



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 10.9.2012  
COM(2012) 495 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of  
the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (EU Youth Strategy  
2010-2018)**

{SWD(2012) 256 final}  
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Council Resolution on the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)<sup>1</sup>, requires an EU Youth Report to be drawn up at the end of each three-year cycle, with a **dual objective**: namely to **evaluate the progress made towards the overall objectives of the EU Youth Strategy**, and to serve as a basis for **establishing a set of priorities for the coming work cycle**.

This Communication presents a draft EU Youth Report to be agreed upon by the Council. It is accompanied by two Staff Working Documents: one which reviews the situation of young people in the EU and one which analyses actions taken under the strategy.

## **2. EUROPE 2020 – SUPPORTING YOUTH IN A CONTEXT OF CRISIS**

Europe is undergoing a crisis that has hit young Europeans with unprecedented levels of unemployment and the risk of social exclusion and poverty. Europe 2020, the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, sets the framework for a coordinated European response in order to emerge stronger from the crisis and to improve the long-term prosperity of Europe's citizens.

**Europe 2020** focuses strongly on young people, with a headline target of reducing early school-leaving and increasing tertiary attainment. Two other headline targets also share a clear youth dimension – to reduce the risk of poverty and to increase the share of the population in employment. Furthermore, the flagship initiative entitled Youth on the Move<sup>2</sup> promotes youth mobility, while young people are also included in An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs<sup>3</sup> and A Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion<sup>4</sup>.

In the second European Semester of economic policy coordination, the European Commission emphasised the need to act towards reducing the unacceptably high rate of youth unemployment. The Annual Growth Survey 2012, which sets out priorities for action at EU and national levels in order to boost growth and jobs, called on Member States to support youth employment. Concrete recommendations included promoting quality apprenticeships and traineeships, as well as entrepreneurial skills. It also called for reforms in employment legislation and in education and training. Expressing concerns that the social tissue of the EU

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> COM(2010) 477.

<sup>3</sup> COM(2010) 682.

<sup>4</sup> COM(2010) 758.

is being put to the test, the Commission also called on Member States to protect the vulnerable, with regard to social protection, inclusion strategies and access to services ensuring integration in the labour market and society<sup>5</sup>. [Country-specific recommendations](#)<sup>6</sup> have been adopted according to the particular situations of individual Member States.

Against this backdrop, the European Commission proposed a dedicated Youth Opportunities Initiative (YOI),<sup>7</sup> which aims to mobilise resources and increase efforts to drive down youth unemployment and make young people more employable. In this context, the Commission urged Member States to make better use of the European Social Fund to support young people. Commission action teams are assisting eight Member States<sup>8</sup> where youth unemployment rates are above average. Furthermore, the recent ‘Employment Package’<sup>9</sup> includes a first progress report on the YOI and a consultation on a new quality framework for traineeships.

The Commission is also endeavouring to lift obstacles that EU citizens, including the youth, encounter when invoking their rights as EU citizens, notably their right to free movement within the EU, including for volunteering, study or work.

Efforts to boost the employability, learning mobility and participation of young people are supported through the current Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action programmes, which – from 2014 onwards – will be succeeded by a new EU programme targeting education, training and youth.

### **3. THE EU YOUTH STRATEGY – INVESTING AND EMPOWERING**

In 2009, the Council endorsed a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), based on the Communication ‘EU Youth Strategy: Investing and Empowering’<sup>10</sup>. By reinforcing cooperation and sharing good practices, the EU Youth Strategy's two overall objectives are to:

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

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<sup>5</sup> COM(2011) 815.

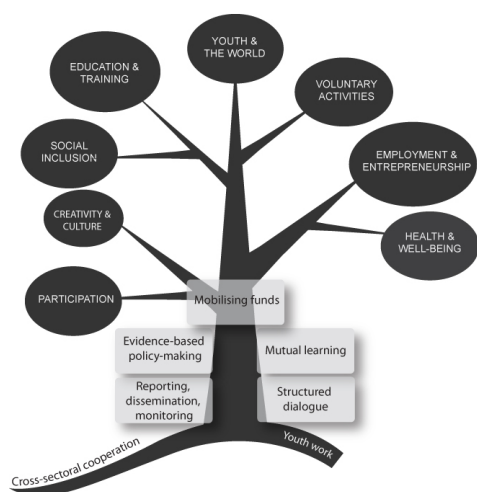
<sup>6</sup> COM(2012) 299.

<sup>7</sup> COM(2011) 933.

<sup>8</sup> Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain.

<sup>9</sup> COM(2012)173, SWD(2012)98, SWD(2012)99.

<sup>10</sup> The framework hereafter called ‘EU Youth Strategy’.



The EU Youth Strategy is action-based. As illustrated by the tree diagram, it branches out into eight policy areas ('fields of action'): education & training; employment & entrepreneurship; social inclusion; health & well-being; participation; culture & creativity; volunteering and youth & the world.

The strategy is rooted in the following instruments: evidence-based policy-making; mutual learning; regular progress-reporting, dissemination of results and monitoring; structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations and mobilisation of EU programmes and funds. This strategy sees youth work<sup>11</sup> as a support to all fields of action and cross-sectoral cooperation as an underlying principle.

#### 4. THE FIRST CYCLE OF THE EU YOUTH STRATEGY (2010-2012)

Nearly all Member States report that the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced existing priorities at national level, with several Member States emphasising its direct impact. Lithuania, for example, mentions the strategy as a guiding document for developing its own National Youth Policy Programme, Austria mentions that the link between youth policy and labour market policies has been strengthened, and dialogue with youth has been further developed in the Flemish Community of Belgium.

The EU Youth Strategy advocates a cross-sectoral approach at all levels in implementing the youth policy framework. Most Member States report having a national youth strategy or a cross-sectoral plan targeting youth. All but two Member States have an inter-ministerial working group on youth or some other institutionalised mechanism. While some National Youth Reports set a good example, such groups often consist of different actors and stakeholders in the 'core' youth policy field, with little or no involvement from other government ministries, thereby limiting their cross-sectoral nature.

Youth work supports many fields of action. A majority of Member States report that they have taken measures to support youth work in line with the Council Resolution on youth

<sup>11</sup> Youth work covers a large scope of social, cultural, educational or political activities by, with and for young people. It is about 'out-of-school' education and leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders. It is based on non-formal learning and voluntary participation.

work<sup>12</sup>. In July 2010, a European Convention on Youth Work was held under the Belgian Presidency, bringing together policy-makers and youth stakeholders from across Europe resulting in the adoption of a [declaration](#) addressing priorities and actions for youth work in the coming years.

#### **4.1. IMPLEMENTING THE EIGHT FIELDS OF ACTION**

In each of its fields of action, the EU Youth Strategy proposes initiatives for the Member States and/or the Commission. Below is an overview of measures taken at EU level and those reported by Member States for the work cycle 2010-2012<sup>13</sup>.

##### *Education & Training*

The Commission and Member States are working together to improve education and training through the 'ET2020' framework<sup>14</sup>. In this context, the Commission presented a strategy for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems in 2011<sup>15</sup>, and is preparing an initiative on 'Rethinking skills', which is due to be launched later in 2012 to support policy development on skills and competences.

The EU Youth Strategy focuses primarily on non-formal learning as a complementary tool, in order to acquire the cross-cutting skills<sup>16</sup> that are much appreciated in the labour market<sup>17</sup>. The Commission will propose a draft Council recommendation on the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in 2012, and is also working on tools to make it easier to record the skills acquired through non-formal learning.

Both the Commission and Member States actively support youth organisations as an important provider of non-formal learning opportunities. Many Member States emphasise the role of youth work in reaching out to early school leavers and helping them to get back into education or work. In this context, they have recently taken action to raise awareness of non-formal learning and to recognise learning outcomes at national level.

##### *Employment & Entrepreneurship*

Youth employment was the overall thematic priority of the first Trio Presidency after the entry into force of the EU Youth Strategy. During this period, the Council adopted resolutions on the active inclusion of young people<sup>18</sup> and the role of youth work in promoting employability of young people. The first cycle of Structured Dialogue also focused on youth employment. Young people recommended concrete actions, which fed into a Council Resolution<sup>19</sup> highlighting the need for access to labour market information, non-formal learning, a quality framework for internships, focus on flexicurity and equal access to mobility. The recommendations were taken up in subsequent Commission initiatives, such as

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<sup>12</sup> OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, p. 1-5.

<sup>13</sup> Activities in the Strategy's fields of action are further described in the Staff Working Document accompanying this Communication.

<sup>14</sup> OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2-10.

<sup>15</sup> COM(2011) 567.

<sup>16</sup> See also framework on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ L 394 of 30.12.2006.

<sup>17</sup> Eurobarometer survey 'employers' attitudes to skills'.

<sup>18</sup> OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, p. 1-6.

<sup>19</sup> OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, p. 1-4.

the draft recommendation on non-formal and informal learning and in the wider context of YOI.

According to National Youth Reports, several Member States have changed their labour laws or applied tax incentives to improve access to the labour market for young people. These are frequently combined with programmes to allow young people to gain work experience or benefit from counselling.

Entrepreneurship education is being increasingly promoted in most European countries. To date, eight countries have launched specific strategies, while 13 others include it as a part of their national lifelong learning, youth or growth strategies<sup>20</sup>.

At EU-level, youth entrepreneurship was given a more visible profile during European Youth Week, raising awareness of the value of entrepreneurial skills and of starting a business as a career option. Also, a number of actions are currently being taken to support entrepreneurial learning at all levels of education.

### *Health & Well-being*

At EU level, young people are a particular target group of EU health initiatives put in place to tackle smoking, alcohol related harm, nutrition, obesity and drug-use.

All but two Member States report that they have taken concrete measures to follow up the Council Resolution on the Health and Well-being of Young People<sup>21</sup>. Many Member States mention initiatives that focus on specific issues, such as alcohol, tobacco or healthy nutrition, or emphasise the value of peer-to-peer education in promoting healthy lifestyles.

### *Social Inclusion*

EU initiatives to combat youth unemployment also make important contributions to the social inclusion of young people. A majority of Member States also addressed youth as a specific target group during the European Year of 2010: Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. These initiatives stress the need to fight poverty from an early age in order to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

Many Member States confirm the importance of a cross-sectoral approach to social inclusion, linking it with education, employment or health policies, for example. Many of them report on specialised training programmes for youth workers, youth leaders and young people to develop intercultural awareness and combat prejudice. A number of Member States cited examples of youth-targeted support measures related to housing.

### *Participation*

Youth participation has figured prominently on the EU youth policy agenda in recent years. The Council confirmed its dedication to this field by making ‘youth participation in democratic life’ the overall priority of the second Trio Presidency in the youth field (mid 2011-2012), in line with Article 165 TFEU. Structured Dialogue has become an increasingly influential instrument for involving young people in decision-making. All Member States

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<sup>20</sup> Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe, European Commission, 2012

<sup>21</sup> OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 1-3.

have set up National Working Groups to organise consultations with young people in their countries and to feed into EU-level debates.

The Commission took steps to strengthen the evidence base on participation through the Eurobarometer on ‘Youth on the Move’<sup>22</sup> and a forthcoming study on changing patterns of youth participation. It furthermore initiated two processes that will come to fruition in the next three-year cycle: namely re-developing the European Youth Portal<sup>23</sup> as an interactive platform for online engagement, and a ‘Youth on the Move Card’ which will further enable youth mobility and participation through incentives, information and support services.

Participation is key to youth policy in all Member States and many activities have been carried out, including the development of structures for involving young people in decision-making, with room for more dialogue online.

### *Voluntary Activities*

Member States and the Commission have worked together to implement the Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the EU<sup>24</sup> in an expert group. Around half of the Member States report that they have raised awareness about opportunities for mobility of young volunteers further to this recommendation. Alongside the [European Voluntary Service](#), a number of Member States report having bilateral or multi-lateral exchange programmes.

Several Member States report that they have developed national volunteering schemes or have established a new civic service. The European Year of Volunteering (2011) involved young people and youth organisations in emphasising its youth dimension.

### *Culture & Creativity*

Member States and the Commission cooperate closely in this area through a European Agenda for Culture<sup>25</sup>. The Council emphasised the importance of creativity, culture and the role of young people in a number of its conclusions<sup>26</sup>. Under the EU Youth Strategy, a [study](#) on youth access to culture in Europe from 2010<sup>27</sup> included good practices and proposals to address obstacles such as cost and distance.

Although the Member States acknowledge the links between culture and creativity and youth policy, the National Youth Reports do not report many activities in this ‘field of action’.

### *Youth & the World*

Through the youth partnership with the Council of Europe, the Commission organised and contributed to high-level youth policy symposia in its Eastern and Southern neighbourhoods<sup>28</sup>. The Council adopted Conclusions on the Eastern Dimension of Youth

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<sup>22</sup> Youth on the Move – Analytical reports ([Flash Eurobarometer 319a](#) and [319b](#) May 2011), target group age 15-30.

<sup>23</sup> <http://europa.eu/youth>.

<sup>24</sup> OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 8-10.

<sup>25</sup> OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1-4.

<sup>26</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010; p. 2-3. OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 19-23; OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, p. 1-4.

<sup>27</sup> Interarts, EACEA/2008/01.

<sup>28</sup> Sharm-al-Sheikh (2010), Odessa (2011), Tbilisi (2012), Tunis (2012).

Participation<sup>29</sup> designed to reach out further into Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Moreover, a decision was taken to set up an Eastern Partnership Youth Window to fund more opportunities for youth partnerships and cooperation under the Youth in Action programme. Activities were organised in Europe and China throughout the 2011 EU-China Youth Year. The Commission also contributed to the UN Year of Youth and its youth summit in Mexico in 2011; it also co-organised two policy conferences as part of a bilateral cooperation agreement with Canada.

‘Youth & the world’ is a new ‘field of action’. Member States nonetheless report that they had already been active prior to 2010, and they continue to underline its relevance. Almost half of the Member States report that they have addressed this issue in their education curricula or as part of youth policy strategies. Most Member States provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues.

## **4.2. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUMENTS**

The EU Youth Strategy applies a set of dedicated instruments to pursue activities in the eight fields described above. The following paragraphs assess to what extent these instruments have been used successfully in order to achieve the overall objectives of the strategy.

### *Evidence-based Policy-making*

Further to the EU Youth Strategy, the Commission – together with experts nominated by Member States and youth stakeholders – developed a dashboard of EU Youth Indicators, which was released in 2011<sup>30</sup>. This dashboard presents 40 indicators covering all eight fields of action. A [study](#) documents the fact that the development of EU Youth Indicators has not only improved the recognition and visibility of youth policy, but has also triggered positive developments in Member States, both in pursuing cross-sectoral co-operation and in applying an evidence-based approach.

During the first work cycle of the strategy, the Commission carried out two studies<sup>31</sup> and conducted a Flash Eurobarometer-survey on youth ([FI319a](#) and [FI319b](#)). The European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) within the EU-CoE youth partnership also contributed to strengthening the evidence-base for youth policy in Europe through its [online portal](#).

### *Mutual Learning*

The Open Method of Coordination is a good framework for peer learning and the sharing of experience among national policy-makers in the youth field. Every six months, EU Youth Conferences are organised by the country holding the Presidency, with the support of the Commission, in conjunction with meetings of Directors-General for youth. These conferences bring together young people and policy-makers from across the EU to discuss the results of the Structured Dialogue and to prepare joint recommendations which feed into Council

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<sup>29</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 10-14.

<sup>30</sup> SEC (2011) 401.

<sup>31</sup> Studies on youth access to culture (InterARTS, 2010) and youth participation in democratic life (London School of Economics, 2012).



resolutions or conclusions<sup>32</sup>. Mutual learning was also achieved through a specific peer-learning activity on cross-sectoral cooperation<sup>33</sup>.

#### *Regular Progress-reporting, Dissemination of Results and Monitoring*

For this reporting exercise, the Commission developed an online questionnaire which addressed specific concrete action lines mentioned in the EU Youth Strategy. This made it possible to conduct a comparative assessment of the National Youth Reports submitted by all Member States, Norway, Switzerland, Montenegro and Croatia<sup>34</sup>. Input was also provided by the European Youth Forum, the representative platform of international non-governmental youth organisations and national youth councils.

In addition to releasing the Staff Working Document to the EU Youth Report, all National Youth Reports are made public on the Commission's website. This is in line with the EU Youth Strategy, which calls for broad dissemination of the results of the reporting exercise.

#### *Structured Dialogue with Young People and Youth Organisations*

All Member States established National Working Groups for Structured Dialogue with young people early in the first cycle. The Structured Dialogue – which is an elaborate and formal method of consultation with young people – has become a vibrant and integral part of youth policy-making. The consultations during the first Trio Presidency (2010-11) resulted in valuable joint recommendations between youth policy-makers and young people on the most pressing employment issues.

More and more people are participating in the evolving and on-going dialogue – over 20 000 youth leaders and young people were directly involved in the latest round of consultations.

#### *Mobilisation of EU programmes*

The Youth in Action programme is a key instrument to support the EU Youth Strategy. Alongside the Lifelong Learning programme, it has contributed to the learning mobility of young people. It focuses on non-formal learning activities for young people, youth workers and youth organisations. In line with the EU Youth Strategy, it promotes a sense of citizenship and solidarity among young people and places the emphasis on youth work, volunteering and civic activities as a suitable environment in which to acquire transversal skills. This programme involved around 150 000 and 185 000 participants in 2010 and 2011 respectively, which was a noticeable increase compared to the beginning of the programme (111 000 participants in 2007).

Almost all Member States report having used other sources of EU funding, such as the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and/or PROGRESS to integrate young people into the labour market.

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<sup>32</sup> See the Staff Working Document which accompanies this Communication.

<sup>33</sup> Organised under the Spanish Presidency.

<sup>34</sup> These four non-EU countries responded to the Commission's invitation to EU candidate countries and EFTA states to submit National Youth Reports on a voluntary basis. Separate contributions were submitted by Belgium's three language communities.

## 5. THE NEXT CYCLE (2013-2015)

### *Strengthening the link between the EU Youth Strategy and Europe 2020*

According to the Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy, a number of priorities for European cooperation will be set for each work cycle to contribute to the fields of action identified under the framework. The priorities for the next cycle are to be adopted on the basis of the current EU Youth Report.

The EU presidencies focused in the first cycle on 'employment and entrepreneurship' and 'participation'. The EU Youth Strategy and its fields of action together encompass the full range of issues that concern young people in transition, albeit affecting them to differing degrees. More importantly, the strategy acknowledges and reinforces inter-relationships between these fields and among stakeholders, to deliver effective instruments to achieve policy coordination and synergies.

The EU and National Youth Reports confirm the robustness and relevance of the EU Youth Strategy and its two overall objectives: (i) creating more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market, and (ii) promoting citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. Both tie in well with Europe 2020, the Annual Growth Survey 2012, Youth on the Move and the Youth Opportunities Initiative.

The priorities for the next work cycle should reflect the current overall priorities and activities under Europe 2020. Youth employment will remain high on the EU agenda. Building on the Annual Growth Survey 2012 and possible reviews of priorities under the upcoming Annual Growth Survey 2013, and on the Youth Opportunities Initiative, Member States should in particular target young people who are not in employment, education or training, and therein make full use of available EU funding. They should undertake more efforts to increase young people's access to work, apprenticeships and traineeship contracts and improve their employability.

The Commission supports the efforts of Member States with new EU initiatives, such as "Your first EURES job", which helps young people find a job abroad, support to the development of Youth Guarantees<sup>35</sup> and a quality framework for traineeships. It has also increased possibilities for learning mobility through the Lifelong Learning<sup>36</sup> and Youth in Action<sup>37</sup> programmes. Furthermore, the cross-cutting tools developed under the EU Youth Strategy can serve to foster partnerships between different actors involved in delivering support to young people in transition, including employment services, education providers, youth work, social services, employers and young people themselves. Stronger cooperation on the ground can be beneficial in offering tailor-made approaches, especially to young people with more complex life situations or that are hard to reach through conventional methods. The strategy can also play a role in the promotion and recognition of non-formal and informal learning through youth work and in encouraging participation in youth organisations as means to gain transversal skills. It can thereby contribute to strengthening synergies between different forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

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<sup>35</sup> The Commission intends to propose by the end of 2012 a Council recommendation on guidelines to establish youth guarantees, which are schemes to be designed by Member States to ensure that all young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed (or leaving formal education).

<sup>36</sup> 130 000 [company placements](#) in 2012 in other EU countries for university-level and vocational students

<sup>37</sup> 10 000 young people with opportunities through the [European Voluntary Service](#)

The situation on the labour market and unemployment has related social effects. The Annual Growth Survey 2012 refers to clear signs of increases in the number of people at risk of income poverty, notably child poverty, and social exclusion, with acute health problems and homelessness in the most extreme cases. A growing group of young people are at risk of social exclusion.

The EU Youth Strategy can play a role in reaching out to vulnerable young people. Based on its cross-cutting perspective and focus on the participation of *all* young people in various aspects of society, it addresses a multitude of challenges linked to exclusion, alienation and young people's efforts in building an independent life. For the coming years, the strategy should increasingly focus on the consequences of the current crisis and its effects on social inclusion and the health & well-being of young people. To this purpose, it needs to step up its focus on participation in democratic and societal activities, as well as build on youth work in developing young people's life skills, their overall personal development and a sense of belonging to the society in which they live.

### *Taking implementation forward*

Cross-sectoral cooperation can be further improved across all policy areas that affect young people. Member States should seek to further enhance inter-ministerial cooperation at national level. Additional efforts should be made to strengthen the evidence base of youth policy and to share examples of good practice through mutual learning.

Youth policy should continue the dialogue with young people, in order to fully understand the challenges youth face and their expectations towards policy-makers and support providers. The Structured Dialogue with young people can be further developed by making the membership of National Working Groups more inclusive and ensuring that decision-makers take recommendations from young people more fully into account.

The Commission will develop the initiative of the 'Youth on the Move Card' in order to make it easier for young people to be mobile across Europe. It will also reach out to, and facilitate dialogue with, *all* young people, particularly those with fewer opportunities, through the new interactive tools of the European Youth Portal. Youth policy will also explore measures to foster the creative and innovative potential of young people when attempting to tackle challenges related to employment, employability and inclusion<sup>38</sup>.

The Youth in Action programme and the future EU programme targeting youth will play a particular role in supporting these initiatives.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

The implementation of the first three-year work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy, covering 2010-2012, demonstrated that it is both lasting and flexible as a framework for a whole range of actions – by the Commission, Member States and other relevant stakeholders. The strategy, with its cross-sectoral and all-inclusive perspective, has been greeted with interest and has inspired not only EU Member States, but also countries in the larger Europe and the world beyond.

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<sup>38</sup> Council Conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people, OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, p. 1-4.

The EU Youth Strategy has served as a vehicle to forge links between fields of action, including employment & entrepreneurship, education & training and social inclusion, to develop multi-faceted solutions in support of young people. This has proved relevant in looking for answers to address the current high levels of youth unemployment and to support the growing number of young people who are not in employment, education or training. Youth work has contributed to young people's development and has the potential to do more in all fields of action.

The participation of young people in democratic life is central to youth policy. Deepening and widening the dialogue with young people not only raises both the quality and legitimacy of youth policy, but also raises expectations for the EU and its Member States to deliver. The EU should do its utmost to encourage *all* of its young people to become involved in shaping the EU's future, particularly on those issues which – as successive consultations and opinion surveys have demonstrated – matter most to them.

In order to further its contribution to Europe 2020, the second three-year work cycle of the EU Youth Strategy (2013-2015) should address the challenges facing young people as a result of the crisis. Emphasis should continue to be placed on employment and entrepreneurship, increasing access to work, along with developing the innovative and creative capacities of young people. It should increasingly focus on social inclusion, health and well-being. The future EU programme targeting young people will contribute towards achieving these objectives of the EU Youth Strategy.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 10.9.2012  
SWD(2012) 256 final

## **EU Youth Report**

### **COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

#### **Results of the first cycle of the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field (2010-2012)**

*Accompanying the document*

### **COMMISSION COMMUNICATION**

#### **Draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018)**

{COM(2012) 495 final}  
{SWD(2012) 257 final}

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

#### *The EU Youth Strategy*

In 2009, the Council endorsed the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), known in short as the EU Youth Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Its objectives are to:

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

The EU Youth Strategy advocates a cross-cutting approach, branching out into eight different policy areas ('fields of action'), which are the following: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Culture and Creativity, Volunteering, and Youth and the World.

The EU Youth Strategy and its implementation are based on the Open Method of Coordination, addressing both the Commission and Member States to take specific actions in the above-mentioned 'fields of action'. To this end, it proposes a set of instruments which include: evidence-based policy-making; mutual learning; regular progress-reporting; dissemination of results and monitoring; Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations; and mobilisation of EU programmes and funds.

The EU Youth Strategy invited the Commission and Member States to implement the strategy by fostering cooperation that cuts across all of the various policy fields concerned. Such an approach should be pursued at all levels, and policies can be improved by sharing good practices. Youth work should be supported, developed and recognised for its economic and social contribution.

#### *EU Youth Report: reporting on progress and looking ahead*

The period covered by the EU Youth Strategy is divided into three-year cycles, with the requirement to produce an EU Youth Report at the end of each cycle, the first of which will be drawn up in 2012 and 'consist of [...] 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. [...] The EU Youth Report should also serve as a basis for establishing a set of priorities for the following work cycle.'

This Staff Working Document supports the Commission Communication which presents the draft joint report on the EU Youth Report to the Council. Summarising the results of the first cycle (2010-2012), it presents the actions taken at EU-level and in Member States, as well as initiatives taken by young people themselves. Separate chapters report on achievements in all eight 'fields of action' of the strategy, the general organisation and approach to youth policy,

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<sup>1</sup> Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, pp. 1-11.



and the Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers. The references made to Member States' activities are based on National Youth Reports submitted by them<sup>2</sup>. Young people are represented in the report by the European Youth Forum, which is an umbrella organisation of approximately 40 National Youth Councils and more than 60 international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe.

A second Staff Working Document supporting the Commission Communication on the EU Youth Report 2012 provides a comprehensive picture of the situation of young people in Europe based on the latest available data, statistics and research. It portrays trends and developments in young people's conditions in different areas, corresponding to the 'fields of action'. It builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators, which is an overview of 41 indicators that measure the most crucial aspects of the lives of young people in Europe<sup>3</sup>.

### **Results of the first cycle of the Open Method of Coordination in the youth field (2010-2012)**

#### *Actions at EU level*

The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth puts young people high on its agenda and embraces a number of concrete initiatives to support them in getting jobs and dealing with related challenges during this crisis. Young people are the target group of the flagship initiative 'Youth on the Move', which promotes mobility as a means of learning. They are also impacted by two other flagship initiatives, 'An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs', which aims to improve employability and employment opportunities for young people, and 'A Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion', the aim of which is to combat poverty and exclusion from an early age.

In response to the unacceptably high youth unemployment rates, the Commission proposed a comprehensive set of measures under the 'Youth Opportunities Initiative' and urged Member States to make better use of the European Social Fund (ESF). It also proposed tailor-made national approaches to youth unemployment through its Country Specific Recommendations under the European Semester and through dedicated action teams set up to assist those Member States with above average unemployment rates.

To better prepare young people for the labour market, including in the medium term, and in line with the Europe 2020 benchmarks on tertiary education and early school leaving, the Commission intensified its efforts to ensure that young people acquire the relevant skills for the labour market and to improve education and training. The main initiative in this field is the strategic framework for European cooperation in Education and Training, which was adopted in 2009 for the period up to 2020 (ET 2020). In this context, the Commission presented a strategy for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems in 2011.

The Youth in Action and the Lifelong Learning programmes support learning mobility in both formal and non-formal education. Projects supported in 2011 under the Lifelong Learning programme involved more than 530 000 participants, while Youth in Action projects involved more than 180 000 young people.

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<sup>2</sup> Separate contributions were submitted by the three language communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EFTA-countries, which are programme countries under the Commission's Youth in Action programme, were invited to submit National Youth Reports.

<sup>3</sup> SEC(2011) 401. This document presents 40 indicators. One additional indicator has since been added, bringing the total number of EU Youth Indicators to 41.

The Commission is also endeavouring to lift obstacles EU citizens, including the young, encounter when using their EU rights, notably their right to free movement within the EU be it for leisure, volunteering, study or work<sup>4</sup>.

The EU Youth Strategy contributed to these efforts by making youth employment the overall thematic priority during the first Trio Presidency. This resulted in recommendations and proposals for action through Council resolutions addressing the social inclusion of young people, and the role of youth work in employability and accessing jobs. During the same period, the Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers focused on youth employment. The resulting recommendations culminated in a Council resolution and were used to develop policy measures within the Commission.

The Trio Presidency of Poland, Denmark and Cyprus chose ‘youth participation in democratic life’ as the overall thematic priority between mid-2011 and end 2012. Youth participation is important not only to increase citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity among young people; it also helps young people to acquire valuable cross-cutting skills that add to their employability. This work led to Council conclusions and resolutions that emphasised the need for an inclusive approach to participation and to broaden the range of tools for youth participation. It addressed interaction with young people from EU neighbouring countries, especially in Eastern Europe, and ensured better outreach to include young people with fewer opportunities. It also looked at the creative potential of young people themselves in terms of developing opportunities for youth participation.

#### *Actions in Member States*

All Member States submitted reports on how the EU Youth Strategy has been implemented at a national level during the period 2010-2012. These reports were drawn up in response to a comprehensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the EU Youth Strategy<sup>5</sup>. Norway, Switzerland, Montenegro, and Croatia submitted such reports voluntarily. The National Youth Reports can be downloaded from the Commission's [website](#).

This report presents a summary of actions taken, including tables indicating the aggregate responses of all National Youth Reports to the various questions. It analyses trends in the ‘fields of action’ and provides an overview of national policies, the use of funds in each country, as well as specific projects and initiatives. As mutual learning is key to the implementation of the European Youth Strategy, examples of good practice from the Member States are highlighted throughout the report.

A majority of Member States have legislation specifically pertaining to young people, some of which has only relatively recently come into effect. The same applies to National Youth Strategies. Structures for cooperation across ministries or with researchers reflect the cross-sectoral approach of the EU Youth Strategy at national level. Member States indicate that the EU Youth Strategy has been generally well received, and have taken measures after it came into force in all eight ‘fields of action’. The most dynamic policy field seems to be Participation, in which 18 Member States have taken action since the EU Youth Strategy came into force in 2010, whereas Culture and Creativity had the fewest initiatives.

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<sup>4</sup> COM(2010) 603.

<sup>5</sup> The National Youth Reports cover the period from beginning of 2010 until end 2011 and provide a preview of intended activities for 2012.

Many measures relating to the ‘fields of action’ had been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force, which shows that the strategy ties in well with Member States' priorities. For example, 22 Member States responded that they had already taken measures to promote learning mobility of all young people before the EU Youth Strategy came into effect in 2010. This was also the case in the areas of combating homelessness and financial exclusion; support of youth organisations and recognition of their important role in promoting participation from an early age.

The Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers has been successfully established. National Working Groups have been set up and Member States are ready to enhance the transparency and visibility of the process and monitor its follow-up.

### *Actions by young people*

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) also contributed to this report by describing its activities and appreciation of measures in all eight ‘fields of action’. The YFJ is a key player in the Structured Dialogue, with its President acting as chair of the European Steering Committee.

YFJ has been very active in the field of Employment and Entrepreneurship, including the submission of various position papers that have fed into the Commission’s policy preparations. As youth organisations are an important provider of non-formal learning, the YFJ has also been active in promoting better recognition and quality of non-formal education.

A wide range of activities were carried out in preparation for and during the 2011 European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship, during which YFJ organised a large volunteering convention in Brussels.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This part of the EU Youth Report assesses the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy at national and EU level during its first three-year work cycle. Separate chapters cover all eight ‘fields of action’ of the Strategy.

Each chapter consists of three sections. The first provides an overview of initiatives taken at EU level during 2010-2012. The second includes a summary and a brief assessment of the initiatives and action taken at national level. This section is based on National Youth Reports submitted by all Member States<sup>6</sup> and Norway, Switzerland, Montenegro and Croatia. These reports were drawn up in response to a comprehensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the EU Youth Strategy<sup>7</sup>. The third section presents measures taken by young people themselves, represented by the European Youth Forum – a body which represents some 90 National Youth Councils and international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe.

National Youth Reports can be downloaded from the Commission's [website](#).

## 2. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF YOUTH POLICY

### 2.1. Youth policy: a policy based on evidence

This EU Youth Report has been drawn up thanks to a framework for reporting and monitoring of youth data, research and policy activities. This framework is anchored in the EU Youth Strategy, which stresses the importance of evidence as a basis for policy.

EU Youth Policy is measured through a dashboard of EU youth indicators, which was drawn up in 2011 on the basis of a mandate from the EU Youth Strategy. An expert group fed into this dashboard<sup>8</sup>, which presents 40 indicators in all eight ‘fields of action’ of the EU Youth Strategy. Eurostat set up a [sub-section on youth](#) on its website, displaying latest available data for the indicators. The expert group on EU youth indicators meets annually to review the dashboard. The Commission also released [a study](#)<sup>9</sup> showing how Member States work with youth indicators.

The Commission furthermore conducted a Flash Eurobarometer-survey on youth ([FI319a](#) and [FI319b](#)) in early 2011. The data collected further contributed to the dashboard of EU youth indicators and a Commission benchmark on mobility.

This evidence-base was further enriched by findings from a cluster of five youth-oriented socio-economic research projects supported under the 7<sup>th</sup> EU Research Framework Programme, focusing on marginalised groups of young people and their inclusion in society

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<sup>6</sup> Separate contributions were submitted by the three language communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EFTA-countries, which are programme countries under the Commission's Youth in Action programme, were invited to submit National Youth Reports.

<sup>7</sup> The National Youth Reports cover the period from beginning of 2010 until end 2011 and provide a preview of intended activities for 2012 as Member States reports had to be returned early 2012.

<sup>8</sup> SEC(2011) 401.

<sup>9</sup> ECORYS, 2011. *Assessing practices for using indicators in fields related to youth – Final Report for the European Commission, DG Education and Culture*. Available [here](#)

(young homeless people; young people from a public care background; ethnic minority youth including Roma and young unemployed).

The results and recommendations of these projects are summarised in the forthcoming policy review<sup>10</sup> *Social Inclusion of Youth on the Margins of Society: More Opportunities, Better Access and Higher Solidarity* and were discussed at a European [Conference](#) by European and national policy-makers, youth researchers and practitioners in the youth field (November 2011).

The Commission is supported in its evidence-based approach to youth policy by its partnership with the Council of Europe (CoE) in the youth field. The [EU-CoE Youth Partnership](#) manages the Pool of European Youth Researchers ([PEYR](#)) and the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy ([EKCYP](#)). It also has a comprehensive online database with knowledge on the situation of young people in Europe.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) also provides support in monitoring data and statistics in the youth field.

## 2.2. Legal framework and national youth policy environment

This chapter provides a general overview of how the Member States and participating non-EU countries – 31 in all – structure their youth policy in terms of legislation, policy strategies and inter-ministerial cooperation. It also presents 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

#### Responses in National Youth Reports<sup>11</sup>

Does your country have a 'youth law' or legislation that specifically refers to youth issues, or laws containing a section addressing the needs and/or rights of young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	27	3	3	21
No	◇	6		1	5

Although most Member States report to have legislation that specifically refers to youth issues, or laws containing a section addressing the needs and/or rights of young people, the responses do not easily lend themselves to analysis. For instance, some countries which answer in the affirmative to the question whether they have specific legislation on youth make reference to legislation on children. Most countries operate with an overlap in age between children and young people (children defined up to the age of 18 and young people usually from the age of 15), and in some countries the division between children and youth is vague. It should be noted that several of the countries reporting that they do not have a 'youth law' or specific legislation on young people, may have specific legislation on children, defined up to the age of 18

<sup>10</sup> Kutsar, D. and Helve, H., 2012. *'Social Inclusion of Youth on the Margins of Society: More Opportunities, Better Access, and Higher Solidarity'* Policy review of the Youth Research Cluster on Social Inclusion (forthcoming). The policy review will be made available [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Belgium appears in a separate column because there are different contributions from the three language communities of Belgium.

Many Member States refer to specific youth laws (see Table 2-A). In countries with a federal structure, the regions are autonomous on youth issues: In **Belgium**, the three Communities have separate youth legislation, and legislation on youth is in place in all 17 Autonomous Communities of **Spain**. In **Austria** and **Germany**, national legislation is supplemented by legislative acts at Federal State level. In **Italy** legislation in this area only exists at regional level.

Whereas most Member States have legislation on young people, such legislation is in most cases recent, which suggests that youth legislation is an area still under development.

**Table 2-A: Overview of youth laws or national legislation on youth**

(Web-links included where provided)	
<b>EU MEMBER STATES</b>	
BELGIUM:	Laws and legislative acts pertaining to young people's rights and well-being exist in all Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking).
BULGARIA:	The Family Code (2009, amended 2010) settles relationships between parents and children. Other legislative acts cover various issues relating to youth, among them employment, health, physical education and sport.
CZECH REPUBLIC:	A number of laws address young people's rights, welfare and care services, social protection, education, etc.
DENMARK:	There is no specific youth law or youth legislation.
GERMANY:	Legislation on child and youth (adopted 1990) available online at <a href="http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/">http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/</a> (in German).
ESTONIA:	The Youth Work Act was adopted in 1999; the renewed law came into force in 2010.
IRELAND:	The Youth Work Act was adopted in 2001: <a href="http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2001/en.act.2001.0042.pdf">http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2001/en.act.2001.0042.pdf</a> (in English).
GREECE:	A number of laws concern young people's rights to education and information, health and social protection, youth participation in elections, entrepreneurship and employment, etc.
SPAIN:	At regional level, there exists specific legislation on youth, such as training, employment, health, housing, education, environment, culture, sports, tourism and recreation, associations, voluntary work, etc.
FRANCE:	There is no specific youth law. However, legislation which covers young people exists in various areas, such as education, employment, social affairs, health, justice, professional training, etc.
ITALY:	No national youth law, but some legislation exists at regional level.
CYPRUS:	The main legislation concerning youth is the Youth Board Law of 1994 (available in English). Additionally, there are other laws addressing the needs/rights of young people.
LATVIA:	The Youth Law is from 2009 and was amended in 2011: <a href="http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=175920">http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=175920</a> (only Latvian).
LITHUANIA:	The Law on a Youth Policy Framework (2003) outlines the main concepts of youth policy, defines youth policy areas and establishes principles of the implementation of youth policy.
LUXEMBOURG:	There is a Youth Law (2008) and a Law on Youth Volunteering (2007).

HUNGARY:	There is a law on the Children and Youth Fund (1995) and a Regulation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports on the Functioning of the National Children and Youth Fund and the Regional Youth Services (1999).
MALTA:	No legislation on youth but a Commissioner for Children Act, Chapter 462 of the Laws of Malta: <a href="http://www.mjha.gov.mt/LOM.aspx?pageid=27&amp;mode=chrono&amp;gotoID=462">http://www.mjha.gov.mt/LOM.aspx?pageid=27&amp;mode=chrono&amp;gotoID=462</a> (English version).
NETHERLANDS:	The Youth Care Act 2005 and the Social Support Law 2007 address child and youth issues. A new youth law will soon replace the Youth Care Act. Youth Care Act: <a href="http://english.minvws.nl/en/folders/djb/2005/youth-care-in-the-netherlands.asp">http://english.minvws.nl/en/folders/djb/2005/youth-care-in-the-netherlands.asp</a> Social Support Act: <a href="http://english.minvws.nl/en/themes/social-support-act">http://english.minvws.nl/en/themes/social-support-act</a> (English version).
AUSTRIA:	There is a Federal Youth Promotion Act (2001): <a href="http://www.en.bmwfj.gv.at/Youth/YouthPromotion/Seiten/default.aspx">http://www.en.bmwfj.gv.at/Youth/YouthPromotion/Seiten/default.aspx</a>
POLAND:	The Act on promotion of employment and labour market institutions (2004) outlines special measures for unemployed under the age of 25.
PORTUGAL:	All youth legislation (latest revisions in 2011) is available online at <a href="http://juventude.gov.pt/Legislacao/Paginas/Legislacao_Juventude.aspx">http://juventude.gov.pt/Legislacao/Paginas/Legislacao_Juventude.aspx</a> (in Portuguese). There are youth protection acts in all nine regions. English versions are available upon request.
ROMANIA:	The Romanian Youth Law was adopted in 2006.
SLOVENIA:	Legislation on youth include the Youth Councils Act, <a href="http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZMS-NPB1_ANG.pdf">http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZMS-NPB1_ANG.pdf</a> , and the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act, <a href="http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZJIMS_ENG.pdf">http://www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZJIMS_ENG.pdf</a> (English version).
SLOVAKIA:	Different legislation addresses needs and rights of young people. The legal act closest resembling a youth law is the Youth Work Support Act (2008).
FINLAND:	There is a Youth Act (2006), <a href="http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisopolitiikka/?lang=en">http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisopolitiikka/?lang=en</a> (in English), and several other acts that address welfare and health, rights, education and training.
UNITED KINGDOM:	There is the Children Act (2004), <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents</a> , and the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009). Furthermore, in Wales there is the Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure (2011) and in Scotland the Commissioner for Children & Young People Act (2003).
<b>NON-EU COUNTRIES</b>	
SWITZERLAND:	There is a Federal law on the Promotion of extracurricular Child and Youth Welfare (2011).
MONTENEGRO:	There is different legislation pertaining to young people's rights and well-being. A separate Youth Law is planned, scheduled for adoption in 2012.
CROATIA:	Law on Youth Advisory Boards (LYAB), adopted in 2007.

## 2.2.2. National Strategies and Action Plans or cross-sectoral strategies specifically referring to youth issues

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your country have a National Youth Strategy and/or Action Plan, or a cross-sectoral strategy specifically referring to youth issues?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	28	3	4	21
No	◇	5			5

Even in the absence of a National Youth Strategy or action plan, **Ireland** and **Spain** stress that strategies existed previously and that new strategies are expected to be in place by the end of 2012. **Portugal** and **Spain** are currently drafting a White Paper on Youth. All ongoing processes mention that consultations with young people are an inherent element in the development of youth policy. In **Austria** a national Action Plan for the Rights of Children and Youth has been in place since 2004.

As is true for youth legislation, National Youth Strategies and action plans are in many cases relatively recent. A substantial number of countries in which strategies are already in place, report ongoing processes to develop new strategies. This again suggests that youth policy is an area of increasing importance at national level.



### 2.2.3. Institutional mechanisms aimed at cross-sectoral youth policy

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your Government have an inter-ministerial working group on youth or any other institutionalised mechanism for ensuring a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such an institutional mechanism has existed since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	■	27	1	4	22
YES, such an institutional mechanism was established after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	4	2		2
NO, but we have an ongoing initiative to establish such an institutional mechanism in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not plan to establish such an institutional mechanism.	◆	1			1

There are many examples of standing working groups or advisory bodies with representatives of different ministries. In the French community of **Belgium**, a permanent inter-ministerial Conference on Youth has existed since July 2011 at the level of Ministers. In **Cyprus**, an inter-ministerial Consulting Committee on Youth consists of representatives of 10 ministries and various government agencies. In the **Czech Republic**, the Youth Chamber, which is an advisory body to the Youth Minister and consists of representatives from various ministries and youth stakeholder groups, has been transformed into an efficient instrument for the implementation of youth policy. In **Spain**, the Inter-ministerial Commission for Youth comprises a senior representative of each ministry plus the president of the National Youth Council, and its role is to propose government programmes and measures in the youth field. The Council of Youth Affairs in **Lithuania** consists of 6 representatives of different ministries and 6 representatives of the Lithuanian Youth Council, and submits proposals on youth policy to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

Several Member States mention that the EU Youth Strategy's emphasis on a cross-sectoral approach has played an important role for the recognition of youth policies and strategies at national level.

#### FRANCE

##### Policy in favour of young people

The document of transversal policy 'Policy in favour of young people' is an annual annex to the draft of the budget law. It shows the policy pertaining to young people from the age of 3 to 30 with measures taken, indicators of performance and dedicated funding including costs of human resources (€ 74.9 billions). Documents of transversal policy allow another perspective on the budget, but are not subject to parliamentary decision. The document on youth policy is written according to an inter-ministerial procedure established by the Ministry of Finance. The policy is presented along five strategic axes. In addition to informing Members of Parliament, the document aims to harmonize the policies between the ministries involved in its preparation and to detect possible synergies. It can be downloaded [here](#).

## 2.2.4. *Linkages between youth policy and youth research*

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Is there an institutionalised and regular cooperation between the Ministry responsible for Youth and the youth research community in your country?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such cooperation has existed since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	■	22	1	3	18
YES, such cooperation was established after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	2	1	1	0
NO, but we have an ongoing initiative to establish such cooperation in 2012.	▲	6			6
NO, we do not have any initiative to establish such cooperation.	◆	3	1		2

Member States' governments take different approaches to institutionalised cooperation with researchers. A significant number of Member States fund Youth Institutes which often conduct research themselves. In the cases of **Luxembourg**, **Malta**, and **Portugal** these institutes are part of a university, whereas research centres in the **United Kingdom** have a stronger emphasis on secondary analysis.

**Germany** and **Austria** both issue youth reports outlining the situation of young people during each parliamentary term. **Estonia** refers to the organisation of cooperation seminars by the Youth Institute. In **Slovakia**, cooperation takes place in working groups. Facilitation of information exchange and stimulation of research is the focus of the Nordic Youth Cooperation Committee in **Denmark** and the Youth Institute in the **Netherlands**. The Nordic Youth Cooperation Committee derives new ideas also from the European dashboard of youth indicators. The Youth Research Society in **Finland** promotes of multidisciplinary youth research and was founded as non-profit organisation already in 1988, the earliest year referred to by Member States responding to this question.

With **Bulgaria**, **Greece**, **Italy**, **Latvia**, and **Lithuania** nearly all the Member States reporting ongoing initiatives are currently trying to establish a permanent network of youth researchers.

## 2.2.5. *Strategies and measures to support youth work*

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the Government of your country have a strategy to acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society, in line with the Council Resolution on Youth Work (2010) <sup>12</sup> ?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, we already had such a strategy in place since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	■	19	3	1	15
YES, we have set up such a strategy since the adoption of the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	3		1	2
NO, we do not have such a strategy in place, but the Government is planning to set up such a strategy in the coming year.	▲	4			4
NO, the Government is not planning to set up such a strategy.	◆	7		2	5

The Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Germany**, and **Finland** point out their long tradition of youth work, by referring to well established funding procedures at various levels and long standing laws. **Finland** not only underlines the importance of local, regional, and national youth work in its policy programme, but also of virtual youth work.

Several Member States refer to parts on youth work in their National Youth Strategies (e.g. **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, and **Hungary**). In **Slovenia** the notion of the entire youth work sphere

<sup>12</sup> OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5.

being in the public interest is anchored in law. **Spain** reports on efforts in the area of professional qualifications in the youth field; **Malta** refers to its university as an institution of higher education for the youth field also delivering courses leading to vocational qualifications. In the **Czech Republic** high quality NGOs are awarded the honorary title ‘Organisation recognised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in the field of children and youth work’.

Even some Member States that report not having or planning such strategies are actively promoting youth work. In **Bulgaria**, the significance of youth work is outlined in the National Youth Strategy (2010-2020); in **Slovakia** there is a Youth Work Support Act and in **Sweden** – where youth work is a local responsibility – one of the main roles of the National Board of Youth Affairs is to provide relevant support to municipalities. **Cyprus** and **Poland** report that they provide active support to youth work through their policies.

The most frequently mentioned measure is the financing of non-governmental youth associations.

## MALTA

### Youth Information Portal

Youth Information Malta consists of a web portal which includes general information compiled in Maltese and in English about a wide range of topics. A search function and accessibility features are also included. The information is continually updated and includes detailed contact information of various organisations together with embedded hyperlinks to access further details directly from the source. The portal provides also a showcase of news, music, and events pertaining to the youth field. The streaming music function is aimed primarily to promote local artists and their music with direct links to the respective websites. The events section is a showcase of events and besides informing young people, it assists youth organisations, agencies and groups in their promotions. Youth Information Malta aims also to be a common meeting platform for young people, institutions, organisations and youth workers. For more information click [here](#).

### 2.2.6. Using general EU funding opportunities for youth initiatives

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has your Government carried out specific initiatives targeting young people or the field of youth policy utilising EU funding opportunities through the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and/or the Rural Development Fund, or any other relevant EU funds or programmes such as PROGRESS?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, we have carried out youth initiatives or projects utilising the general EU funding opportunities mentioned above in the past, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, but they are now finalised.	■	13	1		12
YES, we are currently carrying out youth initiatives or projects utilising the general EU funding opportunities mentioned above.	●	14	2	1	11
NO, we have not carried out youth initiatives or projects utilising the general EU funding opportunities mentioned above, but we are planning to do so in 2012.	▲	1		1	0
NO, we do not plan to utilise the EU funding opportunities mentioned above to finance youth activities or projects.	◆	5		2	3

A majority of projects funded by the EU through the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund and/or PROGRESS focus on labour market integration of young people. Employability is strengthening e.g. through better recognition of non-formal learning and supporting youth work, training of youth workers, stimulating

entrepreneurship, improving information services and developing ICT skills. Other projects focus on developing networks of youth centres and regional youth policy, improving systems of formal education, and promoting rural development by working with young farmers. Diverse groups of young people at risk of social exclusion and poverty or with special needs (immigrants, disabled, early school leavers) are often targeted.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.3. Implementation of the first cycle of the EU Youth Strategy

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

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy, adopted in November 2009, has influenced youth priorities in your country at the NATIONAL level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
It has reinforced existing priorities.	◀	27	2	2	23
It has led to a re-orientation of policy.	▶	3	1		2
It has had little or no impact on national youth policy.	—	3		2	1

Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy has influenced youth priorities in your country at the LOCAL and/or REGIONAL level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
It has reinforced existing priorities.	◀	24	1	2	21
It has led to a re-orientation of policy.	▶	2	1		1
It has had little or no impact on local and regional youth policy.	—	7	1	2	4

Member States will differ in national priorities and vary their emphasis on different policy areas linked to youth. However, the National Youth Reports show a strong coherence between national initiatives and areas of action which they committed to prioritise through the EU Youth Strategy.

Nearly all Member States report that the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced their national priorities, with several stressing its direct impact. For example, the strategy was a guiding document for developing the National Youth Policy Programme in **Lithuania**, the link between youth policy and labour market policies was strengthened in **Austria** and the dialogue with youth was further developed in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**.

The EU Youth Strategy seems to have had less impact on local and regional youth policy, which is not unexpected given that the Open Method of Coordination focuses on cooperation between the EU and Member States. Implementation at regional and local level will require tailoring measures to regional and local circumstances, which probably requires more time.

### 2.3.2. Challenges in implementing the EU Youth Strategy at national level

According to the National Youth Reports, the EU Youth Strategy has been the subject of many conferences and meetings across Europe, and all national governments have actively promoted the Strategy. This is particularly true for the Member States which held the EU Council Presidencies during the first two years of the EU Youth Strategy: **Spain, Belgium, Hungary and Poland**.

<sup>13</sup> The question does not refer to EU programmes such as the Lifelong Learning or Youth in Action programmes.

When assessing the challenges in implementation, many National Youth Reports noted that the close links between the EU Youth Strategy and National Youth Strategies made it artificial to separate the two. Among the main challenges mentioned by most countries were:

- cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation;
- convincing local authorities to put ‘youth’ on the agenda;
- highlighting the added value of non-formal education and youth work for other policy areas;
- consequences of high youth unemployment and its social impact on young people.

The financial crisis only exacerbates these challenges.

Few countries carried out assessments on the impact of the EU Youth Strategy at national level and when it occurred, it usually coincided with assessing national policy (such as in the **Czech Republic, Slovenia and Finland** in 2011). In **Estonia**, the Estonian Youth Work Centre developed a youth monitoring system and since 2010 publishes a youth monitoring yearbook. **Germany** is the only country undertaking a separate evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy, focusing on its governance instruments.

### *2.3.3. Consultation of young people in the reporting exercise*

In line with the bearing principle of youth participation in the EU, nearly all Member States involved young people in developing the National Youth Report. The most common way has been to involve the National Youth Council, the National Working Group for the Structured Dialogue and/or other relevant youth stakeholders, but some have also organised specific events (**Ireland**), or had an online consultation (**Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia**). Several countries noted, however, that the format of the National Youth Report was not suitable for a wider consultation with young people.

**Table 2-B: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – legal framework, youth policy environment, implementation of the EU Youth Strategy<sup>14</sup>**

EU Member States	Does your country have a 'youth law' or legislation that specifically refers to youth issues, or laws containing a section addressing the needs and/or rights of young people?	Is the document available in other languages, in full or abbreviated version?	Does your country have a National Youth Strategy and/or Action Plan, or a cross-sectoral strategy specifically referring to youth issues?	Is the document available in other languages, in full or abbreviated version?
Belgium German-speaking	▼	▼	▼	◇
Belgium Flemish	▼	▼	▼	▼
Belgium French	▼	◇	▼	◇
Bulgaria	▼	◇	▼	◇
Czech Republic	▼	▼	▼	▼
Denmark	◇		◇	
Germany	▼	◇	▼	◇
Estonia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	▼	◇	◇	◇
Greece	▼	◇	▼	◇
Spain	◇	▼	▼	◇
France	◇		▼	◇
Italy	◇	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▼	▼	▼	◇
Lithuania	▼	▼	▼	▼
Luxembourg	▼	◇	▼	◇
Hungary	▼	◇	▼	▼
Malta	▼	▼	▼	▼
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	◇
Austria	▼	▼	◇	◇
Poland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Portugal	▼	◇	▼	◇
Romania	▼	◇	◇	◇
Slovenia	▼	▼	◇	
Slovakia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Finland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Sweden	◇		▼	▼
United Kingdom	▼	◇	▼	◇
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◇		▼	◇
Switzerland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Montenegro	▼	◇	▼	▼
Croatia	▼	◇	▼	▼

▼ Yes

◇ No

<sup>14</sup>

Alphabetical order according to country's name in national language.

EU Member States	Does your Government have an inter-ministerial working group on youth or any other institutionalised mechanism for ensuring a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy?	Is there an institutionalised and regular cooperation between the Ministry responsible for Youth and the youth research community in your country?	Does the Government of your country have a strategy to acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society, in line with the Council Resolution on Youth Work (2010)?	Has your Government carried out specific initiatives targeting young people or the field of youth policy utilising EU funding opportunities?
Belgium German-speaking	■	◆	■	●
Belgium Flemish	■	●	■	●
Belgium French	●	■	■	■
Bulgaria	■	▲	◆	■
Czech Republic	■	■	■	●
Denmark	◆	■	■	■
Germany	■	■	■	●
Estonia	▲	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	■	▲	▲	■
Spain	■	■	■	●
France	■	■	■	◆
Italy	■	▲	▲	●
Cyprus	■	◆	◆	■
Latvia	■	▲	■	◆
Lithuania	■	▲	●	●
Luxembourg	■	■	●	●
Hungary	■	■	■	■
Malta	●	■	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	◆
Austria	■	■	■	●
Poland	■	■	◆	■
Portugal	■	■	▲	■
Romania	■	■	▲	■
Slovenia	●	▲	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	◆	●
Finland	■	■	■	●
Sweden	■	◆	◆	●
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU</b>				
Norway	■	■	■	◆
Switzerland	■	■	◆	◆
Montenegro	■	●	●	▲
Croatia	■	■	◆	●

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

EU Member States	Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy, adopted in November 2009, has influenced youth priorities in your country at the NATIONAL level?	Please indicate how the EU Youth Strategy has influenced youth priorities in your country at the LOCAL and/or REGIONAL level?
Belgium German-speaking	▶	▶
Belgium Flemish	◀	◀
Belgium French	◀	—
Bulgaria	◀	◀
Czech Republic	◀	◀
Denmark	—	—
Germany	◀	◀
Estonia	◀	◀
Ireland	◀	◀
Greece	◀	◀
Spain	◀	◀
France	◀	◀
Italy	◀	◀
Cyprus	◀	◀
Latvia	◀	◀
Lithuania	▶	▶
Luxembourg	◀	—
Hungary	▶	—
Malta	◀	◀
Netherlands	◀	◀
Austria	◀	◀
Poland	◀	—
Portugal	◀	◀
Romania	◀	◀
Slovenia	◀	◀
Slovakia	◀	◀
Finland	◀	◀
Sweden	◀	◀
United Kingdom	◀	◀
<b>Non-EU Members</b>		
Norway	—	—
Switzerland	—	—
Montenegro	◀	◀
Croatia	◀	◀

◀ It has reinforced existing priorities

▶ It has led to a re-orientation of policy

— It has had little or no impact on youth policy



### **3. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

#### **3.1. Commission initiatives and action**

##### *3.1.1. Youth employment: a priority for the European Union*

With the effects of the economic crisis on young people becoming ever more severe, youth employment is an on-going concern for the EU. Since 2010, the youth unemployment rate has increased to well over more than one in five young Europeans, with much higher rates for young people in a number of Member States or for young people with specific challenges, such as early school leavers.

The Europe 2020 strategy dedicates two of its flagship initiatives ‘Youth on the Move’<sup>15</sup> and ‘An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs’<sup>16</sup> to improving employability and employment opportunities for young people. ‘Youth on the Move’ was welcomed by the Council, thereby emphasising the particular relevance of its cross-sectoral nature<sup>17</sup>. In December 2011 the Commission launched the ‘Youth Opportunities Initiative’<sup>18</sup> to further stress the need for action on the high youth unemployment rates and the growing number of young people not in employment, education or training (so-called NEETs).

The [Youth Opportunities Initiative](#) emphasised the primary role of Member States in tackling unemployment and advocated mobilising the European Social Fund (ESF) to further support skills development and the transition from school to work. With strong backing from the informal European Council of 30 January 2012, the Commission set up youth action teams to support the eight Member States<sup>19</sup> with the highest youth unemployment rates. These teams worked together with national authorities and social partners to develop actions appropriate for each country, along with advising on the use of Structural Funds to support short- and long-term measures.

To supplement national efforts, the Commission initiated a number of measures at EU level, which included:

- The implementation of a preparatory action on ‘Youth guarantee schemes’ that will help Member States to ensure that all young people are in a job, further education or training within four months of leaving school.
- ‘A quality framework for traineeships’ scheme that aims to increase the transparency on the conditions for trainees throughout the EU.
- ‘Your first EURES job’, a targeted job mobility scheme in the form of a preparatory action that aims, in 2012-2013, to reach out to around 5 000 young people to help fill job vacancies in other Member States.

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<sup>15</sup> COM(2010) 477.

<sup>16</sup> COM(2010) 682.

<sup>17</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 9-11.

<sup>18</sup> COM(2011) 933.

<sup>19</sup> Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain.

The Commission also proposed to dedicate more EU funds to apprenticeships, student placements in enterprises, young volunteers and entrepreneurs under the ESF, the Lifelong Learning, the Youth in Action and the Erasmus for Entrepreneurs programmes. A significant share of the budget for social innovation will be targeted at youth in disadvantaged situations and areas.

To enhance transparency, the EURES European Job Mobility Portal gives access to over 1.3 million vacancies and 850 000 CVs, and the European Vacancy Monitor provides quarterly labour-market updates on the job opportunities available in different sectors and countries across the EU. The awareness-raising campaign ‘Youth@Work’ (April 2011-May 2012) was aimed to link up young people and SMEs.

Mutual learning and exchange of good practice on youth employment has taken place with support of the ESF. For instance, a Youth Employment Network on education, counselling mobility and entrepreneurship, (consisting of **Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, and Sweden**) which produced a [Benchmarking Report](#) in 2011 showcasing best practices based on studies and evaluation as a basis for a Common Reference Framework.

The EU placed further efforts into improving the quality of traineeships and work placements it supports through its programmes. A new study<sup>20</sup> provided a comprehensive overview of how traineeships are structured in Member States, from legislative frameworks, governance and financing, to target groups, sectors and professions. The study pointed out issues around the current arrangements where improvement is needed, including areas related to quality, and the need for new opportunities particularly for young people who are unemployed, low skilled or at risk of social exclusion. The outcomes of the study will be fed into on-going work related to moving obstacles to mobility and improving the quality of traineeships and work placements.

### 3.1.2. *Youth employment: the priority of the first cycle under the EU Youth Strategy*

Given the rising youth unemployment rates, the Trio Presidency during 2010 and the first half of 2011 (**Spain, Belgium and Hungary**) chose ‘youth employment’ as the overarching priority.

Within the Trio Presidency, each country focused on a national priority, proposing action contributing to labour market access and employability of young people from this specific angle. Under the Spanish Presidency, the Council adopted a Resolution on the *active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty*<sup>21</sup>; and under the Belgian Presidency a Resolution on *youth work*<sup>22</sup>. Under the Hungarian Presidency, the Council adopted a Resolution on *encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life*<sup>23</sup>, which stressed the value of participation in acquiring key competences. Several events explored concrete policy approaches, including e.g. a peer

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<sup>20</sup> European Commission, 2012. *Study on a comprehensive overview on traineeship arrangements in Member States*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available [here](#).

<sup>21</sup> OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, pp. 1-6.

<sup>22</sup> OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5.

<sup>23</sup> OJ C 169, 9.6.2011, pp. 1-5.

learning seminar on cross-sectoral youth policy cooperation in Madrid and a [seminar](#) on flexicurity.

The European Youth Forum (YFJ), in cooperation with the Trio Presidency, the Commission and National Working Groups, conducted a Structured Dialogue on youth employment which resulted in a number of concrete recommendations. The Council endorsed later a number of recommendations in a Resolution, which notably called for better labour market information, the recognition of non-formal learning, a quality framework for internships, the flexibility to reconcile work and private life, and more opportunities for mobility<sup>24</sup>. These recommendations were well received and taken further by Commissioners Vassiliou and Andor.

### *3.1.3. Entrepreneurship: another career option*

The Commission promotes entrepreneurship as a career option. Within education policy, peer learning activities and targeted funding of European projects aim to promote entrepreneurship as a key competence in the education systems. The [‘Erasmus for Entrepreneurs’](#) – expected to finance around 600 exchanges in 2012 – offers new entrepreneurs learning experiences in businesses abroad. The [European Progress Micro-finance Facility](#)<sup>25</sup> financially supports potential young entrepreneurs and € 3 million of the ESF Technical Assistance will be used to support Member States schemes for young business starters and social entrepreneurs. The Commission organised meetings with youth representatives, stakeholders and policy-makers to discuss policy initiatives to cooperate on entrepreneurship promotion and share experience.

## **ROMANIA – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**

### **Learning how to help young people find their place in society**

The project trained youth leaders from Azerbaijan, Greece, Italy, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine in working with young people facing unemployment, marginalisation and social exclusion. It guided them in techniques to stimulate entrepreneurial skills among youth, and to interest unemployed young people in seeking qualifications, employment and involvement in society. 22 young people took part in this 10-day training course funded by the Youth in Action national agency in Romania in mid-2010. It was hosted by Kasta Morrely in Iasi, Romania, a human rights organisation that promotes skills central to the development of a democratic society. Through a non-formal approach, discussions addressed entrepreneurship and business strategies, social inclusion, youth unemployment in Europe, vocational qualifications, the socioeconomic situation in participants' countries and the challenges of engaging unemployed young people to participate actively in society. On the basis of this project, further cross-border cooperation has developed to reduce youth unemployment and support local communities.

## **3.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level**

### *3.2.1. Youth measures in flexicurity strategies*

#### **Responses in National Youth Reports**

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<sup>24</sup> OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, pp. 1-4.

<sup>25</sup> OJ L 87, 7.4.2010, p. 6.

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to take the specific situation of young people into account when devising flexicurity strategies?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	13		2	11
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	3		7
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	5			5
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	5		2	3

**Flexicurity** is about optimising the balance between labour market flexibility and security for employees against labour market risks. Some countries adapted the legal framework regulating employment contracts to improve access of young people to the labour market. Others apply schemes to encourage employers to hire young people, e.g. through tax incentives, or grant special facilities for dismissed employees to find a job. Such measures are frequently combined with e.g. career guidance, counselling or opportunities to gain work experience.

### 3.2.2. Cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	23	3	1	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	5		2	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	4		1	3

Many countries cite EU programmes such as Youth in Action and Lifelong Learning as key sources for opportunities to learn, train and work abroad. In **Sweden**, an evaluation of Youth in Action projects in the field of training showed their value in developing vocational, social and foreign language skills. In 2011 the **Malta** Qualifications Council started a Leonardo da Vinci [project](#) to test and implement the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training in a national context, facilitating the recognition and transfer of learning outcomes. There are also national cross-border programmes in vocational training open to students from a neighbouring country, e.g. between **Germany** and **France**, and programmes that organise professional training in other parts of the world.

The German ESF funded 'IdA Programme – Integration' offers work experience abroad focussing on helping young people facing difficulties to access the labour markets (e.g. disadvantaged youth, young unemployed, single mothers, and young people with disabilities).

Many countries actively promote opportunities to train or work abroad. The [EURES](#) network organises job days and campaigns around working abroad. One of the tasks of the [Eurodesk](#) youth information network, active in 33 countries, is to inform about mobility opportunities (e.g. in the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, projects financed in this field include the website [www.gostrange.be](http://www.gostrange.be) and a bi-annual information fair the latter of which attracted 1 500 young people in 2011).

Other examples of policy initiatives to promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for youth are a programme for supporting distance learning to young people in

remote areas of **Greece**, a ‘mobility semester’ for all undergraduates at the University of **Malta** and supporting young participants in ‘skills’ championships at national and international level in **Sweden**.

### 3.2.3. Career guidance and counselling services

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to develop career guidance and counselling services?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	26	1	4	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2		4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

Career and counselling services are frequently offered by education institutions as well as employment services. In some countries such guidance is guaranteed by law. Youth information centres can play an important role in counselling and provide information on job opportunities, e.g. in the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, where schools offer classes on ‘life planning’. The role of youth work is especially relevant for young people who are out of reach of regular education or employment systems and/or who need a second or third chance. In some countries, for example **Estonia**, career and educational guidance targets not only young people but also parents, teachers and youth workers. The ESF is often quoted as a source to develop career guidance services.

#### LATVIA

##### KIPNIS – Career education

In Latvia, the General Education Standard for secondary education includes career planning and development, integrated into the various teaching subjects. Subject teachers can themselves determine the methods for exploring this within the curriculum and schools can also integrate it in extracurricular activities. The ESF funded project KIPNIS provides career education guidelines and in-service teacher training on implementing such career education. For more information click [here](#).

Many countries offer targeted support, courses, counselling or work placements, to unemployed or vulnerable young people. A full year comprehensive counselling programme is available to young people in the French Community of **Belgium**, in which they can develop individual plans through, for instance, awareness-raising for jobs in promising sectors, sessions to explore one's own career path, information on job offers and, if appropriate, social support. Some countries use special approaches, such as one-stop-shops or online guidance. Other countries organise guidance on specific topics, such as in **Austria** where guidance centres advise girls on ‘non-traditional’ careers or in the Flemish Community of **Belgium** with its ‘Personal Development Trajectory’ for students in dual education and work. In **Bulgaria**, events brought together young jobseekers and employers to exchange expectations and requirements. This led to common criteria in selection procedures. There is also guidance for organisations that support young people, e.g. the **German** ‘Jobstarter’ for companies offering placements.

#### FINLAND

### **MAST – Common guidance**

The MAST project, supported by the ESF, developed a model for counselling at regional level for students in vocational training. It aims to lower drop-out rates and facilitate transition to work life. The project involved schools, youth workshops and others working with young people. Its success is based on strong cooperation between the partners involved and the use of a common guidance model, e.g. to facilitate the assessment of skills gained at work by the school. For more information click [here](#).

The ‘Career Card’ in **Greece** is designed to help young people choose training to complement their knowledge and skills, while the card will cover costs of counselling and training.

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network ([ELGPN](#)), supported by the Commission and bringing together experts from 26 countries, enhances better coordination of services, a common understanding of career management skills and making the most of new technologies.

## PORTUGAL

### Reflection for Action

The Portuguese NYC (CNJ) conducted a project ‘Reflection for Action – Towards Youth Employment’ to implement the third phase of the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. Seminars occurred from January to March 2011, through the implementation of five regional meetings and one national event. In the latter 300 young people living in Portugal took part, from different socio-economic, cultural backgrounds and geographical origin, side by side with decision-makers, politicians and experts. They identified concrete actions to be developed at EU level in terms of youth employment. Non-formal methods education was an integrated component of this project to ensure a participatory approach, focusing on young people's participation and cooperative work. The project produced a [website](#) and a Guide on the Rights of Young Workers.

### 3.2.4. Promoting quality internships and apprenticeships

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote quality internships and apprenticeships to facilitate the entry to, and progress within, the labour market?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	25	2	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Traineeships are frequently available as part of formal education and several countries have dual track education systems combining classroom teaching with apprenticeships, sometimes tailored for young people with difficulties. The value of apprenticeships is supported by numbers: in Wales, **United Kingdom**, more than 75 % of apprentices achieve a full certificate. In **Malta**, 85 % of apprentices find employment or start a business.

Several countries have taken legal measures to promote apprenticeships. This is the case in **Finland** (to prevent replacing regular workers by interns and better protection of interns at work), **Germany** (to widen possibilities for corporate internships), **Romania** (to improve the framework for apprenticeships in the workplace), **Italy** (to improve apprenticeship contracts) and **Spain** (to make trainees eligible for social rights and benefits).

Broad policy programmes are also pursued. In **Germany**, specific measures include the ‘Wege ins Ausland’ working group, which has developed criteria and raised awareness for quality traineeships abroad; in the **United Kingdom**, a web-based apprenticeship vacancy system has been set up and apprentice-sharing between different employers is facilitated. Furthermore, **Austria** offers guaranteed placements in supra-company structures for apprenticeship-seekers in compulsory education and **Luxembourg** introduced a system in vocational training that transposes job profiles into learning profiles, listing all relevant competences to be acquired.



## PORTUGAL

### INOV – Training opportunities

To facilitate transition, Portugal's 'INOV' programme offers a range of training opportunities: INOV-CONTACTO offers international training to young graduates; INOV-Art offers internships in arts and culture; INOV-Energi@ aims to enhance socio-professional skills of unemployed graduates; INOV-Social promotes integration of young graduates in the non-profit sector; INOV-Jovem supports professional training in SMEs in innovation and business management; INOV-Mundus aims to promote involvement of young graduates in organisations active in development cooperation. In 2010, [INOV](#) attracted 35 100 participants.

**France** has developed a comprehensive strategy for vocational training. Measures include a card for apprentices with similar advantages as a student card, online facilities for partner search and completion of administrative procedures and the possibility to use temporary work agencies to hire apprentices. Financial support is available to individual companies as well as to improve the situation of apprentices and the vocational training system at large.

A number of countries offer graduates and unemployed young people opportunities to gain work experience and acquire further skills by extending unemployment benefits and/or providing financial compensation to employers who offer training opportunities. The job guarantee in **Sweden** targets young people aged 16 to 24 who have been enlisted with the governmental employment services for more than three months. The guarantee provides for professional orientation, work experience or even preparatory work to start a business. In 2010 on average 47 000 people per month participated.

In the National Youth Reports submitted by Member States, National Youth Councils in several countries call for further efforts to offer quality traineeships.

#### 3.2.5. Promoting sharing of responsibilities between partners

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote sharing of responsibilities between partners in order to facilitate reconciliation between professional and private life for both young women and young men?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	25	2	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	4	1		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1		1	0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3			3

Support to young parents is available across Europe – albeit to different degrees – through access to childcare, along with financial support or tax deductions. Aside from maternity leave, paternity leave is increasingly available, which helps young women and men better share family responsibilities. There are also possibilities for longer 'parental' leave, income support, the right to part-time work and the promotion of flexible working arrangements. A number of countries run awareness campaigns and in some countries (such as **Denmark**, **Austria** and **Slovenia**) companies can perform audits to test their 'family-friendliness'.



## LUXEMBOURG

### Megafamily

In Luxembourg, the Megafamily campaign on the balance between work and private life was launched in 2011 by the Ministry responsible for equal opportunities. It offers online evaluation tools to check one's own situation, targeting both families and businesses. The 'familytest' reveals inequalities between a couple regarding household chores and inspires a discussion on the division of labour. Moreover a wide range of information helpful to reconcile private and work life can be found on the website, e.g. on maternity leave, social transfers, babysitters. Employers also have a space to exchange good practices. The [website](#) is also linked to a group on Facebook, which allows for communication on the subject.

### 3.2.6. Promoting entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	25	2	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	4	1		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2		1	1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2			2

Support for potential or new entrepreneurs, including young people, in the form of information, coaching, business services, grants or loans, is available across the EU. In some countries, young entrepreneurs enjoy more favourable conditions to set up a business. Others address entrepreneurship within the education system to develop entrepreneurial skills and creativity. Programmes are available for young people to this purpose, such as the ones developed by [Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise](#); there is support for young people willing to develop their own 'junior enterprise' whilst still in education. [FINICIA-Jovem](#), developed by the Youth Institute in **Portugal**, stimulates creativity and innovation among young entrepreneurs, students, and young people in youth organisations.

Partners from **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic**, **Germany**, **Spain**, and **Lithuania** joined in a Community of Practice 'Learning network on inclusive entrepreneurship' ([COPIE](#)) to share experience on producing an environment in which entrepreneurship is a natural choice for people from all walks of life. This project (2009-2012) gathered representatives from ESF management and implementing bodies and was supported with a grant of € 630 000.

## UNITED KINGDOM – WALES

### YES – Empowerment

The Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (YES) Action Plan in Wales seeks to equip young people with a 'can do' attitude and a drive to create opportunities for themselves. The YES Action Plan outlines measures for young people, education, business and community within three areas – Engaging: Promoting the value of entrepreneurship to create opportunities and develop young people – Empowering: Providing young people with entrepreneurial learning opportunities – Equipping: Supporting young people to create and grow businesses. For more information, click [here](#).

Most countries encourage sustainable activities. In **Greece**, training is available for unemployed to develop specific skills in sustainable economic development. **Cyprus** runs a scheme, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, for youth entrepreneurship, emphasising new technologies, innovative production and environmental issues to develop strong and competitive businesses. Programmes in some countries focus on certain economic activities, e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture in the **Czech Republic** supports young farmers who want to start their own business.

## **LITHUANIA**

### **Rural Development**

There are support possibilities for youth under the Rural Development Programme for Lithuania 2007-2013 consisting in setting up of young farmers, modernisation of agricultural holdings, improvement of economic value of forests, first afforestation of land, non-productive investments in forests, diversification into non-agricultural activities, support for business creation and development, encouragement of rural tourism activities. The applicants under these measures are young farmers (a farmer, who is less than 40 years old) and young people not less than 18 years old. For the implementation of the projects, priorities of the Rural Youth Committee in 2012 are: promoting entrepreneurship among rural youth; to organise the leisure time for rural youth; to encourage the community of rural youth; to encourage volunteering of rural youth; the development of rural youth-friendly spaces; to promote the ecological awareness. For more information, click [here](#).

Some countries support entrepreneurial initiative in the non-profit sector. The ‘Zakon o socialnem podjetnistvu’ (law on social entrepreneurship) in **Slovenia** promotes socially relevant activities or support to people from vulnerable backgrounds. In the Flemish Community of **Belgium**, the project ‘Opinno’ encourages science students to orient themselves towards specific areas, including ‘energy and living environment’; ‘CORE’ encourages secondary school students to work around rational use of energy in cooperation with a start-up cooperative; and ‘VLAJO’ supports projects for secondary school students to start up their own business in fair-trade products. In **Italy**, micro-credits are available to develop social businesses or cooperatives that help increase jobs for disadvantaged or socially vulnerable groups.

### **3.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

Young people's voices were heard through the Structured Dialogue dedicated to this topic. The European Youth Forum (YFJ) built on this by providing further feedback to the Commission and the Council on the need for a strong youth dimension in EU policy activities. It also increased capacity building of youth organisations on youth employment policies through its [Youth Employment Action network](#).

The YFJ promoted a European Quality Charter on Internships and Apprenticeships, which sets the basic quality principles to ensure that internships and apprenticeships become valuable and quality experiences across Europe. The YFJ also launched a survey ‘Interns Revealed’ on the experiences of young interns in Europe, and [gathered signatures](#) from organisations on the website <http://qualityinternships.eu/> and from individuals via [Facebook](#). This support campaign continued in 2012 and the Charter was officially presented at the European Parliament in May 2012.

Youth organisations also expressed themselves on access to entrepreneurship in an opinion presented by the YFJ. This reaffirmed the need for stable, enabling, and supportive environments to engage in entrepreneurship. This was further discussed during the roundtable ‘Making Entrepreneurship a Real Option for Young Europeans’ organised in the European Parliament in May 2011.

The YFJ also issued an opinion on a [youth guarantee](#). This is important to improve the situation of young people being neither in education, employment nor training (NEETs), who often face poverty and social exclusion.

Young people gathered also at the ‘Youth Employment in Europe’ conference, co-organised by the YFJ and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris to express their opinions, concerns and suggestions on policy measures to support youth employment.

**Table 3-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives						
EU Member States	to take the specific situation of young people into account when devising flexicurity strategies?	to promote cross-border professional and vocational opportunities for young people?	to develop career guidance and counselling services?	to promote quality internships and apprenticeships to facilitate the entry to, and progress within, the labour market?	to promote sharing of responsibilities between partners in order to facilitate reconciliation between professional and private life for both young women and young men?	to promote entrepreneurship in the field of sustainable development?
Belgium German-speaking	●	■	●	■	●	■
Belgium Flemish	●	■	●	●	■	■
Belgium French	●	■	■	■	■	●
Bulgaria	●	●	●	■	●	●
Czech Republic	▲	■	■	■	■	■
Denmark	■	■	■	■	■	■
Germany	●	■	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ireland	◆	■	■	●	◆	■
Greece	●	●	■	■	■	■
Spain	▲	▲	■	●	■	●
France	■	◆	◆	■	◆	◆
Italy	●	■	●	■	■	●
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	◆	■
Latvia	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lithuania	▲	◆	■	●	■	■
Luxembourg	◆	■	■	●	●	◆
Hungary	●	●	●	●	■	■
Malta	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■	■
Austria	●	■	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■	●	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	▲	■	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	▲	■	■	■	■	■
Finland	●	◆	●	■	■	▲
Sweden	◆	■	■	●	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>						
Norway	◆	◆	■	■	■	■
Switzerland	◆	■	■	■	■	▲
Montenegro	■	●	■	●	▲	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 4.1. Commission initiatives and action

Education and training figures at the top of the EU agenda with one of the five headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy – the EU Strategy for jobs and growth – focusing on increasing tertiary attainment to at least 40 % and reducing the share of early school leavers to less than 10 % by 2020.

Through the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, adopted in 2009 for the period up to 2020<sup>26</sup> (ET 2020), Member States agreed that the long-term strategic objectives of EU education and training policies are (1) making Lifelong Learning and mobility a reality; (2) improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; (3) promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; and (4) enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Following up the Europe 2020 headline target of lowering the rate of early school leavers to less than 10 % by 2020, the Commission adopted in 2011 the Communication *Tackling early school leaving* which outlines policy measures aimed at reaching this goal. A policy handbook with examples of good practice accompanied the Communication, which was followed by a Council Recommendation in May 2012<sup>27</sup>.

The Commission also adopted in 2011 the Communication *Agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education*<sup>28</sup> which prioritises widening access of under-represented groups into higher education as a means to improve the attainment level.

Within the strategic framework, the first Joint Report<sup>29</sup>, adopted in 2012 by the Commission and the Council, finds that Member States are making slow progress towards achieving the Europe 2020 target of reducing the share of early school leavers below the 10 % benchmark. In 2011, the early school leaving rate averaged 13.5 % across the EU compared to 14.1 % the year before (with considerable differences between Member States). If current trends continue, the report states, the 2020 target will not be met. The share of low-achievers in basic skills in reading, maths and science, in contrast, is on track for meeting the EU target of less than 15 % by the end of the decade (20 % in 2009 compared to 24.1 % in 2006).

The report also shows that achieving the EU's tertiary attainment target – raising the share of 30 to 34 year olds who have graduated from higher education from the current EU average of 34.6 % to at least 40 % – cannot be taken for granted. Seven Member States score below 25 %. To support Member States' reforms and contribute to the goals of Europe 2020, the Commission published a new agenda for modernisation of Europe's higher education systems in September 2011<sup>30</sup>. The strategy identifies priority areas where EU countries need to do more to achieve shared education objectives and sets out how the EU can support their modernisation policies. EU-level initiatives will include a multi-dimensional university

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<sup>26</sup> OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, pp. 2-10.

<sup>27</sup> COM(2011) 18; Doc. 5242/11 – SEC(2011) 96; OJ C 191, 1.7.2011, pp. 1-6.

<sup>28</sup> COM(2011) 567.

<sup>29</sup> Annex I to the Annual Growth Survey 2012 COM(2011) 815.

<sup>30</sup> COM(2011) 567.

ranking and an ‘Erasmus for Masters’ loan guarantee scheme for students taking a full degree course abroad. The ‘Erasmus’ programme celebrated its 25 years’ anniversary with some 3 million European students having already participated. An Erasmus manifesto recently prepared calls to enhance the quantity of the programme (student numbers/targets and adequate funding, incl. for less well-off students) as well as its quality (especially regarding programme preparation and credit recognition).

The Commission encouraged learning mobility through ‘Youth on the Move’, one of the flagships of the Europe 2020 strategy<sup>31</sup>. ‘Youth on the Move’ was followed by a Council Recommendation on *learning mobility*<sup>32</sup> which provides guidance with regard to tackling administrative, institutional and legal obstacles to learning mobility. The new proposal for an integrated programme Erasmus for All<sup>33</sup> also devotes ample room to learning mobility, and the Council has adopted a new benchmark in this area<sup>34</sup>.

The EU Youth Strategy promotes youth work, which offers non-formal and informal learning environments. Youth work has been addressed during various events during 2010-2012. This included the first European Youth Work Convention in Ghent, organised by the Belgian Presidency with the support of the Commission (2010). The recommendations of this meeting were endorsed in a Council Resolution<sup>35</sup>. The youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe organised a symposium in 2011 on the recognition of youth work. The Commission has also launched a study on the value of youth work in the EU the results of which are expected in 2013.

#### **PORTUGAL – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**

##### **Teach in order to learn**

This project took place in Luau, Angola, involving 12 volunteers from Portugal – along with Angolan young people – during one month in 2010. It started with an exploration of the education and training needs among local children and young people, to get to know the context they were operating in. On that basis, the volunteers built a library from scratch: 300 cases of books were delivered during the project, they classified and catalogued and incorporated them into the new library, which became a cultural centre for extra-school activities. They worked with local teachers in developing cultural and artistic activities and providing teaching materials ranging from health to information technology. They also gained a clearer sense of what European identity means – something that they continued to display on their return home, in meetings and presentations to their peers. The project also promoted international youth work and the concept and practice of volunteering. Local newspapers, newsletters, the radio, and videos made by the volunteers with their partners during the project and distributed widely on their return ensured its visibility.

Adult learning is a vital component of the lifelong learning continuum, covering the entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities, general and vocational, undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training. Adult learning is important in

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<sup>31</sup> COM(2010) 2020.

<sup>32</sup> OJ C 199, 7.7.2011, pp. 1-5.

<sup>33</sup> COM(2011) 788.

<sup>34</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 31-35.

<sup>35</sup> OJ C 327, 4.12.2010, pp. 1-5.

relation to the provision of second-chance opportunities and the acquisition of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, but also digital skills; in relation to targeted learning for early school leavers and young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) as stated in the recent Council Resolution on *a renewed European agenda for adult learning*<sup>36</sup>.

Intergenerational learning (IL) has been the main medium for the transfer of skills, knowledge and values between generations for centuries. Nowadays IL is increasingly taking place outside the family because of changes in structures of families and communities. IL in the workplace provides a means to imparting tacit knowledge and skills between older workers and apprentices and for younger workers to introduce new technical knowledge. Alongside its importance in the context of working environment, IL also has the potential to contribute significantly to promoting social cohesion in general and is admirably suited to addressing many of the key challenges facing Europe today, such as combating poverty, integrating young people at risk, environmental protection and intercultural harmony.

#### SPAIN, AUSTRIA, ROMANIA, SWEDEN – GRUNDTVIG

##### Seniors for Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer

Once seniors leave the labour market, they neither have the opportunity to offer their know-how to others nor access to permanent learning processes (lack of motivation), leading to a kind of social exclusion. The project used NICT-based didactic methodologies to qualify seniors (coming from restructuring sectors) to take active part (via volunteer work) in training processes aimed at young people, thus giving value and transferring their knowledge to new generations. Through such efforts, they became experienced mentors and were offered the training they needed as well as the necessary tools and methodologies to enable effective knowledge transfer across generations. For more information, click [here](#).

To promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning, the Commission prepared a draft Council recommendation on this subject<sup>37</sup>. The Commission is also working on a tool to help individuals record and present skills acquired throughout their lives, particularly in non-formal settings, and will provide soon an updated inventory.

## 4.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

This summary is primarily focused on non-formal learning issues, in line with the priorities of the EU Youth Strategy. It does not encompass all the priorities of the Education and Training Strategy.

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

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support the development of youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities as a way of addressing early school leaving?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24	1	2	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4

<sup>36</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 1-6.

<sup>37</sup> To be tabled in September 2012.

NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

Many countries present good practices around youth work activities targeting early school leaving. These include the Youth Coach initiative in **Austria**, the European Social Fund (ESF) co-funded ‘Developing youth work quality’ project in **Estonia** as well as youth centres in the **Czech Republic**, **Latvia** and **Lithuania**. Other examples include the project Learning for Young Adults in **Slovenia**, involvement of youth workers in the social guarantee scheme in **Finland**, special trainings for young people with fewer opportunities in KOMPrax project in **Slovakia** and activity agreements in the **United Kingdom**.

**Germany**, **France** and **Romania** mention second chance schemes, while the French Community of **Belgium**, **Luxembourg**, and **Poland** present specific voluntary services targeted at early school leavers (‘solidarité’ in **Belgium**, ‘service Volontaire d'orientation’ in **Luxembourg** and ‘Voluntary Labour Corps’ in **Poland**).

The need for an individual follow-up of the early school leaver by youth workers is often underlined in the National Youth Reports, e.g. by **France**, **Italy** and **Finland**.

The Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **Spain** and **Sweden** put a particular emphasis on supporting the youth organisations or youth projects which address early school leaving.

Countries such as **Bulgaria** (with a project ‘To make the school more attractive’), **Greece**, **Italy** (National Guidance Plan) and **Malta** (with initiatives using non-formal learning within schools) underline the development of specific programmes in schools to prevent early school leaving.

**Denmark** and **Portugal** underline activities in favour of validation and recognition of non-formal learning.

## BELGIUM

### Time-Out – swap school for non-formal learning

‘Time-Out Projects’ exist for young people that come into conflict with teachers, with other children in their class or for those who have problems with formal education. During this time-out period, formal education or employment is replaced by non-formal learning opportunities. Young people are supposed to return to class after this time-out period. For more information, click [here](#).

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

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to strengthen the use of the range of tools established at EU level for the transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	1	1	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		2	1



Many countries present the state of play regarding the preparation of their National Qualifications Framework<sup>38</sup>, to be developed within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)<sup>39</sup>.

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 also often quoted.

The **Czech Republic**, **Estonia**, **Spain**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Slovenia** and the **United Kingdom** have chosen to focus their answer on validation of competences acquired through non-formal learning activities such as youth work, as there seem indeed to be many developments in this area. The **Czech Republic** has developed a Personal Competency Portfolio, which is a tool for recording key competences acquired in non-formal learning settings. **Spain** is currently working on the evaluation and recognition of competences gained via non-formal learning or work experience. A law on the validation and recognition of non-formal learning was adopted in February 2011 in **Latvia**. Non-formal education is being revised in **Lithuania** and the set of competences gained via these activities is being assessed. **Slovenia** also presents its 'national occupational qualifications', a scheme for recognition and assessment of non-formally obtained knowledge. In the **United Kingdom**, Wales has developed quality standards for youth work.

## ESTONIA

### Stardiplats – how to put non-formal learning into a CV

In 2010 the Estonian Youth Work Centre launched a non-formal learning recognition instrument 'stardiplats', which is a web-based online youth portal, where young people can gather and write down all of their formal education and working experiences and also all different kinds of non-formal education experiences. They can analyse and describe their non-formal learning experience in that portal and afterwards print them out on CV or Europass format if needed. The project is supported via the ESF co-funded state programme 'Developing youth work quality' initiated by the Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education and Research and carried out by the Estonian Youth Work Centre. For more information, click [here](#).

### 4.2.3. Promoting learning mobility of all young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote learning mobility of all young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	25	1	2	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2	1	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

<sup>38</sup> BE, BG, EL, CY, AT, PT, RO, SI, FI, SE, all indicate where they stand with this preparation.

<sup>39</sup> OJ C 111, 6.5.2008, pp. 1-7.

More than half of the Member States mention the key role of Youth in Action and other EU programmes, such as the Lifelong Learning programme, with a particular focus on Erasmus and Comenius, for promoting learning mobility of youth.

**Bulgaria** concentrates on the promotion of Erasmus, providing also additional financial subsidies for young people with fewer opportunities. **Spain** on the other hand presents a variety of grant schemes offered by ministries and the Commerce Office for internships, research projects and language courses all over the world. The main actor in **Sweden** in this field is the International Programme Office for Education and Training. This government agency awards grants and project funding but also runs communication initiatives.

## IRELAND

### National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) – sharing information on learning mobility

The Government provides and promotes learning mobility through support for agencies and in turn for young people to learn about each other in the form of national and international visits and cross cultural exchange and non-formal learning. The NYCI International Programme is supported to provide information and advice through sharing information, face to face meetings, development of partnerships and collaborations. It facilitates the learning mobility of young people and youth workers in youth organisations. NYCI shares information via youth.ie, e-newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, etc. NYCI works largely with youth organisations to ensure the learning mobility of young people. NYCI also works with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, and dáil na nÓg, the Youth Parliament, which gives young people in Ireland the opportunity to represent the views of those under the voting age of 18 at a national level, and to call for changes to improve the lives of young people in Ireland. For more information, click [here](#).

#### 4.2.4. Raising public awareness of the value of non-formal learning

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to make the broader public aware of the value of non-formal learning?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	3	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	11	2		9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3		1	2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Non-formal learning activities are promoted broadly across the Member States. They are often conducted through web-portals (such as [www.mitteformaalne.ee](http://www.mitteformaalne.ee) in **Estonia** and [www.hrdauth.org.cy](http://www.hrdauth.org.cy) in **Cyprus**), special events (Youth Work Week in Wales, **United Kingdom**), campaigns (e.g. connected with the European Year of Volunteering, such as in **Austria**) or projects (**Lithuania** for instance mentions a pilot project launched in 2011 for non-formal education of children, including a scheme of individual vouchers; ‘changing mentalities’ project in **Greece**; ‘Youth information network’ in **Latvia**, ‘Year with Passion’ in **Poland**, ‘KOMPrax’ project in **Slovakia**).

In this context, the National Youth Reports often<sup>40</sup> seem to imply that a better assessment and quality of non-formal learning, as well as its improved recognition and validation, can support promotion and awareness-raising of its value.

**Denmark** and **Sweden** stress the very lively role of non-formal activities in their society (Folkbildning activities in Sweden, volunteering in Denmark).

**Portugal** and **Hungary** mention their activities regarding training of trainers or youth workers.

<sup>40</sup>

In particular Flemish Community BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, LU, AT, SI, FI.

## **IRELAND**

### **National Quality Standards Framework for youth work**

The National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) aims to ensure that youth work organisations provide quality services to young people. It also provides an opportunity to articulate their practice through the development of a common language within a structured framework. The NQSF is intended to be both practical and developmental, in that it will enable youth work organisations to assess service provision and to identify areas for development. The values underpinning the development and implementation of the NQSF are: (i) a clear understanding of youth work's educational purpose, methodology and context; (ii) commitment to continual improvement and best practice; (iii) transparency of governance and operation; (iv) equality and inclusiveness embedded in policy and practice for staff, volunteers and young people; (v) promotion of the young person's well-being by ensuring safe learning environments. For more information, click [here](#).

### **4.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

Youth organisations are a key provider of non-formal learning. Youth organisations and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) contributed to efforts for a better recognition and quality of non-formal education by implementing a pilot project on quality assurance of non-formal learning experiences in youth organisations. To explore spaces for flexibility between formal and non-formal education, the YFJ regularly organises a 'Non-formal Education Week'. Based on the pilot project, the YFJ developed a European System for Quality Assurance of non-formal education, anchored in three strands: expertise building, capacity building and developing a political consensus with institutions and stakeholders on how to organise quality assurance on non-formal education at European level.

**Table 4-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Education and Training**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to support the development of youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities as a way of addressing early school leaving?	to strengthen the use of the range of tools established at EU level for the transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications?	to promote learning mobility of all young people?	to make the broader public aware of the value of non-formal learning?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	●	●
Belgium French	■	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	■	●
Czech Republic	■	■	■	●
Denmark	■	■	■	■
Germany	■	■	●	●
Estonia	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	◆	■	▲
Greece	■	●	■	■
Spain	■	■	■	■
France	■	■	■	■
Italy	■	■	■	●
Cyprus	▲	■	■	■
Latvia	●	●	■	●
Lithuania	●	■	■	■
Luxembourg	■	■	■	▲
Hungary	■	▲	●	●
Malta	■	■	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	●	■
Slovenia	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	▲	■	●
Finland	●	■	◆	●
Sweden	■	●	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	■	◆	◆	■
Switzerland	◆	◆	■	■
Montenegro	●	●	■	■
Croatia	■	■	●	▲

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 5. SOCIAL INCLUSION

### 5.1. Commission initiatives and action

Young people generally are among the most vulnerable groups in society, and this is especially true in the current crisis. The proportion of young people living at risk of poverty is several percentage points higher than for the total population. Youth unemployment rates are more than twice as high as for the total EU population, and the impact of the crisis risks being particularly grave for today's generation of young people<sup>41</sup>.

The Europe 2020 strategy advocates not only smart and sustainable, but also inclusive growth. One of its headline targets is to lift 20 million people out of risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020. One of the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives is the 'European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion'. Poverty should be combated from an early age; children born into poverty face a substantially higher risk of remaining poor throughout their youth and into adulthood.

Combating poverty and social exclusion is primarily a Member State competence; the Commission plays a supporting and coordinating role by identifying best practices and promoting mutual learning, setting up EU-wide guidelines and making funding available.

Social inclusion of all young people is a 'field of action' of the EU Youth Strategy and also a key priority of the Youth in Action programme. This programme supported more than 7 100 projects in this area for almost € 105 million in 2010 and 2011. More than 150 000 young people participated in these projects, of which more than one third young people with fewer opportunities.

In 2010 the Council adopted the Resolution on *active inclusion of young people: combating unemployment and poverty*<sup>42</sup>, emphasising the need for Member States to step up efforts to reduce social exclusion of young people and inviting them to act upon a number of issues.

2010 was the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The key objectives of the year were to raise public awareness about these issues and to renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to improve the situation. The Council Declaration on the 2010 European Year<sup>43</sup> signed at the end of 2010 concluded that: (1) The European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion has contributed to giving a stronger voice to the excluded. (2) The adoption of the Europe 2020 strategy was a major step forward. (3) The recognition of the fundamental human right for all women, men and children to live in dignity is at the heart of the EU commitment to social inclusion. (4) Taking into account lessons learned from the past, the EU has to provide concrete, satisfactory and urgent answers to the difficulties faced by people living in poverty or social exclusion, by removing obstacles and empowering women and men to change their situation. (5) The legacy of the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 will be further developed through the flagship initiative 'European Platform against Poverty'.

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<sup>41</sup> See also Chapter 3 'Youth Employment & Entrepreneurship'

<sup>42</sup> OJ C 137, 27.5.2010, pp. 1-6.

<sup>43</sup> OJ C 333, 10.12.2010, pp. 8-9.

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUTH ON THE MARGINS OF SOCIETY – MORE OPPORTUNITIES, BETTER ACCESS AND HIGHER SOLIDARITY**

This policy review focuses on the situation of some specific youth groups in the European youth policy context, such as the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, migrant, ethnic minority youth and those young people with public care backgrounds.

The policy review is based on the findings of a cluster of five research projects on the social inclusion of young people, financed by the Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities Programme (SSH) of the EU 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme:

- YIPPEE: ‘Young People from a Public Care Background: pathways to education in Europe’. (DK, ES, HU, SE, UK [January 2008 – August 2010] <http://tcru.ioe.ac.uk/yippee>).
- CSEYHP: ‘Combating Social Exclusion among Young Homeless Populations: a comparative investigation of homeless paths among local white, local ethnic groups and migrant young men and women, and appropriate reinsertion methods’. (CZ, NL, PT, UK [May 2008 – April 2011] <http://www.movisie.nl/homelessyouth>).
- EUMARGINS: ‘On the Margins of the European Community – Young adult immigrants in seven European countries’ (EE, ES, FR, IT, SE, UK, NO [October 2008 – September 2011] <http://www.iss.uio.no/forskning/eumargins/index.html>).
- EDUMIGROM: ‘Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe’ (CZ, DK, DE, FR, HU, RO, SK, SE, UK [March 2008 – February 2011] <http://www.edumigrom.eu>).
- YOUNEX: ‘Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe: A multidimensional approach to understanding the conditions and prospects for social and political integration of young unemployed’. (DE, FR, IT, PL, PT, SE, CH [May 2008 – August 2011] <http://www.younex.unige.ch>).

Altogether, research evidence comes from eleven old and six new EU Member States, which suggests that this policy-oriented review is based on a good coverage of the countries of the EU.

More specifically, **the objectives of the review** are:

- to provide an overview of the reasons for the precarious situations of the examined youth groups and to formulate the policy issues;
- to visualise the policy challenges needed to produce greater social inclusion on the labour market and in the wider society;
- to highlight policy implications for cross-border policy transfer; and
- to contribute with research-based recommendations.

The EU financially supports initiatives against poverty and social exclusion through the European Social Fund (ESF)<sup>44</sup>, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund<sup>45</sup> and the PROGRESS programme<sup>46</sup>.

The ESF is dedicated to supporting employment and raising living standards throughout the EU. The guiding principle is investment in education and training. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund supports people who have lost their jobs as a result of globalisation. PROGRESS is the EU's employment and social solidarity programme whose aim is to encourage improvements in employment, social inclusion and protection, working conditions, non-discrimination and gender equality.

## **ESTONIA, SPAIN, ITALY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, SWEDEN, UNITED KINGDOM – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**

### **Jump start – giving young people a new sense of motivation**

This short-term European Voluntary Service (EVS) project took place in 2010 and involved seven unemployed young people from Spain, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It helped participants acquire a new understanding of looking for a job during a three-week project at a vocational school in rural Estonia. They learnt something concrete under the supervision of qualified educators, overcame language barriers and, as unemployed young people from Estonia also became involved, they came into contact with other cultures. These were all young people with fewer opportunities, and half of them had related social or health problems. Through this project, they developed a new desire to plan for their future and identify objectives for themselves. When returning home, they displayed an interest in active participation in society: some got jobs, others went back to school, and some became involved in other reintegration programmes and international youth projects. Furthermore, for some of the school's staff and organisers of the village, this was a novel teaching method and their first experience of dealing with young people from different parts of Europe.

## **5.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level**

### *5.2.1. Youth work and youth centres as means for social inclusion*

#### **Responses in National Youth Reports**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres as means of inclusion?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	20	1	1	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	4		1	3
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

<sup>44</sup> For ESF Regulation, period 2007-2013, see OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, pp. 12-18; OJ L 126, 21.5.2009, pp. 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> For legislation establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund see OJ L 406, 30.12.2006, pp. 1-6; OJ L 167, 29.6.2009, pp. 26-29; OJ L 48, 22.2.2008, pp. 82-88.

<sup>46</sup> For legislation establishing PROGRESS see OJ L 315, 15.11.2006, pp.1-8; OJ L 65, 3.3.2007, p. 12; OJ L 87, 7.4.2010, p. 6.



Most Member States provide funding to youth work organisations and projects through a range of schemes and national programmes. Almost all have developed networks of youth work centres, which offer information, counselling services, leisure time and after-school activities for youth. The main focus usually is on socially vulnerable young people.

**Sweden** has initiated a specific training programme for youth workers and youth leaders on youth policy and methods for how to promote the social inclusion of young people at local level. **Finland** has realised the potential of youth work to combat social inclusion, but admits there is still room for improvement. In Finland, the risk of discrimination and unfair treatment against children and young people is particularly high in immigrant groups, the Roma, the indigenous Sámi people, sexual minorities and among youth with disabilities. **Slovenia** finances youth work measures by the National Youth Office while, simultaneously, the local level provides a number of initiatives for ensuring a holistic approach to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

### 5.2.2. *Cross-sectoral approach to improve community cohesion and solidarity*

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to adopt a cross-sectoral approach when working to improve community cohesion and solidarity and reduce the social exclusion of young people, addressing the inter linkages between e.g. young peoples education and employment and their social inclusion?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21		2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	2		6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	2	1	1	0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

In view of the inter-linkages between e.g. young people's education, employment, health and their social inclusion, many Member States confirm the importance of pursuing a cross-sectoral approach and of including a youth dimension in these policy areas linked to social inclusion. Member States frequently mention the involvement of relevant ministries and stakeholders such as youth NGOs when deciding on youth related issues, strategies or action plans. Many put a strong emphasis on youth in their employment policies with the main goal to promote the integration of young people in the labour market and decrease youth unemployment.

The aim of **Malta's** 'Embark for Life' project is to provide support to young people, aged 16 to 24, who need assistance to integrate better into the workforce and society. Through this project, young people benefit from a number of individual sessions with a Professional Youth Support Worker. These experts help young people identify their strengths and weaknesses and outline areas they need to work on in order to improve their employability prospects.

In **Austria**, two federal ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Education) work together to improve the situation of young people at risk through the project 'Youth Counselling'. The project started in January 2012 in several federal states and its aim is to prevent early school leaving, to provide support for pupils/students at risk and those dealing with psycho-social or family problems. The youth coaches are mainly social workers who cooperate with teachers and school boards/directors in offering advice and helps solving individual problems for young people at risk of social exclusion.

## FINLAND

### Myrsky – social participation through arts in rural areas

The Myrsky project (The Storm), which was started in 2008 by the Finnish Cultural Fund, has financed youth art projects run by professional artists. During 2008-2011, over 14 000 young persons have participated. The objective is to offer young people in rural areas artistic activities. It is especially targeting young people at risk of social exclusion or marginalization, and aims at strengthening the social participation of these young people through creating art.

In the spring of 2011 Myrsky became a part of the Finnish Children and Youth Foundation's activities. For more information click [here](#).

### 5.2.3. Development of intercultural awareness and competences

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support the development of intercultural awareness and competences for all young people and combat prejudice?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	1	3	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	2	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

A number of cited initiatives in this area target specific groups. **Germany** reports two federal initiatives with particular emphasis on disadvantaged youth and young people with migration background to promote tolerance and democracy, and strengthen civil society. **Portugal's** 'Escolhas' programme aims to mobilise local communities for projects of equal opportunities aimed at children and young people from vulnerable socio-economic contexts, particularly the descendants of immigrants and ethnic minorities. School curricula in **Austria** include intercultural learning as a principle of teaching. It describes a holistic way of teaching students in diverse classes together with people using diverse first languages and having different ethnic backgrounds.

Many countries organise specialized training programmes for youth workers, youth leaders and young people to develop intercultural awareness and combat prejudice. In **Luxembourg**, a mandatory training for specialists in the youth field includes subjects on intercultural awareness and competences. The **Czech Republic** and **Latvia** report various non-formal learning activities for youth workers and young people on topics addressing prejudice and intercultural learning.

The ESF is, according to Member States, frequently used to co-finance initiatives to develop intercultural awareness. **Spain** communicates with youth and addressed the topic in a youth friendly manner through the launch of the initiative 'Rap Against Racism' – a song, a video and a campaign with the participation of leading representatives of the Spanish hip-hop scene. The government of **Sweden** has adopted a national action plan to promote democracy and combat violent extremism with a specific focus on young people.

### 5.2.4. Homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with focus on young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to address the issues of homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with a particular focus on young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24		2	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2	1	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2	1		1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

A number of Member States cited examples of youth-targeted support measures related to housing. Apart from general measures concerning housing policy, **Cyprus** grants low priced ready-made dwellings to young people from low-income strata and tackles the accommodation problem of students through the construction of student residences and subleasing flats at lower prices. The **Czech Republic** provides shelter services for young homeless mothers and their children and ‘half-way houses’ which means temporary residence services for young persons up to the age of 26 years, who leave educational facilities for institutional or protection care. **Spain** provides technical and legal advice to young people under the age of 35 in buying and providing housing as well as grants, subsidies, state aid programmes, monthly allowances for covering rental costs and other kinds of financial support. **Finland** also ensures sufficient investment funding in order to improve the living conditions of young people on the brink of independence with a focus on youth homelessness and the prevention of social exclusion, as well as reinforcing social skills. In **Slovenia** young people are classified as a priority group in a number of state measures to improve the housing situation; however, their access to housing remains limited given that in the majority of cases the number of applicants for subsidies, financial assistance and non-profit housing far exceeds the funds available. State subsidies intended for first-time home buyers are specifically aimed at young people; however, the eligibility for such subsidies is limited to young families and exclude individuals.

From the National Youth Reports, it seems that there is a trend of tackling the issues of homelessness, housing and financial exclusion of young people through the general social policies of the country and not through youth oriented policies in particular.

#### 5.2.5. Access to quality services

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote access to quality services e.g. transport, e-inclusion, health, social services?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24		3	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	5	2		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2	1		1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		1	1

Some countries have incorporated the objective to ensure access of young people to quality services in their national youth strategies or action plans, whereas others mention the value of youth information offices and services providing tailor-made youth information.

**Belgium, Spain, Lithuania, Austria** and **Portugal** report discounts for young people on transport services. **Austria** furthermore offers e.g. free public schools and universities. In the

Flemish Community of **Belgium** it is common practice to make public services less expensive for young people.

The **Swedish** government developed an online youth clinic and a strategy with a long-term objective to gradually reduce the number of children and young people using tobacco, narcotic drugs, doping substances and alcohol.

## AUSTRIA

### Youth Coaching – counsel for special needs

BMUKK/Ministry of Education: In January 2012, the initiative Youth Coaching was started up in several federal states; the aim of the initiative is to prevent early school leaving, to provide support for pupils/students at risk and those dealing with psycho-social or family problems. The ‘Youth Coaches’ are mainly social workers offering counselling and overcoming individual problems in school. They are requested to co-operate with teachers and school boards/directors. For more information click [here](#).

Addressing social exclusion by promoting e-inclusion services, however, is rarely reported. Only **Estonia** and the Flemish Community of **Belgium** mentioned e-inclusion services in their National Youth Reports. The e-inclusion concept, in particular focused on youth, needs to be more developed in all countries.

## SLOVAKIA

### Emancipated young adults

Financial support for young adults (ESF) in order to help them to be more emancipated consists of activities which promote the availability and quality of care services (social services and measures of social protection and social guardianship), improve the position of vulnerable and marginalized population groups in the labour market and society. The project consists of several programmes: Social, educational and other programmes and methods designed to prepare children for emancipation before completion of a court decision about staying in an orphanage. Programmes and other training methods work to promote the emancipation of young adults after leaving an orphanage. Support programmes, professional activities and special methods of work for an adult person after orphanage leaving, focused on the ability to acquire and maintain a household. New and innovative programs focus on adaptation, integration, careers and facilitate entry into the labour market.

### 5.2.6. Specific support for young families

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote specific support for young families?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3			3
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

Wherever Member States provided examples of measures in this area, state guarantees and subsidies for young families to buy or renovate housing are most often mentioned. Some countries also mention well developed family policies and financial support to young parents. Young families in **Austria** benefit from paid parental leave for mothers and/or fathers (shared), direct financial child benefits or specific tax benefits for single parents, special access to cheap housing or no-interest-loans for building and a well-structured system of child-care. The **Czech Republic** has facilitated reconciling professional and family life by designing specific flexible measures in its labour law (e.g. reduced working hours upon request of pregnant women or flexible working time to young mother/father). The Housing Development Plan in **Estonia** sets out measures and financing to support young people and families to buy or renovate their homes. In addition a state guarantee for mortgage for young families aims to support young families to buy their own dwelling. **Italy** introduced a national fund for newborn babies, under which new parents can apply for bank loans benefiting from special refunding conditions. **Malta's** social marketing campaign targets young people to promote work-life balance. **Poland** aims at a well-developed nursery system co-financed by government and the establishment of clubs for children up to three years old. **Slovenia** reports to have a highly developed family policy comprising a lot of benefits and services for children and families with children.

#### 5.2.7. *Young people and youth organisations in the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010*

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to engage young people and youth organisations in the planning, delivery and evaluation of European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	12	1	1	10
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	1		9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	10	1	3	6

Many countries report participation in and organisation of various events and projects in relation to the European Year 2010, whereby many projects addressed youth.

**Bulgaria** reports that various projects and initiatives were implemented under the Youth in Action programme and several national programmes. In **Hungary**, youth organisations, NGOs in the youth field and student unions were consulted on the topic of the European Year 2010. **Latvian** youth was widely represented in the majority of activities, and a 13 year old singer, involved in Latvian Child Forum activities, was one of the Ambassadors of the European Year 2010.

#### 5.2.8. *Cross-disciplinary research on active inclusion*

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the government of your country support and promote cross-disciplinary research relating to young people and their living conditions in line with the Council resolution on active inclusion, having regard to the socio-economic environment and the opportunities and obstacles this poses for the social inclusion and employability of young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, the Government has supported and promoted such cross-disciplinary research since before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	■	22	2	1	19

YES, measures were taken to support and promote such cross-disciplinary research after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	•	1			1
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	7		2	5
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3	1	1	1

A number of Member States inform that they release regular evidence-based reports on young people's situation, including their living conditions. Some Member States have a monitoring system in place with a variety of youth indicators (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Estonia**, the **Netherlands**, **Finland**, Wales in the **United Kingdom**) or support longitudinal research on youth (socio-economic panel in **Germany**, National Longitudinal Study of Children in **Ireland**).

### 5.3. Youth-led initiatives and action

Young people and their representative organisations such as the European Youth Forum (YFJ) were actively engaged in promoting and implementing the 2010 European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion and the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing.

Youth, through the channel of their representative body, the YFJ were consulted prior to elaborating the flagship initiative 'European Platform Against Poverty'<sup>47</sup>, and continues together with other civil society organisations, notably within the 'Platform of European Social NGOs', to be involved in its monitoring.

The YFJ is facilitating a project on the European coordination platform of young migrants and young people with migrant background (YM+). This project is supported by the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), and involves 20 organisations from different European countries. The YFJ organised two capacity building events for YM+ in spring 2011 on advocacy and EU institutions and on organisational and project development, and established a group of contact persons, which assisted in the organisational development of YM+.

<sup>47</sup>

COM(2010) 758.

**Table 5-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Social Inclusion**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives								Does the government of your country support and promote cross-disciplinary research relating to young people and their living conditions in line with the Council resolution on active inclusion?
EU Member States	to realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres as means of inclusion?	to adopt a cross-sectoral approach when working to improve community cohesion and solidarity and reduce the social exclusion of young people, addressing the inter linkages between e.g. young peoples education and employment and their social inclusion?	to support the development of intercultural awareness and competences for all young people and combat prejudice?	to address the issues of homelessness, housing and financial exclusion with a particular focus on young people?	to promote access to quality services e.g. transport, e-inclusion, health, social services?	to promote specific support for young families?	to engage young people and youth organisations in the planning, delivery and evaluation of European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2010?	
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◆
Belgium - Flemish	●	●	●	●	●	●	◆	■
Belgium - French	■	▲	■	▲	▲	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	■	■	▲	●	■
Czech Republic	■	■	●	■	■	■	●	▲
Denmark	■	■	■	■	■	■	◆	■
Germany	■	●	■	■	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■	■	■	◆	■
Greece	▲	■	■	■	▲	▲	◆	▲
Spain	■	■	●	■	■	■	◆	■
France	◆	●	◆	●	◆	■	●	■
Italy	■	■	●	■	●	●	●	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	◆
Latvia	●	■	●	■	■	■	●	▲
Lithuania	■	◆	▲	■	■	■	■	▲
Luxembourg	■	●	■	●	■	■	◆	■
Hungary	▲	■	▲	▲	●	●	●	■
Malta	●	■	■	■	■	■	●	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■	■	●	■
Austria	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■	■	●	■	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■	■	▲	■	▲
Romania	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	▲	■	■	■	■	■	▲	■
Slovakia	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	●	■	■	■	■	■	■
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	●	◆	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>								
Norway	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Switzerland	▲	◆	■	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Montenegro	●	▲	●	●	■	●	◆	▲
Croatia	◆	■	■	■	■	■	◆	▲

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans



## 6. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### 6.1. Commission initiatives and action

The majority of young people in the EU enjoy good health; nevertheless, evidence shows that the current crisis risks to have an impact on the health and well-being of young people – in particular in low-income families<sup>48</sup>.

Although health is mainly a national competence, the Commission coordinates and complements these efforts through action at EU level.

Under the Youth Health Initiative and as a follow-up to the 2009 ‘Be healthy, Be yourself’ Conference, a number of actions were carried out around four priorities (empowerment and participation, inequalities and vulnerability, communicating health, and mainstreaming these principles across European health policy). The Commission organised a youth health event ‘Food for mind, mind for health’ in October 2010 in Torino, then European Youth Capital, together with stakeholders active on youth health<sup>49</sup>.

Young people are a specific target group in several EU health initiatives around smoking, alcohol abuse, nutrition, obesity and drug use<sup>50</sup>. In pursuing action in this area, the Commission cooperates with stakeholders such as the European Youth Forum (YFJ).

The ‘Together for Health’ Programme (2008-2013)<sup>51</sup> supports a number of youth-related projects. One was the publication *Preventing Injuries in Europe*<sup>52</sup> assessing progress by European countries implementing the WHO Resolution on *the prevention of injury and the promotion of safety*<sup>53</sup>. The [ProYouth](#) initiative promotes healthy eating, body satisfaction and preventing eating disorders in young people aged 15 to 25. Under the Drug Prevention and Information Programme, the Commission supports several projects focused on prevention of drug use and treatment of teenagers and young adults, among others a programme targeting young polydrug users, a resilience-based interactive drug education programme, and family empowerment and hepatitis prevention projects.

In 2011, the Commission launched a study ‘Making the case for investing in the health of young people: assessing the economic impact of poor health and actions to promote and protect better health of children in Europe’ together with the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children International Coordinating Centre within the University of Edinburgh.

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<sup>48</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2011. Impact of Economic Crises on Mental Health. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. Available here.

<sup>49</sup> The International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE-CIPES) European Centre, the European Youth Forum and other youth organisations.

<sup>50</sup> The [EX-Smokers Campaign](#) (2010-2013), the Strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm (2006-2012); the strategy on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related Health Issues (2007-2013); and the EU Drugs Strategy (2005-2012).

<sup>51</sup> OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, pp. 1-12; OJ L 301, 20.11.2007, pp. 3-13.

<sup>52</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2010. Preventing Injuries in Europe – From international collaboration to local implementation. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. Available here.

<sup>53</sup> Resolution on the Prevention of injuries in the WHO European Region of 15 September 2005, EUR/RC55/R9, 54257.



## GREECE – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Board game about mental health

A group of young people from an NGO called ‘Athina’, in Greece, active in the field of mental health and de-institutionalisation mainly of children and teenagers, proposed the creation of the first educational board game aiming at informing young people and raising awareness on mental health issues through question and answers. The game is addressed to teenagers, students and secondary school pupils and one of the main aims is to combat social exclusion and stigma on mental health issues.

## 6.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 6.2.1. Implementation of the Council Resolution on the health and well-being of young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to follow up the Council Resolution on the health and well-being of young people and encourage youth fitness and physical activity by applying the EU Physical Activity Guidelines?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	2		5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		2	1

Many countries undertake efforts to improve the health and well-being of young people through existing capacities within the sport movement or the education system. For instance, **Austria** enhanced its policy on the involvement of youth in sport. The Austrian Health Promotion Foundation implements ‘Guidelines to Physical Activity’ through a general call for fitness and physical activity and by funding projects, campaigns and activities. **Slovenia** addresses insufficient physical activity by ‘the National Sports Programme’ and ‘the National Health Enhancing Physical Activity Programme 2007-2012’, which established 11 goals targeting young people aged 15 to 29 years. **Finland** set up a cross-sectoral health-enhancing physical activity steering group at the end of 2011 to develop new strategic guidelines. **Cyprus** introduced several initiatives, e.g. Student Sport Label/Badge Scheme in 2011 and a Health Card is issued for all competitive sport athletes. **Latvia** is implementing the National Sports Development Programme 2006-2012 and **Bulgaria** the programme ‘sport for Children in their spare time’ targeting young people up to the age of 18.

### 6.2.2. Encouraging healthy lifestyles for young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles for young people via physical education, education on nutrition, physical activity and collaboration between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sporting organisations?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	26	1	4	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2		4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Most Member States promote healthy lifestyles for young people. Often they thereby focus on specific health issues, such as physical education, health education, prevention of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, healthy nutrition and sexual education. The government of **Spain** launched the ‘National Agreement against the consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors’, which includes a manifesto signed by stakeholders from various social, educational and business sectors committing them to work side by side to achieve zero consumption of alcohol by young people under the age of 18. To prevent smoking by young people, the government launched an awareness-raising campaign together with the Spanish Association Against Cancer (AECC), the National Youth Council and the Healthy Universities Network to mark the World No Tobacco Day on 31 May. The National Institute for Youth set up a new ‘Center for Sexual Health Injuve’, to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. In **Poland**, the ‘Fruit at School’ programme promotes healthy nutrition, aiming to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables by children and to shape their eating habits. Since 2011 the Ministry of Education provides funding for organisations promoting healthy lifestyle during ‘out-of-school’ activities.

A number of Member States emphasise prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles. For example, the **Bulgarian** National Health Strategy 2007-2012 raises the awareness for healthy lifestyles and health risks, whereby children and young people are targeted through Internet and social media. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** actively promotes the use of a health policy in every school. In **Slovenia**, the Programme for Children and Youth 2006-2016 promotes healthy lifestyles, whereby placing considerable emphasis on awareness-raising in elementary and secondary school curricula. The **Hungarian** National Youth Strategy addresses health awareness in education and training and develops knowledge and methods within the national curriculum and school-based pedagogical programmes.

### 6.2.3. Increasing knowledge and awareness of health issues among youth workers

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to increase knowledge and awareness of youth workers and youth leaders of health issues?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	18	1	2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	4			4
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3	1	1	1

Member States frequently mention close cooperation between public bodies and civil society stakeholders. In the **Czech Republic**, a specialised unit for preventing risky behaviour within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports coordinates policy and legislative initiatives and cooperates closely with regional specialists and schools. By law, youth workers and youth leaders, especially those who organise camps for children and young people, have to be trained in security and health issues.

The General Secretariat for Youth in **Greece** conducted a series of online debates on AIDS/HIV where young people had the opportunity to ask questions on HIV transmission and treatment to doctors, psychologists and relevant institutions and organisations. The questions and answers now constitute a guide on AIDS, which can be found on the web-portal of the General Secretariat for Youth and which is distributed to schools, youth workers and others interested in learning more about AIDS.

The National Youth Institute in **Portugal** runs the 'Cuida-te' (Take care of yourself) programme in partnership with public and private bodies to promote healthy lifestyles. It targets young people, but also others, such as teachers, parents, youth organisations and health professionals. The **Austrian** Nutrition Action Plan includes an on-going Structured Dialogue with young people on nutrition. The **Spanish** Youth Council is pursuing a campaign around HIV prevention and is active within the context of the national strategy against alcohol abuse.

#### 6.2.4. Encouraging peer-to-peer education

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage peer-to-peer health education?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	17	1	1	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	2	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	6	1	1	4

In almost every country where peer-to-peer education has been implemented, policy-makers see it as a crucial tool to reach out to younger people. Methods such as peer group education and peer counselling are seen as bringing added value into prevention work.

For example, the National Youth Service Strategy of Wales, **United Kingdom**, identifies peer education as a key youth work methodology and many local authorities and voluntary sector youth organisations have local initiatives. In order to transfer this concept into practice on a more ambitious and national basis, an apprenticeship programme has been established. A total of 26 apprentice youth workers are employed to engage with young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

#### 6.2.5. Making health facilities more youth friendly

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to facilitate access to existing health facilities by making them more youth friendly?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	17		2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6

NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3	1		2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	5	1	1	3

Member States mention some concrete examples of how health facilities can be made more youth friendly. In 2010, **Bulgaria** maintained 19 consulting rooms across the country for anonymous and free of charge consultations and tests of HIV. Consulting offices are situated at regional health inspections, municipal hospitals and non-governmental organisations. Ensuring guaranteed health services with high quality and easy access is one of the goals of the National Health strategy 2008-2013. Primary and specialized aid practice is to be brought closer to remote areas and residential districts populated mainly by Roma people.

**Finland** takes efforts to reduce regional differences in access to pupil and student welfare services. School and student health services are now more easily accessible, e.g. services of school health nurses have improved during the last few years. The development will be assessed in cooperation with children and young people. To strengthen the youth perspective, discussion days were organised about 80 times in 60 different municipalities from 2009-2011 and involved 2 500 young people.

## **LATVIA**

### **Health and safety at work**

Within the ESF project 'Practical application of the legislation on occupational safety and health and labour relations in sectors and enterprises' (2008-2013) implemented by the Latvian Employers' Confederation, a computer game on occupational safety and health issues has been elaborated for young people. The game suggests to solve real problems related to health and safety at work in real Latvian enterprises (seven companies working in distribution of automobiles, retail trade, manufacturing and distribution of cosmetics, telecommunications, tourism and hotel services, construction, distribution of computer techniques).

Information about the game is available [online](#) as well as the [game](#).

### **6.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

After the launch of the Youth Health Initiative in 2009, the YFJ contributed to the development of a roadmap for the implementation of the initiative. The Youth Forum also followed the implementation of the EU Mental Health Pact and conferences on the link between mental health, social exclusion and employment. The Forum also participated in the advisory board of the Commission's [Help campaign](#) and supported the [Alcohol Policy Youth Network](#). It furthermore participated in the 'Youthlink' project on sexual and reproductive health and rights and developed its work on health inequalities. It also organised an event in October 2010 with the European Parliament Intergroup on Youth. The Forum continued awareness-raising and capacity building among its Member Organisations on health issues within non-formal education and health training.

The Youth Forum supported research from the University of Maastricht on the relationship between youth unemployment and mental health problems, and in its publication '[Youth Employment in Europe – A Call for Change](#)' it emphasised the issue of mental scarring caused by youth unemployment and the social impact that the exclusion of young people is currently having.

**Table 6-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Health and Well-being**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives					
EU Member States	to follow up the Council Resolution on the Health and Well-being of Young People and encourage youth fitness and physical activity by applying the EU Physical Activity Guidelines?	to encourage healthy lifestyles for young people via physical education, education on nutrition, physical activity and collaboration between schools, youth workers, health professionals and sporting organisations?	to increase knowledge and awareness of youth workers and youth leaders of health issues?	to encourage peer-to-peer health education?	to facilitate access to existing health facilities by making them more youth friendly?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●	◆
Belgium Flemish	●	●	◆	◆	●
Belgium French	■	■	■	■	▲
Bulgaria	●	■	●	■	■
Czech Republic	■	■	■	■	■
Denmark	◆	■	◆	◆	■
Germany	■	■	■	■	◆
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■	■
Greece	▲	▲	●	◆	■
Spain	■	●	■	■	●
France	●	■	■	●	■
Italy	■	■	●	●	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	■
Latvia	●	●	●	●	◆
Lithuania	●	■	●	■	■
Luxembourg	■	■	▲	●	◆
Hungary	■	■	▲	▲	▲
Malta	●	●	●	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■	●
Poland	■	■	■	●	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■	●
Romania	■	■	▲	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	▲	▲	●
Slovakia	■	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■	◆	▲
Sweden	■	●	■	◆	●
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>					
Norway	◆	■	■	◆	◆
Switzerland	◆	■	■	●	■
Montenegro	■	■	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	◆	■	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 7. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

### 7.1. Commission initiatives and action

Youth participation is about young people's initiatives, individually or as a group, to engage in societal activities, to freely express their views and to contribute to decision-making on matters affecting them.

Promoting youth participation is central to EU youth policy, it both is an underlying theme of the EU Youth Strategy and one of the 'fields of action' is dedicated to its promotion. It is incorporated into the Treaty of Lisbon, where Article 165 TFEU stipulates that 'Union action shall be aimed at [...] encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe'<sup>54</sup>. The right of young people to participate in decision-making is also underlined in the Council Conclusion on *the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights*<sup>55</sup>. In addition, Article 24 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU stipulates that children may express their views freely and their views on matters which concern them must be considered in accordance with their age and maturity.

The Hungarian Presidency gave special priority to participation during its mandate. Under their Presidency, the Council adopted a Resolution on *encouraging new and effective forms of participation of all young people in democratic life*<sup>56</sup>, emphasising a broad concept of 'participation' which covers not only social and political participation but also participation in the labour market and education. The Resolution also examines new forms of participation such as social media and online communities.

The Trio Presidency of Poland, Denmark and Cyprus built on this work, making 'youth participation in democratic life in Europe' the overarching priority for the second half of the first cycle of the EU Youth Strategy between mid-2011 and end 2012. In 2011, under Polish Presidency, the Council adopted Conclusions on *the Eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility*<sup>57</sup>, calling on the Commission and Member States to promote exchanges and mobility for young people in the EU and their eastern neighbours.

The Structured Dialogue is one of the EU Youth Strategy's key initiatives bringing together young people and decision-makers around key issues all across Europe. Given its importance, Chapter 11 of this document is entirely dedicated to this process.

The [Flash Eurobarometer](#) on 'Youth on the Move' from 2011 addressed opinions and attitudes of young people also regarding participation, for example about their involvement in society as volunteers, as members of organisations, and as participants in international activities, cultural activities and political activities.

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<sup>54</sup> Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), OJ C 83, 30.3.2010, pp. 47-199.

<sup>55</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> OJ C 169, 9.6.2011, pp. 1-5.

<sup>57</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14.

The Commission also conducted a study on ‘Youth Participation in Democratic Life’<sup>58</sup>, which addresses: youth representation; promoting youth engagement; voting and deliberation; creativity, innovation and youth participation; (new) media and youth participation; and finally, youth exclusion. Among its conclusions are that there is indeed no crisis of democratic participation or disenchantment with politics among youth in Europe, but that young people lack attractive alternatives among established politicians and feel that their opinions are not represented<sup>59</sup>.

The Commission initiated efforts to restructure the [European Youth Portal](#), adding features to promote youth participation online. From providing information on opportunities for young people, the portal is being turned into a platform for young people to engage with each other and to have their say on the issues that affect them. The Youth Portal will also support the Structured Dialogue, with a view to stretching its outreach.

The Commission's ‘[Europa Diary](#)’ has received a major makeover, moving from a paper-based diary format to a completely online product. It aims to give information to school pupils about their rights, participation, health issues, personal safety, consumer issues, studying, and the environment. As announced in the [EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child](#)<sup>60</sup>, the Commission launched the ‘[Kids' Corner](#)’ website<sup>61</sup> in 2011, which 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](#)<sup>62</sup>, where they can learn through games, quizzes and child-friendly texts in 22 EU languages. It works as a ‘one-stop shop’ so it is very convenient for the children, who can easily find all the different games at one place.

Young EU citizens can now use the new online tools provided by the Commission's ‘[European Citizens Initiative](#)’ (ECI), to come together to raise issues and make proposals for EU legislation. The ECI, was launched in April 2012, and is open to young people who are old enough to vote in European Parliament elections<sup>63</sup>.

Finally, the Commission is working on a Youth on the Move Card initiative, as part of the flagship initiative ‘Youth on the Move’. It launched consultation to hear stakeholders' views on an initiative to promote the use of youth and student cards making the lives of young people who are mobile within Europe easier, by giving them information, support and special deals.

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<sup>58</sup> European Commission, 2012. *Youth Participation in Democratic Life* (forthcoming).

<sup>59</sup> Other studies that concern the issue of participation of young people are for example the Study to collect data on children's involvement in judicial proceedings in the EU, (terms of reference available [here](#)) and the Study on the legal framework for child participation at EU Member State and EU levels which should be launched in 2012.

<sup>60</sup> COM (2011) 60.

<sup>61</sup> [http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_en.htm).

<sup>62</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/0-18/>

<sup>63</sup> 18 years old and above, except in Austria where the voting age is 16.



## BULGARIA – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Engaging young people in decision-making

This project aimed to identify how to increase active participation and youth employment in small and remote towns in Bulgaria. Research was conducted on the factors that determine the choice of hometowns, and discussions were organised with decision-makers on their vision for employment, education and training, housing policy, transport, recreation, and healthcare. Participants became involved with local governments in the development of municipal youth strategies. At a national youth meeting in Sofia in October 2010, 70 young people presented and shared local level experiences and developed recommendations for the National Youth Strategy and the Europe 2020 strategy. They discussed with decision-makers issues related to economic activities and entrepreneurship, employment and career development, recreation, youth volunteering, and political participation and civic activism at the local and national levels. The project activities demonstrated that youth policies are developed not only by organisations and institutions in the capital city but also with the participation of organisations from remote and small towns. A project video was produced and published on YouTube.

## 7.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 7.2.1. Mechanisms for dialogue with youth on national youth policies

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to develop mechanisms for dialogue with youth and youth participation on national youth policies?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	23	1	4	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	2		8
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Member States are active in promoting youth participation mechanisms since already before 2010. From the range of activities, Member States quote some good examples of more recent activities. Some Member States initiated legal action. The **Bulgarian** Government is drafting a Youth Law, which allows for the creation of a national consultative youth council to assist the Minister for Education, Youth and Science in developing national policy. In Wales in the **United Kingdom**, pre-existing guidance on consulting with and involving young people in decision-making became legally binding in 2012.

Others enlarge possibilities for young people to participate in decision-making. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** started the ‘Youth Ambassadors for...’ project, in which youth representatives express their opinions on the thematic priorities chosen by the Trio Presidencies in the context of the EU Youth Strategy.



## 7.2.2. Guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage use of already existing, or development of, guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation in order to ensure the quality of these activities?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	24	1	3	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1	1		0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Member States were already actively pursuing activities in this area prior to 2010 and continued to do so after the Strategy came into place. Some countries focus on ensuring a high standard of quality. The Ministry of Education and Science in **Latvia** launched an evaluation of existing youth participation mechanisms in 2011. To share best practice among practitioners and maintain a high quality of youth provisions, a biennial National Meeting in **Spain** in 2010 brought together over 200 youth information workers.

Several countries have produced information material. In 2011, in the Flemish Community of **Belgium** researchers developed a framework and a manual on youth participation, together with youth organisations. **Estonia** publishes a manual ‘Youth involvement and participation’, which focuses on practical issues around participation as well as evaluating the effectiveness of youth councils. In **Sweden**, the Ministry of Education and Research is producing guidelines for consultation with civil society organisations, including youth organisations.

## 7.2.3. Governmental support of youth organisations and Local/National Youth Councils

### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support politically and financially youth organisations, as well as local and national youth councils and promote recognition of their important role in democracy?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	28	3	3	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	5		1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	0			0

Some Member States have recently developed youth consultation structures. The Ministry of Education in **Poland** supported the process of establishing the Federation of Youth Organisations (National Youth Council), whereby ensuring its independence free from state influence. In **Cyprus**, 20 new municipal and community youth councils were created in 2010 with the support of the Youth Board of Cyprus. The [board](#)<sup>64</sup> also signed a memorandum with the Cyprus Youth Council to cover expenses of young people who participate in seminars abroad.

<sup>64</sup>

The Youth Board of Cyprus is a legal entity of public law (Semi-Governmental organisation), with representatives from party youth organisations and members who are appointed directly by the Council of Ministers in the Governing Board.

Following the earthquake of 2009, the **Italian** Government's 'Partecipiamo!' project created structures and opportunities for young people in the affected areas to help revitalise local communities. This enabled them to be involved in decisions around rebuilding facilities of importance to them, such as schools, leisure and sports centres, and other community buildings.

In some countries, efforts have been made to further recognise and support youth representative organisations. In the **United Kingdom**, the Westminster government and the devolved governments/assemblies in Wales and Scotland provide financial support to NGOs which allow young people to be heard by decision-makers, such as the UK Youth Parliament, the Scottish Youth Parliament and Funky Dragon in Wales.

## HUNGARY

### Region legion – Youth for the South-East Hungary (DKMT) Euro-region

The four day meeting with the participation of 30 young people took place in Szeged, Hungary. The goal of the meeting was to bring together young people and decision-makers from the DKMT Euro-region to initiate a discussion and a joint action plan on youth issues. Young people, who were already experienced in the implementation of youth projects, were involved, many of them being leaders of formal and informal youth organisations based in their home town. During the meeting youth projects, which had been previously realised in the DKMT region, were examined, then a joint action plan was drawn up with decision-makers – including the wording of a letter – to draw attention to the potential of young people in the region. A publication was edited as a follow-up summarizing the outcomes of the meeting. As a result a network of child and youth self-governments was established in the region that played a significant role in the re-creation of the National Council of Child and Youth Self-Governments in Hungary. For more information, click [here](#).

#### 7.2.4. Promote the greater participation of young people

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote the participation of more and a greater diversity of young people in representative democracy, in youth organisations and other civil-society organisations?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	1	2	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	2	1	7
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

National Youth Reports present several concrete activities to promote wider involvement of youth in participation since 2010. In **Lithuania**, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour approved a programme to develop youth volunteering as a means to get more young people involved in civic and democratic life. The **Swedish** Government has allocated funds for youth organisations and other civil society organisations to help them improve methods to stimulate non-organised young people to become active in the organisations of civil society.

Some activities focus on specific groups. In **Austria**, the National Youth Council has set up a project group on 'Intercultural Opening of Youth Work' to establish a model on how to enable the greater participation of young people from migrant backgrounds in youth

organisations. The Youth Council in the French Community of **Belgium** has contacted local youth clubs which work with young people from difficult socio-economic circumstances in order to raise participation levels of young people from all sectors of society. The Flemish Community of Belgium passed the 'Participation Act' which allowed financial support to youth initiatives working with young immigrants and young people living in poverty.

## SWEDEN

### Commitment guides

The purpose of the Commitment guides is to stimulate people living in areas with less organised inhabitants, in particular young people and women, and increase their contacts with civil society organisations in different areas of activity. Support to the Commitment guides has been allocated by the National Board for Youth Affairs during 2010 with converted € 1.4 million. The number of 91 applications received was above expectations. Of the 21 projects granted, 10 focused in particular on women/girls. Dialogue with parents regarding attitudes and values has had a great importance for involving young women. The Commitment guides have reached about 6 000 young people in various ages. The National Board for Youth Affairs will as a consequence of the very good results and big demand continue to support organisations in this field until 2013. For more information, click [here](#).

### 7.2.5. Use of ICT to broaden and deepen participation of young people

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to make effective use of information and communication technologies to broaden and deepen participation of young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	2	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	1	2	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	3	1		2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2			2

A relatively high number of countries report that such initiatives were carried out after 2010. One reason for this may be that e-participation still is a concept under development.

Whilst most countries reported the use of websites to pass information to young people, with ministries either delivering websites themselves or supporting NGOs to deliver youth information websites, others mentioned using social networking sites to inform and engage young people.

In view of the fast evolving development in social media, there are some interesting new initiatives. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** awarded grants to projects developing computer games to help young people to cope with different challenges in life, and the Government and National Agency in **Italy** encouraging the use of internet radio to engage with young people. The Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth in **Germany** initiated the 'Dialogue Internet' project, one of the elements of which is promoting e-participation. In **Malta**, the Youth Agency created the Youth Information Malta website in 2011, as a result of needs identified during the consultation process for the country's new

National Youth Policy. In the **United Kingdom**, Young Scot<sup>65</sup>, working in partnership with local authorities and the Scottish Youth Parliament, developed an online platform to enable young people to vote electronically using Scotland's youth smart card. In a first round of elections for the Scottish Youth Parliament, over 21 000 votes were cast online. The e-Voting platform has also been used to support a participatory budgeting exercise in Shetland, with young people voting using their cards to choose projects to be funded.

#### 7.2.6. Supporting 'learning to participate'

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support various forms of learning to participate from early age through formal education and non-formal learning?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	26	2	2	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	4	1		3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2		2	0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

In this field, most countries mention examples in formal education, as supporting school and pupil councils and adding citizenship education into the curricula. There were fewer reported examples from the non-formal sector. In **Bulgaria**, the National Centre 'European Youth Programmes and Initiatives' conducts annual training for young people, youth leaders and NGO representatives, with the aim to deliver greater participation skills. Wales in the **United Kingdom** supported the development and dissemination of participation training packages through networks such as the Participation Workers Network and Pupil Voice Wales.

Some initiatives cover both formal and non-formal education. **Luxembourg** is piloting education on participation to very young children through school reception classes, as well as to older children and young people through schools and non-formal education projects. In **Finland**, the Government's Child and Youth Policy Programme promotes the participation in everyday environments in early-years education, schools and educational institutions, and youth facilities, and states that youth facilities are there to support the voluntary activities of young people and increase the level of youth participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities.

#### 7.2.7. Developing opportunities to debate with young people

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to further develop opportunities for debate between public institutions and young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	16	1	1	14
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	12	2	1	9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2		1	1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Examples of concrete activities since 2010 include the involvement of local youth councils in evaluating the quality of local opportunities for youth participation in **Finland**, as part of the

<sup>65</sup>

The national youth information and citizenship agency for Scotland.

national evaluation of basic services, and the ‘Participation Café’ project in **Estonia** in 2011 which brought together decision-makers and young people to discuss various topics affecting young people's participation, such as the right to vote at age 16, youth unemployment, and other important issues.

Some Member States link dialogue to long-term, strategic development. The new **Austrian** Youth Strategy will create new opportunities for dialogue between decision-makers and young people, and the Flemish Community of **Belgium** is planning a Youth Pact 2020 which will be the culmination of a large-scale debate between decision-makers and young people about making the Flemish Community of Belgium a place where young people like to live in 2020.

## **SLOVENIA**

### **Council of the Government for Youth**

This inter-ministerial working group (Svet vlade Republike Slovenije za mladino) was established in 2009. The Council is a consultative body that proposes measures and monitors the consideration of youth interests in various public policies at the national level. It gives the Government and the responsible ministries incentives and suggestions for the regulation of youth matters and promotes youth participation in these processes. The Council which comprises representatives of youth organisations and various ministries on an equal basis is chaired by the Minister of Education and Sport. For more information, click [here](#).

### **7.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

Youth organisations and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) have been actively engaged in the implementation of the Structured Dialogue (see Chapter 10) and undertook their own efforts to foster the capacity of youth organisations to take part in decision-making processes.

Since 2010 the YFJ actively advocated lowering the voting age to 16 across Europe, and organised several meetings to further explore and raise awareness on the topic. This campaign led to the organisation of the European Parliament Roundtable on expanding democracy in Europe in December 2011 and enabled a discussion on this topic in an institutional forum.

Better youth participation at local level is promoted through the European Youth Capitals, a title awarded to a city for one year, during which it can showcase its youth-related cultural, social, political and economic life and development. It is chosen by the YFJ based on a jury selection process.

The YFJ commissioned a study ‘The Impact of the New Provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon on Youth’, conducted by Prof. Ponzano, which reported on opportunities and limits in the application of article 165 TFEU.

**Table 7-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Youth Participation**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to develop mechanisms for dialogue with youth and youth participation on national youth policies?	to encourage use of already existing, or development of, guidelines on youth participation, information and consultation in order to ensure the quality of these activities?	to support politically and financially youth organisations, as well as local and national youth councils and promote recognition of their important role in democracy?	to promote the participation of more youth and a greater diversity of young people in representative democracy, in youth organisations and other civil-society organisations?
Belgium German-speaking	●	▲	■	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	■	●
Belgium French	■	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	●
Czech Republic	■	■	●	■
Denmark	●	■	■	■
Germany	●	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	●	■	■	●
Spain	■	■	■	■
France	●	●	■	●
Italy	●	●	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■
Latvia	■	●	■	■
Lithuania	■	●	■	■
Luxembourg	■	■	■	●
Hungary	■	■	■	●
Malta	■	■	●	●
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■
Poland	●	●	●	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	●	■	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■	▲
Sweden	■	■	■	●
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	■	■	■	■
Switzerland	■	■	■	■
Montenegro	■	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	◆

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives			
EU Member States	to make effective use of information and communication technologies to broaden and deepen participation of young people?	to support various forms of learning to participate from early age through formal education and non-formal learning?	to further develop opportunities for debate between public institutions and young people?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	▲	■	●
Belgium French	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●
Czech Republic	■	■	■
Denmark	■	■	■
Germany	●	■	●
Estonia	■	■	●
Ireland	■	■	■
Greece	■	■	●
Spain	■	■	■
France	●	■	◆
Italy	●	■	●
Cyprus	■	■	■
Latvia	▲	◆	▲
Lithuania	■	■	■
Luxembourg	■	●	●
Hungary	●	●	■
Malta	●	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	●
Poland	◆	■	●
Portugal	▲	■	■
Romania	■	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■
Sweden	◆	■	◆
United Kingdom	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>			
Norway	■	■	■
Switzerland	●	▲	◆
Montenegro	●	■	●
Croatia	■	▲	▲

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans



## 8. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

### 8.1. Commission initiatives and action

A Council Recommendation on *the mobility of young volunteers across the EU*<sup>66</sup>, adopted in 2008, remains highly relevant when outlining EU initiatives during the first cycle of the EU Youth Strategy. It aimed to create more cross-border volunteering opportunities for young people through cooperation between organisers of voluntary activities, complementing the European Voluntary Service (EVS). It recommends Member States to develop opportunities for cross-border volunteering, raise awareness and assure its quality, recognise learning outcomes and promote mobility of youth workers and young leaders while giving particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities.

The expert group established in 2009 to facilitate the implementation of the Recommendation, continued to meet in order to identify ways and means of cooperation and learn from each other through the exchange of information and best practices. Among the group's achievements are a multilateral cross-border volunteering project, a mapping of good practices, a conference on cross-border volunteering in central Europe organised by the Czech Republic, and a high-level seminar led by Germany. The active involvement of Member States experts has contributed to a deeper understanding of volunteering.

The EVS, one of the main components of the Youth in Action programme, facilitates every year around 7 000 young people between 18 and 30 to work as a volunteer abroad. The programme also includes measures to support youth workers and youth organisations to improve the quality of their activities, also in the field of volunteering.

Two European Years help raise awareness for youth volunteering: the European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship [2011](#) and the [European Year 2012](#) for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. While the first one gave visibility to the work of many youth volunteers and drew attention to its value both for society and the individuals, the current Year highlights, among others, intergenerational volunteering.

#### **MALTA – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME**

##### **Disability is no bar to helping others**

An Italian volunteer spent three months in Malta with the NGO Razett tal-Hibberija, which helps children and adults with learning and physical disabilities to develop their potential. It offers an array of therapeutic, educational and leisure services to them, free of charge. The NGO initially hesitated, because the young Italian himself has suffered from a physical disability since birth. Working with a foreign volunteer who has a disability was a new concept for the centre's staff and volunteers. But the experience proved valuable to everyone. Through his responsibilities in the park, the volunteer overcame his physical barriers and strengthened his self-confidence and independence. Through his volunteering experience he impressed himself and inspired people around him, and proved to be an invaluable learning activity supplementing his university studies.

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<sup>66</sup> OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, pp. 8-10.



## 8.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 8.2.1. Opportunities for and awareness about mobility of young volunteers

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to create more opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	2	2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	4		1	3

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to raise awareness about opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	18	1	2	15
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	11	2		9
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	0			0

Many Member States quote the Youth in Action programme, particularly the EVS as an important, if not the main source for youth volunteering in another European country. In addition, a number of countries conduct bi-lateral or multi-lateral exchange programmes. **Germany** has several international agreements in the youth exchanges, and especially agreements with **France** and **Israel** are used as basis for pilot projects on cross-border volunteering. **Spain** and **Portugal** signed a protocol of cooperation in the youth field, which encourages the mobility of young people between both countries. **Italy** and **Montenegro** have an active youth exchange. The **Polish-Lithuanian** Youth Exchange Fund provides support for young people's engagement in activities across the border. **Denmark** refers to volunteering as part of different Nordic programmes.

**France** and **Luxembourg** launched new voluntary services, the service civique, which are open to young people from other European countries. Conversely, **Italy's** civic service allows young people to volunteer in another country. The **Czech Republic** launched a pilot call for innovative projects promoting cross-border volunteering. **Poland** focused on youth mobility in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus countries.

A number of Member States pursue strategic approaches to promoting youth volunteering. **Austria**, **Lithuania**, **Romania** and **Slovenia**, for example, prepared volunteering laws, as did **Croatia**. In **Bulgaria** volunteering is one of the main strategic goals of the National Youth Strategy and also **Hungary** promotes volunteering through its youth strategy. **Spain** and **Greece**, for example, have specific Volunteer Strategies. The **Czech Republic** adopted an Action Plan, which promotes a youth dimension in all forms of voluntary activities as well as cross-border volunteering. **Germany** initiated new opportunities for cross-border volunteering, such as a new format of the international youth voluntary services. Many countries also refer to the expert group on the Mobility of Young Volunteers as an important forum to advance the implementation of the Recommendation.

In terms of awareness raising for volunteering, many Member States referred to the value of the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Some refer to Eurodesk and its network as an important provider of information about volunteering. **France** has a Youth Portal with a specific 'International Mobility' section and young people share related information via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. In the **United Kingdom** the 'Volunteer Scotland' website offers numerous volunteering opportunities from small local to large scale international volunteering. **Bulgaria**, **Estonia** and **Spain** reach out to formal-learning institutions, such as schools or universities, to promote volunteering. **Italy** organised a promotional truck tour.

### 8.2.2. *Quality assurance*

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to assure quality through the development of self-assessment tools?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	13	2	2	9
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7		1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	4			4
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	9	1	1	7

The 'Youthpass Certificate' from the Youth in Action programme is mentioned by some Member States as a tool in this context and a valuable starting point for further initiatives. Measures for quality assurance by self-assessment are generally closely intertwined with efforts regarding recognition of non-formal learning.

By way of example, in **Sweden**, where voluntary activities are primarily organised by civil society organisations, several self-assessment tools are in use, such as the 'Experience, Learning, Development – ELD' assessment tool, developed by the Centre for International Exchanges. **Finland** also reports considerations for developing criteria and tools for self-assessment. **Germany** is preparing to take concrete measures having provided central units for quality management in the International Youth Volunteering Programme.

### 8.2.3. *Promoting cross-border mobility of youth workers and young volunteers*

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote cross-border mobility of youth workers and young people in youth organisations?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	20	2	1	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	1	2	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Several Member States cite how the Youth in Action programme, the main programme for mobility at EU level in this field, contributes to mobility in a concrete way. For example, in **Slovenia** the Youth in Action programme has prompted several pilot youth worker exchange projects. In addition, it developed youth worker exchange programmes in cooperation with partners from **Finland**.

In addition to the Youth in Action programme, there are nationally driven initiatives promoting exchanges between youth workers. The French Community of **Belgium** has a youth worker exchange with **France** and **Switzerland**. Its 'Tremplins Jeunes' programme offers internships in youth organisations. **France** encourages the mobility of youth workers through the law on the civic service.

#### 8.2.4. Particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to give particular attention in this context to young people with fewer opportunities?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	2	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	10	2	2	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3			3

In a number of countries, prevention of exclusion is part of broader youth strategies and funding schemes, also covering volunteering.

**Slovenia's** Volunteering Act stipulates specific attention to young people with fewer opportunities. **Hungary** made inclusion a priority of its volunteering programmes. In **Italy**, the EuroGames 2010 project, which focused on capacity building for volunteering and sustainable development, actively reached out to young people with fewer opportunities.

**Finland** stresses the importance of creating local working models and basic structures in the field of volunteering.

#### 8.2.5. Promoting the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities through instruments such as Europass, Youthpass and Member State instruments?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	19	1	2	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	2	1	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	5			5
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Member States actively undertake efforts ensuring that the value of volunteering experiences is duly recognised. **Portugal** grants all young people who participated in voluntary activities a certificate, **Austria** developed a Volunteer Pass and the **Czech Republic** created a Personal Competence Portfolio ('Keys for Life' project). Youth Portfolio is a self-assessment tool available in **Luxembourg**. Youthpass gets mentioned as the primary means of recognition by the Member States and **Bulgaria** based its national document on the Youthpass.

A number of Member States are focusing on outreach to the labour market to have experiences gained through volunteering recognised by employers. **Denmark** states that the skills required through volunteering are highly recognised on the labour market. **Hungary** inserted the need to develop a validation system, in particular in view of future employment of young volunteers, into its National Youth Strategy. The **Slovak** KOMPrax network for the recognition of youth work is preparing a database which intends to function as an 'achievements platform' also accessible to employers. In the French Community of **Belgium** the Scouts raised awareness of volunteering outcomes in enterprises. **Latvia** aims at making Youthpass better known in the entrepreneurial world.

Social recognition, such as the ‘Volunteer of the Year’ in **Slovenia** or the ‘saltire Award’ in the **United Kingdom** are appreciated by volunteers. In **Germany**, former EVS volunteers promote through the EuroPeers programme volunteering in schools, youth clubs, and pedestrian zones but also in local and regional media.

#### 8.2.6. Promoting intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	14	1	1	12
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	1	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	8	1	1	6
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	5		1	4

Many Member States declare that the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 enhances their intergenerational activities, including volunteering. **Lithuania** aims at promoting volunteering under the European Year 2012.

There are a number of examples of youth organisations' involvement in projects around intergenerational solidarity. **Slovenia** reports on youth organisations participating in the ESF network for intergenerational solidarity. **Estonia** encourages joint voluntary activities of the young and the elder generation, especially at the local level. Also the **Czech Republic** supports joint volunteering at local level through projects such as ‘Volunteering - A Way to Development of Local Communities’ by Hestia, the national volunteering centre, and ‘Between Generations – Active and Together’ by the Network of Healthy Cities. In **Ireland** the National Youth Council cooperates with the organisation Age Action, in **Denmark**, the National Youth Council works regularly with organisations of the elderly, **Germany** and **Spain** promote intergenerational housing and **Slovakia** involves all generations in a project on road safety.

An example of a volunteering project whereby young people help elderly people can be found in **Portugal**, where the young run errands for and keep the elderly company in the framework of the project ‘Recados e Companhia’. Other fields of intergenerational volunteering are, for example, culture (**Austria**: music; **Malta**: theatre), social care (**Portuguese** voluntary programmes with the Institute of Social Security), environment (**Cyprus**: recycling; **Estonia**: garbage cleaning) and IT skills (**Denmark**: computer literacy and use of cell-phones).

#### BULGARIA

##### National volunteering campaign

In connection with the celebration of the European youth week in 2011 and the European Year of Volunteering, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science co-organised a National volunteering campaign. The main idea was to convince all of us, that together we can change the world to the better. This campaign started on Facebook 21 April and finished 31 December 2011. It targeted young Bulgarian people to generate ideas and to exchange them using the social network as well as to exchange practices in the sphere of volunteering. The Facebook application ‘The Change Starts with You’ had for each of the nine messages separate webpages (e.g. Help elderly people! Accept the different! Don't be aggressive!).

Users could there publish photos and descriptions of the initiatives realized in connection with the relevant ideas. For more information, click [here](#) or [here](#).

### **8.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

Preparing for the 2011 European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) was represented in the 'European Year of Volunteering 2011 Alliance', an informal grouping of 39 European networks of Civil Society Organisations active in volunteering, working together on the advocacy for and promotion, preparation and implementation of the European Year of Volunteering.

The YFJ organised the II Youth Convention on Volunteering, the biggest civil society event of the European Year on Volunteering. Hosted by the European Parliament, it provided a space for young volunteers and youth organisations to work together, to discuss with European decision-makers and celebrate young people's commitment throughout Europe. The convention included a range of activities, from policy-debates, exchanges of practices, meetings of young European and Chinese volunteers to public concerts. This gave visibility to volunteering in youth work, showcased the impact of youth organisations, and provided youth organisations with a space to exchange and to learn from best practices.

The YFJ also called for the adoption of a European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers. This Charter was developed in an open discussion with stakeholders, and based on the collection, analyses and interpretation of existing studies, surveys and statistical data on the legal status of volunteers and volunteering organisations.

**Table 8-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Voluntary Activities**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to create more opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?	to raise awareness about opportunities for mobility of young volunteers?	to assure quality through the development of self-assessment tools?	to promote cross-border mobility of youth workers and young people in youth organisations?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	◆	●
Belgium Flemish	■	●	■	■
Belgium French	■	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	●
Czech Republic	●	●	●	●
Denmark	■	◆	■	■
Germany	■	■	▲	■
Estonia	■	■	●	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	▲	●	▲	▲
Spain	■	■	◆	■
France	●	●	◆	●
Italy	■	■	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	◆	■
Latvia	◆	●	●	◆
Lithuania	◆	◆	◆	◆
Luxembourg	●	●	●	■
Hungary	■	■	▲	■
Malta	■	■	■	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	●	●	●	●
Poland	●	●	◆	■
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	●	▲	■
Slovenia	▲	■	■	●
Slovakia	■	■	◆	●
Finland	◆	◆	◆	■
Sweden	■	■	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◆	◆	◆	■
Switzerland	■	■	■	◆
Montenegro	●	■	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	●

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives			
EU Member States	to give particular attention in this context to young people with fewer opportunities?	to promote the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary activities through instruments such as Europass, Youthpass and Member State instruments?	to promote intergenerational solidarity through voluntary activities?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	▲
Belgium French	■	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●
Czech Republic	●	●	▲
Denmark	◆	■	■
Germany	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■
Ireland	■	◆	■
Greece	▲	▲	▲
Spain	■	■	■
France	●	◆	◆
Italy	■	■	●
Cyprus	■	■	■
Latvia	●	■	▲
Lithuania	◆	■	▲
Luxembourg	■	●	◆
Hungary	●	■	▲
Malta	■	■	●
Netherlands	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■
Poland	■	▲	▲
Portugal	■	■	■
Romania	■	▲	■
Slovenia	●	▲	●
Slovakia	■	▲	■
Finland	◆	■	◆
Sweden	■	■	◆
United Kingdom	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>			
Norway	■	◆	◆
Switzerland	■	■	▲
Montenegro	●	●	●
Croatia	●	■	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans



## 9. CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

### 9.1. Commission initiatives and action

Member States and the Commission are working together to increase opportunities for young people to experience culture and develop their talent and creative skills. This includes making new technologies available to empower young people's creativity, promoting specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers, and encouraging partnerships between culture and creative sectors on the one hand and youth organisations or workers on the other.

Under the European Agenda for Culture<sup>67</sup>, some initiatives directly address youth creativity and culture. The Council adopted Conclusions on *promoting a creative generation* in 2009<sup>68</sup> and Conclusions on *cultural and creative competences and their role in building intellectual capital of Europe* in 2011<sup>69</sup>. Promoting accessible and inclusive culture is among the priorities of the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 adopted by the Council in 2010<sup>70</sup>.

Under the EU Youth Strategy, a [study](#) on youth access to culture in Europe<sup>71</sup>, released mid-2010, highlights good practices. It also includes proposals for helping European institutions and Member States overcome common obstacles such as cost and distance and improve access of all young people to all forms of creative and cultural activity. Council Conclusions on *access of young people to culture* adopted in November 2010<sup>72</sup> underlined the need to promote the development of long-term coordinated policies for access of young people to culture on all levels and to deepen knowledge and exchange of experiences on the subject.

The Council also adopted Conclusions in May 2012 on *fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people*<sup>73</sup>, where it invited Member States to support young people's creativity through non-formal and informal learning activities. The Conclusions foresee the setting up of a peer-learning expert group on this theme.

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<sup>67</sup> More on the European Agenda for Culture on the specific Commission [website](#).

<sup>68</sup> OJ C 301, 11.12.2009, pp. 9-11.

<sup>69</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 19-23.

<sup>70</sup> OJ C 325, 2.12.2010, pp. 1-9.

<sup>71</sup> EACEA, 2008. *Access of young people to culture*. Brussels: EACEA. Available [here](#).

<sup>72</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 2-3.

<sup>73</sup> OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, pp. 1-4.

## HUNGARY, ROMANIA, TURKEY – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Branch of olive

The project created a multicultural and multi-religious atmosphere by bringing together 20 young people belonging to Christianity, Judaism and Islam from Hungary, Romania and Turkey for 10 days in Antalya, Turkey in 2011. The project focused on intercultural learning, and each group planned its own activities for a designated culture day, at which it introduced its culture and religion. All participants were also involved in workshops on diverse activities such as Ashura, painting Easter eggs, the Shabbat ritual, or henna night, effectively removing prejudices among the participants. A kite workshop involved group work and the kites were flown together in a spirit of brotherhood and freedom. A visit to the ‘Garden of tolerance’, where a mosque, a church and a synagogue stand alongside one another, helped to reinforce the sense of co-existence, and each group had a chance to introduce its own rituals. An imam read extracts from the Quran and explained the meaning in English, answering questions from participants. Participants learnt about each other's religions and cultures, improved mutual understanding, and broke down stereotypes and prejudices.

## 9.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 9.2.1. Following up the Council Conclusions on promoting a creative generation

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to support the development of creativity among young people by following up the Council conclusions on promoting a creative generation: developing the creativity and innovative capacity of children and young people through cultural expression and wider access to culture?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	23	1	1	21
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	2	1	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2		2	0

Many countries mention specific projects aiming at promoting youth access to culture and cultural expression: the French Community of **Belgium**, **Denmark**, **Germany**, and **Spain** all have awards to stimulate and highlight youth creativity while **Estonia** and **Italy** mention student cards which promote access to culture. **Luxembourg** offers free access to museums for young people, **Malta** has a specific culture card, **Portugal** reports having a youth creative programme, **Sweden** has the Creative Schools initiative and the **United Kingdom** promotes the Welsh Young Creators' strategy.

Some countries also present broader programmes or strategies for youth cultural education (**Ireland**, **France**, **Lithuania**, **Poland** and **Slovenia**) sometimes involving cooperation between Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Education/Youth.

## ITALY

### Io Studio – enable students to participate in culture

The project aims at establishing a public-private institutional network that can provide students with easier access to a variety of goods and services in the fields of cultural and natural heritage, ICT, travel, and sports. Introduction of students to various forms of cultural education outside school perimeter is the main objective. The project enables them to actively participate in the cultural realities of their territory, as well as nationally and internationally.

The established partnerships involve students in projects, which seek to stimulate their creativity by making them the protagonists of the creative and training processes as well as to encourage direct contact with the business world and cultural production circuits.

In the framework of this project a Student Card and a Student Portal [website](#) were developed.

#### 9.2.2. Making new technologies readily available to young people

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to make new technologies readily available to empower young people's creativity and capacity for innovation, and attract interest in culture, the arts and science?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22		2	20
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	3	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1		1	0

Some countries mention support of specific projects to make new technologies available to young people.

**Sweden** underlines the role of schools to stimulate youth creativity and mentions support to the use of ICT in teaching, while **France** stresses the role that cultural institutions may have in this regard and the need to raise their awareness.

Support of young people to achieve media literacy is indicated as an element of national strategies for youth by **Belgium, Italy, Austria, and Slovenia**.

## BELGIUM – FLEMISH COMMUNITY

### Nugames

This project is an initiative of the Flemish Youth Support Centre in cooperation with other youth organisations funded by the Government of the Flemish Community of Belgium. Nugames are recreational activities that use technology and digital media being at the same time linked to the surrounding physical space too. They are intended for group play. The activities are freely accessible and can be modified and spread widely. Nugames are modular, which makes them easy to adapt to different contexts. The use of Nugames and other digital technology can make youth work more attractive to young people and furthermore help bridge

the digital divide. New forms of play will lead to new creative forms of expression for young people. For more information, click [here](#) or [here](#).

**Estonia** and **Malta** stress that they set up schemes to highlight creative industries' activities that target young people.

### 9.2.3. *Providing access to environments in which young people can develop their creativity*

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to provide access to environments where young people can develop their creativity and interests and spend a meaningful leisure time?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary. ■		26	1	3	22
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010. ●		7	2	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012. ▲		0			0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field. ◆		0			0

Free access to museums for young people (**Luxembourg**) or specific cards providing easier access to cultural products or facilities (**Italy**, **Malta** and **Austria**) are presented as measures to promote young people's creativity.

#### ITALY

##### Osthello

Since 2010 the Government promoted and funded with more than € 3 million 'Osthello', a pilot project carried out in collaboration with the Italian Association of Youth Hotels (AIG) intending to develop youth mobility and youth creativity. It consists of using hostels for young people all over the country which have been provided and equipped with appropriate spaces for artistic production such as recording studios, photographic laboratories, cinema sets, and theatre and multimedia laboratories. The pilot initiative is carried out in eight youth hotels and deal on five artistic subjects. This chance for young artists to produce free of charge and to meet important artists and teachers of various fields at relevant seminars could become even more proactive by creating a network of events, exhibitions and multimedia tools set up across the territory. For more information, click [here](#).

The role of youth/leisure time centres in providing creative environments for young people is particularly pointed out in the reports from the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic**, **Cyprus**, **Lithuania**, **Luxembourg**, **Hungary**, **Slovenia**, and **Finland**.

#### SPAIN

##### Youth Creating Spaces – places to develop a creative spirit

The Spanish Institute for Youth (INJUVE), from 2005 to 2009, has promoted the young artistic creation in collaboration with various local authorities, through the construction and rehabilitation of buildings to house Youth Creating Spaces. A Youth Creating Space is a place for sharing knowledge, meeting and learning, where young people can develop a creative spirit with means that are usually difficult to get. It is a network of 'own spaces' for young people with whom they can identify and turn it into a personal project. The versatile spaces

are eligible for rehearsal, performance, assembly, and other creative leisure of various types. It offers several areas fully equipped with the necessary for practicing creative activities, including services for the general operation such as buffet, offices, toilets, storage, and information about youth. For more information, click [here](#).

**Estonia, France, Italy, and Slovenia** mention that cultural institutions are encouraged to provide young people with access to facilities where they can develop creative activities.

The National Youth Report for **Sweden** underlines that the Swedish Arts Council allocates around 30 % of state cultural funding to operations and projects that directly benefit child and youth culture, while **Ireland** supports a National Youth Arts Programme which endeavours to set standards for quality youth arts work through the promotion and development of models of best practice.

#### 9.2.4. *Promoting specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers*

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	1	1	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1	1		0
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3		1	2

Among measures that have been taken, some Member States emphasise training in intercultural competences of youth workers (among them **Belgium, Cyprus** and the **United Kingdom**) whereas others report that priority is given to training in new media or technologies (the **Czech Republic, Spain, Luxembourg, and Austria**). The National Youth Report of **Belgium, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Slovenia** mention the role of the Youth in Action programme in supporting training activities for professionals and volunteers in youth organisations and youth centres on cultural aspects.

### 9.3. Youth-led initiatives and action

Whilst creativity and culture are not currently within the strategic priorities of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), culture was nevertheless progressively integrated into its actions. In 2010 and 2011 particularly, the YO! Fest was organised and brought together an international array of young musicians to take part in a public youth event in Brussels.

The YFJ further contributed to the discussions on young people's access to culture during the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU, which led to the adoption of Council Conclusions *on access of young people to culture* 19 November 2010<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 2-3.

**Table 9-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Culture and Creativity**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives				
EU Member States	to support the development of creativity among young people by following up the Council Conclusions on promoting a creative generation?	to make new technologies readily available to empower young people's creativity and capacity for innovation, and attract interest in culture, the arts and science?	to provide access to environments where young people can develop their creativity and interests and spend a meaningful leisure time?	to promote specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	●	●
Belgium Flemish	●	●	●	▲
Belgium French	■	●	■	■
Bulgaria	■	●	●	●
Czech Republic	■	■	■	●
Denmark	■	■	■	■
Germany	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■
Greece	■	■	■	■
Spain	■	■	■	■
France	■	■	■	◆
Italy	■	■	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■
Latvia	■	■	■	●
Lithuania	■	■	■	■
Luxembourg	●	▲	●	■
Hungary	●	▲	●	●
Malta	●	●	●	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■
Austria	●	●	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	●
Portugal	■	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	■	■	■	■
Slovakia	■	■	■	■
Finland	■	■	■	■
Sweden	●	●	■	◆
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◆	■	■	■
Switzerland	◆	◆	■	◆
Montenegro	●	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## 10. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

### 10.1. Commission initiatives and action

The EU Youth Strategy ‘field of action’ Youth and the World aims at supporting the implementation of the EU's external policies in the youth field. It encourages young people's cooperation with regions outside of Europe through enhancing young people's participation in and contribution to global policy processes. Numerous activities of Youth and the World are implemented within the [partnership](#) between the European Commission and the Council of Europe (CoE) in the youth field. In the context of the EU-CoE youth partnership, [two symposia](#) were organised with Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries, including the Russian Federation. The first, hosted in Ukraine in 2011, focused on the Eastern dimension of participation and mobility of young people. This was followed up by a symposium focusing on the well-being of young people, hosted in June 2012 in Georgia. Both activities offered opportunities for exchanging views on youth policies, priorities and good practices. The European Commission maintains contact also with other international organisations in this field, such as the UN family and the World Bank. The Commission supported, for example, the [UN Year for Youth](#) and took part in the Youth World Conference in Mexico in 2010.

The priority regions for Youth and the World are in particular the accession and pre-accession states, the Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation, the Southern Mediterranean (South Med) region and Southeast Europe. Other focus areas are Africa, Canada, and China. These priorities allow for a flexible response to political and societal developments, requirements, changes and opportunities in the youth sector.

Outreach to eastern European and Caucasus countries was a priority of the Polish EU Presidency in 2011. During this presidency, the Council adopted Conclusions on *the Eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility*<sup>75</sup> and the EU Presidency Youth Conference included participants from these countries. The Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations, which also included the formulation of concrete recommendations during the EU Presidency Youth Conference in Warsaw, was dedicated to this subject.

The South Med region was in particular brought to the global public's attention through the youth-led uprisings in some Arab countries during 2011, called the ‘Arab Spring’. In light of these events, the Commission organised a seminar on the empowerment of youth organisations and youth-led civil society initiatives in Malta in March 2012 followed by a youth policy conference in Tunis in August 2012. These events were organised in the framework of the EU-CoE youth partnership in cooperation with different partners such as the North-South Centre<sup>76</sup>, the League of Arab States, the Maltese and Tunisian governments, the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and civil society organisations in the region. The aims of these events were to analyse the current situation and to identify future practical steps to promote youth participation. The ground for these events had already been prepared by a youth policy seminar in Egypt in 2010.

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<sup>75</sup> OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14.

<sup>76</sup> The North–South Centre, officially the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, is an autonomous agency – called a [Partial Agreement](#) – of the [Council of Europe](#).



As a follow-up to EU-Africa Youth Summits held in 2007 and 2010, the first meeting of the Africa-Europe Youth Platform/Forum is envisaged for November 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This will bring together the Commission, the Council of Europe, the North-South Centre, the African Union (AU), the EU-CoE youth partnership, the YFJ and the Pan-African Youth Union.

The second EU-Canada [Youth Policy Round Table](#) on youth participation took place in Helsinki, Finland as a follow-up to the 2009 EU-Canada Roundtable on Youth Employment. It was organised in the framework of the EU-Canada Agreement in Higher Education, Training and Youth<sup>77</sup>. The main goals were to exchange good practices, policy models and experiences in the EU and Canada in the youth policy area.

The year 2011 was designated the EU-China Year of Youth with a view to further promote and deepen the partnership between China and Europe, promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between our youth. Several activities were organised throughout the year involving policy-makers and youth organisations, some even continued beyond 2011.

The policy efforts are supported by several programmes in the youth field. The Youth in Action programme has a special strand called '[Youth in the World](#)' which supports activities aimed at strengthening relations between the EU and its neighbours, as well as the rest of the world. A total of nearly 27 000 young people and youth workers participated in 2010 and 2011 in exchanges and other non-formal education activities supported by the programme in sub-action 'Cooperation with EU neighbours'.

The Commission is increasingly focusing on the youth dimension of EU development cooperation. The focus on vulnerable groups, including youth, is embraced in the Communication on the future of EU development cooperation *Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change*<sup>78</sup>.

Youth employment has also become a major issue in the post-Arab spring context in the Southern Neighbourhood region. A study by EuropeAid published in 2010 on 'Social Inclusion and youth in EC External Cooperation' focusing on ENP countries, provided key information and recommendations on how to streamline and better tackle youth challenges in our external financial cooperation. In line with the Joint Communications of 8 March and 25 May 2011, geographical interventions in southern neighbourhood will have a strong focus on youth inclusion. In this regard, in the 2011 SPRING programme (Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth – € 350 million) youth employability and skills development are considered as priorities for ensuring democratic transformation, institution building and economic growth. An example of this greater focus is the forthcoming 'Jeunesse-emploi' (€ 23 million) programme in Algeria which will start in 2013. In the most recent Joint Communication of May 2012 *Delivering on a new European Neighbourhood Policy*<sup>79</sup>, the EU reinforces its commitment to support partner countries reforms aimed at promoting social cohesion and employment, in particular for young people, in an integrated approach.

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<sup>77</sup> OJ L 397, 30.12.2006, pp. 15-21.

<sup>78</sup> COM(2011) 637.

<sup>79</sup> JOIN(2012) 14.



## EUROPEAID'S REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON YOUTH IN THE ENP REGION.

The regional Eastern Partnership Youth programme (2012-2015) will strengthen the response of the Eastern Partnership countries to the needs of youth in their societies. The programme has two components: capacity building to officials and civil society actors in the youth policy domain, conducted by a Youth Regional Unit; and a grants scheme which takes the shape of the 'Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window'. Priority in awarding grants under this window will be given to projects targeting disadvantaged young people living in rural or deprived urban areas.

In the Neighbourhood South area, the [EuroMed Youth IV Programme](#), with timeframe 2010-2013 and a total budget of € 5 million, aims to support and strengthen the participation and contribution of youth organisations and youth from the Euro-Mediterranean region towards the development of civil society and democracy. As a response to the recent events in the area, the programme has been granted with extra € 6 million top-up in 2012.

The 'field of action' Youth and the World also supports recent Communications from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission on *a new response to a changing neighbourhood*<sup>80</sup>, *a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*<sup>81</sup>, and the Commission Communication *Eastern Partnership*<sup>82</sup>.

## DENMARK, GERMANY, UNITED KINGDOM – YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME

### Global Youth and Sports Forum for the Millennium Development Goals

The Global Youth and Sports Forum project took place in 2010 involving seven promoters from three EU countries (Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom) and three partner countries (African and South-American). It gathered 100 young people to establish a platform for young citizens to debate and act upon the role of youth and sport to reach the Millennium Development Goals (exchange of good practices, dissemination of recommendations from participants to stakeholders at local, national and international levels, international networking and partnership-building between participants and among partner organisations for future initiatives). The promoters were international, member-based youth and sport umbrellas, international youth and sport foundations and regional 'sport for Social Change Networks'.

## 10.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level

### 10.2.1. Raising awareness of young people about global issues

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to raise the awareness of young people about global issues such as sustainable development and human rights?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	2	2	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	9	1	2	6

<sup>80</sup> COM(2011) 303.

<sup>81</sup> COM(2011) 200.

<sup>82</sup> COM(2008) 823.

NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2			2

Almost half of the Member States indicate that global issues are part of the education curriculum, a national youth policy programme or strategy, an action plan or a specific education programme. The important role of the Youth in Action programme as a means to support young people's initiatives and projects was also mentioned.

According to the National Reports, a number of key state institutions or non-governmental organisations are involved in raising awareness of young people about global issues (e.g. Youth Councils, youth organisations, National Authority for Youth, advisory councils, National Commission for Human Rights, specific ministries, General Secretariat for Youth, inter-ministerial working group, informal network of organisations and institutions active in the field, youth institutes, Environmental Education Centre). For example in **Sweden**, the International Development Cooperation Agency disseminates information about development cooperation and global issues and the Living History Forum works with young people on tolerance, democracy and human rights. With the support of the Spanish Institute for Youth, **Spain** organised an international activity called 'University for Youth and Development' where more than 300 young people from over 80 countries discussed current youth issues and focused especially on sustainable development.

## SLOVENIA

### Global Education Week

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates an inter-ministerial working group for global education, under the auspices of which various events are held for raising awareness of the importance of global education in schools and in general. Under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by SLOGA, an NGO platform for development cooperation and humanitarian aid, a week of global education is organised every year in cooperation with a number of non-governmental organisations for young people. In 2011, the central topic focused on a responsible behaviour of individuals to our planet and its inhabitants. A number of events were held throughout Slovenia, also in cooperation with all kinds of organisations, schools, and associations that are engaged in global education in various ways. For more information, click [here](#).

### 10.2.2. Providing opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues (e.g. via participation in international meetings, virtual platforms/fora etc.)?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	2	3	16
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	8	1	1	6
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012	▲	3			3
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	1			1

Most Member States mention that they provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues (e.g. via participation in international meetings, virtual platforms/forums, etc.).

Member States use several channels for encouraging exchanges of opinions between young people and policy-makers on global issues. This includes international events organised by the government or NGOs (**Slovenia**), conferences, online live debates, various forums and exchanges at the international level either by the ministry responsible for Youth issues or through Youth Councils (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, **Denmark**, **Greece**, **Spain** and **Cyprus**). Some Member States (German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Latvia**, **Hungary** and **Sweden**) mentioned that the EU Youth Conferences function in a positive way in this matter through the Structured Dialogue as well as the National Working Groups. YFJ, Youth in Action programme (**Estonia** and **Ireland**), EuroMed Youth (**Malta**) Platform and International Advisory Committee were also referred to in this context.

### 10.2.3. Encouraging young people to go 'green'

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage young people to participate in green volunteering and 'green' patterns of consumption and production (e.g. recycling, energy conservation, hybrid vehicles, etc.)?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	22	1	2	19
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	1	1	4
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	3	1	1	1

Special websites for young consumers exist in **Ireland** and **Sweden**. Eco-friendly ideas, civic participation and social actions are promoted in **Lithuania** via the national event 'Let's do it'. **Luxembourg**, **Hungary** and **Finland** are developing agendas or action plans for education in sustainable development. Such an agenda (Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship) has been in place in the **United Kingdom** already since 2008 as well as in the **Czech Republic**, **Cyprus**, **Latvia** and **Slovenia**. **Slovenia** is also part of an international programme of eco-schools which encourages the education of children and is managed by the association 'Ecologists without borders'. In **Bulgaria**, the national programme underlines the use of green energy, environmental protection and recycling. In **Latvia**, its Green point organises a competition 'Green Night' event both for students and pupils.

### 10.2.4. Promoting entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to promote entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	21	2	2	17
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	6	1	2	3
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	2			2
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	4			4

Several Member States indicate that they have inter-governmental or inter-organisational partnership agreements with strategic regions outside the EU. Such programmes contribute to the development of better relations and understanding between nations and facilitate educational cooperation and further youth exchanges. Some projects aim at youth work

professionals and training of young people for the creation of international youth networks. For example, **Spain's** Cooperating Youth programme serves as a gateway to the field of international cooperation for young university graduates by providing professional services at offices in Latin America, Africa and Asia. **Estonia** facilitates educational cooperation and youth exchanges between associations, young people, and specialists with China and Japan to promote mutual understanding, broaden the international perspectives and support young leaders in a global society. Some Member States, such as the **Czech Republic**, **Poland** and **Finland** have programmes run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Education. In the **Czech Republic**, the United Nations Volunteers Contact Point provides an opportunity for young volunteers to be actively involved in UN development programmes and peace missions. **France** created a platform '[France Volontaires](#)' which consists of public sector, international solidarity associations and young people and has an aim to support the development of international voluntary exchanges and solidarity. Within its Presidency in the second half of 2010, **Poland** granted a number of scholarships to several 'Meet your neighbour' projects. Under the **Hungarian** Presidency during the first half of 2011, the EU-China Youth Year promoted youth initiatives and exchanges, and a number of young people from China attended the EU Youth Conference and the European Youth Week.

To promote entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe, several Member States, for instance the German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Denmark**, **Italy**, **Latvia**, **Malta**, **Austria**, **Finland** and **Sweden** stressed the importance of EU mobility programmes, such as Youth in Action (especially European Voluntary Service) and Lifelong Learning (primarily Erasmus – student exchange in higher education). They also underline the role of the National Agencies of these programmes (**Romania**) and the SALTO Resource Centres (**Poland**).

#### 10.2.5. Encouraging young people to participate in development cooperation activities

##### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives to encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities either in their country of residence or abroad?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, such measures had already been taken before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010, no additional initiatives were necessary.	■	23	2	3	18
YES, such measures/initiatives were taken after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010.	●	7	1	1	5
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	1			1
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	2			2

A common way for young people to participate is to engage in civil society organisations concentrating on development, or by carrying out voluntary activities in their home country or in a developing country. Some Member States highlight the opportunities offered by the Commission's Youth in Action programme (**Bulgaria**, **Luxembourg**, **Austria**, and **Slovenia**) while others emphasise national programmes (Flemish Community of **Belgium**, French Community of **Belgium**, the **Czech Republic**, **Germany**, **Estonia**, **Spain**, **Cyprus**, **Lithuania**, **Poland**, **Finland** and **Sweden**). Many of the National Youth Reports also stress that projects supporting the participation of young people in development cooperation also help them develop a European identity and sense of solidarity. The Flemish Community of **Belgium** reports that it supports both international youth projects in countries in need of humanitarian help as well as international projects that raise young people's intercultural competences and awareness of problems in developing countries. National programmes providing opportunities for young graduates and young people to obtain experience from working in international organisations and in developing countries include the Junior

Professional Officer programme in **Sweden**, the Aid Volunteering programme in **Poland** and the **Spanish** Cooperation Youth programme. The Development Aid Programme in the **Czech Republic** supports the development of the youth sector in specific countries and offers training courses concerning development projects at the national level. In **Bulgaria**, a national information campaign about volunteering and the Annual Ball of Volunteers are examples of activities aiming at awareness-raising among youth organisations on this subject. **Germany** and **Austria** offer school partnership programmes on development cooperation issues. **Lithuania** highlights ‘Green Capital’ a cooperation project focusing on climate change, sharing of knowledge and personal experience.

### **10.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

The inclusion of Youth and the World as a new ‘field of action’ in the EU Youth Strategy has been welcomed by young people. This ‘field of action’ reflects the aims of the Youth Forum's work in strengthening inter-regional and global youth dialogue and cooperation, supporting the development of youth work in other regions of the world and looking for synergies between European youth organisations and their counterparts elsewhere.

In 2010 and 2011, the Youth Forum's engagement in cooperation with other regions of the world focused on Africa-Europe youth cooperation, Euro-Mediterranean youth cooperation, the EU-China Year of Youth, EU-Canada cooperation as well as other initiatives carried out by youth organisations with other regions of the world. The Youth Forum engaged in several processes with Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, China, Arab and Mediterranean regions. These include the ‘Universities’ on Participation and Citizenship in Uruguay, and on Youth and Development in Cape Verde and Spain; the Youth Leaders Meeting on Youth Policies in the context of Africa-Europe youth cooperation and the Euro-Latin American and Caribbean Youth Forum.

The YFJ was also active in the UN High-level Meeting on Youth, the 4<sup>th</sup> Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilisations, as member of the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO) and as co-organiser of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Universities on Youth and Development (UYD), held in Mollina, Spain.

In the field of sustainable development, the Youth Forum adopted several policy positions linked to the UN Millennium Development Goals and prepared youth delegates for climate-related and social development-related international events.

In an EU-Canada roundtable in Helsinki in 2011, jointly organised by the Canadian government and the Commission, representatives of youth organisations had opportunities to exchange views with youth workers, researchers and officials from both sides of the Atlantic on the topic of youth participation.

The YFJ was actively involved in the 2011 EU-China Year of Youth, contributing to realising youth dialogue and achieving full involvement of young people and youth organisations in EU-China relations.

The YFJ contributed to the Structured Dialogue on the involvement of civil society and local authorities in EU Development Cooperation, organised in 2010.

**Table 10-A: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Youth and the World**

Has the Government of your country - existing or previous - taken concrete measures or carried out any specific policy initiatives					
EU Member States	to raise the awareness of young people about global issues such as sustainable development and human rights?	to provide opportunities for young people to exchange views with policy-makers on global issues (e.g. via participation in international meetings, virtual platforms/forums, etc.)?	to encourage young people to participate in green volunteering and 'green' patterns of consumption and production (e.g. recycling, energy conservation, hybrid vehicles, etc.)?	to promote entrepreneurship, employment, education and volunteering opportunities with countries or regions outside of Europe?	to encourage young people to participate in development cooperation activities either in their country of residence or abroad?
Belgium German-speaking	●	●	◆	●	●
Belgium Flemish	■	■	■	■	■
Belgium French	■	■	●	■	■
Bulgaria	●	●	●	▲	●
Czech Republic	■	■	●	■	■
Denmark	◆	■	■	◆	■
Germany	■	■	■	■	■
Estonia	■	■	■	■	■
Ireland	■	■	■	■	■
Greece	■	●	●	■	■
Spain	■	■	■	■	■
France	■	■	■	●	●
Italy	■	■	■	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	■	■	■
Latvia	■	●	■	●	●
Lithuania	◆	◆	■	◆	●
Luxembourg	●	▲	▲	◆	●
Hungary	●	●	▲	●	■
Malta	●	■	●	■	■
Netherlands	■	■	■	■	■
Austria	■	■	■	■	■
Poland	■	■	■	■	■
Portugal	●	●	■	■	■
Romania	■	■	■	■	■
Slovenia	▲	▲	■	▲	▲
Slovakia	●	●	◆	◆	◆
Finland	■	▲	■	■	■
Sweden	■	■	■	■	■
United Kingdom	■	■	■	■	◆
<b>Non-EU</b>					
Norway	■	■	◆	■	■
Switzerland	●	■	■	■	■
Montenegro	●	●	●	●	●
Croatia	■	■	■	●	■

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

## **11. STRUCTURED DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS**

### **11.1. Commission initiatives and action**

Structured Dialogue with Young People<sup>83</sup> is an operational tool of the EU Youth Strategy, which enables young people and youth organisations to contribute to policy-making. It is conducted in cycles of 18 months, coinciding with the terms of office of Trio Presidencies, on overall thematic priorities set by the Council. In addition, individual Presidency countries set national priorities for Structured Dialogue which, wholly or partially, contribute to the overall thematic priority.

Structured Dialogue is conducted at national and EU level:

- National Working Groups (NWG) manage consultations of young people and youth organisations within their respective countries on the basis of guiding questions set by the European Steering Committee for the Structured Dialogue (ESC) for each phase of the Structured Dialogue cycle. The guiding questions reflect the overall thematic priority of the Structured Dialogue cycle and the national priority set by the presidency countries for its phase of the cycle. NWGs may adapt the guiding questions to take account of national situations and report the outcomes of consultations to the ESC.
- Outcomes are collated and serve as a basis for debates conducted at EU Youth Conferences organised by each presidency country, where selected youth delegates and policy-makers representing national authorities and EU institutions will draw conclusions (in the form of joint recommendations) aimed, in most cases, at Member States and the European Commission. The conclusions are subsequently reflected in Council resolutions/conclusions adopted by youth ministers.

At the end of the first cycle (on *youth employment*) of Structured Dialogue, a Council Resolution was adopted to provide an overview of the process and its outcomes.

#### **HUNGARY**

##### **Compendium on Structured Dialogue**

In early 2012, the outgoing Hungarian Presidency published a compendium on the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. The Compendium provides an overview of the Structured Dialogue conducted on the theme of ‘youth employment’, with contributions from the main actors in the process. It contains facts and figures relating to the first cycle and lists its main outcomes and achievements. It is a useful reference point, which may inspire those entrusted with

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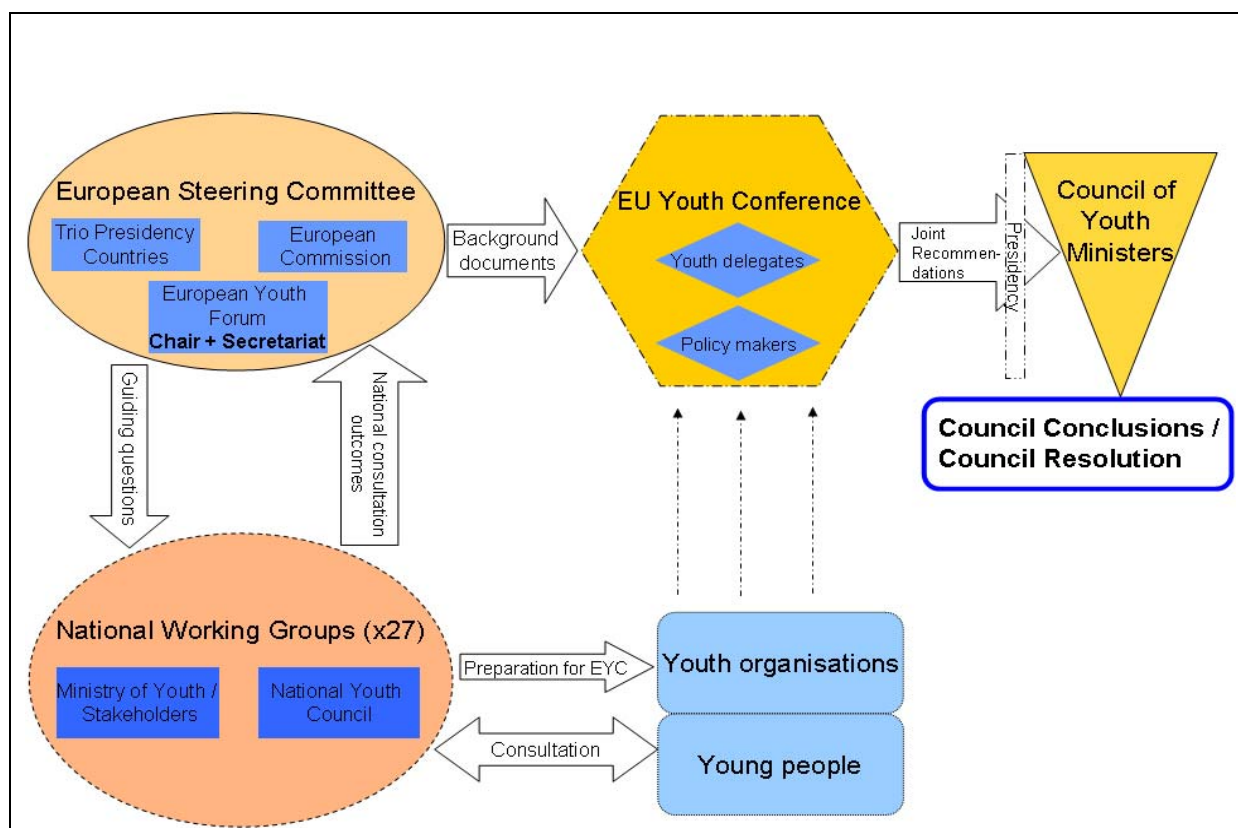
<sup>83</sup> The implementation of Structured Dialogue is detailed in annex III of the Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European Cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 11, and in the annex of the Council Resolution on the Structured Dialogue with young people on youth employment, OJ C 164, 2.6.2011, p. 4.



ensuring the successful conduct of Structured Dialogue in the years to come. The Commission has made this compendium available on the [European Youth Portal](#)<sup>84</sup>.

NWGs were established in all Member States during the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. In the second cycle of Structured Dialogue (on *youth participation in democratic life*<sup>85</sup>), NWGs in all Member States organised consultations of young people and youth organisations and reported on their outcomes.

**Table 11-A: Structured Dialogue with Young People and Youth Organisations**



**Structured Dialogue** enables young people and youth organisations to contribute to policy-making. Its cycles of 18 months coincide with the terms of office of **Trio Presidencies**.

Overall thematic priorities are set by the Council and may be supplemented by national priorities of individual presidency countries. The priorities are reflected in guiding questions set for each phase of the cycle of Structured Dialogue (18 months). The **European Steering Committee** for the Structured Dialogue (ESC) sets the guiding questions which form the basis of consultations in Member States. ESC consists of three representatives (national authority, National Agency for Youth in Action programme, National Youth Council) of each of the Member States of the Trio Presidency, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum (YFJ). The latter chairs the ESC and provides most of its secretarial functions.

**National Working Groups** (NWG) manage consultations of young people, youth organisations and other stakeholders. NWGs may adapt the guiding questions to take account of national situations.

<sup>84</sup> Ministry of National Resources of Hungary, 2011. [Compendium of the Structured Dialogue with Young People and Youth Organisations on Youth Employment during the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian EU Presidencies](#). Available [here](#).

<sup>85</sup> The first part of the second cycle finished with Council Conclusions, OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14.



Background documents for **EU Youth Conferences** are drawn up on the basis of a consolidated report of outcomes of national consultations. EU Youth Conferences are organised by each Member State holding the Council Presidency, where nominated youth delegates and policy-makers, representing national authorities and EU institutions, conduct debates and draw conclusions (in the form of joint recommendations).

Joint recommendations are generally aimed at Member States and the European Commission and are subsequently reflected in Council resolutions/conclusions adopted by Youth Ministers.

With a view to developing and refining the process, and as an integral part of the 5<sup>th</sup> European Youth Week in May 2011, the Commission took the initiative to host Structured Dialogue devoted to the conduct of the Dialogue itself. This Dialogue took stock of the process on the basis of experiences gained from the conduct of its first cycle. Youth delegates representing all NWGs and policy-makers from most national authorities adopted [45 joint recommendations on the future conduct and development of Structured Dialogue](#).

Dedicated pages have been added to the [European Youth Portal](#) to promote and enhance the visibility of the process.

## **GERMANY**

### **Online procedure for Structured Dialogue**

Together with the NWG the National Co-ordination Unit developed an online procedure to compile the dialogue results. In a first phase, the demands, concerns, desires and results of the dialogue processes are compiled. These contributions are published immediately on a website for all to see. Compilation is followed by a second phase during which the participants prioritise the input and thereby determine which content will flow into the National Youth Report.

For the purposes of this online procedure, a special tool (the ‘participation tracker’) was developed to offer the young people low-threshold access to participation and at the same time provide all participants with the highest degree of transparency. With the ‘participation tracker’, a nationwide eParticipation procedure was used for the first time and it also serves as a pilot project for further developments in this area. For more information, click [here](#).

Although Structured Dialogue is only conducted in Member States, youth delegates and government officials from EU Candidate Countries, European Economic Area (EFTA-EEA) and other non-EU Youth in Action programme countries have, at the discretion of Member States holding the Presidency, been invited to participate in EU Youth Conferences.

The first two cycles of Structured Dialogue on employment and youth participation fed into Council documents and were actively used by the Commission to further their policies in these areas. Worth mentioning are take up of recommendations in the several of the Commission's policy initiatives to fight youth unemployment and the opening of an Eastern Partnership Window in the Youth in Action programme aimed at cooperation with eastern European neighbouring countries. The results of these efforts are described in further detail in the relevant chapters addressing employment, participation and youth in the world.

## **11.2. Summary of initiatives and action at national level**

### **Responses in National Youth Reports**

Has your government carried out any specific measures or is it planning to do so based on the conclusions from the European Youth Week, which present a number of recommendations on how the structured dialogue can be improved at the national and the European levels?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
YES, the government has implemented specific measures responding to recommendations from the European Youth Week in May 2011.	▼	16	3		13
NO, but we plan to take concrete measures in this field in 2012.	▲	8		1	7
NO, we do not have any current plans to carry out measures in this field.	◆	9		3	6

Most Member States have responded actively to the recommendations on how to improve the Structured Dialogue. The ESC for the Structured Dialogue and the Commission also responded to relevant recommendations from the conclusions drawn during the 2011 European Youth Week.

**Germany** believes that it has only limited means of exerting influence on the conduct of Structured Dialogue at EU level, but relies on contacts with the ESC to present proposals for improvements. Some Member States, including the **Netherlands** and **Lithuania** comment that efforts to improve the conduct of Structured Dialogue at national level are undertaken by the NWG, rather than the Government, which does not play a leading role in NWG.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has your Government supported the establishment of a National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	29	3		26
No	◆	4		4	0

All Member States demonstrated their commitment to Structured Dialogue by actively supporting the setting up of a NWG during the first cycle of the process. NWGs in all Member States contributed to the consultations of young people undertaken prior to the EU Youth Conferences organised by **Poland** and **Denmark**, which completed the first two phases of the second cycle on ‘youth participation in democratic life’.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the National Youth Council play a leading role in the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	24	3		21
No	◆	9		4	5

NYCs do not exist in all Member States, but they have the leading role in most NWGs. **Slovakia** reports that in line with the recommendations adopted during the 2011 European Youth Week, the leading role of the NWG was transferred to the Slovak Youth Council. In **Bulgaria** and **Hungary**, where there are no NYCs, other youth representatives are members of the NWG. In **France**, CNAJEP, as the national representative of organised youth, is performing the leading role in the NWG during the second cycle of Structured Dialogue. In **Romania** the leading role is assumed by the national ministry, and in **Greece** the General Secretariat for Youth plays the leading role in the absence of cooperation with the NYC.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does the competent national ministry play an active role in the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	28	3		25
No	◆	5		4	1

The competent ministry for youth affairs plays an active role in all NWGs with the exception of **Finland**. Although the Finnish Ministry is represented in the NWG and finances its activities, the Ministry has chosen not to play an active role.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Is the competent national ministry aware of the process of consultations, and subsequent results, undertaken by the National Working Group in response to guiding questions issued by the European Steering Committee for the structured dialogue with youth?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	28	3		25
No	◇	5		4	1

The competent ministry for youth affairs is aware of the tasks and achievements of NWGs in all Member States. **Finland**, however, reports that whereas the Ministry is aware of the consultations and results, it is difficult to estimate to which extent it has taken these into consideration.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Given the cross-sectoral character of the EU Youth Strategy, have other national ministries played an active role in the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	6			6
No	◇	27	3	4	20

In **Bulgaria**, **Latvia**, **Hungary**, the **Netherlands** and **Portugal** ministries responsible for employment issues participated in the first cycle of Structured Dialogue. The active role of other national ministries in NWGs will inevitably depend on the relevant thematic priority of the Structured Dialogue, but the potential for their involvement may increase in the future given the cross-sectoral character of the EU Youth Strategy.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your Government provide financial or other support for the National Working Group?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	25	3		22
No	◇	8		4	4

A significant majority of Member States' governments provides financial and other means of support for the activities of NWGs. Financial support is often given in the framework of subsidies to the NYC (e.g. **Spain**, the **Netherlands**, **Slovenia**, and **Sweden**), regular national grant schemes (e.g. **Denmark**, and **Estonia**), or the Youth in Action programme (e.g. **Latvia**).

The German-speaking Community of **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **Cyprus**, and **Lithuania** refer to the provision of venues. For political support of the NWG, in the **Czech Republic** there is a civil servant in charge of close cooperation with its Chair.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Does your Government consider the National Working Group already established in your country to be sufficiently inclusive in its composition to ensure a participatory process open to all young people?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	19	1		18
No	◇	14	2	4	8

Although the majority of governments consider their NWGs to be sufficiently inclusive, others express suggestions for broadening outreach in future. **Latvia** reminds of the necessity to involve more young people, who are ready to be active. **Cyprus** argues that creative and innovative ways of reaching out to young people should be further explored, while **Sweden**

reports on the difficulty, as in other European countries, in reaching young people who are not part of an organisation. Although **Ireland** considers its NWG to be inclusive, its verdict is qualified by a reference to ‘in as far as it is practicable’.

**Belgium** established three NWGs (French Community, German-speaking Community and Flemish Community) to reflect its federal structure.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Has your Government taken any initiatives to follow up the points that were raised as priority areas in the conclusions of the structured dialogue on youth employment, as outlined in the Council Resolution on the structured dialogue?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	12	2		10
No, but we intend to take relevant initiatives/measures in 2012	▲	12		1	11
No, we do not have any current plans for a follow-up	◆	9	1	3	5

A majority of Member States responded positively to the outcomes of the Structured Dialogue on youth employment and have already, or are in the process of so doing, taken initiatives to ensure a follow-up of outcomes.

Several Member States refer to national strategies, which include some of the conclusions. In **Germany** the conclusions were picked up both by the federal and state governments. Namely the ‘Recognition of non-formal education’ is integrated into their work and influenced also the discussion regarding the development of an ‘Independent Youth Policy’. **Ireland** followed the conclusions mainly by establishing the ‘JobBridge’ national internship scheme. **Italy** in contrast undertook a reform of apprenticeships.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Would your Government support a structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations in other fields than those covered by the overall thematic priorities, and individual Presidency priorities, agreed at European level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	26	3	1	22
No	◆	7		3	4

A significant majority of Member States have embraced the concept of Structured Dialogue to the extent that they would support its extension at national level. Some Member States (the **Czech Republic Greece, Spain,**) argue such developments are already being implemented, whereas **Austria** feels that any extension should be partly funded by EU funds. **Sweden** reports that regular consultations with young people and youth organisations are a natural part of national youth policy. **France** explains that the means for having a continuous consultation process between the government and organised youth do not exist.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Do youth researchers and those engaged in youth work play a role in carrying out the structured dialogue in your country?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	26	2	1	23
No	◆	7	1	3	3

A significant majority of Member States report that researchers and youth workers are involved in the Structured Dialogue process, either as members of the NWG or as active participants in consultations – or both.

**Portugal** puts emphasis on the involvement of experts in workshops and the provision of information at the infopoint network ‘Lojas Ponto JA’. In **Germany**, scientific support comes from the research group ‘Youth and Europe’ at the Centre for Applied Policy Research.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Would your Government support efforts to enhance the visibility and transparency of structured dialogue at national level?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	30	3	1	26
No	◇	3		3	0

All Member States support efforts to enhance the national visibility of the process. **Austria** reports that this is one of the core aims of its NWG, while **Spain** seeks greater ‘social visibility’. **Lithuania** emphasises the need to promote Structured Dialogue on the websites of important stakeholders. At EU level, the European Youth Portal now provides dedicated pages on Structured Dialogue and optional online functionalities are being added to support the conduct of future national consultations.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Based on the experiences gained since 2010, does your Government feel that the format and working methods employed at EU Youth Conferences contribute to a successful conduct of structured dialogue?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	23	1	1	21
No	◇	10	2	3	5

**Hungary** argues that the final outcome of the first cycle of Structured Dialogue proves that the working methods of three (linked) conferences are useful and can lead to a well prepared result. **Germany** calls for a greater role to be played by the outcomes of consultations and perceives that there is not sufficient time allowed for debates in workshops. **Estonia** feels that EU Youth Conferences should provide for more sharing of experiences and good practices between national youth organisations. **Spain** emphasises the importance of ensuring that non-organised youth and young people with fewer opportunities are represented, whereas **Finland** argues for continuity in the process and recommends that young participants be experienced in the field of EU policy. The French Community of **Belgium** reports that the language barrier is a major problem and obstacle, and Austria calls for new technology tools to be employed to give more young people a chance to participate in Conferences. Parts of the EU Youth Conferences organised in **Poland**, **Denmark** and **Cyprus** were made available to a larger audience through the use of web-streaming.

#### Responses in National Youth Reports

Based on the experiences gained from the first two cycles of the structured dialogue, does your Government have particular recommendations for the further development of the structured dialogue?		Total	Belgium	Non-EU countries	EU countries excl. Belgium
Yes	▼	23	3		20
No	◇	10		4	6

Structured Dialogue is an on-going and developing process. Building on the positive experience gained from the 2011 European Youth Week and the organisation of a Structured Dialogue with the main actors in the process, the Commission will ensure that such dialogues are conducted regularly to facilitate any future improvements of the Structured Dialogue.

#### NETHERLANDS

##### Local Structured Dialogue

In the Netherlands the NWG chaired by the NYC (NJR) has started a pilot project with Dutch local authorities/municipalities ('gemeenten') to organise the Structured Dialogue at the local level. This involves one kick-off meeting and five intensive local dialogue sessions between local policy-makers, professionals and young people to discuss how the Structured Dialogue can be implemented on a structural basis on the local level and to promote the European Youth Strategy with local administrators. For more information please contact the Dutch National Youth Council NJR at: [info@njr.nl](mailto:info@njr.nl); [jacqueline.baljeu@njr.nl](mailto:jacqueline.baljeu@njr.nl).

Several Member States are developing and defining their contribution to the Structured Dialogue. **Portugal** revised and redefined its execution of the process in cooperation with its NYC, and the NWG set up ambitious regional and national consultations in accordance with the joint recommendations issued during the 2011 European Youth Week. By adopting a new Public Interest in the Youth Sector Act, **Slovenia** defined Structured Dialogue as 'an open, transparent, long-term, continuous and systematic dialogue between young people and the holders of power at the national and local level'. The Youth Department of the **Czech**

**Republic** identified Structured Dialogue as a priority area in the 2012-13 Action Plan on the Concept of Czech Youth Policy. Discussions were initiated with the National Council of Children and Youth to shape the functioning of the NWG and change its primary mission of responding to tasks set by the Trio Presidencies into one of being an equal partner to the Ministry in the preparation of a new concept for youth policy after 2013.

Some Member States are also reporting developments in the methodology employed when conducting Structured Dialogue at national level. In **Hungary** the joint recommendations issued during the 2011 European Youth Week were taken into consideration during the process of establishing a new NWG, which has created its own Facebook site, 'Have Your Say' to be able to address and communicate directly with young people and to enable youth to keep an eye on the process. In the **Netherlands**, the NYC makes a particular effort to involve unorganised youth as much as possible. Lessons and debates in schools organised by representatives of the NYC, as well as online questionnaires and polls, are among the consultation methods that have been employed.

The majority of Member States are satisfied with the format of the EU Youth Conferences organised during the first cycles of Structured Dialogue, **Sweden** reports that it nominates the same two youth representatives to participate in all three EU Youth Conferences organised during a cycle. Both the youth representatives and the NWG feel that this is a successful method to sustain consistency in the national consultations and the EU Youth Conferences.

## **POLAND**

### **Infopack for Structured Dialogue**

At the end of 2011 a new Infopack on Structured Dialogue was prepared by the National Agency of the Youth in Action programme and the Polish Council of Youth Organisations. That short guide on the Dialogue shows how the process works and how to implement it on a local level including advice on meetings at schools, universities or how to facilitate the dialogue in a youth organisation by creativity techniques. Find the InfoPack [here](#).

Most Member States issued recommendations for the further development of the Structured Dialogue, based on the experiences gained from the completion of its first two cycles. These recommendations include:

- A single overall thematic priority should be the focus of Structured Dialogue during each of its cycles, covering all three Presidency terms of office (the Flemish and the French Communities of **Belgium**, the National Youth Council of the **Netherlands**)
- A clear link between the three consultation cycles and the overall thematic priority is essential (**Hungary** and **Portugal**)
- More transparency is required to illustrate the follow-up to the outcomes of the consultation processes (**Germany**)
- New methods should be used to reach a larger number of young people, e.g. by consulting European Youth Card holders (**Finland**)
- Member States should explain to young people the importance of participating in a Structured Dialogue consultation (**Cyprus**)



- The Youth in Action programme and its successor must be construed to meet the needs of Structured Dialogue, in terms of application deadlines, eligibility of expenses and recognition of in-kind contributions and volunteering time as eligible elements of co-funding (National Youth Council of **Austria**)
- A consistency in the nomination of youth representatives attending EU Youth Conferences (**Sweden**)
- The term ‘Structured Dialogue’ needs to be explained, as young people do not understand what it means (**Estonia**)
- Solicit the opinion of young people before setting thematic priorities for Structured Dialogue (French Community of **Belgium**)

As the Structured Dialogue only involves Member States, questions relating to this ongoing process have not been answered in National Youth Reports submitted by non-EU countries.

### **11.3. Youth-led initiatives and action**

The YFJ regards the Structured Dialogue as one of the most important developments for EU cooperation in the youth field since 2010. It has created a direct communication channel between young people and decision-makers at European level, as well as in all Member States. From the very beginning, the YFJ has been one of the key stakeholders and played a leading role in the implementation of the process within the ESC.

Since 2009, the YFJ has been involved in preparing and developing the process and defining the structures needed for its implementation, namely NWGs and the ESC. Holding the Chair and secretariat of the ESC, the Forum has until today been in charge of communication with NWGs.

During the first and second cycles of Structured Dialogue, the YFJ selected a group of facilitators to ensure continuity and efficiency in the preparation and methodology of EU Youth Conferences. Likewise, it contributed to the organisation of the European Youth Week 2011, in which an interim assessment of the process was made and a set of joint recommendations regarding its future was drafted.

After each phase of national consultation, the YFJ collected reports from NWGs and synthesised them thematically. These compilations were used as background documents for the discussions at the consequent EU Youth Conferences. The YFJ additionally used NWGs' feedback to put together an overview of methodologies used for consultations in Member States, allowing NWGs to build on each other's experience. This was also used to identify challenges NWGs face and address them within the ESC.

During these two cycles, the YFJ has been successful in engaging NYCs to take part in Structured Dialogue, and is now working towards more involvement of international non-governmental youth organisations. In addition to broadening the scope of the process, the Forum also worked on the visibility of Structured Dialogue, by publishing information on it on its webpage.

After each EU Youth Conference, the YFJ ensured political follow-up of the recommendations put forward during the process, both within the youth field and in other fields, for example the employment field during the first cycle of Structured Dialogue.



**Table 11-B: Overview of responses contained in National Youth Reports – Structured Dialogue**

<b>EU Member States</b>	Has your government carried out any specific measures or is it planning to do so based on the conclusions from the European Youth Week, which present a number of recommendations on how the structured dialogue can be improved at the national and the European levels?	Has your Government supported the establishment of a National Working Group?	Does the National Youth Council play a leading role in the National Working Group?	Does the competent national ministry play an active role in the National Working Group?	Is the competent national ministry aware of the process of consultations, and subsequent results, undertaken by the National Working Group in response to guiding questions issued by the European Steering Committee for the structured dialogue with youth?
Belgium German-speaking	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Belgium Flemish	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Belgium French	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Bulgaria	▼	▼	◊	▼	▼
Czech	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Denmark	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Germany	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Estonia	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	◆	▼	▼	▼	▼
Greece	◆	▼	◊	▼	▼
Spain	◆	▼	▼	▼	▼
France	◆	▼	▼	▼	▼
Italy	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Lithuania	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Luxembourg	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Hungary	▼	▼	◊	▼	▼
Malta	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Austria	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼
Poland	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Portugal	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Romania	▼	▼	◊	▼	▼
Slovenia	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Slovakia	▼	▼	◊	▼	▼
Finland	◆	▼	▼	◊	◊
Sweden	◆	▼	▼	▼	▼
United	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
<b>Non-EU</b>					
Norway	◆	◊	◊	◊	◊
Switzerland	◆	◊	◊	◊	◊
Montenegro	◆	◊	◊	◊	◊
Croatia	▲	◊	◊	◊	◊

▼ Yes

◊ No

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

EU Member States	Given the cross-sectoral character of the EU Youth Strategy, have other national ministries played an active role in the National Working Group?	Does your Government provide financial or other support for the National Working Group?	Does your Government consider the National Working Group already established in your country to be sufficiently inclusive in its composition to ensure a participatory process open to all young people?	Has your Government taken any initiatives to follow up the points that were raised as priority areas in the conclusions of the structured dialogue on youth employment, as outlined in the Council Resolution on the structured dialogue?	Would your Government support a structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations in other fields than those covered by the overall thematic priorities, and individual Presidency priorities, agreed at European level?
Belgium German-speaking	◇	▼	▼	◆	▼
Belgium Flemish	◇	▼	◇	▼	▼
Belgium French	◇	▼	◇	▼	▼
Bulgaria	▼	◇	▼	▼	▼
Czech Republic	◇	▼	◇	▲	▼
Denmark	▼	▼	▼	▲	▼
Germany	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Estonia	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Greece	◇	◇	▼	▲	▼
Spain	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
France	◇	▼	◇	◆	◇
Italy	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▼	▼	◇	▼	▼
Lithuania	◇	▼	◇	▲	▼
Luxembourg	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
Hungary	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Malta	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Austria	◇	▼	▼	▼	▼
Poland	◇	▼	▼	▲	▼
Portugal	▼	◇	◇	▲	▼
Romania	◇	▼	▼	▲	◇
Slovenia	◇	▼	◇	▲	▼
Slovakia	◇	▼	◇	◆	▼
Finland	◇	▼	▼	◆	▼
Sweden	◇	▼	◇	◆	◇
United	◇	◇	▼	◆	◇
<b>Non-EU Members</b>					
Norway	◇	◇	◇	◆	◇
Switzerland	◇	◇	◇	◆	◇
Montenegro	◇	◇	◇	▲	◇
Croatia	◇	◇	◇	◆	▼

▼ Yes

◇ No

■ Yes, before the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

● Yes, after the EU Youth Strategy came into force in January 2010

▲ No, but plans 2012

◆ No, without plans

EU Member States	Do youth researchers and those engaged in youth work play a role in carrying out the structured dialogue in your country?	Would your Government support efforts to enhance the visibility and transparency of structured dialogue at national level?	Based on the experiences gained since 2010, does your Government feel that the format and working methods employed at EU Youth Conferences contribute to a successful conduct of structured dialogue?	Based on the experiences gained from the first two cycles of the structured dialogue, does your Government have particular recommendations for the further development of the structured dialogue?
Belgium German-speaking	◇	▼	◇	▼
Belgium Flemish	▼	▼	◇	▼
Belgium French	▼	▼	▼	▼
Bulgaria	▼	▼	▼	◇
Czech Republic	◇	▼	▼	▼
Denmark	▼	▼	▼	◇
Germany	▼	▼	◇	▼
Estonia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Ireland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Greece	▼	▼	▼	◇
Spain	◇	▼	◇	▼
France	▼	▼	▼	▼
Italy	◇	▼	▼	▼
Cyprus	▼	▼	▼	▼
Latvia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Lithuania	▼	▼	▼	▼
Luxembourg	▼	▼	◇	▼
Hungary	▼	▼	▼	▼
Malta	▼	▼	▼	◇
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼	▼
Austria	▼	▼	◇	▼
Poland	▼	▼	▼	◇
Portugal	▼	▼	▼	▼
Romania	▼	▼	▼	▼
Slovenia	▼	▼	▼	▼
Slovakia	▼	▼	◇	▼
Finland	▼	▼	▼	▼
Sweden	▼	▼	▼	▼
United Kingdom	▼	▼	▼	◇
<b>Non-EU Members</b>				
Norway	◇	◇	◇	◇
Switzerland	◇	◇	◇	◇
Montenegro	◇	◇	◇	◇
Croatia	▼	▼	▼	◇

▼ Yes      ◇ No

## **12. ANNEX**

### **12.1. ANNEX 1: Table of abbreviations**

#### **EU Member States<sup>86</sup>**

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
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**

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<sup>86</sup> Alphabetical order according to country's name in national language.

HR	Croatia
ME	Montenegro
NO	Norway
CH	Switzerland

### **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
ESC	European Steering Committee for the Structured Dialogue
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EU-27	27 Member States of the EU
EVS	European Voluntary Service
GP	General practitioner
ICT	information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MS	Member State(s)
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQSF	National Quality Standards Framework
NWG	National Working Group
NYC	National Youth Council
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
South Med	Southern Mediterranean region
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational education and training
WHO	World Health Organization
YFJ	European Youth Forum

## **12.2. ANNEX 2: Council Resolutions/Conclusions on youth (2010-2012)**

**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, pp. 1-6

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:137:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

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, pp. 1-5

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:327:0001:0005:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

Council Conclusions on access of young people to culture

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 2-3

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:326:0002:0003:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

Council Conclusions on the European and International Policy Agendas on Children, Youth and Children's Rights

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, p. 1

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:326:0001:0001:EN:PDF>

**19 November 2010**

Council Conclusions on the Youth on the Move initiative – an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face

OJ C 326, 3.12.2010, pp. 9-11

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:326:0009:0011:EN:PDF>

**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, pp. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:164:0001:0004:EN:PDF>

### **19 May 2011**

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, pp. 1-5

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:169:0001:0005:EN:PDF>

### **28 November 2011**

Council Conclusions on the Eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility

OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, pp. 10-14

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:372:0010:0014:EN:PDF>

### **11 May 2012**

Council Conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people

OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, pp. 1-4

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:169:0001:0004:EN:PDF>



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 10.9.2012  
SWD(2012) 257 final

**EU Youth Report**

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Status of the situation of young people in the European Union**

*Accompanying the document*

**COMMISSION COMMUNICATION**

**Draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of  
the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field  
(EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018)**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

#### *The EU Youth Strategy*

In 2009, the Council endorsed the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), known in short as the EU Youth Strategy<sup>1</sup>. Its objectives are to:

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

The EU Youth Strategy advocates a cross-cutting approach, branching out into eight different policy areas ('fields of action'), which are the following: Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Culture and Creativity, Volunteering, and Youth and the World.

The EU Youth Strategy and its implementation are based on the Open Method of Coordination, addressing both the Commission and Member States to take specific actions in the above-mentioned 'fields of action'. To this end, it proposes a set of instruments which include: evidence-based policy-making; mutual learning; regular progress-reporting; dissemination of results and monitoring; Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations; and mobilisation of EU programmes and funds.

The EU Youth Strategy invited the Commission and Member States to implement the strategy by fostering cooperation that cuts across all of the various policy fields concerned. Such an approach should be pursued at all levels, and policies can be improved by sharing good practices. Youth work should be supported, developed and recognised for its economic and social contribution.

#### *EU Youth Report: reporting on progress and looking ahead*

The period covered by the EU Youth Strategy is divided into three-year cycles, with the requirement to produce an EU Youth Report at the end of each cycle, the first of which will be drawn up in 2012 and '*consist of [...] 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. [...] The EU Youth Report should also serve as a basis for establishing a set of priorities for the following work cycle.*'

This Staff Working Document supports the Commission Communication which presents the draft EU Youth Report to the Council. It provides a comprehensive picture of the situation of young people in Europe based on the latest available data, statistics and research. It portrays trends and developments in young people's conditions in different areas, corresponding to the 'fields of action'. It builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators, which is an overview of 41 indicators that measure the most crucial aspects of the lives of young people in Europe<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) (2009/C 311/01), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, pp. 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> SEC(2011) 401. This document presents 40 indicators. One additional indicator has since been added, bringing the total number of EU Youth Indicators to 41.

The second Staff Working Document supporting the Commission Communication on the EU Youth Report summarises the results of the first cycle (2010-2012). It presents the actions taken at EU-level and in Member States, as well as initiatives taken by young people themselves. Separate chapters report on achievements in all eight 'fields of action' of the strategy, the general organisation and approach to youth policy, and the Structured Dialogue between young people and policy-makers. The references made to Member States' activities are based on National Youth Reports submitted by them<sup>3</sup>. Young people are represented in the report by the European Youth Forum, which is an umbrella organisation of approximately 40 National Youth Councils and more than 60 international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe.

### **Status of the situation of young people in the European Union**

In addition to the EU Member States, information and analysis cover, as far as data allows, the acceding country of Croatia, the five EU candidate countries (Montenegro, Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) as well as the EFTA countries Norway, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland

The period when a person is considered to be 'young' differs across Europe according to national context, socio-economic development of a society and time<sup>4</sup>. Common to all countries, however, is the fact that the period of youth is marked by important life transitions. For statistical purposes the target population is primarily the age category between 15 and 29 years of age.

These transitions provide opportunities for youth to excel and prosper, but can also leave them vulnerable and deprived. With the current economic crisis, many young people are unable to find jobs that allow them to live on their own. This period of transition has become longer and harder, leading to the risk of a 'lost generation'. The statistical evidence points to the following:

**More school, less work** – Between 2005 and 2009, the share of young people either in full-time education or employment was relatively stable. Since then, the situation has increasingly diverged: while the share of students is going up, that of young employees is going down. Young people who lose their job are returning to education in greater numbers than before.

**Increase in the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)** – After several years of decline, the share of NEETs levelled out in 2007, but has increased sharply since 2008. This shows a link to the current financial crisis, as NEETs are over-represented in families with a low work intensity and low household income.

**Increasingly difficult labour market** – The unemployment rate of young people (aged 15 to 24) rose sharply from 15 % in February 2008 to an unprecedented 22.6 % in June 2012. This amounts to an increase of 50 % in four years. Among those unemployed, more than 30 % have been without a job for the past year. Temporary employment is also much more common among young people aged 15 to 24 than for those aged 25-59. While 42.5 % of young people in employment were on a temporary contract in 2011, this was the case for only 11 % in the older age-group. Between 2008 and 2011, temporary employment among young people increased by almost two and a half percentage points while it increased by less than one

---

<sup>3</sup> Separate contributions were submitted by the three language communities of Belgium. All EU candidate countries and EFTA-countries, which are programme countries under the Commission's Youth in Action programme, were invited to submit National Youth Reports.

<sup>4</sup> The age-span of eligibility in the Youth in Action programme is 13 to 30.

percentage point for the general working population. This suggests that young people are more likely than the general population to get a temporary job (which often means precarious work). Even if a young person achieves a high level of education, employment is no longer guaranteed.

**Fewer early school leavers** – Progress has been made in reducing the share of early school leavers to reach the headline target of less than 10% by 2020. Although the share fell from 14.9% in 2008 to 14.1% in 2010, any further reduction is becoming a major challenge.

**Young people at serious risk of social exclusion and poverty** – A headline target of Europe 2020 is to reduce the share of the EU population at risk of social exclusion and poverty by 20 million, or 25%, by 2020. The share of young people at such risk is higher than that of the general population. Between 2009 and 2010, the increase in the number of young people at risk was significantly higher than for the total population.

**Young people's well-being under pressure** – While high unemployment rates have resulted in more low-income families and jobless households, and with young people being most at risk of poverty and social exclusion, the crisis has also had an impact on the health and well-being of young people. Unemployment, impoverishment, inadequate housing conditions and family disruptions significantly increase the risk of mental health problems such as depression, alcohol abuse disorders and suicide. As detriments to health and well-being can often last for life, they have a particularly serious impact on young people.

**But young people remain active** – the participation of young people in democratic life has not suffered as a result of the crisis. On the contrary, young people have spearheaded social movements in Europe and beyond. While youth turnout in elections is low (only 29 % of young people aged 18 to 30 voted in the 2009 European Parliament elections, for example), young people do not appear to experience any major disenchantment with policy issues and causes in general –, only a clear and growing mistrust of a political establishment which young people feel does not represent their interests. The results of a 2011 Eurobarometer survey supports the claim that young people are interested in politics: 78 % of eligible young people up to the age of 30 declared that they had voted in a political election at local, regional, national or EU level in the last three years. The survey also documents the active participation young people in society: half of the young people in the EU participated in activities of a youth organisation, leisure and/or sports club in the past year, while a quarter took part in organised voluntary activities.

A tendency towards above-average participation by young people can be identified in countries which have established regulations and policies on volunteering, created systems of financial support for volunteers, and operate a system of recognition of the competencies acquired. As far as the various indicators for cultural participation, computer and internet use and creative education are concerned, there seem – with some significant exceptions – to be few differences between countries. The general trend common to all countries is, however, that, these aspects of cultural engagement are interrelated.

Whilst many young people are very committed to global issues such as climate change or poverty, active participation by young people in structures that address global issues is fairly limited. There are only a few EU Member States in which a considerable portion of the youth population participate in NGOs dedicated to global causes or are involved in projects aimed at cooperating with young people from other continents. Young people taking part in education and training are more likely to dedicate their time to global causes.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report, which is a supporting document to the Commission Communication on the EU Youth Report, presents data and information on the current situation of young people in Europe<sup>5</sup>. Following an introductory chapter on demographics, which presents the main trends in the youth population over the last years, separate chapters are dedicated to the eight ‘fields of action’ identified in the Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018)<sup>6</sup>: Employment and Entrepreneurship, Education and Training, Social Inclusion, Health and Well-being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Culture and Creativity, and Youth and the World.

The period during which a person is considered to be ‘young’ differs across Europe according to the national context, the socio-economic development of a society and time<sup>7</sup>. 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 transitions: from being financially dependent to being in control of one's own budget, from living in the family home to having set up one's own household - maybe with a partner, from being in education to having a full-time job, and from being a child to being responsible for one's own children.

For statistical purposes, this report needs to rely on age categories. The target population is primarily the age category between 15 and 29 years of age, for which there is a good statistical basis using Eurostat data and other data sources. The analysis focuses on the age groups 15 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 29. In some cases, a more limited age range or different age groups are used, either because certain conditions mainly affect a particular age group (e.g. early school leavers) or the analysis relates to a specific perspective (e.g. child population at risk of poverty or social exclusion). In other cases, the analysis is limited to certain age groups due to the availability of data.

In addition to the EU Member States, information and analysis cover, as far as data allows, the acceding country of Croatia, the five EU candidate countries (Montenegro, Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) as well as the EFTA countries Norway, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland

It was not possible to select a single reference year for the information presented in the report, due to variation in the sources of data. However, the report focuses on the most recent years (2010 and 2011) in order to depict the most up-to-date situation of young people. Wherever data are available, comparisons with past years and relative trends are included.

This report builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators, an overview of 41 indicators which measure the most crucial aspects of the conditions of young people in Europe. The dashboard was released by the European Commission in spring 2011. With input from an expert group, the Commission reviews the dashboard on an annual basis to ensure that the indicators reflect the changing realities of young people. Wherever the report uses these indicators, this is highlighted in the text. The dashboard of EU youth indicators is presented as an annex to this report.

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<sup>5</sup> The data from Eurostat databases was extracted in June 2012.

The special value ‘.’ indicates that the data is not available for a country. The special value ‘⊗’ indicates that the respective country is not participating in the survey.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, pp. 1-11.

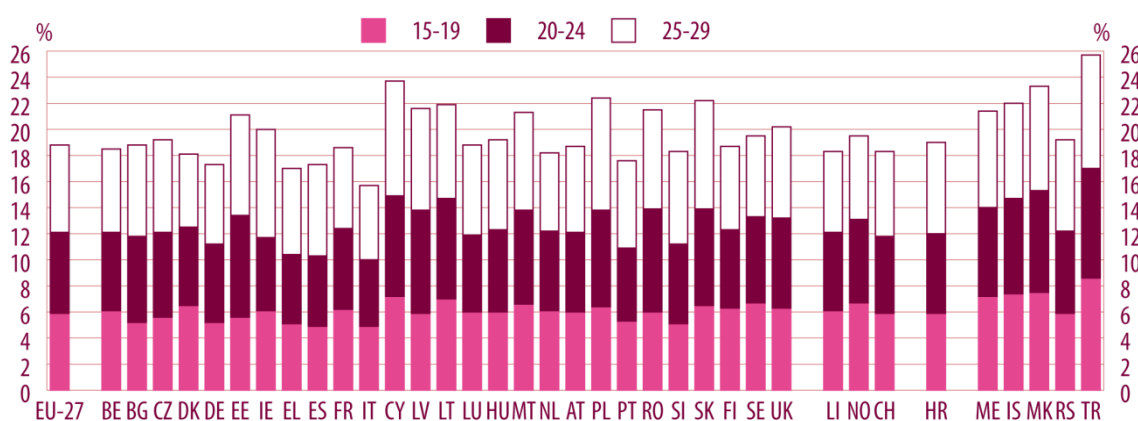
<sup>7</sup> The age-span of eligibility in the Youth in Action programme is 13 to 30.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHY

### 2.1. How many young Europeans are there?

In January 2011, around 95.2 million young people aged between 15 and 29 lived in the EU-27. The acceding country Croatia and five candidate countries to the EU (Montenegro, Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) added approximately 22 million young people to this figure<sup>8</sup>. Figure 2-A shows the percentage share of young people in the overall population, which ranges from 15 % in Italy to over 23 % in Cyprus and 22 % in Poland and Slovakia. EU candidate countries have shares of young people above the EU-27 average, particularly in Turkey where those aged between 15 and 29 account for more than a quarter of the total population.

**Figure 2-A: EU youth indicator: Share of young people in the total population, by age, 1 January 2011**



Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: demo\_pjanind

Note: EU-27, Belgium, Cyprus, Romania, and Switzerland: data are from 2010.

### 2.2. Past and future trends in European youth population

#### 2.2.1. The number of young people continues to decrease

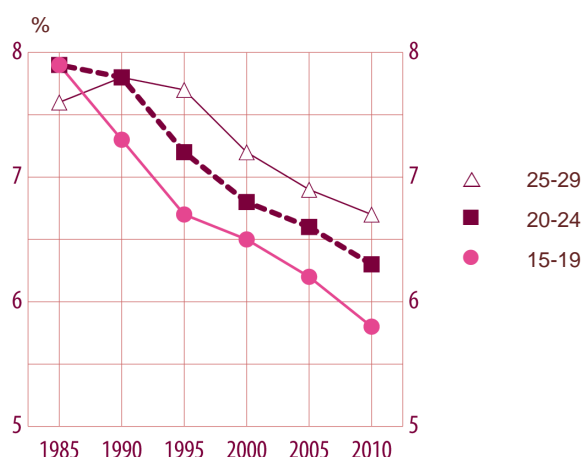
The share of young Europeans in the total population has declined steadily over the last 25 years (Figure 2-B). This is due to a reduction in the fertility rate in Europe following the end of the demographic boom of the 1950-60-70s. Fewer births, longer life expectancies and the ageing of those baby-boomers since then have led to a fall in the youth population and a parallel increase in the proportion of older age groups as the increase of the old is now mainly driven by the ageing baby-boomers.

<sup>8</sup>

Eurostat – online data code: demo\_pjangroup.



**Figure 2-B: Share of young people in the total population, EU-27 average, by age, 1985-2010<sup>9</sup>**



Source: Eurostat 2010. Online data code: demo\_pjanind

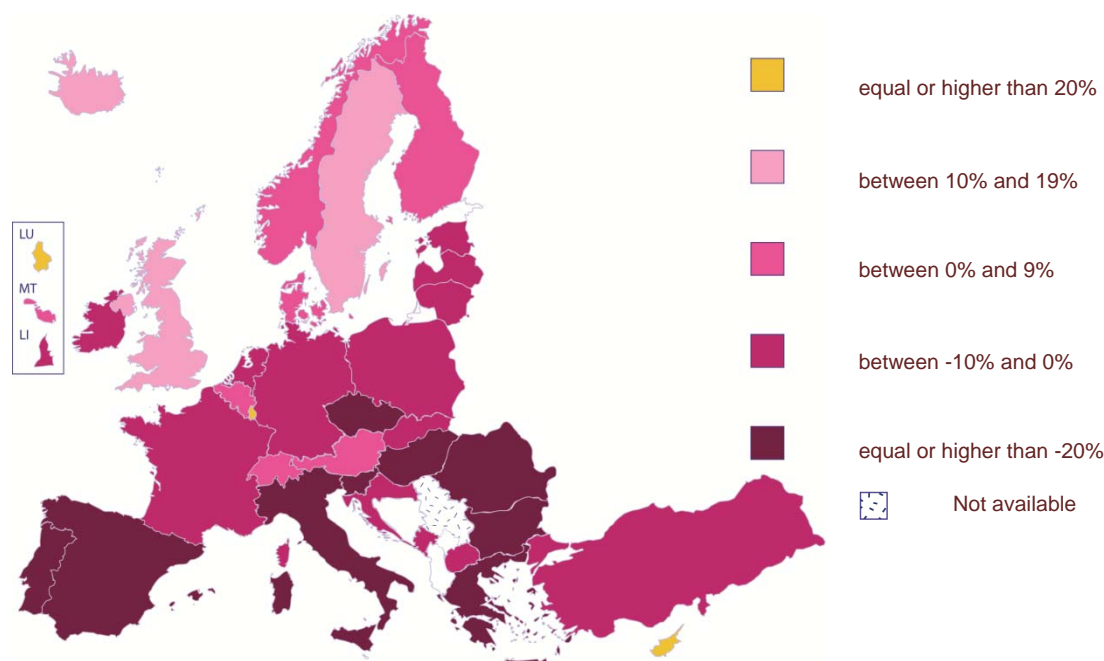
Note:

In line with the long-term decline since 1985, the number of young people decreased steadily by over 4 million between 2000 and 2010. The 15 to 19 age group has been most affected by the decline, in particular since 2006, and the youth population will fall even more sharply in the near future.

Yet this trend was not common to all countries during the decade in question. From closer examination of national variations (Figure 2-C), it is possible to identify cases in which the youth population actually grew between 2000 and 2010. Cyprus, Luxembourg and, to a lesser extent, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Norway, Switzerland and Iceland all experienced such increases. Otherwise the number of young people has fallen in the majority of countries and by as much as a fifth in Bulgaria and Greece.

<sup>9</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

**Figure 2-C: Youth population (aged 15-29), change between 1 January 2000 and 1 January 2010**



Source: Eurostat 2010. Online data code: demo\_pjangroup

Note: EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate countries covered.

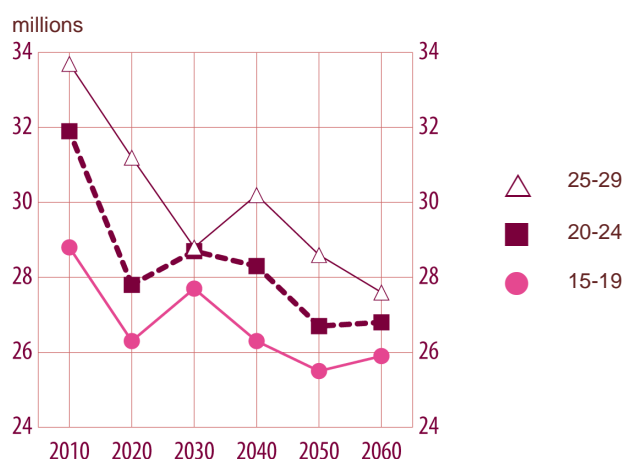
In recent decades, EU-27 countries have generally been having fewer children<sup>10</sup>. A total fertility rate<sup>11</sup> of around 2.1 children per woman is considered to be the replacement level, that is, the average number of children per woman required to keep the population size constant in the absence of inward or outward migration.<sup>12</sup> Between 2002 and 2010, the total fertility rate in the EU-27 rose slightly from just under 1.45 to 1.6 children per woman, reversing an earlier steady decrease, however still far below the replacement level. According to Eurostat population projections EUROPOP2010, the share of young people in the total population is expected to fall in the years up to 2060 (Figure 2-D).

<sup>10</sup> Eurostat – online data code: demo\_frate.

<sup>11</sup> The main indicator of fertility is the Total Fertility Rate (TFR): this is the mean number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her lifetime if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of a given year.

<sup>12</sup> Eurostat 2011b, p. 28.

**Figure 2-D: Projected youth population, EU-27, by age, 2010-2060<sup>13</sup>**

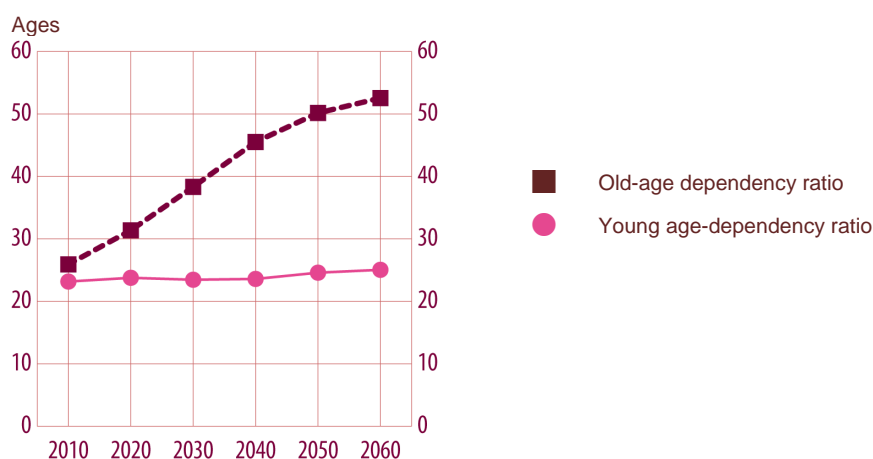


Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: proj\_10c2150p

If the decline is not reversed, the youth population of the European Union could fall by a further 14 million in the next 50 years.

One of the most significant outcomes of the decrease in the numbers of young people in Europe, taken with the rise in average life expectancy, is the steady ageing of the European population overall. This scenario is illustrated by means of the projected dependency ratios in the decades ahead (Figure 2-E).

**Figure 2-E: Projected young-age and old-age dependency ratios in the EU-27, 2010-2060**



Source: Eurostat – EUROPOP2008. Online data code: not available

The age dependency ratios compare the number of people – young (0 to 14 years old) or old (65 years old or over) to the working age population (15 to 64 years old). According to EUROPOP2008, while the young-age dependency ratio would change little over the next 50 years, the old-age dependency ratio would increase by almost 30 percentage points. This means that each person in working age will potentially support the same number of young people, but about twice as many older people.

<sup>13</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

## 2.2.2. Increase in youth immigration from third countries

### Glossary

**Citizenship:** 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 under national legislation.

**EU citizen or EU national:** a citizen of a Member State of the EU-27.

**Foreigners or foreign population** refer to persons who are not citizens of the country in which they reside, including persons of unknown citizenship and stateless persons.

**EU foreigners:** persons who have citizenship of an EU-27 Member State and who are usually resident in another EU-27 Member State.

**Non-EU foreigners or third-country nationals:** persons who are usually resident in the EU and who have citizenship of a country outside the EU.

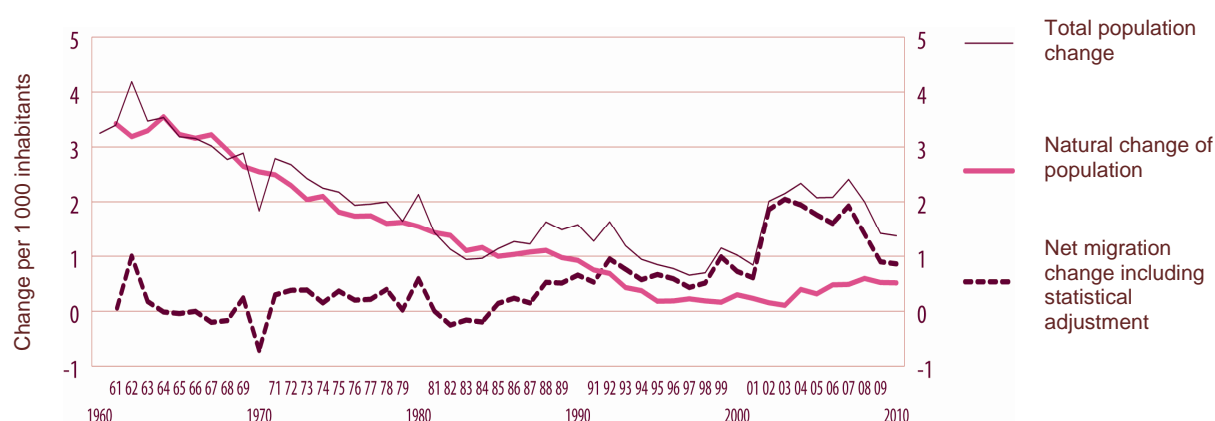
**Foreign-born:** a person whose place of birth, or residence of the mother at the time of the birth, is outside the country of his/her usual residence.

Source: Eurostat, 2011

The steady decline in the youth population over the last decade has been partially offset by the increase in net immigration flows.

Figure 2-F shows that, despite periodical downturns, the growth in immigration from third countries over the last 30 years has significantly offset the steady decrease in the population of EU nationals.

**Figure 2-F: Crude rates of population change, EU-27, 1960-2010<sup>14</sup>**



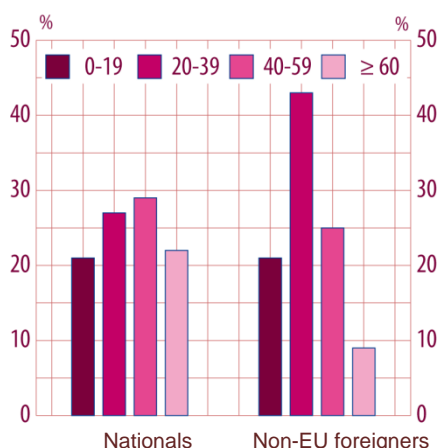
Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: demo\_gind

Furthermore, whereas the median age of nationals of all EU-27 Member States was 40.6 years in 2009, the median age of non-EU nationals was 27.5 years<sup>15</sup>. Figure 2-G illustrates differences in the average ages of EU-27 and non-EU nationals. Immigrants arrive typically when they are between 25 and 35, i.e. in their prime working and child-bearing ages. Thus they contribute twice to rejuvenating the populations they join; firstly, because they themselves are relatively young; secondly, because they bear children.

<sup>14</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission 2011c, p. 46.

**Figure 2-G: Age distribution of EU nationals and non-EU foreigners, EU-27, 1 January 2010**

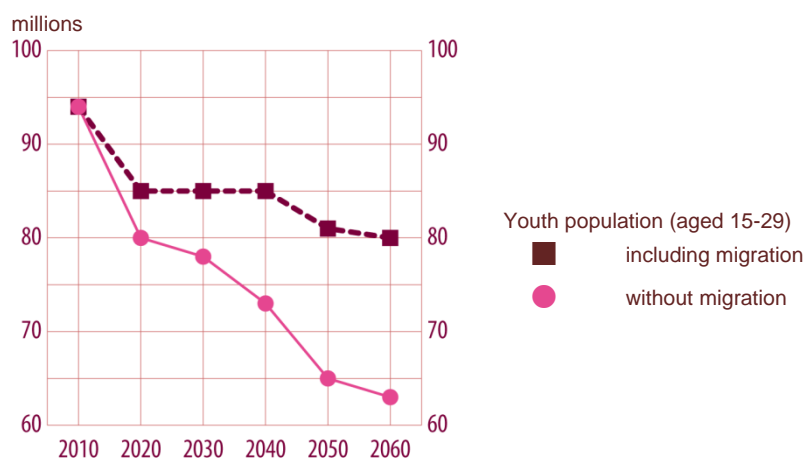


Source: Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 34/2011.  
Online data code: migr\_pop2ctz

As shown in Figure 2-G, while the proportions of EU nationals in the four age groups considered are fairly even, non-EU foreigners in the 20 to 39 age group are over-represented in comparison to the other groups, accounting for over 40 % of the total third-country population. The immigrants from non-EU countries who partially offset the decrease in the numbers of EU nationals are predominantly young.

According to the assumptions of EUROPOP2010 the levels of youth migration could affect the projected EU-27 youth population as a whole (Figure 2-H).

**Figure 2-H: Projected youth population (aged 15-29) – with and without migration, EU-27, 2010-2060<sup>16</sup>**



Source: Eurostat 2010. Online data code: proj\_10c2150zmp

### 2.3. Increase in the mobility of young Europeans

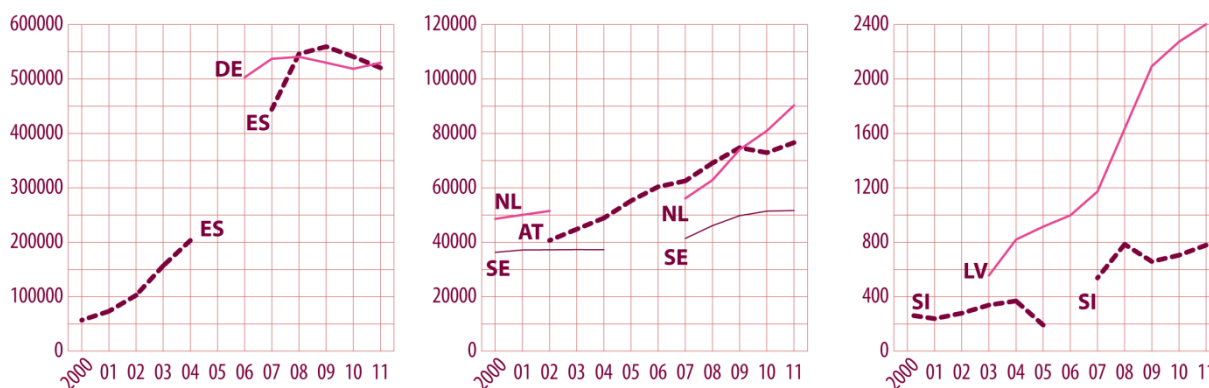
Young people in the EU-27 have become increasingly mobile. Crossing national borders to study, to work in the paid employment or voluntary sectors, or to travel for pleasure has become increasingly common.

Based on available information, there is a general growth in the numbers of young people choosing to live in a different Member State. Among people who have experienced studying or working abroad, young adults are over-represented. There are a few exceptions to this trend: in Sweden the number of young EU foreigners started to increase only since 2006; in

<sup>16</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

Germany it started to fall in 2008 following several years of increase. The leveling out or decrease in youth mobility after 2008 is one of the more general effects of the current economic crisis on intra-EU student and professional mobility (Figure 2-I)<sup>17</sup>.

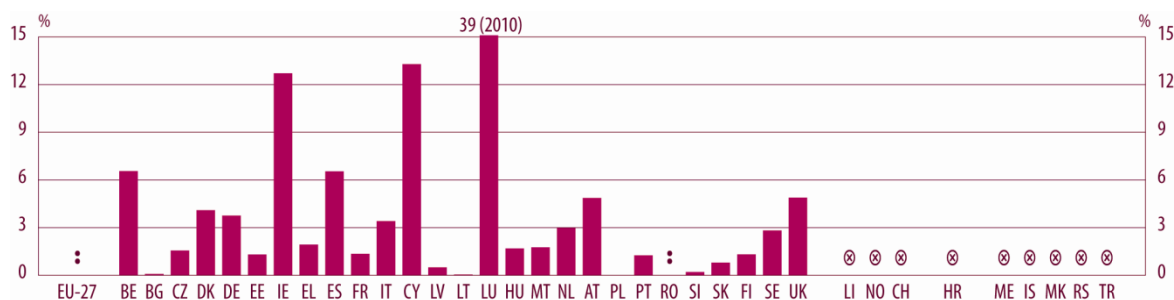
**Figure 2-I: Trends in the EU population of young foreigners (ES, DE, LV, NL, AT, SI, SE)**<sup>18</sup>



Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: migr\_pop1ctz

Note: Countries, for which time series are available. Slovenia – break in series between 2008 and 2009 due to a change in the definitions and methods used.

**Figure 2-J: Young EU foreigners (aged 15-29), 1 January 2011**



Source: Eurostat 2011. Online data code: migr\_pop1ctz

Note: Latvia, Poland, United Kingdom: provisional data. Luxembourg: 2010 data.

The share of young EU foreigners varies from one country to another (Figure 2-J). Luxembourg is the Member State with the highest share of young EU foreigners (almost 40 %) in its youth population<sup>19</sup>. Other countries with a high proportion of EU foreigners are Belgium, Ireland, Spain, and Cyprus. By contrast, the youth population in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia is more homogeneous in terms of nationality. It is important to bear in mind that the data shown here is based on citizenship, and that naturalisation policies of countries (under which it may be relatively hard or easy to acquire the new nationality) will affect official measurements of the EU foreign population.

Between 2010 and 2011 migration increased by an average of 45 % from southern EU Member States, an increase of 52 % from Spain and 90 % from Greece. It was underlined that the majority of migrants were well educated young people with qualifications in the tertiary sector<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> European Commission 2011d, p. 255.

<sup>18</sup> The population is a stock and it refers to 1 January of a certain year.

<sup>19</sup> The immigration of large numbers of Portuguese citizens during the 1960s and 1970s appears to be the main reason for this.

<sup>20</sup> European Commission 2012f.

### **3. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The current crisis has severely affected employment. This is of special concern to young people, who are more vulnerable to the effects of unstable economic cycles in the labour market.

Indeed, the youngest workers are the first hit by unemployment because they are the least experienced and more often employed under temporary contracts. The labour market is also more competitive during a crisis, in the sense that there are more young applicants for fewer job offers<sup>21</sup>. In addition, some groups of young people are more at risk of unemployment than others. Those who are only modestly qualified or entering the labour market for the first time are especially vulnerable in times of economic crisis<sup>22</sup>. Even those who are employed can experience precarious situations with low pay, poor quality working conditions and weak social security coverage. Lack of family – work-life reconciliation measures, discrimination, and absence of skills required by the current labour market may constitute further barriers of youth employment.

#### **3.2. Transition from education to employment**

The transition from education and training to employment can be defined as a period in which young people should ideally finish their formal education, find employment to match their qualifications, and thereby achieve financial autonomy. Yet the existence throughout Europe of other possible career paths that, for example, combine studies with part-time work, or alternate education and training with professional activity, calls for a closer examination of precisely how young Europeans have experienced this transition in recent years. The research focus on school-to-work transition is therefore moving from treating the transition as a single event towards treating it as a sequence, involving multiple transitions in a given period of time.

##### *3.2.1. Between 20 and 24: an age of transition*

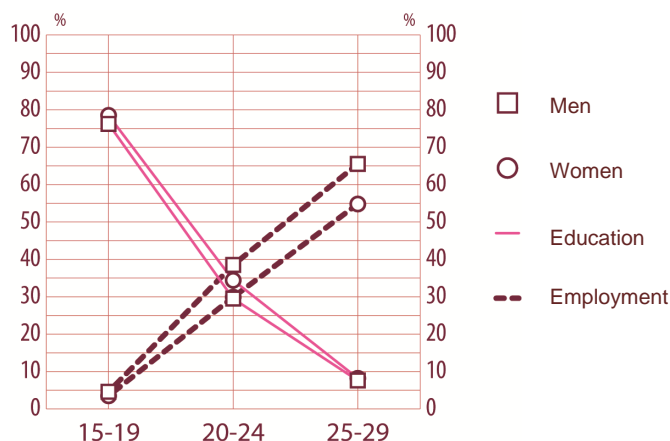
As shown in Figure 3-Abelow, the period of transition occurs for most young Europeans between the ages of 20 and 24. This is the age group in which the proportion of young people who are exclusively in education and training falls below 50 % to be gradually overtaken by the proportion of those who are exclusively employed.

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<sup>21</sup> Eurofound 2011a, pp.6-9.

<sup>22</sup> ODI 2010, pp.14-17.

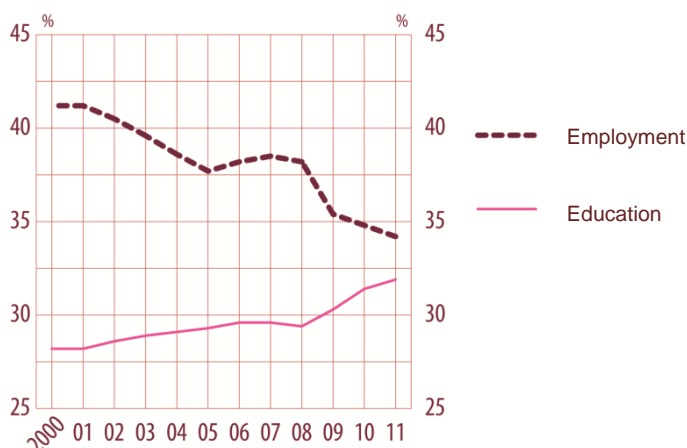
**Figure 3-A: Full-time education rate and full-time employment rate of young people, EU-27 average, by age and by sex, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – Labour Force Survey (LFS). Online data code: edat\_lfse\_18

The transition occurs slightly later for women aged between 20 and 24 than men. A gap emerges between them, as more women than men in that age group continue their studies and postpone joining the labour market. The employment gap is maintained in later years, whereas participation exclusively in education and training simply drops to similar rates for both men and women.

**Figure 3-B: Full-time education rate and full-time employment rate of young people (aged 20-24), EU-27 average, 2000-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: edat\_lfse\_18

Since 2000, the proportion of the 20 to 24 age group enrolled in education and training but not employed has been growing. Between 2000 and 2011, there was an increase of 3.7 percentage points (Figure 3-B). Conversely, the proportion of young people in the same age group exclusively working and not participating in education and training fell from 41.2 % in 2000 to 34.2 % in 2011.

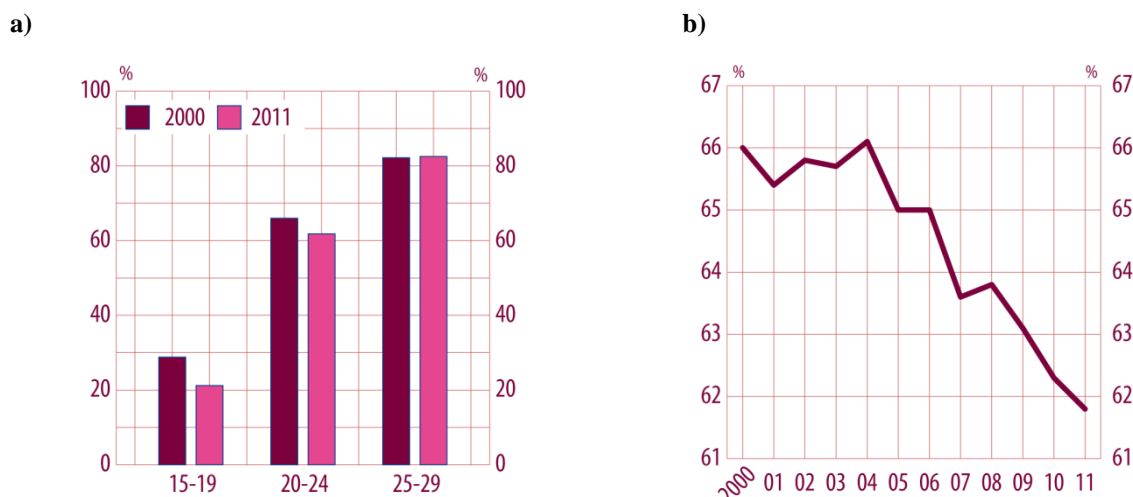
Figure 3-B shows that this trend has become more pronounced since 2008. Since the economic downturn, more young people aged between 20 and 24 increasingly devote a longer time to education and training exclusively, while a decreasing share is active in employment but not in education and training. Therefore, while this remains the age category with the highest share of youth in transition from education to employment, an increasing number of young people stay in education longer than the age of 24.



### 3.2.2. Economically active young people

The postponement of the transition discussed above has clearly been changing the proportions of young people in the economically active population, defined as those who are either employed or searching for a job<sup>23</sup>. Figure 3-C shows how the activity rate has changed between 2000 and 2011 among the three main age groups i.e. 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29.

**Figure 3-C: Activity rates of young people (aged 15-19, 20-24, 25-29), EU-27 average, 2000 and 2011 (a) and (aged 20-24) variations of the EU-27 average, 2000-2011 (b)**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_argan

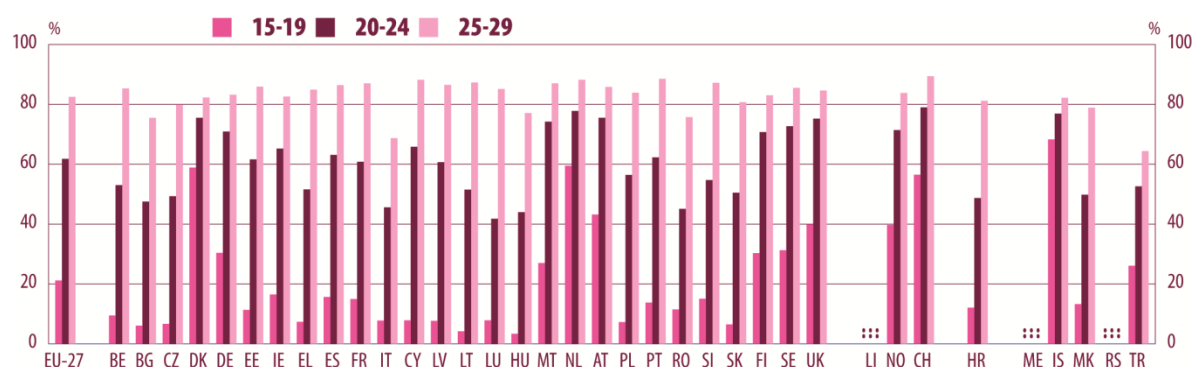
There appears to have been little change for the 25 to 29 age group, whose activity rate stands at around 82 %. This does not apply to the other two age groups. Young people aged 15 to 19 have always been the least active, as most of them are still enrolled in education and training programmes. Their activity rate has decreased further in 2011, however, for this age group this is a good development providing that they go or stay in education. As Figure 3-C shows, the proportion of those in the transition age group (20 to 24) in the active population has also decreased in the last ten years. Since 2007, their activity rate has fallen faster, sinking to 61.8 % in 2011.

This decrease in the activity rate and the postponement of the transition from education (or training) to work are interrelated. Chapter 4 on Education and Training sets out that there has been a counter-trend in terms of rising enrolments in post-secondary level and tertiary education in Europe in recent years, which is in line with EU education targets. However, this prolongation of studies may also be partly attributable to difficulty in finding employment<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> 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 as unemployed.

<sup>24</sup> ILO 2012, p. 8.

**Figure 3-D: Activity rates of young people (aged 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29), by country, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_argan

The most recent data on youth activity rates in the EU-27 complete the picture (Figure 3-D). In several countries, such as Belgium, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia, the postponement of the transition from education to work is clear. Activity rates are very high for the 25 to 29 age group while for 20 to 24 year olds rates are below the EU-27 average, as many of them continue studying and only become economically active when aged 25 or over.

However, in many other countries including Denmark and the Netherlands, the activity rates observed in the three age groups (15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29) are the highest, at far above the EU-27 average. In these countries, a majority of young people combine studies and work as both trainees and apprentices under the dual education system, or as students working while in tertiary education.

There are also young people who drop out of education or training and are unable to access the labour market, thus comprising the vulnerable group known as NEETs – those who are not in employment, education or training. The NEETs are a group consisting of ‘persons typically aged between 15 and 24 years who, regardless of their educational level, are disengaged from both work and education’<sup>25</sup>. They are also a mixed group. For instance, they may include young persons who are ‘not seeking jobs or applying for education and are not constrained from doing so’<sup>26</sup> alongside active but unsuccessful job seekers or vulnerable groups of young people who are farther from the labour market. Yet despite such distinctions, all NEETs are more likely to be disengaged from work and education for longer periods and thus more vulnerable to social marginalisation (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion on NEETs).

### **3.3. The position of young people in the labour market**

#### *3.3.1. Aspects of unemployment*

Young people in Europe are hindered in their efforts to start a rewarding professional career and more generally to achieve their long-term career goals. Indeed joblessness ‘prevents them from accumulating work experience, which reduces their entire human and social capital, and can be reflected in lower future wages’<sup>27</sup>. Going through a joblessness situation early in life may leave long-term scars<sup>28</sup>. Furthermore, difficulty in finding a job may ultimately lead to

<sup>25</sup> Eurofound 2011a, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

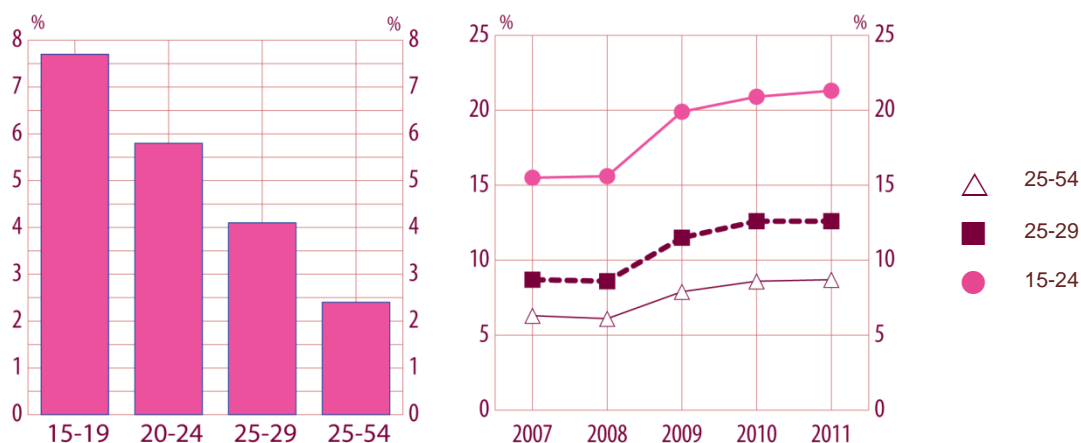
<sup>27</sup> European Commission 2010a, pp. 132-133.

<sup>28</sup> OECD 2011, p. 12.

economic and social exclusion and result in a psychological hindrance for young people if they feel unable to contribute fully to society<sup>29</sup>.

Youth unemployment rates<sup>30</sup> have been consistently higher than that of the population as a whole. As shown in Figure 3-E, the increase in the share of youth unemployed has been significantly greater than for the older active population since the start of the financial crisis in spring 2008. In spring 2012, more than one in five young people aged below 25 in the labour market in the EU-27 was jobless.

**Figure 3-E: Increase of unemployment rates of young people, EU-27 average, by age, 2007-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: une\_rt\_a

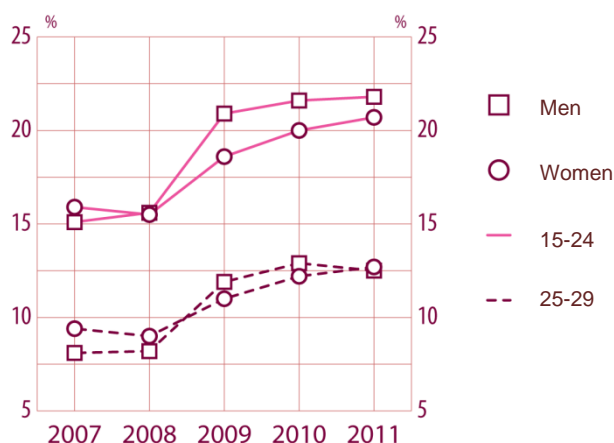
As shown in Figure 3-F, the proportion of unemployed young women aged 15 to 24 in the EU-27 was slightly higher than that of young men until 2008. In that year, both rates were equal. The same trend applies to the active population of the 25 to 29 age group. Since then, the opposite has occurred with greater proportions of unemployed young men, although almost identical proportions of women and men aged between 25 and 29 in the active population were unemployed in 2011.

<sup>29</sup> SALTO-Youth 2011.

<sup>30</sup> 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).

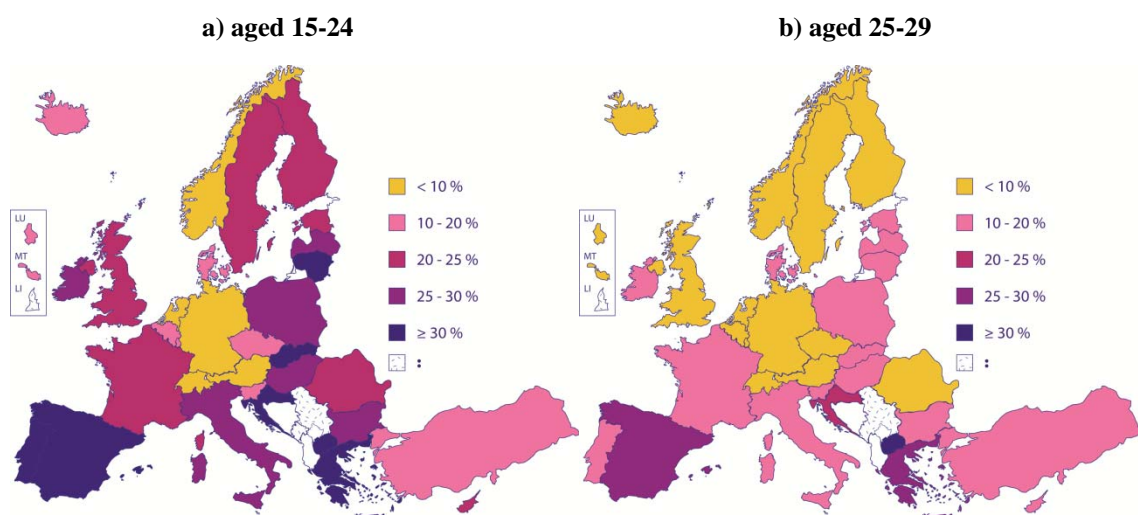
An unemployed person is defined by Eurostat, in accordance with ILO guidelines, as someone aged 15 to 74 (or 16 to 74 in Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway) who is a) without work during the reference week; b) available to start work within the following two weeks (or has already found a job to start within the next three months); and c) who has actively sought employment at some time during the preceding four weeks.

**Figure 3-F: EU youth indicator: Unemployment rates of young people, EU-27 average, by age and by sex, 2007-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfs\_urgan

**Figure 3-G: Unemployment rates of young people (aged 15- 24 and 25-29), by country and by age, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_urgan  
Note: EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate countries covered.

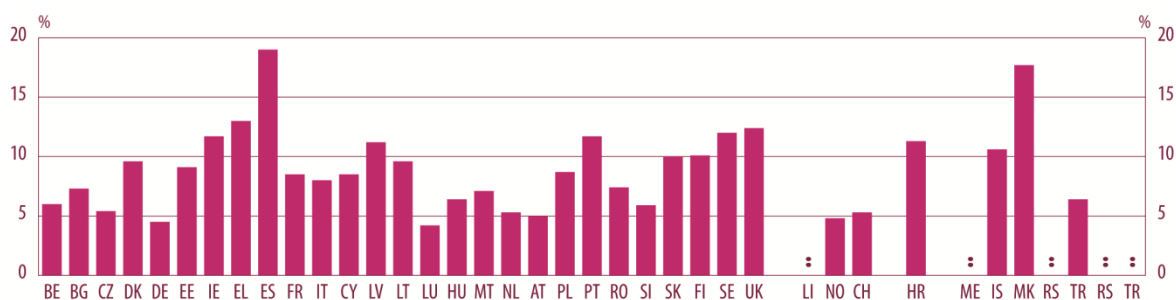
Almost everywhere in Europe, the active population of the 15 to 24 age group has been more often affected by unemployment than that of those aged 25 to 29. In the case of the former (map a) in Figure 3-G), unemployment rates in 2011 were below 10 % only in a few countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Austria as well as in Norway and Switzerland. By contrast, the proportion of unemployed in the active population in the same age group (15 to 24) was three times as high in Lithuania, Portugal and Slovakia while in Spain and Greece it reached 45 %. Although unemployment rates for the 25 to 29 age group were lower (second map in Figure 3-G), they were still above the EU-27 average of 12.6 % in the same countries as in the case of 15 to 24 year olds. In 2011, rates ranged from 13.9 % in Estonia to 26.9 % in Spain and 29.6 % in Greece.

Figure 3-H shows unemployment ratios <sup>31</sup> for the 15 to 24 age group in European countries in 2011. This indicator offers a better insight into youth unemployment since it does take

<sup>31</sup> The Youth unemployment rate (15 to 24) is the proportion of unemployed people over the active population in the same (15 to 24) age group.  
The Youth unemployment ratio (15 to 24) is the proportion of unemployed people over the total population in the same (15 to 24) age group.

account the large proportion of young people still enrolled in education. The data reveals how youth unemployment levels in Europe vary widely from one country to the next.

**Figure 3-H: EU youth indicator: Unemployment ratio of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsi\_act\_a

In some countries, unemployment affects only a small minority of the 15 to 24 age group with ratios below or close to 5 %. This applies to the Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Austria as well as to Norway and Switzerland. As already mentioned, the dual education system in these countries, which combines courses at school with company apprenticeships, helps to account for low unemployment among those aged between 15 and 24. At the other end of the spectrum, Spain has the highest proportion of jobless young people in the same age group (18 %), followed by around a dozen countries in which the unemployment ratio is above the EU-27 average of 9.1 % (10 % for men and 8.2 % for women). Ratios range from 9.6 % in Denmark and Lithuania to 13 % in Greece.

These two different approaches towards understanding how unemployment affects the youth population of Europe via unemployment rates and ratios respectively, point to a disturbing situation in Spain, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia. Jobless young people in these countries constitute a relatively high proportion of both the entire labour force and the 15 to 24 age group.

The length of the period during which young persons search for a job after having completed education is likely to depend on various factors. Foremost among them will be the level of their educational qualifications. In general, tertiary education graduates experience shorter search periods than those who completed secondary school. Indeed in 2009, the average time taken by graduates to find a ‘significant’ job<sup>32</sup> was put at around half that required by those who had at most completed lower secondary education, namely 5 months compared to 9.8 months<sup>33</sup>.

In 2011, a third of the unemployed aged 15 to 24 were unemployed for a year or more<sup>34</sup> (Figure 3-I). While the long-term unemployment rate was lower than in the case of the active population in the 25 to 59 age group (in which it was 46.3 %), the situation has worsened for the active population of young people in the last five years. Whereas the long-term unemployment rate of the 25 to 59 has been steadily falling since 2000, it suddenly started increasing for the 15 to 24 age group in 2007. Since then, a higher proportion of young men than young women among the labour force have experienced long-term unemployment (31.9 % compared to 27.8 %).

<sup>32</sup> A job lasting at least three months.

<sup>33</sup> Eurydice/EACEA and Eurostat 2012, pp. 178-179.

<sup>34</sup> 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.

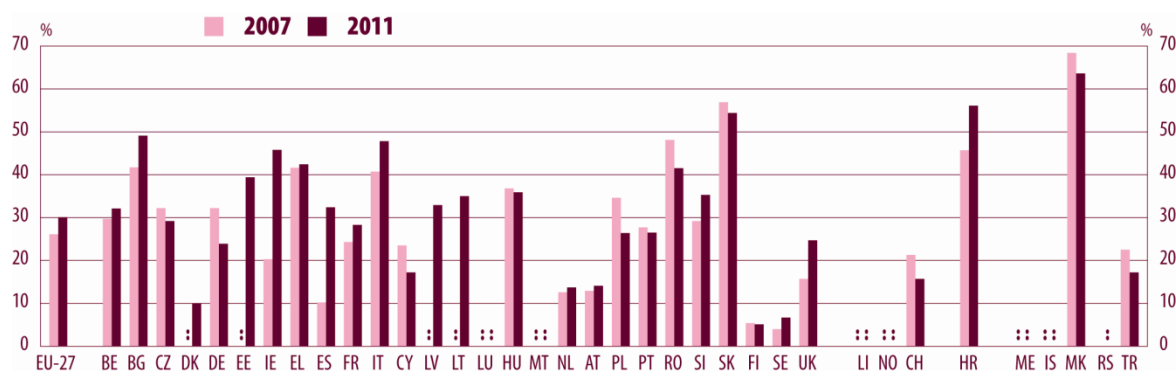
**Figure 3-I: Long term youth unemployment rates of young people, EU-27 average, by age and by sex, 2000, 2007 and 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_upgal

Since 2007, there have been diverging trends between EU countries concerning the number of young people who have spent long periods job-hunting (Figure 3-J). In eleven countries, long-term unemployment rates have decreased, while in ten countries the trend is the opposite with rates increasing between 2007 and 2011. The extreme case is in Spain in which the proportion of those aged 15 to 24 in the active population being in long-term unemployment is three times higher than four years ago, reaching 32.4 % in 2011. Furthermore, in one third of EU-27 countries, over a third of the unemployed aged 15 to 24 had been jobless for one year or more in 2011. The highest long-term unemployment rates were in Slovakia (54.4 %), Bulgaria (49.8 %), Italy (47.1 %) and Ireland (45.8 %). In Denmark, Finland and Sweden, the situation seems to be more favourable for 15 to 24 year olds in the active population who have tended to find a job quickly, with fewer than 10 % of them were unemployed for 12 months or longer in 2011. Outside the EU-27, the long-term unemployment rate was over 50 % in Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

**Figure 3-J: EU youth indicator: Long term unemployment rate of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2007 and 2011**

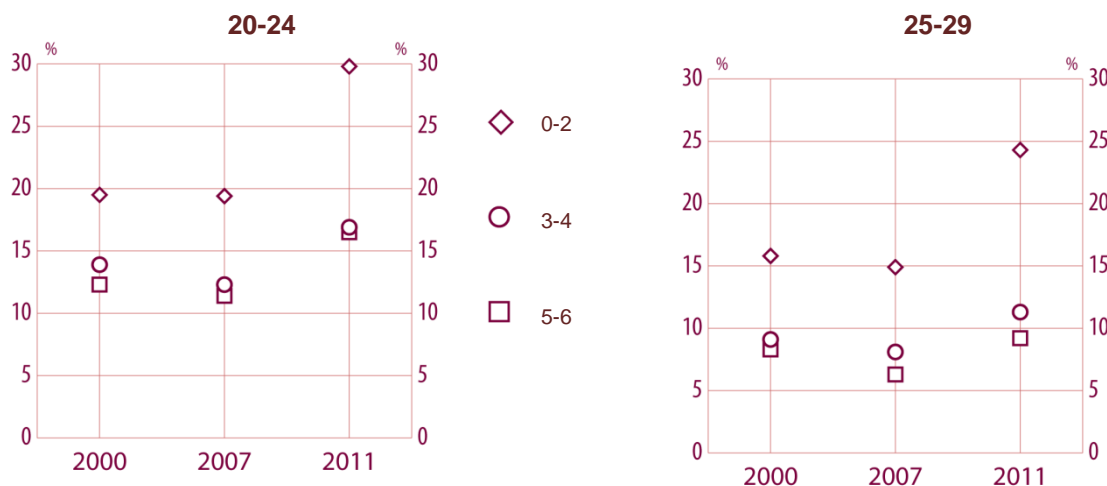


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_upgal

Figure 3-K suggests that the more young people are educated, the better they are protected against unemployment. In 2011, the unemployment rate was indeed much lower for young graduates from tertiary education than for those with the lowest levels of education in the EU-

27<sup>35</sup>. Rates among the active population aged 25 to 29 were 9.2 % and 11.3 % for those who had completed tertiary education and upper secondary education, respectively. However they are twice as high in the case of the active population of the 25 to 29 year olds, whose qualifications were obtained only in or prior lower secondary education (24.3 %).

**Figure 3-K: Unemployment rate of young people, by highest educational attainment level, EU-27 average, by age, 2000, 2007 and 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_urgaed

Note: Educational levels as defined by the 1997 ISCED.

ISCED 0 = pre-primary education, ISCED 1 = primary education, ISCED 2 = lower secondary education, ISCED 3 = upper secondary education, ISCED 4 = post-secondary non-tertiary education, ISCED 5 = tertiary education (first stage) and ISCED 6 = tertiary education (second stage).

However, the risk of unemployment has increased also for higher educated young people since 2007. The economic crisis has affected them too, albeit to a lesser extent. However, the situation in some countries is rather different (Figure 3-L). This is especially pertinent in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal and Romania, where graduates are at a greater risk of unemployment than young people with lower qualifications, including those who have not completed secondary education. In these countries, the economic crisis has exacerbated the situation of ‘overqualified’ graduates<sup>36</sup>. There appears to be a mismatch between the skills acquired in tertiary education and those needed for available jobs. Beyond the EU-27, graduates in Croatia, the Former Republic of Macedonia and Turkey face similar problems. Vulnerable groups of young people like migrants, Roma or other minorities, youngsters with a disability or mental health problem, homeless youth experience increased difficulties to get a job.

<sup>35</sup>

Please see the definition of the educational levels according to the 1997 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED – UOE) in Chapter 0 on Due to the high unemployment rates in southern European countries, mobility intentions are high (especially among young people) and labour mobility from those countries has increased, contrasting with an overall decline in intra-EU mobility since 2008. Emigration from these countries has increased, notably in the form of return migration, but there are also early signs of new patterns of emigration of nationals (e.g. from Ireland to Australia).

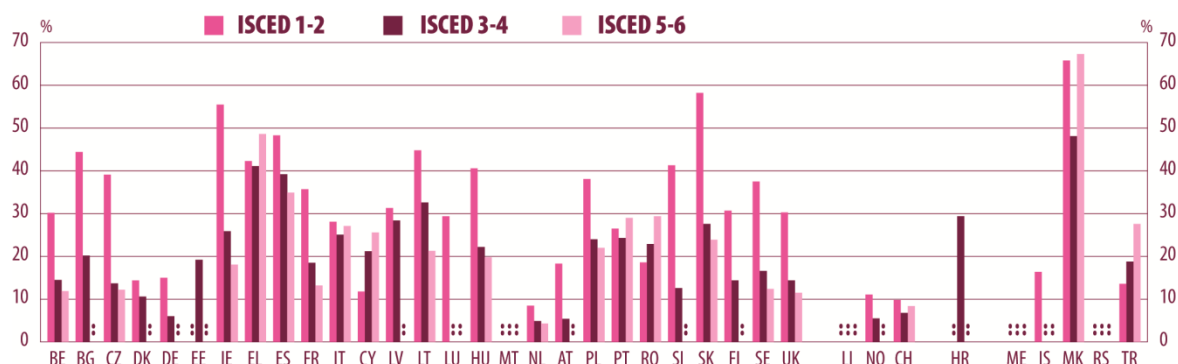
Education and Training.

<sup>36</sup> Eurofound 2011a, p. 2.

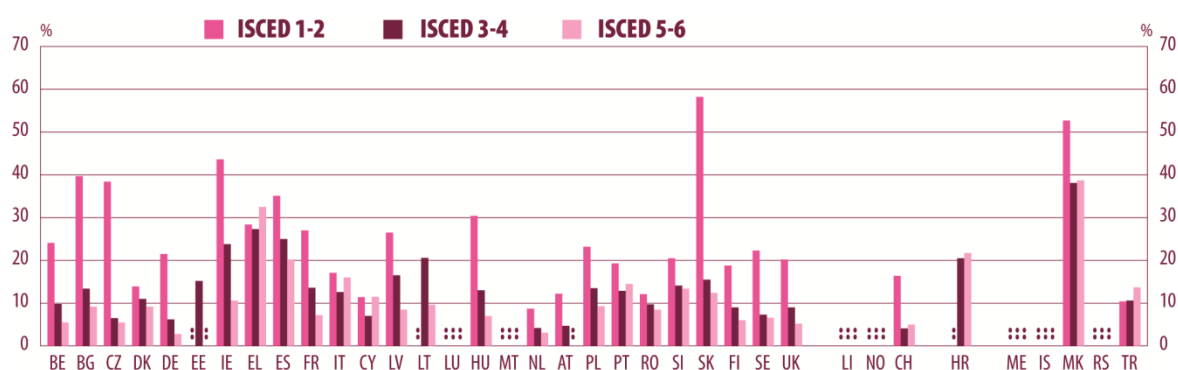


**Figure 3-L: Unemployment rate of young people, by the highest educational attainment, by age and by country, 2011**

**a) aged 20-24**



**b) aged 25-29**



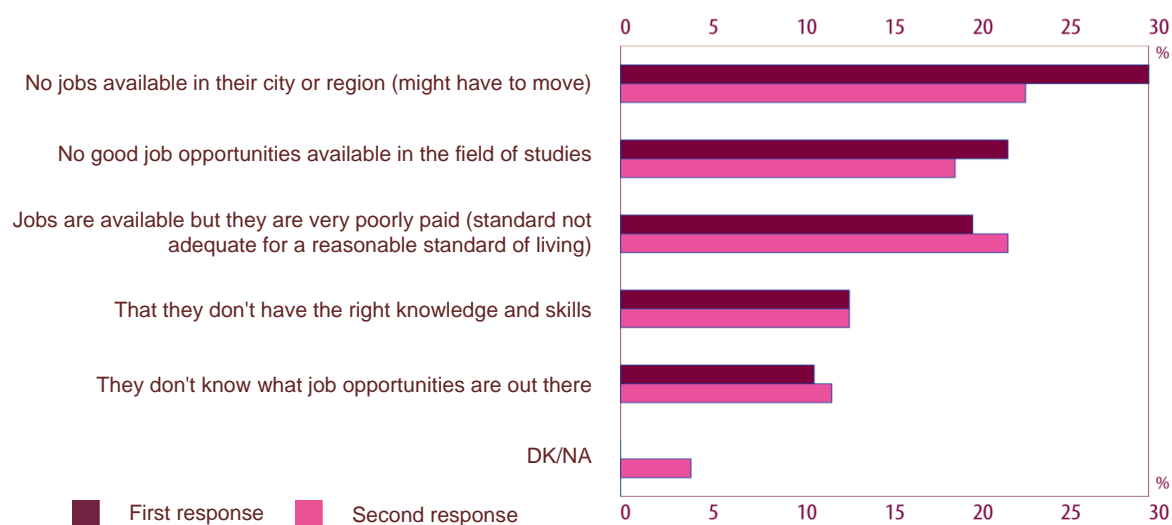
Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_urgaed

The ‘Youth on the Move’ Flash [Eurobarometer](#) gives some insight into the main concerns of young Europeans when seeking a job on completion of their education (Figure 3-M).

The majority of respondents (53 %) identified a structural factor, namely ‘no available jobs in their city or region’ as their first or second main concern. Many also highlighted ‘poorly paid available jobs’ and ‘low employability in the field of studies’ (42 % and 41 %). Possible personal reasons for their difficulty, such as lack of ‘the right knowledge and skills’ and ‘unawareness of job opportunities’ were the least cited.



**Figure 3-M: Young people having difficulties in finding a job, EU-27 average, 2011**



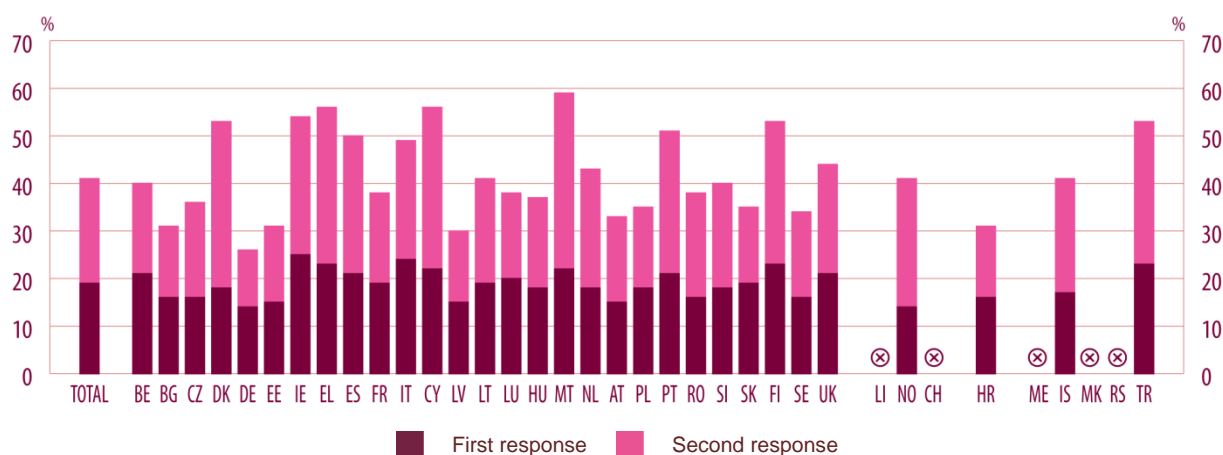
Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Finding a relevant and suitable job after finishing education is often a challenge. In your opinion, what is the main concern of young people in your country regarding getting a job after finishing education? And the second main concern?'

Answers by educational level show that the main difficulty for those who are better qualified is the mismatch between skills and jobs. Indeed, young people who were in tertiary education or had completed it were more likely to indicate a lack of good job opportunities in their field of study (47 %) than their counterparts at lower levels of education. Conversely, 54% of young people who had dropped out of lower secondary education and were the least qualified said that poorly paid jobs were their main concern, as opposed to 42% in the case of those who had pursued their education further.

When looking at country variations, a lack of good job opportunities in young people's fields of study is the main concern of over half of the respondents in one third of European countries (Figure 3-N). They include countries in which youth unemployment is the highest in Europe, both in general and among tertiary education graduates (for example, Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal).

**Figure 3-N: Young people considering that there are no good job opportunities in their field of studies, by country, 2011**

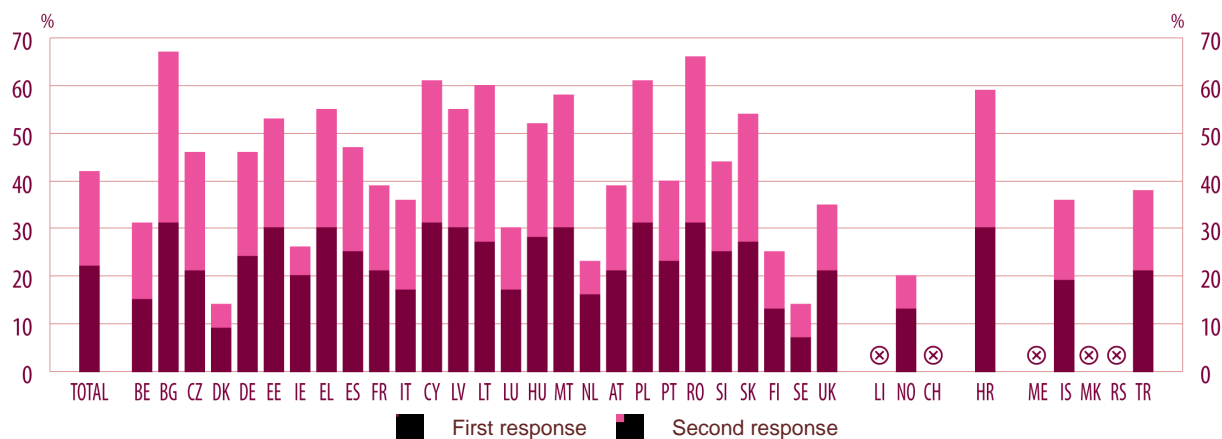


Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Finding a relevant and suitable job after finishing education is often a challenge. In your opinion, what is the main concern of young people in your country regarding getting a job after finishing education? And the second main concern?'

In other countries, the main concern is that jobs are very poorly paid (Figure 3-O), e.g. in Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus, Poland and Lithuania. Conversely, poor pay was a minor concern reported by fewer than 20% of young people in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland.

**Figure 3-O: Young people considering that jobs are available but they are very poorly paid, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Finding a relevant and suitable job after finishing education is often a challenge. In your opinion, what is the main concern of young people in your country regarding getting a job after finishing education? And the second main concern?'

### 3.3.2. Working patterns of young employees

Young people are more likely to be employed on a temporary contract or part-time basis. And they more commonly have jobs with atypical and unusual schedules, including shifts and weekend or night-time work.

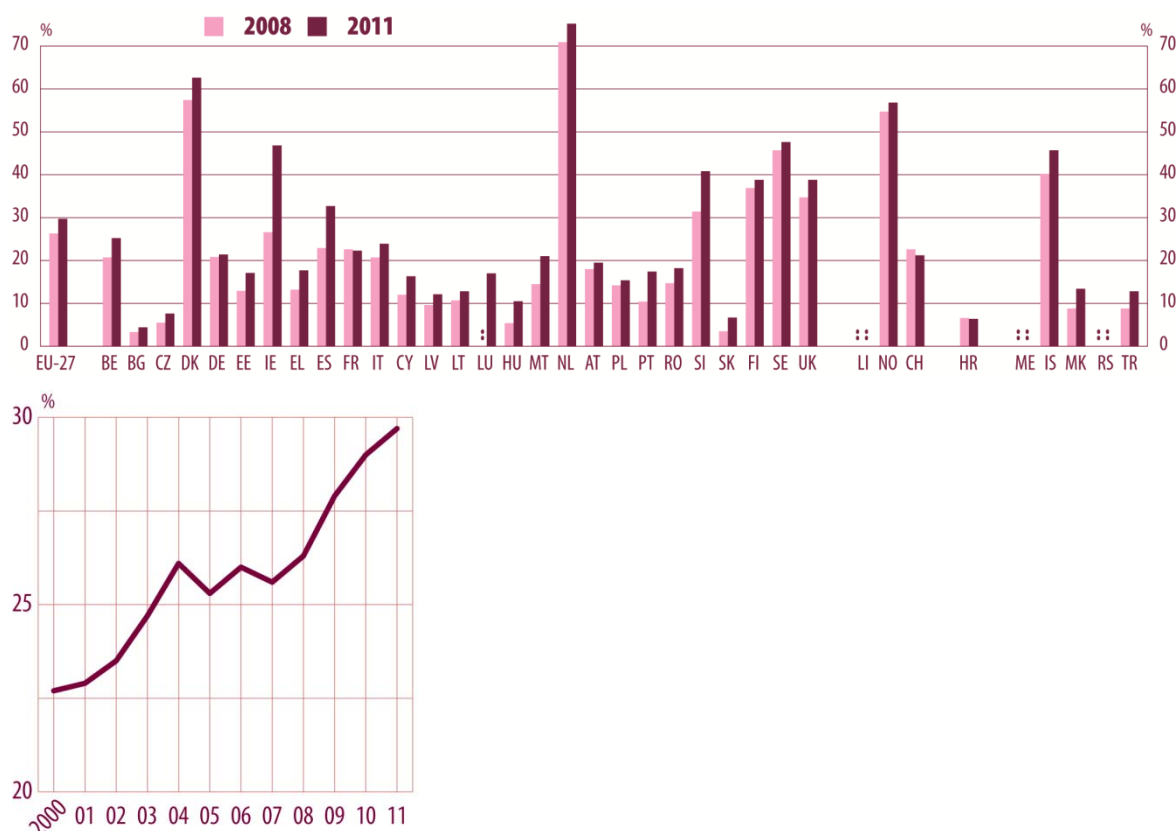
Since 2000, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of the 15 to 24 age group who work on a part-time basis<sup>37</sup>. In 2011, nearly one in three employed 15 to 24 year olds had a part-time job (Figure 3-P). The situation is different among the working population aged 25 to 54, with its part-time employment rate of around 16 % over the last ten years.

In some countries, the trend for the 15 to 24 age group is even more marked. For example, in Ireland, the proportion of part-time workers in this group almost doubled. In Denmark and the Netherlands, the rates were already among the highest in Europe in 2008 and continued to increase reaching 62.6 % and 75.2 % respectively. By contrast, in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, part-time employment of 15 to 24 year olds was still uncommon in 2011 with rates of just 4.4-7.6 %.

<sup>37</sup>

As explained when defining full-time employment, the distinction between full-time and part-time work is based on a spontaneous response by the respondent (except in the Netherlands, Iceland and Norway where part-time is determined 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.

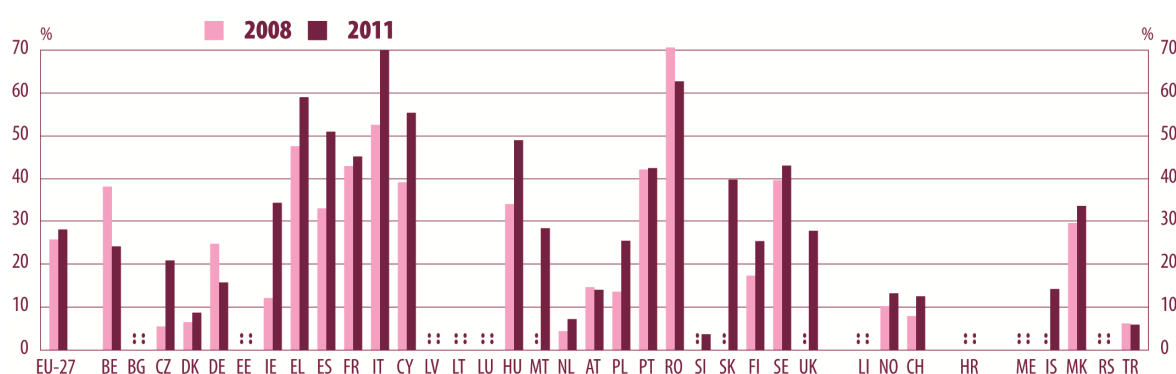
**Figure 3-P: Part-time employment rate of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2008 and 2011, and EU-27 average 2000-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_eppgan

Part-time work among young people often implies apprenticeship either under a vocational education programme or in a job while studying. This accounts for the high part-time rates reported in many countries and their increase in recent years.

**Figure 3-Q: Involuntary part-time employment rate of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2008 and 2011**

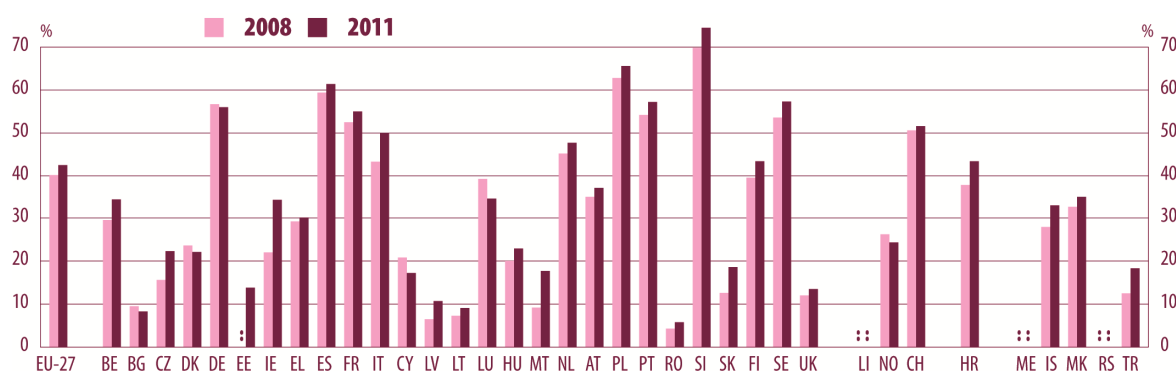


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_eppgai

That said, many young people work part-time because they cannot find full-time employment. Figure 3-Q shows the high rates of involuntary part-time employment among 15 to 24 year olds in several European countries. In Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Romania, over half of young people aged under 25 worked part-time because they had no choice. Since 2008, involuntary part-time youth employment has increased in most parts of Europe. By contrast, in Denmark and the Netherlands, in which the most of those aged 15 to 24 work part-time, it is clear from the data that they do so deliberately.

From 2008 to 2011, the percentage of young people with temporary employment contracts<sup>38</sup> rose from 40.2 % to 42.5 % in the EU-27 (Figure 3-R). Even before the economic downturn, the great majority of 15 to 24 year olds in several countries was employed under fixed-term contracts. This was the case in Germany, Spain, France, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. However, in a few countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania and the United Kingdom, the opposite was true with just a small minority of those aged 15 to 24 employed under temporary contracts.

**Figure 3-R: Employees with a temporary contract among young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2008 and 2011**



Source : Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: lfsa\_etpga

Temporary employment occurs among a far greater proportion of young workers aged 15 to 24 than in the case of those aged between 25 and 59. In 2011, the difference was one of nearly 30 percentage points in the EU-27 (11 % against 42.5 %). This is indicative of a labour market segmented into workers with long-term contracts and those with temporary jobs.

Temporary contracts may help young people in the transition from education to full-time employment, by giving them work experience and making it easier to enter the labour market or providing training opportunities as stepping-stones to permanent jobs. However, high rates of temporary employment may be indicative of insecure jobs. Temporary employees face a worse social security coverage and more precarious working conditions. Where this is the case, young people may lack the stability enabling them to live independently. They can be trapped in a cycle of alternating temporary contracts and unemployment, which may adversely affect their status into their thirties or beyond. The lack of a degree or professional experience is among the factors that may hinder the transition from a temporary to a permanent contract. Finally, there is evidence that the longer people spend searching for a job, the less likely they are to secure a permanent contract. Research showed that in 2006-2007, the younger workers (15 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groups) especially in Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and in the United Kingdom, had good chances of moving to a permanent contract<sup>39</sup>.

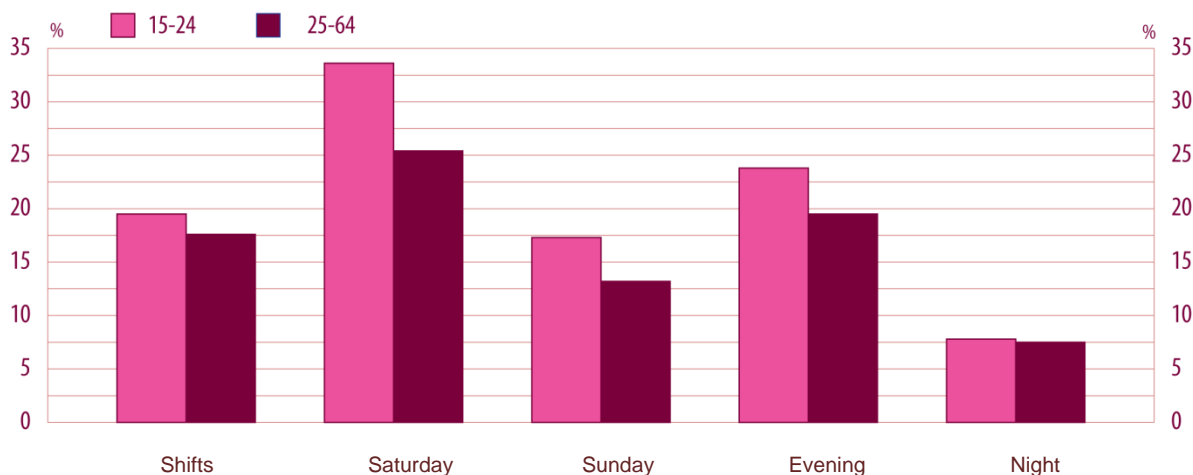
In 2011, the proportion of employed young people in the 15 to 24 age group which had atypical working hours was also much higher than for those aged 25 to 64. This was especially true of work on Saturday, with proportions of 33.6 % and 25.4 % respectively (Figure 3-S). The proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 which worked on Sundays and in the evenings was also around four percentage points higher than that of their elders in the 25

<sup>38</sup> 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).

<sup>39</sup> European Commission 2010a, p. 141

to 64 age group. The percentage of employees doing night work was the same in both age groups – the only exception to the overall trend. A higher proportion of 15 to 24 year olds did shift work (19.5 %), almost two percentage points higher than the proportion of their elders.

**Figure 3-S: Share of employees working in atypical and asocial working hours among young people, EU-27 average, by age, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data codes: lfsa\_ewpshi (shift); lfsa\_ewpsat (Saturday); lfsa\_ewpsun (Sunday); lfsa\_ewpnig (night); lfsa\_ewpeve (evening)

There are wide variations in these trends from one EU-27 country to another. In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, over 40 % of young employees aged 15 to 24 did shift work. In Belgium, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, the corresponding proportion was below 10 %. In Greece, the proportion of employed young people aged 15 to 24 who worked in the evening (42.9 %) was almost twice the EU-27 average. Conversely, at less than 12 %, the proportion was around half that average in Belgium, Cyprus, Latvia, Austria and Poland. Proportionally more young employees in the 15 to 24 age group in Slovakia did night work (21.9 %) than everywhere else in the EU-27. In addition, a high proportion of young employees in Greece and the Netherlands worked on Saturdays (54.9 % and 46.5 % respectively), while the approximately 25 % of 15 to 24 year olds who worked on Sundays in Ireland and Slovakia exceeded the EU-27 average of 17.3 %. Finally, the proportions of young employees aged 15 to 24 working at weekends or other less usual times were lowest in Poland<sup>40</sup>.

### 3.3.3. Young entrepreneurs

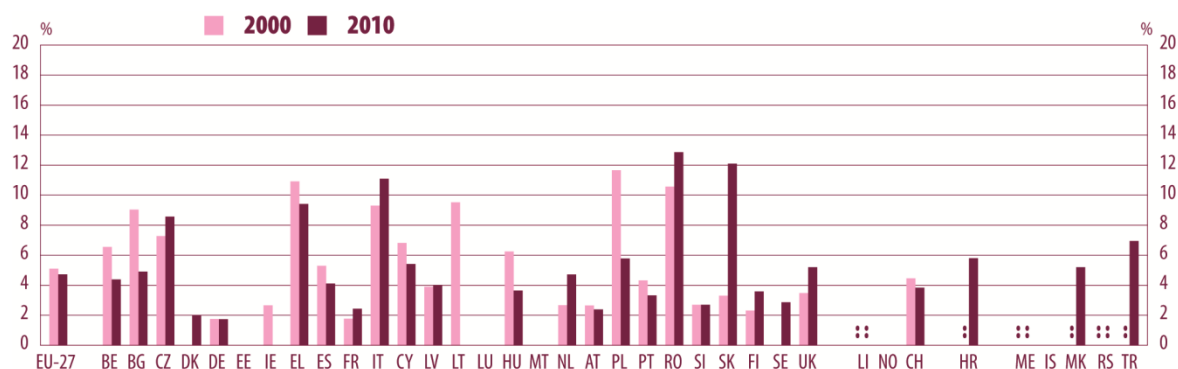
Young people aged 25 to 29 seem far more likely to set up their own business than 20 to 24 year olds. In 2010, the EU self-employment rate of the higher age group was double that of the younger group, and already close to double that of ten years earlier.

Figure 3-T shows that, in 2010, the proportions of young self-employed people in the 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 age groups in the EU-27 were smaller than ten years earlier. However, the proportions have grown among the 20 to 24 age group in the Czech Republic, Romania and Finland and in both age groups, in France, the Netherlands and Slovakia.

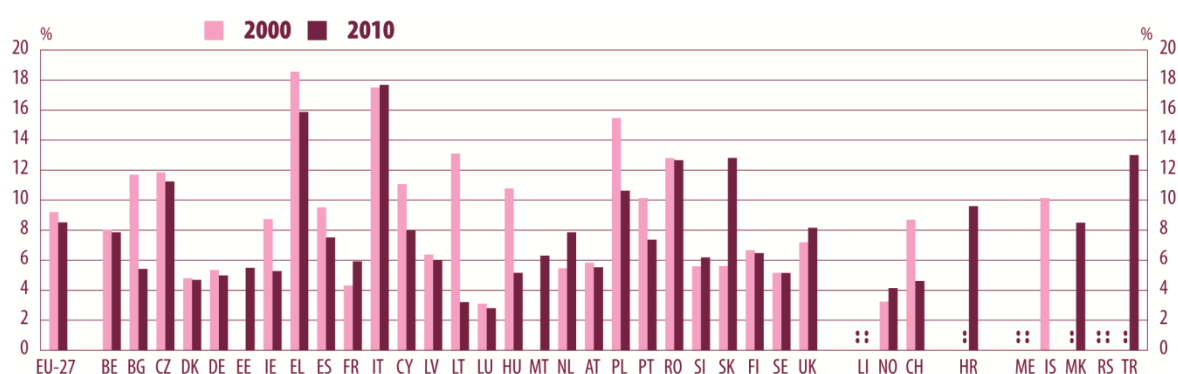
<sup>40</sup> Eurostat – online data codes: shift work: lfsa\_ewpshi; evening work: lfsa\_ewpeve; night work: lfsa\_ewpnig; Saturday: lfsa\_ewpsat; Sunday: lfsa\_ewpsun.

**Figure 3-T: EU youth indicator: Self-employed rate of young people, by country and by age, 2000 and 2010**

**a) aged 20-24**



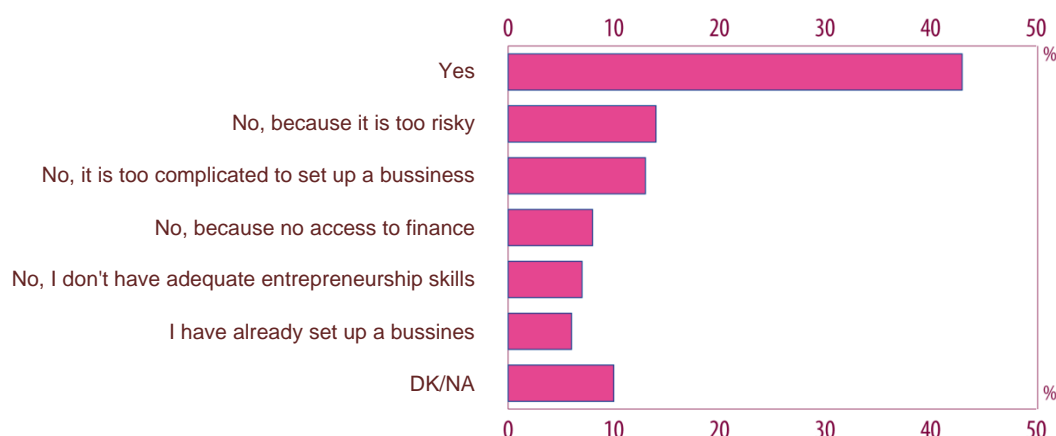
**b) aged 25-29**



Source: Eurostat – LFS

Eurobarometer gives some insight into the thinking of young people aged between 15 and 29 towards entrepreneurship. Figure 3-U reports the response rates to one of the questions on the attitudes of young people to setting up their own business, revealing that 40 % of respondents would like to do this and 6 % of them had done so already.

**Figure 3-U: EU youth indicator: Young people's desire to set up their own business, EU-27 average, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Would you like to set up your own business in the future?'

Among those who answered that they did not wish to set up their own business, similar percentages thought that it was either too risky or too complicated. Almost half as frequent

were answers related to lack of financial resources (8 %) or in adequate entrepreneurial skills (7 %). Although there were gender differences regarding willingness to set up a business (47 % of men were willing, compared to 39 % of women), the decline in interest became more noticeable with age. While 50 % of 15 to 19 year olds wanted to start a company, only 34 % of 30 to 35 year olds did so. Willingness also appeared to vary with educational level. Young people still in vocational and secondary education were keener to start up a business (53 % and 50 %, respectively) than those still in tertiary education (47 %).

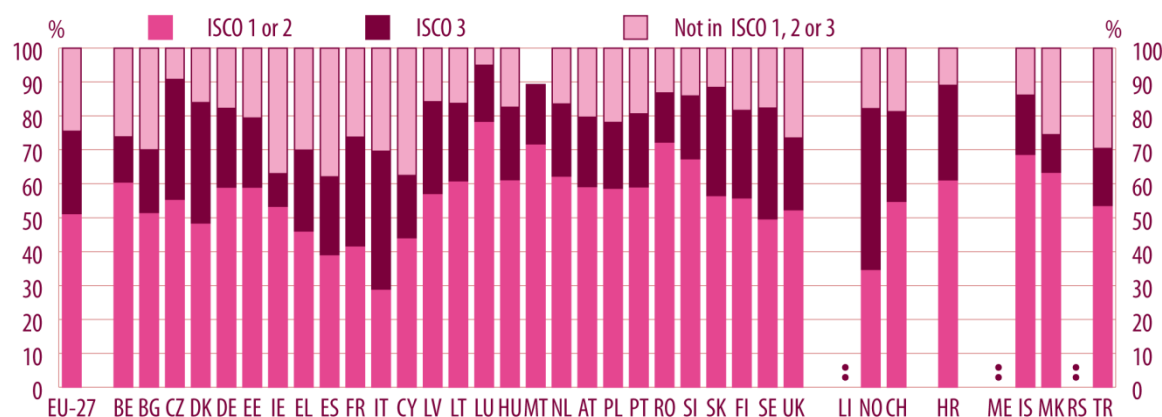
### 3.4. Support for the transition to employment

#### 3.4.1. Skills forecasting and career guidance

Young people entering the labour market are one of the groups in society most affected by the issue of skills-to-job mismatch. Research has found that, without work experience, they are more likely to find that they have inappropriate skills or are overqualified. If there is a mismatch between the acquired and required level of education or skills, they may be considered ‘overqualified for the job’<sup>41</sup>.

Figure 3-V shows that ‘vertical skills mismatch’ or ‘over-qualification’ among young people with tertiary education qualifications is widespread in Europe, by relating their qualifications to their jobs as classified in the International Classifications of Occupations (ISCO). In 2010, on average just over one fifth of the 25 to 34 age group was either inappropriately qualified or overqualified. The highest proportions of overqualified young people were in Spain, Cyprus and Ireland, in which almost one in three young people were employed in a job which did not require their tertiary qualifications<sup>42</sup>.

**Figure 3-V: Distribution of young people (aged 25-34) with tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) 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, 2010**



Source: Eurostat.

Note: ISCO 1, 2 and 3 are categories of occupations usually requiring tertiary qualifications.

Clearly, the impact of skill forecasting in helping young people to plan their studies and enter the labour market is most effective when integrated into a career guidance system<sup>43</sup>. However, the evidence from the [Eurobarometer](#) survey ‘Employment and Social Policy’ is that a

<sup>41</sup> Cedefop 2010, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> The forthcoming 2012 European Commission's report on Employment and Social Developments in Europe will explore in more details the problem of skills mismatch in the EU.

<sup>43</sup> For the development of career guidance policies see: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network ([www.elgpn.eu](http://www.elgpn.eu)), For an insight onto existing career guidance provided at school in Europe, see Eurydice/EACEA 2010, pp. 61-64 and Eurydice/EACEA 2011c, pp. 48-53.

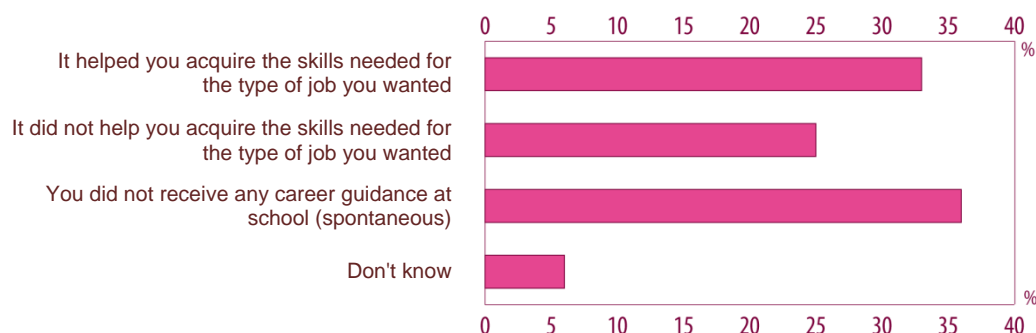


majority of respondents received no guidance during education, while one in four of those who did were not satisfied (Figure 3-W).

#### The Eurydice study 'New Skills for New Jobs'

Policy initiatives in the field of education: Short overview of the current situation in Europe (2010) reports on the measures taken by Member States in the field of the early identification of skills requirements. Several actions are recognised. The first is related to conducting studies on skills supply and requirements in the labour market, i.e. forecasting labour market developments and planning education and training provision. The second concerns developing a monitoring system based on both quantitative and qualitative methods, aiming at providing a deeper understanding of the regional and national labour market trends and requirements. The third relates to setting up the networks of organisations to establish a well-functioning communication system, and constructing a coherent system of informing and planning.

**Figure 3-W: Career guidance offered at school and its support on acquiring the skills needed for the type of job wanted, EU-27 average, 2011**



Source: 2011 Special Eurobarometer 377 'Employment and Social Policy'

Note: the question was 'Which of the following statements best describes the career guidance you received at school? It helped you acquire the skills needed for the type of job you wanted; it did not help you acquire the skills needed for the type of job you wanted; you did not receive any career guidance at school (spontaneous); don't know.'

In a few countries (Estonia, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary and Portugal), a majority of young respondents said they received no career guidance at school. By contrast, very high proportions of students were involved in guidance activities in France, Poland and the United Kingdom. Around half the respondents in the Czech Republic, France, Slovenia and Slovakia, greatly appreciated the quality of these activities. This differs from the situation reported in Germany, Ireland, Greece and Finland, in which only one in four students found career guidance an effective means for preparing for the job market.

#### 3.4.2. High-quality traineeships and internships

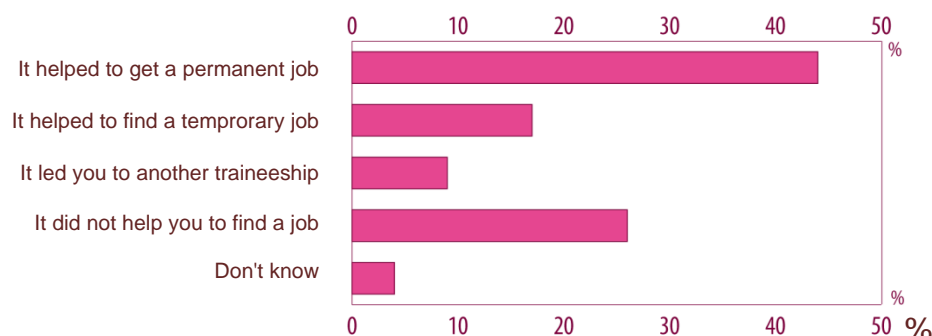
Young people often have difficulty in finding a job because they lack experience, and special measures such as traineeships and internships can help to broaden their experience. In the 2011 'Employment and Social Policy' Eurobarometer survey, which explored the topic of traineeships, 61 % of respondents acknowledged that work experience was the most important factor in employability. The survey then went further by focusing on their participation in such training programmes and how this might help them to get a job. All respondents except students were asked whether they had completed one or more traineeships either during or immediately after completing their education<sup>44</sup>. Although almost two-thirds (63 %) said that they had not completed any training programmes, and a third (34 %) has completed at least one traineeship. Out of this third, 16 % completed one, 8 % two, and 10 % three or more. The six countries whose citizens completed at least one traineeship are: Denmark (51 %), Estonia (57 %), Lithuania (55 %), Luxembourg (54 %), Finland (56 %), and Sweden (53 %). Young people in the remaining 21 Member States predominantly had not completed any traineeship either during or immediately after finishing their education.

<sup>44</sup>

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?'



**Figure 3-X: Traineeship and its importance on finding a job, EU-27 average, 2011**



Source: 2011 Special Eurobarometer 377 'Employment and Social Policy'

Note: The question was 'Thinking about the traineeship(s) you have completed, which of the following statements best corresponds to your situation? It led you to another traineeship; it helped you to find a temporary job; it helped you to get a permanent job; it did not help you to find a job; don't know'.

Base: those who completed a traineeship = 31 % of the total sample.

As shown in Figure 3-X, 44 % of respondents who reported they had completed a traineeship felt that it helped them to get a permanent job. A lower percentage (17 %) reported a similar opinion with regards to a temporary job. By contrast, 26 % stated that a traineeship was not helpful. Finally, almost one in ten respondents reported that their traineeship led to another one.

### 3.4.3. Support for young households to reconcile work and private life

Early childhood education and care are provided and subsidised, albeit organised differently from one country to another<sup>45</sup>.

**Figure 3-Y: Affordability of childcare services, by country, 2010**



Source: 2010 Special Eurobarometer 355 'Poverty and Social Exclusion'

Note: The question was 'And thinking now about the affordability of childcare services in your country, would you say that they are – Very affordable, Fairly affordable, Not very affordable, Not at all affordable, Nothing to pay/free?'

Figure 3-Y shows the opinions of EU citizens on affordability of childcare (collected in 2010 by a special Eurobarometer). Childcare services were considered generally affordable by

<sup>45</sup>

See Eurydice/EACEA 2009b for more information on how early childhood education and care is provided for and organised in the EU.

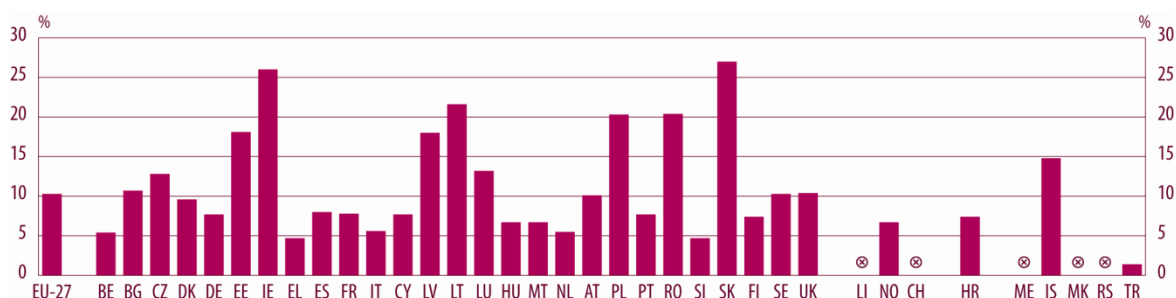
44 % of respondents. On the other hand, 34 % reported that these services were ‘not affordable’<sup>46</sup>.

#### 3.4.4. Geographical career mobility

The Flash Eurobarometer survey ‘Youth on the Move’ (2011) contains findings on young people's experience and willingness to move to another EU country. First, 77 % of them said that they had not experienced living in another country. Conversely, 20 % said that they had gone abroad for at least one month for other than leisure purposes. Of this 20 %, only about half replied that they had already worked abroad. Among the survey respondents, more young men (10.8 %) had been abroad than young women (6.9 %). And it was unsurprising that higher proportions of older respondents had gone abroad to work than in the case of the young. The steadily increasing proportions for the age groups of 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 years were 1.7%, 7.5%, and 10.9 % respectively.

Figure 3-Z reveals substantial differences between European countries in the proportions of young people who have gone abroad to work even for short periods. The highest proportions came mainly from central Europe, ranging from around 20 % in Poland and Romania to 27 % in Slovakia. But Ireland fell within the same range with 26 %. By contrast, the proportions in Belgium, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovenia were no more than around 5 %.

**Figure 3-Z: Young having stayed abroad for working purposes for at least one month, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b ‘Youth on the Move’

Note: The question was ‘Apart from vacation or tourism, learning or training, have you ever stayed abroad for at least one month for working purposes?’

Base: all respondents, % of ‘mentions’ shown, total.

Due to the high unemployment rates in southern European countries, mobility intentions are high (especially among young people) and labour mobility from those countries has increased, contrasting with an overall decline in intra-EU mobility since 2008. Emigration from these countries has increased, notably in the form of return migration, but there are also early signs of new patterns of emigration of nationals (e.g. from Ireland to Australia)<sup>47</sup>.

## 4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### 4.1. Introduction

Education is at the centre of a young person's life. At school and in other learning environments, young people acquire the skills needed in order to make appropriate choices with a view ultimately to achieving fulfilment and independence in adult life. Between the age of 15 and mature adulthood, young people progress gradually through the different routes

<sup>46</sup> See more data on accessibility, affordability of childcare, other reconciliation measures in the SPC report on Tackling and preventing child poverty (Social Protection Committee, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> European Commission, 2012f

offered by education and training system. As they gain successive qualifications, they ideally become better equipped to find their preferred jobs and play an active part in society.

## 4.2. Formal education

Formal education here means ‘education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions. It normally constitutes a continuous “ladder” of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at the age of 5 to 7 and continuing to up to 20 or 25 years old’<sup>48</sup>.

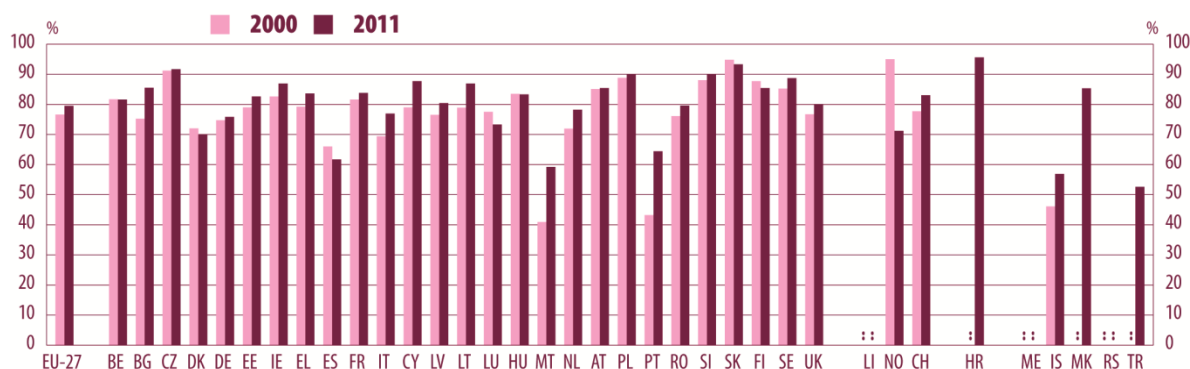
### 4.2.1. Participation and attainment

Today, young people expect to spend an average of 17 years in education during their lifetime. This estimation varies from one country to another, ranging for example, in 2011, from Luxembourg and Slovenia with 15 years to Finland with 20.5 years<sup>49</sup>.

Since 2005 the duration of education is extending. This is related to efforts to extend the length of compulsory education in many countries, by either bringing forward the start of formal education or by extending full-time/part-time attendance at upper secondary level. In addition, participation rates in education in the two years following the end of compulsory education has increased or stayed stable, as observed in the 2000/09 period<sup>50</sup>.

Figure 4-A shows data on the proportion of the 20 to 24 year olds who had at least completed upper secondary education in 2010. On average, the EU-27 rate was 79 %, marking a slight increase across the European countries since 2000 when the rate was 76.6 %. The increase has been the greatest in Malta and Portugal.

**Figure 4-A: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 20-24) having completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3), by country, 2000 and 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: tsiir110

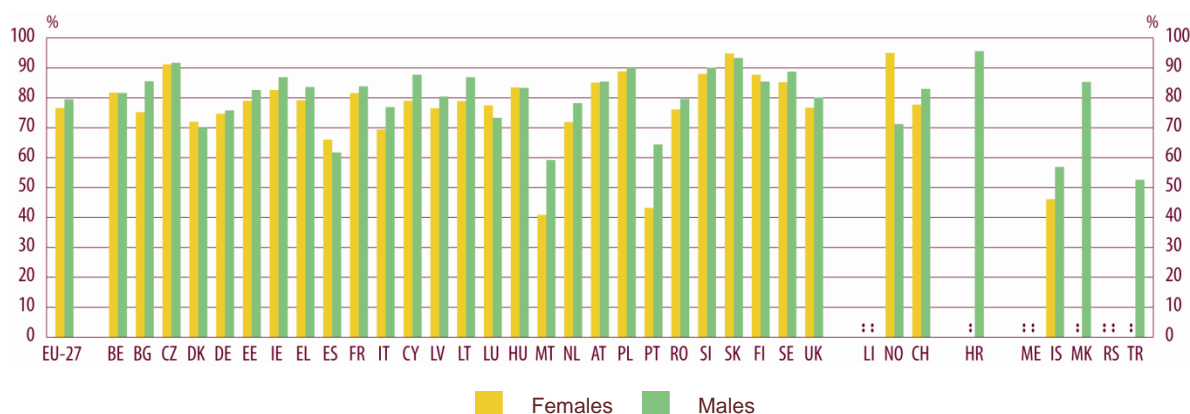
Despite this overall positive trend, there were still countries where many 20 to 24 year olds did not complete upper secondary education in 2011, such as Malta and Spain. In Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain and Finland, the proportion of young people having completed at least upper secondary level has decreased compared to 2000. By contrast, in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, almost all young people aged 20 to 24 years old had completed upper secondary level. Outside the EU-27, Iceland and Turkey had the lowest share of young people having completed upper secondary education (nearly half) whereas in Norway, the rate decreased by more than 20 percentage points in eleven years.

<sup>48</sup> Eurostat 2006, p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> Eurostat – online data code: educ\_igen.

<sup>50</sup> Eurydice/EACEA and Eurostat 2012, pp. 77/78.

**Figure 4-B: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 20-24) having completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3), by country and by sex, 2011**



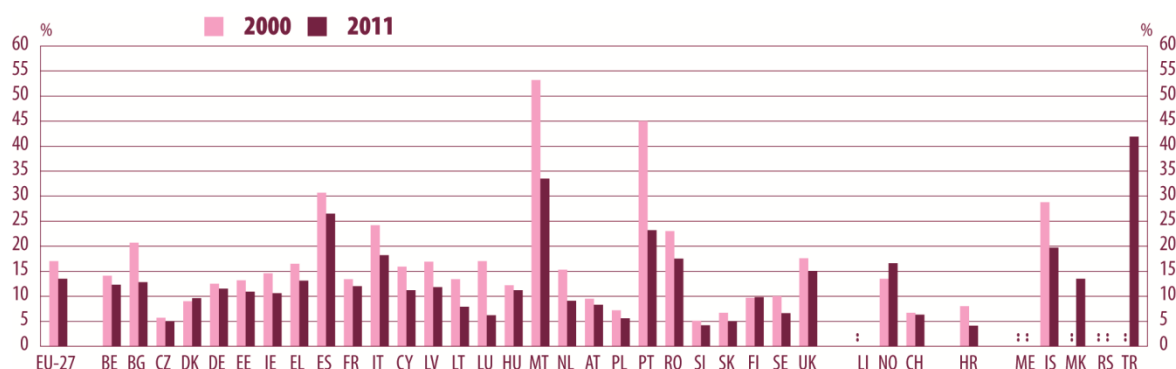
Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: tsiir110

Differences by gender are significant. Figure 4-B indicates that at EU level (2011), the proportion of women among the 20 to 24 year olds who have at least completed upper secondary education was greater than that of men: 82.4 % against 76.7 %. This picture applies to all Member States but Bulgaria. The gap between women and men is the greatest in Denmark, Spain, Malta and Portugal with more than 10 percentage points difference between the genders.

There is a significant share of young people not having completed upper secondary education. Early leavers from education and training are defined as people aged 18 to 24 who have only lower secondary education or less and are no longer in education or training. It means that they have only achieved pre-primary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than two years.

Students facing strong difficulties in the school education system might feel compelled to end their education prematurely without having gained relevant qualifications or a school certificate. Many factors can explain why young people find themselves in such a situation. Some reasons lie in personal backgrounds, for example coming from a socially disadvantaged background which does not support school attendance and academic performance. Other reasons relate to school and education systems, for instance, the lack of support for those who repeat a year and are left behind. Early leavers from education and training tend more to be unemployed, get less secure and jobs and earn less. They are therefore more at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

**Figure 4-C: EU youth indicator: Early leavers from education and training<sup>51</sup> (population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education, ISCED 3c, and not in further education or training), by country, 2000 and 2011**



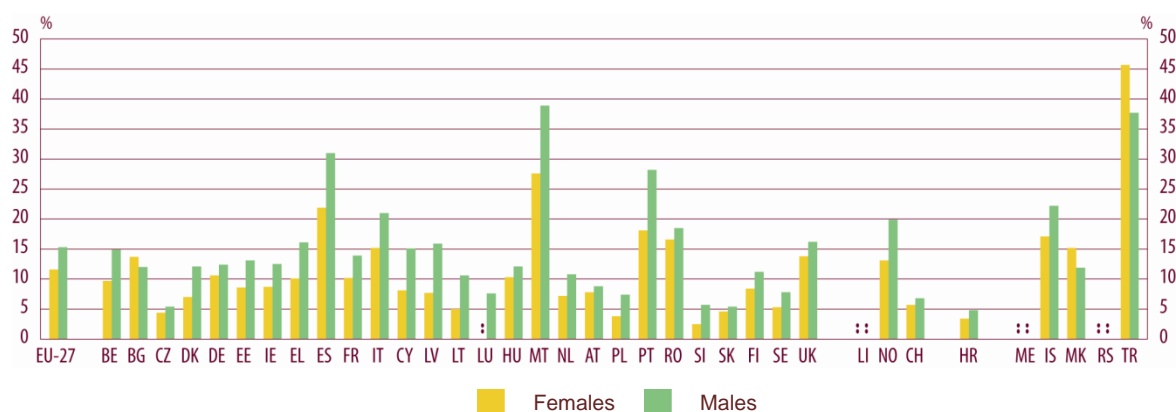
Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_40

Note: 2000: Data are from 2001 for BG, PL and SI; Data are from 2002 for CZ, IE, LV, SK and HR.

Figure 4-C shows a decreasing trend in early leaving from education and training. In 2011, the EU-27 rate was 13.5 %, or 3.5 percentage points less than in 2000. Early leaving is rather uncommon in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia with rates below 5 %. Bulgaria, Malta and Portugal are among the countries where the share of early leavers decreased the most. Malta still had the highest rate with 33.5 % followed by Portugal and Spain and Portugal with respectively rates of 23.2% and 26.5 % Outside the EU-27, in Iceland and Turkey early leaving stood at respectively 19.7 % and 41.9 % while in Croatia it affected only a minority.

Early leaving has a strong gender dimension: on average in the EU-27, men are more affected than women with 15.3 % against 11.6 %. The extreme case is Portugal where the male early school leaving rate (28.2 %) is ten points higher than the female rate (18.1 %). Although in Denmark and Lithuania, the early leaver rate is rather low in total, the rate for men is twice as high as that of women. An exception is Bulgaria, where the share is slightly higher among women.

**Figure 4-D: EU youth indicator: Early leavers from education and training (population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education, ISCED 3c, and not in further education or training), by country and by sex, 2011**

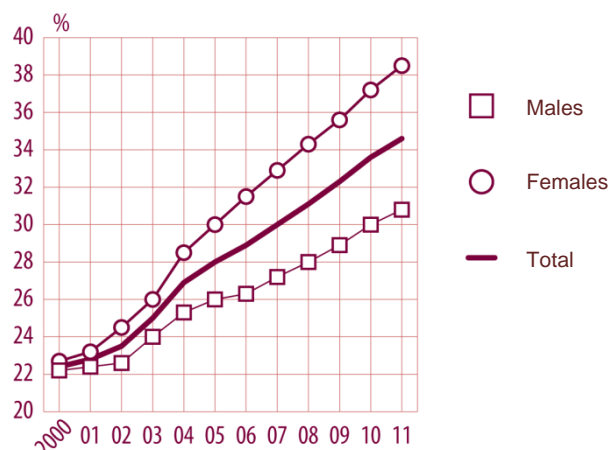


Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_40

<sup>51</sup> Further harmonisation of concepts used in the EU Labour Force Survey hampers the comparability of data between 2000 and 2010 in particular in Denmark, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Iceland and Norway.

There are still opportunities for young people who have prematurely left school to re-enter mainstream education or to gain the qualifications they need. The recognition and validation of such learning outcomes are also a means of (re)integrating education and training systems, enabling students to progress further and possibly access tertiary education or equivalent courses.

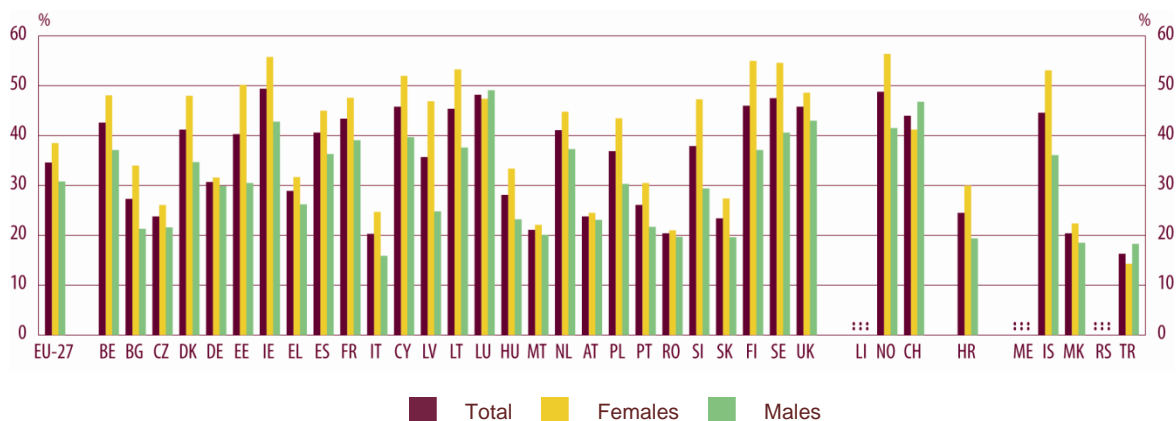
**Figure 4-E: EU youth indicator: Trends in the tertiary educational attainment of people aged 30-34, EU-27 average, by sex, 2000-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_41

The trend observed during the 2000-2011 period shows an increase of nearly 50 % in the attainment rate in tertiary education or equivalent at EU level (Figure 4-E).

**Figure 4-F: EU youth indicator: Tertiary educational attainment of people aged 30-34, by country and by sex, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: t2020\_41

According to Figure 4-F, the highest attainment rates are to be found in Luxembourg and Ireland where almost half of the young people aged 30 to 34 have graduated from tertiary education. At the other end, in Italy and Romania this rate is nearly a fifth of 30 to 34 year olds.

The gender gap regarding tertiary educational or equivalent attainment is widespread in the EU-27. The proportion of women gaining qualifications is higher than that of men with nearly more than 20 percentage points difference in Estonia, Latvia and Finland. In Germany, Austria, Malta and Romania, the attainment rate for women was almost equal to that for men.

Notwithstanding the positive overall trend, not all students entering tertiary education complete their studies. The average completion rate for programmes leading to a Bachelor degree was 72 % in 2008<sup>52</sup>.

#### 4.2.2. Skills achievements

Figure 4-G shows the percentage of low achievers<sup>53</sup> in reading, mathematics and science (2009). Regarding the EU average, the highest proportion of low achievers is to be found in mathematics (22.2 %) while in reading and science, rates are 19.6 % and 17.7 % respectively.

**Figure 4-G: Low-achieving 15 year-old students in reading, mathematics and science, by country, 2009**

##### Reading



##### Mathematics



##### Science



Source: OECD – PISA 2009 databases.

Note: UK (1) stands for United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Belgium (the Flemish and German-speaking communities), Estonia, the Netherlands and Finland are the countries in which the share of low achievers is among the lowest in at least

<sup>52</sup> Eurydice/EACEA 2012, p. 106.

<sup>53</sup> The Council of the European Union has defined low achievers as students who have been marked below Level 2 in the PISA surveys.

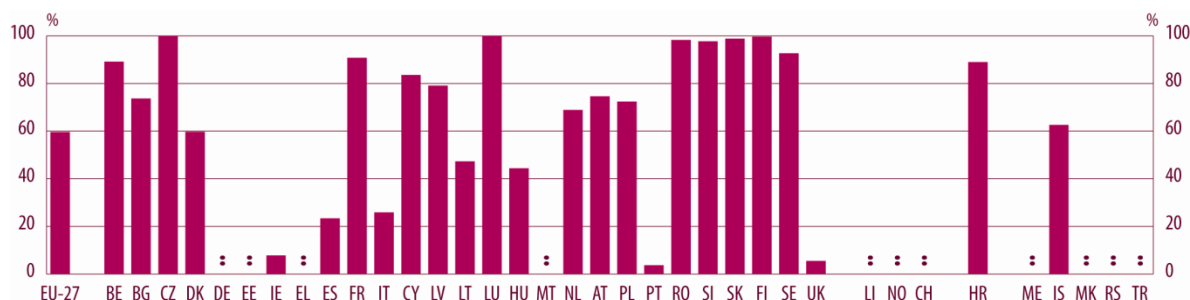
two of the three basic skills fields. Bulgaria and Romania are the EU-27 countries in which the proportion of low achievers is highest in the three fields, with rates of sometimes 40 % or over.

Young people with a disadvantaged background are prone to have a higher share among low-achievers<sup>54</sup>.

Communication in another language than one's mother tongue enables young people to discover and understand different cultures and is also important for mobility, either to study or to work in an international environment abroad.

Nearly 60 % of students in upper secondary education in the EU-27 were learning at least two foreign languages in 2010. Yet, there are high discrepancies between countries. Every upper secondary student enrolled in general education in the Czech Republic and Luxembourg was learning two or more foreign languages. In four others (Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Finland), rates stand above 95 %. By contrast, in Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom less than one in ten upper secondary students were learning two or more foreign languages.

**Figure 4-H: EU youth indicator: Young people in upper general secondary education (ISCED 3 Gen) learning two or more foreign languages, by country, 2010**



Source: Eurostat data collection on language learning in schools. Online data code: educ\_ilang

Comparing 2010 with 2005 and 2007, a few countries (e.g. Estonia and Malta) registered an increase, whereas there was a decline in Portugal and the United Kingdom. These diverging trends can be explained by differences in educational regulations regarding teaching of foreign languages at school. In most countries, students have to learn a minimum of two foreign languages for at least one year during full-time compulsory education.

#### 4.3. Non-formal education and training and youth work

Formal education and training is the most visible and recognised form of learning in society. Yet, non-formal education and training is increasingly acknowledged as an essential part of the lifelong learning process of any individual. Non-formal education covers a range of educational programmes: 'adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. It may take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages'<sup>55</sup>.

Figure 4-I shows 2011 data on the proportion of young people between 15 and 24 who had taken part in non-formal learning activities in the four weeks preceding the survey. The participation rate in the EU-27 was 9 %. This percentage has remained rather stable since 2004, fluctuating between 9.1 % and 9.5 %.

<sup>54</sup> Social Protection Committee 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Eurostat 2006, p. 13.



**Figure 4-I: Participation in non-formal learning of young people (aged 15-24), by country, 2011**



**Figure 4-J: Participation in non-formal learning of young people (aged 15-24), by country and by sex, 2011**

	EU		BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT
Total	9.0		2.7	0.9	10.2	34.4	3.1	4.7	3.8	16.2	19.4	5.7	4.6	28.4	2.1	7.5	7.0	2.2	6.3	3.4	12.8
Males	8.7		2.5	:	9.3	32.5	2.9	3.4	3.4	14.5	18.3	5.7	4.6	27.4	2.0	7.5	7.0	2.0	:	3.6	12.4
Females	9.3		2.8	1.2	11.1	36.3	3.3	6.0	4.3	17.8	20.5	5.8	4.6	29.3	2.2	7.5	7.0	2.5	7.8	3.2	13.1
	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK		LI	NO	CH		HR		ME	IS	MK	RS	TR	
Total	1.9	11.3	1.1	10.5	1.6	11.2	28.7	23.1		:	8.2	23.0		0.7		:	9.5	2.8	:	6.7	
Males	1.8	10.6	1.2	9.5	1.5	9.8	26.7	23.1		:	8.9	20.4		:		:	8.8	3.0	:	6.5	
Females	2.0	11.9	1.0	11.6	1.7	12.7	30.8	23.2		:	7.5	25.6		:		:	10.2	2.6	:	6.9	

Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: trng\_lfs\_09

There are however significant differences among the countries. In Denmark, nearly 35 % of the 15 to 24 age group, or triple the EU-27 average, were attending non-formal learning activities. Also, in Cyprus, Sweden and the United Kingdom, participation rates ranged from 23.1 % to 28.4 %. Yet, in nearly half of the EU countries, less than about 5 % of the 15 to 24 year olds took part in non-formal learning activities in 2011. In Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, participation rates are below 2 %.

Figure 4-J shows that young women take part in non-formal learning activities more extensively than young men almost everywhere in Europe. This trend is especially marked in e.g. Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Finland and Sweden.

Non-formal education and training takes mainly place in the context of youth work. Youth work refers to ‘activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature.’ In addition, ‘youth work increasingly deals with unemployment, educational failure, marginalisation and social exclusion.’<sup>56</sup> Youth work plays a fundamental role in supporting young people in their personal education and fulfilment and in consolidating their identity among their peers and within society, as they are encouraged to take an active part in any field of interest to them. Youth work activities also sometimes target young people who are especially at risk of social marginalisation and poverty.

A study on youth work as carried out in some countries<sup>57</sup> showed that such activities are offered to a broad age range encompassing childhood and early adolescence (seven and eleven years old respectively in Estonia and Austria) as well as mature adulthood (36 years is the ceiling age in Italy). However, in all countries the young people most intensively involved appear to be aged between 15 and 29. Finally, while in general they mainly take part in

<sup>56</sup> Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth 2007, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth 2007.

extracurricular youth education and recreational activities, many other types of services are on offer. The latter may be internationally oriented or may focus on the local community; they may promote active civic and democratic participation of young people, or the prevention of social exclusion; or they may be concerned with youth information and counselling on matters such as school problems and career guidance.

#### 4.4. Learning mobility

Going abroad for learning purposes is an experience that brings many benefits: from learning a foreign language and discovering a different culture to widening job opportunities and career prospects.

The Eurobarometer survey ‘Youth on the Move’ conducted in 2011 inquired about mobility of young people aged between 15 and 29 in Europe. As Figure 4-K shows, the vast majority of respondents reported never to have stayed abroad for learning or training purposes. Only 13.5 % of them and 15.4 % at EU level studied in another country. At national level, percentages vary greatly: 41.3 % of the respondents from Luxembourg and 38.6 % in Cyprus studied abroad. At the other end of the scale, in Bulgaria, Romania and the United Kingdom less than one in ten respondents went abroad for learning purposes.

**Figure 4-K: Young people who have stayed abroad for learning or training purposes (aged 15-29), by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b ‘Youth on the Move’

Note: The question was ‘Have you ever stayed abroad for learning or training purposes (outside the country where you received your prior education) or are you currently abroad?’

Base: all respondents, % by country.

According to the survey, of the respondents who had stayed abroad, 43% said they had studied abroad as part of their higher education studies and the same proportion answered that they had done so as part of their lower or upper secondary school education. In Greece, Ireland, Cyprus and Luxembourg the share of respondents who studied abroad as part of higher education was more than 67 %. In Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Sweden, more than 50 % of respondents had studied outside their country at secondary level of education.

Vocational education and training (VET) students were less likely to study abroad (33 %). Nonetheless, in Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Poland the rates are nearly 45 %.

Undertaking a traineeship abroad either within higher or vocational education abroad was less prevalent among the respondents with 26 % and 21 % respectively. The highest rates within higher education were in Luxembourg and France (36 % and 38 %) and in vocational education and training in Bulgaria and Romania (32 % and 31 %).

The duration of learning mobility periods varies according to the type and level of education programmes. Respondents who went abroad for studying in higher education were more likely to stay longer i.e. more than one year (21 %).

According to the Eurobarometer survey, the most important reason why respondents did not go abroad is lack of interest (28 %), followed by lack of funding or the stay being too expensive (20 %). In addition, 13 % have reported family commitments as the first main reason.

The Eurobarometer survey also shows that students used various types of financial resources for their studies abroad. Figure 4-L shows that they mostly used their private funds and savings (65.7 %). This is particularly the case of countries such as Germany, Spain, Greece, France, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria and the United Kingdom, where nearly half of the respondents reported doing so. Young Europeans used the three other types of financial resources almost equally during their studies or traineeships: employers' support (18.4 %), regional or national study loans and grants (17.3 %) and EU funded mobility programmes such as Erasmus, and Youth in Action (15.2 %).

**Figure 4-L: Type of financial resources used during the longest stay abroad by young people (aged 15-29), by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Thinking about your longest stay abroad, how did you finance your stay?'

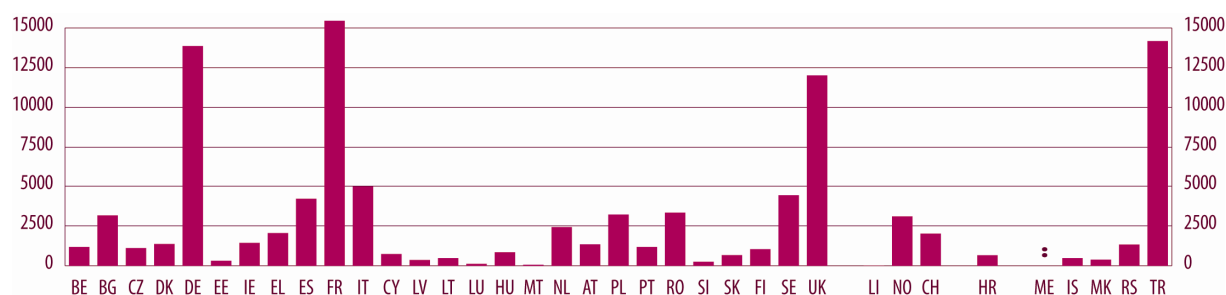
Base: respondents who have been abroad for at least one of the tested learning mobility periods, % of mentions 'shown', total.

Behind this overall picture, young people financed their longest stays differently in the different countries. In Luxembourg, national or regional study loans and grants financed the longest stays of more than half of the young people surveyed. In Ireland, the Netherlands, Romania and the United Kingdom, more than a third of the respondents had their stay partially paid by the employer.

EU funded mobility programmes were used by a significant percentage of young respondents from Lithuania and Finland (around 35 %). Finally, in Belgium, Finland and Sweden, more than one in ten respondents who stayed abroad have had other grants and awards for financing their longest stay abroad.

Annual data on the Erasmus programme<sup>58</sup> show that in 2010/11, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Liechtenstein and, Spain, Austria and Finland were the countries with the highest share of students who went abroad in the overall student population of students. The countries which sent most students abroad under the Erasmus programme in 2010/11 were by order of numbers Spain, France followed by Germany, Italy and Poland. The most popular destinations among students were first Spain and France, followed by the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy.

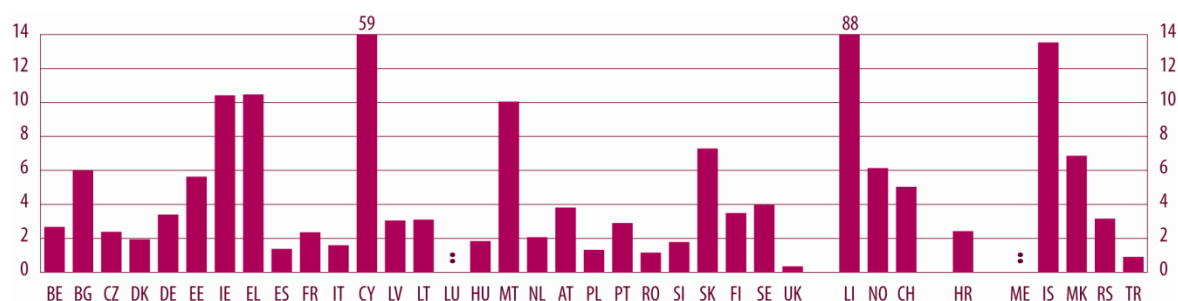
**Figure 4-M: Outward degree tertiary education students from the EHEA to abroad outside the EHEA, by country of origin, 2008/09**



Source: Eurostat – UOE data collection

Figure 4-M reveals that 48 % of the students who went abroad outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)<sup>59</sup> in 2008/09 were from Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Turkey. This type of mobility i.e. outward degree mobility<sup>60</sup> was also significant in numerical terms in Spain, Italy and Sweden.

**Figure 4-N: Tertiary education graduates from a country of the EHEA, graduating inside the EHEA, as a percentage of the total number of graduates of the same country of origin, 2008/09**



Source: Eurostat – UOE data collection

Figure 4-N shows that most graduates from Cyprus (59 %) have graduated abroad but within the EHEA. However this was truly exceptional case among the EU-27 countries, as in Greece, Ireland and Malta, the rates ranged from 10 % to 13.5 %, while in the remaining countries, they were much smaller so that the total average rate was below 2 %.

<sup>58</sup> European Commission 2012c.

<sup>59</sup> The countries considered as outside the EHEA were Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States.

<sup>60</sup> Outward degree mobility refers to students that moved out of a country in order to acquire a whole degree or certificate in the country of destination.

## **5. SOCIAL INCLUSION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Social inclusion is a process ‘which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live’<sup>61</sup>.

Social exclusion at an early age has long-lasting consequences for both the individual and society as a whole. Besides poverty, it also refers to the process ‘whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination’. Social exclusion brings about a vicious circle of unemployment or low-quality employment and poor living conditions with limited access to education and training, health care and ‘social and community networks and activities’<sup>62</sup>. In short, it adversely affects all aspects of young people's lives.

### **5.2. Moving towards autonomy: young people leaving the parental home**

Young people are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty as they move towards an independent life, which involves looking for work and establishing their own household. For many, this is far from easy: even if they find employment, they often start with low-paid jobs, which can make sustaining a household financially difficult.

The risk of becoming poor is closely linked to the timing of departure from the parental home. In fact, some studies have found that moving out of the parental household is the ‘strongest predictor behind youth poverty’<sup>63</sup>.

Figure 5-A shows that the average age of young people leaving the parental household varies substantially in Europe. On average, young people leave the parental household earlier in western and northern Europe, while they stay longer with their parents in eastern and southern Europe. Among the countries where data is available, the average age of leaving the parental household is lowest for both sexes in France, the Netherlands, Finland and the United Kingdom. Within the EU-27, both young women and young men establish their own household relatively late in Malta and Slovakia.

On average in the EU-27, young women leave the parental household more than two years earlier than men (at the ages of 25.1 and 27.5 respectively). This is partly but not fully attributable to the younger age at which women get married<sup>64</sup>.

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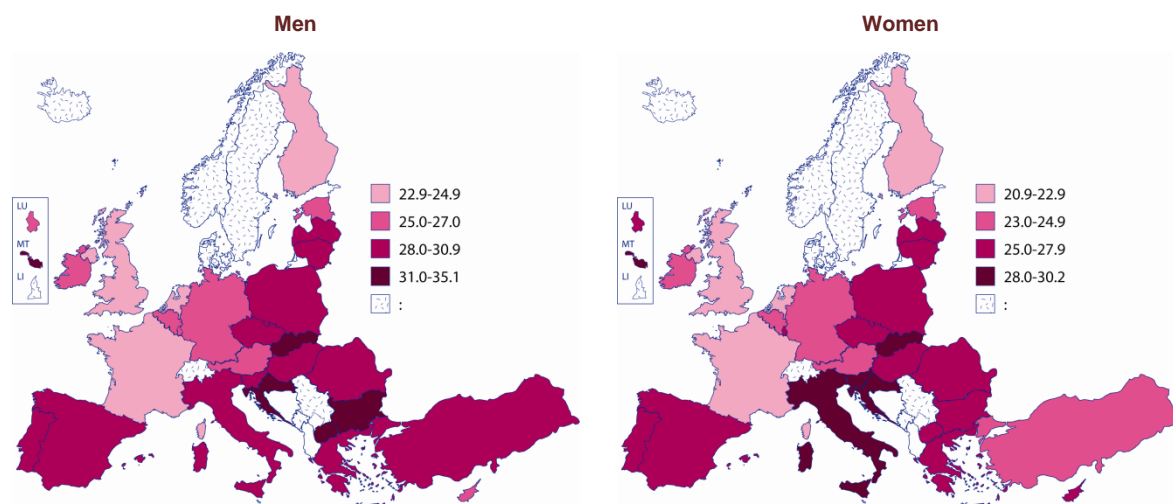
<sup>61</sup> 7101/04, p. 8.

<sup>62</sup> 7101/04, p. 8.

<sup>63</sup> Aassve et al. 2007, p. 331.

<sup>64</sup> Eurostat 2008.

**Figure 5-A: EU youth indicator: Average age of young people when leaving the parental household, by country and by sex, 2010**



Source: Eurostat. Online data code: not available.

Notes: This indicator tries to estimate the average age of young people when leaving the parental household by comparing for each age the percentage of young people not living anymore in the parental household. The exact age when leaving the parental home is not collected by current surveys. EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate countries covered except when not available.

The average age of leaving the parental home has remained quite stable over time since 2005, though countries differ widely in this respect (Figure 5-B). For example, the average age of moving out of the parental home decreased significantly in Estonia and Lithuania, but increased markedly in Bulgaria and Malta.

**Figure 5-B: EU youth indicator: Changes in the average age of young people when leaving the parental household, by country and by sex, difference between 2005 and 2010**



Source: Eurostat. Online data code: not available.

The likely reasons behind these differences are many and varied. According to the special [Eurobarometer](#) survey 2007 on youth, most young Europeans aged 15 to 30 listed financial reasons for staying with their parents: 44 % of respondents stated that they could not afford to move out, while 28 % said that there was not enough affordable housing. On average, young people move out later in countries in which respondents mostly blamed the lack of financial resources for staying longer with their parents.

A lack of financial resources may certainly explain why young people in eastern and southern European countries stay longer with their parents<sup>65</sup>. In these countries, there are high levels of youth unemployment, and wages for young people are relatively low. In addition, affordable housing opportunities are scarce<sup>66</sup>. However, in western and especially northern European countries, young people move out of the parental household early despite the fact that they are at greater risk of poverty, at least temporarily. Explanations for this include cultural factors such as social norms<sup>67</sup>, predictable labour market structures and good employment opportunities for young people<sup>68</sup>, and the targeted state support available to them<sup>69</sup>.

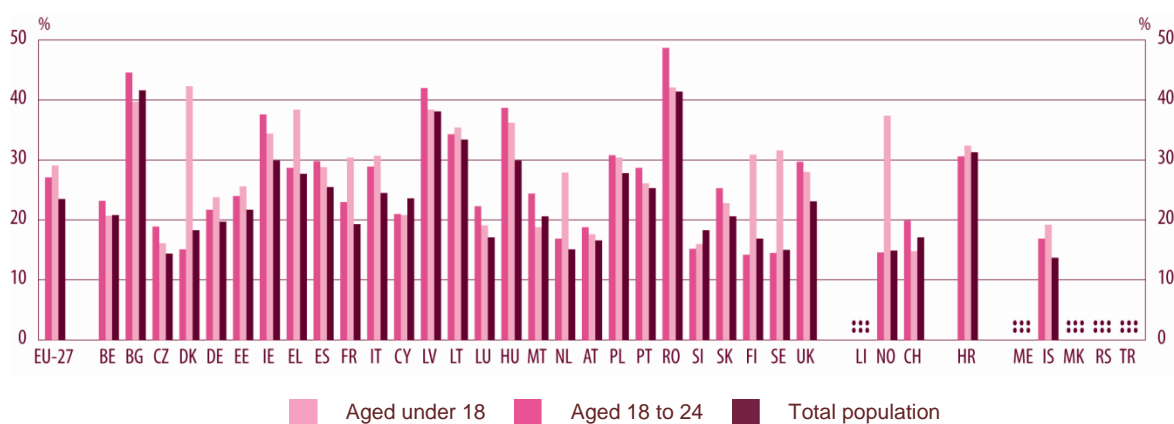
### 5.3. Levels of poverty and social exclusion

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: at-risk-of-poverty, severe material deprivation and living in a household with very low work intensity. People at risk of poverty and social exclusion are defined as the share of the population that is at least in one of the three situations described in the three sub-indicators.

Figure 5-C shows that, in the EU-27, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for young people (29.1 %) is higher than that of children (27.1 %) and the total population (23.5 %). In two-thirds of the countries examined, this ratio is higher for both children and young people than for the total population, showing that young people are more at risk of social exclusion. This highlights the importance of paying special attention to this segment of the population.

Countries with the highest levels of poverty and social exclusion are Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania. This is true both in the case of children and young people, and as will be shown below, is also measured by the different sub-indicators. The composite indicator of at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion also shows quite high values for Ireland, Lithuania and Hungary for both children and young people. Within the EU-27, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate is relatively low in the Czech Republic, Austria and Slovenia.

**Figure 5-C: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate, by country and by age, 2010**



Source: Eurostat – Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). Online data code: ilc\_peps01

There is a group of countries in which young people seem to be especially vulnerable compared to other groups within the population. This concerns the Nordic countries and the

<sup>65</sup> Aassve et al. 2002 and 2007.

<sup>66</sup> Iacovou 2001.

<sup>67</sup> Aassve et al. 2007; Iacovou 2001.

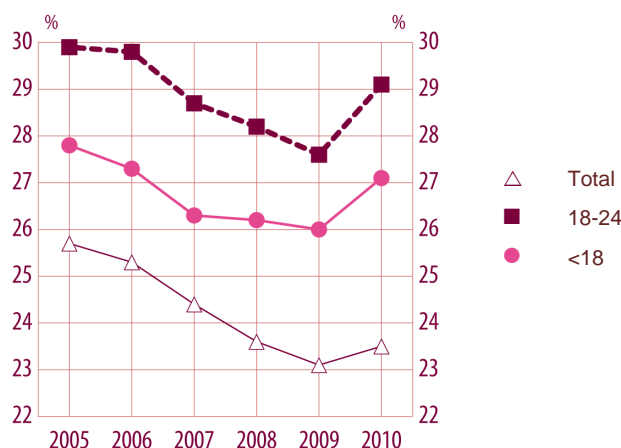
<sup>68</sup> Aassve et al. 2007.

<sup>69</sup> Aassve et al. 2002. See also discussion on housing in the following section.

Netherlands, and to some extent Greece and France. The existence of such different at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates for young people indicates measurement issues that are peculiar to the 18 to 24 age group. As discussed above, the average age of establishing a household and the costs of such a move are different in the countries examined. Since poverty and exclusion are measured at household level, young people living with their parents benefit from the higher living standards derived from the total family income, while those living alone depend solely on their own resources. This means that youth poverty rates are higher in countries in which young people have access to their own resources through a job, housing, or study loans, and lower in countries in which achieving autonomy is more difficult (with the exception of Greece, in which youth poverty is relatively high despite the fact that young people tend to stay with their parents longer). Paradoxically this implies that better opportunities for young people produce higher levels of at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion among them, at least temporarily.

A comparison of at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rates over time in the EU indicates that the situation of children and young people improved between 2005 and 2009 (see Figure 5-D). However, between 2009 and 2010, the proportion of children and young people who were at risk of poverty or social exclusion increased substantially, more than within the general population. As will be shown below, this is especially owing to a marked increase in the share of the population living in jobless households, which is linked to increasing unemployment levels following the economic crisis (see also Chapter 3 on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship). Between 2008 and 2010, the increase in the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for children was highest in Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary; for young people aged 18 to 24 it was highest in Ireland, Latvia and Malta<sup>70</sup>.

**Figure 5-D: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate, EU-27 average, by age, 2005-2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_peps01  
 Note: 2005, 2006: Eurostat estimate.

### 5.3.1. The at-risk-of-poverty rate

One sub-indicator of the above composite indicator is the at-risk-of-poverty rate. This indicator measures poverty in relative terms: it defines a relative poverty threshold (60 % of the net median equivalised income) and regards the segment of the population below this threshold as being at risk of poverty.

<sup>70</sup> Eurostat – online datacode: ilc\_peps01.



**Equivalised income** is a measure of household income that takes account of the differences in a household's size and composition, and thus is equivalised or made equivalent for all household sizes and compositions<sup>71</sup>.

As indicated above, comparing the situation of young people by means of this indicator is particularly difficult because their levels of independence vary in the countries concerned. At-risk-of-poverty rates will be higher in countries in which young people generally set up their own household earlier, and lower in those in which they tend to live with their parents longer. For this reason, the list of EU youth indicators does not include this indicator when analysing the situation of the 18 to 24 age group<sup>72</sup>. This section is therefore devoted solely to examining the situation of children (defined as those aged under 18).

Like the composite indicator above, Figure 5-E shows that a bigger proportion of children are at risk of poverty (20.5 %) than that of the total population in the EU-27 (16.4 %). The at-risk-of-poverty rate for children is again highest in Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania, as well as in Spain.

While the at-risk-of-poverty rate of children in the EU has been quite stable since 2005, the proportion of children at risk increased between 2008 and 2010 in the majority of countries examined<sup>73</sup>.

**Figure 5-E: EU youth indicator: At-risk-of-poverty rate, by country and by age, 2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_li02

### 5.3.2. Severe material deprivation

To complement the relative poverty indicator based on current income and take account of non-monetary resources, material deprivation indicators have been defined. Because the main indicator, the severe material deprivation rate, is based on a single European threshold, it is also a more absolute measure of poverty. It captures the differences in living standards between countries, as well as the impact of growth on those standards in a given country.

<sup>71</sup> Eurostat 2012b.

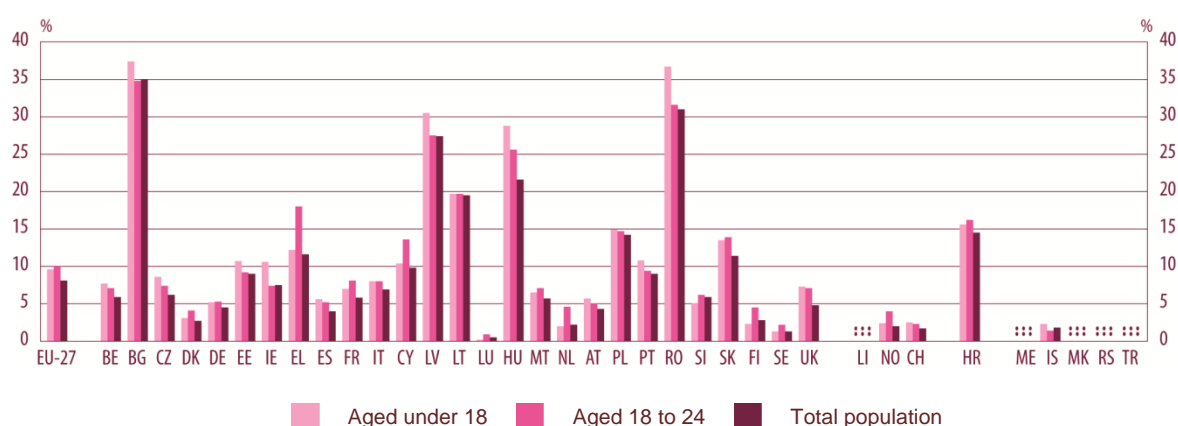
<sup>72</sup> SEC(2011) 401.

<sup>73</sup> Eurostat – online data code: ilc\_li02.

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<sup>74</sup>.

Figure 5-F on severe material deprivation confirms previous conclusions about children (9.6 %) and young people (10 %) being in a worse situation than the total population (8.1 %). As in the case of at-risk-of-poverty rates, the severe material deprivation rate in 2010 was highest in Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania, as well as in Hungary. Material deprivation rates were lowest in the Nordic countries and Luxembourg, though with slightly higher levels for those aged 18 to 24.

**Figure 5-F: EU youth indicator: Severe material deprivation rate, by country and by age, 2010**



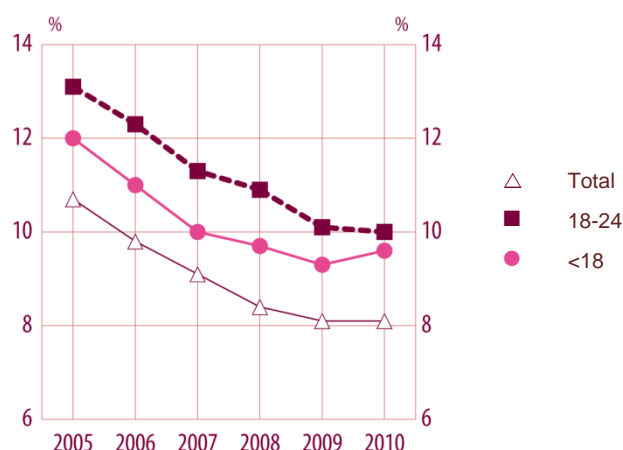
Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_mddd11

In the EU, the severe material deprivation rate has been steadily falling since 2005, with a slight reversal in the case of children in 2010. For young people and the total population, the decline slowed down after 2009 (see Figure 5-G). However, this is solely due to the significant decrease in material deprivation levels in the 12 newer EU Member States between 2005 and 2008; in the former EU-15, levels of material deprivation have changed little over time<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> SEC(2011) 401, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> Eurostat – online datacode: ilc\_mddd11.

**Figure 5-G: EU youth indicator: Severe material deprivation rate, EU-27 average, by age, 2005-2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_mddd11

Notes: 2005, 2006, 2009: Eurostat estimate.

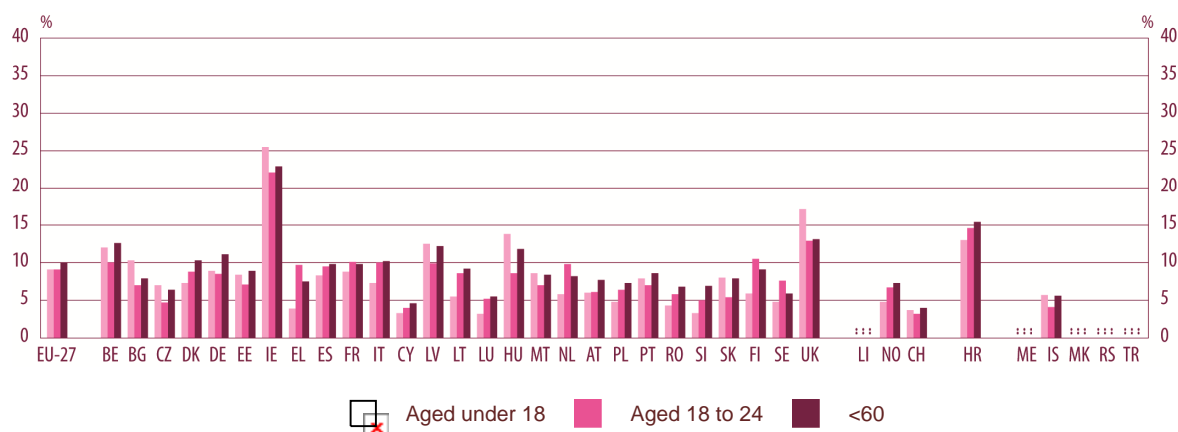
### 5.3.3. Households with very low work intensity

Since unemployment is one of the main determinants of poverty, this section focuses on children and young people living in households with zero or very low work intensity<sup>76</sup>. This is the third sub-indicator included in the main composite indicator.

**Very low work intensity** is defined as less than 20 % of a person's total work potential during the preceding year.<sup>77</sup>

Figure 5-H demonstrates that the proportions of children (those aged under 18) and young people (18 to 24) living in households with very low work intensity are similar (9.1 %), and somewhat lower than that of the population aged under 60 (10 %). In 2010, the proportions of people living in households with very low work intensity were greatest in Ireland (over 20 % for all age groups), followed by the United Kingdom.

**Figure 5-H: EU youth indicator: Share of people living in households with very low work intensity, by country and by age, 2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_lvhl11

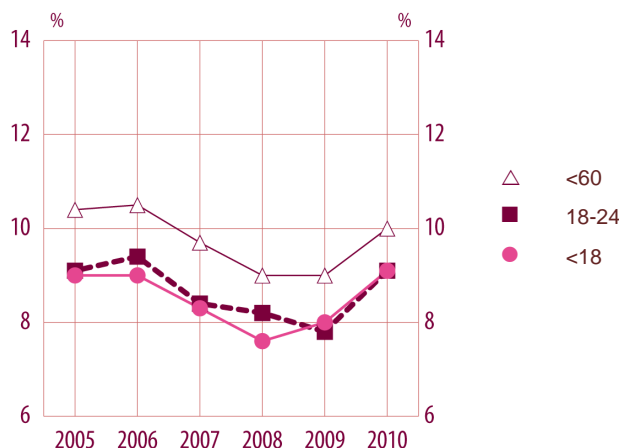
As to the change in this indicator over time, patterns for the EU are similar to those in several of the preceding indicators. There was a general improvement in the situation until 2009 (until

<sup>76</sup> Very low work intensity is defined as less than 20 % of a person's total work potential during the preceding year.

<sup>77</sup> Eurostat 2012e.

2008 in the case of children), but the economic crisis and the year 2010 brought about a worsening of the situation (see Figure 5-I). This deterioration was quite marked for this indicator, given its direct links with rising unemployment since 2008.

**Figure 5-I: EU youth indicator: Share of people living in households with very low work intensity, EU-27 average, by age, 2005-2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_lvhl11

Notes: 2005, 2006: Eurostat estimate.

#### 5.4. Aspects of poverty and social exclusion

Poverty and social exclusion are multidimensional, as they denote not only lower incomes but very limited access to many key services or areas of life.

##### 5.4.1. Housing conditions and homelessness

Homelessness means marginalisation at the edge of society with no access to basic services, and often inability to exercise one's rights. Yet there are many aspects of homelessness which the word may cover. The European Typology of Homelessness and housing exclusion (ETHOS) distinguishes four main concepts of homelessness: inadequate housing, insecure housing, houselessness and rooflessness<sup>78</sup>.

The severe housing deprivation rate is an important indicator measuring inadequate housing. Regarding the housing deprivation rate of children, Figure 5-J indicates a decrease (from 11.3 % to 8.3 %) in the EU between 2005 and 2010, as in the case of severe material deprivation rates. In 2010, the severe housing deprivation rate of children was highest in countries with the highest material deprivation rates, namely Bulgaria, Latvia, Hungary and Romania.

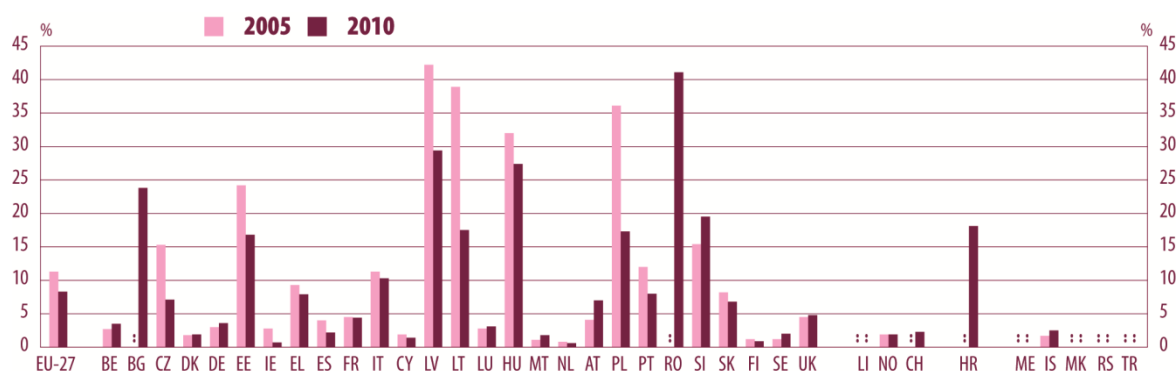
**Severe housing deprivation rate:** the percentage of population living in the dwelling which is considered as overcrowded, while also exhibiting at least one of the housing deprivation measures. Housing deprivation is a measure of poor amenities and is calculated by referring to those households with a leaking roof, no bath/shower and no indoor toilet, or a dwelling considered too dark<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> For the definitions and description of the various situations, see FEANTSA n.d.

<sup>79</sup> Eurostat 2012c.

**Housing cost overburden rate:** the percentage of the population living in households where the total housing costs ('net' of housing allowances) represent more than 40 % of disposable income<sup>80</sup>.

**Figure 5-J: Severe housing deprivation rate of children (aged under 18), by country, 2005 and 2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_mdho06a

Housing has a crucial significance for young people. Their progress towards full independence involves finding – and paying for – their own home. Their risk of poverty is strongly linked to the burden of sustaining their own household. This becomes especially difficult for those with low qualifications, who can only find relatively low quality and poorly paid jobs. As the CSEYHP<sup>81</sup> research project describes, low quality employment on low wages may quickly lead to a housing crisis, as young people concerned cannot afford adequate housing<sup>82</sup>. This section therefore also looks at the housing cost overburden rate for young people (aged 18 to 24, and 25 to 29).

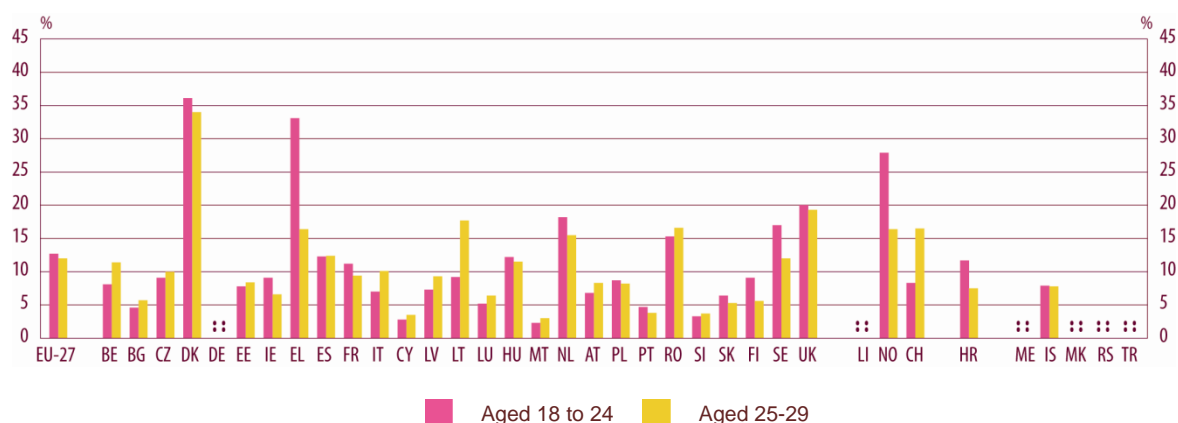
Figure 5-K shows that the housing cost overburden rate in the EU-27 in 2010 was higher for 18 to 24 year olds than for young people aged 25 to 29. For this younger age group, maintaining their own household was the most burdensome in Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, confirming the importance of housing in determining the risk of poverty. For 25 to 29 year olds, the housing cost overburden rate was highest in Denmark, Lithuania and the United Kingdom. For both age groups, and in line with the trend in preceding indicators, the rate declined until 2009, but rose again slightly between 2009 and 2010 (Figure 5-L).

<sup>80</sup> Eurostat 2012b.

<sup>81</sup> 'Combating Social Exclusion among Young Homeless Populations: a comparative investigation of homeless paths among local white, local ethnic groups and migrant young men and women, and appropriate reinsertion methods', funded by the EU Seventh Framework Programme (MOVISIE 2012).

<sup>82</sup> Kutsar and Helve 2012.

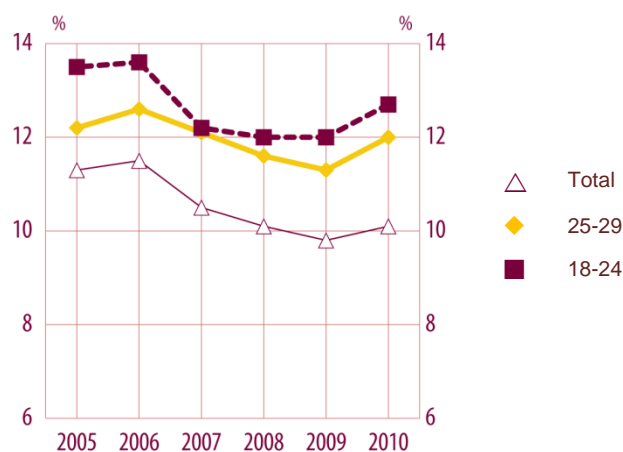
**Figure 5-K: Housing cost overburden rate, by country and by age, 2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_lvho07a

Note: EU-27: Eurostat estimate.

**Figure 5-L: Housing cost overburden rate, EU-27 average, by age, 2005-2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: ilc\_lvho07a

Note: Eurostat estimates for all years.

On average in the EU-27 and the majority of countries examined, women are more likely to have difficulty in maintaining their own household. This is partly because they leave the parental home earlier on average than men (see Figure 5-A). Young people usually face difficulties when leaving their parents and, since women take this step earlier, their financial commitments are liable to be greater. In addition, women may also find it more difficult to provide for their own household because they earn less on average than men.

One way to overcome the housing problems of young people is to offer social housing to those with low incomes. The scale of social housing differs considerably within the EU. While it is extensive in the Netherlands (around 35 % of the total housing stock in 2005), it is almost non-existent in some other countries, and most notably in central and eastern Europe because of high home ownership rates since privatisation<sup>83</sup>.

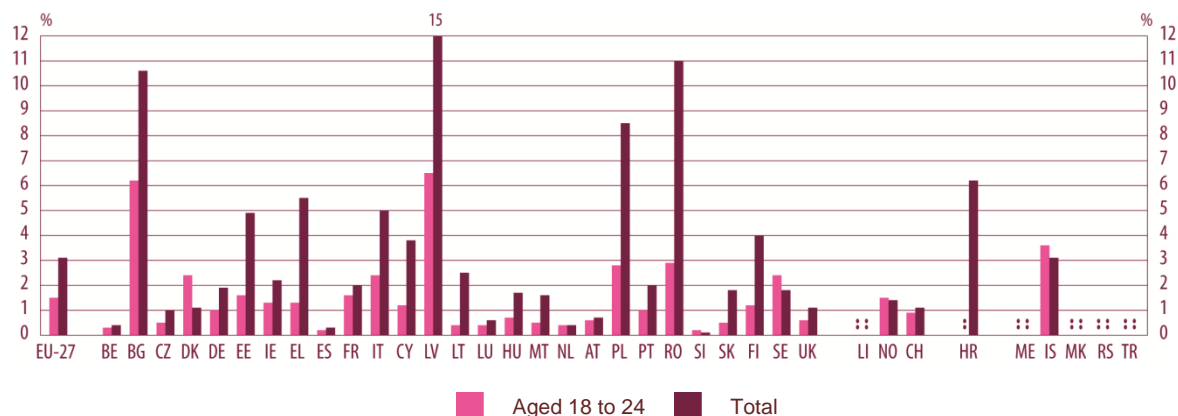
#### 5.4.2. Access to health care

Access to health care is an important aspect of social inclusion. Therefore, the self-reported unmet need for medical care was included among the EU youth indicators as a further indicator on the social exclusion of young people.

<sup>83</sup> European Commission 2010b, p. 107.

Figure 5-M shows that a lower proportion of young people aged 18 to 24 (1.5 %) reported unmet needs for medical examination than among the total population (3.1 %). The exceptions were again the Nordic countries (except Finland) and to some extent Slovenia. Overall, the level of unmet need for medical care was among the lowest in these countries. By contrast, the proportion of young people reporting unmet needs for medical examinations was highest in Bulgaria and Latvia.

**Figure 5-M: EU youth indicator: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examinations because of barriers to access, by country and by age, 2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: hlth\_silc\_03

In the EU, the proportion of young people with such unmet needs has on average been decreasing since 2005 (Figure 5-N). Throughout these years, young women have been reporting higher levels of unmet medical needs than young men.

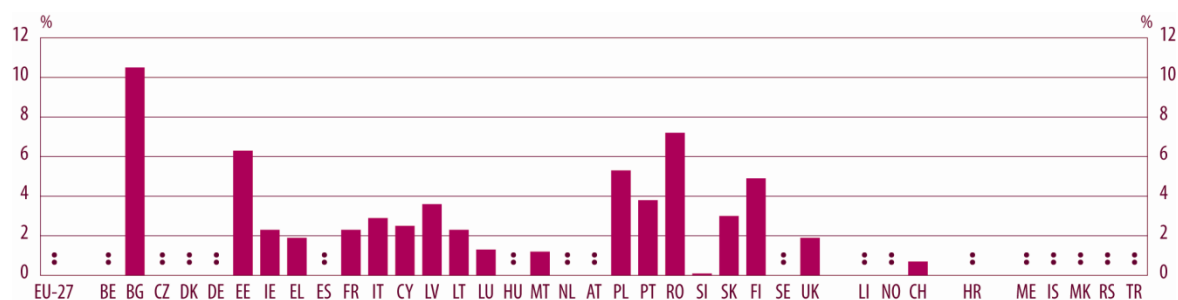
**Figure 5-N: EU youth indicator: Self-reported unmet needs for medical examinations among young people (aged 18-24) because of barriers to access, EU-27 average, by sex, 2005-2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: hlth\_silc\_03

In the case of children (those aged under 18), data on unmet needs for medical care (as reported by their parents) is also available from some countries for the year 2009. Figure 5-O shows that the proportion of children with unmet needs for advice from a doctor was somewhere between that of young people and the total population in the majority of countries participating in data collection. In 2009, the proportion of children with such unmet needs was highest in Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland, Romania and Finland.

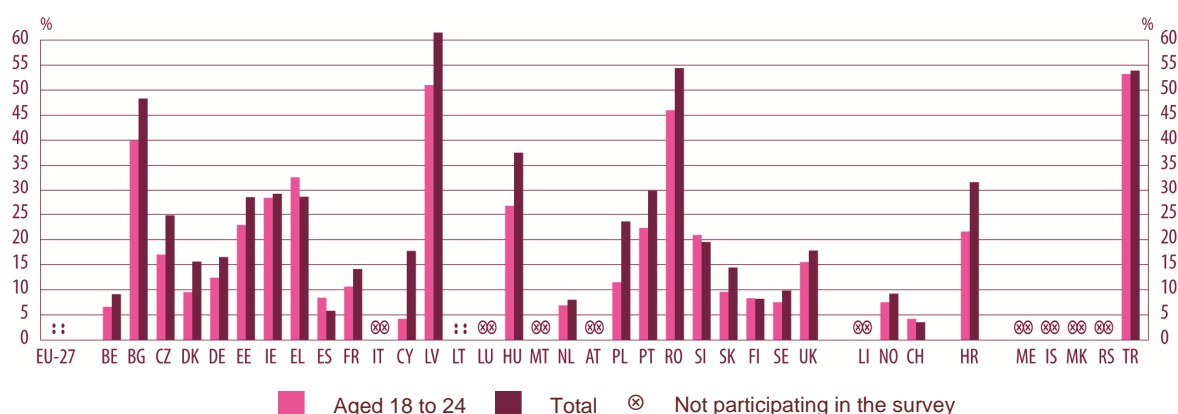
**Figure 5-O: Unmet needs among children (aged under 18) for consulting a GP or specialist, excluding dentists and ophthalmologists, on at least one occasion in the preceding 12 months, 2009**



Source: Eurostat – SILC, ad-hoc module on material deprivation, variable HD250

However, differences between the reported levels of unmet needs for medical examinations stem more from differences between the health conditions of younger and older generations than from differences between social exclusion levels. Smaller differences between young people and the total population were apparent in the perceived likelihood of not receiving medical examinations when needed (Figure 5-P).

**Figure 5-P: Share of persons finding it likely or very likely not to receive necessary health care in the event of illness in the following 12 months, by country and by age, 2008**



Source: European Social Survey 2008

Within the EU-27, perceived levels of non-access were highest in Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania. This confirms the findings based on the reported level of such unmet needs and points to relatively high levels of exclusion in these countries. At the other extreme, EU countries with the lowest share of respondents claiming they were likely or very likely not to receive assistance when needed were Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden.

## 5.5. Groups at risk of social exclusion

### 5.5.1. Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

The group of young people mainly at risk of poverty and social exclusion are the so-called NEETs. A part of this group dropped out of school early without any qualifications and thus cannot find employment. NEETs can be found across all qualifications and in a number of the countries (EL, LU, PT, RO, SK, SI, FI) NEET rates are higher for tertiary educated than lower educated<sup>84</sup>. The potentially long-term unemployment makes NEET youth dependent on social welfare, with substantial societal costs. Furthermore, their situation undermines their life

<sup>84</sup> European Commission 2010a, p. 131, and forthcoming study prepared for DG JUST on "Starting fragile"

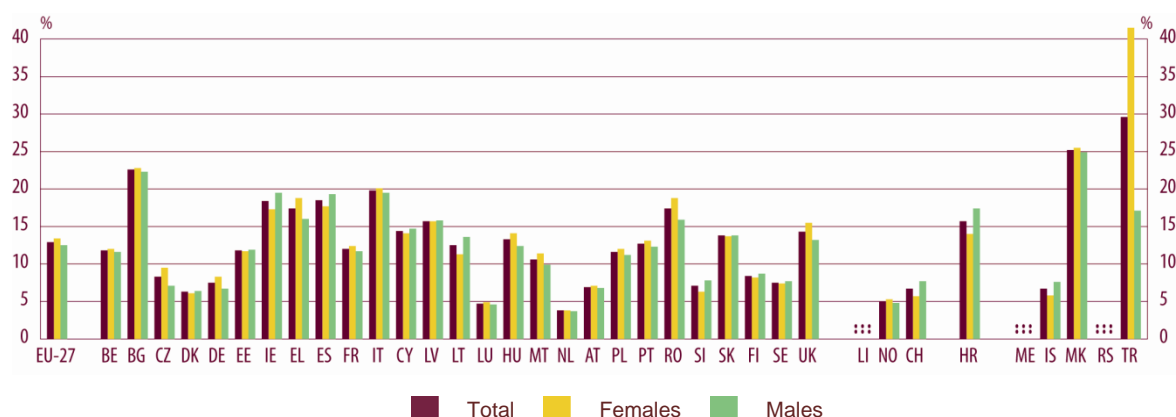


prospects and leads to longer-term social and political marginalisation<sup>85</sup>. As the YOUNEX<sup>86</sup> research project has shown, long-term unemployed young adults face greater anxiety and are less happy, which leads to further (self-)exclusion from society<sup>87</sup>.

NEETs are a mixed group, drawing attention to the multidimensional nature of disadvantage. According to a Eurofound report<sup>88</sup>, the following factors influence the probability of becoming NEET: disablement; an immigrant background; a low educational level; living in remote areas; a low household income; parents who experienced unemployment; parents with low level of education; divorced parents.

Figure 5-Q gives the percentage of NEETs (aged 15 to 24) in 2011. As inferred in Chapter 3 on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship, the 15 to 24 age group is the one for which NEET rates are usually calculated. In 2011, 12.9 % of young people in the EU-27 were classified as NEETs, with the severest situations in Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy and Romania. However, the highest proportion of NEETs among 15 to 24 year olds occurred in two EU candidate countries, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

**Figure 5-Q: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15 to 24) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), by country and by sex, 2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: edat\_lfse\_20

Notes: Luxembourg: unreliable data; Sweden: provisional data.

Similar to the majority of indicators above, the percentage of NEETs in the EU decreased between 2005 and 2008 on average, but started increasing again in 2009 (Figure 5-R and Figure 5-S). As Figure 5-S shows, this trend appears to have been driven by changes in the unemployment ratio of young people. While the proportion of inactive persons within the NEET group has changed little, data on unemployed young people reflect a trend similar to the overall NEET one. Much the same applies if NEETs are separated into those actively seeking employment and those not wanting to work. The proportion of the latter has remained quite stable and relatively low within the EU. By contrast, people who are actively looking for a job constitute the majority of NEETs, and patterns of change look similar to the unemployment figures. This highlights the importance of labour market structures and job prospects in influencing NEET rates.

<sup>85</sup> Eurofound 2011b, p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe: A multidimensional approach to understanding the conditions and prospects for social and political integration of young unemployed’, funded by the EU Seventh Framework Programme (Université de Genève 2012).

<sup>87</sup> Kutsar and Helve 2012.

<sup>88</sup> Eurofound 2011b, pp. 3-4.

**Figure 5-R: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15 to 24) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), EU-27 average, by sex, 2005-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: edat\_lfse\_20

**Figure 5-S: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15 to 24) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), EU-27 average, by labour market status and attitudes towards work, 2005-2011**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: edat\_lfse\_20

In the EU-27, NEET rates are slightly higher for young women than for young men. However, differences between the sexes decreased between 2005 and 2011, with male NEET rates catching up with female NEET rates (Figure 5-R).

### 5.5.2. Migrants and ethnic minorities

Migrants and ethnic minorities (most importantly the Roma) are among the groups most vulnerable to social exclusion. They usually have multiple disadvantages leading to persistent poverty and a marginalised position in society. The European EDUMIGROM<sup>89</sup> research project lists several interrelated factors contributing to the exclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities. Migrant families often lack the social capital needed to integrate into society<sup>90</sup>. They tend to have weaker connections and ties to the local non-migrant community and can find it more difficult to obtain information about institutions, systems (education, health care,

<sup>89</sup> 'Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe', funded by the EU Seventh Framework Programme (Szalai 2011).

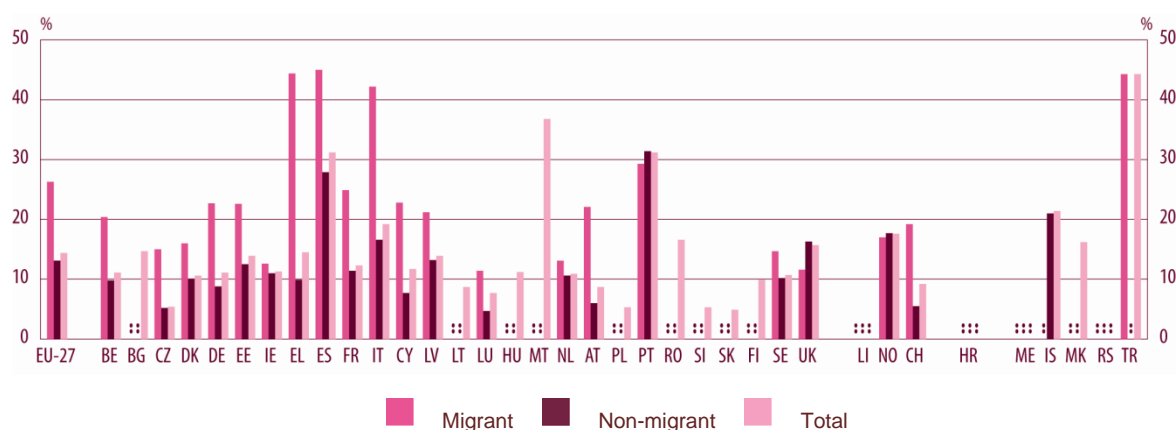
<sup>90</sup> Kutsar and Helve 2012, p. 24.

etc.) and opportunities. The first generation also often has problems understanding the national language<sup>91</sup>. Given this lack of social capital, information and language skills, migrants and ethnic minorities often have limited access to good quality education – especially early childhood education – which in turn reduces later educational opportunities.

Early disadvantages are reinforced by the fact that ethnic minority pupils are largely educated in segregated environments<sup>92</sup>, in the ‘disadvantageous segments’ of education systems<sup>93</sup>. This – apart from increasing the isolation of migrants and ethnic minorities – can mean that children and young people are ‘inside school but outside learning’<sup>94</sup>. Such ethnic segregation and separation affects pupils' performance, aspirations and possibilities.

School segregation and discrimination can lead to frustration and drop-out. As noted in the previous section, leaving school early can be regarded as the main source of marginalisation for young adults<sup>95</sup>. Data on early school-leaving confirms that a higher percentage of first generation migrants than of non-migrants drop out of school in the majority of European countries (Figure 5-T). In 2009 in the EU-27, early school leavers constituted 26.3 % of the migrant population and 13.1 % of the non-migrant population. The differences are particularly striking in Greece (a difference of 34.5 percentage points), Italy (25.6 percentage points) and Spain (17.1 percentage points).

**Figure 5-T: Early school leavers as a percentage of the migrant, non-migrant and total population, by country, 2009**



Source: Eurostat – LFS. Online data code: not available

Notes: Early school leaver is defined as a person aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and who is not in further education or training.

Migrant is defined as a person for whom the country of birth is not the reference country.

On the assumption that parental involvement influences children's success at school, many countries have adopted measures to enhance communication between schools and immigrant families in general education<sup>96</sup>. Such measures can take three main forms: first, providing written information on the school systems in the language of origin of immigrant families; second, using interpreters in various situations in school life; and third, appointing resource persons such as mediators to be responsible for communication between the school and families. Half of the European countries surveyed rely on all three measures, and the majority

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> Szalai 2011.

<sup>93</sup> Kutsar and Helve 2012, p. 28.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

<sup>96</sup> Eurydice/EACEA 2009a.

of them make use of two or three different channels of communication between schools and immigrant families. Several countries also pay special attention to the mother tongue tuition of immigrant children.

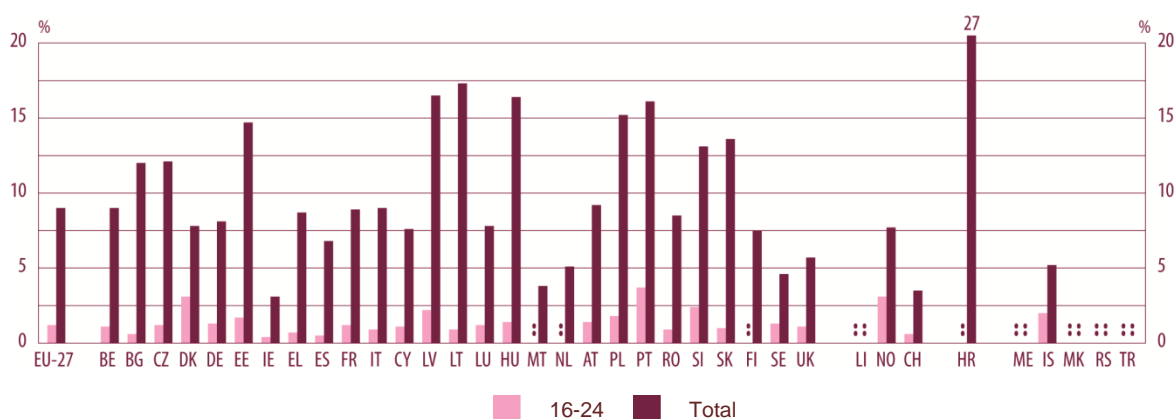
## 6. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### 6.1. Health and risks

Young people are in a better health condition and feel healthier than older age groups<sup>97</sup>. As Figure 6-A shows, a much smaller proportion of young people aged 16 to 24 feel that they are in bad or very bad health than respondents within the total population. Differences between the two age groups were the largest in Bulgaria and Lithuania, and the smallest in the Nordic countries. Within the EU-27, the proportion of young people feeling in a bad or very bad health was the highest in Denmark and Portugal (over 3 %) and the lowest in Ireland and Spain (less than 0.5 %). Within the EU, the proportion of the population feeling in a bad or very bad health condition has remained quite stable since 2005, both among young people and within the total population.

However, certain health risks (e.g. drug use or involvement in road accidents) are more pronounced in the case of young people than for older age groups, often due to lack of information or peer pressure. Research has shown that risk behaviours are related to each other; for example, smoking during adolescence is associated with higher levels of alcohol consumption, unhealthy eating, early sexual initiation, injuries and low life satisfaction<sup>98</sup>. Such health risks can have long-term, life-long consequences if they start at a young age.

**Figure 6-A: Self-perceived health, feeling bad or very bad, by country and by age, 2010**



Source: Eurostat – SILC. Online data code: hlth\_silc\_02

Notes: Aged 16-24, unreliable data for LT, CZ; Aged 16-24 and total population: unreliable data for EE, HR.

#### 6.1.1. Obesity

Overweight and obesity are serious health risks. Being overweight is usually associated with lower socio-economic status in industrialised countries<sup>99</sup>. Childhood obesity has long-lasting consequences, often throughout one's whole life. Within the EU-27, the share of obese young people is the greatest in Malta, where almost 9 % of young people are affected. In contrast, less than 2 % of the youth are considered as obese in Bulgaria and Romania (Figure 6-B).

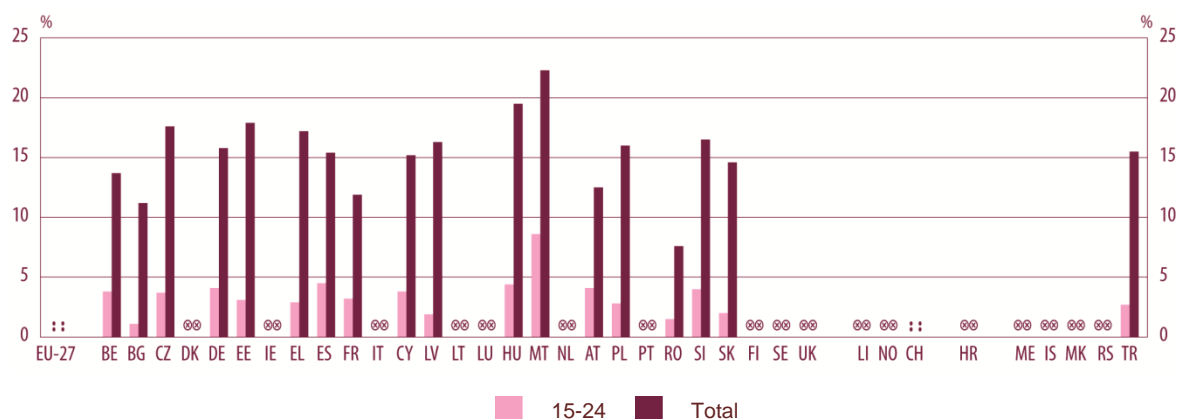
<sup>97</sup> Eurostat – online datacode: hlth\_silc\_02.

<sup>98</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012, p. 141.

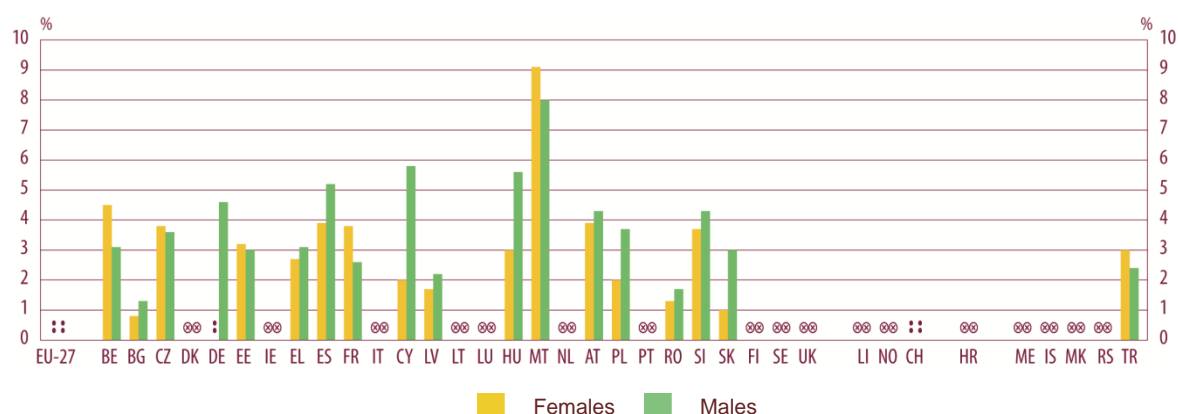
<sup>99</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009.

**Figure 6-B: EU youth indicator: Share of obese persons, by country, 2008**

**a) by age**



**b) share of obese young people (aged 15-24), by sex**



Source: Eurostat – European Health Interview Survey (EHIS). Online datacode: not available

Notes: Obesity is defined by having a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than 30.

Data collection took place in different years for participating countries: EE, AT: 2006; SI: 2007; BE, BG, CZ, FR, CY, LV, MT, RO, TR: 2008; DE, EL, ES, HU, PL, SK: 2009. Germany: the age group for young people is 18-24.

In the majority of countries with available data, the share of obese young men is larger than the share of obese young women. Reasons for such divergence include differences in eating habits or societal and family pressure for controlling weight<sup>100</sup>. However, there are countries where more young women are affected by obesity: Belgium, France, Malta and Turkey.

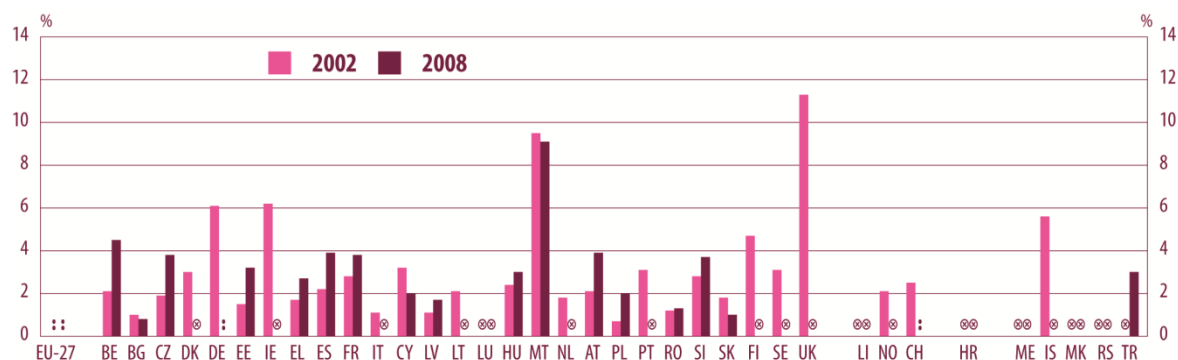
Looking at trends, obesity is a rapidly rising problem among young people in the EU-27. The share of obese young people aged 15 to 24 increased almost everywhere, for both women and men (Figure 6-C). The exceptions are Bulgaria and Malta. In some countries, the proportion of obese young people doubled or even tripled between the 2002 round of the Health Interview Survey (HIS) and the 2008 round of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS)<sup>101</sup>. In the case of young women, the situation worsened the most in Belgium, Estonia and Poland; among young men, obesity increased the most in Cyprus, Latvia, Poland and Romania. This signals an increasingly serious problem, which needs to be addressed by prevention measures such as the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity.

<sup>100</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012.

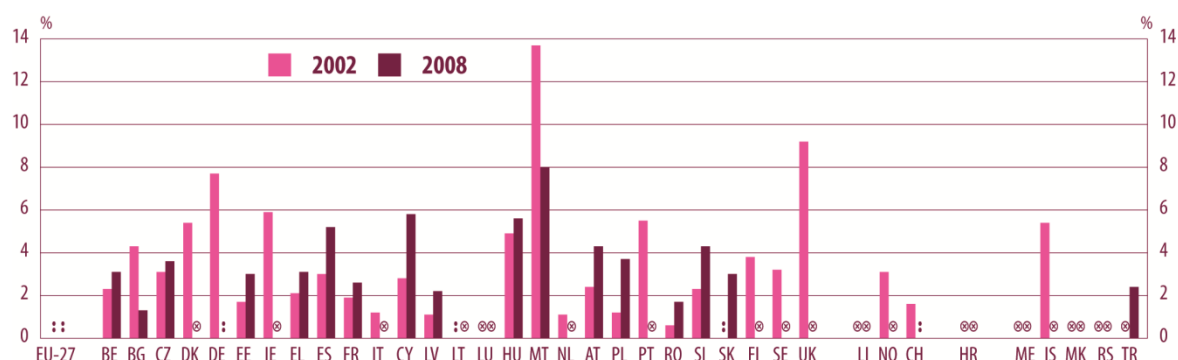
<sup>101</sup> For the purpose of comparison, note that HIS and EHIS are different data collections.

**Figure 6-C: EU youth indicator: Share of obese young people (aged 15-24), by country and by sex, 2002 and 2008**

**a) Women**



**b) Men**



Source: Eurostat – Health Interview Survey (HIS) 2002 and EHIS 2008. Online data code: hlth\_ls\_bmie (2003)

Notes: Data collection for the two surveys took place in different years for participating countries.

HIS: EE, PL: 1996; DE, IS: 1998; AT, PT: 1999; DK, FR, RO: 2000; BE, BG, SI: 2001; NL: 2001/02; CZ, IE, EL, LT, MT, SK, UK, NO, CH: 2002; SE: 2002/03; ES, CY, LV, HU, FI: 2003; IT: 1999/2000 and 2002

EHIS: EE, AT: 2006; SI: 2007; BE, BG, CZ, FR, CY, LV, MT, RO: 2008; EL, ES, HU, PL, SK: 2009.

Data collection did not include all age groups in all countries in the HIS survey: DK, MT, SE, UK, NO: 16+; DE, IE, HU, SI, IS: 18+; LT: 20-64.

### 6.1.2. Smoking

Smoking is a well-known health risk and the leading cause of preventable death<sup>102</sup>. In the majority of countries, the share of daily smokers among young people is slightly lower than within the total population. However, as Figure 6-D shows, in Germany, Spain, Hungary and Austria there are more regular smokers amongst young people than in the total population. In these countries, as well as in Estonia, Greece and Cyprus, more than one quarter of young people aged 15 to 24 smokes daily.

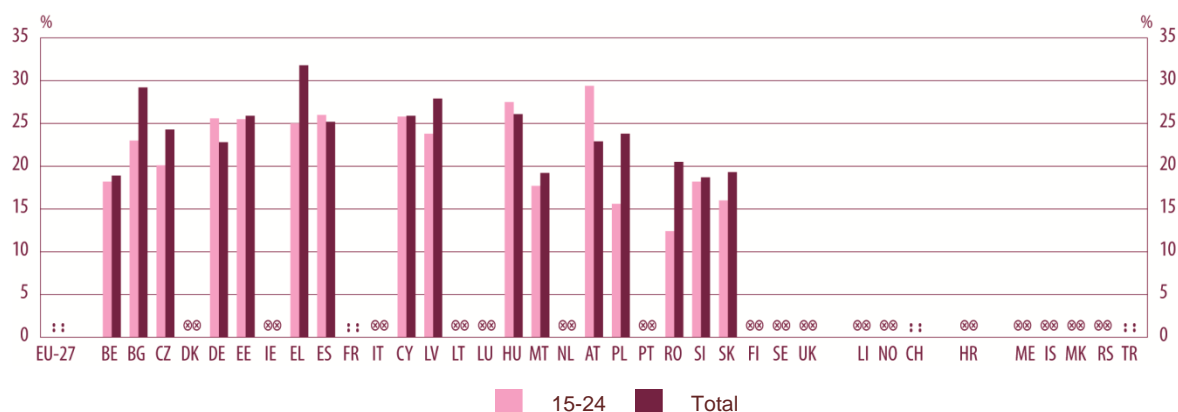
Young men are more prone to become regular smokers than young women, with the exception of Greece. In Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia and Romania, more than twice as many young men smoke as young women, with more than 35 % of young men smoking daily in the first two countries. Countries with the smallest difference between young men's and women's smoking habits are Germany, Greece, Spain and Austria, where a high proportion of young women are also regular smokers.

<sup>102</sup>

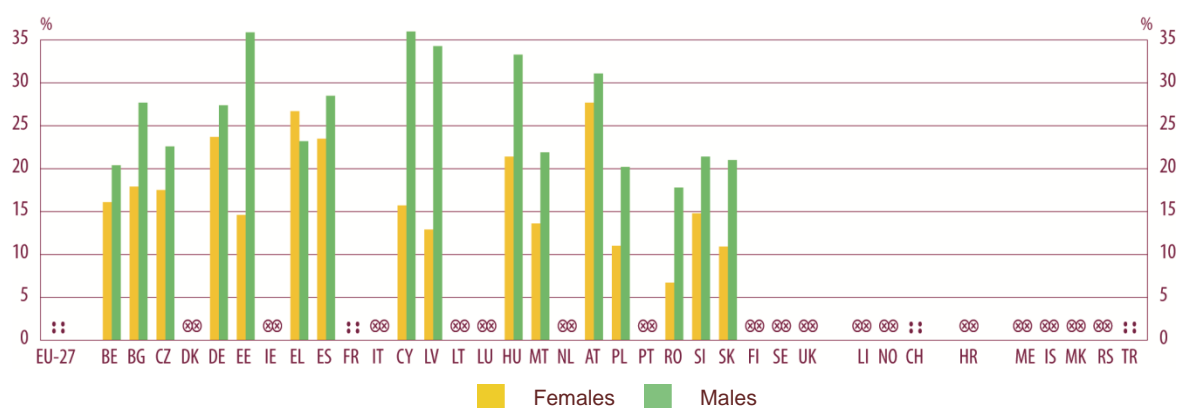
WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012 p. 141.

**Figure 6-D: EU youth indicator: Share of daily smokers, by country, 2008**

**a) by age**



**b) share of daily smokers among young people (aged 15-24), by sex**



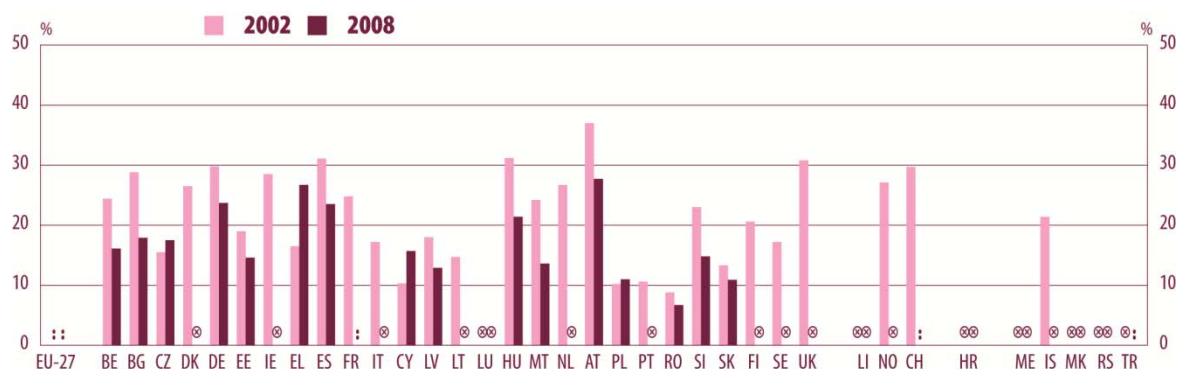
Source: Eurostat – EHIS. Online data code: hlth\_ehis\_de3

Notes: Data collection took place in different years for participating countries: EE, AT: 2006; SI: 2007; BE, BG, CZ, FR, CY, LV, MT, RO: 2008; DE, EL, ES, HU, PL, SK: 2009.

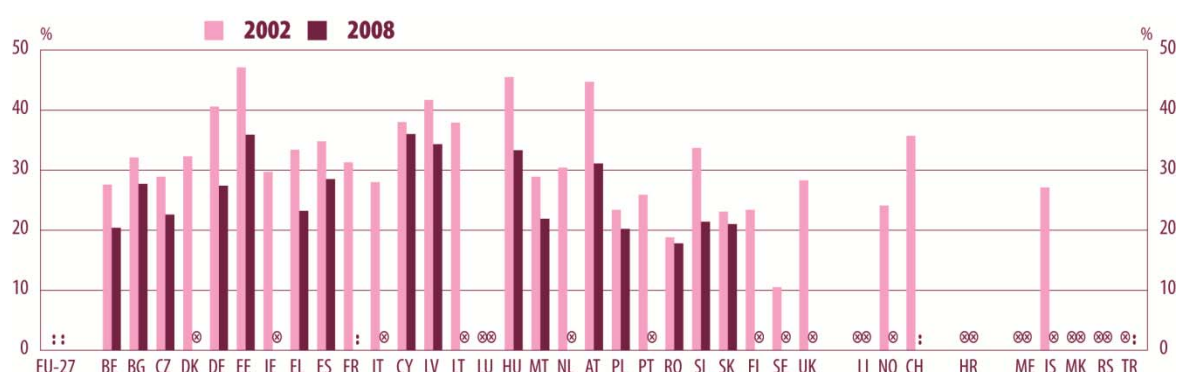
A potential effect of anti-smoking campaigns can be detected through a comparison between the HIS and EHIS surveys. This comparison reveals an improvement in the share of daily smokers among young people. In almost every country, with the exception of Greece and Cyprus, the proportion of regular smokers within the 15 to 24 age group decreased in the period between the two survey rounds, in some cases quite significantly. In Greece and Cyprus, the larger proportion of daily smokers in 2008 is due to an increasing share of female smokers; the proportion of regular smokers among young men also declined in these countries (Figure 6-E).

**Figure 6-E: EU youth indicator: Share of daily smokers among young people (aged 15-24), by country and by sex, 2002 and 2008**

**a) Women**



**b) Men**



Source: Eurostat – HIS 2002 and EHIS 2008. Online datacodes: hlth\_ls\_smke and hlth\_ehis\_de3

Notes: Data collection for the two surveys took place in different years for participating countries.

HIS: EE, PL: 1996; DE, IS: 1998; AT, PT: 1999; DK, FR, RO: 2000; BE, BG, SI: 2001; NL: 2001/02; CZ, IE, EL, LT, MT, SK, UK, NO, CH: 2002; SE: 2002/03; ES, CY, LV, HU, FI: 2003; IT: 1999/2000 and 2002

EHIS: EE, AT: 2006; SI: 2007; BE, BG, CZ, CY, LV, MT, RO: 2008; DE, EL, ES, HU, PL, SK: 2009.

### 6.1.3. Drunkenness

Alcohol is the most consumed psychoactive substance<sup>103</sup>. Nevertheless, there are differences between the levels of alcohol consumption: while some young people drink alcohol relatively rarely, others regularly experience drunkenness. Figure 6-F depicts the share of 16 year old students who have been drunk at least once in the last 30 days based on the 2011 ESPAD<sup>104</sup> survey. As the figure shows, in 2011, experiencing drunkenness was the most widespread in Denmark, with 37 % of students reporting it. The share of students who reported being drunk in the last 30 days was also quite high in Ireland, Spain, Hungary, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. Within the EU-27, the lowest share of students reporting drunkenness was in Belgium (Flemish Community), Estonia and Romania.

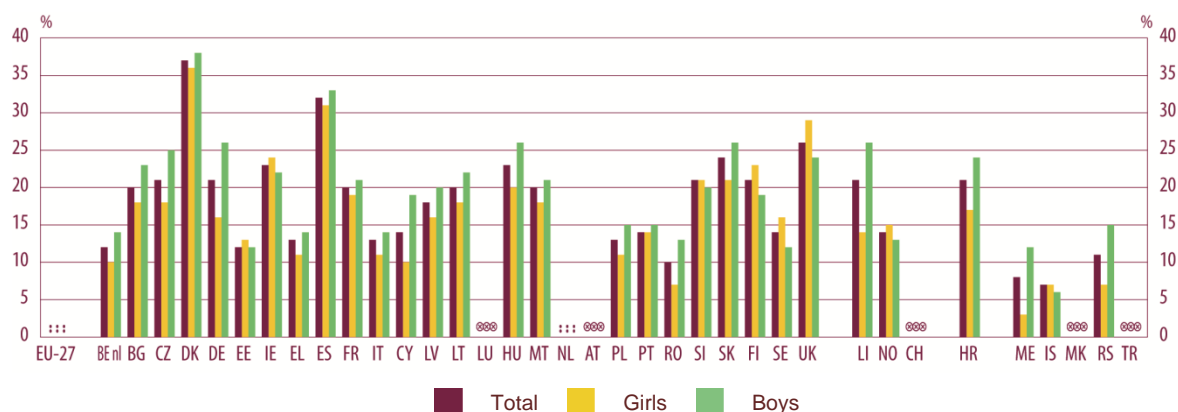
Boys were more affected by such high levels of alcohol consumption than girls in most countries. The only EU-27 countries where the alcohol consumption of 16 year old girls was higher than that of boys were Estonia, Ireland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

<sup>103</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009, p. 82.

<sup>104</sup> [European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs.](#)



**Figure 6-F: EU youth indicator: Share of students turning 16 in 2011 who reported to have been drunk at least once during the past 30 days, by country and by sex, 2011**



Source: ESPAD 2012

Notes: The target group was students who turned 16 in the year of the data collection (2011), thus were born in 1995. The estimated mean age was 15.8 years at the time of data collection.

Belgium: data collection was limited to the Flemish Community of Belgium.

Germany: data collection was limited to five out of sixteen states (Bundesländer): Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Thuringia.

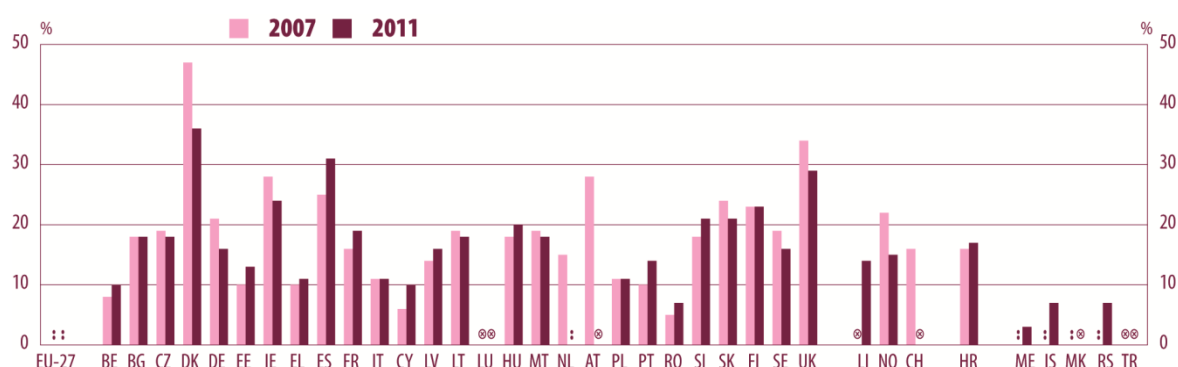
Spain: data is from the Spanish national school survey.

United Kingdom: limited comparability of data due to the low school-participation rate.

Looking at trends, the alcohol consumption of young people did not change significantly<sup>105</sup> in most EU-27 countries between 2007 and 2011. In the case of boys, reported drunkenness decreased significantly in Denmark, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom and increased in Spain, Cyprus and Hungary. In the case of girls, significant changes took place in Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom on the one hand (decrease) and in Spain, Cyprus and Portugal on the other hand (increase).

**Figure 6-G: EU youth indicator: Share of students turning 16 in the year of the data collection who reported to have been drunk at least once during the past 30 days, by country and by sex, 2007 and 2011**

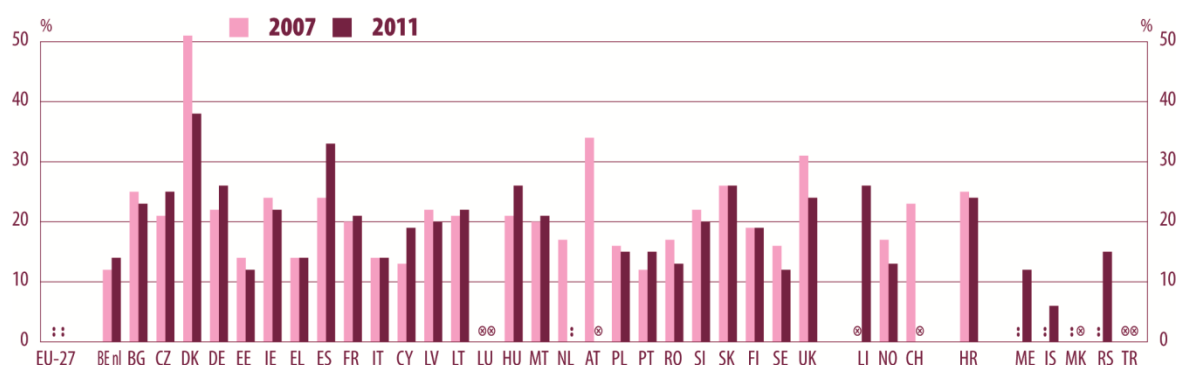
#### a) Girls



<sup>105</sup>

According to the methodological notes of the ESPAD survey, changes below four percentage points between previous data collections are not recognised as real changes (ESPAD 2012, p. 10).

## b) Boys



Source: ESPAD 2009, 2012

Notes: Belgium: data collection was limited to the Flemish Community of Belgium.

Germany: data collection was limited to seven out of sixteen states (Bundesländer) in 2007 and to five in 2011.

Denmark (2007): limited representativeness and comparability of data due to small net sample (result of a combination of a small gross sample and a high school-dropout level).

Spain: data are from the Spanish national school survey.

Finland (2007): only half of the students answered this question due to a split-half test.

United Kingdom (2011): limited comparability of data due to the low school-participation rate.

Peer pressure is a more important factor influencing alcohol consumption than the socio-economic status of young people and their families. This might be the reason why school-based intervention programmes are usually successful in reducing the alcohol consumption of adolescents<sup>106</sup>.

### 6.1.4. Drug use

Young people and especially teenagers are vulnerable to substance use and substance use disorders. At this age, peer pressure can be strong enough to 'force' young people to start using various types of drugs<sup>107</sup>.

Cannabis is the most popular drug among young people aged 15 to 24<sup>108</sup>. On average 6 % of 15 to 16 year old school children had tried one or more of the following substances: ecstasy and amphetamines (most common, ca. 3 % of children used each of them), cocaine, crack, LSD or other hallucinogens, heroin and GHB<sup>109</sup>. Cannabis is often the first illegal substance used. Although the majority of cannabis users does not take other drugs, they are between 4 and 25 times more likely to report the use of cocaine than is the general population<sup>110</sup>. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) found that cannabis consumption is the highest among the youngest age group (Figure 6-H). Among young people aged 15 to 24, cannabis use is the most prevalent in the Czech Republic, Spain, France, Italy, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (Scotland). In these countries, more than 20 % of young people consumed this substance at least once in the preceding 12 months. Cannabis use is the least widespread in Greece and Romania.

<sup>106</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012, p. 161.

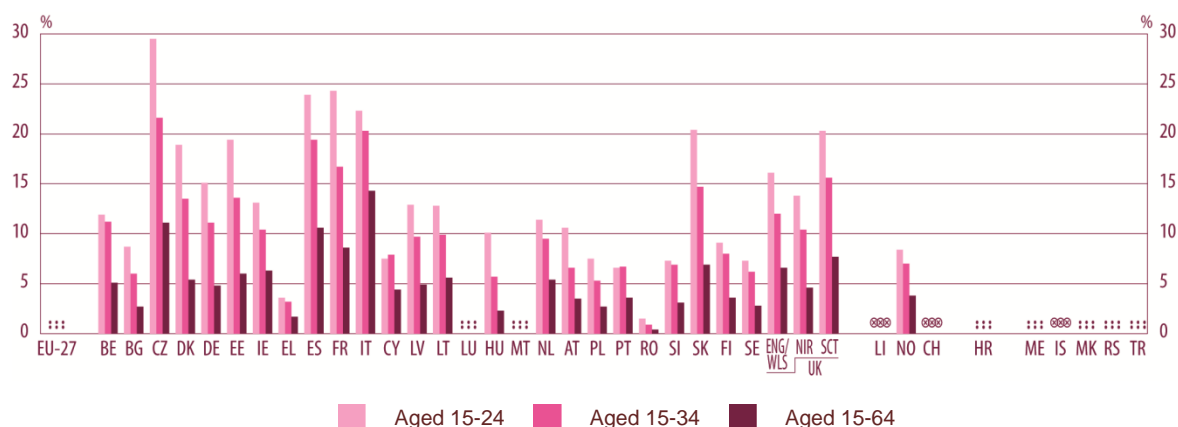
<sup>107</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009, p. 80.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>109</sup> ESPAD 2012, p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> EMCDDA 2009, p. 25.

**Figure 6-H: EU youth indicator: Last 12 months prevalence of cannabis use, by country and by age, year of the last available national survey**



Source: EMCDDA

Notes: Years of national surveys: EL, NO: 2004; FR, NL: 2005; PL, SK, FI: 2006; IE: 2006/07; LV, HU, PT, RO, SI: 2007; BE, BG, EE, IT, LT, AT, SE: 2008; UK-NIR, UK-SCT: 2008/09; CZ, DE, ES, CY: 2009; UK-ENG/WLS: 2009/10; DK: 2010.

Countries were asked to report results using, as far as possible, EMCDDA standard age groups (all adults: 15 to 64, young adults: 15 to 34). In countries where age ranges are more restrictive, prevalence estimates may tend to be slightly higher. Some countries have recalculated their prevalence figures using the EMCDDA standard age groups.

The most recent General population surveys reported by the Czech Republic display a wide variation in results, the reason for which is being explored, but may be due to differing sampling methods. The data is provided for information, but given the lack of comparability between surveys should be treated with caution.

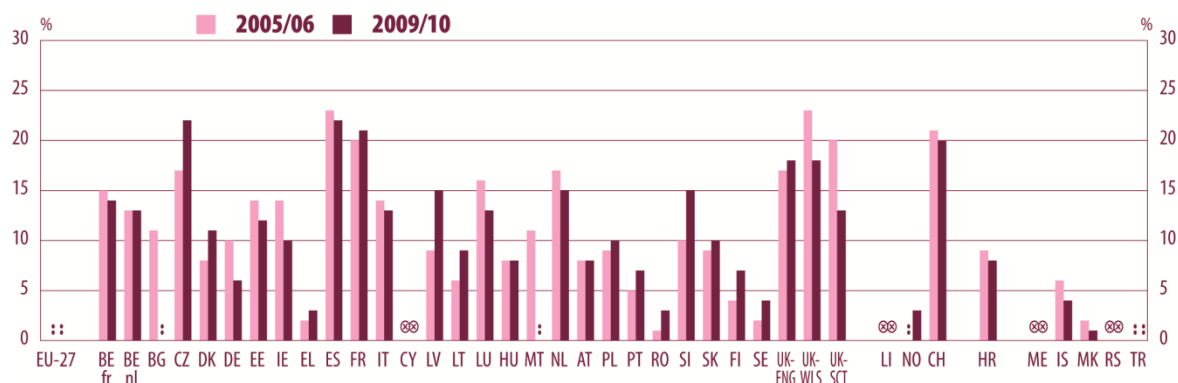
In the United Kingdom, data collection was separate for England & Wales; Northern Ireland and Scotland.

For methods and definitions, see [General population surveys of drug use](#).

Based on the HBSC<sup>111</sup> survey, the WHO reports that boys are using cannabis more frequently than girls<sup>112</sup>. In all education systems except England, more 15 year old boys reported to have been using cannabis in the past year than girls (Figure 6-I).

**Figure 6-I: EU youth indicator: Last 12 months prevalence of cannabis use among 15 year olds, by country and by sex, 2005/06 and 2009/10**

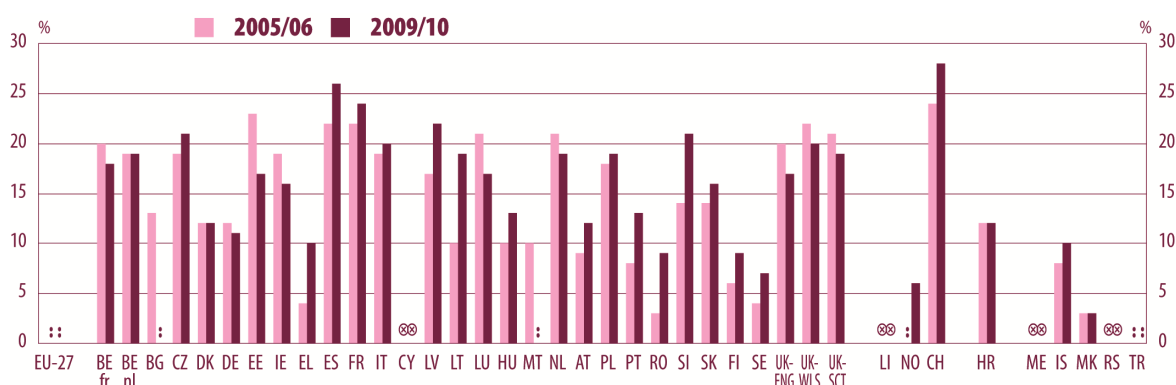
#### a) Girls



<sup>111</sup> Health Behaviour In School-Aged Children, [WHO Collaborative Cross-National Survey](#).

<sup>112</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012, p. 170.

## b) Boys



Source: HBSC survey, WHO (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2008, 2012)

Note: Young people (15 year olds only) were asked whether they had used cannabis in the last 12 months. Response options ranged from 'never' to '40 times or more'. The findings presented here show the proportions that reported using cannabis at least once in the last 12 months.

Data collection was separate for the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium as well as for England, Wales and Scotland within the United Kingdom.

The reported cannabis consumption among 15 year olds grew in the majority of education systems, especially in the case of boys. Figure 6-I illustrates that among boys, the reported use of cannabis increased in 2009/10 compared to 2005/06. This was especially the case in Greece and Romania, where the proportion of cannabis users was among the lowest in 2005/06. The proportion of 15 year old girls who reported using cannabis dropped in comparison with the earlier survey.

Multiple substance (polydrug) use is a common trend in the EU. Alcohol use and cigarette smoking, followed by cannabis use, were the most prevalent forms of substance use consistently reported by young adults in all countries. Among 15 to 16 year old school children, about one in four had used both alcohol and tobacco in the last month and a very small proportion had used two or more illicit drugs<sup>113</sup>. Among young adults (aged 15 to 34), frequent or heavy alcohol users were, in general, between two and six times more likely to report the use of cannabis compared to the general population and between two and nine times more likely to use cocaine.<sup>114</sup>

Young people in a disadvantaged position are generally more prone to start using drugs. In 2008, the EMCDDA concluded that the number of countries implementing intervention measures targeting vulnerable youth did not increase in the EU between 2004 and 2007. Furthermore, while the drug use of certain groups, for example young people in care institutions, gained attention in this period, others like young offenders fell out of policy focus. Moreover, countries relied predominantly on office-based services instead of trying to reach vulnerable young people pro-actively<sup>115</sup>.

### 6.1.5. Risky behaviour: road accidents

Injuries are the leading cause of death and disability among young people<sup>116</sup>. Data reveals that often a much larger proportion of young people are involved in road accidents resulting in injury than the relevant share of the total population (Figure 6-J). The difference between young people and the total population is substantial for example in the Czech Republic, Spain,

<sup>113</sup> EMCDDA 2009, p. 25.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

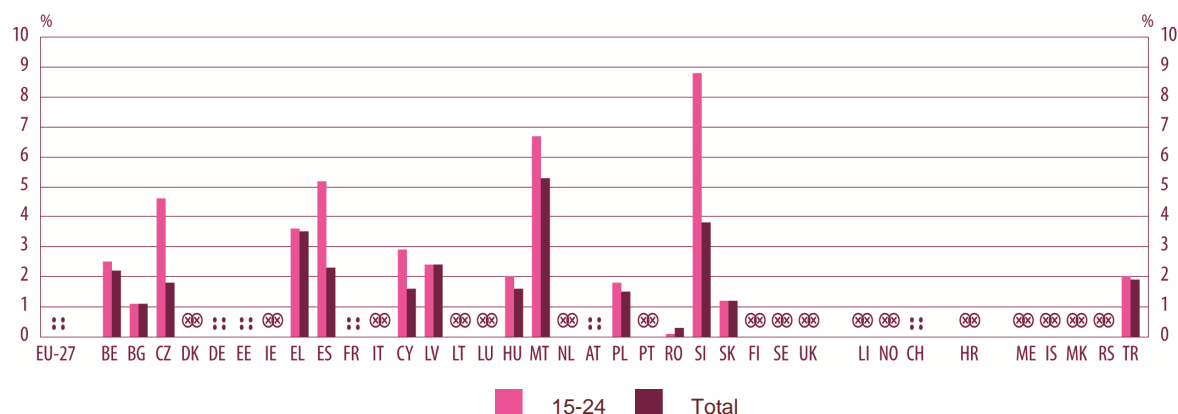
<sup>115</sup> EMCDDA 2008, p. 29.

<sup>116</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009, p. 36.

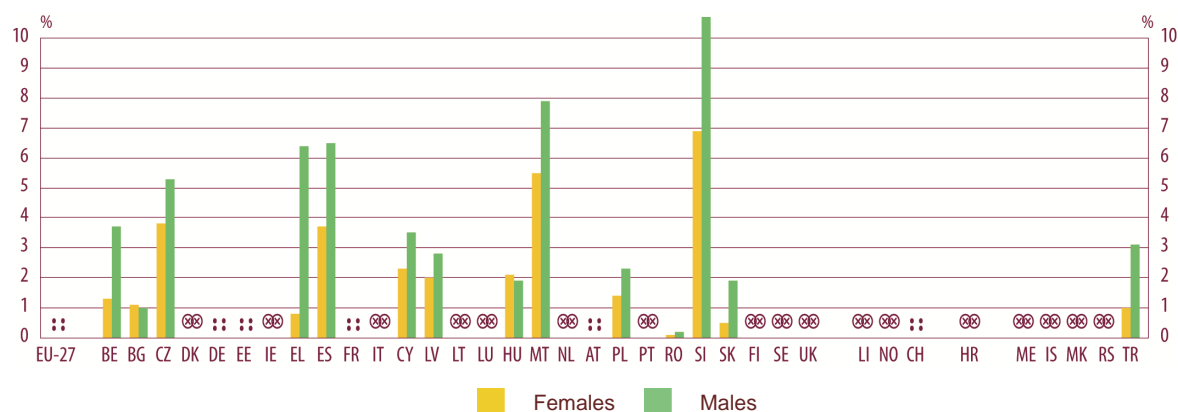
Cyprus and Slovenia. In 2008 in Slovenia, almost 9 % of young people aged 15-24 reported having had an accident in the preceding 12 months. In contrast, accidents involving young people were relatively rare in Romania. Young men are more frequently involved in road accidents than young women.

**Figure 6-J: EU youth indicator: Proportion of people declaring having had an accident resulted in injury during the past 12 months, by country, 2008**

**a) by age**



**b) proportion of young people (aged 15-24) declaring having had an accident, by sex**



Source: Eurostat – EHIS. Online data code: hlth\_ehis\_st2

Notes: Data collection took place in different years for participating countries: EE, AT: 2006; SI: 2007; BE, BG, CZ, FR, CY, LV, MT, RO, TR: 2008; DE, EL, ES, HU, PL, SK: 2009.

### 6.1.6. Health risks of sexual activity

Sexual and reproductive health is linked to safe and healthy sexual behaviour. Regarding the age of having the first intercourse, there are big differences between European countries due to the diversity of cultural and religious backgrounds<sup>117</sup>.

Sex education and personal relationships education are included in curricula in almost every country in Europe, at least at lower secondary and upper secondary levels<sup>118</sup>. Sex education and personal relationships education usually include both biological and emotional aspects of sexuality, e.g. sexual health, responsible sexual behaviour, the processes of human reproduction and awareness of different sexual orientations<sup>119</sup>.

<sup>117</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009, p. 92.

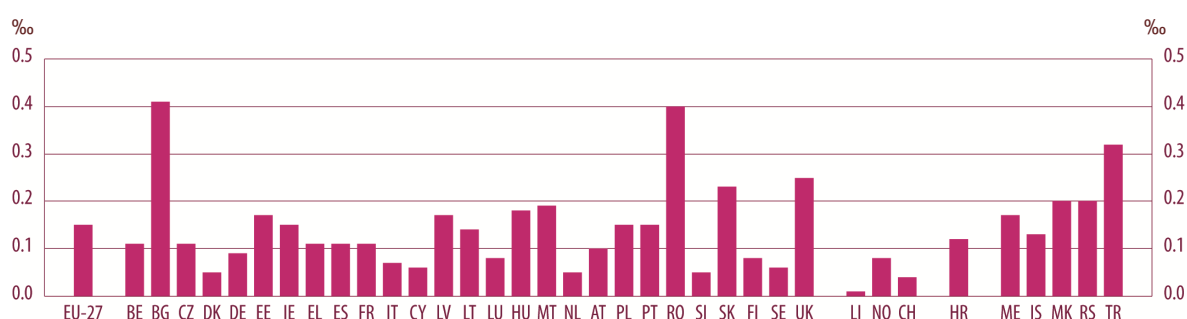
<sup>118</sup> Eurydice/EACEA 2010, p. 60.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 59.

The WHO reports widespread condom use in Europe among 15 year olds (between 60 and 90 %, based on data from 2009/10)<sup>120</sup>. Contraceptive pills are less prevalent and differences between countries are larger (2 % of 15 year old girls used the pill at their last intercourse in Greece, while this proportion is 62 % in Germany)<sup>121</sup>. A minority of young girls and boys still does not use any means of contraception<sup>122</sup>.

Unwanted pregnancies can be measured by fertility and abortion rates. Fertility and abortion rates of 15 to 19 year old girls are very low but vary greatly within Europe (Figure 6-K). In 2010 in the EU-27, fertility rates were the highest in Bulgaria and Romania and the lowest in the Netherlands, Denmark and Slovenia. The number of legally induced abortions per 1 000 women aged 15 to 19 was the greatest in the United Kingdom and Sweden and the smallest in Poland, where there were only a few dozens of reported cases (Figure 6-L). However, it should be noted that differences in the number of legally induced abortions can be partly due to differences in legal frameworks.

**Figure 6-K: Fertility rate of young women (aged 15-19), by country, 2010**

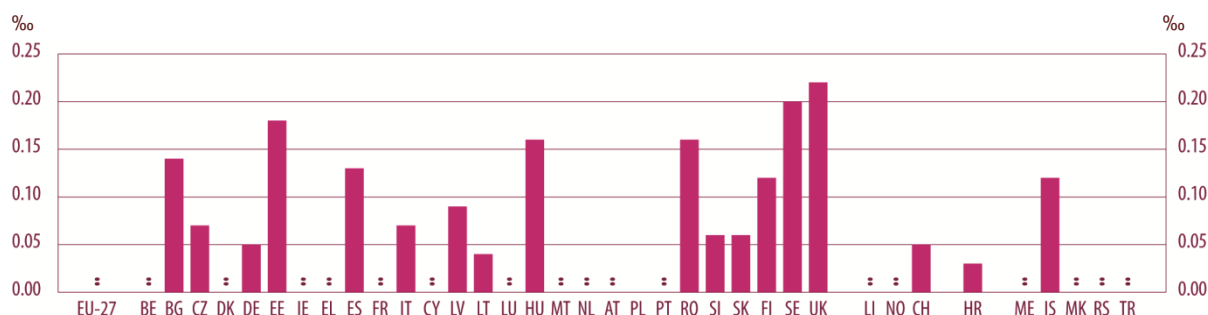


Source: Eurostat. Online datacode: demo\_frate

Notes: The fertility rate for women aged 15 to 19 is the number of births to mothers of age 15 to 19 divided by the average female population of age 15 to 19.

Data is from 2009 for the European Union, Belgium, Cyprus, Romania and the United Kingdom.

**Figure 6-L: Legally induced abortions per 1 000 young women (aged 15-19), by country, 2010**



Source: Eurostat. Online datacodes: own calculation based on demo\_fabort and demo\_pjangroup

Notes: Data is from 2009 for Italy, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and Iceland.

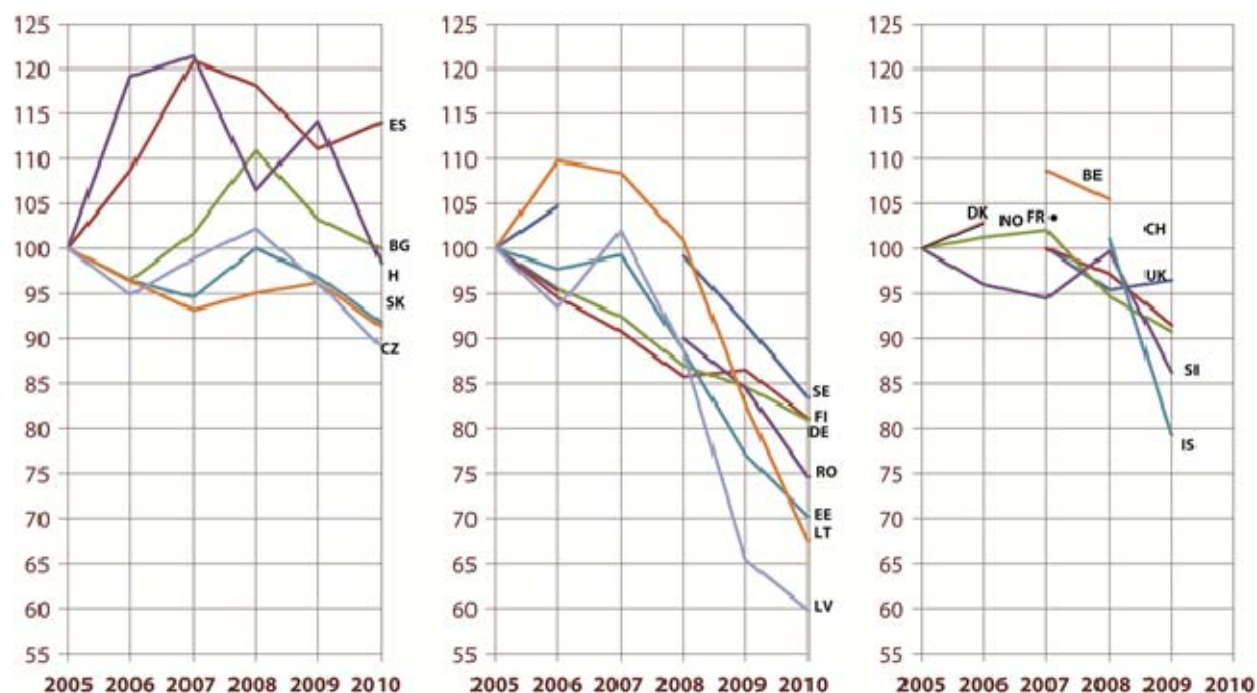
There is a downward trend in the number of legally induced abortions since 2005 (Figure 6-M). In almost all countries, there were fewer abortions per 1 000 women aged 15 to 19 in 2010 than in 2005. In the Baltic countries and Romania, this reduction is quite substantial. The exception is Spain, where there were proportionally more abortions in 2010 than in 2005, but there is no obvious trend showing a clear direction of developments.

<sup>120</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012, p. 179.

<sup>121</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2012, p. 179.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

**Figure 6-M: Trends in the number of legally induced abortions per 1000 young women (aged 15-19), between 2005 and 2010 (2005 = 100 %)**



Source: Eurostat. Online datacodes: own calculation based on demo\_fabort and demo\_pjangroup

Notes: United Kingdom and Switzerland: 2007 = 100 %; Iceland: 2006 = 100 %.

## 6.2. Mental and psychological distress

Mental and psychological distress is still less prevalent among young people than within the total population. Nevertheless, mental disorders are more and more common among young people as well<sup>123</sup>. Young people have to face many challenges related to the transition from childhood to adulthood, when societal and family pressures can be difficult to cope with. The economic crisis also influences the mental health of children and young people, both through the situation of their parents and through their own difficulties<sup>124</sup>. For this reason, special attention has to be paid to develop appropriate measures of detection of, and early intervention on situations of mental and psychological difficulty.

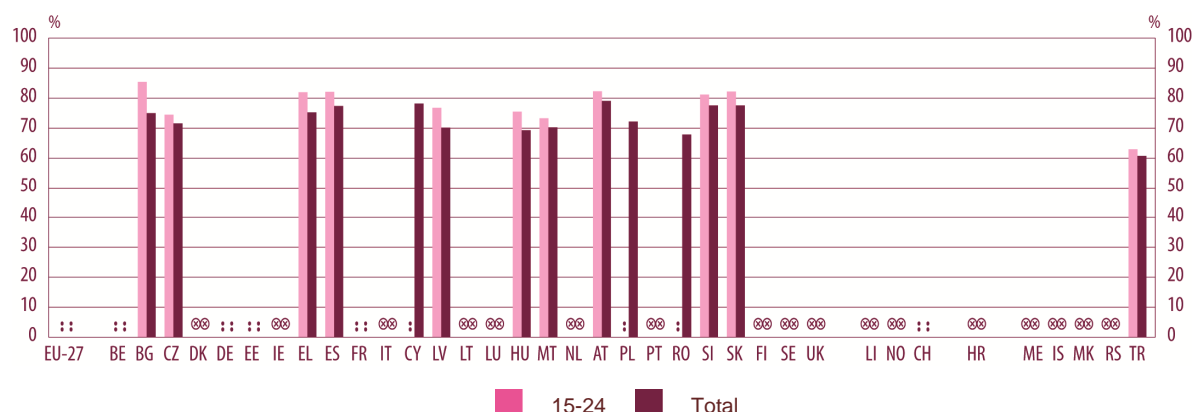
Figure 6-N shows that young people had higher average psychological distress scores in 2008 than the total population, which means that they are less affected by psychological distress. Within the EU-27, countries with the lowest average psychological distress scores among young people were the Czech Republic and Malta. Average psychological distress scores are lower among young women than among young men.

<sup>123</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2009, p. 41.

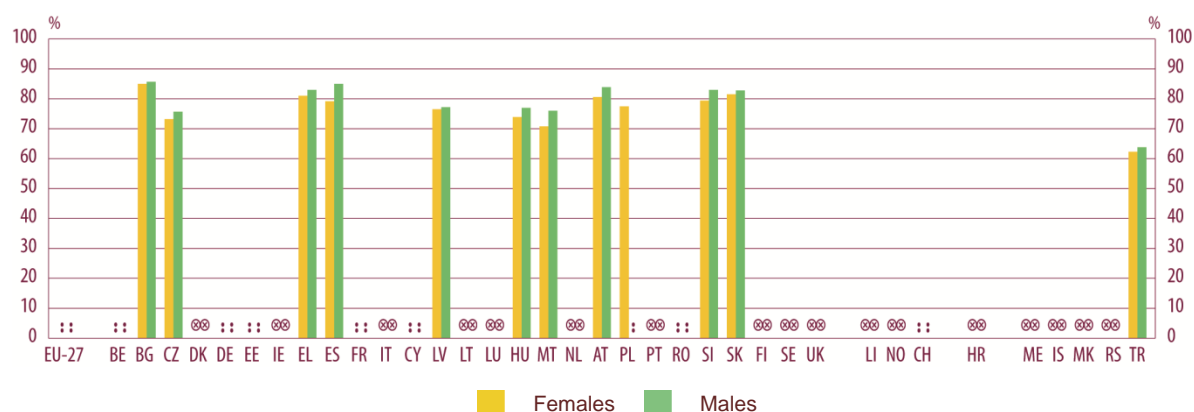
<sup>124</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe 2011.

**Figure 6-N Average psychological distress scores, by country, 2008**

**a) by age**



**b) young people (aged 15-24), by sex**



Source: Eurostat – EHIS. Online datacode: not available

Notes: Data collection took place in different years for participating countries: EE, AT: 2006; SI: 2007; BE, BG, CZ, FR, CY, LV, MT, RO, TR: 2008; DE, EL, ES, HU, PL, SK: 2009.

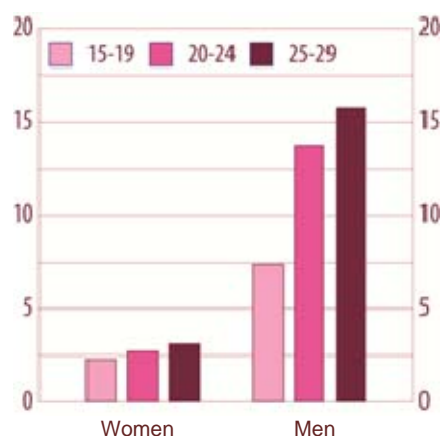
The Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5) has a score of 0 to 100, where a score of 100 represents optimal mental health. In order to have a comparable scale for all countries, (national) quintile distribution of the score is disseminated. Percentages in these figures represent the average scores by country, by age and by sex.

However, when it comes to the most serious outcome of mental suffering, suicide, men are more affected than women. In 2009, on average in the EU-27, three times as many young men as women aged 15 to 19 committed suicide (Figure 6-O). This ratio is five to one in the 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 age groups. For young men aged 15 to 24, suicide rates were the highest in the Baltic countries, Ireland and Finland. The largest proportion of women aged 15 to 24 committed suicide in Finland and Sweden. Suicide rates in this age group were the lowest for men in Greece and Luxembourg, for women in Denmark, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Slovakia (Figure 6-P).

Suicide rates are increasing with age. Among young people, suicide rates are the highest among the 25 to 29 age group and lowest amongst the 15 to 19 year olds (Figure 6-O).

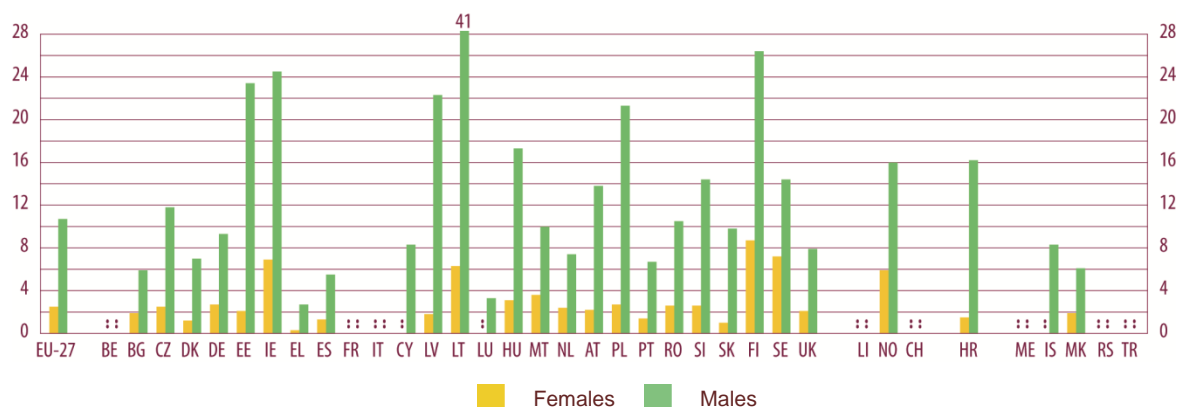


**Figure 6-O: EU youth indicator: Death by intentional self-harm, crude death rate (per 100 000 inhabitants), EU-27 average, by age and by sex, 2009**



Source: Eurostat. Online datacode: hlth\_cd\_acdr

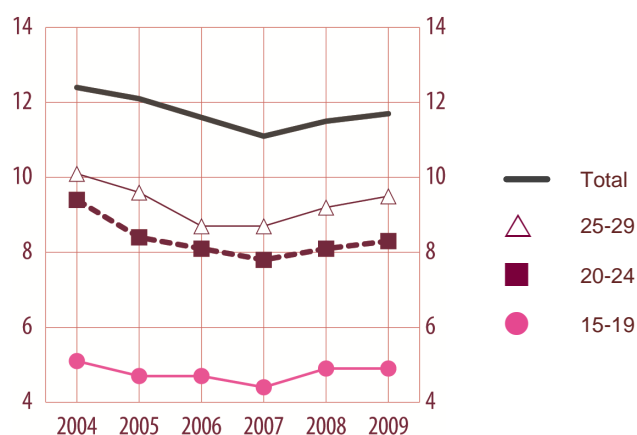
**Figure 6-P: EU youth indicator: Death by intentional self-harm of young people (aged 15-24) year olds, crude death rate (per 100 000 inhabitants), by country and by sex, 2009**



Source: Eurostat. Online datacode: hlth\_cd\_acdr.

For all age groups, suicide rates have been relatively stable over time in the EU, decreasing slightly until 2007 and increasing a little in 2008 and 2009 (Figure 6-Q).

**Figure 6-Q: EU youth indicator: Death by intentional self-harm, crude death rate (per 100 000 inhabitants), EU-27 average, by age, 2004-2009**



Source: Eurostat. Online datacode: hlth\_cd\_acdr

## 7. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

### 7.1. Introduction

The transition from youth to mature adulthood is a complex experience affecting all areas of a person's life. Becoming acquainted with the social and political environment, learning the 'rules of the game' in a democratic society, and developing personal political views are basic and challenging steps in the process. In order to support young people during this transition, all European countries have established 'citizenship education' or 'education in civics' as a subject within the school curriculum. Schools also commonly ensure that pupils and students take part in the management of school activities<sup>125</sup>. Similarly, national or local youth information centres exist in the vast majority of European countries to help circulate information on political and social issues among young people<sup>126</sup>.

However important, these initiatives alone are not sufficient to motivate young people to engage in civic and political activities. Like any other group in society, they decide to become involved in political life when they think that their actions will have a real impact<sup>127</sup>. As illustrated in a forthcoming study on youth participation, young citizens must be given real stakes in political decision-making before they will want to take part in it. This is all the more crucial if the aim of increasing participation is to lessen the risk of social exclusion<sup>128</sup>.

### 7.2. Young people's interest in politics

Interest in politics is considered a stepping stone to involvement in community affairs. When interested, people inform themselves about how decisions are taken in policy-making, as well as about the opinions of different stakeholders and available channels of participation. Ultimately, interest can engender willingness to address common problems jointly with other members of the community and take an active part in its affairs.

**Political interest** is 'the psychological feeling that political participation is worth the opportunity cost of trading off time and commitment from other occupations' (Weatherford 1992, p. 151, as in Kestilä-Kekkonen 2009, p. 153)

Conversely, interest will to some extent depend on real opportunities to participate in a social and political system. As in a virtuous circle, the existence of effective means of

participation may motivate people to become interested in public life, which in turn will foster willingness to take advantage of those means.

According to the [European Social Survey](#) (ESS), one in four young people (aged 15 to 29) on average was at least 'quite interested' in politics in 2010 (Figure 7-A). However, there were wide differences in levels of interest across countries. In some countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden), around half of the respondents reported to be very interested in politics, in others the corresponding proportion was some 20 % (Spain, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia). The level of interest in politics was lowest in the Czech Republic (5 %).

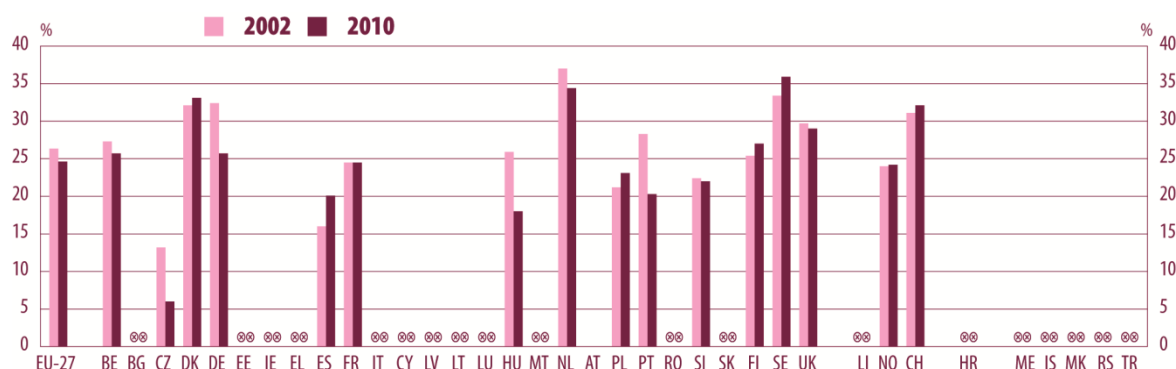
<sup>125</sup> The study conducted by Eurydice on the topic offers EU-wide analysis of the variety of education-related policies and practice in 33 European countries (Eurydice/EACEA 2012a).

<sup>126</sup> Youth Partnership 2011b.

<sup>127</sup> SALTO-Youth 2009.

<sup>128</sup> European Commission 2012d (forthcoming).

**Figure 7-A: Share of young people (aged 15-29) claiming to be ‘very’ or ‘quite’ interested in politics, by country, 2002 and 2010**



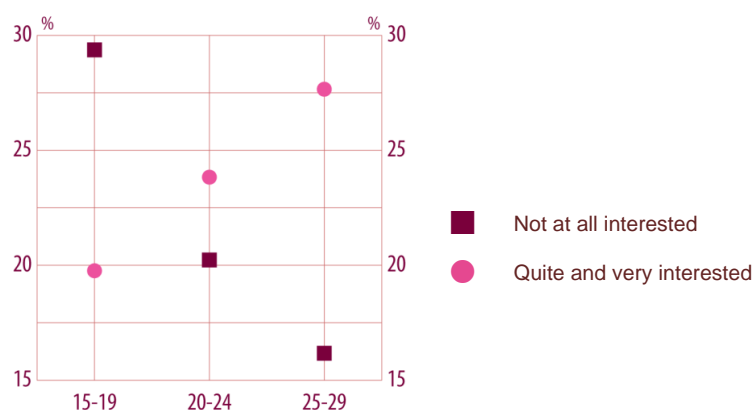
Source: European Social Survey (ESS) 2002 and 2010

Note: The chart covers the 16 countries for which data exist for 2002 and 2010.

The ESS data show trends in young people's level of interest in politics in recent years. From this survey, it appears that the proportion of those interested in politics was fairly similar in 2002 and 2010. It would also seem that, in the intervening period and in the countries considered at least, there is little evidence for the much publicised claim that young people have lost interest in politics. Yet, there were national variations: the proportions of young people in the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Portugal who were interested in political developments in their countries fell significantly by 8 percentage points on average. Spain and Sweden are the two countries in which the share of young people claiming to be ‘very’ and ‘quite’ interested increased significantly (by around 5 percentage points).

Clearly, the time span of the 15 to 29 age group is very long when considering the changes in life experience that impact on a person's social and political commitments. Trends in interest in politics among the 15 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 age groups suggest that political awareness increases with age (Figure 7-B). It would appear that the low interest among the youngest cohort is partly due to them still getting acquainted with the basic ‘rules of the game’ (through interaction with family and friends, and targeted instruction in school) and are generally not being entitled to vote until the age of 18.

**Figure 7-B: Share of young people claiming to be ‘very’, ‘quite’ and ‘not at all interested’ in politics, by age, 2010**



Source: ESS 2010

Note: Countries covered by the survey: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom.

In accordance with this age pattern, the overall level of interest amongst young people is not as high as that of older people. In 2010, 33 % of people aged over 30 were at least ‘quite interested’ in politics, compared to 25 % of those aged between 15 and 29<sup>129</sup>.

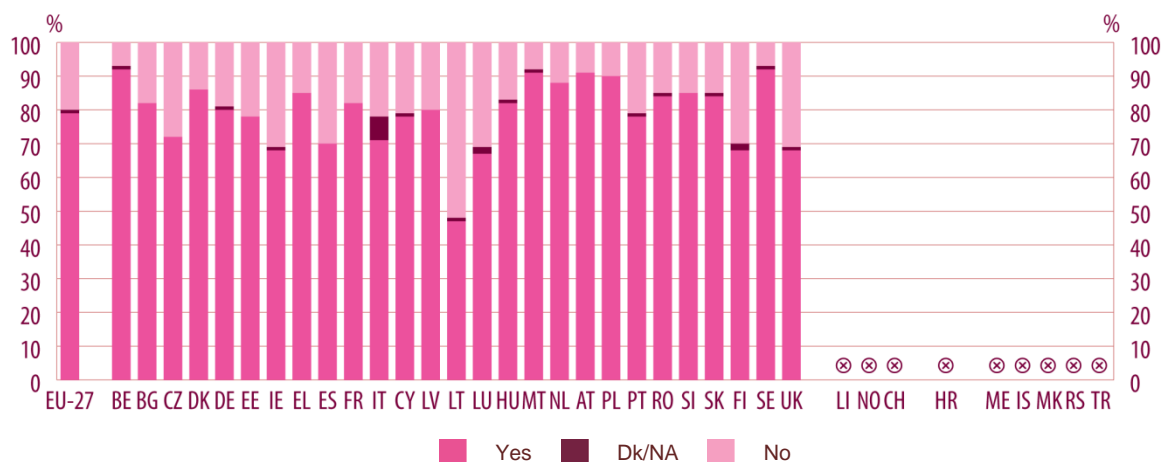
However, before concluding that young Europeans are disenchanted with politics and less keen to take a stand than older people, it should be borne in mind once more that interest in politics does not emerge in a vacuum. It partly depends on the opportunities for involvement, for which young people's preferences might differ from those of their elders. Indeed, some opportunities might be more likely to motivate certain stakeholders in society rather than others, and vice versa. It is therefore important to identify which forms of participation best meet the demands of young people, for a more reliable idea of how great and potentially effective their participation will be.

### 7.3. Young people's participation in representative democracy: voting, standing in elections and joining a political party

Competitive elections are fundamental mechanisms in the functioning of a democratic system. Choosing from amongst the programmes of various political parties and selecting representatives for public office are basic actions on the part of any fully engaged citizen. This is why election turnout is usually referred to as a measure of civic participation.

According to responses published in Eurobarometer ‘Youth on the Move’ (2011), some 80 % of eligible voters aged between 16 and 29 voted in local, regional, national or EU elections in the preceding three years (Figure 7-C). Lithuania was the only country in which less than half of young respondents said they voted. In other countries – the Czech Republic, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Finland and the United Kingdom – the proportions of young people who took part in elections (67-72 %) were also lower than the EU-27 average.

**Figure 7-C: EU youth indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in elections at the local, regional, national or EU level, by country**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a ‘Youth on the Move’

Note: 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 old enough to vote, % by country.

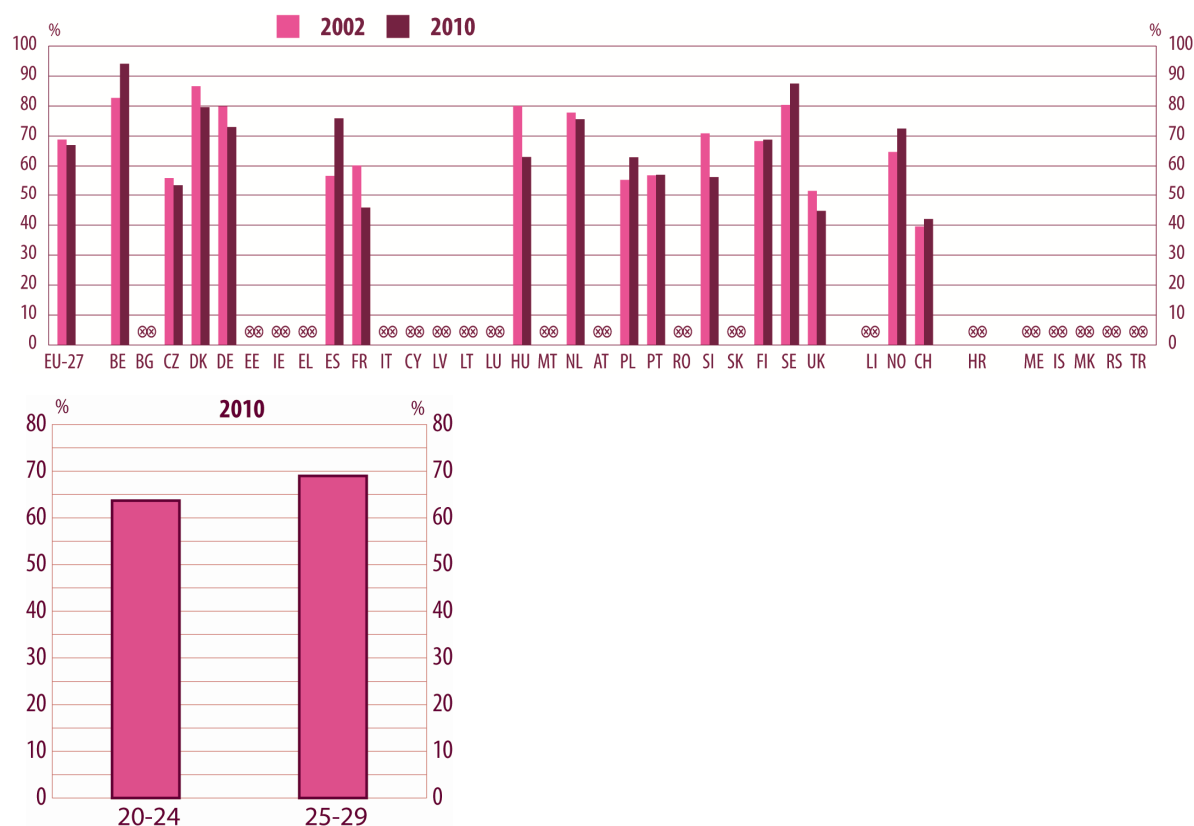
The Eurobarometer provides information on the sociological profile of young people who have voted in recent elections. Older respondents in the youth population said they had voted more often than younger ones. For example, while 78 % of 20 to 24 year olds had voted in

<sup>129</sup>

local, regional, national or EU elections in the preceding three years, 82 % of 25 to 29 year olds had done so. Educational attainment also seems to play a role in the turnout of young voters: 88 % of those who had completed higher education said they voted, compared to only half of those with lower secondary qualifications. Having a disability seems to discourage young people from voting: only 54 % of those with a disability said they voted, compared to the overall average of 79 %<sup>130</sup>.

ESS data series show that, on average, voting turnout among young people in 16 European countries has changed little over the last decade, despite some national variations (Figure 7-D). In Belgium, Spain, Poland, and Sweden, they took part in elections more often in 2010 than in 2002, while in France, Hungary and Slovenia the percentages significantly declined.

**Figure 7-D: Share of the youth population (aged 20-29) who voted in the most recent national elections, by country and by age, 2002-2010**



Source: ESS 2002 and 2010

Note: The chart considers countries in which data exist for 2002 and 2010. The percentage of respondents who said they voted at the most recent national elections is calculated on the basis of the total number of respondents eligible to vote.

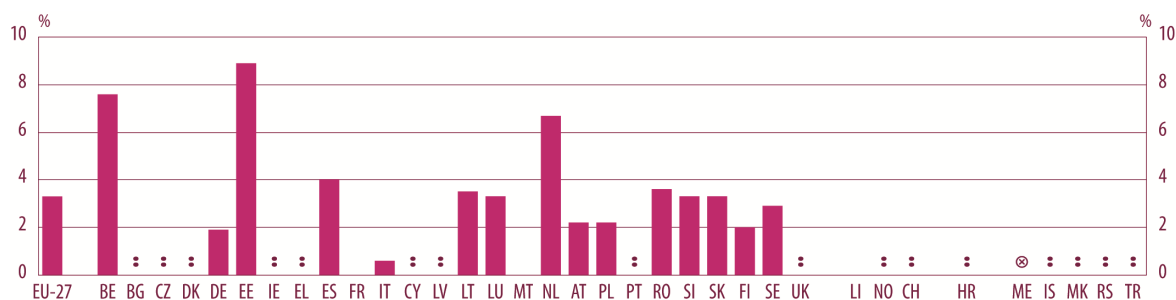
As with the level of interest in politics, the percentage of young people voting in elections is significantly lower than that of their elders (70 % in the EU-27)<sup>131</sup>. The longer transition from childhood to adulthood discussed in Chapter 3 may help to explain why: as many accomplishments of adulthood now occur later in life (completing education, securing employment, achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency), political awareness might also emerge later. However, it is debatable whether voting in elections really offers (or is perceived to offer) young people enough for them to stimulate their active participation. Here, data on young representatives elected to national parliaments can provide some insight

<sup>130</sup> 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'.

<sup>131</sup> ESS5-2010, ed.1.0.

into how responsive institutions are to youth interests. Information collected by the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) shows that the average proportion of members of parliament aged under 30 in Europe is low (3 %) (Figure 7-E).

**Figure 7-E: Share of young members of national parliaments (aged under 30), 2011**

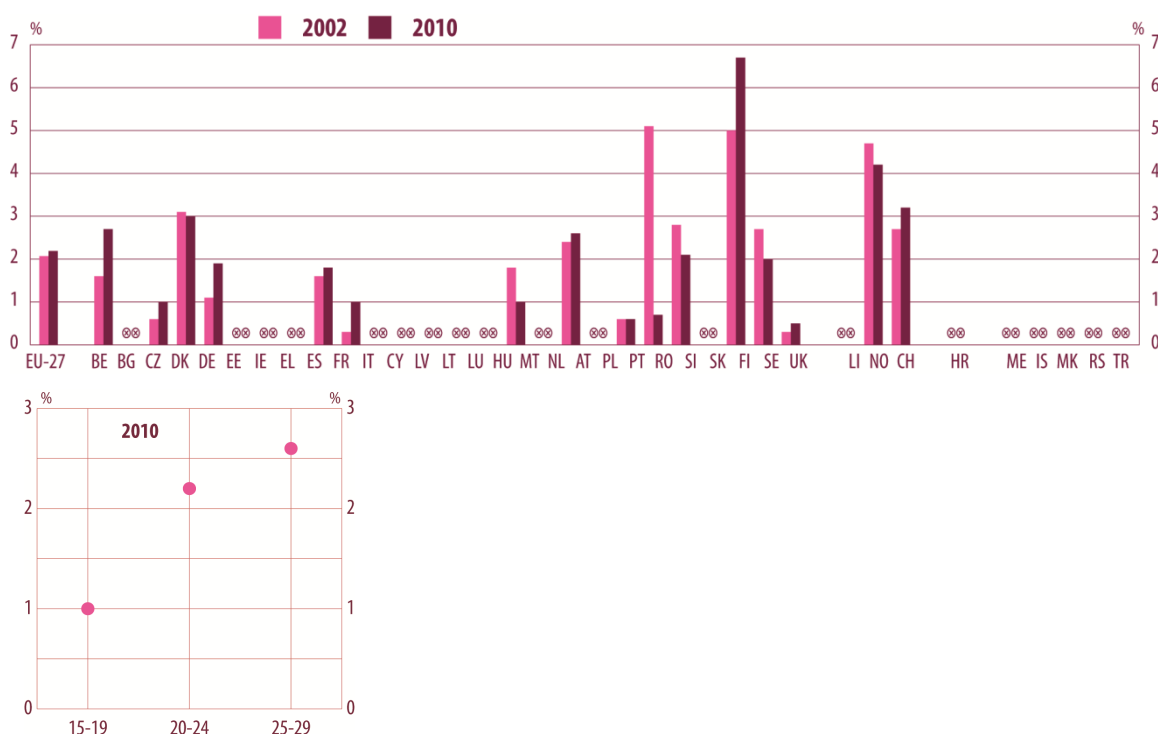


Source: European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP) 2011

Of the countries for which data is available, only in three (Belgium, Estonia and the Netherlands) do young Members of Parliament constitute a significant share (around 7 %) of the total membership of the parliament. The situation in the European Parliament is similar. Those aged under 30 constitute 3.4 % of the members elected in 2009. Hence, information from national and European parliaments suggests that opportunities for young people to be represented by their peers are limited, and so they are not strongly motivated to take part in elections.

The weak presence of young people in representative institutions is partly attributable to the fact that relatively few of them join political parties – an average European level proportion of 2 % (Figure 7-F).

**Figure 7-F: Membership of political parties amongst young people (aged 15-29), by countries and by age, 2002 and 2010**



Source: ESS 2002 and 2010

Note: The chart considers countries for which data exist for 2002 and 2010.

The average percentage share of young people in Europe who are members of a political party is less than half that of their elders (4.5 %) <sup>132</sup>. This is in line with data showing that people within the consecutive age groups of the youth population (aged 15 to 29 as a whole) are more willing to join parties as they get older. As with electoral participation, an age divide seems to affect the level of party membership.

If political parties and elections were the only means of being politically active, one might conclude that young people are far more dissatisfied with and uninterested in politics than their elders. Yet other means of taking an active part in society exist and arguably provide for more spontaneous and informal participation. Indeed, some research concludes that personal commitment and faith in political involvement are stronger amongst young people than in other age groups <sup>133</sup>. The fact that their turnout at elections and membership of political parties are relatively weak might not be a symptom of disinterest but of their preference for other forms of participation.

#### **7.4. Other forms of participation by young people, ranging from engagement in civil society to public demonstrations**

The previous section suggests that traditional channels of representative democracy only partially stimulate young people's interest in active participation. Voting at elections and joining political parties seem to have a limited appeal, particularly amongst the youngest members of the 15 to 29 age group. However, interest and involvement in political and social activities are not confined to the sphere of elections and political parties. Less institutionalised and structured forms of participation, such as contributing to the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or community-driven initiatives and joining social movements, are also worthwhile forms of social engagement which – according to some research – are increasingly appealing to young people <sup>134</sup>.

The Flash Eurobarometer ‘Youth on the Move’ confirms the preference of young people for being active in non-governmental and local associations rather than in political parties. Twice as many respondents as those who were active in a political party said they were involved in the work of an NGO, or a local organisation aimed at improving the local community or environment (Figure 7-G).

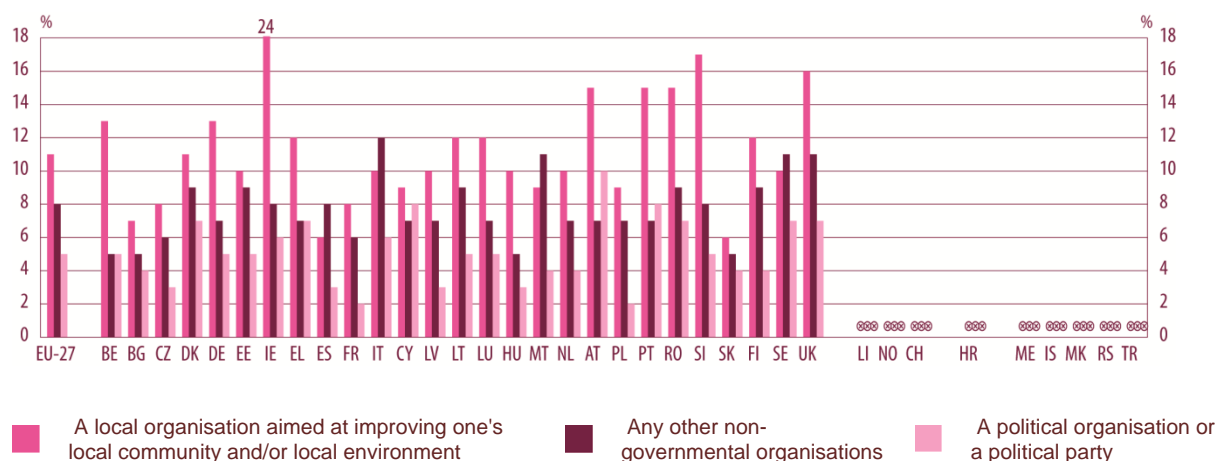
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<sup>132</sup> ESS5-2010, ed.1.0.

<sup>133</sup> Kestila-Kekkonen 2009, pp. 145-165; Vinken 2005, pp. 147-157.

<sup>134</sup> For example Hoikkala 2009, Barber 2010, Gaiser et al. 2010, Santo et al. 2010.

**Figure 7-G: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who have participated in the activities of various organisations, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?'

Base: % 'yes' answers by country.

The share of young people participating in a local organisation is particularly high in Ireland (almost 25 %). Italy, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom are the countries with the highest level of participation in NGOs (over 10 %). Bulgaria Spain and Slovakia score lowest for the three categories of organisation identified in Figure 7-G. Furthermore, in contrast to the over-representation of older people in the membership of political parties, participation levels of young people in other forms of social engagement are similar to the corresponding proportions among other age groups: at European level, about the same percentages of young people and of people above the age of 30 (15 % and 15.5 % respectively) said they were involved in the activities of civil society organisations<sup>135</sup>. These results match recent studies arguing that youth is increasingly disillusioned with traditional political structures because the latter are perceived as unresponsive to young people's interests. They therefore often consider that involvement in community activities and small-scale organisations is far easier and more effective<sup>136</sup>.

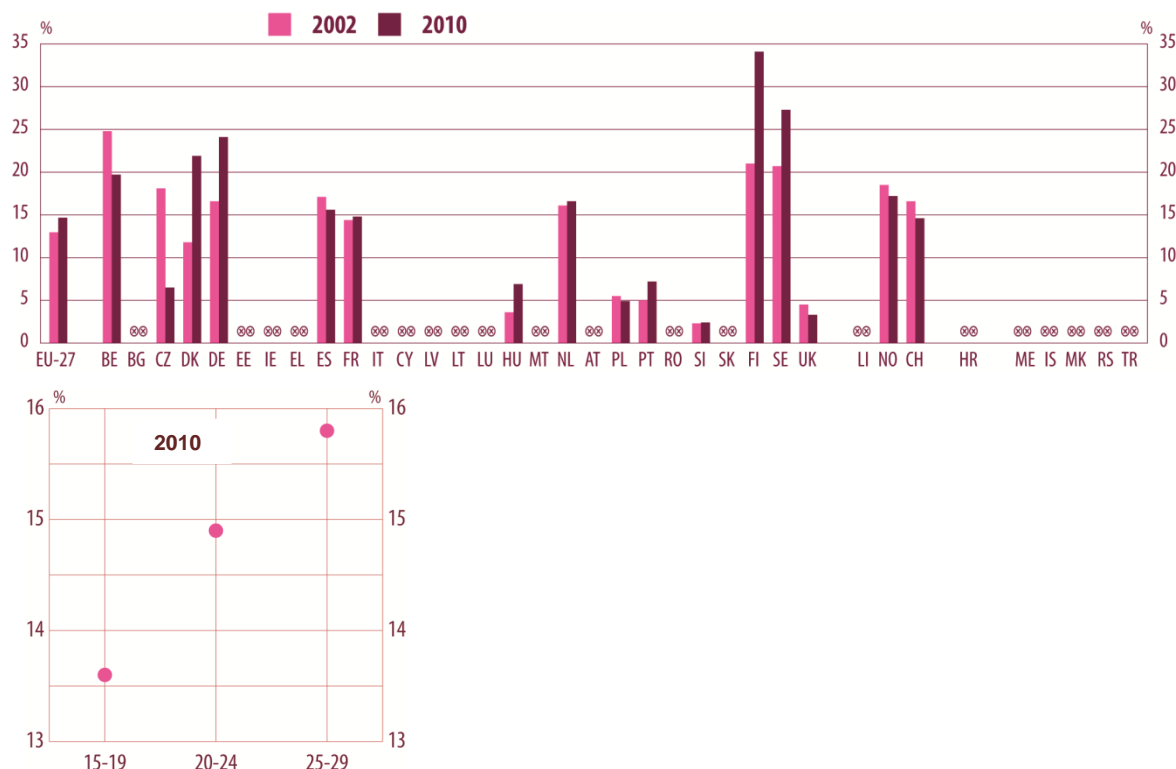
In line with these findings, the proportion of young people working for civil society organisations and associations has slightly increased over the last decade (Figure 7-H). This trend is mainly due to the big increases in Denmark, Germany, Finland and Sweden, while the situation in the majority of other countries has changed little. Yet a few others (in particular the Czech Republic) witnessed a significant decrease. As in the case of party membership, there are significant differences between the propensities of different age groups within the youth population to be active members of organisations (Figure 7-H). Older individuals tend to participate to a larger extent.

<sup>135</sup> ESS5-2010, ed.1.0.

<sup>136</sup> Harris et al. 2010, pp. 9-32.



**Figure 7-H: Share of young people (aged 15-29) working in civil society organisations and associations, by country and by age, 2002 and 2010**



Source: ESS 2002 and 2010

Notes: The chart considers countries for which data exist for 2002 and 2010.

The question was 'There are different ways of trying to improve things in [country] or help prevent things from going wrong. During the last 12 months, have you worked in another organisation or association?'

Frustration with institutional forms of political participation can also result in people expressing their concerns and interests more or less independently of organised structures like political parties or NGOs. In this context, street demonstrations, protests, or the occupation of public spaces become means of looser and more informal involvement in society and in politics, which many young people find worth experiencing<sup>137</sup>. Indeed, they appear to resort to such activities much more often than their elders. For example, according to ESS data, 8 % of youth respondents in 14 EU Member States – as opposed to 5 % of respondents aged 30 and over – joined lawful public demonstrations in the 12 months prior to the survey<sup>138</sup>. Notable differences also exist between the constituent age groups of the total youth population. The youngest group, which joins political parties the least, appears to take part most frequently in public demonstrations. In comparison, participation amongst respondents aged between 25 and 29 is two percentage points lower (Figure 7-I).

<sup>137</sup> Feixa et al. 2009, pp. 421-442.

<sup>138</sup> ESS5-2010, ed.1.0.

**Figure 7-I: Participation of young people (aged 15-29) in lawful public demonstrations, by country and by age, 2002 and 2010**



Source: ESS 2002 and 2010

Note: The chart considers countries for which data exist for 2002 and 2010.

## 7.5. Fresh opportunities for participation offered by the new media

Young people have been at the forefront in using the Internet and its applications (for example Facebook and Twitter) as means of interpersonal communication. The virtual spaces frequented by young people such as online forums, chats, social networks and blogs, serve the same basic function as the physical ones they replace, by establishing collective interaction around common interests. They thus constitute a great resource for political and social engagement, which the young have been fastest to acknowledge and exploit.

In this context, new media can be used in a variety of ways: to become familiar with and exchange ideas on social and political topics; to expose violations of political and social rights that would otherwise go unreported; to initiate and organise protests and demonstrations around shared objectives; and to establish contacts and exchanges with public authorities. It is also important to note that online and offline modes of participation are usually convergent, with one reinforcing the other<sup>139</sup>. In other words, young people who are already active offline can take advantage of the new media to expand their participation (for example, by joining transnational networks). At the same time, young people who start to participate online are more likely to respond to offline modes of participation (for example, by learning about the existence of a local association and joining it).

However, the challenges posed by a potential digital divide should be acknowledged. The new media can restrict access to certain networks and areas of knowledge solely to those able to

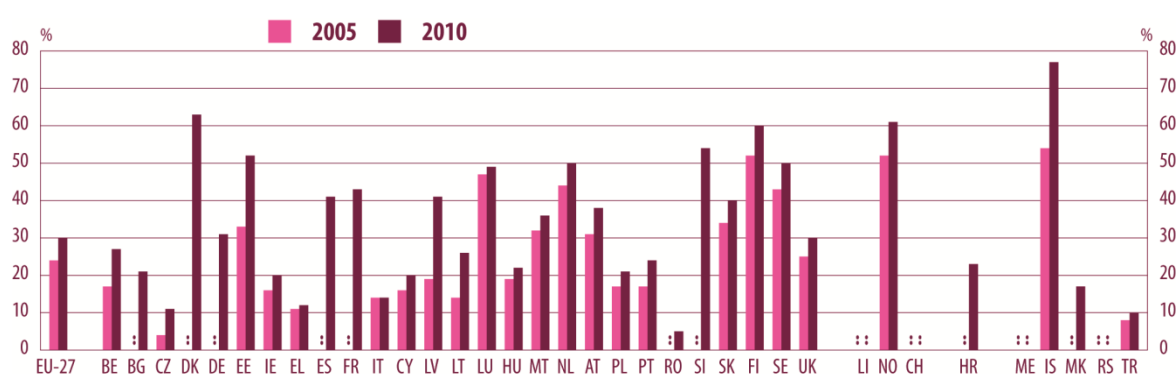
<sup>139</sup>

Hirzalla et al. 2010.

use a computer and surf the Internet, thereby replicating the social inequalities of the ‘non-virtual’ environment.

Several studies indicate the importance of the Internet in fostering social contact and facilitating interaction between citizens and their political representatives through what are usually called ‘e-democracy’ projects, often targeting young Internet users<sup>140</sup>. Indeed, the percentage of young people contacting public authorities via the Internet has increased in recent years (Figure 7-J). This is clearly due to the increase in Internet use in general, but is also an indication that new forms of political participation can be especially appealing to the young, in comparison to more traditional ones. The Eurostat data point to a geographical divide separating countries in northern Europe, in which young people seem to interact more readily with public authorities via the Internet, from those in southern and eastern Europe, in which they do so much less.

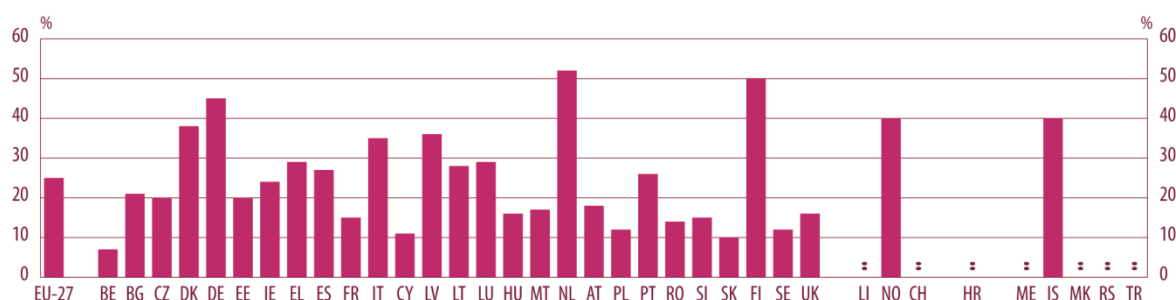
**Figure 7-J: EU youth indicator: Share of the population aged 16-24 who have used the Internet (in the last three months) for interaction with public authorities, 2005 and 2010**



Source: Eurostat 2010 – Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals (ISS-HH). Online data code: isoc\_pibi\_igov

Similarly, young people are active in accessing information, forming opinions and exchanging views on political and social issues within Internet communities (Figure 7-K). Unfortunately, comparison over time is not possible because data is not available for earlier years. However it can be assumed that the percentage followed a trend similar to that of Internet contacts with public authorities.

**Figure 7-K: EU youth indicator: Share of the population aged 16-24 who have used the Internet (in the last three months) to access or post opinions on civic and political issues via websites, 2011**



Source: Eurostat 2011 – ISS-HH. Online data code: isoc\_ci\_ac\_i

National trends vary substantially. While some Member States report proportions of some 40 % or over (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Finland), others register very low levels of Internet use for exchanging political views (Belgium, Cyprus, Poland, Slovakia and Sweden). The percentages of young people active via these ‘new’ forms of participation are

<sup>140</sup>

Hirzalla et al. 2010.

generally significant and bear comparison with or surpass those reported for their elders. Among respondents to the Eurostat survey who were young (aged 16 to 24) and older (25 to 64), about one third in each case said they used the Internet to contact public authorities, while 24 % and 14 % respectively said they used it to join blogs and forums to discuss political topics<sup>141</sup>.

As in the case of non-institutional forms of participation, young people seem to prefer interaction via the Internet and its services to traditional kinds of political participation. The potential offered by this form of civic involvement for mobilising the interest and commitment of young people should be fully acknowledged and supported.

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<sup>141</sup> Eurostat – online data code: isoc\_ci\_ac\_i.

## 8. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

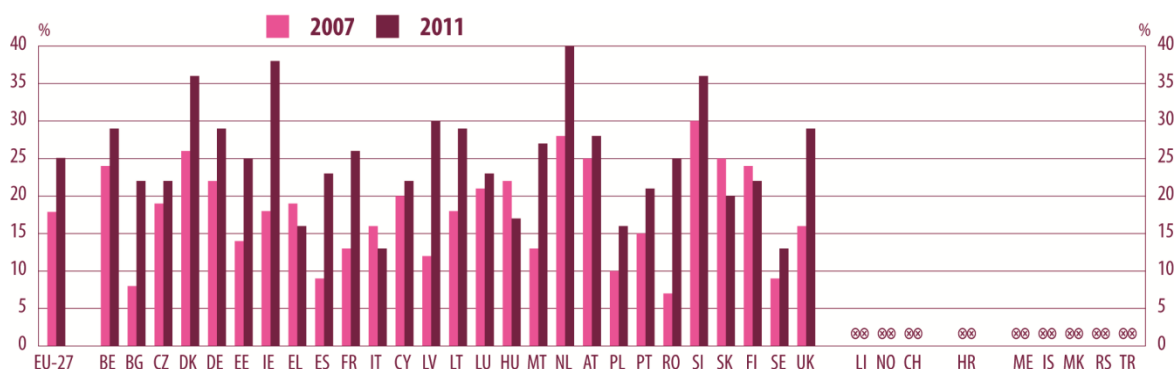
### 8.1. Introduction

Young people's participation in voluntary activities represents a great contribution to the promotion of social and economic cohesion. In addition to the valuable service to society at large, young volunteers themselves also receive great benefits from participating in such activities. Indeed, by engaging in projects tackling topical social problems, young volunteers become key agents of social reform and develop a sense of belonging and ownership towards their community. This is of particular relevance when young people living in situations at risk of exclusion become active as volunteers: by way of their engagement, they find opportunities for integration in social and economic networks, and improve their participation as active citizens. In addition, volunteering is non-formal learning. The personal and professional skills acquired through voluntary activities are important resources for the enhancement of one's education and employability.

### 8.2. Youth participation in voluntary activities

On average, one in four young Europeans has been involved in voluntary activities in 2011 (Figure 8-A). Compared to data from 2007, the percentage of young people active in the field has thus increased. According to a Eurobarometer survey (2011), the level of youth engagement appears to be similar to that of the total population<sup>142</sup>.

**Figure 8-A: EU youth indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in organised voluntary activities, 2007 and 2011**



Source: 2007 Eurobarometer 'Young Europeans'

Note: The question was 'Are you engaged in any voluntary activities?'

2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you been involved in any organised voluntary activities in the past year?'

Base: all respondents, % by country.

Naturally, participation in voluntary activities varies across countries. While the share of young respondents having served in a voluntary project is above one third in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Slovenia, it is less than one fifth in the case of Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden. Such variation also affects national trends over the past years. The share of young people taking part in voluntary projects has increased in the vast majority of countries, except for Greece, Italy, Hungary, Slovakia and Finland. The increase has been particularly significant (around 20 %) in Ireland, Latvia and Romania.

Eurobarometer data indicate that young persons in the 15 to 19 age group are the most likely to engage in volunteering (Figure 8-B). In contrast, the oldest in the youth population appear

<sup>142</sup>

European Parliament 2011.

to be the least active, perhaps because they have usually already entered employment and have relatively less time to devote to voluntary work.

**Figure 8-B: Participation in organised voluntary activities, EU-27 average, by age, 2011**

	15-19	20-24	25-29
<b>Yes</b>	26	25	22
<b>No</b>	73	74	78
<b>DK/NA</b>	1	0	0

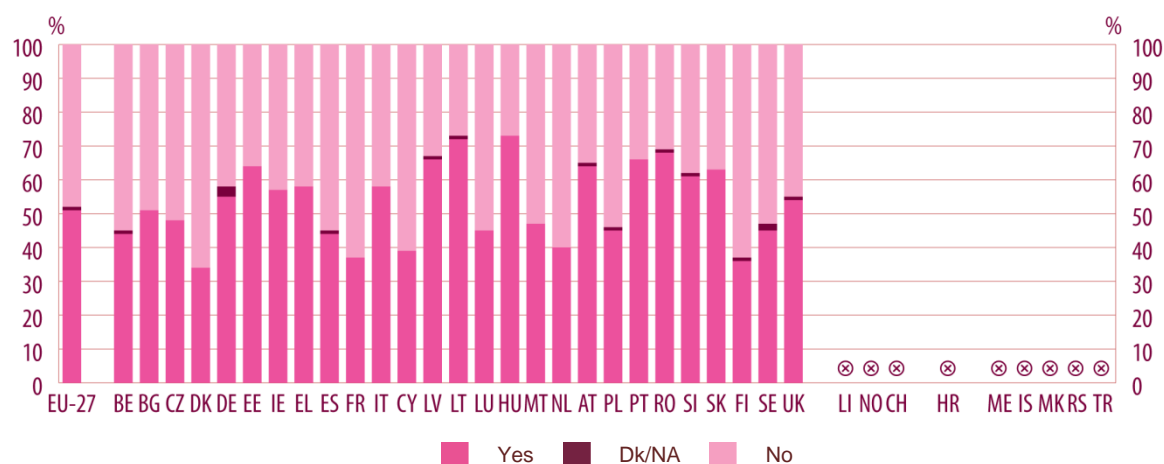
Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you been involved in any organised voluntary activities in the past year?'

Base: all respondents.

When engaged in volunteering, approximately half of young individuals chose to contribute to the improvement of his or her local community (Figure 8-C). In some countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal and Romania) the share of young volunteers serving their communities is as high as two thirds, while in other countries (Denmark, France, Cyprus and Finland) the opposite situation exists.

**Figure 8-C: EU youth indicator: Voluntary actions aimed at changing respondents' (aged 15-30) local communities, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Was the voluntary action aimed at changing something in your local community?'

Base: respondents who have been involved in any organised voluntary activities, % by country.

Comprehensive information on the main fields of engagement of young volunteers is not systematically collected at European level. In this respect, information on the organisations accredited in the framework of the European Voluntary Service can be useful to identify some of the themes that more often attract the interest of young individuals, albeit limited to the

### European Voluntary Service (EVS)

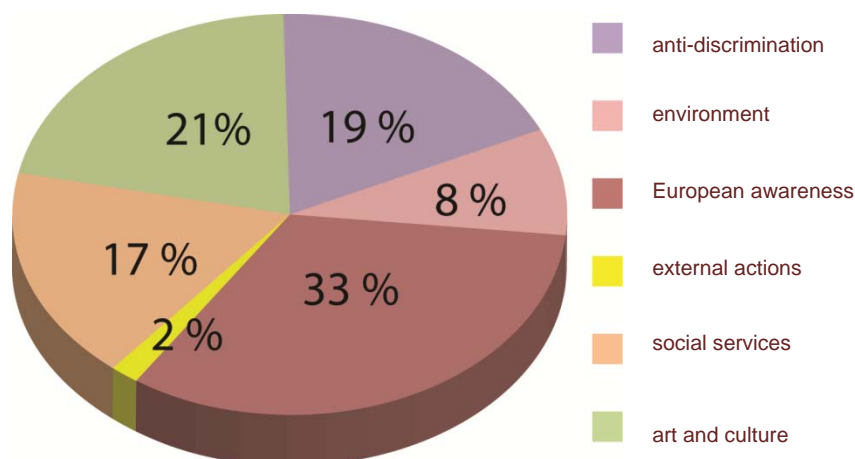
EVS is one of the five operational Actions of the EU Youth in Action programme (2007-2013). Its aim is to support young people's participation in various forms of voluntary activities, both within and outside the EU. Young volunteers take part in non-profit-making unpaid activities to the benefit of the general public in countries other than their countries of residence. Volunteering experiences can last from two to twelve months. The volunteers need to be young people aged 18 to 30 legally resident in the country of the Sending Organisation. Financial support is granted to both the volunteer and the promoters to cover the costs related to the voluntary service.

systematically collected at European level. In this respect, information on the organisations accredited in the framework of the European Voluntary Service can be useful to identify some of the themes that more often attract the interest of young individuals, albeit limited to the

realm of EU funding schemes<sup>143</sup>.

Around one third of accredited organisations focus on fostering European awareness and identity amongst European youth (Figure 8-D). Organisations aimed at combating forms of discrimination and fostering artistic and cultural activities each represent one fifth of the total. About one in six deals with providing services in the social field (healthcare, civil protection, education). The last two categories of voluntary organisations concern actions related to the environment, and to supporting third countries (for example, post-conflict rehabilitation and development and cooperation).

**Figure 8-D: Accredited European Voluntary Service organisations, by main theme, 2010**



Source: SALTO Youth and Educational, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

Note: a total of 4 018 voluntary organisations participating in EVS were accredited in 2010.

As discussed in Chapter 2 on Demography of this report, young Europeans have increasingly become mobile, living in other European countries during their studies and early professional stages. However, serving in cross-border volunteering does not appear to be a major reason to leave their country of origin: only around 2 % of young respondents to the ‘Youth on the Move’ Eurobarometer reported to have spent a period abroad for this purpose (Figure 8-E).

**Figure 8-E: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 15-30) staying abroad for volunteering, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319b ‘Youth on the Move’

Note: The question was ‘Apart from vacation or tourism, learning or training, have you ever stayed abroad for at least one month for the purpose of volunteering?’

Base: all respondents, % by country.

<sup>143</sup>

For more information about EVS accredited organisations, see European Commission n.d, p. 60, and The European [database](#) on EVS accredited organisations.

Albeit with widespread variations between Member States (the share of young people volunteering abroad is six times higher in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Luxembourg than in Greece, Slovakia, Italy, Hungary and Portugal), this percentage never exceeds 6 %.

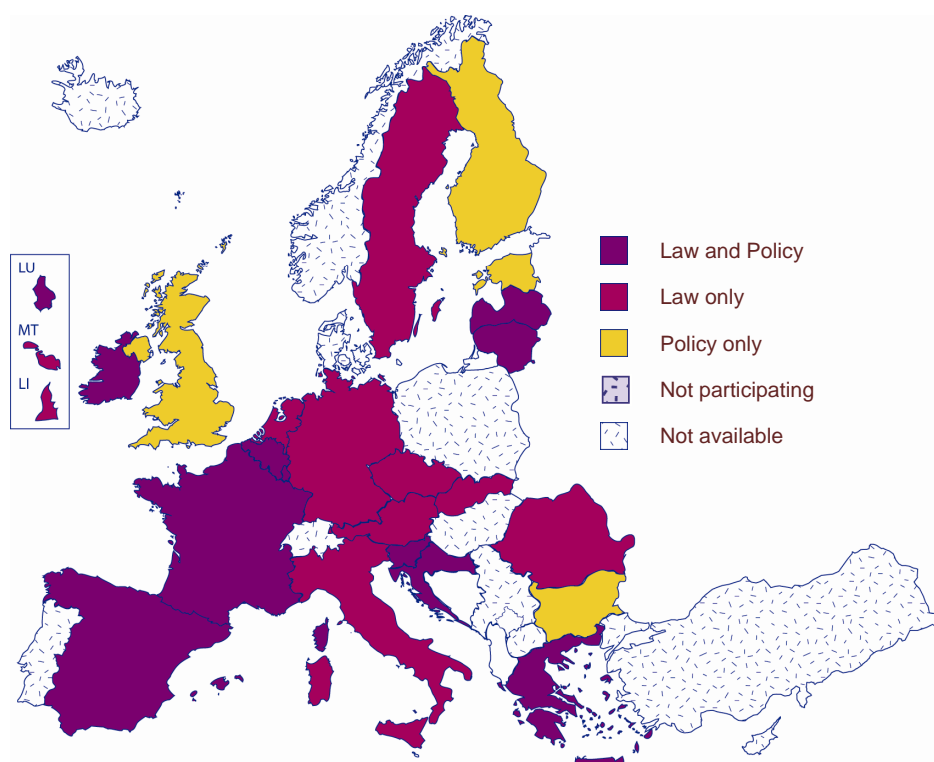
Overall, data show that participation in voluntary activities still concerns a minority of young Europeans, especially in the case of cross-border volunteering. The potential for non-formal learning attached to voluntary experiences appears to be only partly appreciated and exploited by young generations. Many initiatives exist both at local, national and European level aiming at fostering youth engagement in the non-profit sector, and thus at supporting their personal and professional development. However, legal and social barriers hinder more widespread access to voluntary projects, which often curb youth's motivation to participate.

### 8.3. Encouraging youth participation in voluntary activities

Amongst the most important factors fostering participation of young people in voluntary activities are: the existence of a legal and policy framework giving formal recognition of volunteering; the possibility of receiving financial support for the activities carried out; and the right to obtain formal recognition of the personal and professional experience acquired.

The definition of a legal status for volunteers (of any age) through specific legislation, or within a more general law also covering not-for-profit activities, contributes to protecting participants' rights and clarifying the administrative procedures for their employment. About two thirds of countries in the EU-27 have established formal regulations in the field of volunteering (Figure 8-F)<sup>144</sup>.

**Figure 8-F: Laws on volunteering in 24 EU Member States, 2011**



Source: EKCYP 2011

As volunteering implies unpaid work, the financial burdens arising from contributing to voluntary activities can represent a powerful disincentive. This is even more crucial when

<sup>144</sup>

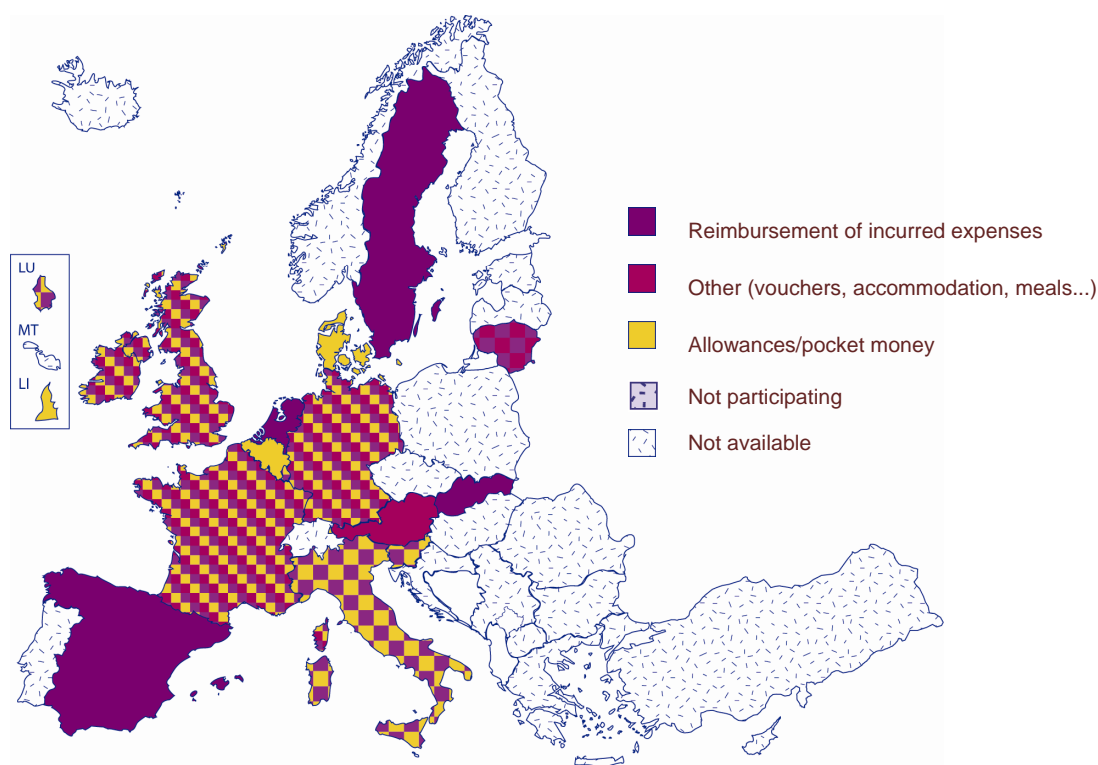
Information collected by the European Knowledge Centre of the Youth Partnership (EKCYP).



considering volunteering abroad, which implies coping with higher personal expenses due to living in a foreign country without either receiving a scholarship or being employed. Further, leaving one's own country often means the loss of social benefits (such as unemployment benefits) and insurance, which easily makes the option of going abroad discouraging.

According to the EKCYP survey, two thirds of the countries covered report having schemes for financial and/or material compensation for the time and energies young volunteers dedicate to not-for-profit work (Figure 8-G).

**Figure 8-G: Reimbursement and remuneration for volunteering involvement in 24 EU Member States, 2011**



Source: EKCYP 2011

Participation in voluntary activities does not only offer young people opportunities to make a contribution to society. By taking part in such projects, volunteers also acquire or enhance their professional capabilities through non-formal learning which can later be useful in either continuing education or entering the labour market. Receiving recognition plays an important role in supporting young people's motivation to engage: in the absence of credit that can subsequently be useful on the labour market, many young people prefer to focus on finding internships and apprenticeships to pave their way towards employment.

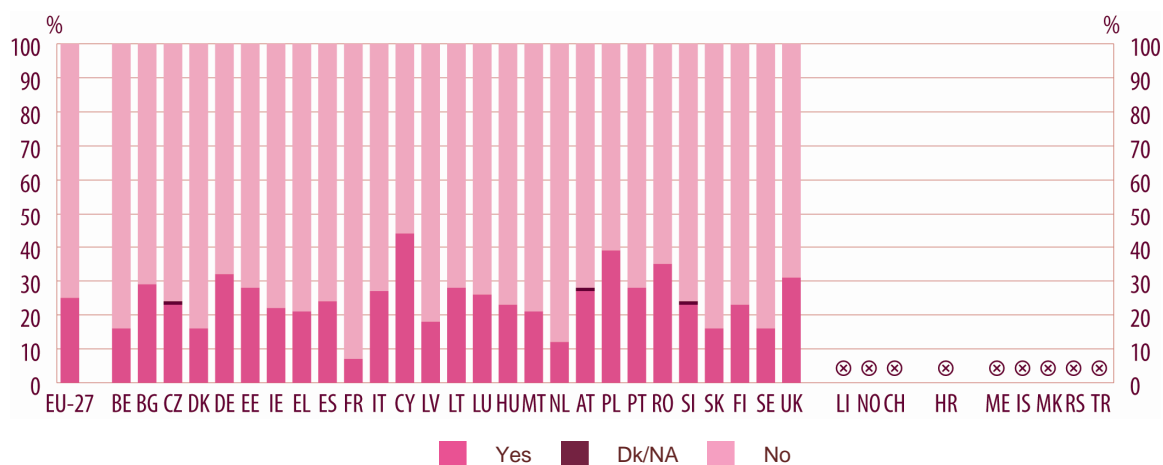
**Youthpass**, the certificate issued at the request of the volunteer at the end of his/her service fulfils the role of EU-wide certification. Introduced in 2007, it provides a tool to reflect and analyse the competences gained through cross-border volunteering.

Recognition of the experience acquired through volunteering can be particularly complicated, when the activity has been carried out in another country than the one where the volunteer wishes to either continue education or seek

employment, due to differences amongst national validation systems.

One in four young volunteers has received a certificate or a diploma recognising their experiences (Figure 8-H).

**Figure 8-H: EU youth indicator: Young people (aged 15-30) receiving a certificate or diploma for voluntary activities, 2011**



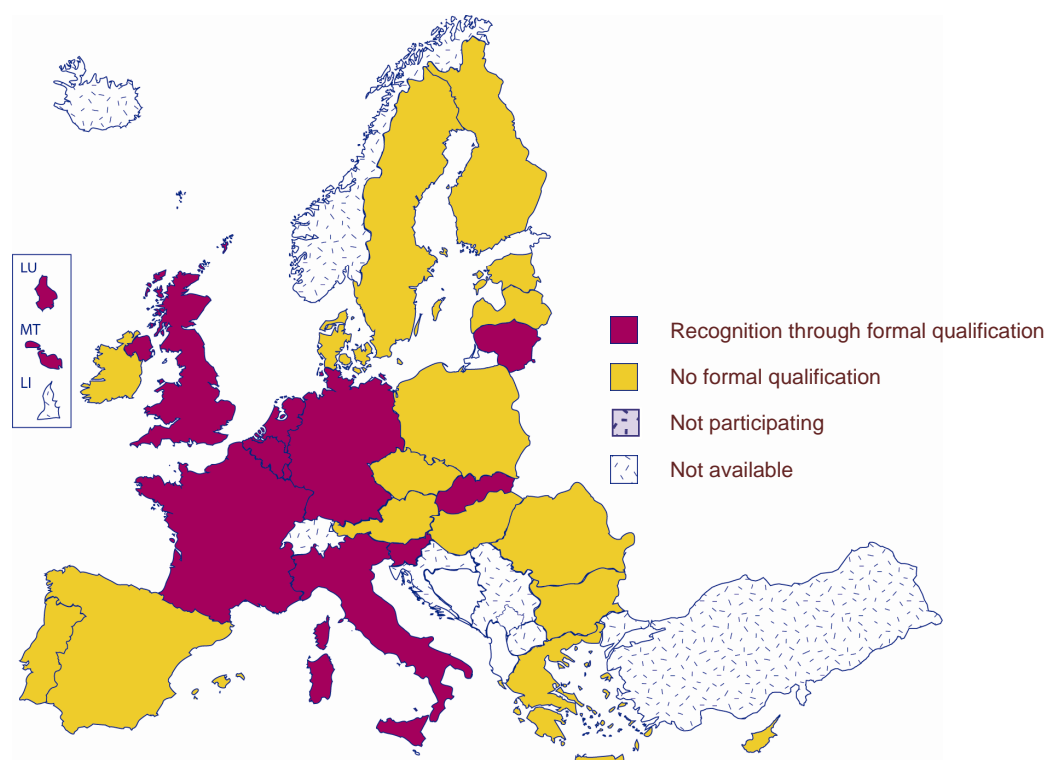
Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Did you receive a certificate, diploma or other formal recognition for your participation in these voluntary activities?'

Base: respondents who have been involved in any organised voluntary activities, % by country.

These data are supported by information on the existence of schemes for recognising qualifications acquired through voluntary experiences in European countries (Figure 8-I). One third of countries participating in the EKCYP survey reported having established formal procedures for validating the skills and competences obtained by young volunteers during their periods of service in credit systems.

**Figure 8-I: Recognition of volunteering in 24 EU Member States, 2011**



Source: EKCYP 2011

Younger individuals (15 to 19) tend to obtain recognition more often than older ones (Figure 8-J).

**Figure 8-J: Receiving a certificate or diploma for voluntary activities, EU-27 average, by age, 2011**

	15-19	20-24	25-30
Yes	34	26	16
No	66	74	84

Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Did you receive a certificate, diploma or other formal recognition for your participation in these voluntary activities?'

Base: respondents who have been involved in any organised voluntary activities,

## 9. CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

### 9.1. Introduction

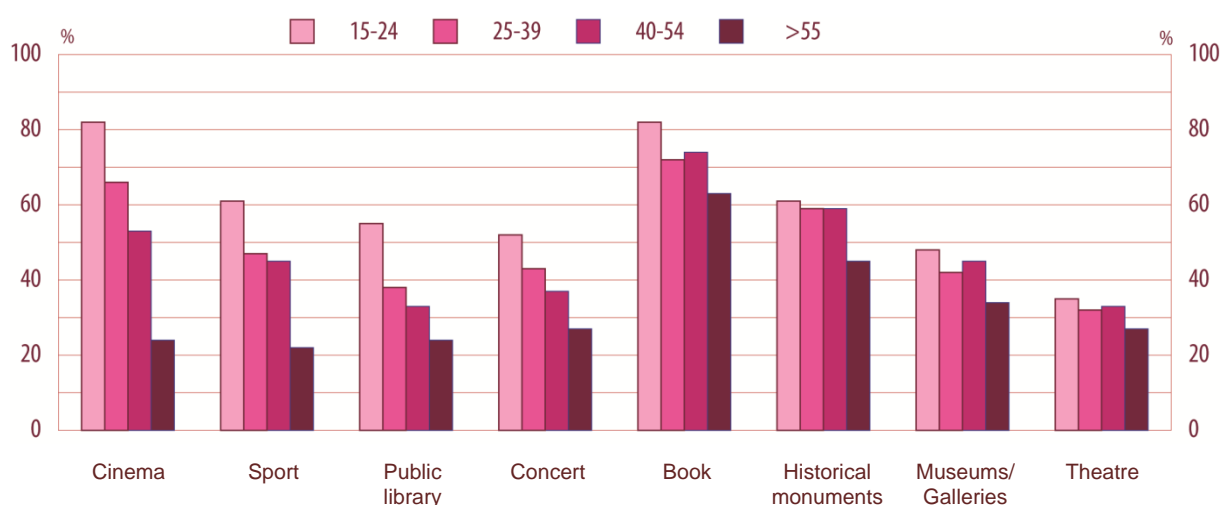
Young people's interest and participation in cultural and artistic activities are of great importance for the enjoyment they give and for their beneficial effects on many areas of a young person's life. Involvement in cultural activities may also help developing personal, social, and professional skills. In fact, cultural interests and creativity can ease the transition from school to the labour market, by imparting non-formal skills useful in either further education and vocational training or professional development. Similarly, by creating opportunities for interpersonal contact and socialisation, they can promote active participation in community life and foster political awareness and engagement. Not least of all, cultural participation is considered essential for furthering the mutual understanding, social inclusion and integration of different national, ethnic and linguistic traditions, and for combating discrimination and social exclusion.

In this context, the development and increased use of new technologies – especially those concerned with computing, the Internet and communications – can potentially nurture young people's creativity and ability to innovate. It is therefore vital to note their general conduct and preferences regarding Culture and Creativity and the main trends in this respect, as well as the reasons why it is important to support and expand their scope for involvement in cultural activities.

## 9.2. Cultural participation

Young people are the most active in the population of Europe as regards participation in cultural activities. This is borne out by a 2007 Europe-wide survey of the whole population, which reported that those aged 15 to 29 took part in such activities more often than other age groups (Figure 9-A)<sup>145</sup>.

**Figure 9-A: Participation rate for selected cultural activities, EU-27 average, by age, 2007**



Source: 2007 Special Eurobarometer 278

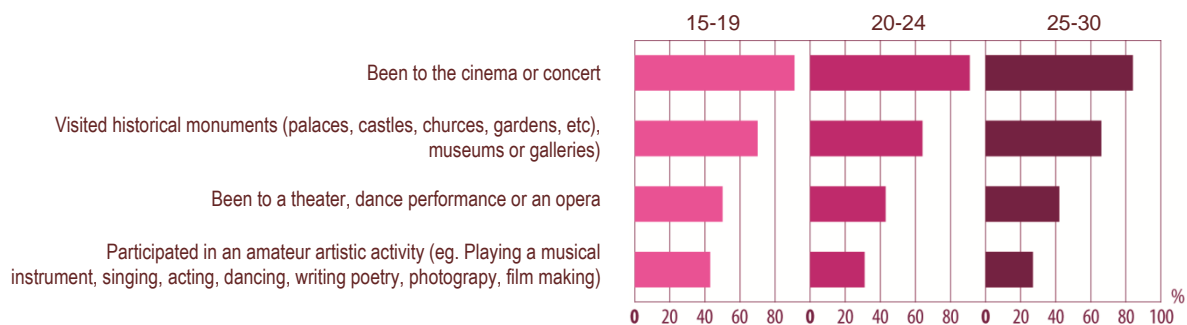
The same survey reports that young people seem to be more inclined to take advantage of opportunities to learn about and appreciate different cultural traditions, as they are more often exposed to cross-cultural exchanges. This is certainly linked to the considerable scope they have for spending time abroad as part of their education, as under the Erasmus and Youth in Action programmes.

According to the Flash Eurobarometer ‘Youth on the Move’ survey (2011), the majority of young respondents enjoy various cultural offerings, in particular those involving the cinema or concerts (Figure 9-B). Visits to museums, galleries and historical monuments appear to be less popular, and the performing arts (theatre, dance and opera) less still.

<sup>145</sup>

European Commission 2007b.

**Figure 9-B: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who say that they have undertaken one or more of the following cultural or amateur artistic activities at least once in the preceding 12 months, EU-27 average, by age, 2011**



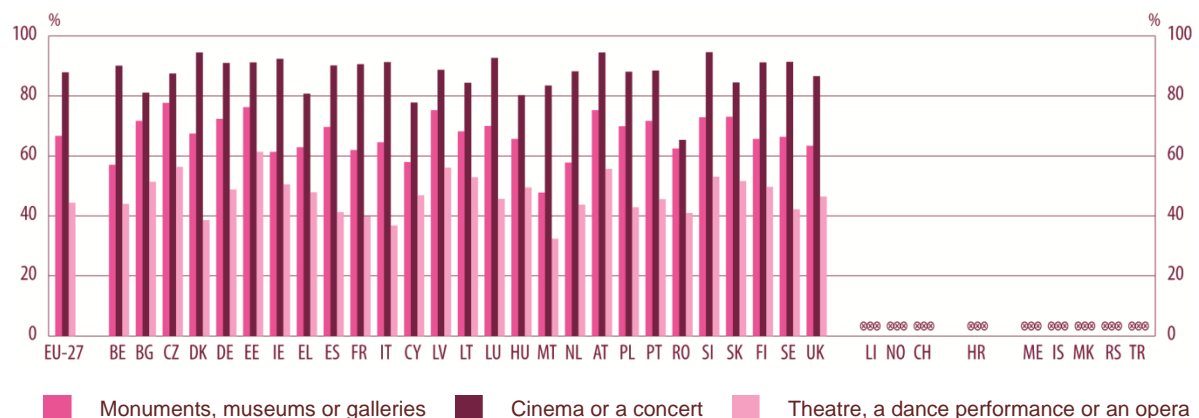
Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Notes: The question was 'Have you participated in any of the following cultural activities in the past year?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'Yes' answers shown.

Slight national variations exist. Although all countries in the survey reported relatively high levels of cultural involvement some differences were observable (Figure 9-C).

**Figure 9-C: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who say that they have undertaken one or more of the following cultural activities at least once in the preceding 12 months, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you participated in any of the following cultural activities in the past year?' (i.e. been to the cinema or a concert, visited a historical monument, museum or gallery, or attended a theatre, dance or opera performance).

Base: all respondents, % by country.

Encouraging results have been reported concerning the real participation of young people in amateur activities, which implies a stronger personal commitment than simple presence at a cultural event or location. One third of young Europeans say they pursue a cultural activity in their free time, whether playing a musical instrument, writing poetry, singing or dancing, or engaging in other performing or visual art activities such as film-making and photography (Figure 9-D). Naturally, countries vary in their levels of participation. While some (such as Germany and Austria) report that amateur activities are pursued by half of the youth population surveyed, others (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta and Portugal) report that only around a quarter of young people interviewed were involved in cultural and artistic activities.

**Figure 9-D: EU youth indicator: Share of young people (aged 15-30) who say that they have undertaken an amateur artistic activity at least once in the preceding 12 months, by country, 2011**



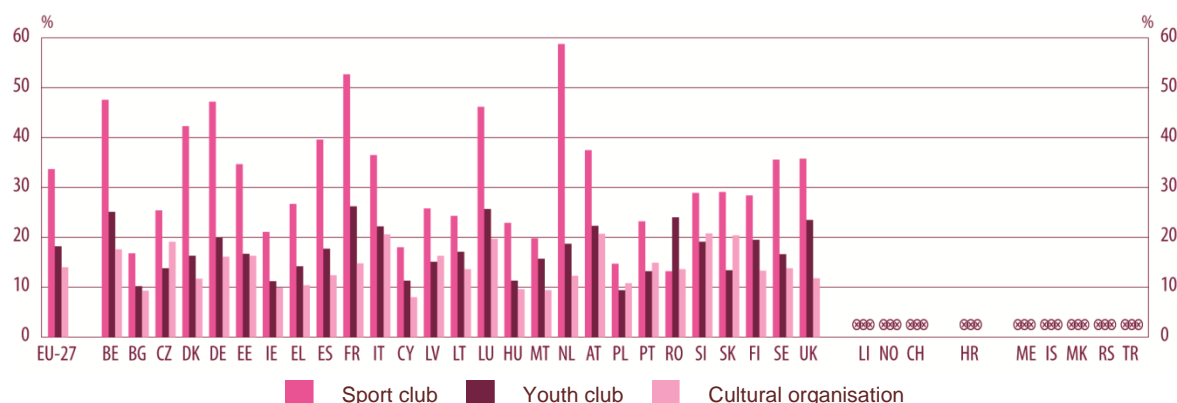
Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you participated in any of the following cultural activities in the past year?' (i.e. an amateur artistic activity, e.g. playing a musical instrument, singing, acting, dancing, writing poetry, photography, or film making).

Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers shown by country.

As regards participation in associations and organisations that promote sport, cultural or youth-related interests, a majority answered positively (Figure 9-E). Here again, variations exist between countries. While Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands report comparatively high results, in Bulgaria, Cyprus and Poland only a minority of young people seem to be active in such organisations.

**Figure 9-E: EU youth indicator: 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, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?' (i.e. a sports club; a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation; a cultural organisation; a local organisation aimed at improving your local community and/or local environment; any other non-governmental organisations; an organisation promoting human rights or global development; a political organisation or a political party; an organisation active in the domain of global climate change/global warming).

Base: all respondents, % by country.

There seems to be some consistency in the tendency of young people to take an interest in all three types of cultural experience discussed so far (presence at cultural events or locations, amateur activities, and membership of sports or cultural organisations). Some countries consistently report the highest levels of participation (Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden), while others (Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Portugal and Romania) constantly report lower percentages.

According to the UNESCO Recommendation on Participation by the People at Large in Cultural Life and Their Contribution to it (1976), access to culture means the existence of concrete opportunities for everyone freely to obtain information, training, knowledge and

understanding, and to enjoy cultural values and cultural property, in particular through the creation of appropriate socio-economic conditions. Disadvantaged young people and those at risk of exclusion have fewer opportunities to access culture, often because they lack the financial resources or time to enjoy cultural and artistic activities.

A Commission study, based on a survey of young people (2008) has shed some light on what they themselves regard as the most widespread difficulties in accessing culture<sup>146</sup>. The study indicates that lack of money is a key impediment to cultural participation, given that young people often do not earn enough to purchase cultural goods, either because they are still in education, or at only the first stages of working life. Attitudes among the public in general, as well as young people themselves, also play a role. Interviews reveal that many young people may feel alienated from society and therefore uninterested in participating in its cultural life. Geographical circumstances can also be a problem. As cultural and artistic activity occurs mainly in urban environments in which public transport to and from rural areas may be limited, some young people may feel culturally isolated. Last but not least, they often regard what is culturally on offer as unsatisfactory. In this respect, the cultural offering has to be attractive, creative, and relevant with an interactive dimension to inspire interest and participation on the part of the young.

The study suggests that these and other barriers to cultural access can also be overcome by investing in the digitalisation of cultural output. Creativity and innovation that are related to the life and future of young people are strongly associated with the new technologies, the creative use of the Internet, and the way the young accumulate, analyse and exchange information and knowledge. The digital cultural environment is a central – and still largely unexploited – factor in today's youth culture.

### **9.3. Youth and use of ICT**

The development of ICT and the Internet exerts a strong influence on cultural production and participation, as well on creativity. Among the other benefits of ICT are its vast scope for sharing ideas and knowledge, and overcoming physical and non-physical boundaries. New technologies have expanded access to all cultural and artistic activities, both in terms of an almost unlimited cultural output, and of creative practice (for example, music, video and film-making computer applications). The spread of ICT has also enabled young people to engage in non-formal learning, which can provide useful skills for later professional activity in the cultural and artistic fields.

Around 80 % of young people aged between 16 and 24 use computers and the Internet daily in EU (Figure 9-F)<sup>147</sup>. Denmark, Germany, Estonia, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden report the highest (percentage) levels of computer and Internet use, while Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece and Romania record much lower levels. In the latter country, under half of those surveyed have daily access to ICT.

Both computer and Internet use significantly increased between 2006 and 2011 (Figure 9-F). The growth was 17 and 33 percentage points for the daily use of a computer and the Internet, respectively. According to data reported below, the largest increases in ICT use have occurred in many of the central and eastern European countries. The Czech Republic, Cyprus,

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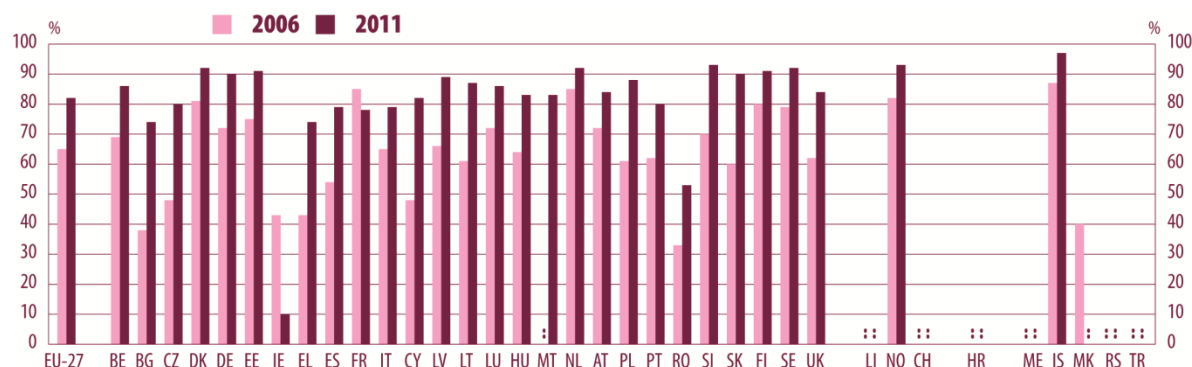
<sup>146</sup> EACEA 2008.

<sup>147</sup> According to a study by Eurydice on ICT use amongst young people, the majority of 15 year olds use the Internet for entertainment-related activities, while a minority do so for school-related purposes (Eurydice/EACEA 2011, p. 25).

Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in particular have reported dramatic increases in the numbers of young people regularly using computers and the Internet.

**Figure 9-F: Trends in daily computer and Internet use among young people (aged 16-24), 2006 and 2011**

**a) Daily computer use**



**b) Daily Internet use**



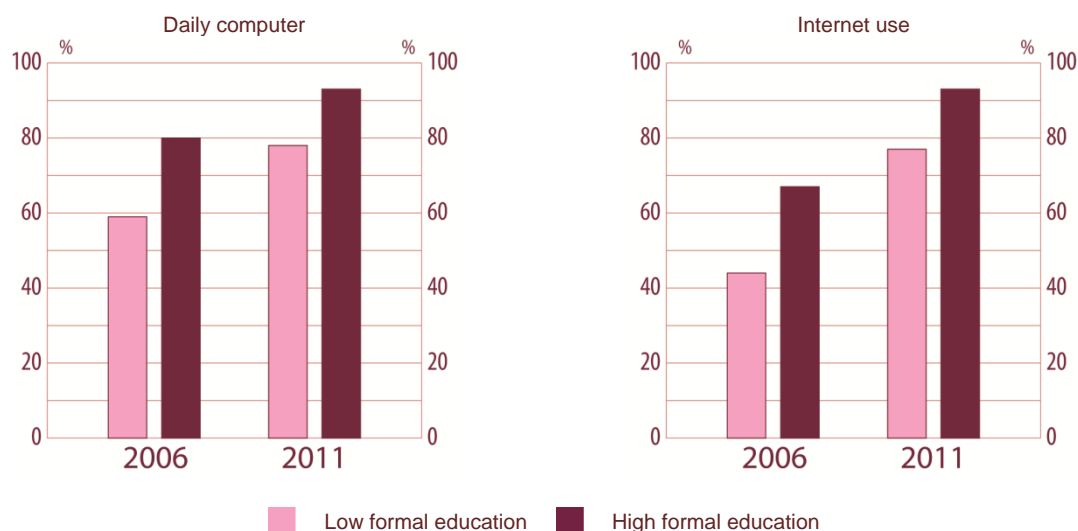
Source: Eurostat 2011 – ISS-HH. Online datacodes: isoc\_ci\_cfp\_fu, isoc\_ci\_ifp\_fu  
Notes: Ireland: 2011 data for daily computer use are unreliable according to Eurostat.

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of the young population using the internet daily increased in most EU Member States much more than the share of new computer users. During this five-year period, twice as many young people started to use the Internet daily when comparing to those who began using computers. This is closely linked to the fact that a higher number of young people had access to a computer in 2011 than in 2006.

An interesting aspect of the above figures on ICT use concerns the educational level of respondents (Figure 9-G). In the case of both computers and the Internet, daily levels of use tend to rise with educational attainment. This suggests a positive relation between the level of education and opportunities for young people to access and become familiar with ICT. However, the increase in the number of young people using ICT between 2006 and 2011 seems unrelated to the level of formal education. This increase of 17 percentage points for computer use and 33 percentage points for the Internet is similar in the case of those with both relatively low and high educational levels.



**Figure 9-G: Daily computer and Internet use and level of education among young people (aged 16-24), EU-27 average, 2006 and 2011**

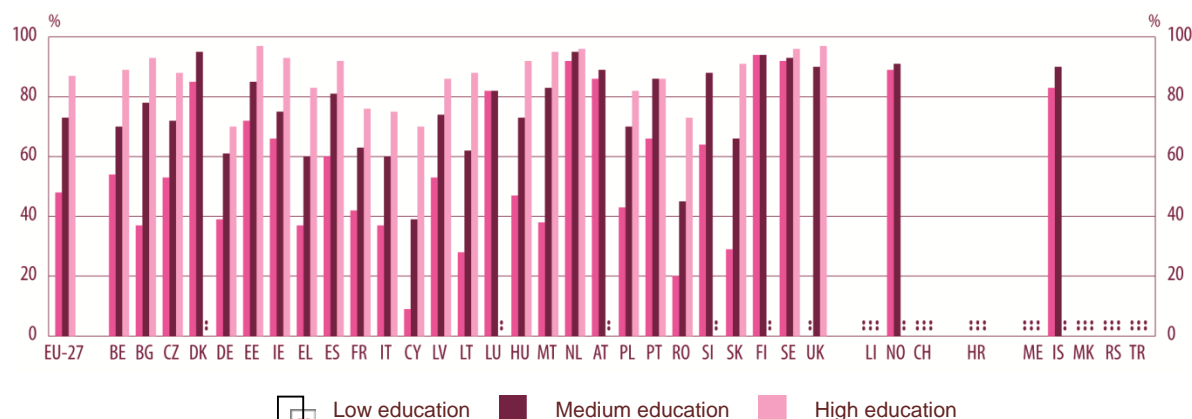


Source: Eurostat 2010 – ISS-HH. Online datacodes: isoc\_ci\_cfp\_fu, isoc\_ci\_ifp\_fu

Notes: Low education: primary (ISCED1) and lower-secondary education (ISCED2). High education: tertiary education (ISCED5 and 6).

These findings are even more interesting alongside data on young people's perception of the value of their computer skills in finding a job (Figure 9-H).

**Figure 9-H: Share of young people (aged 16-24) who think their computer or Internet skills would be sufficient if they were to look for a job or change job within a year, by level of formal education, 2011**



Source: Eurostat 2011 – ISS-HH. Online datacode: isoc\_sk\_cskl\_i

Notes: Low education: primary (ISCED 1) and lower secondary education (ISCED 2)

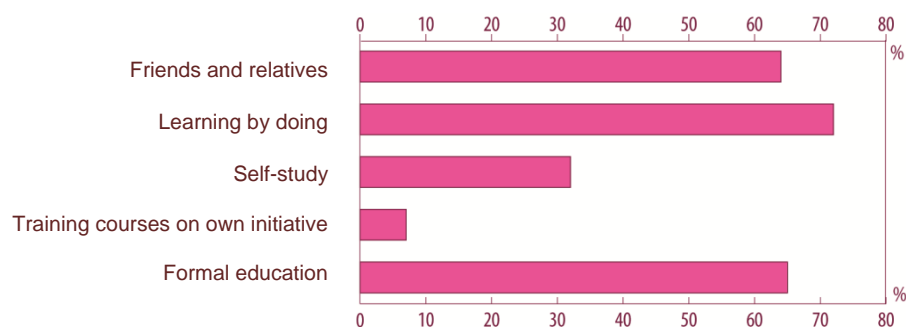
Medium education: upper secondary education (ISCED 3) and post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)

High education: tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6).

The data suggest that, in most countries, young people's confidence in their computer skills grows with the increase in their educational level. There are a few exceptions such as Austria in which the level of education does not appear to affect people's confidence in their ICT skills.

Yet although formal education seems to have a positive impact in preparing young people for the labour market by equipping them with relevant computer skills, learning by doing – followed by formal education and assistance from friends and family (Figure 9-I) – appears to be the strategy most used for gaining ICT proficiency.

**Figure 9-I: Main ways of acquiring ICT skills among young people (aged 16-24), EU-27 average, 2011**

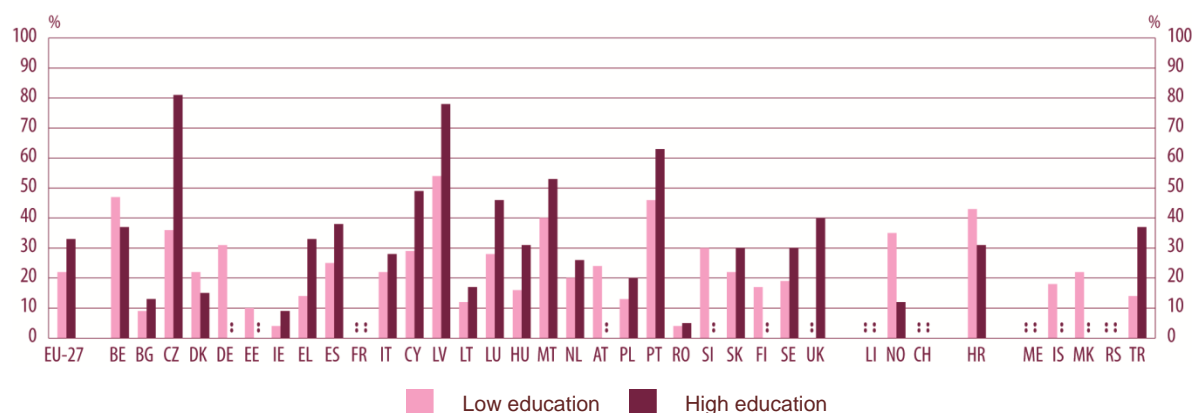


Source: Eurostat 2011 – ISS-HH. Online datacode: isoc\_sk\_how\_i

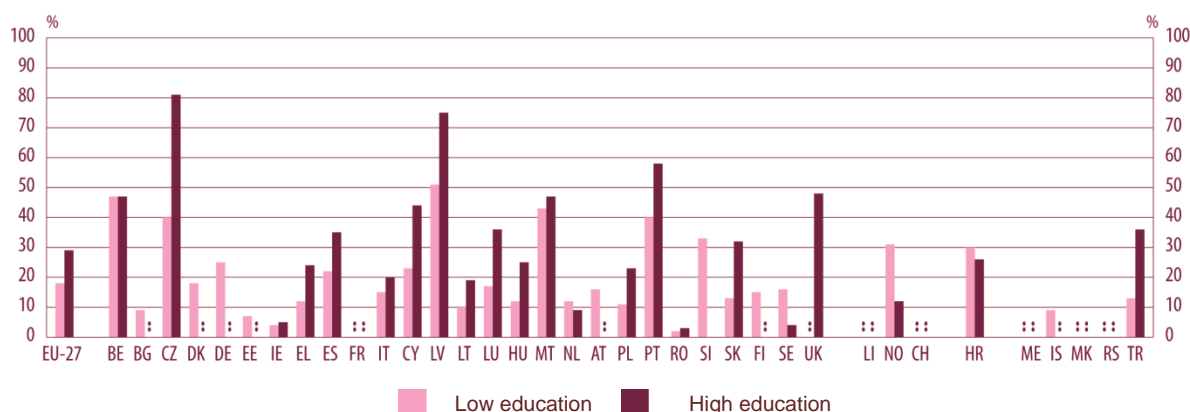
Differences in educational level also affect young people's attitudes towards Internet security. Except in the case of Belgium, and to some extent Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, the higher the level of formal education, the stronger the awareness of risks in surfing the Internet, such as financial fraud and the unwanted disclosure of personal information (Figure 9-J). A higher educational level means better training and greater awareness regarding the potential dangers of surfing the Web, while those who leave school early are more vulnerable to such risks. The value of completing a high level of education in order to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT is also reflected in greater attention to Internet user safety.

**Figure 9-J: Share of young people (aged 16-24) expressing concern about Internet security, by level of education, 2010**

**Strongly concerned about abuse of PERSONAL INFORMATION sent on the Internet and/or other privacy violations (e.g. abuse of pictures, videos, personal data uploaded on community websites)**



**Strongly concerned about FINANCIAL LOSS as a result of receiving fraudulent messages ('phishing') or getting redirected to fake websites asking for personal information ('pharming')**



Source: Eurostat 2010 – ISS-HH. Online datacode: isoc\_cisci\_co

#### 9.4. Fostering creativity through education

Creativity and culture are closely interrelated<sup>148</sup>. In this sense, creativity represents a set of transversal soft skills that facilitate the processes of learning, the use of knowledge for creating innovation, cultural participation and, not least of all, the development of entrepreneurial and professional skills.

At an individual level, creativity is associated with the development of personal aptitudes such as problem-solving, experimentation, risk-taking and the ability to learn from failure, use of the imagination and hypothetical reasoning, and a sense of entrepreneurship. In this respect, education and training play an essential role in fostering such aptitudes in young people. Because of the broad spectrum of components the concept of creativity entails, its application in the domain of education has proved particularly difficult to measure.

A study conducted by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in 2010 focused on evaluating the extent to which European education and training systems are equipped to enhance these skills amongst students in compulsory (primary and lower secondary) education<sup>149</sup>. The study concluded that the term 'creativity' is quite frequently mentioned in curricula in many EU countries. In most of them it is seen as an essential part of learning, which encourages children and young people to be successful learners and confident, effective and responsible citizens. Creativity is viewed as a skill that should be nurtured and developed in most subjects.

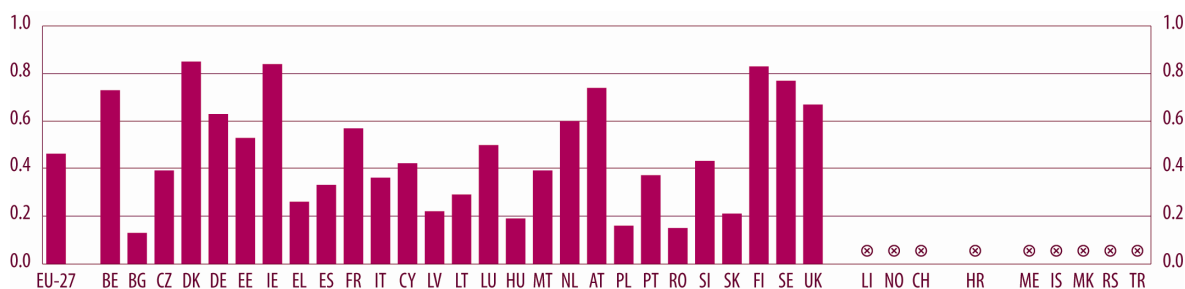
However, the extent to which creativity is really a part of learning seems to be limited. The study also showed that the majority of school teachers did not include activities fostering creativity (for example, multidisciplinary work) in their classrooms. Despite recognising its importance, potentially relevant activities are not widely pursued in schools.

<sup>148</sup> The Council recognised creativity as 'a process of generating ideas, expressions and forms, when looking for new ways of tackling existing problems, of reinterpreting reality or searching for new opportunities. Creativity is in essence a process that can amplify knowledge and lead to new ways of using it' (Council Conclusions on Culture as a Catalyst for Creativity and Innovation, 8749/1/09 REV 1).

<sup>149</sup> European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies 2010.

A composite indicator for measuring creativity in countries has been developed, which consists of sub-indicators dealing with various aspects of creativity, including its level in education<sup>150</sup>. EU-27 Member States score as shown in Figure 9-K.

**Figure 9-K: Measuring creative education in the, by country, 2009**



Source: Hollanders and van Cruysen 2009

Note: Composite indicator to measure the level of creative education, highest possible value = 1.

Countries fall into two main geographical areas in Europe: the northern and Scandinavian regions seem to have designed education and training systems that enhance student creativity to a greater extent than the southern and eastern ones.

## 10. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

### 10.1. Introduction

Young people growing up in the era of globalisation can play a crucial role in bringing about global change around issues such as climate change, sustainable development or the promotion of human rights. Young people are also the ones who are disproportionately affected by globalisation<sup>151</sup>.

### 10.2. Young people's engagement with global issues

Young people's engagement with global issues in general is quite low in the EU-27 (Figure 10-A). The Eurobarometer survey on 'Youth on the Move' found that only 3.2 % of young Europeans participated in NGOs active in the domain of climate change, while 5.2 % were engaged with human rights or global development issues. This also means that when it comes to young people's participation in non-governmental organisations, human rights or global development are more popular themes than global climate change.

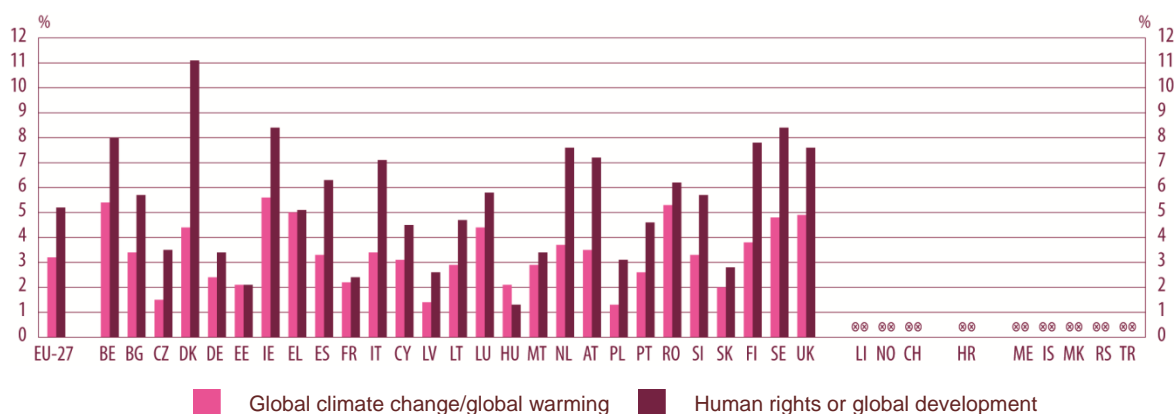
Nevertheless, the variation among countries is substantial. When it comes to human rights or global development, the participation of young people is ranging from 11.1 % in Denmark to 1.3 % in Hungary. In terms of climate change, young people's participation is between 5.6 % (Ireland) and 1.3 % (Poland). Young people's participation in both domains tends to be higher in western Europe than in eastern Europe, though not without exceptions.

<sup>150</sup> The composite indicator used to measure the level of creative education in the 27 EU Member States includes the following: the number of art schools per million people in the population (ELIA – European League of Institutes of the Arts/Eurostat); the quality of the educational system (Global Competitiveness Report 2007/08); public expenditure on education per capita (Eurostat); the share of tertiary students by field of education related to culture (Eurostat); and the extent of staff training (Global Competitiveness Report 2007/08). For further information on the indicator and on the methodology used for its calculation see Hollanders and van Cruysen 2009.

<sup>151</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2003.

Among those who participate, almost two thirds of young people active in the relevant NGOs were in education or training at the time of the survey (Figure 10-B). There are no significant differences in involvement between young men and women, neither among the different age groups within young people<sup>152</sup>.

**Figure 10-A: EU youth indicator: Participation of young people (aged 15-30) in non-governmental organisations active in the domains of global climate change/global warming, human rights or global development, self-reported participation in the last 12 months, by country, 2011**

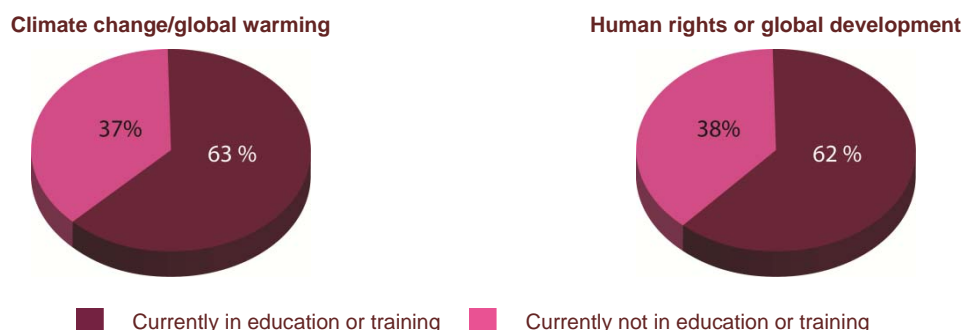


Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Notes: The questions were 'An organisation active in the domain of global climate change/global warming – Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?'; 'An organisation promoting human rights or global development – Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers by country, EU-27.

**Figure 10-B: Young people (aged 15-30) participating in non-governmental organisations active in the domains of global climate change/global warming, human rights or global development, by being in education or training or not, EU-27 average, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Notes: The questions were 'An organisation active in the domain of global climate change/global warming – Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?'; 'An organisation promoting human rights or global development – Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'yes' answers, EU-27.

### 10.3. Cooperation among young people from different continents

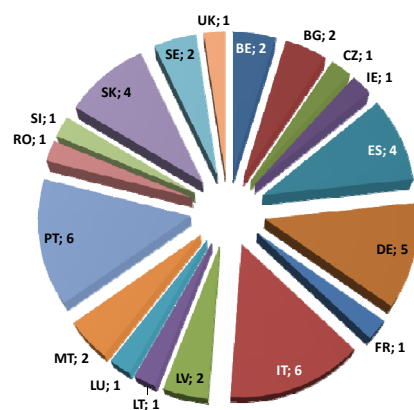
Several EU-27 countries support volunteers to engage in global development causes<sup>153</sup>. The Youth in Action programme also devotes specific action to cooperation with the EU Partner Countries and supports volunteers in development cooperation. However, data on accredited organisations in the framework of the European Voluntary Service reveal that only 1.1 % of such organisations had development cooperation as a principal theme in 2010 within the EU-

<sup>152</sup> 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'.

<sup>153</sup> See country-specific information on such programmes for example [here](#).

27 (see also Chapter 8 on Voluntary Activities). This means a total of 43 organisations, most of which were accredited in Germany, Italy and Portugal (Figure 10-C).

**Figure 10-C: Accredited European Voluntary Service organisations having development cooperation as the main theme, by country, 2010**



Source: SALTO Youth and EACEA

Figures for the participation of young people in activities involving cooperation with young people from other continents are similarly low. As Figure 10-D shows, only around 4 % of young Europeans reported such participation in the 2011 Eurobarometer survey. Again, differences between countries are quite significant: while 7.6 % of young Germans and Austrians engage in cooperation with young people from other continents, the figure is barely higher than 1 % in Bulgaria, Poland or Romania. Young people from western and northern Europe are more likely to participate in international/global activities or projects than their counterparts in eastern and southern Europe.

**Figure 10-D: 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 last 12 months, by country, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you participated in any activities or projects during the past year aimed at fostering cooperation with youth from other countries?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'Yes, in activities/projects with young people from other continents' answers by country, EU-27.

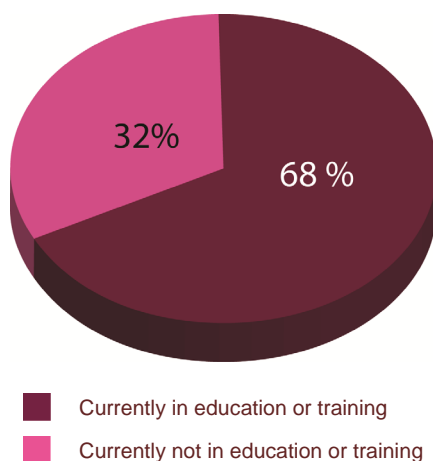
Similar to the findings above, among the young people participating in relevant activities and projects, two thirds are taking part in education and training (Figure 10-E). In addition, as Figure 10-F demonstrates, the youngest age group (15 to 19) is slightly overrepresented in projects involving young people from other continents<sup>154</sup>, while young people aged 20 to 24

<sup>154</sup>

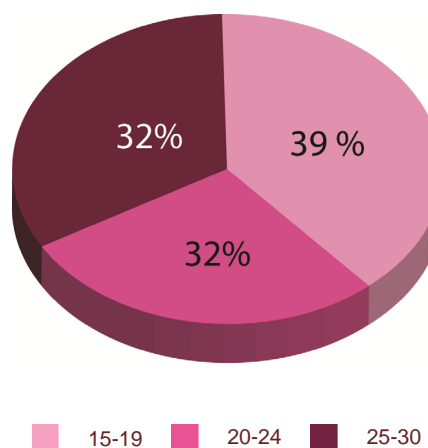
They are even more overrepresented in the case of cooperation with young people from other European countries (source: Flash Eurobarometer 319a, 'Youth on the Move').

participate least in such activities. However, there is no difference between the participation of young men and women<sup>155</sup>.

**Figure 10-E: Young people (aged 15-30) participating in activities or projects aimed at fostering cooperation with young people from other continents, by being in education or training or not, EU-27 average, 2011**



**Figure 10-F: Young people (aged 15-30) participating in activities or projects aimed at fostering cooperation with young people from other continents, EU-27 average, by age, 2011**



Source: 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'

Note: The question was 'Have you participated in any activities or projects during the past year aimed at fostering cooperation with youth from other countries?'

Base: all respondents, % of 'Yes, in activities/projects with young people from other continents' answers, EU-27.

<sup>155</sup> 2011 Flash Eurobarometer 319a 'Youth on the Move'.

## 11. ANNEX

### 11.1. Table of abbreviations

#### Statistical codes

: Data not available

⊗ Not participating

#### Country codes

##### EU Member States<sup>156</sup>

BE	Belgium
BE-nl	Flemish Community of Belgium
BE-fr	French Community of Belgium

BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
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
UK- ENG/WLS	England and Wales

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<sup>156</sup> Alphabetical order according to country's name in national language.



UK-NIR	Northern Ireland
UK-SCT	Scotland
UK (1)	United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland

### **Non-EU Member States**

LI	Liechtenstein
NO	Norway
CH	Switzerland
HR	Croatia
ME	Montenegro
IS	Iceland
MK	the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
RS	Serbia
TR	Turkey

### **Other Abbreviations**

CoE	Council of Europe
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
DK/NA	Don't know/not applicable
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EHIS	European Health Interview Survey
EKCYP	European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESC	European Steering Committee for the Structured Dialogue
ESF	European Social Fund
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EU-15	The 15 Member States of the EU before 1 May 2004
EU-27	The 27 Member States of the EU after 1 January, 2007
EVS	European Voluntary Service
GHB	$\gamma$ -Hydroxybutyric acid, illegal narcotic substance
GP	General practitioner
HBSC	Health Behaviour In School-Aged Children, WHO Collaborative Cross-National Survey
HIS	Health Interview Survey
ICT	information and communications technology
IL	intergenerational learning
ILO	International Labour Organisation

ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Classifications of Occupations
ISS-HH	Survey on ICT Usage in Households and by Individuals
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MS	Member State(s)
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NQSF	National Quality Standards Framework
NWG	National Working Group
NYC	National Youth Council
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
South Med	Southern Mediterranean region
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
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)
VET	Vocational education and training
WHO	World Health Organization

## 11.2. Dashboard of youth indicators

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PART 1</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY DOMAINS WITH EXISTING INDICATORS</b></p>	
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<b>0. CONTEXT</b>		
<b>Indicator</b>		<b>Definition/Comment</b>
0.1. Child population		<u>Definition:</u> The total number of children in the age groups 0-14 living in a Member State of the European Union on January 1. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat demographic data.
0.2. Youth population		<u>Definition:</u> The total number of young people in the age groups 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29 living in a Member State of the European Union on January 1. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat demographic data.
0.3. The ratio of young people in the total population		<u>Definition:</u> Young people (age groups 15-19, 20-24 and 25-29) as a share of the total population living in a Member State of the European Union on January 1. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat demographic data.
0.4. Mean age of young people leaving the parental household		<u>Definition:</u> Mean age of young people leaving home. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS.
<b>1. EDUCATION &amp; TRAINING</b>		
<b>Indicator</b>		<b>Definition/Comment</b>
1.1. Early leavers from education and training		<u>Definition:</u> % of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and who is no longer in education or training. <u>EU target:</u> Less than 10 % by 2020. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS.
1.2. Low achievers	Reading	<u>Definition:</u> Share of 15 year olds who get a score of 1 or below (on a scale from 1 to 5) in PISA tests. <u>EU target:</u> less than 15 % by 2020. <u>Source:</u> OECD - PISA (2009). Every 3 years, upcoming in 2012. <u>Comment:</u> PISA 2003 analyses data from 19 MS while PISA 2006 and PISA 2009 analyse data from 25 MS. PISA science tests were introduced in 2006.
	Mathematics	
	Science	

1.3. Tertiary education attainment		<u>Definition:</u> Share of population aged 30-34 with tertiary education attainment. <u>EU target:</u> By 2020, at least 40 . <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS.
1.4. Young people (20-24) having completed at least upper secondary education		<u>Definition:</u> Percentage of young people aged 20-24 having completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED level 3c) <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS.
1.5. Learning at least two foreign languages		<u>Definition:</u> Young people in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3 general programmes, excluding pre-vocational and vocational education) learning two or more foreign languages. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat data collection on language learning in schools
<b>2. EMPLOYMENT &amp; ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>		
Indicator		Definition/Comment
2.1. Youth unemployment	2.1.1. Youth unemployment rate	<u>Definition:</u> Share of unemployed among active population (employed and unemployed) aged 15-24. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS.
	2.1.2. Long-term youth unemployment rate	<u>Definition:</u> Share of unemployed youth 15-24 without a job for the last 12 months or more among all unemployed in this age group <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS.
2.2. Youth unemployment ratio		<u>Definition:</u> Share of unemployed among the total population (employed, unemployed and inactive), aged 15-24. <u>Comment:</u> This balances out differences in MS activity rates, which influences unemployment rate. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat LFS.
2.3. Self-employed youth		<u>Definition:</u> Percentage of self-employed among all employed aged 20-24 and 25-29 <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS.
2.4. Young people who would like to set up their own business		<u>Definition:</u> The share of young people age 15-30 answering YES to the question "Would you like to set up your own business in the future?". <u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.
2.5. Young employees with a temporary contract		<u>Definition:</u> The share of young employed people (age 20-29) who are on a contract of limited duration. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU LFS <u>Comment:</u> Age class 20-29 is chosen since younger youth often have a temporary contract because they are in apprenticeships.

### 3. HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Indicator	Definition/Comment
3.1. Regular smokers	<u>Definition:</u> Share of daily cigarette smokers in the population aged 15-24. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat, Health Interview Surveys 1996-2003, depending on country. Upcoming data will come from latest wave 2007-2009. ECHIM #44.
3.2. Obesity	<u>Definition:</u> Young people 18-24 with a Body Mass Index of 30 or above. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat, Health Interview Surveys (EHIS). Every 5 years Last wave 2007-2009. ECHIM #42.
3.3. Drunkness past 30 days	<u>Target group:</u> Students turning age 16 during year of ESPAD data-collection. <u>Definition:</u> Share of target group who reported having been drunk in the last 30 days. <u>Source:</u> ESPAD survey data. No data for ES+LU. Upcoming data will come from latest wave 2011-2012.
3.4. Cause of death of young people - suicide	<u>Definition:</u> Deaths caused by suicide per 100 000 inhabitants aged 15-24. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat, Causes of death DB. ECHIM #13.
3.5. Psychological distress	<u>Definition:</u> Young people (15-24) having had psychological distress during the past four weeks. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat, EHIS. ECHIM #38.
3.6. Injuries: road traffic: self-reported incidences	<u>Definition:</u> Proportion of individuals aged 15-24 reporting to have had a road traffic accident, which resulted in injury for which medical treatment was sought during the past 12 months. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat, EHIS. ECHIM #30(a).
3.7. Use of illicit drugs <sup>157</sup>	<u>Definition:</u> Proportion of individuals aged 15-34 reporting to have used cannabis during the past 12 months. <u>Source:</u> EMCDDA (surveys between 2004-2010).

<sup>157</sup>

This indicator was added compared to the initial version of the dashboard presented in the document SEC(2011) 401.

## 4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

Indicator		Definition/Comment
4.1. At-risk-of-poverty or exclusion rate	4.1.1. For children (<18) compared to total population	<u>Definition:</u> The share of children (under age 18) who are at risk of poverty and/or severely materially deprived and/or living in a household with very low work intensity compared to total population <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU SILC.
	4.1.2. For young people (18-24) compared to total population	<u>Definition:</u> The share of young people (18-24) who are at risk of poverty and/or severely materially deprived and/or living in a household with very low work intensity compared to total population. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU SILC.
4.2. At-risk-of-poverty rate	4.2.1. For children (<18) compared to total population	<u>Definition:</u> The share of children (under age 18) living in families with an equivalised disposable income below 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers) compared to total population. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU SILC.
	4.2.2. For young people (18-24) compared to total population	<u>Definition:</u> The share of young people (18-24) living in families with an equivalised disposable income below 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers) compared to total population. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU SILC.
4.3. Severe Material deprivation rate	4.3.1. For children (<18) compared to total population	<u>Definition:</u> percentage of the population that cannot afford at least three of the following nine 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 cannot afford to buy a: 6) TV 7) Refrigerator, 8) Car, 9) Telephone; compared to total population. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat EU SILC.
	4.3.2. For young people (18-24) compared to total population	
4.4. Living in households with very low work intensity	4.4.1. For children (<18) compared to total population	<u>Definition:</u> The share of children (under age 18) who live in households with very low work intensity (households where adults worked less than 20 % of their total work potential during the past year) compared to total population. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat SILC.
	4.4.2. For young people (18-24) compared to total population	<u>Definition:</u> The share of young people (18-24) who live in households with very low work intensity (households where adults worked less than 20 % of their total work potential during the past year) compared to total population. <u>Source:</u> Eurostat SILC.

<p>4.5. Self-reported unmet need for medical care for young people (18-24) compared to total population</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Self-reported unmet need for medical care for the following 3 reasons: financial barriers + too far to travel + waiting times, compared to total population.  <u>Comment:</u> To be analysed together with 'care utilisation, defined as the number of visits to the doctor (GP or specialist) during the last 12 months.  <u>Source:</u> Eurostat SILC.</p>
<p>4.6. Young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Young people (age group 15-24 not in employment, nor in any education or training.  <u>Source:</u> Eurostat LFS.</p>

## PART 2

### POLICY DOMAINS WITH NEW INDICATORS

#### 5. CULTURE & CREATIVITY

5.1. Performing/taking part in amateur artistic activities	<p><u>Definition:</u> Share of young people (15-30) who declare that they have participated in any of the following amateur artistic activities at least once in the last 12 months: Playing a musical instrument, singing, acting, dancing, writing poetry, photography, film-making.</p> <p><u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.</p>
5.2. Participation in cultural activities	<p><u>Definition:</u> Share of young people (aged 15-30) reporting that they have participated in any of the following cultural activities in the last 12 months: visited historical monuments (palaces, castles, churches, gardens, etc.), museums or galleries, been to a cinema or a concert, a theatre, a dance performance or an opera.</p> <p><u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.</p>
5.3. Participation in sports clubs, leisure time or youth clubs/associations or cultural organisations	<p><u>Definition:</u> Share of young people (aged 15-30) reporting that they have participated in activities of a sports club, leisure time or youth club, any kind of youth association or cultural organisation in the last 12 months.</p> <p><u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.</p>

#### 6. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Indicator	Definition/Comment
6.1. Young people's participation in political organisations/party or community/environmentally-oriented organisations	<p><u>Definition:</u> Self-reported participation in activities of a political organisation or political party or a local organisation aimed at improving their local community and/or local environment in the last 12 months. Age 15-30.</p> <p><u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.</p>
6.2. Participation of young people in political elections at local, regional, national or EU level	<p><u>Definition:</u> Percentage of young people aged 18-30 who declare that they participated in political elections at either local, regional, national or EU level in the last three years.</p> <p><u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.</p>



6.3. Young people aged 18-30 who got elected into the European Parliament	<u>Definition:</u> The number of young Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) elected into the European Parliament in the last elections (2009). <u>Source:</u> The European Parliament.
6.4. Young people who use internet for interaction with public authorities	<u>Definition:</u> Percentage of individuals aged 16-24 who have used the Internet, in the last 12 months for interaction with public authorities (i.e. having used the Internet for one or more of the following activities: obtaining information from public authorities web sites, downloading official forms, sending filled in forms). <u>Source:</u> Eurostat, Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals.
6.5. Young people using internet for accessing or posting opinions on websites (e.g. blogs, social networks, etc) for discussing civic and political issues (in the last three months).	<u>Definition:</u> Percentage of individuals aged 16-24 declaring that they have used internet for accessing or posting opinions on websites (e.g. blogs, social networks, etc) for discussing civic and political issues (in the last three months). <u>Source:</u> Eurostat, Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals.
<b>7. VOLUNTEERING</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Definition/Comment</b>
7.1. Young people's participation in organised voluntary activities	<u>Definition:</u> Self-reported involvement in organised voluntary activities in the last 12 months. Age 15-30. <u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.
7.2. Share of young people participating in organised voluntary activities aimed at improving their local community	<u>Definition:</u> Share of young people (age 15-30) declaring that they have taken part in any voluntary action aimed at changing something in their local community during the last 12 months. <u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.
7.3. Share of young people who have stayed abroad for the purpose of volunteering	<u>Definition:</u> Share of young people (age 15-30) declaring that they have stayed abroad for the purpose of volunteering. <u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.
7.4. Formal recognition of participation in voluntary activities	<u>Definition:</u> Share of young people (age 15-30) that declare having taken part in voluntary activities who have received a certificate, a diploma or other kind of formal recognition for their participation. <u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.

## 8. YOUTH & THE WORLD

Indicator	Definition/Comment
8.1. Young people's participation in non-governmental organisations active in the domains of global climate change/global warming, development aid or human rights	<p><u>Definition:</u> Self-reported participation in activities of an organisation active in the domain of global climate change/global warming, global development or promoting human rights in the last 12 months. Age 15-30.</p> <p><u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.</p>
8.2. Participation of young people in activities or projects aimed at fostering cooperation with youth from other continents	<p><u>Definition:</u> Self-reported involvement of young people in activities or projects during the past year aimed at fostering cooperation with youth from other continents. Age 15-30.</p> <p><u>Source:</u> DG EAC Flash Eurobarometer on youth.</p>

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# EU YOUTH REPORT 2012

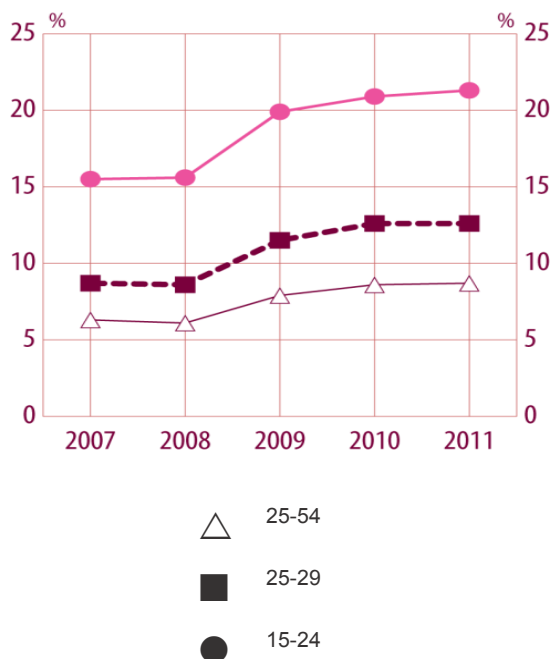


The EU Youth Report 2012 summarises the results of the first 3 years of the EU Youth Strategy and proposes to prioritise employment and entrepreneurship, as well as social inclusion, health and well-being over the next 3 years.

One of the aims of the EU Youth Report is to present an updated analysis on the situation of young people in the European Union.

## Key data on the situation of young people in the European Union in 2012

Unemployment rate by age group (2007-2011)



**Increasingly difficult labour market.** The youth unemployment rate in the EU (age 15-24) increased by 50 % since the financial crisis hit, from 15 % in Feb 2008 to 22.5 % in July 2012. Among the unemployed 30% have been without a job for more than one year.

**Increase in 'youth not in employment, education or training' (NEET).** After several years of decline, the share of NEETs levelled out in 2007 and has sharply increased since 2008. Given that NEETs are overrepresented in families with a low household income and high unemployment, this increase is clearly linked to the current financial crisis.

**More school, less work.** Until 2009, the share of young people in full-time education or employment was relatively stable. Since then, the share of students is going up while that of young employees is going down. Young people who lose their job return to education in higher numbers than before.



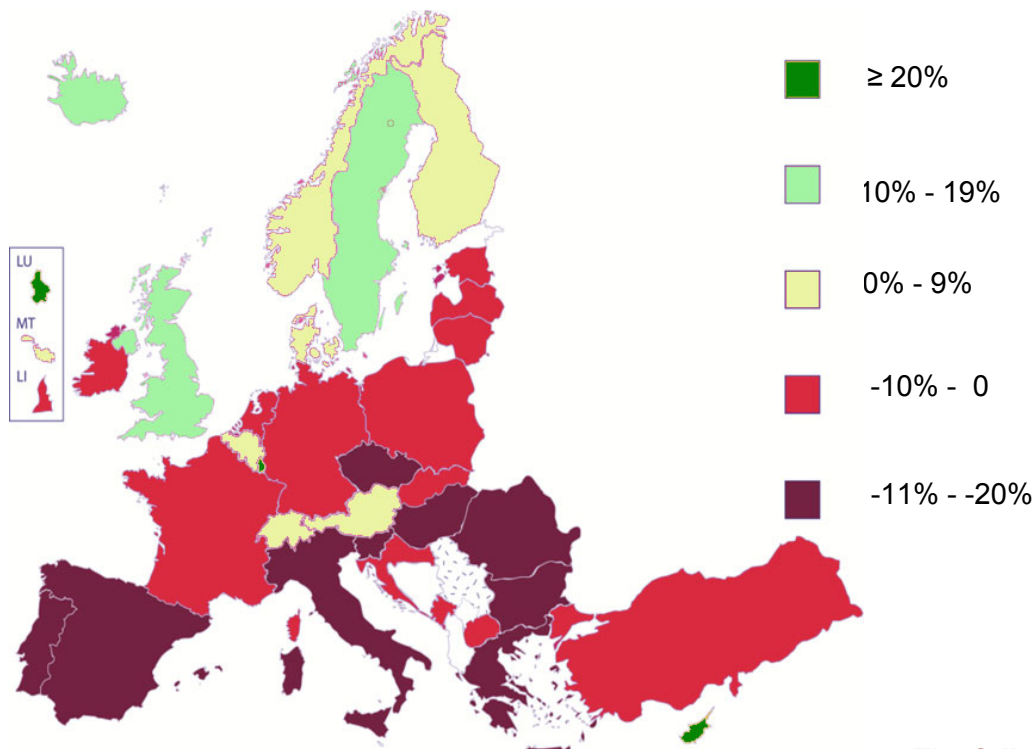
**Young people's well-being under pressure.** Young people's health and general well-being has been impacted by the crisis. Unemployment, poverty and family disruptions significantly increase the risk of mental health problems such as depression, alcohol-use, disorders and even lead to suicide. Such problems can often have lifelong consequences.

**Youth at greater risk of social exclusion and poverty.** The share of young people at risk of social exclusion and poverty is higher than that of the general population. From 2009 to 2010, the risk of poverty rate among young people rose faster than for the general population.

**Fewer early school leavers.** Some progress has been made in reducing the share of early school leavers. Although the share dropped from 14.9 % in 2008 to 13.5 % in 2011, It would be hard to reduce it much further.

**But young people remain active.** Youth participation in democratic life has not suffered as a result of the crisis. On the contrary, youth organisations are flourishing across Europe.

### Decline & growth of youth population across Europe (2000-2010)



Youth population (15-29), demographic change between 2000-2010

**The full report and National Reports can be found on:**  
<http://ec.europa.eu/youth>