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Cooperation - Innovation - Coaching - Opportunities

IO1 – Analysis of ESL

State of Art



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Early School Leaving in Europe

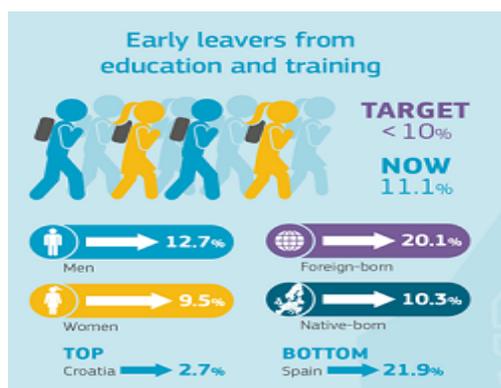
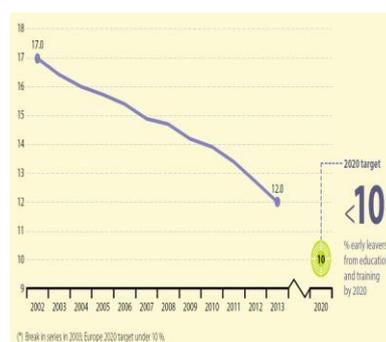


The definition of “Early School Leaving” used at EU level refers to ‘those



young people who leave education and training with only lower secondary education or less, and who are no longer in education and training.¹ In statistical terms, European ESL rates are measured as the percentage of 18-24 year olds with only lower secondary education or less and no longer in education or training.

Generally, on the European level the ESL rate has been steadily decreasing, going from the 17% recorded in 2012 to the 12% circa registered in 2013, with the goal of reducing the average European rate to less than 10% by 2020.² It is worth noting that early leaving from education and training is highest in Southern Europe and huge discrepancies between and within Member States are recorded. In this context, the Council of the European Union points out how the comprehensive strategies advocated in the 2011 Council Recommendation are still lacking in many countries.



Still, the EU is strongly committed to address the school dropout issue, and the Europe 2020 headline target on ESL has kept this issue high on national policy agendas and has contributed to promoting educational reforms. As a result, substantial steps have been taken by Member States, and projects and programmes aimed at tackling the ESL issue have multiplied over time on the basis of a more concerted, transversal and integrated approach.

Alongside Strategy Europe 2020, in late November 2015

¹ Thematic Working Group, “Reducing early school leaving: key messages and policy support”, 2013.

² Eurostat, “Smarter, greener, more inclusive?”, 2015.

the Council of the European Union adopted conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school. In the official document, the Council invites the Member States and the Commission to:

- Make maximum use of the opportunities available under the ET 2020 strategic framework.
- Make the most of the funding opportunities offered by EU instruments such as the Erasmus+ Programme, the European Social Fund and the European Fund for Strategic Investments.
- Continue to identify, through research and peer learning, examples of the most effective collaborative practices at school and at local level aimed at alleviating educational disadvantage, reducing early school leaving and ensuring more inclusive education.³



Europe 2020 strategy targets

Employment 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed (ES national target 74%)
Fighting poverty and social exclusion at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion (ES national target 1,400,000-1,500,000)

Education

- Reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%
- at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education

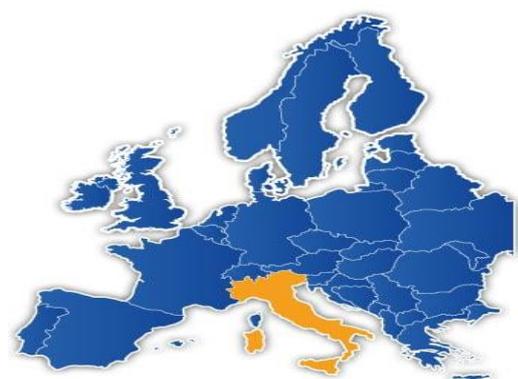
R&D 3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in R&D

Climate change and energy sustainability

- greenhouse gas emissions 20% (or even 30% if the conditions are right) lower than 1990
- 20% of energy from renewables
- 20% increase in energy efficiency

³ Council of the European Union, "Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school", 2015.

Early School Leaving in Italy

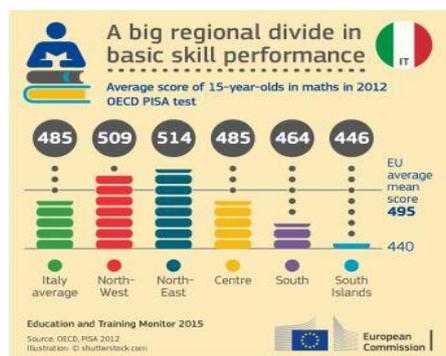
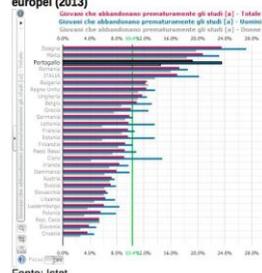


The situation in Italy in relation to Early School Leaving is concerning. According to Eurostat, in 2013 Italy was among those nations, along with Spain, Malta, Portugal, and Romania, which ESL rate touched 17% or more. In stark contrast with Central and Eastern European countries, which record a very low share of early leavers (8%), Italy stands out with above average rates of early leavers from education and training. The share of early leavers reached a peak higher than 20 % in three regions from the extremities of Italy (including the islands of Sardinia and Sicily).

Furthermore, Eurostat highlights the huge differences among Member States as far as levels of tertiary educational attainments are concerned. Indeed, Northern and Central Europe had the highest percentage of tertiary graduates, with 16 countries exceeding the overall EU target of 40%. On the contrary, the lowest levels could be observed in Italy and Romania, which were both below 25%.⁴

The most marked gap between Italy and the European average is related to gender differences. National statistics show that the male component leaving school in Italy amounts to 20.2% against the 13.6% in Europe, while the 13.7% of the female component dropping out of school in Italy is closer to the 10.2% rate recorded in the European Union.⁵

Figura 1. Giovani che abbandonano prematuramente gli studi in diversi paesi europei (2013)



A heterogeneous situation is present in Italy also with regard to different regions. Despite evident progresses over the years, the goal set by the Strategy Europe 2020 about the containment of the ESL rate below 10% appears unrealistic at the moment. By the end of 2013, the phenomenon of early school leaving from education and training still involves 21.4% of young people in the South of Italy and 14.1% in the Centre-North. As mentioned above, the situation is particularly critical in the two insular regions of Sardinia (25.8%) and Sicily (25%).

⁴ Eurostat, "Smarter, greener, more inclusive?", 2015.

⁵ *Ibid.*



Urged by national and European stimuli to improve the education system and curb the early school leaving phenomenon, Italy started addressing the issue, which gradually climbed the policy agenda. In 2003, Delegated Law no. 53/2003 was passed aiming at creating a system to address the problem of school dropouts by monitoring frequency of students, in both national and regional systems (national register of students).⁶ The database allows to effectively combating early leaving as educational institutions are required to update in real

time frequency or the abandonment of each pupil. Within the national register of students, the school has to clearly state the reasons for the interruption of attendance (transfer abroad, transfer to another school, transition to the system of education and vocational training, parental education). In this context, the risk of “dropping out” arises when no formal communication about the interruption of attendance is given by the pupil or the family to the school.

National statistics emphasise how the risk of dropping out is mainly related to students enrolled in their second or third year of the first and second level of secondary school (mainly boys aged 16-18). Further, data show that the greatest risk of early school leaving regards students enrolled in vocational schools, trade schools, and artistic education schools.⁷



As far as fighting the ESL phenomenon is concerned, Italy has started to design policies aimed at reducing the number of students dropping out. In 2014, the House of Representatives approved the doc. XVII, n.6 on the strategies to contrast ESL. Such document used as a source and guidance the report issued by the Thematic Workgroup on early school leaving of the European Commission titled “Reducing early school leaving: key messages and policy support.” On the basis of the report’s conclusions, the Italian response focuses on five main priorities:

1. Multiplication and facilitation of the access to kindergartens and primary school, especially in the South and in the Isles;
2. Improving the formative and training courses offered by schools;
3. Creation of learning environments suitable for high level training;

⁶ Camera dei Deputati e Senato della Repubblica, “Legge 28 Marzo 2003, n.53”, 2003.

⁷ Istat, “Rilevazione sulle forze di lavoro”, 2015.

4. Creation and structuring of a monitoring system for results (INVALSI database);
5. Addressing on different levels the families and students at risk of dropping out.⁸

The Italian overall strategy is designed as a transversal and comprehensive action plan focused on early prevention, constant monitoring, the quality of teachers' training, and a special attention to those subjects and categories considered to be most "at risk" of dropping out.

Through this action plan, the Italian government aims at achieving the objectives set by the EU Strategy Europe 2020 of reducing the ESL rate to 10% by 2020.



⁸ Camera dei Deputati, "Doc. XVII, n.6", 2014.
CEPAE – Dissemination plan

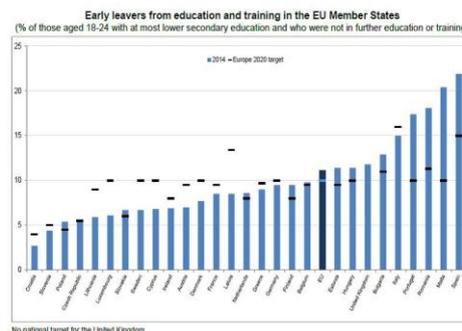
Early School Leaving in Spain



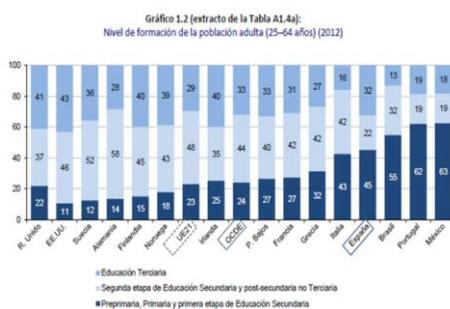
Spain is the EU Member State with the greatest percentage of early school leavers, registering a rate of 21.9% of young people aged between 18 and 24 years prematurely leaving the education system with at most lower secondary education, and not in further education or training. This percentage is double the EU average of 11.1%, and is still far off Spain's goal of reducing the rate of school drop-outs to 15% by 2020.⁹

According to Eurostat, Spain registered better results in the second of the education indicators that the EU has set for 2020, since 42.3% of the population aged between 30 to 34 years has successfully completed university education or equivalent, which is close to the 44% target set for 2020, and the females recorded much better results (47.8%, above the goal) than the males (36.8%).¹⁰

National statistics show that 94.3% of students who finish ESO (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Mandatory Secondary Education) go on studying, while 33% of early school leavers decide to go back to school after four years. In the Spanish Educational System, VET education generally



plays an important role providing the labour market with a high insertion rate.¹¹



According to an OECD analysis, Spain has an above-average rate of students enrolled in primary education (around 45%) and maintains an average rate as far as people enrolled in tertiary education is concerned (32%). Where Spain lags behind the European average is in secondary and post-secondary education (22%).¹²

⁹ Eurostat, "Europe 2020 education indicators in 2014", 2015.

¹⁰ OECD, "Education at a glance", 2012.

¹¹ Encuesta de Transición Educativa-Formativa e Inserción Laboral (EteFIL), "Encuesta de Transición Educativo-Formativa e Inserción Laboral", 2006.

¹² OECD, "Education at a glance", 2012.

To a deeper analysis, it is possible to make a study outlining the profile of early leavers and the most significant risk factors. Risks can be divided into

external and internal risk factors. Among the former, the socio-economic context of families and the local culture represent possibly the most determinant factors leading students and young people to

drop out of school. Individual peculiarities and economic factors due to an unbalanced economic structure also constitute significant risk factors. As far as internal factors are concerned, teachers' motivation is considered as an important aspect contributing to early school leaving. Along these lines, the lack of flexibility of schools and training centres, and an unbalanced operational rate between teachers and students have been pointed out as significant in leading to a high dropout rate.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARENTS	ESL	GOING ON STUDYING
No education	20,7 %	7,0 %
Secondary	56,4 %	41,3 %
Upper Secondary	10,1 %	14,9 %
VET	7 %	12,2 %
Third sector	5,8 %	24,6 %

Delving into the profiling of early leavers, the PISA report established that nearly 50% of performance differences can be explained by the social context of origin. In particular, the analysis shed some light on how the level of education of parents affects children's ESL. Though parents' lack of education does not necessarily implicate a higher ESL rate, it nonetheless markedly affects the children's decision to go on studying. The PISA report further highlighted how the lowest rate of ESL is to be found in VET and third sector education.¹³

	GENDER	
	FEMALE	MALE
REPETITIONS	42%	58%
NOT INTERESTING IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCAT.	38,1%	61,9%
SCORE UNDER AVERAGE (Standard Deviation)	43,3%	56,7%
HIGH RISK OF ESL	42,7%	57,3%

Further differences in the ESL rate are related to gender differences, in that the male component is generally subject to a higher risk of dropping out than the female counterpart.

Another identified risk factor contributing to high ESL rates relates to ethnic and nationality differences, as ETEFIL statistics¹⁴ show that

immigrants and children with an immigrant background are at a higher risk of dropping out prematurely.

¹³ OECD, "PISA report", 2012.

¹⁴ ETEFIL, "Encuesta de Transición Educativo-Formativa e Inserción Labora", 2006.

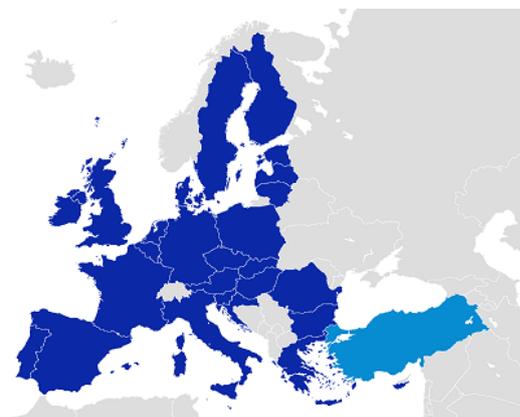


A final risk factor taken into consideration in profiling early school leavers is family composition. Indeed, Spanish national statistics record a lower ESL rate in nuclear families as compared to a higher school dropout risk for mixed, mono-parental and other types of families.¹⁵

To sum up, the in-depth analysis conducted in Spain suggests that the profile of students with the highest propensity to become early leavers has four main components: males, whom parents have a low qualification level, with an immigrant or ethnic background, and part of a broken family.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

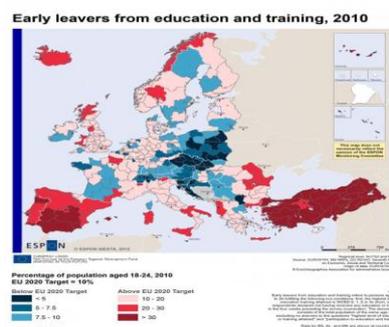
EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IN TURKEY



The Early School Leaving rate in Turkey is higher than that of any other country throughout the European Union. As a matter of fact, while the ESL rate registered in the EU in 2013 was nearly 12%, Turkey is lagging way behind, with a rate higher than 30%. Specifically, the Thematic Working Group set up in 2013 by the European Commission came up with the figure of 39,6%.¹⁶ As highlighted by Mr Béla Szombati, Chargé d'affaires a. i. of the EU Delegation in Turkey, the ESL figures show this is an issue both for boys and girls, especially in the last years of compulsory

education, with higher numbers in the poorer regions.¹⁷ The high school attainment rate is significantly lower in Turkey than the EU-28 average: only 21% of men and only 18% of women of the 30-34 age group get into tertiary education.¹⁸ However, it is important to point out that a positive development in the reduction of ESL has been underway resulting in a steady decreasing trend since data were recorded in 2007.¹⁹

In recent years, important measures have been taken in an effort to tackle the ESL issue. Indeed, in March 2012, new legislation on primary and secondary education usually termed as "4+4+4" was implemented in order to modernize the system and reduce the numbers of early school leavers. According to the new legislation, compulsory education is extended from 8 to 12 years, so that a smoother transition between educational level is possible.



As part of the new educational system, each student is automatically registered to the closest formal education institution. In case of underperformance of and absenteeism the student is transferred to a non-formal education school automatically. In the light of this development, the focus is now to increase school attendance rates, encourage students to continue to formal education and provide the re-participation of the ones who have left system before.

¹⁶ Thematic Working Group, "Reducing early school leaving: key messages and policy support", 2013.

¹⁷ Béla Szombati, "Eu Provides Funding To Increase High School Attendance Of Youngsters", 2015.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Thematic Working Group, "Reducing early school leaving: key messages and policy support", 2013.

Tertiary attainment levels in Turkey have improved strongly over the last decade, but they are still low compared with other OECD countries. Moreover, it is significant to emphasise that, while the average education period in Europe is 11-12 years or more, the average education period of the adult population in Turkey is about 6 years.

According to European data and statistics, the ESL rates of

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
MALE	41.3	39.0	37.9	37.9	37.8	37.7	36.1	35.0
FEMALE	55.6	54.1	52.5	50.2	47.9	45.7	43.0	39.9
TOTAL	48.8	46.9	45.5	44.3	43.1	41.9	39.6	37.5

female students have significantly been decreasing if we take into consideration the period between 2006 and 2013. However, it is still evident that female students display a greater tendency to early school leaving than male students.²⁰

In the scope of lifelong learning as a term covering all learning phases, the arrangement of activities and the encouragement of active participation are vitally important in terms of self-development of the individuals. According to the 2013 statistics, participation rate of lifelong learning is 3.8 % in Turkey, while this rate is 9.2 % in EU28.



Early school leaving for boys and girls may have similar reasons, such as poverty, but consequences are not necessarily the same. Men are much more likely to have a job even if dropping out of school, as demonstrated by

Turkey's labour market figures, but this is not necessarily the case for women. As Mr Béla Szombati²¹ declared, while it is positive that compulsory education is extended to twelve years, it would be important for Turkey to take a close look at the reasons for switching to open education in the coming years, both for boys and girls.

Other data comparing the situation between Turkey and the EU are indicative of the present wide gap observed still today. Indeed, 37,5% of Turkey's population consisted of early school leavers in 2013, while the EU 2020 Target as outlined in the Strategy Europe 2020 is <10%.

Nevertheless, all the rates concerning education and training have been improving in harmony with

EU TARGETS AND BENCHMARKS, 2013 (%)

Benchmarking indicator	EU 2020 target	EU average	Worst EU performer	Best EU performer	Turkey	Trend in Turkey 2010-13**
Early leavers from education and training	<10	12.0	23.6	3.9	37.5	Improving
Tertiary education attainment	≥40	36.9	22.4	52.6	19.5	Improving
Early childhood education and care*	95	93.9	71.7	100.0	44.1	Improving
Students' low achievement in basic competences*						
• Reading		17.8	39.4	9.1	21.6	
• Mathematics	15	22.1	43.8	10.5	42.0	Improving
• Science		16.8	38.0	5.0	26.4	
Share of ISCED 3 students in VET*	—	50.4	11.8	75.3	43.9	Improving
Adult participation in lifelong learning	15	10.5	1.7	31.4	4.0	Improving
Employment rate of recent graduates	82	75.5	40.0	92.2	61.7	Improving
Employment rate (20-64 age group)	≥75	68.4	52.9	79.8	53.4	Improving

Notes: (*) 2012 data; (**) Comparing trends between 2010 and 2012/13 (depending on latest data availability), except for 'students' low achievement in basic competences' where PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results refer to 2009 and 2012; Indicators in Italic = EU 2020 targets; ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education.
Source: Eurostat, 2014; Data for 'students' low achievement in basic competences': OECD/PISA.

²⁰ Eurostat, "Europe 2020 education indicators in 2014", 2015.

²¹ Béla Szombati, "Eu Provides Funding To Increase High School Attendance Of Youngsters", 2015.



the EU process.



Other measures aimed at tackling ESL rates may also be designed, particularly with regards to the strengthening of prevention and early intervention. In addition, better support for teachers, trainers and other education staff, parental involvement and cooperation with local communities would also represent important measures.

To sum up, the high ESL rate represents an issue for the Turkish government, and the target set by the Strategy Europe 2020 appear out of reach at the moment.

Early School Leaving in Germany



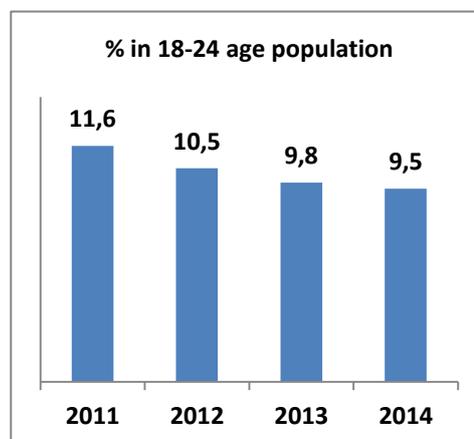
Germany is one of the 10 countries in the European Union that by 2013 had already achieved the target of reducing its ESL rate below 10% set by Strategy Europe 2020.²²

As a matter of fact, in 2014 the German population having left school prematurely was as low as 9.5%.²³

In order to better understand the German success in addressing ESL, an analysis of the German Education System is worthwhile. In contrast to that of other countries, the German school system is not

organised centrally. Only the fundamental structures of the German educational system are defined by the federal government while the main educational targets and the curriculum are developed de-centrally in each of the 16 federal states (Bundesländer).

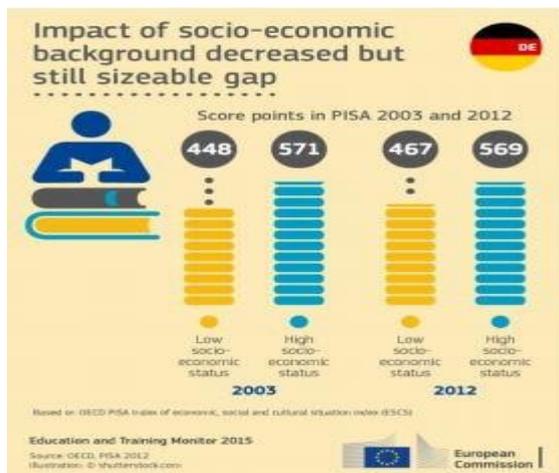
Another particularity of the German educational system is the 'cost-free' principle. That means that, except for pre-school education in general, the individual learner can attend school without paying any fee for his/her education. Some federal states even provide access to schoolbooks free of charge. The subsequent particularity is that of the Dual System (Duales System) with regard to vocational education. This system combines part-time vocational education with practical work experience. The trainee is employed in a company or institution and attends vocational school in parallel (in average 2 days per week).



Education becomes mandatory for children after their 6th birthday and lasts for between 9 and 10 full-time school years (depending on the different 'Bundesländer'). Compulsory education is extended by 2-3 part-time school years in vocational schools. The general education qualifications that may be obtained after grades 9 and 10 carry particular designations in some federal states.

²² Eurostat, "Europe 2020 education indicators in 2014", 2015.

²³ Eurostat, "EU Labour Force Survey", 2015.



Despite the lack of comprehensive national reporting system about Early School Leaving in Germany, it is possible to outline the main reasons and ‘risk factors’ generally associated to early school leaving. Regional differences in ESL show that school dropout rates are higher in federal states with higher unemployment rates and unemployment of parents can lead to school related problems of children. In regions with a higher amount of employees without vocational degree the dropout rates of young people are higher. This suggests a relation between social status of parents and

educational success of their children. The amount of immigrant students in classes seems to be influencing dropout rates, mainly due to language problems.

Therefore, the main ‘risk factors’ identified are related to: gender, migration status, geographical provenience, educational/cultural background, enrolment in a General Secondary School (Hauptschulen), perception of parents on their children’s future, and socio-economic as well as employment status of the student’s parents therefore being stable predictors for Early School Leaving (ESL).

The excellent German situation in tackling and reducing the ESL rate is the result of a number of strategies implemented on the local and national level. The relevance and effectiveness of some of these measures, initiatives, and general principles are worth pointing out. They include:

- Qualification initiative “Getting ahead through education” (2007), implies close collaboration between the Federal and the Länder authorities, and aims at reducing the number of students leaving school without first general education qualification.
- The “Second Chances for Truants” programme (Schulverweigerung – Die 2. Chance) offers individual socio-pedagogical support to young people identified as at risk of not completing secondary and vocational training as a result of truancy.
- Specific targeted measures for groups at risk are focused on students from socially disadvantaged, migrant and minority/Roma background.



- Education and Career Guidance. For example, the “Education Chains” (Bildungsketten) initiative aims at minimising the dropout ratio by offering support for the transition phase from school to the labour market.

