



European
Commission

Education and Training Monitor 2019

Spain



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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Volume 2 of the Education and Training Monitor 2019 includes twenty-eight individual country reports. It builds on the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative evidence to present and assess the main recent and ongoing policy measures in each EU Member State. It therefore complements other sources of information which offer descriptions of national education and training systems.

Section 1 presents a statistical overview of the main education and training indicators. Section 2 briefly identifies the main strengths and challenges of the country's education and training system. Section 3 focuses on teachers and challenges of teaching profession. Section 4 looks at investment in education and training. Section 5 deals with policies to modernise early childhood and school education. Section 6 discusses measures to modernise higher education. Finally, section 7 covers vocational education and training, while section 8 covers adult learning.

The Education and Training Monitor 2019 was prepared by the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), with contributions from the Directorate-General of Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) and the Eurydice Network. DG EAC was assisted by the Education and Youth Policy Analysis Unit from the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), Eurostat, Cedefop and the JRC's Human Capital and Employment Unit, Directorate Innovation and Growth. The Members of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB) were consulted during the drafting phase.

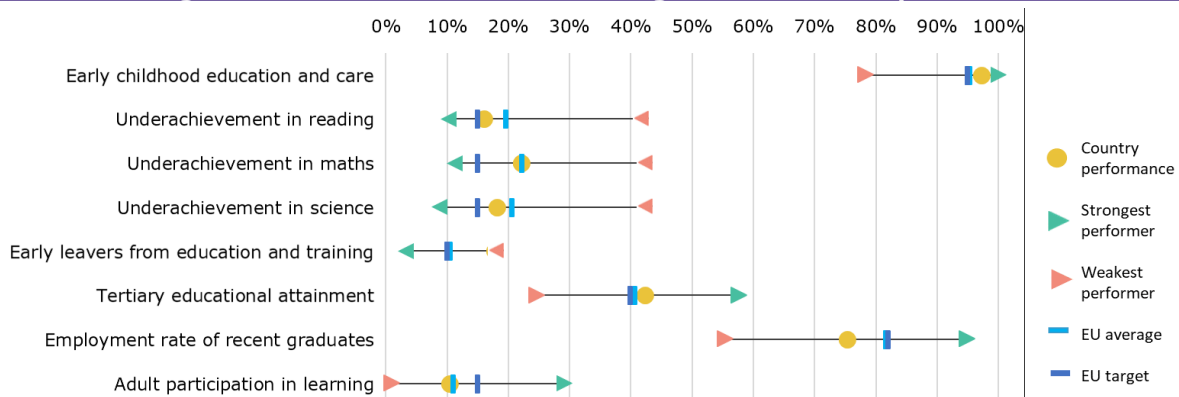
*The manuscript was completed on 26 August 2019.
Additional contextual data can be found online (ec.europa.eu/education/monitor)*

1. Key indicators

		Spain		EU average		
		2009	2018	2009	2018	
Education and training 2020 benchmarks						
Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)		30.9%	17.9%	14.2%	10.6%	
Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)		40.7%	42.4%	32.3%	40.7%	
Early childhood education and care (from age 4 to starting age of compulsory primary education)		98.4%	97.4% ¹⁷	90.8%	95.4% ^{17,d}	
Proportion of 15 year-olds underachieving in:	Reading	19.6%	16.2% ¹⁵	19.5% ^{EU27}	19.7% ¹⁵	
	Maths	23.8%	22.2% ¹⁵	22.3% ^{EU27}	22.2% ¹⁵	
	Science	18.2%	18.3% ¹⁵	17.7% ^{EU27}	20.6% ¹⁵	
Employment rate of recent graduates by educational attainment (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year)	ISCED 3-8 (total)	73.0%	75.4%	78.3%	81.6%	
Adult participation in learning (age 25-64)	ISCED 0-8 (total)	10.8%	10.5%	9.5%	11.1%	
Learning mobility	Degree-mobile graduates (ISCED 5-8)	:	1.9% ¹⁷	:	3.6% ¹⁷	
	Credit-mobile graduates (ISCED 5-8)	:	7.7% ¹⁷	:	8.0% ¹⁷	
Other contextual indicators						
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP		4.6%	4.0% ¹⁷	5.2%	4.6% ¹⁷	
Education investment	Expenditure on public and private institutions per student in € PPS	ISCED 0	€4 881 ¹²	€5 251 ¹⁶	:	€6 111 ^{15,d}
		ISCED 1	€5 269 ¹²	€5 532 ¹⁶	€5 812 ^{12,d}	€6 248 ^{15,d}
		ISCED 2	€6 770 ¹²	€6 618 ¹⁶	€6 937 ^{12,d}	€7 243 ^{15,d}
		ISCED 3-4	€6 775 ¹²	€7 179 ¹⁶	:	€7 730 ^{14,d}
		ISCED 5-8	€9 155 ¹²	€9 116 ¹⁶	€10 549 ^{12,d}	€11 413 ^{15,d}
Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)	Native-born	27.7%	14.9%	13.1%	9.5%	
	Foreign-born	45.2%	32.0%	26.1%	20.2%	
Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)	Native-born	45.8%	46.3%	33.1%	41.3%	
	Foreign-born	23.9%	29.3%	27.7%	37.8%	
Employment rate of recent graduates by educational attainment (age 20-34 having left education 1-3 years before reference year)	ISCED 3-4	63.9%	68.2%	72.5%	76.8%	
	ISCED 5-8	76.5%	77.9%	83.8%	85.5%	

Sources: Eurostat; OECD (PISA); Learning mobility figures are calculated by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre from UOE data. Further information can be found in Annex I and in Volume 1 (ec.europa.eu/education/monitor). Notes: The EU's 2009 PISA averages do not include Cyprus; d = definition differs, : = not available, 12=2012, 14=2014, 15 = 2015, 16=2016, 17 = 2017

Figure 1 Position in relation to strongest and weakest performers



Source: European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (DG EAC) calculations, based on data from Eurostat (LFS 2018, UOE 2017) and OECD (PISA 2015).

2. Highlights

- The teaching profession is attractive, but working conditions differ among regions and between public and private education systems.
- Private spending in education is significant, while public spending is static compared to GDP.
- Planned reforms, reflecting political uncertainties, have been slowed down.
- The process to modernise vocational education and training is ongoing. Adult participation in education is slowly rising.

3. A focus on teachers

Teaching is an attractive profession in Spain, particularly in the public sector. School teachers' salaries are higher than the average for tertiary educated workers in Spain and among the highest in Europe (OECD, 2018). Salaries in public schools vary significantly across the Autonomous Communities¹, and are higher than those in private schools. Currently (MECD, 2019a), 504 569 teachers work in public schools and 207 612 in private schools. 33% of schools in general education are private (MECD, 2017), educating 32% of pupils (School Council, 2018), well above the EU average of 19%. Institutions linked to the Catholic Church own around 57% of these schools². The relative share varies between regions, from around 50% of students in private schools in Madrid and the Basque country to around 20% in Castilla-La Mancha and Extremadura (MECD, 2019a). According to TALIS (OECD, 2019)³, the proportion of teachers satisfied with their job is higher than the EU average (95.7% v 89.5%), but decreases among teachers with more than 5 years' experience (97.3% for novice teachers vs 95.4% for teachers with more than 5 years of experience). Overall, 89.3% of teachers say that if they had to decide again, they would still choose to become a teacher (EU average: 77.6%); teachers with more than 5 years' experience, slightly less (88.3%; EU average: 76.4%). The proportion of teachers reporting that teaching was their first career choice is below the EU average (61.8% v 65.7%); lower for men (53.9%) than for women (66.7%) (EU average: 11.5 pp lower).

Many teachers are on interim contracts. To become a civil servant, teachers must pass an open competition assessing their knowledge in the teaching subject and evaluating work experience. These competitions have always attracted high numbers of applications. During the financial crisis, they were scarce⁴, with needs covered through short-term contracts, 'interim teachers' (*profesores interinos*). Around 25% of teachers are interim, with strong regional differences (from 41% in the Balearic Islands; to 13% in Galicia)⁵. The high share of interim teachers (who are assigned to a different school each year) makes it difficult to build stable and cohesive teams in schools. In 2018, a competition for teachers in upper secondary level (including vocational education and training, VET) took place, with 23 689 jobs available. The results of this competition were lower than expected, particularly in certain subjects⁶, which meant that many of the offered positions could not be covered by civil servants in certain regions.

The teacher population is ageing and predominantly female. In 2016/2017, 7.3% of school teachers (pre-primary to secondary education) were under 30 years old, 28.5% were 30-40, 30% were 40-50, and 34.2% were over 50 years old (School Council, 2018), close to the EU average⁷.

¹ For example, a secondary teacher may earn 28% more in the Basque country than in Asturias. Analysis by the teachers' union FES-UGT at <http://www.fespugt.es/images/PDF/ensenanza/GAB-retribuciones-publica-ccaa-2015.pdf>.

² See: *Survey on Financing and Expenditure of Private Education 2014-2015*, National Institute of Statistic (INE).

³ In 2018, 23 Member States participated in TALIS: Austria, Belgium fr, Belgium nl, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, England (UK), Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden. TALIS 2018 covers lower secondary teachers and school leaders in mainstream public and private schools.

⁴ See: <http://stecyl.net/mas-alumnado-mucho-menos-docentes-congelacion-de-ofertas-de-empleo-publico-y-mas-en-situacion-de-interinidad/>.

⁵ See the June 2019 Trade Union Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) Teaching Federation report at <http://www.fe.ccoo.es/6724a0c909e00066e50bb71cba0dc52b000063.pdf>.

⁶ Ranging from 12% to 30% in different regions. See: <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2018/09/06/5b903bea22601d12758b464d.html>. According to the trade union Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) almost one third of the posts for math teachers remained vacant.

⁷ Eurostat, UOE 2017.

In higher education, in 2017 44% of teachers were over 50 and only 3.6% under 30⁸. It is clear that over the next decade, a substantive renewal of the workforce will be needed. 94.5% of ECEC teachers are women; 66.2% in primary and secondary schools. In higher education, 43.4% of teachers and researchers are women and make up 52.7% of the academic staff under 35 and 37.2% of the over-50 group. There are no programmes to address the gender imbalance.

Teacher qualification requirements are set centrally⁹. Pre-primary and primary school teachers need a university degree in early or primary education. Secondary school teachers need a university degree. Teachers' induction in public schools consists of an internship (from three months to one school year), varying by region but broadly similar in content. Both central and regional administrations provide professional development courses. In 2018, almost 10 000 teachers followed online courses managed by the National Institute for Educational Technologies and Teachers' Training (INTEF) and 34 000 teachers followed self-paced online courses. Spanish teachers report in TALIS (OECD 2019) that a lack of incentives is the main barrier to participation in continuous professional development (76.3% v 51.9% at EU level). The survey also showed that once they finish their formal education, the proportion of teachers who feel well or very well prepared to use information and communication technologies (ICT) for teaching is below the EU average (36.2% v 39.4%). 38% of teachers reported that ICT was included in their formal education (EU average: 52.9%). However, the percentage increases considerably, to 85.8% for those who have been teaching up to five years.

Teachers are generally not attracted to the career of a school leader. School leaders must simultaneously be teachers, school directors, pedagogical leaders and administrators. They are elected through a process involving the school board (representatives of parents, students, teachers and the educational administration). They must have a minimum of five years' teaching experience and have passed a preparatory training course. Their mandate is for four years, with the possibility to renew once only. Vacancies for school leader positions attract few candidates. This reflects the: 1) temporary nature of the job, after which they usually return to teaching in the same school; 2) heavy administrative burden; 3) lack of autonomy in curricular matters and teaching staff supervision, a task reserved to the educational inspectorate. Associations of school leaders cite a lack of professional identity for school leaders as the reason it attracts few candidates to the position¹⁰.

4. Investing in education and training

Education spending was stable in 2018, below the EU average. While Spanish GDP has grown from 2016 to 2017, public expenditure on education as a share of GDP remained at 4%, below the EU average of 4.6%¹¹. Public expenditure on education per pupil at primary, secondary and tertiary level is also below other similar EU Member States economies¹². Regional administrations spend the vast majority (85.6%), largely on salaries (67.6% of all public education spending)¹³. 13.4% of education spending goes to publicly funded private schools (*escuelas concertadas*¹⁴), representing 8%-25% of all students enrolled in schools, depending on the region (MECD, 2019b). Between 2010 and 2015, spending on universities fell by EUR 1.5 billion and is projected to drop further by EUR 3.5 billion by 2021. The failure to approve the 2019 state budget means that the share of government expenditure on education will be the same in 2019 as in 2018.

Private spending in education is significant. The proportion of private-sector expenditure (primary to tertiary), excluded international sources, is among the highest in EU and OECD countries at 19% (OECD, 2018). Between 2012 and 2015, private education expenditure as a share of GDP increased (0.68% to 0.82%), mainly in secondary and tertiary education¹⁵. This

⁸ Ibid 7.

⁹ For teachers in public schools <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2007/BOE-A-2007-4372-consolidado.pdf>, and for teachers in private schools <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2010/BOE-A-2010-11426-consolidado.pdf>.

¹⁰ See: <http://educalab.es/documents/10180/38496/MEDB+digital/4ea4b5d9-6a99-468c-a387-46affa4b6c50>.

¹¹ Eurostat, COFOG, 2017.

¹² Eurostat, UOE 2017.

¹³ Ibid 12.

¹⁴ *Escuelas concertadas* (concerted schools) are private schools that provide free school places under the same conditions as public schools. Their administration is private but their financing is mostly public, alongside parental contributions. Around 26% of students attend this type of school.

¹⁵ OECD, Private spending on education. doi: 10.1787/6e70bede-en.

contrasts with most other EU countries in the OECD, where it either fell or remained the same¹⁶. In 2016/2017, over 30% of students (from primary to tertiary) had a scholarship (MECD, 2019b). In 2019, the government continued increasing funding for such scholarships.

Additional funding is available to address regional disparities. The 2019 European Semester country-specific recommendation to Spain included the recommendation to: 'Reduce early school leaving and improve educational outcomes, taking into account regional disparities' (Council of the European Union, 2019). In December 2018¹⁷, the Ministry of Education and the Autonomous Communities agreed to allocate EUR 200 million for regional cooperation programmes. The government allocated EUR 81 million to support the new programme to reduce school leaving, EUR 46 million to dual-VET, EUR 19 million to continuing professional development and mobility of teachers, and EUR 8 million to raising the quality of vocational education and training.

5. Modernising early childhood and school education

Enrolment in early childhood education and care (ECEC) is high, but with regional disparities for the youngest children. Participation in ECEC of children over 4 in 2017 was very high (97.4% v EU average 95.4%). The proportion of children under 3 in ECEC keeps rising, from 39.7% in 2015 to 45.8% [provisional data] in 2017, above the EU average of 34.2%¹⁸. The government plans to extend access to ECEC to all children from 0-3 years. There are major regional disparities in enrolment of children up to 2 years old: 53.8% in the Basque Country, 13.3 in Ceuta and 19.5% in Murcia (MECD, 2019b). There is no single legal framework; regions (Autonomous Communities) have different models and prioritise different factors, such as social equity in some regions (priority to children from lower socio-economic background), work-life reconciliation (priority to children whose parents work), or a blend of objectives. According to UNICEF (2018), these regional differences hinder equal access to childcare.

Progress to reduce early school leaving has slowed down. Although the percentage of early leavers from education and training fell from 28.2% in 2010 to 17.9% in 2018, it remains way above the EU average and Spain's Europe 2020 target of 15% (Figure 2). In 2018, the rate in 12 out of 19 regions either remained stable or rose (in 7 regions)¹⁹. In December 2018, the government adopted a new orientation and reinforcement programme, amending the former PROEDUCAR. It supports educational centres and students in vulnerable socio-economic situations, and aims to strengthen teachers' competences to address student diversity. Some Autonomous Communities approved programmes to improve pupil outcomes in primary and lower secondary education.

Announced major legislative reforms were delayed. The general election prevented the government from undertaking legislative proposals including the reform of the current education law, a new model of scholarships, universal access to early childhood education, reforms of access to the teaching profession and teacher education, and reforms to reduce the number of interim teachers. The only legislative reform adopted was the act on teaching conditions from pre-primary to secondary education²⁰. This allows Autonomous Communities to reduce teaching hours (from 25 to 23 hours in ECEC, primary and special education, and from 20 to 18 hours elsewhere), lower the number of students per class, and substitute on-leave teachers more rapidly.

¹⁶ See: <https://data.oecd.org/eduresource/private-spending-on-education.htm#indicator-chart>.

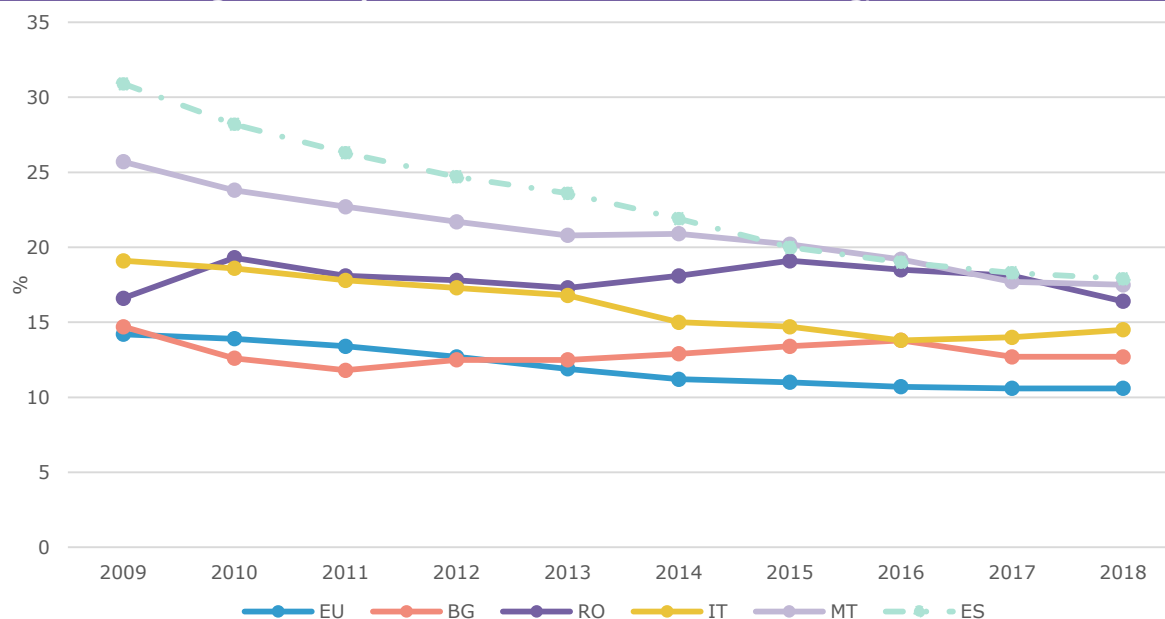
¹⁷ See: <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/prensa/actualidad/2018/12/20181207-programas.html>.

¹⁸ Eurostat, EU-SILC. Online data code: [tepsr_sp210](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1).

¹⁹ Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE). EDUCAbase. Abandono temprano de la educación-formación por comunidad autónoma, sexo y periodo. See: <http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Tabla.htm?path=/Formacionym/EPA/Indi//I0/&file=Indi01.px&type=pcaxis&L=0>.

²⁰ See: <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/prensa/actualidad/2019/02/20190221-leyrecorteseducativos.html>. The text of the proposal can be consulted in the web page of the Congreso de los Diputados: <http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/PopUpCGI?CMD=VERLST&BASE=pu12&DOCS=1-1&DOCORDER=LIFO&QUERY=%28BOCG-12-A-49-1.CODI.%29#>.

Figure 2 Early leavers from education and training, 2009-2018



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, 2018

6. Modernising higher education

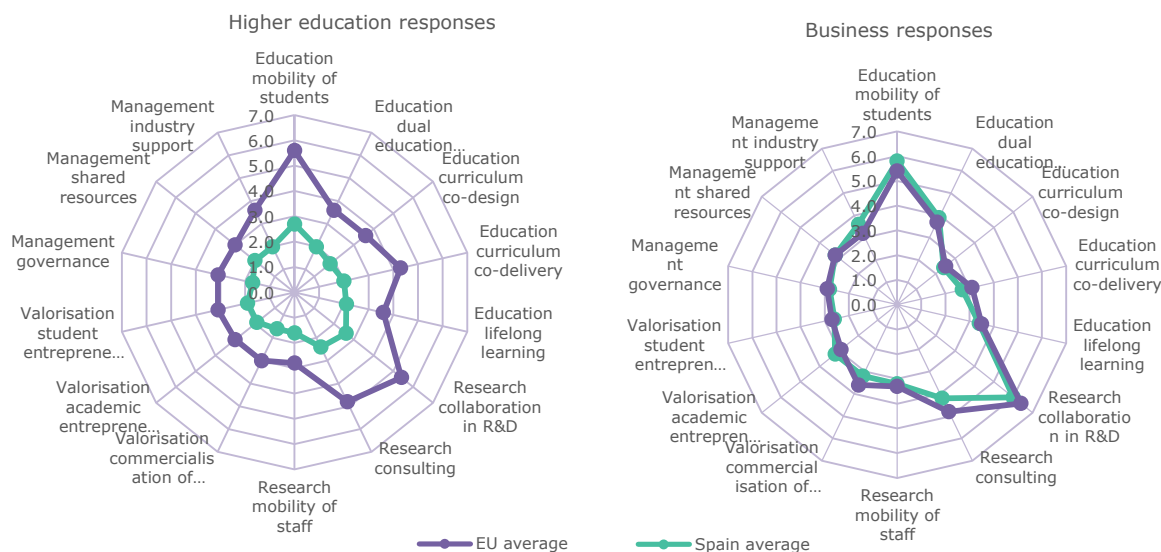
Expected reforms to higher education were delayed. The government announced in November 2018 a comprehensive reform of higher education, but this has not yet materialised. Other announced reforms (on scholarships, on the payment and recognition of social rights for university students on internships) were also not adopted. One of the reasons was that the government and the universities did not agree on who should cover the cost.

Higher education faces challenges. At 42.4%, Spain's higher education attainment rate in 2018 is high, above the EU average of 40.7%²¹. However, 21.5% of enrolled students drop out of university (12.1% of master's students)²². This is despite the fact that over 40% of students receive a scholarship in the first year of the bachelor's. Regarding learning mobility, the proportion of graduates graduating outside Spain (1.9%) is well below the EU average (3.6%), but the share of students participating in short-term study periods and/or work placements abroad (7.7%), is close (EU average: 8%).

Though both academia and business desire further cooperation, it remains weak. A recent survey (Galán Muros et al., 2019a) found that higher education institutions tend to cooperate with large and medium-size companies located in their region. This usually focuses on student mobility, with collaborative research and consultancies. But over 75% of academics are not involved; staff mobility and R&D commercialisation is particularly low (below the EU average). Academics perceive the main barriers to cooperation to be the lack of funding, administrative barriers and a lack of understanding of university activities by business. From the business perspective (Galán Muros et al., 2019b), 72% of respondents cooperate to a medium-high extent with universities, particularly in joint R&D. Few are involved in staff mobility, but cooperate significantly on student mobility. Cooperation is particularly low in aspects such as curriculum co-design, co-delivery and student entrepreneurship. Business perceive a lack of business knowledge within universities, low public financial support, and the high level of bureaucracy in universities as barriers to cooperation. The 2019 European Semester country-specific recommendation to Spain included the recommendation to: 'Increase cooperation between education and businesses with a view to improving the provision of labour market relevant skills and qualifications, in particular for information and communication technologies' (Council of the European Union, 2019).

²¹ Eurostat. Online data code: [sdg_04_20](#).

²² Indicators of Higher Education 2018: <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/universitaria/estadisticas/estadistica-indicadores-universitarios/2018-2019.html>.

Figure 3 State of cooperation from the higher education and business viewpoints


Source: European Commission (DG Education and Culture) calculations, based on data from *State of University-Business Cooperation in Europe 2019*. Code: 0: Not at all; 1-4: Low; 5-7: Medium; 8-10: High.

National and regional administrations are seeking to foster university-business cooperation. Employment rates of recent graduates are improving (from 76.6% in 2017 to 77.9% in 2018) but below the EU average (85.5%). The government allocated EUR 19 million to hire 200 doctoral students under the programme 'Torres Quevedo'²³ to carry out industrial research in companies, business associations, and science and technology parks. Regional examples of university-business cooperation include the Basque region's university-business strategy, and the partnership agreement between Aragon, the automotive industrial cluster and other private-sector partners to build the first learning factory in Spain²⁴.

Box 1: Joint academia-business strategic alliance in the Basque country

In June 2017, the regional education department of the Basque Country adopted the [University-Business strategy 2022](#). Its objectives are to generate knowledge based on scientific excellence and apply it in the business sector, and to train highly skilled people with the skills needed in the business sector. The strategy is aligned with the regional smart specialisation strategy ([RIS3-Euskadi](#)). The *Cluster 4Gune* was created in 2017 to foster collaboration between academia and education and training bodies in STEM areas. In 2019, the [Plan for the Basque University system 2019-2022](#) was adopted to strengthen cooperation between the three Basque universities (UPV-EHU, Mondragón University and Deusto University) and research, innovation and business organisations (BERCs, Ikerbasque, Unibasq, Clúster 4Gune and Euskampus). In 2018/2019, the universities offer 25 dual-university degrees (bachelor and master's levels), including training in companies (accounting for 25-50% of credits). Almost 500 students are currently enrolled and 600 private-sector bodies involved. The goals by 2022 are to reach 1 750 students, to increase the share of female STEM students from 32-52%, and to increase the number of jobs in companies for highly qualified workers by 25%.

The Basque Country adopted in 2018 the [law on vocational training](#) and in 2019 the [5th Basque vocational training plan 2019-2021](#). Around 1 500 companies are involved in vocational training. Dual-VET graduates (around 20% of all VET students) have an employability rate of 96.2%. The Basque VET system is widely acknowledged as one of most successful and innovative in Europe.

²³ See press note from the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities [here](#).

²⁴ See: <https://www.eleconomista.es/aragon/noticias/9684428/02/19/Educacion-la-CAAR-y-TuvRheinland-impulsan-la-primera-fabrica-de-aprendizaje-en-Espana.html>; <https://cifpa.aragon.es/inauguracion-fabrica-aprendizaje/>.

7. Modernising vocational education and training

Enrolment in upper secondary VET slightly increased in 2017. In 2017, 35.3% of students were enrolled in vocational programmes, well below the EU average 47.8%. Students had limited exposure to work-based learning; very few programmes provided for it in 2017. The level of employability of recent VET graduates rose significantly notably from 58.5% in 2017 to 70% in 2018, still below the EU average of 79.5% (2018).

The development of the strategic plan for vocational training intends to boost VET. The government presented a plan proposal in September 2018, including measures such as: developing new specialisation courses for VET graduates wishing to adapt their skills to labour-market needs, updating occupational standards and qualifications, easing progression to intermediate and higher-VET programmes, and improving the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications and the Catalogue of VET Diplomas were updated. In December 2018, the government tripled the budget for VET teacher training and mobility (EUR 8.6 million, co-financed by the European Social Fund).

The general council for vocational training²⁵ set up working groups to boost the VET system and increase cooperation between education and businesses. The work of these groups focuses on the development, evaluation and quality of the system, professional information and guidance, national reference centres and integrated vocational training centres, dual-VET, and accreditation of professional competences acquired through work experience.

Spain has taken many measures on dual-VET. Royal Decree 28/2018 reduced the age limit for participating in dual-VET. In December 2018, the Council of Ministers approved further funding at regional level, with co-funding from European funds, to promote dual-VET. The agreement between the chamber of commerce and the public employment service to advise and support companies participating in dual-VET was extended until end 2019. In February 2019, the government published the strategic plan for dual vocational training, announcing more active participation of companies in continuous professional development for teachers and in designing occupational standards and training programmes.

Box 2: Innovative bottom-up approach to VET

Generation is an academy founded by McKinsey & Company that helps unemployed young people obtain career-launching jobs working closely with employers. It provides training programmes (web, digital, sales, robotics, etc.) lasting 4-12 weeks, including a mix of hard and soft skills and based on experiential learning. *Generation* also provides social support services and mentoring before and after training. Students are then recruited by the investing employers who have a guarantee regarding their skills. Since 2015, *Generation* has organised programmes in six regions, with 1 200 participants (500 men, 700 women), of which 81% found a job after graduation and 76% had a job six months later. From 2014-2020, *Generation* will receive EUR 5 000 000 from the European Social Fund.

8. Developing adult learning

In Spain, there is no specialised training to become an adult educator and no specific qualification to teach or train educators. Therefore, the supply of specialised adult education teaching/training staff is insufficient, both for VET and 'general' adult education.

The government approved the action plan for youth employment in December 2018. One of its six priorities is to promote vocational training for young adults to improve their competencies.

Adult participation in lifelong learning is increasing but still far from the EU benchmark. In 2018, the participation rate of adults in education and training (10.5%) was close to the EU average (11.1%), but far below the EU benchmark of 15%. 39.9% of adults in Spain lack an upper-secondary qualification (EU average: 21.9%). In 2017, around 63 500 adults aged 25 or older acquired an upper-secondary qualification²⁶, but this is only a small percentage of the nearly 10.7 million adults with only low-level educational qualifications. Skills polarisation and skills

²⁵ Consejo General de Formación Profesional.

²⁶ Eurostat, UOE, 2017.

mismatches affect the performance of the labour market in Spain and weigh on productivity growth. In 2018, the proportion of low and high qualified adults on total employment in Spain (32.8% and 43.2% respectively) are above EU averages (16.3% and 35.8%), while the proportion of mid qualified adults (23.9%) is below (47.7% in the EU)²⁷.

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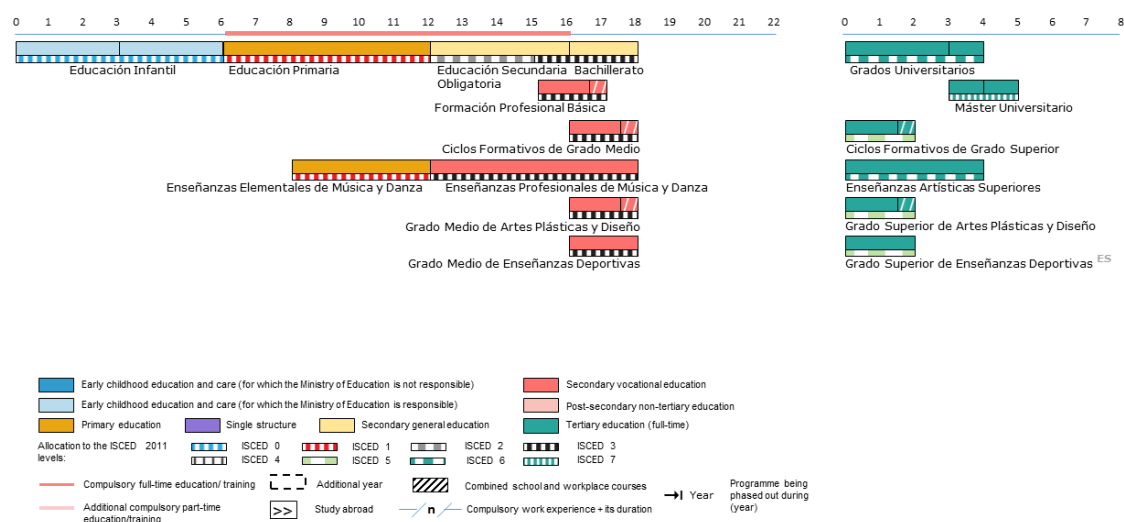
Annex I: Key indicator sources

Indicator	Eurostat online data code
Early leavers from education and training	edat_lfse_14 + edat_lfse_02
Tertiary educational attainment	edat_lfse_03 + edat_lfs_9912
Early childhood education and care	educ_uoe_enra10
Underachievement in reading, maths, science	OECD (PISA)
Employment rate of recent graduates	edat_lfse_24
Adult participation in learning	trng_lfse_03
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	gov_10a_exp
Expenditure on public and private institutions per student	educ_uoe_fini04

Learning mobility:
 - Degree-mobile graduates
 - Credit-mobile graduates

JRC computation based on Eurostat / UIS / OECD data

Annex II: Structure of the education system



Source: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018. The Structure of the European Education Systems 2018/19: Schematic Diagrams. Eurydice Facts and Figures. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

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Executive summary

Highlights of the cross-national analysis

Highlights of the country analysis



Highlights of the cross-national analysis

Among all factors in the school environment, teachers are considered to have the greatest impact on students' learning outcomes. At the same time, more than 60%²⁸ of public expenditure in education in the EU is spent on teachers. Any policy effort seeking to improve educational outcomes – or the efficiency of education and training – is bound to take a close look at the role of teachers and look for ways to help teachers excel in their demanding profession. New evidence from the OECD TALIS survey sheds more light on teachers. The recent survey data inform the 2019 Education and Training Monitor, which contains a dedicated analysis of school teachers in the EU. Being a unique source of information on teachers' motivations, lifelong learning and careers, the new evidence from TALIS 2018 can help policy-makers harnessing the full potential of teachers by preventing and addressing challenges.

After the teacher-dedicated part, the 2019 Monitor sets to analyse the existing targets adopted by the Council of the European Union under the strategic framework for European cooperation Education and Training 2020 ('EU benchmarks'). This part of the report presents latest data on participation in early childhood education and care; early leaving from education and training; tertiary educational attainment; underachievement in basic skills; employment rate of recent graduates; adult learning; and learning mobility in higher education. Next, the 2019 Monitor offers analysis on education indicators used in other well-established or emerging priorities, including entrepreneurship education; digital education; multilingualism. The report concludes with a section analysing public investment in education and training.

At the core of learning: the teachers

Across the entire EU, education systems are confronted with a number of challenges relating to teachers. Several countries already face or are about to face shortages of teachers, either across the board or in particular subject areas (typically science, technology, engineering and maths); or in particular geographical areas. In view of the proportions of teachers aged 50 or plus, the 23 EU countries participating in TALIS 2018 will have to renew about one third of their teaching population in the next decade or so. At least five EU countries will have to renew around half of their secondary school teachers in the same period (Italy, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Estonia, Greece and Latvia; and the same applies to primary school teachers in the former three countries).

Successfully renewing the teachers' population requires acting upon key factors such as the number of students deciding to embark on teacher education, the number of new teachers starting in the job and the number of teachers stopping to work. To address this challenge, there is a need to improve the attractiveness of the profession and offer good working conditions for sustained professional activity.

According to survey data, only 18% of lower secondary school teachers in the EU consider their profession as valued by society; and their proportion lowers with longer years of teaching experience. Similarly, the share of teachers would still choose to work as teachers, declines significantly, in several EU countries, among more experienced teachers. Overall, there is a specific challenge in attracting men into teaching; and particularly so for primary and pre-primary education, where the proportion of female teachers reaches 85% and 96% respectively.

Salaries of teachers do not always compare favourably to salaries of other equally qualified professionals. Among EU countries with available data, in four countries (Czechia, Slovakia, Italy and Hungary) teachers at all education levels earn less than 80% of what other tertiary-educated workers do. In most Member States, primary (and especially pre-primary) teachers earn less than secondary level teachers. In secondary education, teachers' statutory salary tends to be higher at upper-secondary level than at lower-secondary level.

There are also shortages of teachers with specific profiles. Nearly 40% of principals in lower secondary schools in the EU declare that the shortage of teachers teaching students with special

²⁸ DG EAC calculation on Eurostat's general government finance statistics, reference year 2017 ([gov_10a_exp](#)).

needs hinders the quality of instruction at their school. Principals also point to shortages of teachers who have competences in teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting (the largest shortages are in France, Italy and Portugal); and competences in teaching students from socio-economically disadvantaged homes (largest shortages in France, Italy, and Portugal). This second type of shortage is driven by change (technology; diversity in classrooms) and points to a need to improve training (initial and continued).

Furthermore, against an evolving technological and demographic background, teachers need new skills more than ever, including for dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom, teaching in a technology-rich environment, and adopting collaborative teaching practices. While 92% of teachers report regular participation in professional development, 21% of them declare a further need for training on teaching students with special needs; 16% report a further need for training on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for teaching; and about 13% report a further need for training in teaching in multilingual and multicultural environments.

Growing participation in education and educational attainment: main achievements in the last decade

In the last decade, the EU experienced a massive increase in tertiary educational attainment and met its target of having at least 40% tertiary graduates in the 30-34 year-old population – up from 32% in 2009. Despite this increase, there are clear patterns of inequalities in educational attainment. For example, on average, women's tertiary educational attainment (45.8%) is higher than men's (35.7%) – and the gap has been continuously increasing over recent years. Typically, women complete tertiary education earlier than men do. Also, young adults born in the reporting country or elsewhere in the EU, graduate more than their peers from non-EU countries (41.0% against 35.8% respectively). Yet, an overview of policy measures to broaden tertiary educational attainment shows that less than half of EU countries set specific targets to support participation in higher education of under-represented groups, such as, for example, people with disabilities, migrants or students from disadvantaged background.

The attendance of children from the age of 4 in early childhood education has expanded, and is, by now, almost universal. There are also high rates of participation in early childhood education by children from the age of 3. Yet the 90% participation rate for the general population decreases to 77.8% in the group of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Experiencing education in the early years of life has been found to be beneficial for better learning outcomes later on in life, and particularly so for children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes. The challenge of ensuring equal access to education in the early years needs to be addressed.

Since the EU cooperation framework in education and training started in 2009, the proportion of young adults leaving education and training without obtaining at least an upper secondary qualification has considerably reduced. Nonetheless, at EU level this process came to a halt after 2016. Comparing 2016 and 2018, there was progress on this indicator in large countries such as Spain or Poland, as well as in other countries such as Romania, the Netherlands and Portugal. However, this was countered by negative developments in other countries – for example, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Slovakia, and Estonia (in descending order by size of population). Furthermore, in the past 2 years, early school leaving rates increased for both young adults born in the EU (between 2016 and 2017) and those born outside (between 2017 and 2018). Reducing early leaving remains a priority and a target of the EU, as those who leave education and training before obtaining an upper-secondary diploma will struggle with lower employment rates and lower rates of participation in adult learning.

The main challenge for the next decade: improving learning outcomes at school, and increasing adult participation in learning

Participation in education can be measured by data on enrolments, qualifications, or performance test. The latter show that reducing the number of underachieving 15-year-olds to meet the EU

target of less than 15% by 2020²⁹ remains a challenge, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Failing to achieve basic mathematics, reading or science tasks at the age of 15 impacts on individuals' chances to continue studying, find and maintain employment later in life, cope with fast-paced technological change, and develop as citizens. Between 2012 and 2015, the EU has actually moved further away from meeting this target. Approximately one fifth of pupils in the EU cannot complete basic reading tasks, and the share is slightly higher for science and maths (2015 data). Despite less favourable or sometimes adverse background conditions, around a quarter of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils born in another country are considered academically resilient. Individual factors associated with higher resilience include high academic expectations, and not repeating grades; while disengagement from school (for example skipping classes, and abusing substances) has a negative association with resilience. At school level, the use of school evaluations, connecting the students' test results to teachers' performance, adequate provision of study rooms and being surrounded by pupils with higher socio-economic status are all factors correlating positively with resilience.

Over the years, there has been limited growth in the share of adults participating in education and training during the last 4 weeks in the EU – from 9.5% in 2008 to 11.1% in 2018. In addition, in practically in all EU countries people with little or no qualifications in education – those most in need of access to learning – are the least likely to benefit from it. Age and educational attainment matter when it comes to adult participation in learning. Young adults (25-34) are more than four times more likely to participate in learning as those aged 55-64. Similarly, those with a tertiary degree are more than four times more likely to participate in learning than those holding at most an upper-secondary diploma.

Developing competences for future life and employment

Research has long established the positive outcomes of being able to study abroad. Transnational learning mobility is associated with future mobility, higher earnings, and lower risk of unemployment. 'Making learning mobility a reality for all' is one of the objectives of the European Education Area³⁰. In 2017, 11.6% of higher education graduates 'were mobile', meaning that they studied partially or entirely abroad. About 8% of them were abroad for short-term periods, while 3.6% graduated in another country. The Erasmus+ programme supported about half of the short-term study periods spent abroad by EU graduates. Overall, Luxembourg, Cyprus, the Netherlands, and Finland (in descending order) have high shares of mobile graduates. As to inward mobility, capturing the volume of students coming into a country for a period of study, it can be read as a measure of the attractiveness of the education system. On this indicator the United Kingdom leads the way – both in percentage of inward graduates and in absolute numbers.

There are a number of key competences (or combination of knowledge, skills and attitude) that can support an individual's life chances and also easier transition to the labour market and career job prospects. For example, participation in entrepreneurship education increases the likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activities later in life by 35% on average. Of this 35%, a 7 percentage point increase is due to improved self-perceptions by participants of their entrepreneurial skills. However, available data show that participation in entrepreneurship education in the EU is mostly optional, and only a handful of countries make it compulsory.

Furthermore, the potential of digital technologies in improving educational practices is being held up by challenges that education systems still face. To successfully undergo digital transformation, schools need to support teachers' digital competence for pedagogical use, design innovative pedagogical approaches, and provide digital equipment as well as better connectivity. Capacity

²⁹ Data for this benchmark come from the OECD PISA survey. Students scoring below level 2 are considered underachievers.

³⁰ In November 2017, EU leaders met in Gothenburg to discuss the social dimension of Europe, including education and culture. As part of the debate on the Future of Europe, the Commission set out its vision and concrete steps to create a European Education Area by 2025. One of the main objective of the European Area of Education is 'making mobility a reality for all', by building on the positive experiences of the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps and expanding participation in them, as well as by creating an EU Student Card to offer a new user-friendly way to store information on a person's academic records. Other measures to boost mobility under the European Education Area include initiating new processes to ensure the mutual recognition of diplomas; improving language learning; creating a network of European universities; and supporting teachers and their mobility.

building for digital assessment needs to be implemented for learners, teachers, schools and education systems.

Moreover, speaking several languages can increase individuals' employment prospects. Overall in Europe, between 2005 and 2015, the number of pupils who experienced compulsory language learning grew both in primary and secondary education. As to the former, 83.7% of primary school children learned at least one foreign language in 2014, against 67.3% almost a decade before. At lower secondary level, 59% of pupils learned two languages in school in 2015, against 46.7% in 2005.

After reaching the lowest point in 2013 (75.4%), the employment rate of recent graduates has been continuously increasing in the EU. With 81.6% in 2018, the rate is now close to the pre-crisis 2008 level of 82%. However, some countries still suffer from the effects of the crisis on employability of recent graduates – in particular Greece and Italy, where employment rates of recent graduates are around 55%. As compared to secondary graduates holding a vocational qualification, those with a general orientation qualification have a less easy transition into the labour market (66.3% against 79.5%). The employment rate of tertiary graduates was at 85.5% in 2018.

Public investment in education

In 2017, EU Member States invested, on average, 4.6% of their gross domestic product (GDP) in their education systems. This proportion has been slightly but continuously decreasing in the last few years, down from 4.9% in 2014. On average, EU countries spend about one third of their public expenditure for education on pre-primary and primary education; 41% on secondary education; and 15% on tertiary education. Looking at different education sectors, real expenditure on secondary and post-secondary education decreased (-1.3%, between 2016 and 2017) and increased in pre-primary and primary education (+ 1.4%), as well as tertiary education (+ 1.7%). So far trends in education expenditure have been largely independent from demographic developments, with the partial exception of expenditure on tertiary education. Due to the predicted school-age population decline in many EU countries, even constant spending on education is likely to result in an increase in spending per student.

Highlights of the country analysis

Austria

To avoid teacher shortages, Austria needs to attract enough students into initial teacher education and improve continuing professional development. Investment in higher education aims to improve the study environment. Improving digital competence is a priority in the education and training system. Discontinued recent reforms may weaken efforts to integrate students with migrant backgrounds and to improve education outcomes of students from a socially disadvantaged background.

Belgium

The Flemish Community (BE fl) will implement reforms at all levels of education, including dual learning, starting in September 2019. The French Community (BE fr) will also implement school reforms, starting with changes to governance, then the new extended common curriculum and reforming initial teacher education from September 2020. Education spending in Belgium is among the highest in the EU, but educational outcomes are comparatively low, suggesting room for increased efficiency and effectiveness. To reduce inequality and improve outcomes, teachers need more support to manage diversity in the classroom. Tertiary educational attainment is high but disparities remain between regions and groups.

Bulgaria

The modernisation of the education and training system continues while quality, labour market relevance and inclusiveness remain challenging. Demographic trends and rising skill shortages suggest that Bulgaria needs to invest better in the skills of its current and future workforce. The need to upskill and reskill the adult population is high while participation in adult learning is low. The status of the teaching profession is low, and the teacher workforce is ageing. Salaries are being increased as a means to boost the attractiveness of the profession. Steps have been taken to increase the labour market relevance of vocational education and training (VET).

Croatia

Pilot implementation of curricular reform and ambitious preparations for full implementation are under way. Reforms are under way in vocational education and training. Participation in early childhood education and care is held back by shortages of teachers and places. Plans to expand the very short average instruction time could help to improve low education outcomes.

Cyprus

The teaching profession is highly attractive. Reforms to upgrade it are promising but need to be sustained and expanded. Reforms are implemented to foster high-quality public early childhood education and care. However, provision is insufficient for the early years. Tertiary education attainment has risen further but underutilisation of skills remains a challenge given the specific features of the Cypriot labour market. Measures have been taken to upgrade vocational education and training and adult learning, but attractiveness of both sectors and participation in them remain low.

Czechia

Czechia continues to make vocational education and training more relevant to the needs of the jobs market. Authorities are making good use of EU funds to support reforms. Inclusive education is progressing but measures targeted at Roma remain limited. The attractiveness of the teaching profession remains low.

Denmark

Changes to university education are making it more flexible and labour market friendly, but the need for more STEM graduates remains. The number of apprenticeships has been increased and measures are being taken to promote adult learning. Reduced education spending is having an impact on schools and universities. There is considerable local variation in the education performance of young people from migrant backgrounds.

Estonia

Estonia is developing an education strategy for 2021-2035, aiming to bring gradual changes to the system to respond to changes in the labour market and society. Due to demographic trends and

the limited responsiveness of the education and training system to labour market needs, aligning skills supply and labour demand remains a challenge. The ageing of the teaching population coupled with the low attractiveness of the teaching profession are a long-term challenge for the functioning of the education system. Participation in adult learning has reached a record high but the need for upskilling and reskilling remains high.

Finland

While teaching is a prestigious and attractive profession, there are teacher shortages for kindergarten and special needs education. There has been some growth in education inequalities, and spending on education has fallen. New policy measures aim to improve the quality, effectiveness and internationalisation of higher education. Demand for graduates in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is high and difficult to meet. Implementation of vocational education and training reform is ongoing, and reforms are planned to foster adult learning.

France

Work continues on improving educational outcomes and reducing inequalities, with support for teaching staff and funding measures. A new law on education extends the length of compulsory education and training to 3-18. Authorities are faced with the challenge of combining the rapid pace of reforms with the need to consult stakeholders to ensure good ownership and optimal impact. Implementation of the vocational education and training reform is in full swing.

Germany

Germany has announced significant investments in digitalisation, higher education and research in the decade ahead, but as well in school education. Germany is preparing for fundamental change in the skills of its workforce by carrying out digital initiatives and by refocusing the system of adult learning. The teaching workforce is aging and Germany faces a challenge to replace a large number of teachers. Young people from disadvantaged socio-economic and/or migrant backgrounds continue to lag behind in educational attainment.

Greece

The teaching profession is highly attractive in Greece but opportunities and incentives to improve professionalism are lacking. Education expenditure is lower than in most EU countries and largely spent on salaries. Early school leaving has been further reduced, particularly in rural areas. Finding employment after education remains difficult, including for highly qualified people. Measures to tackle the brain drain of tertiary graduates are being implemented but internationalisation of Greek universities is underdeveloped.

Hungary

Recent measures have raised the qualification levels of staff in early childhood education and care. Measures to reduce performance gaps between pupils have been strengthened. Admission conditions for entry to higher education have been made more restrictive. A new medium-term strategy aims to modernise vocational education and training and adult education.

Ireland

Ireland has a strong framework to ensure highly qualified teachers and further plans to meet emerging needs, including teacher shortages. Early school leaving has continued to decline, and participation in early childhood education and care is to be supported by new national schemes. Despite increased public spending on education, investment in higher education has not kept up with rising student numbers. Ireland implements initiatives aimed at upskilling and increasing adult participation in learning and training but the numbers of low-skilled adults in the population remain sizeable.

Italy

Italy invests well below the EU average in education, particularly in higher education. The share of teachers satisfied with their jobs is among the highest in the EU, but only a small share believe that theirs is a valued profession. Compulsory work-based learning in vocational education and training could help provide more structured training for apprentices and ease the transition from education to work. The level of tertiary educational attainment is low, and the transition from education to work remains difficult, even for highly qualified people.

Latvia

Latvia has already met and exceeded its Europe 2020 education targets. Latvia should achieve further improvements in learning outcomes through the new competence-based curriculum, a stronger individual approach to students at risk and support for inclusion of students with special educational needs. Enrolment in vocational education and training (VET) is increasing and the employment rate of VET graduates is improving, although both remain below the EU average. In higher education, a gradual increase in investment and incremental changes in quality assurance are welcome, but the sector remains fragmented and international competitiveness low.

Lithuania

Current trends in student population and teacher workforce call for a comprehensive strategy to manage teacher supply and demand. Improving key competences and relevant skills remains a priority at all levels. Further development of monitoring and evaluation systems may help improve the quality of education and training. Measures have been put in place to increase the education system's overall efficiency, but further efforts are needed to ensure their implementation. Policy measures to address low participation in adult learning are lacking.

Luxembourg

In 2018, more flexible entry requirements for the recruitment competition for early childhood and primary education teachers attracted more candidates. Pupils' performance is heavily influenced by their ability to cope with the trilingual system. A reform of the orientation process at the end of primary education may have stopped a trend whereby many pupils were being guided to the lowest track in secondary education. Employment rates among recent graduates from all types of education are significantly higher than the EU average.

Malta

Work is underway to improve the quality of teaching and the attractiveness of the profession. Improving the quality of investment in education and developing monitoring and assessment are key challenges. Increased participation in early childhood education and care and the new secondary system may help reduce the number of early school leavers. While participation in tertiary education is increasing, its labour market relevance is still a challenge.

Netherlands

The early school leaving rate is below the Europe 2020 national target but has slightly increased. The Netherlands faces an increasing shortage of teachers, both in primary and secondary education. The 2019-2022 Quality Agreements aim to improve the quality of vocational education and training. Dutch tertiary education increasingly attracts foreign students.

Poland

Early school leaving continues declining and participation in early childhood education and care among children under 3 remains low. The higher education reform has been launched, bringing major changes to the functioning of higher education institutions. Implementing the 2017 school system changes is causing organisational, financial and curricular challenges. Further challenges relate to teachers' pay, emerging shortages, and initial and continuing training. Participation in adult learning remains low.

Portugal

Teachers are satisfied with their jobs, but the ageing teacher population, the high proportion of non-permanent staff and weaknesses in induction and continuing professional development remain challenging. Investment to upgrade infrastructure is insufficient, particularly for early childhood education and care in metropolitan areas. Regional disparities in education outcomes, grade repetition and early school leaving rates are improving. Tertiary educational attainment has grown but business demand for ICT specialists exceeds supply. There is a significant proportion of low qualified adults while participation in adult learning remains low.

Romania

Concrete ideas have been presented for major reform of the education and training system. Clear steps need to be taken for the implementation of the reform. Public spending on education is low in EU comparison, while the sector's investment needs are high. Any major reform is likely to require additional funding linked to stronger equity and efficiency mechanisms. Better support for teachers – in particular by redesigning initial teacher education and strengthening continuing professional

development – can help improve quality and equity. Efforts were made to expand dual education. Participation in adult learning remains low despite the high need for upskilling and reskilling.

Slovakia

Slovakia is improving early childhood education and care, which is particularly positive for children from deprived families. Slovakia is taking a more strategic approach to lifelong learning, upskilling and reskilling. The early school leaving rate has continued increasing since 2010, approaching 14% in Eastern Slovakia. Investment in education and training is insufficient, and this is reflected in teachers' still low salaries despite recent increases.

Slovenia

Enrolment in early childhood education and care is approaching the EU benchmark. The proportion of Slovenian upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training is one of the highest in the EU, and the employment rate of such graduates is high. There are enough new entrant teachers but large numbers are approaching retirement and shortages already exist in certain categories. Tertiary educational attainment is high, but the differences between men and women and the native-born and foreign-born population are large.

Spain

The teaching profession is attractive, but working conditions differ among regions and between public and private education systems. Private spending in education is significant, while public spending is static compared to GDP. Planned reforms, reflecting political uncertainties, have been slowed down. The process to modernise vocational education and training is ongoing. Adult participation in education is slowly rising.

Sweden

Tertiary educational attainment and graduate employment rates are high. The population's digital skills are among the best in the EU. There is a serious teacher shortage, and a large number of teachers lack formal qualifications. School segregation and inequality are serious and growing concerns.

United Kingdom

Efforts are being made to tackle the high proportion of teachers leaving the profession. In England, school academies are growing in number but many are facing financial pressures. The consequences of Brexit for UK higher education are unclear but policy responses to address the potential loss of EU research funding and reduced student inflows will be needed. England will introduce new qualifications as part of ongoing reforms of upper secondary VET.

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