



The Union of Skills and its implications for Higher Education

International Forum on Skills Intelligence (IFSI)
#IFSI2025 Conference (02/07/2025, online)

Marc Goffart, EAC.B1

*Policy Officer Higher Education
DG Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (DG EAC)*

European Commission: Political Guidelines 2024-2029

“ Tackling the skills and labour gaps

Europe needs a radical step change in ambition and action – for all skill levels and for all types of training and education. This is as important for people's careers and prospects as it is for our competitiveness. To do so, we will establish a **Union of Skills**.



18 July 2024



Union of Skills Communication

“ **A Union of Skills to equip people for a competitive Europe**

5 March 2025

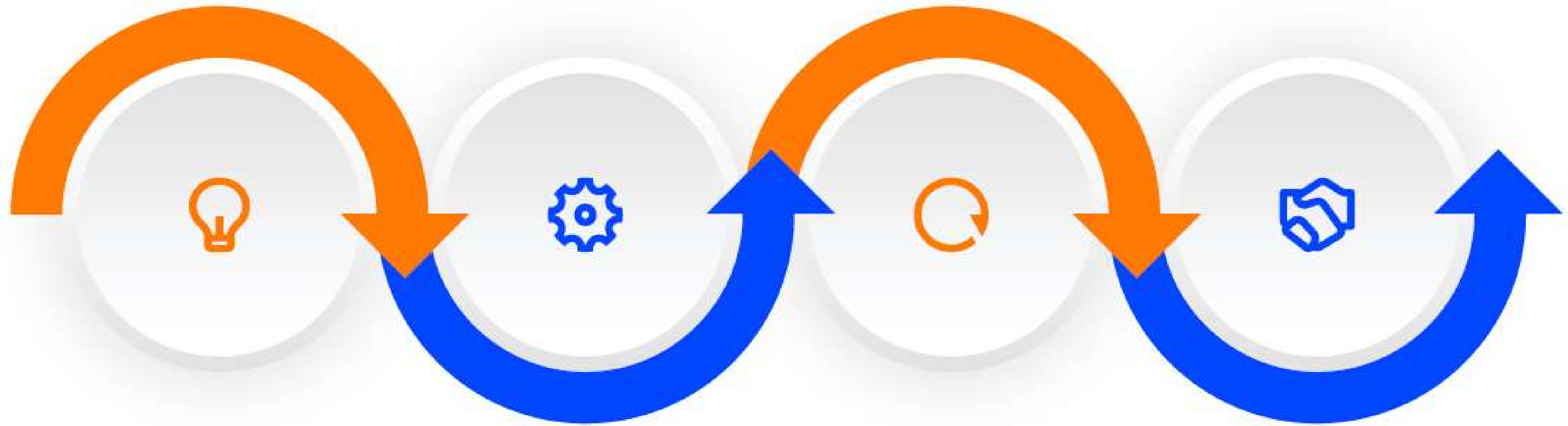
The Union of Skills is our strategy to **help people stay ahead** in a rapidly changing world and **keep Europe competitive and fair.**

We, in Europe, **put people first** because the success of every person in learning, at work and in life is essential for competitiveness and for a stable and resilient Union.

Empower our people by enhancing skills to access quality jobs and navigate transitions

Enhance companies' competitiveness by helping them find the talent they need

Make skills portable across the EU, independently of where or how they were acquired



Build skills
for quality
lives and jobs

Upskill and reskill
for the digital &
green transition

Circulate skills
across the EU for
competitiveness

**Attract,
develop and
retain talent**
for Europe's future

European Skills Intelligence Observatory

- The observatory will provide data and foresight regarding skills and allow for early warning alerts regarding skills shortages in critical or strategic sectors.



A **data lakehouse** is currently under construction to merge all the data of the agencies and is coordinated by Eurofound.

[The lakehouse is under pilot phase and the work is currently focused on merging data on skills.]

Other relevant data sources

include the sectoral skills intelligence gathered:

Pact for Skills and 'Blueprint' skills alliances,

European Data Space for Skills,

Education and Training Monitor,

European graduate tracking,

European higher education sector observatory,

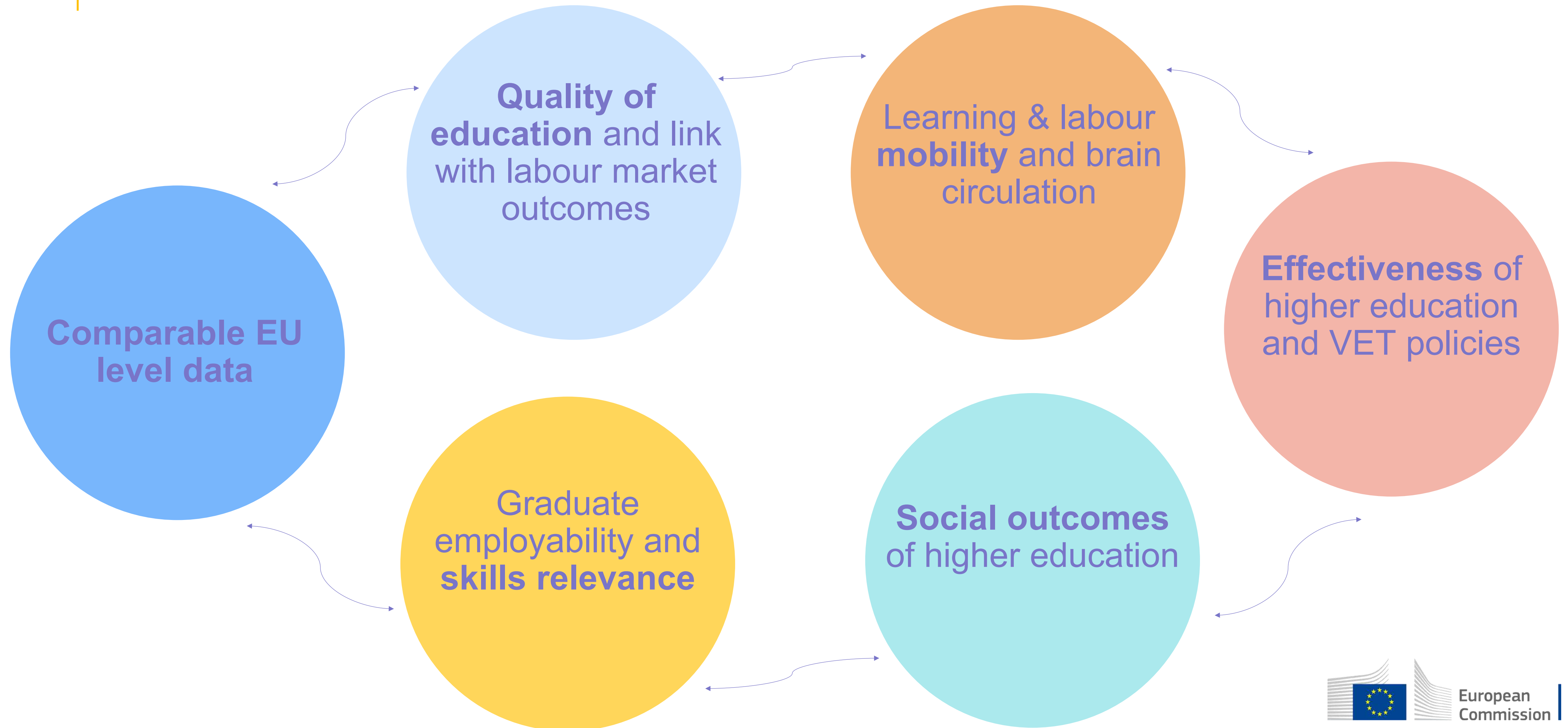
Eurydice network. and

Research & Innovation Careers Observatory (ReICO),

The **European Skills Intelligence Observatory** will allow to centralise all these granular, real-time and comparable data in a **one-stop-shop**,

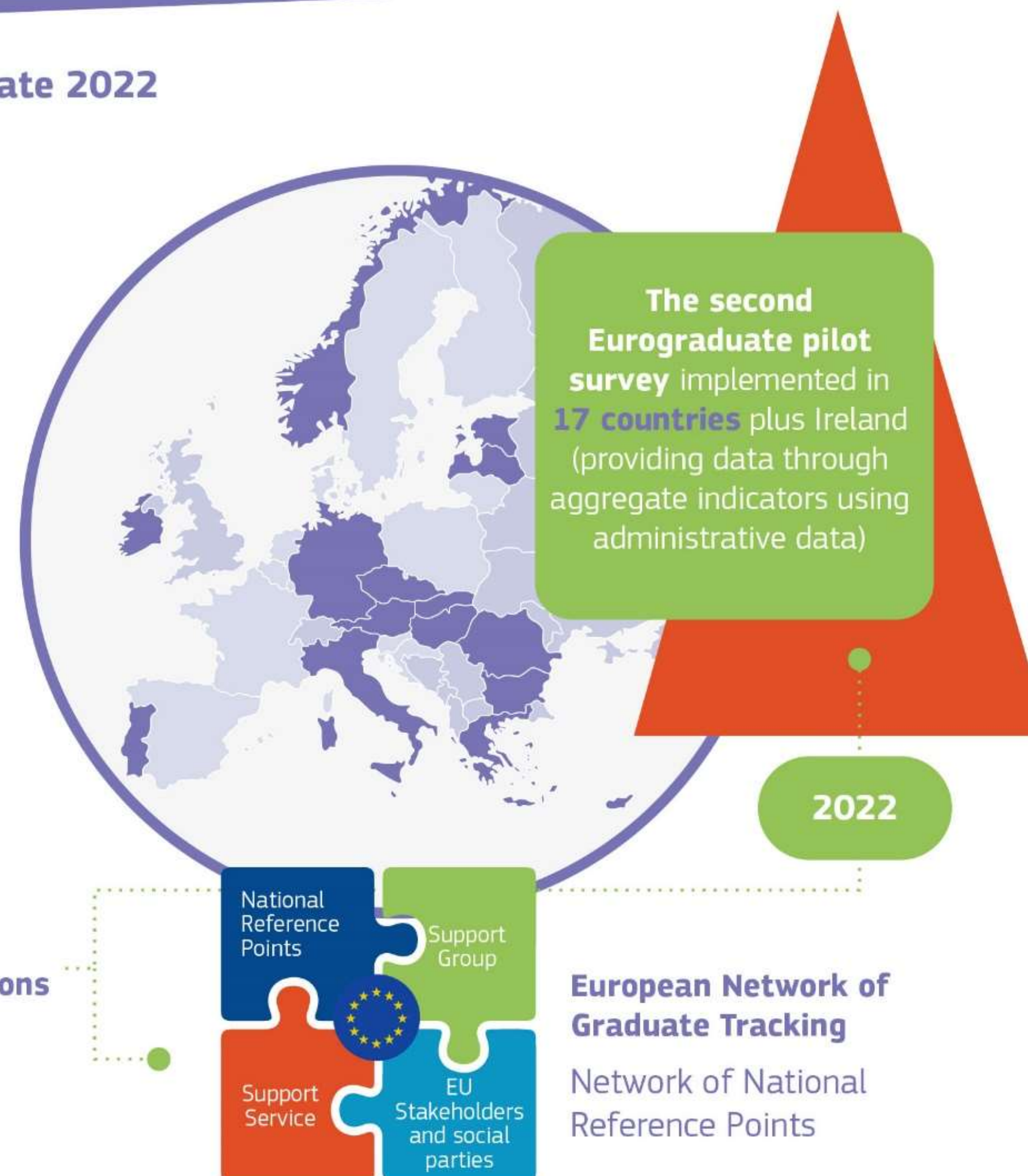
providing the necessary inputs to the High-Level Skills Board and feeding the work of the European Semester.”

Why graduate tracking matters for the EU?



EUROPEAN GRADUATE TRACKING INITIATIVE

Establishment of the Network and Eurograduate 2022



Network activities and achievements 2022-24



Annual meeting of the network, discussing progress and outcomes, as well as the work programme and strategy for the next year(s)



Peer learning activities on common challenges (e.g. combining and linking administrative data and surveys, or on making effective use of graduate tracking data)



Thematic working group meetings (e.g. preparing for the next higher education graduate survey or on tracking mobile graduate outcomes)



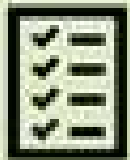
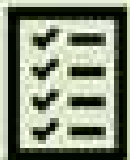
Webinars for a wider audience on good practices and common challenges in tracking graduate outcomes



Six-monthly **network newsletter**, updating on European and national developments

Eurograduate 2022 – survey organisation

Table: Overview of response rates & differences in data collection methods

Country	Response rate	Respondents	Invitation channel	Incentives	Mode of data coll.	Contacting
Austria	57%	12433	✉	✓	 online survey (+ registry data: BG)	central
Bulgaria	5%	3604	✉	✗		decentral
Croatia	14%	3119	--	--		--
Cyprus	6%	1360	✉	✓		decentral
Czechia	12%	7317	✉	✓		decentral
Germany	15%	6665	✉	✓		central
Estonia	19%	3651	✉	✓		central
Greece	21%	17663	✉☎	✗		decentral
Hungary	7%	6795	✉	✗		central
Italy	70%	3340	✉☎	✗	telephone interviews + online survey + registry data	central
Latvia	8%	1454	✉	✓	 online survey (+ registry data: LV, NO, PT, RO)	central
Malta	5%	982	--	--		--
Norway	20%	4864	✉	✗		central
Portugal	13%	18327	✉	✗		decentral
Romania	1%	1545	✉	✗		central
Slovakia	9%	3867	✉✉	✗		central
Slovenia	21%	5217	✉	✗		central

17 countries

- **10** added the European module as well, with social outcomes

±100,000 graduates replied
 ≈ **18%** response rate

**Countries participating
 before improved their
 response rates**

**Excellent scope for further peer
 learning on methods**

Source: EUROGRADUATE 2022 project meeting, 4 October 2023

Effectiveness of higher education policies

MA graduates see their education as a **good basis for their job** – more than BA graduates.



8% run their own business

- innovative learning styles & extracurricular experiences help;
- Starting an enterprise gets more likely with more experience.



- About **2/3rd** of working graduates have a job **matching** their **highest education degree**
- Others are either over- or underqualified

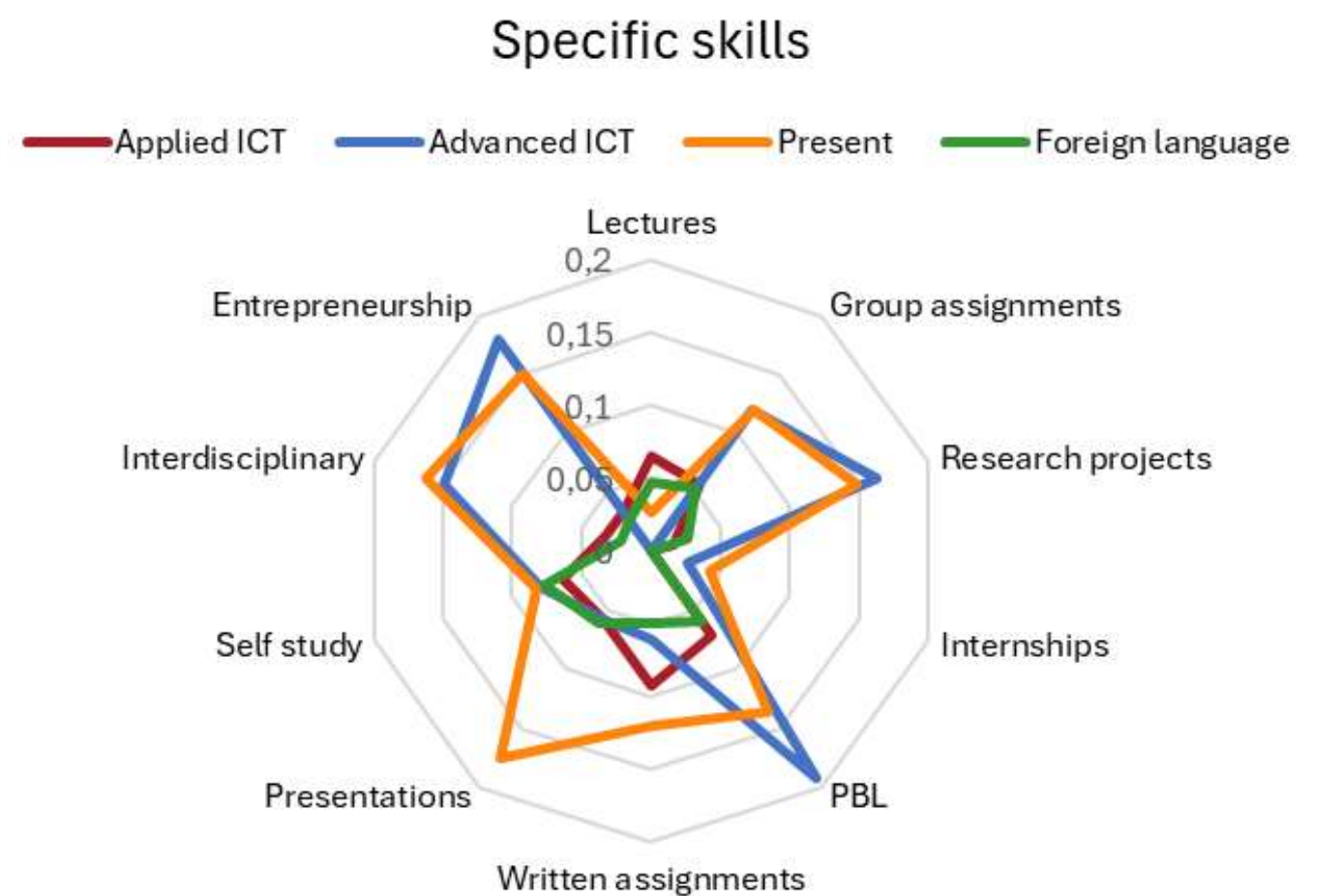
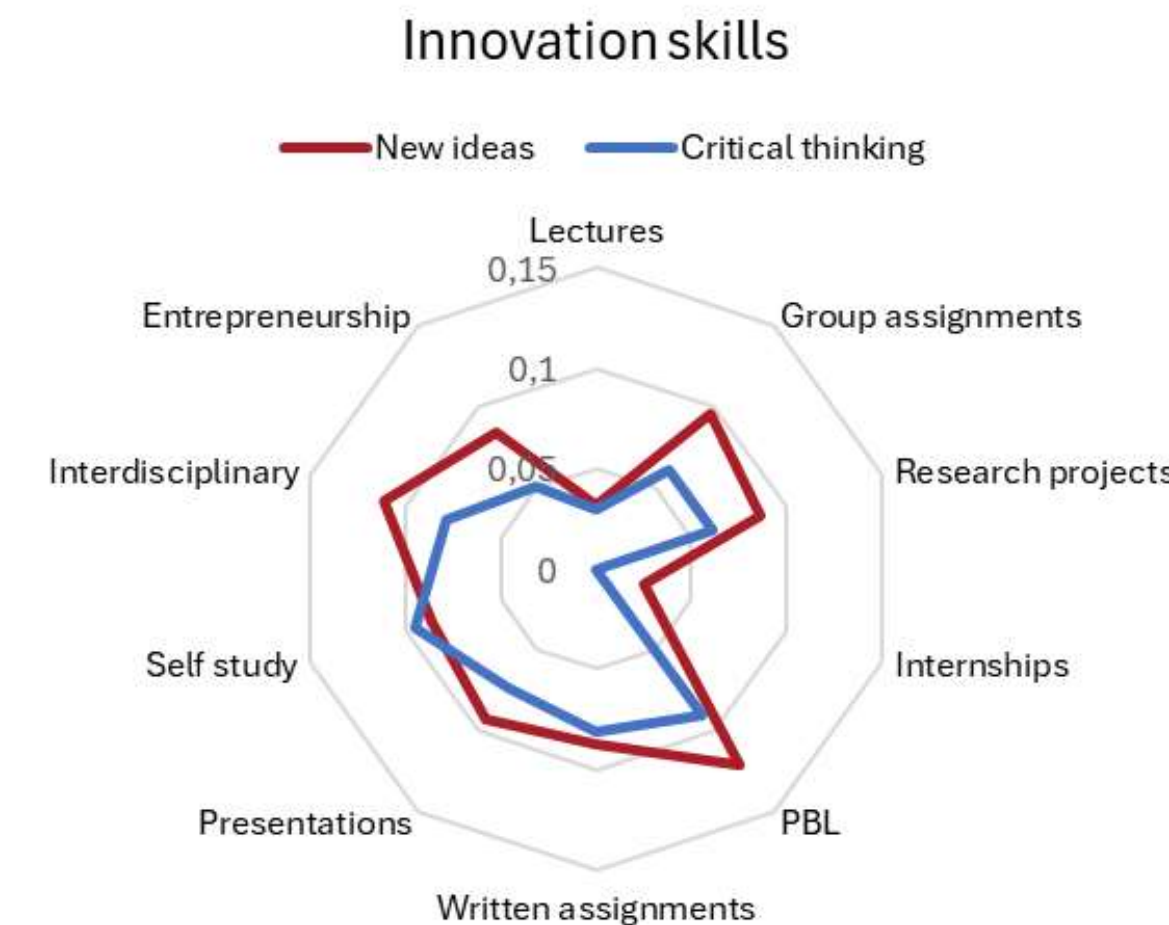
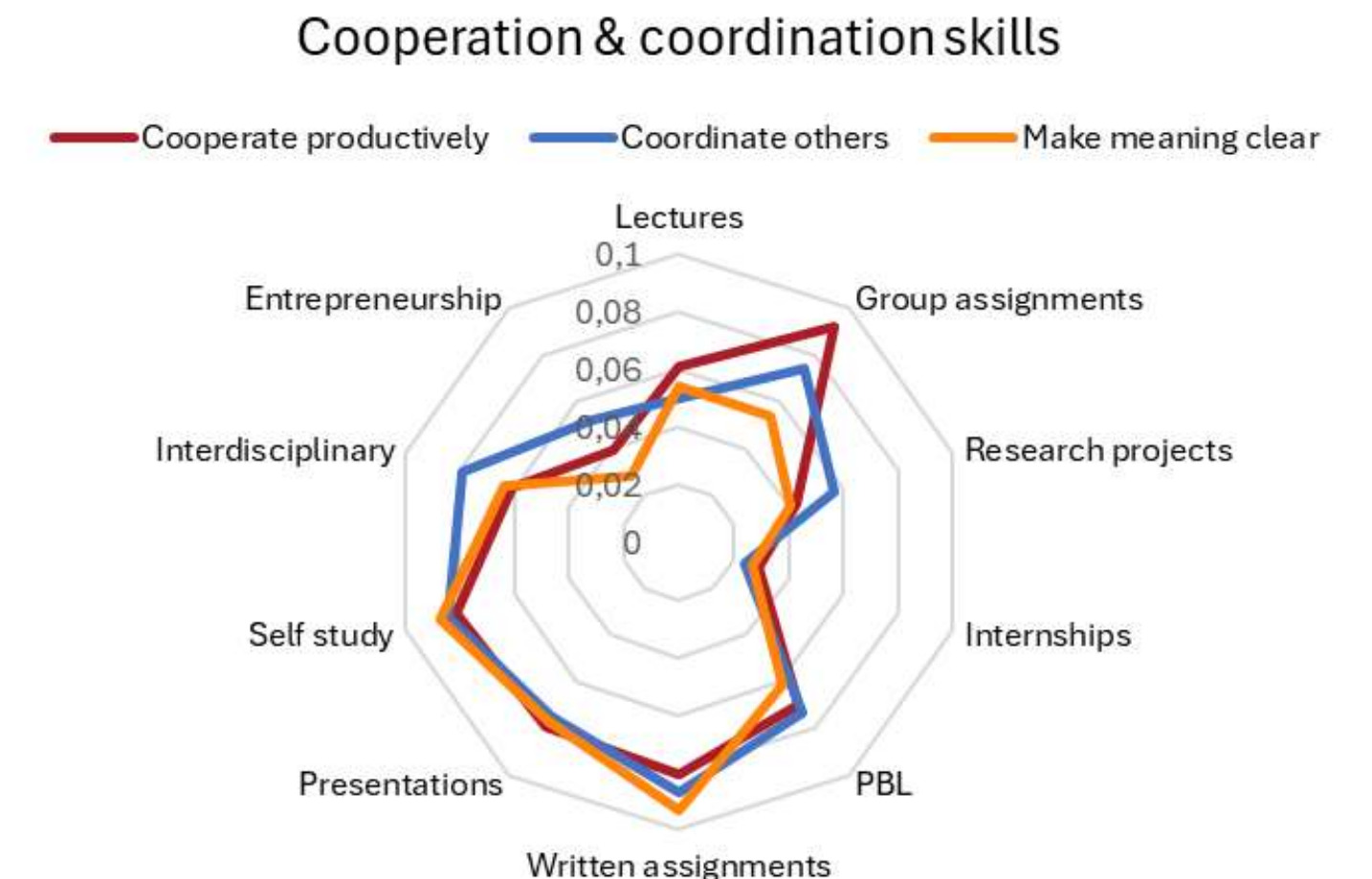
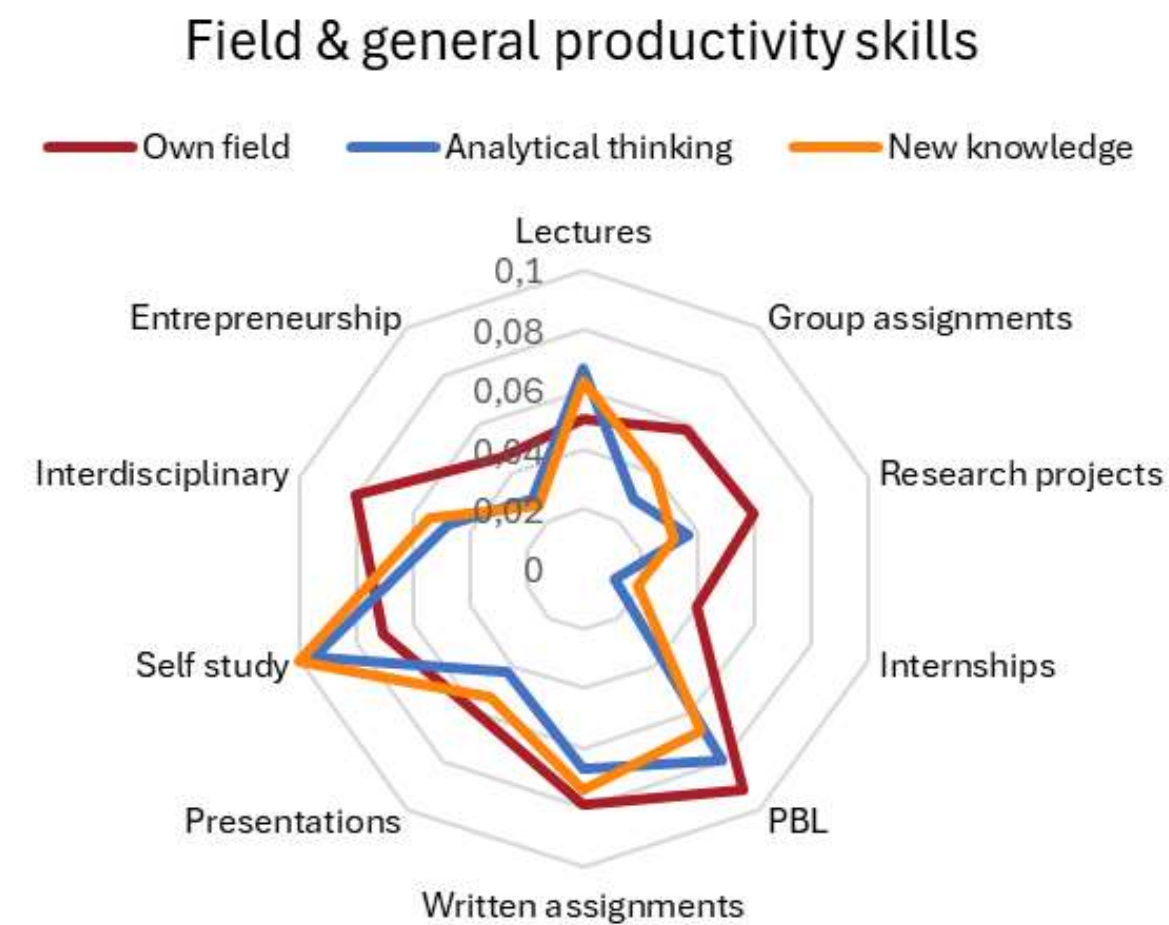


A **gender-gap** (F<M) can be noted in **labour market participation & wages**, risk of **unemployment**, & entrepreneurship

Skills relevance – teaching & learning for skills

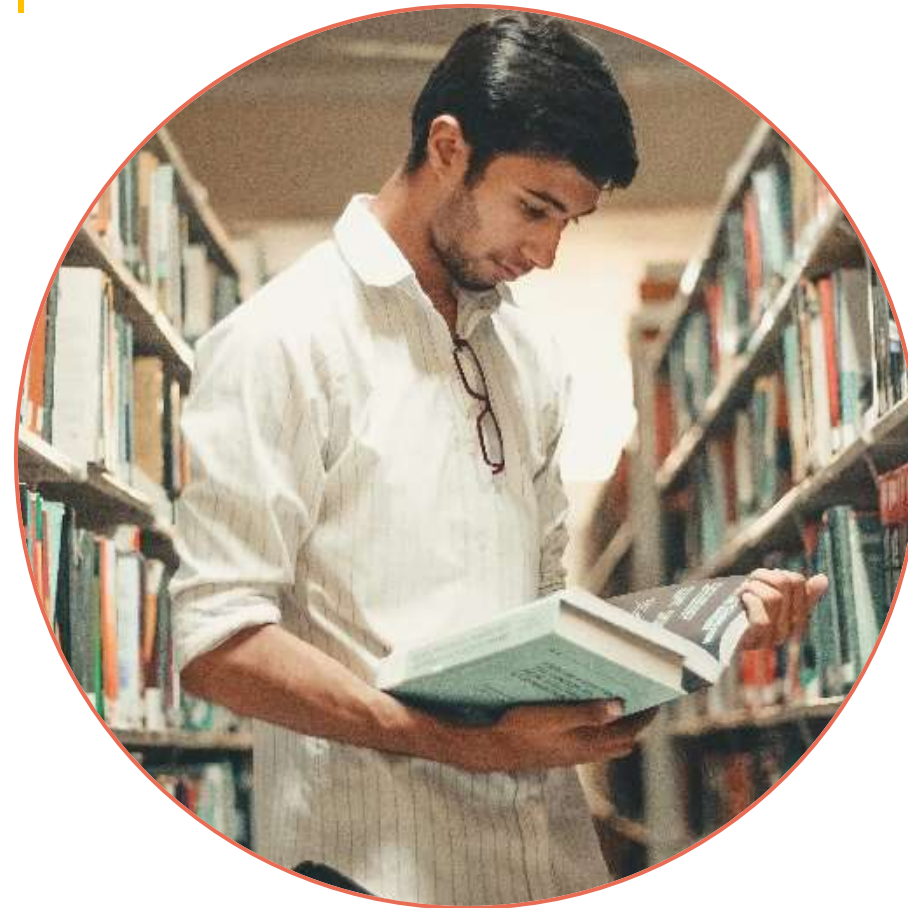
Different teaching & learning forms needed to foster a **variety of skills**; focus on lectures [only] less advantageous.

- **Problem-based learning (PBL), self-study, written assignments** foster a **large bandwidth of skills**
- PBL, written assignments & interdisciplinary learning help to **improve mastery of own discipline**
- PBL, self-study, group assignments, or interdisciplinary activities **boost innovation skills** (→ requires students to find own solutions)



- Source: EUROGRADUATE 2022

Mobility after studies



Mobility **within** their country (**33%**) is much higher than moving to **another** country (**11%**).



Learning mobility

Learning mobility (**11%**) **varies a lot** among countries: from **7%** (RO) to **32%** (DE)

- **socio-economic** variation / parental education matters

Transition to work

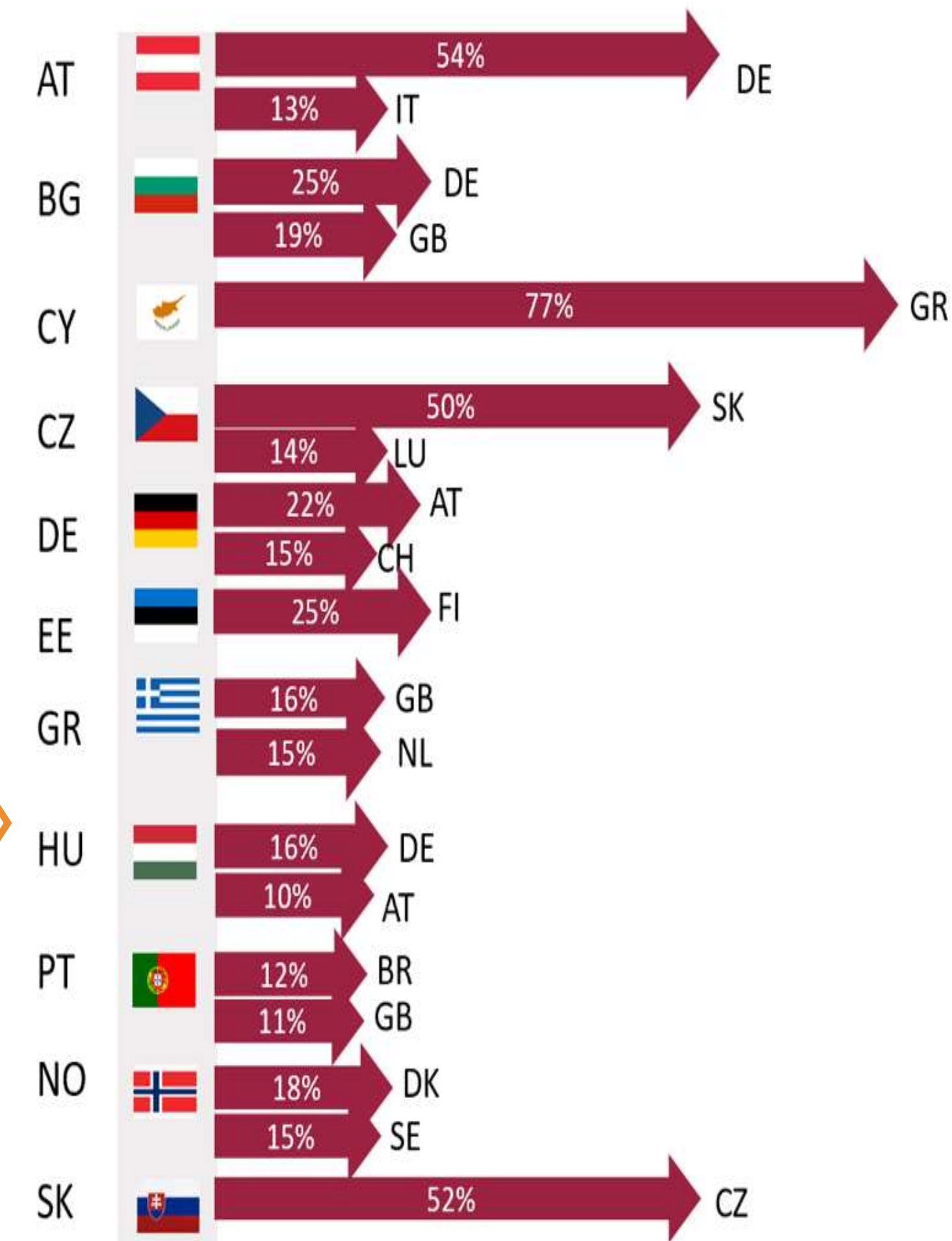
Unemployment is a **'push' factor** for graduate mobility

- learning mobility during studies matters, but not the main cause

Graduate mobility

Graduates living abroad report **higher satisfaction with life** (\neq job)

! Prior mobility experience matters;
this may also imply **moving back** to country of origin



Possible core indicators on graduate outcomes



Integration in EHESO

Administrative data (essential info)

Comparable EU level data

Survey data with subjective info



Employment rate after 1 year (Ba/Ma)

Effectiveness of higher education and VET policies

Satisfaction with higher education

N.A.

Graduate employability and skills relevance

Level of skills matching

Median gross monthly earnings

Quality of education & link with labour market outcomes

Satisfaction with current job

Education level of graduates' parents

Social outcomes of higher education

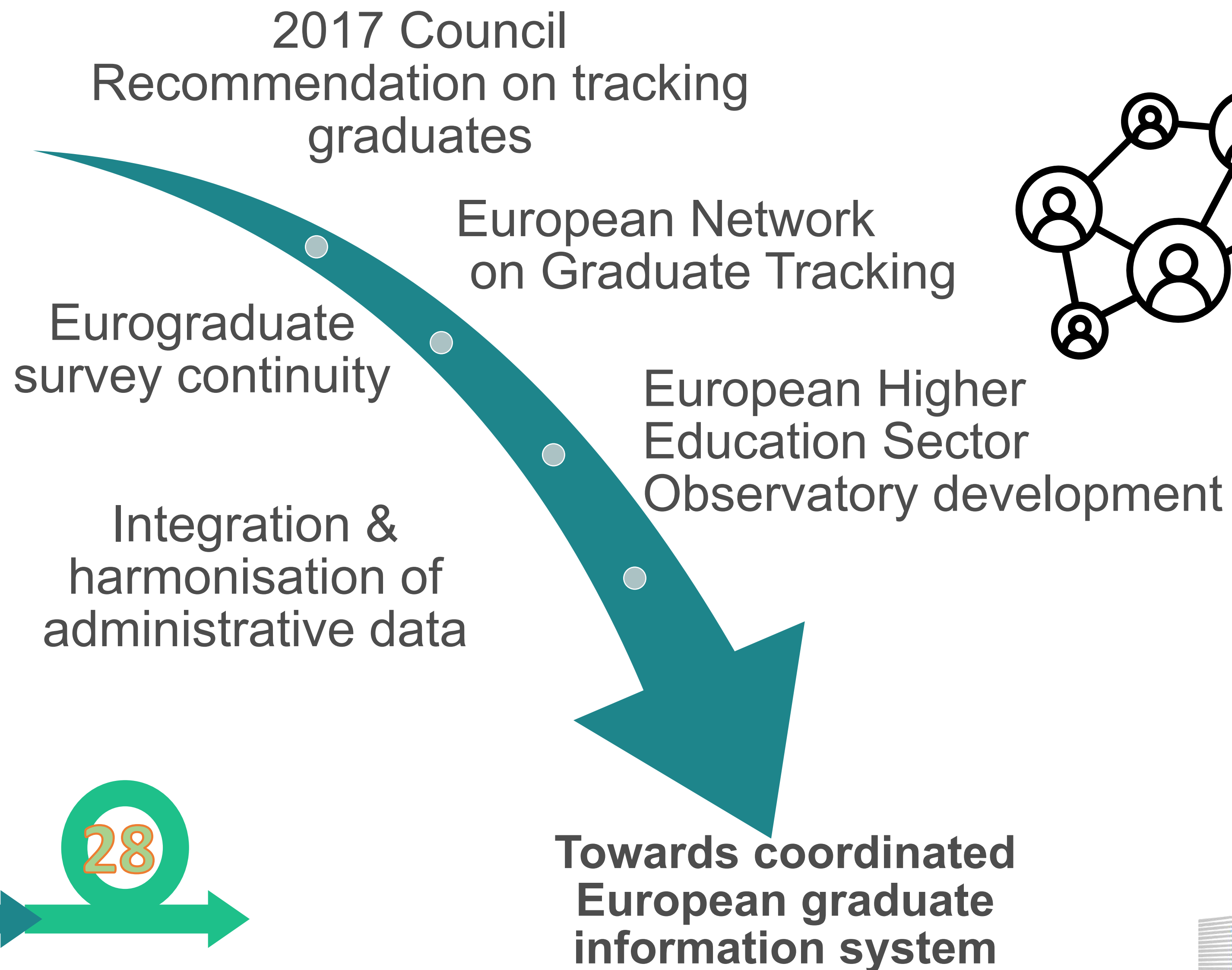
Civic competencies

N.A.

Learning & labour mobility and brain circulation

Learning mobility before graduation

European Graduate Tracking Initiative 2025-2028



Key initiative under the European strategy for universities

(January 2022)



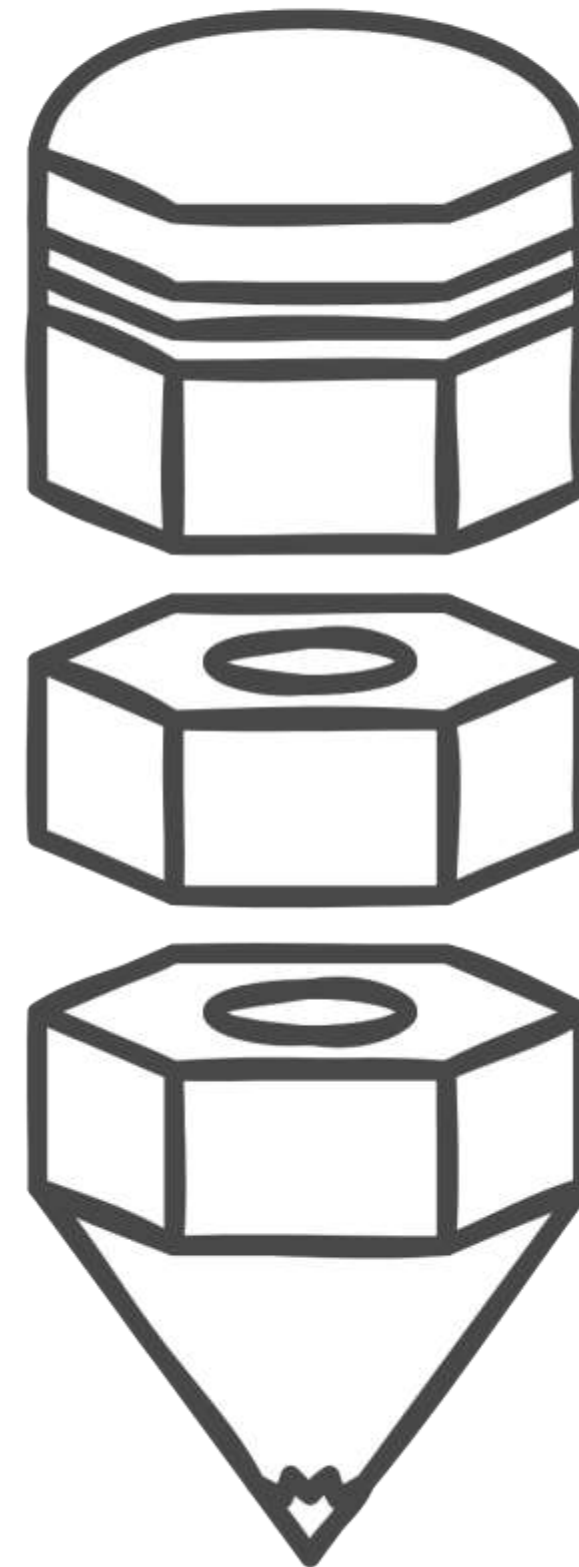
Set-up a European Higher Education Sector Observatory to monitor progress

The Observatory will combine the best of the current EU data tools and capacities in one single place and make it possible to:

- ▶ Monitor the implementation of European policy priorities
- ▶ Support data needs of Member States and higher education institutions
- ▶ Promote competitiveness and attractiveness of higher education institutions and attracting talent

EHESO offers enhanced transparency

Policymakers
Use data to create and monitor
evidence-based policies



Students
Access to comparative information, aiding
in programme and career decisions



Higher education institutions
Benefit from benchmarking and
identifying best practices, ensuring
excellence in teaching and research



EHESO Data and Tools

HE Observatory – integrate and align existing tools



European Tertiary Education Registry



U-MULTIRANK - [EHESO Benchmarking Tool](#)



Eurostudent



Eurograduate



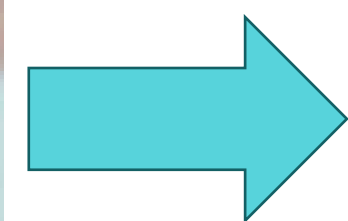
Bologna implementation (Eurydice)



Mobility Scoreboard (Eurydice)



Database of External Quality Assurance Results



Dynamic & strategic alignment with evolving HE policy priorities (**EEA & UoS**) – need for monitoring & evaluation

What is EHESO?

The European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO) is a user-centred data and information platform on the higher education sector in Europe. The Observatory enables the comparison, analysis, and showcasing of the sector's performance across multiple levels, actors, and themes.

European Higher Education Sector Scoreboard

An interactive data visualisation platform presenting higher education indicators at country level, organised along key EU higher education policy objectives.

Benchmarking Tool for Higher Education Institutions

An interactive tool for higher education institutions to benchmark and compare with a large sample of European and international peers.

Strategic Transformation Toolbox

Tools and resources for higher education institutions, policymakers and students to support their strategic ambitions.

Microdata Access

An Open Access Data Centre offering open access to the EHESO microdata.

European Student Observatory (by 2026)

A tool to inform students about the comparative diversity of university profiles and study programmes.

News

Latest news related to EHESO.

Events

Information about the upcoming and past EHESO events.

Methodology and Technical Documentation

Data gathering and analysis methodology applied to produce EHESO user tools.

Progress on European Higher Education Sector Observatory:

The further development process (2024-2026)



European Higher Education
Sector Scoreboard launched
30/1/2025 – 1st main output

Enhance & update data & tools:

- new NSI & HEI survey data
- Onboard Eurograduate 2026
- HEI benchmarking tool

Further development of the
EHESO data centre (microdata),
European Student Observatory

Tour of the scoreboard

[European Higher Education Sector Observatory](#)

European Higher Education Sector Scoreboard

https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eheso/european-higher-education-sector-scoreboard

Create a New PostWeb Slice Gallery7 7 new network up...GPT@JRCEuropean Commissi...GPT@EC

HomeYouth WikiEurydiceMobility ScoreboardEHESO

Transnational mobility of students

Select report view :ScoreboardTime SeriesIndicator sourceEUROSTAT

Select indicatorShare of mobile students at ISCED 5-7

Select year2022

Select countries35/35

Reset filters

Proportion of short cycle, bachelor's and master's students enrolled in the country's higher education institutions with a degree, granting access to tertiary education, from outside of the country.

Map of Europe showing the share of mobile students at ISCED 5-7. The map uses a color scale from 1.5% (light blue) to 85.1% (dark blue). Liechtenstein is the darkest blue, indicating the highest share.

Values scale
min 1.5% max 85.1%

Country	Group	Value	YoY	Trendline
Liechtenstein	EFTA	85.1%	▼0.1%	
Luxembourg	EU-27	44.3%	▲1.6%	
Malta	EU-27	22.0%	▲51.0%	
Cyprus	EU-27	20.0%	▼7.6%	
Austria	EU-27	18.4%	▲3.5%	
Netherlands	EU-27	17.0%	▲29.4%	
Switzerland	EFTA	15.7%	▲4.5%	
Czechia	EU-27	15.1%	▲1.0%	
Hungary	EU-27	13.1%	▲3.9%	
Latvia	EU-27	12.7%	▼0.6%	
Slovakia	EU-27	11.8%	▲8.5%	
Germany	EU-27	11.3%	▲7.3%	
Portugal	EU-27	10.6%	▲2.9%	
Estonia	EU-27	10.3%	▼4.0%	
Ireland	EU-27	9.8%	▲20.0%	
Belgium	EU-27	9.6%	▲3.9%	
Denmark	EU-27	9.3%	▲1.1%	
Slovenia	EU-27	8.9%	▲2.5%	
Lithuania	EU-27	8.8%	▲19.7%	
Iceland	EFTA	8.5%	▲23.2%	
France	EU-27	8.5%	▲2.0%	
Bulgaria	EU-27	8.4%	▲5.2%	
EU-27	EU-27	8.3%	▲9.2%	
North Macedonia	CAN-PCAN	8.0%	▲11.8%	
Finland	EU-27	7.2%	▲5.3%	
Poland	EU-27	6.8%	▲26.0%	
Romania	EU-27	6.4%	▲4.4%	
Sweden	EU-27	5.8%	▲6.5%	

Microsoft Power BI

FacebookTwitterLinkedInSharePrint

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Future-proof skills and cooperation with industrial ecosystems

This section provides key indicators to compare European higher education systems according to six dimensions:

- Perceived value of teaching and pedagogical innovation.
- Strengthening quality and relevance of future proof skills.
- Cooperation with industrial ecosystems.
- Promoting entrepreneurship.
- Engagement in green transition.
- Engagement in digital transition.

EU Values

This section provides key indicators to compare European higher education systems according to three dimensions:

- Institutional autonomy and academic freedom.
- Gender balance.
- Diversity and inclusiveness.

International cooperation in higher education, research and innovation

This section provides key indicators to compare European higher education systems according to two dimensions:

- Global role in education.
- Global role in research and innovation.

- Total population
- Gross domestic product at current prices (in PPS per inhabitant)
- Share of higher education revenues from core budget
- Share of higher education institutions revenues from third-party funding
- Share of higher education institutions revenues from tuition fees
- Total academic personnel (in FTE per 1000 total active population)
- Share of students aged 20-24 at ISCED 5-7 (% of population aged 20-24)
- Graduates aged 20-29 at ISCED 5-7 (per 1,000 population aged 20-29)

Main Data Sources for EHESO/EHESS:

- ✓ **Eurostat** by NSIs
- ✓ **ETER** data by NSIs
- ✓ **EHESO** HEI & Student Survey
- ✓ **Erasmus+** data (mobilities, joint programs etc.)
- ✓ **EUROSTUDENT** survey data
- ✓ **EUROGRADUATE** survey data
- ✓ **CWTS** (OpenAlex) publication data
- ✓ **Other** external sources (e.g. EUA, AFI, ...)



Reset filters

 37 / 37

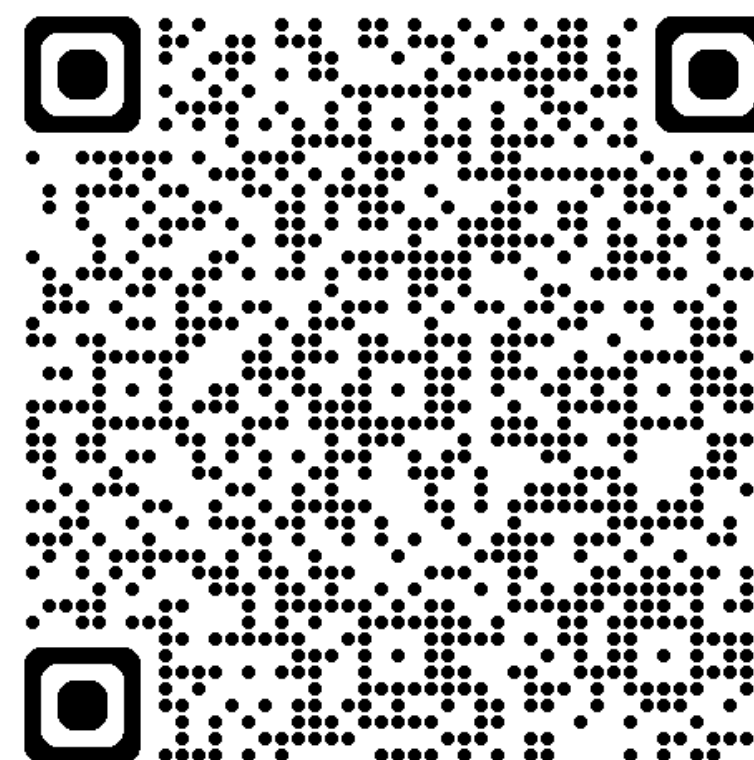
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