



# Education of EU migrant children in EU Member States

Emma Harte, Facundo Herrera, Martin Stepanek

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# Preface

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This policy brief was developed by RAND Europe, which in 2011 was commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion to provide content and technical support for the European Alliance for Families platform, which became the European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) in 2013.

The European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) was set up to explore demographic and economic challenges in the EU from a child and family-focused perspective. Its purpose is to share the best of policymaking for children and their families, and to foster cooperation and mutual learning in the field. This is achieved through information provided on the EPIC website, which enables policymakers from the Member States to search evidence-based child-focused practices from around the EU and to share knowledge about practices that are being developed, and also by bringing together government, civil society and European Union representatives for seminars and workshops to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

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The document is designed to provide insights into issues of interest to policymakers and practitioners. It has been subject to RAND's quality assurance processes: it has been reviewed externally by one of the EPIC experts in child and family policy, Dr Klaus Hurrelmann, Professor of Public Health and Education at the Hertie School of Governance, and a RAND expert, Stijn Hoorens.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position of the European Commission.



## **Education of EU-migrant children in EU Member States**

**Emma Harte, Facundo Herrera, Martin Stepanek**

### **Executive summary**

- This policy brief looks at the education of EU migrant children. These are children under the age of 15 residing in the EU, but born in another Member State. The share of EU migrants in the EU has grown in recent years, due to increased mobility between Member States.
- Higher proportions of EU migrants live in the older Member States (EU-15) than the 2004 (EU-10), 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and 2014 (Croatia) accession Member States. As a proportion of the under-15-year-old population, Luxembourg (13.8 per cent) has the highest share of EU-migrant children, while the Czech Republic hosts the lowest share (0.3 per cent).
- Recent data on the arrival of new migrants shows that Belgium, Germany or Sweden, which already have relatively high numbers of EU migrants in absolute terms, have seen a large inflow. Among the top reasons for migration are prospects of higher income and employment and family reunification.
- Some evidence suggests that on average EU migrant children do not do as well at school as their native counterparts, especially when their new country's language is different. Moreover, the underperformance in education of EU-migrant children is associated with later challenges in the labour market. For example, rates of youth unemployment among EU migrants tend to be higher than for non-migrant youth.
- Policy initiatives to help integrate EU-migrant children into school vary considerably between Member States with some countries, such as Portugal and Finland, facilitating access compared to Bulgaria and Hungary, and others, such as Denmark, Estonia, Sweden and Finland targeting specific needs compared to Bulgaria and Croatia.
- Across Europe, some initiatives aim to help migrant children and youths by improving their language skills and educational attainment.

## **Abbreviations**

AROPE	At-risk of poverty and social exclusion
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
EU-15	EU Member States before the 2004 enlargement: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
EU-10	2004 accession states: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia
A-8	2004 accession states except for Cyprus and Malta
A-2	2007 accession states: Bulgaria and Romania

## Table of contents

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Preface .....	i
Table of contents.....	v
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Intra-EU mobility .....	1
2.1 European Union policies .....	1
2.2 EU migrants.....	2
3. Education.....	7
3.1 Considering education in the EU context.....	7
3.2 Educational outcomes of EU-migrant children.....	8
3.3 Educational attainment .....	9
3.4 Early school leavers.....	11
3.5 Youth employment.....	12
3.6 Youth at-risk of poverty or exclusion .....	14
3.7 Explanations for EU migrant child educational attainment .....	15
4. Accommodating EU migrant children in the school system.....	18
4.1 Education system responses .....	18
4.2 Programmes for the inclusion of migrant children.....	21
5. Concluding remarks.....	26
References .....	29

## 1. Introduction

Approximately ten per cent of the EU's population are migrants, measured as the proportion of the population born in a country other than the one in which they reside. Five per cent of migrants are under the age of 15 (Eurostat 2016a; Eurostat 2015).<sup>1</sup> Children with an EU-migrant background represent approximately 1.8 per cent of all children under the age of 15 in the EU (Eurostat 2016a). There is variation among Member States in the proportional distribution of the EU-migrant population (see Figure 1), with Luxembourg accommodating the largest share per capita and Bulgaria, Poland and Romania the smallest.

This policy brief looks at intra-EU mobility with a particular focus on EU migrant children in education. Education is a key priority for the EU in the context of Europe 2020: increased attainment is expected to help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society (EC 2010). In general, children with a migrant background are more likely to have a lower level of educational performance (see Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8) and to become early school leavers (see Figure 9) than those without a migrant background (Nouwen et al. 2015). Hence, the topic of inclusion of EU-migrant children is very relevant in the context of European economic development and social mobility.

In this brief we explore the differences in educational performance and attainment between (EU) migrant and host country children, and attempt to understand the gaps in educational performance and employment outcomes between migrant and non-migrant children. We also outline some policies and practices which are aimed at improving educational outcomes and progression of migrants. We examine some of the literature and data on the topic in order to tease out some of the differences between the two groups. In addition, through case studies from selected countries, we illustrate how particular programmes respond to the demands and challenges in education systems posed by EU migrant children.

## 2. Intra-EU mobility

### 2.1 European Union policies

The European Union has made provisions over the past number of decades for the inclusion of EU migrant citizens across a number of domains including intra-EU mobility, education and employment. The freedom of movement of workers is a fundamental component of the European Union and was enshrined in the Treaty of Rome (1957).<sup>2</sup> The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU – 2012/C 326/01) reinforces the importance of intra-EU mobility stating that '[f]reedom of movement for workers shall be secured within the Union,' and outlining the rights of EU migrant workers, making a provision for the exchange of young workers, and the appropriate accompanying support to be provided by the host country (EC 2012). According to Recchi (2008) the freedom of movement within the borders of the European Union has a role in encouraging integration among citizens of Member States, and in legitimising the broader goal of an increasingly integrated European Union.

In this section, we outline the definition of EU migrants and EU-migrant children used for the purposes of this brief. We also look at the distribution of EU migrants as a share of the non-migrant population and attempt to understand some of the reasons for relocation. Although we pay particular attention to EU migrants, sometimes the studies or the data on which we rely make no distinction as to the provenance of migrants and we outline this, where appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat indicator migr\_pop3ctb; Eurostat indicator migr\_pop3ctb\_under15

<sup>2</sup> Treaty establishing the European Economic Community



### 2.1.1 Timeline of European Union Member States accession

Since its establishment in 1958, the European Union has undergone seven enlargements, growing from six Member States to 28 (see Table 1), the EU-28. Further labels are attributed to Member States as groupings, most notable are EU-15 (referring to pre-2004 Member States), EU-10 (2004 accession states), A-8 (2004 accession states except Cyprus and Malta) and A-2 (Romania and Bulgaria).

**Table 1: Member States by year of accession**

Year	Member State	Grouping name	
1958	Belgium France Germany Italy Luxembourg Netherlands	EU-15	EU-28
1973	Denmark Ireland United Kingdom		
1981	Greece		
1986	Spain Portugal		
1995	Austria Finland Sweden		
2004	Cyprus Czech Republic* Estonia* Hungary* Latvia* Lithuania* Malta Poland* Slovenia* Slovakia*	EU-10	*A-8
2007	Bulgaria Romania	A-2	
2013	Croatia		

Source: Based on European Union (2016)

## 2.2 EU migrants

### 2.2.1 Definitions of EU migrants and EU-migrant children

The main focus of this policy brief is intra-EU migration, i.e. the migration of individuals from one European Union Member State to another. We therefore aim to build a definition of an EU migrant and EU migrant child on this basis.

Janta and Harte (2016) explain that there is no clear consensus on the definition of who constitutes a migrant or migrant child, but that there are some accepted ways of characterising these groups. Some interpret a migrant as an individual who was born in one country but who now resides in another, irrespective of their citizenship, a definition which works on the basis that country of birth cannot change

while citizenship can (Tromans et al. 2009). Other definitions require an individual to be present in another country for 12 months or subject to immigration controls in order to be counted as a migrant, although in the context of the European Union not all intra-EU migrants are subject to such controls (Anderson & Blinder 2015).

As outlined by Janta and Harte (2016), a migrant child can be viewed as one who is born in a country other than the one in which they reside and is labelled a first-generation migrant. However, a migrant child can also be defined as someone born in the country in which they reside but whose parents (one or both) were born elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

In the context of the data presented, we define an EU migrant as an individual who is resident in an EU Member State other than the one in which they were *born*, rather than focusing on heritage or ethnic background. In the EU context, migration from one Member State to another is referred to as mobility. On this basis, we assume that an EU-migrant child is anyone under the age of 15 born in an EU Member State and who is resident in a different EU Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months.

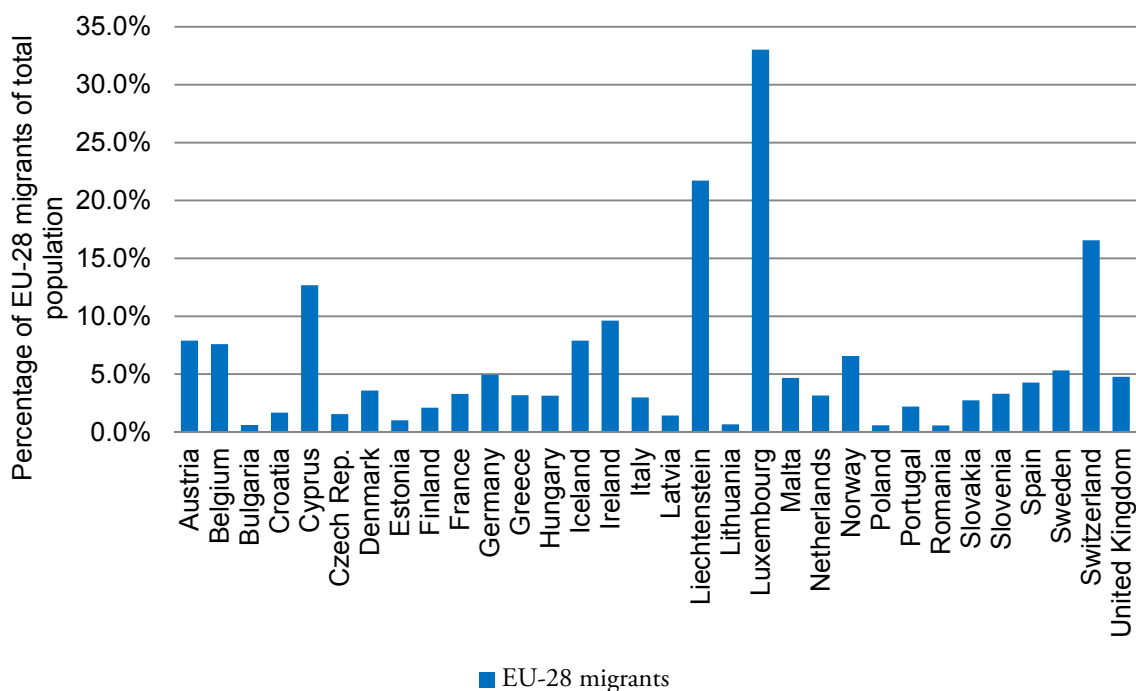
### 2.2.2 EU migrants in the European Union

According to Eurostat, the total number of EU migrants was 18.5 million in 2015 (Eurostat 2016b). Only a handful of Member States received more EU-28 migrants than non-EU-28 migrants, namely Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg and Slovakia (Eurostat 2016b). The proportion of EU migrants varies considerably across the Member States (see Figure 1). Luxembourg has the highest concentration of foreign-born EU citizens, with one third of the Luxembourgish population born in another EU Member State. Cyprus (12.7 per cent), Ireland (9.6 per cent), Austria (7.9 per cent) and Belgium (7.6 per cent) also have large concentrations of foreign-born EU migrants, while Bulgaria (0.6 per cent), Poland (0.6 per cent), Romania (0.6 per cent) and Lithuania (0.7 per cent) have the smallest.

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<sup>3</sup> In France, data are collected on children who are born to at least one foreign-born parent and/or to non-citizens (Breuil-Genier et al. 2011; Insee 2011; Janta & Harte 2016).

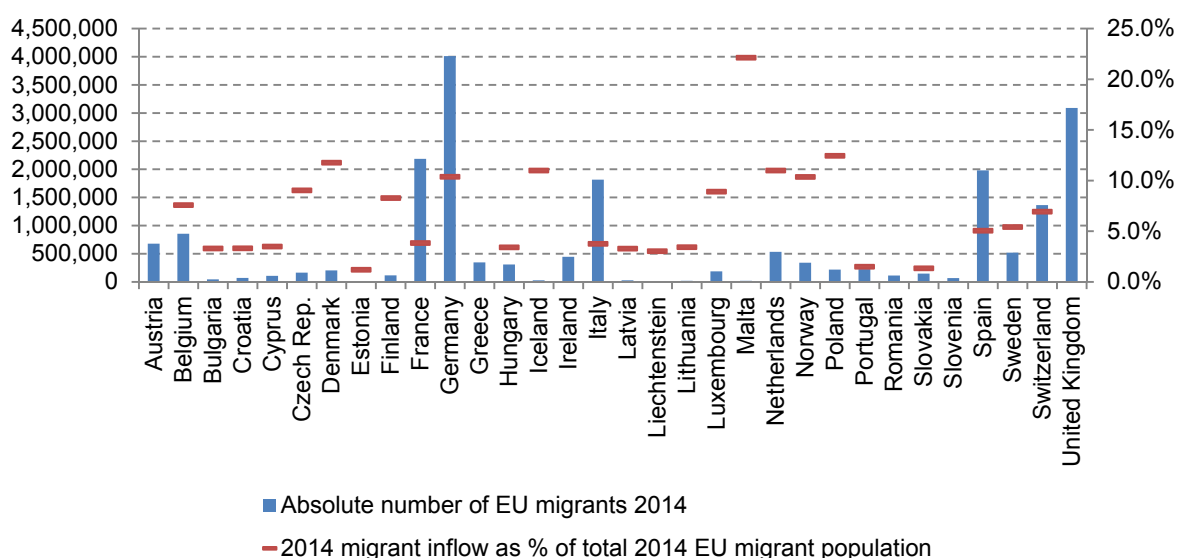
Figure 1: EU-28 migrants as a share of the total population in 2015



Source: Eurostat [migr\_pop3ctb]

The data from 2014 on the stock and inflow of new migrants shows that countries such as Belgium, Germany and Sweden have already had a large number of EU migrants in absolute terms and are still seeing a large inflow (Figure 2). On the other hand, although it may seem that countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic are among the top intra-EU migrant destinations, the relative inflow of new migrants against existing ones likely seems exaggerated due to the small number of migrant residents.

Figure 2: Inflow of EU migrants as a percentage of the total number of migrants by country in 2014

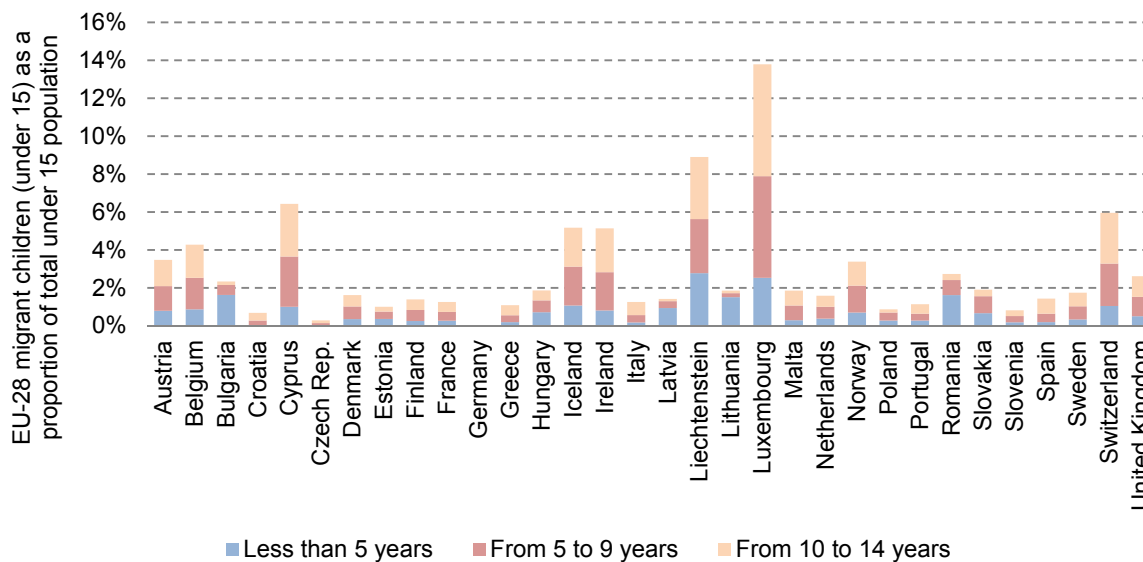


Source: Eurostat [migr\_pop3ctb; migr\_imm1ctz]

Note: Missing marks signify no data available.

On average, 1.8 per cent of all children under the age of 15 in the EU-28 were born in another Member State. As shown in Figure 3, the share of this population group is rather equally split among all three five-year under-15s age groups (0–4 years, 5–9 years and 10–14 years).

**Figure 3: EU-28 migrant children under 15 years of age as a share of the total population under 15 years of age.**

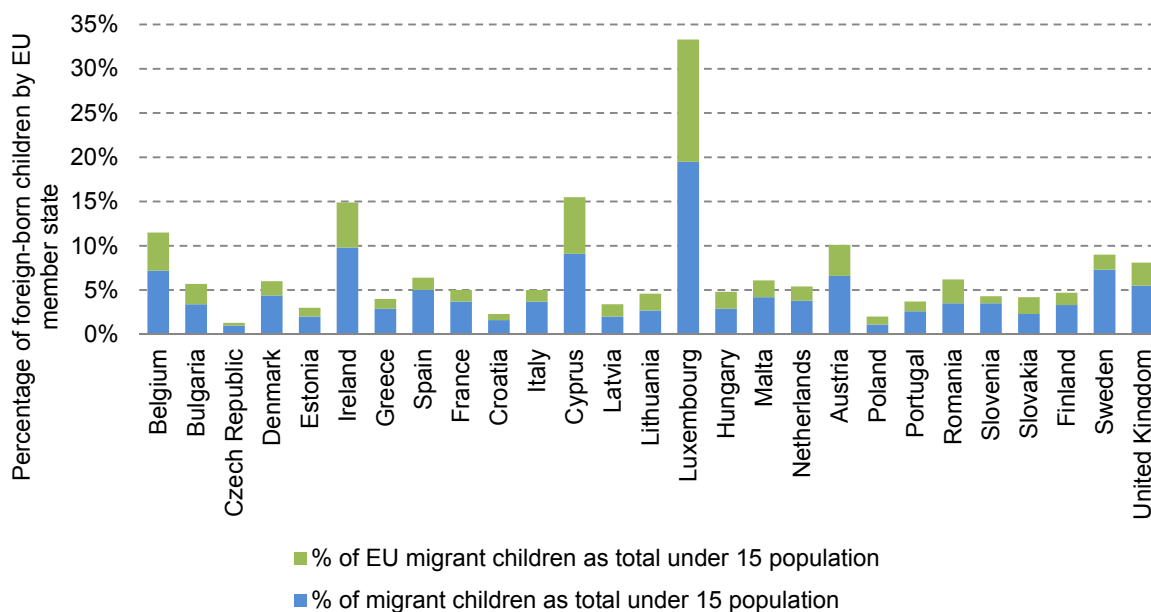


Source: Eurostat [migr\_pop3ctb]

### 2.2.3 EU-migrant children

It should be no surprise that there is also variation in the distribution and concentration of EU-migrant children (population aged 15 or below) across Member States, with EU-migrant children usually constituting a small proportion of the total number in this group (see Figure 4). Luxembourg hosts the highest proportion of EU-migrant children (13.8 per cent of the population aged 15 or younger), followed by Cyprus (6.4 per cent), Ireland (5.1 per cent) and Belgium (4.3 per cent).

Figure 4: Foreign-born children in the EU Member States, 2015

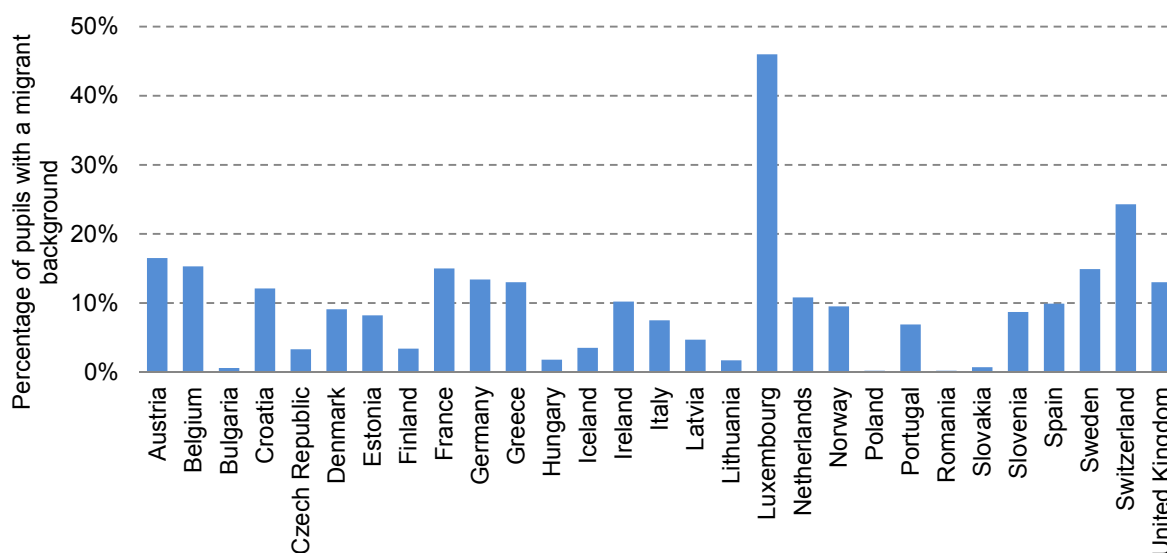


Source: Eurostat [migr\_pop3ctb].

Note: migrant children defined by their country of birth. EU-migrant children defined as migrant children from EU27 countries (excluding reporting country). No available data for Germany for 2015.

Figure 5 below shows data from the Migrant Integration Policy Index. In 2012, several countries had a high proportion of pupils with a migrant background (both EU and non-EU). Luxembourg had the highest with 46 per cent, followed by Switzerland (24 per cent), Austria (17 per cent) and Belgium (15 per cent). In addition, pupils with a migrant background constituted over 10 per cent of the student population in France, Croatia, Germany and Greece, as well as Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Figure 5: Share of pupils with a migrant background, 2012



Source: Migrant Integration Policy Index ([www.mipex.eu](http://www.mipex.eu))

### 3. Education

In the context of the freedom of movement of people, it is important to understand that many migrants may arrive with complex and interlinking needs and priorities, one example of which is placing their children in education or early childhood education and care (ECEC) (Ryan & Sales 2011). Devine (2013) recognises that education can have the purpose of developing human capital. As such, schools can provide an environment for constructing migrant children's identities – recognising this group's need is important in enabling access to the right to quality of learning (Devine 2013).

Children with a migrant background are likely to face a number of challenges in school, both in terms of performance and outcomes. For example, Eurostat, OECD, and European Commission (EC) data shows that children with a migrant background are more likely to leave school early (see Figure 9), and that young people with a migrant background are at a greater risk of poverty (see Figure 12), or to be out of employment, education and training (see Figure 11). Moreover, there are concerns that the increasing share of pupils whose first language is not that of the host country may have detrimental effects on the educational outcomes of non-migrant children, or that they may be a burden to both the state budget and education system in general (Jensen 2015). Although mixed evidence has been presented on the issue so far (Ohinata & Van Ours 2013), the topics are of high importance for policymakers at both a national and international level.

#### 3.1 Considering education in the EU context

The aim of this section is to examine the disparities in educational attainment, early school leaving and youth unemployment between EU-migrant children and non-migrant children. Janta and Harte (2016) produced a policy brief for the European Platform for Investing in Children focusing on policy responses to the inclusion of migrant children in Europe. The policy brief examined the varied challenges that migrant children and children with a migrant background might face that can impact on their educational attainment. The following section can be read as a complement to Janta and Harte's brief (2016), which provides a greater level of detail on the challenges that migrant children (not exclusively EU-migrant children) face and outlines some potential policy responses that could help this population in Europe. Please note that the literature in this section does not make a clear distinction between children who were born in a different country and those whose family comes from a migrant background, unless expressly specified. Where relevant, we state when the data or literature refers to an EU-migrant child's experience in the education system in their EU Member State of residence. We first provide an overview of education within the EU context, and then examine the data and literature to unpack some of the reasons for the disparities between EU-migrant and non-migrant child populations.

The European Union has historically recognised the need to make provisions for migrant children, with the aim of facilitating the freedom of movement of workers. The Council Directive (77/486/EEC) on the education of the children of migrant workers passed in 1977. The Directive makes reference to the right of a child of compulsory school age to initially receive free appropriate tuition and to learn the official language of the host country.

Education features in the Europe 2020 strategy, particularly under one of its flagship initiatives, the *European Platform against Poverty*, as a means to help tackle inequality by applying 'innovative education, training, and employment opportunities' in order to help the inclusion of marginalised, disabled and migrant communities (EC 2010). Generally, the strategy states an ambition to increase educational attainment and reduce attrition in education (i.e. reduce the number of early school leavers) from 15 per cent to 10 per cent and to increase the number of individuals with tertiary degrees to 40 per cent (EC 2010). The underlying assumption of creating better educational outcomes is that it will have spillover

effects on the employability of individuals and contribute to reducing poverty and gaps in equality (EC 2010).

The Commission Recommendation on *Investing in Children: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage* (2013/112/EU) makes reference to the importance of education in reducing social inequality and disadvantage. The Recommendation calls for ‘integrated strategies’ to curb poverty and social exclusion, including preventive measures such as supporting access to the workforce for parents and to quality pre-school and school education for children. A number of other options for ensuring positive outcomes for children were outlined, such as the provision of additional resources to tackle disadvantage, preparing teachers for diversity, facilitating the integration of minority groups (e.g. Roma and children with a migrant background) with special cultural mediator roles, and the implementation of policies to tackle early school leaving (2013/112/EU).

Each Member State has remit over their own education systems (e.g. ECEC, K1–12, high school, higher education), and each has different compulsory ages for starting education (see Table 2). However, the European Commission liaises with national governments to support them in the development of their education systems and in the provision of education, such as exchange programmes, staff training, and school development (EC 2016a). Member States were consulted at European-level and identified some overarching priorities for education, including ensuring that each child in school can ‘benefit from high-quality learning, including migrant children,’ that there is an availability of pre-school education, that there is a reduction of early school leavers and that special needs are catered to within mainstream education (EC 2016a). The work done so far to create more harmony among education systems and the recognition of qualifications across Member States acts as a facilitator for intra-EU mobility and ‘makes school certificates more easily marketable abroad’ (Recchi 2008).

**Table 2: Compulsory school age across EU Member States**

Member State	Age
United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)	4
Cyprus, Malta, United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales)	5
Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain	6
Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden	7

Source: NFER (2013)

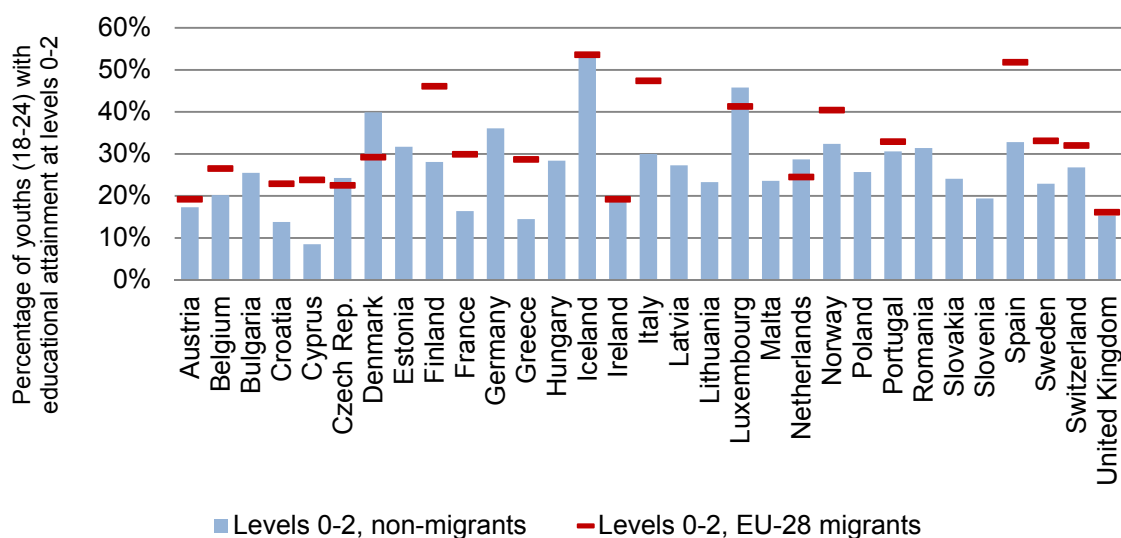
### 3.2 Educational outcomes of EU-migrant children

Across the board, the data show that EU-migrant children tend to perform less well than those born in the host country. Heath et al. (2008) explain that some of the differences between children born to two non-migrant parents and children with a migrant background, particularly from a less developed source country, can be attributed to having fewer socio-economic resources, lower parental educational attainment and, even if these factors are considered, there is an associated ethnic penalty that can have impacts on performance.

### 3.3 Educational attainment

The level of educational attainment at level 0–2 depicted in Figure 6 below is similar for non-migrants and EU-28 migrants only for countries like the Czech Republic, Austria, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Finland, Italy and Spain show the highest gaps in educational attainment between both groups, while most of the EU migrants are above national rates, with the exception of Denmark and Luxembourg.

**Figure 6: Share of young adults aged 18-24 with educational attainment at levels 0-2 (less than primary, primary and lower secondary education)**

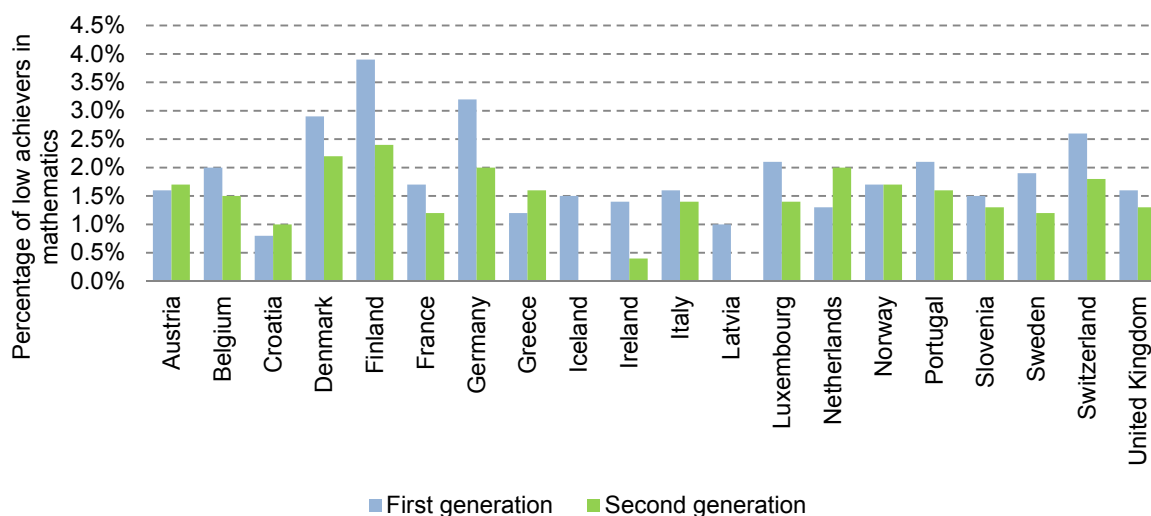


Note: Missing marks signify no data available.

Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfs\_9912]

Figure 7 below shows the gap in maths scores (in percentage points) between first and second generation migrant pupils during 2012. Overall, the first generation struggles more than the second generation. The widest gaps are observed in Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Denmark. For a limited number of countries, including Croatia, Greece and the Netherlands, first generation migrant pupils outperform the second generation group.



**Figure 7: Share of low achievers in mathematics, gap between first and second generation migrant children, 2012**


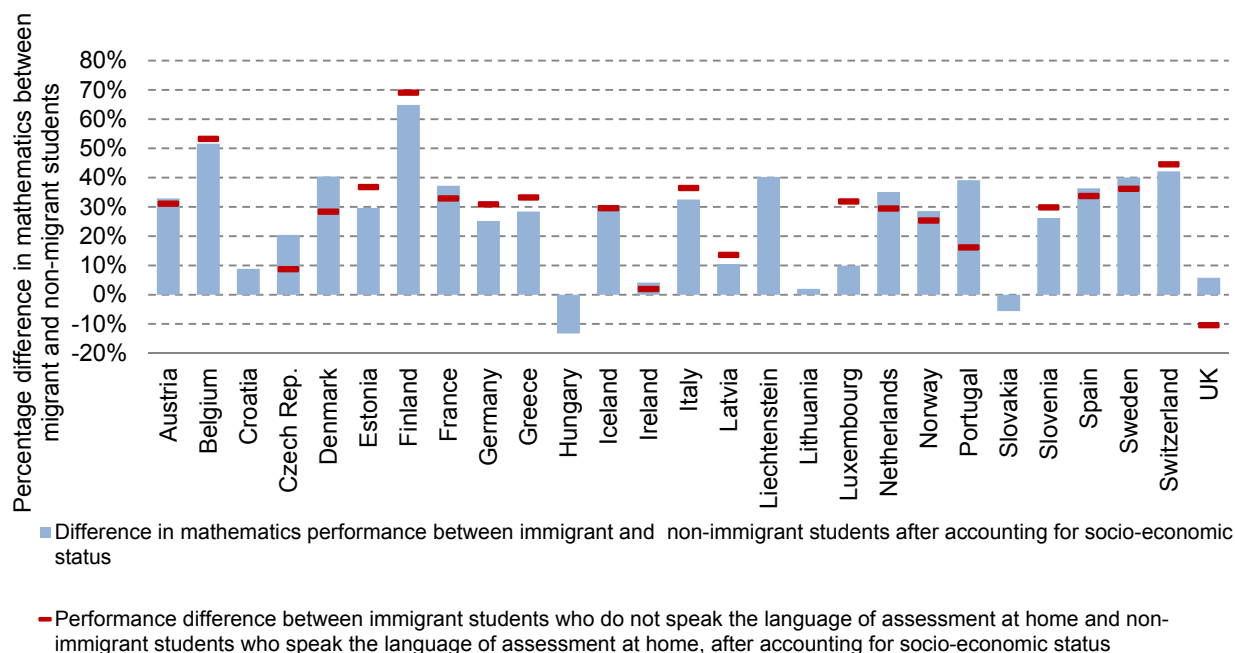
Note: Missing marks signify no data available.

Source: Migrant integration policy index, series corresponding to 'Share with immigrant background' (2016) ([www.mipex.eu](http://www.mipex.eu)).

PISA data in Figure 8 displays the percentage point difference in scores between non-migrant and migrant groups in the maths tests. A positive value means migrant pupils underperform compared to the non-migrant group. This figure suggests that, after taking into account socio-economic backgrounds, those students with a migrant background underperform compared to non-migrants. Moreover, the red markers show that there is also a difference between migrant students whose language at home is different from the test language and the non-migrant group whose language at home is the same as the test language. Both series exhibit similar patterns.

The underlying causes are related to the nature of the migrant population, the inflow and how the education systems have been able to adapt. Some countries have experienced a recent and abrupt inflow of migrants since 2000 (Italy, Finland, Portugal, Greece, Ireland and Spain) and struggle to respond to this challenge, while other countries (France and United Kingdom) due to their former colonial past had migrants who have already mastered the language (OECD 2013).

Figure 8: PISA difference in maths results, 2012

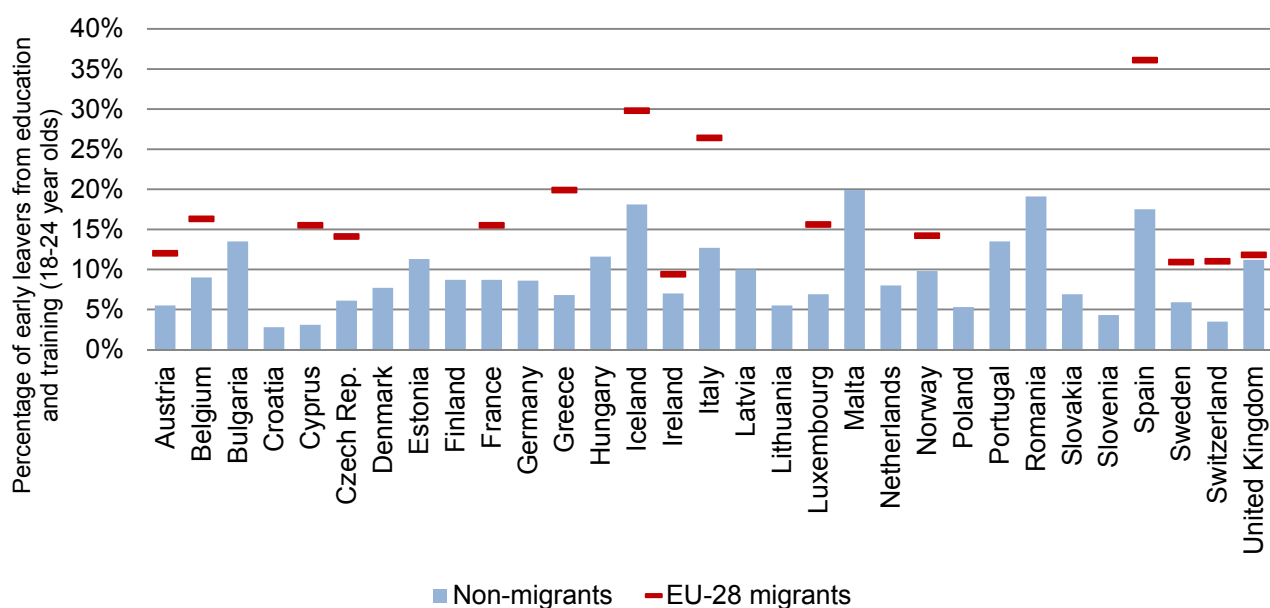


Source: OECD (2013), PISA 2012 Results: Excellence through Equity (Volume II): Giving Every Student the Chance to Succeed. Series 'Difference in mathematics performance between immigrant and non-immigrant students'.

### 3.4 Early school leavers

There is a notable difference between the proportions of early school leavers among 18–24 year-old EU-migrants and non-migrants (see Figure 9). In most Member States, the difference between the two populations of early school leavers is almost null, as it is the case of the United Kingdom. However, in some Member States gaps in early school leaving rates between EU migrant children and their non-migrant peers is wider, for example in Greece (with a 13.1 percentage point difference), Italy (with a 13.7 percentage point difference) and Spain (an 18.6 percentage point difference).

Figure 9: Early leavers from education and training aged 18–24, 2015



Note: Missing marks signify no data available.

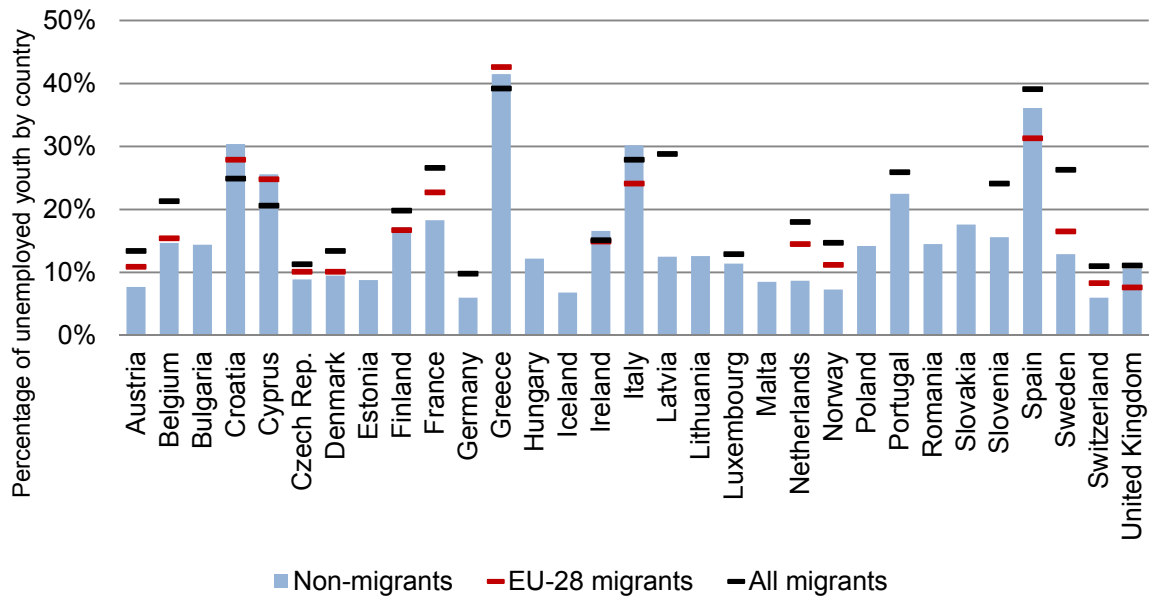
Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfse\_02]

### 3.5 Youth employment

With the caveat that we are not demonstrating the actual progression of a subset of EU-migrant children over time, we believe it is important to situate EU migrants' current position in context. Therefore, we will look at the number of youths across EU Member States who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

In terms of youth unemployment, Figure 10 shows that, in most countries, EU migrants have lower unemployment rates compared to the total group of migrants. In some countries however, such as Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom, the unemployment rates are higher among non-migrants than both groups of migrants (EU migrants and all migrants).

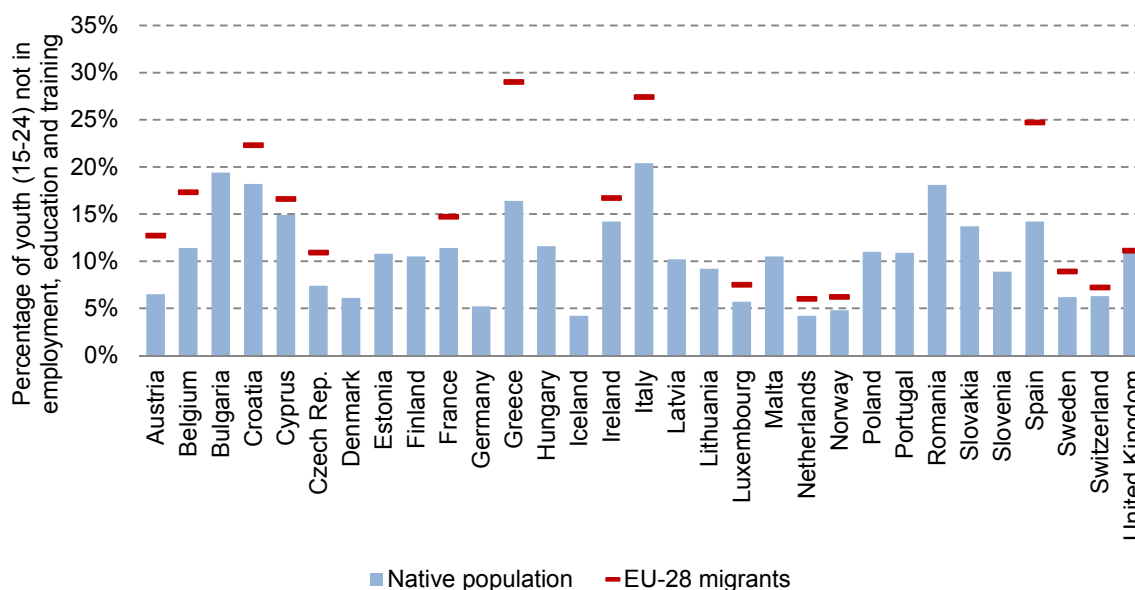
Figure 10: Youth (15–29 years old) unemployment levels by country.



Note: Missing marks signify no data available.

Source: Eurostat [yth\_empl\_100]

As well as displaying a higher tendency towards early school leaving compared with the non-migrant population (Figure 9), EU-migrant youths (15–24 year olds) are more likely to not be in education, employment or training (NEETs) compared with their non-migrant counterparts (Figure 11). Some Member States such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, show relatively few differences in the number of NEETs among the EU-migrant and non-migrant populations. It is worth noting that, despite having high levels of NEETs among their native populations, there are still significant differences between the EU-migrant and non-migrant populations in Greece, Italy, and Spain. In Greece, for example, approximately 29 per cent of the EU-migrant population is a NEET while this is true for only 16 per cent of the non-migrant population. The differences between the two populations in Italy (7 percentage points) and Spain (10 percentage points) are also significant, with almost 30 per cent and 25 per cent of EU migrants falling into the NEET category. Bulgaria and Romania also have high levels of NEETs among their native populations, although no data for EU-28 migrants in these Member States is available.

**Figure 11: People aged 15–24 not in employment, nor in education and training (NEETs) in 2015**


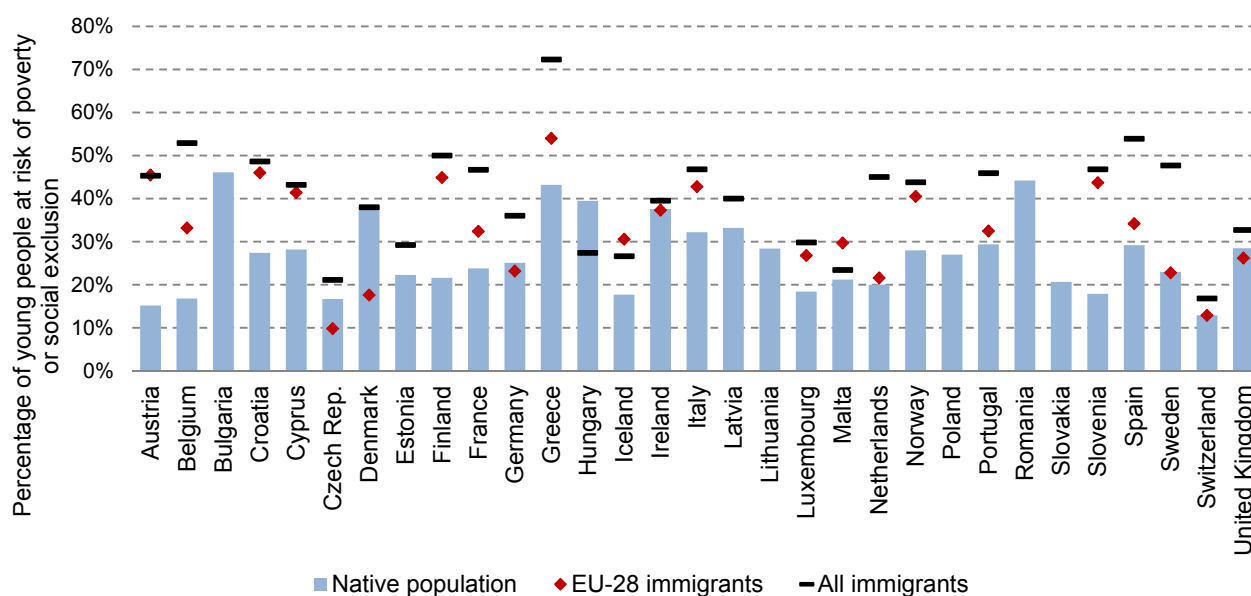
Note: Missing marks signify no data available.

Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfse\_28]

### 3.6 Youth at-risk of poverty or exclusion

Data on the proportion of EU migrant children at risk of poverty was not available. Instead, we present data on youth at risk of poverty to illustrate that differences in migrant outcomes exist across different age cohorts. In most countries, there is a gap between the proportion of young people (15–29 year olds) at-risk of poverty or exclusion (AROPE) in the migrant and non-migrant communities, as shown below in Figure 12.

Where data is available, and save for a few exceptions (namely Denmark and Hungary), migrant youth (EU and non-EU) are at a greater risk of poverty than non-migrant youth, often with large disparities between the two groups. For instance, there is a 36 percentage point difference between migrant and non-migrant children in Belgium, a 30 percentage point difference in Austria and a 29 percentage point difference in Greece (see Figure 12). In Hungary, just less than 30 per cent of the migrant population is AROPE compared to approximately 40 per cent of the non-migrant population, and migrant children and non-migrant children are tied at 38 per cent AROPE in Denmark. The gap between all migrants and only the EU-28 migrants is relatively small for countries such as Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway and Slovenia. The opposite is true for countries such as Denmark, Greece and Sweden, which have an approximate 20 percentage point difference between the two groups. Relatively speaking, however, migrant youth are somewhat less likely than the total migrant group to be at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

**Figure 12: Young people at risk of poverty or exclusion (AROPE) rate by country of birth, 2014.**

Note: Missing marks signify no data available.

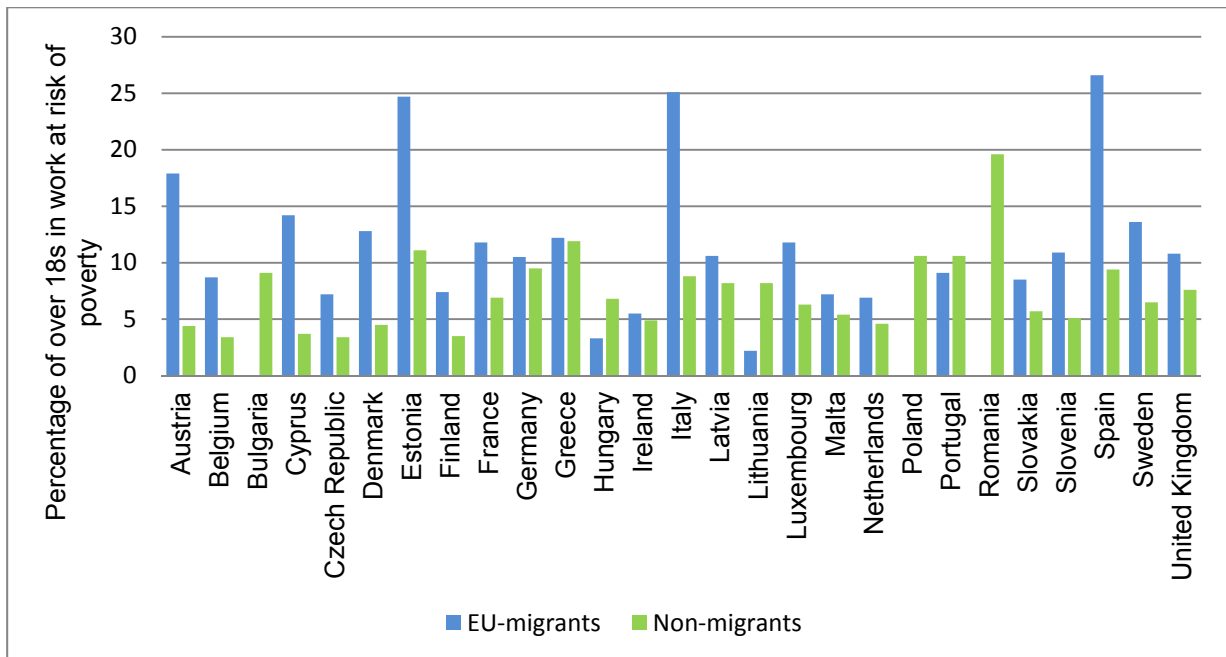
Source: Eurostat [ilc\_li33]

### 3.7 Explanations for EU migrant child educational attainment

#### Socio-economic disadvantage

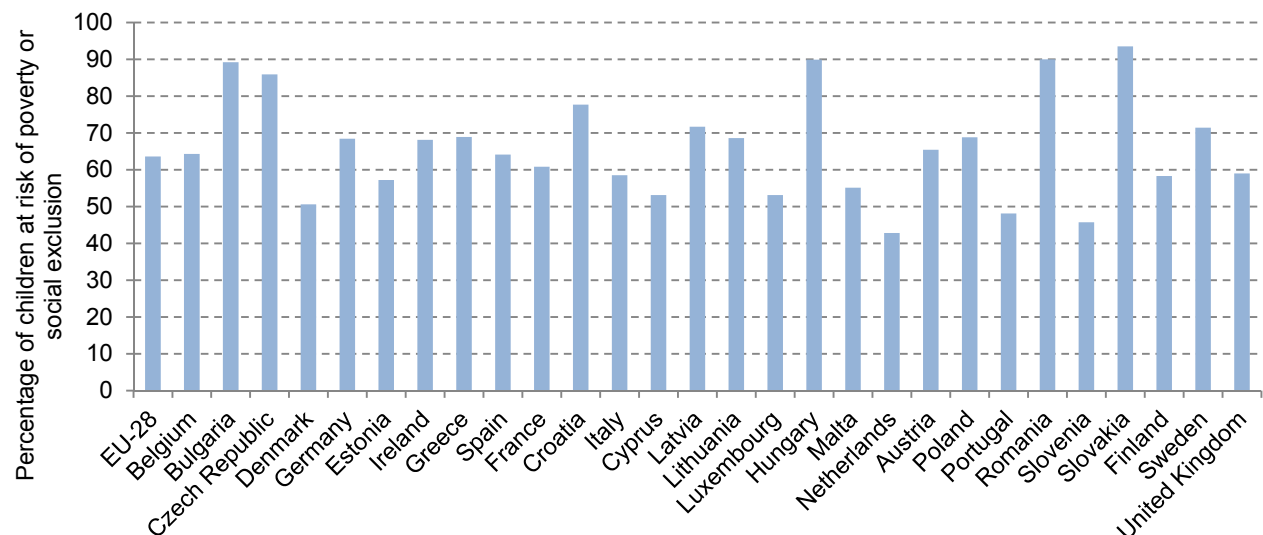
Socio-economic factors (e.g. income, family status) can have an impact on educational outcomes, and children from a disadvantaged background can achieve lower levels of attainment than those who are not (Guérin 2013). Other sources state that the concentration of children from a socio-economically disadvantaged background, and the educational attainment of their parents have a stronger association with children's educational performance than the concentration of migrants (OECD 2015; Jensen 2015; Janta & Harte 2016). Writing about the importance of ECEC, Esping-Andersen (2008) explains that disadvantage can often be transferred from one generation to another. In this respect, those who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion (AROPE) are also at risk of perpetuating this disadvantage between parent and child, especially if the appropriate measures to correct for this disadvantage are unavailable or unused. Disadvantage can also hinder parents' investment in their children, thus further risking the transfer of disadvantage between generations (Esping-Andersen 2008).

In all but three EU Member States (Hungary, Lithuania and Portugal) for which data was available, there are larger shares of the adult EU-migrant population than the non-migrant population at risk of poverty and social exclusion (AROPE). In some Member States there are large disparities between EU-migrant and non-migrant populations (18 years or older) who are at risk of poverty, such as Austria (13.5 percentage points), Estonia (13.6 percentage points), Italy (16.3 percentage points) and Spain (17.2 percentage points). Although the data does not show what percentage of this population are parents, it is clear that there are notable differences between EU-migrant and non-migrant communities.

**Figure 13: In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by broad group of country of birth (18 and over)**

Source: Eurostat indicator [ilc\_iw16]

We could not source any information directly pertaining to migrant children or EU-migrant children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE). The data in Figure 14 below shows the proportion of children across the EU at risk of poverty with parents who have at least lower secondary education or less.

**Figure 14: Children (0–17 years) at risk of poverty or social exclusion with parents with less than primary, primary, and lower secondary educations, 2014.**

Source: Eurostat [ilc\_peps60]

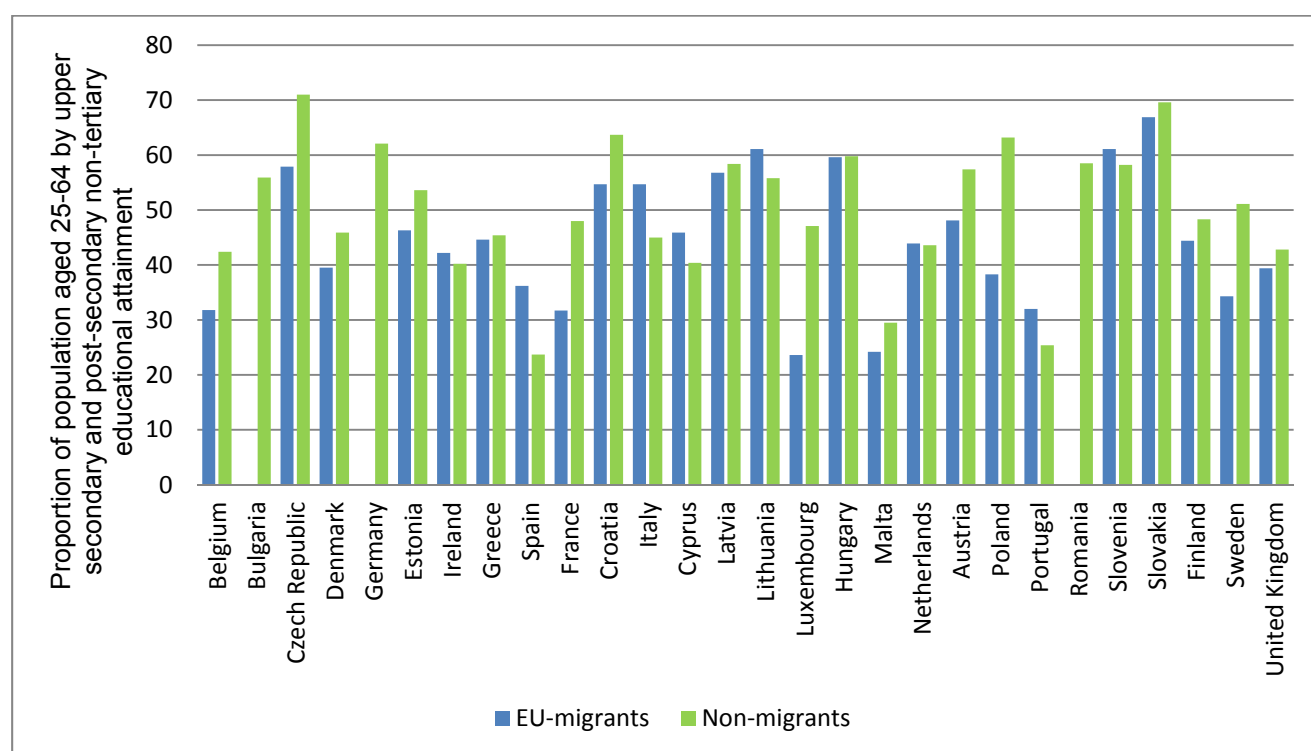
### Parental attainment and engagement

The role of parents is important in a child's schooling. There are still a number of social and cultural structures that incoming migrants need to learn to navigate when they arrive in a new country (Ryan & Sales 2011). Ryan and Sales's study (2011) examined the situation of Polish migrants in London, and

demonstrated that migrant parents may not always understand the schooling system of the country to which they migrate. They argue that that the freedom of movement within the EU and the relative ease with which it can be done could lead to ‘unplanned migration,’ while the expectation that a move can be reversed easily, and is temporary, can also reduce some of the necessary preparation ahead of relocation. Ryan and Sales (2011) also highlight that the compulsory school age for children can differ among EU Member States, something of which parents might not always be aware. As such, children who have never attended school can be placed in a class group relative to their age (Ryan & Sales 2011). Migrant parents may not be able to navigate linguistic barriers and are perhaps less likely to engage with schools and their child’s learning (Janta & Harte 2016; Heckmann 2008; Crul & Schneider 2009; Dumčius et al. 2013).

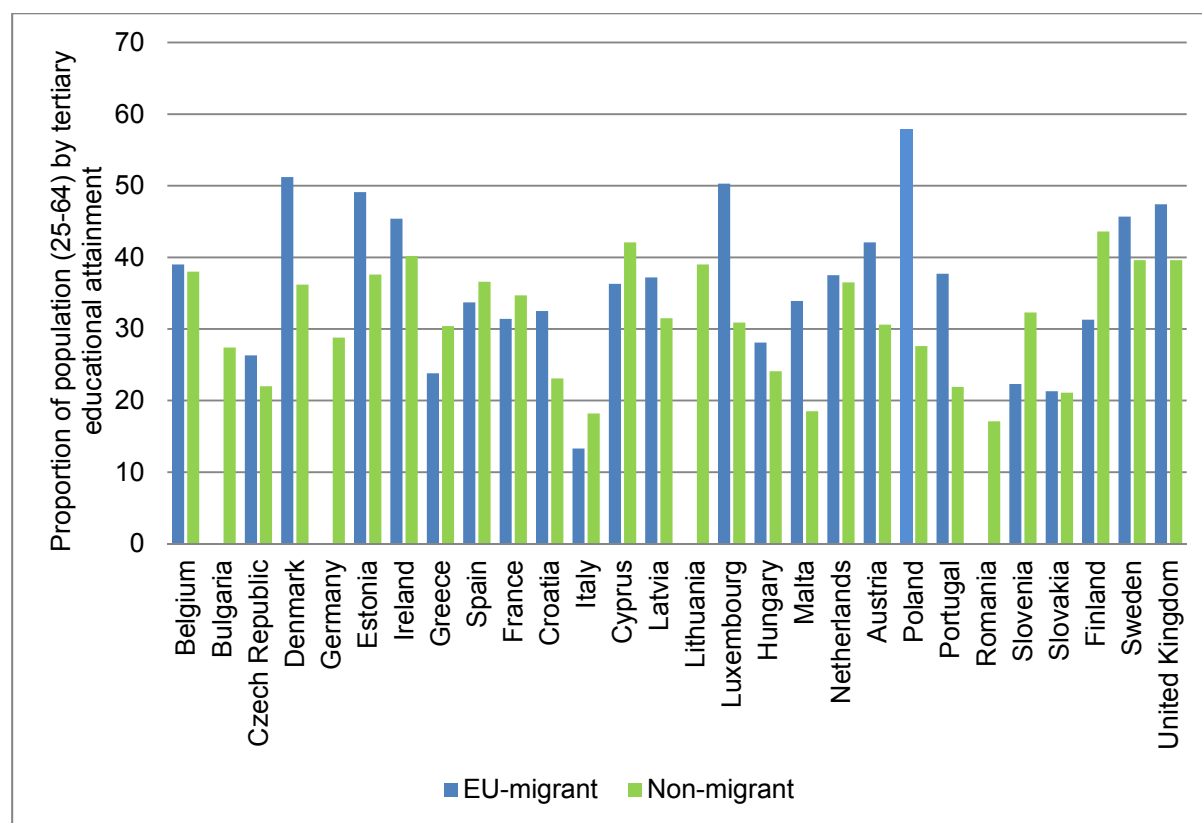
The OECD (2015) also suggests that parental educational attainment can have an impact on performance. Figure 15 and Figure 16 below show variation in the upper secondary school to tertiary qualifications of EU migrants between the ages of 25 and 64. Figure 15 highlights a lot of variation in the proportion of migrants with upper and post-secondary (non-tertiary) education, and show that the differences between the EU migrant and the non-migrant populations are small. For tertiary education the situation is different, however. The share of EU migrants who have at least a tertiary education qualification is higher than for the non-migrant population, with the exceptions of Cyprus, Greece and Finland.

**Figure 15: Proportion of population (25-64) by upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4) attainment**



Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfs\_9912]



**Figure 16: Proportion of population (25-64) by tertiary education (levels 5-8) attainment**

Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfs\_9912]

### Language and educational outcomes

Although the Council Directive 77/486/EEC underscores the right of the EU migrant child to receive free tuition in the host language, some difficulties may persist which impinge on educational attainment.

A pupil's command of the language of instruction or the language of assessment can impact on their educational performance. The 2012 PISA results (OECD n.d.) show that there is a substantial difference in second-level student achievement: the trend highlights that those children with a migrant background who do not speak the language of assessment at home do not perform as well in school as those children who do. Parental command of the host country language can also contribute to the wider picture. Brind et al. (2008) suggest that children with a migrant background who do not speak the language of instruction at home may have parents who do not understand the host country language, and therefore may not engage with the school.

Language matters, but migrant children can catch up in this domain. Studies show that ethnic minority children and those who do not speak the language of instruction as their first language can progress and catch up to their peers in educational performance as they become increasingly proficient in their language (Dustmann et al. 2012; De Paola & Brunello 2016; Janta & Harte 2016).

## 4. Accommodating EU migrant children in the school system

### 4.1 Education system responses

While education is not an EU competence, some EU Member States have shown adaptability to the diverse and changing needs of their population. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX 2016) collects data on how countries respond to migrant needs (Figure 17). MIPEX (Education) outlined an

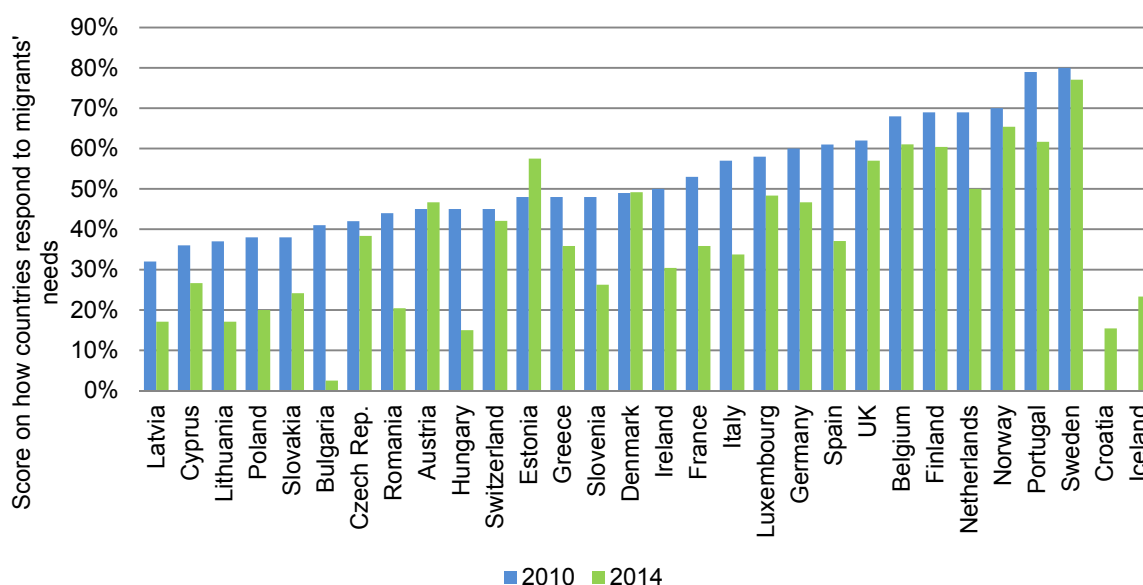
index to reflect the extent to which a country addresses migrant education needs. The index is constructed across four sub-dimensions: access, targeting needs, new opportunities and intercultural education.

**Table 3: Definition of MIPEX sub-dimensions of migrant needs in education**

Access	measures to grant or facilitate formal education for migrant children
Targeting needs	financial resources addressed to migrant pupils in the education system
New opportunities	degree to which schools/systems seize new opportunities coming from a diverse school population
Intercultural education	degree in which diversity is embedded into the curriculum

Source: adapted from MIPEX (2016)

**Figure 17: Overall score on how countries respond to migrants' needs – Education (Policy) Index 2010 and 2014**

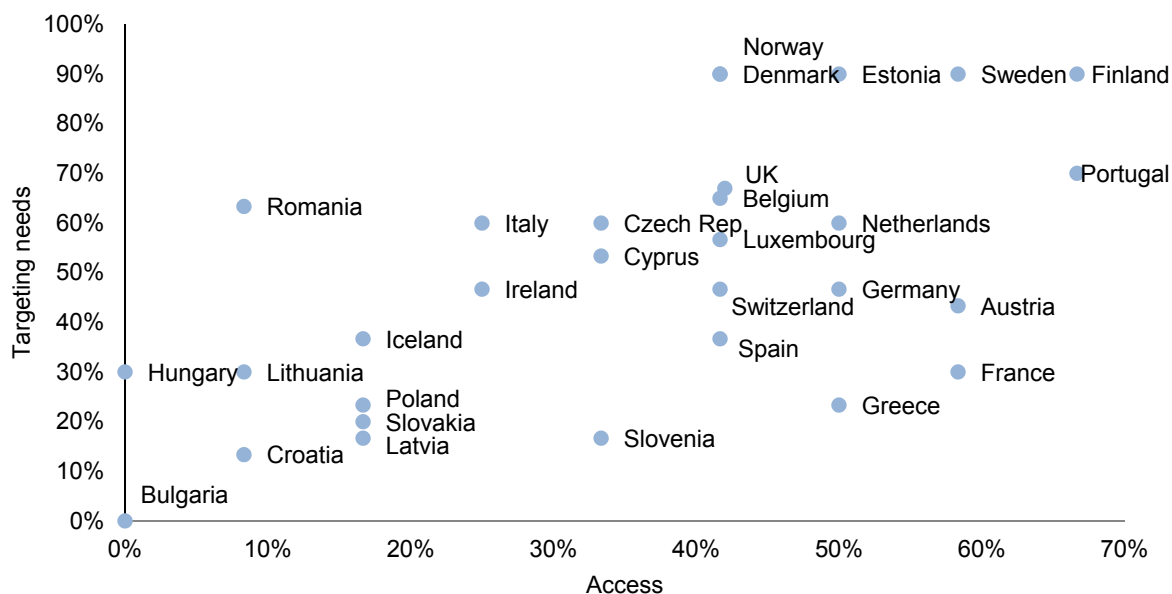


Note: missing markers signify no data available

Source: MIPEX (2016) Series on 'Education Policy Index'

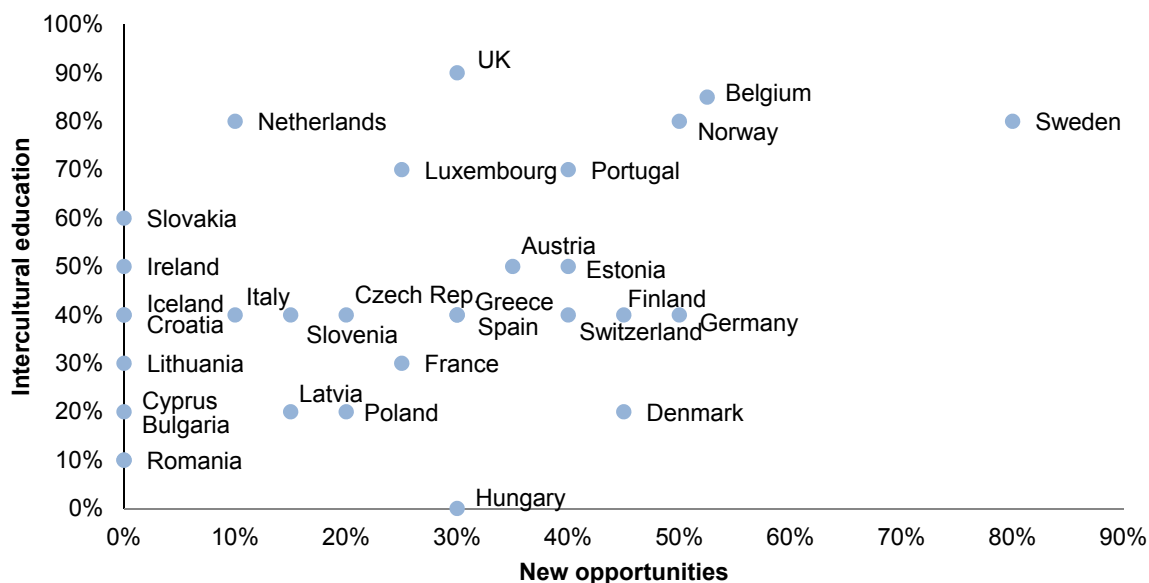
Figure 17 shows a negative trend in the extent to which countries responded to policy needs between 2010 and 2014 for most of the countries. Only Austria, Denmark and Estonia are different from the rest. This would mean that countries have worsened in terms of measures to facilitate the integration of migrant students to their education systems.

When looking at the index composition of Figure 18 across access and targeting needs, there appears to be a positive association between access and the needs of migrant pupils being targeted. Denmark, Estonia, Sweden and Finland show the highest levels of targeting combined with high levels of access. On the other hand, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia and Lithuania show low levels of both access and targeting.

**Figure 18: Access and Targeting needs composite indices, 2014**

Source: MIPEX (2016), Series on 'Access' and 'Targeting needs' indexes for 2014

Figure 19 displays the association between the intercultural education sub-dimension and the new opportunities sub-dimension (see Table 3). Although the trend appears positive, there is a cluster of countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania, Iceland, Ireland and Slovakia) with no new opportunities. For example, Ireland and Cyprus have some of the largest shares of migrant children under 15 years of age (14.9 per cent and 11.5 per cent, respectively) and EU-migrant children (5.1 per cent and 4.3 per cent, respectively), but do not score particularly well on the intercultural education or the new opportunities sub-dimensions. Luxembourg, the Member State with the largest share of migrant children, scores relatively well on the intercultural education sub-dimension (approximately 70 per cent), but scores relatively low (less than 30 per cent) on the new opportunities sub-dimension. Those with the highest levels of intercultural education are Sweden, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands, but only Sweden (where migrant children make up 9 per cent and EU-migrant children 1.7 per cent of the population under 15 years of age) shows a high level of new opportunities within this group (80 per cent).

**Figure 19: New opportunities and Intercultural education composite indices, 2014**

Source: MIPEX (2016), Series on 'Intercultural education' and 'New opportunities' index for 2014

## 4.2 Programmes for the inclusion of migrant children

Previous sections have explained that there are gaps in educational performance and attainment, as well as employment outcomes later in life, between migrant children and non-migrant children. In this section we present some case studies of initiatives that seek to help migrant children and young people to integrate and achieve better educational and employment outcomes. The initiatives outlined in this section focus on empowering young people, promoting language acquisition among migrant children and helping educational attainment.

We recognise that these initiatives are but a subset of what is on offer across the European Union. We also recognise that these initiatives are not solely targeting EU-migrant children or youths. Understanding that different migrant populations face different challenges, we look to these initiatives purely as evidence of the existence of programmes that aim to boost the socio-economic and educational integration of young migrants or marginalised groups, and which serve as inspiration for the types of programmes that could be beneficial to bolster migrant children's performance as they pursue their educational careers.

Our approach to sourcing examples in this section began with recent reports on migration policy from the OECD and the Migration Policy Institute, in which they explore different initiatives across the EU. The search aimed to find initiatives particularly focused on EU migrants that have been labelled as examples of good practice. Most of the initiatives that have a high number of beneficiaries and that are widely known in the literature<sup>4</sup> have targeted migrants in general, but EU migrants are included in the population and benefit from the projects. Some, but not all, of these initiatives have been subject to evaluation.

### 4.2.1 Promoting language acquisition

Under the Council Directive 77/486/EEC, language acquisition is a right for EU-migrant children as they enter into a new school system. The OECD posits that migrant children's integration can be facilitated by language support (OECD 2015; Janta & Harte 2016). Nusche (2009) conducted a review of migrant

<sup>4</sup> Or discussed at conferences. For example: Conference held from 19 to 20 of November 2014 in Brussels by the SIRIUS network: 'Helping Children and Youth with Migrant Background Succeed: Making Schools Matter for All.'

policies that examined policies focusing on the inclusion of migrant children in host countries. In terms of language learning, Nusche (2009) argues there is not one accepted best practice, although some authors suggest basing language instruction around the curriculum (Nusche 2009) or that mainstreaming migrant children in the classroom with the offer of additional support could be useful (Dumčius et al. 2013).

**Table 4: Bilingual Task Force, Denmark**

Bilingual Task force (Folkeskole)	Denmark
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>Denmark has a small population of about 5.4 million people. Historically, immigration flows came from the Nordic and Western countries and emigration outweighed immigration (MPI 2016).</p> <p>In the early 1970s there was a ‘guest-worker’ programme mainly for refugees, but once it reached an end, family dependents and former ‘guest workers’ challenged the status quo. Namely, the high number of people with a migrant background placed some pressure on public services. Until 1984, the birth rate of the total population was negative but after that the number of non-Western migrants started to grow significantly (MPI 2016).</p> <p>Today, the share of non-naturalised Asian and African migrants and their descendants constitute six per cent of the total population compared to only one per cent in the 1980s (MPI, 2016). In addition, EU-28 migrants make up 3.6 per cent of the total Danish population, while non-EU migrants constitute 6.9 per cent (EMN 2016). Moreover, in 2010 students with a migrant background accounted for 10 per cent of the total student population (EMN 2016).</p> <p><b>Programme description</b></p> <p>The national Folkeskole legislation regulates the strategy for inclusion of migrants into the education system (Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality 2016). The Bilingual Task Force programme aims to give language support to pupils who do not have Danish as a first language.</p> <p>At ISCED level 0, children without Danish as a first language are assessed by a test and, if language needs are identified, they will receive language stimulation’ in day-care institutions (Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality 2016). Every child, regardless of their migrant status, could receive up to 15 hours of language training, but the scope and length of the training varies depending on whether they are enrolled in day-care or not. At a later stage (ISCED 1–2 – primary and secondary school) students without Danish as a first language receive further Danish language support. Pupils are assessed before starting school to determine their ability to participate in mainstream education. Pupils in need of further language support are placed into ‘welcoming classes’ for up to six months before joining mainstream classes. If, following the initial assessment, the students show difficulties with the Danish language, they are placed into reception classes for up to two years. However, students within these groups can frequently participate in mainstream classes.</p> <p><b>Target group</b></p> <p>The target group is ISCED level 0 (early childhood education), when pupils are assessed to detect language needs. Support is subsequently provided for as many years as needed within ISCED 1–2. This provision is compulsory for bilingual children with Danish as their second language, but the same framework applies for children with learning difficulties in general (Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality 2016).</p> <p><b>Results</b></p> <p>An assessment conducted by the OECD suggests that, on the whole, the results are positive. The</p>	

assessment outlined that teachers receive professional training on diversity and teaching Danish as a second language, pupils are assessed at an early stage using a needs-based approach, almost 40 per cent of students succeed in VET and a full coverage of the target population enrolled in formal education (OECD 2010a).

However, some challenges have also been identified (OECD 2011), such as: the underuse of system-level data, in particular on outcomes; the need to strengthen performance management in national agencies; and in validating the national tests for monitoring purposes.

### Evaluation

The Danish Prime Minister commissioned a qualitative review of the Folkeskole programme in 2010 (OECD 2010a). An OECD report (2011) provides some recommendations including: the integration of teachers and principals' appraisals into the framework; investing in evaluation and assessment capacity; refining some key elements and defining their purpose as common objectives; and promoting and supporting optimal use of evaluation (OECD 2011).

### 4.2.2 Educational attainment

Education is a cornerstone of the Europe 2020 strategy, which aims to reduce early school leaving rates to below ten per cent and raise the share of 30–34-year olds completing tertiary education to 40 per cent. In addition, the goals of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training centre on increasing the share of adults in lifelong learning to 15 per cent, reducing the proportion of low-achieving 15-year olds in reading, mathematics and science to under 15 per cent and raising the proportion of children aged four to compulsory school age in early childhood education to 95 per cent (Eurostat 2016c).

**Table 5: Local Education Plans, Spain.**

Plans educatius d'entorn (Local education plans) <sup>5</sup>	Catalonia region, Spain
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>The Catalonia region has over 7.5 million inhabitants and a GDP of roughly €200 billion, having received a huge influx of migrants in the last couple of decades. Latin America (30.4 per cent), the EU-27 Member States (25.6 per cent) and Africa (25.2 per cent) (OECD 2010b) represent the three largest sources of migrants to Catalonia (OECD 2011). The education system in Spain is decentralised to the regional level (Generalitat de Catalunya 2009).<sup>6</sup></p> <p>According to an OECD report on education in Catalonia (OECD 2010b), the migrant population showed the highest unemployment rates even before the economic crisis, reaching 45 per cent for males and 40 per cent for females. Therefore, the integration of migrants into the labour market and education system remains a key challenge.</p> <p>The Catalanian government's regional education strategy outlines the following six objectives (Generalitat de Catalunya 2016):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Foster a competence-based education</i></li> <li>2. <i>Promote an education system ensuring equal opportunities</i></li> <li>3. <i>Create a unique Catalan education model based on plurilingualism</i></li> <li>4. <i>Promote school autonomy, strengthening networks and support teachers</i></li> <li>5. <i>Promote an inclusive education system with a focus on diversity</i></li> </ol>	

<sup>5</sup> Generalitat de Catalunya (2016c).

<sup>6</sup> Decentralisation was implemented by Decree 297/2011 of 22 March in line with the Legislation of Education in Catalonia.

#### 6. *Develop a unique model of professional training.*

##### **Programme description**

The general aim of the *Plans educatius d'entorn* programme is to ensure successful educational attainment by pupils regardless of their socio-economic background (Generalitat de Catalunya 2014). The *Plans educatius d'entorn* programme fits mainly into objectives 3 and 5 of the regional strategy, but it also resonates across the other objectives. The target group is children aged 0 to 18 from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a specific focus on those with a migrant background, enrolled in primary and secondary education. Due to the link with grassroots NGOs and local stakeholders, the programme also targets migrant youths out of school (Generalitat de Catalunya 2014).

The programme has seven key objectives (Generalitat de Catalunya 2016), namely to:

1. *Contribute to improving academic attainment.*
2. *Contribute to improving school conditions.*
3. *Foster interaction and involvement within spaces of coexistence around the school.*
4. *Improve the coexistence of the Catalan language with other foreign languages to foster respect of diversity.*
5. *Promote active citizenship practices and values.*
6. *Promote leisure education.*
7. *Foster the education process across all the stakeholders involved (families, schools, local context).*

The programme has a specific focus on migrant students and their integration into a multilingual setup and is a coordinated effort between the Catalan Education department and the local authorities.

##### **Results**

An overview of the programme released by the Catalan Department for Education states that the rate of unauthorised absences between 2007/8 and 2009/10 was four times lower within the centres that ran the programme compared to other schools. Other reported outcomes of the programme include (Generalitat de Catalunya 2016):

1. Evidence of an increase in school enrolment among migrant students. Furthermore, the qualitative evidence shows that there was an increased sense of belonging among those groups at risk of exclusion and an improved perception of diversity across the community.
2. An improvement of the academic success of the target population over the course of the programme's implementation and was better than that in schools which were not involved in the programme.
3. The negative correlation between the percentage of students in a school with a migrant background and educational attainment decreased during and after the implementation of the programme.
4. An increased involvement of parents with a migrant background with the schools was observed.

##### **Supporting documentation**

Generalitat de Catalunya (2016), Website for the evaluation report on *Plans educatius d'entorn*. As of 25 September 2016:

[http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/comunitat/entorn\\_pee/entorn\\_pee\\_documents/entorn\\_pee\\_documents\\_aval/](http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/comunitat/entorn_pee/entorn_pee_documents/entorn_pee_documents_aval/)

### **4.2.3 Empowering migrant youth**

The European Union has provisions for the inclusion and advancement of young people. The EU's 2010–2018 Youth Strategy (2009/C 311/1) calls for the inclusion of young people through active

citizenship, and the promotion of equal opportunities in education and employment. Specifically relating to migrant youth, the European Union Council and representatives of Member States (2012/C 393/05) outlined that it is important to empower young people with a migrant background, both those from the EU and third countries, in order to ensure social inclusion and maintain democratic development. In particular, this policy document recognises that equal opportunities to access education and training are imperative and that non-formal learning and youth organisations have a role to play in ensuring social inclusion.

**Table 6: Progame Escolhas, Portugal.**

Programa Escolhas (Choices programme)	Portugal
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>The integration of migrants in Portugal is incorporated into public policy through the first and second '<i>Plano para a Integração de Imigrantes (2010–2013)</i>' (Plan for the Integration of Immigrants). Portugal uses this plan to implement the Europe 2020 priority on the integration of migrants. This plan included the establishment of a working group coordinated by the ACIDI (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações – ACM, IP) (currently High Commissioner for Migrations).</p> <p>In 2011, there were 394,496 foreign-born individuals residing in Portugal, constituting 3.7 per cent of the total population. Twenty-four per cent of the total number of migrants were born in another EU Member State. The migrant population is predominantly concentrated in Lisbon (Oliveira &amp; Gomes 2014).</p> <p>Portugal has some instruments that facilitate the integration of migrants and migrant pupils, namely the recognition of foreign qualifications (regulated by the laws 224/2006 of 8 March and 699/2006 of 12 July), with tables of equivalence between levels of education in Portugal and those in other EU and non-EU countries (Asssembleia da Republica 2016).</p> <p><b>Description</b></p> <p>One programme, Programa Escolhas, has been set up to support migrant youths in the heterogeneous neighbourhood of Vale da Amoreira in Lisbon. This programme involved conducting cultural activities with schools, parental and community engagement. The overarching aim of the project was to improve the social inclusion of young people from Vale da Amoreira and it had three specific goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To contribute to the school success and/or professional career of 320 young people (aged between 11 and 24) residing in Vale da Amoreira during the 3 years of the project, and assigning responsibilities to 40 family members to monitor their children's educational background and/or training.</li> <li>2. To promote structured and healthy lifestyles for 270 young people aged between 11 and 24 with a focus on the unemployed.</li> <li>3. To promote the acquisition and/or consolidation of skills among 250 young people aged between 15 and 24, facilitating their (re)integration into the labour market.</li> </ol> <p>Vale da Amoreira has a high concentration of Portuguese-speaking African migrants (PALOP) and a high Roma population. The target group is young people and children aged 11 to 24, at primary and secondary level. Migrants are among the main beneficiaries of this intervention and are one of the most vulnerable groups; nonetheless, native people residing in Vale da Amoreira are also accepted into the programme.</p> <p>Although the Programa Escolhas, is not focused specifically on EU migrants, it is easy to see how young migrants could benefit from it since it is based on social inclusion principles with a comprehensive set up.</p>	



This population shows a number of unmet socio-economic needs (400 families receiving the Social Insertion Income in 2012), such as the undocumented permanence of migrants, unemployment and labour precariousness. A disengaged youth with high absenteeism or school dropout levels remains one of the main issues (EC 2016b).

### Results

Between January 2013 and December 2014, a total of 644 participants took part in the activities of the project.

Results related to goal 1:

- The programme engaged 320 young people and 38 families.
- 27 young people were oriented towards and integrated into schooling, professional training or employment.

Results related to goal 2:

- 41 people participated in activities to develop competences in citizenship.
- 31 people were reached by activities to develop personal and social competencies.

Results related to goal 3:

- 63 people were reached by professional and entrepreneurial development activities.
- 16 participants received an internship.
- 76 participants got their ICT competencies certified.

As can be seen above, some targets were achieved and some were not, but the overall picture is positive (EC 2016b).

### Evaluation

No external evaluation of the project was conducted. Instead, a self-assessment report was completed by the programme implementers every six months following the model provided by the Choices Programme. This involved monitoring the indicators established in the application form for each of the specific objectives. To date, the project has been assessed four times.

## 5. Concluding remarks

This policy brief examined migrant children's educational performance and attainment, with a particular focus on EU-migrant children. There are clear disparities in educational performance between migrants and non-migrants: data show that children with a migrant background are generally less likely to perform as well as their non-migrant counterparts, and are more likely to be early school leavers. In addition, migrant youths are generally less likely to be in education, employment or training, and are more likely to be at risk of poverty and exclusion, than non-migrants. Intra-EU mobility is a cornerstone of the EU Single Market: in this context, it is important to create conditions to harness the potential of EU migrants and their children.

The education performance gap between migrant children and non-migrants is due to a number of intersecting factors, including linguistic capabilities, parental influence and socio-economic status. Language can play a role in a pupil's educational attainment, and evidence shows that those who do not speak the language perform less well on average than those who do, although pupils' performances can

improve as their language skills improve. In addition, parents who do not speak the language of instruction may also be less engaged with the education process (e.g. with the school or their child's schoolwork). Parental educational attainment and socio-economic disadvantage can also impact a child's performance.

Interventions aimed at reducing these educational disparities exist and policies which tackle the reasons for the performance gap could be applied to improve the educational outcomes of migrant children. Nonetheless, policies addressing the educational integration of EU-migrant children vary between Member States, with some countries responding to migrants' needs better than others). Additionally, this policy brief outlined some initiatives that may contribute to the integration of migrant children and youths in helping them to improve their language capabilities, educational attainment and sense of empowerment. Although the evidence for the effectiveness of these measures is limited, they illustrate some examples of interventions that engage with migrant children and youth and attempt to improve their educational and progression outcomes. These initiatives take a comprehensive and integrated approach, involving families, schools and children along the pathway, and promoting integration into the education system from an early stage.

The principle of freedom of movement applies to EU citizens and EU migrants constitute a large portion of the migrant population. Much of the literature on intra-EU migration focuses on migrant workers, or tertiary education, with little research on the impacts of intra-EU migration on children, their education and their wellbeing. There are gaps in the data on EU-migrant child performance across the board, and cross-country analyses of such data would be useful in understanding EU-migrant children's educational performance based on the specific culture and education system of the host country. Building a strong evidence base could be beneficial in understanding what works when responding to EU-migrant children's educational needs. Moving forward, it would be useful to build an evidence base on which policies and practices work in terms of reducing the migrant education deficit and investing in children for their personal, educational and future workforce development. Such policies and practices could be submitted for review to the European Platform for Investing in Children to add to the repository of *Practices that Work* of relevance to child and family policy.



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