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Youth - Investing and Empowering

EU YOUTH REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first time that the Commission is publishing a report on Youth in the European Union. It is a first effort to compile data and statistics in order to give a picture of the situation of young people in Europe.

This report was requested by the Council of the European Union and constitutes one of the supporting documents of the Commission's Communication for the new youth cooperation framework, entitled "An EU Strategy for Youth: Investing and Empowering".

The objective of this first youth report is twofold. First, it is to support the new youth cooperation framework by collecting much of the available statistics and data on the conditions of young people. Second, any effort to address young people's challenges and improve their situation must be evidence-based.

The report "European Research on Youth" with results of youth-related projects funded under consecutive Commission research framework programmes from 1996 to now, as well as a forthcoming Eurostat publication with data and statistics on the situation of young people, will provide additional information.

By making accessible evidence and knowledge on the situation of young people in Europe, this report also gives some indications for where there is a lack of research and data on youth and possible venues for future improvement.

By elaborating this first European report on youth, the ambition of the Commission is to contribute to better integrated youth policies. This dynamic is also valid at the national level where ongoing knowledge production can also improve conditions for developing youth policy.

Target group covered by the report: definition of youth

There is no clear-cut definition of youth. The period of when a person is seen as young may be considered a transition phase. Youth has been defined as "the passage from a dependant childhood to independent adulthood". Young people are in transition between a world of rather secure and standard biographical development to a world of choice and/or risk where individuals have to choose and plan their own orientation and social integration.

Finding a common definition of youth is not an easy task. Age is a useful but insufficient indication to characterise the transition to adulthood. Other qualitative information also reveals how societies acknowledge the increasing maturity of young people. The age limit of child benefits, the end of full-time compulsory schooling, the voting age and the minimum age for standing for elections may be considered as key milestones to adulthood.

The age limit of child benefits usually ranges from 15 (in the Czech Republic and Latvia) to 18, but it is often prolonged when children are still in education. The end of compulsory education may also be seen as the time when individuals are free to make their own choices. It ranges from 14 to 17 years.

Considering civic rights, the voting age for national elections in the European Union is 18 in all countries except Austria (16). In Italy the legal voting age is 18 but the Senate is elected only by people aged 25 and over. The age to stand for elections as a candidate varies from 18 to 40 across Member States, and may depend of the type of election (see chapter 3).

Aside from the above-mentioned key milestones that are mainly related to age, adulthood is also considered as the time when young people become financially self-sufficient. The increase in the length of studies (especially through increased participation in higher education), combined with difficulties in getting a first job and access to affordable housing have increased the length of the transition from youth to independence.

For these reasons this report focuses mainly on the population aged between 15 and 29, but statistics are sometimes available for different age ranges.

Method

Areas covered in the report are among those considered to be important for the development of youth policy. However, more coverage has been given to areas and issues where useful data on the situation of young people in Europe has been easily accessible.

Sources

Chapters 1, 2 and 4 build primarily on data and analyses provided by Eurostat based on the following main surveys:

- European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS)
- European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC)

For chapter 3, the main sources are reports to the Commission by Member States, data from the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYP)¹ and some Eurobarometer surveys. Eurobarometer surveys are not statistical tools but opinion polls based on subjective responses, and are not always exhaustive.

The European Social Survey (ESS)² has also provided data for some parts of chapters 3 and 4.

Content

The aim of this report is to provide data and analysis on the different pathways of young people, and how they influence – and are themselves influenced – by underlying demographic, economic and social contexts. This regards in particular the transition from education to the labour market. Other important elements are the analysis of young people's active citizenship as well as their well being, their family life, and more generally some aspects of their lifestyle.

¹ EKCYP has been developed jointly by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. This is a knowledge management system that aims at providing youth policy-makers and other interested stakeholders with a single entry point to retrieve information on the realities of youth across Europe.

² The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically-driven social survey designed to chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes beliefs and behaviour patterns of its diverse populations. Now in its fourth round, the survey covers over 30 nations. This survey received funding from the EU Research Framework Programmes. More information is available at www.europeansocialsurvey.org

Frequency

In line with the request from the Council of the European Union, youth reports are expected to be produced every three years. These reports will continue to build on the basis of the current report. In this way, a constructive dynamic should be developed: the process of analysing data - or identifying areas where there is insufficient data - will suggest what kind of other information and analysis could be useful, the results of which can be introduced in the next report.

1. DEMOGRAPHY

Past decades have shown a continuous increase in life expectancy in Europe. This increasingly affects the general organisation of life and the length of the main life periods: school life, working life and retirement all tend to become longer with time.

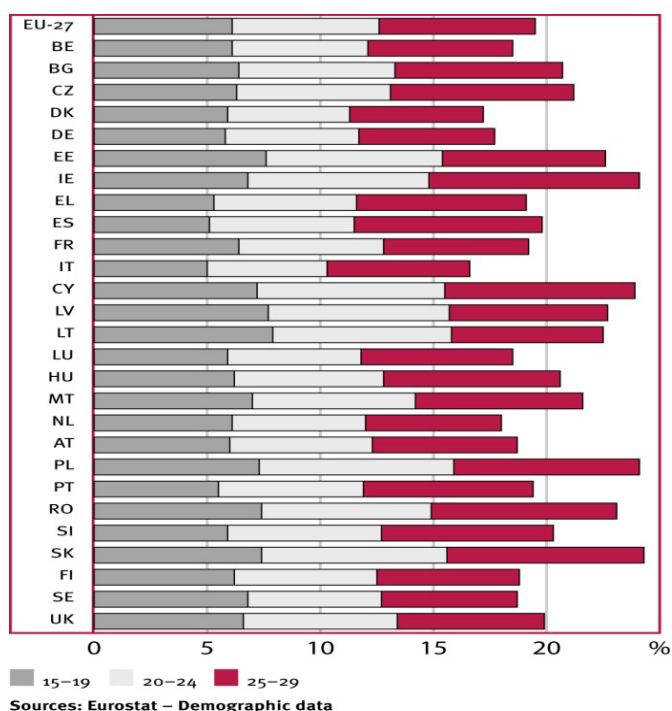
1.1. Close to 100 million young people live in the European Union

Figures from 2007 indicate that some 96 million people aged between 15 and 29 reside in the European Union. An excess of 34 million European inhabitants are between 25 and 29 years of age, slightly more than the populations of the other two age groups (20-24 and 15-19), which are recorded at some 32 million and 30 million respectively.

In terms of share of the population, youth represents just under a fifth of the total (19.4%), with the proportion of young people aged between 25 and 29 (6.9 %) slightly higher than the share of young people aged 20-24 (6.5 %) and 15-19 (6 %).

The share of youth aged between 15 and 29 in the total population at the national level ranges between 22 % and 24 % for the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Cyprus and Malta, whereas it is less than 20 % (average proportion at the European Union level), in Austria, Germany, Finland, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Young people (15-19, 20-24, 25-29) as a share of total population, 01.01.2007



1.2. Changes in the working population

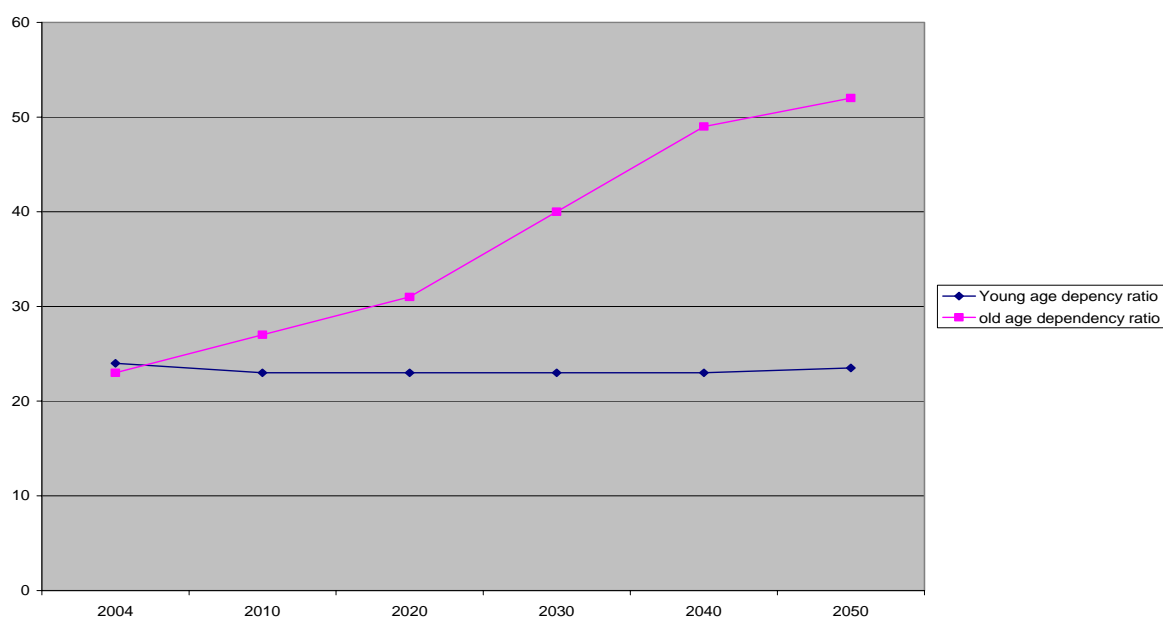
In the near future the European Union will face two demographic challenges, namely the ageing and impending decline of its population. The population share of young people will drop further, while that of older people will increase. As a consequence, the characteristics of the working population

will change. Two indicators in particular are useful to evaluate this trend: population of working age (20-59 and 60-65), and activity rates per age.

Over the past decade, both the working population (aged 20-59 years) and the population aged 60 years and above have been growing by 1 to 1.5 million people per year on average. According to Eurostat demographic projections, it is foreseen that from now on the population aged 60 years and above will be growing by 2 million people every year for the next 25 years. The growth of the working-age population is slowing down fast and will stop altogether in about 6 years; from then on, this segment of the population will be shrinking by 1 to 1.5 million people each year.

The projections of the old and young age dependency ratios³ indicate that by 2050, the population under 14 will account for less than one fourth of the population aged 15-64 - while the population aged over 65 will represent more than 50 % of the 15-64 year olds. From 2004 to 2050, the young age dependency ratio will remain stable while the old age dependency ratio will nearly double.

Projection of young and old age dependency ratios, EU-25, 2004–2050



Source: Eurostat - population projection

³ The dependency ratio is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labour force and those typically in the labour force. The young-age dependency ratio is the ratio of the number of young persons at an age when they are generally economically inactive divided by the number of persons of working age. The old-age dependency ratio is the ratio of the number of elderly persons at an age when they are generally economically inactive divided by the number of persons of working age.

By 2050, the old age dependency ratio will be lower than 50 % in just over half of the EU Member States, but higher than 60 % in countries such as Bulgaria, Spain and Italy. The young age dependency ratio is projected to be below 30 % in all Member States, with the highest scores (over 27 %) in Ireland, France, Luxembourg and Sweden and the lowest (under 22 %) in Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria and Romania.

1.3. Youth immigration and mobility

Member States of the European Union are attractive to young people coming from other countries. They may come from neighbouring countries outside the Union, from former colonies of Member States, or from other countries outside of Europe. Mobility inside the EU also contributes to changing the structure of society. Regarding international migration patterns, European countries have experienced major changes since the end of the Second World War, most notably through a progressive shift from emigration to immigration. This trend has gained strength, international migration has become a key factor in European population growth and immigration flows have increased. Population ageing, including the ageing of the workforce could continue to function as a pull factor for international migration.

The figures we refer to in the following paragraphs come from Eurostat (Eurostat- LFS and Eurostat population - International Migration and Asylum). Measuring migration among young people takes also into account student mobility.

Mobility of young Europeans

Young EU nationals mostly tend to move to Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In Luxembourg almost 40 % of young people are from other EU Member States, but the UK and Spain remain the main hosting countries for young people. Migration flows also reveal that young people tend to move to neighbouring countries. For example, the main young foreign nationals residing in Slovenia are Germans and in the United Kingdom 475 000 young persons were born in Ireland.

Mobility from outside EU

Immigration from outside the EU is influenced by diverse factors such as former colonial links, (Belgium, France, UK, the Netherlands, or Spain and Portugal), strategic geographical position as a gateway to Europe (Estonia, Spain, Greece, or Finland), favourable economic conditions (Luxembourg for example), or a combination of some or all of these factors.

Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom are the countries with the largest absolute numbers of young non-EU foreigners between the ages of 15 and 29 (1.8, 1.4 and 1.25 million respectively). In 2007, more than 15% of young people in Spain were non-EU citizens. This was the second highest proportion after that of Luxembourg, among the 18 EU Member States for which these data are available. Austria and Germany follow with 13.6% and 12.4% respectively. The lowest proportions are found in three of the most recent EU Member States (Poland, Romania and Slovakia).

Spain is the main destination of young immigrants from the American continent and from Africa, while most young immigrants from Asia tend to go to the United Kingdom. Many young immigrants in the Netherlands were born in Asia, followed by America, Africa and Turkey. The largest group of third-country citizens living in Austria, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands are from Turkey, and the majority of the third-country foreigners in France and Spain have Moroccan citizenship. In France, geographic and cultural proximities also ease mobility. Young people from Iceland and Norway tend to emigrate to Sweden or Denmark, while youngsters from Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia go firstly to Slovenia.

KEY FIGURES RELATING TO DEMOGRAPHY

- Currently 96 Million young people aged 15-29 in the European Union
- Young people aged 15-29 constitute 19.4 % of the total population within the EU
- Projected share of young people in 2050: 15.3 % of the total population

2. TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

2.1. Education

In Europe, the extension of schooling is a long-term phenomenon. The rapid economic growth between 1950 and 1975 increased the demand for qualified labour through increased levels of education. More recently, higher unemployment rates and increasing world-wide competition have stressed the need to improve the overall level of education of the working force in Europe. The knowledge-based economy that already characterises many European countries requires people to be able to renew their skills continuously through lifelong learning so as to secure employment over time, and participate and integrate fully in a changing society.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

School expectancy: School expectancy is an estimate of the number of years a typical 5-year-old child can expect to be enrolled in the education system during his or her lifetime if current enrolment patterns remain unchanged. It is calculated by adding the net educational enrolment percentages for each single year of age and age band. The net enrolment rates are calculated by dividing the number of students (ISCED 0 to 6) of a particular age or age group by the number of persons in the population in the same age or age band.

Source: The UNESCO/OECD/EUROSTAT (UOE) database on education statistics

Early school leavers refer to persons aged 18 to 24 in the following two conditions: the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short and respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey

Formal Education is defined as “...education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous “ladder” of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at age of five to seven and continuing up to 20 or 25 years old. In some countries, the upper parts of this “ladder” are organised programmes of joint part-time employment and part-time participation in the regular school and university system: such programmes have come to be known as the “dual system” or equivalent terms in these countries.”

Non-formal Education is defined as “any organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the “ladder” system, and may have a differing duration.”

Informal Learning is defined as “...intentional, but it is less organised and less structured ...and may include for example learning events (activities) that occur in the family, in the work place, and in the daily life of every person, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis”.

Source: Eurostat - Classification of learning activities -Manual

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is an instrument suitable for assembling, compiling and presenting comparable indicators and statistics of education both within individual countries and internationally. It presents standard concepts, definitions and classifications

and covers all organized and sustained learning opportunities for children, youth and adults including those with special needs education, irrespective of the institution or entity providing them or the form in which they are delivered.

LEVEL 0 – Pre-primary education: Programmes at level 0, (pre-primary) defined as the initial stage of organized instruction are designed primarily to introduce very young children to a school-type environment, i.e. to provide a bridge between the home and a school-based atmosphere.

LEVEL 1 – Primary education or first stage of basic education: Programmes at level 1 are normally designed on a unit or project basis to give students a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other subjects such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music (and sometimes religion).

LEVEL 2 – Lower secondary or second stage of basic education: The contents of education at this stage are typically designed to complete the provision of basic education which began at ISCED level 1. In many, if not most countries, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may expand, systematically, further educational opportunities. The end of this level often coincides with the end of compulsory education where it exists.

LEVEL 3 – (Upper) secondary education: This level of education typically begins at the end of full-time compulsory education for those countries that have a system of compulsory education. More specialization may be observed at this level than at ISCED level 2 and often teachers need to be more qualified or specialized than for ISCED level 2. The entrance age to this level is typically 15 or 16 years.

LEVEL 4 – Post-secondary non-tertiary education: ISCED 4 programmes can, depending on their content, not to be regarded as tertiary programmes. They are often not significantly more advanced than programmes at ISCED 3 but they serve to broaden the knowledge of participants who have already completed a programme at level 3. Typical examples are programmes designed to prepare students for studies at level 5 who, although having completed ISCED level 3, did not follow a curriculum which would allow entry to level 5, i.e. pre-degree foundation courses or short vocational programmes.

LEVEL 5 – First stage of tertiary education (not leading directly to an advanced research qualification): This level consists of tertiary programmes having an educational content more advanced than those offered at levels 3 and 4. There is a distinction between 5A: the programmes which are theoretically based/research preparatory (history, philosophy, mathematics, etc.) or giving access to professions with high skills requirements (e.g. medicine, dentistry, architecture, etc.), and 5B: those programmes which are practical/technical/occupationally specific.

LEVEL 6 – Second stage of tertiary education (leading to an advanced research qualification): This level is reserved for tertiary programmes which lead to the award of an advanced research qualification. The programmes are therefore devoted to advanced study and original research and are not based on course-work only.

The term **Early-Stage Researcher** refers to researchers in the first four years (full-time equivalent) of their research activity, including the period of research training.

According to the ISCED classification, general and vocational educations have the following definitions:

General education: Education which is mainly designed to lead participants to a deeper understanding of a subject or group of subjects, especially, but not necessarily, with a view to preparing participants for further (additional) education at the same or a higher level. Successful completion of these programmes may or may not provide the participants with a labour-market relevant qualification at this level. These programmes are typically school-based.

Vocational or technical education: Education which is mainly designed to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade or class of occupations or trades. Successful completion of such programmes lead to a labour-market relevant vocational qualification recognised by the competent authorities in the country in which it is obtained (e.g. Ministry of Education, employers' associations, etc.).

Source: International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 1997, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

2.1.1. Longer schooling for children

As a result of life expectancy, the number of years that a young person will spend within the formal education system is higher than before (it is today on average 17 years). For instance, in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Poland, this means that children aged 5 can expect to spend more than one fourth of their remaining lifetime at school and university.

School expectancy depends on various factors that structure each educational system: the length of compulsory schooling, the access and patterns of pre-primary education, the different types of upper secondary education (vocational or general) and the way pupils are oriented towards them, the type of admission and the variety of choices in tertiary education. Beyond compulsory education, school expectancy is also affected, among other factors, by the attitudes of parents who may consider the investment in their children's education a security ensuring status, a decent future income and protection against unemployment.

In addition to investing in secondary education, however, the development of lifelong learning opportunities reinforces the need to consider also the time spent in non-formal education and informal learning during the entire life in order to evaluate the total time devoted to education in a lifetime.

2.1.2. Choosing paths after compulsory schooling

In most European countries, compulsory schooling ends between the ages 14 and 17, which corresponds to the end of lower secondary education. Nowadays it is by no means exceptional to remain in education after the end of compulsory schooling. From this age, young Europeans may choose at any time whether to continue their education or to become economically active. Most young people choose to continue their studies beyond compulsory education, but some choose alternative ways. However, many young people do not take a clear-cut decision on whether to pursue education or employment. Instead, they opt for a transitional phase during which they try to conciliate studies and work.

In most European countries, over 80 % of the population remains at school at least one year after the end of compulsory education. Attendance rates tend to decline more in the second year after the end of compulsory education, but remain above 70 % in most countries. The exceptions are Germany and the United Kingdom, where less than 50 % of young people remain in education two years following compulsory education.

Young women remain in education longer than their male counterparts. In most countries, female attendance rates two years after the end of compulsory education are higher than for their male counterparts.

At the age of 19, more than 60 % of young Europeans are still in formal education, although at different levels due to the differences in the education systems and their own academic progression. In Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Austria, Romania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, more than half of young people aged 19 have are no longer in formal education. In these countries, the transition to the labour market has already started for a majority of young people. In the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Hungary and Austria, the share of 19-year-olds attending post secondary vocational education (which is more work oriented) reach around 10 %. In Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands more than 40 % of the 19 years old population is still in upper secondary education.

2.1.3. Educational orientation and early transition to work

Further participation in higher education depends on the educational orientation (general or vocational) of upper secondary education. At EU level, a little more than half of the students in upper secondary education attend vocational-oriented programmes. The percentage of students that prepare themselves to enter the labour market at this level is especially high (more than 70 %) in the Czech Republic, Austria, and Slovakia. To a lesser extent, most of students in upper secondary choose vocational orientation in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherland, Romania, Slovenia, and Finland. At the opposite, in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ireland, Greece, Hungary, and Portugal, more than 60 % of students follow general programmes in a view to continue further education. In Cyprus, more than 80 % of students are in this situation.

Young men and women who graduate from vocational programmes in upper secondary education are mainly prepared to work in business and industry. At European level, 62 % of graduates of vocational programmes at this level studied either “social science, business and law” or “engineering, manufacturing and construction” programmes. Graduates in “health and welfare” as well “services” come next.

2.1.4. Gender differences in upper secondary education

In 2006, the number of boys attending upper secondary education is not very different from the one of girls. Most EU Member States show a balanced distribution and at European level, there are 98 girls for every 100 boys. However, in some countries, the number of women to every hundred men is more unbalanced. This is the case in Germany (89 women to every 100 men), Malta (88) Austria (89) and Poland (90). Conversely, in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg, Portugal and the United Kingdom, women are more numerous in upper secondary education.

Despite the fact that the gender gap in upper secondary education is low in most of the countries, strong differences across sexes emerge when considering attendance by educational orientation. In all European countries, girls outnumber boys in general upper secondary education meaning that they mainly prepare for further education whereas boys are more focused in preparing access to the labour market. This is illustrated by the fact that within EU Member States, nearly 54 % of girls in upper secondary education are attending general programmes whereas only 43 % of boys do so. The reverse is true when considering vocational programmes, except in Ireland and the United Kingdom where girls are more numerous than boys independent of programme orientation. In Bulgaria, Denmark, Malta and Poland, a majority of women are attending the general secondary educational programme whereas the majority of men are attending vocational programmes. In Bulgaria, Estonia,

Latvia, Lithuania, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, and Poland there are less than 70 girls for every 100 boys in vocational programmes.

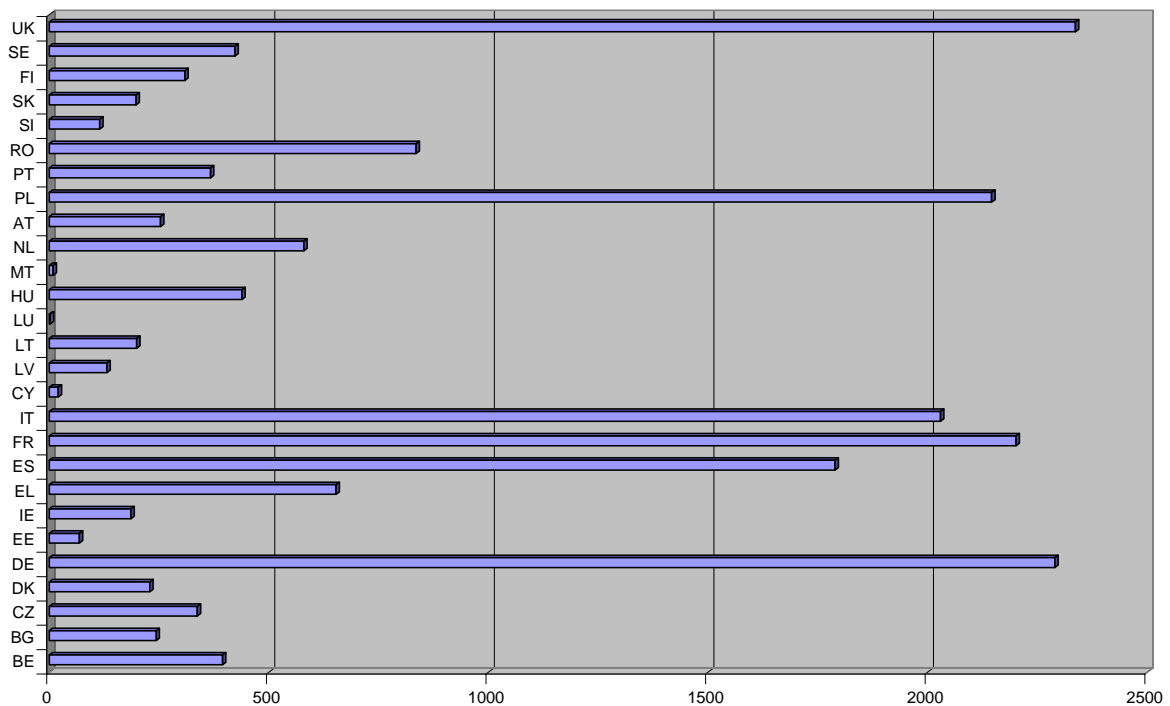
2.1.5. More students in the knowledge triangle

Tertiary education is the final stage of formal or regular education. Education, research and innovation (also known as the knowledge triangle) play a key role in facing the challenges of globalisation and the development of knowledge society. When creating new knowledge and including it in the education of students, the basis is set up for further innovation, creativity and contribution to future prosperity.

In 2006, there were almost 19 million tertiary students in the European Union. The number of tertiary students has increased by 25 % between 1998 and 2006. There are about 3 million more students in higher education and 1 million more graduates per year than in 2000. At EU level, 11.5 % of the population aged between 18 and 39 attend tertiary education. Attendance rates vary across countries, however: more than half of the countries for which data is available show attendance rates higher than 10 %. In Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ireland, Greece, France, Poland and Finland, the participation rate is higher than 15 %.

One probable reason why participation rates are lower in Cyprus, Malta, and Luxembourg may be that many young people are studying abroad.

Number of tertiary students per country (1000), 2006



Source: Eurostat

2.1.6. *An emerging gender gap in tertiary studies*

The past decade (1998-2006) has witnessed an increase in the gender gap in higher education. In 1998, there were nearly 112 women to every 100 men in higher education. This ratio increased to 123 in 2006. These numbers show that the 'feminisation' of tertiary education is stronger than in upper secondary education. This is probably linked to the fact that the majority of women attend general programmes that prepare them for further education at tertiary level rather than vocational programmes.

2.1.7. *Older students*

Most full-time students are economically inactive and thus rely (partly or fully) on the financial support from their parents and/or from public support schemes. Thus, the distribution by age of full time students can provide some indication as to the age at which young people are probably not yet economically active. There is a strong diversity across Europe. This diversity may be explained by several factors: Different education systems have different starting age of tertiary education (due to various length of secondary education). They also differ on the length of tertiary education programmes and the types of financial support students can get from public authorities. The obligation to do military service, as well as public policies aiming to encourage lifelong learning at tertiary level, also increases the average age of a student of higher education. Finally, the levels of participation in programmes which lead to advanced research degrees also have an impact on the age of the student population. Among EU Member States, half of the students are older than 22.

Across Europe, the median age⁴ of tertiary students ranges from 20.5 in Greece to near 26 in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Germany and Austria: in these countries half of the students are older than 23. Moreover, in the three Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) as well as in Latvia and the United Kingdom, 15 % of full time students are older than 35. The same countries also tend to show the highest diversity in terms of age of the student population.

Most of the European countries have witnessed an ageing of the oldest population of full time students between 1998 and 2006: old students tend to become older. In 1998, 15 % of European full time students were older than 29. In 2006, 15 % of students were older than 30. The three Baltic States have registered a dramatic increase in the average age of the oldest students over the same period: the average age of the 15 % oldest students increased by 7 years in Lithuania and by nearly 10 in Latvia. Significant but yet lower increases are also registered in Ireland, Greece, Hungary and Malta, where the average age increased by more than 5 years. The reverse applies in Germany, Austria, and Poland, where the average age of the 15 % oldest students has actually decreased.

2.1.8. *Learning foreign languages*

Multilingualism (i.e. the ability to speak and use several languages) has become a key issue in the development of the European Union. The European Commission's Communication on "A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism" states that the many mother tongues are a "a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding", but also that "the ability to understand and communicate in more than one language is a desirable life-skill for all European citizens. It enables people to take advantage of the freedom to work or study in another Member State". Learning languages is thus a "key for the future". It should be given to all pupils in general, including in vocational upper secondary education.

⁴ *Median* is the middle value of a sample

At the EU level, learning languages at school is a reality for most pupils in upper secondary education regardless of educational orientation: less than 10 % of pupils do not learn any foreign languages. Pupils in prevocational and vocational programmes at upper secondary level tend to learn less foreign languages than their counterparts in general programmes. The majority (64 %) of pupils in vocational programmes learn one language and a little more than 25 % learn two. However in Estonia, for instance, more than 80 % of students in vocational programmes learn two foreign languages. In most countries for which data are available, all or nearly all pupils in general programmes at upper secondary education learn at least one foreign language. The exceptions are Portugal and the United Kingdom, where 40 % or more pupils do not learn any foreign language.

2.1.9. Increased mobility, but not for everyone

A high level expert forum on mobility, established by the European Commission, has stated that “learning mobility should become a natural feature of being European and an opportunity provided to all young people in Europe”. Learning mobility is important for strengthening Europe's competitiveness, for creating a knowledge-intensive society and for deepening citizenship within young generations.

Mobility concerns various young populations: pupils and students in secondary and tertiary education, trainees, apprentices, volunteers and participants in professional training in or outside Europe. However, statistical information on mobility in Europe is only partially harmonised and exists most often only on tertiary education. Moreover, data on mobility based on the citizenship criterion within the field of higher education is not fully comparable across countries since national legislation governing the acquisition of citizenship differs across Europe.

Six EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany and United Kingdom) have more than 10 % foreign students in their total student population. Three of these countries, Cyprus, Austria, and the United Kingdom, have a proportion higher than 15 %.

Various European Union programmes support learning mobility across Europe. The Youth in Action Programme, successor of the YOUTH programme, supports EU's mobility and non-formal education of young people, particularly young people with fewer opportunities: each year 100 000 young people are involved in more than 6 000 projects. Since 1988, 1.5 millions young people and youth workers participated in the programme. In the formal education field, Erasmus has had a growing popularity over the years, supporting 3244 students in its first year (the academic year 1987/88) and nearly 160 000 students in 2006/07. Overall, the Erasmus programme has supported more than 2 millions students so far.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROGRAMMES

IN THE FIELD OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND YOUTH

Comenius: The Comenius programme focuses on the first phase of education, from pre-school and primary to secondary schools. It is relevant for all members of the education community: pupils, teachers, local authorities, parents' associations, non-government organisations, teacher training institutes, universities and all other educational staff. Comenius seeks to develop knowledge and understanding among young people and educational staff of the diversity of European cultures, languages and values. It helps young people acquire the basic life skills and competences necessary for their personal development, for future employment and for active citizenship.

Leonardo: The Leonardo da Vinci programme links policy to practice in the field of vocational education and training (VET). Projects range from those giving individuals the chance to improve their competences, knowledge and skills through a period abroad, to Europe-wide co-operation between training organisations. The programme funds a wide range of actions, notably cross-border mobility initiatives; co-operation projects to develop and spread innovation; and thematic networks. The potential beneficiaries are similarly wide – from trainees in initial vocational training, to people already in the labour market, as well as VET professionals and private or public organisations active in this field.

Erasmus: The Erasmus programme aims at enhancing the quality and reinforcing the European dimension of higher education as well as at increasing student and staff mobility. It enriches not only the students' lives in the academic field but also in the acquisition of intercultural skills and self-reliance. Staff exchanges also have beneficial effects both on the persons concerned and on the institutions involved. Erasmus Mundus is the globally open counterpart of the Erasmus programme.

Youth in action: The Youth in Action programme aims at inspiring a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans, promoting the employability, and involving them in shaping the Union's future. It promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background. It supports a large variety of activities of young people and youth workers through five Actions.

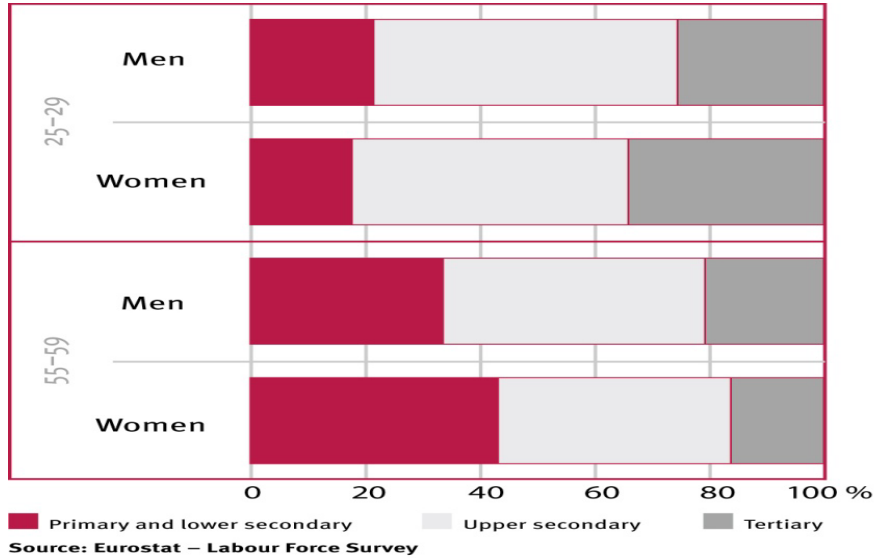
Source: DG Education and Culture

2.1.10. The level of education: a comparison between generations

The percentage of the population which has completed higher education is increasing. 29 % of young Europeans aged between 25 and 29 have completed higher education, against 18 % of the population aged between 55 and 59. The same trend exists for secondary education: slightly more than 50 % of the 25-29 age group has finished secondary education compared to 42 % of the 55-59 age group.

However, a few countries experience that the proportion of people aged between 25 and 29 having completed at least upper secondary education is lower than the one for the 35-39 and 45-49 age groups. This is the case in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania.

Population by age group (25-29, 55-59) sex and highest level of education completed



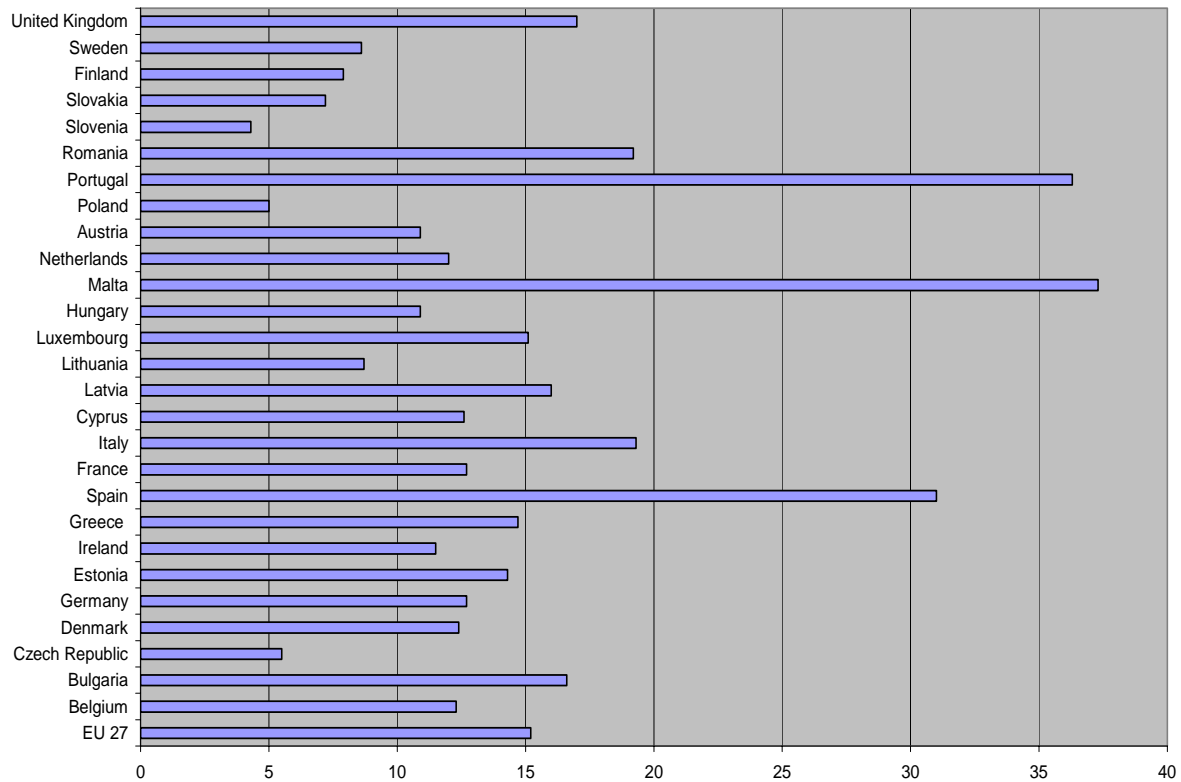
Almost all member states show an increase in the proportion of people having completed at least upper secondary education through generations. The only exceptions are Germany, the Baltic States, Romania and Sweden.

2.1.11. Early school leavers

One out of seven young persons aged 18 to 24 in the EU leaves the education system with no more than lower secondary education and participates in no form of education and training (early school leaver). There has been a continuous improvement in recent years, but progress will need to speed up in order to reach the EU benchmark set for 2010. At the European level, the percentage of early school leavers has continuously decreased over the 2000-2007 period. It is now standing at 14.8 %.

Europe tends to show a north/south divide on this issue. Some of the southern countries record more than 30 % of early school leavers (Spain, Malta, and Portugal) whereas other countries (principally from north Europe) register much lower numbers. In all countries except Bulgaria, the percentage of early school leavers is higher for male than for female. Seven Member States – the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden – have shares of less than 10 %. Among these countries, Poland, the Czech Republic and Finland are still progressing. Other countries, like Malta and Portugal, have considerably decreased their initially very high percentages of early school leavers.

Percentage of early school leavers by country, 2007



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE UP2YOUTH PROJECT:

YOUTH - ACTOR OF SOCIAL CHANGE⁵

Young migrants' transitions from education to work

The UP2YOUTH project centres around three areas of social change with regard to youth and its transition to adulthood: young parenthood; social participation; and the transitions of young people with an ethnic minority or migrant background. UP2Youth analyses to what extent social change results from young people's agency and what they need to act in ways which contribute both to social integration and to subjectively meaningful biographies.

Learning is a key to an agency perspective in understanding changing pathways to adulthood and citizenship. In the individualisation of transitions to adulthood learning is relevant in a double perspective:

- young people are expected to acquire knowledge and skills in formal trajectories, but
- individual learning increasingly takes place in non-formal and informal settings.

⁵ The UP2Youth project was funded under the 6th framework programme of the European Union (Citizens and governance programme) and involved research partners from 15 countries (Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Portugal, Spain, Finland, Romania, Austria, Slovakia and Ireland), running from May 2006 - April 2009 – Info: <http://www.up2youth.org/>.

Today formal learning is most necessary but not sufficient to help young people's social and labour market integration. Approaches of non-formal learning are concerned with compensating a lack of formal learning – especially with regard to youth – and to allow for reconciliation between adult expectations and youth cultural forms of praxis.

The development of alternative learning settings holds considerable resources to compensate for missing formal certificates. This is especially the case for young people with learning problems in formal education, as is often the case for young people with an ethnic minority or migrant background, due to linguistic and cultural challenges or interrupted educational trajectories.

While belonging to an ethnic minority may be considered a biographical and social resource in globalised post-modern life (governed by flexibility and cultural diversity), it may also bring them at the edge of society, marginalized by the larger society and separated by cultural and religious life styles.

Thus a significant proportion of young people with migration background is involved in a “processes of ethnic differentiation” reinforced by discrimination, restricted educational achievements and a low socioeconomic status.

Especially male youngsters from migrant and ethnic minority communities are regarded as developing informal peer cultures, being lived as social spaces of social participation and socialization on citizenship practices, which often conflict with school cultures.

Moreover, the improvements in education and vocational training have led to a deficit of low/unqualified labour force in some sectors and a structural dependency on unskilled, immigrant labour force in the labour market. The immigrants' coping strategies respond to these labour markets' demands, which have in most cases a de-motivating effect on their career aspirations and educational improvement plans.

Comparative research on the social integration of young people from an ethnic minority or migrant background found rather weak links of successful integration processes to integration policies. Most of the success in labour market transitions is attributable to the general economic, education and social policies that are framing labour market transitions.

Social integration appears to be a matter of attachment and belonging predominantly to the local surroundings and a daily life. Therefore integration processes might best be carried out in local or smaller contexts, in which common interest and activities among local inhabitants can be found.

2.1.12. Parents' education and academic success

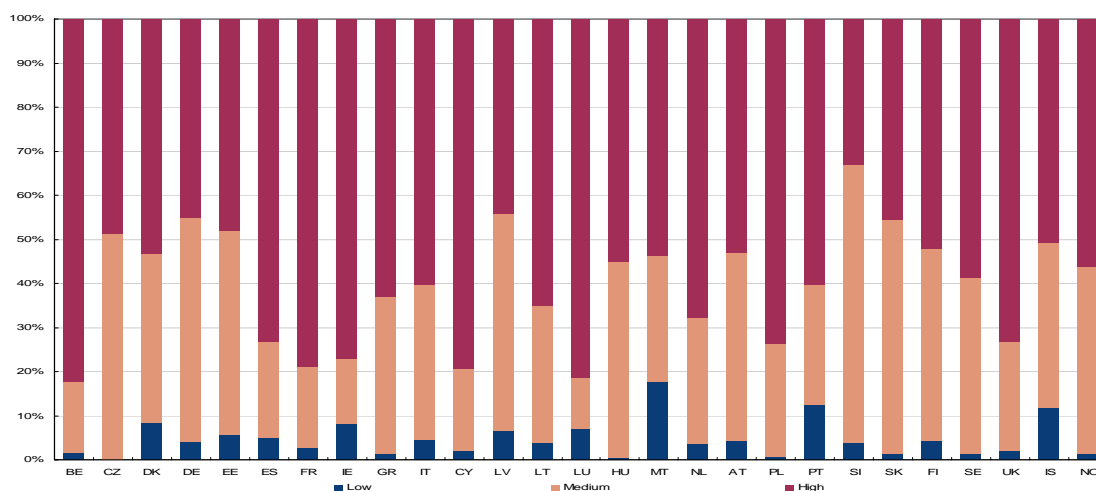
The chances young people have to become highly qualified are often influenced by their socio-economic background. Evaluating the social background of people is complex and usually approximated by different variables.

However, in all EU Member States for which data is available, the majority of people aged 25-34 with parents who have at most lower secondary education have either completed the same level (lower secondary) or at most upper secondary education.

Conversely, young people aged 25-34 whose parents have a tertiary education, have a much higher chance of completing a tertiary education themselves. They are also less at risk of getting only a secondary education than those who have parents with only a secondary education. In more than two thirds of EU Member States for which there is data available, more than half of all young

people aged 25-34 who have parents with tertiary education have themselves completed education at the same level. In most countries, less than 5 % had taken only a lower secondary education.

Level of education for people (25-34) whose parents have higher (tertiary) education, 2005



2.1.13. Public financial support in accessing higher education

In all European countries, access to higher education is facilitated by public financial support schemes dedicated to students and their parents. These schemes may have different purposes (for instance to cover the costs of living, to pay administrative fees and/or contribute to tuition costs) and take several forms (e.g. loans or combination of grants and loans). The impact of these financing schemes on the social and economic situation of students is difficult to assess, but recent data suggests that students in tertiary education still rely mainly on parents and family contributions.

2.1.14. Youth participation in non-formal education

Among EU Member States, the average participation rates in non-formal education and training is below 10 % among all age groups (15-24, 25-29 and 30-54). However, Denmark, Spain, Austria, Sweden and the United Kingdom all have a higher participation in non-formal education activities than the average. Participation rates are especially high in Denmark and the United Kingdom, where it is around 20 % for all age groups.

Participation rates show low differences across age groups in a majority of countries, but in Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Sweden and the United Kingdom, younger people participate more in non-formal education activities than their elders.

When considering the level of education of young adults who have taken part in non-formal education activities, participation rates are more diverse. In all countries except Greece, Cyprus and Sweden, young people with a higher level of education participate to a larger extent in non-formal education activities than their peers with a lower level of education.

This pattern is even more pronounced when considering participation in non-formal education of employed people of the same age group. In all European countries, young employed people with a higher education participate more in non-formal education than other young people.

A majority of young employed people who attended non-formal education did so in relation to their job. This is especially true for people with at least upper secondary education. However, in Estonia,

France, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria and Romania, young employed people with at most upper secondary education are proportionally more numerous in attending job-related non-formal education than those having tertiary education.

One dimension of non-formal education that may not be completely covered by the statistics referred to above is activities carried out by non-governmental volunteer organisations and/or within the context of youth work. Such activities often target young people in particular and are typically carried out during young people's leisure time. Non-formal education activities conducted by professional youth workers and non-governmental youth organisations are becoming increasingly recognised as an important element of lifelong learning.

KEY FIGURES RELATING TO EDUCATION

- There are about 3 million more students in higher education and 1 million more graduates per year today than in 2000. The number of students increased by 25% between 1998 and 2006.
- There are 19 million students in higher education in the European Union; this constitutes 11.5 % of the population between 18 and 39.
- There are 23 % more women than men in higher education.
- Nearly 80 % of young people between 25 and 29 have completed upper secondary education.
- Still, one fifth of children do not have basic standards of literacy and numeracy.
- 6 million young people, 1 in 7 of 18-24 years old, achieve only compulsory education or less.
- 11.5 % of the EU population aged 18-39 attends tertiary education.
- At the European level, the percentage of early school leavers has continuously decreased over the 2000-2007 period but still amounts to 14.8 %.
- The number of years in the formal education system is on average 17 years.
- At age 19, more than 60 % of young Europeans are still in formal education.
- More than half of all students in upper secondary education attend vocational programmes.
- Girls prepare for higher education while boys prepare for employment: 54 % of girls in upper secondary education attend general programmes, whereas 57 % of boys attend more employment-oriented vocational programmes.
- 15 % of students in the European Union are older than 30 years old.
- However, 10 % of pupils do not learn any foreign language in school.
- More than 50 % of young Europeans between 25 and 29 have completed upper education and 29 % higher education.
- Less than one third of young people aged 25-34 who have a disadvantaged socio-economic background complete higher education.

2.2. From school to work

The transition from education to employment is an important process for young people. The transition process may vary significantly between different countries and different national systems in terms of the length and the nature of the transition process, level and persistence of youth unemployment, and types of jobs and contracts obtained by young people.

The reference population analysed in this chapter is usually young people aged 15-29. Whenever possible, this is further divided into two age categories, 15-24 and 25-29, in order to take into account the diversity of young people's situation. The majority of the younger age cohort is still in education, while the older is supposed to already have a foothold in the labour market.

EUROPEAN UNION LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (EU LFS)

The main data source in this section is the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS). The EU LFS is a quarterly large sample survey covering the population in private households in the EU, EFTA (except Liechtenstein) and Candidate Countries. It provides annual and quarterly results on labour participation of people aged 15 and over as well as persons outside the labour force.

The EU LFS sample size amounts approximately to 1.5 million individuals each quarter. The quarterly sampling rates vary between 0.2 and 3.3 % in each country. This makes the LFS one of the largest household surveys in Europe.

The concepts and definitions used in the survey are based on those of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In consequence, results from the EU LFS count among the most comparable international labour market statistics.

Despite the fact that today's young people are smaller in number and better educated than their previous generation, difficulties remain in entering the labour market. Many of those who have already gained employment often hold unstable jobs. There are several reasons for this, such as the mismatch between skills acquired in education and training and labour market requirements, as well as general labour market conditions. In financially difficult times, companies will also downsize their recruitment programmes, in addition to the fact that there will be more qualified experts available on the job market.

2.2.1. Activity rates

As chapter 2.1 shows, most young people remain in education at least until the ages 14-17 which correspond to the end of full-time compulsory school. Furthermore, a majority of 19 year-olds, who are beyond the compulsory school age, are still in formal education.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The *economically active population* (labour force) comprises employed and unemployed persons.

Employed persons are persons aged 15 and over who during the reference week performed work, even for just one hour, for pay, profit or family gain or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent because of, e.g., illness, holidays, industrial dispute or training. This can also include students when they are also employed.

Unemployed persons are persons aged 15-74 who were without work during the reference week, were currently available for work and were either actively seeking work in the past four weeks or had already found a job to start within the next three months.

Inactive persons are those who neither classified as employed nor as unemployed because they are still for instance in the education system.

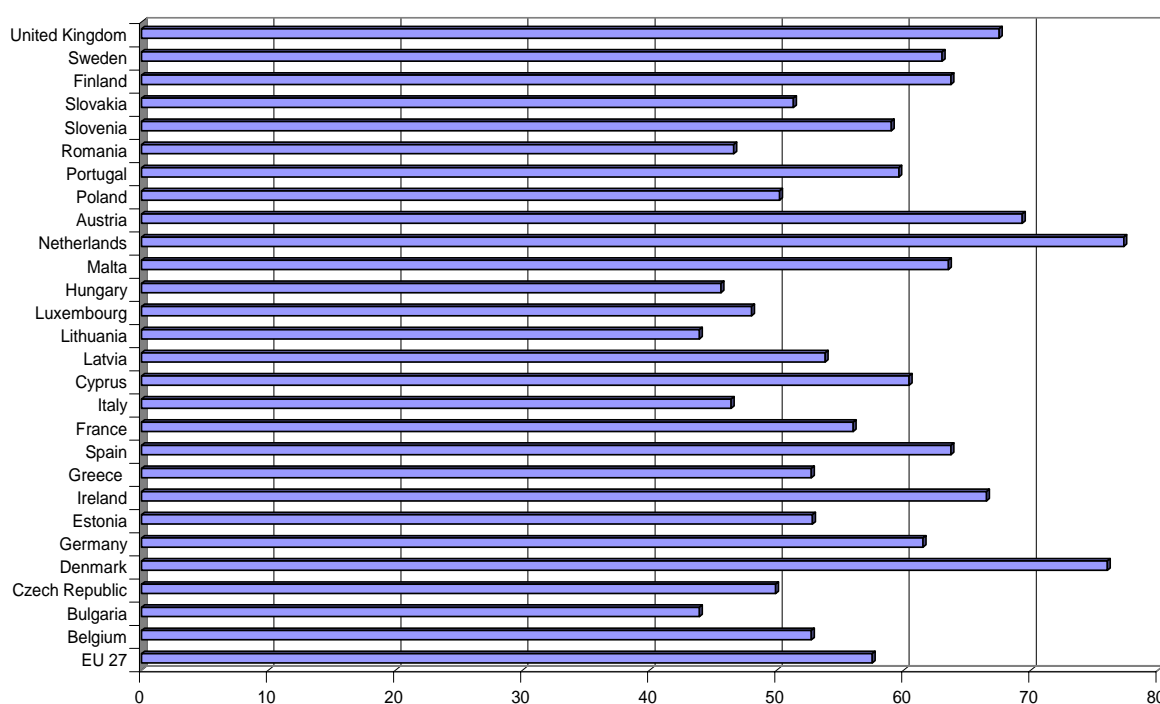
Activity rates represent active persons as a percentage of same age total population.

Inactivity rates represent inactive persons as a percentage of same age total population.

Source: International Labour Office / Labour Force Survey

The first step towards the labour market is to become economically active (employed or unemployed – actively searching for a job). However, young people’s decision to pursue education or not is not so clear cut. Aspects to take into account include motivation to continue studying, financial means, the cultural context, socio-economic background and the general situation of the labour market.

Activity rates among young people aged 15-29, 2007



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

In 2007, 57.5 % of young Europeans aged 15-29 were categorised as economically active. This was a drop by one per cent from 2000. With regard to this age group, Member States can be separated into three categories: those having activity rates below 50 % (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, and Romania), those who displayed activity rates of more than 70 % (Denmark and the Netherlands) and finally those having activity rates between 50 % and 70 % (remaining countries). With 44 % of young people categorised as economically active in 2007, Lithuania recorded the largest drop in activity level from 2000 (minus 10.5 %) while Sweden registered the highest increase (7.9 %) going from 55 % to 63 %.

Activity levels vary according to gender. In most Member States, more than half of young men aged 15-29 were economically active. There is no such main trend for young women, where activity rates varied between 70 % (Denmark and the Netherlands) and 39 % (Hungary). Activity rates also vary

according to the level of education with the most educated young people displaying activity rates of more than 75 %. Furthermore, education seems to lessen the gender imbalance and to ease young people entry into the labour market.

2.2.2. *Who are the young economically inactive people?*

At the EU level, more than 65 % of young people with at most lower secondary education are economically inactive; they are only 16 % among high educated ones.

Among young inactive people two categories can be distinguished: those who do not want to work and those who would like to work but do not look for a job due to specific reasons: own illness or disability, education or training, family responsibilities.

On average around 80 % of young inactive people aged 15-29 do not seek employment, many of them still being in the formal education system.

At the EU level, 65 % of young inactive people aged 15-24 do not seek an employment because of education or training (at Member State level, the percentages reached a minimum of 76.8 % for Sweden and a maximum of 97 % for Luxembourg). This is not surprising as the majority of young people aged 15-24 are still in education.

More than 60 % of the young inactive people not seeking employment are women. In addition, inactive young people not looking for a job are more widespread among the youngest age class having only lower secondary education. This proportion decreases with the level of education until reaching a one digit percentage for those having attained the tertiary level.

2.2.3. *Off the beaten paths: away from education and activity*

Since inactivity is partly accounted for by growing share of young people who tend to stay in education beyond the age of compulsory schooling, the following indicators consider all those who are, voluntary or involuntary, Neither in Education. Employment nor Training (NEET) allowing to better estimate young people most at risk on the labour market. This group of either unemployed or inactive youth and not following any education may face difficulties to find work or may drop out of the labour force altogether because of being discouraged to work or for other unspecified reasons (as opposed to those who are inactive because of family commitments, military service, travel or leisure).

At the European level, more than one third of young people aged 15-24 were NEET. The EU average sometimes hides big differences between the Member States. Indeed, this share reached more than 50 % for Bulgaria and Hungary and around 20 % in Denmark and the Netherlands.

By the age of 25 the share of young people in NEET is lower compared to the youngest age class: one might suppose that this decline is mainly due to those who have already found a job or enrolled again in education. Nevertheless, in many countries there are still more than 20 % of young people aged 25-29 years considered as NEET.

2.2.4. *Transition between education and work takes place mainly between 18 and 24*

Half of 20 year-old young people were on the EU labour market in 2007. In a number of countries, the age of entry onto the labour market has increased between 2000 and 2007. In this period, the youngest age at which at least 50 % of young people entered the labour market increased by 2 years in Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania and Slovakia. On the other hand, Austria experienced in the same time period that the youngest age at which at least 50 % of young people entered the labour market was reduced by two years.

In 2007, the vast majority of 15 year-olds were in education/training and not active in employment. The exception here is Denmark, where nearly half of the 15 year-olds (48.5 %) were both in education and active in the employment market. The proportion of young people devoting themselves exclusively to education or training decreases with age whereas the proportion of young people characterised as active increases with age. Indeed, 90.7 % of all Europeans aged 15 years old in 2007 were in education or training, while this number dropped to 3.2 % for 29 year-olds. At the age of 29, roughly three-quarters of the young population were categorised as economically active.

Transition from education to employment mainly takes place between 18 and 24. An indicator of this is that among 18 year-olds, 59 % were exclusively in education or training in 2007, while only 13 % were categorised as exclusively economically active. At the age of 24, on the other hand, the proportion has switched, with a majority of young people being active. Around 20 % of 18 year olds in the EU combine education or training with employment. For 24 year olds, the rate is slightly reduced to 16 %.

In some Member States (Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom), the majority of 18 year-olds were in education or training while they were also active on the employment market. In most Member States, however, a majority of young people were still only in education/training and inactive on the labour market

In both 2000 and 2007 at least half of all 20 year-olds were on the labour market either as unemployed or employed (full-time or part-time). There were striking differences across the European Union, however, with young people entering the labour market much earlier in some countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, and the United Kingdom) than in others (Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Hungary and Romania).

Among 24 year-olds, a majority of young people were economically active and not in education. In Denmark, however, almost half combined both work and education, while in the Netherlands, Finland and Slovenia three out ten 24 year-olds did the same. At the same time, these countries were among those that recorded the highest employment rates.

In 16 EU Member States, more than 50 % of 15-24 year-olds were inactive in the labour market one year after leaving school. This is double the rate as for 25-29 year-olds.

In a majority of EU Member States (except in Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) more than 70 % of 29 year-olds were economically active and no longer in education.

2.2.5. *The higher the level of education, the lower the risk of unemployment*

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Employment rate represent persons in employment as a percentage of the economically active population.

Unemployment rate represent unemployed persons as a percentage of the economically active population.

Unemployment ratio represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the total population.

Long-term unemployed persons are persons who have been unemployed for one year or more. Long term unemployment is computed as a percentage of total unemployed in the same age group.

Source: Eurostat, "Labour force survey: Methods and definition"

Unemployment rates decrease with the level of education. Among EU Member States, people with lower secondary education are nearly 3 more times at risk of unemployment than people with higher education. The unemployment gap between those with low levels and high levels of education slightly increased from 2000 to 2007. It is probable that people with a low level of education are more subject to labour market adjustment, particularly as economies are impacted by internationalisation and increasing competition with emerging economies.

2.2.6. *Diplomas – no guarantee for employment*

In 2007, only 20.7 % of young Europeans who attained lower secondary education were employed one year after they left initial education. This proportion tripled for young people with a tertiary qualification (65.8 % of those were employed one year after leaving education). Still, whatever their level of education, the transition to employment takes time for a significant proportion of young people. The more demanding they are (in terms of expected wages, working conditions, etc.), the more difficult it will be to find a job. This may also reveal the inadequacy of some tertiary education programmes to the need of the national labour market. The majority of the member States followed the European trend with Greece getting out of the lot with generally highest unemployment rates recorded among young people having higher level of education.

RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE SPREW PROJECT: SOCIAL PATTERNS OF RELATION TO WORK⁶

Are there changing patterns of relation to work among younger and older generations?

The overall objective of the SPReW project was to examine the factors leading to solidarity or tensions in intergenerational relations, in the specific area of work and correlated fields. While “age” is also an important variable, it can be observed from the SPReW results, that other variables (in particular gender, but also education, socio-professional groups, economic development, institutional contexts) may overwhelm the effect of the “generation” variable.

Contrary to a widespread opinion that young people are more instrumental and less interested by work, young people (< 30) have a more "expressive" relation to work, i.e. a greater request for self-fulfilment in work (esp. when they are highly educated): the human relations at work and the social usefulness are important to them, as well as the opportunities to express oneself at work, the interest of the work, the feeling of success and the level of autonomy.

- Both the educational level of workers and the feminisation of the labour market increased significantly in recent years. Women appear to be more expressive, although they are likely to change their attitude when they have a family to care for. Women’s working pattern changes after maternity, from a very expressive to a more instrumental one.
- Young people (< 30) are more exposed to low wages, precariousness and unemployment although they benefit from a positive educational and digital differential in comparison with the older. Although they are less afraid about instability and precariousness than the previous generations, they ask for more social protection and higher income but also for more freedom and opportunity for self-development.

Despite objectives differences, a “perception” of conflict among generations does not really emerge. Nevertheless, we should consider the possibility that more awareness of generations may initiate social tensions in the future. The two "extreme" groups on the labour market seem to face an identical problem, since both lack a fair recognition at work.

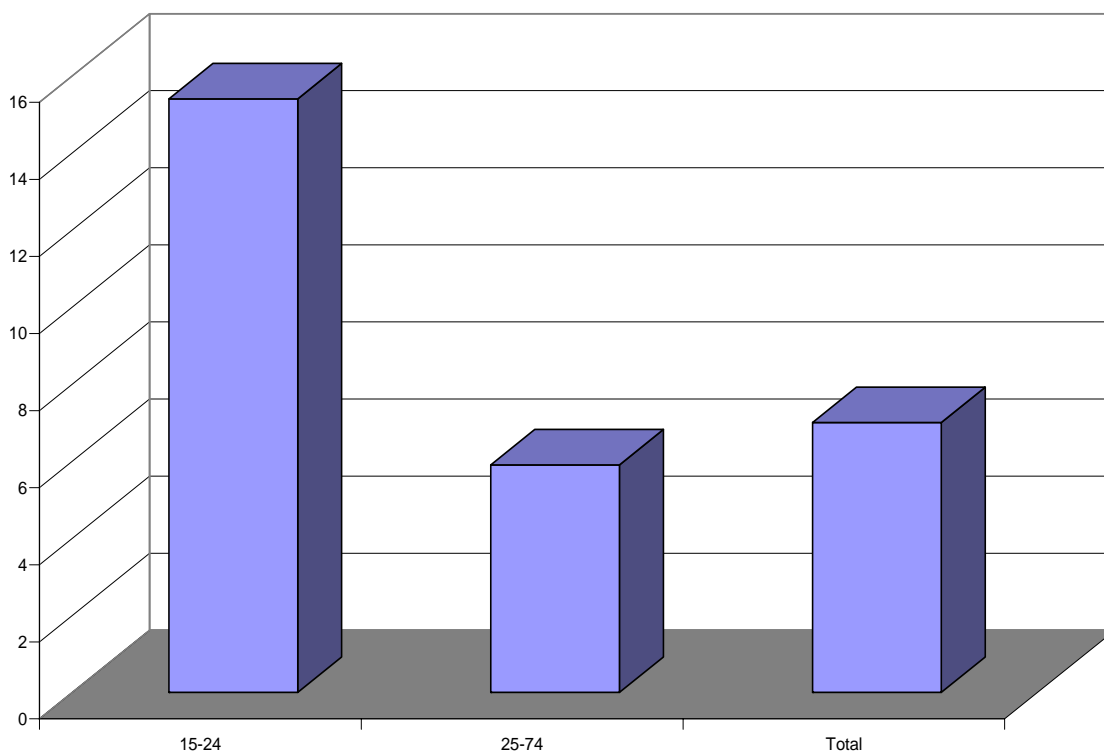
From one side, young people feel undervalued as for their education, whereas the older generation people feel undervalued as for their work experience. Above all, they fear about losing their job because they are aware that companies are not going to consider any longer the result of many years of learning-by-doing as a real resource.

⁶ The SPREW project was funded under the 6th framework programme of the European Union (Citizens and governance programme) and involved research partners from six countries (BE, FR, DE, HU, IT, PT), running from May 2006 - August 2008 – Info: <http://www.ftu-namur.org/sprew>.

2.2.7. Young people in unemployment

Once the transition from education to employment is over, a later step should be surmounted: find a stable job. This is probably an important step for those who want to settle down (set up a family or buy a house). Indeed, unstable job (i.e. temporary or part-time job) might have repercussions on the family life such as the difficulty to get a real estate loan, to leave parental home, to set up a family, to have children.

Unemployment rates by age group (15-24, 25-74, total), EU-27,



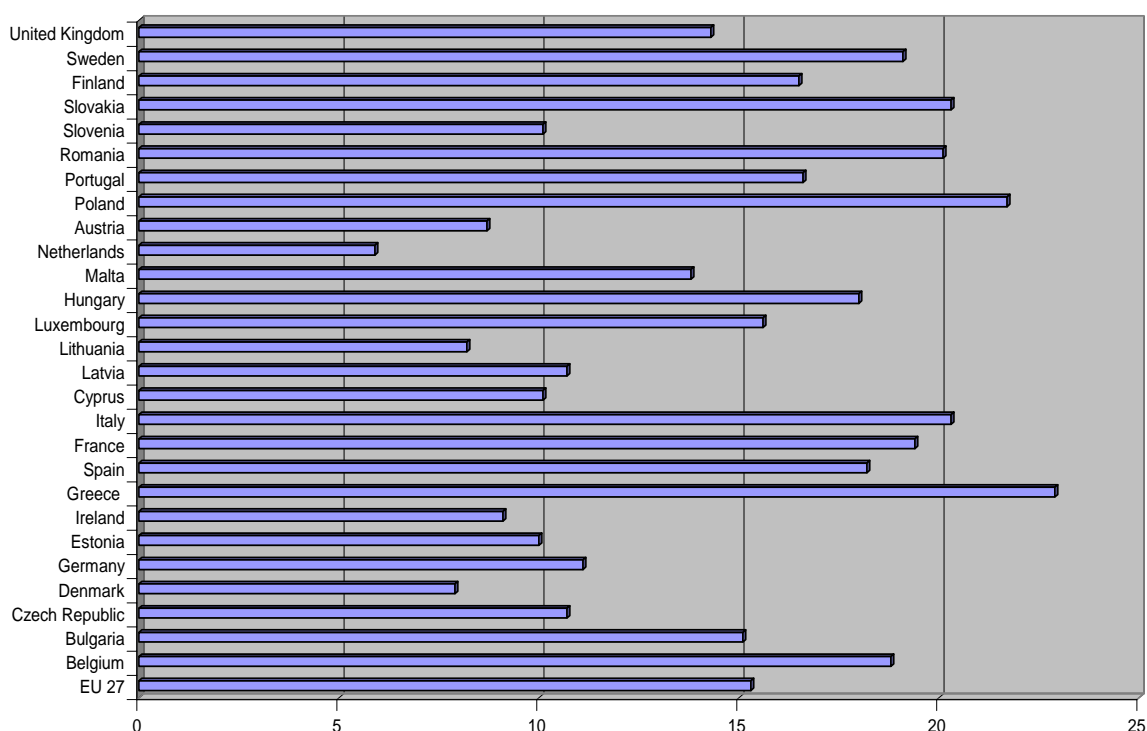
2008

Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Youth unemployment rate (15.3 % in 2007, 15.4 % in 2008) is nearly twice the percentage observed among the whole working population and nearly three times higher than for the older economically active population. But the EU Member States show a large spectrum of results. In 2007; the Netherlands and Denmark had the lowest youth unemployment rates for (respectively at 5.9 % and 7.9 %). The only other Member States with youth unemployment rates below 10 % for the age class 15-24 were Austria, Ireland and Lithuania.

At the other extreme, for the age group 15-24 years, youth unemployment rates above 20 % were recorded in Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovakia in 2007.

Unemployment rate 15-24 by country, 2007



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

For the age group 25-29 unemployment rates exceeded 10 %, in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain, France, Poland and Slovakia. Youth unemployment rates in Europe as a whole decreased by about 3 % from 2000 to 2007 for both age groups. At Member States level, the situation varies. For the youngest age group, four Member States (Sweden, Portugal, Hungary and Luxembourg recorded significant increases (more than 5 %). Regarding the oldest age group, only Portugal recorded a noteworthy raise (more than 7 %). Nonetheless the crisis can change a lot the situation on the labour market in different countries.

As regards gender difference, unemployment rates for young women in the EU are generally higher than for young men. While some Member States show small differences between male and female youth unemployment rates, there are a few countries with very significant gender gaps. The most extreme case is Greece, where the female youth unemployment rate is almost twice as high as for young males for both age groups. Other Member States with a particular large youth unemployment gender gap are Spain and Portugal.

2.2.8. Long term youth unemployment

Young people in unemployment and especially those in long term unemployment are at risk of social exclusion. Generally, those people have a socially unacceptable income not allowing a life which fits the societal standards.

At the European level 26 % of unemployed aged 15-24 and 35 % of unemployed 25-29 were unemployed for 12 month or more.

At the Member State level, there is a strong heterogeneity. For the younger age-group (15-24) the long term-unemployment rate ranges from less than 4 % in Sweden to 57 % in Slovakia. In Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Hungary and Poland more than one third of

unemployed people have been without a job for more than one year. For the oldest age group, nearly half of the countries show higher rates than the EU average, which stands at 35 %.

Generally, long term unemployment is negatively correlated with the level of education completed and it tends to decrease with higher education. Nevertheless, there are two exceptions - Estonia and Lithuania - which recorded the highest share of long term unemployment among young people who have tertiary education.

Looking at the youth unemployment to population ratio instead of the unemployment rate shows a different picture. The European unemployment ratio in 2007 for young men aged 15-24 was 6.8 % while it was 7.3 % for young people aged 25-29. Sweden and Greece registered the highest youth unemployment ratio for young people aged 15-24 and 25-29 respectively. Lithuania displayed the lowest youth unemployment ratio for young people in both age groups. In some Member States, the difference between the unemployment rate and employment ratio is higher than 15 %. This reveals that the majority of young people are inactive because of education.

2.2.9. Working while studying, studying while working

On average, around one-third of European employed youth aged 15-24 are students or apprentices, compared to only 16 % of the 25-29 age group. In some countries this share is much higher: in Denmark and the Netherlands over 65 % of employed youth are students or apprentices. While in Finland and Germany more than half of employed youth are students or apprentices. Conversely, the lowest share of students or apprentices among employed young people was observed in Romania (about 5 % for both youth age groups).

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Employers employing one or more employees are defined as persons who work in their own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit, and who employ at least one other person

A **Self-employed** person not employing any employees are defined as persons who work in their own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit, and who employ no other persons.

Employees are defined as persons who work for a public or private employer and who receive compensation in the form of wages, salaries, fees, gratuities, payment by results or payment in kind; non-conscript members of the armed forces are also included.

Family workers are persons who help another member of the family to run a farm or other business, provided they are not classed as employees.

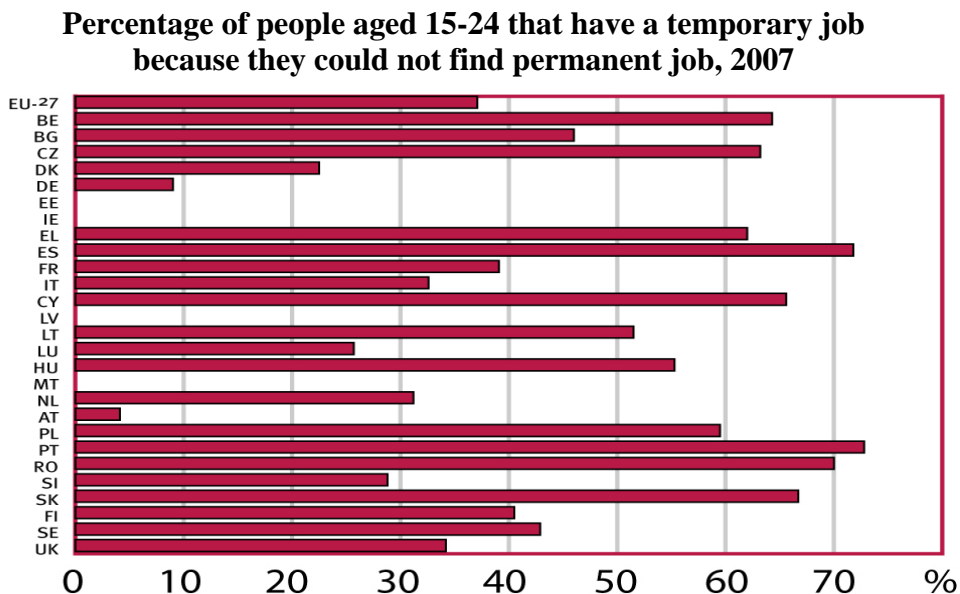
Employees with temporary contracts are those who declare themselves as having a fixed term employment contract or a job which will terminate if certain objective criteria are met, such as completion of an assignment or return of the employee who was temporarily replaced.

Full-time/part-time pattern of the main job is declared by the respondent except in the Netherlands, where part-time is determined if the usual hours are fewer than 35 hours and full-time if the usual hours are 35 hours or more, and in Sweden where this criterion is applied to the self-employed.

Source: Eurostat

2.2.10. Temporary contracts

For many young people, having a temporary or part-time job may be seen as a stepping-stone towards permanent employment. However, it also limits a person's possibility to express his or her potential. Temporary contracts therefore limit the financial and personal autonomy of young Europeans.



Source: Eurostat – Labour Force Survey

Note: BE, BG, DE, EL, ES, LT, LU, NL, AT, UK: unreliable or uncertain data due to small sample size

The share of young people on a temporary contract decreases with age. At the European level, almost 40 % of employed 15-24 year-olds work on a temporary contract, with more than 60 % on a temporary contract in Slovenia, Poland and Spain. This is reduced to around 20 % for the 25-29 age group and down to less than 10 % for employed people age 30-54. This shows that young people face not only a transition from school to work but also a transition from an unstable to a stable employment situation. With such a situation, there is a risk that a young person becomes "trapped" in unstable employment, moving from one temporary contract to another without being able to get into a permanent job.

The use of temporary contracts is increasing. Between 2000 and 2007, there was an increase in the use of such contracts of about 5 %. In Poland, this increase has been even more significant.

There are no large gender differences at EU level with respect to temporary youth employment. On average, young women are slightly more likely to be in a temporary contract than young men, although there are of course differences between Member States.

At the European level, more than 50 % of low educated young people aged 15-24 have temporary contracts. This percentage decreased with the level of education and was down to 38.5 % among young people with tertiary education. Among young people aged 25-29, around 25 % was on a temporary contract independent of the level of education.

Temporary work may be either voluntary or involuntary. The latter comprises persons that could not find a permanent job, enter a contract with a period of training or who are in a probationary period (which is considered as temporary work if the contract finishes automatically at its end).

At the European level, the majority of young people in temporary work did not choose it. This is true for all EU Member States except for Slovenia, where about 60 % young people aged 15-24 in temporary work did not want a permanent job. The proportion of young people choosing temporary work is slightly higher in the 15-24 age group than among 25-29 year-olds in all EU Member States, except in the Netherlands, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The percentage of persons on a temporary contract who could not find a permanent job increases with age. At the European level, this was the case for around 37 % of young people age 15-24, while it was 65 % for those aged 25-29.

2.2.11. Part-time work

Just as more young people are entering the labour market on temporary contracts, they are also over-represented among employees in part-time jobs. These two conditions are often complementary: A young person might both have a part-time job and be on a temporary contract.

On average, 25 % of European young people aged 15-24 who are employed work part-time mainly because of education purposes. This is much less the case for 25-29 year olds, of which only half have part-time employment for the same reason.

The percentage of young European employees who work part-time has increased from 2000 to 2007 for the 15-24 age group while remaining more or less stable for the 25-29 age group. However, there is considerable variation, both across Member States and according to gender. While about 2 % of 25-29 year old employees in Slovakia were working part-time, the same was the case for more than 20 % in the Netherlands and Denmark.

Gender differences are very significant when considering temporary work, with young women on average almost twice as likely as men for working part-time. Only Romania displayed an insignificant gender difference.

While education or training were the main reasons for accepting a part-time work for the 19-24 year olds, reasons for having a part-time work are more balanced among the age group 25-29. The most frequent reason was to look after children or other family members. Other reasons include own illness or disability or other family or personal reasons. However, in Greece, 69 % of part-time workers aged 25-29 declared to be in such a job because it was not possible to find full-time employment.

2.2.12. Young entrepreneurs

The proportion of young people running their own business is very low in Europe: about 4 % of young people aged 15-24 and 9 % of the age group 25-29 are self-employed. In all EU Member States the percentage of self-employed is higher in the 25-29 age group than among 15-24 year olds, and the rate of self-employed persons does not reach 10 % of the employed population for the age group 25-29 except in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

During the period 2000-2007, the share of self-employed young people in Europe slightly decreased. Italy had in 2007 the highest percentage of self-employed young people aged 15-29 in Europe, with double the EU average.

In most EU Member States, men made up the majority of self-employed. There was no significant gender difference in Cyprus. With regard to age, Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta and Austria showed a higher proportion of self-employment among men aged 25-29 compared to men in the 15-24 age group. The opposite trend was the case for women, with the highest self-employment rate in the youngest age category.

In most Member States, entrepreneurial mindsets seem to be more widespread among young people with upper secondary school. The exceptions in this regard are Spain, Malta and Romania, where more than 60 % of self-employed youth aged 15-24 had lower education. Luxembourg recorded the same proportion among highly educated young people aged 25-29.

According to the Factors of Business Success Survey (FOBS), less than 15 % of entrepreneurs are younger than 30 years old, 38 % between 30 and 39 years and 48 % of them are 40 years old or over. This has to be considered with caution since only few EU Member States collect data. The population that was surveyed in this project was enterprises born in 2002, that had survived to 2005, and that were still managed by their founders at the time of the survey. The survey was carried out from June 2005 to January 2006 by the National Statistical Institutes of 13 EU Member States (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, Bulgaria and Romania), on a voluntary basis.

Six out of 10 entrepreneurs did not have any special training. Almost all of those who did go through training did it on their own initiative. The exceptions here are Italy and France: in Italy about half of the entrepreneurs undertook a special training on their own initiative while one fourth of French entrepreneurs did so upon a public authority's request. The same pattern applies for all ages: young entrepreneurs did not get more specific training than their older counterparts.

Young entrepreneurs have various educational backgrounds. Three groups of Member States can be distinguished: In the first, a majority of entrepreneurs had an upper secondary education (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Sweden). In the second group, the majority had a tertiary education (Estonia, Latvia Lithuania and Luxembourg) while in the third group, consisting only of Romania, a majority of the entrepreneurs had a primary or lower secondary education.

Among the most important motivations for starting one's own business in all countries that participated in the survey were a desire for new challenges and being one's own boss. Future earning is also an important aspect when starting up its own business: about 80 % of Czech, Romanian, Slovenian and Slovakian entrepreneurs reported the financial aspect as main motivation.

Avoiding unemployment could motivate young people to set up their own business. This was stated as being an important motivation for a majority of young entrepreneurs in all participating countries apart from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Austria, Sweden, Luxembourg and Denmark.

2.2.13. Focus of activity

Participation of young people in the economic sector depends on the structure of each national economy. At the EU level, young people aged 15-24 are proportionally more numerous in the sectors of wholesale and retail trade. On the other hand, manufacturing shows the highest share of young people aged 25-29. These sectors were also the main ones employing older people aged 30-54.

Half of young people aged 15-24 are employed in low skilled or elementary occupations. Nearly 20 % are employed either as legislators, senior officials and manager, professionals or technicians or associates professionals. Of course, youth aged 15-24 are underrepresented in senior or management positions given their young age and their lack of experience.

About 4 out of ten young people aged 25-29 has skilled non manual positions and more than 25 % are occupied as skilled manual employees. The proportion of young adults working in elementary and low skilled non manual occupations stands at 35 %.

KEY FIGURES RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

- 57.5 % of young Europeans aged 15-29 are considered as economically active (meaning that they are either employed or actively seeking employment)
- More than one third of young people aged 15-24 are NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- The unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 considered economically active was 15.4 % in 2008, almost three times as high as for the older economically active population
- Half of young people aged 20 are on the labour market
- 26 % of unemployed 15-24 year-olds and 35 % of unemployed 25-29 year-olds have been unemployed for more than 12 months
- One third of employed 15-24 year-olds are students or apprentices
- Half of employed 15-24 year-olds are in a low skilled or elementary occupation
- 40 % of employed 15-24 year-olds work on a temporary contract
- 25 % of employed 15-24 year-olds have a part-time job
- 4 % of youth aged 15-24 are self-employed entrepreneurs, while the same goes for 9 % of 25-29 year-olds

2.3. Young people and social exclusion

2.3.1. *Unequal access to opportunities*

Unequal access to opportunities tends to deepen the gap between young people's life prospects.

The prospects of young people vary widely, according to their socio-economic background and other variables. A number of youth groups are more exposed to social exclusion and poverty than others. Amongst the factors leading to this situation are early school dropouts, low educational achievements, a migrant or Roma background, mental health problems, a low socioeconomic background, disability, exposure to violence and substance abuse.⁷

The problems experienced by such groups of youth can, amongst others, be translated into decreased access to necessary services, poor health, lack of decent housing or homelessness, financial exclusion, reduced participation in the community and further exclusion from the labour market and, consequently, shorter life expectancy. Accordingly, access to education and training, increased opportunities for entering the labour market (including measures to facilitate the transition from school to work), provision of decent housing and quality health care, access to basic services such as transport and to other services such as financial services (e.g. credit), are among the welfare goods facilitating opportunities and supporting integration within society⁸.

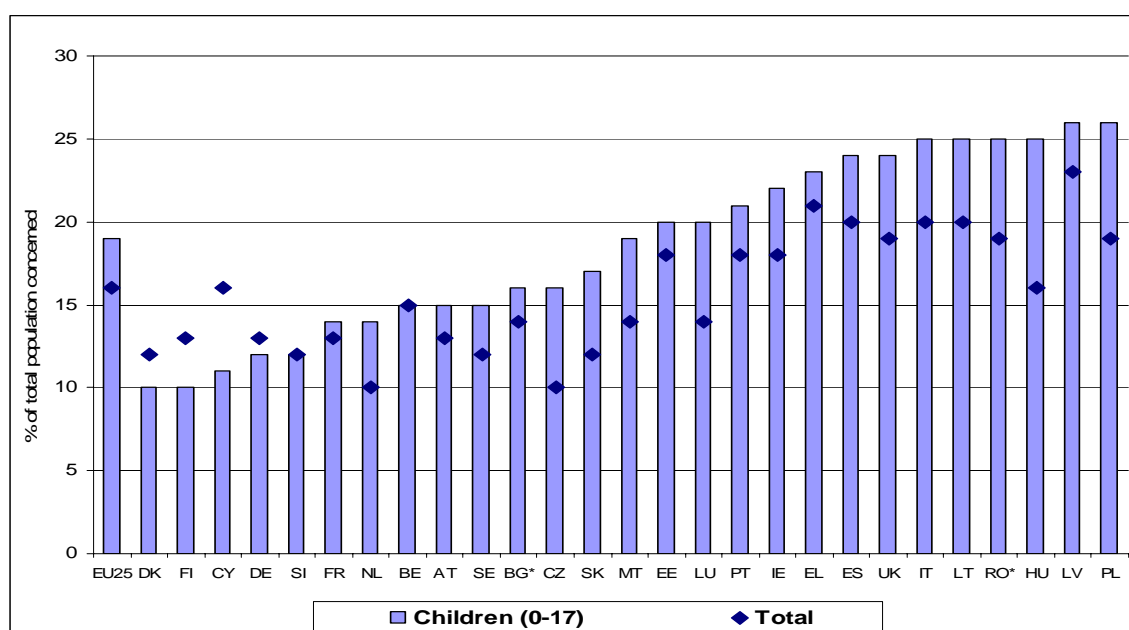
⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/poverty_social_exclusion_en.htm

⁸ EU indicators, European Commission Staff Working Document, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Units E2 and E4, 2008.

2.3.2. Living conditions

Children and young people, in particular from disadvantaged backgrounds, face higher risk of social exclusion and poverty. Data shows that living conditions during childhood and young age have a significant impact on further life prospects.⁹ There is a vicious circle of intergenerational inheritance following from growing up in a household defined as being at risk of poverty and social exclusion and thus having less access to opportunities. Of the 16 % of Europeans at risk of poverty, 19 million are children (age 0-17). Children are often at greater risk-of-poverty than the rest of the population (19 % in the EU, 2007 figures). This is true in most countries except in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Cyprus and Slovenia. Child poverty rates range from 10 % in Denmark to 25 % in Italy and Romania.

Rate of people at risk-of-poverty in the EU (%), whole population and children, 2005



Source: SILC (2006)

A detailed analysis of the determinants of child poverty (age 0-17) was carried out in 2007 by the Social Protection Committee, leading to a detailed diagnosis of the main causes of child poverty in each country¹⁰. The analysis confirms that child poverty outcomes result from complex interactions between joblessness, in-work poverty (of households) and the impact of social transfers, and that the countries achieving the best outcomes are those performing well on all fronts, notably by combining strategies aimed at facilitating access to employment and enabling services (child care etc.) with income support. Accordingly, the extent to which lone households and large families experience greater risk of poverty depends both on their characteristics (age, education level of parents, etc.), and on the labour market situation of the parents (joblessness, in-work poverty, etc.), which can be influenced by the availability of adequate support through access to enabling services such as

⁹ "Child Poverty and Well-being in the EU, current status and way forward", Social Protection Committee, January 2008: EU indicators, European Commission Staff Working Document, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Units E2 and E4, 2008.

¹⁰ "Child Poverty and Well-being in the EU, current status and way forward", Social Protection Committee, January 2008

childcare, measures of reconciliation of work and family life, and in-work income support. This situation will follow children as they grow older.

2.3.3. *Young people at risk of poverty*

20 % of young people aged 18-24 are regarded as being in risk of poverty (defined as having an income below 60 % of the national median income). One in five young people find themselves in this situation. Young adults face a higher risk of poverty as support from their parental home diminishes and integration to the labour market is still in an early stage. The rate of young people aged 18-24 at risk of poverty, when looking at their earned income, varies greatly across EU countries, from less than 10 % in Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia to 30 % or more in Denmark and Sweden¹¹.

However, when trying to assess young people's actual living conditions, figures on youth income have to be interpreted with great caution and supplemented with knowledge on other determinants on poverty and social exclusion, as this indicator alone does not accurately reflect the living conditions of young people, covering access to resources and to opportunities. This implies that the earned income of young people on its own does not give an accurately reflect whether a young person is deprived of opportunities, or if their life prospects are under threat.

Young people, who have left the parental home, have often limited financial means, but they nevertheless have access to housing and can benefit from their own source of income, through work, student loans or benefits. They might also receive financial support¹² from their family, which means that living on one's own is not always a sign of self-sufficiency. In average, young people left the parental home at a mean age of 25 years. Thus, a majority of young people in Denmark and Finland have left the parental home, unlike most young people in other EU countries where between 66 % and 88 % of 18-24 year-olds are still living with their parents¹³. Among the reasons for this is access to student loans or benefits, or financial support from their family. Moreover young people who have left their parental home often have access to housing, despite very limited income. Young people living with their parents are likely to face a lower risk of being in a risk situation, since they benefit directly from the income of their parents. However, further analysis would be needed to determine, whether they stay with their parents by choice, or because they cannot become self-sufficient through lack of access to employment¹⁴ and housing.

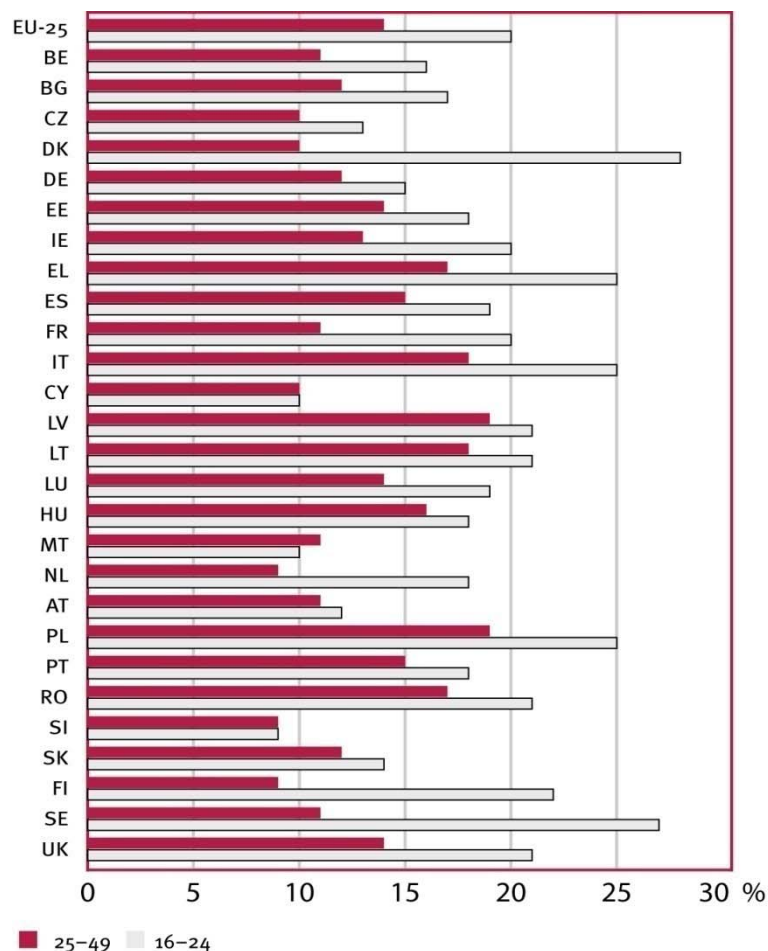
¹¹ Social protection and social inclusion 2008: EU indicators, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Units E.2 and E.4, October 2008.

¹² Financial support from parents is recorded as income in EU-SILC under the inter-household transfer component only insofar as these transfers are regular.

¹³ Social protection and social inclusion 2008: EU indicators, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Units E.2 and E.4, October 2008.

¹⁴ The Commission working document accompanying the 2007 Commission Communication 'Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society' provides a detailed analysis of the employment situation of young people together with a revival of Member State policies to foster youth employment in the context of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs. See: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/youthswd_2007_en.pdf.

At risk of poverty rate of age groups 16-24 and 24-49 , 2006



Source: Eurostat – EU SILC

At risk of poverty rate: Share of persons with an income below 60% national median income. "Income" must be understood as equivalised disposable income. It is defined as the household's total disposable income divided by its "equivalent size", to take account of the size and composition of the household, and is attributed to each household member.

Note: EU25: estimate. MT, PT: provisionnal

18 % of young people aged 18-24 earn less than half the average income for the country they live in. 27 % of young people earn less than 60 % (the income level below 60 % of the median income is defined as "at risk of poverty"), and 11 % of young people earn less than 40 % of the average national income (in 2006).

KEY FIGURES RELATING TO SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

- 19 million children (age 0-17) are at risk of poverty in the EU
- 20 % of young people aged 18-24 are at risk of poverty
- In average, young people leave the parental home at 25 years of age (mean age)
- 18 % of young people aged 18-24 earn less than half the average income for the country they live in

3. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

3.1. Citizenship and participation

3.1.1. *Active citizenship: today's choices, the life of tomorrow's community*

Active citizenship of young people, as the “*political participation and participation in associational life characterized by tolerance and non violence and the acknowledgement of the rule of law and human rights*”¹⁵, is a key component of the future of European Union. It is also a political priority at the European level.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The term **citizenship** is used to express three different concepts which can be used simultaneously:

- what a citizen is, i.e. his or her status;
- what a citizen can or cannot do, i.e. in terms of rights and duties; and
- which activities a citizen undertakes, i.e. a set of practices that demonstrate his/ her or membership of a society.

3.1.2. *Information: the key to participation?*

Information of young people is, on the basis of the White Paper on Youth¹⁶, a priority at the European level. It is increasingly seen as key for ensuring their access to social and civic opportunities.

According to the 2006 Commission analysis of national reports under the Youth open method of coordination¹⁷, 12 Member States presented comprehensive youth information strategies (Austria, Belgium, Spain, Finland, France, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Netherlands, and Czech Republic).

18 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, and United Kingdom) had also created youth web portals at this time.

Data about 20 Member States is currently available in the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYC) database. More than 2300 information points at national or regional level are registered.

3.1.3. *Youth Participation*

On the basis of the White Paper on Youth, participation of young people is – like information – a priority of the EU open method of coordination. Two kinds of participation have been identified by

¹⁵ Indicators for active citizenship and citizens' education. Research report for the European Commission, DG EAC

¹⁶ European Commission White Paper of 21 November 2001 on a new impetus for European youth, [COM\(2001\) 681](#)

¹⁷ Commission Staff Working Document SEC(2006) 1006

Member States as common objectives for increasing participation of young people: participation in community life and participation in representative democracy.

Since the publication of the White Paper, a number of Member States have clarified or strengthened the legal rules governing participation by young people. These provisions often refer to the legal recognition of local youth councils or the powers devolved to national youth councils. A number of Member States have made participation by young people a national priority through the adoption of annual or multiannual strategic plans. All EU Member States have representative structures in schools and universities and, increasingly, youth councils and children's or youth parliaments. (Commission Staff Working Document: Analysis of national reports submitted by the Member States concerning participation by and information for young people).

The following analysis is mainly based upon Eurobarometer surveys, the Member States' national reports on participation of young people and information available in the EKCYP system. Information on a number of Member States is missing. It is not possible to identify overall pan-European trends. For the future, improving data definition and collection about the following issues is recommended: membership of trade unions and youth organisations, participation in elections, numbers of young people elected at regional and local level, definition of 'youth councils' and other participatory structures, percentage of young people who are members of youth organisations (some Member States include, for example, membership of sports clubs), or categorisation of different types of financial support. Nevertheless, a first picture of the developments in youth participation can be given.

3.1.4. A decline in traditional membership of organisations

Membership in organisations, associations and clubs does not seem to be very appealing to young people in the European Union: Only 22 % of young people answered "yes" to the question: "are you member of an organisation?"

There is a clear division between the northern Member States, where young people are more often members of clubs and associations, and the southern Member States, where such membership is less extensive.

Previous surveys in 1997 and 2001 indicate that membership of sports clubs is very popular. This is confirmed in the reporting from 2007: almost half of young persons (49 %) are members of a sports club.

Far behind follows memberships in youth organisations and cultural associations (8 %), trade unions and hobby clubs (7 %), political parties and religious associations (5 %). Human rights movements and consumer organisations have the smallest number of young memberships.

Recreational groups and religious organisations and were the most popular engagements for European youth in 2006. 26.8 % of the young men (aged between 16 and 29) interviewed took part in recreational activities through dedicated groups or organisations, and 18.9 % of young women interviewed did so during the last 12 months. Religion is still a common way of being active in society, with a 20.1 % of young women practicing this option and 16 % of young men. Only few young people (less than 4 %) participated in activities of political parties or trade unions during 2006.

Some examples of trade unions membership among young people 13-30

Country	Percentage (estimate)
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Finland	10
Germany	3.7
Greece	2.3
Romania	0.05
Slovakia	3.9
Slovenia	6.04
United Kingdom	10 % of people aged 16-24, and 24 % of people aged 25-34

Source: European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCY) 2006-2007

Percentage of the population aged 16-29 that participated in the last 12 months in activities of..., by sex, EU-25, 2006

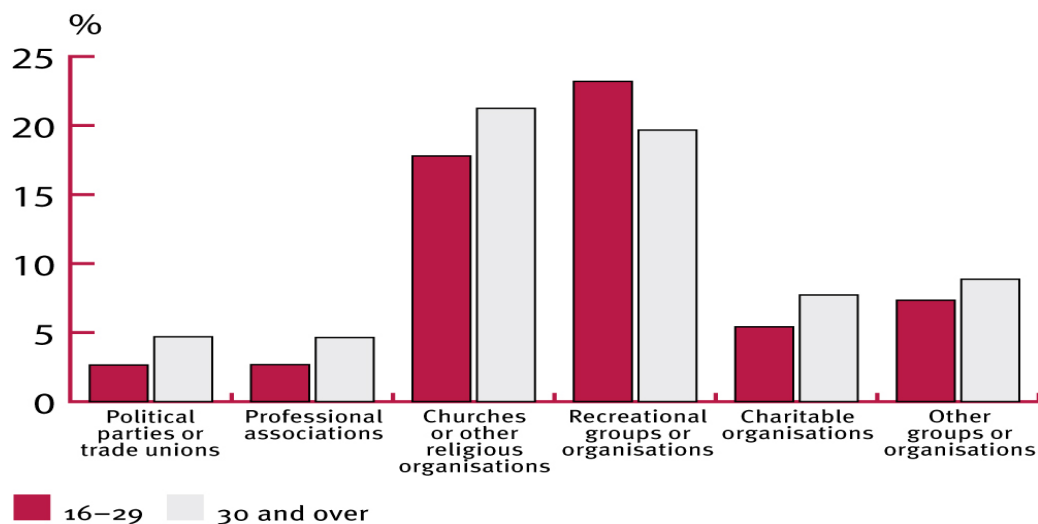


Source: Eurostat – EU-SILC ad hoc module 2006 on “Social participation”.

Men aged 16-29 have been more active than women in the last 12 months in getting involved in political parties, trade unions, professional associations and recreational groups. Women participated more in church activities and other religious organisations and charitable activities.

There is no substantial difference between the participation rate of young people (16 – 29) and the overall population.

Percentage of the population of age group that participated in the last 12 months in activities of..., EU-25, 2006



Source: Eurostat – EU-SILC ad hoc module 2006 on “Social participation”.

3.1.5. Interest in participative democracy

When asked which political actions are most important to ensure that their voice is heard by policy makers, 30 % of young Europeans list participating in debates as the most important activity. Joining a political party comes second (16 %) and taking part in a demonstration third (13 %). Signing a petition, being a member of or supporting a non-governmental organization (NGO), or joining a trade union is equally recognized as an effective way of political activism by 11 % of European youth (Eurobarometer 2007 survey on Youth). More than one in four young people signed a petition during the last year, and almost the same number presented his or her view in an online discussion forum. One in five young Europeans took part in a public demonstration.

The highest level of overall political involvement among young persons was recorded in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, and the lowest in Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary and Malta.

Young men tend to be more active, in particular when presenting their view in an online forum or taking part in a public demonstration.

Young Europeans living in a metropolitan or urban area are more likely to be involved than those from rural areas.

3.1.6. Legal framework for participation structures

The above mentioned 2006 Commission synthesis report analysed which actions had been implemented by Member States to support the participation structures.

This report shows that the legal framework for youth participation has been improved. Some Member States have adopted legislation, others have strategic action plans or agreed obligations for the consultation of young people. This may be an act that requires each local authority to recognise/establish one or more youth councils (Belgium), a policy concept (the Czech Republic), a budget for participation (Denmark), a local youth act (Finland), a social code (Germany), a national action plan, a youth law or an act (Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia), or acts that regulate agreements between non-governmental organisations and the Government (Luxembourg) or which require young people to be consulted (United Kingdom). There may also be mechanisms or legislation

encouraging the self-organisation of young people by regulating the process for the establishment and structuring of youth representation (Bulgaria).

In at least six Member States the existence of school councils is a requirement by law. In Sweden, a national campaign called School elections 2006 ('Skolval 2006') was carried out in 1.400 schools all across the country a few days before the ordinary national, regional and local parliamentary elections.

In most Member States, activities are aimed towards all young people, but with special emphasis on certain groups. The types of groups differ per Member State, but often include immigrants/ethnic minorities, women, homosexuals, disabled, unemployed or young drug addicts.

3.1.7. Youth councils

The definition, structure and form of youth councils differ between Member States. Almost two thirds of the Member States have *local youth councils*. Data from EKCYP indicate that every municipality in Greece and the Flemish part of Belgium has a youth council. In the United Kingdom, there are more than 400 local youth councils although there is no uniform structure for them. Sweden has around 50 local youth councils, but here the organisation differs per municipality; a number of Swedish municipalities have mechanism for a regular dialogue with young people. Finland has 20 youth councils which are elected by local authorities and operate within municipal structures. In addition, Finland has 180 youth councils elected by young people themselves (there are 400 municipalities). Germany and Italy and the Netherlands report a considerable number of local youth councils (200, 471 and 124 respectively). In new Member States, local youth councils are being formed; Estonia reported 4 in 2005 which increased to 20 in 2007, in Slovenia 39 youth councils were established after 2000, and in Romania there are 28. For Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the possibility exists to create youth councils; while in Lithuania 46 out of 60 municipalities already have a youth council.

At the regional level, 15 Member States report having *regional youth councils*, although some have only one. In several countries, the regional youth councils cover most regions: in Germany all "Länder" have a council, Estonia has councils at the county government level while the Slovak Republic has one in each region (8 in total). Greece has prefectural youth councils; Lithuania has 25 regional councils and the Czech Republic 12. In Denmark all city or district councils have a youth council, and Austria and the Flemish part of Belgium both have 5 regional councils. The Netherlands, Romania and Bulgaria have to regional youth councils each. In the United Kingdom, the regional youth councils are the same as the regional youth parliaments.

Almost all Member States have a *national youth council*. In most cases, it is an umbrella organisation of which other youth organisations are members (between 25 and 100 members). National Youth Councils, besides Europeans or International youth NGOs, are normally members of the European Youth Forum.

3.1.8. Youth parliaments

7 Member States reported having youth parliaments at the *local level*. The structures vary, however, and so does the number of youth parliaments. Germany has the highest number (300-350) followed by the Czech Republic (around 300) and Austria (more than 100). Estonia and Bulgaria report on several local parliaments or councils, and Sweden has a few. Finland has no official structures, but reports on internet-based parliamentary forums for children.

At the *regional level*, although 6 Member States report some activity, the number of initiatives is, in most cases, limited (some initiatives in Austria (2), Finland (1), Italy (4), Slovenia (2) and the

Netherlands). The UK parliament has a network of regional contacts, and the Czech Republic reports of 15 regional youth parliaments.

At the *national level*, 13 Member States reported having a youth parliament although the way they are organised differ considerably. In many countries, the youth parliament is organised annually, as a one day event or on a project basis. In Estonia, the youth parliament is a body with member organisations. In Latvia the National Youth Parliament was established in 2004. In the Netherlands, a youth government (Jugendkabinet) was established in 2007. The UK has a youth parliament with 300 elected members, in Wales there is a Youth Assembly, Scotland has a Youth Parliament and there is a Youth Forum for Northern Ireland.

3.1.9. *Other participatory structures*

The most common participatory structures are school and student councils, pupil and scholar parliaments, and information and consultancy services for young people. Other examples are open forums, such as consultation hours, and project related forms of participation such as playgrounds and youth centres (Austria), advisory bodies of youth boards and youth clubs (Cyprus). There are also youth organisations and adult organisations endorsing children's rights (Czech Republic), opinion organisations of youngsters (Finland) and interactive websites.

The structures within ministries and other public authorities for the participation of young people seem to be more numerous and better developed in some countries (such as Finland, Sweden, and Denmark), in comparison to others (such as Hungary, Greece, UK, Austria, Lithuania and Slovenia).

3.1.10. *Youth interest in politics*

If we consider the results of the European Social Survey, young people aged 16-24 and 25-29 seem to show a low interest in politics. A majority of young people declare that they are hardly or not interested in politics, whilst only 6 % declare that they are very interested. Among older generations, the percentage of those very interested in politics is more than twice as high.

The interest in politics increases with age: 36 % of people aged 30 and over declared to be quite interested in politics, whereas 26 % and 30 %, respectively, of people aged 16-24 and 25-29 years old gave the same answer.

Apart from the generational gap, interest in politics also shows gender differences. Young men respond more often than young women that they are interested in politics. Almost 40 % of young males declared that they are quite or very interested in politics, while a little less than 30 % of females showed such interest. Overall, European youth is seemingly still distant from politics. 62 % of young men and 70 % of young women declare that they are hardly interested or not interested at all in politics.

Some examples of membership of political parties among young people aged 13-30

COUNTRY	PERCENTAGE
Czech Republic	1.2 (2005)
Finland	2 (2006)
Estonia	4 (2007)
Germany	2.8 (2007)
Romania	0.32 (2007)
Slovak Republic	9.95 (2006)
Sweden	4 (2006)

Source: European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCYC)

To contradict the findings in the European Social Survey in 2006, a Eurobarometer survey on youth from 2007 indicated that young Europeans are indeed interested in politics. A majority of respondents say that they are very interested or interested in politics and current affairs: 82 % of them are interested in politics in their own country, 73 % claim to be interested at a city or regional level, and 66 % say they are interested in politics and current affairs in the EU.

In the Eurobarometer survey, young Greeks have the highest level of interest in politics and current affairs, while young people in Romania, Belgium and the Czech Republic have the lowest level of interest in politics in general.

Older and highly educated young persons, and those who live in a metropolitan area, are the most interested in politics at all levels.

These findings, which may seem contradictory, could suggest that while young people may be less interested in traditional party politics, they are indeed engaged in current public and political affairs or topics that have a direct impact on their daily lives or on their future in the longer term (for example on climate change).

THE CIVICWEB PROJECT: YOUNG PEOPLE, THE INTERNET AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION¹⁸

Does the Internet contribute to civic engagement and participation among young people?

The CIVICWEB analyses the Internet as a potentially powerful tool for non-formal learning, affecting the development of social capital, and civic, political, social and economic participation among young people (aged 15-25). It focuses specifically on the range of civic sites now emerging on the web, created by many different organisations, interest groups and individuals, ranging from small-scale, local initiatives to national and international projects.

An online survey among 3.307 young internet users in the seven participating countries (partly "recruited" at the MTV website) reveals that young people are mainly interested in lifestyle and entertainment issues on the internet. Civic participation is only relevant for some 10 % of respondents, with social justice, spiritual and environmental issues being most "popular". Political issues are the least popular item, but interest in civic and political websites appears to be stronger among older young respondents, in particular those not living with their parents, youth that identify as religious, and among girls and young women.

Gender appears to be a quite significant socio-economic variable, but –surprisingly– education level does not constitute a main feature. Participation in offline and online activities turns out to be strongly correlated; demonstrating that online and offline are complementary to each other, rather than substitutive. Websites by 'specialist' groups (based on identity or locality) and aimed at a very specific audience (and often produced by members of that specific group) support a sense of belonging and 'community' and are more 'used'.

Regarding the production of civic websites for young people, the internet is mostly regarded as a cheap method of disseminating information and making contact with young people. However, for a website to be known, a lot of thought needs to be given to marketing and publicity. Most civic website producers have neither the time nor the money to adequately publicise their sites and hence the core of users remain relatively small. They mostly function with a combination of one or two part time paid employees and several voluntary staff. There is a fairly high turnover of volunteer staff at many of the civic websites surveyed and sometimes this leads to the website not being updated for months or even to its closure.

Static websites composed of visual images and written text are still the norm, though some funders of sites appear to think that complex and more expensive sites are automatically 'better'. But offering interactivity does not automatically mean that young people participate. Forums and interactive applications have to be carefully encouraged, motivated and managed. Interaction with the public sphere from young people's perspective appears to be most successful when it is both peer-to-peer and enables opportunities for reciprocal engagement with those in power – though reciprocity is rarely the case. Dealing with controversial issues of social justice (sexuality, gender, etc.) can provoke strong and negative responses from some members of the public.

¹⁸ The CIVICWEB project was funded under the 6th framework programme of the European Union (Citizens and governance programme) and involved research partners from seven countries (UK, Sweden, The Netherlands, Hungary, Spain, Slovenia and Turkey), running from September 2006 - August 2009 – Info: <http://www.civicweb.eu/>.

3.1.11. Participation by young people in the mechanisms of representative democracy

The age at which people are eligible to vote is 18 for national elections¹⁹, with the exception of Austria, where the age was lowered from 18 to 16 in 2007. In Italy, the age at which people are eligible to vote is also 18, except for elections to the Senate, for which the minimum age is 25.

In most Member States, the age at which people are eligible to stand for election is 18 as well. However, there are variations from 18 to 40, especially for candidates standing for election as president or in senate (candidates must be over 40 years for Italian and Czech Senates for instance).

Percentage of young people aged 13-30 who voted in recent elections, some countries

	Compulsory vote	European Parliament elections (2004)	National elections	Regional elections
Austria	NO	40 %	78 %	Between 66-80 % (according to the federal states)
Belgium Flanders	YES	100 %	100 %	100 %
Finland	NO	26 %	56 %	40 %
Luxembourg	YES		100 %	
Malta	NO	24 %	24 %	
Romania	NO	N/A	65.8 %	
Slovak Republic	NO	9.7 %	44.9 %	
Sweden	NO	26.5% of 18-24 31.6% of 25-29	76.6 %	69.9 %
United Kingdom	NO	45 % of 18-24 53 % of 25-34	45 % of 18-24 53 % of 25-34	

Source: European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKCY)P

These results are in line with the results of the Eurobarometer 2007: asked if they have voted in an election or referendum in the last three years, 62 % of young Europeans state that they did vote, 13 % that they did not vote, while less than one in four was not yet eligible to vote.

The largest percentages of young persons who did not vote in an election or a referendum in the past three years is found in Latvia, the United Kingdom and Portugal, and the smallest percentages in Belgium (where voting is compulsory) followed by Sweden and Italy. Almost all Member States

¹⁹ The voting age for local elections in some Federal States of Germany has been lowered to 16 in the 1990s.

have launched campaigns to encourage young people to vote (Commission staff working document: Analysis of national reports submitted by the Member States concerning participation by and information for young people (SEC (2006) 1006).

Asked which measures would help to be more active as a citizen in the society, 19 % answered "if the voting age would be lower".

The post European elections 2004 Flash Eurobarometer survey (162) shows that at European level, the propensity to abstain from voting is higher when the voter is young (or a manual worker). More than two-thirds of voters between 18 and 24 (67 %, compared to a population average of 54.3 %) did not go to the polls. Conversely, a minority of people over 55 chose to abstain (41 %). People between 25 and 39 were overrepresented (together with women, people who studied for a long time and employees) among "one-day abstentionists", people who decide the very day of the election not to vote. They are thus a group which can most easily be mobilised, all the more as young people also tend to feel not being sufficiently informed about elections. The European Parliament Eurobarometer (EB Standard 70) survey from autumn 2008 points out that the age group of the 17 – 24 year olds failed to answer the question about the date of the next European elections more frequently than any other age group.

The same European Parliament's survey shows that when asked about elements relative to the sense of European citizenship, young people between 15 and 24 years clearly distinguish themselves from their elders regarding the following three areas: 24% of young people (EU average: 18%) think that a European identity card in addition to a national identity card would strengthen the sense of European Citizenship. 21% support being able to vote in all elections organised in the Member State where one resides as opposed to the 19% of older respondents and 21% support a European civic education course for children from primary school age as opposed to 18% of older respondents.

3.1.12. Promoting participation through the European Union

Promoting participation is one of the priorities of the EU Strategy for Youth: Investing and Empowering (2010-2018). The main objective of this priority is to ensure the full participation of young people in society through encouraging youth participation in non-governmental youth organisations, civic life and in representative democracy. Promoting the participation of non-organised young people is stressed as important.

The European Union concretely supports projects aimed at enhancing participation of young people through the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013).

"Participation of young people" is one of the four permanent priorities of the Programme. More than 4.100 projects supported through the programme in 2007 (75 % of the projects granted) were described by the promoters as targeting this particular priority.

The Youth in Action Programme, which succeeded the previous EU YOUTH Programme (2000 – 2006), includes two actions of particular relevance to participation:

- Action 1.3 Youth Democracy Projects/ A Youth Democracy Project is developed by a European partnership, allowing the pooling of ideas, experiences and methodologies from projects or activities at local, regional, national or European level towards improving young people's participation.
- Action 5.1 Meetings of young people and those responsible for youth policy/ This sub-action supports cooperation, seminars and structured dialogue between young people who are active in youth work and youth organisations and who address issues related to youth policy.

In 2007, which was the first year of implementation of the new Programme, the participation in these two actions was the following:

- more than 5.300 young people participated in 54 projects under sub-Action 1.3;
- more than 7.900 young people participated in 41 projects under sub-Action 5.1.

Provisional figures for 2008 suggest a further increase in the interest for these actions.

Beyond the Youth in Action Programme, Representations of the European Commission in member States have supported a wide range of actions with the aim of improving participation and active citizenship of young people. Activities include simulations of EU institutions, debating activities, competitions and workshops with youth organisations on selected topics.

Moreover, among the "Plan D/Debate Europe" projects supported by the European Commission (DG Communication) following the call for proposals in 2007/2008, 26 projects specifically addressed the promotion of active participation of through democratic debate. Activities that were funded include online consultations, polls, group debates and mock parliaments. Activities were generally organised by non-governmental youth organisations, local authorities, universities and schools. Similar activities will also be carried out in 2009.

3.1.13. Trust in institutions

Confidence in institutions may be considered a prerequisite to becoming active citizens. As pointed out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)²⁰, "trust in political institutions refers to the extent to which individuals have a high degree of confidence in the institutions (government and parliament) and public administration of the country where they live".

The European Social Survey has asked people how much they personally trust each of the institutions that were mentioned to them²¹. Results show that Europeans have a lack of trust of towards their national political institutions. Less than 40 % of young people aged between 16 and 29 have trust in (or are neutral towards) politicians and political parties. On this issue, there is not great difference between age-groups. While older generations tend to trust (or be neutral towards) politicians slightly more than young people, young people tend to be more positive toward political parties. The percentage of people (independent of age) that distrust their country parliament is slightly over 50 %. However, the distrust of politicians in general is even higher than for the institution of the parliament.

Trust (or neutral feeling) in police and in the legal system is higher in the total population. 75 % of people aged 30 and over trust the police, while for the age group under 30, the percentage is 70. Furthermore, 60 % of the total population trust the legal system of their country.

People, and especially the young generation, tend to be more positive towards international institutions. Young people aged between 16 and 29 have more trust in the United Nations than older people: more than 70 % of youth trust the UN (with rates of more than 75 % in the Nordic countries) whereas they have only 66 % of trust from the older generation.

Trust in the European Parliament, which is the only directly elected body of the European Union, is above 50 %. 63 % of the population younger than 30 trust the European Parliament while 52 % in the population aged 30 and over trusted the same institution. However, in nearly half the countries

²⁰ OECD, "Society at glance" 2006

²¹ European Social Survey, www.europeansocialsurvey.org (ESS2 and ESS 3)

for which data is available, more than one third of young people below 30 responded that they mistrust the European Parliament. Such mistrust reaches more than 40 % in Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom and is also the case for those aged between 25 and 29 years in Latvia, Hungary and Poland. The distrust of the European Parliament is lower in other countries, especially in Belgium, Denmark and Estonia, where less than one fourth of all respondents below 30 expressed such suspicion.

3.2. Voluntary activities

The historical context of voluntary activities among young people differs throughout Europe. While there is a long and continuous tradition of volunteering in Western Europe, Central and Eastern European countries has had to re-develop frameworks for voluntary activities and service after the fall of communism. This must be taken into account when analysing the current state of play and recent developments in the field of volunteering.

Partly because of this reason, the availability of data varies considerably among countries and must be assessed in a historical and cultural context. In some countries, systems for data collection on volunteering are not well developed, and understandings of terms/concepts related to voluntary service may vary considerably.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Voluntary activities are all kinds of voluntary engagement. They are characterised by the following aspects: open to all, unpaid, undertaken by own free will, educational (non-formal learning aspect) and added social value.

Voluntary service is part of voluntary activities and is characterised by the following additional aspects: fixed period; clear objectives, content, tasks, structure and framework; appropriate support and legal and social protection.

Civic service is a voluntary service managed by the State or on behalf of the State, e.g. in the social field or in civil protection.

Civilian service is an alternative to compulsory military service in some countries, but not voluntary.

In this report, volunteering is mainly analysed through assessing national reports on the implementation of European common objectives agreed by Member States under the Open Method of Coordination plus data from the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) and Eurobarometer surveys.

Available statistics concerning the rate of participation of young people in volunteering activities are insufficient. Most national governments do not systematically collect relevant data on volunteering for young people, and there is much room for improvement.

According to the 2007 Commission analysis of national reports under the Youth open method of coordination²², nine countries had either a youth volunteering strategy in place or in preparation (Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom). All countries that have a strategy, also have a volunteering law. Six countries had a voluntary service in place (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and Luxembourg). In 13 countries, specific measures had been taken to enhance the volunteering activities of young people

²² Commission Staff Working Document SEC(2007) 1084

with fewer activities (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom). France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the UK have made volunteering a political priority of their governments (at the time of the 2007 national reports). Cyprus, Greece and Italy have strengthened cooperation with schools; Spain has traditionally a good cooperation with Universities on volunteering. Finland has sought to develop a tripartite dialogue model for volunteering including decision makers, youth workers and researchers. Austria (Volunteer's Pass), Belgium, Finland, France (Passport of Commitment), Germany, Poland and Slovakia are among the countries which have developed the explicit recognition of individual skills and competence acquired through volunteering at national and European (Youthpass) level.

At the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) information about the following 16 EU Member States is currently available (reporting 2007): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Sweden, United Kingdom.

3.2.1. *Older generations are more active in voluntary activities*

Available data suggest that young people participate less in voluntary activities than that of other age groups, even when corrected for national differences. Types of volunteering include informal and unpaid assistance, caring for other adults and other social activities in clubs, as well as political or community organisations. There are huge differences across countries, as far as voluntary activities go. Older people are most likely to be involved in these activities in the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, whereas participation levels are lowest in the Southern and Central European countries taking part in the SHARE Survey (Survey on Health and Retirement in Europe, which does not cover all Member States²³).

A Eurobarometer survey carried out in September 2008 revealed that almost three quarters of Europeans would consider participating in community work or volunteering after retirement.

3.2.2. *Youth and voluntary activities: more advocacy than practise*

In a Eurobarometer on youth in January 2007, only 2 % of people aged between 15 and 30 report that they regularly participate in voluntary or community work during their leisure time. In the same survey, however, 16 % declare to be engaged (regularly or occasionally) in voluntary activities and 74 % of respondents think that "more available programmes encouraging voluntary work" will help young people become more active citizens in society.

In the country questionnaires that Member States were asked to submit on volunteering under EKCYP²⁴, respondents were asked to "tick off" which of a total of 17 different kinds of volunteering activities exist in their countries (such as Community peacekeeping, social assistance, environment, education, humanitarian aid, etc.). All categories of volunteering have been selected for Germany and United Kingdom, as well as for the Flemish Community of Belgium. Sweden also has most types of voluntary activity. Portugal has 11 out of the 17 categories of volunteering with the largest number of young people participating in the environmental and sports categories, while

²³ The SHARE Survey has been funded through successive EU Research Framework Programmes. SHARE is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro-data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks of more than 30,000 individuals aged 50 or over. Eleven countries have contributed data to the 2004 SHARE baseline study. More countries are joining in later surveys, thus establishing a longitudinal dataset and research infrastructure. Info: <http://www.share-project.org/>.

²⁴ European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy

in Italy, data indicate that six types of volunteering opportunities are present, with the most popular being welfare, followed by education and culture.

Voluntary activities of young people have gained importance at national and European level in recent years. There is a large variety of voluntary activities throughout EU, whether they are organised by civil society or by public authorities.

Different realities of volunteering across Member States – Some examples

The United Kingdom launched a national youth volunteering programme called 'vinvolved', accompanied by millions worth of grants to support a major expansion in volunteering for young people between the ages of 16 and 25. This completes the funding allocated to youth volunteering in this country. These support local, regional and national volunteering organisations in their respective territories. In addition, a number of organisations support youth volunteering specifically and a range of organisations offer full-time volunteering opportunities. There is also a network of more than 400 volunteer centres throughout the UK.

In this country, there is a wide range of ways to accredit young people's learning and achievements in non-formal settings, which can include volunteering. The Awards Network has mapped these awards and their components against a nine level National Qualification Framework.

In **Germany**, the national Child and Youth Plan provides a framework to support the development of an effective infrastructure for voluntary activities. This appears to be well funded and supports organisations in the field of child and youth services and welfare at the federal level. Pilot programmes and specific projects are also funded. Local and regional levels also have specific child and youth plans, under which youth volunteering activity is funded; primarily through 680 local youth welfare offices.

The two main civic service programmes that receive support through a mixture of host organisation, state, federal and third party funds are: the Voluntary Social Year and the Voluntary Ecological Year. In 2008 a new civic service focusing on developing countries has been launched, with funding to provide places for about 10.000 volunteers per year. A range of non-public organisations also support voluntary activity (e.g. churches, lottery and private foundations).

The range of actors in Germany includes government and non-governmental bodies and, also in terms of networks, there is a broad range: e.g. the Association of Voluntary Social Welfare Services, the Association of Volunteering Agencies and the Federal Network for Civil Engagement. There are also a number of information centres providing information on specific civil services, in the fields of the environment, sports and culture.

There are numerous forms of recognition and accreditation for young people, including the "In-Card", which is a certificate for volunteers who are active in a voluntary organisation. They must have attended a special qualification training and be at least 16, and the card gives them discounts on access to community services or cultural events. Over 3.000 cards are issued each month. Some Federal States have their own method of certifying qualifications, and for international volunteers there is an International Certificate.

In **Portugal**, some 238 youth associations are reported as active in the field of volunteering, together with 207 NGOs, 69 youth groups, 37 student associations, one university, 719 associations and other private entities, and 128 other bodies. Some 324 public service organisations at national and regional level are reported to be active in volunteering activity. This suggests a wide range of actors and activity, but may also indicate a degree of fragmentation. Certificates can be gained by volunteers for their work.

In **Italy**, some 2.800 organisations are reported as active in voluntary activities. All those operating within the National Civic Service are registered on a database. A sub-group of 12 of these, which constitutes the *Conferenza Nazionale degli Enti per il Servizio Civile*, is described as playing the most important role in the youth and voluntary fields. This includes CARITAS and WWF. Certificates can be gained by volunteers for their work.

Sweden also has a long tradition and history of volunteering, in particular in terms of leisure and sports associations. Participation rates for the population as a whole are relatively high – 50 % take part in some form of voluntary work. Amongst young people (between the ages 16 and 29), participation rates are 39 % for men and 43 % for women. The government supports activity primarily through financial support to NGOs. In addition, youth organisations can apply for financial support from municipalities. There are about 250 organisations which send or receive volunteers within approximately 25 programmes. Although the development of programmes and activities generally takes place within youth NGOs, the Government has taken the initiative in several specific areas, e.g. in the development of methods for the recognition of non-formal learning. The Government is working on methods for recognising non-formal and informal learning in a number of areas and have developed a special authority, the Swedish National Commission on Validation, to look into this issue.

3.2.3. Obstacles

Certain groups of young people tend to participate in volunteering much more than others. There are a number of barriers to participation; financial conditions, geographical location, health status and so on. These barriers are particularly important for people with fewer opportunities. Unfortunately, there is insufficient data to conduct a deeper analysis of these differences in volunteering.

The national reports from Member States also indicate that competing demands and increasing pressure on how young people should spend their time, in particular from the systems of formal education, can also discourage young people from becoming involved in volunteering. In some countries, a lack of clear legal and financial status for volunteer organisations and projects also constitutes serious obstacles. Others barriers include negative peer pressure and a lack of access to appropriate information. Legal and insurance issues also have an impact, alongside more practical issues such as lack of transport and childcare.

3.2.4. Initiating voluntary projects at the European level

Apart from the common objective on volunteering, which was included in the Open Method of Coordination in 2002, the European Union has since 1996 offered concrete support to voluntary activities. The European Voluntary Service (EVS) is an integrated part of the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013) and receives a substantial share of the programme budget (at least 23 % according to the decision which established the programme). In 2007, almost 4.300 young people participated in some 2.100 individual or group EVS projects. 62 % of former volunteers under the European Voluntary Service consider that this experience has changed for the better their career possibilities.

The Council of Ministers adopted in November 2008 a recommendation on the promotion of volunteering of young people across Europe²⁵.

²⁵ Council Recommendation of 20 November 2008 on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union (2008/C 319/03)

KEY FIGURES RELATING TO ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE

- Over 2300 national and regional information points are reported in 20 Member States
- 22 % of young people in the EU declare that they are members of an organisation
- 49 % of young people declare that they are members of a sport club
- 4 % of young people declare having participated in activities of political parties or trade unions
- Less than 40 % of young people aged between 16 and 29 have trust in (or are neutral towards) politicians and political parties
- 63 % of the population younger than 30 trust the European Parliament
- 16 % of people aged 15-30 are occasional or regular volunteers
- Three out of four young people consider volunteering activities as an incentive for their greater participation in society.

4. LIFESTYLES

4.1. Family life

4.1.1. General trends

Many countries are concerned about their low birth rates, while the social reality of family life has changed profoundly over recent decades.

First marriage rates, by sex and age class, expressed per 1000 persons (2003)

	Women			Men		
	15-24	25-29	30+	15-24	25-29	30+
BE	173	186	101	83	199	152
BG	273	162	56	120	200	135
CZ	210	188	52	95	200	127
DK	114	272	307	49	213	392
DE	165	203	172	75	166	248
LV	261	136	51	173	173	92
LT	351	160	52	227	218	103
LU	157	184	153	66	168	198
HU	209	189	70	95	203	144
MT	328	286	149	154	331	245
NL	150	226	179	65	187	265
PL	340	185	51	204	263	112
PT	270	233	116	159	256	166
RO	439	176	71	212	278	147
SI	130	183	107	55	161	174
SK	286	173	57	151	217	125
SE	86	178	248	28	121	290
IS	100	216	275	48	162	347
NO	124	208	199	57	168	290
CH	177	242	212	90	200	299

Note : EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, AT, FI, UK data not available

Source: Eurostat, Demographic statistics

People are less likely to enter into a first marriage, and, in 2003, did so more than two years later than in 1990: the average age at first marriage rose from 24.8 years to 27.4 years for women and from 27.5 to 29.8 years for men. The average age to enter into a first marriage is 27,3years.

Furthermore, the number of marriages between partners of different nationalities has become significant: between 12 % and 15 % in Germany and France, around 20 % in Belgium and Austria and between 25 % and 30 % in Estonia, Luxembourg and Cyprus.

Divorce rates have increased since the 1970s, more than doubling in some countries, unmarried cohabitation has become commonplace, and a large proportion of children are born outside marriage: in most Member States between 25 % and 50 % of all children.

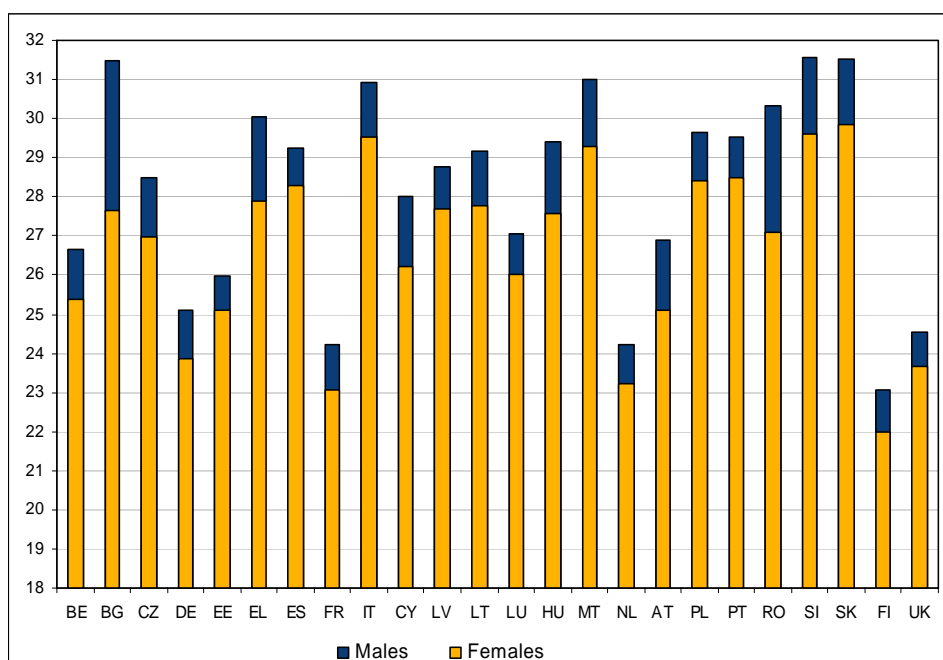
In spite of this 'de-institutionalisation' of family life, most children still live in couple households, married or cohabiting. Single-parent households, most of them headed by mothers, accounted for 14 % of households with children.

4.1.2. Leaving the parental home

One event that contributes to lead young people toward independence is when they leave the parental home. Transition from parental to own household has a strong relation to fertility rates: as a rule, when young people leave home later, they have fewer children and later in life.

In 2005, 66 % of young women and 78 % of men aged 18–24 in the EU were still living with their parents (Eurostat). According to the data from the EU Labour Force Survey (2007), the mean age at which young people leave parental home differ among Member States.

Mean age of young people leaving home, by gender (2007)



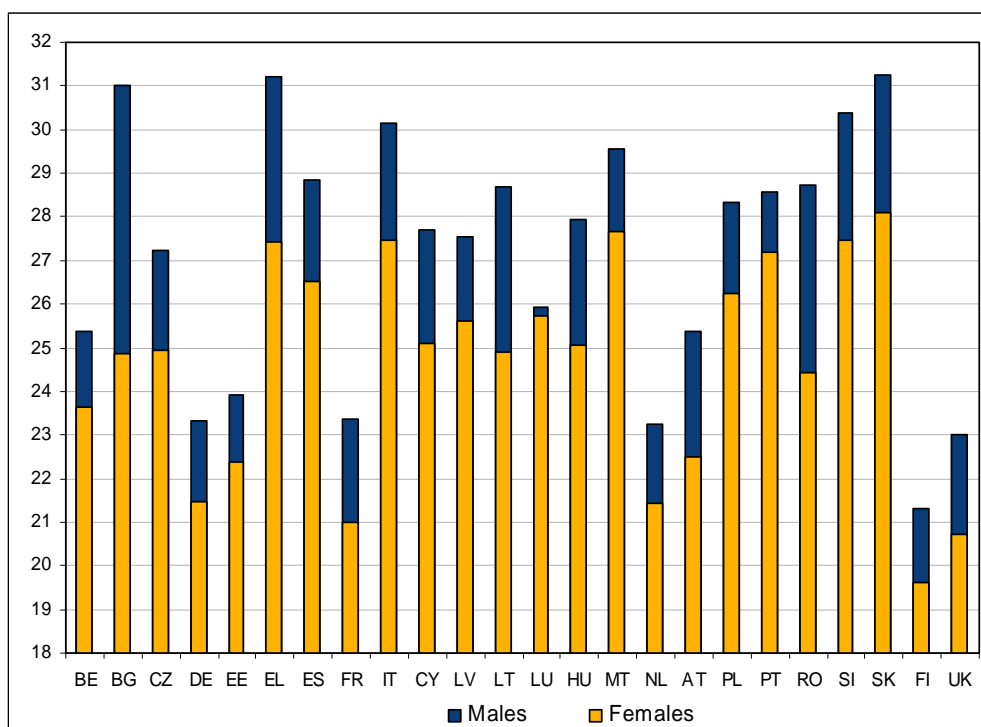
Note: DK, IE, SE data not available

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

The mean age is 25 years. For men, it varies from 23 in Finland to 31.5 in Bulgaria, Slovenia and Slovakia. Women leave on average earlier, varying from 22 in Finland to nearly 30 in Slovakia. Highest gaps by gender are registered in Bulgaria and Romania, respectively 3.8 and 3.2 years, while the majority of Member States register gaps between one and two years. On average, transition from parental home takes place later in Southern and Central Europe than in other EU countries (often after age 26 for women and 28 for men).

These results are confirmed when considering the median age - i.e. age at which half of young people have left their home: the value varies from 21 years of age in Finland to age 31 in Slovakia. Women leave in average earlier, varying from 20 to just over 28, again in Finland and in Slovakia.

Median age of young people leaving home by gender (2007)



Note: DK, IE, SE data not available

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

4.1.3. Reasons for staying at home longer than before

A Eurobarometer survey, conducted in 2007 on a sample of EU citizens aged 15-30, provides information for why young people stay longer than before at the parental home.

According to this survey, a majority of young Europeans give financial reasons when asked what they believe are the reasons for this delay: 44 % believe that young adults cannot afford to move out, and 28 % think that there is a lack of affordable housing. Furthermore, 16 % of respondents tend to blame selfishness, agreeing with the statement that young people today want all the comfort of living at home without having to bear the responsibilities. Respondents in the 12 new Member States are more likely to mention the first two reasons when explaining why young adults remain at their parents' homes. In the EU15, however, respondents agree more often with the statement that they want all the comfort without having to bear all the responsibilities.

An analysis of the answers at the national level shows that in 16 out of 27 countries, a lack of financial resources is given as the primary explanation as to why young adults continue to live with their parents. Young Greeks, Hungarians and Portuguese tend to put forward this assumption more frequently than others (61 %, 64 % and 62 %, respectively).

In 10 other Member States, the shortage of affordable housing is selected as the most significant reason. This is particularly notable in Lithuania, where more than one in two young adults (54 %) supports this statement, and in Spain (48 %).

4.1.4. Household composition

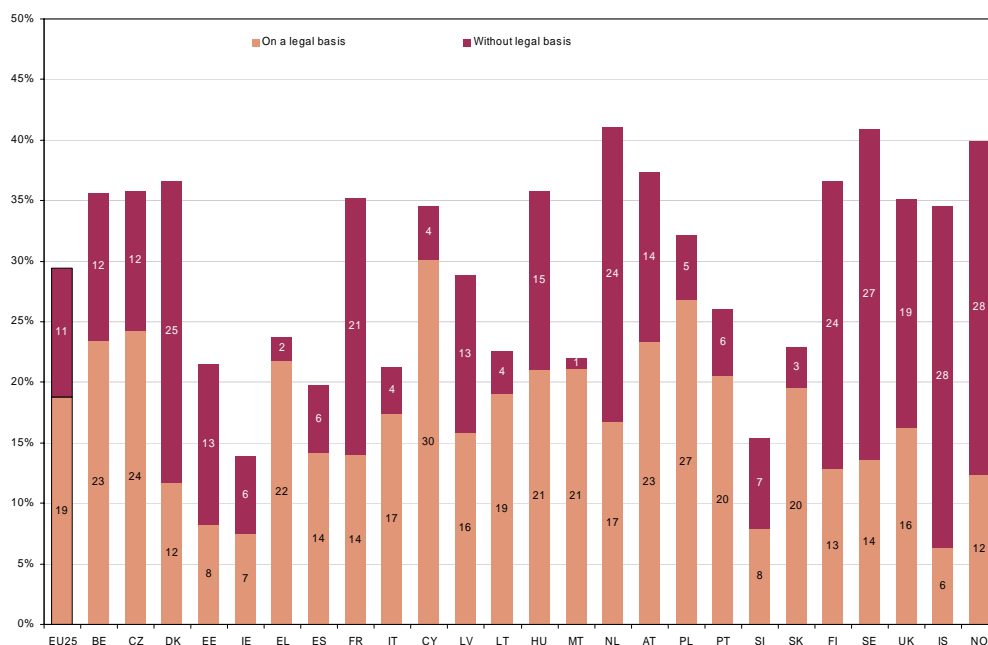
According to an EU-SILC survey (EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions) from 2005, 24,5 % of young people (15-29) in EU live in the same household as their partner. For women, three out of ten young women (15-29) and near two in ten young men live in the same household as their partner.

In two Member States, the Netherlands and Sweden, more than 40 % of women live with their partners, while the maximum concerning men is reached in Sweden with 30 %. In these cases and generally everywhere in Northern Europe, most of unions before the age of 30 are not established on a legal basis. Meanwhile, in Greece, Italy, Poland, Cyprus, Slovakia, Malta and Lithuania this share does not exceed 5 % of women, representing less than 20 % of those living in couple in the same household. The situation among young men is similar, showing a slightly higher frequency of persons not living as a couple (parental house, alone, collective accommodations, etc) or cohabiting.

In 2005, on average, the head of the household in nearly 10 % of families in the European Union was younger than 30 years old. In Spain and Italy, however, this share was less than one third of the EU average. There is a declining trend in recent years, where the figure dropped by 1.6 percentage points within six years (9.6 in 1999 versus 8 % in 2005).

In terms of size of the household, the EU value in 2005 is not far from 1.5 adult equivalents²⁶. The size of the household is significantly larger than the EU average in Latvia, Portugal, Romania and Bulgaria.

Young women living in consensual union, with or without legal basis, % of 15-29 year olds in 2005

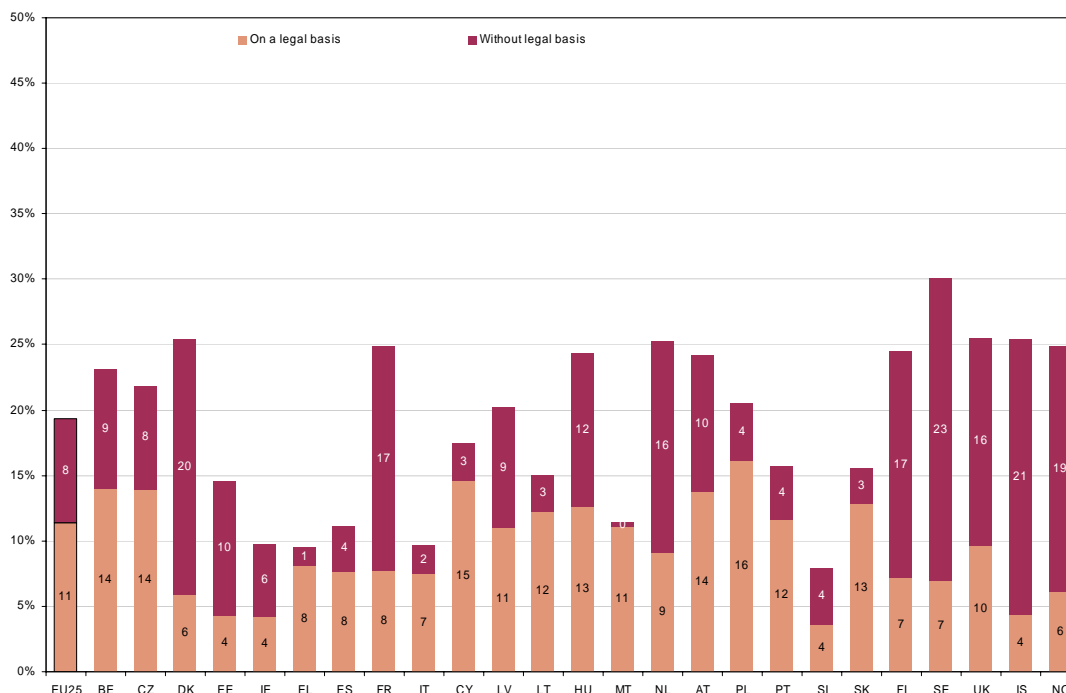


Note : BG, DE, IE; LV, RO data not available

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC

²⁶ The household average size is expressed as “adult equivalent” computed using the modified OECD equivalence scale. This scale gives a weight of 1.0 to the first adult, 0.5 to the second and each subsequent person aged 14 and over, and 0.3 to each child aged less than 14 in the household.

Young men living in consensual union, with or without legal basis, % of 15-29 year olds in 2005



4.1.5. Marital status of young people

It clearly appears that young people's behaviour towards marriage differ considerably among Member States both with regard to intensity and age. As a general trend, more young people marry in Central Europe while marriages in Scandinavia happen without hurry. In all EU Member States, more young women than men are married. The reason for this is that women marry approximately 2-3 years sooner than men. In all Member States the majority of marriages occur when the woman is younger than 30, except for in Sweden (44 %) and Denmark (49 %). In Lithuania and Poland almost 90 out of 100 brides are younger than 30.

In terms of wedding frequency per country for the age cohort 25-29, the proportion of young married women in Romania is three times higher than for Sweden (60 % and 20 % respectively). Among men, the extreme values at the same age can be found in Lithuania and Sweden (42 % and 11 %). For both sexes the proportion of young married is higher in Central Europe and the Baltic States.

Among young people aged 25-29, the divorce rate is marginal. Only in a few countries does the divorce rate reach as high as 5 %.

Proportion of young population by marital status, sex and age class (2006) - Eurostat

%		F				M				F+M
		15-19	20-24	25-29	Total	15-19	20-24	25-29	Total	Total
BE	Married	0.8	11.7	36.3	16.7	0.1	4.0	22.7	9.1	12.9
	Divorced	0.0	0.4	2.9	1.1	0.0	0.1	1.3	0.5	0.8
	Singles	99.2	87.9	60.8	82.1	99.9	95.9	76.0	90.4	86.3
CZ	Married	0.4	10.8	43.6	20.5	0.1	3.5	26.0	11.2	15.8
	Divorced	0.0	0.7	5.1	2.2	0.0	0.2	2.7	1.1	1.7
	Singles	99.6	88.5	51.2	77.2	99.9	96.3	71.3	87.6	82.5
DE	Married	0.6	10.1	31.5	14.1	0.1	3.6	17.8	7.1	10.6
	Divorced	0.0	0.5	3.0	1.2	0.0	0.1	1.5	0.6	0.9
	Singles	99.4	89.4	65.4	84.6	99.9	96.3	80.7	92.3	88.5
LV	Married	1.1	15.5	39.7	17.9	0.2	7.7	29.0	11.6	14.7
	Divorced	0.0	0.7	4.8	1.7	0.0	0.2	2.9	1.0	1.3
	Singles	98.9	83.7	55.2	80.2	99.8	92.0	68.0	87.4	83.9
LT	Married	2.4	22.8	54.4	25.0	0.5	11.7	41.8	16.6	20.7
	Divorced	0.0	1.6	7.9	2.9	0.0	0.5	4.7	1.6	2.2
	Singles	97.6	75.5	37.2	71.9	99.5	87.8	53.4	81.8	76.9
HU	Married	0.8	10.7	38.6	18.5	0.0	3.5	23.1	10.0	14.2
	Divorced	0.0	0.6	4.5	1.9	0.0	0.2	2.1	0.9	1.4
	Singles	99.2	88.6	56.8	79.5	100.0	96.3	74.8	89.1	84.4
NL	Married	0.0	9.2	30.2	13.3	0.0	2.9	16.8	6.5	9.9
	Divorced	0.0	0.3	1.9	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.5
	Singles	100.0	90.4	67.9	85.9	100.0	97.0	82.5	93.2	89.6
RO	Married	3.8	28.7	59.9	31.3	0.2	7.8	40.1	16.6	23.8
	Divorced	0.1	1.1	3.8	1.7	0.0	0.2	1.6	0.6	1.1
	Singles	96.2	70.1	36.0	66.8	99.8	92.0	58.3	82.7	74.9
SI	Married	0.0	5.4	25.2	11.1	0.0	1.6	12.4	5.1	8.0
	Divorced	0.0	0.1	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.3
	Singles	100.0	94.5	73.6	88.4	100.0	98.4	87.2	94.7	91.7
SK	Married	1.0	17.5	49.7	23.9	0.2	7.5	32.8	14.3	19.0
	Divorced	0.0	0.7	3.9	1.6	0.0	0.3	2.0	0.8	1.2
	Singles	99.0	81.5	46.0	74.3	99.8	92.1	65.1	84.9	79.7
FI	Married	0.5	8.7	31.4	13.6	0.1	4.1	20.4	8.3	10.9
	Divorced	0.0	0.5	2.9	1.1	0.0	0.2	1.5	0.6	0.8
	Singles	99.5	90.8	65.7	85.2	99.9	95.7	78.1	91.2	88.2
SE	Married	0.4	6.7	20.2	8.9	0.0	2.3	11.2	4.4	6.6
	Divorced	0.0	0.5	2.3	0.9	0.0	0.1	1.1	0.4	0.7
	Singles	99.6	92.8	77.5	90.2	100.0	97.6	87.7	95.2	92.8
IS	Married	0.0	4.2	22.0	8.8	0.0	1.4	12.4	4.6	6.6
	Divorced	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.3	0.5
	Singles	100.0	95.8	75.9	90.5	100.0	98.6	86.7	95.1	92.9
LI	Married	0.0	12.4	37.5	17.1	0.0	5.6	21.7	9.3	13.1
	Divorced	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.6
	Singles	100.0	87.6	60.0	82.0	100.0	94.4	77.4	90.4	86.3
CH	Married	1.0	14.0	37.1	17.9	0.1	5.8	23.3	9.9	13.9
	Divorced	0.0	0.3	1.7	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.8	0.3	0.5
	Singles	99.0	85.7	61.1	81.3	99.9	94.1	76.0	89.8	85.6

4.1.6. *Becoming a parent*

Another frequent key event in a young person's life in the transitional phase towards adulthood is the experience of becoming parent. This is a landmark event in the life of millions of young persons in the EU. Again, there are large differences between countries.

Total fertility rate 1980- 2006

	1980	1990	2000	2006	2006			
	TFR				<20	20-24	25-29	30+
BE	:	:	1.62	:	:	:	:	:
BG	:	:	1.27	1.37	0.21	0.40	0.42	0.35
CZ	2.10	1.89	1.14	1.33	0.05	0.23	0.49	0.55
DK	1.55	1.67	1.77	1.83	0.03	0.22	0.63	0.96
DE	:	:	:	1.32	0.05	0.22	0.42	0.63
EE	2.02	2.05	1.39	1.55	0.11	0.35	0.51	0.58
IE	3.23	2.12	1.90	1.90	0.08	0.24	0.39	1.18
EL	:	:	1.27	1.39	0.06	0.22	0.42	0.70
ES	2.20	1.36	1.23	1.38	0.06	0.16	0.32	0.83
FR	:	:	1.89	2.00	0.06	0.32	0.68	0.94
IT	1.68	1.36	1.26	1.32	0.03	0.16	0.36	0.76
CY	:	2.40	1.60	1.47	0.03	0.22	0.53	0.69
LV	:	:	1.24	1.35	0.11	0.35	0.42	0.46
LT	:	2.03	1.39	1.31	0.10	0.32	0.47	0.42
LU	1.46	1.60	1.78	1.65	0.05	0.27	0.50	0.83
HU	1.92	1.84	1.33	1.34	0.10	0.24	0.44	0.56
MT	1.99	2.05	1.69	1.41	0.08	0.23	0.48	0.61
NL	1.60	1.62	1.72	1.70	0.03	0.19	0.54	0.94
AT	1.65	1.46	1.36	1.40	0.06	0.26	0.46	0.61
PL	2.28	1.99	1.37	1.27	0.07	0.29	0.46	0.46
PT	2.25	1.57	1.56	1.35	0.08	0.22	0.39	0.65
RO	2.40	1.80	1.30	1.31	0.17	0.35	0.41	0.38
SI	2.11	1.46	1.26	1.31	0.02	0.19	0.50	0.60
SK	2.31	2.09	1.29	1.24	0.10	0.28	0.42	0.44
FI	:	:	1.73	1.84	0.05	0.29	0.58	0.92
SE	1.68	2.14	1.55	1.85	0.03	0.24	0.57	1.01
UK	:	:	:	1.84	0.13	0.36	0.50	0.85
IS	2.48	2.31	2.08	2.08	0.07	0.40	0.64	0.97
LI	:	:	1.58	1.42	0.02	0.20	0.28	0.92
NO	1.72	1.93	1.85	1.90	0.05	0.30	0.64	0.92
CH	1.55	1.59	1.50	1.43	0.02	0.19	0.42	0.80
HR	:	:	1.39	1.38	0.07	0.30	0.48	0.53
MK	:	:	1.70	1.46	0.10	0.40	0.53	0.43
TR	:	3.07	2.27	:	:	:	:	:

Note : IT 2005

Source: Eurostat, Demographic statistics

The fertility trends over the last decades in Europe are well known. There has been a sharp decline in the total fertility rate far below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. There has also been an increase in the mean age of mothers at first births. Even a reduced mortality risk among young people and increased immigration can not sufficiently compensate for this effect. The main results have been structural changes in the proportion of young in the total population. There are different hypotheses for explaining this trend, the most frequent ones being delayed age of departure from parental home, increased birth control, postponed start of employment, unstable employment conditions and economic hardship. Some potential links between these hypotheses will be examined in the following paragraphs.

After a long period of decreasing fertility across Europe, recent figures (from 2000 to 2006) suggest that the average number of children per woman is increasing in several Member States, in particular Sweden (+0.30), Czech Republic (+0.18), Estonia (+0.16) and Spain (+0.15).

Despite the recent new trend, even the highest national fertility levels recorded in EU (France at 2.0 and Ireland at 1.9) are still under the full replacement level if one does not take into account migration flows.

Looking at time series starting in 1980, one gets a better picture of the diversity in the fertility levels in Europe. The highest levels in 1980 were observed in Ireland (3.23 children per woman) and Romania (2.40). Current values for these countries have fallen by more than 40 % from 1980 to 2006. The lowest fertility rates (below 1.4) are registered mainly in Central and Southern Europe, with the lowest rates registered in Slovakia (1.24) and Poland (1.27).

Mean age of women at first child (1995, 2005)

	1995	2005
BE	27.3	:
BG	22.4	24.7
CZ	23.3	26.6
DK	27.4	28.4
DE	27.5	29.1
EE	23.0	25.2
IE	27.3	:
EL	26.6	28.5
ES	28.4	29.3
FR	:	28.5
IT	28.0	:
CY	:	27.5
LV	:	25.0
LT	23.1	24.9
LU	27.4	29.0
HU	23.8	26.7
NL	28.4	28.9
AT	25.6	27.2
PL	23.8	25.8
PT	25.8	27.4
RO	22.9	24.8
SI	24.9	27.7
SK	:	25.7
FI	27.2	27.9
SE	27.2	28.7
UK	29.3	30.0
IS	24.9	26.3
NO	26.4	27.7
CH	28.1	29.5
HR	:	26.5
MK	:	25.2

Note : UK 1996, 2006 Source: Eurostat, Demographic statistics

Looking at the age of the mother at the first childbirth gives further evidence of delayed parenthood. Without exception, this age has increased in all EU Member States during the period 1995-2005. The mean age of the mothers at the first childbirth in EU is around 27 years.

Changes are bigger in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia, with an average postponement of birth of first child by about 3 years. In absolute terms, however, the mother's mean age at first birth is even more delayed in the United Kingdom (30 years old), together with Spain, Germany and Luxembourg, where age of mothers at first birth is between 29 and 30.

Italy and Spain have low fertility rates overall, but especially among young women. Ireland is the only country characterised by a fertility rate above Europe's average, particularly due to high fertility rates of women over 30.

4.1.7. More babies born outside marriage

Proportion of births outside marriage by country (1996, 2006)

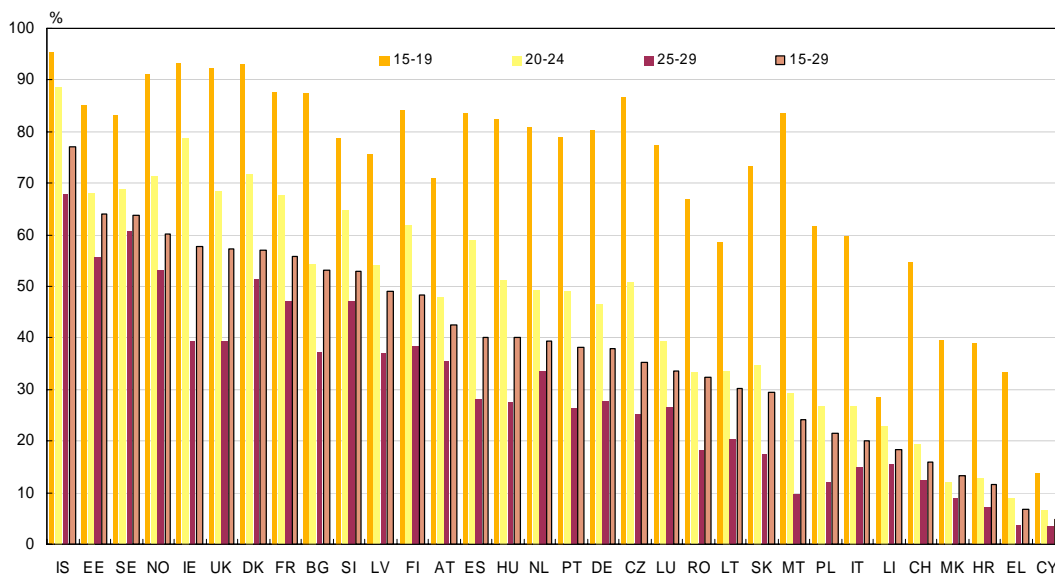
	1996	2006
BE	19	39
BG	28	51
CZ	17	33
DK	46	46
DE	17	30
EE	48	58
IE	25	33
EL	3	5
ES	12	28
FR	.	50
IT	8	19
CY	1	6
LV	33	43
LT	14	30
LU	15	29
HU	23	36
MT	3	22
NL	17	37
AT	28	37
PL	10	19
PT	19	32
RO	21	29
SI	32	47
SK	14	27
FI	35	41
SE	54	55
UK	36	44
HR	7	11
MK	8	13
IS	61	66
LI	10	16
NO	48	53
CH	7	15

Note: BE: 2007 Source: Eurostat, Demographic statistics

Over the last decade, the trend in the EU has been that more and more babies are born outside of marriage (37 % in 2006). Differences between Member States have grown stronger from 1996 to 2006. In some Member States, the number of babies born outside of marriage has more than doubled during this period. This is the case in Belgium, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta and the Netherlands.

In Estonia and Sweden, around 6 children of 10 are born outside marriage, while in Cyprus or Greece this proportion is close to one on twenty and less or equal to one on four in Italy, Poland and Malta. In the youngest age group registered (15-19 year olds), the number of births outside marriage exceeds 90 % of newborns in Denmark, Ireland and UK, while it is down to 33 % in Greece and less than 15 % in Cyprus. Regarding this age group, it is important to keep in mind that few persons are married and few births are registered. For the age group 25-29, more than 50 % of children are born outside marriage in Sweden, Estonia and Denmark. On the opposite side of the spectrum are Greece and Cyprus, with less than 4 %.

Births outside marriage by age group, % (decreasing order) -2005



Note : BE data not available

Source: Eurostat, Demographic statistics

Results of the KASS project: Kinship and Social Security²⁷

Patterns of Kinship and Family relations across Europe

The KASS project measured, through original ethnographic research, the extent of mutual assistance between relatives of various generations, and the factors which influence it. It considered the role of kinship ties in practical and social life in terms of three implicit contracts:

- (1) The contract between *successive generations* is a source of practical, emotional and financial support – both on a regular basis and as an insurance for times of crisis such as illness, unemployment, divorce and bereavement. Support from the grand-parental generation for their own children's parenting can greatly assist the reconciliation of parenting and employment, and people in middle and later-middle age are an important source of care for the dependent elderly.
- (2) The contract between *reproductive partners* (and each other's family of origin) includes the division of productive, child-rearing and domestic labour, as well as the ways in which the partners support each other's social identities.
- (3) The contract with the *community as a whole* goes beyond the formal obligations and rights resulting from legal citizenship. It also includes the obligations and pleasures of participating in social and ritual life, in its own right or as a representative of one's family.

²⁷

The KASS project was funded under the 6th Framework Programme of the European Union (Citizens and Governance Programme) and involved 19 research partners from eight European countries (Sweden, Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Poland and Russia) representing different family/welfare regimes, running from May 2004 – April 2008. – www.eth.mpg.de/kass.

The research has identified two broad ways in which the three contracts are combined in contemporary Europe, demonstrating and confirming a northwest-southeast and urban-rural contrasts in kinship patterns across Europe. While most of the nineteen communities studied fall somewhere between these two patterns, they do so in a systematic way, since the different aspects of the models vary together:

In one combination, typical of **northern and western Europe**, the contract between the individual and society as a whole is direct, the conception of society is geographically quite wide, and family life is centred on the reproductive couple. Co-residence of different adult generations is rare and intergenerational ties are relatively down-played – though, nevertheless, substantial amounts of help flow from parents to adult children. This pattern is better adapted to modern capitalism, in which most families do not own and transmit their own productive capital, and in which each person ideally enters the labour market in his or her own right, irrespective of family ties.

In the other combination, typical of **southern and eastern Europe**, intergenerational ties are emphasised, and the link between reproductive partners is correspondingly down-played. This pattern is adapted to family-based production (most notably in agriculture) in which the moral debt of the younger generation for the inheritance of the family capital underpins the relatively high status of members of the older generation. Features of this model are highly distinct gender roles, a conception of social identity in which the individual relates to the community at large as a member of an extended family, and a community that is geographically concentrated enough for each individual's family background to be generally known. Intergenerational co-residence (or close residence) is common, and allows for extensive flows of help in both directions.

Throughout these regimes, ties with kin are more reliable in practice than ties with friends and neighbours. Old people usually have a rather low position in the welfare priorities of families themselves, because they generally favour provision for the young. State support (in particular pensions) is therefore vital. Moreover, state support for the elderly enables the latter to be net givers to their descendants in the family.

Because old people are likely to pass some of the resulting income to younger family members, there will be additional knock-on benefits to younger family members, which will themselves entail reciprocal help to the old people. The overall effect is thus likely to include some strengthening of family relationships (i.e. a 'crowding in' effect).

KEY FIGURES RELATING TO LIFESTYLES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

- Mean age to enter into a first marriage: 27,3years
- Mean age to leave parental home: 25 years
- 24,5 % of young people (15-29) live in the same household as their partner
- Mean age of mothers at the first childbirth: around 27 years
- 37 % babies born outside marriage

4.2. Youth and Health

Much of the data serving as background information for young people and health relates to the age groups 15 – 24 and 25 – 34. Available data on youth and health are mostly linked to international programmes and policies against diseases, unhealthy lifestyles or for reducing mortality rates - particular at the European level.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The *crude death rate* describes mortality in relation to the total population. Expressed in per 100,000 inhabitants, it is calculated as the number of deaths recorded in the population for a given period divided by population in the same period and then multiplied by 100,000. The population structure strongly influences this indicator for broad age classes. In a relatively 'old' population, there will be more deaths than in a 'young' one because mortality is higher in higher age groups.

A *transport accident* is any accident involving a device designed primarily for, or being used at the time primarily for, conveying persons or goods from one place to another.

A *traffic accident* is any vehicle accident occurring on the public highway [i.e. originating on, terminating on, or involving a vehicle partially on the highway]. A vehicle accident is assumed to have occurred on the public highway unless another place is specified, except in the case of accidents involving only off-road motor vehicles, which are classified as non-traffic accidents unless the contrary is stated.

Intentional self-harm implies purposely self-inflicted poisoning or injury and suicide (attempted). It also includes intentional self-poisoning by drugs and alcohol, intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to organic solvents and halogenated hydrocarbons and their vapours, intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to other gases and vapours, intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to pesticides, intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to other and unspecified chemicals and noxious substances, by hanging, strangulation and suffocation, by drowning and submersion, intentional self-harm by handgun discharge, intentional self-harm by rifle, shotgun and larger firearm discharge, by other and unspecified firearm discharge, by explosive material, by smoke, fire and flames, by steam, hot vapours and hot objects, harm by sharp object, by blunt object, by jumping from a high place, by jumping or lying before moving object, by crashing of motor vehicle, by other specified means and by unspecified means.

Suicide is the act of deliberately killing oneself. Risk factors for suicide include mental disorder (such as depression, personality disorder, alcohol dependence, or schizophrenia), and some physical illnesses, such as neurological disorders, cancer, and HIV infection. There are effective strategies and interventions for the prevention of suicide.

Drug dependence as a cause of death comprises the following items: mental and behavioural disorders due to use of opioids, cannabinoids, sedatives, hypnotics, cocaine, hallucinogens, volatile solvents, multiple drug use and other psychoactive substances or stimulants, including caffeine. This category also includes situations when two or more psychoactive substances are known to be involved, but it is impossible to assess which substance is contributing most to the disorders. It is also used when the exact identity of some or even all the psychoactive substances being used is uncertain or unknown, since many multiple drug users themselves often do not know the details of what they are taking.

Source: WHO Classification of death causes

4.2.1. *Young people expect to live longer*

Economic development and the improvement of health systems across Europe have led to a continuous increase in *life expectancy at birth*. As a result, life expectancy in the EU is higher than in most countries in the world: Female (80.7 years) usually lives longer than men (74 years) in the European Union (Source: Eurostat -2006).

With an average life expectancy of 81,1 and 81 years, Spain and Sweden are the countries where one can expect to live longest in the EU-27, followed by France(80,9), Cyprus (80,6), Austria (80,1) and Nederland (80). In some of the new Member States the life expectancy rate is significantly lower than the average, with Latvia and Lithuania with the shortest life expectancy at 71 years. Women generally live longer than men in the European Union, with an average life expectancy of 80.7 years, as compared to 74 years for men.

4.2.2. *Young Europeans perceive themselves as healthy*

Many physical and physiological changes occur during adolescence. These changes have an impact on the body and on how young people perceive themselves. The relationship between body image and self-esteem is well established; it is usually stronger in girls. Gender differences are also apparent in the ways in which young men and women assess their bodies.

Europeans tend to self perceive their own health more negatively with age except in Ireland, the Netherlands and UK, where more people say they feel in “very good” health when they are aged 25-34 than those aged 15-24. On the average, people aged 25-34 defined themselves as in “good” or “fair” health. Most young people also report a high level of mental well-being.

Differences across countries are difficult to analyse since the perception of one’s health is closely linked to socio-cultural factors. In 2006, close to 90 % of young Greeks aged between 15 and 24 considered themselves to be in “very good health” while when the same question is asked to young people in Portugal and Latvia, the percentage remains below 10 %. Cyprus and Slovakia had the highest scores of respondents replying that they were in “very bad health”, with 2 %.

Nevertheless, some two million young people in the European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) suffer from mental disorders ranging from depression, conduct disorders, anxiety disorders or eating disorders to schizophrenia. One fifth of children and adolescents suffer from developmental, emotional or behavioural problems, and one in eight have a mental disorder²⁸.

4.2.3. *Young people and their weight*

Excessive weight has a negative impact on a person's health – both in the short term as well as in the long term. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has classified obesity as a major public health concern and a “global epidemic” due to its high and increasing prevalence and challenge to long-term health. There is also a rising concern for young people’s underweight, often due to dieting and other weight control methods. Often, weight problems are a symptom of negative physical and psychological self-images of young people.

There seem to be in particular two factors that have had an impact on young people's increasing body weight. First, eating habits have changed. Causes of changing eating habits among young people can be of a social, cultural and family-connected nature, but it may also be that young people are more influenced by their peers, new popular lifestyles and/or an ever expanding number of new

²⁸ Consensus Paper "Mental Health in Youth and Education" (2008)

products. More meals, often unhealthy take-away dishes or fast foods, are being consumed outside the home or the school than ever before. Young people are influenced by a still growing and often aggressive advertising market.

Secondly, young people's increasing body weight is also caused by a growing inactivity among youth. The culture of inactivity among groups of young people developed in the last century is a result of the development and availability of new technology: the massive expansion and availability of private cars has reduced the physical activity levels among youth. The same goes for television sets and the number of TV-channels in an average private home as well as the personal computer and electronic games of all kinds. In addition, the number of hours that an average young person spends doing school homework has increased, which further limits the time available to active leisure-time pursuits.

In almost two thirds of EU Member States, the overweight population counts for more than one third of the population aged 25-34. Countries with the highest scores are Germany (42.7 %), Malta (47.8 %) and the United Kingdom (53.1 %) ²⁹.

A large number of young people aged 15-24 are also concerned: around 17 % of them are in a situation of overweight or obesity. In Malta, 33.9 % of young people are reported to be overweight or obese, while in the UK it is 31 %, in Germany 26.5 % and in Ireland 25.8 %. The lowest levels of overweight young people aged 15-24 are registered in Latvia (10 %), Slovakia (10.3 %) and France (10.6 %). The share of young people aged 24-34, who show overweight or obesity, is double compared to the age 15-24 (34%).

A gender analysis shows that men are more overweight than women: there are more than 50 % of men aged 25-34 who are overweight or obese in Germany, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Slovakia, Finland and the United Kingdom, while the percentage of women never gets above 50 % of the population.

Around 9% of young people aged 15-24 are in a situation of underweight. The share of people being underweight is lower among 25-34 year-olds (less than 5 %).

The highest level of underweight young people is in the United Kingdom (16.8 %), followed by France (15.9 %), Austria (14.5 %), Slovakia (13.9 %) and Latvia (13.6 %). The percentage of women in the underweight category is much higher for young women than for young men except in Austria (3.5 % more men) and in the UK (about equal numbers).

Globally speaking, nearly one third of young Europeans aged 15-24 are affected by weight troubles overall, but the numbers differ greatly by country.

4.2.4. A majority of young people die due to external factors

Causes of death are different according to the each age group. A majority of people over 45 years die because of cancer, circulatory or respiratory diseases, whereas young people fall victim to external factors, such as transport accidents, accidental falls, intentional self-harm and assault.

²⁹ Data from Germany and UK are based on measured height and weight, while in other countries the height and weight were self-reported; UK data cover only England.

**Causes of death of young people: number of cases by main external factors,
by sex and age group, 2006**

Causes of death					Women			Men		
	EU-27 number of cases (all ages)	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29
Suicide and intentional harm	58527	1478	2731	3132	326	433	544	1152	2298	2588
Transport Accidents	49688	4285	5821	4654	1003	1016	730	3282	4805	3924
Accidental Poisoning	11010	188	621	816	71	112	113	117	509	703
AIDS (HIV disease)	5833	122	74	222	49	31	81	73	43	141
Homicide, assault	5402	184	378	462	53	87	116	131	291	346
Drug dependence, toxicomania	2878	105	318	443	26	56	57	79	262	386

Source: Eurostat-Health-Causes of death

In 2006, more than 12 000 young men aged 15-29 died as a result of transport accidents in the EU. Intentional self-harm (and suicide) was the second most common cause of death for young people aged between 15 and 29. In 2006, more than 7 000 young people committed suicide in the EU, 82 % of whom were young men.

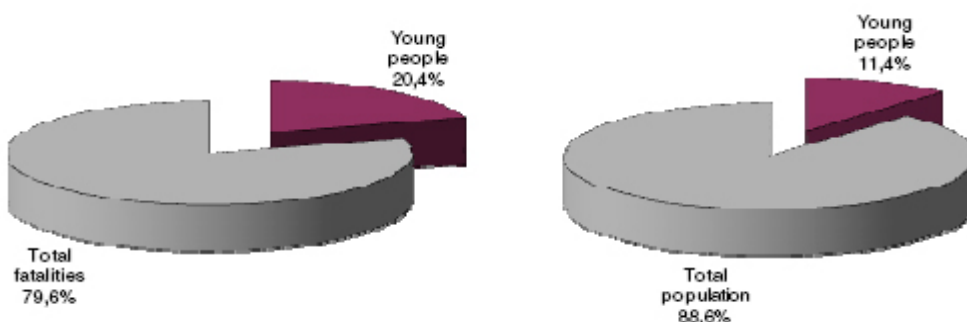
Drug consumption and addiction were also a significant cause of death: in the EU, 1 625 young people aged 15-29 died because of accidental poisoning and 866 died because of drug dependence.

Homicide and assault also accounted for a substantial share of fatalities (1 024 deaths), especially among young men aged between 20 and 29.

4.2.4.1. *Deaths due to transport accidents*

Traffic crashes are a major external cause of death in young people and the single greatest killer of 15 to 24 year olds in OECD countries. 21.1% of people killed in road accidents in 2005 in the 18 European countries were aged 16-24 and the majority of them were drivers (4 279 persons), whereas only 484 were pedestrians. Drivers 16-24 year old have risk factors 2 to 3 times higher than more experienced drivers. They pose a greater risk to themselves and to others: in young driver crashes, for each young driver killed, about 1.3 others also die (e.g. passengers and other road users). Source: CARE Database / EC- Date of query: December 2007.

Proportion of young people in population and in traffic fatalities in the EU, 2006



*Source: CARE Database / EC
Date of query: September 2008
Source of population data: EUROSTAT*

In 2006, more than 12 000 young men aged 15-29 died as a result of transport accidents in the EU. Amongst young people, males account for the majority of the overall fatalities (88,5 fatality rate in 2005).

In 2006, Lithuania and Greece recorded the highest transport accident death rates for young men aged 20-24, followed by Estonia and Slovenia. All these countries registered crude death rates well above the EU average. The countries with the lowest death rates were the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden.

The number of fatalities linked to transport accidents generally tends to decrease with age, except in Cyprus and Hungary, where transport fatalities among men aged 25-29 were more frequent than among men aged 20-24.

Transport accidents are often linked to other risky behaviours of young people such as drunkenness and drug abuse.

4.2.4.2. Deaths due to suicide

At EU level, the crude death rate by suicide among the male population aged 25-29 stood at 15 per 100 000 inhabitants. The Baltic States and Finland registered the highest male suicide and self-inflicted injury rates for people aged between 20 and 29.

To a lesser extent, Nordic countries such as Sweden also counted relatively high suicide rates among young people. Women tend to be less affected by suicide and intentional self harm, with crude death rates generally lower than 6 per 100 000 inhabitants, but the incidence of non-fatal self-harm, which is estimated to be 10-40 times more common than that of actual suicide, is common also among female adolescents.

4.2.4.3. Deaths due to drugs

Within the European Union, deaths related to drug dependence remained on average below 2 per 100 000 inhabitants in 2006. The highest death rates were found in Austria, Ireland and the United Kingdom. In 2005-2006, drug-inflicted deaths accounted for 3.5 % of all deaths of Europeans aged 15-39. Opium-based products were found in around 70 % of them (2008 EMCDDA annual report).

4.2.4.4. Death due to AIDS/HIV

Number of deaths caused by AIDS, by age group -2005

	TOTAL	Y15_19	Y20_24	Y25_29
EU27	5998	139	62	212

Source : Eurostat-Population

Share of young people diagnosed with HIV, by age group, 2006

% of HIV cases among 15-29 on the total of HIV case (all known ages)	% of HIV cases broken down by age (15-19,20-24,25-29)		
	15-19	20-24	25-29
EU-27 : 27.7	6.9	32.8	60.3

Source : Eurostat-Population

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) affects all generations. Governments have taken action in order to combat and avoid its spreading. In spite of education and information campaigns, however, Europe still sees a considerable number of new HIV infections every year.

HIV/AIDS is still considered a serious health concern across the EU. In 2006, 27.7 % of newly-diagnosed HIV cases inside the Union concerned young people aged between 15 and 29. Within this age group, young people 25-29 accounted for 60.3 % of new cases, while for the age group 20-24 and 15-19 the rates were 32.8 % and 6.9 %, respectively. This is however not the case in Bulgaria and Estonia, where the largest share was identified among 20-24 year olds.

In the age group 15-29, some discrepancies were registered between country patterns and the EU average of 27.7. This age group comprised more than 70 % of newly-diagnosed HIV cases in Estonia in 2006, while the numbers are 50 % in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia. The lowest shares of newly-diagnosed HIV cases were found in Denmark (20 %) and France (22 %).

The most common modes of HIV transmission include heterosexual sex, men who have sex with men (MSM) and injection drug users (IDU). In the EU, 54 % of newly diagnosed cases in 2006 within the age range 15-29 involved heterosexual relations, followed by MSM (35 %) and IDU (10 %). However, this varies from one country to another: in Germany, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia, MSM was the most common mode of transmission, while in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Portugal IDU accounted for the majority of transmission cases. Other modes of transmission, such as blood transfusions, accounted for 4 % of newly diagnosed cases in Belgium and 6 % of cases in Romania.

The European Centre for the Epidemiological Monitoring of AIDS–EuroHIV (HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe) coordinates the surveillance of HIV/AIDS in the WHO European Region (53 countries). Its mission is to understand, improve and share European HIV/AIDS surveillance data in order to better inform disease prevention, control and care. Its objectives include making international comparisons, assessing trends, characterising affected populations and predicting disease burden and evaluating surveillance methods.

4.2.5. Youth attitudes toward smoking

WHO has identified tobacco smoking as the leading cause of premature illness and death in developed countries, responsible for more than 14 % of all deaths in the WHO European Region in 2005 (WHO – Europe Health report –2005). Although the vast majority of smoking related deaths occur among middle aged and elderly people, smoking behaviours are undeniably acquired well before.

Young daily smokers may acquire the habit and become addicted before reaching adulthood, making them less able to quit and more likely to suffer from tobacco-related health complications. The longer the onset of smoking is delayed, the less likely a person is to become addicted.

According to estimates, half of all new male adolescent smokers will not kick the habit for at least 16 years, while young women will not give up for at least 20 years (WHO – Europe Health Report – 2005).

The total proportion of smokers increases with age and there are, generally speaking, more daily smokers between the age of 25 and 34 than between the ages of 15 and 24. However this was not the case in Ireland and Hungary, where young smokers outnumbered their older counterparts. Sweden registered rather positive figures regarding young smokers, followed by Slovakia: in both countries, less than 20 % of the population aged between 15 and 34 are daily smokers, but this proportion increases when considering the 45-55 age group. In contrast, Bulgaria counted the highest shares of smokers (31 % for the population aged 15-24 and half of the population aged 25-34), followed by Estonia, where two-thirds of men aged 25-34 are regular smokers. Ireland is the only country where the share of smokers decreases with age. Considering the distribution of smokers by gender, it can be said that in Europe men are more likely to be smokers. Only in Sweden and the United Kingdom the share of female smokers aged 15-24 was higher than that of their male counterparts, although this no longer holds true for older generations (except for Sweden).

4.2.6. Youth attitudes towards drinking

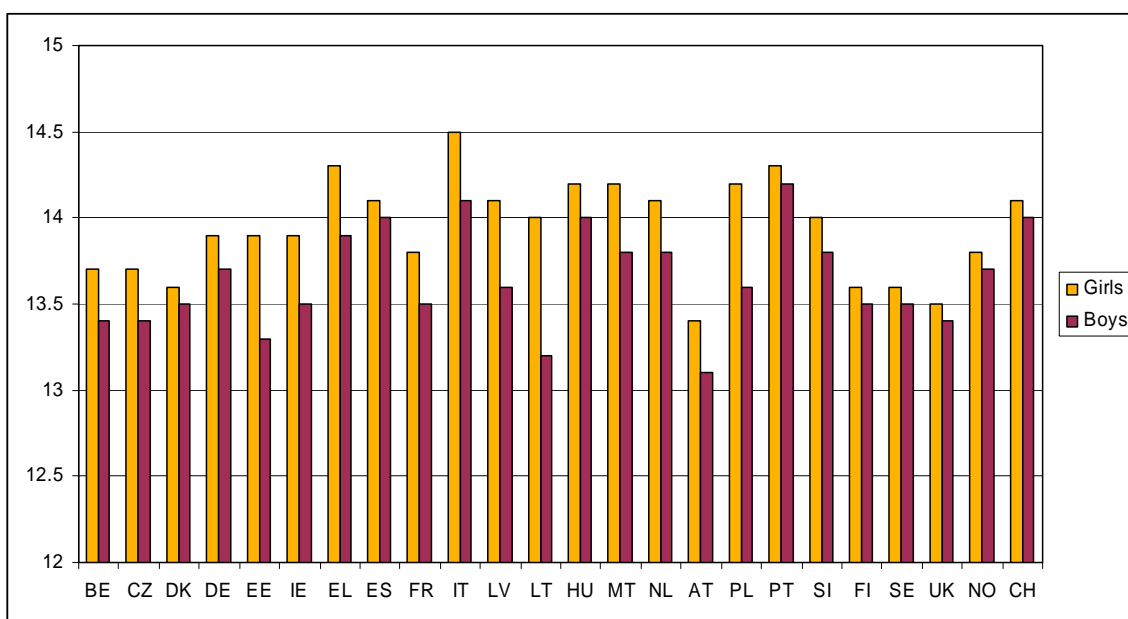
Aside from being influenced by various social factors, adolescents also engage in drinking alcohol on the basis of their personal beliefs and goals, as well as their family or social environment. Alcohol may also facilitate interaction and making new friends, increase perceived popularity or influence young people's image among their peers.

As a general pattern, Europeans have their first spell of drunkenness between the ages of 13 or 14 in all countries for which data are available. As a rule, girls tend to have their first hangover at a marginally later age than boys. On average, the earliest episodes of drunkenness were registered in Austria, while in Mediterranean countries, such as Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal the starting age was slightly higher.

In most countries considered, more than 80 % of young Europeans aged 17-18 years have consumed alcohol over the past 12 months, with Denmark and the Czech Republic registering the highest shares (95 %). This was followed by Lithuania (94 %), Germany, Austria (93 %), Greece and the United Kingdom (91 %). Conversely, the lowest shares of youths having consumed alcohol over the past 12 months were found in Portugal (74 %) and Sweden (77 %).

In around half of the countries for which data are available, more than 50 % of young Europeans aged 17-18 have been drunk at least once in the past 12 months. Denmark accounted the highest rates of drunkenness among youths (82 %), followed by Ireland (72 %). In contrast, only 25 % of young people in Cyprus and 29 % in France admitted to having been drunk in the past 12 months.

First episode of drunkenness



Source WHO: Young people's health in context

EUROPEAN SCHOOL SURVEY ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS (ESPAD)

In the 1980s, the group of experts in epidemiology of drug problems of the Pompidou Group at the Council of Europe commissioned a team of investigators to develop a standardised school survey questionnaire. The purpose was to produce a standard survey instrument which would allow different countries to compare alcohol and drug use in student populations in different countries. A main goal of the ESPAD project is to collect comparable data on alcohol, tobacco and drug use among students that turn 16 years old during the calendar year of the data collection, in as many European countries as possible through a survey. The survey is carried out every four years. The most important goal in the long run is to monitor trends in alcohol and drug habits among students in Europe and to compare trends between countries and between groups of countries. Since 1994, ESPAD has issued four international reports on alcohol and other drug use among students. The most recent report, with results from 2007, was released in March 2009.

4.2.7. *Youth attitudes towards drugs*

Cannabis is the most popular drug among young people aged 15-34. The highest levels of use are generally being reported among 15-24 years old (EMCDA 2008). Estimates suggest that around 23 million European adults have used cannabis in the last year producing an average figure of about 7 % among all 15 to 64 year olds while among young adults age 25-34 the European average is calculated at 13 % (ranging from 2-20 % between countries).

Based on data for 13 countries that participated a second field trial on the frequency of cannabis use, it is roughly estimated that over 1 % of European adults (15-64 years) are using cannabis daily or almost daily (about 4 million). Most of them (about 3 million) are aged between 15 and 34 years, meaning roughly 2 to 2.5 % of all young adults. In countries such as the Czech Republic, Spain, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, more than 16 % of young persons admit to use it.

Cocaine remains the second most used substance after cannabis, although its use is not uniform across Europe (national figures range from 0.4 % to 7.7 %). For young adults, among those cocaine use is concentrated, it is estimated that 7.5 million have used it at least once (ranging from 0.7 % to 12.7 % between countries). It is estimated that 4 million have used it in the past year (1.2 % on average). Variation between countries is again considerable.

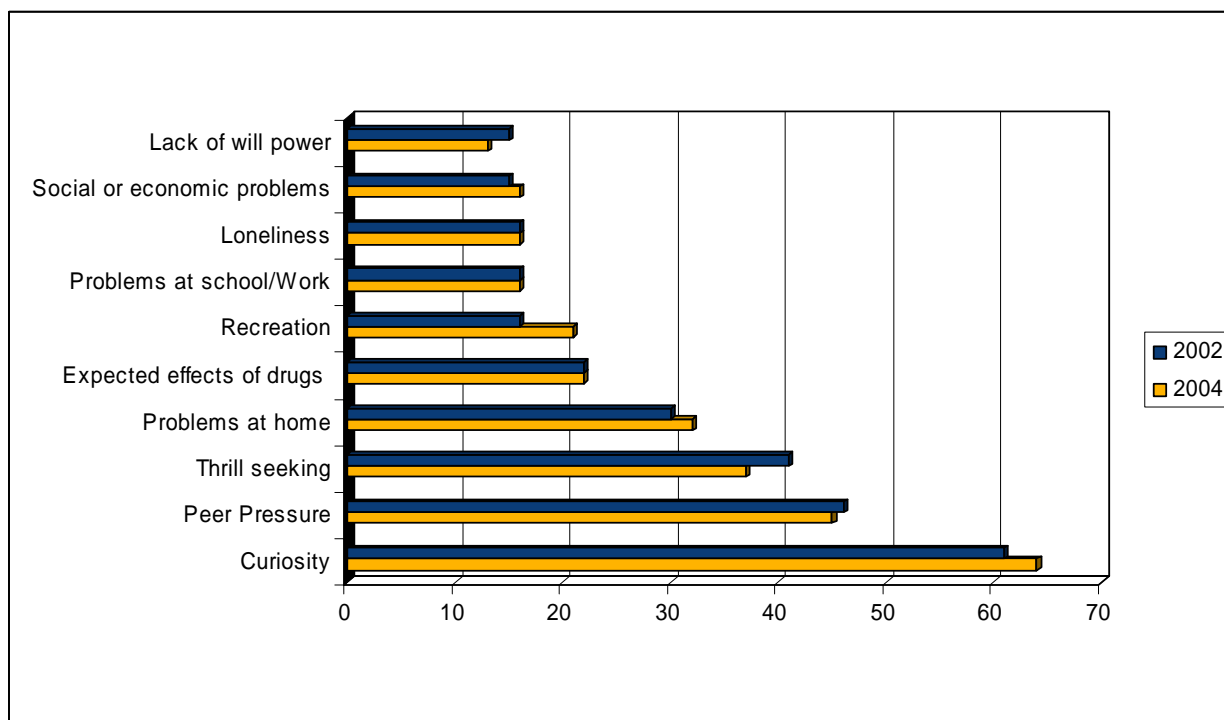
In 2005, cocaine consumption was quite high in Spain (5 %) and the United Kingdom (5 %), but well behind the consumption of cannabis.

Among young adults (15-34 years), lifetime prevalence of ecstasy use ranges at national level from 0.5 % to 14.6 % while between 0.4 % and 7.7 % of this age group reported using the drug in the last year. On average, it is estimated that 7.5 million young Europeans (5.6 %) have tried ecstasy, with around 2.5 million (1.8 %) having used the drug in the last year. Consumption remained high in the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom.

Among young adults (15-35 year olds), lifetime prevalence of amphetamine use varies between countries, from 0.2 % to 16.5 %, with a European average of about 5 %.

Bulgaria and Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Cyprus and Malta accounted for the lowest levels of drug consumption in Europe.

The reasons why young people try drugs are shown in the table below.



Source: Eurobarometer, n°158

“Young people and drugs”-“Why do young Europeans experiment with drugs?”

EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTER FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION (EMCDDA)

Just over a decade ago, Europe’s capacity for monitoring its drug problem was extremely limited. National approaches to the topic varied greatly and there was a lack of reliable and comparable information at European level concerning drugs, drug addiction and their consequences. In other words, it was impossible to talk with confidence about patterns and trends in drug use across the EU. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) was founded to change that.

Inaugurated in Lisbon in 1995, the EMCDDA is the hub of drug-related information in the European Union. It exists to provide the EU and its Member States with a factual overview of European drug problems and a common information framework to support the drugs debate. Today it offers policy-makers the scientific evidence base they need for drawing up drug laws and strategies and helps professionals and researchers pinpoint best practice and new areas for analysis.

According to the 2004 Eurobarometer survey, more than 60 % of young people think that curiosity remains the chief reason for trying drugs, a little more than 45 % invoke peer pressure and nearly 40 % thrill seeking. Less than one third of respondents consider that young people try drugs on account of problems at home. Problems at school or work were also invoked by less than one fifth of respondents as a reason to experiment with drugs. Loneliness, together with social or economic problems, were given as a reason for trying drugs by around 15 % of young Europeans.

According to Eurobarometer 2004, it does not seem to be difficult for young Europeans aged between 15 and 24 to get hold of drugs. This acquisition mainly concerns places where people go out in the evening. In 2004, 79 % of young respondents tended to agree that it is easy to get drugs at parties, compared with 76 % in pubs or clubs, 63 % near their home and 57 % in or near school.

As stated by European youths in the Eurobarometer survey, parties and clubs seem to be the most convenient place to purchase drugs. For 92 % of young Spanish interviewed, parties are the easiest place for getting drugs. In Belgium, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal young people consider that drugs are more readily available in pubs and clubs. In Ireland, 78 % of respondents feel that they have easy access to drugs close to where they live. This contrasts with Finland and Sweden, where buying drugs near the home is not deemed to be easy.

According to respondents, drug dealing also seems to be rife in schools and colleges, especially in France, Spain, Greece and Portugal.

KEY FIGURES REGARDING HEALTH

- Life expectancy of young people is 80;7 years for girls, 74 years for boys.
- Around 2 million young people have mental health problems
- 17 % of young people aged 15-24 are overweight
- 9% of young people aged 15-24 are underweight
- 60% of deaths in young people aged 15-29 are due to external causes
- 14 760 young people aged 15-29 died by transport accident
- 7341 young people aged 15-29 died by suicide
- 2246 young people aged 15-29 died by drug abuse
- 1024 young people aged 15-29 died by homicide or assault
- 467 young people aged 15-29 died due to AIDS/HIV
- 24 % of young people aged 15-29 smoke daily
- First spell of drunkenness is between 13 and 14
- 13 % of young people aged 25-34 use cannabis

4.3. Young people and leisure time

4.3.1. *Free time decreases with age*

Broadly speaking, leisure time is a period when young people choose what they want to do with people they want to be with. Young people's leisure time is sometimes associated with potential risky behaviours (drinking, smoking or violence, etc.) but also constitutes opportunities to play, relax and learn through informal learning and development (i.e. out of the academic framework). As confirmed by research conducted by the United Nations, leisure time is important in helping young people achieve a broad range of positive outcomes for their social, emotional, vocational, physical, cognitive and civic development and engagement. These positive outcomes may have an impact on both personal and community development.

When people get older, the percentage of free time decreases while there is a progressive shift from study to working time. Indeed, in nearly all countries for which data is available, young people aged between 15 and 19 year enjoy free time during more than 20 % of their total time. This share decreases by at least 24 % in all countries when considering people aged between 30 and 49. Some differences across countries exist. In Bulgaria, France and the United Kingdom, the youngest people (aged between 15 and 19) have less than 20 % of their total time free whereas in Germany, more than one quarter of a normal day is made of free time activities.

Young people are not very concerned with household work. The percentage of time devoted to household work among those aged 30 to 49 is more than double that of the youngest age category.

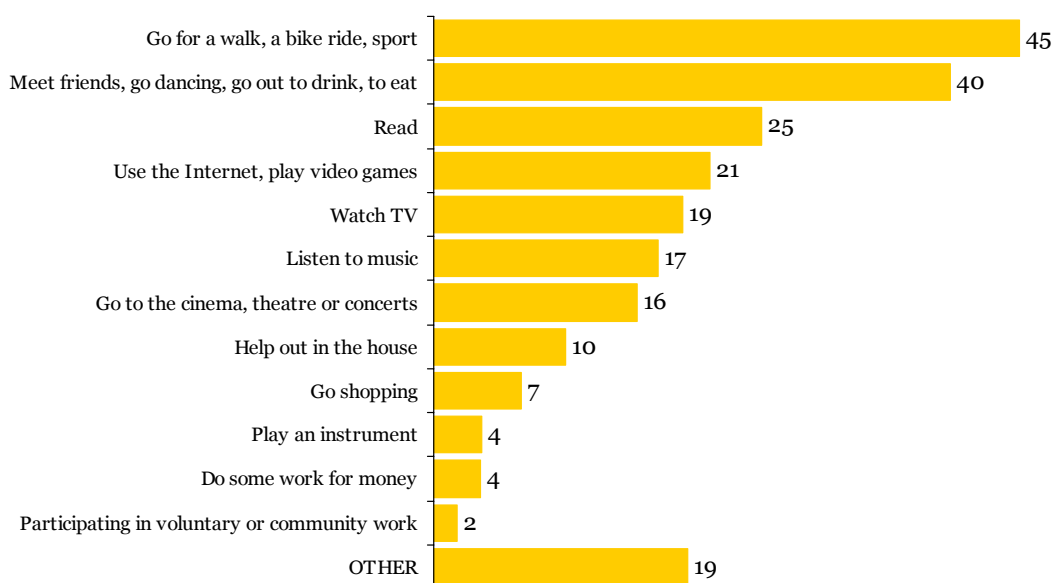
Watching TV is quite popular in all age ranges (people spend from 5 % to 10 % of their time in front of the TV).

4.3.2. *Leisure time activities among 15-30 year olds*

The following figures are derived from a Eurobarometer survey on young people and leisure time.

What young people do during their leisure time will depend on different factors such as their own interests and imagination, the kind of facilities available in their neighbourhood and their available budget.

Activities during leisure time



Source:
FLASH EB 202
January 2007
EDUROBAROMETER GALLUP

Q3. What do you regularly do during your leisure time?
Base: all respondents
% of "Mentioned"

Practicing sport (either going for a walk, a bike ride or any other sports) and going out to meet friends, to dance, to drink or eat are the main activities young Europeans do during their leisure time. 45 % of them declared that they practice sports and 40 % declared that they go out with friends. Reading is still a common entertainment for one fourth of young Europeans. Using the Internet, playing video games and watching TV interest one fifth of them. Listening to music and going to the cinema and the theatre are also popular leisure activities for more than 15 % of young people. Helping out in the house (10 %) and going shopping (7 %) are less popular among young European youth.

Less than 5 % of young Europeans declare that they do some work for money or to play an instrument whereas participation in voluntary or community work is mentioned by only 2 % of people aged between 15 and 30 (see chapter on volunteering).

Young Europeans tend to participate more in artistic activities than their elders. Photography and films are the preferred activities of young Europeans interviewed aged 15-24, followed by dancing and singing. A rather large percentage of young people (23 %) also enjoy writing, singing and playing an instrument, which is more than the older generations. Acting, on the other hand, is not a very popular activity (less than 10 % of youth surveyed has practiced it in the last 12 months). Leisure time is also the time for young people to get together and take part in activities such as going to the cinema, live performances and live sports.

Although the access to films at home has increased through Internet, DVDs and video equipment, young people are still enjoying to go out to watch movies on a large screen: at European level, more than 82 % of youth aged between 16 and 24 went to the cinema at least once a year. For the 25-29 age group this was reduced to 58 % and down to nearly 39 % among people aged 30 and over.

The proportion of young people going to the cinema varies across countries and depends on various factors: the density of cinema screens in a country, the price of cinema tickets and the movie programming. Young people in Latvia and Lithuania go less to the cinema with 42 % and 37 % respectively of those aged 16-24. A majority of those aged 25 - 29 in these two countries did not watch a movie at the cinema in the past year. The numbers are radically different in some other countries, with more than one third of young people aged 16-24 reporting that they go to the cinema more than six times a year

4.3.3. Attending cultural events

Attending live performance does not only mean going to music festivals, but also to watch plays, operas, ballet and dance performances performed by professionals or amateurs. Among young people this is less popular than going to the cinema, but a majority of them enjoyed a live performance at least once in 2006 except for in Italy, Malta and Poland.

Attendance at live events depends on their variety and quality. They may also be more expensive than going to the cinema, which can at least partly explain why the difference in participation at live events is much less between age groups than for going to the cinema. For instance, in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the proportion of 25-29 year olds having attended one to six live performances in the last year is higher than for 16-24 year olds. Austrian young people attend live performances more often than any other EU Member State: around 19 % of the 16 to 24 year olds attend live performances more than 6 times a year.

4.3.4. Attending live sports events

In more than half of the EU Member States, a majority of people aged 16-24 had not attended a live sporting event in the last year, independent on whether it was performed by professionals or amateurs (including one's own children or siblings).

In 2006, around 20 % of young people (aged 16-24) from the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Greece, France, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom went to live sports events from 1 to 3 times a year. But in Denmark (15 %), Ireland (21.6 %), Luxembourg (18.2 %) and Slovakia (17.2 %) a significant proportion of people aged from 16 to 24 went on average more than every month to watch live sports. In Malta, 76 % of young people aged 16-24 did not watch any live sport events during the whole year 2006. The same was true for more than 60 % of young Greeks, Hungarians and young people from the UK.

4.3.5. Cultural visits

Cultural visits are less frequent for both young and old compared to cinema and live performances. In nearly half of the European countries, more than 50 % of the population, regardless of age, never went on a cultural visit in 2006.

In average, 41.% of young people aged 16-29 years visited cultural sites at least once a year. In more than half of the EU Member States, young people aged 16-24 visited cultural sites between one and six times in 2006. However, there is no information on whether such visits were done through personal initiative or through school visits. Hungary, Austria and Finland show respectively 17 %, 16 % and 15 % of people aged 16 to 24 going more than 6 times to cultural visits in a year. In Spain and Luxembourg, more than 10 % of people aged between 25 and 29 undertake cultural visits more than 6 times a year.

4.3.6. Travels and tourism

Europe and Europeans are key actors in the global tourism market: Europe is the most important tourism region, both as a destination and as a source. In spite of the steady fall in its market share over the last ten years as a consequence of the dramatic growth of dynamic regions such as Asia (especially South Asia), Europe still maintains its leading position.

Harmonised data on youth travellers and tourism are difficult to interpret since data on tourism by age does not show if young people travelled with or without their parents or whether they financed their own trip. Moreover, new ways of travelling have recently made travel easier and cheaper for young people: travel information and access to travel agencies is simplified through the Internet, low cost carriers charge less and less rigid border structures have helped younger generations to get to know the world better.

New holiday patterns are emerging, forcing public and private tourism operators to develop new tourism products and services and to rethink their marketing and promotional strategies. Young people today go more frequently on holiday trips, but trips are of a shorter duration than before. In part, the increase in travel frequency and shorter stays has been stimulated by the spread of low-cost airline travel, which was identified as one of the main drivers of tourism growth in Europe in 2006.

Broadly speaking, the age distribution of people who travel on holiday corresponds approximately to the age distribution of the total population. In most European countries for which data are available, young people aged 15-24 account for less than 20 % of the total number of holiday-travellers (i.e. those who spent four nights or more on holidays). The Baltic States, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden are exceptions, with a higher share of young travellers (between 20 % and 30 %) as part of the travelling population. Younger travellers aged 15-24 represent the lowest share in Cyprus (11 %) and France (12 %).

For nearly all countries, there is almost no difference between age groups when it comes to holiday destinations. Holidays abroad are most popular for people living in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom, whereas domestic holidays are most common for many Mediterranean or southern European countries (Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal) as well as Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Finland.

4.3.7. Culture: united in diversity

The European Union is primarily an economic, legal and political integration project. However, it is also perceived as "...an unprecedented and successful social and cultural project".³⁰ Its successive enlargements have led to an increase of diversity within the European area and the Union has proved its ability to respect Member States' varied and intertwined history, languages and cultures.

Young people under 30 years old constitute the first generation that lived in an enlarged European Union and that benefit from the four freedoms (free movement of goods, services, people and finance). Indeed, "United in Diversity," the official motto of the European Union, testifies to the new melting pot which young Europeans are living in.

³⁰ Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world {Sec(2007) 570}.

'Culture' is complex to define, as it can both refer to the fine arts and as the basis for a symbolic world of meanings, beliefs, values, traditions which are expressed in language, art, religion and myths.

The personal meaning of the word “culture” does not vary extensively across age: more than one third of Europeans think of culture primarily in terms of arts (either performance or visual arts). As age increases people are more likely to think of culture in these terms, but are less likely to perceive culture as a link to traditions and languages. Young people (28 %) are more likely than their elders to consider that traditions, languages, customs and social and cultural communities also belong to the field of cultures, but are less numerous (20 %) in linking literature, poetry and playwriting with culture.

4.3.8. *Culture and multiculturalism*

Multiculturalism is generally understood as a shared commitment to recognize, maintain, and to accord respect and value to the different cultures that coexist within a territorially defined space, be it that of a nation, city, region, municipality or any other society.

Researchers identify three new trends regarding the internationalisation of young people in Europe: the growing number of “third culture kids” (i.e. second and third generation of immigrants), the increasing desire for mobility (to visit other countries, to study abroad or to find employment) and the transnational circulation of young well-trained professionals. All three trends, coupled with an intensive use of communication technologies, boost the multicultural aspects of European societies and multiply the potential for young people to be in contact with different cultures.

When asking young Europeans about some activities that involve exchanges with foreign cultures, very practical activities take the lead. More than half of 15-24 year olds enjoys eating foreign cuisine compared to 32 % of those aged 55 and above. Around 30 % of young Europeans enjoy making friends with people from other European countries and more than 20 % try to mix with other cultures by travelling abroad.

Increased mobility within Europe (for instance through study mobility, twinning of European cities, cross-border labour markets, tourism) has developed young people's potential to make friends across Europe: a little more than 30 % of young people declared they have friends in other European countries.

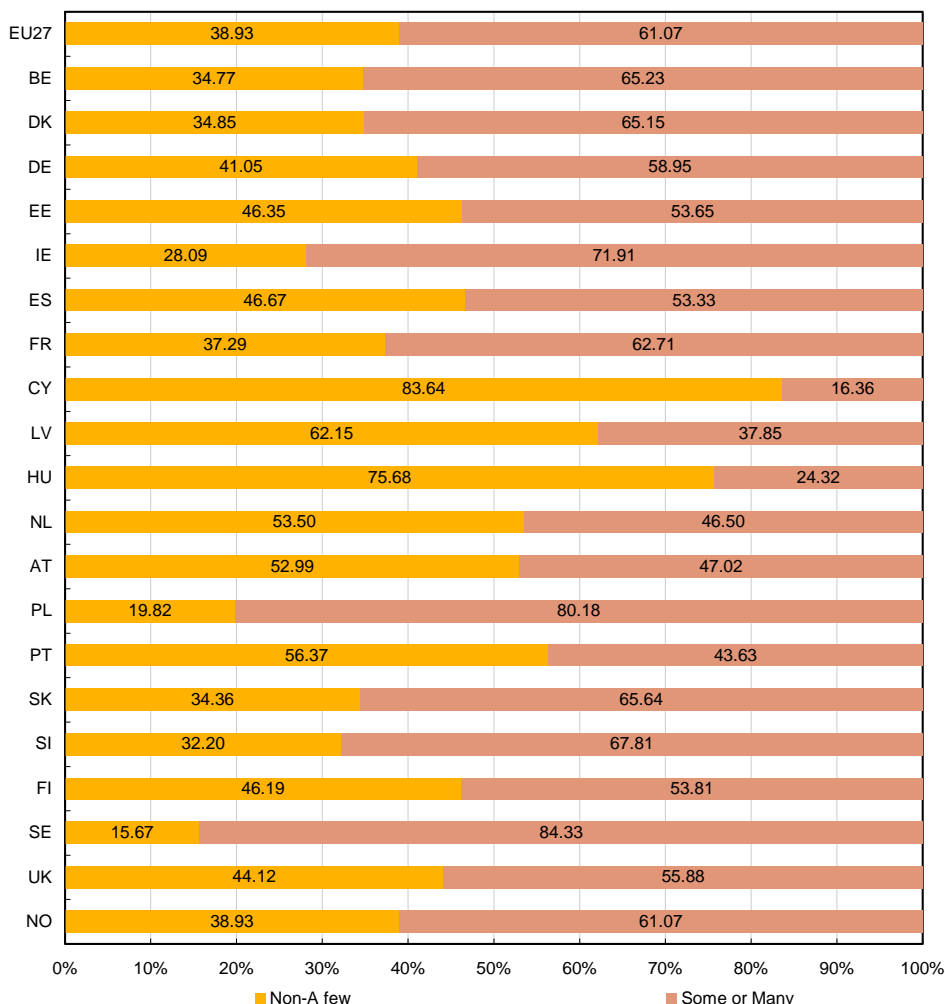
Watching foreign language TV and movies is also popular among people aged 15-24 and 25-39, but only 13 % of people older than 50 listed it as an important cultural exchange activity.

4.3.9. *Intercultural dialogue*

Intercultural dialogue is more than coexistence of different cultures within a territorially defined space. It may be defined as “a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or worldviews. Among its aims are: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes. The European Union declared 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and recognises that Europe’s great cultural diversity represents a unique advantage for all Europeans. This initiative aims at encouraging all those living in Europe to explore the benefits of the European cultural heritage and the opportunities to learn from different cultural traditions.

As a general pattern, people aged 16-24 in the EU are very open minded towards people coming from different parts of the world. Nearly 61 % of youth in this age group were willing to allow some or many people from different ethnic groups to enter their country, while 39 % would allow none or a few.

Percentage of people aged 16-24 willing to allow people from different ethnic groups into their society- EU 27, 2006



Source: European Social Survey³¹

ESS2 (Reference period 2004-2005): Czech Republic, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg and Turkey

ESS3 (Reference period 2006-2007): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom

³¹ to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country's] people to come and live here?

At national level, the picture is a little more contrasted. In more than half of the countries, a majority of young people consider that their country should allow some or many people from other ethnicities in their countries. They are proportionally less numerous in Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria and Portugal. In Cyprus, Latvia and Hungary, more than 60 % of young people aged 16-24 consider that only few people with other ethnic background should live in their country.

Overall, most of the population aged over 16 considers that a country's cultural life is enriched by immigrants. More than 55 % of Europeans aged between 16 and 29 agree or strongly agree that people from foreign countries who live in their country enrich their cultural life. The agreement with such statement is less widespread among people aged 30 years old or more. But the benefits of intercultural dialogues are still challenged by the fact that one fourth of young people in the age groups 16-24 and 25-29 consider that culture is not enriched by immigration flows. This proportion reaches around 30 % in the population aged 30 or more.

At national level, Poland, Finland and Sweden show the highest percentage of people regardless of age that are positive towards the enrichment of their culture from foreign people. People become slightly less positive towards the statement as they grow older, except in Estonia, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

KEY FIGURES ON LEISURE TIME OF YOUNG PEOPLE

- Young people (15-19) enjoy free time more than 20% of their total time
- 82 % of young people aged 16-24 go to the cinema at least once a year (reduced to 58% for 25-29)
- 45% of young people declare practicing sport
- 40% of young people declare going out with friends
- 25% of young people declare reading
- 23% of young people declare writing, singing or playing an instrument
- 41.% of young people aged 16-29 declare visiting cultural sites at least once a year
- 30% of young people declare having friends in other European countries
- 61% of young people aged 16-24 will to allow ethnic group to enter their country
- 55% of young people aged 16-29 agree that people for foreign countries enrich their cultural life

4.4. The digital generation

Due to increased popularity and affordability, personal computers can now be found in a majority of homes across the European Union. This has driven down the cost of Internet and made it more accessible.

4.4.1. *Young people play a leading role in applying new technologies*

Young people are usually most enthusiastic towards new technologies, and are the first to adopt and spread it. They are also most often the leading innovators in using and spreading ICT. It appears that having a dependent child is an incentive to have computers at home. In 2007, 75 % of households with at least one dependent child have a computer, compared to around 50 % of the total number of European households. 66 % of all households with a computer also have Internet access. There is a much higher rate of households with dependent children that have Internet connections at home compared to those without children.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Dependent children cover two groups. All persons below 16 are considered to be dependent children. Persons aged 16 to 24, living in a household of which at least one of their parents is a member and who are economically inactive are also considered as dependent children.

Source: Eurostat, European Community Household Panel (ECHP)

However, households that have a dependent child may also be considered as “young” and “middle age” households who are more receptive to the use of new technologies than the older part of the population. Furthermore, parents with a dependent child might be more willing to have PCs and Internet as they can be considered tools for their children's education.

There is still a geographical gap when considering access to personal computers and to Internet: more than 90 % of households with a dependent child in Germany, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden have a personal computer. This is followed by Austria (87 %) and the United Kingdom (85 %). The share of households with a dependent child that have access to a personal computer and Internet goes down to 56 % in Greece and 34 % in Romania.

Households without a dependent child tend to have less access to a computer and Internet. The biggest differences between the two categories of households can be seen in the Czech Republic, Cyprus and Lithuania. In these countries, the proportion of households with dependent children having access to personal computer is twice as high as those without dependent children.

4.4.2. *A generational gap in ICT*

Europe's population has increased its daily use of computers since 2004. Within the age group 16-24, daily use of a computer has increased from 50 % in 2004 to almost 70 % in 2007. This tendency can be seen in all EU countries. Young Europeans aged 16-24 in 2007 use the computer more often than any other age group. The proportion of young people using computers on a daily basis is double that of the age range 45-54 in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia and Malta and even three (or little less) higher in Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Latvia. In the Nordic countries and in the Netherlands, more than 80 % of the 16-24 years-

old use a computer every day, while in Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus and Romania the daily use of computers for this age group does not go above 50 %.

The Internet has undergone far-reaching changes since its early days in the late 1960s, having developed into a user friendly communications infrastructure available for all citizens. The Internet became accessible to the general public in the beginning of the 1990s. Its use is greatly expanding, and the proportion of daily users aged 16-24 nearly doubled between 2004 and 2007. 16-24 year olds take the lead in the daily use of Internet. At EU level, 59 % of people age 16-24 use the Internet daily, while as for the age group 25-34 the share is 51 % and for people in the age range 45-54, the share is 35 %.

More than 70 % of the population aged 16-24 consults the Internet on a daily basis in the Nordic countries, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg the Netherlands and Slovenia. Greece and Romania present the lowest percentage of people looking at Internet daily with 34 % and 26 % respectively.

Age is an important determinant in the frequency of Internet use, but the occupation or status of young people (whether you are a student, a workers etc.) also matters. The Internet is commonly used in schools and universities as a learning tool.

Almost 80 % of students in the EU Member States use computers daily and 68 % of them use the Internet on a daily basis. Only 7 % of European students never use the Internet.

4.4.3. E-mobility

Individual Internet connections, together with broadband expansion has made the Internet more accessible to people at home. While more than 30 % of the young population used the Internet in places such as Internet cafes, public libraries and government buildings in 2004, young people now tend more and more to use it at home. In 2004, less than 50 % of the young population used Internet at home. This share had increased to almost 70 % in 2007.

Home is the most common place of use of computer independent of age group. For the people aged 16-24 the preferred place is at home and at the place of education while the older people use computers at home and at work except for Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, where the primary source of Internet access is the place of education.

The place of education is also a very common place for an Internet connection when young people are aged 16-24. More than 50 % of young people from the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Baltic States, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Finland, use the Internet at their education places, while in other European countries, although being the second source of Internet use, the percentage stays below 30 %. The place of education is not anymore such a popular place for Internet uses at the age range 25-34 due to the fact that most people at those age ranges have left education and started a working career.

In France and Finland, looking at the Internet at a friend's houses is common practice. In these countries, respectively 53 % and 67 % of the young people aged 16-24 access the Internet in friends' houses. The percentage stays at levels of 41 % in France and 51 % for Finland within the age range 25-34.

Internet cafés are also quite popular for people aged 16-24, especially in Greece, where 24 % of this group use them to connect to the Internet, but also 18 % in Slovakia, 14 % in Poland and 13 % in Spain and Portugal. Among its population aged 25-34, only Spain shows an

important use of Internet cafés (10 %). In the rest of the European countries there is a remarkable decrease in the use of Internet cafés among older age groups.

For people aged 25-34, their working place allows them to access the Internet. In the Netherlands, more than 60 % use the work place as a connection to the Internet. On the other hand, in Romania this proportion reaches only 16 %.

4.4.4. E-skills

E-skills are not just pure technical skills but also cross-disciplinary, cognitive and problem-solving skills as well as an understanding of the fundamentals of the new communication strategies. In fact, the European e-Skills Forum considers that e-skills cover three main categories (ICT practitioner skills, ICT user skills and E-business skills) that are only partially covered by current data.

Developing computer skills will also help the development of new types of social relations, business competitiveness and innovation in Europe. Finally, the lack of adequate e-skills may increase the risk of exclusion.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The European e-Skills Forum has adopted a definition of the term “**e-skills**” covering:

ICT practitioner skills: the capabilities required for researching, developing, designing, strategic planning, managing, producing, consulting, marketing, selling, integrating, installing, administering, maintaining, supporting and servicing ICT systems.

ICT user skills: the capabilities required for the effective application of ICT systems and devices by the individual. ICT users apply systems as tools in support of their own work. User skills cover the use of common software tools and of specialised tools supporting business functions within industry. At the general level, they cover “digital literacy”. Digital literacy involves the confident and critical use of ICT for work, leisure and communication underpinned by basic ICT skills: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

E-business skills: the capabilities needed to exploit opportunities provided by ICT, notably the Internet; to ensure more efficient and effective performance of different types of organisations; to explore possibilities for new ways of conducting business/administrative and organisational processes; and/or to establish new businesses.

Source: European Commission – DG Enterprises and Industry

There is an obvious gap between the levels of computer skills of people aged 16-24 and those of people aged 45-54. In 2007, 41 % of Europeans aged 16-24 are able to carry on at least 5 or 6 computer related activities. This figure decreases with the age to 35 % of people aged 25-34, 26 % for 35-44 and only 18 % for people aged 45-54. Looking deeply into the European countries, some differences can be pointed out. In Denmark, Ireland, The Netherlands, Finland, and Sweden, the level of high skills computer users aged 25-34 is higher than within the people aged 16-24. This gap may be also explained by the way of acquisition of computer skills (self learning, peers etc).

Digital competence can be acquired through various learning opportunities (formal, non formal or informal). Data show that people usually use many of these different alternatives to improve their personal skills.

At EU 27 level, getting e-Skills is often a “learning by doing” process for young people since most of them acquired some of their e-skills by sitting in front of their computers and playing with the machine (72 % of people aged 16-24 and 66 % of people aged 25-34 improve their e-skills by themselves). But asking for informal assistance to colleagues, friends and family members is also frequent, (65 % of the people aged 16-24 and 59 % of the people aged 25-34). Formalized educational institutions are a place of obtaining e-skills more popular within the youngest (people aged 16-24), due probably to the fact that education in the field of information technologies has been wide spread in European schools in the last years (in 2002/03 most of European countries had included ICT in their compulsory curriculum in primary and general secondary education as a “separate subject in its own right or/and as a tool for other subjects”).

In all European countries, young people (16-24) combine all or part of these three ways to acquire or improve their e-skills but the hierarchy may vary across countries. For instance, in Germany, young people are more numerous to ask for informal assistance (91 % of the age group) than to learn by doing (87 %) or through formal educational institutions (69 %). In most of the countries except Estonia (69 %), France (53 %) and Sweden (50 %), less than the half of young people aged between 16 and 24 self-study using books, cd-roms or other material.

People aged 25 to 34 use the same means of acquiring e-skills as their younger counterparts. It should also be emphasized that they are more numerous than their junior peers to develop their skills through self study or training course and adult education center. In nearly half of the countries, more than 10 % of this age group attended such a training course.

Girls and boys acquire their e-skills through the same means with a slight preference for women aged 16-24 to use formalized education.

USEFUL CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Different uses of computers

Sending / receiving e-mails: It includes the use of e-mail for sending messages to friends or for getting information on goods/services.

Telephoning over the Internet / videoconferencing: Telephoning over the Internet is a relatively inexpensive method to communicate and is often the method used by companies offering reduced cost telephone charges. Users may not be aware that they are communicating using such Internet-based telephony, Voiceover- IP or VoIP. Next to nVoIP, peer-to-peer telephony is becoming more important. The user needs to install a little program (such as Skype) for making free calls over the Internet to anyone else who also has this software. Usually, one can also make calls to normal fixed or mobile lines via a pre-paid credit. Videoconferencing includes audio and visual communication between two or more groups or persons. Videoconferencing is more widely used by organisations and replaces the need for face to face meetings.

Other (use of chat sites, messenger, etc.): Chat sites can be used by two or more persons for the purpose of communication. This communication is by written word (similar to email). This item also covers instant messaging which means real-time communication between people on the basis of typed text.

Finding information about goods or services: Using the Internet to seek for information about any household good, for example, films, music, video-games, books, e-learning material, clothes, electronic equipment computer software or services for example banking, financial or health services. It does not include transactions, e.g. purchases of any goods or services (although one will usually look up information on a good or services before actually purchasing it).

Using services related to travel and accommodation: Includes using the Internet for ascertaining information or to purchase goods and services in relation to travel and accommodation, for example travel tickets, hotels or any other type of accommodation or web sites containing information for tourists.

Listening to web radios / watching web television: This covers both live streaming (real-time) and radio or TV 'on demand' (batch, i.e. the user can listen/watch programs later on).

Playing or downloading games, images, films or music: This refers to actually downloading games, images for use, films for watching, or music for listening.

Downloading software: Includes downloading software either free of charge or under payment.

Reading or downloading online newspapers / news magazines: This includes all types of online newspapers and magazines either free of charge or under payment.

Looking for a job or sending a job application: Includes searching specific web sites for job 'hunting' or for sending an application for a job. Sending a job application should be included in this category only if it was sent on-line.

Seeking health-related information (e.g. injury, disease, nutrition, improving health, etc.): This item refers to Internet use for health related activities. The scope is limited to private purpose, professional use is not taken into account. Private should however not be limited to own personal use, but can also include Internet use for health related activities on behalf of other family members or friends. Includes general searches via a search engine (Google, Yahoo!,) using keywords in one of the mentioned fields. This item also includes more specific searches on specialized websites such as the Ministry of Health, non-governmental bodies or interest groups. It includes activities such as making an appointment on-line with a practitioner, requesting a prescription on-line from a practitioner or seeking medical advice on-line from a practitioner.

Internet Banking: This includes electronic transactions with a bank for payment, transfers, etc. or for looking up account information. Electronic transactions for other types of financial services are not covered by this category.

Selling goods or services (e.g. via auctions) Selling goods or services on-line does not require an electronic payment transaction, i.e. the transaction or 'deal' is done on-line but the payment and/or delivery can take place off-line. Putting an advertisement on a website to, for example, sell a second-hand bicycle or a spare ticket for an event, is not included here as the transaction is in general not concluded on-line in an automatic manner (but via a phone call or informal e-mail).

Obtaining information from public authorities' websites: Includes searching to obtain any type of information from public authority web sites. Public authorities' web sites include local or central government offering information or services.

Downloading official forms: Includes downloading official forms from public authorities' websites for any purpose of use (e.g. for information or for requesting a service).

Sending in filled forms: Includes filled in forms sent via Internet (public authorities' websites) only. Forms downloaded, printed, filled in and sent by post are not included in this category.

Source: Eurostat – Statistics on the Information Society.

4.4.5. Using the Internet

Being familiar with computers is a first step toward using the Internet. It appears that most of young people know how to use the basic functions of the Internet (using search engine, sending email with attachments or post message in a chat room) but fewer know how to create a web page or to make Internet phone calls.

Using the Internet as a search engine is the most widely spread e-skill in European society, followed by attaching files to e-mails and posting messages to chat rooms. This is true for all the age ranges, although the percentage of people with this kind of skills decreases with age.

People age 16-24 have integrated into their lives the Internet as a communication tool. Except for Romania and Cyprus (where the percentage does not reach 50 %), the great majority of the population aged 16-24 know how to send e-mail with attachments. Almost all the population in Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, and Finland, is in this situation.

The level of people being able to send an e-mail with an attachment within the age range 25-34 decreases with respect to the previous age range (except in Ireland where it increases slightly) The biggest gap between the two age groups can be seen in Lithuania and Portugal, where the decrease is more than one fourth.

If looking at other Internet skills, posting messages in chat rooms and making Internet phone calls are also common. Regarding the use of the Internet for phone calls, the differences between age ranges is not high. Peer to peer file sharing seems to be a competence of the youngest people. The creation of websites is a less popular skill.

European youth like to search for information using Internet search tools: they go shopping from home by Internet, play games with friends they have never seen, open an Internet account and listen to music. Their activities are the same of older generations; they just do it in a new way. This is especially true when considering communication: the youngest generations are developing new ways to interact with their world from the Internet and their computers.

Europeans from all age ranges use the Internet for communication purposes. Indeed, 85 % or more of Internet users in all age groups did so, but young people tend to be relatively more numerous to use other kind of communications tools (such as chat sites or messengers, etc.) than their elders.

The second most used activity is searching information about goods and services even if it is remarkable how older Europeans take more advantage of this utility than younger Europeans. However, young people play or download games and music or software more than older people do.

Internet is also a way to get in touch with future employers for young people: nearly 30 % of them have search specific web sites for job hunting or for sending an application for a job. This is more than 10 % compared to older people.

Younger people are less numerous than their elders to use the Internet for interactions with public authorities or practice Internet banking.

Apart from the Internet's communication capacity reflected in the high use of the Internet for sending and receiving e-mails, more than 50 % of people aged 16-24 used the Internet for downloading music and games. Less than 50 % of young population use Internet for educational purposes and job searching (although the figures relating to education activities are not available for all demographics). Last, but not least, the Internet is becoming a reliable way for financial transactions especially in later years. This is due to the developments of security systems that make more reliable for society, especially the youngest, to work on the Internet for banking purposes. However, young Europeans use less Internet banking probably because they have not yet acquired a regular income and usually don't need to make financial operations regularly.

It appears that, regarding the evolution in Internet use, sending e-mail comes first, followed by travel and accommodation booking. Downloading music is another important activity that has seen an almost 10 % increase in the last 4 years. Using the Internet for educational purposes has been stable while the Internet is becoming a valuable tool for job searching.

There are generally few gender differences in Internet activities. Increasingly, boys and girls equally use the Internet for communication purposes (such as social networking) and sending e-mails and to a lesser extent to interact with public authorities, to search for a job or to do electronic transactions with a bank for payment, transfers, etc (i.e. Internet banking). More men than women aged 16-24 use the Internet for playing games, this is the most remarkable gender difference. Women are more interested in information such as health and travel while men pay more attention to entertainment such as games, news, phone calls and radio.

4.4.6. E-commerce

Clothes, sporting goods, books and magazines are the main goods acquired via e-commerce (Internet purchase).

According to Eurostat's Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals (2007), people aged 16-24 prefer to buy clothes and sporting goods, followed by films and music. More than 10 % use the Internet for cultural and leisure activities such as to purchase books, magazines and e-learning material, and also tickets for events. Within the age range 16-24 not so many people (less than 10 %) rely on Internet shopping for computer software, hardware or electronic equipment. Looking at the age range 25-34, the preferences change: if

clothes and sporting goods keep a prime position, more than 15 % of the 25-34 year olds buy online books, magazines and e-learning material.

Purchasing through the Internet is not yet widespread among European Internet users and show great disparities across countries. In fact, in most of the countries, less than 10 % of those who used Internet in the last twelve months purchased goods such as books, films and music, hardware, software, electronic equipment or clothes. People from Germany, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Nordic countries and the United Kingdom were, during 2007, the most active in such Internet purchases. On the reverse, in Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania and Romania, 3 % or less of each age group purchased such goods through the Internet.

Internet users aged between 25 and 34 are proportionally more numerous than their juniors to purchase goods via the Internet. This is true in most of the countries and for most of the categories of goods that are presented here.

Clothes (and sporting goods) as well as music and films are the goods and services most purchased by Internet users in Denmark, Germany, Finland, Sweden, and United Kingdom by young people aged between 16 and 24. Indeed, more than 25 % (but less than 40 %) of Internet users of this age group purchased such goods during 2007. In nearly half of the countries, more people bought books, magazines and e-learning material than any other goods. It is the case of clothes and sporting goods in Belgium, France, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Romania. Buying music and films come first in only five countries (Denmark, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and United Kingdom) for this age group.

KEY FIGURES ON THE DIGITAL AND INTERNET GENERATION

- 70% of young people aged 16-24 daily use computers (in 2007 compared to 50% in 2004)
- 59% of young people aged 16-24 daily use Internet
- 41% of young people aged 16-24 are able to carry on at least 5 computer related activities (18% for 35-44)
- 30% of young people declare searching a job on Internet

5. RECOMMENDATIONS DERIVED FROM RESEARCH FOR POLICYMAKERS AND YOUTH WORKERS

The European Commission has funded a number of youth-related research projects under the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Research Framework Programmes (from 1996 to 2013). The report "European Research on Youth" examines the results achieved so far and analyses some common recurring themes which are of interest to policymakers and persons working with young people.³²

The report suggests a number of recommendations for policymaking in terms of content and methodology. Some of these recommendations are concerned with the ways in which policymaking happens in general when addressing issues of engagement of citizens, avoiding exclusion, and the practices which contribute to success. Others address the content of policymaking more directly and provide advice on how to most appropriately address issues relating to young peoples' participation in employment, their transition from education and training to the world of work, and finally their participation in society as committed and engaged citizens.

The recommendations are presented at two levels:

A first level of recommendations which are directed to policymakers in general which identify good practice to inform the policymaking process. A second level which identifies recommendations of particular interest to those who are working in the youth policy field and dealing with issues of exclusion, effective transition to the world of work and citizenship.

5.1. Recommendations to policymakers

In order to ensure good practice policymaking should be seen as a process which:

- (1) involves all the key actors in a given area, stakeholders and those who will be the target public of the policy.
- (2) is holistic, involving the consideration of every aspect of a particular issue, at the levels at which action is required, and considering the impacts both intended and unintended which are likely to be the end result of the policy.
- (3) where context plays a crucial role in determining what works and what does not. Policymakers need to be aware of the role of context when examining policy models from other countries and ensure that they fully consider the importance of the cultural, historical, and social context within which they are operating.
- (4) builds on the broader policy context created at EU level through macro level approaches such as those advocated in the Renewed Social Agenda and the Lisbon Process, creating an impetus for reform processes within Member States. Policymakers should act on this impetus and adapt their policies to suit their local contexts.

³² These recommendations appeared in the policy review "European Research on Youth" (European Commission, April 2009). The publication is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/library_en.html.

- (5) is creative, all embracing and which anticipates issues rather than one which is premised on developing a reactive approach to particular problems. Policymakers should take a longer term view which sees particular initiatives as part of a continuum of legislative action.
- (6) ensures appropriate balance between the development of policies targeting individual needs and approaches which address broader infrastructural questions within which social objectives can be achieved.
- (7) where evaluation and monitoring are seen as a continuing part of the policymaking process. They should not be based on quantitative data but should also address the effectiveness of policies in qualitative terms.

5.2. Recommendations to youth workers

In order to ensure effective policymaking by those working with young people and their transition from education to work policymakers should:

- (1) ensure that the voice of young people is heard when formulating policies to enable them to move from education and training into the world of employment. Policymaking should be with young people rather than for them.
- (2) prioritise involving young people in identifying solutions, developing appropriate responses and exploring implementation issues particularly, but not only, when they are addressing issues of preparing responses to issues of exclusion from the labour market and society.
- (3) encourage partnerships between the worlds of education and enterprise in fostering the transition of young people into employment and in supporting the development of the competences and skills young people need to participate fully in employment and society. Policymakers should promote such partnerships and use them as a testing-ground when they are developing policies.
- (4) adopt flexibility of approach in the identification of options when examining issues relating to the integration of young people into the world of employment. This entails examining options and choices which may involve a number of policy areas which potentially impact on the transition from education and training to the world of employment.
- (5) ensure effective transition of young people into active life. This will not happen in a sustainable way without significant investment of time and resources in putting in place appropriate system wide infrastructural initiatives which target social inclusion and the effective participation of young people in employment.
- (6) elaborate policies which are aimed at ensuring the effective engagement and participation of young people in citizenship initiatives at local and national levels. These have an added benefit of enhancing young peoples' sense of themselves as European citizens.
- (7) take care that enterprise education plays a major role in ensuring that young people develop the kinds of skills which will enable them to participate effectively in society and in the labour market.

- (8) ensure that they are aware of any unintended outcomes of policies to promote the inclusion of young people in society. There can be a danger that some such policies may have the effect of excluding significant numbers of young people because of a lack of education and/or training.