

D 3.4 – Comparative overview synthesis

Comparative overview of institutional arrangements in selected country case studies

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Abbreviations

APEL	Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (EE)
AT	Austria
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy/Policies
AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
EPL	Employment Protection Legislation
ES	Spain
ESF	European Social Fund
ESL	Early School Leaving/Leaver
Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
FE	Further Education
FI	Finland
FR	France
HE	Higher Education
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IAC	Industry Apprentice Council (UK)
IE	Ireland
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
IT	Italy
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance (UK benefit for jobseekers)
LAS	Lagen om anställningsskydd (Law on Employment Security) (SE)
LOMCE	Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa (ES)
LT	Lithuania

LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NL	Netherlands
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PES	Public Employment Services
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
STW	School to Work
UGA	Jobbgaranti för ungdomar (Youth Job Guarantee) (SE)
UK	United Kingdom
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive summary

This Draft Report presents the comparative overview of the school-to-work (STW) transition pathways, structures and related effectiveness in the eight case study countries of Task 3 of Work Package (WP) 3: Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. In addition, France was reviewed where possible as representing a particular Continental STW transition model. We have applied the Pohl and Walther's typology of STW transitions to the comparative review, which distinguishes between five main types of youth transition regimes: (i) Universalistic (SE); (ii) Liberal (UK); (iii) Employment-centred (DE, FR, NL); (iv) Mediterranean (ES, TR); and (v) Post-Socialist/Transitional (EE, PL) (Pohl, and Walther, 2007; Walther, 2006).

Across the EU, VET, including apprenticeships, is considered key to lowering youth unemployment and facilitating the STW transitions of young people and policy makers across Europe have been attempting to improve VET in order to provide an attractive alternative to general upper secondary and tertiary education and in order to better meet the skill requirements of the labour market (European Commission, 2015f; Quintini and Martin, 2014). Overall, VET/apprenticeships still play a critical role in facilitating fast and smooth transitions, albeit to varying degrees and depending on the path-dependent institutional and cultural context. It has proved to be a key STW transition mechanism in the employment-centred cluster, notably Germany and the Netherlands, but less so in the Mediterranean (ES, TR) and liberal clusters (UK), while its take-up is decreasing in the universalistic cluster (SE). Not surprisingly, we found that VET participation was much higher than the EU average in the employment-centred regimes and much lower in the Mediterranean and the post-Socialist clusters. These differences in the participation rates in VET across the EU countries can be attributed in part to the differing perceptions of VET and its centrality in the STW transition process.

Overall, although with some notable exceptions, such as Germany and the Netherlands, VET is generally associated with a lower status and quality than general/academic education, meaning that fewer students voluntarily choose the VET track and, in many instances, VET is seen as a 'second best' option destined for students with lower educational attainment. In contrast, in countries characterised by the employment-centred STW transitions model (e.g. DE, NL), VET is perceived as a core instrument 'for sustaining the competitiveness of the economy' (European Commission, 2012) and in these countries, VET in its various forms, such as dual apprenticeships and school-based VET has long been established and represents the main STW transition mechanism.

Crucially, there has been a convergence in policy across all clusters, in that apprenticeships are now being promoted as a high quality route to achieving improved outcomes for young people in all clusters. However, the success of this policy shift is dependent on the specific structural and institutional frameworks in place to support this agenda, which varies greatly between clusters.

Consistently shown to be key to the success of particular VET schemes, notably apprenticeships, is the extent, type and nature of social partner involvement (European Commission, 2013; ILO, 2013 and 2015). However, this involvement varies considerably between Member States and VET programmes. In general, the role of social partners is clearly prescribed in highly regulated VET/apprenticeship systems with a corporatist form of governance such as Germany and Sweden which, in turn, leads to very strong and active social partner involvement. In contrast, in market-led systems such as the UK, social partner involvement is rather uneven. Likewise, social partner involvement in school-based VET systems tends to be less extensive than in work-based VET systems (European Commission, 2013).

Dual (work-based/apprenticeships) or school-based VET systems, the strong involvement of all relevant stakeholders and a co-operative institutional framework ensures that the employment-centred regimes have a strong STW transition model - for example, Germany and the Netherlands, particularly, have below average youth unemployment rates and STW transition duration (Eurofound, 2014). On the other hand, France is characterised by lengthier STW transitions and diverse labour market inclusion instruments ranging from a variety of subsidised employment contracts to an array of VET placements, each with varying degrees of effectiveness (Dif, 2012; Quintini and Martin, 2014). The STW transitions under the UK's liberal regime are fast but unstable, with a focus on youth employability and the promotion of young people's economic independence as quickly as possible. Within the Mediterranean cluster, characterised by high youth unemployment, STW transitions are lengthier, unstable and complex. In Turkey, for example, STW transitions tend to be slow although there have been numerous attempts to improve their speed and quality, particularly for disadvantaged youth (Goksen et al, 2015). Similarly, in Spain, STW transitions are protracted and fragmented while the prevalence of temporary, short-term employment contracts among young people reflects the fact that this type of employment has traditionally been a key (but controversial) STW transition instrument (González-Menéndez et al, 2015).

The Estonian STW transition model is focused more on a general education (school-based) pathway, while its work-based VET in the form of apprenticeships is relatively underdeveloped. In Poland, youth unemployment has been a key policy issue for the past decade, but it is also characterised by a high degree of labour market dualism with the highest share of fixed-term contracts in the EU and a low (20%) transition rate from temporary to permanent employment (European Commission, 2015h). This has clear and negative implications for the STW transitions of Polish youth.

The Swedish model has historically been associated with a high quality and effective education and training system, including VET, producing well-educated youth able to make fast and successful STW transitions. Similar to Germany and the Netherlands, it has been argued that these smooth STW transitions can be attributed to a high share of students combining work and study, a proportion well above the EU average (Eurofound, 2014). However, as in other countries, these smooth STW transitions do not hold for all young people; with those who have not completed secondary education, or young migrants and refugees or those with disabilities, facing particular barriers to their labour market entry (Wadensjö, 2015).

The countries also varied in their EPL as well as the focus of their ALMPs. Differences in ALMPs between France, Germany and the Netherlands are driven by the highly different educational systems and the general economic performance of these countries. Whereas dual vocational training is one important pillar of the German educational system, it is less important in the Netherlands and even still less in France. In this case, wage subsidies play a crucial role in France and the Netherlands to facilitate the acquisition of work experience and/or first job by young people. In the UK, ALMPs are not specifically targeted at young people, although there have been some flagship initiatives such as the Youth Contract as well as some youth specific support targeted at disadvantaged youth, including NEETs. Likewise, although Swedish ALMPs are often aimed at all age groups, programmes like the Job Guarantee focus on young people. ALMPs in Spain often seek to improve young people's skills, both theoretical and practical and/or to provide them with work experience. In the post-socialist cluster (EE, PL) labour market policy is less differentiated compared to employment-centred countries like Germany. This is also true for ALMPs where there little focus on youth in both countries, although recently some projects/programmes do focus on the specific needs of young people. In both countries, ALMPs that are used to support the STW transition of young people include training and/or employment

subsidies to increase the supply of work experience placements.

Our analysis has also highlighted that, especially as a result of the Great Recession of the late 2000s, some of the characteristics of each of the Pohl and Walther's STW transition regimes are in a state of flux. For example, VET (and apprenticeships) are becoming more important STW transition mechanisms even in clusters such as the liberal (UK) and the Mediterranean (ES, TR) clusters. On the other hand, in the universalistic cluster the quality and effectiveness of the Swedish education and training system, including VET which, in the past, produced well-educated young people who could make fast and successful STW transitions is currently under-performing, with obvious implications for these transitions. At the same time, VET take-up is falling. That said, it is still early to assess whether such changes represent paradigmatic shifts in the key STW transitions mechanisms, especially in view of the path dependency and cultural and institutional specificity of STW transitions.

A requirement highlighted by our review is the need for the Pohl and Walther's typology of STW transitions to be updated and further refined on the basis of the developments that have occurred during and after the recent crisis and which have led to an ongoing reconfiguration of education and training systems, labour market policies and institutional arrangements which are pertinent to young people's successful entry to sustained employment. Linked to this is the need for further differentiation within the clusters themselves since there is variation in a number of institutional arrangements and this leads to variation in the STW transition outcomes as is, for example, the case of the employment centred cluster (DE, FR, NL). The above discussion notwithstanding, our analysis did not really change the way STW transitions in each cluster have been traditionally regarded, especially in relation to their length, quality and sustainability.

1. The situation of young people in the labour market

This Draft Report presents the comparative overview of the school-to-work (STW) transition pathways, structures and related effectiveness in the eight case study countries of Task 3 of Work Package (WP) 3: Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. In addition, France was reviewed where possible as representing a particular Continental STW transition model.

The analysis presented here uses a comparative framework based on the well-known typology of STW transition regimes developed by Pohl and Walther (2005 and 2007; Walther, 2006). According to this typology, STW transition regimes fall into five broad categories: (i) *universalistic* (Finland, Sweden, Denmark) where the focus of transition policies is mainly on education in the broad sense of personal development; (ii) *employment-centred* which includes transition policies focusing primarily on *dual training/apprenticeship* system (Germany, Austria), or *school-based education and training* (France), or *mixed* training provision (the Netherlands); (iii) *liberal* which focuses more on the young person's rapid labour market entry (the UK and, to some extent, Ireland); (iv) *sub-protective/ Mediterranean* which have traditionally had the weakest links between the worlds of education and work and quite protracted STW transitions (Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal); and (v) *transitional/post-socialist regimes* which have adopted either liberal and/or employment centred approaches to STW transitions (e.g. Baltic States, Romania, Bulgaria).

Employment/labour market access

The Great Recession of the late 2000s and ensuing economic recovery hit young people in the EU disproportionately hard, although with significant country variations. For example, throughout the crisis and afterwards Germany and the Netherlands registered much lower youth unemployment rates of below or just over 10% as opposed to France and Poland which had medium to very high rates of over 20% and Spain which recorded dramatically high rates of over 50%. The fact that Germany and the Netherlands weathered the recent crisis much better than other countries has been attributed to their structured STW transitions pathways with close links between work and education through a mass dual apprenticeship system (Germany) and a robust VET system (Netherlands).

Although the labour market situation of young people is improving, youth unemployment remains very high (European Commission, 2015a; Eurofound, 2015a). In January 2016, the EU-28 youth unemployment rate (15-24 years) was 19.7% (Eurostat, 2016).¹ There is, however, a large divergence between Member States, with countries belonging to the employment-centred cluster performing much better than countries belonging to other clusters (see Table 1 which also includes 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data). France, on the other hand, although belonging to the employment cluster, registers high youth unemployment which reflects a number of structural barriers such as pronounced labour market segmentation/dualism and considerable skills mismatches. Sweden, characterised by a school-based but universalistic STW transitions model also records high youth unemployment, which reflects a perceived lack of job readiness and skills mismatches. Interestingly, Estonia (in-transition cluster) and the UK (liberal cluster) also score better than the other countries. There are also country differences in relation to the unemployment rate of the older age group (25-29), with Germany, the UK and the Netherlands having the lowest rates for this group as opposed to Spain and France which register the

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

highest, while the EU-28 average rate stood at 13.6% in 2014 (see Table 2 which also includes 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data).

High youth unemployment rates reflect young people's difficulties in securing employment. However, this does not necessarily mean that the number of unemployed young people aged 15-24 is large, since many in this age group are in full-time education and are, therefore, neither working nor looking for a job. This, in turn, may make meaningful comparisons between countries difficult since in some countries young people in education and/or training such as apprentices are defined as 'employed but taking part in vocational training in school' and, as such, as being out of the labour force (Wadensjö, 2015). Moreover, in some countries full-time students, who wish to continue their full-time studies, but are looking/applying for a part-time job while studying, are counted as unemployed until they are successful in their job search.

A further complication in relation to using the youth unemployment rate as an indicator of young people's labour market status is that labour force surveys classify as unemployed those who have already received and accepted a job offer, but have not started working yet. This, in turn, means that students who have received and accepted summer job offers are counted as unemployed in the period up to the start of the summer vacation (Wadensjö, 2015).

As a result, another key, more reliable indicator which is also an EU dashboard youth indicator is the **youth unemployment ratio** which is typically lower than the rate since it reflects the proportion of unemployed youth in relation to the total youth population (employed, unemployed and inactive, including those in full-time education). Even so, youth unemployment ratios which show the extent of youth unemployment in relation to the labour market situation of the population as a whole, have also risen since 2008 due to the adverse effects of the crisis on the youth labour market (European Commission, 2015b). This was, indeed, reflected in the countries under review, save for Germany (See Table 1 which also includes 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data). In 2014, the youth unemployment ratio in the EU-28 for those aged 15-24 and 25-29 was 9.2% and 11.2% respectively, but again with considerable country variations (See Tables 1 and 2 which also include 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data). For the countries under review, the ratio for the 15-24 age group ranged between 3.9% in Germany through to 19% in Spain. It should be noted that a high proportion of non-employed young people in the calculation of the youth unemployment ratio denominator are either in education or NEETs (O'Reilly et al, 2015).

Although both youth unemployment rates and ratios seem to be pointing in the same direction for countries at the two ends of the spectrum such as Germany (low) and Spain (high), there are interesting variations for those in between. For example, countries like the UK and, to some extent, Sweden with relatively low youth unemployment rates (or, at least lower than the EU-28 average) have relatively high youth unemployment ratios (or, at least lower than the EU-28 average). Conversely, countries like France whose youth unemployment rate is higher than the EU-28 average, have a youth unemployment ratio which is smaller than the relevant EU-28 average. As has been noted, this would suggest that in these countries, a higher proportion of non-employed young people in the calculation of the youth unemployment ratio denominator are either in education or NEETs (O'Reilly et al, 2015).

The Great Recession of the late 2000s also resulted in an increase in **youth long-term unemployment**. In 2014, the youth long-term unemployment rate for those aged 15-24 and 25-29 stood at 7.8% and 6% respectively, although there were significant differences between Member States (see Tables 1 and 2 which also include 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data); with rates for both age groups being highest in Spain and lowest in Sweden.

Table 1: Youth Unemployment, Long-term Unemployment Rates and Youth Unemployment Ratio (%) by Country (Age Group: 15 to 24)

	Youth Unemployment Rate (%)		Youth Long-term Unemployment Rate (%)		Youth Unemployment Ratio (%)	
	2008	Jan 2016	2008	2014	2008	2014
Germany	10.6	7.1	3.0	1.8	5.5	3.9
Netherlands	5.3	11.2	0.5	2.3	3.9	8.6
UK	15.0	13.6**	2.4	4.3	9.2	9.8
Spain	24.5	45.0	2.5	21.5	11.7	19.0
Estonia	12.0	18.4***	2.9	4.4	4.9	5.9
Poland	17.3	20.4	3.8	7.4	5.7	8.1
Sweden	20.2	18.9	0.7	1.3	10.7	12.7
France	18.3	25.9	4.3	7.2	7.1	8.9
Turkey	18.5	18.4****	3.8	2.6	6.9	7.3
EU-28	15.6*	19.7	3.5*	7.8	6.9*	9.2

Source: Eurostat, (2016). 'January 2016 - Euro Area Unemployment Rate at 10.3%', Eurostat Newsrelease - Euroindicators, 41/2016, 1.3.2016; Eurostat yth_empl_100; Eurostat yth_empl_120 & Eurostat yth_empl_140; accessed on 22 January & 7 March 2016

Note: * refers to EU-27 (excluding Croatia)

** November 2015

*** December 2015

**** August 2015

Table 2: Youth Unemployment, Long-term Unemployment Rates and Youth Unemployment Ratio (%) by Country (Age Group: 25 to 29)

	Youth Unemployment Rate (%)		Youth Long-term Unemployment Rate (%)		Youth Unemployment Ratio (%)	
	2008	2014	2008	2014	2008	2014
Germany	8.4	6.1	3.2	1.9	6.9	5.1
Netherlands	2.2	7.2	0.5	2.3	2.0	6.2
UK	5.7	6.9	1.3	2.3	4.8	5.9
Spain	13.3	30.3	1.6	13.4	11.6	26.3
Estonia	5.2	9.2	na	3.9	4.3	7.7
Poland	8.2	11.8	2.4	4.8	6.8	10.0
Sweden	6.7	9.1	0.6	1.4	5.7	7.8
France	8.9	14.4	2.7	5.2	7.7	12.4
Turkey	11.8	12.9	3.1	2.8	7.3	8.6
EU-28	8.5*	13.6	2.6*	6.0	7.1*	11.2

Source: Eurostat *yth_empl_100*; Eurostat *yth_empl_120* & Eurostat *yth_empl_140*; accessed on 1 April 2016

Note: * refers to EU-27 (excluding Croatia)

As youth unemployment rose during the Great Recession of the late 2000s and its aftermath, **youth employment** fell by more than four percentage points between 2008 (37.3%) and 2014 (32.5%). However, there has recently been some improvement and, for the first time since 2007, the average **youth employment rate** of those aged 15-24 across the EU slightly increased to 32.5% in 2014 (Eurofound, 2015a). Again, however, there is considerable country variation, for example it decreased in Poland (see Table 3 which also includes 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data). Similarly, as Table 3 shows, with the exception of Germany and Turkey, the employment rate of those aged 25-29 also fell between 2008 and 2014, albeit with significant country differences in the magnitude of this fall.

Table 3: Youth Employment Rate (%) by Country (2008 & 2014, Age Groups: 15-24 & 25-29)

	Youth Employment Rate (%)			
	15-24		25-29	
	2008	2014	2008	2014
Germany	69.3	58.8	74.8	77.7
Netherlands	52.0	48.1	88.4	81.0
UK	46.6	46.1	79.6	78.9
Spain	42.2	42.8	75.2	60.5
Estonia	35.9	33.3	78.7	76.4
Poland	31.4	27.9	76.3	74.7
Sweden	27.3	25.8	80.6	77.9
France	36	16.7	79.0	73.3
Turkey	30.3	33.5	54.3	58.3
EU-28	37.3*	32.4	75.6*	71.2

Source: Eurostat yth_empl_010 accessed on 22 January, 7 March & 1 April 2016

Note: * refers to EU-27 (excluding Croatia)

Youth labour market structure

Young people's employment is characterised by a number of specific working patterns which, in many cases, contribute to greater labour market vulnerability. Across the EU, the incidence of precarious, including temporary and atypical (as well as part-time), employment is significantly higher among young people. This reflects the high degree of **segmentation** and **dualism** that characterise youth labour markets and which increased during the economic crisis.

In relation to **temporary employment** and its impact on STW transitions, in line with the prevailing schools of thought, this is either seen as a 'stepping stone' to permanent employment or a 'trap'² (European Commission, 2015b) depending on country specific institutional settings like employment protection legislation. In 2014, 43.4% of young people aged 15–24 were in temporary employment (compared to 13% of the total working population) (Eurostat, 2015c),³ although with considerable differences between Member States (see Table 4 which also includes 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data). This country variation reflects different labour market structures, STW transition patterns, employment protection legislation (EPL), the extent to which traineeships form part of the national education and training system and youth-related policy measures (Eurostat, 2015c). As expected, the share of

² The 'trap' interpretation of temporary work suggests that temporary contracts offer poor quality work in the short-term and have scarring effects in the long-term

³ <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

temporary employment among those aged 25-29 is much lower (22.7% in 2014), although it has also increased since 2008 (see Table 5 which also includes 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data).

Similarly, **part-time employment** is more widespread among young people, with proportions increasing across the EU-28 between 2008 and 2014: from 26% to 31.3% for those aged 15–24 and from 12.3% to 15.9% for those aged 25-29 (see Tables 4 and 5 which also include 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data). Again, there are marked country differences in relation to the incidence of part-time employment with the Netherlands registering by far the highest percentage. Crucially, reflecting young people's deteriorating situation in the labour market, the rate of **involuntary part-time employment** generally increased across the EU between 2008 and 2014: from 26.1% to 29.4% for those aged 15–24 with Spain and France recording the highest incidence of involuntary part-time employment in 2014 (see Table 4). A significant increase in the rate of involuntary part-time employment was also observed for the 25-29 age group, albeit again the extent of the increase varies widely among the countries under review (see Table 5).

Table 4: Forms of Precarious Employment (%) by Country (2014, Age Group: 15-24)

	Temporary Employment (%)		Part-time Employment (%)		Involuntary Part-time Employment (%)	
	2008	2014	2008	2014	2008	2014
Netherlands	44.5	55.1	71.2	79.2	4.4	10.7
UK	11.4	14.7	35.1	38.3	na	26.7
Germany	57.1	53.9	20.0	21.9	24.7	10.7
Sweden	53.5	55.6	45.4	49.5	39.7	44.6
Estonia	6.1	11.0	12.9	20.0	na	na
France	52.8	57.4	22.4	24.3	46.4	52.9
Poland	62.8	71.2	14.1	15.4	13.6	28.8
Spain	58.4	69.3	23.2	39.1	32.7	59.1
Turkey	na	21.7	na	14.3	6.2	7.0
EU-28	40.0*	43.4	26.0*	31.3	26.1*	29.4

Source: Eurostat *yth_empl_050*, Eurostat *yth_empl_060* & Eurostat *yth_empl_080*; accessed on 22 January & 7 March 2016

Note: * refers to EU-27 (excluding Croatia)

Table 5: Forms of Precarious Employment (%) by Country (2014, Age Group: 25-29)

	Temporary Employment (%)		Part-time Employment (%)		Involuntary Part-time Employment (%)	
	2008	2014	2008	2014	2008	2014
Netherlands	22.0	31.8	32.1	41.7	10.8	24.0
UK	4.5	6.0	13.8	17.1	na	27.1
Germany	22.0	21.5	19.8	20.0	25.6	16.5
Sweden	24.3	24.8	21.0	22.9	39.8	41.9
Estonia	3.0	4.0	3.8	8.4	na	na
France	20.7	24.1	12.3	14.1	49.0	60.1
Poland	36.0	43.4	5.9	6.6	28.6	51.5
Spain	37.8	44.4	10.3	22.1	45.1	76.5
Turkey	na	10.0	na	7.4	10.4	9.7
EU-28	20.0*	22.7	12.3*	15.9	36.0*	42.3

Source: Eurostat yth_empl_050, Eurostat yth_empl_060 & Eurostat yth_empl_080; accessed on 1 April 2016

Note: * refers to EU-27 (excluding Croatia)

Youth and labour market disadvantage

Since 2009 across the EU there had been a steady rise in the NEET rate of those aged 15-24. In 2014, the NEET rate for those aged 15-24 and 25-29 in the EU-28 stood at 12.5% and 20.4% respectively, but again with considerable country differences, notably a clear North-South divide (see Table 6 which also includes 2008, i.e. pre-crisis data). For those aged 15-24, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden all record NEET rates well below 10%. In contrast, Turkey and Spain have high NEET rates. Low educational attainment is one of the key determinants of becoming a NEET as well as of being unemployed or inactive. In 2014, the ESL rate across the EU stood at 11.2% (see Table 6). Poland, Sweden, the Netherlands, France and Germany have already achieved the EU2020 target by having ESL rates below 10%.

Table 6: NEET and ESL Rate (%) by Country (2008 & 2014, Age Groups: 15-24 & 25-29)

	NEET Rate (%)				ESL Rate (%)	
	15-24		25-29		18-24	
	2008	2014	2008	2014	2008	2014
Netherlands	3.4	5.5	7.1	11.6	11.4	8.7
UK	12.1	11.9	15.0	16.2	16.9	11.8
Germany	8.4	6.4	15.8	12.6	11.8	9.5
Sweden	7.8	7.2	8.5	9.0	7.9	6.7
Estonia	8.7	11.7	16.9	16.8	14.0	11.4
France	10.5	11.4	16.7	19.7	11.8	9.0
Poland	9.0	12.0	19.3	21.2	5.0	5.4
Spain	14.3	17.1	16.7	26.7	31.7	21.9
Turkey	na	24.8	na	na	45.5	38.3
EU-28	10.9*	12.5	17.0*	20.4	14.7*	11.2

Source: Eurostat *yth_empl_150* & Eurostat *t2020_40* accessed on 22 January, 7 March & 1 April 2016

Note: * refers to EU-27 (excluding Croatia)

4. Structure of education and VET system

Introduction

In this section we provide an overview of the structure of education, including VET systems across the EU with particular reference to the nine countries under review. Crucially, we seek to situate the role of education and training within the wider STW transition mechanisms that exist in each country as these are grouped in the five clusters. For example, VET, including apprenticeships, is considered key to lowering youth unemployment and facilitating the STW transitions of young people across the EU. Indeed, policy makers across Europe have been attempting to improve VET in order to provide an attractive alternative to general upper secondary and tertiary education and in order to better meet the skill requirements of the labour market (European Commission, 2015f; Quintini and Martin, 2014).

In 2013, about half (48.9%) of all upper secondary education students across the EU-28 participated in VET.⁴ Not surprisingly, there is significant country variation in the take-up of VET as opposed to general education: VET participation is typically much higher than the EU average in the employment-centred regime and much lower in the Mediterranean and the post-Socialist clusters. For example, in Germany, in 2014, the share of ISCED 3 students in VET was 47.5%, while the proportion of secondary school graduates involved in dual training (apprenticeships) is far above the EU average (88.2% compared with 27%) (Eichhorst, 2015; European Commission, 2015f). The difference in participation rates in VET across the EU countries can be partly attributed to the differing perceptions of VET and its centrality in the STW transition process.

Structural and institutional factors relating to the education and training system

A number of structural and institutional factors relating to the education and training systems such as ability grouping (tracking in schools) and flexibility and permeability of education pathways together with specific strategies such as widening access and the role of VET, and including apprenticeships as opposed to general education in STW transitions, have been shown to impact these transitions. Early labour market experience can be an important factor for young people for their successful transition into work. VET often allows young people to acquire this experience and work-relevant skills through a work-based model of delivery. Apprenticeships are typically delivered through workplace and school-based study; although the way they are organised varies between countries, including the percentage that work-based training represents in relation to the total training time.

With some notable exceptions, such as Germany and the Netherlands, VET is generally associated with a lower status and quality than general/academic education, meaning that fewer students voluntarily choose the VET track; in many instances, VET is seen as a 'second best' option destined for students with lower educational attainment. Crucially, there has been a convergence in policy across all clusters, in that apprenticeships are now being promoted as a high quality route to achieving improved outcomes for young people in all clusters. However, the success of this policy shift is dependent on the specific structural and institutional frameworks in place to support this agenda, which varies greatly between clusters.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Education_statistics_at_regional_level#Students_in_vocational_upper_secondary_education

The extent, type and nature of social partner involvement is consistently shown to be key to the success of particular VET schemes, notably apprenticeships (European Commission, 2013; ILO, 2013 and 2015). However, social partner involvement varies considerably between Member States and VET programmes. In general, the role of social partners is clearly prescribed in highly regulated VET/apprenticeship systems with a corporatist form of governance such as Germany and Sweden which, in turn, leads to very strong and active social partner involvement. In contrast, in market-led systems such as the UK, social partner involvement is rather uneven. Likewise, social partner involvement in school-based VET systems tends to be less extensive than in work-based VET systems (European Commission, 2013).

Universalistic cluster (SE)

Under the universalistic model, where there is a collinear linkage between education and the labour market, employers are increasingly playing a shaping role in specifying standards; particularly within occupations that require occupational certification. There has also been some movement in recent years towards more employer engagement in the delivery of education and training through enterprise-based upper secondary schools (European Commission, 2014).

In recent years, there has been a distinct deterioration in the quality and effectiveness of Sweden's education and training system (European Commission, 2015f). Participation in VET has decreased since 2005 making Sweden one of the few European countries where this has occurred (Gonzalez Carreras et al, 2015). The decrease in upper secondary VET participation has been precipitated following the 2011 upper secondary school reform, whereby vocational programmes no longer grant basic eligibility to higher education (European Commission, 2015f). There have also been repeated (failed) attempts to recruit young people to apprenticeship programmes (Wadensjö, 2015). Indeed, the incidence of formal apprenticeship is uncommon, with it typically occurring only in craft occupations. The Swedish state has attempted to expand apprenticeship training in recent years, but participation still remains low.

Under the Swedish model, there is a corporatist tradition of close cooperation between employers, trade unions and the state which helps ensure agreements are reached on the implementation of formal traineeship and apprenticeship systems (Eurofound, 2014). For example, the National Apprenticeship Committee, which included industry representatives, played a significant role in the design and assessment of the apprenticeship programmes introduced in upper secondary schools (Eurofound, 2014).

Employment-Centred cluster (DE, FR, NL)

Countries in the employment-centred transition model (e.g. DE, NL) tend to have highly standardised forms of vocational training in terms of their curricula and national certification systems and well-developed apprenticeship systems (Eurofound, 2014). Dual VET is a core feature of the German education system, with apprenticeship providing the main form of VET at upper secondary level. In the Netherlands, apprenticeship is a slightly less prominent, not least because of the prevalence of the school-based VET route (BOL). In these countries, VET in its various forms, such as dual apprenticeships and school-based VET has long been established and, due to its high take-up, represents an important STW transition mechanism. However, due to an ongoing trend of 'tertiarisation' (i.e. increased participation in higher education) in Germany, academic programmes are nowadays slightly more popular than VET programmes.

In Germany and, to a lesser degree in the Netherlands, path dependencies affect educational choices once a track has been chosen. However, the German education system has grown more flexible with the freedom to choose between educational paths vastly increased (Eichhorst, et al 2015). Within the Mediterranean cluster, early tracking and path dependence is also observed. Within the employment-centred regime as represented by Germany, the education and training system prepares young people with occupation-specific skills, and labour market experience is likely to start during upper secondary or tertiary education. In this case, VET (involving theoretical learning in vocational schools) is often combined with practical work experience in the form of company-based apprenticeships (Eurofound, 2014).

However, in France, where the incidence of apprenticeship is increasing, through promotion of apprenticeship contracts, school-based VET still dominates (Eurofound, 2014; European Commission, 2015). As a result, vocational education is less closely linked to the workplace representing more school-based delivery and a looser link between qualifications and jobs. Moreover, in the Netherlands a substantial share of vocational courses focus on the attainment of broader, generic skills. There are also such commonalities with the universalistic model, as vocational schools at both secondary and tertiary level in Sweden provide a broad preparation for a particular sector rather than a specialised occupation as is the case of Germany and, for certain occupations, the Netherlands.

Within Germany and the Netherlands there is active employer involvement, with employers taking a partnership approach to the design and content of VET (Eurofound, 2014). This active social partner involvement, especially from employers, is also reflected in their close co-operation with the educational institutions providing VET. This level of involvement is, however, less common in France, where there is a lack of sufficient cooperation between employers and educational institutions, especially within the initial general secondary educational path (OECD, 2009; Cedefop, 2013; Dif, 2012). That said, the social partners do have influence in some areas of VET provision such as through the *Contrat de Professionalisation* and in apprenticeships.

Even within the employment-centred regime where VET involves the delivery of highly standardised and occupation-specific qualifications, often delivered through apprenticeships in cooperation with employers, some mismatch still exists between education and the required skills needed by employers. For example, following criticism in the Netherlands, where employers still play a strong shaping role in VET design but there is less focus on joint delivery, VET reform aims to better match education with the needs of the labour market. In such labour markets where joint delivery is less of a focus, supply issues (relating to the number of apprenticeships, traineeships etc. offered by employers) can also dominate meaning young people who cannot find placements with employers lack work-based training and education opportunities and are thus at more risk of becoming NEET.

Liberal cluster (UK)

The UK, characterised by the liberal transition model, had in 2012 the lowest rate of participation in post-compulsory education (79%) than any other country in the EU-28 (OECD, 2013). This, partly, reflects the fact that availability of higher vocational and technical education in the UK lags behind other European systems (European Commission, 2015f). Post compulsory secondary education is highly fragmented in the UK, although not to the same degree as within the Mediterranean cluster. The liberal cluster has also started to share some commonalities with other regimes, with younger people tending to remain in education longer as opposed to entering employment at an earlier age; a feature which is widespread across the clusters.

The UK is characterised by a much higher degree of flexibility but also fragmentation within VET. In recent years, there have been efforts to standardise VET qualifications; and apprenticeships now lie at the heart of a new UK VET system. This comprises flexible vocational qualifications allowing progression into training that is equivalent to university-level qualifications (BIS, 2010; Campbell, 2012, cited in Hadjivassiliou et al, 2015a). Although the UK's policy intention is to effect a major change in the STW transition pattern by massively expanding apprenticeships, it is still rather early to assess the extent to which this will lead to a permanent path-shift.

VET under the flexible liberal regime focuses rather more narrowly on delivering particular occupational skills, although not to the same degree as the German model. However, the division between the school and work-based elements of VET varies, with VET being accessible through school-based programmes combining academic study with vocational elements, broad vocational programmes, or specialist occupational programmes that take place both in a school and workplace setting (Cedefop/ReferNet, 2012).

In contrast to the universalistic and employment-centred regimes, under the liberal regime, there is a more limited role for employer engagement in VET, with employers seeing themselves as 'customers' of the education system rather than partners. As such, many employers expect 'job-ready' workers (Sissons and Jones, 2012; cited in Hadjivassiliou et al, 2015a) and have criticised the education and training system for ill-equipping young people for the world of work. Such limited employer engagement can detrimentally impact STW transitions and efforts have been made to increasingly involve employers in VET, particularly in relation to apprenticeships. In particular, the recent Apprenticeship Trailblazer reforms, which are providing a new model for the design and delivery of apprenticeship standards specifically seek to further increase employer involvement in the institutional framework, design and delivery of apprenticeships (Hadjivassiliou et al, 2015a).

Under the liberal regime, where the education system and labour market is decoupled, the lack of joint delivery of training or co-design of its content has made skill mismatch a reoccurring concern: a significant minority continue to leave secondary education without the necessary skills and qualifications to compete in the labour market. Likewise, VET policy in the UK has been criticised as being too focused on basic skills and relatively low-level qualifications (European Commission, 2013).

Mediterranean cluster (ES, TR)

The Mediterranean models and, to some degree, the post-socialist models are characterised by non-selective and comprehensively structured compulsory educational systems but relatively low-standard training schemes (Eurofound, 2014). Within the Mediterranean model, secondary education is much more highly fragmented in Turkey than in Spain, with Turkey operating a multi-tracked education system with numerous different forms of vocational schools (possessing commonalities with Poland and Estonia). Vast reform has occurred over recent decades in the education systems in both the Mediterranean countries under review (ES, TR) and the post-socialist countries (EE, PL), improving the delivery and length of compulsory education.

In the Mediterranean cluster, there have been efforts to make VET more flexible and align it closer to the skill needs of employers. In both the Mediterranean and universalistic clusters, education and training is centrally standardised and there is a comparatively low incidence of apprenticeships. In view of the better employment outcomes of quality apprenticeships and VET, during the last decade, Spain has implemented a major VET reform, introducing a dual training/apprenticeship system, together with support measures aimed at increasing the number of students in the vocational track. It has also tried

to increase the flexibility and quality of VET supply and demand, with the number of students enrolled in dual VET having quadrupled since 2012 (European Commission, 2015f). However, as the 2015 country-specific recommendations underline, Spain has made limited progress in providing good quality offers of employment, apprenticeships and traineeships for young people.

Similar to the universalistic model, in the Mediterranean regimes, VET at upper secondary level and at tertiary level involves mostly school-based delivery, with workplace training modules delivering only small elements of the curricula. In Turkey, the involvement of employers in vocational training is relatively low, despite efforts over the past few years to increase co-operation between the vocational education system and employers. However, in Spain the social partners, including employers, are officially involved in youth-related policies, including VET delivery, to a much larger extent (González-Menéndez et al, 2015). In the Mediterranean model, skill mismatch is also observed, with the more qualified among the young facing challenges in finding suitable employment matching their qualification levels. For example, Turkey currently has among the highest over-qualification rates of the countries reviewed (above 30%).

Post-socialist cluster (EE, PL)

In comparison, VET delivery in the post-socialist countries is dependent on the type of school with vocational placements in enterprises comprising different proportions of the curricula. There are still, however, country differences with VET in Poland being mostly school-based as opposed to Estonia where it involves a greater share of practical training in enterprises.

In Estonia, apprenticeships are uncommon, accounting for only about 2% of students, and, in both Estonia and Poland the provision of apprenticeships of sufficient quantity and quality remains insufficient (European Commission, 2015f).

In the post-socialist countries (EE, PL), the involvement of employers in vocational training is again relatively low, but there have been efforts over the past few years to increase co-operation between the vocational education system and employers in both Member States. For example, in Estonia this co-operation has focused on both the content of VET programmes and standards, while in Poland this has involved the inclusion of internships/work placements in the curricula.

Under the post-socialist regimes, the linkages between the education system and labour market are also weak and have again resulted in an observed mismatch between the requirements of employers and the qualifications/skills obtained during education.

5. Labour market policy and benefits system

Introduction

In this section we present for each of the clusters country specific information about labour market regulation rigidity and associated degree of labour market segmentation; coverage of collective bargaining institutions, including trade union density; wage setting mechanisms and the role of national minimum wage; the wage structure, labour taxation and tax wedge; and key characteristics of the benefit system in terms of its coverage, generosity, conditionality and the segmentation of unemployment benefits and other social assistance schemes. For each of the clusters, we also present an overview of their ALMPs.

Universalistic cluster (SE)

In general, the EPL rigidity within a universalistic cluster is moderate. However, in the case of Sweden, EPL for permanent employment is relatively high and relatively low for temporary employment. Such a difference fosters labour market segmentation because employers may benefit from using temporary forms of employment to avoid dismissal costs. Indeed, in Sweden, the use of temporary work is above the EU-average and especially high among young people. Crucially, this has, in part, been attributed to this duality in EPL (Dolado, 2015).

The financing of the Swedish social state is typical for a universalistic cluster because it is mainly financed by taxes and not contributions, with a tax wedge of 42.46% in 2014 according to OECD statistics. In general, collective agreements are very important driving forces for labour market regulations in Sweden. Social partners are crucial for wage setting which is why there is no statutory minimum wage, leading to different minimum wages for young employees depending on the sector. The power of Swedish trade unions is reflected by a trade union density of 67.5% and a collective bargaining coverage of about 81%, due to negotiations at company and industry level. Labour market regulation is set by law without differentiation for young people. Since severance payments are regulated by collective agreements, trade unions also influence the costs of dismissal, and thus indirectly also the rigidity of employment protection. Income inequality in Sweden is among the lowest in the OECD and the lowest of all countries covered in this Report with a Gini coefficient of 0.27 in 2012 according to OECD statistics.

In the case of ALMPs, young unemployed people take part in similar labour market programmes as older workers. Possible support for young people can differ between regions in Sweden because ALMPs are implemented at both national and municipality levels. Despite the fact that Swedish ALMPs are often aimed at all age groups, programmes like the Job Guarantee (UGA) focus on young peoples' needs. Supported forms of employment also play an important role. Work experience, like elsewhere in the EU, is also highly valued in the Swedish youth labour market (and, as such, critical for smooth STW transitions) (Wadensjö, 2015).

Employment -centred cluster (DE, FR, NL)

The employment-centred countries share the fact that there are significant differences in the employment protection afforded to permanent as opposed to atypical workers and they all have

segmented labour markets, albeit to a different extent. However, a closer look at the actual use of atypical employment produces a counter-intuitive result. Germany, for example, has a higher level of EPL for permanent employment and a lower level of EPL for temporary employment than France. From a theoretical point of view, this makes temporary employment in Germany more desirable than in France since it provides employers with higher flexibility. However, the labour market in France is more segmented than in Germany. This is why differences in segmentation cannot only be explained by differences in EPL.

Although trade union density is the highest in Germany (17.9%) compared to 17.7% in the Netherlands and 7.7% in France, collective bargaining coverage is the lowest in Germany (59%) compared to 81% in the Netherlands and 98% in France. This is not as contradictory as it appears at first glance, because besides trade union density, the economic structure of every country and legislation - such as the main levels of collective bargaining - also determine the collective bargaining coverage.

In contrast to Sweden, benefits are not only financed by taxes but also by contributions and, as in Sweden, benefits are income based. Whereas the tax wedges in Germany (49.31%) and France (48.44%) are the highest in this report, the tax wedge in the Netherlands is relatively low (37.71%) in 2014. However, the income distribution in the Netherlands in 2013 (Gini: 0.28) was lower than in Germany (Gini: 0.29) or France (Gini: 0.31) in 2012.

In the case of young people there can be some exclusion from (or reduction in) benefits depending on their current status. In Germany, for example, young people receive less social assistance if they live in their parents' house (Eichhorst et al, 2015). Similarities also exist in the Netherlands. When a young person aged under 27 applies for social assistance for the first time, he/she has first to seek education or work independently in line with the rule of a four weeks 'search period' (Wadensjö, 2015). This, in turn, means that, initially, there is no right to either income or re-integration support.

All three countries have a national minimum wage with specific regulations for young people. However, where social partners are included, the minimum wage level and increase is the result of negotiations or consultation. In general, involving social partners in labour market policies is common among these employment-centred countries.

Differences in ALMPs between France, Germany and the Netherlands are driven by the highly different educational systems and the general economic performance of these countries. Wage subsidies play a crucial role in France and the Netherlands to facilitate the acquisition of work experience by young people. Due to the favourable situation on the German labour market, basic training and assistance for the less educated youth is gaining in importance. This is why the specific focus of ALMPs does not only depend on the general orientation of a particular cluster, but also on the current economic situation of a country.

Liberal cluster (UK)

The liberal cluster is characterised by relatively low levels of employment protection and social benefits. It is, therefore, not surprising that the tax wedge in the UK (31.09% in 2014) is the lowest among the countries covered in this report. The UK's EPL is one of the lowest among the OECD for several types of contracts. On the one hand, this makes the use of fixed-term employment or temporary agency work less attractive for employees, leading to a less segmented labour market. On the other hand, the absolute low level of EPL enables a strong increase in zero-hours contracts where working hours are set by the employers' demand, and thus lead to non-predictable income. This transfer of business risk from the employer to the employee is especially prevalent among young people who are over-presented

(38%) in this form of contracts (ONS, 2016).

At about 25.8% trade union density in the UK is relatively high compared to employment-centered countries like France, Germany and the Netherlands. However, contrary to these countries the collective bargaining coverage is only 29% reflecting the fact that collective agreements refer to company and not industry level.

Whilst many benefits are universal, some differ for young people. Benefit increases are only available for those aged over 25. Similarly to employment-centred countries like Germany, benefits for young people are conditional upon active job search and, in many cases, compulsory participation in various ALMPs which may focus on training or acquisition of work experience. Apart from a basic level, the amount of unemployment benefits is also contribution-based, which is the common denominator among all clusters. The income inequality was relatively high in the UK (Gini: 0.35) in 2012.

ALMPs in general are not specifically targeted at young people, although there have been some flagship initiatives such as the former Coalition's Youth Contract. In contrast to the other clusters, subsidies play a less crucial role not least because of low employment protection and specific sub-minimum wages for people aged below 21.

Mediterranean cluster (ES, TR)

Among the distinctive characteristics of the Mediterranean countries are their restrictive EPL (especially in relation to permanent employees) and their ungenerous benefits. The Spanish labour market is traditionally segmented, especially for young people, due to differences in the EPL rigidity between fixed and permanent contracts. However, whereas past reforms decreased protection only at the margin and thus increased segmentation; recent reforms also deregulated employment protection for permanent contracts (González-Menéndez et al, 2015). Labour market segmentation is less of an issue in Turkey because employment protection for all forms of employment is among the most rigid in the OECD countries (Goksen et al, 2015).

Trade union density in Spain (17.5%) and collective bargaining coverage (70%), which is realised by collective agreements at industry level, is comparable with the employment-centred countries. Involvement of social partners in legislative decisions is less developed in Turkey which also has one of the lowest collective bargaining coverage and trade union density in all OECD countries (Goksen et al, 2015).

ALMPs in Spain often seek to improve young people's skills and/or to provide them with work experience. Due to the structure of the Spanish education system, some forms of practical training is realised by Craft Centres run by regional governments (González-Menéndez et al, 2015). In Turkey, there is a straighter link to the labour market because the focus lies on fostering entrepreneurship and providing internships (Goksen et al, 2015). In Spain and Turkey, an increase in the supply of work experience and/or job placements is realised by hiring subsidies that reduce non-wage labour costs when hiring youth. However, no measures are in place to reduce wage labour costs, despite the fact that no specific sub-minimum wage for young workers exists.

In Spain, benefits do not differ for young people. However, whereas unemployment insurance is contribution-based, unemployment assistance is a means-based scheme with conditionality duration and amounts being dependent on work, family conditions and age (over 45 years) (González-Menéndez et al, 2015). The tax wedge (about 40.71% in 2014) was at a medium level. Contrary to Germany, the Netherlands or Sweden, there is no basic social assistance for young people who are

able to work. The income inequality was at a medium level in 2012 (Gini: 0.34), indicating that all levels of income were hit by the crisis. Comparing the social system of Turkey with the former countries is less meaningful due to the fact that Turkey is an emerging country. This is why most benefits refer to those who are unable to work. The relatively new unemployment insurance is contribution-based and does not contain any youth-related exceptions (Goksen et al, 2015). Income inequality was among the highest of all OECD countries in 2011 (Gini: 0.41) associated with a relatively low tax wedge (38.23%) in 2014.

Post-Socialist/Transitional cluster (EE, PL)

Differences in the use of temporary employment in Estonia and Poland are remarkable especially because both are post-Socialist countries and have espoused a mix of employment-centred and liberal regime. Whereas in Estonia the use of temporary employment is among the lowest in the EU, it is among the highest in Poland, regardless of age (Ślęzak and Szopa, 2015; Eamets and Humal, 2015). This may be explained by the fact that Estonia has a relatively low level of employment protection for permanent employment and a high level for temporary employment. In Poland, however, employment protection is much higher for permanent employment and equally high for temporary employment. Temporary employment is thus more attractive for employers in Poland than in Estonia. Furthermore, in Poland and Estonia there is no age differentiation in the minimum wage.

As in the liberal cluster, collective bargaining coverage is comparatively low in Poland (25%) and Estonia (33%) due to the fact that collective agreements are not binding at industry level (Ślęzak and Szopa, 2015; Eamets and Humal, 2015). It is rather striking that the collective bargaining coverage is still 33% in Estonia despite the fact that trade union density is only 6.4% (Eamets and Humal, 2015). The trade union density in Poland is about 12.5%; it is, therefore, not surprising that Polish social partners are not sufficiently integrated in legislative decisions (Ślęzak and Szopa, 2015).

In both countries, welfare benefits are a mix of universal and contribution-based systems without any specific focus on young people. In 2014, the tax wedge in Poland was 35.6% and 40.05% in Estonia. On the contrary, income inequality was higher in Estonia (Gini: 0.43) in 2012 than in Poland (Gini: 0.3). In these countries, labour market policy is in general less differentiated compared to employment-centred countries like Germany. This general approach is also true for ALMPs because there is little focus on youth in both countries. As in other countries, young people can benefit from services which are available for all unemployed. However, recently, some projects/programmes have started which focus on the specific needs of young people. In both countries, ALMPs that are used to support the STW transition of young people include training and/or employment subsidies to increase the supply of work experience placements. Nevertheless, certain differences exist between the two countries. Whereas ALMPs in Estonia concentrate mainly on less educated (young) individuals, ALMPs in Poland also target higher educated young people, notably graduates, with graduate unemployment being a pertinent issue in Poland.

6. Structure of transition processes and outcomes

Introduction

An overall aim of youth policy in Europe is to achieve sustained transitions into the labour market following education. Numerous policy responses and political contexts need to be considered in order to determine how this goal is best achieved within Member States. In this section, we review the main STW transition mechanisms in the nine countries under review, including the structure of transitions; their outcomes and the effectiveness of the institutional arrangements in structuring transition processes. Reflecting the great variety in institutional arrangements, including welfare regimes, there are interesting disparities between European countries in how these arrangements structure the STW transition processes.

Main STW transition mechanisms and their effectiveness

Universalistic cluster (SE)

Under Sweden's universalistic model, STW transitions are focused upon the early activation of young people; this is realised through a strong Job Guarantee (UGA) and social assistance programme for Swedish youth (Albæk et al, 2015; Wadensjö, 2015). One element of such programmes is intensive (and early) job search assistance combined with personalised action plans which have been found to be effective short-term transition mechanisms for unemployed youth (Card et al, 2010, cited in Gonzalez Carreras et al, 2015). Interestingly, a legal framework to monitor the STW transitions has been in place since 2010, and it is further supported by the systematic tracking of VET graduates (European Commission, 2015f).

Under the Swedish universalistic model, STW transitions can be considered rather effective in some respects, for example, the length of STW transitions at 4.4 months (in 2009) is well below the EU average (6.5 months) (Eurofound, 2014). The share of school-leavers who are in employment one year after completing their education is also the highest in the EU (Eurofound, 2014). Interestingly, although temporary employment is prevalent among young people (55.6% in 2014), contrary to France or Spain, this type of employment does act as a stepping stone to more stable work (Dolado, 2015).

However, many Swedish young people who left school without having completed upper secondary education or who have health problems are out of the labour market or unemployed, while if they secure employment, this is mainly a temporary job (Wadensjö, 2015). The performance gap is also large between native-born and foreign born/migrant students (European Commission, 2015g; Wadensjö, 2015). Many attempts have been made at both national and municipal levels to help these groups of young people; however, according to existing evaluations, such attempts have not succeeded to date in helping them make successful STW transitions (Wadensjö, 2015).

The Swedish model has historically been associated with a high quality and effective education and training system, including VET, producing well-educated youth able to make fast and successful STW transitions. Similar to Germany and the Netherlands, it has been argued that this can be attributed to the fact that a high share of students combine work and study, a proportion well above the EU average

(Eurofound, 2014). However, as in other countries, these smooth STW transitions do not hold for all young people; with those who have not completed secondary education, or young migrants and refugees or those with disabilities, facing particular barriers to their labour market entry (Wadensjö, 2015).

ALMPs aimed at addressing youth unemployment have a long-standing tradition in Sweden. In relation to younger workers, the country pioneered the implementation of a 'Youth Guarantee', and in 2007 the new Job Guarantee programme (UGA) for young people was introduced (Eurofound, 2012b; Wadensjö, 2015). A number of studies have shown that the Job Guarantee speeds up the provision of activation measures to unemployed young people and raises the likelihood of participants being employed within three months (Eurofound, 2012b).

There is a plurality of views on what are the main obstacles to the labour market integration of Swedish young people. Nordström (cited in Kullander and Johansson, 2011) argues that relatively high minimum wages and rigid employment laws are potential causes of high structural youth unemployment. One policy measure intended to counteract the effects of high minimum wages is lower payroll taxes for employers who employ young people; however, its effects have been small to date (Egebark and Kaunitz, 2013 cited in Wadensjö, 2015).

Sweden's EPL is around the unweighted OECD average, while the most important law in this area is the Law on Job Security (LAS), according to which, those who already have a job, have a protected position (Wadensjö, 2015). Growth of temporary employment among young people has been partly attributed to a reform introduced in 2007 which made it easier to employ a person on a temporary basis (Eurofound, 2013b), but it has also been argued that the dual nature of Sweden's EPL, which affords far greater protection to permanent employees is also a factor contributing to the rise in temporary employment among young people (Dolado, 2015).

Employment-Centred cluster (DE, FR, NL)

Dual (work-based/apprenticeships) or school-based VET systems, the strong involvement of all relevant stakeholders and a co-operative institutional framework ensures that the employment-centred regimes have a strong STW transition model - Germany and the Netherlands, particularly, have below average youth unemployment rates (Eurofound, 2014). Indeed, countries with well-established apprenticeship systems such as Germany and/or VET systems such as the Netherlands are characterised by relatively successful STW transition outcomes and low rates of youth unemployment

Conversely, France is characterised by considerable labour market segmentation/dualism and a diverse and complex labour market inclusion instruments ranging from a variety of subsidised employment contracts to an array of VET placements, each with varying degrees of effectiveness (Dif, 2012; Quintini and Martin, 2014). The success of labour market entry in France depends to a great extent on following a linear educational trajectory to obtain an initial selective diploma (from a *grande école*, or a university institute of technology), which is particularly highly valued by employers (OECD, 2009). Young people who deviate from this educational path and do not hold a diploma (as well as youth from ethnic minority and/or migrant background, notably coming from the Maghreb/North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa) experience considerable difficulties their STW transitions (CEREQ, 2012). France's linear and rather stratified educational trajectory which privileges an initial selective diploma/qualification means that young people who do not follow this route face considerable barriers in their labour market entry (CEREQ, 2012). The pronounced labour market segmentation and the large

proportion of young people in temporary employment are also characteristics of France's STW transitions, as is the high proportion (20-30%) of 'poorly integrated new entrants' (OECD) - young qualified people who experience persistent difficulties in accessing stable employment and are caught in a series of precarious jobs interspersed by (short) periods of unemployment and/or inactivity (Scarpetta et al, 2010).

On the other hand, Germany's strong VET system and institutional structure has helped achieve positive employment outcomes for its young people (Gonzalez Carreras et al, 2015). For example, the average length of STW transition is much lower than the EU average and the majority of the school leavers who are employed one year after graduation hold a permanent job (Eurofound 2014).

Several measures are implemented as part of ALMPs aimed at fostering closer links between education and the labour market and increasing young people's labour market attachment. Unfortunately, to date there has been a relative dearth of evaluations of youth-related ALMPs in Germany. However, existing evidence reveals positive employment effects for measures that focus on job assistance and training, while public job creation is counter-productive (Eichhorst et al, 2015). In terms of EPL, Germany has one of the strictest EPL in relation to permanent employment while its EPL for temporary employment is well below the OECD average (Eichhorst et al, 2015). Interestingly, the recent introduction of the minimum wage in Germany is not seen as major burden for the education system because of the exclusion of education related work like dual apprenticeships or mandatory internships (Eichhorst et al, 2015).

In the Netherlands, the success of the STW transition process has been attributed to its quality VET and its flexible education and training system, allowing movement across programmes, and between general and vocational tracks (OECD, 2014d). It has consistently been argued that young people's fast and smooth STW transitions may also be explained by the high proportion of students who combine work and study, which is well above the EU average (Eurofound, 2014). The Netherlands has also implemented successful policies aimed at reducing early school leaving and NEETs (Euwals, 2013; Bekker et al, 2015).

One specific feature of the Dutch institutional system is the existence of a (national) youth minimum wage (Euwals, 2013; Bekker et al, 2015). There is not much evidence on the effect of the age-differentiated level of the minimum wage on youth employment. However, there is reason to argue that especially during the recent crisis in some sectors, some crowding-out and substitution has taken place of young people with higher minimum wages by cheaper youngsters or students working mostly on temporary contracts (UWV, 2014 cited in Bekker et al, 2015).

The level of EPL in the Netherlands is high for regular but rather low for temporary employment. In general, although strong employment protection has, on average, no impact on overall employment, it has a strong adverse effect on youth employment. On the other hand, the markedly lower EPL for temporary employment is likely to have a positive impact on the employment of young people who are hired on such contracts (Bekker et al, 2015).

Liberal cluster (UK)

The STW transitions under the UK's liberal regime are fast but unstable. In 2009, a young person's average time of securing their first significant job stood at 3.5 months, almost half the EU average (Eurostat, 2015c). The UK's liberal regime is focussed on employability and the promotion of young

people's economic independence, which is evident through the raised participation age, a 'work-first' approach in youth-related ALMPs and the push to make qualifications – particularly apprenticeships – more relevant to employer requirements. Indeed, the foreseen expansion of craft/intermediate level as well as higher level apprenticeships combined with the concerted effort to improve their quality and image/reputation and ensure greater employer ownership represents a major path-shift in the UK's STW transition system (Newton, 2014).

Currently, the focus of the UK's STW transition pattern is on moving as many young people as possible into employment; however, a major problem has been patchy and inconsistent service provision together with a tendency to divide skills and employment programmes. This, in turn, means young people are largely left to navigate the STW transition alone (Hadjivassiliou et al, 2015). Moreover, the persistently high number of early school leavers (12.4%) and NEETs (13.3%) in the UK reflects a critical structural problem. There is a correlation between NEET rates and low qualification levels, with prior education attainment being the most important predictor of NEET status.

Compared to other Member States, qualifications and skills are more critical for smooth labour market entry in the UK. However, both horizontal and vertical skills mismatch is rather high even for recent graduates. As a result, there is significant underemployment among young people. Internships constitute a key STW transition mechanism, particularly for graduates, but are often associated with questionable employer practices. In general, the UK's approach to tackling youth unemployment can be characterised as light touch labour market regulation, state investment and reforms in education and strong activation (Lanning and Rüdiger, 2012). With relation to the latter, a flagship programme has been the Youth Contract, which shares common characteristics with the Youth Guarantee. Its evaluation had yielded mixed results, with outcomes shown to be better when targeted towards the most disadvantaged participants (Newton et al, 2014).

In the UK, a number of institutional arrangements such as VET and aspects of youth-related activation policies vary by nation. However, in general, there has been a major policy push towards reforming VET, including apprenticeships, across all four nations. Each nation is also committed to raising the participation age (and level of educational attainment) of young people, who now must stay in some form of education or training until the age of 18.

In line with its characteristics as an Anglo-Saxon, liberal welfare regime, dominant features of the UK's labour market is flexibility and low EPL. Although this contributes to fast STW transitions these also tend to be rather unstable. In general, the UK's low EPL does not present many of the 'rigidities' often identified as causes of high structural unemployment elsewhere; however, this is accompanied by job insecurity, employment volatility, and high incidence of low-quality, low-pay jobs, and very insecure employment contracts, including zero hours contracts, which do not necessarily represent a desirable transition outcome (Hadjivassiliou et al, 2015).

Mediterranean cluster (ES, TR)

STW transitions are lengthier, unstable and complex within the Mediterranean cluster which is characterised by high youth unemployment. In Turkey, STW transitions tend to be slow and there have been numerous attempts from both public and private actors to improve their speed and quality, particularly for disadvantaged youth; however, progress has been slow (Goksen et al, 2015). Spain has a more developed but varied STW transition mechanism, but there is conflict between stakeholders and government as to the direction of education and training, including VET, while skill mismatch is of

particular concern (González-Menéndez et al, 2015). For example, the employability of higher education graduates, particularly in certain disciplines, which at 68.6% is one of the lowest in the EU remains a major challenge, as does the significant proportion of graduates employed in jobs that do not require a university degree (European Commission, 2015f). Moreover, the prevalence of temporary, short-term employment contracts among young people reflects the fact that this type of employment has traditionally been a key (but controversial) STW transition instrument in Spain (González-Menéndez et al, 2015).

The issue of qualification/skills mismatch affects both Spain and Turkey. In Spain, 32.5% of its youth is deemed 'overqualified' for their jobs (Mínguez and Ballesteros, 2013), whereas in Turkey there is a considerable lack of medium and highly-skilled youth in the workforce (Mourshed et al, 2014). However, Spain also has a substantial proportion of low-qualified youth in long-term unemployment as a result of the recent crisis; this is increasingly becoming a structural feature of the Spanish youth labour market with negative implications for their future STW transitions (González-Menéndez et al, 2015). Compared to other clusters, both countries also have persistently higher NEET rates than the EU average (Turkey: 24.8%; Spain: 17.1%), although in Spain there has been a distinct downward trend due to a number of secondary education reforms (focusing on VET) and an increase in post-secondary education enrolment (González-Menéndez et al, 2015).

There are similarities in this cluster such as protracted STW transitions, the traditionally weak role of VET, and the strong role of family support (including financial support) in helping young people make these transitions as well as the large proportion of low-qualified (and unemployed/inactive/discouraged) youth. There are, however, some significant differences such as the level of EPL and the degree of centralisation/co-ordination of youth related policies. For example, in Turkey, the governance of youth policies is remarkably centralised, yet fragmented, while the involvement of social partners remains ineffective. In the absence of a coherent, integrated and effective institutional and policy framework concerning youth, policies related to STW transitions in Turkey are often developed as ad hoc responses to emerging urgent problems (Goksen et al, 2015).

Moreover, Turkey has the strictest EPL and the tax rate on labour is among the highest in the OECD for low-wage workers. This tax burden creates disincentives for employers to hire labour and for these workers to seek employment, especially in the formal economy. This has also obvious adverse effects on young people who are overrepresented in low-wage sectors (Goksen et al, 2015). In contrast, Spain has implemented several legislative reforms aimed at increasing labour market flexibility, although these have effected changes at the margin of EPL, leaving permanent contracts largely unchanged while modifying temporary contracts. The successive changes undertaken have maintained the pattern of two-tier employment protection, leading to a highly segmented labour market (González-Menéndez et al; 2015; Dolado, 2015).

Post-Socialist/Transitional cluster (EE, PL)

The Estonian STW transition model is focused more on a general education (school-based) pathway, while its work-based VET in the form of apprenticeships is relatively underdeveloped. A number of work experience programmes, either as part of upper secondary and tertiary programmes or ALMPs are in operation in an attempt to help enhance young Estonian's employability. Overall, compared to other transitional economies, Kogan and Unt (2005) find that Estonia matches the experiences of Hungary and Slovenia in stratifying educational pathways, but Estonia does not suffer from the same issues of over-qualification occurring in other Member States, suggesting that there is a better match between skills acquired through education and labour market requirements.

In Poland, youth unemployment has been a key policy issue for the past decade, due to a shortage of labour demand (especially amongst graduates) and relative success in tackling the issue of youth unemployment (Ślezak and Szopa, 2015). Poland is also characterised by a high degree of labour market dualism with the highest share of fixed-term contracts in the EU and a low (20%) transition rate from temporary to permanent employment (European Commission, 2015h). This has clear and negative implications for the STW transitions of Polish youth, since at 71.2% Poland has the second highest share of young people in temporary employment in the EU (Eurostat, 2015c; Ślezak and Szopa, 2015).

Labour market outcomes for youth in this cluster have improved since their independence. For example, the share of graduates in Estonia who join the labour market within six months of completing education increased from 54% to 71% between 2009 and 2012 (Kabanen and Meres, 2014), while in Poland there has also been a steady decrease in youth unemployment rates. Within both countries there has been a concerted effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of the education and training system by increasing the level of specialisation and standardisation and by updating vocational and higher education curricula in line with labour market needs.

There are a number of structural problems that adversely affect the STW transition in Poland such as a complex regulatory framework and structure of institutions; long educational cycles which make immediate reaction and adjustment to the changes in the labour market almost impossible and limited discussion and cooperation between governing institutions and social partners (Ślezak and Szopa, 2015). Poland's Labour Code is also relatively strict and has one of the highest proportions in Europe of young people employed on fixed-term/temporary contracts (Ślezak and Szopa, 2015). Crucially, this coupled with the low transition rate to regular employment risks rendering these contracts 'dead ends' rather than 'stepping stones' into the labour market (European Commission, 2015i). As regards Poland's minimum wage, it is not possible to differentiate its level for young people, or relate it to the age of the employee (Ślezak and Szopa, 2015). However, the civil law contracts where young people are over-represented are not subject to the Labour Code and the minimum wage rules (Eurofound, 2013a and 2013b).

In Estonia, the role of VET in the STW transition is rather limited and VET participation is well below the EU average (European Commission, 2015f; Eamets and Humal, 2015). The minimum wage in Estonia applies to all employees and the only exception, which has obvious implications for STW transitions, is an internship which can be unpaid, if agreed by the employer and intern (Eamets and Humal, 2015). Until 2015, there were no youth-specific national ALMP measures, while now the 'My first job' service, launched in January 2015, provides partial remuneration of wage and training costs to employers who hire young people with little or no experience and no specialised education (Eamets and Humal, 2015).

7. Conclusions

In our comparative review of the nine countries (DE, EE, ES, FR, NL, PL, SE, TR, UK) we applied the Pohl and Walther's typology of STW transitions which distinguishes between five main types of youth transition regimes: (i) Universalistic (SE); (ii) liberal (UK); (iii) employment-centred (DE, FR, NL); (iv) Mediterranean (ES, TR); and (v) post-socialist/transitional (EE, PL). Although this typology was developed in mid to late 2000s, a number of features for each regime of STW transition still hold. For example, VET, including apprenticeships still play a critical role in facilitating fast and smooth transitions, albeit to varying degrees and depending on the path-dependent institutional and cultural context. So they have proved to be a key STW transition mechanism in the employment-centred cluster, notably DE and NL, but less so in the Mediterranean (ES, TR) and liberal clusters (UK), while their importance (and take-up) is decreasing in the universalistic cluster (SE).

However, our analysis has also highlighted that, especially as a result of the Great Recession of the late 2000s, some of the characteristics of each of the Pohl and Walther's STW transition regimes are in a state of flux. For example, VET (and apprenticeships) are becoming more important STW transition mechanisms even in clusters such as the liberal (UK) and the Mediterranean (ES, TR) clusters. On the other hand, in the universalistic cluster the quality and effectiveness of the Swedish education and training system, including VET which, in the past, produced well-educated young people who could make fast and successful STW transitions is currently under-performing, with obvious implications for these transitions. At the same time, VET take-up is falling.

That said, it is still early to assess whether such changes represent paradigmatic shifts in the key STW transitions mechanisms, especially in view of the path dependency and cultural and institutional specificity of STW transitions. However, given the extent of reforms that are under way either in education and training, notably in reforming/expanding VET/apprenticeships and in incorporating work experience as an integral part of educational programmes, or in strengthening activation, for example through the national implementation of the Youth Guarantee in all Member States, one can assume that there is scope for at least some change.

Another key factor that will increasingly need to be taken into account in any typology is that of migration which affects all clusters, be it inbound (DE, NL, SE, UK) or outbound (EE, ES, PL). In other words, our analysis point to the need for updating and further refining the Pohl and Walther's typology of STW transitions on the basis of the developments that have occurred during and after the recent crisis and which have led to an ongoing reconfiguration of education and training systems, labour market policies and institutional arrangements which are pertinent to young people's successful entry to sustained employment. Linked to this is the need for further differentiation within the clusters themselves since there is variation in a number of institutional arrangements and this leads to variation in the STW transition outcomes as is, for example, the case of the employment centred cluster (DE, FR, NL).

The above discussion notwithstanding, our analysis did not really change the way STW transitions in each cluster have been traditionally regarded, especially in relation to their length, quality and sustainability. Specifically, countries within the employment centred cluster, especially although Germany and the Netherlands (as opposed to France) are consistently performing much better in terms of speed and stability of STW transitions, not least thanks to their strong and well-established tradition of dual apprenticeships (DE) or (school-based and apprenticeship-based) VET (NL). Like the case of Germany and the Netherlands, it has been argued that these fast and smooth STW transitions in

Sweden (universalistic cluster) can be attributed to the fact that a high share of students combine work and study, a proportion which is well above the EU average (as well as to strong activation).

On the other hand, the Mediterranean cluster (ES, TR) is characterised by protracted STW transitions combined with a traditionally weak role of VET (and welfare system) in structuring these, a strong role of family and related support (including financial support) in helping young people make these transitions as well as the large proportion of low-qualified (and unemployed/inactive/discouraged) youth. The UK's liberal regime is characterised by fast but unstable STW transitions, while its high labour market flexibility means that young people move more frequently between jobs and into and out of education. The (poor) quality and/or stability of employment, including working conditions, pay and career progression prospects is an issue as is the persistently high number of early school leavers and NEETs which reflect a critical structural problem.

Finally, Estonia and Poland in the post-socialist cluster show interesting differences in their institutional arrangements and how these affect STW transitions. For example, STW transitions in Estonia are focused on a general education (school-based) pathway. In Poland, on the other hand, given the great heterogeneity of young labour market entrants in terms of qualifications, work experience and career expectations, there is no single pattern of transition from the education system to the labour market, although like other countries, those with better qualifications fare much better (although high graduate unemployment is an issue). Although the speed of transition varies, in Estonia it is well below the EU average, while in Poland it is just below it.

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OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

www.oecd.org

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