

# TRANSITIONS TO ADULthood IN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES: PRESENT AND FUTURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LOW EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

## LABOR FLEXIBILITY AND EDUCATION TO FIGHT A LOW LEVEL OF EDUCATION

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### PREMISE

Since education with its different levels is widespread in society, the individual is required to follow each educational step and attain, when possible, a university degree. During the school years, when the need for a "complete" education is taken for granted, there must be a reason to drop out of school. Work and learning appear interconnected and the education of citizens in modern times is attributed to schools (as formal education) and training people means trusting the public institutions and the individual's ability to take responsibility over a lifelong education.

### AIMS AND METHOD

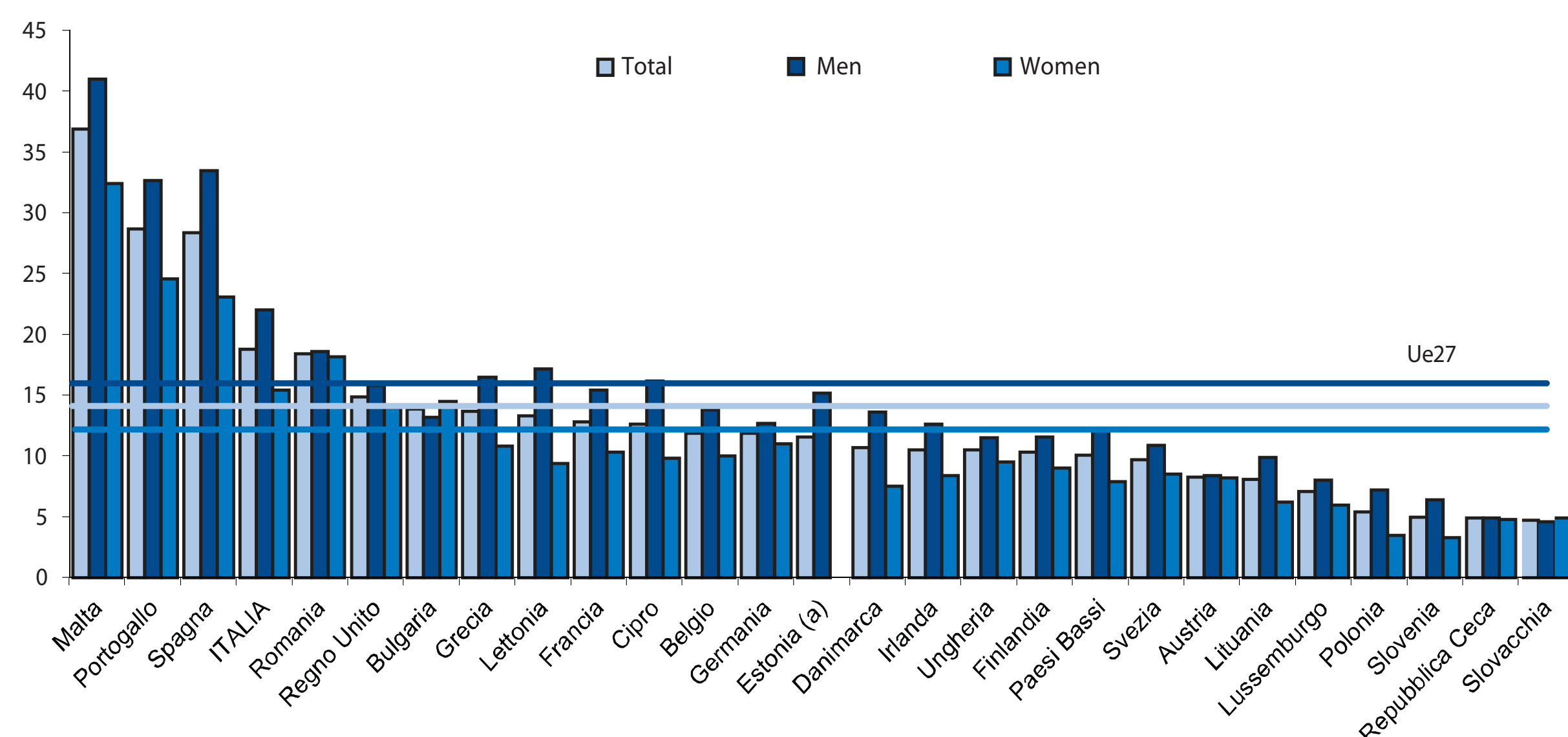
This paper aims to highlight the link between disadvantage, poverty, school dropout and a low level of education, underlying the need to attribute social and individual importance to the ability to "master" a work regardless of educational credentials.

The school is an agency of secondary socialization, but in teaching and learning the whole social context comes first and this presence is so subtle that those who are involved in it do not feel it. This educational immersion is independent of any type of knowledge transmitted and assimilated (Bauman 2002, p. 157). Bateson (2001) calls it "prolearning" which connects with secondary education, rarely controlled and managed by teachers.

We will analyze Italian and European statistical data to confirm our hypothesis that the "schizophrenic traits" found in young people may be interpreted as signs of a post-modernity which, according to Bauman, has "normalized" what Bateson considered contrary to mankind's evolutionary equipment. In fact, the post-modern human being cannot live without their ability to modify the alternatives they are exposed to in second learning processes (which Bateson calls third degree processes).

### ITALIAN AND EUROPEAN DATA

2010 data regarding school dropout (Graphic 1) show that Malta, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Romania are the first places among the European nations.



Graphic 1 - Students dropping out in UE

If you look at Italy data alone, in 2010 (Fig. 1) you can see that the Italian provinces exceeding 20% of dropouts are Sicily, Sardinia, Apulia, Campania e Valle d'Aosta. In addition to these regions there is also Bolzano province.

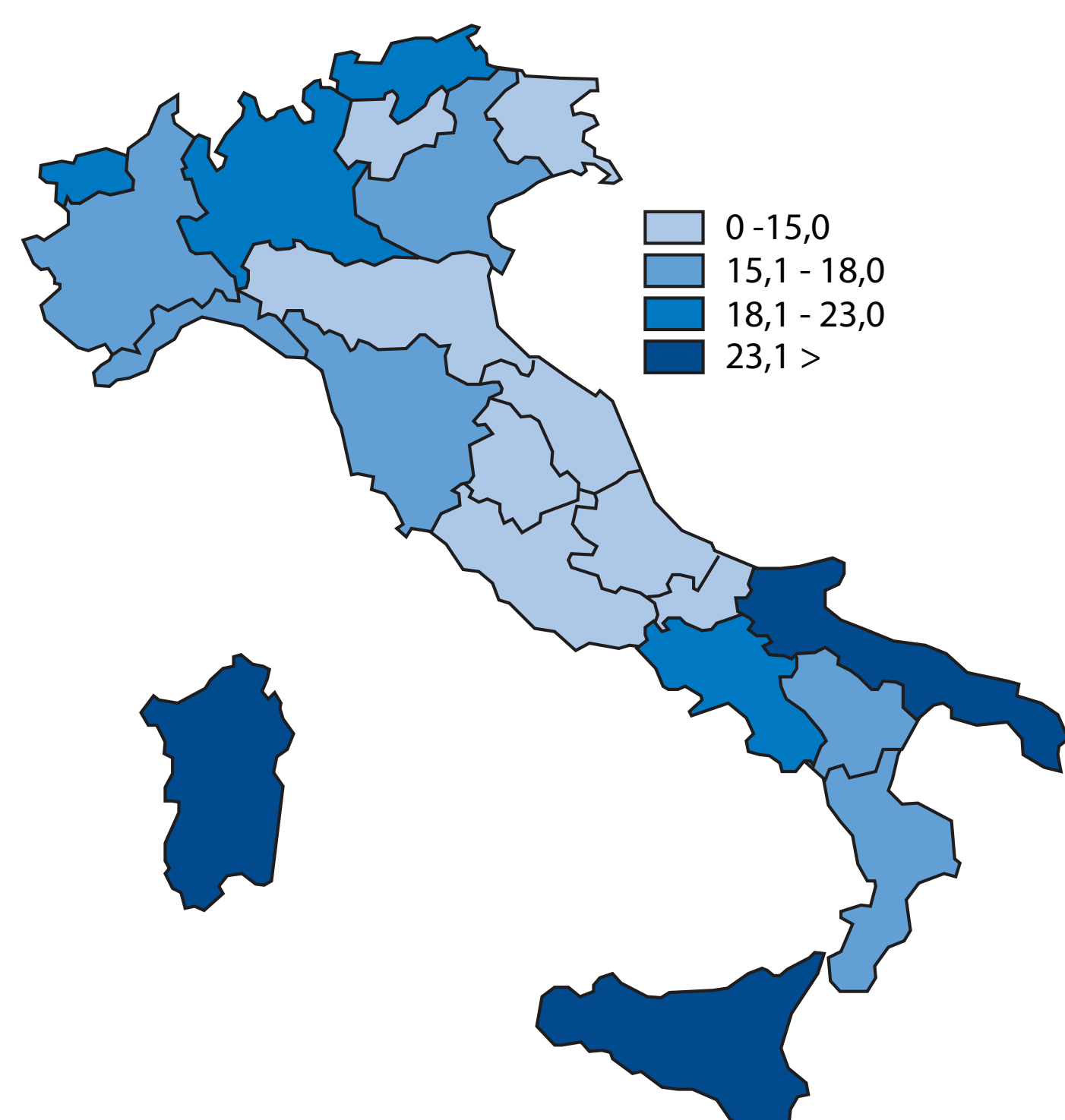
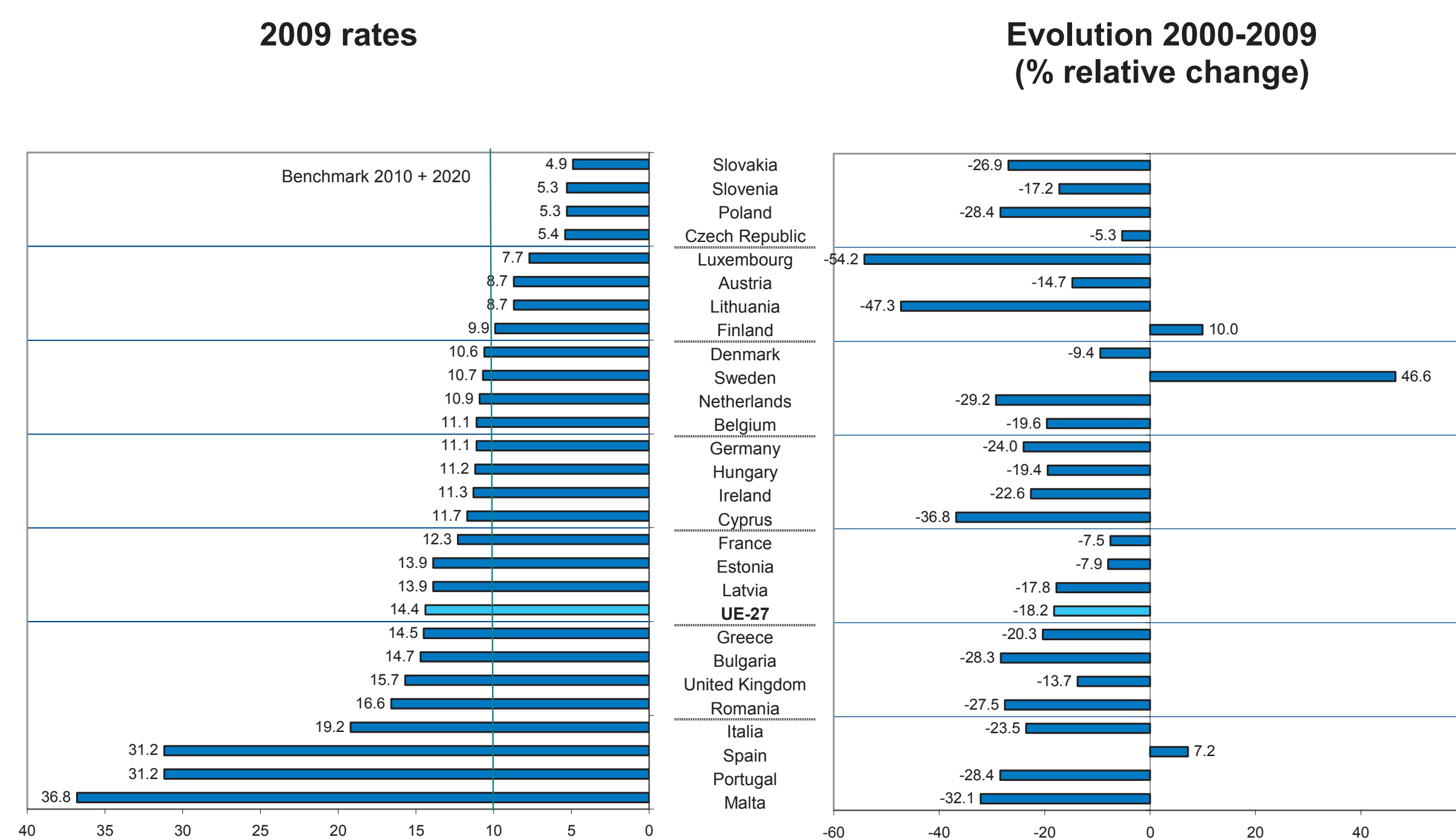


Fig. 1 - Students dropping out by region (table 2 caption)

"Since 2000 the average European early school quitting rate has declined by 3.2 points, yet progress has been insufficient to reach the 10% target by 2010 as initially agreed within the European Council. In addition, the average masks large differences between Member States. Seven Member States

have already achieved the 10% benchmark, while three have rates higher than 30%. Looking at the relative performance of Member States, there are reasons for optimism. All but three have reduced their rates of early school quitting since 2000, some very significantly".

"The reason why young people quit education and training prematurely are highly individual. Nevertheless it is possible to identify some recurring characteristics. Early School quitting is strongly linked to social disadvantage and low education backgrounds. Children of parents with a low level of education and from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to leave education and training before completing upper secondary education levels than other young people" (European Commission, 2011, pp. 3-4).



Graphic 2

Some groups affected by early school quitting are those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and vulnerable groups.

### CONCLUSIONS

School dropout or dispergere ("dispersion") comes from the Latin words disperdere ("dispersible"), which means scattering and spreading here and there, and not from the word disperdono ("to disperse"), that is removing from a specific location. In this sense, early school dropout, with its consequent low levels of education, should be regarded as an anomaly of the training process. Such failure is due to an individual dispersion during the school years (they do have, indeed, a choice) and to the school system inability to meet the needs of the school population with an adequate training offer. Moreover, social, economic and cultural inequalities represent external additional causes.

Post-modern man will be successful if he is fast not only in acquiring new models but also in getting rid of old ones. Studying and teaching are for Margaret Mead processes at the base of the transmission of knowledge.

Early school leaving is influenced by educational factors, by individual circumstances and by socio-economic conditions. This is not an isolated event, but a process.

School dropout is influenced by background situations, individual circumstances and socioeconomic conditions. Often pupils quit school during the first years because of early failures and a growing disaffection.

Transitions between schools and between different educational levels are particularly difficult for pupils at risk of quitting school. Mismatches between education, training curricula and labour market needs can increase the risk of educational failure as pupils lack prospects within their chosen educational pathway (Variale, 2010). Responding to the different learning styles of pupils and helping teachers to address the variable needs of mixed ability groups of students is still a challenge for schools. Personalised and flexible learning arrangements are especially important for those prefer "learning by doing" and are motivated by active forms of learning (European Commission, 2011, p. 5).

The real task of the school is to develop the intellectual capacities of individuals beyond the content itself.

Selection does not concern people having good academic results; Independently from the type, school plays a fundamental role in determining the level of social maladjustment of individuals. The failure of misfits is a measure of the non-renewal of the school in terms of democratization and professionalism (Bonansea et al. 1996).

The true aim of school is to develop individuals' intellectual abilities beyond contents. Its intrinsic goal is giving conceptual tools to all, especially those showing deficiencies.

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