Early School Leaving
Monitoring and Prevention Solutions

Monitoring systems

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pan-European research has demonstrated that increasing levels of education has both a direct and indirect impact on many aspects of European life. This has led the European Union to set a headline target within its Europe 2020 strategy for reducing Early School Leavers in each member state; one of only five headline targets in the strategy.

By reducing Early School Leaver rates, research has shown that member states can benefit from increased income, reduced unemployment, lower levels of healthcare requirements and less crime. These will help the EU achieve their Europe 2020 aim of emerging “stronger from the economic and financial crisis”.

Early School Leaver statistics are monitored in two main ways:

1) the Labour Force Survey, which is created by Eurostat to compare the situation in all European countries
2) data collection systems for individual countries, collected on a national scale.

This report has investigated these monitoring systems in relation to three EU member states: Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom. This has allowed a comparative analysis between a country in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and Western Europe which have different cultural and historical educational systems and cultures. In addition, the United Kingdom is the only country in the EU which does not set a national target for Early School Leavers, focusing instead on NEET, NET and Participation statistics.

As Europe’s largest household survey, the Labour Force Survey relies upon an EU-wide co-operation of national statistical institutes and a common data collection framework to collect the relevant data and ensure accuracy in the statistics that are produced and published in the European Education & Training Monitor. The analysis in this report concludes that, while Eurostat has worked hard to create a consistent statistical methodology, the implementation of this by every member state is not appropriate. There are significant differences in the application of the standardised Early School Leaver definition due to differing educational systems as well as different sample sizes, methods of data collection, rotation systems, response rates, timeliness, punctuality and sample and non-sample errors. It is our opinion that this invalidates the ability to be able to compare Early School Leaver rates across EU member states.

Additionally to the Labour Force Survey, each member state has their own individual monitoring systems that collect data relating to national priorities and targets. The report investigates a variety of different monitoring systems in Italy, Poland and the UK to identify best practice and to understand the ability to be able to make comparisons between different member states.

The methods used by the member states being researched identified two different types of monitoring systems: a quantitative count of the numbers of
people in school and an individualised database detailing the situation of people in real-time. While the quantitative monitoring systems have strengths, including accuracy, they do suffer from a lack of timeliness. In contrast, the individualised databases are more timely but the complexity of the network required to record the information means that the information may suffer from a lack of accuracy. Furthermore, due to the country-specific priorities and targets, it is impossible to reliably compare these statistics across multiple member states.

While there is a clear difficulty in developing a monitoring system which will provide comparable Early School Leaver statistics across all EU countries, it is important that the EU develops a system which collates and reports accurate information for policy makers. This will enable best practice to be identified and distributed across the EU rather than statistics being affected by historical and cultural differences. As such the report details five recommendations:

1. There is a need for a clear pan-European response to the Early School Leaver phenomenon as each member state is increasingly interdependent on educational standards and attainment in other member states.
2. Eurostat must be given increased power to enforce strictly comparable statistical methodologies across the EU so that the collection, collation and distribution of statistical data from all national statistical institutions is accurate.
3. There must be a comparable definition for Early School Leavers so that the current inconsistencies in the application of the definition are eliminated or, at least, reduced substantially.
4. Electronic systems provide the opportunity for improved accuracy and timeliness; these are both essential in making appropriate policy decisions on Early School Leavers.
5. It is essential that the EU focuses on both Early School Leavers and NEET statistics to enable them to meet their Europe 2020 aims. While these statistics cover a similar topic and age demographic, they do not have a strong relationship and they are very different issues. It would appear essential for the EU to develop a high skills workforce, however this is irrelevant if their economic environments do not supply the necessary employment opportunities.

While Italy, Poland and the UK all accept and appreciate the dangers of young people not having the appropriate skills to enter the workforce, the individual national policies of each member state, which are built on historical and cultural differences in educational systems and economic priorities, cause real difficulties in the ability and effectiveness of comparing Early School Leaver statistics across the EU and limits a pan-European response to the phenomenon.
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INTRODUCTION

Education is a very important area in European actions and political debate of each country of the European Union; therefore an evaluation of its effectiveness in different contexts is an essential element of research conducted in particular countries. One area of research is the phenomenon of Early School Leavers of people aged 18 - 24.

This report is the result of a European Union Erasmus+ funded project conducted in partnership by four organizations consisting of experts from Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom: Eurocultura (Italy), the Education Office from Warsaw and Sysco Polska (both Poland) and Sysco Business Skills Academy (UK).

The report provides answers to questions related to the monitoring systems of Early School Leavers in the countries mentioned above together with the methods of monitoring and its effectiveness.

Our aim was to examine monitoring systems existing at the EU level and in each partner country. The methodology for this study uses a two-step approach:

1) the Labour Force Survey in the EU, which is created by Eurostat to compare the situation in all European countries

2) data collection systems for individual countries, collected on a national scale.

A comprehensive research on the monitoring of the Early School Leaver phenomenon is presented against the information concerning other countries of the European Union in order to compare the practices applied in this field in various European countries. It focuses more specifically on this problem in the partner countries.

The report discusses different methods and systems of monitoring the Early School Leaver phenomenon, the type of data collected and the reasons for the collection, which will help to determine whether the actions of individual countries are similar and whether the national policies that are applied allow for more information generation on Early School Leavers.

Information gathered in this report fits in with the Europe 2020 strategy, implemented at the European Union level, which aims to achieve an average rate of 10% for Early School Leavers by 2020. Taking into consideration the fact that studies devoted to this problem do not always include accurate data and ways of collection in particular countries are different, the report can be a valuable research material to be used in further work on the phenomenon of Early School Leavers.
1. INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH
This project is concerned with the important subject of Early School Leavers. This section will introduce the project, its research partners, explain the research methodology, discuss the importance of reducing Early School Leavers in the European Union and highlight any constraints that may affect the findings.

1.1 About Project and Partnership
The consortium consists of four members from three diverse locations (Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom) within the European Union.

The consortium has been compiled to embrace and compare the educational system of a country in Southern Europe (Italy), Eastern Europe (Poland) and Western Europe (UK) and, therefore, widen the breadth of the investigation into best practices throughout the EU by taking into account different historical and cultural traits.

1.1.1 Eurocultura (Italy)
Eurocultura is a research, training and career counselling organisation based in Vicenza, a town of 116,000 inhabitants located in the northeast of Italy, between Verona and Venice.

Key competences are mainly related to labour market and training issues. Projects and activities are aimed at improving the employability of people through training and valuable work experiences abroad, the promotion of entrepreneurship, the promotion of international mobility of students and workers, and the prevention and fight against racism and prejudices. Furthermore, Eurocultura focus on raising the awareness of Early School Leavers to stakeholders and the general public; this being a major cause of disadvantage for access to the labour market within Italy and for exercising the rights of citizenship.

1.1.2 Masovia Province Education Superintendent - Mazowiecki Kurator Oświaty (Poland)
The Masovia Province Education Superintendent performs tasks within the Polish education system on behalf of the head of the Masovia province. The Education Office, based in Warsaw, has branch offices in five major cities in the Masovia Province (Plock, Radom, Ciechanów, Siedlce, Ostrołęka) and employs 286 people.

The Education Superintendent is responsible for implementing the Polish Government’s educational policy, which is established by the Minister of National Education, through the cooperation of Local Government education authorities.
In the 2014/2015 academic year the Education Superintendent supervised 6705 schools and educational institutions located in the Masovia province. Among them are 1655 primary schools, 934 lower-secondary schools and 1281 upper-secondary schools. About 700,000 students attend schools in the Masovia Province and are taught by approximately 94,000 teaching staff.

The main task of the Education Superintendent is pedagogical supervision in the form of evaluation and inspections. The Education Superintendent exercises pedagogical supervision over all public and non-public schools as well as educational institutions, teacher training centres (including non-public teacher training centres of nationwide scope which are located in the province) with the exception of schools and institutions that are subject to supervision by relevant ministers. However, even in these institutions, the Superintendent exercises pedagogical supervision over teaching general subjects. In addition, the Education Superintendent assesses the state and conditions of teaching and care provided by schools and institutions.

Another task of the Education Superintendent is providing assistance to schools and institutions, as well as teachers in their teaching and care related tasks, and inspiring teachers to undertake pedagogical, methodological and organisational innovations.

The Education Office is also responsible for issuing administrative decisions. The Education Superintendent gives orders to quality control a school or institution, to transfer a student who is subject to compulsory education to another school and to repeal a public school statute. The Education Superintendent can also grant or revoke the accreditation to institutions of lifelong learning or teacher training centres. The Education Superintendent has authoritative power over local government units including matters relating to giving consent or refusal to establish a public school or a refusal to register a non-public institution, removal of a non-public school from the register and withdrawal of the rights of a public school granted to a non-public school.

1.1.3 **Sysco Polska (Poland)**

Sysco Polska is a renowned provider of innovative and effective training as well as consultancy services for individuals, enterprises, non-governmental organisations and the public sector.

With great experience of working as an advocate for entrepreneurship and education, Sysco Polska helps clients to
develop skills crucial for achieving success in life and business. It delivers soft skills courses and vocational qualifications training enabling personal development as well as upskilling. Sysco Polska has a long history of delivering EU-cofinanced projects that support competitiveness and the development of human capital.

Thanks to many successfully completed projects, Sysco Polska has gained significant experience in the provision of training, apprenticeships, unemployment support and in the area of entrepreneurship.

It has carried out projects designed for diverse groups of individuals (students, academics, professionals, people wishing to change their career route) as well as public institutions and enterprises, in particular from the SME sector. Thanks to the number and diversity of delivered projects, Sysco Polska can boast a broad network of specialist partners that creates interesting and viable solutions in many diverse areas. Sysco works closely with different partners based in Poland and in the UK, including universities, chambers of commerce, enterprises and NGOs.

1.1.4 Sysco Business Skills Academy (United Kingdom)

Sysco Business Skills Academy is based in Liverpool in the North West of England and is part of the Sysco Group which also includes Brighter Futures Merseyside (a company that provides Further Education to 16-18 year olds through Education Funding Agency monies) and Sysco Management Consultants (a company which provides funded and non-funded vocational education and training).

Sysco Business Skills Academy has a long history of successfully delivering large-scale training programmes in partnership with key public institutions. Currently Sysco Business Skills Academy delivers Apprenticeships to employed individuals and employability training to the unemployed through the Skills Funding Agency and the European Social Fund and vocational training through the European Social Fund’s Skills Support for the Workforce programme.

The Sysco Group employs approximately 80 people and has extensive experience of supporting and training individuals aged 16+ through a wide variety of funded programmes. In the 2014/15 academic year, the Sysco Group will train approximately 6,000 people.
1.2 Methodology
In order to develop this report the following methodology was adopted:

- a schedule for all the tasks was created
- methods of data collection were defined
- a method of analysing and interpreting data was defined
- a comparison of partner countries against the EU was made
- conclusions and recommendations were formulated

The aim of this project is to comprehensively research the current monitoring systems for Early School Leavers within both the EU and each consortium member’s country (Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom).

This approach is very similar to ‘Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures’\(^1\) although there is a more extensive discussion on monitoring systems in this report.

The following research methods were used:

- Desk Research
- Interviews
- Statistical Analysis
- Literature Review

Each partner was responsible for researching their own national monitoring systems, both in terms of data collection for the EU Labour Force Survey and also country-specific data collection systems, and this was then compared and contrasted to identify common traits and differences to gain an understanding of the reliability of published Early School Leaver statistics and best practice monitoring systems.

The partners in this project met regularly through cross-national meetings, in each partner country, to discuss findings and agree conclusions for the results that had been identified.

1.3 Constraints
There were a number of constraints to the report which may have affected the accuracies of the results. It is, however, the opinion of the report authors that these constraints have had a minimal impact on the findings.

1.3.1 Timeliness of Data

As with all data research and analysis, timeliness and comparability of data can be constraints to the accuracy of conclusions.

Data is time-sensitive and delays between collection, collation and publication, inevitably affect result validity. Furthermore, this is complicated where cross-country comparisons rely upon differing data from differing periods.

However, it is unlikely that small disparities in time (ie. a few months) will have a major impact on the general characteristics of the Early School Leaver phenomenon.

1.3.2 **Access to Data**
The availability of the microdata which is collated to produce statistics is key to determining the accuracy and validity of any conclusions. In most cases, the statistics that have been researched within this report are based on publicly available information and, therefore, we have been unable to access and test timely results using the specific relevant microdata.

However, the publicly available information has been managed and supplied by national and pan-European statistical bodies using generally accepted international standards. As such it has to be assumed that the information we have accessed is accurate based on the published methodology.

1.4 **European Economic and Educational Strategies – Europe 2020**
Europe 2020 is the central 10-year European strategy, proposed by the European Union on 3rd March 2010, to enable “Europe to emerge stronger from the economic and financial crisis”\(^2\).

The report concludes that “Europe faces a moment of transformation” and “The EU must now take charge of its future”. It is stated that “Europe can succeed if it acts collectively, as a Union. We need a strategy to help us come out stronger from the crisis and turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Europe 2020 sets out a vision of Europe’s social market economy for the 21st century”\(^3\).

The three priority areas of Europe 2020 are defined as:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.

\(^2\) European Commission, 3 March 2010, 'Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’
\(^3\) European Commission, 3 March 2010, 'Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’
• Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
• Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

Based on these three priorities, the EU Commission proposed five headline targets; one of these is that "the share of early school leavers should be under 10%". At the time of the strategy publication in 2010, Early School Leavers were reported to be at an average of 15% across the EU.

It is important to emphasise the importance of Early School Leavers to Europe; the EU Commission highlighted their desire to reduce Early School Leavers within the EU to 10% as one of only 5 headline targets in the whole of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Early School Leaver targets are one of the two headline targets of the EU's Education and Training strategy (ET 2020).

The Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) strategy builds upon the progress made under the Education and Training 2010 work programme with the aim of developing "an updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training" which "could further enhance the efficiency of such cooperation and provide continuing benefits and support for Member States' education and training systems up to the year 2020". The strategy aims to value European diversity yet attempts to fully respect each Member States' responsibility for their own education systems.

Reducing Early School Leavers had been a major focus of ‘Strategic Objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship in the priority areas for European cooperation in Education and Training’ during the first cycle between 2009-2011.

1.5 The Importance of Reducing Early School Leavers

The Europe 2020 strategy states “by 2020, 16 million more jobs will require high qualifications while the demand for low skills will drop by 12 million jobs”.

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European reports have suggested that leaving education and school early creates a higher risk of unemployment, jobs with less employment security, more part-time work and lower earnings\(^7\).

According to Eurostat, in 2013, the unemployment rate amongst Early School Leavers across the EU was 41% compared to an overall youth unemployment rate of 23.5%\(^8\). Additionally, in Austria, according to a study by Steiner (2009)\(^9\), those leaving education and training early face a risk of unemployment that is twice as high as for upper secondary level graduates and, when early leavers do find a job, their risk of being in low-level occupations is four times higher. Research by Gasquet and Roux (2006)\(^10\) found that one-third of Early School Leavers in France did not have a job in the seven years after leaving school.

The costs of Early School Leavers can be described as private, fiscal and social\(^11\). Figure 1\(^12\) details an interesting synopsis of the benefits to the EU of reducing Early School Leavers.

**Figure 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>P - Private benefits</strong></th>
<th><strong>F - Fiscal or government</strong> (state/local and federal/central)</th>
<th><strong>S - Social</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Gain in net earnings and wealth</td>
<td>(5) Increased tax payments</td>
<td>Private individual benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ (2) Improved health status / life expectancy</td>
<td>(6) Lower reliance on government health programs</td>
<td>+ Fiscal benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ (3) Household productivity gains</td>
<td>+ (7) Reduced expenditures on criminal justice</td>
<td>+ (10) Productivity externalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- (4) Fees for education</td>
<td>+ (8) Lower reliance on welfare</td>
<td>+ (11) Gains from reduced crime</td>
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**Source:** Belfield C, 2008, ‘The Cost of early school-leaving and school failure’, mimeo

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\(^7\) Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training (NESSE), 2010, ‘Early school leaving: Lessons from research for policy makers’

\(^8\) European Commission, 2014, ‘Education and Training Monitor 2014’

\(^9\) Steiner M, 2009, ‘Early School Leaving in Austria’

\(^10\) Gasquet C & Roux V, 2006, ‘Les sept premieres annees de vie active des jeunes non diplomes: la place des mesures publiques pour l’emploi’


\(^12\) Belfield C, 2008, ‘The Cost of early school-leaving and school failure’, mimeo
1.5.1 Private Benefits

Early school leaving has been found to reduce lifetime earnings and lead to a higher likelihood of unemployment and duration of unemployment.\(^{13}\)

Various reports, including Rouse (2007)\(^ {14}\), Oreopoulos (2006)\(^ {15}\), Anspal et al (2011)\(^ {16}\), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2012)\(^ {17}\) and Brunello, Weber and Weiss (2012)\(^ {18}\), point to significant wage enhancements for individuals staying at high school for longer periods.

There are also private benefits in the form of improved health and life expectancy; this is discussed further in section 1.4.3.

1.5.2 Fiscal Costs

Psacharopoulos (2007)\(^ {19}\) classifies foregone tax revenues as fiscal costs. This is based on the premise that, as Early School Leavers earn, on average, lower lifetime earnings, they contribute less in terms of income taxes. Additionally, since Early School Leavers are more likely to be unemployed or out of the labour force, they typically receive higher unemployment benefits, disability benefits and other welfare benefits. Research by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and


\(^{17}\) European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2012, ‘NEETs young people not in employment, education or training: characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe’


Working Conditions (2012) estimated that the average annual public finance costs of individuals ‘not in employment, education or training’ in the 26 European countries to be €742 per head, with a range between €3 in Bulgaria and €5204 in Denmark.

1.5.3 Social Costs

The relationship between education and health (known as the health-education gradient) is widely studied. There is some level of debate as to how the extent of education achieved can impact health with reports such as Mazumber (2008), Arendt (2005), Kempter et al (2011) and Van Kippersluis (2011) all concluding that education improves health and reduces mortality. A recent study, covering seven European countries (including Italy and England), by Brunello et al (2013) estimated that one additional year of schooling decreases the probability of poor health by 4%-8.5% for females and 5%-6.4% for males.

Additionally, studies have identified that increased education can have an impact on reducing expenditures on criminal justice and improving gains to society from reduced crime. Research by Machin, Marie and Vujic (2011) and Lochner and Moretti (2004) point towards the benefits of reducing wage losses through time spent out of the labour market while in prison, reducing the time available for participating in criminal activity and increasing the psychological costs of breaking the law.

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20 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2012, ‘NEETs young people not in employment, education or training: characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe’
Indeed Machin et al (2011)\textsuperscript{28} estimated that the social benefits from crime reduction that would follow from a 1% reduction in the percentage of individuals with no educational qualifications would be between 43,921 and 88,469 offences with associated costs of £54mln to £109 mln.

2. **EUROPEAN UNION LABOUR FORCE SURVEY**

The official Early School Leaver statistics for the European Union’s Europe 2020 targets are produced by Eurostat through the EU Labour Force Survey. The EU Labour Force Survey aims to harmonise the microdata supplied by every EU Member State’s national Labour Force Survey.

Regulations 452/2008\(^{29}\) and 577/98\(^{30}\) require all EU Member State national Statistical Institutes to collect and produce statistical information on education and lifelong learning and also to ensure that the data that is collected uses standardised terms and definitions. Furthermore, the EU Labour Force Survey utilises an internationally-recognised classification of educational attainment (the International Standard Classification of Education).

**2.1 Definition of Early School Leavers**

The European Union defines an Early School Leaver as: 

"People aged 18-24 who have only lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than two years"\(^{31}\).

Any individual, aged 18-24 years old, who has not completed their upper secondary education and is not currently in education is classed as being an Early School Leaver for the purposes of Eurostat’s statistics.

This definition excludes anyone who participated in some form of education or training in the four weeks prior to the date of the survey. Young people who initially drop out of education but return to finish upper secondary education before the age of 25 are also excluded from this definition\(^{32}\).

A lower secondary or a short upper secondary education relate to qualifications that are recognised as being International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 0, 1, 2 or 3c Short whereas a long upper secondary education is classed as being ISCED 3a, 3b or 3c Long\(^{33}\).

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\(^{31}\) This definition was agreed by EU Education Ministers in the Council, “Reference levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training ( Benchmarks)”, 2003


The EU would define any 18-24 year old who has not achieved a minimum of an ISCED 3c Long education, and who is no longer in education, as an Early School Leaver.

2.2 **International Standard Classification of Education**

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) belongs to the United Nations’ International Family of Economic and Social Classifications. These are applied in various statistical analysis globally with the “purpose of assembling, compiling and analysing cross-nationally comparable data”\(^{34}\).

The ISCED is a set of concepts and definitions which are intended to be universally applicable\(^{35}\). The classification is used to attempt to combat the issue of benchmarking national education systems that often vary in structure and curricular content.

ISCED coding levels begin at Level 0 (Early Childhood Education) and progress through to Level 6 (Doctoral or Equivalent). Figure 2 illustrates this system\(^{36}\).

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Students with an ISCED Level 2 education could leave their education to join the labour market or gain entry onto an upper secondary education route.

The principles of ISCED Level 3 (upper secondary education) are that they are designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or to provide skills relevant to labour market entry, or both.\(^{37}\)

Within the ISCED Level 3, there is a scale of 3a, 3b and 3c.

ISCED Level 3a are programmes which are designed to provide direct access to ISCED Level 5a courses which are theoretically-based higher education programmes.

ISCED Level 3b are programmes which are designed to provide direct access to ISCED 5b courses which are tertiary vocational education programmes.

ISCED Level 3c are programmes which are designed to provide access to ISCED 4a, 4b and/or 4c courses. Programmes that are classed as ‘c’

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generally contain ‘terminal programmes’ that mainly prepare for labour market entry. Furthermore, within the ISCED 3c there is a distinction between Short (less than two years of relevant education) and Long (two years or more of relevant education).

### 2.2.1 Italian Education System

The Italian education system is divided into a number of stages: pre-school, primary school, secondary school and post-secondary/tertiary (Figure 3).

#### Figure 3

![Diagram of the Italian education system](image)

**Source:** Barone C & Schizzerotto A, 2008, ‘The application of the ISCED-97 to Italy’, MZES

The pre-primary education begins at the age of 3 and lasts for 3 years. It is not compulsory but has an almost universal attendance rate (93.4% according to census data). It constitutes the initial stage of the education system and is mainly intended as an introduction of children to a school environment.

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In Italy, education is compulsory for 10 years, from 6 to 16 years of age, and covers the eight-year first cycle of education (5 years of primary school and 3 years of lower secondary school) and the first two years of upper secondary school. The state sector is the backbone of the Italian education system and most students attend state schools and universities, although there are also private schools.

Primary education (ISCED 1) lasts 5 years, for children between 6 and 11 years of age. Children must be aged six by 31st December of the year in question to enrol. The five-year primary cycle is divided into two parts; the first two years concentrating on basic skills and the final three years introducing pupils to broader concepts.

Lower secondary school (ISCED 2) lasts 3 years, for children between 11 and 14 years of age. As with primary school, there’s a national curriculum that must be studied by all children. The number of hours each subject must be taught each week is stipulated by the Ministry of Education. At the end of the third year, pupils sit a state examination comprising written papers in Italian, a foreign language and mathematics and science, followed by an oral examination in all subjects except religion. Successful students are awarded their lower secondary school diploma and graduate to upper secondary school.

After completion of the first cycle of education, the Financial Law 2007 extended compulsory education by two years (from 14 to 16 years of age) which can be accomplished either in State upper secondary schools or through three-year vocational education and training courses, falling under the responsibility of the Regions (law 133/2008).

Upper secondary education includes pathways of various duration, divided into two main branches: upper secondary education, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, taking 5 years, and Vocational Education and Training under the responsibility of the Regions, taking 3 or 4 years. 15-year olds can attend the last year of compulsory education through an Apprenticeship. In certain conditions, parental education and private schools is allowable.

There are three types of upper secondary schools: Licei, Istituti Tecnici, Istituti Professionali (Licei, Technical Institutes, Vocational Institutes). Licei offer a wide range of pathways: artistic, classical, human sciences, linguistic, music, dance and science. Some of them offer further options, such as economics or applied sciences. Technical and Vocational Institutes also offer a wide range of specialisations and options in the
Economic and Technological sectors (technical schools) and in the Services and Industry and Crafts sectors (vocational schools).

Since 2001, all pupils have had the same core curriculum for the first two years of upper secondary school; their specialised courses start in the third year.

All upper secondary school paths lead to either a diploma liceale, technical education diploma or a vocational education diploma (ISCED 3a). In order to receive the Diploma di Scuola Superiore also known as the Diploma di Maturità (secondary school diploma), students must pass written and oral examinations.

The country is divided into scholastic districts administered by provincial local education offices. However, both the curricula and examinations in state schools are set by the Ministry of Education, in consultation with an advisory body, the National Education Council.

In theory, this centralised system should ensure the same standard of education throughout the country, although in practice there’s a considerable disparity between the quality of education in northern and southern schools; the former being regarded as far superior.

In recent years there has been a progressive devolvement of responsibility to regional education authorities and schools; one effect has been to give schools a limited degree of freedom in setting their own curricula. Since September 2000, state schools have also been responsible for managing their own finances.

In addition, the Vocational Educational Training system, which falls under the competence of the Regions, is part of the national education and training system, and is organised in two basic pathways: three-year courses, leading to the award of Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale (Professional operator certificate) (ISCED 3c), and four-year courses, leading to a Diploma professionale di tecnico (Professional technician diploma) (ISCED 3a).

The qualifications released under the regional system are recognised at national level.

Community Vocational Education Training in Italy supports those in need of continued vocational education and those at risk of long term unemployment. The continuous training offer, aimed at the employed or the unemployed looking for a new job,
is extremely wide and is made up of both public and private-funded training initiatives.

Higher Technical Education and Training (ISCED 4c) is regionally based and it can take place through two pathways: Higher Technical Education and Training (IFTS), and Higher Technical Institutes (ITS). These are regional courses with a specialised nature. At the end of an IFTS course, a Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore (Higher technical specialisation certificate) is awarded by Regions (ISCED 4a).

Higher Technical Institutes (ITS) (ISCED 4c) are established on the basis of Regional Territorial Plans and are managed as a Participative Foundation, including State and Regional and other local authorities, universities, enterprises and training centres. ITS can be attended by young people and adults holding a Diploma di Maturità. At the end of ITS courses, a Higher Technical Education Diploma is issued. These qualifications, awarded by the Ministry of Education, concern specific, nationally defined areas of high technological innovation.

All students can enter university, provided they complete a five-year course at secondary school and acquire their Diploma di Maturità, and it's now common for students who have attended technical and vocational schools to go on to university.

Higher education in Italy falls into four distinct categories: university education, higher-level artistic and musical training, higher-level technical training and other higher education opportunities.

The entire sector, but especially the university education category, underwent a radical renewal at the end of the 1990s, motivated both by choices of national significance and by the desire to bring the system into line with the European model outlined by the Bologna Process, which Italy has helped to promote from the outset.

Apprenticeships are also available and this varies depending on the type of apprenticeship contract.

The first and the third type of apprenticeships are connected to qualifications and diplomas recognised at national level and released at the end of other courses of the education system. The first type of apprenticeship is aimed to gain a vocational qualification recognised at national level.

The second, and most common, form enables the learner to gain a certification from the enterprise and eventually entitles the
learner to enter an examination to achieve a nationally recognised qualification.

### 2.2.2 Polish Education System

The Polish education system includes early education, primary education, lower secondary level, upper secondary level and higher education (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

![Diagram of the Polish education system]

**Source:** Mach BW & Kryszczuk MD, 2008, ‘The ISCED-97 in the Polish context’, MZES

In the Polish education system there are two concepts: compulsory schooling and compulsory education.

Compulsory schooling (i.e. the legal requirement to attend primary and lower-secondary school) concerns children and teenagers aged 6-16. Compulsory education refers to young people aged 16-18, and can be conducted in the school (upper secondary school) or in out-of-school settings (vocational training at an employer's premises). This means that full or part-time compulsory education in school and in out-of-school settings lasts up to 18 years of age, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and the School Education Act.

Early childhood education (ISCED 0) includes children aged 3-5, who can attend nursery schools, nursery units in primary
schools, preschool centres and nursery centres. Attendance is optional for children aged 3-4 and compulsory for all 5-year-olds.

Primary education (ISCED 1) is carried out in 6-year compulsory primary schools. Until the 2013/2014 academic year, children started primary school at the age of 7. Since the 2014/2015 academic year, the age has been reduced to 6. At the end of primary school, students sit an external test, which is taken for informative purposes rather than selection.

Lower secondary education (ISCED 2a) is carried out in compulsory 3-year lower secondary schools. Currently students aged 13-16 attend this type of school. However, due to the decrease in the age of starting primary school, from 2020/21, 12-year-olds will start education in lower secondary schools and complete as 15-year-olds. At the end of lower secondary school, students sit an external examination; the results affect admission to upper secondary schools.

Upper secondary education for young people aged 16-19 (16-20 in the case of technical schools) include: 3-year general upper-secondary schools (ISCED 3a), 3-year basic vocational schools (ISCED 3c) and 4-year technical upper-secondary schools (ISCED 3a). The vast majority of lower secondary school graduates continue their education at upper secondary level; although this is not obligatory as students are only required to continue education. Students attending basic vocational schools and technical upper-secondary schools may take examinations relating to qualifications in a profession and get a Diploma confirming vocational qualifications while still being students or after completing school. Students who attend general upper secondary school and technical upper secondary school may sit an external maturity examination. Passing the examination is necessary to obtain a maturity certificate and be qualified for admission to higher education institutions.

Both public and non-public schools operate in the Polish education system. In the school year 2012/2013, the vast majority of students in compulsory education (95%) attended public schools.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4b) in the Polish education system is considered as education at the secondary level. Post-secondary non-tertiary schools are intended for people with general upper secondary education and allow them to obtain a vocational qualifications diploma after passing relevant examinations. The same vocational examinations can
be passed by students in basic vocational schools and technical upper-secondary schools.

In addition, the Polish education system (outside the higher education system) comprises colleges (ISCED 5a and 5b): teacher training colleges, foreign language teacher training colleges and colleges of social work.

Graduates can pass an examination and obtain a bachelor's degree at a higher education institution (ISCED 5a and 6). Currently, teacher training colleges and foreign language teacher training colleges are being phased out. They will cease to exist in September 2016.

Adults can complete their education at primary and secondary level, as well as obtain and complete skills and competencies for professional and personal purposes. It is organised in two forms (in school and in out-of-school settings) in continuous learning centres, practical training centres and as postgraduate studies in higher education institutions. In addition, there is a system of training the unemployed and certain categories of job seekers39.

Most of the funding for education comes from the State budget. According to the School Education Act, schools are divided into public, which offer free education and teach according to the core curriculum, and non-public schools (including community schools, church or private schools), which may be financed with fees received from parents. Schools may also receive funding from other sources (e.g. private companies and foundations). Non-public schools with the rights of public schools have the right to educational grants awarded to each student, which amount to 100% of the average cost of educating a student in a public school. Non-public schools also have the right to issue certificates recognised by public schools and universities.

In Poland, there are two separate ministries: the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The Ministry of National Education is responsible for the education system with the exception of higher education institutions which are supervised by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Educational policy is developed and carried out centrally, while the administration and running of schools, nursery schools and other educational institutions is decentralised; responsibility for running nursery schools, primary and secondary schools has

been delegated to local authorities. Administrative and organisational matters and decisions on the use of funds by schools are the subject of consultation between the school and the school governing body (i.e. the community in the case of nursery schools, primary and lower secondary schools or district for secondary schools).

Pedagogical supervision of schools is exercised directly by the Ministry of Education, with the help of Education Offices which perform tasks on its behalf.

2.2.3 **UK Education System**

Across the UK, there are five stages of education:

- early years,
- primary,
- secondary,
- Further Education (FE) and
- Higher Education (HE)

The UK’s educational policy is controlled by public institutions in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as part of the devolution of power. As such there are some slight differences to the structure of the educational system depending on the area of the UK.

Until 2012, education was compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16. From 2013, the UK extended the upper limit of compulsory education to 17 and from 2014, the UK extended this further to the age of 18. These increases in the upper limits of compulsory education were introduced through the UK Government’s ‘Raising the Participation Age’ initiative. This is detailed in Figure 5.

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40HM Government, 2008, ‘Education and Skills Act’
Early Years education (ISCED 0) is available to all 3 and 4 year olds in the UK and from 2 years of age in Northern Ireland. Children of these ages are entitled to 15 hours of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year. Early Years education can be undertaken in a number of different settings including state nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes within primary schools, as well as settings outside the state sector such as voluntary pre-schools, privately run nurseries or childminders.

The primary stage (ISCED 1) covers a number of age ranges: nursery (under 5, except in Northern Ireland where it relates to under 4), infant (5 to 7) and junior (up to 11) in England and Wales or primary school (4 to 11 in Northern Ireland and 5 to 12 in Scotland).

Publicly funded provision of secondary education in England consists of a combination of different types of school, often reflecting historical circumstances and the policy adopted by the local authority. Comprehensive schools mostly admit
students regardless of aptitude or ability, although, in some areas, there may also be other types of schools such as grammar schools, which require potential students to sit examinations to gain entry. More recently Academies have developed within England. These are publicly funded independent schools which benefit from greater freedoms from local authority control with the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff, freedom around the delivery of the curriculum and the ability to change the lengths of terms and school days.

At the end of the school year in which a student turns 16 years of age, students are normally entered for external examinations. These would commonly be GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and SCE (Standard Grades) in Scotland, although a range of other qualifications are available.

A student who has achieved five (5) GCSE or SCE subjects at grades A*-C are treated as achieving ISCED 3c Long on the ISCED scale and therefore excluded from the Early School Leaver statistics, even though there is debate as to whether this would only be classed as the end of lower secondary education (ISCED 2a) in many EU countries. The UK utilises GCSE data as this is consistent with statistics that relate to educational attainment of 16 and 19 year olds which are used in other international surveys. Students who achieve four or fewer GCSE or SCE subjects at grades A*-C are treated as achieving ISCED 3c Short. In the UK, if an individual leaves education without achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs then they are considered to be Early School Leavers for EU statistical purposes. As such, there is no ISCED 2 education in the UK.

Further Education is now compulsory to the age of 18 and covers GCE A-Level courses, SCE Advanced Highers and non-advanced education that takes place at secondary school, further (including tertiary) education colleges and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These are classed as ISCED Levels 3a, 3b and 4 depending upon the qualifications. This does not mean young people must stay in school until 17 and 18; rather the following options are available to anyone following the school year in which they turn 16 years old:

- full-time education (e.g. at a school or college)
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time education or training combined with one of the following:
  - employment or self-employment for 20 hours or more a week
The fifth stage, Higher Education (ISCED 5 and 6), is defined as any study beyond three GCE A levels or SCE Advanced Highers and their equivalent which, for most full-time students, takes place in universities and other HEIs and colleges.

### 2.3 Education & Training Monitor Statistics

Early School Leaver statistics are specifically gathered through questions on the national Labour Force Survey questionnaires which cover the Eurostat codes HATLEVEL and HATYEAR\(^41\). The results of the Early School Leavers are published on an annual basis in the EU’s Education and Training Monitor publication.

The Europe 2020 EU target for Early School Leavers was set at 10% from the 15% level in 2010 when the strategy was published\(^42\). The official comparative statistics for the Early School Leavers are published annually by Eurostat through the Education and Training Monitor.

The Education and Training Monitor uses the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) methodology which was developed by the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion and the Employment Committee\(^43\).

Figure 6 graphically illustrates the variation in Early School Leavers based on the information supplied to Eurostat through each Member State’s Labour Force Survey.

### Figure 6

![Graph](image.png)

**Source:** Eurostat, 2014, ‘EU Education and Training Monitor’

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\(^{42}\) European Commission, 3 March 2010, ‘Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’

Nine of the 28 Member States reported Early School Leavers above the Europe 2020 headline target; this includes both Italy (17%) and the UK (12.4%). In comparison, Poland’s Early School Leaver rate in 2013 was 5.4%, which is almost half of the Europe 2020 headline target although slightly higher than their own national target (4.5%)\textsuperscript{44}. Given the wide ranges between different countries in the EU, this would suggest either a large gulf in educational standards, a major difference in educational systems or inconsistent monitoring of the national educational systems.

The Education and Training Monitor 2014 provides a breakdown of Early School Leaver rates by gender and country of birth. Italy, Poland and the UK show remarkable consistency in the characteristics of gender statistics with the incidence of Early School Leavers being greater in men compared to women in each country, however the countries are significantly different in terms of Early School Leavers by country of birth.

Within Italy, foreign-born students are far more likely to be an Early School Leaver than native-born students. Indeed, 36.4% of individuals born in non-EU countries are Early School Leavers compared to 30.2% of individuals born in EU countries; 34.4% of individuals born outside Italy are Early School Leavers compared to 14.8% of individuals born in Italy\textsuperscript{45} (Figure 7).

\textbf{Figure 7}

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\textsuperscript{44} Eurostat, 2014, ‘EU Education and Training Monitor’

\textsuperscript{45} Eurostat, 2014, ‘EU Education and Training Monitor’
Poland, in contrast, has extremely few foreign-born individuals and, as such, statistics for Early School Leavers who are foreign-born are not statistically reliable and are not reported. An interesting point for Poland, however, is that men are more than twice as likely to be Early School Leavers compared to women (Figure 8); this is a significantly greater disparity in gender than both Italy and the UK.\textsuperscript{46}

\textbf{Figure 8}

![Poland Early School Leavers (2013) - EU Education and Training Monitor](source)

\textbf{Source:} Eurostat, 2014, 'EU Education and Training Monitor'

The United Kingdom is unique to the EU in that foreign-born individuals are less likely to be Early School Leavers in comparison to individuals that are native-born (9.9% compared to 12.8%); no other country in the EU achieves this. In addition, the United Kingdom has a more equal balance between men and women that are classified as Early School Leavers than both Italy and Poland.\textsuperscript{47} (Figure 9).

\textsuperscript{46} Eurostat, 2014, 'EU Education and Training Monitor'
\textsuperscript{47} Eurostat, 2014, 'EU Education and Training Monitor'
A further interesting analysis is related to the gaps between the best and the worst performing regions within a given country (Figure 10).

Again, there are some interesting differences between Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom. The UK has the greatest range between the bottom-performing range and the top-performing range; this is caused by outliers in the bottom-performing range. Similarly, Italy has a higher level of disparity between the top-performing and bottom-performing regions than most EU countries but the country average appears to be a good
representation of the country as a whole. Poland, compared to both Italy and the UK, has little disparity between the bottom-performing region and the top-performing region\textsuperscript{48}.

An additional analysis compares the progress in attempts to reduce Early School Leavers in each Member State (Figure 11).

**Figure 11**

![Figure 11: Graph showing the progress in attempts to reduce Early School Leavers in each Member State.](image)

*Source: Eurostat, 2014, 'EU Education and Training Monitor'*

This analysis indicates that, while Italy and the UK have higher published Early School Leaver statistics compared to Poland, both Member States are making more progress than Poland in reducing this phenomenon.

It is interesting to note that Poland’s Early School Leaver statistic has increased between 2010 and 2014 from 5.4% to 5.6%. Over this same period, Italy’s Early School Leaver rate has reduced from 18.8% to 17% and the UK’s Early School Leaver rate has reduced from 14.9% to 12.4\textsuperscript{49}.

Eurostat is the statistical office for the European Communities and is responsible for reporting the official Early School Leaver statistics in relation to the Europe 2020 headline targets. The mission of Eurostat is to “\textit{provide the European Union with a high-quality statistical information service, by using uniform rules to collect all statistical data from the national Statistical Institutes of each of the Member States of the European Union}”\textsuperscript{50}. As discussed

\textsuperscript{48} Eurostat, 2014, 'EU Education and Training Monitor'

\textsuperscript{49} Eurostat, 2014, 'EU Education and Training Monitor'

earlier in this report, various Regulations have been agreed in an attempt to create harmonised terms and definitions.

Eurostat produce the European Labour Force Survey which is conducted in the 27 Member States as well as Croatia, Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. This is a large household survey which provides quarterly data on a variety of areas. The data is collected through each country’s national Statistical Institutes via their own national Labour Force Survey51.

Each national Statistical Institute is responsible for selecting the sample, preparing the questionnaires, conducting the direct interviews among households and then transmitting these results to Eurostat using a common coding scheme. The questionnaires are developed by each national Statistical Institute in their national language or languages following the various Regulations that are in place. The questionnaires often contain additional questions to those required by Eurostat which may be of interest at national level52.

Based on the samples that are provided by the national Statistical Institutes, the sample survey is expanded to population levels using weighting factors derived from the most recent census of population but adjusted for any recent changes which may have occurred since the census53.

All data collected and collated by national statistical offices in EU member countries are standardized according to EU Regulation 577/98.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) recommended definitions of employment and unemployment, which are used in the Labour Force Survey, is also used in similar surveys in other major nations of the world such as the USA, Canada and Australia. Labour Force Survey data are also widely used by organisations such as the Council of Europe, the United Nations, ILO and OECD for international comparisons.

Perfect comparability between the statistics produced in each EU Member State is difficult to achieve even if it were by means of a single direct survey which consisted of a single survey being collected by a single method of recording. Although the EU Labour Force Survey is a joint effort by all EU Member States’ national statistical bodies to provide a co-ordinated and harmonised statistical framework, it is important to note that they must also serve national requirements. Therefore, in spite of the close co-ordination between national statistical bodies and Eurostat, given the various subtle

differences across many of the national educational systems and Labour Force Surveys in each EU Member State, it is difficult to provide reliable comparability between each country’s statistics\(^{54}\).

Additionally, countries use different sampling ratios; these range from 4.5% in Luxembourg and 2.1% in Cyprus to less than 1% in most other EU countries. Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom utilise different sampling ratios which may affect the accuracy of the data across each country.

3. EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER MONITORING WITHIN THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

National statistical offices in countries are responsible for collecting and collating of data on Early School Leavers for Eurostat.

In this section we analyse how the national Statistical Institutes apply the Labour Force Survey in Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom in relation to Early School Leavers.

3.1 Italy

Italy operates a nationwide monitoring system for collecting Labour Force Survey data regarding Early School Leavers, however this is collected through a two-step sample using the Regions.

The survey has been updated over the years to take into account continual transformations in the labour market on the one hand, and the growing information requirements of users regarding the social and economic reality of the nation, on the other. The most recent change was undertaken at the beginning of 2004 in line with European Union regulations.

The ISCED 3c standard in the Italian education system is the completion of the upper secondary diploma or vocational qualification; this entails remaining in education beyond the compulsory schooling age. As such, anyone who is aged 18-24 and has not achieved this educational standard or is not attending either school courses or other training activities is considered to be an Early School Leaver.

3.1.1 National Labour Force Survey Monitoring System

ISTAT is the Italian National Institute of Statistics, a public research organisation. It was established in 1926, and is the main producer of official statistics for citizens and policy-makers. It operates in complete independence and continuous interaction with the academic and scientific communities.

Since 1989, the National Statistical System (Sistan) has been performing the role of directing, coordinating, and providing technical assistance and training. Sistan was established under Legislative Decree 322/89 in order to rationalise the production and publication of information and to optimise resources allocated to official statistics. Sistan is made up of ISTAT, central and branch statistical departments of Public Administrations, local and regional bodies, Chambers of Commerce, other public bodies and administrations providing statistical information.

ISTAT is a member of the European Statistical System that includes Eurostat, the statistical office of the EU.
Data provided by ISTAT to Eurostat are based on the Italian Labour Force Survey\(^{55}\), a continuous survey carried out during every week of a year.

### 3.1.2 Collection & Collation of Data

Each quarter, the Labour Force Survey collects information on almost 70,000 households in 1,246 Italian municipalities covering a total of 175,000 individuals (this represents 1.2% of the overall Italian population).

The reference population of the Labour Force Survey consists of all household members officially resident in Italy, even if temporarily abroad. Households registered as resident in Italy who habitually live abroad and permanent members of collective facilities (hospices, children’s homes, religious institutions, barracks, etc.) are excluded.

The Labour Force Survey is a compulsory requirement for those within the sample and this leads to a very high response rate (88.3%). This data is collected through a web interview.

The Labour Force Survey provides quarterly estimates of the main aggregates of the labour market (employment status, type of work, work experience, job search, etc.), disaggregated by gender, age and territory (to a regional level).

### 3.1.3 Frequency of Data Collection

The sample survey is continuous insofar as information is collected during every week of the year and no longer during a single week per quarter. The results are still disseminated on a quarterly basis, except for provincial data, which is disseminated annually.

### 3.1.4 Type of Data Collected

ISTAT derives its official estimates of the number of employed persons and job-seekers, as well as information about the main labour supply aggregates, such as occupation, economic activity area, hours worked, contract types and duration and training from the Labour Force Survey.

### 3.1.5 Reason for Collection

Since being introduced at the beginning of the 1950s, the survey has played a primary role in the statistical documentation and analysis of the employment situation in Italy and has proven to

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\(^{55}\)To make new estimates comparable with estimates referring to previous years, Istat has reconstructed the time series since the fourth quarter of 1992
be an indispensable instrument of knowledge for public decision-makers, the media and citizens alike. Although the Early School Leaver phenomenon is steadily decreasing in Italy, it is still a long way from the European targets.

Despite the progress made in recent years in most regions and in particular in the South and Islands area, the target of reducing numbers of Early School Leavers to below 10 percent is distant.

While drop-out rates have been constantly decreasing in Italy, the economic crisis contributed to the increase of young people classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). 22.7% of the whole population aged 15-29 neither works nor studies. As such, this has clear implications for policy.

3.1.6 Effectiveness of Collection

Although the Labour Force Survey covers only 1.2% of the total Italian population, it is the largest household survey in Italy. Therefore, given that the survey is only intended to provide general population characteristics rather than actual figures it can be concluded that the Labour Force Survey should provide the best estimate of Early School Leavers in Italy.

It is worth noting that Italy is one of the few countries within the EU which makes the completion of the Labour Force Survey compulsory. While this does not happen in practice, the response rate of 88.3% is exceptionally high in comparison to many other EU Member States. However, in 2011, the time series was revised to take account of changes made by Eurostat in non-response treatment. This means that data can, therefore, in some cases slightly differ from those published in previous years, which limits multi-year comparisons.

Like all sampled surveys, the Italian Labour Force Survey is prone to both sample and non-sample errors. Any sample will need to use a weighting mechanism to cater for unrepresentative trends in the data that is received. Key issues for the Italian Labour Force Survey, however, relate to non-sample errors. For instance, the Italian data has a 2.3% over-coverage due to errors in addresses (due to recent changes of address), wrong inclusions (due to recent migration) and missed inclusions (due to recent immigration).

These types of issues cause a level of inaccuracy in the Italian Labour Force Survey which will affect the effectiveness of the collection to some extent.

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3.2 **Poland**

Poland has a national monitoring system for determining Early School Leaver statistics for Eurostat. This is collected through the Polish Labour Force Survey using a multiple stage sample which uses the regions as the first stage.

The ISCED 3c level of education in Poland refers to the attendance on an upper secondary education. There is no need to pass an examination; rather the requirement is to still be in education on the last day of compulsory upper secondary education.

3.2.1 **National Labour Force Survey Monitoring System**

In Poland, the Central Statistical Office (GUS) is the institution that is responsible for collecting and analysing data relating to many areas of social life, although these studies do not directly relate to the phenomenon of Early School Leavers.

The data is derived from the Labour Force Survey which, since 1992, has been carried out by the Central Statistical Office every quarter.

The legal basis for the Labour Force Survey is the Act of 29 June 1995 on Public Statistics and the decree by the Council of Ministers of 27 August 2014 on the programme of statistical research on official statistics for 2015.

The aim of the study is to provide information on the size and structure of the working population, the unemployed and the economically inactive.

The national Labour Force Survey is a constant study planned each year in accordance with the programme of statistical surveys adopted by the Council of Ministers by means of a decree.

3.2.2 **Collection & Collation of Data**

The Labour Force Survey is conducted by means of a representative method, which means that the inhabited households in selected dwellings are the participants and the information obtained is generalised for the population of the entire country. A household is described as a group of persons,

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57 Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland of 1995. No. 88, item 439, as amended
58 Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland of 2014, item 1330
59 Załącznik do rozporządzenia Rady Ministrów z dnia 27 sierpnia 2014 r. w sprawie programu statystyki publicznej na rok 2015 – Dz. U. z 2014 r., poz. 1330
related or unrelated, living together and providing for the household (i.e. buying food and other basic articles necessary for life).

Currently, in each quarter the survey covers 54,700 homes across Poland and over 90,000 people.

The Labour Force Survey is conducted quarterly on a sample of households in the selected dwellings. The choice of quarterly samples is carried out according to the principles of a rotation scheme in which each sample of households participates in 4 observations before they are rotated. Each quarter a partial replacement of the sample takes place.

The study is conducted using a Computer Assisted Paper Interviewing method (computer-aided method of direct interview) and Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing. In special cases (for instance, a hardware failure) the study can be carried out through a Paper and Pencil Interview method60.

3.2.3 Frequency of Collection
The survey is conducted by means of continuous observation (shifting survey week). In each of the 13 weeks of a quarter, 1/13th of the randomly selected quarterly sample is researched. The results of this method of observation reflect the situation on the labour market during the whole quarter.

The study week (week of observation) is understood as 7 consecutive days (Monday to Sunday). The defined survey should be carried out within 7 days following the week designated for observation. The week in which the test is conducted is called a survey week.

3.2.4 Type of Data Collected
The Labour Force Survey is the primary source of information about the size of the labour force including the full characteristics of the basic social and demographic features, their spatial distribution and the status of a person on the labour market61.

First, general data concerning all persons making up a household is collected, and then questions are asked about the professional activity of all residents over 15 years of age, who are members of the households in randomly selected dwellings.

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60 Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Departament Badań Demograficznych i Rynku Pracy, grudzień 2013, „Objaśnienia do Badania Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności (Kartoteka ZG, Ankieta ZD, Formularz ZA)”

61 Załącznik do rozporządzenia Rady Ministrów z dnia 27 sierpnia 2014 r. w sprawie programu statystyki publicznej na rok 2015 – Dz. U. z 2014 r., poz. 1330
Part of the questionnaire relates to formal education and non-formal education of persons aged 15 and older. The aim of the study is to determine:

- whether the respondent was or still is a student in the past four weeks. It is assumed that the completed level of education should be documented with a school leaving certificate, so as long as the person does not receive a certificate he is still considered a student. Also students at higher education institutions who have already obtained a certificate of completion and who are awaiting their thesis defence are treated in a similar way.

  During the summer, when people move from one level of education to another, if a respondent knows that he was admitted to a higher level of education he ticks the answer that he is a student. If the respondent is in the process of qualifying for admission to school or during the examinations period or does not yet know their results, it is noted that he graduated from school and is waiting for the results of admission to a school or university.\(^{62}\)

- the level of education at which the respondent is currently studying or has studied in the last four weeks. During holiday periods those people who know that they have been admitted to a higher level of education and those that are in the process of qualifying for admission to school or have taken the entrance examinations to the next school, are considered to be at the higher level of education. If a person studies simultaneously in 2 schools (e.g. 2 courses of study - one at the undergraduate level, and the second at post-graduate level), the school which is most important for the person is recorded.\(^{63}\) If the respondent has difficulty in selecting a school, the school which gives a higher level of education is recorded.

- persons who participated in any form of further education outside the formal education system during the last four weeks are recorded. Non-formal education includes educational activities carried out in the form of courses, tutorials (on-site or off-site), seminars, conferences or

\(^{62}\) Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Departament Badań Demograficznych i Rynku Pracy, grudzień 2013, „Objaśnienia do Badania Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności (Kartoteka ZG, Ankieta ZD, Formularz ZA)”

\(^{63}\) Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Departament Badań Demograficznych i Rynku Pracy, grudzień 2013, „Objaśnienia do Badania Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności (Kartoteka ZG, Ankieta ZD, Formularz ZA)”
lectures as well as private lessons taken. All kinds of training conducted under the guidance of a teacher are included. Courses improving intellectual or physical development or one’s interests should also be taken into account (dance, swimming, cooking, judo, karate or driving courses) when recording an educational level. Classes can be carried out in the form of courses or training developing professional skills and can lead to the acquisition of skills needed in social life (a course of self-defence), or for personal benefits (a cooking course, lectures on art history, a course on modelling). \(^{64}\)

### 3.2.5 Reasons for Collection

The Central Statistical Office created the STRATEG Development Monitoring System for the programming and monitoring of national policies of country development\(^{65}\). The rates gathered are used to monitor the implementation of programmes and policies which are in force in Poland (national, supra-regional and provincial) and in the European Union (Europe 2020). The system also provides statistical data relevant to the implementation of the cohesion policy.

The data collected from the Labour Force Survey is used to monitor the dynamics and direction of changes in the activity of the working population in Poland. The survey can provide data for indicators concerning the labour market and for international comparisons\(^{66}\).

The above-mentioned subject areas of the monitoring system include "education and upbringing" in which one of the rates is "young people not continuing education."

The rules for the dissemination of data collected by the Central Statistical Office are set out in the decree by the Prime Minister of 10 September 1999 on the procedures and forms of publishing, sharing and dissemination of statistical information\(^{67}\).

In accordance with point 1 of the above mentioned decree, widespread availability of statistical information is ensured by:

1) placing statistical information in publications of the Central Statistical Office, statistical offices and other bodies engaged

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\(^{64}\) Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Departament Badań Demograficznych i Rynku Pracy, grudzień 2013, „Objaśnienia do Badania Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności (Kartoteka ZG, Ankieta ZD, Formularz ZA)”

\(^{65}\) http://strateg.stat.gov.pl/

\(^{66}\) Załącznik do rozporządzenia Rady Ministrów z dnia 27 sierpnia 2014 r. w sprawie programu statystyki publicznej na rok 2015 – Dz. U. z 2014 r., poz. 1330

\(^{67}\) Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland of 1999, No 75, item 82
in the research of public statistics characterising the
economic, demographic, social and environmental situation

2) announcing major figures and rates for the purposes
specified in each case in separate regulations

3) publishing information in the mass media

4) providing information on the basis of data collected in
statistical surveys, in particular through the statisticians
working in the Central Statistical Office and other statistical
offices.

3.2.6 Effectiveness of Collection
The Labour Force Survey is the largest household survey in
Poland and, as such, its results will provide the best attempt at
determining the characteristics of the population. There are,
however, some areas which will affect the accuracy of the
results.

The Labour Force Survey, as with any study based on samples,
assumes statistical error. Additionally, Poland has a 73.9% response rate, which is fairly low in comparison to most other
EU countries68.

Households located in moving and collective establishments and
temporary rooms do not take part in the sampled population.
The survey also does not cover people who are absent from the
household, if the total period of actual and planned absence is 12
months or longer. Due to these sample errors, there is a 12.8%
over-coverage in the Polish sample because of dwellings in
which the inhabitants are not present for a long time, not
inhabited, only inhabited seasonally or dwellings that have
changed purpose (ie. into a shop), in liquidation or not found
due to an incorrect address69. This is high for EU countries and
increases the likelihood that the sample chosen is
unrepresentative.

3.3 United Kingdom
The United Kingdom has a sophisticated monitoring system for
collecting and collating the national Labour Force Survey. However
concerns remain as to the ability to accurately compare UK Early School
Leaver data with other EU Member States.

The fact that the UK questions the EU’s competency in education and
training, does not set its own national target for Early School Leavers

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and classifies its educational system in a manner which may be considered to be inconsistent with the ISCED and other EU countries leaves many questions as to how accurately UK Early School Leaver data can be compared in the EU Labour Force Survey.

For the purposes of the Labour Force Survey statistics, the UK defines any young person aged 18-24 years of age with less than 5 A*-C GCSE’s and not in education or training as being an Early School Leaver.

3.3.1 National Labour Force Survey Monitoring System

Within the UK, the Office of National Statistics is the largest independent producer of official statistics and is the recognised national Statistical Institute. The Office of National Statistics complies with internationally recognised statistical standards such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines agreed following the Resolution of the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1982 and both Regulations 452/2008 and 577/98 of the EU.

At present, the Office of National Statistics does not publicly distribute statistics related to Early School Leavers in the UK. According to the UK Government’s Review of the Balance of Competences between the UK and the EU Education, Vocational Training and Youth Report, “EU work on education, training and youth policy has had little impact on the UK and, in its more prescriptive form of EU-based recommendations, risks being perceived in some quarters as having pushed the boundaries of EU competence”.

UK Government Policy in this area focuses exclusively on ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ (NEET), ‘Not in Education or Training’ (NET) and ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’. It does not focus on Early School Leavers.

At the 3006th Council of the European Union Education, Youth, Culture and Sport meeting in Brussels on 14th February 2011, the UK was the only country within the EU to not set an Early School Leaver national target in line with the ET 2020. The UK remains the only EU country that has declined to set national targets as it was considered an “unnecessary action at EU level

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71 Eurostat, 2014, ‘EU Education and Training Monitor’
and that target setting per se was not in line with national policy\textsuperscript{72}.

The UK Department for Education, instead, uses the impact indicators most closely aligned with European-level targets; these are attainment at age 16 and 19, and an international comparison within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of the qualification levels of the working age population\textsuperscript{73}.

Even though the UK does not publicly distribute Early School Leaver statistics, Regulation 452/2008\textsuperscript{74} requires that all EU Member State’s national statistical bodies must provide statistics to Eurostat. The UK’s Office of National Statistics supply Eurostat with the microdata from the UK’s Labour Force Survey for inclusion in the EU Labour Force Survey\textsuperscript{75}.

### 3.3.2 Collection & Collation of Data

The primary purpose of the UK’s Labour Force Survey is “providing good quality point in time and change estimates for various labour market outputs and related topics”\textsuperscript{76}.

The Office of National Statistics collects microdata in relation to many different variables through the Labour Force Survey. The Labour Force Survey allows the opportunity to gain information on different aspects of the population in a consistent manner and offers an insight into households which are not normally available from other statistical methods. However, cost constraints limit the overall household sample size, and this limits the accuracy of the results.

A random sample is chosen to complete the UK’s Labour Force Survey; this covers approximately 44,000 households and 102,000 residents on a quarterly basis and each household/recipient is active for 5 quarterly ‘waves’ before the

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\textsuperscript{72} HM Government, December 2014, ‘Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union: Education, Vocational Training and Youth’

\textsuperscript{73} HM Government, December 2014, ‘Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union: Education, Vocational Training and Youth’


\textsuperscript{76} National Statistics Quality Review, 2014, ‘NSQR Review of Labour Force Survey’
sampled population are replaced by a new sample population; each quarter 20% of respondents are added to the survey to replace the 20% that have completed their 5 ‘waves’\(^77\).

The sample population is generated using a statistical process which focuses on the geographical dispersion of the UK population and ensures that a single household is not ‘over-burdened’ by removing that address from available population addresses for two years following the fifth wave. This sample is intended to be representative of the entire population of the UK\(^78\).

The resident population at a sampled household comprises persons who regard the sample address as their main address and/or those who have lived at the dwelling for more than six months. People who are absent for more than six months are not regarded as members of the resident population. A private household consists of “one or more people whose main residence is the same dwelling and/or share at least one meal per day”. The Office of National Statistics omits communal establishments except NHS housing and students in boarding schools and halls of residence\(^79\).

Most households are interviewed face-to-face at their first inclusion (the small population size north of the Caledonia Canal in northern Scotland are approached by telephone only) in the survey and by telephone, if possible, at quarterly interviews thereafter. Respondents are encouraged to provide a telephone number and agree to interview in subsequent waves via the telephone.

However, where a telephone number can be found and matched against an address selected in Wave 1, the household is first approached by telephone. This change was introduced from January 2011, and about 15% of addresses have their Wave 1 information collected by telephone. In the future, it is hoped to be able to introduce internet data collection as an option on the Labour Force Survey\(^80\).


\(^{79}\) Office of National Statistics, 13 January 2015, 'Quality and Methodology Information', Labour Force Survey

It is not, however, compulsory in the UK to complete the Labour Force Survey, and this creates the opportunity for statistical inaccuracies, which are discussed further in the section 3.3.6. The microdata related to the UK Labour Force Survey is supplied to Eurostat each quarter for inclusion within the EU Labour Force Survey.

3.3.3 Frequency of Data Collection

The Labour Force Survey is collected four times in a 12 month period. The year is divided into quarters of 13 weeks. Since January 2006, the Labour Force Survey has been conducted on the basis of calendar quarters: Q1 - January to March, Q2 - April to June, Q3 - July to September and Q4 - October to December.

The UK’s Labour Force Survey results are published in the UK Labour Market Statistical Bulletin, on a national basis, 6 weeks after the end of the survey period. This Statistical Bulletin does not include information on Early School Leavers\textsuperscript{81}.

The microdata from the UK Labour Force Survey is sent to Eurostat on a quarterly basis and on an annual basis for inclusion in the Education & Training Monitor\textsuperscript{82}.

3.3.4 Type of Data Collected

The Labour Force Survey is a 208 page questionnaire which includes all the questions required by the EU together with additional questions that are of interest at national level. This is a joint UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat questionnaire (UOE) which limits bureaucracy and duplication of data. This questionnaire covers many subject areas:

- Household and Respondent Characteristics
- Government Training Schemes
- Main Job
- Home Workers
- Sickness Absence
- Travel to Work
- Sickness
- Hours Worked
- Employment Pattern
- Union Representation
- Looking for Work
- Benefit Entitlement
- Previous Employment

\textsuperscript{81} Office of National Statistics, 13 January 2015, ‘Quality and Methodology Information’, Labour Force Survey

• Education and Training
• Health and Injury
• Earnings

The Labour Force Survey Questionnaire clearly identifies the coverage and frequency of each question through a labelling system. Questions on gender, age, nationality, whether or not the recipient has 5 or more A*-C GCSE qualifications and how current Education and Training has been undertaken are all labeled, among others, as being covered by Eurostat. These are the key areas required to measure Early School Leavers through the EU Labour Force Survey.

3.3.5 Reasons for Collection

Data compiled by the Office of National Statistics is supplied to many regional public and Government agencies. These are:

• Bank of England
• Department for Business Innovation and Skills
• Department for Communities and Local Government
• Department for Education and Skills
• Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland)
• Department for Media, Culture and Sport
• Department for Transport
• Department for Works and Pensions
• Department of Finance and Personnel (Northern Ireland)
• Economic and Social Research Council / Data Archive
• Health & Safety Executive
• HM Treasury
• Home Office
• Low Pay Commission
• Office for Standards in Education
• Office of Manpower Economics
• Scottish Government / Scottish Executive
• Small Business Service
• Welsh Government
• European Parliament, Council and Commission
• European Central Bank
• Directorate-General Employment
• Local Authorities
• Trade Union Congress
• Employers Association
• Confederation of British Industry

• Institute of Fiscal Studies
• Institute of Employment Studies
• Institute for Public Policy Research
• National Institute of Economic and Social Research
• Academic researchers
• Media
• General public

The microdata is used for multiple purposes, and, ultimately, inform and measure Policy.

### 3.3.6 Effectiveness of Collection

The Labour Force Survey has the largest sample size of any UK household survey and thus it can generate robust statistics\(^8^4\). It is important to note that the UK’s Labour Force Survey provides population characteristics rather than exact measures\(^8^5\).

The Office of National Statistics makes provision for both Sample and Non-Sample Errors.

As the size of the population within the sample increases, the lesser the likely impact of Sample and Non-Sample Errors on the data; estimates of fewer than 6000 are likely to be unreliable. The Office of National Statistics does make provision for small sample sizes (for instance, within ethnic groupings) and applies multipliers accordingly\(^8^6\). The Office of National Statistics state that “the strengths of the Labour Force Survey are that it has the largest coverage of any household survey in the UK and can thus generate statistics for small geographical areas. Sampling errors are small because it is a single-stage, random sample of addresses”\(^8^7\).

In addition, “the sampling errors are relatively small, as a result of the wave structure and the size of the survey”\(^8^8\).

If a household (or someone within a household) is unavailable for interview, but was interviewed in the previous wave, responses from the previous wave are rolled forward. This is

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referred to as 'imputation'. Imputation is carried out to minimise non-response bias in estimates, while simultaneously improving precision by boosting the sample size. The rationale is that most Labour Force Survey variables do not change from one quarter to another for most people. Responses are rolled forward for one wave only. Data is not rolled forward after a second consecutive non-response\textsuperscript{89}.

Response rates are approximately 47% excluding imputed households and 55% including imputed households. The most common reason for not responding to the Labour Force Survey is an 'outright refusal' which accounts for approximately half of the non-responses. Responses vary by region with the highest response rate (60.9%) in Tyne & Wear and the lowest response rate (49%) in Merseyside. With the exception of a small number of outliers, most regions report a response rate of approximately 55% of imputed households.

Furthermore, as the Labour Force Survey is conducted on a household basis, there is a high likelihood that there will be proxy responses (responses made by one person on behalf of another person). Proxy responses tend to be significant for 16-19 year olds with 83.3% of responses relating to people aged 16-19 being completed by proxy\textsuperscript{90}. This increases the likelihood of incorrect information relating to these individuals being submitted, which may have an impact on the accuracy of Early School Leaver data.

3.4 Comparative Analysis

Each national Labour Force Survey supplies its data to Eurostat for inclusion within the EU Labour Force Survey. The EU Labour Force Survey is used for cross-country comparison purposes.

This section investigates the comparability of the various national monitoring systems to discuss whether they are generating harmonised data that can compared accurately.


3.4.1 Inconsistent Definition Application


Implementing cross-national comparable measurements is a major challenge in comparative survey research\textsuperscript{91}. In spite of attempts by Eurostat to standardise definitions of Early School Leavers, there are still significant differences between those used in Italy, Poland and the UK.

To define Early School Leavers as “people aged 18-24 who have only lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than two years”\textsuperscript{92} appears logical in essence but it does not take into account several complexities related to national educational systems and how these differences are defined against the standard EU definition.

As discussed in section 2.2, each country within the EU has its own historical and cultural nuances; these significantly affect the application of the EU Early School Leaver definition and, thus, affect the comparability of each country’s performance to another country’s performance. Additionally, the complexity of educational systems, more choice between the different types of certificates available and the attempt to provide more equality in education have added additional difficulties for cross-country comparisons\textsuperscript{93}.

The key complication is the application of the ISCED to differing educational systems. While the ISCED provides a good framework for classifying the different stages of education, it must be remembered that it is a global classification, and it is often difficult to apply accurately to specific national educational systems. ISCED-97 was predominantly developed for the reporting of enrolments, and it is questionable whether it is applicable for measuring educational attainment for large populations. In fact, there have been very rare attempts to harmonise the educational measures of educational attainment\textsuperscript{94}.


\textsuperscript{92} Official Journal of the European Union, 7 June 2003, ‘Council Conclusions on 5 May 2003 on reference levels of European average performance in education and training (Benchmarks)’


The first complication relates to the comparison of comparable education. In both Italy and Poland, ISCED 3c Long education relates to education which is completed at 18 years of age. The UK, in contrast, has an unresolved issue relating to when lower secondary education ends. The UK defines ISCED 3c Long as the achievement of 5 or more A*-C GCSEs, which are completed at 16 years of age; this is a point of dispute as GCSEs are the first educational transition point in the UK and, therefore, could be categorised as ISCED 2a\textsuperscript{95}. The UK applies the definition to GCSEs as this is consistent with other international surveys such as the OECD and therefore skips directly from ISCED 1 to ISCED 3. There is, however, a strong argument that, based on this definition, achievement of, or at least enrolment on, A-Level qualifications would be required to meet the ISCED 3c Long criteria.

Given the difficulties of applying the ISCED in a standardised manner, it is possible that the UK is defining an ISCED 3c Long qualification that is actually a lower level than both Italy and Poland; this makes the comparison inaccurate.

A second complication relates to the varying forms of assessment methods that enable a student to achieve an ISCED 3c Long education. Poland’s educational system has three varying routes at upper secondary level; two of the routes (General Secondary Schools and Technical Secondary Schools) lead to ISCED 3a qualifications yet one of the routes (Basic Vocational School) is not examined and attendance alone qualifies the student for the achievement of an ISCED 3c education\textsuperscript{96}. Should any students not achieve their ISCED 3a qualifications they are automatically assigned an ISCED 3c education. While successful examinations or the achievement of vocational qualifications determine the achievement levels for Italy and the UK, it is inconsistent that Poland applies only attendance criteria to the comparative data.

The clear inconsistencies in the application of the ISCED definition makes the comparison of Early School Leavers inaccurate and, in fact, incomparable. The ease in which the ISCED can be defined by national educational systems provides the opportunity for the misinterpretation or, indeed, manipulation of Early School Leaver statistics that seemingly make major improvements compared to other EU countries.

\textsuperscript{95} Schneider S, 2008, ‘The Application of the ISCED-97 to the UK’s Educational Qualifications’, Mannheim, MZES

where, in fact, little or no improvement has been made to educational standards.

### 3.4.2 Differences in Sample Size

Each country in the EU issues their national Labour Force Survey to differing sample sizes. There are clear reasons for utilising a sample rather than applying the survey to the full population on a regular basis (mainly related to cost constraints), however a sample provides just a representation of the likely population characteristics rather than an exact measure.

Sampled data is an acceptable statistical method and, while the EU Labour Force Survey samples just 0.3% of the EU population\(^{97}\), it is still the largest pan-European household survey. This means that, while it is not an exact measure of Early School Leavers, it should provide the most accurate estimate for the population in comparison to any other pan-European measurement.

Population characteristics rather than an exact measurement is suitable provided the characteristics are being investigated consistently.

The major weakness, however, in relation to comparing data across various samples is that the accuracy of the population characteristics will vary depending on the sampling designs and the size of the sample that has been questioned.

A further inconsistency in sampling design is how the ultimate sampling units are chosen. The sample can be determined by sampling households, dwellings or persons.

There are many differing bases for the population across the EU. The two main sources for sampling are the latest population census or a list of addresses used in the census. Other sources include lists from postal authorities or utility databases. Italy uses the population register while the UK utilises the national postal register and Poland applies their national household register. These are differing forms of sample base and may over-represent or disallow differing elements of the population in each country.

Furthermore, there are differences in sampling stages which can affect the accuracy of the data for comparison purposes. The United Kingdom uses a single sampling stage while Italy and

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Poland use multiple stage sampling which utilises regions as the first stage.

All of these variations to sampling will affect the accuracy and comparability of Early School Leaver data across different countries.

### 3.4.3 Different Methods of Data Collection

There are four differing forms of data collection for Labour Force Surveys that are used across the EU Member States: personal visits, telephone interviews, web interviews and self-administered questionnaires. In some countries, more than one form of data collection is used depending on numerous factors specific to that individual country.

Different forms of data collection will lead to differing interpretations of questionnaires (for instance, web interviews and self-administered questionnaires do not allow for as much clarification as personal visits or telephone interviews) and different response rates.

Italy utilises a web interview for the completion of the Labour Force Survey whereas the UK utilises both personal visits and telephone interviews. Poland undertakes a computer aided method of direct interviewing.

All of the above conditions will affect the accuracy and, therefore, the comparability of the data produced in various EU Member States.

### 3.4.4 Rotation Schemes

Rotation schemes relate to the frequency that the sample is altered to include new respondents. All countries, with the exception of Belgium and Luxembourg, use a rotating scheme. The number of waves (i.e. consecutive periods) for which a sampled recipient responds to the questionnaire is two to eight.

The most common rotation scheme is for sampled respondents to be interviewed for two consecutive quarters and then to be removed for two periods before being included again for two periods. Other countries, including Poland (4 waves) and the UK (5 waves), use different numbers of waves before permanently leaving the sample.

Depending on the national choice concerning rotation schemes, there will be different outcomes of overlaps between two successive quarters or the same quarters in two successive years. Two countries (Belgium and Luxembourg) have no overlap of sample, six countries have an overlap of 20% per
quarter, Germany has a 75% overlap with the previous year while most other countries have an overlap ranging from 33% to 50% per quarter.\textsuperscript{98}

The variations in rotation schemes can have an impact on the size of the population that is being surveyed in a given year and also on the speed in which changes are collected, collated and reported.

3.4.5 \textbf{Response Rates}

The response rate is the success of the survey in collecting the data on all survey variables from all of the sample chosen. The difference between the statistics computed from the collected data and those that would be computed if there were no missing values is the non-response rate.

There are, again, difficulties in comparing non-response rates between the EU Member States. Most countries, including Italy, Poland and the UK, calculate non-response based on a household unit whereas a number of countries calculate non-response on a person basis. Additionally, some countries take into account previous non-response when calculating non-response in later waves while other countries do not take this into account. This affects the comparability of non-response rates.

The response to the national Labour Force Survey is not compulsory in Poland or the UK, and so they have much higher non-response rates than Italy. In Italy the Labour Force Survey is declared a compulsory questionnaire and therefore achieves a non-response rate of only 11.7\% compared to 28.1\% in Poland and 39.4\% in the UK; the UK actually has the second worst non-response rate in the EU after Luxembourg.\textsuperscript{99}

Higher non-response rates will affect the reliability of the data which, again, affects the comparability against other EU countries.

3.4.6 \textbf{Timeliness and Punctuality}

Timeliness relates to the length of time between an event and the availability of the data while punctuality relates to the time lag between the release date of the data and the target date for the release of the data. As timeliness and punctuality grow longer, it is less reliable that the data will represent the current situation in the population as a whole.

Council Regulation 577/98 states that the data should be delivered by the national Statistical Institutes to Eurostat within 12 weeks (90 days) from the end of the reference period.

The vast majority of Member States transmit their data to Eurostat within this deadline (27 out of the EU-28) and the average number of calendar days for transmission is 65 days. However, within this there is some variation with one country transmitting the data within 31 days, 6 transmitting between 31 and 60 days and 20 transmitting within 61-90 days.

There is a further delay between Eurostat receiving the data and disseminating this data on their website. Eurostat disseminates the national data for five countries within 31-60 days of the end of the survey reference period, 21 countries within 61-90 days and two countries in more than 91 days.

This makes it difficult to be confident that the comparisons of data on a cross-country basis are consistent over the same period. However, given that Early School Leaver statistics are unlikely to be dynamic due to the time delays in any improvements in the education system reaching the general population, these timeliness and punctuality concerns are considered minimal.

### 3.4.7 Sample and Non-Sample Errors

Council regulation 577/98 states that weighting factors should take into account “in particular the probability of selection and external data relating to the distribution of the population being surveyed, by sex, age and region, where such external data are held to be sufficiently reliable by the Member States concerned”\(^\text{101}\). These weighting methods differ significantly between countries.

The EU Labour Force Survey uses probability sampling to attempt to quantify the sampling errors and provides a 95% confidence interval. This attempts to reduce the sampling errors that will be apparent given that the national and EU Labour Force Survey are sample surveys and not all units of the population will be surveyed in appropriate detail.

There are many different types of non-sample errors related to the EU Labour Force Survey. These include ‘coverage errors’ (divergences between the target population and the sampled population), measurement errors (due to the type of data collection, the supply of inaccurate information by the

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respondent and the ability of interviewers to influence the answers given by the respondents) and processing errors (errors that occur at the coding, data entry, data editing and imputation stages).

Estimates of many sample and non-sample errors are not available but it is estimated that the Italian data has a 2.3% over-coverage due to errors of information such as addresses (due, for instance, to recent change of the address), wrong inclusions (recent emigration) and missed inclusions (recent immigration), Poland has a 12.8% over-coverage due to dwellings in which inhabitants are not present for a long time, not inhabited or inhabited seasonally, changed into inhabitable space (for example shop), in liquidation or not found (incorrect address) and the UK has a 1.5% under-coverage due to the omission of communal establishments from samples.\(^\text{102}\)

All of these sampling and non-sampling errors will affect the accuracy of the data and the comparability across different EU Member States.

### 3.4.8 Summary

While Eurostat should be applauded for their attempts to standardise international terms and definitions in relation to Early School Leaver statistics, there are clear discrepancies and inaccuracies within the EU Labour Force Survey which makes cross-country comparisons, in the best-case, difficult and, in the worst-case, meaningless.

The discussion above indicates that the EU Labour Force Survey is affected by a number of weaknesses, which impact the validity of the Early School Leavers statistics that are published.

Firstly, it should be noted that Eurostat, together with the national statistical bodies, have worked hard to attempt to harmonise pan-EU data through the legislative requirement to record the same set of characteristics in each country, having a close correspondence between the EU list of questions and the national questionnaires, the development of standardised definitions, the use of common classifications, the synchronisation of the survey in spring and the data being centrally processed by Eurostat.\(^\text{103}\) This has greatly reduced the risk of inconsistencies between the data collected and collated across different EU countries.

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Secondly, it must be recognised that while the potential of inaccuracies discussed in the prior sections are high, it is important to note that the EU Labour Force Survey is designed to provide information on population characteristics rather than exact measures. As such, we should not be expecting a perfect count of the actual numbers of Early School Leavers on a national or EU basis; rather the purpose is to present a general commentary on the state of the Early School Leaver phenomenon within specific countries and the EU as a whole.

Furthermore, while the sampled population consists of just 0.3% of the total EU population, it is the single largest survey of pan-EU Labour Force information and has a considerably higher level of coverage than any other existing set of statistics on the subject matter for Member States.

However, given the lack of consistency with important aspects of data collection such as the application of the Early School Leaver definition, sample sizes, methods of data collection, rotation schemes, timeliness, punctuality, response rates and other sample and non-sample errors, there are serious concerns as to the ability to accurately utilise the EU Labour Force Survey for cross-country comparisons.

Indeed, this conclusion has been supported as, in recent years, Eurostat commissioned several reports with the aim of examining the degree to which participating countries adhere to the common set of definitions. The most recent study of its kind was based on the 2008 questionnaires and found that the “national questionnaires still largely differ even in the collection of key variables” 104.

It is concerning that, given the importance of Early School Leaver statistics as one of the five Europe 2020 headline targets which will enable “Europe to emerge stronger from the economic and financial crisis” 105, there is no legal requirement to ensure consistency in the sample size, methods of data collection, requirements for compulsory respondent completion and clear regulations for dealing with sample and non-sample errors in a harmonised manner for the national Labour Force Surveys.

While the inconsistencies detailed above are problematic in their own right, the fact that the EU Labour Force Survey is the largest survey of pan-EU Labour Force information would significantly reduce the concerns that have been raised;

ultimately the EU Labour Force Survey could be considered as our best estimate at the EU's population characteristics.

The biggest concern, however, highlighted in this section of the report is the inconsistent application of a standard Early School Leaver definition. While there is a consistently written definition, it is highly concerning that the official Eurostat Early School Leaver statistics are measurements that are based on an inconsistently applied definition.

Although Eurostat has expended great efforts to improve consistency and harmonisation, it is clear that historical and cultural differences in each national educational system and the difficulties of applying the ISCED consistently to these differing national educational systems makes the consistency of cross-national data impossible and potentially open to misinterpretation or manipulation.

This has far reaching implications for the EU Community and Member States. Regardless of attempts to harmonise data collection and application, the EU Labour Force Survey cannot, in its present format, be relied upon to provide accurate comparisons of Early School Leaver information across EU Member States and this implicates and complicates policy decisions.

These inconsistencies mean that it is difficult to determine whether Italy, Poland or the UK has had more or less success than other EU Member States at limiting Early School Leavers regardless of the apparent successes or failures published in the EU Education and Training Monitor.
4. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC MONITORING SYSTEMS

Italy, Poland and the UK all accept and appreciate the importance of monitoring and reducing skill shortages for young people within their country. Each country has policies in place to reduce this phenomenon; however, each country has its own priorities and actions in relation to this.

Italy, Poland and the UK have developed their own systems and mechanisms to counteract this phenomenon in their own country. These are developed in isolation to each other and relate to country-specific problems.

In this section we analyse how the phenomenon is monitored through country-specific monitoring systems in Italy, Poland and the UK.

4.1 Italy

Italy has a national monitoring system related to Early School Leavers. The monitoring system has been developed to address the Early School Leaver phenomenon in Italy.

4.1.1 Italian Monitoring System

Until 2011 the phenomenon of early school leaving had been analysed and quantified through statistical surveys on the schools, in particular through the detection on the final results of the examinations. The rate of school dropout was the difference between the initial number of pupils at the start of each school year and the pupils examined at the end of each school year.

Being a synthetic survey, data was aggregated at the school level and, therefore, the information on the different types of attendance interruption were not detailed enough to analyse the causes.

To meet the provisions of the Lisbon process, Italy has taken the necessary legislative actions to create a system that can address the problem of school dropouts by monitoring the school attendance of pupils, in both national and regional systems, through the Delegated Law no. 53/2003\(^{106}\).

As a result of this law it was decided to establish the National Register of Students and the Regional Register in 2005\(^{107}\), to

\(^{106}\)Official Gazette, 2 April 2003, ‘Law of 28 March 2003, n. 53, Delegation to the Government to define general standards of education and levels of performances in education and training’

\(^{107}\)Legislative Decree 15 April 2005 n. 76, art. 3: National System of Registers of students, paragraph 1: (…) The national register of students at the Ministry of Education, University and Research processes the data on schooling, training and apprenticeship of each student from the first year of primary school. Paragraph 2: The regional registers for compulsory training, already existed as per Article 68 of the law 17 May 1999 n.144 and subsequent amendments, are
collect data on schooling, training and apprenticeships for each student, from the first year of their primary school education.

This was implemented with the issue of the decree of the Ministry of Education no. 74 of August 5, 2010, which defined the contents and the main operational processes.

In the last two years there has been a resumption of activities to ensure the flow of data of all pupils in the National Register although it is not yet complete, as it is missing information concerning companies that hire young people subject to compulsory education with an apprenticeship contract.

4.1.1.1 The National Student Register
The Article n.3 of the Legislative Decree n.76 of April 15th 2005 identifies a National Student Register to collect data that is dealing with the fulfilment of the right and duty to education and training.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for “the processing of data regarding educational, training and apprenticeship paths of students from the first year of primary school onward”.

The national system integrates with “regional student registers and municipal registers” and with provincial governments through their orientation, information and tutoring services.

This decree states the requirements for integration:
• defining technical standards to exchange information flows
• ensuring compatibility between registers
• defining information to track educational and training paths of individual students

The stakeholders involved in the National Register of Students are:

• the municipality of residence of young people subject to compulsory education;
• the manager of the school or the head of the educational institution at which students in

transformed into regional registers of students containing data on schooling, training and apprenticeship of each student from the first year of primary school.
compulsory education age are enrolled or have applied to enrol;

- the employment services of the Province, in relation with their activities at local level.

At the moment, companies that hire young people subject to compulsory education with an apprenticeship contract are not included.

The schools are constantly updating the Register of Students. The responsibility of recording the data of each pupil for the National Student Register requires the school to exert greater control and constant updating of information. It is the responsibility of individual schools to implement initiatives and activities that will prevent, combat and, where possible, recover young people of compulsory school age who are at risk of becoming Early School Leavers.

The National Student Register collects demographic information of the school population (full name, social security number, date of birth, municipality or foreign country of birth, sex, citizenship, place of residence, age of the first year of attendance in the case of foreign students and an ‘identifier’ is assigned to each student). An ‘identifier’ follows the pupil throughout his/her schooling period.

The Register also collects data concerning school attendance (mobility, type of school, qualification attained), data on the final results of the state examinations (score admission, the scores of all the written and oral tests, the final marks and choices regarding the continuation in education or vocational training, awards, absences).

The National Register of Students is not just a list of the pupils attending. For each school it provides the composition of classes, with the names of the students and the school hours (normal time and full-time for primary school, normal time and extended time for lower secondary school). For upper secondary schools it also indicates the field of study and weekly teaching hours for each subject.

Where there has been an interruption in school attendance, the school must also indicate the reasons (transfer abroad, transfer to another school, transition to vocational education and training, parental education). If
the interruption is not formally notified by the pupil or from the family, a potential Early School Leaver is identified.

While the National Student Register can be updated (registrations, transfers, school leaving, deaths) at any point in the school year, the primary update is done at certain times:

- Attending: October
- Enrolment: February-March
- Supplementary surveys: October-November
- Surveys on grade assessment and evaluation: Mid-year: January-February; Final: May-June; Final (defining postponed grades): September
- Surveys on State examinations: Lower: June; Upper: June-July
- Absences (Monthly)
- Other surveys on specific matters (upon request): e.g. Surveys on C.L.I.L experiences

The National Register of Students is an effective tool to combat Early School Leavers until the age of 14 years (the age at which young people can choose the path of regional vocational training or can continue their studies in the national education system).

4.1.1.2 The Regional Student Register

The Regional Students Register is the regional hub of the National Student Register of Student as per the Legislative Decree 76/2005.

The Regional Register is a tool to:

- govern the processes related to education and training
- monitor the dynamics arising from school and training attendance
- implement supporting policies for students at risk of dropping out
- monitor young people who are in the age group of compulsory education

108 Content and language integrated learning: teaching a non-linguistic subject in a foreign language
- streamline the flow of information to and from schools

- provide support to policy-makers of institutions and organisations that have powers on the system of education and training

The task of monitoring the fulfillment of the compulsory education is the responsibility of:

a) the municipality of residence of young people who are at the age of compulsory education.

The mayor has the responsibility to report annually to Headteachers the list of children who are subject to compulsory education, including the name of the parent or legal guardian, before the reopening of schools.

At the beginning of the school year, the list of children of compulsory education age is compared with the number of children enrolled in school, to determine whether anyone has failed to comply with the obligation.

After one month of the notice being sent to parents or legal guardians of the failure, the mayor issues a warning against the person responsible, requesting them to comply with the law. If the child does not attend school within a week of the warning, the mayor submits a complaint pursuant to art. 331 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

b) The principal of the school/training centre where students are enrolled.

The principal has the direct responsibility to oversee the implementation of compulsory education and to ensure that pupils attend classes regularly and effectively. Where there are students at risk of dropping out, the school manager is required to contact the family to highlight the responsibilities of parents in the fulfillment of compulsory education and must identify, in accordance with the teachers, targeted interventions to help these students.

c) the Province.

Provincial Labour Offices should deliver services in the field of guidance, information and mentoring.
d) Companies that hire apprentices who are at the age of compulsory education.

4.1.2 Education, Training and Employment Statistics in Italy

Italy publishes statistics on both Early School Leavers and NEET. According to nationally produced statistics, the percentage of young people leaving school early is currently decreasing and is now 13.5%, which has fallen from 14.1% in 2010 and 17.6% in 2000 (this is significantly different to the statistics produced for the EU’s Education & Training Monitor). The 10% target is still far from reached and there are many discrepancies according to the location within the country. In the segment consisting of young people aged 15-19 year olds, the NEET phenomenon is rapidly increasing.

According to data provided by Istat (the Italian National Statistical Institute) there were approximately 2 million NEETs aged 15-29 (21.2%) in 2009, while in 2011 the percentage was 22.1% considering the same age segment, as certified by CNEL (the Italian National Council for Economy and Employment). In 2013, Istat issued a report called Noi Italia (We Italy) stating there were 2.5 million NEETs in Italy, that is to say 26% of under 30s, more than 1 out of 4; among EU countries, only Greece (28.9%) did worse.

Italy is often considered to be divided into three mainland areas and one additional zone for the two principal islands of Sicily and Sardinia.

The north of the country has heavy industry, high wages and many of the social difficulties associated with large cities. This area can be defined by the northern frontiers with France, Switzerland, Austria and Croatia extending south to around Bologna. Nearly 60% of families with children have double earners in this area and families with both parents unemployed are low. For instance, the percentage of NEETs in Veneto (young people aged 15-29 who are neither studying nor working), is far lower than the national average (17% and 26% respectively). The Veneto Early School Leaver rate was 4% lower than the national rate in 2012 (17.6%); this data refers to youths aged 18-24 without an upper secondary school diploma (high school of secondary education), leaving their training or vocational training during the first two years.

The South of Italy is sometimes known as the Mezzogiorno and can be defined as the areas south of Rome. Here unemployment is high (20.7% in 2014 while the national rate was 12.7%), job
security is low and access to work is mainly through personal contacts.

Between the prosperous north and the impoverished Mezzogiorno are the middle regions including Toscana, Umbria, Le Marche, Abruzzo and others. This band is less wealthy than the north, but finds less crime than the areas both north and south. There are heavy industries, but the employment is predominantly in small commercial or industrial units. Tourism plays a significant part of the economies of many areas.

Such great disparities between the north, centre and south of Italy reflects also in the Early School Leaver phenomenon, especially because each region has to put in place its own monitoring system and implement policies and measures to reduce the number of students leaving school before the achievement of a secondary level diploma or a vocational qualification.

4.1.3 Conclusion

The Italian monitoring system for Early School Leavers does exist, although the country is more focused on monitoring NEET statistics and this tends to be the primary purpose of the country’s Early School Leaver monitoring activities.

Italy has a considerable issue with young people who are NEET and, indeed, is one of the very highest on the NEET league table. Therefore it is perhaps unsurprising that Italy focuses more attention on NEET statistics.

Italy operates a decentralized model of monitoring Early School Leavers in that it collects data at a regional (municipal) level and then integrates these to develop the national level statistics. This requires every region in Italy to monitor Early School Leavers and implement solutions locally to reduce the number of students leaving school without an upper secondary school diploma or vocational qualification.

There is, however, currently a gap in the information provided as, at present, it is missing young people that are undertaking an apprenticeship in a company.

4.2 Poland

In Poland, there is a system of monitoring for Early School Leavers. Certain regulations have been adopted in this respect, designed to systematically provide information on the phenomenon of the loss of children and young people from the educational system prior to completing their upper secondary education.
4.2.1 **Polish Monitoring System**
The monitoring system for Early School Leavers is created on the basis of three acts of law:

- Act on Public Statistics\(^{109}\),
- School Education Act\(^{110}\),
- Act on Education Information System\(^{111}\)

Headteachers of public primary and lower secondary schools control the compulsory school attendance of children attending these schools, and the community authorities control the fulfillment of the obligation of education for young people residing in that community. They keep records concerning the obligation of young people to attend schooling and learning. The head of the local government is required to inform the headteachers of public primary and lower secondary schools in their area about the current state and changes in the records of children and teenagers aged 3-18 years old\(^{112}\). Failure to fulfill the obligation of compulsory education is subject to administrative prosecution.

SIO is an electronic education information system introduced at the beginning of 2005. It integrates all the duties associated with the collecting of official statistics, research and the running of administration databases. It collects subject specific information related to students’ education, for example obtaining or failure to gain promotion and completion or failure to complete school. The educational information system regularly collects and offers a variety of data sets which are publicly available and can be used to shape the educational and social policy at all levels. Students’ data is therefore collected at the level of each school and at all levels of education management.

In accordance with the Act on Education Information System, the SIO collects different types of data. Data concerning students is passed by the school / institution through the local SIO database, which is then sent to the central national system. The data can be analysed at the level of the school, community, province or country. The Central Statistical Office collects this for further analysis.

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\(^{110}\) Ustawa z dnia 7 września 1991 r. o systemie oświaty – Dz. U. z 2004 r., Nr 256, poz. 2572 z późn. zm.

\(^{111}\) Ustawa z dnia 15 kwietnia 2011 r. o systemie informacji oświatowej – j. t. Dz. U. z 2015 r., poz. 45

\(^{112}\) Ustawa z dnia 7 września 1991 r. o systemie oświaty – Dz. U. z 2004 r., Nr 256, poz. 2572 z późn. zm.
One of the methods used is calculating the enrollment rate (a measure of the prevalence of education). The gross enrollment rate is the ratio of the number of students (at the beginning of the school year) at a given level of education (regardless of age) to the population (as of 31 December) in the age group defined as corresponding to this level of education. The gross enrollment rate, (e.g. for the lower secondary school level) is calculated by dividing the total number of lower secondary school students, regardless of age at the beginning of the school year, by the population aged 13-15 years (age assigned to this level) as at 31 December of the same year; the result is given as a percentage[113].

The net enrollment rate is the ratio of the number of people (in a given age group) studying (at the beginning of the school year) at a given level of education to the population (as of 31 December) in the age group defined as corresponding to this level of education. The net enrollment rate (e.g. for the lower secondary school level) can be calculated by dividing the number of lower secondary school students aged 13-15 years (age assigned to this level) at the beginning of the school year by the population aged 13-15 years as of December 31 of the same year; the result is given in percentage[114].

The SIO allows public access to information in the field of education. Data regarding the phenomenon of Early School Leavers is collected, processed and analysed by:

- the Ministry of Education,
- school governing bodies (local governments), entrusted with the tasks related to public education,
- headteachers of schools and institutions,
- scientific and research institutions, e.g. the Institute for Educational Research
- supervisory institutions, e.g. the Supreme Chamber of Control.

This creates a set of quantitative data against which a comparative analysis is performed.

The Central Statistical Office prepares an annual publication called "Education in the school year ……", which contains data on graduates from all types of schools. Data for the school year 2012/2013 and for the previous five years is based on the information collected by the Ministry of Education through the SIO. The data for the year 2006/2007 and for previous years is derived from studies carried out by the Central Statistical Office

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[113] Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, 2012, „Raport o stanie edukacji 2012”
in the form of annual reports from educational institutions (schools and other educational institutions).

The ability to create reports from the SIO enables different institutions to use the data collected in order to produce studies which are of interest to them. Examples of such studies are "Reports on the state of education" prepared annually, in various aspects, by the Institute for Educational Research.

Twice a year, the SIO monitors the compulsory education at various levels of education by providing data to the system.

The data is used to control the fulfillment of the obligation of education by the community authorities. The analysis of data on the fulfillment of the obligation of education by young people residing in the community is used in reports on the state of fulfillment of educational tasks that the Executive Authority must annually submit to the Legislative Authority by 31 October\textsuperscript{115}.

The executive body has autonomy as to the scope of the data used and the methods of analysis. The data is also used by the Masovia Region School Superintendent in respect of inspections and evaluations conducted in schools.

As a rule, the data in the educational database is updated and published as at 30 September and 31 March (2013-2016).

The headteacher of a school and the community regularly monitor fulfillment of compulsory school attendance and the obligation to study. The headmaster of a primary school and lower secondary school has to update the information about the place where students attend school (usually in the first month of the new school year), and the community about the fulfillment of the obligation of education. Communities typically use websites and the headteachers of lower secondary schools by sending a letter to the parents asking them to submit the information about where their child attends school by 30 September.

The data is collected and provides information about the total number of children and young people in the educational system, at the various stages of education. It indicates age, sex, number of students with disabilities and receiving psycho-pedagogical assistance. The data is of quantitative character.

\textsuperscript{115}Ustawa z dnia 7 września 1991 r. o systemie oświaty – Dz. U. z 2004 r., Nr 256, poz. 2572 z późn. zm.
Other data related to a student at school also includes:
- obtaining or failure to obtain promotion;
- use of an extended period of study at a given level of education;
- completing or not completing school;
- the start date and the end date of a given period of education\(^{116}\).

Particularly useful is the data associated with the education of children and young people. It is used for the creation of the educational, social and economic policies of the state at every level (local, regional and national strategies) and allows modifications of system activities, in order to prevent Early School Leavers. It also enables the obtaining of aggregate information necessary to assess the fulfillment of compulsory education. Moreover, it is used to determine the amount of education funding from the state budget on the basis of a functioning financial algorithm. Much of the data that is helpful for this purpose (e.g. student’s age or disability) also allows an immediate response to a student’s unauthorised absenteeism.

Ongoing monitoring of the fulfillment of compulsory education is a key element of the monitoring system of Early School Leavers. Of similar importance is the collection and analysis of data concerning the fulfillment of the obligation of education by young people residing in a territory of a particular community.

In addition to the data that is collected in the SIO database, reports can also be prepared and made available. Reports include anonymised data generated in the process of automatic identification data processing and domain data of schools, educational institutions, other entities performing tasks in the field of education and of students and teachers in the SIO database. If necessary, this can also include personal data of students and teachers from a set of personal identification numbers (PESEL)\(^{117}\).

Given that there is only a small percentage of students in Poland who are Early School Leavers, it may indicate that the existing monitoring system is effective. Although this system is better compared to paper statistical reports, which were used earlier, its drawback is that it only contains aggregated information about the students.

\(^{116}\) Ustawa z dnia 15 kwietnia 2011 r. o systemie informacji oświatowej – j. t. Dz. U. z 2015 r., poz. 45
\(^{117}\) Ustawa z dnia 15 kwietnia 2011 r. o systemie informacji oświatowej – j. t. Dz. U. z 2015 r., poz. 45
4.2.2 **Education, Training and Employment Statistics in Poland**

Poland is a country in which the problem of Early School Leavers is minor. Poland is a leader in the EU as far as the reduction of the number of Early School Leavers is concerned, with only 5.4% of Early School Leavers in the population aged 18-24.

These outstanding results in reducing Early School Leavers is connected to equally good results in terms of increasing the participation of young people in at least upper secondary education; this is despite one of the greatest risks of poverty among children and young people in the EU and poorly developed systems of pre-primary education. Poland, in 2009, had the largest percentage of young people aged 15-24 in education in the EU (i.e. 71.7% at ISCED 1-6).

The basis for such a good result is another EU indicator included in a set of 5 key indicators to monitor the development of education in Europe in the first decade of the 21st century - the number of young adults aged 20-24 who achieve an education of at least upper secondary level (general or vocational).

The latest available comparative data from 2008 indicates that, in Poland, 91.3% of young people aged 20-24 have achieved at least an upper secondary education; this is the third best result in the EU after Slovakia (92.3%) and the Czech Republic (91.6%). The same countries excel in the rate of Early School Leavers with Poland at 5%, the Czech Republic at 5.6% and Slovakia at 6%. Taking into consideration the fact that the data is derived from studies on statistical samples, it is possible to speak about a group of countries with similar results (without rating them).

The Early School Leaver rate in Poland is positively affected by a high number of young people (aged below 24) who complete at least upper secondary school (general or vocational). For a relatively small group of people, in comparison to the EU, who do not meet this condition, a second chance system to complete their education and training is essential.

The Early School Leaver rate in Poland may be adversely affected by factors influencing its structure. While Poland has one of the smallest numbers that have completed primary education (41% - in comparison with 18% in the EU), this may indicate a relationship of this phenomenon to social inequalities.

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118 Informacja Ministerstwa Edukacji Narodowej dla Sejmowej Komisji Edukacji, Nauki i Młodzieży, 26 października 2010 r., „Przygotowania i prace nad budowaniem strategii Europa 2020 w obszarze polskiej edukacji”
stratification. Therefore, factors outside the education system may be crucial. In addition to the social differences, other factors from outside education may also be important (e.g. permanent changes in the labour market, the abandonment of compulsory conscription, the scale of migration to Poland of people from less developed countries). It should be noted, however, that decreases in the number of Early School Leavers in Poland is positively affected by a small number of foreigners in schools. In addition, some young people delay entering the labour market and stay longer in the educational system.

For this reason, it is worth focusing on the changes in the labour market; if the labour market in the future is more attractive, a group of young people may take up jobs earlier rather than moving into Further Education119 and this may weaken their educational effort. It is possible that both the halt in the decrease of the rate in recent years, as well as its very low level in comparison with the EU, may mean that we have approached the real borderline of improvement.

4.2.3. Conclusions

It is clear that there is a system for collecting data related to students’ education at local, regional and central level in Poland. This enables the generation of reports from the data that is collected.

The report allows the Polish authorities to analyse and draw conclusions on the basis of student data through different entities (public and NGOs) in order to shape educational, social and economic strategies and policies.

Furthermore, this controls the compulsory school attendance, and education, for each individual student.

This system does, however, affect the possibility of inputting unreliable data about the students into the system due to an imperfect system of supervision of data entry, not using the potential of the different data sets concerning the learning process, imperfect system of electronic data collection in the SIO (an ongoing process of improvement of the system at the central level managed by the Ministry of Education) and lack of system solutions for the use of data contained in SIO.

Additionally, sometimes there is difficulty in obtaining data regarding the location of obligatory education of some students and the difficulties in the enforcement of compulsory education.

119 Informacja Ministerstwa Edukacji Narodowej dla Sejmowej Komisji Edukacji, Nauki i Młodzieży, 26 października 2010 r., „Przygotowania i prace nad budowaniem strategii Europa 2020 w obszarze polskiej edukacji”
Improvements could be made to the system through the professional use of the system databases for analytical operations resulting in the prevention of Early School Leavers. This would be helped by improving the control system of compulsory school attendance and the obligation of education in the context of population migration.

As part of the ongoing planning of continuous learning policy, a better inter-ministerial coordination in relation to the data storage and analysis is expected. This is due to the fact that education and training occurs not only in school, and the data on non-formal and informal education and training at all stages of life should be collected for the application of a lifelong learning policy.

The high rate of students learning might be almost at its peak and, until 2020, there may not be any significant changes. However, it is a major achievement for Poland, which in recent years has changed greatly; not just in the area of education, but also economically and socially.

4.3 United Kingdom

Although research within the United Kingdom has identified that people leaving school with no qualifications at Level 2 (equivalent to 5 A*-C GCSEs) are twice as likely to be unemployed and are more likely to remain unemployed for longer, the UK does not focus on Early School Leavers statistics for national use; rather it focuses internal monitoring systems exclusively on the following internationally recognised measurements:

- ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ (NEET),
- ‘Not in Education or Training’ (NET) and

The UK’s definition of someone being NEET is anybody aged 16 to 24 years old who is not in some form of education or training and who is not in employment. The definition of “in employment” follows that used for the official labour market statistics, based on that recommended by

\footnote{Draft Jobseeker’s Allowance Regulations 2014, November 2014 and Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, December 2006}

the International Labour Organisation (ILO)\textsuperscript{122}. NET focuses specifically on just those people who are not in education or training, although they could be in employment.

While Early School Leavers, NEET and NET classifications are concerned with a similar topic and age demographic, there are considerable differences between the characteristics of each group. Firstly, Early School Leaver statistics are restricted by educational attainment, whereas NEET is not. Secondly, the NEET statistics are restricted by the employment status of the population, whereas the Early School Leaver statistics are not\textsuperscript{123}.

Although the common perception is that young people who are Early School Leavers are also likely to be a major part of the NEET group, this has been shown to have only a minor linkage.

The graph in Figure 12, examine the correlation between Early School Leavers and NEET across every country in the EU. While there is a positive correlation, this is quite a weak relationship with a correlation of 0.32 for 18-24 year olds.

\textsuperscript{122} Office of National Statistics, May 2013, ‘UK Estimate of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training’

If we investigate the percentage of these two groups and also their interaction (ie. those young people who are both Early School Leavers and NEET), we see a variety of different results (Figure 13).

Source: Flisi S, Goglio V, Meroni EC & Vera-Toscano ME, 2015, ‘School-to-work transition of young individuals: what can the ELET and NEET indicators tell us?’
Countries with higher levels of Early School Leavers also tend to have a higher proportion of young people who are both Early School Leavers and NEET.

In countries such as Slovenia (SI) and Croatia (HR), which have a very low level of Early School Leavers, the proportion of Early School Leavers who are also NEET is extremely high; young people who drop out of school are mostly unable to find a job.

In countries with higher levels of Early School Leavers, for instance Italy and the UK, while there is a lower proportion of young people who are both Early School Leavers and NEET compared to the total percentage of Early School Leavers, the proportion of young people who are both Early School Leavers and NEET is greater than in countries with lower percentages of Early School Leavers. For instance, in the UK, 12% of young people are Early School Leavers with approximately 7% of these Early School Leavers being NEET. In comparison, Poland has 5.4% Early School Leavers with approximately 3% of these Early School Leavers being NEET.

However, when comparing NEET in each country, there are massive discrepancies. Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, Ireland and Cyprus, for instance, have very high NEET compared to other EU countries that have much higher levels of Early School Leavers (ie. the UK). Italy has very high levels of Early School Leavers, NEET and young people who are both Early School Leavers and NEET.

These statistics demonstrate that Early School Leavers and NEET are different phenomenon. While there may be some overlapping, they are actual very different issues and monitoring them will lead to different conclusions.

While Early School Leavers and NEET cover a similar topic and age demographic, they do not have a strong relationship and, therefore, cannot be used as indicators monitoring the same phenomenon\textsuperscript{124}.

### 4.3.1 UK Monitoring System

The UK utilises a number of different monitoring systems for measuring NEET, NET and participation in education, training and employment. The UK political system devolves some activities, including the management and monitoring of education, training and employment, to the Welsh Government, Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive. While there is not an English Government, education, training and employment statistics for England are produced separately by bodies that have authority solely within England (ie.

\textsuperscript{124} Flisi S, Goglio V, Meroni EC & Vera-Toscano, ME, 2015, ‘School-to-work transition of young individuals: what can the ELET and NEET indicators tell us?’
Department for Education, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and the Skills Funding Agency). In this report we will only focus on officially regulated and published statistics, each of which has been approved as ‘National Statistics’ (Figure 14).

Due to the devolved status of the UK, the reporting of information is a complex myriad, with a number of different producers of education, training and employment statistics often covering different time periods.

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 defines ‘National Statistics’ as “all those statistical outputs produced by the UK Statistics Authority’s executive office (Office of National Statistics), by central Government departments and agencies, by the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and by other Crown bodies”; this covers more than 200 bodies. ‘National statistics’ are a subset of official statistics which have been certified by the UK Statistics Authority as compliant with its Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This arrangement attempts to reduce inconsistencies in definition or interpretation.

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4.3.1.1 Monitoring in England

There are several publications that relate to education, training and employment statistics for England. These are the ‘NEET Quarterly Brief’, the ‘Further Education & Skills Statistical First Release’, the ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’ and the ‘Local Authorities’ Client Caseload Information System’.

a. NEET Quarterly Brief

The aim of this report is to provide timely and regular estimates of the number and proportion of young people that are classed as NEET within England.\[127\].

The statistics are produced by the Department for Education on a quarterly basis. They combine statistics that are developed for the Participation Statistical First Release reports ('Further Education & Skills Participation Statistical First Release' and 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England Statistical First Release'), Quarterly Labour Force Survey and the Local Authorities’ Client Caseload Information System.\[128\].

The Labour Force Survey statistics for NEET and NET in England are only published in the NEET Quarterly Brief. These statistics use the Labour Force Survey that is undertaken every quarter and determine the level of NEET and NET based on the responses to the survey. The Labour Force Survey is also used in other reports to determine an estimate of the national population.

b. Further Education & Skills Participation Statistical First Release

This report provides statistics on the highest level of qualification, adult learner (19+) participation and achievement in education and all age (16+) Apprenticeships in England.

\[127\] Office of National Statistics, May 2013, 'UK Estimate of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training'

\[128\] Department for Education, February 2015, 'NEET Quarterly Brief – October to December 2014, Statistical First Release'
The statistics are produced by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and the Skills Funding Agency.

These statistics are developed from two different sources:

i) Individualised Learner Record (ILR) collections that are made by further education colleges and training providers and Employer Ownership employers to the Skills Funding Agency on a monthly basis.

ii) The Labour Force Survey

Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England


These statistics are produced annually by the Department for Education and relate purely to England. They are used to monitor progress against the Department for Education’s objectives of raising participation and reducing NEET among young people. The statistics provide a ‘snapshot’ of activity at the end of the previous calendar year.

These statistics are developed from a number of different sources:

i) School Census collections

ii) Individualised Learner Record (ILR) collections that are made by further education colleges and training providers and Employer Ownership employers to the Skills Funding Agency on a monthly basis.

iii) Higher Education Statistics Agency

iv) The Labour Force Survey

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d. Local Authorities’ Client Caseload Information System (CCIS)
This is a local database that provides local authorities with the information that is required to support young people aged 16-19 years old to engage in education and training and to identify any young people who are not participating so that services can be planned to meet their needs.

All local authorities have a statutory duty under Section 68 of the Education & Skills Act 2008 to provide strategic leadership in their areas to support the participation of young people in education, training and employment. Each local authority must collect information about each individual in their local area to identify those young people who are not participating, or are at risk, and then target resources as appropriate. Local authorities must have monitoring systems in place to identify young people’s current activity at regular intervals.132

The information for the CCIS is generated using multiple sources of data:

- September Guarantee
- Intended Destination
- JobCentre Plus
- Activity Survey
- educational institutions
- the Education Funding Agency
- other public bodies, such as Primary Care Trusts and the probation service133

The September Guarantee and Intended Destinations data are collected by schools when a pupil reaches statutory school leaving age; the data

identifies those young people who have no confirmed positive destination (education, training or employment). The range of other sources are then utilised to track young people’s actual activity.

The local authorities enter information into their CCIS which is then collated to create the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS)\(^{134}\). This allows comparisons to be made across local authorities in relation to both the number of young people who are NEET and the number of young people who have ‘unknown’ destinations. Local authorities with high levels of NEET or ‘unknown’ destinations are expected to face an increased level of pressure to demonstrate improvements\(^{135}\).

Local authorities have ‘freedom and flexibility’ to decide how they should meet their statutory duty to collect and manage their local CCIS. The Department for Education monitors the performance of local authorities using the data that is collected and submitted to the NCCIS\(^{136}\).

### 4.3.1.2 Monitoring in Wales

There are a number of different publications that relate to education, training and employment statistics for Wales. These are the ‘Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)’ report, the ‘Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market Statistical First Release’ and the ‘Pupils Destinations from Schools in Wales’ report.

a. Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

This provides the headline data based on the ‘Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market Statistical First Release’, the ‘Annual Population Survey’ and the ‘Pupils Destinations from Schools in Wales’\(^{137}\).

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\(^{134}\) Department for Education, December 2013, ‘NCCIS Management Information Requirement 2014-15’

\(^{135}\) Local Government Association, October 2013, ‘Tracking Young People: A ‘how to’ guide for councils’

\(^{136}\) Department for Education, September 2014, ‘Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training: Statutory guidance for local authorities’

The statistics are produced by the Welsh Government on a quarterly basis.

The Annual Population Survey statistics for NEET and NET in Wales are only published in the ‘Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training’ report. These statistics use the Labour Force Survey that is undertaken every quarter and apply ‘boosts’ to ensure that there is sufficient data to make statistically reliable judgments. The Annual Population Survey is also used in other reports to determine an estimate of the national population.

b. Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market Statistical First Release
This report provides the definitive source for estimates of the proportion of young people aged 16-24 years of age who are NEET in Wales.

The statistics are produced annually by the Welsh Government and relate purely to Wales. They are used to monitor the Welsh Government’s strategic approach to reducing the proportion of young people who are NEET. The statistics provide final statistics based on enrolments on the 1st December two years previously in addition to provisional data and modeling for the same date one year previously.\(^{138}\)

These statistics are developed from a number of different sources:

i) Pupil Level Annual School Census
ii) Higher Education Statistics Agency
iii) The Lifelong Learning Wales Record
iv) Annual Population Survey
v) Office of National Statistics\(^ {139}\)

c. Pupil Destinations from Schools in Wales
These statistics report the destinations of pupils from secondary schools across Wales. It includes statistics on pupils who have reached the statutory


school leaving age as well as pupils leaving school in years 12 and 13.

The statistics are produced annually by Careers Wales and present data on the destinations of school leavers by gender, year group and region\textsuperscript{140}.

4.3.1.3 Monitoring in Scotland
There are a number of different publications that relate to education, training and employment statistics for Scotland. These are the 'Annual Local Area Labour Markets' publication, the 'Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living' and 'More Choices More Chances'.

a. Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey
This report aims to provide reliable and up-to-date headline information for local labour markets and covers employment, underemployment, inactivity and youth participation in the labour market within Scotland and its local authorities.

The statistics are produced annually by the Scottish Government and relate purely to Scotland. The statistics provide information on the previous calendar year\textsuperscript{141}. The report is used to inform government targets and policies, specifically relating to participation and cohesion 'Purpose' targets and improving the skill profile of the population 'National Indicator' in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework\textsuperscript{142}.

b. Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living
This publication presents attainment information, initial and sustained school leaver destinations and healthy living information.

These statistics are produced annually by the Scottish Government to present a snapshot of how achievement at school influences what happens within the first year of leaving school.

\textsuperscript{140} http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/pupil-destinations-schools-wales/?lang=en

\textsuperscript{141} Scottish Government, 7\textsuperscript{th} May 2014, 'Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey'

\textsuperscript{142} http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms
These statistics are developed from a number of different sources:

i) Scottish Qualifications Authority

ii) School leaver statistics from Skills Development Scotland which provides information on the destinations of young people three months after leaving school and nine months after leaving school

iii) Healthy Living Survey\(^{143}\)

c. More Choices More Chances

This report is the official measure of young people that are aged 16-19 years of age that are not in employment, education or training in Scotland.

These statistics are produced by the Scottish Government through the Annual Population Survey\(^{144}\). The Annual Population Survey combines the results of the Labour Force Survey and the Scottish Labour Force Survey boost\(^{145}\). It is able to provide national statistics but it is not robust enough to provide estimates at Local Authority level\(^{146}\).

4.3.1.4 Monitoring in Northern Ireland

Education, training and employment statistics in Northern Ireland are reported through the 'Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey'.

a. Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey

This report is the definitive statistic for the number of young people aged 16-24 years of age that are not in employment, education or training in Northern Ireland.

The Labour Force Survey in Northern Ireland is published quarterly. It is commissioned by the Northern Ireland Executive's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and carried out

\(^{143}\) http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/9242

\(^{144}\) http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/MCMCLMSTATS


\(^{146}\) http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/MCMCLMSTATS
by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

4.3.1.5 Monitoring in the UK
While each country within the UK produces NEET statistics individually, there is one report which focuses on UK-wide statistics. This is the ‘Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training’ report.

a. Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training
This report is published by the Office of National Statistics on a quarterly basis and focuses on young people aged 16-17 and 18-24 years of age. The report is not intended to replace the existing NEET estimates for the various countries of the UK but, from mid-2013, it published a UK figure for the first time.

The data for this report is provided by the Labour Force Survey. This report attempts to provide consistency for NEET statistics across England, Wales and Scotland; Northern Ireland is not included147.

4.3.2 Education, Training and Employment Statistics in the UK
This section will examine the various education, training and employment statistics published by officially recognised bodies within the UK. Although these are not Early School Leaver statistics, they are the closest figures published in the UK.

4.3.2.1 Statistics in England
The Department for Education’s Statistical First Release (SFR), ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’, published in June 2014 and based on actual activity, reported that there had been a decrease of 1.6% in NEETs aged 16-18 from 9.2% in 2012 to 7.6% [provisional] in 2013148 (Figure 15).

147 Office of National Statistics, May 2013, 'UK Estimate of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training'
According to these statistics, 81.2% of 16-18 year olds were participating in education and work-based learning at the end of the 2013. This improvement was as a result of an increase of 2% participating in education and training, hence a 2% reduction in NET figures compared to the end of 2012. It is clear that the number of individuals participating in education and training aged 16 is relatively high (95.6% at the end of 2013) while this reduces in the 17 and 18 age groups, particularly in the 18 year old category. This can be compared against the NEET statistics that are calculated by the Labour Force Survey.

The Labour Force Survey, which is calculated quarterly rather than annually, reports seasonal patterns to NEET that reflects the academic year. The lowest rates tend to be in the autumn yet rise in the spring and summer. According to the Labour Force Survey published in February 2015, based on NEET statistics from October to December 2014, there has been a 0.6% reduction in young people aged 16-18 who are NEET (to 7%) compared to the same period in 2013. This drop has been caused by a 1% fall in NET and a 0.4% increase in the employment rate of the NET group. Additionally, the 19-24 year old age group has a NEET figure that has reduced to 15.9% in October-December 2014 compared to 17.1% in October-December 2013 and 18.1% in the same period in 2012. Overall, for the 16-24 year old age group, there has been a reduction of NEET to 13.1% for 149 Department for Education, 25 June 2014, ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England, end 2013’
the October-December 2014 period, which is a 1% fall over the previous year and a 1.8% drop since October-December 2012\textsuperscript{150} (Figure 16).

Figure 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: NEET rates for different age cohorts: England 2012 – 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October to December 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 19-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour Force Survey, October to December
Note: No changes are statistically significant


Analysing the trends of NEET statistics, based on the ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’ report, it is clear that there has been a slight reduction in NEET since 1994. However, for 16, 17 and 18 year olds, there had been a rise in NEET prior to a sharp fall since the end of 2012\textsuperscript{151} (Figure 17).

\textsuperscript{150} Department for Education, February 2015, ‘NEET Quarterly Brief – October to December 2014, Statistical First Release’

A comparison of the NEET statistics produced in the ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England, end 2013’ report and the UK Labour Force Survey shows a striking similarity\textsuperscript{152} (Figure 18).


\textsuperscript{152} Department for Education, February 2015, ‘NEET Quarterly Brief – October to December 2014, Statistical First Release’
The table shows fairly comparable NEET statistics for the end of each calendar year; this coincides with the historically lowest number of NEET, early in the school year. On each occasion the NEET figures rise dramatically at other times of the year with a maximum NEET figure in Quarter 3 immediately prior to the start of a new school year; this can be a rise of 2% to 6% from the lowest NEET figures which are published in the 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England' report and the Labour Force Survey data in the 'NEET Quarterly Brief'.

An analysis of the proportion of young people, aged 16-18 years of age, which are not in education or training (NET) demonstrates a fall of 2% to a rate of 14.4% between the end of 2012 and the end of 2013. This has fallen from 25% at the end of 2001\textsuperscript{153} (Figure 19).

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure18.png}
\caption{Figure 18}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{153} Department for Education, February 2015, ‘NEET Quarterly Brief – October to December 2014, Statistical First Release’
Maybe unsurprisingly, given the comparative results for NEET, a comparison of the NET statistics produced in the ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’ report and the UK Labour Force Survey shows a remarkably similar trend\textsuperscript{154} (Figure 20).


\textsuperscript{154} Department for Education, February 2015, ‘NEET Quarterly Brief – October to December 2014, Statistical First Release’
Figure 20

The lowest levels of NET are consistently in Quarter 4 and these, again, rise to a high in Quarter 3. Interestingly, though, while the trend for NEET on a year-by-year basis is unpredictable, there is a clear downward trend in the number of NET from 2005 to 2014. This would suggest that the major peaks in the NEET statistics are significantly related to employment opportunities rather than drops in education and training participation.

While the 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England' report for 2014 is yet to be published, the figures from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey would suggest a further drop in NET for Quarter 4 2014 to approximately 13%.

Overall, it can be concluded that, although there are different bodies collecting the NEET, NET and participation data for 16-18 year olds in England, the results are very similar and they appear to be heading in a positive direction.

At the age of 16, most young people (71.5%) are participating in education and training within state-funded schools and general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges. This drops to 61.8% for 17 year olds and 25.2% for 18 year olds. With the exception of higher education institutions for 18 year olds only (27.4%), no other form
of education increases its participation rates. This demonstrates that the reduction in participation in state-funded schools and general FE, tertiary and specialist colleges are lost to the education system.

Other than through the Labour Force Survey, it is difficult to determine an estimated number of NEET or NET for people aged 19-24 years of age as the other official statistics only relate to 19+ years of age. The statistics show that there has been a reduction in participation of people aged 19+ from 2009/10 (approximately 3.5 million) to 2013/14 (2.65 million)\(^{155}\) (Figure 21).

**Figure 21**

![Bar chart showing participation and achieving of funded learners in FE (19+)](chart)

**Source:** Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Skills Funding Agency, 25\(^{th}\) March 2015, ‘Further Education and Skills: Learner Participation, Outcomes and Level of Highest Qualification Held’

It should be noted, however, that it is unreliable to compare the period of 2009/10 and 2010/11 to the period of 2011/12 to 2013/14 as the collection methods were significantly different over these time periods. A better comparison of 2013/14 figures is against the previous year. Between 2012/13 and 2013/14 there has been a fall

of 7.7% in the number of people aged 19+ years of age participating in funded training\textsuperscript{156}.

While the national NEET and NET statistics are reported in the ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’ report and the ‘NEET Quarterly Brief’ publication, regional NEET statistics are taken from the Client Caseload Information System.

The statistics for regional NEET indicate that northern English regions have higher NEET rates than more southern regions\textsuperscript{157} (Figure 22).

\textbf{Figure 22}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure22.png}
\caption{Regional NEET rates in England (November 2013 to January 2014)}
\end{figure}


According to regional NEET statistics for November 2013 to January 2014, the North East has the highest regional NEET in England with approximately 7.5%, followed by the West Midlands (6%), Yorkshire & Humber (5.75%) and the North West (5.5%). The other regions of the UK have NEET rates of around 5% with the exception of London, which has less than 4% NEET.

4.3.2.2 \textbf{Statistics in Wales}

According to ‘Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market (year end 2012 and 2013 (prov))’

\textsuperscript{156} Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Skills Funding Agency, 25\textsuperscript{th} March 2015, ‘Further Education and Skills: Learner Participation, Outcomes and Level of Highest Qualification Held’

\textsuperscript{157} Department for Education, February 2015, ‘NEET Quarterly Brief – October to December 2014, Statistical First Release’
statistics, 10.9% of 16-18 year olds in Wales were NEET (calculated by adding together ‘ILO Unemployed’ and ‘Economically Inactive’ who are ‘Not in education or training’) in December 2012 while 22.9% of 19-24 year olds in Wales were classed as NEET (Figure 23).

**Figure 23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Full time employment</th>
<th>Part time employment</th>
<th>ILO Unemployed</th>
<th>Economically Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>16 to 18 year olds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time education</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time education</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (b)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in education or training</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19 to 24 year olds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time education</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time education</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (b)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in education or training</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Using the Annual Population Survey\(^{158}\) data, the figures are fairly similar, although not identical, for the NEET statistics in Wales. In the comparable year, NEET figures from the Annual Population Survey were 11.9% for 16-18 year olds (a difference of 1%) and 23% for 19-24 year olds (a difference of 0.1%) (Figure 24).

In contrast to the England statistics, there appears to be no pattern in quarters which have higher or lower levels of NEET dependent on the specific quarter within the year. In England the highest level of NEET is consistently Quarter 4 whereas in Wales this is much less likely.
When comparing between the SFR and the APS for 19-24 year olds, it is interesting to note that the figures for NEET in Wales are fairly consistent across almost all years from 2001 to 2013. However, the differences in the figures for 16-18 year olds tend to be relatively sizeable which would indicate inconsistencies in the accuracy of the monitoring systems being used for each age group. An analysis of the trend over a longer period of time illustrates a steadily rising level of NEET since the mid-2000s until the previous 2 years (Figure 25).

Figure 25

| Table 1: Young people not in education, employment or training in Wales, Calendar Year |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                  | 16-18 year olds   | 19-24 year olds   |                                  |
|                                  | SFR NEET          | APS NEET (r)      | SFR NEET          | APS NEET (r)      |
|                                  | Per cent          | Number            | Per cent          | Number            | Per cent          | Number            |
| End 1996                         | 12.1              | 12,800            | ..                | ..                | 19.7              | 40,900            | ..                | ..                |
| End 1997                         | 10.6              | 11,700            | ..                | ..                | 18.5              | 36,800            | ..                | ..                |
| End 1998                         | 11.9              | 13,200            | ..                | ..                | 19.3              | 37,600            | ..                | ..                |
| End 1999                         | 11.6              | 12,800            | ..                | ..                | 18.6              | 37,100            | ..                | ..                |
| End 2000                         | 10.7              | 11,700            | ..                | ..                | 17.9              | 36,500            | ..                | ..                |
| End 2001                         | 11.9              | 13,400            | 12.0              | 13,300            | 19.2              | 40,400            | 19.8              | 39,400            |
| End 2002                         | 11.9              | 13,600            | 11.1              | 12,500            | 18.4              | 39,800            | 18.9              | 38,900            |
| End 2003                         | 12.9              | 15,000            | 12.1              | 13,900            | 17.1              | 38,300            | 17.3              | 36,100            |
| End 2004                         | 11.2              | 13,100            | 11.5              | 13,200            | 16.2              | 36,900            | 16.7              | 36,500            |
| End 2005                         | 9.9               | 11,700            | 12.0              | 13,600            | 17.5              | 40,600            | 18.2              | 41,000            |
| End 2006                         | 9.7               | 11,500            | 10.3              | 11,900            | 17.9              | 42,500            | 18.7              | 41,600            |
| End 2007                         | 11.7              | 14,000            | 12.4              | 14,800            | 17.4              | 42,300            | 17.8              | 41,200            |
| End 2008                         | 12.4              | 14,900            | 12.8              | 15,100            | 17.4              | 42,800            | 17.6              | 41,800            |
| End 2009                         | 12.4              | 14,700            | 12.1              | 14,100            | 21.8              | 54,300            | 21.0              | 50,400            |
| End 2010                         | 11.5              | 13,500            | 11.4              | 13,700            | 23.0              | 58,400            | 23.1              | 55,500            |
| End 2011                         | 12.2              | 14,000            | 13.3              | 15,400            | 22.2              | 57,400            | 22.1              | 54,400            |
| End 2012                         | 10.8              | 12,300            | 11.9              | 13,700            | 22.9              | 59,600            | 23.0              | 58,400            |
| End 2013 (p)                     | 10.5              | 11,800            | 11.9              | 13,500            | 21.2              | 55,300            | 20.4              | 51,500            |
| End 2014                         | ..                | 8,800             | ..                | 8,800             | ..                | 19.7              | 50,900            |


While the ‘Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market (year end 2012 and 2013 (prov))’ report relating to 2014 is not published, the Annual Population Survey suggests that the NEET figures for both 16-18 and 19-24 year olds has fallen quite significantly to 8.1% and 19.7% respectively.
There has been an increase in the percentage of 16-18 year olds remaining in education or training between 2004 and 2013 from a figure in the high 70%’s to a figure in the low 80%’s. There has been an increase in participation for all forms of education (higher education, further education and schools) at almost every age from 2008 to 2013. This is more prevalent at the younger ages of 16 to 21\textsuperscript{159} (Figure 26).

Figure 26

![Graph showing participation rates](image)


In contrast there has been a marked drop in the percentage of 16-18 year olds going into employment, most noticeably during and after the financial crisis of 2008 to 2010\textsuperscript{160}.

\textsuperscript{159} Welsh Government, 24\textsuperscript{th} July 2014, ‘Participation of young people in Education and the Labour Market Statistical First Release (year end 2012 and 2013 (provisional))’

\textsuperscript{160} Welsh Government, 24\textsuperscript{th} July 2014, ‘Participation of young people in Education and the Labour Market Statistical First Release (year end 2012 and 2013 (provisional))’
The increase in the uptake of education and training does not, however, compensate for the drop in employment in this age group over this period. This leads to the increase in the NEET figures in Wales between 2008 and 2010 that were highlighted earlier in this section. The level of employment for 16-18 year olds has steadied in recent years which has helped generate a reduction in NEET in this cohort (Figure 27).

Figure 27

![Graph showing percentage of young people in employment and education](image)


This is somewhat similar to the picture for young people aged 19-24 years of age, which also saw a drop in the percentage of people in employment from 2008 to 2012. There has also been a trend of 19-24 year olds in education and training employment; just as the 16-18 year old group saw a small rise in this area, the 19-24 year old group also saw little change\(^\text{161}\). With no real increase in education and training rates to off-set the reduced proportion of the 19-24 year olds in employment, this led to the increased NEET.

figures between 2008 and 2010 discussed earlier (Figure 28).

Figure 28


Statistics relating to NEET on a regional basis in Wales are taken from the Pupil Destinations from Schools in Wales report which is compiled by Careers Wales. There is a significant difference in NEET statistics across regions with 4.7%, 4.3% and 3.9% in the traditional coal mining areas of Newport, Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf while there is only 1.3% in Flintshire and 1.7% in the Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Monmouthshire162 (Figure 29).

While there are some differences between the NEET statistics reported in the 'Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market (year end 2012 and 2013 (prov))’ report and the Annual Population Survey (especially for 16-18 year olds), the variances are not large and appear to show consistency in the general trend.

### 4.3.2.3 Statistics in Scotland

Using statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2013 in the 'Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland' report, 11.9% of 16-19 year olds in Scotland were NEET. This had decreased by 1.4% compared to the previous year.

The fall in the number of young people aged 16-19 that are NEET is due to a major reduction in the number of NEET males; this is a 3.1% drop since 2012\(^{163}\) (Figure 30).

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These statistics are fairly consistent with those published in the ‘Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living’ report. This report provides an interesting analysis of the differences between the initial destination of a young person three months after leaving school and the young person in a further nine months. In common with other parts of the UK, there is a trend towards reducing NEET in this cohort with a fall of NEET in the initial phase of 2.5% since 2010/11 and a fall of 2.8% in the follow-up phase (Figure 31).
While the 'Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland' report states a 16-19 NEET figure of 11.9%, the 'Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living' report states that this is 8.6% after three months of leaving school and 10% following a further nine months. Although these statistics are not identical, it should be remembered that the 'Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland' report relates to all 16-19 year olds in Scotland while the 'Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living' report focuses only on young people that are within one year of leaving school. Given that there is a 1.4% increase in young people becoming NEET between 3 months of leaving school and 12 months of leaving school, it is likely that these figures would show a further increase the longer a young person has left school and therefore be fairly consistent across the whole age range.

### 4.3.2.4 Statistics in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey reports that the percentage of young people aged 16-24 that were NEET between October and December 2014 was 17.1%. Unlike

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164 Scottish Government, June 2014, 'Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living'
other parts of the UK, there has been a 0.3% increase in NEET since July-September 2014 and a significant 3.9% increase compared to the same period of the previous year\textsuperscript{165} (Figure 32).

\textbf{Figure 32}

\begin{table}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
 & \textbf{Male} & & \textbf{Female} & & \textbf{All persons} \\
\hline
 & \textbf{Total (000's)} & \textbf{Rate (\%)} & \textbf{Total (000's)} & \textbf{Rate (\%)} & \textbf{Total (000's)} & \textbf{Rate (\%)} \\
\hline
Jan-Mar 2013 & 18,000 & 16.6 & 15,000 & 13.6 & 33,000 & 15.1 \\
Apr-Jun 2013 & 17,000 & 15.4 & 17,000 & 15.5 & 34,000 & 15.4 \\
Jul-Sep 2013 & 15,000 & 13.2 & 20,000 & 19.0 & 35,000 & 16.1 \\
Oct-Dec 2013 & 16,000 & 14.5 & 13,000 & 11.8 & 29,000 & 13.2 \\
Jan-Mar 2014 & 19,000 & 17.0 & 13,000 & 12.3 & 32,000 & 14.7 \\
Apr-Jun 2014 & 19,000 & 17.7 & 12,000 & 11.8 & 32,000 & 14.8 \\
Jul-Sep 2014 & 22,000 & 20.3 & 14,000 & 13.2 & 36,000 & 16.8 \\
Oct-Dec 2014 & 19,000 & 17.7 & 17,000 & 16.6 & 37,000 & 17.1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}


\section*{Statistics in the UK}

The Office of National Statistics has produced quarterly statistics of young people, aged 16-24 years of age, who are NEET in the UK since May 2013. While various different departments publish NEET statistics, they use different age groups and are for different areas of the UK, and, therefore, it had not been possible to calculate the number and

percentage of young people that are NEET for the UK as a whole\textsuperscript{166}.

The ‘Young People Not In Education, Employment or Training’ report states that 13.2% of young people aged 16-24 years of age in the UK were NEET between October and December 2014. This is a significant improvement compared to one year previous (14.2%) but a slight regression on the July to September quarter (13.1%)\textsuperscript{167} (Figure 33).

\textbf{Figure 33}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure33.png}
\end{center}


There has been a clear downward trend in the 16 to 24 year old NEET category since 2011. This has seen a reduction from more than 16% in 2011.

According to the Office of National Statistics report in February 2015, based on October to December 2014, there were more than 963,000 young people, aged 16 to 24, who were classed as NEET; this is down 78,000 on the similar period in the previous year (Figure 34).

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{166} Office of National Statistics, May 2013, 'UK Estimate of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training'
\textsuperscript{167} Office of National Statistics, February 2015, ‘Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)’
There are considerably fewer young people aged 16-17 years of age that are NEET compared to 18-24 year olds in the UK. Only 3.9% of young people aged 16-17 were NEET in October-December 2014 compared to 15.6% of young people aged 18-24. Both age groups are consistent in decreasing compared to the previous year but increasing very slightly since the previous quarter\textsuperscript{168} (Figure 35).

\textsuperscript{168} Office of National Statistics, February 2015, ‘Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)’
For the October to December 2014 period, there were 59,000 people aged 16 to 17 who were NEET (31,000 unemployed and 27,000 economically inactive) and 905,000 people aged from 18 to 24 who were NEET (419,000 unemployed and 485,000 economically inactive); both figures were slightly higher than the July to September 2014 period but significantly lower than the statistics one year previous.

The Office of National Statistics report states that there are 32% more women aged 16-24 who are NEET than men (548,000 women compared to 414,000 men). The majority of young people who were NEET are classed as economically inactive as they had not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks. Interestingly though, there were 153% more women aged 16 to 24 classed as economically inactive compared to men yet there were 48% more men unemployed (having been actively seeking work within the last four

### Table 1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16-17</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>89</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-7</td>
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<th>Jul-Sep 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change on year</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change %</td>
<td>-21.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

weeks and able to start work within the next two weeks) than women\textsuperscript{169}.

It is clear, according to the Labour Force Survey, that the UK’s NEET rates for 16-24 year olds are negatively affected by both Northern Ireland and Wales. England and Scotland, on the other hand and with the most significant populations, have relatively low NEET rates\textsuperscript{170} (Figure 36). This is mainly due to higher NEET statistics for 19-24 year olds in Northern Ireland and Wales compared to England and Wales.

\textbf{Figure 36}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{neet_rates.png}
\caption{NEETs Rates (16-24) by UK Country October - December 2014}
\end{figure}


While it is difficult to truly compare the data used for the production of UK-wide statistics and that for each country, the figures do appear to be fairly consistent.

\textsuperscript{169} Office of National Statistics, February 2015, ‘Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)’

4.3.3 Conclusions
This section of the report examines the effectiveness of the NEET statistics that are collected by the various bodies in the UK.

4.3.3.1 Consistent Definition Application
Many of the various reports present strikingly similar NEET statistics when monitoring an identical or similar population. It should be remembered that many of the statistics published by each of the devolved authorities are designed to provide characteristics of the population rather than exact numbers of young people that are NEET so it should be no surprise that there will be slight differences.

To be classified as official statistics, the rationale for the monitoring and analysis must be approved as 'National Statistics' by the UK Statistics Authority and, as such, this has a major bearing on the consistency of the statistics published by numerous different bodies responsible for collecting and managing the statistics. With a fairly consistent educational model, the opportunity for misunderstanding, misinterpretation or misuse of the data is significantly reduced.

4.3.3.2 Sample & Non-Sample Errors
While the sample size for participation statistics is close to 100%, the sample for the Labour Force Survey is much lower and therefore subject to a degree of uncertainty.

The Office of National Statistics calculates the level of uncertainty by exploring how the estimate would change based on different samples over the same time period. This approach allows the Office of National Statistics to define a range around the estimate.

The Office of National Statistics sets a 95% confidence interval based on the belief that they are 95% confident that the true value lies within these ranges.

The Labour Force Survey makes weightings to account for under- or over-coverage in the data; for instance, there is a 1.5% under-coverage in the UK Labour Force

Survey due to the omission of communal establishments from the sample\textsuperscript{173}.

The ability, however, to be able to compare projections (obtained through the Labour Force Survey) with actual figures (obtained through participation data) and the fact that these are fairly similar, means that the sample and non-sample errors in the Labour Force Survey are quite minimal.

4.3.3.3 Method of Data Collection
As all ‘national statistics’ must meet strict guidelines imposed by the UK Statistics Authority, the methods of collection for most of the data is standardised using either participation data or Labour Force Survey data. This data is collected in a similar manner in each of the constituent countries of the UK.

The UK statistics, published by the Office of National Statistics, uses Labour Force Survey data which is collected in the same manner across most of the UK (the only exception is north of the Caledonian Canal in northern Scotland)\textsuperscript{174}.

4.3.3.4 Timing of the Statistics
It can be difficult to compare the various statistics that are collated by the numerous devolved authorities due to the timeframe of each survey. Each devolved authority has its own strategy and target. Therefore, the monitoring systems are designed to measure the statistics that reflect this.

Statistics can only be compared accurately when they relate to the same time period. In the UK, there are reports that cover various timeframes and it is therefore important that only comparable timeframes are compared against each other. For example, statistics used in England’s ‘Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England’ report uses data at the end of the calendar year whereas Wales’ ‘Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market (year end 2012 and 2013 (prov))’ uses data from the 1\textsuperscript{st} December. The UK statistics, produced by the Office of National Statistics, uses Labour Force Survey data which is collected at the same

time in each part of the UK. Given the fact that many of the statistics are designed to show characteristics rather than actual numbers, it is unlikely these minor time variances will have a major effect.

A further point to consider in analysing the statistics is that the 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England' report is released annually and reflects data that is collected approximately six months prior to the publication of the report. Labour Force Survey reports are released quarterly and reflect data that is collected just a few months previously. As such, the Labour Force Survey statistics provide a more timely reflection of the situation although this is based on a much smaller sample size.

4.3.3.5 Response Rates
The response rate of the surveys is important to determine the level of accuracy of the findings. The higher the response rate, the higher the confidence that the statistics are reflective of the sampled population.

The statistics that are produced through participation surveys have very high response rates as a result of the legal obligation on all funded educational institutions in the UK to return accurate activity data on a regular basis.

On the other hand, statistics that are produced by the Labour Force Survey have a far lower response rate. The UK response rate is the second lowest in the EU. Response rates in the UK are approximately 47% excluding imputed households and 55% including imputed households. This significantly reduces the confidence that the Labour Force Survey is reflective of the sampled population.

4.3.3.6 Client Caseload Information System
The National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) is the only monitoring system which attempts to track the entire young person population on an individual basis. This is a major undertaking and it is prone to numerous issues which affect the accuracy and effectiveness of the statistics that are produced.

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Perhaps the biggest danger for monitoring young people that are at risk of becoming NEET is when the individual’s current activity is ‘unknown’. This can happen because the local authority has been unable to contact the young person, the young person has moved to an area managed by a different local authority and information has not been passed to the new local authority or the data has not been recorded effectively. If the activity of young people is unknown then it is highly likely that they will not be receiving the support they require to avoid becoming NEET.

The Department for Education has worked closely with local authorities and the Local Government Association since 2011 to reduce the cases where a young person’s activity is unknown. This has led to a reduction in the number of ‘unknown’ entries in the NCCIS since 2012, although there are still 7.1% of young people with ‘unknown’ current activity (a fall of 1.2%) (Figure 37).

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177 16- to 18-Year Old Participation in Education and Training, National Audit National Audit Office, 3 September 2014, '16- to 18-Year Old Participation in Education and Training'
While these relate to national figures, there are significant differences between local authorities. In October 2013, the Department for Education wrote to 12 local authorities to warn them about their statutory duty to collect this information.\footnote{National Audit Office, 3 September 2014, ‘16- to 18-Year Old Participation in Education and Training’}

As a key element of the NCCIS data source, it is essential that the September Guarantee is recorded accurately. Local authorities are expected to work with schools to identify those pupils who are in need of targeted support.

\footnote{National Audit Office, 3 September 2014, ‘16- to 18-Year Old Participation in Education and Training’}
support or are at risk of becoming NEET\textsuperscript{179}. This again appears to have had varying success dependent on the local authority. In the UK, 4.7\% of young people do not have an intended destination recorded when they leave statutory education. While some local authorities have very little level of unrecorded data (less than 1\%), other local authorities have levels as high as 25.3\% (both Haringley and Liverpool), 24.4\% (North Somerset), 21\% (West Sussex) and 20.5\% (Bath & NE Somerset)\textsuperscript{180}.

Once young people leave the school system there are real difficulties in tracking them due to the number of options that are available. Young people will often move from their immediate post-compulsory school direction by changing course, changing provider or dropping out of their original destination\textsuperscript{181}. This can range from various forms of education and/or training to employment to unemployment to prison to healthcare; each of which is represented by numerous bodies, institutions or organisations. While the statistics relate to the period 2005/06 to 2007/08, an interesting illustration of the level of churn was included in the Wolf Report\textsuperscript{182} (Figure 38).

\textsuperscript{179} Department for Education, September 2014, ‘Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training: Statutory guidance for local authorities’
\textsuperscript{181} Local Government Association, October 2013, ‘Tracking Young People: A ‘how to’ guide for councils’
The task of tracking is further complicated if young people move out of the area or into the area to/from another local authority or, even more so, Wales or Scotland; while Welsh and Scottish local authorities would be expected to liaise with their English counterparts, this is not a statutory requirement\(^{183}\).

A further complication with tracking young people relates to the delay in receiving data that confirms the actual activity of individual young people. While the September Guarantee identifies the expected destination of a specific young person following their statutory school life, it is the statistics produced by other bodies that confirms the actual activity of the young person. Quite often this lack of timeliness in the delay of the receipt of the actual destination of a young person following statutory school can negatively impact the local authority's ability to contact and influence the young person's likelihood of becoming NEET. For instance, the Annual Activity Summary, published by the Department for Education, relates to actual activity...
on the 1st November; some 6 months after the September Guarantee has been completed.

While it is clear that robust tracking is essential to ensuring that suitable education and provision is available in a given area, a key concern for local authorities in tracking young people is that they are expected to meet the costs incurred in the delivery of their duties from their central budget in a time of austerity and change. Given the complexity of their local environment in relation to the potential destinations of young people, it can often be difficult for local authorities to develop and manage monitoring systems that are fully effective due to the number of relationships that would be required to collect and collate the data accurately and in a timely manner within the budgets that are available.

Although local authorities have a statutory duty to enforce participation and the expectation is that those with the highest levels of NEET or ‘unknown’ destinations would face increased scrutiny, to date the government has not prosecuted. It should also be noted that, as local authorities have the ‘freedom and flexibility’ to decide how they should meet their statutory duty to collect and manage their local CCIS, there will be varying levels of accuracy in the statistics that are produced. This may mean that a local authority with a very low NEET or ‘unknown’ figure is not collecting the data accurately.

A further difficulty of tracking young people that are NEET relates to those aged 19 years of age or older.

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186 Department for Education, September 2014, ‘Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training: Statutory guidance for local authorities’
188 Local Government Association, October 2013, ‘Tracking Young People: A ‘how to’ guide for councils’
190 Department for Education, September 2014, ‘Participation of Young People in Education, Employment or Training: Statutory guidance for local authorities’
While the government’s primary emphasis relates to 16-18 year old NEET, the population that are NEET and aged 19+ is also a concern. Tracking people that are aged 19+ is particularly difficult as they start to live more independently and are more likely to move into higher or further education or leave their local area in search of employment.\textsuperscript{191}

The Department for Education has identified that it needs to identify and share good practice on tracking young people.\textsuperscript{192}

4.3.3.7 Summary

The use of a variety of monitoring systems within the UK is both problematic and a benefit. While the use of such a range of differing monitoring systems complicates the collection and analysis of NEET, NET and participation statistics, the ability to cross-reference and compare data that is measuring the same subject through different methodologies provides an excellent opportunity to assess the accuracy of the statistics.

The statistics that should generate the most accurate level of information are those which measure the actual activity of the whole population; this is the participation statistics and that produced in monitoring the current activity of the individual (i.e. NCCIS, Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living). These reports focus on the whole population and are not, therefore, prone to the multiple errors concerned with sampling. However, monitoring systems that measure actual activity are time delayed due to the many complexities of collating data from multiple sources in a quality controlled manner.

Labour Force Survey statistics do not provide the same level of accuracy but, as they are produced quarterly, they report more timely information.

It is interesting to note that the quarterly Labour Force Survey sampled estimates for Q4 appear to be consistent (using a 95% confidence interval) with the

\textsuperscript{191} Local Government Association, October 2013, ‘Tracking Young People: A ‘how to’ guide for councils’

\textsuperscript{192} House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 14\textsuperscript{th} January 2015, ‘16- to 18-Year Old Participation in Education and Training’, Thirty-first Report of the Session 2014-15
annual actual activity produced at a time lag. This means that it is reasonable to use the Labour Force Survey sample to estimate a timely figure for the number of NEET and NET rather than relying on statistics that are six months lagged at the time of publication and 18 months lagged before new statistics are updated. The annually produced statistics based on the whole population can then be used as a gauge to verify accuracy.

The success of the comparative statistics is heavily related to the ability of the UK Statistics Authority in certifying compliance for 'National Statistics'. The UK Statistics Authority has the legally binding ability to enforce 'National Statistics' as the UK Government has the overall power with national policy regardless of other strategies at a devolved level.

Furthermore, the UK statistics benefit from a very similar educational system with a common statutory leaving age and a linked examination structure. This makes consistent definitions and methodologies much easier and accurate.

The UK’s ability to legally enforce a consistent set of definitions and methodologies and measure a very similar educational system across each part of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland leads to a much more accurate set of statistics compared to those produced by Eurostat, which must work with many different historical and cultural systems.

Even within the UK, though, the monitoring system which would generate the most accurate and most timely NEET, NET and participation statistics is far from perfect. The CCIS and Summary Statistics for Attainment, Leaver Destinations & Healthy Living statistics currently focus on too many data sources with no legal enforcement on accurate completion. This has led, in common with the EU’s Labour Force Survey, to a wide gap in the application and accuracy of the monitoring systems at a local level. This makes comparability extremely difficult.

It should also be remembered that the statistics published in the UK on a national basis are related to national targets and are not based on the EU target of Early School Leavers. Therefore, these statistics are not,
in any meaningful way, comparative to the Early School Leaver statistics in other EU countries.

4.4 Comparative Analysis
Each of the partner countries have systems that monitor the circumstances of young people at the end of their compulsory education.

As shown by the detailed national commentaries earlier in this section, each country creates its own distinct solutions that are conditioned in particular by:

- national priorities in education and socio-economic policies
- the degree of centralization of education management
- the type and frequency of data collected

4.4.1 National Priorities in Education and Socio-Economic Policy
The United Kingdom is the only country participating in the project and, indeed the EU, that has not adopted a national target rate for Early School Leavers in line with the Europe 2020 strategy set for the European Union; rather, the UK statistics are linked with their national objectives and do not relate to the specific target of the European Union in terms of the rate of Early School Leavers. Internal monitoring systems focus on measuring NEET, NET and the participation of 16-18-year-olds in education, vocational training and employment and, while these are somewhat different to the Early School Leaver phenomena (although there is some level of overlap), in this regard they are consistent with paragraph 85 of the Resolution of the European Parliament of 1 December 2011 concerning the prevention of Early School Leavers.\(^\text{193}\)

Italy has set an Early School Leaver target rate of 15% by 2020 and has implemented solutions for monitoring this. However, in Italy, the main purpose of the Early School Leaver monitoring is to reduce the rate of NEETs. According to a national statistical analysis carried out in 2013, Italy has one of the highest percentage of people below 30 years of age who are not in education, training and employment among European Union countries.

Poland differs from both of the other partner countries in that the 10% Early School Leaver rate set as a target in the EU had already been achieved, based on the Polish application of the EU’s Early School Leaver definition. As such, Poland could autonomously determine the target rate at 4.5% by 2020,

according to its own educational policy and socio-economic needs.

In Poland, it is assumed that the achievement of the strategic objectives of the national educational policy will be supported by the implementation of two EU investment priorities included in the Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020, including a reduction of Early School Leavers and promoting equal access to good-quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education.

In Poland, the level of youth unemployment (under 25 years of age) in 2011 was 25.8%\(^\text{194}\); one of the highest in the EU. Just like in the other partner countries, it is essential to link data on Early School Leavers to the issues of young people’s professional activity.

4.4.2 The Degree of Centralization in Education Policy Management

Both in the UK and in Italy there is a decentralized system of education policy management.

In the UK, it results in the transfer of responsibility for monitoring the education and employment to the devolved authorities of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In England this task is performed by specially appointed institutions. As such, the collection and transmission of information concerning participation in education, vocational training and employment from various entities responsible for public statistics is a complex process. The UK is characterized by a multiplicity of sources of information on NEET, NET and participation. The ability to compare data from this range of different monitoring systems allows data to be verified on a regular basis for accuracy.

At the same time, despite many strategies at a decentralized level, the UK Government is an overriding authority over state policy and uses the national statistical institution (Office of National Statistics) to certify and approve ‘national statistics’ that have comparable methodologies.

In Italy, the educational participation of students is monitored through two registers: a national student register and a regional student register. The creation of separate registers is associated with the specific tasks in the field of education that are designated at the level of economically diverse regions throughout the country.

\(^{194}\) www.eurostat.ec.europa.eu
Each region in Italy must have its own monitoring system and implement projects to reduce the number of students leaving school before obtaining an upper-secondary school diploma or professional qualifications. The Italian Statistical Office publishes general data on education and vocational training.

In Poland, the management of education is centralized at the state level. Early School Leaver monitoring takes place in a uniform manner all over the country through the Education Information System (SIO) together with procedures controlling compulsory schooling and education and data collected through the Labour Force Survey conducted by the Central Statistical Office (GUS).

At the central level, no model of monitoring the fulfillment of compulsory education by young people under 18 years of age has been created; local governments (municipalities) are responsible for developing their own solutions.

4.4.3 The Type and Frequency of Data Collection
An analysis of the various Early School Leaver monitoring systems in Italy, Poland and the UK shows that slightly different data is collected from each population.

The UK is distinguished by a situation in which ‘national statistics’ includes several categories of data combining the issues of education and the labour market. In England as well as in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, once a quarter, estimates concerning the rate of young people who are categorized as NEET and NET are prepared through the Labour Force Survey.

Additionally, annually-focused data is collected and this acts as a verification tool. In England, for example, statistics on the highest level of qualifications, participation and achievements in education of adults (19+) and all age (16+) apprenticeships, as well as participation in education, training and employment of 16-18 year olds are collected. A National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS), which is created on the basis of the Local Authorities’ Client Caseload Information System (CCIS), is also worth emphasizing. Its aim is to collect information on an individualised basis for every young person living in the local authority in order to identify those young people who do not participate in education or are at risk of dropping out, and then to apply appropriate measures. In this respect, like during the monitoring of the fulfillment of the obligation of education in Poland, local authorities have autonomy in the collection and management of local data. In Italy and Poland, like in the UK,
there are also solutions which allow the collection of actual information about participation in education on an individualised basis.

Furthermore, in the UK, the data on local labour markets concerning the participation of young people in education and the labour market (the percentage of young people aged 16-24 who are NEET in Wales) or the information on employment, underemployed, lack of activity and participation of young people in the labour market (Scotland) is provided by statistics produced annually by the devolved authorities. The Scottish Government also conducts research showing how performance in school influences what happens to the student in the first year after leaving school.

In Italy, a system created on the basis of the Regional Student Register is aimed at ongoing monitoring of the fulfillment of compulsory education for 16 year olds as well as monitoring whether young people aged 16-18 take advantage of the right to education and training. The present system allows for the tracking of educational paths of individual students. It collects detailed data about the students (including assigning an identifier that follows a student throughout the schooling period) such as the date of birth, place of birth (in the country or abroad), gender, nationality, place of residence, attendance and age in the first year of attendance (in case of students from abroad).

The National Register of Students collects data on the fulfillment of the right and obligation of education and training and is integrated with regional registers.

The monitoring systems adopted in Italy at national and regional levels make it possible to identify people at risk of becoming Early School Leavers.

In Poland, the main tool used to monitor Early School Leavers at the state level is a system of education information. It collects data such as the success or failure in obtaining promotions by students, completing or not completing school, participation in vocational qualifications courses (specifying the qualifications), the place of completing an apprenticeship and, in case of students from upper-secondary schools providing vocational training, the date of commencing and completing school; this data is collected twice a year. Like in Italy, activities at school and local authority level, which consist of ongoing monitoring of the fulfillment of compulsory schooling and the obligation of education by individual students, complement the system. It should be noted that, in Poland, the Central Statistical Office
classifies data on participants in the educational process and in the labour market separately.

Poland utilises data concerning Early School Leavers and the labour market activities in the development of strategies implemented at the state level (e.g. the National Development Strategy until 2020.).

4.4.4 Summary
These analysed systems confirm that all countries participating in the project have taken actions to implement the Resolution of the European Parliament of 1 December 2011 concerning the prevention of Early School Leavers.

While the UK does not monitor Early School Leavers except through the Labour Force Survey, in both Italy and Poland there is a similar source of additional data on Early School Leavers. Data for the internal registers and monitoring systems concerning Early School Leavers is taken from schools and local authorities, as well as from established tools of public statistics which have different characteristics in each country.

In the UK, as well as in Italy and Poland, the link between participation in education and a later professional activity is emphasized. Information about people who do not participate in education, vocational training and employment (NEET) is collected. In Poland, official statistics collect data on the basis of the Labour Force Survey, while in the United Kingdom and Italy this data is also collated from other sources.
5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report has focused on a number of different dimensions of the issues related to Early School Leaver monitoring systems across the EU. From this we are able to make a series of recommendations for the improvement of both pan-EU and country-specific monitoring systems that will ensure that the statistics produced are both more accurate and more timely.

For the EU to effectively manage the Early School Leaver phenomena, it is essential that policy makers are receiving accurate information regarding the current situation locally, nationally and across the whole of the EU. As such, these recommendations are key to the future efforts to limit the issues of Early School Leavers.

**Recommendation 1: A Pan-European Response**

The phenomena of Early School Leavers is a concern for local and national policy makers but, increasingly, this is becoming a key area for EU level strategists. This can be seen in the fact that the reduction of Early School Leavers is one of only five headline indicators in the Europe 2020 strategy, however, it is then surprising that there are different levels of commitment to this phenomenon across the EU member states.

With the increasing level of interconnections and interdependability across the member states of the EU, the importance of a strong and competitive workforce throughout the whole of the EU is clear. The ability of people to travel, without impediment, across every state within the EU, means that the education level of people in a particular EU member state will increasingly directly affect the economic strength of a working population in a different EU country. Conversely, the lack of employability skills of people in a particular EU member state will increasingly negatively impact the unemployment situation and benefits costs in a different EU country.

The issue of Early School Leavers cannot now be seen as a local or national phenomenon; rather, it is a fluidly moving phenomenon that will only be managed and reduced through a pan-EU response.

**Recommendation 2: Increase the Power of Eurostat**

At present, Eurostat is reliant upon the national statistical institutions in each EU member state for the collection, collation and distribution of statistical data relating to the Early School Leaver phenomenon. Each national statistical institution operates within a different political framework with different levels of skills, scope and financial resources; this negatively impacts the comparability of data collected nationally and published through the EU’s Education & Training Monitor.

Eurostat currently has little power to enforce statistically comparable methodologies upon national statistical institutes and this leads to different sample sizes, rotation periods, response rates, timeliness and the punctuality of data, which then impacts the accuracy of the Early School Leaver statistics within the EU’s Education & Training Monitor.
Given that the Early School Leaver statistics produced by Eurostat (in conjunction with each member state’s national statistical institution) are used by EU policy makers to monitor and manage a European phenomena, that has been defined as one of only five headline indicators for the Europe 2020 strategy, it is concerning that the statistics and trends that are determined do not show comparability across all EU member states.

The only way to ensure that all of the data that is collected, collated, distributed and analysed is totally accurate and comparable is to enable Eurostat to legally enforce pan-EU agreed statistical methodologies across all national statistical institutions, similar to that which the UK’s Office of National Statistics is able to certify as ‘national statistics’.

**Recommendation 3: Comparable Definitions of Early School Leavers**

While there is currently a written Early School Leaver definition, it is clear that this has been applied differently across the EU member states. By applying the Early School Leaver definition in an inconsistent manner, the statistics that are produced are invalidated for comparison purposes.

It is essential to the management of the Early School Leavers that the phenomena is monitored across the whole of the EU so that areas of good practice can be identified and implemented in other EU member states or regions; however, this can only be identified and implemented if there is a genuine area of best practice rather than statistical manipulation.

The current use of the ISCED framework is not appropriate for the accurate comparison of educational attainment for school leavers across many different educational systems. While a common educational system across the EU would certainly simplify the comparability of school leaver attainment, the level of historical and cultural differences throughout the EU would mean that it would be unreasonable to expect, or even desire, a common educational system. Rather there is a need for a better measurement of educational attainment that considers the age of the school leaver and the quality of both the educational system and the methods of assessment to ensure that school leavers are consistently defined as Early School Leavers regardless of the country in which they have undertaken their education.

Should such a measurement not be available, it is important that that Early School Leaver statistics are divided so that only comparable educational systems are compared against each other and the differences are clearly and explicitly stated so that policy makers are aware and make the necessary adaptations in their strategies.

**Recommendation 4: Improve and Extend the Use of Electronic Systems**

A major concern of the current Early School Leaver monitoring systems is that they are time bound and are often not sufficiently timely to make rapid changes to current policy.
The use of electronic monitoring systems across many EU member states has led to more immediate collection, collation and analysis of the data, which can allow an extremely timely understanding of the Early School Leaver phenomena with a very short timelag.

However, there is still much work to be undertaken to link these current electronic systems so that there is an interlinked understanding and response to the Early School Leaver phenomena.

Perhaps an example of good practice, yet poor implementation, has been the UK’s Client Caseload Information System that individually tracks each young person when they complete compulsory schooling. The ability to manage young people on an individual basis in real time has outstanding potential for managing the Early School Leaver phenomena throughout the EU. However, the implementation of this system has, so far, been poor due to the complexities of the network connections required, with limited and reducing budgets, to effectively track the current location of each young person in schools, colleges, training providers, employment, job centres, health establishments, judiciary system or any place a young person may be located.

While there are currently implementation problems with effectively managing Early School Leavers on an individual, there is no reason to believe that the level of sophistication of electronic systems cannot be improved in the coming years so that interconnections can be extended so that accurate information is collected, collated, analysed and managed in real time.

**Recommendation 5: Focus on Early School Leavers and NEET**

Although the Early School Leaver and the NEET phenomena are often considered to be different elements of the same issue, it is clear that both phenomena, while having some level of overlap, are very different issues and that monitoring them will lead to different conclusions about the circumstances of young people.

While Early School Leavers and NEET cover a similar topic and age demographic, they do not have a strong relationship and, therefore, cannot be used as indicators monitoring the same phenomenon.

Early School Leavers are concerned with long-term strategies that believe that a well-educated population will ultimately be employed in high skilled employment.

NEET is concerned with short-term strategies that believe that everyone should be in work today regardless of the population skill level or the required skill level of the workforce.
Both the Early School Leaver and the NEET phenomena are important for individual regions, countries and across the EU but for different reasons.

It is essential that the EU develop a high skilled workforce to adapt for, and take advantage of, anticipated future workforce skill levels. However, no country can finance and support a high skilled population that is unemployed for anything other than the very short term; an unemployed, highly skilled population has been known to move towards locations that can support their career and financial aspirations and this will be increasingly possible and likely as the EU’s human capital becomes increasingly mobile and/or transient.

The financial support of an education system that develops a well-educated population that does then not pay taxation, due to unemployment or emigration, will lead to an unsustainable financial deficit for any country.

As such, it is important that EU member states, and the EU as a whole, focus on Early School Leavers and NEET as overlapping but, ultimately, different phenomena that require complementary but independent responses.
6. CONCLUSIONS

This report concerns systems for monitoring Early School Leavers, both at European level and for specific countries. Partners from Italy, Poland and the UK focused on attempts to harmonise the system of monitoring Early School Leavers across the EU, while describing in detail monitoring systems that are used at national level. Geographical location has enabled an analysis from the perspective of the countries located in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and Western Europe.

The analysis of the phenomenon of Early School Leavers has led to the following conclusions:

1. **The importance of limiting Early School Leavers across the European Union is clear.** Many studies have sought to understand the synergies that can be gained through a well-educated workforce and society. These studies have identified that, by reducing Early School Leavers, countries can increase employment, health and wealth while reducing crime and benefits costs.

2. **It has been clear that Italy, Poland and the UK take the issues of education and training for young people very seriously and they invest considerable time, effort and finance in attempting to monitor this phenomenon; although the UK is the only country in the EU to refuse to set a national target for Early School Leavers, instead focusing on NEET, NET and Participation statistics on a national basis.**

3. **The EU Labour Force Survey is Europe’s largest household survey.** While Eurostat have worked hard to create and manage a harmonised monitoring system across Europe, there are still too many discrepancies and inconsistencies in the applications of essential definitions, sample size, sample and non-sample errors, rotation periods, response rates, timeliness and punctuality of data to make the statistics produced suitable for accurate cross-country comparison.

4. **The biggest cause for concern with the Labour Force Survey’s Early School Leaver statistics is the inconsistent application of the Early School Leaver definition;** this means that young people with a specific circumstance could be defined as an Early School Leaver in one country while not being defined as an Early School Leaver in another country depending on which country was measuring the data. This is a major concern for comparing Early School Leavers on a pan-European basis.

5. **There are even bigger discrepancies and inconsistencies in how each country measures Early School Leavers on a national basis.** The UK, for instance, does not even attempt to measure Early School Leavers except for the legally compulsory requirement of the EU Labour Force Survey; rather it concentrates on NEET, NET and Participation statistics.
6. This research, however, has identified that the current systems make it very difficult to make comparisons of current Early School Leaver statistics and the progress towards defined targets across Member States of the EU.

7. Each country has developed its own monitoring system, based on its own national priority and historical and cultural differences, which are different in methodology and application.

8. Ultimately, while Italy, Poland and the UK all accept the dangers of young people not having the appropriate skills to enter the workforce, national policies within each country, that are built on historical and cultural differences in educational systems and economic priorities, and which operate independently from other countries, severely hamper the ability and effectiveness of comparing Early School Leaver statistics across EU countries and limits a pan-European response to the phenomenon.
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