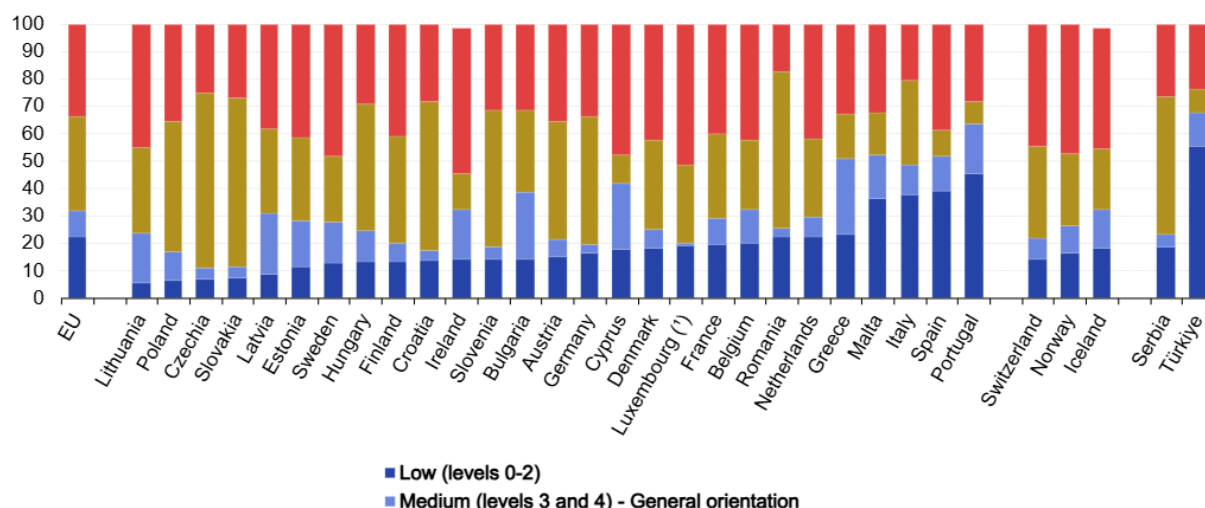


Distribution of the Population Aged 25–74 by Educational Attainment, 2024

Distribution of the population aged 25 –74 by educational attainment level, 2024
(% of the population aged 25 -74)



Interpretation:

At the EU level, about one-third of the population holds tertiary qualifications, one-third vocational, and about one-fifth low education levels. Central and Eastern European countries (Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia) display strong vocational education systems, with over half of adults attaining medium-level vocational qualifications. These systems are often linked to dual training models and are well aligned with industry needs.

Nordic and Baltic countries (Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia) show balanced and high education levels, combining strong tertiary attainment (40–45%) with moderate vocational shares and very low low-education rates. Western Europe (Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Netherlands) shows mixed structures: Germany and Austria maintain strong VET systems, while France and Belgium rely more on higher education.

Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Malta, Greece) exhibits higher shares of low-educated adults (30–45%) and relatively weak participation in vocational pathways, contributing to skills shortages. High tertiary achievers such as Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, and Luxembourg reflect knowledge-driven economies but face shortages of mid-level technical skills.

Policy takeaway: The chart illustrates how the structure and attractiveness of vocational education influence the skills base of national economies. Strengthening VET systems, improving pathways to higher education, and addressing low-education rates are key to reducing skills mismatches and enhancing competitiveness across Europe.