

European Semester 2015-2016

Education-related Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs)

The European Commission has published on 13 May the 2015 Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) for each Member State for budgetary, economic and social policies, along with a Communication [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) on the priorities Member states will have to focus on to boost investment, to return to growth and jobs. The Recommendations are a central part of the European Semester mechanism of governance. They are based on the priorities identified in the [Annual Growth Survey](#) (*boosting investment, accelerating structural reforms and pursuing responsible growth friendly fiscal consolidation*) and the assessment of each Member State's plans for sound public finance (Stability or Convergence Programmes –SCPs) and policy measures to boost growth and jobs (National Reform Programmes –NRPs).

In drafting 2015 Country Specific Recommendations the European Commission has taken into big considerations **Member states' country reports** (published in February) which are summarised in a [Communication](#)

The Communication:

- summarises the implementation of 2014 Country Specific Recommendations also on education and training,
- the involvement of stakeholders into negotiations and consultations,
- identifies **investment in education, research and innovation as a priority across the board**.

The analyses have been published 3 months in advance than in previous years to enable discussion of the key issues in advance. At the **end of June - early July**, the Council formally adopts the Country Specific Recommendations previously discussed. Policy advice is thus given to Member States before they start to finalise their draft budgets for the following year. [Overview of EU Country-Specific Recommendations by Member State for 2015-2016](#)

With a view to coordinate Member States' policies to reach Europe 2020 targets¹, 2015-2016 Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) are also aiming at improving quality in education and training. Although almost all the EU Member States received their assessment on the state of play - and future needs - of education and training systems, only 12 EU Member States² received recommendations (CSRs) directly targeting education and training. Also this year, CSRs' main focus is on essential issues to tackle unemployment and increase employability in Europe. However, CSRs have a broader influence on the education sector and on teachers, especially in those countries where youth unemployment is high.

¹ Europe 2020 headline target on education: 1) reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%, 2) at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education

² 12 EU Member states received education-related CSRs for 2015-2016, namely: **AT, BG, CZ, EE, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, RO, SK, UK**.

NL received one recommendation related instead to Innovation: to shift public expenditure towards supporting investment in research and development (R&D) and work on framework conditions for improving private R&D expenditure in order to counter the declining trend in public R&D expenditure.

Summary of education-related Country Specific Recommendations 2015-2016	
Education and Training CSR	EU Member States
→ Improve the educational achievement of disadvantaged children and the participation of disadvantaged or minorities	AT, BG, CZ, HU, RO, SK
→ Teachers' training and teachers' continuous professional development	CZ, HU, MT, SK
→ Improve teaching of essential competences/attainment of basic skills / reduce number of young people with low basic skills	HU, LT, MT, UK
→ Support for research and innovation / investment in infrastructure, innovation and research	EE, NL, LV, DE
→ Higher education	CZ, LV
→ Reduce early school leaving	MT, RO
→ Improve transition between different stages of education and between education and the labour market	HU
→ Improve the labour market relevance of education	LT
→ Curricula reform	LV
→ Support poorly performing schools	CZ

	Public finances and welfare systems				Financial sector		Labour market			Product and service markets		Education	Social Inclusion	Administration	
	Public finances	Taxation	Pension system	Healthcare system	Banking and access to finance	Housing and private debt	Labour market	Labour taxation	Wage-setting	Services and network industries	Innovation and business environment	Education and skills	Poverty and social inclusion	Administrative modernisation and rule of law	
AT															AT
BE															BE
BG															BG
CZ															CZ
DE															DE
DK															DK
EE															EE
ES															ES
FI															FI
FR															FR
HR															HR
HU															HU
IE															IE
IT															IT
LT															LT
LU															LU
LV															LV
MT															MT
NL															NL
PL															PL
PT															PT
RO															RO
SE															SE
SI															SI
SK															SK
UK															UK
Euro area															Euro area

Figure 1: European Commission website - CSRs overview table http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015-overview-table_en.pdf

Detailed screening of education-related Country Specific Recommendations and context assessment:

EU country Country-specific Recommendations National documents	Assessment and Context	CSR 2015-2016
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Austria</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation DE - EN - FR Country Report 2015 DE - EN</p> <p>National Reform Programme: DE - EN Annex 1.1 - Measures to address the 2014 CSRs: EN</p> <p>Annex 1.2 - Progress on Europe 2020 targets: EN</p> <p>Annex 1.3 - Planned reforms: EN Annex 2 - Table 1: DE Annex 2 - Table 2: DE Stability Programme: DE - EN</p>	<p>The Austrian school system is characterized by a low number of early school leavers, well below the EU average.</p> <p>A strong and well-functioning system of vocational education and training provides a large pool of highly skilled workers. However, improving educational outcomes and hence the employability of young people with low socioeconomic status, in particular those from migrant backgrounds, remains a challenge.</p> <p>The evaluation of the implementation of a new secondary school system (<i>Neue Mittelschule</i>) has revealed weaknesses that still need to be addressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take steps to improve the educational achievement of disadvantaged young people.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Belgium</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation FR - NL - DE - EN Country Report 2015 FR - NL - EN National Reform Programme: FR - NL - EN Stability Programme: FR - NL</p>	<p>Belgium also faces shortages of highly skilled workers and skills mismatches.</p> <p>The various government agreements make reference to the need for stronger links between education, training and employment actors so as to improve linguistic, vocational and educational training and develop alternative training for students and the unemployed. Progress is slow, however.</p> <p>The impact of these structural factors on certain groups in the labour market, such as the young and elderly unemployed and those from migrant backgrounds, is particularly pronounced.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Bulgaria</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation BG - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 BG - EN National Reform Programme: BG Convergence Programme: BG</p>	<p>Bulgaria has a high proportion of young people neither in employment nor in education or training who are not in touch with the employment services and are thus outside the scope of standard labour market activation measures.</p> <p>The Roma population faces particularly high levels of poverty and social exclusion. The majority of young Roma are neither in employment nor in education or training. Pre-school and kindergarten enrolment of Roma children is low and almost a quarter of those aged 7-15 are not in the education system.</p> <p>The low quality of the education and training systems and their limited relevance to the labour market hamper the supply of a suitably skilled labour force to the economy.</p> <p>The rate of adult participation in lifelong learning is one of the lowest in the EU.</p> <p>After years of delay, Bulgaria has still not adopted the reform of the School Education Act and implementation of the strategy on early school leaving is still at an early stage.</p> <p>The national vocational education and training strategy was amended and a new strategy on higher education was adopted in 2014. Implementation of these strategies should help to improve the education system, make it more relevant to the economy and promote innovation and job creation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt the reform of the School Education Act, and increase the participation in education of disadvantaged children, in particular Roma, by improving access to good-quality early schooling.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Croatia</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation</p>	<p>Despite the increased scope and expenditure of active labour market policies, their outreach remains insufficient as regards the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>

<p>HR - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 HR - EN National Reform Programme: HR - EN Convergence Programme: HR</p>	<p>long-term unemployed, older workers and young people not in education, employment or training. The tertiary education rate is one of the lowest in the EU. Skills mismatches and weaknesses in the education and training system act as deterrents for higher education attainment.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Cyprus</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To avoid duplication with measures set out in the Economic Adjustment Programme, there are no additional recommendations for Cyprus. Country Report 2015 EL - EN National Reform Programme: EN</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Czech Republic</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation CS - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 CS - EN National Reform Programme: CS - EN Annex 2 - CS Annex 3 - CS Convergence Programme: CS - EN Tables supporting the CP: CS - EN</p>	<p>The Czech Republic's educational outcomes have improved in recent years but structural challenges still remain.</p> <p>Participation in tertiary education has increased rapidly, but concerns have emerged in relation to the decline in skills of younger tertiary education graduates. It is hoped that the overdue higher education reform planned to be adopted in 2015 will introduce institutional accreditation, stronger internal quality assurance and greater use of profiling of students, and improve financing systems.</p> <p>More teachers need to be recruited into the compulsory education sector, but low salaries and a negative perception of the profession make it difficult to attract talented candidates.</p> <p>A new career system designed to improve both the recruitment of teachers and their professional development should be finalised in the first half of 2015, to be introduced in September 2016. Its overall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt the higher education reform. - Ensure adequate training for teachers, - support poorly performing schools - take measures to increase participation among disadvantaged children, including Roma.

	<p>impact will, however, largely depend on available funding.</p> <p>A comprehensive approach to evaluating and supporting low-performing schools and pupils is, meanwhile, still lacking. The introduction of such an approach could help improve efficiency and equality in the education sector.</p> <p>Limited progress has been made in making education more inclusive, despite the government's adoption of a comprehensive strategy for education. Young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, including Roma, are shown to be less successful in education and on the labour market.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Denmark</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation DA - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 DA - EN National Reform Programme: EN - DA Annex 1 - Key Micro-structural reforms: EN Annex 2 - Quantitative assessment of reforms: EN Convergence Programme: EN - DA</p>	<p>An adequately skilled long-term labour supply is a precondition for sustainable growth in Denmark. With the 2014 active labour market policy reform, Denmark has made progress on improving the employability of people at the margins of the labour market. The reform is at an early stage of implementation and its results need to be monitored. Additional measures for those most excluded from the labour market are still needed, in line with the Carsten-Koch II expert group recommendations.</p> <p>Low educational attainment, limited labour market experience, youth and migrant background appear to be key factors in this respect. In general, the labour market potential of people from migrant backgrounds remains underutilised.</p> <p>Despite the high expenditure on education in Denmark, educational outcomes are only average, in particular for pupils from migrant</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>

	<p>backgrounds.</p> <p>The reform of the primary and lower secondary school and the vocational education and training systems aims to address this challenge. Full implementation of these reforms is needed in order to improve educational outcomes.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Estonia Commission Recommendation ET - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 ET - EN</p>	<p>The Estonian government adopted a lifelong learning strategy in early 2014 and programmes to implement it were presented in March 2015.</p> <p>A reform of curricula in the vocational education and training system is ongoing and participation in lifelong learning has increased.</p> <p>An Adult Education Act and a Professions Act were adopted by parliament in early 2015. The attractiveness of vocational education and training and apprenticeships remains a challenge.</p> <p>Research and innovation systems and cooperation between business, higher education and research institutions have improved. However, public support for research and innovation, under the RDI Strategy and the Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy, seems to lack coordination and should focus more on a limited number of smart specialisation areas.</p> <p>The higher education system, in particular as regards science and technology, still needs to be better aligned with the needs of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase participation in vocational education and training, and its labour market relevance, in particular by improving the availability of apprenticeships. - Focus public support for research and innovation on a limited number of smart specialisation areas.

	<p>business and research institutions. Investment in intellectual property is low and few companies work together with research institutions.</p>	
<p><u>Finland</u> Commission Recommendation FI - SV - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 FI - SV - EN National Reform Programme: EN - FI - SV Stability Programme: FI - SV</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><u>France</u> Commission Recommendation FR - EN - DE Country Report 2015 FR - EN National Reform Programme: FR Summary of the NRP: EN Contribution from stakeholders: FR Stability Programme: FR - EN Summary of the SP: EN</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><u>Germany</u> Commission Recommendation DE - EN - FR Country Report 2015 DE - EN National Reform Programme: DE Stability Programme: EN - DE</p>	<p>The federal government has increased expenditure on education and research, but the share of public spending on education as a proportion of GDP is still below the EU average and total expenditure on education and research may fall short of the national target of 10 % of GDP by 2015. Germany intends to increase public investment until 2018, including additional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further increase public investment in infrastructure, education and research, including by using the available fiscal space.

	<p>amounts of EUR 10 billion for infrastructure and EUR 5 billion to support investment by financially weak municipalities.</p> <p>Limited progress has been made in improving the educational achievement of disadvantaged people. Young people with a migrant background are twice as likely to leave school early.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Greece</u></p> <p>To avoid duplication with measures set out in the Economic Adjustment Programme, there are no additional recommendations for Greece. A report on Greece will be published later, taking account of the follow-up to be given to the Eurogroup statements of 20 and 24 February 2015.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National Reform Programme: EL</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hungary</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation HU - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 HU - EN National Reform Programme: HU - EN Implementation of the CSRs: HU - EN Convergence Programme: HU</p>	<p>Overall, the Hungarian labour market improved in 2014, with employment recovering in the private sector thanks to the economic upturn. Significant challenges remain with regard to the public work scheme. The rate of successful exit from the public work scheme was only 13.8% in the first half of 2014, which suggests that public works do not sufficiently support the reintegration of participants into the labour market. Although the scheme is targeted to the long-term unemployed and low skilled, in 2013 47% participants had secondary or tertiary education.</p> <p>Although some measures have been implemented to support the education of Roma children, a systematic approach to promoting inclusive mainstream education is yet to be developed. The proportion of Roma children attending schools or classes where the majority of pupils are Roma remains high, and the educational attainment of Roma pupils is lower than the national average.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in particular Roma in inclusive mainstream education, - improve the support offered to these groups through targeted teacher training; - strengthen measures to facilitate the transition between different stages of education and to the labour market - and improve the teaching of essential competences.

	<p>Teachers are not trained to provide sufficient support to disadvantaged groups. More needs to be done to improve the transition between different forms and stages of education, and from education to the labour market.</p> <p>The planned changes to the allocation of state-funded places in secondary education and the increasing admission requirements for higher education may further limit the opportunities for transition between different forms of education, especially for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Hungary has the highest drop-out rate in higher education in the EU, at 47 %. The government announced the adoption of a national higher education strategy in December 2014. The strategy included raising the national target for tertiary attainment to 34 %.</p> <p>Overall, recent measures have failed to improve the participation of disadvantaged groups in higher education, and to tackle non-completion of education. The current funding system does not guarantee equitable access.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ireland</u> Commission Recommendation EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 EN National Reform Programme: EN</p>	<p>The situation in the labour market has improved since 2013, with renewed job creation in the private sector and a steady fall in unemployment. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate is still high and long-term unemployment remains a serious concern. The risk exists that some cyclical unemployment could become structural as skills mismatches have emerged with the rebalancing of the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>

<p>Stability Programme: EN</p>	<p>economy.</p> <p>Youth unemployment is still much higher than in the pre-crisis period. Activation reforms have made significant progress in recent years, but some concerns remain about the effectiveness of existing activation policies and training programmes.</p> <p>The recently launched JobPath initiative is a positive development; its effectiveness will need to be tested. In the past, the further education and training system has been ineffective in providing the type of skills that the rebalanced economy needs and reforms have started only recently.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Italy</p> <p>Commission Recommendation IT - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 IT - EN National Reform Programme: IT Annex 1 - List of reforms: IT Annex 2 - Macroeconomic impact of structural reforms: EN Annex 3 - Time table NRP 2015: EN Stability Programme IT</p>	<p>The areas of reform put forward in the programme as having an impact on public finance sustainability include: (i) public administration and simplification; (ii) product and service markets; (iii) labour market; (iv) civil justice; (v) education; (vi) a tax shift; and (vii) spending review as financing measure.</p> <p>Youth unemployment reached almost 43 % in the third quarter of 2014, and the proportion of young people aged between 15 and 24 not in employment, education or training is the highest in the EU.</p> <p>Some of the causes are to be found in the education system, which is still characterised by below-EU average school outcomes, and relatively high early school leaving rates. Only 54.6% of those aged 15-34 who graduated from the first and second stages of tertiary education within the previous three years were</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As part of efforts to tackle youth unemployment, adopt and implement the planned school reform and expand vocationally-oriented tertiary education.

	<p>employed, against the EU average of 78.6%.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Latvia</u> Commission Recommendation LV - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 LV - EN National Reform Programme: LV - EN Stability Programme: LV - EN</p>	<p>A national independent accreditation agency is being set up and a new quality targeting financing model is being developed for Latvia's higher education.</p> <p>Despite some progress in reforming the research and innovation system, in line with the Smart Specialisation Framework, inadequate public funding in a fragmented research and innovation system is leading to poor scientific outcomes. Latvia invested only around 0.6% of GDP in R&D in 2013 - the third lowest level in the EU. Public R&D intensity reached only 0.43% of GDP in 2013. Lack of innovation and private investment in higher value added and knowledge intensive sectors hampers competitiveness.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the progress made to tackle unemployment, further action is needed to prevent youth unemployment and its negative long-term consequences, giving the shrinking labour force.</p> <p>Latvia has made some progress to reform the vocational education and training and its apprenticeship component; however, its attractiveness remains a challenge, due to the limited engagement of SMEs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve vocational education and training, speed up the curricula reform and increase the offer of apprenticeships. - Ensure that the new financing model of the higher education system rewards quality. - Better target research financing and incentivise private investment in innovation on the basis on of the Smart Specialisation Framework.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lithuania</u> Commission Recommendation LT - EN - FR - DE</p>	<p>Lithuania is facing a substantial fall in the working-age population, driven by demographics, migration and poor performance of the healthcare system. The persistently low level of participation in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the challenge of a shrinking working-age population by improving the labour-market relevance of education,

<p>Country Report 2015 LT - EN National Reform Programme: LT - EN Annex 1 - National quantitative targets: LT - EN Annex 2 - Implementation of the 2014 CSRs: LT - EN Stability Programme: LT - EN</p>	<p>life-long learning is not conducive to strengthening human capital, improving employability or increasing productivity.</p> <p>Schools have an above-average rate of low-achievers in basic skills, indicating a need to modernise teacher training and promote continuing professional development.</p> <p>The education and training on offer is not always relevant to the labour market.</p> <p>The proportion of students following vocational education and training programmes in secondary education is low.</p> <p>Lithuania is taking action to improve and extend apprenticeships and work-based learning, but the number and quality of such programmes is still insufficient.</p>	<p>increasing attainment in basic skills (..)</p>
<p>Luxembourg Commission Recommendation FR - EN - DE Country Report 2015 FR - EN National Reform Programme: FR - EN Measures to address the 2014 CSRs: FR Progress towards Europe 2020 targets FR Stability Programme: FR Annex to the Stability Programme: FR</p>	<p>Despite generally well-performing labour markets and high tertiary education attainment rates, employment rates are comparatively low for older workers, women and low-skilled young people.</p> <p>The draft vocational education and training reform and the secondary school reform to improve educational outcomes, notably for those with a disadvantaged socio-economic background, have not been adopted. The announced measures on maternity and education allowances and the planned reform of parental leave can be expected to contribute to increasing the labour market participation of women.</p>	<p>None</p>

	<p>Despite high tertiary education attainment rates, education outcomes remain unsatisfactory, and alleviating the situation of people from migrant backgrounds and low-skilled young people remains difficult.</p>	
<p>Malta Commission Recommendation MT - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 MT - EN National Reform Programme: EN Annex 1 - Measures to address the 2014 CSRs: EN Annex 2 - Progress on Europe2020 targets: EN Annex 3 - Planned reforms: EN Stability Programme: EN</p>	<p>(..) the increased demand for informal long-term care and a lack of suitable skills may be preventing older women from seeking work in the labour market. A national literacy strategy and an early school-leaving strategy were published in June 2014. Work is also ongoing on aligning educational outcomes with market needs, though tangible results are yet to be seen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take measures to improve basic skills and further reduce early school-leaving by promoting the continuous professional development of teachers.
<p>Netherlands Commission Recommendation NL - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 NL - EN National Reform Programme: NL - EN Contribution from the social partners: NL - EN Stability Programme: EN</p>	<p>At 0.84% of GDP in 2013, public expenditure on research and development is low in view of the educational attainment, academic achievement and the level of economic development of the Netherlands.</p> <p>Government expenditure in this area is on a declining trend since 2014, while private R&D spending remains low. Shifting public expenditure towards innovation and research, in particular fundamental research and implementing framework policies to unlock private investment in R&D would help enhance the long-</p>	<p>Note: Country-specific recommendation on Innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shift public expenditure towards supporting investment in R&D and work on framework conditions for improving private R&D expenditure in order to counter the declining trend in public R&D expenditure and increase the potential for economic growth.

	<p>term growth potential of the Dutch economy.</p>	
<p><u>Poland</u> Commission Recommendation PL - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 PL - EN National Reform Programme: PL - EN Convergence Programme: PL</p>	<p>Youth unemployment is high, partly as a result of the mismatch between candidates' qualifications and skills, on the one hand, and labour market needs, on the other.</p> <p>Continued efforts are therefore needed to reform the system of vocational education and training and increase the low level of participation in lifelong learning.</p> <p>Female labour market participation remains low. In order to address this issue, Poland has increased the availability of pre-school education, but still ranks among the poorest performing countries in the EU for the availability of early childcare services.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><u>Portugal</u> Commission Recommendation PT - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 PT - EN National Reform Programme: PT Stability Programme: PT</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made regarding the deployment of active labour market policies and the reform of public employment services. However, challenges remain as regards reaching the young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training.</p> <p>Some progress has been made in improving the quality and labour-market relevance of education.</p> <p>Portugal has reformed curricula and teachers' statutes in order to improve the quality of education.</p> <p>The use of the monitoring tool and the diversification of pathways with new vocational education and training programmes should</p>	<p>None</p>

	<p>address early school leaving and help improve performance rates.</p> <p>Recent reforms are designed to upgrade the vocational education and training system, but making it more attractive to students remains a challenge. Fostering knowledge transfers between higher education, private-sector firms and research organisations also represents a challenge.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Romania</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation RO - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 RO - EN National Reform Programme: RO Convergence Programme: RO - EN</p>	<p>While some improvements were seen in 2014, employment and activity rates continue to be especially low among women, young people, older workers and Roma. Active labour market policies have been revised, but the overall participation in and financing for active labour market measures remain low, particularly for vocational training, schemes leading to the recognition of prior learning, mobility incentives, and measures targeting the long-term unemployed.</p> <p>Romania faces several challenges in the area of education: the early school leaving rate remains well above the EU average; the availability and access of early childhood education and care services is limited, especially in rural areas and for the Roma community; participation in lifelong learning remains far below the EU average; the quality and labour market relevance of higher education is inadequate; and the tertiary attainment rate remains the second lowest in the EU.</p> <p>Romania has started addressing these challenges, with varying degrees of progress being made in the different areas, and, to date, little visible end-effect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the provision and quality of early childhood education and care, in particular for Roma. Adopt the national strategy to reduce early school leaving.

	<p>There have been significant delays in adopting the national strategy for reducing early school leaving. A national programme for early childhood education and care was designed for the period 2014-2019, and will come into effect in the new school year, 2015-2016.</p> <p>The national lifelong learning strategy has been delayed. A strategy on tertiary education has been drafted, the aim of which is to increase the relevance of higher education by aligning it more closely with labour market needs and to improve the accessibility of higher education for disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Measures have been implemented to improve vocational education and training and apprenticeships schemes.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Slovakia</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation SK - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 SK - EN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National Reform Programme: SK - EN NRP 2015 Action Plan SK - EN Stability Programme: SK Annex to the Stability Programme: SK</p>	<p>Slovakia made some progress in relation to work-based learning, with a new Act on vocational education and training to enter into force in 2015.</p> <p>Limited progress has, however, been made in improving teaching conditions, in encouraging the creation of more career-oriented bachelor programmes, and in increasing the proportion of Roma children attending early childhood education and care facilities.</p> <p>No measures have been taken to ensure a wider participation of Roma in vocational training and higher education.</p> <p>Only limited progress has been made in addressing the gaps in the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve teacher training and the attractiveness of teaching as a profession to stem the decline in educational outcomes. - Increase the participation of Roma children in mainstream education and in high-quality early childhood education. - Take additional measures to address long term unemployment by introducing activation measures, second chance education and high-quality training tailored to individuals' needs.

	<p>Slovak research and innovation system, the main needs being namely to improve the quality and relevance of the science base and to promote cooperation between academia, research and business.</p>	
<p><u>Slovenia</u> Commission Recommendation SL - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 SL - EN National Reform Programme: SL - EN Stability Programme: SL - EN</p>	<p>An evaluation of the 2013 labour market reform shows that labour market restrictions have decreased, but structural problems persist as regards the long-term unemployment and the low employment rates of low-skilled and older workers.</p> <p>Slovenia has undertaken some action to address the skills mismatch and numerous other measures are planned until 2020.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><u>Spain</u> Commission Recommendation ES - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 ES - EN National Reform Programme: ES Stability Programme: ES</p>	<p>Spain also made some progress on identifying proposals to rationalise healthcare, education, and social spending at regional level, although these were not finally adopted.</p> <p>The capacity of the public employment service, and of the agencies to which services have been outsourced, is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness and adequate targeting of active labour market and activation policies, including effective re-training to allow people to move into sectors where more jobs are being created.</p> <p>Youth unemployment in Spain remains very high (over 53 %) and the early school leaving rate is one of the highest in the EU.</p> <p>Spain is implementing the new educational schemes introduced by Law No 8/2013 on the quality of education, designed to increase the quality of primary and secondary education.</p>	<p>None</p>

	<p>Limited progress was made in increasing the labour-market relevance of vocational education and training, and the efforts to improve cooperation between higher education institutions and employers are behind scheduled.</p> <p>There are plans to extend the dual vocational training scheme in 2015, but there continue to be considerable differences in its implementation across the regions. A dedicated committee has been set up to examine the relevance of education and training curricula to labour market needs.</p> <p>Structural weaknesses in its research and innovation system continue to limit Spain's growth potential. It therefore remains essential to identify new sources of funding, ensure effective and efficient use of resources, set up the new research agency and promote measures to make the business environment more innovation-friendly.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sweden</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commission Recommendation SV - EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 SV - EN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National Reform Programme: SV Contribution of social partners : SV Measures to address the 2014 CSRs: SV Progress on Europe 2020 targets: SV Planned reforms: SV Convergence Programme: SV - EN</p>	<p>The Government is taking steps to improve school outcomes, after a marked deterioration in the last decade which contributes to relatively high youth unemployment.</p> <p>The Government is also taking measures to facilitate the transition from education to the labour market and to improve the labour market integration of low-educated young people and people with a migrant background. Progress in this area will need to be monitored.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>United Kingdom</u> Commission Recommendation EN - FR - DE Country Report 2015 EN National Reform Programme: EN Convergence Programme: EN</p>	<p>Youth employment and employer engagement in the area of apprenticeships are further challenges.</p> <p>Another area to focus on, linked to youth employment, is education and skills.</p> <p>A large proportion of young people have comparatively low levels of basic skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address skills mismatches by increasing employers' engagement in the delivery of apprenticeships. - Take action to further reduce the number of young people with low basic skills.