Structural indicators for monitoring education and training systems in Europe 2023

Early leaving from education and training

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2023

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Council resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030) ([1]) highlights the importance of tackling early leaving from education and training (ELET). It expresses the need for continued efforts to bring down the rate of ELET and for supporting more young people to obtain an upper secondary education qualification. It presents the following agreed EU-level target.

> *The share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 9 %, by 2030.*

The objective of lowering the rate of ELET and increasing participation in upper secondary education has also been emphasised in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan of March 2021 ([2]).

Building on this objective, a Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success ([3]) was adopted by EU Member States on 28 November 2022. The recommendation aims to ensure better educational outcomes for all learners, by promoting performance in basic skills and reducing ELET. It takes a holistic view of school success, looking at both educational attainment and well-being at school. Member States are also invited to combine universal actions with more targeted, individualised provisions for learners requiring additional attention and support.

In line with these EU-level policy priorities and on the request of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, the Eurydice network undertook the 2023 data collection on structural indicators on ELET. This report presents the results of this data collection. It contains six indicators on the following key policy areas.

([1])   Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030). OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, pp. 1–21.

([2])   See: https://op.europa.eu/webpub/empl/european-pillar-of-social-rights/en/.

([3])   Council Recommendation of 28 November 2022 on Pathways to School Success and replacing the Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving (Text with EEA relevance) 2022/C 469/01. OJ C 469, 9.12.2022, pp. 1–15.

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│warning   ││Preventing││education ││support for││disciplinary││education │
│systems to││bullying  ││and       ││learners at││support teams││and       │
│prevent   ││and       ││training  ││risk of   ││in and around││guidance  │
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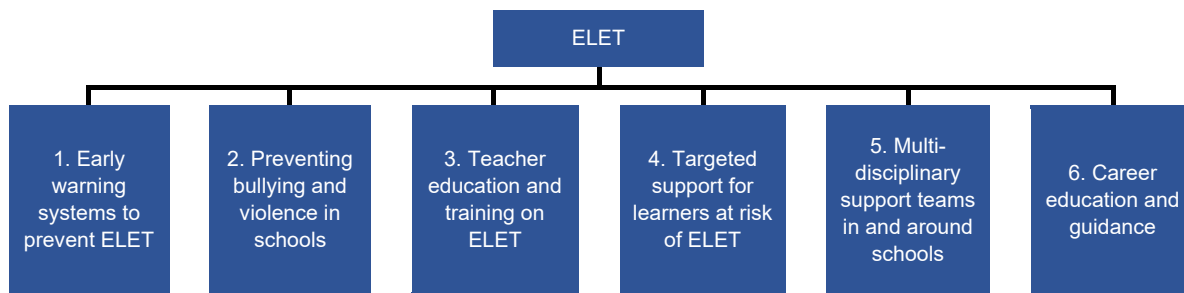
The indicators present the existence of top-level policies and measures, i.e. regulations, recommendations, actions (including monitoring and evaluation) and/or funding provided by top-level education authorities in order to promote the abovementioned policy areas. The results of the analysis are summarised in the main findings section. The annex presents an overview of the data covered in the report in the form of country tables.

All the indicators focus on school education, i.e. primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1, 24 and 34). As the differences between education levels were often minimal, most indicators (except structural indicator 6) do not make a distinction but rather show the general situation across the whole span of school education. Existing variations between education levels are indicated in the country-specific notes below the figures in the main body of the report or the tables in the annex.

The report contains information for the 2022/2023 school year. Participating countries include the EU Member States and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye (⁴).

EARLY LEAVING FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ELET)

1.   Early warning systems to prevent ELET

The need for national data collection systems on ELET which regularly gather a wide range of information on learners has long been recognised (⁵). Systematic data collections developed with the purpose of helping schools and teachers identify and act upon different risk factors associated with ELET are commonly referred to as early warning systems. Such systems are aimed at detecting and responding to early signs of student disengagement which may lead to ELET, such as poor school attendance / truancy, problematic behaviour, low overall marks/grades, grade repetition, social-emotional problems, or contact with social services or law enforcement (European Commission, ICF GHK, 2013). Other elements captured by early warning systems may include students' sense of well-being and belonging at school, and experiences of bullying or discrimination.

Recognising early signs of disengagement can help school staff provide a fast response to these signs together with the concerned learners, their parents and other relevant professionals (see also structural indicator 5: multidisciplinary support teams in and around schools).
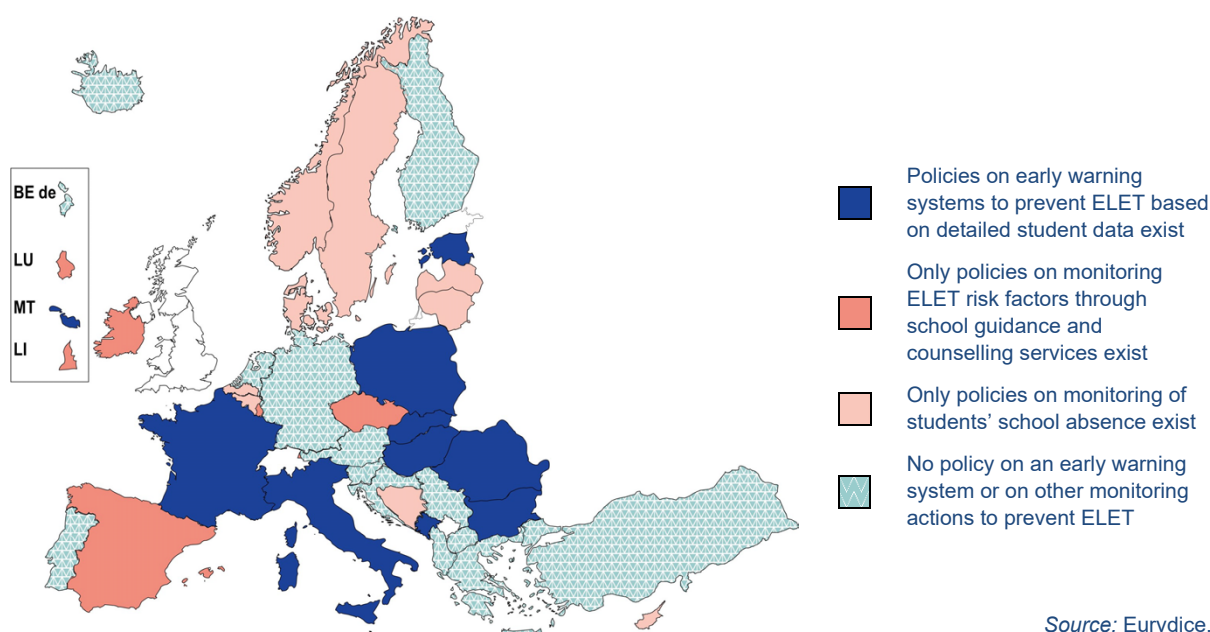

(⁴)   This report is based on information from 38 European education systems. Switzerland does not participate in the project on structural indicators for monitoring education and training systems in Europe.

(⁵)   Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school. OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, pp. 36–40.

Figure 1 presents the existing top-level policies on early warning systems in schools (see also Figure 1A in the annex). It shows that 10 European countries – Bulgaria ([6]), Estonia ([7]), France (see country example below), Italy ([8]), Hungary ([9]), Malta ([10]), Poland ([11]), Romania (see country example below), Slovakia ([12]) and Montenegro ([13]) – have policies establishing an **early warning system to prevent ELET** ([14]). In other words, in these countries a data collection system exists that allows schools to systematically gather a range of student data in order to monitor the situation of learners at risk of disengaging and dropping out, and to take measures to prevent this from happening.

In **France**, for example, schools gather information on their students' number of absences, lateness, avoidance of work or any behaviour that indicates difficulties. This information is recorded in *SIECLE Décrochage scolaire* ([15]). This tool is used by the Dropout Prevention Group (*Groupe de prevention du décrochage scolaire* – GPDS) to identify learners at risk of leaving education and training early. The main objectives of the GPDS are: to analyse the individual difficulties of the students; to offer rapid, personalised help; to coordinate the actions to be implemented; to systematically report to the National Service to Combat ELET (*Mission Nationale de Lutte contre le Décrochage Scolaire*) any young people leaving education and training early, that is to say without having completed their programme (during or at the end of the year).

Figure 1: Top-level policies on early warning systems to prevent ELET (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

Policies on early warning systems to prevent ELET based on detailed student data exist

Only policies on monitoring ELET risk factors through school guidance and counselling services exist

Only policies on monitoring of students' school absence exist

No policy on an early warning system or on other monitoring actions to prevent ELET

Source: Eurydice.

Country-specific notes

Ireland and **Slovakia**: policies only apply to ISCED 1–24.
France, **Luxembourg** and **Hungary**: policies only apply to ISCED 24–34.

([6])   See: https://lex.bg/en/laws/ldoc/2137184744.

([7])   See: https://www.ehis.ee/.

([8])   See: https://www.miur.gov.it/-/sidi;
https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/6735034/Nota+prot.+n.+23940+del+19+settembre+2022.pdf/313d4654-0390-41bb-04f0-7a47f9a1d109?t=1663579368905;
https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/6739250/Orientamenti+per+l%27attuazione+degli+interventi+nelle+scuole+%281%29.pdf/2613376a-03b7-8957-a2a9-b80b0e5f99df?t=1657797058216.

([9])   See: https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200229.kor.

([10])   See: https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/malta_strategic_plan_for_the_prevention_of_early_school_leaving_2014.pdf.

([11])   See: https://sio.gov.pl/sio/login and https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20220000868/U/D20220868Lj.pdf.

([12])   See: https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/20785.pdf.

([13])   See: https://www.meisportal2.edu.me/.

([14])   In Portugal, the Ministry of Education is designing and developing the tool *Project SAMA Monitor: Abandonno Escolar Precoce*, which will allow schools to systematically gather a range of student data to monitor the situation of learners at risk of disengaging and dropping out, and to take measures to prevent this from happening.

([15])   See: https://eduscol.education.fr/1084/siecle-vie-scolaire and https://eduscol.education.fr/907/prevention-du-decrochage-scolaire.

In **Romania**, the MATE (*Mecanismului de Avertizare Timpurie în Educație*) methodology ([16]) is a complex education early warning system developed by the Ministry of Education, with the technical support of European Union and the World Bank. The system includes a student questionnaire covering individual risk factors, family risk factors and school/education-related risk factors. This system also includes other tools for an early identification of students at high risk of leaving education and training early, along with targeted measures to support students. Since 2022, with the support of grants from the national recovery and resilience plan, more than 2 000 Romanian secondary schools are applying the MATE methodology, with an estimated number of 300 000 beneficiaries (primary, lower and upper secondary students).

Fewer countries – Czechia, Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein – reported policies ensuring that **schools cooperate with school guidance and counselling services** in order to support students who are at risk of leaving education and training early. In these countries there is no data collection system on ELET risk factors as such, but schools need to cooperate with school counsellors, psychologists and other relevant specialists to monitor school absence, provide educational, personal, psychological and social guidance to students, help them with difficulties in any of these areas, organise preventive and remedial actions, among other things, in order to minimise the risk of ELET.

For example, in **Ireland**, Tusla Education Welfare Service (TESS) ([17]) has three strands: the statutory Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and the two school-based support services, the School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) scheme. The three TESS strands work together collaboratively with schools, families and other relevant services to promote school attendance, participation and retention. This is a statutory service, and its primary role is to ensure that every child attends school regularly or otherwise receives a certain minimum education. Educational welfare officers work with children and families in a child-centred way to overcome barriers to their school attendance, participation and retention; and work closely with schools, educational support services and other agencies to support school attendance and resolve attendance problems for the benefit of children and families. Schools are obliged to maintain records of students' attendance and are required to refer cases to TESS when a student misses more than 20 days at school or when a school intends to expel a student.

Some other education systems – in the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Denmark, Cyprus, Latvia ([18]), Lithuania, Sweden, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Norway – reported policies that focus mainly on **monitoring student absenteeism** to prevent ELET. In these cases, the schools are responsible for addressing the absenteeism, and they take the necessary steps to support the students, if necessary, in cooperation with relevant services and professionals.

For example, in **Estonia**, the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act ([19]) and the Child Protection Act ([20]) determine that the municipality or city government keep the register of children and young people who are subject to the duty of school attendance. The parents must enable and facilitate school attendance. If that is not the case, a set of measures are provided for schools to ensure school attendance and to support the learner: measures to ensure the flow of information, identify the reasons for failing to attend school, appoint a position or service to provide support, provide support measures or impose sanctions, etc.

In the remaining European countries, there are no top-level policies on early warning systems or on other monitoring actions to prevent ELET; measures to monitor school absence or other factors that may indicate a risk of ELET are decided and implemented at the local or school level. For example, in the Netherlands, municipalities have a statutory duty to prevent school dropout. To this end, they receive almost EUR 37 million annually to implement the regional reporting and coordination system ([21]).

([16]) See: https://mate.edu.ro/.

([17]) See: www.tusla.ie

([18]) An early warning digital monitoring tool is currently being developed, see: https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/veidos-izglitibas-kvalitates-risku-identificesanas-sistemu.

([19]) See: https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/509112022002/consolide.

([20]) See: https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/516112022003/consolide.

([21]) See: https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0007625/2021-08-01/#Hoofdstuk8_Titeldeel3_Artikel8.3.2.

2. Preventing bullying and violence in schools

Promoting a positive school climate has a strong impact on learners' participation and performance. Feeling accepted and valued by peers and teachers, and having friends is of key importance for children and adolescents to feel a sense of belonging at school and to be able to thrive (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2019). An unfavourable school climate, on the other hand, which is characterised by violence and bullying and where learners do not feel respected or supported, can have a negative impact on learners' well-being and mental health (Downes and Cefai, 2016). It is also recognised as a major risk factor for ELET ([22]).

In order to promote a positive school climate and prevent bullying and violence, prevention measures can be implemented in schools (Downes, Nairz-Wirth and Rusinaitė, 2017; OECD, 2017). Such measures put emphasis on developing inclusive schools, providing social and emotional education, promoting a school-wide approach to create a positive school climate, preventing bullying and discrimination, and promoting mental health, a focus on teachers' conflict resolution skills, the inclusion of students' voices, parental involvement, the use of multidisciplinary teams, etc. (Downes and Cefai, 2016). Bullying and violence-prevention measures in schools are essential for conveying a clear message that violence and bullying are unacceptable; they can ensure a comprehensive, multidimensional approach to address the problem in schools; and they provide a foundation for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating responses (UNESCO, 2019).

Figure 2 shows whether in the context of quality assurance, top-level education authorities promote bullying and violence-prevention measures as criteria for the external evaluation of schools, on the one hand, and/or among the criteria for internal school evaluations or the development of school development plans, on the other hand. Around two-thirds of European education systems report that these measures are indeed considered among the criteria for school quality assurance. Slightly more countries encourage schools to consider bullying and violence prevention measures in internal evaluations or when establishing school development plans, than those considering them in external evaluations. In the rest of the countries, either such criteria do not exist or, less often, external or internal evaluation/school development plans are not implemented.

Figure 2: Bullying and violence prevention measures promoted through mechanisms for school quality assurance (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023
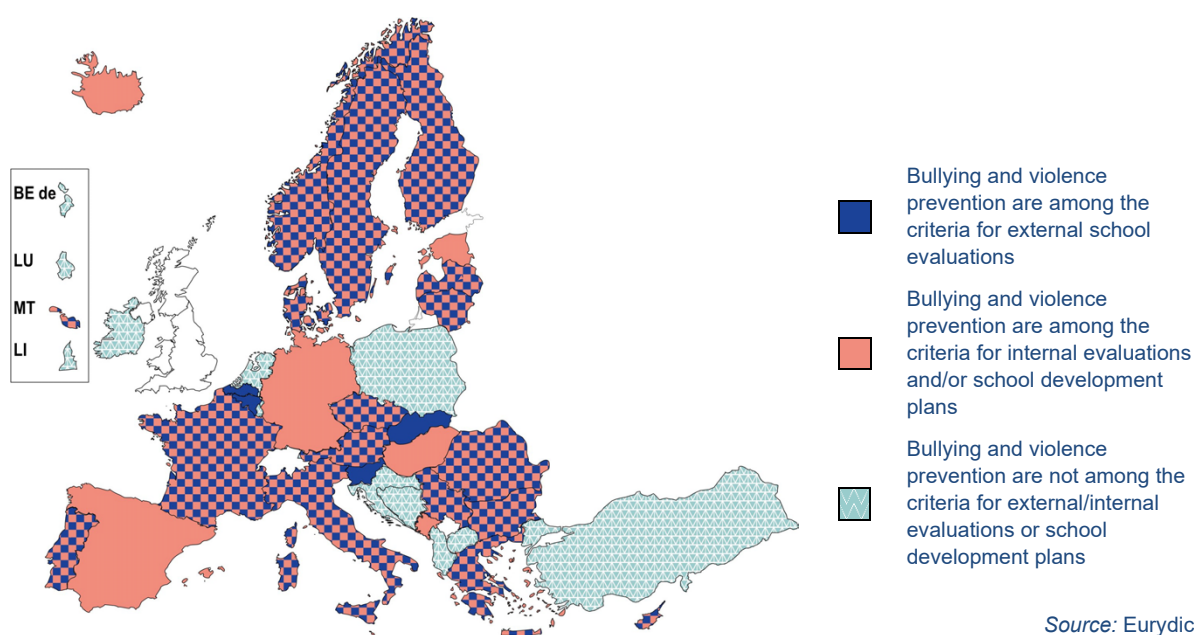
Bullying and violence prevention are among the criteria for external school evaluations

Bullying and violence prevention are among the criteria for internal evaluations and/or school development plans

Bullying and violence prevention are not among the criteria for external/internal evaluations or school development plans

Source: Eurydice.

([22])   Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school. OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, pp. 36–40.

Greece and Italy, for example, are among the countries promoting the prevention of bullying and violence in the context of **internal school evaluations**.

In **Greece**, the prevention and tackling of school violence and bullying is one of the categories of quality assurance [23]. Related indicators cover prevention and support measures targeting students, cooperation with parents and associations. Also, in internal (and external) evaluations of schools, under the topic 'Relationships among students', there are indicators related to the issue, namely: support and enhancement of cooperation among students; development of a culture of mutual respect, trust, tolerance and acceptance of diversity; development of ways for handling/managing conflict and tension; and the prevention and management of school violence and bullying.

In **Italy**, all schools undergo a multi-dimensional self-assessment process using common indicators provided by the Ministry of Education. The internal school evaluation report includes the 'Learning environment' sub-area covering, among other things, bullying and violence [24]. This area of intervention is often chosen by schools as a priority area to develop a future improvement plan and to introduce specific projects/actions to address bullying-related problems [25].

Bullying and violence prevention are promoted through **school development plans**, for example, in Spain and Portugal.

Spanish legislation prescribes that schools need to develop an educational project and a coexistence plan every year [26]. The educational project of a school must include measures promoting equality between women and men, equal treatment and non-discrimination, the prevention of violence against girls and women, harassment and bullying or cyberbullying, and a culture of peace and human rights. The coexistence plan needs to include activities planned in order to promote a good climate of coexistence within the school, the rights and duties of the students and the corrective measures applicable in case of non-compliance in accordance with current regulations. It should take into account the situation and personal conditions of the students, and the performance of initiatives taken for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, with special attention to actions for gender-violence prevention, equality and non-discrimination.

Aware of the phenomena of bullying and cyberbullying and the impact that these can have on children and young people, the **Portuguese** Ministry of Education decided in the 2019/2020 school year to propose that schools develop a plan to combat bullying and cyberbullying [27]. On the International Day against Violence and Bullying at School, schools are awarded with the 'School without bullying – School without violence' stamp. A total of 52 schools were certified for having promoted and implemented, in the 2019/2020 school year, a plan to prevent and combat bullying and cyberbullying, including daily practices to promote the health and well-being of the educational community, guided by the principles of non-violence, inclusion and non-discrimination. In 2022, there were 208 certified schools [28].

In countries such as Romania and Slovakia, bullying and violence prevention measures are monitored and promoted through **external school evaluations** (among other things).

In **Romania**, in the context of the external evaluation of schools (pre-primary, primary and secondary level), a set of indicators were introduced in 2020 that are related to students' well-being [29]. The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education manages the external evaluation process, which includes the systematic collection, at the community and school levels, of data on improving school participation and eliminating various forms of violence, bullying and segregation in education.

[23]   See: https://www.et.gr/api/DownloadFeksApi/?fek_pdf=20210204189.

[24]   See: https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/0/GUIDA+ALL%27AUTOVALUTAZIONE+RAV_def.pdf/658e8482-b55a-a0cc-661a-e41eddb5295d?t=1670254031400.

[25]   See: https://snv.pubblica.istruzione.it/snv-portale-web/public/ptof/ptofDocumenti.

[26]   See: https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2006-7899 (Educative project: article 121; Coexistence plan: article 124).

[27]   See: https://www.dge.mec.pt/noticias/plano-de-prevencao-e-combate-ao-bullying-e-ao-ciberbullying-escola-sem-bullying-escola-sem.

[28]   See: https://www.sembullyingsemviolencia.edu.gov.pt/.

[29]   See: https://isj.vs.edu.ro/download/12.12.2020-Hotarare-9993-2020-aprobare-metodologie-evaluare-institutionala-pt-autorizare-furnizori-de-educatie-1.pdf#:~:text=Guvernul%20Rom%C3%A2niei%20-%20Hot%C4%83r%C3%A2rea%20nr.%20993%2F2020%20privind%20aprobarea,din%2010%20%2F12%2F%202020-%20data%20intr%C4%83rii%20%C3%AEn%20vigoare.

The evaluation criteria used by the state school inspection in **Slovakia** includes the following elements related to bullying and violence prevention ([30]): the school coordinator coordinates the prevention of drug addiction and other socio-pathological phenomena (including bullying) and identifies problems in the student's personal and social development; social pedagogues focus on prevention, intervention and providing counselling to students at risk of socio-pathological phenomena, students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds or otherwise disadvantaged students; the school supports the creation of an atmosphere of safety and trust; the school supports mutual relationships between teachers and students and provides students with a sense of physical and psychological safety; teachers support conflict-free coexistence and respect for the individuality of each student, regardless of differences – ethnic origin, language, health disadvantages, socioeconomic disadvantages, culture, etc.

Finally, in around one third of the countries bullying and violence prevention are not taken into account as criteria in external or internal evaluations or school development plans. However, in some cases there are initiatives that tackle these issues, such as national strategies, awareness-raising campaigns or guidelines by top-level education authorities on preventing and tackling bullying and violence in schools.

3. Teacher education and training on ELET

The knowledge, skills and competences teachers have on ELET contribute significantly to their capacity to take action in this area (European Commission, 2013). Relevant initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) should increase teachers' ability to diagnose ELET risk factors (e.g. learning difficulties, truancy, illness, peer-influence, teacher–student relationships, impact of socioeconomic background, etc.) and knowledge of approaches to prevent ELET. The school climate is also considered a major risk factor for ELET (see also structural indicator 2: preventing bullying and violence in schools). ITE and CPD should therefore also emphasise teacher competences related to promoting a positive school climate, including bullying and violence prevention, conflict resolution and relationship building (European Commission, 2015).

The risk of early leaving is especially high for vulnerable and/or marginalised groups, such as students from socioeconomically disadvantaged families, those from migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds, or students with special educational needs. Teachers need to be equipped with the skills to deal with a diverse range of learners and promote inclusive approaches, namely by avoiding stereotyping, prejudice and other forms of discrimination (Downes, Nairz-Wirth and Rusinaitė, 2017).

As there is evidence relating social and emotional education to a range of positive outcomes, including school engagement and ELET prevention, ITE and CPD need to provide teachers with an awareness of the social and emotional development of learners. This may include inclusive teaching practices, and psychological and counselling skills (*ibid*). Moreover, teachers' own well-being is an important factor that determines their motivation and performance, which, in turn, correlates with the motivation and achievement of learners. For this reason, teacher education and training should also develop teachers' competences related to managing their own well-being, their mental health and stress (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2021).

Figure 3 presents some of the competences related to addressing ELET that are promoted through top-level competence frameworks for ITE and/or CPD programmes which are provided or supported (e.g. financially) by top-level education authorities. Overall, the data shows that many relevant teacher competences are indeed promoted at this policy level. They are, however, more frequently considered in CPD than in ITE programmes. Only a few countries reported not having a relevant top-level competence framework for ITE and/or not promoting the listed competences through top-level CPD programmes (see also Figure 3A in the annex on the country-specific overview).

([30])   See: https://www.ssi.sk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ZS_22_23_web.pdf   (ISCED 1–24)   and   https://www.ssi.sk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/G_22_23_web.pdf (ISCED 34).

Number of education systems

Promoted through top-level competence frameworks for ITE

Promoted through top-level CPD programmes
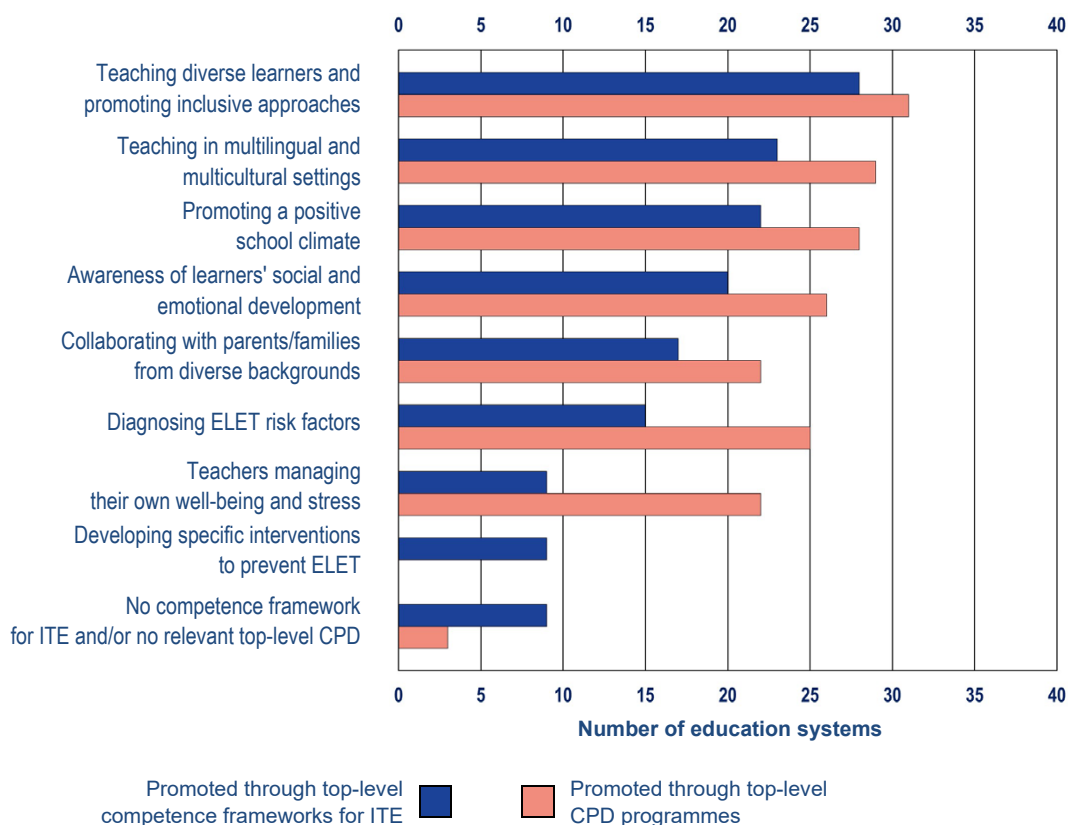
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of education systems reporting the promotion of the listed teacher competences related to addressing ELET through top-level competence frameworks for ITE and/or CPD programmes that are either provided or supported (e.g. financially) by top-level education authorities (in descending order, according to the competences promoted through the ITE competence frameworks). A country-specific overview of the data can be found in the annex (Figure 3A).

In more than half of the European countries, both ITE and CPD promote competences that are related to **teaching a diverse range of learners and promoting inclusive approaches**, **teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings**, **promoting a positive school climate** and **awareness of the social and emotional development of learners**. Examples of such teacher education and training programmes can be found in Bulgaria and Slovakia.

According to the **Bulgarian** Ordinance on the State Requirements for the Acquisition of the Teacher Professional Qualification ([31]), teachers need to develop the following competences, among other things.

- Create conditions and relations marked by a positive acceptance of students' differences as a resource for an effective educational environment; carry out activities involving cooperation between children with socio-cultural differences; apply methods to promote qualities such as tolerance, respect, empathy, etc.

- Have knowledge of the culture, traditions and behavioural patterns of children from different socio-cultural communities and carry out activities that reflect diversity, promote respect and appreciation of people's differences in gender, race, ethnicity and nationality, mother tongue, religion, family structure, socioeconomic group, age and different physical and cognitive abilities.

- Create an appropriate socio-psychological climate in classrooms and schools where students feel calm and safe and can fully develop their potential; create a favourable psychological climate for every child and student with special educational needs.

([31])   See: https://web.mon.bg/upload/25218/nrdb-kvalifikacia-uchitel_050221.pdf.

- Show commitment to support the cognitive, motor and emotional development of the children; carry out a dynamic modelling of the emotional relations with and between the children; develop qualities in students within the framework of personal and social competence which are necessary to go through in dynamically developing situations in life.

In **Slovakia**, the catalogue of teacher training programmes and supporting activities of the 2022/2023 school year ([32]) includes the following training related to the abovementioned competences.

- Creating an inclusive class, school culture and environment; innovating strategies for educational activities and extracurricular education in accordance with respect for the diversity of children and students.

- Applying elements of inclusive education in schools and school facilities on the basis of equal opportunities and without discrimination according to gender, origin, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic affiliation, socioeconomic status of families, way of life, health and emotional state, level of talent or belonging to any majority or minority social group; knowing the specifics of Roma culture to promote multicultural relations and create an inclusive school culture.

- Promoting a classroom/group climate characterised by trust, safety and acceptance of all without distinction; preventing and eliminating violence and the bullying of students in schools and school facilities.

- Preventing drug addiction and other socio-pathological phenomena in schools and school facilities.

In around one third of the countries examined, teacher competences that are promoted through national ITE competence frameworks and a bit more widely through CPD programmes are related to **collaborating with parents or families from diverse backgrounds** and **diagnosing ELET risk factors**. Examples of such teacher education and training programmes can be found in Poland and Hungary.

The **Polish** regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education on the national standards for initial teacher training programmes ([33]) defines, among other things, the following teacher competences.

- The teacher is capable of designing and implementing educational programmes in terms of content and activities targeting learners, their parents or guardians. The teacher knows how to involve and support parents or guardians in their children's educational activities. The teacher can establish an effective dialogue with the learners and their parents or guardians about the learners' development.

- The teacher can diagnose student's developmental and educational needs, disorders and learning difficulties and their sources. He/she knows and understands the problems of neglected and unaccompanied children; the school situation of children with migrant backgrounds; the problems of children in crisis or traumatic situations; the risks for children and adolescents: the phenomena of aggression and violence, including electronic aggression, addiction and issues related to informal groups and youth sub-cultures. The teacher knows how to design and carry out diagnostic activities in pedagogical practices; how to design and implement educational and preventive programmes in terms of educational and preventive content and activities aimed at learners, their parents or guardians and other teachers and professionals.

In **Hungary**, a variety of accredited CPD programmes related to ELET are available ([34]), including the following ones related to the abovementioned competences.

- **Performance-improving assessment in class.** Participants gain basic knowledge about the relationship between assessment practice and school dropout. They are taught assessment tools which – by incorporating them into their everyday pedagogical practice – can effectively contribute to the increase of students' performance and thus to the prevention of school dropout. Participants learn about competence models that contribute to a better understanding of students, and also about normative and criterion-based learning ability models. Participants will be able to reflectively and critically observe, interpret and further develop their own evaluation tools, use diagnostic evaluation tools during the planning, organisation and management of the learning–teaching process, and consciously and relevantly choose what dimensions and tools to implement in the evaluation. Another objective of the course is for participants to become more open to students, getting to know them in a complex way, by valuing diversity and accepting unique learning paths.

- **Supporting complex institutional development with the aim of preventing ELET and by developing institutional partnerships.** To prevent school dropout, institutional (school) cooperation with families, the communities represented by families, churches operating in the local area of the school, civilians and sports associations, among other stakeholders, is

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([32])   See: https://mpc-edu.sk/pages/katalog-nivam-2022-2023.pdf.

([33])   See: https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20190001450.

([34])   See: https://pedakkred.oh.gov.hu/pedakkred/Catalogue/CatalogueList.aspx.

key. As part of this CPD training, participants learn about the conscious, goal-oriented planning methods and conditions for the development of partnerships and the methods of monitoring and evaluating plans. They also learn about the opportunities that are inherent to network learning and network cooperation for the development of partnerships, and about focused methods of network cooperation to develop partnerships and prevent school dropout.

The competences that are the least commonly promoted through ITE and CPD across Europe are related to teachers' ability to **manage their own well-being and stress** and to **develop specific interventions to prevent ELET**. Examples of such teacher education and training programmes can be found in Estonia and Czechia.

In **Estonia**, the occupational qualification standards for teachers (³⁵) include the following mandatory competences (concerning developing effective interventions to prevent ELET).

- The teacher sets long- and short-term learning goals based on the learner(s); selects content and plans activities; chooses suitable methods for teaching, learning and feedback; and prepares, in cooperation with other specialists, an individual study plan, behaviour support plan and/or development plan, taking into account the principles of supporting a learner with special educational needs and the comprehensive development of learners.

- Managing their own well-being: the teacher observes, evaluates and values his/her physical, mental and emotional health, strives to keep them in balance; and seeks help from colleagues, mentors, management, support specialists, etc. when problems arise.

The National Pedagogical Institute (³⁶) of **Czechia** provides various types of in-service teacher training aimed at promoting equal opportunities, especially in schools with a higher proportion of socially disadvantaged learners. Current courses include training on the most effective procedures for preventing ELET and managing risk factors, such as problematic behaviour in- and outside of schools. Other courses address the problem of burnout in the teaching profession. They aim to transmit to the participants a better understanding of key issues (e.g. stress, burnout, etc.), implement these key issues in their own pedagogical practices and proceed preventively within the framework of their own psycho-hygiene in order to ensure their well-being.

4.   Support for learners at risk of ELET

Students at risk of ELET are often affected by complex and multi-faceted disadvantages related to personal, social, economic, educational or family-related factors. As a result, they may experience a process of progressive disengagement from education, usually set off by poor academic performance (European Commission, 2015). In addition to certain features of the education system (such as grade retention or early tracking), factors at the school level such as a lack of learner centeredness, insufficient support and unaddressed disadvantages, to name a few, can contribute to the decision to leave education prematurely (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020).

In order to mitigate the risk of ELET, schools can take a number of measures, some of which are presented in Figure 4. The measures include actions to ensure individualised learning support, support for students' well-being, financial support and parental involvement and support. The figure below presents an overview of the number of education systems reporting top-level policies and measures in the aforementioned areas, which can help learners who are at risk of ELET. Only a few education systems report not having a top-level policy or measure to support learners who are at risk of ELET, that is to say that these issues are addressed at the discretion of schools and teachers (see also Figure 4A in the annex for a country-specific overview). Among them is the Netherlands, where regional plans define which measures schools and municipalities will implement together to combat school dropout (³⁷).

(³⁵)   See: https://www.kutseregister.ee/ctrl/en/Standardid/vaata/10824233#standard_seotud_oppekavad.

(³⁶)   See: https://www.npi.cz/.

(³⁷)   See: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/vsv/aanpak-voortijdig-schoolverlaten-vsv.

Figure 4: Top-level policies on support for learners at risk of ELET (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING SUPPORT
- Additional learning support
- Availability of educational support staff
- Flexibility in choice of subjects and/or learning pathways
- Mentoring schemes (incl. peer mentoring)

SUPPORT FOR WELL_BEING
- Psycho-social support services
- Psycho-social assessments

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
- For textbooks and other learning resources
- For transport
- During apprenticeships

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT
- In school decision making
- In educational activities
- In social activities

No top-level policy/measure

Number of education systems

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of European education systems reporting the promotion of some of the main policies that can support learners at risk of ELET (in descending order). A country-specific overview of the data can be found in the annex (Figure 4A).

Individualised learning support is essential for learners with learning difficulties or those at risk of underachievement. This may include the provision of additional learning support during the school year and/or holiday period, the mobilisation of support staff, mentoring schemes, including peer mentoring and flexibility in the choice of subjects and/or learning pathways (European Commission, 2013).

Across Europe, the most evident and widely reported policies in this area concern the promotion of **additional learning support** and measures to ensure the **availability of educational support staff** (i.e. teaching assistants, speech specialists, special educational needs specialists, etc.) who can provide additional support to students in schools. Other policies in this area, such as those aiming to enhance **flexibility in the choice of subjects and/or learning pathways**, and **mentoring schemes** for learner support are reported in comparatively less countries.

The **Flemish Community of Belgium**, for example, reported all the listed individualised support measures. In addition to support provided throughout the entire school by teachers in cooperation with professionals working in student counselling centres ([38]), learners can participate in summer schools during 10 full school days or 20 half school days, where leisure activities, sports or games are combined with educational school activities that focus on the individual learning needs of participating students. Learners in special needs education only need to attend 5 full school days or 10 half school days ([39]).

([38])   See: https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=15236.

([39])   See: https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/zomerscholen.

The Flemish education system also allows learners to approach their curriculum in a flexible way ([40]). The aim is to ensure that as many students as possible obtain their educational qualification. There are several examples of this. Firstly, the Flemish regulations provide schools with the possibility to give students an exemption from studying one or more subjects/subject areas, for example due to learning disabilities, special educational needs or intellectual giftedness. Secondly, schools can spread out the curriculum to accommodate students with illness or special educational needs. Lastly, schools can introduce flexibility in the assessment of student groups and individual students. As for student groups, it is possible to retain or promote students at the end of a cycle instead of at the end of a school year, or to allow students to graduate early. As for individual students, schools can postpone the assessment of a student with unsatisfactory grades to the end of a cycle.

Flexible learning pathways are not only possible at the school level, but also in school-external trajectories, such as the 'seamless flexible trajectories' (*naadloos flexibele trajecten*) ([41]) and 'transition trajectories' (*transitietrajecten*) ([42]). These initiatives are subsidised by the government of Flanders and are available to any school. Seamless flexible trajectories are trajectories that aim to combat ELET in secondary education by fostering school connectedness, tackling challenges and increasing learner motivation. They entail temporary intensive counselling for individuals or groups of learners and can be used to support a student, a group of students, teachers, teams and/or schools.

The Flemish government also has a cooperation agreement with the Vlaamse Scholierenkoepel, which includes the development of a project on peer mediation called 'The conflixers' ([43]). The aim of the project is to appoint students (so-called 'conflixers') who support fellow students whenever necessary. Each school determines independently what kind of support conflixers can provide to other students. They can be a buddy, a confidential counsellor, mediator, etc. Schools are free to decide if they want to take part in the project or not.

Next to their knowledge and skills, children and young people also need to develop strong social and emotional competences to help them navigate successfully through the developments, challenges and transitions they face on their way to adulthood. It is in fact increasingly recognised that education and schools need to go beyond developing learners' academic achievements and more actively contribute to their mental well-being and provide social and emotional support for those who have had adverse emotional experiences (Cefai, Simões and Caravita, 2021).

As shown in Figure 4, most European countries report having top-level policies promoting the availability of **psychosocial services** to support learners' well-being and mental health. These are usually offered by school counselling services, specialised in the provision of guidance and social and emotional support. Slightly less countries report having top-level guidelines or tools for the **psychosocial assessment** of learners.

In **Cyprus**, for example, top-level policies determine that when schools find that a learner has barriers that hinder learning and functional emotional development, they need to follow the 'Mechanism for the identification and support of children with learning, emotional, and other problems', which is a national tool for supporting students provided by the ministry. Through this mechanism, as soon as a learner is identified as needing help, the parents are informed and engage with the school to address the learner's social and emotional needs. Systemic goals are set, and each party works towards them. Progress is systematically monitored and if, after a reasonable period and despite all efforts, difficulties still remain, then the educational psychologists intervene more intensely and provide counselling and consultation to teachers and parents. A significant part of the process is the learner's psychological assessment. If he/she meets the diagnostic criteria for a social and emotional difficulty, the educational psychologist refers the learner to a clinical psychologist or child and adolescent psychiatrist, as well as to the District Committee of Special Education, if necessary ([44]).

In addition to the need for targeted educational, social and psychological support, the 2011 Council recommendation on early school leaving ([45]) acknowledges the need for financial support for young people experiencing material difficulties that may cause them to leave school early. This financial support could be used to cover the financial costs of education (e.g. textbooks and other learning

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([40]) See: https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/onderwijs-op-maat-differentiatie-in-de-klas-en-op-school.

([41]) See: https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/samen-tegen-schooluitval/leerrecht/naft-naadloze-flexibele-trajecten.

([42]) See: https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/directies-administraties-en-besturen/projecten-in-samenwerking-met-esf/transitietrajecten; and https://www.gtb.be/wat-doet-gtb/voor-werkzoekenden/transitietrajecten.

([43]) See: https://www.deconflixers.be/de-conflixers.

([44]) See: http://www.moec.gov.cy/edu_psychology/orama_apostoli.html and http://www.moec.gov.cy/ysea/.

([45]) Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving. OJ C 191, 1.7.2011, pp. 1–6.

resources, transport, costs related to apprenticeships), and could be provided on a conditional basis, for example based on regular school attendance.

Figure 4 shows that most top-level education authorities report providing financial support for **textbooks and other important learning resources**, and **transport costs**. Financial support to cover **costs occurring in the context of apprenticeships** is reported in a minority of countries.

> For example, in **Austria**, schoolbooks are made available to learners as part of the so-called 'school book initiative', regulated by the family support act (⁴⁶). The aim of the schoolbook initiative is to provide learners with the necessary learning materials and to ease the financial burden on parents.
>
> In addition, learners and apprentices for whom family allowances are paid can apply for free transportation (this is also regulated by the family support act). Free travel applies to the distance between the place of residence and the school or training company. If no public transport is available, it is possible to apply for school or home travel allowance.

Parental involvement is, last but not least, another key factor for educational success. Enhancing communication with parents, reinforcing their cooperation in the context of school activities and decision-making, and creating partnerships between schools and parents can increase learning motivation among students (Downes, Nairz-Wirth and Rusinaitė, 2017). Parental involvement is, moreover, considered an essential component of effective interventions to promote the mental health and well-being of learners and to help them experience a sense of coherence and belonging (Cefai, Simões and Caravita, 2021).

As Figure 4 shows, the most widely reported policies on parental involvement and support promote parents' involvement in **school decision-making**. Comparatively less frequently reported policies are policies promoting parents' involvement in **educational and social activities**. It should be noted that while the abovementioned support policies are mostly targeted at learners who are at risk of school failure and ELET, policies on parental involvement and support are not ELET-specific. They rather aim to generally ensure that there is a dialogue between the different members of the educational community, thereby promoting a positive school climate in which all learners can develop their potential.

> For example, in **Germany**, the 'school conference' (*Schulkonferenz*) is a general school body governing cooperation between the head staff and teachers, students and parents, and external cooperation partners, if applicable. It is constituted in different ways in the individual *Länder* (⁴⁷). Sometimes teachers, parents and students are represented in equal numbers in the school conference, and sometimes teachers and/or parents are more strongly represented. In most cases, this body is involved in the organisation of school life and teaching, student safety (including road safety and incidents on school premises) and the organisation of events outside of school, but under school supervision (e.g. school partnerships, school trips, visits to factories and museums).
>
> For the successful individual support of lower-performing learners, especially those with a migrant background, close cooperation with the parents as educational partners plays a central role. Cooperation with parents takes place through projects, parent courses (e.g. 'Mother learns German' in primary school) or student–teacher–parent discussions.

5.   Multidisciplinary support teams in and around schools

Education systems should aim to provide stimulating learning environments in which all learners can thrive. This includes the promotion of measures to support learners' motivation, progress and educational achievement. It also implies that schools should react fast when students show signs of learning difficulties or disengagement (European Commission, 2015).

The 2015 Council conclusions on reducing early school leaving and promoting success in school call for 'systematic support frameworks for learners at risk of early school leaving, including mentoring, counselling and psychological support, as well as the possibility of additional support for learners


(⁴⁶)   See: https://www.jusline.at/gesetz/famlag/gesamt.

(⁴⁷)   See, for example: https://www.schulministerium.nrw/schule-bildung/schulleben/schulmitwirkung.

whose native language(s) is/are not the language(s) of instruction' ([48]). In this context, research emphasises the need to minimise fragmentation and the diffusion of responsibility across diverse services working with learners and their families. A shift from multiple agencies to multidisciplinary support teams, working in or with schools and providing rapidly targeted intervention measures, can ensure a coordinated strategic response from professionals to address the complex needs of learners at risk of ELET (Edwards and Downes, 2013; Downes, 2016).

The work of multidisciplinary teams occurs in close collaboration with school management, teachers and parents. It involves contributions from various professionals, such as teachers specialised in dealing with language and learning difficulties; teachers specialised in special needs and inclusive education; psychologists, counsellors, medical professionals; education and career guidance specialists; social or youth workers; local community services; etc. (Downes, Nairz-Wirth and Rusinaitė, 2017).

Figure 5 presents an overview of the professionals who, according to top-level policies, should be part of multidisciplinary support teams (see also Figure 5A in the annex for a country-specific overview). It shows that more than half of the countries aim to ensure the involvement of **psychologists/counsellors**, **teachers specialised in special needs and inclusive education**, **teachers specialised in learning and/or language difficulties**, and social or youth workers. Around one-third of education systems promote the inclusion of **education and career guidance specialists** and/or **medical professionals** in multidisciplinary support teams; only few countries promote the involvement of **local community service professionals.** In nine education systems, there are no top-level policies related to multidisciplinary support teams. Multidisciplinary support teams may, however, operate at the school level.

Figure 5: Professionals/services involved in multidisciplinary support teams in and around schools, according to top-level policies (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023
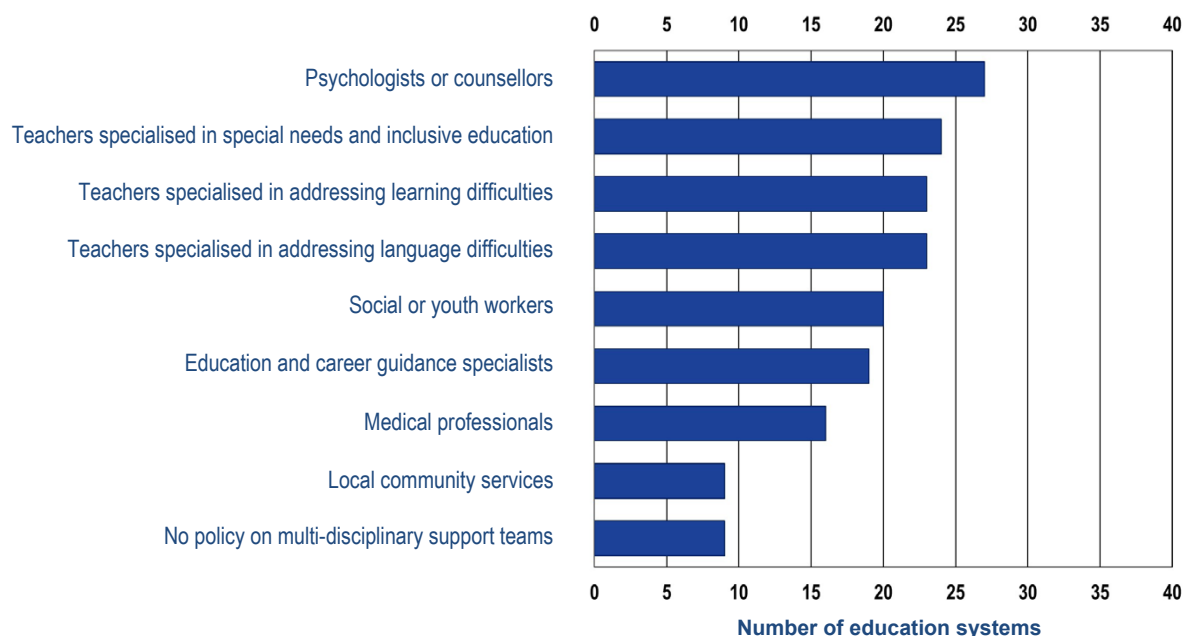
Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The figure presents the number of European education systems reporting policies promoting the involvement of the listed professionals/services as part of multidisciplinary teams supporting students at risk of ELET (in descending order). A country-specific overview of the data can be found in the annex (Figure 5A).

([48])   Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving. OJ C 191, 1.7.2011, pp. 1–6.

The main task of the multidisciplinary support teams generally revolves around analysing the individual situation and challenges of learners and to offer rapid, personalised help. In a few countries, such as Bulgaria ([49]), Spain ([50]), France ([51]) and Hungary ([52]), the work of these teams includes an explicit focus on learners who are at risk of dropping out of school. In other education systems, such as Malta, Portugal and Slovakia (see country examples below), multidisciplinary support teams help schools to implement inclusive education for all learners.

In **Malta**, a policy on inclusive education in schools was published in 2019 ([53]). One of its benchmarks expresses the need for all educators to employ effective teaching approaches that are more representative of and responsive to diversity and that foster flexible learning environments. To achieve this benchmark, the following three goals are proposed.

- Create teaching and learning activities that are meaningful and appropriately challenging for all the diverse learners through active, independent and cooperative learning opportunities, where necessary individualised educational planning unites learners, parents, educators and professionals in the design of a curriculum programme according to the level of performance of the learner.

- Practice cooperative teaching and learning whereby a team approach is adopted. Teachers work with learners together with other educators, parents and multidisciplinary professionals. Learners support each other through peer tutoring.

- Identify barriers to learning (whether it be short-term or more substantial, educational and/or social barriers) and implement appropriate support to mitigate difficulties, including but not limited to support from social workers, a psychosocial team, inclusion specialists, school psychologists and other professionals.

In **Portugal**, school mechanisms to support learning and inclusion involve the Multidisciplinary Support Teams for Inclusive Education (EMAEI) and the Learning Support Centers (CAA). EMAEI, created by a 2018 Decree Law ([54]), enhance the recognition of the added value that is the diversity of the schools' students, finding ways to deal with this diversity, adapting teaching processes to the individual characteristics and conditions of each student, mobilising the resources available to schools so that everyone can learn and participate in the life of the educational community, etc. This structure supports the class councils in identifying the barriers to learning that students may be faced with, proposing strategies to overcome them, in order to ensure that each student has access to the curriculum and basic skills and competences and promoting their educational development and achievement.

In **Slovakia**, national legislation ([55]) encourages school heads to create a school support team the main tasks of which include: the coordination of the development of inclusive education; cooperation with centres for counselling and similar entities; the provision of counselling to students and parents and methodical support to teaching staff; and participation in the creation of the school educational programme. Members of the school support team are professional employees of the respective school. Other teaching staff can also be members of the school support team. They include school psychologists, speech therapists, special pedagogues and therapeutic pedagogues, social pedagogues, education counsellors and career counsellors.

6. Career education and guidance

The role of career education and guidance to prevent ELET is widely acknowledged. Helping learners understand their strengths and the different study options and employment prospects they have provides them with the information they need to make informed education and career choices (European Commission, 2013). Having a career plan, in turn, increases the likelihood that learners remain in school and engage more positively in education (European Commission, 2015).

([49])   See: https://lex.bg/en/laws/ldoc/2137184744.

([50])   See national legislation: https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1996-3834#a42; and example of regulatory development at the autonomous community level: https://dogv.gva.es/portal/ficha_disposicion_pc.jsp?sig=005413/2021&L=1#:~:text=a)%20Cooperar%20en%20la%20planificaci%C3%B3n,diversidad%20de%20todo%20el%20alumnado.

([51])   See: https://eduscol.education.fr/907/prevention-du-decrochage-scolaire.

([52])   See: https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=99700031.tv; https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1200048.emm.

([53])   See: https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MEDE/Documents/A%20Policy%20on%20Inclusive%20Education%20in%20Schools%20-%20Route%20to%20Quality%20Inclusion%E2%80%8B.pdf.

([54])   See: https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/decreto-lei/55-2018-115652962.

([55])   See: https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2019/138/#paragraf-84a.

Career education and guidance should form a regular part of education and training. It may be taught as a compulsory part of the curriculum (either as a separate subject, integrated into other subjects, or as a cross-curricular topic). It should begin early (i.e. starting in primary education, and intensify at key transition points), for example from one education level or form to the next, thereby acting as a bridge to help young people see the links in their education and between learning and the professional world (Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, 2021).

It is also important that guidance go beyond the mere provision of information and focus on the individual and his/her particular needs and circumstances. Individualised career guidance provided by guidance services internal or external to the school can speak to learners in a direct and relevant manner and give students a high degree of ownership of career-related activities (Nouwen et al., 2016).

Effective career education and guidance tends to combine a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities, including work placements/internships or job shadowing (European Commission, 2015). Giving students the opportunity to explore or experience potential future workplaces while still in school provides them with powerful learning opportunities. It is in fact associated with better educational outcomes as it helps students connect their classroom experiences with the understanding they gain about job demands (Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, 2021).

Figure 6 presents top-level policies related to the provision of career education and guidance in schools. It shows, in particular, whether career education and guidance are promoted through a compulsory part of the curriculum, through guidance services that either operate within schools or in collaboration with schools or through opportunities to gain work experience, i.e. placements or job shadowing.

Figure 6: Top-level policies on the provision of career education and guidance in schools (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

Through the compulsory curriculum

Through internal/external services

Through work placements or job shadowing

No policy on career education and guidance
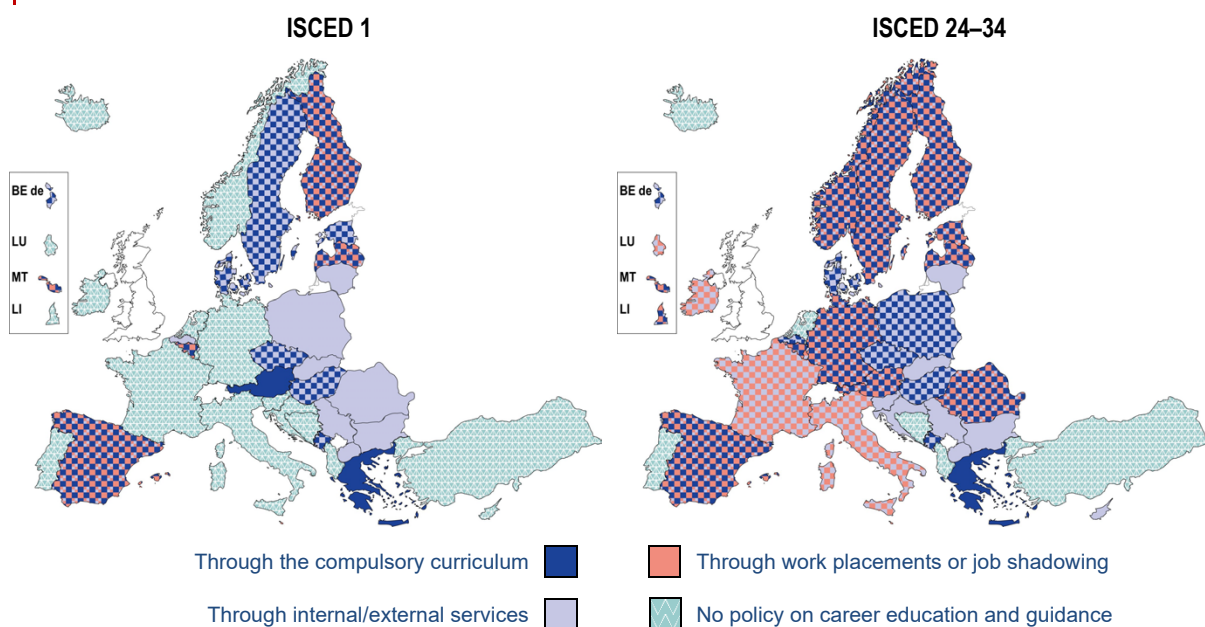
Source: Eurydice.

Country-specific notes

Denmark and **Greece**: career education and guidance taught through the curriculum only applies to ISCED 1 and 24.
Ireland: external career education and guidance services only apply to ISCED 34.
France: work placements or job shadowing only applies to ISCED 24.
Croatia: internal career education and guidance services only apply to ISCED 34.
Italy: work placements or job shadowing only applies to ISCED 34.
Romania and **Norway**: career education and guidance taught through the curriculum only applies to ISCED 24. Work placements or job shadowing only applies to ISCED 34.

The data shows that, across Europe, these policies are more frequently concerned with the secondary education level than the primary level. Still, half of the education system recognise the need to promote **career education and guidance through specialised services** already at primary level; and around one third of them report that career education and guidance is taught **as part of the primary school curriculum**.

> For example, in **Spain**, policies ([56]) establish that in primary education, guidance and tutorial action must accompany the individual and collective training process of the students. All primary (and secondary) schools have guidance teams or departments. The educational guidance teams (multidisciplinary teams) cooperate in the planning, coordination, development and evaluation of educational and professional guidance actions and tutorial action, which incorporate the gender perspective and take into account the diversity of all students. Moreover, external guidance services – the 'accompaniment and guidance service units' - accompany the most vulnerable students in primary and secondary education in their educational paths, to prevent failure and promote their learning and school success, in collaboration with other professionals ([57]). These units accompany and guide students at risk of repeating a school year and/or leaving the educational system early; they are located in school zones or districts, attend to the territorial organisation of the educational and psycho-pedagogical guidance teams of the educational administrations, and take into account the needs of the student body in rural areas.

Five education systems – those of the French Community of Belgium ([58]), Spain ([59]), Latvia ([60]), Malta ([61]) and Finland (see country example below) – report having policies that promote career education and guidance through concrete initial **work experiences**, already at the primary school level.

> In **Finland**, one of the transversal skills promoted through the national core curriculum is 'Working life competence and entrepreneurship' ([62]). It means that learners are guided in working systematically and persistently, and in taking more responsibility for their actions. They are encouraged in recognising their strengths and becoming interested in different things. Activities where students obtain experiences of work, different professions and working for others are included in the schoolwork. These activities may include work experience inside the school, cooperation projects with companies and organisations located near the school, mentoring and peer mediation or acting as a peer supporter. The students are encouraged to take initiative and be enterprising, and they are guided to see the importance of work and entrepreneurship in life and society.

At the secondary education level, most education systems promote career education and guidance through internal or external services; and slightly more than half of them report that it is taught as a compulsory part of the curriculum. In many cases, this also includes work placements or job shadowing experiences.

> For example, in **Sweden**, the Education Act ([63]) states that all learners must have access to study and career guidance through their schools and/or guidance services before choosing future educational and professional activities. Regarding work placements and work shadowing, practical working life orientation is compulsory in grade 8. Vocational training in vocational programmes at ISCED level 34 is compulsory, but optional for higher education preparatory programmes.

Only a minority of education systems report that there are no top-level policies on career education and guidance at the secondary education level; this is something that may be decided and implemented at the school level.

([56]) See: https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2022-3296.

([57]) See: https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/sgctie/cooperacion-territorial/programas-cooperacion/uao.html.

([58]) See: http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=28597&navi=4920.

([59]) See: https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2006-7899#a30.

([60]) See: https://enudiena.lv/skolotajiem/.

([61]) See: https://euroguidance.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CEE-Policy-May-2019-.pdf.

([62]) See: https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/perusopetuksen_opetussuunnitelman_perusteet_2014.pdf.

([63]) See: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800#K2.

This report presented top-level policies and measures – regulations, recommendations, actions (including monitoring and evaluation) and/or funding provided by top-level education authorities – that aim to reduce ELET.

Below are some of the main findings related to the six key policy areas covered in the report.

1. Early warning systems to prevent ELET

Only 10 European countries have policies promoting early warning systems to prevent ELET. Fewer countries reported having policies that encourage schools to cooperate with school guidance and counselling services in order to monitor and support students who are at risk of leaving education and training early, and some other education systems reported having policies that focus mainly on monitoring student absenteeism to prevent ELET.

2. Preventing bullying and violence in schools

Around two thirds of European education systems report that bullying and violence prevention measures are considered in the criteria for school quality assurance. Among these countries, slightly more encourage schools to consider bullying and violence prevention measures in internal evaluations or when establishing school development plans, rather than considering them in external evaluations.

3. Teacher education and training on ELET

Top-level education authorities generally promote many different training opportunities that can enhance teachers' capacity to address issues related to ELET, such as teaching a diverse range of learners and promoting inclusive approaches, teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings, promoting a positive school climate and awareness of learners' social and emotional development. These teacher competences are more widely considered in top-level CPD programmes than in ITE competence frameworks. Only a few countries reported not having a top-level competence framework for ITE and/or not promoting the listed competences through top-level CPD programmes.

4. Targeted support for learners at risk of ELET

Across Europe, the most evident and widely reported policies supporting learners at risk of ELET relate to additional learning support and to the availability of educational support staff who can provide additional support to students in schools. Other policies in this area, such as those aiming to enhance flexibility in the choice of subjects and/or learning pathways, and mentoring schemes for learner support are reported in comparatively less countries.

Most European countries report having top-level policies promoting psychosocial services to support learners' well-being and mental health. Fewer countries report having top-level guidelines or tools for the psychosocial assessment of learners.

Most top-level education authorities report providing financial support to buy textbooks and other important learning resources and to cover transport costs. Financial support to cover costs occurring in the context of apprenticeships is reported in a minority of countries.

The most widely reported policies on parental involvement and support promote parents' involvement in school decision-making. Slightly less frequently reported are policies promoting parents' involvement in educational and social activities.

5. Multidisciplinary support teams in and around schools

Most education systems report promoting the development of multidisciplinary teams that support students at risk of ELET through relevant policies. More than half of the countries aim to ensure the involvement of psychologists/counsellors, teachers specialised in special needs and inclusive education, teachers specialised in learning and/or language difficulties, and social or youth workers. Around one third of education systems promote the availability of education and career guidance specialists and/or medical professionals within multidisciplinary support teams; and only very few countries promote the involvement of local community service professionals.

6. Career education and guidance

Policies related to career education and guidance are more frequently concerned with the secondary education level than the primary level. Still, half of the education systems recognise the need to promote career education and guidance through specialised services already at primary level; and around one third of them report that career education and guidance is taught as part of the primary school curriculum. Five education systems also report having policies that promote career education and guidance through concrete initial work experiences already at the primary level.

At the secondary education level, most education systems promote career education and guidance through internal or external services; and slightly more than half of them report that it is taught as a compulsory part of the curriculum. In many cases, this also includes work placements or job shadowing experiences.

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GLOSSARY

Career education and guidance. A service aiming to help learners understand their strengths, the different study options and employment prospects, and that provides them with the information they need to make informed education and career choices. Career education and guidance may be taught as a compulsory part of the curriculum (either as a separate subject, integrated in other subjects or as a cross-curricular topic), or provided by guidance services internal or external to the school. Effective career education and guidance finally tends to combine a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities, including for example work placements/internships, job shadowing and the possibility to test courses in other types of education.

Competence framework (for ITE). A set of statements of what a teacher should know or be able to do. They therefore contain a description of skills and competences a teacher should have. The format, value and recognition of these frameworks may vary across countries.

Continuing professional development (CPD). Refers to the in-service training undertaken throughout a teacher's career that allows them to broaden, develop and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It may be formal or non-formal and include both subject-based and pedagogical training. Different formats are offered such as courses, seminars, workshops, degree programmes, peer or self-observation and/or reflection, support from teacher networks, observation visits, etc. In certain cases, CPD activities may lead to supplementary qualifications.

Early leaving from education and training (ELET). Refers to students leaving education or training before completing the upper secondary level and thus not obtaining the corresponding school-leaving certificate.

Early warning system. Refers to a systematic data collection that is aimed at detecting and responding to early signs of student disengagement which may lead to ELET, such as poor school attendance/truancy, problematic behaviour, low overall marks/grades, grade repetition, social and emotional problems, or contact with social services or law enforcement. Other elements captured by early warning systems may include students' sense of well-being and belonging at school, experiences of bullying or discrimination, etc.

Educational support staff. Refers to professionals who are not classroom teachers, but rather teaching assistants, speech specialists, special educational needs specialists, counsellors, psychologists, etc., who provide additional support to students in schools.

External evaluation of schools. Is conducted by evaluators who report to a local, regional or top-level education authority and who are not directly involved in the activities of the school being evaluated. Such an evaluation covers a broad range of school activities, including teaching and learning and/or all aspects of the management of the school.

Initial teacher education (ITE). A period of study and training during which prospective teachers attend academic subject-based courses and undertake professional training (either concurrently or consecutively) to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be a teacher. Higher education institutions are the main providers of ITE in most European education systems.

Internal evaluation of schools. Refers to an evaluation undertaken by persons or groups of persons who are directly involved with the school (such as the school head or its teaching and administrative staff and students). Teaching and/or management tasks may be evaluated.

Multidisciplinary support team. Refers to a team of professionals working in or with schools and providing rapidly targeted intervention measures that can ensure a coordinated strategic response to the complex needs of learners at risk of ELET. Multidisciplinary support teams may include teachers specialised in dealing with language and learning difficulties, teachers specialised in special needs and inclusive education, psychologists, counsellors and medical professionals, education and career guidance specialists, social or youth workers, local community services, etc. The emphasis of this concept is on the provision of integrated multidisciplinary systems of care for preventing ELET, rather than the involvement or services of individual agencies or professionals.

School development plan. Is a strategic plan for improvement. It should bring together, in a clear and simple way, the school priorities, the main measures it will take to raise standards, the resources dedicated to these, and the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve.

Top-level education authorities. Refer to the highest level of authority with responsibility for education in a given country, usually located at the national (state) level. However, for Belgium, Germany and Spain, the *Communautés*, *Länder*, *Comunidades Autónomas* and the devolved administrations, respectively, are either wholly responsible or share responsibilities with the state level for all or most areas relating to education. Therefore, these administrations are considered as the top-level authority for the areas where they hold the responsibility, while for those areas for which they share the responsibility with the national (state) level, both are considered to be top-level authorities.

Top-level policies/measures. Refers to regulations, recommendations, official steering documents (including curricula), actions (including monitoring and evaluation) and/or funding provided by top-level education authorities in order to solve an issue.

Figure 1A: Top-level policies on early warning systems to prevent ELET (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

	Policies on early warning system to prevent ELET based on detailed student data exist	Only policies on monitoring ELET risk factors through school guidance and counselling services exist	Only policies on monitoring of students' school absence exist	No policy on early warning system or on other monitoring actions to prevent ELET
BE fr			●	
BE de				●
BE nl			●	
BG	●			
CZ		●		
DK			●	
DE				●
EE	●			
IE		●		
EL				●
ES		●		
FR	●			
HR				●
IT	●			
CY			●	
LV			●	
LT			●	
LU		●		
HU	●			
MT	●			
NL				●
AT				●
PL	●			
PT				●
RO	●			
SI				●
SK	●			
FI				●
SE			●	
AL				●
BA			●	
IS				●
LI		●		
ME	●			
MK				●
NO			●	
RS				●
TR				●

Country-specific notes

Ireland and **Slovakia**: policies only apply to ISCED 1–24.
France, **Luxembourg** and **Hungary**: policies only apply to ISCED 24–34

	Bullying and violence prevention are among the criteria for external school evaluations	Bullying and violence prevention are among the criteria for internal evaluations and/or school development plans	Bullying and violence prevention are not among the criteria for external/internal evaluations or school development plans
BE fr	●		
BE de			●
BE nl	●		
BG	●	●	
CZ	●	●	
DK	●	●	
DE		●	
EE		●	
IE			●
EL	●	●	
ES		●	
FR	●	●	
HR			●
IT	●	●	
CY	●	●	
LV	●	●	
LT	●	●	
LU			●
HU		●	
MT	●	●	
NL			●
AT	●	●	
PL			●
PT	●	●	
RO	●	●	
SI	●		
SK	●		
FI	●	●	
SE	●	●	
AL			●
BA			●
IS		●	
LI			●
ME		●	
MK			●
NO	●	●	
RS	●	●	
TR			●

Country-specific notes

Denmark: criteria for external evaluation only apply to ISCED 1–24.
Austria: criteria for external evaluation only apply to ISCED 24–34.

Figure 3A: Teacher competences related to addressing ELET promoted through top-level competence frameworks for ITE and/or top-level CPD programmes (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

A. Teaching diverse learners and promoting inclusive approaches
B. Teaching in multilingual and multicultural settings
C. Promoting a positive school climate
D. Awareness of learners' social and emotional development
E. Collaborating with parents/families from diverse backgrounds
F. Diagnosing ELET risk factors

G. Teachers managing their own well-being and stress
H. Developing interventions to prevent ELET
I. No national/top-level competence framework for ITE
J. No relevant CPD programmes provided or supported by national/top-level education authorities

	A ITE ●	A CPD ○	B ITE ●	B CPD ○	C ITE ●	C CPD ○	D ITE ●	D CPD ○	E ITE ●	E CPD ○	F ITE ●	F CPD ○	G ITE ●	G CPD ○	H ITE ●	H CPD ○	I	J
BE fr	●	○		○		○		○		○		○		○		○		
BE de	●		●		●		●		●		●							
BE nl	●		●		●		●		●									
BG	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		○		○		
CZ	●	○		○		○		○		○		○		○		○		
DK	●	○	●	○	●	○	●		●		●	○						
DE	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		
EE	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		
IE	●	○	●	○	●	○		○	●	○		○		○		○		
EL		○		○		○		○		○		○					●	
ES	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		○		
FR	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		
HR	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○					●	○				
IT	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		
CY	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○				○						
LV	●		●	○	●		●			○		○		○		○		
LT	●	○			●	○												
LU	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○			●	○			●	○		
HU	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		
MT	●	○	●	○		○		○		○		○		○		○		
NL																	●	○
AT	●	○	●	○		○						○		○				
PL	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		
PT	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		
RO		○															●	
SI		○		○		○		○		○				○			●	
SK	●	○				○	●	○	●		●	○		○	●			
FI		○		○		○		○		○		○		○	●	○	●	
SE	●	○		○	●		●		●		●					○		
AL																	●	○
BA																	●	○
IS			●	○				○		○								
LI		○		○		○		○		○				○			●	
ME	●	○	●	○	●	○		○		○		○		○		○		
MK	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○						
NO	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	○		○				○		
RS		○		○		○		○		○		○		○		○	●	
TR	●	○																

Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de): ITE programmes are only for teachers who will teach at ISCED 1.
Greece: there is an induction training programme for newly appointed teachers, which includes a mandatory module called 'Dealing with diversity'.

Figure 4A: Top-level policies on support for learners at risk of ELET (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

	INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING SUPPORT				SUPPORT FOR WELL-BEING		FINANCIAL SUPPORT			PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT			No policy on support for learners at risk of ELET
	Additional learning support	Availability of educational support staff	Flexibility in choice of subjects and/or learning pathways	Mentoring schemes (incl. peer mentoring)	Psycho-social support services	Psycho-social assessments	For textbooks and other learning resources	For transport	During apprenticeships	In school decision-making	In educational activities	In social activities	
BE fr	●	●			●	●				●			
BE de	●	●	●		●		●	●		●			
BE nl	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
BG	●	●		●	●	●		●			●		
CZ	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
DK	●	●	●		●		●	●		●	●	●	
DE	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
EE	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
IE	●	●			●	●	●						
EL	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	
ES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	
FR	●	●			●	●	●	●			●		
HR		●			●	●	●	●		●		●	
IT	●	●		●			●	●		●	●	●	
CY	●	●	●		●	●		●	●				
LV	●	●	●		●		●		●	●			
LT	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
LU	●	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●	
HU	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	
MT	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
NL													●
AT	●	●			●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
PL	●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
PT	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
RO	●						●	●	●	●			
SI	●	●			●		●	●		●			
SK	●	●		●	●		●			●			
FI	●		●		●		●	●					
SE	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●		
AL	●	●			●		●	●		●	●		
BA	●						●	●		●			
IS													●
LI	●				●					●		●	
ME	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	
MK	●	●					●			●	●	●	
NO	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	
RS	●						●			●			
TR		●			●	●							

Belgium (BE nl): policies on flexibility in choice of subjects and/or learning pathways only apply to ISCED 24–34. Policies on financial support for textbooks only apply to ISECD 1, and financial support during apprenticeships only apply to ISCED 24–34.

Belgium (BE de): policies on flexibility in choice of subjects and/or learning pathways only apply to ISCED 24–34.

Denmark: policies on additional learning support, psychosocial support services and parental involvement in social activities only apply to ISCED 1–24.

Greece and **Lithuania**: policies on flexibility in choice of subjects only apply to ISCED 24–34.

Croatia: policies on financial support for textbooks and transport; and parental involvement in school decision-making and social activities only apply to ISCED 34.

Italy: policies on mentoring schemes only apply to ISCED 24–34.

Cyprus: policies on flexibility in choice of subjects and financial support during apprenticeships only apply to ISCED 34.

Latvia: policies on flexibility in choice of subjects only apply to ISCED 34. Policies on financial support during apprenticeships only apply to ISCED 24–34.

Luxembourg: policies on parental involvement in social activities only apply to ISCED 1–24.

Hungary: policies on psychosocial assessments only apply to ISCED 1.

Malta: policies on parental involvement in social activities only apply to ISCED 1.

Austria: policies on educational support staff only apply to ISCED 24.

Poland: policies on financial support for transport only apply to ISCED 34.

Slovenia: policies on additional learning support and educational support staff only apply to ISCED 1–24.

Finland: policies on mentoring schemes only apply to ISCED 1–24.

Sweden: policies on mentoring schemes and flexibility in choice of subjects only apply to ISCED 34. Policies on parental involvement in school decision-making and educational activities only apply to ISCED 1–24.

Figure 5A: Professionals/services involved in multidisciplinary support teams in and around schools, according to top-level policies (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

	Psycho-logists or counsellors	Teachers specialised in special needs and inclusive education	Teachers specialised in addressing learning difficulties	Teachers specialised in addressing language difficulties	Education and career guidance specialists	Social or youth workers	Medical profes-sionals	Local community services	No policy on multi-disciplinary support teams
BE fr	●		●	●		●	●		
BE de									●
BE nl	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
BG						●		●	
CZ	●	●	●		●	●			
DK	●	●	●	●	●				
DE						●			
EE	●	●	●	●		●			
IE									●
EL	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
ES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
FR	●				●	●	●		
HR									●
IT	●	●	●	●			●	●	
CY	●	●	●		●		●		
LV	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
LT	●	●	●	●	●		●		
LU	●	●	●	●	●	●			
HU	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
MT	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
NL									●
AT	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
PL	●	●		●	●	●			
PT	●	●	●	●					
RO									●
SI	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
SK	●	●	●	●	●	●			
FI	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
SE	●	●	●	●		●	●		
AL	●	●							
BA									●
IS									●
LI	●	●	●	●					
ME	●	●	●	●				●	
MK									●
NO	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
RS	●				●				
TR									●

Country-specific note

France: policies on multidisciplinary support teams only apply to ISCED 24–34.

Figure 6A: Top-level policies on the provision of career education and guidance in schools (ISCED 1–34), 2022/2023

	Through the compulsory curriculum		Through internal/external services		Through work placements or job shadowing		No policy on career education and guidance	
	ISCED 1 ●	ISCED 24–34 ○	ISCED 1 ●	ISCED 24–34 ○	ISCED 1 ●	ISCED 24–34 ○	ISCED 1 ●	ISCED 24–34 ○
BE fr	●	○	●	○	●	○		
BE de	●	○	●	○				
BE nl		○	●	○				
BG			●	○				
CZ	●	○	●	○				
DK	●	○	●	○				
DE		○		○		○	●	
EE	●	○	●	○		○		
IE				○		○	●	
EL	●	○						
ES	●	○	●	○	●	○		
FR				○		○	●	
HR				○			●	
IT				○		○	●	
CY				○			●	
LV	●	○	●	○	●	○		
LT			●	○				
LU				○		○	●	
HU	●	○	●	○				
MT	●	○	●	○	●	○		
NL							●	○
AT	●	○		○		○		
PL		○	●	○				
PT							●	○
RO		○	●	○		○		
SI				○			●	
SK			●	○				
FI	●	○	●	○	●	○		
SE	●	○	●	○		○		
AL							●	○
BA							●	○
IS							●	○
LI		○		○		○	●	
ME	●	○	●	○				
MK			●	○				
NO		○		○		○	●	
RS			●	○				
TR							●	○

Country-specific notes

Denmark and **Greece**: career education and guidance taught through the curriculum only applies to ISCED 1 and 24.
Ireland: external career education and guidance services only apply to ISCED 34.
France: work placements or job shadowing only apply to ISCED 24.
Croatia: internal career education and guidance services only apply to ISCED 34.
Italy: work placements or job shadowing only apply to ISCED 34.
Romania and **Norway**: career education and guidance taught through the curriculum only apply to ISCED 24. Work placements or job shadowing only apply to ISCED 34.

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