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RESEARCH PAPER

Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training



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Foreword

Opinions matter. In vocational education and training (VET) people's opinions on the image, the quality, outcomes and effectiveness of VET provision may have a significant impact not only on an individual's education choice but also on policy-making. Opinions may be based on emotional factors and are not the result of informed and rational estimations. Even the best VET policies will be successful only if they are implemented in a trustful environment and are well-received by individuals and societies.

Designed to complement existing European data sources and statistics, the first Cedefop opinion survey on VET in Europe is aimed providing unique comparative information on how EU citizens view VET in their country. About 36 000 face-to-face interviews conducted among citizens over 15 years old and resident in EU Member States provide key insights into their awareness and perceptions of attractiveness and effectiveness of VET in the EU.

VET can play a strategic role in providing the EU with a workforce ready for the challenges lying ahead. Improving and maintaining high-level workforce skills and competences is essential to ensuring that Europe remains competitive and innovative against increasing global competition, fast-changing labour-market needs and demographic challenges. However, participation in both upper secondary and continuous VET differs greatly among Member States and overall is still far from EU targets. This survey helps us understand why.

Despite the challenges VET systems are facing in the EU, including budget constraints in a labour market still recovering from a long period of economic crisis in many Member States, EU citizens overall show a positive attitude towards VET, its quality and effectiveness. People value upper secondary VET as a way to find jobs, strengthen the economy, help reduce unemployment and tackle social inclusion. However, in too many EU Member States, VET (particularly at upper secondary level) still seems to suffer from lack of esteem. Perception of VET is poor when compared to general education, with a tendency still to consider VET as a second choice for second-rate students.

Valuing VET in the eyes of the EU citizens is not a question of image-promoting measures. The ability of VET provision to equip people with the right skills and open up good labour market prospects for graduates are decisive elements in making VET an attractive option. However, looking at some of the survey answers the impression is that many countries still suffer from negative public discourse on VET which tends to reinforce stereotypes and misconceptions. Looking at the survey results across countries, there is a strong

correlation between the level of information people receive and their participation in VET programmes.

This is just one example of the insights that this survey may provide in many areas relevant for our work. Our hope is that countries, stakeholders and social partners will find our data useful and interesting and will explore this first report which makes available all main results and information collected through the survey. Further investigations based on the micro data are already under way at Cedefop, seeking to understand better challenges and possible implications for VET policies in the EU Member States.

Joachim James Calleja
Director

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⁽¹⁾ A detailed list of workshop participants is available on request.

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Executive summary

Background

In shaping effective vocational education and training (VET) policies, the opinions of citizens, the end-users in VET policies, are no less important than facts or statistics. This is why Cedefop launched its first opinion survey on VET to know more about the perception of EU users and non-users on a wide range of topics related to VET.

This is particularly important in the current European economic and social climate. The economic and financial crisis has profoundly affected labour market conditions and dynamics in many EU Member States. Several years of high unemployment, especially among population groups such as youth, the low-skilled, and the low-educated, may lead to serious long-term consequences. Growing social exclusion, disengagement from the labour market, and persistent underuse of human resources can permanently lower potential growth.

Ensuring that people are equipped with the right skills, not only for employment but also to improve their life chances, is the focus of the *New skills agenda for Europe* (European Commission, 2016); VET has a strategic role to play within it. Quality initial VET (IVET) and work-based learning, including apprenticeship, can prepare young people for work, ensuring a smooth transition from education to employment. Beyond this, improving and maintaining high-levels workforce skills and competences is essential to ensuring that the EU remains competitive and innovative against increasing global competition, fast-changing labour market needs and future demographic challenges.

The strategic role of quality VET systems in supporting youth transitions into the labour market and in realigning the skills of the population to the labour-market needs is widely recognised. Yet, in many Member States participation in VET is still far from the European target, and VET is often seen as a second best option as compared to general education.

European policies provide specific actions aimed at promoting opportunities for VET learners to undertake a work-based learning experience as part of their studies, increasing opportunities for flexible learning, and promoting opportunities for higher VET and greater visibility of its labour-market outcomes. Perceptions of the value of VET, its ability to equip people with the right skills and, the likelihood of finding employment after completing it, are decisive elements in establishing VET as an attractive education option.

However, there is scarce evidence on citizens' perceptions of VET in EU Member States. In 2012, a European Commission Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2012) provided a general overview of VET perceptions in Europe. It did not, however, compare VET perceptions to views on general education and provided only limited insights into specific VET attractiveness factors such as permeability or satisfaction with skills acquired. Cedefop's opinion survey aimed at filling this gap and providing a richer picture of VET perceptions in Europe, suitable for informing VET policy-making.

The survey covers the 28 Member States of the European Union, with 35 646 respondents from different social and demographic groups, aged 15 and over. Cognitive interviews were used to improve the questionnaire (Annex 3) that was pilot tested before the final field work in June 2016.

The survey covers a wide range of topics related to VET. However, VET is understood differently in each Member State and may take many different forms. Therefore, for accuracy, the main focus of the survey is initial vocational education and training at the level of upper secondary education, although there are questions pertaining to both IVET and CVET. The survey is articulated along four main areas of investigation:

- (a) citizens' awareness and knowledge of VET;
- (b) attractiveness and access to VET;
- (c) experience and satisfaction of VET users;
- (d) perceived outcomes and effectiveness of VET.

Main results

Awareness and understanding VET

Most EU citizens (86%) say that they had heard of VET before their interview, and this includes 71% who say that they had heard of it and know precisely what it is. Predictably, knowledge is higher among respondents who went to upper secondary education, but it is the same among those who took vocational education and those who took general education at the upper secondary stage.

When asked about several aspects of VET, respondents are most likely to associate it with 'preparing you for a specific occupation'; almost nine in 10 respondents (87%) say that this always or often applies to VET. Respondents are equally likely to associate VET with a work environment and a school environment; it is also associated with continuous professional development and 'taking place before starting working life'. This suggests that VET has a fairly strong image as something that combines and bridges the worlds of education

and employment, but that encompasses both continuous and initial training, school and work-based approaches.

Information and guidance

Only 48% of respondents whose education was primarily general in nature say they received information about vocational education when making a decision about their upper secondary education; just under three in four respondents who did vocational education (72%) say that they were given information.

One in four respondents (25%) who did general education says that someone advised him/her against taking vocational education when deciding on upper secondary education. This proportion varies markedly between countries; it is highest in Hungary (51%), Romania (48%) and Italy (47%), and lowest in the Netherlands (9%), Denmark (12%) and the UK (14%).

The two main reasons for choosing vocational education at upper secondary level are the likelihood of finding a job (46%) and interest in the subjects (41%). The next most popular reasons are because their family or friends advised them to (31%), career prospects (27%), being good at the subjects (23%), and the possibility of having a good salary (23%). Those who followed vocational education are more likely than those in general education to say that it was because of the likelihood of finding a job, because of the length of studies, and because someone from the world of work advised them to. However, some reasons are more likely to be given by those who took general education than those who took vocational education: the possibility of continuing to higher education, being good at the subjects and career prospects.

Attractiveness of vocational education

Around two thirds of Europeans (68%) think that vocational education at the upper secondary stage has a positive image in their country, while just under a quarter (23%) say that it has a negative image. Respondents in Malta (89%), Finland (84%), the Czech Republic (77%), the UK (75%) and Italy (75%) are most likely to say that vocational training has a positive image, while the proportions that say it has a negative image are highest in France (44%), Hungary (43%), Belgium (42%) and the Netherlands (41%).

Most EU citizens agree that ‘people in vocational education learn skills that are needed by employers in [country]’ (86%), while agreement is slightly lower on the other issues: ‘vocational education allows you to find a job quickly after obtaining a qualification or diploma’ (67% agree), ‘vocational education leads to well-paid jobs’ (61%), and ‘vocational education leads to jobs that are highly regarded in [country]’ (60%). Overall, these findings confirm the generally positive image of vocational education across the EU, particularly in terms of gaining

relevant employment skills. Respondents are most likely to hold positive views about vocational education and employment in Germany, Ireland, Cyprus, Malta, Austria and Poland; while the lowest levels of agreement are found in Belgium, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Slovenia.

Just over half of Europeans (54%) agree that 'it is easy to continue into higher education such as university after vocational education at upper secondary education', while 31% disagree. People who undertook vocational education themselves are more likely to agree with the statement than those from general education (61% compared with 53%).

Views are divided as to whether it would be easy for someone aged 16 to 18 who had started vocational education to switch to general education: two in five EU citizens (41%) say that it would be easy, but almost the same proportion (42%) think it would be difficult.

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents who did vocational education themselves agree that vocational education provides opportunities to study or work abroad. Those who did general education at the upper secondary stage are less likely to agree (58%).

Comparing vocational and general education

Most EU citizens agree that 'general education has a more positive image than vocational education' in their country. This particularly applies to respondents who went into general education themselves (82% agree). However, those who participated in vocational education are also likely to agree with the statement (71%).

Three in four EU citizens (75%) agree that students with low grades are directed towards vocational education in their country, and just under two in three (63%) agree that it is easier to get a qualification in vocational education than in general education.

However, EU citizens perceive vocational education as providing better employment prospects than general education. When thinking about upper secondary education, most respondents say that people who complete vocational education are more likely to find a job than those who complete general education (59%): 13% say they are less likely to find a job and 19% say there is no difference.

Two in five EU citizens (40%) also think that people who complete vocational education are more likely to find a job than those who go on to higher education, while 28% think they are less likely to find a job, and 20% say there is no difference. Responses on these issues are similar between those who did

vocational education and those who did general education at the upper secondary stage.

There is support for national governments prioritising investment in vocational education at the upper secondary stage. Around half of respondents (49%) say that their national government should prioritise investment in vocational education over general education, while just over a quarter (28%) think that general education should be prioritised. Respondents who followed vocational education at upper secondary education are much more likely than those from general education to favour investment in vocational education (69% compared with 40%).

Respondents are most likely to favour the prioritisation of vocational education rather than general education in Slovakia (76%), Slovenia (75%), Hungary (71%), Poland (70%), the Czech Republic (66%), Croatia (65%), Bulgaria (65%) and France (64%). Support for prioritising general education is highest in Ireland (43%), the UK (43%), Malta (36%), Germany (36%) and Austria (36%).

Respondents who undertook vocational education generally say they would recommend vocational education to a young person about to enter upper secondary education (60%), rather than general education (15%). The gap is much smaller for respondents who followed general education, where 38% say they would recommend general education compared to 26% who would recommend vocational education. Respondents are most likely to say they would recommend vocational education in Slovakia (67%), the Czech Republic (65%), Poland (64%), Slovenia (63%) and Hungary (61%). Respondents in Ireland (49%), Luxembourg (42%) and Sweden (40%) are most likely to say they would recommend general education.

Experience and satisfaction with vocational education

Respondents who followed general education at the upper secondary stage mostly say that their education took place at school (in 89% of cases) rather than partly or entirely in the workplace (10%). By contrast, more than half (56%) of those who did vocational education say that this education took place at least partly in the workplace.

Of citizens whose upper secondary was general, 8% say that they spent more than two weeks studying abroad, while this is the case for 4% of the respondents that participated in VET. The EU average is 7% of the citizens, 5% who studied in another EU Member State, and 2% who studied in a country outside the EU.

Most vocational education respondents (90%) say they were satisfied with the general skills they developed, while similar proportions were satisfied with the quality of teaching (89%) and their ultimate work-related skills (87%). Four in five (81%) say they were satisfied with the equipment that was available. In relation to the quality of teaching and general skills, satisfaction levels are similar for general education respondents. However, these respondents are less satisfied in relation to work-related skills (62% compared with 87%) and the equipment that was available (73% compared with 81%).

Across the four items covered in the survey, some countries have consistently high levels of satisfaction among vocational education respondents: Bulgaria, Cyprus and the UK consistently feature among the highest ranked countries. By contrast, Croatia and Italy are consistently among the lowest ranked countries on the four items.

EU citizens say that they developed several different skills when they were in upper secondary education. Among respondents who did vocational education, most say that they developed the ability to work with others (87%), followed by the ability to pursue and organise their own learning (76%) and communication skills (75%).

General education respondents are more likely than those from vocational education to say they gained skills in speaking a foreign language (67% compared with 44%) and cultural awareness (65% compared with 40%). Respondents from vocational education are more likely than their general education counterparts to say that they developed the ability to work with others (87% compared with 81%), the ability to be creative (70% compared with 65%), and a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (65% compared with 53%).

Outcome and effectiveness

EU citizens generally agree that vocational education and training plays an important role in society, specifically by strengthening their country's economy (84% agree), reducing unemployment (80%) and tackling social exclusion (78%). Levels of agreement are very similar between those who did vocational education and those who did general education at the upper secondary stage.

Respondents are most likely to agree that vocational education and training play an important role in reducing unemployment in their country in Sweden (96%), Finland (94%), Denmark (93%) and Malta (91%). The lowest levels of agreement are seen in Greece (66%), France (69%), Slovenia (70%), Italy and Bulgaria (both 71%).

Respondents who were either in employment, unemployment or retired were asked whether they had ever experienced difficulties in finding a job after completing their highest level of education. Just over a quarter (27%) reported having had difficulties of some kind. Most attributed difficulties to lack of relevant work experience (10%), while the other main reasons are that their skills were considered too low (5%) and that they lacked the required qualifications or diplomas (5%).

In most cases (60%), respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational say that it took them no more than a month to find a long-term job after completing their main studies. Respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily general tended to take longer to find a job after their studies: around half (49%) found a job within a month of ending their studies.

Most EU citizens say that they are satisfied with their professional career. Among respondents who were employed, unemployed or retired at the time of the survey, four in five (81%) say that they are satisfied with their career. This proportion is similar among respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational (84%) and those from general education (85%).

Further education and training

Among those whose upper secondary education was primarily general, almost three-quarters (72%) continued to a higher level of education. Respondents who did vocational education for their upper secondary education are less likely to report continuing to a higher education level (39%).

Respondents who continued on to higher education generally remained doing the same type of education as they had at the upper secondary stage: 82% of those whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational went on to a higher level of education that was also vocational; 63% of respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily general moved on to higher education that was also primarily general.

Around one in five respondents (21%) whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational report participating in work-related training in the previous 12 months. This proportion is slightly higher (26%) among those from general education, but is much lower (9%) among those who did not go to upper secondary education at all.

Conclusions

There is considerable variation between countries in the awareness of VET, ranging from 46% to 91% of respondents acknowledging that they know what VET is. VET tends to be associated with education that prepares people for a specific occupation. The survey also shows the heterogeneity of VET in any other area, as it can relate to education that takes place before working life and/or while working.

VET has a positive image in Europe, especially in relation to its capacity to provide job opportunities and prepare people for the world of work, meeting employer needs. However, most respondents tend to agree that general education has a more positive image than VET; 75% of Europeans agree with the statement that 'students with low grades are directed to VET'.

The level of VET graduates' satisfaction with education is often higher than for general education graduates. This is clearer in the case of developing work-related skills where VET graduates are far more satisfied than general education graduates. In terms of key competences, the survey suggests that VET allows learners to develop some soft skills, such as creativity and working with others, that are usually associated with general education. When it comes to speaking a foreign language, cultural awareness and mathematic skills, however, VET is perceived as less effective than general education.

VET graduates tend to need less time to find a long-term job than general education graduates, in line with their perceptions and the portrait image of VET, while their career satisfaction is similar.

The survey provides a generally positive picture of VET in Europe. Despite the many challenges VET systems are facing, including budget constraints in a labour market still recovering from a long period of economic crisis in many Member States, European citizens tend to have a positive attitude towards VET, its quality and effectiveness. People value upper secondary VET as a way to find jobs, strengthen the economy, help reduce unemployment and tackle social inclusion. However, at the same time, in too many European countries VET at upper secondary level still seems to suffer from lack of esteem: perceptions of VET are poor when compared to general education and it is still considered a second choice for second-rate students. VET is often seen as a type of education that permits securing a job quickly, but not necessarily a well-paid, well-regarded job. VET is also not perceived as offering progression opportunities to higher education; this is a major argument for those who opted for general education. However, major country differences require further exploration to determine factors influencing the image of VET in different national contexts.

CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

1.1. Context

High quality vocational education and training (VET) systems can help combat unemployment, improve labour market integration and fight social exclusion. Equipping people with the right skills not only for employment but also to improve their life chances is at the heart of the *New skills agenda for Europe* (European Commission, 2016); within it, VET has a strategic role to play. VET systems are normally seen as more flexible learning systems, better adapted to the labour market, providing a better match between education and labour-market needs. However, in many Member States, participation in VET is lagging behind general education, and VET is often seen as a second best option. Differences in the education and training systems, labour market, employment prospects of VET graduates and involvement of social partners, plus sociocultural traditions and perceptions, are some of the factors believed to influence the differences in participation in VET (European Commission, 2012b).

Understanding perceptions about the value of VET, its ability to equip people with the right skills and the likelihood of finding employment for VET graduates are decisive elements in creating VET as an attractive educational option.

However, there is little evidence on citizen's perceptions of VET in the literature. In 2012 a European Commission Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2012a) provided a general overview of VET perceptions in Europe. The Eurobarometer, however, did not contrast VET perceptions with views on general education and provided only limited insights into specific attractiveness factors of VET such as permeability or satisfaction with skills acquired. Cedefop's opinion survey aimed at filling this gap and providing a richer picture of VET perceptions in Europe suitable to inform VET policy-making.

1.2. Objectives of the report

This report brings together the results of the public opinion survey on VET in the 28 Member States, providing an overview of main results. More in-depth analysis of collected data will be carried out later on. Among other aspects, Cedefop will investigate low-qualified respondents, issues in relation to inter-generational perceptions, in-depth analysis of guidance and information as well as work-based

learning aspects of VET. ReferNet partners will also provide country-specific analysis to understand country results better. This report is a first step.

The aim of the survey is to explore EU citizens' understanding of, and attitudes towards VET. The survey aims at collecting information on VET in four main topics:

- (a) awareness and knowledge (Chapter 2);
- (b) attractiveness and access (Chapter 3);
- (c) experience and satisfaction (Chapter 4);
- (d) outcomes and effectiveness (Chapter 5);

Given the heterogeneity and variety of VET within and between Member States, the scope of the survey is mostly focused on initial vocational training (IVET) at upper secondary level. Some more general questions were also asked about VET without reference to a specific level or segment of the education and training system.

Addressing terminology challenges and concepts that underpin VET were crucial to shaping the survey design. The conceptualisation of 'upper secondary' and the distinction between VET and general education were the most prominent issues identified in the questionnaire design (Annex 3). For the purpose of the survey we used operational definitions based on the international standard classification of education (ISCED) and on Cedefop's terminology (Cedefop, 2014). Since the term 'upper secondary education' was not always understood in each country, a glossary of the term 'upper secondary education' was created for each official language spoken in the Member States and an age bracket was included to help respondents to frame upper secondary education as something that 'was concluded when you were 16 to 18' or so depending on the country.

The following definition of VET at upper secondary level was read out to respondents: 'vocational education is designed to give participants the practical and technical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade. In the following questions, we refer to vocational education which takes place at upper secondary education at 16 to 18 years old'.

1.3. Methodology

The survey was carried out on behalf of Cedefop by Kantar Public in the 28 Member States between 1 and 29 June, 2016. A total of 35 646 respondents from different social and demographic groups aged 15 and over were interviewed. More details on the survey design can be found in the technical report and in Annex 1.

The basic sample design applied in all Member States is a multistage, random (probability) one. In each country, a number of sampling points was drawn, with probability proportional to population size (for total coverage of the country) and to population density. These sample points assure a representation of the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to Eurostat NUTS2 ⁽²⁾ (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and in the appropriate national language, which assures better response rates. Data capture was by computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) in those countries where this technique was available.

The survey was conducted in three phases. First, in November 2015, 20 cognitive interviews were conducted in Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Poland and the UK to test the questionnaire (Annex 3) in six different languages. Participants were asked 15 to 20 survey questions and interviewers probed around the questions to understand better the responses and how they were understood and perceived. In April 2016, the second draft of the survey questionnaire, following modifications after the cognitive interviews, was fielded in all Member States with 30 pilot interviews being conducted in each of the countries (840 interviews in total). Both phases were important steps in the survey design, testing the questions themselves as well as the logistical aspects of multi-country fieldwork. The third phase was the final data collection in all Member States.

The figures on this report are based on answers relating to participation in upper secondary education, whether it was VET-oriented or not. The survey collected information on respondents' education orientation at upper secondary level. An operational definition of VET as referred above, based on Cedefop's and the international standard classification of education (ISCED) was read out to respondents who attended upper secondary education. Then they were asked whether their education was primarily general or vocational: this relies on the individual's judgement, not on official understanding of what constitutes VET. Though this determined the level of participation in VET at upper secondary level, the data are not comparable to others in the labour force survey or in the Unesco OECD Eurostat (UOE) joint data collection, as the collection methodology is different (see Annex 2).

⁽²⁾ Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics: basic regions of the application of regional policies. Figures updated in August 2015.

Figure 1. Data collection process



NB: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation (Table 1).

Source: Cedefop.

Table 1. Countries studied and abbreviations

BE	Belgium	IT	Italy	RO	Romania
BG	Bulgaria	CY *	Cyprus	SI	Slovenia
CZ	Czech Republic	LV	Latvia	SK	Slovakia
DK	Denmark	LT	Lithuania	FI	Finland
DE	Germany	LU	Luxembourg	SE	Sweden
EE	Estonia	HU	Hungary	UK	United Kingdom
IE	Ireland	MT	Malta		
EL	Greece	NL	Netherlands	EU-28	European Union – weighted average for the 28 Member States
ES	Spain	AT	Austria		
FR	France	PL	Poland		
HR	Croatia	PT	Portugal		

* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 28 Member States. However, the 'acquis communautaire' has been suspended in the part of the country which is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the 'CY' category and in the EU-28 average.

CHAPTER 2.

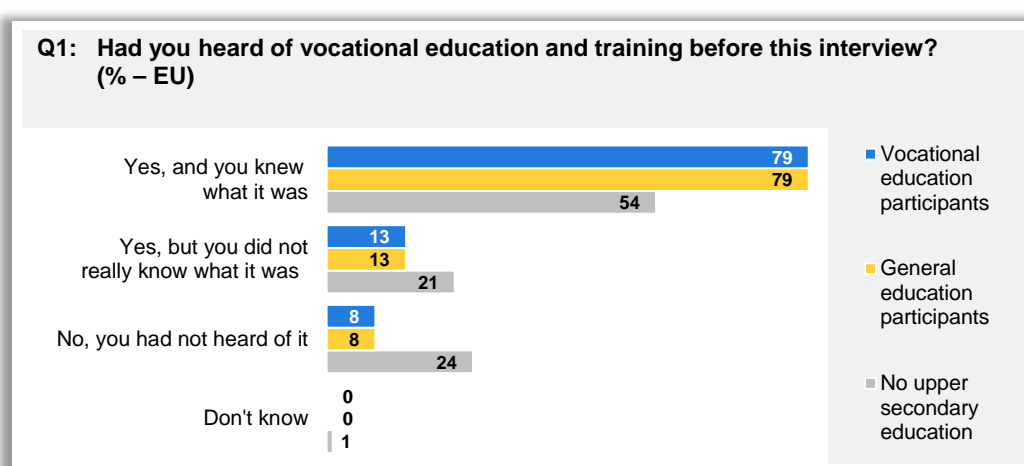
Awareness of vocational education

Increasing participation in VET and making it a more attractive option requires that people are informed and aware of VET opportunities and of how VET differs from general education. The aim of this chapter is to investigate EU citizens' awareness and understanding of VET. To obtain unbiased responses based solely on respondents' own understanding of VET, the first questions relating to VET awareness (Q1, Figures 2 and 3) and conceptualisation (Q2, Figure 4) were asked without providing a definition. Only subsequently respondents were given a definition of VET that would be used across the whole survey.

2.1. Knowing VET

In the EU as a whole, most survey respondents (86%) say that they had heard of VET before their interview. Respondents who did not go to upper secondary education are less familiar with VET: 75% have heard of it and only 54% say that they had heard of it and know what it is. By contrast, four in five respondents who did go to upper secondary education say they know what VET is: the proportion is identical for those who primarily did general education and those who mainly did vocational education (79%).

Figure 2. **Knowing about VET (by type of orientation)**



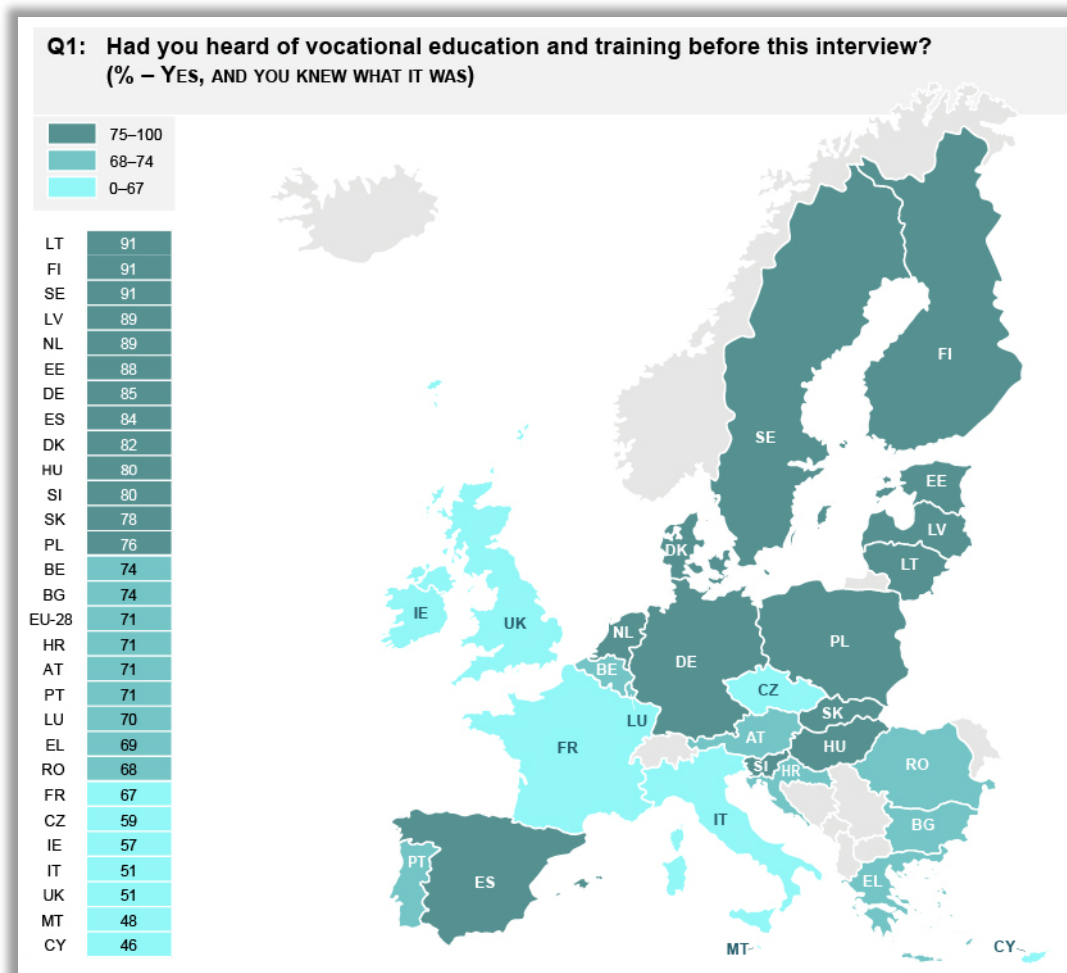
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

In Lithuania, Finland and Sweden, more than nine in 10 respondents say that they had heard of VET and know what it is (91% in each case). Relatively high levels of awareness can also be seen in other countries in northern and eastern Europe, most notably Latvia, the Netherlands (both 89%) and Estonia (88%).

The lowest levels of awareness can be seen in Cyprus (46%), Malta (48%), Italy and the UK (both 51%). There is a general pattern whereby awareness of VET is lower among those who did not go to upper secondary education at all. This pattern may explain the low levels of awareness in some of these countries; for example Malta has a high proportion of respondents who did not go to upper secondary education at all (60%).

Figure 3. **Knowing about VET (country results)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

2.2. General conceptualisation of VET

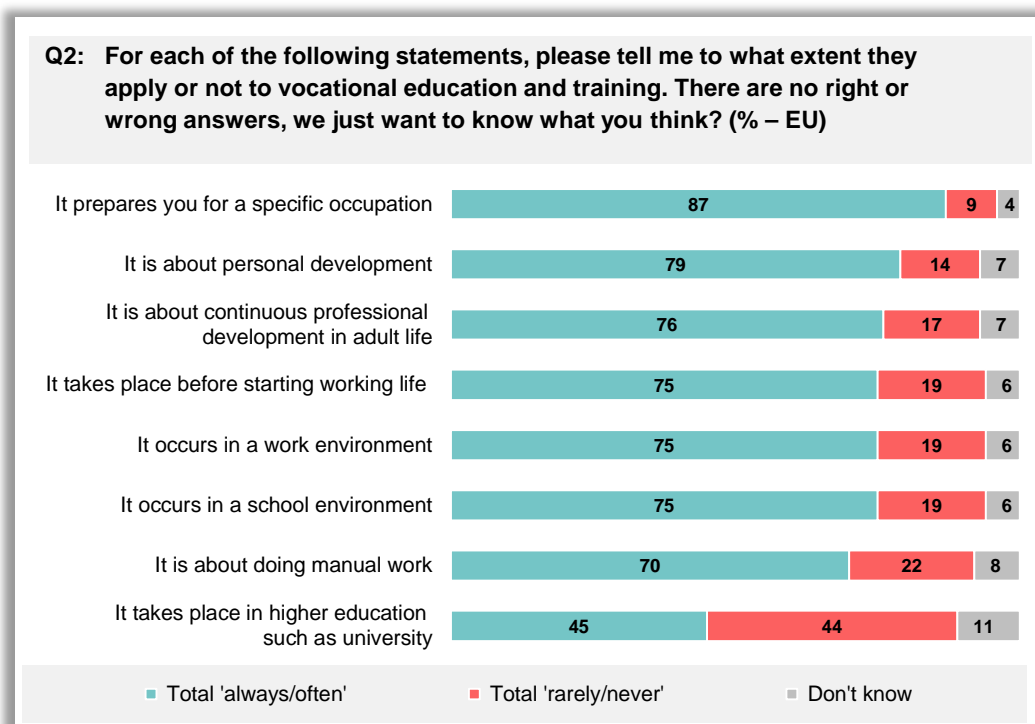
The survey also explores how respondents conceptualise VET. Before they were given any specific definition of VET in this survey, respondents were given eight statements and were asked to indicate to what extent they thought they applied to VET. The statements were developed to address the following aspects of VET:

- (a) school- versus work-based VET;
- (b) continuous VET versus initial VET;
- (c) its relationship to higher education;
- (d) its relationship to occupations;
- (e) its connection to personal development;
- (f) its connection to doing manual work.

The results show that respondents relate VET to most of the identified aspects. All statements, except the connection to higher education, were considered to be 'always or often' applicable to VET by 70% or more of the respondents. The most distinctive characteristic of VET, according to respondents, is that 'it prepares you for a specific occupation'; almost nine in 10 respondents (87%) say that this always or often applies to VET. As might be expected, the characteristic less associated with VET is that it 'takes place in higher education such as university'. Less than half of respondents (45%) agree with that statement applying always or often to VET.

Around four in five respondents (79%) say that VET is always or often 'about personal development'. Respondents are equally likely to say that VET occurs in a work environment and in a school environment. In each case, three quarters of respondents (75%) say that this always or often applies to VET. Similar proportions feel that two other statements always or often apply to VET: 'it is about continuous professional development in adult life' (76%); and 'it takes place before starting working life' (75%). A slightly lower proportion (70%) say that VET is always or often 'about doing manual work',

These figures suggest that VET is primarily connected to an occupation, but that it entails a heterogeneous set of educational experiences at European level. The data also indicate that VET is seen as something that combines and bridges the worlds of education and employment. Findings for this question are generally consistent between respondents who took vocational education at the upper secondary stage, and those who took general education.

Figure 4. **Factors associated with VET (EU)**

Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

2.3. Education guidance and information

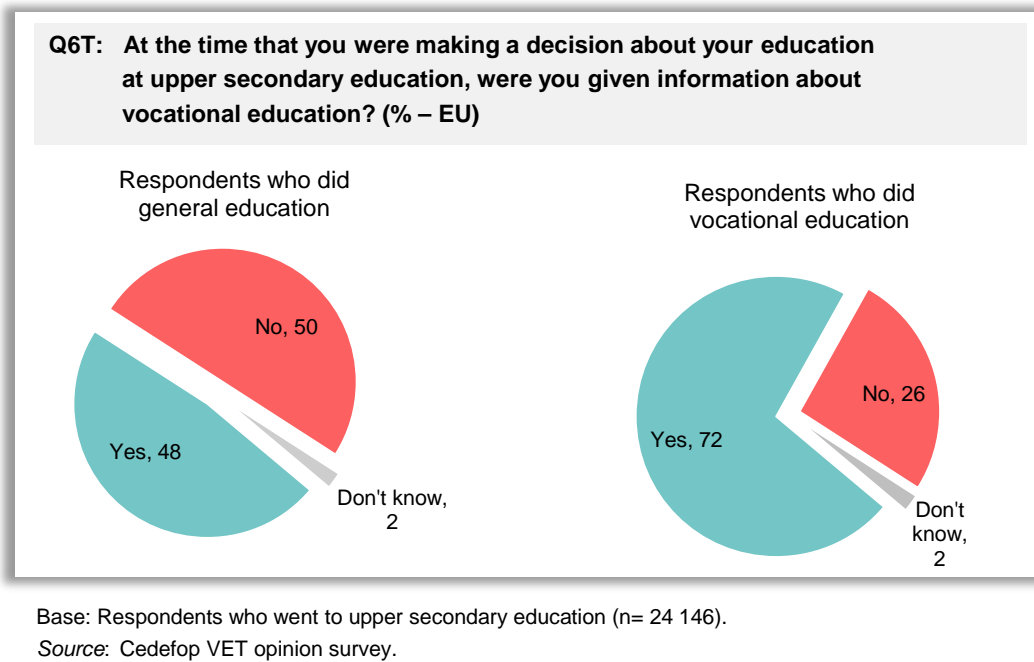
One of the main elements for raising awareness of VET is the information and guidance provided to individuals when they have to choose an educational path. Guidance and counselling have a great potential for making VET more attractive by giving information about its qualities and better matching individual needs to the educational choice they make. This section focuses on information and guidance in relation to the choice of upper secondary education and its orientation. First, it looks at whether respondents were given information about vocational education when they were making a decision on their orientation on upper secondary education; it then examines whether respondents that did not go to VET were advised against participating in vocational education. Finally, it examines the reasons for choosing an orientation at upper secondary level: either vocational or general education.

2.3.1. Provision of information

Most of the respondents (57%) who went to upper secondary received information about VET. However, there is a marked difference between general

education and VET orientation. Among those whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational, 72% say that they were given information about VET when making a decision; this is true only for 48% of the ones whose upper secondary was primarily general.

Figure 5. **Provision of information (VET versus GE participants)**

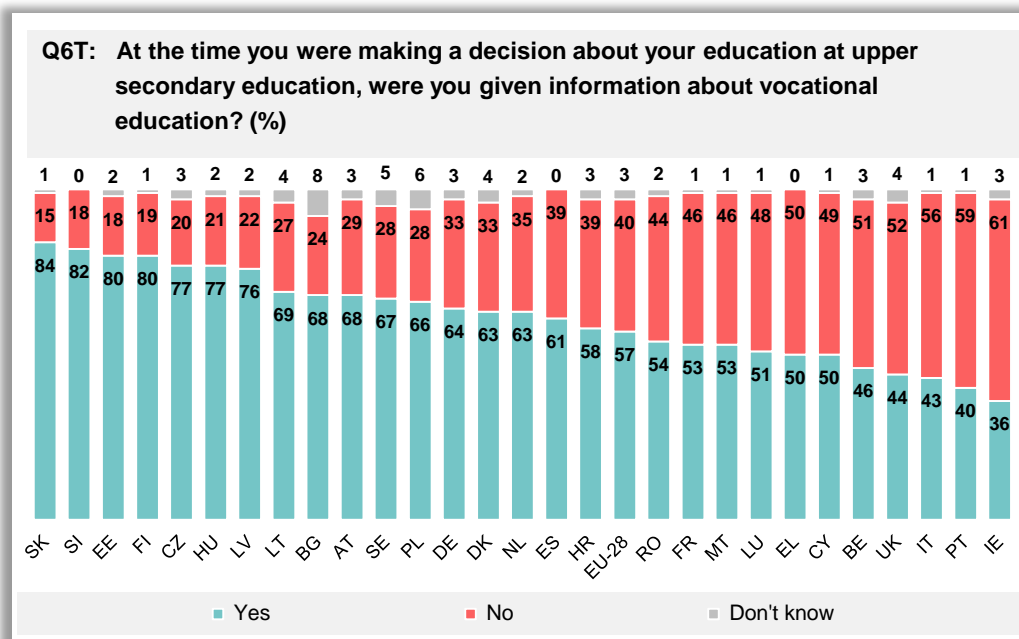


There are large differences between Member States. In seven countries, three-quarters of respondents or more say that they received information on VET: Slovakia (84%), Slovenia (82%), Finland (80%), Estonia (80%), Hungary (77%), Czech Republic (77%) and Latvia (76%).

By contrast, in five Member States less than half of respondents say that they received information about vocational education when they were making a decision about their upper secondary education: Ireland (36%), Portugal (40%), Italy (43%), the UK (44%) and Belgium (46%).

Figure 7 relates the proportion of respondents that received information to the proportion of those who participated in VET at upper secondary level. The chart plots the various Member States on a graph: the proportion who received information about vocational education is plotted on the x-axis, while the y-axis shows the proportion who went on vocational education.

Figure 6. Provision of information (country results)



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

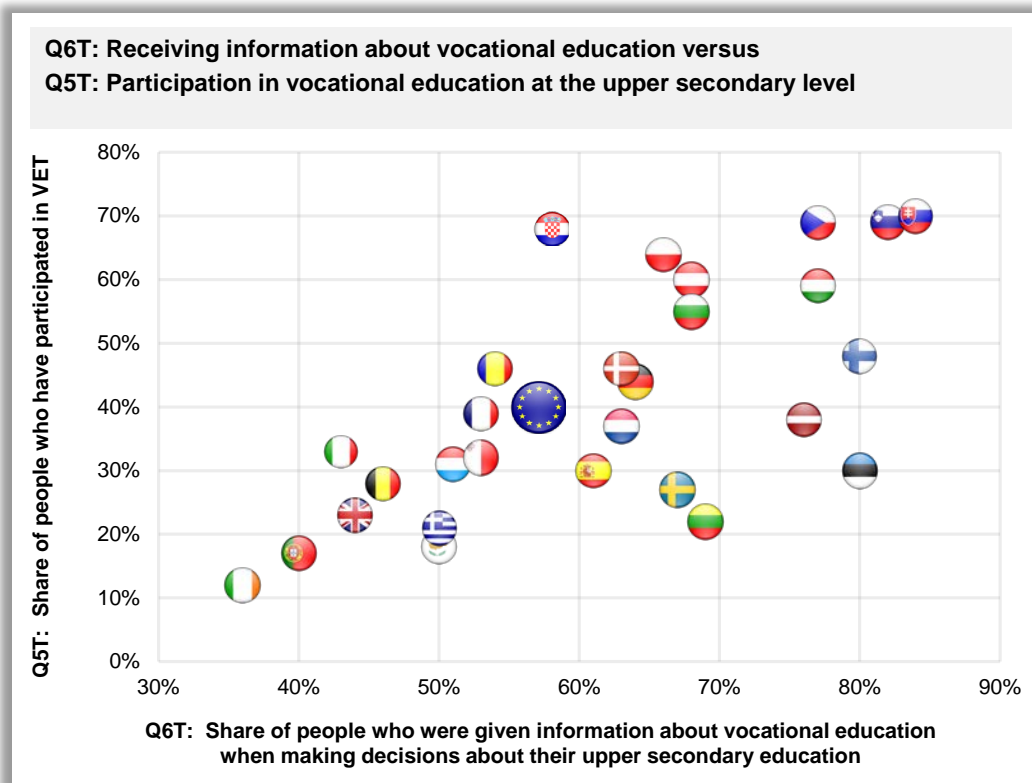
The chart helps to show the extent to which the two questions are correlated: whether high levels of participation in vocational education are matched by large proportions receiving information about it. If the two questions were highly correlated, the various Member States would cluster around a straight line running from bottom-left to top right.

The chart indicates that the two questions are fairly well correlated at country level. There are countries with high figures on both questions: Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. By contrast, there are countries with low figures on both questions: Ireland, Portugal and the UK. There is another group of countries that are further deviated from this rule. Estonia is one of the highest ranked countries in terms of information about vocational education, but has a relatively low proportion of respondents that reported participating in vocational education; this is also the case with Austria and, to a lesser extent, with Lithuania and Sweden, with low proportions of VET participants but relatively high information provision. Conversely, Croatia has one of the highest levels of participation in vocational education but is only around mid-way in the rankings on whether respondents received information about it.

Overall, there is a statistically significant correlation between the two questions at the country level (correlation of 0.669 according to the Pearson correlation test). Countries that have high levels of provision of information in

VET tend to have higher levels of participation. Although correlation *per se* does not indicate causality, data indicate that there is a link at the country level between receiving information about VET and participating in VET ⁽³⁾.

Figure 7. **Relationship between provision of information and participation in VET (country results)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey advice on education path.

The survey also looks into discouragement from taking VET. Respondents that did not participate in VET at upper secondary level were asked whether anyone advised them against taking vocational education ⁽⁴⁾ about the time when they were aged 16 to 18 and were deciding on their orientation of upper secondary education. One in four respondents (25%) who took general education say that someone advised them against taking vocational education. The advice

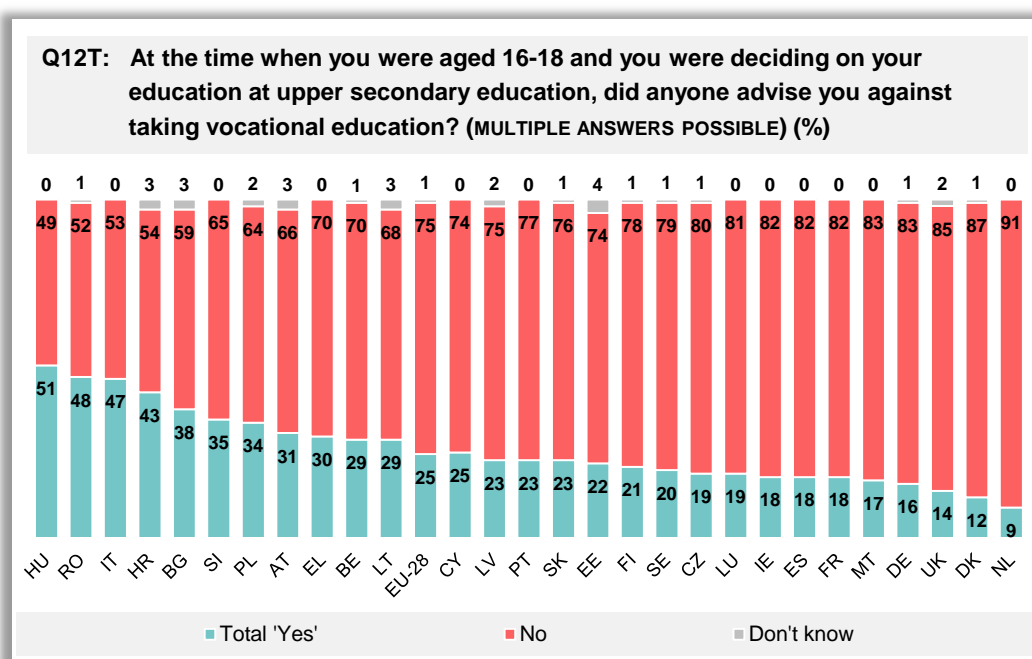
⁽³⁾ Further analysis indicates a weak association only at the level of the individual respondent (rather than the country level), with a ϕ (Phi) coefficient of 0.235.

⁽⁴⁾ Total 'yes' means the share of respondents who said at least one of these answers: 'yes, your friends'; 'yes, your family'; 'yes, someone at school (teacher or career advisor)'; 'yes, someone from the world of work'; 'yes, someone else'.

was most commonly given by someone in their family (17%), but also came from someone at their school (8%) or from a friend (5%).

Findings vary markedly between countries. At one extreme, around half of respondents in Hungary (51%), Romania (48%) and Italy (47%) say that someone advised them against taking vocational education. By contrast, only small proportions say that this happened to them in the Netherlands (9%), Denmark (12%) and the UK (14%).

Figure 8. **Advising against VET (country results)**



Base: Respondents who went to general education at upper secondary level (n= 14,242).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

2.4. Reasons for deciding on an education path

We now look at the reasons why respondents chose to do either vocational or general education when they were in upper secondary education. We asked respondents to indicate from a list of 13 factors which ones might have played a role when deciding what to do in upper secondary education. At EU level, the most common reason is 'interest in the subject' (41%) as well as because 'your family and friends advise you to'. This relies on individual memory, potentially a problem for older individuals though analysis at EU level of age differences among the factors does not indicate too much variation across age groups. One marked difference is in 'the possibility of continuing to higher education' which

older people are less likely to indicate as a reason to choose. In the rest, the proportion of respondents is similar. Further analysis of the age influence will be carried out in future publications on the survey.

Figure 9 shows the reasons split between the two groups: those who did VET and those who went to general education. The two main reasons given by vocational education respondents are the likelihood of finding a job (46%) and interest in the subjects (41%). The next most frequently mentioned reasons are because their family or friends advised them to (31%), career prospects (27%), being good at the subjects (23%), and the possibility of having a good salary (23%).

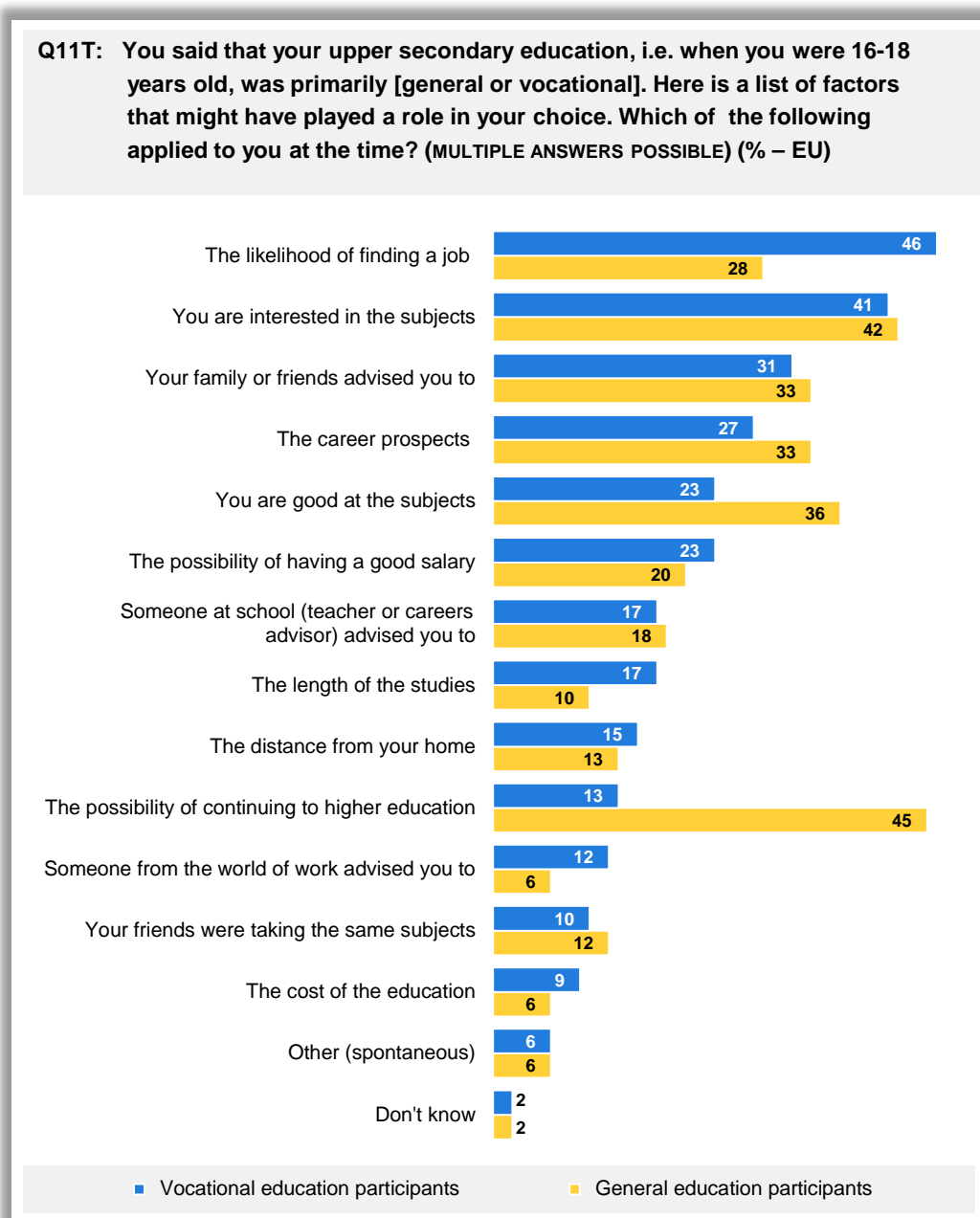
The same reasons also feature prominently among general education respondents. However, the most common reason among these respondents was the possibility of continuing to higher education; this is much more likely to be given as a reason by those who did general education (45%) than those who did vocational education (13%).

A comparison between the two groups shows a number of other differences. Those who took vocational education are more likely than those who took general education to say that it was because of the likelihood of finding a job (46% compared with 28%), because of the length of studies (17% compared with 10%) and because someone from the world of work advised them to (12% compared with 6%).

Other reasons that are more likely to be given by those who did general education than those who did vocational education include being good at the subject (36% compared with 23%) and career prospects (33% compared with 27%).

The reasons for choosing vocational education are broadly consistent across Member States. However, there is a general divide between countries where there is a greater emphasis on being good at or interested in the subjects, and those where there is a greater emphasis on career prospects and/or finding a job. The first group includes Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden while the second group includes Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Portugal and Slovenia.

Figure 9. **Factors that influenced decision on education path (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: Respondents who took general or vocational education at the upper secondary level (n= 23,945).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

CHAPTER 3.

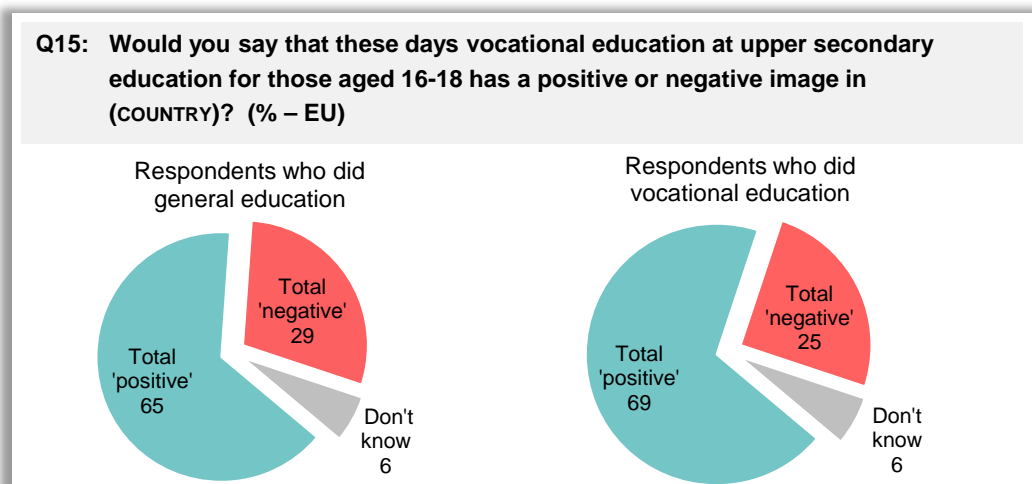
Attractiveness of vocational education

This chapter looks at the attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET). Attractiveness in VET has been defined as its capacity to encourage individuals to choose vocational education and training; offer quality qualifications that open up career prospects; persuade employers to recruit holders of VET certificates (Cedefop, 2014, p. 30). However, the operationalisation of attractiveness in this survey required an individual perspective. While, attractiveness of VET has traditionally used proxies such as measures of participation, the survey has operationalised attractiveness through a series of questions related to the image of VET and its perceived benefits. The chapter also looks into the attractiveness of VET in comparison to general education. It looks at whether vocational education has a positive or negative image at national level and explores this image in more detail and in relation to general education. The chapter then looks into attractiveness in relation to the labour market outcomes associated with VET and presents data on the prioritisation of VET over general education in terms of investment and recommendation for the next generation. In Section 3.6 we explore perceived permeability and progression, defined as ease in changing from a VET programme to a general programme at different levels. The chapter closes with a focus on the mobility prospects associated with VET as another factor for attractiveness.

3.1. Vocational education image

The general image of VET is relatively positive in Europe. Around two in three Europeans (68%) think that vocational education at the upper secondary stage has a positive image in their country, while just under a quarter (23%) say that it has a negative image. The proportion of respondents with a positive image is slightly higher among those that participated in VET (69%) than among general education participants (65%).

Figure 10. Perceived VET image in one's country (VET vs GE participants)

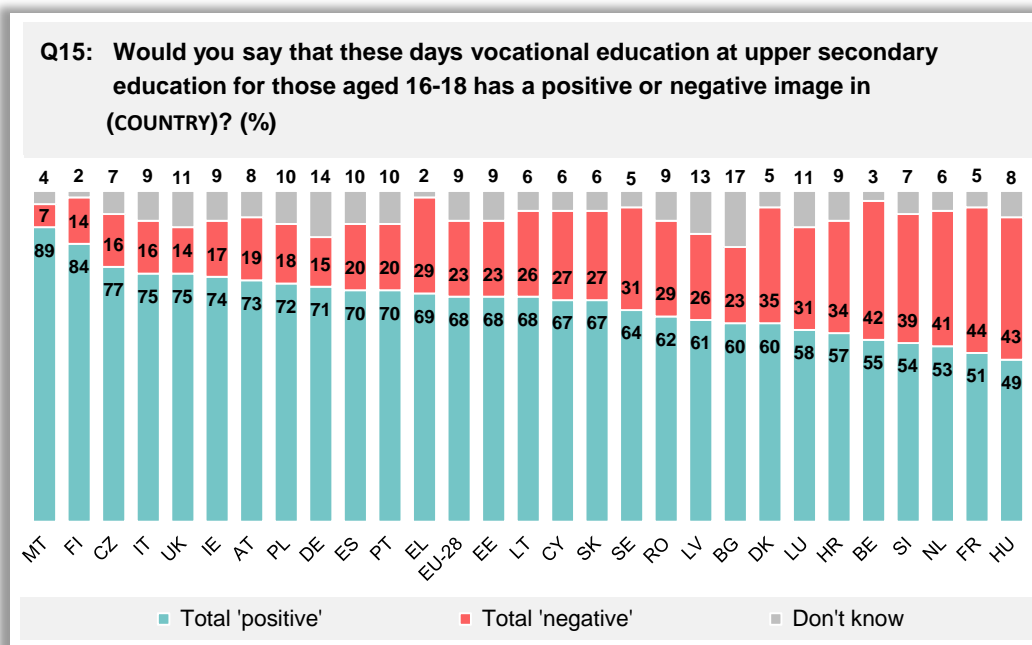


Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

In every Member State, respondents are more likely to say that vocational education in their country has a positive image rather than negative. Respondents in Malta (89%) and Finland (84%) are most likely to say that vocational image has a positive image, followed by respondents in the Czech Republic (77%), the UK and Italy (both 75%). The countries where vocational education is most likely to be seen as having a negative image are France (44%), Hungary (43%), Belgium (42%), the Netherlands (41%) and Slovenia (39%).

Figure 11. Perceived VET image (country results)



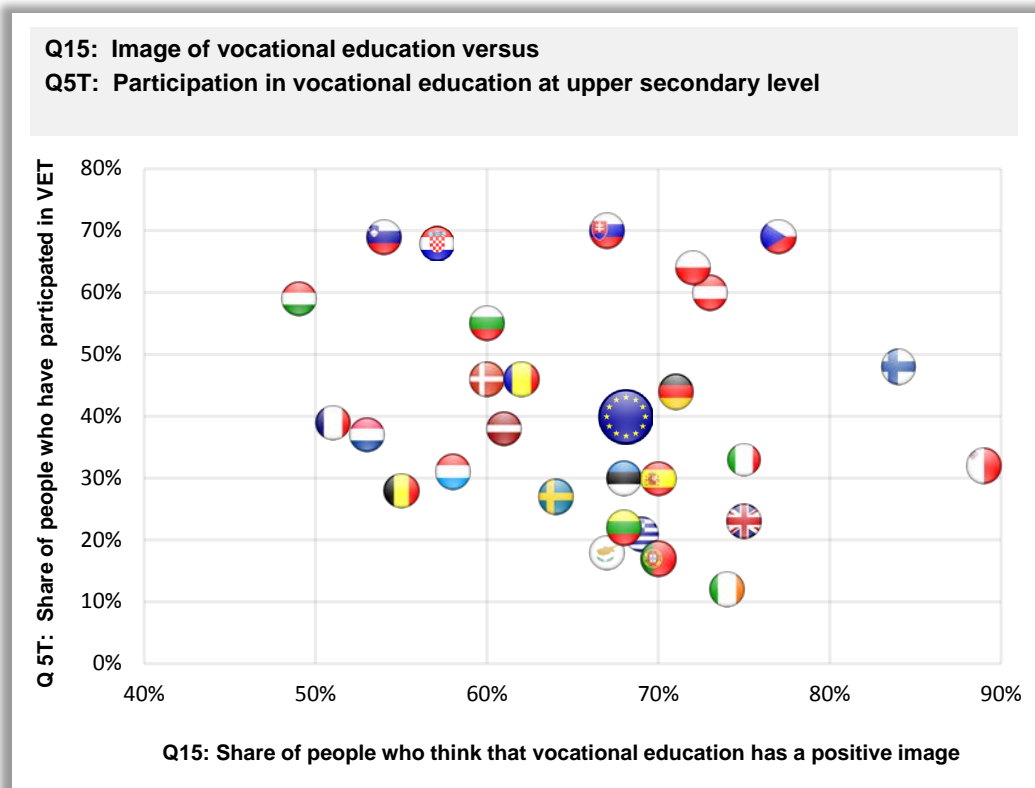
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

One would expect a positive image of VET in the country to be associated with a high level of participation but the data do not support this claim. Figure 12 shows the relationship between the image of vocational education in each country and the proportion of respondents who have participated in vocational education at upper secondary stage. The proportion of those who say that vocational education has a positive image is plotted on the x-axis, while the y-axis shows the proportion of those who went on vocational education.

There is no statistically significant correlation between the two questions and, as Figure 12 shows, there is no clear pattern between high or low rankings for the various Member States. This suggests that the image of vocational education is not linked to the level of participation in each country, so the traditional measurement of attractiveness – participation in VET – does not relate to perceived image at country level. Participation might depend on many other factors; some of those possibly influencing the image of VET are explored in the next section.

Figure 12. Relationship between undertaking VET and its perceived image (country results)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.2. Qualifying VET image

Most respondents consider that VET has a positive image in their country. However, when compared to general education, the proportion of respondents that consider VET as having a better image than general education is considerably reduced. The survey asked how much individuals agreed with the three following statements:

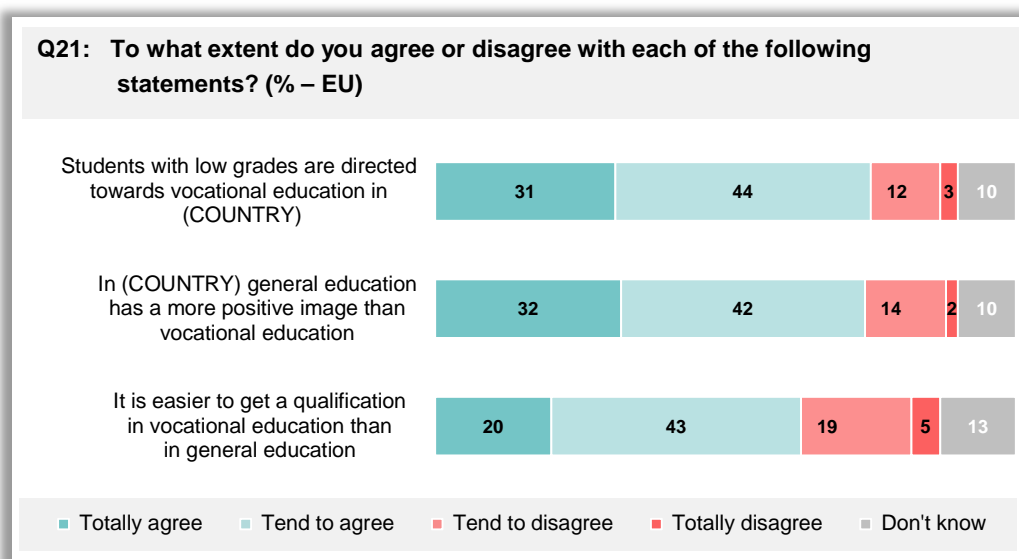
- (a) students with low grades are directed towards VET;
- (b) in [country] general education has a more positive image than VET;
- (c) it is easier to get a qualification in VET than in general education.

Most EU citizens agree that 'general education has a more positive image than vocational education' in their country (74%), including around a third (32%) who agree strongly, while only 16% disagree with such statement.

Responses to other questions comparing vocational and general education follow a similar pattern. Three in four EU citizens (75%) agree that students with

low grades are directed towards vocational education in their country, with 31% agreeing strongly. Results are slightly less clear cut on the issue of whether it is easier to get a qualification in vocational education than in general education. Most respondents agree with this statement (63%), although around one in four (24%) disagree. Some of these statements are explored in more detailed below.

Figure 13. **General perceptions of VET (EU)**



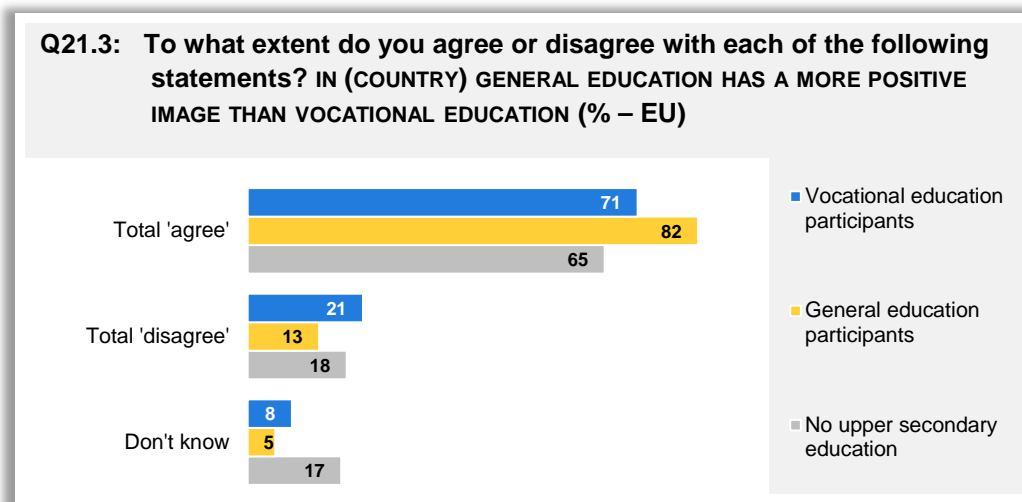
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.2.1. Image of VET: comparison with general education

Most respondents in all groups consider general education as having a more positive image than VET. Agreement is highest among respondents who went through general education themselves (82% agree and just 13% disagree). However, those who participated in vocational education are also likely to agree with the statement (71% agree, 21% disagree). People without upper secondary education report a relatively higher proportion of 'don't know' answers (17%), as with other questions, but also in this group 65% consider general education to have a more positive image than VET.

Figure 14. Image of GE compared to VET in country (VET vs GE participants)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

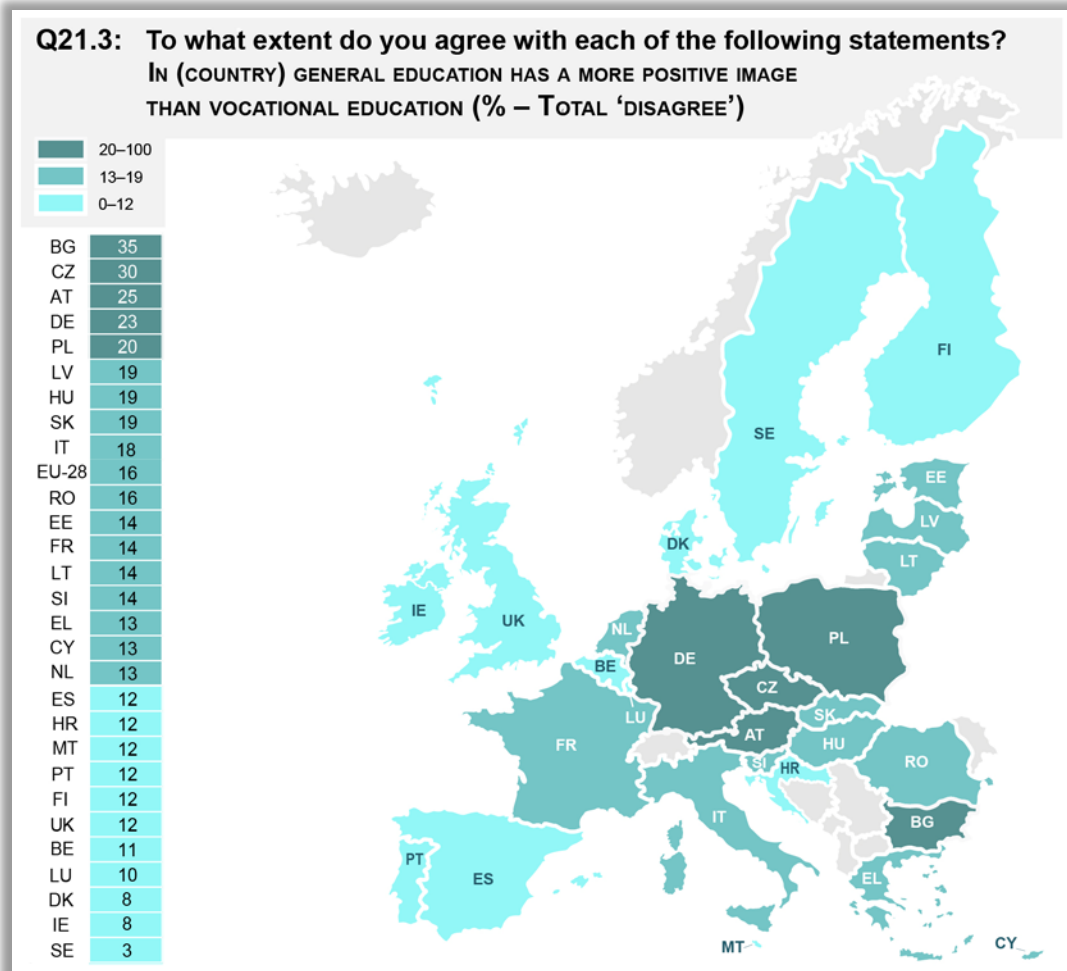
Respondents' views on the image of VET compared to general education differ greatly across countries. Figure 15 focuses on the proportions of respondents who disagree that general education has a more positive image of VET, where a high percentage reflects the view that vocational education has as good image or a better image than general education.

Respondents in Bulgaria (35%) and the Czech Republic (30%) are most likely to disagree, followed by those in Austria (25%), Germany (23%) and Poland (20%). In general, higher disagreement (a more positive image of vocational education) is found in central and eastern parts of Europe. The lowest levels of disagreement are found in Sweden (3%), Denmark (8%), Ireland (8%) and Luxembourg (10%). Sweden is distinctive in having a large proportion of respondents who 'totally agree' that general education has a more positive image than vocational education (69% compared with the EU average of 32%). In general, low levels of disagreement (positive perceptions of general education) are seen in the Nordic countries and in western parts of Europe.

If we compare the country patterns for this question with those on the overall image of vocational education (Figure 11), we see that there is no strong relationship between the two. For example, respondents in Bulgaria are most likely to disagree that general education has a more positive image than vocational education in their country; however, they are not particularly likely to say that vocational education has a positive image (it is ranked below the EU average). This suggests that underlying the perceived image of vocational education is a more general perception of the education system generally and

that both vocational and general education may be viewed positively or negatively.

Figure 15. **Shares of people who disagree that GE has a more positive image than VET (country results)**



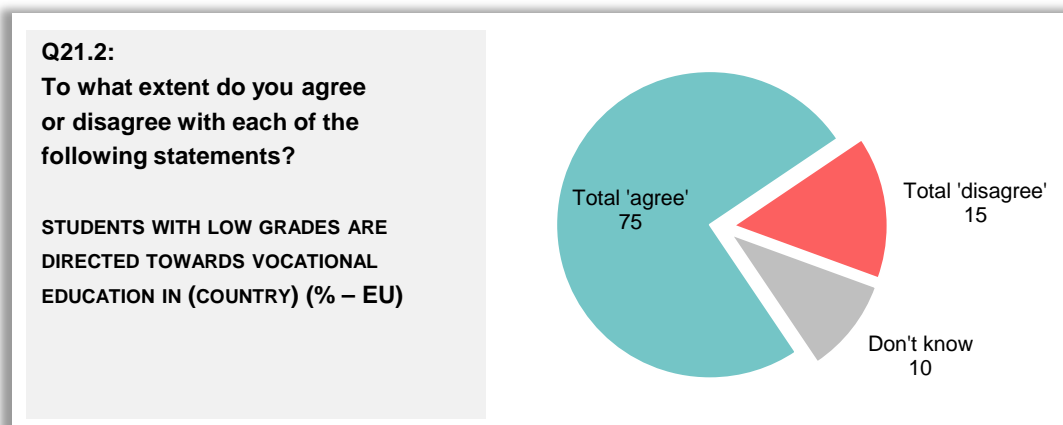
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.2.2. Image of VET: academic performance

We now look more closely at respondents' views on whether students with low grades are directed towards vocational education in their country. There is a clear majority that see VET as for students with low grades. Overall, three in four EU citizens (75%) agree with this statement, while 15% disagree. Those who went through general education are slightly more likely to agree than those who went through vocational education (81% compared with 74%). This still represents a strong level of agreement even among those from vocational education.

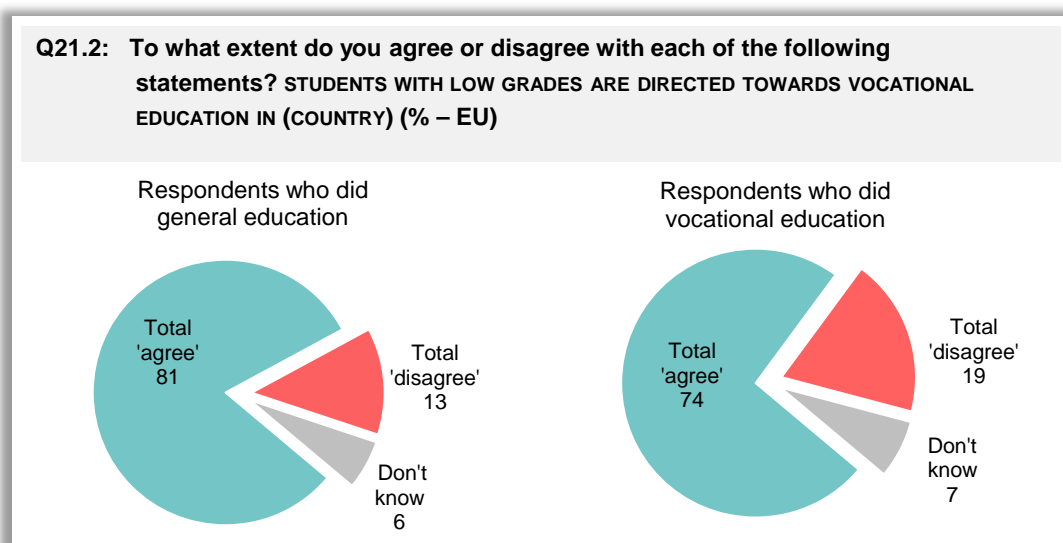
Figure 16. **Students with low grades directed to VET (EU)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Figure 17. **Students with low grades directed to VET (VET vs GE participants)**



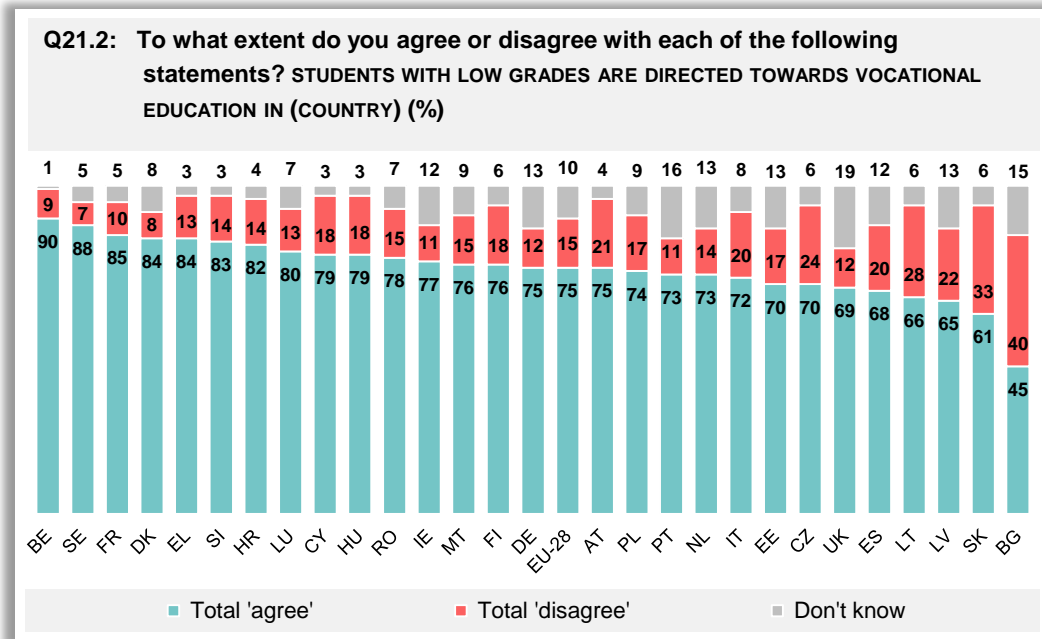
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

In most countries, a majority of respondents agree that students with low grades are directed towards vocational education in their country. The exception is Bulgaria, where almost as many respondents disagree as agree (40% compared with 45%). In all the rest, at least three in five respondents in each country agree with the statement; the highest levels of agreement can be found in Belgium (90%), Sweden (88%), France (85%), Denmark (84%), Greece (84%), Slovenia (83%) and Croatia (82%). Along with Bulgaria, there are high levels of

disagreement in Slovakia (33% disagree) and Lithuania (28%). The question obtained a relatively high number of 'don't know' answers in UK (19%), Portugal (16%), Bulgaria (15%).

Figure 18. **Students with low grades directed to VET (country results)**

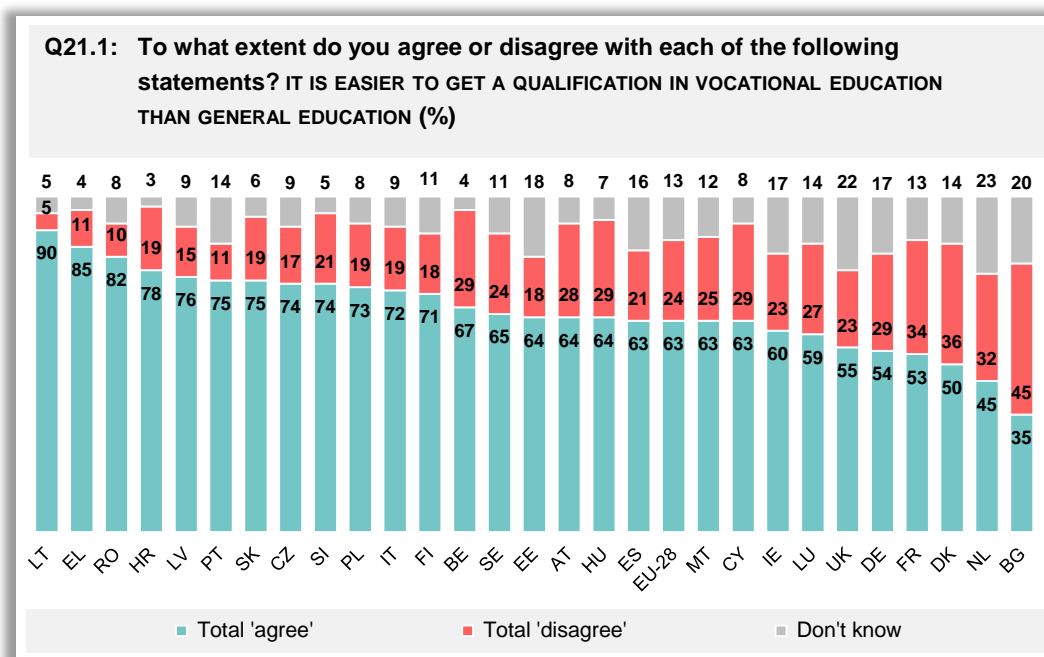


Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.2.3. Image of VET: ease of obtaining a qualification

Comparing ease of obtaining a VET qualification with general education, a similar pattern is observed as in previous questions, but the pattern is less pronounced. There are clear differences between Member States. In some countries, there is a strong level of agreement: more than three-quarters of respondents agree in Lithuania (90%), Greece (85%), Romania (82%), Croatia (78%) and Latvia (76%). By contrast, respondents in Bulgaria are more likely to disagree (45%) than agree (35%) with the statement. Relatively high levels of disagreement are also seen in Denmark (36%), France (34%) and the Netherlands (32%). The number of 'don't know' answers in this question is also relatively high in comparison with other questions: The Netherlands (23%), UK (22%), Bulgaria (20%).

Figure 19. **Qualifications easier to obtain in VET than in GE (country results)**

Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

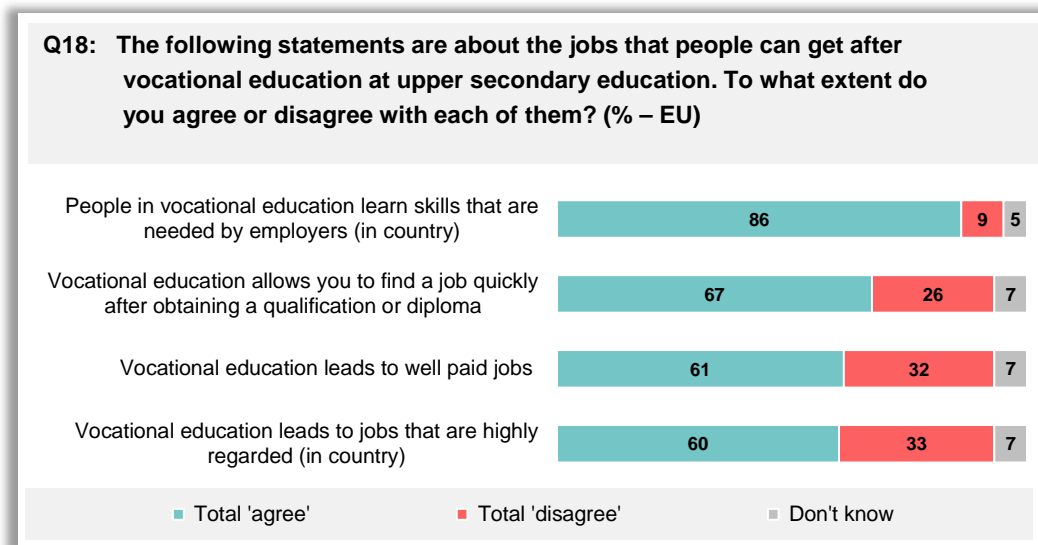
3.3. Attractiveness of VET: labour market outcomes

The survey also looks into the perceived labour market outcomes associated with VET, with the most common reason for choosing vocational education being the perceived likelihood of getting a job. This section looks in more detail at public attitudes to the impact of vocational education on getting a job.

Most EU citizens agree that 'people in vocational education learn skills that are needed by employers in [country]' (86%), while just 9% disagree. Agreement is slightly lower on other issues: two in three respondents (67%) agree that 'vocational education allows you to find a job quickly after obtaining a qualification or diploma', while 26% disagree. Around three in five respondents (61%) agree that 'vocational education leads to well-paid jobs', while a similar proportion (60%) agree that 'vocational education leads to jobs that are highly regarded in [country]'. On both statements, around one in three respondents disagree (32% and 33% respectively).

Overall, these findings confirm the generally positive image of vocational education across the EU, particularly in terms of gaining relevant employment skills.

Figure 20. **Core benefits of VET in relation to labour market issues (EU)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

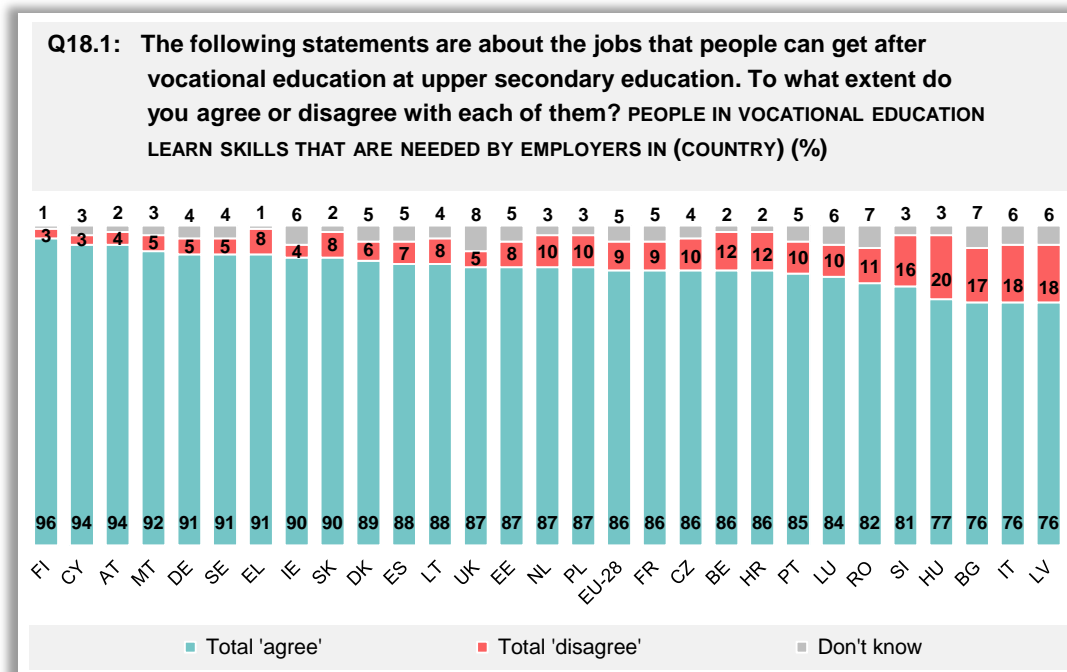
3.3.1. Matching labour market needs

There is a consensus across the various Member States that 'people in vocational education learn skills that are needed by employers' in their country. The European Commission has emphasised the importance of VET in responding to employers' needs and addressing skills shortages (European Commission, 2012b). At least three quarters of respondents in every country agree with this statement, with the lowest proportions seen in Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, (all 76%) and Hungary (77%). In several countries, at least nine respondents in 10 agree with the statement: Finland (96%), Cyprus (94%), Austria (94%), Malta (92%), Germany, Greece, Sweden (all 91%), Ireland and Slovakia (both 90%).

3.3.2. Leading to employment

In the EU as a whole, two in three citizens (67%) agree that 'vocational education allows you to find a job quickly after obtaining a qualification or diploma'. Agreement with this statement varies by Member State, with high levels of agreement found in Sweden (86%), Denmark, Belgium and Cyprus (all 81%). Respondents are most likely to disagree with this statement in Greece (45%), Latvia (45%), Spain (42%) and Portugal (40%). Structural employment patterns play a role in these perceptions.

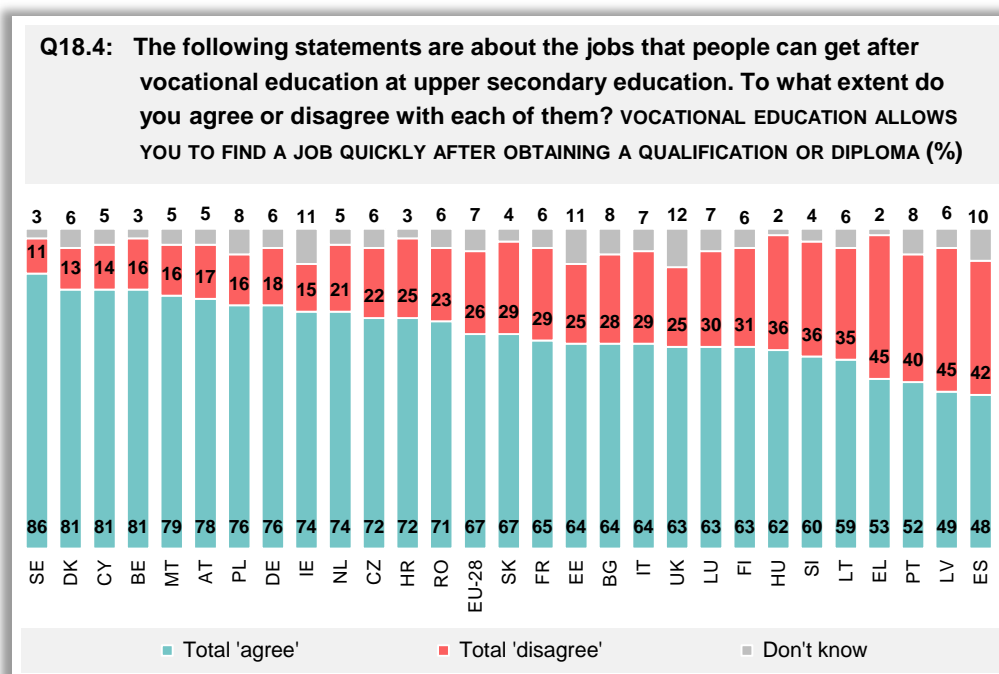
Figure 21. VET teaches skills needed by employers (country results)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Figure 22. VET allows people to find jobs quickly (country results)



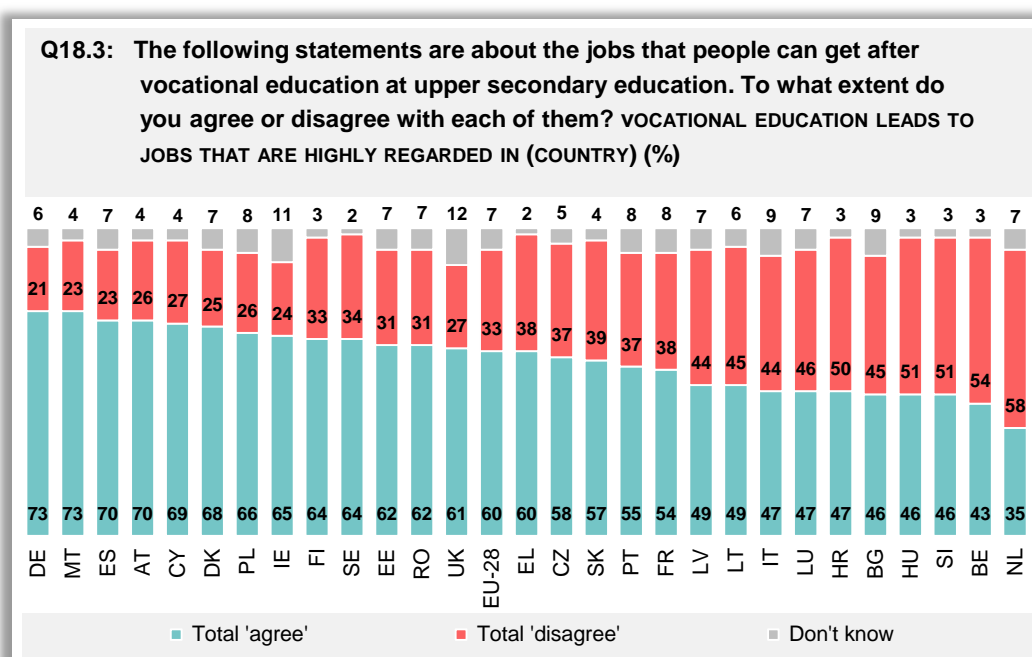
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.3.3. Jobs highly regarded

In most Member States, most respondents agree that 'vocational education leads to jobs that are highly regarded' in their country. However, in five countries disagreement outweighs agreement, most notably in the Netherlands (where 58% disagree and 35% agree), as well as in Belgium (54% disagree), Hungary (51%), Slovenia (51%) and Croatia (50%). In contrast, more than two-thirds of respondents agree that vocational education leads to jobs that are highly regarded in the following countries: Germany, Malta (both 73%), Spain, Austria (both 70%), Cyprus (69%), Denmark (68%), Poland (66%), Ireland (65%), Finland (64%), Sweden (64%), Greece (62%), Romania (62%), United Kingdom (61%), EU-28 (60%), Estonia (60%), Czechia (58%), Slovakia (57%), Portugal (55%), France (54%), Latvia (49%), Lithuania (49%), Italy (47%), Luxembourg (47%), Ireland (46%), Bulgaria (46%), Hungary (46%), Slovenia (46%), Belgium (43%) and Netherlands (35%).

Figure 23. VET leads to highly regarded jobs (country results)



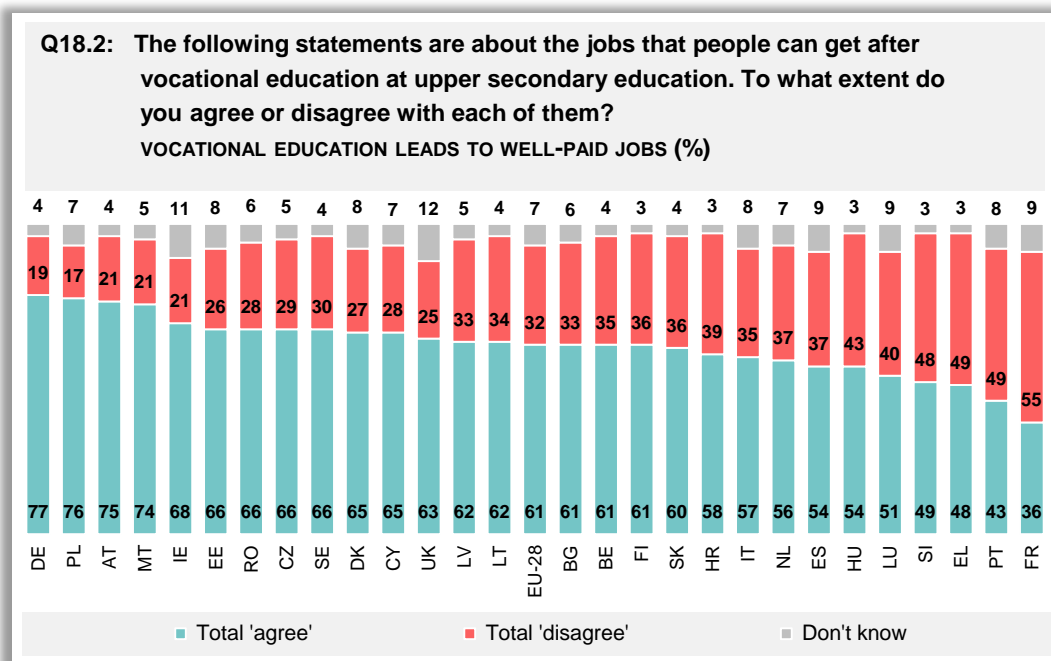
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.3.4. Well-paid jobs

The survey also prompted on the type of jobs it is possible to obtain after VET. In all but four Member States, most respondents agree that 'vocational education leads to well-paid jobs'. Respondents are most likely to agree with this statement in Germany (77%), Poland (76%), Austria (75%) and Malta (74%). Respondents are least likely to agree that vocational education leads to well-paid jobs in France (36%), followed by Portugal (43%), Greece (48%) and Slovenia (49%).

Figure 24. VET leads to well-paid jobs (country results)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

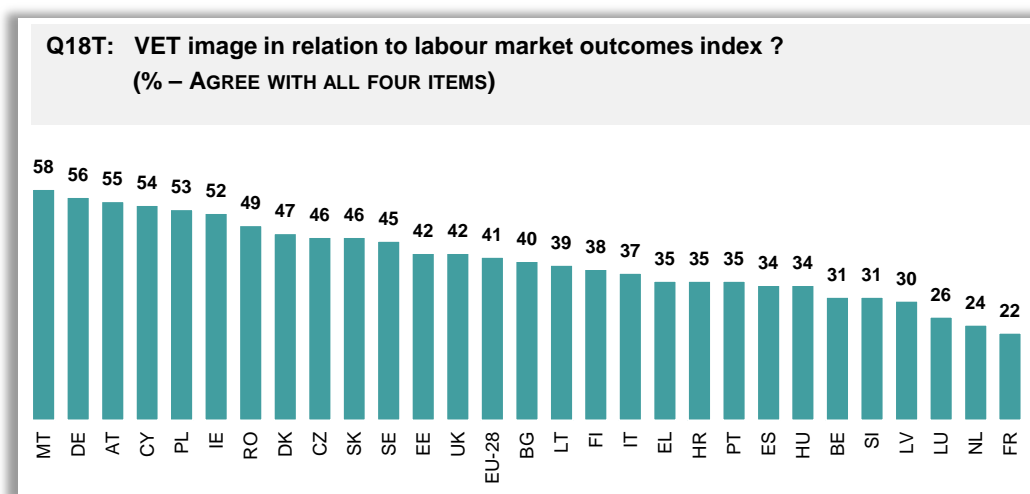
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.3.5. Overall perception on labour market outcomes

Figure 25 summarises the findings from the four statements about vocational education and employment. It shows the proportion of respondents in each country that agree with all four of the statements.

In six Member States, more than half of respondents agree with all four of the statements about vocational education and employment: Malta (58%), Germany (56%), Austria (55%), Cyprus (54%), Poland (53%) and Ireland (52%). The first three of these countries (Germany, Malta and Austria) are notable for being among the highest ranked countries on all four individual statements. By contrast, less than a third of respondents agree with all four statements in the following countries: France (22%), the Netherlands (24%), Luxembourg (26%), Latvia (30%), Belgium and Slovenia (both 31%). Luxembourg is notable for being among the lowest ranked countries on all four items, while France and the Netherlands show very low levels of agreement on specific items: the Netherlands in relation to vocational education leading to jobs that are highly regarded; and France in relation to vocational education leading to well-paid jobs.

Figure 25. **VET image in relation to labour market outcomes index (*) (country results)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

(*) The index is created with the answers to all items in Q18: people in vocational education learn skills that are needed by the employers in [country]; vocational education allows you to find a job quickly after obtaining a qualification or diploma; vocational education leads to well-paid jobs; vocational education leads to jobs that are highly regarded in [country].

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

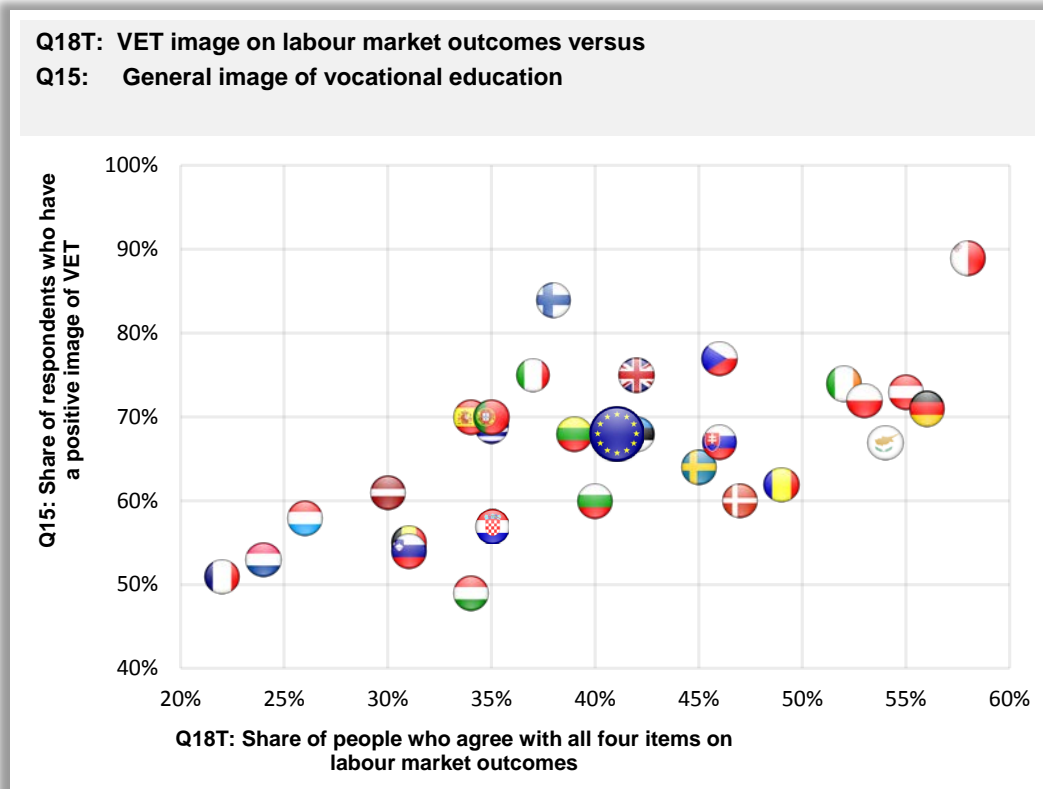
Figure 26 shows the relationship between the overall image of vocational education in each country and the levels of agreement with positive statements about vocational education and work. The proportion of respondents that agree with all four statements about vocational education and labour market outcomes is plotted on the x-axis, while the y-axis shows the proportion of those who say that vocational education has a positive image in their country. This analysis helps to show how much the perceived image of vocational education in each country is linked to respondents' views on the job prospects it offers.

Figure 26 indicates that the two questions are fairly well correlated at country level: overall correlation is 0.626 according to the Pearson correlation test ⁽⁵⁾. Countries such as Malta display very positive views on both indicators (overall image of VET and positive image of VET in terms of labour market outcomes); conversely, there are countries with less positive views on both indicators, such as France and the Netherlands. There are some exceptions to this rule: Finland is one of the highest ranked countries in terms of the overall image of vocational education, but it is ranked slightly below average in terms of agreement with the statements about vocational education and work. This suggests that respondents

⁽⁵⁾ Further analysis indicates a weak association only at the level of the individual respondent (rather than the country level), with a ϕ (Phi) coefficient of 0.237.

in Finland think vocational education has a positive image in their country but this may not necessarily be due to the job prospects it provides.

Figure 26. **VET image in relation to labour market outcomes index compared to VET's general perceived image (country results)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

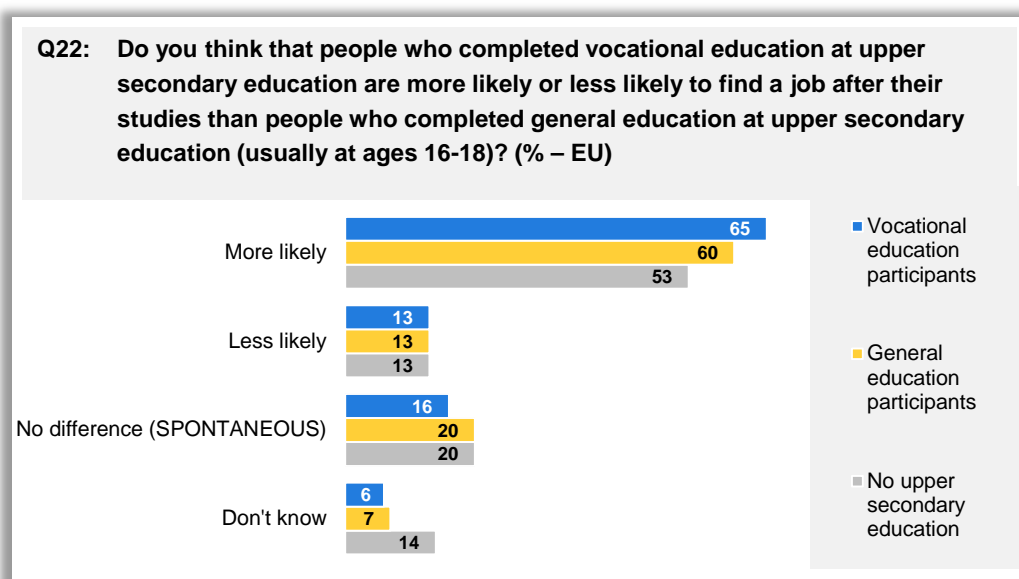
3.3.6. Attractiveness of VET: finding a job in comparison to general education

The connection between VET and labour market outcomes seems relatively strong, with most respondents believing that VET has a positive impact on labour market issues: providing the skills that employers need, offering the possibility of finding a job quickly or providing well-paid jobs.

When comparing vocational education with general education at the upper secondary stage, these views also hold. Most respondents say that people who complete vocational education are more likely to find a job than those who complete general education at upper secondary. Respondents who took vocational education are particularly likely to say this (65%), but the proportions are only slightly lower among those who took general education (60%) and those who report not going to upper secondary education at all (53%).

In each of the groups, one in eight respondents (13%) say that people who completed vocational education are less likely to find a job than those who completed general education. A slightly higher proportion say (spontaneously) that there is no difference between the two types of education: 16% among those from vocational education, and 20% of other respondents.

Figure 27. **Likelihood of finding a job (VET vs GE participants)**

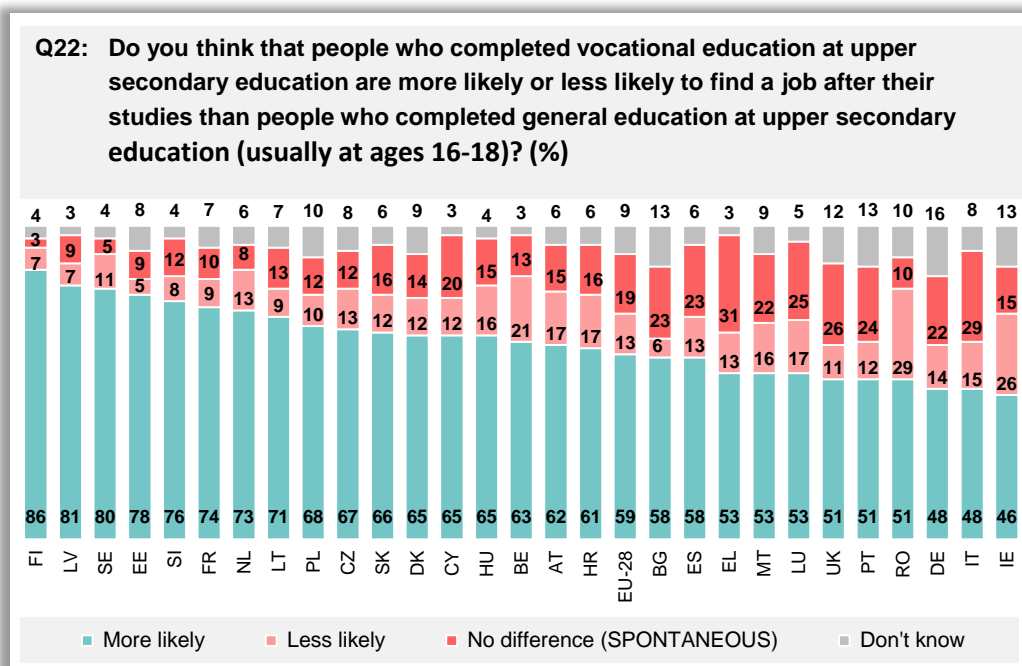


Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

There is widespread consensus across different Member States that people who complete vocational education are more likely to find a job than those who complete general education. This view is particularly pronounced in Finland (86% agree), followed by Latvia (81%), Sweden (80%), Estonia (78%) and Slovenia (76%). Respondents in Romania are most likely to think that people who completed vocational education are less likely to find a job than those who completed general education (29%), followed by respondents in Ireland (26%). A number of countries have relatively high proportions of those who think there is no difference between vocational education and general education in the job prospects they offer: Greece (31%), Italy (29%), the UK (26%) and Luxembourg (25%).

Figure 28. Likelihood of finding a job (VET vs GE students at country level)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

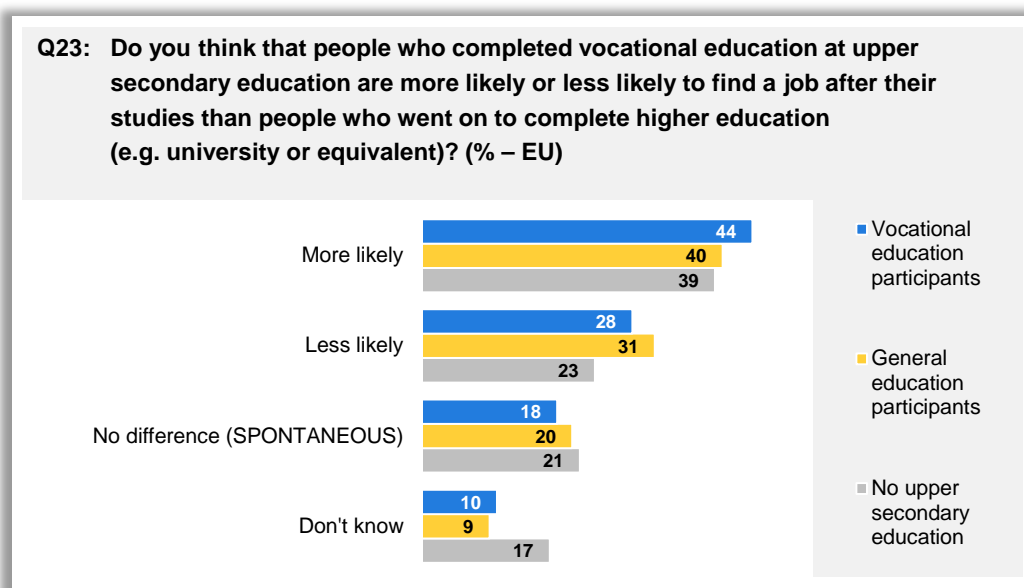
The fact that participants in VET are more likely to find a job than those who complete general education seems logical, as general education usually prepares students to continue to further education. However, when respondents were asked to compare the work prospects of people who complete vocational education with those who go on to complete higher education, respondents still considered VET as providing better employment prospects than general education at a higher level. Two in five EU citizens (40%) think that people who complete vocational education are more likely to find a job than those who go on to higher education, while 28% think they are less likely to find a job, 20% say there is no difference, and 12% do not know.

There is very little difference in respondents' views in relation to their own educational background. Among respondents who followed vocational education at the upper secondary stage, 44% think that that people who complete vocational education are more likely to find a job than those who go on to higher general education. This is only slightly higher than the proportion of respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily general (40%), and those who did not go to upper secondary education at all (39%).

These findings generally confirm that EU citizens see vocational education as providing better employment prospects than general education, although this

applies most strongly to immediate job prospects after upper secondary education. When the option of higher education is taken into account, respondents are less positive as to the relative job prospects of vocational and general education.

Figure 29. **Likelihood of finding a job among VET students and those who went on to complete higher education (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

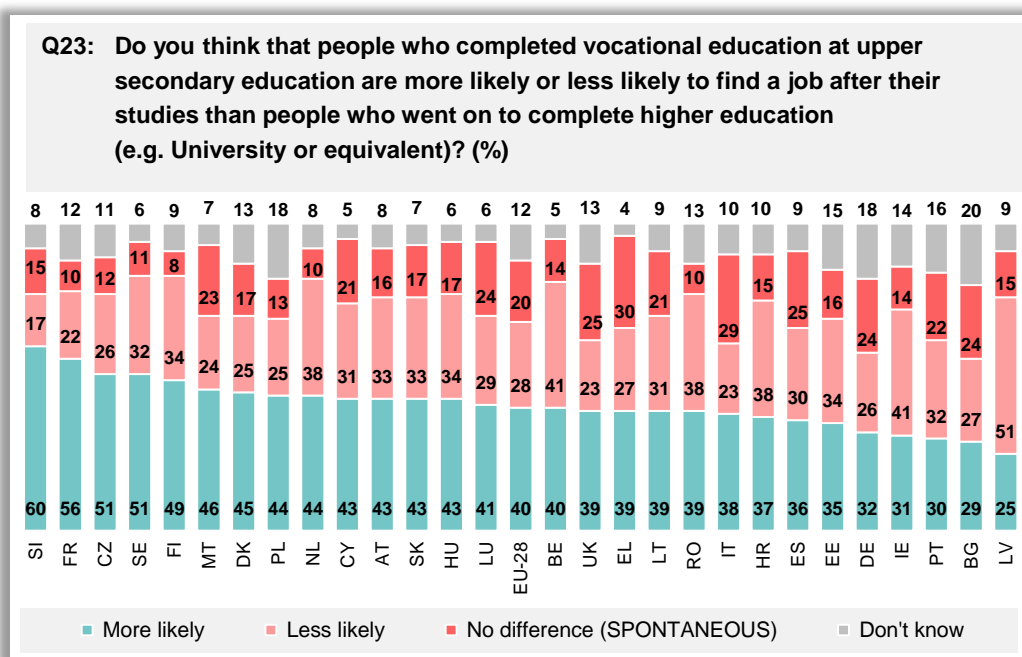
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

In line with the findings for the EU as a whole, in most countries there are mixed views as to the relative job prospects for people who complete vocational education, compared with those who go on to higher education.

In four countries, more than half of respondents say that people who complete vocational education are more likely to find a job: Slovenia (60%), France (56%), the Czech Republic and Sweden (both 51%). The lowest proportions are seen in Latvia (25%), Bulgaria (29%) and Portugal (30%). Latvia also has the highest proportion of respondents who say that people completing vocational education are less likely to find a job (51%), followed by Ireland (41%) and Belgium (41%). In the EU as a whole, 20% of respondents say that there is no difference between vocational education and higher education in the job

prospects they offer. This is highest in Greece (30%) and Italy (29%), countries which both have high levels of youth unemployment ⁽⁶⁾.

Figure 30. **Likelihood of finding a job among VET students and those who went on to complete higher education**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.4. Attractiveness: prioritising public funding

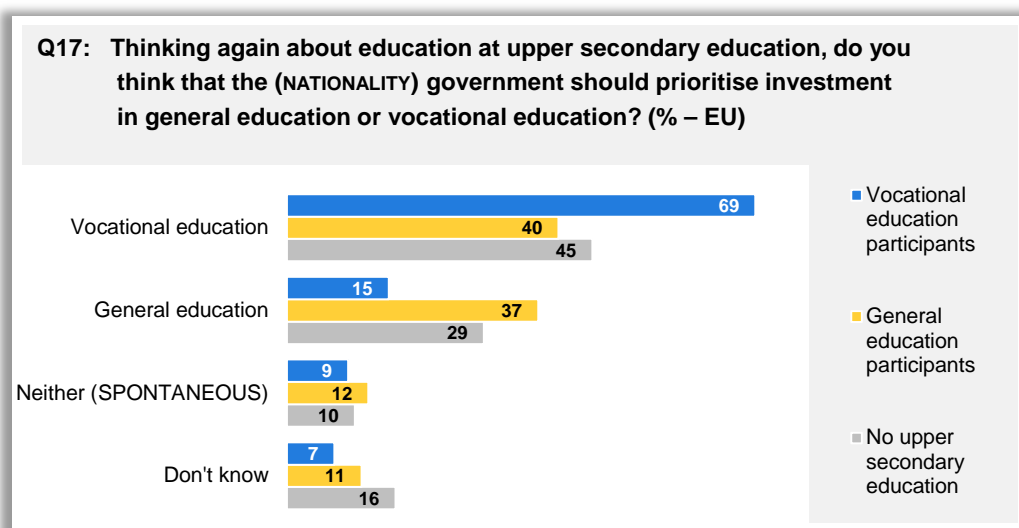
The survey also asked respondents if they thought that national government should prioritise VET over general education at the upper secondary stage. Among EU citizens as a whole, around half (49%) say that their national government should prioritise investment in vocational education over general education, while just over a quarter (28%) think that general education should be prioritised. The remainder either say (spontaneously) that neither type of education should be prioritised (11%) or do not know (12%).

Other questions in the survey have generated only small differences between respondents who took vocational education and those who took general education. On this question, however, there is a large difference between the two

⁽⁶⁾ Eurostat Statistics explained: *Unemployment statistics* [data retrieved on 7.6.2017]
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

groups, suggesting that personal experience has a large bearing on respondents' answers. Respondents from vocational education at upper secondary education are particularly likely to favour investment in vocational education. More than two-thirds (69%) say that vocational education should be prioritised, with just 15% saying that general education should be prioritised. Respondents from general education still confirm a preference for vocational education but only to a limited extent. Two in five (40%) say that vocational education should be prioritised, while a similar proportion (37%) think that general education should be prioritised. Respondents who did not progress to upper secondary education are more likely to say that vocational education should be prioritised (45%) rather than general education (29%).

Figure 31. **Priorities for national investment (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

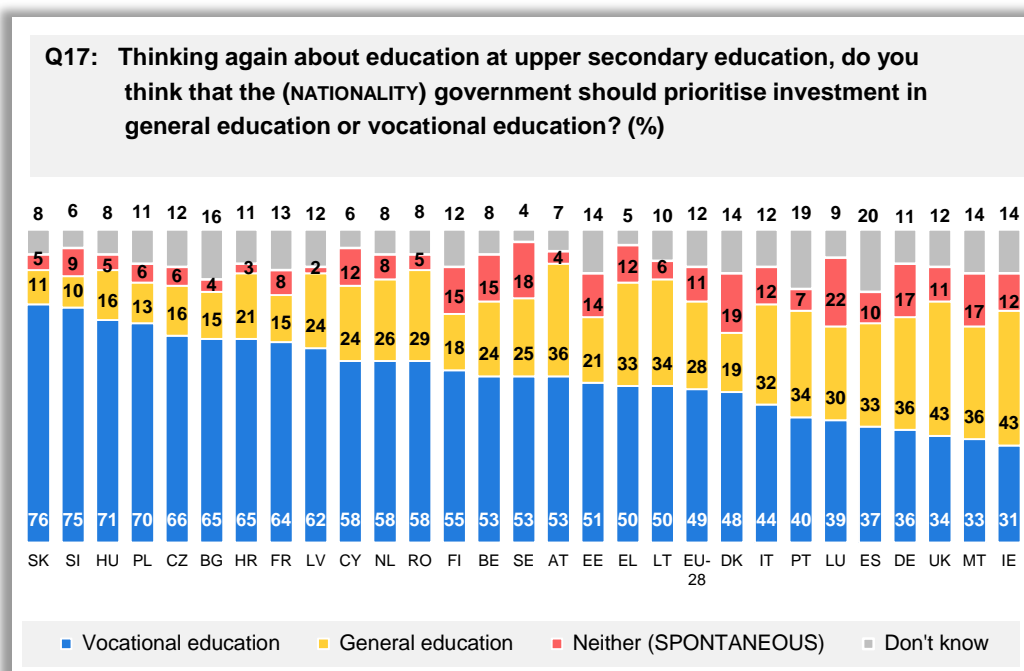
There are some large differences between countries in the levels of support for prioritising investment in general or vocational education. In some countries, respondents are much more likely to favour the prioritisation of vocational education over general education: Slovakia (76% say that vocational education should be prioritised), Slovenia (75%), Hungary (71%), Poland (70%), the Czech Republic (66%), Croatia (65%), Bulgaria (65%) and France (64%). Support for prioritising funding for vocational education tends to be strongest in Member States in the east of Europe.

By contrast, in four countries, support for prioritising general education is as high as, or higher than, support for prioritising vocational education: Ireland (43%

say that general education should be prioritised), the UK (43%), Malta (36%), Germany (36%) and Austria (36%).

Across the EU as a whole, 11% of respondents say (without prompting) that neither type of education should be prioritised. This proportion is highest in Luxembourg (22%), Denmark (19%) and Sweden (18%).

Figure 32. **Priorities for national investment (country results)**



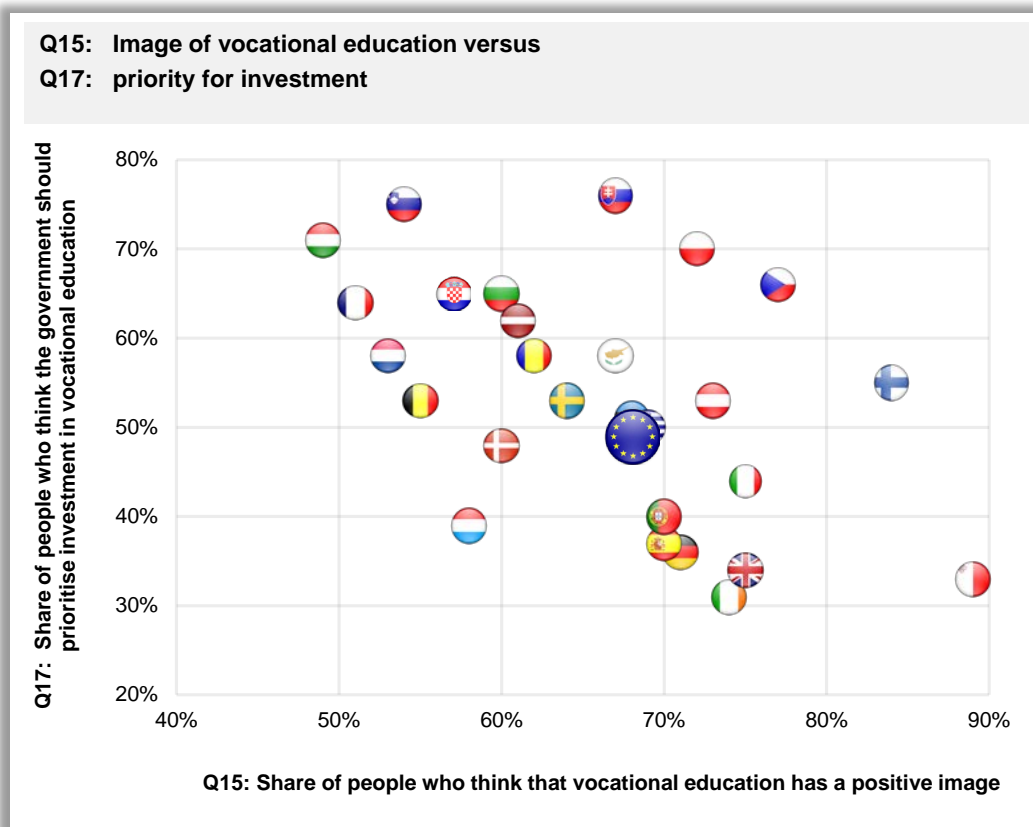
Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Figure 33 shows the relationship between views on priorities for investment and the overall image of vocational education in each country. The proportion of those who say that vocational education has a positive image is plotted on the x-axis, while the y-axis shows the proportion of those who think that their national government should prioritise investment in vocational education.

There is no statistically significant correlation between the two questions. As the chart shows, there is no clear pattern between high or low rankings for the various Member States. This suggests that views on priorities for investment are not influenced by the image of vocational investment in each country; respondents' own participation in vocational or general education is more likely to have a bearing on their views on investment priorities.

Figure 33. Relationship between perception of VET image in country and those who think that the government should invest in VET (country results)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.5. Recommendations for the next generation

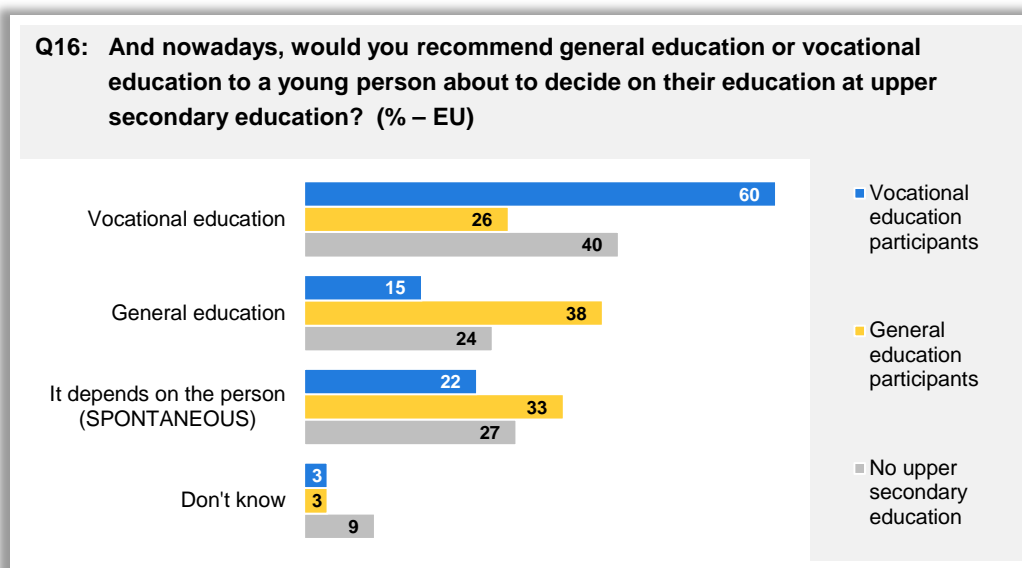
The survey also explored the issue of attractiveness in terms of likelihood of recommending VET. Respondents were asked whether they would recommend general education or vocational education to a young person about to decide on their education at upper secondary education.

There are big differences between those that participated in VET and those from general education. Respondents who followed vocational education themselves generally say they would recommend this option. Three in five (60%) say they would recommend vocational education, with just 15% recommending general education. More than one in four say (without prompting) that it would depend on the person concerned (22%). Findings are very different among respondents from general education. They are more likely to say they would

recommend general education (38%) rather than vocational education (26%), and a larger proportion (33%) say that it would depend on the person.

If respondents did not report continuing to upper secondary education, they are more likely to say they would recommend vocational education than general education (40% compared with 24%).

Figure 34. **Recommending GE or VET to young people (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

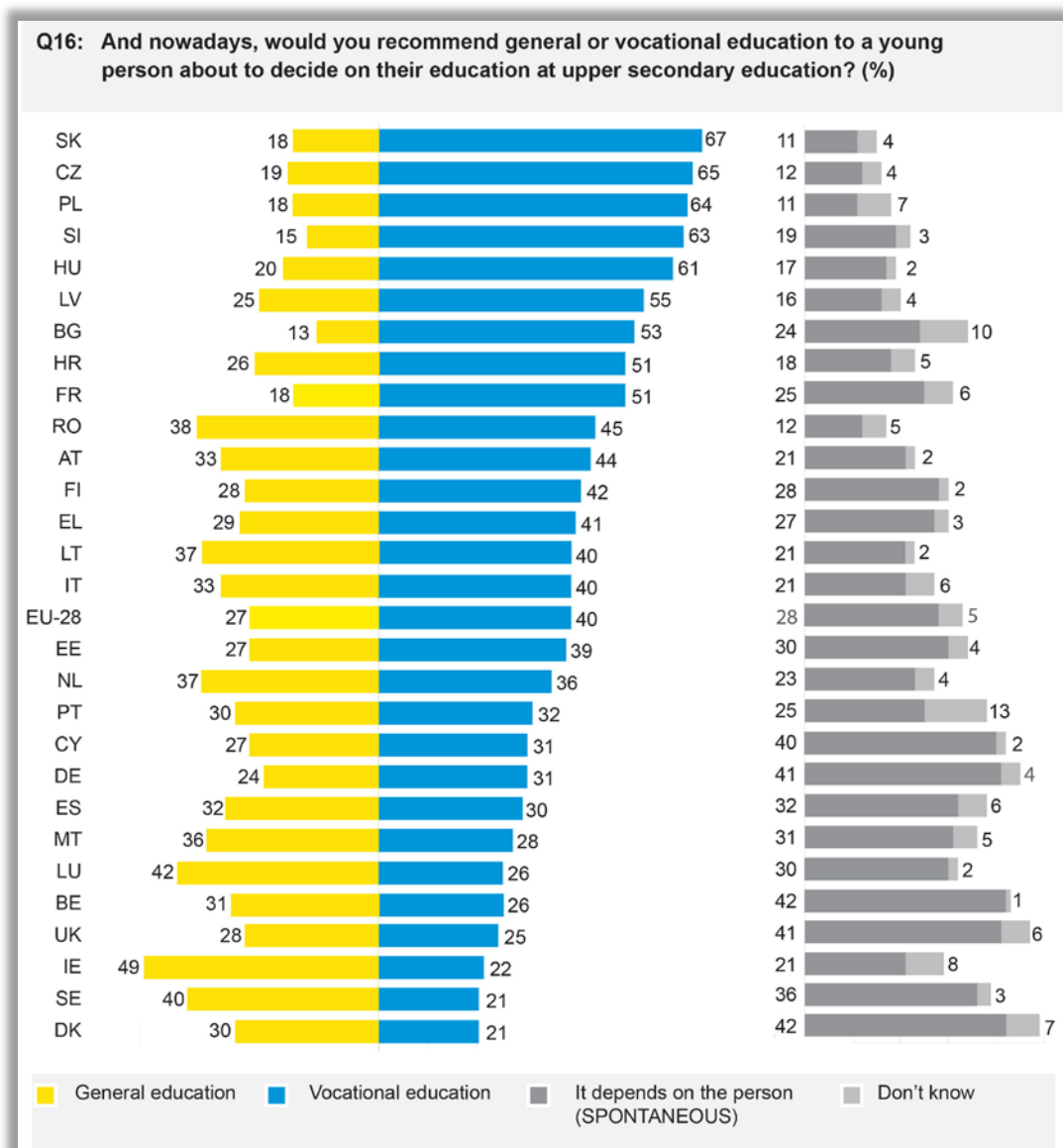
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

There are large differences between Member States in the proportion of those that say they would recommend vocational education to a young person about to decide on their upper secondary education.

Respondents are most likely to say they would recommend vocational education in Slovakia (67%), the Czech Republic (65%), Poland (64%), Slovenia (63%) and Hungary (61%). However, less than a quarter of respondents say they would recommend vocational education in Denmark (21%), Sweden (21%) and Ireland (22%). Respondents in Ireland (49%), Luxembourg (42%) and Sweden (40%) are most likely to say they would recommend general education.

In countries where fewer respondents would recommend vocational education, there is typically also a higher proportion of those that say that recommendation would depend on the person concerned. This proportion ranges from 11% (in Poland and Slovakia) to 42% (in Belgium and Denmark).

Figure 35. **Recommending GE or VET to young people (VET vs GE participants at country level)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

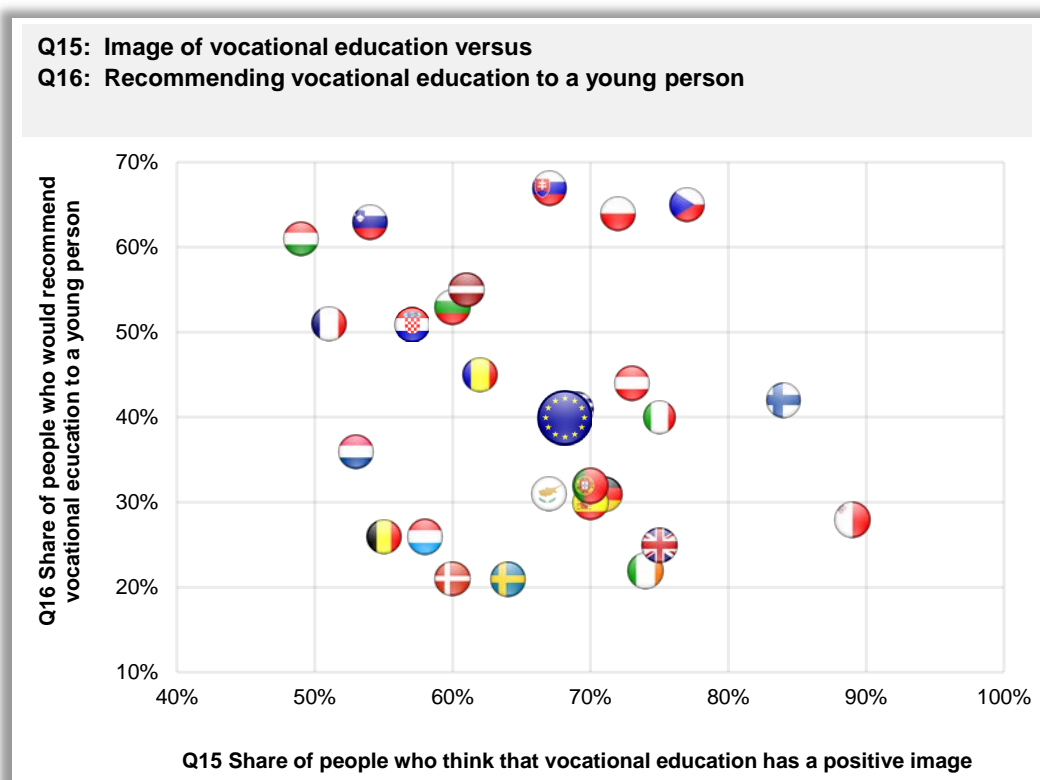
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Figure 36 maps Member States according to responses to two questions: the overall image of vocational education in their country, and the extent to which respondents would recommend vocational education to a young person.

The x-axis shows the proportion of respondents who say that vocational education has a positive image in their country. The y-axis shows the proportion of those that would recommend vocational education to a young person.

This analysis indicates that there is no relationship between the two questions: a country's position on the chart in one aspect has no clear bearing on its position for the other. This suggests that respondents' views on whether they would recommend vocational education to a young person are not influenced by the image of vocational education in their country. Recommendation patterns by country tend to reflect levels of participation in vocational education. The countries where respondents are more likely to recommend vocational education (the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) also have the highest levels of respondents who declare they participate/d in vocational education. This suggests that respondents' own participation in vocational education has a strong bearing on whether they would recommend it.

Figure 36. **Relationship between perception of image in country and recommending VET to young people (country results)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

There is a clear link between respondents' recommendations and their views on priorities for investment. In Figure 37, the x-axis shows the proportion of respondents that would recommend vocational education to a young person. The

y-axis shows the proportion of those that think their national government should prioritise investment in vocational education.

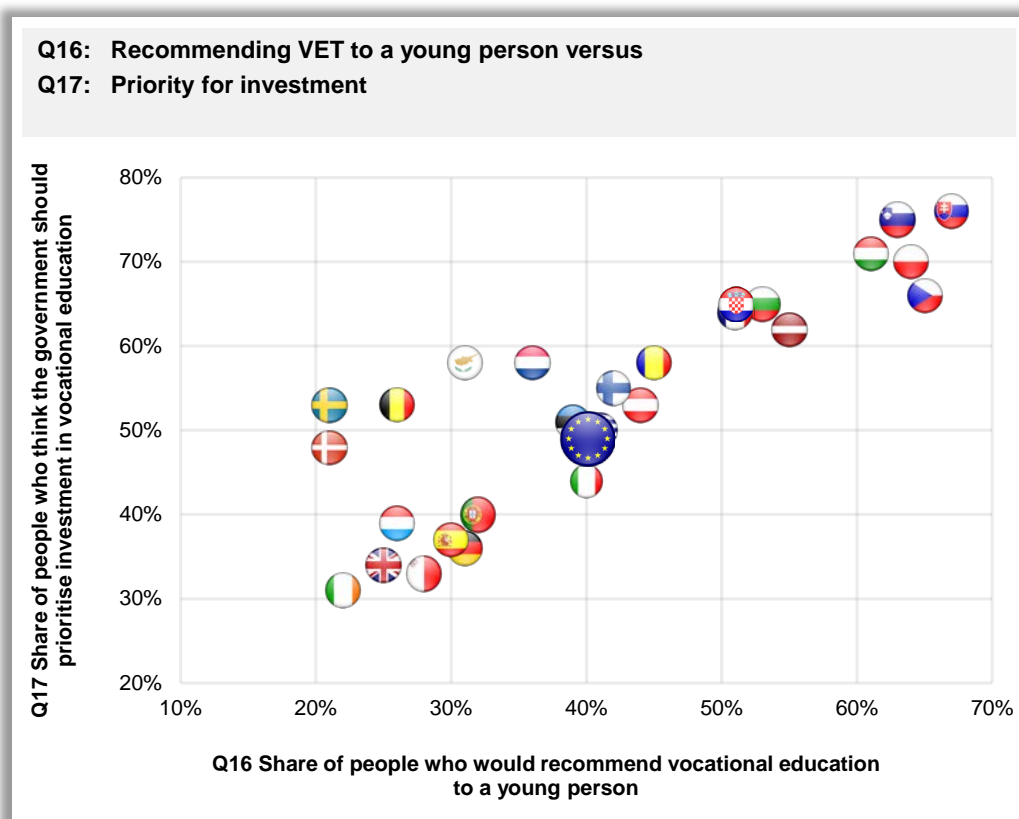
There is a strong correlation between the two questions at the country level; the Pearson correlation is 0.848 ⁽⁷⁾, which is the strongest correlation seen in the survey when comparing two questions in this way.

Countries showing a high ranking on one question are also likely to rank highly on the other. Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia and Hungary are among the highest ranked countries on both items, while Ireland, the UK and Luxembourg are among the lowest ranked countries on both measures.

The exceptions to this generally clear pattern are a group of countries where respondents are unlikely to say they would recommend vocational education to a young person, despite showing reasonable levels of support for prioritising funding in vocational education: Belgium, Denmark and Sweden. In these countries, perceptions of vocational education tend to be mixed or mainly negative throughout the survey. This suggests that support for prioritising funding in vocational education may be based on a perception that standards need to be raised.

⁽⁷⁾ Further analysis indicates a moderate association at the level of the individual respondent (rather than the country level), with a ϕ (Phi) coefficient of 0.507.

Figure 37. Relationship between recommending VET to young people and those who think that the government should invest in VET (country results)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Table 2 shows sociodemographic variations for the question of whether respondents would recommend vocational education or general education to a young person who was about to decide on their upper secondary education.

Older respondents are more likely than younger ones to say they would recommend vocational education. Among those aged 55 or over, 42% would recommend vocational education, while 23% would recommend general education.

Linked to this age pattern, respondents who were still studying at the time of the survey are less likely than other groups to say they would recommend vocational education (26%). The proportion that would recommend vocational education is also relatively low among those who left education at the age of 20 or over (33%), but is much higher among those who finished education at the age of 16 to 19 (47%) or at the age of 15 or below (41%).

These findings reflect differences in participation in vocational or general education. Those who took vocational education typically finished their education

at an earlier age, and are more likely to say they would recommend vocational education. By contrast, those from general education were more likely to leave education at the age of 20 or above, or still to be studying at the time of the survey, and are less likely to say they would recommend vocational education.

There are also differences among the following sociodemographic groups:

- (a) managers are less likely than other socio-professional groups to say they would recommend vocational education (29%). The proportion that would recommend vocational education is highest among manual workers (46%) and unemployed respondents (47%);
- (b) respondents who consider themselves to belong to the working class (43%), lower middle class (41%) or middle class (40%) are more likely to say they would recommend vocational education, compared with those who consider that they belong to the upper middle class (26%) or upper class (33%);
- (c) the proportion that would recommend vocational education is higher among those on a low salary: 51% of those on a monthly salary of less than EUR 1 000, falling to 24% of those on a monthly salary of more than EUR 4 000. Those on higher salaries are also more likely to say that their advice would depend on the person concerned: 39% of those on a monthly salary of more than EUR 4 000, falling to 19% of those earning less than EUR 1 000 per month.

Table 2. **Sociodemographic profiles of people who would recommend VET or GE (results: EU) (%)**

Q16: And nowadays, would you recommend general education or vocational education to a young person about to decide on their education at upper secondary education?		
	General education	Vocational education
EU-28	27	40
Age		
15-24	35	34
25-39	29	39
40-54	27	38
55+	23	42
Education (end of)		
15-	23	41
16-19	24	47
20+	29	33
Still studying	41	26
Socio-professional category		
Self-employed	28	36
Managers	32	29
Other white collars	31	39
Manual workers	24	46
House persons	26	35
Unemployed	24	47
Retired	22	43
Students	41	26
Consider belonging to		
The working class	21	43
The lower middle class	24	41
The middle class	30	40
The upper middle class	41	26
The upper class	35	33
Monthly salary		
< EUR 1 000	26	51
EUR 1 000-2 000	27	42
EUR 2 000-4 000	29	31
> EUR 4 000	35	24

Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.6. Permeability in VET

One aspect that is likely to contribute to the attractiveness of VET is the so-called permeability of the education and training system. Permeability in education and training means that a learner is able to move from one type of education to another and between different levels.

It is likely that VET will be seen as a more interesting education option if it allows for flexible pathways. The 2010 Bruges communiqué and the Europe 2020 strategy stress that permeability is a precondition for having modern European education and training systems that encourage lifelong and life-wide learning. The Bruges communiqué, in 2010, for example, has in its global vision for VET in 2020 'flexible systems of VET, based on a learning outcomes approach, which support flexible learning pathways, which allow permeability between the different education and training subsystems (school education, VET, higher education, adult education)' (Council of the EU and European Commission, 2010, p. 6).

The survey examines permeability issues through two questions: first, asking if it was easy for someone doing VET to change to general education; then if it was possible for VET students to continue to higher education. The survey continues asking for opinions here; we are not interested in whether or not the system allows for transfer between education types and levels.

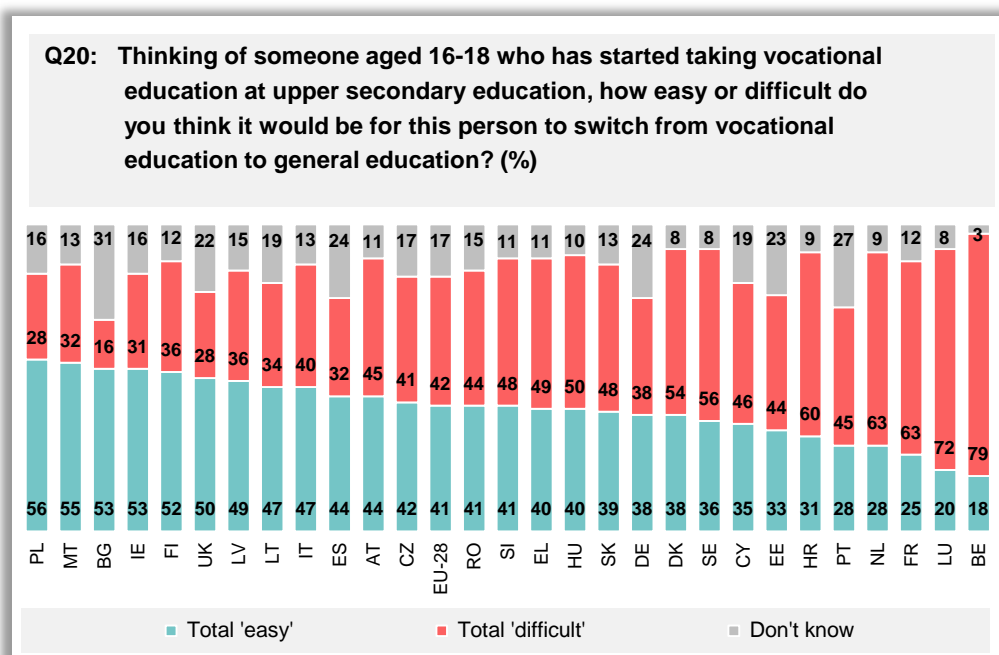
3.6.1. Transitioning between education types

Respondents give mixed views on whether they think it would be easy for someone aged 16 to 18 who had started vocational education to switch to general education. Two in five EU citizens (41%) say that it would be easy, but almost the same proportion (42%) think it would be difficult. Almost a fifth (17%) do not know.

Responses are fairly consistent across Member States. Respondents are most likely to think it would be easy in Poland (56%), Malta (55%), Ireland (53%), Bulgaria (53%) and Finland (52%). The highest proportions of respondents that say it would be difficult are found in Belgium (79%) and Luxembourg (72%).

In general terms, the 'don't know' responses are higher than in other questions; the proportion varies by country, and is highest in Bulgaria (31%) and Portugal (27%). This may suggest that the question is regarded as testing knowledge and they are supposed to know the organisation of the education system.

Figure 38. Ease of switching from VET to GE (country results)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

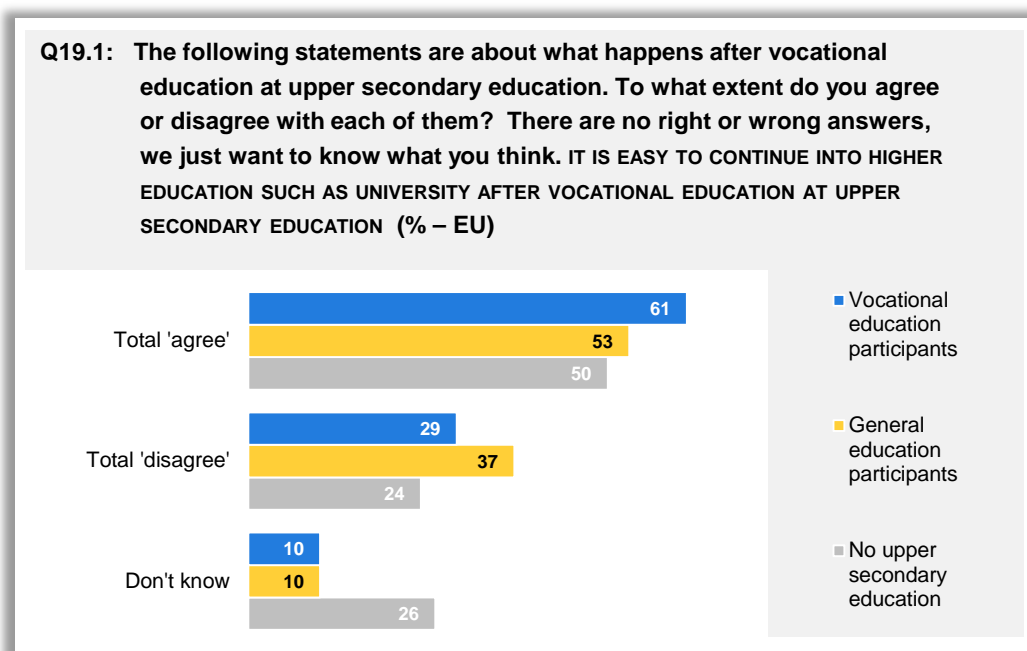
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

3.6.2. Transitioning to higher education

In terms of vertical permeability just over half of Europeans (54%) agree that 'it is easy to continue into higher education such as university after vocational education at upper secondary education'.

There are differences according to respondents' own background in upper secondary education. People from vocational education are more likely to agree with the statement (61%), compared with those from general education (53%). People from vocational education are also less likely to disagree (29% compared with 37% of those from general education). Respondents who did not continue to secondary education at all are twice as likely to agree as disagree (50% and 24% respectively). However, a large proportion of these respondents (26%) do not give an answer.

Figure 39. **Ease of continuing to higher education after VET (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

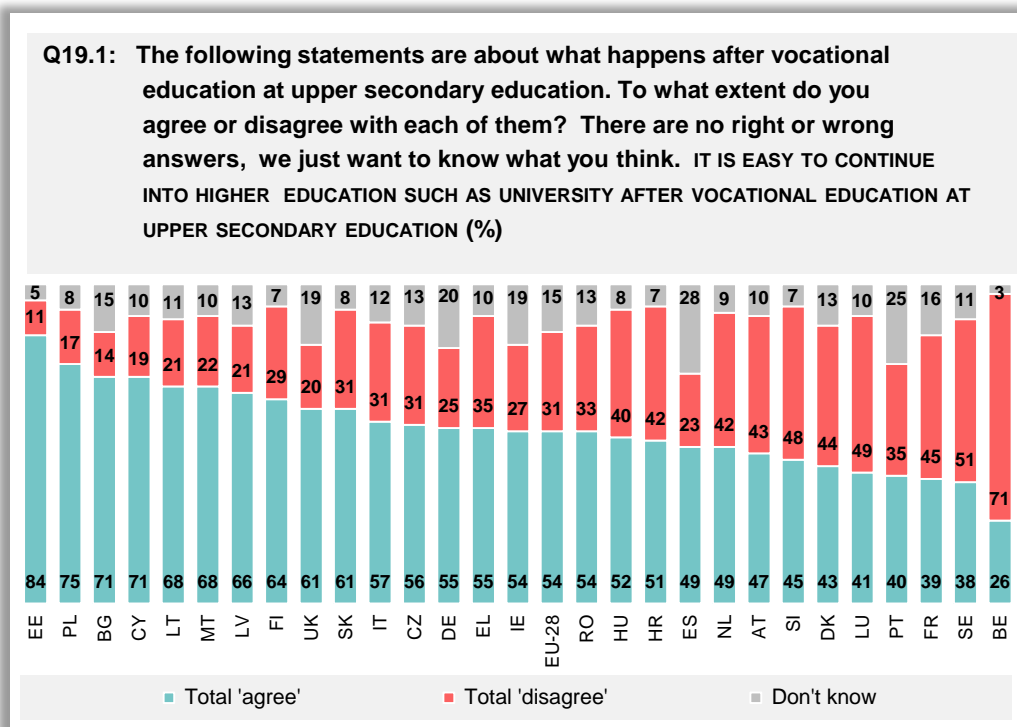
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Respondents in Estonia are by far the most likely to agree that 'it is easy to continue into higher education such as university after vocational education at upper secondary education' (84%), followed by respondents in Poland (75%), Bulgaria and Cyprus (both 71%).

The level of agreement in Belgium is much lower than in other Member States: 26% agree and 71% disagree. There are five other countries where disagreement outweighs agreement: Sweden (51% disagree), Luxembourg (49%), Slovenia (48%), France (45%) and Denmark (44%).

As in the previous question on permeability, the 'don't know' proportion is higher than in other questions; 15% EU citizens that say they do not know the answer to this question. In Spain it is 28%, 25% in Portugal and 19% in the UK.

Figure 40. Ease of continuing to higher education after VET (country results)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

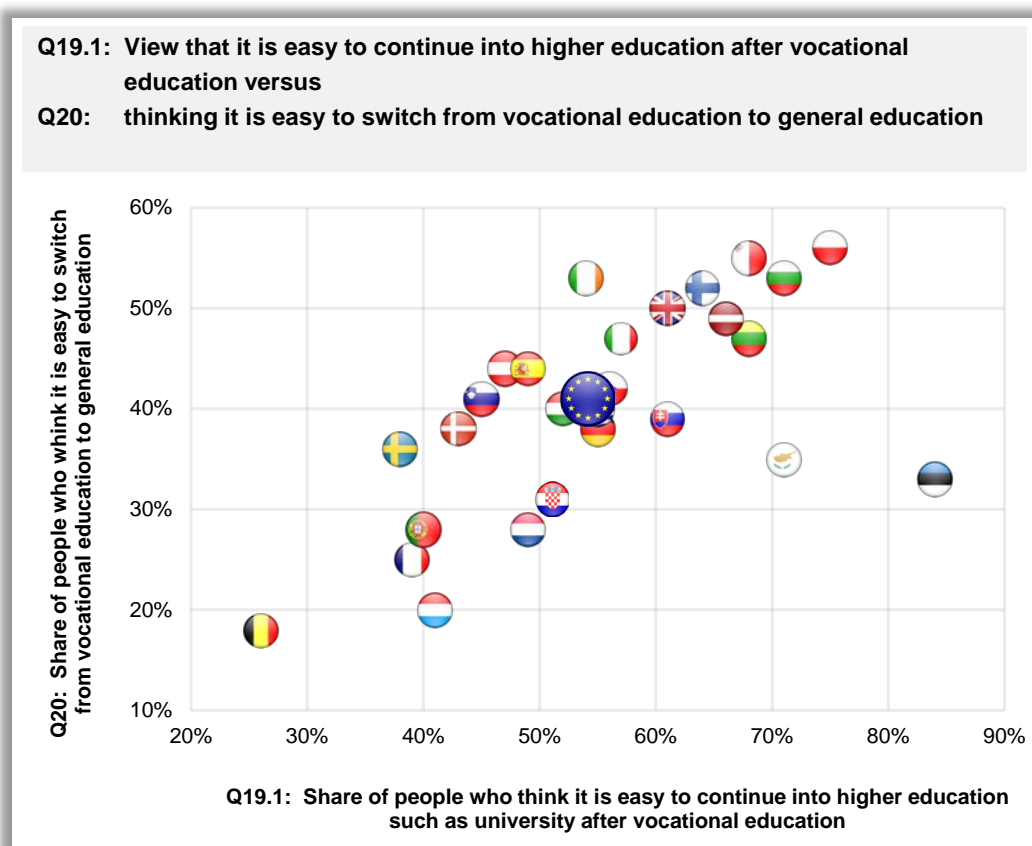
Figure 41 maps Member States according to responses to the two questions on permeability in vocational education. The x-axis shows the proportion of respondents in each country who agree that it would be easy to transition from vocational education to higher education. The y-axis shows the proportion of people who think it would be easy to switch from vocational education to general education.

There is a reasonably strong correlation between the two questions at country level (the Pearson correlation is 0.626) ⁽⁸⁾: countries showing a high ranking on one question are also likely to rank highly on the other. For example, Poland, Bulgaria and Malta are among the highest ranked countries on both items, while Belgium ranks lowest of all countries on both of the measures. However, there are exceptions; for example, Estonia is ranked highest in terms of the perceived ease of continuing to higher education, but is below the EU average in relation to switching from vocational education to general education.

⁽⁸⁾ Further analysis indicates a moderate to weak association at the level of the individual respondent (rather than the country level), with a ϕ (Phi) coefficient of 0.407.

One general pattern shown by the chart is that there is more variation between Member States in relation to perceptions of transitioning to higher education, compared with perceptions of switching to general education. The proportion that agrees that it is easy to continue into higher education after vocational education has a wide range, from 84% in Estonia to 26% in Belgium. However, there is more consistency in the proportions that think it would be easy to switch from vocational education to general education (from 56% to 18%).

Figure 41. **Relationship between considering progression from VET to HE easy and considering switching from VET to GE easy (country results)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

The perceived permeability of the system seems relatively independent of the image of VET. None of the two questions show major connections to the VET image as measured in our survey.

3.7. Mobility prospects

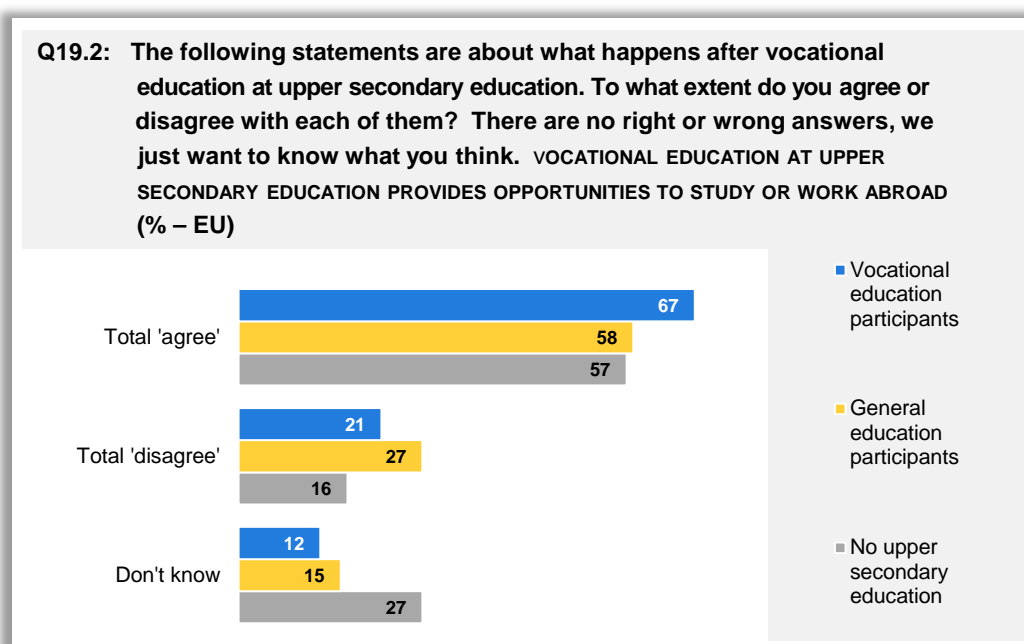
A final question relating to the attractiveness of VET concerned views on the opportunities provided by vocational education for working or studying abroad, as mobility prospects may have an impact on the image of VET.

Across the EU, two-thirds (67%) of respondents who followed vocational education agree that vocational education provides opportunities to study or work abroad, while 21% disagree. Respondents who took general education at the upper secondary stage are less likely to agree (58% agree and 27% disagree).

Respondents who did not continue to secondary education are likely to agree with the statement (57%) rather than disagree (16%), although many of these respondents (27%) do not give an answer.

The correlation of mobility prospects with the image of VET was relatively weak at country level.

Figure 42. **VET provides opportunities to work or study abroad (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

CHAPTER 4.

Experience at upper secondary education

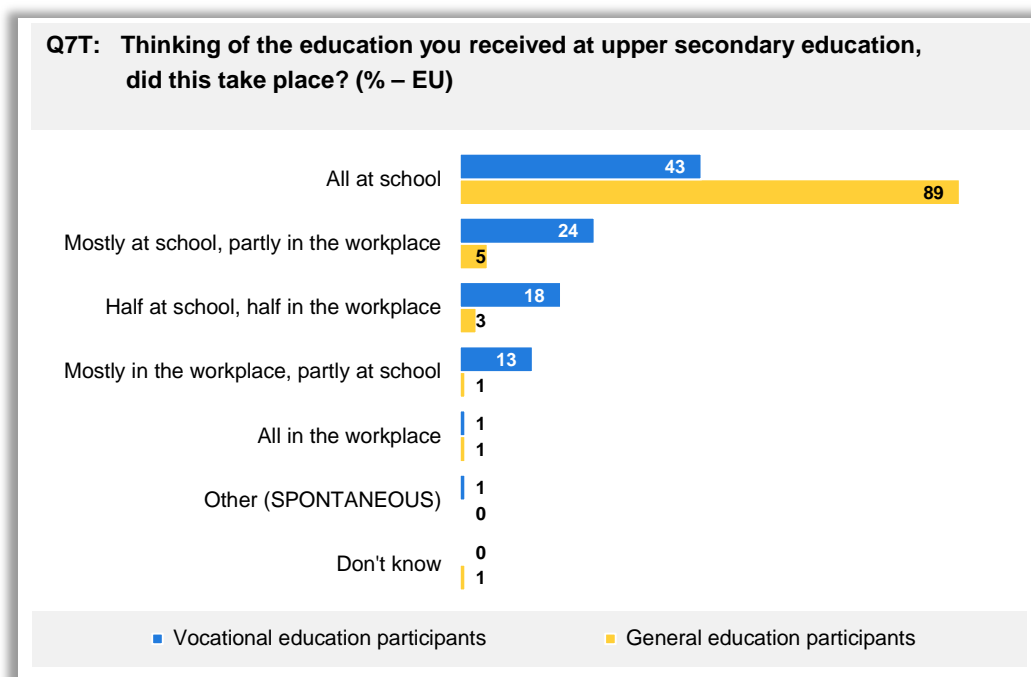
Chapters 2 and 3 have shown perceptions of vocational education and training (VET). This chapter contains details on respondents' experience of their upper secondary education, inevitably relying on people's memory and own interpretation. Aspects surveyed to investigate respondents' experience of upper secondary education include mode of delivery (whether it had any work-based components), studying abroad as part of the main curriculum, respondent's satisfaction with specific aspects of their upper secondary education, and skills developed.

4.1. Mode of delivery: school versus workplace

As expected, general education is more likely to occur fully in a school environment, while VET is more likely to include some work-based components. Respondents reporting upper secondary education with a general orientation mostly say that all of it took place at school (in 89% of cases). Less than one in 10 (9%) say that it took place partly at school and partly in the workplace, while 1% say that all of it was in the workplace.

Findings are substantially different for respondents reporting upper secondary education primarily vocational. More than half of them say that this education took place partly at school and partly in the workplace; specifically 24% say that it took place mostly at school and partly in the workplace, 18% say it was split equally between school and workplace, while 13% say it was mostly in the workplace and partly in school. Just over two in five respondents (43%) who went on vocational education say that this took place entirely at school, while 1% say that it was all in the workplace.

Figure 43. **Education at school or in the workplace (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

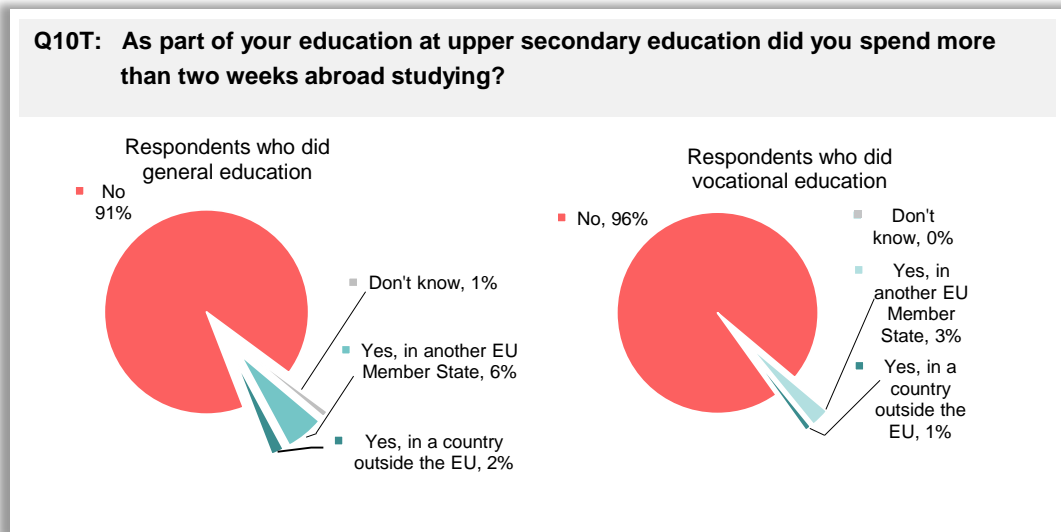
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

4.2. Studying abroad

Of EU citizens who went to upper secondary education, 7% say that they spent more than two weeks studying abroad. Specifically, 5% studied in another Member State, while 2% did their studying in a country outside the EU.

The proportion of those that studied abroad is higher among those who followed general education than vocational education (8% compared with 4%).

Figure 44. **Studying abroad (EU)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

4.3. Satisfaction with upper secondary education

This section examines levels of satisfaction with vocational and general education at upper secondary level, in relation to the quality of teaching, the skills developed and the equipment available.

4.3.1. Overall satisfaction

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with various aspects of their upper secondary education. Most respondents were generally satisfied with most of the aspects prompted, irrespective of their educational orientation.

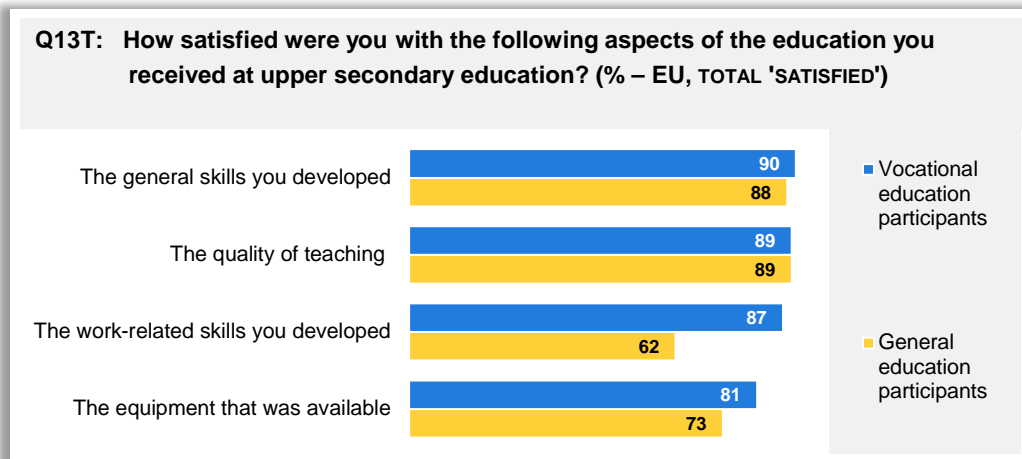
Around nine in 10 respondents say they were satisfied with the general skills they developed and the quality of teaching. On both of these criteria, satisfaction levels are similar for respondents who followed vocational education and those from general education: 90% and 88% respectively in relation to the general skills they developed, and 89% for both groups in relation to the quality of teaching.

There is a higher discrepancy between the two groups in terms of their satisfaction with the work-related skills they developed. Among those from vocational education, 87% were satisfied, considerably higher than those who followed general education (62%). Those who followed vocational education were also more likely to be 'very satisfied' with the work-related skills they developed (40% compared with 21% of those from general education). This

seems consistent with other questions in the survey in which VET is related to the world of work.

Respondents from vocational education were also more satisfied with the equipment that was available: 81%, compared to 73% of those from general education.

Figure 45. **Overall satisfaction with aspects of education (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

4.3.1.1. *Satisfaction with general skills*

Looking at the data by country, in all Member States, respondents are consistently satisfied with the general skills that they developed in their upper secondary education: both for general and vocational education, more than 80% of respondents are satisfied. Looking first at vocational education, respondents in Bulgaria, Malta and the UK (96%) were most satisfied. The lowest levels of satisfaction are found in Portugal (84%), France (84%), Italy (85%) and the Netherlands (86%).

Respondents who followed general education at the upper secondary level were also satisfied with the general skills they developed. Satisfaction was highest in the Czech Republic, Poland and Finland (all 94%), and lowest in Estonia (82%), Bulgaria, Hungary and Malta (all 83%).

In the EU as a whole, there is very little difference in the satisfaction levels of those who participated in vocational education (90%) and those who followed general education (88%). However, there are some differences at country level. In several countries, satisfaction is higher in relation to vocational education than for general education, most notably Bulgaria and Malta; in both countries, 96% of

those who went on vocational education were satisfied with the general skills they developed, while 83% of those who went on general education were satisfied.

There are fewer countries where satisfaction is higher among those who followed general education than vocational education. In Italy, 91% of those who followed general education were satisfied with the general skills they developed, compared with 85% of those who followed vocational education. In both France and Portugal, 88% of those from general education were satisfied with the general skills they developed, compared with 84% of those from vocational education.

4.3.1.2. *Satisfaction with teaching quality*

Across the EU, respondents express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching that they received in their upper secondary education. This applies both to vocational education and to general education.

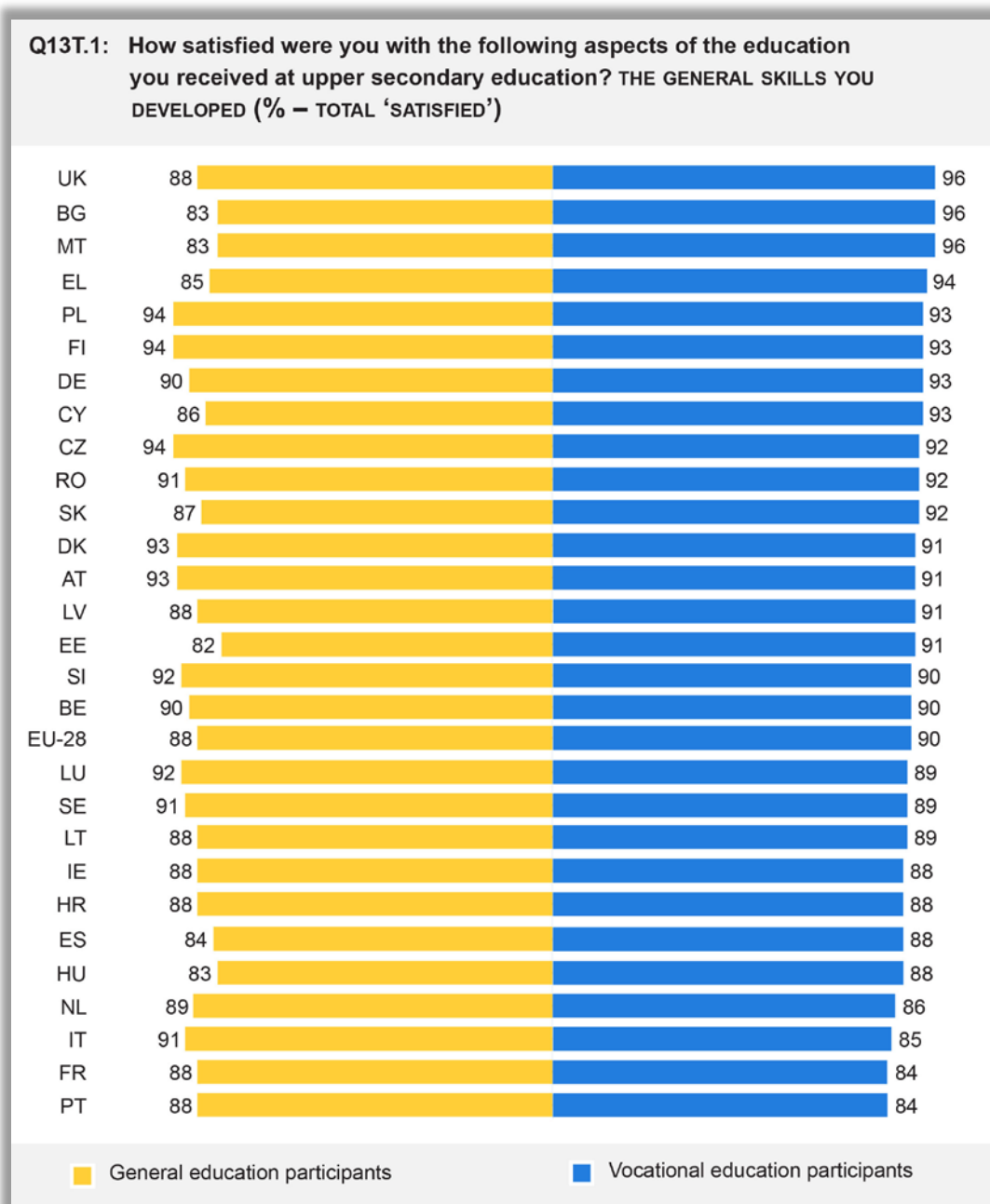
In around half of Member States, at least nine in 10 respondents who followed vocational education say that they were satisfied with the quality of teaching. The highest proportions can be seen in Bulgaria (96%), Slovakia (94%), Estonia (93%), the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Poland and the UK, (all 92%). Respondents are least likely to say they were satisfied with the quality of teaching in their vocational education in Italy (80%), the Netherlands (83%), Croatia and Austria (both 84%).

Respondents who took general education at the upper secondary stage were also generally satisfied with the quality of teaching. Satisfaction was highest in Finland (95%), Slovakia (93%), Poland and Slovenia (both 92%), and lowest in Greece (80%), Hungary (82%) and Lithuania (83%).

In most countries, there is little difference between the satisfaction levels of those who attended vocational education and those who attended general education. However, in some countries satisfaction is higher in relation to vocational education than for general education. The difference is most pronounced in Bulgaria (96% of those who took vocational education, compared with 85% for general education) and in Greece (90% and 80% respectively).

In Italy, respondents from general education are more likely to say they were satisfied with the quality of teaching (89%) than those from vocational education (80%). The same pattern can be seen in Denmark (91% compared with 85%).

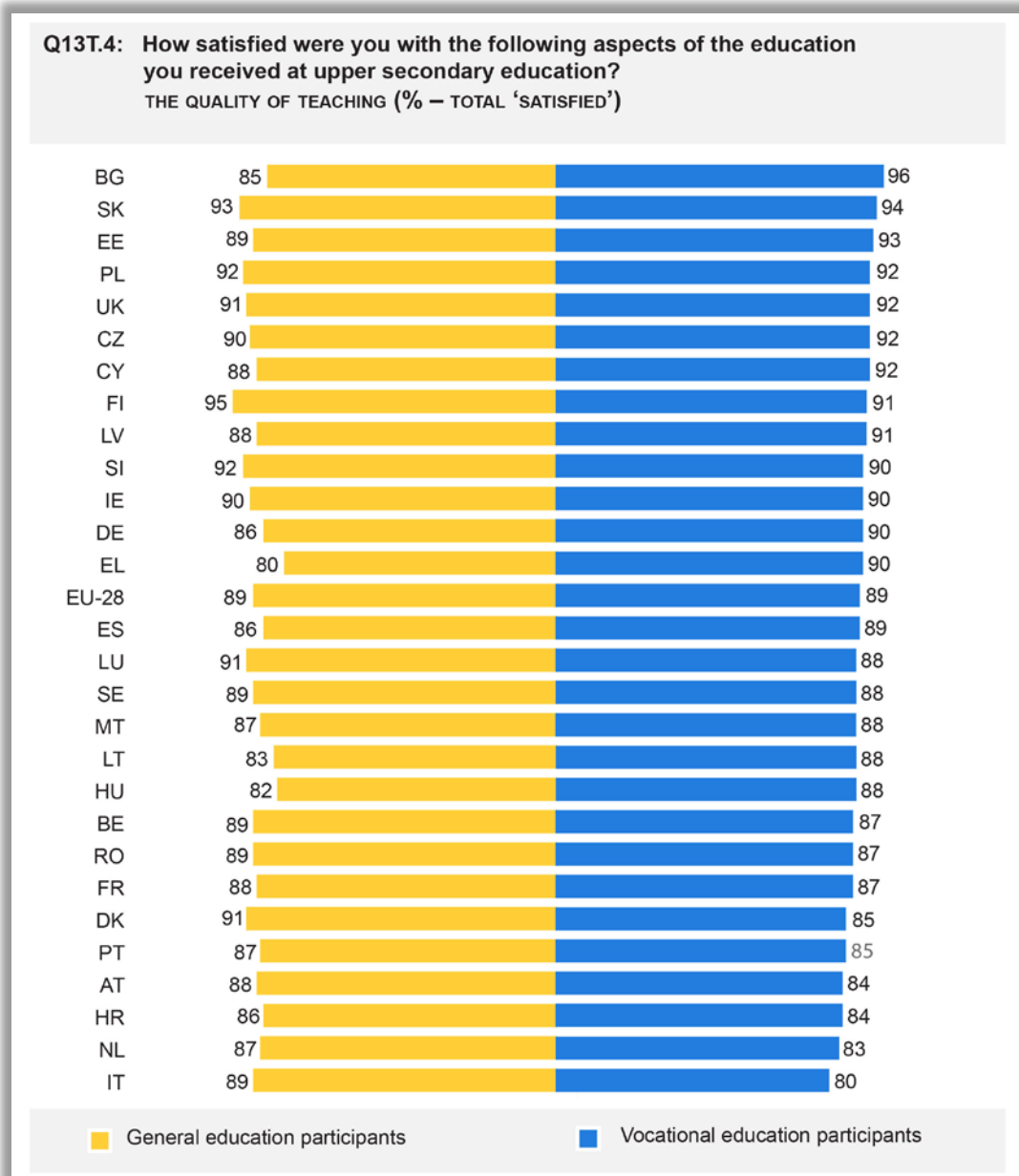
Figure 46. **Satisfaction with skills developed (VET vs GE participants at country level)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Figure 47. **Satisfaction with quality of teaching (VET vs GE participants at country level)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

4.3.1.3. *Satisfaction with work-related skills*

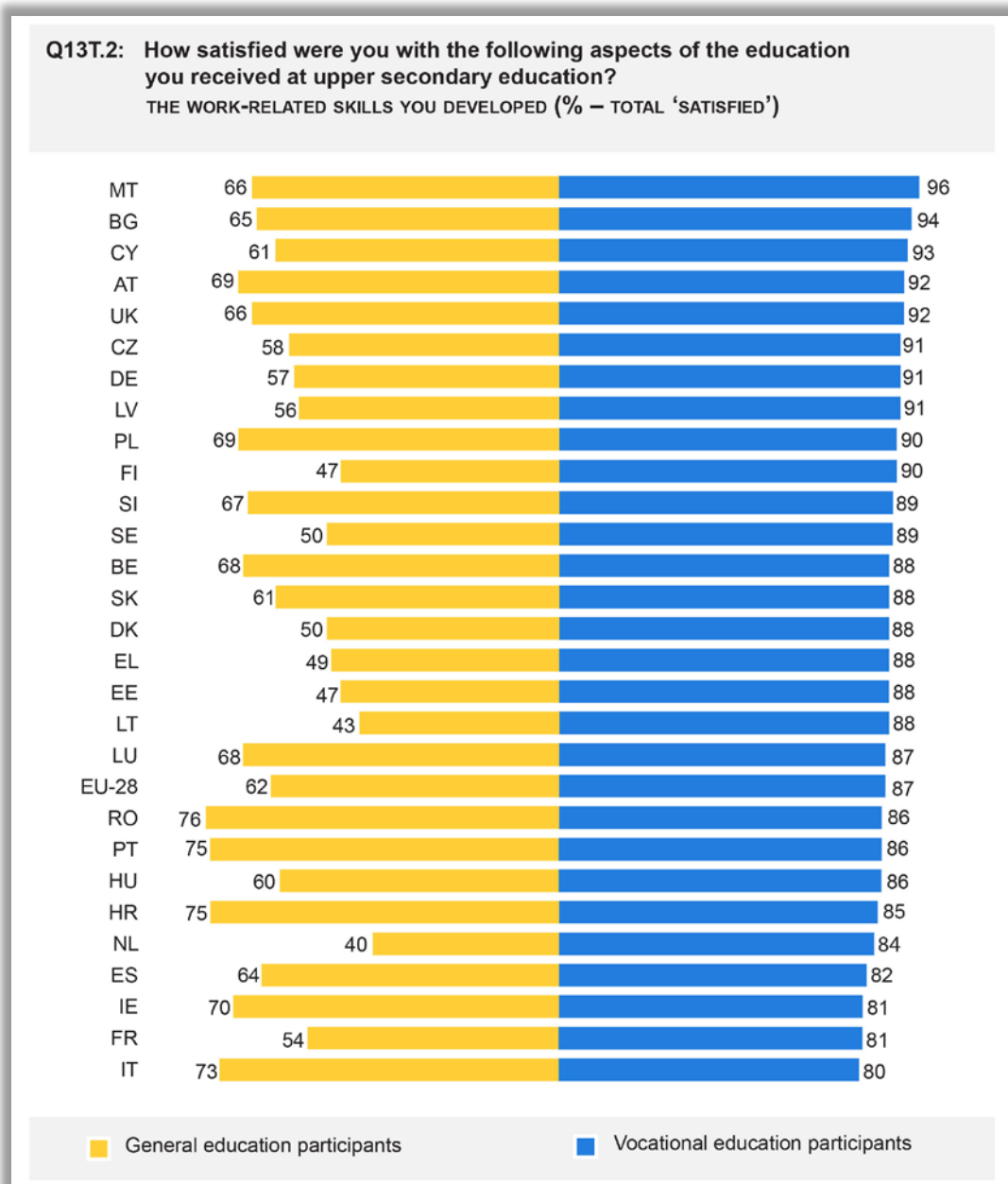
At upper secondary level, respondents are less likely to be satisfied with the work-related skills developed in general education than in VET. In every Member State, at least four in five respondents who attended vocational education for their upper secondary education say that they were satisfied with the work-related skills that they developed. Satisfaction is highest in Malta (96%), Bulgaria (94%), Cyprus (93%), Austria and the UK (both 92%). The lowest levels of satisfaction can be seen in Italy (80%), France, Ireland (both 81%) and Spain (82%).

Respondents from general education were significantly less likely to be satisfied with the work-related skills they developed. The highest levels of satisfaction can be seen in Romania (76%), Croatia and Portugal (both 75%), while less than half of respondents were satisfied in the Netherlands (40%), Lithuania (43%), Estonia, Finland (both 47%) and Greece (49%).

In every country, respondents who followed vocational education are more likely than those who followed general education to say they were satisfied with the work-related skills they developed. The difference is greatest in Lithuania, where 88% from vocational education were satisfied, compared with 43% from general education. There are also large differences in the Netherlands (84% and 40% satisfied respectively), Finland (90% and 47%) and Estonia (88% and 47%).

In Italy, vocational education respondents were only slightly more satisfied than those from general education (80% compared with 73%). Differences between the two respondent groups are also relatively small in Romania (86% compared with 76%), Croatia (85% compared with 75%), Ireland (81% compared with 70%) and Portugal (86% compared with 75%).

Figure 48. **Satisfaction with work-related skills developed (VET vs GE participants at country level)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

4.3.1.4. *Satisfaction with the equipment available*

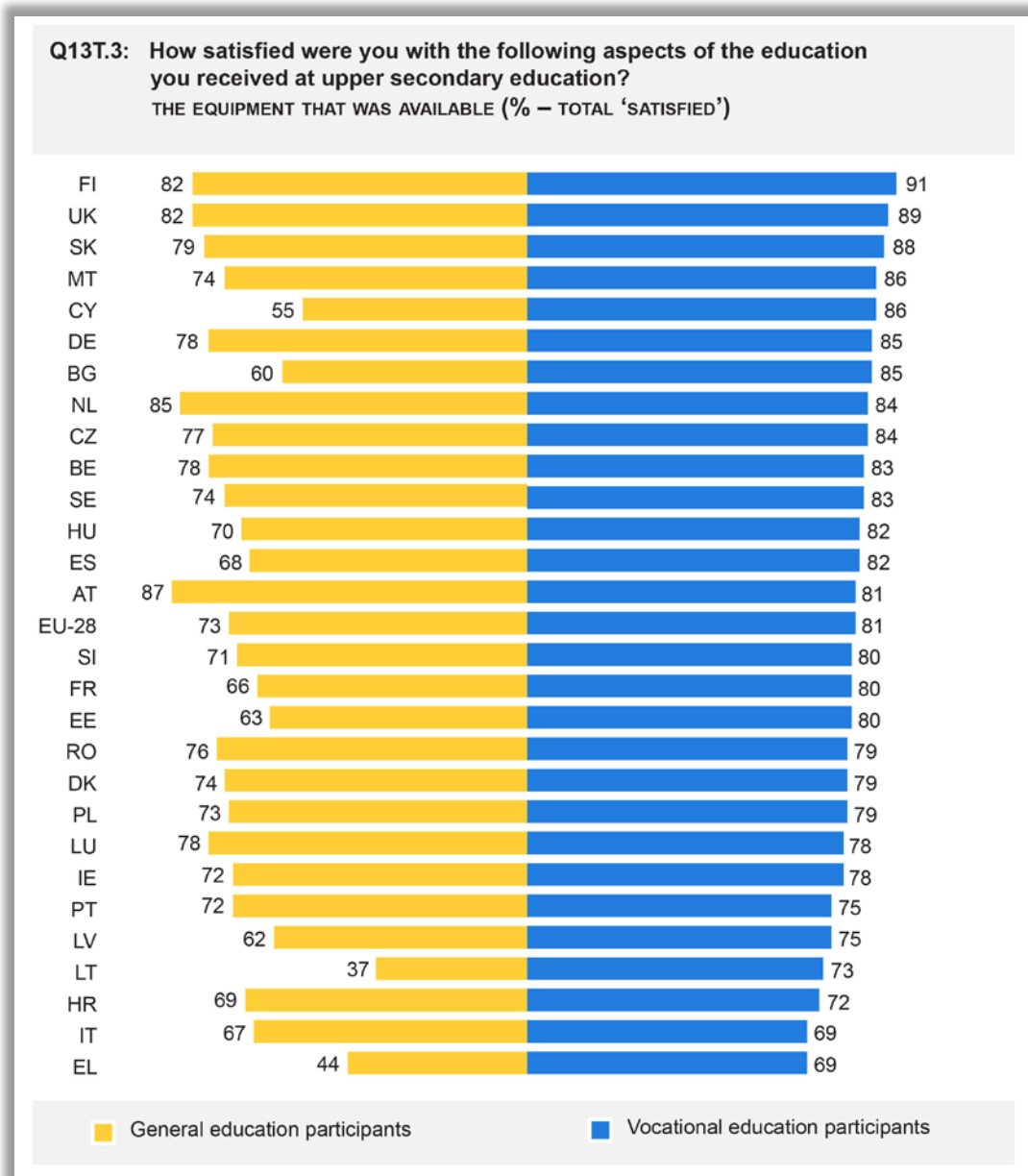
Across the EU as a whole, around four in five respondents who followed vocational education (81%) say that they were satisfied with the equipment that was available. There was some variation between countries: satisfaction levels were highest in Finland (91%), the UK (89%) and Slovakia (88%), and lowest in Italy, Greece (both 69%), Croatia (72%) and Lithuania (73%).

Satisfaction levels also varied by country among respondents who followed general education. Respondents were most likely to be satisfied in Austria (87%), the Netherlands (85%), Finland and the UK (both 82%). By contrast, fewer than half of respondents were satisfied in Lithuania (37%) and Greece (44%).

In most countries, satisfaction with available equipment was higher among those who participated in vocational education than in general education. The largest differences can be seen in Lithuania (73% from vocational education were satisfied, compared with 37% from general education), Cyprus (86% compared with 55%), Bulgaria (85% compared with 60%) and Greece (69% compared with 44%).

In Austria, respondents who took general education were more likely than those who took vocational education to be satisfied with equipment available (87% compared with 81%), while there was little or no difference among the two respondent groups in the Netherlands (85% compared with 84%) and Luxembourg (78% for both groups).

Figure 49. **Satisfaction with available equipment (VET vs GE participants at country level)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

4.3.1.5. *Index of satisfaction*

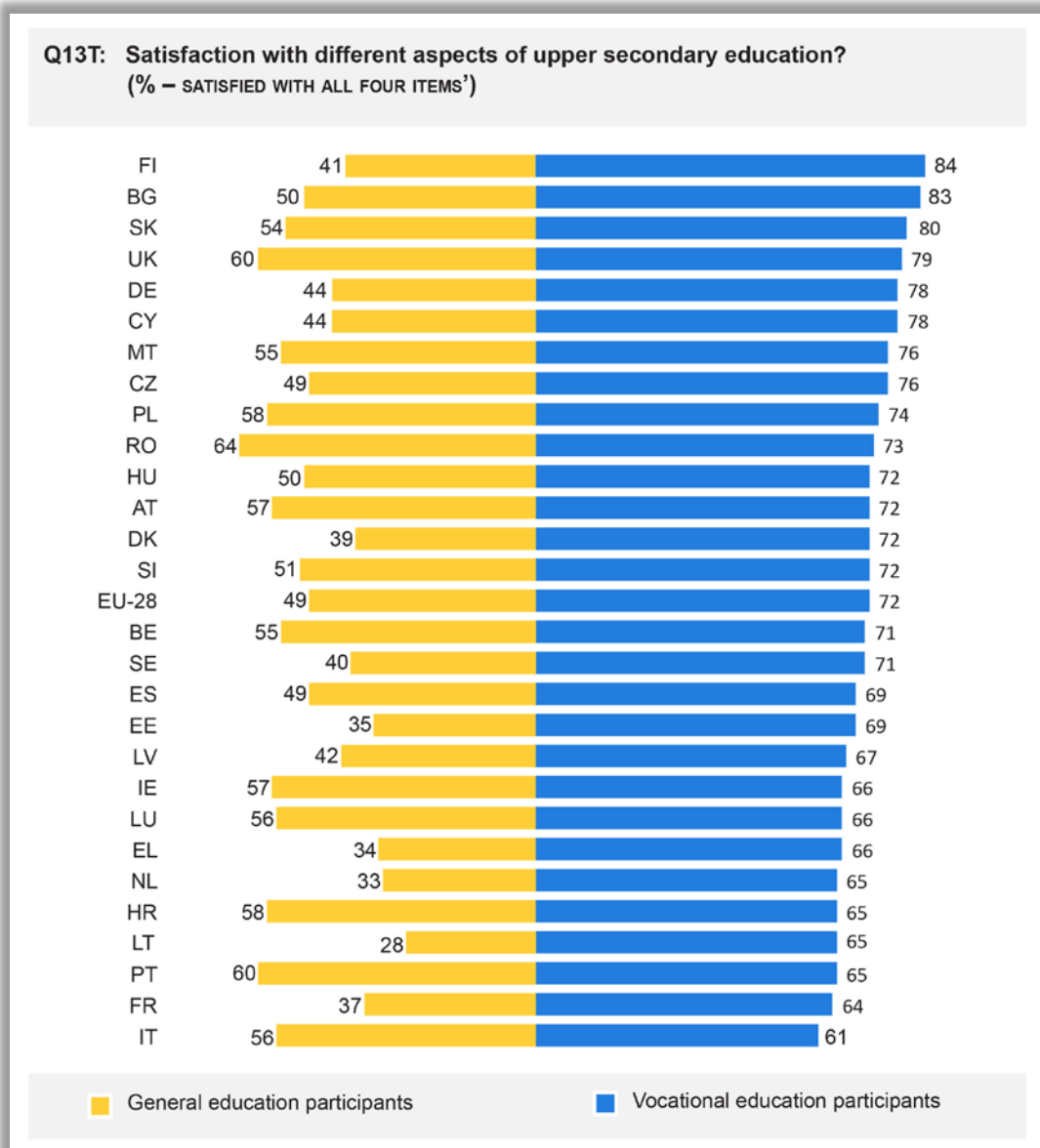
Figure 51 summarises the findings from the four dimensions of satisfaction at upper secondary level investigated throughout this chapter. It shows the proportion of respondents in each country that say they are satisfied with each of the four dimensions.

Across the four aspects of upper secondary education covered in the survey, some countries have consistently high levels of satisfaction among respondents who followed vocational education. Bulgaria, Cyprus and the UK consistently feature among the highest ranked countries. By contrast, Italy and Croatia are consistently among the lowest ranked countries on the four items.

The results show that, in every country, respondents who participated in vocational education are more satisfied with each of the four aspects of education considered in the survey than those who followed general education. Overall, at least six in 10 vocational education students were satisfied with each of the four aspects of their education in every Member State. This ranges from around four fifths of those in Finland (84%), Bulgaria (83%), Slovakia (80%) to 61% in Italy and 64% in France.

Conversely, students of general education at the upper secondary level do not tend to be as satisfied with every aspect. Portugal, Romania and the UK are the only countries where more than 60% of respondents are satisfied with each of the aspects of their general education. At the other end of the scale, around a third of respondents said they were satisfied with all features in Lithuania (28%), the Netherlands (33%), Greece (34%) and Estonia (35%).

Figure 50. **Index of satisfaction with education aspects (VET vs GE participants at country level)**



Base: Respondents who followed upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

All four items include: 'The general skills you developed', 'The work related skills you developed', 'The quality of teaching' and 'The equipment that was available'.

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

4.3.2. Satisfaction with skills development

This section looks more in detail into the development of different types of skill during upper secondary education. It explores the self-perceived acquisition, during upper secondary education, of those key competences, as defined by the European Commission recommendation on key competences, to be delivered at

the end of initial education and consisting of the 'knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help learners find personal fulfilment and, later in life, find work and take part in society' ⁽⁹⁾. In addition to the eight key competences, the survey explores aspects such as 'the ability to be creative', 'to think critically' or 'to work with others'.

A higher proportion of general education than vocational students reported having acquired key competences during upper secondary education. Proportions are similar in technical-related competences (science and technology, digital and computer skills) as well as in pursuing own learning and communication skills. Major differences are in relation to speaking a foreign language and cultural awareness.

VET participants are most likely say that they developed the ability to work with others (87%), followed by the ability to pursue and organise their own learning (76%) and communication skills (75%). A slightly smaller proportion of them say that they developed the ability to be creative (70%).

Around two-thirds of respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational say that they developed the ability to think critically (68%), mathematical skills (66%) and a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (65%). Respondents are slightly less likely to say they developed science and technology skills (60%) and social and civic competences to engage in active democratic participation (56%).

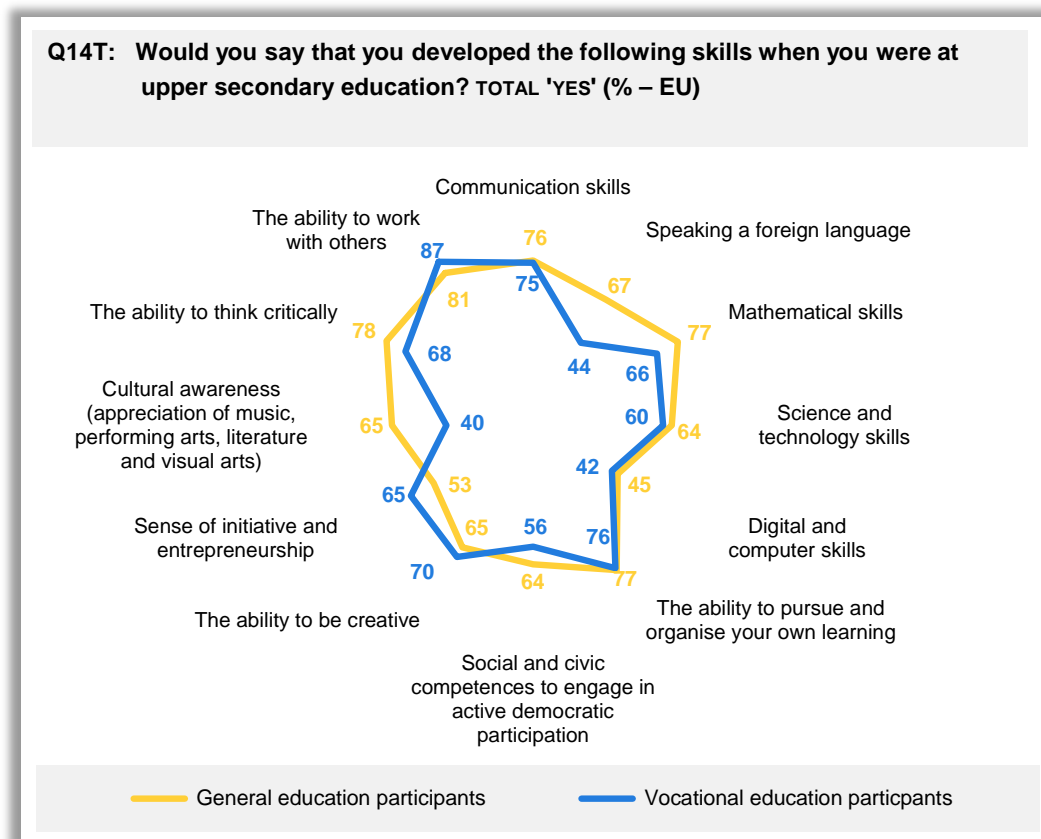
Fewer than half of respondents who followed vocational education say that they developed the following skills: speaking a foreign language (44%), digital and computer skills (42%) and cultural awareness (40%).

The largest differences between general education respondents and those from vocational education are in relation to speaking a foreign language (67% compared with 44%) and cultural awareness (65% compared with 40%). Respondents from general education are also more likely than those from vocational education to say that they developed the ability to think critically (78% compared with 68%), mathematical skills (77% compared with 66%) and social and civic competences (64% compared with 56%).

By contrast, vocational education respondents are more likely than those from general education to say that they developed the ability to work with others (87% compared with 81%), the ability to be creative (70% compared with 65%), and a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (65% compared with 53%).

⁽⁹⁾ European Commission: Education and training: *Key competences*: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/competences_en

Figure 51. **Personal views on development of key competences in education (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

CHAPTER 5.

Outcomes and effectiveness of VET

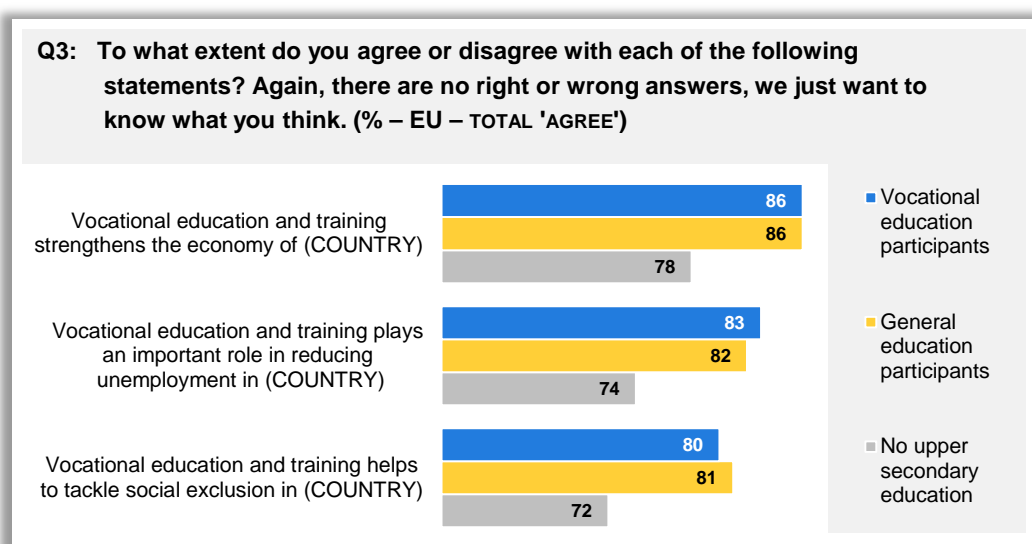
In this chapter vocational education and training (VET) outcomes and effectiveness are explored. First, respondents are asked to express their views on how VET contributes to strengthening the economy, combating unemployment and social exclusion. Second, questions relating to their labour market situation and career satisfaction are asked of all respondents that reported to be working, unemployed or retired, irrespective of educational path.

5.1. Vocational education in society

This section examines EU citizens' perceptions of the role of VET in society. There are high levels of agreement with each of three statements about VET in society, indicating that EU citizens believe it brings positive benefits.

Looking at respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational, more than four in five agree that VET strengthens their country's economy (86%) and plays an important role in reducing unemployment in their country (83%). Four in five agree (80%) that VET helps to tackle social inclusion.

Figure 52. Role of VET in society (VET vs GE participants)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Views on these issues are similar among respondents who followed general education at the upper secondary stage. Levels of agreement are either identical or different by just one percentage point.

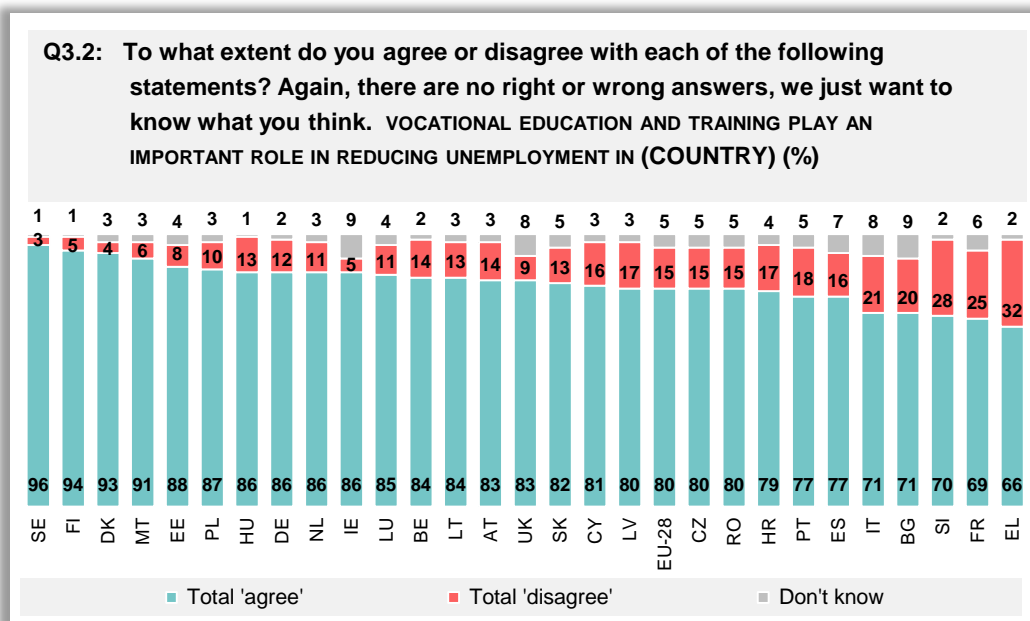
Respondents who did not continue to upper secondary education are slightly less likely to agree with each of the statements; for example, 78% agree that VET strengthens their country's economy, compared with 86% of those from either vocational or general education. However, these lower levels of agreement are due to a higher proportion of 'don't know' answers; the proportion that disagrees with each of the statements is similar to the other respondent groups.

At country level, we only show figures in relation to reducing unemployment, as the other two items had a stable pattern across countries. Across the EU as a whole, four in five respondents (80%) agree that VET plays an important role in reducing unemployment in their country. In every Member State, at least two-thirds of respondents agree with this statement, although there is a fair degree of variation between individual countries.

More than nine in 10 respondents agree that VET plays an important role in reducing unemployment in their country in Sweden (96%), Finland (94%), Denmark (93%) and Malta (91%). Sweden and Denmark have high proportions of respondents who 'totally agree' (73% and 69% respectively).

By contrast, fewer than three in four respondents agree with the statement in Greece (66%), France (69%), Slovenia (70%), Bulgaria and Italy (both 71%).

Figure 53. **VET plays a role in reducing unemployment (country results)**



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

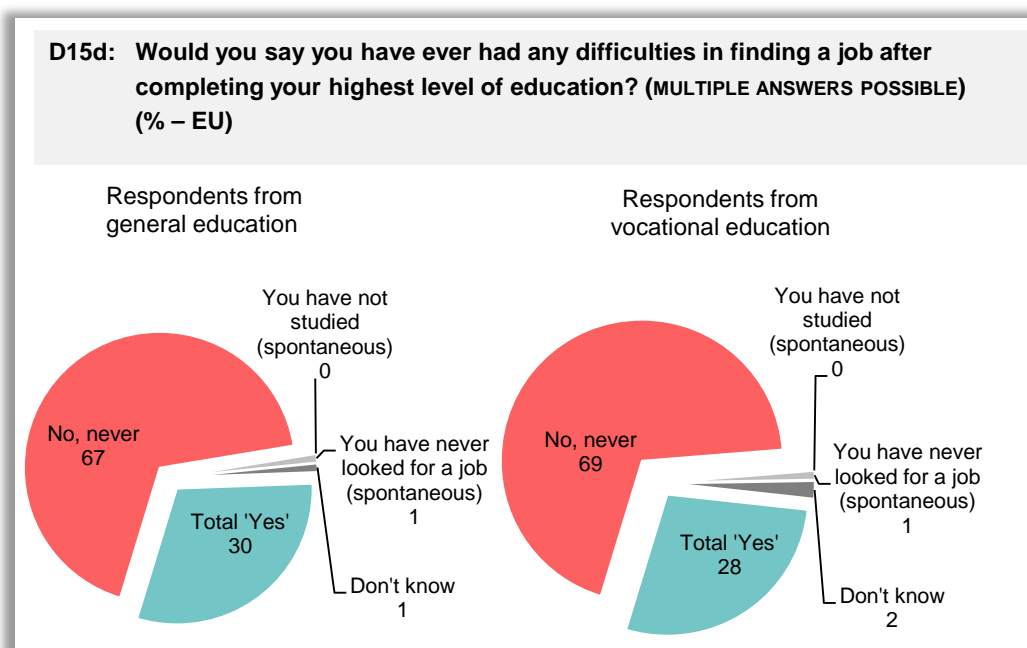
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

5.2. Finding a job after studying

Respondents were also asked whether they had difficulties in finding a job after completing their education and how long it took them to find work. Those who were working, in unemployment or retired were asked whether they had ever experienced any difficulties in finding a job after completing their highest level of education. Just over a quarter (27%) reported having had difficulties of some kind, while around two-thirds say that they never had difficulties. The remaining 5% reported having never looked for a job, not studied at all, or do not know.

The proportions that had difficulties are similar for those from vocational education (28%) and general education (30%) at the upper secondary stage.

Figure 54. Difficulties in finding a job (VET vs GE participants)



Base: Respondents who are currently working, unemployed or retired (n= 29 975).

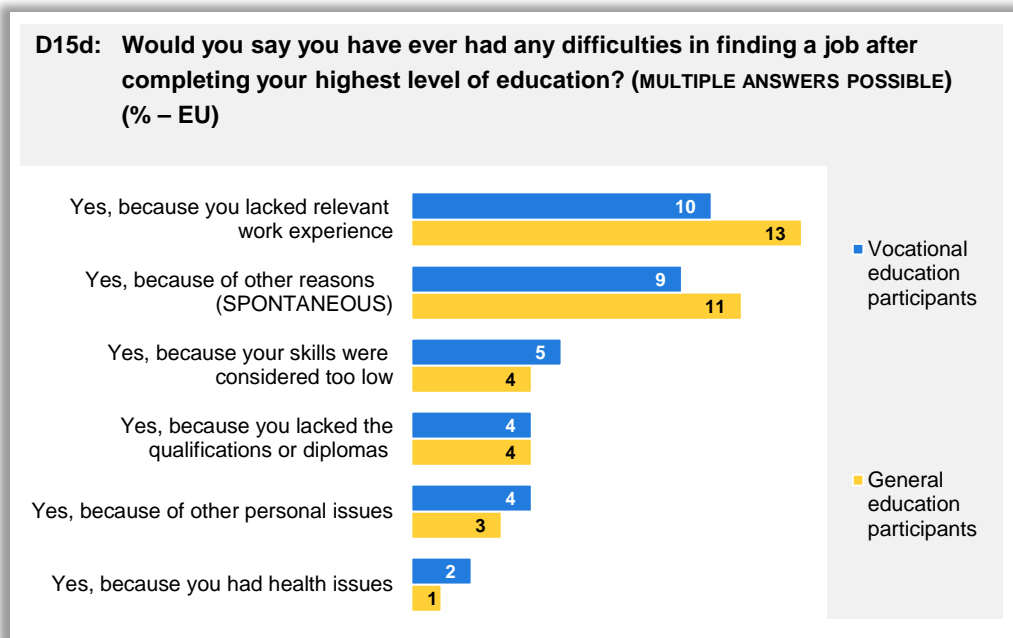
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Figure 56 looks in more detail at the respondents (27%) who say that they have experienced difficulties in finding a job after completing their highest level of education. The chart shows the reasons why respondents had difficulties (multiple answers were possible).

Respondents are most likely to say that their difficulties were due to lack of relevant work experience (10%), that their skills were considered too low (5%) and that they lacked the required qualifications or diplomas (5%). Some

respondents had difficulties relating to personal issues (3%) or health issues (2%), while a range of other reasons was also given (by 9%).

Figure 55. **Reasons for facing difficulties finding a job (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: Respondents who are currently working, unemployed or retired (n= 29 975).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

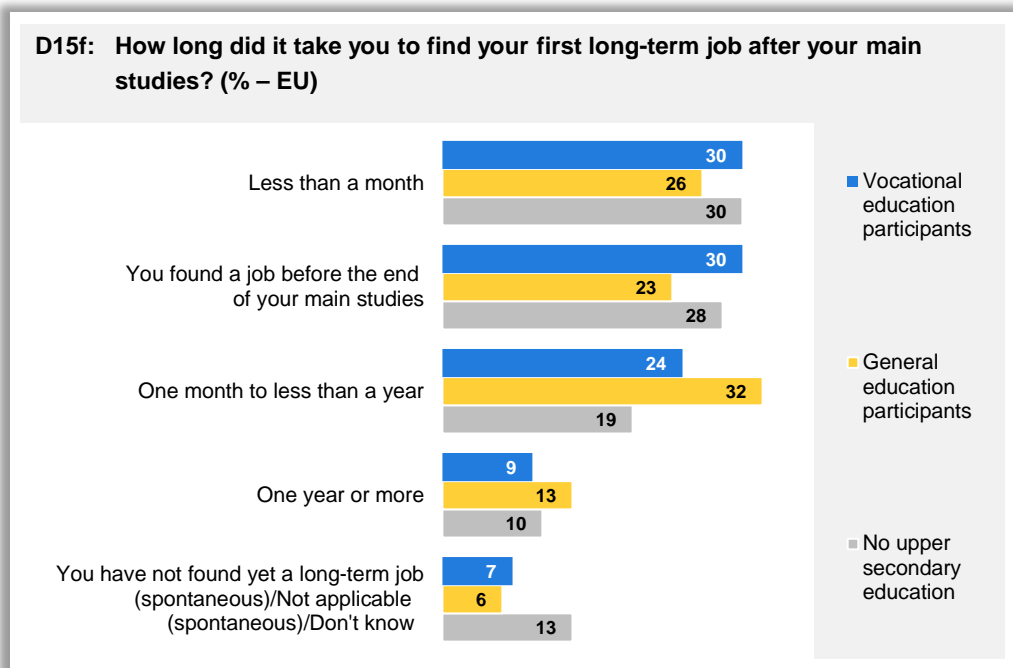
Respondents who were either working, in unemployment or retired were asked how long it took them to find their first long-term job after their main studies.

In most cases, respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational say that it took them no more than a month to find a long-term job after completing their main studies. The same proportion, 30%, found a job before the end of their studies as found a job within one month of finishing their main studies. One in four respondents who from vocational education (24%) say that it took between a month and a year to find a long-term job, while 9% say that it took a year or more.

Respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily general typically took longer to find a job after their studies. Less than a quarter (23%) found a job before the end of their studies, while a quarter (26%) say it took less than a month. Around a third (32%) took between a month and a year, while 13% took a year or more to find a long-term job. This means that around half (49%) found a job within a month of ending their studies, lower than for respondents from vocational education (60%).

Among those who did not continue to upper secondary education, most found a job within a month of ending their studies (58%), while one in five (19%) took between a month and a year and one in 10 (10%) took a year or more. These figures are similar to those seen for respondents from vocational education.

Figure 56. Time lapse before finding a job (VET vs GE participants)



Base: Respondents who are currently working, unemployed or retired (n= 29 975).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

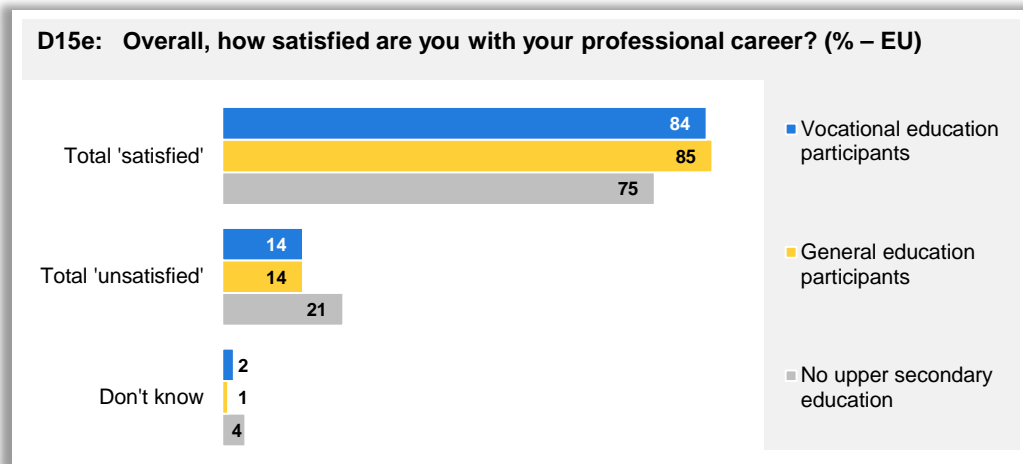
5.3. Career satisfaction

Most EU citizens say that they are satisfied with their professional career. Among respondents who were employed, unemployed or retired at the time of the survey, four in five (81%) say that they are satisfied with their career. This proportion is very similar among respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational (84%) and those from general education (85%). However, it is lower among those who did not continue to upper secondary education (75%).

Similarly, respondents who did not continue to upper secondary education are more likely to be dissatisfied with their career (21%), compared with those who from either vocational or general education (14% in each case).

Those who did not continue to upper secondary education generally found a long-term job as quickly as respondents who did. However, the responses suggest that they were less likely to have a career that they were satisfied with, compared with those who continued to upper secondary education.

Figure 57. **Career satisfaction (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: Respondents who are currently working, unemployed or retired (n= 29 975).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

At least nine respondents in 10 say they are satisfied with their professional career in Denmark (94%), Sweden (93%), the Netherlands (91%), Malta and Finland (90%). Satisfaction is lowest in Greece (67%), Hungary (67%), Italy (69%) and Portugal (70%).

5.4. Further education and training

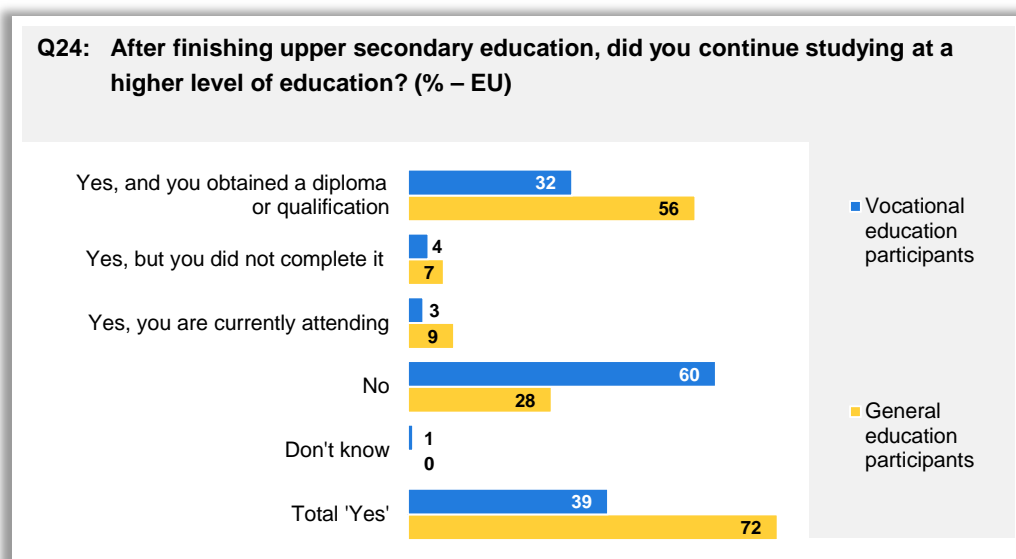
This section looks at respondents' experience of further education and training; specifically whether they continued studying at a higher level of education, and (if so) whether it was primarily vocational or general; and whether they have recently been on any work-related training.

5.4.1. Continuing to higher education

Respondents who moved on to upper secondary education were asked whether they continued studying at a higher level. Among those whose upper secondary education was primarily general, almost three-quarters (72%) say that they continued to a higher level of education: 56% did so and obtained a diploma or qualification, while 7% did not complete their higher education and 9% were currently attending higher education at the time of the survey.

Respondents who followed vocational education at upper secondary level were less likely to continue to a higher level of education (39%): 32% obtained a diploma or qualification, while 4% did not complete their higher education and 3% were currently attending higher education at the time of the survey.

Figure 58. **Progression into higher education (VET vs GE participants)**



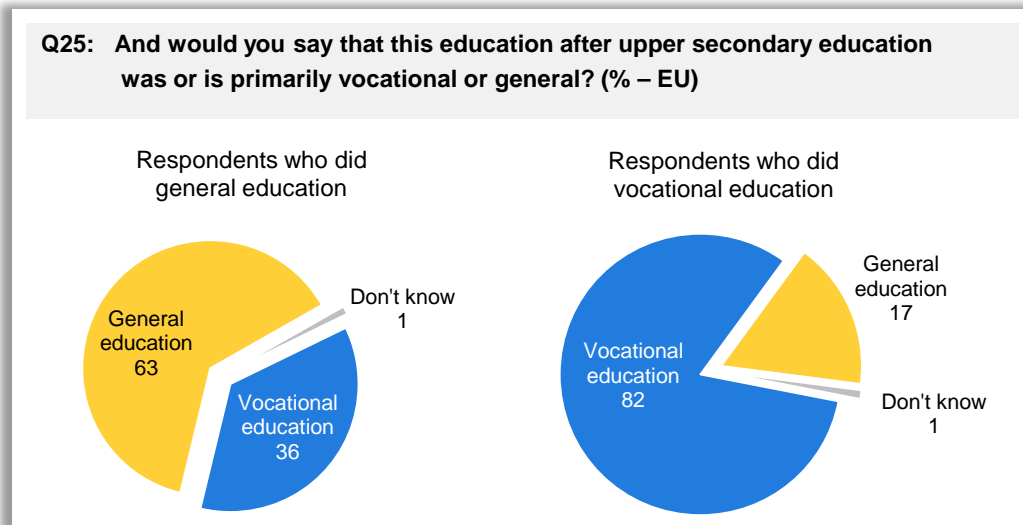
Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Respondents who continued on to higher education generally stayed with the same type of education as they had at the upper secondary stage. Among those whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational, 82% went on to a higher level of education that was also vocational, while just 17% switched to general education.

There was more cross-over among respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily general. More than a third (36%) moved on to higher education that was primarily vocational, while 63% stayed in education that was primarily general.

Figure 59. VET or GE at higher education (VET vs GE participants)



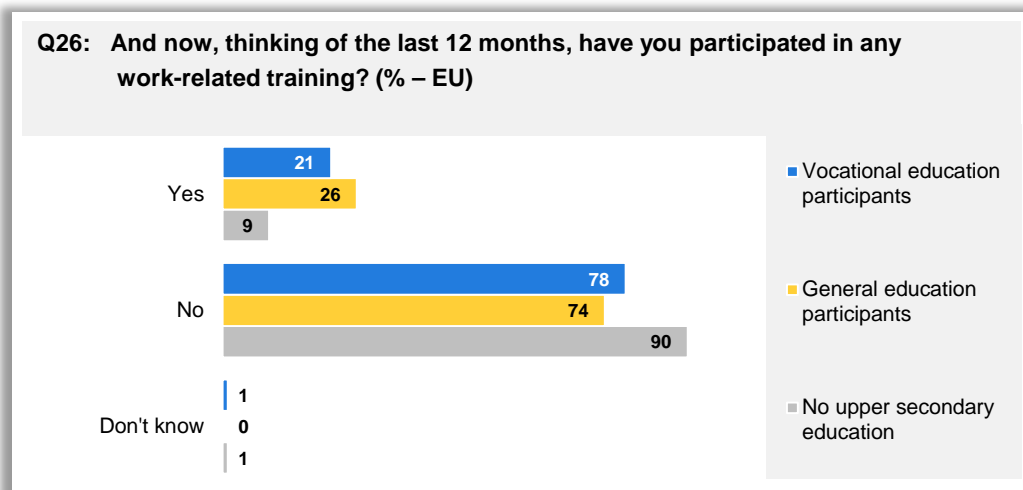
Base: Respondents who continued to higher education (n= 20,226)

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

5.4.2. Work-related training

Around one in five respondents (21%) whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational say that they participated in work-related training in the previous 12 months. This proportion is slightly higher (26%) among those who followed general education but much lower (9%) among those who did not continue to upper secondary education.

Figure 60. Participation in work-related training (VET vs GE participants)



Base: All respondents (n= 35 645).

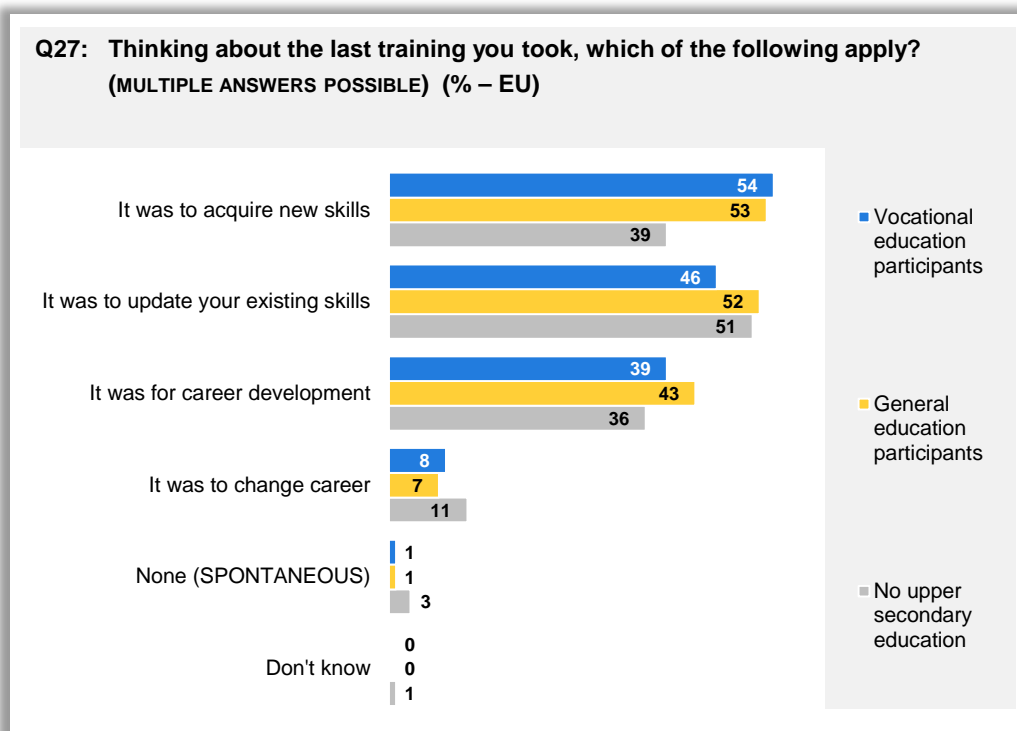
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Respondents who had been on work-related training in the previous 12 months were asked about the last training that they took. More than half (54%) of those whose upper secondary education was primarily vocational, say that their last training was to acquire new skills, while just under half (46%) say that it was to update their existing skills. Around two in five (39%) say that the training was for career development, while 8% say that it was to change career.

Responses are broadly similar among respondents whose upper secondary education was primarily general. However, they are slightly more likely to say that their last training was to update existing skills (52%) and for career development (43%).

Among those who did not follow upper secondary education, recent training was less likely to be to be undertaken for acquiring new skills (39%), but was slightly more likely to be to change career paths (11%), compared with those who did continue to upper secondary education.

Figure 61. **Reasons for work-related training (VET vs GE participants)**



Base: Respondents who have participated in work-related training (n= 6,786)

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

CHAPTER 6.

Conclusion

This report has examined EU citizens' awareness and opinions of VET, as well as their own personal experience at upper secondary level. Making VET more attractive and effective requires a clear understanding of the opinions of the population. Identifying possible stereotypes and misconceptions shaping the concept of VET in people's minds, and understanding the challenges and limitations of VET experience from the end users' point of view, are essential to inform VET policy-making and allow VET to become a first choice.

Main results can be summarised as followed:

- (a) the survey shows a generally positive citizen perception of VET in EU Member States. This is especially in relation to its capacity for providing job opportunities, preparing people for the world of work, and matching employer needs. EU citizens also generally agree that VET plays an important role in society, specifically by strengthening their country's economy, reducing unemployment and tackling social exclusion. This is why there is significant support for national governments prioritising investment in vocational education at the upper secondary stage. However, when asked to compare VET with general education, a majority of respondents tend to agree that general education has a more positive image than VET, that VET is mainly for students of lower academic performance, and that obtaining a VET qualification is usually easier than obtaining a qualification in general education. To address and reverse these perceptions it might be necessary to explore in depth their possible causes;
- (b) survey respondents are generally familiar with vocational education. Most Europeans have heard about VET (86%). While they recognise its heterogeneity, linking it to different statements related to when (initial versus continuous) and where it takes place (school versus work-based), VET is generally associated with an education that prepares you for a specific occupation and rarely connected to higher education such as university. Not perceiving VET as offering progression opportunities to higher education tends to reduce its attractiveness and is a major argument for those who opted for general education; this conceptualisation of VET is in line with the reason for choosing VET. Vocational education students tend to report that the likelihood of finding a job guided their choice of education at upper secondary level (46%), while general education students tend to report their

- choice as based on the possibility of continuing to higher education (45%). Breaking this general education/higher education duality might be a necessary condition to make VET more attractive;
- (c) although in most Member States recent reforms have opened up VET routes, so that, structurally, there are few dead-ends left, citizens views on the permeability of VET are still mixed. Horizontal permeability, i.e. the possibility of switching from vocational education to general education at upper secondary level, is perceived as easy for two in five EU citizens (41%), but almost the same proportion (42%) think it would be difficult and 17% do not know. In terms of vertical permeability (the possibility of continuing to higher education after VET at upper secondary level), just over half of Europeans (54%) agree that 'it is easy to continue into higher education such as university after vocational education at upper secondary education';
 - (d) this shows that many countries still confront a negative public discourse on VET which tends to reinforce stereotypes and misconceptions; the potential of information and lifelong guidance is not fully used in these contexts. Looking at the survey results across countries, there is a strong correlation between the level of information people receive and their participation in VET programmes. Although we cannot assume direct causality, it is also true that in countries where more people are given information on VET, there are more VET participants. Less than half of those who opted for general education at upper secondary level say they were given information about vocational education, and one in four say that someone advised them against taking vocational education when they were deciding on their upper secondary education;
 - (e) VET graduates are generally more satisfied with their learning outcomes than general education graduates; this is especially true of work-related skills developed. General education students are more satisfied when it comes to some of the key competences acquired during their upper secondary education: the ability to speak a foreign language and develop cultural awareness. However, the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, as well as the ability to be creative, have the opposite pattern, with VET students showing more satisfaction than general education students;
 - (f) VET seems to be clearly associated with positive labour market outcomes. In line with the perception that VET graduates at upper secondary level find a job quicker than graduates of general education at upper secondary level and of higher education, VET graduates tend to need less time to find their

first long-term job than general education graduates, while reporting similar career satisfaction.

The survey provides a rich amount of information to understand better citizen's views on VET. This report has given a first view of the survey results. Further analysis will be carried out to develop our understanding of VET perceptions and how they are built across Europe.

List of abbreviations

CVET	continuous vocational education and training
GE	general education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
NUTS2	nomenclature of territorial units for statistics: basic regions of the application of regional policies
VET	vocational education and training

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1.

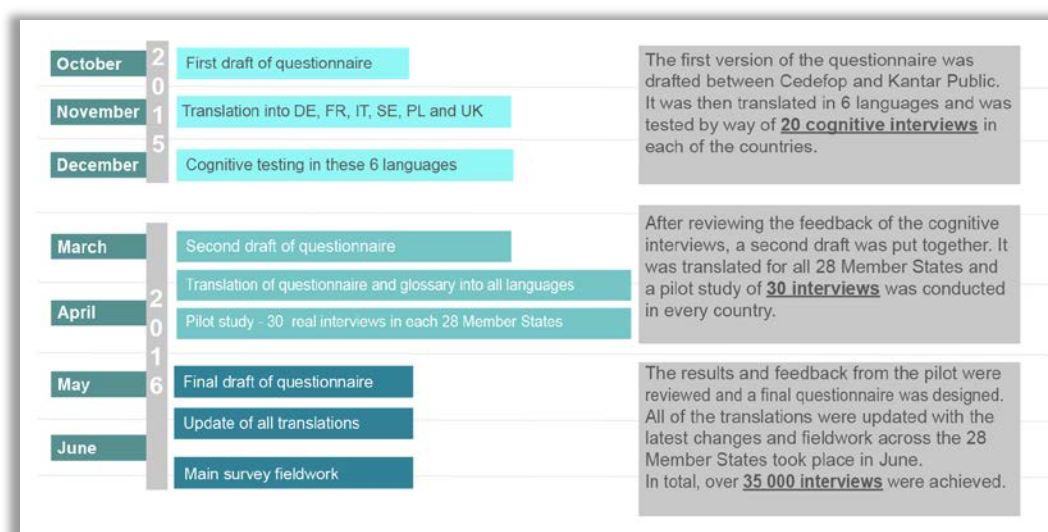
Technical specifications

The main stage fieldwork of this study comes as the third of three phases of survey design and implementation. In November 2015, 20 cognitive interviews were conducted in Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the UK. Participants were asked around 15 to 20 survey questions and interviewers probed around the questions to understand better the responses and how they were understood and perceived.

In April 2016, the second draft of the survey questionnaire, following modifications after the cognitive interviews, was fielded in all EU Member States with 30 pilot interviews being conducted in each country. Both phases were important steps in the survey design, testing the questions themselves as well as the logistical aspects of multi-country fieldwork.

Figure A1 elaborates further on the steps and the timeline of the project.

Figure A1. **A three-tiered approach**



The main survey covered the population of the respective nationalities of the EU Member States, resident in each of the 28 Member States and aged 15 years and over. Fieldwork took place between 1 and 29 June 2016. The fieldwork dates and number of interviews per country can be found in Table A1.

Table A1. **Field work information**

	Countries	N° Interviews	Dates Fieldwork		Population 15+	Proportion EU-28 (%)
BE	Belgium	1 229	01/06/2016	28/06/2016	9 693 779	2.25
BG	Bulgaria	1 001	02/06/2016	21/06/2016	6 537 535	1.52
CZ	Czech Republic	1 060	02/06/2016	22/06/2016	9 238 431	2.14
DK	Denmark	1 010	01/06/2016	23/06/2016	4 838 729	1.12
DE	Germany	2 177	02/06/2016	23/06/2016	70 160 634	16.26
EE	Estonia	1 001	03/06/2016	22/06/2016	1 160 064	0.27
IE	Ireland	1 307	01/06/2016	27/06/2016	3 592 162	0.83
EL	Greece	1 301	02/06/2016	23/06/2016	9 937 810	2.30
ES	Spain	2 215	03/06/2016	26/06/2016	39 445 245	9.14
FR	France	2 012	02/06/2016	27/06/2016	54 097 255	12.54
HR	Croatia	1 026	02/06/2016	21/06/2016	3 796 476	0.88
IT	Italy	2 034	01/06/2016	27/06/2016	52 334 536	12.13
CY	Cyprus	753	01/06/2016	24/06/2016	741 308	0.17
LV	Latvia	1 010	02/06/2016	22/06/2016	1 707 082	0.40
LT	Lithuania	1 004	02/06/2016	24/06/2016	2 513 384	0.58
LU	Luxembourg	760	01/06/2016	20/06/2016	457 127	0.11
HU	Hungary	1 046	03/06/2016	23/06/2016	8 781 161	2.04
MT	Malta	761	01/06/2016	27/06/2016	364 171	0.08
NL	Netherlands	1 003	01/06/2016	21/06/2016	13 979 215	3.24
AT	Austria	1 016	01/06/2016	22/06/2016	7 554 711	1.75
PL	Poland	2 006	02/06/2016	27/06/2016	33 444 171	7.75
PT	Portugal	1 315	02/06/2016	21/06/2016	8 480 126	1.97
RO	Romania	1 302	03/06/2016	24/06/2016	16 852 701	3.91
SI	Slovenia	1 012	01/06/2016	20/06/2016	1 760 032	0.41
SK	Slovakia	1 008	02/06/2016	23/06/2016	4 586 024	1.06
FI	Finland	1 042	02/06/2016	22/06/2016	4 747 810	1.10
SE	Sweden	1 109	01/06/2016	22/06/2016	7 998 763	1.85
UK	United Kingdom	2 126	04/06/2016	29/06/2016	52 651 777	12.20
TOTAL EU-28		35 646	01/06/2016	29/06/2016	431 452 219	100

Source: Cedefop.

The basic sample design applied in all States is a multistage, random (probability) one. In each country, a number of sampling points was drawn with probability proportional to population size (for total coverage of the country) and to population density.

To do this, the sampling points were drawn systematically from each of the 'administrative regional units', after stratification by individual unit and type of

area. They represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the Eurostat NUTS2 ⁽¹⁰⁾ (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas.

In each of the selected sampling points, a starting address was drawn, at random. Further addresses (every Nth address) were selected by standard 'random route' procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random (following the 'closest birthday rule'). All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and in the appropriate national language. Computer assisted personal interview (CAPI) was used for data capture in those countries where this technique was available.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1 000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits (Table A2).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics: basic regions of the application of regional policies. Figures updated in August 2015.

Table A2. Statistical margins due to the sampling process (at 95% level of confidence)

	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6.0	8.3	9.9	11.1	12.0	12.7	13.2	13.6	13.8	13.9	N=50
N=500	1.9	2.6	3.1	3.5	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4	N=500
N=1000	1.4	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1	N=1000
N=1500	1.1	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	N=1500
N=2000	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	N=2000
N=3000	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	N=3000
N=4000	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	N=4000
N=5000	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	N=5000
N=6000	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	N=6000
N=7000	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	N=7000
N=7500	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	N=7500
N=8000	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	N=8000
N=9000	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	N=9000
N=10000	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	N=10000
N=11000	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	N=11000
N=12000	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	N=12000
N=13000	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	N=13000
N=14000	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	N=14000
N=15000	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	

NB: Various sample sizes are in rows; various observed results are in columns.

Source: Cedefop.

ANNEX 2.

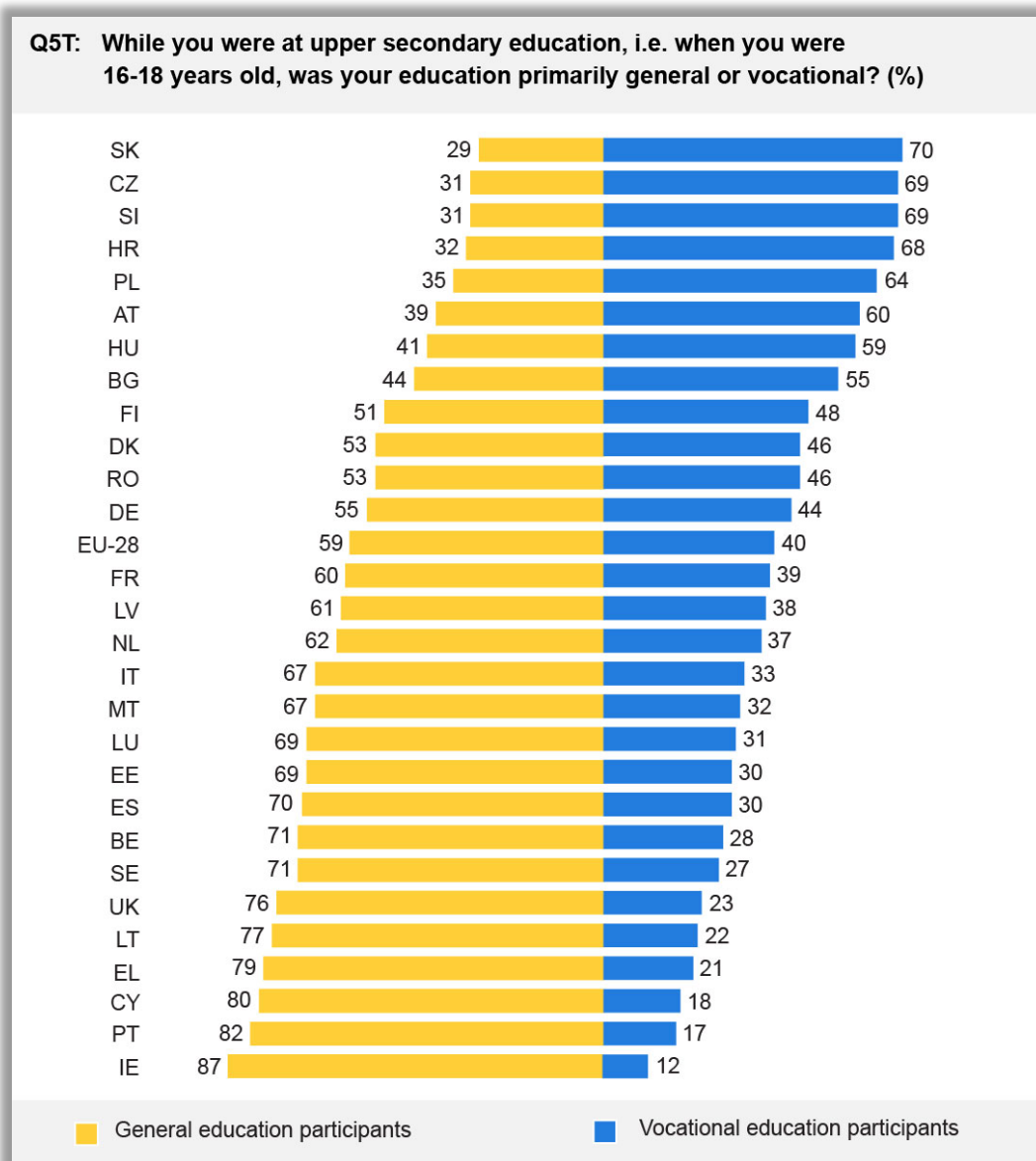
Participation in VET

Participation in VET

The survey collected information on respondents' education orientation at upper secondary level, with the aim of comparing those that participated in VET to those that attended the general stream. An operational definition of VET, based on Cedefop's and the international standard classification of education (ISCED) but simplified for operational purposes, was read out to respondents who attended upper secondary education. They were then asked whether their education was primarily general or vocational. This relies on individual judgement and not on official understanding of what constitute VET: we do not rely on desk based post-coding, based on nationally or internationally agreed mappings of programmes and qualifications and their official categorisation as being vocational or general. This might explain differences with existing national statistics. Internationally comparable data collected through general population surveys (labour force survey and other similar surveys) do not usually have upper secondary education as their main focus but consider the highest level of education and mainly as a background variable. Thus, the survey presents information that was not collected previously in any other EU survey at this scale, but relies on individual own judgement of educational orientation. More information on the issue of participation is described in the technical report.

In the EU as a whole, a majority (59%) say that their education was primarily general in nature, while two in five (40%) say that it was primarily vocational. There is considerable variation between individual Member States: the proportion attending vocational education at the upper secondary level ranges from 70% in Slovakia to just 12% in Ireland. In eight countries, the majority of respondents say that their upper secondary education was primarily vocational. The highest proportions can be seen in Slovakia (70%), the Czech Republic (69%), Slovenia (69%) and Croatia (68%). By contrast, there are six Member States where less than a quarter of respondents say that their upper secondary education was primarily vocational: Ireland (12%), Portugal (17%), Cyprus (18%), Greece (21%), Lithuania (22%) and the UK (23%).

Figure A2. Self-reported participation by type of education



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146)

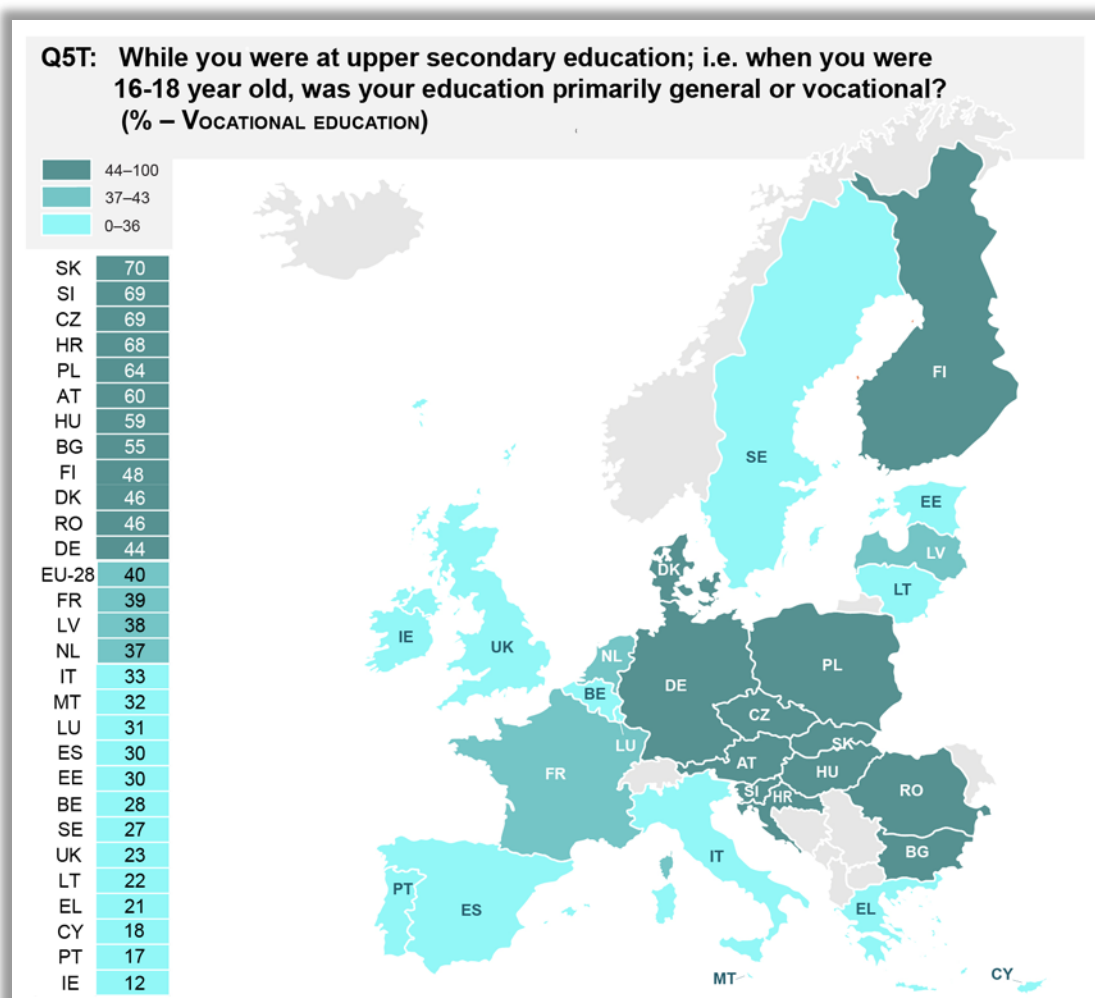
Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

Figure A3 maps the proportion, by Member State, of respondents who declare their upper secondary education as primarily vocational. The chart helps display the geographic patterns behind considerable variation between Member States. The countries with the highest levels of vocational education are clustered together in central and eastern Europe: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania.

The one exception is Finland, which also has a relatively high proportion of respondents in vocational education.

Member States in the west and south of Europe generally have relatively low levels of participation in vocational education; this applies to Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Portugal and the UK. Relatively low proportions can also be seen in Belgium, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Sweden.

Figure A3. **Incidence of VET across Europe**



Base: Respondents who went to upper secondary education (n= 24 146).

Source: Cedefop VET opinion survey.

ANNEX 3.

Questionnaire

Q1	Had you heard of vocational education and training before this interview?					
	(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)					
	Yes, and you knew what it was	1				
	Yes, but you did not really know what it was	2				
	No, you had not heard of it	3				
	DK	4				
	Q2: ROTATE ITEMS 1 TO 8					
Q2	For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent they apply or not to vocational education and training. There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know what you think.					
	(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)					
		Always	Often	Rarely	Never	DK
1	It takes place before starting working life	1	2	3	4	5
2	It is about continuous professional development in adult life	1	2	3	4	5
3	It is about personal development	1	2	3	4	5
4	It occurs in a school environment	1	2	3	4	5
5	It occurs in a work environment	1	2	3	4	5
6	It takes place in higher education such as university	1	2	3	4	5
7	It is about doing manual work	1	2	3	4	5
8	It prepares you for a specific occupation	1	2	3	4	5

READ OUT: First of all thinking of Vocational education and training in general.

Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Again, there are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know what you think.

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	DK
1 Vocational education and training strengthen the economy of (OUR COUNTRY)	1	2	3	4	5
2 Vocational education and training play an important role in reducing unemployment in (OUR COUNTRY)	1	2	3	4	5
3 Vocational education and training help to tackle social exclusion in (OUR COUNTRY)	1	2	3	4	5

READ OUT: Now thinking about your own education.

Q4 Could you please tell me if you went or are currently going to upper secondary education?

(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes, you are currently at upper secondary education	1
Yes, but you did not complete it	2
Yes, and you obtained a diploma or qualification	3
No	4
DK	5

SPLIT: ASK Q5c AND Q6c IF "NO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 4 IN Q4, OTHERS

Q5c **You said that you did not go to upper secondary education. Could you please tell me if you have obtained a qualification or diploma for any work-related training?**

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes	1
No	2
DK	3

Q6c **Have you ever had a formal skills assessment to identify your strengths and skills?**

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes	1
No	2
DK	3

ASK Q5a TO Q14a IF "CURRENTLY GO TO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 1 IN Q4a
– OTHERS GO TO Q5b

READ OUT: Vocational education is designed to give participants the practical and technical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade. In the following questions, we refer to vocational education which takes place at upper secondary education at 16-18 years old.

READ OUT: Now we are going to talk about your own experience at upper secondary education.

Q5a **Is your upper secondary education primarily general or vocational?**

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

General education	1
Vocational education	2
DK	3

Q6a	At the time that you were making a decision about your education at upper secondary education, were you given information about vocational education?	
	(ONE ANSWER ONLY)	
	Yes	1
	No	2
	DK	3
Q7a	Thinking of the education you receive at upper secondary education, does this take place...?	
	(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)	
	All at school	1
	Mostly at school, partly in the workplace	2
	Half at school, half in the workplace	3
	Mostly in the workplace, partly at school	4
	All in the workplace	5
	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	6
	DK	7
	ASK Q8a AND Q9a IF "DO PART OR ALL OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION AT WORK", CODE 2 TO 5 IN Q7a – OTHERS GO TO Q10a	
Q8a	You said that some or all of your education at upper secondary education is in the workplace. Do you have a formal contract with the employer?	
	(ONE ANSWER ONLY)	
	Yes	1
	No	2
	Refusal (SPONTANEOUS)	3
	DK	4

Q9a	Are you paid?	
	(ONE ANSWER ONLY)	
	Yes	1
	No	2
	Refusal (SPONTANEOUS)	3
	DK	4
	ASK Q10a TO Q14a IF "CURRENTLY GO TO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 1 IN Q4a – OTHERS GO TO Q5b	
Q10a	As part of your education at upper secondary education, have you spent or are you going to spend more than two weeks abroad studying?	
	(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)	
	Yes, in another EU Member State	1
	Yes, in a country outside the EU	2
	No	3
	DK	4

Q11a: ROTATE ANSWERS 1 TO 13

Q11a: CODE 15 IS EXCLUSIVE

Q11a: ASK ONLY IF Q5a=1,2

Q11a You said that your upper secondary education is primarily [*Q5a general or vocational]. Here is a list of factors that might have played a role in your choice. Which of the following applied to you at the time?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

- | | |
|---|-----|
| You are good at the subjects | 1, |
| You are interested in the subjects | 2, |
| Your friends were taking the same subjects | 3, |
| Your family or friends advised you to | 4, |
| Someone at school (teacher or careers advisor) advised you to | 5, |
| Someone from the world of work advised you to | 6, |
| The career prospects | 7, |
| The likelihood of finding a job | 8, |
| The possibility of continuing to higher education | 9, |
| The possibility of having a good salary | 10, |
| The cost of the education | 11, |
| The distance from your home | 12, |
| The length of the studies | 13, |
| Other (SPONTANEOUS) | 14, |
| DK | 15, |

ASK Q12a IF "IS PRIMARILY TO GENERAL EDUCATION", CODE 1 IN Q5a – OTHERS GO TO Q13a

Q12a: CODES 6 AND 7 ARE EXCLUSIVE

Q12a At the time when you were deciding on your education at upper secondary education, did anyone advise you against taking vocational education?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

- | | |
|--|----|
| Yes, your friends | 1, |
| Yes, your family | 2, |
| Yes, someone at school (teacher or career advisor) | 3, |
| Yes, someone from the world of work | 4, |
| Yes, someone else | 5, |
| No | 6, |
| DK | 7, |

ASK Q13a AND Q14a IF "CURRENTLY GO TO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 1 IN Q4a – OTHERS GO TO Q5b

Q13a How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the upper secondary education you receive?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Very satis fied	Fairl y satis fied	Fairl y dissa tisfie d	Very dissa tisfie d	Not appli cabl e (SPO NTA NEO US)	DK
1 The general skills you develop	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 The work-related skills you develop	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 The equipment that is available	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 The quality of teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q14a: ROTATE ITEMS 1 TO 12

Q14a Would you say that you develop the following skills at upper secondary education?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Yes, defin itely	Yes, som ewh at	No, not reall y	No, not at all	Not appli cabl e (SPO NTA NEO US)	DK
1 Communication skills (M)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 Speaking a foreign language (M)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 Mathematical skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 Science and technology skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
5 Digital and computer skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
6 The ability to pursue and organise your own	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Social and civic competences to engage in active democratic participation	1	2	3	4	5	6
8 The ability to be creative	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 Cultural awareness (appreciation of music, performing arts, literature and visual arts)	1	2	3	4	5	6
11 The ability to think critically	1	2	3	4	5	6
12 The ability to work with others	1	2	3	4	5	6

NEW

ASK Q5b TO Q14b IF "WENT TO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 2 OR 3 IN Q4 –
OTHERS GO TO Q15

READ OUT: Vocational education is designed to give participants the practical and technical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation or trade. In the following questions, we refer to vocational education which takes place at upper secondary education at 16-18 years old.

READ OUT: Now we are going to talk about your own experience at upper secondary education.

Q5b While you were at upper secondary education, i.e. when you were 16-18 years old, was your education primarily general or vocational?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

General education	1
Vocational education	2
DK	3

Q6b At the time that you were making a decision about your education at upper secondary education, were you given information about vocational education?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes	1
No	2
DK	3

Q7b Thinking of the education you received at upper secondary education, did this take place...?

(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

All at school	1
Mostly at school, partly in the workplace	2
Half at school, half in the workplace	3
Mostly in the workplace, partly at school	4
All in the workplace	5
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	6
DK	7

ASK Q8b AND Q9b IF "DID PART OR ALL OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION AT WORK",
CODE 2 TO 5 IN Q7b – OTHERS GO TO Q10b

Q8b You said that some or all of your education at upper secondary education was in the workplace. Did you have a formal contract with the employer?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes	1
No	2
Refusal (SPONTANEOUS)	3
DK	4

Q9b Were you paid?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes	1
No	2
Refusal (SPONTANEOUS)	3
DK	4

ASK Q10b TO Q14b IF "WENT TO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 2 OR 3 IN Q4 –
OTHERS GO TO Q15

Q10b As part of your education at upper secondary education did you spend more than two weeks abroad studying?

(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes, in another EU Member State	1
Yes, in a country outside the EU	2
No	3
DK	4

Q11b: ROTATE ANSWERS 1 TO 13

Q11b: CODE 15 IS EXCLUSIVE

Q11b: ASK ONLY IF CODE 1 OR 2 IN Q5b

Q11b You said that your upper secondary education, i.e. when you were 16-18 years old, was primarily [?*Q5b general or vocational]. Here is a list of factors that might have played a role in your choice. Which of the following applied to you at the time?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

You were good at the subjects	1,
You were interested in the subjects	2,
Your friends were taking the same subjects	3,
Your family or friends advised you to	4,
Someone at school (teacher or careers advisor) advised you to	5,
Someone from the world of work advised you to	6,
The career prospects	7,
The likelihood of finding a job	8,
The possibility of continuing to higher education	9,
The possibility of having a good salary	10,
The cost of the education	11,
Distance from your home	12,
Length of studies	13,
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	14,
DK	15,

ASK Q12b IF "WENT PRIMARILY TO GENERAL EDUCATION", CODE 1 IN Q5b – OTHERS GO TO Q13b

Q12b: CODES 6 AND 7 ARE EXCLUSIVE

Q12b At the time when you were aged 16-18 and you were deciding on your education at upper secondary education, did anyone advise you against taking vocational education?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

Yes, your friends	1,
Yes, your family	2,
Yes, someone at school (teacher or career advisor)	3,
Yes, someone from the world of work	4,
Yes, someone else	5,
No	6,
DK	7,

ASK Q13b AND Q14b IF "WENT TO UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 2 OR 3 IN Q4 – OTHERS GO TO Q15

Q13b How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the education you received at upper secondary education?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Very satis fied	Fairl y satis fied	Fairl y dissa tisfie d	Very dissa tisfie d	Not appli cabl e (SPO NTA NEO US)	DK
1 The general skills you developed	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 The work-related skills you developed	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 The equipment that was available	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 The quality of teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q14b: ROTATE ITEMS 1 TO 12

Q14b Would you say that you developed the following skills when you were at upper secondary education?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Yes, defin itely	Yes, som ewh at	No, not reall y	No, not at all	Not appli cabl e (SPO NTA NEO US)	DK
1 Communication skills (M)	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 Speaking a foreign language (M)	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 Mathematical skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 Science and technology skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
5 Digital and computer skills	1	2	3	4	5	6
6 The ability to pursue and organise your own	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Social and civic competences to engage in active democratic participation	1	2	3	4	5	6
8 The ability to be creative	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 Cultural awareness (appreciation of music,	1	2	3	4	5	6
11 The ability to think critically	1	2	3	4	5	6
12 The ability to work with others	1	2	3	4	5	6

NEW

ASK ALL

READ OUT: Now we want to know your opinion on Vocational education at upper secondary education today. There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know

Q15 **Would you say that these days vocational education at upper secondary education for those aged 16-18 has a positive or negative image in (OUR COUNTRY)?**

(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Very positive	1
Fairly positive	2
Fairly negative	3
Very negative	4
DK	5

Q16 **And nowadays, would you recommend general education or vocational education to a young person about to decide on their education at upper secondary education?**

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

General education	1
Vocational education	2
It depends on the person (SPONTANEOUS)	3
DK	4

Q17 **Thinking again about education at upper secondary education, do you think that the (NATIONALITY) Government should prioritise investment in general education or vocational education?**

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

General education	1
Vocational education	2
Neither (SPONTANEOUS)	3
DK	4

Q18 The following statements are about the jobs that people can get after vocational education at upper secondary education. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of them?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	DK
1 People in vocational education learn skills that are needed by employers in (OUR COUNTRY)	1	2	3	4	5
2 Vocational education leads to well paid jobs	1	2	3	4	5
3 Vocational education leads to jobs that are highly regarded in (OUR COUNTRY)	1	2	3	4	5
4 Vocational education allows you to find a job quickly after obtaining a qualification or diploma	1	2	3	4	5

NEW

Q19 The following statements are about what happens after vocational education at upper secondary education. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of them? There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know what you think.

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	DK
1 It is easy to continue into higher education such as university after vocational education at upper secondary education	1	2	3	4	5
2 Vocational education at upper secondary education provides opportunities to study or work abroad	1	2	3	4	5

NEW

Q20 Thinking of someone aged 16-18 who has started taking vocational education at upper secondary education, how easy or difficult do you think it would be for this person to switch from vocational education to general education?

(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Very easy	1
Fairly easy	2
Fairly difficult	3
Very difficult	4
DK	5

NEW

READ OUT: The following question compares vocational education and general education. There are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know what you think.

Q21 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER LINE)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	DK
1 It is easier to get a qualification in vocational education than in general	1	2	3	4	5
2 Students with low grades are directed towards vocational education in (OUR COUNTRY)	1	2	3	4	5
3 In (OUR COUNTRY) general education has a more positive image than vocational education (M)	1	2	3	4	5

NEW

Q22 Do you think that people who completed vocational education at upper secondary education are more likely or less likely to find a job after their studies than people who completed general education at upper secondary education (usually at ages 16-18)?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

More likely	1
Less likely	2
No difference (SPONTANEOUS)	3
DK	4

Q23 Do you think that people who completed vocational education at upper secondary education are more likely or less likely to find a job after their studies than people who went on to complete higher education (e.g. University or equivalent)?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

More likely	1
Less likely	2
No difference (SPONTANEOUS)	3
DK	4

ASK Q24 AND Q25 IF "HAS COMPLETED UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION", CODE 3 IN Q4 – OTHERS GO IN Q26 (M)

Q24 After finishing upper secondary education, did you continue studying at a higher level of education?

(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes, you are currently attending	1
Yes, but you did not complete it	2
Yes, and you obtained a diploma or qualification	3
No	4
DK	5

ASK Q25 IF "IS DOING OR HAS PURSUED A HIGHER LEVEL OF EDUCATION", CODE 1 TO 3 IN Q24 – OTHERS GO IN Q26

Q25 And would you say that this education after upper secondary education was or is primarily vocational or general?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Vocational education	1
General education	2
DK	3

ASK ALL

Q26 And now, thinking of the last 12 months, have you participated in any work-related training?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Yes	1
No	2
DK	3

ASK Q27 IF "HAS PARTICIPATED IN WORK-RELATED TRAINING", CODE 1 IN Q26 – OTHERS GO TO DEMOGRAPHICS

Q27: ROTATE ANSWERS 1 TO 4

Q27: CODES 5 AND 6 ARE EXCLUSIVE

Q27 Thinking about the last training you took, which of the following apply?

(READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

It was for career development	1,
It was to change career	2,
It was to acquire new skills	3,
It was to update your existing skills	4,
None (SPONTANEOUS)	5,
DK	6,

DEMOGRAPHICS

ASK D15c IF "CURRENTLY WORKING", CODE 5 TO 18 IN D15a – OTHERS GO TO D15d

D15c Is your main paid job full-time or part-time?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Full-time	1
Part-time	2
DK	3

TREND D25

ASK D15d, D15e AND D15f IF "CURRENTLY WORKING OR UNEMPLOYED OR RETIRED", CODE 3 TO 18 IN D15a – OTHERS GO TO D15g

D15d: ROTATE ITEMS 2 TO 5

D15d: CODE 1, 8, 9 AND 10 ARE EXCLUSIVE

D15d Would you say you have ever had any difficulties in finding a job after completing your highest level of education?

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

No, never	1,
Yes, because your skills were considered too low	2,
Yes, because you lacked the qualifications or diplomas	3,
Yes, because you lacked relevant work experience	4,
Yes, because you had health issues	5,
Yes, because of other personal issues	6,
Yes, because of other reasons (SPONTANEOUS)	7,
You have not studied (SPONTANEOUS)	8,
You have never looked for a job (SPONTANEOUS)	9,
DK	10,

D15e	Overall, how satisfied are you with your professional career?																		
	(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)																		
	<table> <tr> <td>Very satisfied</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fairly satisfied</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fairly dissatisfied</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very dissatisfied</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DK</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </table>	Very satisfied	1	Fairly satisfied	2	Fairly dissatisfied	3	Very dissatisfied	4	DK	5								
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DK	5																		
D15f	How long did it take you to find your first long-term job after your main studies?																		
	(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)																		
	<table> <tr> <td>You found a job before the end of your main studies</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less than a month</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>One month to less than six months</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Six months to less than a year</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A year to less than two years</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two years or more</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>You have not found yet a long-term job (SPONTANEOUS)</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not applicable (SPONTANEOUS) (N)</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DK</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table>	You found a job before the end of your main studies	1	Less than a month	2	One month to less than six months	3	Six months to less than a year	4	A year to less than two years	5	Two years or more	6	You have not found yet a long-term job (SPONTANEOUS)	7	Not applicable (SPONTANEOUS) (N)	8	DK	8
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DK	8																		
	ASK D15g IF "CURRENTLY WORKING", CODE 5 TO18 IN D15a – OTHERS GO TO D9a																		
D15g	And how long do you think it would take you to find a similar job if you were to lose your current job?																		
	(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)																		
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ASK ALL

D29 Please can you tell me how much are your net monthly earnings from your main paid job (i.e., the amount you receive each month after tax)? Is it ...?

(SHOW SCREEN TO RESPONDENT AND LET THEM SELECT ANSWER – DO NOT READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY) (M)

Less than 500€	1
500€ to less than 1.000€	2
1.000€ to less than 1.500€	3
1.500€ to less than 2.000€	4
2.000€ to less than 2.500€	5
2.500€ to less than 3.000€	6
3.000€ to less than 4.000€	7
4.000€ to less than 5.000€	8
5.000€ or more	9
Refusal (SPONTANE)	10
DK	11

READ OUT: Finally, I would like to ask about the educational level of your parents.

D9aa What was the highest level of education attained by your mother?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

No education	1
Primary	2
Vocational education (lower secondary education) (N)	3
Vocational education (upper secondary education)	4
General education (lower secondary education) (N)	5
General education (upper secondary education)	6
Higher education (university, etc.)	7
Refusal (SPONTANEOUS)	8
DK	9

D9bb What was the highest level of education attained by your father?

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

No education	1
Primary	2
Vocational education (lower secondary education) (N)	3
Vocational education (upper secondary education)	4
General education (lower secondary education) (N)	5
General education (upper secondary education)	6
Higher education (university, etc.)	7
Refusal (SPONTANEOUS)	8
DK	9



CEDEFOP

Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training

In 2016 Cedefop launched its first ever opinion survey aimed at investigating EU citizens' opinions on vocational education and training. A total of 35 646 face-to-face interviews were conducted with citizens of the Member States. The survey provides an unprecedented perspective on EU citizens' opinions on awareness, attractiveness, experience and effectiveness of vocational education and training in the EU.

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