

Statistics in focus

POPULATION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

8/2005

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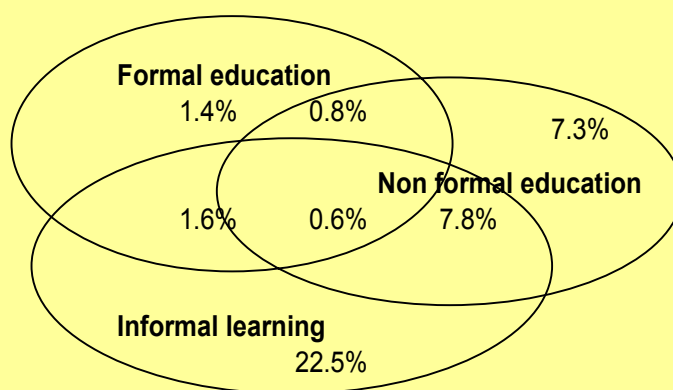


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Lifelong learning in Europe

Education and training rank among the highest political priorities for the Member States of the European Union. Acquiring and continuously updating and upgrading a high level of knowledge, skills and competencies is considered a prerequisite for the personal development of all citizens and for participation in all aspects of society from active citizenship through to labour market integration. Lifelong learning has emerged as an overarching strategy for enabling citizens to meet new challenges.

Figure 1: Percentage of population 25-64 years old involved in education and training



Not in education, training or learning: 58%

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003
Target population: 25-64 years old

42% of the EU population aged 25-64 years old participated in some form of education, training or learning activity over the twelve months preceding the survey, as shown in the results produced in the framework of the Community Labour Force Survey 2003.

4.4% were in formal education. Formal education corresponds to education and training in the regular system of schools, universities and colleges. **16.5% participated in non-formal education** (non-formal education and training includes all types of taught learning activities which are not part of a formal education programme) and **nearly one European out of three declared having taken some form of informal learning** (Informal learning corresponds to self-learning which is not part of either formal or non-formal education and training, by using different methods like books, computers, learning centres or educational broadcasting).

However, these figures show that **58% of EU citizens did not participate in any kind of learning.**

Differences between countries are very significant, ranging from a participation rate of 12% in Hungary and 17% in Greece to 82% in Luxembourg and Slovenia and 89% in Austria.

The most important **variations** are seen when comparing rates by **age**: 25-34 years old rate is 50% and 55-64 years old rate is 30%, and when comparing rates by highest **education attainment**: low education attainment 23%, high education attainment 69%.

Any learning activities: Large differences between countries and age groups; smaller impact of gender

Table 1 shows the participation rate in any kind of learning activity (formal, non-formal or informal). The most significant difference relates to countries, where the participation rates vary from 12% (Hungary) to 89% (Austria). Three groups can be identified: participation rate below one third of the reference population (Hungary, Greece, Spain, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia); participation between one and two thirds (Cyprus, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Latvia, Italy, France, Malta and Slovakia) and countries where education and training covers more than two third of the population (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Austria).

Participation rates decrease significantly with age (from 50% for 25-34 years old to 30% for the age group 55-64). If younger people are more involved in any kind of learning, it is certainly partly because they are still in the formal education system. The highest differences between these two groups are seen in Malta (64%), Cyprus (33%), France (29%), Estonia and Poland (25%) and Belgium (24%). On the contrary, Slovenia shows a little difference (8%) and Austria even an increase in participation over the age.

Whilst at the EU level, there is no significant difference between the female (41%) and male (43%) rates, figures vary significantly in some countries.

Table 1: Participation rate in any kind of learning by age and sex

	25 - 34			35 - 44			45 - 54			55 - 64			total		
	female	male	TOTAL	female	male	TOTAL	female	male	TOTAL	female	male	TOTAL	female	male	TOTAL
EU25	50	51	50	45	45	45	40	41	40	28	31	30	41	43	42
BE	50	51	51	43	47	45	38	44	41	24	30	27	40	44	42
CZ	31	36	34	33	32	32	28	28	28	17	22	20	27	30	29
DK	83	81	82	85	82	83	80	80	80	72	72	72	80	79	80
DE	48	52	50	44	46	45	40	42	41	30	33	32	41	43	42
EE	41	42	41	40	31	36	33	26	30	15	17	16	33	30	31
EL	28	27	27	18	20	19	11	15	13	5	10	7	16	19	17
ES	35	32	33	26	26	26	19	20	20	14	14	14	25	24	25
FR	59	63	61	51	59	55	47	55	51	28	36	32	47	55	51
IT	57	58	57	50	53	52	43	50	47	32	39	35	46	51	49
IE	55	47	51	56	47	52	52	42	47	47	38	42	53	44	49
CY	50	54	52	39	44	41	30	36	33	15	24	19	35	40	38
LV	63	49	56	52	45	49	46	38	42	37	34	36	50	42	46
LT	38	30	34	39	24	32	28	23	25	18	14	16	32	24	28
LU	87	86	86	83	85	84	78	80	79	76	75	75	81	82	82
HU	21	18	20	15	11	13	9	8	8	4	5	4	12	11	12
MT	83	80	82	29	28	29	73	74	74	16	20	18	53	54	53
NL	48	53	51	40	47	44	39	40	39	27	33	30	39	44	42
AT	91	88	90	89	87	88	88	86	87	94	91	93	90	88	89
PL	42	39	41	35	31	33	27	25	26	15	18	16	31	29	30
PT	56	53	54	46	46	46	38	40	39	30	36	33	44	45	44
SI	88	85	86	85	81	83	81	80	80	79	78	78	83	81	82
FI	87	82	85	87	78	82	81	72	76	69	62	66	81	74	77
SE	75	78	77	76	72	74	75	67	71	64	60	62	73	69	71
SK	62	63	62	62	62	62	60	61	61	46	52	49	59	61	60
UK(*)	45	44	44	44	41	42	41	36	39	21	24	23	38	37	38

(*) Informal training is not included in UK

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning 2003
Target population: 25-64 years old

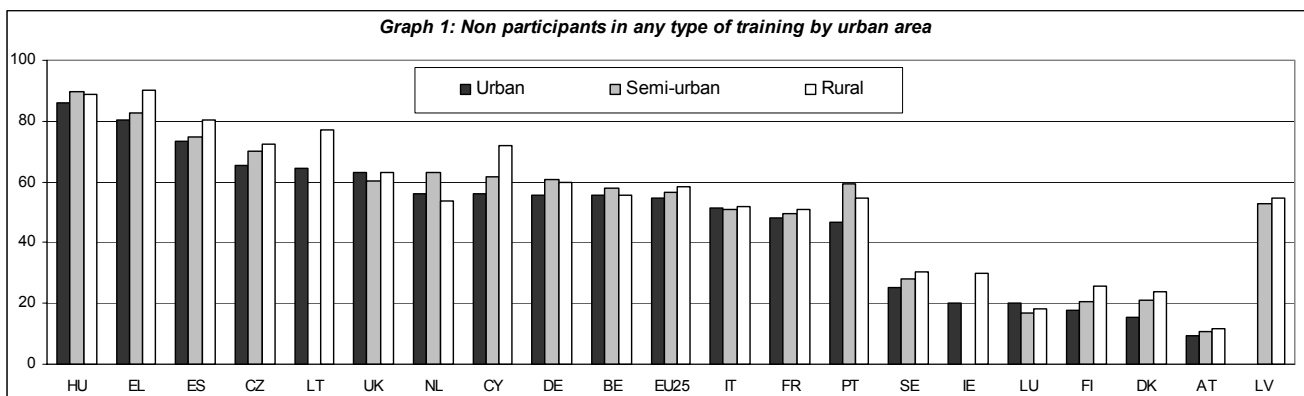
Females participate more in Greece (3% more than males), Latvia and Lithuania (8%), Finland (7%) and Sweden (4%). Males' participation is higher in France (7%), Italy, Cyprus and Netherlands (5%) and Belgium (4%).

The two most extreme situations in terms of participation rates are seen in Austria, with a female participation rate in the age 55-64 of 94% and in Hungary, with the same subpopulation (female, 55-64 years old) having a participation rate of 4%.

Non participation: Educational level has more influence than location

For policy making purposes, it could be useful to analyse the non-participation of certain subpopulations.

Graph 1 shows that in the EU25, non participation varies only slightly between urban (55%),



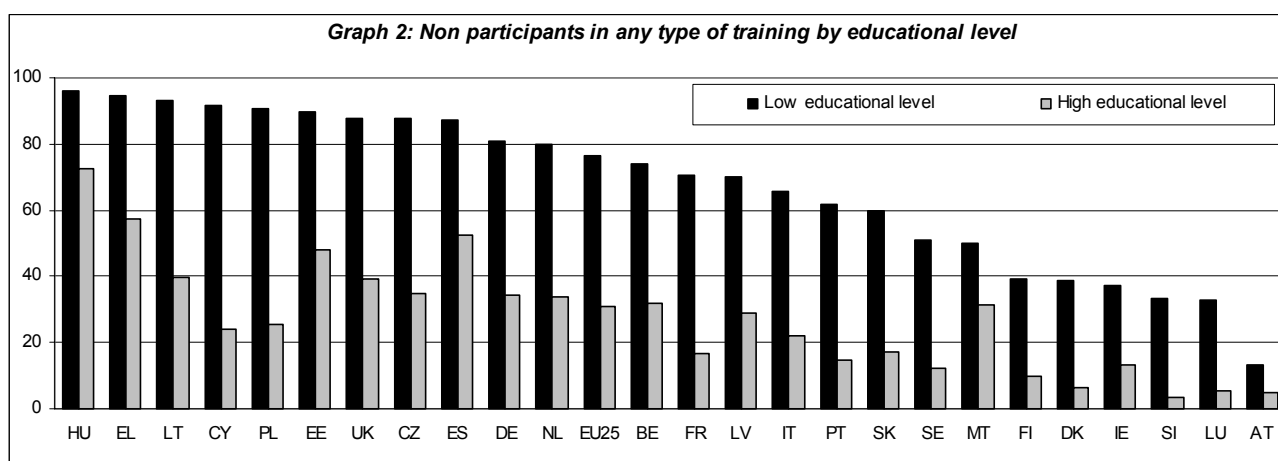
Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003. Target population: 25-64 years old

semi-urban (57%) and rural areas (59%). However, more significant differences are seen in Greece, Spain, Lithuania, Cyprus, Ireland, Finland and Denmark. The age of the population and the level of infrastructure available in each country in rural areas could be the main factors explaining these differences, while this question is not so relevant for densely populated countries.

Graph 2 compares the non-participation rate by the different educational levels attained: high level, corresponding to tertiary education, and low level,

corresponding to the successful completion of at most the lower secondary level. It appears clearly that people with low educational qualifications participate in training much less than those with tertiary education qualifications.

The non-participation rate for the low qualified in the EU25 is 1.5 times more than for the highly qualified, while the most significant gaps are observed in Cyprus, Poland, France, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, Slovenia and Luxembourg.



Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003. Target population: 25-64 years old

Non formal education: Higher participation for employed and highly educated people

Table 2: Participation rate in non formal learning by educational level and working status

	Educational level			Working status		
	High	Medium	Low	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive
EU25	31	16	7	21	14	6
BE	35	19	9	26	13	5
CZ	27	12	4	17	6	2
DK	61	44	31	53	41	23
DE	25	11	4	16	12	4
EE	27	11	:	19	13	:
EL	13	5	1	6	7	2
ES	21	13	5	12	16	5
FR	35	20	11	25	20	6
IT	14	7	2	7	2	1
IE	24	14	7	17	12	6
CY	45	17	4	25	13	4
LV	33	11	3	17	8	4
LT	20	5	:	10	4	:
LU	36	16	5	20	20	6
HU	10	5	2	6	5	2
MT	25	23	6	14	:	4
NL	15	12	6	13	9	5
AT	45	26	9	30	25	11
PL	32	8	2	15	4	1
PT	30	18	5	11	9	4
SI	49	22	7	31	13	5
SK	41	20	7	29	7	2
FI	60	37	24	50	25	16
SE	64	45	30	53	24	23
UK	56	34	11	42	26	14

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning 2003
Target population: 25-64 years old

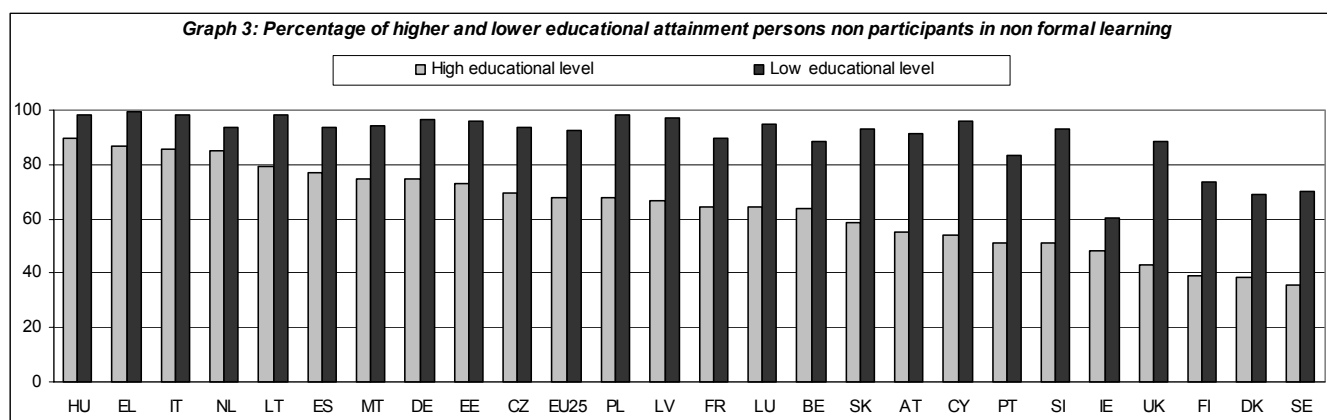
In Table 2, one out of three persons having a high educational level follows non formal education, and this rate goes higher than one in two in Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the United Kingdom. In the lower educational level the Northern Member States also have higher rates of participation.

The difference in participation between highly educated and low educated people are sometimes very significant: in Lithuania, Poland, Cyprus and Latvia, the proportion participating in non formal education is more than ten times higher for highly educated people than for the low educated ones. This ratio drops below 2 only in Denmark and in Sweden. The same trend is observed for the participation rate of employed, unemployed or inactive persons. At EU25 level one out of seven unemployed persons follows non formal learning while in the Northern Member States, the United Kingdom, Austria, France and Luxembourg this rate reaches at least one out of five.

For most Member States participation is lower for the unemployed than the employed. However, Spain, Greece, Luxembourg, Austria and Portugal record similar participation rates in non formal education for the employed and unemployed population. It is only in Austria, the United Kingdom, Finland, Denmark and Sweden that more than one inactive citizen out of 10 participates in non formal education.

Concerning non participation in non formal training, there is in general a significant gap between higher and lower level of educational attainment of the participants. However for Greece, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Malta and Hungary this difference is reduced and at the same time higher rates of non participants are registered

The trend is opposite for the other Member States. Lower educated persons participate less in this kind of learning activity. This message is confirmed for most of the Northern countries, Cyprus, Slovenia, Portugal and Austria (see graph 3).



Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003. Target population: 25-64 years old

Non formal education intensity: Higher for unemployed and inactive

Table 3 shows that the impact of the educational level of the participants on the intensity of their participation is not as important as their working status. Most efforts for non formal education target unemployed persons where the volume of training is nearly three times higher than

the training of employed people in most countries. In Graph 4 the participation rate and the volume of hours in non formal education are compared. The EU average defines four sectors. One of these sectors is nearly empty: high participation combined with high intensity!

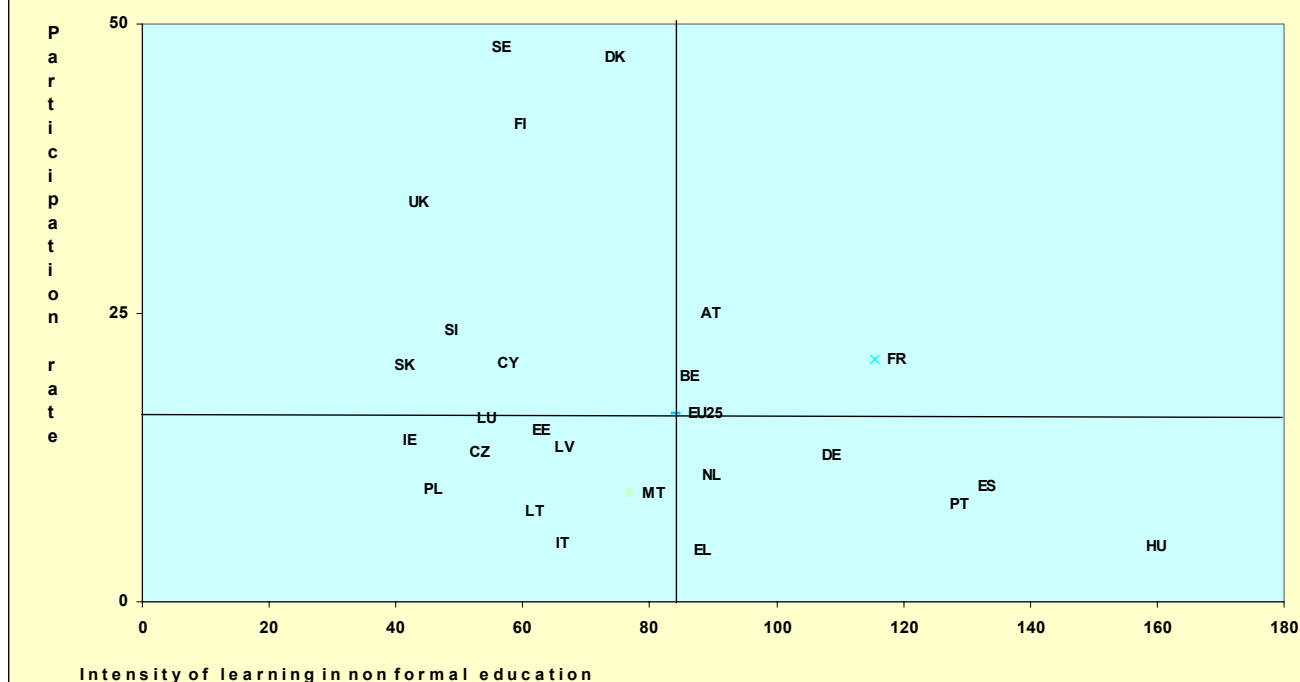
Table 3: Mean volume of training participants in the non formal education by educational level and working status (in hours)

	Higher educational level				Medium educational level				Lower educational level				ALL			
	Employed	Unemployed	inactive	TOTAL	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive	TOTAL	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive	TOTAL	Employed	Unemployed	Inactive	TOTAL
EU25	69	213	189	81	67	212	182	86	60	178	150	87	67	210	180	84
BE	66	243	129	72	72	297	161	90	74	277	187	103	69	277	160	83
CZ	75	0	108	77	39	98	79	42	18	0	0	25	47	102	84	50
DK	57	203	175	68	57	185	181	70	58	186	193	87	57	192	182	71
DE	69	358	219	85	80	371	259	119	74	285	193	139	74	358	240	105
EE	64	0	0	65	46	0	0	54	0	0	0	0	56	118	0	59
EL	77	112	109	81	85	107	116	92	72	0	110	81	80	108	113	85
ES	113	278	246	139	96	220	224	127	82	208	163	113	102	243	204	130
FR	87	278	407	110	87	287	406	119	74	264	370	119	85	278	396	115
IT	61	174	204	72	56	155	101	60	58	0	48	57	58	149	116	63
IE	42	56	47	42	35	68	55	38	28	53	43	32	37	59	49	39
CY	55	0	0	55	51	0	0	54	31	0	0	42	53	74	72	54
LV	65	0	0	68	51	0	0	58	0	0	0	0	58	0	131	63
LT	50	0	0	53	55	0	0	66	0	0	0	0	52	170	0	58
LU	53	0	64	57	42	0	61	48	40	0	84	47	46	155	65	51
HU	114	0	335	129	134	317	364	174	116	200	170	133	126	315	334	156
MT	62	0	0	70	93	0	0	90	82	0	47	73	80	0	62	77
NL	73	0	171	80	77	0	137	88	78	0	162	96	76	233	153	86
AT	109	191	81	108	78	124	90	80	64	67	55	63	85	125	84	86
PL	47	87	0	49	35	68	61	39	21	0	0	23	40	70	60	42
PT	80	265	0	88	102	0	201	114	108	516	405	162	96	395	317	126
SI	49	0	88	51	41	60	58	43	37	0	45	38	44	67	63	46
SK	60	0	0	62	28	90	53	32	11	0	0	16	35	90	63	38
FI	53	171	89	58	43	212	91	54	39	180	121	59	48	192	98	57
SE	54	67	83	56	47	164	66	52	44	0	70	49	50	135	72	53
UK	37	51	63	40	33	97	68	39	27	125	81	45	34	89	69	40

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning 2003

Target population: 25-64 years old

Graph 4: Participation rate and mean volume of hours in non formal learning



Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003. Target population: 25-64 years old

Non formal education for employees: Highly skilled white collar participate more

Table 4: Participation rate in non formal learning by occupation status of participants (%)

	High skilled white collar	Low skilled white collar	High skilled blue collar	Low skilled blue collar
EU25	30	19	12	10
BE	36	25	14	12
CZ	24	13	10	13
DK	63	51	43	35
DE	24	13	9	5
EE	32	19	9	4
GR	12	8	1	2
ES	19	13	7	6
FR	35	23	15	15
IT	14	6	3	3
IE	22	15	12	10
CY	50	25	10	5
LV	35	16	6	5
LT	25	5	2	3
LU	30	19	9	6
HU	10	7	3	4
MT	24	11	6	6
NL	16	12	11	7
AT	44	30	22	15
PL	29	12	6	8
PT	21	13	4	6
SI	48	29	19	12
SK	40	19	24	24
FI	62	50	35	31
SE	67	48	37	33
UK	54	41	26	21

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning 2003

Target population: 25-64 years old

In Table 4 employees are split into four categories according to their occupation. Occupation is defined according to the international classification ISCO-88, 1-digit level.

Highly skilled white collar (1+2+3) includes legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals and technicians and associate professionals; **Low skilled white collar** (4+5) includes clerks and service workers and shop and market sales workers; **Highly skilled blue collar** (6+7) includes skilled agricultural and fishery workers and craft and related trades workers; in **Low skilled blue collar** (8+9) includes plant and machine operators and assemblers and elementary occupations. Armed forces are excluded.

The table shows the percentage of employees aged 25-64 who participated in non-formal education or training activities in the twelve months preceding their interview. Two main remarks result from this table. First there is a clear cut difference between white and blue collar, and between highly skilled (30%) and low skilled (19%) white collar. The situation regarding highly skilled (12%) and low skilled (10%) blue collar is less straightforward.

Informal learning: Similar importance of country, age and education level

The field of informal learning was also explored through the survey. One should bear in mind that although a statistical definition exists, the field is probably less clear cut from the respondent's point of view and that some cultural differences may exist in the interpretation of what is learning and what is not.

Overall 33% of EU citizens aged 25-64 declared having had some form of informal learning in the 12 months before the interview. This average covers a significant diversity in Member States: more than 70% of the population is concerned in Finland (70%), Slovenia (78%) and Austria (86%) and less than 20% in Spain (16%), Greece (14%) and Hungary (6%). From 38% in the age group 25-34 the rate falls one to four persons in the age group 55-64. Participation rate in informal learning is also linked with educational attainment: the rates vary from 55% (high attainment) to 18% (low attainment). Seven countries show a rate for the low attainment population inferior to 10%. However, in some countries, more than half of the low educated population declared some form of informal learning: Finland (54%), Slovenia (65%), Luxembourg (67%) and Austria (85%).

The survey identified four non exclusive forms of informal learning:

- Self studying by making use of printed material (e.g. professional books, magazines and the like);
- Computer based learning/training; online internet based web education;
- Studying by making use of educational broadcasting or offline computer based material (audio or videotapes);
- Visiting facilities aimed at transmitting educational content (library, learning centres etc.).

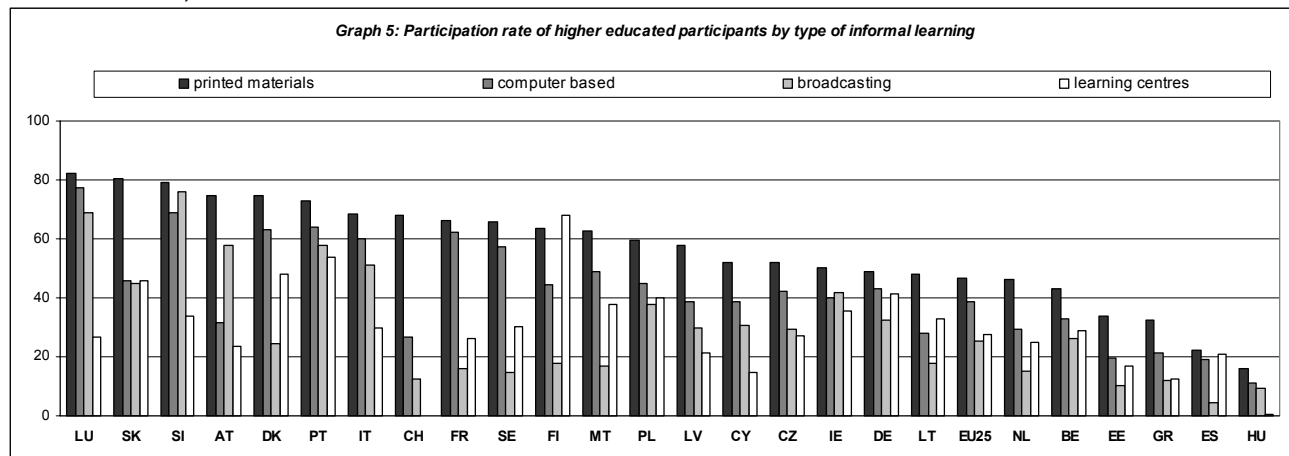
Table 5: Participation rate in informal training by age/by educational level

	Age groups				total	Educational level		
	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64		High	Medium	Low
EU25	38	34	31	25	33	55	34	18
BE	38	34	32	23	32	53	32	18
CZ	24	24	21	16	21	53	19	7
DK	66	69	67	61	66	83	62	45
DE	42	40	37	30	37	60	36	17
EE	31	28	26	13	25	45	18	8
EL	20	16	12	7	14	36	14	5
ES	21	17	14	9	16	34	19	7
FR	54	49	46	31	46	79	46	25
IT	54	50	45	35	47	76	58	33
IE	46	48	44	40	45	62	47	32
CY	41	32	27	17	30	65	24	6
LV	50	45	40	34	43	64	40	29
LT	30	29	23	15	25	56	18	5
LU	85	83	78	75	81	94	86	67
HU	8	7	5	4	6	17	5	2
MT	80	27	72	18	52	67	64	49
NL	35	34	32	26	32	56	32	13
AT	85	84	84	91	86	92	84	85
PL	35	29	23	16	27	68	23	8
PT	50	45	38	32	42	77	67	34
SI	79	79	77	77	78	92	79	65
SK	60	59	58	48	57	82	57	39
FI	76	74	68	60	70	83	68	54
SE	57	54	53	46	53	74	48	30

Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad Hoc module on Lifelong Learning 2003
Target population: 25-64 years old

For the population with a high level of educational attainment, the overall preferred type is always self-studying with printed material, except in Finland where learning centres are favoured. The second preferred media is computer based informal learning, except in Slovenia and Austria (broadcasting is second) in Finland (printed materials) and in Lithuania and Spain, where learning centres are second.

Graph 5: Participation rate of higher educated participants by type of informal learning



Source: Eurostat LFS, Ad hoc module on lifelong learning 2003. Target population: 25-64 years old

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Abbreviations: **EU25** – European Union (25 Member States); **BE** – Belgium; **CZ** – Czech Republic; **DK** – Denmark; **DE** – Germany; **EE** – Estonia; **EL** – Greece; **ES** – Spain; **FR** – France; **IT** – Italy; **IE** – Ireland; **CY** – Cyprus; **LV** – Latvia; **LT** – Lithuania; **LU** – Luxembourg; **HU** – Hungary; **MT** – Malta; **NL** – Netherlands; **AT** – Austria; **PL** – Poland; **PT** – Portugal; **SI** – Slovenia; **SK** – Slovakia; **FI** – Finland; **SE** – Sweden; **UK** – United Kingdom

Source: The survey on participation in lifelong learning has been carried out as an ad hoc module included in the EU Labour Force Survey according to the specifications included in the Commission Regulation (EC) No 1313/2002 of 19 July 2002 implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98 on the organisation of a labour force sample survey in the Community concerning the specification of the 2003 ad hoc module on lifelong learning (Official Journal L 192, p.16).

Additional documentation/information is available on the internet:

- on the 2003 ad hoc module:
http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/edtc/library?l=/public/education_labour/lfs_2003_ahm_III

- on the EU Labour Force Survey:
http://forum.europa.eu.int/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/index.htm

Concepts and definitions

Highest level of education successfully completed: The expression 'level successfully completed' must be associated with obtaining a certificate or a diploma, when there is a certification. In cases where there is no certification, successful completion must be associated with full attendance. When determining the highest level, both general and vocational education/training should be taken into consideration. Three levels of educational attainment are distinguished in the present publication: **low** which corresponds pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 0, 1, 2); **medium** which corresponds to upper secondary and

post secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED levels 3 and 4) and **high** which corresponds to tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 and 6). More information on ISCED97 is available at the address <http://www.uis.unesco.org>

Degree of urbanisation:

The concept "urbanisation" has been introduced in order to indicate the features of the area where the interviewed person lives. Three area types have been identified as follows:

- Densely populated area (**urban**): refers to a set of closely related local units, each one of which having a density greater than 500 inhabitants per km², and the total population of which being of at least 50 000 inhabitants;
- Intermediate area (**semi-urban**): refers to a set of closely related local units that do not pertain to a densely populated area, each one of which having density greater than 100 inhabitants per km², and where the total population is at least of 50 000 inhabitants or it refers to a set that is adjacent to a highly populated area.
- Thinly populated area (**rural**): refers to a set of closely related local units that are not part of a densely populated area, or of an intermediate area.

Volume of learning: Duration in number of taught hours.

Type of occupation: is defined according to the International classification ISCO-88, 1-digit level. 4 categories of employees are distinguished (ISCO-88 codes in parenthesis): **high skilled white collar** (codes 1+2+3) that includes, legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals and technicians and associate professionals; **low skilled white collar** (4+5) that includes clerks and service workers and shop and market sales workers; **high skilled blue collar** (6+7) where includes skilled agricultural and fishery workers and craft and related trades workers; **low skilled blue collar** (8+9) where is included plant and machine operators and assemblers and elementary occupations. Armed forces are excluded.

Further information:

Databases

[EUROSTAT Website/Population and social conditions/Education and training/Education/Lifelong learning/Any learning activities/Participation in any training activities by age and sex](#)

[EUROSTAT Website/Population and social conditions/Education and training/Education/Lifelong learning/Any learning activities/Participation in any training activities by educational attainment and working status](#)

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Eurostat set up with the members of the 'European statistical system' a network of support centres, which will exist in nearly all Member States as well as in some EFTA countries.

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