise the significant contribution of non-formal and informal learning provided through youth work, emphasise and promote cross-sectoral cooperation and collaboration, and prioritise young people's participation.

Twenty-three of the reporting countries believe that the work plan facilitates the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. **Finland** points out that the work plan lends substance to the strategy and ties it more closely to policy-making and further development of youth work at national level. **Italy** considers that the work plan allows Member States to implement the strategy more effectively in a number of ways: it identifies which fields of action are the most relevant in view of the current situation of young people; it sets a clear timetable and planning for intervention at European level; and it strengthens cross-sectoral cooperation. For **Greece**, it serves as a concrete framework of actions for policy-makers.

Some caution was expressed. While recognising the work plan's benefit in terms of making the EU Youth Strategy more concrete, giving clear direction and increasing transparency, the Flemish Community of **Belgium** says there is a risk that it could be

Figure 4 Number of Member States involved in the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Youth



considered as a separate instrument with its own dynamics of implementation and reporting. The need for the EU Youth Strategy on a long-term basis is still there and the work plan should cover all themes – and the presidency priorities should be related to it.

Finally, most of the Member States participated in the planned activities and their feedback provided details on national participation in the work plan's expert groups.

2.4. Other relevant initiatives

Countries were asked to specify if they took other initiatives linked to the EU Youth Strategy, such as multilateral peer-learning activities, policy conferences or policy networks. When such activities are mentioned, these are mostly conferences or other mutual learning events.

Table 5: Overview of other relevant initiatives

	Peer-learning activity, policy conference or network	Other
Belgium	French Community: 1 st European Youth Work Convention in July 2010 under the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU Flemish Community: Seminars in the framework of the multilateral cooperation between Flanders, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia; study visits and conferences on different themes, e.g. development of youth policy at all levels, youth policy at local level, youth in an urban context, participation, quality youth work	
Bulgaria	Annual exchange of experience with South Korea and Azerbaijan in the field of youth policy and sport on the basis of memorandums of cooperation Exchange of experience with Finland for studying good practices in the youth field under a project funded by the ESF, Operational Programme 'Administrative Capacity' Exchange of experience in the field of youth policies and programmes with Greece Bulgarian Chairmanship of the meeting of the ministers of youth and sports of the Black Sea Cooperation Organisation member states (2013)	
Czech Republic	Working seminar on Youth Volunteering for Visegrad Group (V4) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, September 2014; main theme: role of local, national and international volunteering in V4 and EaP countries – identification of cooperation opportunities for better efficiency	The new National Youth Strategy (2014-2020) was developed using Czech-Slovak bilateral cooperation, cooperation between the Visegrad Group countries and a peer-learning activity between the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Belgium, Lithuania, Netherlands and Sweden in 2011-2013
Denmark	Exchange of good practices and coordination of views among the youth councils in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland). Yearly conferences for board members of youth councils in the Nordic countries.	
Germany	Various multilateral cooperation projects: European Peer Learning on Youth Policy (<i>Eigenständige Jugendpolitik</i>) 'youthpart' (on e-participation) transitions. Successful Transitions to Training and Employment Participation of young people in the democratic Europe	
Ireland	Different meetings as part of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2013: EU youth conference on social inclusion High level round table on the role of youth work in responding to youth employment and employability Informal meeting of EU Directors-General for Youth Belong To conference on 'LGBT Youth and Social Inclusion'	

	Peer-learning activity, policy conference or network	Other
Spain	'youthpart' project (2012-2014): cooperation between Spain, Germany, Finland, Austria, United Kingdom and the Commission on youth e-participation; conferences, peer-learning seminars and youth conferences	
Croatia		<p>April 2012: 'Information right now! – Young people are asking' conference, organised by the Community Information Centres for young people in Croatia and the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth to mark the beginning of a public campaign <i>Informacija uPRAVO sad!</i> (Information right now!) in Croatia; On that occasion, the European Charter for Youth Information was signed</p> <p>February 2014: conference on the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, Erasmus +</p> <p>December 2014: conference 'EU for Youth' to inform students, young unemployed people and young entrepreneurs about their possibilities from EU funds.</p>
Italy	<p>European Conference on Youth Health and Well-being, Rome, June 2010</p> <p>Events organised in 2014 as part of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU:</p> <p>EU youth conference on support access to rights by young people to enhance their autonomy and participation in social life</p> <p>Meeting of EU Directors-General for Youth</p> <p>'Regenerate participation. Youth and Civil Service in the European perspective'</p> <p>'Youth employment event – 1 year after – Building a sustainable future'</p>	
Latvia	Multilateral cooperation with Estonia, Lithuania and Flanders – for the implementation of cooperation in the youth field 2012-2014. The aim of the cooperation is to promote the exchange of experience on the participation of young people in thematic areas, to identify effective methods and best examples for young people; workshops organised, for example, on 1) skill recognition through informal education, 2) youth participation in different decision-making processes, 3) youth work quality, 4) evidence-based youth policy at the local level	
Hungary	<p>V4 seminars related to the youth field with Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries</p> <p>Bilateral cooperation with the Flemish Community of Belgium. A five-days long study visit was achieved in September 2014</p>	
Netherlands	Focus in positive youth policies and practices – multilateral peer-learning seminars with German and Czech partners; one was organised in Rotterdam ⁽¹⁸⁾ in 2012.	

	Peer-learning activity, policy conference or network	Other
Austria	<p>Youth Forum 2010: exchange of opinions and ideas on three main topics (education, inclusion, participation); networking and exchange of good practices in the youth field on a European level; meeting between more than 200 young people and youth workers, representatives of youth ministries and authorities from Austria, Germany, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Belgium and Liechtenstein</p> <p>2013 learning mobility research conference 'International youth work and mobility as learning contexts: research evidence for policy and practice' organised by the network for the 'Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth in Action' (RAY)</p>	<p>Regional symposia 2011-2012: under the heading 'Youth.Politics.Europe.Austria' the tour of the federal states included symposia in Tyrol, Styria, Vorarlberg, Upper Austria and Salzburg. Apart from decision-makers in the fields of politics and administration, practitioners and multipliers were also invited according to the key topic. Apart from spreading information on the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field, the goal of the series of events was to relate these European guidelines to the national and local level and to bring together various players around a chosen key topic</p>
Portugal	Conferences, peer-learning and network activities – youth employment, entrepreneurship, youth work and non-formal education – social inclusion; national and transnational	
Slovakia		Declaration on the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work: public declaration of various stakeholders (employers, ministries, municipalities, universities, youth organisations, etc.) in education about the value of non-formal education in youth work.
Finland	<p>2nd InterCity Conference – peer-learning in local youth work and youth policy, December 2013, Helsinki</p> <p>Autonomy through dependency – histories of cooperation, conflict and innovation in youth work, June 2014, Helsinki</p>	Finland also focuses on the topic of social inclusion during its Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which includes non-EU member states (Russian Federation and Norway)
United Kingdom		UK Young Ambassadors ⁽¹⁹⁾ (Young Migrants project) to engage young migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Structured Dialogue British Youth Council partnered with 'Refugee Youth' for the duration of the Trio, getting access to the target group and supporting them to develop resources and workshops to outreach further.
Serbia	Regional network Western Balkans	

3 Youth employment and entrepreneurship

The aim of action in this field is to support young people's integration into the labour market (either as employees or as entrepreneurs) and to facilitate and support the transition from education and training, or from unemployment or inactivity, to the labour market. Opportunities to reconcile working life with family life should also be improved.

3.1. EU initiatives and action

The growing number of unemployed youth and those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) has led to an increase in the number of initiatives in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee seeks to ensure that all EU Member States make a good-quality offer to all young people (up to age 25) of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The **Youth Guarantee recommendation** was formally adopted by the EU's Council of Ministers on 22 April 2013⁽²⁰⁾ and endorsed by the June 2013 European Council. It includes guidelines for setting up such schemes, covering in particular the need for stronger partnerships between all the public authorities concerned (education and employment institutions), early intervention and activation, and making full use of EU funding.

The implementation of the Youth Guarantee in all Member States is already

producing results. Compared to other structural reforms in Europe, the Youth Guarantee is probably one of the most rapidly implemented. All 28 Member States presented their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans in 2014, setting out the respective roles of public authorities and other organisations, how it will be financed and monitored, as well as a timetable. The Commission monitors the progress made within the EU's reinforced economic surveillance framework (the European Semester). An Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee is now in place.

The Commission provides technical support and guidance in a variety of ways. For example, to assist the Member States in developing their Youth Guarantee schemes, the Commission organises high-level events as well as more technical meetings and country visits. The Commission has set up and continuously updates a Youth Guarantee website⁽²¹⁾ which explains the concept and related actions to a wider audience. A dedicated hotline provides information and guidance to Member States. The Commission also encourages and enables mutual learning among Member States through the sharing of experiences and good practices. One example is a peer review of the Finnish Youth Guarantee held on 18 September 2014. The Commission also supports awareness-raising activities centred around the Youth Guarantee: a pilot was launched in four countries in the first half of 2015, with a particular focus on outreach to young people to invite them to contact the relevant services. Furthermore, at the request of the European Parliament, the Commission financed 18 twelve-month pilot projects⁽²²⁾ in seven Member States to support Youth

20 Council recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, OJ C 120, 26.4.2013, p. 1-6.

21 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/youthguarantee>

22 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=11400&langId=en>

European Parliament pilot project in Ballymun (Ireland)

A particularly comprehensive and ambitious pilot project was set up in Ballymun, outside Dublin, Ireland, to support 739 young people facing multiple barriers to the labour market in one of Ireland's most disadvantaged areas.

The project had an ambitious target of guaranteeing all newly-registered unemployed young people aged between 18 and 24 years in the Ballymun area a good-quality offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, work experience, or continued education within four months of registration and all those already on the unemployment register would receive an offer within four months of an initial guidance interview. This target was met, with 98% of young people receiving their offer on time: 57% of offers were for further education and training, and the remaining 43% were offers of employment, subsidised employment and traineeships. Unsurprisingly, the profile of offers to the better educated members of the client group featured much higher rates of employment and higher levels of further education and training. For many others the 'offer' was the start of a process and not the end: stepping stones along a pathway to employment.

The Ballymun pilot was also successful in terms of engaging employers: new communication materials for employers (leaflets and webpage) featuring one key contact person for queries were developed. A database of local employers was created to facilitate communication and relationship building. A range of employer events including breakfast briefings were held to raise awareness and boost participation in the Youth Guarantee.

By the end of the project the number of youth registered as unemployed in Ballymun had dropped by 29%, which compares positively against the national rate of reduction of 19% during the same period.

Guarantee partnerships at the local level. The results of these projects can be found in the summary report published in April 2015 and were presented at a conference ⁽²³⁾ during the European Youth Week.

Particular emphasis will be placed on youth employment in implementing the EU Structural and Investment Funds from 2014 to 2020. The regulations that govern these funds already include a dedicated investment priority targeting the sustainable labour market integration of young NEETs.

To increase available EU financial support to the regions and individuals struggling most with youth employment and inactivity, the EU also agreed to create a dedicated Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The YEI exclusively targets NEETs aged below 25 years, and where the Member State considers relevant, also those aged below 30 years. The YEI provides additional funding to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The YEI funding comprises €3.2 billion from a specific EU budget heading dedicated to

youth employment and at least another €3.2 billion from the EU Structural and Investment Funds' national allocations. This will boost the support already provided by these funds for similar types of activities. Furthermore, Member States will have to complement this assistance with additional investments in structural reforms to modernise employment, social and education services for young people, and by strengthening the capacity of relevant structures and improving education access, quality and links to labour market demand.

Quality apprenticeships and traineeships are two core components of Youth Guarantee schemes. Effective vocational education and training systems, in particular those that include a strong work-based learning component, appear to facilitate the transition of young people from education to work. A recent analysis by the Center for Research on Education and Life Long Learning ⁽²⁴⁾ (CRELL) showed a labour market advantage, at least in the short run, of young individuals with VET qualifications

23 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1079&eventId=1051&furtherEvents=yes>

24 European Commission (2015), *Education and youth labour market outcomes – the added value of VET*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

(compared to their non-VET counterparts), although with important cross-country differences.

Launched in July 2013, the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships** brings together public authorities, businesses, social partners, vocational education and training providers, youth representatives, and other key actors in order to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and change attitudes towards apprenticeship-type learning. A Council Declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships was adopted in October 2013. By June 2015, 26 Member States and 5 non EU countries ⁽²⁵⁾ had submitted concrete commitments on next steps to increase the quantity, quality and supply of apprenticeships. Furthermore, 86 organisations (companies, business associations, chambers, social partners, education and training providers, regional authorities, youth and non-profit organisations) pledged to contribute to strengthening the supply, quality and/or attractiveness of apprenticeships. A pool of 'business ambassadors' was set up on the initiative of the European Roundtable of Industrialists.

So that young people can acquire high-quality work experience under safe and fair conditions and to increase their employability, Member States agreed on a **Quality Framework for Traineeships** ⁽²⁶⁾ in March 2014, setting a benchmark for the determination of good quality traineeship under the Youth Guarantee. It offers guidelines to ensure that all traineeships are based on a written agreement covering learning content and working conditions (learning objectives, mentoring, limited duration, working time, clear indication as to whether remuneration/compensation and social protection apply). In addition, traineeship providers are recommended to enhance transparency by disclosing in the vacancy notice the financial conditions (compensation and social security coverage) and the proportion of ex-trainees recruited in

the past after their traineeship. These requirements are designed to tackle the lack of transparency on compensation (46% of vacancy notices do not indicate it), often exploited by unscrupulous traineeship providers, and the problem of traineeships being renewed more than once under the guise of (non-existent) hiring prospects.

Labour mobility

The EU facilitates labour mobility, in particular by making young people aware of job opportunities in other EU countries. The **European Employment Services (EURES)** network provides information, advice and recruitment/placement (job matching) services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to benefit from the principle of free movement of workers. EURES promotes cooperation between the Commission, public employment services of 28 Member States, and their partners. It consists of about 1 000 EURES advisers working on transnational and cross-border mobility issues. The human network is complemented by the EURES Job Mobility portal giving access to about 1.4 million job vacancies and offering opportunities for easy and multilingual matching of CVs with those job vacancies across Europe. The overall ongoing reform of EURES aims at making it a more demand-driven and result-oriented recruitment tool.

As part of this development, the Commission has been testing a scheme called **Your first EURES Job (YfEJ)** to help EU nationals aged 18 to 30 to find a job in any of the 28 Member States (remunerated, minimum 6 months contract). The scheme combines information, recruitment, matching and job placement support with financial incentives. It finances language courses, other training needs and travel expenses for young job applicants (for job interviews and job settlement in other EU countries). It also provides a contribution to an integration

25 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147&langId=en>

26 OJ C 88, 27.3.2014, p. 1-4.

programme in the case of recruitment by an SME. The objective of the YfEJ for the three calls launched between 2011 and 2013 was to find jobs for 5 000 young people on the basis of a total budget of around €12 million. As from 2013, support measures were extended to trainees and apprentices with an enhanced mobility package (e.g. further language training support, costs with recognition of qualifications, supplementary allowance for young people with special needs, mentoring for trainees/apprentices). By the end of the first quarter of 2015, nearly 4 000 young jobseekers had obtained a job in another Member State, but not all projects will be finished before the end of the third quarter 2015. A mid-term evaluation confirmed the relevance and EU added value of the scheme; an ex-post evaluation will follow in 2016.

The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (2014-2020) provides

additional funding to support targeted mobility schemes intended to fill bottleneck vacancies or deal with vacancies in certain occupations, sectors or Member States or to support specific target groups (e.g. young people), facilitating intra-EU job mobility. Under the programme, the YfEJ covers young people aged 18 to 35 and is open to the 28 Member States, Norway and Iceland.

From 2014 the YfEJ scheme is integrated into the above-mentioned EURES network. EURES member organisations are lead applicants, in consortium with EURES partners and other labour market organisations. The 2014 call for proposals (€7 million) selected EURES Italy and EURES Sweden as lead applicants. For the 2015 call, €8 million is available to finance two additional projects. Each project aims at about 1 500 placements over a period of two years.

EU-funded research projects on youth mobility and labour market integration

Research projects launched in 2015:

- MOVE – Mapping mobility: Pathways, institutions and structural effects of youth mobility in EU (<http://www.move-project.eu>)
- YMOBILITY – Youth mobility: Maximising opportunities for individuals, labour markets and regions in EU (www.ymobility.eu)
- NEGOTIATE – Negotiating early job: Insecurity and labour market exclusion in Europe (www.negotiate-research.eu)

European youth cooperation on employment

Youth employment was the overall thematic priority of the first Trio Presidency after the entry into force of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field. The first cycle of the Structured Dialogue also focused on youth employment. The results of this thematic priority⁽²⁷⁾ inspired subsequent initiatives, such as the Council recommendation of 20 December

2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.⁽²⁸⁾

Based on Council conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people (May 2012), a thematic **expert group** was set up in order to share best practice on how to **promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people by identifying competences and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning relevant to employability**. The

27 See 2012 EU Youth Report.

28 OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1-5.

expert group's final report⁽²⁹⁾ was submitted to the Youth Working Party on 22 January 2014. It confirms that engaging in non-formal learning activities can help boost young people's employability and social inclusion. Participation in non-formal learning activities allows young people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that are frequently said to be needed in the labour market. This includes teamwork, communication, leadership, flexibility and responsiveness. It also entails discovering one's entrepreneurial and innovative potential, by identifying problems, coming up with ways of dealing with them and sticking to a chosen course of action. The report also identifies a need for greater recognition of non-formal learning and recommends ways of explaining non-formal learning more clearly to employers and educators, translating non-formal learning outcomes to the world of work, encouraging youth entrepreneurship and promoting partnerships and cross-sectoral innovation.

The European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 underlines the need for cross-sectoral cooperation, with a particular focus on collaboration between youth policy and employment policy. The Member States and the Commission were invited to establish an **expert group** for the duration of the work plan, whose aim is to define **the specific contribution of youth work and non-formal and informal learning to address challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment**. The group started work in October 2014 and will present its results at the end of 2015.

Entrepreneurship

The purpose of youth entrepreneurship is to combat youth unemployment and social exclusion as well as to stimulate the innovative capabilities of young people in Europe. Therefore, the objective of fostering

youth entrepreneurship has a prominent place in the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Commission communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*⁽³⁰⁾ identifies the development of transversal skills, particularly **entrepreneurial skills**, as one of the strategic priorities in education and training.

The importance of **promoting entrepreneurship** was stressed in the Council conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014). In this context special attention is paid to the concept of 'social entrepreneurship', which is embedded in the real economy, close to people and to local communities, and primarily aims at contributing to the general good of society. The above-mentioned **expert group** on promoting the creativity and innovative capacity of young people recommended a 'strong focus on entrepreneurship'.

A number of policy initiatives and tools in the field of **formal education and training** address the need to foster entrepreneurship. The Council conclusions on entrepreneurship in education and training⁽³¹⁾ of 12 December 2014 highlight the need for a coordinated, cross-sectoral approach to entrepreneurship education; initial teacher/trainer education programmes and continuous professional development; synergies between entrepreneurship education and career guidance; involvement of entrepreneurs in the learning process as well as providing traineeship, apprenticeship, work-based learning; and practical entrepreneurship experience.

In its final report⁽³²⁾ of November 2014, the thematic working group on entrepreneurship education explored ways of embedding entrepreneurship as a key competence in education and training, namely by identifying success factors for

29 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

30 COM(2012) 669 final of 20.11.2012.

31 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/146196.pdf

32 <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetailDoc&id=17016&no=1>

the entrepreneurship ecosystem such as stakeholder engagement; entrepreneurial curriculum and teaching methods; entrepreneurial learning outcomes and assessment; supporting educators and leaders; pathway for aspiring entrepreneurs; and measuring progress and impact.

Through a study launched by the Commission's Joint Research Centre, the Commission also works on the description of the key competence for lifelong learning⁽³³⁾ 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship'. A competence framework will be developed, clarifying the constituting elements of entrepreneurship competence for all stakeholders – including young citizens – to refer to for any purpose, including education, employment and business endeavours.

'HEInnovate',⁽³⁴⁾ a joint initiative of the Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), enables self-assessment of the entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities of higher education to promote an entrepreneurial mind-set through education. The 'knowledge triangle' interaction between education, research and innovation supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) enhances the teaching and learning process by stimulating creative thinking and innovative attitudes and approaches that often result in venture creation.

During the second cycle of the renewed framework, the Commission adopted the communication *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan – Reigniting the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe*,⁽³⁵⁾ which invites Member States to offer all students a practical

entrepreneurial experience, including through youth work and non-formal learning (e.g. volunteering), before they leave secondary education.

A number of **EU programmes** contribute to fostering entrepreneurship. The European exchange programme for entrepreneurs 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs' (2014-2020)⁽³⁶⁾ gives would-be and recently established entrepreneurs the know-how that is key to creating and running a new business, through exchanges with experienced entrepreneurs in another European country. The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, the European Social Fund as well as the European Regional Development Fund (2014-2020) facilitate access to finance for social enterprises and support business creation by young people. The EU has since 2009 supported the multi-country initiative 'South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEEC-EL) – developing an entrepreneurial society in Western Balkans and Turkey'.⁽³⁷⁾ Its main purpose is to encourage systematic development of 'entrepreneurially literate' societies across the region and to support alignment of national policies with EU recommendations related to lifelong entrepreneurial learning, as well as to further develop the lifelong entrepreneurial learning system in line with the Human Capital dimension of the Small Business Act for Europe. The activity covers both secondary and tertiary education. Last but not least, the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (2007-2013) supported research activities related to social innovation focusing on social entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship (see box).

33 Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10-18.

34 <https://heinnovate.eu/intranet/main/index.php>

35 COM(2012) 795 final of 9.1.2013.

36 <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/index.php>

37 <http://www.seecel.hr/home-5026>

EU-funded research projects on entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship:

- SEFORIS – Social Entrepreneurship as a Force for more Inclusive and Innovative Societies (www.seforis.eu)
- EFESEIIS – Enabling the flourishing and evolution of social entrepreneurship for innovative and inclusive societies (<http://www.fp7-efeseiis.eu>)

Youth entrepreneurship:

- STYLE – Strategic Transitions for Youth Labour in Europe (<http://www.style-research.eu>)
- CUPESSE – Cultural Pathways to Economic Self-Sufficiency and Entrepreneurship: Family Values and Youth Unemployment in Europe (<http://cupesse.eu/>)

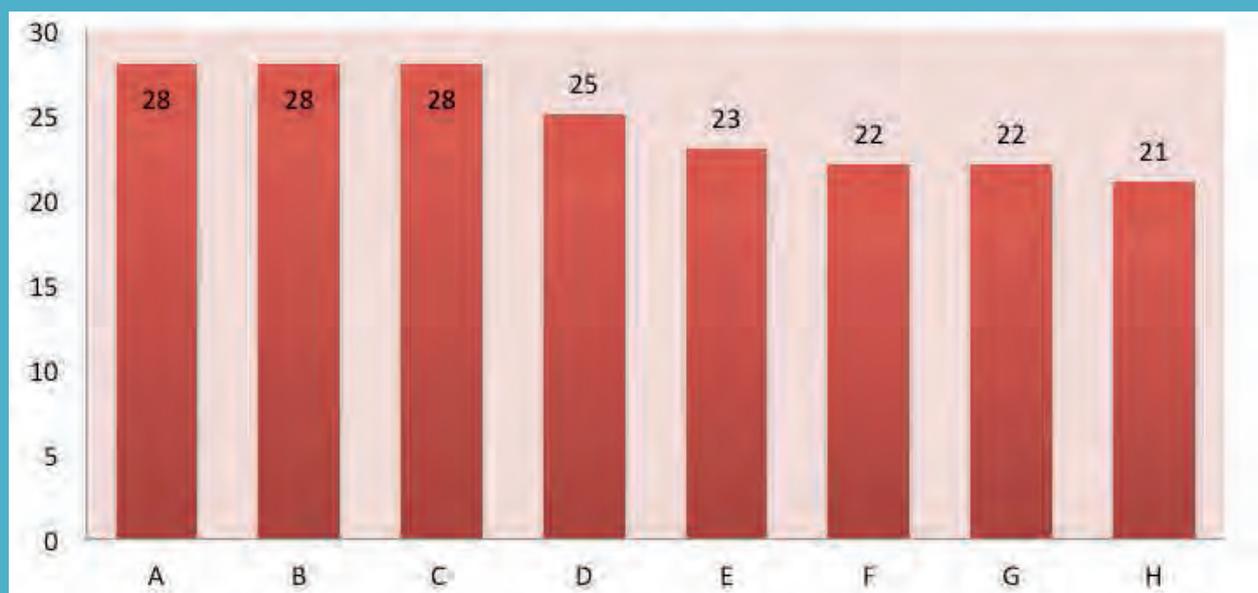
3.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

3.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

The types of measures most frequently mentioned are the following: short-term

measures stimulating the integration of young people in the labour market as well as structural measures taking into account youth; measures developing career guidance and counselling services; and measures supporting and promoting young people's entrepreneurship via entrepreneurship education, support to start-up funds and junior enterprises, mentoring programmes

Figure 5 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of youth employment and entrepreneurship



- A – Short-term measures stimulating the integration of young people in the labour market and structural measures taking into account youth
 B – Developing career guidance and counselling services
 C – Supporting and promoting young people's entrepreneurship
 D – Increasing and improving investments in the provision of suitable skills
 E – Promoting cross-border professional and vocational opportunities
 F – Lowering barriers to the free movement of workers across the EU
 G – Facilitating reconciliation between professional and private life
 H – Promoting entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development

and European networks and structures. Interestingly, these three types of measures are amongst those which to a large extent were introduced after January 2010.

3.2.1.1. Increasing and improving investments in the provision of suitable skills

The provision of suitable skills for the labour market is of concern to most countries. Training programmes for the attainment of new, professional, language, practical or transversal skills and of key competences are commonly used measures which are often part of the national Youth Guarantee scheme. For instance, the **United Kingdom** (England) launched two 'Work Skills' pilots to help 18 to 21 year-olds with training on literacy, numeracy and other work skills with 18 000 participants. The support of youth work initiatives that increase young people's employability is particularly mentioned by **Ireland**, which in the context of its annual Action Plan for Jobs ⁽³⁸⁾ instituted a mapping exercise to categorise and comment on the Irish youth work response to youth employment. The German-speaking Community of **Belgium** identified the need for professional youth workers and will develop a specific professional qualification for this activity by 2017.

Bringing vocational training systems closer to the labour market is another priority. Here, the **Czech Republic's** Action Plan for Support of Vocational Training (*Akční plan podpory odborného vzdělávání*) is being constantly refined and updated. **Denmark** also plans to reform its vocational education system in order to increase the participation of young people in VET and to strengthen the trust in this type of training. In **Austria**, the apprenticeship regulations (*Lehrberufspaket*) are continuously adapted to new trends and technologies and to professional practice.

From 2011 to 2015 **Slovenia** runs a mentorship programme for young people (*Mentorstvo za mlade*) with the aim to encourage employers to transfer knowledge, skills and experience from experienced staff to those who need their knowledge – new (young) employees. Special emphasis is put on inter-generational transfer of knowledge, skills and information.

Regarding better anticipation in the longer term of the skills needed, common measures are labour market forecasts, identification of competencies and professions needed, and programmes for specific skills. By way of example, the Flemish Community of **Belgium** developed, via the VLAMT project, a methodology to collect information on future skills needs in order to facilitate future vocational choices. In **Greece**, the national organisation for the certification of qualifications and vocational guidance (EOPPEP) conducted several studies on future labour market needs, for instance on green jobs and green skills needed in the Greek labour market (2011) and on emerging occupational sectors in Greece and new skills meeting labour market needs (2013). In the **Netherlands**, the public administration, education sector, trade unions and employers concluded a pact to improve the links between education and labour market in the technical sector (*Techniekpakt* ⁽³⁹⁾). The **Polish** Commissioned Degree programmes address the huge skills mismatch concerning sector-specific skills (oversupply of graduates in social sciences, the humanities, economics, management, administration, etc. versus lack of students in mathematics, technical and natural science faculties) by scholarship schemes, remedial courses and attractive teaching activities. In **Romania**, the Law No 335/2013 on traineeships for higher education graduates aims at strengthening professional skills and abilities to adapt to practical requirements and job demands.

38 <http://www.djei.ie/enterprise/apj.htm>

39 <http://techniekpakt.nl>

3.2.1.2. Promoting cross-border professional and vocational opportunities

The Erasmus+ programme and its predecessors in the fields of youth and education and training are mentioned by many countries as important support for cross-border opportunities for young people. In this context, Europass, a set of documents that can be used to show skills and competences clearly and unambiguously, is also quoted. Several countries, such as **Finland**, refer to their international mobility and cooperation programmes.

Other support measures for cross-border mobility of young people – although not directly aimed at professional or vocational development – are for instance bilateral governmental agreements concluded by the **Czech Republic** with other countries to facilitate working abroad during holidays (in South Korea, Canada, New Zealand, and soon Chile and Israel). These agreements enable young people from 18 to 30 or 35 to undertake employment in the host country for the purpose of supplementing their

travel funds. Several projects of the **Latvia, Lithuania** and Belarus Cross Border Cooperation programme⁽⁴⁰⁾ within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people, such as the one on ‘Youth Entrepreneurship Encouragement in Kaunas and Minsk regions’, whose overall objective is to enhance entrepreneurship, youth cooperation, reduction of unemployment and young people’s mobility in the regions concerned.

More specifically on vocational training, **Luxembourg** concluded a framework agreement on cross-border vocational training in the Greater Region (see box). **Austria** offers foreign work placements to apprentices (for instance in the tourism industry). Thanks to these 3 to 5 weeks placements in another country, apprentices acquire new working methods, get to know another country and culture, improve their vocational, linguistic and intercultural competences, and get accustomed to the requirements of the labour market and clients.

Framework agreement on cross-border vocational training in the Greater Region

The members of the Greater Region (Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate, Wallonia and the rest of the French Community of Belgium, and the German-speaking Community of Belgium) concluded, for an unlimited period, a framework agreement on cross-border vocational training which entered into force on 4 December 2014.

The agreement formulates, for the first time, common objectives on cross-border vocational training in the region. It aims at (non-exhaustive enumeration):

- deepening the regional labour market integration;
- improving the qualification, professional mobility and adaptability of the labour force, in particular of young people;
- fighting youth unemployment and reducing the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training;
- satisfying the demand for skilled workers;
- improving information on cross-border vocational training opportunities;
- removing regulatory barriers to cross-border mobility.

The implementation will be monitored by the Greater Region Summit’s working group on the labour market. <http://www.men.public.lu/fr/actualites/communiqués-conference-presse/2014/11/13-accord-cadre/index.html>

Ireland – Experience Your Europe (EYE) programme

The Experience Your Europe (EYE) programme is part of the Youth Guarantee aimed at young people aged 18 to 24 years. It consists of three options:

- 12 month sponsored placement in another European country;
- helping jobseekers find a job in Europe;
- apprenticeship programme in Germany.

Targeting of suitable candidates nationwide commenced in October 2014. Under the scheme the Department of Social Protection will fund some of the re-location costs and/or living costs incurred by jobseekers undertaking at least nine months' training/work experience abroad. Basic language training will be provided in advance and language acquisition while abroad is a compulsory element of the placement.

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Experience-Your-Europe.aspx>

3.2.1.3. Short-term measures stimulating the integration of young people in the labour market and structural measures taking into account youth

Besides the Youth Guarantee implementation (see Section 3.2.2.2.) which is often linked to long-term structural reforms, noteworthy fast-acting initiatives are those to prevent and re-integrate early school leavers (for instance free revision classes, tailored vocational training for socially disadvantaged or less gifted young people), job fairs, short-term first work experience offers or public work programmes.

Several countries adopted urgent labour market reform measures. For instance, **Spain's** Royal Decree-Law 3/2012 on Urgent Measures to Reform the Labour Market (10 February 2012) amended the training and learning contract in order to strengthen the employment of young people, and introduced measures encouraging open-ended contracts and job creation. The **Greek** operational programme Development in Human Resources (2013) provided funding to businesses to hire young people for acquiring professional experience. With the Act on Emergency Measures in Field of Labour Market and Parental Care (ZIUTDSV)⁽⁴¹⁾ in 2013, **Slovenia** introduced temporary youth employment incentives which seek to contribute to swift

and stable youth employment. Employers are exempted from paying social security contributions till the end of 2014 (extended till the end of 2015 in 2014) if they employ young people under the age of 30 years for an indefinite period. Through its Job Protection Action Plan, **Hungary** offered social contribution tax benefits and vocational training contribution discounts to employers hiring young people under 25, which resulted in more than 150 000 young people hired. **Croatia's** Act on Employment Incentives⁽⁴²⁾ of 2012 aimed at facilitating access to first employment and work experience, facilitating access to professional or master craftsperson examination, ensuring the acquisition of work-related skills for a specific workplace without any additional costs for the employer.

Another example is **France**, which launched a 'Jobs for the future' scheme (*emplois d'avenir*) in November 2012. The programme supports young people with low education attainment and offers subsidised work contracts in the profit and non-profit sectors. In addition to gaining work experience, young people get access to training and counselling. By the end of 2014, 187 000 young people had enrolled, which is more than the initial objective to get 150 000 young people sign up for the scheme. **Denmark's** cash benefit reform

41 Official Gazette UL RS 63/2013 of 26.7.2013, Regulation No 2511.

42 *Zakon o poticanju zapošljavanja*, Official Gazette, 57/12.

(*Kontanthjælpsreformen*) has a direct focus on young people under the age of 30 without ordinary education. The idea behind was that education is key to the stable integration of young people into the labour market. Furthermore, the reform created a greater incentive for benefit receivers under the age of 30 to find employment or enrol in an educational programme, as the cash benefits were reduced to the level of the state educational grant. Regarding young people, the overall focus of the cash benefit reform was to make sure that they have an education and remain an active part in society, leading to the successful integration into the labour market. The reform entered into force on 1 January 2014.

3.2.1.4. Developing career guidance and counselling services

Job search guidance or training courses are part of 'supply-side' measures encouraged by the Youth Guarantee. Under the section 'Early intervention and activation', one of the Youth Guarantee's recommendations to Member States is to 'enable employment services, together with other partners supporting young people, to provide personalised guidance and individual action planning, including tailor-made individual support schemes, based on the principle of mutual obligation at an early stage and continued follow-up with a view to preventing drop-out and ensure progression towards education and training or employment'. In this context, many countries strengthened the provision and quality of career guidance and counselling services.

Sweden's new Education Act, which entered into force in 2011, stipulates that all pupils and students at every stage of the education system (from compulsory school throughout adult education) should have access to a person with sufficient competence as to meet their guidance needs for planning their forthcoming education and work. Guidance counsellors must be properly trained. In 2010/2011, there were 847 guidance counsellors working for the compulsory school system, which corresponds to one counsellor per 526 pupils. In upper secondary schools, there were

955 counsellors, or one counsellor per 500 pupils. In **Finland**, every person is entitled to guidance and counselling services, regardless of whether he or she is studying, working, unemployed or outside the labour market. Public sector education and employment authorities and education providers, normally municipalities, are the main actors responsible for guidance and counselling services. The division of duties between them is clear. Education and training institutions bear the main responsibility for guidance and counselling of pupils and students. The vocational guidance and career planning and educational and vocational information services, available at employment offices, are primarily intended for those outside education and training. All guidance and counselling services of employment offices, however, are also available for students. Career plans are also tackled in youth workshops.

The **Czech Republic's** national youth strategy contains an initiative to increase the effectiveness and quality of career counselling in leisure-based and non-formal education. This is part of a wider goal to promote greater cooperation between schools, education institutions, other educators, employers, professional and sectoral associations and labour offices to improve the young people's opportunities on the labour market. **Greece** also implemented a number of actions to raise the quality of career guidance services, such as regular training seminars for public and private sector career guidance counsellors, development of a job profile for career guidance counsellor, and preparation of a code of ethics for this profession.

The National Employment Action Plan of **Serbia** contains a strategy for career guidance and counselling which has already established career info corners in 120 local youth offices. More of these will follow in the course of 2014-2015. In **Croatia**, the public employment service developed a mobile expert team combining career guidance counsellors, employment counsellors, lawyers and other professionals. **Slovenia** also strengthened its policy on counselling work with young people. In April 2014, 40 new counsellors were hired by the public

employment service. The aim of another project is to set up a network of regional career centres for young people by 2020. Offering regional guidance and counselling services is also the endeavour of **France**, where the pilot phase of a new type of public service collaboration between national and regional levels (tested in eight regions) has proven to better respond to citizens' needs. Therefore, it was decided in November 2014 to deploy this new *service public régional de l'orientation* (SPRO) across the remaining regions. Other countries have also introduced new approaches, such as **Luxembourg**, where career guidance services were centralised within the House of Guidance (*maison de l'orientation*) in September 2012.

It goes without saying that career guidance and counselling is also and increasingly provided through dedicated or specialised online portals, which sometimes integrate the possibility to create a personal account, to carry out self-assessments, etc. An example is the **Greek** career guidance portal for adolescents⁽⁴³⁾ launched at the end of 2012.

3.2.1.5. Lowering barriers to the free movement of workers across the EU

Besides their participation in the EURES network and the YfEJ scheme, several countries refer to the implementation of Directive 2014/54/EU of 16 April 2014 on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers.⁽⁴⁴⁾ This directive addresses the lack of awareness or understanding of the rules by public and private employers, which is a major source of discrimination based on nationality. People also consider that they do not know where to turn to in the host Member State when faced with problems concerning their rights to free movement. The directive aims to help workers to overcome obstacles to working in another EU country, notably by requiring Member States to designate bodies at national level to provide assistance to mobile EU workers and their families.

3.2.1.6. Facilitating reconciliation between professional and private life

Many countries maintained or introduced measures to keep or increase the number of childcare facilities and places available to families in need of it. Since the initial situation seems to vary greatly between countries, the targeted coverage rate mentioned ranges from at least 12% to 100%, also depending on the age group (under 3 or between 3 and 6 years old). The measures do not only aim to achieve better coverage but also seek to improve the quality of childcare available. In general, there is an increased focus on shared parental and paternity leave. Certificates or awards for family-friendly enterprises, such as delivered in **Slovenia** or **Austria**, are other means to facilitate the reconciliation between professional and private life and to generate cultural change.

3.2.1.7. Supporting and promoting young people's entrepreneurship

A broad range of measures promoting young people's entrepreneurship via entrepreneurship education, support to start-up funds and junior enterprises, mentoring programmes as well as – mainly national – networks and structures were taken by the different countries. These aim at improving the employability of young people by the development of relevant skills matching labour market needs, and/or providing an alternative way to get out of unemployment. Some of these measures are included in Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (**Luxembourg**, **Croatia**) and target, among others, NEETs. This is particularly highlighted by countries with high unemployment rates like **Spain** and **Portugal**. In other countries, such as the **Netherlands**, **Austria** and **France**, the emphasis is put on developing the creative potential of young people and encouraging innovation and business start-ups, with a special focus on SMEs or social enterprises. Some measures are also aimed at school and higher education teachers, enabling them to

43 www.eoppep.gr/teens

44 OJ L 128, 30.4.2014, p. 8-14.

develop relevant competencies to support young people in entrepreneurship education (**France, Lithuania**). Another emphasis is put on establishing broad cross-sectoral cooperation and networking platforms between formal education, non-formal learning and the world of work: employers, businesses and employment services.

In **Poland**, entrepreneurship education is one of the priorities of education policy; the country has a comprehensive system of entrepreneurship education, and entrepreneurship is a compulsory subject at school. **Denmark** put in place a national innovation strategy which aims to develop students' relevant skills and competencies from primary to PhD level. Similarly, in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, an action plan on entrepreneurship includes various measures, implemented also in school education, with the goal to equip youngsters with entrepreneurial skills. In **Spain**, an entrepreneurship and employment strategy has a strong focus on enhancing employability of young people through improvement of intermediation, incentives for hiring and promotion of entrepreneurship. **Croatia** developed plans to encourage self-employment of unemployed persons through financial incentives and professional assistance. In addition, a comprehensive Strategy of Entrepreneurship Development (2013-2020) includes a targeted entrepreneurship education programme 'Entrepreneurial Impulse', promoting entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, entrepreneurial culture, and self-employment through entrepreneurship. In **Sweden**, a strategy for entrepreneurship in the field of education was integrated in comprehensive reforms of the education system – entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial teaching are now part of the national teaching plan for lower education as well as in high schools. In **Portugal**, the business network programme RPGN supports young entrepreneurs from generating an idea to establishing a sustainable initiative.

In **Lithuania**, the National Entrepreneurship Action Plan (2014-2020) aims at creating

a coherent entrepreneurship education system embedded in the lifelong learning continuum and embracing both formal education and extracurricular activities provided by youth work. The main pillars of the action plan are: improving the entrepreneurship learning environment; promoting students' creativity, entrepreneurship and leadership; entrepreneurship education; teachers' competencies; and stronger partnerships between schools, universities and companies. The plan receives funding from the Structural Funds. In 2013, **France** put in place an action plan to support students' entrepreneurship with the aim of creating 20 000 youth enterprises.

In most cases the enlisted projects are implemented by stakeholders, including civil society organisations, with funding provided and monitored by relevant administrative bodies. An example is a comprehensive education programme for young people of all ages developed, which is implemented by the Junior Achievement **Serbia** ⁽⁴⁵⁾ (partnership with local businesses). The **United Kingdom** Frontline London Campaign focuses on social business start-ups (partnership between the Cabinet Office and the daily newspaper *London Evening Standard*, with support of community organisations and volunteers). Close cooperation between the University of **Malta** and business organisations is the foundation for the Takeoff programme supporting enterprising graduates, students and staff to champion innovation and entrepreneurship. Support for start-ups is also at the core of the operational programme Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness in the **Czech Republic**. Equally, **Latvia** adopted measures to encourage innovation and start-ups to support young people in schools and at universities to become entrepreneurs. The programme includes practical training courses targeted at young people, seminars, competitions, events, and marketing activities. Financial aid and training was also provided through a national scheme for enhancing youth entrepreneurship in **Cyprus**, aiming at the creation of new and sustainable small and micro enterprises.

Creating an entrepreneurial mind-set and improving the acknowledgement of entrepreneur career is the aim of several initiatives addressed to children and young people of all ages in **Austria**, such as the Kids Business Week, seminars, junior enterprise, the programme for self-employment and start-up of the Alumni Association of the University of Vienna, as well as the entrepreneurship professorship in Klagenfurt, Linz and Vienna.

Since entrepreneurship is to be seen as a horizontal topic requiring a holistic cross-sectoral approach, a broad coalition of ministries in charge of education, youth, labour market and employment, enterprise and innovation, economy, industry and trade, and agriculture was set up in many countries. Many stakeholders were involved, including chambers of commerce, employers' organisations, trade unions, youth networks, education centres and employment services, to conceive and implement relevant strategies and programmes.

In many countries the European Social Fund and other Structural Funds are an important source of financing these measures, alongside national public expenditures and private funding.

3.2.1.8. Measures promoting entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development

A number of countries have already introduced measures promoting sustainable development, investing in green economy and social economy with special attention to social enterprises. **Slovenia** adopted a legislative act on social entrepreneurship to increase the visibility and understanding of this business model. In most cases promoting social entrepreneurship is part of dedicated programmes or projects. For instance, the **Czech Republic** offers support, within the REVIT framework programme, to micro entrepreneurs or SMEs in economically problematic regions or to entrepreneurs having faced natural catastrophes.

The programme primarily aims at increasing employment in particular regions and is not specifically addressed to young people. The **Irish** ECO-UNESCO's Green Pathways programme aims to train and progress participants onto employment in the green economy while building strong environmental, business, communication and leadership skills. Similarly, the Green Deal programme launched in the **Netherlands** fosters sustainable development in the fields of energy, elements, biodiversity, water and transport. The 'Innovation Challenge: Go Green' ⁽⁴⁶⁾ is a competition for young people aged between 17 and 30, incentivising them to identify environmental problems that affect **Malta** and to come up with green innovation solutions. In **Denmark**, funding is provided to establish existing initiatives within sustainable and social entrepreneurship in further education, and to test selected initiatives in a pilot project and measure their effects.

3.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

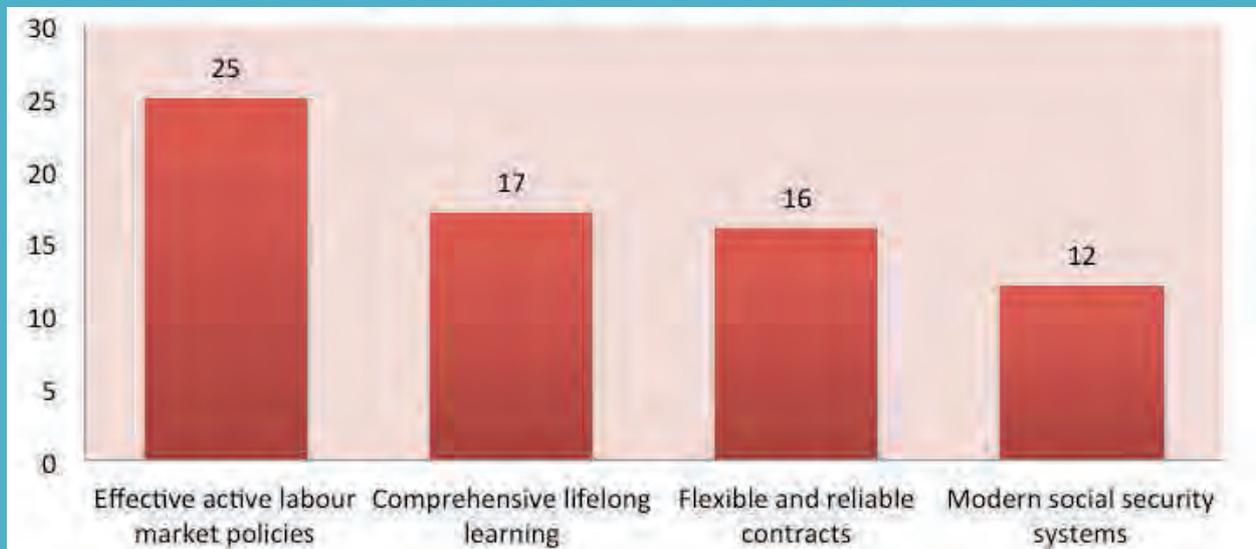
3.2.2.1. Flexicurity measures

In the Council resolution of 19 May 2011 on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment, Ministers acknowledged the importance of improving flexibility as well as security for boosting youth employment.

Effective active labour market policies are amongst the flexicurity measures most frequently mentioned. Measures aimed at improving **flexibility** range from laws regulating flexible work arrangements (which are not specific to young persons) and subsidy schemes aimed at attracting people in the labour market or creating new jobs through flexible forms of employment to regulations on student jobs (lower taxation and social insurance contributions). A lot of attention is paid to skills development or upgrading, and to first (short-term) work experience offers for young people.

46 https://www.um.edu.mt/create/notices/innovation_challenge_go_green

Figure 6 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the type of flexicurity measures taken at national level



In terms of **security**, the countries refer to early activation measures, lifelong learning strategies, modernisation of social security systems (ensuring a higher level of security in the transitions between different jobs or between work and learning) or incentives for employers to offer young persons open-ended full-time contracts. In 2013, **Romania** amended its law regarding the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation⁽⁴⁷⁾ with the objective to stimulate employers to hire people who are looking for a job and to ensure the protection of persons within the unemployment insurance system. The recent structural labour market reform in **Italy**⁽⁴⁸⁾ gives gradually rising levels of labour protection to people hired on open-ended permanent contracts, but it also softens protection against unfair dismissal. It should encourage firms to hire new staff and help combat unemployment, in particular youth unemployment.

3.2.2.2. Youth Guarantee

In the Youth Guarantee recommendation of 22 April 2013, Ministers agreed to make a good-quality offer to all young people up to age 25 of a job, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

Involvement of young people and/or youth organisations

Member States were asked to ensure consultation or involvement of young people and/or youth organisations in designing and further developing the Youth Guarantee scheme. Most of the countries consulted or involved their national youth councils or forums in the design, implementation and promotion of the national scheme. Other types of organisations listed are

47 Law No 76/2002, amended and supplemented by Law No 250/2013.

48 LEGGE 10 dicembre 2014, n. 183.

Figure 7 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the involvement of young people and/or youth organisations and the partnerships



youth structures of social partners (both sides of industry), other non-governmental youth organisations, youth parliaments and youth information centres.

In **Malta**, European Youth Card holders and youth workers were also consulted. Young people in **Finland** were invited to evaluate the Youth Guarantee through a survey which fed into the overall evaluation and further development of the scheme. Finland is also an example for an institutionalised involvement: the Finnish Youth Cooperation *Allianssi*, a national service and lobbying organisation for youth work, is member of the interministerial working group on the Youth Guarantee. **Bulgaria's** Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan was developed by an inter-institutional working group which included representatives of youth organisations. In **Lithuania**, representatives of ministries, both sides of industry and youth organisations signed a memorandum of cooperation on the implementation of the

Youth Guarantee. Another example is the **Czech Republic** where young people and non-governmental youth organisations are – alongside representatives of different ministries, social partners, regional authorities, municipalities and educational institutions – part of advisory boards established in each regional labour office in 2004. The national labour office is responsible for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. In **Romania**, the Young Entrepreneurs' Association *Asociatia Patronatul Tinerilor Intreprinzatori din Romania* was consulted. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the youth council participates in a working group on the Youth Guarantee, which was established within the public employment service. In **Italy**, representative youth organisations were involved in the preparation of the operational programme of the Youth Employment Initiative as well as in the monitoring committee for the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Partnerships

Building up partnership-based approaches is an important feature of the Youth Guarantee. In two thirds of the countries, partnerships were established between public and private employment services, education and training institutions, career guidance services and with other specialised youth services. These specialised youth services are either non-governmental youth organisations, youth centres, outreach youth services or others (those

mentioned include local youth offices, social work, municipalities, government bodies, public-private partnerships).

In **Malta**, *Aġenzija Żgħażaġh*, which provides a number of services to young people, is one of the key institutions involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. In **Estonia**, the national youth council, the Estonian youth work centre and the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres are amongst the key organisations supporting and delivering the scheme. In **Austria**,

Figure 8 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the type of youth services involved in partnerships



these are the Centre of Competence for Open Youth Work 'bOJA' and the youth information centres (*Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos*). The **Finnish** Youth Act laid down provisions on outreach youth work and multi-disciplinary cooperation at local level. The Youth Guarantee is seen as a way to make this kind of activities available all over the country. In **Croatia**, the public employment service supports the

development of Job Clubs (*Razvoj klubova za zapošljavanje mladih*), which offer intensive short-term targeted programmes for small groups of young people which are guided and managed by Job Club leaders. The programmes consist of tailor-made support and individualised service, such as training of job search skills, goal-setting and motivational workshops.

Finland – Tailor-made training provided by youth centres

Nuotta training is a service offered by the Finnish Youth Centres, a nationwide organisation founded in 1993 to promote youth centres in Finland. The service co-funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture relies on volunteerism, practical applications, a participatory spirit and community. These elements are implemented in either daily or intensive training that is tailor-made to suit the needs of the individual or group in question. The expertise of the youth centres in experiential and action-based pedagogy is instrumental in the training, where each of the youth centre's strong points and operating environments are used to the fullest.

<http://www.snk.fi/en/services/nuotta+training/>

Poland – Outreach youth services

Voluntary Labour Corps (*Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy*, OHP) is a state organisation functioning under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The primary objective of OHP is to create adequate conditions for proper social and vocational development of young people, including special activities that are addressed to disadvantaged young people to support them in the process of going out of poverty, unemployment and social pathology effects. Actions taken by OHP are addressed to young people aged 15 to 25 years. The tasks are carried out by the central headquarters of OHP and 16 regional headquarters together with 49 youth education and job centres and nine education and nurture centres.

The aim of the cooperation of OHP at local level is to ensure the widest outreach to young people requiring special support in terms of education and employment. OHP has a network of over 700 units of care, education, training and labour market services, spread throughout the country (most often located in smaller towns). OHP units have developed an effective system of reaching young people who are disadvantaged in the labour market, through cooperation with schools, education offices, churches (parish communities) and other institutions. OHP cooperates also with local governments and its specialised units (social welfare centers, family assistance centers, etc.).

<http://www.ohp.pl/en/>

Estonia – The contribution of youth work to the Youth Guarantee

Youth work contributes to the development of young people and helps to acquire knowledge and life skills. In preparation for working life, methods increasing young people's contact with working life and developing their social skills are of utmost importance.

During the period 2008-2013, support from the European Social Fund helped to increase the quality of local youth work institutions in solving young people's problems and the possibilities of young people to acquaint themselves with working life. The 'Startline' website (www.stardiplats.ee) was set up, helping young people to describe their acquired knowledge and skills to employers.

To develop social skills, young people can volunteer in activities offered by youth organisations. In addition to participating in youth work in Estonia, each year several dozens of young people have the possibility to work in youth work organisations outside Estonia via the European Voluntary Service scheme.

<http://www.entk.ee/developingyouthworkquality>

3.2.2.3. Developing entrepreneurial and creative competences

The above-mentioned European expert group on how to promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people recommended developing concrete tools to enable young people to develop entrepreneurial and creative competences through non-formal and informal learning. Most of the quoted measures aiming at this are part of strategies, programmes or projects already described above. Some documents, for instance national youth strategies in the **Czech Republic** and **Serbia**, emphasise the role of non-formal learning in developing transversal skills. Specific national structures and programmes also support youth work and non-formal learning. In **Hungary**, the 'Design Terminal', a national creative industry centre promoting and strengthening entrepreneurs, provides free of charge

mentoring and consulting sessions in order to help young people gaining the skills and knowledge needed to enter the labour market.

In response to the expert group's recommendations, **Slovakia** organised a regional round table gathering representatives of regional employers, secondary schools and universities, youth NGOs and other youth work structures as well as regional and local administrative bodies with the aim to find common ground for the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning. This led to a declaration on the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work. A follow-up of this initiative is a national school competition promoting non-formal education, funded by the European Social Fund. Slovakia also included the youth worker profession in its National Qualifications Framework with a clearly defined set of competencies.

Greece – Ideatree Contest

Ideatree is a nationwide contest on innovation and youth entrepreneurship for young people aged 16 to 35 years old. It was set up by the Foundation of Youth & Lifelong Learning of Greece (INEDIBIM) in 2014.

The objectives of the competition are:

- enhancement and promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and extroversion of young workforce of our country;
- promotion of research, innovation production and extroversion as basic philosophy on upgrading;
- competitiveness of the country and the promotion of its creative and productive potential;
- encouragement of start-ups in sectors of high added value and innovation.

This project was funded with support from the Lifelong Learning programme. <http://ideatree.gr/>

3.2.2.4. Youth entrepreneurship fostering social inclusion of young people

In the Council conclusions of 20 May 2014, Ministers agreed on measures to boost youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people, especially in the area of social entrepreneurship.

Promoting entrepreneurial education from an early age

Most measures promoting entrepreneurial education from an early age and highlighting the role of non-formal and informal

learning are part of general strategies described above; some countries highlight additional initiatives in this area. For instance, **Luxembourg** supported innovative educational projects which enhance entrepreneurial spirit ('Go-first', 'Go-on', 'Go-further'). In its Promoting Entrepreneurship and Flexibility programme, **Slovenia** developed a holistic approach to entrepreneurship education, which involves all school types and levels and also puts emphasis on training of professionals in schools. A broad coalition of partners was established, and an informal working group on

entrepreneurship in education shall integrate entrepreneurship in a systematic way into the education institutions. Amongst other initiatives, the **Netherlands** launched a Young Entrepreneur programme for all levels of school (from primary school to university) with the aim of ensuring that each student gets in touch with entrepreneurship over the course of his or her education. In **Estonia**, the Entrepreneurship Awareness programme aims at enhancing entrepreneurship spirit and culture in society as well as helping potential and operating companies to develop, by providing a range of services such as consultancy and training. There is a strong focus on projects highlighting the importance of non-formal learning.

Promoting youth work and voluntary activities

Many measures promote youth work and voluntary activities as key instruments in developing transversal skills, which are needed in running businesses and entrepreneurial action. For instance, **Cyprus'** 2014-2020 Lifelong Learning strategy foresees the establishment of a mechanism for validation of non-formal learning in addition to enhancing cooperation between the youth board of Cyprus and youth NGOs, and to developing a specific strategy on entrepreneurship including formal and non-formal education. In **Austria**, a specific law on volunteering supports the development of quality volunteering services and helps acknowledging the educational effects of volunteering, providing also financial support. **Slovenia's** Public Interest in Youth Sector Act is a harmonised set of various sectoral public policies with the aim of integrating youth in economic, cultural and political life of their communities; it also serves to develop youth work and support youth organisations. In addition, youth awards recognise extraordinary achievements in the youth sector. **Serbia** carried out a mapping study on EU practices in recognition of competencies gained through non-formal learning in youth

work, demonstrating their relevance to young people's employability. The research served as a basis for developing a recognition tool for competencies gained through youth work in Serbia. This tool should help young people increase their employability through systematic competence development and career planning.

Supporting business start-ups and social enterprises

Many countries have put measures in place which support business start-ups and social enterprises in overcoming considerable barriers to access finance, support services and mentoring possibilities. They are either part of broader entrepreneurship programmes or specific funding schemes. The **United Kingdom**, for instance, has established a New Enterprise Allowance⁽⁴⁹⁾ scheme to support business start-ups for inactive people aged 18 or over. These loans are combined with mentoring support. **Finland** has introduced (as part of the Youth Guarantee) entrepreneurship workshops for young people under the age of 30 for the development of their business ideas. Subsequently, participants can apply for start-up grants. The **Czech Republic** offers support for start-ups ('CzechAccelerator'), coaching, mentoring and counselling ('CzechEkoSystem') and a guarantee programme for social enterprises (2015-2023). **Portugal** also created a support programme for social businesses. The **Netherlands** set up a Social Enterprise Lab as a community of practice. In **Lithuania**, social entrepreneurship is promoted via a national entrepreneurship action plan (2014-2020), whilst France does so via a *plan entrepreneurs des quartiers*. **Poland's** national programme for entrepreneurship supports new and existing enterprises. It is also addressed to young people and aims at building a positive image of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial learning, including business creation.

49 <https://www.gov.uk/new-enterprise-allowance>

Ireland – *Foróige* Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship

Foróige is a leading youth organisation in Ireland who operates the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) programme in cooperation with educational institutions. In 2013 it received funding from the Ulster Bank's Community Impact Fund.

Foróige NFTE is committed to changing the lives of young people in disadvantaged communities by enabling them to develop core skills in business and enterprise, and in doing so help them to unlock their individual talents and potential. *Foróige* NFTE operates in-school and out-of-school programmes, both of which have been shown to be successful in increasing school completion and college attendance rates. The programme is delivered to young people from 12 to 18 years of age through schools and youth centres throughout Ireland. The programme runs from September to May. Each year, teachers and youth workers attend an intensive training programme 'NFTE University', which equips them with the necessary skills and resources to successfully deliver the programme directly to young people.

During the programme, students study all aspects of starting and successfully running a business; receive a seed grant to start their business; visit wholesalers to buy their business supplies; engage with entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, business executives, community leaders; visit local and national companies; work with business corporate mentors; sell their products at the NFTE Class Trade Fair; and prepare and present their business plan to a panel of judges. In 2013, 1 500 young people graduated from NFTE.

<http://www.foroige.ie/our-work/youth-entrepreneurship>

Increasing the visibility of social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is a relatively new concept; only few countries have legislation to lay down its definition, objectives, principles and to better capture this new type of business. In the **Czech Republic** there is a Social Entrepreneurship Act; **Latvia** plans to adopt regulation by 2018, and **Lithuania** has a specific act under preparation with an implementation period till 2020. On the basis of its Social Entrepreneurship Act, **Slovenia** has set up an implementation strategy for 2013-2016. In other countries social entrepreneurship aspects are included in general legislation or strategies linked to enterprise or employment issues, for instance in the national action plan for youth employment in **Cyprus**, in the national employment strategy in **Slovakia**, and in the Youth Guarantee programme in the French Community of **Belgium**, while the Flemish Community developed a Social Innovation Factory.⁽⁵⁰⁾ In 2014, **Poland** set up a national programme for the development of social economy, which outlines the

general direction in this sector. In the education and youth fields the programme focuses on entrepreneurial learning from the earliest stage of education, by promoting and implementing cooperative student ideas, traineeships in social enterprises and social economy as well as creating youth funds for the development of informal youth initiatives. **Greece** adopted a Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship legal act in 2011 and uses its operational programme Development in Human Resources (2013) to provide information, counselling, coaching and mentoring for new social entrepreneurs and training in social economy and social entrepreneurship.

Enhancing entrepreneurial attitudes and skills

Traineeships, apprenticeships as well as learning mobility activities, including volunteering and training courses, are the most frequently reported measures which facilitate exchanges, sharing of experiences and other learning activities enhancing entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. The

50 <http://www.socialeinnovatiefabriek.be/nl/english#sthash.TwtqMPF.dpbs>

Spain – Social network *Emprende XL*

Emprende XL is an online platform functioning like a social network set up in Spain in 2013. Its main objective is to promote entrepreneurship amongst young people up to 35 years of age, and to act as reference point for new entrepreneurship projects. It provides training and counselling to young entrepreneurs who are involved in this network. It also offers services for improving collaboration between various actors and to obtain funding for the projects involved.

The social network allows users to share their ideas; there are more than 2 100 free training hours available through an e-learning platform; experts' advice and experience from other entrepreneurs are also provided. Moreover, users may, through the platform, find public and private sources of funding to implement their projects.

To date, *Emprende XL* has had almost 4 000 registered users, but it is planned to extend its outreach to some Latin American countries. The platform was established through collaboration between the Spanish Youth Institute and Biznet, a private company.

www.emprendexl.com

Czech project 'Internship in Companies – learning by practicing' was funded by the ESF for people with little or without work experience including the unemployed. **Turkey** offers Applied Entrepreneurship Training programmes to support young entrepreneurs. In **Croatia**, the 2013-2020 Entrepreneurship Development strategy and the Entrepreneurial Impulse programme include education for craft to enable the acquisition of key skills and competencies for craft occupations, but also to involve small business entities in education. In this context scholarships and apprenticeships were financed by the ESF.

Cross-sectoral cooperation to create favourable conditions for young entrepreneurs

Taking into account the complex environment that influences young people's life, the need for cross-sectoral, inter-institutional cooperation to find adequate responses to young people's needs is frequently highlighted. In most countries such platforms and networks involving various sectors are already established as part of strategies, action plans or programmes linked to entrepreneurship, education and employment. **Lithuania's** National Youth Policy Development programme (2011-2019) strives towards inter-institutional and cross-sectoral cooperation in developing a coherent, evidence- and

knowledge-based youth policy. **Slovenia** set up an entrepreneurship programme to bring together previously fragmented funding. And the **Czech** Concept of Support for Small and Midrange Entrepreneurs (2014-2020) promotes projects which aim to create favourable conditions for young entrepreneurs.

3.2.3. Other policy measures in this field of action

One third of the countries list policy measures here but most of the topics are already identified in the youth-related aims and possible initiatives of the EU Youth Strategy. They concern the provision of suitable skills, support to young people's entrepreneurship and more particularly to start-up funds, traineeships and other measures to stimulate the integration of young people in the labour market.

3.3. Youth-led initiatives and actions at EU level

For the European Youth Forum (YFJ), **quality employment** is essential to ensuring a decent life for young people all over Europe. Against the background of the economic crisis that impacted heavily on the quality of employment, the YFJ analysed the evolution

of working conditions, skills usage, income and wages as well as job stability and job security for young people. The results of this research are available in the 2013 publication 'Quality Jobs for Young People'.⁽⁵¹⁾

The Council, in its Resolution on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment (May 2011), stressed the importance of flexicurity measures to boost youth employment. However, the YFJ's report 'Youth in the crisis – What went wrong?'⁽⁵²⁾ (2014) reveals that many Member States imposing austerity measures disproportionately reduced the protection of young people by cutting minimum wages and unemployment benefits. The YFJ therefore thinks that measures ensuring better protection of young people in the labour market must be put back on the EU agenda.

The YFJ is in favour of the **Youth Guarantee** and has closely followed the developments since the adoption of the Council recommendation to this effect. Based on the publication 'Youth organisations and the Youth Guarantee in Europe'⁽⁵³⁾ (2013), the forum and its membership have identified several hurdles in the Member States, such as the need to prioritise the Youth Guarantee and make it part of a broader investment programme in public employment services and education and training systems. It is also crucial that Member States ensure quality offers and protect young people from ending up in precarious work or poorly designed training schemes without additional benefit for their personal and professional development. Another problem is that too many young people have never heard of the Youth Guarantee. Finally, only a few Member States have effectively involved young people in shaping, implementing and monitoring the Youth Guarantee. This, however, is a vital element of the scheme because it promotes transparency, increases the outreach and

ensures that the programme is tailored to the specific needs of young people.

The above-mentioned publication also identified good examples of successful cooperation between national governments and youth organisations. For instance, Slovenia's national youth council was heavily involved in the design of the Youth Guarantee. It led the corresponding information campaign and this approach proved to be successful: according to a 2014 Flash Eurobarometer survey,⁽⁵⁴⁾ young people in Slovenia are much more aware of the scheme than other nationalities.

The YFJ draws attention to the disappointment felt among organised young people at being denied any real input into a policy that directly impacts on them. Although the forum participated in several EU-level events, such as the 'Youth Guarantee: Making it Happen' conference (organised by the Commission in April 2014), there is little involvement of organised young people in monitoring implementation at EU level. For instance, young people were not formally consulted when the Employment Committee⁽⁵⁵⁾ put in place the Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee.

The YFJ has also called for a **Quality Framework for Traineeships** to combat youth unemployment, precarious employment and social exclusion. Whilst the Council recommendation of 10 March 2014 set out quality principles regarding the education component of internships in the EU, it did not address the most pressing area of concern for young people – the issue of remuneration. The YFJ believes that too many young Europeans are being exploited when first entering the labour market through unpaid traineeships. Therefore the forum's European Quality Charter for Internships and Apprenticeships⁽⁵⁶⁾ calls for

51 http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_qualityjobs_en_issuu_

52 <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/youth-in-the-crisis-what-went-wrong-2/>

53 http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_youthorganisationsandtheyouthgu

54 Flash Eurobarometer *European Youth in 2014* of the European Parliament (EP EB395) of April 2014.

55 Advisory committee for Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in the Employment and Social Affairs Council (EPSCO).

56 <http://www.youthforum.org/quality-internships/>

a minimum level of remuneration for traineeships taking place outside education. In the YFJ's view, governments have a duty to adopt legislation that ensures equal and fair treatment of trainees in the workplace, going above and beyond the Council recommendation. The forum also actively worked with businesses to jointly draft an Employers' Guide to Quality Internships.⁽⁵⁷⁾ This guide is aimed at employers who are interested in setting up traineeship schemes or who would like to improve their traineeship opportunities for young people.

Additionally, the forum and its member organisations contribute to promoting **entrepreneurial and creative skills** through non-formal and informal learning. With its 2014 publication 'Money Grows on Trees – Youth Organisations Setting up

Cooperatives'⁽⁵⁸⁾ the YFJ has provided a six-step guide to help young entrepreneurs set up their own cooperative. Besides creating new jobs for young people and stimulating economic activity, cooperatives are particularly valuable because they transfer the principle of democracy to the business world. Cooperatives tend to be financially autonomous from the financial markets, which makes them less affected by international crises. They empower their members, are embedded in their local communities, promote responsible and sustainable management and often work in close cooperation with public authorities. Finally, cooperatives can also be a part of a financial sustainability strategy of youth organisations, enabling them to continue operating in times of severe public budget cuts.

57 <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/an-employers-guide-to-quality-internships/>

58 http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/05/YFJ_MoneyGrowsOnTreesweb.pdf

4 Social inclusion

Under this strand of the EU Youth Strategy, the social exclusion and poverty of young people and perpetuation of such problems should be prevented, while mutual solidarity between society and young people should be strengthened. Another aim is to promote equal opportunities for all and to combat all forms of discrimination.

4.1. EU initiatives and action

Fighting poverty and social exclusion is one of the headline targets of **Europe 2020**, the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion by 2020 seems difficult to achieve, given that the unemployment and poverty and social exclusion levels in Europe have reached record highs due largely to the economic crisis in 2008 and subsequent recessions in the majority of Member States.

Young people are particularly vulnerable and the number of policies aimed at them and their social inclusion has increased in the aftermath of the crisis. The **European platform against poverty and social exclusion** ⁽⁵⁹⁾ is one of seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy. It is designed to help EU countries reach the above-mentioned headline target. It aims inter alia at delivering actions across the whole policy spectrum such as the labour market, minimum income support, health-care, education, housing and access to

basic banking accounts and at making better use of EU funds to support social inclusion. It also provides the frame for working with civil society and for enhanced policy coordination among EU countries through the use of the open method of coordination for social protection and social inclusion and the Social Protection Committee ⁽⁶⁰⁾ in particular. The social situation of children and of young people in Europe ⁽⁶¹⁾ was discussed in the Social Protection Committee in 2013 and 2014.

In February 2013, the Commission adopted a **Social Investment Package** calling particularly for investment in children and young people to increase their opportunities in life. It includes a Commission recommendation against child poverty, pointing to the need for children to have access to adequate resources, access to affordable quality services, and a right to participate. An overall emphasis is put on preventive approaches and early intervention. In this context, the Commission built an inventory of 140 ICT-enabled social innovation initiatives of which 50 are focussed on youth initiatives, addressing mainly education and training, employment, employability and social inclusion. ⁽⁶²⁾

The EU acts on behalf of EU citizens to prevent them being discriminated against on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and sex, and has introduced and initiated a broad set of measures ⁽⁶³⁾ to combat different forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia. In 2015,

59 COM(2010) 758 final of 16.12.2010.

60 Advisory committee for Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in the Employment and Social Affairs Council (EPSCO).

61 *Social Europe – Aiming for inclusive growth – Annual report of the Social Protection Committee on the social situation in the European Union* (2014), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

62 Research project 'IESI – ICT-Enabled Social Innovation in support to the implementation of the EU Social Investment Package', <http://is.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pages/EAP/eInclusion.IESI.html>.

63 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/racism-xenophobia/index_en.htm

the Commission published a report entitled 'Overview of **youth discrimination** in the European Union'.⁽⁶⁴⁾ It focuses on two areas of discrimination from the perspective of young people, namely discrimination on the grounds of racial and ethnic origin, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The report found that improving the quality of education and employment for LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex) and ethnic minority youth requires an inclusive environment. This can be achieved through training of teachers and creation of youth networks, as well as awareness-raising on rights and prospects of these vulnerable groups.

Under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (2014-2020), the Commission currently supports the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO). This organisation promotes youth empowerment and leadership, builds the capacity of member organisations and argues for LGBTQ youth and student rights at European level.

Another activity regarding **information and education activities for young people about their rights** is the Commission 'Consumer Classroom' project launched in 2013, aiming at promoting consumer education.⁽⁶⁵⁾ This multilingual website encourages and facilitates the teaching of consumer education in European secondary schools; it is addressed to teachers – all across Europe – of students aged 12 to 18, counting more than 21 000 registered users, including over 13 600 teachers who are part of a dynamic web community throughout the EU.

The Commission proposed in November 2013 a directive on procedural safeguards for children suspected or accused in criminal

proceedings.⁽⁶⁶⁾ This directive will lay down **minimum rules concerning children involved in criminal proceedings**, taking account of their particular vulnerability (e.g. mandatory assistance by a lawyer). In addition, any deprivation of liberty of children should be a measure of last resort and alternative measures should be explored. The Commission also adopted a recommendation on procedural safeguards for all vulnerable persons suspected or accused in criminal proceedings including also children.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Children who become victims of crime will be better protected and will get better access to justice thanks to the **Victims' Directive**,⁽⁶⁸⁾ adopted in 2012 and due to be implemented in the Member States by 16 November 2015.

European youth cooperation on social inclusion

Following publication of the 2012 EU Youth Report, three sets of Council conclusions and one Council resolution⁽⁶⁹⁾ relating to social inclusion of young people were adopted under the EU Youth Strategy. This is the result of the Trio Presidency of Ireland (January-June 2013), Lithuania (July-December 2013) and Greece (January-June 2014), whose main priority was to tackle social inclusion from different angles.

First, the Council conclusions on the **contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people** make it clear that youth work can enhance the skill sets of young people while addressing the barriers they encounter, and may be particularly beneficial for young people with fewer opportunities; these conclusions advocate mechanisms

64 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/overview_youth_discrimination_en.pdf

65 <http://www.consumerclassroom.eu/>

66 COM(2013) 822 final of 27.11.2013. In accordance with international law instruments, any individual below the age of 18 years will be considered as a child.

67 C(2013) 8178 final of 27.11.2013.

68 Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57-73.

69 All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

to ensure that youth work is quality-based, outcomes-focused and evidence-informed, and can reach out to more young people, especially those at risk of social exclusion. Second, the Council conclusions on **enhancing the social inclusion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs)** underline the need to focus on this vulnerable group of young people with an individually tailored and flexible approach to effectively and successfully (re) integrating them into the labour market, the education or training system, and social life. Third, the Council adopted conclusions on **promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of all young people**.

The Council resolution on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process including social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014) lists the priority areas which emerged from the Structured Dialogue and youth conferences in Dublin, Vilnius and Thessaloniki, seeking to enhance the social inclusion of all young people in Europe: promoting equal opportunities for all young people; promoting cooperation between education authorities, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders; promoting equal access of young people to rights and to opportunities; and strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation on and between local, regional, national and European

levels. The importance of focusing on the **participation and social inclusion of young people with a migrant background**, and the role of youth work and youth policy to deal with the growing diversity among all young people, had already been underlined under the Cypriot Presidency of the Council of the EU (July-December 2012).

The Commission published the **Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity strategy in the field of youth** in December 2014. It outlines the support and possibilities available through the Erasmus+ programme (youth) for inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The strategy also sets out the aims to be reached and defines the target groups. It seeks to ensure that Erasmus+ responds positively to diversity in the field of youth: 'Diversity in all its forms is referred to throughout, alongside inclusion. This ensures there is a dual focus – not only on including young people but also on strengthening the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to fully accept, support and promote the differences in society'.⁽⁷¹⁾

The European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (2007-2013) supported research activities related to the social inclusion of youth at the margins of society.⁽⁷²⁾

EU-funded research projects on social inclusion

Ongoing FP7 projects:

- SocIEtY – Social Innovation, Empowering the Young for the Common Good, proposes a shift in how inequality among young people and its ensuing disadvantages can be tackled, applying the capability approach (<http://www.society-youth.eu/>)
- CITISPYCE – Combating inequalities through innovative social practices of, and for, young people in cities across Europe (<http://www.aston.ac.uk/lss/research/research-centres/interland/citispyce/>)

Ongoing Horizon 2020 project:

- EXCEPT – Social Exclusion of Youth in Europe: cumulative disadvantages, coping strategies, effective policies and transfer

70 Overall close to 24% of Youth in Action participants were young people with fewer opportunities.

71 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/inclusion-diversity-strategy_en.pdf

72 http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/social-inclusion-of-youth_en.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none

4.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

4.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

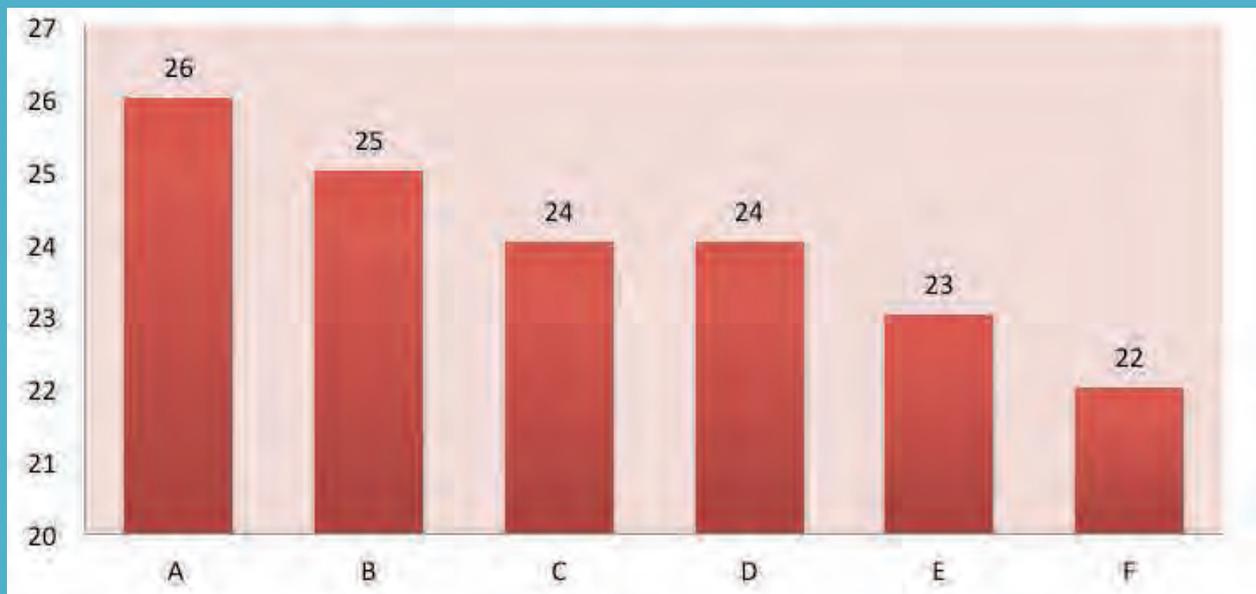
The main measures at national level concern support to youth work and youth centres as well as facilitating access to quality services. Initiatives supporting the development of intercultural awareness amongst young people arrive in second position. Globally, a significant amount of countries have developed, for the major part after 2010, measures in all areas mentioned below. This clearly shows the importance attached to the integration of socially excluded young people. Cross-sectoral cooperation was widely used for the initiation, implementation and monitoring of these measures.

4.2.1.1. Youth work and youth centres as means for social inclusion

The majority of countries took measures in support of youth work and youth centres to improve social inclusion. Many of them developed national youth programmes that enclose general policies on social inclusion and on the development of youth work and youth centres. This is the case for example of **Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia**. A number of countries have specific youth work strategies ⁽⁷³⁾ in place, such as the **United Kingdom** with the Scottish strategy ‘Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019’. **Estonia’s** European Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013’ aims at developing youth work quality.

Several Member States strengthened the network of youth centres, such as **Luxembourg**, which set up a national network of

Figure 9 Number of Member States’ reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of social inclusion



- A – Youth work and youth centres as means for social inclusion
- B – Development of intercultural awareness
- C – Addressing homelessness, housing and financial exclusion
- D – Promoting access to quality services
- E – Promoting specific support for young families
- F – Supporting youth information and education about their rights

local youth centres, and **Finland** with its youth centres network aiming at developing youth work methods, spreading knowledge and promoting youth mobility both at national and international level. **Austria** also created a network of youth centres (the Centre of Competence for Open Youth Work 'boJA'), and the **Netherlands** established the *Nederlands Jeugdinstuut*. **Malta** founded 'Youth Cafés', a welcoming place for young people offering special services. **Sweden** and the **Czech Republic** provide direct financial support to youth organisations.

4.2.1.2. Development of intercultural awareness

Most countries adopted various measures to support intercultural awareness amongst young people. **Denmark**, for instance, launched an 'Initiative Part of the National Strategy against Honour-Related Conflicts' to provide information and open a dialogue between youngsters with a view to changing attitudes towards honour-related conflicts. Developing intercultural awareness at school and in cultural institutions is the purpose of the **Netherlands'** *Cultuureducatie met kwaliteit* programme. **Slovenia** established a 'Youth Ambassadors of Intercultural Dialogue' programme to facilitate understanding of other cultures; this is based on youth participation. This country also launched 'The Role Models Attract' campaign, which is made of video compilations on various topics concerning intercultural awareness that can be used by educators, counsellors, mentors, cultural animators and others. One of these videos, 'Richness in Diversity', promotes key competences needed in a multicultural environment. In **Finland**, an essential criterion for awarding grants to youth organisations is the promotion of multiculturalism and equality. **Sweden** launched an action plan to safeguard democracy against violent extremism, which is specifically targeted at young people. While the Flemish Community of **Belgium** published

a call for projects regarding tolerance and anti-homophobia, the French Community developed a *Histoires croisées* programme to facilitate collaboration between youth organisations, youth centres, local youth movement groups and public youth services. The aim is to share experiences amongst youth groups from different social backgrounds. Lastly, **Austria** kicked off a global learning strategy with the purpose of providing young people with educational responses to the globalisation process. Since 2010, there has been a counselling centre specialised on questions related to youth extremism,⁽⁷⁴⁾ including prevention, intervention and a helpline.

4.2.1.3. Supporting youth information and education about their rights

Many countries provide support to youth information and education about young people's rights. Most measures were taken after 2010. The tendency is that these are included in broader national youth (work) strategies or other governmental documents (for instance in **Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Sweden, Croatia** and the **Czech Republic**).

Denmark, however, launched specific campaigns and education activities on children's rights with a particular focus on privacy, violence and children in a divorce situation. **Luxembourg** and **Austria** set up online portals, providing young people with a range of information, among others about their rights and obligations. The Ombudsman for Children in **Finland** and the Central Union for Child Welfare, an NGO, promote the rights of children and young people. In **Italy**, a specific policy on children's rights was initiated in 2011; there now exists a 'National Authority for Children and Adolescents'. Similarly, in 2013, the Flemish Parliament Act on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children's rights entered into force in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**.

4.2.1.4. Addressing homelessness, housing and financial exclusion

Measures addressing youth homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with a focus on young people, taken in many countries mostly after 2010, are usually based on cross-sectoral cooperation. A range of countries carried out studies, reports or reviews on the current level of poverty and housing needs of young people.

The conclusions of the 2015 poverty report issued by the German-speaking Community of **Belgium** draw the attention on the need to harmonise and better coordinate the living space available. **Denmark** also published an annual poverty review and launched a study on how to tackle social and material deprivation linked to economic poverty. **Finland** carried out a study on the experience, views and problems linked to housing issues of young people, with a special focus on immigrants. Many other countries implemented national programmes and strategies or adopted regulations related to this issue. Amongst other development and reform programmes, **Bulgaria** adopted a 'National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Encouragement of Social Inclusion 2020' to tackle youth homelessness,

housing and financial exclusion. **Ireland** also has a youth homelessness strategy in place, while **Denmark** provides temporary transitional housing for the most vulnerable young homeless people through social reserve agreements in 2014 and 2015. The country also works on solid preventive and early intervention targeted at young homeless people as well as young people considered at risk of becoming homeless. **Luxembourg** created housing structures for young people in distress as well, and **Malta** built temporary to permanent residential homes and provided aid in the transitional phase. **Poland's** Flat for the Young programme provides public funds for young married couples, single parents and singles (until 35 years) who buy their first flat.

Regarding financial exclusion of young people, the **Netherlands** has taken measures in support of young people and their parents to enable them to pay for the education system, whereas **Finland** protects minors from negative effects of gambling by enhancing the age limit to 18 years and by restricting gambling advertisement. The **United Kingdom** (England) launched a 'Fair Chance Fund' to support young homeless NEETs in entering employment, education, or training.

Czech Republic – *Programy finanční gramotnosti* (Financial Literacy programmes)

'Financial Literacy', an NGO, launched different programmes to develop projects in the field of further education of citizens – especially young people and children – in the area of financial literacy, by teaching people how to effectively manage their own properties, in particular regarding their financial resources. The objective is to use better knowledge acquired as prevention instrument against school bullying, crime of children and youth, gambling, over-indebtedness, social exclusion, family and affiliate crises, extremism, fear of old age as well as other negative phenomena.

In 2014, the NGO was awarded, by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, a certificate accreditation giving it the legal status of a training institution until the end of 2017.

<http://www.financnigramotnost.eu/stranka/english-summary/78/>

4.2.1.5. Promoting access to quality services

Almost all countries took measures promoting access to quality services for young people, and this mostly after the inception of the EU Youth Strategy. The

establishment of youth centres which provide information targeted at young people is a common feature.

In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, youth advice centres (*Jongeren Advies Centrum*, JAC) offer this type of support at

local level, where young people can come along with their questions and problems. Likewise, the **Netherlands** has central points for youth, children and their parents, but also for professionals. **Slovenia** created a centre for information and career guidance within its national employment service, which is specifically targeted at pupils, students and young adults.

Access to psychological services is also increasingly being promoted. In **Cyprus**, the youth board implements an 'Anger Management Group for Adolescents' project, aimed at reducing the risk of dropping out of school for adolescents with risky and

aggressive behaviour. The project's purpose is to facilitate access to psychological services for young people whose families cannot support them. **Finland** has a new law on pupil and student welfare services with the objective to improve well-being in the school environment, notably by providing services of a psychologist and welfare officer in secondary education.

In several other countries (such as **Croatia, Ireland, Latvia** and **Malta**), enhancing the capacity of service providers targeted at young people at risk of social exclusion is part of the national youth strategy.

Sweden – The Online Youth Friendly Clinic (OMU)

The Swedish Online Youth Clinic (OMU) is a website whose overall aim is to improve young people's access to information related to sexual health and gender issues. It was set up in November 2008 and is run by the 'Council for Care', a non-commercial organisation funded by the Swedish regions. In Sweden, most regions have youth clinics, which specialise in sexual health and psychiatric care and are staffed by a range of professionals, including midwives, therapists and social workers. The success of these clinics led them to decide to set up a website, which young women and men aged between 13 and 25 can turn to for advice and services regarding birth control, pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease tests.

<http://www.umo.se/Andra-sprak/Om-UMO/About-UMO/>

4.2.1.6. Promoting specific support for young families

The majority of countries provide financial support to young families. The **Czech Republic**, for instance, took specific measures on taxation policy, social welfare and financial support for housing by taking into account the specific financial situation of young families. **Estonia** also financially helps young families to buy or renovate their homes. A state guarantee for mortgage has also been developed in order to allow young families to buy their own dwelling. **Italy** disposes of a fund for housing young families and young precarious parents. **Poland** financially and legally supports young parents who leave foster care, and young parents who need help in rising up their child.

Many other measures are worth mentioning, such as the establishment, by the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, of a new

public organisation providing information, opportunities and global support to young children's caretakers (Flemish Parliament Act on preventive care for young children – Agency Child & Family). **Sweden** launched a governmental 'Assignment to Implement Actions to Promote Young Parents to Complete their Education', and **Greece** developed a project named 'School for Parents', offering various courses on issues parents are (or could be) faced with in the education of their children, or on global and specific knowledge on family issues. **Cyprus'** programme called 'Parents Group for Parents with Children with Special Needs' provides support to young families facing a diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental disorder or a chronic condition of their child.

Several countries took general measures within their national policies or youth strategies, amongst others **Ireland, Slovenia, Finland**, the **United Kingdom** (Scotland) and the French Community of **Belgium**.

4.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

4.2.2.1. Cross-sectoral approach to improve community cohesion and solidarity

As highlighted in the EU Youth Strategy and reiterated by the Council on several occasions – such as in its resolution of 11 May 2010 on the active inclusion of young people – cross-sectoral cooperation is essential in promoting youth social inclusion. Nearly all countries covered by this report took relevant measures for at least one of the issues (youth employment, education, health and well-being, political participation, cultural and social participation, and housing and living conditions), involving minimum two different public authorities.

Cross-sectoral cooperation was widely used in the fields of youth employment and education, and this mainly between national ministries. In some cases, there is broader consultation and cooperation involving other public authorities or actors (e.g. national youth councils, national youth

agencies, representatives of a specific region, associations).

Cross-sectoral cooperation is also often practiced in the field of health and well-being and to a lesser extent in the other fields mentioned above. In addition, working across sectors was implemented in the **Czech Republic** regarding youth information, access to youth rights, leisure time, media, environment and global development, volunteering and mobility; and in **Denmark** regarding young families and young motherhood programmes.

Concerning youth employment, a number of countries, such as the **United Kingdom**, **Croatia** and the **Netherlands**, have developed specific national youth policies. **Serbia** undertook a policy assessment on youth employment in order to provide and develop more effective youth employment measures. Many Member States refer to measures contained in their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan.⁽⁷⁵⁾ For obvious reasons, measures taken in the field of youth employment are seen in connection with measures taken to improve the social inclusion of NEETs.

Figure 10 Number of Member States using a cross-sectoral approach involving minimum two different public authorities

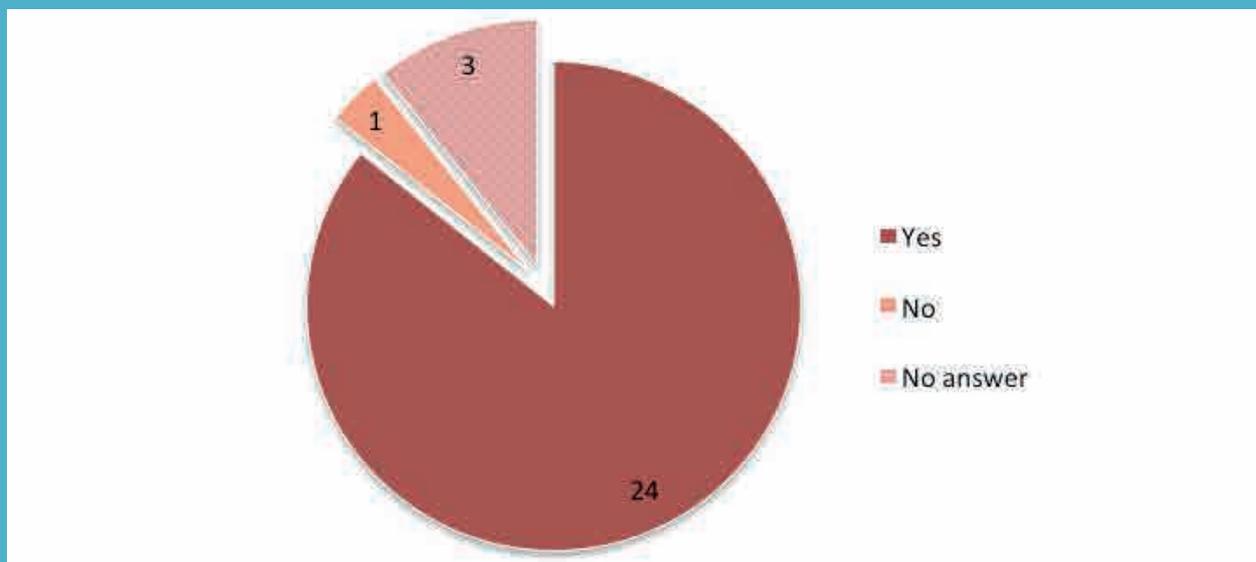
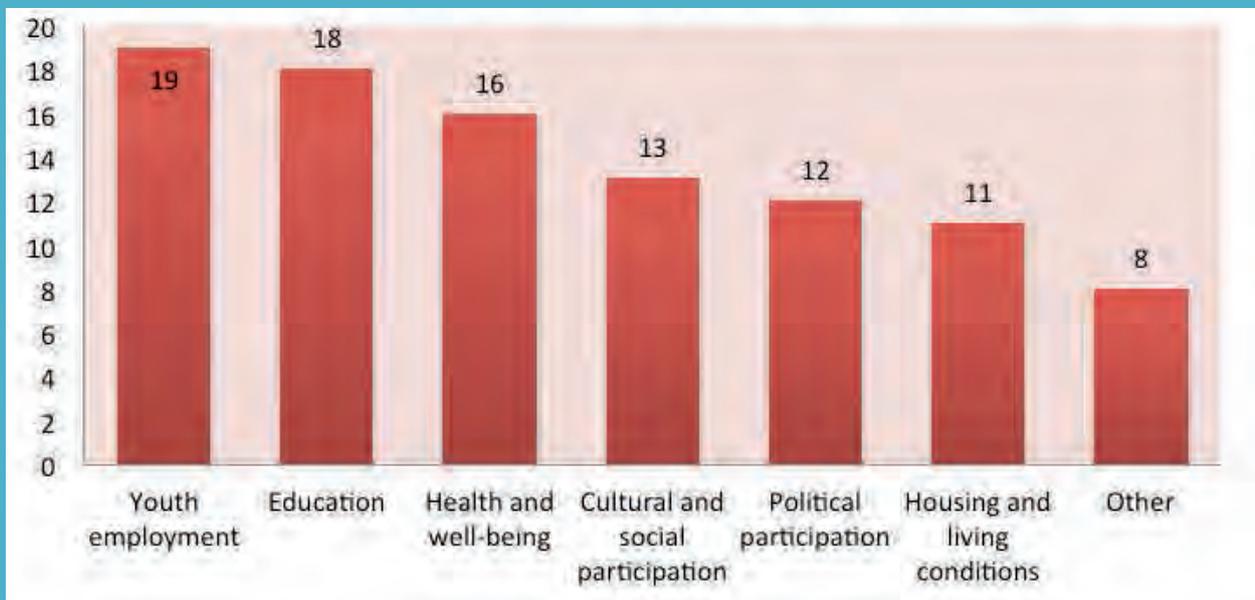


Figure 11 Number of Member States' reports addressing issues through cross-sectoral cooperation with at least two public authorities



In the fields of education and health and well-being, cross-sectoral cooperation took mostly place between two public authorities. Individual measures can be found in the respective chapters of this document. Remarkably, the education sector often works in cooperation with the employment sector or with the health sector. By way of example, cooperation was set up in **Sweden** between the Ministry of Employment and the Swedish National Agency for Education to work on a government assignment entitled 'Efforts to Create an Open and Inclusive Environment at Schools for Young LGBT People'.

4.2.2.2. Emphasis on youth with a migrant background

In its conclusions of 27 November 2012, the Council stressed the need to foster the social inclusion of young people, particularly those with a migrant background. A significant number of countries refer to initiatives addressing this issue.

Several countries, such as **Spain**, **Belgium** (French Community) and **Croatia**, took general measures at national level, not specifically targeting young people but including them. Many Member States developed language courses for young people with a migrant background. **Slovenia**, **Austria**, **Poland**, **Latvia**, **Greece** and **Malta** also developed language training for young foreign nationals and minorities with the purpose of better including them in society and increasing their ability to succeed in the national education system. **Turkey** launched a specific training programme which provides young migrants from Syria and Afghanistan with free Turkish language courses.

Italy's 'National Project for the Inclusion and the Integration of Roma, Sinti, and Travellers Children' focuses on these minorities; it is designed to prevent early school dropout through actions aimed at improving school attendance and educational success. **Denmark** also launched projects

with the objective to strengthen young ethnic minorities' participation in civil society and in Danish democracy as well as to organise activities enhancing their inclusion in local associations. The **Czech Republic** started an ESF project called 'Development of Counselling Services for Foreigners Provided by Job Centres' to develop and improve the standard of services provided by the national network of job services to (young) people with a migrant background. **Germany** has developed a specific national programme on services targeted at young people with a migrant background, and the **Netherlands** launched a *Diversiteit in Jeugdbeleid* policy, enabling children and young people with a migrant background as well as their parents to have easy access to general facilities such as educational support, youth work, sport and cultural facilities.

4.2.2.3. Supporting quality youth work to foster social inclusion

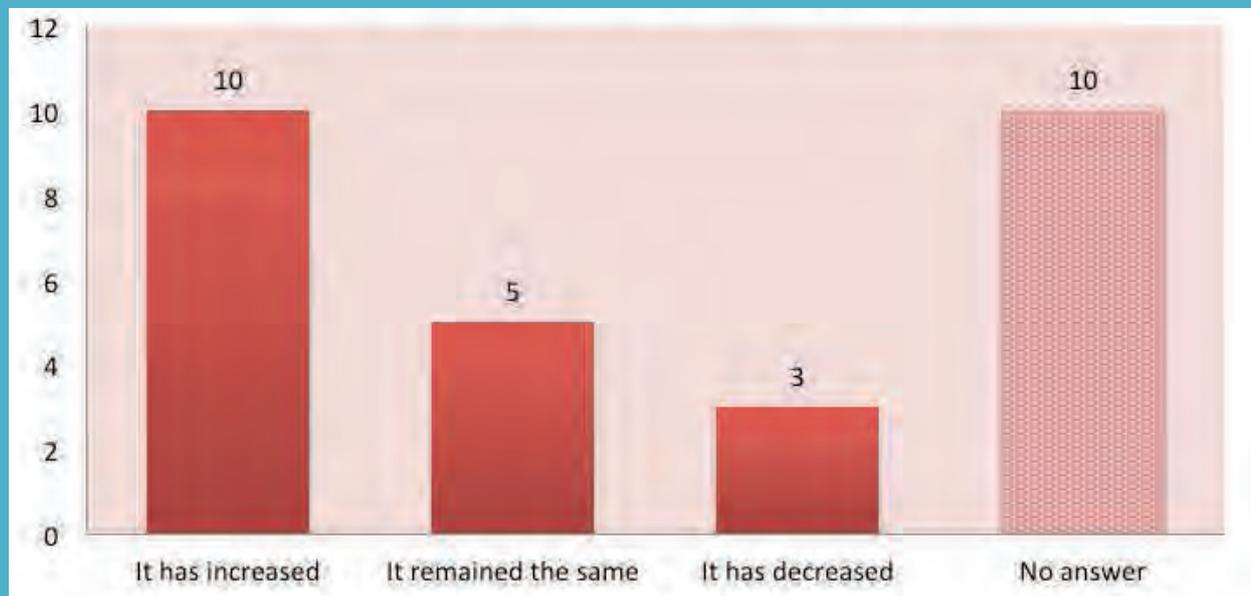
The majority of countries support quality youth work with a view to fostering social inclusion. Many do so by funding youth organisations or providing training for youth workers.

The **Netherlands** drew up a 'Policy Note Youth 2014-2019' setting the objective that youth work should reach all young people. The **Czech Republic** amended its state support programme for NGOs to ensure that youth organisations benefitting from subsidies meet accurate quality criteria. **France** also gives direct subsidies to national youth and non-formal education organisations through its Programme 163 *Jeunesse et vie associative*. In cooperation

with the Estonian Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and Research, **Estonia** introduced a youth work quality assessment system for local municipalities. Similarly, **Ireland** adopted a National Quality Standards Framework in Youth Work. **Slovenia** plans to integrate youth work in its operational programme for the use of EU Structural and Investment Funds, with the objective of supporting the development of quality systems in youth work, to define the professional qualification of a youth worker and to build on the education and training for youth workers and youth work. Within its national youth programme, **Croatia** aims at creating institutional requirements for the advancement of youth work through cooperation between NGOs and decision-makers. The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) in **Serbia** developed guidelines for the quality insurance of youth work.

4.2.2.4. Public funding for youth work

In two thirds of the countries, public funding is available to youth work activities fostering the social inclusion of young people. In most of them, the amount of public funding available to youth work activities is higher than three years before. In **Slovenia** the increase is linked to the use of EU Structural and Investment Funds. While in several countries – like the **Czech Republic**, **France** and **Sweden** – the level of public funding remained stable, it decreased in some other countries (**Italy**, **Netherlands**, **Ireland**) due to the crisis. In **Ireland**, for instance, funding for youth work services drastically fell between 2008 and 2014, whereas the budget for 2015 remains at the level of 2014.

Figure 12 Number of Member States mentioning the status of public funding for youth work in the past 3 years

4.2.2.5. Social inclusion of NEETs

Almost all countries took action on enhancing the social inclusion of NEETs, and this by way of cross-sectoral cooperation. However, these measures did not necessarily target the situation of NEETs but were addressed to all young people in need. Several Member States, such as **Ireland, Spain, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta** and **Slovenia**, refer to their national action plans, in particular their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans which are most relevant for NEETs. **Poland** and **Estonia** took measures to support NEETs in a comprehensive manner, helping them to get back to employment, education or training.

In **Germany**, a national initiative called 'Strengthen Youth' (*Jugend stärken*) focuses on NEETs, especially those who are not registered with the public employment service. England (**United Kingdom**) developed

a Youth Contract programme for 16- and 17-year-olds, which provides young people who face the greatest risk of becoming disengaged with the individualised help they need to re-engage sustainably in education, training or employment with training. England disposes of a 'Vulnerable and Disengaged People Fund' to support young people with special and complex needs, young care leavers and youth offenders who are easier victims of social exclusion. **Slovakia** currently works on a project named 'InNEETiative' to facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation between authorities and stakeholders, with a view to detecting and including NEETs. The project seeks to enable these young people to be personally involved in an activity and get a first working experience (traineeships in youth centres, voluntary service in public institutions, business sector, social enterprises, etc.).

Latvia – Šķelot viļņus (Break the Waves)

Šķelot viļņus (Break the Waves), a non-formal educational programme, seeks to ensure support to young people in prisons to help them to develop, change, educate and take responsibility. In order to achieve this goal, the project developed six steps including a ten-week long training programme (one training day per week) focusing on particular needs according to different groups of young people in various prisons.

The first edition of the project (2012-2013) was coordinated by the National Agency for the Youth in Action programme and financed by the EU. The second edition is financed by the Latvian state budget.

<http://skelotvilnus.blogspot.be/2014/12/eng.html>

4.2.2.6. Priority areas defined in the Council resolution of May 2014

The Council resolution on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process including social inclusion of young people (20 May 2014) lists the following priority areas to enhance the social inclusion of all young people in Europe.

Promoting equal opportunities for all young people

Two thirds of the countries report on initiatives in this field. In several countries these were legislative measures, such as in **Italy** which endorsed a 'Legislative Decree on the National System of Certification of Skills and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, No 13' in 2013, or in **Croatia** whose 'Croatian Qualification Framework Act; OG 22/2013' serves as a basis for a coming ordinance that will regulate procedures for the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. **Slovakia** issued a public declaration on the recognition of the contribution of non-formal education in youth work, while **Sweden**, conscious of the need to establish transparent systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, established in 2014 a working group to arrive at a more efficient use of existing resources (enabling more individuals to get their skills validated).

Promoting cooperation between stakeholders

Although a significant number of countries indicate that they promote cooperation

between education authorities, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders, only few concrete examples are available. The **Czech** Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and National Institute for Further Education implemented the 'K2 – quality and competitiveness in non-formal education' project (financed by the ESF and the Czech government budget), which aimed at qualitative changes in NGOs and schools by facilitating a non-formal learning approach. In cooperation with the public and private sector as well as with NGOs, **Malta** established an Education Plus strategy to get young people involved in programmes that develop, beyond the knowledge acquired in schools, skills which are relevant in life. The ultimate objective is to equip young people with skills and attitudes useful to participate in the country's democratic and economic life and thus to become active and employable citizens. Through its 'Step up to Serve' campaign, the **United Kingdom** strives for establishing a bridge between the educational and voluntary sectors, with the aim of empowering young people and getting them involved in social actions.

Promoting equal access of young people to rights and to opportunities

Many initiatives were taken in this field to allow young people to fully participate in society. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, for instance, there is an act on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children's rights; in the French Community, a decree on youth centres includes a dedicated part on 'Specific Support to Equal Opportunities for All', which provides

additional support to youth organisations working with disadvantaged young people. The Ombudsman for Children in the **Netherlands** plays an important role in informing children and young people about ways to stand up for their rights. It also serves as instrument to monitor the proper application of children's rights by the government and the educational, children, youth and healthcare systems. **Serbia** carried out a project on how to develop, create and strengthen new mechanisms, networks and services enabling young people to have better access and knowledge of their rights and resources.

Strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation

The country reports show that cross-sectoral cooperation at and between local, regional, national and European levels still

needs to be strengthened to meet young people's needs and to ensure coherent social inclusion policies, although there are good practices at national level and below. The implementation of the **Czech** national youth strategy is done in collaboration with regional and municipal authorities as well as with the National Network of Local Action Groups. The youth advisory board of the **Croatian** Government works similarly by developing youth policies in a cross-sectoral manner, involving several ministries and other governmental representatives, public associations, educational and scientific institutions and youth organisations. Another example for working together between different levels is the Child-Friendly Cities strategy in the **Netherlands**, which aims to spread information and contacts between local, national and European municipalities and regions.

Ireland – Big Brother Big Sister

Big Brothers Big Sisters is an internationally recognised youth mentoring programme initiated in the United States in 1904. It forms supportive friendships for young people inspiring them to brighter futures. It establishes professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships between a caring adult and a young person, both on a voluntary basis. The adult volunteer takes the role of a big brother or a big sister, backing the young person with a positive development approach and identifying specific needs and necessary competencies that will help him/her to grow, to be productive and to acquire his/her own potential. The programme is based on the conviction that the relationship between an adult and a young person can be very useful for a young person facing adversity in his/her life. It is therefore a good tool to support social inclusion.

In Ireland, the Big Brother Big Sister programme is operated by *Foróige*, the National Youth Development Organisation.

<https://www.foroige.ie/our-work/big-brother-big-sister>

Turkey – Supporting Social Inclusion through Sports Education

This project – Technical Assistance for Supporting Social Inclusion through Sports Education – coordinated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports aimed at increasing future opportunities and living standards of children and young people in the disadvantaged regions of Turkey through the use of sports and sports training as a tool for building inclusion and social cohesion.

It also aimed at contributing to physical and physiological developments of children and young people and thus strengthens social ties. It furthermore had the objective to generate important values, such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and fair play, and to contribute to personal development as well as personal fulfilment of young people.

The project was financed through the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

<http://www.niras.com/current-events/news/2013/social-inclusion-through-sports-education-in-turkey.aspx>

4.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) has put social inclusion at the top of its priorities for the coming two years.

Together with the Social Platform (bringing together European rights and value-based NGOs working in the social sector), the YFJ has monitored the implementation of the European platform against poverty and social exclusion, the above-mentioned Europe 2020 flagship initiative. The forum specifically contributed to the Social Platform's

two position papers 'Position Paper on Minimum Wage' ⁽⁷⁶⁾ and 'An EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Income'.⁽⁷⁷⁾

The YFJ also analysed the situation of young people's social inclusion in Europe (covering in particular the areas of poverty, inequality, non-regular employment and unemployment) through its 2014 report 'Youth in the crisis – What went wrong?'.⁽⁷⁸⁾ It underlined the value of youth work, too, especially for the social inclusion of young people in civic life, and jointly provided guiding principles for quality youth work in its 2014 'Policy Paper on Youth Work'.⁽⁷⁹⁾

76 http://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/20150226_SocialPlatform_PositionPaper_MinimumWage.pdf

77 http://www.socialplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/20140624_SocialPlatform_PositionPaper_Directive-Minimum-Income.pdf

78 <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/youth-in-the-crisis-what-went-wrong-2/>

79 <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/12/PP-Youth-Work.pdf>

5 Youth participation

The aim of this field of action is to support young people's participation in representative democracy and civil society at all levels, and in society at large.

5.1. EU initiatives and action

Encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe is not only central to the EU Youth Strategy, it is a key aim of EU-level action as set out in Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The right of young people to participate in decision-making is also underlined in the Council conclusions on the European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights (November 2010).⁽⁸⁰⁾ In addition, Article 24(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that children may express their views freely and that their views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity.

Protection and promotion of the rights of the child is one of the objectives of the European Union, as laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).⁽⁸¹⁾ This includes promoting child participation, which was the subject of a study⁽⁸²⁾ in 2015. It includes a resource catalogue on child participation, a child-led research strand report, and reports for each Member State. In addition, funding was awarded to numerous projects on awareness-raising on rights of the child in judicial proceedings, and in general

on the child's right to be heard (UNCRC Article 12) under the 2014 pilot project on raising the awareness of children with regard to their rights in judicial proceedings, the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship programme (2007-2013), the Daphne III programme (2007-2013) and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme (2014-2020).

The Kids' Corner website⁽⁸³⁾ launched in 2011 aims to give children and young people information on their rights as well as information about the EU and its Member States. A key feature of the Kids' Corner is the **EU website on the Rights of the Child**,⁽⁸⁴⁾ where they can learn about their rights through games, quizzes and child-friendly texts in 24 EU languages.

Youth participation was the overall thematic priority of the second Trio Presidency (Poland, Denmark and Cyprus) after the entry into force of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field. In May 2011 the Council adopted a resolution on new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in Europe. Youth empowerment, a subject closely linked to participation, is the priority of the current Trio Presidency (Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg). Council conclusions addressing **young people's access to rights as a means of fostering their autonomy and participation in democratic life**, and **the need to reinforce youth work to ensure cohesive societies** were adopted. An EU Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 also deals with political participation.

One of the most prominent measures in regard to participation at EU level is the

80 All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

81 <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

82 <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/evaluation-of-legislation-policy-and-practice-of-child-participation-in-the-european-union-eu--pbDS0514101/>

83 http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_en.htm

84 <http://ec.europa.eu/0-18/>

Structured Dialogue, which is a key initiative of the EU Youth Strategy. Given its importance, Chapter 11 of this document is entirely dedicated to this process.

The Commission's regular **Flash Eurobarometer surveys on youth** ⁽⁸⁵⁾ address opinions and attitudes of young people, for example about their involvement in society as volunteers, as members of organisations and as participants in international activities, cultural activities and political activities.

In 2013 the Commission published a **study on youth participation in democratic life**, ⁽⁸⁶⁾ which addressed youth representation, promoting youth engagement, voting, media and youth participation, as well as youth exclusion. According to the findings, there is no crisis of democratic participation or disenchantment with political issues and concerns among youth in Europe, but young people often feel that their opinions are not represented, are dissatisfied with the way politics are conducted and are less likely to vote than older age groups. They are keen to participate, but their interests are shifting; they ask for more channels of participation. The study also stressed the need to support certain groups to warrant their involvement.

In May 2015, the Commission adopted a **report on the 2014 European Parliament elections** ⁽⁸⁷⁾ which underlines that younger people were the largest group of abstainers. ⁽⁸⁸⁾ The report highlights the need to identify further ways in which to foster participation in the next elections, in particular through timely support for national, regional and local awareness-raising campaigns. This is even more the case with respect to young voters' participation in European Parliament elections, for which concrete support can be provided to authorities and civil society at the local level seeking to raise awareness about EU political rights and in particular when reaching out to youth groups.

'Democratic engagement and civic participation' is one part of the **Europe for Citizens** funding programme ⁽⁸⁹⁾ (2014-2017). It aims at strengthening the general public's understanding of how EU policies are shaped today. It also fosters the close involvement of civil society in European policy-making. A number of innovative youth projects were funded under this programme in 2014 and 2015, such as 'Europe 2038 – Voice of the youth', 'Debating Threats to Democracy and Human Rights' and 'International Session of the European Youth Parliament in Leipzig' (see box).

80th International Session of the European Youth Parliament

This 12-month project financed under the Europe for Citizens programme includes a series of four youth events during 2015 which will culminate in an international youth conference in Leipzig in November 2015 – marking the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. This final event will gather 300 young people from all over Europe as well as local youth from Leipzig. The aim is to discuss current political issues and promote mutual understanding and a stronger European identity among participants. By taking part in the project, the young participants will experience parliamentary democracy first-hand and articulate their views on current European issues, within multi-cultural and international working groups. The project will help participants to acquire long-term competences, cultural awareness and respect, tolerance, and democratic participation, and offer them the possibility to engage as volunteers afterwards.

The project will be organised by voluntary active young people aged between 18 and 25, making it an almost entirely volunteer and youth-driven project. The project beneficiary is *Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa*, the international umbrella organisation of the European Youth Parliament.

http://www.leipzig2015is.eu/?page_id=165

85 The latest one was published in April 2015: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_408_en.pdf.

86 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/tools/documents/lse_study_on_youth_participation_2013.pdf

87 COM(2015) 206 final of 8.5.2015.

88 Only 27.8% of 18 to 24 year-olds voted, as compared with 51.3% in the 55+ age group.

89 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en

The **European Youth Portal** ⁽⁹⁰⁾ was re-structured and re-launched in May 2013, adding a great deal more information on opportunities for young people. The portal is evolving into a platform for young people to engage with policy-makers and to have their say on the issues that affect them. It supports widening of the Structured Dialogue and also includes the Ideas Lab platform, through which young people can generate ideas on a wide range of issues, which are then rated online by their peers around Europe. The use of social media tools to engage with young people has also been improved. The new **'European Youth' Facebook page** serves to conduct online chats with young people on different topics. These tools are also successfully used to support big events, for example the seventh European Youth Week (2015), which witnessed new levels of outreach thanks to social media.

The Commission also promotes direct exchanges of views between Commissioners and citizens, mainly through **Citizens' Dialogues** ⁽⁹¹⁾ (with some 300 to 500 participants each) across the EU. The series was launched in January 2015 and 30 dialogues were held in 18 Member States in the first half of 2015. The Citizens' Dialogues are not one-off events but part of a permanent debate cycle that covers the entire European Union. The dialogues focus on specific themes, usually linked to the Commission's political priorities, and many of them are prepared and followed up by further dialogues

(in social media, but also physically on the ground). They complement formal consultation processes and serve to increase understanding of the concerns and expectations of citizens in a number of Member States where the specific aspects of an initiative are particularly important. The rate of participation of young people at these events is remarkable. The largest Citizens' Dialogue to date was on 9 May 2015 in Milan – with the President of the European Parliament Martin Schulz and the High Representative and European Commission Vice-President Federica Mogherini – where roughly two thirds of the 1200 participants belonged to the young generation. It took place during the European Youth Week. Apart from participating physically in the dialogues, young people often very actively contribute through social media channels as well. Citizens' Dialogues are normally web streamed live or even broadcast on TV and by Europe by Satellite, allowing 'virtual' participants to follow the event, make comments, put questions to Commissioners via social media (which are then channelled into the debate) and get answers from them, just like their fellow participants at the venue.

Some research projects supported by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme and Horizon 2020 contribute to providing scientific evidence on the way young people participate in society and politics (see box).

EU-funded research projects on young people's participation in society and politics

- MYPLACE – Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement (<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu>)
- SocIEtY – Social Innovation, Empowering the Young for the Common Good, (<http://www.society-youth.eu/>)
- PIDOP – Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation (<http://www.fahs.surrey.ac.uk/pidop/index.htm>)
- PARTISPACE – Spaces and Styles of Participation: Formal, non-formal and informal possibilities of young people's participation in European cities (<http://www.partispace.eu>)
- CATCH-EyoU – Constructing AcTive CitizensHip with European Youth: Policies, practices, challenges and solutions

90 http://europa.eu/youth/splash_en

91 <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-dialogues/>

5.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

5.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

5.2.1.1. Mechanisms for dialogue with youth on national youth policies

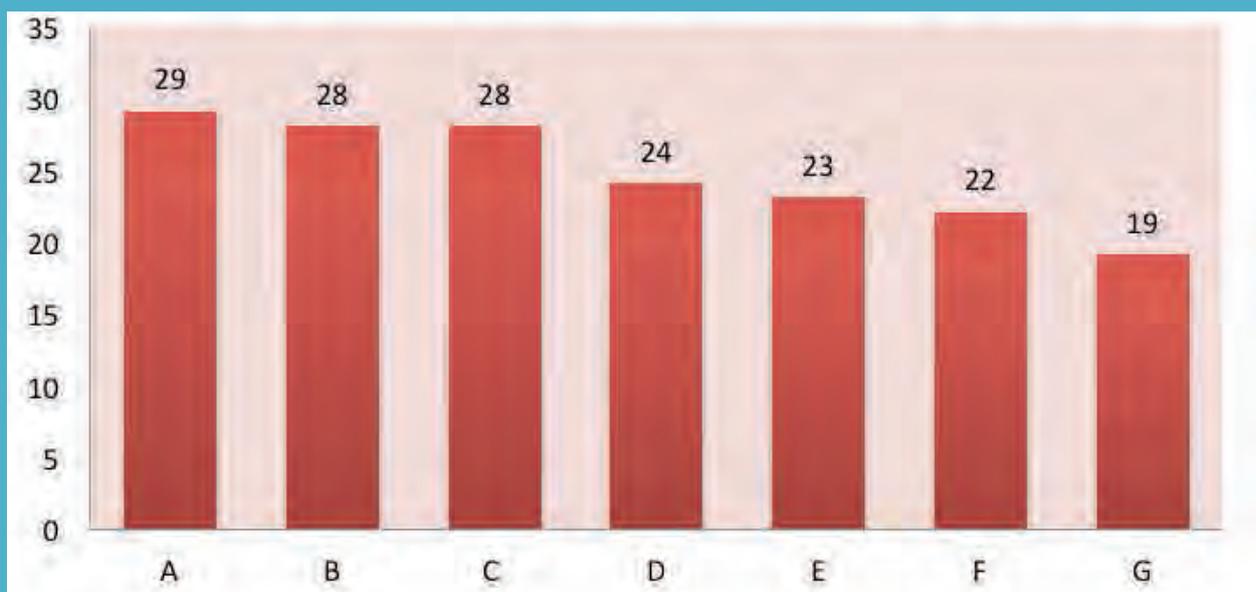
Member States have a genuine interest in promoting youth participation and they actively seek to create or enhance previously existing mechanisms in order to engage young people in decision-making. Whilst more than half of the Member States have maintained measures from before 2010, the vast majority instigated new ones after 2010. For instance, in **Slovenia** one of the main principles of the national programme for youth is to ensure the participation of young people in the decision-making process on policies which affect them. The national programme of youth councils in **Estonia** stipulates that local municipalities

consult with the local youth council on the planning, implementation and assessment of youth work. In other countries measures on participation are legally binding. In **Sweden** the consultation with young people is a constitutional prerequisite, and **Serbia** passed its Law on Youth in 2011.

5.2.1.2. Guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation

Many Member States already had guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation in place before the inception of the EU Youth Strategy, and they have been even more active in this area since then, either by maintaining previously existing structures or by deepening the existing ones. **Croatia** passed its new Law on Youth Advisory Boards in 2014, establishing youth advisory boards as advisory bodies of units of local and regional self-governments. The law involves young people in decision-making on public matters of interest. The interministerial

Figure 13 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of participation



- A – Mechanisms for dialogue with youth on national youth policies
- B – Governmental support of youth organisations and youth councils
- C – Developing opportunities to debate with young people
- D – Broadening youth participation through effective use of ICT
- E – Supporting 'learning to participate'
- F – Guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation
- G – Promoting a greater diversity in youth participation in representative democracy

conference on youth, organised by the Government of the French Community of **Belgium** in February 2014, produced guidelines for consultation between young people and official advisory bodies and encouraged all directorates within the administration to use criteria on young people's participation for their calls for projects targeted at young people. Some countries developed digital structures for information and consultation. **Spain** offers grants to youth organisations and services to develop and promote ICT and social networks for their communication with young people.

5.2.1.3. Governmental support of youth organisations and youth councils

Member States provide, to a different extent, political and/or financial support to youth organisations and local or national youth councils. Most countries pursued or strengthened policies which existed before 2010 in this area. The Cabinet Office in the **United Kingdom** supports the British Youth Council, a structure responsible for the annual delivery of the UK Youth Parliament. In **Austria**, the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth, under the provisions of the Federal Youth Promotion Act, is funding actions which get young people genuinely involved in youth organisations that focus on vocational guidance and the transition to professional life. The **Czech Republic's** 2011-2015 grant programmes for youth organisations and other organisations working with young people will be renewed; the planned new generation grant programmes will support quality systems for youth work as from 2016. In **Finland** approximately 140 organisations are financially supported each year from the state youth budget, and in **Lithuania** support at regional and national level is organised under the National Youth Policy Development programme.

5.2.1.4. Promoting a greater diversity in youth participation in representative democracy

It becomes apparent that young people are increasingly involved in democratic processes. Member States are anxious for

including young people from the entire socio-economic spectrum. The national youth debate project in the **Netherlands** gives young people aged between 12 and 18 years the opportunity to express their views in youth debates at provincial level. Out of the participants in these regional debates, 150 are selected to participate in a youth debate at national level, which is held once a year. Before they participate, they are being trained to promote their ideas in front of ministers and state secretaries. Within the project 'Youth & Volunteering – a laboratory of ideas in evolution'(2010-2014), **Italy** aimed at promoting active citizenship through workshops involving young people and youth organisations, schools, universities and businesses into a process promoting youth volunteering – as an experience of active and responsible citizenship. In the **United Kingdom**, a major campaign was launched in January 2015 to raise awareness of the National Citizen Service, the UK Government's flagship youth programme.

5.2.1.5. Broadening youth participation through effective use of ICT

Measures to broaden youth participation through the use of information and communication technologies were mostly taken after 2010. ICT, usually websites, are primarily used to pass information on the country's youth policies. Many countries financially support youth organisations and youth information centres to advise young people about their opportunities to engage in public life. The French Community of **Belgium**, for instance, helps youth information centres develop their own tools for youth-targeted information.

With its multilateral cooperation project 'youthpart', **Germany** initiated an important step towards e-participation (see box). At the beginning of 2015, the Ministry of Justice in **Finland** launched Nuortenideat.fi, an e-participation service for young people.

Germany – youthpart

Youthpart – a multilateral cooperation project by IJAB, the International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany – was established to start international dialogue on how to encourage more young people to participate in decision-making in today's digital society. The project's overarching aim was to provide support, advisory services and help in advancing online participation formats in cooperation between Germany and project partner countries (Austria, United Kingdom, Spain and Finland).

Guidelines for successful e-participation by young people in decision-making at local, regional, national and European levels offer, to those in charge of planning an e-participation process for young people, a set of factors they should take into consideration to make the process more effective. These guidelines are designed to support youth policy experts, decision-makers, young people, youth organisations and administrative staff. They are advisory and can be adapted to the needs of different e-participation initiatives and target groups.

The project (2011-2014) received funding from the EU Youth in Action programme.
<https://www.ijab.de/en/youthpart/>

5.2.1.6. Supporting 'learning to participate'

Member States generally seek to cultivate active citizenship and participative attitude via formal education, for instance by including citizenship education in the curriculum or by supporting pupil and student councils. There are, however, also several interesting examples from the non-formal learning sector.

In **Italy**, the *Campo Giovani* programme provides young people from 14 to 22 years an opportunity to participate in a civic education project, which is organised by the Department of Youth and the National Civic Service in collaboration with the Navy, the

Coast Guard and the Italian Red Cross. The programme started in 2009 and is now in its seventh edition; approximately 2700 young people take part each year. In **Luxembourg**, the youth newspaper *SLAM! By Youth for Youth* published quarterly since 2014 (with an online portal as well) offers place for expression for young people on topics of their interest. The project aims at developing critical thinking and professional skills amongst young people. The **Czech** ESF project 'Keys for Life' trained 14 regional non-formal learning coordinators and 105 youth workers and established a network where youth participation is promoted through formal and non-formal education settings.

Austria – Jugendplattform (Youth Platform)

This project is based on the concept of the ARGE *Partizipation*⁽⁹²⁾ guidelines (*Leitfaden zur nachhaltigen Beteiligung von jungen Menschen in Gemeinden* – Guidelines for the sustainable participation of young people in communities). The objectives are:

- to create a platform with local politicians, people from the administration, multipliers and young people;
- to promote participation;
- to integrate young people in political processes;
- to inform young people about youth issues;

- to promote direct contact between politicians and young people;
- to implement projects with broad approval;
- to understand democratic processes in the municipality;
- to promote the identification with the municipality;
- to create mature and active citizens;
- to develop political knowledge;
- to promote social inclusion.

The youth platform brings together politicians, multipliers and young people to work on certain youth projects. The members can vary depending on the topic. The platform meets four times per year in the municipal office to discuss youth issues and to develop new projects (such as a skate park, youth centre). The youth platform is accompanied and supported by the regional staff of *akzente* Salzburg.

<http://www.akzente.net/fachbereiche/regionale-kommunale-jugendarbeit/mitreden-in-den-gemeinden/jugendplattformen/>

5.2.1.7. Developing opportunities to debate with young people

Almost every country disposes of mechanisms to facilitate debate between public institutions and young people. In some cases, these mechanisms are part of a wider strategy for social consensus in the decision-making process, while in other cases debates are organised on occasion. In the **United Kingdom**, the English Government involved young people in an open debate on the decentralisation and economic growth in the North of England, under the 'Northern Futures' programme. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the 2013 conference *100 x Jong in de Stad* allowed young people to share their vision and insights about the shaping of youth policy in their city. As from 2014, the youth board of **Cyprus** organises at least two public consultations per year, involving young people and youth organisations.

5.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

5.2.2.1. Promoting youth participation in decision-making structures

In the Council resolution of 11 May 2011 on encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in Europe, Ministers agreed on promoting the participation of young people in decision-making structures and on enhancing their contribution to the policies that affect them. Nearly all of the reporting countries (28) refer to their formal and institutionalised mechanism for consulting young people during policy-making. Most countries consider a national youth council as important structure for developing dialogue between young people and promoting youth participation. Local youth (and children) councils also exist, for instance in

Poland and **Iceland**. **Ireland** set up a ‘Children and Young People’s Participation Support Team’ and a national youth parliament for 12 to 18 year-olds. A youth parliament also exists in **Luxembourg**, where in addition the Government has set up a Structured Dialogue mechanism with young people. In the **United Kingdom** (England), young people were involved in the recruitment of the new Children’s Commissioner in 2014. **France** organises regular meetings between the Interministerial Delegate for Youth (*délégué interministériel de la jeunesse*) and the French youth forum (CNA-JEP). **Malta** passed a law which extends voting rights to 16 and 17 year-olds in local council elections. The purpose of this law is to strengthen democratic co-determination and participation of young people. Many countries refer to measures and methods within their national youth strategy, youth law or youth programme (e.g. the **Czech Republic**, **Bulgaria**, **Austria** and **Estonia**).

5.2.2.2. Increasing information about democratic rights and democratic values

In the Council resolution mentioned above, Ministers also agreed on increasing the information to children and young people about their democratic rights and democratic values. A high number of countries (25) confirm that they took measures on this issue. In many cases general information is provided through youth information centres.

Often children’s and young people’s rights, obligations and opportunities are actively promoted. In **Spain**, this is for instance done by the youth institute INJUVE as well as by other regional youth institutions, which are spreading information through websites and social networks. **Finland** launched a national communication

strategy on children’s rights, which saw the creation of a Human Rights Centre as an expert institution in this field. Starting in 2011, **Sweden** organises every year a Living History Forum, reinforcing democratic values and combating violent extremism amongst young people by highlighting the importance of democracy in a European context. The country also made its system of citizen proposals (addressed to local councils) available to children and young people under the age of 18, enabling them to influence and participate in their local communities.

In order to maximise electoral registration and democratic engagement, the **United Kingdom** (England) launched a programme called ‘Rock Enrol!’, offering young people a free downloadable learning resource on the topic. In Wales, the National Assembly set up an online platform ‘Your Assembly – your say, your way’ with explanations on the Assembly and on democracy in general. **Germany** has a Federal Agency for Civic Education, providing citizenship education and information on political issues to all people in Germany. Similarly, ‘ProDemos’ is the House for Democracy and the Rule of Law in the **Netherlands**. It explains the systems that govern democracy and the rule of law and shows what citizens can do to exert political influence – at municipal, provincial, national and European level. In the **Czech Republic** there is a specific Civic Education Centre to make participation of young citizen in public life more effective. **Austria** published a brochure entitled ‘Co-existence in Austria’ to raise awareness of the rule of law and values of citizenship. In several countries, such as **Denmark**, **Italy**, **Ireland** and the **Netherlands**, there is an ombudsman for children and/or young people investigating their complaints, taking into account their views and offering consultancy to authorities on their situation.

5.2.2.3. Developing an eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility

Most of the countries which developed youth exchanges and cooperation between eastern countries and EU Member States did so in the framework of EU youth programmes. Naturally, the Eastern Partnership Youth Window within the Youth in Action programme was fundamental for the cooperation with Eastern European countries.⁽⁹³⁾

Apart from relying on EU programmes, **Poland** founded a Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange Board and a Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding. In 2006, **Germany** established a Foundation for German-Russian Youth Exchange – a public-private partnership. Based on former cooperation agreements with Georgia and Moldova (2006-2007), **Lithuania** prepared renewed agreements on youth affairs with both countries. **Romania** also develops youth exchange projects with Moldova. **Croatia** and Azerbaijan signed a memorandum of understanding in 2013 to develop cooperation in the youth field. The **Czech Republic** and **Slovakia** underline the work of the Visegrad Group (the Czech

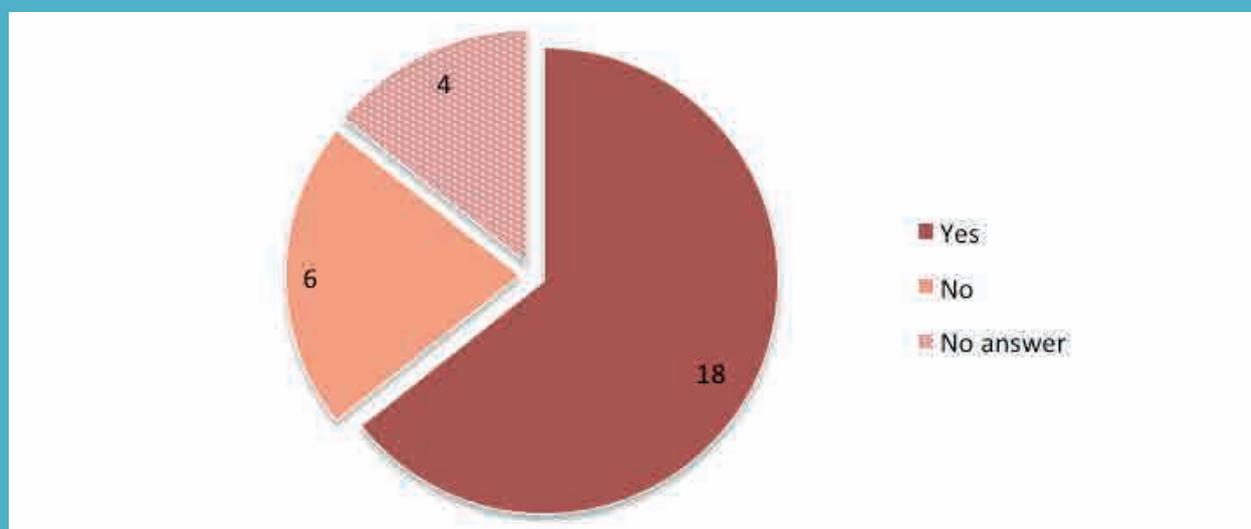
Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), which annually meets with Eastern Partnership countries to discuss youth issues and which agreed in 2012 on an action plan which includes youth mobility. **Serbia** developed support for youth mobility within its national youth strategy. Overall, it becomes apparent from the national reports that there is scope for further developing exchanges and cooperation with Eastern European countries.

5.2.2.4. Supporting active involvement and participation of youth with a migrant background

In the Council conclusions of 27 November 2012, Ministers agreed on supporting active involvement and participation of young people with a migrant background.

A considerable number of countries have maintained or introduced relevant measures; these are mostly general measures to include and support the integration of young people with a migrant background as part of national youth programmes or national youth strategies, but do not focus specifically on active involvement and participation of this target group. Many

Figure 14 Number of Member States mentioning support to active involvement and participation of youth with a migrant background



countries provide official support in language trainings and/or historical and cultural learning programmes.

Some countries particularly focus on participation in society and democratic life of young people with a migrant background. **Denmark**, for instance, set up a 'Civil Society – Building Bridges Website' with the purpose of empowering ethnic minority organisations. The Danish youth council carried out a project for young newcomers' participation in civil society and democratic life; another project, 'MS ActionAid Denmark – Opinion Leaders Against Discrimination', aims at empowering young opinion leaders with a minority background to stand up and make their voice heard in public debates, also by challenging discriminating stereotypes they face in their everyday life. In addition, following a study that showed the

positive correlation between the behaviour of first-time voters and participation in elections of their mothers, a campaign called 'Mothers voting for local elections 2013' was launched.

As a follow-up to the above-mentioned interministerial conference, the French Community of **Belgium** proposed to organise an intersectoral conference on obstacles to youth participation for young people with a migrant background, young people living in poverty or young people with disability. **Ireland** held a Dialogue for Change in 2014, which aimed to provide young asylum seekers with an opportunity to come together with policy-makers and identify key policy issues that affect them. The **Czech Republic** mentions the international ACCESS project (see box).

ACCESS – Enhancing political participation of migrant youth

The ACCESS project aims to empower migrant youth to become politically active citizens on a local, national and EU-wide level and to be able to better contribute to the formulation of policies. It is a multi-stakeholder project whose activities target policy-makers from municipalities, youth leaders, youth workers and young people with a migrant background.

Through peer reviews of policies and practices in ACCESS project countries (Finland, Romania, Czech Republic, France and Spain), the project provides concrete advice and tools to policy-makers on involving young people's ideas and concerns in decision-making. In the context of this project, political participation of youth does not only include participation in electoral processes but consists of a more comprehensive approach, engaging all young people in the development, implementation and evaluation of all policies which affect them. Active political participation may entail taking part in e.g. local municipalities, youth parliaments, lobbying, providing feedback to decision-makers and voluntary involvement such as neighbourhood committees and associations.

The ACCESS project, which runs from December 2013 till May 2015, is managed by IOM (International Organization for Migration) Helsinki with support from IOM offices in Prague, Marseille, Barcelona and Bucharest.

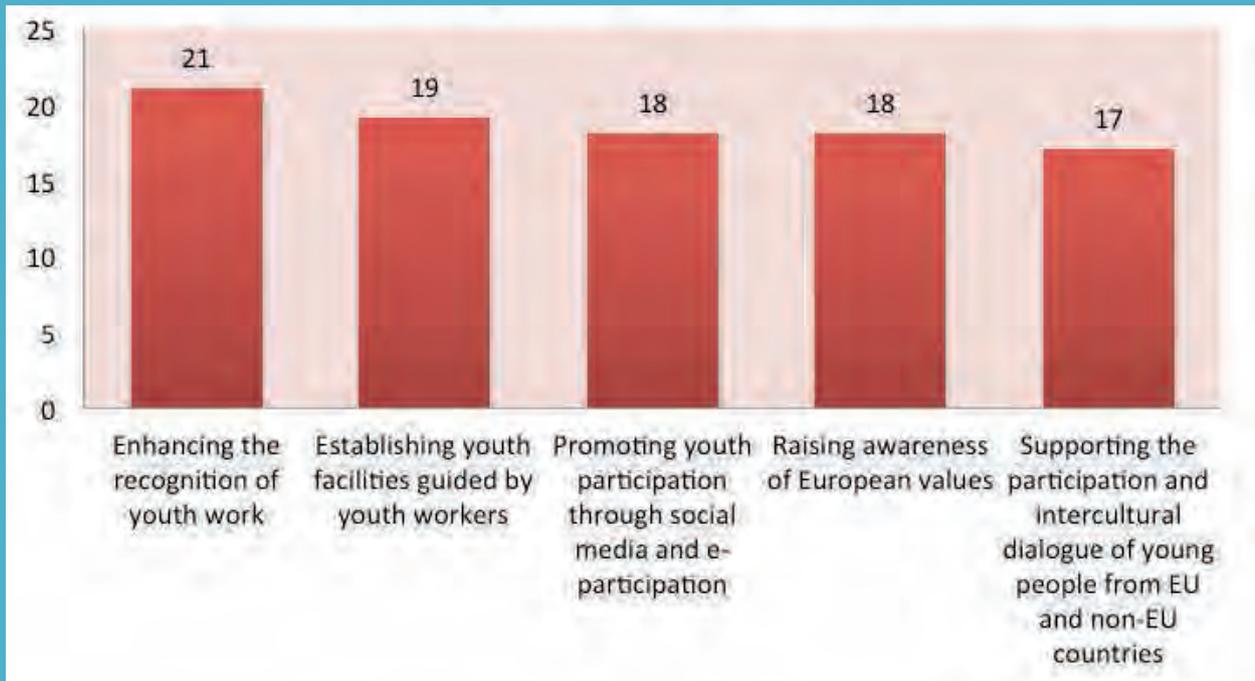
http://www.iom.fi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=230&Itemid=191

5.2.2.5. Further promoting youth participation

In the Council resolution of 11 December 2012 on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process on youth participation in

democratic life in Europe, several priority areas emerged to promote youth participation. The study 'Youth Participation in Democratic Life' of 2013 issued a set of recommendations regarding the themes below.

Figure 15 Number of Member States' reports mentioning further measures promoting youth participation



Promoting youth participation through social media and e-participation

The use of the internet can be more appealing to young people to express their views than more traditional forms of participation. Hence, many Member States see a significant role for social media and e-participation in promoting youth participation. **Germany** launched a 'youthpart#lokal' project in 2013, which supported six model municipalities in testing web-based youth participation. After a successful pilot phase between spring 2013 and autumn 2014, best practices were showcased and advice is now provided to those who wish to implement e-participation processes. The 'Power is Yours' website in **Sweden** is an online

platform enabling young people to influence youth policy issues carried out at EU level. In the framework of its governmental programme 'It's about you! – Dialogue with the youth' (*Rólad szól! – Párbeszéd a fiatalokkal*), **Hungary** first established personal meetings with young people in order to hear their opinions on national youth policies, and after six months, went on with an online questionnaire. In 2014, over 870 000 young people participated in 'Make your Mark', the **United Kingdom** Youth Parliament's annual ballot of the public, giving young people their say on what is debated by their Members of Youth Parliament in the House of Commons. **Latvia** developed a social initiative named ManaBalss.lv (see box).

Latvia – Public participation platform ‘ManaBalss.lv’

The platform aims to strengthen civic society and explore new forms of democratic participation in general. Every citizen from the age of 16 in Latvia who has an idea can launch an initiative to gather supporters’ signatures. Once an initiative reaches 10 000 signatures, it is officially submitted to the Parliament, where it is processed and included in the Parliament’s official agenda. Later it is discussed together with the author and experts, and Parliament takes a final decision (either the idea presented in the initiative becomes a law or not). Using the site is free of charge. ManaBalss.lv ensures privacy and security of personal data. All initiative authors and users of ManaBalss.lv receive technical, legal and communication support, and ManaBalss.lv makes sure all ideas presented to Parliament are processed and heard.

ManaBalss.lv was founded in 2011 in close cooperation with the National Civic Alliance and NGO community in Latvia as well as with the National Parliament and other public institutions. At the moment there is wide cooperation with the main civil society stakeholders, NGOs and IT companies, public and private foundations.

After three years of operation ManaBalss.lv has proved to be one of the most effective, widespread and popular civic participation projects in Latvia ever. Close to 1 000 000 people (around 35% of Latvia’s population) have visited the platform. 14 initiatives have gathered more than 10 000 votes, making their way to the Parliament, and 8 initiatives were approved by Parliament.

<https://manabalss.lv/>

Enhancing the recognition of youth work

Many countries enhance the recognition of youth organisations, youth information and counselling structures and professional youth work as channels developing participatory skills and competences. In October 2014, the **Croatian** Government adopted a National Youth Programme 2014-2017 which, together with several other strategic documents, provides a complete framework for the functioning and development of youth structures and youth organisations. In **Lithuania**, a National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011-2019 creates a structured framework for youth information and counselling with a view to raise public awareness on youth issues. **Luxembourg** adopted guidelines regarding non-formal education during childhood and adolescence, with a particular emphasis on transmitting participatory skills to young people and promoting autonomous action. In **Ireland**, a number of ‘Youth Cafés’ operate all-around the country to offer support to young people; in addition, in 2010 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs released two publications intended to assist those seeking to run and set up a youth café.

Raising awareness of European values

Raising awareness of European values, especially amongst young people with fewer opportunities, is a concern in several Member States, which therefore actively promote respect for human rights and minorities, democracy and equality. The Scottish Government (**United Kingdom**) published its National Youth Work strategy 2014-2019, which includes continuing support to two NGOs actively promoting European values and citizenship. Another example is the German-speaking Community of **Belgium** where the promotion of a European identity is amongst the priorities of the 2011 Decree on the promotion of youth work.

Supporting the participation and intercultural dialogue of young people from EU and non-EU countries

Several Member States promote intercultural dialogue between young people from EU and non-EU countries. In **Austria**, the Eastern Partnership Youth Window 2012-2013 supported activities raising awareness of European values, especially

amongst young people in neighbouring countries. In addition, Austria launched a long-term strategy on inclusion in Eastern Partnership countries and Russia in order to continue cooperation and training activities in the region from 2016 and beyond. In **Denmark**, the ‘Youth Ambassadors for Constructive Dialogue’ programme aims at bringing together young people from Denmark and the Middle East in order to increase understanding between them and overcome cultural, religious and national borders. In 2012-2013, ‘SOS Malta’, in partnership with the National Agency of **Malta**, ran a project ‘Youth Upbeat’⁽⁹⁴⁾ co-financed through the European Refugee Fund. It aimed to promote integration between different sectors of Maltese society, in particular young people, and refugees or persons with subsidiary protection, by providing opportunities for interaction and awareness-raising through the use of culture and performing arts. This project was highly successful and demonstrated the importance of intercultural dialogue as a means to tackling negative perceptions and attitudes from both sides.

Establishing youth facilities guided by youth workers

The majority of Member States established youth facilities where young people can meet and get involved in projects. For example, the Youth Hub service in **Malta**, a non-formal educational service which operates within formal education set-ups, offers an informal and recreational environment through which a youth worker can build a trustful relationship with young people, allowing them to get involved into projects which enhance their personal and social skills. In the **Czech Republic**, leisure-time centres which provide extra-curricular education also serve as platform for children and youth to enable them to enter local, national or international projects. In 2014, 270 000 participants attended activities provided by these centres. In

Lithuania, open youth spaces are actively involved in drafting legislative acts towards systematic and general recognition of youth work and pay attention to the support and implementation of open youth work. These open youth spaces are funded by the Department of Youth Affairs and involve every year around 7 500 young people and 330 volunteers in organised activities. In the **Netherlands**, the *levelZ jongerencentrum* provides a different example of youth participation at local level. Young people were united in various working groups and, in cooperation with the municipality of Zwolle, they developed a youth centre providing opportunities for genuine participation to local young people.

5.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

Increasing the participation of young people in civic life and in European politics is part of the core business of the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The forum’s pivotal role in the Structured Dialogue, the European Youth Event and the European Youth Capital demonstrates how, through its membership, it can reach out to and engage young people all over Europe. The forum also sees its role as highlighting the concerns of young voters and supporting efforts to lower the voting age to 16 across Europe.

In 2013 the YFJ launched the League of Young Voters,⁽⁹⁵⁾ a politically neutral initiative that aimed to amplify young people’s concerns and expectations in the run-up to the **European elections**. The league, for example, co-hosted the first European Presidential Debate (28 April 2014) between the *Spitzenkandidaten* which generated over 50 000 tweets. The league’s study ‘Addressing Youth Absenteeism in European Elections’⁽⁹⁶⁾ in the same year identified the sociological profile of abstainers and outlined the reforms that the EU,

94 <http://www.sosmalta.org/youthupbeat>

95 <http://www.youngvoters.eu/eu>

96 http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/02/YFJ-LYV_StudyOnYouthAbsenteeism_WEB.pdf

political parties and Member States could put in place to address this issue. During the European elections, the LoveYouthFuture⁽⁹⁷⁾ campaign focused on the demands of young people and on respect of youth rights across the EU and included a pledge to consult young people more widely using better participation tools. In addition, many of the YFJ members were in the forefront of 'vote@16' campaigns across Europe.

The **European Youth Event**⁽⁹⁸⁾ (EYE) in May 2014 was a key moment for young people's engagement with the European Union. It brought together over 5 000 young people aged 15 to 30 from every Member State to share ideas and opinions during events and activities on the themes of youth unemployment, the digital revolution, the future of the EU, sustainability and European values. The **YO!Fest**⁽⁹⁹⁾ held at the same time welcomed over 8 000 young people to learn, exchange and build cooperation

on topics such as 'vote@16', traineeships, democratic participation and the future of the EU, multiple discrimination, education and youth work.

European Youth Capital⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ is a title awarded to a European city for a one-year period, during which it can showcase, through a multi-faceted programme, its youth-related cultural, social, political and economic life and development. The title was held by Maribor (2013), Thessaloniki (2014) and Cluj-Napoca (2015), each demonstrating the positive change that young people can bring to a city when they are empowered. Using tools such as participatory budgeting and co-management to deliver exciting programmes of activities, the initiative has left a legacy of youthful engagement in these cities, leading to the recent creation of the Network of European Youth Capitals.

97 <http://www.loveyouthfuture.eu/>

98 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/european-youth-event/en/old-edition/eye2014.html>

99 The name comes from the YO!Mag (Youth Opinion), which is the magazine of the YFJ since 1980.

100 <http://www.europeanyouthcapital.org/>

6 Education and training

The aim of action in this field is to support equal access for young people to high-quality education and training at all levels and opportunities for lifelong learning and to promote and recognise non-formal learning as a complement to formal education. Better links between formal education and non-formal learning should be developed, young people's transition between education and training and the labour market facilitated and supported, and early school leaving reduced.

6.1. EU initiatives and action

Reducing the rate of early school leaving to below 10% and increasing the proportion of 30 to 34 year-olds who complete third level education to at least 40% is one of the five headline targets which were agreed for the whole EU to measure progress in meeting the **Europe 2020** goals. Looking at the indicators in 2013, the EU seems to be on track to meet this target. However, striking discrepancies both between and within Member States remain and should be regularly monitored: there are still more than 5 million early school leavers across Europe, facing an unemployment rate of 41% and in countries hit hardest by the crisis, the employability of tertiary education graduates remains a severe problem.

While responsibility for education and training systems lies with the Member States, the **EU strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)** ⁽¹⁰¹⁾ is instrumental in supporting Member States in their efforts to modernise education and training systems. In

particular, it relies on peer learning and the exchange of good practices in the context of ET 2020 working groups, ⁽¹⁰²⁾ as well as informal groupings of senior officials.

ET 2020 includes a set of seven European benchmarks designed to foster policy developments and monitor outcomes in different fields, including for instance benchmarks on early childhood education and on basic skills in reading, mathematics and science. The annual Education and Training Monitor ⁽¹⁰³⁾ sets out the progress on these benchmarks and core indicators, including the Europe 2020 headline target on education and training. It illustrates the evolution of education and training systems across Europe. It is accompanied by 28 individual country reports and an online visualisation tool. The Centre for Research on Education and Lifelong Learning (CRELL) provides additional indicators ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ used throughout the monitoring exercise, which are part of the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF), a tool enabling consistent and transparent monitoring for all Member States.

The mid-term stocktaking exercise underpinning the current ET 2020 review confirmed that the framework's four strategic objectives (and current European benchmarks) remain valid. It also confirmed that a recalibration of ET 2020 policy focus is needed, to include both the pressing economic and employment challenges and the role of education in imparting fundamental values, intercultural competences and active citizenship. This latter issue will be a key priority in the coming ET 2020 work cycle, with a concrete set of measures underpinned by funding from the Erasmus+ programme, in line with the four areas identified in the Paris

101 OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2-10.

102 http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups_en.htm

103 http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm

104 <https://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ET2020Indicators/>

Declaration of European Education Ministers⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ of 17 March 2015.

Further to the EU Security Agenda and the Paris Declaration, Member States undertook to step up efforts to foster the inclusion and participation in society of all young people. These efforts complement the work of the EU-funded **Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)** which has increasingly looked into the role of education in tackling radicalisation. Among the concrete outcomes of exchanges between practitioners within the RAN in this field, the recent Manifesto for Education is of particular relevance.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

Drawing on the conclusions of the ET 2020 mid-term stocktaking, a 2015 Joint Report⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ will identify priority areas and concrete issues for future work at European level up to 2020. The 2014 Education, Training and Youth Forum, a platform for stakeholders, made a structured contribution to the ET 2020 mid-term stocktaking with a particular emphasis on cross-sectoral cooperation with the youth sector.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

Apart from ensuring coordination under the ET 2020 strategic framework, the EU plays an equally crucial role in supplementing Member States' efforts through its funding instruments. In this context, the **European Structural and Investment Funds** support investments which help with the modernisation of education and training systems, reduce early school leaving, promote better access to good quality education, enhance access to lifelong learning, strengthen vocational education and training systems, and improve the labour market relevance of education.

The Commission communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better*

socio-economic outcomes⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ calls for a fundamental shift in education, with more focus on learning outcomes: 'There is a need to recognise and value non-formal learning in a creative and innovative way, raising the visibility of skills acquired outside the formal system and fostering complementarity between non-formal and formal learning, while at the same time promoting equal opportunities.'

Part of this need to rethink education is linked to improving the recognition of qualifications and skills, including those gained outside the formal education and training system, e.g. by encouraging validation mechanisms. That is why a Council recommendation was adopted on 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

In its final report⁽¹¹¹⁾ published in 2014, the thematic **expert group** set up in the framework of the EU Youth Strategy for sharing best practice on how to promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people by **identifying competences and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning relevant to employability** stressed the need to improve and widen the recognition of non-formal learning, and not just in relation to employability. A better equipped workforce is required; one that can interact effectively with young people, especially those who are disadvantaged and lack access to the labour market.

The peer-learning activity on the **writing of learning outcomes for assessment and validation**,⁽¹¹²⁾ which took place in Ireland in November 2014, sought to explore in a practical manner issues related to the integration of different learning contexts,

105 http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf

106 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-prevent/index_en.htm

107 The Joint Report is expected to be adopted at the November 2015 Education Council.

108 https://education-training-youth-forum.teamwork.fr/docs/ETY_Forum_Report.pdf

109 COM(2012) 669 final of 20.11.2012.

110 OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1-5.

111 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

112 http://extendedcampus.cit.ie/contentfiles/PLA%20Cork%2019_20%2011%202014%20Report%20final.pdf

purposes and stakeholder concerns into learning outcomes.

An updated **European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning**,⁽¹¹³⁾ which covered 33 European countries (EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey), was published at the end of 2014. It shows that effective tools for recognising those skills need to be better designed and applied with a view to tackling current bottlenecks within the European labour market.

In 2014, the Commission ran a public consultation on the potential benefits of developing a European Area of Skills and Qualifications.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ The consultation collected views of stakeholders on the obstacles faced by people in having their skills and qualifications recognised across Europe. It found that there is strong support for action to simplify European tools for recognition of skills and qualifications, to make them more coherent and easier to use, and to ensure a stronger focus on the needs of pupils, students, workers and employers.

Seeking to boost education through new technologies, the Commission launched the **Opening up Education initiative** in September 2013, presenting the actions that the Commission will implement, including policy orientation for operations funded under Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation programme (2014-2020). The initiative also launched the OpenEducationEuropa.eu portal, aimed at helping users (teachers or learners) to find relevant open educational resources and enhancing the visibility of the many high-quality resources produced in Europe.⁽¹¹⁵⁾

The EU Youth Strategy promotes **youth work**, which offers non-formal and informal learning environments. Generally speaking, youth work equips young people with skills and competences that are relevant to many aspects of their life, including the workplace. By engaging in youth activities, young people for example can gain important transversal skills, experience of leadership, a sense of initiative, or working in teams. For some, engaging in these activities can provide the impetus to come back to formal education after dropping out, while for others it can be a way to complement formal qualifications and thus increase their chances in the labour market. The study on the value of youth work in the European Union⁽¹¹⁶⁾ published by the Commission in 2014 substantiates this view. It shows a positive correlation between participation in non-formal education and achievement in formal education because, for instance, it teaches young people persistence, staying motivated to complete a task.

On 16 May 2013, the Council adopted conclusions⁽¹¹⁷⁾ on the contribution of **quality youth work** to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people, which resulted in the setting up of a thematic expert group on youth work quality systems in the EU Member States. It sought to examine these systems and explore how common indicators or frameworks might be developed. In their report⁽¹¹⁸⁾ submitted to the Youth Working Party on 8 April 2015, the experts pointed out that 'working with indicators, quality tools and systems is crucial to the continuous development of youth work and has great potential to contribute to an enhanced credibility and recognition of the youth work sector as a whole'.

113 <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>

114 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/consultations/skills_en.htm

115 The Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) conducts several studies to contribute to the development of a knowledge base on open education issues dealing with research on the recognition of learning through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), on the profile and motivations of MOOC learners, and on how higher education institutions deal with open education issues.

116 <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/working-with-young-people-pbNC0414172/>

117 All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

118 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf

Two large-scale ongoing research projects supported by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013) are worth mentioning; they address the governance of educational trajectories in Europe and, in particular, access to and relevance of education for young people (see box).

The Commission established the Scientix platform www.scientix.eu, a community for **science education** in Europe, to ensure a wide uptake and dissemination of

STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) education practices. The Commission also recognises that science events intended to inspire and mobilise young people are more important than ever. The annual European Union Contest for Young Scientists⁽¹¹⁹⁾ (EUCYS) is one of Europe's premier events for showcasing young scientific talent. It brings together winners of national science competitions – young people between 14 and 20 years of age – to compete with their European counterparts.

EU-funded research projects on education

Ongoing FP7 projects:

- RESL.eu – Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe (www.resl-eu.org)
- GOETE – Access, coping and relevance of education for young people in European knowledge societies in comparative perspective (<http://www.goete.eu/>)

6.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

This summary is primarily focused on non-formal learning, in line with the priorities of the EU Youth Strategy. It does not encompass all ET 2020 priority areas.

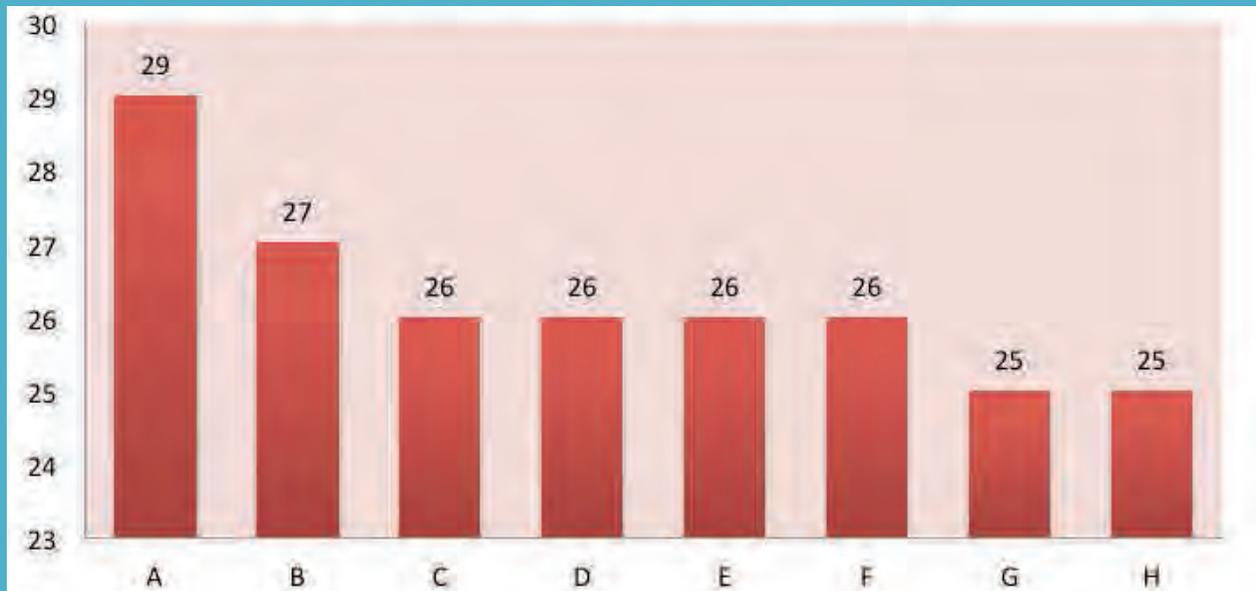
6.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

6.2.1.1. Developing non-formal learning opportunities to address early school leaving

The number of measures introduced or planned after January 2010 has increased.

Many countries present good practices around youth work activities targeting early school leaving. These include a strategy to combat early school leaving in **Austria**; an ESF-funded project *Schulverweigerung – Die 2. Chance* (Chronic truants – A second chance) in **Germany**; the 'Youth.inc' educational programme in **Malta** helping young people to improve their standard of education and gain more knowledge, values and skills to enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue in further education and/or training; the T.O.M. project in the **Netherlands** (see box); and an ESF project in **Slovakia** developing competences of young people through non-formal education.

Figure 16 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of education and training



- A – Encouraging formal education and non-formal learning to support young people's innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship
 B – Raising public awareness of the value of non-formal learning
 C – Use of EU tools for the validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications
 D – Promoting learning mobility of all young people
 E – Addressing gender and other stereotypes
 F – Promoting cohesion by formal education and non-formal learning
 G – Developing non-formal learning opportunities to address early school leaving
 H – Developing participative structures

Netherlands – *Traject op Maat* (T.O.M.)

T.O.M. (literally 'tailor-made trajectory') offers tailor-made guidance on the (re)gain of action skills and making choices by young people themselves to give them better access and thus inflow back in education and work. Young people are registered and accompanied to school and/or work. Some young people are even visited at home. Intensive coaching combined with group counselling is provided. All young people receive individual coaching from one of the T.O.M. coaches. After attending a T.O.M. course participants go back to school or move on to work. Such a course lasts as long as necessary. On average, it takes about six months for a young person to be able to go back to school and/or work.

<http://www.tomdenbosch.nl/>

Luxembourg's specific Orientation Voluntary Service (*service volontaire d'orientation*) is targeted at early school leavers.

Some countries have strategies or action plans, such as the 2012 strategy to combat early school leaving in **Austria**, an action plan on early school leaving in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, a strategy for reducing the number of early school leavers in **Bulgaria**, or the Youth Act in **Finland** with outreach to youth work and multi-disciplinary cooperation at local level.

The **Czech Republic** and **Serbia** put particular emphasis on supporting youth organisations or youth projects which address early school leaving. Other countries highlight specific programmes in schools, such as **Ireland** with its 'School Completion Programme' and its strategy 'Delivering Equality of Education in Schools'. **France**, the French Community of **Belgium** and **Latvia**, among others, refer to activities in favour of validation and recognition of non-formal learning, while **Estonia** focuses on the development of youth work quality.

Bulgaria and **Luxembourg** mention the use of IT services to tackle early school leaving. In Luxembourg an internet portal for the education and training programme 'Level Up' is addressed to young people without professional or school activity wishing to bridge the transition to active life with a useful occupation.

6.2.1.2. Use of EU tools for the validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications

Many countries present the state of play regarding their National Qualifications Framework to be developed within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The state of play concerning strategies on the validation of non-formal and informal learning is also described. Besides the EQF, other European tools such as Europass, Youthpass, the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) and the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) are often quoted.

Compared to the 2012 Youth Report, more measures were introduced to strengthen the use of the various tools established at

EU level for the transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications. Some countries focus their answer on the validation of competences acquired through non-formal learning activities (such as youth work). In **Bulgaria** a system for the validation of knowledge, skills and competences gained through voluntary work is under evaluation. **Croatia** plans to adopt an ordinance on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning by the end of 2015. In **Slovakia** an ESF-funded project focuses on developing competences for youth leaders and youth workers based on a competence model – the qualification gained will be included in the National Qualifications Framework. In **Greece** a system of recognition and certification of qualifications acquired via non-formal and informal learning was established and a framework for licensing-awarding bodies is in preparation. It aims at certifying those qualifications that reinforce employment, assuring that the certified qualification corresponds to specifications set out in the respective accredited occupational profile. This provides equity and access to qualifications regardless of the way learning outcomes were achieved.

Latvia – National Network of Cooperation and Information Exchange (Val-Net)

The project 'Towards an integrated system for validation of non-formal and informal learning: initiating a national network of cooperation and information exchange' (Val-Net) initiated a national network of cooperation and information exchange.

Two national-scale conferences, four regional forums, seminars and round table discussions aimed at addressing the validation of non-formal and informal learning, interlinking the general, vocational and higher education, as well as lifelong learning and the labour market.

All institutions participating in Val-Net (e.g. the Latvian Parent Movement, UNESCO Latvia, Ventspils Digital Centre, Riga Central Library) are involved in the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

The project (March 2012 - April 2013) received funding from the EU Lifelong Learning programme.

Slovenia – Nefiks and e-Nefiks, tools to prove non-formal learning outcomes

Nefiks aims to help youth organisations and other NGOs to show competences possible to obtain in their projects, not only to showcase them but also to describe them in terms relevant for other sectors, e.g. employers. At policy level Nefiks strives to achieve general recognition of non-formally obtained competences as equal and consisting part of an individual's education. Nefiks comes in two shapes, a booklet and an electronic portfolio (e-Nefiks). The electronic portfolio is free of charge and easily accessible everywhere where internet is available. The output of e-Nefiks is: Europass CV, list of competences (according to eight key competences), portfolios (social capital, career building), e-Nefiks forms, employer recommendations, attachments (other certificates, e.g. Youthpass). Since e-Nefiks was established, the main focus has moved towards youth employability, proving that competences obtained in non-formal settings are useful for employment.

<http://www.talentiran.si/en-nefiks>

6.2.1.3. Promoting learning mobility of all young people

More than half of the Member States mention the key role the Erasmus+ programme and its predecessors (Youth in Action programme and Lifelong Learning programme, particularly Erasmus and Comenius) for promoting learning mobility of young people. The number of measures promoting learning mobility of all young people – introduced or planned since January 2010 – has increased significantly.

In the French Community of **Belgium**, *Bureau International Jeunesse* is the main actor to award public grants for mobility in the non-formal sector. In **Finland**, the Centre for International Mobility CIMO is in charge of all EU mobility programmes. In **France**, where the outgoing international mobility is widely encouraged, 180 000 young people take part in various national and European programmes for training, traineeships, sporting or cultural exchanges, community projects or volunteering. **Romania** established, as part of its National Agency for Community Programmes in Education and Training (ANPCDEFP), a national Europass centre in charge of the provision of information and support to complete and issue Youthpass and Europass documents.

6.2.1.4. Addressing gender and other stereotypes

Many countries mention their programmes and projects addressing gender and other stereotypes via formal education and non-formal learning. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, a set of projects and tools were established, ranging from coaching within a network of schools over a publication to a website on gender and diversity. In some countries, for instance **Cyprus** and **Croatia**, the topic is part of a health education curriculum in cooperation with other ministries such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Health, or local and national NGOs. In some countries like **Austria**, **Germany** and **Luxembourg**, Girls' and Boys' Days⁽¹²⁰⁾ take place as national initiatives. In **Malta**, emphasis is put on bullying at school in all forms including on LGBT students. In **Turkey**, trainings are organised in youth centres and youth camps associated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and in coordination with young people.

120 Technical enterprises and training facilities, universities and research centres are invited to organise an open day for girls to change attitudes towards vocational orientation; conversely, on a dedicated day, boys learn more about service occupations in education, social affairs, healthcare or other occupations where men are underrepresented.

Austria – Special Gender Department of the association *Amazone*

The Special Gender Department sees itself as a place for the promotion of education and expertise on all matters and issues of gender work as a whole, with a focus on feminist work with girls. The Special Gender Department integrates the aspects of working with girls, mixed-gender aspects and aspects of development, qualification and raising awareness. From these three perspectives, measures are proposed for the deconstruction of gender role images with and for girls, boys, adults, institutions and anyone else who is interested. Through the gateways of education and promotion, work is carried out on the following eight topics which have emerged over the course of many years: work, education, health, violence, culture, multimedia, politics and sexuality. The qualification area includes information on talks, seminars, specialist consultations and work materials. In many of the association's services, qualified peers function as role models for other young people. The association also works with a trained pool of advisers, who pass on their expertise as needed, thus bringing together the approaches of work with both girls and boys.

www.amazone.or.at

6.2.1.5. Promoting cohesion by formal education and non-formal learning

A number of measures were introduced after January 2010 using formal education and non-formal learning to promote cohesion and understanding across different groups, to promote equal opportunities and narrow the gaps in (educational) achievement.

Some projects are designed to give information, for example a book about 'superdiversity' in the youth sector published in the Flemish Community of **Belgium** in 2014. Special grant schemes targeting projects in the field of non-institutional education for young people exist in the French Community of Belgium or in **Croatia**. In **Germany**, a set of strategies include a funding strategy that promotes school success of children and young people with a migrant background. In England, **United Kingdom**, an additional funding programme, separate from core education funding, is targeting economically disadvantaged pupils in school. Legislation is in place in many countries, such as the 'Framework law for assistance, social integration and rights for people with disabilities' in **Italy** with additional guidelines on school integration of pupils with disabilities.

6.2.1.6. Developing participative structures

Legislation is in place in several countries, and student bodies are established and implemented within different educational institutions in many countries. In **Finland**, the laws on secondary and vocational educational schools oblige these educational institutions to have a student body.

In **Ireland**, one of the priority areas of the national strategy on education for sustainable development is 'promoting participation by young people', with school council as key structure within the school context. The strategy aims to increase the number of student councils at primary level and to review the effectiveness of such councils in post primary schools. In **Luxembourg**, the coordination of the national student council is transferred to the national youth council and will therefore gain more autonomy. The national youth council is the umbrella organisation of youth organisations and represents the opinions and interests of young people at national level. A law which gives schools the opportunity to establish student school councils has existed in **Slovakia** since 2003 and was followed by the establishment of training programmes for coordinators of student school councils. In **Lithuania**, the development of a student parliament and the implementation of related activities are still ongoing.

6.2.1.7. Encouraging formal education and non-formal learning to support young people's innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship

Different strategies, schemes and guidelines for encouraging formal education to support young people's innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship are in place in almost all countries. Examples are a strategy for entrepreneurship in the field of education in **Sweden**, a Young Enterprise charity in the **United Kingdom** or guidelines for entrepreneurship education in **Finland**. In many countries the topic is part of a national youth strategy, like in the **Czech Republic** or **Serbia**. In some countries special strategies – like a national innovation strategy in **Denmark** or an action plan for student entrepreneurship in **France** – are in place to foster students' innovative and entrepreneurial skills and competences. Sometimes strategies and schemes on entrepreneurship are part of a broader lifelong learning strategy.

Some actions aim at stimulating entrepreneurial attitude, others focus on teaching entrepreneurial skills and competencies and therefore educate students to become entrepreneurs. Several countries include both approaches like the Flemish Community of **Belgium** in an action plan on education for entrepreneurship.

Other countries' programmes focus more on the non-formal sector, like **Portugal's** programme aiming at youth organisation leaders, or **Cyprus'** planned Career Camps programme which will be implemented in 2015 to enhance entrepreneurial mind-sets and trainings for the development of non-formal learning projects on entrepreneurship. 'YouSmile'⁽¹²¹⁾, a safe online interactive environment in **Greece**, promotes learning and skills development through use of new technologies. It also aims at creating an environment for the development of creative, social and literacy skills. The Other School programme in **Romania** involves both students and teachers in non-formal activities.

It is carried out during one week of the second semester of school and is based on a special schedule, consisting exclusively in non-formal activities.

Amongst other countries, **Estonia** mentions cooperation with VET providers or projects implemented by VET schools in order to support innovation projects. One example for a project to foster innovation is 'Youth Creates' (*Jugend gründet*), a nationwide and online-based competition for young people in **Germany**, which supports the development of innovative entrepreneurial ideas for industry, service and trade. Participants test their ideas in an eight-week simulation.

6.2.1.8. Raising public awareness of the value of non-formal learning

There is a broad variety of projects, programmes and publications aiming at delivering better insight and enhancing awareness of the value of non-formal learning outcomes. The 'Youth business cards' in the French Community of **Belgium** raise awareness of the role and added value of youth organisations for other sectors, such as employment or education. In several countries emphasis is put on the value of non-formal learning outcomes through volunteering. In **Slovenia**, for instance, a Volunteering Act was adopted in 2011. Other countries launched studies or conducted mapping exercises to explore the theme of youth work and the value of its non-formal learning outcomes. A study⁽¹²²⁾ on 'hidden competences' was published in 2014 in **Finland**, and a mapping report will be released in 2015 in **Ireland**.

Declarations on the contribution of youth work are reported for **Ireland** and **Slovakia**. Online portals or platforms informing and promoting exchange on the topic of learning outcomes of non-formal learning are also described, e.g. by **Luxembourg**. The contribution to the recognition of non-formal learning through developing a quality system for youth work is acknowledged by **Austria**.

121 <http://www.yousmile.gr/>

122 http://www.cimo.fi/hidden_competences

Belgium – European Youth Work Convention 2015

Belgium organised the European Youth Work Convention 2015 as one of the flagship initiatives of the Belgian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. It looked at developments in youth work policy and practice since the first convention, which took place in Ghent in 2010 in the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The second convention brought together over 400 policy-makers, researchers and practitioners and culminated in a declaration discussing the challenges youth work is facing at local, national and European level.

Therein, the recognition and value of youth work is addressed as follows: ‘The Convention agreed that there are three levels of recognition that have, up to now, been insufficiently addressed and require further attention. First, to gain more recognition youth work needs active promotion and advocacy by all relevant shareholders in politics, public sector and civil society at different levels. Second, there should be greater recognition of NGOs working in the youth work field, including as independent partners in the dialogue shaping youth work development. Third, there needs to be recognition and validation of the learning and achievement that takes place through youth work in non-formal and informal learning environments.’

<http://eywc2015.be/>

AufZaq ⁽¹²³⁾ is a certification for training courses and described as an effective tool for quality development in youth work.

6.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

6.2.2.1. Validating non-formal and informal learning outcomes

In the Council recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, Ministers agreed to have in place, no later than 2018, arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Relevant measures are introduced or planned by Member States to a different extent in the different youth-related issues covered by the recommendation: the involvement of youth organisations and youth workers in the development and implementation of validation arrangements; the role of the youth organisations and civil society organisations on promoting and facilitating the identification and documentation of learning outcomes acquired at work or in voluntary activities, using relevant Union transparency tools (the Europass framework and Youthpass); and the coordination

on validation arrangements between stakeholders in the education, training, employment and youth sectors.

In **Austria**, the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Bulgaria**, **Cyprus**, **Czech Republic**, **Estonia**, **France**, **Ireland**, **Italy**, **Netherlands**, **Scotland (United Kingdom)**, **Slovenia** as well as **Serbia** and **Turkey**, relevant measures in all above-mentioned fields are planned or implemented. Youth organisations and youth workers are also involved in the development and implementation of validation arrangements in the French and Flemish Communities of **Belgium**, **Italy**, **Luxembourg**, **Malta**, **Portugal**, **Lithuania** and **Sweden**. The role of the youth organisations and civil society organisations in promoting and facilitating the identification and documentation of learning outcomes acquired at work or in voluntary activities are equally addressed (by planned or implemented measures) in the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, in **Finland**, **Germany**, **Luxembourg**, **Croatia**, **Lithuania**, **Spain** and **Sweden**.

Finally, measures to coordinate validation arrangements between stakeholders in the education, training, employment and youth sectors are introduced or planned by the

123 <http://www.aufzaq.at/>

German-speaking and Flemish Communities of **Belgium**, by **Latvia** and **Spain**.

6.2.2.2. Promoting the acquisition of skills and competences and their recognition and validation through quality youth work

In the Council conclusions of 16 May 2013 on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social

inclusion of young people, Ministers agreed to promote, through quality youth work, experiential learning and skills development, and the recognition and validation of such skills. In nearly all countries, relevant measures are introduced or planned in both fields: promoting the acquisition skills and competences through quality youth work, and promoting the recognition and validation of skills and competences acquired through quality youth work.

InterCity Youth (ICY) – European Network of Local Departments for Youth Work

InterCity Youth (ICY) is a European Network of Local Departments for Youth Work which gathers municipalities actively involved in youth work. The overall aim is to enhance the quality of youth work in Europe, via knowledge sharing, peer learning and policy development.

The network's objectives are:

- to enhance peer learning between local departments of youth work; providing directors and staff opportunities to professional development, mutual support and stimulation;
- to promote the exchange and development of tools for enhancing and making visible the quality of youth work and promote youth work as an arena for non-formal learning;
- to contribute to European youth policies; transmitting knowledge and insight from local government experiments and solutions to European policy agendas.

The project of setting up such a network was developed through two InterCity-conferences held in 2012 and 2013; the network itself was launched during the third conference in 2014. These conferences were supported by the Erasmus+ programme.

<http://intercityyouth.eu/>

6.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) has taken a significant number of initiatives and actions related to education and training. **Quality education** has for instance always been a key point on the forum's agenda. The YFJ published in 2013 'The European Youth Forum Policy Paper on Quality Education',⁽¹²⁴⁾ which underlines the right of access for all young people to quality education as well as its general important

role in social, political and economic life of young people. The YFJ has established a Framework for Quality Assurance of Non-formal Education⁽¹²⁵⁾ which proposes to youth organisations an eight-step cycle of activities, from planning to evaluation. A specific manual was also developed to support its implementation.

With the organisation of the '2014 Education Week: Quality Education: a Youth right!' the YFJ addressed the issue of recognition of non-formal education, which it

124 <http://www.youthforum.org/policypaper/european-forum-policy-paper-on-quality-education/>

125 <http://www.youthforum.org/quality-assurance-of-non-formal-education/>

had previously tackled in the 2012 study on 'The Impact of Non-formal Education in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability'.⁽¹²⁶⁾ Besides these youth-led initiatives, the forum also contributed to promotion of the value of competences acquired through youth work by participating in the ET 2020 working group on **transversal skills** in 2014 (which is part of the open method of coordination in the field of education and training). The YFJ also contributed to the Commission's public consultation on a European Area of Skills and Qualifications which took place in 2014.

Furthermore, since 2012 the YFJ has been a member of the **European Qualifications Framework** (EQF) Advisory Group, which brings together representatives from national authorities and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the framework. Therein the YFJ has played an important role by raising Member States' awareness about the potential impact and contribution of validation to the youth sector. It also empowers youth organisations to follow up the implementation of the EQF recommendation at national level.

Connected to this and building on a series of online questionnaires, the YFJ organised an event for its membership in September 2014 on the **validation of non-formal learning**. The objective was to gather first-hand input from youth organisations and experts across Europe on what needs to be done to establish effective validation arrangements for non-formal education activities in the Member States. Driven by the desire to meaningfully contribute to the work of the EQF Advisory Group, the forum collated all the gathered evidence into a report, which it presented to the members of the group.

The YFJ deplores the little progress that has been made towards the introduction of national validation arrangements, as demonstrated by the updated European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning. A lack of knowledge and recognition of the added value of such arrangements, specifically concerning the validation of competences gained through non-formal education in the third sector, seems to be the main reason for this.

126 http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/reportnfe_print

7 Health and well-being

Supporting the health and well-being of young people – with a focus on the promotion of good mental and sexual health, sport, physical activity and healthy life styles – is the aim of this field of action. The prevention and treatment of injury, eating disorders, addictions and substance abuse are equally in the spotlight.

7.1. EU initiatives and action

Good health has an impact on quality of life and life expectancy, and also contributes to personal well-being (physical/mental/emotional) and self-esteem/self-confidence. A healthy youth performs better at school and work. Investing in and maintaining the health of young people lowers the pressure on national healthcare systems and budgets, and makes a positive contribution to the labour market/employment and the European economy as a whole.

The Eurofound study about NEETs⁽¹²⁷⁾ noted the detrimental consequences for young people falling into this category of not being in employment, education or training, such as psychological distress, disengagement and risky behaviour. NEETs were found to be more prone to suffer from poor health and depression, use alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances. The foundation's policy brief of 2014 on the social situation of young people⁽¹²⁸⁾ highlighted the fact that unemployed and inactive young people give a comparatively low rating for their subjective well-being. It also stated that

unemployed and inactive young people are more likely than others to have lower levels of mental well-being.

Nature is vital for health and contributes to the quality of life. A recent report,⁽¹²⁹⁾ jointly prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the WHO, underlines how contact with nature brings direct benefits to mental and physical health. In addition to these health advantages, parks and green spaces also absorb and disperse air pollutants, lower temperatures and prevent heat stress in cities, reduce social tension, and buffer noise pollution.

Health policy

The Commission supports Member States' efforts to promote healthy lifestyles. Health determinants such as a balanced diet (high consumption of fruit and vegetables, limited intake of foods high in fat/salt/sugar and sugar sweetened beverages), regular physical activity, tobacco-free lifestyle and moderate alcohol use, play an important role in disease prevention. Regarding **indicators**, the Commission and the Member States developed a shortlist of 88 European Core Health Indicators (ECHI) through a Joint Action in 2012.⁽¹³⁰⁾ Wherever useful or appropriate, health indicators are broken down by age. Prevention is particularly important among young people as lifestyle habits are forged during childhood and adolescence. The EU health policy focuses on nutrition and physical activity, alcohol, smoking, sexual health and HIV/AIDS, and drug use.

127 Eurofound (2012), *NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

128 Eurofound (2014), *Social situation of young people in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

129 World Health Organization and Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2015), *Connecting global priorities: biodiversity and human health: a state of knowledge review*.

130 http://ec.europa.eu/health/indicators/echi/list/index_en.htm

Support for **nutrition and physical activity** takes place through ⁽¹³¹⁾ the high-level group that provides an EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health (a forum for European-level organisations, ranging from the food industry to consumer protection NGOs) and through projects co-financed under the EU Health programme.⁽¹³²⁾ The 2007 strategy on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues and the 2014-2020 EU action plan on childhood obesity are important frameworks for action. The action plan was adopted by the high-level group to demonstrate the shared commitment of Member States to halting the rise in childhood obesity by 2020. Council conclusions on nutrition and physical activity ⁽¹³³⁾ were adopted in June 2014. A Joint Action on nutrition and physical activity involving 25 Member States is to be launched in 2015. The Commission receives additional funding from the European Parliament for pilot projects ⁽¹³⁴⁾ designed to improve future policy action in the area of nutrition and physical activity and to identify good practices that can be used to replicate these projects in other European cities or regions.

As far as **alcohol-related harm** is concerned, young people are particularly at risk of short-term effects of drunkenness, including accidents and violence, with alcohol-related deaths accounting for around 25% of deaths in young men aged 15-29. The EU alcohol strategy ⁽¹³⁵⁾ is designed to help national governments and other stakeholders coordinate their action to reduce alcohol-related harm in the EU. The 2014-2016 action plan ⁽¹³⁶⁾ on youth drinking and on heavy episodic (binge) drinking

focuses on prevention of alcohol-related harm resulting from such consumption and contributes to achieving the objectives of the EU alcohol strategy. It is complemented by the Joint Action on reducing alcohol-related harm, ⁽¹³⁷⁾ also running from 2014 to 2016. Many projects funded under the EU Health programme have to do with youth and alcohol-related issues. For example, the project 'Let it hAPYN' ⁽¹³⁸⁾ aims to get a better overview of good and bad practices of alcohol intervention programmes used by youth organisations in Europe.

As to **smoking**, the new Tobacco Products Directive ⁽¹³⁹⁾ aims at improving the functioning of the EU market for tobacco products whilst ensuring a high level of public health, in particular for young people. It has been estimated that the combined provisions, which will apply as from May 2016, will lead to a 2% reduction in EU tobacco consumption over five years. Anti-smoking measures are also taken through EU directives prohibiting tobacco advertising and sponsorship in the media, including on television, and through the 'Ex-smokers are unstoppable' ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ campaign initiated by the Commission.

In the area of **sexual health and HIV/AIDS**, EU policy aims at raising awareness about the risks of sexually transmittable diseases by enhancing the comparability of data (improved notification and comparability of national data). The Commission communication *Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries, 2009-2013* was complemented by an operational action plan ⁽¹⁴¹⁾ that was extended until 2016. It focuses on effective prevention,

131 http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/policy/index_en.htm

132 <http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/health/index.html>

133 OJ C 213, 8.7.2014, p. 1-6.

134 http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/projects/ep_funded_projects_en.htm

135 COM(2006) 625 final of 24.10.2006.

136 http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/2014_2016_actionplan_youthdrinking_en.pdf

137 <http://www.rarha.eu/Pages/default.aspx>

138 <http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/projects/database.html?prjno=20121208>

139 Directive 2014/40/EU on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products, OJ L 127, 29.4.2014.

140 <http://www.exsmokers.eu/uk-en/index.html>

141 COM(2009) 569 final of 26.10.2009 and SWD(2014) 106 final of 14.3.2014.

including educational measures to increase awareness on sexual health, particularly relevant to youth. The Commission also funds projects or prevention campaigns to promote safe sex and address risk behaviour.⁽¹⁴²⁾

Drug abuse is a key public health and social concern throughout the EU and beyond. The EU drugs strategy⁽¹⁴³⁾ provides the overarching political framework and priorities for EU drugs policy identified by Member States and EU institutions for the period 2013-2020. It aims at ensuring a high level of human health protection, social stability and security by focusing on two dimensions of drug policy – drug demand reduction and drug supply. The strategy also has three cross-cutting themes: (a) coordination, (b) international cooperation and (c) research, information, monitoring and evaluation. The strategy is accompanied by an action plan that covers the period 2013-2016 and provides for specific actions to be undertaken by designated responsible parties, a timetable, indicators and data collection tools. The Commission is currently undertaking a progress review of the implementation of the strategy and its action plan, whose results are expected by the end of 2015. The Commission also finances a number of projects addressing drugs and a major awareness-raising campaign.

It is important to reduce the pressure on youth that comes from aggressive **marketing and advertising** of foods high in fat, sugar and salt, and of alcohol, and ensure compliance with the Audiovisual Media Services Directive⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ and Member States' regulations and/or voluntary agreements. The above-mentioned strategy on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health

issues promotes the curbing of food marketing targeting children and young people. This aim is also included in the action plans on childhood obesity and on youth drinking and binge drinking. Marketing and advertising are also addressed in the Council conclusions on nutrition and physical activity. Marketing and advertising comprise one of the areas of work of the EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health. Since 2005, its members have developed 35 commitments in this field.

A Joint Action⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ on **mental health and well-being** was launched in 2013 under the EU Health programme. This three-year initiative aims at building a framework for action in mental health policy at EU level. It addresses issues related to five areas: promotion of mental health at the workplace; promotion of mental health in schools; promoting action against depression and suicide and implementation of e-health approaches; developing community-based and socially inclusive mental health care for people with severe mental disorders; and promoting the integration of mental health in all policies. The Health programme also supports PROYOUTH,⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ a European initiative for the promotion of mental health and the prevention of eating disorders. In addition, the Commission implements a European Parliament preparatory action, ADOCARE.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ The purpose is to consider the usefulness of creating support services at Member State level which are adapted to the needs of adolescents with mental health problems through multidisciplinary teams in non-stigmatised environments. Last but not least, under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme, the project 'Saving and empowering young lives in Europe'⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ (SEYLE) includes

142 'Sexual Awareness for Europe' (SAFE II), 'Mobile Sexuality' (SAFESEX), 'Youth Sexual Violence', 'Sunflower', 'H-CUBE'.

143 <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/european-union-drugs-strategy-2013-2020-pbQC3213067/>

144 Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services, OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1-24.

145 <http://www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/>

146 <https://www.proyouth.eu/home.html>

147 <http://www.adocare.eu/>

148 <http://www.seyle.eu/>

awareness interventions in schools. These have been shown to reduce suicide attempts and related thoughts among pupils by 50%. Another project, 'Measuring Youth Well-Being' ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ (MYWeB), currently explores the feasibility of conducting a European longitudinal survey on children's and young people's well-being. The research involves a wide range of stakeholders including policy-makers, experts, children and young people.

As to **environmental-related pressures**, EU environmental legislation has delivered significant benefits for the health and well-being of the public. However, water, air pollution and chemicals remain among people's top environmental concerns. This is why one of the three key objectives of the EU's Environment Action Programme ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ (EAP) until 2020 is to safeguard the Union's citizens from environmental-related pressures and risks to health and well-being.

European youth cooperation on health and well-being

The Trio Presidency gave priority to the question of social inclusion during the period from January 2013 until June 2014, and the Council adopted conclusions ⁽¹⁵¹⁾ on the contribution of **quality youth work** to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people. The Council called for better cross-sectoral cooperation with health policy and practice and emphasised the importance of seeking quality and clear outcomes for youth work. The study on the value of youth work in the European Union ⁽¹⁵²⁾ published by the Commission in 2014 describes how youth work results in a range of positive outcomes for young people, including health and well-being. Youth work plays the role of a trustworthy

advisor for young people when it comes to prevention or advice on healthcare. Youth work also helps change behaviour that can diminish the risk of leading dangerous lifestyles. More generally, youth work activities add to self-awareness and confidence in young people, which contributes to their well-being.

The Youth in Action programme (2007-2013) specifically supported projects promoting healthy lifestyles and the inclusion of young people into society, including socially-excluded youth with mental health problems. Next to the permanent priority of social inclusion, health was regularly one of the annual priorities of the programme. Funding these types of projects continues under the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020).

Young people and children are today amongst the keenest users of online and mobile technologies in Europe. To give them the digital skills and tools they need to fully and safely benefit from being online, the Commission set out a European strategy for a better internet for children ⁽¹⁵³⁾ in 2012. Its goals related to the **protection of young people against dangers arising from the use of social media** are to scale up awareness and empowerment, including teaching of digital literacy and online safety in all EU schools; to create a safe environment for children through age-appropriate privacy settings, wider use of parental controls and age rating and content classification; and to combat child sexual abuse material online and child sexual exploitation. The Commission also promotes a digital competence framework for all citizens describing the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to live and work in an increasing digital society. ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾

149 <http://www.fp7-myweb.eu/>

150 <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/factsheets/7eap/en.pdf>

151 All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

152 <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/working-with-young-people-pbNC0414172/>

153 COM(2012) 196 final of 2.5.2012.

154 <http://openeducationeuropa.eu/sites/default/files/DIGCOMP%20brochure%202014%20.pdf>

7.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

7.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

7.2.1.1. Encouraging youth fitness and physical activity

A large number of countries developed national strategies or action plans to promote fitness and physical activity of young people. **Austria**, for instance, adopted a child and youth health strategy which complemented an action plan on physical activity. **Finland** elaborated a national strategy for physical activity promoting health and well-being targeted at all age groups, including children and young people. The country also runs a working group with local and regional authorities, which develops recommendations on rising physical activity and healthy diets. **Luxembourg**

developed a national action plan on healthy eating and physical exercise to establish a coherent policy approach for children and young people in this field, while **Ireland** currently prepares a national physical activity plan.

In many cases, projects are also means of encouraging fitness and physical activity, such as a project in **Denmark** entitled 'Get moving' or 'PMPAM' in **Italy**, a project built on networking with and between the local and regional levels to promote physical activity and healthy diets. The German-speaking Community of **Belgium** created a one-stop-shop for physical activity in combination with mental, psychological and social development and prevention of health problems.

In the **Czech Republic**, volunteering serves to promote physical activity, especially in the framework of a national grant programmes for youth leisure activities prioritising 'Sport for Everybody' and

Figure 17 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of health and well-being



- A – Encouraging youth fitness and physical activity
- B – Promoting healthy lifestyles for young people
- C – Taking into account that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being
- D – Promoting the role of sport
- E – Mobilising stakeholders at local level to detect and help youth at risk
- F – Increasing knowledge and awareness of health issues among youth workers
- G – Encouraging peer-to-peer education
- H – Promoting safe use of new media amongst young people
- I – Making health facilities more youth friendly

'Volunteerism in Sport'. Countries often mention schools as primary partners for physical education, awareness and training. By way of example, the **United Kingdom** points out high quality data collected in the framework of a school sport survey in Wales, and an online guide to teenage health and well-being created by the national youth information and citizenship charity Young Scot. Other means to encourage physical activity are outreach to young people through associations (**Sweden**) and youth work (**Estonia**).

7.2.1.2. Taking into account that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being

Many countries took measures regarding this aspect. The **United Kingdom** and the **Czech Republic** set up cross-sectoral interministerial platforms on youth health issues at the ministries in charge of youth. More specifically, the Czech Republic set up an expert platform on health, healthy lifestyles and well-being of young people at the Ministry for Youth and Sports, where experts tackle issues related to different aspects of health in regular roundtable meetings. The Young People's Mental Health and Well-Being task force in the United Kingdom focuses on innovative solutions improving children's and young people's health and well-being.

Bulgaria launched an intervention programme for health promotion and integrated prophylaxis, which is divided into different levels and actions, including the municipal-level programme Healthy Children in Healthy Families with the overall aim to improve the health situation of the local population, including young people. **Slovenia** refers to a planned national programme on nutrition and health-enhancing physical activity whose purpose is to complement the national sport strategy. In **Croatia**, health is promoted through a network between health professionals, funding programmes and the Living Healthy programme, which is made up of a wide range of measures from nutrition to physical activity but also health education and enhanced communication. In **France**,

a national health programme and a *plan priorité jeunesse* aim at fighting risky behaviour, answering the needs of the most vulnerable young people, developing physical activities and sports, and making young people actors of their own health. **Finland's** multidisciplinary agencies promote health literacy – in this country, 'Teaching Health' is part of the curriculum.

Youth health counselling offices in **Portugal** offer free and anonymous support on all health-related questions, and the **German** Healthy Children network offers young families with children a wide range of support covering different aspects of young people's health. Furthermore, **Italy's** Gaining Health programme promotes healthy choices and points out risk factors, while **Latvia** aims at decreasing health risks by promoting a safe and healthy environment for young people. Young people follow seminars and discussions in which they learn how to take care of their health.

Luxembourg promotes emotional and sexual health through an interministerial co-ordination unit and an enlarged steering group. **Malta** also took measures related to sexual health via a national sexual health strategy. **Ireland** developed a new national suicide prevention strategy, which aims at making mental illness better understood and recognised in society. **France** took measures in this field through its national action programme against suicide 2011-2014. The **Netherlands** invest in prevention through a Healthy School initiative, and **Sweden** launched a study to gain better knowledge about young people's health in different social situations.

7.2.1.3. Promoting healthy lifestyles for young people

Measures taken in this area focus on the following three aspects: healthy lifestyle in general, healthy eating and preventing drug addiction. **Slovenia**, for instance, developed an integrated innovative approach ensuring a healthy lifestyle among children and adolescents with the pillars nutrition, physical activity, prevention and management of obesity. The objective is

to reduce health inequalities. In **Finland**, a healthy and active lifestyle is promoted through a 'School on the Move' project. **France** targets young people at school as well; education and health committees aim at raising awareness about health issues. Another example is **Germany** where necessary competences for a healthy life are developed through out-of-school learning in Thuringia. **Italy's** project 'Gaining Health in Adolescence' disseminates best practices, engages health professional trainers and creates so-called communities of practice.

To promote healthy eating, nutrition plans in schools or pre-schools are part of some countries' initiatives. **Austria** developed a project named 'Our School Cafeteria'. The French Community of **Belgium** combines nutrition plans with physical activities in its *Manger-Bouger* (Eat-Move) programme. In **Luxembourg's** youth centres, healthy eating is also an important topic. And **Slovakia** has developed a national care programme focusing on healthy nutrition for children, in particular in Roma communities, and ensuring that fruit is available in schools.

Preventative measures against drug addiction include national programmes counteracting drug addiction in the **Netherlands** and **Poland** and a 'National Drugs Strategy (Interim) 2009-2013' of **Ireland**. This strategy was based on the five following pillars: supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and research. Along these lines, the **United Kingdom's** drugs strategy provides information for young people and their parents about drugs and alcohol through education. It also offers the FRANK ('Friendly, confidential drugs advice') service, a specialist substance misuse service for youth which intervenes quickly and efficiently.

7.2.1.4. Promoting the role of sport

Sport plays an important role in Member States and candidate countries to enhance the health and well-being of young people. **Latvia** has developed a state sport strategy to create equal conditions for healthy living for all. **Slovakia's** national sports programme follows a cross-sectoral approach between different ministries, such as the Ministries for Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Health, Finances and Defence. **Serbia** and **Turkey** also launched national sport strategies aiming at facilitating access of all young people to sports.

Germany backs sport infrastructures and supports various youth work projects in the field of sport. Through its initiative 'Boost for Sport', **Sweden** aims to involve young people in sport associations. The **Czech Republic** combines promotion of sports, volunteering, engagement for development cooperation and fun in the Football for Development campaign, which is annually organised by the Association for Voluntary Activities INEX, while **Lithuania** enhances good neighbourly cooperation with Belarus through sports in the youth field. In **Luxembourg**, a national youth service trains young experts in freestyle sports to transmit their knowledge and experience to youngsters.

Finland uses sports as a tool for integration of young immigrants in cooperation with local authorities, whereas the **Netherlands** refers to 'Sport and Moving in the Neighbourhood', which puts particular emphasis on youth living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (*Sportimpuls*).

Austria – Project *Bewegung* (Physical Exercise)

The aim of this yearly nationwide project consists in encouraging children and youth to be daily involved in sport activities or other forms of exercise. This is promoted by the Austrian Scout Movement, whose goal is to link sport with fun through outdoor activities and experiences in the nature and to develop teamwork spirit amongst young people. In this framework, the Austrian Scout Movement prepared an outdoor activity booklet, which rewarded children and youth with a sticker and a badge every time they completed an activity.

Moreover, a project 'On the Road' was carried out, which consisted in a bicycle driven for a whole year through Austria by different scout groups. 5 000 kilometres and about 300 groups took part in this project; the current position of the bicycle could always be tracked on the homepage or via a Facebook group.

<https://www.ppo.e.at/aktionen/bundesthema/bundesthema1314>

7.2.1.5. Increasing knowledge and awareness of health issues among youth workers

The **Czech Republic**, **Sweden** and **Finland** report that knowledge of health issues is part of youth worker training in their country. **Austria** and **Ireland** organised conferences in this field. The Austrian 'Food for Thought Conference' took place in relation to a pilot project on health literacy in professional open youth work and information, whereas the Irish conference was organised in the context of capacity-building of youth agencies and organisations. Other countries focused on prevention training, such as the French Community of **Belgium** which raised youth workers' awareness of suicide prevention, or **Malta** which organised workshops for youth workers on sexual health of young people.

7.2.1.6. Mobilising stakeholders at local level to detect and help youth at risk

In order to gain better knowledge about the situation of vulnerable children and youth at local level, the Flemish Community of **Belgium** launched a study which served as a basis for projects including health monitoring and screening. The new **Swedish** youth policy law – which entered into force on 1 January 2015 – strengthens young people's self-support, primarily NEETs. Cross-sectoral cooperation at municipal level, for instance between social services, is an important part of this new approach. In

the **United Kingdom** (England), the three-year project 'Health Champions', which ran until March 2015 and was carried out by a voluntary organisation, focused on engagement of young people in primary care and was particularly responsive to youth in communities. The **Irish** Child and Family Agency, dedicated to improving well-being of children and youth, provided a wide range of services, including psychological support, to children, young people and families. **Latvia's** health promotion guidelines for local governments aim at improving healthy lifestyles and sports at local level. **Slovenia** counted on capacity-building regarding healthcare, including also the local level. In the **Netherlands**, local neighbourhood expert teams intervene where and when necessary with a focus on prevention.

7.2.1.7. Encouraging peer-to-peer education

Only few peer-to-peer measures related to health and well-being were contained in the national reports. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** uses peer-to-peer education in all domains that touch the daily lives of young people, including health and well-being. The **Czech Republic** adopts a peer-to-peer approach in schools, for example in the framework of school minimal prevention programmes. In **Finland**, the method is used at the grass-roots level with the support of the Government's Child and Youth Policy programme.

Belgium – Festi-Team

The project 'Festi-Team', led by the association *Latitudes jeunes* and working together with other actors of the health sector, provides peer-to-peer awareness in festivals about safe partying. A group of young volunteers are trained to harm reduction in party environment beforehand, and then they go to festivals, spread the word and raise awareness amongst other young partyers (16-25 years old) about issues related to drugs, alcohol abuse, noise and safe sex.

<http://www.cartesdevisite-jeunesse.be/projets/festi-team.html>

7.2.1.8. Promoting safe use of new media amongst young people

Although approaches are different, this topic is addressed by many Member States.

A strategy for information safety and security is for instance part of **Luxembourg's** 2012-2014 Youth Pact. Online youth work offers services addressed to professionals working with young people, but also aims at creating an online culture of young people. In **Germany**, children and young people are helped to learn using today's media in the best possible way, which includes counselling and cooperation with youth media protection; this was covered by a support programme in the framework of the Federal Children and Youth Plan.

Parents are targeted by the **United Kingdom's** 'ParentPort' website, which provides useful help and advice on children's media use. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** wrote a concept note on media knowledge and established a dedicated centre on this issue. **Malta** raises awareness of and empowers minors, parents and guardians through a 'Be Smart' project. The Safer-Internet.at platform in **Austria** has a special focus on children and youth as well as on parents and educators. This measure belongs to the country's child and youth health strategy.

Cyprus created a Safer Internet Centre to promote safer internet use among children and youth. Another noteworthy project is 'CyberEthics', which amongst other things

Slovenia – 'LogOut & ReStart'

LogOut is a non-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and families by providing treatment, help, information and education needed for a healthy and balanced life in a world of media and technology.

With its 'LogOut & ReStart' programme, LogOut aims at targeting excessive use of online media and computer games amongst young people and their dependency to it. It offers therefore unique free-of-charge addiction treatment options and a wide range of different prevention activities. The main fields the organisation is focusing on are compulsive internet use, excessive playing of online games, online gambling addiction, online shopping overuse and online pornography.

It also strives to inspire children that the internet is not just a place to escape from problems but also a place of creativity and endless potential. In this framework, the organisation uses peer-to-peer support and involves families and young internet users. Team counselling of technological experts and psychologists as well as analysis of online activities, behaviour and roles are part of the approach. LogOut also organises summer camps – Logout Digital Detox Summer Camps – where youngsters live one week without internet devices and connections.

The programme is financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry for Health and the Municipality of Ljubljana.

<http://www.logout.si/starsi-in-otroci/>

addresses children pornography, gender discrimination and inappropriate use of personal images. Cyprus also runs a help-line and a hotline to offer specific support to internet users – including children and youth. **Greece** launched a new application for smart phones named ‘Cyberkid’, which enables children in case of danger or threat appearing while surfing on the internet to directly communicate with officers of the Directorate of Electronic Crime – through a process of ‘Cyber Alert’ or by e-mail. **Croatia**, the **Netherlands** and **Italy** specifically refer to action against cyber-bullying. And the **Finnish** Internet Police monitor behaviour on social media sites with the purpose of preventive action, early intervention and online safety for young people.

7.2.1.9. Making health facilities more youth friendly

For this aspect Member States provide little information. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** refers to its 2014 Special Youth Care Act, whereas the **Czech Republic** and **Latvia** point at their health programmes. **Finland** mentions its Law on Pupils’ and Students’ Welfare. In the **Netherlands**, advice and help is provided by Centres for Youth and Family (*Centra voor Jeugd en Gezin*), and in **Sweden**, an Online Youth Clinic⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ (UMO) provides advice and services regarding birth control, pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease tests but also counselling on mental health illness.

United Kingdom – NHS England Youth Forum

The National Health Service (NHS) England launched a Youth Forum in March 2014. Comprising 20 young people recruited from all over the country and linked in to a Facebook network of hundreds more young people, the forum aims to provide a voice for young people. The young people work with NHS England to improve the services for young people.

During the first year, the priorities were the following:

- working with partners to develop recommendations for improving communication between young people and clinicians;
- improving awareness of mental health issues for young people;
- focusing on de-stigmatising sexual health services and improving young people’s sexual health.

The delivery of the Youth Forum is supported by the British Youth Council and a reference group of a wide range of youth sector partners. In addition to that, social media offer young people the possibility to contribute to the forum with their views, ideas and experiences.

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/patients/yth-for/>

7.2.2. *Other policy measures in this field of action*

Member States refer to a variety of issues but most of them are already identified in the youth-related aims and possible initiatives of the EU Youth Strategy. The listed measures concern teenage pregnancy, young people with disabilities and youth with special needs, the reduction of tobacco or alcohol consumption, psychological support and health education at school, the prevention and control of HIV infections and other sexually transmitted disease. An aspect not yet covered is mentioned by **Germany** which highlights measures to improve children's security and to avoid accidents.

7.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) stresses that although the right of **access to health care** is enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, such

access has been severely and disproportionately hampered by austerity politics in Ireland, Greece and Portugal – as observed in the YFJ's report on 'Youth in the Crisis'⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ (2014). This situation is completely unacceptable and the forum therefore urges the EU and its Member States to immediately restore the unrestricted access of young people to their right to health care.

In its 2013 publication 'Quality Jobs for Young People',⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ the YFJ researched the link between the crisis and provisions to protect **young workers' health at work**. Given that the financial and fiscal crisis impacted strongly on young people, the forum regrets that health and well-being of young people has been a rather low priority on the EU agenda since the launch of the Commission's Youth Health initiative in 2009. The YFJ is actively engaged in awareness-raising and capacity-building on health issues among its member organisations through non-formal education and health training.

156 <http://www.youthforum.org/publication/youth-in-the-crisis-what-went-wrong-2/>

157 http://issuu.com/yomag/docs/yfj_qualityjobs_en_issuu_

8 Voluntary activities

Young people's voluntary activities should be supported and better recognised for their value as an important form of non-formal learning. Another aim in this field of action is to remove obstacles to voluntary activities and to promote the cross-border mobility of young people.

8.1. EU initiatives and action

The 2008 **Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union** ⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ aims at promoting more cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people in the EU. The Commission's objective is to successfully implement the recommendation whilst encouraging civil society organisations to actively contribute to these efforts. The establishment of an expert group on the mobility of young volunteers in 2009 and the European Year of Volunteering 2011 were further milestones.

European Voluntary Service (EVS), as part of the Erasmus+ programme, ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ provides young people aged 18 to 30 years with an opportunity to express their personal commitment through full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country, within or outside the European Union. The standard duration of an EVS stint is between 2 and 12 months. The EVS scheme aims at enhancing young people's employability by offering a true learning experience which contributes greatly to the development of both personal and professional skills and competencies. Young people's participation in EVS, and in voluntary activities in general, also promotes their engagement in society – in

particular it strengthens their sense of solidarity – and offers them an opportunity to contribute to their community by providing valuable services. It also stimulates their sense of initiative and social entrepreneurship, and contributes to breaking down stereotypes and fostering a sense of tolerance by demonstrating the value of cultural diversity. Finally, EVS is a useful instrument for the support and capacity-building of organisations active in the fields of youth, civic education, solidarity and social services.

A **database of EVS accredited organisations** ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ is available via the European Youth Portal. In December 2014, the database was re-launched with new features that make it easier for young people to find and apply for international volunteering opportunities. Advertisements for volunteering placements with application deadlines, dates of activity, place and description target young people willing to gain new experience through voluntary work. The database is designed to help organisations to attract volunteers for their projects by allowing them to create appropriate advertisements. The system is flexible and easy to use.

Between 2007 and 2013, over 48 000 young people participated in EVS under the Youth in Action programme. Erasmus+ now also makes it possible to carry out **large-scale projects relevant to voluntary activities**. In October 2014, a call for proposals was published under Key Action 3 ⁽¹⁶¹⁾ with a view to boosting the effectiveness and efficiency of education and training systems and youth policies. One of the priority themes was to encourage the development and internationalisation of young people's volunteering.

158 OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 8-10.

159 See also Chapter 12.

160 http://europa.eu/youth/evs_database

161 A description of the different key actions under Erasmus+ can be found in Section 12.1.

YesEuropa – Young volunteers changing Europe

This 12-month project, carried out by *Asociación Building Bridges* (Spain) under the Europe for Citizens programme, aims at raising awareness among young people, teachers and youth workers from rural areas and disadvantaged backgrounds about the benefits of participating in volunteering programmes in order to become active citizens. Giving young people a greater sense of tolerance and respect is seen as key to creating future generations of committed European citizens. This project will inform them about how to become a volunteer based on the experience of voluntary organisations at European level and foster debates about European civic participation policies and opportunities for young people.

Within the framework of the project, an international seminar bringing together European civic organisations and policy-makers will be organised to discuss the results of a survey on volunteering and civic engagement, and fostering online and offline debates with the participation of young European volunteers.

<http://yeseuropa.org/proyecto-yeseuropa-jovenes-voluntarios-cambiando-europa/>

Interest in volunteering and young people's participation has continued to increase over the years. According to the **Flash Eurobarometer survey** published in April 2015,⁽¹⁶²⁾ on average 25% of young people in the EU aged between 15 and 30 were involved in organised voluntary activities. However the situation varies across Member States. In several countries, such as Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, more than 30% of young people actively participate in volunteering, while in others (such as Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Sweden, Finland or Romania) the numbers remain below 20%. A substantial proportion of the volunteers are involved in activities in their local communities (66%). In general, the main areas of voluntary activity are charity, humanitarian and development aid (44%) and education, training and sport (40%). It is worth noting that 93% of the young people

participating in the survey never had the opportunity to go abroad for the purpose of volunteering.

New opportunities to get actively involved will arise from the launch of the **EU Aid Volunteers initiative**⁽¹⁶³⁾ in 2015 which will bring volunteers and organisations from different countries together to work on humanitarian projects worldwide.

Research projects supported by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme and Horizon 2020 contribute to better understanding of social innovation processes, including the impact of voluntary activities. For instance, the project 'Third Sector Impact, Measuring impact, Enhancing visibility'⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ is a comparative European research project addressing understanding of the third sector, its scope and scale, and impacts on the common welfare.

162 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_408_en.pdf

163 http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en

164 <http://thirdsectorimpact.eu>

8.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

8.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

8.2.1.1. Promoting the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities

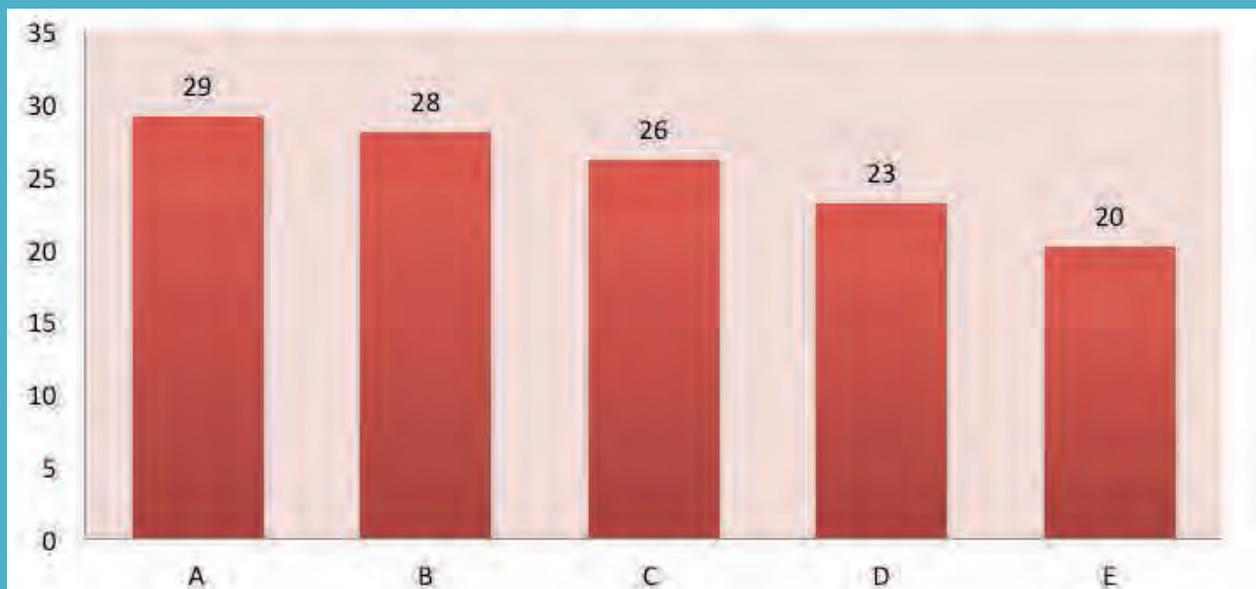
A number of Member States, such as **Croatia, Malta, Slovakia** and **Austria**, have implemented or prepare tools supporting young people in describing and recognising competences and skills acquired through voluntary activities. It is noticeable that several countries use web and IT solutions to operationalise these tools. Between 2012 and 2014 Slovakia implemented a project with the support of the Leonardo da Vinci programme to raise awareness about competences obtained through volunteering, implemented with an online tool for recognition. Similarly, Austria created an online 'WIK:!' ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ which

allows young people to recognise their competences with the support of youth workers. In October 2014 the **Czech Republic** introduced a vocational qualification for 'Coordinator of Volunteers', a certificate that is accepted across the country.

8.2.1.2. Raising awareness amongst youth about the value of voluntary activities

A large majority of countries mention their measures adopted to raise awareness amongst young people about the value of voluntary activities as well as of the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities. **Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands** and **Portugal** put in place dedicated websites aimed at promoting volunteering and raising awareness of its value. **Denmark** set up 'Project Voluntary', a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the national centre for voluntary work. The **German** Europeers ⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

Figure 18 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of voluntary activities



- A – Promoting the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities
- B – Raising awareness amongst youth about the value of voluntary activities
- C – Supporting the protection of young volunteers and the quality of volunteering
- D – Engaging young people in the European Year of Volunteering 2011
- E – Promoting intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities

165 WIK:I – Was ich kann durch informelles Lernen, <http://www.bmfj.gv.at/jugend/jugend-aktiv/wiki.html>.

166 <https://www.europeers.de/>

initiative is an example of using a network of young people who took part in transnational activities in order to promote its virtues amongst their peers.

When describing their efforts in implementing transnational volunteering, most

countries underline the importance of the EVS scheme. In addition, some Members States support youth volunteering through national schemes.

Sweden – *Volontärbyrån* (Volunteer Office)

Volontärbyrån (Volunteer Office) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2002 as part of another NGO called FORUM.

Volontärbyrån uses its website to share information about volunteering issues and manages a free matching service to publicise volunteering opportunities throughout the country and make it easy for volunteers and non-profit organisations in Sweden to connect with each other.

The organisation also provides support and training to NGOs about volunteer coordination.

<http://www.volontarbyran.org/eng/>

8.2.1.3. Supporting the protection of young volunteers and the quality of volunteering

When it comes to supporting the protection of young volunteers and the quality of volunteering, there are signs for an increased Europe-wide effort. Since 2010, 4 out of 5 of the responding countries have implemented or plan to implement new measures in this regard. **Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland** and **Slovakia** have laws for volunteers addressing their well-being and safety. As for the quality of volunteering, good results were displayed through EVS and its accreditation scheme for organisations wishing to run EU-funded volunteering projects. Similar certification or accreditation measures are in place on a national level in **Cyprus, the Czech Republic** and **Denmark**.

8.2.1.4. Engaging young people in the European Year of Volunteering 2011

Overall, the activity level with regard to the European Year of Volunteering 2011 promoting citizenship was strong across the board. Some initiatives taken in the context of the Year led to meetings and activities

which are still ongoing. In **Greece**, one of the follow-up measures consisted of the use of a national educational documentary called 'Act Positively'. It aims to stimulate and initiate dialogue on volunteering in the classroom.

8.2.1.5. Promoting intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities

As to intergenerational solidarity initiatives, the **Czech Republic** informs about its 2013-2017 national action plan supporting positive ageing, in which both intergenerational relationships and volunteering are covered. In 2012 **Slovenia** released a report containing an analysis of and recommendations on intergenerational solidarity in the community.

8.2.2. Implementation of the Council recommendation of 30 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers

For the implementation of the Council recommendation on enhancing the mobility of young volunteers across the European

Union,¹⁶⁷ the Youth in Action programme (2007-2013) and the Erasmus+ programme are highlighted by most countries. Several Member States also inform about national funding available for promoting and enabling volunteering for young people.

Italy, Germany, France and Luxembourg have national schemes for youth volunteering, such as the Voluntary Service Cooperation in Luxembourg for young people between 18 and 30 wishing to volunteer between 3 and 12 months. Young people from Germany as well as from other countries may take part in voluntary work in Germany through a *Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr* (Voluntary Social Year). In **Belgium**, the Bel'J programme offers young Belgians the opportunity to take part in volunteering in one of the other Communities in Belgium. The **Irish Aid** Volunteering Initiative was launched in 2013 and aims to strengthen support for volunteering across all age groups (see box).

Croatia, Ireland, Finland, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and the **United Kingdom** provide support to non-governmental organisations in the context of volunteering in the youth field. As an example, the United

Kingdom has a grant fund that helps 26 volunteering programmes provide crucial support for young people in vulnerable circumstances, including young offenders, care leavers and NEETs.

Following the Council recommendation and in order to increase capacities of organisations ready to receive volunteers, **Austria** established a working group. **Spain's** National Strategy for Volunteering (2010-2014) aims to strengthen participation of non-profit actors in international networks. Furthermore, **Slovenia** explored the relevance of volunteering, through notably EVS, for the employability of young people.

The Council recommendation puts a strong emphasis on the sharing of information on volunteering – such as existing opportunities, information and training for youth workers, organisations and other actors as well as awareness of rights and responsibilities. Many countries are involved in such informational activities. In addition to using the networks available under Erasmus+ (such as Eurodesk), a notable example are **Slovakia's** yearly meetings in local areas to motivate young people to get involved in volunteering.

Ireland – Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative

The Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative aims to modernise Irish Aid's support to volunteering, enabling experienced professionals to have an opportunity to contribute to development. Irish Aid, who is managed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, works closely with NGOs such as the Irish Association of Development Workers and Volunteers (*Comhlámh*) on the Irish Aid Volunteering Initiative. This initiative targets all age groups but is particularly relevant to young people (69% of international volunteers in 2013 were below 30).

Irish Aid has been a long standing partner of the UN Volunteers programme (UNV). Irish Aid also hosts an annual Volunteering Fair to showcase to potential volunteers the diversity and availability of short and long term volunteering placements overseas. Important initiatives funded by Irish Aid include the development by *Comhlámh* of the Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Organisations; the provision of enhanced information on volunteering across a range of social media including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, which can be utilised through the #Volops Hashtag; and profiling the experience and contribution that volunteers make to international development, leading to increased awareness and interest in volunteering.

<https://www.irishaid.ie/get-involved/volunteering/>

167 Although the recommendation was agreed before the EU Youth Strategy, it is included in this report because its commitments are explicitly recalled in the text of the 2009 Council resolution and because it encourages Member States to set up transnational volunteering schemes.

8.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) has developed a **European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers**,⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ which aims at informing decision-makers, volunteer providers, organisations and volunteers themselves about adequate conditions for volunteers. This includes the protection of their rights and support by the volunteer provider. A volunteer's status can differ widely between the EU Member States. Thus the forum's contribution is valuable as a common guideline to ensure a certain level of protection.

As far as **international mobility of young people** is concerned, the YFJ has for many years been calling for reduction of obstacles to the entry of young people from non-EU countries into the EU. Commenting on the Council Position on a proposal⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ for a new Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing, the YFJ and several of its member organisations published a joint reaction⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ stating that the proposals clearly fall short of what is needed to enhance the international mobility of young people.

168 <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/04/volunteering-charter-en.pdf>

169 COM(2013) 151 final of 25.3.2013.

170 <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2015/01/Reaction-to-Council-Position-on-Visa-Directive.pdf>

9 Youth and the world

This field of action aims at young people's participation in and contribution to global processes of policy-making. It concerns issues such as climate change, the UN Millennium Development Goals and human rights.

9.1. EU initiatives and action

The EU instruments for pursuing the above objectives entail both policy cooperation and financial support through different EU programmes, mainly Erasmus+. So-called Youth Windows to Erasmus+ provide additional funds and measures to strengthen cooperation with specific neighbouring regions.

While this section deals mostly with youth cooperation with partner countries, such as China and Africa, Chapter 12 goes into detail about Erasmus+ and its predecessor programme Youth in Action and their support to the 'Youth and the world' field of action, especially as regards cooperation with partner countries neighbouring the EU.

The Eastern Partnership made significant progress in 2014. New Association Agreements were signed with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Both the Lithuanian and the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU put a focus on strengthening youth cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries. In 2013 and 2015, **Eastern Partnership Youth Forums** were organised through cooperation between the Presidencies, the Commission and other stakeholders. The participants' recommendations from these forums were brought to the attention of the Eastern Partnership Summits.

To support capacity-development of governments and civil society stakeholders

in the youth sector in cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries, the Commission has set up an Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit (EPYRU) in Kiev. EPYRU also aims to foster youth research and to implement visibility and dissemination activities related to youth in the Eastern Partnership. EPYRU activities in 2014 included the organisation of a forum on student self-government, a training course for youth workers and state civil servants, and the development of an e-learning platform.

The **EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue**⁽¹⁷¹⁾ (HPPD), launched in 2012, is part of the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, which covers various policy fields. It provides a platform for cooperation between China and the EU in many areas, including youth, education and culture. The youth dimension of the HPPD builds on the 2011 EU-China Year of Youth, during which seven flagship events were organised. These involved the Commission, Member States and a large number of youth organisations, including the All-China Youth Federation (ACYF) and the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The 2011 EU-China Year of Youth supported cooperation between more than 200 youth organisations from China and Europe.

Two HPPD meetings have been organised so far, one in Brussels (April 2012) and one in Beijing (September 2014). They resulted in the adoption of joint declarations and follow-up action plans. The current action plan provides for EU-China policy dialogue and expert seminars on issues relevant to youth – to be organised by the Commission and the ACYF – as well as joint projects in the framework of the Erasmus+ and the Chinese Youth Partnership for Friendship programmes. It is also geared to strengthening

171 http://ec.europa.eu/education/international-cooperation/china_en.htm

web-based cooperation between the Chinese and EU youth portals. An extraordinary HPPD meeting is scheduled for September 2015 with a view to celebrating the 40th anniversary of EU-China diplomatic relations.

Cooperation between the EU and Africa in the youth field is conducted via meetings, such as **Africa-Europe Youth Leaders' summits** (the third of these took place in April 2014 immediately before the fourth EU-Africa summit) or **Africa-Europe Youth Platform** meetings (the third one was held in January 2015). These activities are part of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership which aims at jointly addressing common challenges such as climate change, protection of the environment, ensuring peace and security, good governance, effective participation in society and human rights.

The European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development financed two research projects related to young people in the South and East Mediterranean countries: SAHWA – Researching Arab Mediterranean Youth: Towards a New Social Contract⁽¹⁷²⁾ and POWER2YOUTH – Freedom, dignity and justice: a comprehensive approach to the understanding of youth exclusion and the prospects for youth-led change in the South and East Mediterranean.⁽¹⁷³⁾

The **European Year for Development**⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ (EYD2015) is a major EU-led initiative dedicated to raising awareness, engaging Europeans in the EU's development cooperation and encouraging a debate on 'our world, our dignity, our future'. The EYD2015 aims to highlight the Union's strong commitment to international development cooperation in line with the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda by the UN General

Assembly,⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ as well as the new international climate agreement. The EYD2015 places a strong focus on young people and their role in contributing to eradicating poverty worldwide, with a specific thematic month dedicated to Children and Youth in July.

The Commission also puts a special focus on youth aspects within **EU development cooperation**, especially with regard to education, social inclusion and combating poverty. The report on 'Youth and the post-2015 development framework: challenges and opportunities'⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ highlights current key challenges and opportunities with regard to youth employment and youth inclusion in development processes.

In October 2014 the Commission launched a four-year project on youth inclusion⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ – co-financed under the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and implemented by the OECD Development Centre – to support 10 selected countries (Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Jordan, Moldova, Peru, South Africa, Togo and Vietnam) to better respond to the needs and aspirations of young people through evidence-based policies and strengthen their involvement in national development processes. This project will address the main challenges youth is facing, and analyse the indicators to measure youth well-being deficits. A global methodology will be developed to assist countries in implementing and strengthening youth inclusion strategies.

The **EU Aid Volunteers initiative**⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ was launched in 2015. It aims to connect volunteers and organisations from different countries so that they can work together on humanitarian projects. Trained volunteers are being deployed to address needs-based humanitarian aid and to support youth

172 <http://sahwa.eu/>

173 <http://www.power2youth.eu/>

174 <https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en>

175 The UN Millennium Development Goals were established in 2000 and include eight anti-poverty targets to be accomplished by 2015. 2015 is also the year in which the international community will agree on the future global framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

176 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/erd-report-youth-post-2015-2013_en.pdf

177 http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/human-development/social-inclusion_en

178 http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/eu-aid-volunteers_en

capacity-building. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, focuses as well on volunteering and involvement of young people, recommending to the governments to engage with relevant stakeholders, including youth and volunteers.

9.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

9.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

9.2.1.1. Raising awareness of young people about global issues

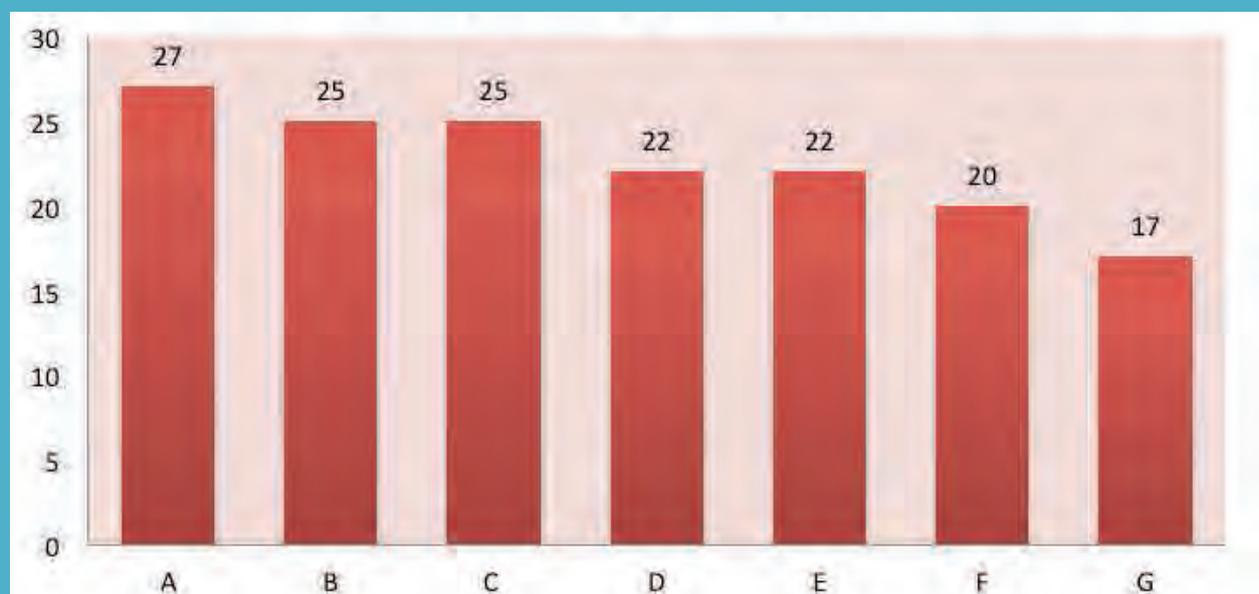
Almost all Member States included the aims of the 'Youth and the world' field of action

in their national youth strategy or development education strategy, and/or implemented programmes for that purpose.

The **Czech** youth strategy aims at making children and young people familiar with the principles of sustainable development and at developing environmental literacy. **Slovakia's** youth strategy focuses on young people's and youth workers' international mobility, on the development of quality youth work and on increasing awareness of interdependence between local actions and global impacts.

The **Irish** Aid Development Education Strategy (2007-2015) was put in place to strengthen coherence between education, citizenship and development policies in Ireland, to ensure high quality development education and the implementation of initiatives raising public awareness and understanding for development issues. It also supports

Figure 19 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of 'Youth and the world'



A – Raising awareness of young people about global issues

B – Providing opportunities to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues

C – Promoting the organisation of trainings, exchanges and meetings for young people from different regions of the world

D – Promoting entrepreneurship, employment and volunteering amongst young people with regions outside of Europe

E – Promoting youth participation in development cooperation

F – Promoting youth participation in green volunteering and green patterns of consumption

G – Promoting cooperation with and exchanges between those active in youth work on different continents

the exchange of good practice at European and international levels. Ireland's national youth council's development education programme has a number of strands such as youth workers' training on development and justice issues or the organisation of the One World Week – a week of youth-led awareness-raising, education and action that takes place throughout Ireland each year. In the **Netherlands**, youth representatives of the national youth council hold discussions with thousands of young people about sustainable development and provide input for the UN and climate conferences. This is done in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries.

Germany implements programmes which foster networking among volunteers who were involved in development projects and use the volunteers' competences for educational purposes of children, young people and adults in formal and non-formal education. The programme *Bildung trifft Entwicklung* (Education Meets Development), for example, is expected to contribute to the organisation of about 3 000 educational events mainly in schools, which should reach about 75 000 young people.

Several countries made global issues or development education part of school

curricula. With its 2009 curriculum reform, the **Polish** Ministry of Education strengthened education on global issues within formal education at primary and secondary school levels. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports local governments and education institutions committed to raising development cooperation issues in public debates. In line with **Finland's** development policy programme (2012), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperates with educational authorities to ensure that global education has a solid foothold in general education. According to the new core curriculum, which should be in place in 2016, interactive methods should be used, promoting sustainable development in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Cooperation among stakeholders tends to involve the Ministries responsible for education and for foreign affairs, the bodies related to them and civil society organisations, which in several cases create networks to achieve synergy. In **Denmark**, a network of high schools – Global High Schools – was set up to empower students to become active learners with a global horizon. And in **Slovenia**, 'Plan B' is a network of NGOs and experts which form a broad civil society platform.

Czech Republic – ARPOK

The organisation ARPOK, founded in 2004, provides Global Development Education, raising awareness about development among children, young people, pupils and teachers, both in a formal and non-formal context. Its mission is to contribute to the development of civil society in the Czech Republic and abroad. The organisation offers educational programmes, discussions about developing countries, thematic days, methodical materials, exhibitions, consultations concerning the implementation of global topics into the school curriculum, courses for teachers. ARPOK works both with pupils (interactive workshops, project/thematic day) and with teachers and youth workers (methodological seminars, handbooks, consultation centre, and library).

<http://arpok.cz/home/>

9.2.1.2. Providing opportunities to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues

Most of the Member States actively promote young people's participation in international cooperation and fora. In **Sweden**, since more than 15 years a youth representative participates in the Swedish Delegation to the UN General Assembly. The National Youth Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) has a representative in the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO and the Nordic Committee for Children and Young People. Sweden also highlights that the Structured Dialogue provides youth delegates with important knowledge and experience of international cooperation and an expanded network. Similarly, **Denmark** has one representative of the Danish Student Union as a permanent member in the Danish National Commission for UNESCO. The Flemish youth council (**Belgium**) sends youth representatives to several international fora (EU, UN, Council of Europe, UNESCO). **Austria** also offers young people the possibility to be part of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO. **Romania's** youth delegates participate in two intergovernmental conferences: the UN General Assembly and the Commission for Social Development.

In **Germany**, the permanent school competition *Alle für Eine Welt – Eine Welt für Alle* (All for One World – One World for All) which is organised on behalf of the Federal President, invites teachers to integrate topics related to global learning in their lessons. In **Finland**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture provide support to NGOs and other national-level stakeholders in order to facilitate exchange of views on global issues. Programmes like **Lithuania's** Democracy Promotion and Development Cooperation programme and conferences like the European-North American Conference on Youth Participation (organised by the **Austrian** Commission for UNESCO) are used to foster exchange between young people and policy-makers on issues of global relevance.

9.2.1.3. Promoting the organisation of trainings, exchanges and meetings for young people from different regions of the world

Many Member States mention Erasmus+ and its predecessor programme Youth in Action as well as the Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations as examples of measures which foster the exchange and training of young people at international level.

Youth councils such as the **Danish** DUF (*Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd*) or the **Spanish** youth system – which consists of the youth institute INJUVE, youth bodies of the Autonomous Communities, youth counsellorships of city halls, youth organisations and youth councils – support democratic processes in an international youth context.

The Euromed Youth Platform, which is based in **Malta**, brings young people from the European and Mediterranean regions together in an environment of tolerance and mutual understanding and promotes capacity-building. Its 'Search 4 Partners' engine facilitates the creation of networks with similar objectives. **Slovenia** has developed a national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education, which defines priority areas and ensures the funding of international mobility from the national budget. **Lithuania** has put in place a bachelor study programme 'International Politics and Development Studies' in English for students from Georgia and Ukraine.

In the **Czech Republic**, the main task of the Czech Development Agency – established by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs – is to implement projects in priority partner countries, to award grants to NGOs and to provide training for Czech staff involved in development assistance. In **Germany**, the ASA programme offers practical training in Africa, Asia, Latin America and South East Europe. ASA fosters competence in global learning, quality youth work and networking of young people who are interested in and/or were involved in development work.

The **Netherlands** has put in place a citizenship and development programme. It aims at young people's promotion of and involvement in international cooperation, at opening the field of development

cooperation to newcomers and bringing together stakeholders from various fields, such as youth and migrant organisations and business.

Netherlands – *Samen* (Together)

The Dutch organisation *Samen* (Together) brings together young Dutch people with disadvantaged peers from Africa, Asia and Latin America. They live and work with street children and encourage young people to promote active citizenship in an international context.

Samen is part of the worldwide Don Bosco organisation.

<http://www.samen.org/>

9.2.1.4. Promoting youth participation in green volunteering and green patterns of consumption

Three quarters of the Member States made environmental and sustainable development education and participation part of their national youth strategy or developed specific strategies with this aim.

The **Finnish** National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Education and Culture developed a national strategy of education for sustainable development. Sustainable development is also incorporated as a cross-cutting theme in the national core curricula of general and vocational education. After 2010, the environmental criteria and certification system was updated to cover also economic, social and cultural aspects of sustainability. Environmental/sustainable development certificates are awarded to educational establishments.

Several countries (**Belgium, Cyprus, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain**) support youth organisations or have set up programmes or projects which promote youth participation in green volunteering. **Sweden** established a website to promote sustainable/green consumption amongst young people.

9.2.1.5. Promoting entrepreneurship, employment and volunteering amongst young people with regions outside of Europe

Two thirds of the Member States mention activities promoting entrepreneurship, employment and volunteering amongst young people with regions outside of Europe. In **Finland**, the ETVO volunteer programme channels volunteers to civil society organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Finnish Centre for International Mobility CIMO is responsible for a North-South-South programme, which, based on networks between institutions of higher education in Finland and southern partners, focuses on student and teacher exchanges.

In **Lithuania**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implements development cooperation projects jointly with other governmental and non-governmental institutions from Lithuania and partner countries. **Cyprus** initiated strategic political cooperation between Cyprus, Egypt and Israel and other countries to strengthen civil society and promote voluntary service in these countries. In **Germany**, the City of Bremen published guidelines for the involvement of young people in development policy and cooperation.

9.2.1.6. Promoting cooperation with and exchanges between those active in youth work on different continents

Germany has a funding programme for international youth work in place for bilateral and multilateral youth exchange and international mobility of youth workers. The country runs a pilot project *Jugendarbeit international – Vielfalt erleben* (JiVE) (International Youth Work – Experience Diversity), which, as part of the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany, aims e.g. at fostering international youth work, increased participation of young people, intercultural learning, equal opportunities – especially also for young people with a migrant background – and at enhanced qualification of youth workers.

The youth chapter of bilateral intergovernmental agreements concluded by the **Czech Republic** enables youth workers, youth leaders and young people to join international activities including exchanges. In addition, the Czech Republic concluded bilateral sectoral agreements in the field of youth with the same aim.

9.2.1.7. Promoting youth participation in development cooperation

In some Member States, measures promoting youth participation in development cooperation are based on national strategies and implemented through programmes which support civil society organisations or cooperation with international organisations.

The **Swedish** Government provides financial support to Swedish civil society organisations which foster voluntary activities in developing countries through the Swedish International Development Agency. The agency also supports Minor Fields studies, a scholarship programme targeting students at college or university level. In **Finland**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture support NGOs

who promote development cooperation, for example, by involving young people and students in development work. Each year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds about 100 experts taking up international assignments via the UN Junior Professional Officers (JPO) and the UN Volunteers programme (UNV). The recruitment for the JPO programme is coordinated by the Centre for International Mobility CIMO. In **Lithuania**, the Democracy Promotion and Development Cooperation programme (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) finances development cooperation projects which are implemented in cooperation with other governmental and non-governmental institutions in Lithuania and partner countries.

9.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

9.2.2.1. Cooperating on the international policy agenda on children, youth and children's rights

Two thirds of the Member States took steps to cooperate and take an active role in international meetings dealing with children's rights. Member States participate in international fora regarding children's rights, e.g. at the level of the UN, the European Union or the Council of Europe.

In **Finland**, the Ombudsman for Children has the main responsibility for European and international policy agendas on children, youth and children's rights. In **Denmark**, there is a Children's division at the Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman's office. In **Iceland**, actions are coordinated between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the Ministry of Welfare and the Office of the Ombudsman for Children.

Austria, **Germany** and **Switzerland** initiated a campaign 'Don't look away' aiming to protect children against sexual exploitation in tourism. **Turkey** implements technical assistance measures to fight violence against

children and to prevent the abuse of children. In 2014 **Belgian** authorities, in cooperation with the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe, organised a European conference focused on the child's best interest. The event commemorated at the same time the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

9.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum's work in recent years in relation to 'Youth and the world' has focused on strengthening interregional and global youth dialogue and cooperation, giving youth organisations and young people a greater say in global processes, and seeking out synergies between European youth organisations and their counterparts in other parts of the world.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) was involved in action in the field of **sustainable development**, including cooperation with youth organisations and young people from other regions of the world, through participation at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (June 2012) and in the sessions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals throughout 2013 and 2014. The YFJ produced a Board position paper⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ on the subject of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and involved European youth organisations in this work through the creation of a task force of European Youth Forum member organisations. This work has continued into 2015 through participation in the post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations. Cooperation with youth organisations and young people in other parts of the world takes place through the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations⁽¹⁸¹⁾ (IC-MYO) and the UN Major Group for Children

and Youth⁽¹⁸²⁾ (MGCY), of which the YFJ became an organising partner in 2014.

The YFJ was also involved in strengthening **global youth dialogue and cooperation** through the World Conference on Youth⁽¹⁸³⁾ held in Sri Lanka in May 2014. The forum was a member of the International Youth Task Force preparing this event, which attracted 1 500 participants, including representatives of governments, youth-led organisations and other partners. The outcome document of the conference, the Colombo Declaration, explores ways and means of mainstreaming youth in the post-2015 development agenda and was developed jointly by young people and governments. YFJ member organisations participated actively in the conference, together with partner youth organisations from other parts of the world.

Between 2012 and 2015, the European Youth Forum and its member organisations engaged in several **interregional processes with youth organisations and institutions**, focusing on Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab and Mediterranean region and China. Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation came to the fore in 2014 through the third Africa-Europe Youth Leaders' summit. More than 100 representatives of African and European youth organisations called for a youth mechanism in the EU-Africa partnership, although Heads of State and Government, at the subsequent EU-Africa summit, did not advocate this so strongly in their final communiqué.

The YFJ was also involved in the Network of Universities on Youth and Global Citizenship⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ in the period 2012-2015, including through the African University on Youth and Development, the Mediterranean University and the University on Youth and Development in Mollina, Spain, where the forum was a core partner of the 13th, 14th and 15th editions.

180 <http://www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/09/0061-14-Board-Position-Paper-Post2015-FINAL-0.pdf>

181 <http://icmyo.org/>

182 <http://childreneyouth.org/>

183 <http://www.wcy2014.com/>

184 <http://uyd.me/about>

10 Creativity and culture

In this field of action, young people's creativity and capacity for innovation should be supported through better quality access to and participation in culture and cultural expressions from an early age, thereby promoting personal development, enhanced learning capabilities, intercultural skills, understanding of and respect for cultural diversity, and the development of new and flexible skills for future job opportunities.

10.1. EU initiatives and action

Building on a 2010 study on access of young people to culture,⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ the topic was taken up by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU (Council conclusions of 19 November 2010⁽¹⁸⁶⁾) and further addressed in Council conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people (May 2012). On that basis, a thematic **expert group** was set up in order to share best practice on how to **promote the creativity and innovative capacity of young people by identifying competences and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning relevant to employability**. The expert group's final report⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ was published in 2014. The 2012 Council conclusions also called on Member States to make best use of the Youth in Action programme and other existing and future EU programmes and funds, including the European Social Fund.

Apart from the youth sector as such, the **European agenda for culture in a globalising world**⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ promotes access to

culture. This includes the role art plays in young people's lives, as nicely expressed by Yehudi Menuhin who is quoted in the Commission communication: 'It is art that can structure the personalities of young people with a view to open their minds, to instil the respect of others and the desire of peace.'

From 2013 to 2015 the Commission implemented a pilot project and a preparatory action on the theme of **New Narrative for Europe**.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ This initiative will be pursued in 2016 and is meant to connect people living in Europe to the European integration project via the arts and sciences. Its main purpose is to expand and engage more voices in the public debate on Europe by fostering a dialogue and mutual understanding among people, youth in particular, as well as building on culture as a key component of our shared European identity. A number of events and debates with young people have already been held in the Member States, producing positive feedback. At the same time this methodology can be used to test how this initiative could have a longer-lasting impact as demanded by the European Parliament.

The second **Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014**⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ set up working groups composed of experts nominated by the Member States to work on the identified priority areas. These include cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture, and skills and mobility. According to the work plan, intercultural competences and intercultural dialogue should be promoted and strengthened in particular by developing 'cultural awareness and

185 <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/access-of-young-people-to-culture-pbNC0113224/>

186 All Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015) are listed in Annex 2.

187 http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/creative-potential_en.pdf

188 COM(2007) 242 final of 10.5.2007.

189 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/new-narrative/index_en.htm

190 OJ C 325, 2.12.2010, p. 1-9.

expression', 'social and civic competences' and 'communication in foreign languages', which are among the key components of lifelong learning identified by the European Parliament and the Council in 2006.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ The working group's final report on 'cultural awareness and expression' will be available in December 2015. It will include good practice examples of how to develop this key competence from childhood to all stages of life. Results of other working groups' activities are already available, such as the ones on better access to culture (2012)⁽¹⁹²⁾ and on creative partnerships between cultural institutions and other sectors (2014).⁽¹⁹³⁾

As far as EU financial support is concerned, the **Creative Europe** programme 2014-2020 aims to build on the success of the previous MEDIA, MEDIA Mundus and Culture programmes (see box).

Many projects supported by Creative Europe focus on emerging artists, in most cases young people, as well as start-ups and micro-businesses in the digital domain run almost by definition by young people. As education is one of the programme's priorities, several projects bring together cultural operators, schools and universities, as well as non-formal youth structures. The phenomenon of radicalisation has put new emphasis on projects focusing on intercultural dialogue and respect for other forms of cultural and religious expression.

The Creative Europe programme also supports specific prizes. The **European Border Breakers Award** is a European prize for rock and pop music for groups and singers having a first success abroad. All winners so far have been young talented people, many of whom have enjoyed successful

Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the EU framework programme for support to the culture and audiovisual sectors. Following on from the previous Culture Programme and MEDIA programme, Creative Europe, with a budget of €1.46 billion (9% higher than its predecessors), will support:

- culture sector initiatives, such as those promoting cross-border cooperation, platforms, networking, and literary translation;
- audiovisual sector initiatives, such as those promoting the development, distribution, or access to audiovisual works;
- a cross-sectoral strand, including a Guarantee Facility and transnational policy cooperation.

The programme consists of two sub-programmes; the Culture sub-programme to promote the culture sector, and the MEDIA sub-programme to support the audiovisual sector.

Creative Europe's stated aims are to:

- help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation;
- enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs, and social cohesion;
- give Europe's culture and media sectors access to new international opportunities, markets, and audiences.

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/opportunities/index_en.htm

191 Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10-18.

192 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/documents/omc-report-access-to-culture_en.pdf

193 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/creative-partnerships_en.pdf

careers after winning the prize. The **European Union Prize for Literature** awards emerging writers, in most cases also young and promising talents. And the **European Union Prize for Architecture** celebrates every two years a young emerging architect alongside the main award winners.

10.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

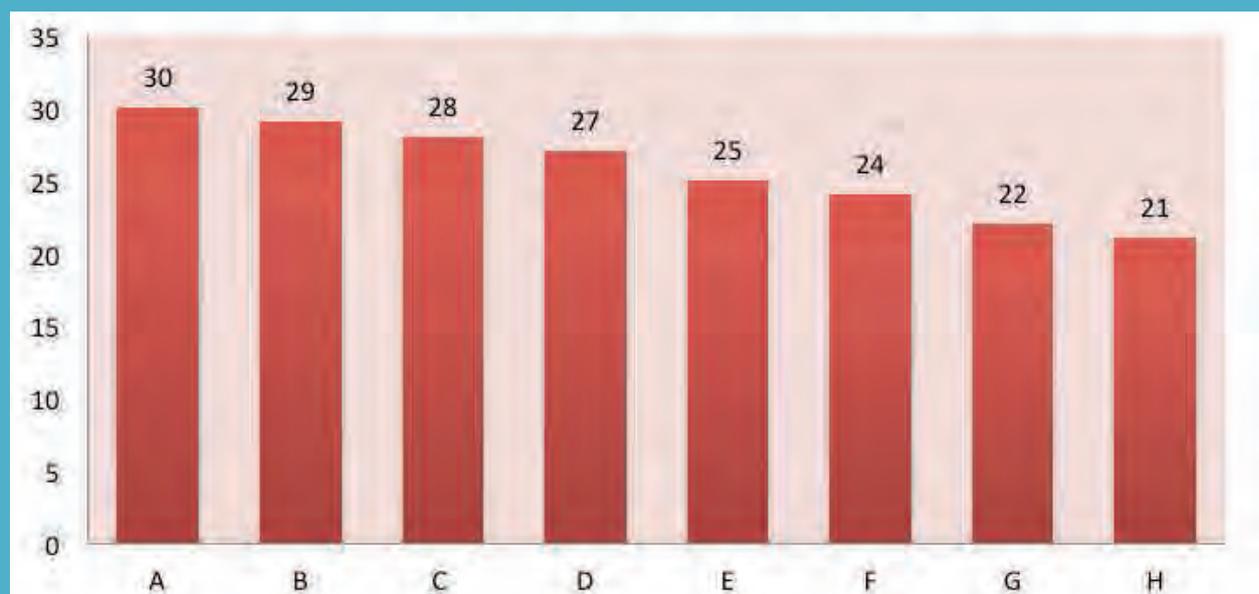
10.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

10.2.1.1. Supporting the development of creativity amongst young people

Many measures were taken to support the development of creativity amongst young people through cultural expression and wider access to culture. In **Luxembourg**, for instance, a law confers the task of fostering participation of young people not

only in economic and social life, but also in cultural life, on the national youth service. The **Czech Republic** established state cultural institutions by law, which also cater for the needs of children and young people through specific programmes and offer scholarships for creativity and productive works. The country's youth strategy facilitates equal access of children and youth to culture and motivates them to actively participate in artistic expressions. It also supports volunteering in culture and art. **France's** 2014 *plan priorité jeunesse*, drawn up by an interministerial committee on youth, supports access of young people to art, culture and quality audiovisual and computer learning. Over the years 2012 to 2014, **Sweden** incited all cultural institutions to develop strategies to reach children and young people. In the **United Kingdom**, the 'Creative Scotland' strategy works with a range of partners to implement a cultural plan in relation to young people. In 2012, the Flemish Community of **Belgium** launched a 'Growing in Culture'

Figure 20 Number of Member States' reports mentioning the measures taken in the field of creativity and culture



- A – Supporting the development of creativity amongst young people
- B – Widening quality access to culture and creative tools
- C – Providing access to environments that are conducive to creativity
- D – Promoting young people's knowledge about culture and cultural heritage
- E – Empowering young people's creativity and innovation through new technologies
- F – Facilitating long-term synergies between policies and programmes
- G – Supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills through culture
- H – Promoting specialised training for youth workers

policy for those under 18 to offer more and better cultural education for all.

Cross-sectoral cooperation is mentioned notably by **Italy** and **Slovenia**. Both countries promote partnerships between cultural and educational institutions. Many countries refer to their national programmes, such as **Slovenia** (National Culture programme), **Portugal** (Young Creators programme) and **Poland** (2011-2015 Multi-annual programme Culture+, 2014-2020 National Readership Development programme). The two Polish programmes support and promote versatile forms of artistic and cultural activity aimed at raising the level of cultural awareness, critical thinking and access to culture, especially for young people. **Finland's** Children and Youth Policy programme emphasises the status of and operational requirements for children's and young people's culture and creativity. Three national development and service centres in the field of youth culture are financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely the 'Art Centre for Children and Young People', the 'Young Culture Organisation' and the 'Sorin Sirkus' (a youth circus). **Ireland** has a specific National Youth Arts programme in place to realise young people's creative potential. Another example for the promotion of young people's creativity is provided for **Malta**, whose 'Malta Arts Fund' is meant to stimulate investment in local artists and their work.

Cooperation with schools is another means of bringing culture closer to young people and supporting their creativity, such as practised (among others) in the **Netherlands** and **Lithuania**. **Austria** has set aside a specific budget for school culture, whereas **Sweden** plans to increase access to culture for all children by a 'Creative School Initiative'. Outreach to young people with fewer opportunities is the objective of the **United Kingdom's** 'Myplace' programme (England). It provides capital grant awards for the development of quality youth centres in some of the most deprived areas of the country. **Greece** encourages cultural expression and creativity amongst young people and brings out new talented narrative writers by a narrative and short film

production competition, which is designed by the Forum European Cultural Exchanges and the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art. Other countries, such as **Latvia**, underline the link between culture and tradition; here young people are encouraged to get involved in traditional song and dance festivals, thus preserving the country's cultural heritage.

10.2.1.2. Widening quality access to culture and creative tools

The main instruments which exist to widen the access to culture and creative tools for young people (both inside and outside schools) are action plans, programmes, funds, the use of specialised centres, and cooperation with schools. **Slovakia** and **Lithuania** each developed an action plan, the first one to improve young people's reading skills and their interest in literature, and the latter to develop conscious, civic-minded, patriotic, mature, cultured and creative young personalities. **Iceland** used its Biophilia Educational Project – a large-scale pilot project based around creativity as a teaching and research tool, where music, technology and the natural sciences are linked together in an innovative way – to provide art experiences for those children who would normally not have access. **Finland's** 'Proposal for the Children's Culture Policy Programme for the Years 2014-2018' supports activities which increase children's and young people's equal access to art and culture. In the **Czech Republic**, the National Information and Consulting Centre for Culture (NIPOS), and in particular its department for non-professional artistic activities ARTAMA, promotes access to non-professional artistic activities for all groups of citizens, including youth. The **Irish** Film Board (IFB) runs a number of film workshops and courses available to primary and secondary school students. The related festival is an occasion for them to deepen their interest in film. Cross-cutting themes linked to cultural heritage as well as experimental didactic models are part of school curricula in **Italy**, while **Austria** features nationwide cultural education programmes and initiatives for schools.

Malta – Youth Empowerment programme

Malta's *Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ*, an agency established in February 2011 to promote the interests of young people and to provide assistance to youth organisations and young people in achieving their potential, runs a programme to empower young people. This programme incorporates a series of project initiatives for young people both at national and local level.

These initiatives aim to enable young people take further control of their lives, become motivated and enhance their own learning and resourcefulness to take up further studies, improve their employability skills and take action in the community to bring about social change. Amongst the initiatives were 'Divergent Thinkers', music tuition for young people in band clubs, and a social theatre contest. What is important is the outreach to young people with fewer opportunities.

http://www.agenzjazghazagh.gov.mt/Categories/805/Youth_Empowerment_Programme/

10.2.1.3. Empowering young people's creativity and innovation through new technologies

Promoting availability of new technologies to empower young people's creativity and capacity for innovation – only a few measures are cited by Member States in this field. **Spain** refers to its Young Creation programme, **Luxembourg** mentions its youth centre in Eisenborn (which provides media education), and **Germany** and **Lithuania** declare that they support actions in media literacy through youth organisations. In **Ireland**, the 'TechSpace' programme works with a number of national and regional youth organisations and schools so that children and young people can learn and develop digital skills. In **Greece**, young people's innovation is supported through a video art festival touring the country.

10.2.1.4. Providing access to environments that are conducive to creativity

Environments where young people can develop their creativity are often made

available through national (youth) programmes, schools, youth work or communication tools. Some countries dispose of specific programmes, such as the Youth Initiatives project in **Cyprus** or the **Irish** Young Ensembles scheme, a fund which supports groups of young people between the ages of 12 and 23 to create ambitious and original work together in any art form. **Malta's** '#Malteen' programme offers a weekend to give space to teenagers to find their own creative niche and express themselves through different art forms. **Luxembourg** invites this target group to a creativity contest. In the **Netherlands**, the publicly financed 'Mondriaan Fund' supports visual art and cultural heritage, also with a view to young people. Art festivals, such as the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ (BJCEM), are also environments where young artists, volunteers and large numbers of creative young people can meet.

Poland – Cooperation between schools

Through cooperation between schools, also from other countries, young people develop projects together, organise concerts and contests on international, national, regional and local levels. This allows them to showcase trends in their own country's music culture. It is also an opportunity for talented young people to present their skills and abilities in creating contemporary young culture.

http://cea.art.pl/events/kal_impresz_2014.pdf

10.2.1.5. Facilitating long-term synergies between policies and programmes

Member States provide information on some measures facilitating long-term synergies between policies and programmes (e.g. culture, education, health, social inclusion, media, employment, youth) to promote creativity. **Lithuania**, for instance, refers to the Vilnius declaration on innovative actions for youth (6 December 2013) adopted under its Presidency of the Council of the EU; this was the outcome of an expert roundtable which brought together employers, business representatives, researchers, policy-makers and youth to discuss innovative ideas and identify solutions regarding social inclusion and unemployment of young people. In this context it was considered important to enhance young people's active participation in the labour market and to promote creativity and innovation with a view to pursuing self-employment, entrepreneurship and first working experience. **France's** *plan priorité jeunesse* set up a specific working group in 2014 to elaborate a quality charter for youth summer camps (*colos nouvelle génération*). The charter contains a number of commitments taken by the most relevant players involved in the provision of youth camps in France, such as to offer leisure-time activities for young people coming from different ethnic and social backgrounds and at affordable prices.

10.2.1.6. Promoting specialised training for youth workers

Specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth

workers is essentially promoted via programmes and courses. In **Luxembourg**, for example, training in audiovisual arts, photo editing or theatre is covered by lifelong learning programmes for youth workers. Various workshops, especially regarding the use of internet, are offered in **Austria**. In other countries (like **Finland** and **Slovakia**) such specialised training is an integral part of the education programme to become a qualified youth worker (professional level youth work qualification). Universities can play a supportive role, such as in **Ireland** where a part-time, year long course leads to a Certificate in Youth Arts.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ It aims to introduce those working in the non-formal education sector to the concepts, principles and practice of youth arts using a context and practice approach.

10.2.1.7. Supporting the development of entrepreneurial skills through culture

The few examples which are highlighted here are either programmes or specific projects, for instance 'Programme Kreativ' in **Malta** or the *Vrijhavens* project in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**. In the latter, youth workers and policy-makers are brought together in a full day discussion about young people's needs for cultural infrastructure, the link between creativity and entrepreneurship and ways how to attract diverse groups of young people. The Culture Entrepreneurship programme (2012-2016) in the **Netherlands** focuses on leadership, patronage, and support for creative professionals and individual culture providers. **Romania** supports young people who ventured

Spain – Sala Amadís (Exhibition Hall)

The Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) puts an exhibition hall at the disposal of young artists' works. This so-called *Amadís* exhibition hall is a place destined to artistic training, cultural production and young entrepreneurship through participative activities and programmes addressed to young people interested in contemporary creation. This allows highlighting the work of young people in order to foster creativity, facilitate the promotion and dissemination of their artistic output and put them in contact with the professional artistic world. Activities are, among others, exhibitions, workshops, concerts and performances.

<http://www.injuve.es/creacionjoven>

to enter the cultural labour market as young entrepreneurs by providing them with equal opportunities. This country also opens dialogue with private companies to ease access of young people to the labour market and promotes entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries.

10.2.1.8. Promoting young people's knowledge about culture and cultural heritage

Activities to promote knowledge about culture and cultural heritage amongst young people range from the above-mentioned

'Creative School Initiative' in **Sweden** to culture cards in **Malta** and creativity contests in **Luxembourg**. Many Member States, such as **Finland**, financially support NGOs for their promotion of knowledge about culture and cultural heritage. In this context the **Netherlands** refers to cooperation with UNESCO, and **Croatia** highlights involvement of youth organisations in the work of cultural committees. In **Greece**, the so-called Classes in the Dark offered a series of projections, workshops and seminars – primarily for bordering regions and municipalities – which reached around 15 000 pupils and parents.

Finland – *Kulttuurivoltti* (Culture Leap)

The so-called 'Culture Leap' 2014-2015, a nationwide guidance in culture education plans for schools, was taken up by 1 out of 10 municipalities in Finland to launch a systematic approach to culture education in schools in the following way: a culture education plan for schools ensures that all children and young people of the region get in contact with the local cultural heritage, culture institutions such as theatres, music halls and museums. All forms of art are given the possibility to create. The political effects of the culture education plans are judged significant because of the guaranteed equal right to culture in society.

10.2.2. Implementation of subsequent Council agreements

10.2.2.1. Access of young people to culture

In the Council conclusions of 19 November 2010, Ministers agreed on facilitating young people's access to culture and listed in particular the following lines of action.

Reducing obstacles (e.g. financial, linguistic, time and geographical constraints)

A variety of measures are in place at national level to facilitate young people's access to culture by reducing related obstacles. **Denmark**, the **United Kingdom** (Scotland), **Estonia**, **Slovakia** and **Italy** refer to their general culture policies or strategies. The **Czech Republic's** national youth strategy also aims at improving provision of culture to children and young people in rural areas. The objectives are to motivate cultural and heritage institutions in the countryside and in small towns to create attractive events and

programmes aimed at children and youth, and to exploit the potential of the network of libraries and possibly other local cultural institutions. Programmes, such as the 'Accessible Culture' and the 'Visit the Museum' programmes in **Poland**, the children's culture policy programme in **Finland** and the national programme for culture in **Austria**, also try to widen access for young people to arts and culture. By providing continuous financial support, **Croatia** aims at increasing the number of cultural events in the educational system through formal and informal programmes of contemporary cultural and artistic practice. A cultural passport – created during the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 – in **Luxembourg** aims at granting equal access to culture and leisure-time activities for socially disadvantaged persons and groups. The **Netherlands** follow a similar approach (cultural youth passport). Free entry to museums for young people is another means to bring culture closer to this target group, for instance in the French Community of **Belgium**.

Greece – ‘Mind Games’

The international training course ‘Mind Games’ (Komotini, 12-20 April 2013) addressed cultural diversity, achieved to offer quality training on a number of key issues facing society today. Historical and current examples of good practice on interreligious dialogue, understanding the role of the media, religious conflicts and peaceful conflicts management formed the core of the programme content. Methods used were non-formal education, debates, simulations, group work and games. Participants thus reviewed issues facing civil society and trained to play an active role in promoting interfaith dialogue back to their communities. At the end of the project participants carried out their own actions in order to bring back positive change to their communities.

Stimulating strategic partnerships

Member States and candidate countries were asked about their measures promoting the development of long-term coordinated policies for access of young people to culture on all levels, with a clear youth perspective. Here again, programmes play a significant role, such as **Malta’s** above-mentioned empowerment programme, **Finland’s** children’s culture policy programme and **Turkey’s** programmes to increase young people’s participation in cultural activities, to name but a few.

Deepening the knowledge on the access of young people to culture

Bulgaria organises annual conferences to review the access of youth to culture in the country. The Flemish knowledge and research centre ‘Demos’ focuses mainly on groups and practices that are underrepresented and underexposed in the Belgian society; the French Community of **Belgium** published a survey on cultural practices. The **Netherlands** also has a knowledge institute which collects relevant information.

Promoting experiences, practices and information

Exchanges of experiences related to the access of young people to culture take place for instance in the **Czech Republic**, which promotes cooperation between various organisations and institutions in the field of artistic activities for children and youth. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** supports regional networks of teachers and professionals in the cultural field.

Supporting youth and cultural workers’ quality education, training and capacity-building

Another line of action of the 2010 Council conclusions is support of quality education, training and capacity-building of youth workers and youth leaders, artists and other cultural workers, teachers and all other relevant stakeholders involved in the access of young people to culture. For this, the countries refer amongst others to their youth work strategies and youth workers’ certification. **Estonia** mentions the ESF project ‘Developing youth work quality’⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ which included training for youth workers to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively with young people, also in the cultural field. **Finland’s** children’s culture policy programme includes measures to increase teaching of culture in and outside school. Teacher training also plays an important role, for example in **Belgium** (Flemish Community), **Austria** and **Croatia**.

10.2.2.2. Fostering the creative and innovative potential of young through partnerships

In the Council conclusions of 11 May 2012, Ministers agreed to stimulate strategic partnerships between youth organisations, authorities at local, regional and national level as well as the private sector to organise projects and events led by young people. The expert group report ‘Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability’ also recommends achieving cooperation

196 See also box ‘Estonia – The contribution of youth work to the Youth Guarantee’ in Section 3.2.2.

and joint action between stakeholders and the social partners. Globally, youth or volunteering organisations and cultural organisations are the stakeholders most frequently quoted by the reporting countries. Youth workers and teachers, trainers and other education professionals come second, and the private sector ranks third.

Some countries refer to strategic partnerships developed in the context of governmental youth creativity promotion programmes (e.g. **Luxembourg**). **Poland** mentions its 'Social Capital Development

Strategy 2020' with a partnership between art universities and entrepreneurs, especially in the area of design. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** highlights 'OPEK – *Openbaar Entrepot voor de Kunsten*' (Public Warehouse for Arts), an infrastructure which seeks new, innovative partnerships between art, education and the public. **Serbia** developed a 'Protocol on Cooperation with the Independent Cultural Scene', and **Lithuania** organised a Culture Education Week enabling cultural institutions to present their education programmes and projects to teachers.

Serbia – *Rapresent* project (IDE Group)

The project was initiated by a graffiti artist and homeless man, Bojan Radanov Rapresent. Through the transformation of public places, cooperation between artists and young people, and participation and activation of young people's creative potential, their and the general public's awareness regarding street art has changed. Activities are, among others, workshops and mural painting in underground stations. This is achieved through cooperation between NGOs, associations, trade unions, private actors, civic society and many more actors.

10.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

Creativity and culture are not yet among the policy priorities of the European Youth Forum (YFJ). However, the forum annually organises the **YO!Fest** ⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ that brings together an international array of young artists to take part in one of the biggest youth events in Europe. Additionally, the YFJ contributed to organising the **European Youth Event** (EYE) in May 2014, during which the YO!Fest took place. The 2014 edition welcomed over 8 000 young people and blended policy debates and cultural events, enhancing the creativity of young people.

Moreover, the YFJ uses creative tools for engaging with young people and encouraging them to share their experiences. The forum's **digital storytelling workshops** for youth activists promote greater awareness of participating members' youth work experience: their role and actions; what they learned; and the impact this had on their lives, as well as the opportunities and challenges they faced and the changes needed. The creative work done through this method also helps participants to increase their self-esteem and strengthen respect for both their own story and other people's stories. The process itself releases creativity and innovation.

11 Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations

Structured Dialogue with young people serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection on the priorities, implementation, and follow-up of European cooperation in the youth field. It involves regular consultations of young people and youth organisations at all levels in EU countries, as well as dialogue between youth representatives and policy-makers at EU youth conferences organised by the Member States holding the presidency of the Council of the EU, and during the European Youth Week.

11.1. EU initiatives and action

During the period covered by this report, the Commission organised a review of the Structured Dialogue process, which was launched during the 2013 European Youth Week with a conference in Brussels for all National Working Groups. In the spirit of Structured Dialogue, the National Working Groups endorsed a set of recommendations for the future development and conduct of the process, which served as background document for a conference organised in Brussels for the main actors in the process in November 2013. The conference participants endorsed joint recommendations for the conduct of the Structured Dialogue for the consideration of the Council of Youth Ministers.

Meeting in May 2014, Youth Ministers subsequently agreed a number of new developments in Structured Dialogue, including a **new architecture for the process**. This means that Structured Dialogue is now conducted on a single overall priority set by the Council, following a prior consultation undertaken by the incoming Trio Presidency of youth representatives and the Commission.

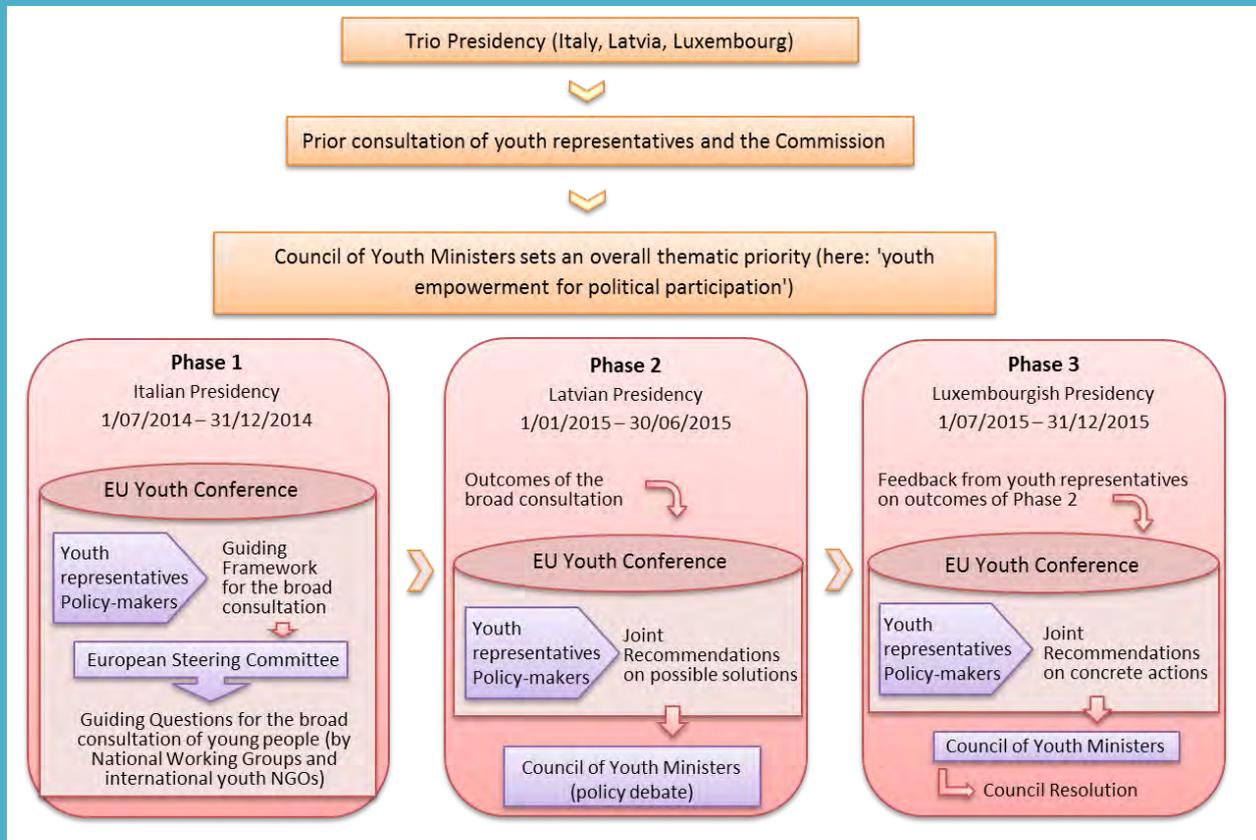
The current cycle of Structured Dialogue, on 'youth empowerment for political participation' is conducted under this new format (see diagram), with a single broad consultation of young people across Europe launched in October 2014 on the basis of a guiding framework, which was set jointly by youth representatives and policy-makers at the EU youth conference in Italy.

The Commission followed up on the 2014 Council resolution by paving the way for annual grants from the **Erasmus+** programme to the National Working Groups, who manage the Structured Dialogue at national level. These annual grants were made available in 2014 and 2015 to all 30 National Working Groups and range from €15 000-60 000, depending on the population of the Member State concerned.

In May 2015, the Commission again organised, as an integral part of the seventh edition of the European Youth Week, a three-day conference in Brussels for the main actors in the Structured Dialogue. At this conference, youth representatives and policy-makers endorsed 10 joint recommendations for the future conduct of Structured Dialogue, which are expected to be reflected in a Council resolution to conclude the fourth cycle of the process, which is scheduled for adoption by Ministers at the Youth Council in November 2015.

In accordance with the 2012 Council resolution on Structured Dialogue, a consultation of youth representatives was launched by the incoming Trio Presidency in June 2015 on the theme of the overall thematic priority for the fifth cycle of Structured Dialogue (from January 2016 to June 2017), which is also scheduled for adoption by Ministers at the Youth Council in November 2015.

Diagram New architecture of the Structured Dialogue as implemented during the fourth cycle on 'youth empowerment for political participation'



The Commission made the outcomes of the third cycle of Structured Dialogue on 'social inclusion of young people' available to relevant Commission services. They were already taken into consideration in the Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity strategy in the field of youth launched during the 2015 European Youth Week.

11.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

11.2.1. Implementation of the 2009 Council resolution

11.2.1.1. National Working Groups

National youth councils are represented in all 30 National Working Groups and lead, according to a 2014 mapping exercise,

the National Working Groups in all but 3 Member States. **Finland** remains the only Member State, where the national youth authority is not represented on the National Working Group. Youth researchers are represented in 11 and youth workers in 15 National Working Groups. 4 Member States report that other ministries, than solely the national youth ministry, are represented in the National Working Groups.

According to reports from 23 Member States, the number of young people represented in the National Working Groups range from 1 in **Croatia** to 17 in the **United Kingdom**, with an average participation of 6 to 7 young people on the National Working Group.

11.2.1.2. Dialogue processes in other fields

The 2009 Council resolution underlines the importance of developing dialogue

processes in other policy fields, similar to the EU Structured Dialogue. 14 of 27 Member States developed such processes. In **Malta**, a 2015 project on 'Policy in Action' creates space for discussions between youth and policy-makers on national issues. **Lithuania** organised a Structured Dialogue on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, including a public consultation, a conference and a round table with ministers. **Germany** ensured youth participation in the development of an independent youth policy (2012-2014) and in the Federal Government's dialogue for the development of a demography strategy (2014-2017), organising 9 participation rounds with youth on various thematic priorities. In the **Netherlands**, 120 young people are selected each year since 2009 to participate in the National Youth Debate in the Dutch parliament to engage in debates with ministers and members of parliament. **Lithuania's** 2013 'X-Y-Z' project focused on the involvement of NEETs in youth policy processes, and in **Poland**, a consultative youth body was established, where youth is consulted on youth policies and on the annual national budget with a focus on the youth field.

11.2.1.3. Reform of the Structured Dialogue

During the 2013 review process, many joint recommendations were made regarding the reform of the Structured Dialogue. 17 Member States had particular comments on these recommendations. The new architecture of Structured Dialogue is generally welcomed, in particular the focus on a single overall priority, which is considered to allow more time for a systematic approach and an in-depth understanding of the overall priority and for reaching out to more young people. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** emphasises that for any participation process to be successful, all participants have to invest it and take it seriously. The main indicator of success should be the quality of discussion with young people and the outcomes reached.

Ireland wishes to ensure that the process is open to all young people, including those seldom heard whose participation in EU youth conferences would be desirable, as the current process is at high risk of becoming unrepresentative of the views of non-organised youth. **Germany** emphasises that 'more dialogue is important', and that the Structured Dialogue should remain a space for a mutual exchange of ideas. The process should be strengthened at regional and local level, and its importance as a participatory process should be underlined. **Greece** suggests that the Committee of the Regions could be involved as an additional stakeholder to make the process more visible at local level, and that the Commission Representations in Member States should be members of the national working groups to increase the visibility and monitoring of the Structured Dialogue.

11.2.1.4. Visibility of the Structured Dialogue

26 Member States confirm that there were initiatives to promote the Structured Dialogue at national/regional/local level and to increase its visibility, with 21 reporting the development of a website devoted to the Structured Dialogue. 18 Member States confirm the use of awareness-raising campaigns, whilst 13 use the European Youth Portal or other platforms for their promotion/visibility of the process.

Germany reports on a 2014 dialogue event at federal level on 'Youth and policy in dialogue', and **Ireland** on a significant number of steps taken to increase visibility. **France** has organised four regional events and a national event devoted to the Structured Dialogue. In **Italy**, the national youth council linked the promotion of Structured Dialogue to the *Salone della Studenti* event with a big national campus and orientation on the process, and to 12 events organised across the country to increase outreach, even in remote areas. Training courses on Structured Dialogue were organised for youth leaders to build skills to allow them to

act as multipliers and run consultations at local level. **Cyprus** produced an animation for dissemination through social media and organised trainings of multipliers. **Lithuania** reports on the creation of a Structured Dialogue communication strategy in 2014 and uses social media networks to attract non-organised youth and young Lithuanians living in remote areas or abroad. In **Finland**, consultation questionnaires are sent to all European Youth Card holders, and the national youth councils in the **United Kingdom** will set up a national working group in Northern Ireland in 2015. **Poland** promoted the Structured Dialogue widely during the 2013 European Youth Week.

National reports illustrate that a considerable number of Structured Dialogue projects were supported by the Erasmus+ programme, or its predecessor Youth in Action, providing ample evidence of how EU youth programmes support the policies and tools of the EU Youth Strategy.

11.2.1.5. Involvement of young people in National Working Groups

In the 2014 Council resolution on Structured Dialogue, Ministers agreed that the National Working Groups should seek to ensure the involvement of young people, including those who did not previously participate in the Structured Dialogue. 27 Member States report that initiatives were taken in this regard, although only few can yet give an indication of the number of young people participating in the consultation during the fourth cycle of the process. It is now confirmed that more than 40 000 young people across Europe participated, a doubling of the highest number achieved in any of the previous nine consultation phases. It is evident from the national reports that the number of young people represented, through youth or other organisations, in the Structured Dialogue consultations runs into several millions, although the reliability and reality of such a figure remains questionable.

In **Sweden**, new communication methods facilitated seeking out and reaching newcomers to the process. In the **United Kingdom**, effective and inclusive youth participation research is carried out to identify target groups of young people. **Malta's** 2014 'Spread Outreach' information campaign aimed at getting the Structured Dialogue across to non-organised youth and included a 'Europinion Booth' placed in strategic locations to collect feedback from young people. The **Czech Republic** focused on inclusion in the consultations conducted during the third cycle of Structured Dialogue, with **Belgium** (Flemish Community) reporting that an evaluation is conducted after each cycle to improve the process and involve youth from a diverse background. In **Latvia**, an established 'Coffee with Politicians' method is used within Structured Dialogue consultations to attract young people with low levels of participation skills and experience. **Slovakia** includes a strategic planning in the work plan of its National Working Group to increase the outreach of the process, and close collaboration was set up with municipalities to bring the process closer to the local level. In **Germany**, a non-formal method of using a photo-workshop for youth on 'Participating actively – with POWER' was employed in 2014 for discussions on the theme of youth empowerment for political participation, with a view to encouraging the involvement of young people with oral or written expression difficulties. **Austria's** 2014 'Participate, Be Heard, Be Part!' project made the consultation process available to young people with fewer opportunities by allowing youth centres and workers to carry out projects with their target groups. In **Slovenia**, the 'Youth Dialogue 2:0 – Including!' project opened space and support for young people across the country to participate actively in the third cycle through youth work, whereas the 'Structured Dialogue in **Croatia**' project aimed at increasing the outreach of the process, in particular for those with fewer prospects.

11.2.1.6. Assessment of the EU youth conferences

Asked about possible improvements to the working methods and the decision-making process at the EU youth conferences, **Spain** and **Poland** call for the inclusion of non-organised young people and youth with fewer opportunities. **Malta** pleads for a more bottom-up approach to the setting of the overall priority to give youth a greater sense of ownership of the process. The overall priority should be the focus throughout the 18 months and conclude with 6 to 10 joint recommendations to be acted upon by the incoming Trio Presidency. **Sweden** notes that the overall priority is set in a rather undemocratic way, and the **Czech Republic** calls for a more democratic procedure, which could be conducted during the European Youth Week. It also suggests that a democratic voting system could be introduced for all conference participants to vote on all joint recommendations. **Luxembourg**, the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Germany** and the **Netherlands** feel that too much effort is spent on drafting the conference recommendations, at the expense of the time available for discussions and exchanges of ideas and experiences. Several Member States call for a more active participation of policy-makers in the conferences, and some for the participation of policy-makers drawn from ministries who are competent as regards the overall priority. **Sweden**, **Germany** and **Ireland** report that the Structured Dialogue should be conducted solely on the overall priority, and **Croatia** welcomes the new architecture with a guiding framework for the consultation set up with young people. **France** reports a very positive evaluation by its conference participants, although there is little opportunity for creativity in drafting the recommendations and a lack of time in the workshops. **Finland** suggests that greater transparency is required on how the input of National Working Groups feeds into the background documents of the conferences. Researchers should be involved in analysing national consultation

outcomes, using possibly the European Pool of Youth Researchers, and exchanges of views, rather than formal recommendations, could be documented and used for policy-making. Ministry officials cannot commit themselves to ad hoc recommendations, and the low level of participation of policy-makers in the conferences sends an important signal.

11.2.1.7. Considering the developments and outcomes of the Structured Dialogue

The countries were asked how they would consider the developments and outcomes of the Structured Dialogue at national and EU level over the first three cycles, in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Relevance

Spain considers that the dialogue themes are relevant as they define the political agenda of Member States, although the implementation process is very long. **Sweden** reports that the process has become even more relevant with the new architecture of the process, and **Luxembourg** that the process is an important learning experience for national policy-makers. The **Czech Republic** notes that recommendations from the EU level are weak in terms of national implementation, whereas **Denmark** reports that the National Working Group is a good forum for sharing knowledge and information between the various actors. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** reports that Structured Dialogue is important, mainly as a participation process. Outcomes are very relevant for national policy debates, and that whereas the process is an important instrument at EU level, it should not be the only one. The French Community of Belgium reports that improvements were made to the process, giving more time for in-depth discussions and involving national youth councils in the setting of the overall priority. **Latvia** notes that the increase in national participation in each cycle is evidence of young people

getting to know the opportunities offered by Structured Dialogue, whereas **Ireland** considered the first two dialogue cycles 'very relevant', and the fourth cycle 'relevant'. **Estonia** reports that the relevance of the process has increased at both national and EU level and that national consultation outcomes are important inputs for policy planning, whereas **Slovakia** notes that the thematic priorities are not equally relevant in all Member States. **Portugal** feels that the process is important for a youth contribution to policy-making but should become more inclusive, and **France** considers the process relevant, as it has supported an orientation among youth organisations in terms of democracy.

Effectiveness

Greece reports that the new architecture, with a single priority and consultation, seems to suit better the needs of youth and other stakeholders and leads to a better understanding of the content. **Romania** notes that the process needs time to establish deep roots, but there is a goal to pursue. **Spain** reports that the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency at national level is low, and its relevance depends on the national context and theme. **Sweden** notes that effectiveness is not always the most important, and that the advantage of a common process on common challenges is high. **Malta** reports that the Structured Dialogue outcomes only become effective if they coincide with or complement national political developments. In **Denmark**, the impact is considered limited, as many Structured Dialogue initiatives are already covered at national level, with the **Czech Republic** reporting that the recommendations are often too general for national implementation. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** reports that outcomes did not directly lead to policy measures, but diverse youth has had an opportunity to participate in the process, and **Ireland** welcomes the new architecture, as the first three cycles did not allow for a focus on implementation. **Germany** reports that

Structured Dialogue has no impacts in terms of concrete policy measures, but the impact of many hundreds young people being offered the opportunity to engage with policy-makers through decentralised Structured Dialogue projects must not be underestimated. **Poland** and **Portugal** observe that the process has impact and implications at national level, whereas **Italy** notes that the difficulty in implementing outcomes raises questions about the effectiveness of the process. For **France**, it is difficult to identify implementation outcomes, as recommendations take time to become a political reality. A greater appreciation of effectiveness at Member State level may be achieved by integrating outcome-linked indicators in relevant chapters of future EU Youth Reports. **Lithuania** reports that the biggest issue of effectiveness is the absence of ministry officials in EU youth conferences.

Efficiency

The **Czech Republic** suggests a greater involvement of National Working Groups in the implementation process in non-youth policy sectors, whereas **Latvia** identifies the need for a simple common mechanism for the implementation of recommendations at both national and EU level. **Greece** emphasises the need for a strategy to be developed by National Working Groups to involve non-organised youth, whereas **Cyprus** reports that consultation fatigue has been noted amongst young people and youth organisations in earlier cycles, because of the time and resources required. **Slovakia** considers that the efficiency has improved significantly since the first cycle of Structured Dialogue, whilst **Portugal** reports that more follow-up must be guaranteed for the process to become more effective. Structured Dialogue is an effective participation tool in the **Netherlands**, and **Lithuania** believes that the review of the process has increased its efficiency. **Spain** considers the level of efficiency at EU level to be 'medium', and 'low' at national level, while **France** reports that as

the consultation process has now reached a level of maturity, it is important to use Structured Dialogue on other levels and with other projects. The Commission should encourage Member States to use the process in their revision of national policies in general, and in particular on youth issues. For the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the quality and outreach to diverse groups of young people is more important than the number of young people involved in the process.

Implementation of the Structured Dialogue outcomes

17 Member States set up measures to implement the outcomes of the Structured Dialogue. **Luxembourg** reported taking measures to disseminate the outcomes of the national consultation under the fourth cycle and briefing its youth minister before his participation in the policy debate in the May 2015 Youth Council meeting. The final recommendations of the fourth cycle will be transmitted to all relevant members of the Government. **Poland** reports that the outcomes of each cycle of Structured Dialogue are transmitted to relevant government ministers, with the ministry of the **Czech Republic** also circulating the cycle outcomes. In **Denmark**, the National Working Group reviews Council conclusions/resolutions and distribute their findings to relevant actors for their consideration of implementation. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the outcomes of the process were included in the analysis that forms the basis for a new Youth and Children's Rights policy initiative. **Ireland** reports on the national implementation project, which brings together young people involved in consultations to focus on a specific outcome and work for its implementation, and in **Slovakia**, outcomes of the Structured Dialogue will be used for the preparation of the Government's 'Conception of youth work development', scheduled for adoption in 2015. **Germany** reports that the National Working Group developed a feedback mechanism, and a permanent arrangement exists with the Federal/Federal State

working group for the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany, which will discuss outcomes of the process and provide a written feedback on selected issues, which is published on an e-participation tool. **Austria's** National Working Group developed a new tool to track follow-up activities, and in **Bulgaria** the national youth forum and youth organisations form part of the monitoring committees of operational programmes on human resource development, science and education for smart growth, apprenticeships, the Youth Guarantee and the 'First Job'. In the **Netherlands**, letters were sent to all municipalities to inform them of outcomes of the process, which were followed up by dialogues on implementation measures at local level. **France** proposes to use the open method of cooperation more often to help Member States to implement the recommendations emanating from the Structured Dialogue.

11.3. Youth-led initiatives and action at EU level

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) perceives the Structured Dialogue as a valuable tool to enable young people to participate at all levels in policy-making processes and to engage in a meaningful dialogue with decision-makers. From the very beginning, the YFJ has been a key actor in the Structured Dialogue. It chairs the **European Steering Committee** and is in charge of the communication with the National Working Groups. Together with its members, the forum has been steadily working on widening the scope of the Structured Dialogue and on better integrating disadvantaged young people. It has been actively contributing to both the 2013 and 2014 review processes by ensuring that young people across Europe were able to express their ideas.

In the YFJ's view, the Structured Dialogue needs to be approached more from a cross-sectoral perspective, involving all decision-makers from the relevant sectors in all phases of the process. The European Commission and the Member States should

ensure that young people's contributions are reflected in the Council conclusions and are implemented at national and European level.

To inform as many young people as possible about the Structured Dialogue, the forum cooperates with the European Youth Portal. It also ensures media coverage of the

EU youth conferences via online tools and its own website. Finally, the YFJ conducted a wide **consultation on youth policy and the Structured Dialogue** among its membership, which led to the adoption of a shadow report supplementing the information contained in the 2015 Youth Report with the views of young people across Europe.

12 EU programme: from Youth in Action to Erasmus+

The period covered by this report was marked by the transition from the Youth in Action programme to its successor Erasmus+,⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ the integrated EU programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020. Erasmus+

encompasses all activities funded by the European Union which are related to formal, non-formal and informal learning. It fosters cross-sectoral cooperation to increase synergies and link policy development with implementation on the ground.

The new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2014-2020

The Erasmus+ programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising education, training and youth work. The seven-year programme has a budget of €14.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to previous spending levels, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas.

Erasmus+ provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad.

Erasmus+ supports transnational partnerships among education, training, and youth institutions and organisations to foster cooperation and bridge the worlds of education and work in order to tackle the skills gaps we are facing in Europe.

It also supports national efforts to modernise education, training, and youth systems. In the field of sport, it supports grassroots projects and cross-border challenges such as combating match-fixing, doping, violence and racism.

Erasmus+ brings together seven EU programmes in the fields of education, training and youth. For the first time, it provides support for sport. As an integrated programme, Erasmus+ offers more opportunities for cooperation across the education, training, youth and sport sectors.

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm

198 Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing 'Erasmus+': the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Decisions No 1719/2006/EC, No 1720/2006/EC and No 1298/2008/EC Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 50-73.

12.1. Erasmus+ opportunities in the field of youth

The year 2013 was the 25th anniversary of EU programmes in favour of youth – over these 25 years, more than 2.5 million young people and youth workers have taken part in non-formal learning activities funded by the programmes, for a total budget of €1 993.2 million. In Erasmus+, 10% of the funding is reserved for specific youth activities, which is an 80% increase in total funding compared to its predecessor Youth in Action. These youth activities have a dual purpose: firstly to develop key competences and thereby strengthen the employability of young people, and secondly to promote young people's social inclusion, well-being and participation and foster improvements in youth work and youth policy at local, national and international level. Erasmus+ aims to involve 500 000 participants in transnational volunteering or youth exchanges from 2014 until 2020.

Concretely, the Erasmus+ programme offers three main opportunities:

- **Key Action 1: mobility for young people and youth workers.** Young people have the opportunity to participate in youth exchanges or to volunteer for a period of up to one year in another country under the European Voluntary Service scheme. Youth workers can take part in training and networking activities abroad or spend some time in a youth organisation for job shadowing or a period of observation.
- **Key Action 2: cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices.** Organisations can apply for funding to work in partnership with organisations from other participating countries. The projects funded under this action will focus on sharing, developing and transferring innovative

practices in education, training and youth provision between participating countries.

- **Key Action 3: support for policy reform.** The Erasmus+ programme will fund strategic activities supporting policy reform across the EU. Funding opportunities under this key action may extend to meetings between young people and decision-makers or support the implementation of Structured Dialogue.

Like its predecessors, the programme is managed through a network of National Agencies which have become important actors in youth work and youth policy development at national level bringing in a European dimension. The programme is also supported by SALTO-YOUTH,⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ a network of eight resource centres which celebrated their 15th anniversary in 2015, and by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

12.2. Mobility for young people and youth workers

Through the learning mobility of individuals Erasmus+ aims to improve the skill sets of young people and enhance the quality of youth work and non-formal learning for young people in Europe. It provides opportunities for young people to experience learning mobility in successful formats like youth exchanges or European Voluntary Service (including large-scale projects) and for youth workers to develop their interpersonal skills and improve their employment prospects through training and networking opportunities in 'Programme Countries' ⁽²⁰⁰⁾ and in partner countries neighbouring the EU.

European Voluntary Service ⁽²⁰¹⁾ (EVS) provides young people aged 18 to 30 years with an opportunity to express their

199 SALTO-YOUTH stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme (<https://www.salto-youth.net/>).

200 Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey.

201 See Section 9.1.

personal commitment through full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country, within or outside the European Union. Under Erasmus+, close to 100 000 young people can participate in EVS until 2020.

The Erasmus+ Programme Guide ⁽²⁰²⁾ contains detailed information about the conditions for participating in all the activities. In most cases, applications for funding are submitted via the Erasmus+ National Agencies in each country participating in the programme.

Deserving of special attention is the development of **Youthpass**, ⁽²⁰³⁾ a voluntary tool to enhance the individual learning process and outcomes. It was introduced for the Youth in Action programme and further developed under Erasmus+. By 2013, 340 000 Youthpass certificates had been issued. Youthpass is not just a certificate – it is integrated into EU youth activities as part of the learning process which encompasses setting personal learning goals, adjusting the goals, influencing the process, documenting the outcomes and revising them for the certificate while rephrasing the learning outcomes as key competences. Youthpass also has an impact on youth workers and organisations and helps them gain greater awareness of the value of their work. The Youthpass Impact Study ⁽²⁰⁴⁾ (2013) revealed that among 80% of the participants, Youthpass enhances recognition of the value of non-formal education and youth work alongside the usefulness and quality of the projects.

12.3. Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices

Under Key Action 2, Erasmus+ aims to improve the quality of youth work and non-formal learning for young people in Europe. It funds opportunities for youth

workers and organisations to develop innovative approaches and exchange best practice, while supporting partnerships that allow young people to boost their interpersonal skills and job prospects.

Strategic partnerships foster cooperation between organisations in different countries engaged in youth work and non-formal learning for young people. By working together, the organisations involved will develop new approaches to youth work and encourage cooperation over longer periods. Cross-sectoral cooperation in the youth field is being taken up mainly through strategic partnerships; a first call attracted some 1 000 applications and 241 projects are funded. Overall, 7 000 strategic partnership projects are expected to benefit in the period 2014-2020. Moreover, this action supports cooperation activities (transnational youth initiatives) fostering social commitment and entrepreneurial spirit jointly carried out by two or more groups of young people from different countries.

Capacity-building projects aim at fostering cooperation and exchanges in the field of youth between countries worldwide to promote quality, innovation and cooperation in youth work and informal learning for young people. Youth organisations based in and outside the EU as well as other stakeholders involved in youth issues can participate. 700 projects are expected to benefit in the period 2014-2020.

12.4. Support for policy reform

Last but not least, Erasmus+ supports the introduction, exchange and promotion of innovative practices in the youth field. The aim of Key Action 3 is to develop youth policy cooperation at European level, promote the EU Youth Strategy and encourage Structured Dialogue. ⁽²⁰⁵⁾

202 http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/guide/index_en.htm

203 <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>

204 <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/downloads/youthpass-impact-study/>

205 See Chapter 11 on Structured Dialogue.

Activities supporting policy dialogue and cooperation on youth issues can involve countries across the EU as well as non-EU countries and international organisations (notably the Council of Europe); Structured Dialogue with young people; and partnerships with European non-governmental youth organisations.

Structured Dialogue (meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth) projects can last from 3 to 24 months. Young people should be actively involved in all stages of a project from preparation to follow-up. Activities could include national and transnational meetings that give young people the chance to obtain information and debate issues with decision-makers; national meetings and transnational seminars that prepare the ground for official youth conferences; and any other relevant meetings, events, seminars, consultations or debates between young people and decision-makers.

12.5. Partnership with countries neighbouring the EU

Erasmus+, like its predecessor Youth in Action, fosters cooperation with partner countries worldwide and, more specifically, partner countries neighbouring the EU. It thus supports the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy in the relevant field of action.⁽²⁰⁶⁾ During the period covered by this

report, the Youth in Action programme supported youth cooperation with partner countries in the world through a specific call for proposals. Erasmus+ contributes to international youth cooperation through capacity-building projects, which may entail activities such as policy dialogue, further development of youth work methods or information campaigns.

Both Youth in Action and Erasmus+ place specific emphasis on cooperation with neighbouring partner countries: the Western Balkans, Eastern Partnership countries, Southern Mediterranean countries and the Russian Federation. Erasmus+ National Agencies can allocate a maximum of 25% of the budget available for mobility projects for young people and youth workers – by far the bulk of the budget – to activities involving partner countries neighbouring the EU. The programme also supports meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth. To further strengthen cooperation with neighbouring partner countries, so-called Youth Windows have been established (see following sections). These support additional joint projects with neighbouring partner countries.

Structures such as the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership (see box), the SALTO-YOUTH resource centres for Eastern Europe & Caucasus, South East Europe and EuroMed, or the Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit (EPYRU) contribute to fostering regional cooperation.

206 See Chapter 9 on Youth and the world.

EU-Council of Europe partnership in the field of youth

The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, which stems from the close relations the Council of Europe and the European Commission have developed in the youth field since 1998, also carries out activities relating to 'Youth and the world'. A recent external evaluation of this partnership showed that the partnership's fostering of youth cooperation with partner countries – mostly through symposiums and seminars – is highly valued by the various stakeholders in the youth field.

The partnership's geographic coverage spans 47 European countries (EU Member States and other Council of Europe member countries). Regional cooperation is one of the partnership's horizontal objectives to promote young people's participation through peer learning and capacity-building in specific European and neighbourhood regions: Eastern Europe and Caucasus, South East Europe (Western Balkans), South Mediterranean.

The overall goal of the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership is to foster synergies between the youth-oriented activities of the two institutions. The specific themes are participation/citizenship, social inclusion, recognition and quality of youth work.

<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home>

12.5.1. South East Europe and the Western Balkans Youth Window

A 2013 study on the impact of cooperation with South East Europe within the Youth in Action programme⁽²⁰⁷⁾ showed the positive effects of the programme on a number of developments in the region. The programme helped to increase capacities and build competencies in the field of youth through international training courses, networking and conferences on topics relevant to youth work and youth policy. It supported the principles and implementation of non-formal learning in youth work and enhanced the intercultural and European dimension of youth cooperation also by involving local actors (contact points) in an advisory role as advocates of the European programmes' objectives and priorities.

A specific Western Balkans Youth Window was created in 2008 to support mobility projects taking place either in the EU or in the Western Balkans. The annual budget allocated to this Youth Window increased from €1 million in 2008 to €3 million in 2013. Between 2008 and 2013, 18 000 young people and youth workers participated in the Youth Window activities, for which a total budget of €12.9 million was provided

through the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Within the framework of Erasmus+, the Western Balkans Youth Window was renewed for the period 2015-2020, with a budget of €3 million for 2015.

12.5.2. Eastern Europe and Caucasus and the Eastern Partnership Youth Window

EU youth programmes are always open to the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) as well as to the Russian Federation, encouraging young people from the region to get involved in international projects in the field of non-formal learning.

Successful youth cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries led to the launch of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window in 2012 for the years 2012 and 2013. It supported joint youth projects between Eastern Partnership countries and Youth in Action programme countries. The Youth Window put a specific focus on involving young people with fewer opportunities, especially those living in rural or deprived urban areas. More than 37 000 young people

207 <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/resources/seepublications/yiaimpactsee/>

and youth workers – some 15 000 of them from Eastern Partnership countries – participated in these additional activities. The Youth Window had a total budget of € 31.5 million, provided through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (EPNI). The Eastern Partnership Youth Window was evaluated in 2014. Based on this evaluation and depending on funds available, the Commission will decide in 2015 about the possible continuation of the Window.

12.5.3. Southern Mediterranean countries – EuroMed Youth

To strengthen youth cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries, a EuroMed Youth Programme was launched back in 1999. During the programming period 2007-2013, around 8 000 young people and youth leaders were beneficiaries. The current EuroMed Youth IV programme runs from 2010 to 2016 with an overall budget of € 11 million. Like the two regional Youth Windows, EuroMed Youth IV supports youth exchanges, voluntary service projects and training and networking activities for youth workers.

The accreditation process for European Voluntary Service (EVS) organisations in the region started in 2013 with the aim of

further increasing the quantity and quality of EVS projects in EuroMed countries. Training courses offered to youth workers and NGOs aim to create new competencies and to strengthen contacts between young people and foster mutual understanding against a background of political change and instability.

In cooperation with UNESCO, the Commission established the Networks of Mediterranean Youth programme (Net-Med Youth) (2014-2017) to improve the opportunities for young people to have a real say in shaping legislation and national planning in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries. The specific objectives of the programme are to build the capacities of youth organisations and to enhance networking among them in order to reduce fragmentation of efforts and harness the collective potential of young people for achieving democratic transition towards active citizenship, political participation and social inclusion.

The Commission also launched a European Parliament preparatory action 'New Euro-Mediterranean initiative for youth employment promotion' (2014-2016) to facilitate learning, networking and exchange of experience for new young professionals through periods spent working in SMEs run by experienced entrepreneurs in another country.

Annexes

Annex 1: Abbreviations

EU Member States ⁽²⁰⁸⁾	
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom
Non-EU Member States	
IS	Iceland
RS	Republic of Serbia
TR	Turkey

208 Roman alphabetical order of the countries' geographical names in the original language(s).

Other Abbreviations

CoE	Council of Europe
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EKCYP	European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EURES	European Employment Services
EVS	European Voluntary Service
EYD2015	European Year for Development 2015
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (2007-2013)
Horizon 2020	The EU's research and innovation programme (2014-2020)
HPPD	EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJ	Official Journal of the European Union
PEYR	Pool of European Youth Researchers
SALTO-YOUTH	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
WHO	World Health Organization
YFEJ	Your first EURES Job
YFJ	European Youth Forum

Annex 2: Council resolutions and conclusions on youth (2010-2015)

11 May 2010

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty
OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, p. 1-6
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42010X0527%2801%29>

19 November 2010

Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights
OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 1-1
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52010XG1203%2801%29>

Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on access of young people to culture
OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 2-3
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52010XG1203%2802%29>

Council conclusions of 19 November 2010 on the 'Youth on the Move' initiative — an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face
OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 9-11
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2010.326.01.0009.01.ENG

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on youth work
OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, p. 1-5
[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:42010Y1204\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:42010Y1204(01))

19 May 2011

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment
OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, p. 1-4
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2011.164.01.0001.01.ENG

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life in Europe
OJ C 169, 9.6.2011, p. 1-5
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42011Y0609%2801%29>

28 November 2011

Council conclusions on the eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility
OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 10-14
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52011XG1220%2801%29>

11 May 2012

Council conclusions of 11 May 2012 on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people
OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, p. 1-4
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2012.169.01.0001.01.ENG

27 November 2012

Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the overview of the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe
OJ C 380, 11.12.2012, p. 1-4
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42012Y1211%2801%29>

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 27 November 2012 on the participation and social inclusion of young people with emphasis on those with a migrant background

OJ C 393, 19.12.2012, p. 15-19

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2012.393.01.0015.01.ENG

16 May 2013

Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people

OJ C 168, 14.6.2013, p. 5-9

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.168.01.0005.01.ENG

Council conclusions on maximising the potential of youth policy in addressing the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy

OJ C 224, 3.8.2013, p. 2-6

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2013.224.01.0002.01.ENG

25 November 2013

Council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training

OJ C 30, 1.2.2014, p. 5-8

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.030.01.0005.01.ENG

20 May 2014

Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 20 May 2014 on the overview of the Structured Dialogue process including social inclusion of young people

OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 1-4

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.183.01.0001.01.ENG

Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 20 May 2014 on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015

OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 5-11

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.183.01.0005.01.ENG

Council conclusions of 20 May 2014 on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people

OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 18-21

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2014.183.01.0018.01.ENG

12 December 2014

Council conclusions on promoting young people's access to rights in order to foster their autonomy and participation in civil society

OJ C 18, 21.1.2015, p. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52015XG0121%2801%29>

18 May 2015

Council conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies

OJ C 170, 23.5.2015, p. 2-3

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:JOC_2015_170_R_0002

Council conclusions on enhancing cross-sectorial policy cooperation to effectively address socio-economic challenges facing young people

OJ C 172, 27.5.2015, p. 3-7

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:JOC_2015_172_R_0002

Situation of young people in the European Union

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

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1 Introduction

In 2009, the Council endorsed a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), also known as the EU Youth Strategy⁽¹⁾. The period covered by the framework is divided into three-year work cycles. At the end of each cycle, a European Union (EU) Youth Report should be drawn up by the Commission. The Council specified that the report 'shall consist of two parts: A joint Council-Commission report (political part), and supporting documents (statistical and analytical part). The EU Youth Report will evaluate progress made towards the overall objectives of the framework, as well as progress regarding the priorities defined for the most recent work cycle and identify good practices'. At the same time, the report should serve as a basis for establishing priorities for the following work cycle.

The **statistical part of the report** presents data and information on the current situation of young people in Europe. Following an introductory chapter on demography, which presents the main trends in the youth population over the last few years, separate chapters are dedicated to the eight 'fields of action' identified in the Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018): Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Creativity and Culture, and Youth and the World.

This report builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators⁽²⁾, a selection of 41 indicators which measure the most crucial aspects of young people's lives in Europe. Wherever the report uses these indicators,

this is highlighted in the text and in the layout of the relevant Figures.

The period when a person is considered to be 'young' differs across Europe according to the national context, the socio-economic development of society and time. Common to all countries is that the period of youth - the transition from being a child to being an adult - is marked by important life changes: from being in education to having a full-time job, from living in the family home to setting up one's own household, and from being financially dependent to managing one's own money.

Relying on Eurostat data, Eurobarometer surveys and other available sources, the population targeted in this report is primarily young people between 15 and 29 years of age. Where possible, the analysis distinguishes between subgroups aged 15 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 29. In other cases, a more limited age range is used, either because of the specifications of survey data, or because the issue in question affects a particular age group (e.g. early school leaving). In addition, children (under 16 years of age) are also included when analysing indicators on poverty or social exclusion.

In line with the analytical part of the EU Youth Report⁽³⁾, the information and analysis cover the EU Member States and, where the available data allows, the EU candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) and EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).

- 1 Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1-11.
- 2 Commission Staff Working Document on EU indicators in the field of youth, SEC(2011) 401 final.
- 3 All EU Member States, EU candidate countries and EEA EFTA States were invited to submit National Youth Reports.

The report focuses on the most recent years for which data are available and illustrates trends which have emerged since the publication of the previous Youth Report in 2012.

European youth: cross-cutting trends

Across the different topics covered in detail by each chapter, some general trends affecting young Europeans in these transition stages emerge.

In general, positive trends are registered in the field of **education**, where all the main indicators showed improvements for the EU as a whole. The proportion of young people with at least upper secondary level attainment and with tertiary degrees has risen, while the percentage of low achievers and early school leavers has declined. Evidence indicates that higher levels of education are associated with more positive conditions in other spheres of life. First of all, the positive relationship between higher levels of education and employment is confirmed. In the EU as a whole, the unemployment rate is much lower for young graduates from tertiary education than for those with the lowest levels of education. Data also illustrate that highly educated youth tend to be more motivated to participate in political elections and cast their vote.

However, challenges do exist for those who do not benefit from the improvements in terms of education. Many young people face difficulties in completing school education and acquiring necessary skills. Indeed, progress is mixed regarding reducing the share of 'low achievers' among 15 year olds. This compounds their socio-economic

disadvantages and reduces their opportunities to participate more broadly in society.

The economic crisis which started in 2008 continues to limit young people's chances of success. **Employment** has become more difficult to find and retain, and, when a job is secured, the risk of being overqualified is high for many young graduates. Unemployment, including long-term unemployment, has continued to rise amongst the young, particularly in countries facing economic hurdles. Here, insecure work conditions linked to temporary contracts and involuntary part-time work continue to be widespread and, in some regions, have even deteriorated. Some signs of improvement in the situation for young people in the labour market emerged between 2013 and 2014, raising the hope that the negative

trends provoked by the economic crisis have started to turn around.

However, the consequences of several years of great adversity in the labour market have significantly jeopardised the chances of **social inclusion** for vast numbers of young Europeans. The proportion

of young employees unable to make ends meet and living in poverty despite having a job is particularly high in some European countries. Inability to find employment and gain appropriate remuneration clearly affects the possibility for significant numbers of young people to afford the costs of basic goods and services such as food, healthcare, and proper housing. Material deprivation rates for youth have increased in Europe, especially in countries where youth unemployment is high. It has become increasingly difficult for many young people to meet their housing costs (such as rent and utility bills), and, as a consequence, the rate of overcrowding has risen in many EU Member States. Also the possibility for many young people to look after

Despite improvements in the level of competencies, skills and educational achievements, many young Europeans are facing serious threats such as marginalisation in the labour market, deterioration of living conditions, and obstacles to social integration and political participation.

their health and maintain their well-being has reduced: in countries where unemployment and social exclusion are particularly high, increasing proportions of young people report not being able to afford medical care when needed.

Over the last three years, deterioration in the working and living conditions of many young people in Europe has gone hand in hand with a **growing detachment from political life and waning engagement in traditional civic activities**. Electoral turn-out amongst young voters has declined since 2011 in the vast majority of countries, suggesting a widespread dissatisfaction with traditional modes of political engagement. At the same time, the propensity to dedicate time and energy to the activities of non-governmental organisations has weakened, especially in countries where unemployment and social exclusion are the highest.

Youth participation in **cultural activities** is also suffering from decreasing trends. Possibly because of reduced financial resources, some are unable to afford to attend cultural events or develop their artistic interests; many young people have refrained from visiting museums, going to the theatre, concerts and movies, and from pursuing their artistic vocations. Attendance at sports and youth clubs has also declined, indicating a withdrawal of many young people from socially inclusive activities.

All in all, despite improvements in the level of competencies, skills and educational achievements, many young Europeans are facing multiple challenges which increase the risk of economic and social exclusion. Marginalisation in the labour market, deterioration in living conditions, and challenges to social integration and political participation are serious threats to young people with fewer opportunities in Europe today.

2 Demography

EU Youth Indicators

⇒ Share of young people in the total population on 1 January

Figure 2-A

2.1. Introduction

Understanding the demographic trends at play in the European youth population is conducive to appreciating the characteristics and behaviours of young people today, which will be described in detail in the other chapters of the report. The size, geographical distribution and demographic features of youth in Europe are related to the quality of life they enjoy, the opportunities at their disposal and their individual and social behaviours.

This chapter therefore introduces the subject matter of the current report. It illustrates the key demographic indicators for European youth, including its proportion in the general population,

The proportion of young people in the European Union continues to decrease...

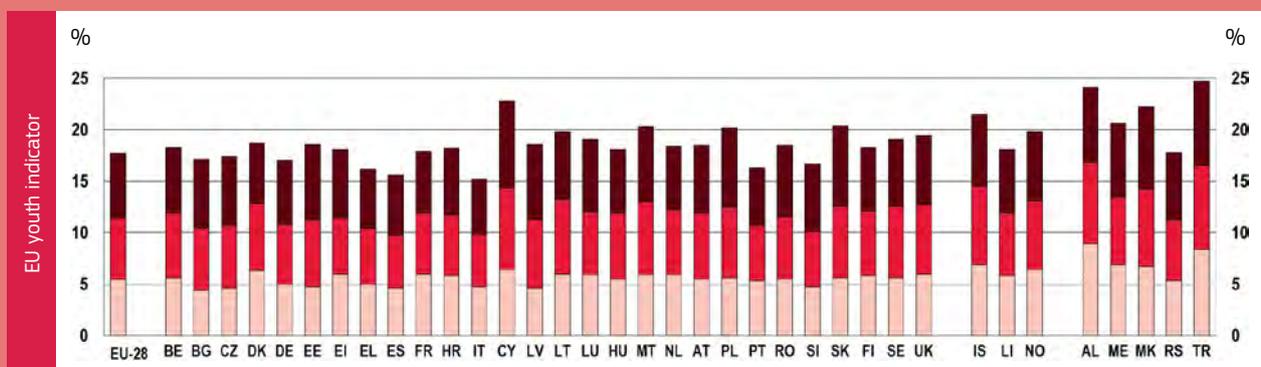
its projected development, its composition, and the patterns of youth mobility across the continent.

2.2. Trends in the European youth population

On 1 January 2014, almost 90 million young people aged between 15 and 29 years lived in the European Union⁽⁴⁾. This represents around 18% of the total population of EU-28 (Figure 2-A).

The proportion of young people in the total population varies across countries. While it is comparatively smaller in Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia, it reaches the highest levels in Cyprus,

Figure 2-A: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-29) in the total population on 1 January, by age group and by country, 2014



Notes: The population corresponds to the number of persons having their usual residence in the country on 1st January. When 'usual residence' cannot be established, the countries can report of the legal or registered residence.

Source: Eurostat [demo_pjanind]

4 Eurostat collects information on the population living in each European country on the 1st of January of each year. Data on young people are available at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/data/database>.

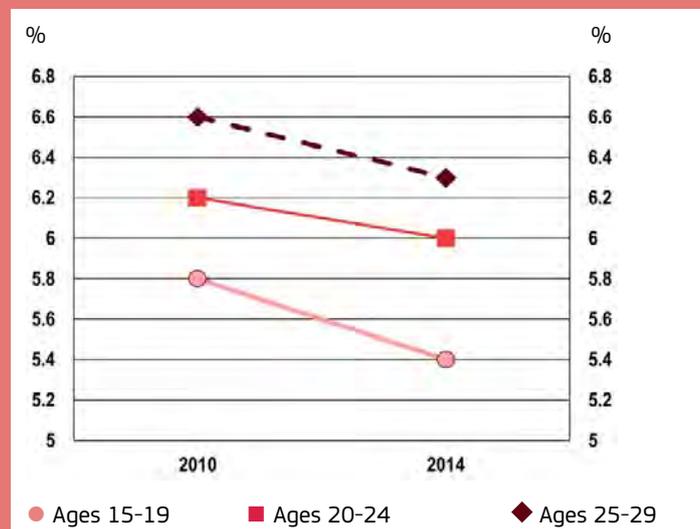
Malta, and Slovakia. Albania and Turkey report the highest figures outside of the EU.

In line with the long term trend over the last three decades (see the previous edition of the Youth Report⁽⁵⁾), the proportion of young people continued to decline between 2010 and 2014 (Figure 2-B).

On average, the 15-19 age group is the most affected by the decline: it registered a 7% decrease over the three years considered. Over a period of only 4 years, it is evident that the proportion of teenagers who entered the 15-19 age group did not fully replace the proportion that moved out of the 25-29 group. This decline in the total numbers of young people in the European Union affects countries to a different extent (Figure 2-C).

Central, eastern and southern European countries have seen comparatively larger drops in their youth populations than northern ones. However, Ireland is the country recording the highest fall in percentage points since 2010 (-4 pp.). On the other hand, a few countries (Denmark, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) have witnessed slight increases in the proportion of young people in their population.

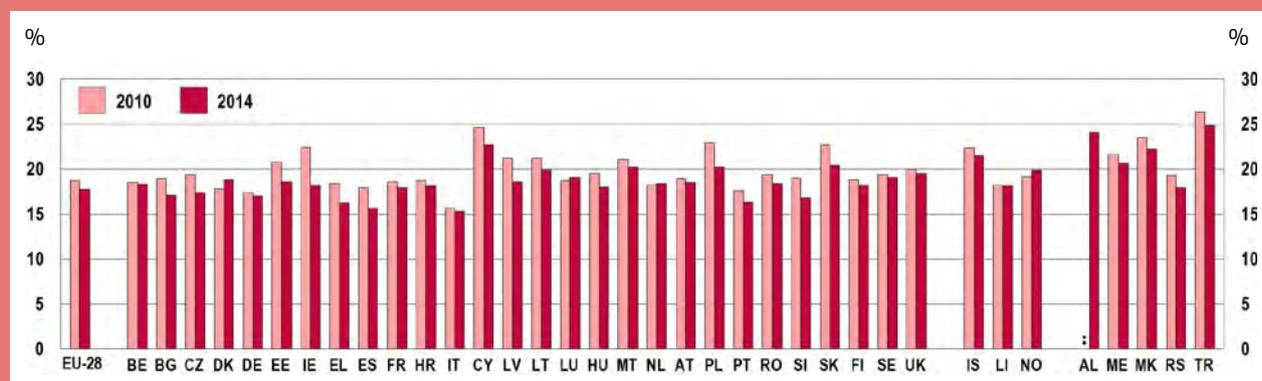
Figure 2-B: Share of young people (aged 15-29) in the total population, by age group, EU-28 average, 2010 and 2014



Source: Eurostat [demo_pjanind]

There are several reasons behind the decline in the youth population in the vast majority of European countries. While fertility rates rose modestly during the first decade of the century, they remained below what is considered to be the replacement level⁽⁶⁾. Since 2008, they have recorded

Figure 2-C: Share of young people (aged 15-29) in the total population, by country, 2010 and 2014

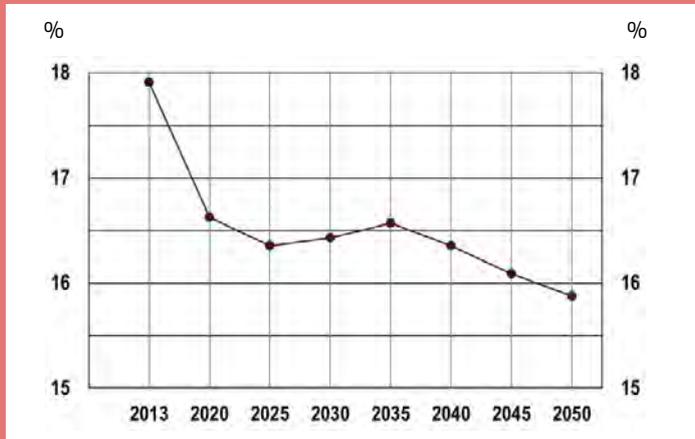


Source: Eurostat [demo_pjanind]

5 European Commission, 2012.

6 Eurostat, 2015a. The replacement level is the level of the fertility rate which is necessary to compensate for the mortality rate. Its value should be 2.1.

Figure 2-D: Projected share of the youth population (aged 15-29), EU-28 average, 2013-2050

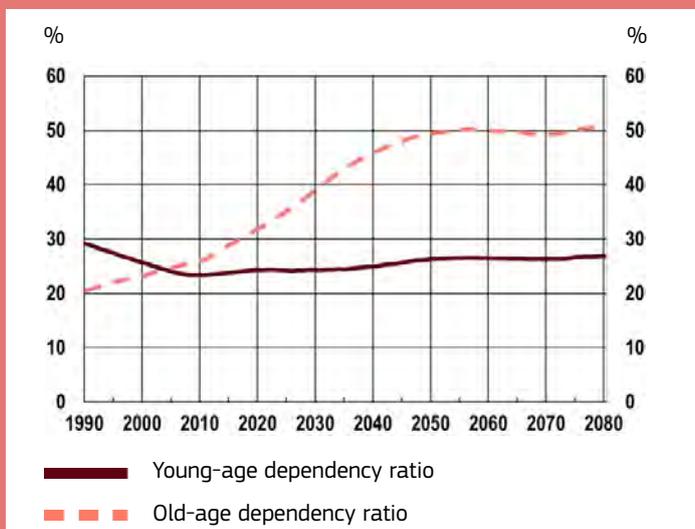


Source: Eurostat [proj_13npms]

a further decline, perhaps partly due to the effects of the economic crisis where it impacted on the level of unemployment and family income, at least in those countries most severely hit by the economic downturn⁽⁷⁾. In addition, a tendency for women to give birth to fewer children and at a later age in life is observed, which further reduces the proportion of children being born⁽⁸⁾. These trends are expected to continue in the coming decades, leading to further reductions in the size of the EU youth population (Figure 2-D).

... and the decline is expected to continue in the future.

Figure 2-E: Projected young-age and old-age dependency ratios, EU-28 average, 1990-2080



Note: The old-age-dependency ratio is the ratio of the number of elderly people at an age when they are generally economically inactive (i.e. aged 65 and over), compared to the number of people of working age (i.e. 15-64 years old). The young-age-dependency ratio is the ratio of the number of young people at an age when they are generally economically inactive, (i.e. under 15 years of age), compared to the number of people of working age (i.e. 15-64).

Source: Eurostat [demo_pjanind] [proj_13ndbims]

According to population projections developed by Eurostat (Europop2013), while the total EU population is expected to grow through 2050 reaching approximately 525 million in that year, the proportion of young people will decrease from almost 18% in 2013 to below 16% in 2050, equal to over 7 million individuals⁽⁹⁾. The progressive decline in the share of young people, in a context of gradual growth in the total population and of ever-increasing life expectancy rates, indicates that the EU population is progressively ageing. This is expected to substantially boost the old-age dependency ratio, a measure of the extent to which the working-age segment of the population has to support older age groups through, for example, sustaining public healthcare and pension schemes (Figure 2-E)⁽¹⁰⁾. As a result, younger generations will face an increased burden in supporting the remainder of the population as they move into work.

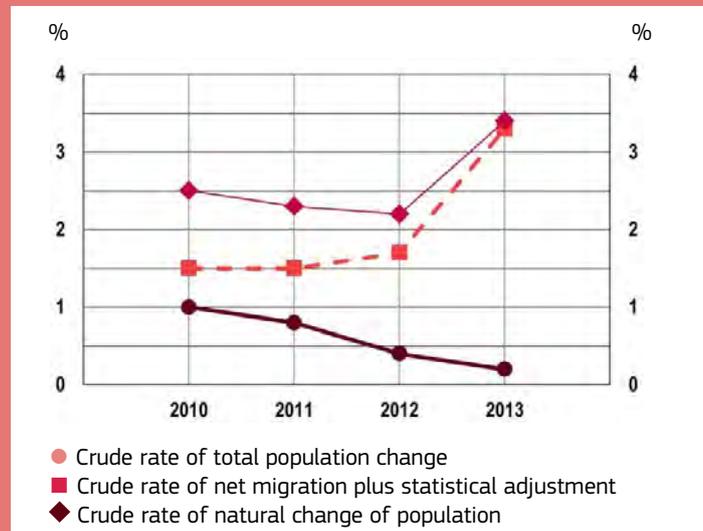
The increase in the numbers of young immigrants from outside the EU partially offsets the decrease in EU youth population

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Bloom et al., 2008.

The steady decrease in the youth population living in the EU over the last decades and the related augmentation of the old-age dependency ratio has been subdued by the growth of immigration from non-EU⁽¹¹⁾. This has occurred in two main ways. On the one hand, the influx of immigration from third countries⁽¹²⁾ compensated for the overall natural change in the general population and reversed an otherwise declining trend in the total population. This phenomenon has occurred during the last two decades and has continued over most recent years (Figure 2-F). Data illustrated in the chart show how the crude rate of total population change rose owing to the growth in the crude rate of net migration plus adjustment, especially since 2012.

On the other hand, young people aged between 20 and 29 are over-represented in the age structure of immigrants coming into EU countries from outside the Union (Figure 2-G).

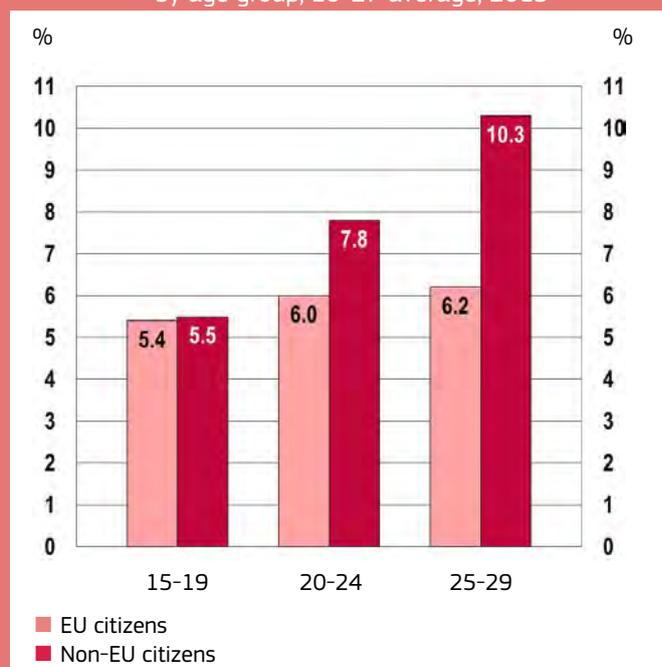
Figure 2-F: Crude rates of population change, EU-28 average, 2010-2013



Notes: A crude rate is calculated as the ratio of the number of events to the average population of the respective area in a given year. The natural change of population corresponds to the difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths during the year. Net migration plus statistical adjustment is calculated as the difference between total population change and natural change.

Source: Eurostat [demo_gind]

Figure 2-G: Young people (aged 15-29) as a proportion of total EU citizens and non-EU citizens living in the EU, by age group, EU-27 average, 2013



Notes: Citizenship denotes the particular legal bond between an individual and his or her State, acquired by birth or naturalisation, whether by declaration, choice, marriage or other means, according to national legislation.

Source: Eurostat [migr_pop1ctz]

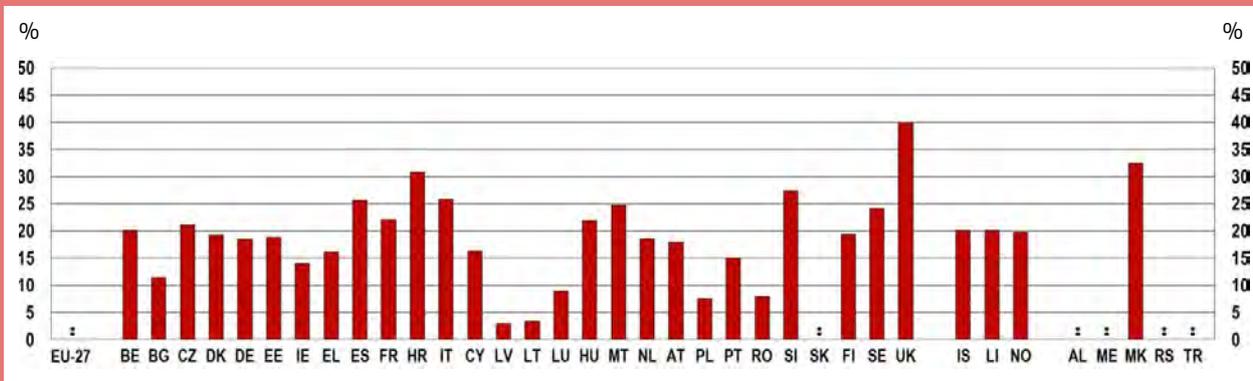
11 Bloom et al., 2008; Lanzieri, 2013.

12 'Non-EU country' and 'third country' are used interchangeably to indicate any country outside the current 28 EU Member States.

As it appears from the trend illustrated in the first part of the chapter, the contribution of non-EU immigration is not enough to reverse the general decline in the youth population living in the EU, but has nonetheless made it less sharp. The proportion of young people from non-EU countries residing in EU Member States varies across countries (Figure 2-H).

Most recent data available indicate that in some EU Member States young non-EU residents account for at least one fifth of the total youth population (Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Spain, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Malta, Slovenia and Sweden). In the United Kingdom the proportion reaches 40%. On the contrary, in Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Romania, the share of non-EU young people is below 10%.

Figure 2-H: Share of young immigrants (aged 15-29) from non-European countries, by country, 2012



Notes: Immigration denotes the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country.

Source: Eurostat [yth_demo_070]

2.3. Mobility among young Europeans

Thanks to the increasing opportunities for EU citizens to travel and set up residence across EU Member States, young Europeans have become increasingly mobile and likely to go work or study in another European country⁽¹³⁾. Crossing geographical and cultural borders and gaining life and work experience in a different context is a great opportunity for a young person to acquire personal skills, learn new languages and appreciate the diversity of European culture.

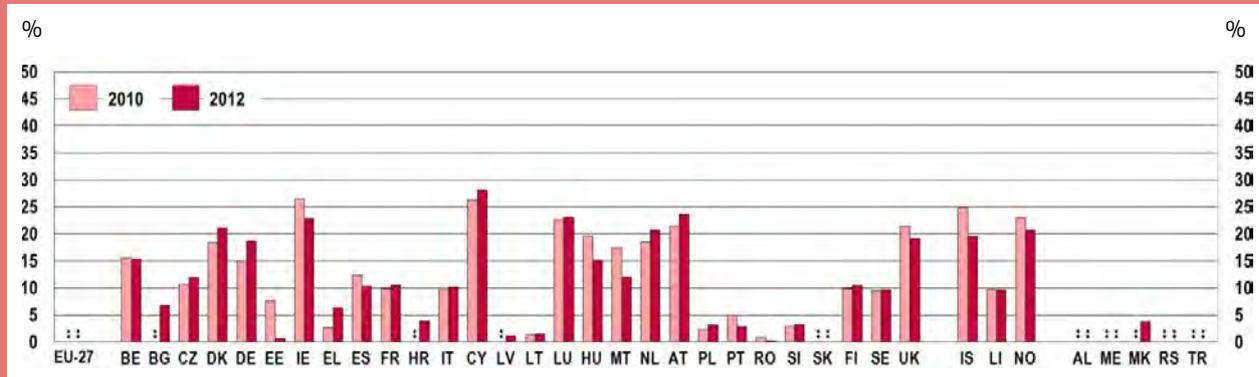
With over 20% of the immigrants (aged 15-29) coming from another EU Member State, Ireland, Cyprus, Luxembourg and

Austria stand out as the countries whose youth population receives in 2012 the highest proportion of young immigrants from other EU countries (Figure 2-I-a). In most of the countries, the share of young immigrants coming from another EU Member State has not changed radically compared to 2010.

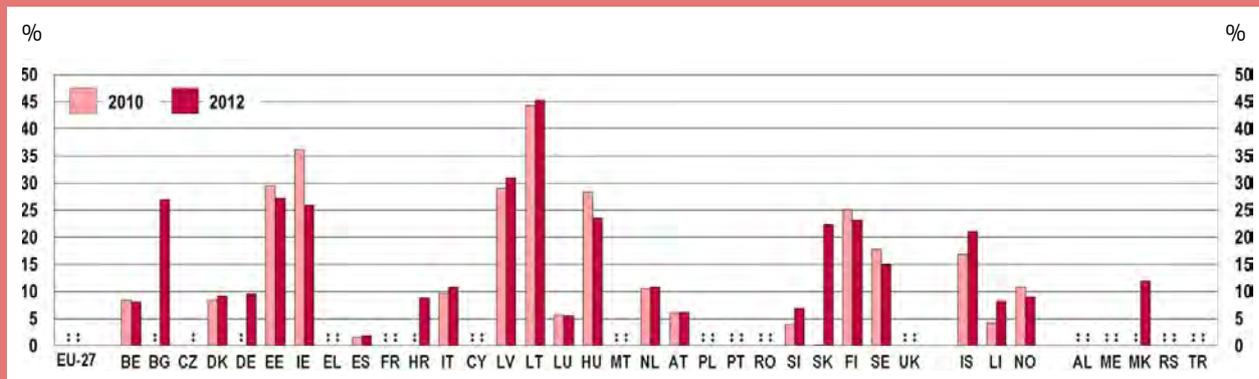
However, some exceptions exist. The most significant increase has occurred in Greece, where the percentage of young European immigrants from other EU countries has doubled, although the overall level is relatively low (6%). In contrast, in Estonia and Romania the resident youth population from other EU States has significantly decreased.

Figure 2-I: Share of young (aged 15-29) EU immigrants and emigrants, by country, 2010 and 2012

a) EU immigrants from another EU Member State



b) EU emigrants to another EU Member State



Notes: According to the definitions provided by Eurostat, 'Immigration' denotes the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country; 'Emigration' denotes the action by which a person, having previously been usually resident in the territory of a Member State, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months.

Source: Eurostat [yth_demo_070] [yth_demo_080]

The largest proportions of young EU citizens leaving their own country of residence to settle in another EU Member State in 2012 are recorded in Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia (where one in four young people have emigrated) and remarkably in Lithuania (where the share reaches 45%) (Figure 2-I-b). The biggest increase in the proportion of young people emigrating over the two years in question is observed in Slovenia. Lichtenstein and Iceland have also seen increases in the share of young people choosing to live in another EU Member State. The opposite trend is illustrated

in Ireland, where the proportion of young residents leaving the country to settle in another EU country has declined by almost one third.

Overall, looking at the countries for which data are available for both EU immigrants and emigrants, some are clearly shown to be either countries from which many young Europeans go abroad (for example, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Hungary) or countries which receive large numbers of young people (in particular Denmark, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg and Austria).

3 Education and training

EU Youth Indicators

- ⇒ Young people (aged 20-24) who have completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3-4) Figure 3-A
- ⇒ Tertiary educational attainment of people aged 30-34 Figure 3-B
- ⇒ Early leavers from education and training Figure 3-C
- ⇒ Young people in upper general secondary education (ISCED 3gen) learning two or more foreign languages Figure 3-E

3.1. Introduction

The importance of education is unquestioned in today's world. Throughout the years spent in formal education and by means of the opportunities made available through the non-formal and informal sector and through youth work, children and young people have the chance to develop their personal potential, acquire basic skills and qualifications, and become integrated into society at large. Indeed, high-quality and inclusive education for all is one of the most effective defences against the risks of social marginalisation, poverty and exclusion, especially at times of crisis⁽¹⁴⁾.

Moreover, education is not only a fundamental determinant of individual life chances, but also of economic development⁽¹⁵⁾. Accordingly, obtaining a high-quality education gives the opportunity for young people to succeed in the labour market and find meaningful employment, while spurring long-term economic growth.

This chapter discusses the provision of learning opportunities for young people in Europe in both formal and non-formal settings. Taking a brief look first at the average number of years young Europeans spend in formal education, the chapter then goes on to examine attainment in terms of the educational level completed and student

achievement in reading, mathematics and science. The chapter then gives an insight into the participation of young people in non-formal education, including youth work activities, and then turns to analysing how many young Europeans have had the opportunity to widen their learning experiences by going abroad during their studies. Finally, the last section examines the transition of young people to the world of work.

3.2. Formal education

Formal education refers to the structured system of education from pre-primary to tertiary level. This section considers some of the aspects most relevant to young people: the qualifications they attain – or fail to attain if they leave school prematurely – and the skills they acquire in the education system.

3.2.1. Participation and attainment

European children and young people on average spend more than 17 years in formal education, and this period has been increasing in recent years⁽¹⁶⁾. Variations between countries are, however, quite significant, with the expected time spent in

14 European Commission 2014a.

15 EENEE, 2014.

16 In the EU-28, while school expectancy was 17 years in 2003, it increased to 17.6 by 2012. Source: Eurostat, online data code: educ_igen (School expectancy of pupils and students (ISCED 0-6)).

education ranging from 14 years in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and around 15 years in Cyprus and Luxembourg, to more than 20 years in Finland and Iceland⁽¹⁷⁾. As was explained in the 2012 EU Youth Report⁽¹⁸⁾, this is partly due to countries bringing forward the starting age of compulsory education; nevertheless, young people also stay longer in education beyond the compulsory school years (see also Section 3.5).

Young people are also more highly-qualified than older generations. In 2013⁽¹⁹⁾ in the EU-28, 81.1 % of young people aged 20-24 had completed at least upper secondary education; whereas only 66 % of people aged 55 to 64 had similar qualification levels⁽²⁰⁾.

The proportion of young people aged 20 to 24 with upper secondary or higher educational attainment increased between 2011 and 2014 in the EU-28 and in almost every country except Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Sweden (Figure 3-A-a). The Czech Republic and Slovakia are nevertheless still among the countries with a very high share of at least medium-educated young people: together with Ireland, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia, these are the countries where 90 % or more of young people aged 20-24 completed at least upper secondary education. Conversely, the percentage of young people with upper secondary or tertiary attainment levels is less than 70 % in Spain, Iceland and Turkey.

However, it has to be noted that a high share of young people with at least upper secondary education does not mean that tertiary attainment is also high in a country (see for example the cases of the Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovakia on Figure 3-B-a).

Women generally have higher educational attainment levels than men. As Figure 3-A-b shows, in the EU-28, on average 84.7 % of women completed at least upper secondary education, while the percentage of men with the same attainment level is 79.9 %. This pattern holds true for all countries with available data, with the exception

of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, where the share of young men with at least upper secondary educational attainment is 3.9 and 4.4 percentage points higher than that of women, respectively.

Gender differences are the largest in Estonia, Spain, Cyprus, and Iceland, with differences of more than 10 percentage points.

Among higher qualifications, the attainment of tertiary education degrees helps young people the most in securing a job in a high-skilled labour market (as illustrated in the chapter on Employment and Entrepreneurship)⁽²¹⁾. Indeed, according to recent skills forecasts, the demand for high-skilled labour will continue to grow until 2020, when about 31 % of jobs in Europe will require high-level qualifications⁽²²⁾.

Young people are increasingly highly educated. The share of young Europeans attaining upper-secondary qualifications continues to increase.

17 Ibid.

18 European Commission, 2012a.

19 In Section 3.2.1, given the application of the new ISCED 2011 categories by Eurostat from 2014, we rely on data from 2013 for being able to make comparisons over time.

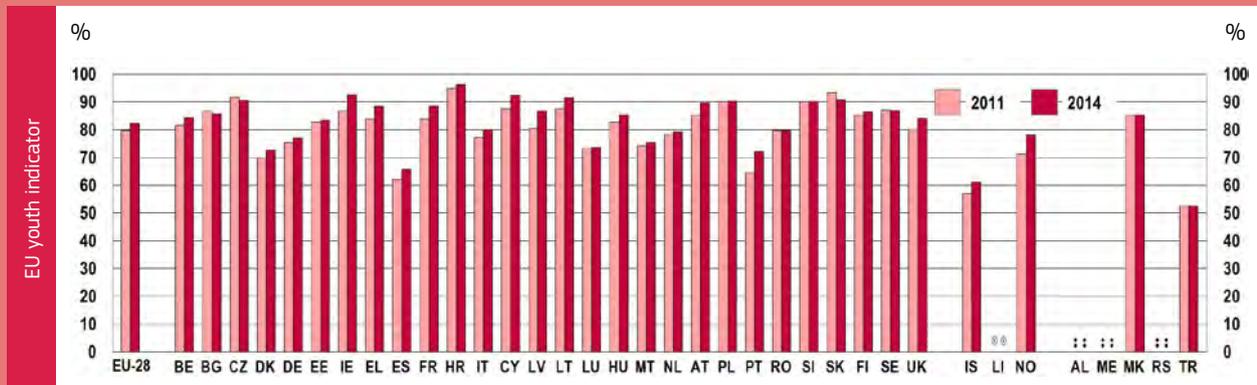
20 Eurostat, online data code: edat_ifse_08. Data extracted on 16/03/2015.

21 European Commission/EACEA, 2013.

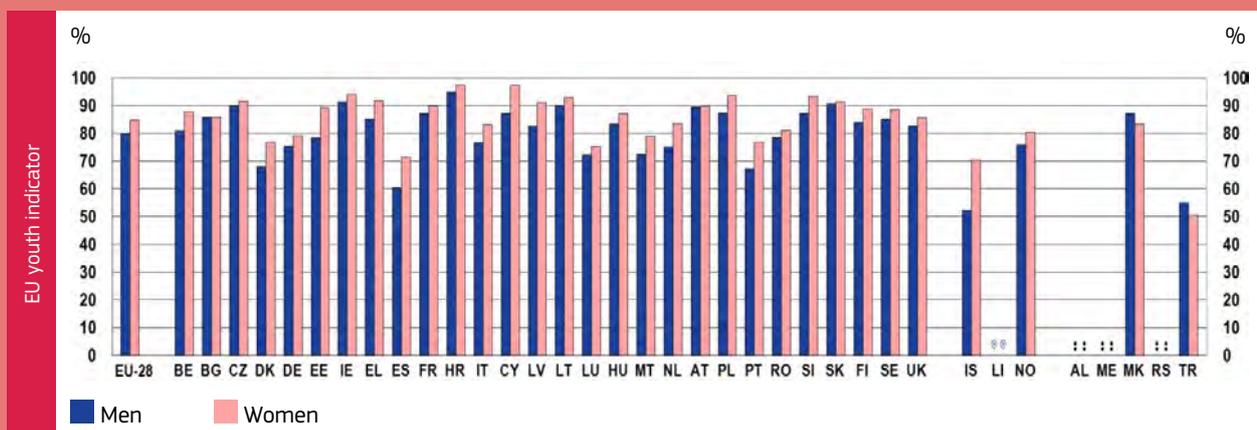
22 European Commission 2014a.

Figure 3-A: EU youth indicator: young people (aged 20-24) who have completed at least upper secondary education, by country

a) 2011 and 2014



b) by sex, 2014



Notes: For data on educational attainment based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 (ISCED 2011) is applied as from 2014. Up to 2013 ISCED 1997 is used. Nevertheless, data are comparable over time for all available countries except Austria due to the reclassification of higher technical and vocational colleges. However, in the case of this particular indicator, which includes both upper secondary and tertiary levels, data for Austria are also comparable.

Source: Eurostat LFS [edat_lfse_08]

On average, over a third of Europeans between 30 and 34 years of age have achieved a tertiary degree (Figure 3-B-a)⁽²³⁾. Several countries reveal percentages much lower than the EU average, in particular the Czech Republic, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, and, outside the EU, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, where around one in four 30-34 year-olds has a tertiary qualification.

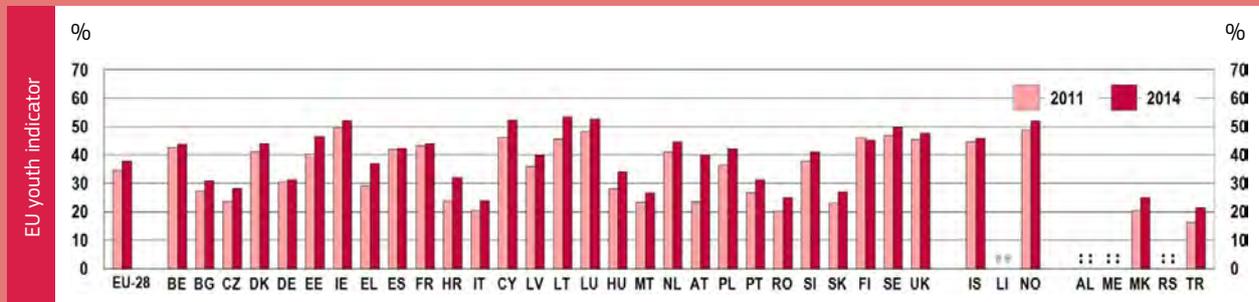
In line with the gradual increase since 2000⁽²⁴⁾, the proportion of people aged 30-34 with tertiary level education attainment has grown over the last three years, although at a different pace across European countries (Figure 3-B-a). The most significant relative increases have taken place in Greece and Croatia, with an increase of more than 8 percentage points.

23 The Europe 2020 Strategy includes a target set by the European Council to raise the level of tertiary attainment amongst 30-34 year-olds to 40 % by 2020.

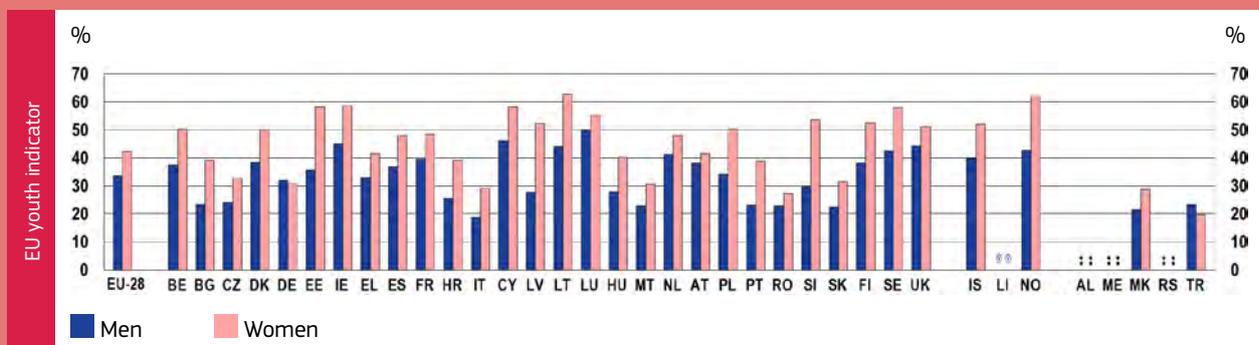
24 European Commission, 2012a.

Figure 3-B: EU youth indicator: Tertiary education attainment of people aged 30-34, by country and by sex, a) 2011 and 2014

a) 2011 and 2014



b) by sex, 2014



Notes: For data on educational attainment based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 (ISCED 2011) is applied as from 2014. Up to 2013 ISCED 1997 is used. Nevertheless, data are comparable over time for all available countries except Austria due to the reclassification of higher technical and vocational colleges.

Source: Eurostat LFS [edat_lfse_07]

In accordance with the general educational attainment trends described above, women attain tertiary degrees in higher percentages than men (Figure 3-B-b). Men are furthest behind in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Norway, while the gender gap is narrowest in Germany and Austria. In Germany, together with Turkey, fewer women than men complete tertiary degrees.

Despite this positive trend in educational attainment, a significant share of young Europeans still face significant difficulties in the education system and feel compelled to leave prematurely without having

Increasing shares of young Europeans gain tertiary degrees.

gained relevant qualifications or a school certificate. This is the case with early leavers from education and training (also referred to as 'early school leavers') – people aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and who were not in further education or training during the last four weeks preceding the survey. Amongst the factors contributing to young people leaving education early, their socio-economic status and that of their families proves to have significant weight⁽²⁵⁾. Indeed, early leavers are much more likely to come from families with a low socio-economic status (i.e. where parents are unemployed, have

low income and low levels of education), or from vulnerable social groups such as migrants⁽²⁶⁾. Early school leavers are exposed to a particularly high risk of deprivation and social exclusion. In addition, not only does leaving school early result in longer and more frequent spells of unemployment, it also engenders considerable public and social costs⁽²⁷⁾.

On average, about 11 % of Europeans aged 18-24 in 2014 left education having completed lower secondary education at most (Figure 3-C-a)⁽²⁸⁾. Several countries report much higher percentages (especially Spain, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Iceland and Turkey), while the lowest

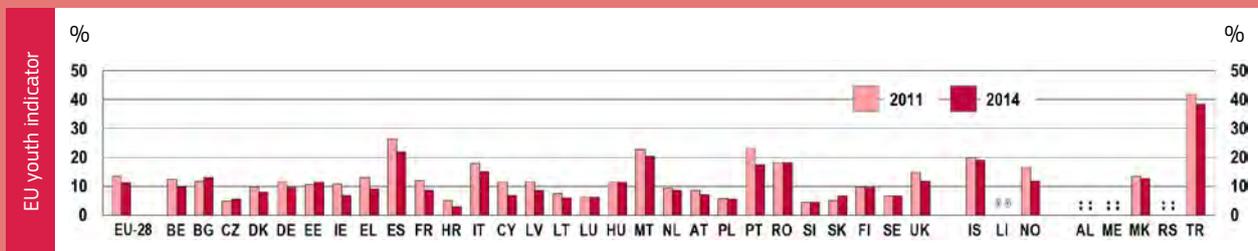
shares are registered in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, and Slovenia.

Since 2000, there has been a general decline in the proportion of young people leaving school early in Europe. In line with this long-term trend, fewer people left education prematurely in the majority of European countries between 2011 and 2014 (Figure 3-C-a). Spain, Cyprus, Portugal and Norway are the countries where the decrease has been most significant. Among the countries with the highest proportions of early school leavers, Italy and Malta have also shown improvement. However, there are still more

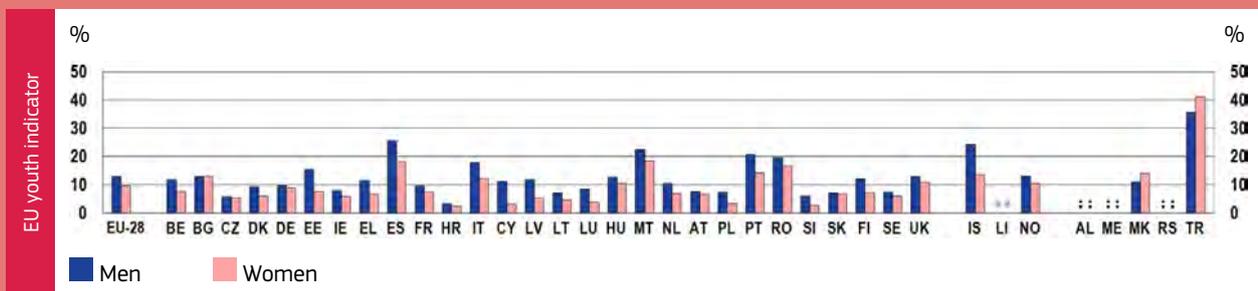
Across the EU, the proportion of early leavers from education and training is declining.

Figure 3-C: EU youth indicator: Early leavers from education and training (population aged 18-24 with lower secondary education at most and not in further education or training), by country

a) 2011 and 2014



b) by sex, 2014



Notes: For data on educational attainment based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 (ISCED 2011) is applied as from 2014. Up to 2013 ISCED 1997 is used. Nevertheless, data are comparable over time for all available countries except Austria due to the reclassification of higher technical and vocational colleges.

Source: Eurostat LFS [edat_lfse_14]

26 Ibid.
 27 European Commission, 2014a.
 28 The ET 2020 Strategic framework includes a target set by the European Council of reducing the share of early school leavers to below 10 % by 2020.

than 5 million early school leavers in Europe, and an increase in their share has taken place in Bulgaria and Estonia, and there has been a stagnation in Hungary and Romania, where percentages still higher than the EU benchmark of 10 %.

The risk of leaving education prematurely and with low qualification levels is higher amongst men than women (Figure 3-C-b). This gender gap applies to most European countries, and is widest in Estonia, Spain, Cyprus and Iceland. On the other hand, some countries show similar percentages for men and women (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovakia). Only in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Turkey, and to much a lesser extent in Bulgaria, there are more young women leaving early from education and training.

Young people who have left school prematurely are typically those students who perform poorly in the classroom and on standardised tests, and can be helped to re-enter mainstream education and subsequently to gain higher qualifications through the recognition and validation of learning outcomes achieved by means of non-formal education (discussed in Section 3.3).

3.2.2. Skills

During the years spent in formal education, young people can acquire the skills that are essential if they are to achieve their full potential and be successful in their personal

and social lives as well as in their career. Indeed, good levels of basic skills represent the foundation for professional development and social inclusion⁽²⁹⁾. Specifically, reading, mathematics, and science have been recognised as the core competencies to be developed in schools⁽³⁰⁾.

On average, about one in five young people aged 15 demonstrates low levels of proficiency in the three core competencies (Figure 3-D). Figures clearly indicate that pupil performance in these three skills cor-

relate strongly with each other. Countries that show a certain level of performance in one of these basic skills tend to perform similarly in the others. For example,

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania, Albania, Montenegro and Turkey, show higher proportions of low-achievers in all three areas.

Since 2009, the share of low-achievers has declined in the majority of European countries, with the exception of Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden, Norway and Iceland where the opposite trend is recorded. However, Europe still counts a worrying number of pupils with very low basic skills and progress is lacking behind, particularly in mathematics.

In addition to basic skills, knowledge of foreign languages is a significant advantage for young people. It enables them to discover and understand different cultures, and expand their educational and professional prospects by opening up opportunities to study and work abroad.

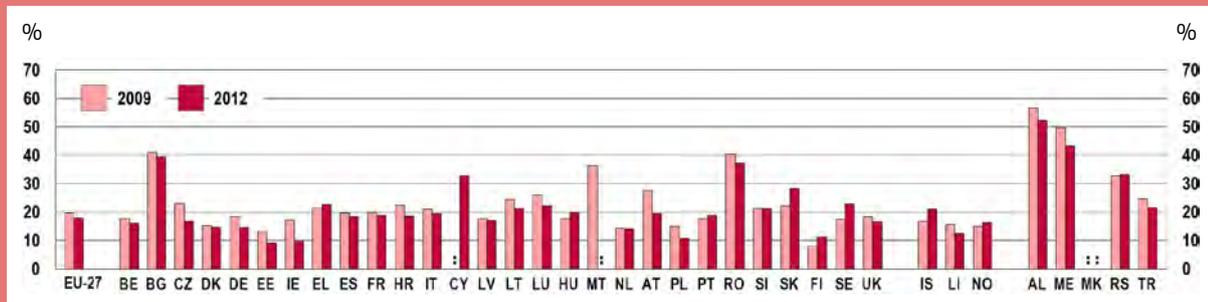
Since 2009, the share of low-achievers in reading, mathematics and science has declined in the majority of European countries.

29 European Commission 2014a.

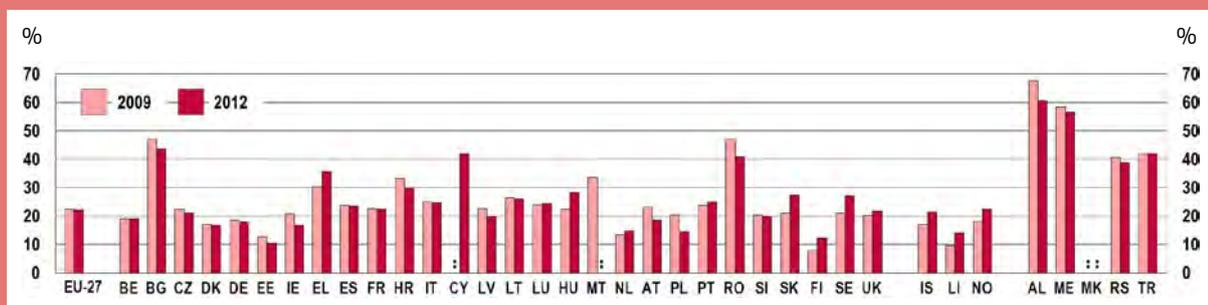
30 The Europe 2020 Strategy includes a target set by the European Council to reduce the share of low achievers in reading, mathematics and science amongst 15 year-olds to below 15 % by 2020.

Figure 3-D: Low-achieving 15 year-old students in reading (a), mathematics (b) and science (c), by country, 2009 and 2012

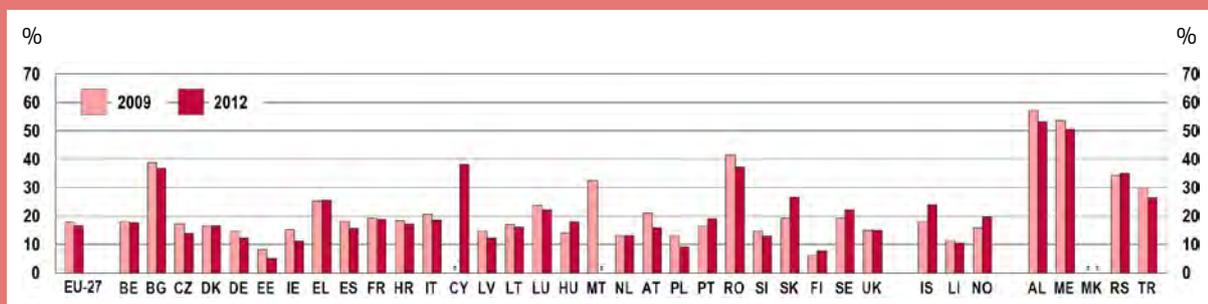
a) Reading



b) Mathematics



c) Science



Notes: 'UK' stands for United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland is not included.

Source: OECD, PISA

One in two young students enrolled in general secondary education learns two or more foreign languages in the European Union (Figure 3-E). In some countries, the proportion is much higher, reaching 100% or nearly 100% in the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Lichtenstein. Conversely, Ireland, the United Kingdom and some southern European Member States show particularly low proportions of young people learning at least two foreign languages.

Over the two years for which data are available, the noticeable variations that have occurred have been decreases in Greece, Malta and Sweden.

The level of skills in foreign languages acquired by young Europeans is not yet being systematically measured across all EU countries. However, the first round of the European Survey on Language Competencies (ESLC) conducted in 2011 in 13 Member States shows wide variations exist across participating countries in the levels

Figure 3-E: EU Youth indicator: Share of young people in upper general secondary education (ISCED 3gen) learning two or more foreign languages, by country, 2010 and 2012



Notes: EU-28 totals are calculated on the basis of the countries for which data are available. Where possible the previous/following year data have been used to compute the EU aggregates. Germany: data are not available due to a derogation.

Source: Eurostat UOE [educ_ilang]

of proficiency demonstrated by 15-year-old students in reading, listening and writing in foreign languages⁽³¹⁾.

3.3. Non-formal education and youth work

Non-formal education and training covers any organised and sustained learning activities that do not take place within the framework of the formal education system⁽³²⁾. Non-formal learning is undertaken intentionally but participation in the courses or activities is voluntary⁽³³⁾. This type of learning experience usually addresses the needs of specific target groups such as adults wishing to re-enter education, employed or employment-seeking individuals active in the labour market in need of further qualifications, and young people trying

to improve specific skills in parallel or as an alternative to formal education.

As acknowledged by the Council of the European Union, non-formal learning can greatly contribute to increasing the motivation of young Europeans to undertake lifelong learning as well as improving their employability and job mobility, provided that mechanisms for recognising the skills acquired are widely available⁽³⁴⁾.

Indeed, non-formal learning can help release the potential of many young people by uncovering and developing their knowledge, skills and competencies and by encouraging the acquisition of new kinds of capacities. While these opportunities are important for all young people, they can be particularly beneficial to those who are at an educational disadvantage⁽³⁵⁾.

31 European Commission, 2012b. The European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC) was conducted for the first time in 2011 in Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden. In accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the survey tests 15-year-old students' abilities in their first and second foreign languages.

32 This definition is provided by Eurostat in the context of its lifelong learning statistics and is also applied in the EU LFS which collects data on participation in non-formal education and training during the four weeks preceding the survey.

33 Salto, 2005.

34 European Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01).

35 Council of Europe, 2005.

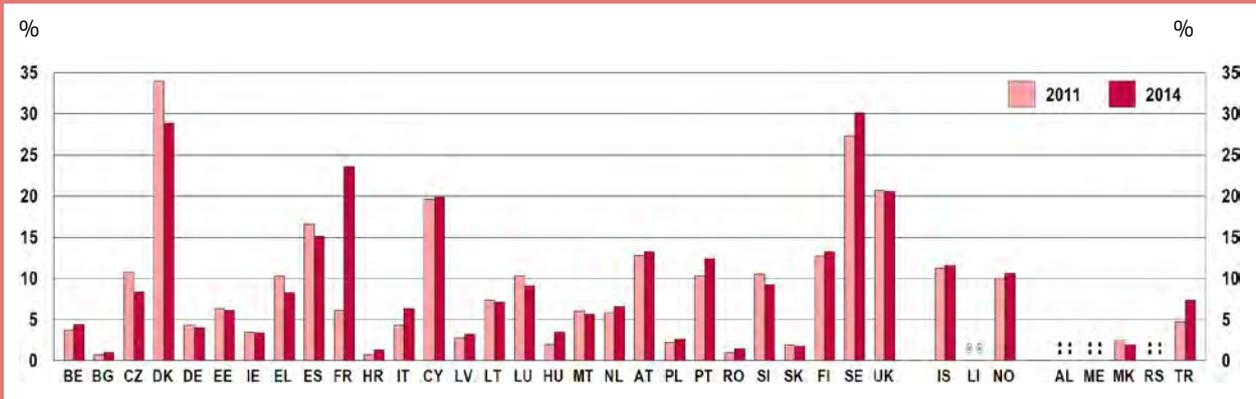
Countries differ greatly in terms of the share of young people involved in non-formal education (Figure 3-F). While at least one in five young individuals participate in non-formal education activities in Denmark, France, Cyprus, Sweden and the United Kingdom, other countries register much

European countries differ widely in the level of participation of young people in non-formal education and training.

lower percentages; in particular, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Overall, in individual European countries between 2011 and 2014 only minor variations occurred in the proportions of young people undertaking non-formal learning.

Figure 3-F: Share of young people (aged 15-29) participating in non-formal education and training, by country, 2011 and 2014

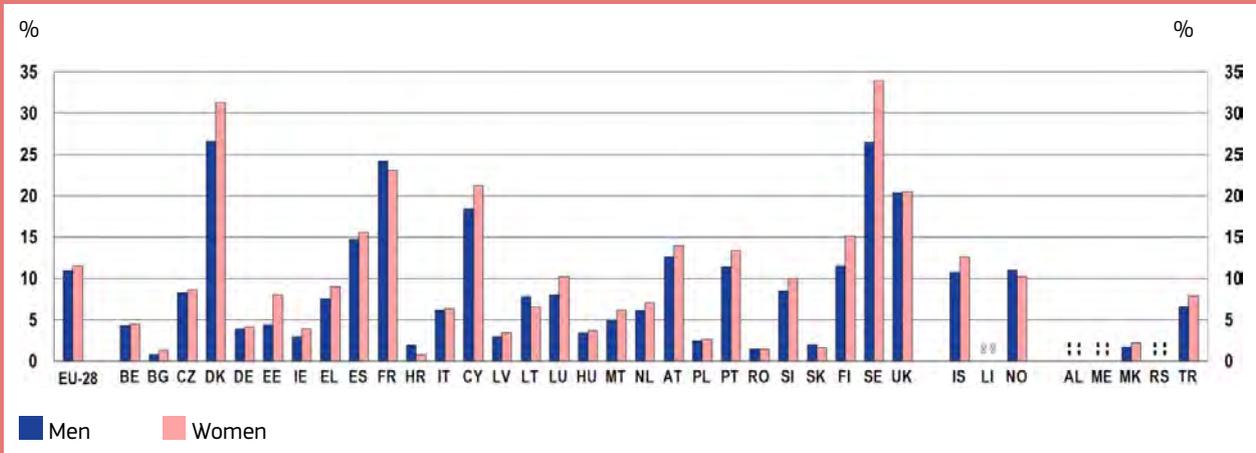
a) 2011 and 2014



Notes: the Czech Republic, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Turkey: breaks in time series in 2013 (2014 for Spain and Turkey) make data not comparable with those from 2011.

EU average: data are not shown due to a break in series in data collection (2013).

b) by sex, 2014



Notes: Data are not reliable for Bulgaria (men) and Croatia (both men and women).

Source: Eurostat LFS [trng_lfs_09]

As illustrated by Figure 3-F-b, the average share of young women and young men engaging in non-formal learning are very similar. Yet, in most countries, women tend to report somewhat higher rates of participation, with gender differences being the largest (more than 30 %) in Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland and Finland.

Non-formal learning might take place in the context of youth work. According to the Resolution of the Council of the EU on youth work from 2010, youth work encompasses activities for and by young people, taking place in the extracurricular and leisure areas, and based on voluntary participation. Such activities see the cooperation of professional and voluntary youth workers, youth leaders, and the active engagement and contribution of young participants⁽³⁶⁾.

Youth work has been shown to exert positive influence on student achievements in education by fostering non-cognitive skills such as persistence, motivation, and self-efficacy⁽³⁷⁾. In particular, young people at risk of dropping out prematurely from education and training may obtain support from youth workers, gaining access to learning resources and individualised assistance and becoming motivated to learn again through participation in the various activities organised for them⁽³⁸⁾. Some youth work programmes have also proven effective in bringing young people who have

left school early back into education by, for example, offering preparatory courses for re-insertion into mainstream education or second chance programmes⁽³⁹⁾.

Providing information, advice and guidance to support young people in their decision making during their education and training is another important aspect of youth work⁽⁴⁰⁾. Indeed, in some European countries, central authorities place guidance services for

students under the auspices of youth work organisations, delivered by nation-wide networks independent from schools⁽⁴¹⁾.

Because youth work is such a wide field encompassing voluntary leisure-time as well as extra-curricular activities, its contribution goes well beyond supporting young people in their educational experiences. Studies which have investigated the effects of young people's participation in youth work activities show that young people can acquire and reinforce personal skills such as conflict resolution, decision making, goal setting and interpersonal communication that can prove useful in all spheres of life⁽⁴²⁾. Although data on young people's participation in activities organised by youth workers is limited, Chapter 8 of this report provides some insight into the level of participation in organised voluntary activities (Figure 8-A) while Chapter 9 examines their involvement in youth organisations, cultural organisations and sports clubs (Figure 9-C).

By providing opportunities for non-formal learning, youth work contributes to the acquisition and enhancement of personal and learning skills that prove essential in promoting youth's education attainment.

36 Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council on youth work, Brussels, 18 and 19 November 2010.

37 Shernoff and Lowe Vandell, 2007.

38 European Commission, 2014h. The study offers a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the various traditions and developments of youth work in Europe. It presents both secondary analysis of previous literature and data on the topic, and first-hand evidence collected through interviews. Most of the information presented in this section draws from this study's findings.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

3.4. Learning mobility

Learning mobility is generally seen as contributing to the development of a wide range of skills and competences among young people. Most importantly, transversal skills such as language competences, communication, problem-solving, and intercultural understanding are found to be improved by study periods abroad⁽⁴³⁾. According to the Erasmus Impact Study, students participating in the Erasmus mobility programme improve their employability skills more than non-mobile students⁽⁴⁴⁾. In addition, student mobility programmes also have the potential to contribute to the overall quality of education⁽⁴⁵⁾.

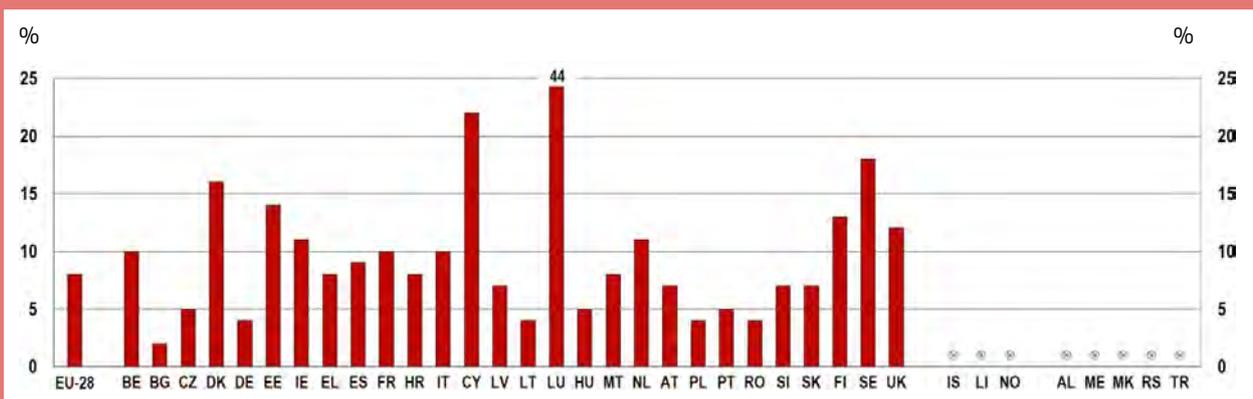
However, while mobility contributes to the skills development and labour market prospects of individuals, many do not have the possibility to experience learning mobility. First of all, most learning mobility occurs during higher education studies. While data on mobility outside higher education

settings are scarce, young people not entering tertiary education clearly have fewer opportunities for learning mobility. In addition, even among higher education students, disadvantaged students participate less in mobility programmes⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Figure 3-G depicts the proportion of people who, in a recent Eurobarometer survey, declared they had spent time abroad studying. The figure covers all respondents, thus not only young people, but nevertheless gives a useful overview on learning mobility in the different European countries across different age groups.

According to the Eurobarometer survey, in the EU-28 in general, the age group with the highest share of people who have studied abroad is the 25-39 age group (12 %), followed by the 40-54 year-olds (9 %)⁽⁴⁷⁾. In contrast, only 5 % of respondents over the age of 55 had experienced learning abroad⁽⁴⁸⁾. This indicates that learning mobility is increasing in Europe with each

Figure 3-G: Proportion of people who have spent time abroad (in another EU Member State or outside the EU) studying, by country, 2014



Notes: The question was: 'Have you ever spent time in another EU Member State or outside of the EU...? Studying'.

Base: all respondents, % by country

Source: Special Eurobarometer 417, European area of Skills and Qualifications, 2014

43 European Commission, 2014c.

44 Ibid, p.14.

45 Council of the European Union, 2011.

46 Hauschildt et al., 2015.

47 European Commission, 2014f.

48 Ibid.

generation. This trend would appear to be contradicted by the figures for the youngest age group (those aged 15-24), where only 9 % of respondents have studied abroad. However, since most young people undertake a period of learning abroad during their higher education studies, many respondents in this age group may not yet have had the opportunity to do so.

Today's young people participate in learning mobility more than older generations. However, differences across countries are substantial.

The country with the largest proportion of respondents that has spent time abroad studying is Luxembourg, where until 2003, when the first and only university was founded, everyone went abroad for higher education studies, and even today all higher education students have some experience of learning mobility. Luxembourg is followed by Cyprus, where the proportion of higher education graduates receiving their degrees abroad is also relatively high (see Figure 3-H). Besides these two countries, learning mobility is most widespread in northern European countries: Sweden, Denmark, Estonia and Finland, with 18 %, 16 %, 14 % and 13 % respectively. On the other hand, the survey indicates that people are the least mobile in Bulgaria, with only 2 % of respondents declaring they had spent time abroad studying.

Given that most learning mobility occurs during higher education studies, more specific data are available on the mobility of higher education students. There are two main types of learning mobility in higher education: credit mobility, which refers to a short period of study in another country when a student may earn credits towards their home-based degree programme; and degree mobility, where a student moves to

an institution abroad to take their entire degree course⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Figure 3-H depicts the latest Eurostudent survey data on temporary enrolments abroad (credit mobility) by higher education students. Among the countries with

available data, the Nordic countries – Finland (18 %), Norway (16 %), Sweden (13 %) and Denmark (12 %) – as well as Slovenia (12 %) stand out with the highest credit mobility rates in 2013/14. Conversely, credit mobility rates were the lowest (around 2 %) in Croatia, Slovakia and Serbia.

These data also illustrate that despite the benefits of learning mobility, the majority of higher education students did not report having spent time abroad. This is partly due to a selection bias, since the sample of the survey includes all higher education students, some of whom might not have reached the point in their study course when the opportunity to study abroad had arisen. Nevertheless, when asking about the intention to go abroad, data still show that in the majority of European countries, more than half of students do not even plan to study abroad, especially those from a lower socio-economic background⁽⁵⁰⁾. The most important obstacles to credit mobility, as indicated by the students not planning a study period abroad, are the additional financial burden (63 %), and the separation from partners, children and friends (47 %)⁽⁵¹⁾.

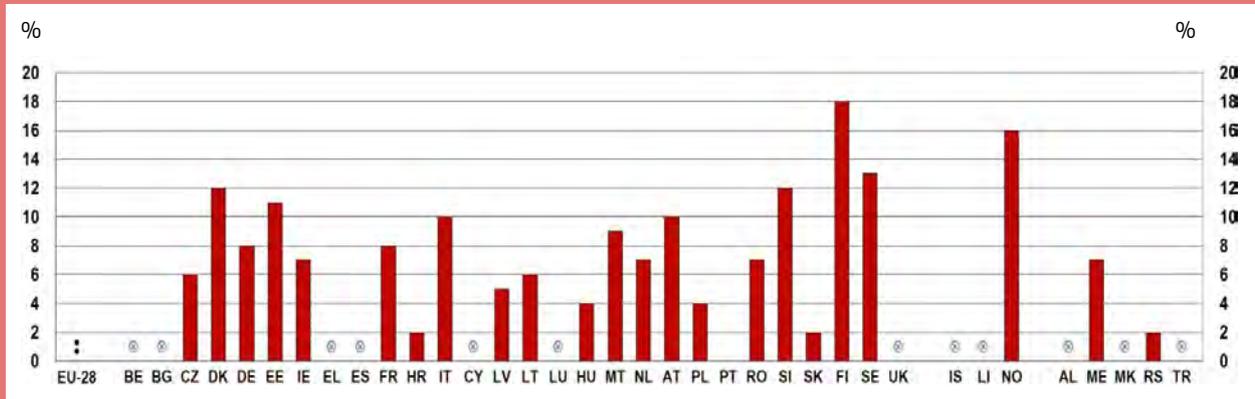
Public funding for learning mobility can reduce the additional financial burden students have to face when going abroad to study. In Europe, the most important source of funding is the Erasmus Student Mobility programme. In fact, most of the European

49 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013b.

50 Hauschildt et al. 2015, p. 193. Lower socio-economic background here refers to having parents with no higher education qualifications.

51 Ibid., p. 194.

Figure 3-H: Proportion of higher education students who have been temporarily enrolled abroad (credit mobility), 2013/14



Notes: EUROSTUDENT Question: 4.1 Have you been enrolled abroad as a student in higher education?

Data relate only to temporary international student mobility and therefore only take into account students who resume their studies in the country from which they came prior to their study period abroad.

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: Austria, Switzerland, Finland and France. Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: Germany and Italy.

Source: EUROSTUDENT V, K.1, K.16.

students undertaking short-term periods abroad to earn credits towards a home-based degree (credit mobility) do so through the Erasmus programme, especially in countries where national sources are less available⁽⁵²⁾. In the academic year 2012/13, 212 522 students participated in the programme, and the numbers have been growing each year⁽⁵³⁾. The largest numbers of participating students are from Spain, Germany, France, Italy and Turkey, though the relative share of students participating is the highest in Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Spain, Lithuania and Latvia⁽⁵⁴⁾. Interestingly, whilst credit mobility is highest in the Nordic countries, the relative proportion of Erasmus students in Denmark, Sweden and

Norway is among the lowest⁽⁵⁵⁾, pointing towards the availability of other sources of funding for these students.

Students who move to another country to take an entire degree programme (degree mobility), as depicted in Figure 3-I⁽⁵⁶⁾, mostly stay within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)⁽⁵⁷⁾. The majority of students from Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Cyprus study outside their country, but almost all of them within the EHEA. Besides these three small countries, degree mobility is the highest in Slovakia, Iceland and Malta, with more than 10 % of students studying abroad. At the other end of the scale, the proportion of students

52 Ibid., p. 198.

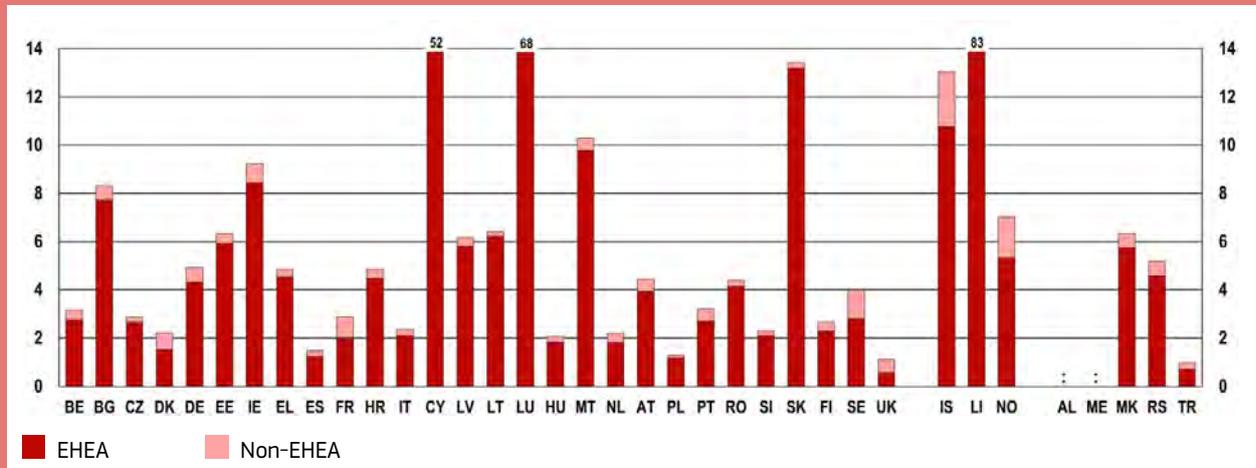
53 European Commission 2014c, p.8.

54 Ibid.

55 Hauschildt et al. 2015, p. 198.

56 Data presented here need to be treated with caution due to two main limitations. First, the list of destinations outside the EHEA is limited. Second, mobility data may rely on different criteria (i.e. citizenship, prior/permanent residence, prior education), which do not measure exactly the same phenomenon. For example, where data refers to foreign students instead of mobile students, it also includes non-national students who were already living in the country of destination before they began their higher education studies.

57 A more detailed analysis on degree mobility can be found in the latest Bologna Implementation Report (European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

Figure 3-1: Proportion of tertiary education students enrolled abroad (degree mobility), by country of origin, 2011/12

Notes: Destinations outside of the EHEA considered are Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco (reference year 2010), Oman (reference year 2011), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China – Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China – Macao Special Administrative Region (reference year 2011), Malaysia, Thailand, Israel, India, Ghana, Brazil, Chile, Korea, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States.

Japan: data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students.

Czech Republic, Greece, France, Italy, Finland, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and Serbia: data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students.

Source: European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice 2015, p. 236. Source: EUROSTUDENT V, K.1, K.16.

leaving their country to get a higher education degree is lowest (below 2 %) in Turkey, the United Kingdom and Spain.

Among the countries with comparable data, the countries with the highest relative share of mobile students studying outside the EHEA are the United Kingdom, where around half of all mobile students leave the EHEA; and Denmark and Sweden, where around one third do so. Looking at the share of mobile students going outside the EHEA within all (including non-mobile) students, more than 1 % of all students go abroad to study outside the EHEA in Cyprus, Sweden, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Iceland.

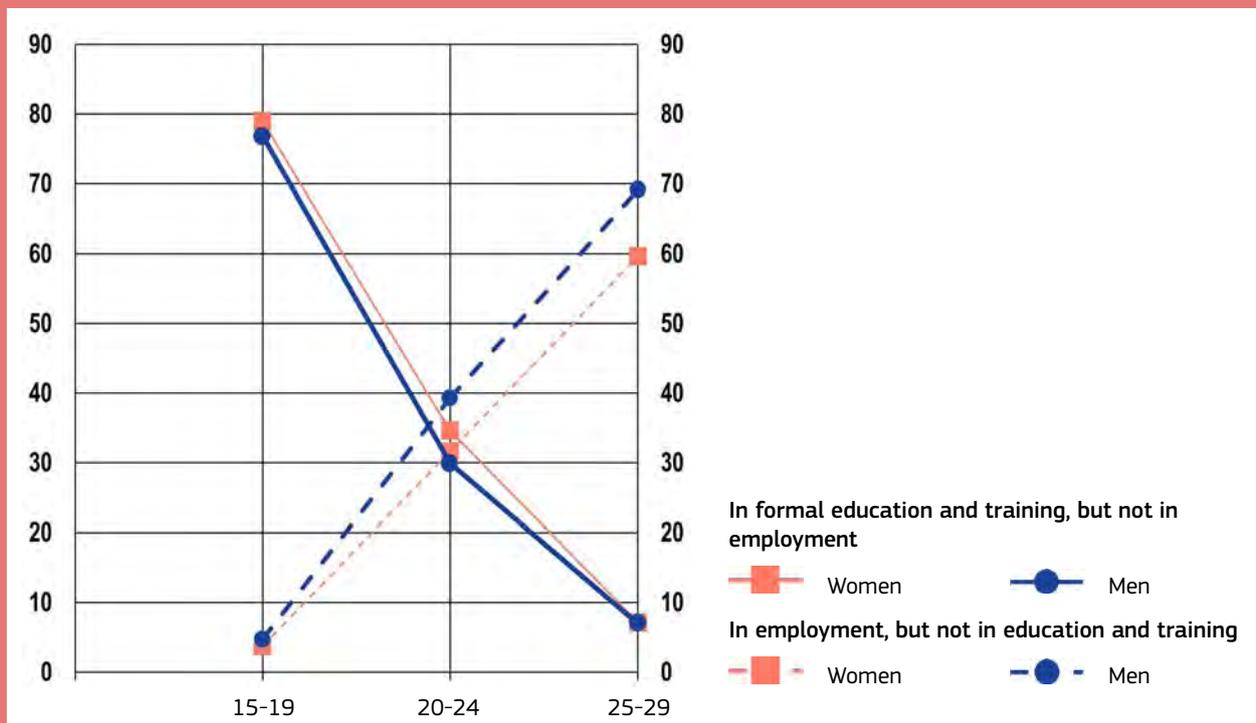
3.5. Transition from education to employment

Completing education and entering the labour market represents an important step in young people's lives. It is the time when the knowledge and skills learnt and aspirations developed during the years spent in education are put to the test, with the objective of gaining meaningful employment and financial independence. This transition has become increasingly complex and individualised for today's young people, as many of them move regularly in and out of work, often having part-time or temporary jobs, or even returning to education after a period of employment⁽⁵⁸⁾ (see also the chapter on Employment and Entrepreneurship).

For most young Europeans, the passage from education to employment occurs between the ages of 20 and 24 (Figure 3-J). During these ages, the share of young individuals in formal education is overtaken by the share in employment.

This transition occurs later for women than for men. The gender gap in this particular regard is a consequence of the higher percentage of women in the age group 20-24 who continue their studies and postpone joining the labour force without continuing their education.

Figure 3-J: Share of young people (aged 15-29) either in formal education or in employment (but not in both), by age group, EU-28 average, 2013



Source: Eurostat [edat_lfse_19]

The rates of participation in formal education amongst young people in the age of transition (20-24) have gradually increased since 2000, with a significant surge after the start of the economic crisis in 2008⁽⁵⁹⁾. Alongside this, the rate of employment for the same age group has progressively

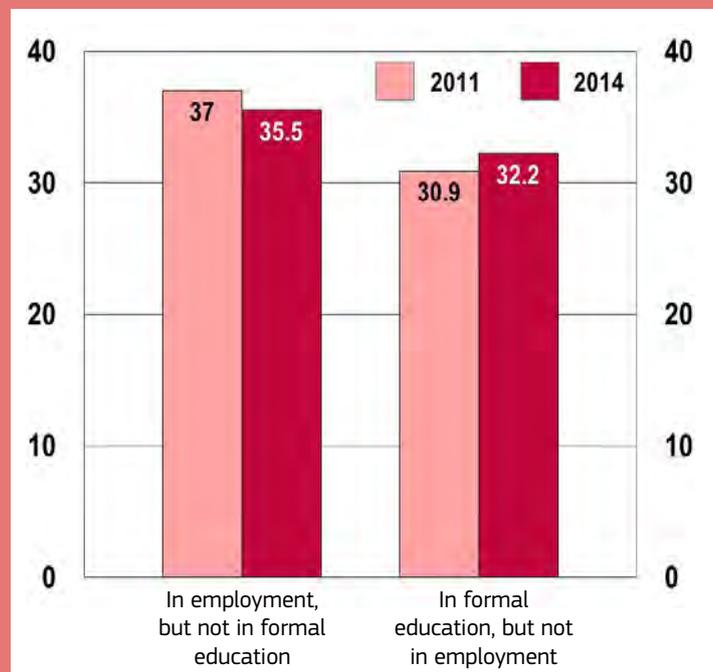
declined. These trends are confirmed between 2011 and 2014. As an increasing share of young Europeans aged 20 to 24 remains in education, a smaller portion enters the labour market without continuing their education (Figure 3-K).

Data presented in the chart indicate that the decrease in the proportion of young people solely in employment has been greater than the increase in the percentage

While the transition from education to employment continues to take place between 20 and 24 years of age for most young Europeans, the share of young people staying in education has increased since 2011.

of those solely in formal education. There is therefore a segment of the youth population aged 20-24 that appears to have left education without having been integrated into the labour force. The challenges encountered by young people experiencing unemployment, and by those who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) will be illustrated in the chapters on Employment and Social Inclusion respectively.

Figure 3-K: Share of young people (aged 20 to 24) either in formal education or in employment (but not in both), EU-28 average, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat [edat_ifse_19]

4 Youth employment and entrepreneurship

EU Youth Indicators

⇒ Unemployment rates among young people	Figures 4-D and 4-E
⇒ Long term youth unemployment rate	Figure 4-F
⇒ Unemployment ratio of young people	Figure 4-J
⇒ Young employees with a temporary contract	Figure 4-P
⇒ Young people who would like to set up their own business	Figure 4-S
⇒ Self-employed rate of young people	Figure 4-T

4.1. Introduction

The economic crisis in the European Union has dramatically changed the youth labour market to a degree that in almost all European countries, several years since the start of the crisis, young people are still facing unprecedented difficulties in finding a job. While youth unemployment was already quite high in 2011, during the following two years the situation deteriorated even further in most countries, with eleven of these registering their highest youth unemployment rate for the 15-24 age group either in 2012 or in 2013⁽⁶⁰⁾. The crisis has also had an important negative impact on young people aged between 25 and 29.

Analysing the situation of the 15-29 age group as a whole between 2011 and 2014, a significant contraction in employment is evident. Indeed, employment among those aged 15-29 decreased by more than 1.8 million, from 42.2 million in 2011 to 40.4 million in 2014⁽⁶¹⁾. In parallel, young people increased their participation in education and training (for more details see Chapter 3), and they are equally more likely to become

unemployed. In 2014, more than 8.5 million young people aged 15-29 were unemployed.

Moreover, an increasing percentage of young people in 2014 had only temporary, part-time work or other non-standard form of employment in comparison to 2011.

The aim of this chapter is to describe both the current situation of the youth labour market as well as the changes that took place between 2011 and 2014. The chapter focuses firstly on economically active young people; it then presents a deeper analysis of young people's position in the labour market; and finally it gives a brief overview of the support available to assist young people in making the transition from education to employment.

4.2. Economically active young people

The economically active population is broadly defined as those who are either in employment or unemployed⁽⁶²⁾. Figure 4-A shows the proportion of economically active

60 Eurofound 2014a, p. 4-5.

61 Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, online code: lfsa_egan and lfsa_uhan. Accessed on 28/04/2015.

62 According to the definition provided by the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and used by Eurostat for collecting data, the economically active population comprises employed and unemployed persons. Inactive persons are those who are classified neither as employed nor unemployed. Those 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) are not dealt with in this chapter. A full analysis of this very vulnerable group can be found in Chapter 5.

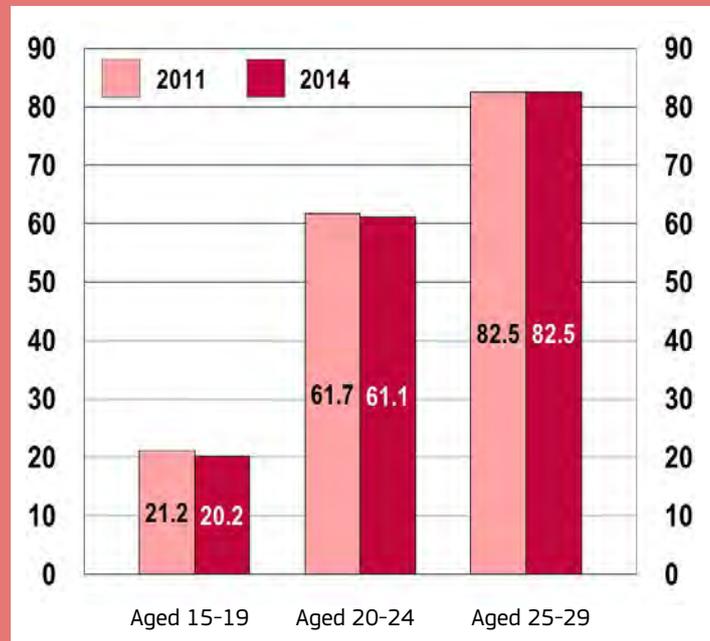
young people in the total population, in 2011 and 2014. During the last three years there has been little change for the older age groups (young people aged 20-24 and 25-29), while the youngest age group (those aged 15-19) recorded a small decrease.

During the period 2011-2014, activity rates among young people aged 20-24 and 25-29 remained stable

Young people aged 15 to 19 have always been the least active within the broader youth population, as most are still enrolled in education or training programmes. In 2011, just over one in five of those aged between 15 and 19 were economically active. The 2014 value shows a reduction of 4.7 % compared to 2011.

The EU-28 average hides some significant differences at country level (Figure 4-B-a). Indeed, in approximately a third of countries the youth population aged 15-19 show activity rates significantly above the EU average. The highest values are recorded in Denmark (51.4 %), the Netherlands (59.6 %) and Iceland (71 %). Moreover, in these three countries the 15-19 age group's activity rates are much closer to those of the other groups in the youth population, suggesting an earlier entry to the labour market than in the other countries.

Figure 4-A: Activity rates among young people (aged 15-29), EU-28 average, by age group, 2011 and 2014

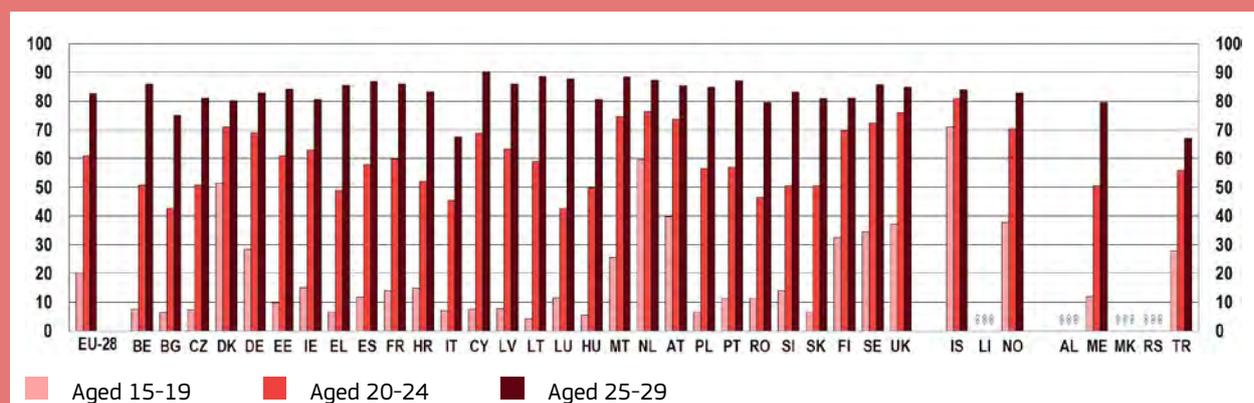


Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_argan]

Similar variations between countries are observed among young people aged 20-24. In 2014, the highest values are recorded in Iceland (80.9 %) and the Netherlands (76.2 %), while Bulgaria (42.8 %) and Luxembourg (42.5 %) show the lowest activity rates. The EU-28 activity rate is equal to 61.1 %.

As for the oldest age group (young people aged 25-29), the EU-28 activity rate is higher

Figure 4-B: a) Activity rates among young people (aged 15-29), by age group and by country, 2014



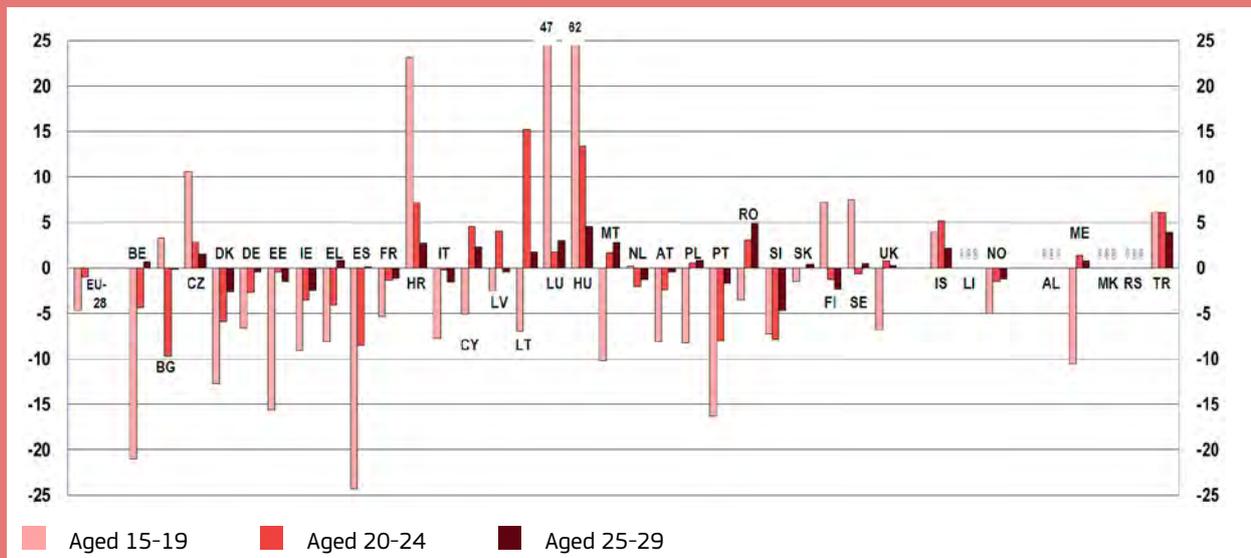
Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_argan]

than that of the previous group at 82.5 %. Cyprus (90.2 %) and Lithuania (88.7 %) are the countries with the highest activity rates. Conversely Italy (67.6 %) and Turkey (66.9 %) are those with the lowest values.

Figure 4-B (b) shows the relative changes in the activity rates over the period 2011-2014.

Few countries (Croatia, Luxembourg and Hungary) registered a significant increase in activity rate among young people (particularly those aged 15-19). Other countries, conversely, had a significant decrease (Belgium, Estonia, Spain, and Portugal).

Figure 4-B: b) Change in activity rates among young people (aged 15-29), by age group and by country, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_argan]

4.3. Challenges to young people in the labour market

4.3.1. Unemployment

As illustrated in the previous Youth Report of 2012, since the start of the financial and economic crisis in spring 2008 the increase in youth unemployment (in all the three age groups considered: 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29) has been significantly greater than for the older active population (aged 25-64). This situation is also confirmed for the period 2011-2014.

Unemployment rates among young people

The EU-28 unemployment rate among young people⁽⁶³⁾ in 2014 was 26.3 % for those aged 15-19, 20.6 % for those aged 20-24 and 13.6 % for the oldest age group (25-29).

It is worth noting that the unemployment rates among young people were already quite high in 2011. The rates then increased (Figure 4-C) during the period 2011-2014 for the two older age groups

63 The unemployment rate for a given age group expresses unemployed people in that age group as a percentage of the total labour force (both employed and unemployed).

An unemployed person is defined by Eurostat, in accordance with ILO guidelines, as someone aged 15 to 74 (or 16 to 74 in Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway) who is a) without work during the reference week; b) available to start work within the following two weeks (or has already found a job to start within the next three months), and c) who has actively sought employment at some time during the preceding four weeks.

(aged 20-24 and 25-29), while for the youngest group (15-19 year-olds), the change shows a moderate improvement (-1.9 %). For the two older age groups the change represents an increase of 4.0 % for young people aged 20-24, and of 7.9 % for those aged 25-29.

The high level of unemployment recorded for the 25-29 age group shows an increasing difficulty in entering the labour market for young people who have completed their education (or those who have reached the age where they are expected to have completed it).

The EU-28 unemployment rates among young people aged 20-24 and 25-29 registered a further increase during the period 2011-2014

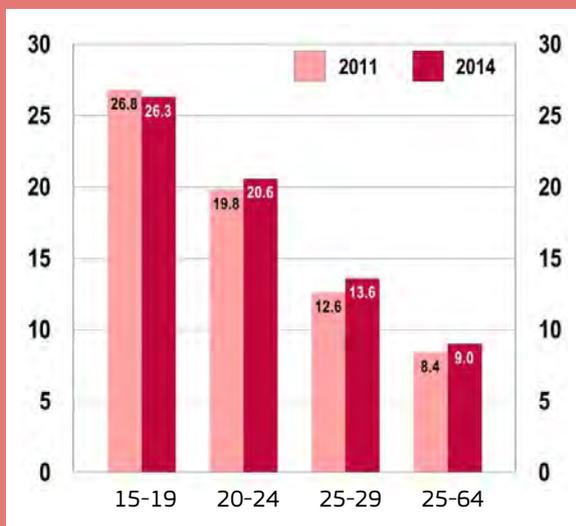
As indicated in the Education chapter, the rates of participation in full-time education amongst young people, in the age of transition from education to employment (ages 20-24), have gradually increased since 2000, with a significant surge after the start of the economic crisis in 2008. This change means that there is now greater homogeneity across the two lower age groups comprising young people from

age 15 through to 24. For this reason, and also to be in line with the indicator on youth unemployment on the EU youth dashboard, the analysis which follows will compare this wider group with the older age group of 25-29 year-olds.

From a gender perspective, over the period 2011-2014 at EU-28 level, the unemployment rates of men and women have followed similar trends (Figure 4-D). The unemployment rate for young men aged 15-24 increased by 3.2 % while for young women it increased by 1.9 %. For the older age group (young people aged 25-29) the increase was roughly 7 %. Rates rose for both age groups until 2013 (for men and women alike) and subsequently fell between 2013 and 2014.

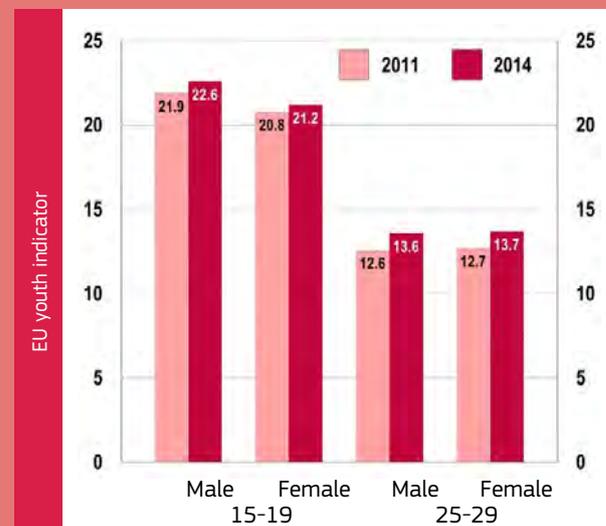
The fact that the crisis hit mainly male-dominated economic sectors (such as the construction sector) contributed to the higher youth unemployment rate amongst young men (particularly for the

Figure 4-C: Unemployment rates among young people (aged 15-29) compared to the 25-64 age group, EU-28 average, by age group, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_organ]

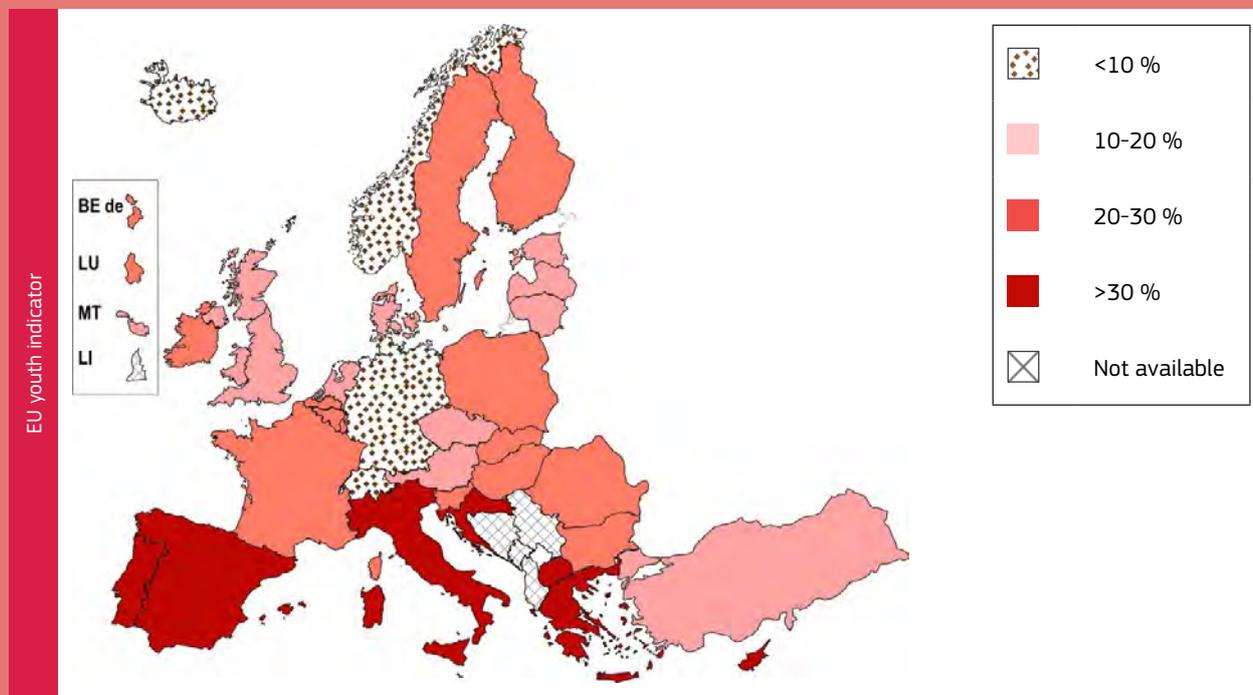
Figure 4-D: Unemployment rates for young people (aged 15-29), EU-28 average, by age group and by sex, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_organ]

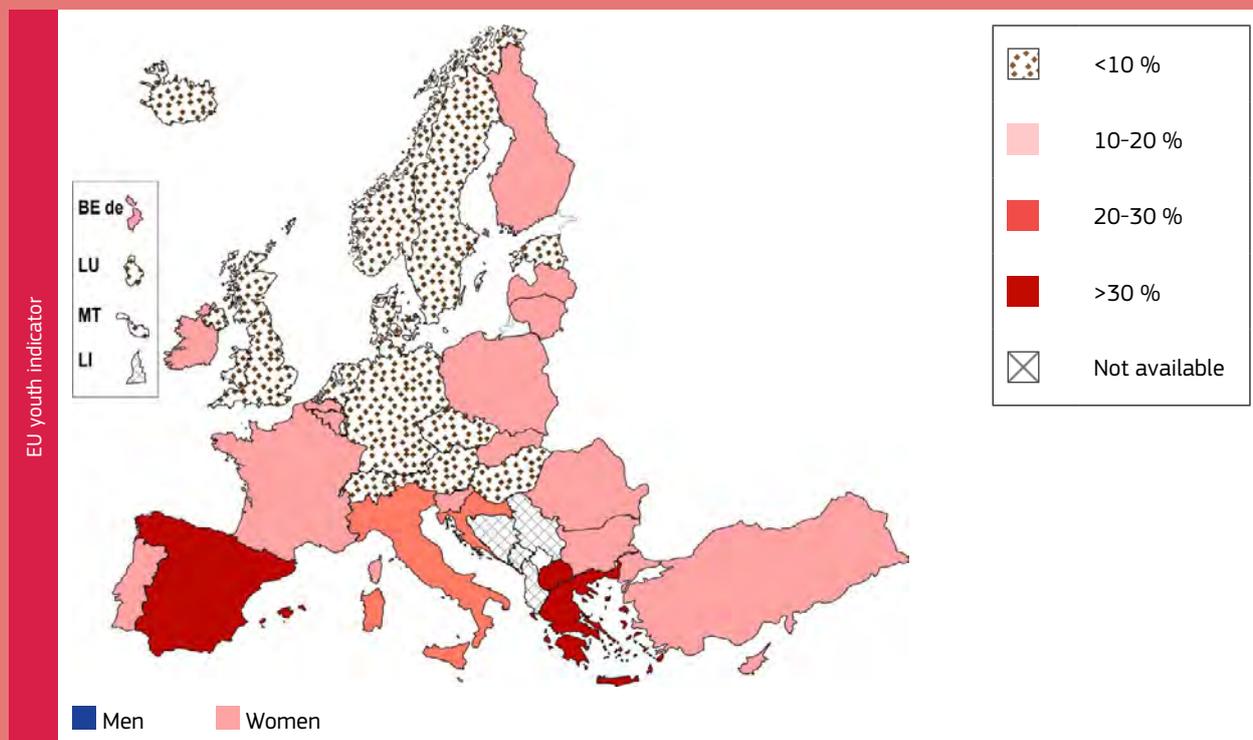
Figure 4-E: EU Youth Indicator: Unemployment rates for young people (aged 15-24 and 25-29), by country, 2014

a) 15-24 age group



Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_urgan]

b) 25-29 age group



Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_urgan]

15-24 age group). Accordingly, in 2014, the unemployment rate for young men aged 15-24 is slightly higher than that for young women in the same age group (22.6 % and 21.2 % respectively).

At country level, the situation differs considerably. Moreover, important differences exist between young people aged 15-24 and those aged 25-29 (Figure 4-E). On average, the unemployment rate for young people aged 25-29 was 9.8 percentage points lower than the value for young people aged 15-24.

The younger age group (those aged 15-24) is more affected by unemployment. For seven countries the unemployment rate for this age group is above 30 %. Among these countries, particularly high values are recorded in Greece and Spain, which in 2014 had youth unemployment rates for those aged 15-24 of 52.4 % and 53.2 % respectively. On the other hand, only three countries (Germany, Iceland, and Norway) had unemployment rates of below 10 % for young people aged 15-24.

As for the 25-29 age group, the unemployment rate exceeds 30 % in only three countries, Greece (40.8 %), Spain (30.3 %), and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (39.3 %). For thirteen countries the unemployment rate is below 10 %.

To better understand how the increases in unemployment rates registered in 2014 came about, it is necessary to examine the changes that occurred in the period immediately before, i.e. from 2011 onwards.

The most significant decrease in the unemployment rate among young people aged 15-24 between 2011 and 2014 is registered in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Iceland. Conversely, for seven countries (Belgium,

Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Slovenia) the change represented an increase of at least 24 %.

In Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy, particularly Cyprus, and Portugal, the youth unemployment rate for the 15-24 age group was already very high in 2011. In these countries the situation for young people deteriorated over the three-year period, although at a slower pace.

The trend for young people aged 25-29 indicates changes of a greater magnitude in many countries. In this age group, the greatest reductions occurred in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary, while the highest

increases were recorded in Greece, Italy, and Cyprus (+106 %). Large increases were also registered for Luxembourg and the Netherlands, but both countries had a very low unem-

ployment rate in 2011 (and this is still the case in 2014).

Despite the changes shown over the 2011-2014 period, it should be pointed out that 2013 represented a turning point for almost all countries. Indeed, 25 countries in 2014 recorded a lower unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 than in 2013 (apart from Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Romania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey). Similarly, 23 countries registered a lower unemployment rate in 2014 for the older age group (ages 25-29), in comparison with 2013.

Youth long-term unemployment

The employment situation for young people is further complicated by the phenomenon of long-term unemployment⁽⁶⁴⁾, which applies to an increasing proportion of young men and women.

In 2014, the youth long-term unemployment rate continued to be higher for young men (aged 15-24) than for young women in the same age group.

64 The long-term unemployment rate is the proportion of persons who have been unemployed for 12 months or more, in the total number of unemployed persons in the labour market.

The youth long-term unemployment rate differs between age groups (15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 years). The EU-28 average value for the youngest group (15-19 years) in 2014 was 5.8 %, corresponding to a 3.6 % increase in comparison with 2011 (5.6 %).

For young people aged 20-24, the long-term unemployment rate (EU-28 average) increased from 6.5 % in 2011 to 7.7 % in 2014 (+18.5 %). For the 25-29 age group, the increase was from 4.9 % in 2011 to 5.9 % in 2014 (+ 20.4 %). The following analysis of youth long-term unemployment focuses on the older age groups (20-24 and 25-29 years).

In 2011, in both age groups, the proportion of long-term unemployed young men was higher than for young women (see Figure 4-F).

The gender gap further increased over the three years in question. In 2011 the difference between unemployed young men and women was 1.2 percentage points for the 20-24 age group and 0.2 percentage points for the 25-29 age group; in 2014 these values were 1.4 and 0.5 percentage points respectively.

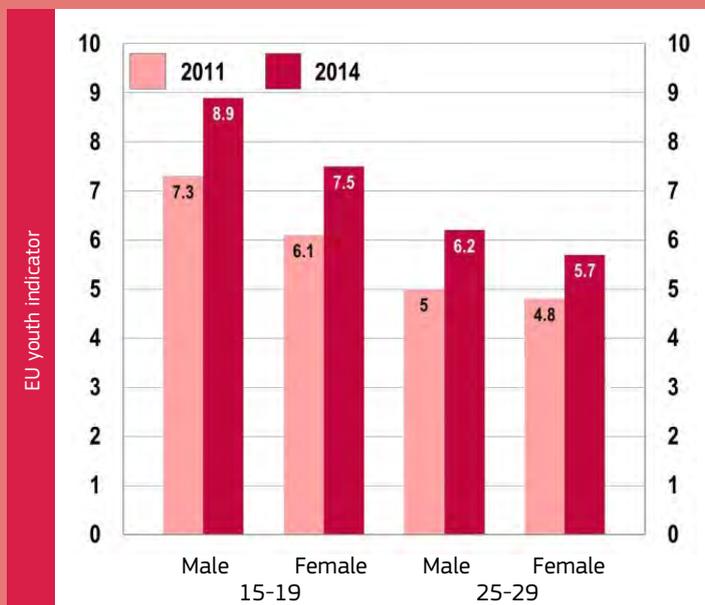
The EU-28 average conceals variations across Europe in relation to this indicator (see Figure 4-G). In the 20-24 age group, high rates of long-term unemployment were recorded in Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

From 2011, a dramatic increase was registered in Cyprus where the long-term youth unemployment rate for those aged 20-24 surged by 172.5 %. Greece, Italy and Portugal registered an increase equal to or higher than 70 %.

Young people aged between 25 and 29 have been particularly affected by long-term unemployment in Greece and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with values around 30 %. Since 2011, two-thirds of countries recorded an increase in long-term youth unemployment for this age group. The largest increases were registered in Greece (+86.8 %), Italy (+94.4 %), Cyprus (+313.6 %) and the Netherlands (+144.4 %).

On a positive note, significant reductions have been registered in the long-term unemployment rate of those aged 25-29 in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The three Baltic countries have markedly improved their labour market situation in the last three years, after several years of negative trends.

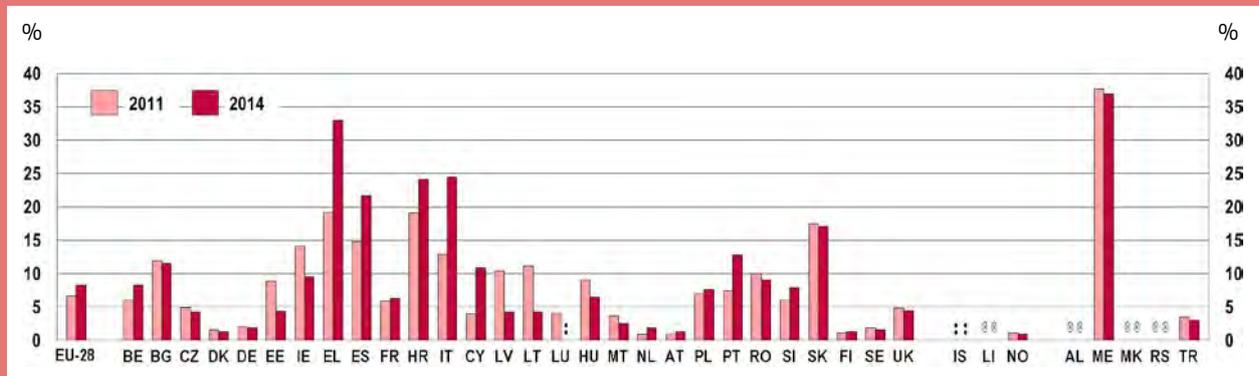
Figure 4-F: Long term youth unemployment rate, 20-24 and 25-29 age groups, EU-28 average, 2011 and 2014



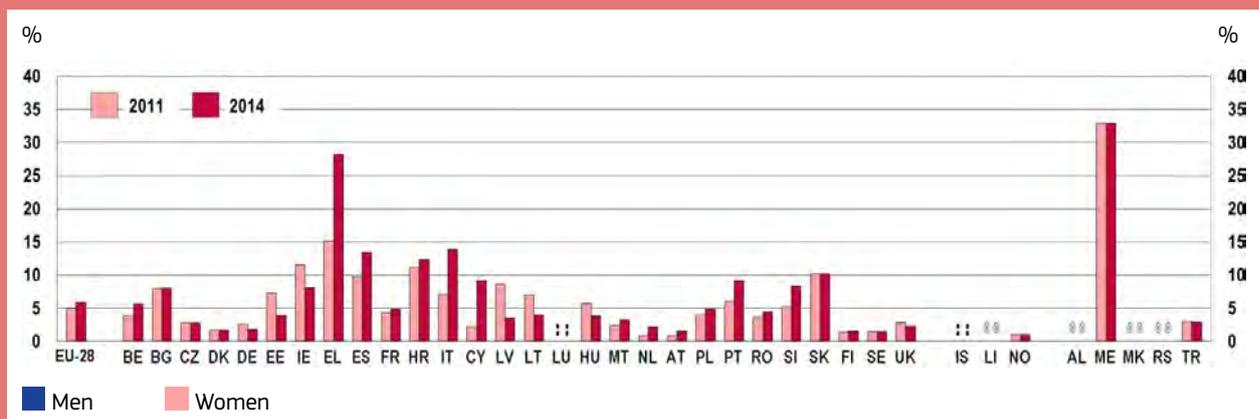
Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_120]

Figure 4-G: Long-term unemployment rates among young people (aged 20-24 and 25-29), by country, 2011 and 2014

a) 20-24 age group



b) 25-29 age group



Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_120]

Youth unemployment and educational attainment

The level of educational attainment is a relevant factor in young people's chances of success in finding work. Indeed, Figure 4-H suggests that the higher the education level completed, the lower the youth unemployment rate registered.

In 2014 the EU-28 average unemployment rate was 10.5 % among the active population aged 25 to 29 years who had completed tertiary

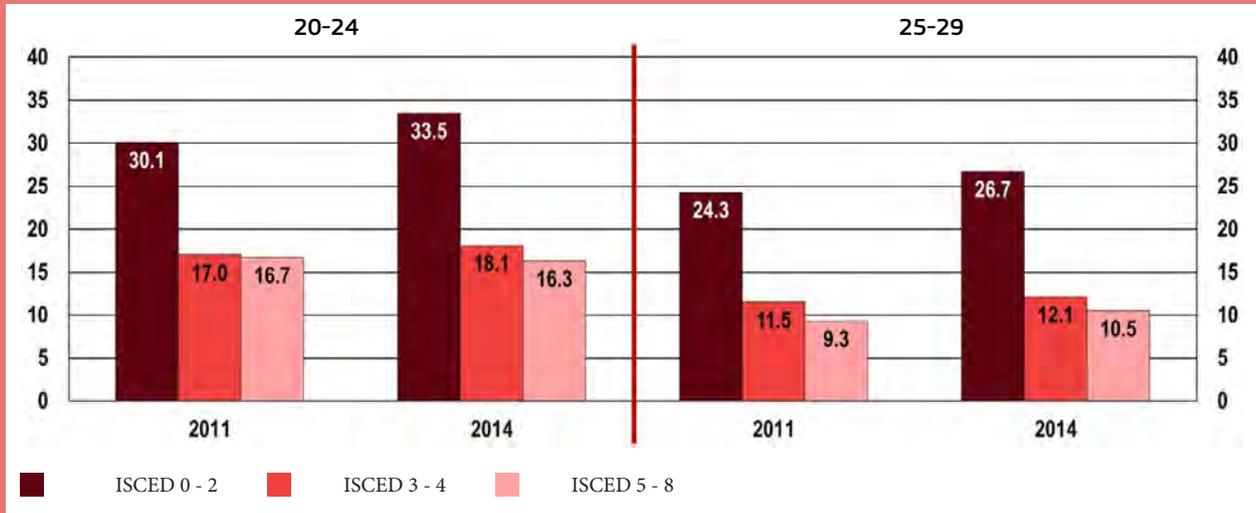
education (ISCED 5-8), and 12.1 % for those with only upper secondary education (ISCED 3-4). For young people aged 20-24, the youth unemployment rates are comparatively higher, but still show a stronger incidence of unemployment amongst those with a lower level of educational attainment.

The youth unemployment rate in 2014 across the EU-28 was much lower for young graduates from tertiary education than for those with the lowest levels of education.

However, from a comparative perspective, between 2011 and 2014 the EU-28 average unemployment rate

increased most amongst those young people (aged 25-29) who had completed tertiary education (+12.9 %).

Figure 4-H: Youth unemployment rate by the highest educational level attained, 20-24 and 25-29 age groups, EU-28 average, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_120]

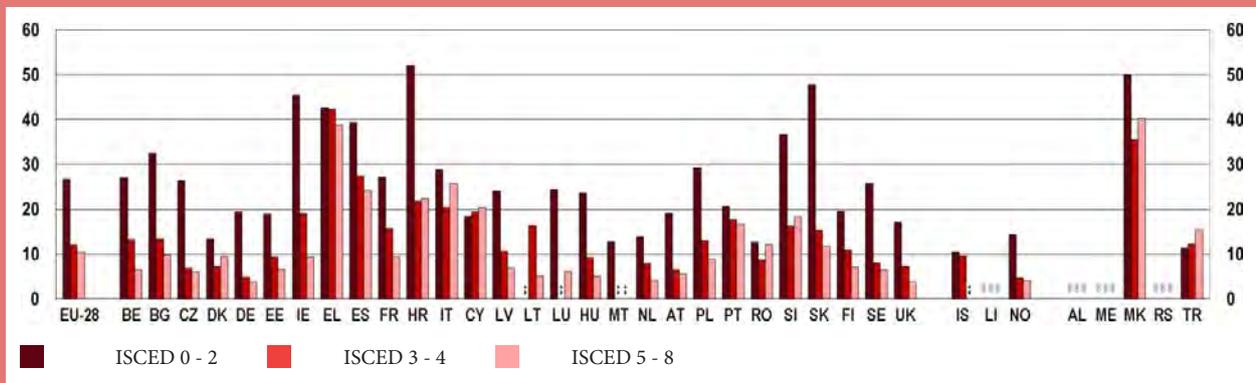
For data on educational attainment based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 (ISCED 2011) is applied as from 2014. Up to 2013 ISCED 1997 is used.

For details see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1014465/6636845/EN-Implementation-ISCED2011.pdf>

Indeed, the economic crisis has affected young people attaining higher education too, especially in some European countries. Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, and outside the EU, the former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have the highest youth unemployment rates among 25-29 year-olds with an ISCED 5-8 qualification (from 20.1 % for Portugal to 42.4 % for Greece) (Figure 4-I-a).

Figure 4-I-a: Unemployment rate for the 25-29 age group according to the highest educational level attained, by country, 2014

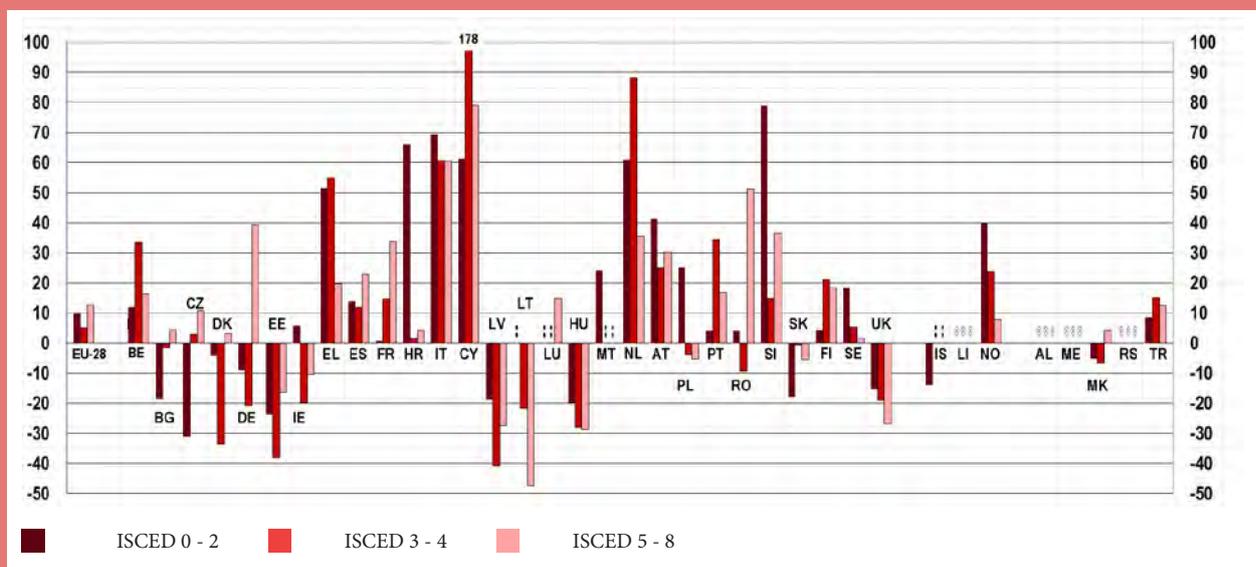


Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_090]

Moreover, the economic crisis has created a difficult challenge for young graduates in many countries: they often find themselves overqualified for the opportunities available in the labour market⁽⁶⁵⁾. This is grasped by Figure 4-I-b, showing the percentage changes in youth unemployment (young people aged 25-29) by education

level. What emerges is that in a third of countries between 2011 and 2014, the youth unemployment rate increased more for those with a higher level of attainment (ISCED 5-8) than for those with a lower level (ISCED 0-2) (see also Section 4.4.1 which is devoted to the skills mismatch).

Figure 4-I-b: Changes in the youth unemployment rate of young people aged 25-29, by education level and by country, 2011 and 2014



Note: For Cyprus end of the bar for ISCED 3-4 is not shown in the graph. The value is equal to 178.6 %.

Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_090]

The largest increase for young people with low educational attainment (ISCED 0-2) is registered in Slovenia (79 %), while Cyprus has seen its youth unemployment rate for young people aged 25-29 increase more than in any other country over the period 2011-2014. The changes account for an increase of 178.6 % for young people with educational attainment at ISCED level 3-4 and 78.9 % for the more highly educated at ISCED level 5-8.

Youth unemployment ratios in the EU are much lower than youth unemployment rates; they have, however, also risen since 2008 due to the effects of the crisis on the labour market.

Youth unemployment ratio

High youth unemployment rates reflect the difficulties faced by young people in finding jobs. However, many young people – in particular in the 15-24 age group – are still studying full-time and are therefore neither working nor looking for a job. In other words, they are economically inactive and not part of the total labour force figure which is used as

the denominator for calculating the unemployment rate. For this reason, the youth unemployment ratio, which is an EU dashboard youth indicator, is used to show the proportion of unemployed youth in relation to the total youth population (employed, unemployed and inactive).

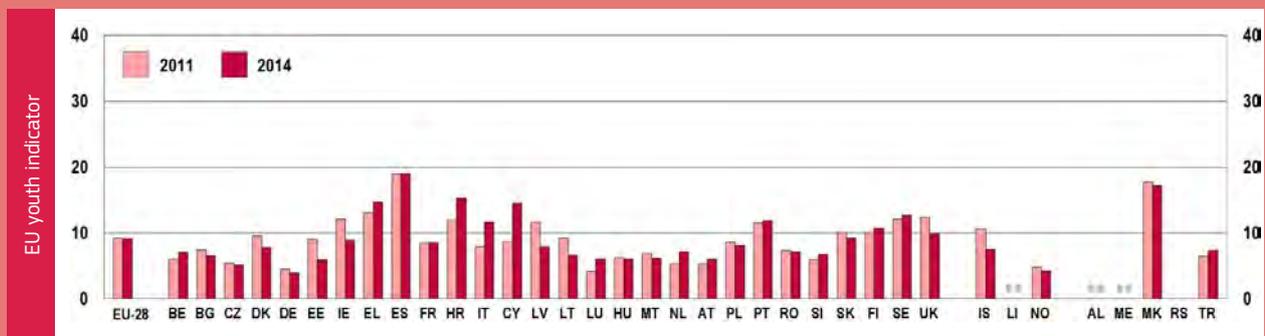
Figure 4-J shows the unemployment ratios for the 15-24 and 25-29 age groups in European countries in 2011 and 2014. Although the youth unemployment ratios are by definition much lower than youth unemployment rates, as they include economically inactive youth, they have, however, also risen since 2008 due to the effects of the crisis on the labour market⁽⁶⁶⁾. A positive sign is, however, represented by the decrease (-8 %) in the EU-28 youth unemployment ratio registered between 2013 and 2014. This is the case for 26 countries,

while only five countries recorded a further increase. The data analysis reveals how the situation in Europe differs greatly from one country to another.

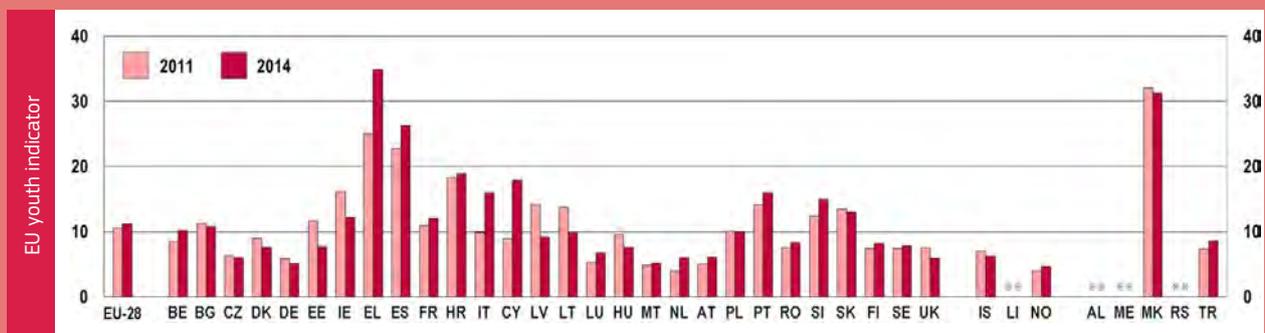
In a few countries, unemployment affects only a small minority of the 15-24 age group, with ratios below or close to 6%. This is true for the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, and Norway. The dual education system in some of these countries, which combines courses at school with company apprenticeships, helps to account for the low unemployment ratios among those aged between 15 and 24. At the other end of the spectrum, Spain continues to have the highest proportion of jobless young people in the 15-24 population (19%), followed by eleven countries in which the unemployment ratio is above the EU-28 average of 9.1%.

Figure 4-J: EU youth indicator: unemployment ratio of young people (aged 15-29), by age and by country, 2011 and 2014

a) age 15-24



b) age 25-29



Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_140]

66 See Eurostat, Unemployment statistics: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics (accessed on 05/03/2015).

Over the period 2011-2014, the situation has considerably worsened in Croatia (+28.6 %), Italy (+46.8 %), Cyprus (+66.7 %), Luxembourg (+42.9 %) and the Netherlands (+45.3 %). However, despite the recent increase, in Luxembourg and the Netherlands, youth unemployment ratios continue to be relatively low (below 7.1 %).

The unemployment ratio for young people aged 25-29 (Figure 4-J-b) in 2014 was higher than that recorded for those aged 15-24 in two-thirds of countries. The highest values in 2014 are registered in Greece (34.9 %) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (31.3 %). Norway (4.7 %) and Germany (5.1 %) are the countries with the lowest youth unemployment ratio for the 25-29 age group.

From a comparative perspective, the situation during the period 2011-2014 worsened particularly in Greece (+39.6 %), Italy (+60.6 %), Cyprus (+101.1 %) and the Netherlands (+50.0 %).

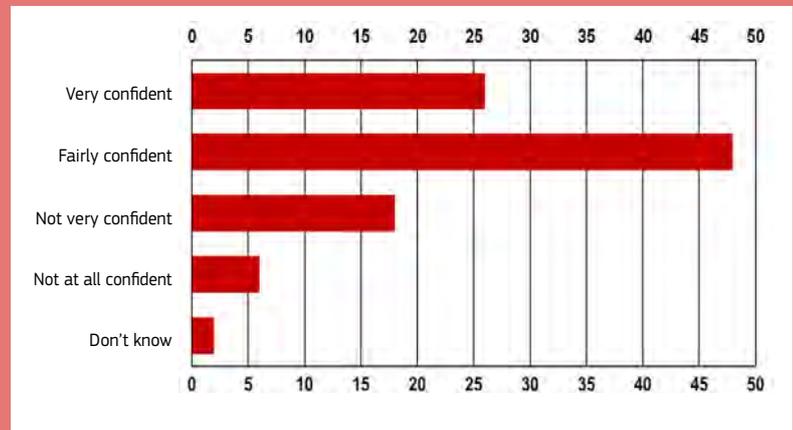
A comparison between unemployment rates and ratios indicates a very difficult situation in Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus and Portugal. Jobless young people in these countries constitute a relatively high proportion of both the entire labour force and the 15 to 24 age group.

One young European in four is not confident that they be able to find a job when they finish education

Young people's confidence in finding a job

This difficult youth labour market situation is well known by young people of different age groups and it has an impact on their confidence in finding a job once they have finished their education. A recent Eurobarometer⁽⁶⁷⁾ survey addressed also this issue (Figure 4-K). One respondent in four (24 % of the total participants) expressed

Figure 4-K: Young people's confidence in finding a job after finishing education, age group 15-29, EU 28 average, 2014



Notes: The question was 'How confident are you that you will find a job after finishing education?' Base: all respondents. Very confident; Fairly confident; Not very confident; Not at all confident; Don't know; Total 'Confident'; Total 'Not confident'.

Source: 2015 Flash Eurobarometer 408 – 'European Youth'.

concerns about finding a job after finishing their education (18 % 'Not very confident' and 6 % 'Not at all confident').

When looking at country variations, those most affected by the current economic crisis have a relatively high percentage of respondents feeling 'not confident' in finding a job after finishing education. This is the case in Greece (67 %), Spain (61 %), Cyprus (48 %), and to a lesser extent, Italy (35 %). The highest percentages of people feeling 'very confident' are recorded in countries with very low youth unemployment rates. High levels of confidence are also registered in Estonia (40 %) and Latvia (40 %), two countries that had a severe crisis in 2010 but which have implemented important measures since⁽⁶⁸⁾.

An additional question in the Eurobarometer⁽⁶⁹⁾ (Figure 4-L) focused on the main

67 European Commission, 2015b.

68 European Commission, 2013a.

69 European Commission, 2015b.

concerns young people have when thinking about getting a job. For one respondent in three (31 %), 'not finding a long term contract or a stable job' is not among their main concerns. This response seems justified considering the increasing number of temporary contracts offered to young people in Europe in recent years (see Figure 4-P) as well as the high percentage of young people working on a part-time basis (see Figure 4-M and Figure 4-N).

The part-time employment rate among young people aged 15-24 increased almost everywhere during the period 2011-2014

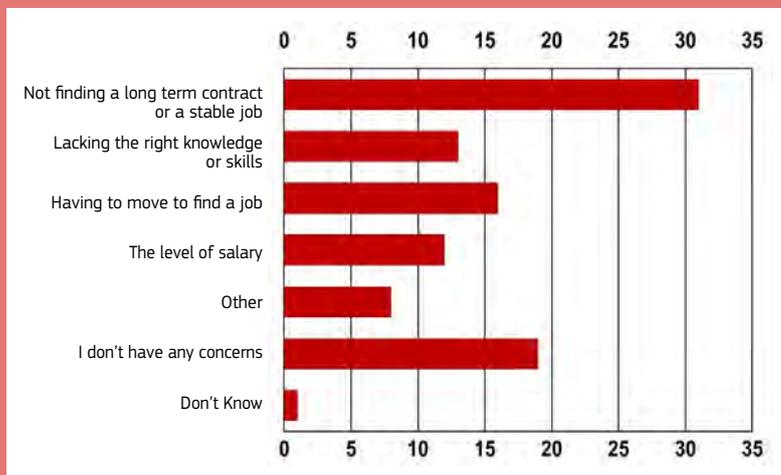
Only 13 % of respondents considered 'lacking the right knowledge or skills' as an issue, while 16 % saw 'having to move to find a job' as a potential problem.

4.3.2. Working patterns of young employees

Young people are more likely to be employed on a temporary contract or on a part-time basis than older workers. Young people in Europe also tend to register higher rates of jobs with atypical and unusual schedules, including shifts and weekend or night-time work⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Working patterns among young people in Europe have been directly affected by the crisis⁽⁷¹⁾. As a consequence, more young Europeans might begin their employment career with a traineeship or by taking on part-time or temporary employment contracts interrupted by periods of unemployment or further education and training, thereby moving frequently in and out of the labour market.

Figure 4-L: Young people's main concerns when thinking about getting a job, age group 15-29, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: The question was 'What would be your concerns when you think about getting a job? Firstly (main reason)? Base: respondents who are still studying. Not finding a long term contract or a stable job; Lacking the right knowledge or skills; Having to move to find a job; The level of salary; Other; I don't have any concerns; Don't know.

Source: 2015 Flash Eurobarometer 408 – 'European Youth'.

Part-time employment among young people

One characteristic of part-time contracts is that it allows young people to combine employment and education. The most recent Eurostat data for 2014 confirm the increasing trend registered over recent years in the proportion of the 15-24 age group working on a part-time basis⁽⁷²⁾.

In 2014, nearly one in three 15- to 24-year-olds in employment worked part-time (Figure 4-M). Huge differences exist between countries. Denmark, Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway, and Iceland are the countries where part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment

70 Eurofound, 2013a.

71 Ibid.

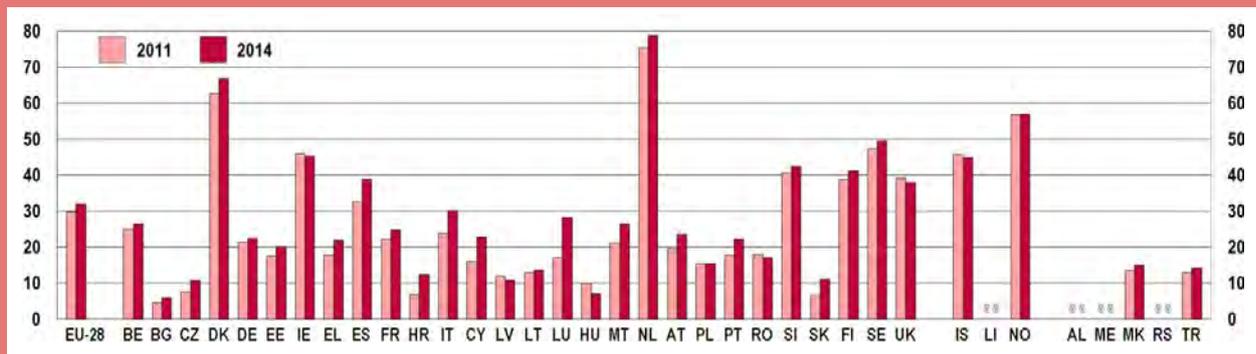
72 As explained when defining full-time employment, the distinction between full- and part-time work is based on a spontaneous response by the respondent (except in the Netherlands, Iceland and Norway where part-time is used if the usual hours are fewer than 35 hours, and full-time if the usual hours are 35 hours or more; and in Sweden where this criterion is applied to the self-employed). It is not possible to establish a more precise distinction between full-time and part-time employment, since working hours differ between Member States and between branches of activity.

for young people is higher than the EU-28 average (31.9 %). Conversely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Hungary have the lowest part-time employment rates for this group.

Similar patterns are also recorded for young people aged 25-29. Denmark and

the Netherlands register the highest rates, while Bulgaria and Slovakia have the lowest. As a general rule, the part-time employment rate of those aged 25-29, for which the EU-28 average is 17.0 %, is between two and three times lower than for younger people aged 15-24 (EU-28 average 31.9 %).

Figure 4-M: Part-time employment rates for the 15-24 age group, by country, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [lyth_empl_060]

Between 2011 and 2014, the part-time employment rate among young people aged 15-24 increased almost everywhere. In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Luxembourg, and Slovakia the increase was higher than 30 %.

In reading these data, it is important to bear in mind that part-time work among young people may imply apprenticeship either in the context of a vocational education programme or directly with an employer. Other reasons for choosing part-time work relate to the possibility of combining work and studies, and to accommodate family needs. In many cases, however, part time work is not a deliberate choice for young people.

Indeed, many young people work part-time because they cannot find full-time employment. Figure 4-N shows the high rates of involuntary part-time employment among the 15-24 and 25-29 age groups in several European countries.

In Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus and Romania, at least one in two young people

aged under 25 worked part-time because they had no other choice. In these countries, involuntary part-time work increased by at least 13 % from 2011 to 2014. Significant reductions were, conversely, registered in the Czech Republic, Germany, Malta and Iceland.

Involuntary part-time employment is higher among people aged 25-29 in all countries. The highest values are recorded in Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Spain, where two in three part-time workers aged 25-29 may be considered as being in involuntary part-time work.

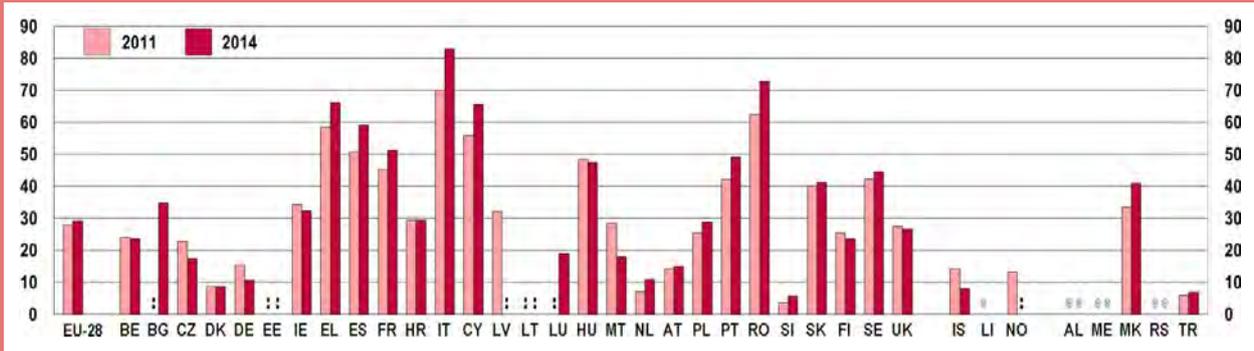
By reading together Figure 4-M and Figure 4-N, it appears evident that for some countries, which record by far the highest share of part-time workers (namely Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway), this is not really an issue, because working part-time is a choice.

For the first time since 2011, more young men were in involuntary part-time work in 2014 than young women (Figure 4-O). The largest differences between young men

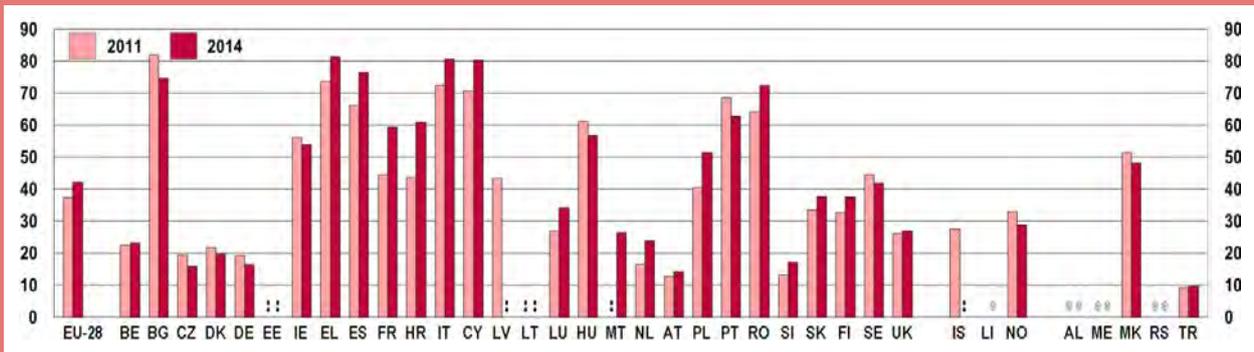
and women are registered in Romania, France, the Netherlands and Finland, young women have a higher involuntary part-time work rate than men.

Figure 4-N: Involuntary part-time employment as a percentage of total part-time employment for young people (15-29), by age and by country, 2011 and 2014

a) 15-24 age group



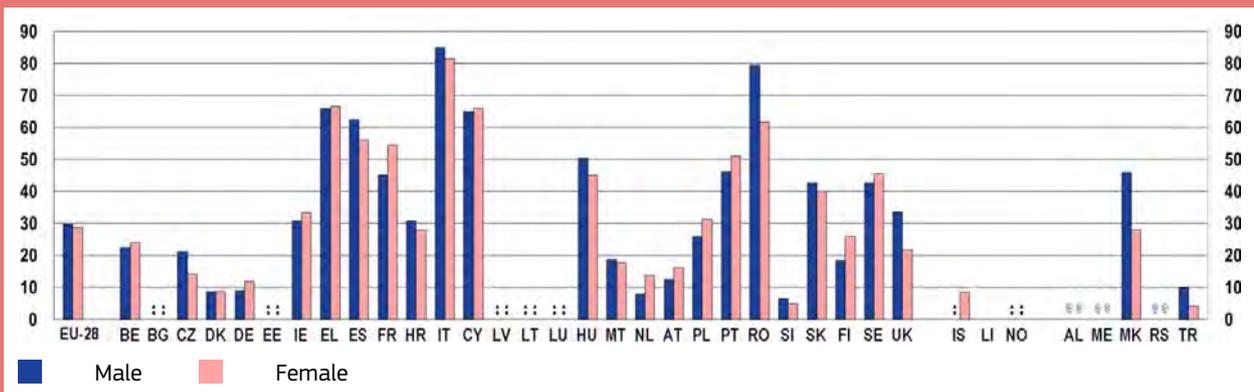
b) 25-29 age group



Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_080]

Notes: For Bulgaria, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Sweden, Iceland and Norway data have low reliability.

Figure 4-O: Involuntary part-time employment as a percentage of total part-time employment for young people (aged 15-24), by country and by sex, in 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_080]

Temporary contracts for young people

Another characteristic of the youth labour market is the high percentage of temporary contracts⁽⁷³⁾ in comparison to other age categories. Temporary employment can be an important step in the transition from education into the labour market⁽⁷⁴⁾. It gives young people work experience and makes it easier to enter the labour market, and it provides stepping-stones to permanent jobs. Temporary employment also gives employers an opportunity to assess young people's suitability and capacity to perform the tasks required.

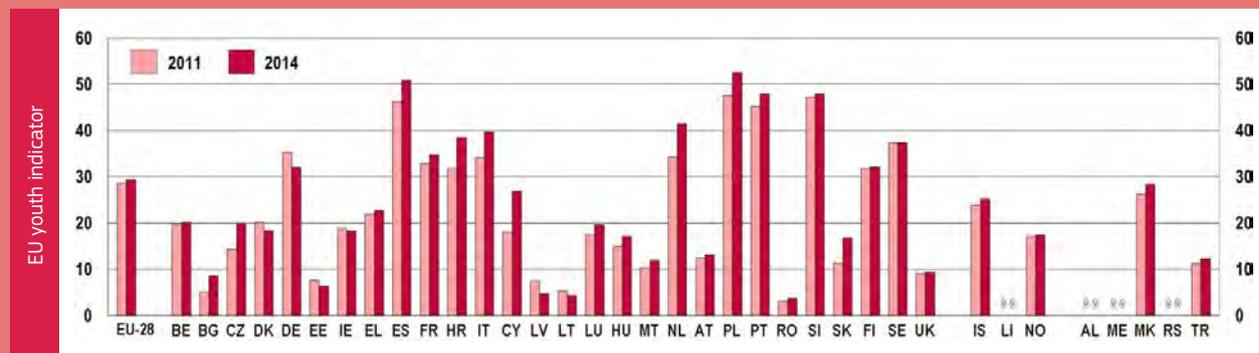
However, relatively high rates of temporary employment among young people can also be seen as an indication of career insecurity. Where this is the case, young people may lack the stability needed to allow them to live independently. They can be trapped in a cycle of alternating periods of temporary employment and unemployment, which

may adversely affect their status into their thirties and beyond.

After having remained stable over the period 2011 and 2013, the percentage of young people aged 20-29 in temporary employment increased in 2014 (+2.4 % in comparison to 2011). Despite the relatively small change at EU level, at country level, some marked differences exist. Indeed, over the period 2011-2014, Bulgaria (+68.6 %), Cyprus (+48.9 %) and Slovakia (+48.7 %) registered the highest increases. At the other end of the spectrum, Estonia (-18.2 %) and Latvia (-36.5 %) recorded the most significant falls.

In 2014 (Figure 4-P), Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden had a very high percentage of young people aged 20-29 working under temporary contract (more than 30 %).

Figure 4-P: EU Youth Indicator: Young employees aged 20-29 with a temporary contract as a percentage of total number employees, by country, 2011 and 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_050]

73 A temporary contract is a fixed-term contract which will terminate if certain objective criteria are met such as the completion of an assignment or the return of the employee who has been temporarily replaced (Eurostat).

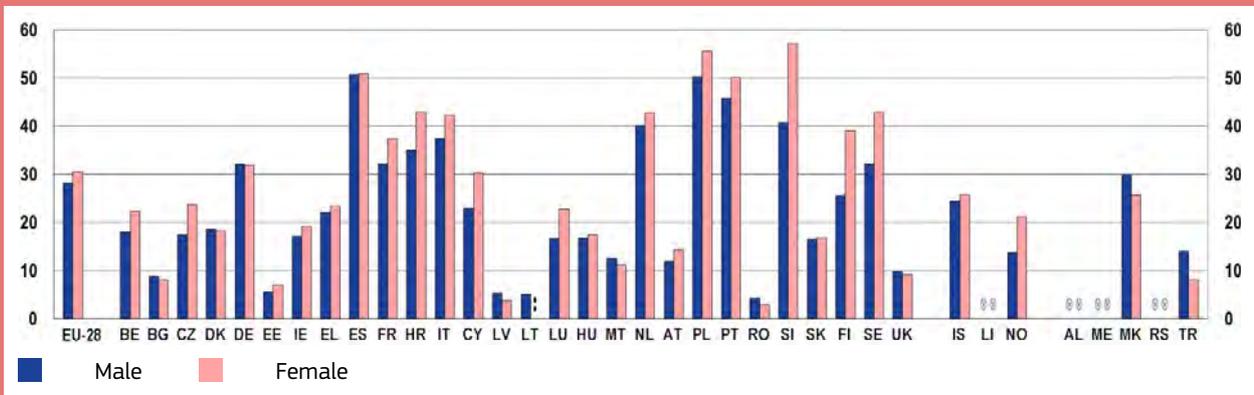
74 Eurofound, 2013b.

From a gender perspective, the difference at the EU-28 level between the rate of young women and young men aged 20-29 with temporary contracts is not large (Figure 4-Q). However, more significant differences

The difference at EU-28 level for young men and women aged 20-29 with temporary contracts is small.

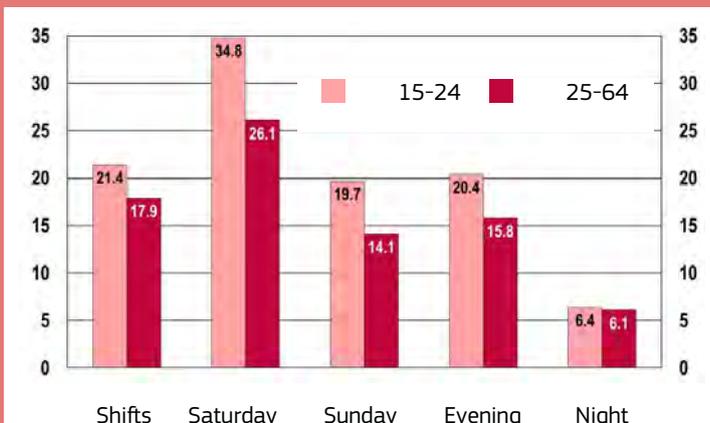
exist in some countries, and in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden, and Norway, young women have a higher percentage of temporary employment than young men.

Figure 4-Q: Young employees aged 20-29 with a temporary contract as a percentage of total number employees, by country and by sex, 2014



Source : Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_050]

Figure 4-R: Share of employees working atypical and asocial working hours, EU-28 average, by age, 2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [lfsa_ewpshi] [lfsa_ewpsat] [lfsa_ewpsun] [lfsa_ewpeve] [lfsa_ewpnig]

Atypical working hours for young people

In 2014, the proportion of employed young people in the 15 to 24 age group which had atypical working hours was much higher than for those aged 25-64. This was particularly true in the case of Saturday working (Figure 4-R).

There are important variations in these trends from one EU country to the next, in particular for shift work and working on public holidays. The countries where the largest proportions of young employees are doing shift work (over 40 %) are recorded in the Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia, and, outside the EU, in Iceland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Conversely, in Belgium, and

Denmark, the corresponding proportion was below 10 %.

As for working on Saturdays, the highest percentages (over 50 %) are recorded in Ireland, Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Conversely, the lowest value is recorded in Portugal, where less than one young employee in ten (9.1 %) worked on Saturday.

4.3.3. Young entrepreneurs

Young people can be confronted with significant barriers in their efforts to turn ideas into projects. Such barriers often comprise social attitudes, lack of skills, inadequate entrepreneurship education, lack of work experience, insufficient capitalisation, lack of networks, and market obstacles⁽⁷⁵⁾.

Furthermore, a recent Eurobarometer survey⁽⁷⁶⁾ notes that for many young

Europeans entrepreneurship does not constitute a possible response to the jobs crisis. Indeed (Figure 4-5), more than half of the respondents declared having no wish to start their own business (52 %). Just one in five (22 %) would like to start a business but considered it too difficult.

Only a quarter of young Europeans are more proactive about starting a business (5 % have done so, 17 % intend to do so in the near future and 3 % tried to start a business but gave up because it was too difficult)⁽⁷⁷⁾.

The highest percentage of respondents willing to become entrepreneurs is registered in Lithuania (32 % 'intend to start a business in the coming years') and Romania (33 %). Conversely, the lowest values are recorded in Germany (11 %) and Greece (11 %). The country with the lowest percentage of young people that have started a business is Ireland (only 2 %).

Figure 4-5: EU Youth indicator: Young people (aged 15-29) who would like to set up their own business, EU-28 average, 2014

Regarding the start-up of a business, which of the following is closer to your situation?



Base: all respondents.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer of the European Parliament (EP EB395) on 'European Youth in 2014'.

75 OECD, 2012a.

76 European Parliament, 2014.

77 Ibid.

Eurostat data on self-employed⁽⁷⁸⁾ young people identify similar patterns. Indeed, as shown in Figure 4-T, the lowest percentages of self-employed young people among the employed population aged 20-24 are recorded in Germany (1.8 %), and Ireland (1.7 %). On the other side of the spectrum, Italy (11.8 %) and Romania (11.6 %) have

the highest percentage of self-employed young people among the employed.

Regarding the 25-29 age group, Luxembourg (3.7 %) and Norway (4.2 %) have the lowest values, while Greece (16.3 %) and Italy (17.3 %) show the highest percentage of self-employed young people among those employed.

Figure 4-T: EU Youth Indicator: Self-employed rate of young people (aged 20-29), by age and by country, 2013



Source: Eurydice calculation on Eurostat data on self-employed young people [yth_empl_040]

4.4. Support for the transition to employment

4.4.1. Career guidance and skills forecasting

Young people have not only had to face higher unemployment since the onset of the economic crisis, but those who are in employment are also now more likely to accept jobs for which they are overqualified. ‘Vertical mismatch’ refers to the situation where there is a discrepancy between young people’s education or skills and the

level of education or skills required by their job⁽⁷⁹⁾. Such vertical mismatch can occur in terms of qualifications or skills, and over-qualification and over-skilling do not always go together⁽⁸⁰⁾.

Evidence indicates that younger workers, as new entrants into the labour market, tend to experience a higher degree of vertical mismatch⁽⁸¹⁾; and this vertical mismatch in the EU is increasing. This is apparent in the collapse in the demand for low-skilled workers and in the greater number of highly educated people taking up jobs that are not commensurate with their qualifications.

78 Eurostat definition: Self-employed persons are the ones who work in their own business, farm or professional practice. A self-employed person is considered to be working if she/he meets one of the following criteria: works for the purpose of earning profit, spends time on the operation of a business or is in the process of setting up his/her business.

79 The literature usually distinguishes between vertical and horizontal mismatch. The former occurs when there is a discrepancy between young people’s education or skills and the level of education or skills required by their job. Horizontal mismatch refers to a situation where the worker has an adequate qualification level, but in a different field of study to that required by the job (Cedefop, 2010).

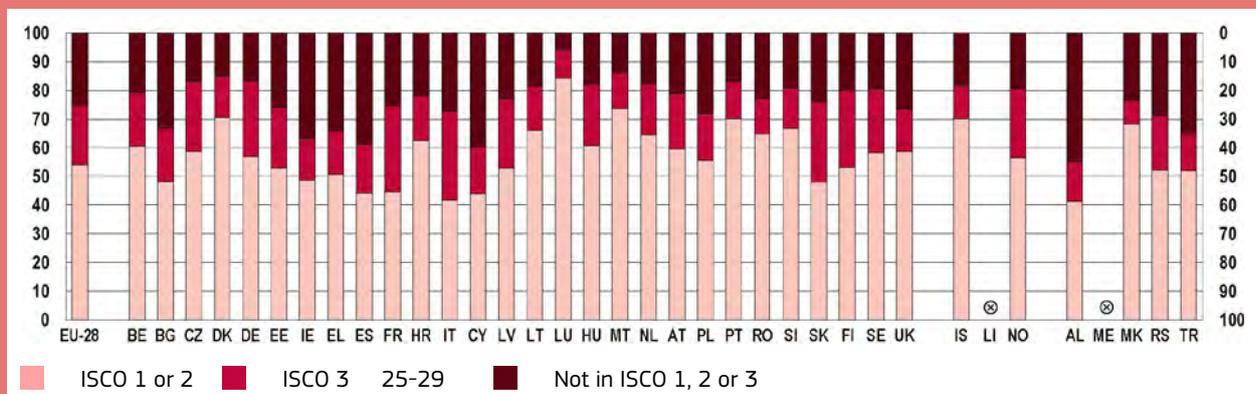
80 See for example Flisi et al, 2014.

81 Cedefop, 2010.

In parallel to this increase in over-qualified young people, recent research also points towards the danger of skill loss between generations, showing that in certain countries – particularly in Denmark, Sweden or the United Kingdom – younger cohorts have lower level of skills than their older peers, despite having to face a more competitive labour market requiring higher level of skills⁽⁸²⁾.

Figure 4-U depicts ‘vertical mismatch’ in terms of a qualification mismatch. The figure shows young people’s qualifications in relation to their jobs as classified in the International Classifications of Occupations (ISCO⁽⁸³⁾). The over-qualification rate is defined as the percentage of young people (aged 25-34) with tertiary education occupying a post not regarded as necessitating a tertiary qualification (ISCO level 4 to 9).

Figure 4-U: Distribution of people with tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) aged 25-34 and employed in ISCO 1 or 2 (legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals), in ISCO 3 (technicians and associate professionals) and not in ISCO 1, 2 or 3, by country, 2013



Notes: ISCO 0 (armed forces) and ISCO missing excluded.

Source: Eurostat LFS and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

In the EU-28, approximately a quarter of highly qualified young people aged 25-34 are overqualified for their job. In 2013, the countries with the highest over-qualification rates (above 30 %) were Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus and Turkey. By comparing these data with the unemployment rates discussed in Section 4.3, it emerges that those countries with the highest youth unemployment rates also show the highest over-qualification rates. This implies that when young graduates face difficulties in finding a suitable job

Only one in four young Europeans report having used a career guidance service at some point.

matching their qualification levels, they are more likely to accept one with lower-level requirements.

Career guidance is an important service that can support young people facing a difficult transition to employment. Relying on skills forecasting, career guidance can potentially help in directing young people towards professions for which there is greater demand. In addition, career guidance can equip young people with the skills necessary to successfully search for a job.

82 Flisi et al, 2015.

83 International Standard Classification of Occupations.

Career guidance services are available in higher education institutions in almost all European countries⁽⁸⁴⁾. However, evidence from a recent Eurobarometer survey⁽⁸⁵⁾ suggests that a majority of respondents received no guidance during education. Indeed, only around one in four respondents (24 %) reported having used a career guidance service at some point. In many cases the reason behind this is the lack of access to services (45 % of all respondents).

4.4.2. High-quality traineeships

The extensive use of temporary employment contracts described in Section 4.3 goes hand in hand with the increased use of traineeships as a way for employers to assess the capabilities of new recruits before offering them permanent positions⁽⁸⁶⁾.

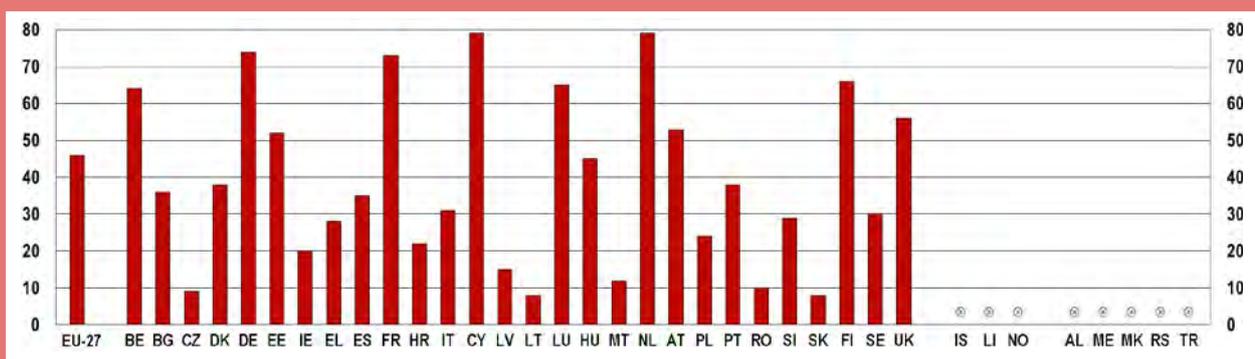
Traineeships provide important opportunities for young people to acquire the experience needed to find a job in the future. According to the Flash Eurobarometer 'The experience of traineeships in the EU'⁽⁸⁷⁾, around half of the respondents

aged 18-35 report having had a traineeship (Figure 4-V)⁽⁸⁸⁾. The highest percentage was registered in Germany, Cyprus and the Netherlands. At the other end of the spectrum, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Slovakia had the lowest percentages of respondents who reported having undertaken a traineeship.

Looking at the gender dimension, 49 % of female respondents have had a traineeship compared with 43 % of males. The highest number of respondents undertaking a traineeship belongs to the 25-29 age group (50 %), while only 43 % of respondents aged between 30 and 35 have done so.

Undoubtedly, one of the aims of traineeships is to provide young people with the skills needed to enter the labour market and to facilitate this process. The Eurobarometer asked, among other things, whether young people had learned things that were useful professionally during their most recent traineeship. The vast majority of respondents (89 %) agreed that they had learned useful things.

Figure 4-V: Proportion of respondents (aged 18-35) who have completed a traineeship, by country, 2013



Note: The Question was: Have you ever had any of the following experiences...Traineeship? Base: all respondents.

Source: 2013 Flash EB378, 'The experience of traineeships in the EU'.

84 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014.

85 European Commission, 2014f.

86 Eurofound, 2013b.

87 European Commission, 2014g. This survey interviewed EU citizens aged 18-35 about their experience with traineeships and the benefits they felt they had received from them.

88 The question was 'I would like you to think about traineeships. Did you complete one or more traineeships either during or immediately after you completed your education?'

Furthermore, respondents were asked whether the traineeship had been or would be helpful in order to find a regular job. On average (EU-27) the majority of young people (aged 18-35) with traineeship experience (71 %) believed this had been the case. The socio-demographic analysis of this data shows that gender, age, university graduation and education, occupation and time when the traineeship was completed, had no significant impact on the percentages recorded.

The majority of trainees were not offered an employment contract when they finished their most recent traineeship.

Unfortunately, a further Eurobarometer question revealed that the majority of trainees (71 %) were not offered an employment contract when they finished their most recent traineeship. In this case, gender data suggests that more men were

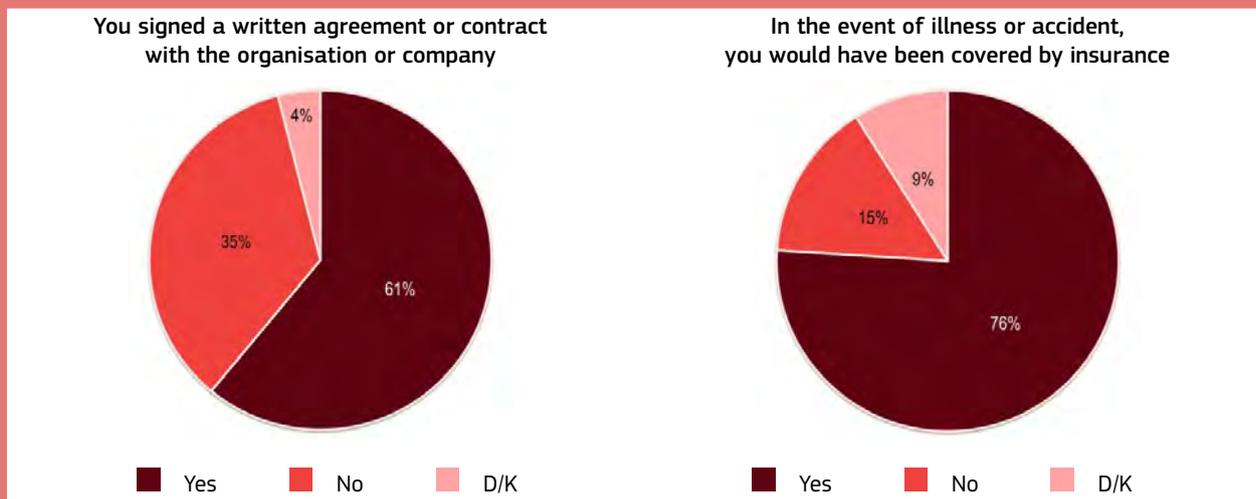
offered an employment contract at the end of their traineeship than women (31 % versus 24 %).

Conditions of traineeships

The conditions under which traineeships were offered reveal interesting differences between countries. Over one third of young Europeans did not sign an agreement or contract with the hosting organisation that provided the traineeship (Figure 4-W(a)).

A more positive aspect is, however, the percentage of young people covered by a health insurance during their traineeship (Figure 4-W(b)): according to the EU-27 average, 76 % of the respondents reported being covered in the event of illness or accident.

Figure 4-W: Share of young people (aged 18-35) who signed a written contract and received health insurance during the traineeship, EU-27 average, 2013



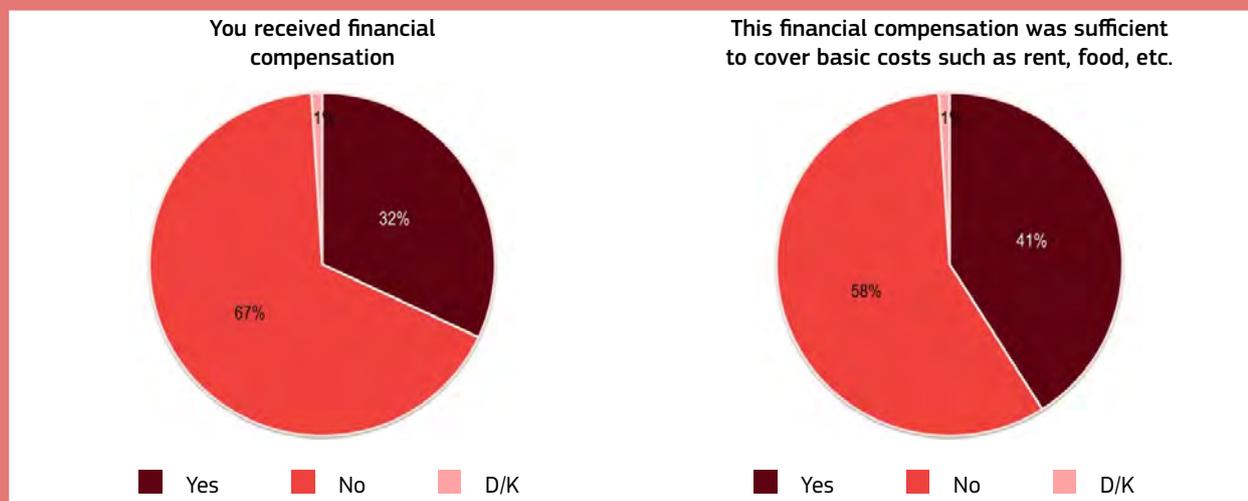
Base: respondents who had undertaken at least one traineeship.

Source: 2013 Flash EB378, 'The experience of traineeships in the EU'.

An additional question from the same Eurobarometer investigated whether respondents who had completed more than one traineeship had received financial compensation during one of these. Over two-thirds of respondents (67 %) had not received any compensation, while a third of respondents

(32 %) had. Moreover, for 58 % of the respondents, the compensation they received was not sufficient to cover basic living costs such as rent, food, etc. (Figure 4-X). Only slightly more than two in five respondents (41 %) say the financial compensation they received had been sufficient.

Figure 4-X: Share of young people (aged 18-35) who received financial compensation during traineeships and whether it was sufficient to cover basic living costs, EU-27 average, 2013



Base: respondents who had at least one traineeship.

Source: 2013 Flash EB378, 'The experience of traineeships in the EU'.

Figure 4-Y: Proportion of respondents (aged 18-35) who received a certificate at the end of their traineeship, EU-27 average, 2013



Base: respondents who had at least one traineeship.

Source: 2013 Flash EB378, 'The experience of traineeships in the EU'.

Finally, it is worth noting that not all trainees are awarded a certificate or reference at the end of a training period. Indeed, only 64 % of trainees reported that at the end of the traineeship, the organisation or company gave them a certificate or reference describing what they had done. For 34 % of the respondents, this was not the case (Figure 4-Y).

4.4.3. Geographical career mobility

Geographical career mobility within the EU is an important dimension of the EU youth labour market. During the period 2009-2013, intra-EU movers were predominantly young people.

Indeed, young people aged 15-34 represented 63 % of all intra-EU movers, even though this age category only accounted for around 34 % of the labour force in

the EU (average over 2009–2013). Within this broad age group, the youngest cohort (15–24) is the least represented. The majority of those relocating are young adults between 25 and 34 who move to another EU Member State to work⁽⁸⁹⁾.

Among its many findings, the Flash Eurobarometer survey ‘European area of skills and qualifications’ from 2014⁽⁹⁰⁾ contains information on young people’s experience of working or studying in another EU country and/or outside the EU.

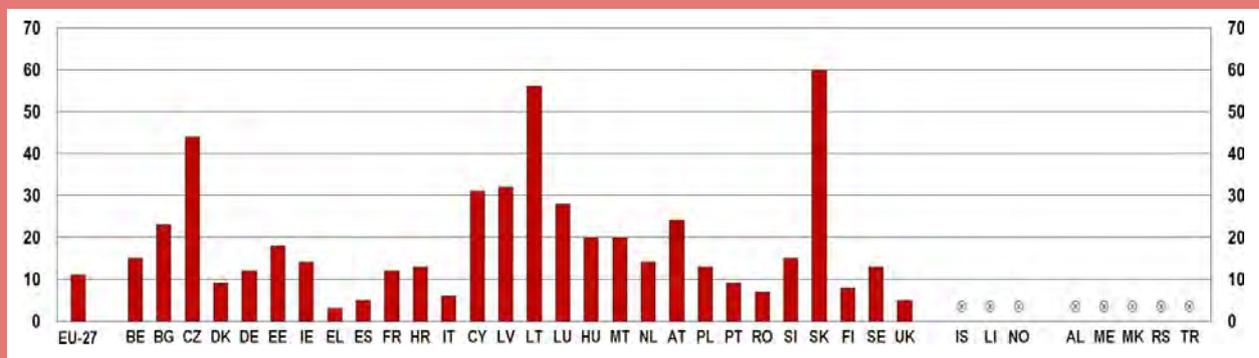
According to this survey, less than one in ten respondents (8 %) aged 15–24 say they have spent time working in another EU Member State and/or outside the EU. This percentage is relatively low in comparison to older age groups – the highest being in the 25–39 age group at 20 %, with 13 % for the 55+ group.

The percentage of respondents aged 15–24 who have studied in another EU country or outside the EU is slightly higher (9 %) and more in line with figures for the older age groups (12 % for 25–39 year-olds, 9 % for those aged 40–54 and 5 % for the 55+ group).

Another Flash Eurobarometer⁽⁹¹⁾ addresses the issue of traineeships abroad either in another EU country or elsewhere (Figure 4-Z). Approximately nine in ten of the respondents (89 %) had never undertaken a traineeship abroad.

Across the EU, respondents in Slovakia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Latvia are most likely to report that they had undertaken at least one traineeship abroad. Respondents are least likely to have had this experience in Greece, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Italy.

Figure 4-Z: Proportion of young people (aged 18–35) who have had at least one traineeship abroad, by country, 2013



Note: the question was: Overall, how many traineeships have you had abroad? 0 stage, 1 stage, 2 stages, 3 stages, 4 stages. Base: all respondents.

Source: 2014 Flash EB378, ‘The experience of traineeships in the EU’. Base: Those EU respondents who have had at least one traineeship.

89 European Commission, 2014g.

90 European Commission, 2014f.

91 European Commission, 2014g.

5 Social inclusion

EU Youth Indicators

⇒ Average age of young people when leaving the parental household	Figure 5-A
⇒ At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for children and young people	Figures 5-B, 5-C and 5-D
⇒ At-risk-of-poverty rate for children	Figures 5-E and 5-F
⇒ Severe material deprivation rate for children and young people	Figures 5-H and 5-I
⇒ Children and young people living in households with very low work intensity	Figures 5-J and 5-K
⇒ Self-reported unmet needs for medical care	Figures 5-O and 5-P
⇒ Share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET rate)	Figure 5-S and 5-T

5.1. Introduction

The economic crisis and the subsequent recession continue to have an impact on young people in terms of poverty and social inclusion. According to a recent Eurobarometer survey⁽⁹²⁾, the majority of young Europeans – especially in countries hardest hit by the economic recession – feel that young people have been marginalised by the economic crisis and are being excluded from economic and social life⁽⁹³⁾. Changing labour markets, increasing uncertainty⁽⁹⁴⁾ and high youth unemployment rates (see Chapter 4) influence many aspects of young people's lives including their levels of poverty and deprivation, their living conditions, their health and well-being (see Chapter 6), and even their political and cultural participation (see Chapters 7 and 9). All these aspects contribute to young people's feelings of social exclusion, especially amongst the most vulnerable groups.

This chapter focuses on the main indicators of social exclusion and poverty and

examines the most recent trends. Given the importance of living arrangements in determining poverty levels, a distinction is made between young people living independently and those living with their parents. The chapter also examines some specific aspects of poverty and social exclusion including housing, access to health care and in-work poverty. Finally, the last section focuses on the groups most at risk of poverty and social exclusion: young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), as well as young people from a migrant background.

Given how determining childhood poverty is for the risk of poverty later in life, for several indicators, the EU Dashboard covers both young people and children. The age breakdown used in the chapter for each of these groups reflects the available data provided by Eurostat. In most cases, the reference age groups are 0-16 for children and 15-29 for young people, although for a few indicators only, slightly different age ranges are provided. While an overlap

92 Flash Eurobarometer of the European Parliament (EP EB395) on the 'European Youth in 2014'.

93 European Parliament, 2014.

94 On inequalities and marginalisation among young people in ten European cities, see the 'CITISPYCE' project: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/lss/research/research-centres/interland/citispyce/>.

is evident between the two age groups, the data currently available does not allow for further refinement.

5.2. Moving towards independence: young people leaving the parental home

Young people's lives are characterised by phases and episodes of transition towards independence: they move from education to work, and from living with and being supported by their families towards establishing their own household. As Chapters 3 and 4 have already described, this road towards independence is often bumpy, and usually takes many turns before leading to financial independence. As a result, young people are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty.

The risk of becoming poor is closely linked to a crucial move: leaving the parental home. In fact, moving out of the parental household is found to be the 'strongest predictor behind youth poverty' (95). Though moving out of the parental home might not be definitive for many (young people often 'boomerang' back to the parental household if they cannot afford to live independently), the timing of this move differs widely in European countries, influencing the social exclusion and poverty levels among young people.

On average, young Europeans leave the parental home around the age of 26 (96). However, as Figure 5-A depicts, there are substantial differences across European countries, as well as between young men

and women. Regarding country differences, there is a clear north-west vs. south-east divide in Europe: young people in northern and western Europe generally leave the parental household earlier than their peers from southern and eastern European countries. The average age of leaving the parental home ranges from 19.6 years in Sweden to 31.9 years in Croatia (97). As was discussed in the 2012 Youth Report, such differences are partly cultural and partly linked to the economic environment, and have the effect of either encouraging young people to make an early start in independent living or persuading them to postpone this step (98).

Young people in northern and western Europe generally leave the parental home earlier than their peers from southern and eastern European countries.

Common to all European countries, however, is that young women leave their parents earlier than young men, partly due to the fact that women starting to cohabit with their partners at an earlier age than men (99). The gender difference was 2.2 years on average in the EU-28 in 2013 (100). Differences between men and women are generally smaller in countries where young people tend to establish their own household earlier (only around seven months in Sweden, and around a year in Denmark and Luxembourg), in part because leaving home is not necessarily connected to moving in with a partner. Conversely, gender differences are greater in countries where young people arrive at the crucial point of establishing their own household later in their lives (the gap is almost five years in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and 8.4 years in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (101)), and where leaving the parental household coincides more with moving in

95 Aassve et al. 2007, p. 331.

96 EU-28 average. Source: Eurostat [yth_demo_030].

97 Ibid.

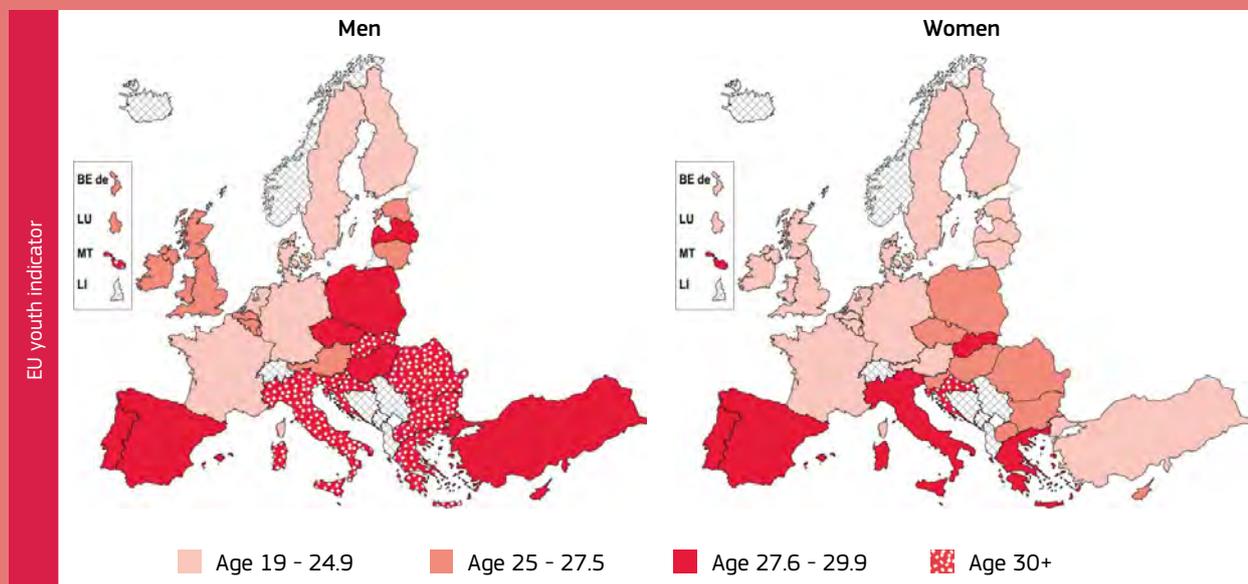
98 European Commission, 2012a.

99 Iacovou, 2011.

100 Source: Eurostat [yth_demo_030].

101 Ibid.

Figure 5-A: EU youth indicator: Average age of young people when leaving the parental household, by country and by sex, 2013



Source: Eurostat [yth_demo_030]

with a partner⁽¹⁰²⁾. In some countries in this group, young people tend to stay with their parents even after starting to cohabit with their partner⁽¹⁰³⁾.

Differences between countries in the average age of leaving the parental home also influences the poverty rates shown in the indicators, as they usually combine the data for both independent young people and those living with their parents, and, as will be shown later, moving out of the family home increases the risk of poverty for young people. For this reason, where possible, the next section will make distinctions between these two groups when comparing levels of poverty and social exclusion.

The at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate continues to rise for young people.

5.3. Levels of poverty and social exclusion

The main indicator of poverty and social exclusion is the composite indicator of 'at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion'. This indicator is based on three sub-indicators of poverty: the at-risk-of-poverty rate; the severe material deprivation rate; and the rate of living in a household with very low work

intensity. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion are defined as the proportion of the population that falls into at least one

of the categories described by the three sub-indicators. While each of these sub-indicators will be defined and illustrated in the following sections, the analysis focuses first on the composite indicator.

102 Iacovou, 2011.

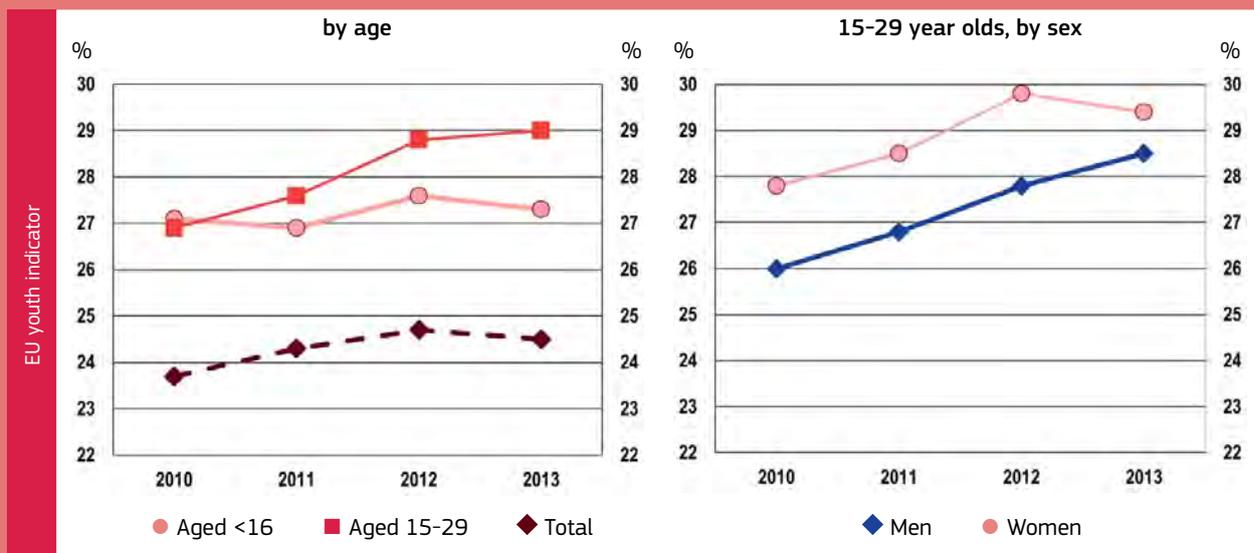
103 Ibid.

As Figure 5-B-a shows, on average in the EU-28, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for young people aged 15 to 29 (29.0 % in 2013) is higher than that for children under the age of 16 (27.3 %) or for the total population (24.5 %). Moreover, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates in 2013 stopped increasing for both the total population and children (for children, there had even been small decrease between 2010 and 2011), but continued to rise for young people, widening the poverty gap between young people and the total population. This disparity is mostly due to an increasing proportion of young people living in households with very low work intensity – thus to rising levels of unemployment

until 2013 (see Figure 5-J as well as Chapter 4). Within the group of young people, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate was the highest for the 20 to 24 age group (31.5 %) in 2013⁽¹⁰⁴⁾, since most young people complete education, enter the job market and strive to become independent at this age (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5).

On analysing the gender differences, Figure 5-B-b shows that young women are in a more difficult situation than men – partly because they move out of the parental household earlier – though their at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates have shown a slight decline since 2012, while the rates for men have continued to increase.

Figure 5-B: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate, EU-28 average, 2010-2013

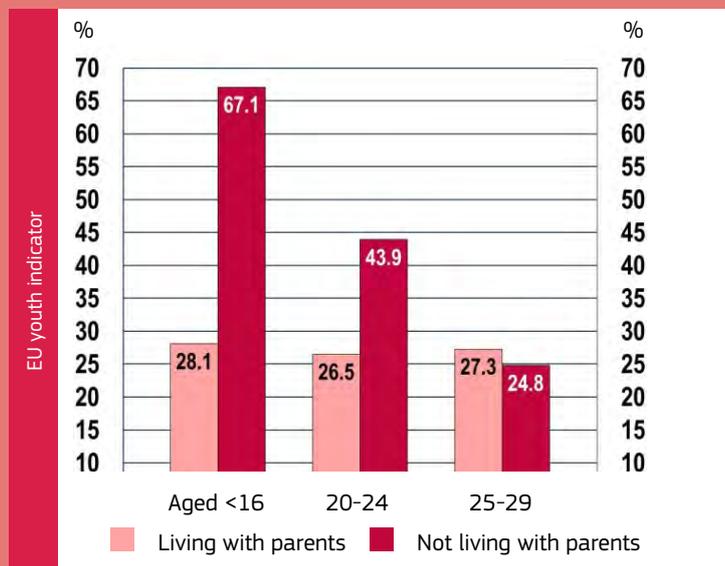


Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_010 and ilc_peps01]

As discussed above, moving out of the parental household increases the risk of poverty for young people. Indeed, as Figure 5-C illustrates, the differences between young people living with their parents or living independently are substantial, especially in the younger age groups. In 2013,

the gap between young people living with their parents or not was 39.0 percentage points in the 16 to 19 age group, 17.4 percentage points among 20 to 24 year olds, while it was only 2.5 percentage points in the favour independent young people in the oldest, 25 to 29 age group.

Figure 5-C: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for young people (aged 16-29), EU-28 average, by living arrangements and by age, 2013

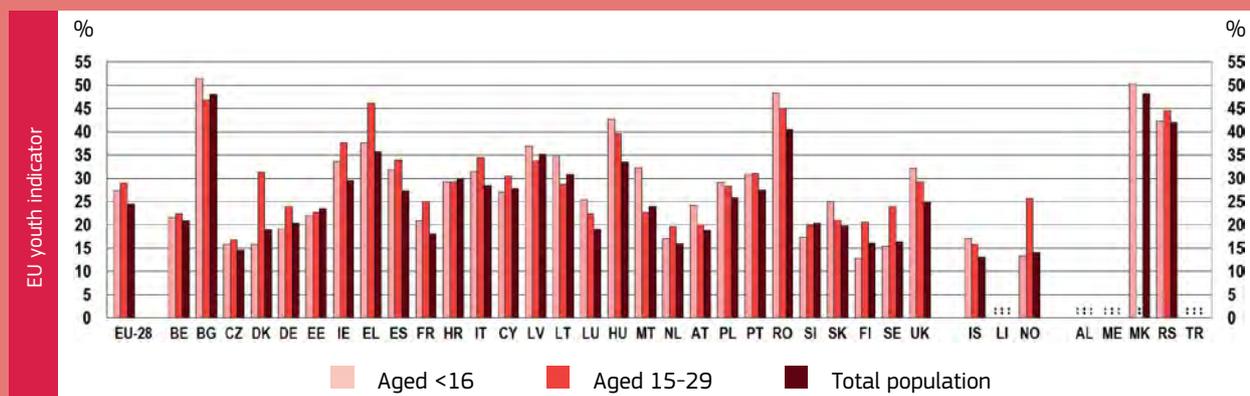


Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_030]

Other important factors influencing the risk of poverty or social exclusion of young people include their level of education (the more educated young people are, the lower their risk of poverty⁽¹⁰⁵⁾), or their immigrant status (see Section 5.5.2).

Figure 5-D shows differences across European countries in the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate. As the figure depicts, for children, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate is the highest in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, exceeding 40 % in all five countries, and even 50 % in Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The proportion of young people (aged 15 to 29) at risk of poverty or social exclusion surpasses 40 % in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Serbia. The rates for children are the lowest in Finland and Norway; and for young people in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia and Iceland.

Figure 5-D: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate, by country and by age, 2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_010 and ilc_peps01]

Figure 5-D also illustrates the relatively more vulnerable position of young people in most European countries. Differences between the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates of young people and the total population are the largest in the Nordic countries, especially in Denmark and Norway, where the share of young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is more than double that of the total population. This is partly because young people leave the parental home much earlier in this region than in other parts of Europe, thus putting themselves at greater risk. However, as will be discussed below, when taking into account only those not living with their parents, young people in these countries still face a higher risk of being in poverty.

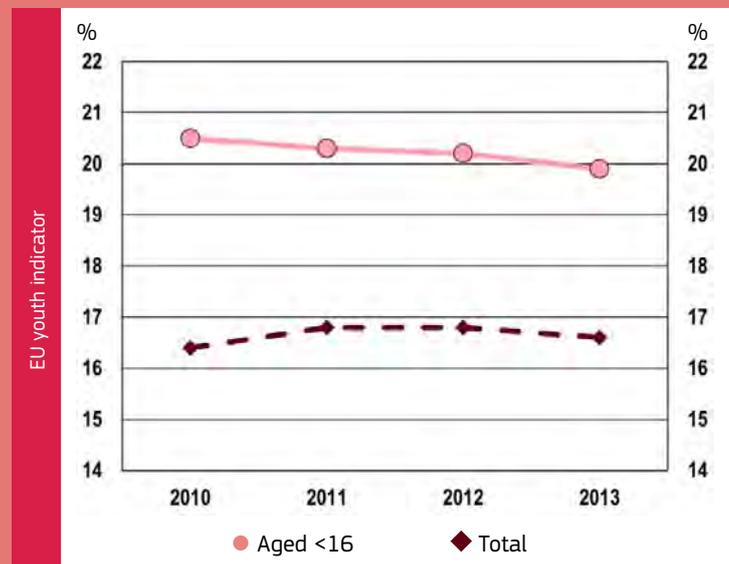
5.3.1. The at-risk-of-poverty rate

The sub-indicator of the composite 'at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate' that measures poverty in relative terms is the at-risk-of-poverty rate. For this indicator, a relative poverty threshold is defined at 60 % of the net median equivalised disposable income⁽¹⁰⁶⁾, and the population with income below this threshold is regarded as being at risk of poverty⁽¹⁰⁷⁾.

Given the differences across countries in the average age when young people leave the parental household, the at-risk-of-poverty rate can be misleading if used for international comparisons of 15-29 year-olds. For this reason, the Dashboard of Youth Indicators only considers the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children in comparison to the total population (Figure 5-E and 5-F). Nevertheless, it is still helpful to look at the at-risk-of-poverty rates across Europe for young people not living with their parents (Figure 5-G).

On average in the EU-28, the at-risk-of-poverty rate has been decreasing for

Figure 5-E: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty rate, EU-28 average, by age, 2010-2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [ilc_li02]

children since 2010, and for the total population the increasing trend also reversed between 2012 and 2013 (Figure 5-E). Nevertheless, the average at-risk-of-poverty rate for the total population was still higher in 2013 than in 2010.

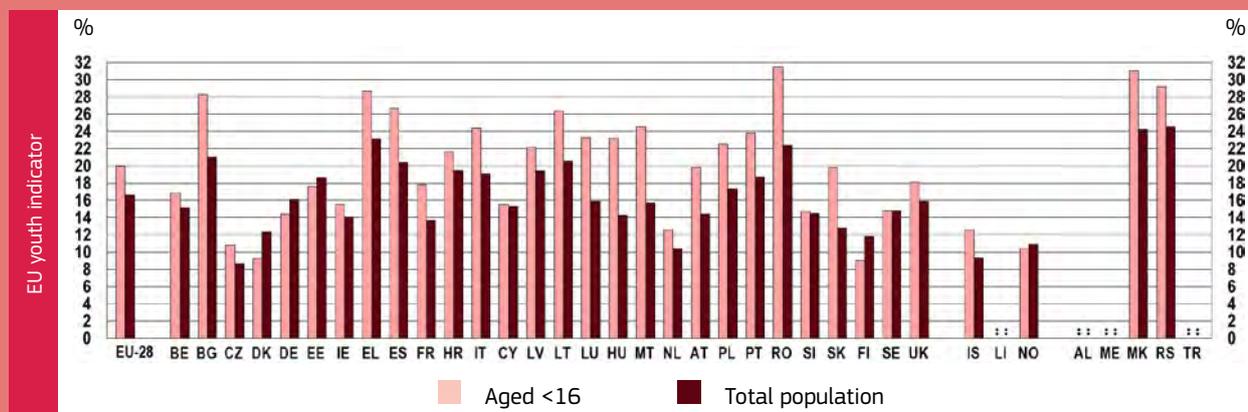
In the EU-28 on average and in the majority of European countries, the average at-risk-of-poverty rate is higher for children than for the total population (Figure 5-F). The exceptions are Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland and Norway, where children have a relatively lower risk of poverty. In 2013, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children was highest in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, while it was lowest in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland and Norway. In contrast to the European trend, the at-risk-of-poverty rates for children grew by more than 3 percentage points between 2010 and 2013 in Greece and Hungary⁽¹⁰⁸⁾.

106 The equivalised disposable income is the total income of a household, after tax and other deductions, that is available for spending or saving, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; household members are equalised or made equivalent by weighting each according to their age, using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (Eurostat, 2015b).

107 Eurostat, 2015c.

108 Source: Eurostat SILC [ilc_li02].

Figure 5-F: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty rate, by country and by age, 2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [ilc_li02]

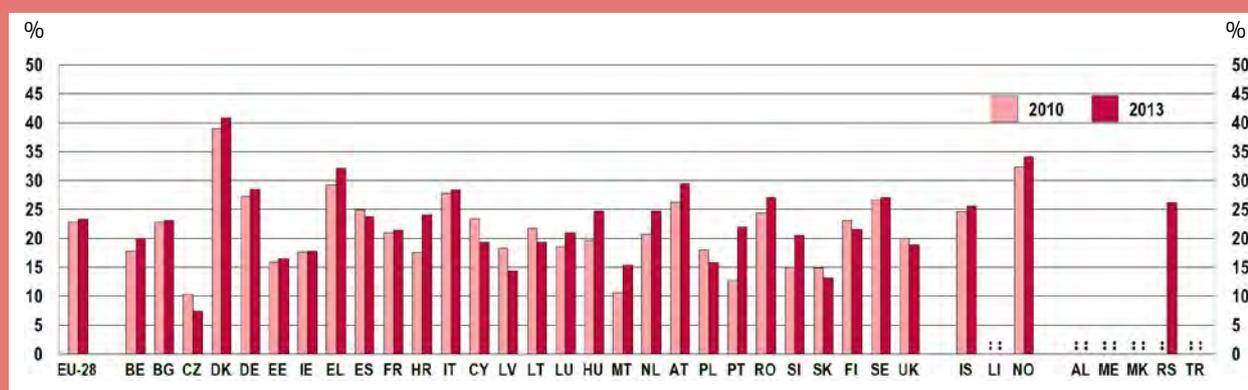
In assessing the risk of poverty for young people, it is useful to examine the extent of the problem for those no longer living with their parents. Figure 5-G therefore includes young people aged 20 to 29 who have moved out of the parental household. This wider age group has been chosen to take into account the differences across Europe in the average age of leaving the parental

home. However, it has to be kept in mind that young people aged 20 to 24 living independently are on average twice as likely to be at risk of poverty as their older peers aged 25 to 29⁽¹⁰⁹⁾.

At-risk-of-poverty rates for young people not living with their parents are relatively high across the EU and, in the majority of countries, increased between 2010 and 2013.

In 2013, the highest risk of poverty for young people aged 20 to 29 not living with their parents was found in Denmark – more than 40 %; and the rate

Figure 5-G: At-risk-of-poverty rate for young people (aged 20-29) not living with parents, by country, 2010 and 2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_060]

also exceeded 30 % in Greece and Norway. Though young people move out of the parental household at different ages in these countries, data still show that young people face much lower income levels than the total population if they choose to live independently. In contrast, the lowest risk of poverty amongst this group in 2013 (below 15 %) was found in the Czech Republic, Latvia and Slovakia.

When comparing the proportion of young people aged 20 to 29 living independently and at risk of poverty in 2010 and 2013, data show that in the EU-28 as well as in the majority of countries, this proportion increased in this period. The most significant increases took place in Croatia (6.5 percentage points), Hungary (5 percentage points), Portugal (9.2 percentage points) and Slovenia (5.6 percentage points).

5.3.2. Severe material deprivation

The severe material deprivation rate¹¹⁰ complements the at-risk-of-poverty rate in two important respects. First, instead of defining a poverty threshold that varies between countries, it is based on a single European threshold.

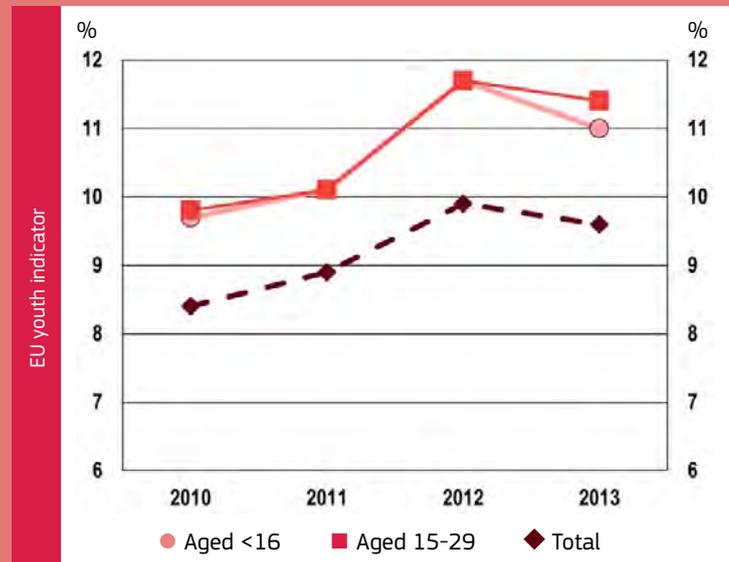
For this reason, it is a more absolute measure of poverty, and can capture the differences in living standards between countries. Second, while the relative poverty indicator is based on current income, the severe material deprivation rate takes non-monetary resources into account.

As with the indicators discussed above, in 2013, the severe material deprivation rate was the highest for young people (aged 15 to 29), followed by children (under 16 years of age), while the rate for the total population was lower than either sub-group.

Severe material deprivation rates vary considerably across European countries, ranging from below 1 % to over 40 %.

The severe material deprivation rate is higher for children and young people than for the total population also in the majority of European countries

Figure 5-H: EU youth indicator: Severe material deprivation rate, EU-28 average, by age, 2010-2013

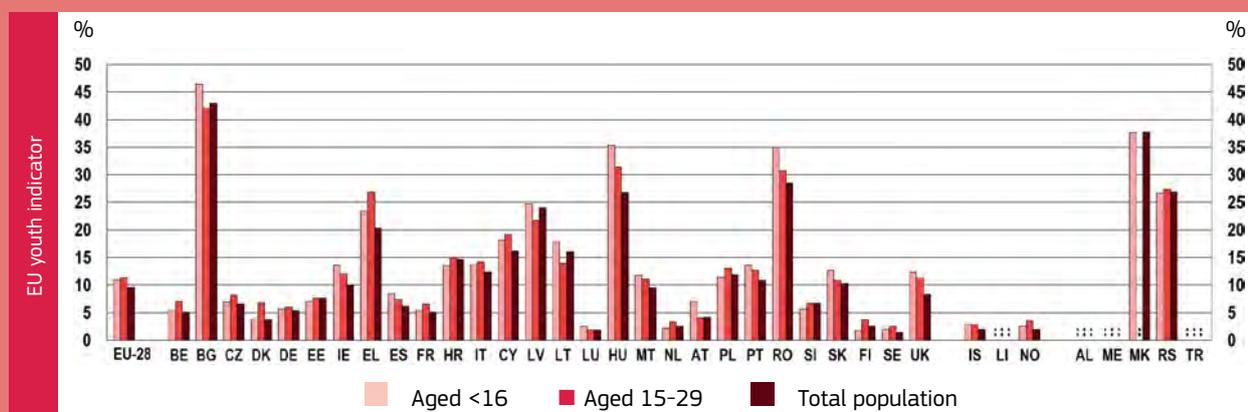


Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_070 and ilc_mddd11]

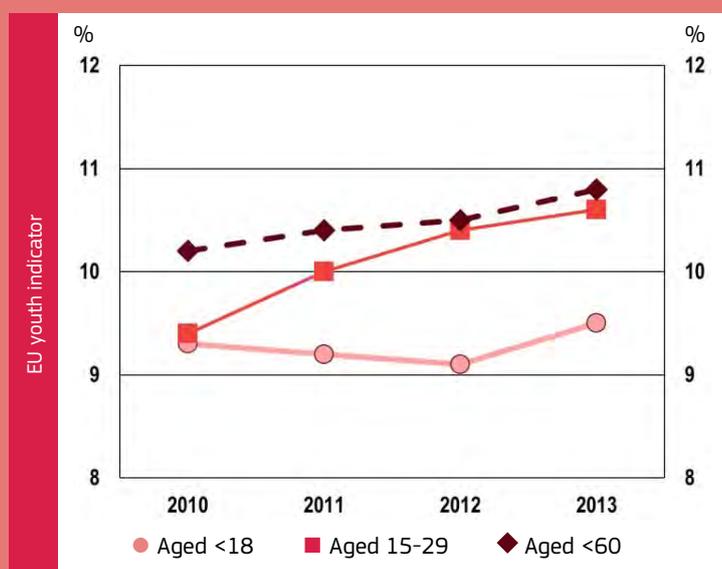
As Figure 5-H shows, after substantial increases between 2010 and 2012, material deprivation rates started falling across the board. This decline was the largest for children under 16, from 11.7 % to 11 %.

(Figure 5-I). In the EU-28 in 2013, the severe material deprivation rate was the highest in Bulgaria (exceeding 40 % for both children and young people), followed by Hungary and Romania (exceeding 30 % for the youngest age groups). Conversely, the proportion of both children and young people experiencing severe material deprivation was below 5 % in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway.

110 The severe material deprivation rate is defined as the percentage of the population that cannot afford at least four of the following nine pre-defined deprivation items: 1) to pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills, 2) to keep their home adequately warm, 3) to face unexpected expenses, 4) to eat meat or proteins regularly, 5) to go on holiday, or to buy a: 6) TV, 7) refrigerator, 8) car, or a 9) telephone (Eurostat, 2015d).

Figure 5-I: EU youth indicator: Severe material deprivation rate, by country and by age, 2013

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_070 and ilc_mddd11]

Figure 5-J: EU youth indicator: Proportion of people living in households with very low work intensity, EU-28 average, by age, 2010-2013

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_100 and ilc_lvhl11]

5.3.3. Households with very low work intensity

Since unemployment influences poverty and social exclusion levels to a great extent, this section focuses on children and young people living in households with very low work intensity. This is the third sub-indicator of the main composite indicator of poverty or social exclusion. The indicator on persons living in households with low work intensity is defined as the share of the population living in a household having work intensity which equals or is below the threshold of 0.20⁽¹¹¹⁾.

The changes in the proportion of the population living in households with very low work intensity have not been consistent across the different age groups in recent years. For young people and the total population (people below the age of 60), the proportion has been increasing since 2008⁽¹¹²⁾. However, the rate for young people has been

111 The work intensity of a household is the ratio of the total number of months that all working-age household members have worked during the income reference year and the total number of months the same household members theoretically could have worked in the same period (Eurostat, 2015e).

112 European Commission, 2012a.

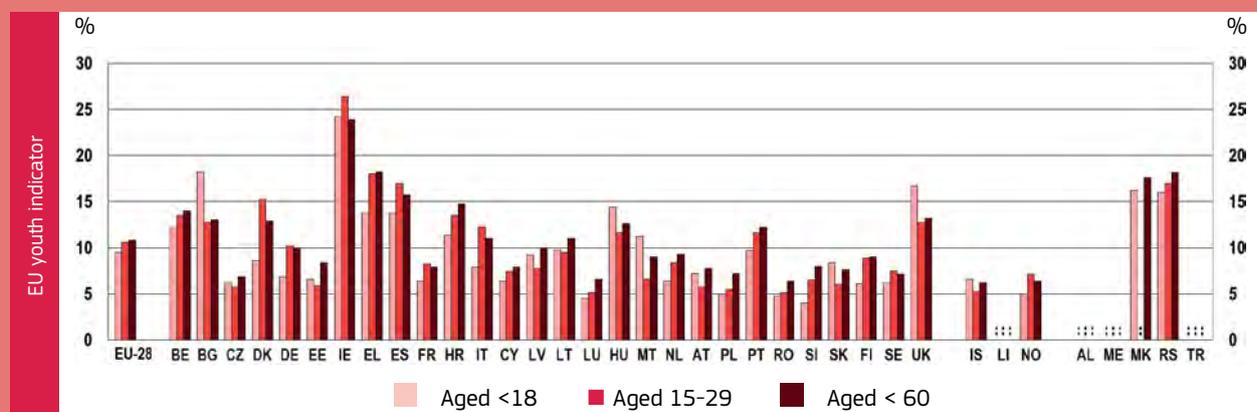
rising faster, to the extent that in 2012, the proportion of young people aged 15–29 living in households with very low work intensity reached the same level as that for the total population under 60 years of age (Figure 5-J). This shows the impact of rising levels of youth unemployment on the poverty levels of young people¹¹³). In contrast, the share of children under the age of 18 living in households with very low work intensity decreased between 2010 and 2012 but started rising again in 2013.

Figure 5-K depicts the wide differences across Europe in the proportions of people

living in households with very low work intensity. Different patterns exist regarding the relative position of children (aged under 18), young people and the total population under 60 years of age. In six countries, it is children who are in the most vulnerable position, (Bulgaria, Hungary, Malta, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and Iceland); while in eight others, it is young people aged 15 to 29 (Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway). However, in 17 other countries, the proportions of both children and young people living in households with very low work intensity are lower than in the total population under the age of 60.

An increasing proportion of young people live in households with very low work intensity, showing the impact of rising youth unemployment rates.

Figure 5-K: EU youth indicator: Proportion of people living in households with very low work intensity, by country and by age, 2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_100 and ilc_lvh11]

The share of young people aged 15 to 29 living in households with very low work intensity is the highest in Ireland (26.4 %), followed by Greece (18 %), Spain and Serbia (17 %), and Denmark (15.3 %). This proportion is the lowest in Luxembourg, Romania and Iceland.

Nevertheless, given that this indicator is based on household composition, whether young people are living with their parents or not makes a difference. In most European countries, the proportion of young people living in households with very low work intensity is much higher for those not sharing

113 As the chapter on Employment and Entrepreneurship showed, youth unemployment rates started declining after 2013. However, poverty and social exclusion data are only available up to 2013.

a household with their parents. In 2013, in the 20 to 29 age group, the difference was greatest in Denmark, where the proportion of young people living in households with very low work intensity was 3.5 times higher for those living outside the family home than for those who were still living with their parents⁽¹¹⁴⁾. Differences were also relatively large in Bulgaria, Croatia and Hungary. However, in twelve other countries, particularly in Greece, Spain and Serbia, the proportion of young people living in low-work intensity households was higher among those living with their parents than among those living independently.

5.4. Other aspects of poverty and social inclusion

Poverty and social exclusion are multi-dimensional phenomena which cannot be understood solely in terms of people's income. The other dimensions that should be taken into account include access not only to basic services such as housing and healthcare, but also to good, well-paid jobs. Limited access to these basic necessities forms part of the root cause of poverty and helps to explain how individuals and families become socially excluded.

Homelessness and housing exclusion represents one of the most extreme forms of poverty and deprivation in society today⁽¹¹⁵⁾. One of the key challenges of the Europe 2020 strategy is to provide decent (in terms of quality and cost) housing for everyone. The cost and quality of housing is key to providing adequate living standards as well as promoting young people's well-being; however a shortage of adequate housing is a long-standing problem in most European countries⁽¹¹⁶⁾.

Furthermore, limited access to healthcare contributes to deterioration in people's health and can have repercussions on their ability to work. The relatively high cost of medical examinations and treatments (both important aspects of healthcare) represents a barrier to individuals on low incomes obtaining healthcare and as such becomes a main driver of social exclusion.

Finally, when assessing poverty and social exclusion, it must be remembered that these phenomena do not only affect those who are economically inactive or unemployed. Indeed employment does not necessarily make the risk of poverty disappear. Consequently, young people's employment conditions should be looked at carefully, as in-work-poverty, that is poverty among the employed population, is a key indicator in understanding young people's susceptibility to poverty and social inclusion.

5.4.1. Housing conditions and homelessness

The cost and quality of housing are extremely important for living standards and well-being. Having access to decent housing and being part of a community is crucial if people are to realise their full economic potential and to contribute productively to society⁽¹¹⁷⁾. However, most European countries continue to have a shortage of adequate housing for their population. Currently, there is no single definition of homelessness that is accepted in all EU Member States. In 2010, a range of stakeholders and the European Commission agreed on the European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS). This typology distinguishes four main concepts of homelessness: 'rooflessness', 'houselessness', 'insecure housing' and 'inadequate housing'⁽¹¹⁸⁾. The attention in this section is on the last concept: inadequate housing.

114 Source: Eurostat SILC, [yth_incl_120].

115 European Commission, 2010a.

116 Eurostat, 2015f.

117 European Commission, 2013c.

118 On ETHOS (Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion), see <http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?article120&lang=en>, accessed on 23/03/2015.

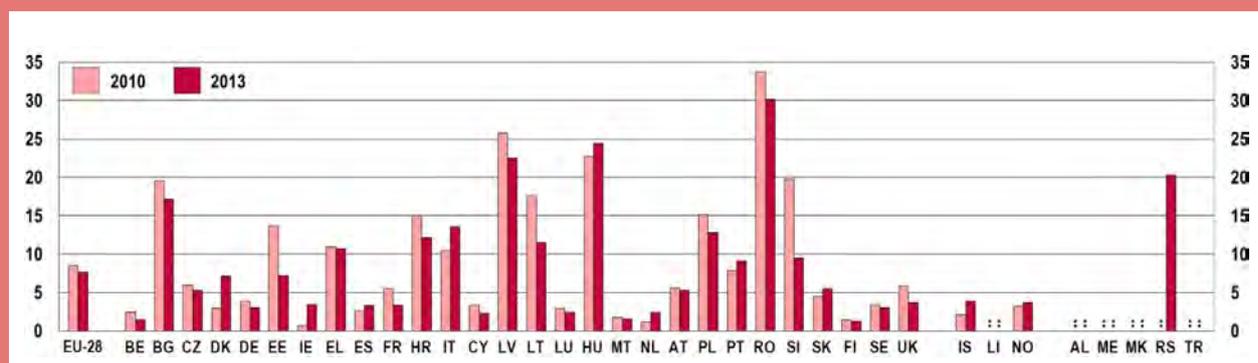
A useful indicator to measure inadequate housing is the severe housing deprivation rate. Housing deprivation is a measure of poor amenities and is calculated by referring to those households with a leaking roof, no bath/shower and no indoor toilet, or a dwelling considered too dark. Severe housing deprivation is defined as the percentage of the population living in a dwelling which is considered as overcrowded whilst also manifesting at least one of the other shortcomings listed above⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

The housing deprivation rate of young people aged 15-29 was 7.7 % in 2013 at EU-28 level. At country level, the severe housing deprivation rate among young people was the highest in Latvia (22.5 %), Hungary

(24.4 %) and Romania (30.2 %). Conversely, Finland (1.3 %) and Belgium (1.5 %) recorded the lowest values (Figure 5-L).

Figure 5-L indicates a decrease (from 8.5 % to 7.7 %) in the housing deprivation rate among young people (15-29) in the EU between 2010 and 2013. Indeed, in two-thirds of countries, the rate fell between 2010 and 2013. The biggest reductions are recorded in Slovenia (10.3 percentage points), Estonia (6.5 percentage points) and Lithuania (6.0 percentage points); while the countries with the highest increase over the period are Denmark (4.1 percentage points), Italy (3.1 percentage points) and the Ireland (2.8 percentage points).

Figure 5-L: Severe housing deprivation rate for young people (aged 15-29), by country, 2010 and 2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_140]

The overcrowding rate, which focuses on the availability of sufficient space in the dwelling, can shed further light on the housing conditions of young people. The overcrowding rate is defined by the number of rooms available to the household, the household's size, as well as its members' ages and family situation⁽¹²⁰⁾.

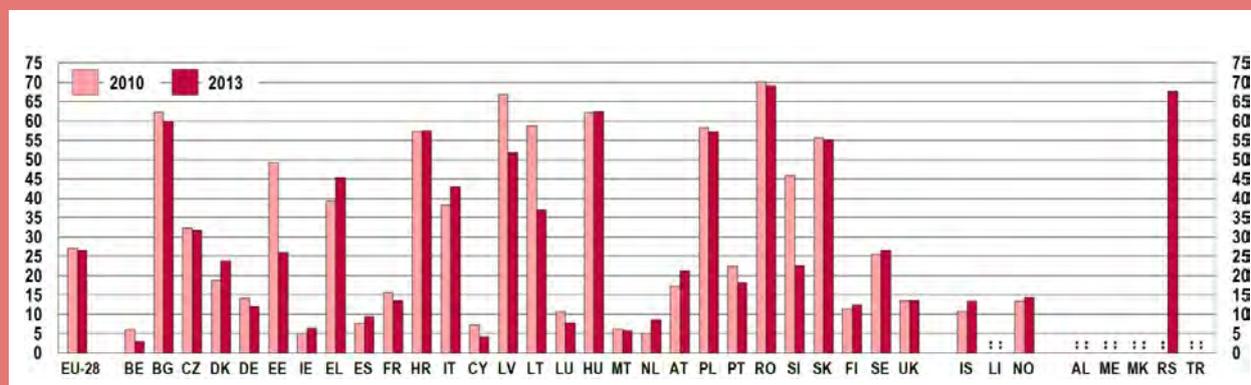
In 2013, as Figure 5-M shows, the EU-28 average overcrowding rate for young people aged 15-29 was 26.6 %. In comparison to 2010, when the overcrowding rate of young

people accounted for 27.2 %, the new rate in 2013 represents a small improvement.

The highest overcrowding rates for young people in 2013 were observed in Bulgaria (60.0 %), Hungary (62.4 %), Romania (69.1 %) and Serbia (67.9%), while the lowest were recorded in Belgium (3.0 %), Cyprus (4.1 %), and Malta (5.8 %). During the period between 2010 and 2013, important improvements were registered in Slovenia (-23.3 percentage points), Estonia (-23.1 percentage points) and Lithuania (-21.8 percentage points).

119 Eurostat, 2015g.

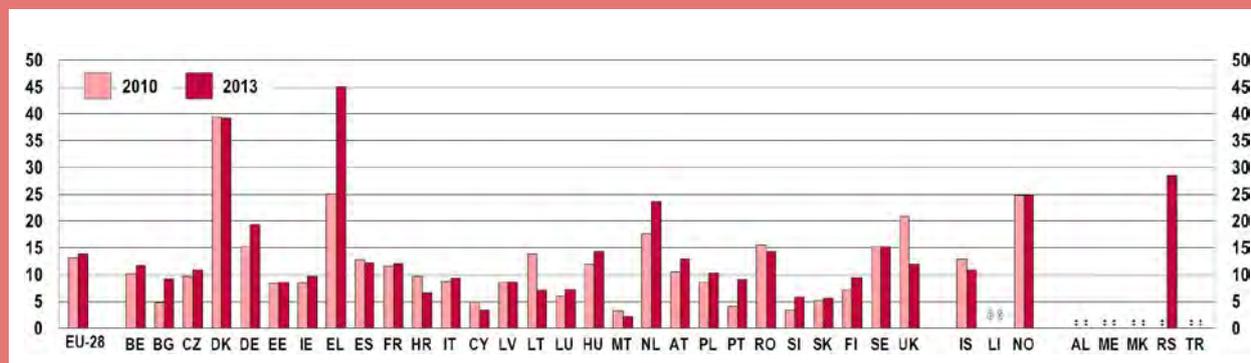
120 Eurostat, 2015h.

Figure 5-M: Overcrowding rate among young people (aged 15-29), by country, 2010 and 2013

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_150]

As explained in earlier sections, leaving the parental home and establishing a separate household is a crucial moment in young people's lives and has a strong influence on their risk of poverty (see Section 5.3.2). In this respect, housing costs have a significant impact on young people's living conditions. Given that young people have to face many hurdles in their transition from education to work (see Chapter 3), the question of affordable housing is becoming even more important.

The 'housing cost overburden rate' shows the percentage of the population living in households where the total housing costs ('net' of housing allowances) represent more than 40 % of disposable income⁽¹²¹⁾. In 2013, 12.7 % of the EU-28 population aged 15-29 lived in households where they spent more than 40 % of their disposable income on housing (Figure 5-N).

Figure 5-N: Housing cost overburden rate for young people (aged 15-29), by country, 2010 and 2013

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_160]

The 'housing cost overburden rate' for young people aged 15-29 for the EU-28 rose in comparison to 2010. At country level, over the period between 2010 and 2013, the largest increases in the rate for the age group 15-29 are recorded in Greece (19.8 percentage points), Bulgaria (5.4 percentage points) and Portugal (5.2 percentage points).

A deeper analysis into age sub-groups reveals that the relative increase is much higher for young people aged 25-29 (+1.1 percentage points) than for the younger age group 20-24 (+0.2 percentage points). Maintaining their

own household was the most burdensome for the younger age group, in Denmark (43.6 %), Greece (49.3 %), and Serbia (32.1 %). Also for the 25 to 29 year-olds, the housing cost overburden rate was the highest in Denmark (25.1 %), Greece (40.6 %) and Serbia (26 %). As was discussed above, Denmark and Greece are among the countries with the highest at-risk-of-poverty

rates for young people not living with their parents (see Figure 5-G).

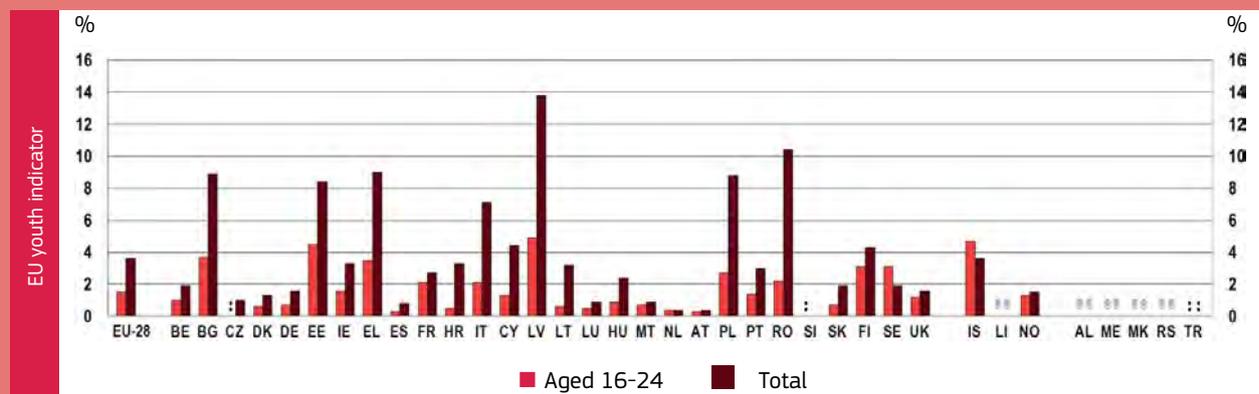
5.4.2. Access to health care

Another important aspect of social inclusion for young people is their access to health care. The self-reported unmet need for medical care is a good indicator with which to assess it. Accordingly, the self-reported unmet need for medical care was included among the EU youth indicators as a further pointer to social exclusion among young people.

In 2013, the proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 reporting unmet needs for medical examination (due to its being too expensive, having to travel too far, or as a result of waiting lists) was 1.5 % at EU-28 level (Figure 5-O). This value is around half the rate for the total population (3.6 %), and is due partly to young people having fewer health-related problems than older age groups (see Chapter 6).

The housing cost overburden rate for young people increased between 2010 and 2013.

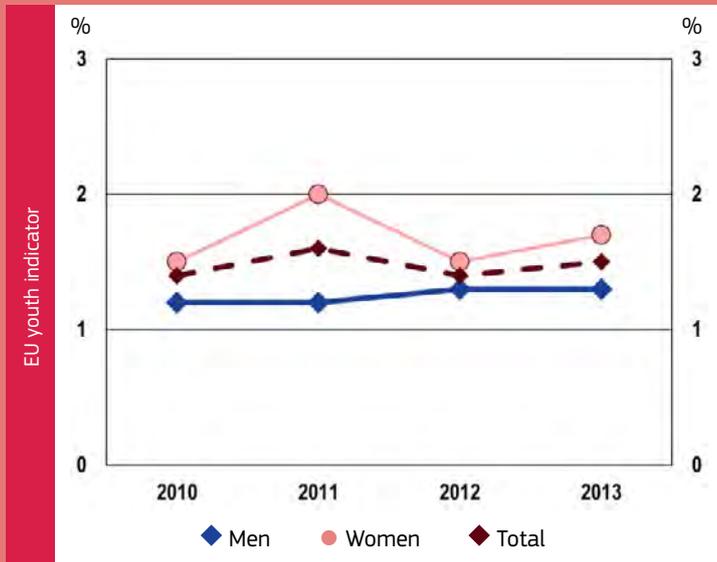
Figure 5-O: EU youth indicator: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination due to access barriers, by country and by age, 2013



Notes: Czech Republic: data not reliable for young people aged 16-24.

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [hlth_silc_03]

Figure 5-P: EU youth indicator: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examinations among young people (aged 16-24) because of barriers to access, EU-28 average, by sex, 2010-2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [ilc_iw01]

In the EU-28, the proportion of young people (aged 16-24) with unmet medical needs has on average been stable since 2010 (Figure 5-P). In 2013, the highest proportion of young people reporting unmet needs for medical examination was recorded in Latvia (4.9 %) and Iceland (4.7 %). Conversely, Spain (0.3 %) had the lowest proportion of young people reporting unmet needs for medical examination (Figure 5-O). Over the period 2010-2013,

The proportion of young people (aged 16-24) with unmet needs for medical care has been stable on average at the EU-28 level since 2010.

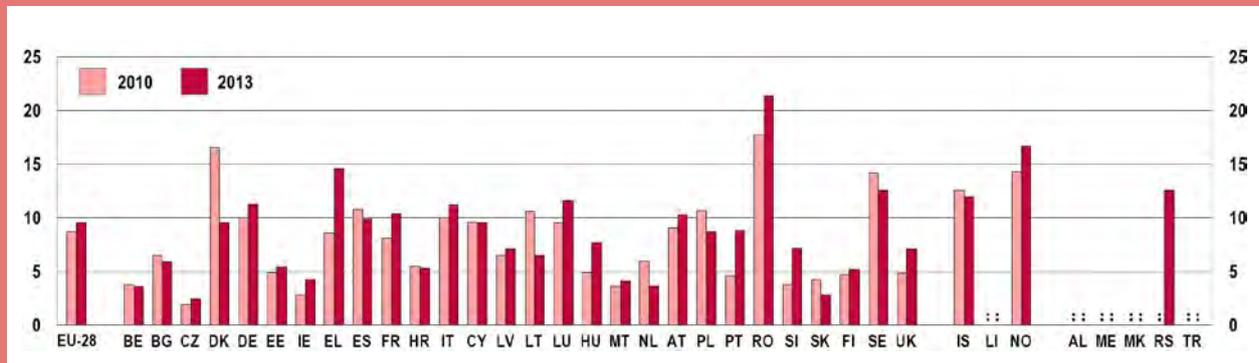
the biggest increases in the proportion of young people reporting unmet needs for medical examination were recorded in Estonia (3.0 percentage points) and Greece (2.1 percentage points).

Between 2010 and 2013, young women reported higher levels of unmet medical needs than young men (Figure 5-P). In 2013, the proportion of young women aged 16-24 reporting unmet medical needs was 0.4 percentage points higher than the one recorded for young men in the same age group.

5.4.3. In-work poverty

Poverty among those of working age can reflect both labour market exclusion (not having access to jobs) and in-work poverty (being in employment, but not earning enough to make a living)⁽¹²²⁾. Given the difficulties for young people in the labour market (see Chapter 4), it is particularly important to examine the effect this has on their risk of poverty and social exclusion. The EU-28 average in-work at-risk-of-poverty rate for young people aged 15-29 in 2013 was 9.5 % (Figure 5-Q).

At country level, the highest in-work at-risk-of-poverty rates for young people aged 15-29 were recorded in Romania (21.4 %), Norway (16.7 %), and Greece (14.6 %). On the other side of the spectrum, Belgium (3.6 %), Czech Republic (2.5 %) and Slovakia (2.8 %) showed the lowest rates.

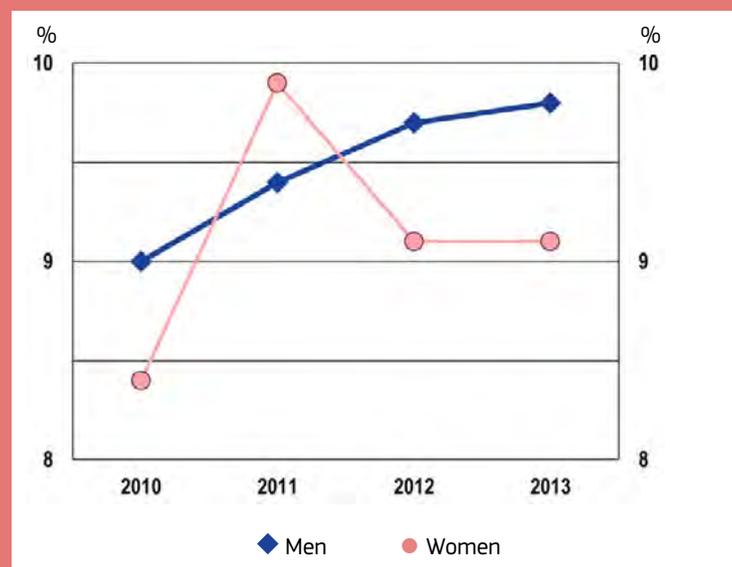
Figure 5-Q: In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate for young people (aged 15-29) by country, 2010 and 2013

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_130]

Over the period 2010-2013, the EU-28 in-work-at-risk-of-poverty rate for young people (aged 15-29) increased by 0.8 percentage points from 8.7 % in 2010 to 9.5 % in 2013. However, as Figure 5-R shows, the increase took place between 2010 and 2011; since 2011, the in-work-at-risk-of-poverty rate of young people has been falling in the EU-28. Nevertheless, the situation varies at country level: the in-work-at-risk-of-poverty rate for young people increased significantly in Greece (by 6.0 percentage points), Portugal (by 4.2 percentage points), and Romania (by 3.6 percentage points); while it decreased considerably in Denmark (by 7.1 percentage points), Lithuania (by 4.1 percentage points) and the Netherlands (by 2.3 percentage points).

From a gender perspective, the EU-28 average in-work at-risk-of-poverty rate was slightly higher for young men than women in 2013 (Figure 5-R). At country level, the highest gender gap in 2013 (where the rate for men was higher than for women) is recorded in Romania (7.1 percentage points) and Serbia (7.4 percentage points). However, for some countries the gender gap is reversed,

with a higher in-work at-risk-of-poverty rate for women than men. This is case in Italy (3.2 percentage points higher for women than men), Lithuania (4.4 percentage points) and Iceland (4.8 percentage points)⁽¹²³⁾.

Figure 5-R: In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate for young people (aged 15-29), EU-28 average, 2010- 2013

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [yth_incl_130]

5.5. Groups at risk of social exclusion

After discussing the main poverty and social exclusion indicators as well as specific aspects of poverty, the last section of this chapter turns to specific groups of young people who are more vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion than others. Specific groups of young people most affected by poverty or social exclusion include women, lower educated young people and migrants⁽¹²⁴⁾. Since the situation of young women was discussed above, two groups of young people were selected for this section: young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and young people from a migrant background.

5.5.1. Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

The indicator on NEETs aims to capture the predicament of a vulnerable group of young people in transition between education and the labour market. This transition between school and work is increasingly complex and individualised for today's young people (see Chapter 4). Those most at risk are young people having disabilities, coming from a migrant background, having a low level of education, living in remote areas, having a low household income, as well as young people with parents who experienced unemployment, have low levels of education or are divorced⁽¹²⁵⁾.

The difficulties faced in entering the labour market can lead to young people's disengagement from the world of work, making them vulnerable to social exclusion. The NEET group therefore includes not only the conventional unemployed job-seekers, but also those who are disengaged from both education and work and are therefore not looking for a job⁽¹²⁶⁾. Being economically inactive, nevertheless, does not always imply disengagement: NEETs also include those unavailable for work (e.g. young carers or those who are sick or disabled), the 'opportunity-seekers' (those who are waiting for better opportunities), and the 'voluntary NEETs' (those who choose to be inactive while travelling or engaging in activities such as arts or self-directed learning)⁽¹²⁷⁾. Yet, by not accumulating the human capital needed for work, even these last three subgroups are at risk of future social exclusion⁽¹²⁸⁾.

After a steady rise in NEET rates of those aged 15-24 in the EU-28 from 2009 due to the economic crisis⁽¹²⁹⁾, the NEET rate reached its peak of 13.1 % in 2012 and then started to decline (Figure 5-S).

Following increases up to 2012, small decreases in the share of NEETs were recorded in 2013 and 2014, mainly due to the decline in the share of unemployed NEETs between 2013 and 2014.

As Figure 5-S-b shows, this small decrease is due to a decline in the share of unemployed NEETs between 2013 and 2014, and, to a lesser degree, of inactive young people. In addition, looking at the education-

background of NEETs reveals that, over the four years considered, the gap between young people with low levels of education and their peers with medium to high levels of education has widened to the disadvantage of the latter group (see Figure 5-S-d).

124 Eurostat, 2015j.

125 Eurofound 2012, p. 55-56.

126 Ibid, p. 23.

127 Ibid, p. 24-25.

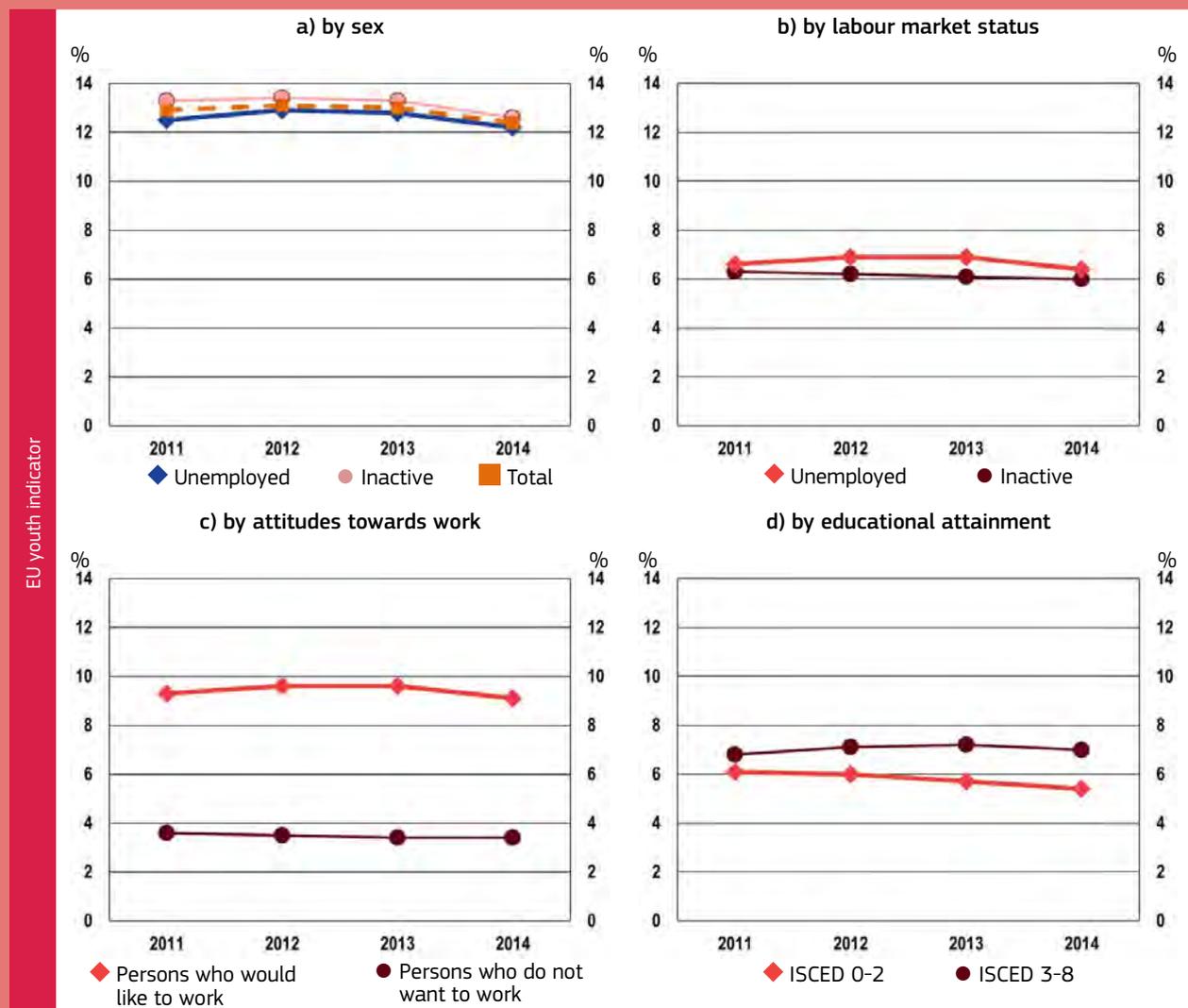
128 Ibid.

129 European Commission, 2012a.

In general in the EU-28, NEET rates are higher for women than for men (Figure 5-S-a). However, women are also the group for which the decline in the share of NEETs has been more relevant. Countries show great variation in regard to gender differences: NEET rates are actually higher for men in about half of EU-28 countries. Within the EU-28, differences between women and men exceed three percentage points in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta and Romania on the one hand (with higher NEET rates for women), and in

Croatia, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Finland on the other hand (with higher NEET rates for men)⁽¹³⁰⁾. With the exception of Malta, countries in the first group have periods of parental leave that are among the longest in Europe⁽¹³¹⁾, which can partly explain the relatively high share of inactive young women. Outside the EU-28, gender differences are the largest in Turkey, where NEET rates for women are exceptionally high (35 %, in contrast to the 14.6 % NEET rate for men), due to their very high inactivity rate⁽¹³²⁾.

Figure 5-S: EU youth indicator: Proportion of young people (aged 15-24) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), EU-28 average, 2011-2014



Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_150 and yth_empl_160]

130 Source: Eurostat LFS [yth_empl_150].

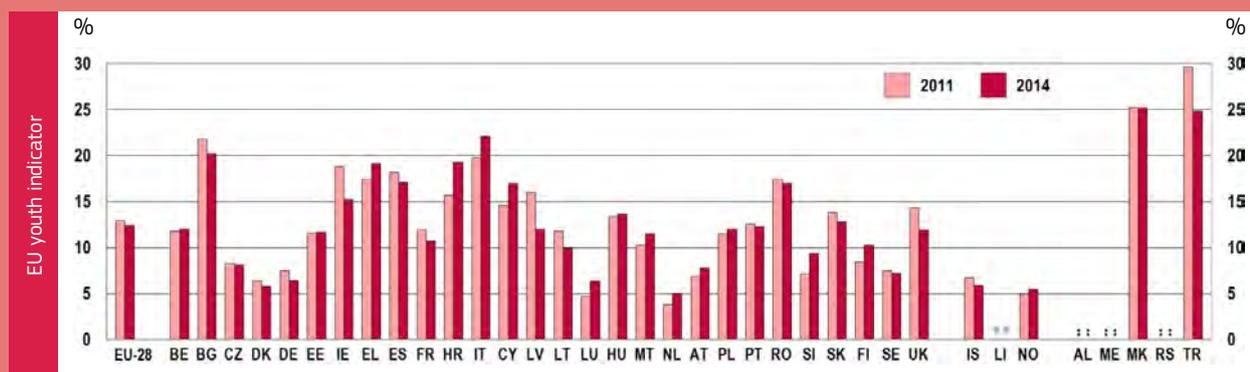
131 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat 2014, p. 37.

132 Source: Eurostat LFS [edat_ifse_20].

Looking at the differences between countries reveals that in 2014, NEET rates were the highest Bulgaria, Italy, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey,

all exceeding 20 % (Figure 5-T). On the other hand, NEET rates were around 6 % or below in Denmark, the Netherlands, Iceland and Norway.

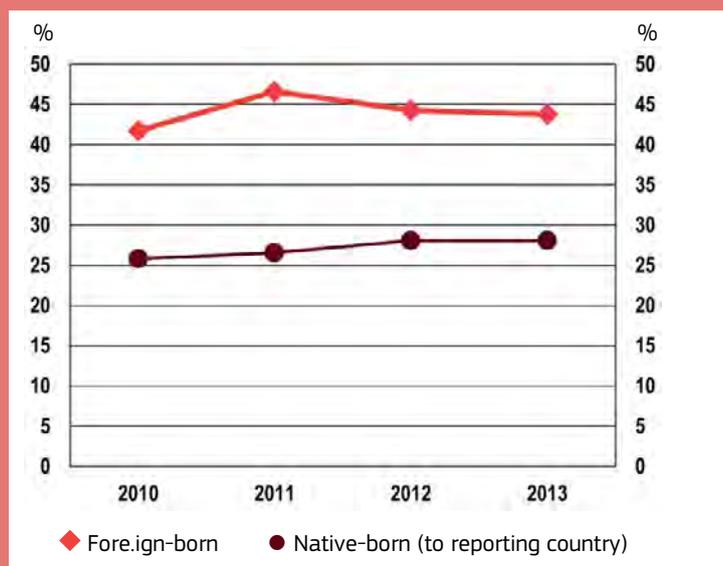
Figure 5-T: EU youth indicator: Proportion of young people (aged 15 to 24) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), by country, 2011 and 2014



Notes: Break in series: France (2013)

Source: Eurostat LFS [edat_ifse_20]

Figure 5-U: At-risk-of poverty or social exclusion rate of young people (aged 16-29) by country of birth, EU-28 average, 2010-2013



Source: Eurostat [yth_incl_020]

Between 2011 and 2014, NEET rates increased by more than 30 % in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Slovenia (although from a relatively low level) and by more than 20 % in Croatia and Finland, with Croatia registering quite high proportions of NEETs in 2014 (19.3 %). In contrast, NEET rates decreased by more than 15 % in Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the United Kingdom and Turkey in this period (Figure 5-U).

5.5.2. Young people from a migrant background

Migrants and ethnic minorities are among the groups most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion. They usually face multiple disadvantages leading to persistent poverty and a marginalised position in society. As the 2012 EU Youth Report pointed out, immigrants often lack the social capital (networks and information) needed for

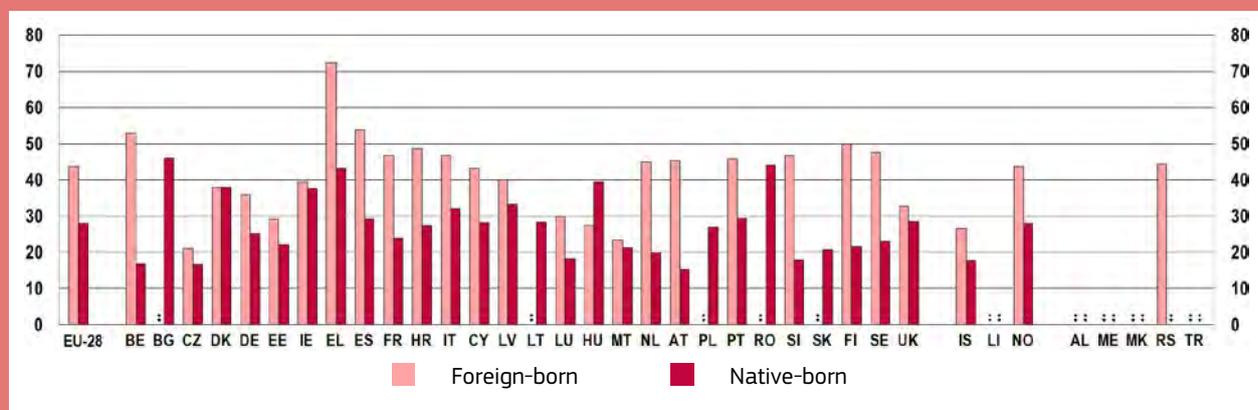
being fully included in society⁽¹³³⁾. As a result, migrants tend to be more at risk of poverty and social exclusion than the native-born population.

Figure 5-U shows the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates of foreign- and native-born young people. The differences between these two groups are telling: foreign-born young people are considerably more likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion than native-born youth in the EU-28 (43.8 % vs. 28.1 % in 2013). Nevertheless, while the rate for native-born young people has continued to grow since 2010, it has slightly declined since 2011 for their foreign-born peers.

The greater risk of poverty or social exclusion for young immigrants is evident in almost all European countries (Figure 5-V).

The risks for immigrant youth are especially large in Belgium, Austria and Slovenia, where the share of foreign-born young people who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion is about three times as high as for native-born youths. The smallest gaps in the poverty risk between native- and foreign-born youth are registered in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom. Though the reliability of the data on foreign-born young people is open to question, Hungary appears to be the only country where native-born young people are more vulnerable to the risk of poverty or social exclusion than the foreign-born, mostly due to the composition of the foreign-born population⁽¹³⁴⁾. The at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates of foreign-born youth are highest in Greece (72.3 %), Belgium (52.9 %), Spain (53.9 %), and Finland (50 %).

Figure 5-V: At-risk-of poverty or social exclusion rate of native- and foreign-born young people (aged 16-29), by country, 2013



Notes: Data on foreign-born young people: Data not reliable and not publishable for Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Data not reliable for Estonia, Latvia and Hungary.

Data on native-born young people: Serbia: not reliable and not publishable.

Source: Eurostat [yth_incl_020]

133 European Commission 2012a, p. 213-214.

134 On the typology of countries with respect to the type of migration inflow, see OECD, 2014a.

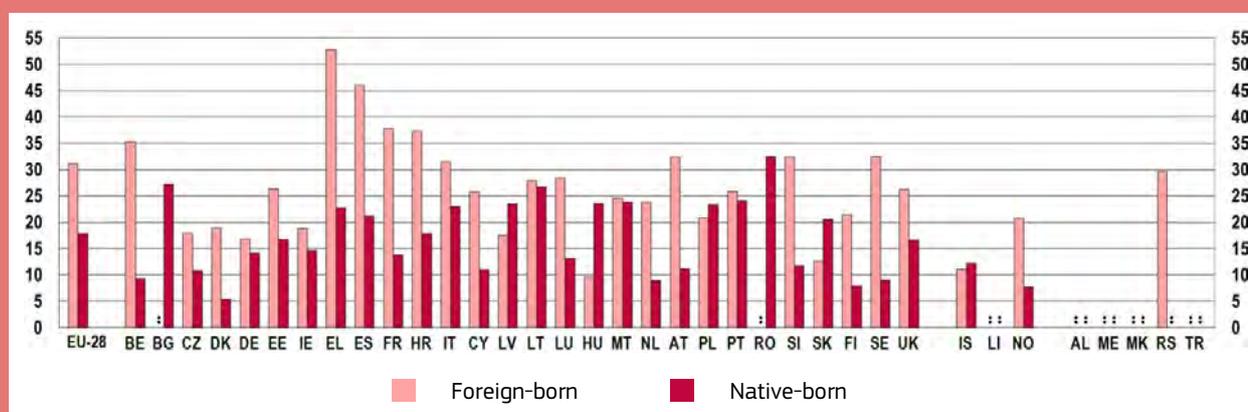
The situation looks similar when looking at second generation immigrants – the children of foreign-born parents. As Figure 5-W shows, the children of foreign-born parents are almost twice as likely to be at risk of poverty as the children of native-born parents in the EU-28 (31.1 % vs. 17.8 %). In addition, in contrast to the trends described above for young people, while the at-risk-of-poverty rates for children from native-born families decreased between 2010 and 2013, they increased slightly for the children of foreign-born parents⁽¹³⁵⁾.

The risk for immigrant children is the largest again in Belgium, but it is also high in Denmark and Sweden, where the proportion of children from foreign-born families who are at risk of poverty is more than three times as high as the relevant share of the children of native-born parents.

Conversely, in Hungary and Iceland, children from foreign-born families are at lower risk of poverty than children from native-born families. The at-risk-of-poverty rates of immigrant children are the highest in Greece (52.7 %), Spain (46 %), France (37.8 %) and Croatia (37.2 %), while they are lowest in Hungary (9.6 %) and Iceland (11.1 %).

Given the trans-generational transmission of poverty, children from poor families are also more likely to stay in poverty when they become adults⁽¹³⁶⁾. Immigrant children and those from poorer families are more likely to leave school early and have fewer chances to attain higher education qualifications⁽¹³⁷⁾, leading to further disadvantages in their working lives. Therefore, special attention must be paid to the issue of educational integration for young people from immigrant families.

Figure 5-W: At-risk-of poverty rate of children (aged 0 to 17 years) by parental origin and by country, 2013



Notes: Data on children with foreign-born parents: EU-28 average: estimate. Data not reliable and not publishable for Bulgaria and Romania. Data not reliable for Poland and Slovakia.

Data on children with native-born parents: Serbia: not applicable.

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [ilc_li34]

135 Source: Eurostat SILC [ilc_li34].

136 See e.g. Bellani and Bia, 2013.

137 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015.

6 Health and well-being

EU Youth Indicators

- ⇒ Share of daily smokers
- ⇒ Last 12 months prevalence of cannabis use
- ⇒ Death by intentional self-harm

Figures 6-B and 6-C

Figure 6-E

Figures 6-N and 6-O

6.1. Introduction

Young people in Europe have higher levels of life satisfaction and report a higher frequency of 'being happy' than older age groups⁽¹³⁸⁾. Nevertheless, difficulties in their transition to adulthood and independence have an influence on their health and well-being. Vulnerable groups of young people facing unemployment, poverty or social exclusion can especially experience more serious problems in their physical and mental health. For this reason, it is necessary to pay attention to young people's state of health, particularly in the current economic climate.

This chapter examines firstly the general health of young people; it then looks at recent trends in their susceptibility to 'risk behaviour' in terms of smoking, drug and alcohol use, sexual behaviour and physical inactivity. The last section addresses young people's mental well-being. Since the publication of the last EU Youth Report⁽¹³⁹⁾, no updates have been published on the EU youth indicators on obesity, drunkenness, road accidents and psychological distress; hence, no new analysis is provided on these indicators in this chapter⁽¹⁴⁰⁾. Therefore, in order to show progress, where possible, some of these issues are broached in relation to other indicators.

6.2. Young people's state of health

Young people are not only more satisfied with their life than older age groups, but they also feel healthier. As Figure 6-A-a shows, the proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 in the EU-28 who perceive their health to be 'bad' and 'very bad' is 8.4 percentage points lower than for the general population.

Differences between the proportion of young people and the total population feeling 'bad' and 'very bad' are especially wide in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Montenegro and Serbia, while they are narrowest in Ireland and Sweden. The proportion of young people feeling to be in 'bad' and 'very bad' health is the highest in Denmark (2.4 %), France (2.3 %), Latvia and the United Kingdom (2.6 %) and Norway (2.7 %), while the lowest in Greece and Spain (0.5 %) and Malta (0.4 %).

However, though the share of young people perceiving to be in 'bad' and 'very bad' health is quite low, there has been a 0.3 percentage points increase in this proportion in the EU-28 since 2010 (Figure 6-A-b). The largest increases took place in France (1.0 percentage points) and the United Kingdom (1.4 percentage points). On the other hand, the share of young people in bad and very bad health decreased substantially in Denmark and Slovenia (by 1.3 percentage points) and Portugal (by 1.4 percentage points).

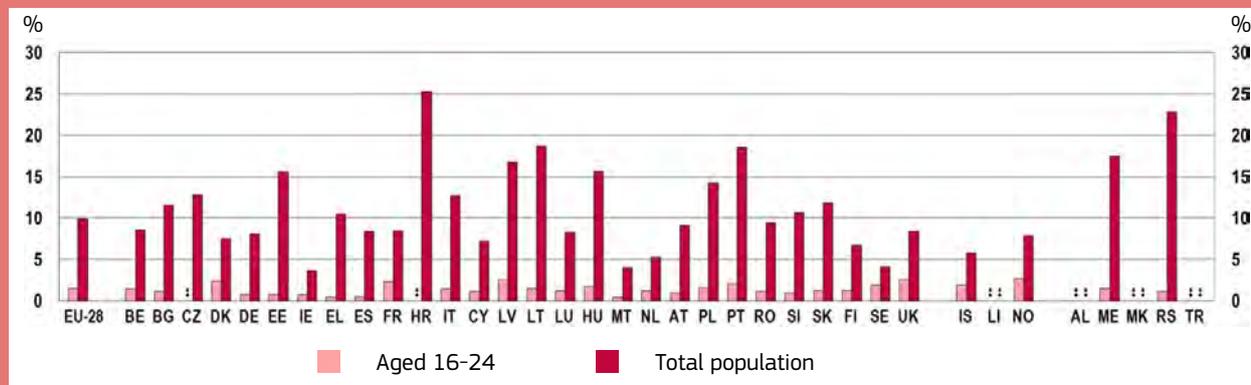
138 Eurostat 2013, SILC ad-hoc module on personal well-being [ilc_pw01 and ilc_pw08].

139 European Commission, 2012a.

140 These indicators can also be consulted on the website of the European Core Health Indicators (European Commission, 2015a).

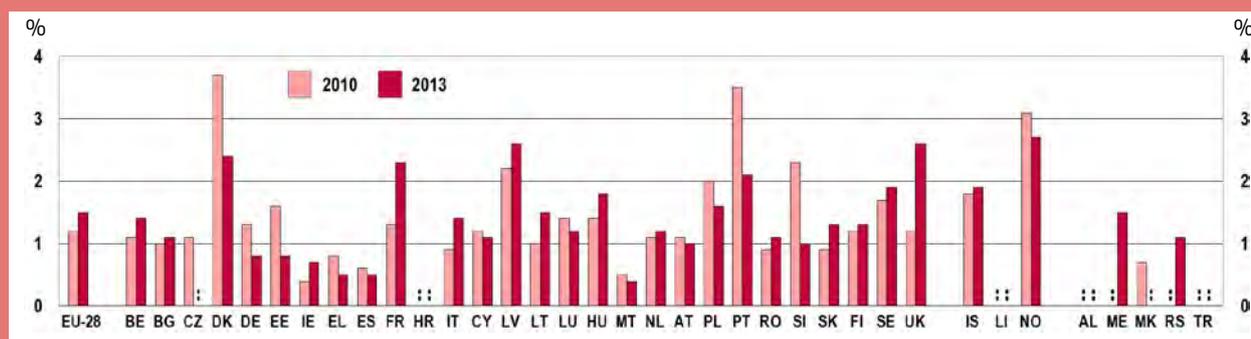
Figure 6-A: Self-perceived health: feeling 'bad' and 'very bad', by country and by age

a) by age, 2013



Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [hlth_silc_01]

b) young people (aged 16-24), 2010 and 2013



Notes: Data on young people aged 16-24 are not reliable and not publishable for the Czech Republic (2013) and Croatia (2010 and 2013). Data are not reliable for the Czech Republic (total population), Estonia (young people, 2010 and 2013), Croatia (total population), Lithuania (total population and young people, 2010 and 2013), the United Kingdom (young people, 2013), and Serbia (total population and young people, 2013).

Data on young people feeling 'very bad' are not available for Ireland (2010), Lithuania (2010), Malta (2010 and 2013), the Netherlands (2010), Finland (2010) and Iceland (2013). In these cases, data displayed on the figure is the proportion of young people reporting to feel 'bad'.

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC) [hlth_silc_01]

6.3. Health risks

Despite their generally good health, young people are more prone to risk behaviour than older age groups. Risk behaviours such as smoking, alcohol consumption, drug use, physical inactivity and unsafe sexual practices often cluster together and reinforce each other⁽¹⁴¹⁾. They are all

influenced by the same social factors: the level of deprivation and social exclusion, access to education, as well as the family, school and living environment⁽¹⁴²⁾. Moreover, these behaviours do not only have a strong influence on young people's health and well-being at the time they occur, but also have life-long effects⁽¹⁴³⁾.

141 Jackson et al., 2012.

142 Ibid.; Viner et al., 2012.

143 Sawyer et al., 2012.

Young people are the most vulnerable to risk behaviours when their life is in transition⁽¹⁴⁴⁾. As has been discussed in earlier chapters, young people undergo various transition periods as they grow up: from childhood to adolescence, from education to work, and from living with their parents to living with their peers or alone. In this context, barriers to accessing higher levels of education, leaving school prematurely, long periods of unemployment or insecure housing situations all increase the probability of young people engaging in risk behaviours⁽¹⁴⁵⁾. Moreover, as was shown in Chapters 4 and 5, these transition periods are becoming longer and more complex, thus increasing young people's vulnerability⁽¹⁴⁶⁾.

Youth transitions are becoming longer, more complex and more individualised. This impacts on health-related behaviours and has long-term consequences for young people's health.

This section provides an overview of the behaviours that may put young Europeans' health at risk. Yet, it has to be noted that data are often limited to only a few countries, or are based on surveys for which no time series is available. This hampers the possibility to make comprehensive comparisons across European countries and through time. Nevertheless, this section

provides an analysis based on the most up-to-date comparative data in the relevant fields.

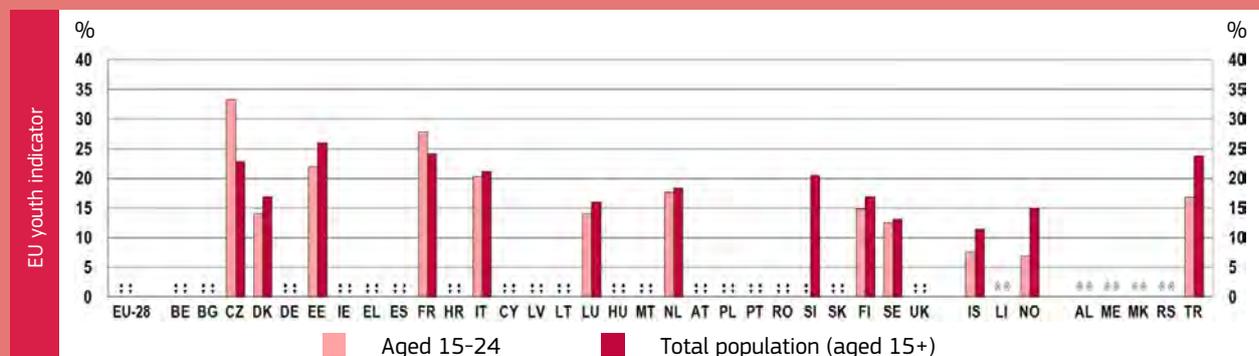
6.3.1. Smoking

Smoking is a well-known health risk and is the leading cause of preventable death⁽¹⁴⁷⁾. However, as Figure 6-B-a shows based on data from 2012 and 2013, a relatively large percentage of young people aged 15 to 24 still smoke daily in European countries, especially in the Czech Republic (33.2 %) and France (27.9 %). These are also the two countries with available data where young people smoke more than older age groups. Young men are particular-

ly prone to daily smoking – with more of them smoking on a daily basis than young women in all countries with available data (Figure 6-B-b). Nevertheless, gender differences are quite small in most Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland) and Luxembourg; whereas almost six times more young men than young women smoke daily in Turkey.

Figure 6-B: EU youth indicator: Share of daily smokers, by country and by age, 2012/2013

a) by age



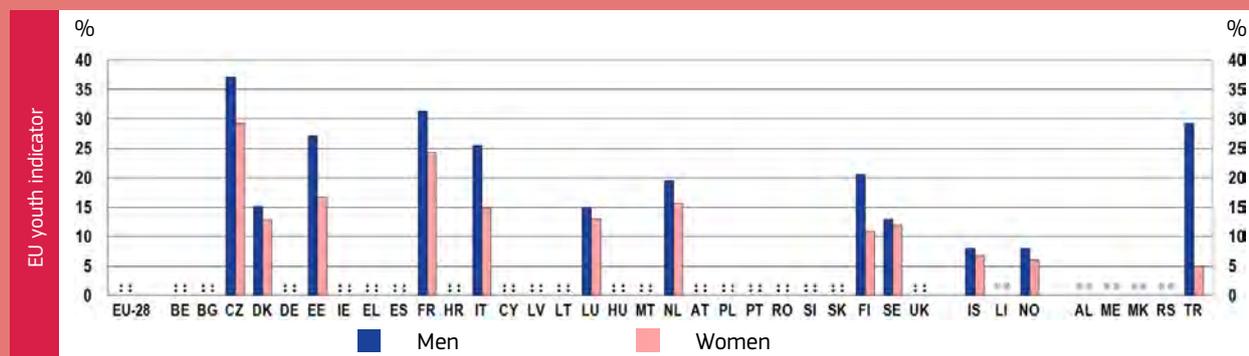
144 Furlong et al., 2003; Jackson et al., 2012.

145 Furlong, 2002; Jackson et al., 2012.

146 Furlong, 2002; Jackson et al., 2012.

147 WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012, p. 141.

b) Share of daily smokers among young people (aged 15-24), by sex



Notes: CZ, EE, FR, NL, SI, FI, SE, TR: 2012; DK, IT, LU, NO, IS: 2013

Source: OECD Health Statistics

The proportion of people who smoke daily has been steadily decreasing since the beginning of the 2000s in almost all European countries with available data (Figure 6-C), pointing towards the effectiveness of anti-smoking campaigns and smoke-free legislation⁽¹⁴⁸⁾. Countries registering the greatest decreases in the proportion of young people who smoke daily between 2002 and 2013 are shown on Figure 6-C-a: they are Luxembourg and Norway, with a fall of around 23 and 19 percentage points respectively, followed by the Netherlands, Finland and Iceland. In Luxembourg, Norway, Finland and Iceland, the proportion is now below 15%. On the other hand, the countries where the proportion of young people smoking daily has remained relatively stable (with a decrease of less than 6 percentage points) are Estonia, France, Italy and Sweden, though France registered a recent increase of 2.3 percentage points between 2010 and 2012 (depicted on Figure 6-C-b).

The proportion of young people smoking daily has been in decline since the early 2000s, though not in all countries.

Among the countries with available data, the only country where the proportion of young people smoking daily has been on the rise since 2002 is the Czech Republic (Figure 6-C-b). This increase has been especially striking in the case of women: the proportion of young female smokers in 2012 was almost the double of the same ratio in 2002⁽¹⁴⁹⁾. Differences between the smoking trends of women and men have also been registered in Estonia and Sweden. In Estonia, the proportion of young women smoking daily has been increasing since 2002; while in Sweden, the proportion of young men smoking daily was growing in this period⁽¹⁵⁰⁾.

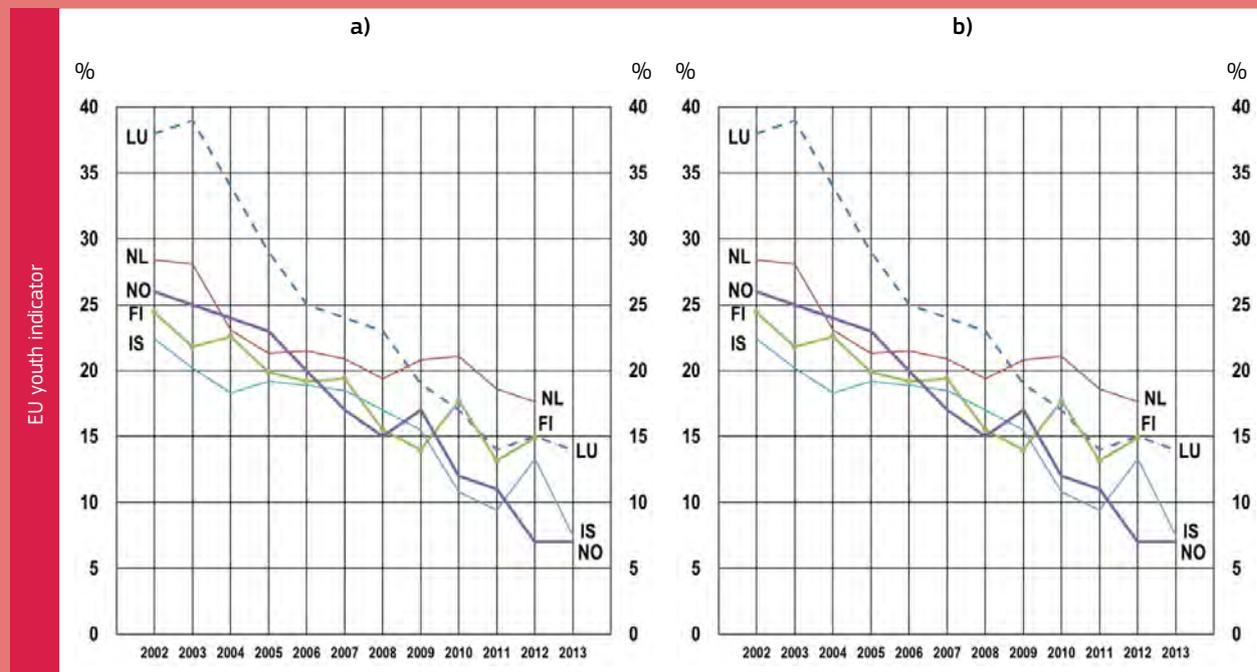
This decreasing trend is also confirmed by a recently released Eurobarometer survey on the attitudes of Europeans towards tobacco⁽¹⁵¹⁾. In comparison to previous surveys, the proportion of smokers (not daily smokers, but smokers in general) decreased in

148 See e.g. WHO, 2014.

149 See OECD Health Statistics, available at: http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=HEALTH_LVNG# [Accessed 22 January 2015].

150 Ibid.

151 Special Eurobarometer 429, 'Attitudes of Europeans towards tobacco and electronic cigarettes', 2015 (European Commission, 2015c).

Figure 6-C: EU youth indicator: Share of daily smokers among young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2002-2013

Notes: EE, FR: data not available for 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011; IT: data not available for 2004.

Source: OECD Health Statistics

almost all EU-28 countries⁽¹⁵²⁾. However, no data on young people are available by country in these Eurobarometer surveys.

6.3.2. Alcohol consumption

Alcohol is the most consumed psychoactive substance⁽¹⁵³⁾. Despite its links with health problems, unsafe sex and violent behaviour, young people do not perceive the occasional drink as a health risk: 77 % of respondents in a recent Eurobarometer survey believed that drinking alcohol once or twice poses 'no risk' or only a 'low risk'⁽¹⁵⁴⁾. Nevertheless, regular drinking was perceived differently: 57 % of young respondents thought that regular alcohol consumption posed a high risk to their health⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. However, the limits

between drinking 'once or twice' and 'regularly' are often drawn arbitrarily and can become blurred.

This section relies on the indicator on the last month prevalence of alcohol use among young people⁽¹⁵⁶⁾, based on national survey data collected by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EM-CDDA). This indicator has to be treated with caution, since it does not distinguish between occasional and regular drinking; neither does it indicate the amount of alcohol drunk on any occasion. Nevertheless, past surveys suggest that young people are less likely to drink daily and more likely to drink 5 or more drinks (heavy episodic or binge drinking) once a week than people above the age of 55⁽¹⁵⁷⁾.

152 European Commission 2015c, p. 15.

153 WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009, p. 82.

154 Flash Eurobarometer 401, 'Young people and drugs', 2014 (European Commission 2014i).

155 Ibid. No definitions of 'once or twice' or 'regularly' were given in the questionnaire.

156 No new data on drunkenness based on the ESPAD survey used in the last EU Youth Report (European Commission, 2012a) were published since 2012.

157 Special Eurobarometer 331, 'EU citizens' attitudes towards alcohol', 2010 (European Commission, 2010b).

Figure 6-D-a confirms the widespread consumption of alcohol by young Europeans. In almost all countries with available data, more than 50 % of young people (and people from older age groups) reported having drunk alcohol in the past month. Alcohol consumption is slightly less prevalent in Portugal and Romania, where just over 40 % of young people aged 15-24 drink regularly (at least once in the past month), and very low in Turkey, where only 12 % of young people reported drinking alcohol in the month before the data collection. In contrast, drinking alcohol is the most widespread – with more than 70 % of young people reporting recent alcohol consumption – in Germany, Estonia, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Slovenia.

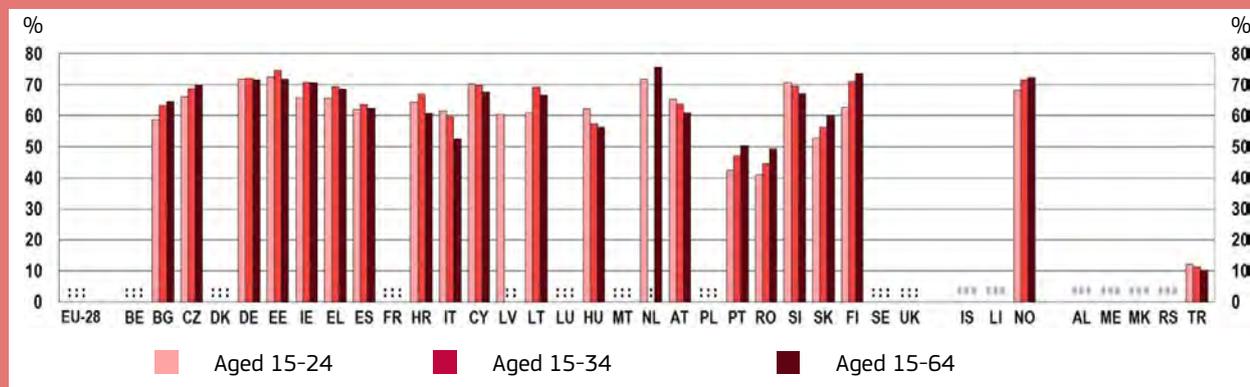
Different patterns of alcohol consumption are evident across Europe. In about a third

of countries with available data, consumption increases with age; in another third, the 15-34 age group is the most prone to regular drinking; and in the final third of countries, consumption decreases with age. Countries in this latter group – where young people drink more than older age groups – are Italy, Cyprus, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia and Turkey.

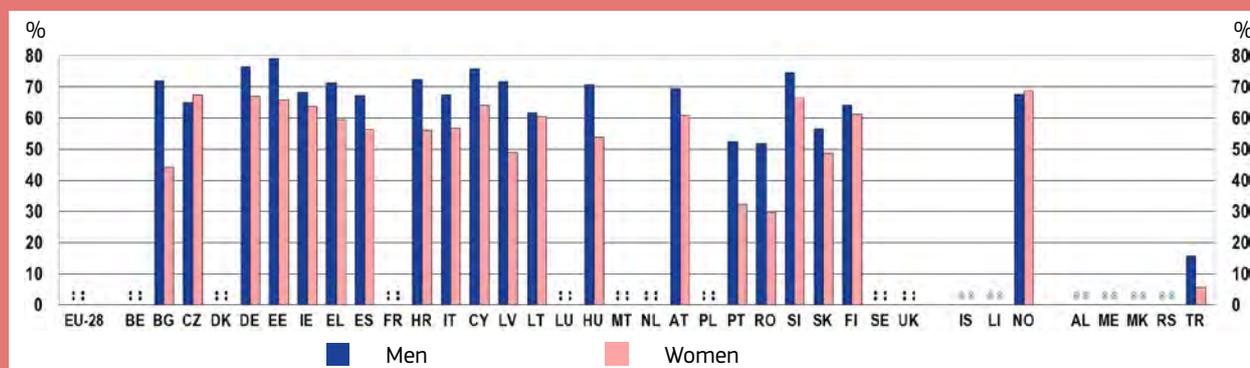
As with smoking, drinking alcohol is more of a habit among men than women¹⁵⁸. As Figure 6-D-b depicts, with the exception of the Czech Republic and Norway, alcohol consumption is higher among men than women in all countries with available data. Differences between the sexes are the widest in Turkey, followed by Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal; while they are narrowest in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Finland and Norway.

Figure 6-D: Last month prevalence of alcohol use, by country and by age, year of the last available national survey

a) by age, 2013



b) Last month prevalence of alcohol use of young people (aged 15-24), by sex



Notes: EL: 2004; HU: 2007; AT, EE: 2008; NL: 2009; RO, SK, FI: 2010; IE, ES, LV, TR: 2011; BG, CZ, DE, HR, IT, CY, LT, PT, SI, NO: 2012 - Source: EMCDDA.

158 For gender differences regarding the frequency of getting drunk, see the 2012 EU Youth Report (European Commission, 2012a).

6.3.3. Drug use

Young people – especially in adolescence – are particularly vulnerable to substance use and substance use disorders⁽¹⁵⁹⁾. As mentioned above, the insecurity experienced in this transition period, together with factors such as the experience of deprivation, an insecure family environment or peer pressure all increase the likelihood of risk behaviour.

This section focuses in the first place on cannabis, the most popular drug used by young people aged 15 to 24⁽¹⁶⁰⁾. It also examines data on 'legal highs': new synthetic psychoactive substances that imitate the effects of illicit drugs, but, as yet, are still legal or not controlled. According to the EMCDDA, although the use of such legal highs is still relatively low in Europe, they are growing rapidly. In addition, though they are not perceived as such (see Figure 6-G), accessing them is fairly easy, since they are available online⁽¹⁶¹⁾.

According to the 2014 Eurobarometer survey on drugs, in comparison to alcohol, fewer young people think that using cannabis once or twice poses 'no risk' or only a 'low risk' to health, but this proportion is still relatively high, 50 %⁽¹⁶²⁾. A majority of respondents (63 %) thought that regular

cannabis use posed a high health risk (as discussed above, the same percentage for alcohol was 57 %) ⁽¹⁶³⁾. In contrast, the new synthetic substances are perceived to be much more dangerous: 57 % of respondents thought that using them even once or twice posed a high health risk, while regular use was perceived to be highly risky by 87 % of young respondents ⁽¹⁶⁴⁾.

Young people are more prone to using cannabis than older age groups. According to national surveys collected by the EMCDDA, in all countries with available data, the likelihood of using cannabis decreases with age, thus young people aged 15 to 24 are much more likely to use this substance than older age groups (Figure 6-E-a). Late

Young people are more likely to use cannabis than older age groups. Young men are more prone to substance use than young women.

adolescence and young adulthood is often described as the age of 'experimentation', when young people try new substances, often without becoming addicted to them.

As Figure 6-E-a depicts, the greatest differences between cannabis use among young adults and that of the wider population (between 15 and 64 years of age) are in Hungary, where young adults are more than four times more likely to have used cannabis in the past year than the wider adult population, followed by Denmark, Italy and Norway, where this ratio is almost 3.5.

159 WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009, p. 80.

160 Ibid, p. 84.

161 EMCDDA, 2012, 2014.

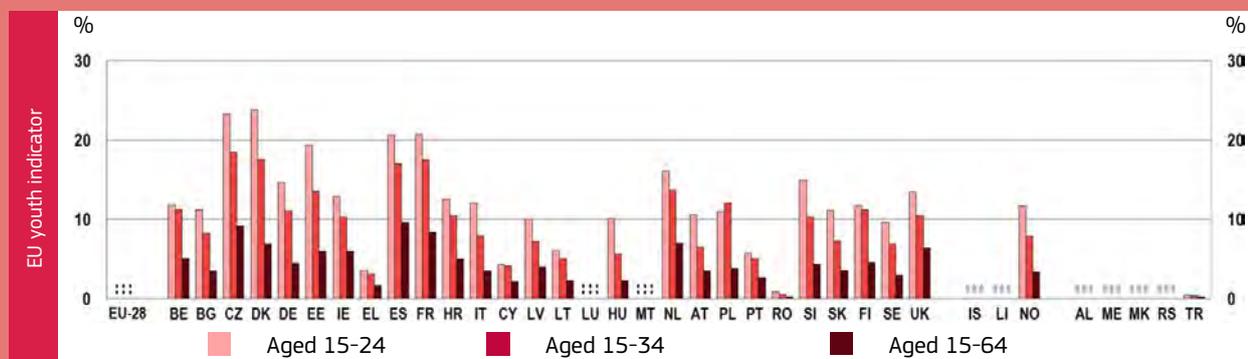
162 Flash Eurobarometer 401, 'Young people and drugs', 2014 (European Commission 2014i).

163 Ibid.

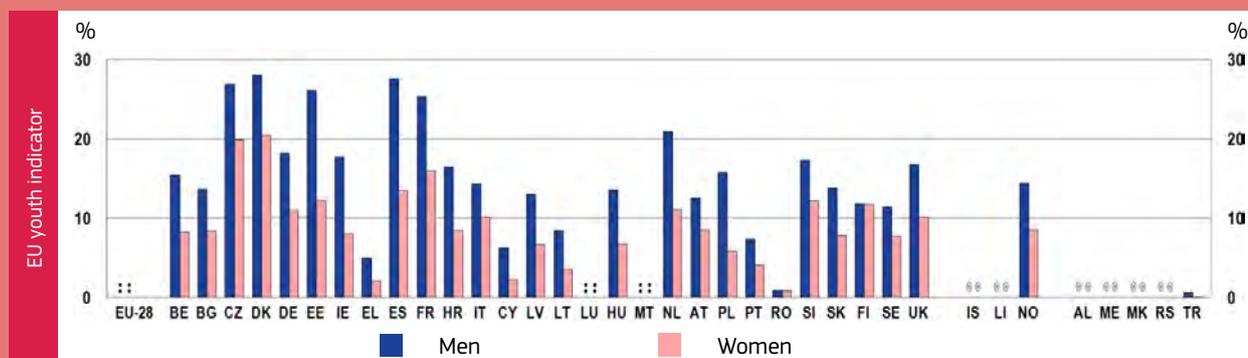
164 Ibid.

Figure 6-E: EU youth indicator: Last 12 months prevalence of cannabis use, by country and by age, year of the last available national survey

a) by age



b) Last 12 months prevalence of cannabis use of young people (aged 15-24), by sex



Notes: EL: 2004; HU: 2007; BE, AT, EE: 2008; NL: 2009; FR, RO, SK, FI: 2010; IE, ES, LV, TR: 2011; BG, CZ, DE, HR, IT, CY, LT, PL, PT, SI, SE, UK, NO: 2012; DK: 2013; UK: England and Wales only.

Source: EMCDDA

As with smoking and alcohol consumption, men are more prone to cannabis use than women in all countries with available data (see Figure 6-E-b). The difference between the sexes is the largest again in Turkey, though cannabis consumption is very low for both sexes. Men are more than 2.5 times more likely to use cannabis than women in Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania and Poland. There is no difference between men and women in Romania in their use of cannabis, which is at a very low level in this country, as well as in Finland.

The Eurobarometer surveys on drugs allow for comparing cannabis use in 2011 and

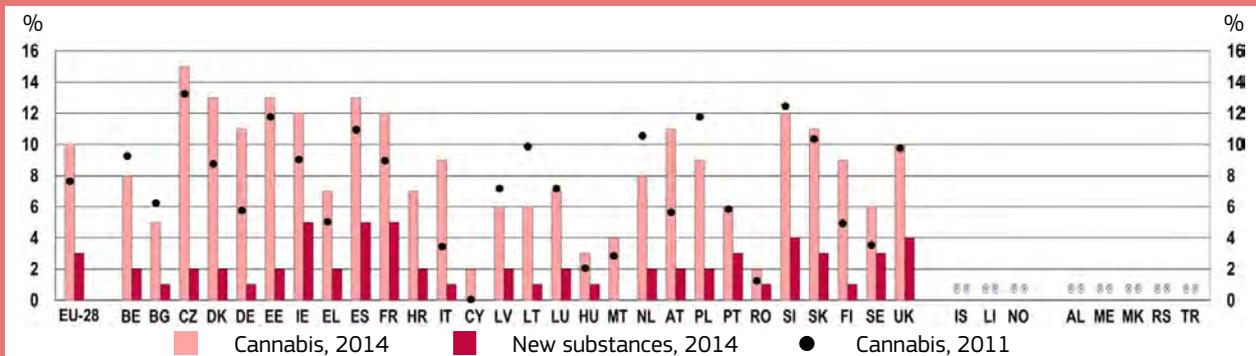
2014, indicating an increase in the European Union from 7.6 % to 10 % (Figure 6-F)¹⁶⁵. Countries registering significant increases were Denmark, Germany, Italy, Cyprus, Austria and Finland, while cannabis consumption decreased significantly in Lithuania.

The 2014 survey shows that cannabis use was the most widespread in the Czech Republic (15 %), Denmark, Estonia and Spain (13 %), while its use was reported to be the lowest in Hungary (3 %), Cyprus and Romania (2 %).

In contrast, as Figure 6-F also shows, new substances are rarely used by young

165 Longer-term time series are available regarding the consumption of cannabis and amphetamines in the framework of the European Core Health Indicators (indicator 48 on the 'use of illicit drugs') on the website of the European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety (European Commission, 2015a).

Figure 6-F: Last 12 months prevalence of cannabis and ‘new substances’ use of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2011 and 2014



Notes: Questions: ‘Have you used cannabis yourself?’ and ‘New substances that imitate the effects of illicit drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, etc. may now sometimes be available. They are sometimes called (...) ‘legal highs’, or ‘research chemicals’ and can come in different forms, for example herbal mixtures, powders, crystals or tablets. Have you ever used such substances?’

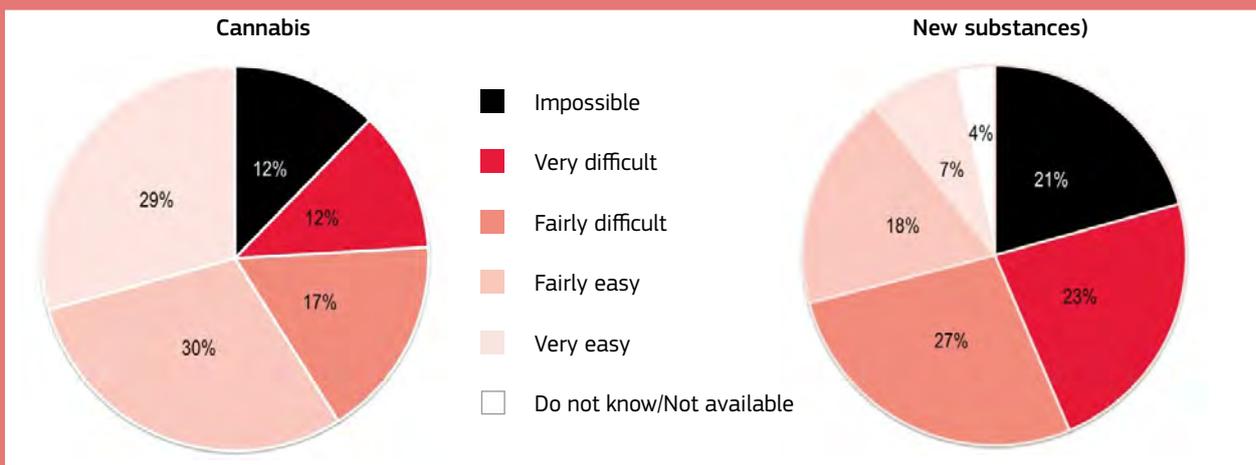
Base: all respondents, % of ‘yes, in the last 12 months’ answers by country, EU-28 in 2014 and EU-27 in 2011

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 401, ‘Young people and drugs’, 2014 and Flash Eurobarometer 330, ‘Youth attitudes on drugs’, 2011

Europeans, only 3 % of respondents report using the new synthetic substances. These new drugs were used the most in Ireland, Spain and France (5 %). They are typically

used in social settings: 68 % of users reported to have obtained them from their friends, 60 % used them together with friends and 65 % at a party or an event⁽¹⁶⁶⁾.

Figure 6-G: Young people’s (aged 15-24) perception of the difficulty in obtaining drugs within 24 hours, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: Question: ‘Q11. How difficult or easy do you think it would be for you personally to obtain the following substances within 24 hours?’ – ‘Cannabis’; ‘New substances that imitate the effects of illicit drugs’

Base: all respondents, EU-28

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 401, ‘Young people and drugs’, 2014

Differences in the consumption of these two substances are in line with their perceived danger to health as well as the perceived difficulty in accessing them. Figure 6-G depicts young people's perception of the difficulty in obtaining different drugs within 24 hours (15-24 age group). Data show that while the majority of young people (59 %) thought that getting access to cannabis was easy, new substances were perceived to be rather difficult to get hold of: 21 % of respondents thought it impossible to obtain them within 24 hours, and 50 % thought this would be difficult.

6.3.4. Sexual risk behaviour

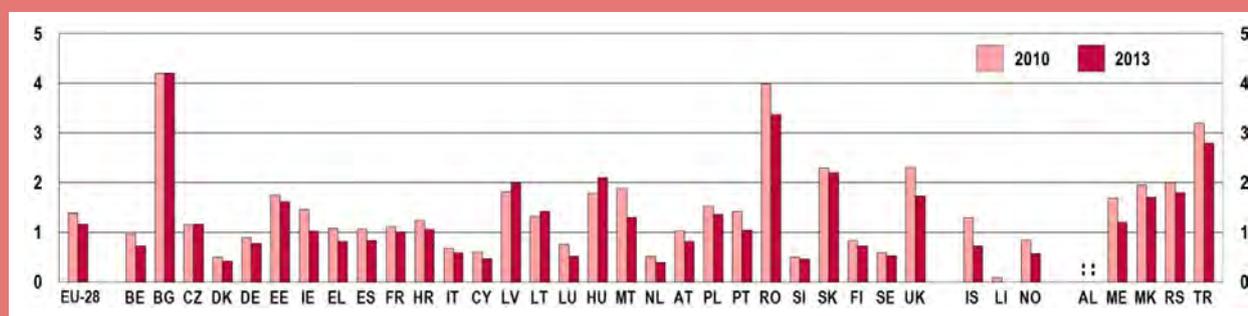
High-risk sexual behaviour (most notably early first intercourse, multiple sexual partners, or inconsistent condom use) is influenced by the same social factors as the various types of substance use and is even associated with them⁽¹⁶⁷⁾. Such risky behaviour carries the danger of contracting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS and can result in unplanned pregnancies.

Fertility rates as well as the percentage of legally induced abortions are decreasing among girls aged 15 to 19.

Collecting data on the sexual risk behaviour of young people or on its consequences is difficult and complex. For example, the true incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) is likely to be considerably higher than data suggest, since due to differences in testing methods, screening programmes and surveillance systems across Europe, many cases remain unreported or misdiagnosed.

In the absence of more accurate data, fertility and abortion rates are indications of sexual activity without contraception. Figure 6-H shows the fertility rates of young women aged 15 to 19 in 2010 and 2013. In 2013, fertility rates of 15 to 19 year-old girls were the highest in Bulgaria (4.2 live births per 100 women) and Romania (3.3), and the lowest in the Netherlands (0.4) and Liechtenstein (no live births per 100 women aged 15-19). Almost every country shows declining trends since 2010 for this indicator, with the exception of Bulgaria (no change since 2010), the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary. In the EU-28, fertility rates among young women show a 15 % decrease in 2013 compared to 2010.

Figure 6-H: Fertility rate among young women (aged 15-19), by country, 2010 and 2013 (live births per 100 women)

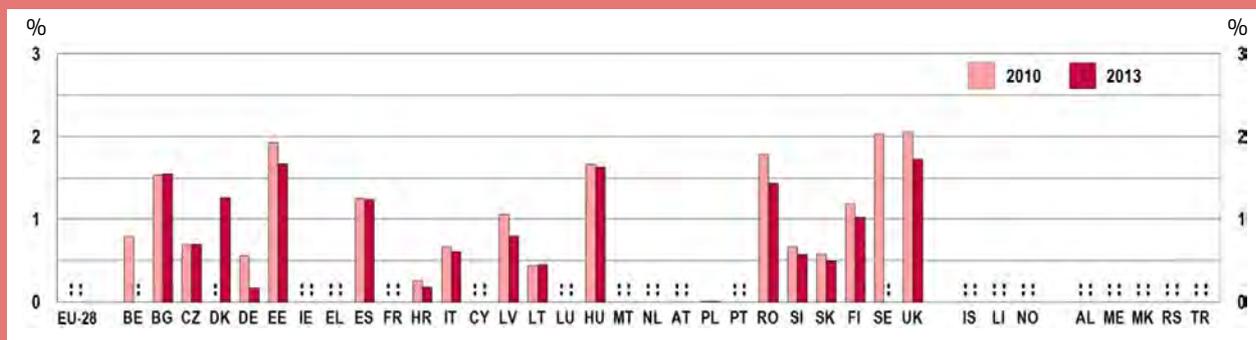


Source: Eurostat [demo_frate]

Similar trends can also be observed based on available data on the percentage of legally induced abortions in the same age group (young women aged 15 to 19). The percentage of young women's abortions declined in every country except Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Lithuania, though absolute numbers decreased even in these

three countries. The decline is especially pronounced in Germany, Romania and the United Kingdom (Figure 6-I). In 2013, the percentage of legally induced abortions for very young women was the highest in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary and the United Kingdom.

Figure 6-I: Percentage of legally induced abortions among young women (aged 15-19), by country, 2010 and 2013



Notes: For Spain, Italy, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, data are from 2012 instead of 2013. Average populations were calculated as the arithmetic averages between the population on the 1 January in the given year, and on 1 January in the following year.

Source: Eurostat [demo_fabort and demo_pjangroup] and own calculations.

6.3.5. Physical inactivity

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality⁽¹⁶⁸⁾. Physical inactivity is one of the main causes of obesity, which has long-lasting health consequences if it develops early in childhood⁽¹⁶⁹⁾.

Recent Eurobarometer surveys indicate that young people aged 15-24 are the most physically active of the age groups investigated⁽¹⁷⁰⁾. As Figure 6-J depicts, only 36 % of young people aged 15-24 seldom or never take exercise or play sport, as opposed to 54 % in the 25-39 age group, 61 % of those aged 40-54 and 70 % of people over 55. Yet, differences between the age groups are much smaller when it comes to engaging in less

Almost half of young women seldom or never engage in physical activity.

formalised physical activities like cycling, dancing or gardening: 44 % of young people seldom or never engage in such activities, while the corresponding proportion is 57 % in the oldest (55+) age group (see Figure 6-K).

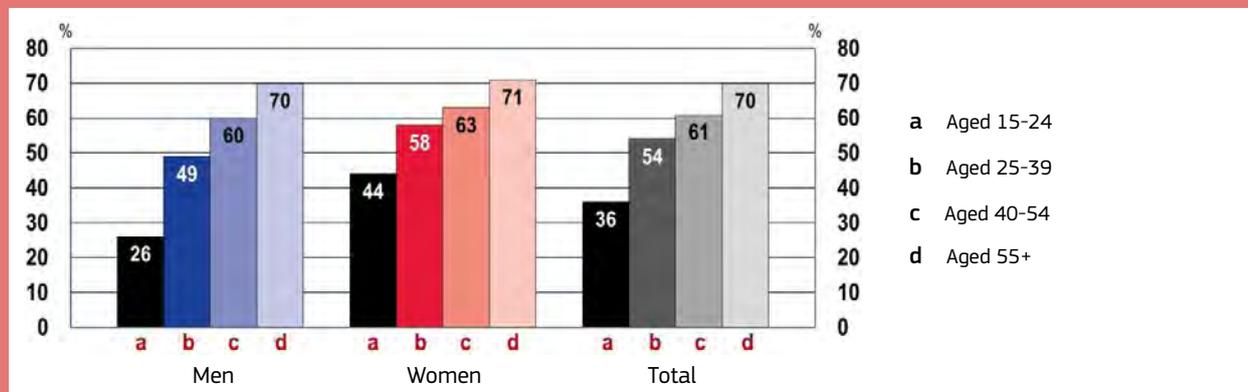
Similarly, while relatively large differences exist between young women and men in the frequency of taking exercise or playing sport, differences are much smaller when it comes to their engagement in other physical activities (see Figure 6-J and 6-K). Nonetheless, women are more likely to be physically inactive than men: 44 % of young women seldom or never take exercise or play sport, and 49 % seldom or never engage in other physical activities (as opposed to the 26 % and 40 % of men respectively).

168 WHO 2010, p. 10.

169 On obesity, see European Commission, 2012a.

170 Special Eurobarometer 412, 'Sport and physical activity', 2014 (European Commission, 2014j).

Figure 6-J: Proportion of people seldom or never taking exercise or playing sport, by age and by sex, EU-28 average, 2013

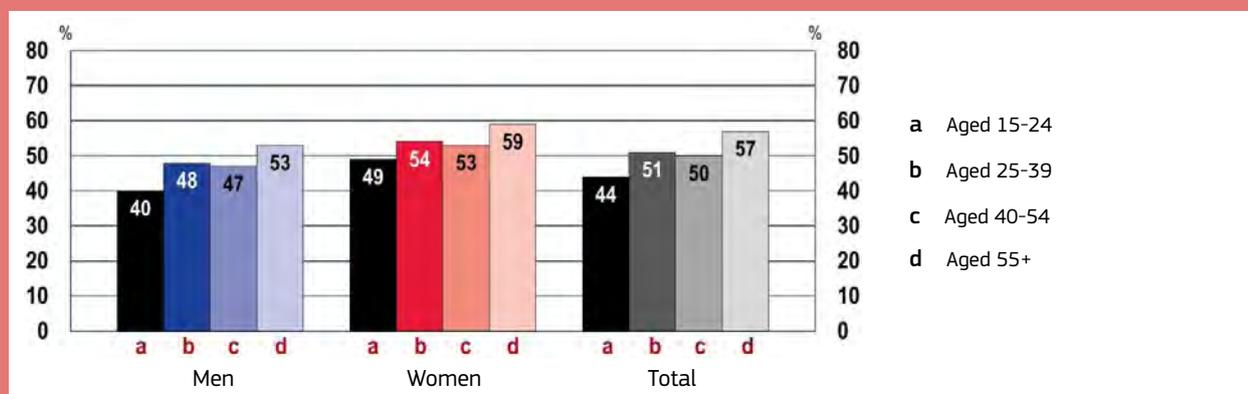


Notes: Question: 'How often do you exercise or play sport?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'less than 1 to 3 times a month' and 'never' answers, EU-28

Source: Special Eurobarometer 412, 'Sport and physical activity', 2014

Figure 6-K: Proportion of people seldom or never engaging in physical activities such as cycling, dancing or gardening, by age and by sex, EU-28 average, 2013



Notes: Question: 'And how often do you engage in other physical activity such as cycling from one place to another, dancing, gardening, etc.?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'less than 1 to 3 times a month' and 'never' answers, EU-28

Source: Special Eurobarometer 412, 'Sport and physical activity', 2014

Although a direct comparison between the Eurobarometer surveys conducted in 2009 and 2013 is not possible due to a change in the question on physical activity (in 2009, it also included 'walking from one place to another'), the direction of change between the surveys is not encouraging¹⁷¹. While the

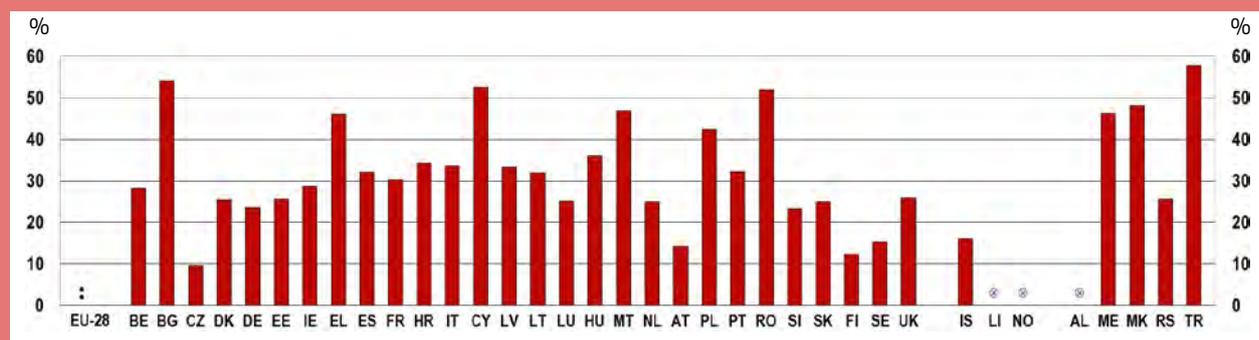
proportion of young people seldom or never taking exercise or playing sport has decreased since 2009 (especially among young women), data on the share of young people, and primarily on the share of young women seldom or never engaging in other physical activities point towards increasing inactivity.

171 Special Eurobarometer 412, 'Sport and physical activity', 2014 (European Commission, 2014j), and Special Eurobarometer 334, 'Sport and physical activity', 2010 (European Commission, 2010c).

While sample sizes in Eurobarometer surveys do not allow for analysing young people's inactivity by country, data are available from the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) conducted by Eurofound⁽¹⁷²⁾. As Figure 6-L shows, physical

inactivity among young respondents aged between 18 and 24 was particularly high (more than 50 %) in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania and Turkey. Young people were the most physically active in the Czech Republic, Austria and Finland.

Figure 6-L: Proportion of young people (aged 18-24) seldom or never taking part in sports or physical exercise, by country, 2011



Source: Eurofound, EQLS

6.4. Mental well-being

The transition from childhood to adulthood and the societal and family pressures that young people face in such contexts also influence their mental health. Though mental and psychological distress is still less prevalent among young people than older age groups, special attention has to be paid to young people and the factors influencing their vulnerability. As with risk behaviour, mental health is also influenced by the socio-economic conditions of young people's lives – their level of social exclusion and degree of poverty. For this reason, the economic crisis may also have had an impact on the mental health of young people due to their parents' circumstances as well as their own difficulties⁽¹⁷³⁾. As Chapters 4 and 5 of this report showed, youth unemployment and social exclusion rates have grown considerably, which certainly influences young people's mental health and psychological well-being.

The mental well-being index developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) is compiled on the basis of five questions⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ related to a person's mental well-being. The European Quality of Life Survey includes information on this well-being index, and allows for comparisons between countries, age groups, social groups and over time. The higher the average mental well-being score, the better the respondents' perception of their own psychological well-being. For example, as the EQLS survey shows, the mental well-being index is higher for those in employment than for both the unemployed and the inactive⁽¹⁷⁵⁾.

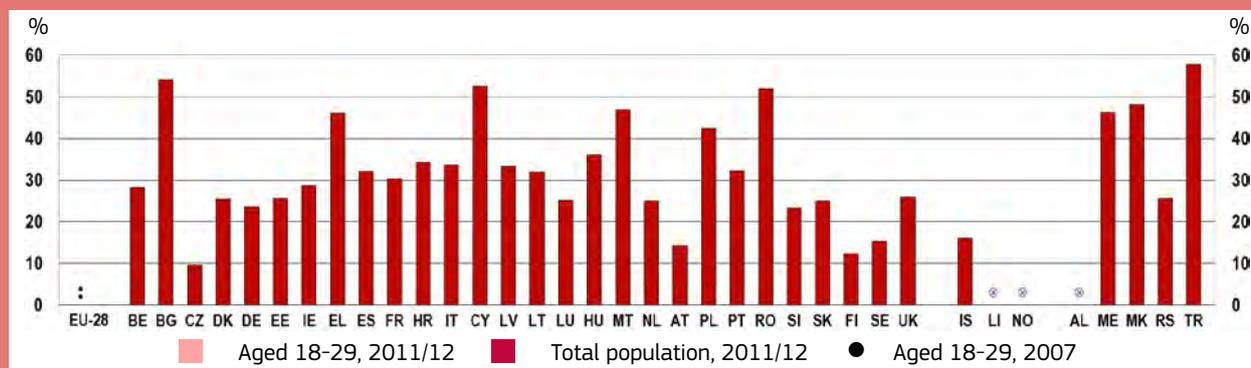
Figure 6-M compares the mental well-being index of young people with the total population in European countries. In 2011/12, the mental well-being index of young people aged 18-29 had the highest average scores in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria and Montenegro,

172 See: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/european-quality-of-life-surveys-eqls> [Accessed 27 July 2015].

173 EPHA, 2014; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2011.

174 The index is based on respondents' evaluations of the following items: 1) 'I have felt cheerful and in good spirits'; 2) 'I have felt calm and relaxed'; 3) 'I have felt active and vigorous'; 4) 'I woke up feeling fresh and rested'; 5) 'My daily life has been filled with things that interest me'. See: <http://www.who-5.org> [Accessed 4 June 2015].

175 Eurofound, 2014b.

Figure 6-M: Mental well-being index, by country and by age, 2007 and 2011/12

Source: Eurofound, EQLS

while the lowest were in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Malta and Luxembourg.

The figure also shows that young people have higher average scores than the total population almost everywhere. The exceptions are the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Iceland), as well as Ireland and Luxembourg, though to different degrees. It is in Sweden in particular (with a difference of more than 6 percentage points), as well as in Iceland (4.5 percentage points) and Finland (2.5 percentage points) where young people's mental well-being is worse than in the total population. In contrast, young people have much higher mental well-being scores than the total population – with a difference of more than 10 percentage points – in south-eastern countries such as Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, and to a lesser extent in Greece, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia and Montenegro.

Looking at recent trends in the mental well-being of young people, while the average EU mental well-being index stayed relatively stable between 2007 and 2011, country variations exist (see Figure 6-M). Among the countries with available data, more countries experienced increases in the average mental well-being index scores of young people than decreases. Average mental well-being scores decreased the most in Ireland, Sweden and Slovakia in this period,

while the largest increases were registered in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Italy.

6.4.2. Suicide

As the 2012 Youth Report showed⁽¹⁷⁶⁾, suicide rates were relatively stable in the EU-28, but with a slight increase from 2008, both among young people and in the total population. This increase – and more notable increases in some countries, for example in Greece – can at least partly be linked to the economic crisis⁽¹⁷⁷⁾.

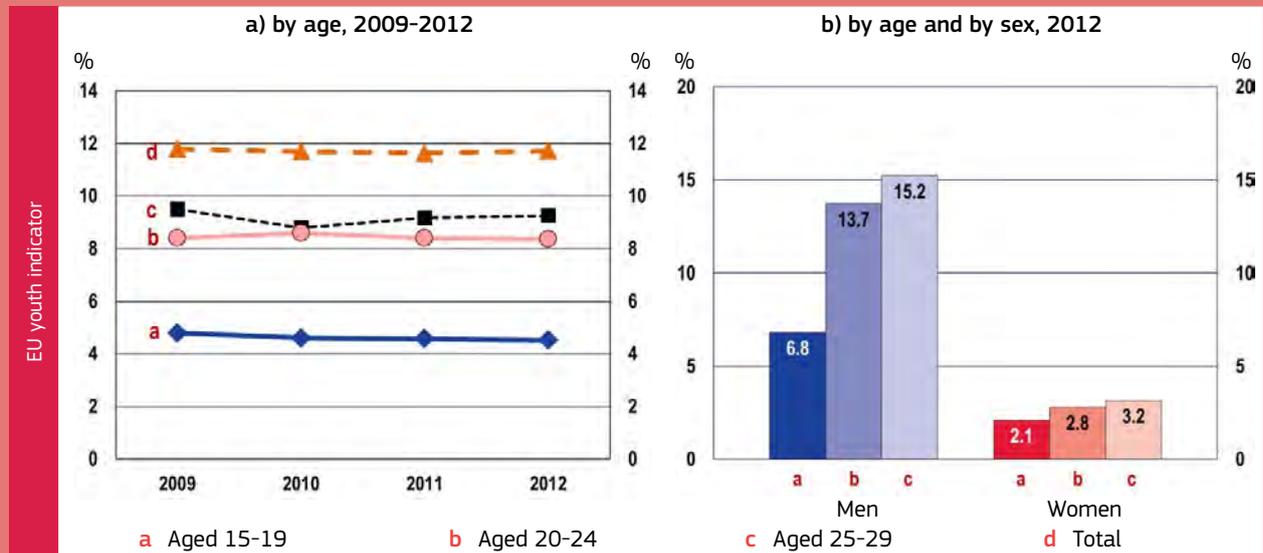
More recent data, as shown on Figure 6-N-a, confirm the relative stability of suicide rates at the EU-28 level. However, since the method for data collection changed in 2011, conclusions can be drawn only regarding the most recent changes. Between 2011 and 2012, suicide rates slightly increased among young people aged 25 to 29 and among the total population, while stayed relatively stable among young people aged 15 to 19 and 20 to 24.

Suicide rates increase with age. In addition, as Figure 6-N-b shows, suicide rates are much higher among young men than young women in all age groups. More than three times more young men than young women aged 15 to 19 committed suicide in 2012,

176 European Commission 2012a, p. 230.

177 Thomson et al. 2014, p. 37. See also Branas et al., 2015.

Figure 6-N: EU youth indicator: Death by intentional self-harm, crude death rate (per 100000 inhabitants), by age and by sex, EU-28 average



Notes: 2011: break in series; 2012: estimates.

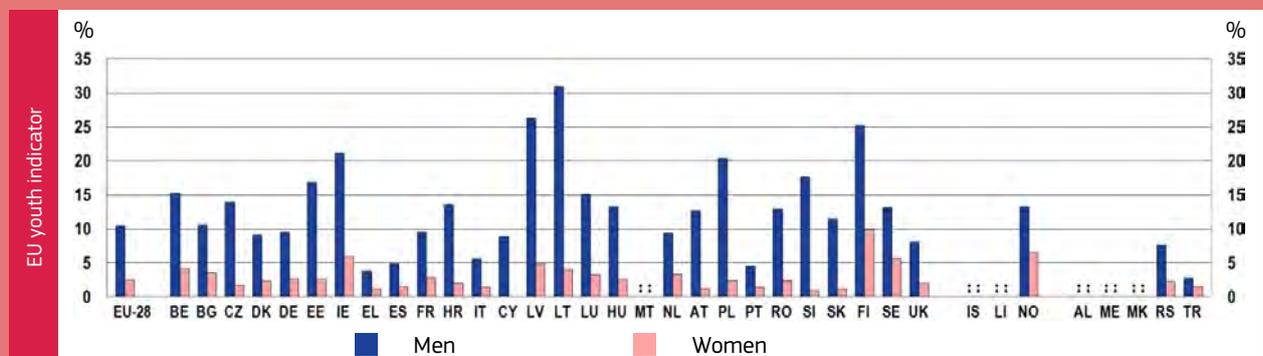
Source: Eurostat [yth_hlth_030, hlth_cd_acdr2]

and this ratio reaches to almost five times more for the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups.

As Figure 6-O depicts, among young men aged 15 to 24, suicide rates were the highest in Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. Among young women in the same age group, suicide rates were the highest in

Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Norway. Suicide rates were quite low for both sexes in southern countries like Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Turkey. However, in Greece, though suicide rates remain comparatively low, a more than 50% increase took place between 2007 and 2012⁽¹⁷⁸⁾.

Figure 6-O: EU youth indicator: Death by intentional self-harm among young people (aged 15-24), crude death rate (per 100 000 inhabitants), by country and by sex, 2012



Notes: EU-28: estimates. France: 2011. Malta and Liechtenstein: confidential.

Source: Eurostat [hlth_cd_acdr2]

7 Participation in democratic life

EU Youth Indicators

- ⇒ Participation of young people in elections at the local, regional, national or EU level Figure 7-E
- ⇒ Young people's participation in political or community/environmentally-oriented NGOs Figure 7-H and Figure 7-I
- ⇒ Proportion of the population who have used the Internet for interaction with public authorities Figure 7-K
- ⇒ Proportion of the population who have used the Internet to post opinions on civic and political issues via websites Figure 7-L
- ⇒ Young people elected to the European Parliament Figure 7-G-bis

7.1. Introduction

Young people are often described as being more disenchanted with politics and less keen on participating, in comparison with older groups in the general population. In this chapter, this view will be challenged using data and information on various forms of political participation and social engagement, and it will be shown how different ways of participating can appeal to young people and motivate them to become more engaged. Indeed, as any other group in society, they develop a desire to become involved in political life when they perceive that their opinions count. Young citizens, therefore, need to have a real stake in political decision-making processes in order to be willing to participate.

About one third of young Europeans report to be very or quite interested in politics

This chapter will focus initially on young people's general level of interest in politics, and on their perception of citizenship. It will then examine how young citizens take advantage of different opportunities to actively participate in politics, from the more traditional means such as voting and joining political parties, to the less mediated experiences of engaging in local and non-governmental organisations and social movements. The use of the Internet as

a 'new' resource for political participation will then be addressed before concluding with a discussion of the issue of youth exclusion from political engagement.

7.2. Young people's interest in politics and their perception of EU citizenship

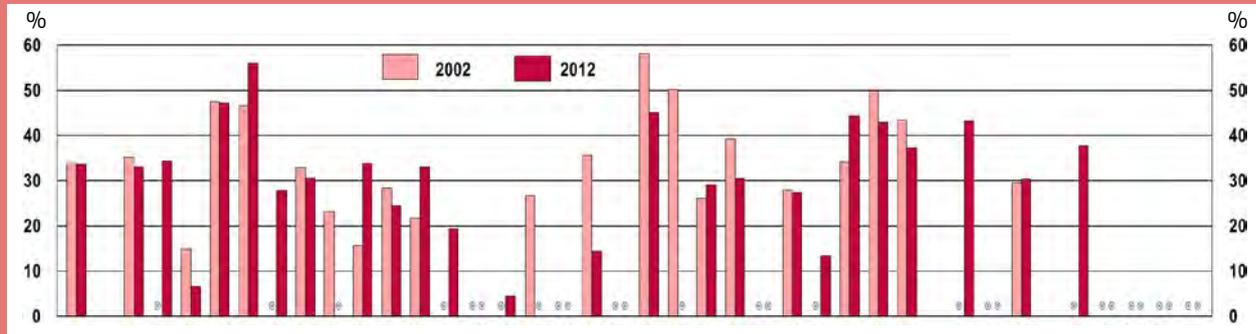
Interest in the political life of society is a stepping stone to involvement in community life, and vice versa. Interest prompts an individual to become informed about how decisions are made in the policy-making process, what

the opinions of different stakeholders are, and what means of participation are available. Ultimately, interest

can engender willingness to actively participate and address shared problems together with other members of the community.

Results from the European Social Survey conducted in 2012 indicate that, on average, about 33 % of respondents declare to be very or quite interested in politics (Figure 7-A). Some differences exist between countries. Northern and Scandinavian Member States register above average levels of

Figure 7-A: Share of young people (aged 15-29) claiming to be 'very' or 'quite' interested in politics, by country, 2002 and 2012



Note: The chart covers the countries for which data exist for 2002 and 2012.

Source: European Social Survey 2002 and 2012

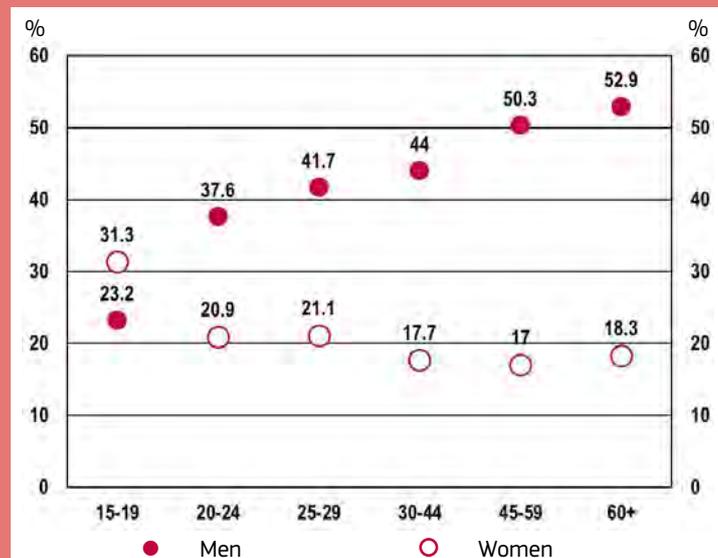
interest. On the other hand, several southern and eastern European countries display comparatively low levels of concern with political issues.

Contrary to the claim that young people are disaffected with politics, interest in political issues amongst young people in Europe has remained stable over the last decade, with approximately one third of respondents reporting to be very or quite interested. Yet, significant changes have occurred in some countries since 2002: while substantial increases have been registered in Germany (+19.9 %), Spain (+117.3 %), Croatia (+51.8 %) and Finland (+29.8 %), rates have dropped in the Czech Republic (-56.7 %), Hungary (-59.7 %), the Netherlands (-22.3 %) and Portugal (-22.6 %).

In order to fully appreciate the figures reported above, it is useful to compare the general level of interest in politics expressed by young people with that reported by other age groups in the general population (Figure 7-B). Within the younger age groups, levels of concern with political issues are highest amongst individuals at the older end of the spectrum (around 40 % of respondents aged 25 to 29 on average declare to be very or quite interested).

This tendency is confirmed when considering the older age cohorts, from 30 to over

Figure 7-B: Level of interest in politics among different age groups, EU-27 average, 2012



Note: The average showed on the chart was calculated on the basis of the countries for which data exist for 2012.

Source: European Social Survey, 2012

60 years. As the figure above illustrates, the degree of attention to political issues increases as individuals grow older. Within the boundaries of the snapshot offered by the 2012 data here illustrated, the notion that young people are comparatively less engaged in following political developments is therefore confirmed.

However, this phenomenon is, at least partly, intrinsic to each generation: individuals tend to become more aware of the political environment as they grow into mature adulthood, become politically socialised, and acquire a larger 'stake' in the social, political and economic life of their community. Therefore, this lower level of interest in politics should not be labelled as a specific characteristic of the current generation of young people but rather as an inherent phase in the average life trajectory⁽¹⁷⁹⁾.

Besides a general interest in politics, identification with a political entity is essential in determining the degree of engagement in political life. Indeed, perceptions of citizenship are crucial in motivating people to participate. Young people report stronger feelings of citizenship towards the European Union than older cohorts (Figure 7-C). It is therefore possible that, compared to

older generations, young people might be more inclined to participate at European rather than at national level.

Data presented in this section shed some light on young people's interest in politics as well as their political identity. Whilst these are important motivational factors, young people must also have the means to actively participate.

As in a virtuous circle, the existence of effective means for participation encourages people to become interested in the public sphere, which in turn fosters the desire to take advantage of those means. It is therefore important to identify which forms of participation best meet the needs of young people, keeping in mind that the means young people choose today may not necessarily be those traditionally used by previous generations.

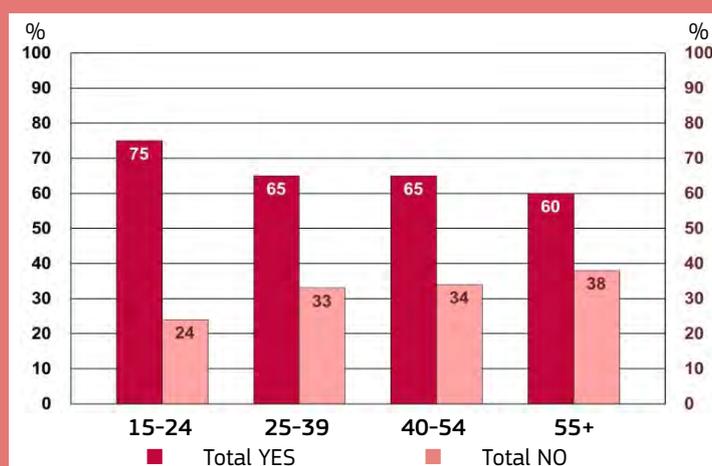
Young people's lower levels of interest in politics are partly explained by the fact that political awareness and socialisation take time and reach their highest at older age.

7.3. Young people's participation in representative democracy: voting and joining a political party

Genuine elections with political parties competing on alternative political programmes provide the basis for the functioning of representative democracy. Choosing between the programmes of various parties and candidates, and selecting representatives for public office are the basic actions by which citizens participate in the management of public affairs. This is why election turnout is usually referred to as a relevant measure of citizens' participation.

However, electoral and party engagement seems to have limited appeal for young citizens. A Eurobarometer survey from 2012 indicates that only about one in two young people consider elections as one of the

Figure 7-C: Sense of European citizenship, by age group, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: the question was: 'For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your own opinion - You feel you are a citizen of the EU'. Base: all respondents. The chart does not show the share of respondents answering 'I don't know'.

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 81, Spring 2014

most valuable ways to express their political preferences (Figure 7-D). According to their responses, 47 % among 15-24 year-olds, and 50 % among 25-34 year-olds, believe that voting is one of the two best ways to ensure that their voice is heard by decision-makers. This result is in line with what is indicated in a survey asking young respondents what they consider to be the most effective way for participating in

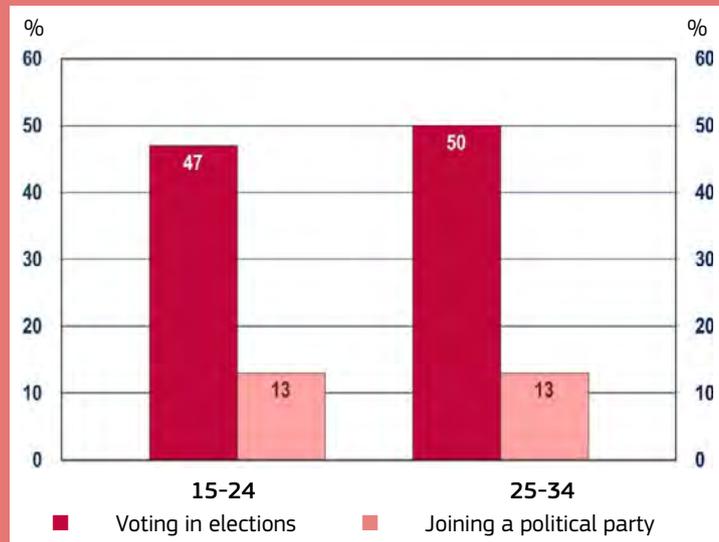
Traditional forms of political engagement such as voting and becoming members of political parties have limited appeal for young citizens

public life in the European Union: voting in elections to the European Parliament was chosen by only 44 % of the sample⁽¹⁸⁰⁾.

Joining a political party is viewed as an effective way of channelling their views by a much lower proportion of young people: only 13 % in both age groups.

Along with these results, low levels of turnout have been registered amongst young people in recent years. According to the Eurobarometer's results illustrated below, on

Figure 7-D: Percentage of young people including 'voting in elections' and 'joining a political party' as one of the two best ways to ensure 'that one's voice is heard by decision-makers', by age group (15-24 and 25-34), EU-27 average, 2012

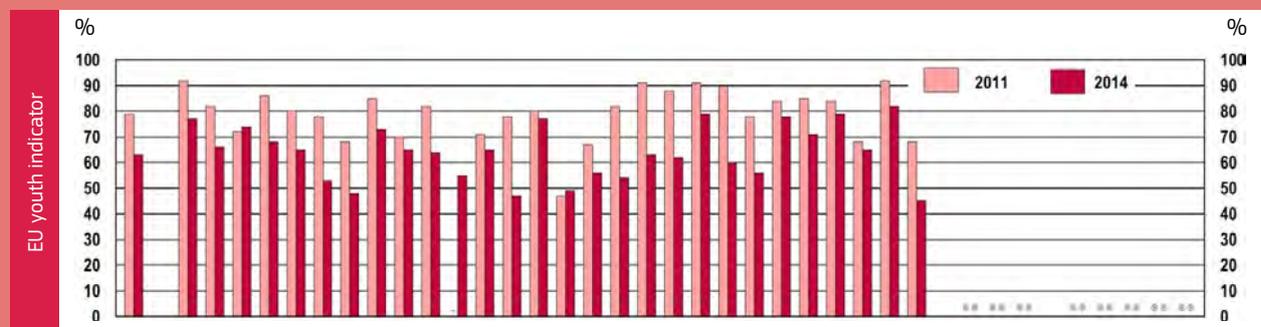


Notes: the question was: 'Which two of the following do you think are the best ways of ensuring one's voice is heard by decision-makers?'. Base: all respondents.

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 77, 2012

average about 60 % of young respondents have cast their vote in an election between 2011 and 2014 (Figure 7-E).

Figure 7-E: EU youth indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in elections at the local, regional, national or EU level, by country, 2011 and 2014

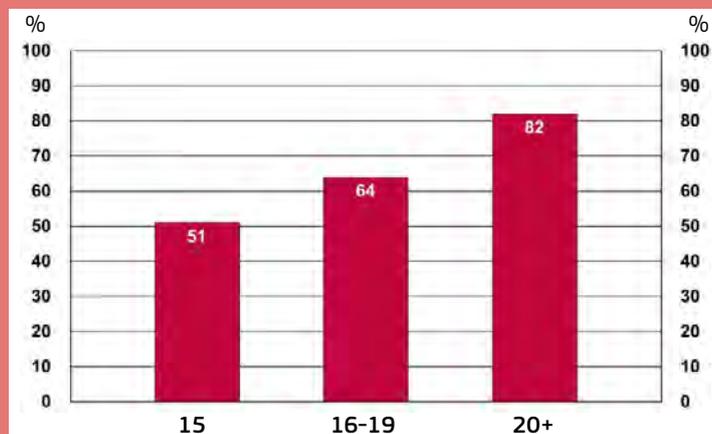


Notes: The question was 'During the last 3 years, did you vote in any political election at the local, regional, national or EU level? If you were, at that time, not eligible to vote, please say so'. Base: respondents who were eligible to vote at the time of the election. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move', 2015 Flash Eurobarometer 408 'European Youth'

180 European Parliament, 2014.

Figure 7-F: Participation of young people (aged 15-29 who are eligible to vote) in elections at the local, regional, national or EU level, by the age at which they stopped full-time education, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: questions were 'During the last 3 years, did you vote in any political election at the local, regional, national or EU level? If you were, at that time, not eligible to vote, please say so'; 'How old were you when you stopped full-time education?'. Base: respondents who were eligible to vote at the time of the election.

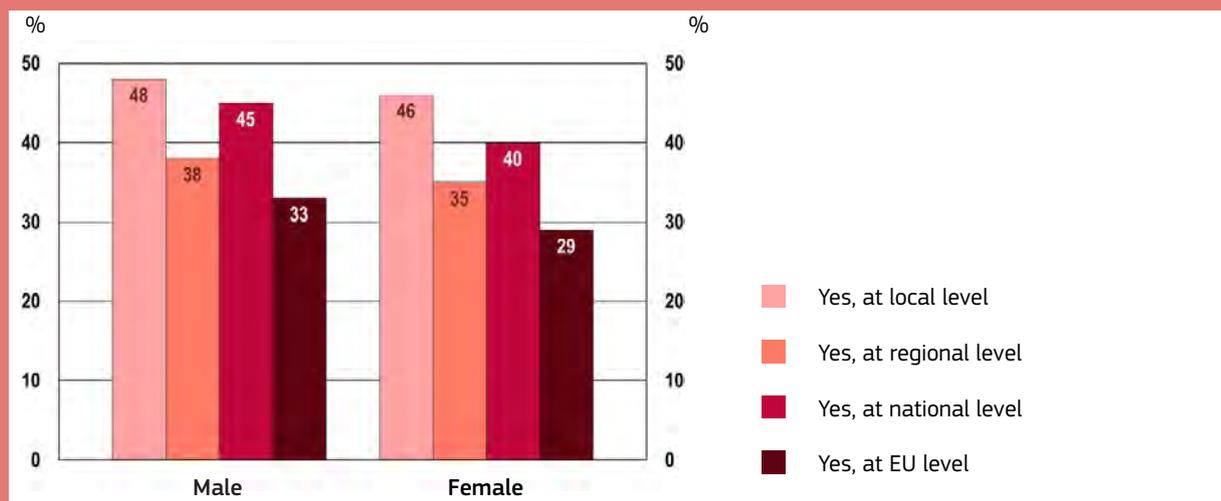
Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408 'European Youth', 2015

Turnout amongst young voters has declined over recent years. In 2011, an average of almost 80 % of young respondents to the survey declared they had participated in an election in the previous three years. This trend is common to the vast majority of EU Member States, the exceptions being the Czech Republic and Lithuania where a slight increase has occurred⁽¹⁸¹⁾.

The propensity to vote seems to be influenced by the age at which respondents completed their education, indicating that higher levels of education are associated with higher turnout in elections (Figure 7-F).

Both the political level at which elections take place, and the gender of young voters play a role in determining how likely they are to cast their vote in a ballot (Figure 7-G). Young voters tend to favour local elections, followed by national ones, while regional and European elections attract less interest. In addition, there is a higher turnout among male voters than females, in all types of elections.

Figure 7-G: Participation in elections of young people (aged 15-29), by type of election and by sex, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: questions were 'During the last 3 years, did you vote in any political election at the local, regional, national or EU level? If you were, at that time, not eligible to vote, please say so'. Base: respondents who were eligible to vote at the time of the election.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408 'European Youth', 2015

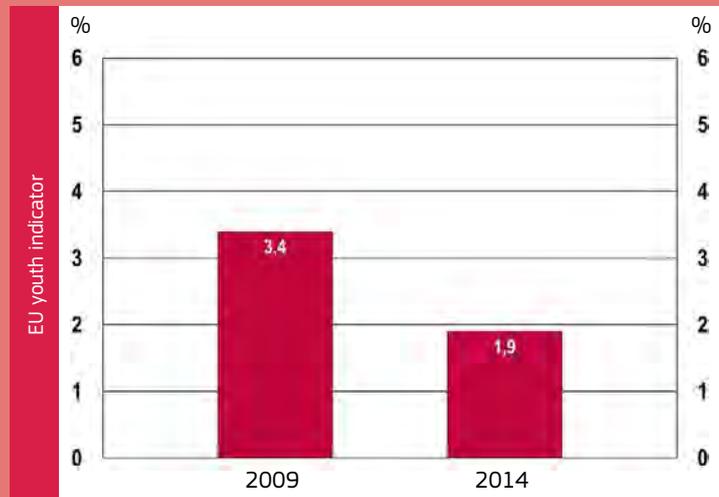
181 It has to be kept in mind that electoral turnout is also influenced by the specific legal regulations in effect in countries. An obligation for citizens to vote currently exists in Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, France, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Turkey, although levels of enforcement vary (http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory_voting.cfm).

Besides their limited participation in elections, the proportion of people from the younger age groups elected to public office is low, at least at European Union level. Figure 7-H depicts the proportion of Members of the European Parliament aged 30 or under, who were elected to the European Parliament in May 2014. The percentage on the total of the MEPs is minimal, and, what is more, it has almost halved since the previous European elections in 2009.

In line with these results, joining a political party appeals to a rather small proportion of young people (Figure 7-I). Between 2011 and 2014, levels of membership have remained stable at around an average of 5 % in Europe. Significant drops in membership figures since 2011 have been registered in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania and Poland, while the Czech Republic, Spain, Luxembourg, and Hungary have seen significant increases.

Membership of political parties is even more limited amongst young women: on average, they are 50 % less likely to become active in such organisations than men of the same age⁽¹⁸²⁾.

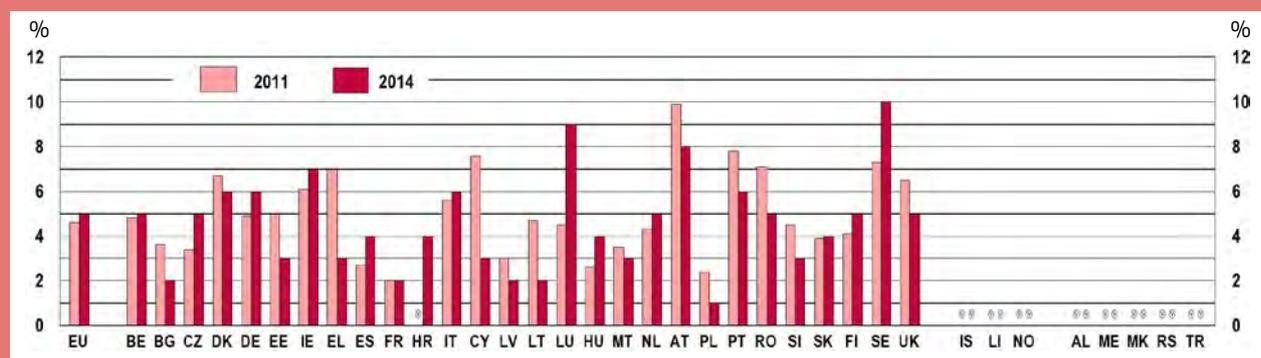
Figure 7-H: EU Youth Indicator: Members of the European Parliament aged 30 or under, 2009 and 2014



Source: European Parliament

The limited levels of participation in traditional activities like voting and being active within political parties should not immediately be interpreted as signals that young people are disenchanted with democracy.

Figure 7-I: Membership of political parties amongst young people (aged 15-29), by country, 2011 and 2014



Notes: question was 'In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations? (Political Party)'. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move', 2015 Flash Eurobarometer 408 'European Youth'

Indeed, as an on-going research project suggests, ‘young people show general support for democratic systems although are often critical of how they work in practice and for them’⁽¹⁸³⁾. Collecting the views of young individuals from 30 different regions in Europe through surveys, interviews and ethnographic observation, the study indicates that youth dissatisfaction is often with associated political choices (parties, leaders, manifestoes) rather than with democracy and participation per se. It is also to be considered that, though elections and political parties have a pivotal role in democratic societies, they are not the only activities to be taken into account when evaluating political participation. Many other channels are open to people to have their say and to influence political decision-makers and policies, and these may be more attractive to younger citizens.

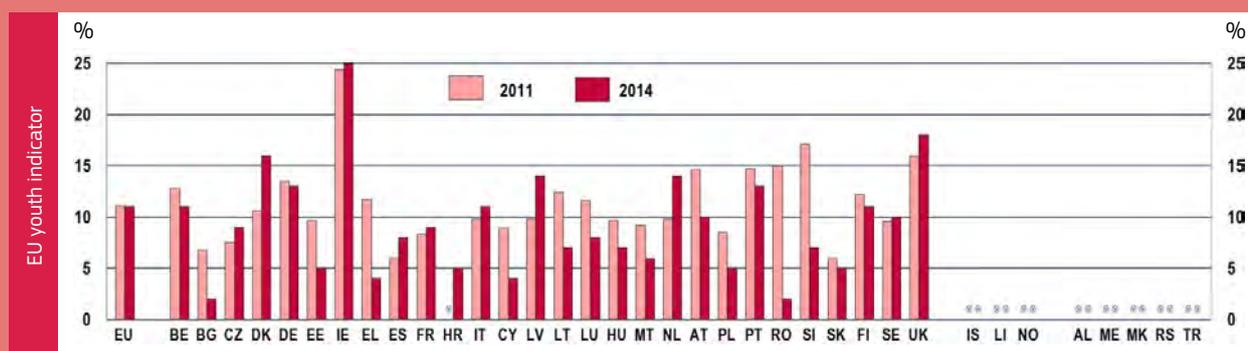
Young people show general support for democratic systems but are often critical of how they work in practice.

7.4. Other ways young people participate

Young people tend to favour flexible and issue-based forms of active participation such as contributing to the projects of non-governmental associations, participating in community-driven initiatives, joining social movements and expressing political opinions in public spaces⁽¹⁸⁴⁾.

Data presented here confirm young people’s preference for being active in non-governmental organisations and/or local organisations which address local issues, rather than in political parties. On average, twice as many respondents as those who have been active in a political party stated they had participated in the activities of a local organisation aimed at improving the local community (Figure 7-J).

Figure 7-J: EU youth indicator: Proportion of young people (aged 15-30) who have participated in the activities of organisations aimed at improving their local community, by country, 2011 and 2014



Notes: the question was ‘In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations? (A local organisation aimed at improving the local community)’. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a ‘Youth on the Move’, 2015 Flash Eurobarometer 408 ‘European Youth’

183 Further information on the research project, funded under the European 7th Framework Programme, can be retrieved at www.fp7-myplace.eu.

184 Hoikkala, 2009; Barber, 2010; Gaisel et al., 2010; Santo et al., 2010.

On average, the figures remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2012, although important changes occurred in some Member States. Levels of participation fell significantly in Estonia, Greece, and Romania. The proportion of young people taking part in local organisations aimed at improving local communities also declined in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia. In contrast, it rose in Denmark, Latvia and the Netherlands.

Petitions, public demonstrations, boycotts, wearing political symbols such as badges and stickers, become the means of more loose and informal participation in society and in politics, which many young people find worth experiencing.

Frustration with traditional and institutionalised forms of political participation can also result in people choosing to show their interest in issues or express their concerns without any (or with little) mediation

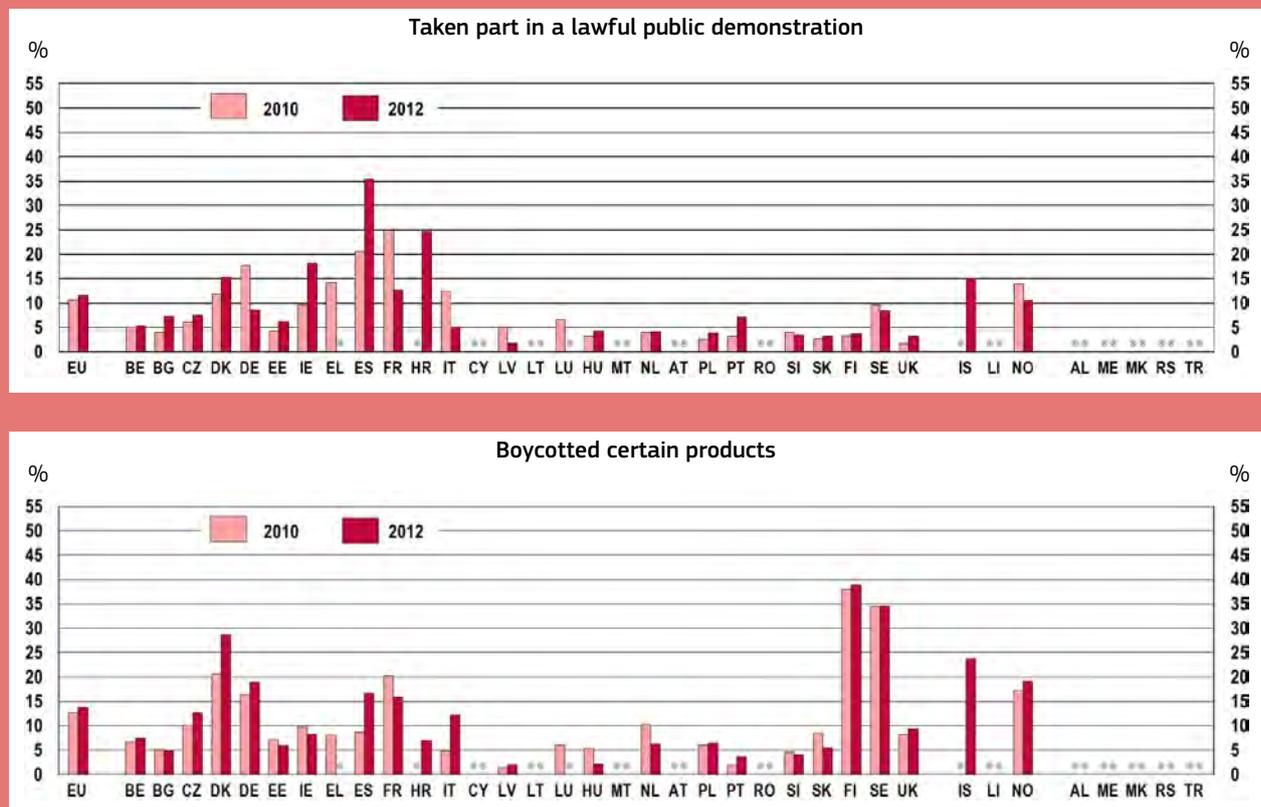
by organised bodies, be they political parties or nongovernmental organisations.

In this context, petitions, public demonstrations, boycotts, wearing political symbols such as badges and stickers, become

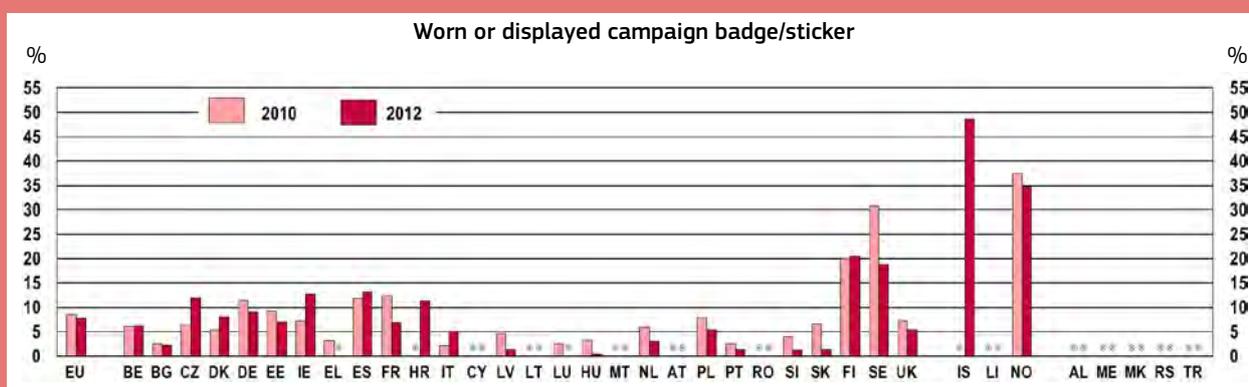
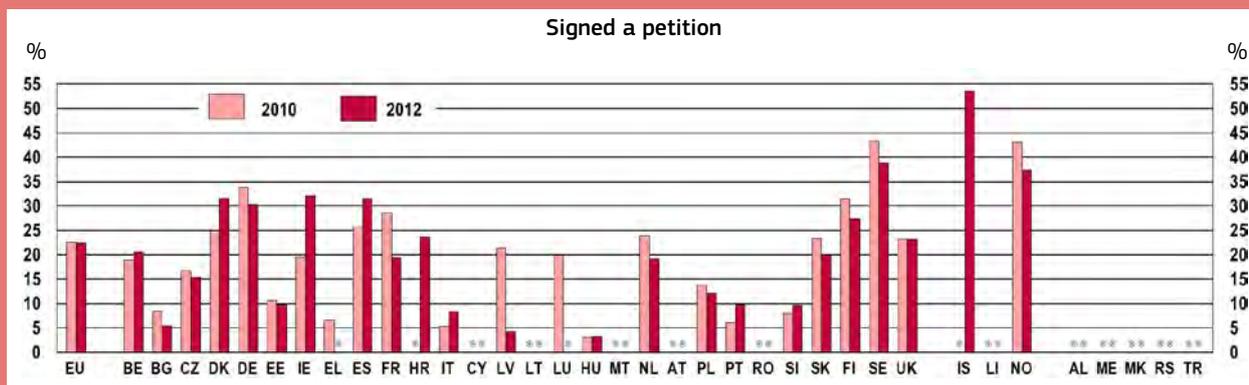
the means of more loose and informal participation in society and in politics, which many young people find worth experiencing⁽¹⁸⁵⁾. The 2012 European Social Survey shows that on average about 20 % of young people have recently signed

a petition and about 10 % respectively have joined a public demonstration and worn a badge or sticker (Figure 7-K).

Figure 7-K: Participation of young people (aged 15-29) in various activities during the three years before the survey, by country, 2010 and 2012



185 Feixa et al., 2009.



Source: European Social Survey, 2010 and 2012

Some countries appear to register higher levels of youth participation in these activities than others. In general, young people in Germany, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, France, the Scandinavian countries (Finland, Sweden, and Norway) and Iceland tend to engage more in these modes of political participation than their peers in the rest of Europe. Differences between these countries exist: while in Scandinavia higher figures are reported for signing a petition, boycotting products and especially wearing political symbols, in Ireland, Spain and Italy a higher propensity is shown for participating in public demonstrations.

Many young people resort to the Internet and its social media to interact with public authorities and exchange opinions on political issues

A wide array of opportunities for political participation is also offered by the Internet and its applications, and young people have been in the forefront of using these means of interpersonal communication.

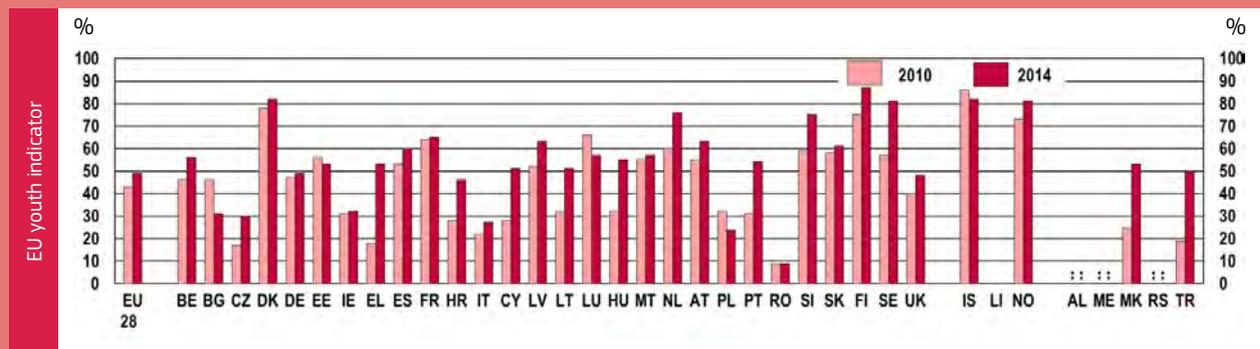
The virtual spaces frequented by young people such as online forums, chat rooms, social networks and blogs, serve the same basic function as the physical ones they sometimes replace: establishing collective interaction around common interests. In this sense, they constitute a great resource for political and social engagement, which young people have been the quickest to recognise and use. For example, the Internet plays a significant role in fostering social contact between young citizens as well as facilitating their interactions with their political representatives and public authorities.

Data collected by Eurostat show that, on average, roughly 50 % of young Europeans have used the Internet to contact or interact with public authorities in 2014, and this figure has increased over the last

4 years (Figure 7-L). In some countries, this percentage is extremely high, indicating a widespread use of online instruments to obtain information from public authorities' websites (Denmark, the Netherlands,

Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway). Significant increases have been registered in the Czech Republic, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Figure 7-L: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 16-24) who used the Internet for interaction with public authorities in the twelve months before the survey, by country, 2010 and 2014



Notes: Data presented in the chart refer to the 16-24 age group, for which figures are available for both 2010 and 2014

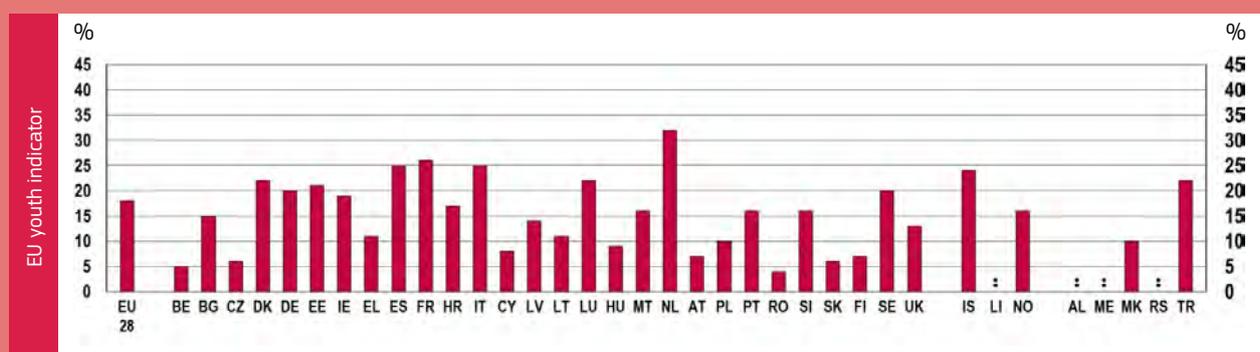
Source: Eurostat [isoc_ciegi_ac], 2010 and 2014

On the other hand, young people in some European countries seem less familiar with this form of interaction with public authorities: the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Romania and Turkey report levels of interaction with public authorities through the Internet well below the European average. According to the breakdown by sex of the same data collected by Eurostat, young

women tend to use the Internet to contact public authorities more than men.

Besides making contact with public authorities, around 18 % of young Europeans take to the Internet to exchange their political opinions through messages and posts on websites (Figure 7-M).

Figure 7-M: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 16-24) who have used the Internet in the last three months to post opinions on civic and political issues via websites, by country, 2013



Source: Eurostat [isoc_bde15cua], 2013

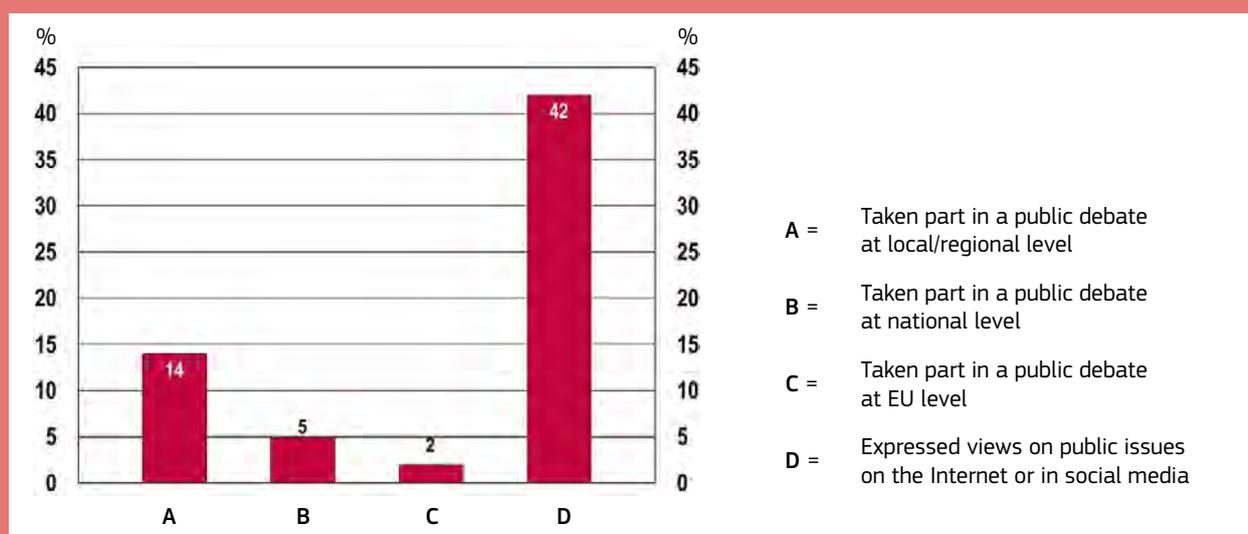
Differences between some countries are significant: while young people in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and Finland do not often resort to this means of communication, a larger proportion of their peers in Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Iceland do so.

Results for the age group 15-24 and for a longer reference period from a Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2013 show that, on average, young people clearly prefer to express their opinions and ideas through online fora, rather than participating in person in public debates (Figure 7-N). The Internet therefore proves to be an

important means for political communication amongst young Europeans.

Evidence offered by the figures illustrated so far help build a picture of the diverse and multi-layered nature of young people's engagement in political and civic activities. As some of the more traditional modes of participation lose their appeal for young Europeans, other more innovative and fluid ways to communicate and interact in the political sphere develop. Overall, the picture that emerges is far from being pessimistic: many young people manifest a desire to have their voice heard and show an interest in engaging in society, through various channels of communication.

Figure 7-N: Share of young people (aged 15-24) who participated in off-line and on-line public debates during the two years before the survey, by age groups, EU-28 average, 2013



Notes: question was 'Have you done any of the following in the last two years?'. Base: all respondents.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 373, 2013

7.5. Engaging hard-to-reach young people in political and civic life

Despite the encouraging signs described so far with respect to young people's participation, it is also evident that certain segments of the youth population remain excluded from any form of engagement in the life of their community and must overcome significant obstacles in order to

participate. This form of exclusion is closely linked to other aspects of marginalisation; for example, to difficulties in finding employment or accessing vital social services (youth unemployment and social exclusion are discussed respectively in Chapters 4 and 5).

Unfortunately, the absence of quantitative information prevents an examination of the extent and nature of such political exclusion. Therefore, qualitative research

investigating the beliefs and behaviours of young people represents an essential source of information in understanding the fundamental reasons behind their exclusion from the political sphere. A recent study on political participation among young people has addressed this topic through extensive interviews and focus groups with young Europeans from six EU Member States⁽¹⁸⁶⁾. The results indicated a widespread belief amongst young people that political engagement requires a particular set of skills including aptitude in interpersonal relations, rhetorical dexterity, and networking ability. This opinion was shared by both individuals who did not consider they possessed such skills as well as by those who did. The perceived requirement for political skills was even more evident amongst young people experiencing social and political exclusion, for which a highly formalised model of political engagement was perceived as alien and intimidating. In

addition, young respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds reported encountering material obstacles to political participation. Pressing daily concerns left very little time and resources for engagement in civic or political activities, which increased feelings of alienation and ineffectiveness in the social environment⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. Last but not least, it is important to acknowledge the challenges posed by a potential digital divide in the use of communication technologies for participative purposes. While the new media offer opportunities for involvement in and information about political processes, they can also restrict access to knowledge and networks to those who have the opportunity to use a computer and surf the internet, thereby replicating the social inequalities existing in the 'non-virtual' environment (data on the use of the Internet amongst young people are discussed in Chapter 9).

186 EACEA, 2013

187 Ibid.

8 Voluntary activities

EU Youth Indicators

- | | |
|--|------------|
| ⇒ Participation of young people in organised voluntary activities | Figure 8-A |
| ⇒ Voluntary activities aimed at changing young people's local communities | Figure 8-D |
| ⇒ Young people volunteering abroad | Figure 8-F |
| ⇒ Young people receiving a certificate or diploma for voluntary activities | Figure 8-H |

8.1. Introduction

Participating in voluntary activities greatly contributes to a young person's human capital and personal development. The personal benefits volunteering brings to young people are numerous. Research has shown how it helps to discourage young people from leaving school prematurely and improves their self-confidence, sense of social responsibility, and level of psychological wellbeing⁽¹⁸⁸⁾. In terms of the development of human capital, volunteering provides young individuals with effective opportunities for non-formal learning which enhance their personal and professional skills and can greatly contribute to their employability. The improvement of interpersonal skills, communication skills, knowledge, organisational and managerial skills, fundraising, technical and office skills are examples of practical gains reported by young volunteers⁽¹⁸⁹⁾.

Volunteering also represents an important contribution to the promotion of social and economic cohesion. Indeed, by engaging in projects to tackle current social problems, young volunteers become key agents of social reform and develop a sense of belonging in and ownership of their community. More specifically, peer-mentoring (voluntary mentoring by a young person who has lived through similar experiences)

has been shown to be effective in helping young people at risk of exclusion⁽¹⁹⁰⁾.

This chapter provides an overview of young people's participation in voluntary activities; it examines recent trends in terms of participation rates, areas of activity and the tendency for young people to undertake voluntary work abroad. The second part of the chapter highlights some of the key factors in supporting youth volunteering and encouraging more widespread participation.

8.2. Youth participation in voluntary activities

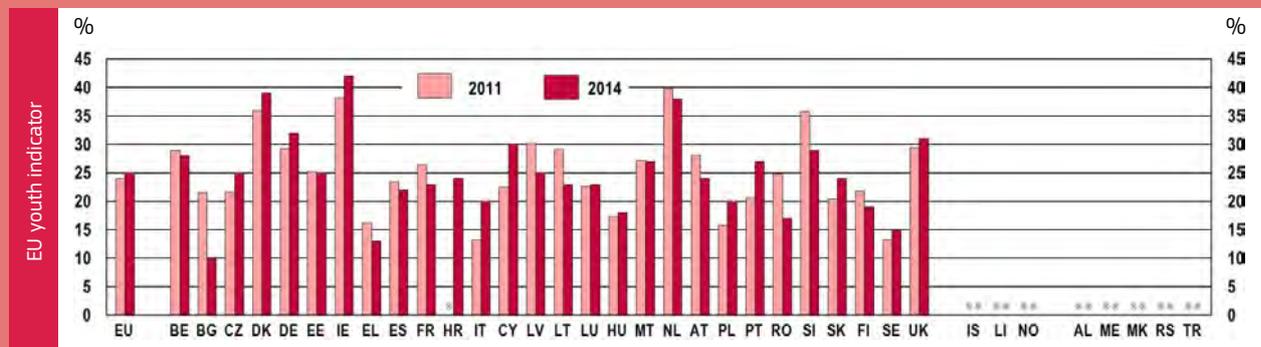
According to the results of the Flash Eurobarometer 'European Youth' conducted in 2014, around one young European in four has engaged in voluntary activities (Figure 8-A). In some countries (Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), this percentage rises to over one in three, while other countries register much lower rates of participation (in particular, Bulgaria, Greece and Sweden). At the European level, figures have remained stable since 2011, although some variations have occurred in certain Member States. For example, the share of young people participating in volunteering has halved in Bulgaria and significantly

188 Hall, 2008; Piliavin, 2003; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008.

189 Hall, 2008.

190 Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008.

Figure 8-A: EU Youth Indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in organised voluntary activities, by country, 2011 and 2014



Note: the question was: 'In the last 12 months, have you been involved in any organised voluntary activities?'. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 319, 'Youth on the Move', 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014

diminished in Romania, while it has increased in Italy and Cyprus.

The younger groups of young people tend to be more active in voluntary activities (Figure 8-B). Comparison with rates of participation in the general population does not signal substantial differences between generations, nor does comparison between men and women⁽¹⁹¹⁾.

Volunteering is often inspired by previous experiences of engagement in the community. Participation in services organised by families, schools, religious communities, and sporting organisations have been indicated as a strong factor in fostering youth involvement in voluntary projects⁽¹⁹²⁾. Indeed, data show that young people seem to be more active in volunteering when they participate in other collective political and cultural activities (Figure 8-C). In particular, engagement in a youth club is very closely related to involvement in voluntary experiences.

Figure 8-B: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in organised voluntary activities, EU-28 average, by age group, 2014



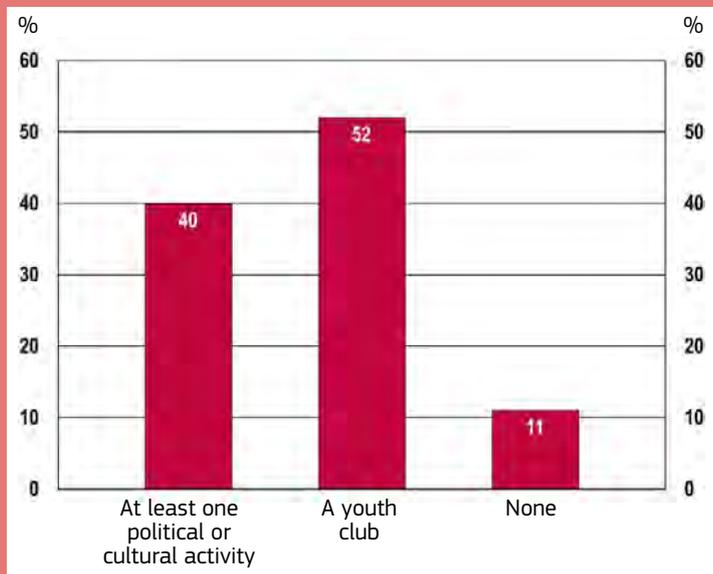
Note: the question was: 'In the last 12 months, have you been involved in any organised voluntary activities?'. Base: all respondents.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014 Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408 'European Youth', 2015

191 Data on participation in voluntary activities by age groups and gender are provided by the European Social Survey, 2012.

192 Haski-Leventhal et al. 2008.

Figure 8-C: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in organised voluntary activities, EU-28 average, by participation in other activities, 2014



Note: the questions were: 'In the last 12 months, have you been involved in any organised voluntary activities?' and 'In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations? (Multiple answers possible)'. Base: all respondents.

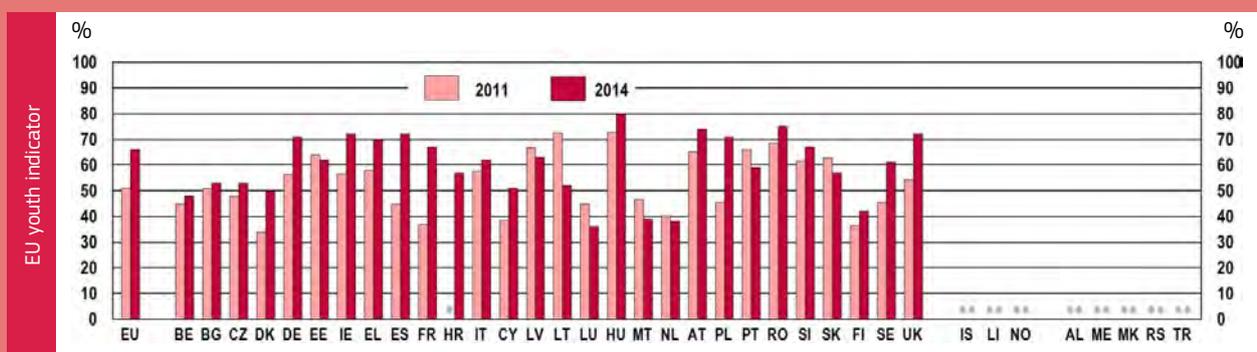
Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014

The majority of those involved in voluntary activities choose projects and services aimed at bringing benefits to their local community (Figure 8-D). The proportion of young Europeans who have undertaken these types of activity have registered an increase since 2011, especially in Spain, France and Poland.

Despite the local focus favoured by many young volunteers, others are involved in charitable activities with a particular focus on humanitarian and development aid – causes which have a definite global dimension (Figure 8-E). Education, training and sports are also popular activities. Conversely, other issues such as the environment, animal welfare, as well as political, cultural and religious causes seem to have less appeal.

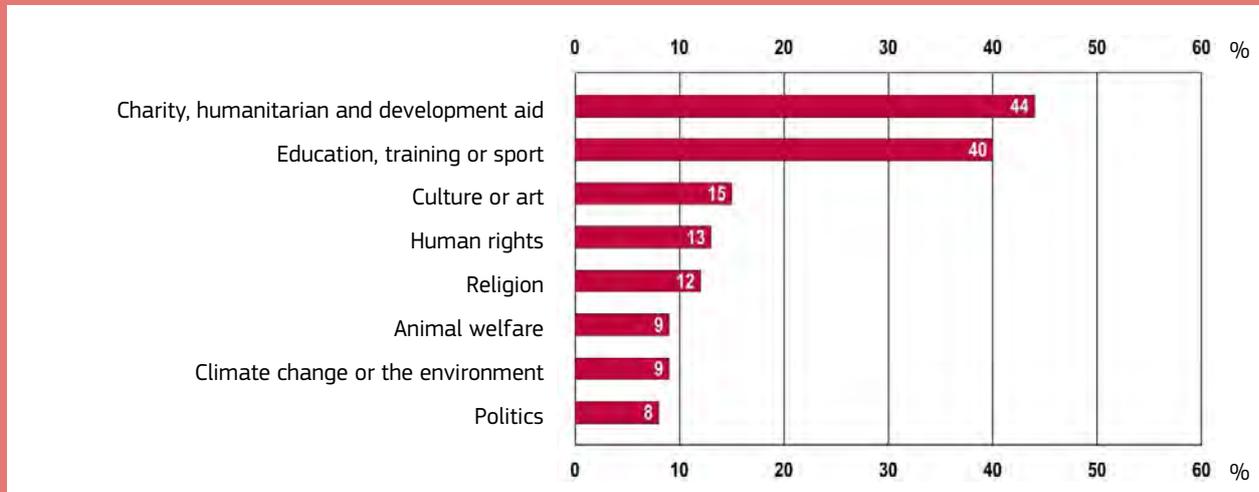
Young volunteers are mostly engaged in activities within their own country, a finding in line with their propensity to engage in actions which benefit their local community, as illustrated above. Although young people's international mobility has increased over recent years bringing many young Europeans to live, study and work in other European countries, as discussed in the first chapter of this report, serving in cross-border

Figure 8-D: EU Youth Indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who undertook voluntary activities aimed at changing their local communities, by country, 2011 and 2014



Note: the question was: 'Were these voluntary activities aimed at changing something in your local community?'. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 319, 'Youth on the Move', 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014

Figure 8-E: Main themes of the voluntary activities undertaken by young people (aged 15-30), EU-28 average, 2014

Note: the question was: 'In the last 12 months, which of the following were your voluntary activities related to? (Multiple answers possible)'. Base: all respondents.

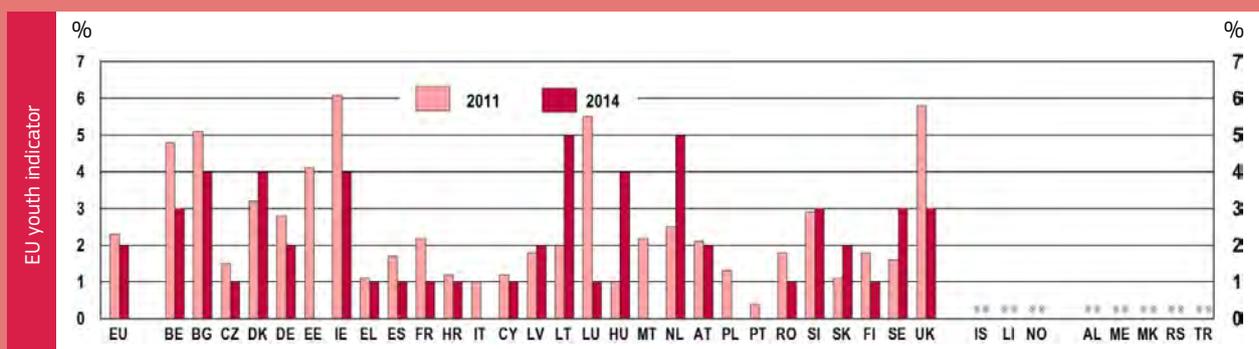
Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014

voluntary organisations does not seem to be a major reason for young people to leave their country of origin: only around 2% of individuals in the European Union report having volunteered abroad (Figure 8-F).

Even in those countries where the percentage of young volunteers going abroad is highest (Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands) the figure does not exceed 6% of the total number of respondents. Significant variations have occurred in several countries since 2011.

While Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom have experienced a sharp decline in the number of young people going abroad to volunteer, Lithuania, Hungary, and the Netherlands have seen a substantial increase.

Overall, data show that participation in voluntary activities either at home or abroad involves around a quarter of young Europeans. While this figure is encouraging, the potential for non-formal learning and personal growth attached to voluntary work

Figure 8-F: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) going abroad to do voluntary work, by country, 2011 and 2014

Note: the question was: 'Have you ever had the opportunity to stay abroad for the purpose of volunteering?'. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 319, 'Youth on the Move', 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014

can be further appreciated and exploited by young generations. To this end, it is interesting to shed some light on the barriers which prevent more widespread access to voluntary projects.

8.3. Encouraging youth participation in voluntary activities

Two of the most important factors which facilitate the participation of young people in voluntary activities are the possibility of receiving financial compensation for the expenses incurred during their period of volunteering, and the right to obtain formal recognition of the personal and professional experience acquired⁽¹⁹³⁾.

Almost one in three young volunteers does not receive any contribution towards the living and travelling costs incurred.

The fact that the costs of volunteering activities must usually be borne by the individual concerned can represent a powerful

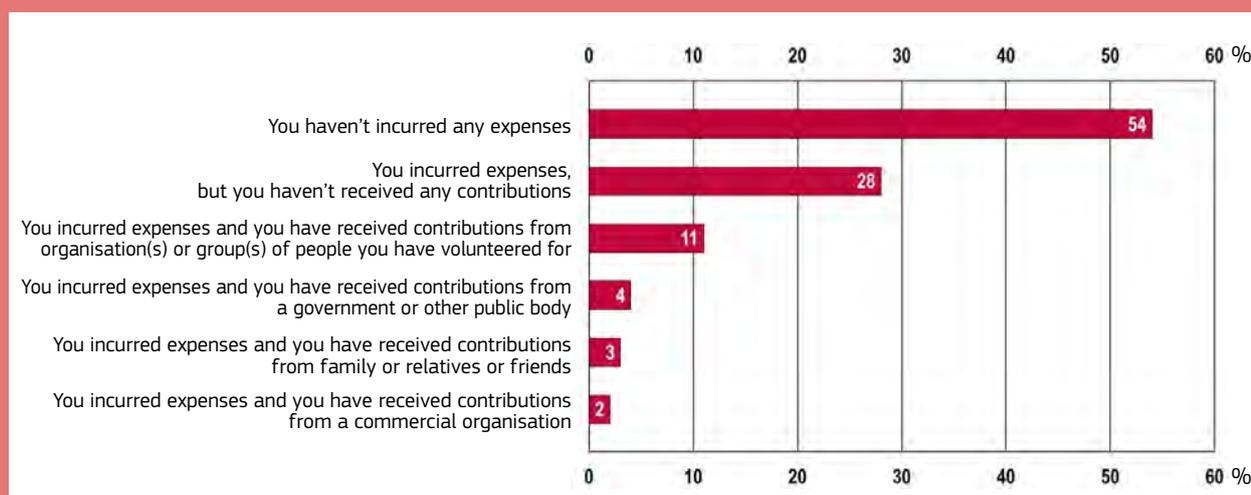
disincentive for those who do not possess enough personal or family resources to bear the financial burden arising from a sustained period of non-remunerated work. This is even more crucial when considering volunteering abroad, which generally involves higher personal expenses. Furthermore, leaving the country of origin often means the loss of social benefits (such as unemployment benefits) and insurance, which can mean that going abroad is even more difficult⁽¹⁹⁴⁾. In this respect, contributions to expenses incurred such as living and travel costs can open volunteering up to a wider audience, particularly to individuals from disadvantaged social groups who, perhaps, could benefit most

in terms of improving their educational and professional skills.

Available data from the Eurobarometer survey of 2014 indicate that half of young volunteers in the European Union have incurred expenses to cover living and travel costs during their volunteering experiences (Figure 8-G).

in terms of improving their educational and professional skills.

Figure 8-G: Contributions towards living expenses received by young people (aged 15-30) during voluntary activities, EU-28, 2014



Note: the question was: 'Have you incurred any expenses in relation to your voluntary activities and have you received any contributions for these expenses?'. Base: all respondents who have participated in a voluntary activity.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014

193 Williamson, Hoskins and Boetzelen, 2006.

194 Ibid.

Almost one third of young volunteers have not received any contributions towards expenses incurred. This finding might be linked with the propensity of young volunteers to engage in activities for the benefit of their local communities instead of taking up opportunities to volunteer abroad. Amongst those who have received support, the majority did so from the organisations for which they volunteered. Contributions from public bodies and families and/or friends account for only a small percentage.

Formal recognition of volunteering experiences also plays

a major role in encouraging young people to engage⁽¹⁹⁵⁾. As mentioned above, by participating in voluntary activities, volunteers acquire skills or enhance their personal and professional capabilities through non-formal learning. Such skills can later be useful in either continuing education or entering the labour market, especially when they are formally recognised through qualifications that can enrich their curriculum vitae.

On average, only a quarter of young people who have participated in voluntary activities have received a certificate or diploma

formally recognising their experience and the skills they have demonstrated, a percentage that has slightly increased since 2011 (Figure 8-H).

This percentage has grown significantly in Denmark, France, Latvia and Luxembourg, while it has declined in the Czech Republic.

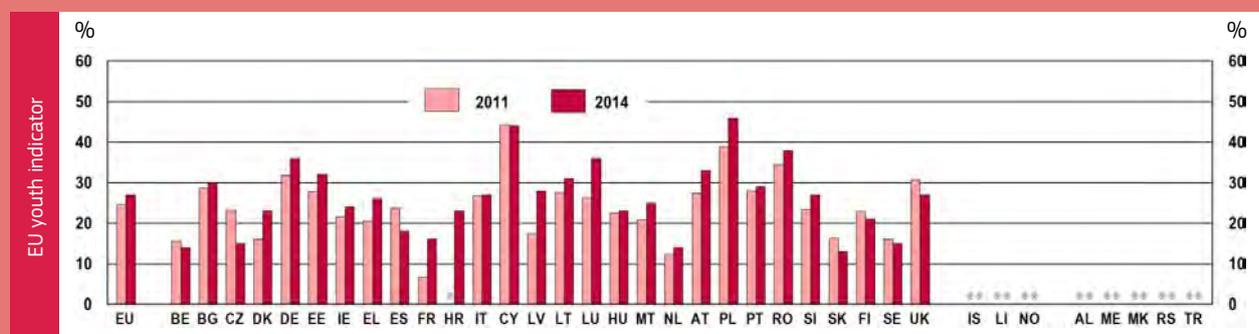
The latter is one of the European countries where, in general, a very small proportion of young people receive formal recognition for their volunteering experience; the others are Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Sweden. The

highest percentages are found in Germany, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Poland and Romania.

Recognition of the skills acquired through volunteering can be particularly complicated when the activity has been carried out in a country different from the one where the individual wishes to either continue his/her education or seek employment, due to differences between national validation systems⁽¹⁹⁶⁾. The combination of challenges such as these can make volunteering abroad all the more difficult.

Only a quarter of young people who have participated in voluntary activities have received a certificate or diploma formally recognising their experience and the skills they have demonstrated.

Figure 8-H: EU Youth Indicator: Share of young people (aged 15–30) who received a certificate or diploma for their voluntary activities, by country, 2011 and 2014



Note: the question was: 'Did you receive a certificate, diploma or other formal recognition for your participation in these voluntary activities?'. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 319, 'Youth on the Move', 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2014

195 Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth, 2011.

196 Williamson, Hoskins and Boetzelen, 2005.

9 Culture and creativity

EU Youth Indicators

- ⇒ Share of young people who have undertaken one or more cultural activities at least once in the preceding 12 months Figure 9-A
- ⇒ Share of young people who have undertaken an amateur artistic activity at least once in the preceding 12 months Figure 9-B
- ⇒ Share of young people who have been active in a sports club, youth club or cultural organisation at least once in the preceding 12 months Figure 9-C
- ⇒ Share of young people (aged 15-30) who say that they have been active in a sports club, youth club or cultural organisation at least once in the preceding 12 months Figure 9-E
- ⇒ Daily computer and Internet use among young people Figure 9-G

9.1. Introduction

Participation in cultural, artistic and recreational activities is a vital part of young people's lives. Besides providing an opportunity for enjoyment and stimulating creativity, involvement in these activities is an important way for young people to develop their personal, social and professional skills. Cultural engagement can provide them with the opportunities to acquire non-formal competencies that can be used in further education and vocational training as well as in professional development. In addition, involvement in cultural and artistic activities facilitates socialisation and integration into the community and therefore encourages active participation and social inclusion⁽¹⁹⁷⁾.

Between 2011 and 2014, a general decline in youth participation in cultural and artistic activities has taken place.

The development and increased use of new technologies applied to social communication and cultural enjoyment rapidly transform the way young people experience culture and the arts. This therefore offers an interesting perspective to observe what the general trends are in the way young people get involved in cultural activities

and to what extent they have taken advantage of existing opportunities to be active participants in creative experiences.

The chapter firstly presents data on youth participation in a variety of cultural and recreational activities, and explores the most widespread obstacles to access to culture. The second part deals with young people's use of the new information and communications technologies for cultural purposes, as well

as more generally in terms of frequency of use and level of skills. The final section addresses young people's views about creativity and looks at the types of creative activities they engage in online.

9.2. Cultural participation

Results from two Eurobarometer surveys, conducted in 2011 and 2014 respectively, shed light on the levels of and variations in young people's participation in various cultural activities. The main trend that emerges is a general decline in the extent to which young Europeans have taken part

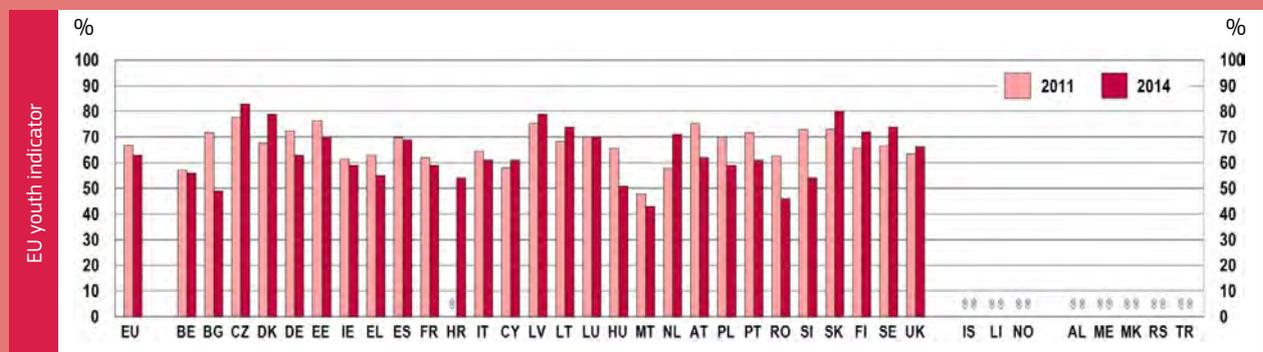
in these experiences over the three years in question. For each of the activities examined (visits to historical monuments, museums and galleries, going to the cinema or concerts, or attending live performances), the proportion of young individuals who have participated at least once in the 12 months prior to the survey has declined in the majority of countries (Figure 9-A).

On average, the strongest decline is registered in the proportion of young people going to the theatre, dance performance or opera (-14 %), followed by going to the cinema and concerts (-9 %) and visiting historical monuments, museums and galleries (-6 %).

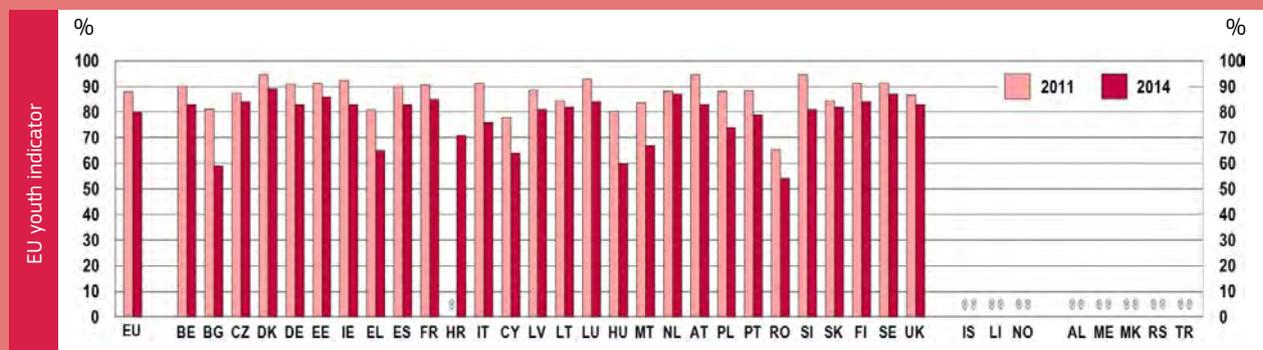
The decline in participation is significant and consistent across the three types of activity

Figure 9-A: EU Youth Indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who have undertaken one or more of the following cultural activities at least once in 12 months preceding the survey, by country, 2011 and 2014

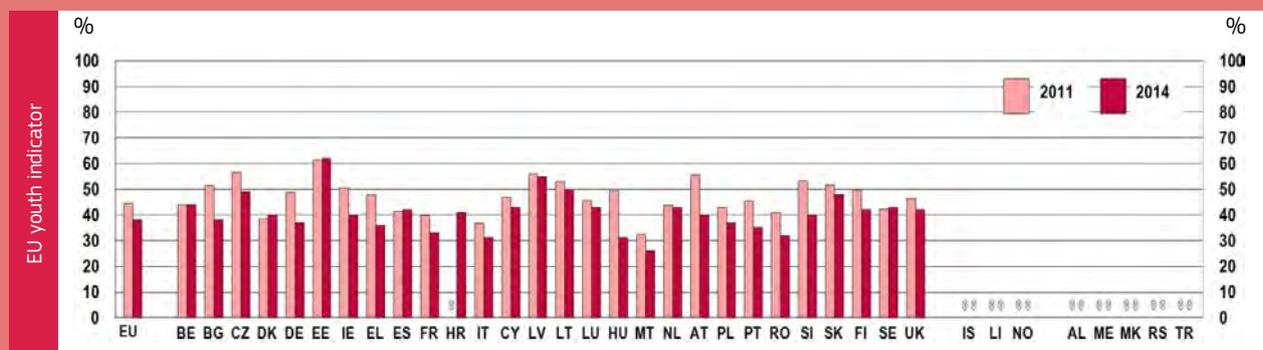
a) Visited historical monuments (palaces, castles, churches, gardens, etc.), museums or galleries



b) Been to the cinema or a concert



c) Been to a theatre, a dance performance or an opera



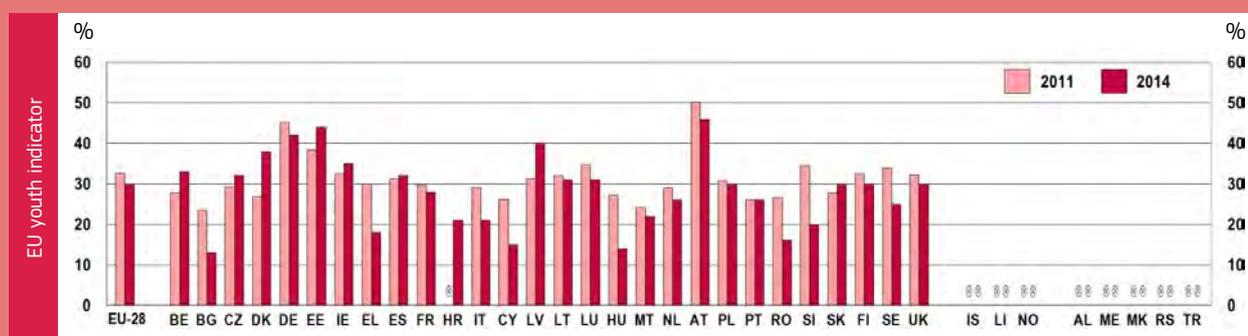
Note: the question was 'In the last 12 months, have you undertaken any of the following cultural activities?' (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE). Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 'Youth on the Move' 319, 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 'European Youth' 408, 2014

amongst young people in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia. Drops in the share of young people going to the cinema and concerts and to the theatre, dance performances and opera is notable also in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, and Malta. Similar reductions in the proportion of young people going to live performances can be observed in Germany, Ireland and Austria.

The declining trend in participation in cultural activities is similar to that for undertaking an amateur artistic activity. The most significant fall in the level of involvement is registered again in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia (Figure 9-B).

Figure 9-B: EU Youth Indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who have undertaken an amateur artistic activity at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey, by country, 2011 and 2014



Note: the question was 'In the last 12 months, have you participated in an amateur artistic activity (playing a musical instrument, singing, acting, dancing, writing poetry, photography, film making)?'. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 'Youth on the Move' 319, 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 'European Youth' 408, 2014

In addition, a smaller proportion of young people have joined cultural and recreational organisations, such as youth organisations, sports clubs and cultural associations over the last three years. Again, the most notable decrease has taken place in the same group of countries as above (Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia) to which Estonia, Lithuania, Austria, and Slovakia must also be added (Figure 9-C).

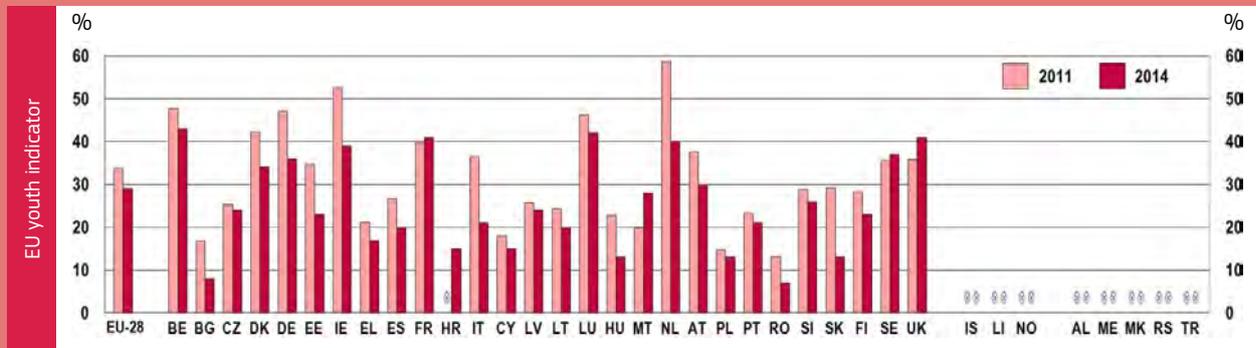
The consistent drop in figures for all indicators in the EU in general, and in several Member States in particular, hints at the existence of general underlying causes for the decline in the numbers of young Europeans becoming involved in cultural activities. It seems likely that the economic crisis affecting the European continent over

recent years, which has exacted a high economic and social price in several countries, has played a part. Plummeting levels of employment and the growing financial insecurity suffered by many Europeans, in particular the younger generation, have meant that many do not have the means to enjoy cultural events⁽¹⁹⁸⁾. As discussed in the chapter on Social Inclusion, the last few years have seen a dramatic worsening in the social conditions of significant segments of the youth population, which reflects in all areas of life.

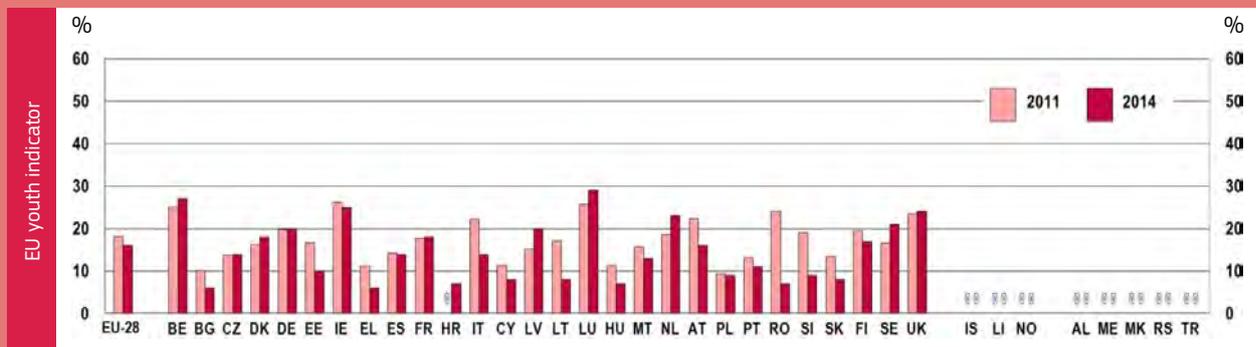
The findings of a recent survey exploring the main reasons for young people not participating in cultural activities is in line with this argument. Over a third of respondents felt the cost of going to the cinema or concerts (the most popular forms of

Figure 9-C: EU Youth Indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who have been active in a sports club, youth club or cultural organisation at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey, by country, 2011 and 2014

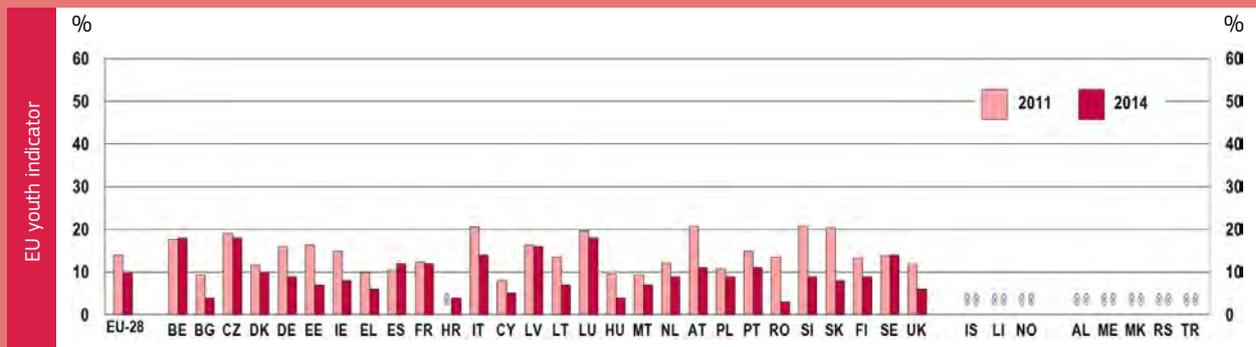
a) Sport club



b) A youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation



c) A cultural organisation



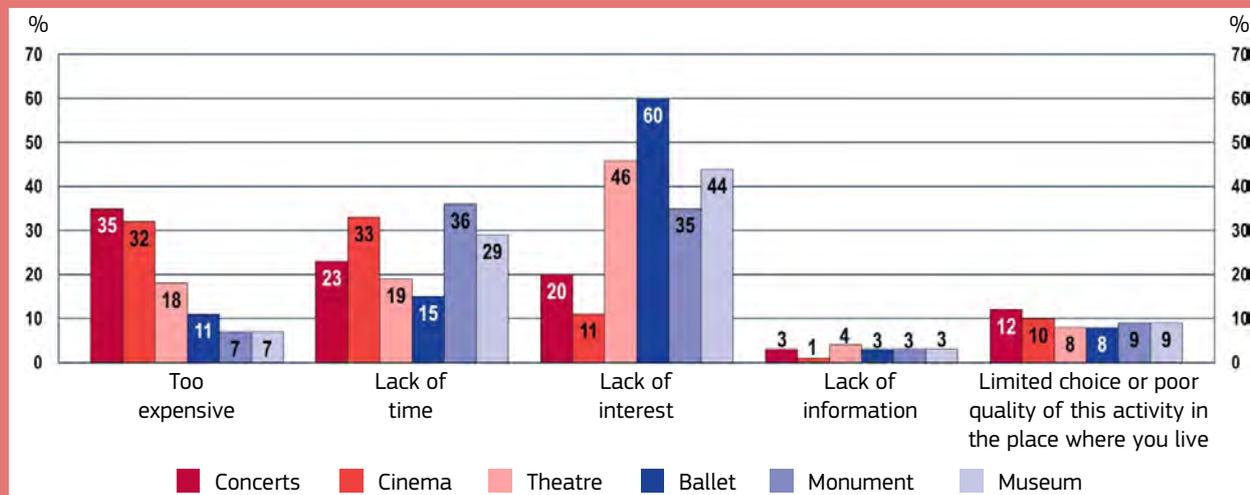
Note: the question was 'In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations?'. Base: all respondents. EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 'Youth on the Move' 319, 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 'European Youth' 408, 2014

entertainment for young audiences) to be the most important obstacle (Figure 9-D). For other cultural activities such as the theatre, dance performances, and visits to

museums and monuments, a lack of interest and time appear as the main reasons for not taking part.

Figure 9-D: Reasons for young people (aged 15-24) not attending various cultural activities in the 12 months preceding the survey, EU-28 average, 2013



Note: the question was ‘For each of the following activities, please tell me why you haven’t done it or haven’t done it more often in the last 12 months’. Base: all respondents.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 399, ‘Cultural access and participation’, 2013

In terms of gender, being active in a sports club is the activity where differences between young men and women are most apparent (Figure 9-E). According to Eurobarometer data, men tend to participate more than women, a result in line with men’s higher propensity to play sports, as illustrated in the chapter on Health and Well-being.

The trends discussed so far pertain to certain cultural activities that are not immediately influenced by the growth of new developments in information and communications technology. Yet, the latter play an ever larger role in shaping the ways people can access and enjoy cultural experiences, especially young people who are the most receptive to the developments these new

Figure 9-E: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who have been active in a sports club, youth club or cultural organisation at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey, by sex, EU-28 average, 2014



Note: the question was ‘In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations?’. Base: all respondents.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer ‘European Youth’ 408, 2015

media bring about. The next section will therefore address the extent and nature of use of these media by young Europeans, in general, and as a medium for accessing cultural experiences.

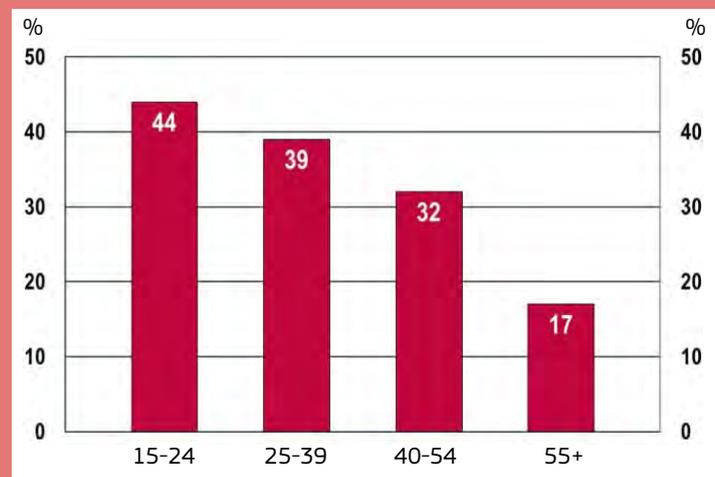
9.3. Young people and their use of ICT

According to the results reported by a Eurobarometer survey from 2013, young people are the group in the general population which uses the internet the most for cultural purposes (Figure 9-F).

As in the case of political participation (discussed in Chapter 7), young people have been the first to apply communication technologies to their social interactions. This also reflects on the way they access, enjoy and initiate cultural experiences. To this end, access to and proficiency in the use of computers and the Internet are essential. According to data collected by Eurostat, between 2011 and 2014 the level of use of computers and the Internet amongst young Europeans have followed different trends (Figure 9-G). While levels of daily access to computers have generally decreased in the majority of countries, rates of daily use of the Internet have increased. This situation can be explained by the growth in alternative channels to access the Internet such as mobile or smart phones which are heavily used by young people⁽¹⁹⁹⁾. They probably have partially replaced the desktop type of personal computer as a main gateway to online connectivity at home.

Daily use of computers by young people aged 16-24 has slightly declined while access to the Internet has grown in almost all Member States.

Figure 9-F: Share of the population using the Internet for cultural purposes at least once a week, by age, EU-28 average, 2013



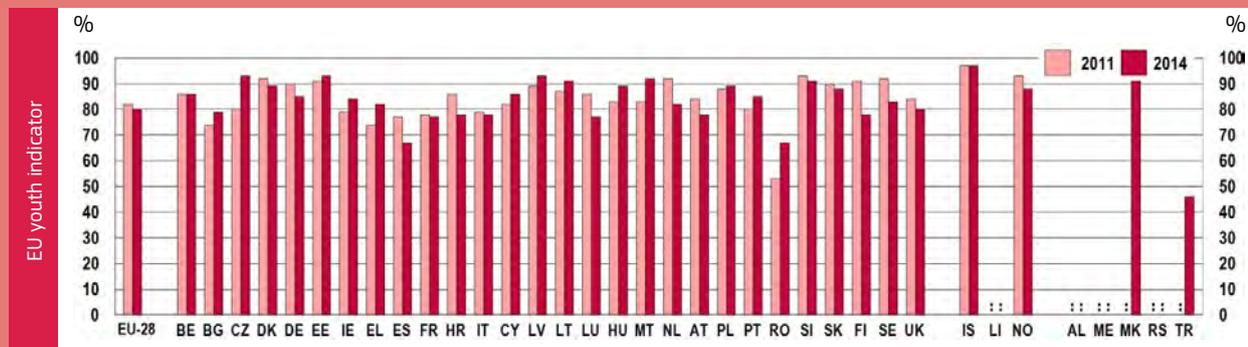
Note: the question was 'How often do you use the Internet for cultural purposes like, for instance, searching for cultural information, buying cultural products or reading articles related to culture?'. Base: all respondents.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 399 'Cultural access and participation', 2013

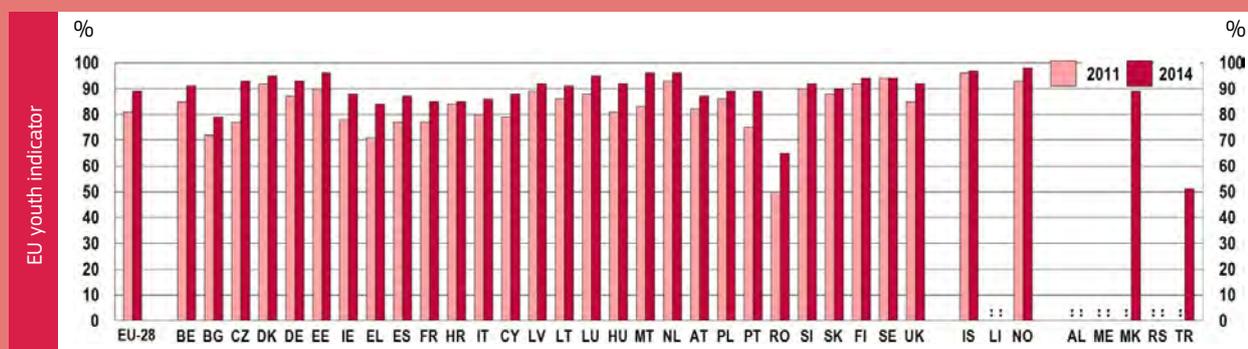
The biggest decreases in daily computer use are observed in Spain, Croatia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden. Conversely, higher rates have been recorded in the Czech Republic, Greece, Malta, and especially in Romania. These latter countries (Czech Republic, Greece, Malta and Romania) are, together with Hungary and Portugal, also those where the proportion of young people who have daily access to the Internet has increased the most since 2011.

Figure 9-G: EU Youth Indicator: Daily computer and Internet use among young people (aged 16-24), by country, 2011 and 2014

a) Daily computer use



b) Daily Internet use

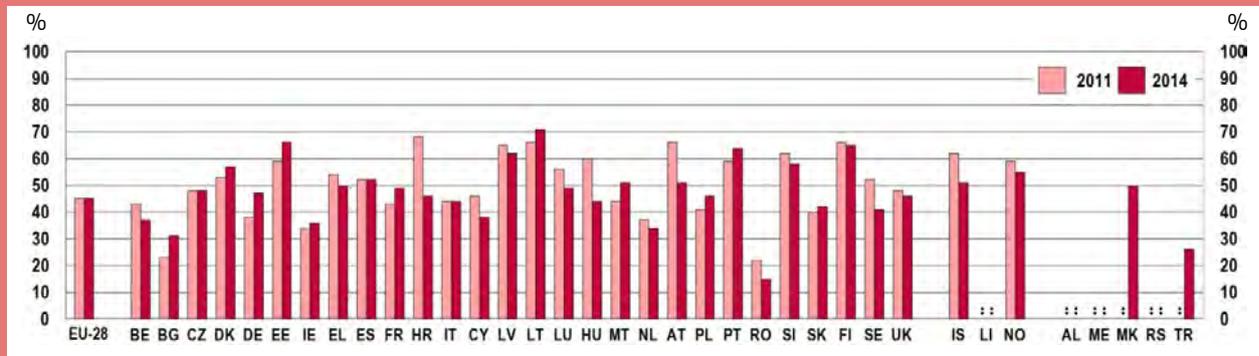


Source: Eurostat [isoc_ci_cfp_fu]

On average, the proportion of young people with a good level of computer skills (measured by Eurostat as the ability to perform five or six tasks, that means all or almost all tasks from a list of six selected computer-related activities in the survey) has remained stable at around 45 % in Europe (Figure 9-H). Significant improvements have been observed in some countries (Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, France, Malta, Portugal and Poland), while negative trends appear in particular in Croatia, Hungary, Austria and Sweden.

Eurostat data also show that the gap in the use of ICT between young people who have acquired different levels of education has reduced. Indeed, the decline in the daily use of computers recorded since 2011 has been lower among young people with a low level of formal education than for those with higher level formal qualifications (Figure 9-I-a). In parallel, the growth in the share of young people having daily access to the Internet has been more remarkable amongst those who have only a low level of educational attainment (Figure 9-I-b).

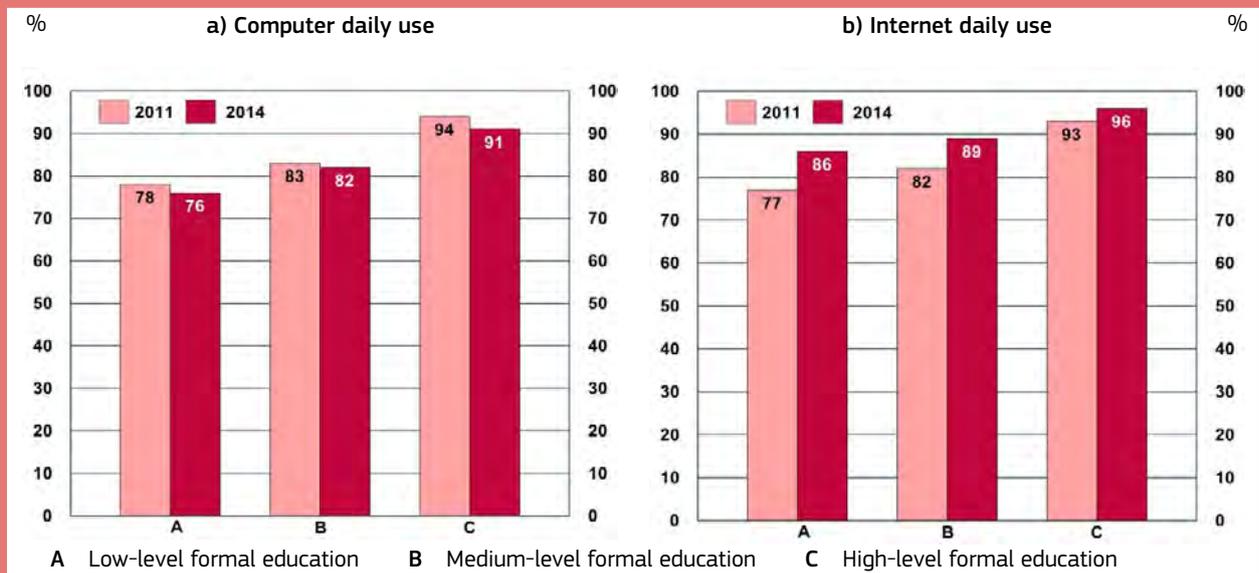
Figure 9-H: Share of young people (aged 16-29) who have carried out at least five of the specified computer-related activities, by country, 2011 and 2014



Note: the computer related activities surveyed and used for skills aggregation were: copying or moving a file or folder; using copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document; using basic arithmetic formulas in a spreadsheet; compressing (or zipping) files; connecting and installing new devices, e.g. a modem; writing a computer programme using a specialised programming language.

Source: Eurostat [isoc_sk_cskl_i]

Figure 9-I: Daily computer and Internet use among young people (aged 16-24) by level of education, EU-28 average, 2011 and 2014



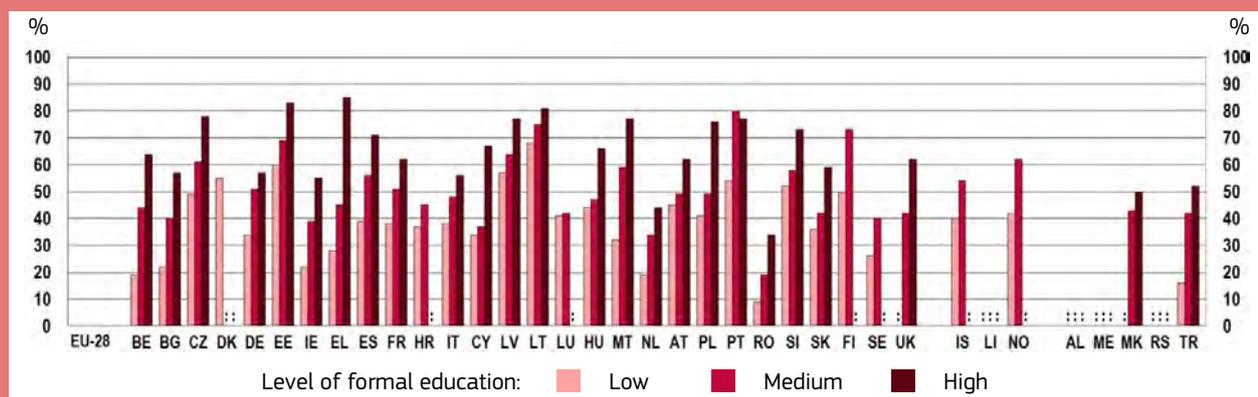
Note: According to Eurostat's Statistics Manual, a low level of formal education corresponds to no formal education or the completion of primary or lower secondary education only (corresponding to ISCED 0, 1 or 2); medium-level formal education corresponds to upper secondary education (ISCED 3 and 4); and high-level formal education corresponds to tertiary education (ISCED 5, 6, 7 or 8). For data on educational attainment based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 (ISCED 2011) is applied as from 2014. Up to 2013 ISCED 1997 is used

Source: Eurostat [isoc_ci_ifp_fu]

However, evident disparities still exist in terms of the computer skills demonstrated by high- and low-attaining young people. On average, almost twice as many young individuals who have attained a high level of formal education possess good computer

skills compared to individuals with a lower level of attainment (Figure 9-J). The biggest differences between the two groups are found in Belgium, Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Malta and Romania.

Figure 9-J: Share of young people (aged 16-24) who have carried out at least five computer related activities, by country and level of education, 2014



Note: According to Eurostat's Statistics Manual, a low level of formal education corresponds to no formal education or the completion of primary or lower secondary education only (corresponding to ISCED 0, 1 or 2); medium-level formal education corresponds to upper secondary education (ISCED 3 and 4); and high-level formal education corresponds to tertiary education (ISCED 5, 6, 7 or 8). Computer related activities surveyed and used for skills aggregation were: copying or moving a file or folder; using copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document; using basic arithmetic formulas in a spreadsheet; compressing (or zipping) files; connecting and installing new devices, e.g. a modem; writing a computer programme using a specialised programming language.

Source: Eurostat [isoc_sk_cskl_i]

9.4. Creativity

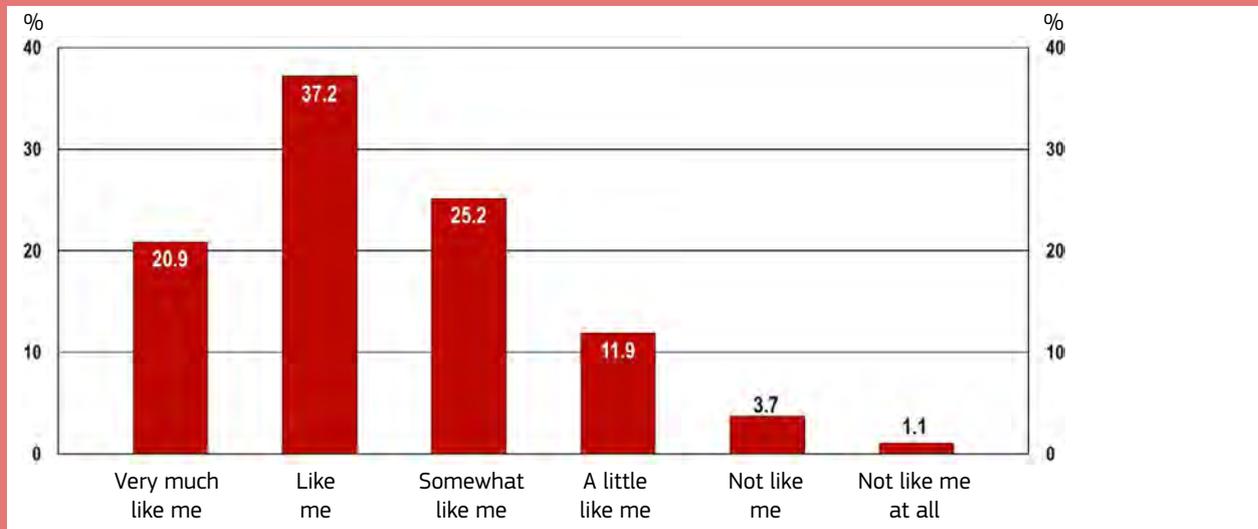
Young people's creativity and capacity for innovation are important skills for their active participation in society. Engaging in creative experiences also fosters the development of transversal soft-skills such as finding new ways to tackle problems, being able to handle risk and learn from failure, and adapting knowledge to new applications, which in turn help improve employability and entrepreneurial potential⁽²⁰⁰⁾.

When asked about the perceived importance of being creative, a majority of young respondents to a survey conducted in 2012

indicated that they valued the ability to develop innovative ideas and creative thinking (Figure 9-K).

Unfortunately, evidence about the ways in which young people actually participate in creative activities is still limited. A Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2013 sheds some light on young people's use of the internet for creative activities. According to the results, young respondents tend to be engaged in such activities more than older ones (Figure 9-L). In particular, filming, photography, and sharing their own creative content online appear to be the most common activities amongst young people.

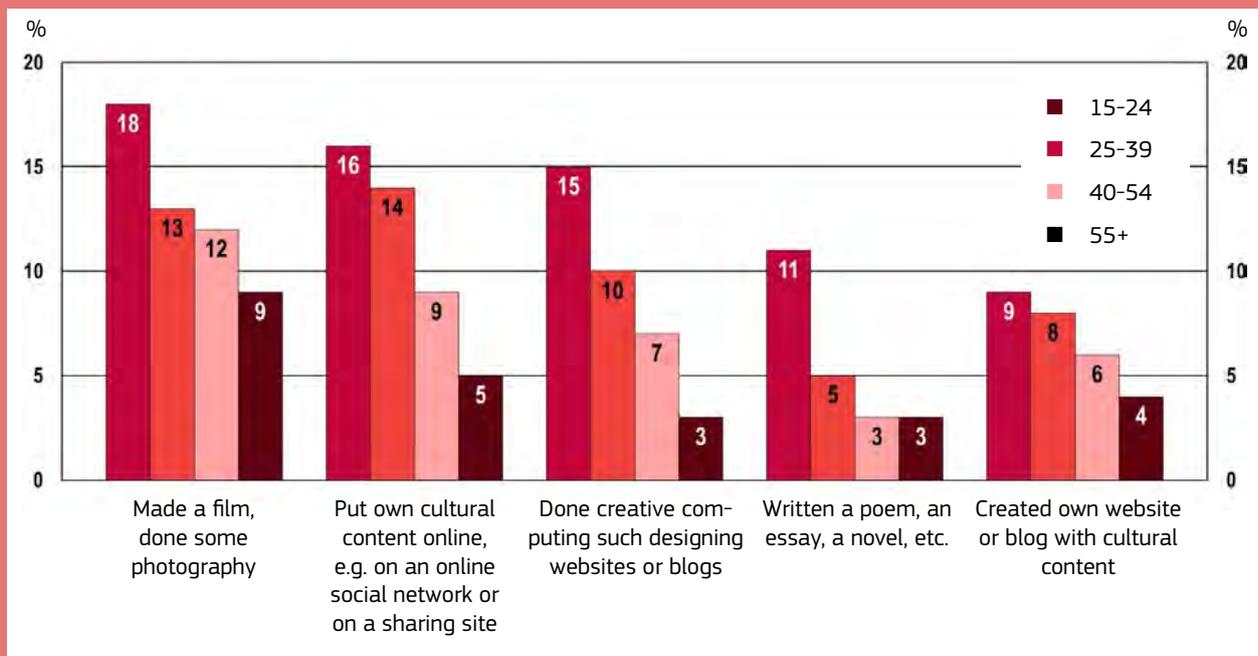
Figure 9-K: Share of young people (aged 15-29) saying that it is important to think new ideas and be creative, EU-27 average, 2012



Note: the question asked respondents to what extent the statement 'It is important to think new ideas and being creative' was similar to their own opinion. Base: all respondents.

Source: European Social Survey, 2012

Figure 9-L: Share of the population undertaking creative activities during the 12 months preceding the survey, by age group, EU-28 average, 2013



Note: questions were: 'What do you use the Internet for, in terms of cultural purposes?' and 'Please tell me if, in the last 12 months, you have either on your own or as part of an organised group or classes...'. Base: all respondents.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 399 'Cultural access and participation', 2013

10 Youth and the world

EU Youth Indicators

- ⇒ Participation of young people in non-governmental organisations active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues Figures 10-B, 10-D and 10-E
- ⇒ Participation of young people in non-governmental organisations promoting human rights or global development Figure 10-C, 10-D and 10-E
- ⇒ Participation of young people in activities or projects aimed at fostering cooperation with young people from other continents Figures 10-F and 10-G

10.1. Introduction

Today, young people are growing up in a world substantially different from the one in which their parents were raised. Globalisation shapes all aspects of their lives: they live in increasingly diverse societies, consume global goods and culture, and have jobs in globally integrated economies. While this presents new opportunities, it also carries high levels of uncertainties and risks⁽²⁰¹⁾. Globalisation affects not only young people's work prospects, but also their identity, sense of citizenship and patterns of political engagement⁽²⁰²⁾ (see also Chapter 7). In this respect, their experiences could make them more prone to engage with global issues such as human rights, climate change or environmental protection⁽²⁰³⁾.

While many young Europeans take actions in everyday life to combat global problems, only a small fraction are actively engaged in organisations that pursue globally relevant issues.

Based on Eurobarometer surveys, this section therefore looks at the extent to which young Europeans are actually engaged with global issues, as well as at how much

they participate in activities designed to foster cooperation between young people from different continents.

10.2. Young people's engagement with global issues

Young people's engagement with global issues can take various forms. Organised action, for example through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), requires the most active commitment. However, young people can also contribute to global issues through small-scale, individual and everyday activities⁽²⁰⁴⁾. As a recent Eurobarometer survey on young people demonstrates, a large proportion of young people are indeed engaged with global issues like sustainable development and climate change at various different levels (Figure 10-A).

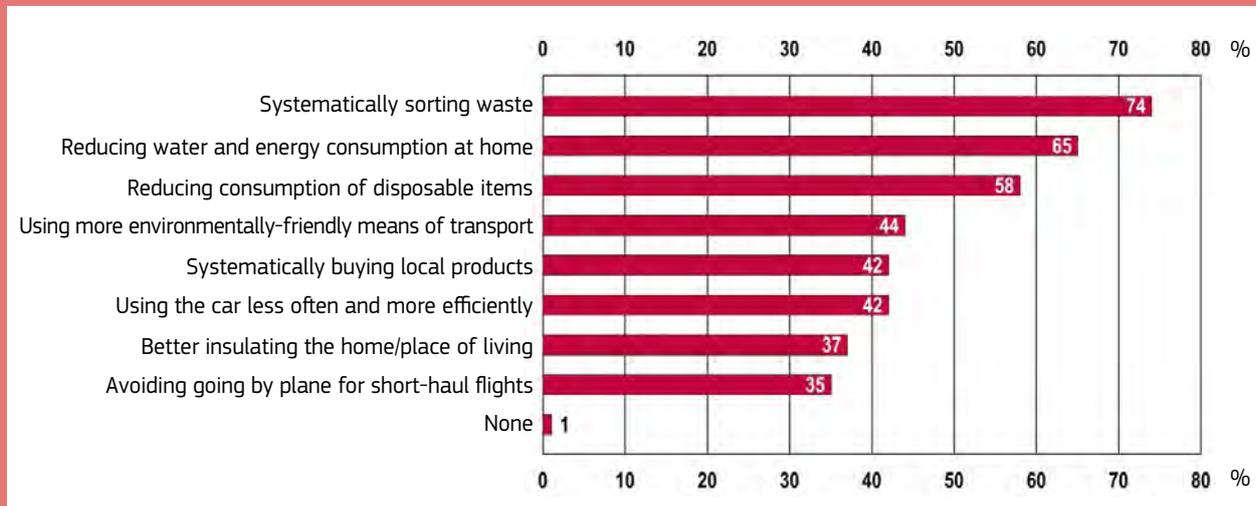
201 Bourn, 2008.

202 Ibid.

203 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013a.

204 Harris, Wyn and Younes, 2010.

Figure 10-A: Proportion of young people (aged 16-30) taking actions in everyday life to protect the environment and combat climate change, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: Question: 'Which of the following steps to protect the environment and combat climate change have you taken personally?' – 'Systematically sorting your waste'; 'Reducing your water and energy consumption at home (electricity, heating, household appliances)'; 'Reducing your consumption of disposable items (plastic bags, useless packaging)'; 'Changing your mode of transport to use a more environmentally-friendly means of transport'; 'Systematically buying local products'; 'Using your car less often and more efficiently (e.g. car-sharing)'; 'Carrying out the necessary work to better insulate your home/place where you live'; 'Avoiding going by plane for short-haul flights' (Multiple answers possible). Base: all respondents.

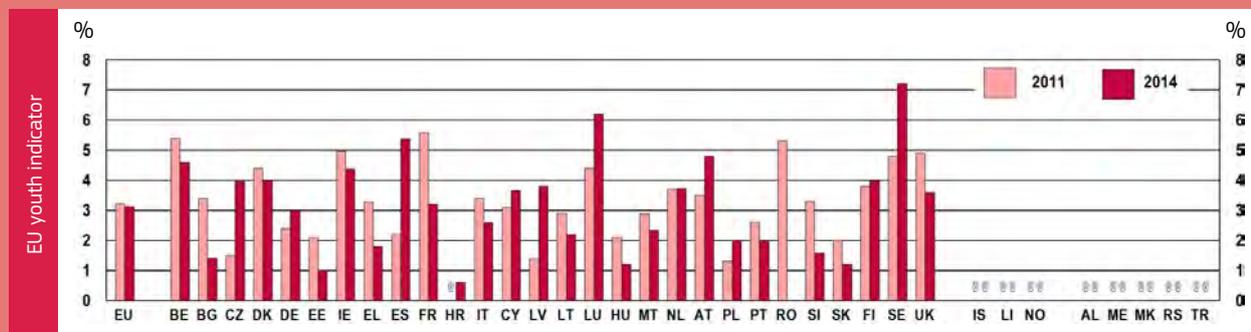
Source: Flash Eurobarometer of the European Parliament (EP EB395) on 'European Youth in 2014', 2014

As Figure 10-A shows, a large majority of European youth has adopted certain life-style changes in order to protect the environment and combat climate change. The most common actions include sorting waste systematically (74 %), reducing water and energy consumption at home (65 %), and reducing the consumption of disposable items like plastic bags (58 %).

Nevertheless, when it comes to young Europeans' active engagement with global issues through more organised activities, their commitment is relatively low. Another recent Eurobarometer survey on 'European Youth' finds that only 3.1 % participate in NGOs active in the domain of climate change or other environmental issues, while 4.7 % do so in the areas of promoting human rights or global development (Figures 10-B and 10-C). In contrast, 11 % of young people participate in NGOs aimed at improving their local community (see Figure 7-I).

In general, across the EU-28, more young people participate in NGOs working in the field of human rights or global development than in climate change or environmental issues. However, there are large differences between countries. Young people's participation in both fields tends to be higher in western (and especially northern) European countries than in eastern Europe, though not without exceptions. Regarding climate change and environmental issues, young people's participation rates range from zero or nearly zero per cent in Croatia and Romania to over 6 % in Luxembourg (6.2 %) and Sweden (7.2 %). With respect to human rights and global development, young people participate the least in NGOs in Bulgaria (0.8 %), Croatia and Romania (both at 1.4 %), while they tend to be the most active in Denmark (10.4 %), Ireland (11.7 %) and Sweden (16.2 %). The active engagement of young people in Sweden is exceptionally high within the EU-28.

Figure 10-B: EU youth indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in non-governmental organisations active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues, self-reported participation in the 12 months preceding the survey, by country, 2011 and 2014

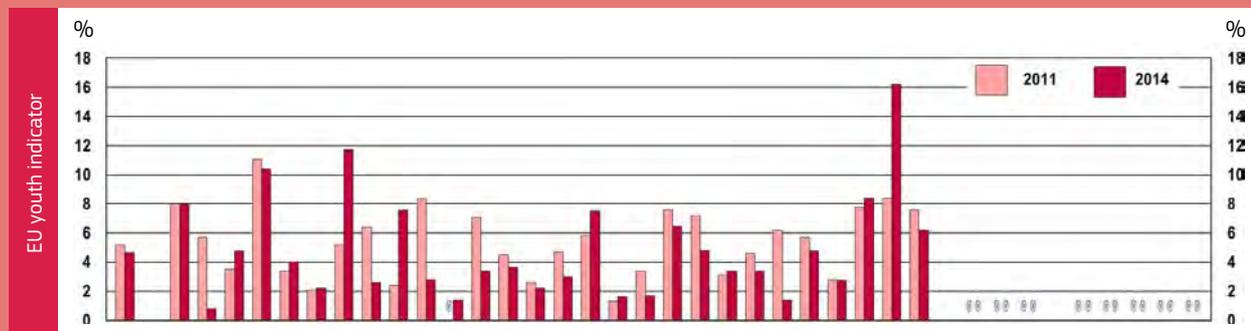


Notes: Question: 'Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?' - 'An organisation active in the domains of global climate change/global warming' (2011), 'An organisation active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues' (2014) (Multiple answers possible.)

Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers by country, EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 319a, 'Youth on the Move', 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2015

Figure 10-C: EU youth indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in non-governmental organisations promoting human rights or global development, self-reported participation in the 12 months preceding the survey, by country, 2011 and 2014



Notes: Question: 'Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?' - 'An organisation promoting human rights or global development' (Multiple answers possible.)

Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers by country, EU 27 (2011) and EU 28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 319a, 'Youth on the Move', 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2015

As Figures 10-B and 10-C show, young people's participation in NGOs in these globally relevant areas stayed relatively stable across the EU⁽²⁰⁵⁾ between 2011 and 2014, with a small decrease in the field of human rights promotion and global development (from 5.2 % to 4.7 %). Due to small sample

sizes, comparisons across time by country should be made cautiously. Nevertheless, relatively significant falls in young people's participation in NGOs across both fields occurred in Bulgaria, France and Romania; in Spain, however, there was a substantial increase. In the area of promoting human

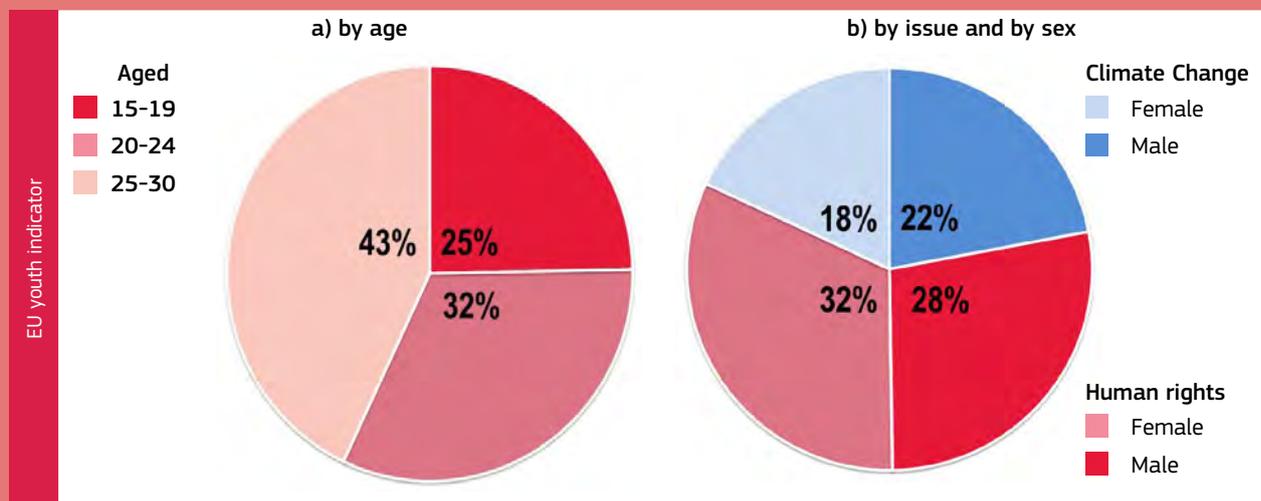
205 The 2011 average refers to the EU-27. The 2014 average is the same for the EU-27 and the EU-28.

rights and global development, significant changes took place in Greece and Italy (a decrease) as well as in Ireland and Sweden (an increase).

But who are these young people who are actively engaged with global issues? The Eurobarometer on 'European Youth' indicates that while young women and men are equally active in NGOs dealing with global

problems, women tend to be more interested in human rights promotion and global development, while men are relatively more likely to engage with environmental issues (Figure 10-D-b). Furthermore, young people over the age of 25 are more likely to be active in these fields than their younger peers: 43 % of young respondents participating in relevant NGOs were between 25 and 30 years of age (Figure 10-D-a).

Figure 10-D: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 15-30) participating in non-governmental organisations active in the domains of climate change/environmental issues, human rights or global development in the 12 months preceding the survey, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: Question: Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations? 'An organisation active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues'; 'An organisation promoting human rights or global development' (Multiple answers possible.)

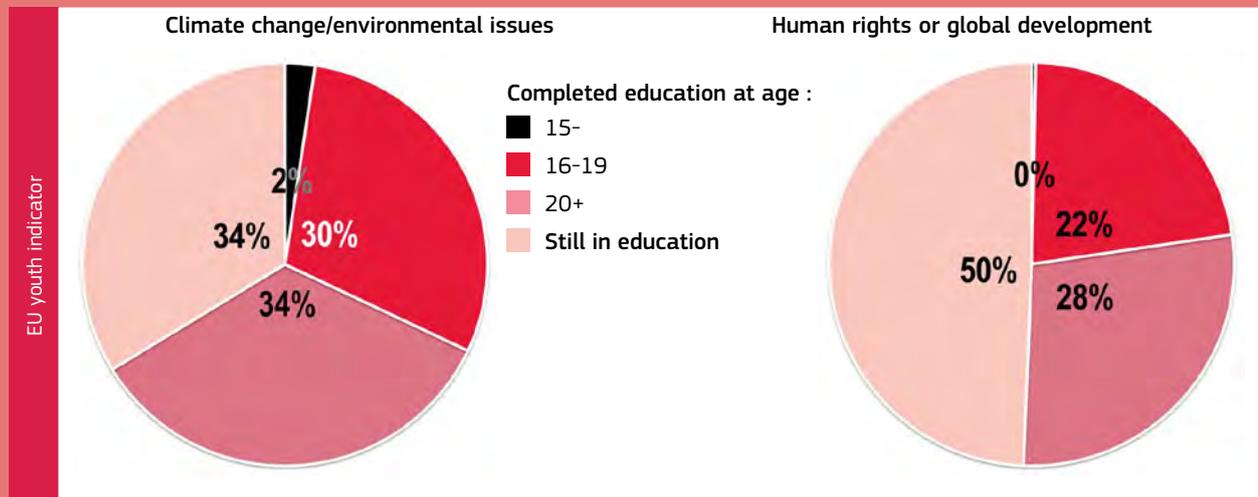
Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers, EU-28

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2015

In addition, despite young people in their late twenties being more likely to be engaged with global issues, a large proportion of active young people are still in education: one third of those active in the field of climate change or environmental issues; and half of those engaged with human rights promotion or global development

(Figure 10-E). Among the young people who have finished their education, the longer they studied, the more likely it is that they actively participate in NGOs dealing with global challenges. This suggests that active engagement with globally relevant topics increases with the level of education.

Figure 10-E: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 15–30) participating in non-governmental organisations active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues, human rights or global development, in the 12 months preceding the survey by education status (still in education or age of completion), EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: Questions: 'Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?' - 'An organisation active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues'; 'An organisation promoting human rights or global development' (Multiple answers possible.); 'How old were you when you stopped full-time education?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers, EU-28

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2015

10.3. Cooperation among young people from different continents

At 3 %, the participation of European young people in activities or projects fostering cooperation with young people from other continents is also relatively low in the EU-28, and has even fallen from the 4 % reported in 2011 (Figure 10-F). For comparison, in 2014, 5 % (6 % in 2011) of young people reported having participated in activities and projects together with young people from other European countries⁽²⁰⁶⁾.

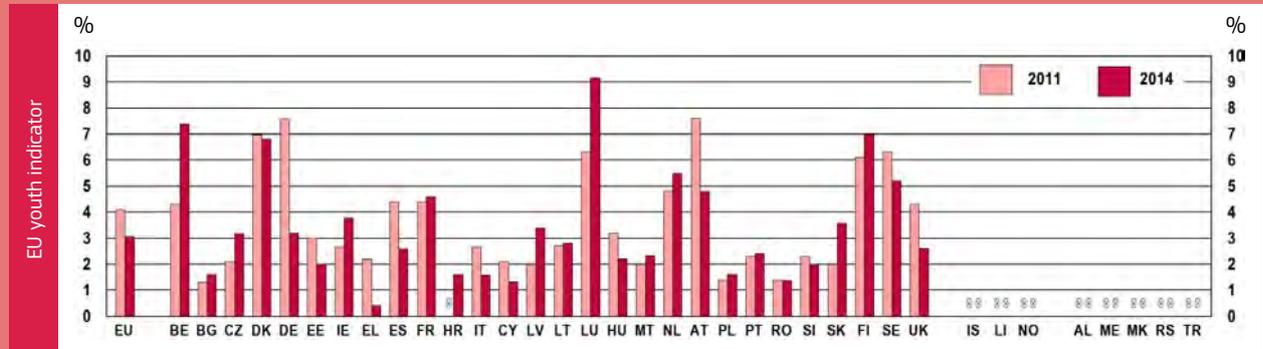
Nevertheless, differences between countries are again substantial, with young people

from eastern and southern European countries participating less in such activities than their peers from western and northern Europe. Participation rates of respondents are the lowest in Greece (0.3 %), Cyprus (1.3 %) and Romania (1.4 %), and the highest in Finland (7 %), Belgium (7.4 %) and Luxembourg (9.2 %). Luxembourg is the only country with a significant increase since 2011 in young people's participation in activities together with young people from other continents. The countries with the largest falls in participation rates are Germany, Greece and Austria (see Figure 10-F).

In contrast to NGO participation in globally relevant domains, the likelihood of participating in activities or projects together with young people from other continents does

The majority of young people participating in projects together with young people from other continents are still in education.

Figure 10-F: EU Youth Indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in activities or projects aimed at fostering cooperation with young people from other continents, self-reported participation in the 12 months preceding the survey, by country, 2011 and 2014



Notes: Question: 'Have you participated in any activities or projects during the past year aimed at fostering cooperation with youth from other countries?' – 'Yes, in activities or projects with young people from other continents' (Multiple answers possible.)

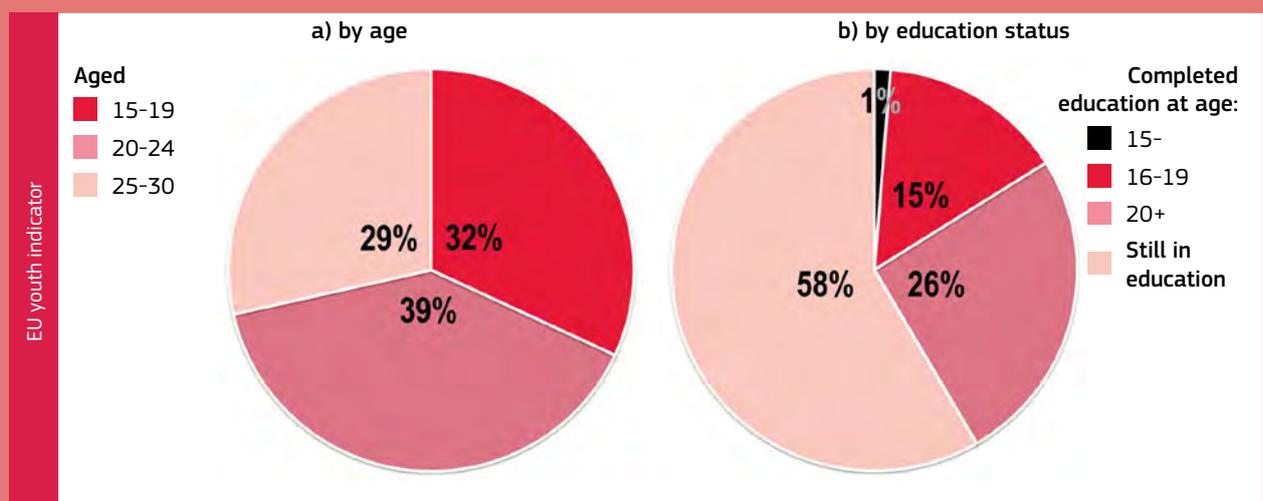
Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers by country, EU-27 (2011) and EU-28 (2014)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 319a, 'Youth on the Move', 2011 and Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2015

not increase with age: the young people most likely to be involved in such activities are in their early twenties (Figure 10-G-a). In addition, a large majority of respondents (58 %) are still studying, and only 16 %

of participating young people completed their education before they turned 20 (Figure 10-G-b). This suggests that many of the cooperation activities are linked to higher education studies and exchanges.

Figure 10-G: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 15-30) participating in activities or projects aimed at fostering cooperation with young people from other continents in the 12 months preceding the survey, EU-28 average, 2014



Notes: Question: 'Have you participated in any activities or projects during the past year aimed at fostering cooperation with youth from other countries?' – 'Yes, in activities or projects with young people from other continents' (Multiple answers possible.); 'How old were you when you stopped full-time education?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers, EU-28

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 408, 'European Youth', 2015

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Abbreviations

Statistical codes

:	Data not available
V	Country not participating in data collection

Country codes

EU Member States ⁽²⁰⁷⁾	
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

207 Roman alphabetical order of the countries' geographical names in the original language(s).

Non-EU Member States

IS	Iceland
LI	Liechtenstein
NO	Norway
ME	Montenegro
MK	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
RS	Serbia
TR	Turkey

Other Abbreviations

EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EU-15	15 Member States of the EU before 1 May 2004
EU-27	27 Member States of the EU before 1 July 2013
EU-28	28 Member States of the EU
HBSC	Health Behaviour In School-aged Children, WHO Collaborative Cross-National Survey
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Classifications of Occupations
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SALTO	Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme – a network of eight resource centres
SILC	Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UOE	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-UIS), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat)
WHO	World Health Organization

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