

*Data extracted in October 2020.*

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This article presents statistics on the mobility of **tertiary education** students in the **European Union (EU)** and forms part of an [online publication](#) on **education** and training in the EU. It focuses on tertiary education students who are internationally mobile. In theory, this concerns students who completed their secondary education somewhere other than the EU Member State where they are studying (regardless of whether this was in another EU Member State or in a non-member country); in practice, a number of different criteria are used, notably the country of usual or previous residence, or citizenship. The first part of the analysis focuses on tertiary students, the second part on tertiary graduates, followed by an analysis comparing the number of students with the number of graduates. The article concludes with a brief presentation of data on credit mobile graduates, in other words, students who are temporarily abroad (for study or work placement) for the purpose (usually) of gaining academic credit within the framework of enrolment in a tertiary education programme at a home institution.

## Key figures

In 2018, there were 1.3 million students from abroad who were undertaking tertiary level studies across the EU Member States: in other words, foreign students studying in a Member State other than the country (another Member State or a non-member country) where they had completed their secondary education. In the same year, 302 000 tertiary level students from abroad graduated within the EU Member States. Such students/graduates may be referred to as degree mobile students/graduates. These totals for the number of students and the number of graduates are based on data reported by the Member States in which they are studying; in other words, they are recorded as inwardly mobile students.

As well as data for degree mobile students (those who have come from abroad to study), another set of data — referring to credit mobile students — looks at the number of students who have studied abroad for a part of their degree: in 2018, 111 000 students in the **EU-27** (excluding Ireland and Slovakia) graduated from a course at bachelor's or equivalent level, having spent at least three months abroad.

## Students from abroad

### Number and share of students from abroad

There were 1.3 million students from abroad who were undertaking tertiary level studies across the EU-27 in 2018. As is the case for all students, not just those from abroad, the highest shares of these students were studying for either a bachelor's degree (43.4 %) or a master's degree (45.0 %), while 9.2 % were studying for doctoral degrees and 2.4 % followed short-cycle tertiary courses.

## Tertiary education students from abroad by sex and level of education, 2018

(number)

	Short-cycle tertiary			Bachelor's or equivalent			Master's or equivalent			Doctoral or equivalent		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>EU-27</b>	<b>32 503</b>	<b>15 958</b>	<b>16 545</b>	<b>584 727</b>	<b>281 401</b>	<b>303 325</b>	<b>606 606</b>	<b>299 184</b>	<b>307 422</b>	<b>123 693</b>	<b>69 679</b>	<b>54 014</b>
Belgium	1 836	640	1 196	25 578	9 129	16 449	19 282	8 646	10 636	7 200	3 935	3 265
Bulgaria	–	–	–	4 675	2 874	1 801	9 993	5 419	4 574	487	268	219
Czechia	51	18	33	22 594	10 624	11 970	17 984	7 885	10 099	4 138	2 307	1 831
Denmark	4 592	2 344	2 248	11 528	5 388	6 140	13 748	6 426	7 322	3 420	1 842	1 578
Germany (*)	0	0	0	123 184	66 188	56 996	164 654	84 358	80 296	23 900	15 100	8 800
Estonia	–	–	–	1 904	1 082	822	2 062	1 151	911	426	281	145
Ireland	707	360	347	12 174	5 448	6 726	6 819	3 235	3 584	2 583	1 338	1 245
Greece	–	–	–	25 333	12 667	12 666	620	313	307	372	214	158
Spain	4 999	2 119	2 880	15 193	7 100	8 093	36 059	17 343	18 716	14 661	7 834	6 827
France	14 300	6 591	7 709	70 311	33 032	37 279	119 747	60 532	59 215	25 265	13 448	11 817
Croatia	0	0	0	2 522	1 179	1 343	2 161	928	1 233	331	175	156
Italy	986	654	332	59 587	24 283	35 304	41 466	18 681	22 785	4 572	2 582	1 990
Cyprus	2 189	1 797	392	6 612	4 701	1 911	2 254	1 168	1 086	218	98	120
Latvia	115	84	31	3 477	2 524	953	3 751	2 078	1 673	221	134	87
Lithuania	–	–	–	3 061	1 712	1 349	3 052	1 673	1 379	187	115	72
Luxembourg	75	29	46	707	291	416	1 985	940	1 045	595	358	237
Hungary	116	57	59	15 915	8 175	7 740	14 812	7 224	7 588	1 489	899	590
Malta	156	88	68	374	168	206	957	481	476	28	13	15
Netherlands	675	377	298	65 623	29 335	36 288	31 502	14 824	16 678	6 890	3 727	3 163
Austria	966	383	583	37 313	17 659	19 653	30 193	13 612	16 581	6 788	3 457	3 331
Poland	0	0	0	31 785	16 197	15 588	21 617	10 449	11 168	952	562	390
Portugal	403	231	172	10 025	4 611	5 414	11 815	5 514	6 301	5 879	3 258	2 621
Romania	–	–	–	10 444	5 398	5 046	17 751	9 927	7 824	917	614	303
Slovenia	251	143	108	1 613	732	881	1 279	498	781	277	145	132
Slovakia	32	16	16	5 229	2 134	3 095	5 653	2 505	3 148	683	461	222
Finland	–	–	–	11 334	6 140	5 194	8 161	4 453	3 708	4 219	2 420	1 799
Sweden	54	27	27	6 632	2 630	4 002	17 230	8 922	8 308	6 996	4 095	2 901
United Kingdom (*)	11 003	4 937	6 066	239 106	112 058	127 048	155 807	65 976	89 831	46 163	24 725	21 438
Iceland	167	81	86	573	179	394	477	199	278	213	110	103
Liechtenstein	–	–	–	338	176	162	265	179	86	148	112	36
Norway	78	49	29	5 042	2 065	2 977	5 384	2 855	2 529	1 790	1 034	756
Switzerland	0	0	0	19 734	9 868	9 866	20 443	9 784	10 659	14 102	7 602	6 500
North Macedonia	–	–	–	2 499	1 543	956	449	214	235	148	91	57
Serbia	–	–	–	7 540	3 734	3 806	2 973	1 379	1 594	848	498	350
Turkey	8 600	5 212	3 388	79 969	53 422	26 547	28 539	17 638	10 901	8 030	5 511	2 519

Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia, Luxembourg and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania.

(\*) Doctoral or equivalent: rounded to the nearest hundred.

(†) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

(–) not applicable.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ\_uoe\_mobs02)

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**Table 1: Tertiary education students from abroad by sex and level of education, 2018(number)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobs02)**

In 2018, a total of 312 000 students from abroad (23.1 % of the total number of students from abroad in the EU-27) were studying in Germany, while 230 000 (17.0 %) were studying in France. The next largest populations of students from abroad were recorded in Italy (107 000) and the Netherlands (105 000), equivalent to 7.9 % and 7.8 % of the EU-27 total.

Relative to the overall number of tertiary education students in each Member State (in other words, the sum of indigenous students and students from abroad), Luxembourg had the highest proportion of students from abroad in 2018, at 47.7 %, followed by Cyprus (23.9 %). There were eight additional EU Member States where at least one tenth of all tertiary education students were from abroad: Austria (17.5 %), Czechia (13.6 %), the Netherlands (11.8 %), Hungary (11.4 %), Denmark (10.7 %), Belgium (10.5 %), Germany (10.0 %) and Malta (10.0 %). By contrast, students from abroad made up a relatively small proportion of the tertiary education student population in Slovenia (4.5 %), Poland (3.6 %), Spain (3.5 %), Greece (3.4 %) and Croatia (3.0 %).

Figure 1 provides a more detailed analysis of the share of students from abroad in each stage of tertiary education, ranked on the share for bachelor's degrees as this level of education generally had the largest number of students from abroad. In relation to the total number of tertiary education students at each level, the share of students from abroad generally increases as a function of the level of education, from relatively low shares for short-cycle tertiary courses to much higher shares for doctoral degrees.

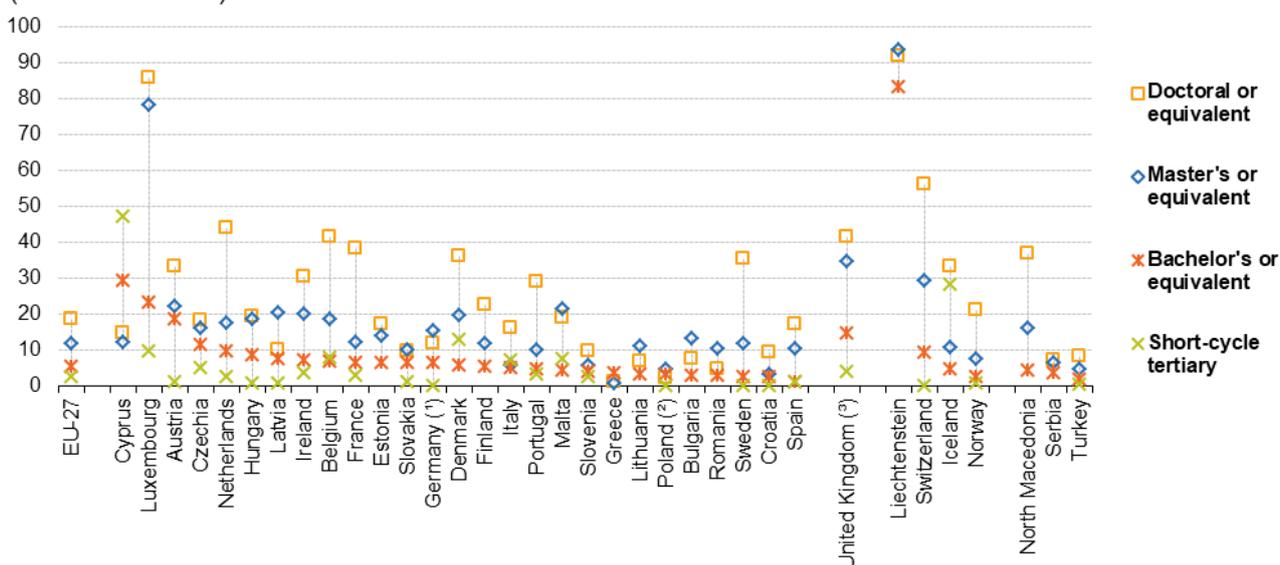
In 17 of the EU member States, the highest share of students from abroad was observed for doctoral de-

grees. Eight Member States — Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Germany, Malta, Poland and Slovakia — recorded their highest shares for master’s degrees, while Greece recorded its highest share for bachelor’s degrees and Cyprus for short-cycle tertiary courses.

In 2018, the highest shares of students from abroad studying for short-cycle tertiary courses were recorded in Cyprus and Denmark, with their shares 47.1 % and 12.9 % respectively. More than one quarter of all students studying for bachelor’s degrees in Cyprus (29.2 %) were from abroad, as were more than one fifth from Luxembourg (23.2 %). Austria (18.7 %) and Czechia (11.7 %) were the only other EU Member States where more than 1 in 10 students at this level were from abroad. More than three quarters (78.3 %) of master’s students in Luxembourg were from abroad, as were more than one fifth in Austria, Malta, Latvia and Ireland; there were 17 further Member States that reported double-digit shares of students from abroad at this level. For doctoral students, Luxembourg again reported the highest share of students from abroad (85.9 %), followed by the Netherlands (44.0 %), Belgium (41.5 %), France (38.2 %), Denmark (36.2 %) and Sweden (35.5 %). By contrast, less than 5.0 % of all doctoral students in Romania, Poland and Greece were from abroad.

### Share of tertiary education students from abroad by level of education, 2018

(% of all students)



Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia, Luxembourg and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania. Short cycle tertiary: not applicable in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Finland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia and Serbia. Ranked on bachelor's or equivalent.

(\*) Doctoral or equivalent: shares based on values rounded to the nearest hundred.

(?) Bachelor's or equivalent and master's or equivalent: estimates.

(\*) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: educ\_uae\_mobs02 and educ\_uae\_enrt01)



Figure 1: Share of tertiary education students from abroad by level of education, 2018(% of all students)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uae\_mobs02) and (educ\_uae\_enrt01)

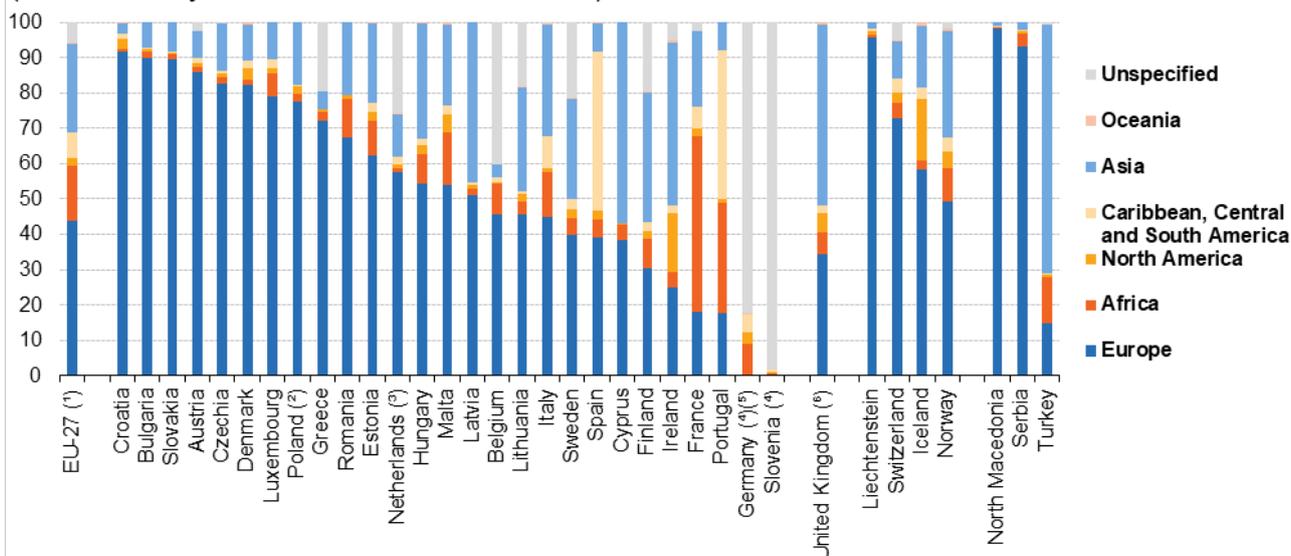
### Origin of students from abroad

Figure 2 shows how factors like language, cultural and historical ties, and geographical proximity can influence learning mobility. For 15 of the EU Member States for which data are available (incomplete data for Germany and Slovenia; 2015 data for the Netherlands), a majority of students from abroad in 2018 were from elsewhere in Europe. This share exceeded 90.0 % in Croatia (where a peak of 91.7 % was recorded). The proportion of tertiary students from elsewhere in Europe was one quarter of the total in Ireland (25.0 %) and less than one fifth in France (18.1 %) and Portugal (where a low of 17.6 % was reached).

In Cyprus, more than half (56.8 %) of all tertiary students from abroad came from Asia. In France, nearly half (49.8 %) of tertiary students from abroad in 2018 were from Africa, while this share was just under one third (31.2 %) in Portugal. The share of foreign students from the Caribbean, Central and South America was particularly high in Spain (45.0 %), with Portugal once again recording a relatively high share (42.3 %). Ireland (16.8 %) was the only Member State where more than 1 in 20 tertiary education students from abroad originated from North America.

## Share of tertiary education students from abroad by continent of origin, 2018

(% of all tertiary education students from abroad)



Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia, Luxembourg and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania. Ranked on percentage of mobile students from Europe.

(¹) Excluding the Netherlands.

(²) Estimates.

(³) 2015.

(⁴) Europe and Asia: not separately available: included in unspecified.

(⁵) Doctoral or equivalent: shares based on values rounded to the nearest hundred.

(⁶) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ\_uae\_mobs02)

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**Figure 2: Share of tertiary education students from abroad by continent of origin, 2018 (% of all tertiary education students from abroad)** Source: Eurostat (educ\_uae\_mobs02)

A more detailed analysis for the origin of students from abroad is presented in Table 2. For 13 of the EU Member States, the principal country of origin for students from abroad in 2018 was another Member State. These were often neighbouring countries (such as Czechia and Slovakia) or countries that may be reached by a relatively short water crossing (for example, students from Finland studying in Estonia). In four of the EU Member States — Denmark, Hungary, the Netherlands (2015 data) and Austria — students from Germany made up the largest share of students from abroad, while German students were the second largest group of students from abroad in three other Member States (Greece, Croatia and Luxembourg) and the third largest group in Latvia.

Across the whole of the EU, China (including Hong Kong) was the most common country of origin for tertiary students from abroad in 2018, accounting for 5.2 % of the total. There were more students from China (than any other foreign country) studying in Germany (excluding doctoral studies), Italy and Sweden, while Chinese students accounted for the second or third largest population of foreign students within the tertiary education sectors of five other EU Member States. Alongside the neighbouring countries of Albania, Belarus,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, the only other non-member country that appeared multiple times in the rankings was India.

### Share of tertiary education students from abroad by country of origin for the three largest partner countries, 2018

(% of all tertiary education students from abroad)

	Largest country of origin for students from abroad	Share (%)	Second largest country of origin for students from abroad	Share (%)	Third largest country of origin for students from abroad	Share (%)
<b>EU-27 (*)</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	5.2	Germany	3.4	Ukraine	3.0
<b>Belgium</b>	France	27.6	Netherlands	5.8	Luxembourg	3.4
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Greece	25.0	United Kingdom	13.8	Turkey	10.5
<b>Czechia</b>	Slovakia	49.0	Russia	13.1	Ukraine	7.2
<b>Denmark</b>	Germany	10.7	Norway	9.3	Romania	6.0
<b>Germany (†)</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	10.4	India	5.4	Austria	4.4
<b>Estonia</b>	Finland	32.9	Russia	6.9	Nigeria	6.5
<b>Ireland</b>	India	11.7	China (including Hong Kong)	11.2	United States	9.9
<b>Greece</b>	Cyprus	52.4	Germany	5.5	Albania	4.9
<b>Spain</b>	France	11.6	Italy	9.5	Ecuador	9.3
<b>France</b>	Morocco	12.4	Algeria	10.5	China (including Hong Kong)	10.2
<b>Croatia</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	50.2	Germany	6.5	Slovenia	4.9
<b>Italy</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	14.2	Albania	9.6	Romania	9.0
<b>Cyprus</b>	India	35.8	Greece	33.2	Bangladesh	5.7
<b>Latvia</b>	India	16.3	Uzbekistan	14.8	Germany	13.8
<b>Lithuania</b>	Belarus	15.3	India	10.1	Ukraine	5.1
<b>Luxembourg</b>	France	28.6	Germany	14.3	Belgium	11.0
<b>Hungary</b>	Germany	10.1	Romania	6.6	China (including Hong Kong)	6.4
<b>Malta</b>	United Kingdom	23.5	India	7.4	Italy	6.0
<b>Netherlands (‡)</b>	Germany	27.4	China (including Hong Kong)	5.6	Belgium	3.1
<b>Austria</b>	Germany	38.4	Italy	11.7	Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.2
<b>Poland</b>	Ukraine	49.4	Belarus	9.7	India	4.6
<b>Portugal</b>	Brazil	39.0	Angola	11.4	Cabo Verde	9.3
<b>Romania</b>	Moldova	31.7	Israel	10.9	France	8.1
<b>Slovenia (‡)</b>	Croatia	30.5	North Macedonia	21.4	Bosnia and Herzegovina	11.7
<b>Slovakia</b>	Czechia	30.2	Ukraine	16.9	Serbia	6.4
<b>Finland</b>	Russia	9.9	China (including Hong Kong)	6.6	Nepal	4.6
<b>Sweden</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	8.4	Finland	8.1	India	6.7
<b>United Kingdom (*)</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	23.8	India	4.3	United States	3.9
<b>Iceland</b>	United States	13.8	Germany	7.8	Philippines	7.2
<b>Liechtenstein</b>	Austria	41.1	Germany	24.6	Switzerland	20.0
<b>Norway</b>	Sweden	7.1	China (including Hong Kong)	6.3	Germany	5.0
<b>Switzerland</b>	Germany	20.3	France	19.2	Italy	10.3
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Turkey	42.1	Serbia	10.6	France	2.1
<b>Serbia</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	54.8	Montenegro	25.5	Croatia	4.9
<b>Turkey</b>	Syria	16.5	Azerbaijan	13.7	Turkmenistan	9.8

Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia, Luxembourg and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania.

(\*) Excluding the Netherlands and Slovenia. Excluding doctoral or equivalent for Germany.

(†) Excluding doctoral or equivalent.

(‡) 2015.

(\*) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ\_uoe\_mobs02)

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**Table 2: Share of tertiary education students from abroad by country of origin for the three largest partner countries, 2018(% of all tertiary education students from abroad)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobs02)**

### Field of education for students from abroad

Table 3 provides an analysis of students from abroad according to their field of education. Among the fields shown in the table — which is based on the ISCED-F 2013 classification (see the section on **Data sources** for more information) — the most common field for tertiary students from abroad in the EU-27 was business, administration and law (20.9 % of all students from abroad), followed by engineering, manufacturing and construction (17.9 %), arts and humanities (13.9 %) and health and welfare (13.4 %). By contrast, students from abroad following education, services, or agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary fields of study accounted for a relatively small share of the total number of students from abroad (each less than 3.0 %).

Among the EU Member States, there was a high degree of variation concerning the share of tertiary students from abroad studying each field of education, reflecting at least to some degree, their specialisations. For example, nearly one quarter (24.1 %) of all students from abroad studying in Italy in 2018 followed a course in the arts or humanities, while 28.4 % of the students from abroad studying in Germany followed a course in engineering, manufacturing or construction.

Business, administration and law was the most common field of study for tertiary students from abroad in 14 of the EU Member States. Health or welfare was the most common field of study for students from abroad in six of the Member States (this field of education accounted for more than half of all tertiary students from abroad studying in Bulgaria and Slovakia), while engineering, manufacturing and construction was the most common field in four of the Member States.

Share of tertiary education students from abroad by field, 2018

	All fields (% of students from abroad among all tertiary education students)	Generic pro- grammes and qualifica- tions	(% of all tertiary education students from abroad)										
			Education	Arts and humanities	Social sciences, journalism and infor- mation	Business, adminis- tration and law	Natural sciences, mathe- matics and statistics	Infor- mation and communi- cation tech- nologies	Engi- neering, manufac- turing and con- struction	Agriculture , forestry, fisheries and veterinary	Health and welfare	Services	Unknown
<b>EU-27</b>	7.7	0.0	2.6	13.9	11.3	20.9	7.8	6.0	17.9	1.7	13.4	2.4	2.0
Belgium	10.5	0.0	4.7	12.4	10.4	13.0	5.4	1.7	9.5	4.2	36.5	1.5	0.6
Bulgaria	6.4	0.0	3.3	4.4	5.8	6.3	1.0	3.0	7.2	3.4	58.1	4.8	2.6
Czechia	13.6	0.0	1.8	9.4	10.2	20.3	7.5	10.6	14.1	3.3	18.7	4.2	0.0
Denmark	10.7	0.0	1.9	10.9	8.7	28.1	6.8	7.5	21.0	2.4	8.2	4.4	0.1
Germany (*)	10.0	0.0	2.0	15.5	7.8	17.6	8.8	8.8	28.4	1.5	6.5	1.0	2.0
Estonia	9.6	0.0	1.7	13.1	10.7	39.3	6.3	9.9	11.3	4.2	3.3	0.1	0.0
Ireland	9.6	0.7	1.3	11.4	6.9	21.6	8.7	10.3	11.3	1.2	25.0	1.7	0.0
Greece	3.4	0.0	4.2	18.0	14.5	12.7	10.9	3.3	16.6	3.1	12.7	4.0	0.0
Spain	3.5	0.0	5.0	8.8	10.9	26.7	5.1	2.4	12.6	2.2	22.1	4.2	0.0
France	8.8	0.0	1.8	16.4	11.8	27.2	12.4	6.2	15.8	0.3	7.0	1.0	0.0
Croatia	3.0	0.0	2.5	10.3	6.1	21.8	5.5	2.4	22.7	2.5	19.1	7.0	0.0
Italy	5.6	0.0	1.5	24.1	12.9	14.7	5.3	2.4	20.8	1.6	10.7	1.6	4.5
Cyprus	23.9	0.0	1.5	3.0	4.1	69.5	1.4	2.6	3.8	0.0	12.0	2.1	0.0
Latvia	9.3	0.0	0.7	3.0	6.3	32.4	0.6	7.9	11.1	0.3	29.6	8.0	0.0
Lithuania	5.3	0.0	2.1	9.9	17.7	26.2	2.0	3.4	15.4	1.6	20.7	0.9	0.0
Luxembourg	47.7	0.0	5.0	6.8	12.5	43.5	8.7	8.2	7.6	3.9	3.5	0.4	0.0
Hungary	11.4	0.0	2.0	7.4	10.1	7.6	3.0	4.4	8.7	5.8	30.5	1.9	18.5
Malta	10.0	0.0	5.7	8.0	12.2	35.2	1.8	6.1	3.8	0.2	23.5	3.4	0.0
Netherlands	11.8	0.0	2.1	10.9	17.4	26.0	6.7	2.9	11.1	1.6	7.0	5.6	8.6
Austria	17.5	0.0	5.7	14.5	19.0	16.8	10.8	5.0	16.1	1.6	8.8	1.3	0.4
Poland	3.6	0.0	1.6	10.7	17.9	26.7	2.3	7.8	8.4	1.3	16.4	6.8	0.1
Portugal	7.9	0.0	5.4	12.2	12.1	23.9	6.1	2.2	20.4	1.4	12.0	4.3	0.0
Romania	5.4	0.0	0.5	9.0	6.2	14.0	1.6	3.1	11.4	3.3	47.8	3.2	0.0
Slovenia	4.5	0.0	4.6	10.5	15.4	16.3	7.7	7.6	21.0	1.9	8.5	6.3	0.0
Slovakia	8.0	0.0	10.1	7.1	4.6	9.6	2.3	2.3	7.7	2.6	51.1	2.8	0.0
Finland	8.1	0.0	2.9	10.3	4.7	23.6	5.9	16.7	19.6	1.5	10.4	4.3	0.0
Sweden	7.2	0.0	2.6	12.6	13.3	12.6	13.0	6.6	25.8	0.7	11.9	0.8	0.1
United Kingdom (*)	18.3	0.4	2.4	13.0	12.2	33.1	11.7	4.9	14.5	0.8	7.1	0.0	0.0
Iceland	8.0	0.0	6.0	43.4	8.1	6.7	18.0	2.4	8.4	1.7	3.8	1.5	0.0
Liechtenstein	88.4	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	65.9	0.0	0.0	24.6	0.0	8.0	0.0	0.0
Norway	4.3	0.6	4.2	19.4	12.5	14.7	15.7	4.8	12.2	1.4	10.5	3.8	0.0
Switzerland	17.7	0.0	4.8	13.7	11.7	19.4	17.1	3.7	17.7	0.5	7.9	2.3	1.3
North Macedonia	5.2	0.0	4.6	13.9	10.6	24.9	6.6	9.1	11.8	0.1	17.3	1.0	0.0
Serbia	4.4	0.0	3.5	10.4	9.5	14.4	6.0	7.0	21.7	4.7	16.9	5.9	0.0
Turkey	1.7	0.0	5.9	12.9	13.9	19.1	5.3	0.9	25.2	1.8	12.1	2.8	0.0

Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia, Luxembourg and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania.

(\*) Doctoral or equivalent: based on data rounded to the nearest hundred.

(†) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

(‡) not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: educ\_uoe\_mobs01 and educ\_uoe\_enrt03)

Table 3: Share of tertiary education students from abroad by field, 2018 Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobs01) and (educ\_uoe\_enrt03)

## Graduates from abroad

### Number and share of graduates from abroad

Based on available data (see Table 4), there were 302 000 tertiary students from abroad that graduated in the EU-27 during 2018. The majority of these graduated from master's degree courses (56.6 %), while just under one third (33.1 %) graduated from bachelor's degree courses, 6.8 % from doctoral courses and 3.5 % from short-cycle tertiary courses.

A total of 79 000 students from abroad graduated in France in 2018, which equated to more than one quarter (26.1 %) of the total number of graduates from abroad across the whole of the EU-27. The next largest numbers of graduates from abroad were 49 000 in Germany (16.2 % of the EU-27 total) and 26 000 in the Netherlands (8.6 % of the EU-27 total); note that data for Spain are incomplete as data are not available for doctoral courses.

### Tertiary education graduates from abroad by sex and level of education, 2018

(number)

	Short-cycle tertiary			Bachelor's or equivalent			Master's or equivalent			Doctoral or equivalent		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
EU-27 (*)	10 572	4 666	5 906	99 886	42 477	57 409	170 705	81 932	88 774	20 498	11 665	8 833
Belgium	0	0	0	4 976	1 584	3 392	7 309	3 247	4 062	1 374	825	549
Bulgaria	-	-	-	687	362	325	1 059	556	503	96	66	30
Czechia	15	6	9	4 250	1 784	2 466	4 130	1 764	2 366	410	247	163
Denmark	1 712	817	895	3 299	1 499	1 800	5 087	2 376	2 711	793	458	335
Germany (†)	0	0	0	14 263	6 737	7 526	29 431	15 143	14 288	5 296	2 943	2 353
Estonia	-	-	-	354	183	171	647	404	243	40	30	10
Ireland	500	229	271	5 277	2 498	2 779	5 108	2 317	2 791	400	219	181
Greece	-	-	-	1 116	511	605	136	70	66	21	13	8
Spain	1 576	662	914	2 267	1 023	1 244	16 911	7 927	8 984	.	.	.
France	5 982	2 466	3 516	20 622	9 050	11 572	47 083	23 151	23 932	5 150	2 888	2 262
Croatia	0	0	0	342	161	181	414	171	243	68	37	31
Italy	231	159	72	10 042	3 430	6 612	9 317	4 144	5 173	1 001	595	406
Cyprus	183	125	58	495	254	241	426	208	218	11	6	5
Latvia	23	10	13	372	216	156	486	278	208	11	5	6
Lithuania	-	-	-	448	198	250	567	305	262	13	5	8
Luxembourg	68	31	37	128	33	95	533	244	289	118	81	37
Hungary	30	9	21	1 802	781	1 021	2 703	1 304	1 399	145	81	64
Malta	52	32	20	107	51	56	202	101	101	10	6	4
Netherlands	0	0	0	10 644	4 330	6 314	13 184	5 752	7 432	1 994	1 083	911
Austria	81	52	29	4 982	2 090	2 892	6 270	2 724	3 547	873	497	376
Poland	-	-	-	5 983	2 493	3 490	4 658	2 096	2 562	72	19	53
Portugal	80	48	32	1 354	586	768	2 719	1 323	1 396	591	330	261
Romania	-	-	-	1 914	902	1 012	3 233	1 736	1 497	124	88	36
Slovenia	22	10	12	200	86	114	299	131	168	39	22	17
Slovakia	5	4	1	1 143	383	760	1 238	503	735	109	70	39
Finland	-	-	-	2 000	993	1 007	2 202	1 165	1 037	542	327	215
Sweden	12	6	6	819	259	560	5 353	2 792	2 561	1 197	724	473
United Kingdom (‡)	7 443	3 752	3 691	73 224	33 887	39 337	112 704	47 012	65 692	13 718	7 582	6 136
Iceland	0	0	0	132	36	96	158	71	87	23	11	12
Norway	41	20	21	1 004	342	662	1 668	852	816	460	285	175
Switzerland	-	-	-	4 006	1 990	2 016	6 944	3 550	3 394	2 350	1 332	1 018
North Macedonia	-	-	-	395	242	153	175	77	98	39	23	16
Serbia	-	-	-	1 219	624	595	568	260	308	70	40	30
Turkey	540	256	284	5 638	3 497	2 141	3 990	2 526	1 464	524	373	151

Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg (except short-cycle tertiary), Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Luxembourg (short-cycle tertiary), Slovakia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania.

(\*) Doctoral or equivalent education: excluding Spain.

(†) Excluding graduates of vocational academies.

(‡) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

(.) not available.

(-) not applicable.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ\_uae\_mobg02)

eurostat 

**Table 4: Tertiary education graduates from abroad by sex and level of education, 2018(number)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uae\_mobg02)**

Figure 3 provides an analysis of the share of graduates from abroad in each stage of tertiary education, ranked on the share for master's degrees as this level of education generally has the largest number of graduates from abroad. In relation to the total number of tertiary graduates, the share of graduates from abroad generally increases as a function of the level of education, from relatively low shares for short-cycle tertiary courses to much higher shares for doctoral degrees: this is a similar pattern to that observed for students from abroad.

Relative to the overall number of tertiary graduates in 2018 in each of the EU Member States, Luxembourg had the highest proportion (48.3 %) who were students from abroad, followed by the Netherlands (16.2 %). In seven other Member States — Austria, Ireland, Denmark, Cyprus, Belgium, Czechia and Estonia — the share of all graduates who originated from abroad was between 11.5 % and 14.5 %. By contrast, students from abroad made up a relatively small proportion (1.8 %) of the total number of tertiary graduates in Greece.

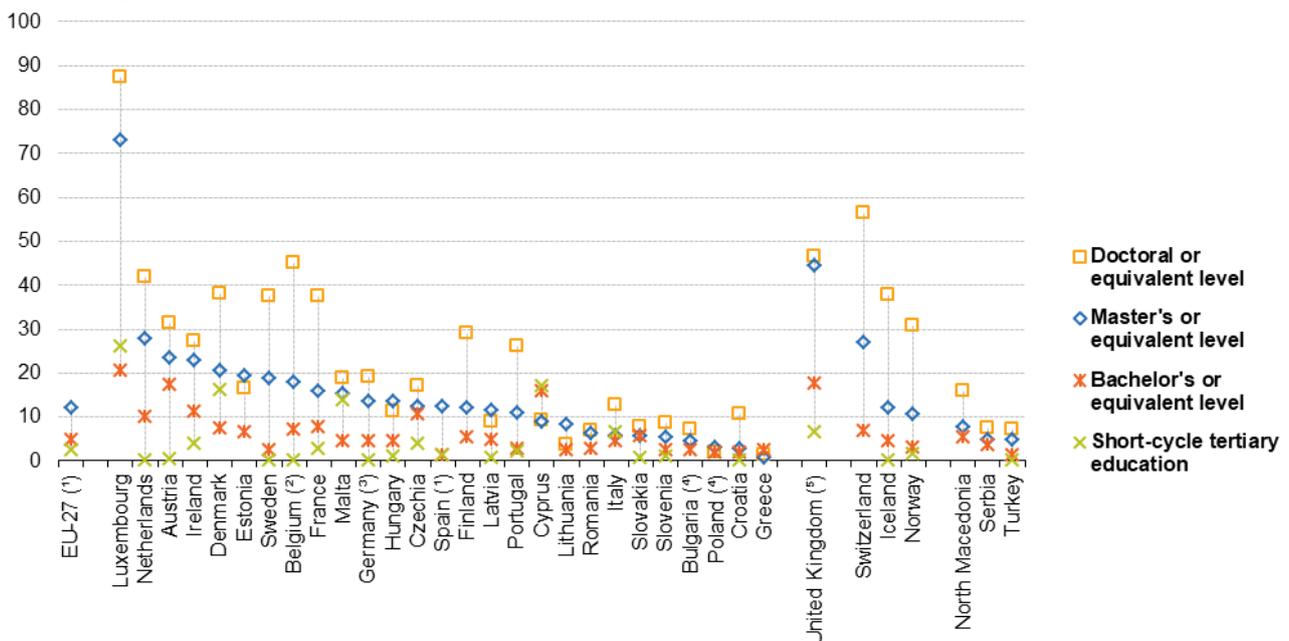
A relatively high share of tertiary graduates from abroad in Luxembourg was observed for each of the individual levels of tertiary education, while there was:

- a relatively high share of short-cycle tertiary education graduates in Cyprus, Denmark and Malta that originated from abroad;
- a relatively high share of graduates with bachelor's degrees in Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Czechia and the Netherlands that originated from abroad;
- a relatively high share of graduates with master's degrees in the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland and Denmark that originated from abroad;
- a relatively high share of graduates with doctoral degrees in Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, France and Sweden that originated from abroad.

Among the non-member countries, there was a relatively high share of graduates with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in the United Kingdom that originated from abroad, as was also the case for master's and doctoral degrees in Switzerland and doctoral degrees in Iceland.

### Share of tertiary education graduates from abroad by level of education, 2018

(% of all graduates)



Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg (except short-cycle tertiary), Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Luxembourg (short-cycle tertiary), Slovakia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania. Short-cycle tertiary: not applicable in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Finland, Switzerland, North Macedonia and Serbia. Ranked on master's or equivalent.

(¹) Doctoral or equivalent: not available.

(²) Short-cycle tertiary: not available.

(³) Excluding graduates of vocational academies.

(⁴) Estimates.

(⁵) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

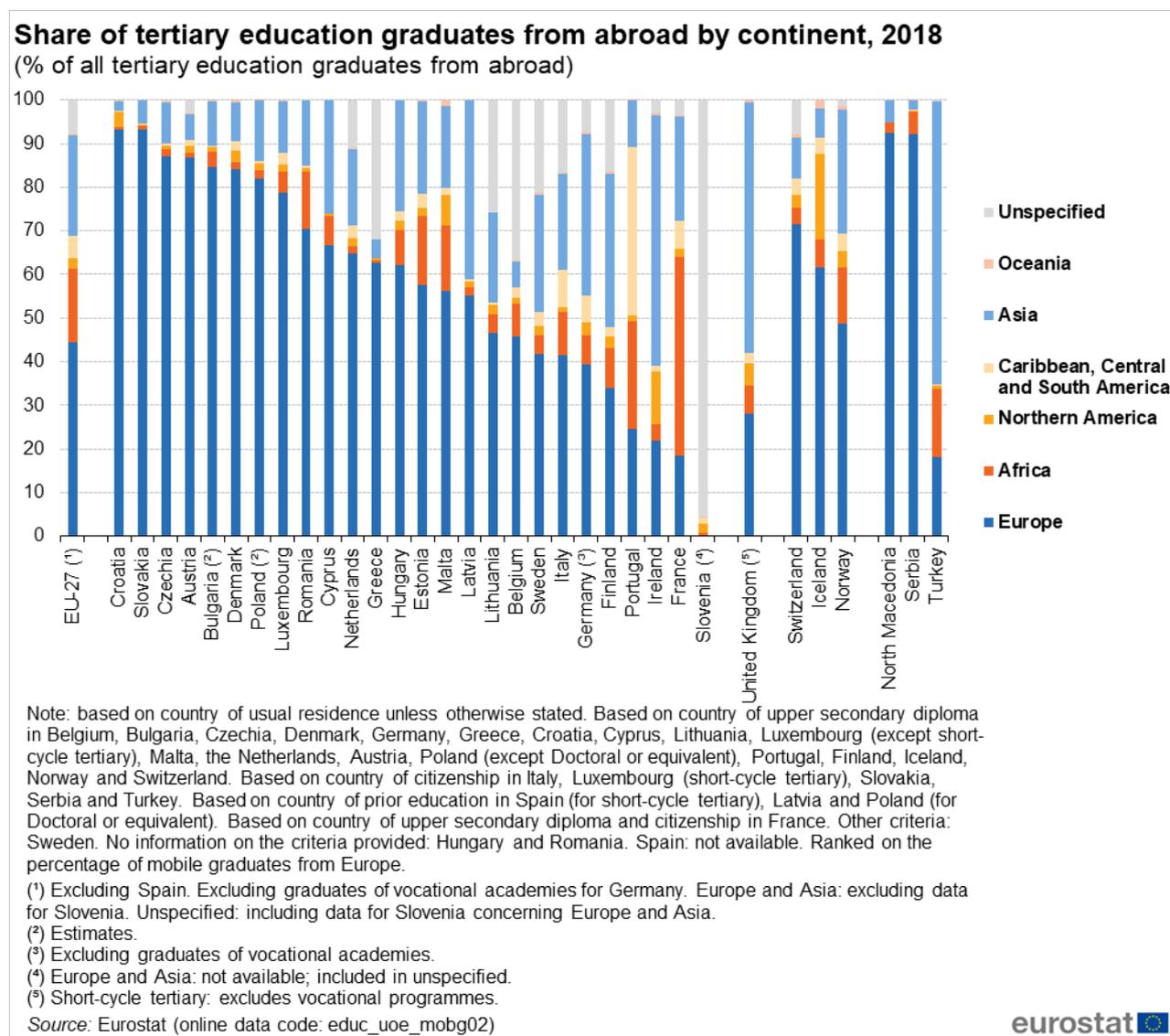
Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ\_uoe\_mobg03)



Figure 3: Share of tertiary education graduates from abroad by level of education, 2018(% of all graduates)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobg03)

### Origin of graduates from abroad

The distribution by continent for the origin of tertiary graduates from abroad is presented in Figure 4 for 26 EU Member States (no data for Spain). In 2018, there were 16 Member States where a majority of the tertiary graduates from abroad originated from Europe, with this share reaching as high as 93.1 % in Slovakia and 93.3 % in Croatia. By contrast, in Portugal and Ireland, tertiary graduates from other European countries accounted for between one quarter and one fifth of all tertiary graduates from abroad, while this share was lowest (18.5 %) in France.



**Figure 4: Share of tertiary education graduates from abroad by continent, 2018(% of all tertiary education graduates from abroad)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobg02)**

In 2018, more than a half (57.2 %) of all tertiary graduates from abroad in Ireland originated from Asia. Asian graduates also accounted for more than one third of all graduates from abroad in Latvia, Germany and Finland. In 2018, close to two fifths (38.5 %) of all tertiary graduates from abroad in Portugal originated from the Caribbean, Central and South America (note that there are no data available for Spain). The share of tertiary graduates from abroad originating from Africa was also relatively high in Portugal (24.5 %), although this was notably lower than the share recorded in France (45.7 %).

A more detailed analysis of graduates from abroad by country of origin is available (see Table 5). In 2018, the three principal origins of graduates in the EU-27 (excluding Spain and Slovenia) from abroad were China (including Hong Kong), Germany and Morocco. In 12 of the Member States for which data are available, the principal country of origin for tertiary graduates from abroad was another EU Member State. In nine of the remaining Member States for which data are available, neighbouring countries bordering the EU — the

United Kingdom, Albania, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Morocco — accounted for the highest share of graduates from abroad. Graduates originating from further afield were the most common in Ireland (from India), Latvia (from Uzbekistan), Portugal (from Brazil), Germany and Sweden (both from China).

### Share of tertiary education graduates from abroad by country of origin for the three largest partner countries, 2018

(% of all tertiary education graduates from abroad)

	Largest country of origin for graduates from abroad	Share (%)	Second largest country of origin for graduates from abroad	Share (%)	Third largest country of origin for graduates from abroad	Share (%)
<b>EU-27 (*)</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	8.5	Germany	6.4	Morocco	4.3
<b>Belgium</b>	France	27.0	Luxembourg	3.8	Netherlands	3.1
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Turkey	20.7	Greece	19.5	United Kingdom	6.3
<b>Czechia</b>	Slovakia	57.9	Russia	12.1	Ukraine	5.6
<b>Denmark</b>	Germany	10.9	Norway	9.5	Romania	6.2
<b>Germany (†)</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	13.6	India	7.3	Austria	4.3
<b>Estonia</b>	Finland	24.9	Nigeria	11.6	Ukraine	7.8
<b>Ireland</b>	India	13.5	China (including Hong Kong)	12.7	Singapore	9.8
<b>Greece</b>	Cyprus	47.2	Germany	4.8	Albania	3.1
<b>Spain</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>France</b>	Morocco	14.1	China (including Hong Kong)	12.1	Algeria	7.8
<b>Croatia</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	70.6	Slovenia	5.8	Serbia	4.2
<b>Italy</b>	Albania	8.3	China (including Hong Kong)	7.2	Romania	6.5
<b>Cyprus</b>	Greece	58.5	India	12.6	Bangladesh	4.4
<b>Latvia</b>	Uzbekistan	18.4	Germany	11.8	Russia	10.3
<b>Lithuania</b>	Belarus	15.1	India	6.8	Ukraine	6.6
<b>Luxembourg</b>	France	26.3	Germany	12.3	Belgium	12.0
<b>Hungary</b>	Romania	9.8	Slovakia	9.7	Serbia	8.6
<b>Malta</b>	United Kingdom	26.4	Italy	5.9	United States	5.7
<b>Netherlands</b>	Germany	24.7	China (including Hong Kong)	7.1	Italy	5.3
<b>Austria</b>	Germany	44.9	Italy	13.0	Hungary	2.7
<b>Poland</b>	Ukraine	53.0	Belarus	8.6	Slovakia	3.1
<b>Portugal</b>	Brazil	33.2	Angola	11.3	Cabo Verde	6.5
<b>Romania</b>	Moldova	41.1	Israel	7.2	France	5.8
<b>Slovenia (‡)</b>	Croatia	34.6	North Macedonia	12.4	Italy	7.7
<b>Slovakia</b>	Czechia	47.2	Ukraine	13.3	Serbia	7.5
<b>Finland</b>	Russia	12.0	China (including Hong Kong)	8.2	Vietnam	8.0
<b>Sweden</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	9.8	Germany	8.1	India	6.3
<b>United Kingdom (†)</b>	China (including Hong Kong)	30.4	India	4.1	United States	3.8
<b>Iceland</b>	United States	13.7	United Kingdom	7.3	Germany	6.7
<b>Norway</b>	Sweden	9.3	China (including Hong Kong)	5.3	Germany	5.0
<b>Switzerland</b>	France	20.4	Germany	19.3	Italy	10.8
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Turkey	20.9	Serbia	13.8	Albania	4.1
<b>Serbia</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	52.8	Montenegro	29.5	Croatia	4.0
<b>Turkey</b>	Azerbaijan	12.2	Iraq	9.6	Syria	7.6

Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg (except short-cycle tertiary), Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Luxembourg (short-cycle tertiary), Slovakia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary), Latvia and Poland (for Doctoral or equivalent). Based on country of upper secondary diploma and citizenship in France. Other criteria: Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania.

(\*) Excluding Spain and Slovenia. Excluding graduates of vocational academies for Germany.

(†) Excluding graduates of vocational academies.

(‡) 2015.

(§) Short-cycle tertiary: excludes vocational programmes.

(.) not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ\_uoe\_mobg02)

eurostat 

**Table 5: Share of tertiary education graduates from abroad by country of origin for the three largest partner countries, 2018(% of all tertiary education graduates from abroad)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobg02)**

### Field of study for graduates from abroad

Table 6 provides an analysis according to the field of education which is similar to that shown in Table 3, but it presents information on the share of graduates from abroad rather than the share of students from abroad who were still attending education courses. A comparison between the two tables shows there were eight EU Member States (out of 25 for which a complete set of data are available) where the overall share of graduates from abroad in 2018 was higher than the share of students from abroad. The largest difference was in the Netherlands where the share of tertiary graduates from abroad was 16.2 % compared with a share of 11.8 % for students from abroad. By contrast, while some 12.2 % of tertiary graduates in Cyprus were from abroad, the share of tertiary students from abroad studying in Cyprus was much higher, at 23.9 %.

## Share of tertiary education graduates from abroad by field, 2018

	All fields (% of graduates from abroad among all tertiary education graduates)	Generic pro- grammes and qualifica- tions	(% of all tertiary education graduates from abroad)										
			Education	Arts and humanities	Social sciences, journalism and informa- tion	Business, adminis- tration and law	Natural sciences, mathe- matics and statistics	Informa- tion and communi- cation tech- nologies	Engi- neering, manufac- turing and con- struction	Agriculture , forestry, fisheries and veterinary	Health and welfare	Services	Unknown
EU-27 (*)	6.9	0.0	2.8	13.9	10.6	21.7	7.6	5.7	19.5	2.0	13.3	2.1	0.8
Belgium	11.7	0.0	2.9	12.6	11.6	9.1	6.4	0.8	12.1	3.9	31.6	1.0	8.1
Bulgaria	3.4	0.0	9.5	5.2	11.4	14.8	1.2	3.0	7.5	1.8	39.4	6.1	0.0
Czechia	11.6	0.0	2.0	9.7	11.9	23.5	8.1	9.8	15.6	2.6	12.3	4.3	0.0
Denmark	13.4	0.0	1.3	11.8	8.2	31.2	6.0	7.3	20.3	2.1	6.8	5.2	0.0
Germany (†)	8.7	0.0	2.1	15.2	8.1	20.0	10.7	7.2	28.1	1.9	5.7	1.0	0.0
Estonia	11.5	0.0	0.5	17.3	11.0	37.8	6.4	9.8	14.4	1.6	1.2	0.0	0.0
Ireland	13.4	0.7	1.3	9.8	6.9	39.9	5.9	11.4	8.0	0.8	13.5	1.8	0.0
Greece	1.8	0.0	8.6	12.8	12.3	11.9	9.0	3.1	15.1	1.5	18.5	7.2	0.0
Spain	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
France	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Croatia	2.4	0.0	2.7	8.9	9.7	17.5	6.4	2.2	23.5	2.5	17.1	9.5	0.0
Italy	5.1	0.0	2.0	26.9	12.0	17.7	4.8	1.7	20.4	1.5	10.9	1.3	0.7
Cyprus	12.2	0.0	5.0	4.8	5.9	63.7	1.6	1.4	8.4	0.0	7.4	1.6	0.0
Latvia	5.8	0.0	0.8	5.0	8.3	40.7	0.3	4.6	10.5	0.0	24.8	4.9	0.0
Lithuania	3.9	0.0	5.8	13.7	19.7	23.8	1.9	2.8	13.5	1.0	16.1	1.5	0.0
Luxembourg	48.3	0.0	4.1	3.7	10.3	56.2	7.0	7.1	5.9	0.5	3.7	1.7	0.0
Hungary	7.2	0.0	3.7	10.1	19.8	13.5	3.7	4.4	10.3	6.8	24.0	3.2	0.6
Malta	8.9	0.0	0.8	9.2	15.1	35.8	2.4	5.9	3.8	0.0	21.8	5.1	0.0
Netherlands	16.2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Austria	14.5	0.0	5.0	12.8	19.8	22.3	9.6	3.3	14.0	1.5	9.7	1.8	0.2
Poland	2.3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Portugal	5.9	0.0	7.0	11.8	10.1	26.9	5.5	1.6	19.6	1.6	12.8	3.2	0.0
Romania	4.2	0.0	0.6	7.9	8.1	19.0	2.2	3.2	10.9	1.8	41.1	5.4	0.0
Slovenia	3.4	0.0	7.7	9.6	15.7	21.3	6.6	5.5	17.9	1.3	10.4	4.1	0.0
Slovakia	5.6	0.0	13.2	6.9	7.5	7.6	1.8	1.6	5.9	2.8	50.7	1.9	0.0
Finland	8.2	0.0	3.4	9.1	4.6	23.2	7.2	16.2	20.7	1.4	9.5	4.5	0.0
Sweden	9.7	0.0	2.2	6.5	13.9	17.5	12.9	5.6	28.7	0.4	11.5	0.9	0.0
United Kingdom (‡)	25.3	0.2	2.7	11.9	12.5	38.7	9.7	4.0	14.2	0.7	5.4	0.0	0.0
Iceland	7.1	0.0	9.3	26.5	14.4	6.7	21.4	2.6	11.8	2.6	4.5	0.3	0.0
Norway	5.8	0.0	6.7	14.2	12.0	11.1	16.0	4.7	16.6	1.7	14.1	2.7	0.0
Switzerland	14.9	0.0	5.6	13.1	10.6	21.4	15.9	2.9	18.6	0.5	6.9	2.7	1.8
North Macedonia	6.2	0.0	6.7	16.3	7.6	27.6	9.5	7.7	15.9	0.0	6.6	2.1	0.0
Serbia	4.1	0.0	6.0	8.0	9.6	20.2	8.1	3.5	24.4	2.5	10.7	6.9	0.0
Turkey	1.3	0.0	6.2	12.7	14.3	19.2	7.1	0.8	24.6	1.6	10.9	2.7	0.0

Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated. Based on country of upper secondary diploma in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg (except short-cycle tertiary), Malta, Austria, Poland (except Doctoral or equivalent), Portugal, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Based on country of citizenship in Italy, Luxembourg (short-cycle tertiary), Slovakia, Serbia and Turkey. Based on country of prior education in Spain (for short-cycle tertiary) and Latvia. Other criteria:

Sweden. No information on the criteria provided: Hungary and Romania.

(\*) Excluding Spain, France and the Netherlands. Analysis by field of study; also excluding Poland. Excluding graduates of vocational academies for Germany.

(†) Excluding graduates of vocational academies.

(‡) Short-cycle tertiary; excludes vocational programmes.

(.) not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: educ\_uae\_mobg01, educ\_uae\_mobg03 and educ\_uae\_grad02)

Table 6: Share of tertiary education graduates from abroad by field, 2018 Source: Eurostat (educ\_uae\_mobg01) and (educ\_uae\_grad02)

## Tertiary students and tertiary graduates from abroad compared

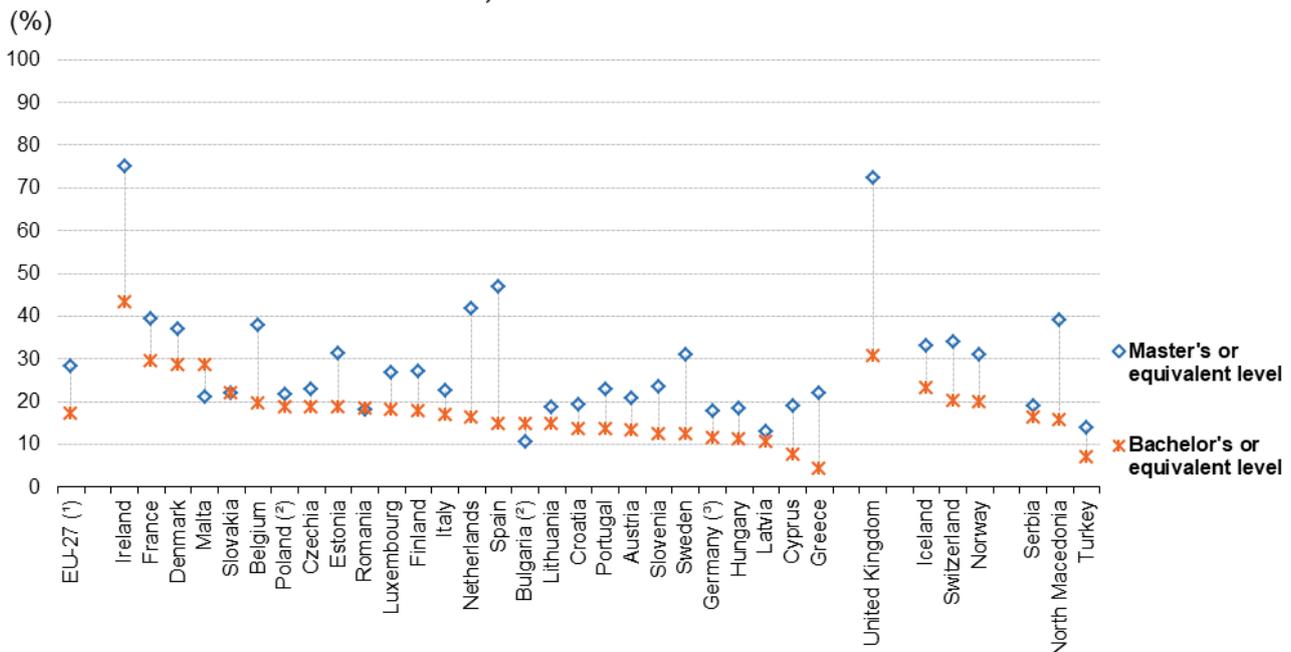
The number of graduates may be expected to be smaller than the number of students for each level of tertiary education, as most tertiary education courses take more than one year to complete and some students do not graduate as they change courses or drop out before completing their studies. Furthermore, students from abroad who only undertake part of their studies abroad may be registered as students from abroad in their host country, but may not graduate there.

The ratio of graduates from abroad to students from abroad for short-cycle degrees in the EU-27 was 32.5 % in 2018, while the ratio for master's degree courses was slightly lower, at 28.1 %. Both of these ratios are relatively high, reflecting the short length of most courses; master's degrees typically last one or two years if taken after having already obtained a bachelor's degree). Considerably lower ratios were recorded for doctoral degrees (18.8 %; excluding data for Spain) and for bachelor's degrees (17.1 %), where it is typical for students to spend at least three years researching or studying before they graduate.

Figure 5 compares the number of tertiary graduates from abroad with the corresponding number of tertiary students from abroad. It focuses on the two ISCED levels with the largest populations of graduates and stu-

dents from abroad, namely bachelor's degree courses and master's degree courses. Particularly high ratios were observed in Ireland, 43.3 % for bachelor's degrees and 74.9 % for master's degrees. Comparing these ratios for the two levels shown, the largest differences were recorded in Spain, Ireland and the Netherlands, all of which had notably higher ratios of graduates from abroad to students from abroad for master's degrees than for bachelor's degrees. Romania, Bulgaria and Malta were the only EU Member States to record lower ratios of graduates from abroad to students from abroad for master's degrees than for bachelor's degrees.

### Ratio of tertiary education graduates from abroad to tertiary education students from abroad, 2018



Note: based on country of usual residence unless otherwise stated in Tables 1 and 4. Ranked on bachelor's or equivalent.

(¹) Excluding graduates of vocational academies for Germany.

(²) Estimates.

(³) Excluding graduates of vocational academies.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: educ\_uoe\_mobs02 and educ\_uoe\_mobg02)

eurostat

**Figure 5: Ratio of tertiary education graduates from abroad to tertiary education students from abroad, 2018(%)**Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobs02) and (educ\_uoe\_mobg02)

Rather than comparing students and graduates by level of education, Figure 6 compares them according to their field of study. As might be expected, the differences in the shares are relatively small and some of the differences may reflect the incomplete coverage of the data for graduates.

In percentage point terms, leaving aside the unknown category (which is considerably smaller for graduates than for students), the largest differences were observed for:

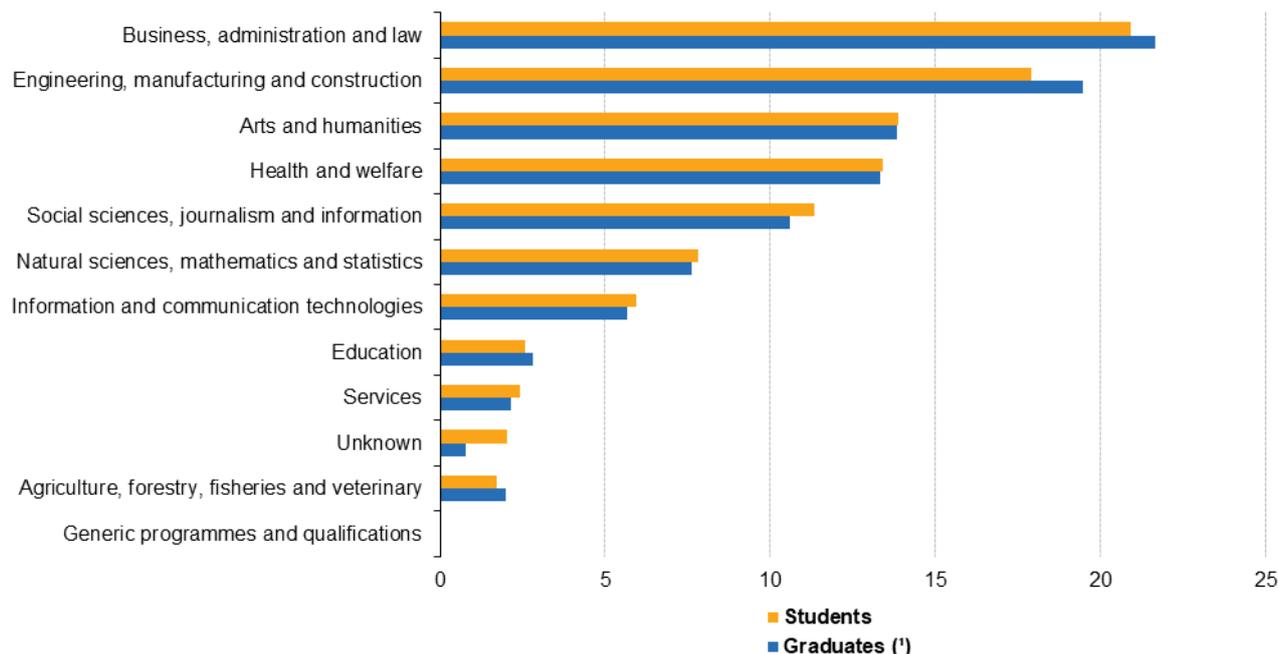
- engineering, manufacturing and construction as well as business, administration and law when the share was higher for graduates;
- social sciences, journalism and information when the share was higher for students.

In relative terms, the largest differences were observed for:

- agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary, for which the share for graduates was 16 % higher than the share for students;
- services, for which the share for students was 13 % higher than the share for graduates.

## Share of tertiary education students and graduates from abroad by field, EU-27, 2018

(% of all tertiary education students/graduates from abroad)



Note: ranked on students.

(\*) Excluding Spain, France, the Netherlands and Poland. Excluding graduates of vocational academies for Germany.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: educ\_uae\_mobs01 and educ\_uae\_mobg01)

eurostat

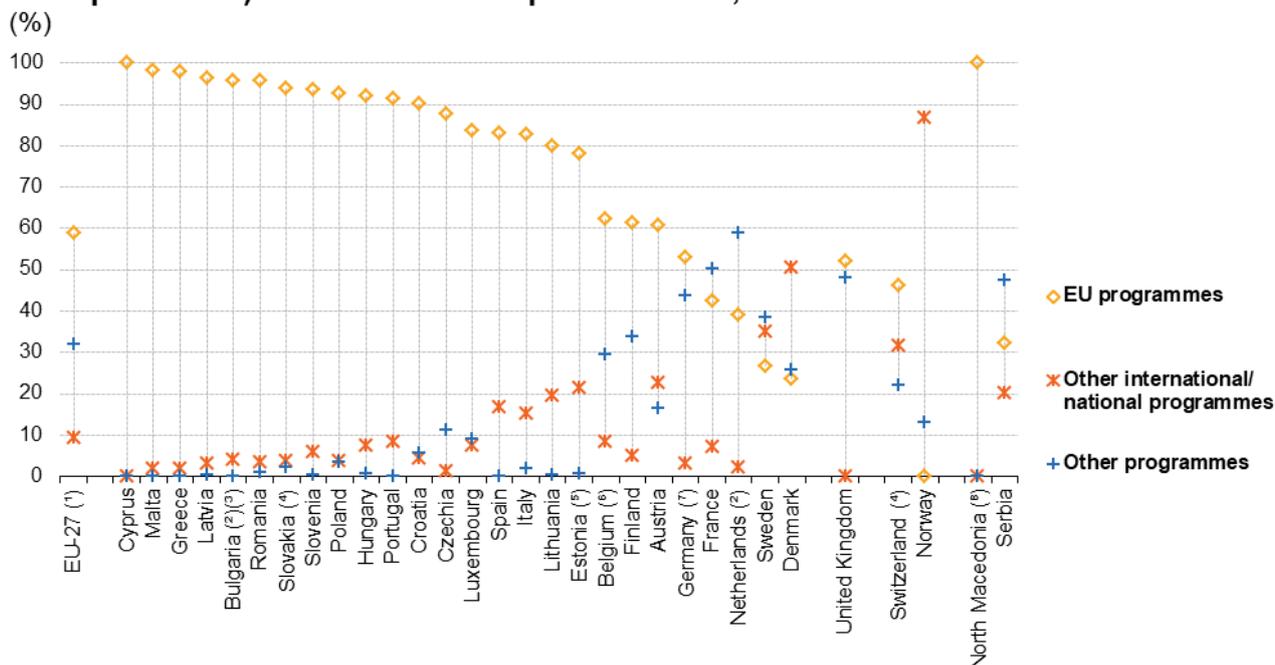
**Figure 6: Share of tertiary education students and graduates from abroad by field, EU-27, 2018(% of all tertiary education students/graduates from abroad)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uae\_mobs01) and (educ\_uae\_mobg01)**

### Credit mobile graduates

The final analysis presented in this article is for credit mobile graduates, focusing on those who had graduated from bachelor's or equivalent level programmes and been abroad for at least three months for study and/or work placement. Data are presented for three types of credit mobility programmes in Figure 7: EU programmes are those financed via programmes such as Erasmus+; other international/national programmes are other bi- or multilateral programmes, for example partnerships between universities; other programmes concern students who organise their mobility which is credited by their home institution. Note that mobility which is not recognised in a student's home institution and therefore falls outside the student's programme at their home institution (so-called bridge mobility) is excluded.

In 22 out of the 26 EU Member States for which data are available (no data for Ireland; 2017 data for Slovakia), a majority of credit mobile graduates from bachelor's or equivalent level studies in 2018 had participated in EU programmes, with this share reaching 100.0 % in Cyprus. Aside from Cyprus, there were a further 11 Member States where the share of credit mobile graduates that had participated in EU programmes was higher than 90.0 %. Denmark was the only Member State where a majority of credit mobile graduates participated in other international or national programmes (50.7 %). Finally, there were three Member States — France, the Netherlands and Sweden — where the residual category of 'other programmes' accounted for the highest share of credit mobile graduates: in France and the Netherlands, a majority of credit mobile graduates participated in other programmes.

## Distribution of type of mobility scheme among credit mobile graduates (at least three months abroad for a study period and/or work placement) at bachelor's or equivalent level, 2018 (%)



Note: Ireland, not available. Ranked on EU programmes.

(1) Excluding Ireland.

(2) Estimates.

(3) Includes some students who started their studies abroad.

(4) 2017.

(5) Based on data that may be under-reported.

(6) Only covers the Flemish Community.

(7) Excluding graduates that are simultaneously credit and degree mobile.

(8) 2016.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: educ\_uoe\_mobc01)

eurostat

Figure 7: Distribution of type of mobility scheme among credit mobile graduates (at least three months abroad for a study period and/or work placement) at bachelor's or equivalent level, 2018(%)Source: Eurostat (educ\_uoe\_mobc01)

## Source data for tables and graphs

Learning mobility statistics: tables and figures

## Data sources

**Source** The standards for international statistics on education are set by three international organisations:

- the [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#) institute for statistics (UIS);
- the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\)](#) ;
- [Eurostat](#) , the statistical office of the European Union.

The source of data used in this article is a [joint UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat \(UOE\) data collection](#) on education statistics and this is the basis for the core components of Eurostat's database on education statistics; in combination with the joint data collection Eurostat also collects data on regional enrolments and foreign language learning.

[Regulation \(EC\) No 452/2008](#) of 23 April 2008 provides the legal basis for the production and development of the EU's statistics on education and [lifelong learning](#) . Two European Commission Regulations have been

adopted concerning the implementation of the education and training data. The first, [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 88/2011](#) of 2 February 2011, concerned data for the school years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 while the second, [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 912/2013](#) of 23 September 2013, concerns data for school years from 2012/2013 onwards.

More information about the joint data collection is available in an article on the [UOE methodology](#) .

**Classification** The [international standard classification of education \(ISCED\)](#) provides the basis for the classification of education statistics, describing different levels of education; it was first developed in 1976 by UNESCO and revised in 1997 and 2011. [ISCED 2011](#) distinguishes nine levels of education: early childhood education (level 0); primary education (level 1); lower secondary education (level 2); upper secondary education (level 3); post-secondary non-tertiary education (level 4); short-cycle tertiary education (level 5); bachelor's or equivalent level (level 6); master's or equivalent level (level 7); doctoral or equivalent level (level 8). The first results based on ISCED 2011 were published in 2015 starting with data for the 2013 reference period.

Eurostat data by fields of education are classified according to the [ISCED-F 2013](#) classification; this classification has been used for Eurostat data from reference year 2016 onwards (and is therefore the basis for the information presented within this article). The fields of education — as classified by ISCED-F 2013 — are broad domains, branches or areas of content covered by an education programme or qualification. The classification was designed principally to describe and categorise fields of education and training at the secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels of formal education. It has a three-level hierarchy based on broad fields (the highest level), narrow fields (the second level) and detailed fields (the third level) of education. The 11 broad fields include: generic programmes and qualifications; education; arts and humanities; business, administration and law; natural sciences, mathematics and statistics; information and communication technologies; engineering, manufacturing and construction; agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary; health and welfare; and services.

**Key concepts** The UOE data collection covers **domestic educational activity** , in other words education provided within a country's own territory regardless of ownership or sponsorship of the institutions concerned (whether public or private, national or foreign) or of the education delivery mechanism (whether face-to-face or at a distance). In particular, all students studying within a country, including internationally mobile students from abroad, should be included in the statistics of the reporting country. Students who have left the reporting country to study abroad should not be included by the reporting country even where such students are partially or fully-funded by national or subnational authorities. Concerning short exchange programmes (of at least three months but shorter than one academic year), students who remain enrolled in their home institution and where credits for successful completion of the study abroad are awarded by the home institution should be reported by the country of the home institution in which they are enrolled.

By contrast, **educational activities which take place abroad** — for example, in institutions run by providers located in the reporting country — should be excluded.

In cases of **cross-border distance learning/e-learning** , students should be reported by the country of the institution providing the service, not the country of residence of the student. Equally, **students who commute across borders** should be reported by the country where they are enrolled rather than where they are resident.

The **country of origin** for learning mobility data should, in principle, refer to the country of prior secondary education. However, countries might use the country of prior residence or citizenship or another concept. Information on the definitions currently used by countries is available under each table or figure.

More information on the concepts used for these statistics can be found in the [Methodological manual on learning mobility in tertiary education](#) .

**Notation in tables** Tables in this article use the following notation:

Value in <i>italics</i>	estimate or provisional data;
Value is –	not relevant or not applicable;
Value is :	not available.

## Context

**Bologna process** The [Bologna process](#) put in motion a series of reforms to make European higher education more compatible, comparable, competitive and attractive for students. One of the operational goals of the Bologna process was to remove obstacles to student mobility across Europe, and more broadly support the mobility of students, teachers and researchers. It established a European Higher Education Area to facilitate student and staff mobility, to make higher education more inclusive and accessible, and to make higher education in Europe more attractive and competitive worldwide.

**ET 2020 strategic framework** The [strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training](#) (known as ET 2020), was adopted by the [Council](#) in May 2009. It set out four strategic objectives for education and training in the EU including making mobility a reality. Two benchmarks on learning mobility were adopted by the Council in November 2011, supplementing a set of benchmarks laid down in ET 2020:

- by 2020, an EU average of at least 20 % of higher education graduates should have had a period of higher education-related study or training (including work placements) abroad, representing a minimum of 15 [European credit transfer and accumulation system \(ECTS\)](#) credits or lasting a minimum of three months;
- by 2020, an EU average of at least 6 % of 18 to 34 year-olds with an initial [vocational education and training \(VET\)](#) qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks, or shorter if documented by [Europass](#) .

The European Higher Education Area has brought about far-reaching changes which make it easier to study and train abroad. Both the three tier bachelor-master-doctorate degree structure and advances in quality assurance have facilitated student and staff mobility, while the use of mobility and quality assurance tools (such as the [European credit transfer and accumulation system \(ECTS\)](#) or the [European quality assurance register \(EQAR\)](#) ) have facilitated mutual trust, academic recognition and mobility.

**Erasmus+** The [Erasmus programme](#) was one of the most well-known European programmes and ran for just over a quarter of a century; in 2014 it was superseded by the [EU's programme for education, training, youth and sport](#) , referred to as [Erasmus+](#) . In the field of higher education, Erasmus+ gives students and academic staff the opportunity to develop their skills and boost their employment prospects. Students can study abroad for up to 12 months (during each cycle of tertiary education). During the period between 2014 and 2020, some four million people are expected to benefit from Erasmus+, including around: two million higher education students (including an estimated 25 000 students in [joint masters' programmes](#) ); 650 000 vocational training and education students; 800 000 lecturers, teachers, trainers, education staff and youth workers. The programme currently covers all 27 EU Member States, as well as the United Kingdom (at least until 31 December 2020), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

In May 2018, the European Commission adopted proposals for [the Erasmus programme for 2021-2027](#) , involving a doubling of the budget to EUR 30 billion which it is expected should enable 12 million people to participate in the programme. In June 2019, the European Parliament approved the budget for the programme for 2021-2027.

## Other articles

- [Being young in Europe today — education](#)
- [Education and training in the EU — facts and figures](#)
- [The EU in the world — education and training](#)

## Main tables

- [Education and training \(t\\_educ\)](#)

## Database

- [Education and training \(educ\)](#) , see:

Participation in education and training (educ\_part)

    Pupils and students - enrolments (educ\_uae\_enr)

    Learning mobility (educ\_uae\_mob)

        Mobile students from abroad (educ\_uae\_mobs)

        Degree mobile graduates from abroad (educ\_uae\_mobg)

        Credit mobile graduates (educ\_uae\_mobc)

    Education and training outcomes (educ\_outc)

        Graduates (educ\_uae\_grad)

## Dedicated section

- [Education and training](#)
- [Youth](#)

## Methodology

### Metadata

- [Education administrative data from 2013 onwards \(ISCED 2011\)](#) (ESMS metadata file — educ\_uae\_enr\_esms)

### Manuals and other methodological information

- [Classification of learning activities — Manual — 2016 edition](#)
- [International Standard Classification of Education \(ISCED\)](#)
- [ISCED 2011 operational manual — Guidelines for classifying national education programmes and related qualifications](#)
- [UOE data collection on formal education — Manual on concepts, definitions and classifications — 2019 edition](#)
- [UNESCO OECD Eurostat \(UOE\) joint data collection – methodology](#)

## Legislation

- [Regulation \(EC\) No 452/2008](#) of 23 April 2008 concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning
  - From school year 2012/2013 onwards: [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 912/2013](#) of 23 September 2013 as regards statistics on education and training systems
  - School years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012: [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 88/2011](#) of 2 February 2011 as regards statistics on education and training systems
  - [Summaries of EU Legislation: Statistics on education and lifelong learning](#)

## External links

- [Council of Europe — The European Higher Education area at 20: new publication](#)
- [European Commission — Education and training — Bologna process](#)
- [European Commission — Education and training — Mobility and cooperation](#)
- [European Commission — Education and Training — Strategic framework for education and training](#)
- [European Commission — Education and training monitor](#)
- [European Commission — Programmes — Erasmus+](#)
- [Eurydice — Better knowledge for better education policies](#)
- [Eurydice — The European higher education area in 2018: Bologna process Implementation report](#)
- [OECD — Education](#)
  - [OECD — Skills beyond school](#)
  - [OECD — Thematic review of tertiary education](#)
- [UNESCO — Education transforms lives](#)