European Commission

Education and Training Monitor 2013

Spain

Education and Training

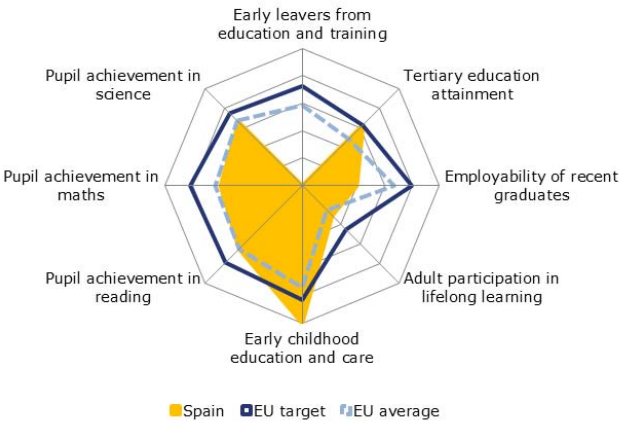
1. Key indicators and benchmarks

Europe 2020 headline targets			Spain 2009	Spain 2012	EU average 2009	EU average 2012	Europe 2020 target / Benchmark
1. Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)			31.2%	24.9%	14.2% EU28	12.7% EU28	**EU target: 10%** National target: 15%
2. Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)			39.4%	40.1%	32.1% EU28	35.7% EU28	**EU target: 40%** National target: 44%
ET 2020 Benchmarks							
3. Early childhood education and care (4 years old - year before start of compulsory primary)			99.3%	100.0% 11	91.7%	93.2% 11	**95%**
4. Basic skills Low achievers (15 year-olds; Level 1 or lower in PISA study)	Reading		19.6%	:	19.6%	:	**15%**
	Mathematics		23.7%	:	22.2%	:	**15%**
	Science		18.2%	:	17.7%	:	**15%**
5. Learning mobility	Initial vocational training (IVET)	**a.** Students participating in Leonardo da Vinci programs as a share of vocational students at ISCED 3	0.1%	1.0% 11	0.6%	0.7% 11	
	Higher Education	**b.** Erasmus inbound students as % of student population in host country		1.9% 11		1.1% 11	
		c. Inbound degree mobile students as % of student population in the host country		3.2% 11		7.0% 11	
6. Employment rate of graduates (age 20-34) having left education 1-3 years before reference year			72.6%	62.4%	78.3%	75.7%	**82%**
7. Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)			10.4%	10.7%	9.3%	9.0%	**15%**
Proposed ET 2020 benchmark							
8. Foreign languages skills	**a.** ISCED 2 students at proficiency level B1 or higher in first foreign language[1]		:	26.7% 11	:	43.5% 11	
	b. ISCED 2 students learning two or more foreign languages		38.7%	40.3% 11	58.6%	60.8% 10	
Other ET 2020 Indicators							
9. Investment in education and training	**a.** General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)		5.1%	4.7% 11	5.5%	5.3% 11	
	b. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student in € PPS	ISCED 1-2	€ 6,227 08	€ 6,207 10	€ 5,732 08	€ 6,021 10	
		ISCED 3-4	€ 8,680 08	€ 7,938 10	€ 6,964 08	€ 7,123 10	
		ISCED 5-6	€ 10,440 08	€ 10,301 10	€ 9,309 08	€ 9,168 10	
10. Digital competences	**a.** Pupils in grade 4 (ISCED 1) using computers at school		:	60.7% 11	60.7% 07	64.7% 11	
	b. Individuals aged 16-74 with high computer skills[2]		28.0%	35.0%	25.0%	26.0%	
11. Entrepreneurial competences	Individuals aged 18-64 who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business		48.0%	50.0%	42.3% a	42.0% a	
12. Vocational education and training	Share of vocational students at ISCED 3		42.9%	45.3% 11	49.6%	50.3% 11	
13. Skills for future labour markets Projected change in employment 2010-2020 in %	High qualification		:	23.2%	:	19.1% EU28	
	Medium qualification		:	27.1%	:	4.6% EU28	
	Low qualification		:	-34.4%	:	-20.2% EU28	
14. Low-skilled adults	Literacy		:	27.5%	:	19.9% EU17	
	Numeracy		:	30.6%	:	23.6% EU17	
	Problem solving in technology rich environments[3]		:	23.2%	:	13.0% EU17	

Source: Cedefop: 13 / EAC: 10a,b / European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC): 8a / Eurostat (Government finance statistics): 9a / Eurostat (LFS): 1, 2, 6, 7 / Eurostat (ISS): 10b / Eurostat (UOE): 3, 8b, 9b, 10c, 12 / IEA TIMSS: 10a / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 11 / OECD (PIAAC): 14 / OECD (PISA): 4

Notes: 07 =2007, 08 =2008, 09 =2009, 10 =2010, 11 =2011, e= estimate, a= unweighted average b= break, p= provisional
Number of countries included in EU average: PISA=25, Entrepreneurship=18, Language skills=13, ICT/Computers at school=13, others: EU27
[1]= average of skills tested in reading, listening, writing, [2]= having carried out 5-6 specific computer related activities, [3]= Results refer to people without ICT experience and people who failed the ICT test

Figure 1. Position in relation to highest (outer ring) and lowest performers (centre)



Source: DG EAC calculations on the basis of data from Eurostat (LFS 2012 and UOE 2011) and OECD (PISA 2009). *Note:* all scores are set between a maximum (the highest performers visualised by the outer ring) and a minimum (the lowest performers visualised by the centre of the chart).

2. Main challenges

The major challenges in the Spanish education system are the transition from education and training to the labour market, a persistently high rate of early school leavers with big regional disparities, and skills mismatches, including in higher education. Those challenges are aggravated by the economic situation in Spain demanding significant fiscal consolidation efforts, with budgetary cuts in education since 2011 at national and regional level.

Early school leaving and vocational education and training (VET) have been at the core of the European Semester country-specific recommendations (CSRs) since 2011. Progress has been made in both fields. Nevertheless, they still remain a major cause of concern and thus are also addressed in 2013 CSRs, which recommend that Spain continue with efforts to increase the labour market relevance of education and training, to reduce early school leaving and to enhance life-long learning, namely by expanding application of dual vocational training beyond the current pilot phase and by introducing a comprehensive monitoring system of pupils' performance by the end of 2013.

3. Investing in skills and qualifications

Investing in education and training in a context of economic crisis

In the context of fiscal consolidation, investment in education and training in Spain has suffered significant cuts at national and regional level. General government expenditure on education as a share of GDP declined from 5.1% in 2009 to 4.7% in 2011. Expenditure on educational institutions per student has also declined, but remained above the EU average.

In April 2012, a Royal Decree Law set urgent measures to rationalise public expenditure in education. These measures concerned the use of all resources available in education, and were implemented in the school year 2012-2013: increasing the number of teaching hours per teacher; reviewing class-sizes (which are low compared to the EU and OECD average) and therefore the student/teacher ratio; adjusting the offer of upper secondary education and first-cycle university degrees to real demand; reviewing the university fees in order to bring them closer to the real cost of higher education.

Total budgetary allocations for education (central and regional level) decreased by 4.1% in 2012 and by 7.3% in 2013. Regarding the central level (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports), the decline was 22% in 2012 and 25.8% in 2013 (estimated)[1]. Important cuts were also done at the level of Autonomous Communities.

Skills

Despite some recent improvement in the three fields concerned (reading, mathematics and science), 15-year olds' performance on the PISA tests close to the EU average, coupled with big regional disparities.

[1] It has to be taken into account that the central administration budget stands approximately for less than 6% of the total education budget and from this budget more than 60% is allocated to scholarships. Source: Spanish Ministry of Education, EVOLUCIÓN DEL GASTO EN EDUCACIÓN DE LAS ADMINISTRACIONES EDUCATIVAS SEGÚN LOS PRESUPUESTOS INICIALES Información elaborada en el marco de la Estadística del Gasto Público en Educación.

A specific program for the improvement of foreign language learning was approved by the Government at end-2012 and is being implemented by the Autonomous Communities. 40.3% of pupils in lower secondary education learn a second foreign language (2010-2011 school year).

ICT skills of the population are above the EU average. At present, 89% of the schools have broad band connection to internet. The promotion of digital competences has been developed by means of the Territorial Cooperation Programmes for the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in publicly-funded schools.

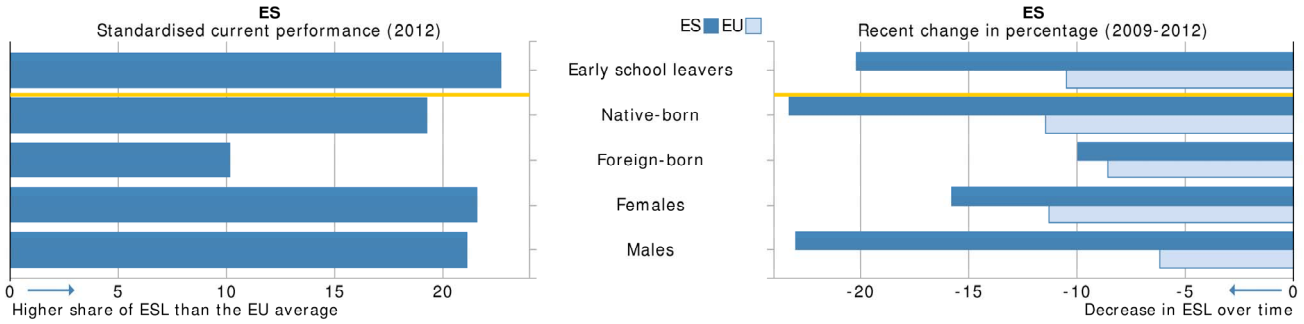
Regarding entrepreneurship competences, the percentage of 18-64 old adults who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business is above the EU average. The Spanish Government presented on 12 March 2013 the Entrepreneurship and Youth employment Strategy 2013-2016. In this context, in May 2013 the Government approved a draft Law to incentivise the creation of enterprises and jobs and to provide measures to support entrepreneurs as autonomous workers to start new activities particularly in the difficult context of the economic crisis.

The elaboration of the National Qualification Framework (MECU), is pending. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport is currently updating the MECU website (to be ready by end-2013) and plans to present a report on the links between its national framework and the European Qualifications framework in the 4th quarter of 2013.

4. Tackling early school leaving and raising the bar in school education

Despite a reduction from 31.2% in 2009 to 24.9% in 2012, the early school leaving (ESL) rate is far above the EU average (12.7%), with big regional disparities (from 11,5% in País Vasco to 32,2% in Extremadura). It is also far from the national target of 15% by 2020. Measures to fight ESL were put in place at national and regional level in recent years, including the 'Plan to fight ESL' (preventive and intervention measures such as analysis, awareness raising, follow up of early school leavers to support their reintegration into the education and training system), PROA (guidance and support programme) and PCPI (initial professional qualification programme). The ministry of education is currently carrying out an evaluation of these measures. The national programmes referred to above are not funded by the regions anymore since 2012, and also not included in the 2013 national budget.

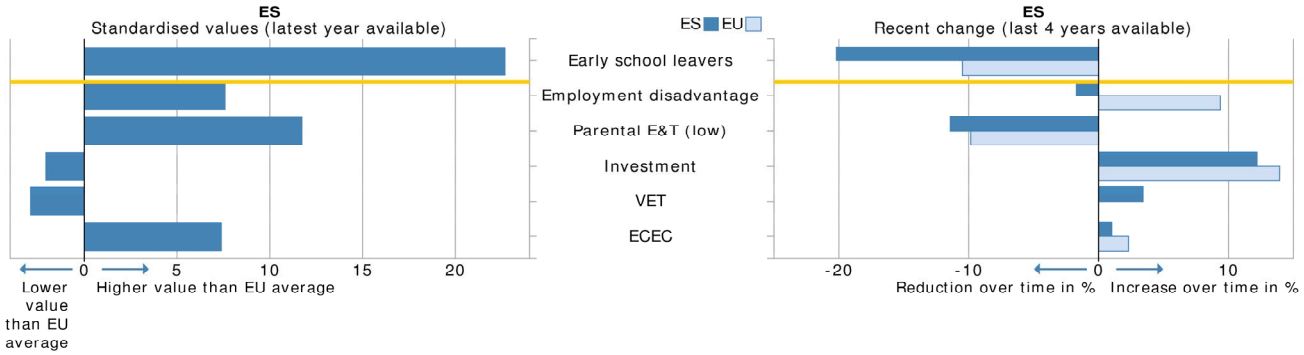
Figure 2. Early leavers from education and training: sub-groups



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* ESL = early school leaving. See Annex 2 for further information.

As shown by some sub-indicators, employment disadvantage for early school leavers is high but has been decreasing somewhat while the EU average has been increasing. Investment is low but has been increasing, with a similar trend for VET opportunities.

Figure 3. Early leavers from education and training: sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

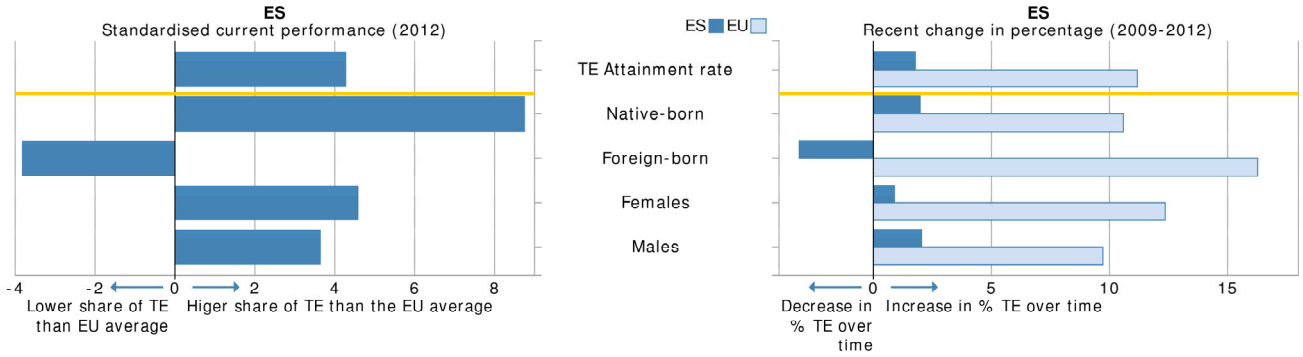
Given the financial difficulties, the Government's efforts concentrate on normative measures; the reduction of ESL is the first main objective stated in the draft Organic Law for the Improvement of the Quality of Education (LOMCE), approved by the Government on 17 May 2013 and currently undergoing the legislative procedure in the Spanish Parliament. Amongst a series of measures, LOMCE in particular offers flexibility in pathways and aims to increase the percentage of students completing upper secondary education and obtaining initial vocational training diplomas.

Regarding participation rate in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), Spain reached 100% in 2011. Finally, Spain is now elaborating a Non-University Teaching Staff Statute to regulate the teaching profession, including access to the teaching profession within public service, provision of teaching position, teachers' rights and obligations.

5. Encouraging participation in tertiary education and modernising higher education

Spain established a 2020 national target of 44% for the tertiary attainment rate. At present, the rate is above the EU average (40.1% vs. 35.7 in 2012), although it has been stagnating over the last three years. In 2011, completion rates are above the EU average for both ISCED 5A (78% vs. 69%) and ISCED 5B programmes (73% vs. 59%). The reduction in the number of tertiary students in the field of sciences (-27.3% over the last ten years) represents a problem for the future innovation potential of the economy.

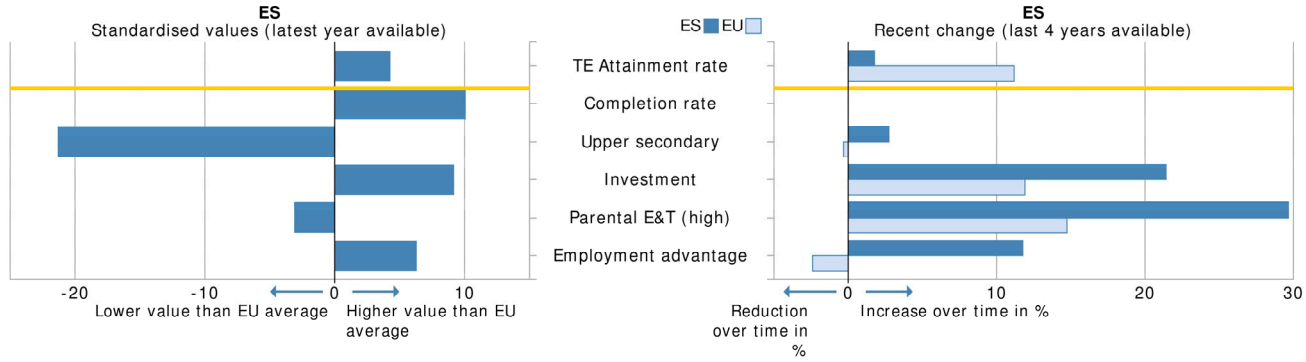
Figure 4. Tertiary education attainment: sub-groups



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* TE = tertiary education. See Annex 2 for further information.

Upper secondary supply is limited but completion rates are indeed good, as is the employment advantage of having a tertiary education degree. Furthermore, investment is strong and has increased.

Figure 5. Tertiary education attainment: sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

Spain has completed the integration into the Higher Education European Area and within this framework the Spanish authorities have announced important measures to increase excellence, innovation, competitiveness and internationalization of the university system. The first step in June 2012 was to set a high level group of experts that made "Proposals to improve quality and efficiency of the Spanish University system". As a following on-going step, a working group has been constituted in spring 2013 to further evaluate and operationalize proposals on rationalizing the range of qualifications, improving the teacher accreditation system, evaluating and optimising accountability mechanisms, governance and funding.

6. Facilitating the transition from education to work and reshaping vocational training

Effective measures linking study and work practice will be key for enhancing the employability of young people. Spain lacks a comprehensive strategy to effectively match changes in its productive structure; in particular, training and skills are not sufficiently updated and adapted to market needs particularly on those sectors with better economic development prospects. In this context, increasing the proportion of tertiary VET education in the total tertiary attainment rate could be particularly relevant and dual VET, combining study and practice/work, could also be applied to some fields in higher education.

The youth unemployment rate (53.2% in 2012) is particularly worrisome, both because of its magnitude and the risk of becoming structural. There are also large regional differences, which tend to mirror those in early school leaving: the Autonomous Communities with the highest youth unemployment rates are the Canary Islands (62.6%), Andalucía (62.3%) and Extremadura (61.6%) and, while those with the lowest are Navarra (40.6%), Cantabria (41.5%), Pais Vasco and Aragon (42.5%). These inter-regional differences in unemployment rates testify to the need for stimulating workers' mobility nationwide, especially skilled young people.

Spain has initiated a reform of the VET system to better adapt the skills of young people to labour market needs and to make VET more attractive: first, the draft Organic Law for the Improvement of the Education (LOMCE) includes the setting up of a two-year course of Basic Vocational Training and, secondly, Royal Decree 1529/2012 introduced measures to develop the training and apprenticeship contract and establish the bases for dual vocational training (work-based training with different modalities). The Royal Decree has been agreed between the Ministries of Education and Labour; however the competences on their implementation remain within the 17 Autonomous Communities. During 2012, 4000 students, 500 enterprises and 140 schools participated in pilot projects. The measures concerning VET seem adequate, but in the present economic and labour market situation their full implementation remains a challenge. Further continued efforts jointly involving public authorities, education providers and employers will be required to extend and consolidate the dual VET system in Spain to implement work based learning and increase apprenticeship opportunities.

7. Upgrading skills through lifelong learning

The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC[2]) shows that adults (aged 16-65) in Spain perform far below the EU average in the proficiency tests on literacy and numeracy. This holds also true for young adults (aged 16-24). Young adults (16-29) with at most lower secondary education have low scores compared to the EU average. Moreover, the performance of young people with tertiary education is not far from that of young people with upper secondary education.

The gap in proficiency skills for literacy between the generations aged 25-34 and 55-65 is significant (i.e. equivalent to skills usually acquired with about 5 years of education). This might be due to improvements in the education system in recent decades and / or a decline in skills over the working life.

Close to 30% of adults have low literacy and numeracy skills (at level 1 or below) compared to the EU average of 19% for literacy and 24% for numeracy. Moreover, low-skilled people are 6 times less likely to participate in job-related learning than high skilled people[3].

Adult participation in lifelong learning in Spain is slightly above the EU average (10.7% as against 9% in 2012). Regarding continuing vocational training, Eurostat data for 2010 shows that in Spain 75% of all enterprises provide training (compared with an EU average of 66%).

The Spanish Government has announced in its 2013 National Reform Programme that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport is elaborating a National Strategic lifelong learning framework (MENAP). Its starting point is a former Action Plan for lifelong learning, which resulted from a wide consultation process among Ministries, Autonomous Communities and other concerned stakeholders; the economic crisis made it necessary to revise the content of this Plan. MENAP addresses the whole population in order to increase personal, social and professional skills complementing those acquired in the education system. It will present in a systematic way the necessary measures to increase access to information, guidance and advice for citizens to participate in lifelong learning, improve the quality of training, promote innovation, individualise the learning process and favour flexible learning pathways.

[2] Volume I of the Education and Training Monitor (chapter 6) provides an overview of the results of the survey. Skills levels are presented either in terms of average score points or proportion of adults at a given proficiency level in literacy or numeracy (level 1 to 5) or problem solving in technology-rich (ICT) environments (level 1 to 3 or no ICT experience).

[3] At EU level, low skilled adults are 5 times less likely to participate in job-related learning than high skilled adults.