

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING – EU PERSPECTIVES

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REDUCING AVERAGE EU RATE OF ESL TO LESS THAN 10% BY 2020 IS ONE OF THE MAIN TARGETS OF EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

- Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving
- Policy makers, practitioners and experts from 27 EU members + Norway, Iceland and Turkey + key European stakeholder organisations (CEDEFOP, ETUCE, COFACE, EPA, OBESSU, OECD...)
- Support Member States in design and development of comprehensive policies on ESL
- The work lasted two years and the report was published at the beginning of December, 2013
- I was a non-governmental representative from Croatia

- **ISSUES WITH DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENT**
Is it clear what we speak about?
- **STATE OF ESL IN EU**
Below 10% - ambitious and reachable political goal?
- **CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL POLICIES AGAINST ESL**
What can we do?
 - Governance and cooperation
 - Data collection and monitoring
 - Prevention
 - Intervention
 - Compensation

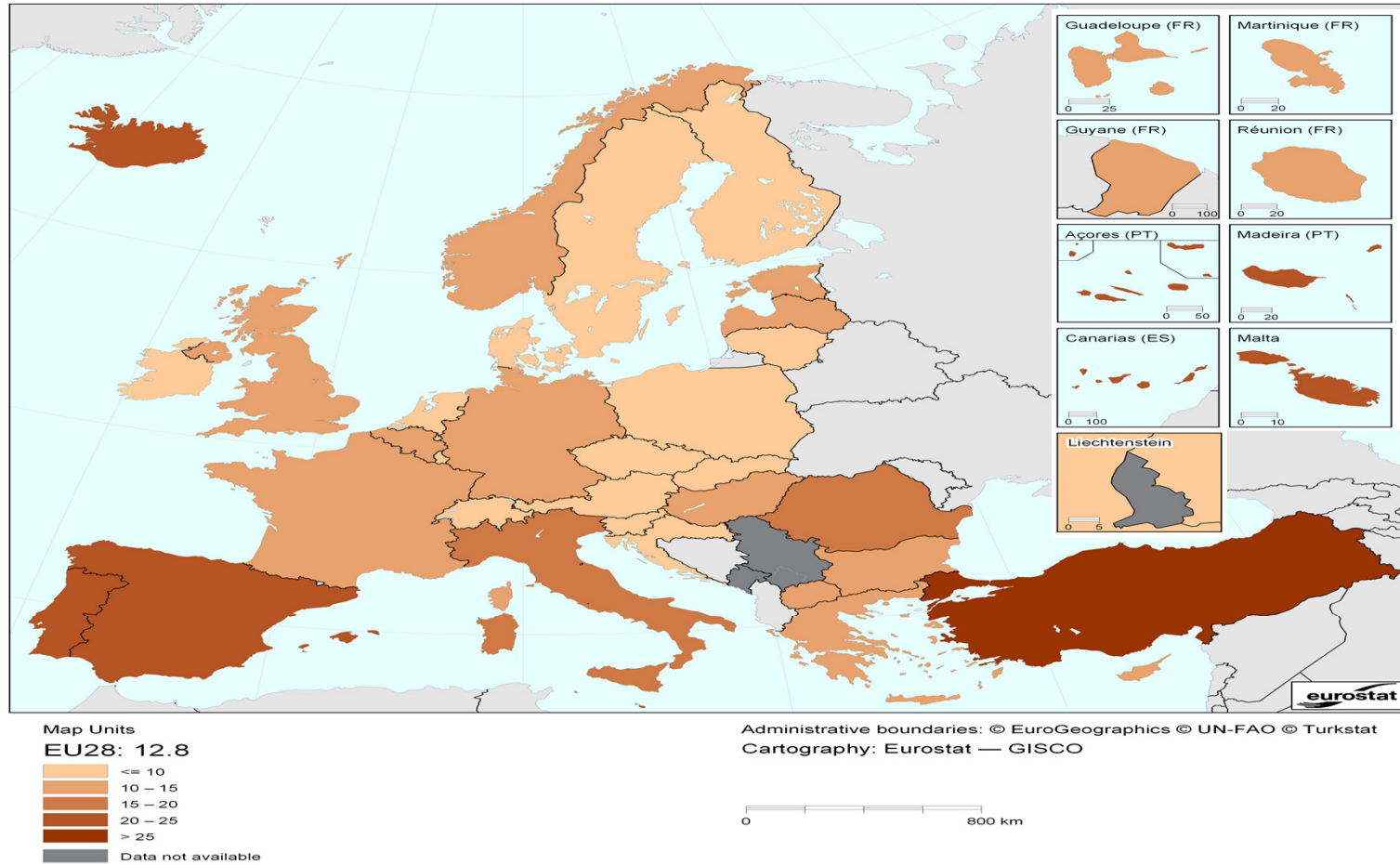
ISSUES WITH DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENT

- ‘those young people who leave education and training with only lower secondary education or less, and who are no longer in education and training’.
- persons aged 18 to 24 fulfilling the following two conditions:
 - the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short,
 - no education or training has been received in the four weeks preceding the survey. The reference group to calculate the early school leaving rate consists of the total population of the same age group (18 to 24).
 - All measurements come from the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS).
- Very different from ‘*school drop-out*’ which often refers to discontinuing an on-going course, e.g. dropping out in the middle of the school term.
- Drop-out from education can occur at any time and can be experienced by different age groups.

- The way you define the issue has serious implications on what you measure and where you place your focus.
- Dropping out is focused on intervention, ESL on re-engagement
- Why has EU focused on ESL?
- What implications does it have for the common EU policies and Member State policies?
- Although measurable, question remains is the indicator valid?
- What if you are stuck with a poor indicator?

STATE OF ESL IN EU

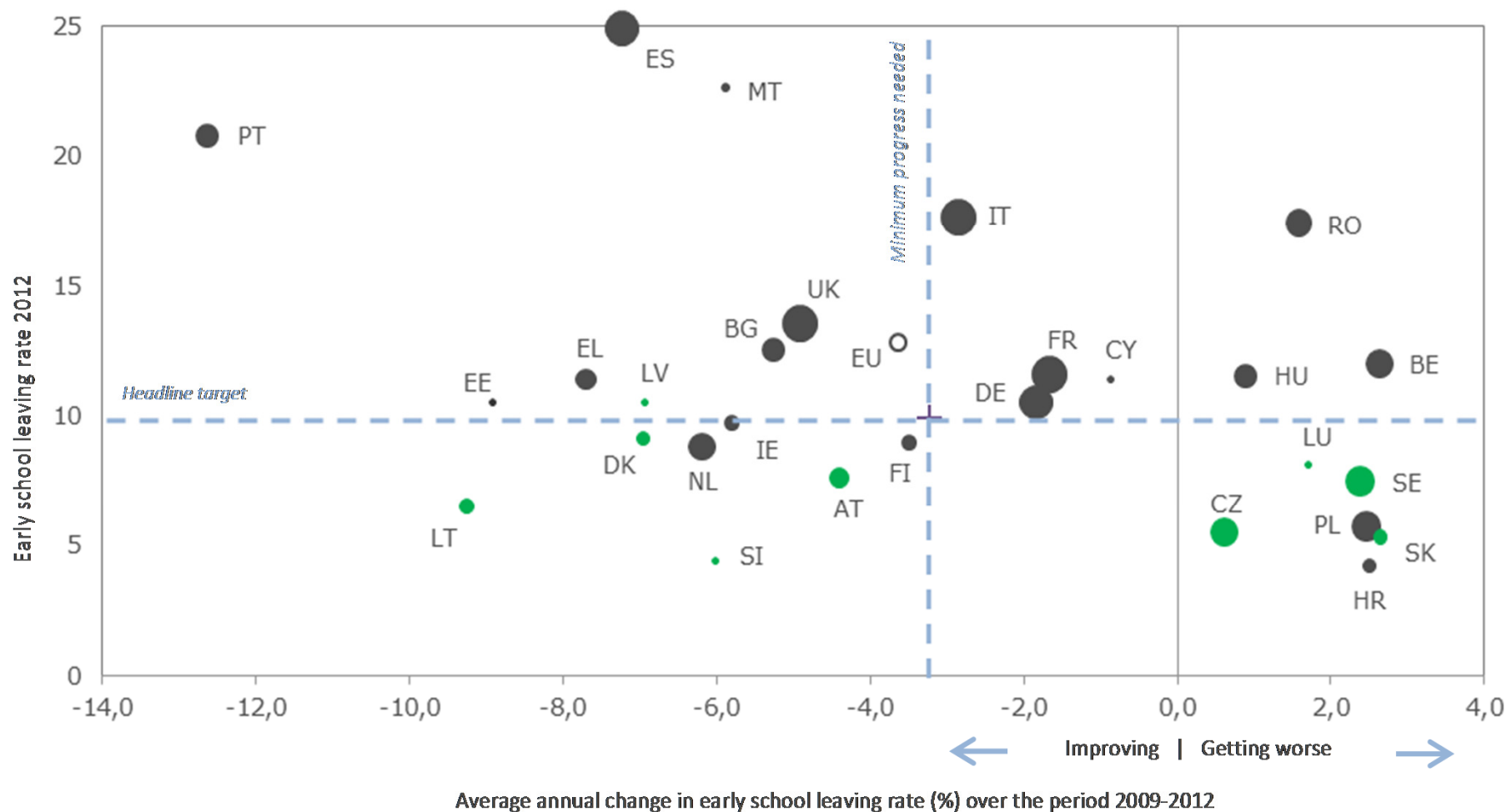
Early leavers from education and training, 2012
 % of 18-24 year-olds



Footnote:
 Provisional data for DE, LU, NL, PL and EU28. Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (online data code: edat_ifse_16)

- In 2012, 12.7% of all 18 to 24 years olds in EU had not completed upper secondary education and were no longer in education and training - 5.5 milion young people
- The highest proportion is in Spain (24.9%), Malta (22.6%), Portugal (20.8%)
- The smallest proportion is in Czech Republic (5.5%), Slovakia (5.3%), Slovenia (4.4%) and Croatia (4.2%)
- Most countries are progressing in reaching their targets

Early school leaving: current performance and recent change



Source: JRC-CRELL and DG EAC calculations based on Eurostat (LFS) data. Member States having already achieved their national targets are marked in green. Countries are shown according to their 18-24 cohort size, with five categories. Further notes: the average annual change rate is artificial for countries with a break in series, i.e. NL (2010) and LV (2011).

- Consequences are dire. Unemployment, social exclusion, poverty...both for an individual and for a society.
- More likely to leave school are:
 - boys
 - young people from a migrant background
 - disadvantaged minorities, including Roma
 - ESL is higher in VET than in general education although good quality VET can be successful in helping many young people complete upper secondary education.
- ESL is a very complex phenomenon. It is outmost personal issue. School and education can play very different roles within this decision.
- Schools play an important role in addressing ESL but cannot and should not work in isolation.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Governance and cooperation

Cooperation of national, regional and local actors · national coordination · progressive approach · local and regional adaptation · sustainable funding · cross-sectoral cooperation · stakeholder involvement · learning cooperation · mentoring and evaluation

Data collection and monitoring

Data collection systems · sensitivity of data · timeliness and transparency · use of data

Prevention

- Access to good quality ECEC
- Relevant and engaging curriculum
- Flexible educational pathways
- Integration of migrants and minorities
- Smooth transition between educational levels
- High quality VET Involvement of pupils in decision making
- Teacher education
- Strong guidance systems

Intervention

- Effective and evidence-based early warning systems
- Focus on individual needs
- Systematic support frameworks
- Extra-curricula and out-of-school activities
- Support to teachers
- Empowering families and parents

Compensation

- Accessibility and relevance of second chance education
- Recognition
- Commitment and governance Personalised and holistic approach
- Distinctive learning experience
- Flexibility in curricula
- Teacher involvement and support
- Links to mainstream education

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Governance and cooperation

- **A coordinating body** - A coordinating body such as a dedicated unit within the Ministry of Education with cross-department links or a separate agency can support cooperation at national level and collaborate with ministries/institutions in related policy fields (e.g. education, economy, employment, youth, health, welfare and social policy).
- **A progressive approach** - A long-term national strategy for ESL needs to be flexible and responsive. It should allow for revision and modification of (evolving) priorities and actions where necessary.
- **Local and regional adaptation** - National strategies should allow for local and regional developments and adaptations. Initiatives and measures should respond to concrete local and regional needs to achieve the greatest impact.
- **Schools and local stakeholders need autonomy to identify and develop local solutions with local actors** - There should be a balance between a bottom-up and top-down approach and between the need for a universal response and more targeted interventions.

- **Awareness raising and training** - In order to ensure sustained political commitment from policy makers and stakeholders, it is important to provide information and training on ESL.
- **Sustainable funding** - Long-term interventions need time to produce results, but generate more effective and lasting effects than short-term, fragmented initiatives. In some Member States, adopting and implementing a comprehensive strategy against ESL may compete with other political priorities during a time of economic austerity.
- **Funding can be used as an incentive to take action to reduce ESL** - Some countries have chosen to introduce performance-based funding to reduce ESL. However, this approach risks favouring solutions that tend to lead to quick, unsustainable successes. Performance-based funding should be complemented by extra support especially for schools in disadvantaged areas .
- **Monitoring and evaluation** - Continuous monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to reduce ESL is essential to steer policy development. The monitoring of services/support at system level is desirable to ensure systematic rather than ad hoc reporting.

- **Inter-agency or inter-institutional arrangements** - Local authorities and other relevant services should establish arrangements for cross-sector collaboration to tackle ESL.
- **Central role of schools** - Cooperation should be centred on schools. Their boundaries should be opened up to enable them to include other professionals (as teams) such as social workers, youth workers, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, speech and language therapists and occupational guidance specialists in efforts to reduce ESL .
- **Involvement of pupils and parents** - Schools and regional or local authorities need to pay special attention to involving pupils and parents and their representatives in the planning and implementation of measures to reduce ESL. Parents need to be supported in their engagement with school education, be strongly encouraged to get involved and responsible for their children's school attendance and education.
- **Learning cooperation** - Inter-professional cooperation requires relational expertise, which enables professionals to recognise and work with the expertise of others.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Data collection and monitoring

TYPES OF DATA

- **Data collection systems on ESL at the national or regional level**
- **Large-scale empirical studies on ESL** - Large-scale quantitative and qualitative empirical studies exploring the correlations and reasons for ESL are important for the development of sound and targeted policies addressing ESL. Studies with longitudinal designs are needed to explore the development of decisions and attitudes towards education and school leaving.
- **Small-scale qualitative studies on ESL** - Small-scale qualitative studies can be an important data source for understanding features of ESL in a specific setting or among specific groups of pupils. These studies offer an important opportunity to capture the voices of young people leaving education.

- **Provision of timely data** - Annual data collection is not sufficient for in-time interventions and for measuring the effectiveness of measures.
- **Security of data** – countries have different approaches to data protection; the collection of personal information must comply with country specific requirements for data protection.
- **Transparency of data** - data collection needs to allow for the comparison of aggregated data between schools, local authorities and/or regions. However, the stigmatisation of low performing schools or neighbourhoods must be avoided.
- **Reporting of data** - adjusted or indexed to the contextual information of the specific school and its needs. It is important to provide schools with data in a user friendly and easily accessible format.
- **Follow-up of data** - the publication and analysis of data should be followed by concrete measures. Adequate and targeted support should be available to local authorities, stakeholders and schools (particularly those with high rates of ESL) in order to help them continuously improve their practice.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Prevention

- Access to good quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- Relevant and engaging curriculum
- Flexible educational pathways
- Better integration of newly arrived migrant children
- Smooth transition between different levels of education
- High quality, attractive and engaging vocational education and training (VET)
- Involvement of pupils and parents in school decision-making
- Initial and continuous education for education staff
- Whole school approaches
- Strong and well-developed guidance system
- Cooperation with the world of work

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Intervention

- Early Warning Systems (EWS)
- Systemic support frameworks within schools
- Focus on the needs of the individual pupil
- Extra-curricular and out-of-school activities to enrich the learning offer
- Support to teachers:
- Empower families and parents to support their children's education
- Raise parental awareness of ESL

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Compensation

- Accessible and relevant second chance schemes
- Recognition of prior learning
- Personalised and holistic approach to second chance education
- Flexibility in the curricula
- Teacher involvement and support
- Links between second chance education and mainstream education

SYSTEM THAT WORKS

- The country has a sustainable strategy to reduce ESL that is nationally coordinated.
- **There is sustained political commitment from policy makers, educational authorities and stakeholders to reduce ESL.**
- The strategy covers the entire education and training (ET) system including provision for special education needs (SEN).
- Measures supporting the reduction of ESL are integrated into all relevant policies aimed at children and young people.
- **There is a coordinating body at national level that which ensures coordination across different policy sectors and with relevant stakeholders.**

- Cooperation is embedded in the working practice of all services and stakeholders working with children and young people.
- Inter-agency or inter-institutional arrangements support cooperation between different services and stakeholders (e.g. social workers).
- **Schools play a central role in cooperation with other services and stakeholders. Cooperation is centred around schools.**
- **Clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders ensure efficient and effective governance of measures and policies to reduce ESL.**

- **All services and stakeholders share common goals, a common language, a joint understanding of expected outcomes.**
- **Local and regional arrangements involve parents and pupils and their respective associations.**
- There is a central system for data collection, coordinated by a central body.
- Data can be aggregated at all local, regional and national levels.
- **The quality and reliability of data is high.**
- Systematic data collection is complemented with regular surveys (e.g. longitudinal studies or studies to capture the motivation of early leavers from education and training).
- **Data is collected at several times of the year.**

- The security of personal data is ensured and complies with specific national requirements.
- Reporting is adjusted to the needs of policy makers, schools and local authorities.
- **The publication and analysis of data is followed by concrete measures; data is used to further develop strategies, programmes and measures to reduce ESL.**
- **Education and training institutions provide conducive and stimulating learning environments (including the physical environment) for all pupils. Schools are supported in creating such learning environments.**
- **Good quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is accessible to all groups in society and especially to groups at high and increased risk of ESL.**
- Potential obstacles to school success at system level have been identified and have been reduced or mitigated. The flexibility of education pathways has been increased.

- **The support for children from a migrant or minority background is embedded in a more inclusive approach in school education; targeted support to address their specific needs is available.**
- **Measures at system level have been taken or are under development to ease transition between educational levels. This concerns closer cooperation between primary and secondary schools especially.**
- **The potential of VET in reducing of ESL has been identified; measures to reduce ESL in VET are in place. Reforms to increase the attractiveness of VET are under way.**
- **There is a growing focus on involving pupils in decision-making at school level.** Schools are encouraged to develop measures and policies to better involve pupils in decision making at school level.
- **Parents are supported in their engagement with school education and encouraged to be involved in decision-making processes in schools.** Schools have outreach programmes to encourage the engagement of vulnerable families in particular in school education.

- Teachers and other professionals working with young people are aware of ESL. **Preventing ESL is part of both initial education and continuous professional development.**
- **High quality guidance is available to all pupils, particularly during periods of transition** (e.g. from lower to upper secondary education)
- **Pupils have the opportunity at an early stage to experience the world of work** (e.g. through short-term traineeships, episodes of work experience) in order to understand job demands and employer expectations.
- **Early warning systems have been developed** and are implemented at school level - especially in schools that experience high rates of ESL.

- Early warning systems are monitored in their efficiency and effectiveness.
- Schools have set up systemic support frameworks to support pupils at risk of ESL effectively in a timely manner.
- **Multi-professional teams work inside schools or in cooperation with several schools.** Schools cooperate with social and youth services, health services, local community and/or other education and training providers.
- **Schools provide individual learning support and support different learning methods.** Student-focused teaching methods are commonly applied.

- **Extra-curricular and out-of-school activities are an integral part of the learning offer in all schools.**
- Schools take care of the professional development of their staff and support teachers working with pupils at risk of ESL.
- **Schools (in cooperation with local communities) support parents and families to help pupils at risk of ESL to remain in school.**
- Schools raise awareness about ESL and discuss first signs of it with parents.
- Compensation schemes such as Second Chance Schemes are available to all young people.
- Second chance education is of high quality and offers qualifications that are valued and recognised on the labour market.

SYSTEM THAT WORKS

Croatia - 4.2%

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Thank you!

http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/twg_en.htm

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