

Structural indicators for monitoring education and training systems in Europe 2022

Overview of
major reforms since 2015

Eurydice background report

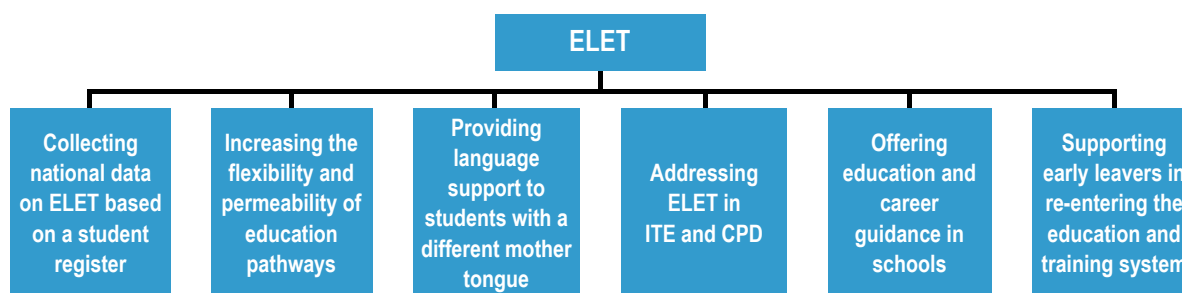
3. Early leaving from education and training



3. EARLY LEAVING FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The structural indicators on early leaving from education and training (ELET) ⁽¹⁰⁾ focus on certain key policies and measures that together cover the three main areas of action – prevention, intervention and compensation – as highlighted in the Council recommendation of 28 June 2011 ⁽¹¹⁾. The need to continue to bring down the rate of ELET and for more young people to obtain an upper secondary education qualification was reiterated in the Council resolution of 19 February 2021. A new EU-level target was agreed: the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 9 %, by 2030 ⁽¹²⁾.

This set of structural indicators provides an overview of recent reforms and policy developments of some of the main activities taking place in European countries to achieve the EU-level target on ELET. The indicators focus on school education: primary, general secondary and school-based initial vocational education (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3). Since 2015, when the structural indicators on ELET were first gathered, there have been many reforms in all of the following six areas.



Overview of reforms and policy developments since 2015

A **national data collection system based on a student register** can be used to understand the scale of the problem and to develop and implement appropriate policies to address ELET. Such a system can also be employed to both monitor absenteeism and evaluate the effectiveness of policies to reduce early leaving. Since 2015, more and more European education systems have put in place such a data-collection system, making it possible to monitor absenteeism and analyse early-school-leaving patterns at different levels – school, local, regional and national. In 2021/2022, the majority of European countries are collecting national data on ELET through a student register.

Policies for **increasing the flexibility and permeability of education pathways** can help prevent ELET by removing potential obstacles to the completion of education and training programmes. These might include initiatives to promote alternative education and training pathways (e.g. vocational or technical rather than general), to facilitate the transition between pathways and to improve systems for the recognition of students' skills and qualifications. In 2021/2022, almost all European countries have policies in place to promote alternative education and training pathways; and measures exist in many

⁽¹⁰⁾ Early leaving from education and training (ELET) refers to students leaving education or training before completing the upper secondary level and thus not obtaining the corresponding school-leaving certificate. However, the structural indicators on ELET focus on the whole period of school education: primary education, general secondary and school-based initial vocational education (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3).

⁽¹¹⁾ Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, OJ C 191, 1.7.2011.

⁽¹²⁾ Council Resolution of 19 February 2021 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030). 2021/C 66/1.

countries to facilitate transitions between the different pathways. In Slovakia, conceptual and legislative steps have been taken as of 2022 to introduce a system for the recognition of qualifications.

Language support for students with a mother tongue other than the language of instruction can be crucial as these students are often at increased risk of early leaving. The great majority of European countries already had such policies in place in 2015. Further developments in this area have mainly been focused on intensifying this support. In 2020/2021, reforms occurred in Iceland resulting in better access to language tests and language classes for non-Icelandic speakers. In Czechia, Spain, Portugal and Slovenia additional policies and measures were introduced leading to increased language support for students with a different mother tongue.

Addressing ELET in ITE and/or in CPD is essential if teachers are to know how to support students who are showing signs of disengagement at school, and who are therefore at risk of leaving school early. This was an area addressed by a relatively small number of countries in 2015, but which has since become the focus of top-level policies and measures in an increasing number of countries. Despite these positive developments across Europe, this current update of the structural indicators shows that educating and training teachers on issues relating to ELET is still an area where comparatively fewer policies can be found.

The role of **education and career guidance services** in preventing students from leaving education and training is widely acknowledged. In order to strengthen this area in schools, several countries have introduced reforms since 2015 to ensure that education and career guidance is not only delivered through school-based guidance or counselling services, but also through the national curriculum, thus systematically reaching all students. These developments are in addition to the existing support provided by the school guidance services in all these countries. This two-way approach to promoting education and career guidance in schools is now (in 2021/2022) promoted through top-level policies in about two-thirds of European countries.

Support for early leavers to re-enter the education and training system has been strengthened through a number of policy developments since 2015. These have involved the provision of second-chance education, education and career guidance and/or ‘Youth guarantee’-related education and training initiatives⁽¹³⁾. Reforms in this area have occurred in 2021/2022 in Slovakia through the introduction of the Lifelong learning and counselling strategy for 2021–2030. Currently, almost all European countries have policies promoting second-chance education for early leavers, and most of them support early leavers through targeted education and career guidance and through ‘Youth guarantee’-related initiatives supporting early leavers in re-entering the education and training system.

⁽¹³⁾ The ‘Youth guarantee’ is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, further education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. See the Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee, OJ C 372, 4.11.2020.

ELET summary table 1, 2021/2022

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

ELET summary table 2, 2021/2022

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

(*) Education and career guidance provided both as a compulsory part of the curriculum **and** by school guidance services in lower and upper secondary education.