



Brussels, 24.3.2025
SWD(2025) 72 final

PART 1/3

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Situation of young people in the European Union

Accompanying the document

[...]

**Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European
Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the
implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2022-2024)**

{COM(2025) 117 final} - {SWD(2025) 73 final}

Contents and table of figures

Contents

Contents and table of figures	1
Abbreviations	4
Introduction	6
Sources and scope	7
1. Youth demography	8
1.1. Young people in the total population.....	8
2. Participation	12
2.1. Young people’s voting behaviour	12
2.2. Young people and the European elections.....	14
2.3. Opinion and trust in the EU	18
2.4. Participation in various activities	20
3. Employment and entrepreneurship	24
3.1. Employment and participation in the labour market.....	24
3.2. Unemployment	26
3.3. Young people not in employment, education or training	29
3.4. Entrepreneurship	31
3.5. Traineeships ()	34

Table of figures

Contents and table of figures.....	1
Introduction	6
Sources and scope	7
1. Youth demography.....	8
Figure 1.1: Ratio of young people (15–29) in the total population on 1 January, by country, 2023	8
Figure 1.2: Ratio of young people (15–29) in the total population on 1 January, by country, 2013 and 2023	9
Figure 1.3: Ratio of young people (15–29) born in a non-EU country in the total youth population, by country, 2023	10
Figure 1.4: Projected proportion of children and young people (0–19) in the total population, EU average, 2023–2073	10
Figure 1.5: Projected decrease in the proportion of children and young people (0–19) in the total population, by country, 2023 and 2073	11
2. Participation.....	12
Figure 2.1: Age for voting and for standing as candidate in national elections, 2021	12
Figure 2.2: Voting behaviour of young people (15–24), by country, 2023	13
Figure 2.3: Age for voting in the European elections, 2023	14
Figure 2.4: Share of young people (15–24) who think it is important to vote in the European elections, by country, 2023	15
Figure 2.5: Voting intentions of young people (15–30) in the 2024 European elections, by country, 2024	16
Figure 2.6: Reasons not to vote in 2024 European elections, by age group, EU average, 2024	17
Figure 2.7: Share of young people (15–24) trusting or not the EU, by country, 2023	18
Figure 2.8: Share of young people (15–24) who think the EU has a positive, neutral or negative image, by country, 2023	19
Figure 2.9: Share of young people participating in organised activities by type of activity, by age group, EU average, 2024	20
Figure 2.10: Share of young people (16–29) using internet for civic or political participation, by country, 2019 and 2023	21
Figure 2.11: National programmes for youth volunteering, 2022	22
Figure 2.12: Share of young people participating in activities organised by volunteering organisations, by age group and country, 2024	23
3. Employment and entrepreneurship	24
Figure 3.1: Rate of young people (15–29) participating in the labour market (activity rate), by country, 2019 and 2023	24
Figure 3.2: Employment rate of young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023	25
Figure 3.3: Unemployment rate of young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023	26
Figure 3.4: Unemployment rate of young people by age group (including population of working age 15–64), educational attainment, gender and level of disability, EU average, 2023	27
Figure 3.5: Unemployment ratio of young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023	28
Figure 3.6: Share of young people (15–29) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), by country, 2019 and 2023 ()	29
Figure 3.7: Share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), by age group, labour status, gender and level of disability, EU average, 2023	30
Figure 3.8: Self-employment as a percentage of total employment for young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023	31
Figure 3.9: Top three reasons driving and stopping young people (15–30) to start a business, EU average, 2023	32
Figure 3.10: Measures furthering entrepreneurial skills through non-formal learning, 2023	33



Figure 3.11: Share of young people (18–35) by number of traineeships done, by country, 2023	34
Figure 3.12: Share of young people (18–24 and 25–29) by their situation in the six months after their last traineeship, EU average, 2023	35

Abbreviations

Statistical codes

: Data not available

Country codes

EU	European Union Member States ⁽¹⁾	LV	Latvia
BE	Belgium	LT	Lithuania
BG	Bulgaria	LU	Luxembourg
CZ	Czechia	HU	Hungary
DK	Denmark	MT	Malta
DE	Germany	NL	Netherlands
EE	Estonia	AT	Austria
IE	Ireland	PL	Poland
EL	Greece	PT	Portugal
ES	Spain	RO	Romania
FR	France	SI	Slovenia
HR	Croatia	SK	Slovakia
IT	Italy	FI	Finland
CY	Cyprus	SE	Sweden

Non-EU Member States – Erasmus+ programme countries ⁽²⁾

IS	Iceland	RS	Serbia
LI	Liechtenstein	TR	Turkey
MK	North Macedonia		
NO	Norway		

⁽¹⁾ Alphabetical order according to country's name in national language.
⁽²⁾ Alphabetical order according to codes.



Other abbreviations

EU	European Union
p.p.	percentage points

Introduction

The report outlines several interconnected aspects influencing the situation of young people in the European Union (EU), encompassing demographics, employment, education, social inclusion, political engagement, environmental activism, and health. These topics are not isolated but are intricately related, with many factors influencing others, creating a complex landscape for policy makers and stakeholders.

Young people in the EU continue to demonstrate interest in political and community participation. Over 70% report voting in elections, and many express trust in the EU and a positive perception of its role. Participation in organised activities, including volunteering, further reflects the commitment of young Europeans to societal engagement. These activities foster a sense of community and can provide opportunities to build social networks and skills, thereby indirectly combating social exclusion.

Young people are also increasingly vocal about environmental issues, particularly climate change, which they see as the most pressing global problem. The green transition offers both opportunities and challenges for young people. On the one hand, the transition to a greener economy creates new employment opportunities; on the other, it may impact young people in sectors that are less environmentally sustainable. Young people believe that education has played a crucial role in equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed for environmental change, which is linked with broader issues like education.

The EU has seen a decline in the proportion of young people in its population over the past decade, and this trend is expected to continue. This demographic shift is closely linked with intergenerational fairness, as a shrinking youth population raises concerns about the sustainability of social systems. Fewer young people supporting a growing elderly population could lead to increased strain on public services, social security systems, and economic productivity.

In this context, youth unemployment is an important element. Approximately half of the EU's youth is active in the labour market, but 10% of young people are unemployed. Lower educational attainment and disabilities are significant contributors to higher unemployment rates. A worrying trend is the high proportion of youth classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training), with over 1 in 10 young people in this category. These employment challenges not only affect the economic prospects of young people but also overlap with other social issues, such as social exclusion.

Social exclusion and poverty are significant challenges for young people in the EU, particularly those with lower education levels or with disabilities. Nearly a quarter of the youth population is at risk of poverty and social exclusion, with young people in work also vulnerable to poverty, especially those in precarious jobs. This situation is deeply intertwined with youth unemployment, as lack of access to stable employment opportunities exacerbates financial insecurity, which in turn limits access to education, housing, and healthcare.

Pressures of unemployment, lower education, and social exclusion can intensify the mental health challenges young people face, creating a circle that can worsen both individual well-being and societal outcomes. Almost half of young people reported emotional or psychosocial problems in the past year, with global events like the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical crises contributing to heightened

stress levels. In the opinion of young people, the EU plays a critical role in supporting mental health initiatives, including access to diagnosis, treatment, and care.

Data highlight that 4 in 10 young people completed tertiary education in 2023. However, early leaving from education and training remains a concern, particularly among young men. Education is closely linked to digital skills, with those having higher formal education being more digitally connected and competent. The vast majority of young people think education equips them with the necessary digital skills to identify disinformation.

With 16% of young people having studied or trained in another Member State, mobility is an essential aspect of education and training. However, financial barriers remain a significant obstacle for many, limiting their ability to take advantage of these opportunities. Youth mobility enhances personal development, broadens cultural understanding, and improves employability, particularly for those who learn new languages: 58% of young people think that learning another language enables them to work in another country.

Youth work, a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, is highly beneficial for supporting young people in overcoming the challenges they encounter in life. Guaranteeing the quality of youth work activities and facilitating the digitalisation of youth work modalities are priorities pursued by the majority of European countries.

Sources and scope

Relying on Eurostat data, Eurobarometer surveys and the Youth Wiki⁽³⁾, the report targets young people between 15 and 29 years of age. The analysis often distinguishes between subgroups aged 15 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 29. In a few cases, data for different youth age cohorts are represented, either because of the specifications of survey data, or because the issue in question affects a particular age group. In addition, for some indicators, data for older age groups and the total population are also included.

The reference year of the report is 2023, for which all data were available at the time of drafting. For some indicators, data for 2024 are employed. As far as the availability of data allows, the report illustrates the main trends occurred since 2019.

The analysis covers the EU Member States, and the other Erasmus+ programme countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye). As the data collection of Eurobarometer surveys does not include the latter, they are excluded from the relevant graphs.

⁽³⁾ The Youth Wiki is the platform reporting on national policies in the youth field. To access the most recent developments, see its website: <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

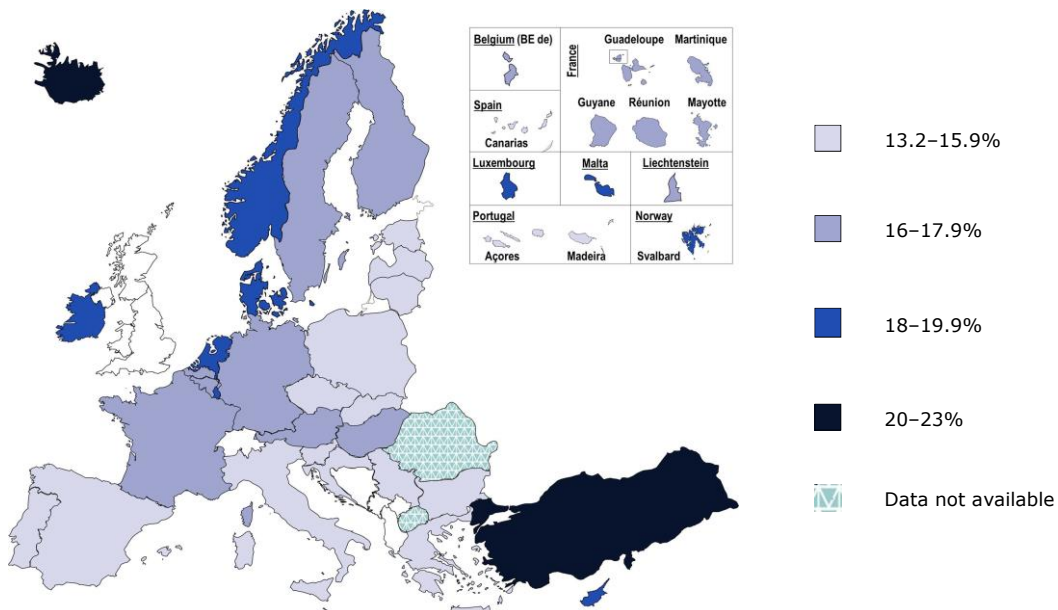
1. Youth demography

1.1. Young people in the total population

About 73 million young people aged 15–29 live in the EU.

Some countries in the northern region of the EU report the highest shares of young people in the total population. On the other hand, the ratio is lowest in countries in the south and east.

Figure 1.1: Ratio of young people (15–29) in the total population on 1 January, by country, 2023



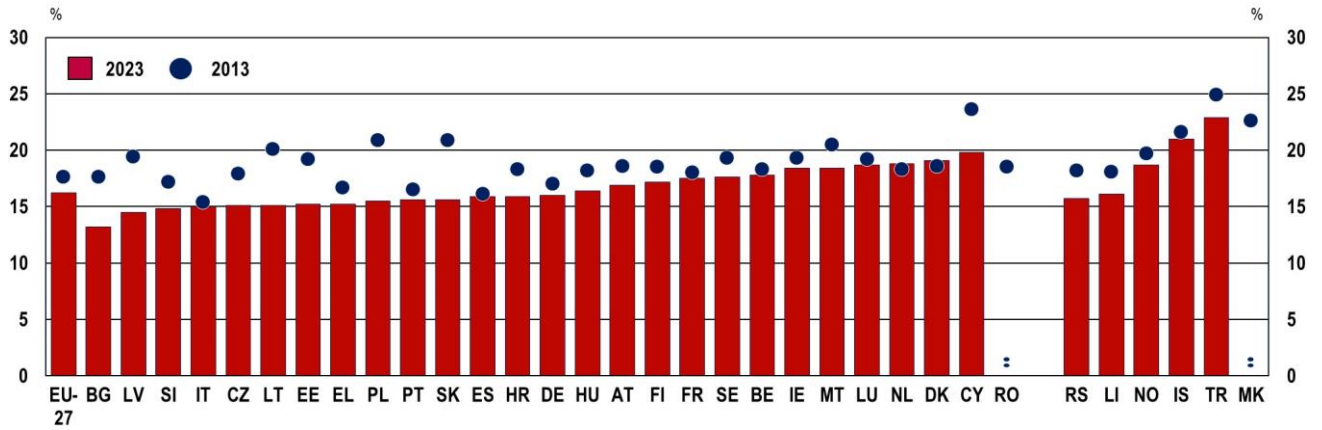
Source: Eurostat – Ratio of children and young people in the total population on 1 January ([youth_demo_020](#)).

Notes: Data extracted on 1.3.2024.

The youth population has slightly decreased over the past 10 years.

In the EU, the proportion of young people in the total population decreased from 17.6% in 2013 to 16.2% in 2023. In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as in Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia, the decrease has been more substantial (around 5%).

Figure 1.2: Ratio of young people (15–29) in the total population on 1 January, by country, 2013 and 2023



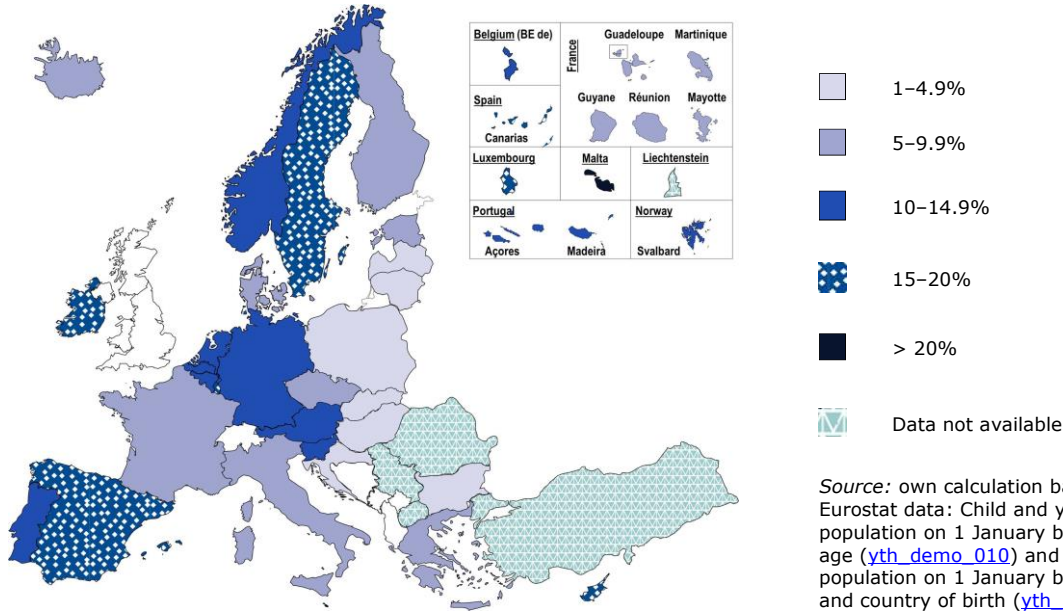
Source: Eurostat – Ratio of children and young people in the total population on 1 January ([youth_demo_020](#)).

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending ratio of young people (15–29) in the total population in 2023. Data extracted on 1.3.2024.

More than 7 million young people of non-EU origin live in the EU.

Countries in the northern and central regions of the EU record high percentages of young people of non-EU origin – together with Ireland, Spain, Cyprus and Portugal. Malta reports the highest percentage (almost one young person in three). Conversely, countries in eastern areas present lower ratios of young people born outside the EU.

Figure 1.3: Ratio of young people (15–29) born in a non-EU country in the total youth population, by country, 2023

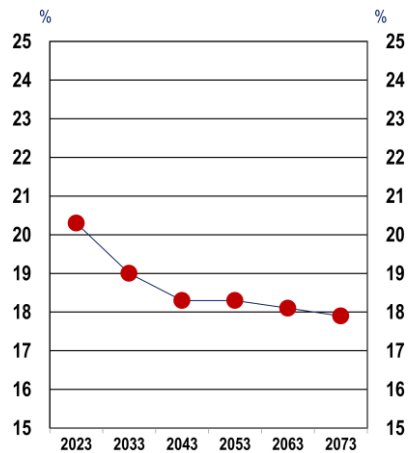


Notes: DE and IE, 2022 data. Data extracted on 22.4.2024.

Youth population is projected to decline in the future.

The share of children and young people aged between 0 and 19 is projected to shrink from 20% in 2023 to 18% in 2073.

Figure 1.4: Projected proportion of children and young people (0–19) in the total population, EU average, 2023–2073

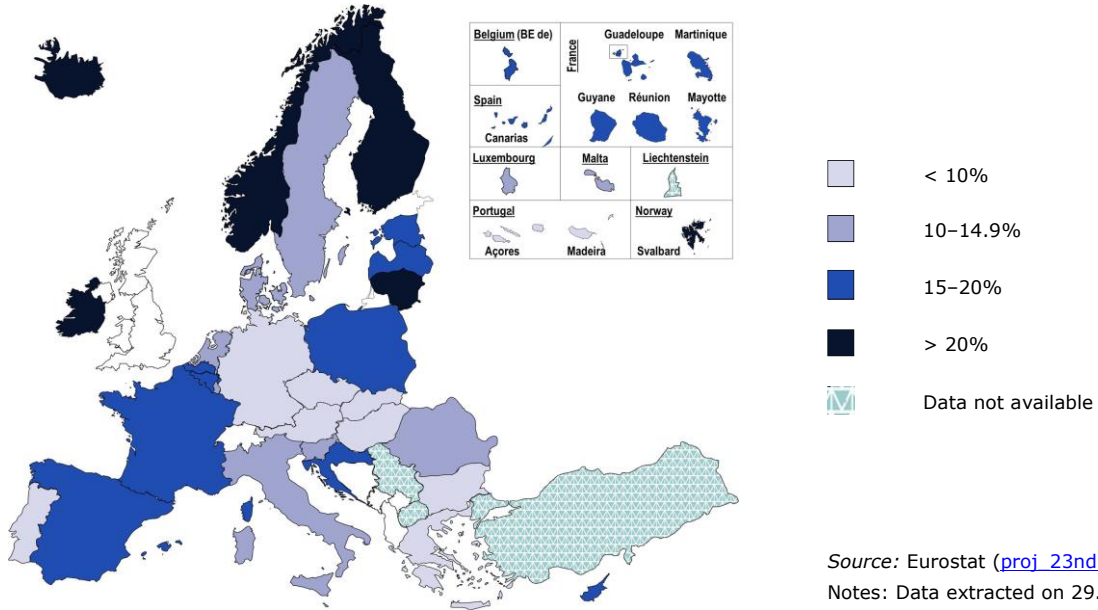


Source: Eurostat – Demographic balances and indicators by type of projection (proj_23ndbi).
Notes: Data extracted on 7.2.2024.

In some countries, the ratio of children and young people is projected to decrease more than 20%.

The highest decreases in the share of children and young people are projected to happen in some countries in the north of Europe, in Ireland and in Lithuania. The proportion of young people is expected to decline the least in the central areas of the EU, as well as in Bulgaria, Greece and Portugal.

Figure 1.5: Projected decrease in the proportion of children and young people (0–19) in the total population, by country, 2023 and 2073



2. Participation

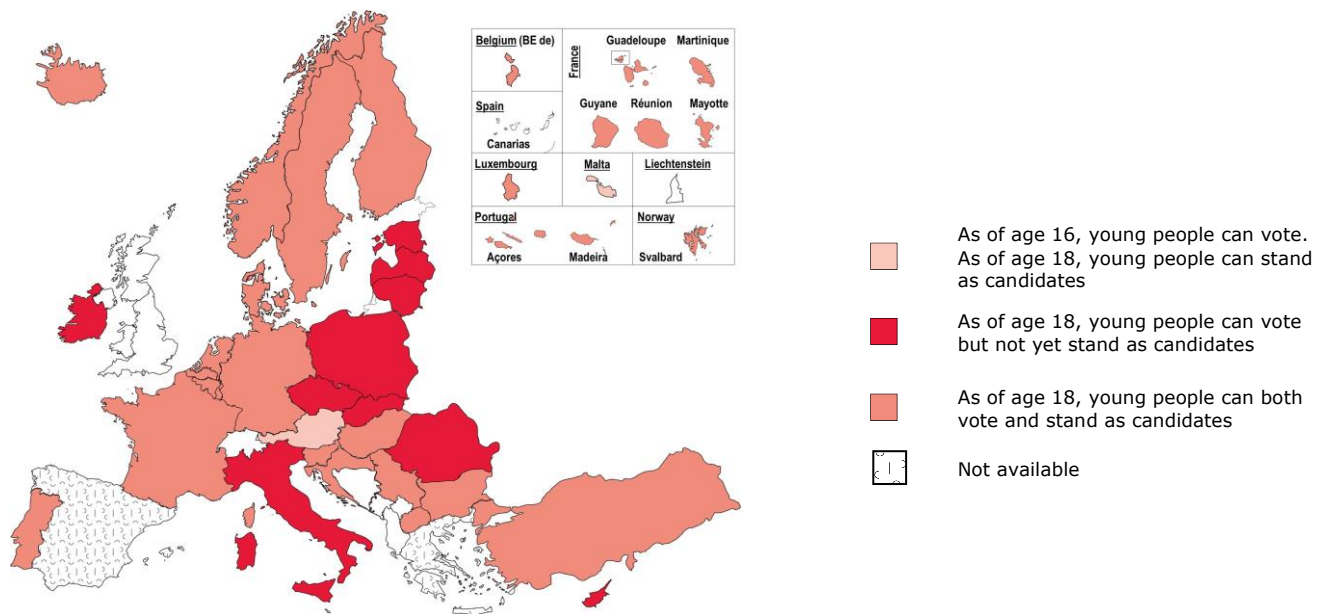
2.1. Young people's voting behaviour

In two thirds of European countries, young people can stand as candidates in national elections at the age of 18.

The voting age in most European countries for national elections is 18. Malta and Austria stand out as the only countries where citizens can vote in national elections from the age of 16. The age required to stand as candidates varies

across Europe, ranging from 18 to 25 years old.

Figure 2.1: Age for voting and for standing as candidate in national elections, 2021

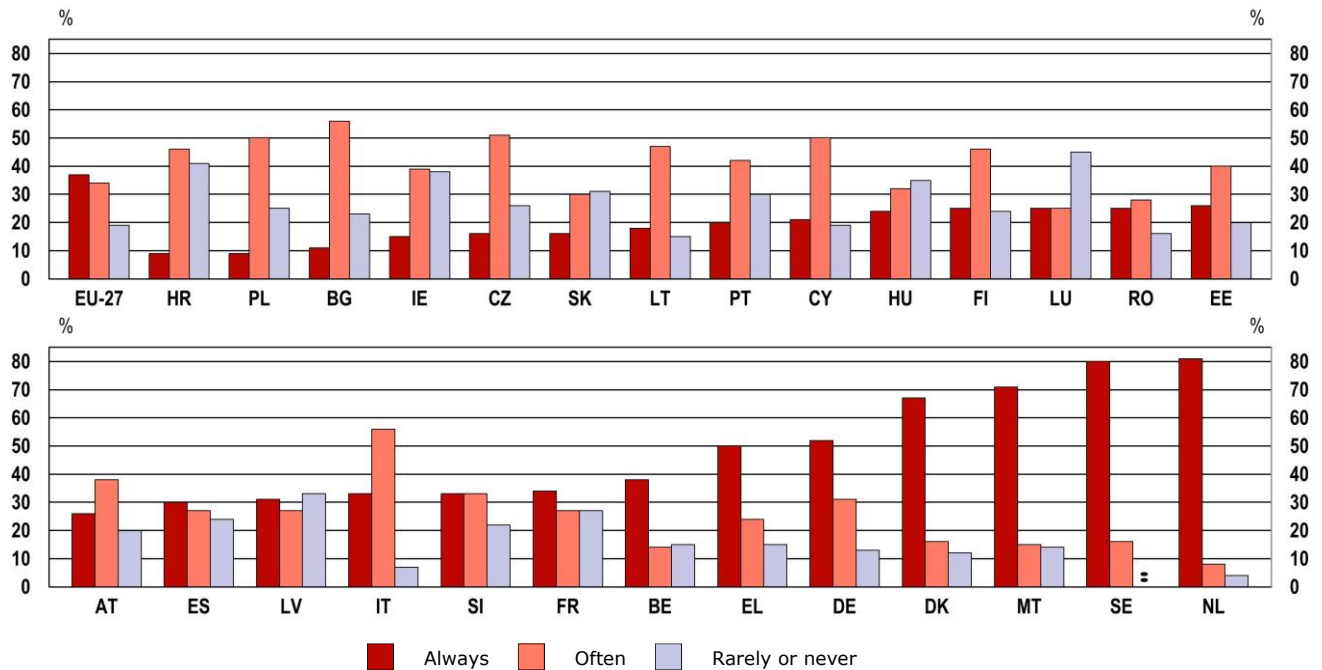


Source: Youth Wiki, '[Age for Voting and for Standing as a Candidate in National Elections \(September 2021\)](#)'.

Over 70% of young Europeans declare that they have voted in recent elections either always or often.

The Netherlands and Sweden have the highest proportion of young people reported having ‘always’ voted in the recent years. On the other hand, Ireland, Croatia and Luxembourg are the countries with the highest proportion of young people reporting having voted rarely or never in recent years. Overall, in the EU Member States, the percentage of young people rarely or never voting is below 20%.

Figure 2.2: Voting behaviour of young people (15–24), by country, 2023



Source: Eurobarometer European Parliament Spring 2023, VOLUME C. QA19. Let’s now talk about your personal voting behaviour. Which of the following best describes your voting behaviour in recent years, whether at the local or regional, national or European level?

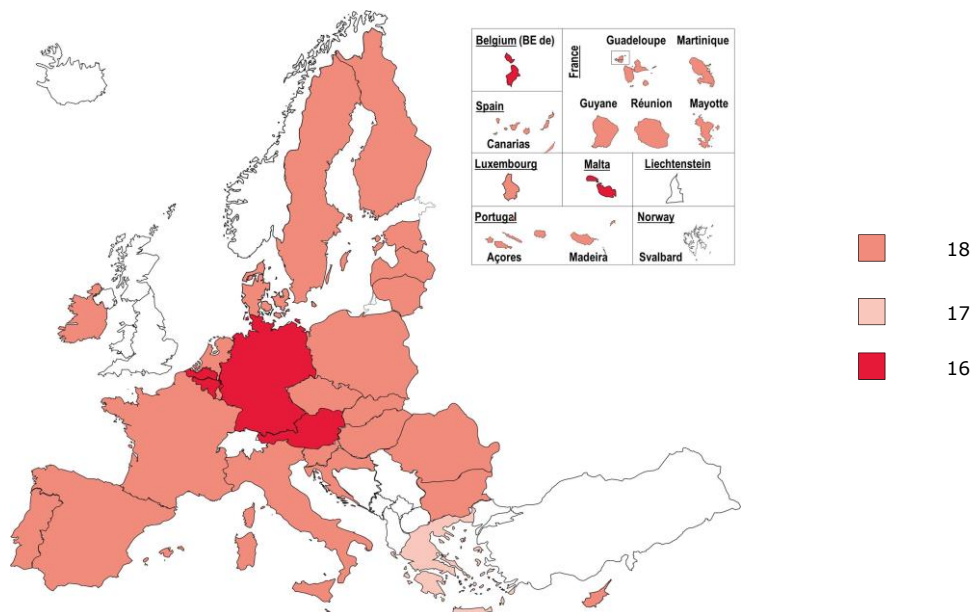
Notes: Base: Respondents aged 18 or more (except in Austria, aged 16 or more). Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people (15–24) who have always voted in recent elections. Data extracted on 14.12.2023.

2.2. Young people and the European elections

In five Member States, young people can vote in European elections below the age of 18.

In most Member States, young people can vote in European elections as from 18 years of age. However, there are a few exceptions. In Belgium, Germany, Malta and Austria, the voting age for European elections is 16, while Greece has set it at 17. In comparison to the 2019 European Parliament elections, two additional Member States, Belgium and Germany, have made it possible for 16-year-olds to vote.

Figure 2.3: Age for voting in the European elections, 2023



Source: European Parliamentary Research Service, '[Voting age for European elections](#)', May 2023, updated in August 2023.

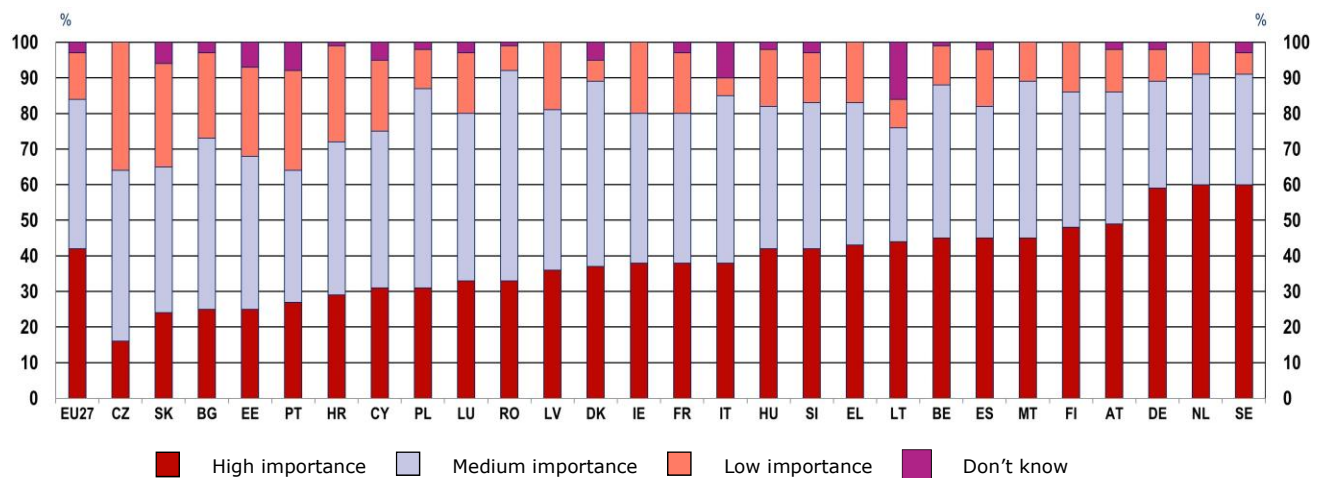
Notes: Data extracted on 14.12.2023.

In the EU, 2 in 5 young people aged 15–24 consider voting in European elections as highly important.

In 2023, among young people aged 15–24, 80% considered voting in the European elections to be either highly or moderately important, while less than 13% say it has low importance. Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, which

also report the highest participatory voting behaviour (as shown in Figure 2.2), had the highest share (around 60%) of young people considering voting in the European elections of high importance. On the contrary, Czechia, Portugal and Slovakia had the highest proportion of young people who consider voting in the European elections to be of low importance.

Figure 2.4: Share of young people (15–24) who think it is important to vote in the European elections, by country, 2023



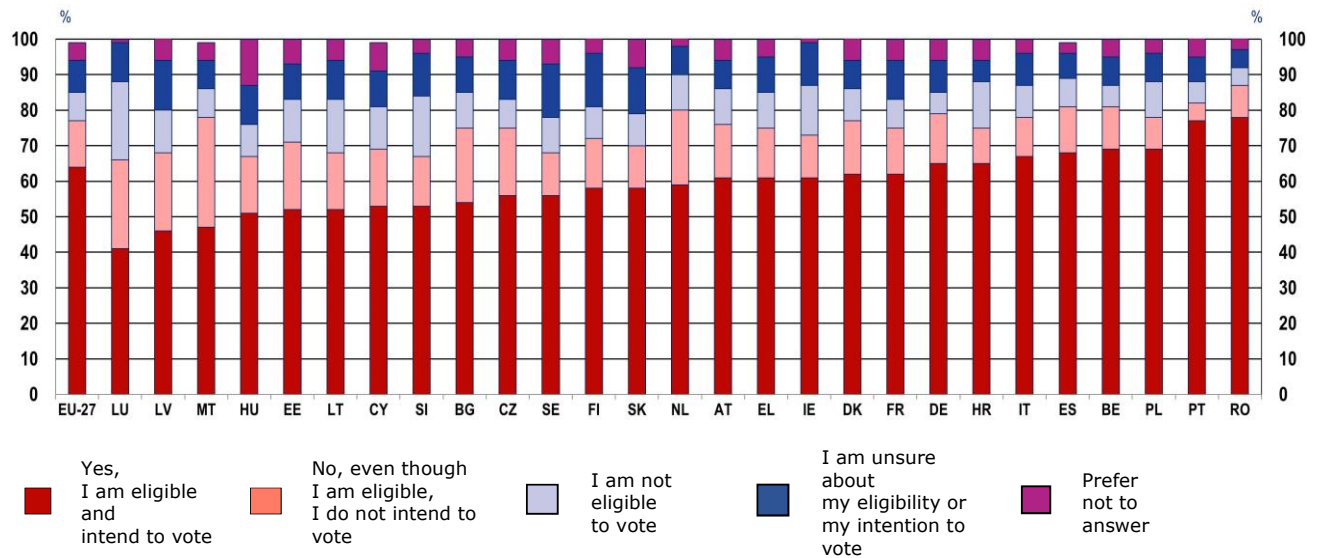
Source: [Eurobarometer European Parliament Spring 2023](#), VOLUME C. QA16a. Please tell how important or not it is for you personally to vote in the European elections.

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people (15–24) considering voting in European elections of 'high importance'. Data extracted on 14.12.2023.

In the EU, approximately two thirds of young people intended to vote in the 2024 EU elections.

Ahead of the 2024 European elections, in eight Member States the percentage of young people who intended to vote was above the EU average (64%), with peaks in Portugal and Romania (almost 80%). Conversely, the highest share of young people stating they did not intend to vote although eligible was recorded in Luxembourg and Malta (25% and 31%). In Latvia, Finland and Sweden, around 15% of young people did not know whether they were eligible to vote or whether they intended to vote.

Figure 2.5: Voting intentions of young people (15–30) in the 2024 European elections, by country, 2024



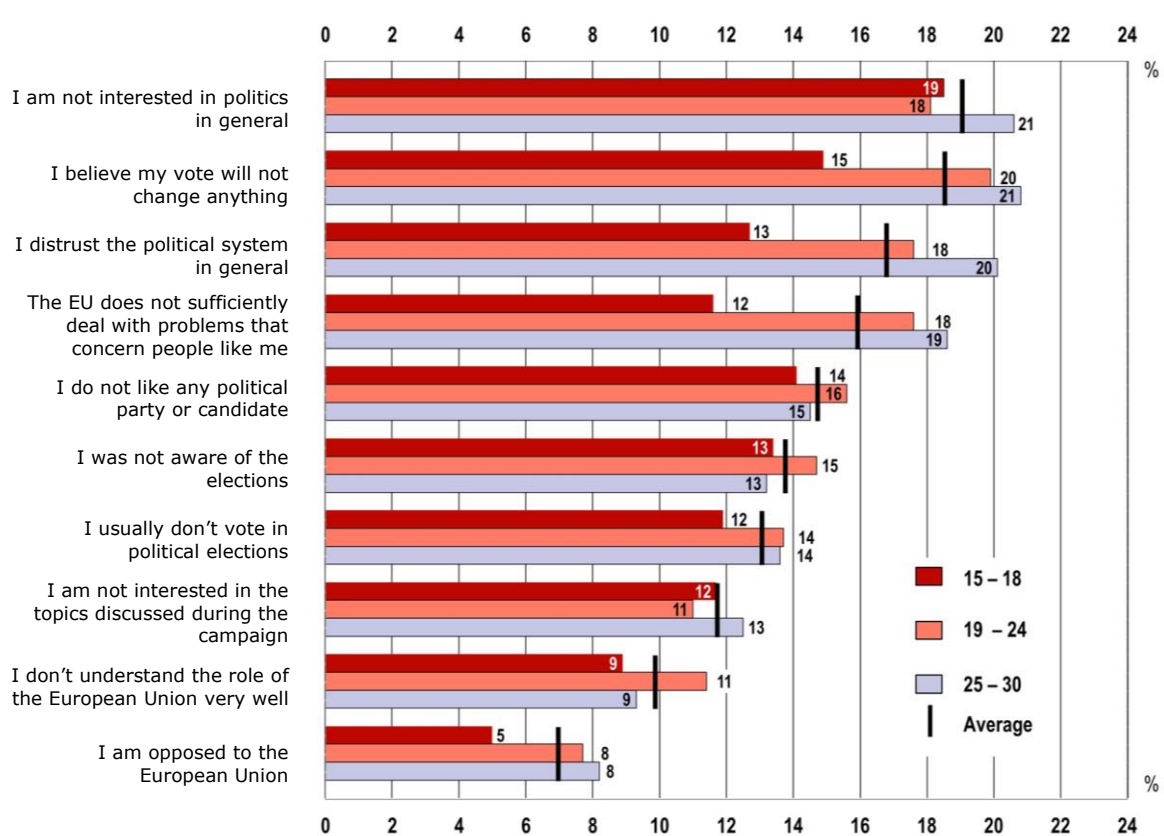
Source: [Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy](#), 2024, VOLUME A. Q13 Do you intend to vote in the upcoming European elections?

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people (15–30) intending to vote in the 2024 European elections. Data extracted on 13.5.2024.

In the EU, young people did not intend to vote in the 2024 European elections mostly because of a lack of interest in politics and the belief that their vote will not change anything.

Ahead of the 2024 European elections, among the reasons why young people (15–30) did not intend to vote, the first three related to a lack of interest in the political system in general, the disbelief that their vote really matters (both around 19%) and the distrust of the political system (around 17%). The second group of reasons was linked mainly to the relationship between young people and the EU. Among those with no intention to vote in elections, 16% did not believe the EU deals with young people’s problems or said that they did not like any political groups or candidate, while around 14% were not aware of the elections. 10% of young people declared they did not plan to vote because they did not understand the role of the EU, while 7% did not intend to take part in the elections because they are opposed to the EU.

Figure 2.6: Reasons not to vote in 2024 European elections, by age group, EU average, 2024



Source: [Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy](#), 2024, VOLUME B. Q14 What are your reasons for not planning to vote or being unsure about voting in the European elections? (Multiple answers possible).

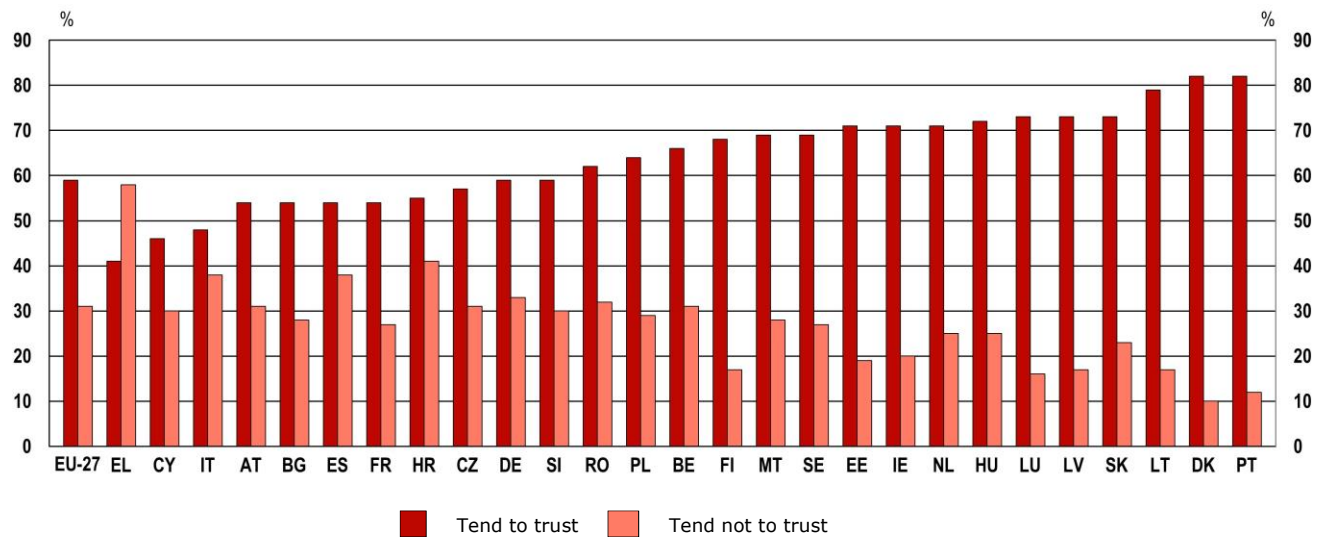
Notes: Data are ordered in decreasing order by share of young people (15–30) not intending to vote in the 2024 European elections. Data extracted on 13.5.2024.

2.3. Opinion and trust in the EU

Almost 60% of young Europeans aged 15–24 trust the EU.

Across the EU, in 16 Member States more than 60% of young people trust the EU, with peaks in Denmark, Luxembourg and Portugal. In these three countries, approximately four out of five young people express trust in the EU. Conversely, in nine Member States the share of young people who do not trust the EU is above the EU average (30%), with a peak of almost 60% in Greece.

Figure 2.7: Share of young people (15–24) trusting or not the EU, by country, 2023



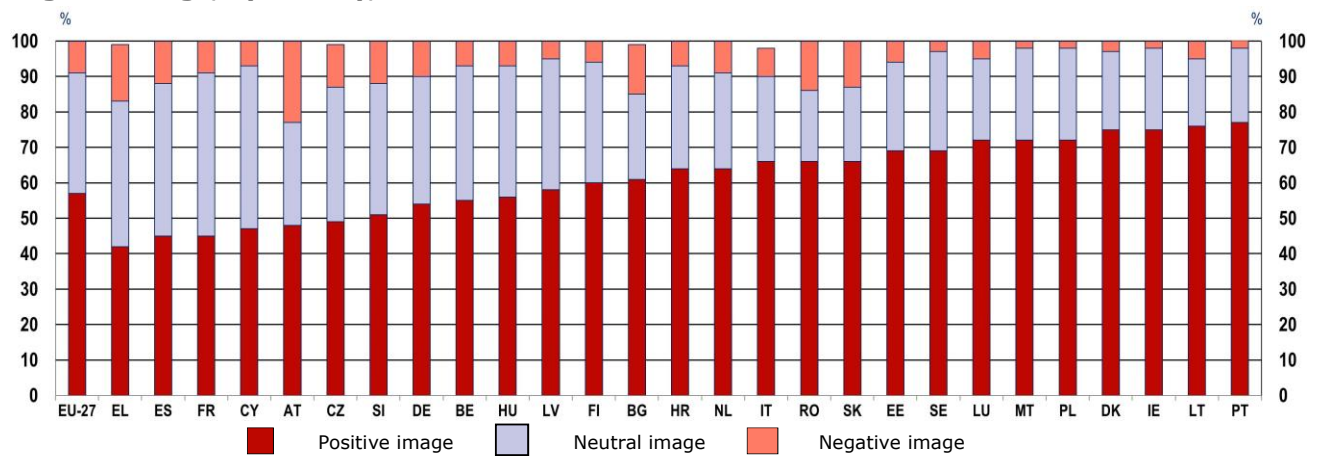
Source: [Standard Eurobarometer Spring 2023](#), VOLUME C. QA6.11. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? The European Union. For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people (15–24) trusting the EU. Data extracted on 15.2.2024.

Almost 60% of young Europeans aged 15–24 have a positive perception of the EU.

In seven Member States (Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Portugal), more than 70% of young people aged 15–24 have a positive view of the EU. Conversely, Austria has the highest proportion of young people aged 15–24 who hold a negative perception of the EU (around 20%). This is followed by Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, each with over 10%. At the EU level, around 30% of young people have a neutral image of the EU, with percentages well above that in Spain, France and Cyprus.

Figure 2.8: Share of young people (15–24) who think the EU has a positive, neutral or negative image, by country, 2023



Source: [Standard Eurobarometer Spring 2023](#), VOLUME B. D78. In general, does the EU conjure up for you a positive or negative image?

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people (15–24) for whom the EU conjures up a positive image. Data extracted on 15.2.2024.

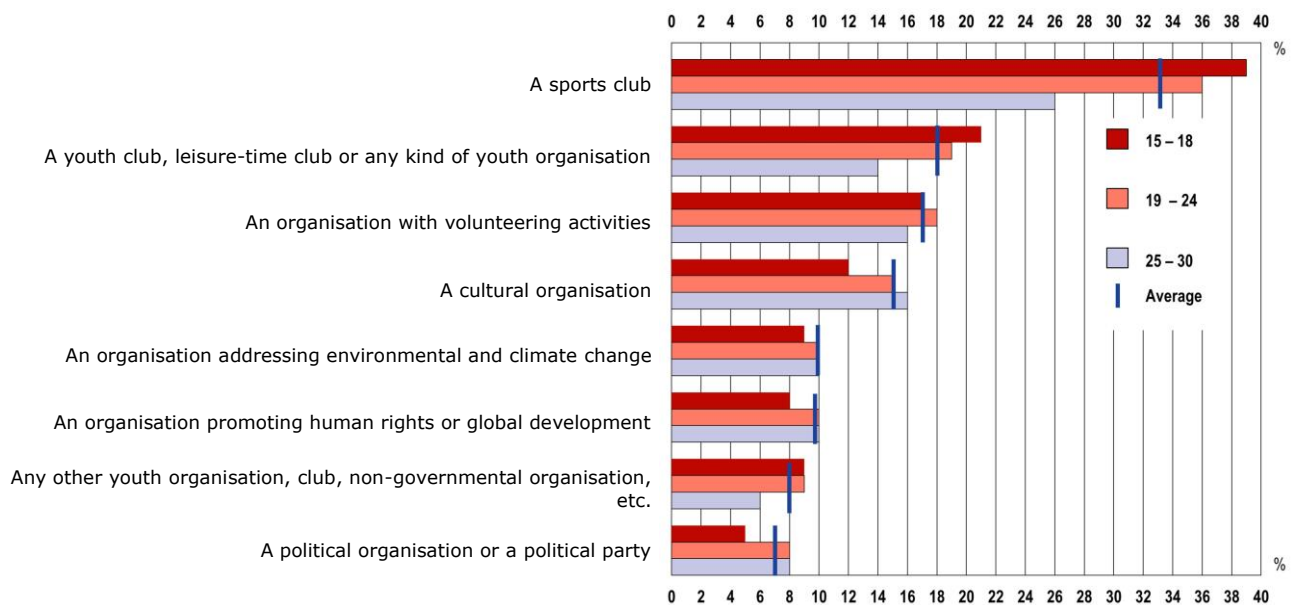
2.4. Participation in various activities

The most common form of participation is in sport, which concerns 33% of young people (15–30), although there is a big drop between the 15–18 and 25–30 age groups (13 pps). Astonishingly, only 1 in 10 young people participate in organisations dealing with environmental and climate change, and far less than 10% are active in political organisations or political parties.

In 2024, one out of three young people (15–30) in the EU have participated in at least one organised activity.

although there is a big drop between the 15–18 and 25–30 age groups (13 pps). Astonishingly, only 1 in 10 young people participate in organisations dealing with environmental and climate change, and far less than 10%

Figure 2.9: Share of young people participating in organised activities by type of activity, by age group, EU average, 2024



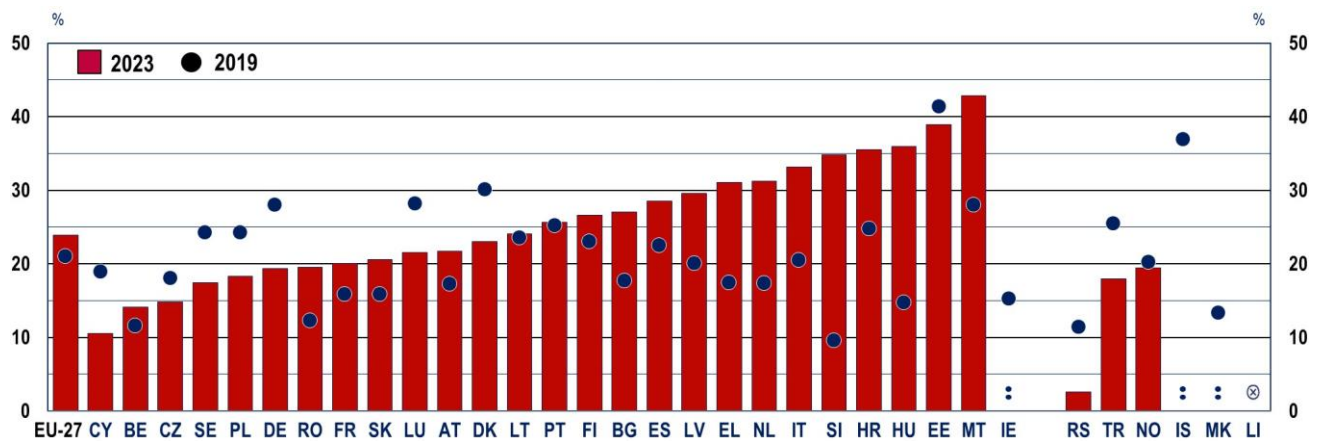
Source: [Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy](#), 2024, VOLUME B. Q2 In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations? (Multiple answers possible).

Notes: Data are ordered by decreasing share of young people (15–30) participating in organised activities. Data extracted on 13.5.2024.

Almost one in four young people in the EU uses the internet for civic and political participation.

In 2023, the use of the internet for civic and political participation across the EU slightly increased compared with 2019. This increase is reflected in approximately two thirds of Member States with several countries, including Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovenia, showing overall increases between 14% and 25%. However, in countries such as Germany and Cyprus, the share of young people using the internet for civic and political participation decreased by more than 8 pps.

Figure 2.10: Share of young people (16–29) using internet for civic or political participation, by country, 2019 and 2023



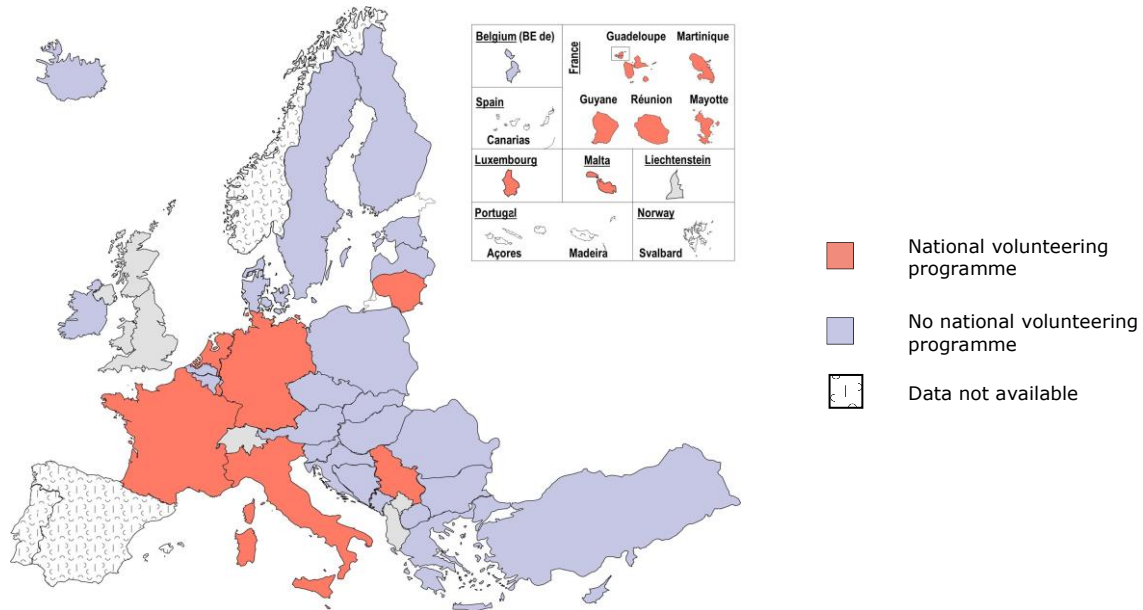
Source: Eurostat, 'Individuals – internet activities' ([isoc_ci_ac_i](#)).

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people (16–29) using the internet for civic or political participation in 2023. Data extracted on 26.2.2024.

Only one third of European countries have a national volunteering programme.

Through the [EU youth strategy](#) 2019–2027, Member States have committed to provide access for all young people to volunteering activities, while also guaranteeing the recognition and validation of skills acquired through volunteering. The national programmes are nationwide initiatives, organised, monitored and funded by national public authorities and offering concrete opportunities for young people to engage in voluntary projects. So far, few European countries have set up such programmes.

Figure 2.11: National programmes for youth volunteering, 2022



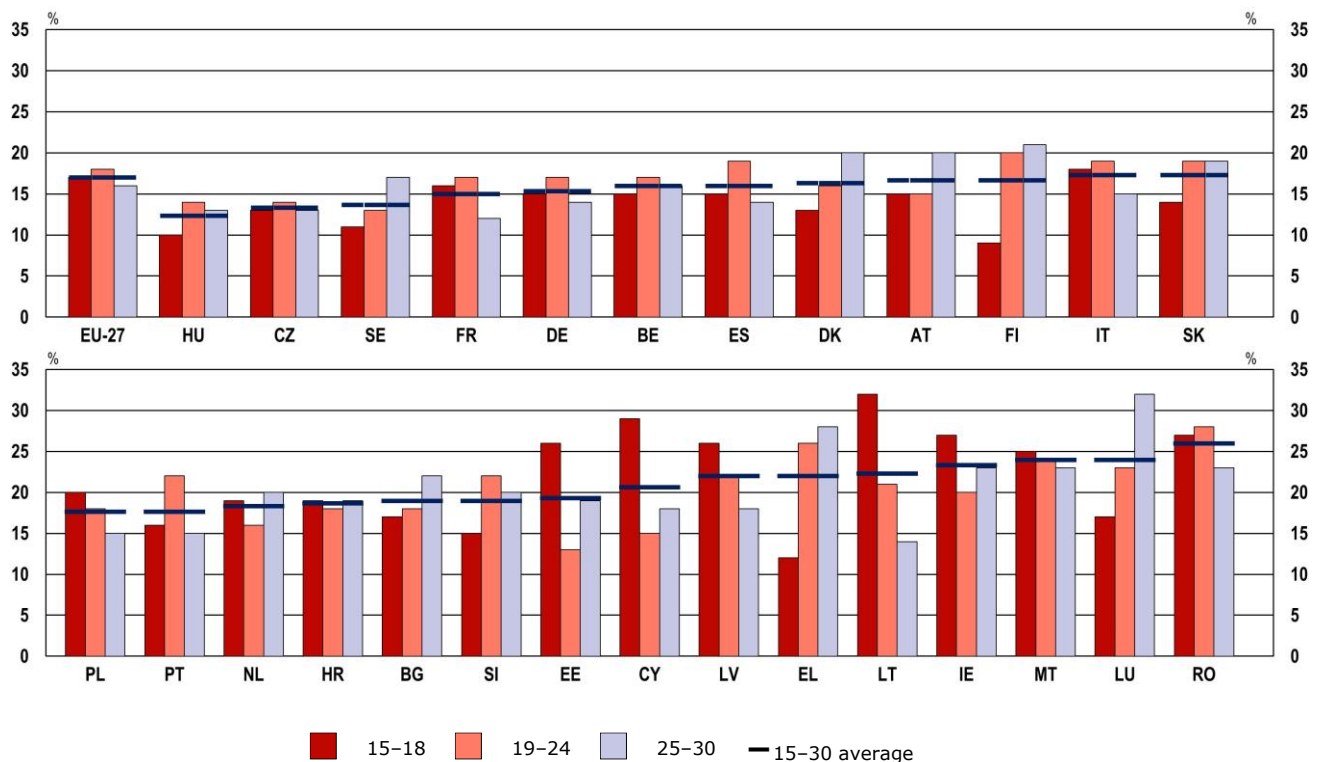
Source: Youth Wiki, '[National programmes for youth volunteering \(September 2022\)](#)'.

In 2024, in the EU, 17% of young people have participated in activities organised by volunteering organisations.

Luxembourg, Malta and Romania show the highest percentage of young people (15–30) who report that they have participated in activities organised by volunteering organisations (around 25%). By contrast, Czechia, Hungary and Sweden account for the lowest share of young people engaged in this type of activity (approximately 13%).

In seven countries (Estonia, Ireland, Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta and Romania), the highest percentage of young people participating in volunteering activities is among the 15–18 age group (more than 25%), while in Greece and Luxembourg it is the 25–30 age group that is most actively engaged in volunteering activities (around 30%).

Figure 2.12: Share of young people participating in activities organised by volunteering organisations, by age group and country, 2024



Source: [Eurobarometer on Youth and Democracy](#), 2024, VOLUME C. Q2 In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations? (Multiple answers possible).

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people (15–30) participating in activities organised by volunteering organisations. Data extracted on 13.5.2024.

3. Employment and entrepreneurship

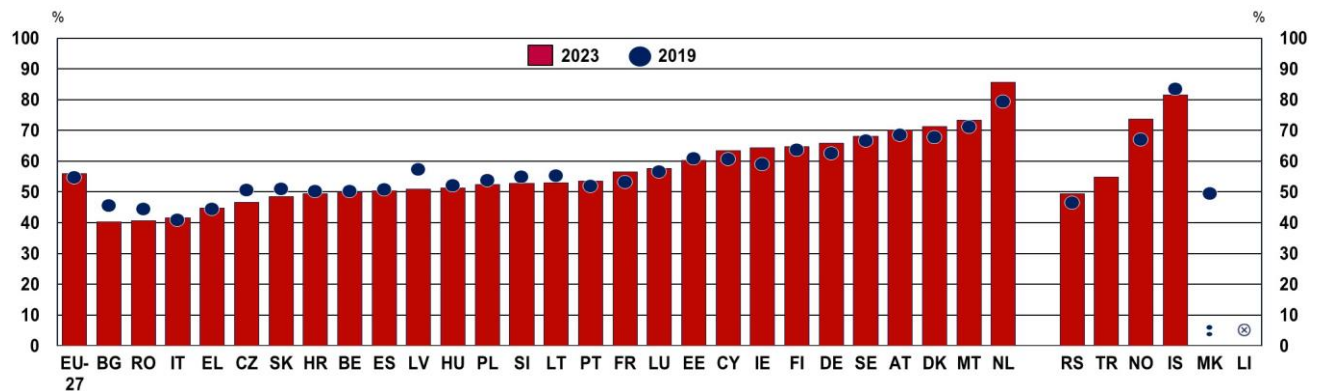
3.1. Employment and participation in the labour market

About half of the EU youth population is active on the labour market.

The highest shares of **active** young people (i.e. both the employed and the unemployed) are recorded in Denmark, Malta, the Netherlands and Austria (between 70% and 85%). In contrast, Bulgaria, Italy and Romania report the

lowest (around 40%). On average, the rate has not substantially changed between 2019 and 2023, except in Bulgaria and Latvia, where it has diminished by about 6 pps, and in Ireland and the Netherlands, where it has increased by the same magnitude.

Figure 3.1: Rate of young people (15–29) participating in the labour market (activity rate), by country, 2019 and 2023



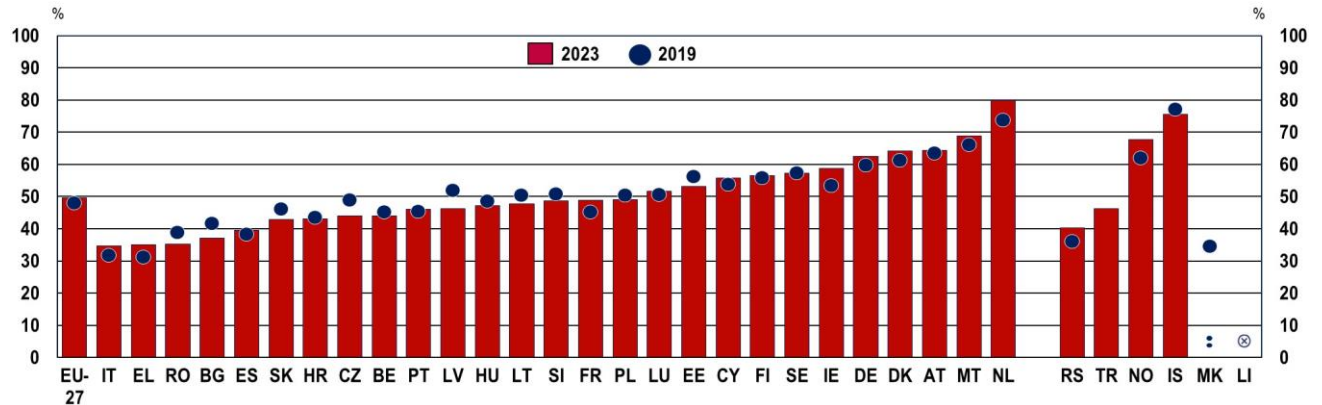
Source: Employment and activity by sex and age ([lfsi_emp_a](#)).

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people participating in the labour market (activity rate) in 2023. Data extracted on 28.6.2024.

One in two young people in the EU are employed.

Greece, Italy and Romania register the lowest shares of [employed](#) young people (around one third), while in the Netherlands the share is almost 80%. On average, the proportion of young employed people in the EU has slightly varied between 2019 and 2023 (1.7 pp), but Bulgaria, Czechia and Latvia saw a decrease of around 5 pps. On the other hand, the share has increased in Ireland and in the Netherlands (5 and 6 pps respectively).

Figure 3.2: Employment rate of young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023



Source: Eurostat: Employment and activity by sex and age ([lfsi_emp_a](#)).

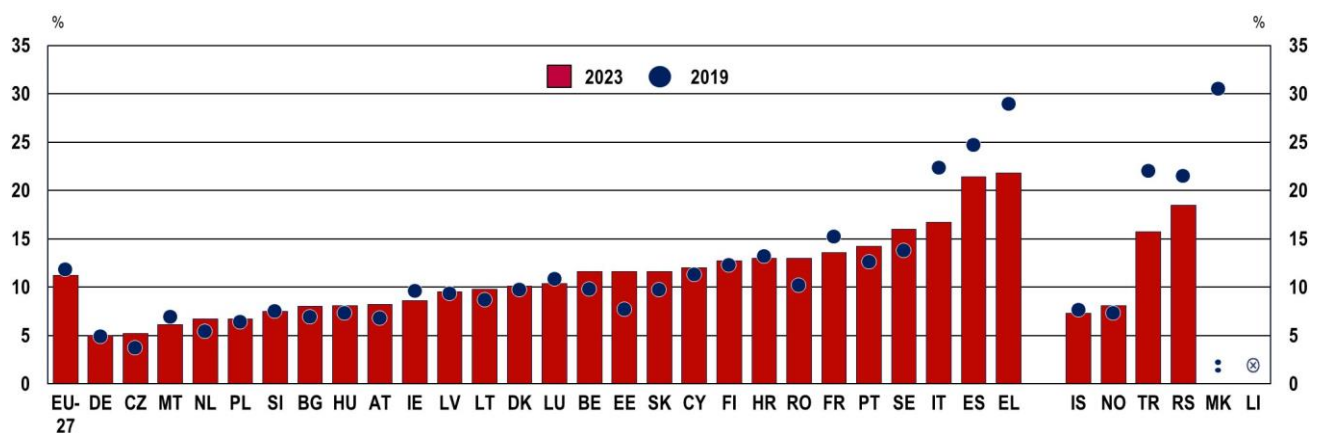
Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending level of employment rate in 2023. Data extracted on 28.6.2024.

3.2. Unemployment

In the EU, one in ten young people is unemployed.

While in some countries (particularly Germany, Czechia, Malta, the Netherlands and Poland) the youth (15–29) **unemployment rate** is well below the EU average, in others (mainly in the southern region of the EU) it is considerably higher. In Greece and Spain, the unemployment rate is twice the EU average. However, these are also the countries where the biggest decline in the proportion of young unemployed since 2019 has occurred. On the other hand, in some countries, youth unemployment has increased, especially in Estonia and Romania. In most countries, no substantial variation took place between 2019 and 2023.

Figure 3.3: Unemployment rate of young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023



Source: Eurostat: Youth unemployment rate by sex, age and educational attainment level ([youth_empl_090](#)).

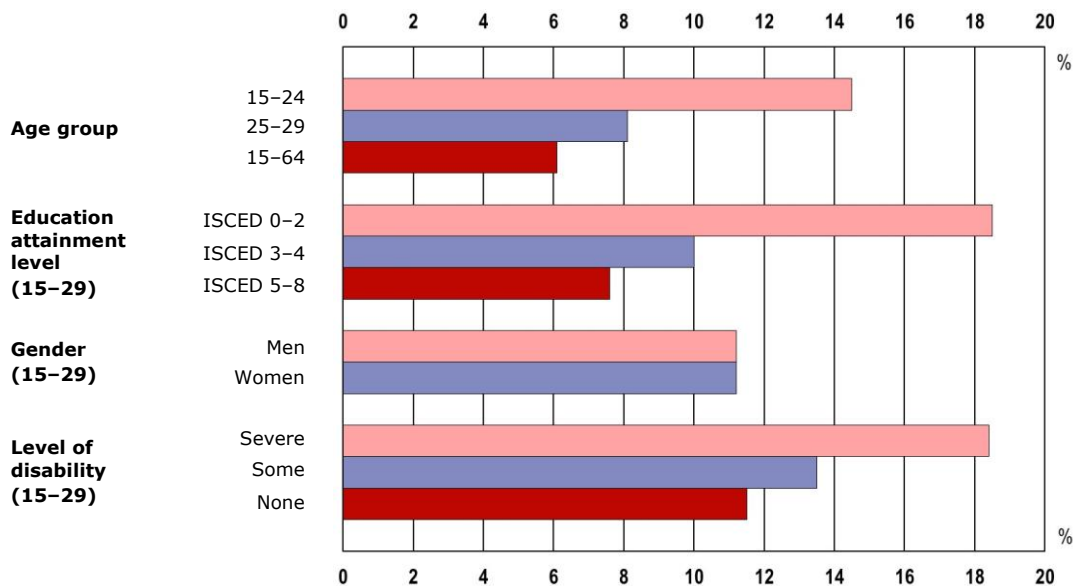
Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending level of unemployment rate in 2023. Data extracted on 14.5.2024.

Younger age, lower educational attainment and disability are associated with higher rates of youth unemployment.

In the EU, on average, the unemployment rate of young people in the youngest age cohort (15–24) (15%) is almost twice as high as that of older ones (25–29) (8%), also in consideration of the fact that many are still in full-time education and training and therefore not taken into account

as active population. Compared with the total [working age population](#) (15–64) (6%), young people face more difficulties in finding a job. Moreover, young people (15–29) with a lower level of educational attainment are also more likely to be unemployed than those with a higher level. The unemployment rate for young people with only a qualification level lower than upper secondary education (International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 0–2) (18%) is almost double that of those with upper or post-secondary qualifications (ISCED 3–4) (10%). The unemployment rate for young people with tertiary education level (ISCED 5–8) is the lowest (7.6%). While gender does not have an impact on the unemployment rate (young men and young women report the same rate), [disability](#) represents a notable barrier to employment: as many as 18% of young people affected by a severe disability are unemployed.

Figure 3.4: Unemployment rate of young people by age group (including population of working age 15–64), educational attainment, gender and level of disability, EU average, 2023



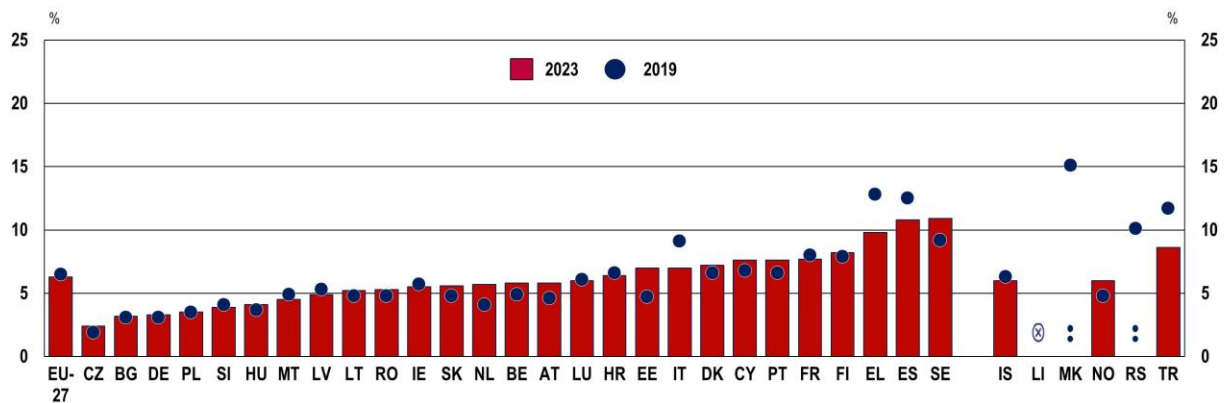
Source: Eurostat: Unemployment rates by age, sex and educational attainment level ([youth empl_090](#)). Unemployment rate by level of disability (activity limitation) ([lfsa_urqaeddl](#)).

Notes: Data by education attainment level, gender and disability level refer to the age group 15–29. ISCED 0–2: Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education. ISCED 3–4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. ISCED 5–8: Tertiary education. Data for level of disability are from 2022. Data extracted on 27.6.2024.

Youth unemployment ratio is half the unemployment rate as many young people are in full-time education.

A large proportion of young people are outside the labour market, such as those who are studying full-time and are not available for work. This situation is taken into consideration by the **unemployment ratio**, which represents the share of unemployed young people within the total youth population. The ratio is well below the EU average (6%) in Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany and Poland. The highest levels of unemployment ratio exist in Greece, Spain and Sweden. While no variation in the EU average has occurred between 2019 and 2023, it has decreased in Greece, Spain and Italy, and increased in Estonia, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Sweden.

Figure 3.5: Unemployment ratio of young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023



Source: Eurostat: Youth unemployment ratio by sex, age and NUTS 2 regions [yth_empl_140].

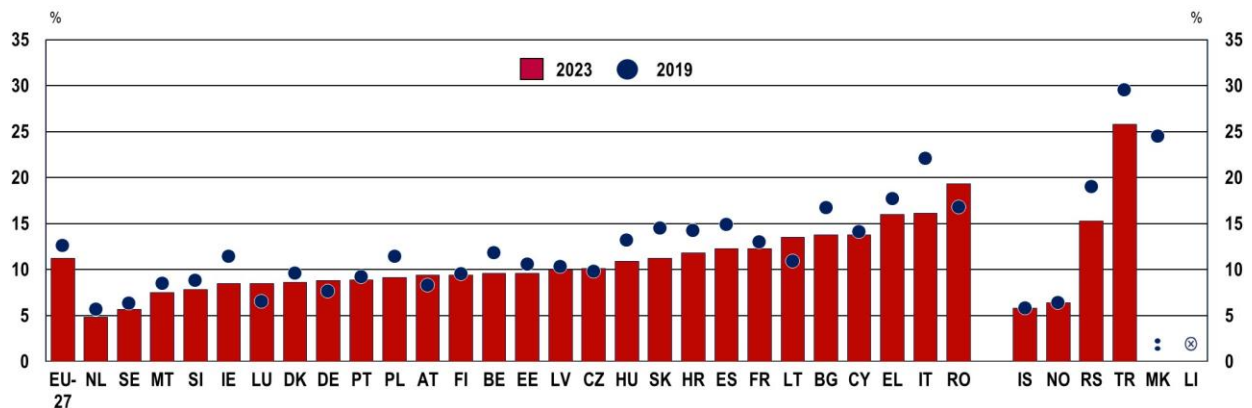
Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending level of unemployment ratio in 2023. Data extracted on 28.8.2024.

3.3. Young people not in employment, education or training

In the EU, more than one in ten young people is not in employment, education or training.

Among Member States, Romania (19%), Greece and Italy (around 16%) have the highest rate of **young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)**⁴. While, on average, the NEET rate did not vary substantially between 2019 and 2023, the rate decreased by around 3 pps in Bulgaria, Ireland, Spain and Slovakia and by 6 pps in Italy. Conversely, the rate increased in Lithuania, Luxembourg and Romania.

Figure 3.6: Share of young people (15–29) not in employment, education or training (NEET rate), by country, 2019 and 2023 ⁽⁵⁾



Source: Eurostat: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status (NEET rate) ([edat_ifse_20](#)).

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending level of NEET rate in 2023. Data extracted on 14.5.2024.

⁴ The Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights has set the target of reducing the percentage of young NEET to 9% by 2030

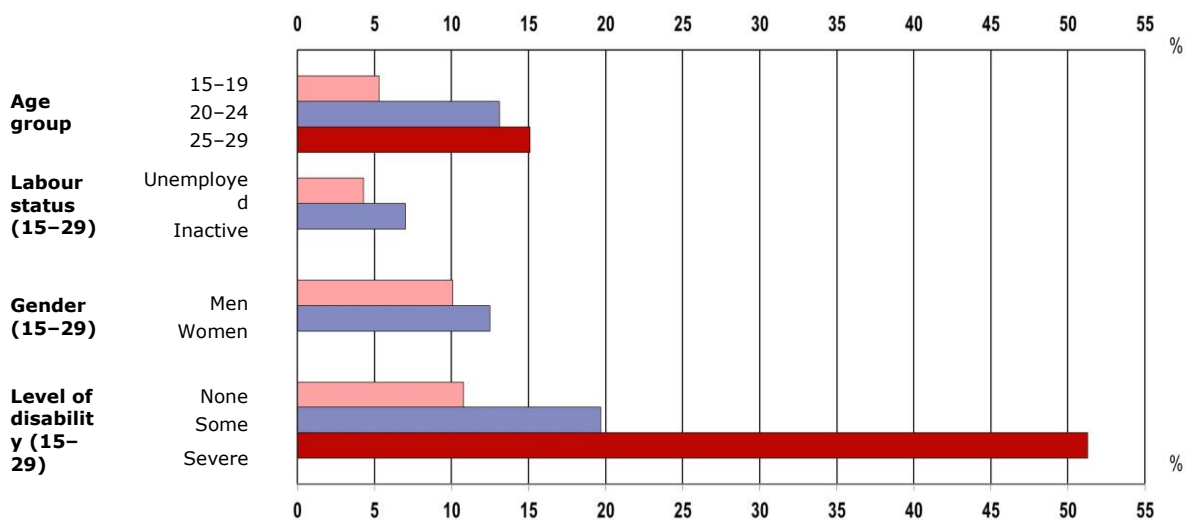
⁽⁵⁾ In the French outermost region of La Réunion, the NEET rate (15–29) was as high as 24.3% in 2023.

Age, status in the labour market, gender and level of disability affect the proportion of NEET.

The NEET rate increases with age. Young people aged 25–29 are three times more likely to be NEET compared with those aged 15–19 (respectively 15% and 5%). Labour status also has an impact. Within the general category of people

not in employment, the rate of those that are inactive (not looking for a job) (7%) is almost twice as high as that of young unemployed people (looking for a job but not finding one) (4%). Young women (13%) tend to be NEET to a slightly higher degree than young men (10%). Notably, disability is strongly associated with being NEET: half of young people affected by a severe disability are not in employment, education or training.

Figure 3.7: Share of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), by age group, labour status, gender and level of disability, EU average, 2023



Source: Eurostat: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and labour status (NEET rate) ([edat_lfse_20](#)). Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex, age and level of disability (activity limitation) ([edat_lfse_39](#)).

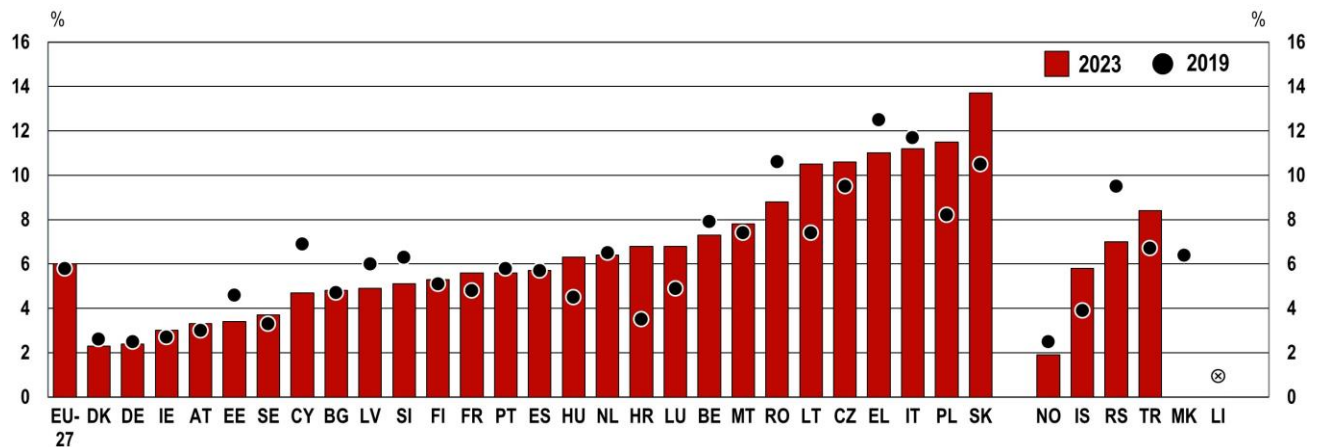
Notes: Data by labour status, gender and level of disability refer to the age group 15–29. Data for level of disability are from 2022. Data extracted on 28.6.2024.

3.4. Entrepreneurship

In the EU, 6% of working young people are self-employed.

In Czechia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Poland around 1 in 10 young people (15–29) are self-employed. The rate is the highest in Slovakia (14%). Conversely, the lowest proportions of self-employed are in Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Austria and Sweden (between 2% and 4%). Compared with 2019, on average, the rate has remained stable. Exceptions are Croatia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia, where the rate has increased by about 3 pps and, on the other side of the spectrum, Greece, Cyprus and Romania, where a decrease of about 2 pps has occurred.

Figure 3.8: Self-employment as a percentage of total employment for young people (15–29), by country, 2019 and 2023



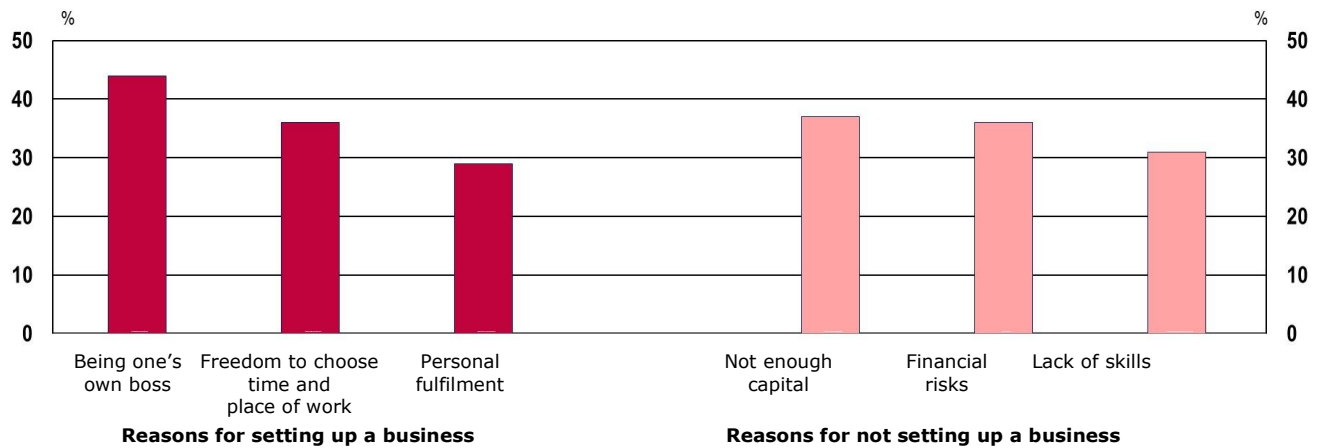
Source: Eurostat: Self-employment by sex, age and citizenship ([lfsa_esgan](#)).

Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending level of self-employment rate as a percentage of total employment in 2023. Data extracted on 14.5.2024.

Perceived financial obstacles discourage young people from setting up a business.

Among the reasons driving young people to be self-employed, the top three pertain to their way of life rather than economic profitability: independence, flexible working conditions and the feeling of accomplishment are the most powerful drivers. On the other hand, financial concerns represent the most common reasons for not setting up a business. Feeling unprepared in terms of skills and competence is also a discouraging factor.

Figure 3.9: Top three reasons driving and stopping young people (15–30) to start a business, EU average, 2023



Source: [Flash Eurobarometer 513](#) – Social entrepreneurship and youth – 2023. Q8 Which of the following reasons do you think drive young people (15–30 years old) to start their own business? (Multiple answers possible). Q9 Which of the following reasons do you think stop young people (15–30 years old) from becoming entrepreneurs? (Multiple answers possible).

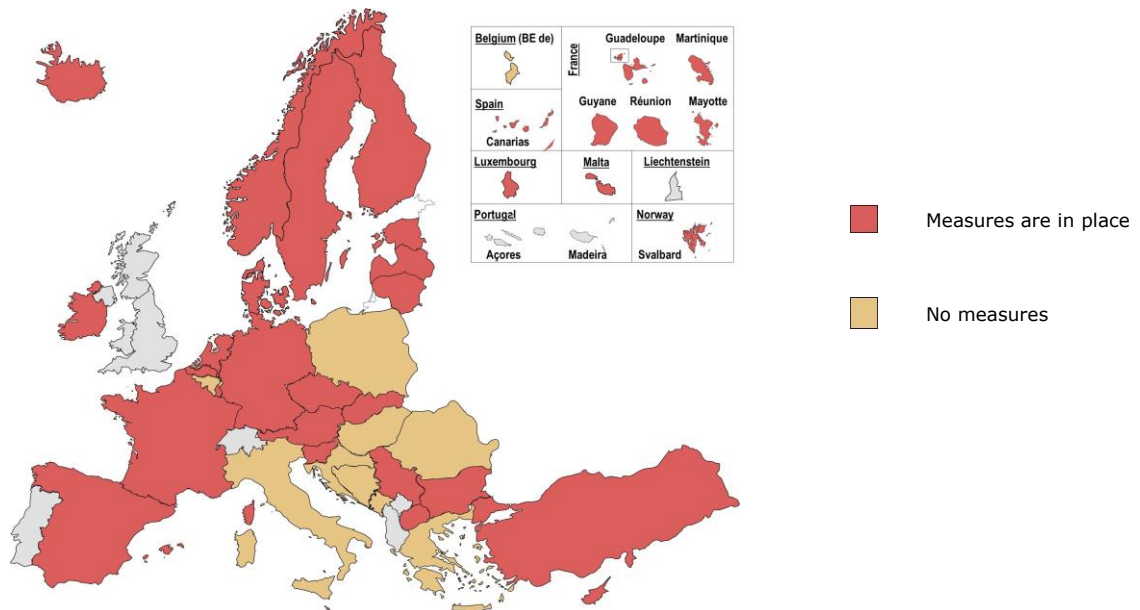
Notes: Data extracted on 6.12.2023.

The majority of European countries have established measures to strengthen young people's entrepreneurial competences through non-formal learning.

Member States have committed to increasing the opportunities for youth entrepreneurship as a way to boost employment. One of the core priorities is promoting the attainment of entrepreneurial skills both in and out of school. In about two thirds of Member States, measures

supporting youth entrepreneurship exist. They tend to be more common in countries in the western and northern regions of Europe.

Figure 3.10: Measures furthering entrepreneurial skills through non-formal learning, 2023



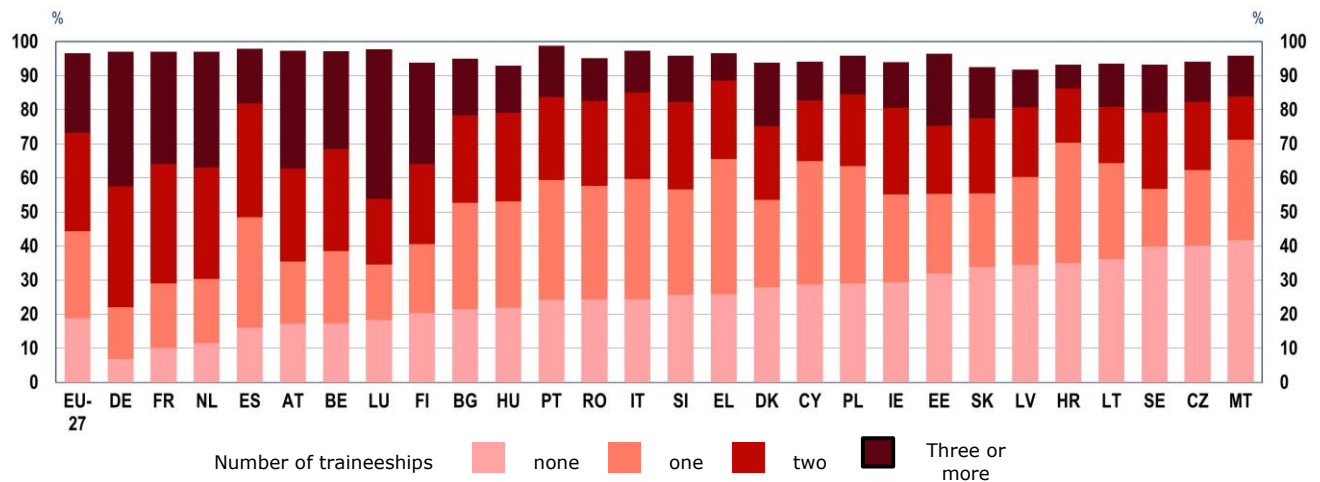
Source: Youth Wiki, '[Development of entrepreneurship competences](#)'. Data collected in September 2023.

3.5. Traineeships ⁽⁶⁾

Almost 80% of young people have been on at least one traineeship

Germany, Spain, France, Austria and the Netherlands are the countries with the highest percentages of young people aged between 18 and 35 who have done one or more traineeships (between 90% and 80%). On the other hand, the lowest shares are found in Croatia, Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Sweden (less than 60%).

Figure 3.11: Share of young people (18–35) by number of traineeships done, by country, 2023



Source: [Flash Eurobarometer 523](#) – Integration of young people into the labour market with particular focus on traineeships – 2023. Q4 A traineeship is a short- or medium-term working experience spent in a business, public body or non-profit institution by students or young graduates. This excludes regular or student jobs. Overall, how many of such traineeships have you had so far?

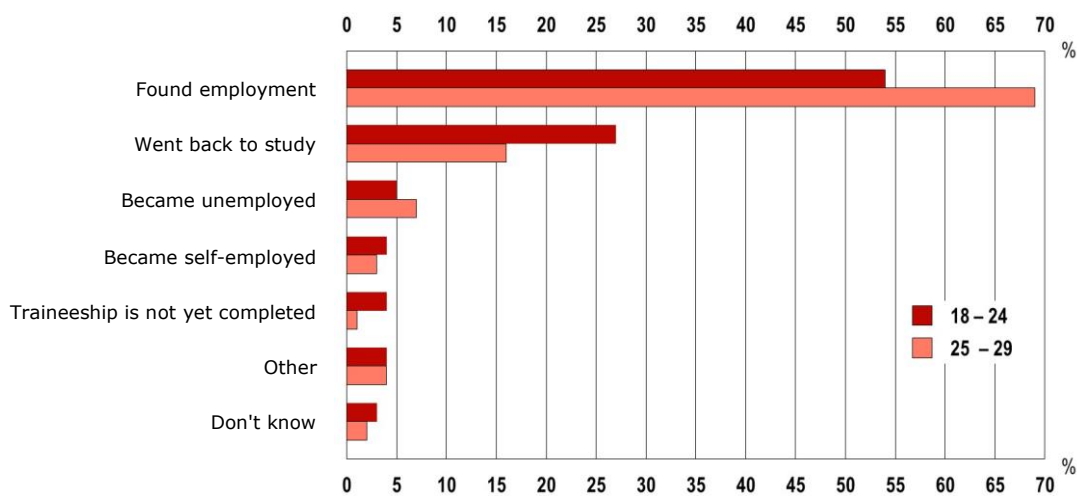
Notes: Countries are ordered by ascending share of young people who have not done any traineeship. Percentages to 100%: Don't know. Data extracted on 21.01.2025.

⁶ For indicators referring to quality traineeships, see [Flash Eurobarometer 523](#) – Integration of young people into the labour market with particular focus on traineeships.

A majority of young people find employment in the 6 months after their last traineeship

More than 50% of young people aged between 18 and 24 report having found employment in the six months after their last traineeship. The percentage increases to almost 70% for young people aged 25-29. On the contrary, the share of young people who return to education after a traineeship is higher among 18–24-year-olds than among individuals aged 25-29. Between 5% and 7% of young people are unemployed after concluding their last traineeship.

Figure 3.12: Share of young people (18–24 and 25–29) by their situation in the six months after their last traineeship, EU average, 2023



Source: [Flash Eurobarometer 523](#) – Integration of young people into the labour market with particular focus on traineeships – 2023. Q11 In the 6 months following your last traineeship, which of the following applied?

Notes: Data extracted on 24.01.2025.