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How to tackle early school leaving (ESL) in the EU

Identifying future challenges and providing recommendations on how to tackle ESL.

A study commissioned by the Committee on Education
MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Persisting challenges can be addressed by:

• Setting up registers on absenteeism to allow the systematic monitoring of ESL, and to establish targeted national and system level responses.

• Promoting more sustained, cross-governmental co-operation to foster a comprehensive policy approach.

• Countries should ideally adopt policies that target youth, social inclusion, education, and labour market areas.

• More understanding and further efforts by schools to make education and training more accessible to harder-to-reach groups of students.

• Focus more on efforts at the national and the system level to help those groups of students most at risk, to reduce the chances of their leaving school or training early.

To provide training and guidance to teachers in
• how to keep engaging students from different backgrounds.

• Better and more continuous training of teachers in recognising the signs of students at risk.

For the European Parliament a recommendation would be to try to promote the implementation of such policy measures, and to work with other EU institutions to raise the awareness of the different funds and EU supports.

ABSTRACT

Since 2011, the individual level drivers have not changed much over time. The influence of gender and nationality on an individual’s likeliness of leaving school early are broadly recognised. The driver of socio-economic background was found to be one of the strongest drivers of ESL by academic research, and is also commonly cited as an individual level cause of ESL across the EU.

However, the effects of the economic crisis have settled to a large degree, and labour markets exercise different push and pull forces on students compared to 2011, when unemployment, and especially youth unemployment was higher in the EU. This driver and the effect of the unemployment rate on the decision to leave school early interacts strongly with a pupil’s socio-economic background.

FOCUS ON

This study is an update on early school leaving in the EU. It reviews the main developments and causes of the problem since the Council Recommendation of 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, and identifies policy initiatives taken by the Member States to address it.

The study explores the interplay between early school leaving and public investment and lastly outlines recommendations to address future challenges. The study takes into consideration European and national literature focusing on six Member States.

Comments on this study are welcome at: poldep-cohesion@europarl.europa.eu

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The full study is available here: http://bit.ly/2TK8WhE