



# The European Commission and policy on early school leaving (ESL)

*EIPPEE conference*

*The Hague May 2012*

*Susanne Conze*

*DG Education and Culture*

March 2012



European  
Commission

# Europe 2020 - smart, sustainable, inclusive growth

**Reducing ESL  
to 10% by 2020  
(from 14.1% in 2010)**

*Lifelong learning  
programme*



- **ESL creates massive long-term problems for young people, increases poverty risk and risk of social exclusion**
- **ESL generates huge social and financial costs**
- **ESL is a complex problem**

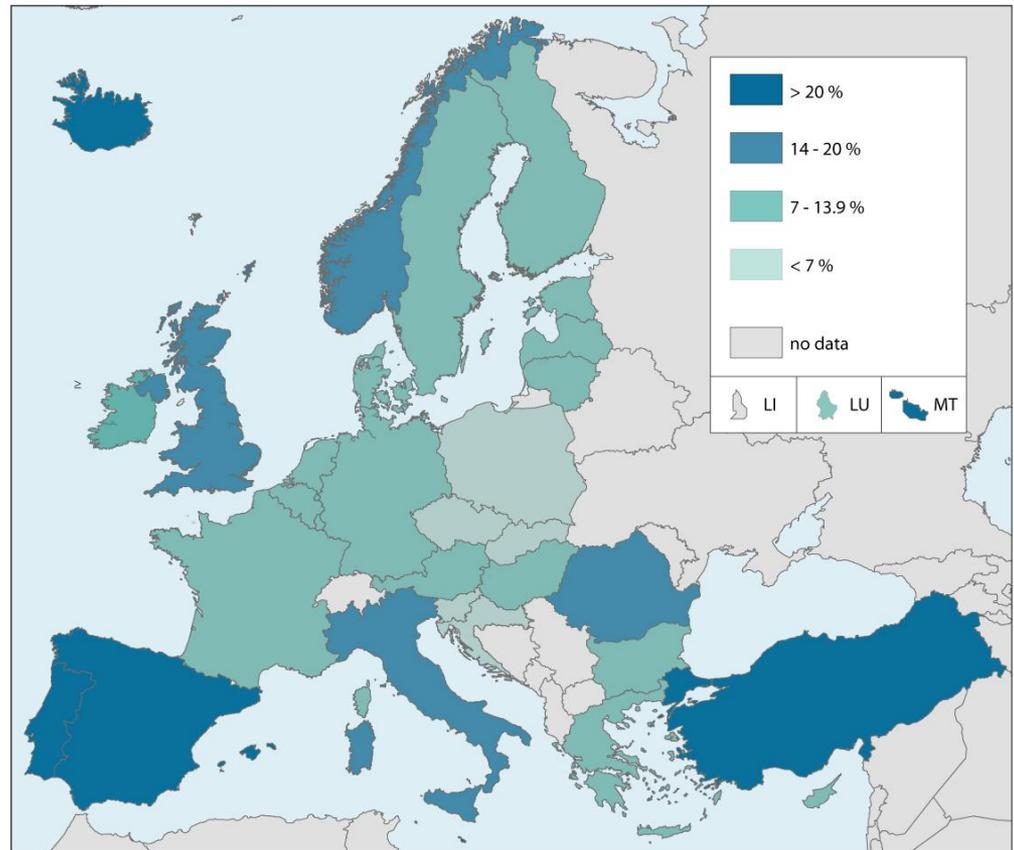
# Early school leaving ...

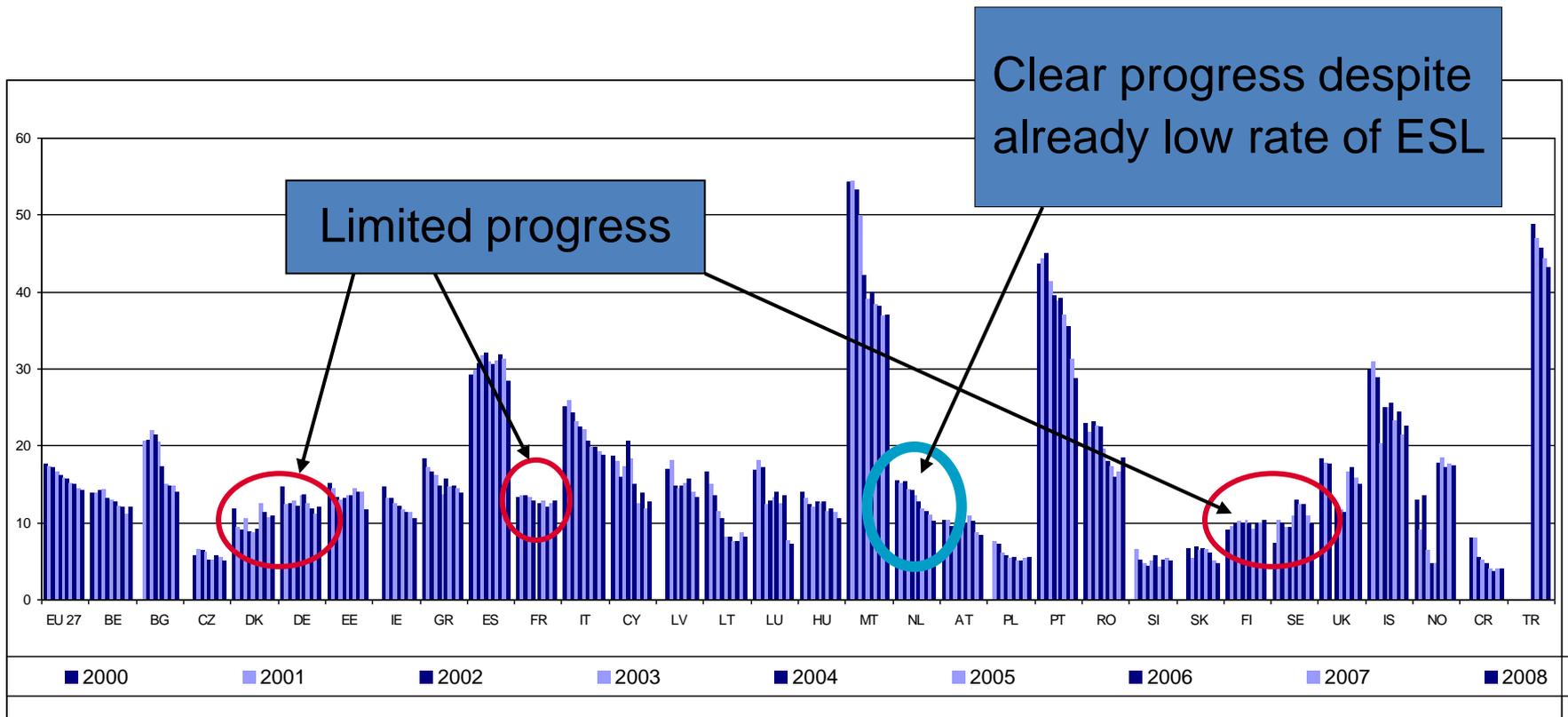
- refers to persons aged 18 to 24  
fulfilling the following two conditions:**
- first, the highest level of education or training attained is ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short,**
  - second, respondents declared not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey (EU LFS).**



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# ESL rates in 2010







# Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving (28 June 2011)

- **Invites Member States to identify the main reasons for ESL and to ensure that comprehensive strategies are in place by 2012**
- **Invites the Commission to monitor developments, to support policy development and to facilitate exchange of experience and good practice**



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## Framework for comprehensive policies

Identification &  
analysis

Monitoring of  
situation

Coordination of  
policies

### Prevention

Early childhood  
education and  
care

Measures at level  
of  
education/training  
system

### Intervention

Measures at  
school level

Student focused  
measures

### Compensation

Second chance  
opportunities

Re-entering  
mainstream  
education

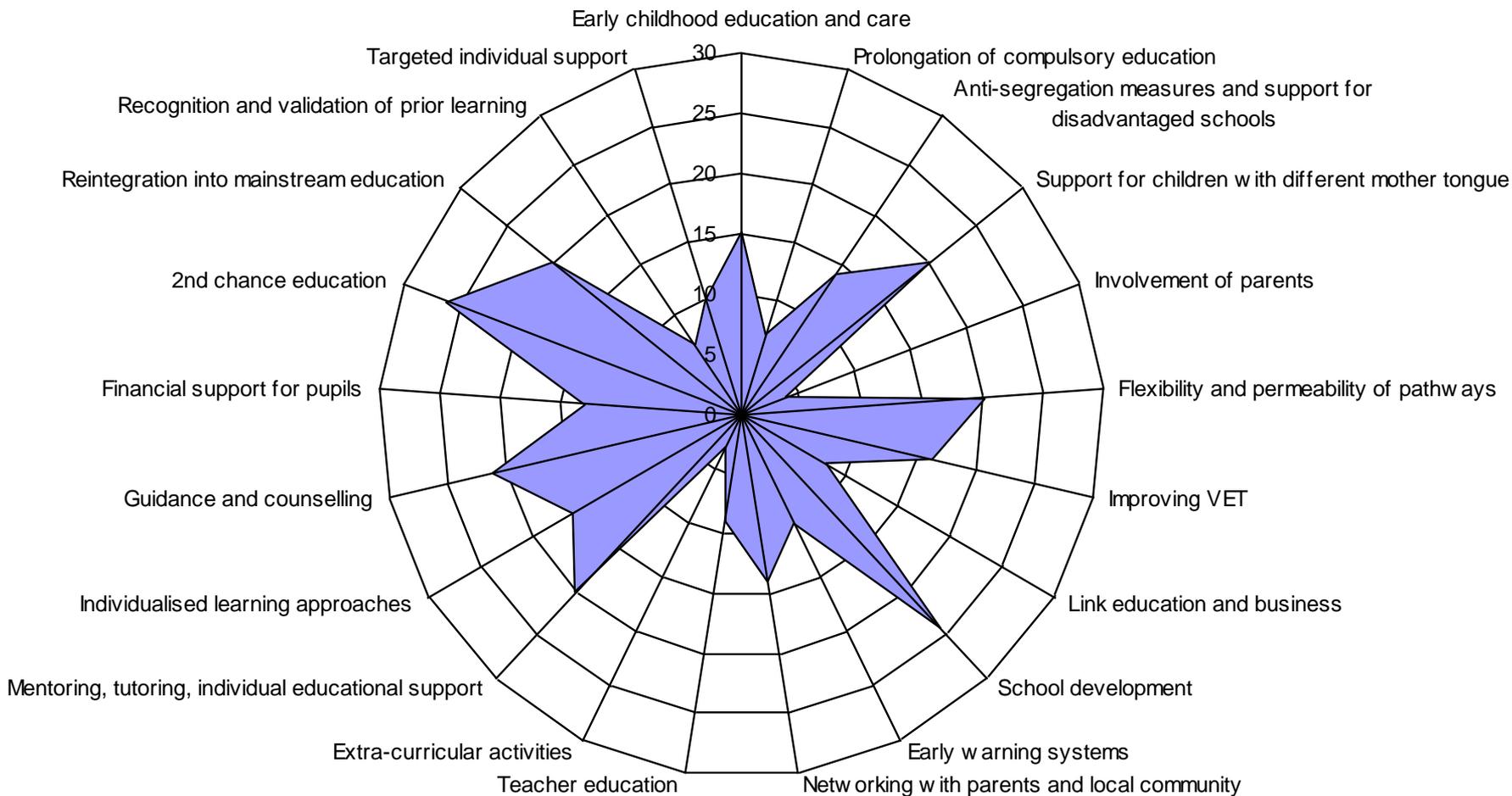
Comprehensive  
support

# Current situation in Europe: Analysis and monitoring of ESL in Europe

- **Different systems to collect data on ESL**
- **Methods often do not provide sufficient evidence**
- **Gaps in monitoring developments and evaluating measures to reduce ESL**

## Current situation in Europe: Measures to reduce ESL

- **Imbalances in frequency of measures**
- **Risk to over-rely on some measures (2<sup>nd</sup> chance education and VET)**
- **Seldom: involving parents and local community, improving teacher education, early warning systems or extra-curricula activities**
- **Cross-sectoral cooperation**



## Some conclusions

- Analysis of the ESL problem crucial to define targeted policies and measures
- Many measures and projects show success, but are less efficient and effective than possible
- Over-reliance on 2<sup>nd</sup> chance linked to weaknesses in analysing what triggers ESL
- Project-based vs comprehensive policies



# Current initiatives at EU level

- **Europe 2020 Strategy**
- **Peer learning**
  - **Conference on policies to reduce ESL, March 2012**
  - **Thematic Working Group on ESL (start in Dec 2011 – mandate until 2014)**
- **Policy debate : Education Council, DG Schools**
- **Funding: Structural Funds and European education and research programmes**