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# **Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe**

## **2021**

Overview of  
major reforms since 2015

Eurydice Background Report

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## INTRODUCTION

This report contains more than 20 key structural indicators on education policies in four areas: early childhood education and care (ECEC), achievement in basic skills, early leaving from education and training (ELET) and higher education.

### Policy context

The indicators provide information on the national policies and structures that contribute to achieving the benchmarks set in the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('[ET 2020](#)').

The performance of the EU and its Member States with regard to the ET 2020 benchmarks is analysed in detail in the European Commission's *Education and Training Monitor*. The Eurydice project on structural indicators for monitoring education and training systems in Europe contributes to the contextual information for this analysis. It provides yearly data, from 2015 onwards, which illustrate the main policy developments in education and training systems across Europe.

### Selection of indicators

The structural indicators were selected by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) using information from several recent Eurydice reports that provide an extensive focus on specific policy areas.

The selection of the structural indicators was discussed with the Eurydice national units and country representatives of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB).

### 2021 update

This report contains the updated indicators for the 2020/21 school/academic year together with a short overview of the major reforms since the start of the 2014/15 school/academic year in four policy areas:

1. Early childhood education and care (ECEC)
2. Achievement in basic skills
3. Early leaving from education and training (ELET)
4. Higher education

The 2021 update of the Structural indicators marks the transition to the new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (2021-2030) <sup>(1)</sup>. The next editions will contain a revised set of indicators in order to be aligned with the new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (2021-2030).

Information on the scope of each indicator, along with detailed definitions of the terms used, can be found in Section 5.

Further information on recent reforms in all countries in the Eurydice network can be found in the [Education system descriptions, chapter 14](#).

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<sup>(1)</sup> Council Resolution of 19 February 2021 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030). 2021/C 66/1.

Part of the information in this report that concerns the EU Member States was published in the [\*Education and Training Monitor 2021\*](#).

### **Country coverage**

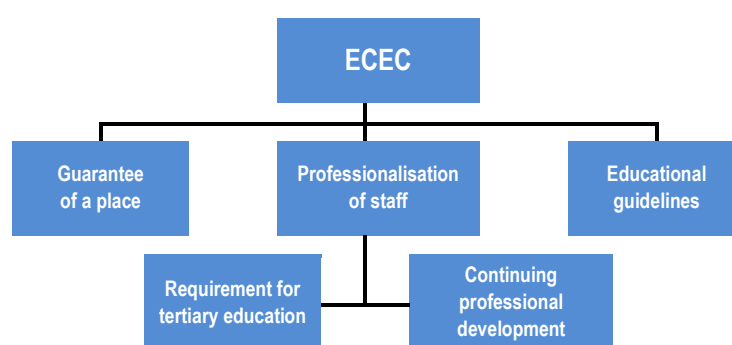
The 2021 update of the structural indicators covers the EU Member States, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey. The information was collected through a questionnaire completed by the national representatives of the Eurydice network.



## 1. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

The structural indicators in this chapter provide an overview of some key features of early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems. The choice of indicators was based on the research literature analysis and the factors listed in the Council recommendation on high-quality early childhood education and care systems <sup>(2)</sup>. The recommendation identified five main aspects of quality in ECEC: access, staff, curriculum, evaluation/monitoring and governance/funding.

However, considering the vast range of possible system-level information and having in mind the limitations of scope and time, only several essential and robust indicators were chosen for yearly monitoring. The diagram below indicates the ECEC structural indicators covered in the Eurydice data collection:



In this analysis, ECEC refers to provision for children from birth through to compulsory primary education that falls within a national regulatory framework, i.e. which must comply with a set of rules, minimum standards and/or undergo accreditation procedures. Only centre-based provision is considered. Home-based provision or childminding services are outside the scope of this analysis. The definition goes beyond the education programmes classified as International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 0 (early childhood education), as it includes all registered ECEC services, not just those with a defined educational component. In many European countries, the ECEC provision for children under age of 3 years does not qualify as early childhood educational development (ISCED level 010), but it still offers an important service for children and their families.

Many European countries structure ECEC services according to the age of the children. Usually, the transition from the first phase to the second takes place when children are around 3 years old. In order to reflect the different regulations, a distinction between provision for ‘children under 3 years old’ and provision for ‘children of 3 years and over’ is often made. However, it is important to keep in mind that, in some countries, the transition can be as early as 2½ years or as late as 4 years of age.

Some European countries have several types of ECEC provision. The indicators show if a certain measure is available in the main type of ECEC provision for each age group.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, pp. 4-14. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2019.189.01.0004.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2019:189:TOC](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2019.189.01.0004.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2019:189:TOC)

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## ***Overview of reforms and policy developments since 2015***

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Since 2014/15, when the structural indicators on ECEC were first gathered, there have been substantial changes in the **legal framework that guarantees access** to ECEC in several EU Member States. Seven countries have introduced compulsory ECEC for 1 year prior to starting primary education, and another three have prolonged the period of mandatory attendance to 2–3 years. Moreover, a number of countries are extending the ages of the legal right to ECEC for every child.

Attending the last year of ECEC has been made **compulsory** in Belgium (from the school year starting September 2020), Czechia (2017), Croatia (2014), Lithuania (2016), Romania (2020), Finland (2015) and Sweden (2018). In Slovakia, such reform is in effect since September 2021.

Three countries have made compulsory attendance longer than one year. In Hungary, ECEC has been compulsory for children from the age 3 since September 2015. In France, the starting age of compulsory education has been age 3 (lowered from age 6) since September 2019. Greece is gradually lowering the starting age of compulsory pre-primary school attendance from age 5 to age 4 (between 2018 and 2021). Bulgaria is gradually introducing compulsory education for 4-year-olds (the aim is for this to be implemented in all municipalities by 2023–2024). Cyprus is planning to introduce compulsory education for 4-year-olds from 2024.

A **legal entitlement** to ECEC has been introduced or extended in Czechia, Poland and Portugal. These countries have imposed a statutory duty on ECEC providers in a catchment area to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children of a certain age whose parents require a place. Czechia and Poland have been gradually extending the entitlement to age 3 (fully implemented in Poland from 2017 and in Czechia from 2018). Portugal lowered the start of universal preschool education (ISCED 020) to age 3 from September 2018. A gradual expansion of the universal guarantee of a place in preschool education has been adopted in Lithuania. According to this plan, 2-year-olds will have a place guarantee from 2025.

There have been substantial reforms aiming to improve the quality and governance of ECEC in some countries. It is important to mention Italy, which is going through a major restructuring of its ECEC system. An integrated ECEC system from birth till age 6 is being introduced: the two components of ECEC (nursery services and preschools) have been integrated into a single framework with the aim of enhancing quality, effectiveness and numbers of providers all over the country.

Several countries have introduced structural reforms concerning **staff qualification or continuing professional development** (CPD). Ireland, Italy, Malta and Finland have raised or are in the process of raising a minimum qualification requirement for all or for a large proportion of staff working with children. In these countries, training pathways to attain the necessary degrees have been established. However, the process of staff professionalisation is still on-going. In addition, Belgium (Flemish Community), Bulgaria and Estonia introduced reforms to provide a coherent system of CPD. Since September 2018, a school type called '*Fachschule für pädagogische Assistenzberufe*' [school for pedagogical assistant professions] (ISCED 3) has been operating in Austria.

**Educational guidelines** have been established for the youngest children for the first time in Belgium (Flemish Community) and France. In Belgium (Flemish Community), a non-binding [pedagogical framework for childcare settings for babies and toddlers](#) (under 2½ years) is available from 2015/16. In 2017, France adopted [the National Framework for Early Childhood Care](#) for services outside the ISCED classification (mainly ECEC provision for children under age 3). This non-binding document sets the main principles and values for safe child development and provides some educational

guidance. Currently, Italy and Portugal are in the process of drafting/adapting the educational guidelines for the ECEC provision for children under age 3.

New ECEC educational guidelines are in place in several countries. In 2016, a new curriculum for pre-school education (children aged 3 and over) was introduced in Bulgaria. Croatia adopted the new national curriculum for early and pre-primary education (2014), and made amendments to the preschool programme in 2018. In Slovakia, a new state educational programme for pre-primary education has applied in all ECEC settings for 3–5-year-olds from 2016 onwards. In Finland, a new national core curriculum for pre-primary education has been in place since 2016 and for ECEC since 2017. Norway introduced a new [framework plan for kindergartens](#) in 2017. In France, new educational guidelines apply from September 2020 for ISCED 020 settings (targeting children aged 3 and over). In 2019, Romania adopted a new curriculum that proposes a unitary approach to early education and care from birth to age 6, as previously there were different guidelines for each group.

A few countries changed their ECEC educational guidelines or introduced new areas of instruction. Lithuania (2015) updated its pre-primary curriculum (for the last year of ECEC) and established a detailed achievement list of children in ECEC. Poland introduced 'preparation to use a modern foreign language' (2014) and the development of reading, writing and mathematical skills (2017) into the preschool core curriculum for children aged 3 and over. Cyprus introduced the [new national curriculum](#) in 2016, targeting children aged 3 to 6 years old, followed by in-service teacher training. The new curriculum highlights elements such as play and a broader concept of learning by combining various subject areas. In Portugal, the educational guidelines for children aged 3 and over have been reviewed and updated (2016). In Greece, pilot creative engagement in English language and soft skills workshops has been included in the 2020/21 preschool curriculum (children aged 4 and over).

**ECEC summary table 1: Legal framework, 2020/21**

	Starting age		
	Universal entitlement to ECEC (*)	Compulsory ECEC	Compulsory primary education
Belgium fr	2y 6m	5y	6y
Belgium de	3	5y	6y
Belgium nl	2y 6m	5y	6y
Bulgaria		5y	7y
Czechia	3y	5y	6y
Denmark	6m		6y
Germany	1y		6y
Estonia	1y 6m		7y
Ireland			6y
Greece		4y	6y
Spain	3y		6y
France		3y	6y
Croatia		6y	7y
Italy			6y
Cyprus		4y 8m	5y 8m
Latvia	1y 6m	5y	7y
Lithuania		6y	7y
Luxembourg	3y	4y	6y
Hungary		3y	6y
Malta			5y
Netherlands		5y	6y
Austria		5y	6y
Poland	3y	6y	7y
Portugal	3y		6y
Romania		5y	6y
Slovenia	11m		6y
Slovakia		(5y)	6y
Finland	9m	6y	7y
Sweden	1y	6y	7y
Bosnia and Herzegovina		5y	6y
Iceland			6y
Liechtenstein	4y		6y
Montenegro			6y
North Macedonia			6y
Norway	1y		6y
Serbia		5y 6m	6y 6m
Turkey			5y 9m

Notes: Abbreviation 'y' means years, 'm' means months. Age in brackets indicates the situation from 2021 September.  
 (\*) A universal legal entitlement to ECEC exists when every child of a certain age has an enforceable right to benefit from ECEC provision.

**ECEC summary table 2: Selected quality aspects, 2020/21**

	1.2. Staff		1.3. Curriculum or educational guidelines
	1.2.1. At least one staff member with a tertiary qualification in education sciences	1.2.2. CPD professional duty or necessary for promotion	
Belgium (BE fr)	■	●	●
Belgium (BE de)	■	●	■
Belgium (BE nl)	■	●	●
Bulgaria	●	■	■
Czechia		■	■
Denmark			●
Germany	●		●
Estonia	●	●	●
Ireland			●
Greece	●	■	■
Spain	■	■	●
France	●	●	●
Croatia	●	●	●
Italy	■	■	■
Cyprus	■	■	■
Latvia		●	●
Lithuania	●	●	●
Luxembourg	■	●	●
Hungary	■	●	●
Malta		■	●
Netherlands	■		■
Austria		●	●
Poland	■	■	■
Portugal	●	■	■
Romania		●	●
Slovenia	●	●	●
Slovakia		■	■
Finland	●	●	●
Sweden	●		●
Bosnia and Herzegovina	●	●	●
Iceland	●	●	●
Liechtenstein	■	●	●
Montenegro	●	●	●
North Macedonia	■	●	●
Norway	●		●
Serbia	■	●	●
Turkey	■	●	●

Notes:

■ = children aged 3 years or more in most countries. Exceptions: children aged 2.5 years or older in Belgium (French and Flemish Communities); children aged 4 years or older in Greece, the Netherlands and Liechtenstein.

● = the entire ECEC phase (from birth to the start of compulsory education).

Tertiary qualification in education = minimum 3 years ISCED 6.

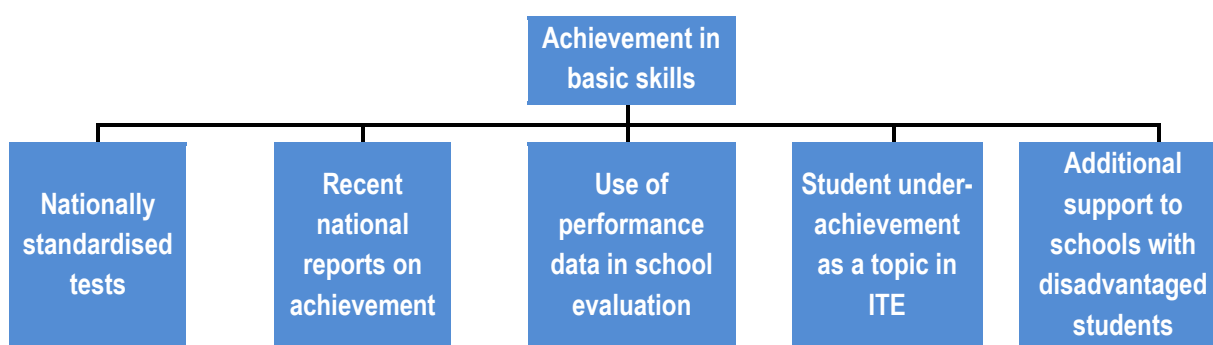
CPD refers to continuing professional development.

## 2. ACHIEVEMENT IN BASIC SKILLS

Low student achievement in the basic skills of literacy/mother tongue, mathematics and science is a concern for many European countries. It is an issue associated not only with the effectiveness of teaching and learning, but also with providing an equitable system of education. Recognising the need for targeted action, the Council of the European Union adopted an EU-wide benchmark related to basic skills, which aims to reduce the proportion of 15-year-olds underachieving in reading, mathematics and science to less than 15 % by 2020 <sup>(3)</sup>.

However, underachievement, defined as performing below level 2 in the PISA test, continues to be a serious challenge across Europe. The latest PISA results from 2018 show that 21.7 % of EU students had low achievement in reading, 22.4 % in mathematics, and 21.6 % in science. Over the past decade, across the EU as a whole, underachievement increased in science and reading and remained stable in mathematics over the past decade (*PISA 2018 and the EU: Striving for social fairness through education* <sup>(4)</sup>).

The structural indicators below focus on a selection of policies and measures that could contribute to improving student achievement. All indicators concern compulsory education, which in the majority of European countries corresponds to ISCED levels 1 and 2.



The selected indicators relate to competences in three distinct areas, i.e. literacy, mathematics and science. These are often treated separately and given different emphasis in national policies. Evidence shows that there is usually more focus on literacy and numeracy, than on science.

### *Overview of reforms and policy developments since 2015*

**The national testing** of students is a widespread practice in Europe but takes different forms, including compulsory and optional tests, as well as sample-based national tests. The results of national tests provide comparable and standardised information about the performance of students, schools and education systems.

In the school year 2019/20, which is the latest year with available data, all European education systems, except Belgium (German-speaking Community), Greece, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia planned to organise nationally standardised tests in compulsory education.

<sup>(3)</sup> Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

<sup>(4)</sup> European Commission, *PISA 2018 and the EU – Striving for social fairness through education*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2019.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, around a third of all education systems were forced to cancel at least some of the national tests that were scheduled to take place in spring 2020 <sup>(5)</sup>.

National tests in some education systems, such as Belgium (Flemish Community) and Czechia, are based on the rotation of subjects. In the majority of European countries, standardised national assessments in compulsory education focus on the language of instruction and mathematics, and to a much lesser extent on science.

In the past six years, national authorities in some European countries have moved from pilot national tests to the establishment of regular testing systems (Czechia, Spain <sup>(6)</sup>) and others have shifted some national tests from a summative to a formative approach (Portugal). Some countries have added new tests in specific years (Lithuania), while others have discontinued certain tests (Latvia), or all national testing for the time being (North Macedonia).

The majority of European countries publish **national reports on achievement** in each of the basic skills based on national performance data. In many cases, these reports are complemented by reports based on the country results from international surveys such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS. Moreover, in around a third of European countries, national reports are based solely on the results of international surveys. In terms of the subject areas covered by these reports, as with the previous indicator on national testing, it appears that performance in the language of instruction and mathematics is analysed much more often than performance in science.

Across Europe, the **evaluation of schools** has become increasingly important for monitoring the overall quality of education. In most cases, school evaluators examine a variety of data from different sources, which could include different types of **student performance data**.

In the vast majority of countries where the external evaluation of schools is practised, evaluators take student performance data into account in order to form their judgement on school quality. This is not the case in Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, Slovakia and Norway, where external school evaluation is concerned with school processes and compliance with regulations. Moreover, several countries do not carry out any external school evaluation (Croatia <sup>(7)</sup>, Finland and Bosnia and Herzegovina). In the past five years, a major reform in Bulgaria has led to the introduction of external school evaluation and the use of student performance data in it.

It is crucial for teachers to be able to deal with student underachievement and manage students with a range of different abilities and needs. A number of countries stipulate that **competences to tackle low student achievement** should be acquired during **initial teacher education (ITE)**.

The education authorities in 20 European systems provide central-level regulations, recommendations and/or guidelines for ITE programmes that specify that prospective teachers should learn how to address student difficulties during their training. Central-level involvement in determining the content of ITE programmes varies between countries. The diverse approaches are reflected in the differing degrees of detail in guidance documents and the variety of practices both at the national level and at the level of individual higher education institutions. In some cases, only general guidelines are

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<sup>(5)</sup> For more details on national testing, see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020. [Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe – 2020: Overview of major reforms since 2015](#), pp. 12-15.

<sup>(6)</sup> The tests in Spain are either sample-based or census-based, depending on the grade. They have no academic consequences.

<sup>(7)</sup> The pilot project 'External Evaluation of Primary and General Upper Secondary Schools' (*Vanjsko vrednovanje osnovnih škola i gimnazija*) started at the end of 2017 and represents the first phase in the preparation for the introduction of a comprehensive system of external evaluation of educational institutions. See <https://www.ncvvo.hr/vanjsko-vrednovanje/vanjsko-vrednovanje-odgojno-obrazovnih-ustanova/pilot-projekt-vanjskoga-vrednovanja-osnovnih-skola-gimnazija/>

provided without specifying particular subjects. Again, science is the area that is less likely to be mentioned explicitly. It is also significant that in 17 education systems there are no such guidelines, which is often due to the fact that, in these cases, higher education institutions are completely autonomous in determining the content of their teacher education programmes.

The central education authorities in around two thirds of all education systems allocate **additional resources to schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students**. There are a variety of approaches in terms of the organisation of the support, the target groups and the actions funded.

In most countries, schools receive the additional funding directly from the central authorities, although in many cases local authorities are also involved. In some countries, financial flows are rather complex because several levels of authorities (central, regional and/or local) are involved in the allocation of funding. Moreover, in some cases, in addition to the centrally allocated funding, education providers/schools can apply for extra funds for specific purposes.

Central authorities **do not** allocate such additional resources in Denmark, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, North Macedonia and Norway. In Denmark and Norway this is done at the level of municipalities. In other countries, additional resources for these purposes are provided mainly through social programmes (Romania) or EU and other international projects (North Macedonia). In certain cases (Denmark and Hungary), central level support is not financial, but focuses on reinforcing the professional development of teachers, providing remedial classes and other educational support, as well as additional salary payments for teachers and support staff in less developed areas during the COVID-19 crisis (Hungary).

Across Europe, additional support is most commonly linked to socio-economic background, migrant status and disability. Criteria like geographical location and ethnic origin are used less often. Targeted funds are most often used to provide additional staff (education or other professionals), to create professional development opportunities to improve teachers' skills in delivering inclusive education and to fund career advice services. In the past six years, reforms in this area have led to the establishment of a scheme that gives additional support to disadvantaged students (Malta) or to the reinforcement of existing support mechanisms (e.g. Germany and Spain).

In conclusion, the review of the structural indicators on achievement in basic skills demonstrates that, while most countries organise national standardised tests and publish national reports on achievement, the three basic skills are not treated equally (science is given less attention). Moreover, many countries use student performance data in external school evaluation but only around half have issued national guidelines to include tackling student underachievement as a topic in initial teacher education. Finally, while the majority of countries provide some type of central support to schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students, there is a great variety of approaches in terms of the organisation of the support, the target groups and the actions funded.

Overall, there have been few policy changes and reforms across the indicators on achievement in basic skills in the past six years. This could be seen as an indication that these areas (except the organisation of national standardised tests) do not seem to be a priority for policy action, despite the fact that, in many countries, there have been no major improvements in student achievement as measured by the PISA survey.



## Summary table on Achievement in basic skills, 2020/21 (\*)

	2. Recent national reports on achievement			3. Use of performance data in school evaluation	4. Guidelines on underachievement as a topic in ITE			5. Additional resources provided by top-level authorities to schools with disadvantaged students
Belgium (BE fr)	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Belgium (BE de)	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Belgium (BE nl)	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Bulgaria	R	M	S	●				●
Czechia	R	M	S	●				●
Denmark	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	
Germany	R	M	S	●	R			●
Estonia	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Ireland	R	M	S	●	R	M		●
Greece	R	M	S					●
Spain	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
France	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Croatia	R	M	S					
Italy	R	M		●				●
Cyprus	R	M	S		R	M	S	●
Latvia	R	M		●				●
Lithuania	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Luxembourg	R	M		●	R	M	S	●
Hungary	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	
Malta	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Netherlands	R	M	S	●				●
Austria	R	M		●	R	M	S	●
Poland	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Portugal	R	M	S	●				●
Romania	R	M	S	●				
Slovenia	R	M	S					●
Slovakia	R	M			R	M	S	●
Finland	R	M						●
Sweden	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	●
Bosnia and Herzegovina	R	M	S					●
Iceland	R	M		●				●
Liechtenstein	R	M		●				●
Montenegro	R	M	S	●				●
North Macedonia	R	M	S	●	R	M	S	
Norway	R	M	S		R	M	S	
Serbia	R	M	S	●				●
Turkey	R	M	S	●				●

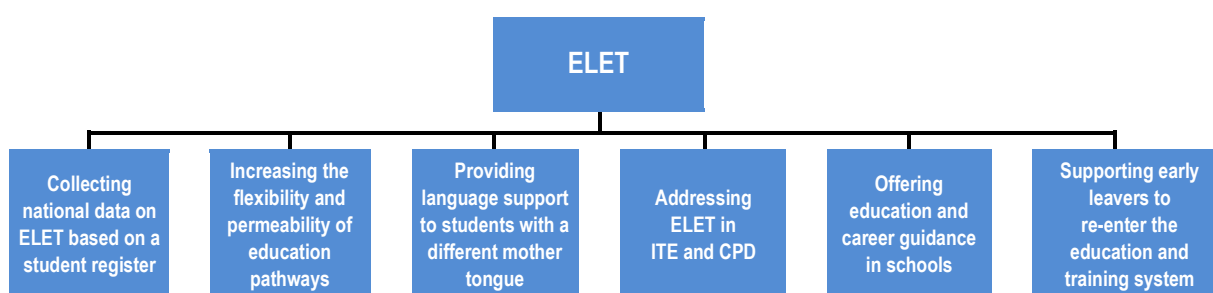
Notes: 'R' = reading; 'M' = mathematics; 'S' = science.

(\*) No data collection on indicator 1. National tests in compulsory education for school year 2020/21.

### 3. EARLY LEAVING FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ELET)

The structural indicators on ELET <sup>(8)</sup> focus on certain key policies and measures that together cover the three main areas of action – prevention, intervention and compensation – as highlighted in the EU Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 <sup>(9)</sup>. This set of indicators therefore provides an overview of recent reforms and policy developments related to some of the main activities taking place in European countries to achieve the European benchmark on ELET <sup>(10)</sup>. The indicators focus on school education: primary and general secondary along with school-based initial vocational education (ISCED 1, 2 and 3).

The diagram below indicates the six ELET structural indicators covered in the Eurydice data collection:



#### *Overview of reforms and policy developments since 2015*

A **national data collection system based on a student register** can be used to understand the scale of the problem and to develop and implement appropriate policies to address ELET. A system like this can also be employed to both monitor absenteeism and evaluate the effectiveness of policies to reduce early leaving. Hungary is one of the countries that has introduced this kind of data collection in the last few years (2016) as part of an early warning system for primary and secondary schools. This data collection makes it possible to monitor absenteeism and analyse early school leaving patterns at several levels – school, local, regional and national. In some other European countries, the national data collection has been modified or expanded. In 2020/21, the majority of countries are collecting national data on ELET through a student register. In Portugal, the existing data collection on ELET is currently under revision; new methodologies to measure ELET more accurately are now being studied.

Policies for **increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways** can help prevent ELET by removing potential obstacles to the completion of education and training programmes. These might include initiatives to promote alternative education and training pathways (e.g. vocational or technical rather than general), to facilitate the transition between pathways and to improve systems for the recognition of students' skills and qualifications. For example, in Greece, new legislation introduced in 2016 has reformed the vocational lyceum (upper secondary vocational cycle). This allows for greater permeability between programmes within a more flexible framework, with the aim of

<sup>(8)</sup> ELET refers here to students leaving education or training before completing the upper secondary level and thus not obtaining the corresponding school leaving certificate. However, the structural indicators on ELET focus on the whole period of school education: primary education and general secondary along with school-based initial vocational education (ISCED 1, 2 and 3).

<sup>(9)</sup> Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, OJ C 191, 1.7.2011.

<sup>(10)</sup> Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030), OJ C 66, 26.2.2021.

attracting a greater number of students. It also promotes a smoother transition from one education pathway to another. In 2020/21, there have been reforms in two education systems (Spain and Poland) that aim to increase the flexibility and permeability of education pathways. The current update of the structural indicators thus shows that almost all European countries now have policies in place to promote alternative education and training pathways, and measures exist in many countries to facilitate transitions between the different pathways.

**Language support for students with a mother tongue other than the language of instruction** can be crucial as these students are often more at risk of leaving school early. The majority of European countries already had such policies in place in 2015. Further developments in this area have mainly been focused on intensifying this support. For example, reforms implemented in Slovenia in 2019/20 increased language provision and support for students with no or very limited knowledge of the language of instruction. Similarly in 2020/21, various programmes have been implemented in the different Autonomous Communities in Spain to support the skills of young people in the language of instruction. This structural indicators update shows that almost all European countries now have policies for language support for students with a different mother tongue.

**Addressing ELET in ITE and/or in CPD** is essential if teachers are to know how to support students who are showing signs of disengagement at school, and who are therefore at risk of leaving school early. This was an area addressed by relatively few countries in 2015, but has since become the focus of top-level regulations/recommendations and/or practical support in many of them. For example, since the implementation of the 'Teacher and school leadership education programme 2017-2020' in Estonia, inclusive education has become the priority in all CPD courses. As a result of a reform in 2020/21, teachers in Cyprus are now attending training programmes that help them to react to signs and circumstances that could indicate the possibility of students wanting to leave school early. Despite these positive developments across Europe, this current update of the structural indicators shows that educating and training teachers on issues relating to ELET is still an area where comparatively fewer policies exist.

The role of **education and career guidance services** in preventing students from leaving education and training is widely acknowledged. In order to strengthen this area in schools, several European countries have introduced reforms in recent years to ensure that education and career guidance is not only delivered through school-based guidance or counselling services, but also through the national curriculum, thus systematically reaching all students. In Poland, for example, education and career guidance became part of the ISCED 2 and 3 national curricula in 2017/18, and more recently in Malta at ISCED 1-3 in 2018/19. These developments are in addition to the existing support provided by the school guidance services in all these countries. This two-way approach to promoting education and career guidance in schools is now (in 2020/21) promoted through top-level policies in about two thirds of the countries.

**Support for early leavers to re-enter the education and training system** has been strengthened through a number of policy developments since 2015. These have involved the provision of second chance education, education and career guidance and/or Youth Guarantee-related education and training initiatives <sup>(1)</sup>. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, young people who leave school without qualifications are automatically registered with the public employment service of Flanders (VDAB), as a result of the real-time data exchange between education and work. These

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<sup>(1)</sup> The Youth Guarantee is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, further education, apprenticeship, or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. See the Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee, OJ C 372, 4.11.2020.

young people can then be guided directly to a job or to an educational pathway. Currently, almost all European countries have policies promoting second chance education for early leavers, and most of them support early leavers through targeted education, career guidance and through Youth Guarantee-related initiatives that aim to help early leavers re-enter the education and training system.

**ELET summary table 1, 2020/21**

	1. National data collection on ELET based on a student register	2. Policies for increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways:			3. Policies for language support for students with a different mother tongue
		2.1. Providing alternative education and training pathways	2.2. Facilitating transitions within education and training systems	2.3. Recognising skills and/or qualifications	
Belgium (BE fr)	●	●	●	●	●
Belgium (BE de)		●	●	●	●
Belgium (BE nl)	●	●	●	●	●
Bulgaria	●	●		●	●
Czechia	●	●	●	●	●
Denmark	●	●	●		●
Germany		●	●		●
Estonia	●	●	●	●	●
Ireland	●	●			●
Greece	●	●	●	●	●
Spain		●	●	●	●
France	●	●	●	●	●
Croatia	●		●	●	●
Italy	●	●	●	●	●
Cyprus	●	●	●		●
Latvia	●	●	●	●	●
Lithuania	●	●	●	●	●
Luxembourg	●	●	●	●	●
Hungary	●	●			
Malta	●	●	●	●	●
Netherlands	●	●	●		●
Austria	●	●	●		●
Poland	●	●	●	●	●
Portugal		●	●	●	●
Romania	●	●	●	●	●
Slovenia		●	●	●	●
Slovakia		●	●		●
Finland	●	●	●	●	●
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●
Bosnia and Herzegovina	●				
Iceland	●	●			
Liechtenstein	●	●	●	●	●
Montenegro	●	●	●	●	●
North Macedonia	●	●	●	●	
Norway	●	●	●		●
Serbia		●			●
Turkey	●				

ELET summary table 2, 2020/21

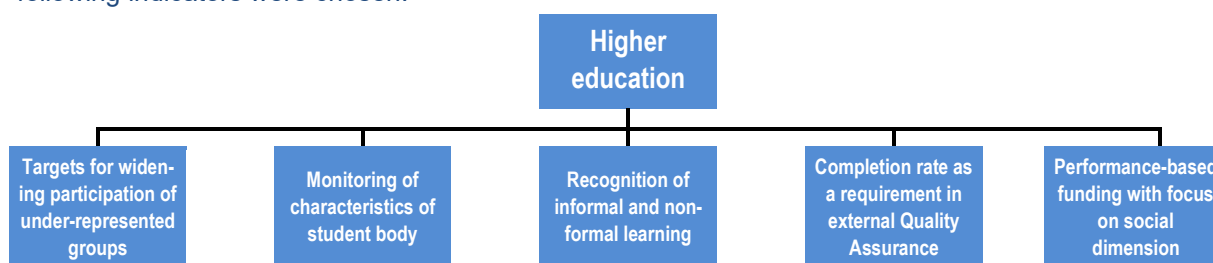
	4. Policies encouraging the inclusion of ELET in ITE and/or CPD	5. Education and career guidance in schools, ISCED 2 and 3*	6. Policies to help early leavers re-enter the education and training system:		
			6.1. Second chance education	6.2. Education and career guidance	6.3. Youth guarantee
Belgium (BE fr)	•	•	•	•	•
Belgium (BE de)	•	•	•		
Belgium (BE nl)	•	•	•	•	•
Bulgaria		•	•	•	•
Czechia		•	•	•	•
Denmark			•	•	•
Germany	•	•	•	•	•
Estonia	•	•	•	•	•
Ireland	•	•	•	•	•
Greece	•	•	•	•	•
Spain	•	•	•	•	•
France	•	•	•	•	•
Croatia			•	•	•
Italy	•	•	•		•
Cyprus	•	•	•	•	•
Latvia	•	•	•	•	•
Lithuania		•	•	•	•
Luxembourg	•		•	•	•
Hungary	•	•	•		•
Malta	•	•	•	•	•
Netherlands	•		•	•	•
Austria	•	•	•	•	•
Poland		•	•	•	•
Portugal	•	•	•	•	•
Romania		•	•	•	•
Slovenia	•	•	•	•	•
Slovakia		•	•		
Finland		•	•	•	•
Sweden	•	•	•	•	•
Bosnia and Herzegovina			•		
Iceland					
Liechtenstein		•	•	•	
Montenegro	•		•		
North Macedonia			•	•	•
Norway		•	•	•	
Serbia		•	•		
Turkey		•	•		

Note: \* Education and career guidance are provided both as a compulsory part of the curriculum **and** by school guidance services in lower and upper secondary education.

## 4. HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2008, the Council adopted an EU-wide benchmark on tertiary education, stating that by 2020 at least 40 % of 30–34-year-olds should have a tertiary or equivalent level qualification<sup>(12)</sup>. This benchmark was part of the double headline target on education within the Europe 2020 growth strategy. According to Eurostat data, this target was reached in 2019<sup>(13)</sup>.

The following five structural indicators were developed in relation to this headline target (see summary table below), and guided by the Commission's communication, 'Supporting growth and jobs: An agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems'<sup>(14)</sup>. Among the main objectives laid out in the communication are two key interlinked policy goals: increasing and widening participation, and improving the quality and relevance of higher education. To achieve these goals, the following indicators were chosen:



### *Overview of reforms and policy developments since 2015*

In the area of higher education, there were very few reforms that took place since 2015. New policies were introduced to include quantitative targets for widening participation and attainment of under-represented groups, and completion as a required criterion in external Quality Assurance. In 2017 in Austria, quantitative targets were introduced through the outcome objectives for the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWFW). It called for an increase in the proportion of higher education students with parents without upper secondary school leaving examination or other higher education entrance qualification. Croatia's Agency for Science and Higher Education also decided to include completion as a requirement in external quality assurance when a new cycle of re-accreditation started in 2017. The higher education institution (HEI) collects and analyses data on student progression and uses them to obtain data on student completion. The re-accreditation cycle has been completed for 30 HEIs, so data on completion rates as a required criterion in external quality assurance are available for all of them.

For Hungary's institutional accreditation in 2018, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee included in its evaluation criteria the way the institution manages (i.e. gathers, analyses and uses) completion rates and drop-out rates. In 2019/20 a new criterion was added presenting the rate of doctoral students who obtain a doctoral degree and whether this rate reaches the level defined by the doctoral school in its quality objectives.

<sup>(12)</sup> Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

<sup>(13)</sup> Eurostat Press release 22th April 2020 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/10749941/3-22042020-BP-EN.pdf/04c88d0b-17af-cf7e-7e78-331a67f3fcd5>

<sup>(14)</sup> Communication from the European Commission, 2011. 'Supporting Growth and Jobs: an Agenda for the Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education Systems'. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities [COM (2011) 567 final].

However, two countries (Finland and Romania) ceased to have quantitative targets for widening participation and attainment of under-represented groups between 2015 and 2021.

When looking at the five indicators for the reference year 2020/21, in more than two thirds of the education systems, the monitoring of the socioeconomic characteristics of the student body was the most widely implemented policy. In addition, the recognition of prior informal or non-formal learning and the requirement of completion rates was implemented in more than half of the education systems.

The two remaining policies (indicators 4.1 and 4.5), which focus heavily on the social dimension and widening participation in higher education, were implemented in less than half of the education systems. This suggests that while indicators related to the quality and relevance of higher education show implementation in the majority of education systems, there is more work to be done in relation to the two indicators on widening participation and the social dimension of higher education.

### Summary table on higher education, 2020/21

	1. Quantitative targets for widening participation and/or attainment of under-represented groups	2. Monitoring of socioeconomic background of students	3. Recognition of informal or non-formal learning in entry to higher education	4. Completion rates as a required criterion in external QA	5. Performance-based funding mechanisms with a social dimension focus
Belgium (BE fr)		●	●	●	
Belgium (BE de)				●	
Belgium (BE nl)		●	●		●
Bulgaria		●		●	
Czechia					
Denmark		●	●		
Germany		●	●	●	
Estonia			●	●	
Ireland	●	●	●	●	●
Greece	●				
Spain		●	●	●	●
France	●	●	●	●	●
Croatia		●		●	●
Italy		●	●	●	●
Cyprus	●				
Latvia					
Lithuania		●	●	●	
Luxembourg					
Hungary		●	●	●	
Malta	●	●	●	●	
Netherlands		●			
Austria	●	●			●
Poland		●	●	●	●
Portugal			●	●	●
Romania		●		●	●
Slovenia				●	
Slovakia					
Finland		●	●		
Sweden		●	●		
Bosnia and Switzerland					
Iceland			●	●	
Liechtenstein		●	●		
Montenegro			●	●	
North Macedonia		●		●	
Norway		●	●		
Serbia	●	●		●	
Turkey		●	●		

## 5. SCOPE OF INDICATORS / KEY DEFINITIONS

### 1. Early childhood education and care

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#### 1.1. Guarantee of a place

This table shows the starting age of the universal legal entitlement to an ECEC place, compulsory ECEC and compulsory primary education.

**Compulsory ECEC** refers to the obligation for children to attend ECEC settings when they reach a certain age.

**Legal entitlement to ECEC** refers to a statutory duty on ECEC providers to secure publicly subsidised ECEC provision for all children living in a catchment area whose parents, regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status, require a place for their child.

It is important to note that a 'right to ECEC for every child' expressed in legislation in general terms, but without adequate funding and the necessary policies to ensure the delivery of sufficient places is not considered a legal entitlement. Similarly, the existence of some publicly subsidised ECEC settings providing places for limited numbers of children is not considered a legal entitlement if public authorities are not obliged to provide a place. A legal entitlement to ECEC exists when every child has an enforceable right to benefit from ECEC provision. An enforceable right means that public authorities guarantee a place for each child whose parents request it (in the age-range covered by the legal entitlement), regardless of their employment, socio-economic or family status. It does not necessarily imply that provision is free, only that it is publicly subsidised and affordable.

A targeted legal entitlement or targeted compulsory ECEC that applies only to certain groups of children (e.g. disadvantaged learners, children of parents who are in employment, certain minorities, etc.) are not considered in this publication.

#### 1.2. Professionalisation of ECEC staff

**ECEC staff** refers here only to those professionals who have regular, daily, direct contact with children and whose duties involve education and care. These staff have the main responsibility for groups of children in an ECEC setting. Their duties usually include designing and delivering safe and developmentally appropriate activities in accordance with all relevant programmes/curricula.

The term ECEC staff does not include heads of ECEC settings, medical/healthcare staff (such as paediatricians, physiotherapists, psychomotor therapists, nutritionists, etc. providing support for children's physical development), professional specialists (such as psychologists), assistants/auxiliary staff who perform only domestic or maintenance roles (such as preparing food and cleaning premises).

The indicator 1.2.1 on the requirement for at least one staff member per group of children in ECEC to be qualified to a minimum of Bachelor level in the field of education (i.e. a minimum of three years at ISCED 6 according to the ISCED 2011 classification) aims to show whether education staff in the sector are highly qualified. This is important as staff who are highly qualified in education can provide leadership to other team members when designing and delivering developmentally appropriate activities for children and thus raise the quality of provision.



Programmes at **ISCED level 6, at Bachelor's or equivalent level**, are often designed to provide participants with academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level are typically theoretically-based but may include practical components and are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice. They are traditionally offered by universities and equivalent tertiary educational institutions, but do not necessarily involve the completion of a research project or thesis <sup>(15)</sup>.

The indicator 1.2.2 presents the basic requirements regarding the **continuing professional development** (CPD). CPD consists of the formal in-service training undertaken throughout a career that allows ECEC staff members to broaden, develop and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It includes both subject-based and pedagogical training. Different formats are offered such as courses, seminars, peer observation and support from practitioners' networks. In certain cases, continuing professional development activities may lead to supplementary qualifications.

**Professional duty:** CPD is considered to be one of ECEC staff's professional duties according to regulations or other relevant policy documents.

### **1.3. Curriculum or educational guidelines**

This indicator shows whether countries have ECEC curriculum or educational guidelines for the entire ECEC phase or only for the children aged 3 and over.

The **ECEC curriculum** as defined in the ECEC quality framework covers developmental care, formative interactions, learning experiences and supportive assessment. It promotes young children's personal and social development and their learning as well as laying the foundations for their future life and citizenship. The ECEC curriculum is set out in formal documentation issued by the responsible authorities.

The learning opportunities to be provided to young children can also be communicated through official **educational guidelines** which explain the content and teaching approaches incorporated into legislation as part of, for example, an ECEC education programme or reference framework. The guidelines often refer to skills, educational standards, curriculum criteria or care/education plans; they may also offer practical advice for ECEC practitioners.

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## **2. Achievement in basic skills**

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### **2.1. Nationally standardised tests in literacy, mathematics and science**

This indicator examines the extent to which the three basic skills are assessed in national tests during compulsory education.

**National testing** is defined as 'the national administration of standardised tests and centrally set examinations'. These tests are standardised by the national education authorities or, in the case of Belgium, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom, by the top-level authorities for education. The procedures for the administration and marking of tests, as well as the setting of content and the interpretation and use of results are decided at central level. National testing is carried out under the authority of a national or centralised body and all examinees take the tests under similar conditions.

This indicator includes national testing for both summative and formative purposes. Both compulsory and optional tests are considered, as are sample-based national tests.

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<sup>(15)</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

## 2.2. Recent national reports on achievement in basic skills

This indicator relates to national reports on performance trends, factors contributing to underachievement, and effective approaches for raising attainment in the basic skills. These reports are based on national data and/or results of international surveys such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS and have been published since 2015.

## 2.3. Use of student performance data in external school evaluation

This indicator looks at whether student performance data is used as an information source in external school evaluation.

The **external evaluation of schools** is conducted by evaluators who report to a local, regional or central/top level education authority; they are not directly involved in the activities of the school under evaluation. This type of evaluation covers a broad range of school activities, including teaching and learning and/or all aspects of school management.

The **student performance data** used in external school evaluation may include students' results in centrally set examinations and nationally standardised assessments. Also used are student results in teacher assessment; data on student progression through school; student results in international surveys; as well as, although less frequently, outcomes in the job market and student or parent satisfaction.

## 2.4. Central guidelines on addressing student underachievement in initial teacher education (ITE)

This indicator shows whether central level regulations, recommendations or guidelines for ITE programmes identify any final competences related to the knowledge and skills needed for addressing underachievement in basic skills or whether higher education institutions have full autonomy with regard to the content of ITE programmes.

## 2.5. Additional support for schools enrolling large numbers of disadvantaged students

This indicator examines whether central education authorities allocate additional resources to schools that enrol large numbers of disadvantaged students. **Additional support to schools** refers to nationally allocated financial and/or other resources that require additional funding (extra educational staff, special allowances, professional development opportunities, reduced teaching time, scholarships, career advice services, etc.). The central education authorities can allocate these resources to the regional, local or school level directly.

**Disadvantaged students** (groups at risk or vulnerable groups) are defined at national level. Possible criteria are socio-economic status, ethnic origin, having a migrant background or others depending on the national context.

**Socio-economic status** refers to a combined economic and sociological measure of an individual's or his/her family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Parents' educational attainment is often taken as a proxy measure for socio-economic status.

### **3. Early leaving from education and training (ELET)**

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In this analysis, 'early leaving from education and training' refers to students leaving education and training before completing the upper secondary level and obtaining a corresponding school leaving certificate. This broad definition encompasses the young people who, according to their own country's definition, are considered to be early leavers. It includes, for example, young people who leave (or drop out of) school without completing what is considered in the national context as basic education (usually primary and lower secondary education).

#### **3.1. Collecting national data on ELET based on a student register**

This indicator examines the existence of a national data collection system on ELET to assess the scale of the problem. ELET data from student registers is collected automatically from school administration systems based on students' personal data. This can be used to determine the number of early leavers by comparing records from one school year to the next. It can also be useful when evaluating the effectiveness of policies to reduce early leaving. Student register based data can finally also be employed to monitor absenteeism, thereby acting as a warning system to alert schools and authorities that they may need to intervene to help students at risk of leaving early.

#### **3.2. Increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways**

This indicator focuses on policy initiatives aimed at minimising the risk of early leaving by offering students a wider choice of programmes or alternative pathways (academic, technical or vocational), as well as providing opportunities for students to change tracks or programmes which do not meet their needs. The indicator also covers policies that are designed to ensure a smooth transition between education levels and programmes (especially from general education to VET programmes). It also includes policies that aim to improve the recognition of skills and qualifications, thereby helping students to progress to the next level or to re-engage in education or training if they have left the system prematurely.

#### **3.3. Providing language support for students with a different mother tongue**

This indicator covers policies for language support for students with a mother tongue that is different from the language of instruction. Empirically, young people from migrant backgrounds tend to be over-represented among those leaving education and training early in many European countries<sup>(16)</sup>. Policies on language support for these students can help ensure the provision of measures for strengthening the students' competences in the language of instruction, which are crucial in order to benefit from all the learning opportunities and to avoid falling behind.

#### **3.4. Addressing ELET in initial teacher education and continuing professional development**

This indicator examines policies and measures for improving teachers' understanding of the challenge of early leaving through initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD). This implies increasing teachers' awareness of the underlying causes, the main triggers and early warning signs, as well as strengthening teachers' capacity to take action in both preventing early leaving and supporting students who are at risk. Training on ELET may also provide teachers with an opportunity to engage in peer learning and collaborate with other teachers and schools with experience in this area.

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<sup>(16)</sup> Eurostat (EU-LFS) [edat\_ifse\_02]

### 3.5. Offering education and career guidance in schools

This indicator analyses policies on education and career guidance, which is provided both as a compulsory part of the curriculum and by school guidance services in lower and upper secondary education. Education and career guidance provides students with information as well as support for developing their decision-making and other skills important for managing their educational and/or career choices. Guidance may also include psycho-social work or counselling to help students, in particular those at risk of leaving early, as they progress through education and training.

### 3.6. Providing support for early leavers to re-enter the education and training system

This indicator presents policies and measures that help young people who have left education and training early to re-enter the system. This may entail: policies promoting the provision of second chance education, i.e. alternative education and training pathways leading to a formal qualification; education and career guidance, which may be combined with practical skills training, one-to-one or group counselling, or similar support offered to help young people develop a vision for their careers and lives; and initiatives taking place within the context of the 'Youth Guarantee' <sup>(17)</sup>, which seeks to ensure that all young people under 25 get a good quality, definite offer within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed, for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship or continuing education that is adapted to each individual's need and situation.

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## 4. Higher education

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### 4.1. Quantitative targets relating to the social dimension of higher education

This indicator examines countries' attempts to widen participation in higher education through quantitative targets for under-represented groups of students. It encompasses quantitative targets which focus on widening or increasing participation among the groups currently under-represented in higher education. However, equity in treatment is also important, so targets related to improving completion rates (attainment) for these groups are also considered here. Examples of under-represented groups might include people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic groups, lower socio-economic status groups, women/men, etc.

### 4.2. Monitoring of the socio-economic characteristics of the student body

For this indicator, **systematic monitoring** refers to the process of systematic data gathering, analysis and use of data to inform policy. It aims to capture how the higher education system operates and whether it is reaching its objectives and targets. It can take place at various stages: on entry to higher education, during studies (refers to student retention), at graduation (refers to completion rates) and after graduation (refers to graduate destinations – employment or further study). Systematic monitoring must include mechanisms for cross-institutional data gathering and allow cross-institutional data comparability.

This indicator focuses on the systematic monitoring of the **socio-economic status of students**, defined as a combined measure of students' or their families' economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analysing a family's socio-economic

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<sup>(17)</sup> Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee. OJ C 120, 26.4.2013. ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013H0426(01)))

status, the household income (combined and individual) is examined as well as the education and occupation of earners. Parents' educational attainment is often taken as a proxy measure for socio-economic status.

### **4.3. Recognition of informal and non-formal learning on entry to higher education**

This indicator focuses on prior informal and non-formal learning.

**Informal learning** means learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective. Examples of informal learning outcomes are skills acquired through life and work experiences such as project management or ICT skills acquired at work; languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country; ICT skills acquired outside work; skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports and youth work; and through home-based activities (e.g. taking care of a child).

**Non-formal learning** means learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives and learning time), where some form of learning support is present (e.g. from a tutor); it may cover programmes to deliver work skills, adult literacy, and basic education for early school leavers. Very common examples of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT skills, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target groups or the general public.

### **4.4. Completion rates as a requirement in external quality assurance**

This indicator focuses on the use of completion rates as one of the criteria included in external quality assurance procedures for higher education institutions/programmes. Where the monitoring of completion rates is a requirement, it gives a good indication that they are measured in practice and that the information is likely to be used in policy making. The completion rate indicates the percentage of students who complete the higher education programme they have started.

### **4.5. Performance-based funding mechanisms with a social dimension focus**

Performance-based funding mechanisms with a **social dimension focus** enable funding to be provided to higher education institutions if they meet a defined level of performance in relation to social objectives. The performance may refer to people – staff or students – with defined characteristics in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, migrant status, etc.



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### OPEN DATA FROM THE EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<https://data.europa.eu/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

## **Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe – 2021: Overview of major reforms since 2015**

This report contains more than 20 structural indicators on education policies in four areas: early childhood education and care (ECEC), achievement in basic skills, early leaving from education and training (ELET) and higher education.

The Eurydice project on Structural Indicators for Monitoring Education and Training Systems in Europe provides yearly data since 2015, which illustrate the main policy developments in education and training systems across Europe.

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The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

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