
Report

Note

This work is the translation of « La France dans l'Union européenne » published in the *INSEE Références* collection in April 2014.

Unless otherwise stated, the data used are taken from the website of Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office. These data are continually updated. The date of acquisition of the figures is therefore generally indicated below the tables and charts. The data mainly concern the countries of the European Union of 28 (EU of 28), as currently defined. However, for some countries (particularly those that have recently joined the EU), certain figures are not yet available. In such cases the perimeter of the EU is indicated.

On 15 May 2014, the INSEE published the national accounts in the 2010 base: these data are compiled in accordance with the new European System of Accounts (ESA 2010). France is one of the first countries to integrate this change, as most other States are not publishing national accounts data in line with ESA 2010 until September 2014. Prior to that date, only data from the 2005 base can be used to make reliable comparisons. It is this base that is therefore used here. It is likely that the change of base will have little effect on the majority of national accounting aggregates (particularly those presented here) and that it will not alter the hierarchies observed between countries.

Symbols used

...	Result unavailable
///	No results due to the nature of things
e	Estimate
p	Provisional result
n.s.	Non-significant result
€	Euro
M	Million
Bn	Billion
Ref.	Reference

Reducing the prevalence of early school leaving: a core objective of the “Education and training 2020” programme

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The education and training policies of the European Union have gained more importance since the Lisbon Strategy (2000) and the “Education and Training 2020” programme (2009) which was incorporated into the “Europe 2020” strategy. While each member State retains political sovereignty, the strategy has considerable impact on the management of education and training systems at national level. Here we present one of the benchmarks selected by the European Union, associated with major socio-economic issues, that of early school leavers. These are young people who have left the educational system with no qualifications and without going on to follow a training course after leaving. Although there are many difficulties involved in measuring their numbers for the purposes of international comparison, it would seem that one young European in eight leaves the education system early. The situation in France is slightly better than the European average, and early school leaving occurs more often in southern Europe. In the Netherlands in particular, where a proactive policy has been followed, early school leaving has seen a rapid decline (from 16% at the beginning of the 2000s to under 9% in 2012).

Education and training policies have gained more importance in the European Union (EU) since the adoption, in 2000, of the Lisbon Strategy, which identified “knowledge” as a key issue. One year later, the member States and the European Commission defined a cooperation framework in this field, which was strengthened in 2009 with the “Education and Training 2020” programme incorporated into the “Europe 2020” strategy. The Union has competence to support, coordinate or complement the action of member States: although each one retains political sovereignty (by applying the principle of subsidiarity), there is considerable impact on the way education and training systems are run at national level. Seven benchmark criteria have been defined, and an eighth will probably be added in 2014 (*Appendix*). More and more monitoring indicators have been introduced, and working methods and common calendars for the States have been developed. The large number of reference criteria and the wide variety of methodologies now mobilised to measure them is the reason why the scope of this study has been limited. It will focus on one criterion, associated with a major socio-economic issue: early school leaving. The struggle to limit early school leaving is one of the main targets of the “Education and Training 2020” strategy; it is also at the forefront of the objectives of the “Europe 2020” strategy.

In order to count early leavers, qualifications have to be classified at European level

In order to be able to make an international comparison of national education systems, a common framework was defined: this is the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED).

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Using this classification, all educational programmes can be ordered on the basis of standardised levels of education (see *Box*). If we say that a young person is an early school leaver or a school dropout - the expression commonly used in the French debate¹ - then this means that he not only has a low level of studies but also that he has left the education system and has had no sort of training. More precisely, the European indicator concerns the proportion of young people aged 18 to 24 whose level of studies is less than or equivalent to ISCED 2 or ISCED 3C short, and who have had no teaching or training (formal or informal²) during the four weeks prior to the time they were surveyed. It is measured on the basis of community Labour Force Surveys (continuous

Box 1

International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED)

In the context of a wide diversity of national education systems – in terms of institutions, organisation of teaching (teaching cycles, learning pathways), curricular content (programmes and educational objectives) or even teaching methods and the importance placed on diplomas – international comparison involves first and foremost a common framework of classifications with which to measure “levels of educational attainment”. This common framework is the result of a long-term process that started with the creation of the International Bureau of Education in 1925 and then more especially that of UNESCO in 1945, and which gradually became associated with other institutions (OECD, Eurostat). International definitions and classifications are rooted in a history built around compromise, arbitration and changes which have inevitably left scope for a wide range of interpretation for each country [Education and training, 2011]. So when the reference benchmarks use data defined in terms of “levels of educational attainment”, as is the case for early school leavers, then the first issue to arise is the question of classifications and how to find national equivalents.

Set up by UNESCO and adopted at the General Conference in 1978, the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED) provides concepts, definitions and systems of standardised classifications with which whole programmes of education can be organised. Revised in 1997,

ISCED combines three criteria: level of education (ranked into six grades according to the main divisions of the teaching cycles - see Figure); the distinction between a general pathway intended for entry into further study (A), a vocational pathway intended for entry to further study (B) and a pathway that prepares for the labour market (C); and finally the duration of the programmes. However, using this last benchmark, Eurostat classified the short vocational secondary teaching programmes, called “3C short”, in the first stage of secondary education (with ISCED 2), in accordance with the level attained. To be classified as ISCED 3, the minimum duration required for secondary teaching programmes is 2 years in the second stage; vocational teaching programmes of less than 2 years are therefore classified as ISCED “3C short” with ISCED 2.

ISCED is used for all educational statistics and especially for collecting UOE data (joint data collection for UNESCO, the OECD and EUROSTAT). In 2011, the revision of UOE was officially adopted by the member States of UNESCO, at the instigation of the three organisations which coordinate its implementation. This revision takes into account important changes that have been made to education systems since the 2000s, especially where higher education is now divided into four levels instead of two. ISCED 2011 will be used for the first time for the UOE data collection in 2014.

1. This expression, which is used for convenience, does not refer to the system put in place by the French Ministry of Education to monitor those that drop out of school. In fact, to be a dropout, in educational terms, is not to have successfully completed the second stage of secondary education on which a young person has embarked. Thus a young person who holds a CAP (apprenticeship certificate) and who continues his studies to obtain a professional Baccalauréat but who leaves before obtaining it is a dropout in terms of the educational code, but not in the sense of being an early school leaver, as he holds a CAP certificate.

2. UNESCO defines non-formal education as, “any organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition of formal education (schools, secondary or higher educational establishments)”.

Labour Force Survey in France). In France, early school leavers are therefore defined as young people aged between 18 and 24 who have neither a CAP (apprenticeship certificate), nor a BEP (vocational studies certificate), nor a higher diploma and who have not followed any course in the four weeks prior to the survey. The CAP and the BEP are vocational diplomas at ISCED 3 (France has no diploma classified as ISCED 3C short). The target figure set by the European Union is to limit the proportion of early school leavers to 10% by 2020. Even though this is a weighted mean to achieve for all young people across the European Union, the target also makes sense for each member State. The way in which countries collect information on the highest level of studies achieved and how they classify their diplomas is key. While the European definition is very clear concerning ISCED 2 or ISCED 3C short, it is possible that some national diplomas are coded as ISCED 3 when they may not have entirely fulfilled the criteria (especially in terms of duration) for completing the second stage of secondary education. From this simple fact, the proportion of early

Box (contd.)

In the European Labour Force Survey, the level of education that counts is the level that has been successfully achieved, as attested by a certificate or a diploma, on condition that the diploma exists; if not, then success is assimilated with completion of the school year. All European countries have diplomas. However, they have by no means exactly the same significance for each nation. The wording of the questions and precision in the coding of the responses are of course essential factors in data collection, as

is the way in which the national structure of diplomas is converted into the international ISCED classification. This transcription of diplomas is in itself highly dependent on their significance and their role in the system of education and of qualifications, and the way they are linked to the labour market. They are specific to each national configuration, and provide clear proof that there is no universal identity for diplomas [Kieffer, Tréhin-Lalanne, 2011].

International Standard Classification for Education ISCED 1997

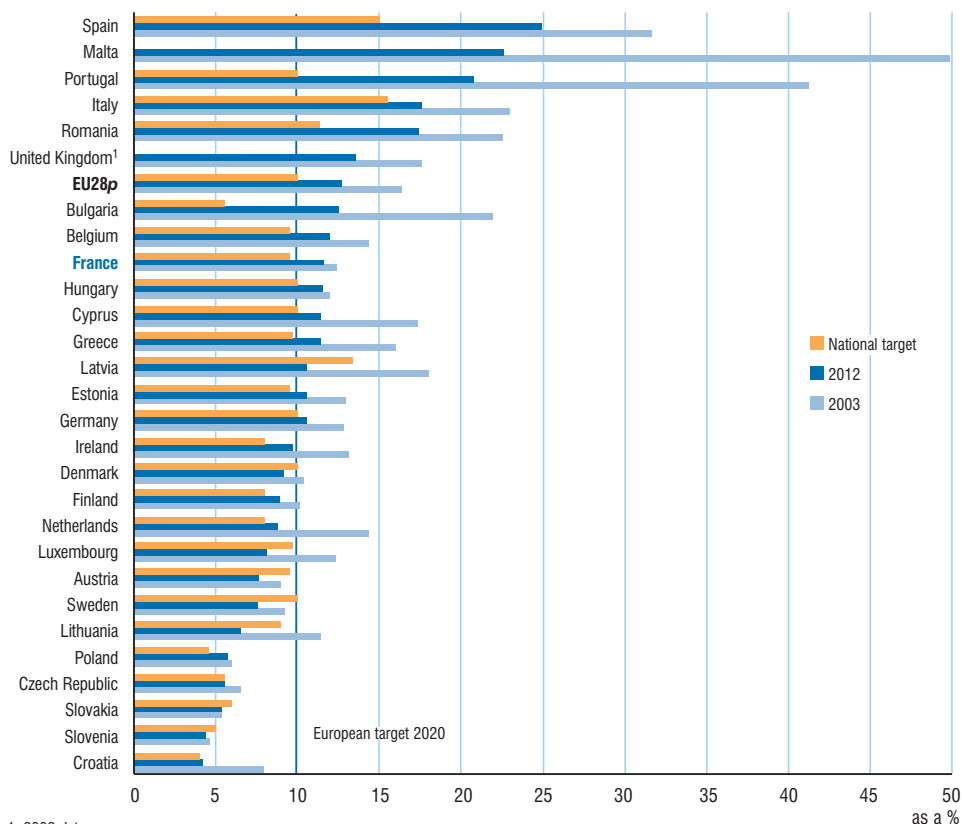
Education levels	Programmes
0 Pre-primary education (from age 3 to the age of entry into primary education)	Initial stage of organised instruction designed to introduce very young children to a school-type environment
1 Primary education (or first stage of basic education) Age of entry between 5 and 7: duration 6 years	Basic education in reading, writing and mathematics, and introduction to other subjects
2 First stage of secondary education (or second stage of basic education) Minimum duration 3 years	2A Designed to lead to general studies 2B Designed to lead to vocational studies
3 Second stage of secondary education Minimum duration 2 years	3A Designed to prepare for academic higher education 3B Designed to lead to vocational higher education 3C short Designed to give access to labour market or to ISCED 3 ¹ 3C long Prepares for access to labour market or to ISCED 4
4 Post-secondary education (non-higher education)	4A Prepares for higher studies 4B Prepares for entry into working life
5 First stage of higher education	5A Long higher education academic-type programmes. 5B Short higher education programmes, more practically and occupation-specific oriented
6 Second stage of higher education	Advanced level programmes corresponding to a duration of studies of at least 3 years (7 years of higher education in all, cumulated in the awarding of a doctorate or equivalent diploma)

1. ISCED 3C short, along with ISCED 2, counts as an early school leaver level. In fact, the 3C short corresponds to programmes that start after ISCED 2. In terms of programmes (right-hand column), it is therefore classified with ISCED 3, but in terms of level of education (i.e. diploma, left-hand column), it comes under ISCED 2.

Sources: UNESCO, Eurostat.

school leavers is automatically lowered. If the teaching cycles are organised in a specific way this may, for example, leave room for interpreting the classification. Thus, in the United Kingdom, pupils enter compulsory primary education early (at age 5 instead of age 6). Secondary education starts at age 11 with an initial stage of three years, after which, in the space of two years, therefore when most are aged 14 to 16, they prepare an exam called the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Between fifteen and forty subjects are offered, depending on the school; most pupils take exams in nine to ten subjects. Thus the first stage of secondary education is longer than in most other European countries. If we think in terms of age (16 years old), the GCSE would be equivalent to the end of the “seconde” class in France. After GCSE, pupils can choose between leaving school or continuing to study for two more years to take A-levels which are equivalent to the Baccalaureate, and this corresponds to the second stage of secondary education, which is shorter than in other European countries. The United Kingdom classifies pupils who have GCSE, and who have validated their five compulsory subjects, as ISCED 3, which of course affects the educational level of early school leavers. To appreciate the effect that this classification can have, we can look at the case of Malta, where the educational system is very similar to that of the United Kingdom, but which does not apply the same classification to holders of the GCSE, because there was some delay in applying ISCED 1997. In Malta, GCSE holders, without exception, were all classified as ISCED 2. It was when large numbers of early school leavers were observed in this country at the beginning of the 2000s (Figure 1) that adjustments were made by Eurostat in liaison with the Malta national statistics office.

1. Share of early school leavers in the 18-24 year-old population



1. 2002 data.
Source: Eurostat.

A simulation exercise by Eurostat in 2010 and 2011 showed that by simply reclassifying the holders of the GCSE as ISCED 3 this caused the historic indicator of early school leavers to drop by more than 10 percentage points [NSO, 2013].

The way in which certain diplomas are coded is not the only source of possible bias. Any system of employment assistance accompanied by training for the least qualified can cause the indicator to drop. No matter how short they are, whether they lead to a diploma or a qualification or not, this type of training can reduce the number of early school leavers. In France, for example, the median duration of training sessions taken by early school leavers before the 4-week reference period is 19 days: half of training periods therefore last less than 19 days [Le Rhun and Dubois, 2013].

France does slightly better than the European average

In France, the target set for early school leavers is lower than that for the EU as a whole: 9.5% by 2020, instead of 10%. In 2012, according to the Labour Force Survey, 11.6% of young people aged 18 to 24 and living in Metropolitan France were early school leavers, or about 600,000 young people out of more than five million. They had no diploma, or only the “Brevet des Collèges” (junior school certificate), and at the time of the survey were neither studying nor attending training. This figure has not dropped significantly since 2003.

Traditionally, in addition to this European indicator for the share of early leavers, France uses an indicator for those leaving initial training with no diploma or with only the “Brevet des Collèges”: these young people are leavers with no diploma.³ This indicator measures the low level of young people’s skills at the key time when they could be entering the job market.

Thus, according to the Employment survey, 135,000 young people, i.e. 17% of those leaving initial schooling, leave the education system with no diploma. The essential difference between this percentage and that of the early school leavers (11.6%) is that it applies to a flow (those coming out of initial training) whereas the early school leavers’ percentage applies to a stock of people (18-24 year-olds). The figure is obviously lower when one refers to 18-24 year-olds as a whole, whether they are studying or not, rather than only to those leaving the educational system. In addition, if we calculate the share of early leavers among 25-29 year-olds, the vast majority of whom have finished their studies, the figure for early leavers increased to 15.7% in 2011 [Le Rhun and Dubois, 2013]. A gap remains which can be explained by the fact that some of the young people in the 25-29 year-old population are still continuing their initial studies, and some others may have obtained a diploma after going back to education.

Fewer young people leave early in education systems where selection is limited

In 2012, 14 countries had reached the European target and 3 had almost reached it. In five countries the rate of early leavers was significantly higher, and early school leaving occurs more frequently in the countries of southern Europe. In most member States in the north or east early leaver rates are less than 12.0%, whereas in Spain (24.9%), Malta (22.6%), Portugal (20.8%), or Italy (17.6%) levels are higher, and similarly in Romania (17.4%). France joins Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Latvia and Hungary at an intermediate level. There are several factors to account for this diversity, but there have also been changes over the last ten years.

3. See reports « Origine et insertion des jeunes sans diplôme », in *Formations et emploi, INSEE Références coll.*, 2013 and « Scolarisation et origines sociales depuis les années 1980 : progrès et limites », in *Trente ans de vie économique et sociale, INSEE Références coll.*, 2014.

To a large extent the disparities reflect the history of the development of secondary education in the countries of the European Union. The rise in educational standards has led for the most part to a drop in the proportion of early leavers.

This proportion falls sharply when there is a drive in a country towards introducing secondary education for all. However, although practically all countries of the European Union have experienced such a movement, this has not happened at the same time in all cases. The level of education of the generations born in the 1950s gives a good illustration. In the EU today, the proportion of 55-64 year-olds who have studied at least to the level of second stage of secondary education is 64.6% on average for the 28 countries (Eurostat data, 2012). The Baltic and Scandinavian countries achieve 70%, as do the countries of the former Eastern Bloc and Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom. In contrast, only a small proportion of the 1950s generations in the countries around the Mediterranean completed the second stage of secondary education: 19.8% in Portugal, 47.1% in Greece, 19.5% in Malta, 35.2% in Spain, 42.4% in Italy. France is in an intermediate position with 59.0% of 55-64 year-olds reaching at least the second stage of secondary education. Along with Ireland and Belgium it is one of the countries to have experienced rapid progress in this area among recent generations. Since 2003, early school leaving rates have dropped by at least 30% in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands and Portugal. In each of these countries, school attendance to 18 has increased by at least 15%, with the exception of Luxembourg where it has remained stable at a high level throughout the period. There are two features of education systems that are favourable to low proportions of early leavers nationally: first, a structural continuity between the first stage of education at primary and secondary schools, in the form of non-selective “core curricula”; second, a significant development in vocational teaching and training courses in the second stage of secondary education. The Scandinavian countries have placed significant emphasis on these models, Sweden in the 1960s, Finland and Denmark in the 1970s. Although there are many variations from one institution to another, this is also the case in the Baltic countries and many Eastern European countries. In Poland, for example, a reform put in place at the end of the 1990s resulted in the core curriculum being extended to the age of 16. In the Mediterranean countries, on the other hand, secondary education is now, or has for a long time been characterised by the existence of selective pathways. Also, vocational education in these countries has fallen behind to some extent, especially in terms of certification.

Early and coordinated intervention seems more effective

The Netherlands provides an example of a proactive policy in this area. Early school leaving has decreased rapidly in this country, from 16% at the start of the 2000s to under 9% in 2012. Dealing with early school leavers became the focus of a specific policy in the form of two legal measures. An initial law in 1969 ensured that compulsory schooling was respected, until the age of 16 in full-time education, followed by one year of part-time education. In 2001, a second law was introduced which this time instructed educational establishments to report instances of pupils leaving school with no diploma attesting to completion of secondary education, even if they were no longer under 17 and no longer obliged to attend school. These legal measures were accompanied by “tailor-made” programmes giving early leavers the possibility of validating skills acquired outside the educational system through agreements with networks of large companies. The early leavers were monitored by a series of bodies coordinated at local level (schools, local authorities, social services, local job centres) [Ballergeau, 2008].

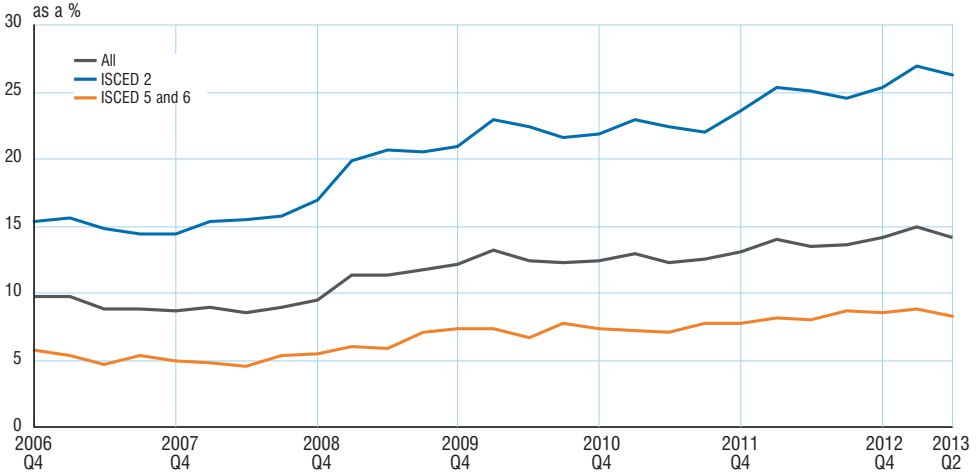
More generally, the main characteristic of recent reforms to reduce early school leaving is the emphasis placed on prevention, with many countries having realised that remedial action not only has a higher cost, but is also less effective. European Union countries have moved in several different directions: more attention paid to pre-primary education; targeting disadvantaged

groups (e.g. migrants); development of vocational pathways (more resources for career guidance; increased permeability of general pathways; closer links with the labour market); improved partnership with parents; customised support; second-chance schools. To varying degrees, each of these actions has found some response in national policies, but few of these are backed up by studies identifying the real causes of early school leaving. The study by AFSA (2013), which was carried out at national level using longitudinal data, nevertheless shows that the academic level reached when a child enters the “sixième” class in France (1st year of secondary education), measured by assessments, can in itself explain almost half of the cases of leavers with no diploma, and that, at a given academic level in “sixième”, household structure and social category, the children of migrants are no more likely than the rest to drop out. The author concludes that early intervention is necessary, right from primary school, which confirms the validity of longstanding practices used in Finland. In this country where repeating the school year is unheard of, the focus is on spotting pupils in difficulty as early as the primary school. The key figure in identifying these children is the teacher, for whom this responsibility is stressed during their basic and higher level training [Robert, 2010]. To help with this task, the teacher has an assistant so that he can work individually with pupils in difficulty or in small groups. A third type of individual may also be called in to school to meet any specific needs pupils may have (slow learning Finnish or Swedish, the second official language, dyslexia, dyscalculia, etc.). If the pupils require more sustained support, then the whole teaching team is involved, assisted by a guidance counsellor, a psychologist and usually a social worker who looks at the learning environment in the family (housing, family break up, alcoholism, etc.). If the young person still leaves school early, then it is the responsibility of the local authorities to return him to the school system or to provide him with vocational training.

Young women who are early school leavers are more often faced with inactivity

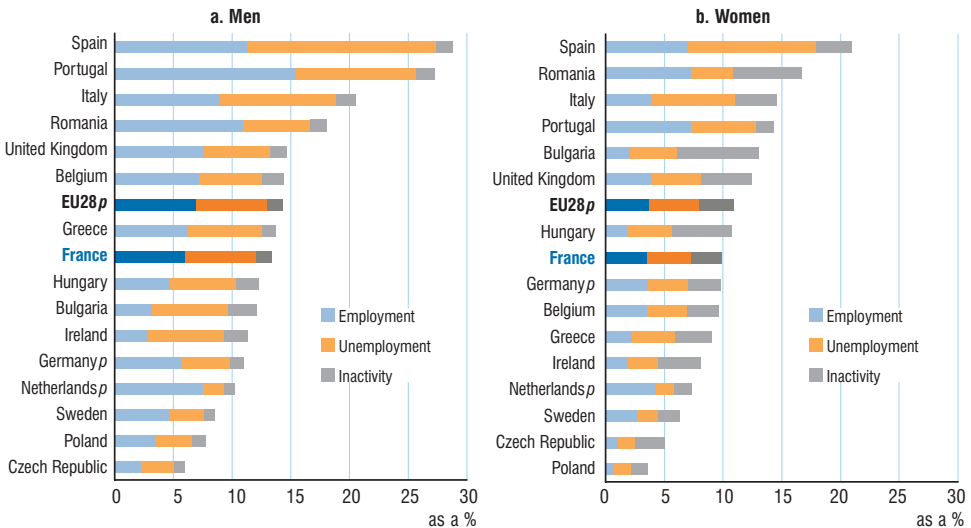
The difficulties surrounding not only integration into professional life – increased risk of unemployment and insecurity – but social integration also – less access to healthcare, risk of poverty – are considerably heightened for young people with no diploma, by comparison with those who do have a diploma. In all European countries, a diploma gives access to a better situation in the job market. And the crisis has only tended to widen this gap (*Figure 2*). This major finding is in itself a total justification for choosing to make reducing early school leaving one of the priorities of government policies in the European Union. The situation of early school leavers when faced with the employment market reveals some contrasting configurations according to gender: young men are more often employed or unemployed; young women on the other hand, whose early leaver rate in the European is on average four percentage points lower than that of men, tend to be more in situations of inactivity (*Figures 3a and 3b*). ■

2. Average unemployment rate for 15-39 year-olds by level of diploma in EU28



Note: The age bracket selected is sufficiently wide to take account of the ages people entered the labour market, which differ according to the level of diploma. Thus, length of service in the labour market is greater for those without diplomas; in principle therefore, this graph tends to under-estimate the difference in the unemployment rate between those without diplomas and those with higher education diplomas. ISCED: International Standard Classification for Education. Source: Eurostat, Community Labour Force surveys.

3. Early school leavers by employment status in 2012



How to read the chart: in the European Union, an average of 11% of women aged 18 to 24 leave education early. This rate is itself the sum of three separate rates measuring respectively three possible situations for women in this age group: in employment: 3.7% of women aged 18 to 24 are both early school leavers and in employment; unemployed: 4.2% of women aged 18 to 24 are both early school leavers and unemployed; inactive: 3% of women aged 18 to 24 are both early school leavers and inactive.

Note: countries whose data did not seem reliable were not taken into consideration. Source: Eurostat, Community Labour Force surveys.

Appendix

“Education and Training 2020” benchmarks

Each of the following targets has been set for 2020. The first 5 benchmarks were approved by the European Union Council in 2009, the 6th in 2011 and the 7th in 2012. An 8th reference criterion, relating to foreign language skills, is expected to be adopted in the course of 2014.

1st benchmark: at least 95% of children between the age of four and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.

2nd benchmark: the share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and sciences should be less than 15%.

3rd benchmark: the early school leaving rate among 18-24 year-olds should not exceed 10%.

4th benchmark: at least 40% of adults aged 30-34 should have some form of higher education attainment.

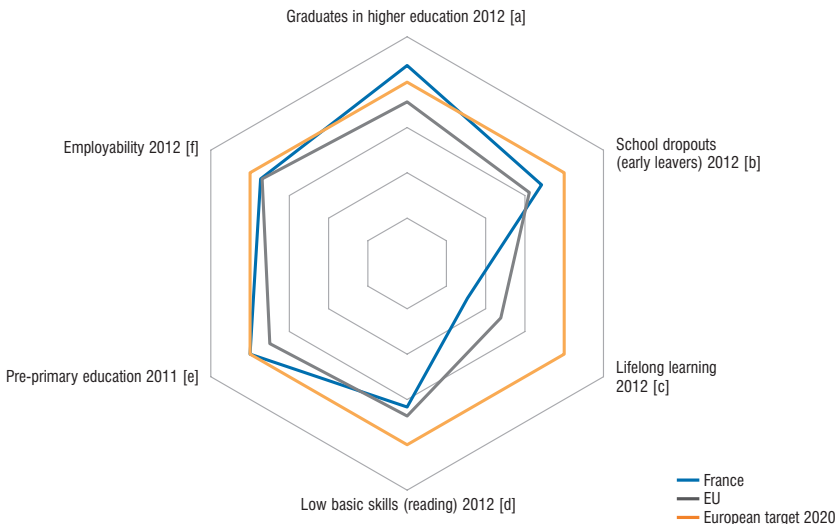
5th benchmark: an average of at least 15% of adults in the working-age population should participate in lifelong learning.

6th benchmark: at least 20% of higher education graduates and 6% of 18-34 year-olds with diplomas from initial vocational education and training should have had a period of higher-education related study or training abroad.

7th benchmark: the share of employed graduates (20-34 year-olds) having left the education and training system no more than three years before the reference year should be at least 82%. By “graduates” here is understood those with a diploma higher than or equal to ISCED 3 (Box).

Benchmarks of the “Education and Training 2020” strategy

Position of France and the European Union



How to read the chart: there are two types of target represented by the points of the regular orange hexagon. The first are objectives for minimum targets. For example, for the target of at least 40% of adults being graduates with a higher education diploma, France is positioned at $43.6/40 \times r$ where r is the radius of the regular orange hexagon. The second type concerns objectives that set maximum thresholds. For example, for the objective of not exceeding 10% for early school leavers: with a rate of 11.6%, France is positioned at $10/11.6 \times r$.

Sources: Eurostat, Community Labour Force Surveys, Education and Training statistics; OECD, PISA survey (Programme for International Student Assessment).

France's position in relation to the objectives and to the European Union is shown in the Figures above and below.

Pre-primary education (1st benchmark): this target has also been largely achieved in France. The same is true for half of the countries of Europe. Croatia, Finland and Greece are not there yet.

Low basic skills in reading (2nd benchmark): once again, France falls within the European Union average, but is very far off the European target. Finland has achieved some remarkable performances; Estonia and the Netherlands have also met the target. Romania and Bulgaria, on the other hand, have the weakest performances.

Benchmarks of the Education and Training 2020 strategy

Position of the European Union countries							as a %
	Graduates in higher education (4 th benchmark)	Early school leavers (3 rd benchmark)	Lifelong learning (5 th benchmark)	Low basic skills (reading, 2 nd benchmark)	Pre-primary education (1 st benchmark)	Employability (7 th benchmark)	
	2012	2012	2012	2012	2011	2012	
	[a]	[b]	[c]	[d]	[e]	[f]	
Austria	26.3	7.6	14.1	19.5	94.3	91.2	
Belgium	43.9	12.0	6.6	16.2	98.1	80.9	
Bulgaria	26.9	12.5	1.5	39.4	86.6	67.3	
Cyprus	49.9	11.4	7.4	32.8	85.0	73.0	
Croatia	23.7	4.5	2.4	18.7	70.6	58.7	
Czech Republic	25.6	5.5	10.8	16.9	87.8	82.3	
Denmark	43.0	9.1	31.6	14.6	98.3	84.1	
Estonia	39.1	10.5	12.9	9.1	89.1	75.1	
Finland	45.8	8.9	24.5	11.3	74.0	80.7	
France	43.6	11.6	5.7	18.9	100.0	76.5	
Germany	31.9	10.5 _p	7.9	14.5	96.4	87.3	
Greece	30.9	11.4	2.9	22.6	74.6	42.9	
Hungary	29.9	11.5	2.8	19.7	94.5	73.4	
Ireland	51.1	9.7	7.1	9.6	99.7	69.3	
Italy	21.7	17.6	6.6	19.5	96.8	54.3	
Latvia	37.0	10.5	7.0	17.0	92.7	74.2	
Lithuania	48.7	6.5	5.2	21.2	84.2	76.0	
Luxembourg	49.6	8.1 _p	13.9	22.2	95.6	84.6	
Malta	22.4	22.6	7.0	...	100.0	91.9	
Netherlands	42.3 _p	8.8 _p	16.5 _p	14.0	99.6	89.3	
Poland	39.1 _p	5.7 _p	4.5 _p	10.6	78.4	73.3	
Portugal	27.2	20.8	10.6	18.8	95.4	67.9	
Romania	21.8	17.4	1.4	37.3	82.0	69.4	
Slovakia	23.7	5.3	3.1	28.2	76.9	68.6	
Slovenia	39.2	4.4	13.8	21.1	92.9	73.2	
Spain	40.1	24.9	10.7	18.3	100.0	62.4	
Sweden	47.9	7.5	26.7	22.7	95.3	83.2	
United Kingdom	47.1	13.5	15.8	16.6	97.0	81.5	
EU28	35.8	12.7_p	9.0	17.8¹	93.2²	75.7	
EU previous year	34.6	13.5	8.9	...	92.4	77.2	
Target 2020 (EU)	40.0	10.0	15.0	15.0	95.0	82.0	
Target 2010 (EU)	...	10.0	12.5	17.0	
Situation 2000 (EU)	22.4	18.0	7.1	21.3	85.2	///	

1. EU27 (excl. Malta) 2. EU27 (excl. Croatia)

How to read the chart: in Germany in 2012, those with higher education diplomas represented 31.9% of young people aged 30 to 34; early leavers made up 10.5% of young people aged 18 to 24; 7.9% of 25-64 year-olds underwent training or participated in formal or non-formal education; 14.5% of 15-year-old pupils had a low level of reading skill (PISA test); in 2011, 96.4% of children between 4 and the age of compulsory schooling were attending school; the employment rate among young people aged 20 to 34 who had been out of the education system for at least three years and who had a diploma equal to or above ISCED 3 was 87.3%.

Source: Eurostat; [a], [b], [c], [f]: Eurostat, Community Labour Force Surveys; [d]: PISA survey by OECD (Programme for International Student Assessment); [e] Eurostat, Education and Training statistics.

Higher education graduates (4th benchmark): with a rate of 43.6%, France has achieved the European target. The national target is set at 50%, whereas in Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia and Malta national targets are lower at 25%.

Lifelong learning (5th benchmark): this is the benchmark where France has the poorest performances. In 2012, 5.7% of 25-64 year-olds had followed a course or a training session in the four weeks preceding the survey. This figure is higher than 20% in the Nordic countries. It is under 5% in Greece and in the majority of central European countries.

Employability of graduates from higher education (7th benchmark): with a rate of 76.5%, France falls within the average for the European Union. Austria, the Netherlands and Germany all perform considerably better. Italy, Bulgaria, Croatia and Greece all fall very far short.

No method has so far been validated by Eurostat to measure the student mobility benchmark (6th benchmark).

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