

Adult Education Survey 2006, European comparison

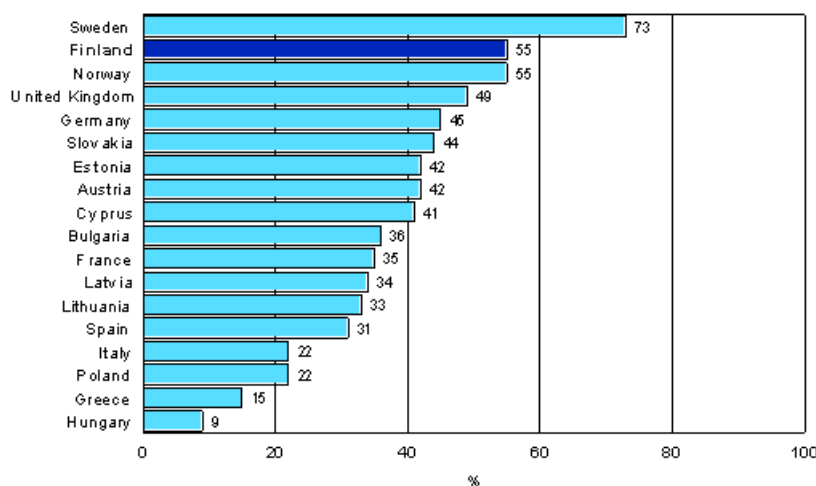
Adults in the Nordic countries actively participate in education and training

Persons aged 25 to 64 who live in the Nordic countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden) participated in formal or non-formal education and training more often than other persons living in Europe. Swedes were the most active when it came to education and training, with nearly three in four having participated in education and training over a period of one year. The participation rate exceeded 50 per cent in Finland and Norway, too. The United Kingdom came closest to the Nordic countries with around one in two participating in education and training. This information is from the findings of the European Adult Education Survey (EU-AES), which was carried out in 29 European countries between 2005 and 2008.

Persons aged 25 to 64 living in the United Kingdom were the most active when it came to participating in education and training leading to a qualification (formal education and training), with around 15 per cent of the persons in this group participating. People living in the Nordic countries were the second most active participants in formal education and training: Sweden's participation rate was 13 per cent and Finland's and Norway's were three percentage points less.

Education and training that does not lead to a qualification (non-formal education and training) is significantly more common among persons aged 25 to 64 living in the Nordic countries than those living elsewhere in Europe. Sweden is in a class of its own with respect to participation in this type of education and training, with around seven out of ten people participating. In Finland and Norway more than one in two participated. Germany and Slovakia were the only other countries whose participation rates exceeded 40 per cent.

Participation in formal or non-formal education and training during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64)



Of those persons aged 25 to 64 who participated in education and training, those living in Hungary received the most hours of instruction – an average of 220 hours. In Poland and Spain, participants received over 170 hours of instruction on average. 150 hours was also exceeded in Latvia, Finland and Sweden.

Calculated per person, the highest number of hours of instruction was provided in the Nordic countries. The number of instruction hours was highest in Sweden: 114 hours per person. In Finland, persons aged 25 to 64 received 86 hours of instruction on average, and in Norway it was ten hours less.

In formal education and training that leads persons aged 25 to 64 living in Germany received by far the most hours of instruction per participant, while in non-formal education and training persons in the same age bracket living in Spain and Hungary received the most hours of instruction per participant. In formal education and training, people living in Sweden received the greatest number of hours of instruction per person. Next in order were Germany, Finland and Norway. In non-formal education and training, the most hours of instruction per person were received in the Nordic countries. For persons living in Sweden and Finland, the number of hours of instruction per person was almost the same (approximately 50 hours), while in Norway the figure was approximately 10 hours lower.

Finns pay the least for their education and training. Persons aged 25 to 64 living in Finland and participating in education and training paid on average less than EUR 300 for their education and training during the survey year. Also in Latvia, Bulgaria and Lithuania, the out-of-pocket payments of those participating in education and training remained below EUR 400. Persons living in Greece and Norway paid the most – more than EUR 1,500 – per participant.

Formal education and training, in particular, was inexpensive for participants in Finland. In this form of education and training, the average share paid for was just EUR 150 per participant in Finland whereas, out of the other comparison countries, it was only in Sweden and Latvia that the amount remained just under EUR 400.

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1. A total of 29 countries participated in the European Adult Education Survey

In Finland, the 2006 Adult Education Survey was the fifth survey in succession to study the adult population's participation in education and training, education and training and know-how. The first four surveys were joint ventures with the Ministry of Education, and were implemented mainly with the ministry's funding. The 2006 Adult Education Survey was part of the *European Union Adult Education Survey* (EU-AES) which was carried out for the first time in 29 countries in the EU and coordinated and mainly funded by Eurostat. The information was collected between 2005 and 2008. In November 2008 [Eurostat](#) published results for the first 18 countries in table format on its website.

The results presented in this review are based on the data published by Eurostat.

The results of Finland's own national Adult Education Survey were presented on [Statistics Finland's website](#) and in the publication¹⁾.

The results of the European Adult Education Survey (EU-AES) on Finland diverge somewhat from the previously published results of the national Adult Education Survey. This is due to the following two matters:

1. Different population

The population of the survey co-ordinated by Eurostat comprises persons aged 25 to 64 permanently resident in the country. The population of the national Adult Education Survey comprised persons aged 18 to 64.

2. Different indicators

2. Different indicators In the national Adult Education Survey, the concepts adult education, employer-sponsored training and job- or occupation-related training were used. In the EU-AES project, on the other hand, education and training are classified based on whether or not they lead to a qualification, and the concepts formal education and training, which leads to a qualification and non-formal education and training, which do not lead to a qualification, are used. The subject of the EU-AES was all training received by the adult population (persons aged 25 to 64), whereas the Finnish national Adult Education Survey has traditionally focused on education that has been arranged and organised for adults, i.e. adult education. The concept of the national Adult Education Survey is determined on the basis of the organisation providing education or the system of arranging the education (see Concepts and definitions at [Statistics Finland's website](#)).

The results presented in this review include the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Slovakia only provided information on the number of instruction hours in education and training that leads to a qualification, and information on the cost of education and training was not available for France and Italy.

The following section examines participation in education and training during a 12-month period, the number of instruction hours received in education and training, and the cost of education and training in different countries.

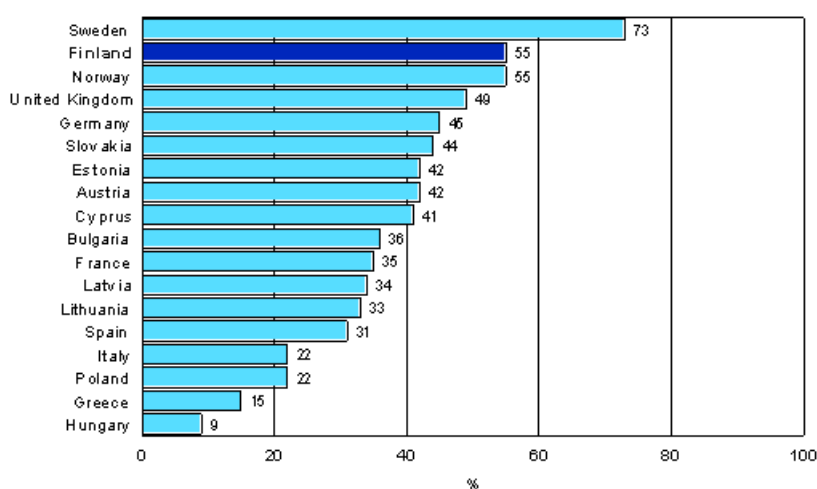
¹⁾Pohjanpää - Niemi - Ruuskanen: Participation in adult education and training. Adult Education Survey 2006. Education 2008. Statistics Finland, Helsinki.

2. Participation of the adult population in education and training

2.1 Participation in formal or non-formal education and training

Participation in formal or non-formal education and training during the survey year was by far the highest in Sweden. During 12 months, nearly three in four persons aged 25 to 64 living in Sweden participated in education and training. Next are the other Nordic countries included in the comparison – Finland and Norway – both of which had the same participation rate. In these countries, more than half of persons aged 25 to 64 participated in formal or non-formal education and training. In the United Kingdom, one in two persons participated in formal or non-formal education and training. The smallest proportion of participants in education and training was in Hungary, where just one in ten persons participated

Figure 1. Participation in formal or non-formal education and training during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64)



In the Nordic and Baltic countries, women were typically more active than men in educating and training themselves. The participation rate of women was higher than that of men also in the United Kingdom. However, in Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany and France, men participated in formal or non-formal education and training more often than women.

In all the comparison countries, persons with a tertiary-level degree have participated in formal or non-formal education and training much more often than persons with primary or secondary education (Annex Table 1). In Sweden, persons aged 25 to 64 with all levels of basic education participated in education and training more often than others. Even among those Swedes who have only completed primary school, more than half participated in education and training during the survey year. It is notable that their participation rate (56 per cent) is as high as that of all persons aged 25 to 64 in Finland and Norway on average. In all countries other than Hungary and Greece, the participation rate of persons with a tertiary-level degree was over 50 per cent.

In the countries with the highest participation rate in formal or non-formal education and training (the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom), the differences in the participation rates of persons with different levels of basic education were lowest in relative terms. The same trend can also be observed at the other end of the scale, i.e. in Poland, Greece and Hungary, where participation was lowest; here the relative differences in participation rates were the greatest. Therefore, a high participation rate would seem to increase equality in education and training.

In all the comparison countries, persons aged 55 to 64 participated in formal or non-formal education and training less often than those in the other age groups. The relative differences in participation rates between countries were also greater in this age group, than in other age groups. For example, while around six out of 10 persons aged 55 to 64 living in Sweden participated in education and training during the survey year; in Hungary, only 3 per cent of persons aged 55 to 64 participated. In nearly all the countries, persons aged 25 to

34 participated in education and training the most, though in some countries, persons aged 35 to 54 participated almost as often.

In all the comparison countries, employed persons participated in formal or non-formal education and training more often than unemployed persons and persons outside the labour force. Unemployed persons participated in education and training more often than persons outside the labour force everywhere except in Finland and Bulgaria, where these groups participated in education and training equally often. The largest relative differences in the participation rates of the labour market status groups were in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Lithuania, while the smallest relative differences were in Sweden, Austria and Norway. Therefore, the observation that a high participation rate implies a certain equality in education and training cannot be made as easily between persons with different labour market statuses as it can between the various levels of basic education.

Persons aged 25 to 64 living in urban and semi-urban areas participated in formal or non-formal education and training more often than those living in rural areas in nearly all the comparison countries. The exceptions were Germany, where persons living in rural and urban areas participated in education and training more often than those living in semi-urban areas, and the United Kingdom, where the classification of the municipality of residence did not affect the rate of participation in education and training. However, the differences in the rate of participation in education and training by type of municipality of residence were relatively small. For example, the differences in participation rates between the inhabitants of urban and rural communities exceeded 10 per cent only in Cyprus, Lithuania, Norway and Poland.

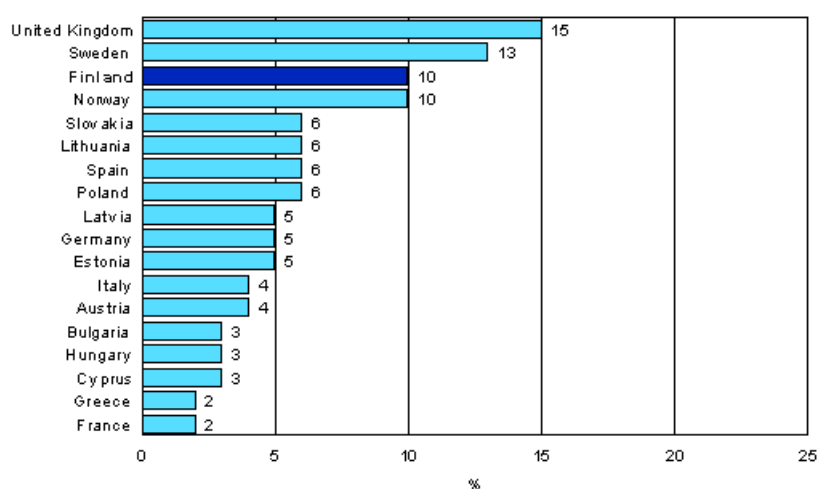
2.2 Participation in formal education and training

During the survey year, persons aged 25 to 64 living in the United Kingdom and the Nordic countries were clearly the most active participants in formal education and training, i.e. education and training that leads to a qualification (Figure 2). In the United Kingdom, around one in seven persons studied with the aim of acquiring a qualification, in Sweden around one in eight, and in Finland and Norway around one in 10.

In Finland, the majority, or 70 per cent, of education and training that leads to a qualification in this age group is education and training that leads to a tertiary degree. Around one in three persons aged 25 to 64 who participated in formal education and training identified studying as their principal activity.

The countries with the lowest participation in education and training that leads to a qualification were certain southern European countries (Greece, France, Cyprus) and Bulgaria and Hungary. In these countries, only 2-3 per cent of persons aged 25 to 64 participated in education and training that leads to a qualification.

Figure 2. Participation in formal education and training during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64)



It was typical for women in the United Kingdom and the Nordic countries to participate in formal education and training more often than men (Annex Table 2). In Sweden, women's participation rate (16 per cent) was six percentage points higher than the corresponding figure for men. In the United Kingdom, women led by five

percentage points, and in Finland and Norway, they led by four percentage points. It was also more common for women to participate than men in Slovakia and the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). On the other hand, men in Cyprus and Germany participated in education and training that leads to a qualification more often than women.

Persons with a tertiary degree participated in formal education and training somewhat more often than others in all countries other than Finland, where their participation rate was almost the same as that of persons with a secondary degree (persons with a tertiary degree 13%, persons with a secondary degree 12%). The differences in the participation rates of persons with basic-level education of different lengths were especially great in Cyprus, France, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. In all of these countries, the rate of participation in formal education and training by persons with a tertiary degree was at least three times the participation rate of persons with a secondary degree, for example.

In all the countries included in the survey, persons aged 25 to 34 were clearly the most active when it came to participating in education and training that leads to a qualification. Persons aged 35 to 54 living in the United Kingdom and Sweden participated in formal education and training more often than persons of the same age in other countries. In the United Kingdom, the participation rate for this age group was 15 per cent and in Sweden it was 11 per cent. In the other countries, the participation rates varied between one and nine per cent. In the oldest age group, 55 to 64, persons living in the United Kingdom were clearly more active in participating in formal education and training. Of these, around 8 per cent studied with the aim of obtaining a degree during the study year, whereas in the other comparison countries, the participation rates ranged between zero and three per cent.

Labour force status affects participation in formal education and training in different ways in different countries. In the Nordic countries, for example, persons outside the labour force were the most active in participating in education and training. The situation was the same in Bulgaria and Germany. However, in a number of former Eastern Bloc countries (Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland) and the United Kingdom, employed persons were the most active in participating in formal education and training. In Italy and Cyprus, unemployed persons participated in education and training that leads to a qualification more often than employed persons and persons outside the labour force.

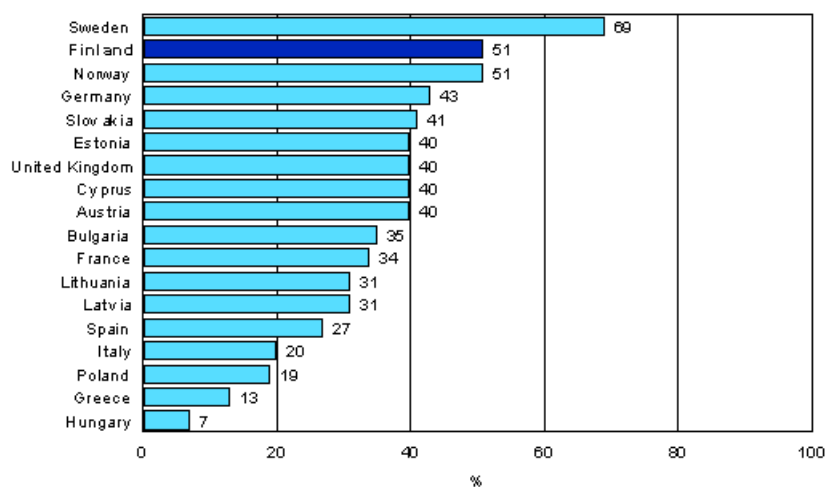
In nearly all the countries, residents of urban areas participated in formal education and training more frequently than others. The exceptions are Bulgaria, where residents of semi-urban areas participated the most and Hungary, Lithuania and Norway, where residents of urban areas and semi-urban areas were equally as active in studying with the aim of obtaining a degree.

2.3 Participation in non-formal education and training

The highest rate of participation in non-formal education and training (that does not lead to a qualification) was in the Nordic countries (Figure 3). People participated in this kind of education and training clearly more often in Sweden than in the other countries. Among the persons living there aged 25 to 64, around seven in 10 people studied for reasons other than to obtain a degree. In Finland and Norway, around one in two participated in such education and training. The participation rate also exceeded 40 per cent in Germany and Slovakia. The lowest participation rates in education and training that does not lead to a qualification were in Hungary, Greece and Poland. In these countries, the participation rate remained below 20 per cent and, in the case of Hungary, even below 10 per cent.

In Finland, the most typical form of non-formal education and training is personnel training financed in part or in full by the employer.

Figure 3. Participation in (non-formal) education and training that does not lead to a qualification during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64)



In Finland and the Baltic countries, women generally participated in non-formal education and training much more frequently than men (Annex Table 3). In Finland, the difference was approximately 12 percentage points in favour of women, while in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia the difference ranged from eight to 12 percentage points. In four countries (Austria, Cyprus, Germany and Slovakia) men participated in this kind of education and training slightly more often than women: the differences in the participation rates were between four and five percentage points. In most countries, the differences between the sexes in rates of participation in non-formal education and training were negligible.

In all the comparison countries, persons who have a tertiary-level degree participated much more frequently than others in education and training that does not lead to a qualification. If we compare the participation rates of persons who have a tertiary-level diploma with those of people who have completed only primary-level education, we can note that the relative differences are greatest in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Poland. In all these countries, the participation rate of persons who have a tertiary-level diploma was at least five times higher than the participation rate of those who have completed only primary-level education, and the figure is 12 times as high in Poland. Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom were the only countries in which this relative difference in participation rates between persons who have a tertiary-level degree and those who have completed only primary-level education was less than double.

In all the comparison countries, persons aged 55 to 64 were the least active participants in education and training that does not lead to a qualification. In six countries (Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Poland), the participation rate of this oldest age group was less than half that of persons aged 25 to 54. Among persons aged 55 to 64, those living in Sweden were by far the most active participants in non-formal education and training. In Sweden, around six people in 10 in this age group participated in education and training during the survey year, while in Norway and Sweden, around four people in 10 in this age group participated. In the oldest age group, participation was lowest in Hungary (3 per cent), Greece (5 per cent) and Poland (7 per cent).

In most of the comparison countries, no difference was discernible between in the participation in non-formal education and training by persons aged 25 to 34 and persons aged 35 to 54.

In all the comparison countries, employed persons participated significantly more often than others in education and training that does not lead to a qualification. Moreover, in nearly all the countries, the participation rate of unemployed persons was higher than that of persons outside the labour force. The relative difference in the rates of participation in non-formal education and training between employed persons and unemployed persons was greatest in Bulgaria and Slovakia. In Bulgaria, the participation rate of employed persons was eight times as high as the participation rate of unemployed persons, while in Slovakia the rate was four times as high.

In most of the comparison countries, persons aged 25 to 64 living in urban or semi-urban areas participated more than average in education and training that does not lead to a qualification. A notable exception is Germany, where residents of rural communities were the most active participants in education and training. In Austria,

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and the United Kingdom, the residents of semi-urban areas participated the most in education and training that does not lead to a qualification. In Spain, Hungary and Sweden the type of municipality of residence had no bearing on the rate of participation in education and training.

3. Volume of education and training

The volume of education and training is examined here in two ways: as the number of hours of instruction spent by the participant on education or training and as the expected value of instruction hours, i.e. as the number of hours of instruction per person.

The number of hours of instruction per participant refers to the number of hours of instruction the person participating in education or training received on average during the 12 months preceding the survey. The expected value of instruction hours can be calculated with the following formula:

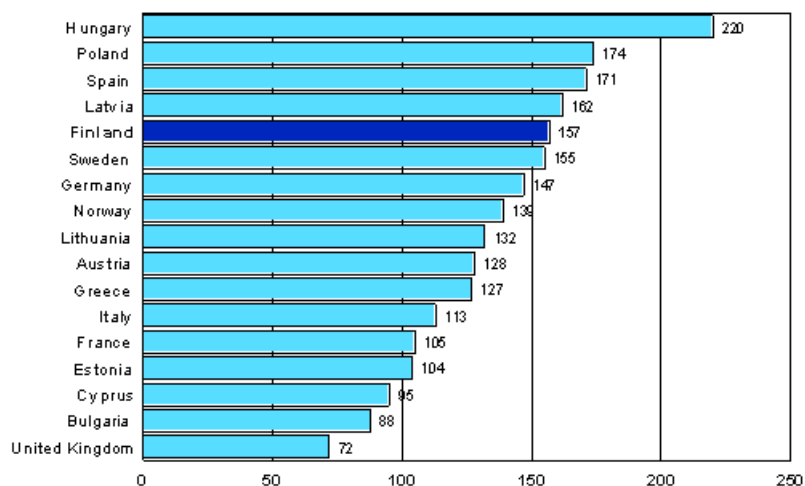
Expected value of instruction hours in category i = (Number of participants in category i / Number of persons belonging to category i) x Average number of hours of instruction for participants in category i

In practice, the expected value of instruction hours involves multiplying the average number of instruction hours by the participation rate, in which case the resulting indicator expresses the number of hours of instruction per person, either in the entire population or in the category of some background variable.

3.1 Volume of formal or non-formal education and training per participant

Among those participating in formal or non-formal education and training, the highest number of hours of instruction was received by persons aged 25 to 64 living in Hungary, whose average number of hours of instruction was a staggering 220 hours. Residents of Poland and Spain received the second highest number of instruction hours (Figure 4). Finland was the fifth comparison country in this sequence, with an average of 157 hours of instruction. The lowest numbers of hours of instruction per participant were received in the United Kingdom, Bulgaria and Cyprus, where the average number of hours was below 100.

Figure 4. Number of instruction hours in formal or non-formal education and training per participant during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64 that participated in formal or non-formal education and training)



The youngest age group of participants in formal or non-formal education and training – persons aged 25 to 34 – received the most hours of instruction in all the comparison countries. Correspondingly, the number of hours of instruction for the oldest age group (persons aged 55 to 64) was lowest in all the countries other than Cyprus, Estonia and Greece. In these countries, the average number of instruction hours for persons aged 55 to 64 was the same as it was for persons aged 35 to 54.

In approximately half of the comparison countries, the average number of instruction hours for participants in formal or non-formal education and training who have a tertiary-level diploma was higher than for those with lower-level basic education (Annex Table 4). The biggest differences were in Bulgaria and Cyprus, where the average number of hours of instruction for participants with a tertiary-level diploma was more than twice as high as it was for others. Persons with a secondary degree received more hours of instruction than others on average in Finland, Greece and Hungary. In Austria, Germany, Lithuania and Norway, persons aged 25 to 64

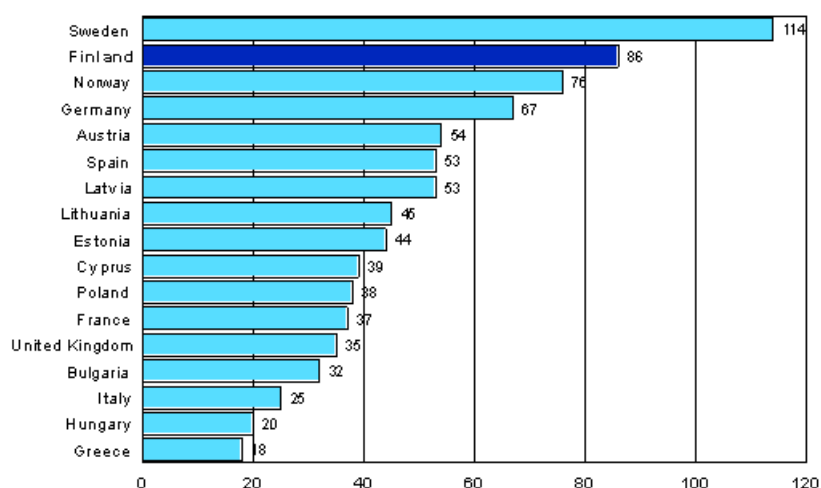
who have completed only primary-level education received the highest number of hours of instruction. Residents of the United Kingdom received the most equal number of hours of instruction, regardless of basic education.

Persons aged 25 to 64 who are outside the labour force had more instruction hours than others in nearly all the comparison countries. This result was expected, as the group in question includes full-time students. The exceptions to this rule were France, where the average number of hours of participation by unemployed persons was nearly double that of persons outside the labour force and quadruple that of employed persons, and the United Kingdom and Austria, where the average number of hours of instruction of unemployed persons and persons outside the labour force was about the same.

3.2 Volume of formal or non-formal education and training per person

The expected value of instruction hours in formal or non-formal education and training was also highest (114 hours) by a wide margin for persons aged 25 to 64 residing in Sweden (Figure 5). The Nordic countries performed well in this comparison, too, as Sweden was followed by Finland and then by Norway. The volume of education and training was lowest in Greece, Hungary and Italy. In Greece, the number of hours of instruction per person was less than 20 hours, i.e. less than one fifth of the corresponding figure in Sweden.

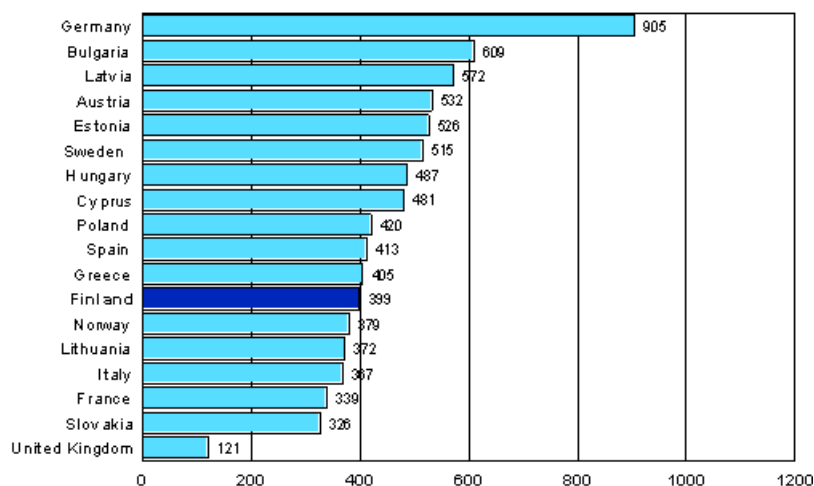
Figure 5. Number of instruction hours in formal or non-formal education and training (expected value) per person during 12 months in selected European countries in the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64)



3.3 Volume of formal education and training per participant

Calculated per participant in education and training, persons aged 25 to 64 residing in Germany received the highest number of hours of instruction in formal education and training (Figure 6). There, persons who participated in formal education and training received more than 900 hours of instruction per year on average. Persons living in Bulgaria received the next highest number of hours of instruction, although the average number of hours of instruction there (over 600) was substantially lower than the figure for Germany. With respect to the amount of teaching, Finland is clearly below average with around 400 hours of instruction. By far the lowest number of hours of instruction per participant was in the United Kingdom (121 hours), where the rate of participation in formal education and training was highest.

Figure 6. Number of instruction hours in formal education and training per participant during 12 months in selected European countries during the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64 that participated in formal education and training)



In most of the comparison countries, young people aged 25 to 34 received more hours of instruction than people older than them (Annex Table 5). There are of course some exceptions: among those who participated in formal education and training in Austria, Germany, Greece, Lithuania and Poland, those in the oldest age group (persons aged 55 to 64) received the most hours of instruction. However, in these countries, the participation rate of the age group was very low – under one per cent – with the exception of Germany. The high number of instruction hours may be explained by the fact that a handful of participants had numerous instruction hours and this has had a substantial impact on the average with the low number of participants.

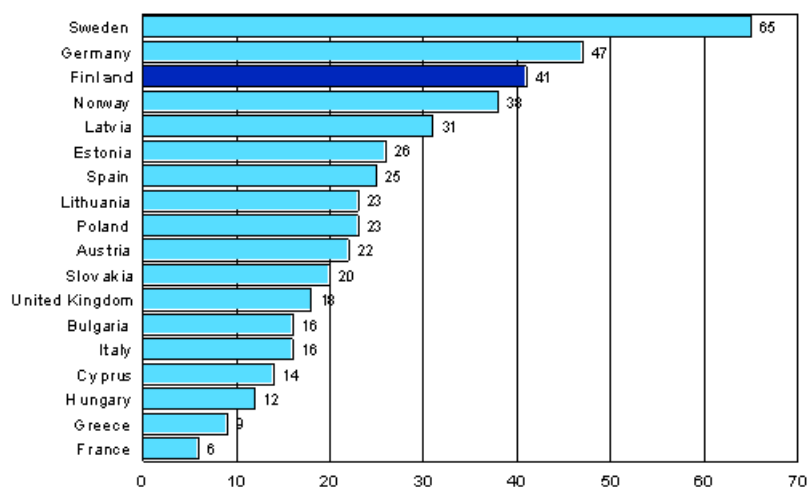
As the rate of participation in formal education and training was higher for persons with a tertiary-level degree than for others in nearly all the comparison countries, the situation regarding instruction hours was almost totally the opposite. In nearly all the countries, persons aged 25 to 64 with secondary-level or lower-level education received the highest number of hours of instruction per participant. Only in Cyprus, Latvia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom was the average number of hours of instruction higher for persons with a tertiary-level degree than it was for others.

Employed persons participating in formal education and training received fewer hours of instruction on average than unemployed persons and persons outside the labour force in nearly all the comparison countries. The exceptions were Bulgaria and Germany, and employed residents in these countries received slightly more hours of instruction than unemployed persons, although they did receive fewer hours of instruction than persons outside the labour force. In the majority of countries, the average number of hours of instruction per participant was highest for persons aged 25 to 64 who are outside the labour force. This is influenced by the fact that full-time students belong to this group. In Austria, Estonia and Lithuania, unemployed persons received the most hours of instruction per participant.

3.4 Volume of formal education and training per person

The expected value of instruction hours during the survey year was clearly the highest for persons aged 25 to 64 living in Sweden (Figure 7). They spent on average 65 hours per year in education and training leading to a qualification. Sweden was followed by Germany and the other Nordic countries Finland and Norway. However, the expected value remained below 50 hours in these countries. The lowest numbers of hours of education and training leading to a qualification were provided in Greece and France, and in both countries the expected value of instruction hours was less than 10 hours.

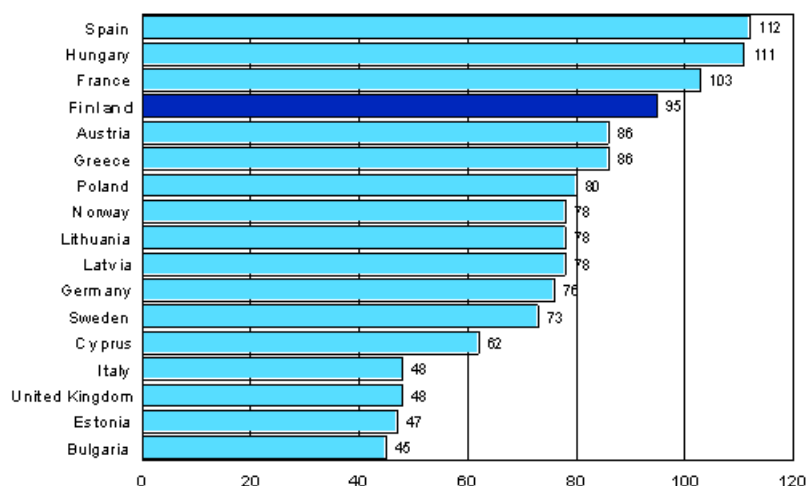
Figure 7. Number of instruction hours in formal education and training (expected value) per person during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64)



3.5 Volume of non-formal education and training per participant

The average number of hours of instruction in non-formal education and training, i.e. education and training that does not lead to a qualification, varied substantially between the comparison countries. Persons aged 25 to 64 living in Spain and Hungary received the most hours of instruction per participant. The average number of hours of instruction exceeded 110 hours in these countries (Figure 8). France was the only country in addition to these to reach an average of over 100 hours. Finland followed these three with an average of 95 hours of instruction. Those living in Bulgaria received the fewest hours of instruction per participant: 45 hours. Persons aged 25 to 64 living in Estonia, the United Kingdom and Italy also received fewer than 50 hours of instruction.

Figure 8. Number of instruction hours in non-formal education and training per participant during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64 that participated in non-formal education and training)



Young people aged 25 to 34 received more hours of instruction in non-formal education and training than people in older age groups in all the comparison countries except Estonia. In Estonia, persons in different age groups received approximately the same number of hours of instruction. The biggest relative differences between the youngest and oldest (persons aged 55 to 64) age groups in the number of hours of instruction per participant were in the United Kingdom and Bulgaria. In these countries, the average number of days of teaching for the youngest age group participating in education and training was around double that given to the oldest age group.

The connection between basic education and the number of hours of instruction in non-formal education and training varied from country to country. The rule of thumb is that either those who have completed only primary-level education or those who have a tertiary-level diploma receive the highest number of hours of

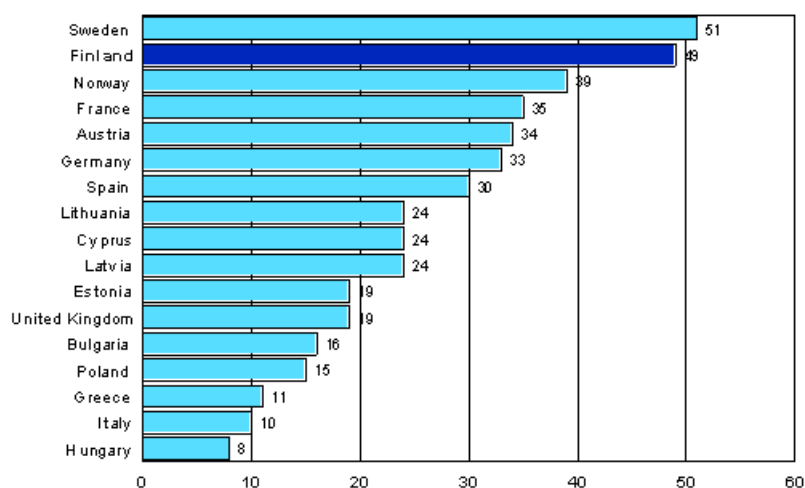
instruction; persons with a secondary-level degree do not receive the highest number of hours of instruction in any of the comparison countries. In Spain and Hungary, however, those who have a secondary-level degree and those who have a tertiary-level degree had the same number of hours of instruction on average, and more hours than those who have only completed primary-level education. When compared with the other categories of basic education, tertiary-level degree graduates in Bulgaria received the most hours of instruction, relatively speaking. The average number of hours of instruction they received was triple that received in other countries. Among those with only primary-level education, persons living in the United Kingdom and Germany received the most days of teaching in relative terms. In Finland, the average number of instruction hours for persons with different levels of basic education were very close to each other. Among persons with only primary-level education and those with a tertiary-level degree, the average number of hours of instruction was approximately 100, and among persons with a secondary-level degree the figure was some 10 hours lower.

Among those who participated in non-formal education and training, either unemployed persons or persons outside the labour force received the most hours of instruction in all the comparison countries (Annex Table 6). Finland and Bulgaria were the only countries in which persons outside the labour force received the most hours of instruction per participant, although in Sweden unemployed persons and persons outside the labour force received the same amount of instruction. The biggest relative differences in the number of hours of instruction in favour of unemployed persons were in Austria and France, where the average number of hours of instruction of unemployed persons was double that of employed persons and persons outside the labour force.

3.6 Volume of non-formal education and training per person

Persons aged 25 to 64 living in the Nordic countries had the highest expected value of instruction hours in non-formal education and training (Figure 9). In Sweden and Finland, the expected value was around 50 hours of instruction, and was 10 hours less in Norway. Hungary, Italy and Greece were the countries with the lowest participation in education and training that does not lead to a qualification. In these countries, the expected value of instruction hours was approximately 10 hours.

Figure 9. Number of instruction hours in non-formal education and training (expected value) per person during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64)



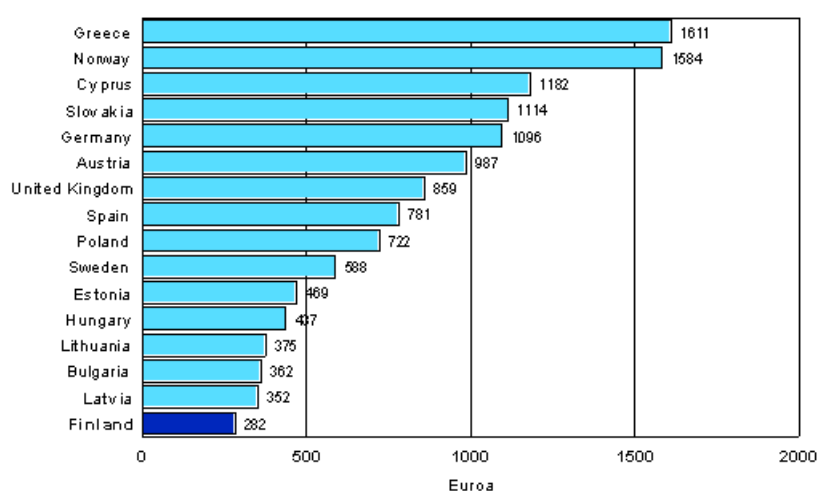
4. Costs of education and training

The costs of education and training are examined as the euro-denominated amount of money spent by the participant on education and training. Costs include participation and registration fees and study materials (books etc.) related to the education and training. It must be noted that this indicator does not take into account the differences in the available earnings of the inhabitants of various countries, and therefore, it does not measure the relative size of the contribution. For this reason, the results should not be analysed too closely, and should be considered indicative.

4.1 Costs of formal or non-formal education and training

Of those who participated in formal or non-formal education and training, persons aged 25 to 64 living in Greece and Norway spent the most on their education and training, while those living in Finland paid the least (Figure 10). Whereas residents of Greece and Norway who participated in education and training spent over EUR 1,500 on their teaching during the survey year, those living in Finland paid much less – under EUR 300. Average out-of-pocket expenses for education and training remained below EUR 400 also in Latvia, Bulgaria and Lithuania.

Figure 10. Expenses for formal or non-formal education and training per participant during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64 that participated in formal or non-formal education and training)



The youngest participants in education and training aged 25 to 34 spent more on their teaching than others in all the comparison countries except Slovakia, where persons aged 55 to 64 spent the most.

Persons with a tertiary-level degree spent more on their education and training than others (per participant) in all the comparison countries except Norway (Annex Table 7). In Norway, persons who have only completed primary-level education paid the most. In a few countries (Bulgaria, Estonia and Hungary), there was no difference in the amount spent by persons who have completed secondary and tertiary education, but those who have only completed primary education spent less on their education and training than the above-mentioned groups also in these countries.

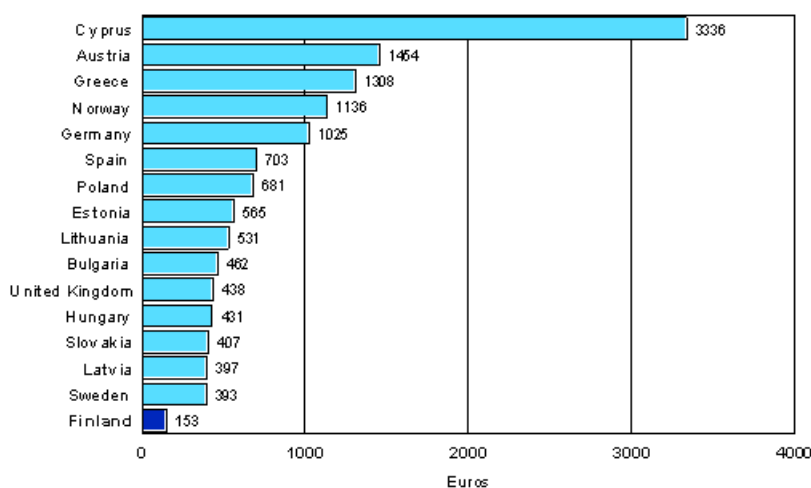
Examined by labour market status, the comparison countries are divided into three very similar-sized groups with respect to education expenses. Among persons aged 25 to 64 living in Austria, Spain, Latvia and Slovakia who participated in formal or non-formal education and training, employed persons spent more on their education and training than others. The difference between unemployed persons and persons outside the labour force was especially large in Slovakia, where the average amount spent by employed persons on their education and training was four times that spent by others. In Germany, Greece, Hungary, Sweden and the United Kingdom, unemployed persons spent the most on their education and training - in Hungary and the United Kingdom it was even more than double that spent by others. The amount paid by persons outside the labour force was greater than that paid by employed and unemployed persons in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania and Norway. Among

persons living in Estonia, persons outside the labour force and employed persons spent on average the same amount and around twice as much as unemployed persons, respectively. In Finland and Poland, labour market status did not affect the amount paid by the participant for education and training.

4.2 Costs of formal education and training

Persons aged 25 to 64 who live in Finland and participated in formal education and training spent clearly the least of their own money on their education and training out of the comparison countries (Figure 11). While persons who participated in formal education and training in Finland spent an average of EUR 153 on their studies, the expense was more than double, EUR 393, in Sweden, the next country in sequence. The average amounts spent by participants remained below EUR 400 also in Latvia. Residents of Cyprus spent by far the most of their own money on education and training that leads to a qualification: the average amount spent by participants exceeded EUR 3,000.

Figure 11. Cost of formal education and training per participant during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64 that participated in formal education and training)



There are clear differences between the comparison countries with respect to the amounts spent by participants of various ages in education and training on formal education and training (Annex Table 8). Among people living in Germany, Spain, Hungary, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and especially the United Kingdom, those in the youngest age group (persons aged 25 to 34) spent more on their education and training than those in older age groups. Participants in formal education and training aged 25 to 34 living in the United Kingdom spent three times as much money on their education and training as persons aged 35 to 54 living in the same country, and ten times as much as persons aged 55 to 64. In Austria, Bulgaria and Greece, persons aged 35 to 54 spent the most on their formal education and training, while in Cyprus, Poland and Slovakia, persons aged 55 to 64 spent the most. Only in Estonia, Finland and Lithuania were the average expenses paid by all the age groups equal.

In most of the comparison countries, persons who have a tertiary-level degree paid more than others, while persons who have only completed primary-level education paid less than others for their education and training that leads to a qualification. The exceptions are Cyprus, Estonia and Sweden, where the expenses per participant paid by persons that have completed secondary-level education were even higher, and Finland and Norway, where the amount spent in euros fell as the basic education level rose.

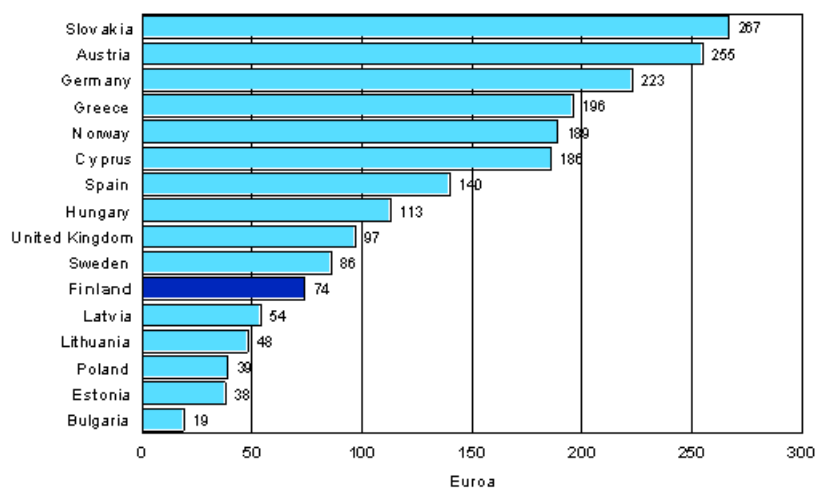
In Austria, Cyprus, Estonia and Slovakia, employed persons who participated in formal education and training spent more on their education and training than persons outside the labour force and unemployed persons. In Greece, Hungary and the United Kingdom, unemployed persons who participated in education and training spent the most on their education and training in relation to employed persons and persons outside the labour force. In around half of the comparison countries (including Finland), persons outside the labour force paid the most for their education and training.

4.3 Costs of non-formal education and training

The out-of-pocket expenses per participant are clearly lower for non-formal education and training than for formal education and training. While only persons living in Finland who participated in formal education and training paid under EUR 300 for the teaching, the expenses of participants in non-formal training did not exceed EUR 300 in any of the comparison countries.

Participants in non-formal education and training aged 25 to 64 living in Bulgaria paid less for the teaching than people in other countries (Figure 12). Bulgarians paid less than EUR 20 per participant for their non-formal education and training. The average teaching expenses per person remained below EUR 50 also in Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. People in Slovakia paid the most for education and training that does not lead to a qualification (EUR 267). The average expenses also exceeded EUR 200 in Austria and Germany. Persons aged 25 to 64 living in Finland paid on average EUR 74 for education and training that does not lead to a qualification, which puts Finland firmly in the group of countries where participants do not pay much for their education and training.

Figure 12. Expenses for non-formal education and training per participant during 12 months in selected European countries over the years 2005-2007 (population aged 25-64 that participated in non-formal education and training)



Among the persons who participated in non-formal education and training, persons aged 25 to 34 spent more on their education and training than the other age groups. The only exceptions to this were in Finland where those aged 25 to 34 and 55 to 64 paid, on average, the same, and Austria, where the age of the participant and the amount paid by the participant are not dependent on each other.

Of the people who participated in non-formal education and training, highly educated people usually spent more on teaching than others. Estonia and Norway, where persons who have only completed primary education paid the most, diverged from this pattern, as did Spain, where persons who have completed secondary-level education paid more than others for their teaching. In Cyprus and the United Kingdom, persons who have completed secondary education and persons who have tertiary-level degrees who participated in non-formal education and training paid approximately the same amount for their education and training.

Unemployed persons and persons outside the labour force who participated in non-formal education and training paid on average more than employed persons for their education and training in nearly all the comparison countries (Annex Table 9). Slovakia was the only country in which the average expenses for teaching were higher for employed persons than for unemployed persons or persons outside the labour force. In Austria, on the other hand, the average out-of-pocket expenses for education and training were almost the same for employed persons and persons outside the labour force, and higher than for unemployed persons. In half of the comparison countries (including Finland), unemployed persons participating in education and training paid more than others. In Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Norway and Poland, persons outside the labour force paid the most.

Appendix tables

1. Participation in formal or non-formal education and training during 12 months according to ISCED—level in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64), %

Country	ISCED-level			Total
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	
Sweden	56	72	90	73
Finland	35	52	73	55
Norway	38	52	72	55
United Kingdom	33	53	63	49
Germany	20	45	63	45
Slovakia	14	41	62	44
Estonia	20	36	61	42
Austria	19	42	68	42
Cyprus	16	40	65	41
Bulgaria	15	39	53	36
France	19	34	57	35
Lithuania	9	25	62	34
Latvia	11	27	59	33
Spain	17	36	51	31
Italy	8	30	51	22
Poland	5	16	54	22
Greece	4	15	32	15
Hungary	3	9	19	9

2. Participation in formal education and training during 12 months according to sex in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64), %

Country	Gender		
	Male	Females	Total
United Kingdom	12	18	15
Sweden	10	16	13
Finland	8	12	10
Norway	8	12	10
Lithuania	5	7	6
Slovakia	4	8	6
Spain	6	6	6
Poland	5	6	6
Latvia	3	8	5
Germany	6	4	5
Estonia	3	7	5
Italy	4	5	4
Austria	4	4	4
Cyprus	4	2	3
Bulgaria	2	3	3
Hungary	2	3	3
Greece	2	2	2
France	2	2	2

3. Participation in non-formal education and training during 12 months by sex in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64), %

Country	Gender		
	Male	Females	Total
Sweden	68	71	69
Finland	45	57	51
Norway	50	51	51
Germany	46	40	43
Slovakia	43	39	41
United Kingdom	39	41	40
Estonia	36	44	40
Austria	42	38	40
Cyprus	42	38	40
Bulgaria	37	34	35
France	36	33	34
Lithuania	26	35	31
Latvia	25	36	31
Spain	27	27	27
Italy	20	20	20
Poland	18	19	19
Greece	13	13	13
Hungary	7	7	7

4. Number of instruction hours in formal or non-formal education and training per participant during 12 months according to ISCED-level in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64 that participated in education and training), %

Country	ISCED-level			Total
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	
Hungary	145	247	193	220
Poland	99	150	202	174
Spain	126	185	190	171
Latvia	103	122	213	162
Finland	140	179	142	157
Sweden	122	126	213	155
Germany	165	153	135	147
Norway	162	128	141	139
Lithuania	172	126	135	132
Austria	147	129	118	128
Greece	113	135	124	127
Italy	74	109	142	113
France	76	102	121	105
Estonia	84	99	111	104
Cyprus	33	63	132	95
Bulgaria	21	70	140	88
United Kingdom	75	69	72	72
Slovakia ¹	..	..	..	..

1) Data not available

5. Number of instruction hours in formal education and training per participant during 12 months according to age in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64 that participated in formal education and training), %

Country	Age			
	25-34	35-54	55-64	Total
Germany	922	844	1 081	905
Bulgaria	662	465	350	609
Latvia	698	496	212	572
Austria	612	346	799	532
Estonia	554	488	363	526
Sweden	615	436	230	515
Hungary	510	435	480	487
Cyprus	513	373	1	481
Poland	445	362	511	420
Spain	472	329	293	413
Greece	479	271	640	405
Finland	436	355	382	399
Norway	448	325	182	379
Lithuania	389	321	486	372
Italy	411	310	127	367
France	362	325	175	339
Slovakia	379	239	120	326
United Kingdom	161	112	44	121

6. Number of instruction hours in non-formal education and training per participant during 12 months according to labour force status in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64 that participated in non-formal education and training), %

Country	Labour force status			
	Employment	Unemployment	Inactive	Total
Spain	100	177	165	112
Hungary	101	238	156	111
France	83	335	148	103
Finland	81	170	184	95
Greece	79	168	112	86
Austria	82	188	80	86
Poland	77	125	106	80
Latvia	74	111	102	78
Lithuania	72	156	149	78
Norway	74	187	114	78
Germany	66	153	116	76
Sweden	70	93	93	73
Cyprus	61	97	70	62
Italy	45	76	56	48
United Kingdom	45	106	60	48
Estonia	46	72	57	47
Bulgaria	43	79	89	45
Slovakia ¹	..	..	..	..

1) Data not available

7. Mean amount of money spent per participant on formal or non-formal education and training during 12 months according to ISCED-level in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64 that participated in formal or non-formal education and training), EUR

Country	ISCED-level			Total
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	
Greece	690	1 298	1 858	1 611
Norway	2 578	1 497	1 343	1 584
Cyprus	190	820	1 567	1 182
Slovakia	160	388	2 109	1 114
Germany	450	1 109	1 185	1 096
Austria	343	915	1 231	987
United Kingdom	390	652	1 191	859
Spain	423	805	925	781
Poland	328	618	812	722
Sweden	310	578	686	588
Estonia	300	475	486	469
Hungary	254	436	457	437
Lithuania	74	329	413	375
Bulgaria	164	385	348	362
Latvia	133	282	430	352
Finland	236	267	308	282
France ¹	..	..	..	..
Italy ²	..	..	..	..

1) Data not available

2) Data not available

8. Mean amount of money spent per participant on formal education and training during 12 months according to age in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64 that participated in education and training), EUR

Country	Age			Total
	25-34	35-54	55-64	
Cyprus	3 796	1 493	6 420	3 336
Austria	1 270	1 867	531	1 454
Greece	1 243	1 443	1 200	1 308
Norway	1 259	1 060	593	1 136
Germany	1 139	983	258	1 025
Spain	841	569	102	703
Poland	717	598	768	681
Estonia	568	558	600	565
Lithuania	524	545	571	531
Bulgaria	458	479	210	462
United Kingdom	782	278	78	438
Hungary	453	384	..	431
Slovakia	439	350	563	407
Latvia	463	359	157	397
Sweden	429	387	120	393
Finland	146	161	141	153
France ¹	..	..	..	..
Italy ²	..	..	..	..

1) Data not available

2) Data not available

9. Mean amount of money spent per participant on non-formal education and training during 12 months according to labour force status in selected European countries over the years 2005-2008 (population aged 25-64 that participated in non-formal education and training), EUR

Country	Labour force status			
	Employment	Unemployment	Inactive	Total
Slovakia	276	87	86	267
Austria	259	116	268	255
Germany	210	335	270	223
Greece	177	446	273	196
Norway	187	78	234	189
Cyprus	183	135	242	186
Spain	129	228	181	140
Hungary	107	180	153	113
United Kingdom	96	112	106	97
Sweden	75	254	126	86
Finland	67	121	125	74
Latvia	52	84	56	54
Lithuania	47	72	62	48
Poland	31	112	135	39
Estonia	33	96	120	38
Bulgaria	16	54	137	19
France ¹	..	..	..	..
Italy ²	..	..	..	..

1) Data not available

2) Data not available

Quality description: Adult Education Survey

1. Relevance of statistical information

The EU Adult Education Survey (EU-AES) results are part of the EU's statistics on lifelong learning. The EU-AES is a sample survey undertaken in 29 EU, EFTA and EU candidate countries and coordinated by Eurostat. The data collection for this, the first such survey, was on a pilot basis and covered the period 2005–2008.

The countries participating in the survey were Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

The survey covered the following: participation in education and training by adults aged 25–64 (both formal education and training, i.e. leading to a qualification, and non-formal education and training, i.e. not leading to a qualification); special features of adult education and training (e.g. job-related v. non-job-related); informal learning; modules on social and cultural participation; foreign language skills; and IT skills.

The survey's most important indicators are:

- Participation in formal, non-formal and informal education
- Non-participation and obstacles
- Field of learning
- Share of the job related non-formal education
- Volume of instruction hours in formal and non-formal education
- Employer financing and cost of learning in formal and non-formal education
- Language and ICT skills
- Social and cultural participation

The background variables common to all countries were sex, age, highest level of educational attainment, degree of urbanization (in the municipality where the individual resides) and labour force status.

The key concepts in the survey, namely *formal education and training*, *non-formal education and training* and *informal learning*, are based on Eurostat's *Classification for Learning Activities* (2005).

The survey results will be used by many different bodies. For example, the survey provides the European Commission, international organisations (OECD, ILO, IMF) and education and training researchers with a set of internationally comparable indicators. In addition, national institutions (e.g. government ministries) will have access to valuable information for the purposes of planning education and training, assessing education and training policy programmes and developing lifelong learning. Employers and trade unions, too, will be able to obtain information for the purposes of assessing the state of adult education and training and personnel training, and for considering the future needs of employees.

2. Methodological description of the survey

The EU-AES is a sampling survey. The data collection methods used for the period 2005–2008 differed among the survey countries. Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) was used in the following countries: Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Paper and pencil interviewing (PAPI) was used as the data collection method in Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Spain. In Norway and Sweden the data collection method was a mix of CAPI and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).

The sampling method also differed among countries. Stratified simple random sampling was used in Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland and Sweden. Simple random sampling was used in Latvia and Slovakia. In France, Greece, Hungary and the United Kingdom, the sampling method employed was multi-stage stratified sampling. Germany, Italy, Latvia, Norway and Poland all used stratified multi-stage multi-stratified sampling. In Bulgaria and Spain, the sampling method adopted was two-stage stratified sampling. The central population register provided the sampling frame in the following countries: Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Sweden. In Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece and Hungary,

the sampling frame was the latest population census. In the United Kingdom, the sampling frame consisted of the Post-code Address File, which comprises all addresses that receive 50 items of mail per day or less.

The EU-AES target population consisted of persons aged 25–64 who are permanently resident in each country. The sample sizes are given in Table 1 of section 3.

The sample overcoverage comprised persons who had died since the most recent register update or population census, all persons abroad during the survey reference period, and persons living in institutions. The sample undercoverage consisted of immigrants aged 25–64 who had moved to the country since the most recent register update or population census.

Weighting coefficients are used in calculating the survey results in order to ensure that the results correspond to the target population aged 25–64 in each country. The weighting coefficients both reduce the bias caused by non-response and improve the efficiency of estimation. In calculating the weighting coefficients, the survey countries used age and sex as the principal variables. Where a calibration method was used in calculating the weighting coefficients, the variables used included municipality group, region (NUTS II), level of education and labour force status.

3. Correctness and accuracy of data

The accuracy of the data obtained in the sample surveys is affected by measurement errors, non-response and random variation caused by sampling. Measurement errors can arise from questions being understood or interpreted in a different way, or from respondents choosing not to declare certain information. Efforts are made to reduce measurement error by means of interviewer training and by testing the data collection forms in advance.

Non-response is divided into unit and item (or partial) non-response. Unit non-response occurs when an interview with a sampled individual cannot be carried out at all because of e.g. refusal by the individual or failure to contact the individual. Unit non-response is corrected by means of weighting coefficients. Item non-response refers to question-specific non-response. In this case the interview is carried out, but there is a lack of data in regard to some of the answers, for instance due to interruption of the interview or refusal to reply.

The EU-AES response rate for those countries for which data is currently available varies from 54.5 per cent for Germany to 94.6 per cent for Hungary (Table 1). Finland's response rate was 65.2 per cent.

Table 1. EU-AES response rates, non-response and sample size, by country.

	Response rate, %	Non-response rate, %	Sample size, n
Austria	57,0	43,0	8 204
Bulgaria	81,5	18,5	6 458
Cyprus	75,8	24,2	6 347
Estonia	68,9	31,1	5 200
Finland	65,2	34,8	6 388
France ¹	..	..	..
Germany	54,5	45,5	16 602
Greece	84,3	15,7	4 210
Hungary	94,6	5,4	7 924
Italy	71,7	28,3	38 816
Latvia	60,4	39,6	3 830
Lithuania	82,6	17,4	4 473
Norway	68,1	31,9	4 429
Poland	68,7	31,3	19 247
Slovakia ²	..	..	5 001
Spain	93,2	6,8	19 696
Sweden	73,8	26,2	4 922
United Kingdom	40,9	59,1	8 636

1) Data not available

2) Data not available

Despite the non-response rates, the interviewees are considered to be very representative of the target population in all countries. Minor distortions are balanced out with the aid of the weighting coefficients.

Partial non-response is an indication of how well the data collection form succeeded and of the quality of the questions. A high proportion of ‘do not know’ responses for a particular question indicates that either the question was difficult to understand or interviewees were reluctant to answer. Partial non-response was very low in the EU-AES in the case of the most important indicators and thus did not present a problem for the reliability or comparability of results.

The random variation caused by sampling refers to the fact that figures calculated from different samples vary somewhat from one sample to the next. This random variation is estimated using standard error. Standard error expresses how closely the observations cluster around the sample mean. The sample size and the variation in the values of variables affect the size of the standard error. The standard error can be used for calculating the confidence interval for different estimates of variables. The confidence interval expresses the probability that a variable value will lie within a certain range.

A confidence interval of $(1-\alpha) \times 100\%$ refers to a defined interval within which the true value of a parameter is located with a probability of $(1-\alpha) \times 100\%$, or

$$\Pr\{p \in (p - t_{\alpha} \cdot d(p), p + t_{\alpha} \cdot d(p))\} = 1 - \alpha$$

The t_{α} value corresponding to a 95 per cent confidence interval is 1.96.

The confidence intervals calculated for the main EU-AES estimates are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Estimates of the participation rates in formal and non-formal education and training, together with the 95% confidence intervals, by country

Country	Education	
	Formal education	Non-formal education
Austria	4,2 ± 0,3	39,8 ± 1,4
Bulgary	2,7 ± 0,6	35,2 ± 1,9
Cyprus	2,9 ± 0,5	39,5 ± 1,4
Estonia	5,0 ± 0,7	40,2 ± 1,6
Finland	10,2 ± 0,9	51,2 ± 1,5
France ¹	1,7	34,1
Germany	5,2 ± 0,5	43,1 ± 1,2
Greece	2,3 ± 0,4	12,7 ± 0,8
Hungary	2,5 ± 0,4	6,8 ± 0,6
Italy	4,4 ± 0,2	20,2 ± 0,5
Latvia	5,4 ± 0,9	30,7 ± 1,9
Lithuania	6,3 ± 0,8	30,9 ± 1,5
Norway	9,9 ± 1,1	50,6 ± 1,8
Poland	5,5 ± 0,3	18,6 ± 0,5
Slovakia	6,1 ± 0,7	41,2 ± 1,4
Spain ²	6,0	27,2
Sweden	12,7 ± 1,1	69,4 ± 1,5
United Kingdom	15,1 ± 1,2	40,3 ± 1,8

1) Data on confidence interval not available

2) Data on confidence interval not available

4. Timeliness and promptness of published data

The EU-AES was the first survey of its kind and, as such, constituted a pilot survey. The aim is to carry out the next EU-AES (specified by regulation) in 2011 or 2012.

The EU-AES fieldwork was undertaken in the period 2005–2008. The reference period for the survey was the 12 months prior to the interviews.

Table 3. EU-AES fieldwork and reference period, by country.

	Fieldwork	Reference period
Austria	04/2007 — 11/2007	05/2006 — 11/2007
Bulgaria	11/2007 — 12/2007	12/2006 — 12/2007
Cyprus	09/2006 — 12/2006	09/2005 — 12/2006
Estonia	09/2007 — 12/2007	10/2006 — 12/2007
Finland	03/2006 — 08/2006	04/2005 — 08/2006
France	01/2006 — 01/2007	02/2005 — 01/2007
Germany	03/2007 — 07/2007	04/2006 — 07/2007
Greece	10/2007 — 12/2007	11/2006 — 12/2007
Hungary	07/2006 — 09/2006	07/2005 — 08/2006
Italy	05/2006 — 08/2006	06/2005 — 08/2006
Latvia	05/2007 — 06/2007	06/2006 — 06/2007
Lithuania	03/2006 — 04/2006	04/2005 — 04/2006
Norway	05/2007 — 08/2007	06/2006 — 08/2007
Poland	10/2006 — 12/2006	11/2005 — 12/2006
Slovakia	08/2007 — 09/2007	09/2006 — 09/2007
Spain	02/2007 — 04/2007	02/2006 — 04/2007
Sweden	10/2005 — 03/2006	11/2004 — 03/2006
United Kingdom	10/2005 — 02/2006	11/2004 — 02/2006

Eurostat published the EU-AES results for 18 of the survey countries in November 2008. The results for the remaining 11 countries will be published before the end of 2009. The results are available only in tabular form and in a tabular database.

5. Accessibility and transparency/clarity of data

In November 2008, Eurostat published the EU-AES results in tabular form for 18 of the survey countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The results can be viewed in tabular form on the [Eurostat](#) website.

The results for the remaining 11 countries (Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Switzerland and Turkey) will be published before the end of 2009.

The following can obtain the right to use EU-AES microdata for research purposes from Eurostat: universities, research institutions, national statistical agencies, central banks of European Union member states, individual researchers and the European Central Bank.

6. Comparability of statistics

The classification of education and training content that is used in the EU-AES is based on the Eurostat classification developed from the ISCED97 (Fields of Education and Training, 1999). The survey's other classifications common to all countries are sex, age, level of education (ISCED97), degree of urbanization and labour force status.

The key education and training concepts in the survey (*formal education and training, non-formal education and training and informal learning*) are derived from the Eurostat's *Classification for Learning Activities* (2005).

No comparison data from earlier years are available for the EU-AES, as the survey was the first of its kind. Comparisons between the countries participating in the survey must take into account the fact that the reference periods differ slightly among the countries and different data collection methods have been used.

The recommended data collection method for the EU-AES was computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). The CAPI method was used for data collection in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Paper and pencil interviewing (PAPI) was used for data collection in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia, while in Norway and Sweden the data collection method was a mix of CAPI and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The influence of the different data collection methods on the survey results has not yet been analysed. It is nevertheless considered that participation estimates obtained through personal interviews would be a little higher than those obtained through telephone

interviews. This was the case in Sweden, for example. Since the interview method was not randomised, but, rather, the interviewee was able to select the method, it is not possible to conclude whether the difference observed is derived from the data collection method or, for instance, from the fact that persons not participating in adult education and training more readily selected the telephone interview option. As the telephone interview method was used only in Sweden and Norway, and only for a proportion of the interviews, this does not present any problem for the comparability of data.

The reference periods for the results published so far cover the years 2005–2007. Thus, the effect of small differences between reference periods on the survey results cannot be regarded as significant.

The EU-AES data collection was fully input-harmonised for some variables, while for other it was output-harmonised. The need to translate the data collection form, originally in English, into the different languages introduces the potential for comparability problems. Nevertheless, the main indicators describing participation in adult education and training and the volume of adult education and training are unambiguously defined, and so the translation of the questions into the different national languages does not present any problem for the comparability of data. However, the measurement of informal learning has apparently produced problems in some countries at the translation stage. As a consequence, in some countries so-called incidental learning has sometimes found its way into the informal learning results, despite the fact that the definition of informal learning in the Classification of learning activities manual does not include occasional learning. Eurostat is not therefore publishing the results for informal learning.

7. Coherence and consistency/uniformity

The EU-AES results for Finland differ somewhat from the results of Finland's national Adult Education Survey 2006. Although the EU-AES data on Finland are based on the national Adult Education Survey, the datasets differ in certain respects. The greatest difference was in the survey population, as the target population for the EU-AES dataset consisted of persons aged 25–64, whereas the target population in the national Adult Education Survey also included persons aged 18–24.

A further difference concerns the follow-up questions on education and training received and the indicators based on these. In the national dataset, the follow-up questions (e.g. content of education and training, instruction hours, funding of education and training) were asked for all courses attended by the respondent, whereas in the internationally comparable dataset produced for Eurostat the data on the follow-up questions cover only three randomly chosen courses.

These dataset differences exist because it has been necessary to secure simultaneously Finland's national data needs and the continuity of national time series data and international comparability.

The results of Finland's national Adult Education Survey are published on the Statistics Finland website and in the following research publication: Pohjanpää - Niemi - Ruuskanen: *Participation in adult education and training. Adult Education Survey 2006. Education 2008. Statistics Finland, Helsinki.*

Suomen virallinen tilasto
Finlands officiella statistik
Official Statistics of Finland

Education 2009

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