

Education across the European Union 1991/92

The number of pupils and students in the European Union stood at 67 million in 1991/92 (72 million in the European Economic Area). This represents almost one fifth of the population of the EU (and the EEA).

In Belgium, Germany, France, and the Netherlands, around 90% of persons aged 16-18 were in education or training in 1991/92. By contrast, the percentages in Spain, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom were considerably lower (EU average of 80%).

Females (82%) were more likely to remain in education at the end of their compulsory schooling (16-18 year olds) than males (78%).

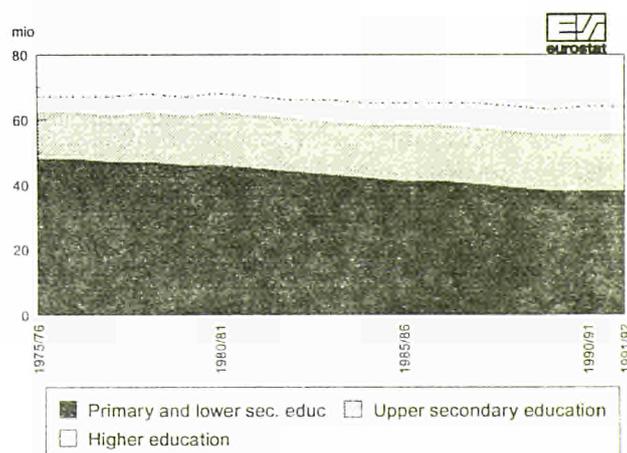
83% of pupils enrolled in general secondary education in 1991/92 were learning English as a foreign language, 32% French and 16% German. Pupils in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium and the Netherlands were learning more foreign languages than their counterparts in the other Member States.

On average, 1.3% of students enrolled in higher education in 1991/92 were citizens from another EU Member State. Among the host countries, Belgium had by far the highest percentage (4.8% of all its students). Significant numbers of Greek (10%) and Irish (6%) higher education students were studying in an EU Member State other than their own.

The number of pupils and students in the European Union stood at 67 million in 1991/92 (72 million in the European Economic Area). This represents almost one fifth (19%) of the population of the EU (and of the EEA). Around 60% of the pupils and students were in compulsory schooling, 25% in post-compulsory secondary education, and 14% in higher education.

As a result of the drop in the birth rate, the number of pupils in compulsory education has fallen steadily since the early seventies. By contrast, numbers in post-compulsory secondary education, and higher education, have risen as the number of young people continuing their studies has more than outweighed the drop in the birth rate (Chart 1).

Chart 1:
Trend in the number of pupils and students - 1975/76-1991/92, EUR12



excluding new German Länder

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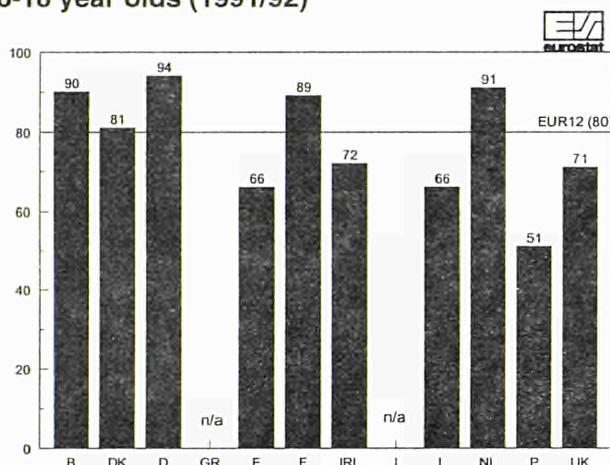
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Beyond compulsory schooling

It is of considerable importance for policy makers to know what young people do at the end of their compulsory schooling, and, in particular, how many continue in education or training. In order to measure the extent of post-compulsory schooling, it seems appropriate to focus on the age group 16-18 (see Chart 2; Table 1 provides more complete information for 14-19 year olds). The lower limit has been set at 16 because, by this age, the vast majority of pupils have completed their full-time compulsory schooling. It is important to note, however, that a number of the pupils in this age group may be (re)taking exams that are normally associated with the end of compulsory schooling.

Chart 2:
Participation rates (in education or training) of 16-18 year olds (1991/92)



Footnotes: see Table 1

Table 1:
Participation rates (in education or training) of 14 to 19 years olds (1991/92)

%	Age					
	14	15	16	17	18	19
EUR12	99	96	90	83	67	54
B	100	100	97	94	80	65
DK	100	97	93	80	69	52
D	99	97	97	95	89	70
GR	98	87	85	65	:	:
E	100	92	76	68	54	45
F	99	99	95	91	81	65
IRL	100	97*	91	75	53	37
I	:	:	:	:	:	:
L	80*	75*	74*	68*	56*	:
NL	99	99	98	94	82	66
P	85	72	60	52	41	33
UK	100	99	94*	78*	43*	35*

The shading indicates approximately the period of post-compulsory schooling

EUR12: excluding I

D: including Berlin, excluding new Länder

GR: 1989/90 data

L: the data exclude the significant number of pupils enrolled in the surrounding countries as well as pupils attending the European school in Luxembourg

On average, 80% of 16-18 year olds in the European Union were still in education or training in 1991/92. There were, however, considerable variations between the Member States, ranging from just over 50% in Portugal to 94% in Germany (excluding the new Länder).

Differences across countries can be explained, in part, by variations in the minimum school leaving age. In three Member States (Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands), part-time compulsory schooling continues beyond 16. Consequently, these countries have relatively high participation rates for 16-18 year olds of more than 90%. France stands out with a similar participation rate (89%) even though compulsory schooling ends at 16.

By contrast, in Spain and Portugal (where pre-reform¹ compulsory schooling ended at the age of 14) and in Ireland (where the leaving age is 15), the number of 16-18 year olds in education is significantly lower (66%, 51% and 72% respectively). The United Kingdom (71%) also falls well below the EU average.

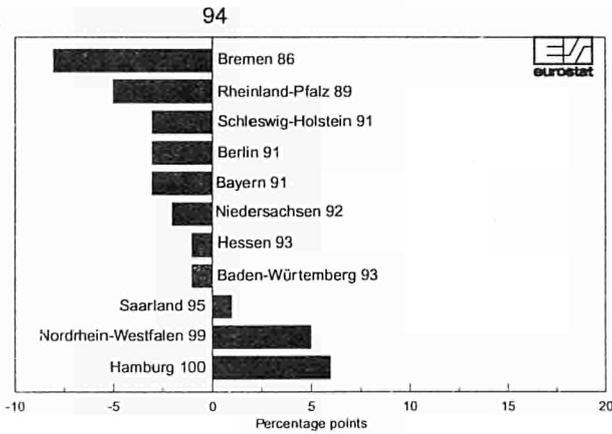
The minimum school leaving age is of course not the only determining factor - labour market conditions, government incentives, tradition, etc, often have a significant influence.

Indeed, these factors clearly come into play when regional variations occur within a country. In three Member States, (Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom), there were considerable regional variations in the participation rates of 16-18 year olds in 1991/92 (Chart 3).

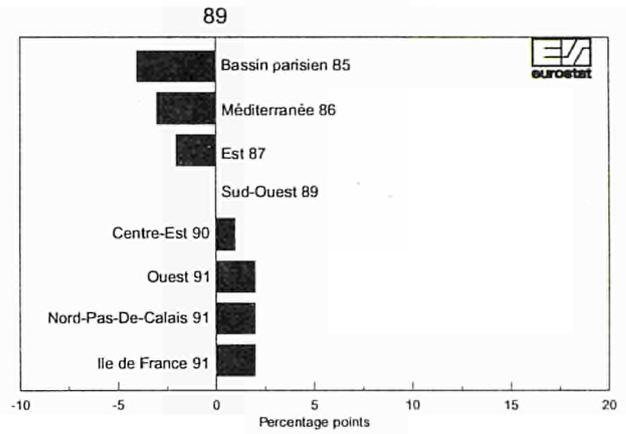
¹ The statistics in this report refer to pre-reform schooling

Chart 3:
Participation rates (in education or training) of 16-18 year olds: regional variations around the national average (1991/92) - some examples

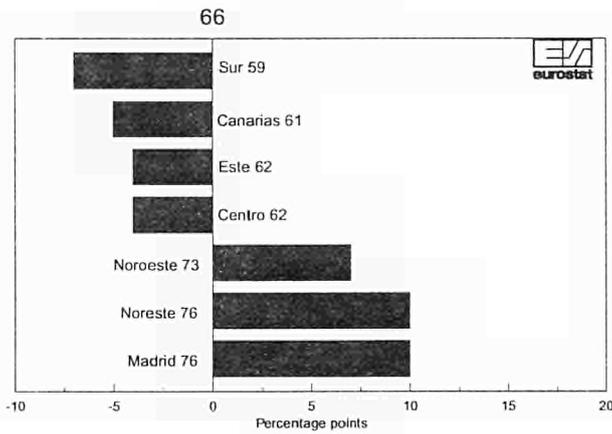
Germany



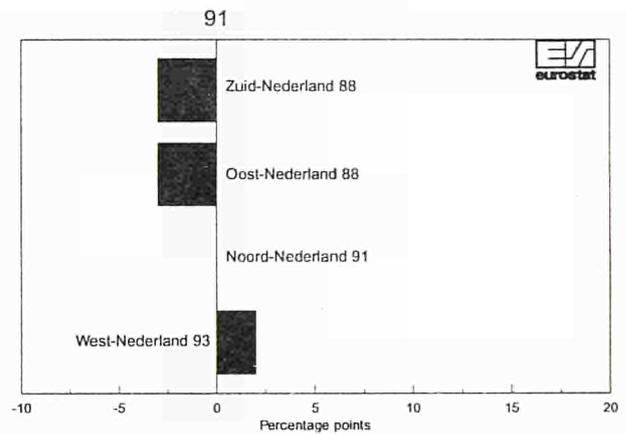
France



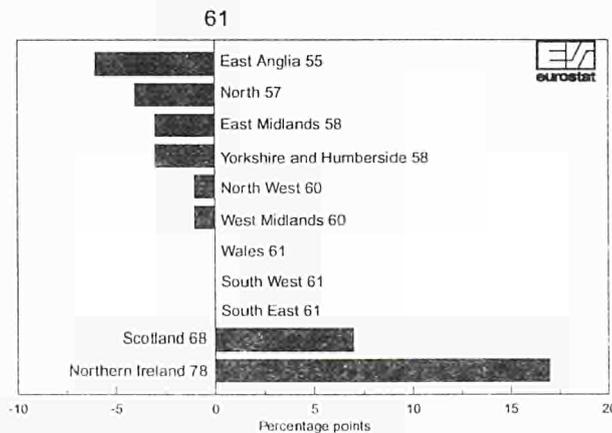
Spain



Netherlands



United Kingdom



At regional level, it is not possible to provide estimates for private independent schools and Youth Training within enterprises. For the purposes of this chart, the UK national figure therefore exclude estimates for these two categories of students.

The difference between the highest and lowest regional participation rate within each country was 14 percentage points in Germany, 17 in Spain and 23 in the United Kingdom. For example, in Spain, while Madrid and Noreste had participation rates of 76%, only 59% of the 16-18 year old population in Sur were enrolled in education or training in that region.

By contrast, in the two other Member States where regional data were available, the picture is relatively homogeneous. In France and the Netherlands, only 6 and 5 percentage points respectively separated the highest and lowest regional participation rates in each country.

It is important to bear in mind, particularly for regions that border large towns or cities, that the participation rates are calculated by dividing the number of pupils enrolled in a region by the resident population in that region. As some young people may be resident in one region and in education in another, this inter-regional mobility may influence the results.

Regional data at NUTS 1 level are not applicable for DK, IRL and L

Equal opportunities in education

The participation of females in post-compulsory schooling provides a useful indication as to the degree of equal opportunities in education. Indeed, in the European Union, females are much more likely to remain in education at the end of their compulsory schooling than males, with 82% of females aged 16-18 in education or training in 1991/92 compared with 78% of males.

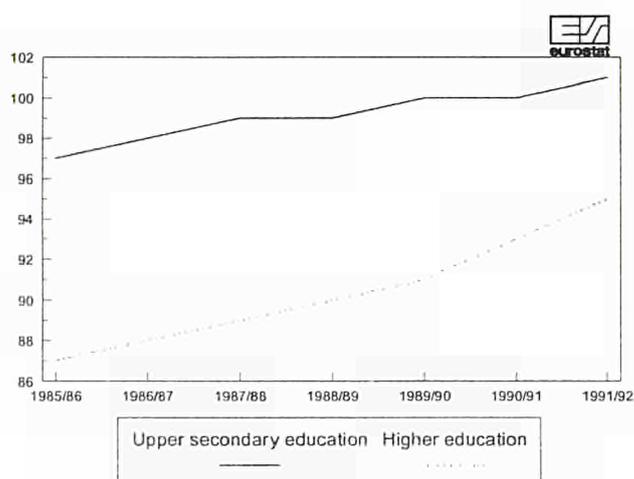
In four Member States (Spain, France, Ireland and Portugal), the differences in participation between the sexes were considerable. Participation rates of 16-18 year old females in these countries were at least 7 percentage points higher than those of their male counterparts. For the other Member States where data were available, the differences were minimal (Table 2).

Table 2:
Participation rates (in education or training) of 16-18 year olds by sex (1991/92)

	EUR12	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	UK
Females (%)	82	90*	82	92	:	70	93	76	:	67	90	60	71
Males (%)	78	90*	80	95	:	62	85	69	:	65	92	42	72
Difference (% points)	4	0	2	-3	:	8	8	7	:	2	-2	18	-1

EUR12 excluding GR and I; see notes to table 1

Chart 4:
Females per 100 males in upper secondary and higher education (1985/86 and 1991/92), EUR12

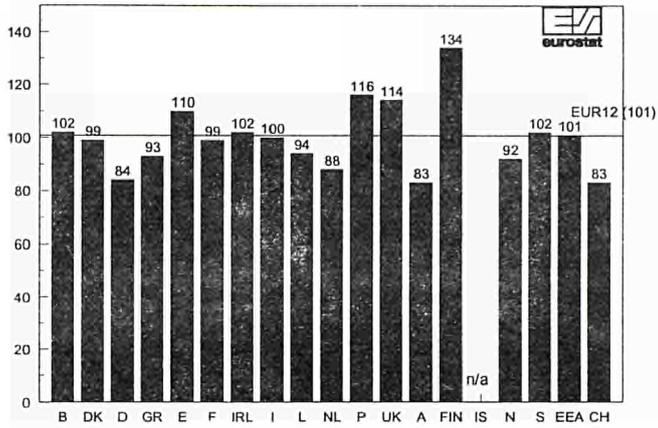


excluding new German Länder

This is the result of a trend in which the inequality of opportunities between males and females has been significantly reduced (Chart 4). Even in the relatively short period between 1985/86 and 1991/92, the number of females per 100 males in the EU increased from 97 to 101 in upper secondary and from 87 to 95 in higher education.

There are, however, large cross-country differences. In upper secondary education, figures range from 83 females per 100 males in Austria and Switzerland and 84 in Germany to 116 females per 100 males in Portugal (Chart 5).

Chart 5:
Females per 100 males in upper secondary education (1991/92)



P - 1990/91

A breakdown of general and vocational education at the upper secondary level shows that females tend to continue in general education rather than opt for vocational education and training. In the European Union, there were 114 females per 100 males in general education compared with only 94 females per 100 males in vocational education and training (1991/92). This phenomenon was true in all EEA Member States, with the exception of the United Kingdom (Table 3).

In higher education, there were 95 females per 100 males in the EU in 1991/92 (96 for the EEA). The corresponding figure for the population as a whole in this age group (18-24) was 96. Higher education can thus be regarded as a stronghold of equal opportunities although there are significant differences among countries (Chart 6): while females are particularly over-represented in Portugal (153 per 100 males), Sweden (117), France (116), Norway (114), Finland (112) and Denmark (111), they are considerably under-represented in Germany (71) and Switzerland (54) (in some countries, the ratio may be affected by national service).

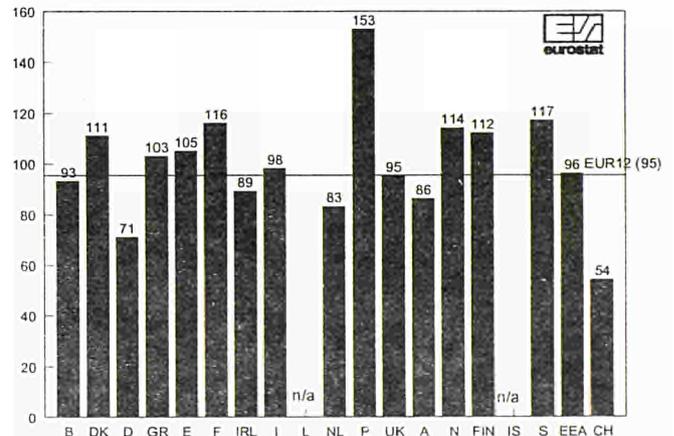
Table 3:
Number of females per 100 males in upper secondary by type of education (1991/92)

	Vocational	General
EUR12	94	114
B	96	114
DK	81	145
D	79	109
GR	52	125
E	105	114
F	79	128
IRL	89	106
I	92	124
L	83	116
NL	78	116
P	60	130
UK	129	98
A	80	98
FIN	123	147
IS	:	:
N	75	124
S	94	109
EEA	94	114
CH	71	125

P - 1990/91



Chart 6:
Females per 100 males in higher education (1991/92)



Foreign language learning in general secondary education

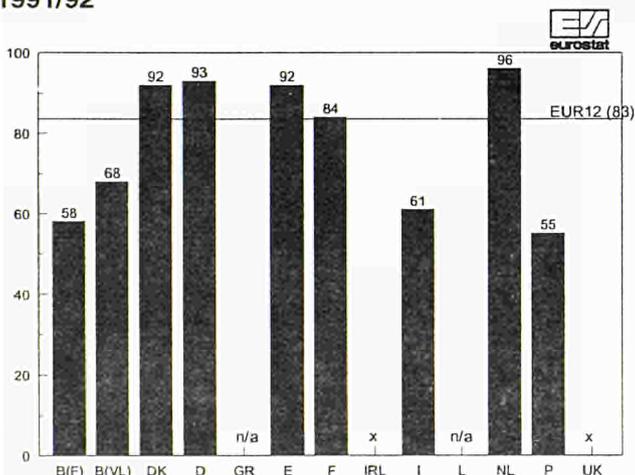
In the European Union in 1991/92, pupils enrolled in general secondary education (both compulsory and post-compulsory) were learning, on average², 1.2 modern foreign languages. While pupils in five Member States were learning on average around one modern foreign language in 1991/92 (varying from 0.8 in Portugal and 0.9 in the United Kingdom to 1.0 in Spain, Ireland and Italy), the figures were significantly higher in Germany (1.3), among the French Community in Belgium and France (1.4), Denmark (1.6), and particularly among the Flemish Community in Belgium (1.9) and the Netherlands (2.2).

Of the pupils enrolled in general secondary education in the Union in 1991/92, 83% were learning English as a foreign language, 32% French and 16% German.

English was the most widely-taught modern foreign language in all relevant countries (Chart 7), with the exception of the Flemish Community in Belgium (studied by 68% of pupils). In four Member States (Denmark, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands), more than 90% of pupils were learning English.

In general, the second most 'popular' language was **French**. In Ireland (69%) and the United Kingdom (59%), French was by far the most widely-taught modern foreign language with over half the pupils learning it in 1991/92. Apart from the Flemish Community in Belgium (98%), the Netherlands (65%) was the only other country with

Chart 7:
Percentage of pupils in general secondary education learning English as a foreign language in 1991/92

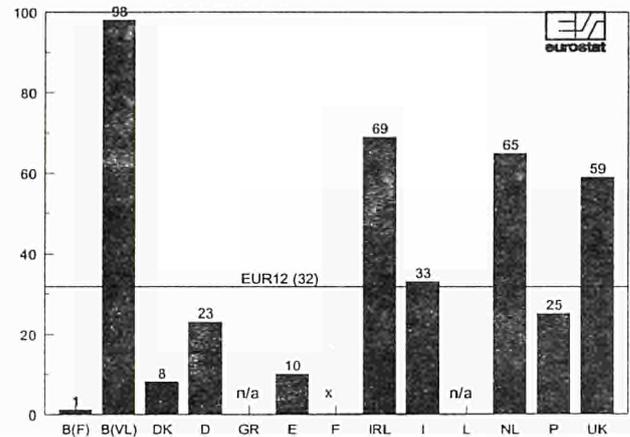


Notes:

- B(F): French-speaking Community (includes small German speaking Community)
- B(VL): Flemish-speaking Community
- D: excluding Brandenburg, Sachsen-Anhalt and Thüringen
- IRL: full-time only
- UK: England and Scotland only
- EUR12: excluding GR and L

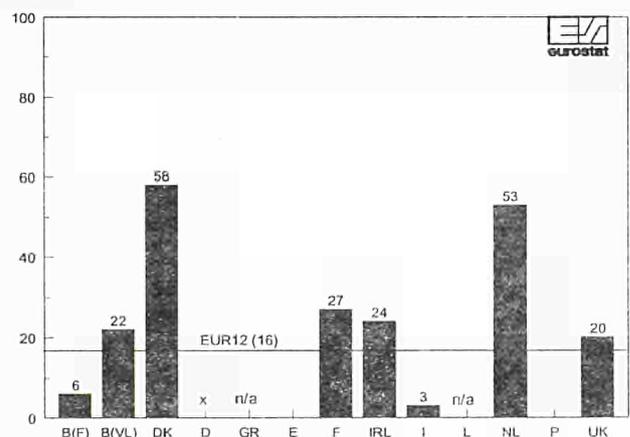
more than one-third of its pupils learning French. Between 23-33% of pupils in Germany, Portugal and Italy were also studying French. The lowest figures (10% or less) were found in Denmark and Spain (Chart 8).

Chart 8:
Percentage of pupils in general secondary education learning French as a foreign language in 1991/92



More than half the pupils in Denmark (58%) and the Netherlands (53%) were learning **German** in 1991/92. German was also being studied by between 20-35% of pupils in the United Kingdom, Ireland and France (Chart 9). There was very little learning of German in Spain, Italy and Portugal.

Chart 9:
Percentage of pupils in general secondary education learning German as a foreign language in 1991/92



² The average number of foreign languages being studied by each pupil at one point in time (as opposed to those studied throughout their secondary schooling)

Crossing educational frontiers

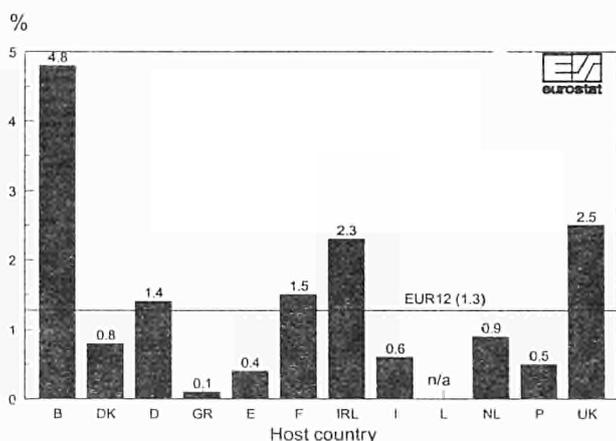
In 1991/92, 1.3% of students enrolled in higher education in the European Union were citizens of another EU country (some 115 000 students). The corresponding figure in 1985/86 was 1.1% (around 80 000 students). EU programmes promoting student mobility have undoubtedly had a positive effect.

There are two ways of looking at the 115 000 students: on the one hand, which Member States young people tend to study in (i.e. by host country - Chart 10); on the other, which EU citizens tend to study abroad (i.e. by citizenship - Chart 11).

There were significant differences between Member States in the numbers of students who were citizens of another Member State. Germany, France and the United Kingdom all had almost 30 000 while Italy (9000) and Spain (4500) had considerably fewer.

However, it is important to relate this figure to the size of the student population in each Member State: Belgium had by far the largest percentage (4.8% or 13 000 students), followed by the United Kingdom (2.5%) and Ireland (2.3%). The other Member States had 1.5% or less of their student population coming from another Member State (Chart 10).

Chart 10:
Percentage of students in higher education who were citizens of another EU Member State (1991/92) - by host country



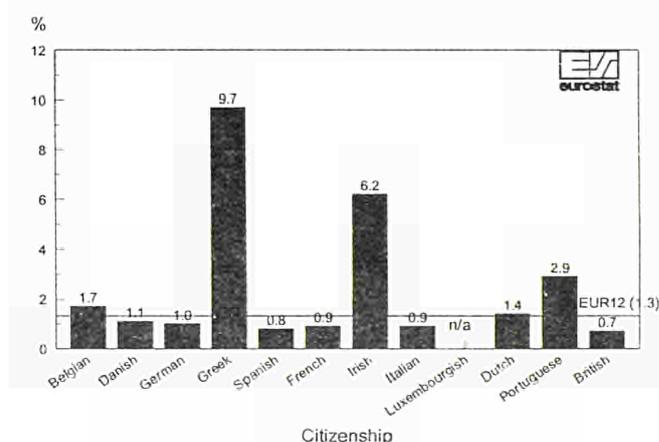
Which EU citizens tend to study abroad? Figures show that Greek, Irish and Luxembourg students are much more likely to study abroad (within the EU) than other EU students (Chart 11).

Luxembourg is a unique case in that only a limited amount of higher education (the first one or two years of some courses) takes place in the country and students are therefore obliged to leave the country in order to continue their studies. Around 20 000 students with Greek citizenship were enrolled in higher education in one of the other Member States of the Union. They represented 10% of the Greek student population. The 5000 Irish students abroad in the EU represented 6% of the Irish student population. It is important to note that more than 85% of them were enrolled in the United Kingdom.

The five most populous countries, namely Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the United Kingdom had very similar percentages of students enrolled in another EU Member State ranging from 0.7% to 1.0%.

The data presented do not provide a precise measure of student mobility. On the one hand, the number of students enrolled in an EU Member State other than their own is underestimated, partly because, in some countries, it is not possible to identify the citizenship of students in certain types of higher education, e.g., non-university education in France. On the other hand, the data may overstate the degree of student mobility as children of migrants are included.

Chart 11:
Percentage of students in higher education studying in another EU Member State (1991/92) - by citizenship



Further information: "Eurostat yearbook 94", 1st edition (forthcoming), "Regions - statistical yearbook", Eurostat 1994 (in print)

Explanatory notes

The statistics in this report refer to full-time and part-time education in the ordinary school and university system as defined in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Data on pre-primary education (ISCED 0) have been excluded from this report because of comparability problems.

: or n/a not available

. or x not applicable

* provisional or estimated figure

In Ireland and the United Kingdom, citizenship is based on permanent residence, while for the other Member States, it is based on the student's passport.

Pupils and students (1)(2) (in 1000)

	EUR 12	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	UK	A	FIN	IS	N	S	EEA	CH
1975/76	67249	2143	977	13121	1736	7481	11047	748	10748	49	3811	1746	13642	1553	988	57	804	1247	71898	:
1980/81	67477	2093	1040	12797	1765	8373	11388	808	10900	50	3888	1826	12549	1472	944	56	853	1301	72103	1204
1985/86	65234	2103	1006	11233	1890	9073	11299	853	10300	50	3714	1987	11726	1368	923	57	822	1429	69833	1127
1990/91	63878	2056	948	10614	1868	8840	11675	877	9632	49	3553	1970	11794	1323	983	61	843	1366	68093	1116
1991/92	64495	2050	933	10738	1861	8777	11791	889	9553	49	3537	2024*	12295	1352	1013	62	850	1382	69154	1127
1991/92 (3)	67103			13346															71762	

Pupils and students by level 1991/92 (3) (in 1000)

Primary education (ISCED 1)	22386	712	327	3438	791	2662	4110	409	3004	25	1408	941*	4560	379	393	26	308	584	24076	414
Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	16637	373	235	4648	443	1987	3275	203	2152	12	753	496*	2060	357	207	12	157	293	17663	275
Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	17783	617	221	2874	422	2786	2480	168	2858	11	773	396*	4177	400	240	18	228	297	18966	288
Higher education (ISCED 5, 6, 7)	9516	286	150	2034	200	1302	1840	101	1533	1	494	191*	1385	217	174	6	154	207	10274	143

Non-nationals in higher education 1991/92 (1)(4)

Citizenship:	EUR 12	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	UK	A	FIN	IS	N	S	EEA	CH
EUR 12	:	13051	1096	27048	102	4435	23879	1768	8316	.	4065	594	29795	10464	317	:	1476	:	:	14901
Belgian	:	.	15	790	0	182	1242	34	236	.	700	37	977	34	9	:	11	:	:	213
Danish	:	35	.	.	0	28	329	20	44	.	73	8	612	39	21	:	567	:	:	50
German (3)	:	513	535	.	69	1347	5674	273	1476	.	1710	90	5853	4881	128	:	262	:	:	5515
Greek	:	898	16	7090	.	29	2631	14	5172	.	103	8	5053	406	12	:	20	:	:	430
Spanish	:	1339	18	3071	0	.	2957	116	153	.	313	71	2334	87	15	:	31	:	:	1077
French	:	2734	83	4158	5	1508	.	169	644	.	193	293	5590	157	23	:	70	:	:	2836
Irish	:	28	19	366	0	42	370	.	20	.	17	0	5554	17	6	:	11	:	:	38
Italian	:	3649	43	4293	12	365	2434	24	.	.	300	16	1775	4381	27	:	34	:	:	3741
Luxembourgish	:	1307	2	1139	3	7	999	10	26	.	18	15	187	260	1	:	0	:	:	202
Dutch	:	1946	58	2377	4	183	790	20	105	.	.	6	1207	66	18	:	115	:	:	267
Portuguese	:	321	7	955	0	170	3349	4	32	.	74	.	653	20	4	:	14	:	:	216
British	:	281	300	2376	9	574	3104	1084	408	.	564	50	.	116	53	:	341	:	:	316

(1) Excluding the new German Länder unless otherwise stated

(2) Total of all levels including special education (data on pre-primary have been excluded due to comparability problems)

(3) Including the new German Länder

(4) B, GR - 1990/91 data; P - 1989/90 data; IRL, UK - full-time education only; E, F, I, A, FIN - universities only; see also text and notes on page 7