

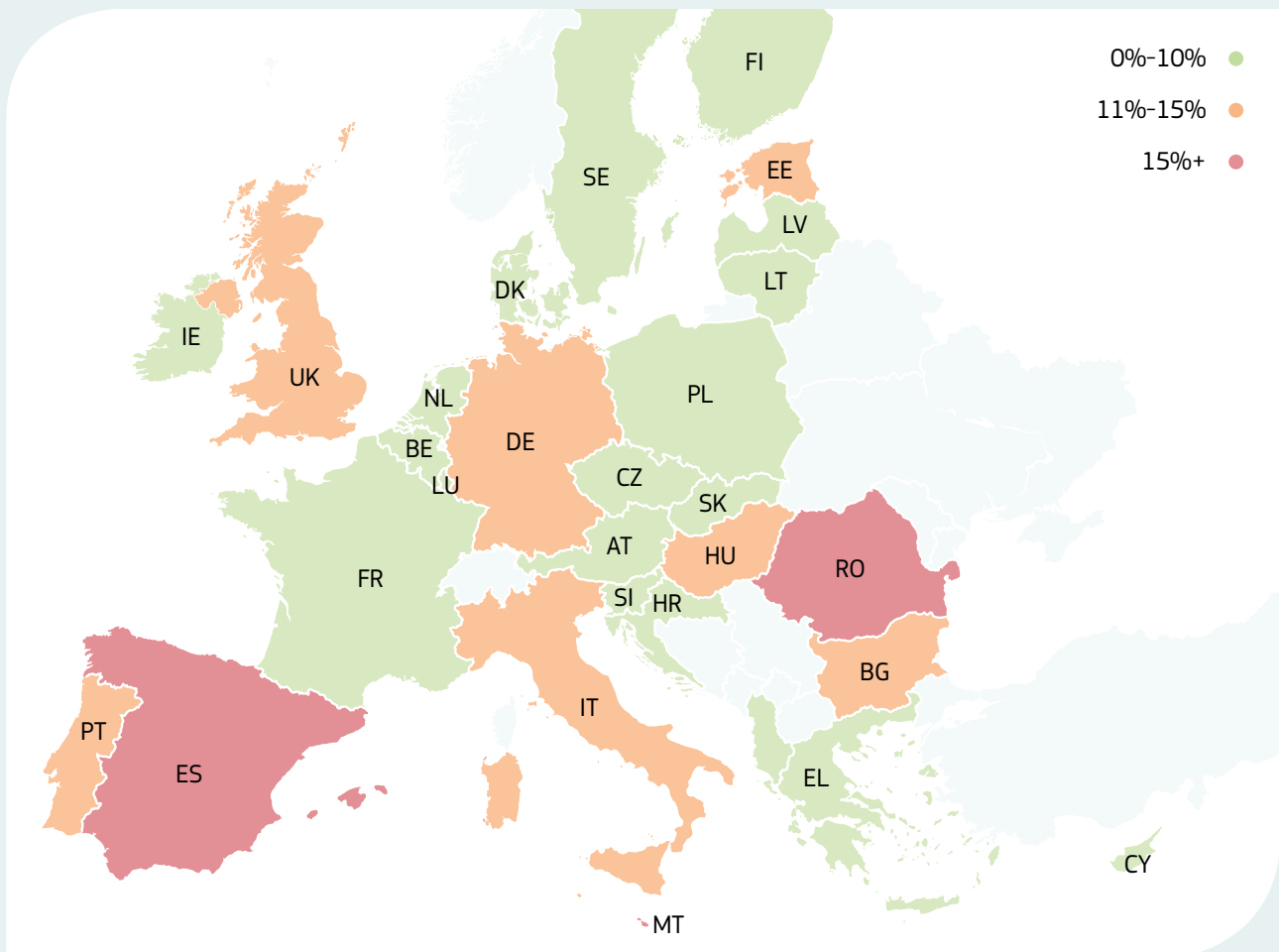
Skills challenges and strategies

Driven by technology, our society and labour market are changing at a rapid pace. Increasing skills levels and helping people acquire new skills are essential to improve people's chances in life. To do so, we need all-encompassing strategies to anticipate the skills needed for the labour market, and respond to these needs through lifelong learning and the validation of acquired skills. This will put in practice the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights: everybody's right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning.

Skills challenges

1. Reducing the number of early school leavers

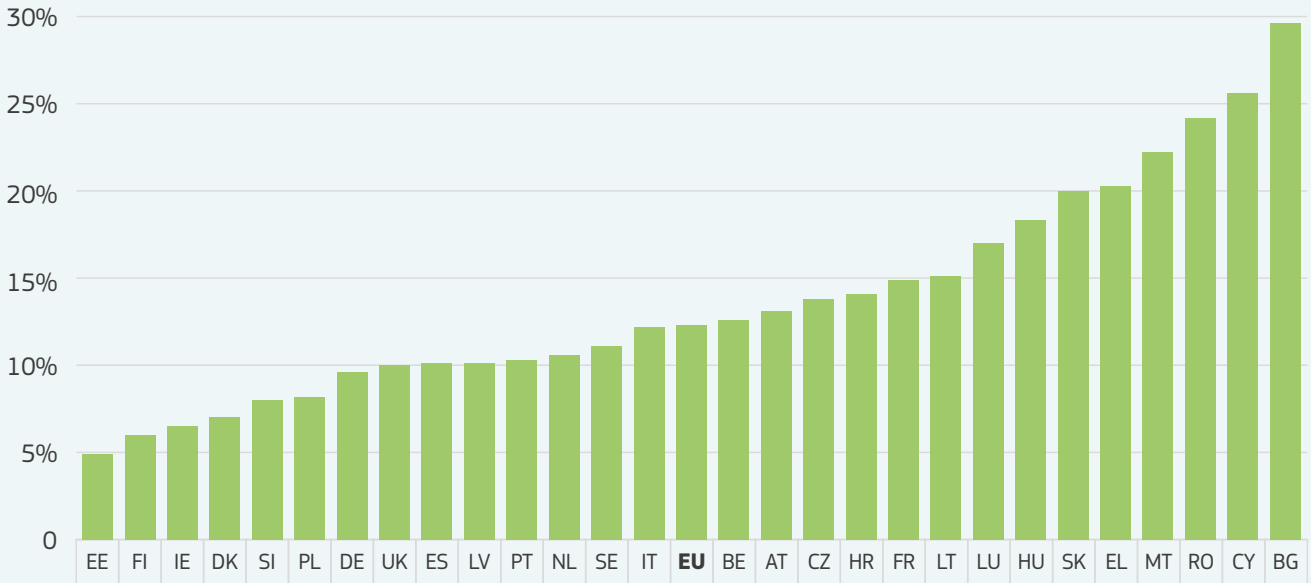
Inclusive education means that everybody achieves initial education and training. At EU-level, we have set a target to reduce the EU average early school leaving rate to less than **10%** by 2020. Standing at **10.6%** in 2017, this target has almost been reached. Many countries have made great progress in the last ten years, and now:



2. Helping people to develop basic skills

Quality and inclusive education also means that everyone attains a good level of basic skills such as in mathematics, science and reading during their education. People, who have difficulty reaching the minimum education attainment levels, are called 'low achievers'. In 2009, the EU **set a target** for reducing the share of low achievers to **below 15%** by 2020. However, the proportion of low achievers increased between 2011 and 2015, in particular for reading and science. **12.3%** of all EU students are low achievers in **all three subjects**.

Percentage of low achieving students in all three domains (reading, maths, science)

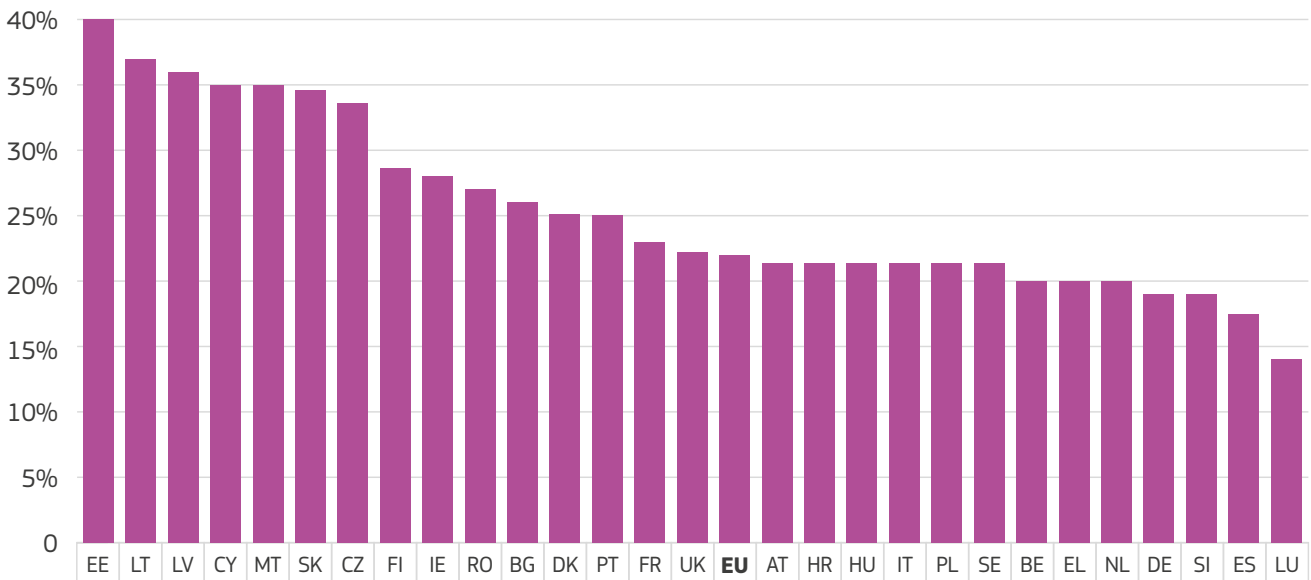


3. Make skills match jobs

Skills mismatches occur for instance when people are overskilled, or underskilled, to perform the available jobs on the labour market.

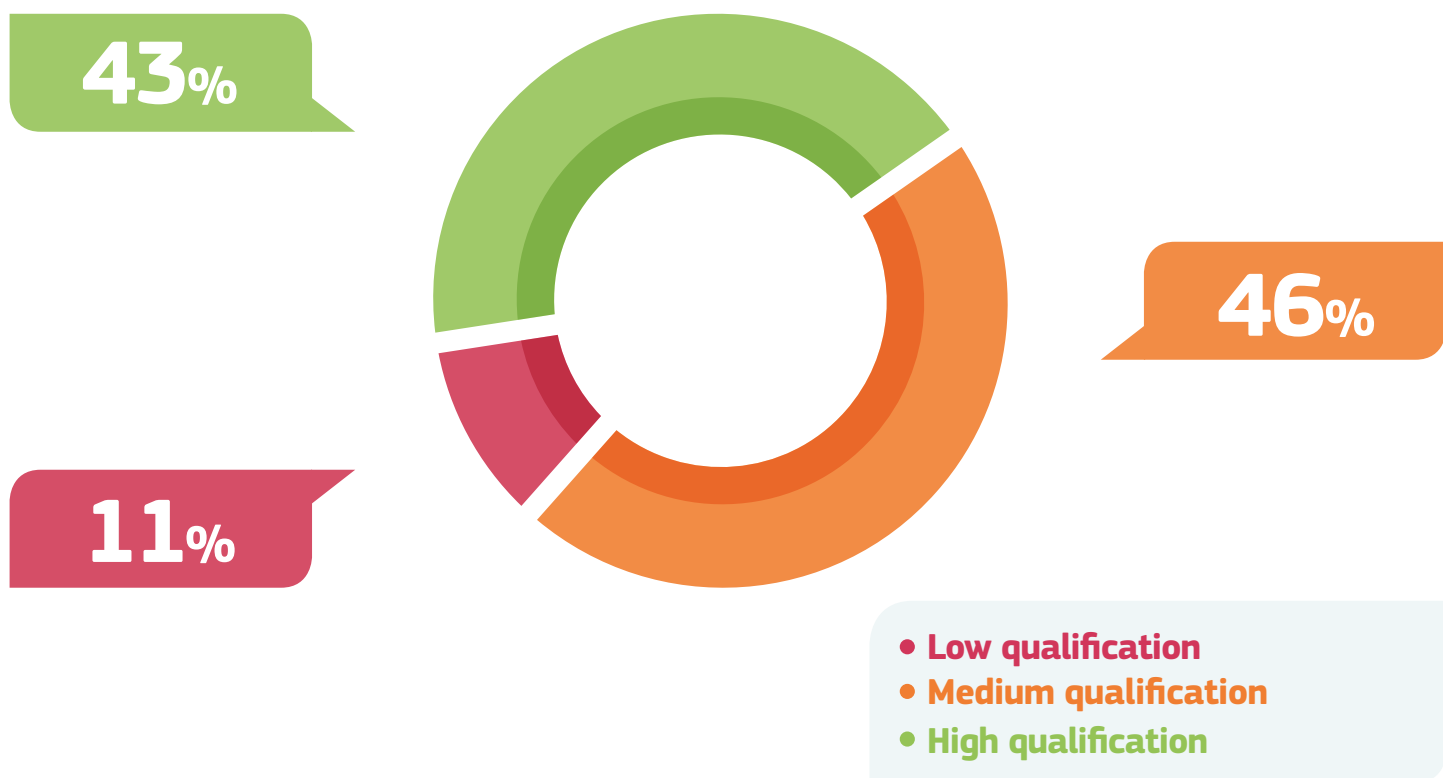
For instance, the skills of newly employed workers do not always fully match their jobs. Workers themselves are often 'under-skilled' when they begin a new job. This issue is usually remedied through on-the-job training.

Adult workers 'under-skilled' at the start of their current jobs



Furthermore, until 2030, about **90%** of new job opportunities will require a high level of qualification (**43%**), or at least a medium level (**46%**).

EU total share of job openings by level of education 2016-2030

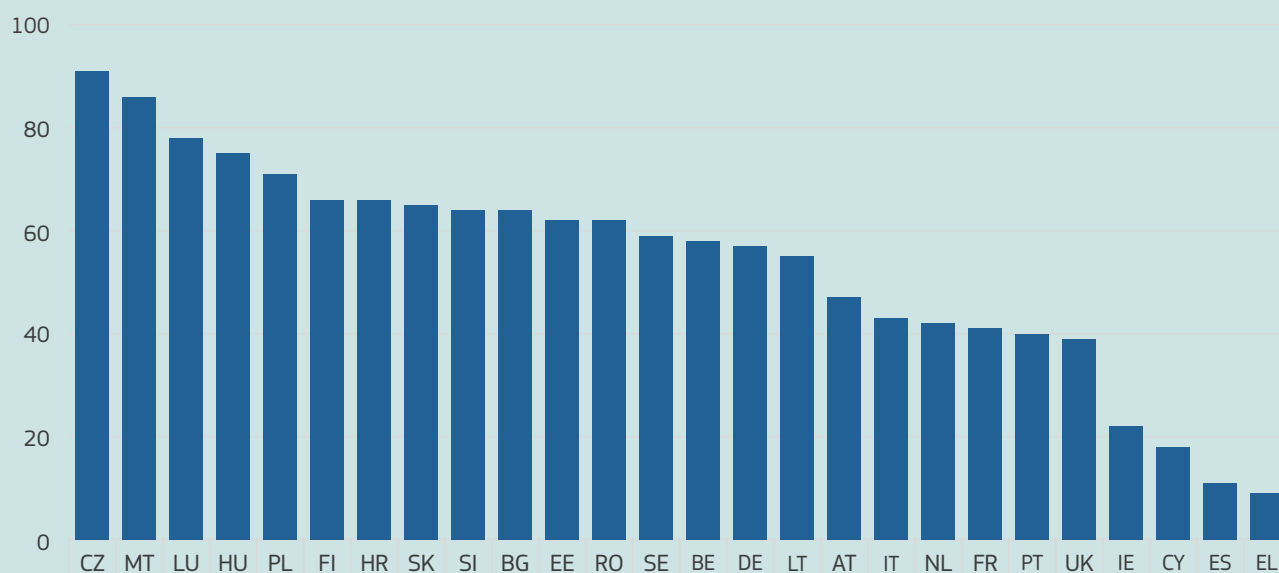


Today, however, only **31%** of the working age population is highly qualified.

On the other hand, many young workers are aware that they have a qualification of a higher level than their job would require.

Some countries are better than others at matching the available skills with the available jobs. The European Skills index measures how well a country puts skills to good use. "Skills Matching" goes from 0 to 100. The closest to 100, the better the use of skills.

Cedefop European Skills Index 2018: Skills Matching



Skills strategies

The challenges above call for comprehensive skills strategies, organised around three dimensions: lifelong development of skills, whether through formal education and training; work or volunteering, making skills visible and comparable; and putting skills to good use in well-matched jobs.

In 2016, the Commission launched the Skills Agenda for Europe. The Agenda consists of 10 concrete actions that have been rolled out over two years, and are now all up and running.

A **strategic approach to skills** requires the full cooperation of all authorities, and stakeholders, as well as effective investment. The Skills Agenda calls upon EU countries, employers' associations, trade unions, industry and other interested parties to **continue to work together** to ensure that these initiatives produce the best possible outcomes.

It is necessary to have in place:



Good skills anticipation



Education and training systems



A system that allows for validation of acquired skills



Effective guidance supporting learners, workers and companies

Sources:

Education and Training Monitor 2018, vol. I Cedefop

EU Skills Panorama: Skills Forecast: key EU trends to 2030 Cedefop (2018)

Insights into skill shortages and skill mismatch: learning from Cedefop's European skills and jobs survey Cedefop, 2018, European Skills Index.

ISBN 978-92-76-00150-8

doi:10.2767/273575

KE-01-19-183-EN-N

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019

© European Union, 2019

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged. The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39)

For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the EU copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

Icons © Shutterstock

