



European
Commission

What is Eurydice

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

Eurydice Highlights



Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) is a serious issue in many EU countries and has attracted the attention of many researchers, policy-makers and educators. Early leaving has a negative impact on young peoples' opportunities in the labour market and therefore has high costs for the individual as well as for society and the economy. Completing education, on the other hand, can lead to a series of better employment opportunities and health related outcomes for the individual, not to mention higher productivity rates, lower public and social costs, economic growth and social cohesion.

This Eurydice/Cedefop report supports the Europe 2020 agenda on reducing early leaving from education and training and is a direct follow-up to the 2011 Council recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving. It aims to add value to Member States' and the European Commission's endeavours in this area by monitoring developments in the design and implementation of strategies, policies and measures to combat early leaving and support student learning.

Several key areas are addressed in the report: data collection and monitoring, strategies and policies against early leaving focusing on prevention, intervention and compensation and on groups at increased risk of early leaving, the role of education and career guidance, governance and cross-sector cooperation and early leaving from the perspective of vocational education and training (ELVET). These highlights provide a brief overview of some of these key areas.

The full study

Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training: Strategies, Policies, Measures can be found in English on the Eurydice website http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/thematic_reports_en.php

Printed copies of the report

are available upon request at: eacea-eurydice@ec.europa.eu

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Early leaving from education and training is strongly linked to socio-economic disadvantage

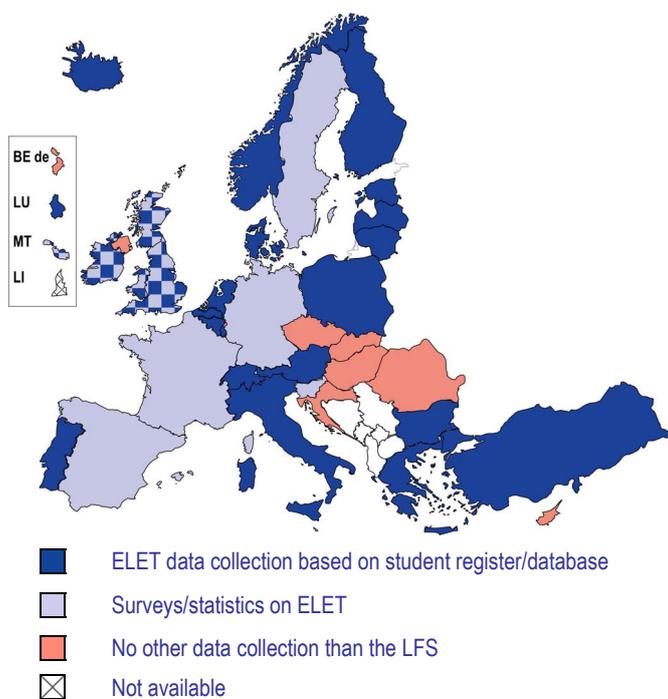
Statistically, students who are born abroad have higher ELET rates in comparison to students born in the country in question. However, this can be due to the fact that students born abroad generally face greater challenges in accessing and participating in education than their peers (e.g. due to language and/or cultural barriers, socio-economic segregation, etc.). As far as gender is concerned, male students are almost twice as likely to leave general school education with low or no qualifications. However, socio-economic background seems to influence this. The higher the socio-economic background, the less apparent are the differences in the rates of early leaving between male and female students. Therefore, both migrant/minority background and gender alone cannot be considered as determining factors with respect to students leaving education and training early.

Early leavers are much more likely to come from families affected by socio-economic disadvantage, i.e. unemployment, low household income and low levels of parental education. The latter is of particular importance as on average, six out of ten children in the EU-28 Member States whose parents have a low level of education are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and because of this might also be at risk of educational disadvantage and early leaving.

Finally, early leaving has direct socio-economic consequences for the individual. In the EU-28, on average, 19.7 % of young people with lower secondary education at most, are in employment, compared to 42.7 % of young people who have gained an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary qualification and 54.6 % of tertiary graduates.

Most countries use a student register to collect national data on early leavers

Sources used for the production of national data on early leaving (other than Eurostat LFS), 2013/14



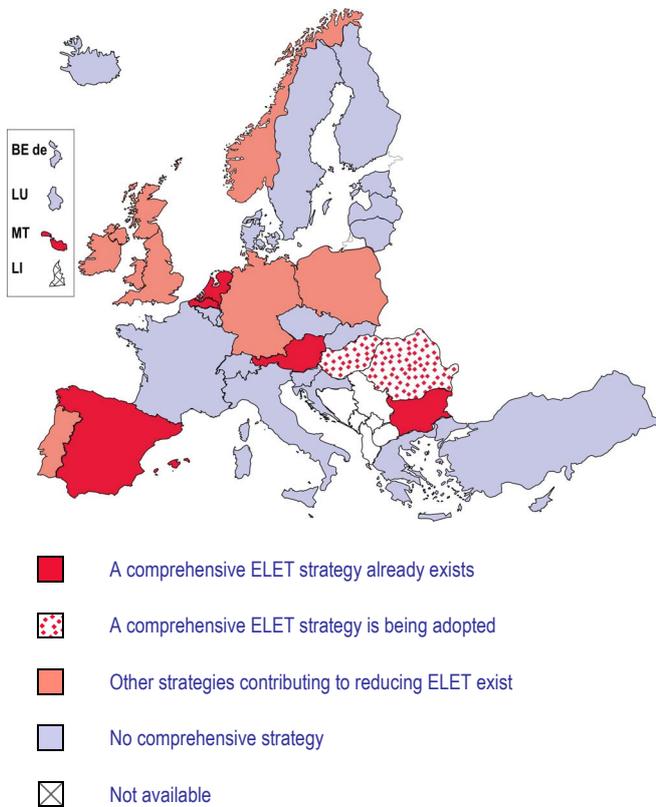
Source: Eurydice.

In an effort to understand the phenomenon of early leaving and develop policies and measures to tackle it, most European countries/regions have established national definitions that they use in the policy process. These definitions are closely linked to the data collection tools used to measure early leaving. All European countries/regions, except for Belgium (German-speaking Community), Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), collect information on early leaving, in addition to data gathered for the European Labour Force Survey, mainly through a student register or database. Ten countries carry out quantitative and/or qualitative surveys, which can further contribute to a better understanding of the reasons for early leaving.

In order for the data to enable comparisons between schools, local authorities and/or regions and to be accurate, it needs to be available in an aggregated format at different levels (top, regional, local, schools) and up-to-date (gathered and analysed more than once per year). The report shows, however, that this is not the case everywhere in Europe.

Only around one third of all European countries have adopted a strategy for tackling early leaving

Strategies for tackling early leaving, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Across Europe, six countries/regions – Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria, Spain, Malta, the Netherlands and Austria – have, to date, developed a comprehensive strategy for tackling early leaving. Two other countries, Hungary and Romania, are in the process of adopting a comprehensive strategy. In several others – Germany, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Norway – while there is no comprehensive strategy as defined at European level, there are other broad strategies or action plans to ensure that young people and adults have the opportunity to complete their education and gain the qualifications they need to succeed in the workplace. All countries have, however, policies and measures that have either been developed specifically to address early leaving, or are part of general/ongoing initiatives, which contribute to reducing early leaving rates.

In order to tackle early leaving, European countries have, moreover, established relationships across the relevant policy and authority levels as well as invested in multi-agency partnerships that can facilitate effective coordination among local stakeholders. However, a coordination body that institutionalises cooperation across government departments and between different levels of authority, schools and other stakeholders has so far only been established in Belgium (Flemish Community), Spain, Malta and the Netherlands.

Education and career guidance is one of the key measures against early leaving in many European countries

Most European countries consider education and career guidance as one of the key measures to address early leaving. Guidance is therefore an important element in prevention, intervention and compensation initiatives. Schools have been given the main responsibility for implementing education and career guidance. Most often, it is addressed to secondary students. In around one third of the countries guidance is not offered at primary level.

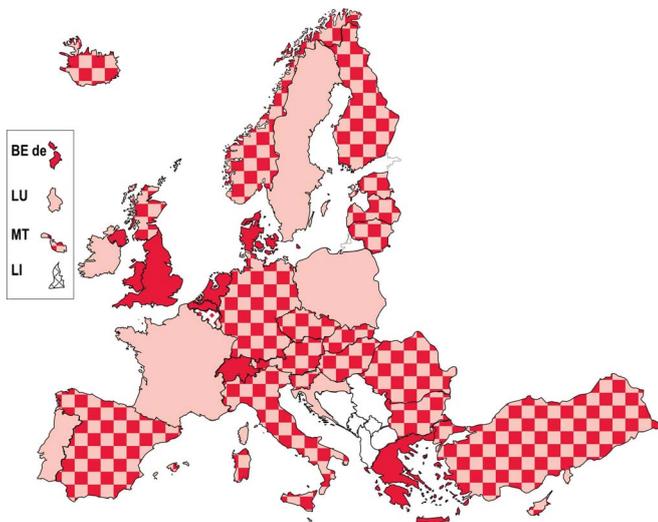
Schools are expected to adopt a holistic approach to education and career guidance. It is traditionally delivered through school-based guidance services, which often deal with individuals who are in need of support or may already be at risk of leaving school early. Additionally, a great number of countries include guidance in the compulsory curriculum, which makes it

accessible to all students. Classroom and individual provision are in some cases complemented by extra-curricular guidance activities.

A variety of school staff can be responsible for guidance provision: teachers specialised in guidance, guidance counsellors, psychologists and social workers. However, teachers not specifically trained in this topic are the most represented staff category that supports students in developing their educational and/or professional career aspirations as well as advises those with educational difficulties. External partners play an important role in training school staff and supporting them in organising guidance activities.

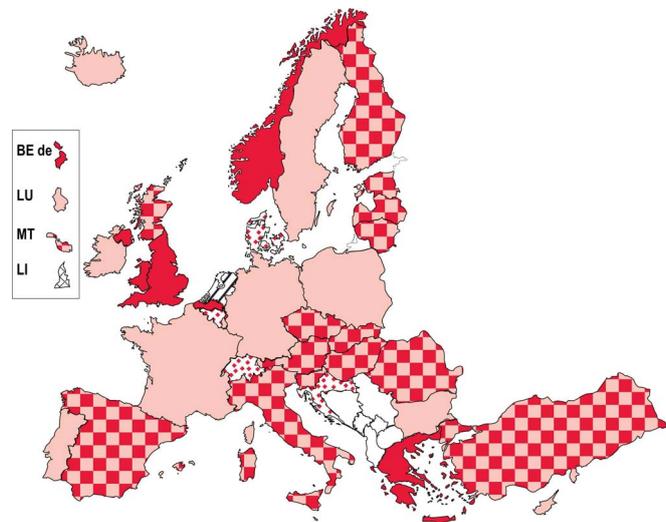
Provision of education and career guidance, 2013/14

Lower secondary general education (ISCED 2)



- Guidance provided by the school guidance service
- Guidance is a compulsory part of the curriculum and provided in the classroom
- Guidance provided only by external guidance services

Upper secondary general education (ISCED 3)



- No guidance provided
- No data available

Source: Eurydice.

Countries implement a variety of measures to address early leaving from VET

When it comes to policies in the area of vocational education and training (VET), analysis shows a large number of different approaches and styles countries have adopted to address early leaving from VET (ELVET). One of the unifying features is the ever-growing recognition of the need to ensure individualised pathways for VET students. A student-centred, individualised approach to learning, for example through guidance, mentoring, individual learning plans or case management, has always been a core feature of compensatory ELVET measures. It is increasingly also a feature of mainstream VET programmes and used also as a way of preventing the incident of ELVET. The competence-based approach is another characteristic

endorsed by ELVET policies. The emphasis on what learners can do as a result of training rather than on the number of courses/hours of learning they have undertaken is particularly important for early leaving actions in VET.

VET in itself is considered to be a measure in the ELET arena, not least because many early leavers from both general and vocational education choose VET if/when they return to learning. Thus VET systems accommodate large numbers of learners who have either dropped out or decided to change their studies from one course, provider or type of learning to another.

The full study Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training: Strategies, Policies and Measures can be found in English on the Eurydice website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/thematic_reports_en.php and on the Cedefop website: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/about-cedefop/projects/empowering-young-people/Early-leaving-education-training.aspx>