RESEARCH REPORT

Eurofound

Social mobility in the EU

Social mobility in the EU

Eurofound

European Foundation
for the Improvement of
Living and Working
Conditions

When citing this report, please use the following wording:
Eurofound (2017), *Social mobility in the EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Authors: Anna Ludwinek, Robert Anderson, Daphne Ahrendt, Jean-Marie Jungblut, Tadas Leončikas

Research managers: Anna Ludwinek, Robert Anderson

Eurofound project: Social mobility in Europe (150024)

Acknowledgments
Eurofound would like to acknowledge the input, time and expertise of the following academic and policy experts who have provided valuable feedback on the report and methodological guidance: Professor Henryk Domański (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland), Professor Robert Erikson (Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI), Sweden), Professor Harry Ganzeboom (VU University Amsterdam, Netherlands), Professor John Goldthorpe (University of Oxford, UK), Professor Richard Layte (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland), Professor Romas Lazutka (Department of Economic and Department of Social Work, Vilnius University, Lithuania), Professor Bogdan Mach (Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland), Jekaterina Navickė (Department of Social Work, Vilnius University, Lithuania), Professor Brian Nolan (University of Oxford, UK), Marii Paskov (University of Oxford, UK), Dr. Ave Roots (Institute of Social Studies, Estonia), Professor Ellu Saar (Tallinn University and Institute for International and Social Studies, Estonia), Professor Maarten H.J. Wolbers (Faculty of Social Science, Radbound University, Netherlands).

Eurofound organised four national workshops in 2016 – UK: 9 June, Poland: 13 July, Lithuania: 3 November (covering the three Baltic countries) and Netherlands: 4 November – and an expert seminar on 28 August 2015 in Dublin, during the course of which leading experts commented on the draft report and stakeholders provided valuable input and advice that further enhanced the contents. See Annex 1 for a full list of the participants of these meetings. Please note that responsibility for the text of the report lies entirely with the authors.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

Print:	ISBN: 978-92-897-1576-8	doi:10.2806/97500	TJ-01-17-286-EN-C
Web:	ISBN: 978-92-897-1577-5	doi:10.2806/420671	TJ-01-17-286-EN-N

© European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2017

For rights of translation or reproduction, applications should be made to the Director, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Dublin D18 KP65, Ireland.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency, whose role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies. Eurofound was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75 to contribute to the planning and design of better living and working conditions in Europe.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Telephone: (+353 1) 204 31 00
Email: information@eurofound.europa.eu
Web: www.eurofound.europa.eu

Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

Freephone number*: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11
*Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00 800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

Printed in Luxembourg
Cover image: Shutterstock

Contents

	Executive summary	1
	Introduction	3
1	Literature review and methodology	7
	Key terms used in study	7
	Social mobility: major themes in research literature	7
	Comparative studies on patterns of occupational mobility	8
	Overview of the empirical analysis in this study	9
2	Absolute social mobility	15
3	Relative social mobility	29
4	Country spotlights	35
	Social mobility in the Netherlands	35
	Social mobility in Poland	36
	Social mobility in the Baltic states	37
	Social mobility in the UK	38
5	Policy discourse on social mobility	41
	Key actors in the debate	41
	Drivers of the current debate	42
	Differences between Member States in policy discourse	46
6	Barriers to social mobility	49
	Early childhood education and care	50
	Secondary and tertiary education	51
	Labour market	52
7	Policies to facilitate upward social mobility	55
	Early childhood education and care	55
	Secondary and tertiary education	59
	Labour market	64
8	Conclusions	69
	Patterns of social mobility	69
	Current policy agenda and debate	71
	Factors and barriers influencing social mobility	72
	Policies to facilitate social mobility	72
	Policy pointers	74
	References	77

Annexes are available online at http://bit.ly/efmobility

Country codes

AT	Austria	**FI**	Finland	**NL**	Netherlands
BE	Belgium	**FR**	France	**PL**	Poland
BG	Bulgaria	**HR**	Croatia	**PT**	Portugal
CY	Cyprus	**HU**	Hungary	**RO**	Romania
CZ	Czech Republic	**IE**	Ireland	**SE**	Sweden
DE	Germany	**IT**	Italy	**SI**	Slovenia
DK	Denmark	**LU**	Luxembourg	**SK**	Slovakia
EE	Estonia	**LT**	Lithuania	**UK**	United Kingdom
EL	Greece	**LV**	Latvia		
ES	Spain	**MT**	Malta		

Executive summary

Introduction

Across the EU, citizens and governments of Member States are becoming increasingly concerned that – for the first time in decades – younger generations will have fewer opportunities for upward social mobility than preceding generations. This concern is shared by those on low incomes and the middle classes. This report sheds new light on the debate on social mobility in EU Member States and provides new evidence on patterns of intergenerational social mobility. It examines to what extent family background has determined people's prospects for social mobility over the last few decades. It identifies key barriers to social mobility and reviews policies aimed at facilitating upward social mobility and equal opportunities specifically in the areas of childcare, early education, schooling and the labour market.

This report is the first to examine patterns of social mobility across all 28 Member States. It considers *absolute* social mobility (the extent and nature of structural, occupational change and societal progress) as well as *relative* social mobility (or 'social fluidity') – people's chances of moving between certain occupational classes. Unlike many previous works in the field, the report analyses quantitative data regarding patterns of social mobility for men and women separately, underlining the increasingly important gender dimension. The qualitative information highlights the most pressing issues in terms of policy debate, the key barriers to social mobility, and policies for fostering equal opportunities and social mobility. In these analyses, occupational status is taken as the key indicator for measuring social mobility.

Policy context

The Europe 2020 strategy views social mobility essentially in terms of equal opportunity: 'It is about ensuring access and opportunities for all throughout the lifecycle.' The European Commission has put the issue of fairness among its top priorities. The ongoing European Commission consultation for the European Pillar of Social Rights points to the negative impact of widening inequalities on social mobility, identifying unequal access to childcare, education and health as key barriers to achieving equal opportunities.

The research identified the most common drivers of the debate regarding a 'fair society' in the Member States – one in which people have equal chances to enjoy good living conditions and have access to resources – as: widening income inequalities, diminished access to public services, persistent inequalities in education, intergenerational transmission of poverty, widespread gender inequalities, integration of immigrants, nepotism and corruption and growing regional disparities.

Key findings

- Structural changes (change of occupational structure, and size of population in various occupations) enabled upward social mobility across three generations in the 20th century.
- More recently, structural shifts have resulted in the level of absolute social mobility among men and women becoming more similar.
- Levels of relative social mobility in EU Member States have converged over the 20th century: they are more similar for the cohort born 1946–1964 than for the cohort born 1927–1946. However, for those born after 1965 a slowing down of convergence – if not divergence – between countries is visible.
- In six countries, social fluidity has been continuously increasing over the three cohorts examined: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands and Slovakia.
- In four countries, the cohort born 1965–1975 has experienced a decrease in social fluidity: Austria, Bulgaria, France and Sweden.
- In four countries, social fluidity (relative mobility) has remained stable over the period examined: Germany, Ireland, Poland and UK.
- Social fluidity among men has decreased (especially for the 1965–1975 cohort) in Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Sweden and the UK.
- Social fluidity among men has increased in Germany and Spain. It has also increased in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands and Slovakia – countries where social fluidity is high for both sexes.
- Social fluidity has in general changed less for women than for men. It has increased in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands and the UK. In contrast, it has decreased in Austria, Germany, Spain and Sweden.

Policy pointers

The policy debate on social mobility should be carefully framed in order to distinguish absolute social mobility from relative social mobility and to understand what these concepts mean for policy. The interpretation of research results for policy measures must take into account the characteristics and quality of data, the population assessed and how mobility is defined by other methodological issues – all these make a substantial difference to results. As the findings show that social background continues to have a profound effect on life chances, policymakers at EU, national and regional levels should recognise its importance and implement measures to promote equal opportunities for upward social mobility so that everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to realise their potential.

Furthermore, policymakers should reflect on the indicators of social mobility: most common indicators to measure social mobility, including both income and occupation, have been chosen to capture standards of living. One drawback is that they relate to people who have a mature occupational or income status. Stakeholders could examine the need to adjust and develop the indicators further to reflect changes at earlier life stages, such as education or employment status.

Reflect on the indicators of social mobility: Most common indicators to measure social mobility include either income or occupation. Stakeholders could reflect on the need to adjust and develop the indicators further to take into account changes taking place on the labour market (for example, changing jobs structure and new forms of employment) and broader societal developments (for example, the growing importance of wealth).

Investigate the reasons for success or failure in promoting social fluidity: Six countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands and Slovakia) have managed to maintain high levels of social fluidity for both men and women over the last decades. Research should examine the key drivers behind this, and investigate the reasons for stagnating – even decreasing – fluidity in many countries (especially among people born after 1964).

Prioritise men of Generation X in policymaking: More attention should be given to the decreasing life chances among men born after 1964, whose prospects have significantly deteriorated in many countries. Policies should be put in place to reverse this trend.

Identify and combat barriers to equal opportunities: Institutional barriers can be addressed by increasing the openness of closed occupational groups or professions, creating fair and transparent access to occupations and countering nepotism. Meanwhile, social investment can boost equality of opportunity – through, for instance, improving the quality and coverage of early education, providing compensatory funding for disadvantaged pupils and enabling better access to healthcare.

Ensure that the most economically advanced Member States maintain their policy focus on equal opportunities: Social fluidity is not likely to continue indefinitely upwards; it may have stagnated in the most developed EU Member States. These countries should still strive to remain socially fluid and ensure opportunities for newcomers (ethnic minorities and immigrants).

Organise educational tracking to benefit all pupils: Early selection and tracking is a potential barrier to social mobility. However, when based on objective standards and monitoring, it can also prevent early school-leaving for less academic children. The focus of the debate, therefore, should not be on early selection as such, but on ensuring that it is organised so that students of all abilities benefit from it.

Strive to moderate residential segregation: The concentration of disadvantaged households in particular areas negatively affects people's life chances. Policymakers, especially at the local level, should pay more attention to the creation of areas with more mixed housing and different types of schools. Such mixed developments can mitigate the effects of social and economic inequalities.

Build social mobility into the country-specific recommendations: Given that the broad objectives of social mobility are to promote fair and equal life chances, the main elements are in keeping with the recommendations of the Annual Growth Survey 2016 regarding investment in people and services. The country-specific recommendations should consistently seek to address inequalities and promote equal opportunities.

Introduction

For many decades, policy goals to promote upward social mobility and equal chances for all have been strongly aligned with the features of many European countries. However, until recently, some policymakers may not have been overly concerned with the level of inequality as long as there was a high degree of mobility, widespread opportunities for all and a reasonable chance of succeeding in life (Brookings Institution, 2008).

The topic of equal opportunities for all has featured strongly in the political and public arena in many Member States. This has been reflected in the policy debate both at national and EU level. Many citizens and governments are becoming increasingly concerned that – for the first time in decades – younger generations of adults will have fewer opportunities for upward mobility than today's older generations enjoyed. This is a widespread concern, relevant not only to those on low incomes but also to the middle classes, albeit with rather different characteristics in different Member States (Atkinson, 2015; OECD, 2015a).

The generation born in the decade or so after the Second World War benefited from major structural and sectoral changes in Europe. There was an expansion in education and in the number of professional and middle-class jobs. Changes in occupational structure were evident broadly in the move towards a more service-oriented economy, with white-collar jobs replacing blue-collar ones, enabling qualified people to move into higher occupational positions (Stiglitz, 2016): hence, more people could be upwardly mobile. The impact of economic growth was often captured in the phrase 'a rising tide lifts all boats', commonly attributed to US President John F. Kennedy (*Washington Post*, 2005). In short, during the 'golden age' of upward social mobility (Goldthorpe, 2016), a range of factors, especially growth in education and employment opportunities, resulted in 'more room at the top' and better general living standards.

Since the onset of the economic crisis in 2007, many Europeans are facing lower living standards and social and income inequalities appear to be increasing in many Member States (Social Protection Committee, 2016). Young people find it increasingly hard to graduate from formal education without having accumulated debt, to find affordable housing and to get a job that will allow them a good standard of living. The numbers of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion have increased; only in 2015 did they return to the levels of 2008. Labour markets have become more polarised between high-skilled/high-wage jobs and low-skilled/low-paid work, with few prospects of upward mobility (OECD, 2011, Eurofound, 2015a).

Evidently, the degree to which different countries have experienced these changes varies greatly.

As income and social inequalities have widened to historically high levels in many EU Member States, and economic growth has slowed, attention has increasingly been directed to the social and economic situation of younger people, the lack of equal opportunities and the transmission of disadvantage. There are concerns that societies have become less fair and less equal. Downward mobility appears to be more in evidence than upward mobility. At the EU level, there has been mounting concern over large differences in the level of living standards between and within countries.

Policymakers have been asking questions: Are these concerns justified? How fluid and fair is European society and how has it changed over the last few decades? Are diminished levels of social mobility evident in Europe? How does the story of social mobility differ between Member States, and how does it relate to trends in social and economic inequalities?

This report comes at a time of intense public and policy debate on the role of public policies at the European, national and regional levels in improving life chances and fostering greater equality of opportunity. It highlights the debate on social mobility taking place in EU Member States and provides new evidence on patterns of intergenerational social mobility in the Union. It also introduces quantitative data to examine to what extent family background is related to the mobility of individuals born from 1926-1975. The report uses qualitative information on the last decade to map the most pronounced barriers to social mobility and reviews the most relevant policies that facilitate upward social mobility and equal opportunities. This is a big subject that is both complex and controversial: a measured debate on 'social mobility' demands clarity of concepts and clear framing of the research questions. This is difficult enough in any one Member State; this report goes further still by seeking to provide an informed comparison of developments across the EU.

Understanding social mobility

Social mobility can be examined from either an intergenerational or an intragenerational perspective.

Intergenerational mobility is understood as the relationship between the parental and adult children's socioeconomic positions – in other words, the individual's current circumstances compared with the circumstances in which that person originated. The closer the strength of the association between parent and child, the more limited social mobility has been

(Breen and Luijkx, 2004). Societies can be labelled as more or less mobile for a defined period of time, depending on the relationship between the current socioeconomic situations of people and that of their parents. Societies in which the current economic and occupational status of an individual can be attributed to the talents and efforts of that person rather than as a result of parental wealth or status are societies that can be characterised as fair and socially mobile. In such societies, the potential of all people, including those from less advantaged backgrounds, is realised (McKnight, 2015). In short, investigating intergenerational mobility means comparing the current socioeconomic characteristics of a person with those of their parents (usually the father). The indicator of socioeconomic status may be occupation or income. When occupation is chosen, usually the parent's main occupation is compared to that of their son or daughter after they reach the age of 35 – when a 'mature' occupational status has been achieved.

Intragenerational mobility (not addressed in this report) focuses on the transitions of individuals during their lifetime by looking at the change in an individual's circumstances over time, most commonly by comparing their first and their current job. Sometimes the focus is on income mobility, but other studies have examined the trajectories of the career of the individual (Torche, 2011; Miles and Vincent, 1993).

A key distinction is made between **absolute social mobility** and **relative social mobility**. Absolute mobility refers to the overall numbers of people whose occupation is in a different level of the social structure from that of their parents (again, the focus is typically on the labour market or occupational structure). Evidently, some proportion of people will experience upward mobility and another proportion downward mobility. The exact number will depend upon how 'mobility' is precisely defined and measured. Absolute social mobility most often relates to large-scale societal and labour market changes that include a large number of individuals moving between different occupational classes (for example, in the post-industrial era it was associated with the rise in service-oriented jobs and the decline of blue-collar employment) (Hout, 1989; Marshall, 1998). Absolute social mobility registers the aggregate (net outcome) of individuals' movements, reflecting shifts in the structure of the economy and society.

Relative social mobility (largely referred to in this report as 'social fluidity') captures the probability that a child will move from their parents' place in the social hierarchy to another category (in terms of occupation or income) (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992). Movement may be upwards or downwards. Phrased differently, social fluidity refers to the chances of movement between different classes. The term 'social fluidity' derives from the literature, where it is sometimes used as a synonym for relative mobility. Social mobility (or social fluidity) was originally introduced as a term by Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero (1979): it denotes the inequality between individuals from different occupational classes in terms of their chances of occupying one destination class rather than another. The degree of social fluidity is an indicator of societal openness. Rates of relative mobility indicate the level of social fluidity or 'social openness' or the degree of 'equality of opportunity' in a society (Goldthorpe, 2000).

The advantage of measures of relative social mobility (or social fluidity) is that they control for the mobility that may have happened in a society simply because the economy developed and the occupational structure changed (for example, the number of farmers decreased, and the number of professionals increased). Such measures point to real chances for individuals not to be limited by their origin, regardless of structural changes. A fair society needs a high level of social fluidity so that talented people are able to compete, and opportunities are not constrained by social origin; the result otherwise is an ongoing social reproduction of inequalities. A genuinely meritocratic society is generally associated with a mobile society, allowing individuals to rise to the highest ranks, irrespective of their social background.

The important point to note is that absolute and relative mobility rates are different measures: to some extent, they reflect different phenomena. In a society, it is possible for high levels of absolute mobility (large numbers moving up or down) to coexist with low levels of relative mobility (or social fluidity) and vice versa. The distance between occupational origin and destination is likely to be a combination of absolute and relative mobility.

Eurofound's contribution to investigating social mobility

To varying degrees across Member States, there has been significant and long-standing research examining patterns of social mobility. This research has involved a range of indicators used to measure mobility – most often income or occupation. The countries covered have usually been individual Member States, with some notable exceptions (Breen, 2005). Investigating intergenerational social mobility requires looking back at fairly long periods of family history: therefore, all current empirical studies relate to people (and their parents) born in the last century.

The overall research questions of Eurofound's work are:

- What are the patterns of social mobility in the EU?
- What are the barriers to social mobility?
- What are the policy responses to tackle these challenges?

Taking into account policy relevance, availability of data and existing research from other organisations, this report focuses on intergenerational social mobility – absolute and relative. It examines both the levels of mobility that are the result of structural changes and societal progress (absolute mobility) as well as the extent to which countries have been and are open to mobility, offering equal opportunities to all of their citizens (relative mobility, or social fluidity). Both dimensions are vital for a full understanding of patterns of social mobility and how the influence of family background interlinks with broader societal and technological changes, leading to an examination of what actions policymakers could take to improve living standards and opportunities for all citizens.

This research brings added value to the subject: the report is unique in that it covers social mobility across all 28 EU countries and uses both quantitative and qualitative information to inform comparisons between countries. Unlike many previous works in the field, this report examines patterns of social mobility for men and women separately, underlining the increasingly important gender dimension. Inevitably, empirical information on patterns of intergenerational social mobility involves looking back at developments in the lives of people who have reached occupational maturity. The qualitative information from correspondents in Member States relates more specifically to the last decade and captures the most current and pressing issues in terms of policy debate and policies put in place to address equal opportunities and social mobility. Finally, in looking at patterns of social mobility in the EU, special attention is given to differences between clusters of countries – considering, in particular, developments in post-socialist countries after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Some of the strengths of this study are also limitations. In particular, since the report aims to present results for many countries in a short format, analyses and interpretation are constrained. However, the results presented can serve as a basis for more in-depth follow-up work by other organisations. Such work is particularly needed to assist policymakers and stakeholders in designing and implementing appropriate policies and measures aimed at promoting social mobility.

In measuring social mobility, Eurofound uses occupational status as the key indicator. Occupation has been identified as the indicator that best reflects social inequalities and has an important impact on a wide range of individuals' life chances and life choices (Goldthorpe, 2016; Goldthorpe and McKnight, 2006). The strength of this classification by occupation is that it is associated with three important aspects of our economic lives: income security, short-term prospects and longer-term income prospects (Goldthorpe and McKnight, 2006; McGovern et al, 2008).

European and international policy context

The EU policy agenda has long been driven by the goal of raising employment and overall standards of living, reducing levels of poverty and boosting social cohesion. The Europe 2020 strategy, launched in 2010, is a 10-year jobs and growth strategy with five headline targets around employment; research and development; climate/energy; education; and poverty reduction. One of the key pillars of Europe 2020 is inclusive growth, to be promoted by a high-employment economy that delivers social and territorial cohesion (European Commission, 2010). Social mobility is referred to in the Europe 2020 strategy in terms of equal opportunity: 'It is about ensuring access and opportunities for all throughout the lifecycle.' The economic downturn and its social and economic consequences have impeded movement towards the targets, but the EU is still committed to the principles of inclusive growth, social cohesion and all Europeans having equal opportunities to succeed in life. This has been evident in recent policy statements and analyses that highlight the relevance of social mobility in EU and national debates.

The Social Investment Package (launched in 2013) touches on social mobility from the perspective of human capital and proactive social policies, emphasising the importance of investing in people from early childhood to old age (European Commission, 2013b). In the context of growing inequalities, the EU Social Protection Committee has focused on the importance of equality of opportunities (referring specifically to the role of education, healthcare and childcare services for occupational achievement).

Even though it focuses mainly on euro zone countries, the 'Five presidents' report' (Juncker, 2015), acknowledges that the success of European Monetary Union depends on the fair functioning of the labour markets and the welfare system, citing in particular a need for equal access to education to prevent inequalities and social exclusion.

The current European Commission has put the issue of fairness among their top priorities, along with jobs, growth and democratic change. One perspective on fairness was illustrated by the UK government, which in 2011 published a strategy on social mobility: 'A fair society is an open society, one in which every individual is free to succeed. That is why improving social mobility is the principal goal of the Government's social policy' (HM Government, 2011). The goal of a fairer society also underpins the ongoing European Commission consultation for the European Pillar of Social Rights, which directly refers to the negative impact of widening inequalities on social mobility (European Commission, 2016). The document goes on to cite unequal access to childcare, education and health as the main barrier to

equal opportunities that can continue into later life, affecting also labour market participation.

This ongoing debate about inequalities and equal opportunities is not restricted to the EU or even to Europe. Concern about the end of the American Dream, the idea that everyone can succeed regardless of their background, has captured recent policy discussion in the United States – particularly in the recent presidential election debates. This concern has also been reflected in academic research (Putnam, 2015). Australia, Canada and Mexico have also witnessed increased attention being paid to widening social and economic inequalities and to growing inequality of opportunity. The OECD has built on its extensive work on growing income inequalities by establishing a Centre for Opportunity and Equality, which is a platform for policy-oriented research on trends in, and the causes and consequences of, inequalities – and policies to address them (OECD, 2015a).

Structure of the report

Chapter 1 is a literature review, documenting trends and patterns of social mobility across EU Member States, giving particular attention to a broad European coverage (as the majority of the most cited and most well-known research has focused mainly on the US, the UK and a few other Western countries) and outlining the main concepts and theories behind social mobility. This chapter also includes the methodology for the quantitative analysis.

Chapter 2 presents the main findings from existing comparative studies and maps patterns of absolute social mobility across 24 EU countries, while Chapter 3 performs the equivalent task for relative social mobility (social fluidity) in 20 EU countries. For both chapters, data from the European Social Survey (ESS) were used to perform the analysis. The ESS has been identified as the best available source of data given the number of countries covered and the high quality of its data. It includes information on the occupation of respondents and both of their parents.

Chapter 4 examines the contextual factors and drivers behind patterns of social mobility in four selected country clusters: the Baltic states, the Netherlands, Poland and the UK. The information derives from a series of in-depth country workshops (involving mainly academic experts), which sought to provide information on the patterns and barriers to social mobility in different countries and the policies or measures that have contributed to promoting upward social mobility.

Chapter 5 turns to the current policy situation and examines how social mobility has been an issue on the policy agenda in different Member States and how the policy debate has been framed (for example, in terms of equal opportunities, life chances or growing social and income inequalities). The chapter also looks at the main drivers of inequality, the stakeholders involved in Member States and differences between clusters of countries (see Annex 3 for more information on the country clustering).

Chapter 6 examines specific barriers to social mobility (as highlighted in policy debates and/or assessed in dedicated studies), focusing on systemic factors.

Chapter 7 looks at policies introduced at national level that have been identified as key to promoting equality of opportunity, particularly for disadvantaged individuals. The chapter examines policies in childcare and early education, school and the labour market. A short section is dedicated to an overview of initiatives and measures that Member States have put in place to tackle barriers to social mobility stemming from regional inequalities.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are based on information collected by Eurofound's network of European correspondents. The network covers all 28 EU Member States plus Norway. The questionnaire was completed and analysed in the first quarter of 2016 (see Annex 2). It is important to note that the information included in the report refers to the situation in the Member States at the time of data collection.

The report concludes with a summary of the main findings and policy pointers for stakeholders and policymakers at the national and European level.

1 Literature review and methodology

Key terms used in study

Social mobility, which is understood as occupational mobility in this report, is the movement of individuals and groups from one position to another over time. For the purposes of analysis, similar occupations are grouped into socioeconomic classes. Measuring mobility in terms of occupational achievement has advantages over other methods: class membership is relatively stable over time compared with, say, level of income. It is also a more precise measurement, as it reflects the life chances of individuals and a certain degree of embeddedness in society. This is only properly captured if socioeconomic status is measured once a person has gained occupational maturity – the stage where they have reached a stable position in life that is unlikely to change (considered to be from age 35 on). The dominant socioeconomic class membership of the parents when the respondent was aged 14 is understood as the respondent's 'social origin' (depending on the occupation of both parents and classified according to whichever is highest). 'Social destination' is measured by the occupation that an occupationally mature individual has achieved at the time of measurement. There is an evident hierarchical gradation between socioeconomic classes in the European Socioeconomic Classification from the bottom to the top of the classification, but this is not necessarily the case between adjacent classes (see Table 2 on p. 11). Groupings of similar occupations are used to simplify the analysis, while socioeconomic classes stand for different levels of access to resources (education, social capital, wealth) and life chances. In general, children from a lower blue-collar origin have fewer resources at their disposal than the offspring of parents who hold white-collar occupations. A more detailed description of the class scheme is provided below (see p.10).

One of the fundamentals of mobility research is the distinction between absolute and relative mobility. Absolute mobility rates are changes in the structure of occupations across time on the aggregate level. These reflect structural change in an economy and society and the general upgrading of status in a society (moving to fewer low-level occupations and to more medium- or high-level jobs). It is possible to compare countries over time to see how the process of modernisation – or industrialisation – is happening. Relative mobility rates show social fluidity: they represent the chances that individuals will occupy a different socioeconomic class from that of their parents (this includes the opportunity to move both upwards and downwards); the less fluidity, the more individuals will remain where their parents were.

Social mobility: major themes in research literature

There are two long-established hypotheses about how patterns of social mobility might vary over time. The first hypothesis is the 'liberal theory of industrialism' – the modernisation hypothesis associated with the work of Parsons (1960) and Kerr et al (1960). This hypothesis claims that absolute mobility increases as a result of economic progress. However, social fluidity will also be affected, as ongoing economic progress means increased economic competition, which in turn means that employers are likely to recruit people based on their acquired skills and qualifications rather than their social backgrounds.

One of the main consequences of greater social fluidity will be the growing importance of education as an important determinant of someone's socioeconomic position. Crucially, the theory also assumes that the education system itself will also become more meritocratic. The theory goes on to make the point that the increasingly complex nature of the labour market and the labour force will make it less likely that advantageous positions will be automatically inherited. The overall trend should be one of greater openness, especially as far as the labour market is concerned, where employers increasingly recruit on the basis of merit and educational qualifications rather than parents' socioeconomic class and associated characteristics.

In contrast, the Featherman, Jones and Hauser (FJH) hypothesis (1975) argues that in advanced industrial societies, the association between origins and destinations will display a basic cross-national similarity. This means that one should expect little variation over time or indeed between countries. The hypothesis also makes an important point from a policymaking perspective insofar as patterns of social mobility are quite resistant to any policy interventions. This theory is broadly in line with the Lipset-Zetterberg (LZ) theory of mobility, which claims that 'the overall pattern of social mobility appears to be much the same in the industrial societies of various western countries' (Lipset and Bendix, 1959). The LZ thesis therefore also suggests that countries with similar levels of industrialisation have similar rates of (absolute) mobility.

Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) have refined the FJH thesis, saying that countries display similarities in their patterns of relationship between origins and destinations, but at the same time may also show some deviation in the strength of this association, which can be affected by policy intervention; this is of course important from a policymaking perspective. They also

argue that inequalities in mobility chances have a self-reinforcing quality. They see a lack of variation over time in class-related inequalities, which can be largely attributed to the fact that groups in a position of wealth and advantage pursue actions that maintain their power and position in society.

More recently, Breen (2005) suggested that there could be a third way. He pointed out that both of the previous hypotheses are based on data from the 'golden age' of capitalism (from the end of the Second World War until the mid-1970s) – a period of growth, of full, stable and predictable employment, and of the development and extension of the welfare state. From the 1980s, however, countries started to follow different paths, some Member States moving towards greater deregulation and privatisation of certain segments of the economy and state. In addition, in recent years, countries have experienced several economic recessions and battled with the economic and social consequences of these. The ways in which countries have responded to the crises, especially that of 2008, have also varied. Job losses and growth in different occupations have impacted on the patterns and the levels of social mobility, which are also likely to have been affected by growth of income inequalities (Eurofound, 2016).

Comparative studies on patterns of occupational mobility

Several international studies have examined intergenerational occupational social mobility in European countries. However, empirical research on comparative social mobility has so far been limited due to lack of suitable comparable data.

Ganzeboom and Treiman (2006) analysed data from 35 countries drawn from the period 1947–1986 and concluded that, despite substantial cross-national differences, there was an overall reduction of about 1% per annum in the strength of the association between class origins and class destinations at the aggregate level, meaning greater social fluidity.

Breen and Luijkx (2004), using 117 mobility surveys, compared 11 countries (9 European countries) and found that France, Germany, Ireland and Italy tended to show low levels of intergenerational social mobility. In contrast, in the Scandinavian countries (in particular, Norway and Sweden) and the post-socialist countries Hungary and Poland it seemed to be more possible for individuals to occupy positions that differ from their social origin. Two countries show the most pronounced changes: the Netherlands had become considerably more socially fluid, while the UK had moved from being one of the most fluid countries to being quite static. The authors argue that the results demonstrate that there is no convergence in terms of equality of opportunity.

Beller and Hout (2006) focus on the levels of social mobility and the welfare regimes of different countries. Using an approach to mobility based on the ISCO-88 schema – converted into an eight-occupational class version of Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) – they looked at 18 countries grouped into four welfare types: [1]

- corporatist (Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Portugal);
- liberal (Canada, Chile, New Zealand, US);
- social-democratic (Norway, Sweden);
- post-socialist (Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia).

They found that post-socialist and social-democratic welfare regimes foster a weaker origin–destination association, meaning greater social fluidity. Origin–destination association is weaker for individuals with the highest level of education. This finding is supported by Breen (2005) and Hout (1989). Occupational mobility is strongly linked with family background and education. High rates of educational mobility directly produce higher rates of occupational mobility. Increased access to higher education may lower the overall origin–destination association (in other words, increase social mobility), as the association is low for individuals with college degrees. Social-democratic and post-socialist Member States promote equality of occupational opportunity across generations without explicitly relying on access to higher education as a catalyst for upward social mobility.

The authors also found that corporatist, post-socialist and liberal welfare states have higher rates of social fluidity if access to education is fostered, but lower rates if access to education is hindered.

Esping-Andersen and Wagner (2012) used the 2005 data from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey (EU-SILC) for five countries (Denmark, France, Italy, Norway and Spain) and investigated asymmetries in the opportunities structure. They found that the impact of class origin on educational attainment had weakened in France and the Nordic countries, decreased somewhat in Spain and remained persistent in Italy. In Nordic countries, the equalisation of life chances is asymmetrical: marginal effects of welfare states policies are felt far more strongly at the bottom of the social class pyramid. As a consequence, the disadvantages associated with lower social class origins

1 More information on the ISCO-88 schema can be found on the website of the Warwick Institute for Employment Research: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/classification/isco88/english

have largely disappeared, but the advantages related to being in a privileged class do still persist. This is especially the case in Denmark.

The role of education in occupational social mobility has been a focus of several comparative studies. Triventi (2013), using 2005–2006 data from the FLEXibility survey (Reflex) investigated mechanisms whereby social inequalities are reproduced among graduates of third-level education. He found that the effect of parental education is greater on occupational status than on income, with the most pronounced effect found in Spain. In all countries, a parent's graduation from a leading educational institution is a greater determinant of a respondent's occupational status than their income. (It may be that income, and not occupational status, is more related to skills, which are not fully certified by educational credentials.) Finally, in all countries except Germany, people whose parents were educated to tertiary level are more likely to have a highly paid occupation.

The European Commission DG Regional Policy 2010 report *Social mobility and intra-regional income* also dedicated a small section to the analysis of occupational social mobility (European Commission, 2010). The report found that Portugal and Spain, followed closely by Austria, Belgium and Poland, had the highest proportions of respondents who shared the same occupational group as their father. Finland and France had the lowest share, indicating greater levels of social mobility. Most immobility is registered for the 'professional' category (group 2 of the ISCO-88 scale). When it comes to educational mobility, the greatest mobility is recorded in Lithuania, Sweden and the UK, while the least mobility is found in the Czech Republic, Germany and Slovakia. The most 'immobile' category was ISCED 5 (first stage of tertiary education).

To conclude, it is evident that the literature shows somewhat different, if not contradictory, findings, even though the main focus of all the studies referred to above has been on occupational mobility. This should not be of major concern, as many scholars have highlighted a range of factors that may lie behind the differences in results. These can include the period covered, age brackets or the different occupational classes and grouping of classes used for the analysis. The inclusion of both men and women also plays a role. Evidence is rather mixed as far as post-socialist countries are concerned. What is evident, though, is that a number of research organisations as well as other stakeholders have called for comparative research mapping patterns of social mobility in the EU countries using coherent data sets that also pay attention to the gender dimension.

Overview of the empirical analysis in this study

The following chapters present a mapping of absolute mobility in 24 EU Member States and an analysis of social fluidity (relative mobility) in 20 of these countries (the reduction in the number of countries relates to the adequacy of sample sizes for analysis).

Assessing the mobility of societies in absolute terms (compare Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Breen 2005) means measuring the movement of individuals from their class of origin to their class of destination. Absolute mobility is also an indication of societal change, a consequence of the modernisation (industrialisation) of a society, or its post-modernisation (the movement from an industrial to a services-based economy). Traditionally, a society sees its agricultural sector decline to make way for more jobs in industry – commonly known as modernisation or industrialisation. At some point, jobs in industry decline and the children of those who worked in heavy industry move on to jobs in the services sector (Bell, 1976; Fourastié, 1979; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992). The more a society is modernising, the more it creates jobs with higher skill levels while destroying jobs in low-productivity areas. This is a situation that Schumpeter (1942) called 'creative destruction'. Social mobility is thus related to modernisation and structural change.

In terms of its contribution to existing research, the added-value of Eurofound's work is twofold: it performs a cross-country comparison and reports a change in mobility patterns over three cohorts, using recent data for a large number of EU countries. (This latter exercise on change in mobility patterns has already been done by Breen and Luijkx (2004) for an earlier period and of course in the seminal work by Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992), on whose work this chapter relies.)

In the following section, the data source used in this study is introduced. This is followed by a presentation of the class scheme that has been employed to estimate mobility. Then some first results on absolute mobility in Europe are presented, along with some of the models that estimate relative mobility.

Data

The quantitative data source used in this study is the European Social Survey (ESS). The ESS is a cross-national survey that measures attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of random samples of population in more than 30 countries. The ESS has all the data needed for the creation of class variables – for respondents and both of their parents. Not all countries are available across the different waves of the ESS. Table 1 gives an overview of the countries for which data are available and the total numbers of observations for the first five waves of the survey. Countries that are not members of the EU28 have been omitted. Only those respondents

Table 1: Countries, waves and number of observations in the European Social Survey (ESS), 2002–2010

Country (waves)	Observations	Country (waves)	Observations	Country (waves)	Observations
Austria (4)	5,183	**Finland (5)**	11,976	**Netherlands (5)**	9,776
Belgium (5)	7,025	**France (5)**	7,302	**Poland (5)**	6,929
Bulgaria (3)	5,624	**Germany (5)**	10,714	**Portugal (5)**	5,167
Croatia (2)	*1,845*	**Greece (4)**	7,026	**Slovakia (4)**	6,421
Cyprus (3)	*2,451*	**Hungary (5)**	6,146	**Slovenia (5)**	5,228
Czech Republic (4)	6,259	**Ireland (5)**	5,718	**Spain (5)**	6,841
Denmark (5)	8,892	***Lithuania (2)***	*1,014*	**Sweden (5)**	6,986
Estonia (4)	7,174	***Luxembourg (2)***	*2,195*	**Sweden (5)**	9,740

Note: *Number of respondents aged 35–75 years. Data weighted with frequency weights based on rounded design weights; for more information on the weighting applied, see Annex 4.*[2] *All 24 countries have been used for the analysis of absolute mobility, but those countries with fewer than three waves or fewer than 2,500 observations are not used for the analysis of relative mobility (these are shown in italics).*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

who worked at some stage of their life are included. All respondents who have never worked were excluded, along with all those for whom information on the occupational position of at least one parent is lacking. The reported occupation of the father and mother when the respondent was aged 14 is used to determine the respondent's social origin.

Surveys implemented between 2002 and 2010 were used, and respondents aged 35 to 75 were identified. In other words, respondents selected for mobility analysis were born between 1927 (being 75 years old in the ESS1 in 2002) and 1975 (being 35 in the ESS5 in 2010), and the information on the status of their parents can refer to a period between 1941 and 1989. This choice of age category is motivated by the requirement to observe occupational maturity among the youngest respondents – in other words, that they have reached a point in their professional lives that can be considered determinant (35 years), in contrast to younger respondents who may still gradually improve their class positions. The upper boundary of 75 years was selected because of differential mortality, as incumbents of higher classes are more likely to survive beyond that age than individuals from lower classes.

Table 1 also shows the number of observations per country where all the required information to proceed with the mobility analysis is available. The country with the highest number of observations is Finland, which participated in all five waves of the ESS since it began in 2002. Most of the new Member States from the 2004 and 2010 enlargements are only present in up to four waves, with the notable exceptions of Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. The fewest observations exist for Lithuania, which only participated in two waves – with a total of 1,014 observations. Italy and Romania were excluded because of data issues. Further on, the analysis of absolute mobility is carried out for 24 countries; however, countries with fewer than three waves or fewer than 2,500 observations are not used in the analysis of relative mobility, because too many blank cells affect the estimation, both for the country in question and for other countries (these countries are listed in italics in Table 1). [2]

Class scheme

The two preeminent approaches to stratification are the Weberian approach, which focuses on life chances, and the Marxist one, which focuses on resources and power. Sociology has been dealing with class analysis since Marx's unfinished discussion in his work, *Capital*. Marx's conceptualisation of classes takes its origin in the organisation of production and his concern with the egalitarian distribution of resources. Marxists look at history and analyse how ownership of resources and appropriation of labour power have shaped class structure, affecting life chances and resulting in conflict and social change.

The Weberian class analysis looks at economic assets, their market value and the exchange relations providing a differential control over income and therefore life chances, options and opportunities (Weber, 1922). In this view, the class situation stands for market situation, incorporating dimensions of ownership of property and control over means of production (Breen, 2005). Weberian class analysis does not claim to identify a group as the 'engine of social change' with the aim of

2 All annexes are available on the Eurofound web page for this report.

Table 2: European Socioeconomic Classification (ESeC), 2007

1	Large employers, higher-grade professional, administrative and managerial occupations
2	Lower-grade professional, administrative and managerial occupations and higher-grade technician and supervisory occupations
3	Intermediate occupations
4	Small employer and self-employed occupations (excluding agriculture, logging, fishing, etc.)
5	Self-employed occupations (agriculture, logging, fishing, etc.)
6	Lower supervisory and lower technician occupations
7	Lower services, sales and clerical occupations
8	Lower technical occupations
9	Routine occupations

Note: *Categories take into account the highest level of occupation (based on ISCO-88), span of control (number of dependent employees) and labour market status (employed or self-employed).*
Source: *Rose and Harrison (2007).*

realising an egalitarian society. Classes are not the major source of conflict, as any social division (gender, region, ethnicity, race, age) can give rise to conflict over scarce resources. Compared to other dimensions used to analyse mobility (such as income or education), using occupational classes provides a more robust measure for status in society, as class membership is more closely linked to other dimensions of status, such as education, capital possessions or social connections, and is more durable: income levels, education and even wealth may fluctuate more often than the class membership based on occupation.

The most recent and detailed socioeconomic classification based on Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero (EGP) is that developed by Rose and Harrison (2007, 2010) as part of the EU's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) between 2004 and 2006 and the European Socioeconomic Classification (ESeC). The class scheme is largely based on the EGP with a few minor alterations. The EGP class scheme was developed by Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero (1979) and is also known as the *Comparative study of social mobility in industrial nations* (CASMIN) scheme (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Goldthorpe, 1980; Goldthorpe, 1984). The EGP scheme combines the Marxist ownership perspective with the Weberian market-based approach to form classes in terms of their assets and resources: education, income, wealth and social capital. The fundamental distinction, apart from that between employers or the self-employed (owners of means of production) and dependent employers (offering their labour and skills), is based on the labour contract – service contracts and labour contracts.

The European Socioeconomic Classification (ESeC) also has the advantage of being well documented, plus the coding scheme and the syntax to implement it are available to the research community (see Table 2 for details of the classification; a more detailed outline of the class scheme is presented in Annex 4).[3]

To gauge the first results of the class distribution of the respondents and their parents in the ESS using the methodology described in Annex 4, an aggregated class structure of the parents compared with one of their children in the data is shown. The distribution of parents across the class scheme adopted for all countries for which data are available is presented in Table 3. The table shows the share of the respondents' parents in each of the classes as defined above, by country.

A cautionary note about the parents' class distribution has to be made here: this distribution does not represent the distribution of individuals across classes at any given time, as the information on parents is collected via the respondents to the survey. However, it reflects the social origin of respondents in the survey and also provides good information on historical occupational class structures and the structural change that took place in societies in the second half of the 20th century.

3 All annexes are available online together with the electronic version of this report.

Table 3 shows that – with the exception of Cyprus, Finland, Greece and Poland – the share of independent farmers in the parents' generation is well below 25% in most countries. The changes in the share of farmers from generation to generation were most extensive in Greece (a drop of 29 percentage points), Poland (–28 percentage points), Cyprus (–25 percentage points), Finland (–22 percentage points) and Ireland (–17 percentage points).[4] In many countries, the share of parents in the service classes (classes 1 and 2) represents about one-third of the class of origin: the UK (36%), Sweden (34%), Belgium (30%), Denmark (30%), and in the Baltic countries, with 32% in Lithuania and 29% in Estonia (Latvia has been omitted). In most other countries, the share of respondents' social origin in classes 1 or 2 is around one-fifth. The exceptions are Greece, and Portugal, where the share is lower than 10%.

Table 3: Parents and respondents – distribution across socioeconomic classification by country (%)

	A. Class of origin								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Large employers, higher managers/ professionals	Lower managers/ professionals, higher supervisory/ technicians	Intermediate occupations	Small employers and self-employed (non-agriculture)	Small employers and self-employed (agriculture)	Lower supervisors and technicians	Lower sales and service	Lower technical	Routine
AT	8.0	13.4	9.4	10.7	15.7	10.8	5.2	15.4	11.4
BE	11.6	17.9	6.0	18.1	7.4	7.2	3.0	14.5	14.1
BG	8.5	14.8	3.7	1.7	3.8	6.0	5.9	20.8	34.8
CY	2.7	6.8	3.4	22.6	27.0	4.0	3.2	10.5	19.7
CZ	6.4	20.4	6.9	0.4	3.1	7.9	9.1	31.0	14.7
DE	10.3	16.5	10.3	7.4	5.3	11.2	6.4	22.5	10.1
DK	13.4	16.0	6.0	5.5	15.5	7.4	7.8	13.2	15.3
EE	15.8	13.7	4.6	0.5	4.5	11.7	6.3	30.6	12.2
EL	3.1	4.9	2.7	21.4	42.8	2.2	2.8	7.0	13.1
ES	5.9	7.9	3.3	17.7	13.8	5.2	3.7	16.8	25.7
FI	6.7	14.7	3.1	14.6	25.6	4.5	5.7	13.0	12.1
FR	11.2	15.7	7.2	13.9	8.0	10.6	5.1	15.3	12.7
HR	6.4	14.0	6.7	5.4	7.5	6.7	3.7	18.9	30.7
HU	8.0	14.6	5.2	3.4	3.7	8.2	5.7	25.3	26.0
IE	6.6	14.0	4.1	12.2	22.0	9.0	3.4	9.2	19.6
LT	12.5	19.5	2.8	3.5	0.3	6.0	7.3	12.8	35.3
LU	7.8	12.8	4.4	4.8	13.9	10.2	3.8	20.4	21.8
NL	10.3	17.9	4.7	14.8	9.4	12.3	3.5	14.7	12.4
PL	4.2	10.7	3.0	4.4	40.5	4.8	3.4	14.3	14.7
PT	3.0	4.1	3.3	15.5	16.5	4.6	5.0	23.1	24.8
SE	13.0	20.7	8.9	11.8	9.9	7.3	10.7	9.5	8.2
SI	10.5	11.9	4.0	0.5	6.0	22.6	5.0	22.5	17.0
SK	12.2	12.2	2.9	1.4	3.8	9.4	6.1	25.8	26.2
UK	14.2	21.6	6.2	9.0	2.4	12.1	6.6	10.3	17.6
EU24	9.3	14.5	5.3	6.6	13.2	8.6	5.5	17.2	16.8

4 All figures given here are percentage point changes, not growth rates.

	B. Class of destination								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Large employers, higher managers/ professionals	Lower managers/ professionals, higher supervisory/ technicians	Intermediate occupations	Small employers and self-employed (non-agriculture)	Small employers and self-employed (agriculture)	Lower supervisors and technicians	Lower sales and service	Lower technical	Routine
AT	8.2	25.3	15.6	7.3	2.9	9.9	11.9	6.9	12.0
BE	13.5	26.1	8.8	9.1	1.1	10.4	7.9	6.5	16.7
BG	8.3	16.0	6.7	4.8	0.6	5.0	11.8	15.6	31.2
CY	7.3	12.4	10.3	12.4	1.9	10.6	12.7	11.0	21.5
CZ	6.5	20.5	9.7	7.4	0.6	6.4	9.4	15.7	23.8
DE	12.9	23.8	13.4	6.8	0.9	11.1	9.0	9.2	13.0
DK	15.5	24.0	11.4	7.0	0.8	10.1	9.9	6.6	14.8
EE	13.8	18.1	4.7	4.8	0.7	8.7	9.4	14.7	25.1
EL	6.5	11.5	6.5	19.5	14.0	5.8	8.6	9.5	18.1
ES	8.1	11.1	9.1	14.1	3.6	8.8	8.3	12.0	24.2
FI	13.9	21.1	7.1	8.2	4.0	5.9	10.8	12.5	16.4
FR	13.1	22.2	13.7	7.2	0.9	8.6	11.1	6.9	16.4
HR	10.5	18.4	11.7	5.4	0.9	10.4	9.7	14.6	18.4
HU	8.4	16.4	9.0	6.5	1.0	5.8	9.8	18.3	24.7
IE	10.8	22.5	8.8	8.9	4.9	9.7	11.9	5.5	17.0
LT	8.1	25.3	9.7	0.4	0.1	5.4	9.1	17.5	24.5
LU	12.5	22.3	9.2	6.2	2.7	12.5	7.5	8.5	18.7
NL	15.8	30.7	10.2	6.7	1.1	11.0	9.9	4.8	9.7
PL	7.2	16.1	6.2	6.7	12.7	7.0	7.9	13.2	23.1
PT	4.4	10.8	6.6	11.7	3.0	6.9	10.7	17.7	28.3
SE	16.3	26.3	10.9	6.8	1.3	8.3	13.0	6.0	11.1
SI	14.8	22.0	8.3	5.7	0.7	15.6	6.4	10.1	16.5
SK	7.7	21.7	7.8	6.2	0.4	8.5	7.9	14.7	25.1
UK	13.9	23.3	8.2	9.8	0.8	12.2	11.2	4.1	16.5
EU24	11.4	20.8	9.3	8.2	2.7	8.9	9.9	10.3	18.6

Note: *Class of origin and destination follow the European Socioeconomic Classification (ESeC) used by Rose and Harrison (2007). Class of origin refers to the categories of the respondents' parents when the respondent was 14 years old. Class of destination refers to categories that respondents belong to themselves. For a fuller description of the classes, please see Table 2. This selection of countries comprises 24 EU Member States.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

The so-called middle classes (higher grade white-collar workers in administration and the self-employed in trade and sales, classes 3 and 4) represent between one-fourth and one-fifth of the parents' generation in most western European countries – Belgium (24%), France (21%), Spain (21%), Sweden (21%), Austria (20%) and the Netherlands (20%). This stands in clear contrast to the former socialist countries, where this figure is around 10% or below. The number of self-employed workers in particular was extremely low in former socialist countries in eastern Europe (LT – 3.5%, CZ – 0.4%, SI – 0.5% and SK – 1.4%), being almost non-existent in some countries (EE, CZ, SI). Many parents in east European countries were employed in blue-collar jobs (classes 6 and 8) – Slovenia (45%), Estonia (42%), the Czech Republic (39%), Slovakia (35%) and Hungary (34%). This is in contrast to western European countries, where the figures are well below 30%, with the exception of Germany (34%) and Luxembourg (31%), where at one time 80% of gross domestic product (GDP) was dependent on the steel industry.

In four of the former socialist republics, the most common social origin is either routine occupations (class 9) or lower sales and service occupations (class 7) – Lithuania (43%), Bulgaria (41%), Croatia (34%) and Hungary (32%). Some of the countries in western Europe also have a higher share in this class of origin, but lower than in the countries above. This is the case for Portugal (30%), Spain (29%) and Luxembourg (26%); the share is even less in the UK (24%), Denmark (23%) and Ireland (23%).

As indicated above, the most dramatic changes in a generation happened for people of agricultural and blue-collar origin, which in broad terms can be related to both the modernisation and post-modernisation of societies. For those countries that have seen their rural sector decline most, the following changes are visible over the generations: Greece (–29% percentage points), Poland (–28%), Cyprus (–25%) and Finland (–22%). A decrease in employment in the manufacturing sector and therefore a corresponding decrease in blue-collar workers (both skilled and unskilled – classes 6 and 8) was most noticeable in Estonia and Slovenia (–19%), the Czech Republic (–17%), Germany (–13%) and Slovakia (–12%). Some countries have also seen their heavy industries increase their workforce: Cyprus (+7%), Greece (+6%), Lithuania (+4%) and Finland and Poland (+1%). There appears to be a pattern, especially in European countries, whereby a decline in farming is followed by growth in manufacturing and industry, then followed by services development (sometimes also called Petty's law). A notable exception to this rule, however, is Ireland, where the shift has occurred from farming to services without a noticeable increase in manufacturing (except in Northern Ireland).

The Netherlands and Sweden have the largest share of respondents themselves working in service classes 1 and 2 (large employers, higher- and lower-grade professionals, administrative and managerial occupations, higher-grade technician and supervisory occupations): 47% and 43% respectively, while the figure in Belgium and Denmark is close to 40%. In most other western European countries, the share is around one-third of the working population. The exceptions in western Europe are Spain (19%), Greece (18%) and Portugal (15%). In most eastern European Member States, the share is around one-quarter of the working population.

The lower-skilled occupations – trade, personal services, unskilled blue-collar and routine jobs – make up less than 30% of the working population across Europe, with substantial differences across countries. The shares are highest in former socialist countries: Bulgaria (43%), Estonia (35%), Hungary (35%), Lithuania (34%) and the Czech Republic (33%). However, the figures are also high for Portugal (39%) and Cyprus (34%). Across Europe, for each person working in less-skilled routine occupations (classes 7–9), two work in higher professional or managerial jobs or in clerical professions (classes 1–3). The figures in the Netherlands are in the ratio of 1:3, while in all other western European Member States the ratio is over 1:2. The ratio is less than 1:1 only in Bulgaria and Portugal, meaning that more respondents work in unskilled professions than in skilled professions. In Estonia, Hungary and Poland, the ratio is close to 1:1.

In sum, Member States in the EU are at different levels of modernisation/post-modernisation and have witnessed substantial changes in their class composition over the last two generations. Some countries have seen their agricultural sector decrease only in recent decades, with a corresponding increase in the share of workers in manufacturing sectors (in particular, Cyprus and Greece) or in the services sectors (especially Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). The countries that started the process of industrialisation in the 19th and early 20th centuries have the highest shares of respondents in the higher occupational classes and the lowest shares in either agriculture or industry, reflecting what the theories on modernisation postulate.

2 Absolute social mobility

Absolute social mobility refers to the number of people who moved to a different social class from that of their parents. There can be two reasons for movements between distinct classes:

- genuine individual mobility to a different social class from one's parents;
- a change in the social structure of origins and destinations – for example, fewer farmers, fewer miners, more service jobs and more professionals from generation to generation.

Table 4 shows the transition or mobility table for all respondents in the survey where there is sufficient information on origin and destination. The rows represent the class of origin, based on the highest level of occupation (ISCO 88), span of control (number of dependent employees) and labour market status (employed or self-employed at the time the respondent was aged 14). The columns represent the class of destination of the respondents, based on the same variables. Bold text, forming a diagonal pattern, represents immobility (where children reproduced the status their parents had). For example, 7,110 respondents in class 2 had the same occupational class origin: among the 4,110 independent farmers, 3,039 of them came from a farming background. (This is the occupation in which children are most likely to reproduce their parents' occupational class.)

The green shaded cells show three main class clusters (top, middle, bottom). Only a movement from one cluster to another is considered as upward or downward mobility; shifts within classes 1–2 or 3–8 are considered horizontal mobility between similar positions.

To carry out the analysis in this chapter, separate tables were used – for country, for sex and for three cohorts (born 1927–1945, born 1946–1964 and born 1965–1975) – which results in a total of 144 mobility tables to be analysed separately and compared to each other. For the moment, the focus is on the marginal distributions – in other words, the class structures for the two

Table 4: Mobility of sample: class of origin and destination (24 EU Member States)

Class of origin	ESeC categories	Class of destination									Total
	Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	Large employers, higher managers/ professionals	**3,751**	4,457	1,433	1,158	54	994	883	484	1,007	14,221
2	Lower managers/ professionals, higher supervisory/technicians	4,093	**7,110**	2,354	1,619	124	1,706	1,894	1,132	2,250	22,282
3	Intermediate occupations	1,328	2,277	**1,162**	652	45	588	829	472	817	8,170
4	Small employers and self-employed (non-agriculture)	1,790	3,002	1,503	**2,351**	334	1,245	1,505	1,103	1,978	14,811
5	Small employers and self-employed (agriculture)	1,195	2,834	1,302	1,891	**3,039**	1,555	1,750	2,434	4,282	20,282
6	Lower supervisors and technicians	1,513	3,103	1,301	932	58	**1,812**	1,348	1,189	1,938	13,194
7	Lower sales and service	754	1,721	973	584	43	821	**1,193**	844	1,517	8,450
8	Lower technical	1,684	4,078	2,283	1,693	194	2,605	2,909	**4,350**	6,619	26,415
9	Routine	1,415	3,444	1,911	1,706	219	2,398	2,849	3,753	**8,112**	25,807
	Total	17,523	32,026	14,222	12,586	4,110	13,724	15,160	15,761	28,520	**153,632**

Note: *Pooled sample of respondents aged 35–75 from 24 EU countries. Data weighted with frequency weights based on rounded design weights. No population weights were applied since the purpose of this table is to assess the composition of the sample as well as to demonstrate what a mobility table is.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

Table 5: Distribution of respondents and their parents across socioeconomic classes by sex (24 EU Member States)

		Origin (O)				Destination (D)				O-D (sons)	O-D (daughters)
		Sons		Daughters		Sons		Daughters			
		N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	Percentage point difference	Percentage point difference
1	Large employers, higher managers/professionals	6,775	9.2	7,446	9.3	11,040	15.0	6,483	8.1	5.8	-1.2
2	Lower managers/ professionals, higher supervisory/technicians	10,624	14.4	11,658	14.6	13,387	18.1	18,639	23.4	3.7	8.7
3	Intermediate occupations	3,815	5.2	4,355	5.5	2,849	3.9	11,373	14.3	-1.3	8.8
4	Small employers and self-employed (non-agriculture)	7,100	9.6	7,711	9.7	8,018	10.9	4,568	5.7	1.2	-3.9
5	Small employers and self-employed (agriculture)	10,223	13.8	10,059	12.6	2,524	3.4	1,586	2.0	-10.4	-10.6
6	Lower supervisors and technicians	6,462	8.8	6,732	8.4	8,978	12.2	4,746	5.9	3.4	-2.5
7	Lower sales and service	4,041	5.5	4,409	5.5	3,231	4.4	11,929	15.0	-1.1	9.4
8	Lower technical	12,703	17.2	13,712	17.2	11,258	15.2	4,503	5.6	-2.0	-11.5
9	Routine	12,101	16.4	13,706	17.2	12,559	17.0	15,961	20.0	0.6	2.8

Note: *Respondents aged 35–75 years. Class of origin refers to the class of male and female respondents' parents when respondent was 14 years old. Class of destination refers to categories that respondents belong to themselves.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

generations (respondents and their parents) presented in Table 4.

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents' origin (O) for men (sons) and women (daughters) as well as their destination (D) by gender. We can see that the relative numbers for sons' and daughters' origins are very similar, representing a quality assessment of the data, as there is no reason to believe that social origin should systematically differ for men and women; if sex at birth is a random selection.

Reading the second and fourth columns of the table (from the left), the following observations can be made.

- Around 9% of men and women among ESS respondents in this set of 24 Member States come from a class 1 background (large employers and higher managers/professionals).
- Some 15% had parents who had been lower professionals or who had supervisory roles (class 2).
- Around 5% of parents had been in intermediate occupations (class 3), mostly skilled clerical and administrative positions.
- Slightly over 20% of the respondents had parents who had been self-employed either in agriculture (13%) or small businesses in crafts and trades (10%) – in classes 4 and 5.
- Some 9% of the respondents had parents who had worked as lower supervisors or technicians (class 6).
- Around 6% of the respondents had parents who had worked in lower sales and services (class 7).
- Some 17% had a father or mother who had worked as a semiskilled or unskilled blue-collar worker (class 8).
- About 17% of respondents' parents had worked in routine occupations (class 9).

The respondents' own class membership differs considerably from their parents' – a reflection of the change in the occupational class structure after modernisation processes. However, globally the difference between class membership of respondents and parents also differs greatly between men and women – because of occupational gender segregation. It is interesting to see which classes have increased or declined – and by how much (the two columns on the right-hand side). The highest increase can be seen in lower sales and services for female respondents, with an

increase of 9.4 percentage points, compared with the parents' generation. In addition, women have increasingly being engaged as lower professionals and in intermediate occupations, which are typically gendered jobs: education, nursing and care specialists; and clerical jobs in administration and the financial services industry.

The biggest increases for men were in higher-level professions (such as solicitors, physicians or higher managerial positions – around +6 percentage points) and in lower-level professions (such as engineering, product design and middle management in public administration and industry – almost +4 percentage points). Not surprisingly, the class that has seen the largest reduction in a generation is farmers (–10 percentage points), but for women the reduction in lower technical occupations is even bigger (–12 percentage points), which is due to the downsizing of the textile industry throughout Europe in the last 50 years (a sector with a predominantly female labour force). Other statistics used for the analysis of the transition tables will be the dissimilarity index and rates of upward and downward mobility (see Figures 1 and 2). This analysis will show how open (or closed) to social mobility the societies of Europe are.

The study understands absolute mobility as the share of respondents who do not occupy the diagonal cells in a mobility table that compares social origin and destination as measured by the socioeconomic class of parents and respondents (see, for illustration, Table 4; cells are marked in bold). These are respondents who belong to a different socioeconomic class from their parents. Social mobility is further distinguished into upward, downward and horizontal mobility (the first two are also called vertical mobility). Horizontal mobility means that respondents are mobile but in neighbouring classes to their social origin. Immobility means that the respondent is in exactly the same occupational class as the parent

In order to measure upward, downward or horizontal mobility for the purposes of this study, the nine categories (classes) of the socioeconomic classification are clustered into three classes (following Breen, 2005). This is done in order to focus on major shifts and avoid misinterpreting minor changes across similar positions in the social hierarchy as real social mobility. In Table 4, the three main clusters are the cells with a blue background. Classes 1 and 2 represent a cluster of similar socioeconomic positions and a move between them represents horizontal mobility (in other words, no mobility within the large top class). Another, middle cluster is comprised of classes 3 to 8. The bottom cluster consists of a single class – class 9. Upward mobility occurs if a respondent moves to a cluster higher than that of their parents – for example, if the son of a skilled manual worker (class 6) becomes a physician (class 1).

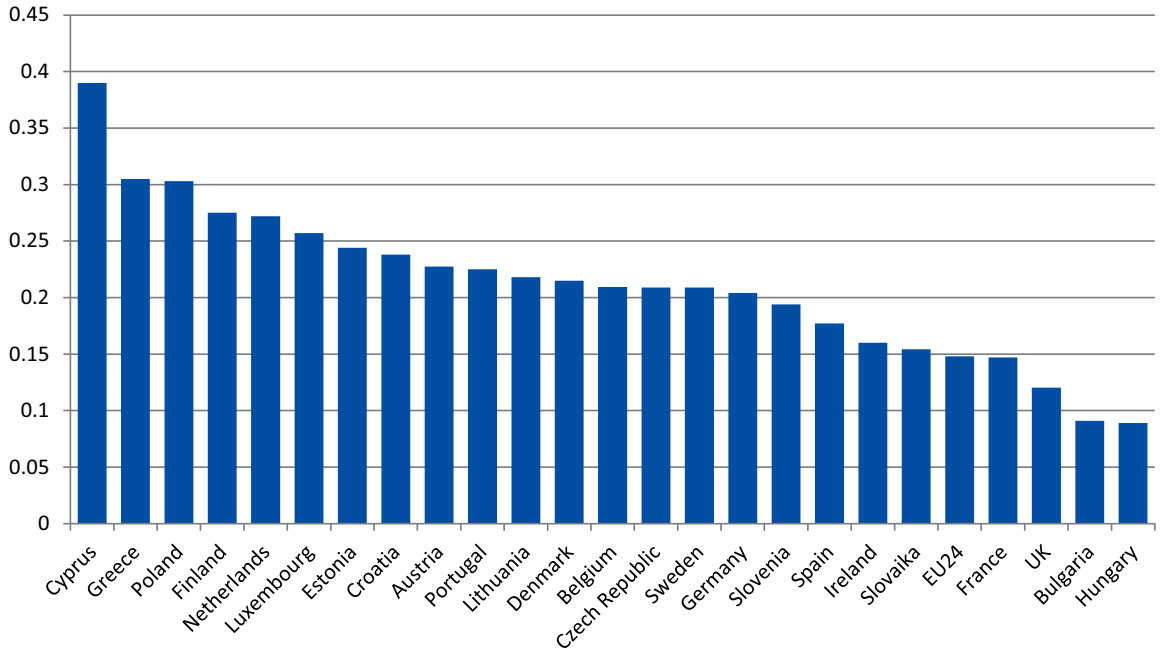
Downward mobility is when the opposite happens and the class cluster of the respondent is lower than their social origin. If a respondent has exactly the same class membership as his or her parents, this is considered immobility or status inheritance. This occurs most frequently where a respondent has an agricultural origin and an agricultural destination.

In general, because of ongoing economic transformation, upward mobility should be more prevalent than downward mobility and immobility should decrease over time – this being a sign of status inheritance, which should decline over time as societies become more meritocratic. For example, if all observations in a mobility table fall on the diagonal, there is no mobility and farmers' children become farmers and the sons and daughters of solicitors become solicitors, physicians or managers, etc. However, as talents and abilities are not perfectly correlated with class of origin and ideally there should be no barriers preventing mobility, there should be social mobility and the off-diagonal cells should be populated. The social mobility as seen in the off-diagonal cells can be affected by different levels of resources or levels of aspirations. (see also Boudon, 1974; Jackson, 2007). If a society is totally immobile – a feudal society, for example – all the counts would be on the diagonal.

Changes in class structure in 24 EU Member States

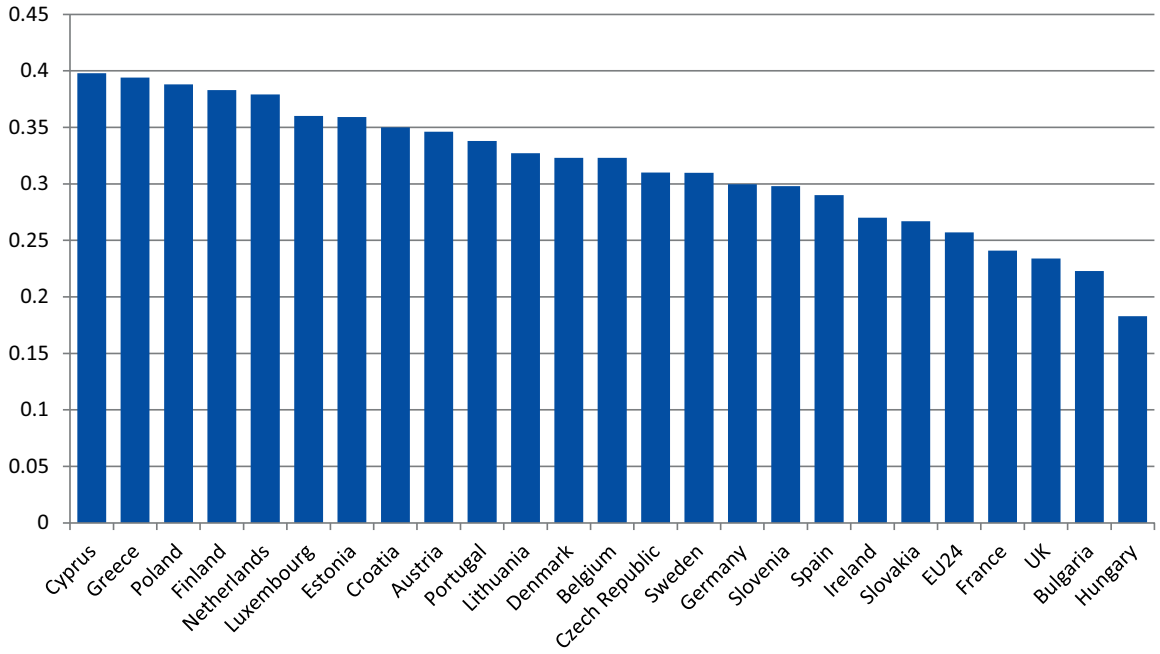
Figures 1 and 2 show the change in the class structure from examining the relationship of sons and daughters compared to the highest occupational class in the household. In a sense, this can be seen as reflecting the underlying economic transformation of countries. Each figure represents a dissimilarity index (see Annex 4 for more details), a measure that shows how many respondents would have to move across cells to obtain the same distribution in the origin and destination tables. The more individuals have moved up or down the class hierarchy compared with their class of origin, the higher the dissimilarity index. A dissimilarity index of .20 means that 20% of the class distribution has changed between the respondents' generation and their parents' generation. The higher the share, the more the class structure has changed. The class structure has changed the most in Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Finland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Countries in which the numbers of independent farmers have been massively reduced have already been discussed. At the opposite end of the plot are countries where the class distribution has changed the least, either because the countries have already modernised substantially (France and the UK) or because they seem to be stagnating in the modernisation process (Bulgaria and Hungary).

Figure 1: Dissimilarity index between origin and destination, for men



Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

Figure 2: Dissimilarity index between origin and destination, for women



Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

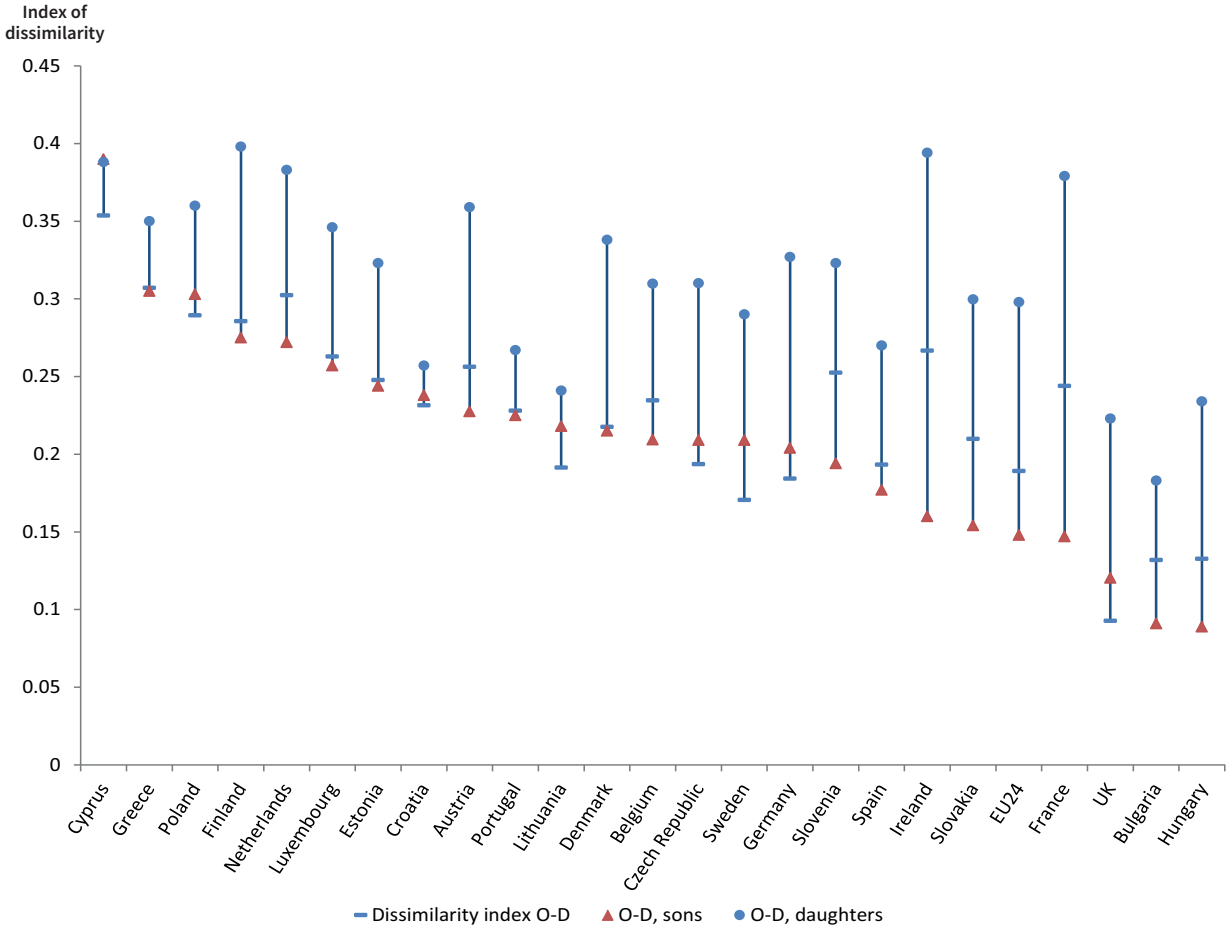
However, it is important to note that this does not say anything about mobility: all that is being compared is the distribution of respondents and that of their parents across classes, or the marginal distributions of the mobility tables (not shown). Looking back at Table 3 (p.12), with the distribution of the respondents' own class and their origin, we can see that in France and the UK, respectively, some 16% and 22% of the parents' generation were in class 2 (managers and professionals). For the respondents themselves, the respective shares are 22% and 23%. Hence, there has been a change only in France – none in the UK. In Cyprus and Greece, however, the corresponding shares for social origin are 7% and 5% for the parents' generation

and 13% and 12% for the respondents' class membership. In fact, in Cyprus and Greece the current share of professionals and middle managers (class 2) among the active population, despite doubling in a generation, has not yet attained the levels that France and the UK had in the previous generation.

The UK did not change that much between parent and respondent because it was the first country to go through all the cycles of modernisation and post-modernisation: it was the first country to become industrialised and the first country to develop a strong services industry, especially finance and services. So over the last few decades of the previous century, the UK has barely changed in terms of major occupational and class categories (see Table 3 on p. 12). Other western European countries like Belgium, France and Germany are similar, having already developed in the post-war period. Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands are latecomers, but they are economically much more advanced today than Cyprus, Greece and Poland. The share of respondents in class 2 in the Netherlands (31%) is twice as high as in Poland (16%), Greece (12%) and Cyprus (13%) – see Table 3, p. 12 for the appropriate cells. A similar situation applies for class 1 (large employers, higher managers and professionals). In the lagging countries – Bulgaria and Hungary and, to a lesser extent, Slovakia and Spain – the share of respondents in the service classes (classes 1 and 2) is low and has not changed much in a generation. These countries reached a moderate level of modernisation some decades ago.

If we now consider the same dissimilarity index for women, the first thing to highlight is that the levels are overall much higher than for men (Figures 1 and 2). A straightforward explanation is that when the number of professional, administrative and sales jobs in a country rises, women have tended to fill them; men more often enter manual jobs, engineering, etc., often following in the footsteps of their father. For women, their choice of job selection is often very different from their parents' occupation. The index of dissimilarity for women is highest for Finland, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Greece. The rank correlation between the origin–destination dissimilarity indices for men and women is .55, which means that the differences in men's and women's class when compared with that of their parents is quite substantial.

Figure 3: Dissimilarity between class of origin and destination for parents and children, by country



Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

However, data on women's occupations should be interpreted with a degree of caution: because the occupational measurement of respondents looks at the current or last occupation, a woman's occupational status may not be representative of the class changes that occurred from origin to destination, especially if she had stopped working a long time prior to the data collection. This is not so much a problem in the case of data for men, who are less likely to have had their careers interrupted or discontinued. For this reason, the dissimilarity index for men alone may be a more precise measure of structural change in a country, since the total index is impacted by the lack of precision in the index of dissimilarity for women.

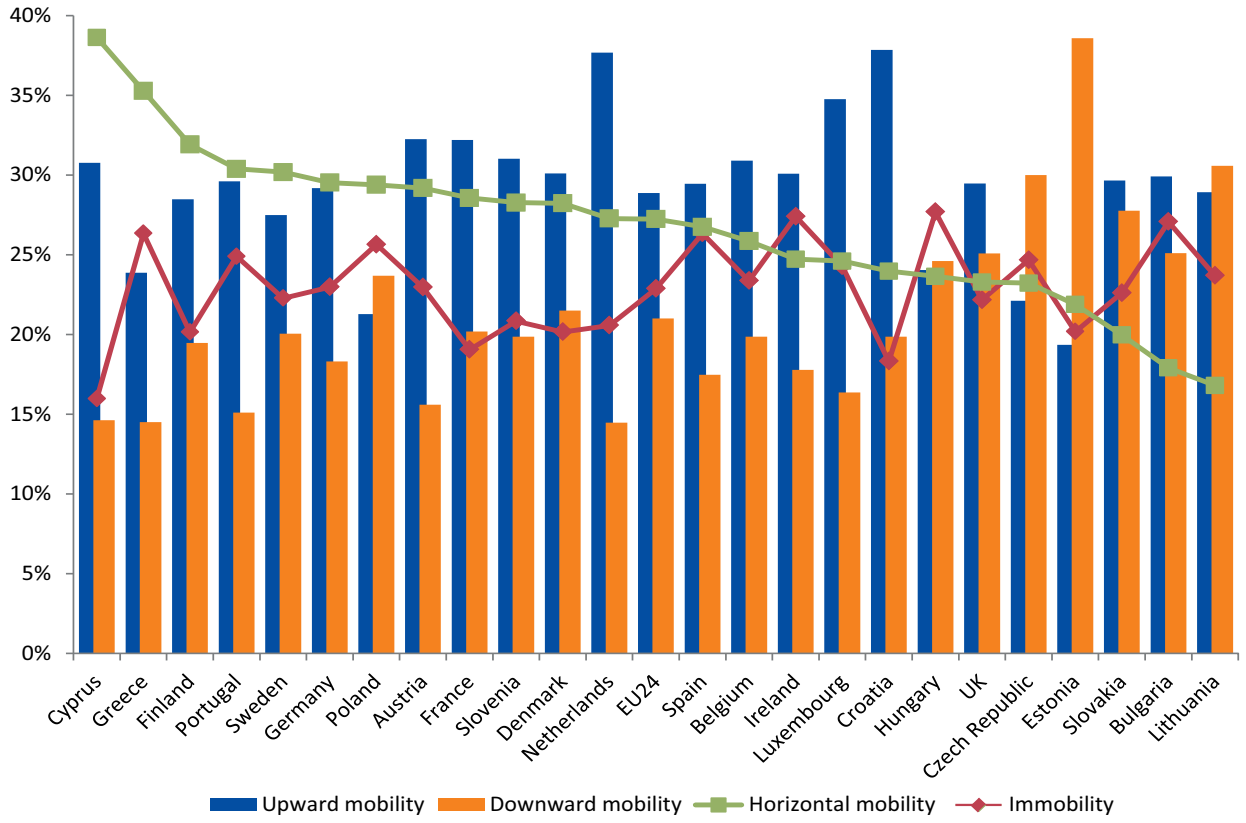
Comparing the two series of dissimilarity indicators together with one covering the total population in one plot delivers a few interesting insights (Figure 3). It can be seen that the more the class structure between men and their parents has changed – an indicator of modernisation or post-modernisation processes underway – the smaller is the gap in dissimilarity between men's and women's origin and destination. In other words, the more the class structure in a society was changing, the more similar the mobility processes of men and women became. In Cyprus, there is almost no class dissimilarity between men and women and their parents. The differences are greatest in France and Ireland, countries that have witnessed a lot of mobility of women into new service sector jobs while men have remained occupied in more traditional jobs.

A further reason why the differences in class movement distribution for women and men is small may be related to the size of the economy: small countries have less variety of occupations and the labour market has only a limited number of jobs to offer, in only a few sectors.

Nature of mobility: up, down or none?

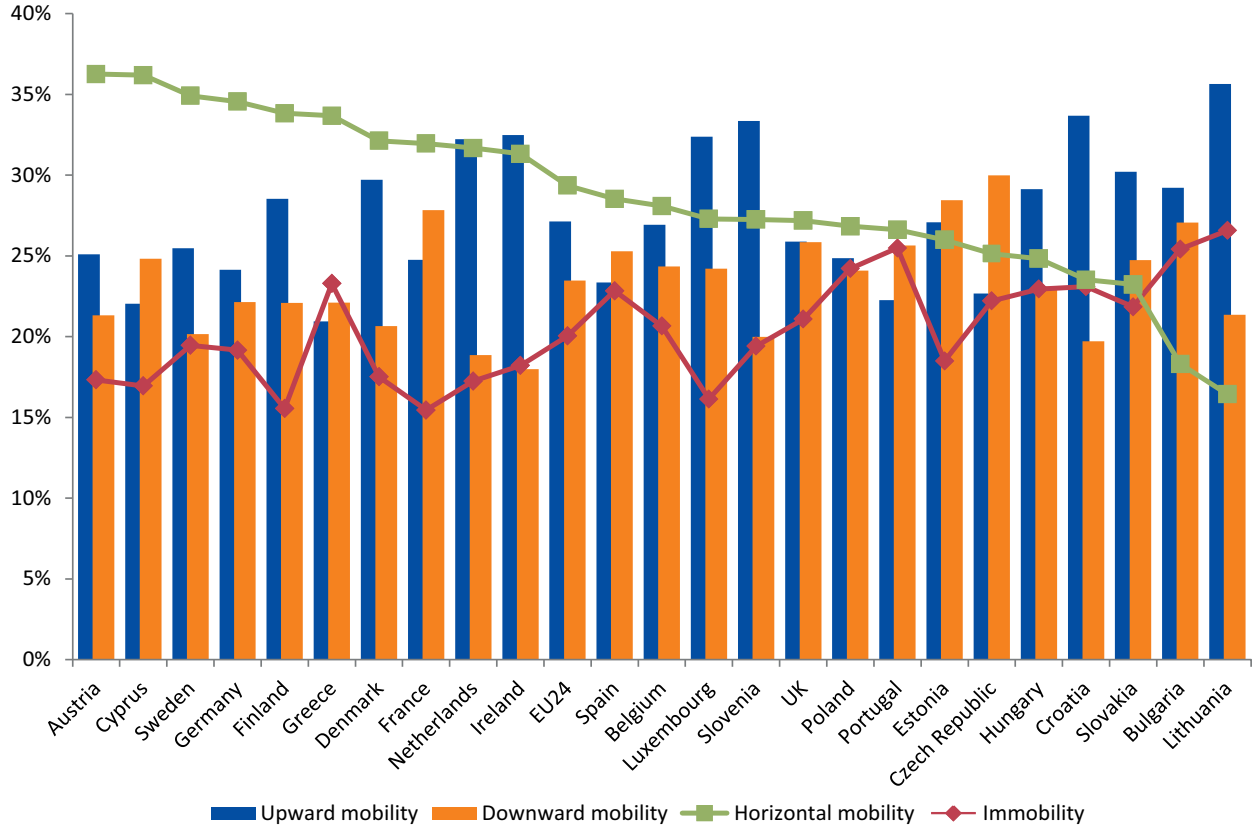
Having the data on upward mobility, downward mobility or no mobility, it is possible to compare societies according to levels of social mobility. In these terms, societies with more immobility and horizontal mobility, and less vertical mobility (upward and downward) have a more closed or rigid social structure. In contrast, societies with less immobility and greater vertical mobility (upward and downward) are more open in terms of their members' freedom to move across social structures.

Figure 4: Indicators of absolute mobility for men



Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

Figure 5: Indicators of absolute mobility for women



Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

Figures 4 and 5 show the main measures of absolute mobility across countries for male and female respondents separately. What is being investigated here? First, it was explained above that if a country's economy is thriving, there should be more upward mobility than downward mobility, as the usual process of modernisation leads from unskilled, labour-intensive occupations to highly skilled intellectual occupations and from monotonous routine occupations to more diversified ones with more contact between people (as in service jobs). Furthermore, it is also normal in such societies to have a fair amount of horizontal mobility and only a limited degree of immobility

Looking at absolute mobility indicators for men only, it is striking that downward mobility is higher than upward mobility in five countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland. At the same time, in these countries, the levels of immobility are fairly high and horizontal mobility is at relatively lower levels for most of those countries. . By contrast, in the other countries, upward mobility clearly outweighs downward mobility. Among men In Figure 4, horizontal mobility – the mobility between similar social classes – and downward mobility are strongly negatively correlated: the higher the horizontal mobility, the lower the downward mobility. A high level of horizontal and upward mobility and low levels of immobility and downward mobility indicate that societies are open to the upward social mobility of their members. This is the case for all the countries on the far left of the plot. There is no correlation between immobility and horizontal mobility, which appears strange, as they should be measuring a similar condition, social closure. However, there is a fair degree of correlation between upward and downward mobility figures across countries, suggesting a trade-off between the two.

The picture for women (Figure 5) is quite different from that for men, as mobility for women is affected by two factors: occupational segregation and career interruptions (especially early departure from the labour market); this has to be kept in mind when looking at the mobility patterns of women. Compared with men, the difference between rates of upward mobility and downward mobility for women is far less pronounced. More countries show downward mobility exceeding upward mobility: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Portugal and Spain (although to a lesser extent than for men).

In addition, downward mobility does not show as much variance across countries as for men. For women, there is a moderate, negative correlation between immobility and horizontal mobility (unlike for men) and a negative correlation between horizontal mobility and upward

mobility across countries. This latter correlation is completely absent in the chart for men (Figure 4). These findings do not lead to any consistent conclusions, like the ones that can be drawn about men's absolute mobility, except again that socially mobile societies are characterised by high levels of upward mobility, low levels of immobility and downward mobility and a moderate degree of horizontal mobility. This seems to be true for Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden and, to a much lesser extent, the UK.

The contrast between the situation of men in western European Member States and those in eastern Europe is pronounced; however, this is less the case for women. Women seem to be more often upwardly mobile in eastern Europe than men. And it appears that women in southern Europe and France experience more downward mobility.

Cohort differences in absolute mobility

Three cohorts have been created by birth year, the surveyed population in the ESS being divided into respondents born 1927–1945 (the 'silent generation'), those born 1946–1964 (the 'baby boomers') and those born 1965–1975 ('Generation X'). The 'silent generation' is a relatively small cohort: birth rates were low during the economic and financial crisis of the 1920s and 1930s and the war years. Those born in this period could pursue their careers amid the opportunities of the post-war expansion. 'Baby boomers' were the large cohort born and raised during the affluent decades immediately following the Second World War, when birth rates were high. These individuals were especially well placed to avail of the long post-war economic expansion. Finally, Generation X, the generation following the baby boomers, is the first generation that could not necessarily assume that their lives would be more affluent than their parent's generation. The cohorts grew up in very different eras and in distinct socioeconomic contexts. Within the cohorts, they share common cultural identities: hence, they constitute a group, rather than simply a collection of unconnected individuals born around the same time (see also Elwood, 2008; Strauss and Howe, 1991).

If the absolute mobility of these three cohorts is compared, it can be seen that mobility patterns have changed from one cohort to the next – not, however, in the same way for women as for men (Table 6). It can be seen in a pooled sample from all 24 countries and all selected ESS waves that downward mobility has slightly increased from the silent generation to Generation X: the cohort born before 1946 shows 35% downward mobility as against 37% for the cohort born after 1965, an increase of two percentage points.[5] The share of respondents who inherited the status of their parents ('immobile' in Table 6) has not changed at all from

Table 6: Absolute mobility statistics by cohort and sex (24 EU Member States)

24 EU countries	N	Downwardly mobile (%)	Immobile (%)	Upwardly mobile (%)
Total				
1927–1945	38,103	35.0	21.9	43.1
1946–1964	82,198	35.1	20.8	44.1
1965–1975	33,331	37.3	22.2	40.5
Men				
1927–1945	19,024	32.0	22.3	45.7
1946–1964	39,260	34.4	22.6	43.0
1965–1975	15,560	37.3	24.2	38.5
Women				
1927–1945	19,079	37.9	21.5	40.5
1946–1964	42,938	35.8	19.2	45.0
1965–1975	17,771	37.3	20.5	42.3

Note: *This table is an illustration of a breakdown by cohorts and sex using a pooled sample (that is, for all countries but unweighted by population size; see explanation in Annex). Data representative of each individual country are provided in Annex 4.*
Based on the size of samples and the total population of cohorts, and a confidence level of 95%, the margin of error for the figures in the table ranges from 0.68 to 1.6 percentage points. For example, for both sexes the downward mobility of the baby-boomer generation is around 35%; a margin of error for the estimate of 35% at the 95% confidence level is +/-0.48 percentage points. In other words, the true value is between 34.52 and 35.48%. Most differences seen in the table are around or bigger than 2 percentage points and are therefore significant. Conversely, differences below 1.6 percentage points may not be significant.
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

5 The breakdown by countries is available in Table A3 in Annex 4.

Table 7: Absolute mobility rates across cohorts – Austria and Bulgaria

Austria	N	Downwardly mobile (%)	Immobile (%)	Upwardly mobile (%)
Total				
1927–1946	983	33.9	22.3	43.8
1946–1964	3,220	33.3	20.0	46.6
1965–1977	980	37.8	17.1	45.1
Men				
1927–1946	512	27.0	23.4	49.6
1946–1964	1,482	30.4	22.5	47.1
1965–1977	384	34.6	24.0	41.4
Women				
1927–1946	471	41.4	21.0	37.6
1946–1964	1,738	35.8	17.9	46.3
1965–1977	596	39.8	12.8	47.5

Bulgaria	N	Downwardly mobile (%)	Immobile (%)	Upwardly mobile (%)
Total				
1927–1946	1,375	26.5	26.0	47.5
1946–1964	3,031	33.2	26.5	40.3
1965–1977	1,218	43.3	25.4	31.4
Men				
1927–1946	577	22.4	26.9	50.8
1946–1964	1,308	34.6	26.8	38.6
1965–1977	5.5	40.2	28.1	31.7
Women				
1927–1946	798	29.6	25.3	45.1
1946–1964	1,723	32.2	26.3	41.6
1965–1977	713	45.4	23.4	31.1

cohort to cohort. If upward mobility across cohorts is now considered, it can be seen that the share of upwardly mobile respondents increased between the two first cohorts but decreased somewhat for the last.

Looking at the same data for men and women separately, a slightly different picture emerges. While the share of men who experience downward mobility over the cohorts has increased significantly, the same indicator has not changed at all for women. The share of those who are stable in each cohort has not changed for the total population, as shown above, but the directions of motion are opposite for men and women: while the share of men who are immobile has increased by around 1% between the first and latest cohorts, the share of immobile women has decreased by about the same extent. Thus, the apparent lack of change in the aggregate table actually masks a slightly opposite movement for men and women. This becomes even clearer when the patterns of upward mobility for men and women are considered separately. From the oldest to the youngest cohort, men show a significant decrease in upward mobility: almost 46% were upwardly mobile among the silent generation, as against 38% for Generation X. In the aggregate statistic, this is partly hidden by the fact that for women, there was an increase of around two percentage points in the share of upwardly mobile respondents between the cohorts.

The data indicate how different mobility patterns have evolved for women and for men. Women have become more upwardly mobile while men are more likely to be downwardly mobile. However, the findings are different for each country (see Table A3 in Annex 4).

The data for Austria (reproduced here in Table 7) show an increase in both downward and upward mobility, while immobility has diminished throughout the cohorts. Looking at the Austrian data separately for men and women, the same pattern is evident as for the aggregate: women have a strong tendency to be more upwardly mobile and less downwardly mobile from one cohort to the next, while the opposite is true for men. And for men, the proportions who are stable (immobile) increase, while for women, the proportions decrease.

Table 8: Change in absolute mobility patterns, by sex and cohort

	Downwardly mobile		Immobile		Upwardly mobile		Extent of changes		
Country	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	–	0	+
Greece	0	–	–	–	–	+	4	1	1
Austria	+	–	0	–	–	+	3	1	2
Cyprus	–	–	+	–	0	+	3	1	2
Czech Republic	+	+	–	–	–	0	3	1	2
Ireland	+	0	–	–	–	+	3	1	2
Bulgaria	+	+	+	–	–	–	3	0	3
Denmark	+	–	+	+	–	–	3	0	3
Spain	+	0	–	–	0	+	2	2	2
Finland	–	–	+	+	0	0	2	2	2
UK	+	+	0	0	–	–	2	2	2
Croatia	+	–	–	+	0	0	2	2	2
Lithuania	+	+	–	0	0	–	2	2	2
Belgium	+	+	+	–	–	0	2	1	3
Netherlands	+	–	+	0	–	+	2	1	3
Poland	–	+	+	–	0	+	2	1	3
Sweden	+	0	+	+	–	–	2	1	3
Slovenia	+	–	+	+	–	0	2	1	3
Estonia	0	0	0	+	0	–	1	4	1
France	+	0	0	0	–	0	1	4	1
Luxembourg	+	0	–	0	0	0	1	4	1
Portugal	0	0	0	–	0	+	1	4	1
Slovakia	+	0	0	0	–	0	1	4	1
Germany	+	0		0	–	0	1	3	2
Hungary	+	0		0	–	0	1	3	2
–	3	8	7	10	15	6			
0	3	10	6	8	9	10			
+	18	6	11	6	0	8			

Note: *0 means no change occurred, – means a decrease, and + means an increase of the share of those who were downwardly mobile, immobile or upwardly mobile. The extent of change is a simple count of those.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

The data for Bulgaria, however, show that for both sexes, both downward mobility is increasing and upward mobility is decreasing. It appears that there is less upward mobility for everybody in Bulgaria across cohorts. Only immobility has slightly increased for men.

Table 8 (based on the absolute mobility tables for all countries), shows that in most countries –18 – downward mobility for men increased over the three cohorts. Over the same period, upward mobility for men decreased in 15 countries. The direction of absolute mobility for women is the opposite: downward mobility increased for women in 6 countries, while it has decreased in 8 and stayed the same in 10. Meanwhile, upward mobility for women stayed the same in 10 countries, increased in 8 and decreased in 6. The picture for immobility also shows opposing tendencies: women are less likely to inherit the status of their parents from cohort to cohort (to be immobile); however, men become more likely to do so. The picture is particularly clear in Greece, where downward mobility has stayed the same for men while declining for women, whereas women's upward mobility has increased and men's has decreased.

The countries at the top of the table are those in which absolute mobility is most polarised, cases of upward/downward mobility for men and women being mostly different while immobility is declining or at most stable. At the bottom of the table are those countries where immobility is greatest. For example, in France, most indicators are stable, with the exception of downward mobility for men increasing and upward mobility declining. Overall, women are experiencing

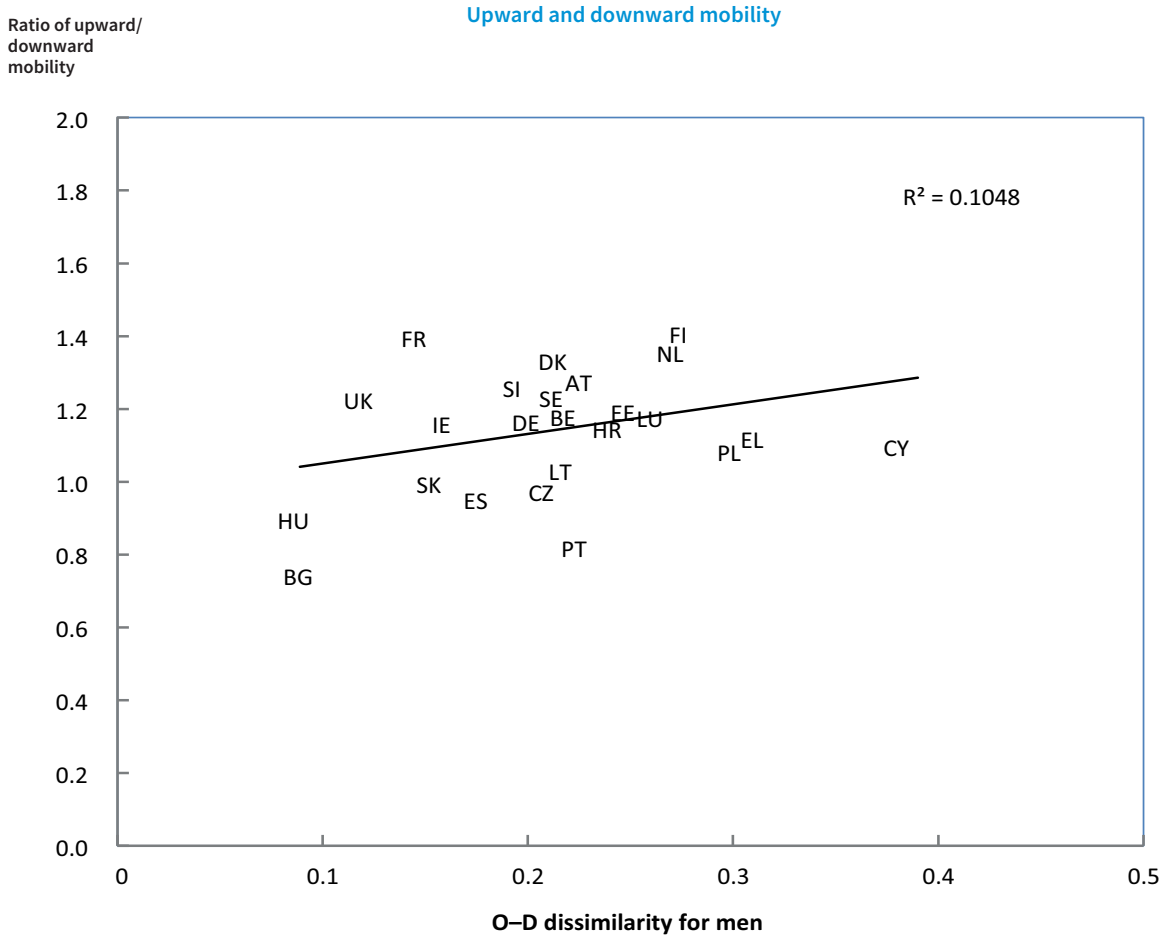
successive mobility gains across cohorts in most countries while men are more likely to experience downward mobility than previous generations.

Absolute mobility – men and women

The extent of structural change alone does not indicate whether that change has led to more upward or downward mobility, nor how it has affected different groups in society (including men and women). In other words, a structural change measured by a dissimilarity index (as an overall dissimilarity between occupations of respondents and those of their parents) does not include any additional information that would be important for understanding long-term trends. The next graphs (Figures 6a and 6b) are constructed in such a way to allow an exploration of whether an overall structural change that took place during the period examined was related (a) to the extent of upward mobility, and (b) to differences in absolute mobility of men and women. To represent the extent of structural change in societies over time, an index of dissimilarity between origin and destination of men is chosen (on the horizontal axes in both figures).[6]

Figure 6a shows that the less structural change there has been in a country (in other words, the less absolute mobility), the more downward mobility is observed – in Hungary and Bulgaria, for instance. Conversely, in countries where dissimilarity between origin and destination for men is high, there is more upward mobility than downward mobility (as can be seen for Finland, the Netherlands, and most other countries). The association is, however, rather weak, as there are other factors affecting mobility. Countries in the lower left part of Figure 6a , such as Slovakia, are those that have not changed (modernised) much in the decades covered in the study and where the rise in social mobility has come to a stop or is decreasing (Czech Republic, Portugal and Spain). Countries in the top-right

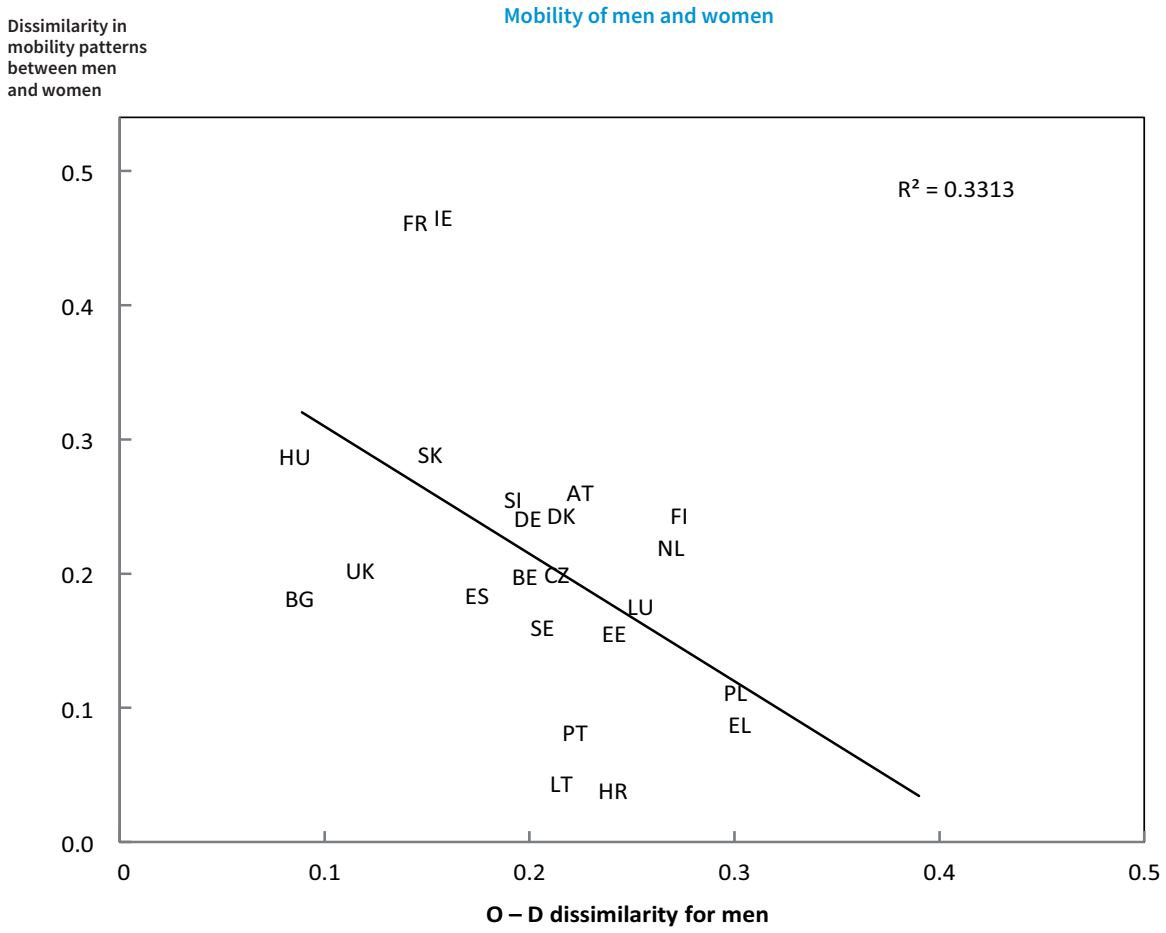
Figure 6a: Structural change has positively impacted on upward mobility



Note: *The horizontal axis represents the extent of absolute mobility for men, shown as origin–destination dissimilarity index. This indicator is chosen as a proxy of overall structural change. The vertical axis shows the ratio of upward to downward mobility for all respondents in a country (both sexes together) and suggests to what extent the upward mobility has prevailed over downward mobility in each country.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

6 All annexes are available online together with the electronic version of this report.

Figure 6b: Structural change led to the intergenerational occupational mobility of men and women becoming more similar



Note: *The horizontal axis represents the extent of absolute mobility for men, shown as the origin–destination dissimilarity index. This indicator is chosen as a proxy of overall structural change. The vertical axis shows an index of dissimilarity between male and female respondents in a full 9*9 mobility table, and thus illustrates how similar the extent of absolute mobility for men and women is.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

corner (Finland and the Netherlands) have changed a lot – at least for men – and upward mobility is (or has been) much higher than downward mobility. The countries towards the right-hand side of the graph are those that have undergone the biggest change in the class structure: if the ratio of upward to downward mobility is higher than 1, they have succeeded in creating enough upward mobility.

The effect of structural change over the examined period was relatively strong for 'gender equality' between the careers of men and women as seen in Figure 6b (the correlation is notably stronger than in Figure 6a): in countries where structural change was substantial, the differences in the extent of mobility between men and women have substantially decreased over time.

The following conclusions can be drawn from examining these associations.

- The more a society experienced shifts in its class structure between generations, the more upward mobility increased and prevailed over downward mobility.
- The more the class structure changed (or modernised due to the disappearance of low-skilled menial jobs and growth in service-class and highly qualified jobs), the more the extent of absolute social mobility among men and women became similar.

This is also what the liberal theory of industrialisation (the modernisation hypothesis) predicts: there should be more upward mobility than downward mobility. Although Figure 6a shows that – in general – this is the case, there are huge differences between countries.

Summary

- To understand social mobility in European societies, it is important to acknowledge differences in economic development and the shifts in occupational structure that occurred over time within each country.
- Structural change – which involves change of occupational structure and size of population in various occupations – have enabled upward mobility: at least, this was the case across three generations in the 20th century.

Structural shifts that changed the occupational structure for current generations in comparison to their parents, have also led to the extent of absolute social mobility among men and women to become more similar.

However, the trends in upward or downward mobility for men and women in the 24 countries studied differ:

- For men, the extent of upward mobility has decreased (in 15 out of 24 countries), and downward mobility has increased over the three cohorts in the majority of countries (18 out of 24);
- For women, the extent of downward mobility over three cohorts decreased in a third of countries (8 out of 24); stayed the same in the majority of others, and upward mobility has increased in a third of countries.
- Women, from generation to generation, were also increasingly less likely to inherit the status of their parents, while this was becoming more likely for men.

A change in the structure of the economy (a rebalancing of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors) opens up new positions in managerial occupations, in high- and low-level professional occupations and in administration and services. At the same time, the share of jobs in more labour-intensive low-skilled sectors such as logging, quarrying and agriculture decreased, partly because these activities largely disappeared or because they underwent substantial technological change so that less human labour is required. This structural change fosters social mobility – in particular, upward mobility. Some countries (the UK and Belgium, for instance) modernised and experienced large changes in their occupational structure early; hence, the workforce in western European countries is engaged to a great extent in service class and administrative/clerical jobs. In contrast, some countries have barely changed at all and still have a large part of their population working in agriculture or routine manual jobs, as in Romania and Bulgaria. (In the case of Ireland and Luxembourg, the phase of industrialisation experienced in other countries was largely skipped over.)

In most countries, the intergenerational mobility processes described in this chapter reflects these major economic shifts, but to differing extents. Both the silent generation and the baby boomers – women in particular – have enjoyed considerable upward mobility. Men in Generation X, however, have more frequently experienced downward mobility or remained immobile; women in this cohort, in contrast, are more upwardly mobile. Most jobs in the 'new economy' need a substantially higher level of education; women are often better educated and hence are better equipped to work in higher-level occupations. Moreover, many jobs in manufacturing that were previously occupied by men have disappeared.

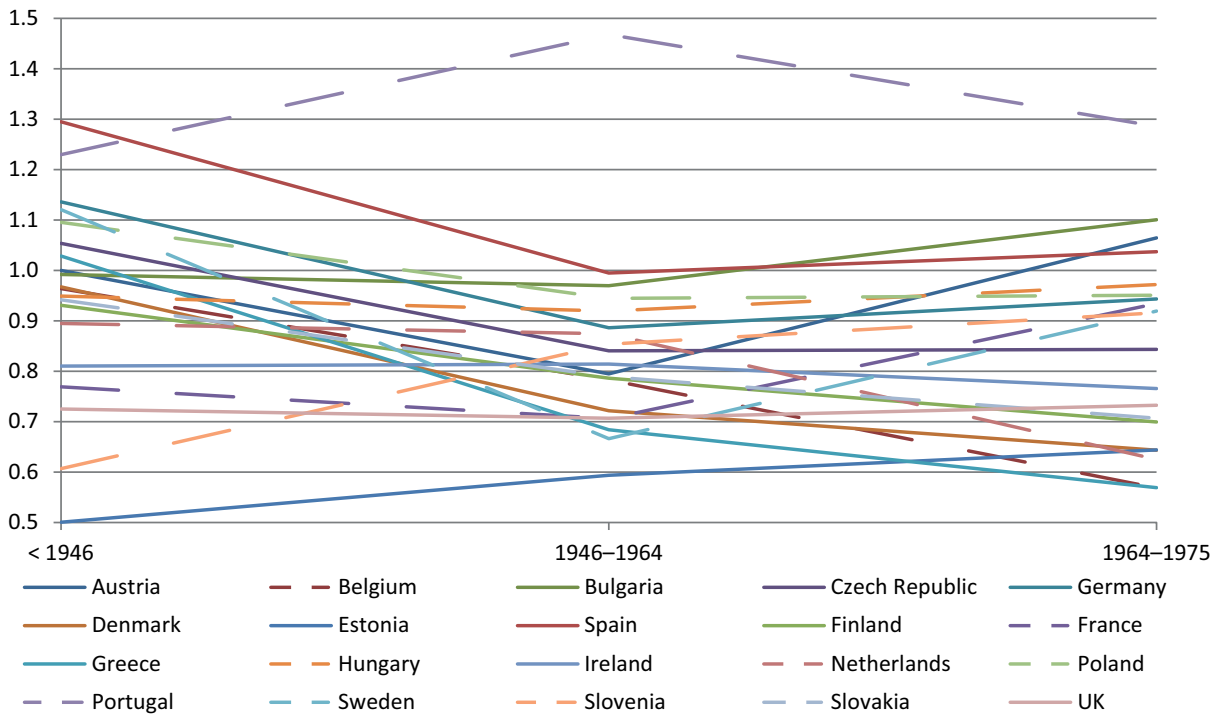
3 Relative social mobility

Measures of relative social mobility ('social fluidity') estimate the probability that individuals from different social groups or classes end up in other social positions or classes regardless of changes in the class structure that happened over time. This is taken as an indicator of the openness or fairness of a society. Goldthorpe points out that 'absolute rates refer to the actual proportions of individuals of given class origins who are mobile to different class destinations, while relative rates compare the chances of individuals of differing class origins arriving at different class destinations and thus indicate the extent of social fluidity'(Goldthorpe, 2012, p. 5).

The following question is probably the most important one for research on social mobility to deal with: have opportunities for social mobility increased for more recent generations? Is there equality of opportunity and openness? One could also formulate the question differently with regard to achievements and in meritocratic terms. The process of modernisation means that birth becomes less important than a person's own achievements, such as education and career, in gaining the most coveted positions in a society.

To answer this question, mobility research has developed the uniform difference model, a log-multiplicative model, abbreviated as the Unidiff model (see Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992 and an explanation in Annex 4). This model estimates that the odds ratios for the separate mobility tables change by some common multiplicative factor, labelled β. The association is fixed to 1 for one cohort in one country as a reference category and all βs are measured in reference to this standard, as with an index where a year and country is equal to 100. Here, the silent generation (born before 1946) in Austria is the reference category (equal to 1). Figure 7 shows the successive βs for the countries and cohorts included in the analysis of relative mobility ('social fluidity') for the total population.[7] A decreasing β parameter indicates a

Figure 7: Changes in social fluidity over time



Note: *Respondents aged 35–75 years. Cohort born before 1946 in Austria is used as a reference category, set at value 1. All other points in the graph are estimated with reference to the oldest cohort in Austria.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

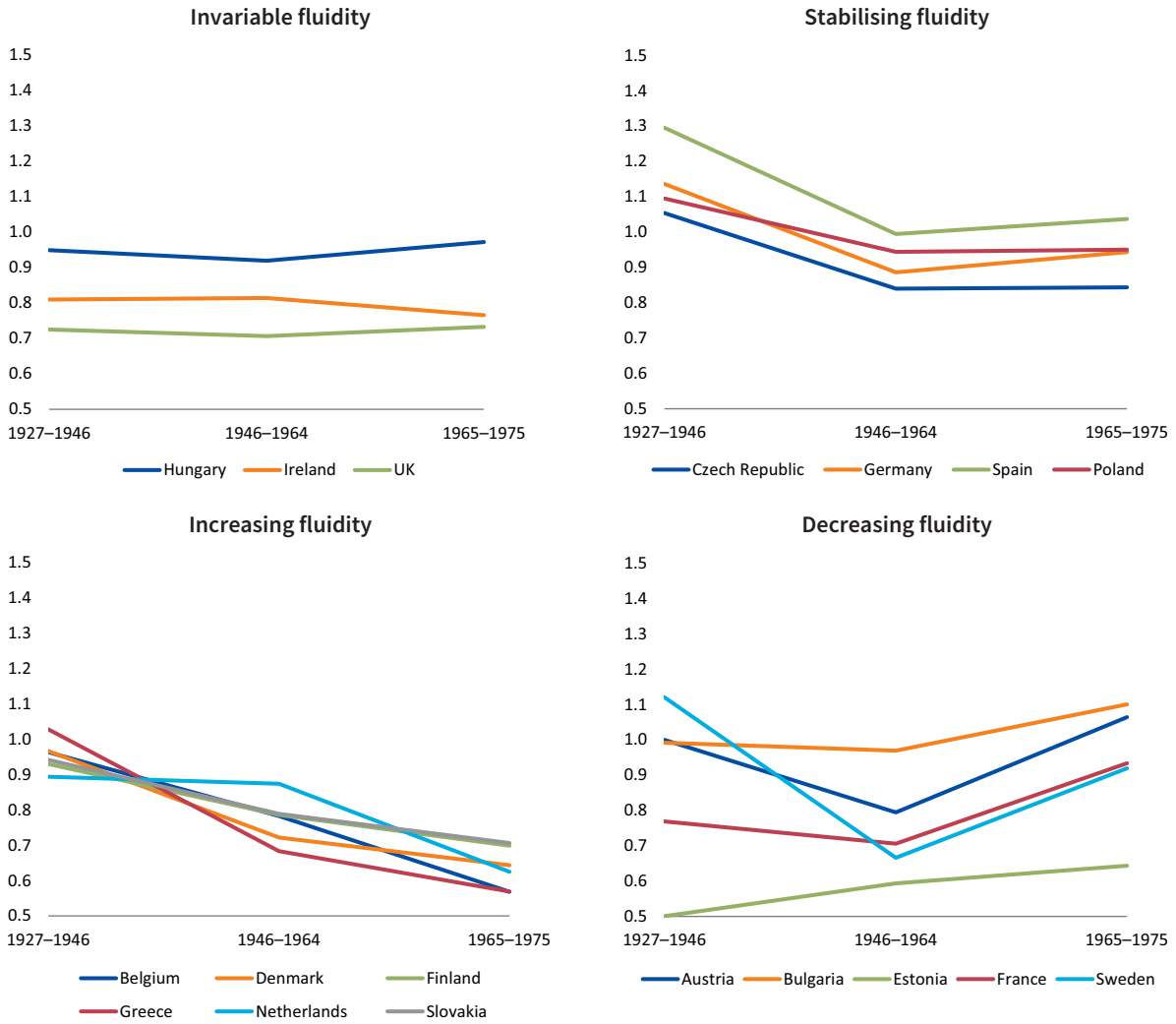
7 Countries with samples that are too small have been excluded: Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania and Luxembourg.

decrease in the association between origin and destination and thus an increase in social fluidity. Social fluidity increases if the social origin becomes a less important factor in avoiding downward mobility or experiencing upward mobility.

Figure 7 shows a convergence in the levels of social fluidity),[8] in particular from the silent generation to the baby boomers, where for most European countries social fluidity increased and social origin started to play a less important role for the next generation. (As the research shows (see Annex 4), social fluidity increases if social origin becomes a less important factor in avoiding downward mobility or experiencing upward mobility.) The variance of the indicators decreases from 3.64 to 3.16 over the three cohorts, showing a decrease in variability and thus convergence. It is, however, also noteworthy that between the baby boomer generation and Generation X the lines on the graph (the Unidiff β parameters, as explained in Annex 4) are fanning out again, meaning that convergence has reversed: in some countries social fluidity has continued to increase, while in many countries social fluidity has come to a halt or has started to decrease. The results presented are for 20 countries and men and women combined. In Figures 8–12, the details will be presented by sex separately.

From one cohort to the next, fluidity may increase, remain stable or decrease. Patterns can be more or less complex: fluidity may increase steadily from one cohort to the next (or, alternatively, decrease steadily). An increase may be followed by stability or decrease, or stability may be followed by a decrease or an increase – and so on. The four charts in Figure 8 show the patterns of the evolution of social fluidity for all countries in the analysis. (It should be kept in mind that the level of

Figure 8: Social fluidity by cohorts for men and women, by country and dominant fluidity patterns



Note: *Values shown are Unidiff coefficients. Respondents were aged 35–75. Portugal and Slovenia are not shown because they have a low-high-low pattern that differs from all the groups above.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

8 Or a convergence of the unidiff β parameters.

fluidity is inversely related to the beta coefficient – in other words, if the β coefficient for successive cohorts goes down, this means that the association between origin (O) and destination (D) is weakening and thus fluidity is increasing.)

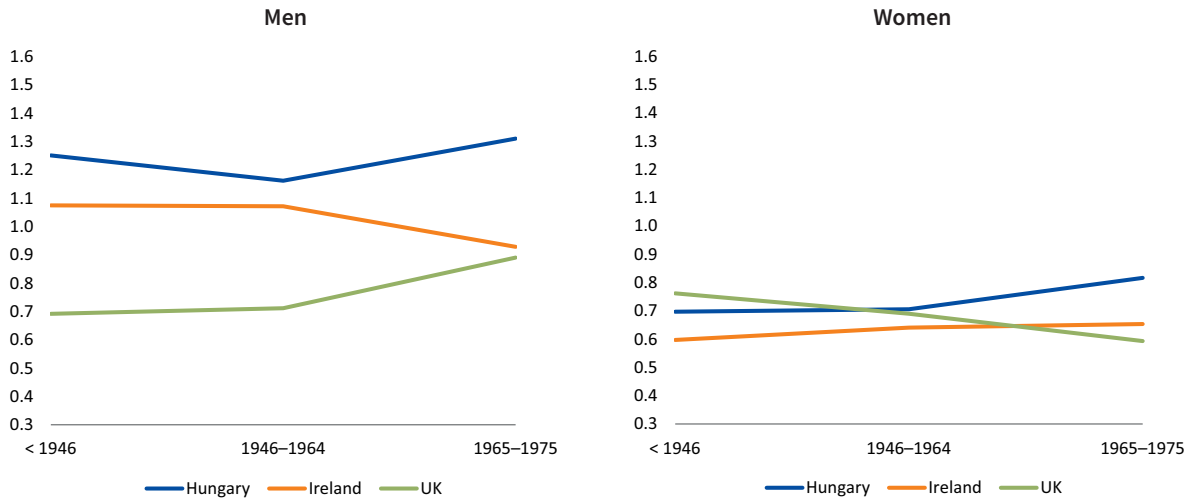
Social fluidity in Hungary, Ireland and the UK does not seem to have changed much over the cohorts (the strength of association between origin and destination has not changed over the cohorts observed) and is at a relatively low level in these three countries when compared with others. Put another way, social fluidity in the UK did not change across cohorts and is among the highest in comparison to other countries, as other research has found (Breen, 2005; Goldthorpe, 2016).

In the second graph in Figure 8 (stabilising fluidity), it can be seen that in the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland and Spain, fluidity increased between the first two cohorts, but then stabilised.

Continuously increasing fluidity is observed in two Nordic countries (with the notable exception of Sweden), as well as in Belgium, Greece, the Netherlands and Slovakia. These are the only countries where chances for equal opportunities have continued to increase for the three cohorts and social origin has become less important over time.

Finally, in a number of countries, fluidity decreased for the last two cohorts. This is the case for Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France and Sweden. In particular, Sweden shows a U-shaped profile of the curve after it became socially mobile country in the 1970s and 1980s, but it social fluidity has decreased after that.

Figure 9: Changes in social fluidity for men and women by cohort: Invariable fluidity



Note: *Respondents aged 35–75.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

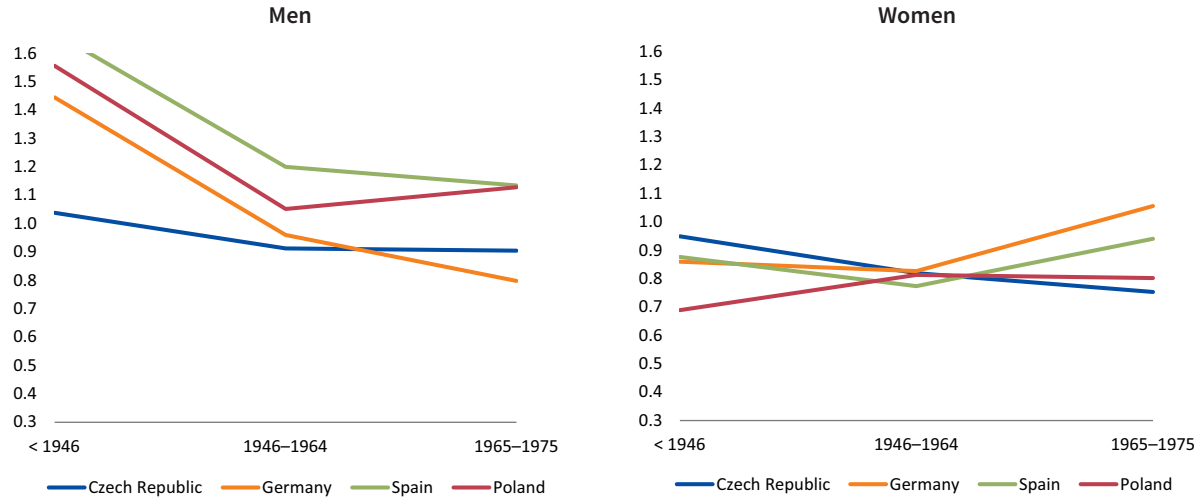
Regardless of what the dominant trend in the level of fluidity appears to be when the data for all countries are analysed, the breakdown of data by sex reveals substantial differences between men and women regarding changes in fluidity, as shown in the following series of figures.

In the UK, it becomes apparent that a seemingly stable level of social fluidity was, in fact, a movement towards decreasing social fluidity for men in the Generation X cohort (Figure 9). In contrast, social fluidity continued to increase – albeit at a slower rate – for women. The data show the opposite pattern in Ireland (little change for women across cohorts and increased fluidity for men of Generation X).

In the cluster of countries showing stablising level of fluidity over time (Figure 10), the Czech Republic probably displays the most stable levels of social mobility: fluidity remains largely the same over time. Moreover, trends for men and women do not differ much – particularly for the Generation X cohort. In Poland, by contrast, the situation of men and women in Generation X does differ: social fluidity increased for men, while the level of fluidity remains almost constant for women.

Other 'stabilising' countries reveal different trends for men and for women (Figure 10). In Germany and Spain, social fluidity for men increased across all three cohorts, but women in Generation X experienced a reduction in social fluidity. Although trends in fluidity are the opposite for men and women, as they have been for the last two cohorts in Germany, if data are not broken down by sex these trends appear to cancel each other out and create an illusion of consistent or stable levels of fluidity in society.

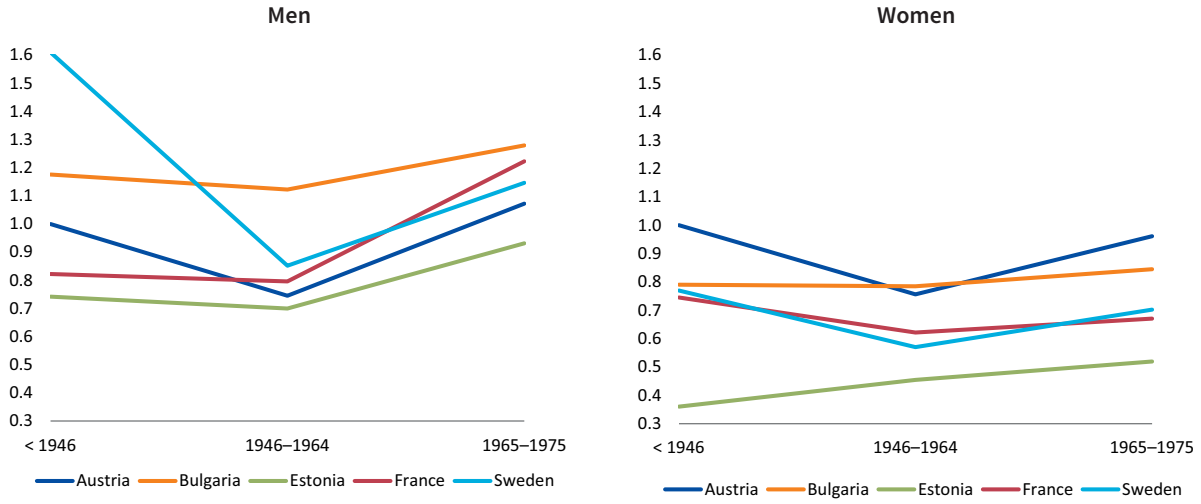
Figure 10: Changes in social fluidity for men and women by cohort: Stabilisation of fluidity



Note: *Respondents aged 35–75.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

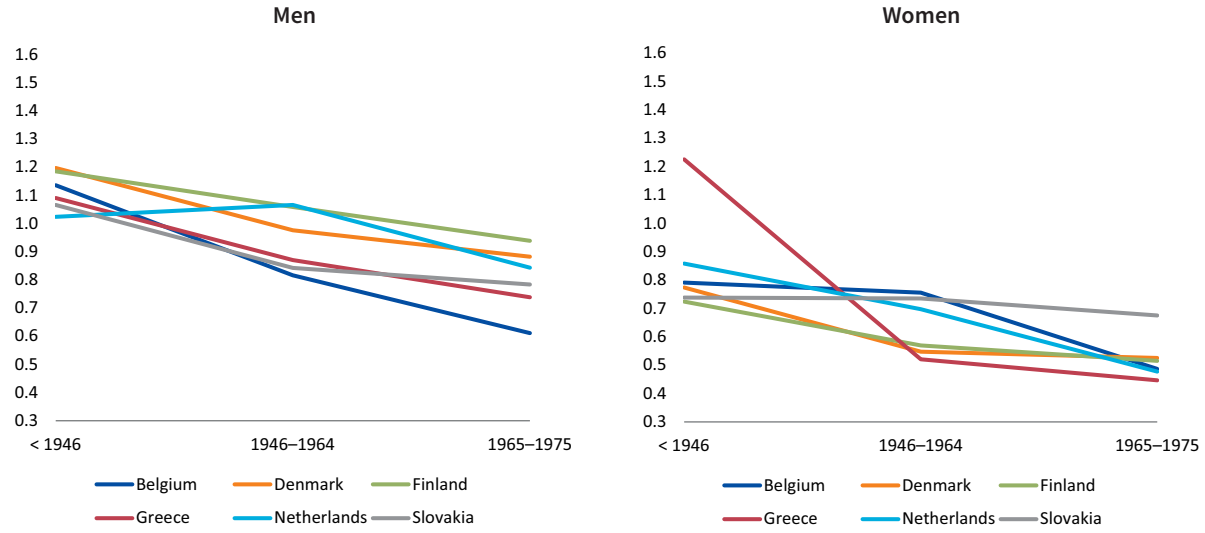
Decreasing fluidity over the three cohorts can be observed for both men and women in Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France and Sweden (Figure 11). However, fluidity decreased more substantially for men than for women in all countries apart from Austria and Sweden, where a marked decline can be observed for both sexes (although more markedly for men). Regarding Sweden, all Nordic countries have traditionally been known for being, egalitarian societies. The relatively high rate of social mobility in the Nordic countries is attributed to the institutional features of the societies, the way in which the society can compensate for differences in conditions in childhood, the structuring of the education system, the rate of return on education, low wage dispersion, low income inequality, the low incidence of low-wage jobs and the high rate of redistribution (Lind, 2009). Despite the apparently overall positive picture, Lind argues that from the mid-1990s and throughout the 2000s many of the factors that fostered upward social mobility were put under pressure, particularly in Sweden. An increase in the freedom of choice in public services (for example, school choice) has widened the gap between families, income inequalities have increased and income redistribution has decreased. It remains an open question whether a reduction in mobility in Sweden is temporary or not; furthermore, it is unknown whether such recent developments are unique to this country or whether they signal a trend in other Nordic countries.

Figure 11: Changes in social fluidity for men and women by cohort: Decrease in fluidity



Note: *Respondents aged 35–75.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

Figure 12: Changes in social fluidity for men and women by cohort: Increase in fluidity



Note: *Respondents aged 35–75.*
Source: *ESS, waves 1–5, covering 2002–2010; authors' own calculations.*

Finally, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands and Slovakia show a continuous trend of increasing fluidity over the successive cohorts (Figure 12). Both men and women are part of this trend and in similar amplitudes. However, it should also be assessed whether all social groups are evenly benefitting from the general trend, and whether there are still barriers to be tackled.

Summary

Notwithstanding the scale and type of changes in occupational structure, societies differ in terms of social fluidity (relative mobility) – that is, to what extent social origin affects one's chances of being in a different occupational class from one's parents.

In the 20 Member States examined, the extent of social fluidity converged over the 20th century, becoming more similar between Member States for the cohort born 1946–1964 (the baby boomers) than they were for the cohort born 1927–1945 (the silent generation). However, it is noteworthy that between the baby boomer generation and Generation X (born 1965–1975) the extent of social fluidity started to diverge: in some countries, it continued to increase, while in many countries it came to a halt or started to decrease.

The extent of social fluidity changed in different directions for the countries analysed. In most countries, social fluidity increased for baby boomers when compared with the silent generation. However, in one group of countries, fluidity has been continuously increasing: Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia and Greece. In contrast, in another group of countries, the Generation X cohort – in particular – has experienced a decrease in social fluidity: most notably Sweden, but also Austria, France and Bulgaria. In a third group, comprising Germany, Poland, the UK and Ireland, levels of social fluidity have been stable.

These overall patterns mask different trends between men and women, which merit policy attention. As already indicated, apparently stable social fluidity may hide opposing trends for men and women, which cancel each other out in statistics unless broken down. The extent of social fluidity in the second half of the 20th century changed in opposite directions for men and women in Germany, Spain, and the UK. In Germany and Spain, social fluidity for men increased across the three cohorts. However, in both these countries, more women were limited by their social origin – experiencing less social fluidity – in Generation X than their equivalents in the baby boom cohort. In the UK, the converse is apparent: social fluidity increased for women across the three cohorts, but more men in Generation X were limited by their social origin than was the case for baby-boomers.

In several countries, men, especially those in Generation X, have started to experience decreasing levels of social fluidity. As just stated, this is the case in the UK; it is also the case in France, Sweden, Austria, Estonia and Bulgaria. In contrast, social fluidity has increased for men (as just discussed) in Germany and Spain, as well as in

those countries where overall levels of social mobility have been high for both sexes (the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia, Belgium and Greece).

Social fluidity has in general changed less for women than for men. Social fluidity among women has increased in the UK, Czech Republic, Finland and most notably in Belgium and the Netherlands. In contrast, it has decreased in Austria, Sweden, Germany and Spain.

4 Country spotlights

In order to gather information on the contextual factors and drivers behind patterns of social mobility, Eurofound hosted a series of national workshops in 2016 in selected Member States:[9]

- the Netherlands
- Poland
- the three Baltic states
- United Kingdom

The findings and data presented at these workshops are detailed below in four spotlights. As the Netherlands has continuously experienced high levels of social mobility, the Dutch case study examines the factors that contribute to the high levels of equal opportunity in the country. Poland has a relatively rich tradition of research into social mobility, which has provided considerable input for Eurofound's work. The Polish case study reflects the impact of social and economic transformation on patterns of social mobility. The Baltic case study highlights the impact of such transformation and provides information on countries that have so far conducted less research into social mobility (with the exception of Estonia).

There has been long-standing interest in social mobility in the UK, specifically in the scientific community but also in public and political debate. A widespread policy commitment to promote social mobility has been reflected in the establishment of a Social Mobility Commission in 2010, which has argued that the mobility of an entire generation of young people is being compromised.

Social mobility in the Netherlands

The'golden age' of upward social mobility – during which education expanded and the number of professional middle-class jobs increased – lasted until the 1990s in the Netherlands, at least for men (Goldthorpe, 2016).

Since then, the country has witnessed only a minor upgrading of occupations; education, however, continued to expand. This has led to 'diploma inflation' on the labour market.[10] Consequently, the influence of education on the labour market position of individuals diminished. In essence, it means that meritocracy on the labour market has stagnated (Tolsma and Wolbers, 2010).

In 2011, the Dutch Council for Social Development (Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling – RMO) similarly concluded that the trend of upward intergenerational relative social mobility is no longer evident in the Netherlands and pointed to the first signs of downward social mobility.[11] According to the RMO, education is the main reason for this. Greater access to education has enabled the Netherlands to become more open; however, the level of educational achievement has become the main divider in Dutch society: those with a high level of education benefit more than those with a lower level. A more recent study by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research added weight to this concern, finding increasing polarisation in education and on the labour market (Vrooman et al, 2014).

The importance of social mobility for society is one of the important messages of the RMO. In another study, it presents three conclusions about the way in which the Dutch government promoted social mobility in the period 1982–2009 (RMO, 2010).

First, the government's priority shifted from the ideal of equality to that of a society in which citizens are called upon to contribute and participate, both economically and in civic terms. It is important to note that equality had been more or less achieved during the post-war period up to 1982 and commitment to the ideal of equal access to education remained strong over that time.

Second, since 1982 there has been a growing shift towards policy that supports absolute social mobility over social fluidity. Participation was encouraged on the basis that it created employment and social cohesion; the focus was no longer on providing equal opportunities for the individual.

9 For the dates and participants of the workshops, please see Annex 1 (available online).

10 'Diploma inflation' is a term coined by Wolbers (1998) used to indicate that diplomas have less value nowadays on the labour market: with the same educational level one now obtains a lower labour position than was previously the case.

11 In 2015, the RMO merged with two other Councils into the Council for Health and Society (Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving).

Third, three pathways to social mobility reappeared in the focus of the successive governments in the period 1982–2009:

- employment
- equal access to education
- social inclusion.

However, the trend towards less fluidity in Dutch society leads to questions about the effectiveness of these policy pathways.

Social mobility in Poland

Poland has a long and rich tradition of social mobility research. Researchers have been particularly interested in the impact of historical developments and transformation of the social and political system on the patterns of social mobility. The research has been aided by the high quality of the ESS in Poland; the country has participated in each wave of the survey. The response rate in Poland has been very high – higher than in most countries participating in the project and higher than in other scientific face-to-face surveys in Poland. (However, even though the field of social mobility has been prominent in research, this has not carried over into the wider policy agenda, as has happened in the UK.)

Overall, findings from a number of researchers suggest that absolute upward social mobility was on the rise for both men and women in the period immediately following the Second World War.[12] Later, social mobility increased for women until the mid-1990s but remained largely unchanged for men.

The most detailed analysis of social fluidity in Poland is a study by Domański et al (2016), which analysed data from 1982–2006. The study looks at several dimensions and associations:

- the effects of social origin on destination
- the relationship between social origin and education
- the net effect of education on destination;
- the effect of education reflected in the rising share of more educated categories in the overall social/occupational structure.

The results are complex and difficult to interpret. The authors found a consistent trend of a declining association between education and occupational position but a less clear association between social origin and destination. For men, beginning in the late 1990s, the association between origin and destination generally increased (meaning that social fluidity decreased). This was most pronounced in the higher educational levels. This differentiates Poland from a number of western societies, in which greater openness among more educated categories makes social stratification more fluid. In a study devoted largely to gender differences, Mach (2004) using data from 1972, 1988 and 1994 found no change in men's social fluidity but a clear tendency of increasing social fluidity among women in both 1972–1988 and 1988–1994.

Słomczynski et al (2016) used data from the Polish Panel Survey, POLPAN 1988–2013, to compare the socioeconomic status of different cohorts. They found no evidence to support the idea that the impact of social origin on occupational careers diminishes over the course of one's career or over time generally. On the contrary, the mean differences between origin and destination in socioeconomic status at the beginning of the career are smaller than later in the career. Furthermore, the effect of the origin increases from one cohort to the next: it is smallest for the 1945–1955 cohort and largest for the 1981–1989 cohort. The authors suggest that differences in socioeconomic status between categories of social origin are not due to the socioeconomic status that is expected based on education but reflect rather structural opportunities and differences in social and cultural capital.

12 These researchers include Domański (2007), Domański, Mach and Przybysz (2016), Mach (2004) and Słomczyński et al. (2016).

The experts agreed that the national context matters in understanding and explaining both the trends and the influencing factors behind patterns of social mobility. The uniqueness of some of the social processes in Poland – and their importance to the phenomenon of social mobility – has been underlined in a number of studies:

- the significant eradication of intelligentsia during and after the Second World War
- the lack of collectivisation in agriculture
- people's perceptions of present-day opportunities for social mobility chances compared with those under state socialism
- female/male preferences regarding social mobility and work–life balance
- the diminishing role of higher education as an enabler for upward social mobility
- the growing number of a type of zero-hour contracts offered to young people
- place of residence as a factor in boosting life chances – increasing east–west and rural–urban dimensions.

Social mobility in the Baltic states

The topic of social mobility has not been a focus of academic research in the Baltic states (apart from Estonia) nor has it been mentioned in public debates in recent decades. However, social mobility has been referred to – albeit indirectly – in policy debates regarding the persistent, high rates of poverty and income inequality; traditionally, these social issues have been cited as one of the main factors influencing patterns of social mobility. For example, high levels of inequality and poverty (especially among children) signal potentially low levels of social mobility (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2011). Both income inequality and the risk of poverty among children in the Baltic countries are among the highest in the EU. Wealth inequality has also been mentioned as a barrier to social mobility. Navicke and Lazutka (2016) established that income inequality is substantially higher for all three Baltic states – particularly if income from property is fully accounted for, while Helemäe (2011) reported on the negative effects of wealth inequality on social mobility in Estonia.

In a similar way to countries in central and eastern Europe, the transformation of the socioeconomic system in the Baltic states has had an impact on patterns of social mobility. Roots (2013) distinguished between two periods in Estonia: 1991–1997 ('a window of opportunity') and the post-1997 period (marked by a tightening of the links between generations – a decline in social fluidity). Helemäe (2011) has confirmed similar tendencies of decreasing upward social mobility in the 2000s compared with the 1990s.

The Baltic states have been characterised by different patterns for men and women; substantial research has been done to specifically investigate gender differences. Research by Saar (2010) on four cohorts in Estonia (1930–1939, 1940–1949, 1950–1959 and 1960–1974) showed that for men in the 1940–1949 cohort social fluidity increased; in later cohorts, it decreased. For women, social fluidity was on the rise in the first three cohorts and then decreased in the latest cohort. Titma, Roots and Soidla (2010) found that women in Estonia were more successful than men in gaining positions in the upper occupational classes and in white-collar positions between 1998 and 2004. Looking at the mechanisms behind gendered patterns in social fluidity, the change in social fluidity was driven at least partially by changes in educational inequality and segregation between men and women (Saar, 2010).

Many studies have found a strong relationship between patterns and rates of social mobility and education. Education also plays a role: experts point to recent educational reforms as potential barriers to social mobility. The education system has some strengths: the basic school system is fairly uniform and children's abilities are generally tracked from an early age. However, there are visible differences in the quality of schooling. In Lithuania, figures from the Ministry of Education indicate that the number of dropouts from education is almost three times higher in rural than in urban areas. In contrast, the number of urban children in non-formal education is twice the number of rural children. In Estonia, Saar and Kristel-Amelie (2014) found that social inequality in the probability of progressing to secondary education increased significantly during the 1990s, with social origin having a strong impact, those from more affluent backgrounds being favoured. And, in Estonia, inequalities between ethnic groups are important: the chances of ethnic Russians progressing to secondary and tertiary education are lower than those for native Estonians (Lindemann and Saar, 2012). In all three Baltic states, reforms were implemented in higher education; these have liberalised funding mechanisms, increased tuition fees and reduced access. In Latvia, the share of programmes not subsidised by the government is high – between 63% and

77%. Vocational education and the extent to which educational programmes match the needs of the labour market demand are important issues.

While levels of educational attainment are on the increase in the Baltic states, there are not many well-paid jobs. As a result, there is little scope for upward social mobility and people with a high level of education must work in lower occupational categories than their educational attainment would prepare them for. Decreasing intergenerational mobility during the transition period in Estonia (since the 1990s) has been visible (Saar, 2011); similar trends have been found in Russia (Gerber and Hout, 2004) and Hungary (Róbert and Bukodi 2004; Bukodi and Goldthorpe, 2010).

As mentioned, the geographical dimension is important for social mobility: increasing urbanisation means a concentration of the population and economic activity in urban areas, and a corresponding decrease in rural areas. Werner (2013) found that, in Lithuania, moving up or down the social ladder is related to patterns of geographical movement: roughly 25% of respondents who moved from the middle class to the upper social class (in terms of occupation) during the period under examination were residents of Lithuania's two biggest cities. Regional development policies in all three countries are currently strengthened through EU structural funding, aimed at improving regional cohesion.

The debate on patterns of social mobility in the Baltic countries cannot be separated from the discussion regarding the impact of emigration on social mobility (still an under-researched topic). The Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research (University of Latvia) has published a large-scale empirical study of various Latvian emigrant communities abroad (Mierina, 2015). The findings indicate that emigration often provides opportunities for upward social mobility in terms of career advancement, moving to a better neighbourhood or region, learning new skills and acquiring new social contacts. Sipavičienė (2011) distinguishes between at least two phases of emigration from Lithuania. At an initial stage (1990–1993), Lithuania's regaining of independence triggered the repatriation of ethnic minorities from the country to other former Soviet republics. The second phase is described as the 'economisation' of migration serving as a 'survival strategy' for citizens. While there was no direct assessment of the impact of emigration on social mobility, the use of emigration as a survival strategy suggests that downward mobility would have been potentially greater if there had been no opportunity to leave.

Social mobility in the UK

There has been long-standing interest in social mobility in the UK, specifically in the scientific community (Goldthorpe, 2016), but also in public and political debate. A widespread policy commitment to promote social mobility has been reflected in the establishment of a Social Mobility Commission in 2010, charged with assessing progress in improving social mobility in the UK and with promoting social mobility in England.

During the course of this research, articles on aspects of social mobility have appeared regularly in daily newspapers, particularly *The Guardian* and *Financial Times*; and best-selling books have been published on diverse themes such as: the psychological dilemmas of upward mobility; the constant preoccupation with social class in the UK; and the growing problems of intergenerational unfairness – with evidence of increasing barriers to mobility (and even towards better living standards) among the current generation of young people.

Many commentators on the Brexit vote have ascribed the decision to underlying resentment of an 'us and them' society, with fundamental societal barriers to equal opportunities (mostly unrelated to the EU). There are some distinctive concerns referenced in the UK debate: the legacies of an unfair education system with privileged access to 'public' (i.e. fee-paying) schools; nepotism and protection of entry to certain professions (e.g. barristers, doctors) and the 'top jobs'; pay gaps in professions associated with social origins; and unequal chances to study at 'top' universities. In addition, the recent policy debates have highlighted stark regional economic imbalances, a growing lack of affordable housing, and large differences in parenting in different social groups. There have also been critical observations regarding cutbacks in public services, such as nursery schools, which are most relevant to improving the life chances of people (particularly children) from disadvantaged groups.

Research in the UK has generally highlighted a 'golden age' for upward social mobility in the decades after the Second World War, when employment in professional and managerial occupations expanded. The opening of many higher-class occupations promoted both absolute and relative social mobility. More recently, with large numbers at higher levels in the occupational structure there is an increased risk of downward mobility – which appear to be happening (Goldthorpe, 2016). Differences between absolute and relative mobility have been

emphasised by sociologists since the 1960s, but have only been taken up by economists and politicians in the UK in more recent years. The extensive social research in the UK has adopted a range of different methods to examine social mobility. The results underline the significance of research decisions, for example, about: how occupational classes are defined; how upward or downward mobility is categorised; which age range is included; and whether men and women are analysed separately or together. Recent studies, such as those based on the UK birth cohort studies, highlight the importance of female employment, although with different stories for women in part-time compared with full-time employment.

Most analyses point to the significance of education for upward mobility. However, other resources related to parents' social capital, family networks, and cultural assets are identified as important in protecting as well as promoting occupational class. In the UK expert workshop organised by Eurofound, the top three barriers to social mobility identified were:

- early childhood education (parental involvement, childcare costs)
- social inequalities (importance of connections for life chances, access to top jobs)
- income inequalities (labour market polarisation, rising importance of wealth and mixed progress on child poverty).

The most recent *State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain* report (SMCPC, 2016) argues that Britain's social mobility problem is getting worse for an entire generation of young people – not only for the poorest in society but for a large swathe of middle-income families. This is not just a social division: it also reflects a widening divide in life chances between people living in the big cities and those living in many towns across the UK. The expectation that each generation would be better off than the one preceding it is no longer being fulfilled. The commission calls for new thinking and new approaches, which involve not only government, but employers and professions, schools and universities, parents and charities.

5 Policy discourse on social mobility

This report began by noting how citizens across the EU have become increasingly concerned that young people will have fewer opportunities for upward social mobility than their parents or even their grandparents. This perception has been reinforced by research in some Member States, particularly the UK, which indicates that 'what is happening, and what has been largely overlooked, is that younger generations of men and women … are less likely to experience upward mobility and more likely to experience downward mobility' (Goldthorpe, 2016, pp. 95–96). In the UK, policy interest in social mobility has led to the establishment of a Social Mobility Commission and to the 'great social mobility debate' over the last decade (*The Guardian*, 2016a). Such explicit debate on social mobility is a feature of policy discourse in a few Member States albeit as diverse as Sweden and Malta; although the perception that income and social inequality is rising and upward social mobility is stalling is widespread across OECD countries (Garnero et al, 2016).

The previous chapters examined the patterns of intergenerational social mobility in EU countries looking back over several decades – how societies have changed in terms of structural/occupational change and societal progress (absolute social mobility). It also investigated to what extent societies have become more open and fluid over time (their relative social mobility). This chapter, and Chapters 6 and 7, review the current situation in the Member States.[13]

The public and policy discourse on social mobility often relates to debates around growing social and economic inequalities as well as discussions of measures to address poverty and social exclusion. The alleviation or reduction of poverty as such may not directly increase upward social mobility, but it will increase the resources that are available to people to improve their life chances. In most Member States, attention to social mobility is linked to equality of opportunity and how to overcome economic and social disadvantage. Attention to deficits in opportunities is related to awareness of disadvantage and discrimination associated particularly with gender, disability and ethnicity – though to different extents in different Member States. As the more detailed examples that follow will show, the main elements of the policy and public discourse cover a wide range of social and economic problems and developments; this relates to history and societal values as well as policy processes (Corak, 2016) and reflects the complex interactions between families, the labour market and government policies in determining the life chances of people growing up in different Member States.

In most countries, the absence of a specific policy debate on social mobility is not necessarily because of a lack of social inequalities or economic disadvantage. In Latvia, for example, social mobility is hardly discussed, for a variety of historical and societal reasons.

Key actors in the debate

In a majority of Member States, the debate on social mobility has been informed by national research on social mobility in addition to information from cross-national studies (such as Breen, 2005). Such research distinguishes between absolute and relative intergenerational mobility; it has been produced by academic and government sources.

Often there has been an effort to document changing patterns of social mobility over time, highlighting the 1970s as 'a time when the industrialised world was actively breaking down barriers to improve social mobility' (Frankopan, 2015, p. 447), or the 'golden age' of upward social mobility in the 1950s and 1960s in the UK (Goldthorpe, 2016). In central and eastern Europe, the period since the fall of communism in 1989 and subsequent changes in the labour market have been of particular interest. Katrňák and Fónadová (2014) examined patterns of social mobility in the Czech Republic from 1990 to 2011, arguing that between 1990 and 2000, the relationship between parents' occupation and the occupation of their children strengthened (meaning that social mobility declined). Following the expansion of the tertiary education system since 2000, it appears that the link between the education of parents and attainment of children weakened, occupation becoming less determined by the occupational class of the parents, hence meaning greater social mobility.

The nuances of academic research on absolute and relative mobility may be reflected in the policy discourse (as in Finland); or they may not (as in Latvia). It seems that the results of academic research have not

13 This information was gathered by the network of European correspondents in 28 Member States who reviewed and analysed relevant national academic and policy documents. In some cases, interviews with relevant stakeholders took place.

made much impact on the policy debate in the Czech Republic, again in part because socioeconomic inequalities are not conceptualised in terms of occupational class inequalities. Instead, the dominant political and social policy discourses have been in terms of poverty, social exclusion, the problems of the Roma and socioeconomic disadvantage. This appears to be quite characteristic of the debates in many Member States that address the issue in terms of equal opportunities.

With encouragement from EU legislation and initiatives on discrimination and equal opportunities, all Member States have strengthened policies to improve the life chances of disadvantaged groups, often through developing national strategies for social inclusion (for example, Bulgaria and Ireland). In some countries, this has involved establishing central government departments or agencies, or advisory bodies – the Combat Poverty, Insecurity and Social Exclusion Service in Belgium and the Social Mobility Commission in the UK. In France, the riots of 2005 underlined the disadvantages experienced by people living in the suburbs of many big cities, notably in terms of access to work, healthcare and education. In 2006, the French government declared that equality of opportunity was 'the great national cause' and a national Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities was established. This agency addresses inequalities and discrimination experienced by disadvantaged groups – specifically, young people. Concern about social inequalities in educational achievement, particularly regarding schools in disadvantaged areas, continues to be a key theme in the policy debate on social mobility.

Framed in terms of combating barriers to mobility and promoting equal opportunities, it is clear that individual government departments – in education, health, employment and welfare services – see themselves as contributing to better life chances, even if they do not often promote social mobility explicitly. In many government initiatives, other actors – particularly from municipal public authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the social partners – are directly involved. For example, the Social Exclusion Service in Belgium brings together public centres for social welfare, trade unions and professionals from different sectors to produce analyses and recommendations for policymakers.

NGOs appear to have a key role in driving the policy debate in a number of Member States. In Austria, the 'Poverty Conference' brings together a network of national NGOs and institutions dealing with poverty and social exclusion. The current debate highlights concerns about child poverty and its consequences for health and well-being. Studies in Austria have underlined the significant correlation between the economic resources of parents and the income of their children a generation later (Altzinger et al, 2013). In Finland, the Central Union for Child Welfare and the Ombudsman for Children have been particularly visible in a debate on child poverty that is central to discussions of social mobility; the Evangelical Lutheran Church has also been active in driving this agenda. And in the UK, much of the specific debate on declining social mobility has been informed by research and advocacy conducted by third-sector organisations such as educational charity the Sutton Trust and think tank the Resolution Foundation.

Employers and trade union organisations have been highly visible in debates in many Member States about deficits in education (for example, in Estonia) and labour market opportunities (in France), both separately and collectively in social partner initiatives. In Slovakia, negotiations between the social partners in the national-level Economic and Social Council have contributed extensively to the development of concrete measures to improve living and working conditions and to promote equal opportunities. Social partners in Poland have contributed to measures that address poverty and social exclusion through proposals for the indexation of minimum income benefits and childcare benefits in the framework of the Tripartite Commission (now the Social Dialogue Council).

In many of these examples, the issue of social mobility has been approached through a broader discussion of equal opportunities and social inclusion or through more specific debate on issues, such as education and health, that directly impact on life chances and prospects for economic and social advancement – opportunities for upward mobility have primarily been at the centre of the policy discourse. However, most of the current debate is framed in terms of concerns about deepening barriers to mobility, growing inequalities and the threats of increasing downward mobility.

Drivers of the current debate

Although relatively few people in Europe are talking in abstract terms about 'social mobility', many are expressing practical and political concerns about a 'fair society' – one in which people have equal chances to enjoy good living conditions and have access to resources. Specifically, attention is directed to developments that make it more difficult for young people to achieve their potential in education and the labour market. Eurofound's network of correspondents was asked to identify the main drivers behind the policy debate on social mobility in their country, drawing upon academic, policy and political documents as well as coverage in the media and academic research. The observations covered a wide range of social problems, including youth unemployment (for example, in Greece, Latvia and Spain), child poverty (Lithuania, Poland) and early school-leavers (Malta, the Netherlands, Romania).

The most common developments are captured in eight main drivers of the debate:

- widening income inequalities
- diminished access to public services
- persistent inequalities in education
- Intergenerational transmission of poverty
- widespread gender inequalities
- integration of immigrants
- nepotism and corruption
- growing regional disparities.

Widening income inequalities

Widening income inequalities were reported as a phenomenon undermining social mobility in a majority of Member States. In the recent annual report of the Social Protection Committee (Social Protection Committee, 2016), increased income inequalities are identified as an issue in 12 Member States, as is a rise in the depth of poverty since 2008 (in 16 countries), so it is not surprising that this deterioration features in the debate across Europe.

In Spain, since 2010, problems directly or indirectly related to social mobility and income inequality – such as a rise in child poverty, wage inequality or a worsening of employment opportunities for young people – have appeared in the policy discourse. This issue was taken up extensively in the media as well as by social movements – both traditional (trade unions, teachers' and doctors' groups) and new (Indignados, Platform for Mortgage Affected People). These developments are similarly reported in Greece, with growing social and economic inequalities associated both with the economic crisis and with the implementation of austerity programmes.

Reference to widening income inequalities is also evident in Hungary and Slovakia. In Hungary, the economic crisis was linked to loss of income, particularly among people already living in poor material conditions associated with hardship and unemployment. It appears that the middle class has narrowed (since more people experience a lower standard of living) and that a growing gap has developed between higher and lower strata in society. The report on the social situation in Slovenia 2013–2014 (Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, 2015) indicates that the situation of the middle classes has deteriorated, particularly the lower middle class, with the risk of poverty increasing since 2009. Social policy has become increasingly targeted at the most vulnerable groups in the population and there is growing pressure on humanitarian organisations to help those who have exhausted their personal and financial assets.

Actual and perceived increases in income inequality have fuelled the policy debate in Estonia, with a particular focus on child poverty and unequal life chances. In Cyprus, the banking crisis triggered economic setbacks in all areas of society over the succeeding five years. Social benefits for vulnerable groups were reduced, unemployment increased and income inequalities widened. The main public debate since 2011 has focused on unemployment and income inequality, as well as labour rights and the entitlement of poor families to education and healthcare.

Diminished access to public services

Diminished access to public services is identified as a driver of the debate on social mobility in a range of countries. In Denmark and Finland, universal access to education and welfare services is a cornerstone of social policy and fundamental rights ensuring equal opportunities for all. These are regarded as important factors in these countries' comparatively low inequality and high social mobility. However, maintaining equal access to equal services is difficult when, for example, middle-class families choose to move their home away from schools with troubled reputations to schools that are regarded as better (as has been documented in Finland). This reinforces neighbourhood segregation and exacerbates differences in learning outcomes between schools. A similar phenomenon is reported in Denmark, where the proportion of children attending non-public schools has increased in the last five years (Landersø and Heckman, 2016). In Finland, some recent austerity measures are feared to have implications for unequal access. A daycare reform has been proposed that reduces entitlement to public daycare if at least one parent is unemployed or on parental leave. This inequality is likely to most severely affect children from poorer families.

Austerity measures have reduced access to public services in Greece and Spain. In Greece, cutbacks are reported in education, health and state subsidies to programmes supporting vulnerable groups; in Spain, campaigns have stressed how cuts in public health and education could hinder social mobility. Similar concerns are high in the policy debate in Portugal, where – since 2011 – austerity measures have been implemented in the education and health sectors, resulting in reductions of some social protection benefits. Inequalities in access to healthcare and the declining quality of health services are identified in the public debate in Hungary, while access to healthcare, especially for children, appears to be a particular issue in Latvia.

Access to a range of public services has been prominent in the political discourse in Poland over the last 10 years. In particular, limited access to early childhood education is highlighted as an important factor in the reproduction of inequalities; the lack of daycare facilities for children below school age is particularly acute in rural areas. Access to housing is also a major issue, since affordable rental housing is limited and mortgages are difficult to finance, especially for young people.

Persistent inequalities in education

Persistent inequalities in education are reported in many Member States, especially in western Europe. In most countries with relevant data, educational attainment is closely related to socioeconomic background; in some – for example, France – it appears that these inequalities have increased over the last decade. In Austria and the Netherlands, concern has been expressed about the negative effects of 'early tracking' or separation into different classes by early scholastic performance; in the UK, the merits of selective education following tests at the age of 11 are hotly debated (*The Guardian*, 2016b). In Croatia, too, upper secondary education is selective, with an academic track for high-achieving students and a system of underfunded vocational schools for the rest.

In many countries, children are less likely to reach tertiary education if their parents do not have a higher level of educational attainment. In Austria, only 4% of students in tertiary education have parents who completed only compulsory schooling (Statistik Austria, 2015); in Belgium, only 6% of students in tertiary education have parents with educational attainment below upper secondary education (OECD, 2014). The OECD report *Education at a glance* (OECD, 2014) shows that even in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, the majority of students (both male and female) in tertiary education have parents who themselves had attained tertiary-level qualifications.

An analysis of intergenerational transmission of level of educational attainment for people aged 25–59 has been undertaken using data from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) 2011 ad hoc module (Grundiza and Lopez Vilaplana, 2013). Data from all 28 Member States show a high level of persistence of educational achievement from parents to children: this was 34% for parents with a low level of education (based on the highest level of education of either parent), 59% for a medium level and 63% for a high level. Among parents with a high level of education, only 3% of their children had a low level. The persistence of a low level of education is least common, reflecting the general increase in levels of education between generations; however, the chances of achieving only a low level of education are still clearly related to the parents' educational level. The persistence of a low level of education across generations was above 50% in Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Spain. The persistence of a high level of education is over 75% in Belgium, Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg and Romania. In contrast, 25% or more of people achieved a high level of education (although their parents had a low level) in Finland, Ireland, Spain and the UK. As the authors note, the level of education is one of the most important individual factors for adults in reducing the level of poverty and being able to secure acceptable living conditions. The persistence of educational inequalities is a major, widely acknowledged, barrier to upward social mobility.

Intergenerational transmission of poverty

The intergenerational transmission of poverty crops up in the debate in many Member States. This is not only an issue for the current experience of poverty, but also for the fact that in many families, poverty is a feature of life from generation to generation. Again, data from EU-SILC illustrate the scale and distribution of this problem. Using the indicator of 'ability to make ends meet', Grundiza and Lopez Vilaplana (2013) show that transmission from parents to children of a limited ability to make ends meet is more common than transmission of a high ability – although at 69% and 56%, there is a strong persistence at both levels. The association between parents' and children's limited ability to make ends meet is highest in Belgium, Italy, Malta, Romania, Portugal and Spain.

In the reports from correspondents, persistence of poverty appears to be particularly apparent in the public debate in Austria, Luxembourg and the UK. This is partly related to scientific studies (for example, Altzinger et al, 2013; SMCPC, 2015) showing the strength of persistence of income between parents and children (when they are adults). In these three countries, there is specific concern regarding population subgroups at risk of poverty, particularly child poverty. Although it does not have the highest rates of child poverty in the EU, Luxembourg is among the Member States where child poverty has increased most since 2008 (Social Protection Committee, 2016).

Widespread gender inequalities

Gender inequalities are identified in many Member States as factors constraining women's upward social mobility. Although there are big differences between Member States, women in the EU are more likely to be at risk of poverty than men – particularly if they are single parents or are elderly (European Parliament, 2016). This is the case in Bulgaria and Romania, which have the highest poverty rates in the EU: in Bulgaria, every third woman over the age of 65 is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In Estonia, there has been increasing public awareness of the inequalities in opportunity for different social groups, particularly women. Although women are almost as active in the labour market as men, there is considerable segregation both in education and the labour market and a correspondingly high gender wage gap. In Italy, the relatively low labour force participation of women is an important feature of the policy debate.

Gender inequality is also a major theme of the policy discourse in Croatia and the Czech Republic. In Croatia, the disadvantages experienced by women, particularly long-term unemployment, are being addressed in the annual employment plans; in the Czech Republic,

unemployment among women is also at the centre of debate, particularly the situation of single mothers. As in many other countries, social mobility in Slovenia is defined in the context of equal opportunities, with a national programme being developed to promote equal opportunities. The programme seeks to address issues such as employment rates, occupational segregation, reconciliation of work and family life, creating a 'knowledge society' without gender stereotypes, the balanced representation of women and men, violence against women and gender equality in foreign policy.

Integration of immigrants

The integration of immigrants is a complex issue of growing concern, specifically regarding the new influx of asylum seekers and refugees; there is much discussion about how to ensure immigrants can enjoy improved life chances and living conditions. Over the last year, the refugee crisis has dominated the social policy debate in several Member States, including Austria and Germany. Alongside discussion of numbers, there have been discussions about how refugees' residence can be integrated and provided with adequate support. In Austria, different perspectives are evident in the political debate: on the one hand calling for investment in the education and vocational training of refugees and asylum seekers; on the other, seeking to minimise costs and reduce benefits. Debate around the access of asylum seekers to social benefits is also evident in Denmark.

Longer-standing concerns exist regarding the integration of Roma people in countries in central and eastern Europe. In the Czech Republic, the emphasis has been on improving access to education and the labour market. In Slovakia, both short-term and long-term measures to combat the social exclusion of people in Roma settlements have been discussed, with the emphasis on employment opportunities. For Roma children in Slovakia, there has been support to extend pre-primary education to promote better health and social behaviour for at least one year before entering primary school and differences in the educational attainment of Roma children have been reduced. In Slovenia, there has been an emphasis on addressing the health needs of children and protecting them against neglect, discrimination and exploitation. While rates of early school-leaving have generally been in decline in most Member States, they remain a problem for Roma children in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia.

Finally, reports from Estonia, Luxembourg and the Netherlands highlight language barriers for immigrants. In Estonia, it is difficult to participate in the labour market without Estonian language skills, so a lot of attention is being directed towards improving the language capabilities of non-Estonians, especially in the school system. In Luxembourg, a key aim of early childhood education programmes is to enhance the abilities of children aged one to three by providing a 'linguistic bath' in French and Luxembourgish. The multilingual educational system has been identified as a significant barrier for the integration of children from an immigrant background. Similarly, in the Netherlands, language deficiency is one of the most difficult challenges for early childhood education. While children of immigrants used to be a target group for intense language training, this policy was gradually abolished after 2005 as a result of the government's wish to be 'colour blind'. As in a number of Member States, education is at the centre of discussions on social mobility in the Netherlands.

Nepotism and corruption

Nepotism and corruption are essentially unfair ways to advance the interests of some people at the expense or exclusion of others. In relation to social mobility, the common issues are access to preferential education and the labour market. Of course, advantages come in both softer and harder forms – for example, in Italy, it is reported that 35% of workers who entered the labour market between 2003 and 2010 were facilitated by family and personal networks (ISFOL, 2012). In particular, family networks appear to provide support in the case of risk of downward social mobility (De Paola, 2015). In various guises, some advantage is conferred by family and 'old boy' networks for career advancement. Supportive social networks can no doubt be found in nearly every Member State and at every level of society. The Finnish correspondent's report refers to concerns regarding members of the establishment (bankers and high-ranking executives in different sectors) protecting their interests – also an issue in Spain and the UK. The 2015 elections in Spain strongly highlighted concerns about political corruption as a cause of poverty and inequality.

Discrimination against specific groups, such as Roma people, is an issue voiced in several countries and has led to the development of extensive initiatives, such as the National Strategy for Integration of Roma in Bulgaria 2012–2020. These broader concerns about favouritism in the labour market, with nepotistic hiring and promotion regarded as a serious problem (Chavdarova, 2015), are also highlighted as a problem in Cyprus, Malta and Romania.

Growing regional disparities

Growing regional disparities are visible between regions of a country, and between rural and urban areas; they can also be seen between parts of cities (suburbs and centre, poorer and richer neighbourhoods). In many Member States, where people live is an important factor in terms of availability and quality of public services, especially schools, and access to employment.

The differences in economic and educational opportunities between regions are a feature in many of the Member States that have joined since 2004. In Croatia, the problem of regional disadvantage is

particularly acute in the war-affected areas along the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, which have not fully recovered economically from the conflict of the 1990s. These regional differences in poverty have apparently not been addressed adequately in regional development policy and disparities have deepened. In Hungary, regional differences in poverty and employment are also evident and the disparities have increased following the economic crisis. The disparity between the more advantaged western regions and the eastern parts of Hungary is long-standing; it is reflected both in economic development and in differences in life expectancy. The relative disadvantage of eastern regions is also apparent in other central European countries such as Poland and Slovakia, where inadequate transport infrastructure is highlighted as an issue.

Unequal life chances for people living in rural areas can be illustrated by experiences in countries as different as Denmark and Romania. In both cases, it appears that wealth and a high-skilled workforce are concentrated in the capital. Denmark has seen an increase in regional differences over the last decade or more in terms of income, jobs, education and health. Many regions are under pressure because businesses and public institutions close or move to bigger cities and because of low economic growth and difficulties in attracting talent (Finans, 2015); this leaves some regions with a concentration of low-income groups (AE, 2015). In Romania, only 3% of the population in the Bucharest–Ilfov area is at risk of poverty compared with 33% in the north-east region, 30% in the south-west and 29% in the south-east; there appears to be a specific problem with rural depopulation and availability of childcare services in Romania. Problems with access to public services in rural areas are also reported in Lithuania and Poland. In Portugal, the closure of public services in areas of the country experiencing depopulation is likewise contributing to increasing regional differences in economic development.

Finally, it is clear that differences between neighbourhoods (in terms of living conditions, quality and availability of public services) can determine life chances. Patterns of residential segregation – by income or ethnicity – are an important element of the policy debate in several countries. In France, the crisis in the suburbs, highlighted by the riots in 2005, has underlined the inequalities that people in these areas face, notably in terms of access to work, healthcare and education. In all of the Scandinavian Member States, there is a growing debate about middle-class families moving to areas with better schools (as in Finland) to give their children additional advantages. In Sweden, reforms in the education system – specifically, the introduction of school choice in 1992 – have been criticised because children increasingly go to schools that are segregated according to socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Ethnic segregation is on the increase: a study conducted by Dagens Nyheter, together with Statistics Sweden in 2015, showed that out of the 30 municipalities in Sweden, ethnic segregation has increased in all but two (Dagens Nyheter, 2015).

Differences between Member States in policy discourse

The previous section has shown how wide-ranging the drivers of debate on social mobility are. This analysis has tried to focus on those that have been identified as significant in the Member States and that feature in public and political debate. The correspondents were asked to provide information on the main elements of debate, so a reference to a particular theme in a Member State does not mean that it was the only theme discussed. Therefore, systematic comparison of the policy discourse in different Member States is not possible; however, some distinctive themes emerge when Member States are clustered, as the table below indicates.[14]

EU28 country groups

Cluster	Label	Countries
1	Nordic	Denmark, Finland, Sweden
2	Continental countries and western islands	Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, UK
3	Western Mediterranean	Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain
4	Central and eastern Europe and Baltic states	Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
5	Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan countries	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania

In the **Nordic** cluster, access to education is at the centre of debate – particularly regarding early education and access to tertiary education for those from low-income backgrounds. However, increasing attention is being paid to the ways in which parents with resources are gaining greater advantages by paying for homework tuition and opting for better schools – in some cases, moving to live nearer to them.

14 For more information on the clustering scheme, see Annex 3. It is an adaptation of Eurofound's country typology that was developed to analyse different dimensions of quality of life in Europe (Eurofound, 2014).

Although inequalities are perceived to be relatively low and social mobility relatively high, there is concern that both issues are deteriorating.

Social mobility as such is not routinely high on the policy agenda in any Member States except the UK. In the **Continental countries and western islands** cluster, the policy focus is on equal opportunities, especially regarding education and early childcare. Increasingly, there is concern about opportunities for migrants in education and the labour market. Young migrants have received specific attention in several Member States and there is increasing discussion about life chances for refugees.

The countries in the **Central and eastern Europe and Baltic states** cluster have emphasised regional disparities – particularly regarding opportunities for people in rural areas. There are still many problems related to gender equality and specific issues about living and working conditions for Roma. Social mobility as such is not at all prominent in the policy debate, but it is discussed in terms of improving opportunities for a range of disadvantaged groups. Access to housing, health and other public services is a factor for many disadvantaged groups.

In the **Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan countries** there is also concern about the situation of Roma people (along with other marginalised groups). In some of these countries, access to education and especially employment is compromised by nepotism, favouritism and corruption.

Finally, in the **Western Mediterranean** cluster, there is particular emphasis on increasing income inequalities, poverty and unemployment. The themes of persistent gender inequality and corruption are also present.

6 Barriers to social mobility

This chapter describes how various barriers in Member States can hamper intergenerational social mobility. It focuses on barriers identified by the country correspondents where the system itself hinders social mobility and is shown to have an impact on three different stages of life: the early years, the school years and working age. The focus for the early years is on access to and cost of childcare; for the school years, the emphasis is on tracking or early selection and financial barriers;[15] and for people of working age, the focus is on barriers related to the transition from school to work and access to occupations.

Table 9 presents an overview of the role of these systemic barriers in the Member States. The countries are grouped according to the five country clusters described in Chapter 5 (and Annex 3).

Table 9: Overview of system barriers in EU Member States, by country clusters

Country cluster	Early years		School years		Working age	
	Access to ECEC	Cost of ECEC	Tracking or early selection	Financial barriers	Transition	Occupation
Nordic countries						
Denmark	No	No	No	No	No	No
Finland	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sweden	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Continental countries and western islands						
Austria	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Belgium	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Germany	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
France	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Luxembourg	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Netherlands	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ireland	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
UK	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Western Mediterranean countries						
Spain	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malta	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Portugal	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Central and Eastern Europe and Baltic states						
Czech Republic	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Croatia	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Hungary	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Poland	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Slovenia	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Slovakia	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Estonia	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Lithuania	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Latvia	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

15 Tracking or ability grouping is the separation of pupils into different classes or educational trajectories according to their scholastic ability; early selection refers to the age at which this takes place and this can vary depending on the education system.

Country cluster	Early years		School years		Working age	
	Access to ECEC	Cost of ECEC	Tracking or early selection	Financial barriers	Transition	Occupation
Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan countries						
Cyprus	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Greece	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bulgaria	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	
Romania	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Note: *ECEC = early childhood education and care.*

Early childhood education and care

There is a widespread consensus that early childhood education and care (ECEC) gives children a better start in life and lays the foundation for success in terms of education, social integration, personal development and, later, capacity for employment (European Commission, 2011a). One benefit of ECEC, for instance, is that it reduces the risk of early school leaving (European Commission, 2011b).

Many children, particularly those from a disadvantaged background, do not have access to high-quality ECEC because of its cost or lack of available places. This puts them at a disadvantage later in life because of the positive effect that ECEC has on cognitive abilities; in turn, this negatively impacts on their educational progress (Eurofound, 2015b).

The lack of sufficient childcare places or the cost of childcare is a barrier to social mobility in many Member States. In the countries in the Nordic cluster, with their long tradition of affordable early childhood education, the system of ECEC is conducive to social mobility. This is less so in the other clusters. In many of the countries in the Continental and western islands cluster, access to childcare is widespread but the costs can be high, particularly in Ireland and the UK (also in France and the Netherlands) where it is reported to be a barrier. Furthermore, high levels of access do not necessarily mean that access is equal: children from disadvantaged backgrounds are often less likely to attend childcare services. Research indicates that unequal access forms a barrier to social mobility in many of the countries in this cluster (see, for example, Altzinger et al (2013) for Austria).

Availability of childcare places is also a significant barrier in many of the countries in the central and eastern European and Baltic states, many of these countries failing to achieve the Barcelona objective of having at least 33% of children under the age of three in formal ECEC structures (European Commission, 2013a). Availability is particularly poor in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. This creates a twofold barrier to social mobility: firstly, it reduces the chances for early intervention and mitigation of inequalities experienced by children from disadvantaged social backgrounds (Federowicz and Sitek, 2011); and secondly, it hinders the return of mothers to the labour market (Kozek, 2013). Moreover, in some of these countries there are significant differences between rural and urban regions in terms of access to early childhood education.

A lack of ECEC places is also a problem in the western Mediterranean cluster. In Italy and Malta, in particular, further efforts are required to improve the availability of childcare facilities, especially for children aged three years or under.[16] In Portugal, cuts in the education sector have led to a reversal of positive trends in preschool enrolment rates and subsequently to more difficult and unequal access to preschool facilities.

The ECEC system is still underdeveloped in the eastern Mediterranean and Balkan cluster. In Bulgaria and Romania, in particular, the state of ECEC is poor and consequently large numbers of children do not attend formal childcare, especially in rural areas. In urban areas – where availability is less of an issue – cost is a barrier, only children of those who can afford it benefiting from the opportunities provided by ECEC. In these parts of Europe, the discourse should not (yet) be about the impact of ECEC on social mobility, but rather, the focus should be on the more pressing need to further develop the childcare sector. In Cyprus and Greece, limited investment in pre-primary education structures maintains and even exacerbates social inequalities from preschool age.

16 The share of children under three years who attend formal childcare arrangements is 11% in Malta and 22% in Italy, which is well below the Barcelona objectives (European Commission, 2013a).

Secondary and tertiary education

In an increasingly difficult labour market, the competition for jobs puts those with the highest qualifications ahead of the rest. This demands a fair and equal educational system. However, certain features of the secondary and tertiary education system limit upward social mobility in many EU Member States. This section examines countries in which early tracking and ability grouping – and financial costs – run the risk of putting some pupils in second place.

Early selection and inequality

The connection between early selection and inequalities is described in detail in an OECD study on equity and quality in education (OECD, 2012). The study shows that in countries where school selection – or tracking – is done relatively early, differences in educational outcome by social background are larger than when it takes place later. One explanation for this is that children whose parents have a low level of education more often go to low-quality schools than children of similar ability with more highly educated parents (Van de Werfhorst, 2015).

The Nordic cluster is well known for its late selection (Finland) and absence of ability grouping (Sweden). However, that is not to say that the educational system in the Nordic countries is completely egalitarian. A 2009 evaluation of the Swedish educational system by the Swedish National Agency for Education shows that the school choice system has led to a growing differentiation between schools of the characteristics of pupils, because students no longer have to enrol in the school closest to their home (NAE, 2009). Furthermore, the NAE's 2013 report points to a strong correlation between the extent to which the opportunity to choose schools is used and the socioeconomic status of the parents (NAE, 2013). In Denmark as well, evidence shows that the probability of completing secondary or higher education is strongly related to the parents' educational level (see, for example, Nielsen et al, 2015; Munk, 2013). In Finland, the evidence is perhaps somewhat more encouraging in this regard: grandchildren's social class is only weakly related to their grandparents' social class (Erola and Moisio, 2007).

Early tracking is a feature of the school systems in much of the Continental cluster (in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). In these five countries, selection occurs before children make the transition to secondary education. In Austria and Germany, the first selection takes place at the age of 10 (Prokic-Breuer and Dronkers, 2012). A recent study highlights the impact of early selection and inequality in Austria (Schneebaum et al, 2015). In the Netherlands, parents' occupational class is strongly related to the level of enrolment into streams at early ages (Van de Werfhorst and Luijkx, 2010). Research on the Belgian school system also points to limited educational mobility between generations, with early tracking offered as one possible explanation for this. There is an ongoing debate on secondary education reform , focused on reducing the negative effects of early tracking and the differences in educational trajectories between general and vocational pathways.

On the other hand, tracking occurs later in Ireland and the UK, and in France, where it takes place around the age of 15. In these countries, financial barriers are the factors that most restrict choice in education and social mobility (see the next section).

In the western Mediterranean cluster, tracking also tends to occur at a later age and is not viewed as a barrier to social mobility. Previously, Malta used tracking to select higher-achieving students; those who failed the exams were assigned to secondary schools instead of the more prestigious Junior Lyceums, with the result that they may have been indirectly neglected (Fabri, 2011). Malta abolished early tracking in 2011. Benchmarking assessments do still take place, although the idea is to use this system as a diagnostic tool to give more attention to those who need it. This means that children in the same class can still be grouped according to their abilities for particular subjects.

A review of early tracking in other countries shows that tracking occurs early (at age 12) in the Czech Republic. The existence of six-eight year grammar schools in the Czech Republic gives rise to socially homogenised cohorts, who, bolstered by an affirmation of their academic ability, are in a sense destined to succeed within the educational system and in the labour market (Fónadová and Katrňák, 2015). Romania also has early tracking (see, for example, Malamud and Pop-Eleches, 2011).

Financial barriers

The hypothesis that social mobility is maximised under the least elitist models of public education has been widely researched (see, for example, Cremer et al, 2010). In this context, the Nordic cluster has the least elitist model, education in these countries being free of charge. Ireland and the UK (countries in the Continental cluster) are at the other extreme: in these two liberal free-market countries, fee-paying schools make the system an elitist one. In Ireland, elitism in the education system has long been recognised and debated as a barrier to social mobility, with particular reference to elite fee-paying schools. The free-market approach to education is seen as serving those who can afford desirable educational choices and excluding lower-income groups (Power et al, 2013). In the UK, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (SMCPC) highlighted the inequality of access to the best education (SMCPC, 2016); one factor that accounts for this is the existence of prestige schools. With social mobility stalling in the UK, the SMCPC calls the system

deeply elitist and closed at the top and also highlights that the privately educated are becoming more advantaged over time. France is another country in this cluster where some elitism exists in the educational system. Furthermore, research shows that the impact of family background on education in France has increased over time (Ben-Halima et al, 2014). Educational fees are far less of a barrier in the other countries in the Continental/western islands cluster, where, as noted above, inequalities in social mobility associated with education seem linked more to early tracking and selection.

With the exception of Malta, where education is free of charge, financial barriers to tertiary education are also evident in the western Mediterranean cluster. In Spain, for instance, differences among social groups in terms of tertiary educational attainment reflect social inequalities. Financial barriers and lack of grants for tertiary education may be behind those inequalities (Martínez-Celorrio and Marin, 2012).

The former socialist system of the countries in the central and eastern European and Baltic states cluster has left its mark on their educational systems and their societal and economic structures. Schlicht et al (2015) note that during the socialist period, these countries were characterised by artificial top-down equalisation. During the initial years of transformation, it was primarily the well-educated families that easily and quickly adapted to the free-market economy, thereby improving their situation. The authors claim that in these countries, educational performance depends more strongly on social background than in western Europe, yet private schools do not significantly influence inequality of education. This may explain why financial barriers are seen as less of a barrier in this cluster.

In the eastern Mediterranean and Balkan cluster, in Cyprus and Greece the ability to purchase private tuition is seen as a crucial factor. Personal relationships and family ties influence the educational and professional choices of children, resulting in the children of wealthy families having more education and training opportunities than those of lower-income families. A study from Cyprus shows that the impact of parental educational background on the child's probability of studying in higher education has decreased over time, resulting in increased educational mobility (Andreou and Koutsampelas, 2015). Meanwhile, in Bulgaria and Romania, the existence of private tuition is reported as a barrier to social mobility. Research findings from Bulgaria suggest that equality of educational opportunities in access to higher education (in the context of the currently applied private co-financing of education) is negatively affected by the ineffective legal possibility to use bank loans guaranteed by the state.

Labour market

Transition from school to employment

The large number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) across the EU highlights how difficult it is for young people to make the transition from school to employment. Even in the Nordic countries, where most other inequalities have been minimised, school-to-work transitions and youth unemployment are key issues .

With the exception of Malta, youth unemployment is a major problem in the western Mediterranean cluster.

In the central and eastern European and Baltic states cluster, transition from school to the labour market poses a range of difficulties. In the Czech Republic, those leaving secondary education without a school leaving examination are disadvantaged: lack of this compulsory precondition for applying to tertiary education limits a student's chances of obtaining a tertiary degree and so hinders upward social mobility. A study by Matković (2009) on the educational and work careers of young people in Croatia shows that a disadvantaged position for labour market entry and for good-quality employment is correlated with coming from a disadvantaged family background (for example, having parents of lower educational level, coming from the Roma national minority, being of lower socioeconomic status or having a disability). In Estonia, policy documents emphasise the problems associated with dropping out of school, which obviously impedes transition from school to work. In Romania, Jecan and Pop (2012) describe a phenomenon they call the bumping-down effect, which exists because there are not enough high-status occupations to accommodate the significant increase of individuals with a higher level of education. This forces graduates to accept occupations that are below what their qualifications would permit them to take. The authors argue that this surplus of overqualified graduates leads to a tightening of education-related hiring criteria, which in turn hampers access to occupations for those with lower educational qualifications.

Access to occupations

Access to occupations is closely linked to relative social mobility and is a good measure of how socially mobile societies are, as has been described in detail in Chapter 1. Using findings from the academic literature and information from the network of European correspondents, this final section provides a brief overview of how restrictions in access to occupations act as a barrier to social mobility.

In the Nordic countries, research has identified discrimination against minority groups and women that hampers their access to certain occupations. Research from Finland, for instance, shows that the labour

market is quite gender segregated: research studies indicate that women generally face higher requirements than men for attaining high-level positions (Koivunen et al, 2015). In addition, ethnic minorities and immigrants experience discrimination at work and elsewhere that may hinder their social mobility. Furthermore, research from Sweden shows that informal contacts are crucial for succeeding in the Swedish labour market. However, the importance of social networks for social mobility is not an issue that has been highlighted in the debate.

In the Continental and western islands cluster, access to occupations is hampered by discrimination, labour market difficulties and – in some countries – elitism and nepotism. In Belgium, being born outside the EU appears to significantly restrict labour market participation. Moreover, native-born offspring of migrants have less favourable labour market positions (Marx and Van Rie, 2013). Belgium is among the EU countries where the intergenerational link between a parent's occupation class and the child's is strongest. Compared with the average worker, respondents whose father had an elementary occupation are 1.5 times more likely to have an elementary occupation as well. This reproduction also applies at the other extreme: workers whose father was a legislator, senior or official are 1.5 more likely to hold a function at this level (Zaidi and Zolyomi, 2007).

In France, a study by Vallet et al (2016) shows that whatever the indicator of labour market success – occupational prestige score, access to the service class, wage earned – the 'direct' effect of parental background does exist in France. The influence of parental origin seems to increase over the life course, being less pronounced for the first job than for the current job. However, this 'direct' origin effect generally varies in strength over educational categories, being weaker or non-existent among higher-educated people. Conversely, a higher social background is able to compensate to a certain extent for a lower level of educational attainment – even more so in the course of the career than at its outset. Finally, the socioeconomic background has indeed strengthened in the most recent cohorts (or the last decade observed). This can be related to the declining occupational returns on education in the context of sustained educational expansion that has characterised France in the post-war period.

In Germany, for many years, male and female pupils followed gender-stereotyped preferences in their choice of occupation. Now, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) university courses (and occupations) are receiving higher proportions of female students. However, this change in occupational choice is taking place only slowly, despite the fact that – in Germany – STEM occupations offer better prospects for career advancement, pay and upward mobility. In the UK, the elite professions have traditionally been the preserves of the upper reaches of society and access to elite occupations remains unequal (Ashley et al, 2015).

The literature from the western Mediterranean countries shows that social networks, the economic crisis and discrimination all affect access to occupations. In Italy, family and local networks play a pivotal role in determining labour market participation. Recent studies indicate that people with a more advantaged family background benefit from a social 'parachute' that reduces their probability of social downgrading (Franzini et al, 2013; Raitano and Vona, 2015). A study in Spain shows that the impact of the crisis has been higher for migrant workers and that immigrants have experienced more downward mobility than native workers. As a consequence, wage polarisation between natives and immigrants has increased (Miguélez et al, 2014).

The analysis of the central and eastern European and Baltic states cluster highlights how the transition to post-socialist life has affected access to occupations. Research from the Czech Republic (Katrňák and Fučík (2010) shows that during the period 1989–2009, Czech society re-stratified. During this period, socioeconomic hierarchies were established and began to influence the life outcomes of their members. This is the paradox characterising Czech post-socialist society. The opportunity to do business and enhance the effects of education and qualifications on one's employment position has led to improved life chances but the connection between social origins and class destinations has grown stronger. However, other factors also hamper access to occupations. For instance, institutional barriers in Estonia also affect occupational mobility over the life course; in addition, a mismatch of skills and skills requirements can limit a person's labour market opportunities. In Slovenia, gender bias in the workplace (especially in the private sector) affects women's opportunities. Social networks also play an important role in hampering equal access (Robnik, 2015).

Finally, with the exception, it seems, of Romania, access to occupations is a widespread problem in the eastern Mediterranean and Balkan cluster – one linked predominantly to nepotism and discrimination. In Bulgaria, nepotism and corruption are barriers to accessing the labour market (Chavdarova, 2015). Furthermore, ethnic discrimination is an obstacle to social mobility in low-skilled occupations, even if affirmative action measures exist to help people of Roma descent. In Cyprus, gender discrimination inhibits access to occupations for women. Likewise, in Greece, men are still twice as likely as women to hold managerial positions and three times as likely to be general managers.

7 Policies to facilitate upward social mobility

It is challenging to map and discuss policies that aim to foster upward social mobility, as their impacts will be most evident in future decades. However, most policymakers agree that achieving the type of the society we want to live in – including the ideal that everyone, regardless of background, can reach their full potential – depends on the decisions made and the policies implemented today. It is also necessary to have an understanding of past and current problems and challenges, and an appreciation of the effects of past policies and their impact on our current environment and society. Understanding the effects of policies will help greatly in designing better policies.

Policy measures to facilitate upward social mobility have focused mainly on promoting increased equality of opportunity for groups who are disadvantaged due to their socioeconomic status. (Race, gender, religion, family composition and migrant status may also play a part in disadvantage). Given the central importance of the prospects of the next generation in determining social mobility, the opportunities for children and young people receive a great deal of attention. This chapter provides an overview of policies and measures in the EU28 (focusing on country clusters) aimed at promoting social mobility and directed at overcoming barriers in three areas: childcare and early education, formal education and the labour market.

Measures related to childcare and early education: Policies may focus on improving access to early childhood education and good-quality care. Measures may also include mechanisms that offer parenting support, as well as out-of-school activity programmes.

Measures related to formal education: These may include measures to modify the structures of tuition fees and grants, change admission procedures and amend the tracking system (for example, by raising the age of selection or by changing the criteria applied). Policies may include initiatives on school choice that avoid segregating pupils. There may be measures that provide extra support to disadvantaged pupils, including specialised curricula and additional teaching assistance. Policies may also be aimed at improving teacher quality, particularly in disadvantaged areas, or boosting access to second-chance schooling.

Measures related to the labour market: Measures may be taken to broaden access to certain occupations or to amend recruitment practices and so open up access to certain sectors. Policies may also include second-chance schooling, apprenticeships and vocational training, as well as measures for lifelong learning.

Early childhood education and care

There is a widespread consensus that early childhood education and care (ECEC) can have a positive impact on a person's achievements and on their capacity to become a successful member of society.[17] In this way, ECEC can be seen as an area where policies could help to counterbalance early on the disadvantages and limitations that some children experience due to their social origin and milieu (Eurofound, 2015b).

Institutional set-up and systemic features determine the availability and accessibility (in terms of cost) of ECEC. There is considerable variation in the availability and quality of ECEC across the Member States; the experiences of developing it also vary widely across countries (Eurofound, 2015b). Within the services, there can be a range of measures to either directly facilitate early development or to interact with the broader community and address larger societal inequalities. In some cases, the motivation for supporting ECEC is to help integrate women into the labour market and create new jobs.

As for the larger-scale policy context at European level, policy interest over the last few decades has broadened from a focus on the availability of ECEC places and its role in improving work–life balance to the role of ECEC in achieving social inclusion. The European Commission has also highlighted social investment in both helping those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and having a qualified and motivated workforce in ECEC (Eurofound, 2015c; European Commission, 2011a).

17 In this chapter, the ECEC measures reviewed include those targeting children at a very early age (0–3 years) and later preschool age, as well as parents or carers of children of this age group.

Nordic countries

Countries	Prevailing themes
Denmark, Finland, Sweden	Improving curriculum quality – greater focus on learning Improving access/involvement: mandatory preschool Cooperation between municipal and national level; promotion of measures to prevent social exclusion and future problems for young people (Denmark)

None of the Nordic countries was reported to have major systemic barriers related to access and costs of childcare. There seem to have been continuous attempts to improve policy over the last two decades, focusing both on curriculum quality and on ensuring as much participation in preschool as possible.

In Sweden, the first National Curriculum for Preschools was introduced in 1998, aiming to improve the quality of early childhood education. In 2002, a maximum fee was introduced in recognition of the economic situation of families with young children, aiming to facilitate employment for parents. The current policy debate has mainly centred on the proposal made in a Swedish government report (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 2013) to make preschool attendance mandatory.[18] By extending the total number of years in compulsory education, inequality in schooling is expected to decrease. Meanwhile, in Finland in 2015, preschool was made mandatory (even though 98% of children attended before this) and a new regulation was introduced that set the maximum number of children per teacher and number of children per daycare group.

Policies in Denmark that aim to strengthen early and targeted measures for children and young people from disadvantaged families have been part of a larger policy programme for 2014–2017, called Early Effort – Lifelong Effect. Looking at children aged up to 18 years, it includes measures such as parenting skills development (Socialstyrelsen, 2015; the programme is currently under evaluation). In addition, the National Board of Social Services cooperates with a number of municipalities to strengthen their use of preventive measures and to focus on vulnerable or disadvantaged children's well-being, development and learning. With regard to curriculum quality, since 2004 there has been more emphasis on learning in ECEC for children aged 0–5 years; this has brought positive outcomes for both children's development and for ECEC staff, who have been equipped with new methods of working.

Continental countries and western islands

Countries	Prevailing themes
Austria, France, Germany	Focus on involving 0–3 years age group in formal ECEC
Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands	Migrant children and those with a disadvantaged background
Ireland, UK	Parenting skills (UK) Targeted support to address disadvantaged 3–4 year-olds (Ireland)

In Germany and Luxembourg, problems of availability and the cost of ECEC were not seen to be a barrier for access (as they were in the Nordic countries). In Austria and Belgium, barriers related to access to ECEC were mentioned (without pointing to costs). Cost (with availability not being an issue) was highlighted as an issue in Ireland and the UK (as will be seen also in relation to the entire education system), and in France and the Netherlands.

A focus on involving the 0–3 years age group in ECEC is prominent in the policies of some countries in this cluster. Since 2013, Germany has provided a legal right to a place in a kindergarten or nursery school to children aged one year or older. The share of children below the age of three years in a kindergarten or nursery school increased from 18% in 2008 to 32% in 2014.[19] Also since 2013, France has implemented a number of measures focusing on childcare options for children under 3 years, including a five-year planned reform of the governance of early childhood and parenthood by expanding 'childcare solutions' (various services for the 0–3 years age group) and 'early education' arrangements (for the 2–3 years age group). The complementary ECEC measures (brought into law on 8 July 2013) were introduced to improve education, notably in disadvantaged ('priority') areas, remote rural areas and in overseas territories; these involved teacher training and partnership with the local authorities.

Various measures to improve ECEC are often informed by concerns over the integration and prospects of migrant children. Similar to what has been noted in Nordic countries, mandatory preschool is in place in Austria; it is believed to particularly benefit migrant children. In Austria, there are debates on extending mandatory preschool to two years. Meanwhile, in Belgium, where a lack of places makes access to childcare for migrants challenging, support is being targeted at those affected by poverty (National Child Poverty Plan 2014–2019). Examples of targeted

18 The Swedish government carried out a consultation with stakeholders over the proposal while this report was being drafted.

19 While the numbers have increased significantly since the introduction of the legal right, some 185,000 places are still lacking (BMFSFJ, 2015).

measures include Germany's federal programme 2011–2018, called Start Reading (Lesestart), which was designed for children of preschool age or in their first year of schooling, with a special focus on disadvantaged children (from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds) or households where parents do not read aloud to their children. The first evaluation results show that since 2011, around 400,000 parents annually have received a starter set; this corresponds to some 60% of the birth cohort. The programme is also supported by paediatricians and over 5,000 libraries that help to disseminate the starter sets.[20]

High childcare costs in Ireland and the UK are one of the reasons why many women stay out of the labour market and provide childcare to their children themselves. Hence, measures have been put in place to improve access to ECEC. Ireland runs the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and provides a free year of early childhood care and education for children of preschool age. Ireland also provides targeted support to address disadvantages through the Early Start Programme, targeted at children aged 3–4 years. The UK has expanded free part-time early education places for 3-year-olds.

In the UK, there seems to be a lot of policy interest in promoting parenting skills.[21] Research has been commissioned to assess trends in parenting skills. Clark and Heath (2015) have found, for example, that there are trends of convergence over time between groups with the highest and lowest socioeconomic status with regard to reading to children by the mothers, interest in education and frequency of disciplinary problems. However, there are widening inequalities in terms of investment of parental time, behavioural problems and social capital between parents of high and low socioeconomic status. The Parenting Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) (2008–2011) focused on parents from socially disadvantaged backgrounds who had concerns about their children's behaviour. Lindsay et al (2011), in their evaluation, found that PEIP had a positive effect on parents' well-being and children's behaviour, for both older and younger children. In addition, the percentage of children with significant behaviour problems fell – from 56% to 38%. Subsequent policy initiatives have also addressed parenting, such as the CANParent (2012–2014) and the Troubled Families programmes (2011–present).

Western Mediterranean countries

Countries	Prevailing themes
Italy, Malta, Spain, Portugal	Extending enrolment to youngest age groups (0–3 years) Providing in-kind support and parental leave policies

All the western Mediterranean countries were reported to be facing similar issues: while the cost of childcare is not viewed as a barrier, the availability of such services is limited in all four countries.

In Law 65/2015 of 3 July, Portugal decided to establish a right to preschool education for all children of four years of age in an attempt to avert school failure in the future.

To support the participation of women in the labour market, Malta introduced free childcare for children aged 0–3 years in 2014; however, this is conditional on both parents or a single parent being in employment or a study programme (thereby contributing to the social security system). While early results seem positive both in terms of childcare enrolment and women's return to the labour market,[22] there is a concern that lack of access to childcare for non-working parents may hinder their search for employment and their children's development.

From 2012 to 2016, Italy implemented a vouchers scheme for mothers after maternity leave,[23] giving them a choice in the type of childcare facility (for example, either kindergarten or a babysitter service). In 2015, the Jobs Act, on a temporary experimental basis, extended the duration of parental leave and the period that it was paid for.[24] To promote flexible working time arrangements, it introduced the entitlement to parental leave on an hourly basis, an option that had previously been possible only if agreed by collective bargaining. Measures in Italy focus on leaving the choice of childcare arrangements (type, timing) to families; the new measures, however, target women, resulting in a lack of gender balance in terms of incentives for men to take parental leave. This might accentuate the occupational segregation of women as well as negatively affecting their career progress and pay rise potential.

20 Source: Lesestart webpage, as on 3 February 2016.

21 Also note the emphasis on the need for more comprehensive policy connected with social mobility aims, such as the Parliamentary Inquiry into Parenting and Social Mobility (2015) and David Cameron's speech on life chances (2016).

22 Between April and December 2014, the number of children enrolled in childcare centres increased from 1,800 to 2,917. During the same period, an additional 200 mothers are estimated to have entered the workforce in low- to medium-skill jobs. Furthermore, mothers who benefitted from the free childcare scheme entered the workforce 130 days before mothers who did not make use of it.

23 The measure was introduced by Law 28 June 2012, no. 92 (hereinafter 'Act no. 92/2012') and has been extended to 2016 by Law 28 December 2015, no. 208 (hereinafter '2016 Stability Law').

24 Jobs Act – work–life balance, Legislative Decree 15 June 2015, no. 80.

From 2008 to 2012, Spain undertook a large-scale investment in ECEC for the 0–3 years' age group, aiming to boost enrolment and improve the quality of childcare education centres.[25] In recent years, the proportion of children aged 0–3 in education has increased. In 2013–2014, almost 100% of children aged 3 years were in education, as were 52% of 2-year-olds and 33% of 1-year-olds (according to data from Statistics Spain). Spain has also addressed the situation of parents: if children are younger than 8 years (it had previously been 6 years), parents may reduce their working time by a minimum of one-eighth (previously it had been one-third) and a maximum of one-half. Working time reduction may be applied by taking a day, a week or a month off (Law 3/2007 for effective equality between men and women).

Central and eastern Europe and Baltic states

Countries	Prevailing themes
Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia	Regional differences in availability of services
Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia	Roma inclusion

None of the countries in this cluster reported that cost was a major barrier, although availability is recognised as a challenge in the Visegrád countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) and Croatia.

Promotion of access to ECEC is more often targeted at Roma or low-income families than reformed overall. However, it is important to note that due to the sizeable Roma population in many of these countries and to the extent of the exclusion that a great proportion of Roma experience, the (re)arrangement of ECEC services in such a way that they reach out, are open and effective is a major challenge. Sometimes preparatory classes or supportive courses to even out the educational gaps are introduced to help Roma – as in the Czech Republic, where these seek to to substitute for full enrolment into ECEC or schooling. They may also be introduced to help the children of migrants or returning migrants (as in Lithuania). A particular type of Roma-oriented measure in relation to ECEC and schooling that has been tried by many countries in this cluster is to employ teaching assistants who are from the Roma community or have a close connection to it.

Most countries in the region have been developing Roma inclusion policies for about two decades and have benefited from EU funding for the related projects. However, it has not yet been established whether measures implemented (such as ECEC or schooling) have been on a sufficient scale to ensure systemic change.

Regional unevenness in availability of childcare facilities is also an issue in Croatia and Hungary (which provides measures to aid the return of mothers to the labour market, including covering commuting costs).

Other than measures targeting specific social groups, mandatory preschool has been part of policy proposals (starting at least a year before school in the Czech Republic). Slovakia has been extending the availability of kindergartens (the main target group is children aged 3–6). Since 2011, Poland has run a programme called 'Toddler' to promote the development of services for the 0–3 age group; it covers up to 80% of the costs of organising a daycare facility. Various types of providers are eligible (local authorities, natural or legal people, higher education institutions); the subsidy is meant to make childcare more affordable for parents.

With regard to those countries where systemic barriers were not reported (the Baltic states and Slovenia), it may be worth considering to what extent ECEC as such is seen as a policy priority at national level. While in Slovenia enrolment levels are high and growing, in the Baltic countries there are indications of problems related to availability and costs – at least in some instances.

All three Baltic countries have tried to tackle the availability of childcare in recent years. Although the proportion of young people in Latvia and Lithuania is falling due to ageing and emigration, the availability of affordable (mainly public) kindergartens is an issue. This is especially the case in the capitals or large cities, which attract young, geographically mobile people. Latvia has introduced financial support for families who cannot access public childcare due to a lack of places. A similar measure has been introduced at local level in Vilnius in Lithuania, where the demand for childcare greatly exceeds supply: the municipal authorities have introduced a subsidy payment to contribute to the cost of private childcare for families who cannot access public childcare because of lack of places. All Baltic states have allocated some of the European Social Funds to childcare projects, but in Estonia this seems to have been mainly related to addressing systemic shortages and introducing up to 1,200 new kindergarten places as of May 2015. The funding can also be used for

25 The plan foresaw an investment of €1,807 million between 2008 and 2012, evenly shared between the state (50%) and the autonomous communities (50%).

childcare in the evening, at night, at weekends and for children with special needs.

To address the shortages in service provision, Estonia has amended legislation to allow municipalities to provide daycare services to children under 3 years of age, rather than providing a place in kindergarten. This lowers the demand for kindergarten places because – unlike kindergartens – daycare centres provide only childcare and not preschool education. However, the shortage of childcare places is greatest among children aged under 3 years and the municipalities are still obliged to ensure kindergarten places for older children.

Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan countries

Countries	Prevailing themes
Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania	Availability of places, especially for Roma

With regard to ECEC, Bulgaria and Romania have experiences and difficulties similar to central and eastern European countries. In both countries, ECEC provision is affected by two central issues: availability (one dimension of which is regional disparity); and the inclusion of Roma children (World Bank, 2014). To address the challenges facing children from a non-Bulgarian linguistic background (Roma children and migrants), Bulgaria runs a preparatory module for groups most affected by exclusion.[26]

Lithuania and Romania, countries that have had the highest emigration rates in the EU, are also experiencing the phenomenon of 'distance' families: parents who leave children behind for considerable periods of time in the care of relatives. The developmental assistance for such children may be uneven and not necessarily compensated for by formal childcare.

Correspondents in Cyprus and Greece have reported barriers in relation to both access to and costs of ECEC. Citing data from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, correspondents in Greece report that a mandatory one year of preschool was introduced in the early 2000s and applied to all children resident in the country who were 5 years old. The impact assessment suggests that enrolment in public and private nursery schools increased, from 141,654 in 2004 to 157,637 children in 2008–2009. The measure is seen as successful thanks to an increase in the number of children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds attending nursery schools. However, this process has faced problems such as lack of funding, issues with planning and inadequate quality of services. Actions that could have supported the enrolment extension – preparing lists of infants, opening new nursery schools, and providing suitable facilities and sufficient nursery staff – have not been adequately implemented. Challenges have emerged in relation to changing patterns of accessing public and private facilities: public nursery schools were cautious and sometimes avoided enrolling first-year preschoolers to secure enough places for second-year preschoolers, thus jeopardising universal enrolment in many regions. This situation has led to many parents opting for private nurseries so that they get a certificate of attendance. Meanwhile, many first-year preschoolers have been enrolled either in private nursery schools or private childcare centres due to the lack of places in public facilities.

In Cyprus, public childcare facilities previously provided services only for the first half of the day, finishing at 13:00 (while afternoon care and tutorial activities were available on the private market, they were not affordable for less affluent families). In 2005, public childcare hours were extended to 16:00, to make the services accessible to more people.

Secondary and tertiary education

Many policymakers view education as the major instrument to promote upward social mobility. The education field encompasses a wide range of factors that have an impact on equal opportunities and ultimately on the patterns of upward social mobility. These include: family- related factors such as wealth, family structure, education and occupation of parents; social networks, including friends and partner/spouse but also networks that are useful later in working life; institutional- and policy- related factors, such as welfare and education policies, transitions from school to work, and the broader institutional set-up of the education system (such as financing, tracking and ability grouping of pupils).

Evidence and framework

There is a large volume of studies highlighting the role of education and the link between educational achievement and occupational attainment and social mobility. (D'Addio, 2007; Blanden et al, 2005). The European Commission found that if a respondent's father had entered third-level education, respondents were more than twice as likely to do the same than if the father had had only a basic level of schooling. (In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, the odds were nine times higher). Indeed, the educational level of parents is cited by many as one of the most important factors influencing social mobility (Blanden, 2009).

26 The module is called 'Providing additional training for children at preparatory groups', part of the national programme called 'Care for every student' 2015. Total enrolment in 2014 was 3,603; of these, 2,458 completed the programme.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) looked at the link between the educational attainments of people in different occupations or income classes and the difference in the 'return' on education – the benefits of their education vis à vis their labour market opportunities. The key question was whether highly educated professionals produce better-educated children because they pay for better-quality schooling or because of other factors, such as good parenting practices, career motivation or biases in the education system itself.

The overall subjective value of education also counts. According to Boudon (1974), people from lower social classes tend to overestimate the costs and underestimate the benefits of education; consequently, they may not pay enough attention to the actual quality of children's education. In the UK, Blanden et al (2005) show that the expansion of higher education since the late 1980s has disproportionately benefited those from well-off families.

The setup of the education system plays an important role. Solon (1992) concludes that intergenerational social mobility is strengthened in systems of public education, whereas an education system with a large private schooling element significantly reduces the chances of intergenerational social mobility.

Main themes

Chapter 6 examined the barriers identified in three main challenges in the educational field: the transition from school to work, barriers related to the school system (including tracking), and financial costs (including fees and elitism). A first glance at the policies and measures identified by correspondents in the EU28 reveals that these interventions do indeed address these barriers. The majority of interventions focus strongly on equalising opportunities and helping disadvantaged groups to flourish in the educational system. Mapping the policies and measures confirms that most governments see education as the primary way in which upward social mobility can be fostered. Most governments have also invested considerably in efforts to introduce reforms to tackle particular barriers or to respond to ongoing problems (such as widening inequalities). Many Member States have also intensified their efforts to nurture a closer link between education and the labour market, and to keep abreast of shifts in the job structure that require a new or modified set of skills.

The section below describes and discusses recent measures and policies in selected Member States, grouped by country cluster.

Nordic cluster

Countries	Prevailing themes
Denmark, Finland, Sweden	Early education: • focus on parenting skills • support beyond school building Quality of teaching Vocational path as an option

The reason for the relatively high rate of social mobility in the Nordic countries is attributed, in part, to the institutional structure of the societies, the way in which the society can compensate for differences in conditions in childhood, how the education system is structured, the rate of return on education and the rate of redistribution (Lind, 2009). However, in recent years, several scholars (as well as the OECD) have pointed to growing income inequalities and the stalling of upward social mobility.

Recent policy measures to address these challenges have focused on two main dimensions. The first centres on equalising chances at very early ages in education. The second broadens vocational paths, in order to align them to the needs of the labour market and to reduce the number of school drop-outs.

Equalising chances in early education

Looking first at equalising chances in early education, in Denmark, the public school reform introduced in 2013 aims to reduce the importance of social background in relation to academic results and more broadly to strengthen trust and well-being in the public school system. Longer school days were introduced, leading to longer teaching and activity hours per day. The central aspect of the reform was supporting pupils by giving them more help with homework. The idea behind this is that this assistance will benefit less-privileged pupils, from backgrounds where this kind of help may not be available.

In Finland, changes in the law on comprehensive education that came into force in 2011 aim at making sure each pupil in early and compulsory education receives sufficient support in their learning. Although no formal evaluation had been carried out, in 2013 the Trade Union for Education (OAJ) claimed that pupils still do not have the intended support because of a lack of coordination between different departments, insufficient resources allocated to the reform and unqualified staff in teaching positions.

The quality of teachers is also high on the agenda in Sweden. According to several stakeholders, including the OECD (2015b), Sweden faces a serious deterioration in the status and quality of the teaching profession; this is thought to be a contributing factor to the overall

decline in the performance of Swedish schools. To counter this challenge, in July 2011, certification of teachers and preschool teachers was introduced. The purpose of the reform was to raise the level of skills in order to improve the quality of teaching. The implementation of the new regulations was examined in a report from the Swedish government (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 2013), which stated that the stricter eligibility criteria for teachers is likely to lead to both improved results and in the long run to a better transition of pupils into the labour market.

Vocational education and training

Vocational aspects of education have traditionally not been a strong feature in the Nordic countries. Policymakers have started paying more attention to this only recently. In 2015, Denmark introduced a so-called EUD/EUX reform with the main objective of increasing by 25% the number of young people obtaining a vocational education by 2020. The challenge for vocational education has always been its image as a less prestigious form of education. With the reform, the legislators are trying to change that perception by increasing the quality of the education and creating a better match with labour market demands. To that end, the initiative aims to increase the number of relevant, demand-driven classes on offer. However, the new, higher admission criteria have been criticised for excluding less academic young people and limiting their educational mobility.

Boosting vocational education was seen as one of the remedies for the high number of students dropping out in Sweden, which in 2011 initiated reform of the upper secondary school system. Many students (around one in four in 2014) drop out of upper secondary school or finish education without a complete diploma. With the reform, 12 out of 18 programmes are going to be vocational programmes providing a foundation for working life and further vocational education; the remaining 6 will focus on higher education preparatory programmes, providing a path for further education in the tertiary sector. The reform sought to ensure that students who did not want to go into higher education after finishing upper secondary school would not be forced to go through all the steps required for college admission. According to a report published by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (2015), the share of young people who have established themselves on the labour market after finishing upper secondary school has increased since the reform. However, there is still a big difference in terms of opportunities in the labour market between those young people who graduated from upper secondary school and those who dropped out.

Continental cluster and western islands

Countries discussed	Prevailing themes
Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, the UK	Reform of tracking system Improving overall quality of education Preventing dropping out from education

The Continental and western islands cluster comprises a large number of countries with distinctively different educational systems. These countries have invested in several different areas to improve education outcomes. The reforms focus on adjustments to the tracking system, improving the overall quality of education (including a strong component of personalisation) as well as addressing the most pressing issues, such as preventing school drop-out.

For a long time, tracking of pupils – determining whether pupils take a vocational or more academic education path – has been a strong feature in many Continental countries, such as Austria and Germany. Recently, however, commentators have been increasingly critical of the long-term effects of the tracking system, linking it with the more limited opportunities available to those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Some governments have started to introduce reforms, with the overall goal of making the system fairer. In Austria in 2008–2009, the government rolled out a new type of school in lower secondary education, the New Secondary School, for pupils aged 10 to 14 years. The aim of the move is to postpone the separation of pupils and hence boost opportunities for all, regardless of socioeconomic background, gender or race. The new school puts a special emphasis on a different culture of learning, with greater attention paid to the quality of teaching and without separation in class based on achievement. The most recent reform, started in 2015, introduced the so-called 'Joint Schools' in some regions. Part of the reform focuses on improving upward educational mobility. However, it is neither easy nor straightforward to introduce reforms to a system in place for so long.

The example of the Flemish regional government in Belgium and its efforts to amend the tracking system are a good illustration of the challenges of introducing such reforms. In June 2013, the Flemish regional government of 2009–2014 ratified a plan for secondary education reform. The goal was to move away from the strong focus on early tracking and the strict separation between general and vocational tracks, because of the fact that it was largely pupils from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who took vocational tracks. Implementing the plan, however, resulted in conflicts within both the governing coalition and the research community. Opposing the reforms, arguments were put forward saying the reform would sacrifice educational

performance for equality and that the degree of inequality of educational outcomes is exaggerated (Van den Broeck, 2014). In favour of the reform, it was argued that early tracking produces unequal outcomes that need urgent action (Lavrijsen et al, 2013; Nicaise et al, 2014). The current Flemish government (elected in 2014) agreed to implement the proposed measures, but the first attempts (in February 2016) resulted in renewed and still unresolved political debate.

The tracking system has undergone reform in the Netherlands, where in 2014 the advice of primary schools was given greater weight in determining a pupil's secondary school track. However, there are mixed reactions to the reform. Van de Werfhorst (2015) note that the use of track selection – in the form of a national test, for instance – may decrease social inequality. On the other hand, the increased role played by the school raised concerns that parents' would seek to influence the teachers assessing the child's potential. A mixed reception has also greeted the forthcoming reform (likely to be introduced in 2017) whereby additional admission requirements will be demanded of graduates of vocational education to progress on to higher education. To date, all students who complete the highest level of vocational education may be admitted to all higher education programmes offered in 'universities of applied sciences' (not in regular universities). In the near future, it is likely that admittance will be dependent on the vocational education programme being in the same field as the intended programme of higher education. This measure will make it more difficult to switch tracks later in the educational career. However, it is hoped that, by linking vocational students' move into higher education to their past experience, it will increase these students' success rate.

The vocational path has also been the focus of recent discussions in the UK, where traditionally expectations for education after secondary school have been geared towards tertiary rather than vocational education. This is clearly visible in the share of university graduates, which has grown substantially over the last few decades. However, given the changes in the labour market, with employers calling for graduates with more technical skills, the government's Post-16 Skills Plan aims to change this by improving the quality of technical education (Minister of State for Skills, 2016). The introduction of tuition fees has led to a debate regarding the value for money of a university degree, in terms of a graduate's chances of securing a good, well-paid job. The plan aims to streamline the current complex system (with about 20,000 technical courses on offer) into a framework of 15 routes implemented by dedicated providers. All courses will include mandatory skills such as English, maths and IT – skills that have frequently been mentioned as lacking among current graduates of technical education.

In Ireland, the School Completion Programme run by the Department of Education and Skills aims to increase the number of young people staying in primary and second-level schools. The programme is part of the department's inclusion strategy 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools' (DEIS), aimed at helping children and young people who are at risk of, or who are experiencing, educational disadvantage. The programme provides flexibility for schools to develop more effective strategies, such as out-of-school support and outreach, family support, mentoring, staff development and parental involvement. The programme is a good example of a long-term, holistic intervention that addresses all aspects of an individual's life, including education, life skills and extracurricular activities. However, as pointed out by the Society of St Vincent de Paul, well over half of all children from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend a DEIS school and are thus immediately disadvantaged as they move on within the education system (*Irish Times*, 2016).

Reducing the high incidence of dropping out continues to be high on the agenda in many continental countries. In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) work toward reducing the number of school-leavers without qualifications and vocational training. Through the 'Educational Chains' programme that has been running since 2011, they support schools with different funding instruments that support – for instance – career guidance services and coaching measures. Some 900 mentors work for the initiative at more than 1,000 schools, supporting around 18,400 pupils. The 2014 evaluation of the programme shows that 400,000 young people have benefited from the programme.

Highly talented high school and university graduates have been a focus of policy in a number of countries. A French initiative, 'Excellent Boarding Schools' aims at helping motivated high school and university students who do not enjoy a favourable home environment to succeed in school (for example, their home conditions are inappropriate for studying, or they come from a disadvantaged or rural background). At the boarding school, participants benefit from personalised private tutoring.

In Germany, the quality of teaching at university level has been placed under scrutiny with the programme 'Pact on Quality in Teaching', introduced in 2010–2011. It seeks to improve support for university students and the quality of teaching at universities. The BMBF is supporting universities by enabling them to employ, train staff and improve their teaching methods. From 2011 to 2016, the pact supported 186 universities and academic institutions. Between 2016 and 2020, another

156 schools will receive the same support. The evaluation of the pact showed that 43% of surveyed project managers indicated a greater recognition of the importance of quality of teaching in their university.

Western Mediterranean cluster

Countries discussed	Prevailing themes
Italy, Malta, Spain	Tackling youth unemployment Renewed focus on VET training and education Preventing drop-out

For some time, countries in the western Mediterranean cluster have been battling with alarmingly high levels of youth unemployment, so the main efforts of the governments have been on policies to address this. In Italy and Spain this has translated into renewed efforts to boost vocational education and training (VET). In Spain, so-called Basic VET courses are being rolled out. They are designed for young people aged 15–17 who have ended the third or, exceptionally, the second course of the mandatory secondary education. The Basic VET courses will combine maths, literacy and other academic subjects with vocational training, including workplace training. In Spain, this vocational track has been introduced quite smoothly; in Italy, however, there is still some work to be done to convince employers of the benefits of vocational training. Despite concerted efforts made in recent years to promote apprenticeships as a pathway to the labour market, this type of employment contract does not appeal to many employers. The latest effort (Jobs Act – Labour Contracts Code, Legislative Decree 15 June 2015, no. 81 2015) reorganised and simplified the existing types of employment contracts, including apprenticeships. It remains to be seen whether the changes will make a positive impact.

In Malta, efforts have focused on preventing students dropping out. Firstly, when a student is identified as being at risk of leaving school early, before the O-level graduation exams, the 'Alternative Learning Programme' kicks in. This phase replaces the last year of compulsory education with a programme that is meant to help students learn basic life skills and introduce them to vocational education in a bid to smooth the transition from school to work. The second phase consists of an intensive course in which students learn basic competencies in specific ICT fields. In addition, students who fail their maths, physics, English or Maltese O-level exams can avail of the free Secondary Education Certificate (SEC). Revision classes available since 2014 provide help to secondary school students who need to re-sit their exams. The measure has been organised twice, in the summers of 2014 and 2015; help was given to over 2,400 students in total. When compared with the previous year, higher pass rates were noted in 2014 in the subjects with free revision classes. Of those who attended the free classes in 2014, some 71% remained in education while another 8% found a job. The Maltese government also offers financial grants to parents of primary and secondary school children to ensure that their children attend school regularly. The measure also serves to emphasise the importance of attendance and so prevent later drop-out.

Central and eastern European and Baltic cluster

Countries discussed	Prevailing themes
Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia	Approach of inclusive education – move away from segregated schools Focus on vulnerable groups Addressing the cost of education

In this cluster, most of the measures in education focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, and moving away from segregated education to a more inclusive approach. Another noticeable feature has been the attention given to a more individual-based approach. One notable example is Latvia, where in 2014 guidelines were developed for education reform. The cornerstone of the reforms is human-oriented education – education that is aimed at self-development and creating the preconditions for entrepreneurship, inclusion, employment and civil participation.

The more inclusive approach allows policymakers to pay more attention to vulnerable groups in society, including children and young people with disabilities, and mental health or behavioural problems. In several countries, this approach has translated into provisions for increased numbers of additional assistants in mainstream education. This is the case in Croatia, where, since 2014, the Ministry of Education covers the cost of class assistants for children with developmental difficulties. The measure has been deemed relatively successful: since the 2014–2015 school year, all children and young people with difficulties or disabilities are provided with class assistants and are able to enrol in mainstream schools. Similarly positive results were noted in Estonia, where the programme that ran between 2009 and 2012 focused on preventing school drop-outs amongst children with learning difficulties. The project placed 150 school students in a two-year intervention phase in order to boost their social skills and their capacity to successfully finish their education. Early evaluations show reduced rates of drop-outs (MTÜ Mahena fotokogu, 2011).

However, a more drastic overhaul of the division between special and mainstream education has proved to be a challenge in the Czech Republic, where between 2005 and 2015 an attempt was made to convert special education schools into inclusive schools. In effect, special schools were renamed 'practical schools' in this period. By renaming the schools, some social stigma has been removed, but these schools still exist; many of their pupils come from the Roma population.

As education in many countries becomes increasingly expensive, governments have decided to alleviate its costs. This has taken different forms. In Estonia, since 2013 all full-time students in public universities are guaranteed tuition-free education. In other countries, programmes have targeted students from low-income families, who can apply for some form of scholarship. The social scholarship has existed in Lithuania since 2010: its aim is to enable disadvantaged and disabled young people to study at higher education institutions. In 2015, a total of 3,732 students benefited from the scheme at a cost of more than €2 million in total. A similar system operates in Poland, with the so-called bridging scholarships; these are provided by NGOs and private companies and supported by the Agricultural Market Agency. Students from low-income families and from rural areas and small towns studying at public universities are eligible. Since 2002, PLN 92 million (around €21 million as at 24 February 2017) has been spent on 19,510 scholarships; 92% of those awarded with the scholarship confirmed that it has improved their material situation during the studies and 90% finished studies with very good or good marks. In Slovenia, a system of scholarships exists for children from low-income families as well as a separate scholarship programme for gifted pupils. In 2015, the government introduced a type of scholarship that it hopes will channel students into professions where demand for skills is needed.

Reforms or innovative vocational training programmes are absent in this cluster. The notable exception is Slovakia, where at the beginning of the 2015–2016 school year, the government allocated resources to enable a significant expansion of the practical part of education to take place directly at the workplace. In the school year 2015–2016, some 422 secondary students were involved. Each of them spent half of their time undertaking practical training in companies in the form of an internship. It is expected that in the 2016–2017 school year, the number of employers engaged in the dual education system will have increased, since 261 enterprises from all sectors of the economy submitted their applications.

Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan cluster

Countries discussed	Prevailing themes
Cyprus, Greece	Promoting equal opportunities and tackling growing inequalities

Two countries from the eastern Mediterranean and Balkan cluster – Cyprus and Greece – have explicitly focused on putting policies in place to promote equal educational opportunities. In Cyprus, several primary school programmes decided to open late in the afternoon to enhance children's socialisation. Summer schools for primary school pupils are being piloted throughout the country, seeking to provide an inclusive and creative environment and so mitigate inequality of opportunities between children of affluent families and those of poor families. The summer schools also help working parents who cannot afford to pay for extra school activities during summer months.

In Greece, the entire education system has undergone a major reform to boost equality of opportunity, aimed at benefiting children of low and medium earners, immigrants and Roma families. The most significant changes comprise: 14 years of compulsory education (2 years of pre-primary school, 6 years of primary school, 3 years of junior high school and 3 years of senior high school); the reform of special education by broadening inclusion; the introduction of all-day primary school nationwide; and a new strategic plan for vocational education and training.

Labour market

Both the academic and policy debate regarding upward social mobility has focused mainly on the role of education and ensuring equal access to it. Recently, though, the debate has widened to include a discussion on equal access to the labour market and the fair progression of a career. This discussion has been framed around access to top professions and the idea that socioeconomic background and social networks are often more important in securing a job than the person's ability. In addition, the challenges of record levels of youth unemployment continue to be high on the agenda, along with concerns over a bleak future for young people in comparison with their parents and grandparents.

Labour market policies to facilitate upward social mobility may include mechanisms to broaden access to certain occupations, or measures in recruitment practices to open up sectors that have traditionally been known to be closed and elitist. Policies may also include second-chance schooling, apprenticeships and vocational training, and measures for lifelong learning – all with the overall objective of making access to the labour market more inclusive.

The labour market-related policies and measures identified in the EU28 generally focus on addressing the barriers in education and access to the labour market. The first set of policies centres around the transition from school to employment. The main instrument identified in most countries is the recently adopted Youth Guarantee, which focuses on providing employment or work experience for recent graduates. The second set of policies addresses access to the labour market and specific occupations, an area that has traditionally been linked to upward social mobility. Here, policies look at breaking the cycle of disadvantage in accessing jobs; they have predominantly been aimed at women and migrants. More recently, the issue of lower socioeconomic status as a barrier to social mobility has been brought into the policy debate.

Transition from school to employment

Most of the EU Member States have implemented employment measures related to the transition from school to employment, either in the form of the Youth Guarantee or via more general programmes, but with the same objective of providing opportunities for employment or further training for young people. The Youth Guarantee that is being implemented in many countries aims to ensure that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer of training, further education or employment within four months of their leaving formal education or becoming unemployed (Council of the European Union, 2013). There have been many studies that aim to examine the programmes and their effectiveness in detail, not least Eurofound's work (Eurofound, 2015c); this section will focus on those aspects that are most relevant to equal opportunities and the social mobility debate.

Some of the strongest elements of the Youth Guarantee and the area that many countries have been working on are those related to apprenticeships and vocational training. This is driven by the idea that better matching the skills of young people with the demands of the labour market can contribute to higher employment rates. In some countries, this has been a focus for some time; hence, evaluations have been carried out to determine how successful these programmes have been. In Austria, where some of the programmes under the Youth Guarantee have been in place since 2009, the emphasis has been on modifying apprenticeships, including the 'Training Guarantee', an apprenticeship programme that takes place within a company. The programme is aimed at young people who cannot find an apprenticeship position. The evaluation of the programme shows overall positive effects, including increased participation in education, fewer young people becoming NEET and – to some extent – more equal opportunities on the labour market (Bergmann et al, 2011).

In Germany, a new National Alliance for Vocational and Further Training was set up at the end of 2014. The alliance is to run from 2015 to 2018 and unlike its predecessor, the Pact on Apprenticeships (2004–2014), the latest initiative unites unions, employers and government representatives. The overall goals are to improve the quality and attractiveness of the vocational training system; to provide every young person who is interested in an apprenticeship position with a pathway to a vocational qualification; to reduce the number of school leavers without a school-leaving certificate or without sufficient qualifications to begin an apprenticeship; and to increase the number of apprenticeship positions and of companies training young people. Following the first year of the implementation, the partners agreed that the newly formed alliance had started well. Nonetheless, they also highlighted areas for improvement. The German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB), for example, criticised employers for not having provided enough additional vocational training positions. Companies had only created 7,300 additional places – not the 20,000 promised. The DGB therefore suggests introducing a training levy, or similar measures, if employers are not able to meet the targets. The employers reject such a levy. Mismatches between applicants' skills and companies' trainee profiles or regional needs have been put forward as another area that needs further attention.

Access to the labour market

Policymakers are paying more attention to ensuring that the labour market is open to all and that access to professions, especially top positions, is based on the candidate's ability rather than their socioeconomic background or social networks. Several factors have been identified as important in improving outcomes for job seekers and ultimately helping them in securing jobs: these include extracurricular activities, geographical mobility and social capital.

The lower levels of extracurricular activities among students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are a differentiating factor in terms of their securing a job. Research shows that students with a lower socioeconomic status spent more time combining school with paid jobs and less time engaging in extracurricular activities. It was concluded that these types of activities were important both in developing students' self-identify and in widening their social networks and career prospects. Research has also shown that employers value and recognise skills acquired through extracurricular activities: this helps them select the most suitable candidates for the position (Stuart et al, 2011). The regional dimension has also been highlighted as a possible factor in affecting career progression. More research needs to be done to explore this in greater detail (Bridge Group, 2016). Evidence, however, shows that students from lower

socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to move away to study and more likely to return to their home after graduation, hence limiting their opportunities to access jobs. Social capital and its value in relation to employability is a sensitive area. Employers may assume that students from lower socioeconomic background lack the networking skills employers value: they therefore need to acquire those skills in order to succeed. Research findings suggest that the development of social capital at university is vital in strengthening equality of opportunity (University Alliance, 2014).

Research on access to the professions suggests that some leading companies may engage in selective recruitment behaviour, seeking to maintain their competitive advantage and blocking a move to widening access to the professions (Ashley and Empson, 2016; Ashley et al, 2015). In general, there may be a mismatch between the set of skills and values that the new recruits can bring with them and the needs and demands of the employers.

In this area, the UK seems to be one of the few countries that explicitly seeks to improve access to the top professional occupations for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The UK Social Mobility Commission has established the Social Mobility Business Compact, within which it aims to work with a range of employers to broaden access to top positions. A number of firms are working together with the government and are outlining alternative (non-higher education) routes into employment – such as apprenticeships. However, it is too early to tell if this policy has been effective. It is also a difficult environment to intervene in, as some UK policymakers argue that it is not the role of the government to interfere with companies' recruitment policies. Furthermore, the challenges of access to professions are not restricted only to the point of entry: they can continue throughout a person's career and may pose an obstacle to reaching the top levels within a chosen profession.

As illustrated in Chapter 6, discrimination in access to the labour market has been mentioned as one of the challenges to upward social mobility in many countries. This can apply to both gender and racially based discrimination; it is seen in the ongoing debate about the lack of diversity and the pay gap in certain sectors or professions. Several countries have tried to tackle this and have introduced programmes to improve recruitment. In France, in 2015, the government established 'blind recruitment' – the candidate's selection being based primarily on skills assessment rather than a diploma-driven process. The initative aims to fight discrimination in the recruitment process. The selection is conducted via the so-called 'platforms of vocation', which were created within French job centres. Candidates who are selected after the testing process are introduced to the companies that have vacancies. An interview then follows, during which the company decides whether to hire the candidate. This recruitment process has been awarded a prize by the national anti-discrimination body.

In Italy, the government implemented an act that aims to increase female participation on boards of directors and audit committees in an attempt to break the glass ceiling that still prevails. Female representation on the boards of public companies rose from 6% to about 23% in January 2015 (Conde-Ruiz and Profeta, 2015). The law had other spin-off effects, including improved governance, as the new law also led to an increase in the number of board members with a level of education higher than that of their predecessors. All of this indicates a widening of the pool of candidates selected for the boards. In addition, the share of women related by kinship to other board members has fallen from 16% to 8%. The quota system, in other words, seems to be able to trigger a change in the selection of directors, with a strong incentive for companies to exclude lower-skilled men in favour of higher-skilled women, thus increasing the average quality of their representatives.

In Slovenia, the focus has also been on women. In 2010, the Association of Employers of Slovenia (ZDS) started a three-and-a-half-year project, called 'Girls' Day', that promotes gender equality in the labour market by raising awareness, encouraging and informing young women about career possibilities in typically male-dominated professions and showing participating enterprises that women represent a source of untapped potential. The project carried out seminars, workshops and open-door days where participating companies invited girls in to introduce them to 'typically male' jobs. In 2014, more than 140 girls from 29 elementary schools visited 11 companies. Another ZDS project, aimed at promoting gender balance in economic decision-making, GEMA, started in 2014 and finished in 2016.

Migrants and their attachment to the labour market has been the focus of initiatives in Sweden, where traditionally migrants have had much higher unemployment rates than native-born Swedes. The 'Special Recruitment Incentive' is a subsidised form of employment introduced in 2007, available to immigrants with a residence permit. While working, the employee also studies the Swedish language. 'New Start Jobs' is another subsidised form of employment: it targets people who have been out of work for a long period. Both measures were introduced to incentivise employers to hire people who had a limited chance of getting a non-subsidised job because of their lack of experience and/or their insufficient proficiency in Swedish. In 2013, a report was published on the effects of the two employment schemes (Swedish National Audit Office, 2013). Participants in both schemes were found to have gained an increased labour market status

– entering and remaining in the labour market – after the programmes ended. However, these results might be exaggerated as it is generally the people who already have the most resources who participate. The success of participants in the 'Special Recruitment Incentive' in finding a non-subsidised job after finishing the programme did not increase. This was most likely due to the fact that many of them went on to participate in a 'New Start' job. Both schemes are concentrated in only a few sectors and occupations.

8 Conclusions

Policymakers aim to foster an environment that allows everyone to fulfil their potential regardless of their socioeconomic background. In times of economic slowdown, the promotion of equal opportunities is more important than ever. There is increasing concern about the prospects for young people and for future generations, the expectation of progress for each new generation no longer prevalent in many countries. These concerns have reduced the sense of trust in the fabric of European societies; in response, policymakers are giving higher priority to measures aimed at combating social exclusion and injustice by paying more attention to social cohesion and fairness (especially in times where deep rooted structural changes have contributed to the widening inequalities in European countries).

This report comes at a time of intense public and policy debate on the need for policies at European, national and regional level that can help to improve life chances and foster equal opportunities. It set out to map patterns of intergenerational social mobility in the EU countries. This involved considering both absolute and relative social mobility:

- **absolute social mobility**: how societies have changed in terms of structural/occupational change and societal progress
- **relative social mobility (or social fluidity)**: how socially fluid societies have been in terms of intergenerational movement between occupational classes.

The story of recent social mobility was explored using data from the European Social Survey (ESS). The report also analysed the current policy discourse: it examines whether social mobility has been visible on the policy agenda in different Member States and, if so, how it has been framed. It then provided information on the prevailing barriers to and implementation of equal opportunities. Finally, it focused on developments in the last decade that could foster social mobility in childhood and early education, school and tertiary education, and the labour market.

The added value and the uniqueness of this report lie in its coverage of social mobility across all 28 EU Member States and in its use of both quantitative and qualitative information to enable comparisons between countries. Unlike many previous works in this field, it examined patterns of social mobility for men and women separately, recognising the increasingly important gender dimension and providing a compelling overview of gendered patterns of social mobility in Europe. The study of patterns of intergenerational social mobility is based on occupational classes, which classifies people who have reached occupational maturity, deemed to be at least 35 years of age. Thus, the empirical analysis of trends in intergenerational mobility has a somewhat historical element. The qualitative information relates more specifically to the last decade and captures current issues in terms of policy debate and policies put in place to mitigate the challenges and promote upward social mobility.

A key strength of the report is that it is built on four sources of information:

- data from a high-quality survey (the ESS)
- an extensive review of literature and research from many Member States
- policy assessments from Eurofound's network of European correspondents
- validation/analysis in review meetings with key experts from the Baltic countries, the Netherlands, Poland and the UK.

The analyses focus not only on research, but also on policies and the links between them. The main limitation of the report is that it presents results for many countries in a brief format, meaning that analyses and interpretation are necessarily constrained. However, Eurofound hopes that the results presented in the report can serve as a basis for more in-depth follow-up work by other organisations. Such work is particularly needed to further assist policymakers in implementing appropriate policies to facilitate upward social mobility.

Patterns of social mobility

The report focuses on specific concepts related to social mobility. It recognises that the definition of these concepts has not been the same in all scientific research; nevertheless, the report aims to be clear about how concepts were defined and measured – and why these choices were made. This is particularly relevant to the empirical analyses, as comparison with results from other research depends on the definitions of the relevant population, the indicators selected to measure social mobility, the specification of occupational classes and the criteria for classifying the categories of horizontal, upward and downward mobility.

In measuring social mobility, Eurofound uses occupational status as the key indicator. Occupational class position is a reflection of an individual's involvement in economic life (which is essentially their participation in the labour market) and of their employment relations. Occupation has been identified as the most suitable indicator for reflecting social

inequalities and as one of the most important – in terms of impacts on a wide range of an individual's life chances and life choices. The strength of classifying by occupation is that it is associated with three important aspects of economic life: income security, short-term income prospects, and longer-term income prospects. It is also an appropriate indicator for capturing the patterns of social mobility within the timeframe that the ESS data covered. There may be an issue regarding the rapid changes in the modern world and discussion might need to take place about the difficulties of measuring these changes. This certainly applies to the changes happening in the labour market, with the growing prevalence of self-employment, freelance and other non-standard forms of employment and the consequences of these changes on the current ordering of occupations into classes. However, it is important to note that Eurofound's empirical results provide information on the patterns of those born between 1927 and 1975 and should be viewed and interpreted within that context only.

It was decided to focus explicitly on intergenerational mobility in this study, analysing social mobility processes for women and men separately as well as analysing them for three distinct cohorts/generations. The first part of the empirical section deals with absolute mobility, while the latter part examines relative mobility ('social fluidity'). In terms of methodology, absolute mobility relates to structural change in societies; it is measured in terms of individuals' upward and downward mobility. Social fluidity relates to equal opportunities and is measured in terms of chances of movement between occupational classes.

To understand the scale and pace of social mobility in European societies, it is important to acknowledge differences in their developmental trajectories and occupational structures. Generally, in western European countries, jobs in service classes and the administrative/clerical class are more numerous, while in the southern European countries, many individuals still work in agriculture and routine, unskilled labour. Eastern European countries lie in between.

The changes observed from one generation to the next are expected: in later-developing countries in the south, mobility is greatest from farm work or other self-employment towards skilled manual and sales and service occupations. In eastern Europe, the movement from blue-collar occupations towards higher service classes, sales and services is more predominant. In central and north-west Europe, structural change after 1970 was modest because western European societies had already undergone extensive changes in occupational structure.

In general, rates of absolute mobility depend on whether a country's occupational structure has changed substantially. If a country's labour market does not change structurally, there are fewer chances for upward mobility – unless for some reason a large number of people experience downward mobility at the same time. The precondition for upward social mobility is therefore economic growth. Changes in absolute social mobility show marked country variations, with the UK, for example, showing little change in occupational structure. Similarly, Bulgaria and Hungary have not seen their social stratification change much in the last generations, albeit for different reasons. The countries that have changed the most are Cyprus, Finland, Greece and Poland, which have seen massive mobility out of agriculture towards manufacturing and services over the last generation or so.

Structural change that involves change of occupational structure and size of population in various occupations can enable upward mobility: at least, this was the case across three cohorts in 20th century. The analysis shows how different mobility patterns evolved for men and women. In a majority of countries, women have become more upwardly mobile while men are more likely to experience downward mobility. In this sense, women are without a doubt advantaged by structural change and deindustrialisation. Having said that, structural shifts that changed the occupational structure for the Generation X cohort (born 1965–1975) have also led to the level of social mobility among men and women becoming more similar: the more dissimilar the occupations of respondents and their parents were in a given country, the more similar was the extent to which men and women had moved away from their parents' occupation.

More recently, given the slowdown in economic growth and the widening of social and economic inequalities, policy attention has focused on equal opportunities (or inequality of opportunity) and the transmission of (dis)advantage. To varying degrees, equality of opportunity has been on the policy agenda since the Second World War both in Europe and the US; however, the current debate both at EU level and in many Member States reveals growing concern with the lack of equal opportunities in access to schools, jobs, healthcare and quality childcare.

A socially fluid society is one in which all citizens can achieve economic success commensurate with their talents and efforts, independent of their social origin; in one way or another, this is related to equality of opportunity. Results from the ESS show that the levels of social fluidity (relative mobility) in 24 EU Member States converged over the 20th century: Member States have become more similar in terms of social fluidity among Generation X than they were among the cohort born before 1946 (the 'silent' generation). However, after that, the picture is more mixed and an overall slowing down of convergence – if not more divergence among countries – can be observed. The results show different patterns, with social fluidity increasing in some

countries while decreasing in others. To sum up, levels of social fluidity changed in different directions for the countries analysed and sometimes in different ways for men and women. By and large, social fluidity increased more for baby-boomers than for the silent generation in most countries.

The overall patterns of social fluidity indicate a group of countries where fluidity has continuously been increasing: Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia and Greece. These are the only countries, where the chances for equal opportunity have increased over all three cohorts. In another group of countries, Generation X – in particular – has experienced a decrease in social fluidity: this is most marked in Sweden, but is also evident in Austria, France and Bulgaria. A third group of countries show stable levels of social fluidity over time – Germany, Poland, the UK and Ireland.

Eurofound decided to examine social fluidity by gender, as the overall country patterns may hide differences between levels of social fluidity for men and women. Indeed, the results clearly show that apparently stable levels of social fluidity may hide opposing trends for men and women, which – in the statistics – cancel each other out unless the figures are broken down. Social fluidity levels in the second half of the 20th century moved in opposite directions for men and women in Germany, Spain, and the UK. In Germany and Spain, social fluidity for men kept increasing across the three cohorts examined; however, more women of Generation X were limited by their social origin than women of the baby-boom. In the UK, the opposite was the case: social fluidity increased for women across the three cohorts, but more men in Generation X were limited by their social origin than was the case for baby-boomers.

Results show that in several countries it is men, especially those of Generation X, who have started to experience decreasing levels of social fluidity: this is the case in the UK (as just mentioned) but it is also the case in France, Sweden, Austria, Estonia and Bulgaria. In contrast, social fluidity among men has increased in Germany and Spain as well as in those countries where the overall levels of social mobility have been high for both sexes (the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Slovakia, Belgium and Greece).

Social fluidity has in general changed less for women than for men. Social fluidity has increased for women in the UK, Czech Republic, Finland and – most notably – in Belgium and the Netherlands. In contrast, social fluidity has decreased in Austria, Sweden, Germany and Spain.

In general, the results from the empirical work are in line with previous research, but they cover more countries and provide new information, especially regarding gender. More research is needed to understand the drivers and determinants behind these patterns and the factors that may influence different patterns for men and women.

Current policy agenda and debate

As part of its mission, this study aims to capture and analyse the ongoing policy discourse and developments in the Member States. In most instances, 'social mobility' as a term is rarely mentioned explicitly in policy debates (with the exception of a handful of countries, including Greece and the UK). It has been argued that – in the 20th century – policymakers usually considered social mobility for all in terms of absolute mobility and the modernisation of the occupational structure. Today it seems that the idea of equal opportunities for all – or relative social mobility – tops the social policy agenda of many policymakers across the EU.

Closely related to the issue of equal opportunities is the issue of fairness, which has been highlighted at both national and EU level as a concept that should be at the centre of debate. Many Member States witness inequalities in income associated with intergenerational transmission of poverty and wealth. A focus on fairness has manifested itself in several ways, including concerns in Italy regarding the relative security of pensions for older generations as against the insecurity experienced by increasing numbers of young people. Similar concerns are expressed in Greece about the widening generation gap. Likewise, in Bulgaria, concerns regarding intergenerational unfairness in the context of population ageing has been reported.

The theme of the 'squeezed middle class' continues to be strongly present and has been associated with slow economic growth and the polarisation of labour markets (Eurofound, 2016). Concerns about the loss of a middle-class tier were voiced in reports from Hungary and Slovenia; reports of diminishing numbers of people in middle-class occupations also came from Latvia, Malta and the Netherlands. For many people, it would appear that they have a job that pays the bare minimum rather than a career that brings prospects for advancement. A number of country reports emphasised an increasing number of social and economic 'losers', particularly referring to people from the middle tiers of employment who have moved into lower-tier occupations with less secure and less rewarding prospects. The experiences of those facing diminishing employment prospects have been linked to a drop in engagement with society, alienation from the 'establishment' and increasing rates of self-destructive behaviour, reflected in poor health and higher mortality rates.

Growing concerns over social cohesion, which are particularly acute in light of economic and societal turbulence, were visible in many countries. Increasing residential and regional segregation, mainly by income or economic situation, was reported specifically in the Nordic countries but also in many central and eastern European countries; in fact, it is a feature of many urban

areas in most Member States. This has policy implications in terms of access to public services, particularly good-quality education and healthcare. Furthermore, growing exposure to discrimination, and even violence, clearly undermines opportunities for ethnic minorities, most notably for the effective societal integration of migrants and refugees.

One of the most essential levers to foster social mobility is access to education, yet in several Member States there are concerns that the benefits of education are diminishing, with declining occupational return on investment in education and growing difficulties in translating third-level qualifications into well-paid jobs. In part, this is a result of the increasingly widespread achieving of higher qualifications and their correspondingly lower value in the competition for employment. On the other hand, examples from many Member States show a clear mismatch between the skills acquired and the demands of the labour market. Importantly, though, the report also shows that increasingly it is the prestige of the educational establishment from which the job applicant graduates that counts (as well as other softer skills) in securing jobs. Finally, in view of educational expansion, parents resort to other instruments and resources (economic, social or cultural) to ensure their children maintain an edge in education and later on in the labour market.

Factors and barriers influencing social mobility

Social background continues to matter even in the most open, or fluid, Member States. This may begin before a child is born but it continues with the transmission of (dis)advantage in a number of ways: parents' parenting skills and their social capital during a child's early years; children's cognitive skills and their parents' social capital in their school years; and their educational attainment and soft, social skills by the time they reach working age (as well as both their own social networks and those of their parents).

Access to early education and childcare is a barrier in many EU countries, especially in more rural areas. Even in countries meeting the Barcelona objectives, access to childcare is not necessarily equal, with children from more disadvantaged backgrounds less likely to attend. Furthermore, in some of these countries, the cost of childcare can be a particular barrier (for example, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK).
In addition to formal access to early education and childcare, it is the home environment and how parents tend to interact with young toddlers that has a lasting effect. At the same time, current family life is full of pitfalls and strains – especially on those on low incomes struggling to make ends meet. Despite their best intentions, some families may need state support to create a better family environment.

This report identifies early selection and tracking as a potential barrier to social mobility because children from disadvantaged backgrounds are further deprived by being excluded from educational opportunities. However, when early selection is based on objective standards and monitoring, it can also prevent early school leaving for children of lesser scholastic ability. The focus of the debate, therefore, should not be on early selection as such, but on ensuring that it is organised in such a way that students of all abilities benefit from it.

Cost barriers are important for education, especially in countries with fee-paying schools (particularly in Ireland and the UK, but also France), where children from privileged backgrounds are able to attend the 'right' schools. In these countries, the educational system is overtly elitist and closed. Even where there are no financial barriers per se, parents may select for better schools by moving to live in specific school districts. However, financial barriers (particularly at tertiary level) are also found in countries with more open educational systems. Another emerging issue related to both education and to geography is that of better schools moving to more affluent neighbourhoods, thus denying higher-quality education to less affluent pupils.

The transition from school to work is a crucial stage, influencing prospects for future occupation, and one for which barriers are present in nearly all EU Member States. Even in the Nordic countries, where most other inequality factors have been minimised, school-to-work transitions and the interrelated issue of youth unemployment are a key barrier. Especially in periods of economic downturn and labour market shrinkage, the impact of transmitted, societal barriers is greatest for young people from lower social strata.

Even in countries that aim to promote equal opportunities, women and people from minority backgrounds are less likely to gain access to certain jobs. In addition to discrimination, nepotism and social networks still clearly favour certain groups of people in accessing specific occupations in many EU countries.

Policies to facilitate social mobility

Patterns of social mobility depend on many factors, including changes in occupational structure and sectoral changes in the labour market; at the same time, they are also crucially a result of policy decisions. Public policymakers can and do implement measures to foster social mobility and support equal opportunities. A review of the literature and of previous studies clearly identified three areas where policymakers can make a difference: childcare and early education, formal education and the labour market.

Early childhood education and care

Measures to improve access to childcare over the last decade include:

- establishing a right to be enrolled (and therefore an obligation for service providers) in Portugal
- making services free of charge – in Malta, in the case of the 0–3 years age group
- adjusting the timing of hours, as in Cyprus
- making preschool mandatory to ensure universal ECEC in a set of countries.

Mandatory preschooling emerges as a policy that has been implemented or considered in a number of countries over the last few years. This seems to be right across the Member States, including the Nordic countries, Greece and other Member States.

In a number of central and eastern European Member States with a sizeable proportion of Roma population, it is a specific challenge to develop policies that focus on the inclusion of children from minority groups.

Only some countries, Spain included, have sought to introduce measures to regulate parents' work–life balance, this is despite the importance that research findings have placed on extensive, good-quality parent–child interaction for early childhood development. There seems to be a lack of systematic evaluation of this type of measure.

Secondary and tertiary education

There is a belief among many policymakers that education is one of the key instruments in fostering upward social mobility. The impact of education has been widely studied in the literature, including the set-up of the system, the value of education, the impact of parents' education on children's educational outcomes and the role of tracking.

In a number of Member States and educational systems, children undergo tracking grouping – being segregated into different education streams. This is a crucial juncture, at which children's chances on the labour market can be determined. This approach is engrained in many countries despite the evidence that – overall – it hampers social mobility. Some countries have attempted to modify their systems by, for example, raising the age at which segregation happens (as in Austria and Finland). Others have tried to implement changes but have faced a series of challenges in doing so (Belgium). It is important to ensure that tracking is organised in such a way that it benefits all children, and does not disproportionally affect disadvantaged children.

Financial constraints may hold back a family's decision to invest in tertiary education and social mobility may hence be hampered; however, evidence also shows that higher education may not necessarily guarantee a good job. The design and availability of loans and grants, and decreasing dependence on the family income, can help mitigate obstacles faced by students in accessing higher education. Financial assistance in the form of grants is being offered to students mainly from low-income families in Lithuania and Poland. In Ireland and the UK, despite evidence that social mobility is weakened by the existence of fee-paying schools, there seems to be little appetite for a major overhaul of the private/public school system.

More attention has been placed on the vocational path, even in countries without a strong vocational track record, such as the Nordic countries. This may be due to the still-high levels of youth unemployment throughout Europe and the growing ambition to better align educational qualifications with the skills needed by the labour market. A number of stakeholders point out that a broader set of institutional establishments offering a wider range of learning options is a better match. However, more should be done to boost the image of vocational education in the labour market and in society. Both students and employers must be convinced that it is not a second-best option. One way to achieve this is to make sure that the quality of the vocational education is of the highest standard: as demonstrated in Chapter 7, a number of countries have started reforms to that effect (Germany and the UK). Also important is ensuring a better alignment between vocational and educational training and labour market needs. This can be achieved by, for example, companies offering work practice placements when students are still in school. This has been put into action in Slovakia.

Some countries (Germany, Sweden) are putting policies in place that pay more attention to the quality of teaching and of the resources available. Others have introduced tougher qualification criteria to become a teacher (Sweden). A priority when instituting such policies is that schools located in disadvantaged areas or with a high proportion of pupils from a disadvantaged background do not lose out in the race for the best teaching talent.

This story is not only about the role of the state and public authorities, but also the importance of family and social networks. Parents provide both the hard resources of money and materials and the softer resources associated with culture, aspirations, contacts and networks. The significance of these softer resources is particularly evident in terms of gaining readier access to quality schools and jobs. In this respect, policies have focused on the family or on assistance with homework (Sweden) or offering activities outside of term-time to support low-income families (Cyprus).

Labour market

With regard to labour market-related policies and measures, a majority of Member States focus on policies that aim to facilitate a smoother transition from education to work. Today the main instrument

identified in most countries is the recently adopted Youth Guarantee. Within this broad tool, particular attention has been given to better aligning the skills that students have and the demands of the labour market. Some countries have translated this into reforming vocational training and apprenticeships.

The second set of policies and measures more directly addresses access to the labour market. Here, policies focus on breaking the cycle of disadvantage in accessing jobs and have predominantly tackled the issue of discrimination in access to the labour market – particularly concerning women and migrants.

Mentoring is an important element in easing access to professions. This can include using well-known figures within the business community to mentor potential candidates, as happens in Slovenia. Mentoring can include focusing mentees' attention on the importance of soft skills.

Another important route of entry to the labour market is through work experience and internships. In many sectors, however (especially those most in demand), people from disadvantaged areas may be unaware of internship possibilities, and are effectively excluded from them (especially for internships in those sectors most in demand). Importantly, they may not be able to afford them, as many internships are unpaid. It is also often the case that such work placements are offered to friends and family members. Programmes that have a broad outreach and aim to go beyond the usual pool of candidates should be encouraged.

The role of recruitment bodies should also be at the centre of policymakers' attention. Much can be done to improve the quality of career advice that is available on site at educational institutions so that they offer more comprehensive advice to students (including those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds) about the set of skills (including soft skills) needed for different jobs.

More recently, the issue of broader socioeconomic background as a barrier to social mobility has been brought into the policy arena. Paying more attention to and being more open about the importance of socioeconomic background and its impact on access to and progression within the labour market is key to the policies' success. One useful instrument would be data collection, perhaps at the company level, to help in understanding the challenge and in designing policies to address it.

Policy pointers

The policy debate on social mobility should be carefully framed in order to distinguish absolute social mobility from relative social mobility and to understand what these concepts mean for policy. The interpretation of research results for policy measures must take into account the characteristics and quality of data, the population assessed and how mobility is defined by other methodological issues – all these make a substantial difference to results. As the findings show that social background continues to have a profound effect on life chances, policymakers at EU, national and regional levels should recognise its importance and implement measures to promote equal opportunities for upward social mobility so that everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to realise their potential.

Furthermore, policymakers should reflect on the indicators of social mobility: most common indicators to measure social mobility, including both income and occupation, have been chosen to capture standards of living. One drawback is that they relate to people who have a mature occupational or income status. Stakeholders could reflect on the need to adjust and develop the indicators further to reflect on changes at earlier life stages, such as education or employment status.

Reflect on the indicators of social mobility: Most common indicators to measure social mobility include either income or occupation. Stakeholders could reflect on the need to adjust and develop the indicators further to take into account changes taking place on the labour market (for example, changing jobs structure and new forms of employment) and broader societal developments (for example, the growing importance of wealth).

Investigate the reasons for success or failure in Member States' achieving social fluidity: Six countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands and Slovakia) managed to maintain high levels of social fluidity for both men and women over the last decades. Research should examine the key drivers behind those patterns and investigate the reasons for stagnating – even decreasing fluidity in many countries (especially among those born after 1964).

Incorporate gender dimension into research: There are different social mobility patterns for men and women, so further research into determinants of those patterns should consider the gender dimension and examine social mobility only for father–son patterns.

Prioritise men of Generation X in policymaking: More attention should be given to the decreasing life chances among men born after 1964, whose prospects have significantly deteriorated in many countries. Policies should be put in place to reverse this trend.

Tackle inequality of opportunity: Public policies should aim at correcting inequality of opportunity by putting in place policies that promote institutional equality of opportunities and promote equality of opportunity through social investment. Institutional equality of opportunities can be promoted through measures aimed at increasing openness of closed occupational groups or professions, including fair and transparent

access to occupations and the prevention of nepotism. (Meanwhile, in some countries, more effort is needed to reduce discrimination based on gender and ethnicity.) Social investment can be used to promote equality of opportunity by investing in the quality of early education and schools. It may also mean more compensatory measures for the least well-off, such as pupil premiums. And it may encompass investing in better access to health and healthcare and reducing out-of-pocket payments in healthcare.

Ensure that the most developed Member States retain their existing social fluidity: Social fluidity is not likely to continue indefinitely upwards; it may have stagnated in the most developed EU Member States. Nevertheless, these countries should strive to remain socially fluid and pay attention to the opportunities of its newcomers (ethnic minorities and immigrants).

Boost investment in childcare: This report highlights the importance of inequality of opportunity in the early years – in particular, the importance of equal access to childcare and the urgent need to invest in more childcare places. Such investment appears to pay off, particularly for children in more disadvantaged families.

Recognise the central importance of home environment: Public policy should concern itself more with the importance of the parental role and the home environment, and support families with assistance and guidance (as several countries are doing).

Encourage young people to take up vocational paths: With youth unemployment still alarmingly high in many European countries, Member States are responding to concerns about a lost generation. This is key in making sure that young people remain encouraged about the prospects of social mobility and maintain trust in the fabric of European societies. One solution is to attract more young people into traditional vocations: these must be of high quality and offer proper career choice. To achieve this, the image of vocational education must be improved; this could be done by putting more emphasis on the quality of teaching as well as creating a better alignment between VET and labour market needs.

Organise educational tracking to benefit all pupils: This report identifies early selection and tracking as a potential barrier to social mobility. However, when early selection is based on objective standards and monitoring, it can also prevent early school leaving for less academic children. The focus of the debate, therefore, should not be on early selection as such, but on ensuring that it is organised in such a way that students of all abilities benefit from it.

Use mentoring and placement schemes to facilitate broader access to professions: Mentoring and work placement can be used as channels to broaden access to elite professions for graduates from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Companies should actively try to tap into potential from a more diverse pool of talent.

Set out proposals for ensuring universal access to public services: The European Pillar of Social Rights has identified unequal access to childcare, education and health as the main barriers to social mobility, so the follow-up actions within the framework should decisively follow up with concrete proposals on how to make these public services accessible to all – especially to those most in need.

Work to tackle residential segregation: Territorial disparities matter: the concentration of disadvantaged households in particular areas negatively affect people's life chances. And researchers have pointed to the importance of community setting as a key factor in fostering social mobility. Policymakers, especially at the local level, should pay more attention to the creation of cohesive areas with more mixed housing and different types of schools where all kinds of residents can mix. Such mixed developments can mitigate the effects of social and economic inequalities and help tackle the increasing sense of a 'them and us' society. (European Structural and Investment Funds could pay more attention to actions that equalise the chances of those who are more likely to be left out.)

Build social mobility into the country-specific recommendations: Given that the broad objectives of social mobility are to promote fair and equal life chances, the main elements are in keeping with the recommendations of the Annual Growth Survey 2016 regarding investment in people and services. The country-specific recommendations should include recommendations to the Member States to encourage them to promote social mobility.

References

All Eurofound publications are available at www.eurofound.europa.eu

AE (2015), *De glemte fattige*, Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd, Copenhagen.

Altzinger, W., Rumplmaier, B., Schneebaum, A. and Lamei, N. (2013), 'Intergenerationelle soziale Mobilität in Österreich', *Statistische Nachrichten*, Vol. 1, pp. 48–62.

Andreou, S. and Koutsampelas, C. (2015), 'Intergenerational mobility and equality of opportunity in higher education in Cyprus', *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 41, pp. 80–87.

Ashley, L. and Empson, L. (2016), 'Understanding social exclusion in elite professional service firms: Field level dynamics and the "professional project"', *Work, Employment & Society*, pp. 1– 19.

Ashley, L., Duberley, J., Sommerlad, H. and Scholarios, D. (2015), *A qualitative evaluation of non-educational barriers to the elite professions*, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, London.

Atkinson, A. B. (2015), *Inequality: What can be done?*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Bell, D. (1976), 'The coming of the post-industrial society, *The Educational Forum*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 574–579.

Beller, E. and Hout, M. (2006), 'Welfare states and social mobility: How educational and social policy may affect cross-national differences in the association between occupational origins and destinations', In *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 24 (2006), pp. 353–365.

Ben-Halima, B., Chusseau, N. and Hellier, J. (2014), 'Skill premia and intergenerational education mobility: The French case', *Economics of Education Review*, Vol. 39, pp. 50–64.

Bergmann, N., Lechner, F., Matt, I., Riesenfelder, A., Schelepa, S. and Willsberger, B. (2011), *Evaluierung der überbetrieblichen Lehrausbildung (ÜBA) in Österreich*, L&R Sozialforschung, Vienna.

Blanden, J., Gregg, P. and Machin, S. (2005), *Intergenerational mobility in Europe and North America: A report supported by the Sutton Trust*, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics, London.

Blanden, J. (2009), *How much can we learn from international comparisons of intergenerational mobility?*, Centre for the Economics of Education, London School of Economics.

BMFSFJ (2015), *Fünfter Bericht zur Evaluation des Kinderförderungsgesetzes*, Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Berlin.

Boudon, R. (1974), *Education, opportunity, and social inequality: Changing prospects in Western society*, Wiley, New York.

Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, I. C. (1977), *Reproduction in education, society and culture*, Sage, London.

Breen, R. (2005), 'Explaining cross-national variation in youth unemployment market and institutional factors', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 125–134.

Breen, R. and Luijkx, R. (2004), 'Conclusions', in Breen, R. (ed.), *Social mobility in Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Bridge Group (2016), *Inspiring policy: Graduate outcomes and social mobility*, London.

Brookings Institution (2008), *Getting ahead or losing ground: Economic mobility in America*, Washington, DC.

Bukodi, E. and Goldthorpe. J.H. (2010). 'Market versus meritocracy: Hungary as a critical case', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 26, No. 6, 655–674.

Chavdarova, T. (2015), 'Perception vs. practices: Nepotism in small businesses in Bulgaria', in Morris, J. and Polese, A. (eds.) *Informal economies in post-socialist spaces: Practices, institutions and networks*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 154–174.

Clark, T. and Heath, A. (2015), *Hard times: Inequality, recession, aftermath*, Yale University Press, New Haven.

Conde-Ruiz, J. I. and Profeta, P. (2015), 'Quote rosa italiane, un modello che funziona', *Lavoce.info*, 7 March.

Corak, M. (2016), *Inequality from generation to generation: The United States in comparison*, Discussion Paper No. 9929, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn.

Council of the European Union (2013), 'Council recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a youth guarantee', 2013/C 120/01, *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Cremer, H., De Donder, P. and Pestieau, P. (2010), *Education and social mobility*, CESifo Working Paper Series No. 2951, CESifo, Munich.

D'Addio, A. C. (2007), *Intergenerational transmission of disadvantage: Mobility or immobility across generations? A review of the evidence for OECD countries*, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers No. 52, OECD, Paris.

Dagens Nyheter (2015), 'Rika områden blir rikare – invandrartäta får fler invandrare', 10 March.

De Paola, M. (2015), 'Gender discrimination and evaluators' gender: Evidence from the Italian academia', *Economica*, Vol. 82, No. 325, pp. 162–188.

Domański, H. (2007), *Struktura Społecznaspołeczna*, Scholar, Warsaw.

Domański, H, Mach, B. W. and Przybysz, D. (2016), 'Social mobility in education and occupation, 1982–2006' in Irina Tomescu-Dubrow, I., et al, *Dynamics of class and stratification in Poland*, Central European University Press, Budapest.

Elwood, J. (2008), 'Gender issues in testing and assessment', in Murphy, P. and Hall, K. (eds.), *Learning and practice: Agency and identities*, Sage, London, pp. 87–101.

Erikson, R. and Goldthorpe, J. (1992), *The constant flux: A study of class mobility in industrial societies*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Erikson, R., Goldthorpe, J. and Portocarero, L. (1979), 'Intergenerational class mobility in three Western European societies', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 415–441.

Erola, J. and Moisio, P. (2007), 'Social mobility over three generations in Finland, 1950–2000', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 169–183.

Esping-Andersen, G. and Wagner, S. (2012), 'Asymmetries in the opportunity structure: Intergenerational mobility trends in Europe', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol. 30, pp. 473–487.

Eurofound (2014), *Developing a country typology for analysing quality of life in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Eurofound (2015a), *Upgrading or polarisation? Long-term and global shifts in the employment structure: European Jobs Monitor 2015*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Eurofound (2015b), *Early childhood care: Accessibility and quality of services*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Eurofound (2015c), *Social inclusion of young people*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Eurofound (2016), *Engaging the 'missing middle': Status quo, trends and good practice*, Dublin.

European Commission (2010), *Social mobility and intra-regional income distribution across EU Member States*, DG Regional Policy, Brussels.

European Commission (2011a), 'Early childhood education and care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow', COM(2011) 66 final, Brussels.

European Commission (2011b), 'Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda', COM(2011) 18 final, Brussels.

European Commission (2013a), *Barcelona objectives: The development of childcare facilities for young children in Europe with a view to sustainable and inclusive growth*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

European Commission (2013b), 'Towards social investment for growth and cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014–2020', COM(2013) 83 final, Brussels.

European Commission (2016), 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Launching a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights', COM(2016)127 final, Brussels.

European Parliament (2016), *Report on poverty: A gender perspective*, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

Fabri, F. (ed.) (2011), *Ittra lill-Prinċipal tal-Kulleġġ u oħra lill-Istudenti*, Kulleġġ Santa Tereża, Malta.

Federowicz, M. and Sitek, M. (eds.) (2011), *Raport o stanie edukacji 2010: Społeczeństwo w drodze do wiedzy*, Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, Warsaw.

Featherman, D.L., Jones, F.L. and Hauser, R.M. (1975), 'Assumptions of social mobility research in the US: The case of occupational status', *Social Science Research* 4, pp. 329–60.

Finans (2015), 'Lav ledighed truer væksten i Udkantsdanmark', 30 June.

Fónadová, L. and Katrňák, T. (2015), 'Empirical evidence on the unequal chances to education in the Czech Republic', in Špalková, D. and Matějová, L., *Current trends in public sector research: Proceedings of the 19th International Conference*, Masaryk University, Brno, pp. 198–204.

Fourastié, J. (1979), *Les trente glorieuses ou la Révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975*, Fayard, Paris.

Frankopan, P. (2015), *The silk roads: A new history of the world*, Bloomsbury, London.

Franzini, M., Raitano, M. and Vona, F. (2013), 'The channels of intergenerational transmission of inequality: A cross-country comparison', *Rivista italiana degli economisti*, Vol. 2, pp. 201–226.

Ganzeboom, H. and Treiman, D. (2006), 'Internationally comparable measures of occupational status for the 1988 International Standard Classification of Occupations', *Social Science Research*, Vol. 25, pp. 201–239 (1996).

Garnero, A., Hijzen, A. and Morton, S. (2016), *More unequal, but more mobile? Earnings inequality and mobility in OECD countries*, Social Employment and Migration Working Papers No. 177, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Gerber, T. P. and Hout, M. (2004), 'Tightening up: Declining class mobility during Russia's market transition', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 69, No. 5, pp. 677–703.

Goldthorpe, J. H. (1980), *Social mobility and class structure in modern Britain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Goldthorpe, J. H. (1984), 'The end of convergence: Corporatist and dualist tendencies in modern western societies', in Goldthorpe, J. H. (ed.), *Order and conflict in contemporary capitalism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Goldthorpe, J. H. (2000), *On sociology: Numbers, narratives and the integration of research and theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Goldthorpe, J. H. (2012), *Understanding – and misunderstanding – social mobility in Britain: The entry of the economists, the confusion of politicians and the limits of educational policy*, Barnet Papers in Social Research, Department of Social Policy and Intervention, Oxford.

Goldthorpe, J. H. (2016), 'Social class mobility in modern Britain: Changing structure, constant process', *Journal of the British Academy*, Vol. 4, pp. 89–111.

Goldthorpe, J. H. and McKnight, A. (2006), 'The economic basis of social class', in Morgan, S., Grusky, D. B. and Fields, G. S. (eds.), *Mobility and inequality: Frontiers of research from sociology and economics*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 109–136.

Grundiza, S. and Lopez Vilaplana, C. (2013), *Intergenerational transmission of disadvantage statistics: Is the likelihood of poverty inherited?,* Statistics in Focus 27/2013, Eurostat.

The Guardian (2016a), 'UK faces permanent generational divide, social mobility Tsar warns', 11 March.

The Guardian (2016b), 'Grammar schools and the great social mobility debate', 9 August.

Harrison, E. and Rose, D. (2006), *The European Socio-economic Classification (ESeC) user guide*, University of Essex, Colchester.

Helemäe, J. (2011), 'Intragenerational mobility under conditions of rapid neoliberalization', in Saar, E. (ed.), *Towards a normal stratification order – Actual and perceived social stratification in post-socialist Estonia* (83−110), Peter Lang, Frankfurt.

HM Government (2011), *Opening doors, breaking barriers: A strategy for social mobility*, Cabinet Office, London.

Hout, M. (1989) *Following in father's footsteps*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Irish Times (2016), 'Downwardly mobile: The plunge in standards of living', 25 July.

ISFOL (2012), *Rapporto ISFOL 2012 – Le competenze per l'occupazione e la crescita*, Rome,

Jackson, M. (2007), 'How far merit selection? Social stratification and the labour market', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 58, No. 3, pp. 367–390.

Jecan, D. and Pop, C. (2012), 'Education and occupation for five generations in Romania: A sequential analysis of cohort status consistency', *Studia UBB Sociologia*, Vol. 57, pp. 61–83.

Juncker, J.-C. (2015), *Completing Europe's economic and monetary union*, European Commission, Brussels.

Katrňák, T. and Fónadová, L. (2014), 'Return to and departure from social origin: Trends in social fluidity in the Czech Republic between 1990 and 2011', *Sociológia*, Vol. 46, No. 6, pp. 655–685.

Katrňák, T. and Fučík, P. (2010), *Návrat k sociálnímu původu: Vývoj sociální stratifikace české společnosti v letech 1989 až 2009*, Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury (CDK), Brno.

Kerr, C., Dunlop, J. T., Harbison, F. H. and Myers, C. A. (1960), *Industrialism and industrial man*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Koivunen, T., Ylöstalo, H. and Otonkorpi-Lehtoranta, K. (2015), 'Informal practices of inequality in recruitment in Finland', *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, Vol. 5.

Kozek, W. (2013), *Rynek pracy: Perspektywa instytucjonalna,* Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warsaw.

Landersø, R. and Heckman, J. (2016), *The Scandinavian fantasy: The sources of intergenerational mobility in Denmark and the US*, NBER Working Paper No. 22465, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge.

Lavrijsen, J., Ides Nicaise, I. and Wouters, T. (2013), *Vroege tracking, kwaliteit en rechtvaardigheid: Wat het wetenschappelijk onderzoek ons leert over de hervorming van het secundair onderwijs*, Working Paper, HIVA-KU Leuven, Leuven.

Lind, D. (2009), *Hur långt från trädet faller äpplet? - Och hur länge lever den amerikanska drömmen i Sverige?*, Låginkomstutredningen, delrapport 3, Arbetarrörelsens Ekonomiska Råd.

Lindemann, K. and Saar, E. (2012), 'Ethnic Inequalities in education: Second-generation Russians in Estonia', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 11, pp. 1974–1998.

Lindsay, G. et al (2011), *Evaluation of the Parenting Early Intervention Programme*, Department for Education, Darlington, UK.

Lipset, S. M. and Bendix, R. (eds.) (1959), *Social mobility in industrial society*, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp. 11–76.

Mach, B. (2004), 'Intergenerational mobility in Poland 1972–1988–1994', in Breen, R. (ed.), *Social mobility in Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

McGovern, P., Hill, S., Mills, C. and White, M. (2008), *Market, class and employment*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

McKnight, A. (2015), *Downward mobility, opportunity hoarding and the 'glass floor'*, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), London School of Economics.

Malamud, O. and Pop-Eleches, C. (2011), 'School tracking and access to higher education among disadvantaged groups', *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 95, No. 11, pp. 1538–1549.

Marshall, A. (1998), 'State intervention, the labour market and inequality in Argentina', in Albert B. (ed.), *Poverty, economic reform and income distribution in Latin America*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder.

Martínez-Celorrio, X. and Marín, A. (2012), *Crisi, trajectòries socials i educació: Anàlisi longitudinal del PaD (2003–2009)*, Fundació Jaume Bofill, Barcelona.

Marx, I. and Van Rie, T. (2013), *Growing inequalities and their impacts in Belgium*, GINI.

Matković, T. (2009), *Patterns of transition from education to the world of work in Croatia*, PhD thesis, University of Zagreb.

Miguélez, F. et al (2014), *Crisis, empleo e inmigración en España: Una análisis de las trayectorias laborales*, Col·lecció i núm: Recerques i anàlisis, QUIT, Obra Social La Caixa, Barcelona.

Miles, A. and Vincent, D. (1993) *Building European society: Occupational change and social mobility in Europe*, 1840–1940, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Ministry of State for Skills (2016), *Post-16 skills plan and independent report on technical education*, Department for Business Innovation and Skills and Deparment of Education UK, London.

MTÜ Mahena fotokogu (2011), *Koolist väljalangemise ennetamine õpilase sotsiaalse toimetuleku tõstmise kaudu*, Tallinn.

Munk, M. (2013), 'Completion of upper secondary education: What mechanisms are at stake?', *Comparative Social Research*, Vol. 30, pp. 255–291.

NAE (2009), *Vad påverkar resultaten i svensk grundskola?*, Skolverket, Stockholm.

NAE (2013), *An assessment of the situation in the Swedish school system 2013 by the Swedish National Agency for Education*, Skolverket, Stockholm.

Navicke, J. and Lazutka, R. (2016), 'Functional and personal income distribution in the Baltics: Comparison of national and household accounts', paper presented at 9th International Scientific Conference, *Business and Management 2016*.

Nicaise, I., Spruyt, B., Van Houtte, M. and Kavadias, D. (2014), *Het onderwijsdebat: Waarom de hervorming van het secundair broodnodig is*, EPO, Berchem.

Nielsen, C. P. et al (2015), *Mønsterbryderindsatser på de videregående uddannelser*, SFI, Copenhagen.

OECD (2011), *Divided we stand: Why inequality keeps rising*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2012), *Equity and quality in education: Supporting disadvantaged students and schools*, Paris.

OECD (2014), *Education at a glance*, Paris.

OECD (2015a), *In it together: Why less inequality benefits all*, Paris.

OECD (2015b), *Improving schools in Sweden: An OECD perspective*, Paris.

Parsons, T. (1960), *Structure and process in modern societies*, Free Press, Glencoe.

Power, M. J., O'Flynn, M., Courtois, A. and Kennedy, M. (2013), *Neoliberal capitalism and education in Ireland*, Department of Sociology Working Paper Series, University of Limerick, Limerick.

Prokic-Breuer, T. and Dronkers, J. (2012), 'The high performance of Dutch and Flemish 15-year-old native pupils: Explaining country differences in math scores between highly stratified educational systems', *Educational Research and Evaluation*, Vol. 18, pp. 749–777.

Putnam, R.B (2015), *Our kids – The American Dream in crisis*, Simon & Schuster, New York.

Raitano, M. and Vona, F. (2015), 'Measuring the link between intergenerational occupational mobility and earnings: Evidence from eight European countries', *Journal of Economic Inequality*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 83–102.

RMO (2010), *De weg omhoog: Een analyse van het vertoog over sociale mobiliteit in regeringsbeleid*, Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, Den Haag.

Róbert, P. and Bukodi, E. (2004), 'Changes in intergenerational class mobility in Hungary, 1973–2000', in Breen, R. (ed.), *Social mobility in Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Robnik, S. (2015), *Gender equality in decision-making positions – significance of transparent staffing*, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ljubljana.

Rose, D. and Harrison, E. (2007), 'The European socio-economic classification: A new social class schema for comparative European research', *European Societies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 459–490.

Rose, D. and Harrison, E. (eds.) (2010), *Social class in Europe: An introduction to the European socio-economic classification*, Routledge, London.

Roots, A. (2013),. 'Occupational and income mobility during post-socialist transformation of 1991–2004 in Estonia.' Thesis, University of Tartu.

Saar, E. 2010. 'Changes in intergenerational mobility and educational inequality in Estonia: Comparative analysis of cohorts born between 1930 and 1974'. *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 367–83.

Saar, E.. 2011. 'Changes in intergenerational social mobility and educational inequality: A comparison of birth cohorts 1930 to 1974' in Saar, E. (ed.), *Towards a normal stratification order – Actual and perceived social stratification in post-socialist Estonia*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt.

Saar, E. and Kristel-Amelie, A. (2014), 'Unequal educational transitions in Estonia', *European Societies*, Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 694–716.

Schlicht, R., Stadelmann-Steffen, I. and Freitag, M. (2015), 'Educational inequality in the EU: The effectiveness of the national education policy', *European Union Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 29–59.

Schneebaum, A., Rumplmaier, B. and Altzinger, W. (2015), 'Gender and migration background in intergenerational educational mobility', *Education Economics*, Vol. 23, No. 5, pp. 1–23.

Schumpeter, J. (1942), 'The process of creative destruction', in *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, Harper & Brothers, New York, pp. 82–85.

Słomczynski, K.M. Tomescu-Dubrow, I. Sawiński, K (2016), 'Social origin and occupational careers in Poland: Evidence from the Polish Panel Survey – POLPAN 1988–2013', presentation at Eurofound seminar, Warsaw, 13 July, 2016.

Sipavičienė, A. (2011), 'Lietuos gyventojų (e)migracijos dvidešimtmetis: tarp laisvės rinktis ir išgyvenimo strategijos', *Filosofija. Sociologija*, Vol. 22, No. 4, p. 323–333

SMCPC (2016), *State of the nation 2016: Social mobility and child poverty in Great Britain*, Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, London.

Social Protection Committee (2016), Social Protection Committee annual report 2016, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (2015), *Socialni položaj v Sloveniji 2013–2014*, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ljubljana.

Solon, G. (1992), 'Intergenerational income mobility in the United States,' *American Economic Review*, Vol. 82, pp. 393–408.

Statens Offentliga Utredningar (2013), *Det tar tid - om effekter av skolpolitiska reformer: Delbetänkande av Utredningen om förbättrade resultat i grundskolan*, Stockholm.

Statistik Austria (2015), *Bildung in Zahlen 2013/14*, Vienna.

Stiglitz, J. (2016), 'Inequality and economic growth', *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 86, pp. 134–155.

Strauss, W. and Howe, N. (1991), *Generations: The history of America's future*, 1584 to 2069, Quill.

Stuart, M., Lido, C., Morgan, J., Solomon, L. and May, S. (2011), 'The impact of engagement with extracurricular activities on the student experience and graduate outcomes for widening participation populations', *Active Learning in Higher Education*, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 203–215.

Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (2015), *Gymnasieskola 2015*, Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, Stockholm.

Swedish National Audit Office (2013), *Ett steg in och en ny start – hur fungerar subventionerade anställningar för nyanlända?*, Riksrevisionen, Stockholm.

Titma, M., Roots, A., and Soidla, I. (2010), 'Gender differences in intragenerational mobility: The case of Estonia', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 337–350.

Tolsma, J. and Wolbers, M. (2010), 'Onderwijs als nieuwe sociale scheidslijn', *Tijdschrift voor Sociologie*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp: 239–259.

Torche, F. (2011), 'Is a college degree still the great equalizer? Intergenerational mobility across levels of schooling in the US', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 117, No. 3, pp. 763–807.

Triventi, M. (2013), 'The role of higher education stratification in the reproduction of social inequality in the labor market', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol. 32, pp. 45–63.

University Alliance (2014), *Closing the gap: Unlocking opportunity through higher education*, London.

Vallet, L-A., Peugny, C. and Bouchet-Valat, M. (2016), 'Inequality of educational returns in France: Changes in the effect of education and social background on occupational careers', in Bernadi, F. and Ballarino, G. (eds.), *Education, occupation and social origin: A comparative analysis of the transmission of socio-economic inequalities*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

Van de Werfhorst, H. G. (ed.) (2015), *Een kloof van alle tijden; Verschillen tussen lager en hoger opgeleiden in werk, cultuur en politiek*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.

Van de Werfhorst, H. G. and Luijkx, R. (2010), 'Educational field of study and social mobility: Disaggregating social origin and education', *Sociology*, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 695–715.

Van den Broeck, W. (2014), *Sociale ongelijkheid in het Vlaamse onderwijs*, Vakgroep Klinische en Levensloopsychologie, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels.

Vrooman, C., Gijsbrechts, M. and Boelhouwer, J. (2014), *Verschil in Nederland – Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport 2014*, SCP, Den Haag.

Washington Post (2005), 'How to refloat these boats', 18 December.

Weber, M. (1922), *Economy and society*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Werner, J. (2013), 'The coherency of social mobility and residential mobility: A comparative analysis of Germany and Lithuania', conference paper, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania.

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. 2011, *The spirit level: Why greater equality makes societies stronger*. London: Bloomsbury Press.

Wolbers, M. (1998), *Diploma Inflatie en Verdringing op de Arbeidsmarkt: Een Studie naar Ontwikkelingen in de Opbrengsten van Diploma's in Nederland*, PhD thesis, ICS.

World Bank (2014), *Handbook for improving the living conditions of Roma*, World Bank Group, Washington, DC.

Zaidi, A. and Zolyomi, E. (2007), *Intergenerational transmission of disadvantages in EU Member States*, Policy Brief, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna.

TJ-01-17-286-EN-N

EU citizens are increasingly concerned that today's young people will have fewer opportunities for upward social mobility than their parents' generation. This report maps patterns of intergenerational social mobility in the EU countries. It first looks at absolute social mobility – how societies have changed in terms of structural and occupational change and societal progress. Then it turns to relative social mobility ('social fluidity') – the opportunities for individuals to move between occupational classes. The story of recent social mobility is explored using data from the European Social Survey (ESS) and findings from Eurofound's Network of European correspondents across the EU Member States. The report also analyses the current policy discourse, examining to what extent social mobility has been visible on the policy agenda in different Member States and how it has been framed and discussed. It goes on to look at barriers to equal opportunities and policies to promote it. Finally, it focuses on developments in the last decade that could foster social mobility in childhood and early education, school and tertiary education, and the labour market.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency, whose role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies. Eurofound was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75, to contribute to the planning and design of better living and working conditions in Europe.

Publications Office

ISBN: 978-92-897-1577-5
doi:10.2806/420671