



EURYKA

Reinventing Democracy in Europe: Youth Doing Politics in Times of Increasing Inequalities

**Integrated Report on Policy Analysis
(Deliverable 1.1)**

Workpackage 1: Policy Analysis

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the results of an analysis of policies which influence the participation and inclusion of young people in Europe. In particular, it examines those policies related to young people's political, societal, and cultural activism across the nine countries of the EURYKA project: France, Greece, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The focus has been contemporary policies, but we have also accounted for some recent changes, especially those in relation to the recent economic crisis. The study is based on materials collected and summarized by all the nine partners of the consortium, though the final report, while the analysis is conducted by the Swedish team (Katrin Uba, Elias Collin).

The results of our investigation describe how the policies that regulate the political, social and cultural activism provide opportunities for participation and reduce the social exclusion of young people. The analysis has revealed there are some significant differences between the examined countries in respect of all examined policy fields.

First, in respect of the opportunities for political activism (i.e. electoral, protest and civic participation), a lower voting age, fewer regulations for non-electoral activism, obligatory civic educations at school and the accessibility of authorities' websites via social media are considered as factors encouraging the political participation of young people. While no country under study provides all of these opportunities, Greece has the lowest voting age for all types of election and Spain is the most restrictive in terms of opportunities for non-electoral (protest) activism and civic education. While all countries provide some opportunities for participating in politics using the internet, none of the nine countries allow e-voting, which has been shown to boost the electoral participation of young people under 30 (Alvarez et al. 2009). From the perspective of social inclusion, countries (e.g. Germany, Greece, Poland) which limit voting rights for people with a mental disability or those in prison, thereby exaggerate rather than reduce the existing inequalities of political participation among the general population, as well as among young people.

Second, there are several opportunities for young people to participate in educational projects aimed at increased societal and political participation – both at national and the EU level (e.g. Erasmus). The examined countries are very similar in this respect, although Spain has recently planned, but not yet implemented, several restrictions, e.g. more controlled content

of civic education. In terms of social inclusion there are also clear differences, as the systems in Sweden include vulnerable groups much more than the systems in Germany, Spain or the UK. Of the studies nine countries, only in Sweden are school lunches free of charge, while in the UK the high fees in play in higher education clearly exclude some young people.

Third, labour market initiatives for young people are present in every country, although to different degrees. Still, youth unemployment and the broad use of temporary contracts (leading to the rise of the ‘precariat’) are significant almost everywhere, especially in Greece, Spain and Italy. In countries like Spain and the UK, the recent economic crisis has made the situation for young people worse than before 2008.

Fourth, the social activism of young people is affected by several European and national initiatives and we particularly looked at how health, family, housing and transport policies address youth issues. Cross-country variances are significant – young people with psychological problems have several free opportunities for help, while in many other countries (Greece, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland) these services are run by non-governmental organizations and therefore there is large intra-country variation and instability. In terms of social inclusion, state-organized psychological aid is rarely available for asylum seekers or illegal immigrants (in Switzerland, even emergency aid is often restricted for this particular group), although in Sweden all asylum seeker under 18 years of age have the same rights to health services as residents of the country.

Family policies usually do not have any special youth-related instruments, except Spain, where parents under 21 are not required to make minimum social security contributions in order to receive benefits. Abortion, on the other hand, is clearly more restricted in Poland than in any other country in the study. Housing and transport policies vary much more than family and health policies as these are often regulated at the regional and municipal levels, but some differences can be noticed. While France has several youth and vulnerable group specific housing initiatives (social housing allowance, personalised housing assistance), very little is done in Germany, Spain or the UK. In relation to public transportation, people studying often enjoy several discounts, but in France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK young people, in general, are entitled to discounts until the age of 25 or 26.

Fifth, there are many opportunities for young people for participating in cultural sphere in all countries. France provides free access to museums to everyone younger than 26 (in Italy the same applies for those under 18), while in Sweden and the UK public museums are free for

everyone. The majority of cultural activities are, however, regulated by regional and local initiatives and therefore country comparisons are difficult.

Finally, the age of criminal responsibility is an important milestone, since we know that those in prison do not always have the right to vote and therefore lack opportunities for political participation. In our examined countries, the minimum age of criminal responsibility varies from low (10 years in France, Switzerland, the UK) to higher than the average in the EU – 15 in Sweden.

In sum, the investigation conducted in the frame of this workpackage (WP1) has shown that European countries provide a wide range of opportunities for political and social activism for young people. However, these appear broader in the educational and cultural sphere, and less effective in the sphere of the labour market or electoral participation because of the continuously high unemployment rate and low levels of political activism among young people. The majority of the studied policies are regulated at the national level, but EU-wide programs like Erasmus and the European Youth Guarantee have broader significance.

INTRODUCTION

This integrated report, based on national reports provided by consortium participants, summarizes the main findings of the WP1. The goal of the WP1 was to provide **a comparative assessment of public policies and practices towards promoting youth participation (online and offline) and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized youth populations in nine countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.** ‘Youth’ in this project is defined as ‘young adults’, that is, persons aged 18 to 35-years-old, although the policies and initiatives analysed might also target younger cohorts (e.g., education policies, school organization). We have focused mainly on the most recent policies (2016), but the assessment also takes into account some recent changes. Participation in politics is seen in a broad sense, referring to the ways young people engage in forming the opinions and taking actions to bring about social change (cf. Cammaerts et al., 2016:4). The inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized youth populations refers to social inclusion of a broad set of groups, such as people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and immigrants, but we also account for the inclusion of sexual minorities (LGTB groups) and look at the gender aspect of the assessed policies.

The report provides contextual background information about the prevalent policies in the examined nine countries in respect of youth participation and inclusion in a comparative perspective. We have examined the policies of nine countries through two main analytical angles:

- (1) Opportunity for participation: To what extent the existing policies **encourage** or **discourage** political, social, and cultural activism of *young people in comparison to other age groups*;
- (2) Social inclusion: To what extent the existing policies provide **negative** or **positive** special treatment to vulnerable groups and thereby **exaggerate** or **reduce** the inequalities of these groups.

It is important to note that while (1) refers particularly to difference between the young people and other age groups, (2) looks at the inclusion of *all* vulnerable groups because we assume that the policies which affect these groups in general also affect young people belonging to these groups.

In contrast to comparing the countries to some ideal type of participatory regime or the level of social inclusion, we have opted for a relative approach and compared the countries to each other on basis of the systematic descriptions of national policies of participation and social inclusion in respect of six policy areas: political and civic activism, activism in labour market, health and family policies, cultural activism and judicial policies.¹

Each national team followed the same analytical framework for evaluating policies relevant for the listed six policy areas (all described in Deliverable 1.1). This involved the description of the policies and provision of a score (from -1 to +1), which describes the extent the particular policies address the opportunities for participation of young people in comparison to other age groups and the inclusion of vulnerable groups. As a result, for each policy area we could divide the examined countries into nine categories (see Table 1).

Table 1. Participatory and social inclusion dimensions of policies

		Social inclusion dimension of policies		
		Vulnerable groups face restrictive treatment (exaggerated inequalities)	No special treatment of vulnerable groups	Vulnerable groups enjoy positive special treatment (reduce inequalities)
Participatory dimension of policies	Young people have more opportunities than other age groups (encourage participation)	1; -1	1; 0	1; 1
	Young people have no special treatment	0; -1	0; 0	0; 1
	Young people have fewer opportunities than other age groups (discourage participation)	-1; -1	-1; 0	-1; 1

A simplified explanation of how teams have given scores for evaluating the participatory and inclusive policies is the following: a country where general voting age is 18 but one has to be 20 years old for running for elections discourages youth participation. Therefore, the score describing the participatory dimension of this policy area in this particular country is -1. The decision regarding the social inclusion score is more complex, because the lack of special treatment of some groups can already exaggerate inequalities to some degree. However, in

¹ In reality, the relative scores differed little from the “absolute” scores proposed directly by country teams, major differences being only in relation to social inclusion where countries often had similar absolute scores but in comparison received somewhat different relative score.

order to make a difference between cases where the legislation clearly restricts the rights of vulnerable groups (e.g., discriminative legislation towards LGBTB groups), we have an option of score -1, where the **existing inequalities are exaggerated even more** than it would be a case for score 0 (that is the group is not entitled for any special treatment). So, if a country does make electoral information available for visually impaired citizens, then these policies exaggerate the existing inequalities but the social inclusion score is still 0.

Additional example: a country where everyone aged 18 has a right to vote and be a candidate in elections does not provide any special treatment for young people and the participation score would be 0. If there also are no special treatment policies for vulnerable groups, then even the social inclusion score would be 0. Policies which allow even 16-year-olds to vote provide a score +1 and if there are policies which require that electoral information is accessible for visually impaired citizens, then the social inclusion score is +1.

Note that in order to describe all six dimensions of youth participation, the analysis involves many different policies which were rated separately by scores from -1 to +1 (with a step 0.25 for accounting for small diversities). For the final analysis, we use the average measure of all policy scores and these policies are listed in Table A1, Appendix. Each dimension of youth participation, the relevant policies and country positions are described in a more detail below.

Table 2. Dimensions of youth participation

	Policy area	Indicators
1	Political and civic participation	Electoral, protest and civil society participation Education, Civic education Youth agency Information and communication technology of state institutions
2	Activism in labour market	Labour and unemployment policies
3	Societal activism	Health policies Parental leave policies Housing policies Transport policies
4	Cultural activism	Culture related policy initiatives (museums, libraries)
5	Illegal (criminal) activism	Penitentiary regulations

1. POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

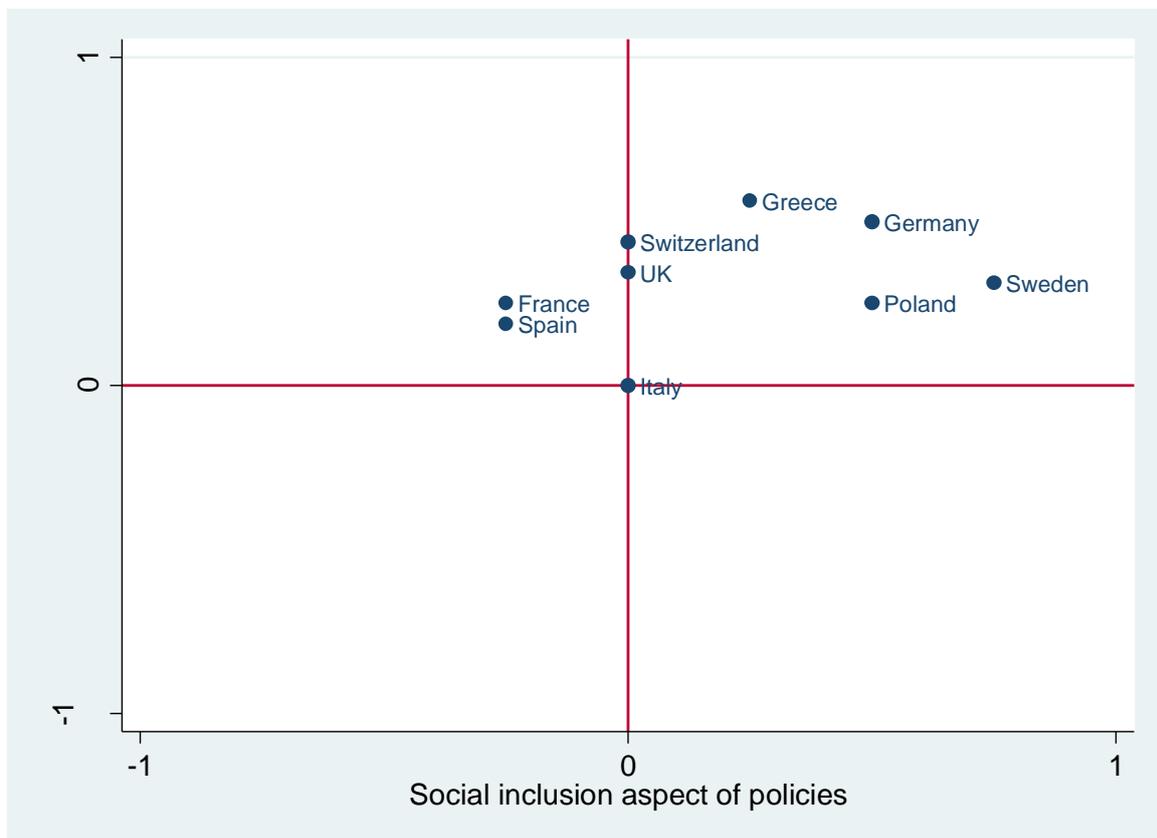
1.1. Electoral participation

Many policies are relevant for evaluating young people's opportunities for political participation, but here we focus on four aspects: what age people are eligible to vote and stand for

national, regional, local and EU elections; how easy it is to form (register) a political party; how the voter registrations system function; and if there are some opportunities for e-voting. These factors have been chosen because they could potentially increase the opportunities for political participation of young people. If these policies also include special treatment of vulnerable groups there is a potential for decreasing existing social inequalities.

The electoral policies of all nine countries have been studied and cross-validated for creating the relative ranking on basis of an aggregate picture of all four previously described dimensions (detailed scores are given in Table 1A in Appendix). Country positions in respect of the electoral policies on participatory and social inclusion scale are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Participatory and social inclusion dimensions of electoral policies



Greece, with its voting age of 17, simple rules for setting up a political party, and automated system of voter registration is ranked as the country where young people – in comparison to other age groups – have more opportunities for electoral participation than other countries, especially Italy. The low rank of Italy is related to its policies which do not allow people under age of 25 to *vote* for, and people under age of 40 to *be elected into*, the Senate. Moreover, the rules for setting up new political parties are relatively complicated. The rest of the coun-

tries – Germany, Switzerland, UK, Sweden, France, Poland and Spain – have very similar election-related policies, and these open up only a few opportunities for young people in comparison to other age groups. None of the examined countries uses e-voting in national elections, although France used to allow e-voting for citizens residing outside the country until the June 2017 elections, while Switzerland and the UK have tried internet-based voting on a few occasions. On the other hand, France restricted the age of running for office in the national legislature to those over 23 years old, so therefore gains a somewhat lower score than Switzerland or the UK. Although in Switzerland the general regulations for voting age are very similar to other countries, there is a significant *state* initiative for getting the youth out to polling booths.

The social inclusion dimension of electoral policies ranges from the countries which have several special policy initiatives for vulnerable groups (Sweden), to those countries where there is a clear lack of such initiatives or poor implementation of such policies (France, Spain).² The relative position of the country is also affected by the fact that people with mental disabilities are not allowed to vote in some countries (Germany, Greece, Poland, Spain) and that people with physical disabilities face significant difficulties (Spain). Similarly, prisoners are sometimes – depending on the seriousness of the crime – disenfranchised in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and the UK, while no such limitations exist in Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Similarly, non-citizen residents can vote in local or regional, as well as in EU-elections in the majority of the examined countries, while in Greece such an opportunity was recently considered unconstitutional.³ Gender quotas, which are sometimes seen as a remedy to tackle gender inequality, are used by political parties for making the party-lists in Sweden, by some of the German parties, and in Italy as a result of electoral reform of Law no. 215 (23.11.2012).

In sum, young people - in comparison to other age groups - seem to have more opportunities for electoral participation in Greece, Germany, and Switzerland, than in Italy, and there are more policies which reduce the existing inequalities of electoral participation in Sweden compared to Spain or France. The rest of the countries are relatively similar to each other in respect of the electoral policies under study. These numbers do not, however, mirror directly

² See Priestley, M., Stickings, M., Loja, E., Grammenos, S., Lawson, A., Waddington, L., & Fridriksdottir, B. (2016). The political participation of disabled people in Europe: Rights, accessibility and activism. *Electoral Studies*, 42, 1-9.

³ See Christopoulos D. (2013) Access to electoral rights: Greece. EUDO Citizenship Observatory. Pages 6-7.

the number of young people (under age 30) in national parliaments, and there is a significant variation from 12% in Sweden, 7% in Italy to 0.2% in France (see Table 2A in the Appendix). Very low representation of young people is also in the EU parliament, where there are only two members of parliament under age 30 (of total 751 MPs).⁴

1.2. Protest participation (off-line)

Protest participation is not as regulated by state initiatives as electoral participation, but is an equally important form of political activism. However, no country under study has any policies which provide special treatment to young people or vulnerable groups in respect of protest activism.⁵ Therefore, we have looked here at the general opportunities for protest activism in relation to bureaucracy and the fees needed for registering protest events, prohibition of covered faces during actions, and rules in relation to graffiti (i.e. fines).

While in some countries activists do not need to give prior notice about protest (Greece) or must give notice only a little in advance (48 hours in Germany), there is a general system of providing notice of planned protest action and in the majority of the countries it is rare for the authorities to refuse permission. On the other hand, covering the face during protests has been prohibited in most of the countries (France since 2009, Germany since 1985, Greece since 2009, Italy since 1975,⁶ Sweden since 2005,⁷ Switzerland since 2011⁸), while in the UK there is no such rule. If the rule is not followed, the fine in France is quite significant – 1500 Euro.

The most restrictive policies for protest activism are in Spain, where the so called “Gag law”⁹ allows authorities to impose maximum 500 000 Euro fine on those who are perceived as making administrative offences. Even the UK’s Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011) places restrictions on public assemblies to prevent the erection of tents or any sleeping equipment around Parliament Square are more restrictive than policies in other countries under study.

⁴ See <https://futurelabeurope.eu/2014/04/07/missing-a-generation-in-eu-politics-how-to-involve-young-europeans/> and

<https://marietjeschaake.eu/en/event-missing-a-generation-in-eu-politics-how-to-involve-young-europeans>

⁵ One exception here could be Greece, which recently abolished the criminalization of student school squatting as a means of student struggle (L. 4386/2016, art.45), but at the same time a law from 2011 (L.4099/2011) removed the “asylum” status of universities.

⁶ Law no. 152/1975, Disposizioni a tutela dell'ordine pubblico (Provisions to protect public order), art. 5.

⁷ Lag 2005:900 om förbud mot maskering i vissa fall.

⁸ See <https://www.parlament.ch/fr/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20113043>

⁹ Ley Orgánica 4/2015, de 30 de marzo, de protección de la seguridad ciudadana.
<http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2015/03/31/pdfs/BOE-A-2015-3442.pdf>

The phenomenon of drawing graffiti, which could be seen as a form of art, political protest or a form of property damage, is treated differently by the examined nine countries. The policies vary from relatively small punishments in Italy, Poland and Sweden to France where in theory the punishments are severe (two years in prison and 30,000€ fine), but in practice are rarely applied.¹⁰

If we consider that young people are more prone to participate in protest actions, as recent research has demonstrated (Brigs, 2017), there are more opportunities for such actions in Germany, Poland and the UK than in Italy, Switzerland or Spain.

1.3. Civic participation

Opportunities for participating in civil society organisations are usually affected by several policies, but here we have decided to investigate if countries under study provide any special treatment to organisations of young people or vulnerable groups in respect of their funding, physical space for activities and the rules of registration. There is no special treatment of youth organizations or any organizations of vulnerable groups in terms of registration in any of the countries, except in Spain where the law¹¹ requires that all youth associations must legally constitute and properly enter in a Youth Associations' register (at a local, regional or national level).

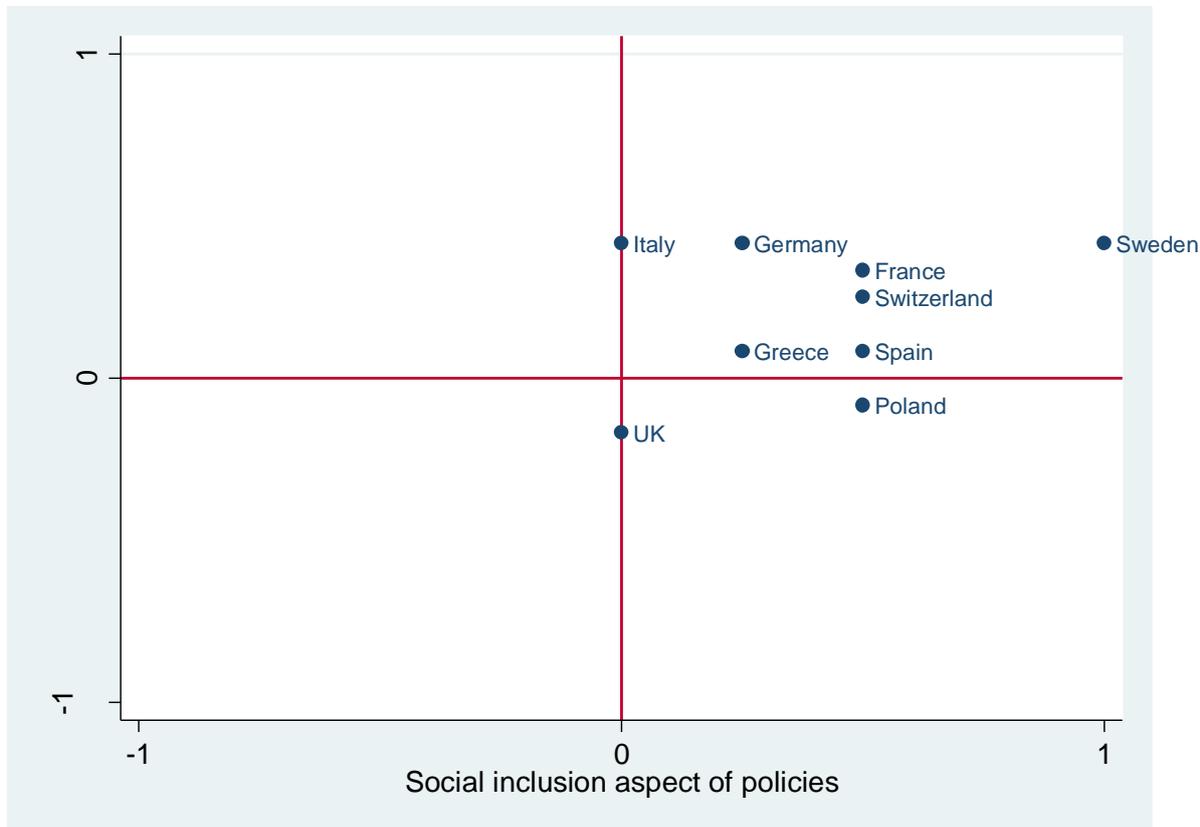
There are, however, some differences between countries and also significant differences within countries (Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the UK) in terms of funding and availability of physical space for activities. The majority of the countries have many different policy initiatives for encouraging the civil society activism of young people, and often the funding is distributed via national government initiatives (Switzerland, the UK), via regional authorities (Germany, Spain), local youth councils (Greece), national state offices for youth policy (Italy) or national umbrella organisations of youth organizations (Sweden). In Poland, the funding of youth organizations is more ad hoc and dependent on temporary projects. Due

¹⁰ See <http://www.legadroit.com/droit-de-manifester.html>;
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?idArticle=LEGIARTI000006418260&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006070719>

¹¹ Legislation on youth participation is stated by the Real Decreto 397/88 sobre las condiciones de creación de las asociaciones juveniles. <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/1988/04/28/pdfs/A13061-13061.pdf>.

to the recent economic crisis, the budget cuts in the UK have also decreased the funding opportunities for youth organisations.¹²

Figure 2. Participatory and social inclusion dimensions of policies of civil society



If we look the special treatment of vulnerable groups – the social inclusion dimension of the civic engagement policies under study – then the Swedish national youth organisation (MUCF) has grants and allowances directed specially to groups working with LGBT rights, ethnic minorities and people with various disabilities.¹³ Elsewhere similar opportunities exist, but these seem to only cover some vulnerable communities (e.g. LGTBQIA in Switzerland)¹⁴ or there is a lack of national strategies (Poland).¹⁵ In comparison to other countries, Italy and the UK have fewer initiatives which provide special treatment to the civil society organisations of vulnerable groups.

¹² National Youth Agency (2017) *Cuts Watch*. Available at: <http://www.nya.org.uk/supporting-youth-work/policy/cuts-watch>

¹³ See <https://www.mucf.se/bidrag>

¹⁴ See <https://www.edi.admin.ch/edi/fr/home/fachstellen/slr/aides-financieres/demande-de-subside-pour--projets.html>

¹⁵ See <https://kph.org.pl/o-kph/misja-i-wizja-dokumenty/>

1.4. Policies facilitating the use of information and communication technology (ICT)

As young people are particularly known for using the internet and social media, we have focused on those policies and initiatives which regulate how state authorities communicate via ICT (presence of digital systems and use of social media platforms). The social inclusion scale measures here the availability of these platforms, even for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities or those not speaking the majority language. While none of the examined countries have some specific treatment of young people in respect of the use of ICT, the European Commission's Digital Scoreboard report (2017) shows that the availability of digital public services varies – being higher than the EU average in Spain, Sweden, and France, and the lower than the EU average in Poland, the UK, Germany, Italy, and Greece.¹⁶ The differences are also visible if one looks at the authorities' use of social media: in France, Greece, Italy, and Switzerland more than half of the national agencies (e.g. government departments) have a Facebook page or a Twitter account. In Germany, however, 10 out of 15 federal ministries have a Facebook page and all 15 have an official Twitter account and a YouTube channel. In Poland, Sweden and the UK all largest state authorities have a Facebook page and/or a Twitter account. Thus, these countries seem to encourage citizens' contact with authorities via social media more than France, Greece, Italy and Switzerland.

As the digital divide is a problem in the majority of the countries, some have special programs for increasing the digital skills of vulnerable groups (e.g. France¹⁷). In Sweden, where the digital divide is smaller¹⁸ such initiatives are rarer, but the majority of the government webpages have an English version and are accessible through the automated reading function for people with visual disparities. Other countries, such as Germany,¹⁹ Greece²⁰ and the UK use regional policies for encouraging digital education, but invest less in making the existing information easily accessible to people with disabilities and/or ethnic minorities. The Italian National Plan for Digital School (PNSD) was launched in 2015 and has not shown any clear

¹⁶ See [http://digital-agenda-data.eu/charts/desi-components#chart={"indicator":"DESI_5_DPS","breakdown-group":"DESI_5_DPS","unit-measure":"pc_DESI_5_DPS","time-period":"2017"}](http://digital-agenda-data.eu/charts/desi-components#chart={)

¹⁷ Act of 11 February 2005 "Equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of persons with disabilities", which included measures for improving digital accessibility to public services.

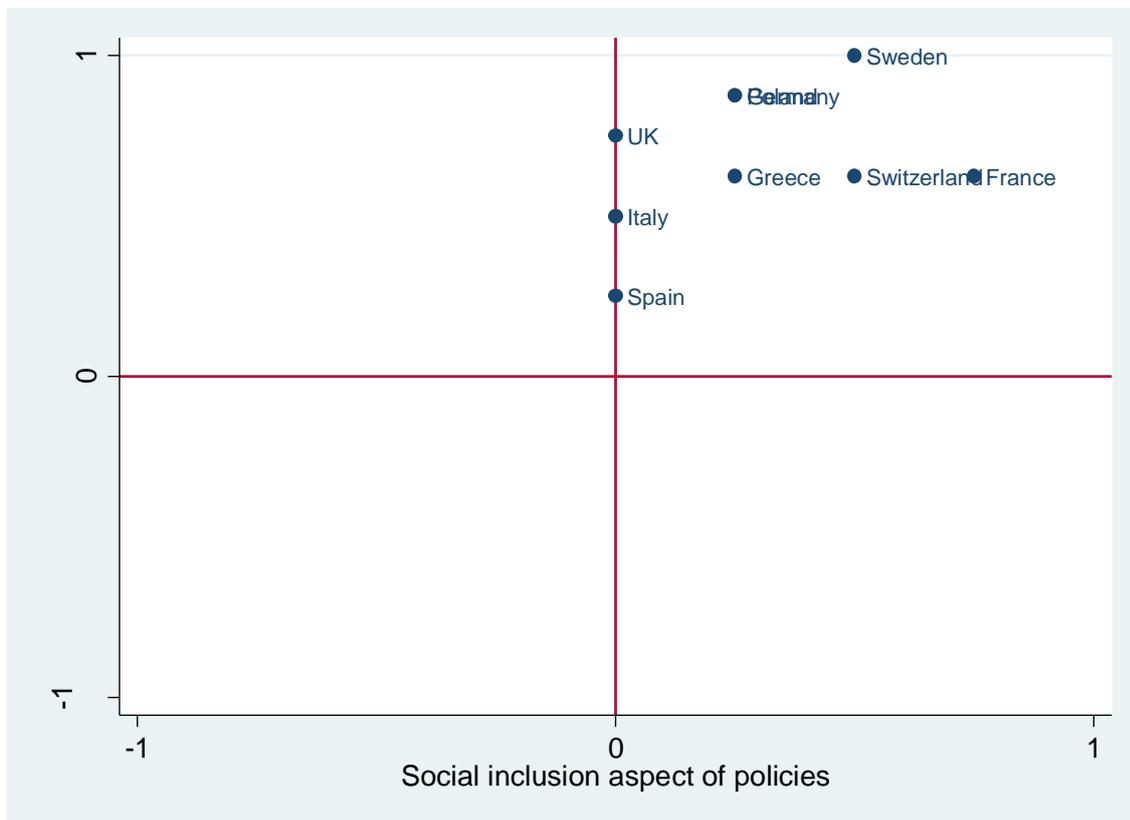
¹⁸ Cruz-Jesus, F., Vicente, M. R., Bacao, F., & Oliveira, T. (2016). The education-related digital divide: An analysis for the EU-28. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 56, 72-82.

¹⁹ See https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2016/Entwurf_KMK-Strategie_Bildung_in_der_digitalen_Welt.pdf

²⁰ Georgiadou P. (2016) "Greece: Reducing the number of public servants – latest developments". *Eurofound*, available in <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/printpdf/observatories/emcc-eurwork/articles/working-conditions-labour-market-industrial-relations/greece-reducing-the-number-of-public-servants-latest-developments>

results yet. Similarly, regardless the regulations for making official websites accessible to people with disabilities in Poland,²¹ the majority of controlled websites only partially fulfil the requirements.²²

Figure 3. Participatory and social inclusion dimension of policies regarding ICT



In sum, there seems to be more policies which encourage the use of ICT among the population at large and reduce the existing inequalities of vulnerable groups in France, Sweden and Switzerland than in Italy, Spain and the UK, although the differences between the countries in general are relatively small.

1.5. Education policies, school governance and youth agency

Early socialisation to political activism by parents, at school and by civil society organizations (youth agencies) is seen as an important promoter of the political participation of young people (see e.g. Earl et al., 2017; Persson et. al., 2016). Therefore, we have examined to what

²¹ See <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU20120000526>

²² See <https://www.nik.gov.pl/aktualnosci/nik-o-dostosowaniu-stron-internetowych-do-potrzeb-osob-z-niepelnosprawnosciami.html>

extent the education policies and school governance encourages the participation of young people and vulnerable groups, as well as the initiatives of civic educations.

The European Commission has adopted the EU Youth Strategy with the objectives to ensure equal opportunities for youths with regard to jobs and education in the EU, as well as encouraging young people to take part in society. The strategy involves, amongst other things, the Erasmus+ program assisting young people in providing opportunities for education, sports training or volunteering abroad. About four million youths use such services every year.²³ The project has a broad base of recruitment and around one out of three participants come from a somewhat disadvantaged background.²⁴ Another program is more focused on civil participation, as it is aimed at developing the engagement of young people is the structured dialogue. In this program, EU decision makers meet with youth representatives from different EU countries to discuss youth-related issues. The dialogue involves representatives of youth ministries or similar organizations, national and local youth councils, youth workers and youth researchers. Although the meetings have no formal power, they are still a forum to convey the importance of youth-related topics.

At the national level, the majority of the examined countries involve young people into the school and university governance via elections and the representation of pupils (students) on the school board. There are also some differences. While in Germany, Poland and Sweden even the primary school pupils are involved in elections for pupil representatives, in France, Greece,²⁵ Italy and Spain this opportunity is provided only in secondary or high-school. In the UK, the representatives to school councils are usually elected, but they could sometimes be also appointed.

In Greece, the national Ombudsman has criticized the Ministry of Education for not accounting for pupils' opinions²⁶ and in Spain the recent Education Law²⁷ has reduced the power of

²³ See http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en

²⁴ See http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/library/erasmus-plus-factsheet_en.pdf

²⁵ The legislative framework on school communities can be found (in Greek) in the official website of the Parliament of Youth: http://www.efivoi.gr/site_stuff/files/2014/nomosxedio_mathitikon_koinotiton.pdf

²⁶ See <https://www.google.gr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiP3IGf9t3TAhVJuBoKHeVtCu8QFggyMAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.0-18.gr%2Fdownloads%2Fkeimeno-paratiriseon-gia-scholikoys-kanonismoys-pros-ypoyrgeio-paideias&usg=AFQjCNG2ELU--n45G640cgeSW98z1LWjXg> last accessed on 7/5/2017.

School Councils which are composed of teachers, parents and pupils. In federal countries such as Germany or Switzerland, the inclusion of pupils in school governance and students in the governance of universities varies also across regions. It should also be noted that although students have an opportunity to hold elections at universities, the turnout is often very low in France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the UK (about 10-20%).

The policies regulating civic education are relatively similar, as in many countries there are obligatory (France, Germany, Greece, Poland, Switzerland, and the UK) courses of civic education. In Sweden, civic education is not compulsory as it is not a specific course, but it is well-integrated into the usual curricula of primary and secondary schools. In Italy, civic education is not compulsory since 2015 and the classes of “Citizenship and Constitution” are integrated to history classes. Just recently, in March 2017, Italy made use of the European Structural Funds for promoting “global citizenship”, where all Italian schools are allowed to apply for specific education programs on topics such as food education, wellness, environmental education, economic citizenship and active citizenship.²⁸ Finally, in Spain the subject “Education for Citizenship” was eliminated from schools’ curriculum in 2016 as the ruling Partido Popular saw it as “indoctrination”. The measure was the result of ten years of intensive debate and controversy raised by the Catholic Church. The new subject, called ‘Civic Constitutional Education’, is oriented to educate about the Constitution’s normative frame and has been criticised by the Spanish LGTB movement due to the exclusion of LGTB issues from the new subject’s content.

Finally, we have investigated to what extent the countries under study support “youth agency” via the presence of national youth-related legislation and state authorities for youth issues. The most common youth-related laws in all examined nine countries are those which refer to the protection of children or the regulations of traineeship (e.g. France)²⁹, but often youth issues are regulated by many different policies, which include specific paragraphs devoted to young people (e.g. Poland, Sweden, Switzerland). Countries with a significant regional division, such as Spain, have regional level youth policies like in Catalunya.³⁰ In some countries, such as Greece, the implementation of youth related policies have been criticised

²⁷ Ley Orgánica 8/2013 para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa (LOMCE).

https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2013-12886

²⁸ See http://www.istruzione.it/pon/avviso_cittadinanza-globale.html

²⁹ See <http://www.vie-publique.fr/th/acces-thematique/jeunesse.html>

³⁰ Ley 33/2010, de 1 de octubre. LCAT 2010\634. <http://www.parlament.cat/document/nom/TL134.pdf>

by the Council of Europe³¹ and in the UK some recent employment and housing related regulations have seen to reduce the opportunities of young people (e.g. Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit entitlement).

Although every examined country has some state agencies for youth issues (e.g., Ministry of Youth and Sports in France, Federal Youth Council in Germany, The General Secretariat for Youth in Greece, Department of Youth and National Civic Service in Italy, The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs in Sweden), these differ in terms of their funding and independence. In respect of funding, UK Youth is funded by the state and private organizations and The National Youth Agency in the UK has no public funds.³² In terms of independence, The Polish Group on Youth Social Activity is part of a Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Spanish Youth Institute³³ is a part of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. The Spanish government has decided to close its only independent youth agency (Youth Council) in 2015.³⁴

By summarizing and comparing these education and youth agency related policies and initiatives, we have can make a general relative ranking of the nine countries in terms of the participatory dimension of these policies (the vertical axes on Figure 4). The differences are, in general, very small except in the case of Spain – which has recently removed civic educations from national curricula and closed the independent youth agency. The horizontal axes in Figure 4 refers to the extent the analysed education and youth agency related policies and initiatives include any special treatment of vulnerable groups – the social inclusion. Here the differences between countries are mainly determined by their welfare state policies: while the German educational system does not provide equal opportunities for all societal groups³⁵ and thereby exaggerates the existing social inequalities, the Greek and Swedish school systems appear as more equality oriented. However, in Greece, the recent economic crisis has complicated the implementation of these equality promoting policies.³⁶ In Sweden, on the other

³¹ Williamson and Petkovic, *ibid*, p. 48

³² NYA [n.d] *History of the National Youth Agency*. Available at: <http://www.nya.org.uk/about-us/history-national-youth-agency/> (accessed 10 April 2017).

³³ Instituto de la Juventud (InJuve). <http://www.injuve.es/>

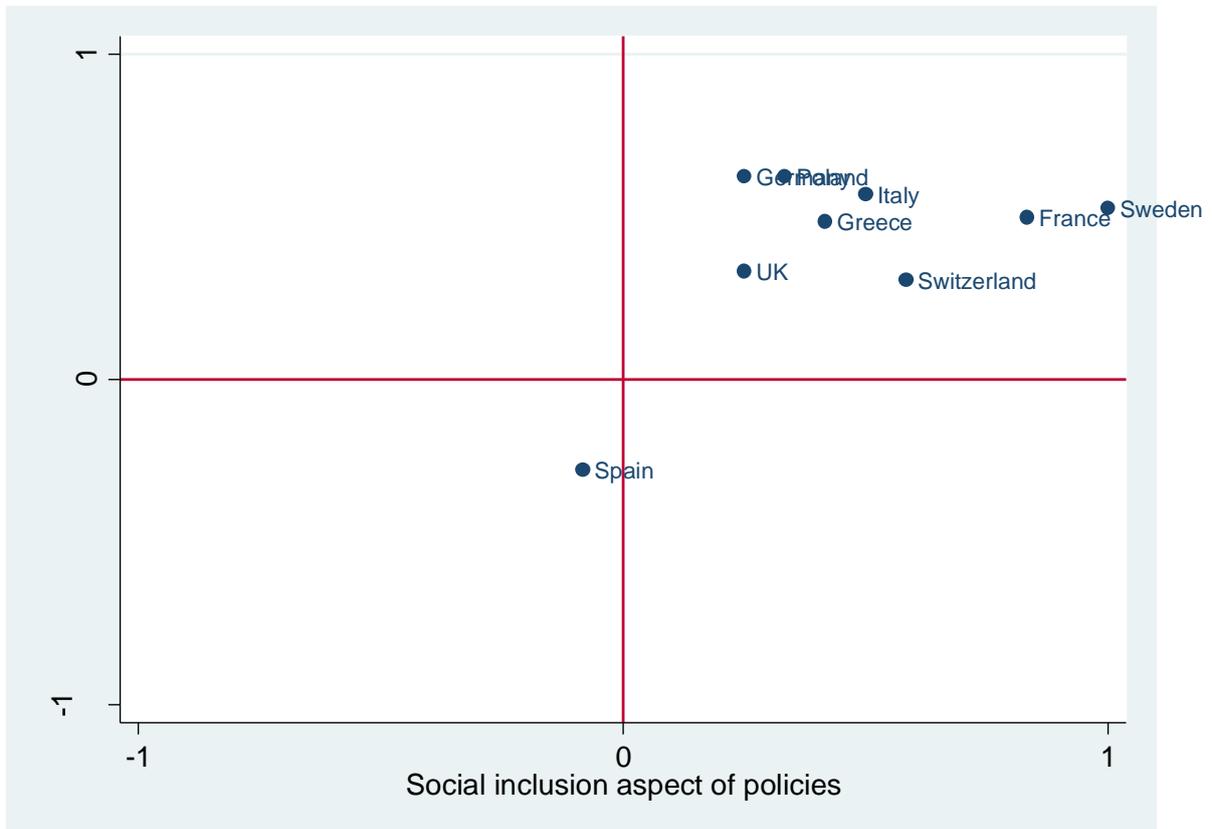
³⁴ Ley 40/2015, de 1 de octubre, de Régimen Jurídico del Sector Público. <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2015/BOE-A-2015-10566-consolidado.pdf>

³⁵ See <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-Germany.pdf>

³⁶ See http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-greece_en.pdf

hand, even the initiatives of The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs tackle particularly vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, LDTB groups, and people with disabilities.

Figure 4. Participatory and social inclusion dimension of education and youth agency related policies



French, Polish and Swiss school systems are also very inclusive, particularly due to the recent initiatives for including pupils with disabilities, but in France,³⁷ Italy, and Poland³⁸ there are still problems with addressing the discrimination of sexual minorities.

While in many countries, the primary and secondary education is free of charge, the difference is in paid lunches (everywhere except Sweden) and high fees for the university education (UK³⁹). In Poland and France, for example, the lunches at school cost relatively little, as these are subsidised by local governments and vulnerable groups are entitled to discount or a refund.

³⁷ See <http://www.etudiant.gouv.fr/cid96523/lutte-contre-les-discriminations.html>

³⁸ Swierszcz J. (ed.) *Lekcja równości. Postawy i potrzeby kadry szkolnej i młodzieży wobec homofobii w szkole*, Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, Warszawa 2012, s. 15-94. Full text accessible at:

<https://www.kph.org.pl/publikacje/lekcjarownosci.pdf>

³⁹ NI Direct [n.d] *Tuition Fees*. Available at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/tuition-fees>

The country with the least number of measures for addressing inequalities of vulnerable groups is Spain, where the recent economic crisis has led to a significant increase of child poverty and the drop-out rate of schools.⁴⁰ Even when the policies are adopted by the government (e.g. The 2017 National Reform Program) in the context of constant budget cuts the implementation of these policies faces difficulties.⁴¹ In sum, the policies of education and youth agency restrict participation and exaggerate social inequalities in Spain more than in any other examined nine countries.

2. ACTIVISM IN LABOUR MARKET

We have investigated to what extent the national labour and unemployment policies address the special situation of young people in comparison to other age groups (participation) and the special treatment of vulnerable groups (social inclusion) by looking particularly at the following issues: the presence of youth employment policies, the access of young people to the labour market, and unemployment benefits. Prior studies have found that there is only little variation in terms of the flexibility of labour market rules among countries like Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland, while the variation is in terms of the unemployment regulations for young people – being the most inclusive in Sweden and France, and the most exclusive in Poland and Italy (Cinally and Giugni, 2013). Since then, there have been several changes in countries' labour market regulation. For example, the EU launched several initiatives (Youth on the Move in 2010, European Youth Guarantee in 2012, Youth Employment Initiative in 2013). The most broader of these programs – the European Youth Guarantee – has been evaluated as being successful for activating unemployed NEETs (young people not in education or employment), but its general effect has not yet been evaluated.⁴² At the national level, the Jobs Act (Law 183/2014) in Italy revised the entire system of temporary contracts (liberalization) and unemployment benefits (universalization), which affected the opportunities of young people in the Italian labour market.⁴³ This current

⁴⁰ Save The Children (2015). *Pobreza y equidad educativa en España 2015. Iluminando el futuro*. https://www.savethechildren.es/sites/default/files/imce/docs/pobreza-equidad-educativa-espana_iluminando-el-futuro.pdf

⁴¹ See http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-spain_en.pdf

⁴² See Eichhorst, W., & Rinne, U. (2017). The European Youth Guarantee: A Preliminary Assessment and Broader Conceptual Implications (No. 128). Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

⁴³ See http://www.isigrowth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/working_paper_2015_5.pdf and http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2014/518757/IPOL-EMPL_NT%282014%29518757_EN.pdf

analysis includes some additional countries and also has a somewhat different focus due to our interest in youth-related labour market policies.

There are many differences between the nine countries under investigation and one needs to account for the differences between the adopted legislation and the implementation of these policies. For example, France⁴⁴, Italy,⁴⁵ Poland⁴⁶ and Switzerland⁴⁷ have many policies particularly addressing youth employment, but these are considered ineffective because of the high youth unemployment in France and Italy⁴⁸ or the lack of coherence in Poland.⁴⁹ Additionally, in Poland, the unemployment of young people is not only tackled by labour market policies but also with the high migration of young people to other EU countries (in 2015 about 2.4 million Polish citizens were residing temporarily abroad).

However, our goal has not been to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing policies and rather focus on the extent these include some special treatment of young people and vulnerable groups. Such policies could be found, for example, in Italy, where the government has introduced several measures to incentivize the recruitment of young people (Law 76/2013, Law 99/2013, Law 183/2014).⁵⁰

On the other hand, the country has ‘balanced’ these policies with other labour market reforms (Jobs Act), which has made the labour market more flexible and increased the precarious status of young workers.⁵¹ Thus, if we would evaluate the consequences of these Italian labour reforms, then the scores given to Italy would be closer to France and Greece. As we have mainly followed the legislation, the Italian score in Figure 5 is somewhat higher than in these two countries which have not promoted youth employment to a similar extent.

⁴⁴ See <http://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/dares-etudes-et-statistiques/statistiques-de-a-a-z/article/les-jeunes-et-les-politiques-de-l-emploi>

⁴⁵ See <http://www.jobsact.lavoro.gov.it/Pagine/default.aspx#tutelecrecenti>

⁴⁶ *Country Report Poland 2017*, COM(2017). <http://ibs.org.pl/app/uploads/2017/04/2017-european-semester-country-report-poland-en.pdf>

⁴⁷ See

http://www.seco.admin.ch/seco/fr/home/Publikationen_Dienstleistungen/Publikationen_und_Formulare/Arbeit/Arbeitsbedingungen/Wegleitungen_zum_Arbeitsgesetz/wegleitung-zum-arbeitsgesetz-und-den-verordnungen-1-und-2.html

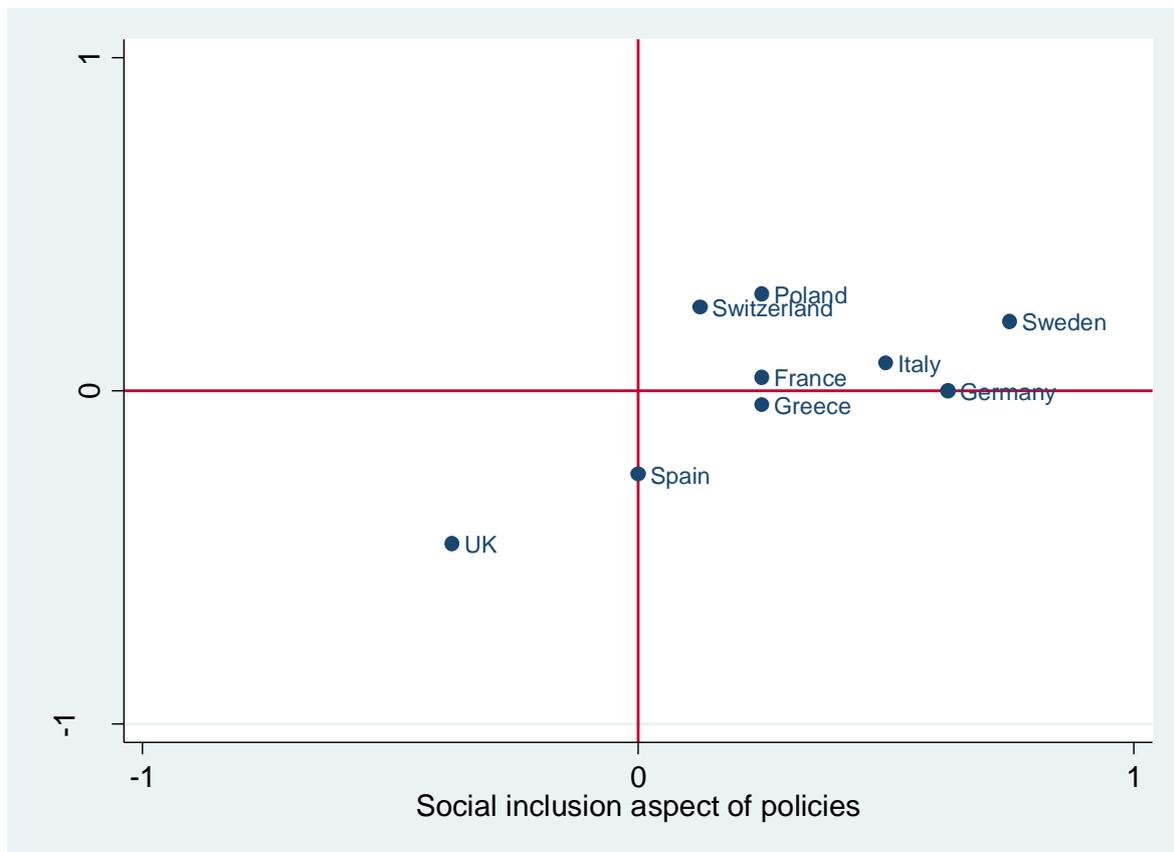
⁴⁸ See http://www.isigrowth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/working_paper_2015_5.pdf

⁴⁹ Social Inclusion in Poland: Key Challenges and Opportunities for Support, World Bank, 2016, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24>, p.42.

⁵⁰ See <http://www.garanzigiocvani.gov.it/Pagine/default.aspx>

⁵¹ See Fana, M., Guarascio, D., & Cirillo, V. (2015). Labour market reforms in Italy: Evaluating the effects of the Jobs Act (No. 2015/31). LEM Working Paper Series.

Figure 5. The participatory and social inclusion dimension of labour and unemployment policies



Young people face a similar problematic status in Spain and although the Spanish national budget of 2017 includes an item called ‘Complementary Help for Youngsters inscribed in the Youth Guarantee System’, it is not designed for helping those young people in temporary employment, and the state’s spending on active employment policy has actually decreased by 4.8%. In Greece, where many of the initiatives for decreasing youth unemployment are financed by EU funds, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food adopted a somewhat innovative measure against youth unemployment in cities – it aims to attract young people to rural areas and promote their involvement in agriculture. Regional differences are also present in Switzerland, where the policies which regulate the reintegration of unemployed to labour maker vary significantly across cantons.

From a comparative perspective, UK policies are even less beneficial for young people than those in Spain because the minimum wage for young people (18 to 20-years-old) in the UK is

£5.60 per hour, while the regular wage is £7.50 per hour.⁵² Furthermore, the Job Seekers Allowance policy in the UK gives young people under 25 a benefit which is 20% lower than the benefit received by job seekers over 25.⁵³

Finally, the problems of temporary employment for young people are also present in the northern welfare states, as Swedish labour policies, particularly the law of employment protection (LAS) has a principle which states that the last person to be employed also is the first person 'to go' in times of work shortages.⁵⁴ However, youth unemployment in Sweden is also tackled by a special 'Youth to work' delegation in the national employment authority, which also aims to increase the employment among young immigrants.⁵⁵ The latter is also important for evaluating the social inclusion dimension of policies, since it is aimed at reducing the existing inequalities. The German Federal Employment Agency encourages vocational training, which increases the accessibility to the labour market among young people as well as among vulnerable groups.

In terms of the special treatment of vulnerable groups by labour and unemployment policies, the country differences are mainly related to the varying initiatives for immigrants and people with disabilities. Like the special treatment of young people, in France there are several policies for improving the employment opportunities of vulnerable groups (immigrants and disabled people), but these initiatives are also considered ineffective.⁵⁶ Germany has adopted a new law which provides more assistance and help for people with disabilities than the previous legislations in December 2016 (*Bundesteilhabegesetz*). However, the policies for including migrants in vocational training have not been very effective (Enggruber, Rützel, and Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2015). A similar situation can be found in Sweden, where despite special programs for increasing the employment of immigrants and people with disabilities, as well as those just released from prison,⁵⁷ the difference between the unemployment rate among young immigrants (16%) and the general population (7%) has not decreased.⁵⁸ Even the rules for Greece include several measures for increasing the employment and vocational

⁵² UK Government [n.d], *National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage Rates*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

⁵³ UK Government (2016), *New style job seeker's allowance*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-style-jobseekers-allowance>

⁵⁴ Skedinger P. *En exkluderande arbetsmarknadsmodell? Den svenska arbetsmarknadens trösklar i ett globalt perspektiv*. Underlagsrapport 24 till Globaliseringsrådet

⁵⁵ Tilläggsdirektiv till Delegationen för unga till arbete (A 2014:06) Dir. 2017:20

⁵⁶ Cour des comptes, *L'accès des jeunes à l'emploi. Construire des parcours, adapter les aides*, septembre 2016.

⁵⁷ SFS 2000:628 §§12-13

⁵⁸ See

http://www.scb.se/contentassets/5a6d6bf5609f42b3ba5d4f02bc255dc2/am0401_2016a01_sm_am12sm1701.pdf

training of vulnerable groups,^{59, 60} although these do not cover needs at the national level, address a limited number of beneficiaries and are applied unsystematically. Problems with continuity also characterized the treatment of vulnerable groups in the Polish labour market because these initiatives are often implemented by civil society organizations.⁶¹

Finally, from a comparative perspective, the degree to which labour and unemployment policies in the UK include the special treatment of vulnerable groups is lower than in other countries under study, especially Sweden or Germany. The low 'score' is explained by the situation where the policies for claiming out of work benefits for people with disabilities are becoming increasingly stringent and restrictive. Furthermore, there are no visible state initiatives for engaging newly arrived immigrants to the labour market.

3. SOCIETAL ACTIVISM: health, family, housing and transport policies

We have evaluated to what extent policies regulating health, family, housing and transportation address young people and vulnerable groups; specifically, we have investigated the opportunities such policies offer for the inclusion of young people and vulnerable groups in societal activism.

3.1. Health policies

While other studies have analysed how countries vary in terms of their healthcare systems⁶² or the coverage of health insurances,⁶³ the focus of this report is the special treatment of young people and vulnerable groups. Therefore, we have looked at the presence and work of youth clinics, the provision of psychological aid for young people, as well as the degree of restriction in gambling and alcohol policies. The last two elements have been added because on the one hand, playing computer games (and using internet casinos) and consuming alcohol are often related to youth social activities. On the other hand, gaming and alcohol addiction

⁵⁹ General Secretariat for Youth (2012) National Report for Youth. p 24

⁶⁰ See <http://www.kdvm.gr/>

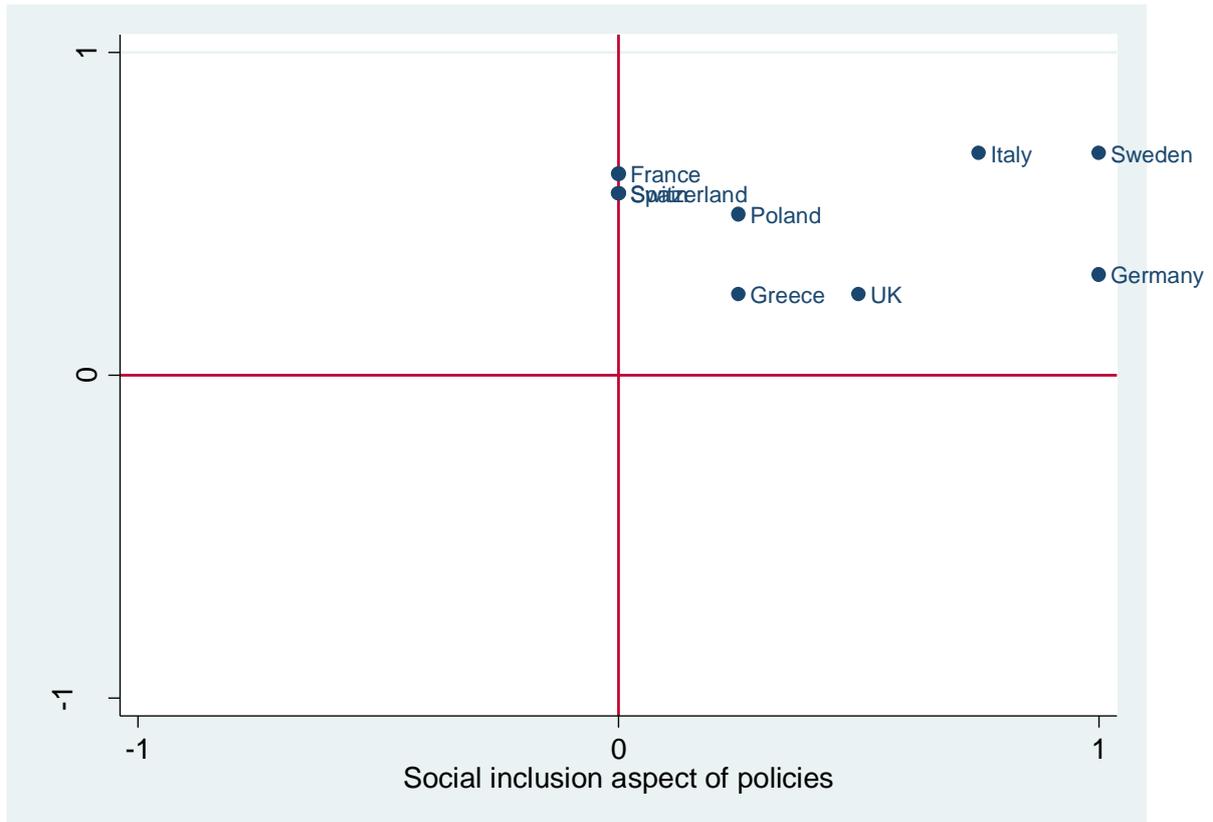
⁶¹ Giermanowska, and Raław, *Commercialisation of occupational development services. People for the institutions, or institutions for people? Case analysis of occupational development of disabled university graduates*, in: <http://journals.bg.agh.edu.pl/STUDIA/2016.15.4/human.2016.15.4.21.pdf>

⁶² See http://www.commonwealthfund.org/~media/files/publications/fund-report/2016/jan/1857_mossialos_intl_profiles_2015_v7.pdf

⁶³ André, C., Batifoulier, P., & Jansen- Ferreira, M. (2016). Health care privatization processes in Europe: Theoretical justifications and empirical classification. *International Social Security Review*, 69(1), 3-23.

cause significant societal costs. The general average evaluation of the extent that these policies provide special treatment for young people and vulnerable groups is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Participatory and social inclusion dimension of health policies



While there is often a lack of funding for youth-related health services (Greece), many countries provide children up to 18 years of age inclusive public healthcare services (Germany, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland) and there are also some special opportunities for young adults. For example, France provides young adults with problems of psycho-active substances (cannabis, alcohol, cocaine, etc.) or of gaming and gambling anonymous and free consultation services at specialist centres.⁶⁴

The system is similar to those in Sweden and the UK, although in these countries only people under 17 (18 in the UK) receive help from child and youth psychiatry services. Furthermore, in France there are many state-run initiatives providing psychological counselling for young people via the telephone, online chat or visits for free; in Greece, Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland such psychological aid is mainly provided via non-governmental

⁶⁴ See http://www.hopital-marmottan.fr/wordpress/?page_id=161

organisations, but with the help of state subsidies. In Italy, medical centres for young people are often related to family health centres and these provide free consultation and services from gynaecologists, psychologists, obstetricians, and even social workers. The system is similar to that in the UK, where there are special youth sexual health clinics, which operate from a range of doctors' surgeries and hospitals. In Spain, there are a few public medical centres specifically oriented to young people and these are promoted by local authorities, mainly in big cities such as Madrid.

Gambling is prohibited for those under 18-years-old in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and the UK⁶⁵, while in Greece this age is 21. In Sweden, people under the age of 18 are not prohibited from participating in publicly arranged lotteries or gambling activities, but visiting a casino is not allowed for those under 20.⁶⁶

Finally, alcohol policies are more diverse. While buying or selling any kind of alcoholic drinks to people under 18 in France, Italy, Poland, Spain or the UK, the German and Swiss national system depends on the percentage of alcohol contained – drinks below 15% can be sold to young people above 16, while drinks above 15% are prohibited for those under 18. Greek policy is a bit less restrictive than French policy, which sets the age limit at 17 years, but this is not much obeyed.⁶⁷ In Sweden, on the contrary, the rule is even stricter – the monopoly state alcohol chain Systembolaget does not sell any alcohol those under 20.

The dimensions of health policy examined here rarely include any special treatment for vulnerable groups (especially gambling and alcohol policies), but there are some differences in terms of providing healthcare services to migrants. The services of youth welfare offices are fully available for migrants and asylum seekers in Germany, while in Greece, Italy and the UK the services are accessible only to those legally residing in the country. Nevertheless, in Italy, both migrants without residence permits and those with permits are entitled to free emergency aid, essential care, maternity care, vaccination and drug addiction care. In Switzerland, the rules are more restrictive and since 2006, following the tightening of the Asylum Law (LAsi), persons who have been rejected from asylum can only receive very

⁶⁵ The National Lottery rules allow anyone aged 16 or over to take part in this particular type of lottery.

⁶⁶ Kasinolag (1999:355) § 4

⁶⁷ Rodriguez-Jareño MC,L. Segura and J. Colom (2013) "Greece: Country description" in *European workplace and alcohol good practice report and compilation of case studies*. Barcelona: Department of Health of the Government of Catalonia, p.182-186 available in http://www.eurocare.org/eu_projects/ewa/resources/documents_and_publications

limited emergency aid.⁶⁸ Spanish initiatives for the special treatment of young people and vulnerable groups were related to the work of the National Youth Council, but according to the most recent legislation, this is planned to be closed. In Sweden, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants are entitled to emergency aid (including giving birth and abortion) and all asylum seekers under 18-years-old have the same rights for healthcare as the residents of the country.

To summarise, in all countries the examined health policies address young people and also provide them with some special treatment. Vulnerable groups are addressed less frequently, and there are also clear differences between the more inclusive Germany and Sweden, and the less inclusive France, Spain and Switzerland.

3.2. Family policies

For evaluating the extent to which family policies provide special treatment to young people and vulnerable groups, we have focused on three issues: birth control, parental leave policies and children's rights in parents' divorce processes. It is, however, important to note that we are not investigating the general parental leave regulations which have been widely studied,⁶⁹ but when we examined if there are any special rules for young people in the frame of the existing family policies, the answer is negative. None of the countries have any special treatment for young people in their family policies – every family with children, including teen parents, are entitled to parental leave as regulated in the particular country and parental benefits according to the general rules. One exception is Spain, where parents under 21 are not required to have made a minimum of social security contributions for receiving benefits. In general, however, the country differences here would be more due to the specific differences between the parental leave policies rather than the special treatment of young people.

In respect of birth control policies, the examined countries have relatively similar rules. Abortion is free and accepted, while contraceptives are free of charge for young adults in France and the UK, while in Germany legal abortion without medical reasons is not free of charge. In Sweden, abortion is legal for everyone, but a regular (small) fee for doctors' appointment applies for all kinds of abortion; contraceptives are free for young people in the majority of the counties.

⁶⁸ Patrick Bodenmann et Abdelhak Elghezouani, *Rev Med Suisse* 2008; volume 4., p. 2563

⁶⁹ If we look the parental leave policies, then our examined countries could be listed as follows (from more generous to less generous): Poland, Sweden, Germany, France, Italy, Greece, Spain, UK, Switzerland (see more in http://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/Leavenetwork/overviews_2016/Statutory_Parental_Leave.pdf).

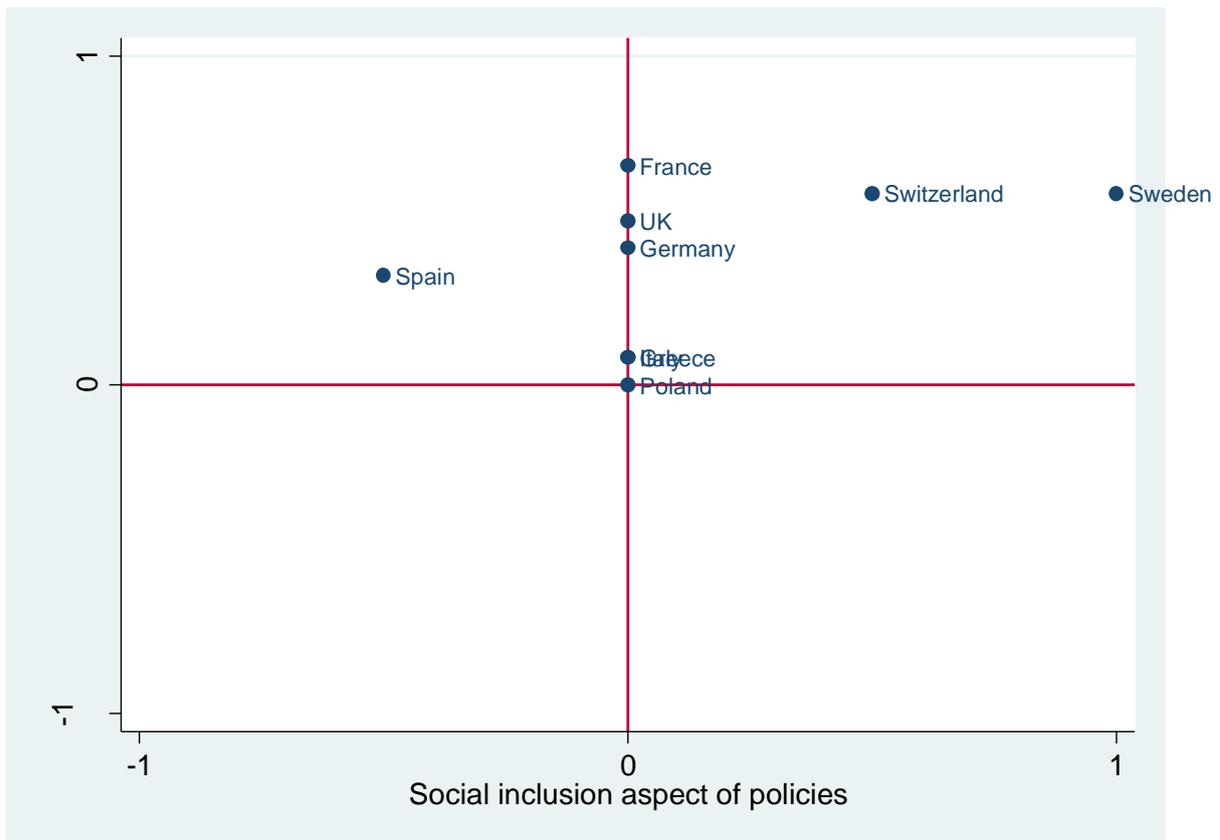
Although abortion is legal also in Greece, Spain, and Switzerland, the system is more bureaucratic in Greece where women who want an abortion resort to private clinics. In Spain, this right of abortion in public clinics is only given to Spanish citizens. The even more restricted situation is in Italy, where medical professionals can refuse to conduct a legal abortion on ethical or religious grounds, and the percentage of conscientious objectors among Italian medical professionals is as high as 70%.⁷⁰ The only examined country where abortion without medical reasons is not legal is Poland. Birth control pills are also available only on prescription, and since the recent decision in parliament (June 2017) even ‘morning after’ pills are only available with prescription.

Finally, looking at policies related to children’s rights, all countries have adopted international regulations for children’s rights. The differences appear in terms of the extent children are given voice in the process of separation: this is a common rule in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and in the UK, but not in Greece.

While vulnerable groups are not frequently addressed in the family policies under examination, the aid given to asylum seekers in Sweden is comparatively more inclusive than the rather restrictive policies of Spain. Therefore, these also appear in different ends of the social inclusion axes in Figure 7.

⁷⁰ In the 2016, the Ministry of Health annual report stated that the rate of conscientious objection in Italy is 70.7% of gynaecologists and 45.8% of non-medical staff. There is a high degree of variation among regions (i.e. in Molise, the rate of objection for gynaecologists is 89.7%, while in Valle D’Aosta it is 13.3%. In the northern city of Bolzano, however, the rate is 85.9%).

Figure 7. Participatory and social inclusion dimension of family policies



There seem to be more policies which include some special treatment of young people in France, than in Greece, Italy and Poland, where there are restricted opportunities for abortion.

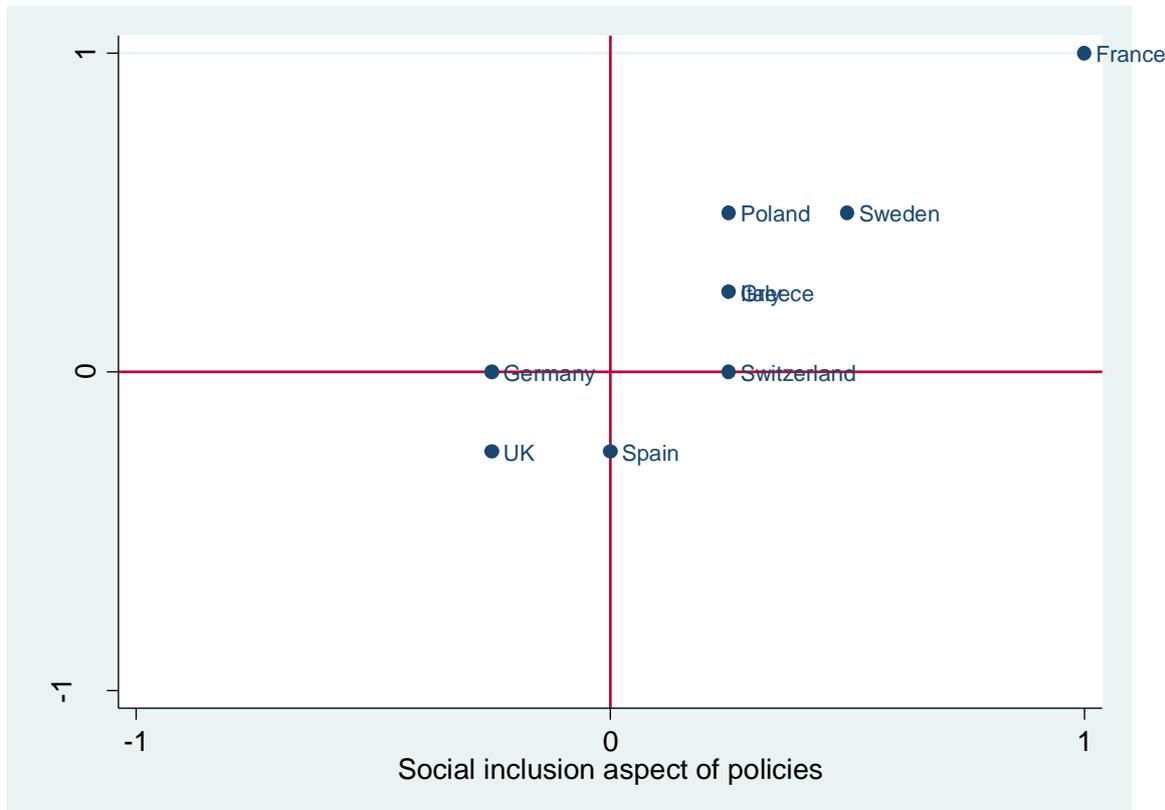
3.3. Housing policies

Young people often face significant challenges when looking for their own place to live and moving out of their parents' house. Therefore, the extent to which housing policies include the special treatment of young people and vulnerable groups is of interest in this study. This also affects the labour and social mobility of young people. Prior studies have shown that younger cohorts are particularly less likely to acquire their first home solely using their own means in Germany, Italy and Spain, while in Sweden the trend is the opposite (Angelini et al., 2013). There are two specifics to consider when talking about housing in Europe. First, there is difference in terms of housing systems – house-owning (Italy, Poland, Spain) and cost rental (France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland) systems – which affects the availability of housing for vulnerable groups. Second, there is a cultural difference, as in southern Europe (Spain and Italy) home ownership is a strong family tradition while in northern Europe (Sweden) renting is socially acceptable (Herbers and Mulder, 2016). Most of the examined

countries do not provide enough housing opportunities for young people and have therefore adopted some national policies for increasing young people’s access to housing market.

In France, there are two major subsidies for young people, Personalized Housing Assistance and Social Housing Allowance. Both are means-tested and the Personalized Housing Assistance mainly benefits students. Since January 2016, there is also a universal rental guarantee (*garantie universelle des loyers*), which aims to facilitate access to housing for tenants, particularly for young people who do not have sufficient guarantees of solvency or security (e.g. because of a lack of personal guarantees, employment precarity, etc.). The Italian system also provides a few initiatives, such as funds to aid young people in purchasing their first home (Solidarity Fund)⁷¹ and tax discounts for housing under agreed-on rent (*canone concordato*),⁷² but the country is still one of the three European countries where the difference in home ownership between young people and the general population is the largest (Greece, Germany, Italy) (Filandri and Bertolini, 2016).

Figure 8. Participatory and social inclusion dimension of housing policies



⁷¹ Law no. 244 of 2007, art. 2, paragraph 475.

⁷² Law Decree No.133 of 2014, art. 21.

Poland has a somewhat similar program to Italy as its Housing for the Young (*Mieszkanie dla Młodych*) is a co-financing mechanism which targets first-time home-buyers under the age of 35. The Swedish system focuses more on means-tested housing allowances (*bostadsbidrag*) and people under the age of 29 are entitled to some allowance to finance their housing expenditures – and being a young parent increases this entitlement.⁷³

In contrast to these special positive treatments, there are only some *ad hoc* initiatives in Greece; young people under the age of 25 do not have any special housing benefits in Germany and Switzerland; the UK has removed housing benefit entitlement from young people aged 18 to 21 just recently;⁷⁴ and in Spain the State Plan of Housing 2018-2021 that is aimed at young people under aged 35 has not yet been adopted. The Spanish government has a small aid program for young people via The Basic Emancipation Income (*Renta Básica de Emancipación*), but this is limited for those aged between 22 and 30.⁷⁵

The housing policies in all examined countries show some special treatment of vulnerable groups, mainly people with low income. Even here, the French system with various benefits for marginalized communities⁷⁶ is comparatively more inclusive than the policies of any other country. The Swedish system is somewhat close to the French – providing public housing opportunities for former criminals, disabled people and migrants, but the system is governed at the municipal level and therefore less coherent across the country. In Greece, where there are no such housing benefits, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity provides some accommodation opportunities to asylum seekers, victims of domestic violence, and single parent families, the homeless and women and children in danger.⁷⁷ The Italian⁷⁸ and Polish systems provide some subsidized housing (apartments) for those with a very low income, but this is mainly administered by local level and therefore creates territorial inequalities. The housing policies in Germany, Switzerland and the UK include very little special treatment of vulnerable groups, and in the UK the main policies address those aiming to buy a house, which is more focused on already better-off communicates.⁷⁹

⁷³ Strömberg och Lundell, *Speciell förvaltningsrätt*, 2014, Liber, Lund

⁷⁴ House of Commons Library (2017), *Housing cost element of Universal Credit: withdrawing entitlement from 18-21 year olds*. Available at: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06473>

⁷⁵ See https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2007-19250

⁷⁶ See <http://www.financement-location-social.location.gouv.fr/le-logement-des-communautes-marginalisees-a1308.html>

⁷⁷ European Union & Council of Europe. (2012). Country Sheet on Youth Policy in Greece. Retrieved from http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Greece_2012_Youth_Policy_Briefing.pdf p. 26.

⁷⁸ LIVEWHAT Deliverable 2.3 p. 220.

⁷⁹ HM Government (2017), *Help to Buy*. Available at: <https://www.helptobuy.gov.uk>

In sum, Figure 8 summarizes the extent to which the examined housing policies include the special treatment of young people and vulnerable groups. Policies in France address the social inclusion of vulnerable groups and provide special treatment for young people to a much larger extent than Germany, Spain and the UK. It should also be noted that housing policies might not be the most important factor for homeownership, as (parents') social class and employment aspirations affect the home ownership of young people (Filandri and Bertolini, 2016).

3.4. Transport policies

While housing policies would provide young people with opportunities for living in independent households, transport related policies (ie. lower fares, special access) address the mobility of young and vulnerable people. Transportation-related policies are often regulated at the local or regional level and therefore the present analysis is not comprehensive, but one could note some general trends. Using public transportation (trains, buses) is often subsidised for young people, but there is sometimes difference between those who study and those who do not. The difference is important as being a student at a university does not imply that you are young (i.e. under 26), even if that often is the case. Hence, the subsidies made for students might be in place to reduce the income-related inequalities of everyone in education, not particularly young people.

Still, in France the '12-25 years old' membership card allows all young people to benefit from a reduced price of 25 to 60 per cent, depending on the trains and whether they travel in second or first class. The Spanish system is even more inclusive, since everyone under 30 is entitled to lower fares in public transportation, but it this across the regions. Greek, Italian, Swedish, Swiss and UK systems resemble the French one, although there are some differences when travelling by bus or train. In Germany and Poland, on the other hand, lower fares are mainly entitled to children (under 18) and those young people who study (sometimes students should be under the age of 26). Even those who have dropped out from obligatory education before the age of 18 are excluded from discounts in Poland.

Like young people, many vulnerable groups (especially people with disabilities) are entitled to a special lower fare or even free public transport in several of the examined countries (France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the UK). In other countries, the initiatives are of a regional character (e.g. in Germany, Italy and Switzerland), and therefore it is not possible to provide a coherent picture of how vulnerable groups are treated in respect of the

transport policies. Everywhere, the accessibility of public transportation for people with disabilities has been reported as increasing, but there is far from full access.

4. CULTURAL ACTIVISM

We have also investigated to what extent culture-related policies in the nine examined countries provide special treatment for young people and vulnerable groups in respect of three areas: subsidies for cultural activities, cultural education, and access to libraries. The last dimension – libraries – is very much regulated at the local level and in every country. Only Greece and the UK have noted a significant decline in the budget for public libraries, due to the recent economic crisis.

Countries can be divided into two groups here – those with national level special treatment of young people, and others with more regional level initiatives. France represents the first group, with its free museums for individuals younger than 26 years (applies to all young Europeans) and an experimental initiative of a free one-year subscription to a daily newspaper for all 18-year-olds. Cultural education has been considered a priority for the government, although there is also increased interest in cultural education after the terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016, considering it to be a way of creating a bond of solidarity between young people.⁸⁰

Similarly, in Italy all museums, monuments, public galleries and state archaeological sites are free for all EU citizens under 18, while young people aged 18-25 are entitled to reduced ticket prices (50%), and The Ministry of Education has established the teaching of musical instruments as part of the overall individual training project in secondary school. As an additional experimental measure, the Renzi government allocated a 500 Euros bonus for all young people (resident in Italy or with a valid residency permit) at the age of 18 in 2016 and 2017 to be spent on cultural initiatives.⁸¹ Poland also has a national policy for offering reduced prices for cultural activities, funded by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, but here eligibility is restricted to people with disabilities, students (until they reach 26) and their teachers. Cultural education is state subsidized, but implemented by civil society organizations and often not free of charge.

In Sweden, the majority of museums are free for everyone regardless of age, and therefore there is no special treatment; however, private museums and other cultural facilities have

⁸⁰ See <http://www.education.arts.culture.fr/index.php?id=2>

⁸¹ Law no. 208/2015.

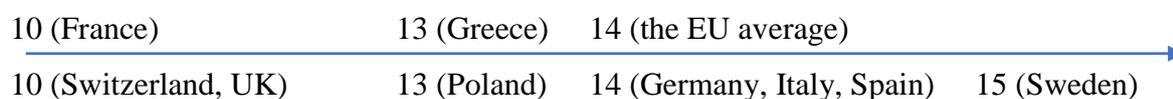
diverse discounts depending on municipal subsidy. Regional diversity is also present in cultural education, which is subsidized by the municipalities but partly paid for by the participants. The policies in the UK are similar to those in Sweden in respect of museums and cultural education, while the National Theatre has a discount for everyone under 25.⁸²

The German system, due to its federal character, is based on regional policies, but almost every theatre, swimming pool, cinema, museum and so on offers students and children (under 18-years-old) reduced rates. Music schools, however, are not public and could be costly for attendees. In Spain, initiatives also vary across regions, but it is also important to note that the national budget for culture has faced significant cuts since the economic crisis. The relatively least generous system is in Switzerland, where there is no national policy and the government is planning to start one with free museum access to young people from 2018. Still, thanks to the Swiss national program ‘Young People and Music’ pupils learn how to play an instrument at school.

5. ILLEGAL (CRIMINAL) ACTIVISM

In addition to political, social and cultural activism, young people’s lives are also affected by the judicial regulations of the country and especially by legislation that defines the age of criminal responsibility. Usually, young people are treated somewhat differently than adults in respect of criminal punishments and there are also some variations across the nine countries studied (see Figure 9). For example, France has no official minimum age of criminal responsibility, even though in practice a child under 10 is considered to not have the necessary discernment to be responsible for his or her acts.

Figure 9. Minimum age of criminal responsibility



Only Sweden has the minimum age over the European average, although Germany, Italy and Spain have exactly the same age, 14 years old. The details about the treatment of young people in custody and their imprisonment varies across countries and on the basis of the crime committed, but it is also noteworthy that there is no special treatment for vulnerable groups.

⁸² National Theatre [n.d]. *Entry Pass*. Available at: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/entry-pass>

The only difference is in terms of prison facilities (accessible for those with physical disabilities) and educational programs such as language courses.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of policies which influence the political, societal, and cultural activism of young people allows us to propose some specific conclusions regarding the extent to which respective policies provide special treatment for young people and vulnerable groups. The focus has been on contemporary policies, but we have also accounted for some recent changes, especially those in relation to the recent economic crisis. Without any normative judgements, it is assumed that policies which include some special treatment of young people also promote youth participation (online and offline) and their social inclusion. The chosen policies cover some more pro-active welfare state strategies implemented in certain countries, as well as educational and cultural policies. The analysis provides contextual background information on the institutional treatment of issues of inequality and social exclusion relating to young people from diverse backgrounds and how these affect young people's ways of doing politics.

When looking at access to policy-making, then the structural differences between countries – federal Germany, Spain, Switzerland and also the UK versus more unitary France, Greece, Italy, Poland and Sweden – provide all citizens, including young people, with diverse opportunities for political activism. Furthermore, the direct democracy oriented political system in Switzerland also provides more opportunities for political activism than unitary representative democracies like Sweden or Poland. However, in respect of the differences of political opportunities of young people in comparison to other age group, our investigation has not shown very large differences across the nine countries. In respect of electoral participation, the voting age bases the major differences since it is 17-years-old in Greece and 25-years-old for Senate elections in Italy. It is possible to suggest that if authorities would like to increase the participation of young people, an equal voting age and the right to stand for election regardless of the type of election would be important to achieve. The opportunities for non-electoral offline political participation, which is often seen as the more frequent way for participating in politics by the younger generation, the rigid restrictions to

protest participation and decreased focus on civic education (as present in contemporary Spain) are certainly not promoting the political activism of young people.

Online participation is certainly related to the issue of digital divide between countries and across the age groups, but the majority of state authorities in studied countries provide opportunities for participating in politics using the internet. The one exception is e-voting, which is not used in any of the countries. From the perspective of inclusion of vulnerable groups, electoral rules which does not allow voting for those with mental disabilities and prisoners rather exaggerate than reduce the existing inequalities of political participation.

Looking further to other fields of participation – labour market activism – the results of our investigation are relatively similar to prior research which describes specific youth unemployment regimes (Cinally and Giugni, 2013). Our focus was the special treatment of young people in comparison to other age groups and, in general, the labour policies of the examined countries do not include very many initiatives which improve the situation of young people in the labour market or the situation of young unemployed. The major obstacles were found in the UK and Spain, where the recent economic crisis has led to the decrease in the minimum wage of young people and unemployment benefits. In the UK, these policies also include relatively few initiatives which directly address vulnerable groups and would therefore not reduce the existing inequalities in society. Obviously, by looking for the specific legislations which focus on ‘vulnerable groups’, we have made the assumption that countries have such policies, but as a result of the investigation it is also clear that some countries (e.g. France) do not bring forward specific groups in their legislation and address the issue of social inclusion in a more universal way. This might limit somewhat our results.

The analysis of labour market policies indicates, similarly to prior studies, that contemporary welfare states have created more beneficial welfare conditions for cohorts born between 1945 and 1955 (Chauvel and Schröder, 2014). However, these conditions also depend on the type of welfare regime, since conservative welfare regimes (France, Italy, Spain) tend to be the most cohort-unequal regimes, while social-democratic regimes (Sweden) appear as more cohort-equitable (ibid.).⁸³ These judgements are based on the analysis of a broader set of

⁸³ Some similar trends are also described by the Intergenerational Justice Index (IJI) developed by Pieter Vanhuysse (see Vanhuysse 2014), which measures a macro-level notion of justice on basis of government activities via four dimensions: the ecological footprint created by all generations alive today; early-life starting conditions (child poverty); the fiscal burdens on the shoulders of currently young generations (public debt), and pro-elderly bias in social spending. All nine countries analysed in this project have also a normalized IJI score from 2013 and this range from the least equitable to the most equitable as follows: Italy, Greece, France, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, UK, and Sweden.

policies than has been focus of this project, but in respect of policies addressing political and social activism, we have noted that Spain does not provide opportunities to young people in general, and the vulnerable young people in particular, to a similar extent as the other eight countries.

Our analysis has also demonstrated some patterns the prior studies have been neglecting. For example, the lack of special treatment of young people and vulnerable groups in German housing policies is in a significant contrast to special treatment provided by French housing policies. While we have not aimed to examine the effectiveness of the existing policies, the measures from Eurostat show that in 2015 entire 43 % of young adults of age 18-34 lived with their parents in Germany, while the respective percentage in France was 35.⁸⁴

Finally, in terms of cultural policies, the differences between countries are smaller than in respect of political and social activism, and the majority of the countries have initiatives which provide special fares and discounts for young people. Thus, in terms of cultural activism, young people are encouraged to participate and there are also, although to lower extent, many initiatives for reducing inequalities of such participation.

The results of this macro-level analysis will be useful for further investigation of young people's participation and social inclusion, as it provides an important picture of the opportunities for participation of young people in general, as well as young people from vulnerable groups.

⁸⁴ See <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

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APPENDIX

Table 1A. The average scores used for making the figures in the report (based on coding by country teams, described in Deliverable 1.2)

Indicator	Sweden		France		Germany		Greece		Italy		Poland		Spain		Switzerland		UK	
	PP	I	PP	I	PP	I	PP	I	PP	I	PP	I	PP	I	PP	I	PP	I
Electoral Participation	0.31	0.75	0.25	-0.25	0.50	0.50	0.56	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.19	-0.25	0.44	0.00	0.34	0.00
Protest participation (off-line)	-0.50	0.00	-0.50	-0.50	-0.25	0.00	-0.25	0.00	-0.75	0.00	-0.25	0.00	-1.00	0.00	-0.75	0.00	-0.25	-0.50
Civic participation	0.42	1.00	0.33	0.50	0.42	0.25	0.08	0.25	0.42	0.00	-0.08	0.50	0.08	0.50	0.25	0.50	-0.17	0.00
ICT Use	1.00	0.50	0.63	0.75	0.88	0.25	0.63	0.25	0.50	0.00	0.88	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.63	0.50	0.75	0.00
Education and school governance	0.83	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	-0.25	0.83	1.00	0.58	0.50	1.00	0.50	0.17	-0.25	0.17	0.75	0.50	0.25
Civic education	0.25	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.50	0.75	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	-1.00	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.50
Youth agency	0.50	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.88	0.25	0.13	0.25	0.63	0.50	0.38	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	-0.25	0.00
Labour market policies	0.42	1.00	-0.17	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.42	0.25	0.17	0.50	0.08	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.33	0.25	0.08	0.00
Unemployment policies	0.00	0.50	0.25	0.50	-0.25	0.75	-0.50	0.25	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.25	-0.75	0.00	0.25	0.00	-1.00	-0.75
Housing policies	0.50	0.50	1.00	1.00	0.00	-0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.25	-0.25	0.00	0.00	0.25	-0.25	-0.75
Transport policies	0.75	1.00	0.75	0.75	0.25	0.00	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.25	0.50	1.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Family policies	0.58	1.00	0.67	0.00	0.42	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.33	-0.25	0.58	0.50	0.50	0.00
Health policies	0.69	1.00	0.63	0.00	0.31	1.00	0.25	0.25	0.69	0.75	0.50	0.25	0.56	0.00	0.56	0.00	0.25	0.50
Culture initiatives	0.58	1.00	0.88	0.50	-0.08	0.00	0.33	0.75	0.42	0.50	0.38	0.00	0.67	0.50	0.33	0.00	0.42	0.50
Religious initiatives	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	-1.00	0.00	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Penitentiary regulations	0.75	0.25	-0.25	0.00	0.50	0.00	-0.25	0.00	0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	0.00	0.00	-0.75	-0.50	-0.75	0.00

Table A2. Youth related statistics and inequality index (Gini)

	Youth Development Index 2016 ⁸⁵	Youth unemployment, % 2016 ⁸⁶	NEET, 15-29 (OECD, 2015-2017)* ⁸⁷	Turnout for 18-25 / turnout for 25-50 (ESS) ⁸⁸	% of MPs under 30 ⁸⁹	Gini coefficient ⁹⁰
France	0.795	24.6	17.20	0.65	0.2	29.2
Germany	0.894	7.0	8.57	0.83	2.5	30.1
Greece	0.662	47.4	26.15	0.85	1.0	34.2
Italy	0.726	37.8	27.38	0.91	6.6	32.4
Poland	0.681	17.6	15.65	0.97	2.0	30.6
Spain	0.776	44.5	22.82	0.98	0.9	34.6
Switzerland	0.837	18.8	9.08	0.87	1.5	29.6
Sweden	0.810	8.4	8.32	0.92	12.3	25.2
UK	0.837	13.0	13.74	0.47	3.1	32.4

* Youth not in employment, education nor training (NEET) as % of people in same age group.

⁸⁵ <http://cmydiproduct.uksouth.cloudapp.azure.com/sites/default/files/2016-10/2016%20Global%20Youth%20Development%20Index%20and%20Report.pdf> (accessed 07.06.2017)

⁸⁶ OECD Index, 2016, <https://data.oecd.org/unemp/youth-unemployment-rate.htm#indicator-chart>

⁸⁷ OECD (2017), Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) (indicator). doi: 10.1787/72d1033a-en (Accessed on 07 June 2017)

⁸⁸ https://www.oecd.org/els/family/CO_4_2_Participation_first_time_voters.pdf (Accessed on 07 June 2017)

⁸⁹ <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/youthrep-e.pdf>

⁹⁰ EUROSTAT Index, 2015, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tessi190&plugin=1>