

## *Chapter 1*

### **The labour market situation of Lithuanian youth**

*This chapter provides an overview of youth in the labour market in Lithuania and highlights some of the key challenges faced by policy makers in the country. Lithuanian youth were hit hard by the global economic and financial crisis, with the unemployment rate increasing sharply and peaking to over 35% in 2010. Despite signs of progress, the unemployment rate continues to be higher than it was at the beginning of the crisis. One key concern relates to the continued underrepresentation of the youth in the Lithuanian labour market, manifested by both low employment rates and high inactivity rates. Even when young Lithuanians are in employment, they are frequently in poor quality jobs. Indeed, they often hold low-paid jobs, they face a high risk of unemployment and have lower income protection in case of job loss. Furthermore, the job of a young worker in Lithuania typically offers few possibilities for career development.*

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## Introduction

Although labour market outcomes for Lithuanian youth (aged 15-24) have recovered quickly from the economic crisis, today they remain poor from an international comparative perspective. Low youth employment rates combined with high inactivity rates and a rising proportion of young NEETs in the population suggest that action should be taken to bring youth back to the labour market. Even where youth are in employment, the quality of their job is often poor. Wages are generally low, earning opportunities scarce, and income inequalities high. Informality is widespread: many employed youth are estimated to work informally, with little employment security or protection. Even those working under a formal contract, often receive envelope payments. Improving employment outcomes for youth therefore should be a priority for the Lithuanian Government. This chapter provides an overview of youth in the labour market in Lithuania, covering basic demographic and labour market indicators, but also measures of the quality of jobs. It takes an international comparative perspective, with OECD and European Union countries used as comparators.

The key findings of this chapter are summarised below:

### *Job quantity*

- While relatively high, the share of youth in the working age population is expected to decline significantly in the upcoming years.
- Labour market outcomes for youth in Lithuania are recovering from the crisis at a faster pace than across OECD and European Union countries.
- In 2014, youth have low employment rates (27.6%), high inactivity rates (65.8%) and unemployment rates (19.3%).
- Youth labour market outcomes improve with educational attainment, and vary significantly across Counties.
- A rising proportion of the youth (aged 15-29) is NEET: 12.9% in 2014, up from 10.7% in 2005.

### *Job quality*

- Lithuanian young workers fare worse than the OECD average on earnings quality and job insecurity, while they fare similarly to the OECD on job strain indicators.
- Informality is pervasive among youth, with many youth working in the informal economy or receiving envelope payments.

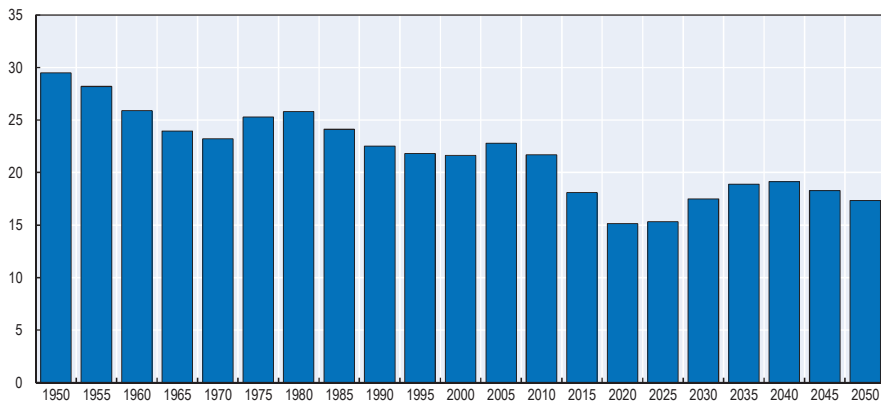
- The incidence of low pay is common: around one fifth of youth earn at the minimum wage or below, and around 61% earn at the median wage or below. This is similar to what is observed among adult workers.
- Lithuanian youth are usually employed under permanent and full-time contracts (respectively 91.5% and 86.4% of youth in dependent employment).
- Skills mismatches are significant: over 30% of young people are either under- or over-qualified for their jobs.

## Youth make up a large, but rapidly falling share of the working age population

Today over one fifth in Lithuania's working age population (ages 15-64) is young (ages 15-24). Although this is relatively high in comparison with the OECD countries (just after Mexico, Turkey, Chile, Israel and Iceland), and the highest in the Baltic countries, the share of youth in the working age population is decreasing and is expected to continue to decline at a rapid pace in the years to come, reaching a historical low in 2020 (around 15%), before recovering somewhat afterwards (Figure 1.1). All in all, at 17.4% by 2050, it will be relatively low by OECD standards (where it should be 18.5%), and the lowest in the Baltic countries (Figure 1.2).

**Figure 1.1. Share of youth in the working age population, Lithuania, 1950-2050<sup>a</sup>**

Population aged 15-24 as a percentage of population aged 15-64



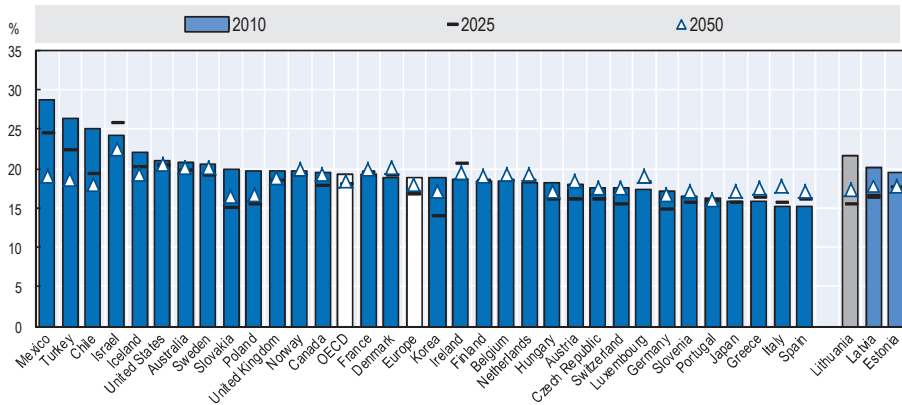
a) Medium-fertility assumption: total fertility is assumed to converge eventually toward a level of 1.85 children per woman.

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013), *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*.

The ageing process that is behind these developments has been ongoing for decades, driven by two primary contributing forces: declines in fertility, themselves further strengthened by the significant transformations in family life undergone by the country since the 1990s; and improvements in longevity, resulting from advances in health. Adding to these sources of pressure, the annual number of young people emigrating from Lithuania has increased steadily during the 2000s, reaching about 10 000 in 2013 – corresponding to about one quarter of total emigration outflows for the year.

**Figure 1.2. Share of youth in the working age population, Lithuania, OECD and Baltic countries, 2010-50<sup>a</sup>**

Population aged 15-24 as a percentage of population aged 15-64

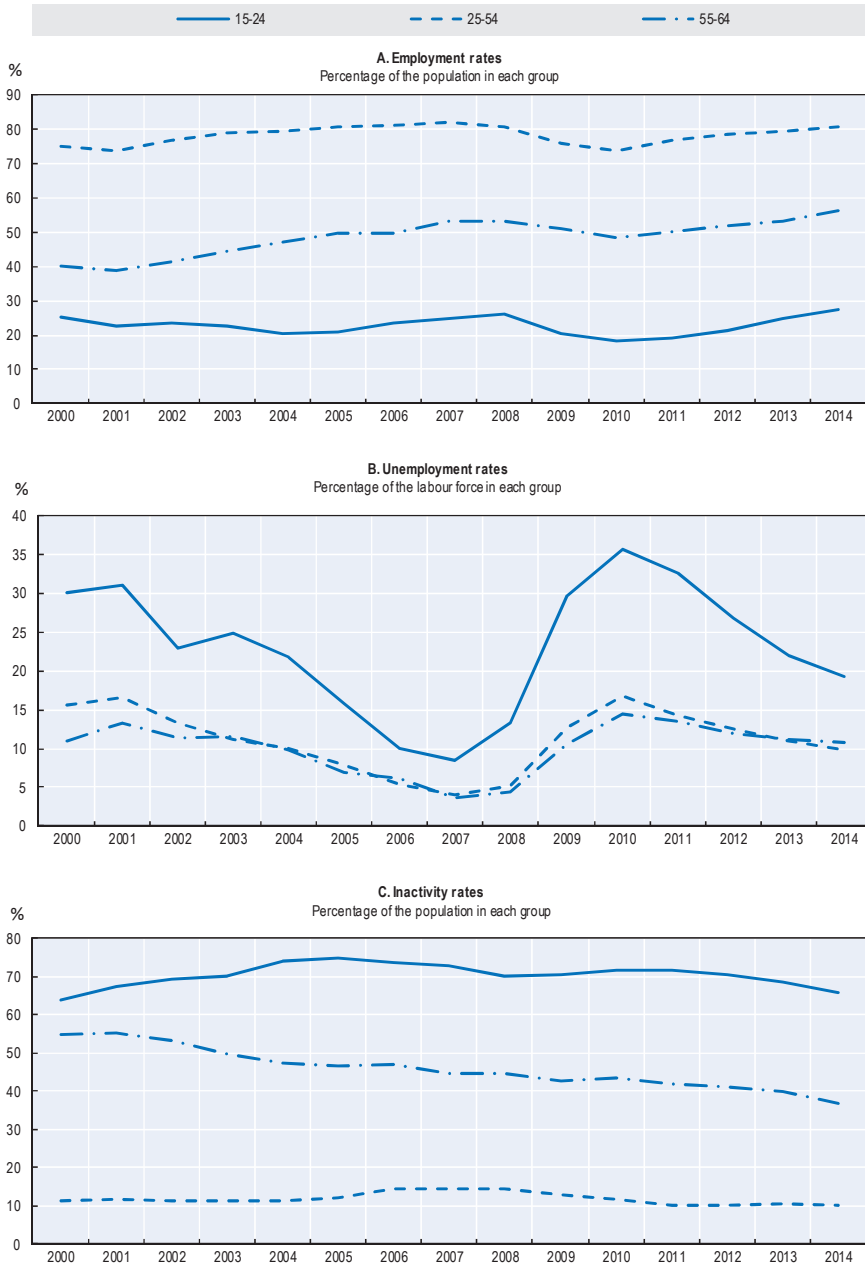


a) Medium-fertility assumption: total fertility is assumed to converge eventually toward a level of 1.85 children per woman.

Source: OECD calculations based on United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013), *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*.

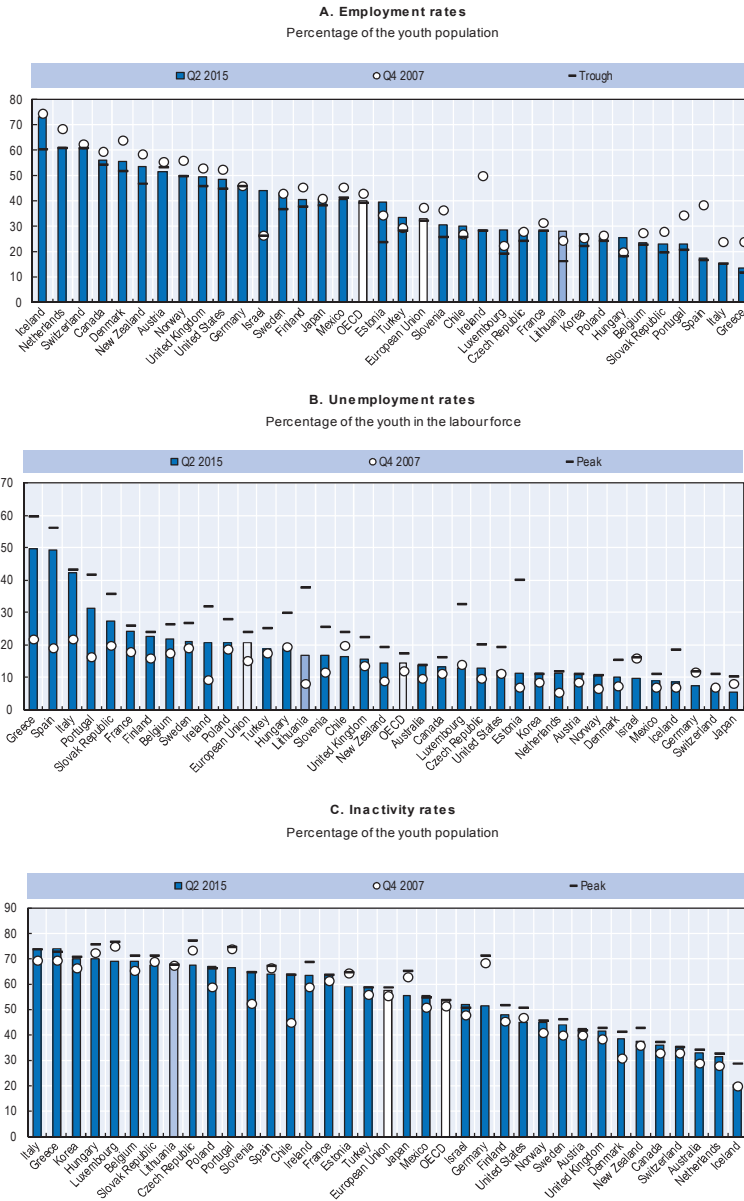
## The situation of Lithuanian youth in the labour market

Lithuanian youth were hit hard by the global economic and financial crisis, with the unemployment rate increasing sharply and peaking to over 35% in 2010 (Figures 1.3 and 1.4). Although youth unemployment declined rapidly thereafter, at 16.7% (in Q2 2015) – which compares with an OECD average of 14.2% and an EU average of 20.7% – it remains higher than where it was at the beginning of the crisis (around 10%). Although unemployment rates of prime age and older workers also increased in the wake of the crisis, the overall impact was smaller.

**Figure 1.3. Labour force indicators by age group, Lithuania, 2000-14**

Source: Statistics Lithuania.

**Figure 1.4. Labour force status of youth (15-24), Lithuania and OECD countries, Q4 2007-Q2 2015**



Note: Q4 2007 data refers to Q2 2008 for Switzerland.

Source: OECD Labour Force Statistics Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/> and Statistics Lithuania.

One key concern relates to the underrepresentation of the youth in the Lithuanian labour market. In the second quarter of 2015, only 27.9% of young Lithuanians were employed, compared to 40% across the OECD and 32.9% across the European Union (Figure 1.4). Moreover, Lithuanian youth face relatively high inactivity rates (67.2%, versus 53.4% across the OECD and 57.2% across the European Union).

### **Some youth fare worse than others**

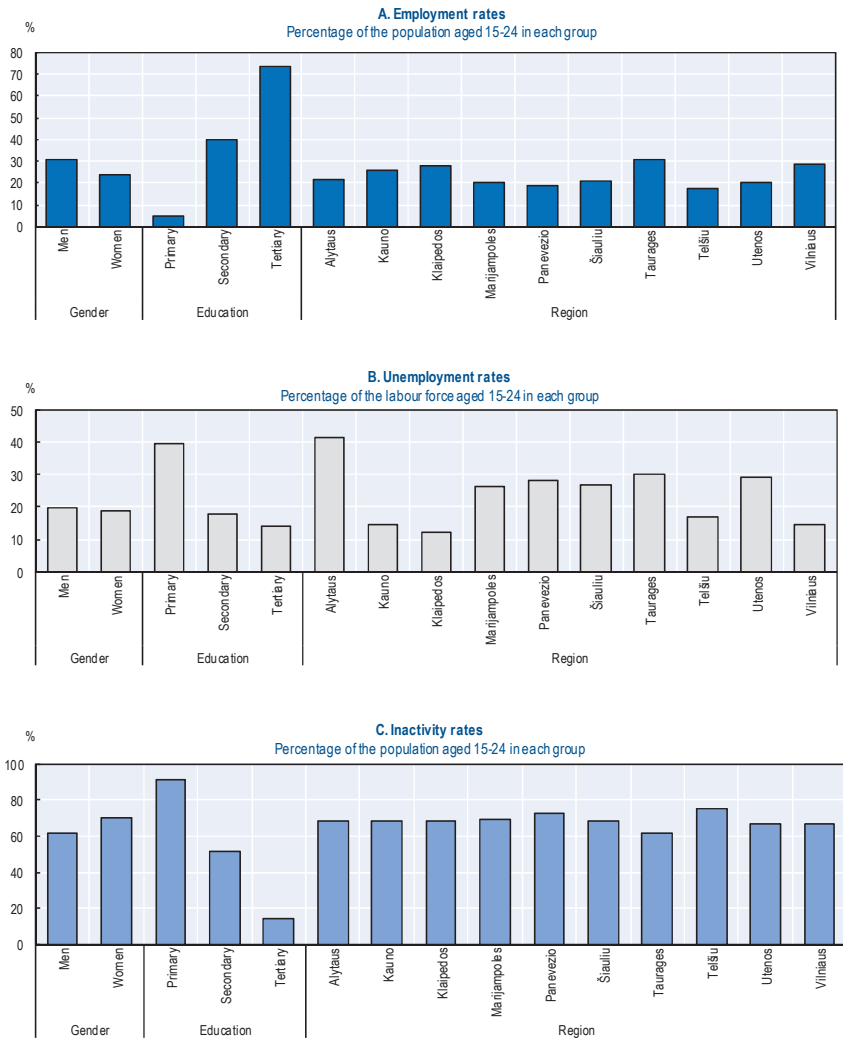
Labour market outcomes differ significantly across groups of Lithuanian youth (Figure 1.5). Similar to the OECD countries, they improve with educational attainment. In particular, youth with primary education face a much higher risk of unemployment or inactivity than their peers with higher educational attainments. Employment rates are also lower among youth with lower levels of education. Differences in labour market outcomes for youth are also substantial across Counties: unemployment rates are lowest in Klaipėda (12.3%) and highest in Alytaus (41.6%); employment rates are lowest in Telšiai (17.8%) and highest in Tauragė (30.7%); and inactivity rates are lowest in Tauragė (61.4%) and highest in Telšiai (75.5%). Furthermore, young women have lower employment rates (24.1% versus 31%), resulting primarily from higher inactivity rates (70.4% versus 61.4%), while their unemployment rates are somewhat lower (18.7% versus 19.6%).

### **A rising proportion of youth is neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET)**

A more comprehensive picture is provided by the NEET rate which shows the proportion of all youth who are neither in Employment, Education or Training. This picks up both unemployed and inactive youth who are not enrolled in education or training. Young NEETs are particular at risk of having their future careers permanently “scarred” by prolonged out-of-work spells, reflecting the lack of opportunities to acquire key social-skills, which are generally better learnt on the job than in classrooms, and to use and improve their job competencies. The young NEETs are often very-low skilled, come from low-income households or are otherwise disadvantaged youth, including migrants or children of migrants.

Although in Lithuania the share of young NEETs is relatively low by OECD standards, it is increasing rapidly. In 2014, 12.9% of young people (aged 15-29) were NEET, up from 10.7% in 2005 (Figure 1.6). By comparison, over the past years the NEET share across the OECD has remained broadly stable (15.5% in 2013, up from 14.9% in 2005).

**Figure 1.5. Youth labour market outcomes by socio-demographic characteristics, Lithuania, 2014**



*Note:*

Primary education refers to “(pre)primary and lower secondary (ISCED 0-2)”; Secondary education refers to “upper and post-secondary (ISCED 3-4)”; Tertiary education refers to “high (ISCED 5-6)”.

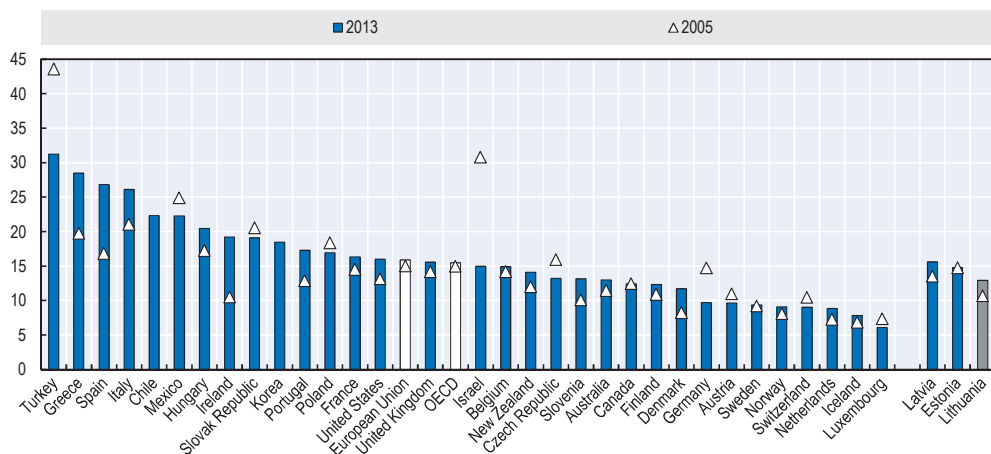
Inactivity and employment rates at the regional level refer to 2013.

*Source:* Statistics Lithuania; OECD calculations based the Lithuanian Labour Force Survey (2013) for regional employment and inactivity rates.



**Figure 1.6. NEET rates, Lithuania, OECD and Baltic countries, 2013**

Percentage of the population aged 15-29



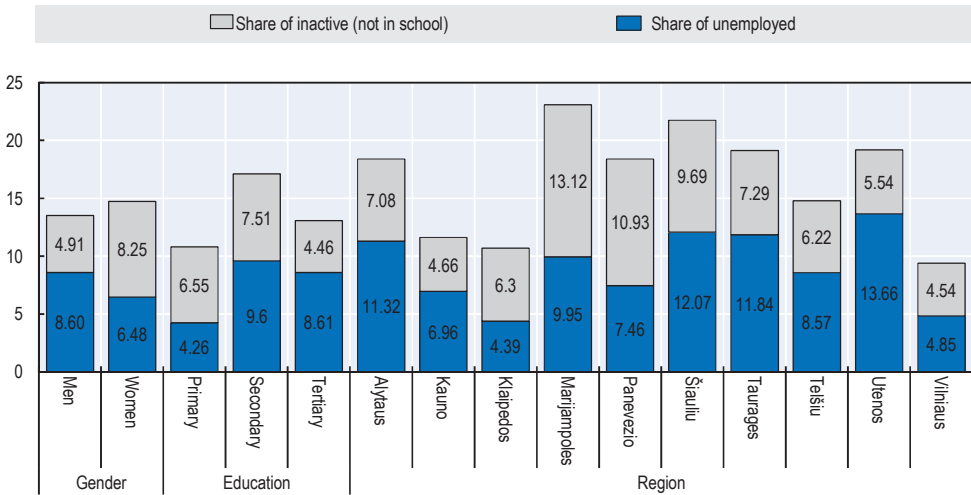
Note: 2013 data refers to 2011 for Chile, 2012 for Korea and 2014 for Lithuania.

Source: OECD Education and Skills Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>, and Eurostat.

Youth NEET rate mask important differences across groups. Youth with secondary education are significantly more likely to be NEETs than youth with tertiary education, partly reflecting the fact that the latter have greater opportunities to continue studying (Figure 1.7). In addition, youth with primary and secondary education are more exposed to the risk of becoming inactive. Geographical differences are substantial, alongside gender differences. With regards to the latter, more specifically, while young women are slightly more likely to be NEET than young men (14.7% versus 13.5%), they are almost twice more likely than men to be inactive and out of school.

**Figure 1.7. NEET rate by socio-demographic characteristics, Lithuania, 2013**

Percentage of the population aged 15-29 in each group



*Note:* Primary education refers to “(pre)primary and lower secondary (ISCED 0-2)”; Secondary education refers to “upper and post-secondary (ISCED 3-4)”; Tertiary education refers to “high (ISCED 5-6)”.

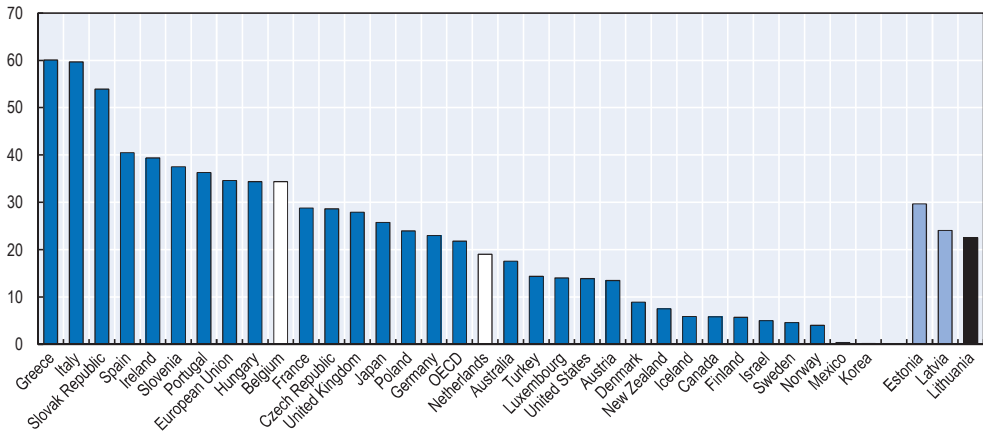
*Source:* OECD calculations based the Lithuanian Labour Force Survey (2013).

### **Around one in five unemployed youth have been unemployed for over a year**

Long-term unemployment (one year or more) affects around one in five unemployed youth in Lithuania (Figure 1.8). This is slightly lower than OECD countries on average (21.8%) and significantly lower than what is observed in the European Union (34.6%) as well as in the neighbouring Baltic countries (29.7% in Estonia and 24.1% in Latvia). These figures may partly reflect the fact that in Lithuania long-term unemployed people, including youth, are more likely than elsewhere to look for job opportunities outside the country and emigrate. Evidence shows that in 2013, 83% of people emigrating from Lithuania were unemployed for more than a year (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2014).

**Figure 1.8. Incidence of long-term unemployment, Lithuania, OECD and other selected countries, 2014**

Percentage of youth (15-24) unemployed for one year and over



1. For Korea data refers to 2013.

Source: OECD Labour Force Statistics Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>.

## The quality of jobs for youth in Lithuania is poor

Labour market performance depends not only on the number, but also on the type of jobs that are created. Job quality is more difficult to measure, however, and encompasses a number of dimensions. The OECD Job Quality Framework (OECD, 2014) measures job quality along three key dimensions: earnings quality (the level and distribution of earnings); labour market security; and the quality of the work environment (see Box 1.1 for further details on the job quality framework).

Figure 1.9 presents the three main components of the job quality framework as outlined in Box 1.1. Lithuanian young workers fare much worse than the OECD average on the earnings quality and job insecurity indicators, while they fare similarly to the OECD on the job strain indicator. In particular, job quality of young Lithuanian workers is characterised by relatively low earnings and high income inequality; higher unemployment risk combined with low unemployment insurance; as well as insufficient resources at the workplace. At the same time physical conditions in the work place are better than the OECD average.

### Box 1.1. The OECD Job Quality Framework

Job quality refers to multiple aspects of employment that contribute to the well-being of workers and, hence, represents an inherently multi-dimensional construct. The chapter “How good is your job? Measuring and assessing job quality” of the *2014 OECD Employment Outlook* (OECD, 2014) focuses on three key dimensions of job quality that have been shown to be particularly relevant for workers’ well-being in the existing literature on economics, sociology and occupational health. These are earnings quality, labour market security, and the quality of the working environment.

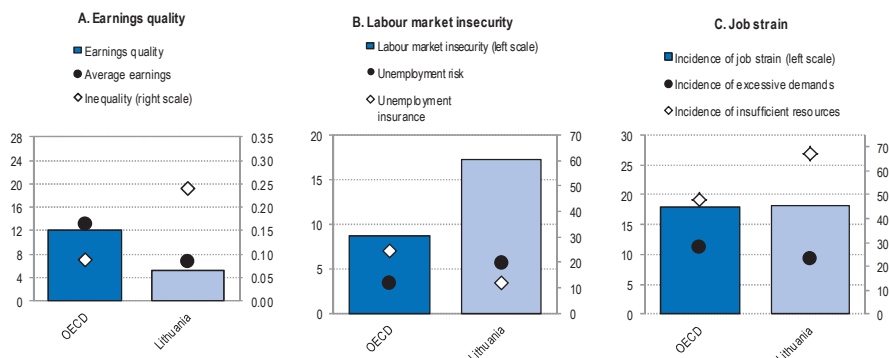
*Earnings quality* is characterised in terms of the level of earnings and its distribution. The need to take into account both aspects reflects their empirical importance for well-being. First, levels of earnings and subjective well-being, as measured by life satisfaction, are positively correlated across countries as well as between persons within countries. Second, for a given level of average earnings, overall well-being tends to be higher the more equal is its distribution. This reflects the evidence pointing to life satisfaction rising at a decreasing rate as earnings rise and that people tend to display an intrinsic dislike of high inequality in society (inequality aversion).

*Labour market security* is defined in terms of unemployment risk and unemployment insurance. Unemployment risk encompasses both the probability of becoming unemployed and the average expected duration of unemployment spells. As such, it gives an indication of the expected amount of time an average person is likely to spend in unemployment in a given year. Insurance against the risk of unemployment is captured in terms of both unemployment benefit coverage and benefit generosity. New evidence suggests that both unemployment risk and insurance are important determinants of life satisfaction among the employed. Both the probability of becoming unemployed and the average expected duration of unemployment spells matter for life satisfaction, although the latter appears to dominate. Thus, workers are not just concerned about becoming unemployed but also, and possibly even more so, about not being able to find a new job when unemployed. Insurance mitigates the adverse effect of the risk of unemployment on life satisfaction of the employed by alleviating concerns about not being able to find a job once unemployed.

*The quality of the working environment* relates to the nature and intensity of work performed the organisation of work and the working atmosphere. The quality of the working environment is an important driver of individual well-being and depends crucially on whether workers have autonomy in their job, are given learning opportunities and well-defined work objectives, and also receive constructive feedback. Good relationships with colleagues are also important. When jobs and workplaces combine these factors, people are more apt to manage work pressure and difficult tasks, and they also tend to be healthier, more satisfied with their job and more productive.

Source: OECD (2014), *OECD Employment Outlook 2014*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/empl\\_outlook-2014-en](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/empl_outlook-2014-en).

**Figure 1.9. Job quality outcomes for youth (15-29), Lithuania and OECD countries, 2010**



*Note:* Country coverage: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and United Kingdom (24 countries, 23 countries excluding Iceland in Panel C).

*Source:* European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC); Eurofound (2012), Fifth European Working Conditions Survey, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

The overall degree of earnings quality for youth is lower in Lithuania than across the OECD on average (Figure 1.9, Panel A). In Lithuania youth on average are paid less than across the OECD countries: they receive a gross hourly wage equal to USD PPP 6.67 in Lithuania, compared to USD PPP 13.1 across the OECD. Lithuanian youth also face higher earnings inequality.

Lithuanian youth face a higher risk of unemployment than their OECD counterpart and have lower income protection in case of unemployment (Figure 1.9, Panel B). In particular, a young Lithuanian worker faces almost double unemployment risk in comparison to the OECD average. This may be partially explained by the relatively high spike in youth unemployment rate in Lithuania in the aftermath of the crisis (Figure 1.3, Panel B). In the event of unemployment, young workers are comparatively less insured. The data suggests that in the event of unemployment a young person in Lithuania may expect to recover only 11% of its gross earnings as opposed to 20% for the OECD.

The job of a young worker in Lithuania is relatively less demanding than their OECD counterpart but offers fewer possibilities for further career development in comparison to the OECD on average. In particular, fewer Lithuanian youth have jobs with excessive demands (23% versus 28% across the OECD). This suggests that young workers in Lithuania work less under time pressure or irregular working hours, their physical health is less

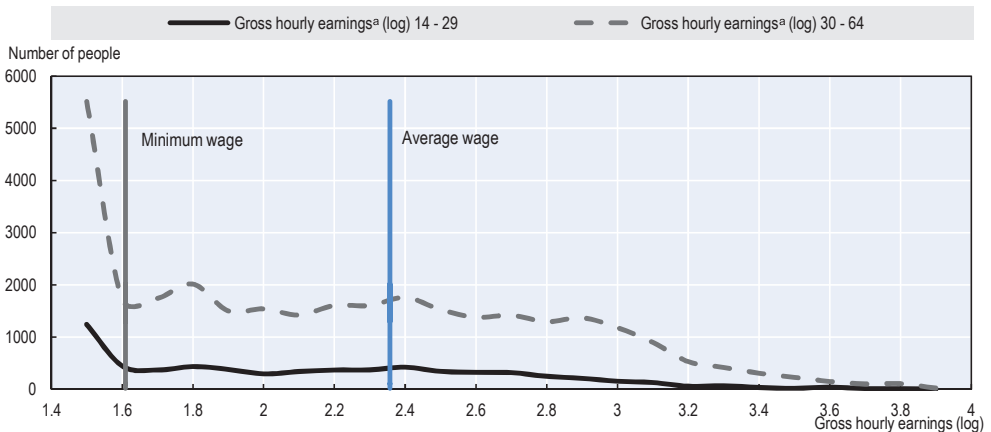
likely to be affected by their jobs and they are less often subject to work place intimidation. At the same time, around seven out of ten young workers in Lithuania report that they lack work autonomy and learning opportunities, and are unsatisfied with the management practices and work atmosphere in general. This compares to an OECD average of one in two.

Alongside the job quality framework discussed above, other indicators could be used to give an indication of the quality of jobs for young people in Lithuania. In the following paragraphs, levels and distributions of wages, temporary and part-time work, informality, as well as skills mismatches and education performance will be discussed.

### The incidence of low pay is common among youth

Consistent with the evidence discussed above, the incidence of low-pay is widespread amongst Lithuanian youth. Approximately one fifth (19.4%) of young workers earn minimum or below minimum wages and 61.4% earn less than the median wage (Figure 1.10). While the low paid nature of many of the jobs that youth are able to find is a concern, it is noteworthy that low pay is not specific to young workers, but is common among all age groups. Indeed, the distribution of earnings of workers aged 30-64 presented in Figure 1.10 closely resembles that of younger counterparts.

**Figure 1.10. Wage distribution by age categories, Lithuania, 2010**



*Note:* Minimum wage is for 2010 (LTL 800). Minimum hourly wage is calculated under the assumption of 160 hours worked per month.

*a)* Wage data have been trimmed at the 1st and 99th centiles to eliminate outliers and are presented in logarithmic form.

*Source:* OECD calculations based on the Structure of Earnings Survey (2010).

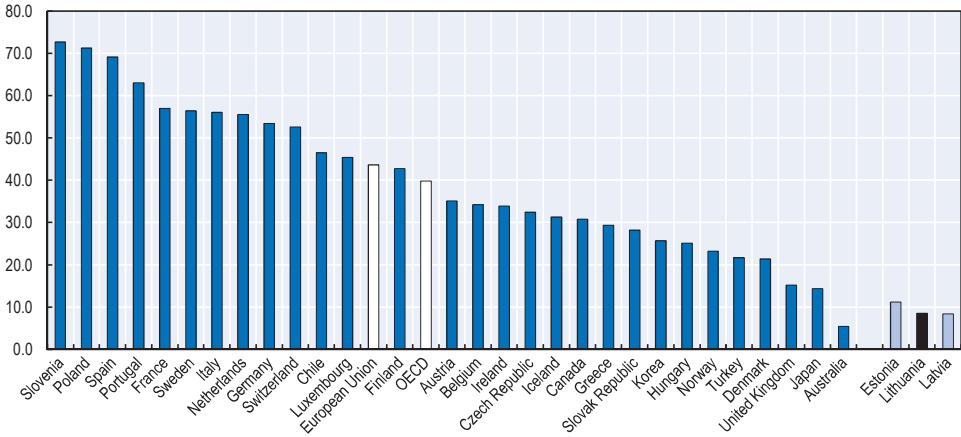
## **Lithuanian youth are usually employed under permanent and full-time contracts**

Temporary contracts are often thought to be a stepping stone to more stable employment for those youth who have limited skills and experience, although the experience of many OECD countries points to the fact that often youth are more likely to get locked into such jobs than prime age workers. As far as Lithuania is concerned, temporary contracts are very uncommon for all workers, including youth. Only 8.5% of Lithuanian youth who work with a contract have a temporary one, compared to an OECD average of 39.8%, and a European Union average of 43.6% (Figure 1.11). Across OECD countries, only Australia has a lower share of temporary employment than Lithuania (5.5%). One of the reasons why temporary contracts are unpopular in Lithuania is that the Labour Code restricts their use, while at the same time generous guarantees are ensured to employees. For instance, employers are by law prohibited to hire workers under temporary contracts for positions that are of a permanent nature (for further information, see the section on employment protection legislation in Chapter 2).

Not only Lithuanian workers, including youth, are unlikely to be hired under temporary contracts, they are also unlikely to work part-time. This point is particularly important to explain the poor integration of young women into the labour market. Far less young people are hired under part-time employment in Lithuania than in OECD and European countries: 13.6% of youth in dependent employment work part-time in Lithuania, compared to an average of 28.9% and 28.4% across the OECD and the European Union respectively (Figure 1.12).

**Figure 1.11. Share of temporary employment for youth, Lithuania, OECD and selected countries, 2014**

Percentage of youth (aged 15-24) in dependent employment

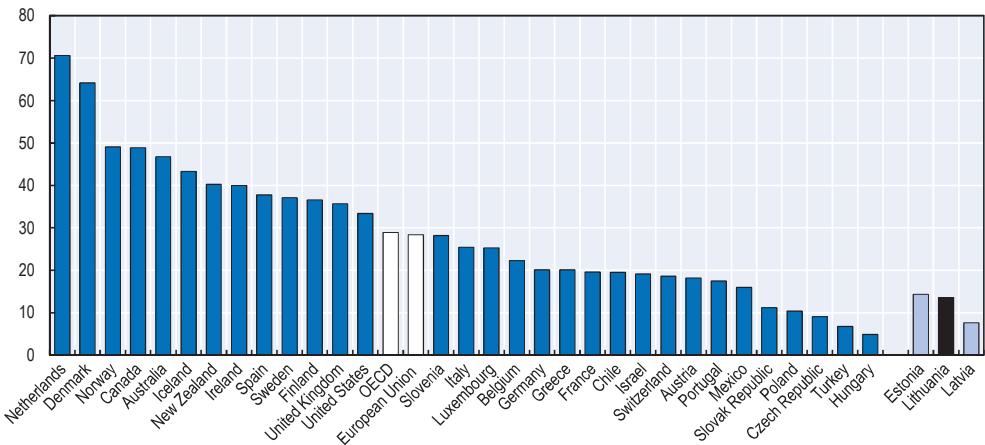


Note: Data refers to 2013 for Australia.

Source: OECD Labour Force Statistics Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>.

**Figure 1.12. Incidence of part-time employment for youth, Lithuania, OECD and selected countries, 2014**

Percentage of youth (aged 15-24) in dependent employment



Source: OECD Labour Force Statistics Database, <http://stats.oecd.org/>.



## Skills mismatches are an obstacle for the quality of employment

Skills mismatches arise when a worker's skills are not well matched with the job he/she performs, i.e. the worker either has skills to perform more demanding tasks than required (overskilled), or lacks the skills to perform well the required job tasks (underskilled). Measuring skills mismatch is not easy though, as it is difficult to find detailed information on the skills possessed by workers and those required by employers. Information is more easily accessible on qualifications mismatches, i.e. the discrepancy between the qualifications possessed by workers and those required by their jobs.

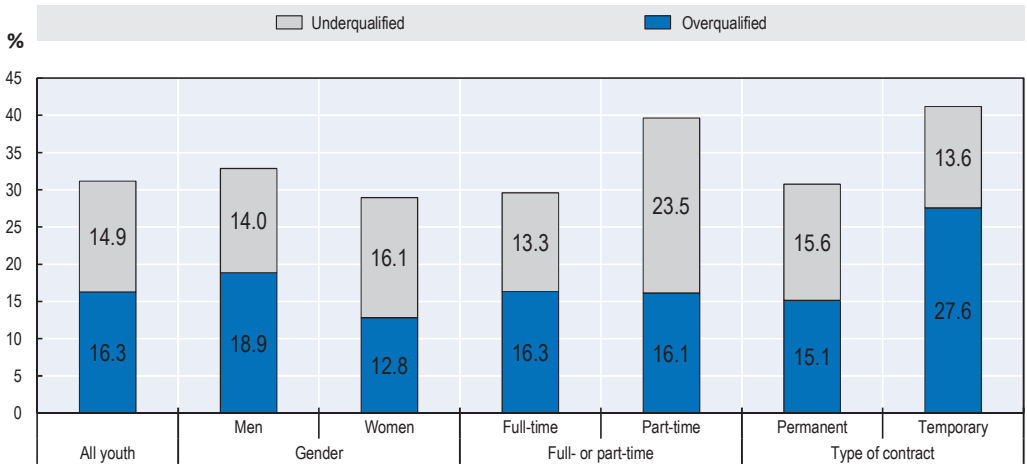
The analysis of the *EBRD-World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey 2013* suggests that a high proportion of firms in Lithuania cite an inadequately educated workforce as a significant obstacle to their operations. Furthermore, over 40% of businesses surveyed in the first half of 2015 for Lithuania's *Investor Confidence Index* pointed to an insufficient availability of qualified labour in the Lithuanian labour market (OECD, forthcoming).

The labour force survey 2013 provides an important source of information with respect to over- and under-qualification in Lithuania. OECD elaborations based on this survey show that skill mismatches affect over 30% of young people in Lithuania, with this percentage being fairly evenly split between over- and under-qualification. Young men, part-time young workers, and youth working under temporary contracts are the groups whose skills are particularly ill-suited to match the requirements of the jobs performed (Figure 1.13). For example, young people working under part-time contracts are more likely to be underqualified, while youth with a temporary contract are more likely to be overqualified for their jobs. However, skills mismatches among young workers on permanent contracts are also an issue. These results are corroborated by the results of ILO (2013), which show that in 2010, 13% of Lithuanian youth were under-educated, and 16.5% were over-educated for their jobs.

This context suggests that giving youth greater help and encouragement to acquire the skills that they need for successful labour market outcomes may be an issue for priority in Lithuania. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 survey shows that Lithuanian students perform systematically below the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science. In particular, over one in four (26%) Lithuanian 15-year-olds had a mathematics proficiency level below level 2 of the six PISA mathematics proficiency level (Figure 1.14), compared to 23% across the OECD on average, 10.5% in Estonia and 19.9% in Latvia.

**Figure 1.13. Over- and under-qualification, Lithuania, 2013**

Percentage of the employed youth (aged 15-24) in each group

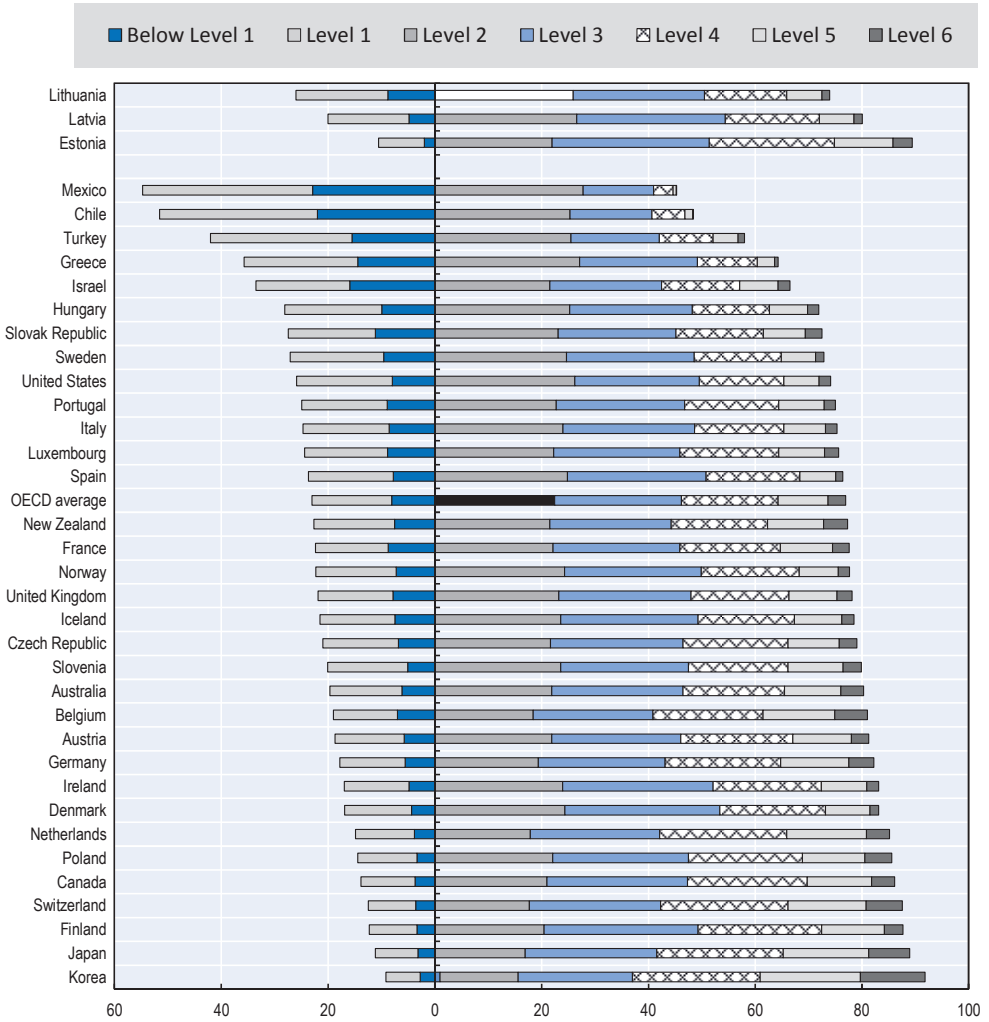


Note: Calculations are made based on the methodology used in Quintini, G. and S. Martin (2006), "Starting Well or Losing Their Way? The Position of Youth in the Labour Market in OECD Countries", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 39, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/351848125721>.

Source: OECD calculations based on the Lithuanian Labour Force Survey (2013).

**Figure 1.14. Proficiency in mathematics, Lithuania, OECD and Baltic countries, 2012**

Percentage of students at each level of mathematics proficiency



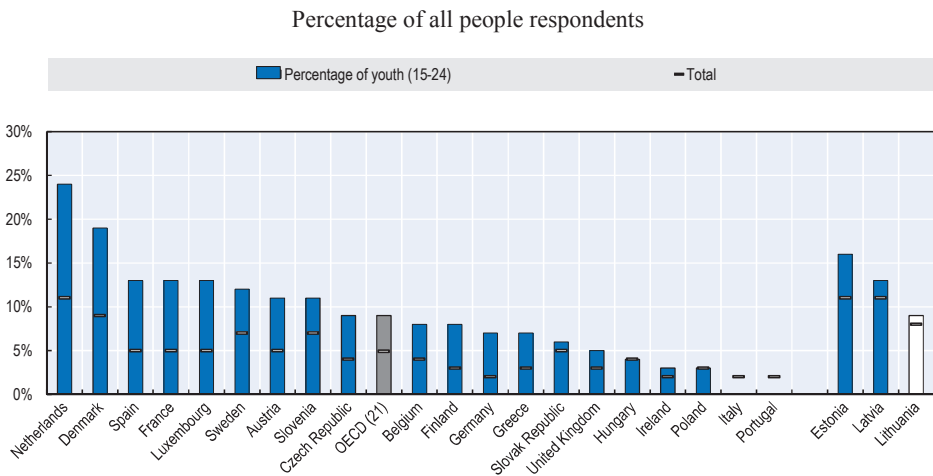
Note: Countries and economies are ranked in descending order of the percentage of students at Levels 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Source: OECD PISA 2012 Database, Table I.2.22, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932935572>.

## Informality is pervasive among Lithuanian youth

There are indications that a large proportion of workers in Lithuania, including youth, is employed in informal jobs, or receive envelope wages (European Commission, 2014). Like elsewhere, in many OECD and Baltic countries, informal employment is especially widespread among young workers, who are typically less knowledgeable of labour markets and their functioning and therefore less protected (Okunevičiūtė Neverauskienė and Pocius, 2011) (Figures 1.15 and 1.16). Eurobarometer data shows that the size of the informal sector among Lithuanian youth is in line with a selection of OECD countries, and is lower than in the other Baltic countries (Figure 1.15). However, in Lithuania many youth working formally with a contract receive parts of their salary in the form of envelope payments (Okunevičiūtė Neverauskienė and Pocius, 2011). Figure 1.16 shows that the proportion of Lithuanian youth reporting to have received cash in hand in the 12 months preceding the survey was very high: at 16% it was more than double the OECD average of 7%. Envelope payments are also relatively more frequent in Lithuania compared to other Baltic countries.

**Figure 1.15. Share of undeclared paid activities in the last 12 months, Lithuania, OECD and Baltic countries, 2013**



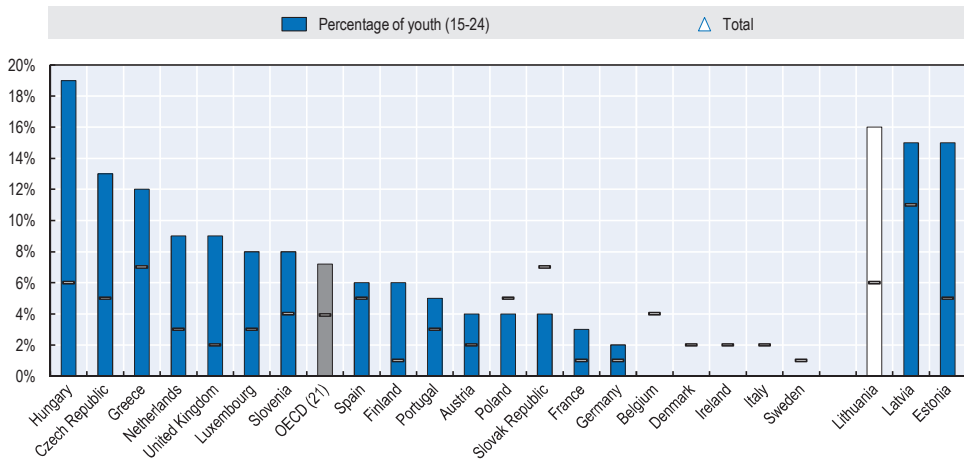
*Note:* Question asked: “Apart from a regular employment, have you yourself carried out any undeclared paid activities in the last 12 months?”

Share of undeclared paid activities among youth in Italy and Portugal is zero.

*Source:* European Commission (2014), *Special Eurobarometer 402*, Undeclared work in the European Union, European Commission.

**Figure 1.16. Share of people who are paid cash in hand, 2013**

Percentage of all respondents



*Note:* Question asked: “Sometimes employers prefer to pay all or part of the salary or the remuneration (for extra work, overtime hours or the part above a legal minimum) in cash and without declaring it to tax or social security authorities. Has your employer paid you any of your income in the last 12 months in this way?”

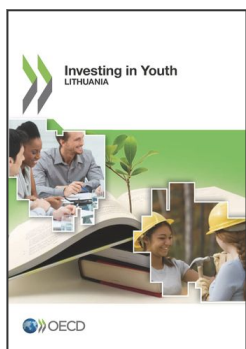
*Source:* European Commission (2014), *Special Eurobarometer 402, Undeclared work in the European Union*, European Commission.

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