



## **44.2% OF THE ADULT POPULATION AGED 25 TO 64 IN PORTUGAL PARTICIPATED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, BELOW THE EU AVERAGE OF 46.6%**

In 2022, the proportion of the resident population in Portugal aged 25 to 64 who participated in at least one formal education and/or non-formal education activity in the last 12 months was 44.2%. The national average is below the European average (46.6%), placing Portugal as the 18<sup>th</sup> country in the EU-27 with the highest participation of the adult population in formal and/or non-formal education and training activities.

In Portugal, and in contrast to the majority of EU-27 countries, in 2022 the participation of men (45.5%) in formal and/or non-formal education activities was higher than that of women (43.0%), placing it among the six countries where the participation rate of women was lower than that of men (Italy, Cyprus, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary). In all the EU-27 countries, participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities increases with the level of education, and in the case of Portugal it is more than double among the population with tertiary education compared to the population who have completed at most lower secondary education (68.3% and 27.3%, respectively). In the various EU-27 countries, participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities was higher among the employed population. In Portugal, 50.6% of the employed population participated in formal and/or non-formal education activities, while only 29.2% of the unemployed population and 17.8% of the inactive population participated in this type of activities.

In all 27 EU countries, the majority of activities carried out in 2022 by the adult population aged 25 to 64 were non-formal education activities. In Portugal, 41.9% of the population aged 25 to 64 carried out non-formal education activities in the last 12 months (44.0% for the EU-27), and 38.5% of these activities were job-related (38.1% for the EU-27). Most of the job-related non-formal education activities were sponsored by the employer, with Portugal (34.1%) standing slightly above the EU-27 average (33.7%).

---

In addition to the [Press Release](#) published on October 17, 2023, Statistics Portugal releases an additional set of results from the Adult Education Survey (AES) 2022, in a comparative analysis of the results for Portugal with those from several European Union countries, made available in the meantime by Eurostat, regarding the participation rate of adults in formal and/or non-formal education and training activities. The analysis focuses on the population aged 25 to 64, coinciding with the age group of the targets set at European level in the context of the Strategic Framework of the European Education Area and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

The results for the various countries are available on the European Union statistical office database ([Eurostat](#)). For the national context, the results of the various AES editions (2007, 2011, 2016 and 2022) can also be found in the statistical indicators published in the [Database](#) of Statistics Portugal website.



## 1. Adult participation in education and training activities

Increasing the participation of the population aged 25 to 64 in education and training to at least 47% by 2025 and to at least 60% by 2030 is an objective to be achieved at European level and defined within the context of monitoring public policy measures.

Increasing the participation of the population aged 25 to 64 in education and training to at least 47% by 2025 is one of the targets set in the context of the Strategic Framework of the European Education Area<sup>1</sup>, with the aim of promoting access to education, training and lifelong learning as a right for all citizens, as stated in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Increasing the participation of the population aged 25 to 64 in education and training to at least 60% by 2030 is one of the three targets set by the 27 countries that make up the European Union (EU-27) in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, to assess progress in the labour market, skills and social protection domains by 2030. In this context, each Member State has set national targets in order to achieve the targets set by the EU-27 by 2030<sup>2</sup>.

The Adult Education Survey (AES), whose main objective is to assess the population's participation in education, training and learning activities, including formal and non-formal education activities, as well as informal learning activities, enables to measure progress towards this target. The indicator calculated from this data source includes participation in formal and non-formal education and training activities, which covers activities carried out in a school context that confer school certification (or double certification) - formal education - as well as intentional learning activities carried out outside the school context that do not confer a level of education, including learning activities carried out in a work context (guided on the job training - GOTJ), and which constitute what is known as non-formal education.

In this context, it should be noted that the definition of these targets did not include the component regarding guided on the job training (GOTJ) in non-formal education. However, the concept of non-formal education operationalized by the AES includes this component by definition. To ensure comparability between countries, the data presented in this Press Release, as published by Eurostat, includes guided on the job training<sup>3</sup> (GOTJ). In 2022, the participation of the resident population in Portugal aged 25 to 64 in formal and/or non-formal education activities was 44.2%, decreasing by 10.8 percentage points (pp), to 33.4%, if guided on the job training is excluded.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, please refer to the following European Commission website - <https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea/strategic-framework>.

<sup>2</sup> The [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) presents three major targets for the EU by the end of the decade in the areas of employment, skills and social protection: i) at least 78% of the population aged between 20 and 64 should be in employment by 2030; ii) at least 60% of adults should participate in training; and iii) the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million by 2030. For Portugal, the national targets are: i) to increase the employment rate of the population aged between 20 and 64 to at least 80%; ii) to increase the annual participation rate of adults in education and training to at least 60%; and iii) to reduce the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 765,000 people, including at least 167,000 children.

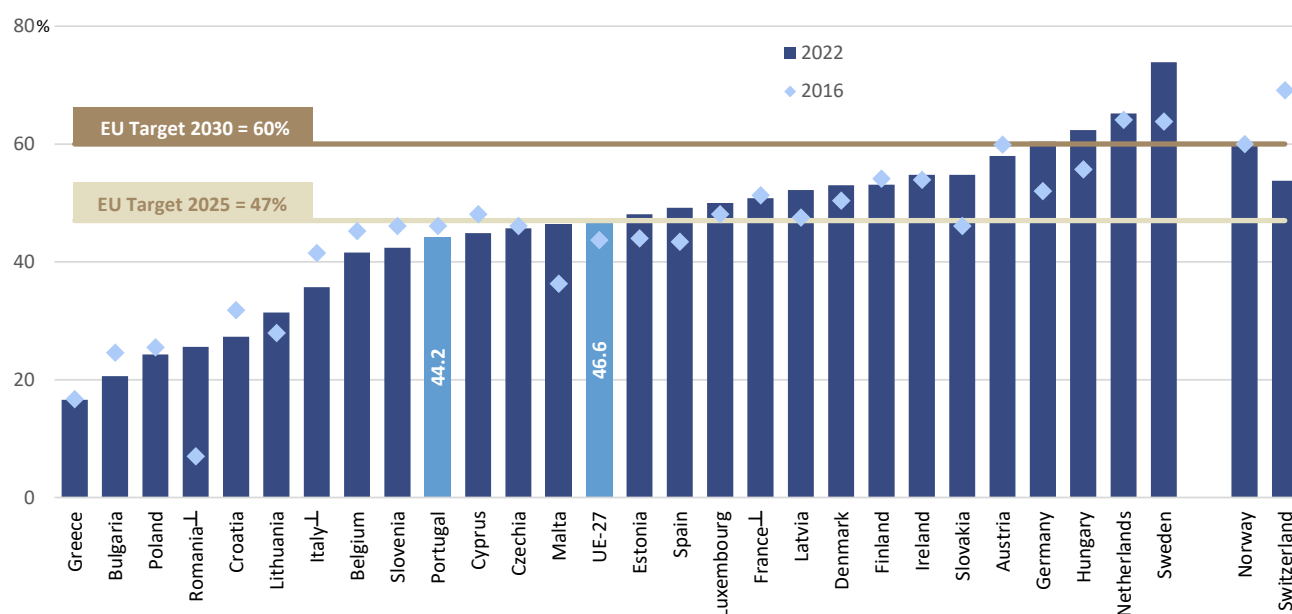
<sup>3</sup> Since AES is carried out every six years, monitoring this target, in terms of its progress trend, can be done based on the new biennial variables included from 2022 onwards in the Labour Force Survey on participation in formal and non-formal education and training, over the last 12 months, in addition to the quarterly questions relating to the last reference month.

*Between 2016 and 2022, the participation of the population aged 25 to 64 in formal and/or non-formal education activities decreased in Portugal, standing in 2022 below the EU-27 average.*

Between 2016 and 2022, the participation of the resident population in Portugal aged 25 to 64 in formal education and/or non-formal education decreased by 1.9 pp to 44.2% in 2022 (46.1% in 2016)<sup>4</sup>. This result is mainly due to the decline in participation in non-formal education, which decreased from 44.4% in 2016 to 41.9% in 2022, while participation in formal education increased by 1.7 pp, increasing from 4.0% in 2016 to 5.7% in 2022.

The participation rate of the population aged 25 to 64 in formal and/or non-formal education activities in Portugal in 2022 was 2.4 pp lower than the EU-27 average (46.6%). Portugal ranked 18<sup>th</sup> among the 27 EU countries with the highest participation rate and is among the group of 13 countries whose result was below the EU average in 2022. It should be noted that the 14 countries that recorded a participation rate above the EU average in 2022 have already exceeded the target set for 2025 of 47% participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities, with four of these countries - Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden - having reached and exceeded the target of 60% participation rate in education and training set for 2030.

**Figure 1. Proportion of the population aged 25-64 who participated, in the last 12 months, in formal and/or non-formal education activities in the European Union, 2016 and 2022**



Source: Eurostat [[trng\\_aes\\_100](#)].

Note: The 2022 figures for France are provisional. † Break in time series.

<sup>4</sup> Considering the resident population in Portugal aged 18 to 69, as reported in the [Press Release](#) published on October 17, 2023, participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities in 2022 was 45.6%. The analysis in this Press Release considers the age group of 25 to 64, in line with the targets set in terms of public policy.



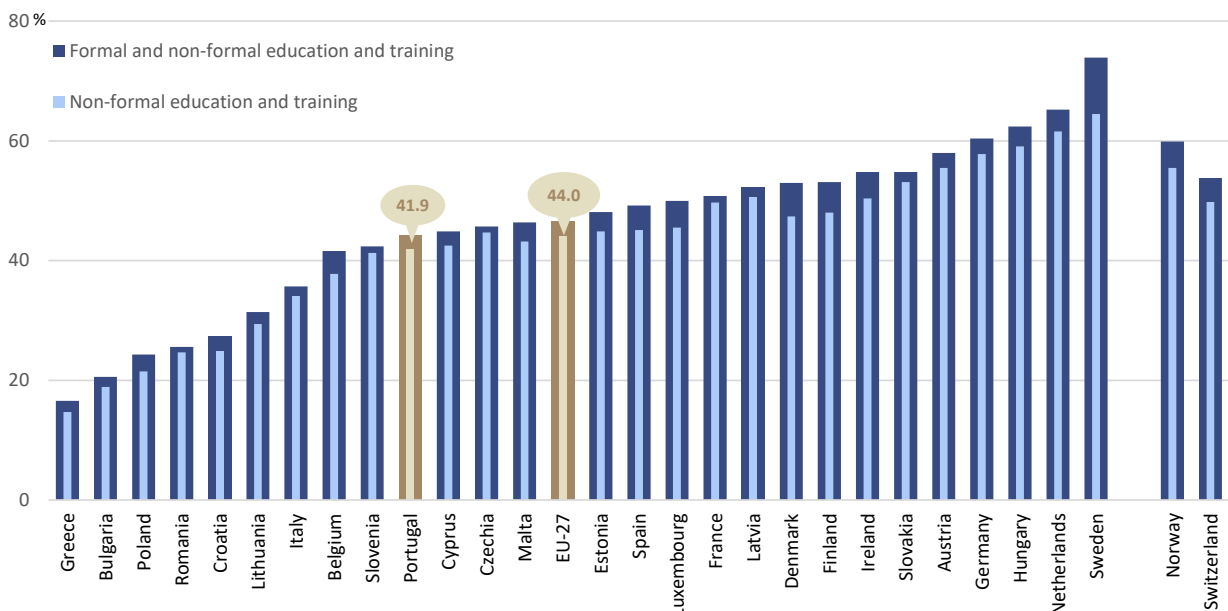
## *The population aged 25 to 64 participates mainly in non-formal education activities.*

Considering the population aged 25 to 64 living in Portugal who, in 2022, participated in formal education and/or non-formal education activities<sup>5</sup> (44.2%), evidence shows that it is participation in non-formal education activities that contributes most to the figure recorded, i.e., 41.9% of the population participated in non-formal education activities in the last 12 months (only 5.7% participated in formal education activities).

In all 27 EU countries, as well as Norway and Switzerland, the participation in non-formal education, which takes place outside the school context, was also predominant in 2022. The significant share of non-formal education in the adult participation rate is not unrelated to the fact that, in the age group considered, 25 to 64, most people are already out of the expected age of schooling.

In 2022, the participation of adults aged 25 to 64 in formal education was highest in Sweden (20.9%), Finland (13.8%), Denmark (12.5%), Luxembourg (11.2%), the Netherlands (11.2%) and Ireland (10.9%), as well as in Norway (12.6%).

**Figure 2. Proportion of the population aged 25-64 who participated, in the last 12 months, in formal and/or non-formal education activities in the European Union, by type of activity, 2022**



Source: Eurostat [[trng\\_aes\\_100](#)].

Note: Data for France are provisional.

<sup>5</sup> Participation in formal education and non-formal education are not mutually exclusive, so the same person may have participated both in formal education and non-formal education activities in the last 12 months.

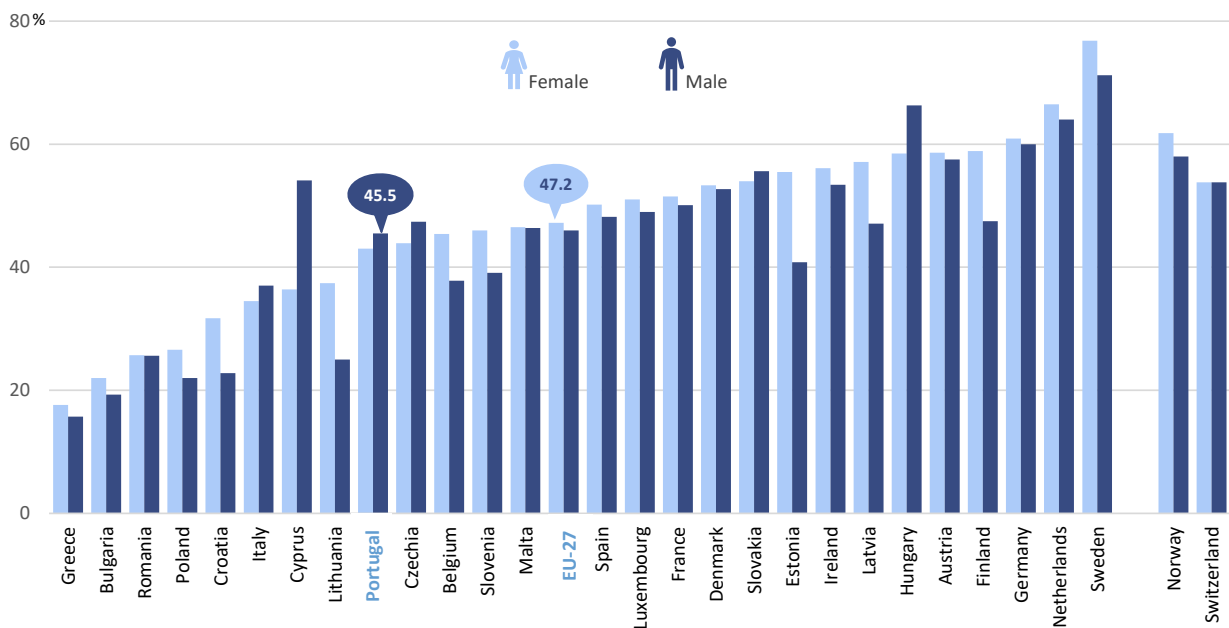


*In Portugal, and in contrast to the majority of EU-27 countries, the participation of men in formal and/or non-formal education activities was higher than that of women in 2022.*

In 2022, the participation of men (45.5%) in formal and/or non-formal education activities in Portugal was higher than that of women (43.0%). Portugal is among the six countries where the participation rate of women was lower than that of men (Italy, Cyprus, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary), contrasting with the 21 other EU-27 countries where the participation of women was higher than that of men and with the EU-27 average for 2022: 47.2% female participation rate and 46.0% male participation rate. Switzerland was the only country with an equal participation rate for women and men (53.8%).

Among the four countries with the greatest difference in the participation rate among men and women, Cyprus recorded the highest difference, with men participating 17.7 pp more than women. In the case of Estonia, Lithuania and Finland, women's participation was higher than men's by 14.7 pp, 12.4 pp and 11.4 pp, respectively.

**Figure 3. Proportion of the population aged 25-64 who participated, in the last 12 months, in formal and/or non-formal education activities in the European Union, by sex, 2022**



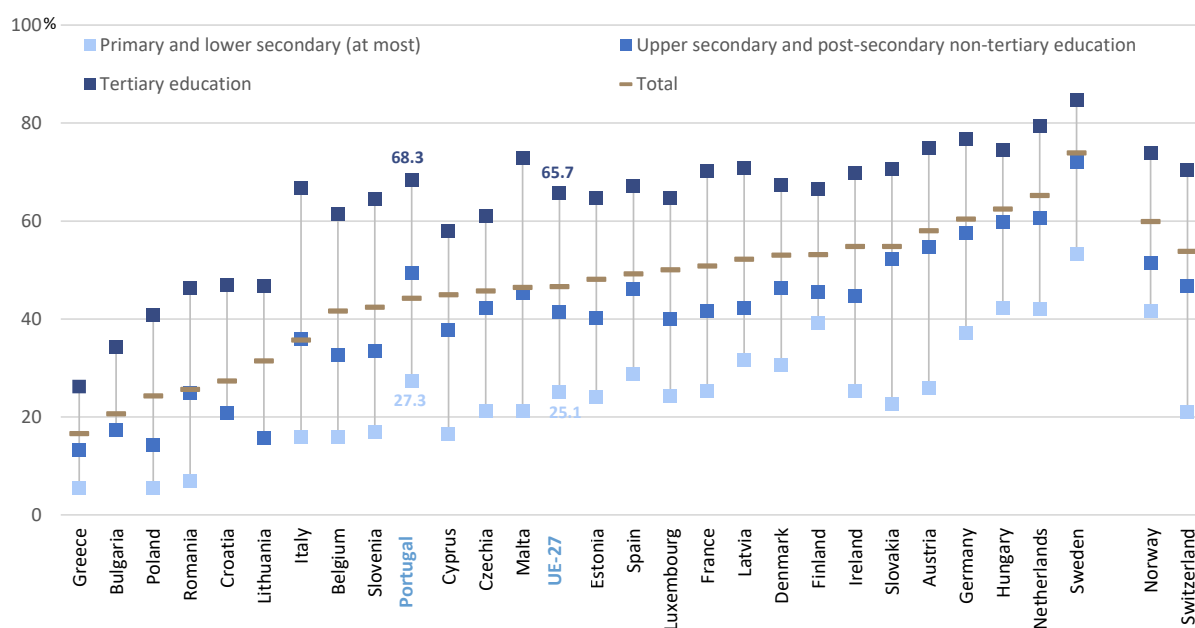
Source: Eurostat [[trng\\_aes\\_100](#)].

Note: Data for France are provisional.

*Participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities increases with the education level.*

Participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities is strongly conditioned by the level of education - as the level of education increases, the participation rate in this type of activities also increases. In 2022, among the resident population aged 25 to 64 in Portugal, who participated in formal and/or non-formal education activities, the participation rate among those with tertiary education was more than double that of those who have completed at most lower secondary education (68.3% and 27.3%, respectively). For all 27 EU countries, as well as Norway and Switzerland, the participation rate in formal and/or non-formal education activities increases with the level of education.

**Figure 4. Proportion of the population aged 25-64 who participated, in the last 12 months, in formal and/or non-formal education activities in the European Union, by highest level of education completed, 2022**



Source: Eurostat [trng\_aes\_102].

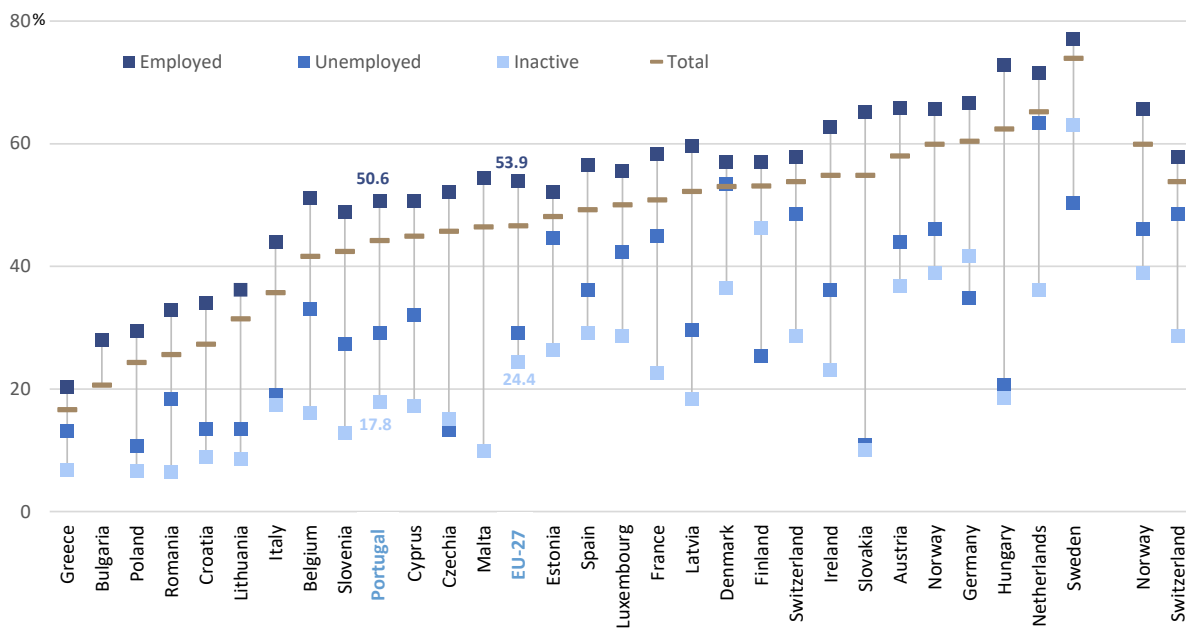
**Note:** Data for France are provisional. The figures for the category "Lower secondary (at most)" for Greece, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia correspond to estimates with low reliability. The estimates for the "Lower secondary (at most)" category for Bulgaria, Croatia and Lithuania have a margin of error higher than the quality standard considered acceptable for dissemination.



## Participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities is higher among the employed population.

The analysis of participation in formal and/or non-formal education activities by employment status shows that participation is higher among the employed population than among the unemployed and inactive population, which is common to all the countries under analysis. In 2022, among the resident population in Portugal aged 25 to 64, 50.6% of the employed population participated in formal and/or non-formal education activities, which is below the EU-27 average (53.9%), and only 29.2% of the unemployed population and 17.8% of the inactive population participated in this type of activities, which compares with 29.2% and 24.4%, respectively, for the EU-27.

Figure 5. Proportion of the population aged 25-64 who participated, in the last 12 months, in formal and/or non-formal education activities in the European Union, by employment status, 2022



Source: Eurostat [trng\_aes\_103].

**Note:** Data for France are provisional. The figures associated with the "Unemployed" category for Czechia, Denmark, Ireland, Croatia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Norway, and the "Inactive" category for Croatia, Lithuania and Malta, correspond to estimates with low reliability. The estimates associated with the "Unemployed" category for Bulgaria and Malta and the "Inactive" category for Malta have a margin of error above the quality standard considered acceptable for dissemination.

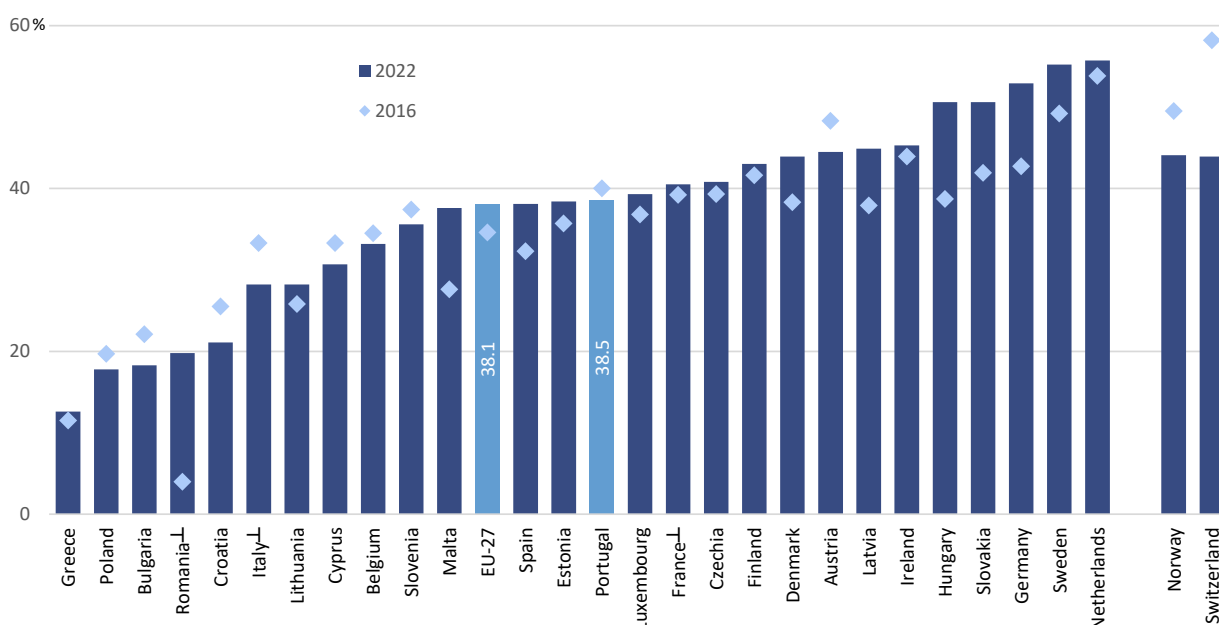
## 2. Adult participation in work-related non-formal education and training activities

Promoting adult participation in learning activities is part of the EU guidelines for employment policies and the education and training strategy (Strategic Framework of the European Education Area), to strengthen the skills of the adult population in order to increase their employability. Participation in non-formal job-related education activities enables skills acquisition, beyond initial formal education, which strengthen the ability to remain and progress in the labour market. In this context, AES collects data on participation in job-related education activities (including guided on the job training - GOTJ) and whether or not they are sponsored by the employer, as they represent essential components of adult learning.

*The national average for participation in non-formal job-related education activities decreased between 2016 and 2022 but remained above the EU-27 average in 2022.*

In 2022, among the resident population in Portugal aged 25 to 64 who participated in non-formal education activities, 38.5% took part in job-related activities, a slight decrease compared to 2016 (40.0%), but still above the average for the EU-27 in 2022 (38.1%). The countries with the highest participation, namely above 50%, in non-formal job-related education activities were the Netherlands (55.7%), Sweden (55.2%), Germany (52.9%), Slovakia (50.6%) and Hungary (50.6%).

Figure 6. Proportion of the population aged 25-64 who participated, in the last 12 months, in non-formal job-related education activities in the European Union, 2016 and 2022



Source: Eurostat [trng\_aes\_120].

Note: The 2022 figures for France are provisional. The figures for Hungary and Norway correspond to estimates with low reliability. † Break in time series.

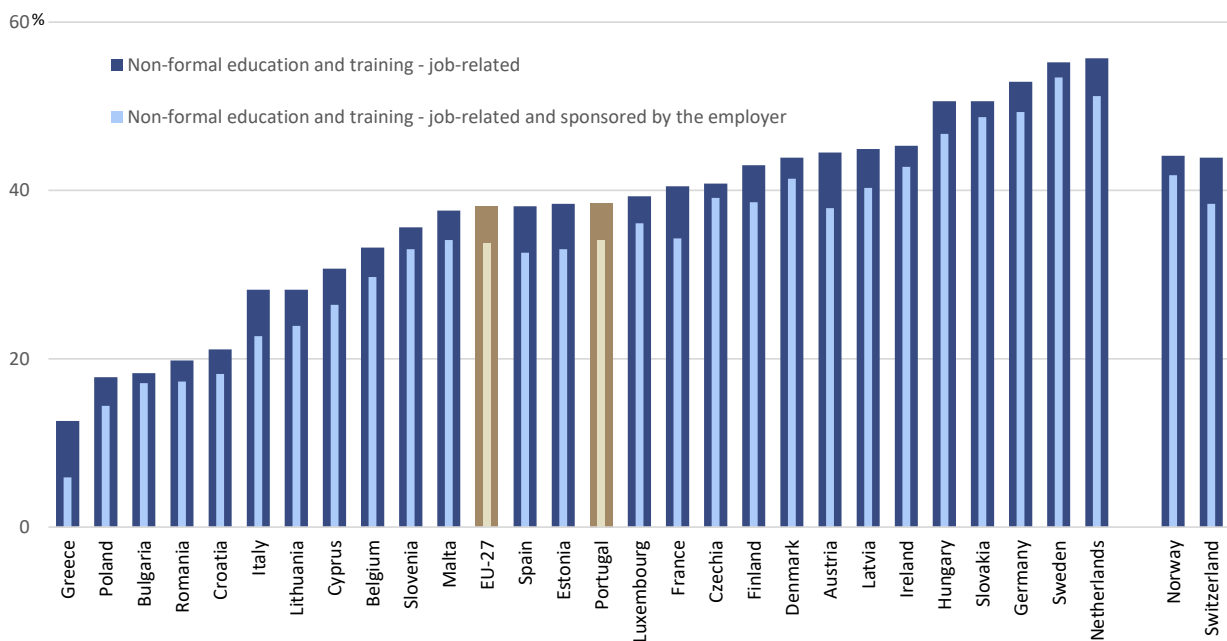




*Participation in non-formal job-related education and training activities is mostly sponsored by the employer.*

In 2022, considering only non-formal job-related education activities (38.5%) carried out by the resident population in Portugal aged 25 to 64, 34.1% were sponsored by the employer, which stands slightly above the EU-27 average (33.7%) and represents more than four-fifths of this type of education activity. Among the countries considered in this analysis, only Greece recorded a considerably lower value (5.9%), representing less than half of job-related activities sponsored by the employer.

**Figure 1. Proportion of the population aged 25-64 who participated, in the last 12 months, in non-formal job-related education activities in the European Union, by type of sponsoring, 2022**



Source: Eurostat [trng\_aes\_120].

Note: The 2022 figures for France are provisional. The figures for Hungary and Norway correspond to estimates with low reliability.



## TECHNICAL NOTE

The Adult Education Survey (AES) is a survey carried out by Statistics Portugal and in accordance with Eurostat's methodological recommendations, following the discussion within the European Statistical System in which Statistics Portugal participates. Its main objective is to analyze the participation of the adult population (here considered to be aged 18 to 69) in education, training and learning activities. Participation in any type of learning activity is considered, including formal and non-formal education activities, as well as informal learning activities, in the 12 months prior to the interview.

The AES 2022 is the fourth edition of this statistical operation, following those carried out in 2007, 2011 and 2016. The 2022 statistical operation surveyed the resident population aged 18 to 69 living in household dwellings of usual residence.

The 2022 edition of the AES was carried out in the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, as well as Serbia, Turkey, Albania and North Macedonia, between July 2022 and March 2023. The AES provides information on participation in formal education, non-formal education and informal learning, access to information on learning possibilities, time spent in education and training, characteristics of learning activities, reasons for not participating and obstacles to learning, sponsoring and costs of learning activities, language skills.

The AES is a sample survey, whose information was collected directly from the observation units - individuals - using a mixed data collection method that combined web (*Computer Assisted Web Interviewing* - CAWI) and telephone interview (*Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing* - CATI). National data collection took place between September 2022 and February 2023.

The geographical scope of the survey refers to the seven NUTS 2 regions (NUTS 2013).

The sample was sized at national level. The estimates were obtained from a sample of 19,658 household units, which corresponded to 14,064 people aged 18 to 69 who completed the interview.

For more detailed information on the methodology followed, please see the AES 2022 [methodological document](#) (only in Portuguese) available at Statistics Portugal website.

## MAIN CONCEPTS

**Formal education:** intentional, institutionalized, and planned education that materializes in education and training offers, confers an academic certification or a dual certification (academic and professional), comprises a hierarchical succession of education levels, and is provided by public or private entities recognized by the competent national authorities in matters of education and training.

**Non-formal education:** intentional, institutionalized, and planned education that adds and/or complements formal education in the context of lifelong learning process and assigns a certificate of attendance, but not a level of education.