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**From:** Secretary-General of the European Commission,  
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

**To:** Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of  
the European Union

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FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
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Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth  
Strategy  
- Part 1/7

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PART 1/7

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Situation of young people in the European Union**

*Accompanying the document*

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE  
REGIONS**

**Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy**

{COM(2018) 269 final} - {SWD(2018) 168 final}

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# Introduction

The renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field <sup>(1)</sup>, also known as the EU Youth Strategy, covers the period from 2010 to 2018. It is divided into three-year work cycles. At the end of each cycle, a European Union (EU) Youth Report should be drawn up by the Commission. The Council has specified that the report 'shall consist of two parts: a joint Council-Commission report (political part), and supporting documents (statistical and analytical part). The EU Youth Report will evaluate progress made towards the overall objectives of the framework, as well as progress regarding the priorities defined for the most recent work cycle and identify good practices'.

This **statistical part of the report** presents data and information on the current situation of young people in Europe. Following an introductory chapter on demography, which presents the main trends in the youth population over recent years, separate chapters are dedicated to the eight 'fields of action' identified in the Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018): Education and Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Health and Well-being, Participation, Voluntary Activities, Social Inclusion, Youth and the World, and Culture, Creativity and ICT.

This part of the report builds on the dashboard of EU youth indicators <sup>(2)</sup>, a selection of 41 indicators which measure the most crucial aspects of young people's lives in Europe. Wherever one of these indicators is used, it is highlighted on the relevant figure. The dashboard of EU youth indicators is presented as an annex to this report.

The period when a person is considered to be 'young' differs across Europe according to national context, the socio-economic development of society and time. Common to all countries is that the period of youth – the transition from being a child to being an adult – is marked by important life changes: from being in education to having a full-time job, from living in the parental home to setting up one's own household, and from being financially dependent to managing one's own money.

Relying on Eurostat data, Eurobarometer surveys and other available sources, the population targeted in this part of the report is primarily young people between 15 and 29 years of age. Where possible, the analysis distinguishes between subgroups aged 15 to 19, 20 to 24, and 25 to 29. In other cases, a more limited age range is used, either because of the specifications of survey data, or because the issue in question affects a particular age group (e.g. early school leaving). In addition, children (under 16 years of age) are also included when analysing indicators on poverty or social exclusion. In order to highlight specific issues affecting the youth population, for some indicators comparisons with the total population or the prime working age group (people aged 25-54) are also made.

In line with the analytical part of the EU Youth Report <sup>(3)</sup> illustrating the state of play of EU and national initiatives and actions, the information and analysis of this statistical section covers the EU Member States and, where the available data allows, the EU candidate countries (Albania, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) as well as the EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).

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<sup>(1)</sup> Council resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), OJ C 311, 19.12.2009, p. 1-11.

<sup>(2)</sup> Commission Staff Working Document on EU indicators in the field of youth, SEC(2011) 401 final.

<sup>(3)</sup> All EU Member States, EU candidate countries and EEA EFTA States were invited to submit national reports.

This part of the report focuses on the most recent data available and, where possible, illustrates the trends which have emerged since the establishment of the EU Youth Strategy in 2010.

## EUROPEAN YOUTH: MAIN TRENDS

### Young Europeans' lives are improving

**Young people are educated to an increasingly higher level.** Over the past decade, the majority of indicators have registered positive trends with respect to education and training, as described in Chapter 2. The proportion of young Europeans who have attained at least upper secondary level qualifications has risen, as has the proportion with tertiary degrees; in parallel, a general decline in the proportion of early school leavers has also occurred.

**More young people are finding employment.** Improved educational attainment not only supports young people's personal development, but it also benefits them in other areas of their lives. In particular, as illustrated in Chapter 3, the positive relationship between higher levels of education and employment is well established in most European countries. In the EU as a whole, the unemployment rate is much lower for young people graduating from tertiary education than for those with the lowest levels of education. Following the rise in youth unemployment provoked by the economic recession in the early years of the decade, the rates have been falling since 2013 in the majority of European countries. Around 1.3 million fewer jobless young people live in the EU today compared to 2013. Long-term youth unemployment has also declined.

**There has been some improvement in the social inclusion of young Europeans.** Labour market improvements have had a positive impact on the living conditions of many young people. Entering the job market often coincides with becoming independent and assuming new responsibilities in terms of sustaining the significant costs of living independently. Having better opportunities for finding gainful employment strengthens young people's ability to secure better social and living conditions. Improvements in the labour market have also meant that the proportion of NEETs (young people not in employment, education or training) has declined steadily in recent years, falling below the levels registered in 2010. Indeed, in 2016, for the first time since the start of the economic crisis, the proportion of unemployed NEETs was lower than that of inactive young people within this group. The proportion of young Europeans suffering from severe material deprivation has also decreased since 2012 and is now at a lower level than in 2010.

Significant improvements have been made in many aspects of young people's lives in recent years, marking a turning point in many European countries

**Young people appear less prone to risky health behaviours.** The difficulties young people face in their transition to adulthood and independence also reflect on their general welfare. In particular, as discussed in Chapter 4, vulnerable groups of young people such as those experiencing unemployment, poverty or social exclusion may be particularly prone to more serious problems in their physical and mental health. In this sense, better economic and living conditions positively influence the general well-being and health of individuals. Indeed, the proportion of young Europeans reported to be smoking daily has been steadily decreasing in the majority of countries. In addition, fewer episodes of alcohol abuse and intoxication have been reported amongst 16 year-olds.

**Young Europeans are demonstrating an increasing interest in politics and are taking advantage of the new methods of participation offered by modern technology.** Improved opportunities in education and employment, as well as progress in social inclusion, not only contribute to the younger generation's well-being, but can also revive their interest in political and civic issues and inspire them to re-engage with society. Chapter 5 documents the surge in the level of interest in politics expressed by young Europeans over the past decade, which has also led to a reduction in the traditional gap vis-à-vis older age groups. In addition, data show that young people feel more European than the general population, and self-identification as European citizens has grown more amongst the young than amongst older individuals. This renewed attention to political issues is also supported by the growing availability of internet applications, such as social media, blogs and online networks, which offer additional opportunities for communicating and exchanging information. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 9, the daily use of the internet is increasing rapidly amongst young people.

**Participation in voluntary activities shows an exceptional expansion.** This renewed engagement in society has also translated into a sharp increase in the proportion of young Europeans participating in voluntary organisations (as explained in Chapter 6). The figure has increased significantly since 2011. The increase in the proportion of young volunteers contributing to projects in foreign countries is even larger: since 2011, the figure has increase threefold, indicating young Europeans' strong solidarity with citizens across borders.

### However, some challenges persist...

**Some groups of young people encounter difficulties in educational achievement.** The rate of underachievement in literacy, numeracy and science is not improving. Since 2009, the proportion of students aged 15 with low levels of proficiency in those key competences has either stagnated – as in the case of reading and mathematics – or increased – as in science.

**Poverty and social exclusion still affect large sections of the youth population.** Despite a slight decline since 2014, the rate of children and young persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion is still considerable and higher than that recorded at the beginning of the decade. Concomitantly, the proportion of young people living in households with very low work intensity is still increasing, which poses serious risks to their economic and social welfare. What is more, in line with the trend in the general population, a growing proportion of young Europeans experience poverty while in employment. For this significant share of the youth population, the risk of suffering social exclusion and deprivation is very high.

Many young Europeans still face challenges in terms of their educational attainment, their health and their living conditions. Young people are also increasingly refraining from taking part in the electoral process

**Obesity and insufficient physical activity pose health risks for an increasing number of young people.** Over recent years, the proportion of obese young people has increased in almost all countries with available data. Obesity is partly linked to unhealthy eating habits, as well as to a lack of physical activity. Indeed, since 2011, the rate of participation of young Europeans in sports clubs has fallen.

**Electoral turnout amongst young Europeans continues to decline.** The most traditional form of political participation – voting – continues to lose its appeal amongst young Europeans, especially in EU elections. While other ways of expressing interest in political and civic issues (e.g. online methods) become more widespread, growing numbers of young citizens refrain from casting their ballot at elections. As discussed in Chapter 5, research suggests that rather than a lack of interest in democratic participation, the main reason for this disengagement seems to be that young people are not attracted by the choices on offer at elections.

## ... and some groups of young Europeans suffer from inequalities

**Young women and men both face disadvantages but in different areas.** Data presented across the statistical section of this report point to the existence of inequalities between genders. Despite achieving higher levels of education, women's participation in the labour market is – in some respects – less prominent than that of young men. This is often related to the fact that they leave the labour force due to family and caring responsibilities. For example, part-time work is more common amongst women than men, and fewer women become self-employed. The potential economic fragility resulting from a less conspicuous involvement in the labour market can amplify the danger of social deprivation. Indeed, the risk of poverty or social exclusion affects young women to a larger extent than men. Larger proportions of young women also report facing barriers to accessing medical examinations, although this might be also linked to their stronger tendency to seek medical care. Social and economic marginalisation is known to have negative effects on the levels of political and civic participation. As a matter of fact, women vote and take part in organisations and political parties to a lesser extent than men.

Young women suffer more from social exclusion and political disengagement than young men, who, in turn, are more susceptible to educational underachievement and health risks.

On the other hand, young men are disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment compared to women. They generally complete upper secondary and tertiary education at lower rates than women and are more at risk of leaving education early. Lower levels of participation in education contribute to the higher numbers of unemployed among young men than women. Men also suffer particular challenges in terms of health: not only are they more prone to risk behaviours and substance abuse (e.g. smoking, alcohol and cannabis), but they are also more likely than women to succeed in their attempts to commit suicide.

**Young Europeans from eastern and southern Europe face comparatively bigger challenges in terms of education, employment and inclusion.** The trends in these three areas show that inequalities are manifest across different regions of Europe. For the main indicators on education, young people from countries in the eastern and southern regions of Europe consistently have worse outcomes than the European average. Lower proportions of students from these regions attain tertiary degrees, higher proportions leave school early, and greater percentages of students have low proficiency in reading, mathematics and science.

Apart from educational attainment, there are considerable differences between European countries in young people's use of digital technologies. The rate at which young Europeans from countries in the south and east of Europe master digital skills is lower than the EU average. As these competences are increasingly important to succeed in the labour market as well as for making the most of the opportunities for civic and cultural participation offered by the internet and its applications, such a deficit poses a particularly serious risk of economic and social exclusion.

Young people from southern and eastern Europe encounter multiple threats to their educational, economic and social development.

Indeed, higher than average general and long-term rates of youth unemployment are detected in the very same regions of Europe. In the southern European countries that were severely affected by the European debt crisis, youth unemployment rates are still considerably higher than before the recession. Moreover, in these countries educational attainment seems unable to ease the path to employment: the unemployment rates of people aged 20-29 remain high among those with low-level as well as high-level qualifications.

All these disadvantages are reflected in the social and living conditions experienced by youth groups in southern and eastern parts of Europe. Not only are they confronted with a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion, but



in some countries their situation is deteriorating. While a general recovery in the economic and social prospects of young people has occurred in recent years in most areas of Europe, some Member States – particularly in the south – are still suffering the aftermath of the economic recession.

# 1. Demography

## EU youth indicators

Total number of children (0-14) on 1 January

Figure 1-A

Total number of young people (15-29) on 1 January

Figure 1-B

Proportion of young people (15-19, 20-24, 25-29) in the total population on 1 January

Figures 1-C and 1-D

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

There is no universally accepted definition of 'youth' in terms of the ages it covers. Cultural and socio-economic factors influence perceptions and determine when a person enters this period of life and how long it lasts. This is reflected in the fact that European countries' national policies on youth matters vary in the age range they take into account <sup>(4)</sup>.

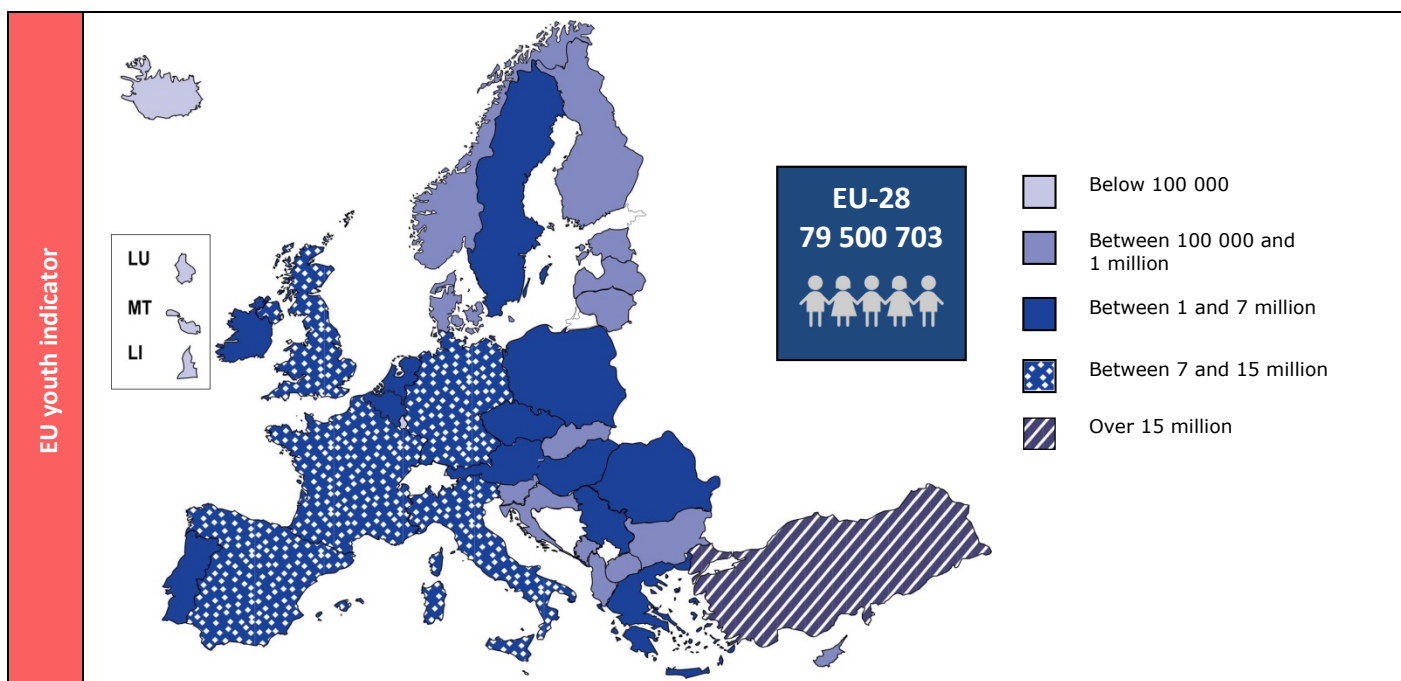
At EU level, official indicators in the field of youth set the age group as between 15 and 29 years of age <sup>(5)</sup>. This introductory chapter, therefore, sets the scene for the report as a whole by illustrating the key demographic data and trends for this age group.

The first section offers an overview of the size and geographical distribution of young people across countries, followed by an illustration of their proportion in the total population. The trend in the number and proportion of young people over recent years is then described, accompanied by a discussion of the projected changes for the years ahead. In the second section, the impact of international migration and patterns of youth mobility across the continent are presented.

## 1.2. EUROPEAN YOUTH POPULATION: PAST AND FUTURE TRENDS

On 1 January 2016, the European Union counted almost 80 million **children** and over 88 million **young people** (Figures 1-A and 1-B).

**Figure 1-A:** Number of children (aged 0-14) on 1 January, by country, 2016



Source: Own calculation based on Eurostat [yth\_demo\_010].

<sup>(4)</sup> Official definitions of 'youth' in European countries can be found on the online pages of the Youth Wiki at <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/youthwiki>

<sup>(5)</sup> Commission Staff Working Document on EU indicators in the field of youth, SEC(2011) 401 final.

For both age groups, the areas with the highest populations of young people were western and central Europe, while eastern and northern European countries reported lower figures. This clearly relates to the geographical distribution of the general population across countries. Outside the EU, Turkey was clearly the European country with the highest numbers of children and young people.

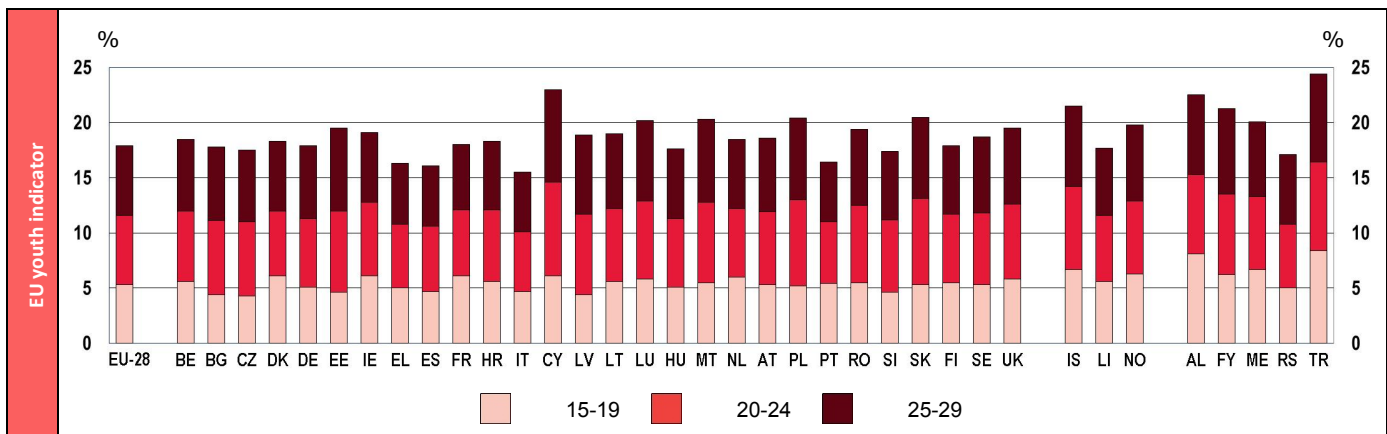
**Figure 1-B:** Number of young people (aged 15-29) on 1 January, by country, 2016



Source: Own calculation based on Eurostat [yth\_demo\_010].

Young people represent around 17 % of the total population of the European Union (Figure 1-C). This proportion varies across countries: while it is comparatively smaller in Greece, Spain, Italy, and Slovenia (below 16 %), it reaches the highest level in Cyprus, where 23.6 % of the population is under 30 years of age. Iceland, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey report the highest figures outside the EU.

**Figure 1-C:** Share of young people (aged 15-29) in the total population on 1 January, by age group and by country, 2016



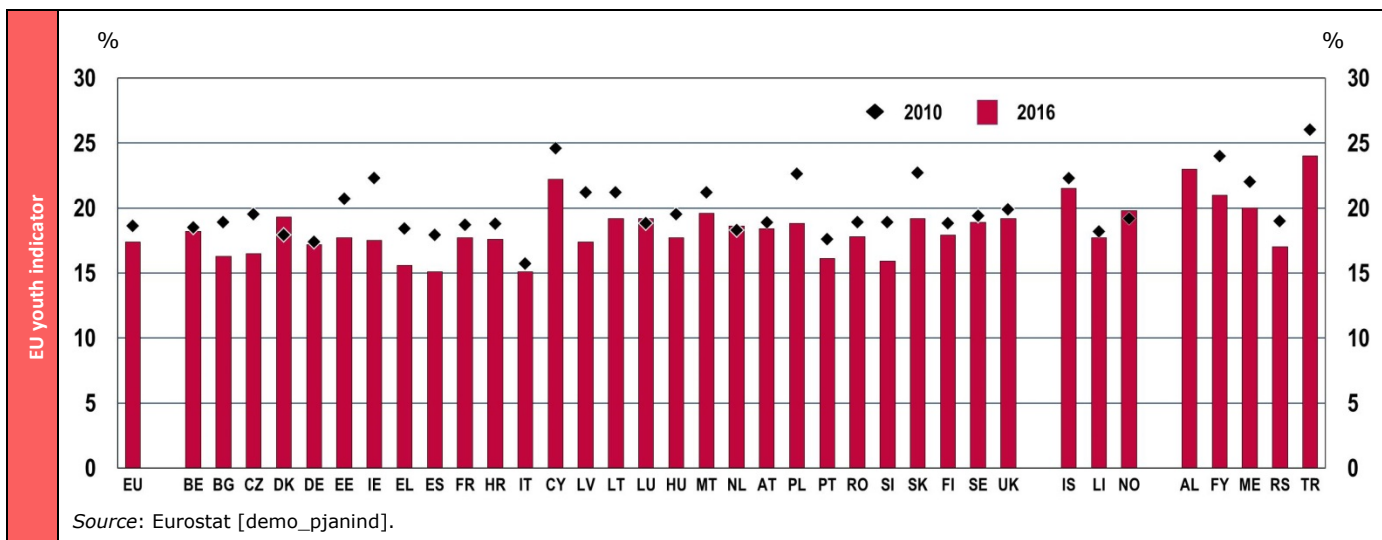
Notes: The population corresponds to the number of persons having their usual residence in the country on 1st January. When 'usual residence' cannot be established, the countries can report of the legal or registered residence.

Source: Eurostat [demo\_pjanind].

The proportion of young people in the total population has declined progressively over recent decades, from around 24 % in 1985 to 19 % in 2010<sup>(6)</sup>. Fewer births have led to a fall in the youth population and – combined with increased life expectancy – to a parallel increase in the proportion of older age groups in the total population<sup>(7)</sup>. In line with such long term trends, the proportion of young people continued to drop between 2010 and 2016 (Figure 1-D). On average, the size of the youth population decreased by 1.2 percentage points over those six years, equivalent to roughly 1 million people. This decline affected countries to a different extent.

The proportion of young people in the European Union continues to decrease and the decline is expected to carry on in the future.

**Figure 1-D:** Share of young people (aged 15-29) in the total population, by country, 2010 and 2016



Central, eastern and southern European countries have seen comparatively larger drops in their youth populations than northern ones. However, Ireland is the country recording the highest fall in percentage points since 2010 (-4.8 p.p.). On the other hand, a few countries (Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Norway) have witnessed slight increases in the proportion of young people in their population.

There are several reasons behind the decline in the youth population in the vast majority of European countries. While fertility rates rose modestly during the first decade of the century, they remained below the replacement level<sup>(8)</sup>. Since 2008, they have recorded a further decline which will affect the youth population in the future. This is partly due to the effects of the economic crisis which impacted on the level of unemployment and family income, especially in those countries most severely hit by the economic downturn<sup>(9)</sup>. In these countries, the economic crisis has also meant high rates of youth emigration (discussed in the last section of the chapter), further aggravating the demographic imbalance. In addition, a general tendency for women to give birth to fewer children and at a later age in life is observed, which further reduces the proportion of children being

<sup>(6)</sup> Time series of the proportion of younger age groups in the total population are available at the Eurostat online database [data code: demo\_pjanind].

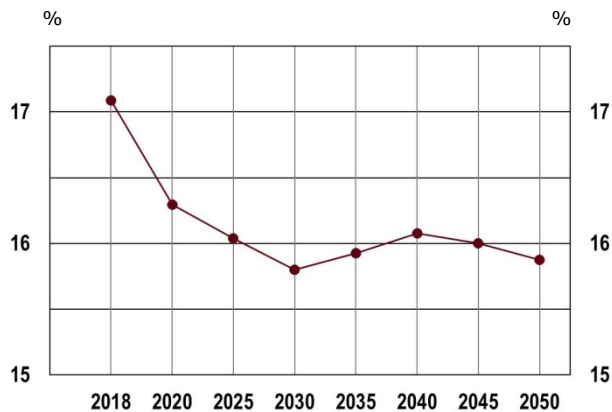
<sup>(7)</sup> Time series of total fertility rate are available at the Eurostat online database [data code: demo\_find].

<sup>(8)</sup> Eurostat, 2015.

<sup>(9)</sup> Ibid.

born<sup>(10)</sup>. These trends are expected to continue in the coming decades, leading to further reductions in the size of the EU youth population (Figure 1-E).

**Figure 1-E:** Projected proportion of the youth population (aged 15-29), EU-28 average, 2018-2050



Source: Eurostat [proj\_15npms].

According to these projections, while the total EU population is expected to grow through 2050 reaching approximately 525 million in that year, the proportion of young people will decrease from about 17 % in 2018 to below 16 % in 2050, equivalent to a reduction of over 7 million individuals. The progressive decline in the proportion of young people, in a context of gradual growth in the total population and of ever-increasing life expectancy rates, indicates that the EU population is progressively ageing. This is expected to substantially boost the old-age dependency ratio, a measure of the extent to which the working-age segment of the population has to support older age groups through, for example, sustaining public

healthcare and pension schemes<sup>(11)</sup>. As a result, younger generations will likely face an increased burden in supporting the remainder of the population as they move into work<sup>(12)</sup>.

### 1.3 THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTRA-EU MIGRATION

The steady decrease in the youth population living in the EU over the last decades has been alleviated by the growth of immigration from outside of the EU<sup>(13)</sup>. The influx of immigrants has compensated for the overall natural change in the general population and reversed an otherwise declining trend in the total population<sup>(14)</sup>. This phenomenon has been evident since 2011, although a blip occurred in 2014 (Figure 1-F).

Immigration from outside the EU has partially offset the decrease in the EU youth population.

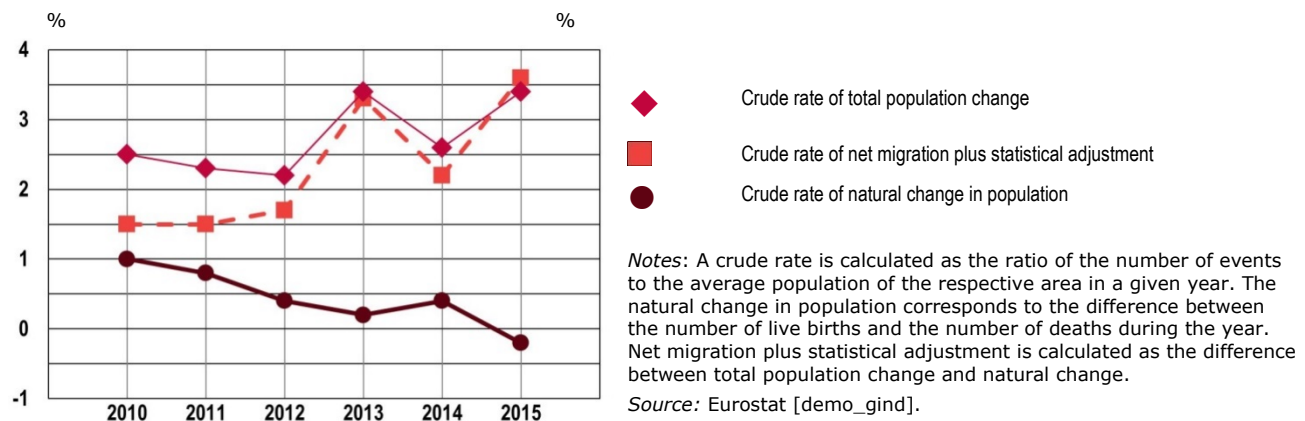
<sup>(10)</sup> Ibid. and Amin and Behrman, 2013.

<sup>(11)</sup> Eurostat's projections expect the average old-age-dependency ratio in the European Union to increase from 30.5 % in 2018 to 50.3 % in 2050 (online data code: proj\_15ndbims).

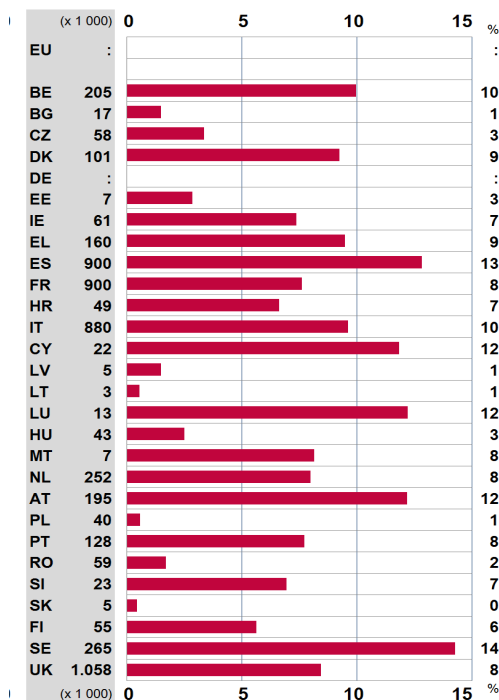
<sup>(12)</sup> For a discussion of the social and economic consequences of low fertility and demographic decline, see Bloom et al., 2008, and Hansen and Gordon, 2014.

<sup>(13)</sup> Wilson et al., 2013; Lanzieri, 2013.

<sup>(14)</sup> An illustration of trends since 1960 can be found on the Eurostat website at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population\\_and\\_population\\_change\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population_and_population_change_statistics)

**Figure 1-F:** Crude rates of population change, EU-28 average, 2010-2015

Data illustrated on the chart show how the crude rate of total population change rose owing to the growth in the crude rate of net migration plus adjustment, especially since 2012.

**Figure 1-G:** Proportion and number of young people (aged 15-29) born in a country outside the EU, by EU Member State, 2016

*Notes:* Ireland: break in series in 2016; France and Poland: provisional data; Germany: derogation to participation in data collection applies.

As data pertain to young people born outside of the European Union, EFTA countries (IS, LI and NO) and EU candidates (AL, FY, ME, RS and TR) are not included.

*Source:* Eurostat [migr\_pop3ctb].

In addition, immigrants into EU Member States are, on average, much younger than the total population already resident in their country of destination: on 1 January 2016, the median age of the total population of the EU-28 was 42.6 years while the median age of immigrants to EU-28 was 27.5 years<sup>(15)</sup>. Although the contribution of immigration from non-EU countries has not been enough to reverse the general decline in the youth population living in the EU – as illustrated in the first part of the chapter – it has nonetheless made it less sharp. Immigration has impacted on countries' youth populations at varying degrees as illustrated by the proportion of young people born outside the EU and living in EU Member States (Figure 1-G).

The highest numbers of young people born outside the EU are found in Spain, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. This is in line with statistics identifying these countries (together with Germany, for which data are not available) as among those hosting the largest numbers of international migrants from across the world<sup>(16)</sup>. Relative to the size of the resident youth population, Belgium, Spain, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Austria and Sweden present the highest figures, reporting percentages equal to or higher than 10 %.

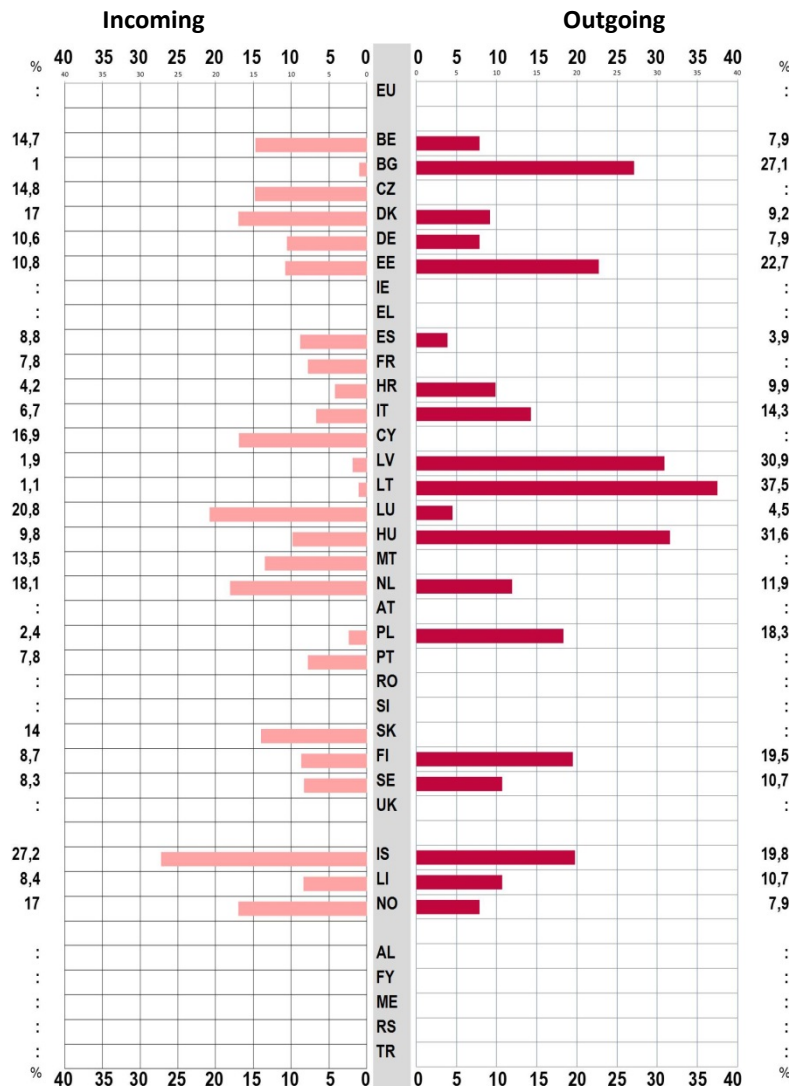
<sup>(15)</sup> Source: Eurostat, online data code [migr\_imm2ctz] and discussion of data at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration\\_and\\_migrant\\_population\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics)

<sup>(16)</sup> United Nations, 2016.

International migration also increases the diversity of the youth population in Europe. In the EU in 2014, second-generation young immigrants (young people between 15 and 29 years of age born in an EU Member State with at least one parent from a country outside the EU) were about 2.5 million <sup>(17)</sup>.

**Figure 1-H:** Proportion of young people (aged 15-29) moving in/ from a European country, by country, 2015

In addition to international flows, intra-EU migration is an important dimension of youth demography. Thanks to the increasing opportunities for EU citizens to travel and set up residence across EU Member States, young Europeans have become increasingly mobile and likely to work or study in another European country <sup>(18)</sup>. Crossing geographical and cultural borders and gaining life and work experience in a different context is a great opportunity for a young person to acquire personal skills, learn new languages and appreciate the diversity of European culture. Comparing data by country on incoming and outgoing mobility allows for the identification of the 'net providers' and 'net receivers' of the young people moving across Europe; it also enables the mapping of the main trajectories of intra-EU youth mobility (Figure 1-H).



Source: Eurostat [yth\_demo\_070] and [yth\_demo\_080].

Notes: According to the definitions provided by Eurostat, 'Immigration' denotes the action by which a person establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another Member State or a third country. 'Emigration' denotes the action by which a person, having previously been usually resident in the territory of a Member State, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months.

Percentages refer to the proportion of the population reaching the age of 15 and not surpassing the age of 29 during the reference year.

Iceland and Norway appear as destinations attracting significant proportions of young Europeans. Other countries (such as Germany, Netherlands and Sweden) show more balanced figures of outgoing and incoming

<sup>(17)</sup> Data source: Eurostat [lfs0\_14pcobp]. Data are only available for year 2014.

<sup>(18)</sup> European Commission, 2012a and 2014a.



migrants, partly due to the higher proportions of students of this age arriving for study purposes (as illustrated in Chapter 2, Section 2.4).

The lack of EU level data for many countries since 2010 hampers the scope of analysis, which is therefore limited to the countries for which data are available. Increases in the proportion of young people

emigrating to another country since 2010 have been observed in Italy and Hungary, and, outside the EU, in Iceland and Liechtenstein<sup>(19)</sup>. On the other hand, Estonia and Finland have registered slight reductions in the number of young people moving abroad over the past five years<sup>(20)</sup>.

Significant flows of young Europeans have moved from eastern and southern countries towards north-western ones over the last decade.

Research on the topic provides further insight on these trends by documenting increased flows of youth emigration from eastern European countries (especially Bulgaria, Poland and the Baltic Republics) towards western ones (in particular, the United Kingdom and Germany), also as a consequence of the economic crisis which began in 2008 and the rising levels of youth unemployment (as discussed in Chapter 3)<sup>(21)</sup>. In addition to an east-to-west trend, a south-to-north drift has also taken place, and for similar reasons: significant proportions of young people have moved in recent years from southern European countries (in particular Greece, Spain and Italy) to northern ones (again mainly Germany and the United Kingdom) in search of education opportunities (discussed in Section 2.4 of the chapter on Education and Training), improved career prospects and better economic conditions<sup>(22)</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

The proportion of young people in the European Union continues to decrease and the decline is expected to carry on in the future. Eastern and southern European countries have seen comparatively larger drops in their youth populations than the average in the EU. In addition to the general decrease in fertility rates affecting the European population as a whole, in these countries, the economic crisis has also meant high rates of youth emigration, further aggravating the demographic imbalance.

The steady decrease in the youth population living in the EU over the last decades has been alleviated by the growth of immigration from outside of the EU. The influx of immigrants has compensated for the overall natural change in the general population and reversed an otherwise declining trend in the total population. In addition to international flows, intra-EU migration has also increased, young Europeans have become increasingly mobile and likely to work or study in another European country.

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<sup>(19)</sup> For the countries mentioned, data are available at Eurostat's the online database [data code: yth\_demo\_070 and yth\_demo\_080].

<sup>(20)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>(21)</sup> King et al., 2016. In addition, the reports from the project 'ON-THE-MOVE –*The reality of free movement for young European citizens migrating in times of crisis*' from 2014 offer interesting insight on the motivations of young Europeans migrants. Available at: <http://euonthemove.eu/lessons-learned/> [Accessed on 9 November 2017].

<sup>(22)</sup> Glorius and Dominguez-Mujica, 2017.