



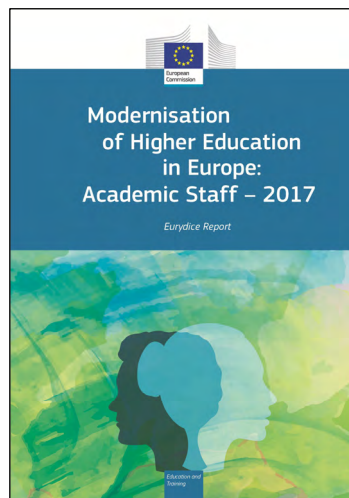
European  
Commission

### What is Eurydice?

The role of the Eurydice network is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is coordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. For more information about Eurydice, see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>

## Eurydice Highlights

### Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff – 2017



The higher education sector has experienced profound changes in the past two decades. Despite recent demographic declines to higher education cohorts in some countries, student numbers overall have increased, while the higher education sector has diversified and experienced numerous structural changes. Academic staff are in the frontline of dealing with increasing societal demands, but have systems adjusted to enable them to keep pace with these rapid changes?

Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff – 2017 explores the current realities for academic staff within the fast-changing European higher education landscape. The report examines the qualification requirements for academic staff, the recruitment process, employment and working conditions in academia, external quality assurance, and central level strategies for internalisation.

The report is largely based on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data, and covers higher education systems in 35 countries. The report focuses on the most representative categories of higher education staff, primarily those responsible for teaching and/or research.

The report also contains national diagrams which provide a visual overview of the most representative categories of academic staff in the country concerned. For each staff category, a number of information are presented including main duties, qualification requirement, contracts and statistical information.

This 'Eurydice Highlights' provides a snapshot of some of the main findings of the report.

### The full report

*Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff – 2017* is available in English on the Eurydice website <http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>

### Printed copies of the report

are available upon request at: [eacea-eurydice@ec.europa.eu](mailto:eacea-eurydice@ec.europa.eu)

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## Women continue to be under represented in academia

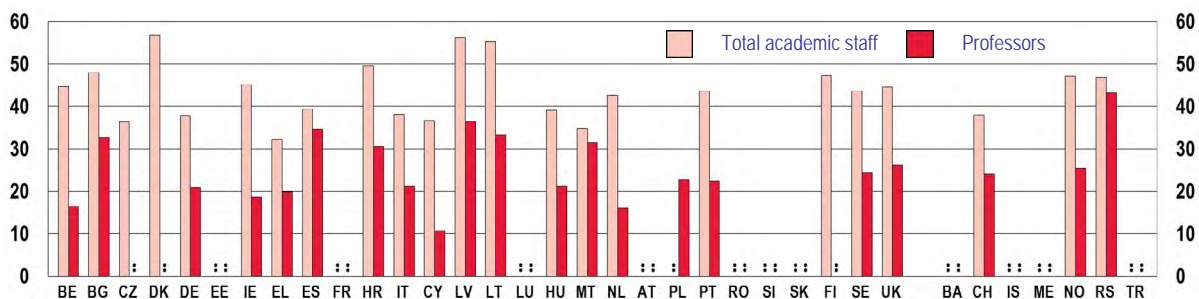
In most European countries top-level authorities regulate at least some aspects of recruitment of academic staff, with specific rules varying in scope and coverage. 24 higher education systems have legislation on equal opportunities directly applicable to the recruitment of academic staff. Regulations on equal opportunities usually cover gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, age, political beliefs and sexual orientation.

The concrete implementation of equal opportunities legislation is usually left to employers, but when laws contain concrete targets or guidance, they are generally limited to the gender balance of staff. Gender equality has been high on the policy agenda at European level for decades. Yet despite positive evolution in academic staff positions, in most countries women represent less than half of the workforce.

Gender disparities are even starker with regards to the amount of women reaching the rank of professor. In countries such as Belgium, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, and the Netherlands, women represent fewer than 20 % of professors. Serbia is the only country where over 40 % of professors are female.

Across Europe the path for women to the higher ranks of academia is hindered by obstacles that general legislation on equal opportunities has been unable to overcome. This has added importance when bearing in mind that in many countries employment legislation for academic staff grants more job security to senior ranks in the profession. Thus women are not only under-represented in the sector, but also hold less prestigious positions, and face more precarious employment conditions.

**Figure 3.5: Share of women among total academic staff and professors, 2013**



Source: European Tertiary Education Register (data extracted November 2016).

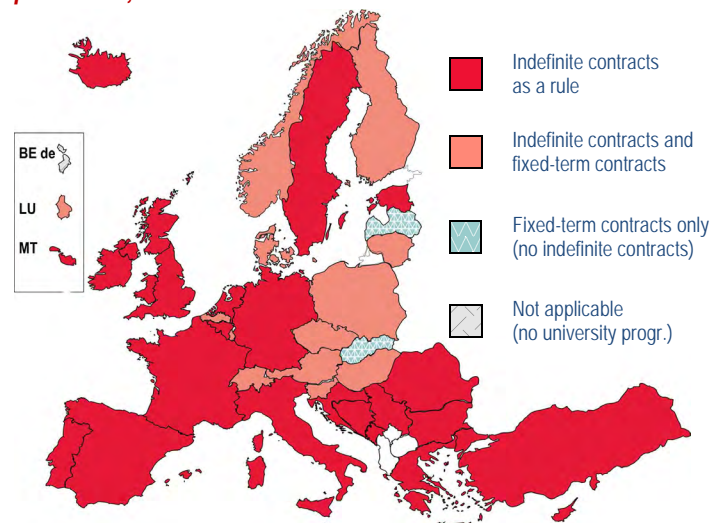
## Senior academic staff tend to have more favourable working conditions and secure contracts than their junior colleagues

Choosing a career in academia and then progressing to the most senior positions requires a huge investment of time and effort all over Europe, but job security is generally not improving... In most European countries, there is a mixture of fixed-term and indefinite contracts for academic staff, with the exception of Slovakia and Latvia where only fixed-term contracts exist.

One strong determinant of contractual stability is the stage of academic career, with junior academics being employed on project-based or fixed-term contracts, while senior academics are more likely to have indefinite contracts. While the majority of professors and other senior academic staff in the majority of European countries still have indefinite contracts, there is increasing competition for these positions, with an overall reduction in employment opportunities in the higher education sector as a whole.

The highest proportion of indefinite contracts – 80 % or more – is reported by France, Malta and Turkey, followed by Sweden, where around 70 % of academics have an indefinite contract.

**Figure 4.2: Employment contracts of university professors, 2015/16**



Source: Eurydice.

At the other end of the spectrum are Germany, Estonia, Austria (the university sector), Finland (the university sector) and Serbia, with 30 % or fewer academics with an indefinite contract.

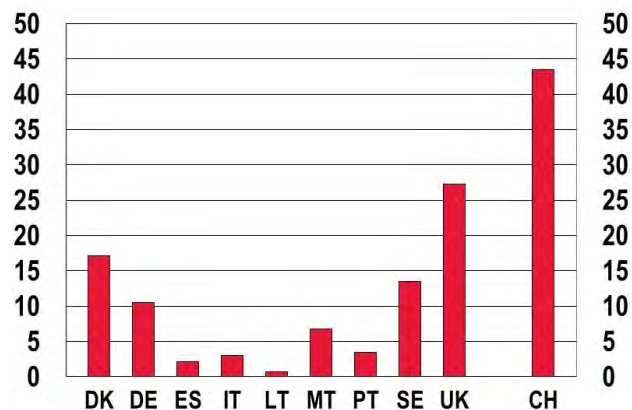
## Academic staff are encouraged to be mobile and some countries have a high percentage of international staff

There is a wide understanding among policy makers and actors at institutional level that the mobility of academic staff is beneficial for improving the quality of higher education and research, developing the circulation of knowledge and supporting student mobility. Most European countries have at least some form of central-level strategy for encouraging the internationalisation of the higher education sector, with roughly a third having highly detailed plans in place to support the phenomenon.

Comprehensive statistical data on academic staff mobility is not available, though the majority of European higher education systems report that they have established mechanisms for monitoring the mobility of academic staff at national level. The data that is currently available shows that in many countries academic staff is highly international, with a high percentage of foreign citizens among academic staff.

For example in the UK, 27.3 % of academic staff is foreign born, while in Switzerland the figure is 43.5 %.

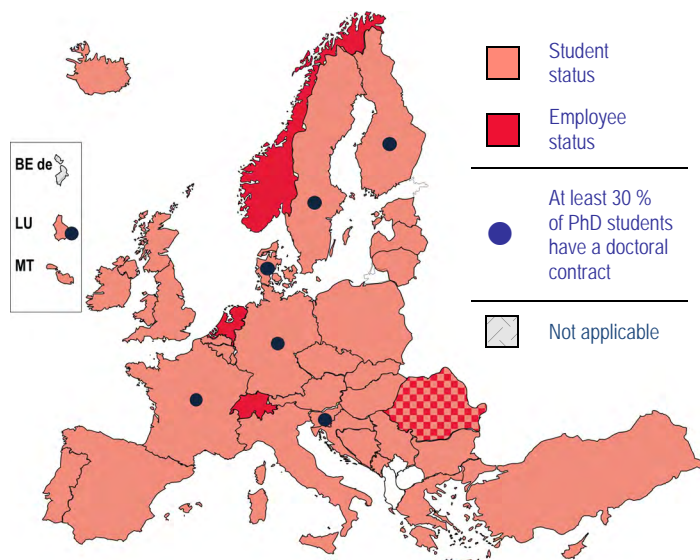
**Figure 6.3: Share of foreign citizens among academic staff, 2013**



Source: European Tertiary Education Register (data extracted November 2016).

## Holding a doctorate is a necessity for most academic positions, and most doctoral candidates are considered to be students

**Figure 2.1: Primary legal status of doctoral candidates, 2015/16**



Source: Eurydice.

A doctorate is commonly seen as a milestone in an academic career. Its preparation generally lasts at least three years and is characterised by a double affiliation: it is considered as an early stage of an academic career and, at the same time, it corresponds to an extended, high level, research-based training period.

In most countries, doctoral students are formally considered as students, despite also being early-stage researchers. This may be related to the Bologna process, which has increased the importance of the taught elements of doctorate programmes.

In most European countries a doctorate is legal requirement for intermediate and senior academic roles, and sometimes also for junior positions. In around a quarter of all European higher education systems – namely the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Montenegro – top-level regulations do not formalise the doctorate as the minimum qualification for any academic staff category. However, most of these countries indicate that while not a legal requirement, the doctorate still plays an important role in academic career progression.

