
APPROACH OF THE EMPLOYABILITY IN EUROPE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Abstract

Automation and globalization lead to resizing jobs. Whether it is simpler jobs or more complex jobs due to technological change, people need higher skills to help them overcome the changes in the labour market. The article analyzes the situation regarding employability in the member countries of the European Union. There are presented aspects regarding the evolution of the population as well as the number of employees. The quality and relevance of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies influence the degree of growth of employability. The challenges we face when it comes to skills call for interventions in education and training systems. Fast access to the labour market immediately after graduation is an asset that can positively influence the subsequent socio-economic development of people. At the same time, investment in education and training should take into account the aging of the population, but also the reduction in the number of young people. Comparative surveys of the employment rate by education level as well as recent graduates complement the analysis.

Keywords

Employability, Europe, education and training,

JEL Classification

J21, J24

Introduction

Making sustainable growth based on job creation and economic recovery is one of the tasks facing Europe (EC, 2015). Another challenge for finding solutions is the importance of preserving competitiveness in a globalized economy amid the aging of the population. Thus, economic growth can be considered to be based on education and training. Vocational education and training systems can raise the level of skills and competencies of the workforce. Technological transformations, environmental changes and demographic changes lead to changes in the labour market. In this context, education and training can contribute to raising the skills and competences of the workforce. Improving knowledge, skills and competencies allows people to grow and expand their outlook. Maintaining the current standard of living can be achieved through an appropriate set of skills and competencies. Acquiring the necessary skills and competences to achieve personal

fulfillment can lead to increased employability and can support a high rate of employment (EC, 2018b). Personal and professional development should be a responsibility to be assumed by each student and student. Awareness of lack of personal skills leads students to acquire those attributes that improve their employability skills (enthusiasm, maturity, confidence) (Creasey, 2013). But aspects of employability also take into account the health status of the population as well as the aging of the population (Burlacu et al., 2018). A culture of sustainability is based on education, training and lifelong learning. Recognizing the value of education and training potential, the European Union wants to create a European education area by 2025. By developing new skills for the digital economy, it is intended to create new jobs, achieve growth as well as the establishment of a social equity (EC, 2019).

Literature review

Lifelong learning can be considered as another part of the career journey. Fulfillment of new tasks at the workplace can be accomplished through the prior acquisition of skills beyond the core responsibilities. This process can ensure a high degree of employability (Osborne, 2017).

In order to live, learn and work in a digital society, certain literacy skills are needed (JISC, 2014). Improving these digital literacy capacities can lead to increased employability (Peacock & Bacon, 2018). Modern technologies and new production models are a consequence of investing in research and innovation. Resources could be used in a sustainable way. Progress has boosted the creation of new jobs. Thus, in the third quarter of 2018, the occupancy rate of persons in the 20-64 age group increased to 73.5%. This is the highest figure ever recorded in the European Union. This growth has positively influenced productivity and growth in Europe (EC, 2019).

Technologies have made more and more jobs automate. Thus, skills requirements have changed. Digitization has increased mobility. These issues have an impact on education and training. However, some international surveys indicate a high percentage of adolescents and adults with insufficient basic skills. Thus, in 2015, one in five students could not develop enough science, math and reading skills. Throughout their lifetime, they will face important obstacles in terms of employability and social inclusion (EC, 2017b). Also, in some countries almost one third of adults have the lowest numeracy and literacy skills (EC, 2018b). It is considered that in formal education and training systems, individuals should acquire numerical skills, literacy skills, scientific and foreign language skills. Also, personal fulfillment and development can be based on digital competences, entrepreneurial mindsets, critical thinking skills, or problem-solving skills. Thus, these skills can be the basis for the development of superior skills. Acquiring such more complex skills can lead to innovation and creativity (EC, 2016).

Methodology of research

Resizing jobs is due to automation, but also to globalization. It cannot be appreciated today what percentage of current jobs will be replaced by robots and what percentage of current jobs will be outsourced. We also cannot tell exactly what skills we will need to take up a job in the future (Osborne, 2017). This article has made an analysis of the employment situation in the EU Member States. In the first part, the evolution of the population for the 15-64 age group for the period 2009-2017 is presented. Also, for the 20-64 age group, a comparison is made of the employment rate according to the level of education. In the second part, the evolution of the number of employees for the 20-34 age group as well as the recent graduates is presented.

Results and discussions

Increasing employability and stimulating innovation can be determined by the quality and relevance of acquired knowledge, skills and competences. Capitalizing on the advantages of the digital era leads to increased learning mobility and increased labour mobility (EC, 2015). Perspectives of personal, social and professional fulfillment of people are limited by the existence of low skills and basic knowledge.

Thus, Table 1 shows the evolution of the population by educational attainment level for the 15-64 age group (millions of people). From the data presented in Table 1, it is noticed that as compared to 2009, in 2017, the number of people with 0-2 levels has dropped significantly in: Spain (-2,845 million people), France (-2,584 million people), Italy (-2,502 million people), United Kingdom (-2,010 million people).

Table no. 1 Evolution of the population by educational attainment level

Countries	Less than primary. primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)			Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)			Tertiary education (levels 5-8)		
	2009	2013	2017	2009	2013	2017	2009	2013	2017
European Union	104,672	90,843	84,799	154,131	151,825	150,198	72,815	82,670	91,042
Belgium	2,310	2,206	1,978	2,718	2,764	2,698	2,098	2,288	2,590
Bulgaria	1,413	1,075	0,982	2,725	2,706	2,486	0,984	1,079	1,128
Czechia	1,127	0,922	0,837	5,308	4,933	4,598	0,996	1,298	1,480
Denmark	1,137	1,025	0,933	1,442	1,437	1,453	0,950	1,012	1,142
Germany	11,781	9,012	10,622	29,897	29,134	29,737	11,940	12,881	13,274
Estonia	0,173	0,138	0,142	0,455	0,452	0,409	0,271	0,281	0,293
Ireland	0,920	0,792	0,664	1,099	1,073	1,149	0,978	1,111	1,229
Greece	2,908	2,448	2,014	2,973	2,937	3,001	1,464	1,705	1,870
Spain	15,417	13,957	12,573	7,217	7,177	7,494	8,537	9,463	9,984
France	12,893	11,156	10,309	16,649	17,189	17,690	10,306	11,513	12,815
Croatia	0,728	0,633	0,541	1,729	1,709	1,621	0,417	0,481	0,559
Italy	18,333	17,003	15,831	15,594	16,514	16,497	4,985	5,655	6,398
Cyprus	0,168	0,147	0,129	0,206	0,227	0,220	0,164	0,204	0,215
Latvia	0,313	0,221	0,187	0,829	0,752	0,673	0,311	0,359	0,368
Lithuania	0,389	0,286	0,223	1,217	1,107	0,986	0,549	0,591	0,645
Luxembourg	0,092	0,093	0,103	0,133	0,137	0,120	0,097	0,125	0,115
Hungary	1,687	1,513	1,352	3,927	3,840	3,723	1,140	1,295	1,340
Malta	0,177	0,156	0,143	0,072	0,080	0,101	0,037	0,051	0,069
Netherlands	3,580	3,132	2,896	4,462	4,494	4,494	2,938	3,166	3,489
Austria	1,324	1,250	1,120	3,348	3,397	2,956	0,887	0,997	1,725
Poland	4,925	4,107	3,377	16,651	15,649	14,546	4,763	5,770	6,394
Portugal	4,867	4,072	3,440	1,241	1,578	1,772	0,921	1,209	1,448
Romania	4,534	3,928	3,531	8,805	7,800	7,557	1,689	1,878	2,007
Slovenia	0,295	0,260	0,228	0,842	0,802	0,744	0,277	0,342	0,390
Slovakia	0,646	0,570	0,558	2,745	2,613	2,439	0,526	0,687	0,783
Finland	0,860	0,726	0,631	1,578	1,592	1,552	1,090	1,171	1,251
Sweden	1,535	1,399	1,323	2,836	2,789	2,689	1,667	1,918	2,253
United Kingdom	10,143	8,617	8,133	17,434	16,945	16,793	11,832	14,142	15,787

Source: own processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019

Also, as compared to 2009, in the year 2017 the number of people with 3-4 levels dropped significantly in: Poland (-2,105 million people), Romania (-1,248 million people), Czechia (-0,710 million people), United Kingdom (-0.641 million people). At the same time, as compared to 2009, in the year 2017 the number of people with 5-8 levels increased

significantly in: United Kingdom (+3,955 million people), France (+2,509 million people), Poland (+1,631 million people).

An important emphasis should be put on the process of transition from education to work (EC, 2012). Fast access of graduates to a first job influences the subsequent socio-economic situation of individuals. Ensuring income, professional success and personal, family, can be positively influenced. Reducing the number of young people and the aging of the population are demographic challenges that need to be taken into account when investing in education and training.

Table 2 presents the comparative situation of the employment rate by educational attainment level for the 20-64 age group for the year 2005 and for 2017 (%).

Table no. 2 Employment rate by educational attainment level

Countries	Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)		Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)		Tertiary education (levels 5-8)	
	2005	2017	2005	2017	2005	2017
European Union	55,5	54,9	69,4	72,6	82,6	84
Belgium	48,8	45,9	68,8	67,8	82,8	82,2
Bulgaria	39,4	44,4	66,5	72,8	80,3	85,5
Czechia	39,6	49,2	72,5	79,4	84,6	84,2
Denmark	62,5	60,2	78,9	78,9	86,2	85,4
Germany	51,9	59,6	69,6	80	82,8	88,1
Estonia	50,5	65,7	70	76,8	83,9	85,5
Ireland	58,5	50,5	75	69,6	85,6	84,2
Greece	58	49,2	62,7	54,1	80,9	70,8
Spain	59,5	54,6	69,2	63,4	80,6	79,4
France	57,9	51,8	72,3	69,7	78,9	83
Croatia	45,1	34,7	61,3	64,1	79,7	81,5
Italy	51,7	51	68,3	65,4	78,5	78,2
Cyprus	64,8	57	74,6	68,5	85	79,1
Latvia	50,5	56,7	69,5	71,1	83,6	86,9
Lithuania	46,6	44,1	69,1	69,7	86,3	90,1
Luxembourg	60,4	56,4	68	68,3	82,5	83,9
Hungary	37,7	53,9	66,1	74,2	82,5	84,3
Malta	48,2	59,2	77,6	80,5	82,8	90,5
Netherlands	58,5	61,2	75,7	78,8	84	87,9
Austria	52	53,9	72,5	75,7	83,5	84,8
Poland	36,2	40,8	57,8	67,6	81,1	86,8
Portugal	71,3	67,7	66,5	74,9	85,7	83,6
Romania	52,5	54,7	65	68,7	84	87,9
Slovenia	55,1	49,3	71,3	71,5	86,6	86,2
Slovakia	25,3	37,3	67,4	73	83,2	78,5
Finland	57,5	51,3	72,4	71,4	84,2	84,4
Sweden	64,4	61,8	78,8	83	86	88,1
United Kingdom	64,1	63,6	79,6	78,1	87,5	85,1

Source: own processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019

It can be seen that employment rates vary depending on the level of education. Thus, in 2017 compared to 2005 (for 20-64 age group) the share of people with 0-2 levels who are in employment, in Hungary (+16.2%), Estonia (+15.2%), Slovakia (+12%). Also, the share of people with 0-2 levels who are in employment decreased, in: Croatia (-10.4%), Greece (-8.8%), Ireland (-8%). The share of people with 3-4 levels and 20-64 age group decreased in

Greece (-8.6%), Cyprus (-6.1%), Spain (-5.8%), Ireland (-5.4%). At the same time, the values for: Germany (+10.4%), Poland (+9.8%), Portugal (+8.4%), Hungary (+8.1%). In 2017 compared to 2005 the share of people with 5-8 levels who are in employment decreased, in Greece (-10.1%), Cyprus (-5.9%), Slovakia (-4.7%). Also, the share of people with 5-8 levels increased in Malta (+7.7%), Poland (+5.7%), Germany (+5.3%), Bulgaria (+5.2%).

Within the mechanisms of measuring and evaluating academic performance, the quality of graduates is an important indicator. Employers are interested in graduates with higher education who are familiar with many foreign languages, are dynamic and flexible, have initiative and show adaptability to the conditions imposed by jobs (Stăiculescu et al., 2018). Table 3 presents the evolution of the number of recent graduates for the 20-34 age group by gender (persons).

Table no. 3 The evolution of the number of recent graduates

Countries	2009		2013		2017	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
European Union	40428536	38194473	38080371	35176068	39172708	36250195
Austria	715942	693046	759992	717030	794758	770585
Belgium	829722	817341	852089	843685	878898	879480
Bulgaria	615427	540744	497859	484716	522763	486076
Croatia	339522	317451	227890	218155	272951	239836
Cyprus	77650	76745	66954	68130	69711	77506
Czechia	1102786	925810	981827	776764	961344	820703
Denmark	445791	427555	435445	390550	483341	426567
Estonia	111260	84479	118763	94563	120156	94598
Finland	406086	372705	421164	396989	439766	365185
France	4647516	4655514	4666699	4499460	4304203	4431990
Germany	6342614	6100703	6759473	6320145	7285492	6492053
Greece	832113	712860	457619	390940	479850	461955
Hungary	887022	804583	777348	680978	846192	706186
Ireland	418163	454967	363049	381460	382914	386611
Italy	3443118	3047931	2501692	2369333	2843527	2530413
Latvia	175157	153016	179442	155232	154074	141137
Lithuania	233115	241217	221186	221010	238190	227759
Luxembourg	43222	42020	45084	43351	59703	51535
Malta	42640	40121	44589	40673	49457	47354
Netherlands	1404764	1381225	1362392	1298021	1457524	1424797
Poland	3864681	3443238	3506823	2983419	3599058	3106150
Portugal	916263	865774	649016	637473	697543	680271
Romania	1728471	1587671	1458146	1285040	1459140	1304514
Slovakia	521006	472923	474439	421839	520834	429197
Slovenia	191964	170438	170567	134444	169110	130032
Spain	3936684	3708278	2760845	2647523	2738099	2819575
Sweden	717607	693506	814227	770670	912611	848572
United Kingdom	4953930	4915414	5476134	5368921	5874920	5553913

Source: own processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019

If the weights give us a picture of the percentage of recent graduates finding a job, the quantitative value (number of graduates) also indicates the number of jobs that recent graduates identify and occupy at the same time.

Based on the information provided by Eurostat, based on the recruiting rate of recent graduates, given the number of people 20-34 age group, we have calculated the number of recent graduates.

For the year 2017, the countries where the number of recent male graduates was highest are Germany, United Kingdom, France, Poland, Italy, Spain, Romania, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Sweden. For the same year, the countries with the highest number of recent female graduates were: Germany, United Kingdom, France, Poland, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Belgium and Sweden.

It is also noted that in 2017 compared to 2009, in Germany and the UK, the number of recent male graduates increased by over 900,000 people. Also, for the same period in Spain, the number of recent male graduates has fallen by about 1,200,000 people. In Italy, values have fallen by about 600,000 people, and in France by over 300,000 people.

Employers are interested in showing graduates at the same time that they have acquired academic abilities, but also that they have developed key skills. It is considered that they facilitate the transition from education to employment (Holmes & Miller, 2000). In this respect, Table 4 shows the evolution of the number of employees according to the level of education, for people 20-34 age group (million people).

Table no. 4 Number of employees by level of education

Countries	Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (levels 0-2)			Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4)			Tertiary education (levels 5-8)		
	2009	2013	2017	2009	2013	2017	2009	2013	2017
European Union	19.878	16.955	15.022	52.664	48.880	46.821	26.071	28.453	29.940
Belgium	0.343	0.380	0.336	0.955	0.959	0.936	0.743	0.790	0.848
Bulgaria	0.261	0.231	0.209	0.847	0.878	0.725	0.276	0.327	0.344
Czechia	0.156	0.144	0.143	1.865	1.505	1.263	0.394	0.508	0.540
Denmark	0.223	0.205	0.206	0.471	0.462	0.484	0.254	0.271	0.343
Germany	2.608	2.304	2.379	9.153	8.778	8.917	2.693	3.230	3.653
Estonia	0.043	0.037	0.035	0.160	0.152	0.135	0.082	0.088	0.091
Ireland	0.149	0.116	0.063	0.464	0.405	0.404	0.457	0.435	0.416
Greece	0.518	0.348	0.214	1.220	1.043	0.976	0.535	0.608	0.602
Spain	3.744	3.104	2.447	2.981	2.505	2.354	3.531	3.134	2.807
France	1.857	1.626	1.509	5.226	5.280	5.314	4.245	4.428	4.512
Croatia	0.077	0.056	0.039	0.643	0.577	0.529	0.137	0.172	0.198
Italy	2.992	2.579	2.225	5.974	5.717	5.394	1.758	1.825	2.054
Cyprus	0.028	0.025	0.021	0.075	0.082	0.075	0.076	0.092	0.097
Latvia	0.090	0.057	0.045	0.262	0.226	0.193	0.111	0.132	0.124
Lithuania	0.082	0.057	0.036	0.356	0.309	0.274	0.212	0.219	0.235
Luxembourg	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.043	0.046	0.045	0.035	0.041	0.043
Hungary	0.305	0.259	0.257	1.367	1.189	1.101	0.405	0.456	0.412
Malta	0.040	0.031	0.030	0.031	0.036	0.043	0.018	0.025	0.033
Netherlands	0.589	0.525	0.470	1.453	1.450	1.486	0.920	1.030	1.189
Austria	0.198	0.187	0.202	1.127	1.127	0.881	0.247	0.311	0.624
Poland	0.630	0.580	0.488	5.687	4.809	4.337	2.428	2.726	2.587
Portugal	1.050	0.668	0.465	0.651	0.704	0.720	0.422	0.486	0.500
Romania	1.166	0.883	0.820	3.195	2.359	2.075	0.772	0.807	0.738
Slovenia	0.034	0.026	0.024	0.309	0.263	0.214	0.096	0.120	0.127
Slovakia	0.077	0.086	0.109	1.052	0.864	0.711	0.228	0.319	0.342
Finland	0.112	0.110	0.108	0.601	0.619	0.619	0.280	0.290	0.302
Sweden	0.212	0.247	0.252	0.954	0.977	0.978	0.554	0.651	0.760
United Kingdom	2.279	2.066	1.874	5.542	5.559	5.638	4.162	4.930	5.419

Source: own processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019

For the people from 20-34 age group, it is noted that at the European Union level, for the period 2009-2017, the number of those with 0-2 levels decreased by -4.856 million people. Countries where the people with 0-2 levels and 20-34 age group dropped significantly in: Spain (-1,297 million people), Italy (-0,767 million people), Portugal (-0,585 million of people). Also, the number of people with 3-4 levels and 20-34 age group decreased in: Poland (-1.35 million people), Romania (-1.12 million people).

The number of people with 5-8 levels and 20-34 age group was down in: Spain (-0.724 million people). At the same time, the number of people with 5-8 levels and 20-34 age group increased in: United Kingdom (+1,257 million people), Germany (+0,959 million people). At European Union level, in 2017 compared to 2009, the number of people with 5-8 levels and 20-34 age group increased by +3.869 million people.

In order to be able to make decisions about the labour market, individuals need to have relevant and useful information about it. Thus, employability can not only be based on vocational and academic skills. To transform this information into intelligence, in determining the usefulness of information, people often need support. Thus, the opportunity to do things in a different way is based on access to relevant training, but also on employment (Hillage & Pollard, 1998).

The demand for highly qualified people has increased on the labour market. Thus, in 2025, high-level qualifications will account for about half of all jobs. To increase the relevance of curricula, universities should develop partnerships with employers (EC, 2017a).

Conclusions

New jobs require flexibility and adaptability. Developing activities within changing teams also involves setting priorities and goals so that changes can be managed proactively (Glover et al., 2002).

The analysis shows that the number of employees with low levels of education (0-4) has decreased and the number of employees with high levels of education (5-8) has increased. Also, the occupancy rate of people with 3-8 education levels has increased.

To meet both current and future challenges in the labour market, education and training can lead to improved employability (EC, 2012).

The needs of the labour market call for a better transfer of information. Thus, the development of knowledge, skills and competences can be ensured through partnerships between education and training providers, social partners and other relevant stakeholders. Acquiring basic skills at the first levels of education and offering lifelong learning specialized education may be a viable solution to future labour market demands.

Investing in skills, competences and knowledge contributes to maintaining employability. Globalization and technological change produce rapid changes that affect the labour market. Based on investment in skills, skills and knowledge, individuals can thus easily overcome skills mismatches existing on the labour market (EC, 2018a).

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