

## ASPECTS REGARDING THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF THE ADULT POPULATION

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**Abstract:** *Occupancy rates can be increased by applying as flexible learning pathways as possible. Acquiring and updating skills, knowledge and competencies is a necessity required by technological changes in the economy. Thus, graduates need to be better prepared, as their access to new jobs can be restricted if they have a low level of skills. Starting from the structure of the adult population in the Member States of the European Union, the article presents an analysis of the level of education of the adult population.*

**Key words:** *level of education, European Union, adult population*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** I25, I20

### 1. Introduction

The demands for higher and higher skills needed in the workplace have led to the need and desire to acquire these skills (Radulescu et al., 2020). New jobs, which allow for economic growth, require high skills (Burlacu et al., 2021). Throughout life, another set of necessary skills is given by social and civic skills, respectively entrepreneurial skills (Radulescu et al., 2020). In most cases, theoretical training needs to be complemented by practical training.

High levels of qualification are increasingly demanded by employers. We can only benefit from the opportunities offered by the labor market through superior training. Flexible ways of learning allow both increasing employment and increasing social inclusion (Sarbu et al., 2021). It can also be considered that people who want a higher standard of living and can achieve it if they have those skills and competencies necessary for those changes in the labor market (Balu et al., 2021). Another aspect is related to the lack of labor force due to the aging population (Profiroiu et al., 2020). The lack of skilled workers, early school leaving, as well as the low graduation rate of higher education, cannot lead to the economic development of a society (Radulescu et al., 2021). It is found that an easier construction of skills is found in those areas where there are more jobs (Burlacu et al., 2019). It is necessary for education and training systems to adapt to demographic change. Opportunities to promote creativity are based on the promotion of knowledge, which in fact involves ensuring quality in education (Bodislav et al., 2020).

Thus, the following table presents the comparative situation of the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years, for the member countries of the European Union, for the period 2012-2020 (%).

It is observed that, compared to 2012, in 2020, the share of the population in the 15-64 age group increased only in Luxembourg (+ 0.7%). For all other states, the values have decreased. The most significant decreases were registered in: Czech Republic (-5.0%), Poland (-4.6%), Slovakia (-4.3%), Slovenia (-4.2%), Bulgaria (-3.9%), Latvia (-3.6%), Finland (-3.4%), Estonia (-3.2%).

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Also, there were smaller decreases: Malta (-0.7%), Denmark (-1.1%), Austria (-1.2%), Ireland (-1.2%), Germany (-1, 3%).

*Table 1. Comparative situation of the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years, for the member countries of the European Union, for the period 2012-2020 (%)*

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
European Union	66,6	66,0	65,4	64,9	64,4
Belgium	65,7	65,2	64,8	64,3	64,1
Bulgaria	67,8	66,7	65,6	64,7	63,9
Czech Republic	69,1	67,6	66,3	65,0	64,1
Denmark	65,0	64,5	64,3	64,1	63,9
Germany	65,9	66,0	65,7	65,1	64,6
Estonia	66,8	65,9	64,9	64,1	63,6
Ireland	66,5	65,9	65,5	65,3	65,3
Greece	65,6	64,9	64,2	63,8	63,4
Spain	67,5	66,6	66,1	65,9	65,8
France	64,3	63,4	62,7	62,1	61,7
Croatia	67,0	66,8	66,2	65,5	64,7
Italy	65,2	64,7	64,3	64,1	63,8
Cyprus	70,7	69,9	68,4	67,9	67,6
Latvia	67,1	66,3	65,1	64,2	63,5
Lithuania	67,2	67,0	66,4	65,3	64,9
Luxembourg	68,8	69,1	69,4	69,5	69,5
Hungary	68,6	68,0	67,2	66,5	65,5
Malta	68,8	67,9	67,4	67,2	68,1
Netherlands	66,4	65,7	65,3	65,1	64,9
Austria	67,7	67,4	67,2	66,9	66,5
Poland	70,9	70,1	69,0	67,7	66,3
Portugal	66,0	65,6	65,1	64,6	64,2
Romania	68,0	68,0	67,0	66,1	65,4
Slovenia	68,9	67,9	66,7	65,6	64,7
Slovakia	71,9	71,1	70,2	68,8	67,6
Finland	65,4	64,2	63,2	62,5	62,0
Sweden	64,4	63,5	62,8	62,4	62,3
UK	65,6	64,8	64,3	63,8	63,7

*Source: made by the authors based on the existing data on the EUROSTAT website*

At the level of the European Union, the following figure shows the evolution of the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years, for the period 2012-2020.

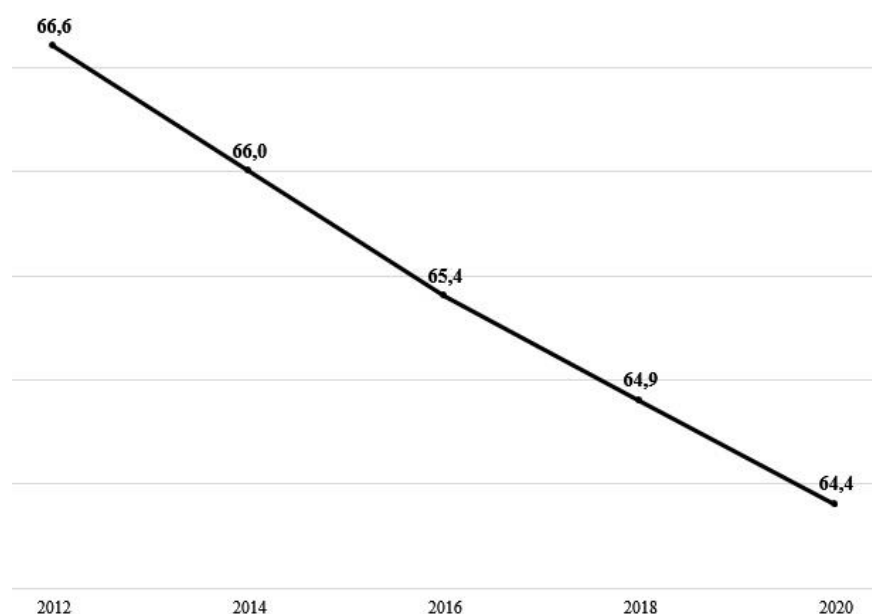


Figure 1. Evolution of the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years, for the period 2012-2020 (%)

Source: made by the authors based on the existing data on the EUROSTAT website

It is observed that the trend is decreasing. Table 2 presents the comparative situation of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a lower level of education than primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2).

Table 2. Comparative situation of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a level of education 0-2 (%)

Countries	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
European Union	29,8	28,4	27,4	26,3	25,1
Belgium	31,4	29,5	28,2	26,3	25,0
Bulgaria	23,0	22,6	21,9	21,5	21,5
Czech Republic	13,4	12,4	12,4	12,1	12,3
Denmark	30,1	28,7	27,3	26,5	25,9
Germany	17,9	19,7	19,8	19,6	20,1
Estonia	16,8	17,7	16,7	16,8	15,4
Ireland	28,2	24,0	23,0	21,5	19,6
Greece	35,9	33,1	30,0	28,7	24,3
Spain	46,4	44,5	42,6	40,8	38,2
France	30,4	26,5	25,5	24,4	22,3
Croatia	23,1	21,0	20,6	18,7	17,5
Italy	44,2	42,3	41,6	40,3	39,0
Cyprus	26,4	26,1	24,0	21,9	21,0
Latvia	17,4	16,1	14,9	15,3	14,6
Lithuania	15,0	14,2	12,4	11,7	10,8
Luxembourg	28,4	24,9	28,2	27,6	27,2
Hungary	23,5	22,0	21,8	20,2	19,7
Malta	56,9	52,2	47,9	42,9	40,3
Netherlands	30,8	28,8	27,9	26,0	24,0
Austria	22,4	20,3	19,6	18,9	18,7
Poland	16,7	15,5	14,6	13,5	12,9
Portugal	61,6	56,3	52,9	49,8	44,5

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
Romania	29,2	31,2	28,0	26,3	23,7
Slovenia	19,0	18,4	17,2	16,4	14,5
Slovakia	15,0	15,2	14,3	14,4	13,5
Finland	21,8	20,1	18,6	17,7	15,9
Sweden	23,8	22,1	21,1	20,9	20,7
UK	22,2	20,9	20,5	19,7	:

*Source: made by the authors based on the existing data on the EUROSTAT website*

From the data presented in Table 2, it is observed that for the age group 15-64 years, with an education level between 0 and 2, only for Germany the share of the population increased (+ 2.2%). For the other countries the values have decreased. The most significant decreases were registered in: Portugal (-17.1%), Malta (-16.6%), Greece (-11.6%), Ireland (-8.6%), Spain (-8, 2%), France (-8.1%), the Netherlands (-6.8%). Also, in 2020, the countries where more than a quarter of the population in the 15-64 age group had a level of education between 0 and 2 are: Portugal (44.5%), Malta (40.3% ), Italy (39.0%), Spain (38.2%), Luxembourg (27.2%), Denmark (25.9%), Belgium (25.0%). Countries where less than 15% of the population in the 15-64 age group had a level of education between 0 and 2 are: Lithuania (10.8%), Czech Republic (12.3%), Poland (12.9 %), Slovakia (13.5%), Slovenia (14.5%), Latvia (14.6%).

Table 3 presents the comparative situation of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a level of education representing non-tertiary upper secondary and post-secondary education (levels 3-4).

*Table 3. Comparative situation of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a level of education 3-4 (%)*

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
European Union	47,0	47,1	46,9	46,5	46,0
Belgium	37,4	37,8	38,6	37,7	37,4
Bulgaria	56,4	53,8	53,7	53,6	52,9
Czech Republic	69,6	68,5	67,1	66,2	65,6
Denmark	41,4	41,9	41,6	40,9	40,4
Germany	57,2	57,1	55,7	55,2	52,7
Estonia	51,1	49,7	49,3	47,3	47,6
Ireland	36,1	38,1	37,6	38,0	37,6
Greece	41,3	42,2	43,5	43,6	47,2
Spain	23,6	23,9	24,7	25,2	25,8
France	41,9	43,7	43,6	42,8	42,4
Croatia	61,1	60,5	59,4	59,3	60,5
Italy	41,9	42,7	42,7	42,6	43,1
Cyprus	38,6	37,5	38,3	38,7	38,8
Latvia	57,4	57,0	55,6	54,7	52,2
Lithuania	56,4	54,3	53,5	52,3	50,5
Luxembourg	38,2	35,5	35,4	34,2	31,9
Hungary	57,5	57,7	57,6	58,1	56,7
Malta	26,5	28,4	31,8	32,4	31,7
Netherlands	40,6	41,4	41,1	40,9	39,4
Austria	60,8	52,4	51,5	51,0	50,0
Poland	61,8	60,7	60,2	59,3	58,1
Portugal	21,7	24,0	25,6	27,6	30,2
Romania	57,3	54,6	56,9	58,2	60,1
Slovenia	58,0	56,5	55,6	54,9	54,0
Slovakia	68,0	66,7	66,0	63,6	62,6

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
Finland	45,4	45,2	45,5	45,1	44,2
Sweden	46,1	45,0	43,6	42,0	41,1
UK	43,1	42,5	41,2	41,0	:

*Source: made by the authors based on the existing data on the EUROSTAT website*

From the data presented in Table 3, it is observed that for the age group 15-64 years, with education level between 3 and 4, only for 9 countries the share of the population increased. For the other countries the values have decreased. The most significant decreases were registered in: Austria (-10.8%), Luxembourg (-6.3%), Lithuania (-5.9%), Slovakia (-5.4%), Latvia (-5, 2%), Sweden (-5.0%), Germany (-4.5%). Increases in values were recorded in: Portugal (+ 8.5%), Greece (+ 5.9%), Malta (+ 5.2%), Romania (+ 2.8%), Spain (+2, 2%), Ireland (+ 1.5%), Italy (+ 1.2%), France (+ 0.5%), Cyprus (+ 0.2%).

Also, in 2020, the countries where more than half of the population in the 15-64 age group had a level of education between 3 and 4 are: Czech Republic (65.6%), Slovakia (62.6%) , Croatia (60.5%), Romania (60.0%), Poland (58.1%), Hungary (56.7%), Slovenia (54.0%), Bulgaria (52.9%), Germany (52.7%), Latvia (52.2%), Lithuania (50.5%), Austria (50.0%).

Table 4 presents the comparative situation of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a tertiary level (levels 5-8).

*Table 4. Comparative situation of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a level of education 5-8 (%)*

<b>Countries</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>
European Union	23,2	24,5	25,7	27,1	29,0
Belgium	31,3	32,6	33,2	36,0	37,6
Bulgaria	20,7	23,6	24,4	24,8	25,6
Czech Republic	17,0	19,1	20,6	21,7	22,1
Denmark	28,5	29,4	31,1	32,6	33,7
Germany	24,9	23,2	24,4	25,2	27,2
Estonia	32,1	32,6	34,1	35,9	37,1
Ireland	35,7	38,0	39,5	40,5	42,8
Greece	22,9	24,6	26,4	27,7	28,5
Spain	30,0	31,7	32,7	34,0	36,0
France	27,7	29,8	30,9	32,8	35,3
Croatia	15,8	18,5	20,0	22,0	22,0
Italy	13,9	15,0	15,7	17,1	17,9
Cyprus	35,0	36,4	37,6	39,4	40,2
Latvia	25,2	26,9	29,5	30,1	33,2
Lithuania	28,6	31,4	34,1	36,1	38,7
Luxembourg	33,4	39,6	36,4	38,3	40,9
Hungary	19,0	20,2	20,6	21,7	23,6
Malta	16,6	19,4	20,3	24,6	28,0
Netherlands	28,6	29,7	31,0	33,0	36,6
Austria	16,9	27,4	28,9	30,1	31,3
Poland	21,5	23,8	25,2	27,2	28,9
Portugal	16,7	19,7	21,5	22,5	25,4
Romania	13,5	14,2	15,1	15,5	16,2
Slovenia	23,0	25,1	27,2	28,7	31,5
Slovakia	17,0	18,1	19,7	22,0	23,9
Finland	32,8	34,7	35,9	37,3	39,8
Sweden	30,1	32,8	35,3	37,1	38,3
UK	34,6	36,6	38,3	39,3	:

*Source: made by the authors based on the existing data on the EUROSTAT website*

From the data presented in Table 4, it is observed that for the age group 15-64 years, with an education level between 5 and 8, for all countries the share of the population increased. High increases in values were recorded in: Austria (+ 14.4%), Malta (+ 11.4%), Lithuania (+ 10.1%), Portugal (+ 8.7%), Slovenia (+8 , 5%), Sweden (+ 8.2%).

Also in 2020, the countries where at least one third of the population in the 15-64 age group had a level of education between 5 and 8 are: Ireland (42.8), Luxembourg (40.9) , Cyprus (40.2), Finland (39.8), Lithuania (38.7), Sweden (38.3), Belgium (37.6), Estonia (37.1), the Netherlands (36.6), Spain (36.0), France (35.3), Denmark (33.7), Latvia (33.2).

In 2020, for two countries, only one person in 5 has a level of education between 5 and 8 in: Romania (16.2%) and Italy (17.9%).

At the level of the European Union, the following figure presents the comparative situation of the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years, depending on the level of education, for the period 2012-2020.

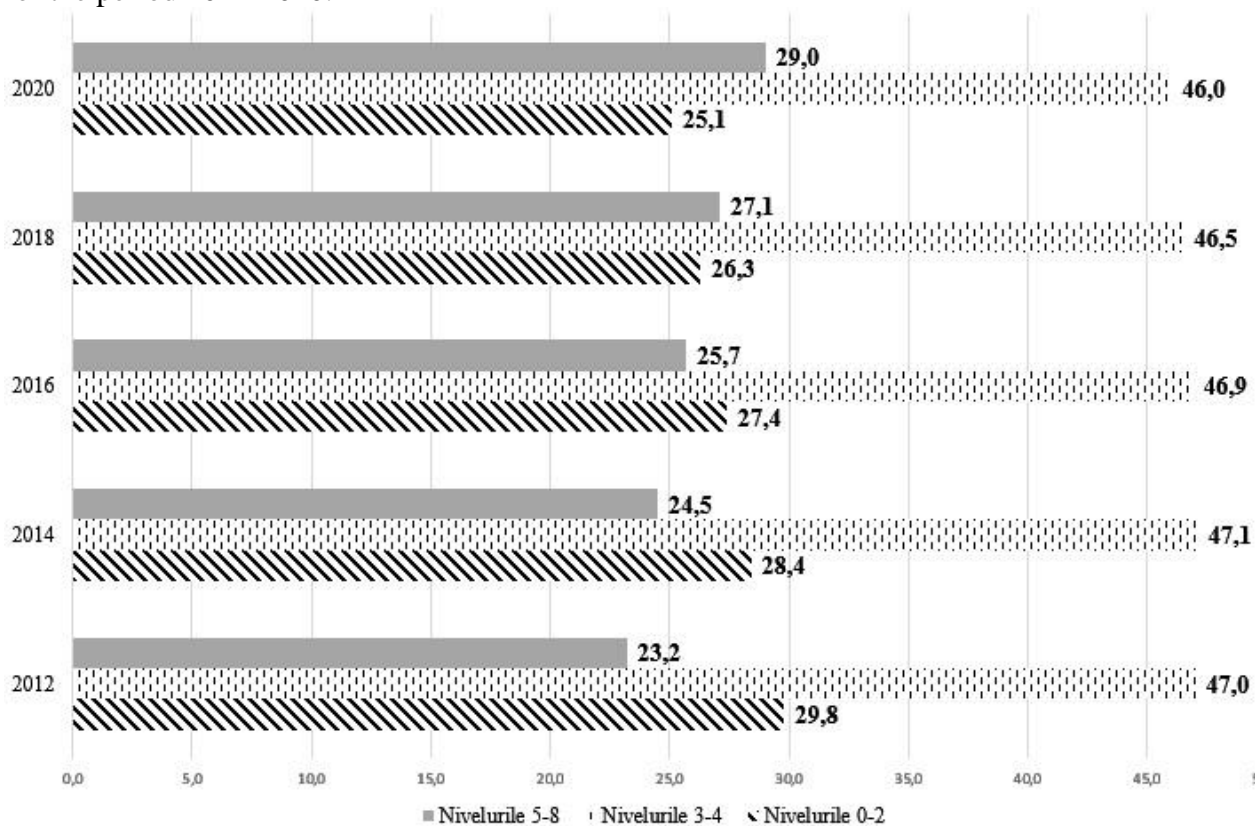


Figure 2. Comparative situation of the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years, depending on the level of education, for the period 2012-2020 (%)

Source: made by the authors based on the existing data on the EUROSTAT website

It is observed that the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a level of education between 0 and 2 has a decreasing trend. Also, the share of the population in the age group 15-64 years with a level of education between 5 and 8 increased in 2020 compared to 2012 by + 5.8%. The trend for this indicator is upward.

## 2. Conclusions

The analysis shows that the share of the population in the 15-64 age group has a decreasing trend.

Also, the share of people with an education level between 0 and 2 has decreased in most European countries. However, in some states the share of these people remains quite high. At the same time, in 2020, in 12 countries, more than half of the population in the 15-64 age group has a

level of education between 3 and 4. The interest for a higher education is also manifested in the case of tertiary education. Thus, there are countries where one in 3 people has a level 5-8 training, but there are also countries where only one person in 5 has a tertiary level (level 5-8).

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