European Commission

Adult Education and Training in Europe

Widening Access to Learning Opportunities

Eurydice Report

Education and Training

Adult Education and Training in Europe:

Widening Access to Learning Opportunities

Eurydice Report

Education and Training

This document is published by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA, Education and Youth Policy Analysis).

Please cite this publication as:

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015. *Adult Education and Training in Europe: Widening Access to Learning Opportunities*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

ISBN 978-92-9201-664-7 (printed version)
ISBN 978-92-9201-661-6 (PDF)
ISBN 978-92-9201-774-3 (EPUB)
doi:10.2797/8002 (printed version)
doi:10.2797/75257 (PDF)
doi:10.2797/968614 (EPUB)

This document is also available on the Internet (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice).

Text completed in February 2015.

© Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2015.

Reproduction is authorized provided the source is acknowledged.

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
Education and Youth Policy Analysis
Avenue du Bourget 1 (BOU2 – Unit A7)
B-1049 Brussels
Tel. +32 2 299 50 58
Fax +32 2 292 19 71
E-mail: eacea-eurydice@ec.europa.eu
Website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/

CONTENTS AND TABLE OF FIGURES

Contents

Table of Figures 5

Main Findings 7

Introduction 15

Chapter 1: Background Indicators 17

1.1. Human capital in Europe 17
1.2. Adult participation in lifelong learning 22
Conclusions 26

Chapter 2: Policy Commitments 29

2.1. Key policies to improve adult basic skills and qualification levels 29
2.2. International surveys of adult skills and their impact on policy development 36
Conclusions 40

Chapter 3: Main Types of Provision 43

3.1. Concepts used in the field: an introduction 43
3.2. Programmes to raise achievement in basic skills 46
3.3. Beyond basic skills programmes: opportunities for adult learners to gain a recognised qualification 61
Conclusions 69

Chapter 4: Flexibility and Progression 73

4.1. What makes participation in learning difficult for adults? 74
4.2. Distance learning programmes open to adults 75
4.3. Provision of modular adult learning programmes and credit-based qualifications 81
4.4. Progression routes 86
4.5. Validation of non-formal and informal learning 89
Conclusions 93

Chapter 5: Outreach Activities and Guidance Services 97

5.1. Promoting adult learning through awareness-raising and outreach 97
5.2. Improving adult participation in lifelong learning by the provision of accessible and comprehensive guidance services and self-help tools 105
5.3. 'One stop shops' or integrated provision of different lifelong learning services 112
Conclusions 114

Chapter 6: Targeted Financial Support 117

6.1. Funding as a barrier to participation in lifelong learning 117
6.2. Funding and co-funding instruments in adult education and training 118
6.3. Targeted funding and co-funding arrangements 120
Conclusions 128

References 131

Annexes 137

Annex 1 137
Annex 2 145

Glossary 149

Country codes 149
Statistical codes 149
Definitions 150

Acknowledgements 157

Table of Figures

Chapter 1: Background Indicators 17

Figure 1.1: Adults (25-64) with educational attainment below upper or lower secondary level (%), 2013 18

Figure 1.2: Adults with educational attainment below upper secondary level according to age groups (%), 2013 19

Figure 1.3: Adults (16-65) with low levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy (%), 2012 20

Figure 1.4: Adults (25-64) who have never used a computer or performed any of the ICT operations mentioned in the survey (%), 2012 22

Figure 1.5: Adults (25-64) participating in education and training in the four weeks prior to the survey (%), 2013 23

Figure 1.6: Adults (25-64) participating in education and training in the 12 months prior to the survey (%), 2011 24

Figure 1.7: Adults (25-64) participating in education and training in the 12 months prior to the survey according to highest educational attainment, employment status, occupational category, age and migrant status (%), 2011 25

Chapter 2: Policy Commitments 29

Figure 2.1: Types of recent policy documents (issued between 2009 and 2014) addressing access to opportunities for skills development or further qualifications for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications 30

Figure 2.2: Participation of European countries in international surveys of adult skills, 2013 36

Chapter 3: Main Types of Provision 43

Figure 3.1: Delivering basic skills in adult education and training 46

Figure 3.2: Basic skills programme clusters 47

Figure 3.3: Programmes for mature learners directly related to initial education up to the end of lower secondary level (ISCED 2), 2013/14 48

Figure 3.4: Dedicated basic skills programmes and programme frameworks for adult learners, 2013/14 52

Figure 3.5: Providers of upper secondary education for adults, 2013/14 64

Figure 3.6: Adults (25-64) who acquired their medium-level qualification during adulthood (aged 25 or above) as a percentage of all adults (25-64), 2013 66

Chapter 4: Flexibility and Progression 73

Figure 4.1: Obstacles to participation in lifelong learning for adults (25-64) with low educational attainment (ISCED 0-2), 2011 74

Figure 4.2: Large-scale publicly subsidised distance learning provision open to adults, 2013/14 77

Figure 4.3: Adults (25-64) who participated in a distance learning activity (formal or non-formal) as a percentage of all adults (25-64), 2011 80

Figure 4.4: Existence of modular programmes open to adults up to upper secondary level (ISCED 3), 2013/14 82

Figure 4.5: Existence of credit-based qualifications up to upper secondary level open to adults (ISCED 3), 2013/14 85

Figure 4.6: Completion of lower secondary education (ISCED 2) as a condition of access to upper secondary education (ISCED 3) by adults, 2013/14 87

Figure 4.7: Alternative routes to higher education for non-traditional candidates, 2013/14 88

Figure 4.8: Data collection on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL), 2013/14 93

Chapter 5: Outreach Activities and Guidance Services 97

Figure 5.1: Adults (25-64) who did not participate in education and training and indicated that they were not interested in participating (%), by highest level of education attained, 2011 99

Figure 5.2: Adults (25-64) who have not searched for information on learning opportunities in the 12 months prior to the survey (%), by highest level of education attained, 2011 100

Figure 5.3: Awareness-raising and outreach campaigns targeting adults, 2009-2014 101

Chapter 6: Targeted Financial Support 117

Figure 6.1: Adults (25-64) who reported that training was too expensive or they could not afford it (%), by highest level of education attained, 2011 118

Figure 6.2: Financing models for lifelong learning 119

Figure 6.3: Co-funding instruments to support adult participation in education and training, 2013/14 122

Figure 6.4: Co-funding instruments for employers to encourage adult participation in education and training, 2013/14 126

MAIN FINDINGS

This Eurydice report aims to provide insight into the field of adult education and training in Europe and support decision-making at policy level. While promoting an integrated approach to lifelong learning, the report emphasises policies and measures to ensure sufficient access to learning opportunities for adults whose skills and qualifications do not fully correspond to current labour market and societal requirements. In doing so, the report takes a broad perspective, considering and exploring a range of interlinked areas.

Starting from a selection of general indicators on adult education and training (Chapter 1), the report examines the policy commitments made by top-level public authorities to provide access to lifelong learning for the most vulnerable groups of adult learners, in particular those lacking basic skills or having low level or no qualifications (Chapter 2). It then provides a cross-country overview of publicly subsidised programmes and programmes frameworks that seek to provide opportunities for adults to upgrade their skills and qualifications throughout adulthood (Chapter 3). The report also addresses the question of learning flexibility, examining measures likely to facilitate the return of adults to education and training (Chapter 4). Outreach initiatives and guidance services constitute another element of the investigation (Chapter 5). Finally, the financial measures likely to encourage the participation of adults in education and training are investigated, paying particular attention to the financial incentives for groups with limited participation in lifelong learning (Chapter 6).

The report draws on several data sources. The prime source is the information collected from the Eurydice National Units, which has been complemented by a range of research reports, as well as by reports and databases produced by international organisations. Alongside qualitative information, most chapters also include statistical data from international surveys.

Following the structure of the report, the main findings highlight the key issues for consideration by policy makers. Each statement directs the reader towards the appropriate section, where the full analysis is provided.

Adult education and training in Europe: setting the scene

One in four adults in Europe have completed lower secondary education at most – differences between countries and age groups are significant

- Around 25 % of adults (25-64) in the EU – that is around 70 million people – have not completed any formal education beyond the level of lower secondary education. Of these, around 20 million adults (6.5 % of adults in the EU) left the education system with no more than primary education (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.1, Figure 1.1).
- Southern European countries are the most affected by low levels of educational attainment among the adult population (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.1, Figure 1.1).
- Young adults have on average a significantly higher educational attainment level than the older population (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.1, Figure 1.2).

Around one in five adults have low literacy and numeracy skills, and nearly one in three have very low or no ICT skills

- On average, across the 17 EU countries that took part in the first round of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), 19.9 % and 23.6 % of adults respectively have a low level of achievement in literacy and numeracy (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.2, Figure 1.3).
- Around 30 % of adults in the EU have very low to no ICT skills. Moreover, almost half of all adults consider that their ICT skills do not fully meet current labour market requirements (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.2, Figure 1.4).

Adults with the greatest education and training needs have the least opportunity to benefit from lifelong learning

- Adult participation in lifelong learning varies significantly between countries, with Nordic countries generally registering higher participation rates (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.2, Figures 1.5 and 1.6).
- Participation in adult education and training is determined by several factors, in particular educational attainment, employment status, occupational category, age and skills: adults with low level or no qualifications, those in low-skilled occupations, the unemployed and economically inactive, older people and the least skilled, are less likely to participate in lifelong learning. In other words, the adults most in need of education and training are those with the least access to lifelong learning opportunities (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1.2, Figure 1.7).

Policy commitments of top-level public authorities

While countries' policy agendas commonly place emphasis on access to lifelong learning for adults lacking basic skills or sufficient qualifications, they rarely specify definite targets to be reached

- Support for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications is now commonly integrated into countries' policy agendas, often as a part of education and training policies. In this context, a few countries have issued strategies referring specifically to adult literacy and basic skills. Beyond the educational sector, central authorities provide explicit support for access to skills and qualifications within their economic reforms or, more specifically, their employment strategies. Furthermore, countries tend to pay specific attention to groups where the lack of skills and qualifications may be of particular concern, namely the unemployed, young people, older workers, immigrants or ethnic minorities (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1, Figure 2.1).
- Despite the fact that policy documents commonly include explicit references to promoting access to education and training for various vulnerable groups of learners, they rarely refer to definite objectives and targets to be reached. Therefore, even when evaluation processes are in place, they do not necessarily address the most important issues affecting adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. This raises the question of whether countries' strategies and policy agendas have a real potential to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for low-qualified adults and other vulnerable groups. The area deserves further investigation (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1).

Results from the PIAAC assessment have started to steer policy, yet it is too early to identify measures that could be fully attributed to the survey outcomes

- The results of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) have triggered initiatives in most participating countries. Virtually all countries have been active in data exploration and several have allocated substantial financial resources to further research in this field. Moreover, references to the PIAAC results have been found in a number of policy documents issued by top-level authorities since October 2013 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3).
- Some countries have already implemented measures with references to the results of the PIAAC survey. Nonetheless, measures that can be fully attributed to the survey outcomes have not yet been identified. However, it is too early to provide definitive conclusions on the policy impact of the PIACC survey and further follow-up is needed (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3).

Main types of provision for adults lacking basic skills or sufficient qualifications

Across Europe, there is a wide range of education and training programmes which provide basic skills to adult learners – further investigation is needed to better understand the field

- Programmes delivering basic skills for adults are very varied: some refer explicitly to improving these skills while others, although they may use different labels, nevertheless embed literacy, numeracy and ICT within their curricula. Moreover, basic skills can be delivered in a range of settings, including education and training institutions, the workplace and community settings (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2, Figures 3.1 and 3.2).
- In almost all countries, there are programmes for mature learners linked to the initial education system up to lower secondary education. These target a functional level of ability in a range of areas, including reading, writing, numeracy and ICT, but sometimes also vocational skills. Some countries organise this type of provision on a subject basis, allowing learners to take shorter courses in distinct curriculum areas (e.g. ICT, languages, etc.) (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1, Figure 3.3).
- Around half of all European countries have established dedicated programmes or programme frameworks for the provision of basic skills. These range from programmes with clearly defined providers, curricula and standards, to programmes that fall under a clearly defined general framework, but where all these elements are determined locally. It is worth noting that dedicated basic skills programmes are not necessarily non-formal, as some countries recognise them within their qualifications frameworks and structures (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2, Figure 3.4).
- There is a range of programmes that provide basic skills, but not in an overt way. In particular, there are 'preparatory' programmes intended to improve learners' motivation to study as well as provide them with the skills necessary to undertake a formal qualifying programme; work-based learning programmes and those which fall under the framework of active labour market policies; programmes delivered within liberal (or popular) adult education; and, finally, programmes at the boundary between non-formal and informal learning, such as family literacy programmes (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3).

- Research suggests that a minimum of 100 tuition hours is necessary for making substantial progress in basic skills. It also highlights that the effectiveness of basic skills programmes should be evaluated over an extended period of time since adult learners, in particular those facing difficulties with basic skills, do not tend to follow a direct or uninterrupted learning path. This means that higher drop-out rates in literacy and basic skills programmes should not be regarded as a programme failure. Indeed, attending a short course or even part of a course can represent an important milestone in the learning pathway of an adult returning to education or training (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.4).

In all countries there are opportunities for adults to achieve a recognised qualification during adulthood; however, the proportion of adults who have completed a medium-level qualification later in life varies between countries

- Most European countries have invested in developing vocational qualification systems that allow access for adults with limited prior formal learning. These may represent the first stepping-stone towards higher qualifications (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1).
- Countries use various approaches to delivering general or vocational upper secondary qualifications to adult learners: some have established a standalone programme framework described as 'adult upper secondary education', while others have developed a framework for adults that covers several levels of qualifications. In contrast, a number of countries deliver upper secondary programmes open to adults within their mainstream upper secondary education and training system (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2).
- On average, 3.6 % of adults in Europe have achieved an upper secondary qualification during adulthood (i.e. aged 25 or above). Yet, there are significant differences between countries, ranging from around 12 % to less than 1 % (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2, Figure 3.6).

Flexibility and progression pathways

Lowering the barriers to adult participation in learning calls for modes of delivery that help overcome time constraints; yet even when they are available, there is little evidence on how well used they are by low-qualified adults

- Barriers to adult participation in learning are often linked to time constraints whether due to family responsibilities or to the work schedule, but the lack of the 'prerequisites' (e.g. appropriate entry qualifications) is also important (see Chapter 4, Section 4.1, Figure 4.1).
- Most European countries offer at least some modular programmes for adults with low level or no qualifications and many countries have recently made progress in this field (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1, Figure 4.4).
- While credit-based programmes are common in the field of higher education, only around half of all European countries offer credit-based programmes at lower educational levels. Overall, the lower the educational level, the fewer credit-based qualifications exist. When it comes to basic skills programmes, almost none have credits attached, which means that the people who are the most educationally disadvantaged benefit the least from this facility (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2, Figure 4.5).
- Only a minority of countries has distance learning provision which is both a comprehensive and institutionalised, but other large-scale programmes can also be important with respect to take-up

of this mode of learning. Statistical data shows no clear link between participation in distance learning and how comprehensive the provision is in a country (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2, Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

- Only a few countries collect data on the take-up of distance learning which has detailed information about participants; this makes it difficult to evaluate participation levels among low-qualified adults (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2).

Efforts are being made to encourage the provision of flexible learning routes, but in most European countries access to a particular level of education is still dependent on completing the previous level

- While all formal education systems have a hierarchical structure, some countries allow a certain degree of flexibility for candidates who want to access a particular level of education but who do not hold the normal entry qualifications. For example, accessing upper secondary education without having completed lower secondary education, or progressing to higher education without an upper secondary school leaving certificate. Overall, progression pathways in western and northern European countries are more flexible compared to eastern and south-eastern European countries. However, when it comes to alternative access to higher education, statistical evidence shows that where this exists, it is being used to differing degrees (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4).
- Among the countries offering alternative access routes to higher education, only a few have developed large-scale programmes to prepare non-traditional candidates (e.g. low-qualified adults) for their next level of study, which raises the question whether the flexible access available in some countries is accompanied by sufficient learning support to enable adult learners to successfully complete their intended course of study (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2, Figure 4.7 and Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3).

While there has been significant progress on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL), enabling the most vulnerable groups to access this service is still a challenge

- Research evidence shows significant progress in the development of systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) across Europe, particularly in areas such as strategies, legal frameworks, links to credit systems and also, to a lesser extent, take-up. However, the continuing challenges facing VNIL are access, awareness, recognition, financial sustainability and data collection (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5.1).
- Data on the proportion of qualifications issued using VNIL are virtually non-existent, and only few countries collect VNIL data that can be used to identify the types of learners benefiting from the service (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5.2, Figure 4.8).
- Only a minority of countries give disadvantaged groups, including low-qualified adults, priority access to VNIL, and less than one third of countries report that low-qualified adults are among the main user groups (see Chapter 4, Section 4.5.2, Figure 4.8).

Outreach initiatives and guidance services

Outreach initiatives are widespread, but very little is known about their effectiveness in reaching out to people with low level or no qualifications

- International surveys show that not only are adults with low levels of educational attainment less likely to actually participate in education and training, but their interest in doing so is also somewhat lower compared to adults with higher attainment levels. Furthermore, people with lower educational attainment are less likely to search for information about learning opportunities than people with higher educational attainment (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1, Figures 5.1 and 5.2).
- Public authorities in most countries are aware of the need to intervene in reaching out to adults with low level or no qualifications to motivate them to take part in lifelong learning. Indeed, during the past five years, most countries have conducted major awareness-raising and outreach campaigns. However, the impact of these initiatives on the participation of the most vulnerable groups is rarely evaluated (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.2, Figure 5.3).

Face-to-face guidance for adults offered outside public employment services is limited; yet countries have been investing in the development of self-help and online tools

- Across Europe, around a quarter of people aged 15 and above have used career guidance services, i.e. services that commonly include elements of educational and vocational guidance. However, statistical evidence points to significant differences between countries (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1, Figure 5.4).
- Although unemployed jobseekers commonly represent the main targets of publicly subsidised face-to-face career guidance interventions, public employment services (PES) have invested in making their provision available to a wider public, particularly through the development of self-guidance and self-assessment tools (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2).
- Publicly subsidised career guidance services generally focus on helping unemployed jobseekers get back into work. Consequently, evaluations tend to assess the impact on the unemployment figures rather than on the numbers participating in education and training (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2).
- Beyond the services provided by PES, publicly subsidised guidance open to adults is limited in most countries. However, some examples of such services can be found in Europe. These target either all citizens (i.e. adults as well as young people), or adults in particular. Moreover, countries with strong policy commitments in the field of literacy or basic skills also tend to provide guidance services specifically for adults with problems in this particular area (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2).
- Publicly subsidised networks of institutions that provide integrated services for adults (including education and training programmes, the validation of non-formal and informal learning as well as guidance) on a single site are scarce. However, some countries have been piloting this type of provision (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3).

- Outside institutional settings, around half of all European countries have developed comprehensive electronic databases providing information on available learning opportunities, either for all age groups or specifically for adults. Whilst some countries may not have developed a comprehensive database, they have developed specific databases with information on learning opportunities for adults with low literacy and basic skills (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3, Figure 5.5).

Targeted financial support

Co-funding instruments specifically for low-qualified learners exist in only a few European countries

- Evidence from international surveys shows that having to make a financial contribution to learning costs, constitutes yet another barrier to adults' participation in lifelong learning. Data also indicate that in some countries, funding presents a more substantial barrier to participation for adults with low levels of educational attainment than for those who have a medium-level qualification or a higher education degree (see Chapter 6, Section 6.1, Figure 6.1).
- Across Europe, there is a range of co-funding instruments targeted at adults returning to education and training. These take a variety of forms, including grants, vouchers, loans or paid training leave. However, co-funding instruments specifically for low-qualified adults, or those which entail preferential treatment for this group, exist only in a few countries. They mainly take the form of specific grants, allowances and vouchers, but may also be provided as paid training leave (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2, Figure 6.3).
- While unemployed jobseekers represent one of the main targets of public interventions in all European countries, some have put in place specific financial incentives to encourage this group to participate in education and training. These mainly take form of training allowances, which the unemployed person receives in addition to unemployment benefits (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2, Figure 6.3).

Specific financial incentives to encourage employers to provide learning opportunities for low-qualified workers are not very common

- Public authorities commonly offer co-funding schemes to employers to help cover their employees' education and training expenses. Alongside general co-funding instruments, around a quarter of all European countries have put in place specific financial incentives for employers to provide education and training opportunities for low-qualified employees. These take the form of grants and vouchers to cover training costs, exemption from social security contributions or subsidies to assist employers meet the salary costs of employees participating in education and training (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3, Figure 6.4).
- In some countries, employers are eligible for financial support if they provide training for people who have been out of the labour market for a time, or for older workers or speakers of other languages. Grants, vouchers and allowances to cover employers' training costs are the most commonly used co-funding instruments in these cases (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3, Figure 6.4).

INTRODUCTION

Since 2011, cooperation in the field of adult education and training has been guided by the renewed European agenda for adult learning ([1]), which invites Members States to focus their efforts on a set of priority areas aligned with those established in the 'ET 2020' strategic framework ([2]). Among the priorities set, specific attention is paid to measures aimed at enabling all adults to develop and enhance their skills and competences throughout their lives. In particular, the renewed agenda addresses provision for adults who lack basic skills and those who left initial education prematurely, i.e. with low level or no qualifications. In this context, the agenda recognises that

> [i]n order to face both the short and long-term consequences of the economic crisis, there is a need for adults regularly to enhance their personal and professional skills and competences. Given the current instability in the labour market and the need to reduce the risk of social exclusion, this applies particularly to the low-skilled and the low-qualified. […] Particular attention should accordingly be paid to improving provision for the high number of low-skilled Europeans targeted in *Europe 2020*, starting with literacy, numeracy and second-chance measures as a precursor to up-skilling for work and life in general.

This report has been prepared in direct response to the renewed European agenda for adult learning, and, more specifically, to its stated objective of increasing access to learning opportunities for adults with a low level of basic skills as well as those with low level or no qualifications. In particular, the report addresses the following questions:

- Are top-level authorities formally committed to facilitating access to education and training for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications?
- What type of provision exists for these learners?
- What means are being used to facilitate their return to education and training?
- Are there any other measures being taken to support these adult learners such as awareness-raising, outreach and guidance?
- How is existing provision funded and what specific help is available to support the target groups?

Content and scope of the report

Following the above questions, the report is structured in six chapters:

Chapter 1 presents a selection of indicators on adult education which sets the context for further analysis of the learning opportunities available to adults in Europe. It includes data relating to human capital in Europe as well as data on adult participation in lifelong learning.

Chapter 2 looks at the extent to which access to learning opportunities for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications has become a visible part of national policy agendas. It also enquires about the possible impact of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) on national policy developments.

Chapter 3 provides a mapping of the publicly funded programmes open to the target groups of the report. It looks first at basic skills programmes, before moving beyond this area to other programmes, in particular, those that allow adults to gain further qualifications.

Chapter 4 addresses the question of flexibility in learning, examining the measures likely to help adults return to education and training. Distance learning, modularisation, easing progression between

([1]) Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning, OJ C 372/1, 20.12.2011.

([2]) Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

the different levels of education and the validation of non-formal and informal learning constitute the core elements of this chapter.

Chapter 5 explores outreach activities and guidance services for adult learners. It also looks at the existence of self-help tools, in particular, the major electronic databases with information about the learning opportunities available to adults. Moreover, it examines the issue of integrated service provision, particularly the creation 'one-stop shops', where adults have access to different lifelong learning services tailored to their individual needs.

Finally, **Chapter 6** provides information on how adult education and training is financed, paying specific attention to the funding methods likely to encourage more adults from the target groups to participate in education and training.

A Glossary is provided at the end of the report which explains the key concepts used. Some terms and concepts are discussed in more detail in the individual chapters. More complete data relating to the selected themes discussed in the report is provided in the Annex. Furthermore, for readers requiring additional information on adult basic education and basic skills programmes, a supporting document is available containing 35 system descriptions produced during the preparation of this report (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

Data sources and methodology

The report is mainly based on information gathered by the Eurydice Network in April and May 2014. The data collection was based on an in-depth questionnaire prepared jointly by Erasmus+: Education and Youth Policy Analysis – a unit of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), and the National Units of the Network. It involved 35 Eurydice National Units ([3]), representing 32 countries ([4]). The data gathered constitute the basis for Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the report.

The Eurydice data and indicators are generally qualitative. They capture top-level publicly funded initiatives or information available to top-level authorities. They generally do not cover regional or local initiatives and schemes. It follows that most qualitative indicators cover large-scale publicly subsidised programmes or schemes coordinated by top-level authorities.

Throughout the report, the information submitted by Eurydice National Units was complemented by data from other sources. These include a range of research reports, reports and databases produced by various international organisations (in particular Cedefop and OECD) and data from previous Eurydice studies. Alongside qualitative information, most chapters also include statistical data from international surveys. Chapter 1 relies on data from international surveys, namely Eurostat data from the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS), the Adult Education Survey (AES) and the Information society statistics (ISOC). It also includes data from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC).

The preparation and drafting of the report was coordinated by the Erasmus+ unit (see above). The draft version of the report was submitted to Eurydice National Units for comments and validation in October 2014. The reference year for most qualitative figures is the school/academic year 2013/14.

All those who have contributed are acknowledged at the end of the report.

([3]) The number of National Units is higher that the number of countries. Belgium is covered by three Eurydice Units (French Community of Belgium, Flemish Community of Belgium and German-speaking Community of Belgium) and the United Kingdom by two Units (one covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and another one covering Scotland).

([4]) All EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND INDICATORS

This chapter presents a selection of indicators which provide the context for this comparative report. The first section focuses on data relating to human capital in Europe. It provides an overview of the educational attainment as well as the skills and competencies of the European adult population. The second section presents data on adult participation in lifelong learning, looking first at the overall statistics before examining the differences according to educational attainment, age, employment status, occupational category, migrant status and skill levels. The analysis relies on Eurostat data from the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS), the Adult Education Survey (AES) and the Information society statistics (ISOC). It also includes data from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC).

1.1. Human capital in Europe

1.1.1. Educational attainment of the European adult population

The educational attainment of the adult population is commonly used as a proxy for the knowledge and skills available in the economy. It is captured by measuring the levels of formal education achieved by the adult population.

According to the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS), around 75 % of adults (25-64) in Europe have completed at least upper secondary education ([1]). This means that adults with educational attainment below the upper secondary level represent around a quarter of the European adult population (see Figure 1.1). This corresponds to around 70 million adults in the EU.

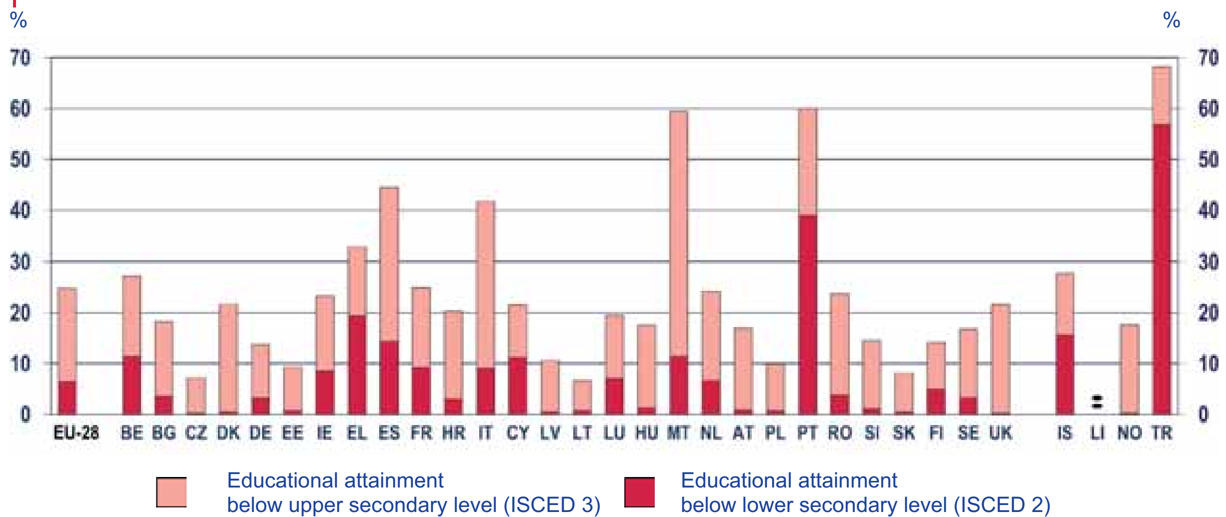
There are significant variations between countries as regards the proportion of the adult population without upper secondary education. In the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia, the proportion does not exceed 10 %. It is also relatively small – between 10 % and 20 % – in Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia and three Nordic countries, namely Finland, Sweden and Norway. In contrast, adults without upper secondary education represent more than 40 % of the population aged 25-64 years in Spain and Italy, around 60 % in Malta and Portugal, and almost 70 % in Turkey.

It is also worth noting that the category of adults with low levels of educational attainment includes people who left initial education prior to the completion of lower secondary education. This very low level of attainment affects around 6.5 % of adults in the European Union (see Figure 1.1), corresponding to around 20 million people.

In a dozen countries (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and Norway), the proportion of the adult population without lower secondary education does not exceed 2 %. In Bulgaria, Germany, Croatia, Romania and Sweden, it is still relatively small, situated between 3 % and 4 %. Portugal and Turkey lie at the other end of the spectrum; while in Portugal around 39 % of adults have not completed lower secondary education, in Turkey the figure is around 57 %. Belgium, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Malta and Iceland are also characterised by a relatively high proportion of the adult population that has not completed lower secondary education (between 10 % and 20 %).

([1]) The completion of upper secondary education is currently regarded as the basic requirement for successful entry to the labour market and continued employability. European policy in this area largely focuses on young people and young adults and centres on the concept of 'early school leaving' (ESL) or 'early leaving from education and training' (ELET), which is understood to mean leaving education or initial training before completing the upper secondary level. This issue is referred to in a range of key European policy documents. For more details, see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/early-school-leavers_en.htm (Accessed 29 January 2015).

Figure 1.1: Adults (25-64) with educational attainment below upper or lower secondary level (%), 2013



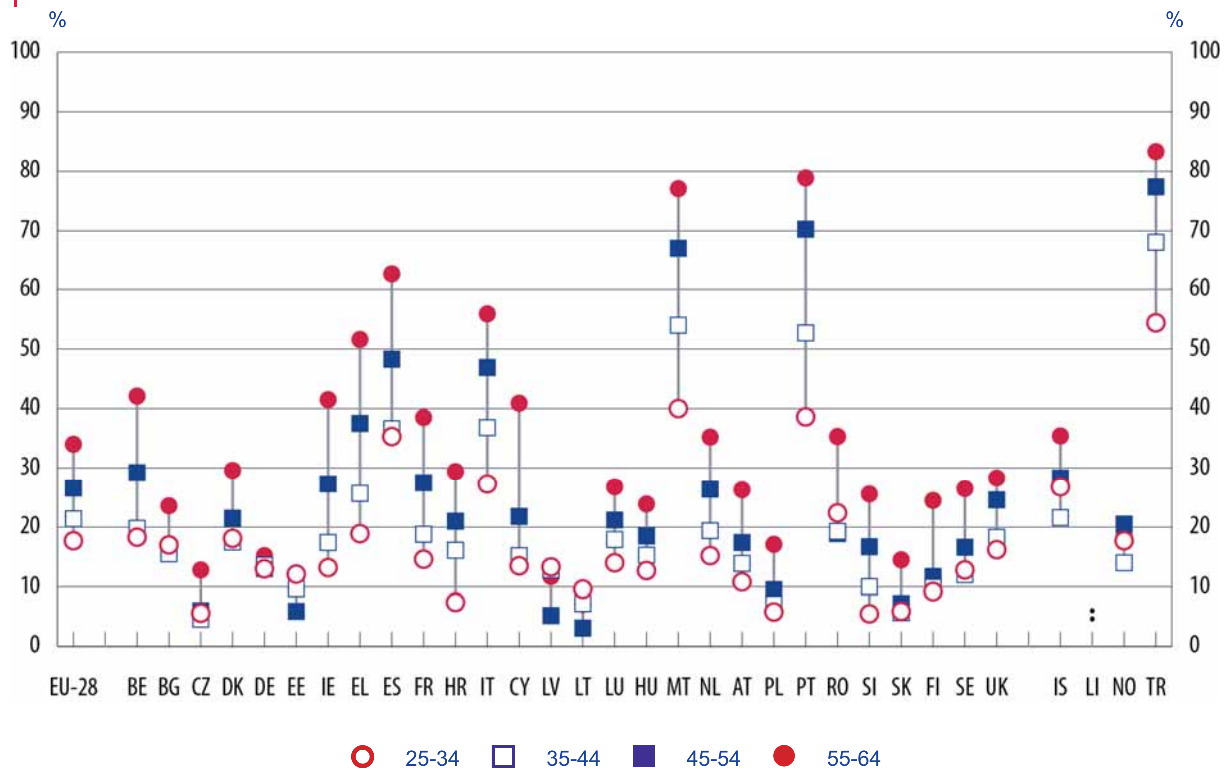
%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
Below ISCED 3	24.8	27.2	18.2	7.2	21.7	13.7	9.4	23.3	32.8	44.5	24.9	20.3	41.8	21.5	10.6	6.6	19.5
Below ISCED 2	6.5	11.4	3.5	0.2	0.5	3.3	0.8	8.6	19.4	14.4	9.2	3.0	9.1	11.2	0.6	0.8	7.0
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
Below ISCED 3	17.5	59.4	24.2	16.9	9.9	60.0	23.7	14.5	8.1	14.1	16.8	21.6		27.8	:	17.6	68.1
Below ISCED 2	1.3	11.5	6.8	0.9	0.7	38.9	3.7	1.1	0.5	4.9	3.3	0.3		15.6	:	0.2	56.9

Source: Eurostat (EU LFS). Data on the adult population with attainment below ISCED 3: Online data code: *edat_lfs_9903* (data extracted September 2014); data on the adult population with attainment below ISCED 2: Extracted and calculated by Eurostat.

Available EU LFS data also indicate that young adults are less affected by low educational attainment than the older population. Indeed, as Figure 1.2 indicates, in the vast majority of countries, successive generations, starting with adults born around 1950, have had access to increasing educational opportunities. Low educational attainment is therefore more common among older generations. More specifically, whilst only around 18 % of the adult population in the 25-34 age group has educational attainment below upper secondary level, this figure is around 27 % for people in the 45-54 age group and 34 % for those aged between 55 and 64.

Country-specific data shows that a dozen countries (Belgium, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Turkey) experienced a particularly strong rise in attainment levels (a difference of more than 20 percentage points between the 25-34 and the 55-64 age groups). While some of these countries, in particular several southern European countries, still have a high proportion of adults without upper secondary education, the figure indicates an increase in the educational opportunities available.

Figure 1.2: Adults with educational attainment below upper secondary level according to age groups (%), 2013



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
25-34	17.7	18.3	17.0	5.6	18.1	13.0	12.1	13.2	18.9	35.3	14.6	7.4	27.3	13.5	13.3	9.6	14.0
35-44	21.4	19.8	15.5	4.6	17.5	13.6	9.7	17.4	25.7	36.6	18.8	16.1	36.8	15.2	12.8	7.2	17.9
45-54	26.6	29.2	16.5	6.0	21.5	13.0	5.9	27.3	37.5	48.3	27.5	21.0	46.9	21.8	5.2	3.1	21.2
55-64	34.0	42.1	23.6	12.8	29.6	15.2	9.8	41.5	51.6	62.6	38.5	29.4	55.9	40.9	11.7	7.1	26.8
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
25-34	12.7	40.0	15.2	10.8	5.8	38.6	22.4	5.5	5.9	9.2	12.8	16.2		26.8	:	17.7	54.4
35-44	15.3	54.0	19.4	13.9	7.1	52.7	19.3	10.0	5.7	9.9	12.0	18.3		21.6	:	14.0	68.1
45-54	18.5	67.1	26.4	17.4	9.5	70.3	18.9	16.7	7.2	11.7	16.6	24.6		28.3	:	20.5	77.4
55-64	23.9	77.1	35.2	26.3	17.1	78.9	35.3	25.6	14.5	24.5	26.5	28.3		35.4	:	18.5	83.3

Source: Eurostat (EU LFS). Online data code: *edat_lfs_9903* (data extracted November 2014).

The educational profile of the immigrant population is another important aspect to consider. Although this is not depicted by a specific figure, the EU LFS data shows that on average, across all EU Member States, those born outside the country of residence (foreign-born) suffer more from low educational attainment (i.e. below upper secondary level) than the wider adult population (34 % against 24.8 % in 2013) ([2]). The problem is particularly significant in southern European countries (Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta and Portugal) and France, where more than 40 % of foreign-born residents have not completed upper secondary level. In all these countries, foreign-born residents represent a significant proportion of the total adult population.

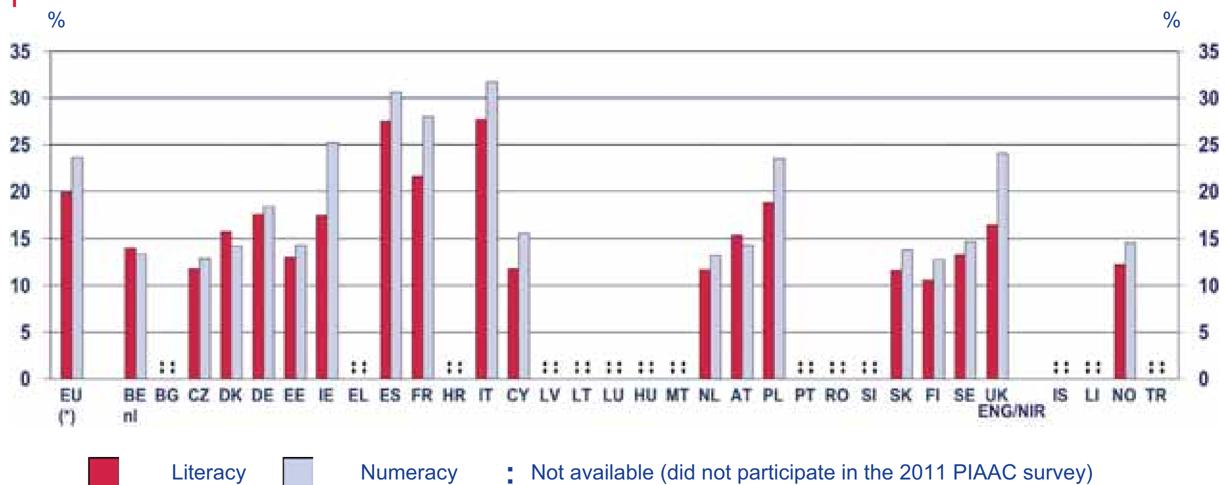
([2]) For more details, see the Eurostat website, online code: *edat_lfs_9912* (Accessed 28 October 2014).

1.1.2. Skills and competences of the adult population

Although educational attainment is an important indicator of the human capital in a society, it is not always a valid proxy for measuring skills across different contexts. In particular, skills acquired in the education system may become obsolete if not maintained, or, on the contrary, those with low formal education attainment may gain a range of skills through varied life and work experiences. Moreover, the same educational attainment may be linked to different skill levels across countries. In this context, the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC), which directly assesses skill levels in the adult population (16-65), adds a new perspective to the cross-country comparability of human capital. The survey measures literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments; its first round involved, alongside countries outside the EU, 17 Member States (for more details on the participating countries, see Chapter 2, Figure 2.2).

Data shows (see Figure 1.3) that on average, across the 17 participating EU countries, 19.9 % and 23.6 % of adults respectively have a low level of achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Figure 1.3: Adults (16-65) with low levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy (%), 2012



%	EU (*)	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
Literacy	19.9	14.0	:	11.8	15.7	17.5	13.0	17.4	:	27.5	21.6	:	27.7	11.8	:	:	:
Numeracy	23.6	13.4	:	12.9	14.2	18.4	14.3	25.2	:	30.6	28.0	:	31.7	15.5	:	:	:

	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK-ENG/NIR	IS	LI	NO	TR
Literacy	:	:	11.7	15.3	18.8	:	:	:	11.6	10.6	13.3	16.4	:	:	12.3	:
Numeracy	:	:	13.2	14.3	23.5	:	:	:	13.8	12.8	14.7	24.1	:	:	14.6	:

Source: OECD (PIAAC).

Explanatory notes

EU (*): Average data for the 17 EU participating countries.

Within the PIAAC survey, adult skills were evaluated on a 5-level scale. Data in the figure refers to the adults that achieved Level 1 at most (i.e. Level 1 and below).

When looking at the situation in individual countries, Italy and Spain appear to have the highest proportion of adults with low level skills in literacy and numeracy. Poor literacy affects around 28 % of adults, and poor numeracy around 30 %. At the other end of the spectrum is Finland, whose adult population suffers least from poor literacy and numeracy skills in comparison to other participating EU countries. Here, low levels of literacy and numeracy occur in 10.6 % and 12.8 % respectively of the adult population. A few other countries had similar results to those of Finland in both literacy and numeracy, namely the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Slovakia.

Data on adult literacy and numeracy (see Figure 1.3) are, on average, consistent with data on the educational attainment of the adult population (see Figure 1.1). In particular, Spain and Italy are shown to have a high proportion of adults with low literacy and numeracy skills and, at the same time, a high proportion of people in the adult population with qualifications below upper secondary education. In contrast, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are among the countries with the smallest proportion of adults qualified below upper secondary education (less than 10 %) and the percentage of adults with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills is also relatively small. However, the two data sets are not always consistent. In Poland, for instance, only around 10 % of adults have not completed upper secondary education, but 18.8 % and 23.5 % respectively, have low literacy and numeracy skills. Moreover, data should be interpreted with caution even for countries where Figures 1.1 and 1.3 are consistent. Indeed, the PIAAC survey shows that adults with the same level of educational attainment in one country have very varied basic skill levels. In other words, among adults with a low level of formal educational attainment, a considerable proportion has skill levels that might be expected of people with higher levels of educational attainment. At the same time, adults with low levels of literacy and numeracy can also be found among people with a relatively high level of educational attainment ([3]). This shows that there is no simple link between formal educational attainment and skills. Nevertheless, there is a close positive relationship between educational attainment and skills, in that having a low level of educational attainment goes along with an increased probability of having low levels of basic skills.

When looking at the basic skills of the immigrant population, the PIAAC survey indicates that in most countries, foreign-born residents have significantly lower proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy than those born in the country of residence (native-born). However, this is partly explained by the fact that the competence assessment is taken in local language(s) only, so that speakers of other languages may experience a language barrier when taking the assessment. For them, PIAAC can be seen as a test of their competence in the local language. When considering the participating EU countries and Norway, the lowest mean literacy proficiency level of foreign-born adults is registered in Italy, followed by France, Spain and Sweden (OECD 2013a, p. 126). The largest differences in literacy proficiency between foreign-born and native-born adults are found in Sweden, followed by Finland. These differences appear to be a consequence of very low average scores among recent immigrants. Other countries with above average differences in their scores are the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, the Flemish Community of Belgium and Germany (ibid., p. 127).

Beyond literacy and numeracy, the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) also evaluated the information and communication (ICT) skills of adults, more specifically the problem solving skills of adults in technology-rich environments. Results show that around 27 % of adults in the EU participating countries ([4]) have 'very low' to 'no skills' in problem solving in technology-rich environments. This includes 14 % that can only perform very simple tasks in technology-rich environments and a further 13 % who lack any computer skills at all or have such low levels of proficiency that they could not take the computer-based test (European Commission, 2014a).

Eurostat Information society statistics (ISOC) also provide insight into the computer skills of the European adult population. They reveal (see Figure 1.4) that on average, across all the EU countries, 30 % of adults (25-64) have either never used a computer or performed any of the tasks listed in the

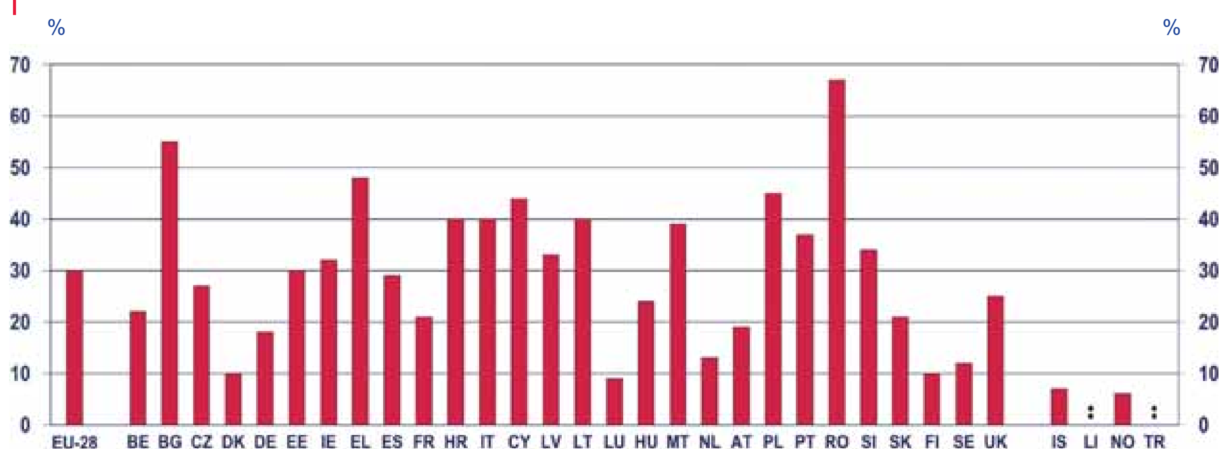
([3]) For more details, see the online tables related to OECD, 2013a available at: http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/chapter3thesocio-demographicdistributionofkeyinformation-processingskills.htm, Table A3.10 (L) (Accessed 7 November 2014).

([4]) This module was taken only by 13 EU Member States or sub-national entities within EU Member States: the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland).

survey, which included some of the most basic ICT operations (for more details, see the explanatory note related to Figure 1.4).

Behind the average data, there are striking differences between countries. Romania and Bulgaria have the largest proportion of adults (67 % and 55 % respectively) who have either never used a computer or performed any of the listed tasks. At the other end of the spectrum are Luxembourg and four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway), where only up to 10 % of adults fall into this category. This is, to a certain degree, consistent with the results of the PIAAC survey showing that the Nordic countries (namely Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) and the Netherlands have a lower proportion of adults with low level computer skills than the other EU countries that participated in the PIAAC assessment.

Figure 1.4: Adults (25-64) who have never used a computer or performed any of the ICT operations mentioned in the survey (%), 2012



EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
30	22	55	27	10	18	30	32	48	29	21	40	40	44	33	40	9
HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
24	39	13	19	45	37	67	34	21	10	12	25		7	:	6	:

Source: Eurostat (ISOC). Online data code: *isoc_sk_cskl_i* (data extracted September 2014).

Explanatory note

Data refers to individuals aged 25-64 who have never used a computer or performed any of the ICT operations listed in the survey. The operations included: using a mouse to launch programmes such as an Internet browser or word processor; copying or moving a file or folder; using copy or cut and paste tools to duplicate or move information on screen; using basic arithmetic formulae to add, subtract, multiply or divide figures in a spreadsheet; compressing files; writing a computer programme using a specialised programming language; connecting and installing new devices, e.g. a printer or a modem; connecting computers to a local area network; detecting and solving computer problems (e.g. computer runs slowly).

The 2011 ISOC data also reveal that 45 % of adults (aged 25-64) across the EU consider that their current computer or Internet skills would not be sufficient if they were to look for a job or change job within a year ([5]).

1.2. Adult participation in lifelong learning

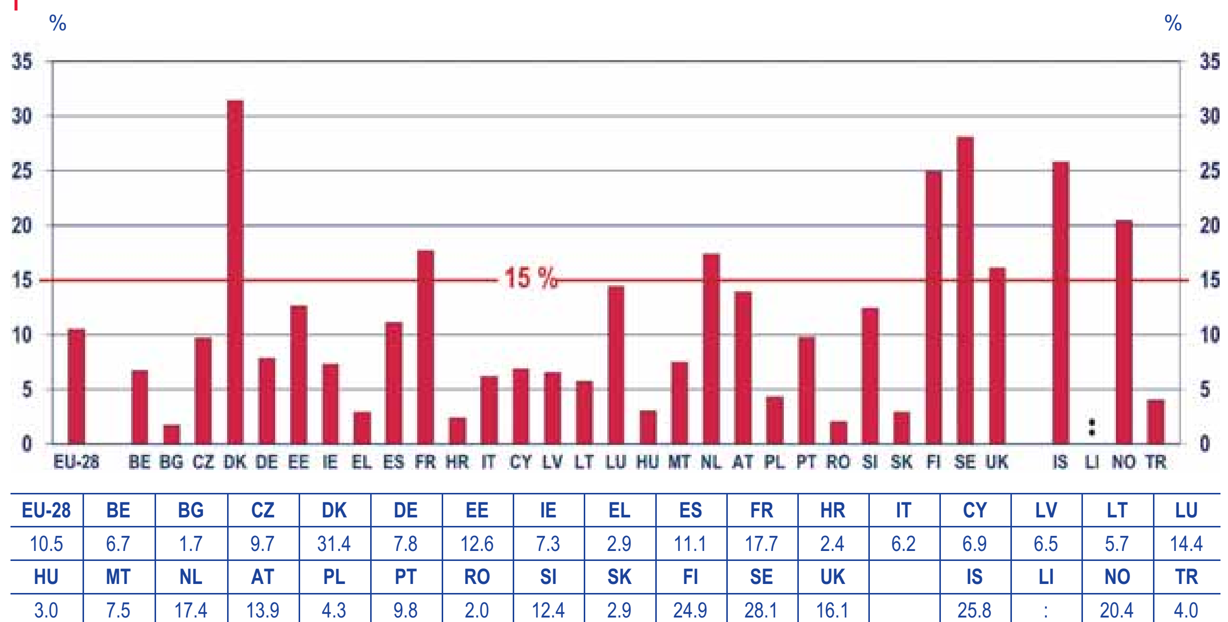
At European level, three surveys coordinated by Eurostat provide data to evaluate adult participation in education and training: the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS), the Adult Education Survey (AES)

([5]) For more details, see the Eurostat website, online code: *isoc_sk_cskl_i* (Accessed 28 October 2014).

and the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS). While the last survey focuses specifically on continuing vocational education and training using enterprises as its unit of investigation, the first two provide more general data on adult participation in lifelong learning. These general data on lifelong learning will be at the centre of the present section, complemented by data on adult participation in education and training based on the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC).

The European Labour Force Survey (EU LFS) is the data source for the EU benchmark indicator on adult participation in lifelong learning. The benchmark of 15 % participation was set in 2009 ([6]) and is to be reached by 2020. According to the results of the EU LFS, in 2013, 10.5 % of the European adult population (25-64) participated in formal or non-formal education and training during the four weeks prior to the survey (see Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5: Adults (25-64) participating in education and training in the four weeks prior to the survey (%), 2013



EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
10.5	6.7	1.7	9.7	31.4	7.8	12.6	7.3	2.9	11.1	17.7	2.4	6.2	6.9	6.5	5.7	14.4
HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
3.0	7.5	17.4	13.9	4.3	9.8	2.0	12.4	2.9	24.9	28.1	16.1		25.8	:	20.4	4.0

Source: Eurostat (EU LFS). Online data code: *trng_lfse_01* (data extracted September 2014).

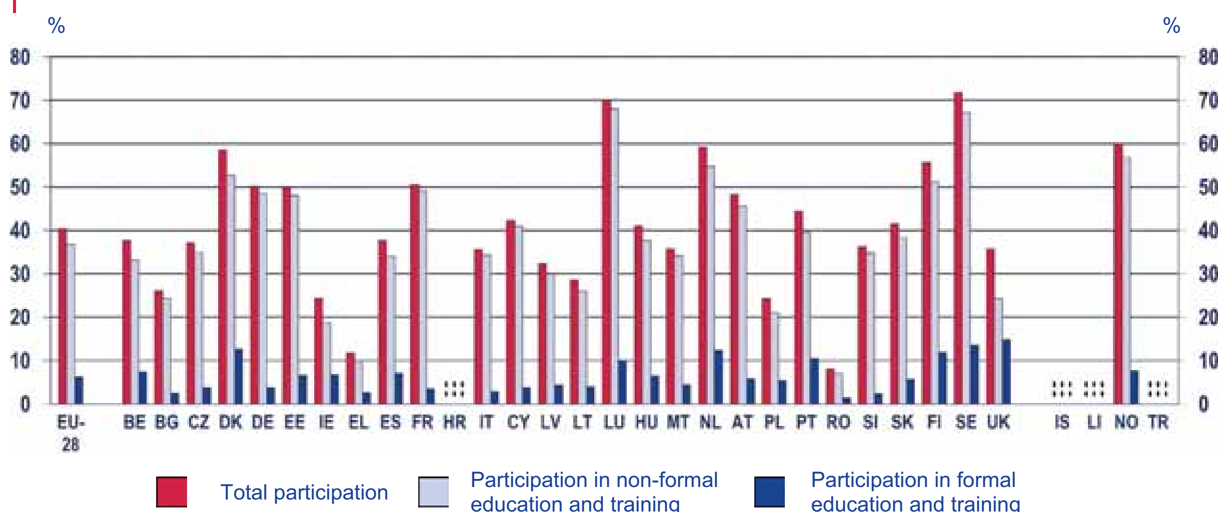
The EU LFS points to significant differences across countries. Adults in Denmark are most likely to participate in education and training within the four weeks prior to the survey (31.4 %), followed by Sweden where the rate reaches 28.1 %. The proportion is also high in Finland and Iceland where around one in four adults takes part in learning activities. France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom and Norway are either above or very close to the 15 % EU benchmark for 2020. In contrast, the participation is very low in Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey, with rates ranging from 2 % to 4.3 %. Bulgaria has the lowest take-up with 1.7 %.

The Adult Education Survey (AES) provides another approach to looking at the participation of adults in lifelong learning. Unlike the EU LFS, the AES has been specifically designed to assess the participation of adults in education and training. Therefore, it provides more detailed information about the learning activities in which adults take part (e.g. it includes learning activities not studied in the EU LFS such as guided on-the-job training). Another major difference between the AES and the EU LFS is the fact that the reference period of the AES is 12 months, whereas it is four weeks in the EU LFS. This difference in reference period is the main explanation for the substantial variations between the results of the two surveys.

([6]) Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), OJ C 119, 28.5.2009.

Data from the AES show that in 2011, 40.3 % of adults aged 25-64 in Europe took part in formal or non-formal learning activities in the 12 months prior to the survey (see Figure 1.6). The same figure indicates that adults are much more likely to participate in non-formal learning activities than in formal education and training. Indeed, the take-up of non-formal education and training is nearly six times higher compared to formal education (36.8 % against 6.2 %).

Figure 1.6: Adults (25-64) participating in education and training in the 12 months prior to the survey (%), 2011



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
Total	40.3	37.7	26.0	37.1	58.5	50.2	49.9	24.4	11.7	37.7	50.5	:	35.6	42.3	32.3	28.5	70.1
Non-formal	36.8	33.1	24.4	34.9	52.7	48.5	48.0	18.7	9.6	34.1	49.1	:	34.3	40.9	30.0	25.9	68.0
Formal	6.2	7.4	2.4	3.7	12.6	3.8	6.6	6.7	2.6	7.0	3.5	:	2.9	3.7	4.3	4.0	9.9
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
Total	41.1	35.9	59.3	48.2	24.2	44.4	8.0	36.2	41.6	55.7	71.8	35.8		:	:	60.0	:
Non-formal	37.6	34.2	54.8	45.5	21.0	39.6	6.9	34.7	38.3	51.3	67.0	24.3		:	:	56.9	:
Formal	6.5	4.4	12.3	5.9	5.4	10.4	1.4	2.3	5.8	12.0	13.5	14.8		:	:	7.6	:

Source: Eurostat (AES). Online data code: *trng_aes_100* (data extracted September 2014).

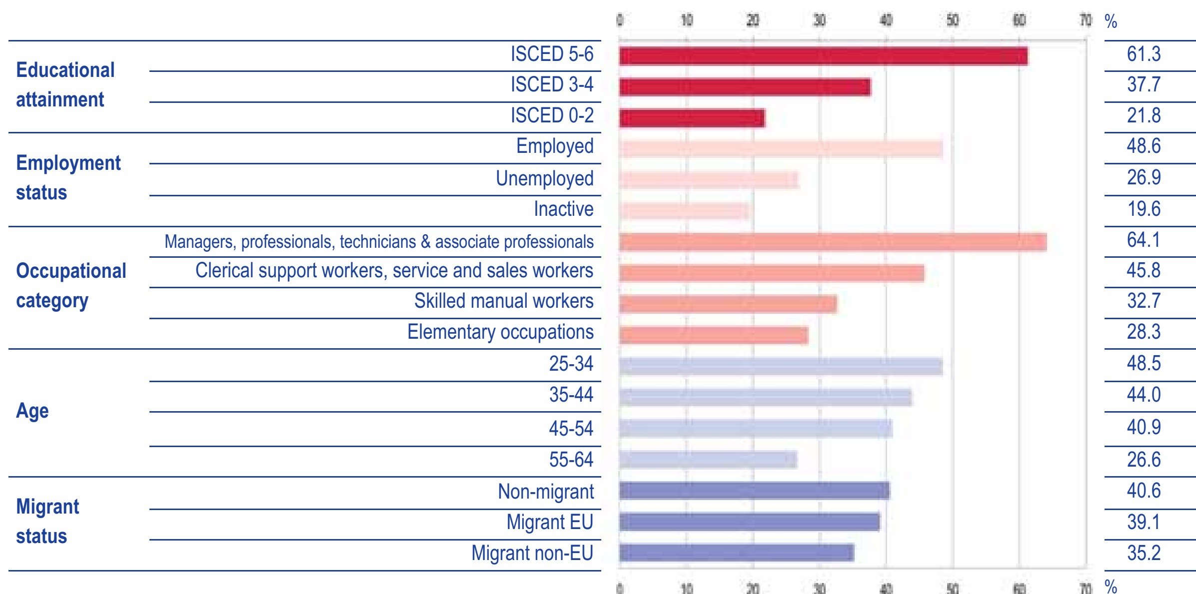
Explanatory note

EU-28: Estimated.

Adult participation in education and training is uneven across countries. In 2011, the lowest rate was registered in Romania (8 %) and Greece (11.7 %). In contrast, Sweden and Luxembourg registered the highest proportion of adults participating in education and training (71.8 % and 70.1 % respectively). They were followed by Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Finland and Norway, where the participation ranges between 50 % and 60 %. All countries with a high overall participation rate were also characterised by high participation in non-formal education and training (ranging from 48.5 % in Germany to 68 % in Luxembourg). Similarly, Romania and Greece also had the lowest take-up of non-formal education and training (6.9 % and 9.6 % respectively). As regards formal education and training, the lowest participation rate – below 3 % – was observed in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Romania and Slovenia. At the other end of the spectrum are Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom where participation in formal education was between 12.3 % and 14.8 %.

The AES reveals strong disparities in the participation rates of different categories of adults in lifelong learning. It shows that there are several factors determining participation levels, in particular, educational attainment, employment status, occupational category and age (see Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7: Adults (25-64) participating in education and training in the 12 months prior to the survey according to highest educational attainment, employment status, occupational category, age and migrant status (%), 2011



Source: Eurostat (AES). Online data codes: *trng_aes_101, trng_aes_102, trng_aes_103, trng_aes_104* (data extracted September 2014). Data on the participation according to migrant status extracted and calculated by Eurostat.

Explanatory note

The figure refers to EU estimated average participation.

Data on participation according to educational attainment indicate that while 61.3 % of the adults who have completed tertiary education participate in lifelong learning, among those who have a medium-level qualification as their highest educational attainment the rate is only 37.7 %; while for those who have reached lower secondary level at most, the participation rate does not exceed 21.8 %. Similar disparities appear with relation to employment status: the employed are much more likely to participate in education and training than the unemployed or the economically inactive (the participation rate for the three categories is 48.6 %, 26.9 % and 19.6 % respectively). The occupational category is another determinant of participation in education and training. Indeed, people with occupations regarded as 'higher skills occupations' ([7]), are much more likely to participate in education and training than those in occupations belonging to lower skill categories (participation rate of 64.1 % for managers, professionals, technicians and associate professionals compared to 28.3 % and 32.7 % for elementary occupations and skilled manual workers respectively). Age is also a strong determinant of participation in lifelong learning, with a significant decline of involvement in learning activities after the age of 55 (e.g. participation reaches 48.5 % in the 25-34 age group compared to 26.6 % for those aged 55-64). This can be partly explained by reduced labour market activity among older people which implies a lack of employer-sponsored further education ([8]). Being born in a foreign country, affects participation in education and training only to a limited degree, particularly if the person was born in another EU country. More specifically, the average participation rate of the native-born population is 40.6 % compared to 39.1 % for foreign-born residents from the EU and 35.2 % for those born outside the EU.

([7]) For more details on the mapping of the ISCO-08 major groups into skills levels, see ILO 2012, p. 14.

([8]) For more details on the participation in employer-sponsored learning activities by age group, see the Eurostat website, online code: *trng_aes_121* (Accessed 7 November 2014).

Finally, adult participation in education and training is closely linked to skill levels. The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) reveals that adults with low level basic skills are less likely to take part in education and training compared to those who have higher skill levels. While this general pattern applies to all countries, interesting cross-country differences can be observed when a specific level of proficiency is considered. For example, when considering adults with literacy performance below Level 1 (for more details, see the explanatory note related to Figure 1.3), their participation in education and training during the 12 months prior to the PIAAC survey varies greatly across countries. The highest participation levels of this group in education and training was recorded in Norway (50.9 %), followed by Sweden (41.7 %), the Netherlands (40.8 %), Denmark (38.9 %) and Finland (36.5 %). In contrast, in Slovakia and Poland, the participation of adults with a literacy score below Level 1 was only 7 % and 9.8 % respectively. The above data is closely related to the participation gap that exists between people scoring at the lowest and the highest level of proficiency. In Norway, for instance, the difference between the participation of people with the lowest and highest level of literacy proficiency is less than 30 percentage points (50.9 % against 77.8 %), whereas in some countries (Germany, Estonia, Spain, Austria, Poland and Slovakia) it is more than 50 percentage points (OECD 2013a, p. 208 ([9])).

([9]) For more details, see OECD 2013a, online data code: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932902246 (Accessed 7 November 2014).

Conclusions

This chapter has explored data relating to human capital in Europe and the participation of adults in education and training. Starting with the educational attainment of the European adult population, the chapter has shown that around 25 % of adults in the European Union have not achieved an upper secondary qualification – the educational level currently regarded as the basic requirement for successful entry to the labour market and continued employability. Furthermore, 6.5 % of adults have not completed any formal education beyond the primary level. Among EU countries, southern European countries are most affected by low educational attainment among adults. Turkey, as a candidate country, is characterised by a particularly high proportion of people with low levels of qualification in the adult population. Data also indicates that young adults have on average a significantly higher educational attainment level than the older population. At the same time, the foreign-born adult population is, on average, less qualified than the native-born population.

Data on the skills of the adult population shows that across the 17 EU countries that participated in the first round of the PIAAC survey, 19.9 % and 23.6 % of adults have, respectively, low literacy and numeracy skills. The patterns observed are on average consistent with data on the educational attainment of the adult population. When looking at the ICT skills of adults, data shows that around 30 % of adults in the EU have 'very low' to 'no' ICT skills. Based on Eurostat data, Bulgaria and Romania have a particularly high proportion of adults with inadequate ICT skills. Moreover, almost a half of all adults in the EU consider that their ICT skills do not fully correspond to current labour market requirements.

As regards the participation of adults in lifelong learning, there are strong disparities between countries. Regardless of the survey considered (i.e. the EU Labour Force Survey or the Adult Education Survey) the Nordic countries generally register high participation rates. Several newer EU Member States (in particular Bulgaria and Romania) and Greece are at the other end of the spectrum, both in the EU LFS and the AES.

The Adult Education Survey data also shows that participation in lifelong learning is determined by several factors, in particular, educational attainment, employment status, occupational category, age and skills. More specifically, different categories of vulnerable learners, i.e. people with low qualification levels, those in low-skilled occupations, the unemployed and the inactive, older people and the least skilled – are less likely to participate in education and training compared to other categories of adults. This indicates the challenge for European education and training systems in that the adults who most need to participate in education and training seem to have least access to lifelong learning opportunities.

CHAPTER 2: POLICY COMMITMENTS

Chapter 1 has shown that not all groups of adults have been able to benefit equally from education and training opportunities. International surveys point to several factors that influence adult participation in lifelong learning; particularly important are educational attainment, labour market status, occupational category, age and skills. European policy documents have already addressed this issue. For example, the renewed European agenda for adult learning ([1]) contains explicit commitments to improving opportunities for adults lacking basic skills or sufficient qualifications ([2]). In this context, it is important to examine the extent to which national policy agendas have taken up this issue and, in particular, whether they reveal explicit commitments to support adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications.

This chapter examines policy making in this area from a dual perspective. The first section looks at key policy documents issued by central authorities over the past five years (i.e. between 2009 and 2014). The second section examines some of the spurs to policy making in this field, with specific reference to the impact of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) on national policy agendas.

2.1. Key policies to improve adult basic skills and qualification levels

One way of looking at policy commitment facilitating access of adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications to education and training is to analyse the commitments expressed in recent policy documents. In particular, it is interesting to investigate in what type of documents these engagements appear, how they are formulated and what objectives they set.

As part of the Eurydice data collection, countries were asked to indicate up to three major policy documents issued in the past five years that referred explicitly to opportunities for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications to access skills development and further qualifications. Countries with a higher number of relevant policy documents were asked to select the three most important. Countries with dedicated policies for adult literacy and basic skills were asked to include these among their three most relevant documents. The information required included the objectives, targets, actions, evaluation measures and sources of funding.

Prior to reporting the outcomes of this exercise, its limitations must be explained. The first is that countries were asked to choose their three most important policy documents. It follows that if a country did not report a specific type of document (see Figure 2.1) it does not mean that this type of document does not exist (e.g. a lifelong learning strategy). It only means that the policy document in question is not regarded as one of the three key documents falling within the scope of the reporting exercise. The second limitation is the reference period of the survey, which covered the past five years, i.e. between 2009 and 2014. It follows that policy documents issued prior to that period were not considered, even where they might still have been influencing educational provision during the reference period. This is further discussed in Section 2.1.3.

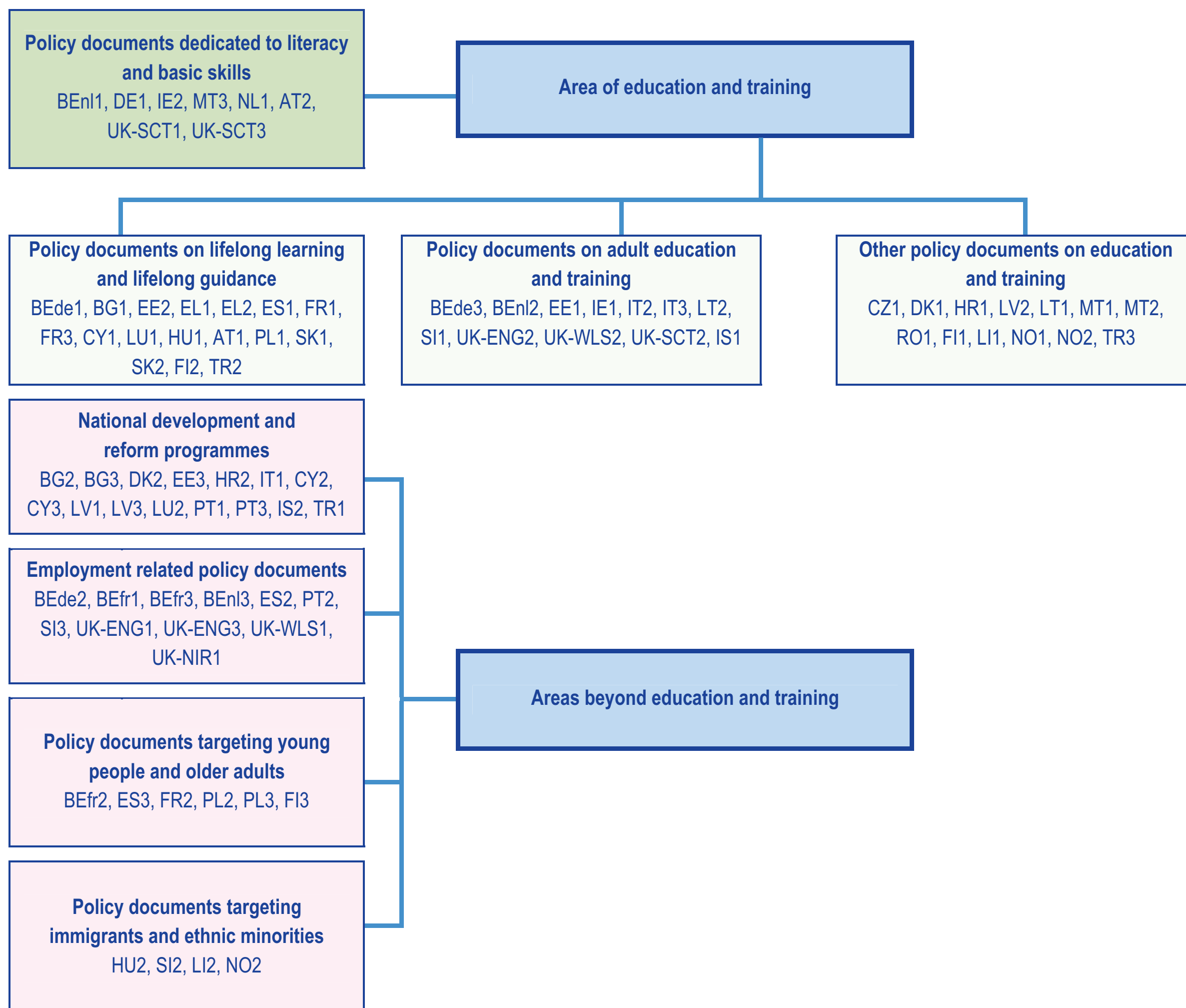
([1]) Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning, OJ C 372/1, 20.12.2011.

([2]) The implementation of the European agenda for adult learning is supported by regular calls for proposals enabling countries – via the network of national coordinators appointed by the EU Member States – to apply for funding to help raise adult participation in lifelong learning. Under these calls, funds are provided for activities which have a specific emphasis on supporting adults with low basic skills or insufficient qualifications.

2.1.1. Commitments stated in recent policy documents

Virtually all European countries report that their recent policy documents indicate support for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications in accessing opportunities for skills development or further qualifications. The reporting exercise shows that these policy commitments are to be found in different types of policy document with different areas of focus. They may be found in strategy documents dedicated to education and training, including literacy and basic skills strategies, lifelong learning strategies, strategies on adult education or other steering documents referring to different areas of education and training. Beyond the education sector, central authorities may also deal with these questions as part of economic reforms or, more specifically, as part of employment strategies. Moreover, countries tend to pay specific attention to groups where the lack of skills and qualifications may be of particular concern such as the unemployed, young people, older workers, immigrants or ethnic minorities (see Figure 2.1; for more details on each policy document, see its code in Annex 1).

Figure 2.1: Types of recent policy documents (issued between 2009 and 2014) addressing access to opportunities for skills development or further qualifications for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

Countries were asked indicate up to three of their most important policy documents. The figure therefore indicates each country up to three times, depending on the number of documents indicated by the given country. The inventory of all reported policy documents is included in Annex 1.

The figure uses the 'best-fit' approach, meaning that a policy document that could potentially be placed in several categories has been placed in the category that best matched its content, objectives and targets.

Country specific note

Sweden: The country reported that there was no relevant policy document issued during the five years in question (i.e. between 2009 and 2014) that explicitly referred to opportunities for skills development or further qualifications for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. Therefore, it is not referred to in the figure. However, it must be noted that a new curriculum for adult municipal education was introduced in January 2013 (see the link in Annex 1). Among other thematic areas, the curriculum refers to basic skills and key competences, yet without explicit references to adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications.

Following the patterns outlined in Figure 2.1, the remainder of this section provides further analysis of each cluster of policy documents, outlining their qualitative objectives and quantitative targets. The text pays specific attention to those targets that explicitly refer to adults with low basic skills and/or low level qualifications. Relevant examples illustrate the patterns observed.

Policy documents dedicated to literacy and basic skills

Among the education and training policy documents issued between 2009 and 2014, a few countries produced documents dedicated to literacy and basic skills. These include two strategies referring expressly to adult literacy and basic skills, namely the Agreement for a Joint National Strategy for Literacy and Adult Basic Skills in Germany 2012-2016 (Germany) and Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance (the United Kingdom – Scotland). Although not explicitly labelled as an 'adult literacy and basic skills strategy', the Austrian Initiative for Adult Education also falls under this category as it describes a policy framework for the provision of adult basic skills programmes, i.e. courses providing basic skills or leading to the completion of lower secondary education. Four countries, or regions within countries, issued wider literacy strategies that include explicit references to the adult population. These are the Flemish Community of Belgium (Strategic Plan to Raise Literacy Levels 2012-2016), Malta (National Literacy Strategy for all in Malta and Gozo 2014-2019), the Netherlands (Illiteracy Action Plan 2012-2015) and the United Kingdom – Scotland (Literacy Action Plan: An Action Plan to Improve Literacy in Scotland). Finally, central authorities in Ireland published a review in 2013 to inform and develop future policy in relation to adult literacy provision (Review of ALCES funded Literacy Provision).

The objectives stated in policy documents dedicated to literacy and basic skills vary across countries. For example, while the Austrian strategy focuses on the provision of basic skills courses and programmes for the completion of lower secondary education, the German strategy refers to a wider range of measures, including the setting up of courses and guidance services, the introduction of awareness-raising activities as well as the provision of support for research activities. Regardless of the measures covered, the information reported by countries indicates that literacy and basic skills strategies are often cross-sector initiatives that may involve the social partners or third sector organisations. The German strategy provides a good illustration of this pattern as it combines measures and resources involving a dozen different stakeholders, including central authorities, representatives from the 16 *Länder*, social partners, research institutions, adult education institutions, associations/foundations, etc. Similarly, the literacy strategy of the Flemish Community of Belgium involves not only the education sector, but also welfare, culture and employment. Building structural partnerships is one of its main objectives. The Austrian strategy is a joint *Länder – Bund* initiative, pooling the resources of the Federal States and the Federal Ministry, each covering 50 % of the overall cost.

Among the policy documents falling under the category of dedicated strategies on literacy and basic skills, the Austrian strategy seems to be the only one that sets measurable quantitative objectives. The strategy quantifies the overall adult population affected by the lack of basic skills at 50 000 people and the population without a lower secondary school leaving certificate at around 280 000 people. During the period 2012-2014, the strategy targets the provision of basic skills courses at 3 400 adults and the provision of courses targeting the completion of lower secondary education at 2 400 people.

Strategies on lifelong learning or adult education and training, and other education and training policy documents

Around half of all European countries have set out their recent policy commitments in lifelong learning or lifelong guidance strategies, or in legislation on lifelong learning. Moreover, in several countries or regions within countries, commitments are stated in policy documents or legislation focusing specifically on adult education and training. Depending on national perceptions of differences between lifelong learning and adult education and training (i.e. the fact that some countries use these terms interchangeably), the content of documents allocated to these two separate categories may partly overlap. For example, while in Slovakia the strategic and legislative framework for lifelong learning focuses on adult education and training, policy in Estonia distinguishes between a lifelong learning framework which refers to learning throughout the whole of life, and policy documents devoted specifically to adult education and training. Beyond the general strategies on lifelong learning and adult education, a dozen countries refer to other educational and/or research strategies. These range from general national strategies on education and/or research (Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey), to strategies on early school leaving (Malta) or vocational education and training (Denmark).

While the above policy documents cover a wide range of initiatives, their real impact on adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications is not always evident. In particular, lifelong learning strategies tend to include support for rather general measures applying to all adults, and, consequently, it is difficult to identify specific actions targeting those with low basic skills or low level qualifications. However, when considering only recent legislation, the specific measures are more apparent. For instance, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Parliamentary Act on Adult Education (final adoption in 2014) states the formal intention of the government to continue financing the adult basic education centres (*Centra voor Basiseducatie*) and adult education centres (*Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs*), the basic education centres targeting only adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. In Iceland, the 2010 Adult Education Act provides a legal basis for improved financial support for programmes targeting people who have not completed upper secondary education. In the same way, in Romania, the 2011 National Law of Education establishes sustained public support for 'second chance' programmes targeting the completion of lower secondary education.

Quantitative targets focusing specifically on adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications are scarce. Only a few explicit targets are identified among the policy documents in this category. The Austrian lifelong learning strategy (Lifelong Learning Strategy Austria – LLL 2020) includes a target to increase the proportion of employees with low level formal qualifications who receive training during paid working hours from 5,6 % in 2007 to a minimum of 15 % in 2020. In France, according to the Law on Guidance and Lifelong Learning, 500 000 more adults in employment with low level qualifications should have access to education and training every year. The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 states that the percentage of adults with general education only (i.e. without professional or vocational qualifications) should be no more than 25 % by 2020. It also states that, by the same year, 80 % of individuals aged 16-74 should have computer skills. In Slovenia, the Strategic Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia from 2013-2020 stipulates that the proportion of people aged 15 and above with unfinished basic (i.e. lower secondary) education should be reduced from 4.4 % in 2011 to 2.2 % in 2020 ([3]).

([3]) The figure refers to national statistical data, not to data in Chapter 1, Figure 1.1.

It is also quite common that countries state general intentions to improve provision but do not include any definite figures either for the current situation or for the gains they expect to achieve. For example, in Croatia, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports 2013-2015, proposes to increase the number of adults in adult basic skills programmes (*Osnovna škola za odrasle*) and the number of adults who receive grants for participation in basic skills or first qualification educational programmes. While this represents an important policy commitment, the strategy does not include any exact quantitative data relating to this objective.

Finally, within policy documents falling under this section, several countries refer to general targets, namely their national targets related to the European benchmark according to which 15 % of adults should be participating in education and training by 2020 ([4]). In this context, countries' ambitions depend on their current situation (for more details on the current situation across Europe, see Figure 1.5 in Chapter 1). For example, while Bulgaria is targeting only 5 % participation by 2020 (National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020), Lithuania targets 12 % (State Education Strategy for 2013-2022), Latvia 15 % (Education Development Guidelines for 2014-2020), Slovenia 19 % (Strategic Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia from 2013-2020), Spain, Estonia and Austria 20 % (Action Plan for Lifelong Learning, Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 and Lifelong Learning Strategy Austria – LLL 2020, respectively) and Finland 27 % (Education and Research 2011-2016 Development Plan). Alongside the target related to the European benchmark for adult participation in lifelong learning, Finland has a target of 60 % participation during the preceding 12 months and 80 % participation over the preceding five years (Education and Research 2011-2016 Development Plan).

National development and reform programmes

While the above sections bundled together policy documents with a specific focus on education and training, the following sections examine policies that are wider in scope. In particular, a dozen countries state their commitments towards adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications in their national development or reform programmes. These policy documents are often directly linked to the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2010) ([5]) but some countries report national initiatives that go beyond Europe 2020 commitments.

Following the above, the objectives and quantitative targets to which countries refer are closely related to those that have been established within the Europe 2020 strategy. This implies that countries often report their national targets related to early school leaving, higher education and/or employment, as well as the targets established in relation to their country-specific recommendations ([6]).

Among the policy documents without a direct link to the Europe 2020 strategy is the Danish strategic framework on the growth of the economy, which consists of five separate agreements (the Growth Plan Agreements). References to adult education appear in different parts of the framework, including a quantitative target to increase the number of adults participating in education and training by 160 000 between 2014 and 2018.

([4]) Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). OJ C 119, 28.5.2009. The benchmark refers to the period of four weeks prior to the survey.

([5]) The Europe 2020 strategy includes headline targets in different areas, namely employment, research and development, climate/energy, education and poverty. As regards education, the strategy states that by 2020 the share of early school leavers should be under 10 % and at least 40 % of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree. For more details, see: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm (Accessed 11 September 2014).

([6]) The European Commission establishes country-specific recommendations for each Member State. For more details on these, see: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm (Accessed 11 September 2014).

Outside the EU countries, Iceland refers to its government policy statement for the economy and community (Iceland 2020), which includes a target to reduce the percentage of Icelanders aged between 25 and 64 who have not completed upper secondary education from 30 % to 10 % by 2020.

Employment related policy documents

Several countries express their commitments in policy documents covering employment issues. This goes hand in hand with the fact that adults with a low level of basic skills and under-qualified people are more likely to face difficulties in the labour market. The objectives and targets stated in this type of document refer predominantly to education and training for unemployed adults.

As well as documents designated as 'employment strategies', this category also includes steering documents that cover a wider range of issues but where the employment perspective is foremost. In the United Kingdom, for example, skills strategies have been adopted in the different parts of the country, namely England (Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills; Skills for Sustainable Growth), Wales (Policy Statement on Skills) and Northern Ireland (Success through Skills: Transforming Futures). These strategies provide funding for programmes up to Levels 2 and/or 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)/Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) ([7]) for low-qualified adults and adults with a low level of basic skills, and they have a specific focus on support for younger low-qualified adults. Of these strategies, only the strategy for Northern Ireland (Success through Skills: Transforming Futures) sets specific quantitative targets; however, these targets relate to the employment rate of these groups, rather than to an increase in their participation in education and training. In particular, the strategy seeks to increase the proportion of people in employment with Level 2 skills and above to 84-90 % by 2020 (from a baseline of 71.2 % in 2008), and those with Level 3 skills and above to 68-76 % by 2020 (from a baseline of 55.6 % in 2008).

Policy documents targeting young people and older adults

The content of steering documents designed to meet young people's needs is closely related to the above category of policies. Indeed, policies focusing on the needs of young people often make explicit references to employment issues. For instance, in Belgium, the Brussels region is intending to create additional: employment opportunities for 1 000 young people; traineeship placements for 2 000 young people; and training opportunities for 3 000 young people. It will also provide career guidance services to an additional 10 000 young people (The Brussels' Youth Guarantee Action Plan). The priority targets are low-qualified young people who represent over 50 % of the young jobseekers in Brussels.

Employment issues are also prominent where older people are concerned. For example, a strategy reported by Poland (Programme for Solidarity between Generations: Measures to Increase Economic Activity among People aged 50+) aims at increasing the employment rate of 55-60 year-olds from 38.7 % in 2012 to 50 % by 2020. The strategy seeks to meet this target by focusing on the skills of older people, and includes references to improving the basic skills of people aged 50 and above. However, another policy document in Poland targeting older people (Government Programme for Senior Citizens' Social Activity 2014-2020) looks at basic skills from different perspective. It aims at increasing choices in education for older people (aged 60 and above) in order to improve their quality of life.

([7]) The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) exist alongside each other in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and between them accommodate most general and vocational qualifications. The frameworks are organised around the same system of nine levels which is designed to support progression for all learners including adult learners: from Entry Level (which is further subdivided into Entry 1, 2 and 3 to support learners who have basic skills needs) to Level 8. The qualifications within the frameworks are provided by independent awarding organisations. In December 2014, it was announced that the regulatory requirements for the QCF would be withdrawn from summer 2015.

Policy documents targeting immigrants and ethnic minorities

Two countries – Norway and Slovenia – report policy documents that target the immigrant population. Norway refers to a white paper (A Comprehensive Integration policy: Diversity and Community) covering language skills for immigrants as well as their integration into the labour market. Similarly Slovenia reports a strategy for giving all immigrants, including those with low level qualifications, equal access to adult education (Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrants in Adult Education). Hungary focuses its efforts on the Roma population (National Roma Integration Strategy). None of these policy documents include quantitative targets.

2.1.2. Monitoring and evaluation

Around three quarters of the policy documents reported include explicit reference to processes to evaluate the implementation of initiatives. While evaluations that precede the implementation of strategies are rare, those during the course of implementation (i.e. formative evaluations) or upon completion are common. However, whether evaluation processes are put in place largely depends on whether there is specific funding allocated to implementing the policies and achieving the objectives. Policies without a specific budget tend to be subject to a less thorough evaluation and, in some cases, are not subject to any evaluation at all (for more details see Annex 1).

However, particularly important with regard to monitoring and evaluation is the fact that policy documents rarely include specific and well defined objectives and targets relating to adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications and their participation in education and training. Therefore, even when evaluation processes are in place, they do not necessarily address the most important issues affecting the target groups of this report.

2.1.3. Understanding the context of recent policy statements

The commitments made in the policy documents discussed above must be read and interpreted with caution, keeping in mind a range of underling factors. Firstly, they must be interpreted in the light of countries' long-standing and heterogeneous institutional frameworks for providing and supporting adult learning. Indeed, in many countries, some organisations and institutional arrangements still operating today date back to the late 19th century. More recently, the frameworks which support the present adult learning opportunities were, in many countries, built in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period when policy makers first became interested in adult learning and many of the current guiding principles were established. Although often not explicitly, since this period, adult learning has become a subject of significant interest in areas outside education, including employment, welfare, health, voluntary work and civic engagement, innovation, youth, immigration, regional development and others. With the policy interest in lifelong learning starting in the mid-1990s, the indispensable contribution of adult education and training to these areas of activity became step-by-step acknowledged in various guiding documents, albeit with considerable variations across countries.

Secondly, the recent initiatives captured by the Eurydice data collection often build on policies initially introduced in the late 1990s or early 2000s. This means that the absence of recent policy commitments does not necessarily mean a lack of policy engagement. For example, in countries such as Sweden or Norway, major policy initiatives were implemented between 2000 and the beginning of the observation period (i.e. 2009) and continue to impact on adult education and training. Moreover, in some countries, key policy documents were adopted just before the reference period. This was the case in the Netherlands where an on-going multi-partner agreement adopted in 2007 – the Illiteracy Agreement for the period 2007-2015 – targets a reduction in the number of working people who are illiterate from approximately 420 000 in 2007 to a maximum of 168 000 by 2015. Ireland also adopted

a strategy in 2007: 'Tomorrow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy' seeks to reduce the number of those in workforce with low qualifications (Levels 1-3 of the National Qualifications Framework) to 7 % by 2020 (from 27 % in 2005). In other countries, for example the United Kingdom, recent policy documents build on the policy direction set out in earlier strategies (see Section 2.2.2 for more details on these). However, a full picture of all the existing policy documents and their current impact on policies relevant to adults with low level qualifications and other vulnerable groups is beyond the scope of this report.

2.2. International surveys of adult skills and their impact on policy development

The impact of international surveys of adult skills on educational policies in European countries has been discussed at length in the literature. Current policy discussions are particularly influenced by the publication of results from the first round of the Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) in October 2013 (for more details on the survey results, see Chapter 1, Figure 1.3). This section therefore considers the impact of these outcomes on future policy development in European countries. However, before looking at this specific issue, it is necessary to provide a broader view of the topic, in particular to look at which European countries have participated in the main international surveys of adult skills, and to examine how earlier surveys influenced policy development across Europe.

2.2.1. Overview of international and national surveys of adult skills

Since the early 1990s, three large-scale cross-country surveys of adult skills have taken place. The first was the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), which was implemented between 1994 and 1998. The second, known as the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL), was undertaken over the period 2002-2006. Finally, the first round of the successor to the first two surveys – the Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC) – took place in 2011 and 2012, with the results released in October 2013. A second round of PIAAC, involving additional countries, began in 2012 and will run until 2016.

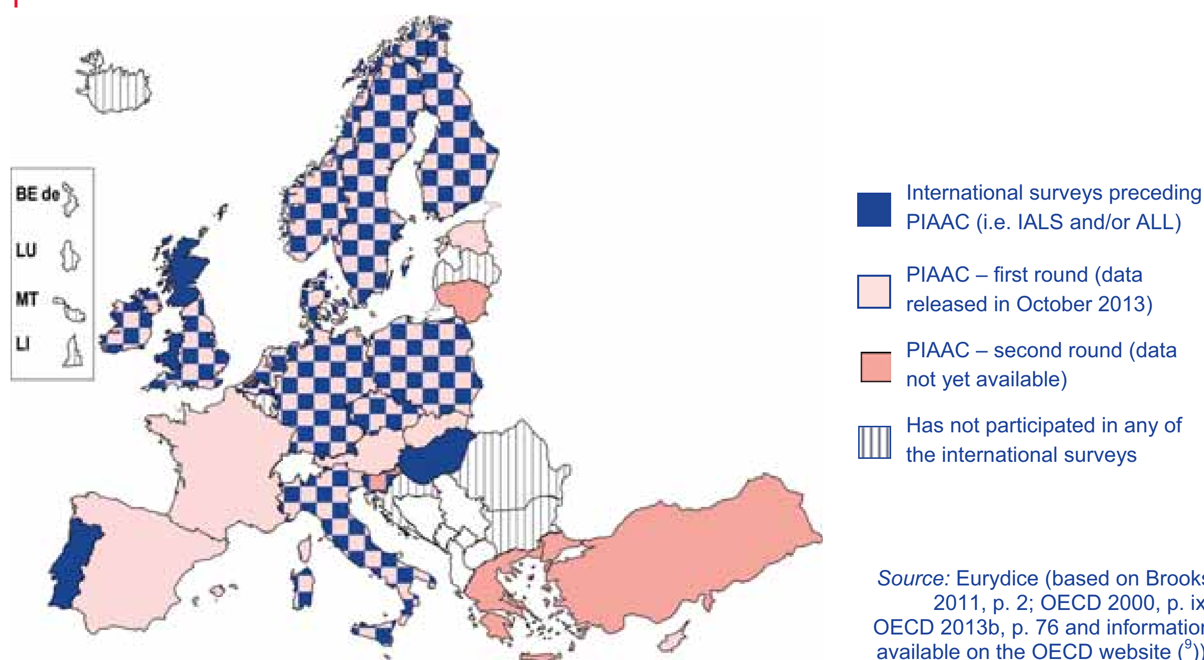
Although IALS, ALL and PIAAC share a common conceptual framework and approach to the assessment of basic skills (Thorn, 2009), they cover different areas of skills. The IALS survey, for example, concentrated on prose, document and quantitative literacy, while the ALL survey covered prose and document literacy, numeracy, and problem solving (OECD, 2013b). The PIAAC direct-assessment component included literacy (understood as the reading of prose and document texts as well as digital texts), numeracy, and problem solving in a technology-rich environment. Consequently, the results from the three surveys are not fully compatible. However, comparability is possible to some extent (further discussion is provided in OECD, 2013b), as the three assessments 'have all been designed to provide links to previous surveys and thus allow the measurement of changes in the literacy skills of certain populations over time' (Thorn 2009, p. 8).

Figure 2.2 shows that among the European countries or regions within countries covered by this report, a dozen have participated in the surveys preceding PIAAC (i.e. IALS and/or ALL) as well as in the first round of the PIAAC survey (namely the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, four Nordic countries, and England and Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom). Hungary, Portugal, and Wales and Scotland in the United Kingdom participated in previous assessments (Hungary in both IALS and ALL, and Portugal, Wales and Scotland in IALS), but did not take part in the PIAAC survey. For six countries (Estonia, Spain, France ([8]), Cyprus, Austria and Slovakia), the PIAAC survey was the first occasion to compare the skills of their adult population with those of other countries. Four countries – Greece, Lithuania,

([8]) For more details on the situation of France, see also the country specific note related to Figure 2.2.

Slovenia and Turkey – are taking part in the second round of the PIAAC assessment. Among these, Slovenia had already participated in the IALS survey, whereas Greece, Lithuania and Turkey have not taken part in any previous international assessment of adult skills. Finally, ten countries or systems covered by this report (the French and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Liechtenstein and Iceland) have not yet taken part in any international survey of adult skills.

Figure 2.2: Participation of European countries in international surveys of adult skills, 2013



Source: Eurydice (based on Brooks 2011, p. 2; OECD 2000, p. ix; OECD 2013b, p. 76 and information available on the OECD website ([9])).

Explanatory note

The figure only refers to the countries that participated in the Eurydice data collection related to this report. It does not cover other countries.

Country specific notes

France: Also participated in the IALS survey but did not publish its data. Consequently, the figure indicates only its participation in the first round of the PIAAC survey.

United Kingdom: England, Wales and Scotland took part in the IALS survey as one jurisdiction. Northern Ireland took part separately.

The picture would be incomplete without mentioning that some European countries – Germany, France and the United Kingdom – have recently conducted their own surveys on a representative sample of the adult population, i.e. surveys comparable to the international surveys. Thus, these countries benefit from an additional source of information that may guide their national policy development.

The Level One Study in **Germany** was carried out in 2010 (data was released in 2011) by the University of Hamburg. It was financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The survey was based on a random selection of people aged 18-64, which comprised 7 035 adults, plus an additional sample of 1 401 adults at the lower end of the educational scale. It provides data on reading and writing skills, showing that functional illiteracy affects 14.5 % of the working-age population in Germany, which corresponds to 7.5 million functionally illiterate adults.

The national survey 'Information and Daily Life' (*Information et Vie Quotidienne* – IVQ) in **France**, is a sample-based survey conducted by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (*Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques* – INSEE). The survey was implemented for the first time in 2004 and repeated in 2011. The first round covered the population aged

([9]) See: http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/surveyofadultskills.htm (Accessed 24 October 2014).

18-65, while the second one looked at people aged 16-65. The survey provides data on literacy and numeracy. According to the results of the 2011 round, approximately 16 % of people living in France have difficulties with basic numeracy and the same proportion has difficulties with basic writing skills.

In the **United Kingdom**, surveys on adult skills have been conducted in England, Wales and Scotland. In **England**, the Government commissioned 'Skills for Life' surveys in 2003 and 2011. These assessed literacy and numeracy using identical tools to ensure comparability. They also assessed ICT skills. In **Wales**, a survey was carried out in 2004 that would provide direct comparisons with England as well as forming a baseline for Wales. A further survey was carried out in 2010. This contained an additional component; as well as assessing numeracy and literacy through the medium of English, it also included a survey to assess the literacy skills of Welsh-speaking adults through the medium of Welsh. In 2009, **Scotland** conducted the Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies (SSAL) showing that 73 % of the adult population possess the skills needed in a contemporary society; around a quarter of the Scottish population (27 %) may face occasional challenges and constrained opportunities due to their difficulties with different forms of literacy, but will generally cope with their day-to-day lives. Within this quarter of the population, 3.6 % (one person in 28) face serious challenges in their practice of different forms of literacy (Scottish Government, 2014) ([10]).

2.2.2. Impact of international surveys of adult skills on national policy development

When examining the impact on policy developments of the international surveys that preceded the Survey of Adults Skills (PIAAC), Thorn (2009) notes a strong impact of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) in a number of English-speaking countries, including Ireland and the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland and Scotland). According to the same source, IALS played an important role in raising awareness of the low levels of literacy and numeracy among the adult population in England and contributed to the development of the national strategy for improving literacy and numeracy known as 'Skills for Life', operational between 2001 and 2010. The strategy was supported by a programme of research that included the establishment of the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) and surveys of adult literacy in 2003 and 2010 (for more details, see the previous section).

A report by NALA (2011) notes that prior to the 1990s, i.e. before the first international survey of adult skills, policies seeking to reduce the proportion of adults with low basic literacy and numeracy skills, had been rare, with considerable variations between countries. In other words,

> [s]eeking to develop the adult literacy sector is, in most countries, a relatively new idea. […] [I]n England, until the development of Skills for Life, adult literacy in that country was fragmentary and clinging to the margins. The same is true in most other countries: until the 1990s, adult literacy education, if it existed at all, tended to be piecemeal, poorly funded and on the margins of policy, if it was on the radar at all (ibid., p. 10).

However, it must be noted that despite the strong impact of international surveys of adult skills on policy developments in the field of adult literacy, the promotion of adult literacy programmes was not a completely new phenomenon and had already occurred prior to the 1990s. In particular, in the 1970s, UNESCO had produced policy analyses and recommendations in this area. Furthermore, during the same period, several English-speaking countries (including the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada) had put in place literacy campaigns emphasising the 'right to read' as a key to emancipation (Hamilton and Merrifield, 1999).

It is also worth noting that while some countries reacted to the results of IALS with large-scale support programmes and campaigns (e.g. the English-speaking countries and the Flemish Community of Belgium, where IALS resulted in an integrated literacy policy), in other countries (e.g. Germany), IALS results had little effect on policy agendas (Abraham and Linde, 2011). Some of these countries used

([10]) In addition, in the United Kingdom, direct skill measures are also regularly included in representative cohort studies, allowing the observation of skills across the individual life span (Reder and Bynner eds., 2009). The longitudinal data provided helps to understand the underlying dynamics, e.g. how low levels of basic skills in childhood and youth transfer into low skills in adulthood.

other policy triggers – in particular the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) – to stimulate new initiatives in adult literacy and basic education. Germany, for example, implemented a large-scale research and development programme on adult basic literacy from 2007 onwards. Other recent international initiatives have also contributed to discussions on adult literacy and basic skills. In particular, UNESCO's Belém Framework for Action, which was adopted in 2009 (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2010) put specific emphasis on adult literacy, as reflected in national and UNESCO policy reports. Moreover, the European Commission created an independent High Level Group of Experts on Literacy in 2011, which resulted in a report containing recommendations for literacy, including adult literacy (European Commission, 2012a). Therefore, the impact of international surveys of adult skills should be studied against the backdrop of these other international and European policy initiatives, which may also have made their mark on national policy developments in this area.

2.2.3. Impact of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC): early observations

As part of the Eurydice data collection, Norway and the 17 EU countries that participated in the first round of the PIAAC survey were asked to report activities that had taken place in their context since the launch of the survey results. Countries were also asked to indicate whether the PIAAC results had already had an impact on their national policy developments and/or whether they were likely to influence policy in the near future.

Data shows that since the launch of the survey results, most of the participating countries have organised a national PIAAC conference and virtually all had been active in producing national reports on the PIAAC results. While some of these reports are rather general, others focus on specific thematic areas. For example, Denmark has prepared a national thematic report on digitalisation and the use of ICT among older age groups (55-65-year-olds). Austria has commissioned an expert report on the various learner subgroups and fields of learning (Statistik Austria, 2014b). The Flemish Community of Belgium has produced three short thematic reports (including a report on literacy developments since 1996), and is providing funding for academic research groups who are exploring various thematic areas relating to the PIAAC assessment. Germany is also planning to start producing reports on specific themes, including an examination of the survey results in relation to the immigrant population.

Beyond the borders of individual countries, there has been a major PIAAC-related international initiative, namely the establishment of a 'Nordic network for PIAAC', involving Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. The overall objective of the initiative is to produce a joint 'Nordic PIAAC report'. The project began in 2010 and will run until 2015; it is financially supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers. To facilitate access to data for researchers, the project has created a 'Nordic PIAAC database', which is hosted by Statistics Denmark. The database contains variables from the PIAAC survey as well as data from the national registers of participating countries.

Regarding the impact of the PIAAC assessment on national policy developments, several countries report that PIAAC has already had an impact on their policy, in particular on the content of policy documents produced since 2013, i.e. since the launch of the survey results. In the context of these documents, Italy has included references to PIAAC in its national reform programme related to the Europe 2020 strategy ([11]). Austria has created a close link between the PIAAC results, vocational education and training and the labour market. More precisely, its government programme for the period 2013-2018 includes references to PIAAC followed by a commitment to reinforce incentives for employers who provide education and training for low-skilled employees. Moreover, there are policy

---

([11]) For more details, see: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm (Accessed 11 September 2014).

commitments to enhance training and support for employees and to provide work-based qualifications. Among other policy documents issued since the launch of the PIAAC results, Estonia reports that the results were taken into account when formulating the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020. Ireland took them into consideration when developing the Further Education and Training Strategy launched in May 2014, which refers to actions on improving literacy and numeracy among adults. Cyprus and Poland report the inclusion of the PIAAC results in planning documents related to the use of EU funds.

Alongside the policy documents that have already been released, others that are currently in preparation are likely to be influenced by the PIAAC results. For example, three Norwegian central authorities (namely the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Children Equality and Social Inclusion) are cooperating on a white paper – 'Lifelong Learning and Exclusion' – that will be released in 2015. It will target adults without adequate education, basic skills or language skills, with a particular emphasis on young adults not in employment or education and training, as well as immigrants.

Beyond the measures proposed in policy documents, Denmark and Finland have already implemented initiatives, partly as a follow up to the PIAAC assessment. Finland reports that according to the government decision on the budgetary framework for the years 2015-2018, 10 million euros are to be allocated in both 2014 and 2015 to improving opportunities for adults with low skills and qualifications. In Denmark, the government has undertaken reforms at compulsory school level and in vocational education and training to be implemented in 2014-2015. Moreover, funds have been allocated to improve skills development for low-skilled adults and immigrants.

Finally, the Flemish Community of Belgium and in Germany – both of which already have strong literacy frameworks – see the results of the PIAAC assessment in the continuity of their ongoing activities. While the Flemish Community of Belgium is expecting that slight adjustments will be made to its existing literacy framework to take account of the PIAAC results, for Germany, the findings have confirmed adult skills as an important subject for national policy. Both the Flemish Community of Belgium and Germany expect further research activities on a national scale that will allow a better policy understanding of the PIAAC results.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the extent to which current policy agendas across Europe provide explicit commitments to improve access to education and training for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. From an analysis of the policy documents issued by top-level authorities during the past five years, the chapter has shown that this area is now firmly embedded into national policy agendas. The analysis also indicates that the policies address the challenges in a variety ways and from different perspectives. In most countries, access to skills and qualifications for the target groups is the focus of education and training policy documents. In this context, a few countries have developed strategies specifically dedicated to adult literacy and basic skills; others have opted to incorporate measures into wider strategies on adult education or lifelong learning; or even into policies relating to other specific areas of education and training. Outside the education policy area, measures to improve access to opportunities for basic skills development and further qualifications are provided as part of general economic reforms or, more specifically, as part of employment policies. Moreover, countries tend to focus on specific groups where the lack of skills and qualifications may be of particular concern such as the unemployed, young adults, older workers, immigrants or ethnic minorities.

Regardless of the area within which the relevant policy discussions take place, the objectives set are often rather general. In other words, while the policy documents analysed within framework of the Eurydice reporting exercise include explicit references to promoting access to education and training for various vulnerable groups of learners, they rarely refer to measurable objectives or targets to be reached. Therefore, even when evaluation processes are in place, they do not necessarily address the most important issues affecting adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. This raises the issue of whether the strategies reported have a real potential to improve lifelong learning opportunities for these groups – a question that merits further investigation.

The chapter has also investigated the possible impact of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) on national policy agendas across Europe. Starting with the surveys preceding PIAAC, the analysis reveals that the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) has had a strong impact on policy developments in several European countries. However, it has also identified other supranational policy levers to promote provision for adults with low literacy and basic skills. Moving to the specific impact of the PIAAC survey, the reporting exercise has identified initiatives in most of the 17 EU countries that participated in the first round of the PIAAC survey. Firstly, since the launch of the survey results in October 2013, most countries have been actively engaged in exploring the data and several have allocated substantial funds for further research activities in this area. Beyond the borders of individual states, five Nordic countries have pooled their resources and established cross-border cooperation to explore the PIAAC results. The analysis also shows that PIAAC has already started to influence policy developments. In particular, several countries have integrated references to the survey results into policy documents issued since the end of 2013. However, measures to widen access to skills development that can be fully attributed to the PIAAC survey results have not yet been identified. Nevertheless, this might be expected as the results are relatively recent. Consequently, this is an area that should be subject to further investigation at a later date.

CHAPTER 3: MAIN TYPES OF PROVISION

Following the analysis of background indicators on adult education and training (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 examined the policy commitments made by public authorities to facilitate access to opportunities for skills development or further qualifications for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. In the context of the two previous chapters, this chapter investigates what publicly funded (or co-funded) programmes currently exist across Europe for adults who wish to improve their level of basic skills or for those who left the initial education system with low or no qualifications.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section examines the core concepts that will be used. The second section looks at adult basic education, in particular programmes which help adults improve their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The third section looks beyond basic skills at the opportunities for adults to achieve a recognised medium-level qualification later in life. Moreover, this section also discusses further education and training perspectives, namely preparatory programmes for adult learners who do not hold the standard qualifications needed for admission to higher education.

3.1. Concepts used in the field: an introduction

Educational provision for adults with low formal education attainment and/or a low level of basic skills is described using various terms, which may have different meanings or applications in different countries and which may also overlap to some extent. The expressions used include 'literacy' and 'basic skills', 'adult basic education' or 'second chance education' and, of course, their equivalents in other languages. While within national traditions the meaning of particular terms or concepts might be firmly established, they may lack clarity in a cross-country comparative perspective. This section therefore seeks to analyse the existing concepts and explain their use within the framework of this chapter.

Literacy, basic skills, key competences and adult basic education

Literacy, basic skills and key competences are commonly used terms in European policies on education and training, including adult education and training. However, as highlighted by Jeantheau,

> [t]erms like 'literacy', 'illiteracy', 'basic skills' or 'key competences', are heavy with meaning. They carry with them the history and culture of each country, but also the ideas of the stakeholders and their visions of present and future societies. It is often the context or the choice of communication that determines their usage, more than the content itself (Jeantheau 2005, p. 77).

Indeed, it is difficult to establish an unequivocal meaning for these terms. They may be understood and defined differently by different international organisations as well as by the different countries that use and interpret them according to their own traditions or specificities of their systems.

While there is no global consensus on the concept of literacy, the term is usually understood as the ability to read and write (for example NRDC, 2010a). In 1978, UNESCO recommended a definition according to which a person who is functionally literate 'can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development' (cited in UNESCO 2013, p. 20). Accordingly, UNESCO defines literacy as the 'ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society' (formulated during an international expert meeting in June 2003 and cited in UNESCO 2004, p. 13).

International surveys of adult skills (for more details, see Chapter 2, Section 2.2), provide additional ways to conceptualise literacy. Compared to UNESCO, the PIAAC survey uses a narrower definition of literacy concerned only with the written word and defined as 'the ability to understand and use information from written texts in a variety of contexts to achieve goals and develop knowledge and potential'. Alongside the concept of literacy, the survey also refers to numeracy ('the ability to use, apply, interpret, and communicate mathematical information and ideas') and the problem solving in technology-rich environments ('ability to use technology to solve problems and accomplish complex tasks') ([1]).

As regards basic skills, Cedefop (2008, p. 37) defines the concept as 'the skills needed to live in contemporary society, e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics'. Alongside basic skills, the same source refers to the concept of new basic skills defined as 'the skills such as information and communication technology (ICT) skills, foreign languages, social, organisational and communication skills, technological culture, entrepreneurship' (ibid., p. 132). The sum of basic skills and new basic skills is referred to as 'key skills' (ibid., p. 101).

The above definitions indicate that the concepts of 'literacy' 'basic skills' and 'key skills' partly overlap. Moreover, these terms are closely related to the concept of 'key competences', which is understood, within the framework of European policy ([2]), as the eight competences of: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competences; learning to learn; social and civic competences; a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and cultural awareness and expression. Two of these key competences – namely communication in the mother tongue and mathematical competences – are in fact basic skills, when considered at the level required for participation in ordinary work and social activity (Cedefop 2013, p. 20).

While EU policy documents rarely refer to 'adult basic education', the term is quite frequently used in the academic literature. There are various definitions of the concept, differing, in particular, in whether they include or exclude language instruction for speakers of another language and/or ICT skills. However, adult basic education is commonly understood to mean provision to help adults acquire basic skills in reading, writing and calculating, equivalent to a level of competence typically achieved by the end of lower secondary education. Moreover, it may also include language instruction for speakers of other languages and/or programmes to raise achievement in ICT skills.

Following the above conceptual discussion, in this chapter, all programmes delivering literacy, basic skills or adult basic education in any blend, will be referred to as basic skills programmes. They will be understood as programmes targeting the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT (with or without reference to other skills).

([1]) For more details, see: http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/mainelementsofthesurveyofadultskills.htm (Accessed 11 September 2014).

([2]) Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ L 394, 30.12.2006.

Second chance education

While the expression 'second chance education' is frequently used throughout the literature on adult and further education, a comprehensive definition of the term is difficult to find. Moreover, existing definitions do not necessarily interpret the concept in the same way.

Among the different definitions, Inbar and Sever (1989) frame second chance education as 'another opportunity to return to or move onto the track one dropped out of or missed altogether' (ibid., p. 233). A definition proposed by Jarvis (2002), mainly stresses failure in the initial education system, referring to provision for those who were not successful in their initial education. Another definition is proposed by Titmus (1996, p. 13) who stresses that second-chance education 'is only an appropriate term in those societies which have a system of universal initial education. It denotes the offer of opportunities for learning normally available in the course of initial education to persons who have terminated it and missed out on these opportunities when they were at that stage'. Vellos and Vadeboncoeur (2013) define second chance education more specifically, linking it to remedial programmes to complete upper secondary education:

> [s]econd chance education is typically defined by the type of participant: usually young people who have been pushed out of mainstream schooling or who have otherwise disengaged from schools. It is offered as a pathway for completing a high school [*i.e. upper secondary education in the United States*] equivalency programme or diploma […] (ibid., p. 35).

In contrast to the above conceptualisations, a more neutral definition is offered by the Study of European Terminology in Adult Education for a Common Language and Common Understanding and Monitoring of the Sector (NRDC, 2010a), where second chance education is defined as '[r]e-entry to learning, as distinct from higher education and from learning continuing from initial education and training' (ibid., p. 68). In other words, this definition stresses only the differences between second chance education and (non-interrupted) initial education and higher education, which is considered as distinct as well.

It is also noteworthy that different policy agendas may slightly alter the meanings of the concept, placing emphasis on different aspects. As a result, the purpose of second chance education may be seen either from a perspective of 'compensation' or, alternatively, 'progression'.

The 'compensation' perspective is closely associated with the European policy to reduce the numbers of young people leaving education and training early (European Commission, 2011a). In this context, compensatory second chance education refers to educational provision for (predominately young) people, who leave initial education prematurely (for a variety of reasons), without gaining an upper secondary qualification. In other words 'compensation measures offer opportunities for education and training for those who dropped out. […] They aim to help young people to re-enter mainstream education or provide a so-called 'second chance'' (ibid., p. 7). This perspective goes hand in hand with the fact that leaving initial education with low level qualifications or none at all, rather than with what has become the generally acknowledged minimum standard, entails a high risk of social exclusion, in particular, exclusion from stable employment. In this sense, second chance education provides the opportunity to negate this risk.

The 'progression' dimension is more closely related to the higher education policy agenda, in particular policies and measures to widen access to higher education to include 'non-traditional' candidates (see Section 3.3.3 for references to relevant policy documents). While the term 'second chance education' is rarely explicitly used in this context, various preparatory/bridging/access programmes for adult learners with no formal credentials for higher education can be understood and interpreted as providing a second opportunity for those without the necessary qualifications to enter higher education later in life.

In light of the above, this chapter will refer to the concept of second chance education in cases where it is explicitly used by countries (e.g. lower secondary 'second chance schools' in Greece (*Scholeio Defteris Efkairias*)) or when referring to certain compensatory programmes to complete upper secondary education. However, the use of the term will be limited to avoid confusion.

3.2. Programmes to raise achievement in basic skills

Cross-country comparisons of education programmes that help to improve adults' level of basic skills, in particular, the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, is a challenging task. Different types of provision may contribute to delivering these skills, including both programmes explicitly dedicated to this purpose as well as those which, although they may use a different nomenclature, nevertheless embed basic skills in their curricula. Moreover, basic skills can be delivered in a range of environments; not only in dedicated education and training institutions, but also in workplace or community settings (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Delivering basic skills in adult education and training

	Basic skills addressed explicitly	Basic skills addressed implicitly
Education and training institutions	Programmes designated as 'literacy', 'basic skills', 'key competences', etc. delivered in education and training institutions	Programmes embedding basic skills in various ways delivered in education and training institutions (e.g. preparatory programmes for further studies that include the revision of different curricular areas) *Potentially any learning activity provided in education and training institutions*
Settings outside education and training institutions	Programmes designated as 'literacy', 'basic skills', 'key competences', etc. delivered e.g. in workplace or community settings	Programmes embedding basic skills in various ways delivered e.g. in workplace or community settings *Potentially any learning activity outside settings devised for education and training*

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

The figure has been inspired by a Cedefop model describing possible ways of integrating key competences in work-based learning (WBL) programmes (Cedefop 2013, p. 26). However, the main dimensions of the Cedefop model have been adjusted.

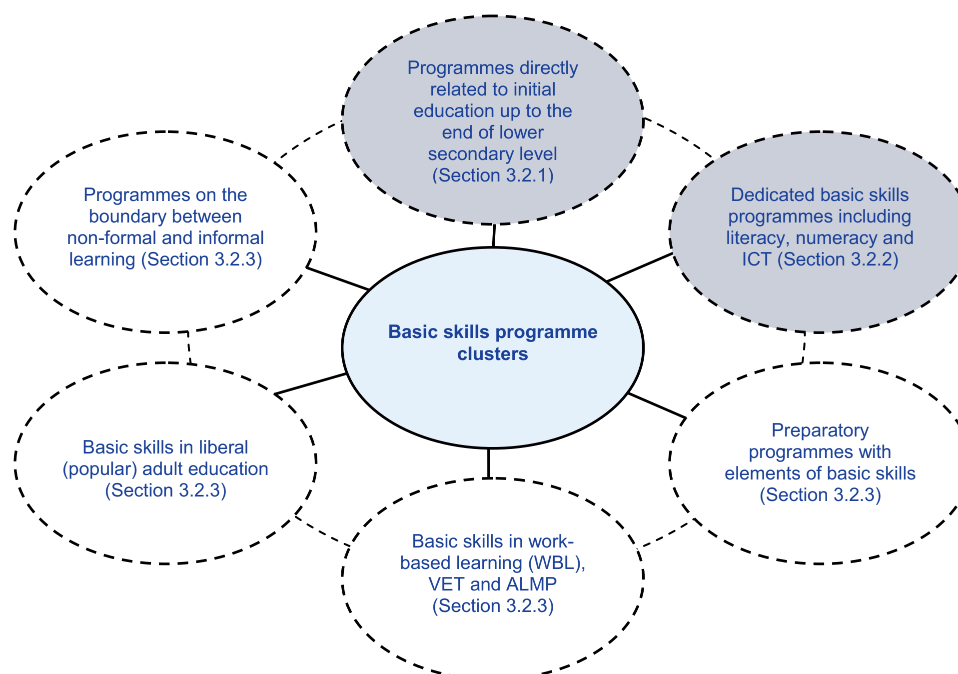
The borders between different categories are permeable, meaning that a programme can be situated between different categories or easily move from one category to another (e.g. a literacy programme delivered in school settings as well as in libraries or other community settings).

When public authorities provide subsidies for basic skills programmes, they may be focused on certain types of provision. This is likely to be determined by various factors, including the educational attainment of the adult population, the situation in the labour market as well as the size and educational profile of the immigrant population. This section therefore discusses basic skills as a mosaic of different elements, with each element contributing to the delivery of these skills in a specific way.

The section starts with an analysis of programmes directly related to the system of initial education, namely programmes for the completion of education up to the end of lower secondary level (ISCED 2). The second part looks at programmes dedicated to basic skills, in particular, those including explicit elements of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Following these detailed preliminary sections, the third section outlines other provision that contributes to the development of basic skills, including the

preparatory programmes that provide the skills necessary to allow access to further study; vocational education and training programmes and those delivered within the framework of active labour market policies (ALMP); liberal (or popular) adult education as well as programmes on the boundary between non-formal and informal learning. Figure 3.2 represents diagrammatically the way in which basic skills programmes have been clustered to facilitate analysis in this chapter. Based on the outcomes of existing research, the final part raises the question of the effectiveness of literacy and basic skills programmes.

Figure 3.2: Basic skills programme clusters



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

The figure represents the categorisation used to facilitate the analysis of programme in this report. There may be other ways of clustering programmes. The clusters shaded in dark grey are the focus of this chapter. The contribution of other programme clusters (shaded in light grey) is acknowledged and outlined, but they are not analysed in detail.

The borders between different categories are permeable, meaning that a single programme might belong to several categories (e.g. programmes for the completion of lower secondary education or dedicated basic skills programmes may be provided within the framework of active labour market policies (ALMP)).

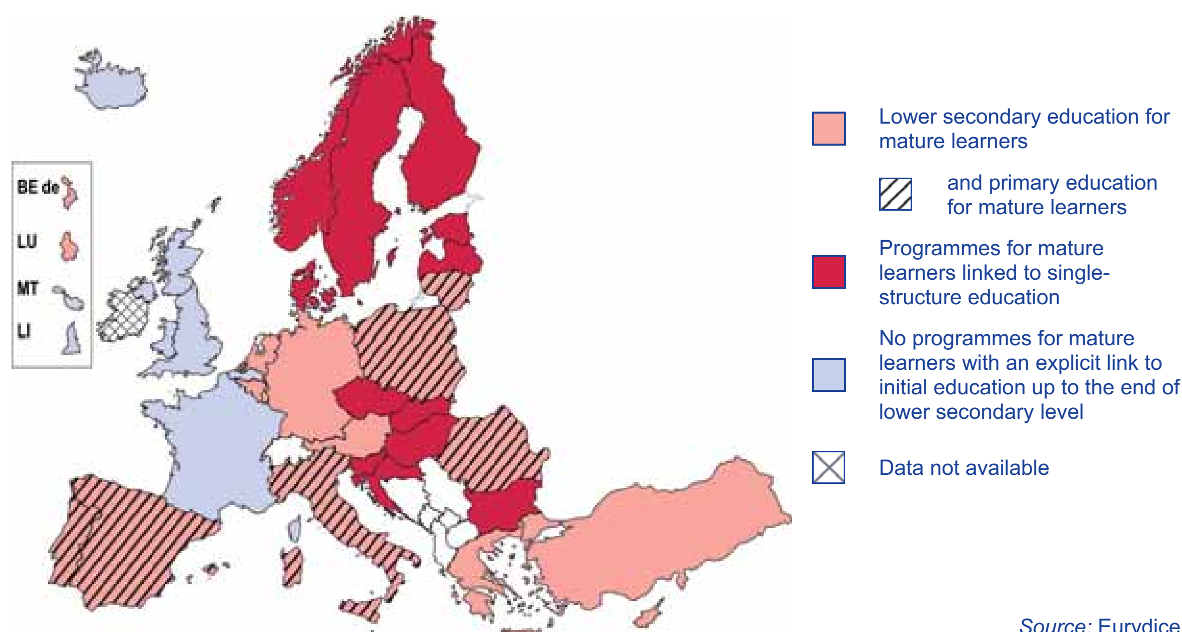
The analysis acknowledges that there is a close relationship between the cluster of programmes directly related to the system of initial education and the cluster of dedicated basic skills programmes. For example, some programmes related to the system of initial education can be delivered on a subject basis, i.e. as shorter dedicated courses (e.g. see the information on general adult education (*almen voksenuddannelse*) in Denmark in Section 3.2.1) and some programmes regarded as dedicated basic skills programmes have a close and explicit link to the formal education system at ISCED levels 1 and 2 (e.g. the Norwegian programme 'basic competence in working life' (*basiskompetanse i arbeidslivet*) analysed in Section 3.2.2 has been developed taking into account the goals stipulated in the national curriculum for primary and lower secondary education). For the purpose of the comparative analysis, however, distinct programmes are presented within single categories, using the 'best-fit' approach.

3.2.1. Programmes linked to the system of initial education

The most obvious starting point for the cross-country analysis of basic skills programmes or adult basic education is to look at programmes which are directly linked to the system of initial education, i.e. those intended to help learners complete their education up to the end of lower secondary level. This level is expected to be completed by young people when they are, depending on the country, between 14 and 16 years old. At the end of lower secondary education, students are expected to

possess a functional level of ability in different areas, including reading, writing, numeracy and ICT ([3]). At present, in all European countries, lower secondary education is a part of compulsory schooling. Therefore, at first glance, it may come as a surprise that most countries provide programmes for mature learners that are expressly associated with primary and/or lower secondary education (see Figure 3.3). However, as shown in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.1), 6.5 % of adults (25-64) in Europe – which corresponds to around 20 million people – have left school before successfully completing lower secondary education. This proportion exceeds 10 % in Belgium and Cyprus (both around 11 %), Malta (11.5 %), Spain (14.4 %), Iceland (15.6 %), Greece (19.4 %), Portugal (38.9 %) and Turkey (56.9 %). Moreover, while the figure represents the existence of programmes, it does not provide details on the relative weight of these programmes in the educational structure. These aspects will be discussed further in the text.

Figure 3.3: Programmes for mature learners directly related to initial education up to the end of lower secondary level (ISCED 2), 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

A programme is defined as a coherent set or sequence of educational activities or communication designed and organised to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period (UNESCO-UIS, 2011). The figure refers to programmes that operate throughout the whole country rather than being restricted to a particular institution or geographical location.

In countries with a single-structure education system, there is no firm distinction between primary and lower secondary education. Therefore, in these countries, programmes for mature learners to complete primary and/or lower secondary education are described in different terms (e.g. 'programmes for the completion of basic education', 'compulsory education for adults', etc.). However, as these programmes mainly cover the last years of single-structure education, they are comparable to those targeting the completion of lower secondary education in other countries.

Country specific notes

Belgium (BE nl): There are standardised basic skills courses in subjects such as Dutch, mathematics, languages, ICT and social studies. These are not expressed in terms of their equivalence to basic, primary or lower secondary education and/or certificates, but cover learning outcomes traditionally associated with ISCED levels 1 and 2. They are described in Section 3.2.2.

Italy: Primary education for mature learners provided in the Territorial Permanent Centres (*Centri territoriali permanenti* – CTPs) is currently being phased out. However, in the newly established Centres for Adult Education (*Centri provinciali per l'istruzione degli adulti* – CPIAs), learners who have not completed primary education will be able to follow 200 hours' provision to acquire

([3]) However, international assessments of student competences show that this is not always the case. For more details, see for instance: http://www.oecd.org/pisa/ (Accessed 11 September 2014).

the basic skills associated with this educational level.

United Kingdom (ENG/WLS/NIR): The single subject qualifications known as 'General Certificate of Secondary Education' GCSEs, which are the means of assessing pupils at age 15-16, are also available to adults. They are not included in the figure as, although lower achievement at GCSE is allocated to lower secondary education (ISCED 2), a full-time programme aiming at five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C is allocated to upper secondary education (ISCED 3). In England, adults (19+) are entitled to full funding for English and Maths qualifications up to and including GCSE. These programmes are also often free to learners in Wales and Northern Ireland, though there is no centrally defined entitlement.

Among the countries where the system of initial education distinguishes between primary and lower secondary education, only few provide programmes linked to primary education (Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Romania). Spain and Portugal divide these programmes into further sub-levels or sub-programmes: In Spain, the education authorities generally distinguish between two sub-levels, each lasting around one school year. In Portugal, there are two cycles, each lasting around 800 hours. Participation statistics indicate that in 2011/12, there were around 90 000 participants in Spain, around 35 000 in Italy and around 3 000 in Romania ([4]) ([5]). In 2013/14, Lithuania and Poland registered 60 and 77 participants respectively.

Programmes for the completion of lower secondary or single-structure ([6]) education exist in virtually all European countries (see Figure 3.3). However, as with primary education for mature learners in Lithuania and Poland (see above), they often involve only a limited number of people. This goes hand in hand with the fact that in some countries, this level has been completed by almost all adults (for more details, see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1). For example, in the Czech Republic, where only 0.2 % of adults (25-64) have not completed lower secondary education, the relevant provision (*kurz pro získání základního vzdělání*) involved only around 400 people in 2013/14. When considering participation statistics as well as other parameters – in particular the size of the population – there are only few countries where programmes for mature learners linked to the system of initial education at lower secondary level make a noticeable quantitative contribution to education and training. Among the countries with a small or medium-size population (up to 20 million inhabitants), Sweden has the highest participation level (around 34 000 participants in 2012) ([7]), followed by Denmark (around 7 000 participants in 2013), Romania and Norway (both around 6 000 participants in 2011/12 and 2012/2013, respectively), Greece (around 4 000 participants in 2012/13), Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria and Finland (all around 2 000 participants for different reference years ranging between 2011 and 2013) and Slovenia (around 1 000 participants in 2013/14). In other countries with less than 20 million inhabitants, the participation either corresponds to less than 1 000 cases or is not subject to separate central-level monitoring. Among the larger countries (i.e. more than 20 million inhabitants), significant numbers are recorded in Spain (around 236 000 participants in 2011/12) and Turkey (around 367 000 participants in 2012/13), followed by Italy (around 34 000 participants in 2011/12), Germany (around 20 000 participants in 2012/13) and Poland (around 15 000 participants in 2013).

It is also worth noting that participants are not necessarily 'adults', i.e. persons aged 18 and above. Indeed, in most countries, these programmes can be followed by any learner who has reached the

---

([4]) Sources of all national statistics presented in Section 3.2 can be consulted in European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice, 2015.

([5]) No data is available for Portugal that would allow quantifying the number of people who participated in education for adults recognised as primary education level. However, when taking into account programmes at both primary and lower secondary level (i.e. the EFA courses B1, B2 and B3), there were 6 782 participants in 2013.

([6]) For more details on the concept of single-structure education, see the explanatory notes related to Figure 3.3.

([7]) It is noteworthy that Sweden has established a legal entitlement to basic adult education for all Swedish residents who are at least 20 years old and have not completed lower secondary education. Consequently, the legal framework obliges municipalities to ensure sufficient provision to meet learners' demands and needs.

end of compulsory education (which occurs between the age of 14 and 16 in most European countries for more details see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014b), but have not completed lower secondary or single-structure education. Consequently, young people and adults are often targeted on the same footing. For example, data provided by Estonia show that out of 371 people who followed vocationally-oriented lower secondary education for adults (*põhihariduse nõudeta kutseõpe*) in 2013/14, 148 were under 19 years old, 73 were aged between 20 and 24 years, and only 150 (i.e. around 40 %) were aged 25 and above. However, in some countries, programmes linked to initial education up to the end of lower secondary level target specifically adults. This is the case in some Nordic countries, where programmes linked to single-structure education specifically target people aged over 18 (programme known as 'general adult education' – *almen voksenuddannelse* – in Denmark) or over 20 (programme known as 'basic adult education' – *grundläggande vuxenutbildning* – in Sweden). The same applies to programmes at 'second chance schools' (*Scholeio Defteris Efkairias*) in Greece as well as programmes to complete lower secondary education in Portugal (*Ciclo do Ensino Básico – Cursos de Educação e Formação de Adultos – B3*), where the minimum starting age is set at 18. Spain also belongs to this category but, in exceptional circumstances, 16-year-olds can also be admitted.

The way programmes are organised partly explains the participation patterns: while in some countries, provision is organised as a comprehensive programme involving a substantial workload, in other cases it is subject-based, so that individual curriculum subjects can be followed as shorter courses.

The first organisational model applies to most countries. For example, in Portugal, there are different lower secondary education pathways for adults (general or vocational), corresponding to between around 1 000 and 2 000 tuition hours, depending on whether the learner takes only a general course or whether he/she also follows a vocational course ([8]). Slovenia reports that programmes for the completion of single-structure education include around 2 000 teaching periods. Countries falling into this category often express the length of their programmes in years, commonly referring to periods of between one and three years, and highlighting that the exact length takes into account the individual needs of learners, consequently there is no pre-defined length. The length obviously also depends on whether the programme is provided on a full- or part-time basis; most countries offer both options. The greatest flexibility for this type of provision seems to exist in Turkey, where the system for the completion of lower secondary education known as 'open lower secondary education' (*Açık Öğretim Ortaokulu*) has no pre-defined length and is offered as a distance learning course (for more details, see Chapter 4, Section 4.2).

The second organisational model is subject-based, i.e. separate subjects can be taken as shorter courses. This model is typical for the Nordic countries. It provides two options: learners can either follow separate subjects as shorter courses without necessarily completing lower secondary education, or they can combine subjects in a pre-defined way, which leads to the completion of lower secondary or single-structure education. In Finland, for instance, adults can study individual subjects such as languages or ICT as so called 'subject students' or they can prepare for examinations in several subjects, thus qualifying for progression to general upper secondary education. In Denmark, general adult education (*almen voksenuddannelse*) comprises subject-based courses that may be completed by taking an examination corresponding to the leaving examinations of the *folkeskole* (i.e. single-structure compulsory school). These courses generally last around 60 hours and most are divided into three levels of proficiency. It is also possible to complete a general examination with a certificate in 5 subjects: Danish, mathematics, English, natural science, and either French, German,

([8]) This length applies where learners take all contact courses, but, there are also options for the validation of prior non-formal and informal learning (VNIL), which may allow a shorter programme to be taken.

history or social science. This qualifies a person for entering a higher preparatory programme or higher preparatory single-subject courses (i.e. upper secondary education) in a relevant field of study. In Sweden, where the curriculum of basic adult education is also course-based, central authorities collect participation statistics directly related to literacy and basic skills provision. Here, of the 34 122 participants registered in basic adult education in 2012, around 25 % (i.e. approximately 8 500 adults) took courses in reading and writing. These data can partly explain the relatively high overall participation. Indeed, it is very likely that data refer to people who took several shorter subject-based courses (i.e. 'participation cases'), rather than individuals taking only one course (i.e. 'participants').

3.2.2. Dedicated basic skills programmes

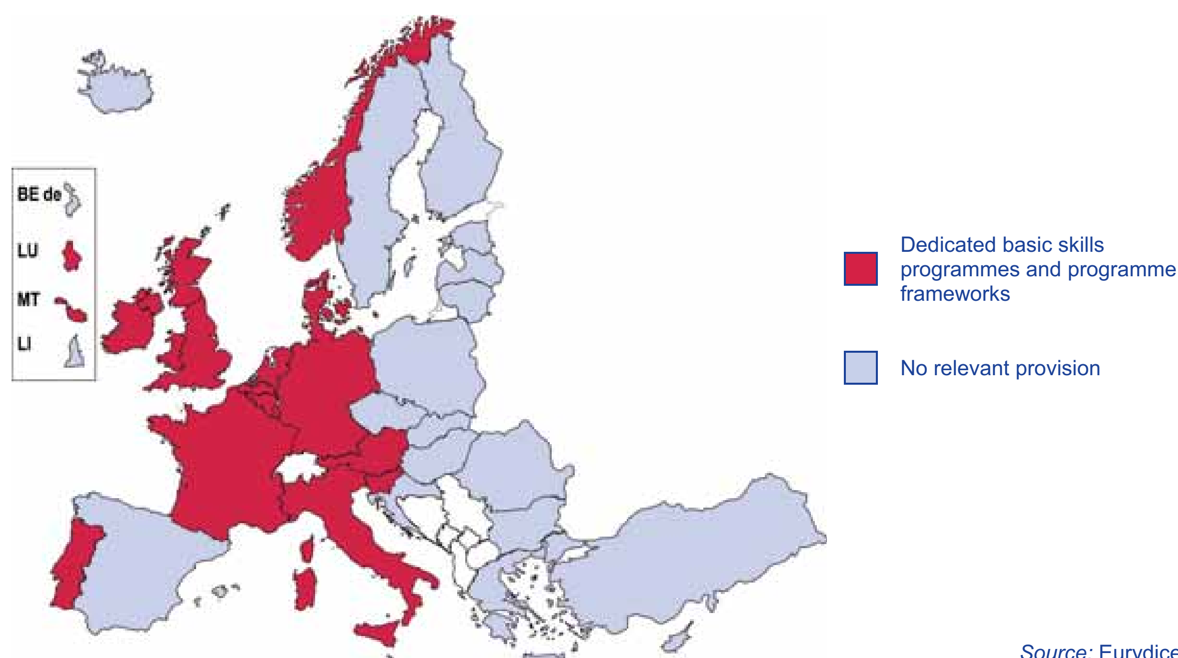
While all the programmes presented in the previous section include elements of literacy, basic skills or key competences, they are not explicitly flagged as such. Rather, they are labelled according to their main purpose, which is, in most cases, the completion of lower secondary or single-structure education. The previous section has also shown that some countries provide programmes related to initial education on a subject basis, allowing learners to choose only certain curricular components (including basic skills components such as their mother tongue, mathematics or ICT) and follow them as shorter 'basic skills' courses. Alongside this type of provision – which is not considered in the present section – some countries have developed dedicated programmes or programme frameworks for the provision of basic skills. However, when moving into this field, meaningful cross-country comparison becomes challenging. Indeed, countries have put in place a range of programmes that use similar names, but include very different content or, on the contrary, use different names but include similar content.

Basic skills programmes with elements of literacy and numeracy

Dedicated basic skills programmes which include literacy and numeracy among the core elements – with or without other content (e.g. ICT, study skills, etc.) – have been established in around a half of all European countries. These programmes use a wide range of labels, commonly using terms discussed in Section 3.1.

To start with, there are programmes or programme frameworks labelled explicitly as 'basic skills', 'key skills', 'basic competences', 'key competences' and so forth. These skill- and competence-oriented programmes can be found in different parts of Europe. Often, they have been set up fairly recently. For example, in 2010, Portugal developed a programme known as 'basic skills training' (*programa de formação em competências básicas*). Since 2006, Norway has been running the programme 'basic competence in working life' (*Basiskompetanse i arbeidslivet*) that provides literacy, numeracy, ICT and oral skills (the last element being offered since 2014). In 2012, Austria put in place the programme framework *Basisbildung*, which would be translated most accurately as 'basic education', yet, is commonly referred to as the 'basic skills' programme. In France, the ministry responsible for employment opted for content that goes beyond 'basic competences' or 'basic skills' when it established the programme 'key competences' (*compétences clefs*), in 2009, referring to the eight competences defined in European policy (for more details on the eight key competences, see Section 3.1). The United Kingdom has established suites of basic skills qualifications, namely Functional Skills (England), Essential Skills Wales (Wales), Essential Skills (Northern Ireland) and Core Skills (Scotland). These qualifications have undergone reforms over the last 20 years since they were first introduced and there are differences between the different parts of the United Kingdom; in England and Wales they replaced Key Skills qualifications for young people at school and college and Basic Skills for adults from 2010.

Figure 3.4: Dedicated basic skills programmes and programme frameworks for adult learners, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

A programme is defined as a coherent set or sequence of educational activities or communication designed and organised to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period (UNESCO-UIS, 2011). A dedicated basic skills programme is defined as a programme that targets the provision of basic skills, but does not have a direct and explicit link to programmes delivered in the initial education system. In addition to programmes, the figure also refers to programme frameworks, which are defined as schemes that can include varied programmes sharing the same overall objective and funding arrangements (for example, a separate, identifiable budget line). The figure refers to programmes and programme frameworks that operate throughout the whole country rather than being restricted to a particular institution or geographical location.

The figure does not consider:

- programmes related to the completion of education up to lower secondary level that can be provided in the form of shorter courses focusing on individual subjects or skills, including courses of literacy and numeracy. For more details on these, see Section 3.2.1;
- dedicated programmes that only focus on the development of ICT skills (i.e. do not include elements of literacy and numeracy);
- dedicated literacy programmes targeting specifically the immigrant population (i.e. local language tuition for speakers of other languages);
- dedicated family literacy programmes, which are discussed in Section 3.2.3.

Country specific notes

Spain: While the figure does not indicate any provision operating throughout the whole country, some Autonomous Communities (e.g. Castilla-La Mancha and Castilla y León) provide non-formal education programmes called 'acquisition and reinforcement of basic skills'.

Hungary: While it is difficult to identify a clear dedicated programme line or a programme framework (i.e. the figure does not indicate any provision), there have been various EU-funded project-based initiatives providing opportunities for adults to improve their basic skills (e.g. the project 'Actively for Skills' (*Aktívan a tudásért!*) or programmes developed within the initiative 'Open Learning Centres (NYITOK)' (*NYITOK Tanulási központok programjai*).

Malta: The provision considered in the figure refers to courses in Maltese, English or mathematics that can be followed in publicly funded institutions.

In some countries, there are dedicated programmes or programme frameworks referring to literacy and/or numeracy, including functional literacy. For example, in Ireland, there is a programme framework known as 'adult literacy', which has existed since 1980s and includes courses in reading, writing, numeracy, ICT, learning to learn and personal development. The French Community of Belgium has also developed a programme framework known as literacy – *alphabétisation*. In the

Netherlands, since the mid-1990s a network of regional training centre (ROCs) has provided Dutch language and numeracy courses (*opleidingen Nederlands en rekenen*). In Italy, a legal framework was established in 1997 that allows the Permanent Territorial Centres (*Centri territoriali permanenti* – CTPs; i.e. centres for adult education) to offer functional literacy courses (referred to as *corsi brevi e modulari di alfabetizzazione funzionale*).These courses are currently being phased out and will be replaced by other types of provision (for more details, see country specific notes related to Figure 3.3).

A dedicated programme established in Luxemburg as far back as 1991 called 'adult basic education' (*instruction de base des adultes*) includes courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT. A similar approach is seen in the Flemish Community of Belgium where, between 1985 and 1990, a network of 13 publicly subsidised adult education institutions was set up. These 'adult basic education centres' (*Centra voor Basiseducatie*) provide standardised courses in various areas of basic skills, including Dutch, mathematics and ICT.

Programmes that include basic skills as part of the core content do not necessarily use explicit labels pointing to basic skills. The most relevant example is in Denmark, where the content of 'preparatory adult education' (*forberedende voksenundervisning*) comprises the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. However, the name of the programme expresses its general aim, which is the delivery of skills that will allow learners to progress further in the education and training system. Similar preparatory programmes have been established in several other countries, but literacy and numeracy do not feature so highly in their content. Moreover, they are sometimes part of wider programmes or institutional frameworks. Therefore, these are further discussed in Section 3.2.3. Slovenia has also established a basic skills framework that is not explicitly labelled as such, namely the 'Education Programme for Success in Life' (*Usposabljanje za življenjsko uspešnost*) developed between 2003 and 2006. It embraces several different strands which target the provision of literacy and basic skills in various contexts, including the workplace, the family, and rural communities.

While dedicated basic skills programmes often have a non-formal character (e.g. Germany, France, Austria and Slovenia), some countries recognise them in their qualification systems and structures. This is the case in the United Kingdom, where Functional Skills (England) and Essential Skills (Wales and Northern Ireland) are accredited at three different levels within the 9-level National Qualifications Framework (NQF): Entry Level (subdivided into Entry 1, 2 and 3), Level 1 and Level 2. Denmark and the Netherlands also recognise their basic skills programmes (i.e. 'preparatory adult education' in Denmark, and the Dutch language and numeracy courses in the Netherlands) in their qualification structures and place them at the first level of their respective qualifications frameworks. Although in Portugal, the 'basic skills training' programme is not positioned within a qualifications framework, it is included in the National Qualifications Catalogue (*Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações*).

It is also worth noting that dedicated basic skills programmes may have a stronger identity in some sectors than in others. While most countries have developed them within the educational sector, France has opted for a different approach. Here, it was the ministry responsible for employment that initiated the programme 'key competences'. Consequently, the programme targets people who are outside the labour market, as a part of active labour market policies (ALMP). In Norway, the programme 'basic competence in working life' was developed by the educational sector, but it targets employees, meaning that it is the employer – in cooperation with a programme provider and possibly also with a trade union organisation – who initiates the provision and applies for public funding.

Public authorities use different approaches towards the providers of basic skills programmes: they may nominate specific providers, or allow a number of providers to offer their services. The first model applies to the Flemish Community of Belgium and the Netherlands, where existing basic skills

programmes are delivered by specific institutions, namely the 13 adult basic education centres in the Flemish Community of Belgium and the 43 ROCs (regional training centres) in the Netherlands. However, the Netherlands is currently considering a reform that would allow municipalities to choose between different suppliers in order to facilitate customised provision for different target groups. This approach exists in several other countries. For example, in Norway, the programme 'basic competence in working life' can be delivered by public schools as well as various private non-profit organisations. In Austria, programmes falling under the 'basic skills' framework are also provided by a range of institutions, the most common providers being rather large institutions which deliver different forms and tracks of adult education. In Slovenia, different programme lines falling under the 'Education Programme for Success in Life' are usually provided by the public adult education institutions established by local communities. In Germany, the main providers of literacy courses are adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*; see also Section 3.3.3), but there are also other providers.

Public intervention in defining content or standards of dedicated basic skills programmes varies across countries. In the Netherlands, for instance, municipalities are given a lot of freedom to organise literacy and numeracy courses in the regional training centres. A very limited intervention by the central-level can also be observed in Germany, where the literacy provision falls under the responsibility of the *Länder* and local authorities. Yet, there is a certain degree of structure provided by the federal level. In particular, the German Adult Education Association (DVV) – a federal-level body – has recently developed a framework covering various areas, including 'writing', 'reading' and 'basic numeracy'. It offers guidelines for tutors who conduct literacy and basic skills courses with examples of exercises at different levels of literacy proficiency (so called 'Alpha-Levels'). Austria also belongs to the group of countries in which there is only limited intervention by central authorities with respect to non-formal basic skills courses. Here, programmes delivered within the 'basic skills' framework differ in both content and practical implementation. However, in order to qualify for funding, each programme has to be accredited, which implies that it has to follow certain general requirements for the curriculum. These include a requirement to structure the programmes in literacy, numeracy and ICT into distinct (up to five) competence levels. Norway's approach is similar to Austria's but with more detailed guidelines for providers. In this country, basic skills courses known as 'basic competence in working life' must be linked to the competence framework developed specifically for adults by the Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning (Vox). Interestingly, the goals in the competence framework are also aligned with the national curriculum for primary and lower secondary education, developed by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

The Flemish Community of Belgium represents a model whereby intervention from the top-level is more substantial. Detailed content and organisational guidelines have been set down for the basic skills programmes delivered in the 13 adult basic education centres (i.e. publicly funded non-profit organisations focusing specifically on the delivery of adult basic education courses). Detailed standards for learning outcomes have also been developed in the United Kingdom, where programmes lead to nationally recognised qualifications in Functional Skills (England), Essential Skills Wales (Wales), Essential Skills (Northern Ireland) and Core Skills (Scotland). However, the organisation and content of programmes may vary according to the context and provider.

It is important to note that the nature of basic skills programmes, including their competence framework, can change over time. A telling example is Luxembourg, where 'adult basic education' has existed since the early 1990s. However, it was only in 2013 that the central authorities formalised this type of provision by establishing a competence framework, which is described in a short reader-friendly document to be distributed to all learners at the beginning of the programme.

As with content and standards, the duration of basic skills programmes varies across countries. In some countries (e.g. Germany, Austria and the Netherlands), providers have a lot of autonomy in designing the courses, including determining their duration. In other countries, there are standards referring to the course duration. A substantial workload seems to characterise the programmes delivered by the 13 adult basic education centres across the Flemish Community of Belgium. For example, the study area 'Dutch', which comprises three programmes, has between 600 and 1 100 teaching periods, depending on the programme(s) the learner chooses. Each study programme is further subdivided into modules. The study area 'mathematics', which follows the same organisational pattern, comprises between 360 and 630 teaching periods.

The basic skills programmes in other countries are generally shorter, usually having between 100 and 300 teaching periods ([9]). For example, the programme 'key competences' in France includes around 100 teaching periods and takes around six months to complete. In Luxembourg, courses within 'Adult Basic Education' generally take one year to complete and include between 150 and 300 hours, depending on learners' needs. In Norway, the standard courses in 'basic competence in working life' include 130 lessons and this standard model was chosen by 75 % of applicants in 2013. In Slovenia, different programme lines that fall under the framework of the 'Education Programme for Success in Life' vary in length, with between 75 and 350 teaching periods.

As some countries divide their basic skills programmes into modules or smaller units, a single module may be rather short while the overall length of the programme is more substantial. For example, Portugal reports that the provision known as 'basic skills training' consists of at least three modules, each lasting 50 hours. As there are six modules in total, the overall duration is between 150 and 300 hours, depending on the number of modules the learner takes. In Denmark 'preparatory adult education' has several 'steps' lasting between 30 and 60 hours, each ending with a test (e.g. reading has 4 steps of 30-60 hours and mathematics has 2 steps of 30-60 hours). The overall programme lasts between 120 and 240 hours. To some extent, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) uses a comparable approach. Here, different basic skills qualifications, which come under different names in different parts of the United Kingdom, are designed to provide coherent progression pathways from Entry Level, which is subdivided into three sub-levels, through Level 1 to Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Within this progression pathway, an individual programme may be relatively short. For example, support materials for programme providers for Functional Skills in English indicate 45 hours of tuition for each Entry Level sub-level (OCR, n.d.).

To complete this analysis of basic skills programmes, a word about participation statistics must be added. Data show that these programmes generally involve a limited number of learners. This can be explained by the fact that they target specific and often hard to reach groups. To be more exact, in most countries, they do not involve more than 5 000 individuals per year. In countries with a small population (e.g. Luxemburg) only a few hundred people are concerned. However, the participation levels are substantial in some countries. This is the case in Ireland, where programmes delivered within the framework of 'adult literacy' reached around 57 000 people in 2012. In Denmark, 'preparatory adult education' registered almost 25 000 entries in 2013. As an example of participation levels in larger countries, the programme 'key competences' in France reached around 50 000 people in 2011. As the programme was developed by the ministry responsible for employment, more than 90 % of all participants were unemployed people.

([9]) Further investigation would be necessary to provide better understanding of the exact length of a teaching period in adult basic education in a cross-country comparative perspective.

Programmes to raise achievement in ICT

As already stated in Section 3.1, Cedefop (2008, p. 132) refers to ICT skills as 'new basic skills'. Indeed, information and communication technologies have become a part of everyday life and it is difficult to survive in the modern world without the skills to use them effectively. The delivery of these skills is a part of compulsory school curricula in all European countries, and, consequently, they are integrated into the programmes that are designed to help mature learners to complete lower secondary level education (for more details, see Section 3.2.1). Moreover, they are also usually integrated into the dedicated basic skills programmes analysed in the section above. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, programmes delivered in the 13 adult basic education centres include the study of ICT. Similarly, in Luxembourg, basic ICT courses fall under the framework of basic adult education described above. Courses providing basic ICT skills are also embedded in other education and training frameworks, including those under the banner of active labour market policies (ALMP) as well as liberal (or popular) adult education (for more details, see Section 3.2.3).

Apart from the provision described above, only a few countries have developed dedicated ICT skills programmes that do not fall under any larger 'basic skills' framework. For example, in 2005, Slovenia developed a digital literacy programme for adults (*računalniška pismenost za odrasle*). It lasts 60 hours and focuses on basic knowledge of ICT, including word processing, use of the Internet, use of e-mail, etc. The programme and related regulations have been adopted centrally by the Expert Council for Adult Education. There were 1 745 participants in 2012. In 2008, Iceland established a programme known as 'Stronger Employees: ICT and communication skills' (*Sterkari Starfsmaður: Upplýsingatækni og samskipti*) targeting the economically active population, in particular people who want to improve their use of ICT in the workplace. It is delivered by the 11 lifelong learning centres all over the country, requires 150 hours of tuition and provides up to 12 credits towards the completion of upper secondary education. The programme attracted around 50 participants in 2013. A more recent but major initiative is reported by Poland, where an ESF project 'Lighthouse Keepers of Digital Poland' (*Latarnicy Polski Cyfrowej*) provides digital education for the 50+ generation. Since the beginning of 2013, the project has involved a substantial number of people: around 200 000.

3.2.3. Other programmes contributing to raising achievement in basic skills

While the programmes designed to provide adults with the knowledge and skills associated with education up to the end of lower secondary level combined with the dedicated basic skills programmes constitute the most visible part of basic skills provision, their contribution to adult education and training is limited in most countries when measured in terms of the size of the adult population they reach. Therefore, the picture would be incomplete without mentioning other types of publicly subsidised provision that provide opportunities for adults, including those with low basic skills, to return to education and training. The following sub-sections seek to describe the myriad of other types of provision, such as preparatory programmes, vocational education and training courses (including provision falling under the framework of active labour market policies (ALMP)), liberal and popular adult education, as well as programmes at the boundary between non-formal and informal learning, in particular, family literacy programmes.

Preparatory programmes ([10])

As already outlined in Section 3.2.2, programmes that include elements of basic skills, are not necessarily labelled as such. For example, as mentioned in the section above, Denmark has established a programme that focuses on the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy, but is labelled as 'preparatory adult education' (*forberedende voksenundervisning*). Preparatory programmes also exist in other countries, but while elements of literacy and numeracy are taught, they are embedded within the curriculum rather than mentioned explicitly. Moreover, these programmes are sometimes integrated into wider programmes or institutional frameworks and thus are less clearly identifiable. In Sweden, for instance, folk high schools, which are a part of the liberal adult education sector, provide a programme to help unemployed people with low level qualifications to improve their motivation to learn (*studiemotiverande folkhögskolekurs*). The programme comprises a range of elements, including the revision of different curriculum areas (i.e. 'basic skills'), reinforcement of study skills, but also educational and vocational guidance. Another example with the same target group (i.e. unemployed people with low level qualifications) is provided by Belgium, where various institutions (e.g. *Bruxelles Formation* in the Brussels region) deliver programmes that seek to enable learners to acquire the skills needed to follow a programme leading to a recognised qualification. The third example in this category is provided by Ireland, where 'bridging foundation courses' target the long-term unemployed who do not have the skill levels they need to access specific training programmes. These courses include modules such as basic information technology, communication and skills sampling, i.e. the opportunity for learners to try out a range of vocational areas (e.g. wood work, metal work, crafts, etc.) allowing learners to find the right career path. Iceland has put in place several preparatory programmes targeting people who are intending to return to the educational system to complete their studies at upper secondary level. These are delivered throughout the country, by a network of 11 lifelong learning centres, and, although they are non-formal courses, they provide between seven and 24 credits towards the completion of an upper secondary programme (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2). In Spain, there are preparatory courses for the entrance examination which allows access to the intermediate vocational training cycle (upper secondary level) targeting people aged 16 and above. These include elements of communication (language and literature), technology and social skills. Their reference point is usually the curriculum of compulsory secondary education (i.e. lower secondary education).

Vocational education and training, work-based learning and ALMP

Discussion on basic skills provision would be incomplete without taking into consideration vocational education and training (VET) and its various sub-frameworks, in particular work-based learning (WBL) and learning that forms part of active labour market policies (ALMP). A recent Cedefop study (Cedefop, 2013) looked at how work-based learning that focuses on the provision of key competences can contribute to getting low-qualified unemployed adults back into work. The study highlights that while work-based learning programmes 'have the potential to play a key role in addressing the barriers that low-qualified unemployed adults face in (re)entering the labour market, the extent to which current policies and programmes are organised to enable them to deliver the potential benefits seems limited' (ibid., p. 105). The study points to a number of issues, including the need for greater cooperation between stakeholders and better monitoring of policy and programme implementation.

([10]) This section refers to programmes to improve learner motivation as well as develop the skills needed for studies below higher education level. Preparatory programmes for non-traditional higher education candidates are discussed in Section 3.3.3.

Looking at the area of ALMP from a wider perspective, the Eurydice data collection shows that all countries have put in place a range of labour market measures related to basic skills. Indeed, in all countries, unemployed people have the opportunity to follow various courses, including those focusing on literacy, numeracy or ICT. As these are generally delivered by a range of institutions according to different procedures and standards, a full picture of this type of provision is beyond the limits of this report. Nevertheless, certain types of programmes described in previous sections belong themselves to the area of ALMP. For example, in France, the 'key competences' programme targets mainly unemployed people: out of around 50 000 people who followed the programme in 2011, more than 90 % were unemployed (for more details, see Section 3.2.2).

It is also worth noting that many countries have developed dedicated vocational qualifications that can be gained by learners who do not posses any formal learning credentials. While these programmes are far from 'dedicated basic skills courses', they generally make a contribution to the development of skills, including the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. This can be seen in Ireland, where all further vocational education programmes leading to nationally recognised qualifications known as 'FETAC awards' contain a minimum of 30 % general skills development. Therefore, these programmes not only help to get people with low level qualifications into work, but also help them gain access to further learning opportunities. Further discussion regarding the contribution of vocational qualifications and programmes for improving access to learning opportunities is provided in Section 3.3.1.

Liberal adult education

In many European countries, central authorities provide subsidies for liberal or popular adult education. Although the name of this sector varies between countries, provision generally includes various non-formal courses which often contribute to the development of a range of skills. These may act as a stepping stone or a springboard to further learning and qualifications. While a dedicated study would be necessary to provide a thorough overview of this field, the present section aims to highlight some relevant examples of current practice.

Liberal adult education has been traditionally associated with the Nordic countries – in particular Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway – where this type of provision has a long-standing and uninterrupted tradition reaching back to the 19th century. In Denmark, where the Nordic model of liberal adult education was created, the system currently includes three types of settings, namely folk high schools (*folkehøjskoler*), evening schools (*aftenskoler – voksenundervisning*) and day folk high schools (*daghøjskoler*). These operate under the Ministry of Culture and provide a range of non-formal courses of varied length. The system is highly decentralised with limited data available at central level on the number of participants. However, data are available in Sweden, where in 2013, 150 folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*) and 10 study associations (*studieförbund*) attracted around 120 000 and nearly one million (914 763) individuals respectively. Although this type of provision has a non-formal character, certain courses in Swedish folk high schools are more formalised. For example, there is a dedicated course to enhance study motivation among the unemployed, which comprises elements of educational and vocational guidance, revision of different curriculum areas (i.e. 'basic skills'), reinforcement of study skills, etc. (for more details on the programme, see information on preparatory programmes in this section above).

The English-speaking countries have a tradition of providing liberal/popular adult education within the sector known as 'community learning'. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the sector provides various opportunities for learning, including opportunities for personal development, cultural enrichment as well as intellectual or creative stimulation and enjoyment. It may also include programmes leading to recognised qualifications, i.e. qualifications that can be positioned within the

National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) (for more details on differences between the two frameworks, see footnotes in Chapter 2). Scotland has established a comparable system – namely community-based adult learning – that includes adult literacies and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). In Ireland, 'community education' provides various courses, generally outside the formal education sector. It aims to enhance learning, empowerment and participation in civic society. Courses within community education are generally short (10-15 weeks) but can also be longer (up to one year). Overall, they attracted around 55 000 learners in 2012.

Germany provides another example of a strongly established liberal adult education sector coordinated at communal and regional level. Here, adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) provide a range of courses, including foreign languages, cultural and general education courses. Also, as indicated in Section 3.2.2, they are the key provider of adult literacy and basic skills courses. Furthermore, they also deliver programmes to enable people to complete lower secondary education as well as courses to prepare people to undertake lower secondary programmes. Austria has developed similar provision.

Further examples of non-formal education in this sector can be found in several other European countries. In some, European funding plays a crucial role. For example, in Estonia, between 2008 and 2013, around 33 000 people benefited from non-formal courses delivered within the ESF-funded programme 'Adult Education in Non-formal Education and Training Centres'. Some of these courses targeted key competences, such as learning skills, digital competences or language competences. Greece has been using European funding to establish an institutional network to ensure the provision of non-formal courses, namely the network of Lifelong Learning Centres (*Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis*). By 2013, 271 municipalities had established one of these centres. Likewise, since 2010, Hungary has been running an EU-funded project – 'Open Learning Centres' (*NYITOK Tanulási központok programjai*) – which provides non-formal learning opportunities for adults living in the country's least developed regions who have low basic skills or low level qualifications.

Family literacy

Family literacy programmes, which are often on the borderline between non-formal and informal learning, make a significant contribution to the provision of basic skills. A recent study (Carpentieri et al., 2011) looked at developments in this field across European countries. The study identified a range of existing programmes, but points out that data on the extent of provision is limited in most countries. However, Turkey is an exception, as it has targets and robust participation data related to its flagship family literacy initiative 'the Mother-Child Education Programme' (MOCEP). According to the study, the programme is particularly widespread. It has an annual participation target of 25 000 mothers and children, and up to 2011, more than 6 600 courses had been delivered to just under 300 000 mothers and children in 78 provinces in Turkey (ibid.). Another country that has invested in family literacy provision, and has collected participation data, is Ireland. Here, family literacy programmes account for approximately 7 % (around 3 500 learners in 2008; ibid.) of the total number of adult literacy learners. Unfortunately, in other European countries, data on family literacy is less readily available at central level (ibid.).

The same study reveals that there are only a few national strategies for family literacy or top-down policies that seek to develop comprehensive or complementary provision. In contrast, initiatives tend to be bottom-up, and though this approach has many strengths, it 'can lead to programme landscapes characterised by competing initiatives and/or a focus only on one or two programme types' (ibid., p. 199). Another finding is that there is a lack of research on family literacy in most European countries, the exceptions being the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

3.2.4. Research findings on basic skills programmes

While the Eurydice data collection did not collect information from countries on the effectiveness of the programmes reported, this general issue has been addressed in a number of research projects. A major research review by Vorhaus et al. (2011) examined the findings of English-language and UK-based research on adult literacy and numeracy since the year 2000 ([11]). The review looked at literature findings related to several research areas, including the economic, personal and social returns of basic skills programmes; the quality and effectiveness of the programmes; the number of learning hours needed for skills gain; and the question of learners' persistence.

As regards the economic, personal and social returns of basic skills programmes, the review points to substantial evidence that a higher level of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills have a positive personal and social impact on individuals. Yet, the same source highlights that the personal and social impact of literacy and numeracy courses 'often takes time to emerge, and emerges in forms and contexts that are removed from formal learning environments' (ibid., p. 12). Moreover, the research points to the positive impact of basic skills courses on learners' confidence (e.g. confidence lost at school), and there seems to be growing evidence that gaining literacy and numeracy skills in adulthood has a positive effect on earnings and employment.

The quality and effectiveness of basic skills programmes embraces different topics and issues. Among them, there is the question of whether basic skills should be delivered as part of dedicated programmes or whether they should be embedded in wider programmes. The literature indicates that 'retention rates and success rates are higher in vocational programmes where literacy and numeracy learning is embedded, as compared with non-embedded programmes' (ibid., p. 13). However, when it comes to basic skills courses in the workplace, the research shows that they have not been shown to make substantial improvements to employee literacy skills in the short term, partly because of the low average number of learning units provided. Yet, 'workplace basic skills courses reach people who are not normally involved in continuing education or training, and learners who participate in these courses voluntarily and who actively use their literacy skills at work and in everyday life continue to improve their skills and are more likely to engage in FE [*further education*] and training (ibid., p. 13).

A crucial question that needs to be answered in order to improve the effectiveness of basic skills programmes is to ascertain the minimum number of tuition hours needed for learners to make substantial progress in their basic skills development. The above review provides research evidence to support the view that learners benefit more from courses that include at least 100 hours of tuition (ibid., p. 13).

An additional aspect to be considered when evaluating basic skills programmes is the fact that learners follow these programmes for varied reasons which are not always articulated as an explicit desire to acquire 'basic skills' (ibid.). This has been confirmed by a recent empirical study by Cedefop (2013) on key competences in work-based learning. The study shows that people rarely refer to the lack of 'basic skills' or 'key competences', but express these areas in very different terms, which are likely to determine their motivation to participate in education and training. More precisely, respondents in the Cedefop study 'often emphasised their lack of formal qualifications, especially basic school certificates or vocational qualifications, or lack of work experience or lack of skills for specific jobs. Where they did talk about some more specific deficiencies, they tended to mention self-

---

([11]) As the review included mainly research on programmes in English-speaking countries, some caution is necessary as regards its main findings. Consequently, the findings should not be assumed to apply to all programmes throughout Europe.

confidence, and the lack of 'job-seeking' skills needed to find work including CV writing, job applications and interview skills' (ibid., p. 61).

Finally, as regards learners' persistence, the literature shows that learners following basic skills courses are more likely to withdraw from the course at an earlier rather than a later stage. Furthermore, those in lower level courses and/or those who are less qualified are more likely to withdraw than those in higher level courses and/or those having higher qualifications. The research indicates that persistence can be supported by regular monitoring and recognition of learners' progression. However, it also highlights that breaking off from programmes should not be necessarily interpreted as a programme failure but may be seen as 'a rational and positive response to changing circumstances. What is important in terms of learner persistence is that these breaks from learning are supported, principally by distance and blended learning, so that learners are not penalised and do not have the door to learning closed on them' (Vorhaus et al. 2011, p. 14). Indeed, adults dropping out at one moment often return to basic skills programmes at a later point in their lives. This also indicates that the evaluation of the effectiveness of basic skills programmes should ideally be conducted over an extended period of time, taking into consideration that adult learners, particularly those facing difficulties with literacy and basic skills, do not tend to follow a direct or uninterrupted learning path (e.g. their learning path may include breaks, combinations of different types of programmes, repetitions of certain programmes, etc.).

3.3. Beyond basic skills programmes: opportunities for adult learners to gain a recognised qualification

As already shown in previous parts of this chapter, some countries have established programmes which are specifically intended to promote progression to further learning opportunities within the education and training system. This section will therefore examine learning opportunities for adults that go beyond 'basic skills', in particular, those programmes that lead to medium-level qualifications (i.e. upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications).

The section is structured in three parts: the first sub-section outlines the opportunities provided through vocational qualifications systems; the second sub-section looks at the organisational arrangements in place for adult learners to undertake upper secondary education programmes, while also indicating the proportion of adults who achieve their medium-level qualification during adulthood; the final sub-section examines other adult educational opportunities, in particular, the opportunities for non-traditional learners – including adults without formal entry qualifications – to enter higher education.

3.3.1. Opportunities for low-qualified adults to gain qualifications through VET

While the analysis of vocational qualifications systems falls under the area of expertise of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the Eurydice data collection shows that this area makes a significant contribution to advancing learning opportunities and enabling low-qualified adults to gain qualifications. Indeed, recognised vocationally-oriented programmes and qualifications often include provision that does not require any prior formal learning achievement for entry. Thus, alongside programmes described in Section 3.2, this type of provision can make a significant contribution to re-engaging adults – in particular those with limited formal learning qualifications – in education and training. Several observations can be made with respect to this theme.

First, with relation to formal mainstream education, some countries have developed vocational tracks at lower secondary level. These commonly target learners who have not completed mainstream general lower secondary education, but are no longer subject to compulsory schooling. For example, in Estonia, the programme *põhihariduse nõudeta kutseõpe* is vocationally-oriented provision developed for those who have attained the age of 17 without completing the lower secondary level. This vocational course can be followed together with basic education for adults (*põhiharidus täiskasvanutele*), i.e. general education. A comparable approach can be observed in Portugal, where learners can combine general and vocational elements in programmes for the completion of lower secondary education. Here, vocational training elements (units) have a strong identity of their own (i.e. they fall within a dedicated vocational qualification programme known as 'certified modular training'), but when combined with general units, they lead to a qualification that has the same value as the lower secondary school leaving certificate.

Apart from the qualifications comparable to those gained within the system of initial education, most countries have developed systems of officially recognised vocational qualifications that are open – at least at the entry level – to learners without any prior formal education credentials. Among the countries reporting this type of provision is Spain, which has developed, within the context of active labour market policies (ALMP), a system of vocational certificates that enable people to perform a recognised trade. The system consists of formally recognised modules and units that are intended to be placed within a 5-level framework, although only certificates for Levels 1, 2 and 3 have been developed so far. Similarly, Belgium also reports that recognised qualifications have been developed within the framework of labour market provision. These can be gained by following programmes offered by three providers (or their partner institutions), namely FOREM (Wallonia), *Bruxelles Formation* (Brussels region) and VDAB (the Flemish Community). Further examples of similar vocational qualifications programmes – developed by employment or educational authorities – have been provided by several other countries, some highlighting that courses leading to first level qualifications do not require any prior formal learning achievement for entry.

One of the questions that may be raised in the context of the various vocational pathways is whether the certificates and qualifications they lead to allow access to further learning, and in particular, whether they can replace the formal learning credentials required for entry to upper secondary or higher education programmes. Some countries provide a clear answer to this question, stating that even though the short vocational qualifications that are open to all learners may lead to recognised certificates and qualifications, they are not equivalent to those provided within the mainstream formal education system. Other systems seem to be more flexible in this regard (for more details, see Chapter 4, Section 4.4). In this context, it is likely that the establishment of national qualifications frameworks will help to improve the status of the various types of vocational certificates that currently have a rather 'non-formal character'. If these are further linked – through learning outcomes – to well-established mainstream qualifications, they could provide the means by which learners with only low level qualifications can access further educational opportunities.

3.3.2. Opportunities for completing a medium-level qualification as an adult learner

European policy places a specific emphasis on the importance of ensuring that young people stay in education or training at least until the end of upper secondary education ([12]). Indeed, according to available statistical data, people who have completed at least upper secondary education have a significantly higher employment rate than those with only lower secondary education ([13]). In addition, jobs requiring the completion of upper secondary education are often related to higher salaries, better working conditions and more opportunities for education and training than jobs specifying lower qualification levels (for more details on the participation in education and training according to educational attainment and occupational categories, see Chapter 1, Figure 1.7). But what opportunities exist in European countries for adults to gain an upper secondary qualification later in life? What types of programme are available, what kinds of institution are involved, and what proportion of the population gains an upper secondary qualification during adulthood? This section will aim at answering these questions.

Organisational arrangements

While obtaining an upper secondary qualification later in life is possible in all European countries, the way provision is organised varies. In many European countries (e.g. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and Iceland; EACEA/Eurydice, 2011a), there is no specific part of the education or training system or specific programmes dedicated to the provision of upper secondary education for adult learners. However, in these countries, upper secondary education (general or vocational) leading to mainstream qualifications can be delivered under various flexible arrangements, including part-time evening courses. These are open to all learners who are no longer subject to compulsory full-time education.

Some countries have developed dedicated upper secondary education programmes for adult learners. For example, Sweden has put in place a system of 'upper secondary adult education' *(Kommunal Vuxenutbildning (Komvux))* targeting people aged 20 and above. Norway has established a similar system, but for slightly older learners, i.e. those who are at least 25 years old. Upper secondary programmes devised for adult learners also have a strong tradition in the German-speaking countries. Austria has established a system of 'schools for employed adults' (*Schulen für Berufstätige*) which offers almost all fields of upper secondary education as evening courses. Germany has developed a system of 'upper secondary education for adults' open to those who have reached the age of 19.

Upper secondary programmes for adult learners can also be provided within wider 'second chance' frameworks that include several educational levels. This can be observed in the French Community of Belgium in the system known as 'education for social advancement' (*enseignement de promotion sociale*). This framework includes programmes at various educational levels (lower secondary, upper secondary and higher education), leading to certificates equivalent to those obtained in the system of initial education as well as qualifications specific to the system of adult education. The Netherlands has established a system known as VAVO (*Voortgezet algemeen volwassenenonderwijs*), which

([12]) Key European policy documents referring to this question are: Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), OJ 2009/C 119/02, 28.5.2009; Communication from the Commission of 3 March 2010 – Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Commission, 2010); Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 31 January 2011 – Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda (European Commission, 2011a); Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, OJ 2011/C 191/01, 1.7.2011.

([13]) For more details on employment rates by highest level of education attained, see the Eurostat website, online code: *lfsa_ergaed* (Accessed 3 December 2014).

comprises programmes for adult learners corresponding to different lower and upper secondary education pathways. Luxembourg has developed a very similar framework, namely the system known as 'the second qualification pathway' (*2e voie de qualification*).

A comparable scheme, but one with a strong labour market orientation, is in place in the Flemish Community of Belgium. This scheme, known as 'OKOT-pathways' (Dutch acronym for 'pathways leading to an educational qualification'), allows jobseekers aged 22 and above with a VDAB-training contract (i.e. a contract with public employment services) to follow qualification courses in an educational institution. The courses focus on sectors facing a shortage of skilled workers and lead to a range of qualifications, from a secondary education diploma to a professional bachelor's degree.

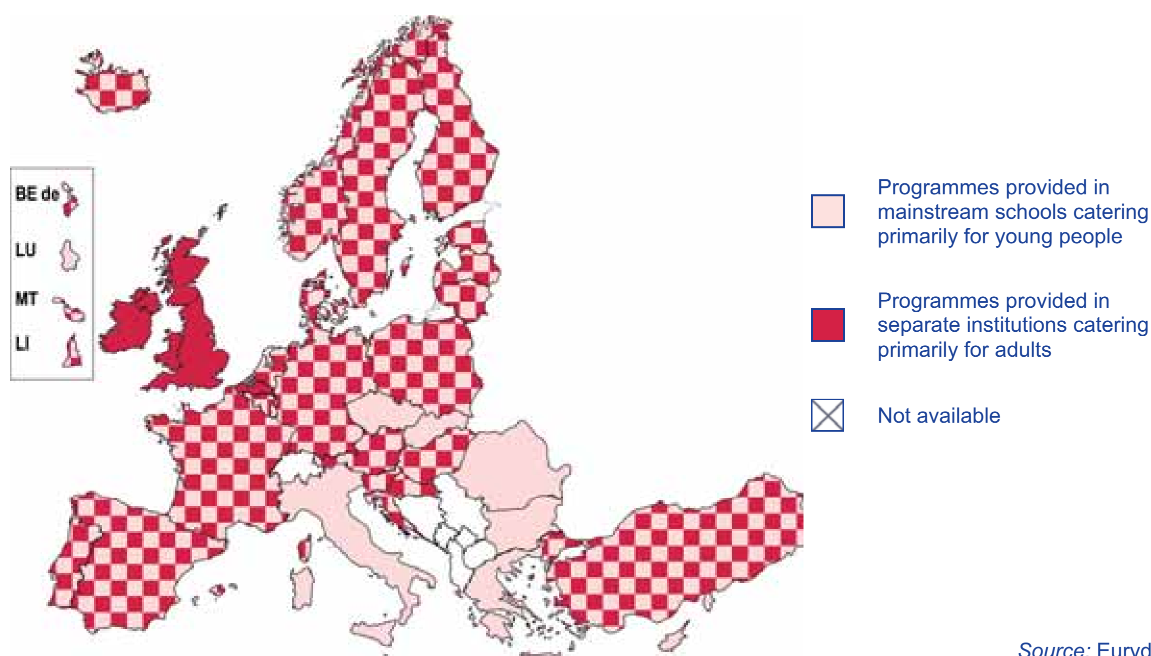
It is also worth noting that several countries have developed specific programmes within upper secondary education for young people who have left school early. These programmes often have an upper age limit. For example, France has put in place a network of 'second chance schools' (known under the abbreviation 'E2C') which offer programmes for young people aged between 18 and 25 years who have left the initial education system without any qualifications. Likewise, Luxemburg has established a 'second chance school' (*école de la 2e chance*) targeting early school leavers between 16 and 24 years. Hungary also reports an EU-funded second chance programme (*Második esély*) that provides a specific focus on young early school leavers.

As already shown in previous Eurydice studies, institutional arrangements for the provision of upper secondary programmes for adults vary across Europe (for a detailed inventory of different institutional arrangements, see EACEA/Eurydice 2011a, pp. 30-34). A summary of these arrangements is provided in Figure 3.5, showing that some countries only provide upper secondary programmes for mature students in the mainstream schools that also deliver initial education to young people (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Romania and Slovakia). In other countries though, the main providers are institutions dedicated to adult education and training. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, adults can follow upper secondary education in 35 adult education centres (*Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs*), which are publicly subsidised non-profit organisations.

In most countries, there is a combination of the two models, so that mature students can follow upper secondary programmes either in institutions delivering initial education to young people or in dedicated adult learning institutions. Nevertheless, even though both models operate, one may be more common. In Austria, for instance, the 'schools for employed adults' can operate on various premises, but they mainly operate in schools providing initial education to young people. In the Netherlands, adults can follow upper secondary vocational programmes either in secondary schools for young people or in around 40 regional training centres (ROCs), which offer a complete range of adult education programmes, including upper secondary programmes. However, while the two options exist, most adults attend classes in the regional training centres.

It is also worth noting that differences in institutional arrangements can sometimes be observed between general and vocationally-oriented programmes. In Poland, for instance, while vocational upper secondary programmes can be provided for adults by a range of institutions, including the vocational schools that also cater for young people, general upper secondary education is only provided for adults in separate general upper secondary schools and continuing education institutions for adults.

Figure 3.5: Providers of upper secondary education for adults, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory notes

Upper secondary programmes for adults provided in mainstreams schools are usually part-time or evening courses.

The figure does not consider the different institutional arrangements that may apply to general and vocational upper secondary programmes. This means that if general upper secondary education is provided only in one type of setting and vocational education and training in another type of setting, both settings are shown in the figure.

Country specific notes

Italy: Adults can follow competence courses corresponding to the first two years of upper secondary education in the newly created (2012) Centres for Adult Education (*Centri provinciali per l'istruzione degli adulti* – CPIAs). However, a full upper secondary qualification can only be taken in mainstream schools catering primarily for young people. Therefore, the figure only refers to the latter category of institutions.

United Kingdom: The data refers to programmes in further education (FE) colleges. However, although colleges are major providers of vocational and technical courses for adults, this is not their only focus and, depending on local arrangements, they are also major providers of full-time programmes for young people aged 16-19.

Achieving a medium-level qualification during adulthood: what do the statistics tell us?

After examining the pattern of provision for adult learners at upper secondary level, the question may be raised about the extent to which adult education contributes to the stock of medium-level qualifications in society. Figure 3.6, based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU LFS), provides a partial answer to this question, looking at the proportion of adults (aged 25-64) who gained their medium-level qualification, i.e. an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification, during adulthood.

Data show that on average, across all the EU countries, 3.6 % of all adults gained their upper secondary qualification – which is currently their highest educational attainment (see the explanatory notes related to Figure 3.6) – during adulthood, i.e. aged 25 or above. Beyond this average figure, the data points to substantial differences between countries.

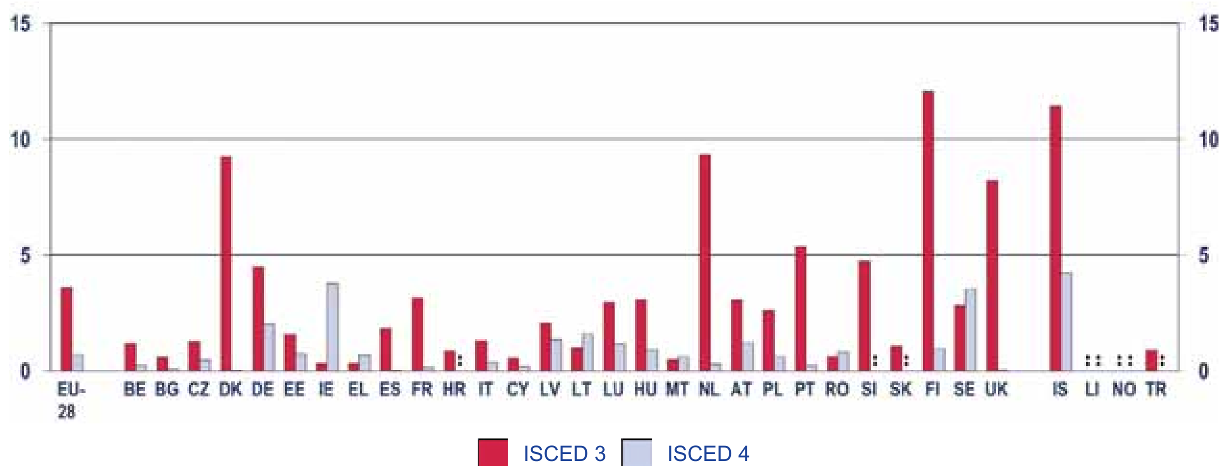
In around half of all European countries, less than 2 % of adults gained an upper secondary qualification during adulthood. This group comprises countries with different educational profiles. First, there are the countries such the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, and Slovakia, which have a relatively high stock of upper secondary qualifications in their population (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1)

and a low rate of early school leaving, meaning that almost all people enter adulthood with a completed upper secondary education. In contrast, there are countries with a relatively low stock of upper secondary qualifications (in particular Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta and Turkey), some of which face significant problems with respect to the numbers of young people leaving school early.

Several countries (Germany, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden) are close to the EU average, with the proportion of the adult population (25-64) who gained an upper secondary qualification during adulthood at between 2 % and 5 %. They are followed by Portugal, where 5.4 % of adults completed upper secondary education during adulthood. Taking into account that Portugal is characterised by particularly low educational attainment among the adult population (around 60 % of adults have completed lower secondary education at most; see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1), the data points to a significant contribution being made by adult education and training to the stock of upper secondary qualifications in this country. Indeed, around one in four adults holding an upper secondary qualification in Portugal gained it during adulthood (for more details, see data in the explanatory notes related to Figure 3.6).

A few countries are considerably above the EU average, meaning that a significant share of their adult population gained an upper secondary qualification at age 25 or above. These are Finland (12.1 %), Iceland (11.4 %), Denmark, the Netherlands (both 9.3 %) and the United Kingdom (8.2 %). These countries have slightly different adult educational profiles: in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom the proportion of low-qualified adults in the adult population is below the EU average, whereas in Iceland, it is somewhat above (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1).

Figure 3.6: Adults (25-64) who acquired their medium-level qualification during adulthood (aged 25 or above) as a percentage of all adults (25-64), 2013



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
ISCED 3	3.6	1.2	0.6	1.3	9.3	4.5	1.6	0.3	0.3	1.8	3.2	0.8	1.3	0.6	2.1	1.0	2.9
ISCED 4	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.0	2.0	0.7	3.8	0.7	0.0	0.1	:	0.4	0.2	1.4	1.6	1.2
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK		IS	LI	NO	TR
ISCED 3	3.1	0.5	9.3	3.1	2.6	5.4	0.6	4.7	1.1	12.1	2.8	8.2		11.4	:	:	0.9
ISCED 4	0.9	0.6	0.3	1.2	0.6	0.2	0.8	:	:	0.9	3.5	0.1		4.2	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat (EU LFS). Data extracted and calculated by Eurostat.

Explanatory notes

The figure refers to adults who gained their medium-level qualification (ISCED 3 or ISCED 4) during adulthood and currently hold it as their highest level of qualification. The figure does not capture situations where people gain more than one qualification during adulthood, in particular, in cases where adults move from a medium-level qualification to a higher education qualification (e.g. finishing upper secondary education at the age of 27 and higher education at the age of 32). This is because the EU LFS only enquires about the highest qualification and the age at which it was awarded.

While Figure 3.6 looks at the share of adults (aged 25-64) who gained a medium-level qualification during adulthood as a percentage of the total adult population, it is also helpful to quantify the proportion of adults (25-64) who gained a medium-level qualification during adulthood as a percentage of all holders (aged 25-64) of medium-level qualifications (rather than all adults). This indicates the contribution of adult education and training to the stock of medium-level qualifications in different countries. Data is presented in the following table.

Adults (25-64) who acquired their medium-level qualification during adulthood (aged 25 or above) as a percentage of all holders of medium-level qualifications (25-64), 2013

%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
ISCED 3	8.3	3.5	1.0	1.8	22.6	9.0	3.5	1.5	1.1	8.3	7.6	1.5	3.2	1.5	4.1	2.7	8.2
ISCED 4	24.1	8.0	18.8	28.4	75.8	25.1	10.6	28.3	8.3	27.5	53.5	:	46.1	10.9	16.7	7.4	35.6
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK		IS	LI	NO	TR
ISCED 3	5.4	3.6	22.5	5.9	4.3	26.6	1.1	8.2	1.5	26.9	7.2	22.3		38.6	:	:	5.1
ISCED 4	41.1	7.4	75.2	11.5	17.6	41.6	20.7	:	:	95.3	49.0	60.7		66.3	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat (EU LFS). Data extracted and calculated by Eurostat.

Country specific notes

Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain and **Cyprus**: Low reliability for ISCED 4.

The above picture would be incomplete without mentioning post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications. As Figure 3.6 shows, 0.7 % of adults in the EU completed post-secondary non-tertiary education during adulthood (i.e. aged 25 or above). This low percentage can be partly explained by the fact that in most European countries post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications are not very common. Therefore, it is generally rare for adults to hold these qualifications ([14]). When looking at the proportion of people who gained a post-secondary non-tertiary qualification during adulthood in the total adult population, only four countries are significantly above the EU average, namely Germany, Ireland, Sweden and Iceland. In these countries, between 2 % and 4.2 % of adults gained a post-secondary non-tertiary qualification during adulthood and currently hold it as their highest qualification.

3.3.3. Widening horizons: opportunities for accessing higher education

Entering higher education at a later stage of life is an important goal for many adults who return to upper secondary education. It can also be a goal for those who do not hold the qualifications that grant access to higher education, but have accumulated knowledge and skills from experiential learning. European policy in the field of higher education (European Commission, 2011b) as well as the communiqués related to the Bologna Process ([15]) have emphasised the theme of opening higher education to non-traditional learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, delayed entry students (i.e. students who don't enter higher education immediately after finishing upper secondary education) or mature learners who do not hold the traditional entry qualifications.

The Eurydice Network has covered the theme of alternative access routes to higher education in several of its recent studies (EACEA/Eurydice, 2011a; EACEA/Eurydice 2011b; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014a) ([16]). These have identified the various different country approaches. In particular, they have shown that while in around half of all European countries the

([14]) In many countries, post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications are mainly related to adult education and training. This can be observed when comparing the difference between data in Figure 3.6 and data in the explanatory notes related to the figure. Countries for which data in Figure 3.6 is low, while data in the explanatory note is high, mainly provide post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications within the adult education sector. This means that adult education and training contributes significantly to the stock of these qualifications; yet, the overall stock in the adult population remains low (as indicated in Figure 3.6).

([15]) See: http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=80 (Accessed 29 January 2015).

([16]) In addition to the Eurydice studies on higher education, European institutions have recently coordinated a study concentrating specifically on adult learners in higher education (see European Commission, 2013).

completion of upper secondary education is a necessary condition to enter higher education programmes, the other half have developed more flexible approaches to higher education entry requirements. These aspects will be further discussed in Chapter 4 on flexibility and progression pathways.

Where alternative access routes to higher education exist, they commonly include the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL). Moreover, some countries have developed preparatory programmes for non-traditional higher education candidates. The aim of these programmes is twofold: they provide alternative credentials to enter higher education and, at the same time, they aim to ensure that non-traditional higher education candidates possess the skills necessary to succeed in their learning goals. Such programmes exist in France, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Iceland (see also Chapter 4, Figure 4.7).

Preparatory programmes for non-traditional higher education candidates are usually provided by the higher education institutions themselves. However, in some countries, they can also be delivered by other institutions (e.g. further education colleges in the United Kingdom). While these programmes generally do not have any requirements for entry as regards prior learning achievement, they may use other entry criteria, in particular, the age of candidates (i.e. candidates must be 'mature students'). The age requirement applies to the programme/qualification known as 'DAEU' (*Diplôme d'Accès aux Etudes Universitaires*) that exists in France. Here, candidates must be at least 20 years old; they must not hold the standard higher education entry qualification (*baccalauréat*) and must have been out of the school system for at least two years. The programme generally takes one year to complete and includes around 300 hours of tuition. It attracts approximately 5 000 learners every year.

While comparable programmes known as 'access courses' that exist in the United Kingdom do not have a strictly defined minimum age, they are designed specifically for mature learners who have been out of education for some time and there is a general expectation that students should be at least 19 years old when they start the course. Some of these courses have a specific subject focus, such as 'law', 'nursing' or 'business studies', whereas others provide a preparation across a wider range of subjects. Comparable provision is offered under the same name (i.e. access courses) in Ireland.

Iceland has developed a programme known as 'preliminary studies' (*frumgreinanám*). The programme takes between one and two years to complete and is accepted by most Icelandic universities as an alternative preparation for higher education, replacing the traditional matriculation examination. Some universities offer it in a distance learning form. According to Icelandic authorities, 'preliminary studies' have become quite popular during the last years as a way for adults without formal qualifications to gain access to universities. They attracted 640 people in 2011. It is also interesting to note that candidates who need learning support prior to entering 'preliminary studies', can follow a 'foundation programme' known as *menntastoðir*. In contrast to preliminary studies, which are delivered by universities, the educational foundation programme is delivered by the 11 Lifelong Learning Centres around the country. It includes around 600 hours of tuition.

The Swedish programme known as 'foundation year' (*Basår*) is similar to the group of programmes described above. It takes one year to complete and targets students lacking the traditional qualifications required for entry into certain higher education programmes (e.g. medicine or civil engineering). However, the main providers of the programme, which are higher education institutions, generally only accept students who have already completed some form of upper secondary education. Only certain providers, including municipal institutions or independent providers, accept students without any upper secondary qualification.

Some countries provide preparatory courses for non-traditional higher education candidates, but completing these courses is not sufficient for entry to higher education. This is the case in Spain, where anyone wishing to enter university must pass an entrance examination (except those over 40 with professional experience related to the studies they wish to undertake). There are special entry examinations for two different categories of mature candidates: those over 25 and over 45. To prepare for these examinations, mature learners may follow courses in various institutions, including public or private adult education centres, or universities.

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to examine the types of publicly funded or co-funded programmes that exist across Europe for adults who wish to improve their basic skills or those who left the initial education system with low level or no qualifications. Starting from a conceptual discussion around commonly used terms such as 'literacy', 'basic skills', 'adult basic education' and 'second chance education', the chapter has shown that these terms do not have a single universal meaning. Instead, they belong to a wide conceptual field, which covers various overlapping or closely related topics. The analysis has therefore taken a pragmatic approach, using the term 'basic skills' when referring to the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT (with or without reference to other skills), and employing 'second chance education' in a few well-defined cases.

Looking at basic skills programmes, the chapter has outlined the complexity of the field, showing that basic skills can be integrated in education and training provision in a variety of ways. They can be the focus of dedicated programmes, which make explicit reference to improving these skills or they may be embedded in programmes that contribute to the same objective without specifically mentioning basic skills. Moreover, basic skills can be delivered in a range of environments, from education and training institutions to workplace or community settings. To allow a cross-country comparison, the analysis has delimited several programme clusters within which basic skills provision has been studied.

The review shows that most countries provide subsidies for programmes linked to the initial education system through to the end of lower secondary level, i.e. the level that should be completed by young people when they are, depending on the country, between 14 and 16 years old. Programmes for mature learners linked to initial education often target functional skills in different areas, including reading, writing, numeracy and ICT. Depending on the country, they may also include vocational elements. In most countries these programmes include a number of curriculum areas taken by all students. However, some countries organise them on a subject basis, allowing mature learners to take shorter courses in distinct subject areas (e.g. ICT, mathematics, languages, etc.). Overall, the extent of provision seems to follow the needs of individual countries, as outlined in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.1). Yet, when programmes are conceived and offered on a subject basis, they also seem to attract people who already hold formal qualifications associated with lower secondary education.

Outside the programmes linked to the system of initial education, some countries have developed dedicated basic skills programmes or programme frameworks. These represent a very diverse field, ranging from programmes with clearly defined providers, curricula and standards, to programmes or programme frameworks where most of these aspects are defined locally. Dedicated basic skills programmes are not necessarily non-formal in character; they are sometimes recognised by countries' qualification frameworks and structures.

The analysis has identified other key programme areas that contribute to raising basic skills achievement. Firstly, it has identified a cluster of preparatory programmes that seek to support adults

in their further learning progression and integrate basic skills in a range of different ways. Secondly, it has highlighted the contribution of vocational education and training, work-based learning and active labour-market policies to delivering dedicated or embedded basic skills programmes. Thirdly, it has pointed to liberal (or popular) adult education, outlining country examples where the sector benefits from continuing public subsidies, as well as cases where subsidies are mainly provided through EU-funded project-based initiatives. Lastly, the analysis has recognised the contribution of programmes at the boundary between non-formal and informal learning, in particular those coming under the umbrella of family literacy.

In the absence of evaluations of the programmes discussed, the chapter has explored recent evaluations of the effectiveness of basic skills provision. The academic literature suggests that substantial learning progression in basic skills requires at least 100 hours of tuition. Yet, it is worth mentioning that evaluating the effectiveness of basic skills programmes is a challenging task that should be ideally conducted over an extended period of time, taking into consideration that the learners facing difficulties with basic skills do not necessarily follow a direct or uninterrupted learning path.

Beyond basic skills programmes, the chapter has looked at opportunities for people with low level or no qualifications to achieve a recognised qualification later in life. In this context, it has first acknowledged the role of vocational education and training and vocational qualification systems in providing opportunities for adults with limited prior formal learning. Indeed, several European countries have developed qualification systems that are open – at least at the entry level – to adults with a limited prior formal learning. These may represent the first step towards higher qualification levels.

Moving to the context of medium-level qualifications, the chapter has examined the organisational arrangements under which adults can follow upper secondary studies. It has shown that while some countries have developed dedicated programme frameworks referring specifically to 'adult upper secondary education', in other cases provision for adults is delivered within the mainstream upper secondary framework. There are also countries that have developed frameworks for adult learners that cover several levels of qualifications, ranging from very basic qualifications to higher education levels. Moreover, the analysis has identified examples of upper secondary programmes that target specifically young people who have left initial education without any qualification. In most countries, the institutional arrangements allow adults to follow upper secondary programmes either in the mainstream schools whose main purpose is the delivery of initial education and training to young people, or in separate institutions focusing primarily on adults.

Regardless of the way in which they gain their upper secondary qualifications, the chapter has identified the proportion of adults that gained a medium-level qualification as their highest level of qualification during adulthood. Using data from the EU Labour Force Survey, the analysis has shown that 3.6 % of adults in the EU completed an upper secondary programme later in life, i.e. aged 25 or above. A few countries are significantly above the EU average, namely Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, the United Kingdom and Iceland. In these countries between 8.2 % and 12.1 % of adults achieved an upper secondary qualification later in life. When considering only the countries with the highest proportion of adults without upper secondary qualifications (as discussed in Chapter 1, Figure 1.1), Portugal is shown to be the one where adult education programmes seem to contribute most to the stock of upper secondary qualifications: of the adults holding an upper secondary qualification, around one in four acquired it during adulthood. As regards post-secondary non-tertiary education, only 0.7 % of adults in Europe acquired this type of qualification during adulthood. This low percentage is mainly due to the fact that post-secondary non-tertiary programmes and qualifications are not very common in most European countries.

The chapter looked finally at wider educational opportunities, examining programmes to prepare non-traditional candidates for higher education – in particular those with limited prior formal education or those with a vocational qualification that does not grant access to this level of education. The analysis has shown that among the countries that provide alternative access routes to higher education (which are further discussed in the next chapter), very few have developed large-scale programmes to widen access to higher education that include the preparatory courses targeting those with only low level qualifications. This raises the question whether the systems providing flexible access to higher education are doing enough to enable non-traditional learners to achieve their higher education goals.

CHAPTER 4: FLEXIBILITY AND PROGRESSION

Adult learners, especially those with low level basic skills or qualifications, may face specific barriers and difficulties when (re-)engaging in learning. They may have difficulties in finding appropriate provision (see Chapter 3) or it may be too expensive (see Chapter 6). Moreover, the flexibility provided for adults both in terms of entry requirements and the modes of delivering programmes is crucial if they are to (re-)engage in lifelong learning.

Evidence collected from countries has shown that the adoption of certain practices in the way programmes are organised and delivered can facilitate adult participation in learning. Flexibility is key, particularly with respect to modes of learning. Consequently, the provision of distance learning (including e-learning and blended learning); breaking programmes into more manageable units of study or modules; credit-based qualifications; validating non-formal and informal learning; as well as ensuring permeability between levels and pathways, all contribute to lowering the barriers which hinder adult participation in education and training.

The concept of permeability applied to education and training systems conveys the idea of learners being able to transfer easily to the next level and between different types of education. In this sense the European policy recommendations outlined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué ([1]) as well as the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2010) stress that permeability and flexible learning pathways are a precondition for having modern European education and training systems that encourage lifelong and life-wide learning (learning that takes place not only in schools, but also through gainful work, managing the home and caring for family members, civic engagement and leisure activities). However, traditionally, European education and training systems have worked in separate and hierarchal subsystems (general, vocational and higher education), which work rather well for learners following a predefined path, but make it difficult for 'atypical' learners, such as low-qualified adults who are trying to re-engage in learning.

The objective of this chapter is to look first at the most important barriers which hinder adult participation in learning and then to examine some of the modes of delivery and organisational arrangements that may have a positive effect on lowering these barriers, thus encouraging the participation of low-qualified adults. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section presents statistical data on obstacles to participation. The second section looks at the delivery of adult education programmes through distance learning. The third examines the state of play with respect to the modularisation of programmes and development of credit-based qualifications. The fourth explores the question of permeability, looking initially at the requirements for progression from lower to upper secondary education, and then from upper secondary to higher education. The final section examines the development of arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) before looking at the data collected in this field, in particular, data relating to take-up and user profiles.

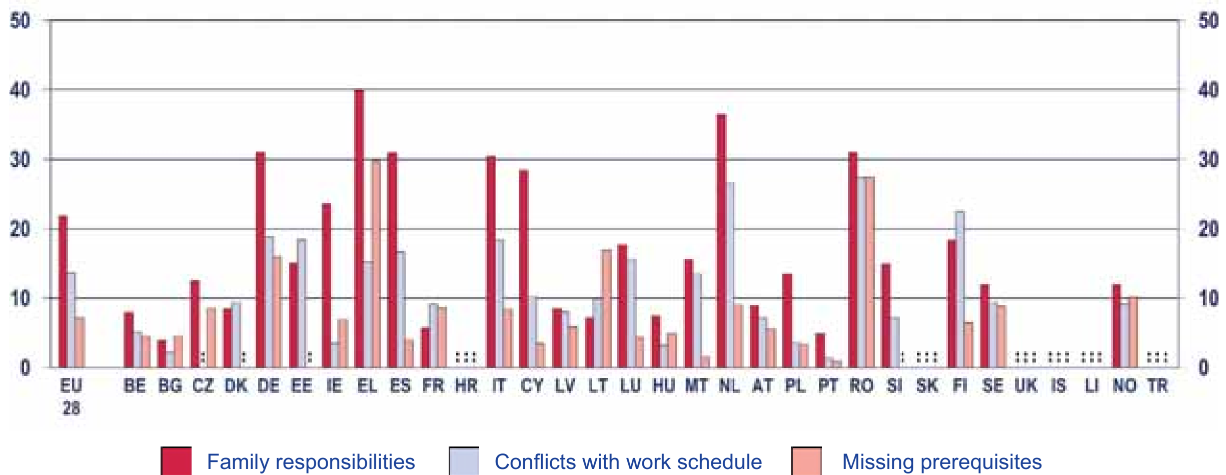
([1]) The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020. Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges on 7 December 2010 to review the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011-2020.

4.1. What makes participation in learning difficult for adults?

Within the Adult Education Survey (AES), respondents (aged 25-64) were asked to indicate what difficulties they face in participating in lifelong learning. The question offered several options to respondents ranging from 'no need for education and training' to practical obstacles. Among the obstacles, the survey included family responsibilities, conflicts between training and the work schedule, a lack of the 'prerequisites' for study, price, a lack of employer's support, a lack of suitable learning activities, a lack of access to ICT, and health or age (for the full list, see the explanatory note related to Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 focuses on respondents with low educational attainment (below upper secondary level) and examines three obstacles: it looks at two obstacles related to time constraints, namely combining education and training with family responsibilities and conflicts with work schedules. Furthermore, it looks at the lack of the 'prerequisites' such as qualifications, which will be further discussed in the section on progression routes between educational levels (see Section 4.4). Obstacles related to finance are further analysed in Chapter 6 on the funding of adult education.

Figure 4.1: Obstacles to participation in lifelong learning for adults (25-64) with low educational attainment (ISCED 0-2), 2011



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
Family	21.8	7.9	3.9	12.5	8.5	31.1	15	23.6	39.9	30.9	5.7	:	30.4	28.4	8.5	7.1	17.6
Work	13.6	5.1	2.2	:	9.3	18.8	18.4	3.5	15.2	16.6	9.1	:	18.3	10.2	8.1	9.9	15.6
Prerequisites	7.1	4.5	4.5	8.5	:	15.9	:	6.9	29.7	4	8.6	:	8.4	3.5	5.9	16.9	4.3
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
Family	7.4	15.6	36.4	8.9	13.5	4.9	31	14.9	:	18.3	12	:		:	:	12	:
Work	3.2	13.5	26.6	7.1	3.6	1.3	27.4	7.1	:	22.5	9.3	:		:	:	9.1	:
Prerequisites	4.9	1.6	9	5.5	3.3	0.9	27.4	:	:	6.4	8.8	:		:	:	10.1	:

Source: Eurostat (AES). Online data code: *trng_aes_178* (data extracted September 2014).

Explanatory notes

EU-28: Estimated.

A full list of options presented to all AES respondents with the average EU results for adults with low educational attainment (ISCED 0-2): respondent did not need it for the job (38.8 %); respondent did not have time because of family responsibilities (21.8 %); respondent did not need it for personal (not job related) reasons (18.1 %); training conflicted with the respondent's work schedule (13.6 %); training was too expensive or respondent could not afford it (13.3 %); respondent could not participate for health or age reasons (13 %); respondent did not have the prerequisites (7.1 %); respondent experienced difficulties in finding what he/she wanted (8.2 %); respondent faced a lack of employer support or public service support (6.8 %); no training was available to the respondent within a convenient distance (6.0 %); the respondent had no access to a computer or internet (for distance learning) (3 %) (data extracted September 2014).

Country specific notes

Bulgaria, **Denmark**, **Lithuania**, **Romania** and **Norway**: Low reliability for 'respondent did not have time because of family responsibilities'.

Bulgaria, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, **Hungary**, **Austria**, **Romania**, **Slovenia** and **Norway**: Low reliability for 'training conflicted with the respondent's work schedule'.

Bulgaria, **the Czech Republic**, **Cyprus**, **Latvia**, **Luxembourg**, **Malta**, **the Netherlands**, **Austria**, **Romania**, **Finland**, **Sweden** and **Norway**: Low reliability for 'respondents did not have the prerequisites'.

Data shows ([2]) that both work and family responsibilities have a direct impact on adult participation in lifelong learning. In most countries, family responsibilities are mentioned more often than work as an obstacle, but in some countries (Estonia, France and Finland), conflicts with the work schedule are more important. Adequate early childhood education and care services could be one of the reasons why family responsibilities are less of a problem here. Whilst the percentage of adults mentioning not having the 'prerequisites' as an obstacle is relatively low across the EU (7.1 %), it is still an important factor for respondents in some countries (e.g. Germany, Greece, Lithuania and Romania).

While Figure 4.1 concentrates on adults with low educational attainment (i.e. below upper secondary education) – in line with the overall focus of the present report – it is also interesting to examine which obstacles are reported by people having a higher level of educational attainment. Looking at the main differences, it emerges that the importance of conflicts with the work schedule increases as the educational attainment of respondents' increases. In contrast, time constraints due to family responsibilities affect all adults in a similar way, regardless of their educational background. Finally, the lack of prerequisites is obviously a more important obstacle for 'low-qualified' adults than for those with medium or high level qualifications, as this includes having the entry qualifications.

The rest of the chapter will thus look at how certain modes of delivery or organisational arrangements facilitate access to and assist progression in learning. These will include distance learning, modularisation and credit-based qualifications. The lack of the fundamental prerequisites to learning such as the appropriate entry qualifications will be further addressed in the sections on progression routes and the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

4.2. Distance learning programmes open to adults

Adults returning or planning to return to education and training often face conflicts with other responsibilities: gainful work, childcare and family responsibilities, and related transport issues. Distance learning, e-learning and blended learning are recognised as having the potential to reduce some of these barriers as they allow adults to choose the place, time and pace of learning. Yet, it is worth noting that while these three terms are often used interchangeably, they are not synonymous. In particular, distance learning – which is referred to in the present section – includes educational activities that are not necessarily delivered through electronic media (e.g. materials may be distributed by post and learning activities may not require a computer), whereas e-learning refers to educational activities using ICT, but not necessarily for distance learning purposes. In other words, distance learning and e-learning do overlap in some cases, but are by no means identical (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). The third term – blended learning – refers to the combination of distance learning or e-learning with some learning taking place in education and training institutions.

While it is widely acknowledged that distance learning allows greater flexibility, some potential disadvantages must be outlined. For example, when distance learning is ICT-based, it runs the risk of excluding the adult population with low level or no ICT skills and/or no access to a computer/Internet.

([2]) Data should be interpreted with caution because of substantial reliability issues which are mainly due to the sample size. For more details, see the country specific notes related to the figure.

Indeed, e-learning is only possible under certain conditions i.e. learners must have access to a computer/Internet and they must have the ability to learn independently. The quality of assimilation of knowledge is also questioned in the context of e-learning. The limitations of distance learning just mentioned will be acknowledged while going through the analysis of actual provision in the next section. In other words, while distance learning is one of the possible methods by which adult learners may re-engage in education and training, its success will always depend on a specific evaluation of each learner's needs and abilities. For some, the lack of face-to-face contact with the teacher and peer learners, and the autonomy required, will be de-motivating. For others, it removes the constraints that prevent them from learning, such as time and transport.

4.2.1. Characteristics of the distance learning programmes open to adults

The Eurydice data collection indicates that in four European countries or regions within countries (the French Community of Belgium, Spain, France and Turkey), publicly subsidised distance learning provision allows adults to gain most of the mainstream qualifications up to the end of upper secondary level (or even beyond) and is significantly institutionalised.

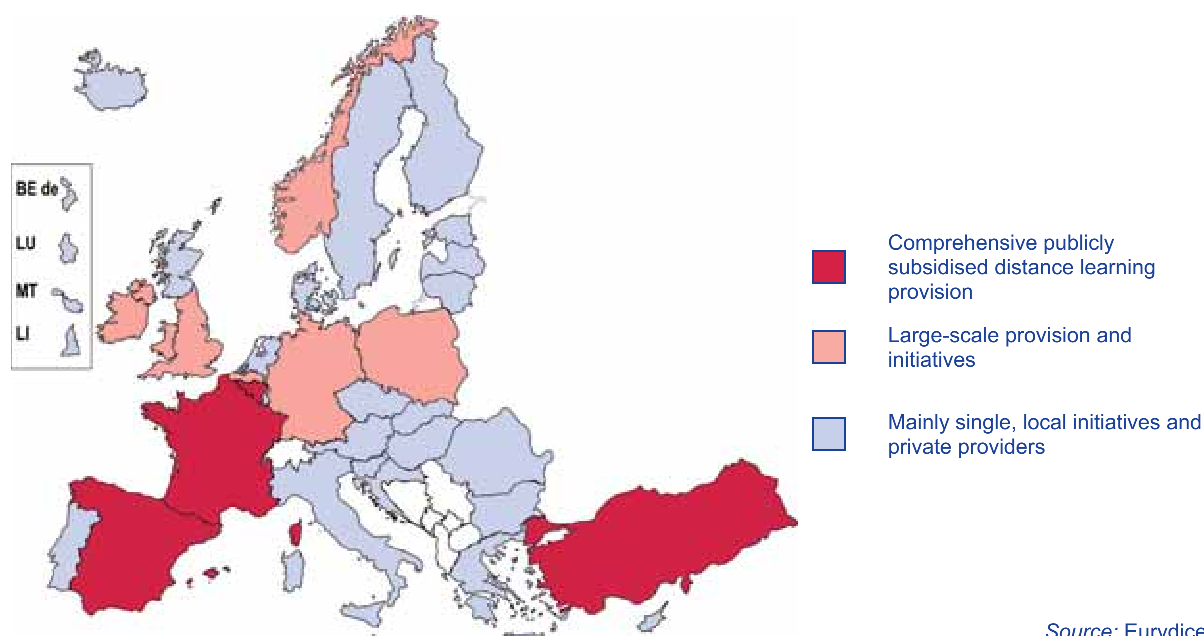
In the French Community of Belgium, where distance learning falls within the remit of the government of the French Community, one of its objectives is to prepare students for the exams organised by the French Community Examination Board (*Jurys de la Communauté française*), to obtain lower or upper secondary education qualifications. This is usually undertaken by people who cannot follow education and training in traditional settings, have gaps in their initial education (primary or secondary education) or who are interested in a career change. The number of distance learners amounts to more than 10 000 every year.

In Spain, distance learning for adults is also centrally coordinated and organised by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (MECD), through the Centre for the Innovation and Development of Distance Education (CIDEAD). The centre covers various formal programmes and qualifications from primary to upper secondary levels. Since 2010, the MECD has developed, in association with the Autonomous Communities, an online platform for vocational training (intermediate and upper level). In addition, some Autonomous Communities have established specific centres for adult distance learning.

In France, the National Centre for Distance Education (*Centre national d'enseignement à distance* – CNED) provides education and training at all education levels – including pre-primary and primary, through to higher education. It offers programmes leading to school qualifications (lower and upper secondary) and higher education qualifications as well as vocational training courses in some fifteen subjects.

In Turkey, the open high school (established in 1992) and the open lower secondary education (established in 1998), under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Directorate General for Lifelong Learning, allow those with a limited prior school experience to achieve qualifications up to upper secondary level. It also addresses citizens living abroad. In 2012/13, 367 277 students were registered in open lower secondary education and in 2013/14, 1 306 994 students were enrolled in general or vocational open high schools (i.e. upper secondary level programmes). One explanation for the high participation in open lower and upper secondary schools in Turkey could be that almost 70 % of the adult population (aged 25-64) have not attained an upper secondary qualification, and almost 60 % have not even completed lower secondary education (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1).

Figure 4.2: Large-scale publicly subsidised distance learning provision open to adults, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure does not cover distance learning that provides only higher education, but large-scale distance learning schemes that include higher education as well as lower level programmes are included. For more details on distance learning in higher education, see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014a.

In several other countries, although the adult distance learning provision is not as comprehensive and institutionalised, there are large-scale programmes promoting, coordinating, and/or delivering it.

The level of institutionalisation and the extent of provision vary between countries. The Flemish Community of Belgium, for example, used to have a similar distance learning provision as the French Community, but this was phased out at the end of 2010. However, distance learning is again being developed, in particular, through the adult education centres (*Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs*, i.e. centres delivering secondary adult education programmes) and adult basic education centres (*Centra voor Basiseducatie*, i.e. centres delivering basic skills courses in subjects such as Dutch, mathematics, languages, ICT or social orientation). These centres may apply for public funding if they offer blended learning programmes which include a minimum proportion of distance learning. The centres which receive funding must then share their experiences and expertise with others, and two years after receiving the funding, they must submit an activity and evaluation report to the government.

In Germany, according to a legal requirement dating back to 1977, distance learning courses may be offered by private organisations but require state approval. The approval procedure run by the Central Office for Distance Learning (*Staatliche Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht* – ZFU) verifies not only the accuracy and didactic quality of the teaching material, but also the content of the distance learning agreement between the student and the distance learning institute. Just over 181 000 people were registered in distance learning courses in 2011. The range of subjects is wide and includes school leaving qualifications.

Interestingly, in Ireland, distance learning is being promoted by a body dedicated specifically to adult literacy. The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) has developed an interactive website, 'www.writeon.ie', allowing adults to improve their reading, writing and number skills and to get a national qualification. Almost, 40 000 learners have benefited from this mode of learning and a significant number of awards have been conferred.

In the United Kingdom and Norway, although the provision of distance learning is less centrally directed, this form of learning is long-standing and extensive, and, in the case of Norway, some central coordination exists. In the United Kingdom, major providers were originally established with government support, but now operate independently. The National Extension College (NEC) was set up in 1963 as a not-for-profit organisation offering a wide range of general and vocational distance learning programmes. It was a pilot for the Open University, which as well as providing its own degree programmes, also provides distance learning access modules helping students to prepare for higher education programmes. The Open University also owns 'Futurelearn', which is a massive open online course platform (MOOC) providing free online courses in general and in vocational subjects. The University for Industry (Ufi) was created in 1998 with a remit to use new technology to transform the delivery of learning and skills. Its further education courses were delivered through the provider 'Learndirect', which was then sold in 2011 and is now a commercial company. In Norway, Flexible Education Norway (FuN), a national membership organisation for institutions involved in delivering flexible and distance education has, since 1968, played an active role in the development of distance education and has also acted as a consultative and co-operating body for the Ministry of Education and Research in these matters.

In line with the very nature of its delivery, distance learning programmes are organised in several countries as open and free online learning portals, such as the large open learning portal 'ich-will-lernen.de' (I want to learn), funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and developed by the German Adult Education Association (*Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband* – DVV). It offers more than 31 000 exercises on topics including basic skills (literacy, numeracy, German) and other general adult skills such as managing finances, applying for a job, work management, working together and intercultural competences. Learners are supported by online tutors. From 2004 when the portal was initiated up to 2013, more than 400 000 learner passwords were allocated and more than 3 200 tutors registered to support the learners. In Ireland, the Further Education and Training Authority, SOLAS, provides a range of online courses, through the e-college website, 'www.ecollege.ie'. However, these courses cater only for individuals who are ICT-literate and don't require any additional support. As discussed in the introductory part to this section, this is a clear limitation to the participation of low-qualified adults.

For these very reasons, the delivery of adult learning programmes through online portals, may not only be accompanied by the support of tutors but may also offer physical spaces beside the virtual classroom. This is the case of 'Aula Mentor' in Spain, an internet-based open education and training system, providing non-formal education through two main infrastructures: physical spaces with computer equipment and internet connection and a virtual study and communication environment. The student's learning process is also guided by a tutor.

Online learning portals can also be found in the area of language learning (language of residence, especially for immigrants), like the recently launched (November 2013) platform 'BRULINGUA' in the Brussels Region (Belgium), which allows any registered jobseeker to follow free online language classes in Dutch, English, French and German from any internet connected computer. The Walloon Region, with 'Wallangues', also offers this opportunity to its residents (over 18 years). In Germany, the portal 'ich-will-deutsch-lernen.de', based on the curriculum of the integration courses of the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (BAMF), offers the possibility to learn German from level A1 to B1 (CEFR for languages ([3])). Additionally, there are special exercises for those who cannot read and write. Between August 2013 and the end of 2013, 5 000 learners (2 750 individual learners, 2 250 as part of an integration course) and 600 tutors registered.

([3]) The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: developed by the Council of Europe is used to describe the learning outcomes of learners of foreign languages across Europe. A1=beginner, B1=intermediate.

Although the development of regional and local initiatives to promote distance learning is not the focus of the present analysis, their existence and contribution should not be overlooked. For instance, in France, a few distance learning experiences are being developed at regional level. The region *'Centre'* has put in place a distance learning programme targeting the most vulnerable adults, to increase their basic skills in French literacy, numeracy, other languages and skills to find a job. In the Netherlands, plans are under way to allow privately-funded institutions delivering distance learning to fund courses temporarily from government grants.

European funding, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), is also being used to promote the delivery of distance learning programmes. In Lithuania for example, the Education Development Centre is implementing an ESF project dedicated to the development of non-formal e-learning for adults. In Poland, the EU funded project 'The Model of implementation and promotion of distance learning in LLL' (*Model systemu wdrażania i upowszechniania kształcenia na odległość w uczeniu się przez całe życie*) is being implemented by the National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education – NCFSVCE (*Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej* – KOWEZiU), distributing manuals and educational materials for distance learning and organising conferences and seminars on the topic. In Greece, the Lifelong Learning Centres (*Kentra Dia Viou Mathisis* – KDVM), co-funded from EU sources, are piloting distance learning programmes in municipalities.

Still, in the majority of European countries, the provision of distance learning programmes open to adults is mainly ensured though private (non-profit and for-profit) providers or single and/or local initiatives. Several countries report that education providers have the option to deliver distance learning among other modes of learning. In other words, distance learning provision is not centralised but is the responsibility of providers only. This also means that the extent of and participation in the provision of distance learning for adults can vary a lot across European countries.

4.2.2. Take-up of distance learning

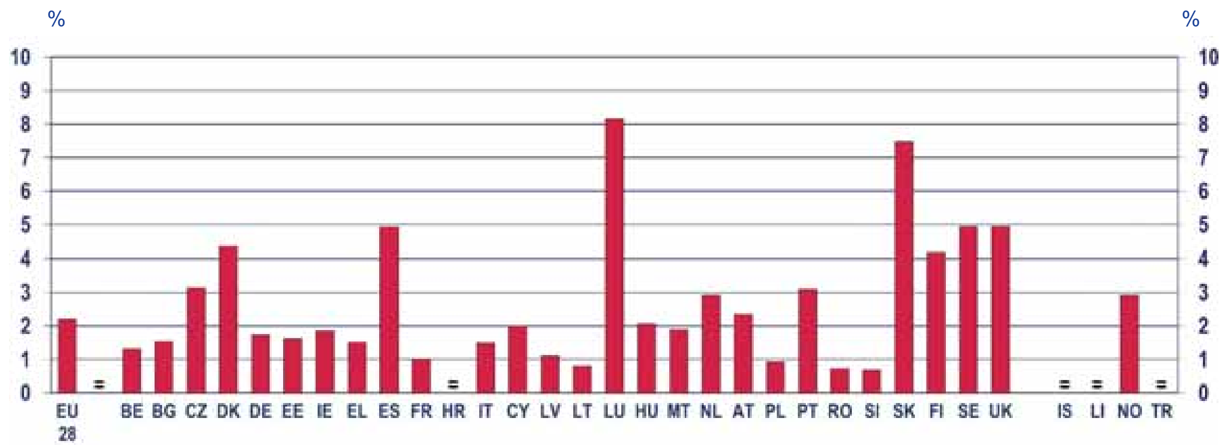
As discussed in the previous section, the delivery of adult education programmes through distance learning varies between countries. There are differences as to the degree of institutionalisation and comprehensiveness of provision, as well as in the level of central coordination or amount of autonomy given to providers. This section intends to quantify the participation in distance learning and explores the availability of data on the profile of learners using these services.

With regard to the main focus of this report, it would be particularly interesting to quantify the proportion of low qualified adults who participate in distance learning. However, while the Adult Education Survey (AES) includes a specific question on participation in distance learning, its sample size does not allow a breakdown by highest educational attainment for this item. Nevertheless, it allows a cross-country comparison of the scale of participation in distance learning, taking into account all adults, regardless of their educational attainment.

Data shows that during 12 months preceding the interview, a little over 2 % of all adults in the EU participated in a formal or non-formal learning activity with distance learning as its main method of delivery. Only seven countries were above 4 % while most countries were between around 1 % and 3 %.

The comparably low participation rates in distance learning should not hide the fact that 2.2 % of the adult population in Europe still represents a lot of people in absolute terms. Moreover, this area is changing as more and more firms use e-learning, for example, for on-the-job training or 'webinars' to replace on-site workshops. Still, distance learning represents a relatively small proportion of all learning activities.

Figure 4.3: Adults (25-64) who participated in a distance learning activity (formal or non-formal) as a percentage of all adults (25-64), 2011



EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
2.2	1.3	1.5	3.1	4.4	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.5	4.9	1.0	:	1.5	2.0	1.1	0.8	8.2
HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
2.1	1.9	2.9	2.4	0.9	3.1	0.7	0.7	7.5	4.2	5.0	5.0		:	:	2.9	:

Source: Eurostat (AES). Data calculated by Eurydice based on data extraction and calculation by Eurostat (see explanatory notes).

Explanatory notes

EU-28: Estimated.

Data was calculated based on data extraction and calculation by Eurostat (see table below). Eurostat data refers to adults (aged 25-64) who participated in a distance learning activity as a percentage of all adult participants of the same age in education and training. The proportion of distance learners in relation to the total population (Figure 4.3) was calculated by multiplying the proportion of distance learners among the adult participants in education and training (see table below) by the proportion of adult participants in education and training (see Figure 1.6 in Chapter 1) and divided by 100.

Adults (25-64) who participated in a distance learning activity (formal or non-formal) as a percentage of all adult participants in education and training, 2011

EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
5.4	3.5	5.9	8.5	7.5	3.5	3.2	7.6	12.9	13.1	2.0	:	4.2	4.7	3.4	2.8	11.6
HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
5.0	5.2	4.9	4.9	3.8	7.0	9.1	1.9	18.0	7.5	6.9	13.8		:	:	4.9	:

Source: Eurostat (AES). Data extracted and calculated by Eurostat.

Country specific notes

Belgium, Estonia and **Ireland**: High non-response rates: Belgium (26.1 %), Estonia (86.3 %) and Ireland (34.9 %).

For some countries, the quantitative participation rates shown in Figure 4.3 put into perspective the extent of the institutional development of distance learning as indicated in Figure 4.2. In the French Community of Belgium and France, although the distance learning system is well developed, the participation rate suggests that, in practice, it is not such a popular option for adult learners. In contrast, in Spain, the relatively high participation rate seems to reflect the institutional efforts to develop distance learning provision. In the case of the United Kingdom, the traditionally wide public and private offer of distance learning is reflected in the participation rate. In Luxembourg, as many adults are multilingual, they can use distance learning provision from neighbouring countries, which is being advertised by the ministry. Interestingly, a comparison between Figures 4.2 and 4.3 points to a few countries (e.g. Denmark, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden) not reporting any large-scale publicly subsidised distance learning schemes (Figure 4.2.), but nevertheless having a relatively high share of adults participating in distance learning activities (Figure 4.3.). Further investigation would be needed to better understand the reasons for the relatively high participation rate in those countries.

Within the Eurydice data collection, countries have also been asked whether the take-up of distance learning is being monitored, and whether detailed information about participants is being collected; in particular, their educational background, age, labour market and immigration background. In only a few countries or regions within countries (French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Iceland and Norway), is there data on the take-up of distance learning provision, often to be gleaned from general statistics. A breakdown of data on participants by socio-economic characteristics is even scarcer. Where background information on distance learning is available, it is often limited to information on age, gender, type of programme attended and only sometimes, e.g. in Spain, are more details given, such as region, educational attainment, labour market status and immigration background. It is hence difficult to analyse specifically participation by low qualified adults or other vulnerable groups such as immigrants and the unemployed. The collection and analysis of data is still not systematic enough to draw any conclusions on distance learning user patterns.

In some countries, information on the modes of adult learning is not directly collected for the purpose of monitoring learners' participation and there is no specific secondary data analysis, but data on distance learning and characteristics of the participants can be extracted from general statistics, e.g. in Estonia, Poland, Iceland and Norway. However, this is limited to absolute participation numbers in different programmes, and does not allow further analysis of participants' profiles. In other countries, or regions within countries, such as the French Community of Belgium, Latvia and Luxembourg, adult education providers collect and monitor the take-up of different modes of adult learning but the information is not available centrally.

4.3. Provision of modular adult learning programmes and credit-based qualifications

Offering modular adult education programmes and/or credit-based qualifications is one of the ways to meet the specific needs of adult learners and to remove barriers to their participation. The possibility of taking modules as partial qualifications or obtaining credits can be a motivating factor for adult learners, who due to work and family obligations cannot undertake a complete programme. Moreover, the modular structure of programmes facilitates the validation of learning and thus the development of individual education pathways (see Section 4.5 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning).

4.3.1. Modular adult education programmes

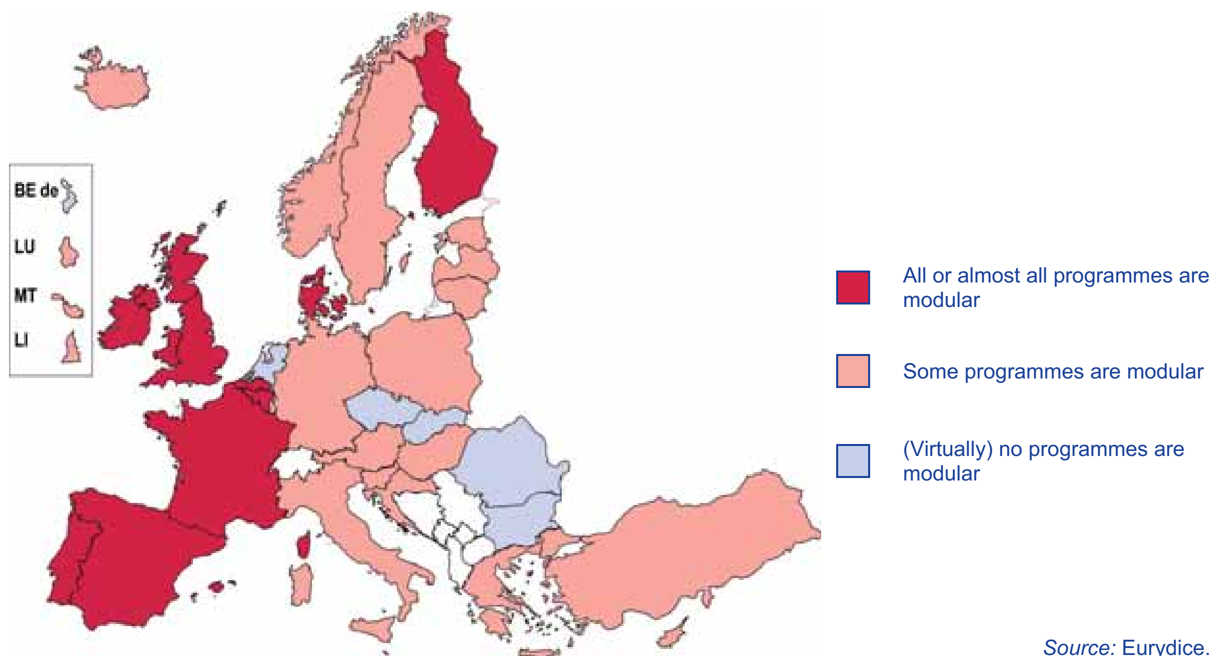
Modularising adult education programmes can facilitate the creation of individual learning pathways. Programmes divided into several 'building blocks' allow adult learners to progress at their own pace and complete qualifications progressively. Therefore, many European countries are increasingly offering modular programmes and qualifications. In this regard it is worth noting that learning modules need to be planned as part of the whole adult education system, as it appears that weakly integrated modules in a complex system are not beneficial to the learner (OECD, 2003).

As shown in Figure 4.4, a majority of European countries offer at least some programmes with a modular structure. Yet, across countries, modules differ in their conception and characteristics, such as the way in which programmes are divided and the amount of study required for each unit. Also, the stage of development and extent of modularisation varies from country to country.

In some countries, modularisation is not new: in Denmark, general adult education (*Almen voksenuddannelse* – AVU, i.e. education for adult learners, equivalent to lower secondary education) is organised as single subject courses, which is similar to modules, whereby learners receive a formal

certificate after completing each individual subject. Modularisation has also taken place used in labour market training programmes (*Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser* – AMU) since the 1970s, and more recently in initial VET (Schreier et al., 2010). In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), modular programmes are well-established for both vocational qualifications and general qualifications. However, in England, there are moves away from modularisation. Apprenticeships will, from 2017/18, be assessed largely at the end of the programme. GCSEs and A levels (general qualifications taken at school and also available to adults) have also been undergoing reform, with modular assessment of GCSEs replaced by linear-only assessment by summer 2014 and linear only assessment of A levels being phased in from 2015. However considerable flexibility remains within the system, as GCSEs, A levels and general qualifications offered at basic levels such as Functional Skills and Essential Skills are all organized on a single subject basis. In Wales and Northern Ireland, the option for modular assessment remains.

Figure 4.4: Existence of modular programmes open to adults up to upper secondary level (ISCED 3), 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

In Spain, adult general and vocational secondary education is modular. Access to these modules is flexible and adult learners can enter the module which corresponds best to their previous learning achievements and needs. If they do not have the formal qualifications to satisfy the admission requirements, they can demonstrate appropriate knowledge through an initial assessment. In Finland, most adult education is modularised with the exception of lower secondary (or single-structure) education for adults (representing only around 2 000 participants in 2011). Students can choose to complete one or more qualification units at a time, as appropriate for their individual learning abilities, personal circumstances or employment situation.

It is also interesting to measure the progress made in this field in recent years. In this sense, the mapping presented in the 2011 Eurydice report on adult education (EACEA/Eurydice, 2011a), indicated that Belgium (Flemish and French Communities) and Portugal were in the process of implementing a modular structure within adult education and training. Both countries now report that in the school year 2013/14 this process has been completed and almost all programmes are now modular. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the modularisation of adult basic education (i.e. provision delivered by the 13 adult basic education centres which targets basic skills) started in 2000. Since 2007, all programmes within adult basic education have been modular. The existing linear

courses had to be phased out by 2012 (EACEA/Eurydice, 2011a). There are now education and training profiles for all basic education and secondary adult education programmes, and all publicly subsidised providers delivering this type of provision (i.e. the 13 adult basic education centres and the 35 adult education centres entitled to deliver secondary education for adults) must respect the content and organisation of the modules as well as the number of teaching periods allocated. In 1991, the French Community of Belgium started to implement a modular structure for its programme framework 'education for social advancement' (*enseignement de promotion sociale*; see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2). All programmes currently offered by providers are modular.

In Portugal, the modularisation of programmes has been taking place alongside a comprehensive reform of vocational education that began in 2007. Modules were first introduced as a teaching option, as 'units of short duration', aiming at professional competences which are socially recognised and certified for the labour market purposes (Schreier et al., 2010). The reforms included the creation of a National Qualifications System (NQS), which incorporates the National Qualifications Catalogue and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Several adult education programmes, including the 'basic skills training' programme (*programa de formação em competências básicas*; see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2), are based on a modular structure and are integrated within the National Qualifications Catalogue. Different modules can be completed either by participating in an education or training programme or through the validation of prior non-formal and informal learning.

Several other countries have taken a systematic approach to the modularisation of adult education programmes. For example, in France, modularisation started to be developed in 2000. Two years later, a system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning known as 'VAE' (*validation des acquis de l'expérience*) was introduced and programmes started to be organised in modules. The expectation now, therefore, is that all programmes delivered by the Ministry of Education and other ministries should follow this principle. However, the approach is not necessarily used in programmes that do not lead to any certification or qualification (e.g. the basic skills programme 'key competences' – *compétences clefs* described in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2). In Italy, under the new system for adult education introduced from 2013/14, courses are organised in a modular way, in 'learning units'. In Lithuania, the development of the modular system has intensified in both general and vocational education since 2010. By 2015, 60 additional modular programmes in vocational education and training are expected to be created. In Austria, in order to meet the needs of adults with various responsibilities, all schools for employed adults (*Schulen für Berufstätige*; see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2) providing general or vocational upper secondary qualifications have introduced modularised programmes and now provide individualised learning opportunities. Furthermore, in recent years, some of the apprenticeship training programmes, which are also open to adults, have also been modularised. In Iceland, during the last 10 years, 43 courses aimed at adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications have been modularised.

Some recent developments are being supported by European funds, such as in Latvia, where the development of 56 modular vocational education programmes began in 2008, as part of an ESF project to develop 184 programmes by 2020. In Poland, since 2012, new types of vocational and continuing training courses are being implemented as part of the reform of vocational education and training. New courses with a modular structure and the option of accumulating and transferring credits have been introduced.

Only a few countries report not having any modular programmes open to adults: the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Bulgaria (with the exception of the National Programme for Literacy and Qualifications for the Roma Population, and current changes linked to the National VET Act of 27 July 2014, which introduced a modular training system for VET and adult learning), the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia.

4.3.2. Credit-based qualifications for adult learners

Alongside the development of modular programmes, policy recommendations advocate increasing the availability of credit-based qualifications, allowing the learner to accumulate and validate learning units at their own pace. This would allow even small efforts to build up skills and achieve qualifications to be validated and thus lower the existing barriers by exempting learners from the obligation to complete learning programmes in their entirety.

At European level, work on credit transfer is carried out through the European credit transfer system (ECTS) ([4]) for higher education as part of the Bologna Process and the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET), which is based on the 2009 recommendation of the European Parliament and Council ([5]).

Besides a transnational dimension, ECVET has a lifelong learning dimension (Cedefop, 2014), which is important in the context of this report. The development of ECVET is being monitored by Cedefop, and shows that over the past two decades, there has been a steady development of European and national initiatives supporting the recognition and validation of credit transfer (Cedefop, 2012b). One step necessary for implementing these initiatives at national level is to develop a national qualifications framework (NQF). However, qualification frameworks must be conceived as a mean for bridging segmented and hierarchical structures of education and training systems, rather than reproducing them (ibid.).

Unfortunately, little information is available concerning credit-based qualifications in adult education and training. Indeed, while Cedefop's ECVET monitoring (Cedefop, 2014) offers insight into the state of development of credit-based programmes, it doesn't specifically mention adult participation in these. Nevertheless, the Eurydice data collection identified recent developments in countries such as Lithuania, Austria and Poland, where the ECVET implementation is under way, and is also being applied to programmes for adults. In Lithuania, the development of the credit system, under way since 2010, applies to both general and vocational education.

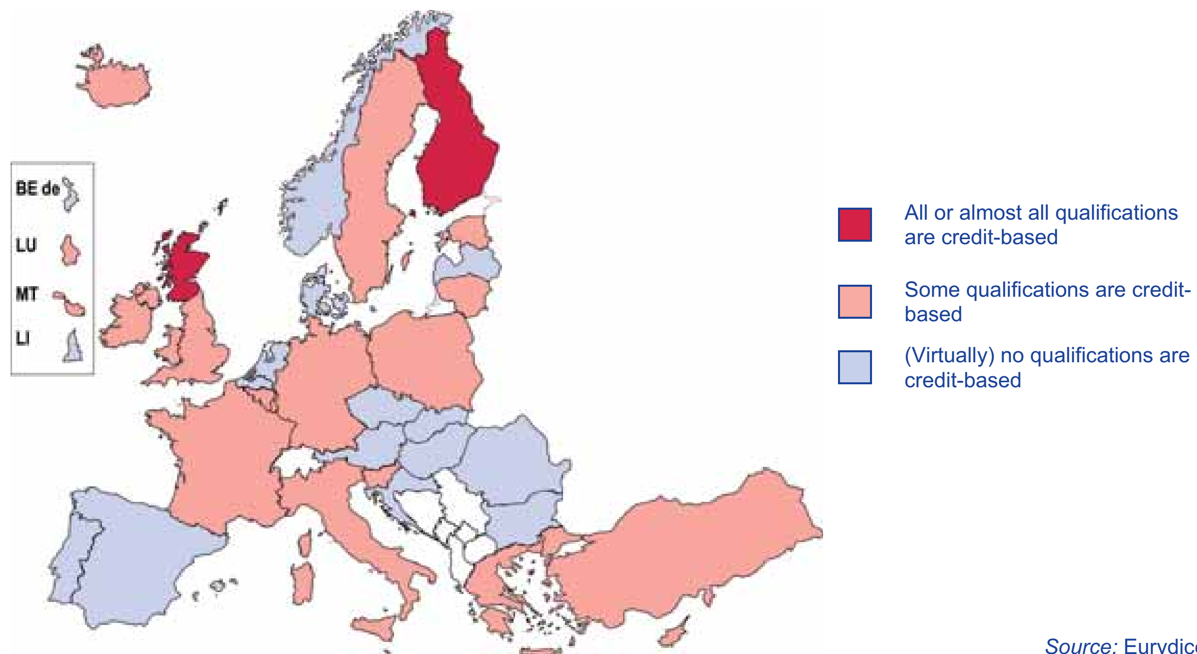
The Eurydice data collection on adult education suggests that in nearly half of all countries or regions within countries, programmes up to upper secondary education open to adults are either not yet linked to any credit system (the Czech Republic, Spain, Latvia, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Liechtenstein and Norway) or its application is very limited (Flemish and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria and Slovakia). In the Flemish Community of Belgium, despite the modularisation of adult education programmes, no credit system reflecting the workload for learners has been linked to modules, only the number of teaching periods has been set.

In the other half of the education systems studied, credits are applied to at least some qualifications open to adults. Finland and the United Kingdom (Scotland) are leaders in the field, reporting that almost all adult learning qualifications are credit-based. In Finland, the possibility of gaining credits applies to basic skills programmes as well as to adult education programmes that are linked to the system of initial education (general and vocational upper secondary and further vocational programmes).

([4]) ECTS was originally set up in 1989 as a pilot scheme within the framework of the Erasmus programme in order to facilitate the recognition of study periods undertaken abroad by higher education students.

([5]) Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), OJ C 155/1, 8.7. 2009.

Figure 4.5: Existence of credit-based qualifications up to upper secondary level open to adults (ISCED 3), 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Looking more specifically at the basic skills programmes identified in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.2), the picture is quite clear. Even those education systems where the accumulation of credits seems possible for some adult education programmes (the French Community of Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland and Turkey) this does not apply to basic skills programmes. These programmes may have a modular structure in some countries, and in a few cases may be delivered through distance learning, but they are rarely credit-based. However, some exceptions exist, including Iceland, where preparatory programmes for low-qualified adults intending to return to the education system (*Grunnmenntaskólinn* and *Nám og þjálfun í almennum bóklegum greinum*) may lead to the accumulation of up to 24 credits that may be taken into account when completing an upper secondary programme. Moreover, the programmes 'Back to School' (*Aftur í nám*) and 'Steps Towards Self-reliance in Reading and Writing' (*Skref til sjálfshjálpar í lestri og ritun*), aimed at adults with learning disabilities and intended to help them to master reading, writing and studying, are modular and recognised as equivalent to up to seven credit units in the upper secondary system. The ICT programme 'Stronger Employees' (*Sterkari Starfsmaður: Upplýsingatækni og samskipti*) may give up to 12 credits.

Other credit-based options for programmes at lower secondary level or below can be found in a few other countries or regions within countries (e.g. the French Community of Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Sweden and Turkey). For instance, in Estonia and Ireland, credit-based options at this level are linked to vocational programmes. These programmes are linked to the system of initial education (although they are open to adult learners and sometimes specifically designed for them), and thus part of the credit system associated with initial education.

In general terms, the lower the level of education (e.g. basic skills programmes), the less common are credit-based programmes or qualifications. In other words, while basic skills programmes are rarely credit-based, it is more common to find programmes or qualifications with credit-based options at the upper secondary level (general or vocational) or at corresponding qualification levels.

4.4. Progression routes

The learning path of low-qualified adults is generally not straight or continuous, but is usually characterised by gaps, interruptions or diversions. In this sense, the way the education system is organised and how progression to the next stage is managed will have consequences for adults who wish to re-enter the system at a later stage in their life. The consequences may be greater for adults who left initial education with low level or no qualifications at all (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1).

The lack of the pre-requisites for re-entering education – possibly including the lack of qualifications – can be among the obstacles to re-engaging adults in education and training (see Section 4.1). When taking into consideration only those adults with low educational attainment (i.e. below upper secondary education), on average, around 7 % mention the lack of the prerequisites as an obstacle to their participation in education and training (see Figure 4.1). The results by country show a much higher percentage in some, meaning that the lack of the prerequisites, including qualifications, is a significant barrier in those countries.

The following two sections will look specifically at the conditions for progression from lower to upper secondary education and from upper secondary to higher education. This has a particular significance for the various 'second chance' adult learners who left initial education with low level or no qualifications and would like to return to the formal education system.

4.4.1. Progression from lower to upper secondary education

At present, in all EU countries, primary and lower secondary education constitute the compulsory stages of education. However, as Figure 1.1 shows (see Chapter 1), in 2013, 6.5 % of adults in Europe completed primary education at most, i.e. left the initial education system before completing the lower secondary level. This means that a significant part of the adult population might wish to complete upper secondary education during adulthood, and could face limitations related to the lack of formal qualifications for entering this educational level. This section thus examines where in Europe the completion of lower secondary education is a necessary condition for adults to enter upper secondary programmes, and where there is some flexibility for progression that would allow adult learners who have not completed lower secondary education to still access an upper secondary programme.

Figure 4.6 shows that in slightly fewer than half of all European countries, the completion of lower secondary education is a necessary condition for progression to further formal studies. This applies not only to young people, but also to adult learners, potentially preventing those without lower secondary education from progressing to upper secondary level. This is the case mostly in eastern and south-eastern European countries.

In nine countries, the completion of lower secondary education is necessary for accessing some upper secondary education programmes, while for others there is no such requirement.

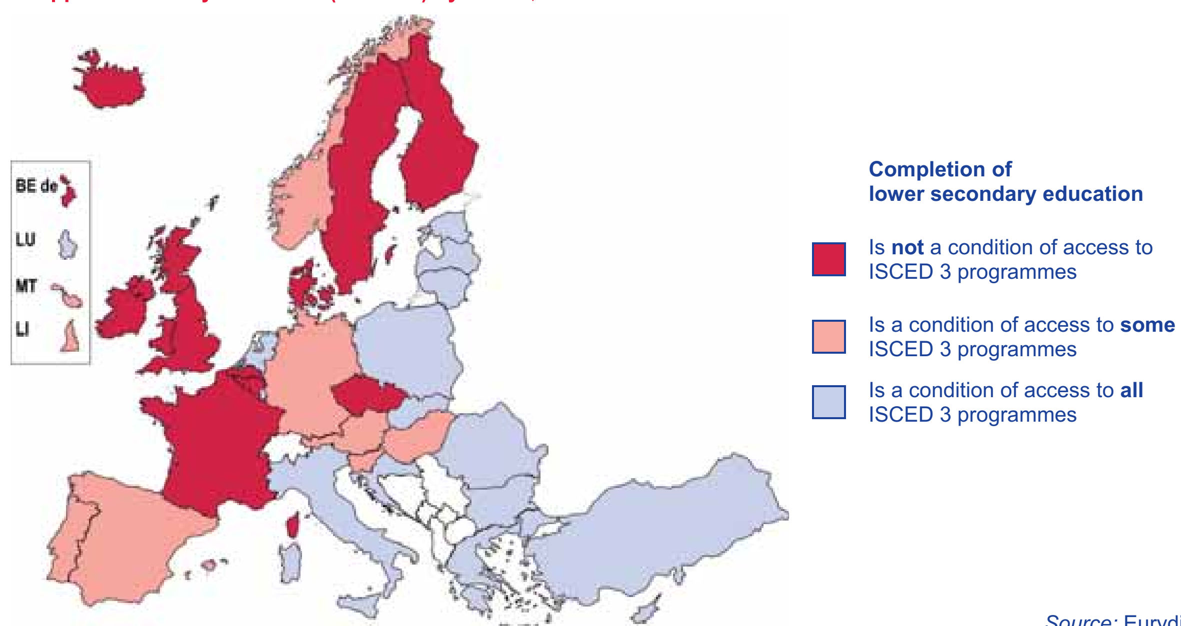
At the less flexible end of the spectrum, the completion of lower secondary education is the general rule, and access to one or more specific upper secondary programmes without having to complete lower secondary is the exception. These exceptions include the dual system in Germany, the newly introduced (upper secondary level) bridging programmes for poor performers in Hungary; the apprenticeship training programmes in Austria; short vocational education in Slovenia; and the *Berufsmaturitätsschule* in Liechtenstein. In Austria for instance, the completion of lower secondary education is needed for the majority of adult upper secondary programmes, yet this is not the case for the preparation of the extraordinary examination for apprenticeship. Adults over 18 years of age who

have acquired vocational skills and knowledge outside the regular apprenticeship training programmes, for example, through work experience or non-formal courses, may in exceptional circumstances be allowed to take the final apprenticeship examination. However, de facto, most companies request the lower secondary certificate before signing a contract with an apprentice. Similarly, in Germany, although there are no formal requirements to enter *Berufsschule* in the dual system, most training companies require at least the attainment of the first general education qualification, *Hochschulabschluss*, from their trainees.

At the more flexible end of the spectrum, the requirement to complete lower secondary education is exceptional and applies only to a few programmes, while flexible access to most upper secondary education programmes is the general rule. Overall, general upper secondary programmes seem to require the completion of lower secondary education more often than other programmes at that level (vocational programmes mainly).

Finally, in nine countries (14 education systems), the completion of lower secondary education is not a necessary condition for progression. In some of these countries, the certificate associated with the completion of lower secondary education is not needed to access upper secondary programmes (e.g. in the French Community of Belgium, the *Certificat d'études du 1er degré* (CE1D); in France, the *brevet*). In Finland, institutions delivering upper secondary education can choose up to 30 % of students within the flexible student selection scheme, i.e. on the basis of validation criteria defined by the institutions. In Iceland, upper secondary education is open to all candidates who have reached 16 years, without any further qualification requirements. The political push towards more permeability in education systems can eventually lead to changes on the ground, such as in Estonia, where vocational education reform was introduced in 2013/14 that will allow adults who are at least 22 years old to access upper secondary vocational education without holding a basic education (i.e. lower secondary education) certificate. Curricula for these programmes are currently being developed and the reform will be fully implemented by 2017.

Figure 4.6: Completion of lower secondary education (ISCED 2) as a condition of access to upper secondary education (ISCED 3) by adults, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Countries with a single-structure education system (e.g. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway) may use other expressions to describe lower secondary education (e.g. 'the last years of basic education', 'the last years of compulsory schooling').

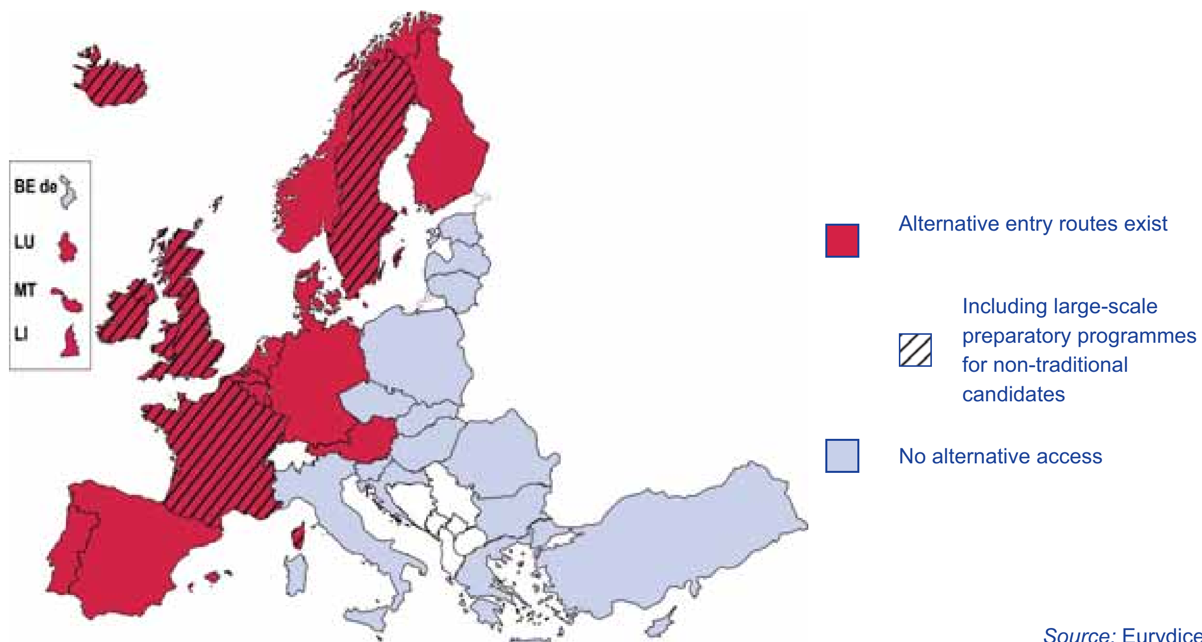
This description of legal and institutional frameworks would benefit from an analysis of participation figures, indicating the number/proportion of adults who have accessed upper secondary programmes without first having completed lower secondary education. This would provide a more balanced picture of how flexible progression really is in different national settings. Unfortunately, no such data was available for this report.

4.4.2. Entering higher education without a mainstream qualification

As discussed previously (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3), participating in higher education at a later stage in life may be an aspiration for adults – even for those who left the initial education system with low level or no qualifications. However, when adults do not hold a mainstream qualification that allows access to higher education working towards this goal may take time. This may even be the case if they have gained the knowledge and skills (e.g. through professional experience) that would allow them to succeed in higher education.

Several Eurydice studies published since 2011 (EACEA/Eurydice, 2011a; EACEA/Eurydice 2011b; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014a) have looked at access routes to higher education across Europe showing that in central and eastern Europe the traditional upper secondary school leaving certificate is generally the only way to enter higher education, while in western Europe and the Nordic countries alternative access routes have been developed (see Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7: Alternative routes to higher education for non-traditional candidates, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice

Explanatory notes

When referring to alternative entry routes to higher education, the figure does not consider arrangements where under exceptional circumstances particularly talented higher education candidates who do not hold an upper secondary school leaving certificate can be granted access to higher education (e.g. for arts studies). Moreover, the category 'alternative entry routes exist' does not include countries where candidates who have not completed upper secondary education can be admitted to higher education but cannot be awarded a higher education degree.

Large-scale preparatory programmes are indicated in this figure only for countries where alternative entry routes to higher education exist. They refer to programmes that provide alternative credentials to enter higher education and, at the same time, aim at equipping non-traditional higher education candidates with skills necessary to follow higher education studies. These programmes are described in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3.

Looking first at central and eastern Europe, although higher education candidates must complete upper secondary education, there are a number of programmes available to mature students to enable them to obtain the necessary standard qualification(s). In particular, most of these countries have established programmes allowing those who already hold an upper secondary qualification from a short vocational course to follow a 'bridging programme', i.e. a short upper secondary general programme leading to a standard qualification giving access to higher education. Moreover, several of these countries have developed a system of external examinations allowing mature students to gain the upper secondary school leaving certificate without participating in a formal programme.

In western Europe and the Nordic countries there is greater flexibility in terms of higher education admission requirements. Alternative access routes are often available to candidates who do not meet the traditional entry requirements either because they have taken a short upper secondary vocational course which does not give access to higher education, or because they have not completed any upper secondary programme. Here, alongside the traditional admission requirements, alternatives exist.

In addition to examining the different ways of accessing higher education, it is also important to look at the extent to which alternative entry routes are used in practice. The Eurostudent survey, which refers to the 2009/10 academic year, gives an indication for the 22 countries it covers (Eurostudent cited in European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat and Eurostudent 2012, pp. 86-87). For countries, such as Turkey, Slovakia, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Italy and Croatia, Eurostudent (ibid.) confirms the information provided in Figure 4.7, which indicates that these countries do not systematically provide any means of entering higher education other than the standard upper secondary school leaving qualification. For the Netherlands, it shows that although alternative entry routes exist, these options are rarely used in practice. At the other end of the spectrum are Finland, Ireland, the United Kingdom (England and Wales) and Sweden, where between 20 % and 30 % of higher education students enter via an alternative route. For the countries in between, namely France, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Norway, Malta, Spain and Portugal, alternative entry routes to higher education represent between 2 % (France) and 15 % (Portugal) of all admissions, which shows that in practice these options are being used to different degrees.

Another aspect to be considered when discussing alternative access to higher education is the completion rate of non-traditional candidates who enter higher education this way. Indeed, research evidence suggests that completion rates of these students are very low (e.g. for Germany and Austria, see Heublein et al., 2010; Unger et al., 2009). Therefore, while access to higher education through alternative entry routes is an important first step in widening participation to include adult learners, it is not enough on its own, and more needs to be done to ensure that non-traditional mature students successfully complete their course of study.

4.5. Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) is commonly understood to be a key factor in the success of lifelong learning strategies, as it can increase permeability within education and training systems. It is particularly important in respect to alternative entry routes into higher education, but it also plays a part in progression from lower to upper secondary education, or, more widely, in lifelong learning as such.

VNIL has several benefits, one of them being to empower low-qualified and other disadvantaged groups, by identifying and giving value to their skills and potential. From a labour-market perspective, the drive can be to promote the employability of individuals, or to meet the skills shortages in some

economic sectors. From an educational perspective, it is yet another tool that can facilitate and encourage adults' access to and progression in learning, especially for those lacking formal qualifications but who may have developed a range of skills and competences through their professional experience or voluntary activities. In addition, VNIL can lower other barriers to learning, such as lack of time or funding, as it can potentially shorten learning paths. For employed learners, the time spent away from the workplace is reduced, as the learning is more focused on individual requirements.

At European level, the validation of non-formal and informal learning has been systematically promoted since the adoption of European principles in the field in 2004 ([6]). In 2009, the European guidelines for the validation of non-formal and informal learning were published (Cedefop, 2009). Following these documents, a Council recommendation on validating non-formal and informal learning was published in 2012 ([7]); one of its expected benefits being that more adults will be motivated to participate in lifelong learning, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups such as low-qualified adults. The recommendation invites Member States to have arrangements in place for VNIL no later than 2018, enabling individuals to have their knowledge, skills and competences assessed and validated and awarded a full qualification, or where applicable, a partial qualification. It stresses that disadvantaged groups, including individuals who are unemployed and those at risk of unemployment, would particularly benefit from such validation arrangements.

4.5.1. Current state of development of VNIL arrangements across Europe

Using the expertise of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Commission has been entrusted to report on the situation with regard to VNIL and thus regularly surveys European countries to produce updates to the European VNIL Inventory ([8]).

The 2010 update of the inventory (GHK, Cedefop, European Commission, 2010) showed that the development of VNIL arrangements varied considerably between European countries. In a small group of countries, VNIL had not only been introduced, but was being implemented across all or most sectors of learning, with significant levels of participation (France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Finland and Norway). In the majority of European countries, however, the development of VNIL was limited in 2010, which either could mean that the overall take-up of VNIL remained low (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland and Turkey), or that there was a well-established system of validation and high level of take-up, but only in one sector.

The latest (2014) update of the European VNIL Inventory (European Commission, Cedefop, ICF International, 2014) tries to take into account the limitations of the categorisation previously used, by analysing the degree of development according to the series of principles ([9]) outlined in the 2012

([6]) Draft Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. 9600/04. EDUC 118, SOC 253.

([7]) Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, OJ C 398/1, 22.12.2012.

([8]) The first version was produced in 2004, then updated in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2014.

([9]) Information, advice and guidance on benefits, opportunities and procedures; guidance and counselling is readily accessible; links to NGFs and in line with EQF; compliance with agreed standards equivalent to qualifications obtained through formal education programmes; transparent quality assurance (QA) measures are in line with existing QA frameworks to support reliable, valid and credible assessment; provision is made for the development of professional competences of staff across all sectors; Synergies between validation and credit systems (ECTS and ECVET); disadvantaged groups are particularly likely to benefit from validation; individuals who are unemployed have the opportunity to undergo a 'skills audit' within 6 months of an identified need; the use of EU transparency tools is encouraged

recommendation on VNIL. While mostly showing the general trends in terms of the number of countries at a particular stage of development according to each principle, it concludes the following on the current state of play in individual countries:

> Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia and Turkey are amongst the countries where urgent action was needed in a greater number of principles according to national experts. Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland and Portugal were amongst those countries where a high number of principles were reported as having achieved good development. Countries like Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), Estonia, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (Wales) also reported a high degree of development in relation to the indicators used (European Commission, Cedefop, ICF International 2014, p. 15).

With respect to the use of validation as a tool to support disadvantaged groups (among which low-qualified adults), the 2014 update of the European Inventory shows that a minority of countries still prioritise these groups in national/regional VNIL strategies or policies. What is particularly interesting for this Eurydice report is that the 2014 country reports suggest that greater emphasis is put on VNIL for low-qualified adults rather than on young early school leavers.

Looking at how VNIL connects with other efforts to create more flexible learning opportunities, the 2014 update states that since 2010 the number of countries that report having developed links between VNIL and credit systems has increased significantly; thus allowing people to gain credits for non-formal and informal learning that can be used for qualification purposes. However, in the previous reporting exercise (2010 update) several countries (e.g. Sweden, Iceland and Norway) had indicated that the opportunity to shorten learning pathways through VNIL is sometimes difficult to implement in practice. In Iceland for example, where it is possible to have prior learning and skills validated within adult education at upper secondary level, its 2010 country report for the European Inventory indicated that this was rarely being used due to challenges in adapting courses to meet the individual needs of learners.

The general picture emerging from the 2014 update is one of significant progress in certain areas, such as strategies, legal frameworks, stakeholder involvement, links to qualification systems and take-up. On the other hand, progress has generally been slower on the ground, and the continuing challenges range from improving access and raising awareness of the value of VNIL, to creating coherent and comprehensive validation systems. Financial sustainability, the professionalisation of staff and data collection are also issues still needing to be addressed.

4.5.2. Data collected on VNIL users and take-up by low-qualified adults

The 2014 update of the European Inventory reports reasonable progress in the take-up of validation since 2010, a majority of countries reporting an increased number of users of the system in 2014. However, the 2014 country reports also reveal that data collection is not always systematic and centralised at national level, and could be improved to give more evidence on access to VNIL. Across Europe, different organisations collect the data (national/regional authorities, education providers, productive sectors) and sometimes, this collection covers only specific sectors or projects; although a more systematic collection of all VNIL data does take place in some countries.

None of the countries reviewed for the 2014 update publish data on the proportion of qualifications issued using VNIL. However, the Eurydice data collection provides an example of what currently seems to be an exception: in Norway, there are figures on the proportions of applicants for various types of education on the basis of validation of prior learning. According to available data, in 2011/12, 12 % of the applicants to upper secondary education applied on the basis of validation of prior learning

e.g. the Europass Framework and Youthpass (for more details, see European Commission, Cedefop, ICF International, 2014).

(Ianke et al. 2013, p. 27), whereas among the applicants to tertiary vocational education the proportion was 7 % in 2013 (Kunnskapsdepartementet 2014, p. 37). One of the main means of collecting data on VNIL applicants is the Vox Statistical Bank for Adult Learning. Still, for most countries, there is no statistical information on the wider impact of VNIL services and only few countries report plans to carry out evaluations in this area.

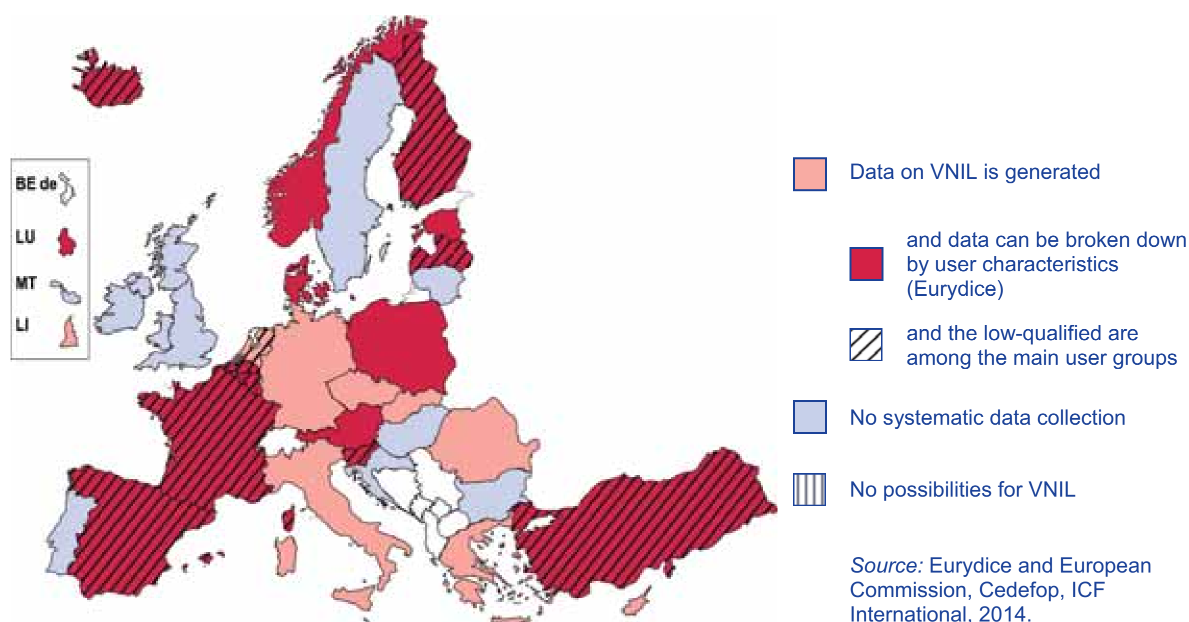
Given that one of the policy aims of extending VNIL is to create wider learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups it is important to assess not only the overall trends in the take-up of VNIL but also to identify the types of participants to determine whether groups such as low-qualified adults are benefiting in practice. The question here is whether the data, if generated, allows further breakdowns into user characteristics. In general, only few countries collect data on VNIL that allows deeper analysis of the characteristics of participants, such as their prior educational attainment, age, labour market status or immigration background. And even fewer countries produce a more in depth analysis of the available data.

Interesting examples of VNIL data analysis can be found in the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium and in France. In the French Community of Belgium, the Consortium for the Validation of Competences is publishing an annual activity report, including an analysis of the take-up of VNIL and a profile of users (gender, labour market status, level of education and age). For 2013, it shows that the low-qualified are among the main users, as 39 % of candidates have completed lower secondary education at most (Consortium de Validation des Compétences, 2013). In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Department of Work and Social Economy delivers an annual report on the 'Certification of Experiential Evidence', including variables such as the number of guidance activities, assessments and certificates granted, a profile of candidates (sex, labour market status, age, level of education, place of residence, diversity test), as well as a profile of the recognised test centres. The 2013 report (Departement voor Werk en Sociale Economie, 2013), analysing 2012 data, looks closely at the profile of candidates to see whether the targets groups cited in the legislation are being reached. In France the statistical department of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue (DARES), publishes data for 2012 (DARES, 2014) showing the educational level acquired through VNIL, the professional qualifications sought and the profile of candidates (gender, age, and labour market status).

Figure 4.8 combines information from the two data sources: the Eurydice data collection and the 2014 update of the European Inventory. All countries appearing in medium or dark red generate data on VNIL to some extent, according to the 2014 inventory update. Additionally, the Eurydice Network specifically asked countries whether detailed information on VNIL participants is gathered and whether it allows the data to be broken down according to various parameters, including highest level of education attained, age, labour market status, and immigration background. For the 2014 inventory update, countries reported on the main groups using VNIL.

The figure highlights countries where the focus group of this report – low-qualified adults – are reported as being among the main user groups of VNIL. This seems to be the case in less than ten countries. While not shown in the figure, it is interesting to note that the 2014 Inventory revealed that more than half of the countries reporting had targeted measures in place, even if in some cases these are limited to specific projects. Low-qualified adults are often among the target groups. Such a targeted policy approach can eventually be successful in increasing the participation of a specific target group (other than policy factors need to be considered too), but this can also remain declarative. In Romania, for example, where disadvantaged groups are prioritised in the relevant legislation, it seems that highly skilled adult learners constitute the largest share of applicants although real evidence is difficult to find as participation data is not broken down.

Figure 4.8: Data collection on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL), 2013/14



Source: Eurydice and European Commission, Cedefop, ICF International, 2014.

Explanatory notes

All countries shaded in red (dark and medium shades) generate data on VNIL. However, the figure does not reflect how comprehensive the data collection is; different administrative levels/organisations may be involved (national/regional authorities, education providers, productive sectors) in different countries.

Information on the breakdown of data by user characteristics was collected by Eurydice, while the information on the main user groups is drawn from the 2014 European VNIL Inventory (European Commission, Cedefop, ICF International, 2014). Information on whether data is generated has been consolidated from both sources.

Country specific notes

Estonia: The characteristics of users are monitored by schools for their private records; therefore data is not publicly available. However, in the Estonian Education Information system (EHIS) a platform for these statistics is being developed and will be available by 2015/16.

Portugal: A new network of Qualification and Vocational Training Centres (CQEP) is currently being set up – one of its tasks will be to re-instigate the recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC). The computer platform previously used to register candidates – the Integrated Education and Training Provision Management System (SIGO) – is temporarily unavailable, which accounts for the lack of relevant data.

In focusing on the participation of low-qualified adults, Figure 4.8 does not seek to indicate the overall level of take-up, nor the state of development of VNIL in specific countries (see Section 4.5.1). Moreover, although the availability of data can indicate a more systematic approach to VNIL, the relationship between data collections and the stage of the VNIL development is more complex, as some countries with a highly developed VNIL system, nevertheless do not collect data systematically (e.g. Sweden and the United Kingdom).

Conclusions

This chapter has looked at the modes of delivery and organisational arrangements that may lower existing barriers to adult participation in education and training. These barriers, identified through statistical data, include time constraints linked to family responsibilities and work schedules in most countries, as well as the lack of prerequisites (e.g. entry qualifications). While conflicts with the work schedule increase with adults' level of educational attainment, time constraints due to family responsibilities affect all adults in a similar way.

Distance learning is acknowledged as providing more flexibility to learners, notably by easing time constraints. The analysis of publicly subsidised provision of distance learning programmes for adults

across Europe shows that only a minority of countries has comprehensive and institutionalised provision in place. However, some countries offer distance learning programmes on a large scale, and the number of participants in absolute terms confirm their importance to adult learners. As to any specific focus on low-qualified adults, it is interesting to highlight the case of Ireland, where distance learning is being promoted by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), thus creating targeted provision for those with difficulties in literacy and basic skills. Open and free online learning portals can be found in several countries, while the example of *Aula Mentor* in Spain is interesting as it combines a virtual leaning environment with an infrastructure of physical learning spaces which have both computers and tutors. However, it is worth noting that statistical data on the proportion of distance learners among adults does not show any clear link between the comprehensiveness and institutionalisation of distance learning provision and the degree of take-up. Only a few countries monitor take-up, and even fewer collect detailed information about participants, which makes it difficult to evaluate the level of participation of specific groups such as low-qualified adults.

The provision of modular adult learning programmes and credit-based qualifications has been shown to be a potentially motivating factor for adult learners, offering the possibility to individualise and shorten learning pathways. Currently, most European countries offer at least some modular programmes to adults. While modularisation is not new is some countries, many others have recently made progress in the field.

Similarly, policy recommendations have been advocating an increase in the provision of credit-based qualifications to allow learners to learn at their own pace. And while a lot is being done in this field, for instance as part of the implementation of ECVET, there is little information on adult participation in credit-based programmes or qualifications. In general, around half of European countries report that at least some credit-based programmes or qualifications are available to adults, and in two education systems (Finland and the United Kingdom (Scotland)) credits seem to be available for almost all qualifications. Unfortunately, at the lower levels of education, fewer credit-based qualifications are found, and there are almost none in the area of basic skills. Consequently low-qualified adults are the least able to benefit from this type of support.

As the learning path of adults, particularly the low-qualified, is generally less direct, the analysis has also focused on requirements for progression from lower to upper secondary education, and on to higher education. Broadly speaking, in eastern and south-eastern European countries there are fewer options open to adults when progressing from lower to upper secondary levels compared to western and northern European countries. Overall, general upper secondary programmes seem to require the completion of lower secondary education more often than vocationally-oriented programmes at this level.

A similar split between the countries exists in respect to access routes to higher education. While central and eastern European countries tend to systematically require the completion of upper secondary education for entry to higher education, the education systems in western and northern Europe tend to be more flexible in this regard. Here, the statistical evidence allows the institutional arrangements to be viewed in relation to the proportion of students entering higher education through alternative pathways. Data shows that where alternative arrangements exist, the level of use varies, which points to the need to explore further to ascertain the causes for this, for example, by investigating university selection policies.

The last measure to inject flexibility into the education system discussed in this chapter – the validation of non-formal and informal learning – is intended to empower low-qualified learners and to increase their motivation to undertake lifelong learning. The latest update of the European VNIL

Inventory (2014) shows significant progress in certain areas related to VNIL, such as strategies, legal frameworks, links to credit systems and, to a lesser degree, take-up. However, it also identifies continuing challenges, such as access, awareness and recognition of VNIL, financial sustainability and data collection. Moreover, only a minority of countries prioritise disadvantaged groups (including low-qualified adults), and fewer than ten of the 2014 country reports indicate that low-qualified adults are among the main user groups of VNIL. Certainly data collection needs to be improved to provide better evidence on the use of VNIL. The Eurydice data collection provided only one example of data collected on the proportion of qualifications issued using VNIL (Norway) and identified only a few more countries collecting VNIL data which allows a breakdown of user profiles. Still for most countries, there is no statistical data on the wider impact of VNIL and only a few countries plan to carry out evaluations. They are thus missing out on an opportunity to ascertain whether one of the main target groups – low-qualified adults – is able to benefit fully from the system.

Overall, monitoring and evaluation appear to be major weak points in the arrangements to increase flexibility (distance learning, modular programmes and credit-based qualifications, progression and VNIL) in adult education systems. In the absence of robust and systematic data on take-up by low-qualified adults, it is difficult to draw conclusions on whether they meet the specific needs of this group and thus encourage and facilitate their participation in lifelong learning.

CHAPTER 5: OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND GUIDANCE SERVICES

Several recent European policy documents have highlighted the importance of outreach activities and guidance services. In 2008, the Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies ([1]) stressed the need for more easily accessible lifelong guidance services and drew attention to improving access to services for the most disadvantaged groups. Moreover, it called Member States to encourage the acquisition of skills for lifelong career management and to develop quality assurance in guidance provision. The more recent resolution on the renewed European agenda for adult learning ([2]) calls for increasing participation by low-qualified and disadvantaged adults and proposes a focus on developing their basic skills, for example through guidance, validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) and access to 'second chance' initiatives. It also calls for fostering greater awareness among adults that learning is a lifelong endeavour, which they should pursue at regular intervals during their lives, and particularly during periods of unemployment or career changes. Furthermore, one of the priorities in the Commission's Communication 'Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes' (European Commission, 2012b) is to reduce the number of low-skilled adults through different means such as the setting up of access points ('one-stop shops') that integrate different services such as VNIL and career guidance, which offer customised learning paths for individual learners.

Based on the above policy priorities, the objective of this chapter is to explore outreach activities and guidance services for adult learners. The chapter starts with an analysis of the outreach activities put in place across Europe. It then explores guidance services, paying a specific attention to publicly subsidised services provided outside public employment services (PES). This section also looks at self-help tools, in particular the existence of major electronic databases with information about learning opportunities available to adults. The final section examines 'one-stop shops', i.e. places integrating different lifelong learning services tailored to individual learners.

5.1. Promoting adult learning through awareness-raising and outreach

When it comes to making adults aware of the benefits of lifelong learning, two terms are often used interchangeably, namely 'awareness-raising' and 'outreach'. In general, both awareness-raising and outreach can be understood as activities to promote learning among adults and improve their participation in existing adult education and training provision. However, different sources provide different definitions for these terms. For example, the term 'awareness-raising', is sometimes perceived in a wider perspective, as activities to make everyone, i.e. learners as well as providers and policy makers, aware of the benefits of adult education and training. This understanding applies to a recent European guide promoting strategies for improving participation in and awareness of adult learning (European Commission, 2012c). As regards the term 'outreach', several sources use Ward's definition (Ward, 1986 cited in McGivney, 2001):

> a process whereby people who would not normally use adult education are contacted in non-institutional settings and become involved in attending and eventually in jointly planning and controlling activities, schemes and courses relevant to their circumstances and needs (ibid, pp. 17-18).

A more recent glossary produced with the support of European institutions (NRDC, 2010a) defines outreach as

> [a] range of activities outside formal educational institutions designed to identify and attract non-learners, in order to encourage them to enrol in education and training programmes (ibid., p. 58).

([1]) Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies, OJ C 319/02, 21.11.2008.

([2]) Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning, OJ C 372/1, 20.12.2011.

According to McGivney (2001) 'the concept [of outreach] has become strongly connected with the notion of disadvantage – reaching out to people who are in some way deprived. For this reason, the word has acquired certain negative connotations: the provision of assistance for poor and needy people; low level or remedial work' (ibid., p. 17). In other words, outreach is commonly understood as a way to attract people to learning, especially those who have had poor experiences of formal education.

Some sources provide a mapping of methods and approaches related to outreach, allowing better understanding of the concept. In this context, the European policy document 'Basic Skills Provision for Adults: Policy and Practice Guidelines' (GHK, 2010) highlights that '[t]o reach low-skilled adults it is essential to transform their life and work environments into places of learning. […] Good outreach work includes networking, partnership, brokerage, bringing the learning opportunity close to the learner and time' (ibid., pp. 12 and 20). According to the same source, outreach can be organised through community links, outreach events, information centres, open days, talks, briefings, publicity campaigns, media advertising, adult learning weeks, contact points in libraries, etc.

When describing different approaches to outreach, McGivney (2001) refers to four different models of outreach work. These include the 'satellite model' (the establishment of centres for the delivery of programmes in community locations outside main sites), the 'peripatetic model' (work in various organisation such as community centres, hospitals, prisons, etc.), the 'detached model' (contacting people outside institutional settings, e.g. on the street) and 'domiciliary model' (visiting people or taking services to their homes). The same source highlights the role of more recent approaches, including the use of mobile outreach services, local capacity-building (i.e. training local people as mentors) and distance learning services.

Moreover, the literature highlights that beyond widening participation by targeting individuals belonging to underrepresented groups in existing forms of educational provision, it is important to target vulnerable communities. Here, outreach work refers to the collaborative creation of new educational opportunities by representatives of disadvantaged communities together with outreach workers (McGivney, 1990 and 2000). However, as described for the United Kingdom of the early 2000s,

> there is little public funding that allows for the essential first-stage development work with new communities. Outreach activity – engaging with people in the community, winning their trust, listening to them and translating what one hears into constructive learning responses – is one of the most effective ways of reaching people least represented in formal learning (McGivney, 2000 cited in McGivney 2006, pp. 80-81). However, as it is staff-intensive and time-consuming it is invariably under-supported and under-resourced (McGivney 2006, p. 81).

As seen above, the term 'outreach' is often understood as reaching low-skilled or low-qualified adults in many different ways and making them aware of the benefits of adult learning. The present chapter applies this understanding of the concept of outreach. Nevertheless, it also uses the term 'awareness-raising', in particular when describing initiatives targeting all prospective learners. However, prior to looking at the awareness-raising and outreach activities being implemented across European countries, it is necessary to examine contextual data allowing a better understanding of their importance.

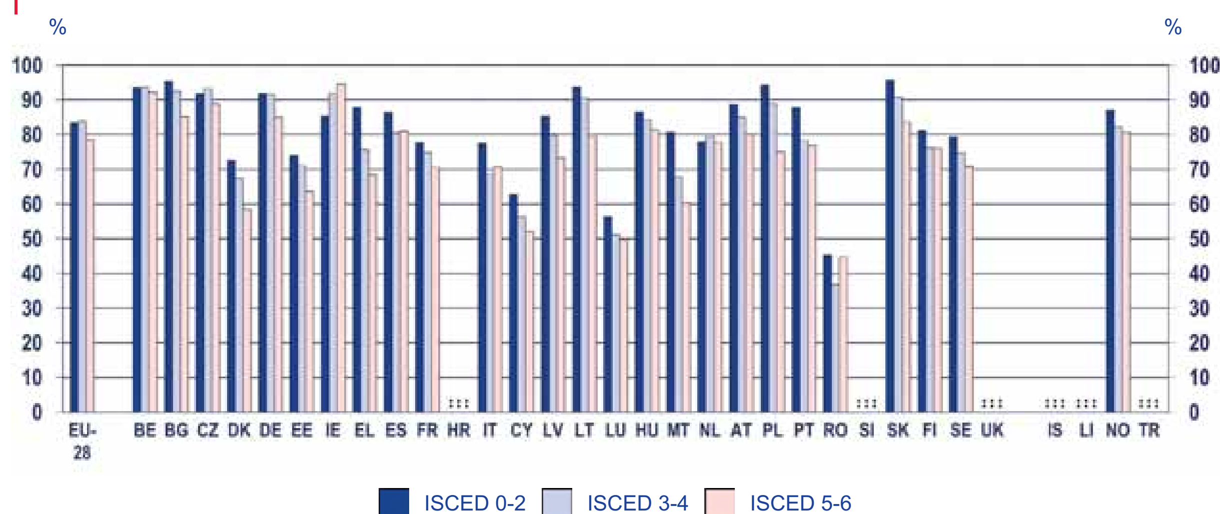
5.1.1. Why outreach matters

Data from the Adult Education Survey (AES) allows the context to be set for discussing awareness-raising and outreach activities to increase participation in lifelong learning. Two elements from the survey are particularly interesting in this regard. First, data allowing a better understanding of reasons for which adults do not participate in lifelong learning; second, data on the extent to which people search for information about learning opportunities.

Within the AES, adults who did not participate in education and training during the 12 months preceding the survey were asked to indicate the reason for their non-participation. On average, across EU countries, more than 80 % of non-participants stated that they simply did not want to take part in education or training. This shows that lack of interest is by far the most common reason for non-participation.

When analysing the lack of interest by highest level of educational attainment (Figure 5.1), very little variation can be observed between different population groups. Yet, in virtually all countries (Ireland is the only exception), the lack of interest is more perceptible among adults with an educational attainment level below higher education compared to adults who have completed higher education studies. This should be interpreted together with participation statistics, showing that adults who have completed higher education are the most likely to take part in lifelong learning (for more details, see Chapter 1, Figure 1.7). By contrast, adults with a lower educational attainment – in particular those who have not completed upper secondary education – appear as a group characterised by a limited participation in lifelong learning, and, as Figure 5.1 shows, the interest they express in participating in lifelong learning is somewhat lower compared to adults with a higher educational attainment.

Figure 5.1: Adults (25-64) who did not participate in education and training and indicated that they were not interested in participating (%), by highest level of education attained, 2011



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
ISCED 0-2	83.4	93.5	95.3	91.8	72.6	92	74.1	85.4	87.9	86.3	77.6	:	77.5	62.7	85.3	93.6	56.3
ISCED 3-4	83.8	93.7	92.5	93.2	67.4	91.6	71.1	92	75.7	80.4	74.9	:	68.8	56.4	79.8	90.4	51.2
ISCED 5-6	78.5	92.2	85.2	88.8	58.5	85.1	63.6	94.7	68.4	81	70.6	:	70.7	52.1	73.3	79.4	49.6
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
ISCED 0-2	86.4	80.7	77.9	88.7	94.4	87.9	45.2	:	95.7	81.1	79.3	:		:	:	87.1	:
ISCED 3-4	84.2	67.8	79.5	85	88.9	78.3	36.8	:	90.7	76.2	74.8	:		:	:	82.3	:
ISCED 5-6	81.4	60.3	77.7	80	75	76.9	44.8	:	83.7	76	70.8	:	:	:	80.5	:	

Source: Eurostat (AES). Online data code: *trng_aes_197* (data extracted June 2014).

Explanatory notes

EU-28: Estimated.

The figure refers only to adults (25-64) who did not participate in education and training in the 12 months preceding the survey. It does not take into account the fact that participation (and non-participation) varies across countries (for more details, see Chapter 1, Figure 1.6).

Country specific note

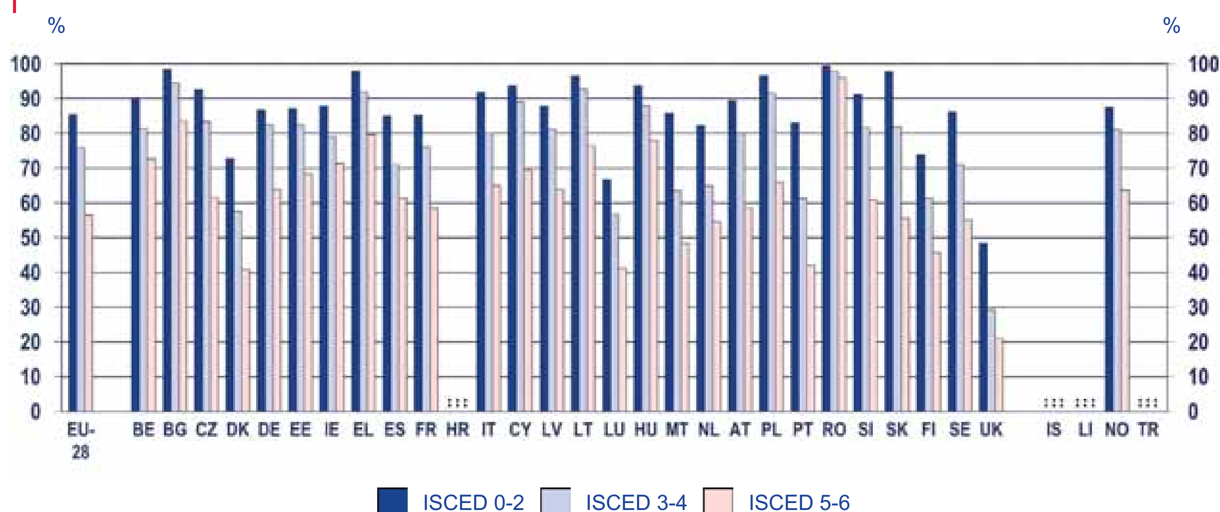
Romania: Low reliability.

Closely related to the question of interest in participating in lifelong learning is the question of whether people undertake self-directed research into the available learning opportunities. The Adult Education Survey (AES) covered this field by a question enquiring whether respondents (i.e. those who participated in lifelong learning as well as non-participants) searched for information about learning opportunities within the 12 months preceding the survey.

The survey reveals that on average, across all EU countries, around one quarter of people (27 %) search for information about learning opportunities, whereas almost three quarters (73 %) do not conduct such activities.

Striking differences can be observed when considering the search for information on learning opportunities by highest level of education attained (Figure 5.2). Indeed, in all European countries, people with a lower level of educational attainment are less likely to search for information about learning opportunities than people with a higher level of educational attainment. On average, across EU countries, around 86 % of adults who have completed at most lower secondary education do not search for information about learning opportunities, whereas the same applies to around 76 % of people who have completed upper secondary education and around 57 % of those with a higher education degree.

Figure 5.2: Adults (25-64) who have not searched for information on learning opportunities in the 12 months prior to the survey (%), by highest level of education attained, 2011



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
ISCED 0-2	85.5	90.3	98.4	92.6	72.7	86.7	87.1	87.9	97.8	85.1	85.2	:	91.9	93.7	87.9	96.5	66.6
ISCED 3-4	75.9	81.4	94.5	83.3	57.6	82.5	82.5	79.0	91.9	71.1	76.0	:	80.1	89.1	81.2	92.8	56.8
ISCED 5-6	56.5	72.7	83.7	61.5	40.8	63.8	68.3	71.5	79.8	61.4	58.4	:	65.0	69.5	63.8	76.5	41.2
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK		IS	LI	NO	TR
ISCED 0-2	93.7	85.8	82.4	89.6	96.7	83.1	99.5	91.2	97.8	73.8	86.3	48.4		:	:	87.5	:
ISCED 3-4	88.0	63.5	64.9	80.0	91.6	61.3	98.0	81.8	81.9	61.5	71.0	29.1		:	:	81.2	:
ISCED 5-6	77.9	48.3	54.6	58.6	66.0	41.9	96.0	60.9	55.5	45.6	55.0	21.0		:	:	63.7	:

Source: Eurostat (AES). Data extracted and calculated by Eurostat.

Explanatory note

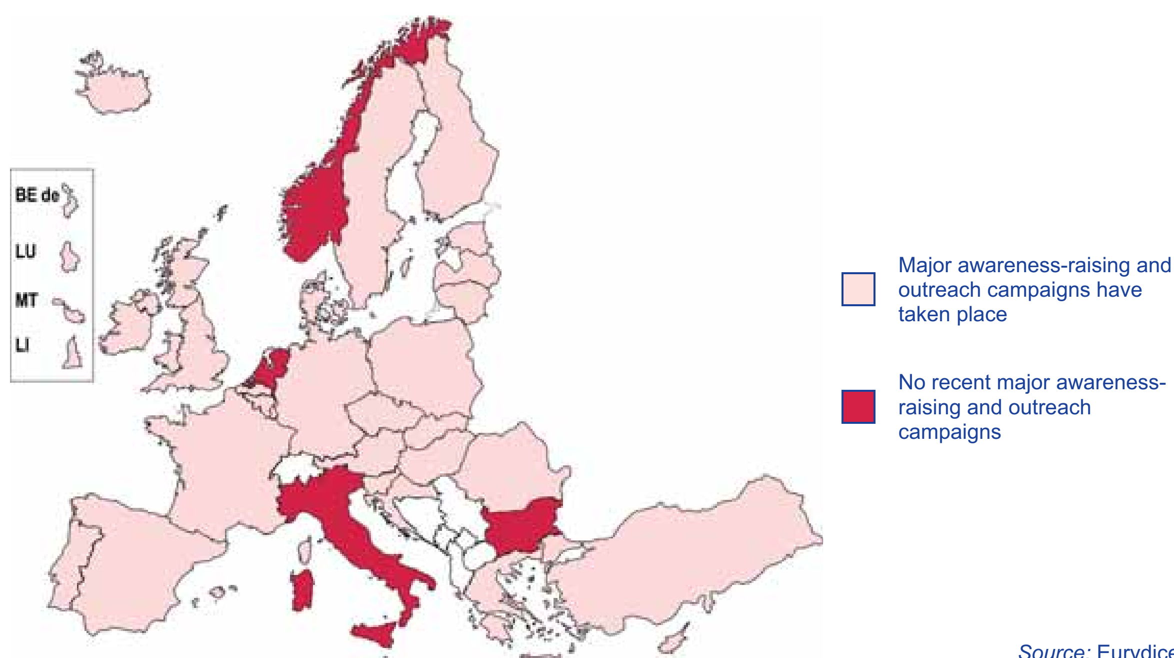
EU-28: Estimated.

Country-specific data indicates that in a dozen countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia) more than 90 % of low-qualified people do not search for information about learning opportunities. At the other end of the spectrum are the United Kingdom (48 %), Luxembourg (67 %), Denmark (73 %) and Finland (74 %), where low-qualified adults seem to be slightly more active in searching for information about learning opportunities compared to all other European countries.

5.1.2. Awareness-raising and outreach activities across Europe

Lack of interest in lifelong learning (Figure 5.1) and limited self-directed research of learning opportunities (Figure 5.2) indicate a need for efforts to reach out to adults and make them aware of the available learning on offer or enable them to cooperate in creating new provision tailored to their particular needs. Within the Eurydice data collection, countries were asked to indicate up to three major publicly subsidised activities to raise awareness of adult education and training that had taken place in their context over the past five years, i.e. between 2009 and 2014. The data collection considered activities targeting all adults as well as those targeting specific groups. As shown in Figure 5.3, virtually all countries report the existence of such activities.

Figure 5.3: Awareness-raising and outreach campaigns targeting adults, 2009-2014



Source: Eurydice.

Awareness-raising and outreach activities take a variety of forms and use different approaches. They range from general national campaigns to promote adult learning, to specific initiatives aimed at adults with a low level of basic skills or low-qualified people. While a study of its own would be necessary to provide a thorough mapping of the field, the following sub-sections intend to cluster reported activities, highlighting some examples of practice.

General campaigns to raise awareness

Among activities targeting all adults, several countries have put in place major one-off events or campaigns that took place during a limited period of time. For example, in 2011, the Czech Republic conducted an awareness raising campaign 'Broaden your Horizons' that aimed at promoting adult education in general, using TV, radio, press and banners as main communication means. Estonia

carried out, between 2008 and 2012, a comparable project. Here, the association of adult educators (ANDRAS) conducted the programme 'Popularisation of Adult Education' including TV series, publication of several issues of a magazine and radio broadcasts. Furthermore, since January 2014, the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) has been running the advertising campaign 'Skills to Success' highlighting the range of programmes, initiatives and options available for lifelong learning. The campaign uses a variety of media platforms, including television, radio, outdoor and digital media.

Apart from project-based campaigns with limited duration, many countries organise general awareness-raising events on a regular basis. The most common examples of regular activities are 'adult education (or lifelong learning) weeks' reported by the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Croatia, Finland, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. In some countries, these are long standing events. For example, in the United Kingdom (England), the first Adult Learners' Week took place in 1991 and it continues to be run by NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) in England and Wales. Slovenia introduced a similar event in 1996, and Estonia and Finland in 1998. Interestingly, Slovenia has recently enriched its lifelong learning week by a set of events known as 'Learning Parade – Days of Learning Communities'. These activities take place during the lifelong learning week and have a local and multi-partner character, meaning that they commonly involve up to 30 partners usually led by a local adult education centre. Finland also reports the multi-partner character of its annual lifelong learning and guidance week. Here, the event involves a dozen central-level bodies, including educational authorities, representatives of enterprises and social partners. While each campaign is a unique event in terms of theme and implementation, it always includes promotional activities taking place all over the country. It is also noteworthy that adult education weeks sometimes concentrate on specific themes and therefore have a targeted rather than general character. This was the case in Denmark, where the adult learners' weeks in 2013 and 2014 provided a specific focus on programmes for adults with a low level of basic skills.

Alongside adult (or lifelong learning) weeks, countries report other major awareness-raising initiatives taking place on a regular basis. For example, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) conducts an annual event known as 'Awards for the Promotion of Adult Learning and Knowledge' that puts into spotlight individuals, groups or institutions that yielded outstanding results as regards lifelong learning. Between 1997 and 2013, the institute attributed almost 200 awards. Moreover, since 2007, the SIAE has been leading an additional initiative entitled 'Role Models Attract' using the same principle of promoting lifelong learning through outstanding individual stories.

Campaigns raising general awareness may also concentrate on specific segments of the adult education and training sector. Such activities may be conducted when central authorities introduce a new type of lifelong learning provision. This was the case in Poland where between 2011 and 2012, central authorities ran a media campaign presenting new training courses created within the reform of the VET system. A similar initiative took place in Spain, where a recent nationwide campaign concentrated on promoting new opportunities to get professional experience nationally recognised. Apart from newly introduced programmes, campaigns focusing on specific segments of adult education may also raise awareness of longstanding provision. For example, in Sweden, central authorities provide support for a special yearly event known as 'Folk High School Day' during which people can visit folk high schools and obtain information about their provision. The Brussels region in Belgium has also recently raised awareness about its longstanding sectoral provision, but through a one-off awareness-raising campaign. The campaign took place in 2014 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the institution *Bruxelles Formation* that focuses on the delivery of labour market training. It used TV, radio, Internet and social media.

Campaigns targeting specific skills, population groups and stakeholders

Some campaigns have a targeted character, concentrating on specific skills, groups of the population or stakeholders.

Among the campaigns targeting specific skills, in 2013, Luxembourg conducted a national campaign focusing on several basic skills, namely literacy, numeracy and ICT. The campaign included the distribution of postcards, the introduction of a free number to call to get advice and information about courses on offer, and the launch of a website providing information through text, pictures and audio messages.

Several countries have implemented initiatives focusing specifically on literacy (e.g. the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, France, Croatia, Austria and Turkey). Among them, the Flemish Community of Belgium organises an annual 'literacy week' and has developed an ICT platform 'Raising Literacy' in 2014, The latter constitutes a central place for everyone looking for information or help on literacy. Austria also reports outreach activities targeting people facing functional literacy difficulties. These include posters in public spaces and advertisements in local or regional newspapers that aim at motivating people facing literacy problems to visit an educational institution and receive guidance on how they could improve their situation. Since 2004, the United Kingdom (Scotland) has been running, a national campaign (The Big Plus) to encourage adults to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills. It includes a website, advertising activities and a helpline. In 2012, Germany launched a campaign aiming to inform the general public about the topic of functional illiteracy. In France, in 2013, the Prime Minister declared the fight against illiteracy a national priority (*Grande cause nationale*) for the year mentioned. Activities included a media campaign (radio, press and television) to raise awareness and mobilise different stakeholders. Ireland provides further examples of targeted literacy activities, including several TV and advertisement campaigns aiming to raise awareness of both adult literacy services and the issue of adult illiteracy. Most of these activities have been developed by a central-level body focusing specifically on adult literacy (the National Adult Literacy Agency – NALA).

Closely related to literacy campaigns are initiatives concentrating on the acquisition of a local language by the immigrant population. In the context of these initiatives, in 2014, the Flemish Community of Belgium implemented a campaign promoting the acquisition of Dutch in informal learning contexts.

There are also campaigns concentrating on ICT skills. For instance, the Flemish Community of Belgium conducts an annual digital week. This event, which is broadly promoted through the media, enables adults to participate in various local learning activities free of charge, including how to work with digital devices, software and the Internet. Moreover, in 2014, the same region of Belgium ran a separate campaign targeting the use of the Internet among older people. Hungary and the United Kingdom have also developed campaigns aiming to boost the digital skills of the adult population. Interestingly, in both cases, the methodology includes a local capacity-building approach, i.e. training local people as mentors. More specifically, in the United Kingdom, the campaign encourages those with high-level digital competences to support family, friends, colleagues, customers or people in their community to develop their basic online skills. Hungary has established a network of 800 mentors within an EU-funded project. They are responsible for recruiting and motivating people to register in ICT and foreign language courses financed from the EU funds. Between December 2012 and January 2014, around 100 000 people started a course sponsored by the project.

Moving from 'basic skills' outreach initiatives to other types of targeted outreach measures, Iceland reports a national campaign conducted since 2004 targeting under-qualified people. The campaign aims to guide them towards the different types of provision available (i.e. educational programmes as well as validation of prior learning) through which they could upgrade their qualifications.

Furthermore, several countries focus their targeted efforts on unemployed people, raising their awareness about available learning opportunities. For example, in 2013, the Brussels region in Belgium conducted a multimedia campaign targeting young unemployed people and aiming to enhance their motivation to follow an education or training programme. It included publicity on public transportation vehicles as well as a massive distribution of information leaflets.

Alongside learners, targeted measures may also focus on other stakeholders. Belgium provides an interesting example in this regard. Here, the institution *Bruxelles Formation*, which concentrates on the education and training of unemployed jobseekers, conducted a media and outdoor campaign in 2013 encouraging employers to hire people who had followed a programme offered by the institution.

Measuring the effectiveness of awareness-raising and outreach activities

Measuring the effectiveness of awareness-raising and outreach activities is a difficult task. As stated in the European policy document 'Basic Skills Provision for Adults: Policy and Practice Guidelines' (GHK, 2010), '[e]valuation of outreach work goes beyond quantitative measures on the understanding that outreach takes time, may take time to show results and is essentially process work' (ibid., p. 20). Indeed, within the Eurydice data collection, most countries stated that they do not evaluate the impact of awareness-raising and outreach activities on the participation of specific groups of the population in education and training.

Among countries that do report having carried out impact evaluations, Portugal states that despite the campaigns that accompanied the New Opportunities Initiative (for more details on this initiative, see EACEA/Eurydice 2011a, pp. 28-29), the most vulnerable groups, in particular people without any qualification and older workers, were not fully benefiting from the opportunities offered by the scheme.

A few other countries or regions within countries also report outcomes of their evaluations. However, these do not include the impact on specific groups of the population. For example, in the Brussels region in Belgium, the institution *Bruxelles Formation*, having recently conducted various awareness-raising and outreach campaigns (for more details, see above), observed an increase in people visiting its website as well as an increase in the numbers of those signing up for a training programme. As the institution concentrates on the provision of labour market programmes, most of its clients are unemployed people. Poland also reports positive effects of the 2012 campaign to promote the reform of the Polish system of vocational and continuing education and training (for more details, see above). The campaign resulted in the successful enrolment of the first participants in the new forms of continuing vocational education and training (CVET).

Malta and Iceland do not provide outcomes of evaluations, but report that their central authorities collect data that could allow impact assessments to be carried out. For example, in Malta, the Directorate for Lifelong Learning conducts surveys targeting those participating in programmes delivered by this authority. The surveys include questions on how people learned about the educational activity they had chosen. Yet, the data is not used to examine a possible link between programme participation and outreach initiatives.

There are also more general evaluations. These commonly relate to awareness-raising or outreach activities repeated on a regular basis. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, each of the different annual campaigns described above is subject to evaluation, allowing further improvement of future events. Similarly, in Slovenia, each lifelong learning week (for more details, see above) is evaluated in order to improve subsequent events.

5.2. Improving adult participation in lifelong learning by the provision of accessible and comprehensive guidance services and self-help tools

Alongside outreach activities, guidance services can also play an important role in encouraging adults to take part in education and training. In particular, they can facilitate the process of setting learning and progression goals, of finding suitable education and training options and mapping out a pathway to reach the goals set. Furthermore, 'effective information, guidance and counselling services can help create accessible learning environments, support learning at all ages and in a range of settings, and empower citizens to manage their learning and work' (OECD 2010, p. 86).

A glossary developed by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) ([3]) defines guidance as help for individuals to make choices about education, training and employment. Guidance can include a range of services delivered through varied means. Today, traditional face-to-face guidance services are often supplemented by technology. This goes hand in hand with the concepts of e-guidance, online guidance, web guidance or telephone guidance. Some of these services may include self-assessment tools that complement those provided during direct contact with a guidance counsellor. Emails, webchats, sms and social media can also be built into the guidance process. However, as highlighted by a recent Cedefop study, 'despite easy access and a plethora of information, clients occasionally need professional assistance to understand and interpret information correctly' (Cedefop 2011, p. 61). In other words, while self-help tools may play an important role in the provision of guidance services, they are not necessarily an option for everyone and should be accompanied by a more structured face-to-face approach between the client and the guidance practitioner (ibid.).

This section exploring the guidance services available to adult learners has three parts. The first part provides contextual statistical data, looking at the use of guidance services by European citizens. The second one explores publicly subsidised guidance services that exist in European countries and include adults in their target groups. The last part focuses on self-directed research tools, in particular, the databases that have been developed with public support and include information about the learning opportunities available to adult learners.

5.2.1. Use of guidance services by European citizens

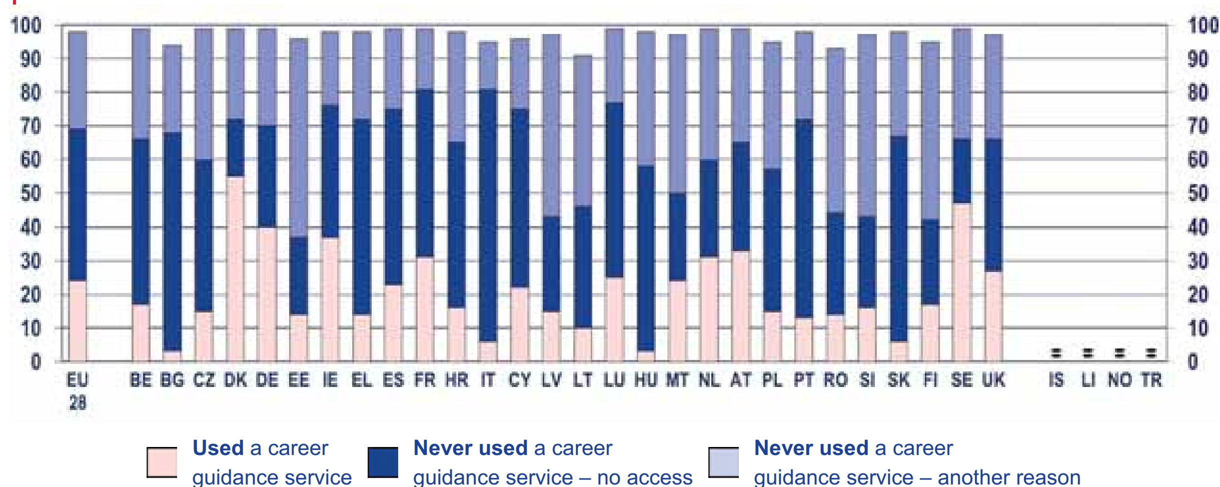
A recent Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2014b) examined the use of guidance services by European citizens, looking specifically at career guidance services, i.e. services that commonly include elements of education and training guidance.

Within the survey, people aged 15 and above were asked to indicate whether they had ever used a career guidance service (Figure 5.4). On average, in the EU countries, around one quarter of respondents gave a positive answer. However, there are important cross-country variations. Denmark (55 %), Sweden (47 %) Germany (40 %) and Ireland (37 %) are the countries with the highest proportion of people who had used a career guidance service. At the other end of the spectrum are countries where only a small proportion of people had used a career guidance service, namely Bulgaria (3 %), Hungary (3 %), Italy and Slovakia (both 6 %).

([3]) ELGPN is a platform for guidance policy cooperation in education and employment sectors between the EU Member States. The glossary it has developed can be consulted on the following website: http://www.elgpn.eu/glossary/glossary (Accessed 27 January 2015).

The survey also enquired about reasons for never having used a career guidance service, which could be due to either a lack of access or other reasons. Data shows that lack of access is most common in Italy, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Portugal and Greece.

Figure 5.4: Use of career guidance services by people aged 15 and above, 2014



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
Used a career guidance service	24	17	3	15	55	40	14	37	14	23	31	16	6	22	15	10	25
Never used – no access	45	49	65	45	17	30	23	39	58	52	50	49	75	53	28	36	52
Never used – another reason	29	33	26	39	27	29	59	22	26	24	18	33	14	21	54	45	22
	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK		IS	LI	NO	TR
Used a career guidance service	3	24	31	33	15	13	14	16	6	17	47	27		:	:	:	:
Never used – no access	55	26	29	32	42	59	30	27	61	25	19	39		:	:	:	:
Never used – another reason	40	47	39	34	38	26	49	54	31	53	33	31		:	:	:	:

Source: Special Eurobarometer 417 (European Commission, 2014b).

Explanatory notes

Within the 417 Eurobarometer Survey (European Commission, 2014b), respondents were asked (Question QB18): 'Have you ever used a career guidance service?' Possible responses were as follows: 'Yes', 'No, you have never had access to a career guidance service', 'No, for another reason', 'Don't know'.

Total number of respondents: 27 998.

It is important to note that career guidance services include both services provided by or on behalf of public institutions (e.g. schools or the public employment services (PES)) and by private organisations, and that respondents' understanding of the concept of career guidance may differ between countries. Moreover, data should be interpreted with caution, given the survey methodology and the comparatively small sample for each country. Contrary to any other data presented in the report, answers refer to a varying multi-year reference period ('life-time'), accounting for changing opportunities and attitudes over a period of 50 years. Therefore data does not necessarily account for the current state of provision of guidance services or adults' current inclination to take advantage of services provided.

Moreover, the survey provides information on the more detailed characteristics of respondents, in particular age, educational attainment and occupational category. While the size of the population surveyed does not allow analysis of data on a country basis, it is possible to examine average patterns across all the EU countries.

When age is considered, data shows that young people and young adults (15-24) are much more likely to have used a career guidance service (36 %) than people in higher age categories, namely those aged between 25-39 (31 %), 40-54 (27 %) and 55+ (12 %). This could be partly explained by a progressive integration of career guidance in the provision of schools ([4]) and higher education

([4]) For more details on education and career guidance in the provision of schools, see Chapter 5 in European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014.

institutions. Indeed, most respondents (61 %) indicated that they used a career guidance service while they were still in education. Moreover, among the student respondents, 37 % stated that they had used a career guidance service.

When looking at the results from the perspective of the highest educational attainment, it becomes clear that people who hold a higher education degree are more likely to have used a career guidance service (33 %) than those who have completed lower secondary education at most (19 %). As regards respondents who have completed at most upper secondary education, a difference can be observed between those who followed general education and those who opted for vocational education and training (VET), the second category being more likely to have used a career guidance service (17 % against 26 %).

Regarding occupational categories, managers are more likely to have used career guidance (34 %) than other categories of workers, namely other white collar workers (29 %), manual workers (27 %) or self-employed persons (19 %). Among the unemployed respondents, 33 % had used a career guidance service, while among 'house persons' only 19 % reported the same.

5.2.2. Guidance services across European countries

Within the Eurydice data collection, countries were asked to provide information about large-scale publicly subsidised guidance services that included adults in their target groups. The data collection enquired about services open to all adults as well as services targeting specific groups of the adult population. Moreover, central authorities were asked to report on how they evaluate the impact of these services on the participation of specific groups of the adult population in education and training, including low-qualified adults, older workers, migrants and unemployed people.

Guidance services for adults provided by public employment services

In most countries, the main publicly subsidised career guidance services open to adults are located within public employment services (PES) (Sultana and Watts, 2006). PES are generally associated with four main functions, namely job broking, providing labour market information, administering labour market adjustment programmes, and administering unemployment benefits (Thuy, Hansen and Price, 2001 cited in Sultana and Watts, 2006). The third element – labour market adjustment programmes – comprises job-search assistance programmes, training and education programmes, and direct job creation programmes. Guidance services, which fall under job-search assistance programmes, may include individual assistance (e.g. vocational guidance and counselling programmes), group activities (e.g. job clubs and workshops) and self-help provision (ibid.).

While in most countries, PES are theoretically open to all adults, in reality, the provision they ensure – including guidance services – is often restricted to unemployed jobseekers. This applies, in particular, to individual face-to-face services (Sultana and Watts, 2006). It follows that education and training guidance provided in the context of PES, and subsequent provision of education and training programmes, target mainly the labour market integration or re-integration of unemployed individuals. Moreover, PES may also provide reinforced guidance support to specific categories of unemployed persons, including the long-term unemployed, women returnees, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, young people with no formal qualifications and work experience, etc. (Cedefop and Sultana, 2004).

Despite the fact that PES concentrate on unemployed jobseekers, they often provide tools and support that can be used by a wider public. This has been facilitated by a shift to on-line guidance services and the development of self-guidance and self-assessment tools. Indeed, Sultana and Watts

(2006) note a major shift towards self-help services, in particular, significant country investment in developing, adapting or adopting ICT and software that facilitate access to career, labour market and further education and training information and guidance in self-help mode. They provide the following examples:

> [T]he development of self- and career-exploration packages (e.g. Austria, Belgium-VDAB, Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania); web-based job-search facilities (e.g. Estonia, Ireland); and web-based registration, integrating the possibility of entering one's CV (e.g. Denmark, Ireland, Malta) or constructing a 'personal skills register' (e.g. Luxembourg) on-line. Some PES also give users the possibility of creating their own domains, so that they can better 'market' themselves (e.g. Greece, Netherlands). A further example is the use of call-centre technology, which can range from a simple free phone number in order to access information (Belgium-VDAB, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia), to a more in-depth engagement in a distance counselling interview (e.g. Poland, Sweden) (ibid., p. 37).

Additional examples from the Eurydice data collection include initiatives of the institution *Bruxelles Formation* (Belgium – Brussels region) that provides two types of guidance services: one open to all adults, supported by an online platform (the service known as *Bruxelles Formation Carrefour*) and another (the service known as *Bruxelles Formation Tremplin*) focusing specifically on the most vulnerable unemployed. In Wallonia (Belgium), the institution Forem has implemented comparable services. A similar system has been developed in the Flemish Community of Belgium by the institution VDAB that provides services comparable to those delivered by *Bruxelles Formation* and Forem (see also references to VDAB in the quotation above).

Guidance services for adults provided outside public employment services

The Eurydice data collection shows that the provision of publicly subsidised guidance services for adults outside public employment services (PES) is limited in most European countries. In other words, most countries do not have a structural guidance service that could be used by every adult enquiring about education and training opportunities. Yet, there are examples of relevant practice.

Among countries that have established education or career guidance services open to all adults, some have developed services putting specific emphasis on education and training guidance. For example, in 2010, Denmark established, a network of 13 career guidance centres known as VEU centres (*Voksen- og EfterUddannelse*) to act as a 'one-stop entrance' for adult education and training. Alongside individual guidance for adults, they also provide counselling services to businesses (especially SME's) regarding the CVET provision. Slovenia has put in place a network of 14 regional adult education guidance centres within the public educational organisations for adults (*ljudska univerza*). The aim of these centres is twofold: First, they aim to provide educational guidance to adults; second, they aim to enhance networking between adult education and guidance providers at local level. Norway has developed a network of 36 career centres at county level offering free career guidance to all those aged 19 and above. Many of these centres cooperate with local enterprises and are also involved in organising the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Five were involved in a project aiming to develop a career guidance model for immigrants between 2013 and 2014.

France has developed a specific guidance system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL). It consists of a network of places providing information on the VNIL scheme 'VAE' (*validation des acquis de l'expérience*), which allows people with experiential learning (i.e. learning through professional and extra-professional experience) to have their knowledge, skills and competences validated with a view to gaining a nationally recognised qualification. The development of this network goes hand in hand with the fact that central authorities in France put specific emphasis on the implementation of VNIL. A comparable situation can be observed in Portugal, where the former New Opportunity Centres network (*Centros Novas Oportunidades*) has been recently replaced by a

network of Qualification and Vocational Training Centres (*Centros para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional* – CQEP). However, these centres provide a wider range of services compared to France, and may be described as 'one stop shops' (see Section 5.3). The CQEP network is based in public schools, vocational schools, training centres, businesses, business associations and local development associations.

Ireland has been implementing a guidance scheme known as the Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI) since the late 1990s. The scheme is designed to support access to a range of adult education programmes, in particular those provided within frameworks such as 'Adult Literacy', 'Community Education', 'Back to Education Initiative' (BTEI) and the 'Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme' (VTOS). The aim of the AEGI is to offer guidance services to adults, including one-to-one and group guidance. The service includes personal, educational and career guidance, and covers the pre-entry, entry, on-going and pre-exit stages. The AEGI scheme is funded by the Department of Education and Skills through SOLAS – the Further Education and Training Authority – and is provided by the local Education and Training Boards (ETBs). The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) – an agency of the Department of Education and Skills – co-ordinates the development of the AEGI and provides support and training for guidance staff. The operation of the service is managed at local level by the ETBs.

Guidance support can also be directed towards adults with a low level of basic skills. This type of provision is common for countries with strong policy commitments in the field of adult literacy and basic skills (for more details, see Chapter 2). For example, Austria has established a specific central-level institution that delivers guidance services related to basic skills and alphabetisation (*Zentrale Beratungsstelle für Basisbildung und Alphabetisierung*). Germany has put in place a telephone guidance service targeting people facing literacy problems.

Beyond services targeting specifically adult learners, some countries have established guidance services open to all, i.e. pupils and students in full-time education and adult learners. For example, Luxembourg has established a guidance centre known as *Maison de l'orientation*, which brings together several public guidance services, acting under the authority of different ministries. In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the training service of the ministry responsible for education (*Weiterbildungsdienst*) offers individual consultations for all those wanting information on education and training opportunities. In the Czech Republic, the Centre for Career Guidance (*Centrum kariérového poradenství*), which is a part of the National Institute for Education, delivers comparable guidance services.

Guidance services open to all can also use ICT tools. In this context, the United Kingdom (England) launched in 2012 the National Careers Service, replacing and building on the former 'Next Step' service. The National Careers Service provides information and guidance on learning, training and work opportunities via its website, by email and over the telephone. Similar services based on ICT tools have been established in other parts of the United Kingdom. Greece has also developed an interactive career guidance portal ('e-stadiodromia.eoppep.gr'), which targets adults of all ages and provides services for career development as well as mobility information (e.g. digitized career tests, e-counseling, etc.).

Finally, there are also various regional and local initiatives related to guidance services. While these are not covered by the present report, their role was highlighted by several countries or regions within countries, including the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany and Sweden.

Evaluation of the impact of guidance services

Career guidance services developed with the use of public funding are commonly subject to monitoring and evaluation. However, countries generally do not evaluate the impact of these services on the participation of adults in education and training. Rather, evaluations seem focus on other goals, in particular integrating the unemployed into the labour market. While the extent of the Eurydice data collection does not allow capturing the outcomes of evaluations of guidance services across all European countries, some examples can be provided.

In Austria, research institutes commissioned by central authorities have carried out an evaluation of an ESF programme looking at the participation of low-qualified adults and adults with an immigrant background in the educational and occupational guidance provided within the programme. The outcomes show that low-qualified adults (i.e. those with at most lower secondary education) represented only 15 % of participants and those with an immigrant background 14 %. Therefore low-qualified people and immigrants were underrepresented in the programme, compared to their share in the population ([5]).

Germany has carried out several research projects to evaluate the impact of guidance services provided within public employment services on the integration of unemployed people into the labour market. The outcomes of one of these projects (Boockmann, Osiander and Stops, 2014) indicate that frequent contacts between the placement officer and the unemployed person tend to have a positive impact on reducing unemployment.

The Eurydice data collection shows that there are varied methods and approaches to evaluate guidance services. For example, Slovenia has developed an ICT-based monitoring system enquiring about client-satisfaction as regards the provision of guidance services delivered by the 14 regional adult education guidance centres (for more details on these centres, see information provided in the text above). In Norway, in 2012, the agency for lifelong learning (Vox) published an evaluation on the impact of career guidance on adults (Vox, 2012). The data in the evaluation consisted of two surveys and qualitative interviews with adult users of the career guidance services. Moreover, Vox conducts regular population surveys with 1 000 respondents, asking about their career guidance needs and their interest in career guidance.

5.2.3. Online databases with information about learning opportunities

Apart from using face-to-face guidance services, adults can also use various self-help tools to guide them in their career or educational choices. Electronic databases (or online courses directories) providing information about available learning opportunities are one of these tools. While they do not seem to be an option for everyone (e.g. the Adult Education Survey shows that most adults, in particular low-qualified people, do not conduct self-directed research about learning opportunities; see Figure 5.2), they can be a valuable source of information for adults searching for information about learning opportunities. Indeed, the Adult Education Survey shows that adults who search for information about learning opportunities, most commonly do so on the Internet (61 %) ([6]). In this context, the Eurydice data collection enquired about the existence of comprehensive electronic

([5]) In 2013, there were 16.9 % of low-qualified people in the Austrian adult population (EU LFS). People with an immigrant background represented 19.4 % of the population (Statistik Austria, 2014a).

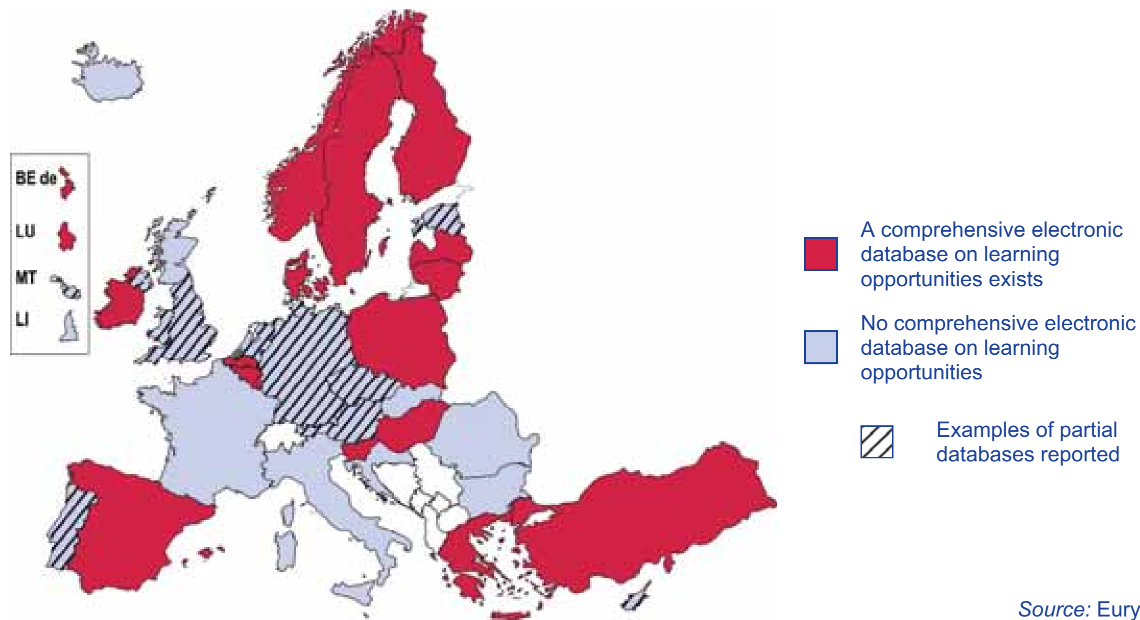
([6]) The employer is the second most common information source (30 %), followed by education and training institutions (25 %). Family, neighbours or colleagues are consulted by around one in five adults (21 %) looking for information about learning opportunities. Finally, mass media (11 %), books (11 %) and career guidance providers (10 %) are also consulted by people carrying out self-directed research, but these are used less often compared to the previously-mentioned sources. For more details, see the Eurostat website, online code: *trng_aes_187* (Accessed 24 November 2014).

databases developed with public support and where adults can find information about learning opportunities, including basic skills courses and programmes leading to medium-level qualifications.

According to available data (Figure 5.5), around half of all European countries have developed comprehensive databases that include information about learning opportunities, including basic skills courses and programmes leading to medium-level qualifications. Their development commonly falls under the responsibility of top-level educational authorities. Among the countries reporting a comprehensive database, most have developed a database embracing education and training provision for all age groups, i.e. young people as well as adults (the French Community of Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary Finland, Sweden, Norway and Turkey). In addition to education and training programmes, these on-line platforms often provide information about career guidance, the validation of non-formal and informal learning and other services related to lifelong learning. A few countries, or regions within countries, have developed comprehensive databases concentrating on adult education and training provision (the German-speaking and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovenia). For example, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) has developed a platform providing details on formal as well as non-formal provision for adult learners. In 2013/14, the platform included more than 200 providers and 4 000 adult education programmes, mainly programmes run by private organisations, but also those provided by secondary schools and adult education centers. All officially recognised programmes (i.e. programmes that have been approved by the Council of Experts for Adult Education) are included on the platform.

Among the countries that do not have a comprehensive lifelong- or adult-learning database, several have developed databases providing information about learning opportunities for low-qualified people. For example, in Germany, the German Federal Literacy Association has developed a database with information about relevant learning opportunities in the area of literacy and adult basic skills. In addition, there is an e-learning portal of the German Adult Education Centre Association (DVV), which also offers a course search. The database covers all adult education centres which offer literacy and basic skills courses (around 300 centres) as well as around 30 other providers. Data is regularly updated. Moreover, at regional level, literacy networks in the respective *Länder* also provide information on literacy courses. A comparable situation can be observed in Austria where a basic skills database run by the central guidance and counselling institution for basic skills and literacy is financed by the Ministry of Education. It contains information on courses nation-wide in literacy, German as a second language and those leading to the lower secondary school leaving certificate. Moreover, there is also a large-scale database for courses provided within public employment services. Finally, every federal state has its own database offering information on adult education courses and lifelong learning programmes in the region. These databases have varying levels of detail as regards information on basis skills courses.

Figure 5.5: Availability of comprehensive electronic databases with information about learning opportunities, including basic skills programmes and programmes leading to medium-level qualifications (ISCED 3-4), 2013/14



Source: Eurydice.

List of comprehensive electronic databases

BE fr	www.dorifor.be	**LU**	http://www.lifelong-learning.lu/Accueil/fr
BE de	http://www.weiterbildungsdatenbank.be/default.aspx	**HU**	http://www.eletpalya.munka.hu/
BE nl	http://www.wordwatjewil.be/	**PL**	http://www.doradztwozawodowe.koweziu.edu.pl/rynek-edukacji.html
DK	https://www.ug.dk/	**SI**	http://pregled.acs.si/
IE	http://www.qualifax.ie/	**FI**	https://opintopolku.fi/wp/fi/
EL	http://ploigos.eoppep.gr	**SE**	http://utbildningsinfo.se/
ES	http://aprendealolargodelavida.es/	**NO**	http://utdanning.no/
LV	http://www.niid.lv/	**TR**	http://www.hayatboyuogrenme.gov.tr/
LT	www.aikos.smm.lt		

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure is based on answers to the following question: 'In your country, is there a comprehensive electronic database that has been developed with public support and where adults can find the information about relevant learning opportunities, in particular programmes established at levels up to ISCED 3/EQF 4, including basic skills programmes?' Countries that responded positively to the question are indicated in dark red and the database they reported is listed in the table under the figure. Countries that responded negatively are indicated in blue. Some of these countries reported the existence of partial databases. A specific graphical presentation (diagonal lines) indicates these countries. If a country has developed a comprehensive electronic database, additional partial databases that might exist in its context are not indicated in the figure.

Country specific note

Belgium (BE fr): While the content of the database reported by the French Community of Belgium can be regarded as comprehensive in terms of different types of provision included, it only covers education and training provision in the Brussels region.

5.3. 'One stop shops' or integrated provision of different lifelong learning services

Integrated provision of different lifelong learning services has attracted significant attention from policy makers. When discussing this theme, policy documents commonly refer to the term 'one stop shop' that generally means the provision of multiple services at a single location. However, specific sources may assign a particular meaning to the term.

When analysing provision within public employment services (PES), Cedefop defines 'one stop shops' as places 'where clients can more readily have access to the whole range of PES services at the same site' (Cedefop and Sultana 2004, p. 56). When applying this definition, the same source had previously identified several countries, or regions within countries that provide a range of public employment services at the same site (e.g. the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Finland, the United Kingdom and Iceland).

The Eurydice data collection applied a more restrictive concept of 'one stop shops', defining them as networks of publicly subsidised places that integrate and deliver three different lifelong learning services, namely guidance, the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) and the provision of education and training programmes.

The survey shows that places corresponding to the above definition have been established in only a few countries. In Portugal, the concept of 'one-stop shops' applies to places known as 'Qualification and Vocational Training Centres' that have recently replaced the previously existing 'New Opportunity Centres'. Like the previous centres, the newly-created institutional network is expected to offer guidance services, tutorial services as well as services to validate non-formal and informal learning. In Iceland, 'one-stop shops' correspond to the 11 lifelong learning centres that have branches in most towns across the country. They offer guidance, validation services, as well as different education and training programmes (see Chapter 3 for more details on programmes offered by these centres). Denmark also partly belongs to this group as, since 2010, it has been operating a network of 13 VEU centres, which are intended to be a 'one-stop entrance' to adult education and training. The centres provide guidance on the different types of available learning provision, on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and can also design an individualised educational path for low-qualified people. However, the VEU centres do not directly provide courses or VNIL services. Interesting practice can also be observed in the French-speaking parts of Belgium, where several public institutions delivering guidance and continuing vocational education and training services (including *Bruxelles Formation* and Forem) have formed an institutional consortium responsible for the delivery of VNIL services.

While some countries acknowledge that they do not have a network of 'one-stop shops' that meet the definition used in the Eurydice data collection, they indicate elements of relevant practice. Some of them refer to pilot projects to trial 'one-stop shops'. For example, between 2009 and 2013, the Czech Republic carried out a national project to transform upper secondary schools into lifelong learning centres that would provide various services, including non-formal programmes, guidance and validation of prior learning. Another pilot project took place between 2013 and 2014 in Slovenia, where 15 public adult education organisations were selected via a tendering procedure to participate in pilot testing procedures for validating the key competences of adults. Poland also reports relevant pilot initiatives, in particular projects to integrate guidance services into the provision of continuing education and training institutions. Latvia is carrying out initiatives with a view to creating network of 'VET competence centres', meaning that institutions providing vocational education and training (VET) are starting to provide additional services, namely career guidance and the validation of professional competences acquired outside formal education. In 2014, 12 VET institutions had acquired the status of a 'VET competence centre'.

Some other countries indicate that they do not have a specific institutional network of 'one stop shops', but that educational institutions operating in their context often provide different lifelong learning services; but not necessarily all the services covered by the survey. For example, Luxembourg reports that all providers of general adult education accredited by the ministry are required to offer information and guidance in addition to their education and training programmes. Moreover, in the same country, different lifelong learning services are also common in continuing vocational education and training (CVET), especially in programmes targeting unemployed people. Malta specifies that the provision of the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology (MCAST) – i.e. the institution where adults can follow varied formal and non-formal courses – includes not only education and training programmes, but also guidance services. Moreover, it partly includes the validation of prior learning, in particular prior non-formal learning. The latter is commonly checked through an interview with the adult learner. In Ireland, some local adult education centres have developed an integrated service approach where they assess the needs of the learner and provide an individual educational plan. Depending on the needs identified, the plan may include programmes provided by the centre and guidance services.

The survey also shows that this area could be subject to further developments in the near future. In this context, Austria reports that a network of 'one-stop shops' could be established as soon as the system of validation of non-formal and informal learning has been developed. According to its lifelong learning strategy (Lifelong Learning Strategy Austria – LLL 2020), this should be the case by 2015. However, it must be noted that a fully operational validation system does not necessarily mean the existence of an institutional network that provides integrated lifelong learning services. France, for instance, already has a well-established validation system, but has not yet created a network that would deliver validation services together with guidance and the provision of education and training programmes. However, it is expected that such an institutional network will be created as a part of on-going reforms to the continuing vocational education and training (CVET) system.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined outreach activities and guidance services targeting adult learners. Starting from educational outreach, the analysis first looked at the context in which outreach takes place. Based on results from the Adult Education Survey (AES), it has shown that most of the adults who do not participate in education and training do not express interest in becoming involved in organised learning activities. In virtually all countries, the lack of interest is more pronounced among adults with an educational attainment level below higher education compared to people who have completed higher education studies. This indicates that people with lower educational achievement are not only less likely to take part in education and training compared to those holding a higher education degree (as discussed in Chapter 1), but that their declared interest in participating in organised learning is somewhat lower compared to adults with a higher educational attainment. The AES also shows that around three quarters of adults in the EU do not search for information about learning opportunities. In all European countries, people with a lower level of educational attainment are less likely to search for information about learning opportunities than people with a higher level of educational attainment.

Lack of interest in lifelong learning and limited self-directed research for learning opportunities indicate a need for efforts to reach out to adults or to enable them to cooperate in creating new provision tailored to their particular needs. Central-level authorities seem to be conscious of the necessity to intervene. Indeed, the Eurydice data collection shows that virtually all countries have recently carried out major awareness-raising and outreach campaigns. The survey also indicates that these initiatives take a variety of forms and use varied approaches. They range from general national campaigns to promote adult learning, to specific initiatives designed to reach adults with low basic skills or low-qualified people. However, most countries do not evaluate the impact of outreach activities on the participation of specific groups (in particular low-qualified people) in education and training. Further research in this area could provide better understanding of available methods and approaches to evaluating outreach work.

Guidance services also play an important role in engaging adults in education and training. Available statistics indicate that across EU countries, around one quarter of citizens aged 15 and above have already used career guidance services, i.e. services that commonly include elements of education and training guidance. Yet, there are important cross-country variations, ranging from situations where around half of all people aged 15 and above have already used career guidance services, to situations where the same applies to less than 10 % of the population. In several countries, lack of access seems to be the main reason why people do not use career guidance services. Furthermore, certain categories of the population – in particular young people, people with a higher level of educational attainment, people occupying professions within higher skill categories and unemployed people – are more likely to have used career guidance than other population groups.

Unemployed jobseekers commonly represent the main targets of publicly subsidised career guidance interventions. Among them, certain categories may benefit from extra support, including the long-term unemployed, returnees from parental leave, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, young people with no formal qualifications and work experience, etc. Public employment services (PES) have also invested in developing tools for the wider public, in particular on-line guidance services and self-guidance and self-assessment tools. Beyond the services provided by PES, publicly subsidised guidance open to adults is limited in most European countries. In other words, most countries do not have a structured guidance service that could be used by every adult enquiring about education and training opportunities. Yet, some examples of practice have been identified that focus either on educational guidance or on other lifelong guidance services, such as guidance related to the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Moreover, some countries have established guidance services

targeting specifically adults facing difficulties with literacy and basic skills. This type of provision has been observed in particular in countries that have strong policy commitments in the field of adult literacy. Beyond services targeting specifically adult learners, there are also guidance services open to all people, i.e. pupils, young people and adults. These may either include face-to-face services or ICT-based guidance services using various approaches, including websites, email, telephone, etc.

Career guidance services developed with the use of public funding, in particular services provided within PES, are commonly subject to monitoring and evaluation. However, countries generally do not evaluate the impact of these services on the participation of adults in education and training. Rather, evaluations focus on other goals, in particular, the labour market integration of unemployed jobseekers.

Online databases providing information on lifelong learning opportunities constitute an important component of widening access strategies. The Adult Education Survey shows that adults who search for information about learning opportunities, most commonly do so on the Internet. A dozen countries have developed comprehensive online databases where adults can find information about learning opportunities, including courses targeting the development of basic skills and programmes leading to medium-level qualifications. While some of these databases target all age groups, others put specific emphasis on adult learners. Among the countries that do not have a comprehensive lifelong- or adult-learning database, several have developed databases providing information about learning opportunities for low-qualified people, but these vary in the level of detail they provide on basic skills courses.

Finally, a question can be raised about the extent to which countries integrate different lifelong learning services. The Eurydice data collection shows that networks of publicly subsidised institutions that would provide three types of lifelong learning services – namely education and training programmes, the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and guidance services – are scarce. However, in several countries, there have been pilot projects testing integrated approaches to lifelong learning.

CHAPTER 6: TARGETED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The funding of adult education and training is a highly complex field. This chapter aims to outline how public finances can be used to support low-qualified adults and other groups whose lack of skills and qualifications may be of particular concern. The chapter starts with an evaluation of data to examine to what extent financial issues represent an obstacle to adult participation in education and training. Following this contextual information, the second section presents the different arrangements for financing lifelong learning. Based on the typology proposed, the third section concentrates on public financial support offered to adult learners – in particular those with low level or no qualifications – as well as to employers providing learning opportunities to the same target groups. It also discusses specific financial incentives for other vulnerable groups, including those re-entering into the labour market, speakers of language(s) other than the local language, and older employees.

6.1. Funding as a barrier to participation in lifelong learning

As already discussed in Chapter 4, adults who wish to return to education and training may face a range of obstacles and difficulties. As the Adult Education Survey (AES) shows, they often have to find a balance between education and training and their family responsibilities and/or work schedule. Another barrier, already discussed in Chapter 4, may be the lack of the prerequisites, for instance, the lack of the qualifications necessary to access a particular education or training programme. The list of barriers also includes another potential obstacle – funding – which will be discussed in this present section.

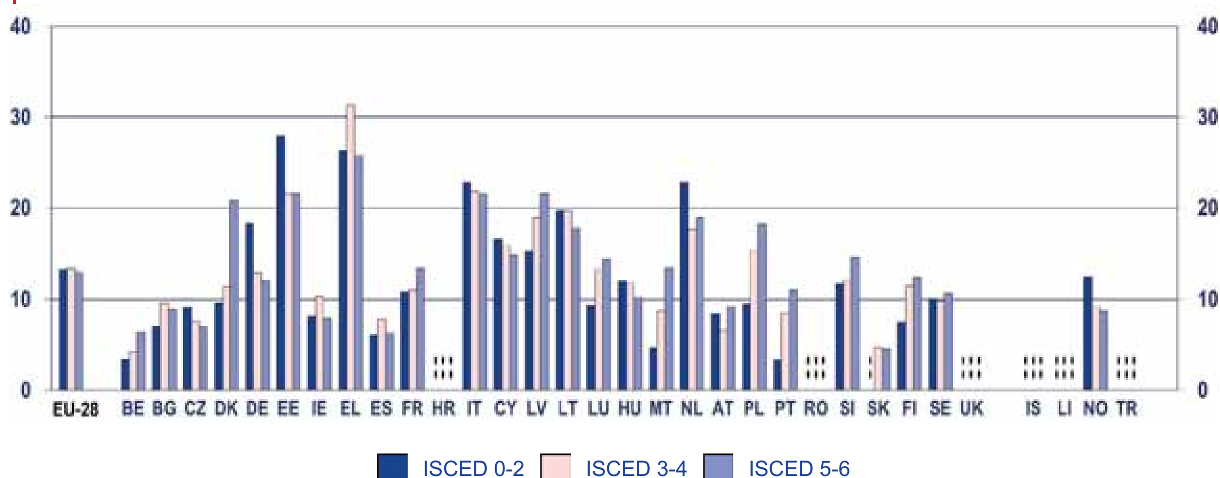
Figure 6.1 looks at the proportion of adults, according to the highest level of educational attainment, who reported that funding was an obstacle to their participation in education and training. More specifically, it refers to those adults who stated that that training was too expensive for them or they could not afford it. When looking at the EU average, data shows that the variation between educational levels is negligible. Indeed, on average, regardless of the level of educational attainment, around 13 % of adults see funding as an obstacle to their participation in education and training.

However, the average data hides some substantial cross-country differences. In particular, in countries such as Estonia, Greece and Italy, funding seems to be a substantial barrier for all groups of the adult population, regardless of prior educational attainment (20 % or more of adults stated that training was too expensive or they could not afford it). By contrast, a relatively small share of adults (up to 10 %) consider funding to be an obstacle in Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Spain, Austria and Slovakia.

When comparing adults with lower secondary education at most to those who have achieved a medium-level qualification (ISCED 3-4) or a higher education degree (ISCED 5-6), some interesting country differences can be observed. In some countries – in particular Germany, Estonia, the Netherlands and Norway – adults with a low level of educational attainment (i.e. at most lower secondary education; ISCED 0-2) seem to be more concerned by the affordability of education and training compared to adults with higher educational attainment. On the other hand, in some other countries, funding is reported as a more substantial barrier by respondents with a higher level of educational attainment compared to those with lower attainment levels. For example, when comparing people with a higher education degree (ISCED 5-6) to those who have completed lower secondary education at most (ISCED 0-2), substantially higher proportion of adults in the first group reported that funding was an obstacle compared to those in the second group in Malta (13.5 % compared to 4.7 %) and Portugal (11 % compared to 3.3 %), but also in Denmark (20.8 % compared to 9.6 %), Poland (18.2 % compared to 9.5 %) and Belgium (6.4 % compared to 3.4 %).

To fully understand the above patterns, it would be necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis of each country context. In doing so, a range of aspects would have to be considered, including the living standard of the population as well as the level of tuition fees and other training costs related to programmes at different qualification levels. This, however, goes beyond the scope of the present report.

Figure 6.1: Adults (25-64) who reported that training was too expensive or they could not afford it (%), by highest level of education attained, 2011



%	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
ISCED 0-2	13.3	3.4	7.0	9.1	9.6	18.3	27.9	8.1	26.3	6.1	10.8	:	22.8	16.7	15.3	19.7	9.3
ISCED 3-4	13.4	4.2	9.6	7.6	11.4	12.9	21.5	10.3	31.3	7.8	11.0	:	21.8	15.9	18.9	19.6	13.3
ISCED 5-6	13.0	6.4	8.9	6.9	20.8	12.0	21.6	7.9	25.8	6.3	13.4	:	21.5	14.9	21.6	17.9	14.4
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**		**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
ISCED 0-2	12.0	4.7	22.8	8.4	9.5	3.3	:	11.7	:	7.5	10.1	:		:	:	12.5	:
ISCED 3-4	11.8	8.8	17.7	6.6	15.4	8.5	:	12.1	4.7	11.5	9.8	:		:	:	9.2	:
ISCED 5-6	10.2	13.5	18.9	9.2	18.2	11.0	:	14.6	4.5	12.4	10.7	:		:	:	8.8	:

Source: Eurostat (AES). Online data code: *trng_aes_178* (data extracted December 2014).

Explanatory notes

EU-28: Estimated.

AES respondents were asked to indicate all valid obstacles out of several proposed options. Funding was indicated as one of them. For a complete list of all obstacles and their relative weight, please see the explanatory note related to Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4.

Country specific notes

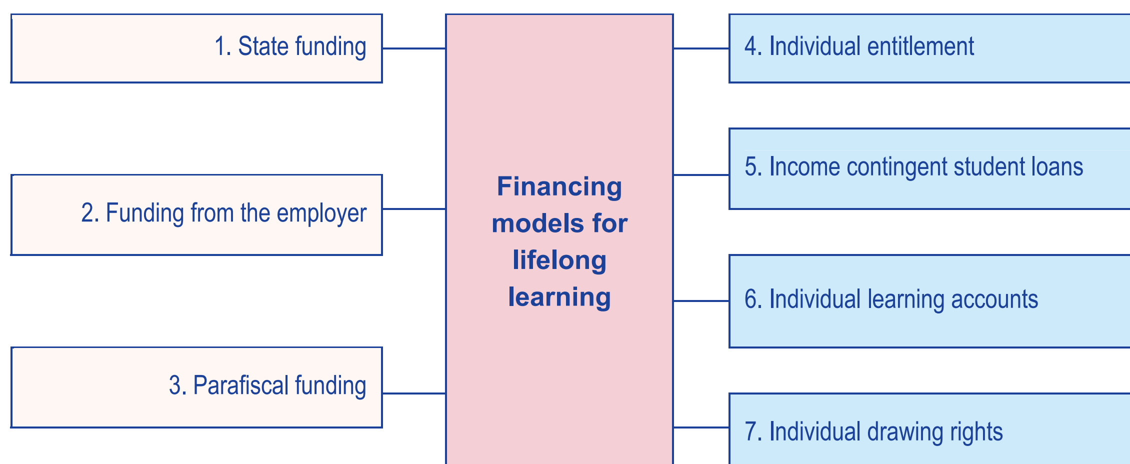
Denmark, **Luxembourg**, **Finland** and **Norway**: Low reliability for ISCED 0-2.
Malta: Low reliability for ISCED 3-4.
Romania: Data excluded by Eurydice for potential reliability issues (for more details, see Cedefop, forthcoming).

6.2. Funding and co-funding instruments in adult education and training

As outlined in the previous section, funding can represent an obstacle to adult participation in education and training. In this context, a range of cost-sharing instruments can be used to reduce the financial burden on the individual. The aim of this section is to provide a general overview of the field, to better situate instruments analysed in the remainder of this chapter.

One way of looking at the subject is to use the typology proposed by Schuetze (2007), who refers to seven main models for funding and co-funding lifelong learning.

Figure 6.2: Financing models for lifelong learning



Source: Based on Schuetze (2007); graphical presentation: Eurydice.

First, when considering the source of funding and the collection mechanism, Schuetze (ibid.) identifies three funding models:

1. State funding: this model refers to funding for organisations that provide formal or non-formal learning activities. These may be public education institutions as well as private non-profit and for-profit providers receiving public subsidies. Since resources are directly distributed to organisations providing educational services, this model is also referred to as supply-side funding.
2. Funding from the employer: here, the employer is the funder of work-related training provided to employees, including on-the-job training or off-the-job training courses.
3. Parafiscal funding: this model refers to collective funds which are made up of contributions either from employers only or from employers together with employees, which may be complemented by public funding. The collective funds are commonly administered through autonomous public bodies and are designed to cover workplace skills development.

Furthermore, Schuetze (ibid.) establishes four additional models where the learner is a direct beneficiary. While he/she bears a part of education and training costs, co-funding from public sources covers the rest of expenses.

4. Individual entitlement: refers to major co-funding schemes encompassing grants, allowances and vouchers, which mostly cover course fees. Training costs other than fees can be covered in certain cases, such as accommodation or travel expenses. Tax refunds for costs are another form of co-funding under this model; yet, they follow a specific logic. While the individual entitlement commonly targets individual learners, employers can also benefit from certain modalities of this co-funding arrangement.
5. Income contingent student loans: under this co-funding model, learners begin to repay the money they have borrowed only when they have completed their education or training programme, and have reached a certain income threshold.
6. Individual learning accounts: here, learners save money to be used for learning purposes in an account which is supplemented by a contribution from the public authorities.
7. Individual drawing rights: this model refers to co-funding that covers not only learning-related, but also work-related activities, through a system in which the learner has the right to maintain income and social protection whilst away from work. One illustration of individuals drawing rights is paid training leave.

Alongside the above classification of funding and co-funding arrangements for financing lifelong learning, there have been other approaches to categorising funding arrangements. Indeed, there is no single universal approach and all have their own justification but also limitations.

6.3. Targeted funding and co-funding arrangements

6.3.1. Funding education and training programmes targeting low-qualified adults and other specific groups: general discussion

Public funding or the state funding model (see Section 6.2) plays an important role in providing learning opportunities to low-qualified adults and other groups that may face difficulties in covering the cost of education and training activities. The Eurydice data collection shows that all countries provide public subsidies for at least some programmes open to adults who wish to improve their literacy or basic skills or those who left the education system with low level or no qualifications (for an overview of relevant publicly subsidised programmes, see Chapter 3 of the present report as well as European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015). In some cases, programmes take place in public education and training institutions (e.g. schools) and receive systematic public subsidies. In other instances, programmes are delivered by approved providers (often non-profit organisations) who also receive public subsidies in a systematic way (e.g. adult basic education centres and adult education centres in the Flemish Community of Belgium). Another approach is to enable different private non-profit or for-profit organisations to apply for public funding if they provide programmes complying with certain pre-defined standards and criteria. In most countries, this type of arrangement is common for funding courses within active labour market policies (ALMP) including 'basic skills' courses such as ICT, literacy or numeracy. Yet, this arrangement is also common outside ALMP schemes.

When one of the above approaches is used, learners may or may not be required to co-finance their tuition. As shown in the 35 system descriptions 'Adult Education and Training in Europe: Programmes to Raise Achievement in Basic Skills' (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015), literacy and basic skills programmes are commonly provided free of charge for participants. The same often applies to programmes leading to medium-level qualifications, in particular if they are provided in public institutions. However, in some cases, learners may be required to pay fees, which vary from programme to programme and often also from provider to provider.

Following the above, the extent to which countries directly subsidise adult education programmes and their providers is likely to have an impact on the extent to which they offer co-funding instruments outlined in Section 6.2. In other words, countries ensuring substantial provision of free of charge programmes (or programmes benefiting from substantial public funding) may place less emphasis on co-funding instruments assuming that learners will find a suitable offer that does not require any (or requires only a limited) financial contribution.

Although it would be particularly interesting to establish a direct relationship between the existence of co-funding instruments and the extent to which countries offer adult education and training programmes free of charge, this would require a substantial research investment that goes beyond the scope of the present report. Furthermore, this would ignore the fact that publicly-funded provision is only a part of all education and training opportunities available in the market. Indeed, adults – including those lacking basic skills or people with low level or no qualifications – may be interested in programmes that are not publicly-funded. In this case, co-funding instruments may play a role in reducing learners' financial burden.

While acknowledging the importance of systematic public subsidies for providers and programmes targeting low-qualified people and other vulnerable groups, the following subsections will concentrate on funding instruments that are also likely to contribute to widening access to learning opportunities for the most vulnerable groups of learners. More specifically, section 6.3.2 will look at the co-funding arrangements referred to previously (see Section 6.2), namely individual entitlements (i.e. grants, vouchers and study allowances), student loans and paid educational leave. It will aim at mapping co-funding instruments which have a targeted character, providing specific incentives for low-qualified adults and other vulnerable groups. Section 6.3.3 will look specifically at employers, examining the public co-funding schemes that encourage them to invest in training for their employees. Here, the main focus will be on financial incentives for employers to invest in skills and qualifications for low-qualified employees and other vulnerable groups.

6.3.2. Co-funding instruments targeting low-qualified adults and other specific groups

Across Europe, a variety of financial schemes have been developed by public authorities to support adults who wish to return to education and training. This section intends to identify which countries offer co-funding schemes targeting adults with low basic skills, or low level or no qualifications. Two different sources are used for the analysis: the Eurydice data collection conducted in relation to this report and the Cedefop database on financing adult learning. The latter provides information on cost-sharing schemes in EU Member States, where a cost-sharing scheme refers to collection or allocation mechanisms through which funding for adult learning is made available ([1]).

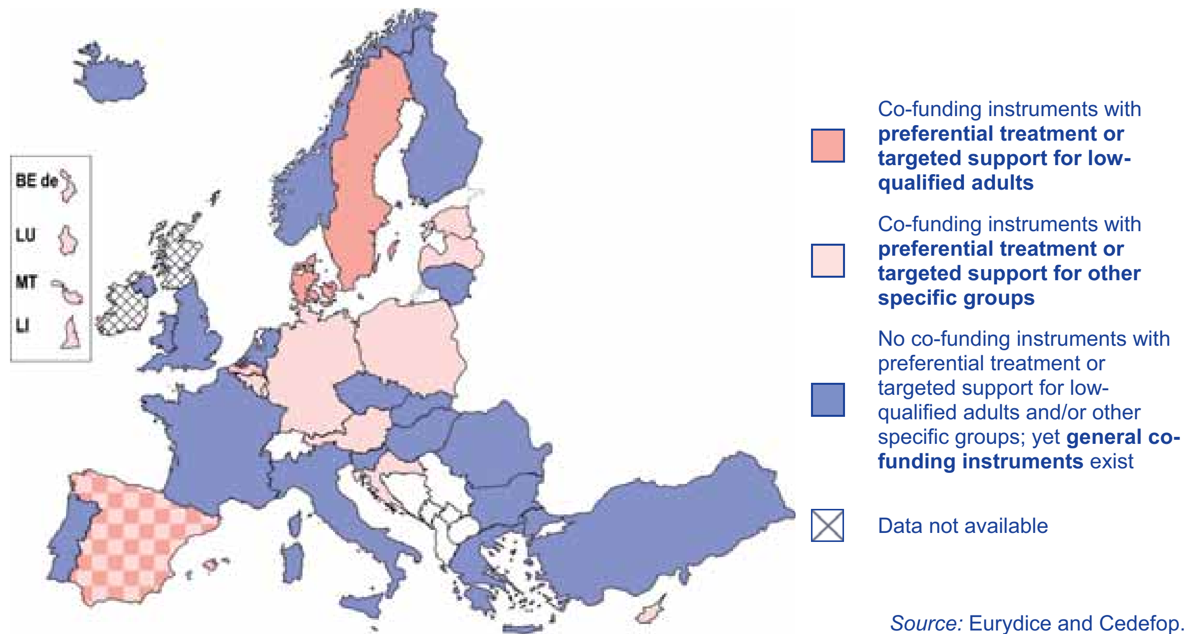
Figure 6.3 shows that in every country, at least some financial instruments exist to support those adults who wish either to return to formal education and training or to participate in non-formal courses. These may have a general character, meaning that low-qualified adults can benefit from the financial support offered, yet, are not considered amongst the specific groups entitled to preferential treatment. In other words, these instruments support on an equal basis all adult learners participating in education and training programmes. For instance, in France the individual right to training (*droit individual à la formation*) ([2]) is for all employees without any distinction between their level of qualification or skills. Another example is the adult education allowance (*Aikuiskoulutustukea*) provided in Finland, which is granted to any adult who wishes to study for a recognised vocational education or training qualification or to take any further vocational or continuing training course organised by a Finnish educational institution under public supervision.

Four countries or regions within countries report the existence of financial schemes at national or central level which specifically aim at supporting low-qualified adults who wish to take an education and training course (see Figure 6.3). These are the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Spain and Sweden.

([1]) The database can be consulted at: http://www.Cedefop.europa.eu/FinancingAdultLearning/ (Accessed 30 January 2015). It covers all Member States except Croatia. It refers to the period 2010-2013 – an update is envisaged for 2015/16. Most schemes included in the database have in-built cost-sharing (between government, companies and individuals) by default. The database covers schemes targeting adults aged 25 and above, who are either the only eligible group or one amongst others. Schemes targeting only public sector employees are not covered.

([2]) It will be replaced by the personal training account (*compte personnel de formation*) as from the 1st of January 2015.

Figure 6.3: Co-funding instruments to support adult participation in education and training, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice and Cedefop.

Explanatory notes

The co-funding instruments considered in the figure are individual entitlements (grants, allowances and vouchers), loans and paid training leave. Direct beneficiaries are individuals. For more details on each co-funding instrument reported in the figure, see Table 1 and Table 2 in Annex 2.

For a definition of 'low-qualified adults', see the Glossary.

When referring to 'other specific groups', the figure refers to unemployed jobseekers, non-native speakers and/or older employees (for more details, see Table 2 in Annex 2).

The category 'co-funding instruments with preferential treatment or targeted support for low-qualified adults' does not cover schemes where low-qualified adults falling under the category of 'other specific groups' (e.g. low-qualified unemployed jobseekers) are the only eligible group. These are covered by the category 'co-funding instruments with preferential treatment or targeted support for other specific groups'.

The Eurydice data collection was the prime source used. The Cedefop database on financing adult learning was consulted as an additional source. When a co-funding instrument was not reported in the data collected from the Eurydice National Units and was included in the Cedefop database, the example was taken into consideration. Yet, it must be noted that the reference period of the Cedefop database is 2010-2013 (and not 2013/14 as the title of the figure indicates for the Eurydice data collection).

Targeted co-funding is often only available for some types of education and training activities. For example in Denmark, the VEU allowance is specifically for adults who have at most basic education and enrol in vocationally-oriented adult education and continuing training.

Individual entitlements such as grants and allowances are the most common form of targeted financial aid for learners. Usually, grants and allowances do not have to be paid back, if used according to the rules of the instrument. One example of an individual entitlement is an allowance offered in Denmark, namely the SVU *Almen* grant for general education which can be also used to compensate for the loss of earnings or job opportunities. In Sweden, there is a long established grant and loan system for any adult who intends to return to the education system to follow a training course. While this scheme is universal, there is preferential treatment for learners studying any programme up to upper secondary level. They can receive a higher amount of grant with a share of 73 % of the total support, while for the other learners, the share is 31 %. The rest is covered by the loan of student’s choice.

In addition to grants and allowances, there is another form of individual entitlement, namely vouchers. These are coupons of a certain monetary value which are intended to be used in payment for a course chosen by the learner, although the terms of use are usually very clearly defined. They are in most

cases co-financed: while the public authorities or the employer finances part of the value of the voucher – usually half or more – the learner finances the rest. One example can be found in the Flemish Community of Belgium, where training vouchers (*Opleidingscheque*) subsidised by the Flemish Government, are made available to all employees. However, depending on the educational attainment of the person, different conditions apply: vouchers are free for all those who possess at most lower secondary education, whereas other employees are expected to co-finance them.

When attending an education and training course, other expenses arise. Even if the programme is free of charge, attending implies additional investment from learners: for instance, costs for transportation or accommodation if the course is away from home. For certain learners, there might also be expenses for the care of children, the elderly or any other dependent. Taking into account that those with the lowest skills and qualifications generally have lower incomes, these aspects have to be considered when designing schemes to support the participation of financially disadvantaged adults in education and training.

Another cost of taking part in education and training is the loss of wages, if the learner is employed and wishes to follow an educational programme during working hours. Paid training leave can be a solution in such cases. This area has been assessed in a specific Cedefop report (2012a) that defines training leave as:

> a unique regulatory instrument which, either by statutory right and/or through collective agreements, sets out the conditions under which employees may be granted time away for learning purposes. […] [A distinction has to be made between] paid training leave, which entitles the employee to receive his/her salary in full or in part while on leave, and unpaid training leave where the salary is not paid during the training period but where an employee has the right to return to his/her employment afterwards (ibid., p. 7).

The report highlights that this funding instrument is a response to time constraints, which are among major obstacles to participation in adult education and training. When mapping existing training leave instruments across countries, the report and related database (see information provided in the section above) have included eligibility criteria among the main descriptors. This enables the identification of the countries where training leave focuses on certain target groups, in particular low-qualified adults.

The outcomes of the above Cedefop research combined with data collected from the Eurydice National Units show that all countries, except Ireland and Greece, have included in their regulations the possibility for adults to take study leave. However, in only two countries – namely Denmark and Spain – low-qualified adults can benefit from education and training leave as a priority group and are given preferential treatment. More specifically, in Spain, the *permiso individual de formación* (individual training permit) identifies the low-qualified as a priority group for attending an officially-recognised training activity (up to a maximum of 200 hours per year) leading to an official qualification. In Denmark, the SVU *Almen* allowance is aimed at employees who are considered as 'early school leavers' (for more details on this category, see Table 1 in Annex 2) and for a maximum duration of 40 weeks. The VEU allowance, mentioned previously, can also be requested for training leave. In this case, the employer receives the VEU allowance to cover wage loss. Training leave is paid either with the salary or with the equivalent amount through publicly-funded allowances. It is also noteworthy that in both Denmark and Spain, the employer's authorisation is a condition for an employee to benefit from paid training leave.

Alongside co-funding schemes targeting low-qualified adults, some countries have put in place financial incentives to promote the participation of other specific groups in education and training. This is based on the assumption that individuals in these groups might be at risk of exclusion from the labour market and ultimately society. These are, in particular, the unemployed and speakers of other languages.

When it comes to the unemployed, they commonly benefit from substantial public support for upgrading their level of qualifications and acquiring new skills. This aims at increasing their potential for finding a job and reintegrating into the labour market. The unemployed take part either on a voluntary or a mandatory basis (Cedefop 2013, p. 65). In the latter case, not enrolling in a course as requested implies the loss of unemployment benefits.

Some countries have put in place subsidies to motivate and support the unemployed to take part in skills and qualification development. In these cases, unemployment benefits are commonly maintained, either in their totality or even increased (rarely reduced). Moreover, the unemployed are entitled to specific grants, and, in some cases, the co-funding also covers training expenses such as travel, meals or daily care of dependents. These financial aids for supporting unemployed people to enrol in upskilling courses exist in Belgium, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Liechtenstein.

In the Brussels region (Belgium), jobseekers who do not hold an upper secondary qualification are entitled to a grant in addition to their unemployment benefits. The amount is one euro per training hour, and the support is open to those who are registered at the Brussels Employment Office (*Actiris*) and have signed a training contract with *Bruxelles Formation*. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, under the Individual Company-Based Vocational Training Contract (*Individuele beroepsopleiding in de onderneming* – IBO), jobseekers attending vocational training with VDAB (i.e. the Flemish public employment service) or VDAB partners may qualify for an allowance in addition to their unemployment benefits, as well as allowances for transport costs and child care. A second co-funding instrument is offered to jobseekers hired and trained under the Individual Company-Based Vocational Training Contract. Jobseekers either continue to receive their unemployment or social security benefits or if not entitled to these, they receive a training or compensation allowance during the training. In addition, they also receive a productivity premium from the employer and transport allowance, under the same conditions as employees of the company where they carry out their Individual Company-Based Vocational Training Contract.

Further examples of co-funding instruments for unemployed people are vouchers, offered in Germany and Latvia. In the first, the training voucher (*Bildungsgutschein*) is offered if the jobseeker fulfils certain conditions, depending on the labour market situation and the qualification needed. Jobseekers are free to choose a certified training provider, within the specific conditions of the voucher, e.g. in terms of qualification or other outcome and timescale. In Latvia, a training programme for the unemployed and jobseekers has been implemented over the period 2009-2013. Under the programme, learners were granted a training coupon for attending approved non-formal education and training courses for developing basic social and professional skills. Furthermore, the unemployed were eligible for a monthly grant lasting a maximum of two months during the courses.

Also in Luxembourg, unemployed jobseekers can use vouchers to pay reduced fees for attending non-formal education and training courses. 'Persons in need of support' as recognised by the immigration office (OLAI) or the municipalities' social offices form another specific group who can benefit from these vouchers.

Some countries offer co-funding schemes for local language courses targeting speakers of other languages. This is the case in Estonia and Austria, where a part of the tuition fee is reimbursed when the learner follows a course related to language requirements for granting citizenship. In Estonia, the limit was EUR 384 per applicant in 2014 when undertaking the Estonian language exam and meeting certain other criteria. In Austria, under specific conditions, public authorities refund 50 % of the tuition fee for courses in German as a second language. In Liechtenstein, a maximum of 12 vouchers with a

value of CHF 200 (around EUR 165) valid for a period of five years are issued to immigrants for attending German courses. This is related to a formal requirement to achieve language proficiency for residency and citizenship applying to non-EU/EEC citizens.

In addition to co-funding schemes for the specific groups mentioned in the text above and covered by Figure 6.3, co-funding arrangements may target other specific groups. While the figure does not refer to these groups and related instruments, their existence can play an important role in widening access to learning opportunities. In Spain, for instance, certain co-funding schemes target adults with disabilities, unemployed women, victims of gender-based violence, people with special educational needs or with employability difficulties.

Moreover, further to systematic national co-funding instruments with long-term resource commitments (i.e. instruments covered by Figure 6.3), other short-term co-funding schemes may provide targeted support for people with low level or no qualifications, or other vulnerable groups. These are often part of project-based initiatives using European funding. Latvia offers a relevant example, with an ESF co-funded project launched in 2009 and covering 70 % of the fees charged to participants attending work- or non-work-related non-formal courses. Certain groups are exempted from fees, including single-parents of two children, pre-pensioners and people in poverty. Also in Cyprus, two schemes – 'Improvement of the Employability of the Unemployed' and 'Improvement of the Employability of Economically Inactive Women' (2009-2015) – financed by the European Social Fund and HRDA, aim to support work placements for inactive women to make them more employable. Programmes offered are free of charge and a weekly training allowance is granted to participants. Another example comes from Hungary where the 2012-2015 ESF-funded project 'I am learning again' (*Újra tanulok*) provides a lump sum on completion of courses. The project targets various vulnerable groups, including people without lower or upper secondary education.

Finally, countries can also fund adult education and training programmes targeting the low-qualified through public calls. For instance, in Slovenia, between 2011 and 2013, people who completed an upper secondary qualification could apply for the reimbursement of 90 % of tuition fees, based on a public call.

6.3.3. Co-funding instruments targeting employers and encouraging the participation of low-qualified adults and other specific groups in education and training

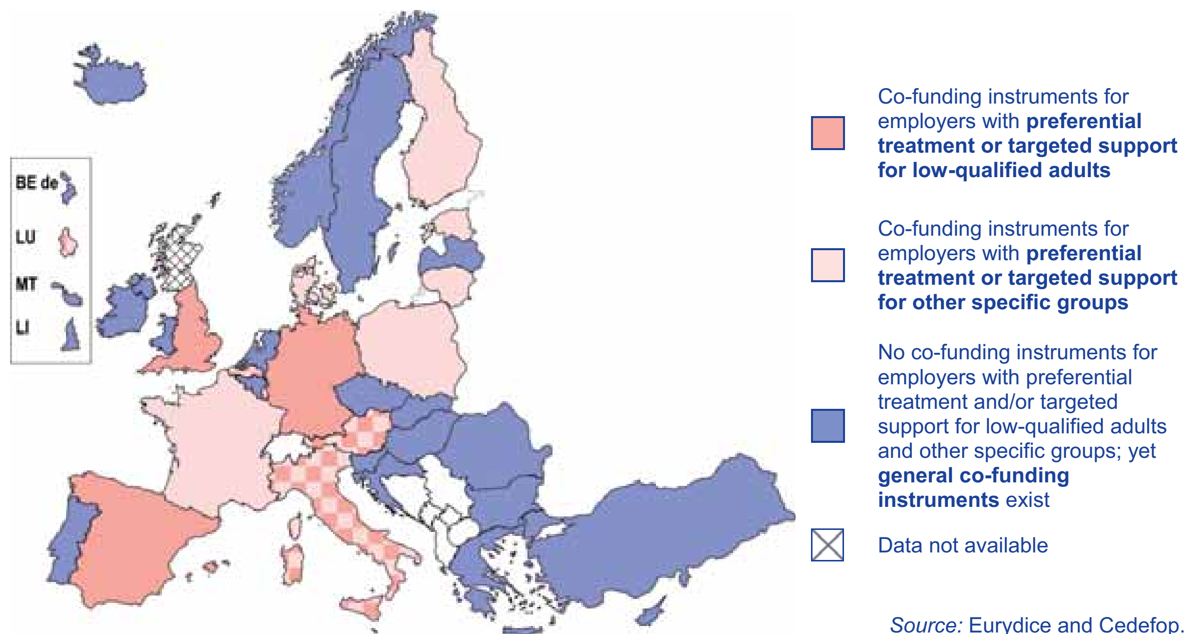
Companies contribute a substantial share of the financial resources used for lifelong learning. The majority of learning activities that employees carry out either occur in the workplace or are work-related ([3]). Public co-funding constitutes an important lever for increasing the participation of employees who are underrepresented in company-sponsored training. Employers can receive financial support for providing training opportunities to employees who usually do not take part in company-funded activities.

This section therefore considers whether public authorities encourage and support companies through co-funding instruments in providing learning opportunities for low-qualified employees or employees with low skills. The support for companies, considered here, may enable employees to participate in continuing vocational training (CVET) or to have time-off for following an education and training course during working hours. Data comes from the same two sources used in the previous section: the Eurydice data collection and the Cedefop database on financing adult learning (for more details on the database, see the previous section).

([3]) For more details, see the results of the Adult Education Survey on the Eurostat website, in particular online codes: *trng_aes_170* and *trng_aes_190*.

Figure 6.4 shows the existence across Europe of financial instruments for companies supporting employee participation in education and training. It indicates that existing schemes are often offered to all employees including those who are low-qualified or lack basic skills and competences. This means that the above groups do not receive any preferential treatment. Such general schemes, i.e. schemes without preferential treatment or targeted support, are not considered in the remainder of the section.

Figure 6.4: Co-funding instruments for employers to encourage adult participation in education and training, 2013/14



Source: Eurydice and Cedefop.

Explanatory notes

The co-funding instruments considered in the figure are the grants, allowances, vouchers and subsidies to cover paid training leave. Direct beneficiaries are employers. For more details on each co-funding instrument reported in the figure, see Table 3 and Table 4 in Annex 2.

For a definition of 'low-qualified adults', see the Glossary.

The 'other specific groups' referred to in the figure are people who have been out of the labour market for a time and who are trained by the employer receiving financial support, older employees and/or non-native speakers (for more details, see Annex 2, Table 4).

The first two categories (i.e. co-funding instruments for employers with preferential treatment or targeted support for low-qualified adults and/or other specific groups) do not cover co-funding schemes that potentially target all employees in the company (e.g. schemes which may benefit companies where employees risk losing their jobs due to changes in the production process and consequently may need further training).

The Eurydice data collection was the prime source used. The Cedefop database on financing adult learning was consulted as an additional source. When a co-funding instrument was not reported in the data collected from the Eurydice National Units and was included in the Cedefop database, the example was taken into consideration. Yet, it must be noted that the reference period of the Cedefop database is 2010-2013 (and not 2013/14 as the title of the figure indicates for the Eurydice data collection).

Co-funding schemes for employers targeting low-qualified or low-skilled employees are provided on a national basis in only a few countries. In Luxembourg and Austria, employers may be eligible for a higher level of support in respect of targeted groups (i.e. preferential treatment), whereas in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom (England) co-funding is offered only for targeted groups.

These co-funding schemes may take different forms. The most common one is the reimbursement of education and training costs. For example, in Austria, the scheme 'Training support for workers'

(*Qualifizierungsförderung für Beschäftige*), which co-funds training in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), pays the costs of tuition fees and daily rates for external trainers. Women with low to medium-level qualifications form one of the target groups of this funding scheme. In the United Kingdom (England), the Government covers a proportion of the training costs for apprentices depending on their age: 50 % if the apprentice is aged 19-24; and up to 50 % if aged over 25.

Employers can also benefit from a reduction in tuition fees when enrolling employees in a training course. This is the case in the Flemish Community of Belgium, where an employee aged over 18 without an upper secondary education qualification is considered as an 'employee at risk'. Therefore co-funding is provided to employers when this category of employees attends a VDAB vocational training programme enabling them to improve skills related to their current job as well as to acquire skills which are broadly transferable to other companies or work areas.

In Italy, at national level, the 'urgent interventions to support employment' scheme offers training vouchers to companies when employees with at most primary education are enrolled in education and training courses. The voucher has a value of EUR 1 500 on average (EUR 500 at the minimum and EUR 5 000 at the maximum) expressed in the equivalent of training hours. The voucher covers 80 % of the training costs while the remaining 20 % must be paid by the employer.

Another form of supporting employers is through the contributions to the employee's salary. This is the case in Germany where employers receive an income subsidy if employees take training leave for achieving at least the equivalent to level 4 of the German Qualifications Framework. In Luxembourg, within one of the existing funding schemes, which co-funds the company training plan, employers can claim the highest reimbursement rates of salary costs (35 %) for employees attending an education and training course who do not hold any formal qualification (i.e. have achieved at most lower secondary education) and have worked less than ten years in the company. Moreover, under the adult apprenticeship programme, employers are paid the difference between the amount of the complementary training allowance granted to apprentices in initial education and the minimum salary the adult apprentices are entitled to.

A co-funding scheme in Spain – the training and learning contract launched in 2012 – concentrates on those aged between 16 and 24 who do not hold either a mainstream qualification or a recognised vocational qualification. Here, employers can apply for deductions from their social security contributions, in addition to having the training provision co-funded or even entirely financed in the case of small companies. The scheme covers various modes of training: in-company training; training outside the company and joint training organised with education and training providers. Training is free of charge in all cases for the employees.

Beyond, or in addition to the above co-funding schemes, some countries have identified other specific groups considered as 'at risk', and therefore in need of support to take part in education and training. On the one hand, those who have been out of the labour market for a range of reasons and on the other hand, older employees (aged 45 and above).

The first type of co-funding – i.e. schemes targeting employers who provide training for people who have been out of the labour market – can be found in the Flemish Community of Belgium (under the Individual Company-Based Vocational Training Contract), in Denmark, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Poland and Finland (including long-term unemployed in this country). Some of these schemes affect unemployed jobseekers. In these cases, the unemployed person often keeps his/her unemployment benefits, while the employer – who is involved in the training provision – also receives subsidies. Yet, sometimes, the participation in education and training is not the only condition for the employer to receive public co-funding. For example, in Poland, the vocational education and training agreement

allows employers to receive funding for training costs as well as a premium if the unemployed people they hired pass the final examination of the vocational education and training course they took part in. Likewise in Estonia, the unemployment insurance system reimburses the training costs to employers, if after the retraining period, the employer offers a new position to the employee who was out of the labour market for medical reasons. Public co-funding for employers targeting people who have been out of the labour market can also affect those who have been raising children (e.g. vocational contracts (*période de professionalisation)* in France) or, as already pointed out in the example above, are returning after an illness which has meant they have been unable to work (e.g. Estonia and Finland).

As mentioned above, certain co-funding schemes provide specific subsidies for employers providing education and training opportunities to employees aged 45 and above. These exist in France (under the condition that the employee has 20 years' working experience and has been employed at least one year), Italy (women aged over 40), Luxembourg (with ten years' experience) and Austria.

There are also co-funding incentives for employers to provide language courses in the local language(s) for speakers of other languages. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the VDAB offers a co-funding scheme to employers under which non-Dutch speaking employees benefit from work-based language training for which the employers receive financial aid. The scheme is customised and integrated into the employees' work duties. Moreover, under the Individual Company-based Vocational Training Contract, employees can follow language courses provided free of charge by VDAB.

While not considered in Figure 6.4, various project-based initiatives also play a significant role in encouraging employers to provide education and training to their employees, in particular those with low level or no qualifications. For example, Norway has put in place a funding scheme related to a programme targeting the acquisition of basic skills, namely 'basic competence in working life' (*Basiskompetanse i arbeidslivet*). Within this scheme, companies can apply for funding to provide basic skills courses to their employees (for more details on the programme, see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2). In Slovenia, public authorities issue regular calls for bids to employers for co-financing education and training of employees. The fifth invitation launched in 2014 placed, for the third time, emphasis on employees over 50, low-qualified women and people with disabilities. With regard to project-based initiatives, European funding plays a key role. In Lithuania, a 2010/13 ESF co-funded project 'Small Companies Human Resources Development' aimed at improving the qualifications, knowledge and skills of employees in small companies to improve their ability to adapt to the needs of the company and to labour market changes. Employees with primary or lower secondary education were the main groups benefitting from this project.

Conclusions

This chapter concentrated on public financial interventions to support access to and participation in lifelong learning among low-qualified adults and other groups where the lack of skills and qualifications may be of particular concern. The chapter started with the analysis of data from the Adult Education Survey, showing that financial issues constitute one of the main obstacles preventing adults from taking part in lifelong learning activities. Moreover, in several countries, low-qualified adults (i.e. those with at most lower secondary education) seem to be significantly more affected by the cost of learning activities compared to adults with a higher level of educational attainment.

Following the above, co-funding schemes, either specifically devised for low-qualified and low-skilled adults or offering them preferential treatment compared to other learners, have been examined.

The analysis shows that while in all countries a range of co-funding instruments are available to help adults return to education and training, only some countries target such arrangements specifically at low-qualified adults or those with low skill levels (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Spain and Sweden). These targeted co-funding measures mainly take the form of specific grants and allowances, but also include training vouchers or paid training leave.

Besides co-funding instruments for low-qualified people, other targeted schemes exist, concentrating on other groups considered 'at risk'. For example, some countries have put in place specific financial incentives for unemployed jobseekers to encourage them to take part in education and training (Belgium, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Liechtenstein). These mainly take the form of training allowances, which the unemployed person receives in addition to unemployment benefits. Comparable incentives targeting speakers of other languages exist in a few additional countries (Estonia, Austria and Liechtenstein).

Co-funding schemes are also commonly offered to employers to provide education and training opportunities to their employees. However, in only a small group of countries is this financial support aimed specifically at low-qualified employees or those with low skill levels (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria and the United Kingdom – England). Most of these targeted co-funding instruments take the form of grants and vouchers to cover training costs; exemption from social security contributions; or income subsidies, in the case of training leave.

In some countries, financial support also goes to employers providing training opportunities to other specific groups, including people who have been out of the labour market (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Poland and Finland), older employees (France, Italy, Luxembourg and Austria) and people learning the local language at the work place (the Flemish Community of Belgium).

REFERENCES

Abraham, E. and Linde, A., 2011. Alphabetisierung/Grundbildung als Aufgabengebiet der Erwachsenenbildung. In R. Tippelt, A. von Hippel, eds. *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung*. 5 ed. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 889-904.

Boockmann, B., Osiander, Ch. and Stops, M., 2014. Vermittlerstrategien und Arbeitsmarkterfolg: Evidenz aus kombinierten Prozess- und Befragungsdaten. *IAW-Diskussionspapiere,* 102. [pdf] Available at: http://www.iaw.edu/tl_files/dokumente/iaw_dp_102.pdf [Accessed 24 October 2014].

Brooks, G., 2011. *A tale of IALS's influence (or not) in the UK*. [pdf] Available at: http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/Brooks_England%20Country%20Story.pdf [Accessed 8 February 2015].

Carpentieri, J. et al., 2011. *Family literacy in Europe: using parental support initiatives to enhance early literacy development*. London: NRDC, Institute of Education.

Cedefop, 2008. *Terminology of European education and training policy. A selection of 100 key terms.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Cedefop, 2009. *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Cedefop, 2011. Lifelong guidance across Europe: reviewing policy progress and future prospects. *Working paper,* No 11. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Cedefop, 2012a. Training leave. Policies and practice in Europe. *Research Paper*, No 28. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Cedefop, 2012b. Permeable education and training systems: reducing barriers and increasing opportunity. *Briefing Note.* November 2012. [pdf] Available at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/9072_en.pdf [Accessed 25 November 2014].

Cedefop, 2013. Return to work. Work-based learning and the reintegration of unemployed adults into the labour market. *Working paper,* No 21. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Cedefop, 2014. Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe in 2013. *Working paper,* No 22. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Cedefop, forthcoming. *Job-related learning and vocational training in Europe: in-depth evidence from the European Adult Education Survey and the Continuing Vocational Training Survey*.

Cedefop and Sultana, R. G., 2004. Guidance policies in the knowledge society: trends, challenges and responses across Europe. A Cedefop synthesis report. *Cedefop Panorama series*; 85. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Consortium de Validation des Compétences, 2013. *Rapport d'activité du Consortium de Validation des Compétences 2013.* [pdf] Available at:
http://www.cvdc.be/sites/default/files/public/uploads/common/Rapport-activite-2013-%20validation-competences.pdf [Accessed 16 December 2014].

DARES (Direction de l'animation de la recherche, des études et des statistiques) [Directorate for Research, Studies and Statistics (FR)]], 2014. La VAE en 2012 dans les ministères certificateurs. *Dares Analyses,* No 002. Janvier 2014. [pdf] Available at: http://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/2014-002.pdf [Accessed 25 November 2014].

Departement voor Werk en Sociale Economie [Department of Work and Social Economy (BE)], 2013. *Jaarrapport ervaringsbewijs.* 1 januari 2013-31 december 2013 [Annual report on experiencial evidence]. [pdf] Available at:
http://www.werk.be/sites/default/files/jaarrapport_ervaringsbewijs_2013.pdf
[Accessed 25 November 2014].

EACEA/Eurydice, 2011a. *Adults in Formal Education: Policies and Practice in Europe*. Brussels: EACEA/Eurydice.

EACEA/Eurydice, 2011b. *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe 2011: Funding and the Social Dimension*. Brussels: EACEA/Eurydice.

European Commission, 2010. *Communication from the Commission. Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.* COM(2010) 2020 final. [pdf] Available at:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF
[Accessed 25 November 2014].

European Commission, 2011a. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda*. COM(2011) 18 final – Not published in the Official Journal. [pdf] Available at:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0018:FIN:EN:PDF
[Accessed 25 November 2014].

European Commission, 2011b. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems.* COM(2011) 567 – Not published in the Official Journal. [pdf] Available at:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0567&from=EN
[Accessed 25 November 2014].

European Commission, 2012a. *EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy. Final Report, September 2012*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission, 2012b. *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee of the Regions*. COM(2012) 669 final. SWD(2012) 371-377 final.

European Commission, 2012c. *Strategies for improving participation in and awareness of adult learning. European Guide*. [pdf] Available at: http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/strategies-for-improving-participation-in-and-awareness-of-adult-learning-pbNC3112514/ [Accessed 24 October 2014].

European Commission, 2013. *Developing the Adult Education Sector. Lot 3: Opening Higher Education to Adults. Contract EAC 2012-0074. Final Report.* Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission, 2014a. *Education and Training Monitor 2014*. [pdf] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor14_en.pdf [Accessed 30 January 2015].

European Commission, 2014b. European area of skills and qualifications. Report. *Special Eurobarometer* 417. [pdf] Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_417_en.pdf [Accessed 24 October 2014].

European Commission, Cedefop, ICF International, 2014. *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014. Final synthesis report*. [pdf] Available at: http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2014/87244.pdf [Accessed 9 December 2014].

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014a. *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice Report.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014b. *The Structure of the European Education Systems 2014/15: Schematic Diagrams.* [pdf] Available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/education_structures_EN.pdf [Accessed 21 January 2015].

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015. *Adult Education and Training in Europe: Programmes to Raise Achievement in Basic Skills. 35 system descriptions. Background document to the report Adult Education and Training in Europe: Widening Access to Learning Opportunities.* [pdf] Available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php [Accessed 10 February 2015].

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014. *Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures.* Eurydice and Cedefop Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat and Eurostudent, 2012. *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Eurostat, 2006. *Classification of learning activities - Manual.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

GHK, 2010. *Basic skills provision for adults: policy and practice guidelines. Final report.* [pdf] Available at: http://adultlearning.isfol.it/adult-learning/risorse/basic-skills-for-adults-rapporto-2011 [Accessed 24 October 2014].

GHK, Cedefop, European Commission, 2010. *2010 update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning – Final Report.* [pdf] Available at: http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2011/77643.pdf [Accessed 25 November 2014].

Gury-Rosenblit, S., 2005. Distance education and 'e-learning': Not the same thing. *Higher Education*, 49, pp. 467-493.

Hamilton, M. and Merrifield, J., 1999. Adult Learning and Literacy in the United Kingdom. In J. Comings, B. Garner & C. Smith, eds. *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Vol. 1, pp. 243-303.

Heublein, U. et al., 2010. *Ursachen des Studienabbruchs in Bachelor-und in herkömmlichen Studiengängen. Ergebnisse einer bundesweiten Befragung von Exmatrikulierten des Studienjahres 2007/2008.* [pdf] Available at: http://www.dzhw.eu/pdf/pub_fh/fh-201002.pdf [Accessed 27 January 2015].

Ianke, P. et al., 2013. *Vox-speilet 3013. Voksnes deltakelse i opplæring*. Oslo: Vox.

ILO (International Labour Organisation), 2012. *International Standard Classification of Occupations: Structure, group definitions and correspondence tables. ISCO-08.* Vol. I. Geneva: ILO.

Inbar, D. and Sever, R., 1989. The Importance of Making Promises: An Analysis of Second-Chance Policies. *Comparative Education Review, 33*(2), pp. 232-242.

Jarvis, P., 2002. *International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education*. London: Kogan Page.

Jeantheau, J.-P., 2005. Assessing low levels of literacy: IVQ Survey 2004-2005 - Focus on the Agence Nationale de Lutte Contre L'Illetrisme (ANLCI) module. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies,* Vol. 14, n. 2, pp. 75-92.

Kunnskapsdepartementet [Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research], 2014. *Fagskoler 2013. Tilstandsrapport.* Oslo: Kunnskapsdepartementet.

McGivney, V., 1990. *Education's For Other People: Access to Education for Non-Participant Adults*. Leicester: NIACE.

McGivney, V., 2000. *Recovering outreach: concepts, issues and practices*. Leicester: NIACE.

McGivney, V., 2001. Outreach. *NIACE Briefing Sheet 17.* Leicester: NIACE.

McGivney, V., 2006. Attracting new groups into learning: Lessons from research in England. In: J. Chapman, P, Cartwright. & E. J. McGilp, eds. *Lifelong Learning, participation and equity.* Dordrecht: Springer, Vol. 5, pp. 79-91.

NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency (IE)), 2011. *A Literature Review of International Adult Literacy Policies.* [pdf] Available at: https://www.nala.ie/sites/default/files/publications/A%20Literature%20Review%20of%20International%20Adult%20Literacy%20Policies%20110311_1.pdf [Accessed 24 October 2014].

NRDC (National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (UK)), 2010a. *Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector. Call Number: EAC 11/2008. European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 1.* London: NRDC, Institute of Education.

NRDC, 2010b. *Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector*. *Call Number: EAC 11/2008. European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2.* London: NRDC, Institute of Education.

OCR, (n.d.) *Functional Skills. Functional Skills qualification in English at Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3. Scheme codes 09495, 09496, 09497. Centre Handbook.* [pdf] Available at: http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/80602-centre-handbook.pdf [Accessed 24 October 2014].

OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development), 2000. *Literacy in the Information Age. Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey.* Paris: OECD.

OECD, 2003. *Beyond Rhetoric: Adult learning Policies and Practices.* Paris: OECD.

OECD, 2010. *Education at a Glance 2010 OECD Indicators: OECD Indicators.* Paris: OECD.

OECD, 2013a. *OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*. Paris: OECD.

OECD, 2013b. *The Survey of Adult Skills: Reader's Companion*. Paris: OECD.

Reder, S. and Bynner, J. eds., 2009. *Tracking adult literacy and numeracy: Findings from longitudinal research.* New York: Routledge.

Schreier, C. et al., 2010. *Inclusive Modules. Moving young people on*. *Handboek 2010.* Frankfurt am Main: Institute for Social Work and Social Education (ISS).

Schuetze, Hans G., 2007. Individual Learning Accounts and other models of financing lifelong learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 26 (1), pp. 5-23.

Scottish Government, 2014. *Adult Literacy and Numeracy*. [Online] Available at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/education/life-long-learning/17551 [Accessed 18 November 2014].

Statistik Austria [Austrian Statistical Office], 2014a. *Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund seit 2008*. [pdf] Available at: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/static/bevoelkerung_mit_migrationshintergrund_seit_2008_069443.pdf [Accessed 2 February 2015].

Statistik Austria, 2014b. *Schlüsselkompetenzen von Erwachsenen - Vertiefende Analysen der PIAAC-Erhebung 2011/12.* Wien: Statistik Austria.

Sultana R. and Watts, R., 2006. Career Guidance in Public Employment Services across Europe. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 6 (1), Issue 1, pp. 29-46.

Thorn, W., 2009. *International Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Surveys in the OECD Region. OECD Working Papers* No. 26. [pdf] Available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/5ksb2zx31xmx.pdf?expires=1422619113&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=533B11D74EDE6B43E1896EAAAFE769A0 [Accessed 24 October 2014].

Thuy, P., Hansen, E. and Price, D., 2001. *The public employment service in a changing labour market.* Geneva: International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Titmus, C. J., 1996. Adult Education: Concepts and Principles. In: A. C. Tuijnman, ed. *The International Encyclopedia of Adult Education and Training.* Oxford: Pergamon Press, pp. 9-17.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), 1972. *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO-UIS (Institute for Statistics), 1996. International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 1997). [pdf] Available at: http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/isced97-en.pdf [Accessed 18 November 2014

UNESCO, 2004. *The Plurality of Literacy and its implications for Policies and Programs*. [pdf] Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001362/136246e.pdf [Accessed 10 December 2014].

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2010. *CONFINTEA VI. Belém Framework for Action. Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future*. [pdf] Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001877/187789m.pdf [Accessed 6 November 2014].

UNESCO-UIS, 2011. *International Standard Classification of Education. ISCED 2011.* [pdf] Available at: http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf [Accessed 14 February 2014].

UNESCO, 2013. *2nd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education. Rethinking Literacy.* [pdf] Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002224/222407E.pdf [Accessed 3 April 2014].

Unger, M. et al., 2009. *Frühe Studienabbrüche an Universitäten in Österreich. Endbericht. Studie im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Wissenschaft und Forschung BMWF*. [pdf] Available at: http://www.equi.at/dateien/Frueher_Studienabbruch_an_Un.pdf [Accessed 27 January 2015].

Vellos, R. and Vadeboncoeur, J., 2013. Alternative and second chance education. In: J. Ainsworth, ed. *Sociology of education: An a-to-z guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Vol. 1, pp. 36-40.

Vorhaus J. et al., 2011. *Review of research and evaluation on improving adult literacy and numeracy skills*. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Vox [Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning], 2012. *Karriereveiledning viser vei! En analyse av brukeres opplevelse og utbytte av veiledningstilbudet ved et utvalg karrieresentre i Norge*. Oslo: Vox.

Ward, K. 1986. *Outreach in Practice: Some Examples of Community-based Projects*. REPLAN Review, DES.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

The table below refers to Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2 ('Policy Commitments'). It lists the policy documents reported by countries as a response to the following question:

> Please indicate up to three important strategic policy documents issued in the past five years (i.e. between 2009 and 2014) that explicitly refer to the access of low-qualified adults and/or adults with a low level of basic skills to skills development and/or qualifications. If there are more than three documents, please choose the most relevant. If there are specific (i.e. standalone) strategies covering the field (e.g. 'Adult Literacy Strategy'), please include them among the three most relevant cases.

The table is divided into five columns. The first column attributes a **code** to each policy document. These codes are referred to in Figure 2.1. The second column indicates the **year of publication**. The third column provides the **name of each strategic document** in an official country language and in English, as well as a **link to the document** (accessed January 2015). The fourth column indicates whether objectives stipulated benefit from specific funding. The table distinguishes between **national funding ('NF')** and **European funding ('EF')**. The fifth column indicates whether objectives stipulated are subject to **evaluation**. This may involve different types of evaluation, including ex-ante, formative and/or ex-post evaluation (any of the above types of evaluation is taken into account).

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding		Evaluation
			NF	EF	
BEde1	2011	Teilprojekt 4 'Weiterentwicklung der Initiativen im Bereich des Lebenslangen Lernens' des Regionalen Entwicklungskonzepts der DG 'Ostbelgien Leben 2025'; Subproject 4 'Further development of the LLL initiatives' of the Regional Development Concept (REK) 'Ostbelgien live 2025' of the German-speaking Community; http://www.dglive.be/PortalData/2/Resources/downloads/staat_gesellschaft/rek-band3.pdf (p. 117)	x	x	x
BEde2	2010	Europäischer Sozialfonds 2007-2013 'Operationelles Programm der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens im Rahmen des Ziels 2', 'Regionale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und Beschäftigung'; European Social Fund 2007-2013 'Operational Programme of the German-speaking Community of Belgium - Objective 2', 'Regional Competitiveness and Employment'; http://www.dgeuropa.be/PortalData/38/Resources/dokumente/esf/ESF_OP_2007-2013.pdf	x	x	x
BEfr1	2014	Décret relatif à la formation alternée pour les demandeurs d'emploi et modifiant le décret du 18 juillet 1997 relatif à l'insertion de demandeurs d'emploi auprès d'employeurs qui organisent une formation permettant d'occuper un poste vacant; Decree on Apprenticeship Training for Job-seekers and amending the Decree of 18 July 1997 on the Placement of Job Seekers with Employers who Allow a Trainee to Fill a Vacant Position; https://wallex.wallonie.be/index.php?mod=voirdoc&script=wallex2&PAGEDYN=indexBelgiqueLex.html&MBID=2014201599	x		x
BEfr2	2013	Le plan bruxellois pour la Garantie Jeunes; The Brussels' Youth Guarantee Action Plan; http://www.parlbruparl.irisnet.be/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Accord-de-majorite-REG-FR.pdf	x	x	x
BEfr3	2011	L'Alliance «Emploi – Environnement»; The «Employment – Environment» Alliance; http://www.parlbruparl.irisnet.be/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Accord-de-majorite-REG-FR.pdf	x	x	x
BEnl1	2012	Strategisch Plan Geletterdheid Verhogen 2012-2016; Strategic Plan to Raise Literacy Levels 2012-2016; http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/geletterdheid/plan/StrategischPlanGeletterdheidVerhogen2012-2016.pdf			x

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding		Evaluation
			NF	EF	
BEnl2	2014 (1)	Decreet betreffende het volwassenenonderwijs; Parliamentary Act on Adult Education; http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/edulex/database/document/document.asp?docid=13914	x		x
BEnl3	2012	Loopbaanakkoord 2012-2013; Career Agreement 2012-2013; http://www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/LR-SERV-VESOC-2012-anysurfer_0.pdf			x
BG1	2014	Natzionalna strategia za Uchene prez tzelia jivot; National Lifelong Learning Strategy; http://lll.mon.bg/uploaded_files/strategy_LLL_2014_2020.pdf			x
BG2	2012	Natzionalna programa za razvitie Balgaria 2020; National Programme for Development Bulgaria 2020; http://www.strategy.bg/FileHandler.ashx?fileId=2928			x
BG3	2011	Natzionalna programa za reformi Balgaria 2020; National Reform Programme 2011-2015; http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nrp/nrp_bulgaria_en.pdf			x
CZ1	2014	Strategie vzdělávací politiky České republiky do roku 2020; Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020; http://www.vzdelavani2020.cz/images_obsah/dokumenty/strategie-2020_web.pdf			x
DK1	2014	Aftale om bedre og mere attraktive erhvervsuddannelser; Agreement to Improve Vocational Education and Training and Make it More Attractive to Users; http://uvm.dk/~/media/UVM/Filer/Udd/Erhverv/PDF14/140224%20endelig%20aftaletekst%2025%202%202014.ashx	x		x
DK2	2013	Aftaler om Vækstplan Vækstplan DK; Growth Plan Agreements; http://www.fm.dk/publikationer/2013/aftaler-om-vaekstplan-dk/~/media/Publikationer/Imported/2013/Aftaler%20V%C3%A6kstplan%20DK/web_aftaler_om_vaekstplan_DK_pdfa.pdf	x		x
DE1	2012	Vereinbarung über eine gemeinsame nationale Strategie für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener in Deutschland 2012-2016; Agreement for a Joint National Strategy for Literacy and Adult Basic Skills in Germany 2012-2016; http://www.bmbf.de/en/426.php			x
EE1	2009	Täiskasvanuhariduse arengukava aastateks 2009-2013; Development Plan for Estonian Adult Education 2009-2013; http://www.hm.ee/index.php?popup=download&id=10228	x	x	x
EE2	2014	Elukestva õppe strateegia 2020; Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020; http://www.kogu.ee/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Lifelong-Learning.pdf	x	x	x
EE3	2011	Konkurentsikava 'Eesti 2020'; National Reform Programme 'Estonia 2020'; https://valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/en/government-office/growth-and-jobs/estonian-positions-on-eu-2020/National%20Reform%20Programme%20Estonia%202020.pdf	x	x	x

(1) The act was first adopted in 2007. The year indicated refers to the final adoption in April 2014.

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding		Evaluation
			NF	EF	
IE1	2014	Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy (2014-2019); http://www.solas.ie/docs/FETStrategy2014-2019.pdf			
IE2	2013	Review of ALCES funded Adult Literacy Provision; http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-ALCES-funded-Adult-Literacy-Provision.pdf			
IE3	2011	Statement of Strategy 2011-2014 (Department of Education and Skills); http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Corporate-Reports/Strategy-Statement/des_strategy_statement_2011_2014.pdf			
EL1	2013	Ethniko Programma Dia Viou Mathisis 2013-15; National Lifelong Learning Programme 2013-15; http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/publications/ETHNIKO_PROGRAMMA_2013-2015.pdf	x	x	x
EL2	2010	Nomos 3879/2010: Anaptixi tis Dia Viou Mathisis kai alles diataxeis; Law 3879/2010: Development of Lifelong Learning and other Provisions; http://www.gsae.edu.gr/images/nomothesia/nomoi/Law-3879-LifeLongLearning.pdf			x
ES1	2011	Plan de acción para el aprendizaje permanente; Action Plan for Lifelong Learning; https://sede.educacion.gob.es/publiventa/detalle.action?cod=14856	x	x	x
ES2	2012	Estrategia Española de Empleo 2012-2014; Spanish Employment Strategy 2012-2014; https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2011/11/19/pdfs/BOE-A-2011-18146.pdf	x	x	x
ES3	2013	Plan Nacional de implantación de la Garantía Juvenil en España; National Plan for the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Spain; http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/garantiajuvenil/queesGJ.html	x	x	x
FR1	2009	La loi du 24 novembre 2009 relative à l'orientation et à la formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie; Law on Guidance and Lifelong Learning; http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000021312490&categorieLien=id			
FR2	2011	Accord national interprofessionnel sur l'accès des jeunes aux formations en alternance et aux stages en entreprises; Intersectoral National Agreement on Young People's Access to Apprenticeship Training and Internships; http://www.emploi.gouv.fr/files/files/Acteurs/CNML/Actu%20une/pdf_ANI_jeunes_alternance_et_stages_2011-06-07.pdf			x
FR3	2014	Loi relative à la formation professionnelle, à l'emploi et à la démocratie sociale; Law on Vocational Training, Employment and Social Democracy; http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000028683576			
HR1	2012	Stateški plan Ministarstva znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta 2013.-2015; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports Strategic Plan 2013-2015; http://public.mzos.hr/fgs.axd?id=19105	x	x	x
HR2	2011	Strategija Vladinih programa za razdoblje 2012.-2014; Strategy for Government Programmes in the Period 2012-2014; http://public.mzos.hr/fgs.axd?id=18603			x

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding		Evaluation
			NF	EF	
IT1	2014	Programma nazionale di riforma (Documento di economia e finanza – DEF); National Reform Programme (Economic and Financial Document – DEF); http://www.dt.tesoro.it/en/analisi_programmazione_economico_finanziaria/documenti_programmatici/sezione3/def_assistenza.html	x	x	x
IT2	2013	Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica (DPR) n. 263/2012; Decree of the President of the Republic no. 263/2012; http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:presidente.repubblica:decreto:2012-10-29;263			x
IT3	2013	Decreto Legislativo (D.Lgs.) n. 13/2013; Legislative Decree no. 13/2013; http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/02/15/13G00043/sg			x
CY1	2014	Ethniki Stratigiki Dia Biou Mathisis 2014-2020; National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020; http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/499A1CB95981643FC2257C7D00486172/$file/National%20Lifelong%20Learning%20Strategy%20in%20Greek.pdf	x	x	x
CY2	2013	Ethniko Metarithmistiko Programma 2013; Cyprus National Reform Programme 2013: Europe 2020 Strategy for: Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth; http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/All/8077A9E8C5584E56C2257D270037E9E1/$file/National%20Reform%20Programme%202013.pdf	x	x	x
CY3	2014	Ethniko Metarithmistiko Programma 2014; Cyprus National Reform Programme 2014: Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth; http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/All/F0102E6523454FFCC2257D270038F1BD/$file/National%20Reform%20Programme%202014.pdf	x	x	x
LV1	2012	Latvijas Nacionālais attīstības plāns 2014.-2020. gadam; Latvian National Development Plan of for 2014–2020 (NDP 2020); http://www.pkc.gov.lv/images/NAP2020%20dokumenti/NDP2020_English_Final.pdf	x	x	x
LV2	2014	Izglītības attīstības pamatnostādnes 2014.-2020. gadam; Education Development Guidelines for 2014-2020; http://m.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406	x	x	x
LV3	2014	Nacionālā reformu programma; Latvian National Reform Programme for the Implementation of the 'Europe 2020' Strategy; http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/nrp2014_latvia_en.pdf	x	x	x
LT1	2013	Valstybinė švietimo 2013-2022 metų strategija; State Education Strategy for 2013-2022; http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=463390&p_query=valstybin%EB%20%F0vietimo%202013%202022%20met%F8%20strategija&p_tr2=2	x	x	x
LT2	2010	Lietuvos Respublikos neformaliojo suaugusiųjų švietimo įstatymas; Law on Non-formal Adult Education; http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/oldsearch.preps2?a=369659&b= http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=370777			

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding NF	Funding EF	Evaluation
LU1	2012	Livre blanc: Stratégie nationale du lifelong learning; White Paper: National Strategy for Lifelong Learning; http://www.men.public.lu/catalogue-publications/adultes/informations-generales-offre-cours/livre-blanc-lifelong-learning/131025-s3l-livreblanc.pdf	x	x	x
LU2	2014	Luxembourg 2020. Plan national pour une croissance intelligente, durable et inclusive. Programme national de réforme du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg dans le cadre du semestre européen 2014; Luxembourg 2020. National Plan for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. National Reform Programme of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg under the European Semester 2014; http://www.odc.public.lu/publications/pnr/index.html			x
HU1	2014	Az egész életen át tartó tanulás szakpolitikájának keretstratégiája a 2014/2020 közötti időszakra; Framework Strategy for the Lifelong Learning Policy for 2014-2020; http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/fe/20000/Eg%C3%A9sz%20%C3%A9leten%20%C3%A1t%20tart%C3%B3%20tanul%C3%A1s.pdf#!DocumentBrowse	x	x	x
HU2	2011	Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkózási Stratégia; National Roma Integration Strategy; http://romagov.kormany.hu/hungarian-national-social-inclusion-strategy-deep-poverty-child-poverty-and-the-roma	x	x	x
MT1	2014	Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024; http://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents%202014/BOOKLET%20ESM%202014-2024%20ENG%2019-02.pdf			x
MT2	2014	A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta 2014; http://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents%202014/School%20Leaving%20in%20Malta%20June%202014.pdf	x	x	x
MT3	2014	National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2014-2019; http://education.gov.mt/en/Documents/Literacy/ENGLISH.pdf			
NL1	2011	Actieplan laaggeletterdheid 2012-2015; Illiteracy Action Plan 2012-2015; http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/volwassenenonderwijs/documenten-en-publicaties/richtlijnen/2011/09/08/bijlage-1-actieplan-laaggeletterdheid-2012-2015-geletterdheid-in-nederland.html	x		x
AT1	2011	Strategie zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen in Österreich – LLL 2020; Lifelong Learning Strategy Austria – LLL 2020; http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/20916/lllarbeitspapier_ebook_gross.pdf			x
AT2	2011	Initiative Erwachsenenbildung - Länder-Bund-Initiative zur Förderung grundlegender Bildungsabschlüsse für Erwachsene inklusive Basisbildung/Grundkompetenzen Initiative for Adult Education; https://www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at/ https://www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at/fileadmin/docs/PPD%202011_09_15_Letzfassung.pdf	x	x	x
PL1	2013	Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie; Lifelong Learning Perspective; https://www.premier.gov.pl/wydarzenia/decyzje-rzadu/uchwala-w-sprawie-przyjecia-dokumentu-strategicznego-perspektywa-uczenia.html http://www.men.gov.pl/index.php/uczenie-sie-przez-cale-zycie/770-perspektywa-uczenia-sie-przez-cale-zycie	x	x	x

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding		Evaluation
			NF	EF	
PL2	2014	Program Solidarność pokoleń. Działania dla zwiększenia aktywności zawodowej osób w wieku 50+; Programme for Solidarity between Generations: Measures to Increase Economic Activity among People aged 50+ (renewal); https://www.premier.gov.pl/wydarzenia/decyzje-rzadu/program-solidarnosc-pokolen-dzialania-dla-zwiekszenia-aktywnosci-zawodowej.html http://www.mpips.gov.pl/seniorzyaktywne-starzenie/program-solidarnosc-pokolen/	x	x	x
PL3	2014	Rządowy Program na rzecz Aktywności Społecznej Osób Starszych na lata 2014-2020; Government Programme for Senior Citizens' Social Activity for 2014-2020; http://www.mpips.gov.pl/seniorzyaktywne-starzenie/rzadowy-program-asos/	x		x
PT1	2014	Portugal 2020 – Acordo de Parceria 2014-2020; Portugal 2020 – Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 (established with the European Commission); http://www.portugal.gov.pt/media/1325391/20140131%20acordo%20parceria%20portugal%202020.pdf	x	x	x
PT2	2013	Estratégia de Fomento Industrial para o Crescimento e o Emprego 2014-2020; National Strategy for Industry to Promote Growth and Employment 2014-2020; http://www.qren.pt/np4/np4/?newsId=4042&fileName=RCM91_2013.pdf	x	x	
PT3	2014	Estratégia Europa 2020 - Ponto de Situação das Metas em Portugal, Abril de 2014; European Strategy 2020 – Current Position with Respect to the Targets in Portugal, April 2014; http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/nrp2014_portugal_pt.pdf	x	x	x
RO1	2011	Legea Educației Naționale, nr. 1/2011 – *(Programul «A doua Șansă»)*; National Law of Education, no.1/2011 – *(«Second Chance» Programme)*; http://www.edu.ro/index.php/base/frontpage	x		x
SI1	2013	Resolucija o nacionalnem programu izobraževanja odraslih 2013-2020; Strategic Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia 2013-2020; http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO97	x	x	x
SI2	2013	Strategija vključevanja priseljencev v izobraževanje odraslih; Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrants in Adult Education; http://arhiv.acs.si/dokumenti/Strategija_vkljucevanja_priseljencev_v_IO.pdf			x
SI3	2011	Smernice za izvajanje ukrepov aktivne politike zaposlovanja za obdobje 2012-2015; Guidelines for the Implementation of Active Employment Policy Measures for 2012-2015; http://www.ess.gov.si/_files/3286/Smernice_APZ_2012_2015.pdf	x	x	x
SK1	2010	Zákon č. 568/2009 Z. z. o celoživotnom vzdelávaní a zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov; Act No. 568/2009 on Lifelong Learning and on the Changes and Supplements to Acts as Amended by Subsequent Provision; https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/4125.pdf			
SK2	2011	Stratégia celoživotného vzdelávania 2011; Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011; http://nuczv.sk/wp-content/uploads/strategia-celozivotneho-vzdelavania-2011.pdf			
FI1	2011	Koulutus ja tutkimus vuosina 2011-2016 Kehittämissuunnitelma; Education and Research 2011-2016 Development Plan; http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/okm03.pdf			x

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding		Evaluation
			NF	EF	
FI2	2011	Elinikäisen ohjauksen kehittämisen strategiset tavoitteet; Strategic Goals for the Development of Lifelong Guidance, Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011; http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/liitteet/tr15.pdf?lang=fi			
FI3	2012	Nuorten aikuisten osaamisohjelma; Young Adults´ Skills Programme; http://www.nuorisotakuu.fi/en/youth_guarantee	x		x
SE		*The country reported that there was no relevant policy document issued during the five years in question (i.e. between 2009 and 2014) that explicitly referred to opportunities for skills development or further qualifications for adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. Therefore, it is not referred to in the figure. However, it must be noted that a new curriculum for adult municipal education was introduced in January 2013. Among other thematic areas, the curriculum refers to basic skills and key competencies, yet without explicit references to adults with low basic skills or low level qualifications. For more details, see http://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=3238 (Accessed 1 December 2014).*			
UK-ENG1	2013	Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rigour-and-responsiveness-in-skills	x	x	
UK-ENG2	2011	New Challenges New Chances; https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-challenges-new-chances-next-steps-in-implementing-the-further-education-reform-programme	x	x	x
UK-ENG3	2010	Skills for Sustainable Growth: Strategy Document; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy-document	x	x	x
UK-WLS1	2014	Policy Statement on Skills; http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/policy-statement-on-skills/?lang=en			
UK-WLS2	2010	Delivering Community Learning for Wales; http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/communitylearning/deliveringlearning/?lang=en	x	x	x
UK-NIR1	2011	Success Through Skills: Transforming Futures; http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-successthroughskills/success-through-skills-transforming-futures.htm			x
UK-SCT1	2010	Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020 Strategic Guidance; http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/25121451/0			x
UK-SCT2	2012	Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development (2012); http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/2208/0			x
UK-SCT3	2010	Literacy Action Plan: An Action Plan to Improve Literacy in Scotland; http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/10/27084039/0			x
IS1	2010	Lög um framhaldsfræðslu. 2010 nr. 27 31. mars; Adult Education Act no. 27/2010; http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-PDF-Althjodlegt/Adult-Education-Act.pdf	x		x
IS2	2011	20/20 Sóknaráætlun Íslands; Iceland 2020 – Governmental Policy Statement for the Economy and Community; http://eng.forsaetisraduneyti.is/iceland2020/			x

Code	Publ. year	Name of the policy document in an official country language; Name of the policy document in English; Link to the policy document	Funding		Evaluation
			NF	EF	
LI1	2011	Bildungsstrategie 2020 und Massnahmenplan; National Education Strategy 2020 and Action Plan; http://www.llv.li/files/sa/pdf-llv-sa-broschuere_bildungsstrategie_2020.pdf http://www.llv.li/files/sa/pdf-llv-sa-broschuere_bildungsstrategie_2020.pdf			
LI2	2010	Integrationskonzept; National Integration Concept; http://www.integration.li/CFDOCS/cmsout/admin/index.cfm?GroupID=220&MandID=1&meID=156&	x		
NO1	2009	St. Meld. nr. 44 (2008–2009) Utdanningslinja; Report No. 44 (2008–2009) to the Storting. Education Strategy; http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/2202348/PDFS/STM200820090044000DDDPDFS.pdf			
NO2	2012	Meld. St. 6 (2012–2013). En helhetlig integreringspolitikk. Mangfold og fellesskap; Meld. St. 6 (2012–2013). A Comprehensive Integration Policy. Diversity and Community; http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/bld/dok/regpubl/stmeld/2012-2013/meld-st-6-20122013.html?id=705945			
NO3	2013	Meld.St.20 (2012–2013). På rett vei. Kvalitet og mangfold i fellesskolen; Meld.St.20 (2012–2013). On the Right Track. Quality and Diversity in the Common School; http://www.regjeringen.no/pages/38263383/PDFS/STM201220130020000DDDPDFS.pdf			
TR1	2013	10. Kalkınma Planı; 10th Development Plan; http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Lists/Yaynlar/Attachments/518/Onuncu%20Kalk%C4%B1nma%20Plan%C4%B1.pdf			x
TR2	2009	Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Strateji Belgesi; Lifelong Learning Strategy Document; http://www.hayatboyuogrenme.gov.tr/images/yukleme/hbo_strateji.pdf			
TR3	2009	Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı 2010-2014 Stratejik Planı; Strategic Plan of Ministry of National Education (2010-2014); http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/Str_yon_planlama_V2/MEBStratejikPlan.pdf			x

Annex 2

The four tables below refer to Chapter 6, Figure 6.3 (Table 1 and Table 2) and Figure 6.4 (Table 3 and Table 4). They provide more details on the targeted co-funding instruments referred to in the above figures.

Table 1: Co-funding instruments with preferential treatment or targeted support for low-qualified adults (2), 2013/14

Country	Type of co-funding instrument (including its title, if available)	Profile of adult learners	Education and training (type and programme)
Belgium – Flemish Community	Training voucher – *Opleidingscheque*	Employees without upper secondary education certificate (ISCED 3) – vouchers are free of charge for this group	Off-the-job training organised by a recognised training provider
Denmark	Grant and paid training leave – the VEU allowance	Adults with at most basic education (ISCED 2)	Vocationally-oriented adult education and continuous vocational education and training (CVET)
	Grant and paid training leave – the SVU *Almen* allowance for general education	Employees who attended school for 8 years or less, supplemented by vocational training regardless of length Employees who attended school for up to 10 years, supplemented by up to two-years of vocational training Employees who attended school for up to 10 years, supplemented by vocational training regardless of length, if this has not been used for five years	Preparatory adult education programmes in mathematics, reading and writing (FVU) Formal general education up to upper secondary level (ISCED 3)
Spain	Paid training leave – individual training permit (*Permiso individual de formación*)	Adults without ISCED 2 and 3 (i.e. lower and upper secondary education) are considered as priority group	Officially recognised education and training programme that leads to an official qualification
Sweden	Grants and loans	Learners up to the age of 56 enrolled in ISCED 1-3 programmes can receive a higher amount of grant with a share of 73 % of the total support (for other learners, the general share is 31 %). The rest is covered by the loan of student's choice.	General and vocational education and training at ISCED 1, 2 and 3

Source: Eurydice for BEnl, DK, and SE and Cedefop (database on financing adult learning) for ES.

(2) For a definition of 'low-qualified adults', see the Glossary.

Table 2: Co-funding instruments with preferential treatment or targeted support for other specific groups ([3])**, 2013/14**

Country	Type of co-funding instrument (including its title, if available)	Profile of adult learners
Belgium – Flemish Community	Compensation allowance including the coverage of transportation costs and child care	Unemployed jobseekers attending a vocational training with VDAB (the Flemish public employment service) or a partner of VDAB under the Individual Company-Based Vocational Training Contract (*Individuele beroepsopleiding in de onderneming* – IBO)
	Training allowance or compensation allowance, eligible for company bonuses and transportation allowance from the employer. Employers receive financial support.	Unemployed jobseekers hired and trained under the Individual Company-Based Vocational Training Contract (*Individuele beroepsopleiding in de onderneming* – IBO)
Belgium – French Community ([4])	Premium grant (a bonus of EUR 1 per training hour)	Unemployed jobseekers that do not hold an upper secondary education certificate (ISCED 3) and are registered at the Brussels Employment Office (*Actiris*) and having signed a training contract with *Bruxelles Formation*
Belgium – German-speaking Community	Education premium (EUR 0.99 per training hour) including the coverage of travel expenses	Unemployed jobseekers who participate in a training organised or recognised by the Employment Office
Germany	Training voucher (*Bildungsgutschein*)	Unemployed jobseekers – under specific conditions related to labour market situation and qualification requirements
Estonia	Reimbursement of tuition fees for attending a preparation course for sitting the Estonian citizenship and language examinations	Individuals who are non-Estonian citizens, having passed the Estonian language exam and citizenship exam or only the language exam; those who have been ordered to take the language exam by the language inspectorate; or those having passed the Estonian language exam.
Spain	Allowances covering transport expenses, meals and board expenses	Unemployed jobseekers participating in training actions within Training for Employment schemes (regardless of the education level involved)
	Grants	Unemployed jobseekers enrolled in individualised training programmes
Croatia	Allowances equivalent to the minimum salary, including the payment of pension insurance and health insurance and coverage of transportation expenses (falls under the Knowledge Pays Off initiative)	Unemployed jobseekers enrolled in 'basic education' (ISCED 1 and 2; *Osnovna škola za odrasle*) or upper secondary programmes (ISCED 3) preparing for jobs in areas with skills shortages
Cyprus	Weekly training allowance	Unemployed jobseekers enrolled in the accelerated initial training programmes
Latvia	Training coupon and additional training grant	Unemployed jobseekers attending approved non-formal education courses for developing the basic social and professional skills they lack
Luxembourg	Vouchers for non-formal adult education programmes	Amongst the target groups: unemployed jobseekers and persons in need of support as recognised by the immigration office (OLAI) or the municipalities' social offices
Malta	Training Subsidy Scheme	Unemployed jobseekers
Austria	Reimbursement of the tuition fees for attending German course (50 %) if examination passed successfully	Individuals who need to learn the German language as a second language to sit an examination at the level of A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Applicants are granted this refund if they successfully pass an exam in German at level A2, up to a maximum of 300 instruction hours and 750 Euro respectively. To be eligible, the course must be provided by an officially certified institution and the exam must be passed within 18 months of entering the country.

([3]) The category 'other specific groups' comprises unemployed jobseekers, non-native speakers and/or older employees.

([4]) Refers to the Brussels region.

Country	Type of co-funding instrument (including its title, if available)	Profile of adult learners
Poland	Allowances equal to additional 20 % of the unemployment benefits (i.e. participants receive 120 % of the unemployment benefits); coverage of exam fees; partial coverage of non-degree postgraduate studies; loan measures; reimbursements of travel costs; accommodation (if training takes place outside home town).	Unemployed jobseekers who follow training or work placement programmes according to the individual activity plan required by the law
Liechtenstein	Coverage of tuition fees and training costs	Unemployed jobseekers who follow professional re-training or re-integration programmes
	Vouchers for attending German courses	Non-EU/EEC citizens who must master the German language as a requirement for residency and citizenship

Source: Eurydice for BE, DE, EE, ES, HR, CY, LV, LU, MT, AT, PL and LI.

Table 3: Co-funding instruments for employers to encourage low-qualified employees (5) to participate in education and training, 2013/14

Country	Type of co-funding instrument (including its title, if available)	Profile of adult learners
Belgium – Flemish Community	Reduction of tuition fees for the employer	Employees without an upper secondary education certificate (ISCED 3) considered as an 'employee at risk' and when they attend a VDAB vocational training programme
Germany	Subsidy to the employer to compensate for the wage costs of employee on paid training leave	Employees taking training leave to gain at least the equivalent to level 4 of the German Qualifications Framework
Spain	Under the training and learning contract, reductions in employers' social security contributions and partial or entire funding of the training provision	Individuals aged 16-24 who do not hold either a mainstream qualification or a professional qualification recognised within the system of vocational training for employment.
Italy	Vouchers for employers that cover 80 % of the training costs delivered under the 'urgent interventions to support employment' scheme	Employees with at most primary education (ISCED 1)
Luxembourg	Highest reimbursement rates of salary costs (35 %) for the employer	Employees attending an education and training course who do not hold any formal qualification (below or equal to lower secondary education, ISCED 2) and have worked less than ten years in the company
	Coverage of the difference between the amount of the complementary training allowance granted to apprentices in initial education and the minimum salary	Adult apprentices enrolled in secondary education programmes
Austria	Coverage of tuition fees and the daily rates for external trainers coming to the company under the training schemes for SMEs (*Qualifizierungsförderung für Beschäftige*)	Women with low to medium-level qualifications
United Kingdom – England	Coverage of the training costs for apprentices (50 % if the apprentice is aged 19-24; and up to 50 % if aged over 25)	Apprentices

Source: Eurydice for BEnl; DE; ES; LU and UK-ENG and Cedefop (database on financing adult learning) for IT and AT.

(5) For a definition of 'low-qualified adults', including employees, see the Glossary.

Table 4: Co-funding instruments for employers to encourage adults belonging to other specific groups (6) to participate in education and training, 2013/14

Country	Type of co-funding instruments (including its title, if available)	Profile of adult learners (7)
Belgium – Flemish Community	Grant under the Individual Company-Based Vocational Training Contract (*Individuele beroepsopleiding in de onderneming* – IBO)	Unemployed jobseekers hired and trained under the scheme
	VDAB scheme that provides financial compensation to the employers for language courses at the workplace	Non-Dutch speakers
Denmark	Grant	Unemployed jobseekers
Estonia	Grant	People who have been out of the labour market due to illness and inability of working
France	Grant under the vocational contracts (*période de professionalisation*)	Employees who return to work after being away for childcare reasons
	Grant	Employees aged over 45 and with twenty years of experience and having been employed one year at least in the company
Italy	Vouchers for employers that cover 80 % of the training costs delivered under the 'urgent interventions to support employment' scheme	Women aged over 40
Lithuania	Grant	Unemployed jobseekers
Luxembourg	Grant	Employees aged over 45 with ten years' experience
Austria	Grant	Employees aged over 45
Poland	Allowance covering the training costs and a premium grant	Unemployed jobseekers who pass the final examination of the vocational education and training course they took part in
Finland	Grant	People who have been out of the labour market due to illness and incapacity for work and long-term unemployed jobseekers

Source: Eurydice for BEnl, DK, EE, FR, LT, LU, AT, PL and FI and Cedefop (database on financing adult learning) for IT.

(6) The category 'other specific groups' comprises people who have been out of the labour market for a time (e.g. unemployed jobseekers or people who return to work after being away for childcare or medical reasons), older employees and/or non-native speakers.

(7) When referring to 'unemployed jobseekers', the table refers to people who are trained (and possibly hired) by the employer receiving financial support.

GLOSSARY

Country codes

EU/EU-28	European Union	**HU**	Hungary
		MT	Malta
BE	Belgium	**NL**	The Netherlands
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	**AT**	Austria
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	**PL**	Poland
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	**PT**	Portugal
BG	Bulgaria	**RO**	Romania
CZ	Czech Republic	**SI**	Slovenia
DK	Denmark	**SK**	Slovakia
DE	Germany	**FI**	Finland
EE	Estonia	**SE**	Sweden
IE	Ireland	**UK**	United Kingdom
EL	Greece	**UK-ENG**	England
ES	Spain	**UK-WLS**	Wales
FR	France	**UK-NIR**	Northern Ireland
HR	Croatia	**UK-SCT**	Scotland
IT	Italy	**IS**	Iceland
CY	Cyprus	**LI**	Liechtenstein
LV	Latvia	**MK***	former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
LT	Lithuania	**NO**	Norway
LU	Luxembourg	**TR**	Turkey

MK*: ISO code 3166. Provisional code which does not prejudge in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place under the auspices of the United Nations (http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists.htm).

Statistical codes

:	Data not available	(–)	Not applicable

Definitions

Active labour market policies (ALMP): Measures to help unemployed people back into work, including job placement services, benefit administration, and labour market intervention programmes such as training and job creation.

Adult education: General or vocational education provided for adults after initial education and training for professional and/or personal purposes, and which aims to:

- provide general education for adults in topics of particular interest to them (e. g. in open universities);
- provide compensatory learning in basic skills which individuals may not have acquired earlier in their initial education or training (such as literacy, numeracy) and thus to;
- give access to qualifications not gained, for various reasons, in the initial education and training system;
- acquire, improve or update knowledge, skills or competences in a specific field: this is continuing education and training (Cedefop, 2008).

Adult learners: For the purpose of this report, adult learners are individuals who are over 18 years of age and have already left the initial education and training system. Younger people (aged 16 and above) are considered only where provision for them is also open to those aged 18 and above.

Adults with a low level of basic skills: For the purpose of this report, the term refers to adults lacking basic skills (for more details, see → 'Basic skills').

Basic skills/basic skills provision (in adult education and training): Despite the efforts to establish a shared European terminology, it is commonly repeated, both in older and more recent research literature, that there is no internationally agreed definition of basic skills or any of the related terms (e.g. key skills, foundational skills, etc.). Cedefop (2008, p. 37) defines the concept of basic skills as 'the skills needed to live in contemporary society, e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics'. Alongside basic skills, the same source refers to the new basic skills 'such as information and communication technology (ICT) skills, foreign languages, social, organisational and communication skills, technological culture, entrepreneurship' (ibid., p. 132). The sum of basic skills and new basic skills is referred to as key skills (ibid. 101).

For the purposes of this report basic skills (or basic skills provision/programmes) refer to the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT (with or without references to other skills).

Central level/Central level authorities: The central level is the top education level. It is located at national (state) level in the vast majority of countries. In some countries, the regions (Communities, *Länder*, etc.) have responsibility for all matters relating to education. In Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom, different jurisdictions have their own education ministries.

Co-funding instruments (in adult education and training): Refers to financial schemes where at least two parties contribute to education and training costs (e.g. learners, employers, public authorities). Co-funding instruments usually take the form of grants, vouchers, loans and subsidies for paid training leave.

Continuing education and training: Education or training after initial education and training – or after entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to:

- improve or update their knowledge and/or skills;
- acquire new skills for a career move or retraining;
- continue their personal or professional development (Cedefop, 2008).

Distance learning: Education and training imparted at a distance through communication media: books, radio, TV, telephone, correspondence, computer or video (Cedefop, 2008).

Education programme: Is defined as a coherent set or sequence of educational activities or communication designed and organised to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period. Objectives encompass improving knowledge, skills and competencies within any personal, civic, social and/or employment-related context. Learning objectives are typically linked to the purpose of preparing for more advanced studies and/or for an occupation, trade, or class of occupations or trades but may be related to personal development or leisure (UNESCO-UIS, 2011).

European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning: Is a common reference framework which should serve as a translation device between different qualifications systems and their levels, whether for general and higher education or for vocational education and training. It is intended to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of citizens' qualifications issued in accordance with the practice in the different Member States (based on the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 ([1])).

Flexible learning: Education and training that responds to learners' needs and preferences. Flexible learning offers learners choices about how, where and when they learn with the aim of supporting motivation and persistence particularly when attendance at a college or centre is difficult, e.g. rural learners; adults with multiple responsibilities or health problems. ICT-based communication between students and teacher is a common feature of flexible learning, but it can also include physical meetings between students and teachers (NRDC, 2010b).

Formal learning/education: According to the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 ([2]) formal learning is 'learning which takes place in an organised and structured environment specifically dedicated to learning, and typically leads to the award of a qualification, usually in the form of a certificate or a diploma'. Statistical surveys (in particular the Adult Education Survey), define formal education 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' (Eurostat, 2006).

Guidance: A range of activities designed to help individuals take educational, vocational or personal decisions and carry them out before and after they enter the labour market (adapted from Cedefop, 2008).

([1]) Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, OJ 2008/C 111/01, 6.5.2008.

([2]) Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2012/C 398/01, 22.12.2012.

Informal learning: According to the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 ([3]) informal learning refers to 'learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective; examples of learning outcomes acquired through informal learning are skills acquired through life and work experiences, project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work, languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country, ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and through activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child)'. Statistical surveys (in particular the Adult Education Survey), define informal learning 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' (Eurostat, 2006).

Initial education: Formal education, usually for young people, before they enter the labour market for the first time (adapted from UNESCO-UIS, 2011).

International surveys of adult skills: Refers to the three international surveys of adult skills, namely the 'PIAAC – Survey of Adult Skills', the 'ALL – Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey' and the 'IALS – International Adult Literacy Survey'.

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED):

When referring to educational levels, this document refers to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The latter has been developed to facilitate comparisons of education statistics and indicators across countries on the basis of uniform and internationally agreed definitions. The coverage of ISCED extends to all organised and sustained learning opportunities for children, youth and adults, including those with special educational needs, irrespective of the institutions or organisations providing them or the form in which they are delivered.

The ISCED 97 classification (UNESCO-UIS, 1996), which is the main reference for this document, distinguishes between seven levels of education:

ISCED 0: Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education is defined as the initial stage of organised instruction. It is school-based or centre-based and is designed for children aged at least 3 years.

ISCED 1: Primary education

This level begins between 5 and 7 years of age, is compulsory in all countries and generally lasts from 4 to 6 years.

ISCED 2: Lower secondary education

Continues the basic programmes of primary education, although teaching is typically more subject-focused. Usually, the end of this level coincides with the end of compulsory education.

([3]) Ibid.

ISCED 3: Upper secondary education

This level generally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entry age is typically 15 or 16 years. Entry requirements usually include the completion of compulsory education but other minimum qualifications are often set. Instruction is often more subject-oriented than at ISCED level 2. The typical duration of ISCED level 3 varies from two to five years.

ISCED 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education

These programmes straddle the boundary between upper secondary and tertiary education. They serve to broaden the knowledge of ISCED level 3 graduates. Typical examples are programmes designed to prepare pupils for studies at level 5, or programmes designed to prepare pupils for direct access to employment.

ISCED 5: Tertiary education (first stage)

Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4. This level includes tertiary programmes with academic orientation (type A) which are largely theoretically based and tertiary programmes with occupation orientation (type B) which are typically shorter than type A programmes and geared for access to employment.

ISCED 6: Tertiary education (second stage)

This level is reserved for tertiary studies that lead to an advanced research qualification (Ph.D. or doctorate).

The ISCED classification refers not only to the education of young people, described in this report as initial education, but also to continuing/adult education and training. When national statistical offices provide information on adult education and training programmes, they are asked to report programmes that are similar in content to the education given at the various ISCED levels. More specifically, programmes for adults usually comply with the following characteristics:

- they involve studies with subject content similar to initial educational programmes,

  or

- the underlying programmes lead to similar potential qualifications as corresponding initial educational programmes.

This specific understanding allows the ISCED classification to be used when describing the adult education programmes within this document.

It must be noted that the ISCED classification was thoroughly revised in 2011. The new classification (ISCED 2011) is currently being phased in. It provides improved definitions and greater scope to monitor global patterns in education. Moreover, ISCED 2011 presents new coding schemes for education programmes and educational attainment (for more details, see UNESCO-UIS, 2011).

Large-scale programmes/schemes: Refers to programmes/schemes that operate throughout the whole country or a significant geographical area rather than being restricted to a particular institution or geographical location. These programmes/schemes are intended as a long-term element of the system with resources planned to cover several consecutive years (as opposed to initiatives with short-term project-based funding covering only one or two years).

Liberal (or popular) adult education: There is no standard definition of the term 'liberal adult education'. However, the concept commonly refers to courses that have a non-formal character and provide opportunities for personal development, cultural enrichment, and intellectual or creative stimulation and enjoyment. Liberal (or popular) adult education is sometimes seen in an opposition to professional and vocational education that prepares students for their future careers. However, the relationship between liberal and vocational education is more complex. In several European countries with a strong liberal adult education tradition (particularly the Nordic countries, but also the English-speaking countries, where it is known as community learning/education), courses can lead to recognised qualifications.

Literacy: While there is no general consensus on the understanding of the concept of literacy, the term is usually understood as the ability to read and write (for example NRDC, 2010a). In 1978, UNESCO recommended a definition according to which a person who is functionally literate 'can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development' (cited in UNESCO 2013, p. 20). Accordingly, UNESCO defined literacy as the 'ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society' (formulated during an international expert meeting in June 2003 and cited in UNESCO 2004, p. 13).

Low-qualified adults/adults with low level qualifications: Those who have completed education or qualifications corresponding to ISCED levels 0-2 at most (for more details, see → 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)').

Mature students/learners: For the purpose of this report, the term refers to students/learners who have passed the usual age associated with initial education at different ISCED levels (see → 'Initial education', see → 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)').

Medium-level qualifications: Refers to qualifications corresponding to ISCED levels 3 and 4 (for more details, see → 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)').

Modularisation: Refers to a building blocks approach to education and training programmes, breaking down the content into smaller units.

National qualifications framework: According to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 ([4]) the term refers to 'an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society'.

Non-formal learning/education: According to the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 ([5]), non-formal learning means 'learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student-teacher relationships); it may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers; […]'. Statistical surveys (in particular the Adult

([4]) Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, OJ 2008/C 111/01, 6.5.2008.

([5]) Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 2012/C 398/01, 22.12.2012.

Education Survey), define non-formal education 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' (Eurostat, 2006).

'**One-stop shop**': Refers to the provision of a comprehensive range of services from a single location. In the context of adult learning this means various lifelong learning services such as career guidance, validation of non-formal and informal learning and learning tailored to individual needs.

Outreach: A range of activities outside formal educational institutions designed to identify and attract non-learners, in order to encourage them to enrol in education and training programmes (NRDC, 2010a).

Qualification: Refers to a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards ([6]).

Strategy: A plan or method of approach typically developed by the national/regional government, in an effort to achieve an overall goal or objective.

Top education level/Top-level authorities: see → 'Central level/Central level authorities'.

Validation (of non-formal and informal learning): According to the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 ([7]), validation of non-formal and informal learning means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: 1. IDENTIFICATION through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual; 2. DOCUMENTATION to make visible the individual's experiences; 3. a formal ASSESSMENT of these experiences; and 4. CERTIFICATION of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.

Vulnerable groups: For the purpose of this report, the term refers to adults with a low level of basic skills, workers in low-skilled occupations, those entering adulthood without qualifications, marginalised groups, immigrants and older workers.

([6]) Ibid.

([7]) Ibid.

EDUCATION, AUDIOVISUAL AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY

EDUCATION AND YOUTH POLICY ANALYSIS

Avenue du Bourget 1 (BOU2)
B-1049 Brussels
(http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice)

Managing editor

Arlette Delhaxhe

Authors

Daniela Kocanova (Coordination),
Ania Bourgeois, Ana Sofia de Almeida Coutinho,
with the contribution of Anna Mc Namee and Anne Gaudry-Lachet

External experts

Günter Hefler and Jörg Markowitsch (support through conceptual development and thematic research)

Cedefop and Eurostat

Patrycja Lipinska (support with Cedefop database on financing adult learning),
Elodie Cayotte and Philippe Lombardo (specific Eurostat data extractions and calculations)

Layout and graphics

Patrice Brel

Production coordinator

Gisèle De Lel

EURYDICE NATIONAL UNITS

AUSTRIA

Eurydice-Informationsstelle
Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen
Abt. IA/1b
Minoritenplatz 5
1014 Wien
Contribution of the Unit: Mario Steiner (external expert)

BELGIUM

Unité Eurydice de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
Ministère de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
Direction des relations internationales
Boulevard Léopold II, 44 – Bureau 6A/008
1080 Bruxelles
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility; experts from French Community of Belgium (education) and from Regions (training)

Eurydice Vlaanderen
Departement Onderwijs en Vorming/
Afdeling Strategische Beleidsondersteuning
Hendrik Consciencegebouw
Koning Albert II-laan 15
1210 Brussel
Contribution of the Unit: coordination by Eline De Ridder;

- Experts from the Department of Education and Training: Tine Swaenepoel, Andy Thoelen, Katlijn Schroyens, Liesbet Vermandere, Isabelle Goudeseune, Anton Derks, Debby Peeters
- Expert from the Department of Work and Social Economy: Isabel Van Wiele
- Expert from VDAB (Flemish Employment Services and Vocational Training Agency): Els Van de Walle
- Expert from EPOS (National Agency responsible for the implementation of Erasmus+ in Flanders): Renilde Reynders
- Expert from SYNTRA (Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training): Annelies Goethals
- Expert from Team Civic Integration (Administrative Services of the Flemish Government): Piet De Glas

Eurydice-Informationsstelle der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft
Autonome Hochschule in der DG
Monschauer Strasse 57
4700 Eupen
Contribution of the Unit: Stéphanie Nix

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Ministry of Civil Affairs
Department for Education
B&H 1
71000 Sarajevo

BULGARIA

Eurydice Unit
Human Resource Development Centre
Education Research and Planning Unit
15, Graf Ignatiev Str.
1000 Sofia
Contribution of the Unit: Lachezar Afrikanov and Krasimira Dimitrova

CROATIA

Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta
Donje Svetice 38
10000 Zagreb
Contribution of the Unit: Duje Bonacci

CYPRUS

Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education and Culture
Kimonos and Thoukydidou
1434 Nicosia
Contribution of the Unit: Christiana Haperi (Ministry of Education and Culture); expert: Professor Mary Koutselini (University of Cyprus)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Eurydice Unit
Centre for International Cooperation in Education
Dům zahraniční spolupráce
Na Poříčí 1035/4
110 00 Praha 1
Contribution of the Unit: Jana Halamová;
expert: Jan Brůha

DENMARK

Eurydice Unit
The Agency for Higher Education
Bredgade 43
1260 København K
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility with the Danish Ministry of Education

ESTONIA

Eurydice Unit
Analysis Department
Ministry of Education and Research
Munga 18
50088 Tartu
Contribution of the Unit: Kersti Kaldma (coordination); expert: Kairi Solmann (Ministry of Education and Research)

FINLAND

Eurydice Unit
Finnish National Board of Education
P.O. Box 380
00531 Helsinki
Contribution of the Unit: Aapo Koukku

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility
Porta Bunjakovec 2A-1
1000 Skopje

FRANCE

Unité française d'Eurydice
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche
Direction de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la performance
Mission aux relations européennes et internationales
61-65, rue Dutot
75732 Paris Cedex 15
Contribution of the Unit: expert: Carole Tuchszirer (socio-economist, Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi)

GERMANY

Eurydice-Informationsstelle des Bundes
EU Bureau of the German Ministry for Education and Research, PT-DLR
Rosa-Luxemburg-Str.2
10178 Berlin
Contribution of the Unit: Hannah Gebel;
experts: Thomas Bartelt (Federal Ministry of Education and Research), Nicole Lederle (Unit Education Research, Integration, Gender Research, PT-DLR)

Eurydice-Informationsstelle der Länder im Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz
Graurheindorfer Straße 157
53117 Bonn
Contribution of the Unit: Thomas Eckhardt and Brigitte Lohmar

GREECE

Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
Directorate for European Union Affairs
37 Andrea Papandreou Str. (Office 2172)
15180 Maroussi (Attiki)
Contribution of the Unit: : Magda Trantallidi, Anastasia Kotsira and Nicole Apostolopoulou.

HUNGARY

Eurydice National Unit
Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development
Szalay u. 10-14
1055 Budapest
Contribution of the Unit: Mártonfi György (expert) and Olasz Krisztina (coordination)

ICELAND

Eurydice Unit
Education Testing Institute
Borgartúni 7a
105 Reykjavik
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility

IRELAND

Eurydice Unit
Department of Education and Skills
International Section
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
Contribution of the Unit: Phil O Flaherty, Marian Carr and Tom Slevin (Department of Education & Skills);
Clare Condron (SOLAS); Andrina Wafer (Quality Qualifications Ireland); Brian Mc Cormack, Shay Conway (Department of Social Protection)

ITALY

Unità italiana di Eurydice
Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa (INDIRE)
Agenzia Erasmus+
Via C. Lombroso 6/15
50134 Firenze
Contribution of the Unit: Erika Bartolini, Erica Cimò;
experts: Luca Tucci (*Dirigente, Dipartimento dell'Istruzione, Direzione Generale per gli ordinamenti scolastici e la valutazione del sistema nazionale di istruzione, Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* - MIUR), Enrica Tais, Sebastian Amelio (*Dirigenti scolastici, Dipartimento dell'Istruzione, Direzione Generale per gli ordinamenti scolastici e la valutazione del sistema nazionale di istruzione, Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* – MIUR), Donatella Rangoni (*Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa*, INDIRE).

LATVIA

Eurydice Unit
State Education Development Agency
Vaļņu street 3
1050 Riga
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility; experts of the Ministry of Education and Science: Karīna Brikmane and Jeļena Muhina; experts of the State Education Development Agency: Didzis Poreiters (Head of National Database of Learning Opportunities) and Ilze Astrīda Jansone, *Euroguidance* Latvia

LIECHTENSTEIN

Informationsstelle Eurydice
Schulamt des Fürstentums Liechtenstein
Austrasse 79
Postfach 684
9490 Vaduz
Contribution of the Unit: Schulamt Fürstentum Liechtenstein

LITHUANIA

Eurydice Unit
National Agency for School Evaluation
Didlaukio 82
08303 Vilnius
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility of the Unit in cooperation with external expert Saulius Samulevičius

LUXEMBOURG

Unité nationale d'Eurydice
ANEFORE ASBL
58, boulevard Grande-Duchesse Charlotte
1330 Luxembourg
Contribution of the Unit: Chantal Fandel (MENJE Luxembourg); Kathleen Lapie (National Eurydice Unit Luxembourg)

MALTA

Eurydice Unit
Research and Development Department
Ministry for Education and Employment
Great Siege Rd.
Floriana VLT 2000
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility of the Unit; Maria Brown and Louise Gafà

MONTENEGRO

Eurydice Unit
Rimski trg bb
81000 Podgorica

NETHERLANDS

Eurydice Nederland
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
Directie Internationaal Beleid
Etage 4 – Kamer 08.022
Rijnstraat 50
2500 BJ Den Haag
Contribution of the Unit: Caroline Liberton, Hans Hindriks and Amnon Owéd (joint responsibility)

NORWAY

Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education and Research
AIK-avd., Kunnskapsdepartementet
Kirkegata 18
P.O. Box 8119 Dep.
0032 Oslo
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility

POLAND

Eurydice Unit
Foundation for the Development of the Education System
Mokotowska 43
00-551 Warsaw
Contribution of the Unit: Magdalena Górowska-Fells in consultation with the Ministry of National Education

PORTUGAL

Unidade Portuguesa da Rede Eurydice (UPRE)
Ministério da Educação e Ciência
Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência (DGEEC)
Av. 24 de Julho, 134
1399-054 Lisboa
Contribution of the Unit: Isabel Almeida;
experts: Elsa Caldeira; Francisca Simões; Raquel Oliveira

ROMANIA

Eurydice Unit
National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training
Universitatea Politehnică București
Biblioteca Centrală
Splaiul Independenței, nr. 313
Sector 6
060042 București
Contribution of the Unit: Veronica – Gabriela Chirea; in cooperation with experts: Maria Țoia (The Romanian Institute for Adult Education - IREA); Ciprian Fartușnic, Magda Balica (Institute of Science Education);
Eugenia Popescu (Ministry of National Education);
Gheorghe Bunescu, PhD Professor (Valahia University of Târgovişte)

SERBIA

Eurydice Unit Serbia
Foundation Tempus
Resavska 29
11000 Belgrade

SLOVAKIA

Eurydice Unit
Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation
Svoradova 1
811 03 Bratislava
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility

SLOVENIA

Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
Education Development Office
Masarykova 16
1000 Ljubljana
Contribution of the Unit: Katja Dovžak. Barbara Kresal Sterniša and Tanja Taštanoska (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport) in cooperation with external experts from the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund

SPAIN

Eurydice España-REDIE
Centro Nacional de Innovación e Investigación Educativa (CNIIE)
Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte
c/General Oraa 55
28006 Madrid
Contribution of the Unit: Flora Gil Traver, Mercedes Lucio-Villegas de la Cuadra; external experts: Fátima Rodríguez Gómez, Ángel Ariza Cobos

SWEDEN

Eurydice Unit
Universitets- och högskolerådet/The Swedish Council for Higher Education
Universitets- och högskolerådet
Box 45093
104 30 Stockholm
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility

TURKEY

Eurydice Unit
MEB, Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı (SGB)
Eurydice Türkiye Birimi, Merkez Bina 4. Kat
B-Blok Bakanlıklar
06648 Ankara
Contribution of the Unit: Osman Yıldırım Uğur,
Dilek Güleçyüz, Hatice Nihan Erdal;
consultant: Paşa Tevfik Cephe

UNITED KINGDOM

Eurydice Unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Centre for Information and Reviews
National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)
The Mere, Upton Park
Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2DQ
Contribution of the Unit: Sigrid Boyd

Eurydice Unit Scotland
c/o Intelligence Unit
Education Analytical Services
Scottish Government
Area 2D South, Mail point 28
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility;
expert: Stuart King (Principal Research Officer;
Employability, Skills and Lifelong Learning Analysis;
Scottish Government)

HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

Free publications:

- one copy:
  via EU Bookshop (http://bookshop.europa.eu);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:from the European Union's representations (http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm); from the delegations in non-EU countries (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm); by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm) or calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (*)

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (http://bookshop.europa.eu).

Priced subscriptions:

- via one of the sales agents of the Publications Office of the European Union (http://publications.europa.eu/others/agents/index_en.htm).

EC-04-14-940-EN-C

Adult Education and Training in Europe: Widening Access to Learning Opportunities

Through a comprehensive overview of policies and data related to the renewed European agenda for adult learning, this Eurydice report aims to support the exchange of policy and practice between countries. The report concentrates on measures to ensure that the most vulnerable groups of adult learners, in particular those with low basic skills or insufficient qualifications, have appropriate access to lifelong learning opportunities. The report's six chapters cover background statistical data on adult education and training, national policy commitments to adult learning, main types of publicly subsidised programmes, learning flexibility and progression pathways, outreach initiatives and guidance services as well as targeted financial support. The report is mainly based on information gathered through the Eurydice Network in 2014 and covers 35 national education systems located in 32 European countries (all EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey). Alongside Eurydice information, it also includes data from a range of research projects and statistical data from international surveys.

The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice.

Publications Office

ISBN 978-92-9201-664-7