

## Indicator A6. How are social outcomes related to education?

### Highlights

- Perceptions about the functioning of democracy do not change based on educational attainment. On average, 25-64 year-olds at all attainment levels have similar views on how the democratic process works.
- Civic engagement tends to increase as educational attainment increases. For example, highly educated adults are more likely to participate in a public demonstration or to volunteer for a charity. Across the OECD countries and accession countries participating in the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 10, around 10% of individuals with tertiary attainment have participated in a public demonstration in the previous 12 months, whereas 6% of individuals with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary educational attainment have done so.
- Tertiary-educated adults are more likely to take steps to protect their privacy on line. On average across OECD and accession countries taking part in the EU Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals (EU-ICT), 27% of 16-74 year-olds with tertiary attainment used software that limits the ability of others to track their activities on the Internet in the three months prior to the survey compared to just 16% of those without upper secondary attainment.

### Context

Formal education aims to transfer the skills that students need to find work, but also to form future citizens in democratic societies. In some countries, schools provide compulsory classes on citizenship education to improve the transfer of democratic values and enhance students' active role in democratic life.

Several studies suggest that students on tertiary education tend to be more involved in their societies' democratic life (Nieuwelink, Dekker and ten Dam, 2019<sup>[1]</sup>). The link between educational attainment and willingness to participate in democratic life (Campbell, 2006<sup>[2]</sup>), as well as the importance given to democracy, are fundamental to improving democratic involvement. Greater attainment could also increase individuals' participation in decision-making processes (Michels and De Graaf, 2017<sup>[3]</sup>).

Education promotes digital literacy (Burns Ed. and Gottschalk Ed., 2020<sup>[4]</sup>) and this can influence individuals' views about their own personal safety on the Internet and awareness of online threats. As with civic engagement and democracy, improving educational attainment may help individuals to be more careful with their personal information on the Internet and reduce being affected by cyber crime.

### Other findings

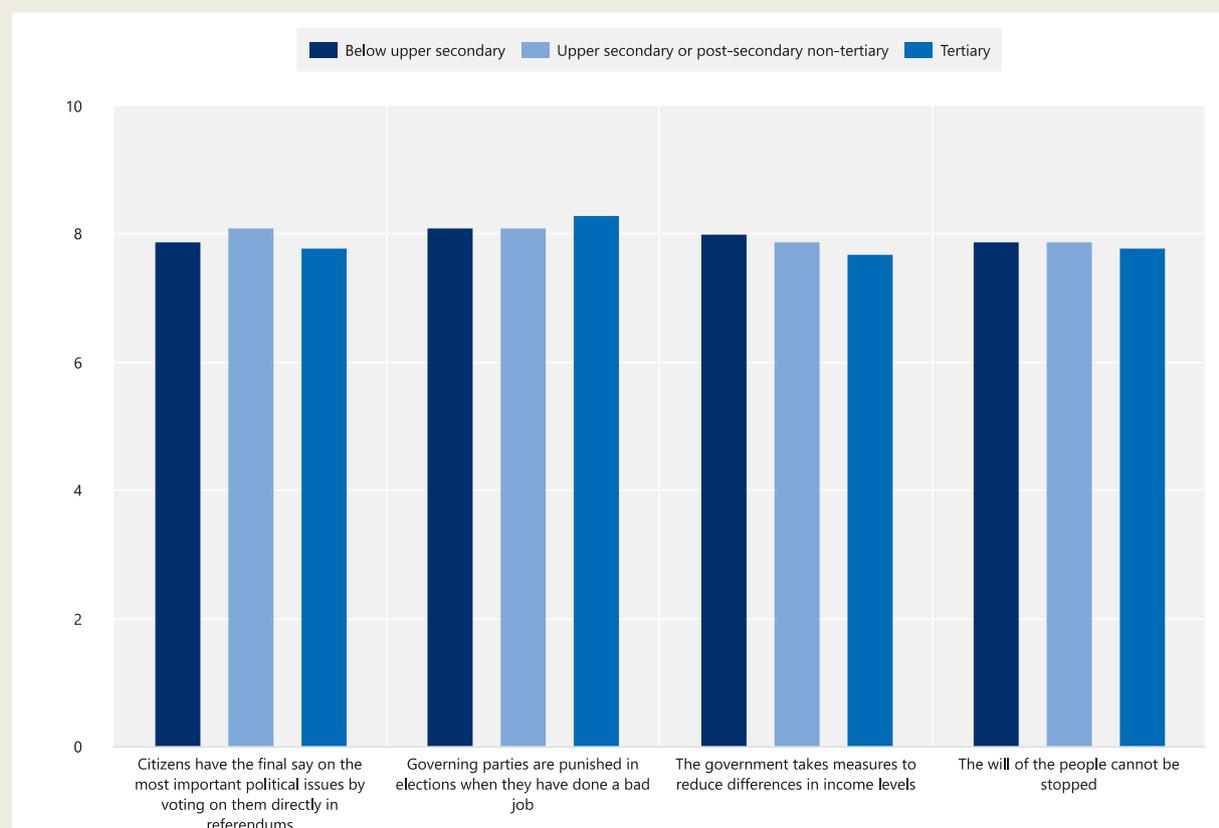
- Civic engagement in the form of participation in demonstrations varies according to the country's political situation, while in the case of volunteering for not-for-profit and charitable organisations it is related to societies' habits and traditions. In both cases, civic engagement is

positively related to educational attainment. Individuals with tertiary qualifications are more likely to volunteer for not-for-profit and charitable organisations

- Among individuals with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education as their highest level of attainment, there is not much difference in civic engagement between those who followed a general or a vocational programme.

**Figure A6.1. Average score of the importance of the following statements indicating how democracy is working, by educational attainment (2020)**

Average of OECD and accession countries participating in the ESS Round 10; 25-64 year-olds



**Note:** The score ranges from 0-10. The "importance of the statement" correspond to the view items in the ESS Round 10 questionnaire. A score of 0 means respondent do not think the statement is important at all and a score of 10 means respondent think it is essential.

**Source:** OECD (2023), Table A6.1. For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/pm9a16>

## Analysis

### ***Civic engagement and governance***

Civic engagement is part of democratic societies and education is a determinant of participation in civic activities (Hauser, 2000<sup>[6]</sup>). It is widely accepted that there is a positive relationship between educational attainment and civic engagement (Campbell, 2006<sup>[2]</sup>). Education can also influence citizens' perceptions of democracy in their countries. It shapes their democratic values and their views on democratic processes. The relationship between educational attainment and civic engagement may be influenced by the fact that in some countries higher educational attainment may be associated with high socio-economic status, and therefore civic engagement is related to socio-economic status rather than educational attainment (Campbell, 2006<sup>[2]</sup>). Increasing levels of education do not seem to affect individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards democracy but they do seem to influence civic engagement. This relationship appears to be strongly influenced by individuals' socio-economic status, particularly by income (Alemán and Kim, 2015<sup>[7]</sup>).

### ***Perceptions of democracy, by educational attainment***

Individuals aged 25-64 were asked in the ESS Round 10 to rate a series of statements from 0-10 according to the importance they gave to the statement, where 0 means not important at all and 10 means that what the statement is saying is essential to them. To assess individuals' perception of democracy, several aspects were considered, such as the importance of referendums as a form of direct democracy, the fact that governing parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job, the government's role in reducing differences in income levels, that the will of the people cannot be stopped and that the media is free to criticise the government.

There are no major differences in perceptions about democracy depending on educational attainment. On average, people aged 25-64 across the OECD countries and accession countries participating in ESS Round 10 rated these statements similarly regardless of their attainment levels. In particular, respondents stated it was highly important that governing parties are punished if they have done a bad job (an average score of around 8 out of 10) (Table A6.1, online columns). Similarly, the importance of citizens having the final say on major political issues by voting directly in referendums also scored around 8, regardless of respondents' attainment (Figure A6.1) Croatia, Poland, Slovenia and Switzerland have the highest rating for this statement, with individuals with all levels of attainment rating it almost 9. This is not surprising given the strong element of direct democracy in Switzerland. In some other countries, the score given to this aspect of democracy is lower; for instance in the Netherlands it scores around 6 for those with tertiary qualifications (Table A6.1). Support for referendums declined between 2012 and 2017 in the Netherlands, where the government has challenged this form of direct democracy (Rojon and Rijken, 2021<sup>[8]</sup>).

On average across OECD and accession countries participating in the ESS Round 10, individuals at all attainment levels rated redistribution as important. In most countries the score is lower among tertiary-educated individuals (around 8.2) than for those with below upper secondary attainment (around 8.9). This may be linked to individuals' socio-economic status and income, as individuals with higher attainment have higher earnings (see Indicator A4) (Table A6.1, online columns).

Another important aspect of democracy is freedom of speech, evidenced by a free media (McNair, 2012<sup>[9]</sup>). As with previous aspects of democracy, 25-64 year-olds in OECD countries and accession countries appear to place high importance on this aspect of democracy regardless of their education attainment, with a sightlier higher rate given by those with tertiary qualifications (Table A6.1, online columns). Individuals living in democratic societies are free to hold different political positions to those of their government and political parties and naturally tend to support the expression of different opinions in the political arena.

*Behaviour indicating civic engagement, by educational attainment and programme orientation*

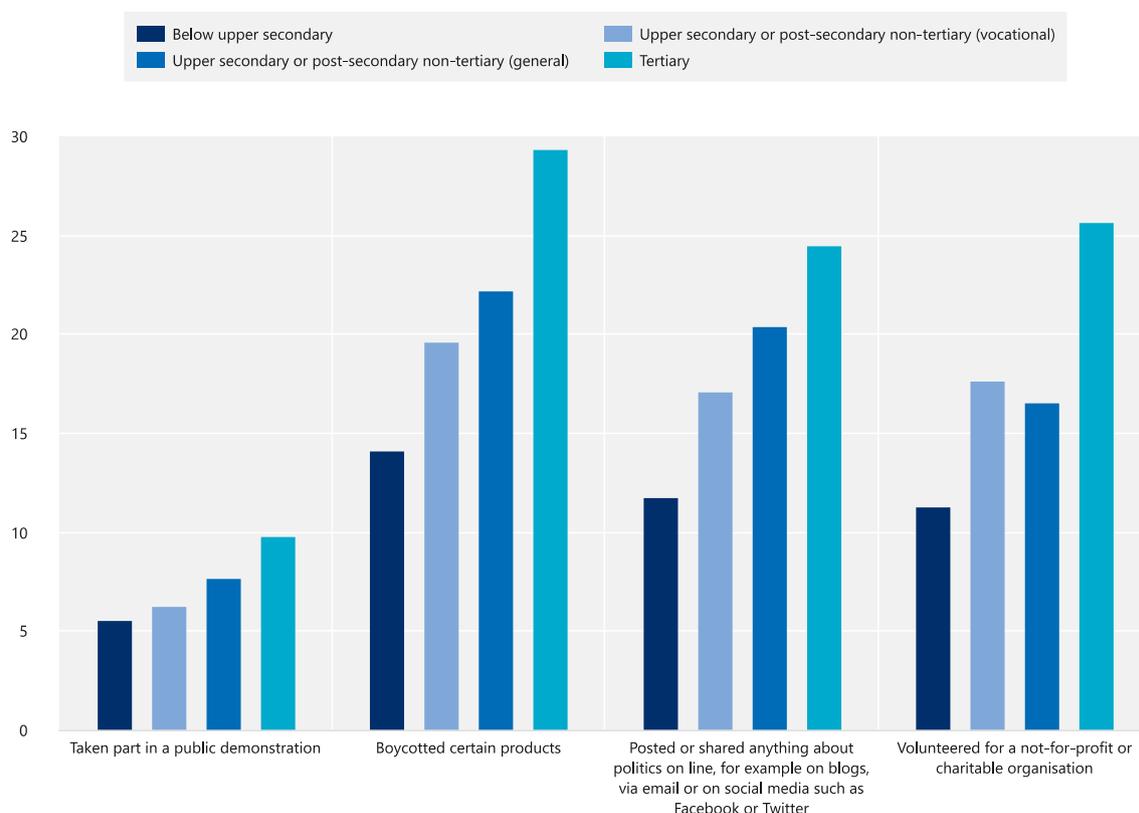
Civic engagement covers the various ways in which citizens participate in the life of their own community and improve the conditions of other members of the community. It can include political involvement and community service (Adler and Goggin, 2005<sup>[10]</sup>). Civic engagement is important for the well-being of societies and trust between individuals in their own community. Along with social cohesion, civic engagement is part of a society's social capital (Prewitt, Mackie and Habermann, 2014<sup>[11]</sup>). To measure civic engagement, 25-64 year-olds were asked in the ESS Round 10 if they participated in any of the following four activities in the last 12 months: taking part in a public demonstration, boycotting certain products, posting or sharing anything about politics on line and volunteering for a not-for-profit or charitable organisation. However, when analysing the results it should be noted that data are from 2021 reporting activities in the previous 12 months, so the results for attending a public demonstration and volunteering for a not-for-profit or charitable organisation may be biased compared to the other two behaviours (boycotting certain products and posting or sharing anything about politics on line) due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

There is a positive relation between educational attainment and the likelihood of participating in a public demonstration, on average across OECD and accession countries taking part in ESS Round 10 (Figure A6.2). In Canada, however, adults with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment are the least likely to participate in a public demonstration. This contrasts with the lack of a relationship between educational attainment and perceptions of democracy discussed above. In particular, individuals with lower attainment place similar importance on the will of the people as those with higher attainment but are less likely to have participated in a public demonstration when they feel that their views or political situation are being challenged (Table A6.1, online columns, and Table A6.2).

The relationship between educational attainment and political participation is also found by other studies (Mayer, 2011<sup>[12]</sup>), but it may not necessarily be a causal relationship. Younger people are more likely to hold a tertiary qualification and are also more likely to participate in public demonstrations (Melo and Stockemer, 2014<sup>[13]</sup>; Schofer and Meyer, 2005<sup>[14]</sup>). The higher rates of participation in demonstrations among the more educated might therefore primarily be an age effect. Looking at individual countries, Israel and Spain displayed high rates of participation in public demonstrations in 2020 regardless of educational attainment, with 20% of surveyed individuals reporting they had taken part in Israel and 21% in Spain (Table A6.2, online columns). In Spain, there was an increase in public demonstrations in 2020. Many of these protests were led by working classes and individuals in precarious economic situations and some by health professionals (Khenkin, 2020<sup>[15]</sup>) so they covered individuals with all levels of educational attainment. In Israel, 2020 also saw widespread public demonstrations (Hitman, 2021<sup>[16]</sup>).

**Figure A6.2. Share of adults who reported the following behaviour indicating civic engagement, by educational attainment and programme orientation (2020)**

Average of OECD and accession countries participating in the ESS Round 10; 25-64 year-olds; in per cent



**Source:** OECD (2023), Table A6.2. For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/m8ge64>

As with participation in demonstrations, there seems to be a positive relation between boycotting products and educational attainment. On average across the OECD and accession countries participating in the ESS Round 10, 23% of 25-64 year-olds report having boycotted certain products as a result of civic engagement in 2020. This association supported by the literature, establishes a direct relation between high educational attainment and consuming for political reasons (Yates, 2011<sup>[17]</sup>). Only 14% of individuals whose highest level of educational attainment is below upper secondary education claim to have boycotted certain products compared to 20% of those whose highest level of attainment is upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary and 29% of individuals who have tertiary qualifications. Austria (45%), Finland (44%) Germany (50%) and Sweden (51%) are the countries where the highest share of individuals who have boycotted certain products, regardless of educational attainment, while Bulgaria (6%), Hungary (2%) and Portugal (6%) have the lowest (Figure A6.2 and Table A6.2). This supports the finding in the literature that people in Central and Northern European countries are more likely to boycott certain products (Yates, 2011<sup>[17]</sup>).

Online engagement also seems related to attainment levels. On average across the OECD countries and accession countries participating in the ESS Round 10, 20% of individuals aged 25-64 report having posted or shared anything about politics on line in 2020, for example, on blogs, via email or on social media such

as Facebook or Twitter. As with other measures of civic engagement, there is a positive relation between posting about politics on line and educational attainment (Figure A6.2). Among young adults in tertiary education, digital media literacy fosters online political participation (Kahne, Lee and Feezell, 2012<sup>[18]</sup>; Kahne and Bowyer, 2019<sup>[19]</sup>). A more in-depth understanding of digital media therefore promotes political participation. Individuals with tertiary attainment are more likely to know more about digital media since they are more likely to have studied it (Kahne, Lee and Feezell, 2012<sup>[18]</sup>) and thus be more politically active on it.

As with all the other activities related to civic engagement discussed above, the higher the educational attainment of individuals, the greater the level of participation in volunteering (Figure A6.2). Previous research has found that people in Nordic countries and people with higher educational attainments tend to be more active in charity work (McCloughan et al., 2011<sup>[20]</sup>). On average among the OECD countries and accession countries participating in the ESS Round 10, 20% of 25-64 year-old individuals reported that they volunteered for a not-for-profit or charitable organisation in 2020. The highest participation rates are in Canada (40% in the national survey), Iceland (35%) and Norway (39%), The lowest rates are in Bulgaria (5%), the Czech Republic (6%) and Hungary (3%) (Table A6.2, online columns).

As these examples have shown, there is a positive relation between individuals' educational attainment and civic engagement. Individuals with tertiary education showed the highest rates of civic engagement and those with below upper secondary attainment the lowest rates. For individuals with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment, there is little difference on average between individuals who studied in general or vocational programmes, around 2 percentage points.

In the recent years, the world has seen an increase in threats to democracy. One of these threats is the spread of conspiracy theories. The COVID-19 pandemic saw an increase and spread of a number of conspiracy theories worldwide (De Coninck et al., 2021<sup>[21]</sup>). These conspiracy theories were not only linked to the pandemic, but affected other topics discussed in public life. Box A6.1 offers an analysis of these conspiracy theories and how educational attainment relates to individuals' belief in them.

### Box A6.1. The link between educational attainment and beliefs in conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories are an important source of mis- and dis-information. They attribute events or situations to secret actions of powerful individuals or groups. In the public debate, conspiracy theories have been blamed as a factor behind rising political populism and the reluctance to follow recommendations to limit the spread of COVID-19. More generally, belief in conspiracy theories is linked to a range of socially and individually harmful behaviours, including a decline in pro-social behaviour, increased support for discriminatory policies, reduced support for democratic government and low trust in institutions, unwillingness to address climate change, and poor medical decisions (Jolley and Douglas, 2013<sup>[22]</sup>; Lamberty and Leiser, 2019<sup>[23]</sup>; Oleksy et al., 2021<sup>[24]</sup>; UNESCO, 2022<sup>[25]</sup>).

A large number of studies have found that higher educational attainment is associated with a lower likelihood of belief in conspiracy theories (see for example Douglas et al. (2015<sup>[26]</sup>), Freeman and Bentall (2017<sup>[27]</sup>), Goertzel (1994<sup>[28]</sup>), (Mancosu, Vassallo and Vezzoni, 2017<sup>[29]</sup>) and van Prooijen (2016<sup>[30]</sup>)). However, the estimated effects are often small and explain only a fraction of the variation in the belief in conspiracy theories within the overall population, which indicates that educational attainment is only one of many factors influencing belief in conspiracy theories.

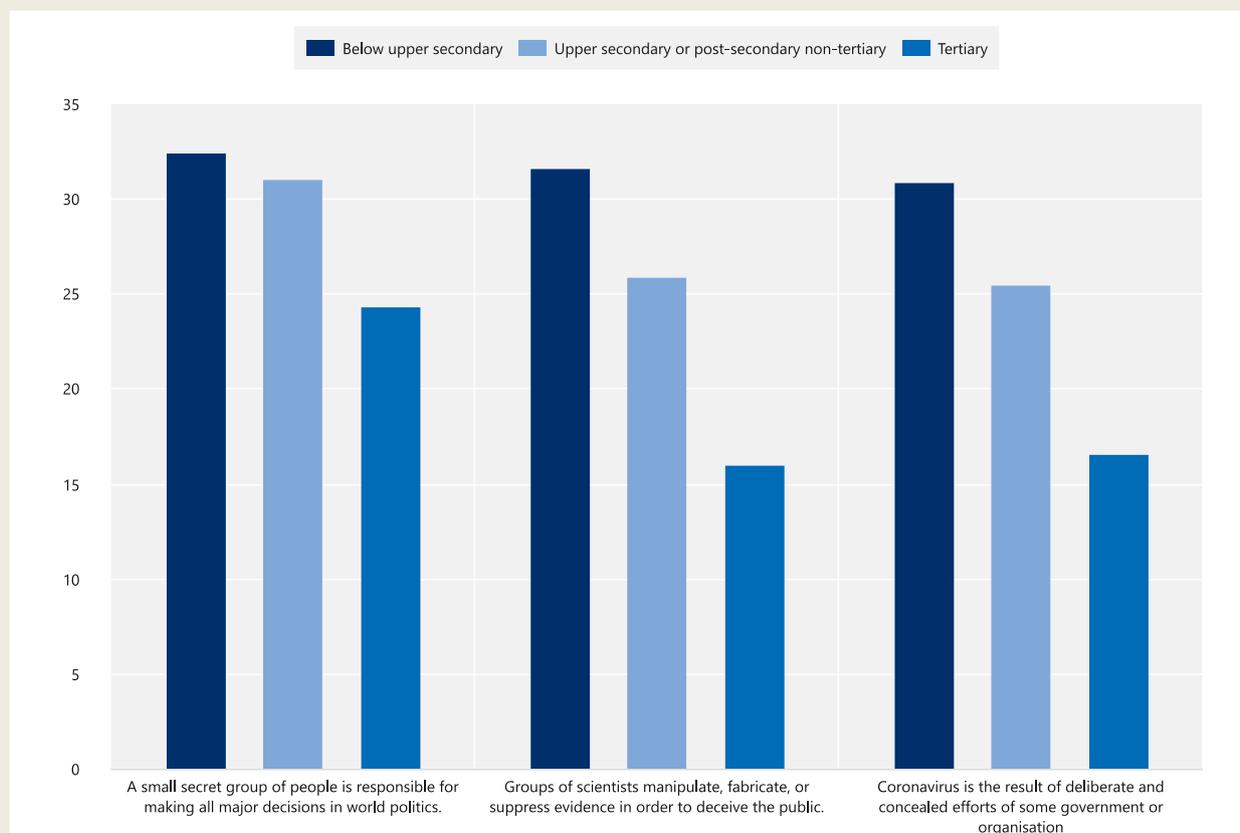
Figure A6.3 shows the share of individuals agreeing with three conspiracy theories presented to them in the ESS Round 10, broken down by educational attainment. The results confirm the pattern found in other research. There is a clear negative correlation between educational attainment and support for conspiracy theories, but even among tertiary-educated adults, a significant share still support them. Such misjudgements arise because individuals form beliefs based on familiarity with the message, cohesion with their worldview and social cues. Once beliefs are formed, individuals are reluctant to revise their beliefs even when presented with contradictory information (Ecker et al., 2022<sup>[31]</sup>).

Unsurprisingly, there is no single mechanism determining how education affects belief in conspiracy theories (van Prooijen, 2016<sup>[30]</sup>). Consequently, a variety of strategies are needed to fight conspiracy theories. Teachers can inoculate students against conspiracy theories by explaining their existence, teaching them how to recognise the flawed reasoning behind them and by creating empathy for the groups targeted by conspiracy theories (UNESCO, 2022<sup>[25]</sup>). Moreover, it is important to strengthen related competencies, such as media and digital literacy to help learners to find and access diverse news sources and to think critically about information (Hill, 2022<sup>[32]</sup>).

It should be noted that the patterns shown in Figure A6.3 are not reproduced in all the countries that have implemented the relevant questions in the ESS Round 10. This is a further indication that education alone is no panacea when it comes to tackling belief in conspiracy theories.

**Figure A6.3. Belief in conspiracy theories, by educational attainment (2020)**

Percentage of adults reporting they agree or strongly agree with the following statements, indicating belief in conspiracy theories; average of OECD and accession countries participating in the ESS Round 10; 25-64 years-olds.



Source: OECD (2023), Table A6.8, available on line. For more information see *Source* section and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/x12te9>

### ***Protection of personal data on the Internet***

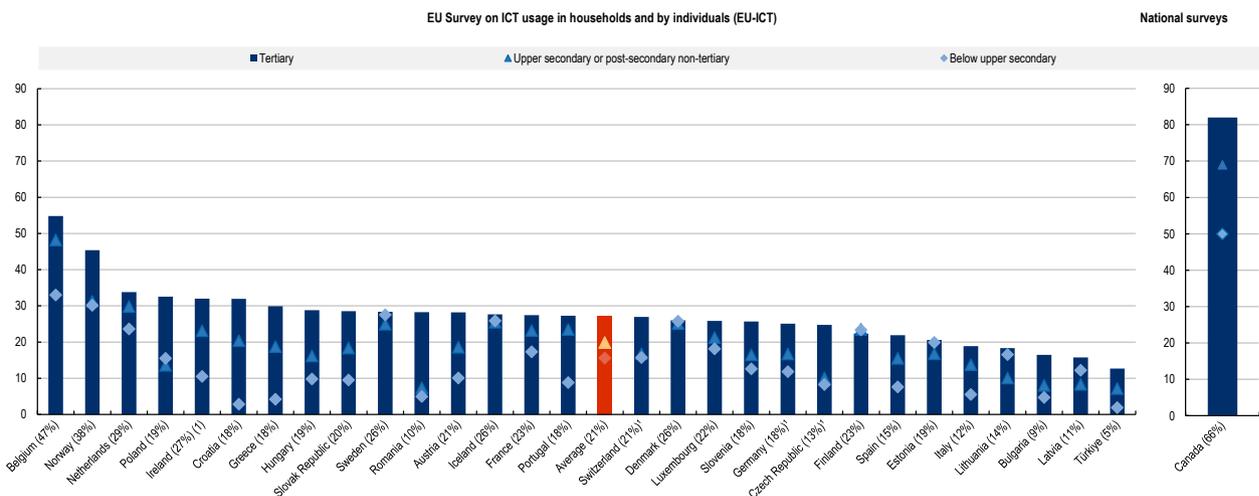
Privacy and Internet security measures are essential for protecting personal information and browsing the Internet safely. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most people in OECD countries conducted their education and work on line. Online attacks increased (Pranggono and Arabo, 2021<sup>[33]</sup>) and personal security on the Internet became an important issue to consider on a daily basis. Information from the EU-ICT survey is used to assess individuals' personal security and willingness to protect their personal data. The survey found that as educational attainment increases, so do the measures individuals take to protect their personal data on line.

The survey asked individuals aged 16-74 about their use of software that limits the ability of others to track their activities on the Internet. Use of this type of software is a good indicator of the extent to which individuals perceive that they need protection on the Internet and are aware of the fact that there are risks when browsing the Internet.

On average across the OECD and accession countries taking part in the EU-ICT survey in 2021, 21% of 16-74 year-olds claim to have used software that limits the ability to track their activities on the Internet in the three months prior to completing the survey. There is a positive relationship between educational attainment and the share of individuals taking this precaution. On average, 16% of individuals with below upper secondary attainment report having used such software, rising to 20% of those upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment and 27% of those with tertiary attainment. For tertiary-educated adults, across OECD countries taking part in the EU-ICT survey, Belgium (55%) and Norway (45%) had the highest share of tertiary-educated individuals using this type of software while Bulgaria (16%), Latvia (16%) and the Republic of Türkiye (13%), had the lowest shares. In Canada, 66% of individuals report using software that limits the ability to track their activities on the Internet regardless of their educational attainment according to the Canadian Internet Use Survey (CIUS) 2020. This is well above the OECD average. As with other countries, there is a positive relation between using software to limit the ability to track their activities on the Internet and educational attainment (Figure A6.4).

**Figure A6.4. Share of adults who used software that limits the ability to track their activities on the Internet, by educational attainment (2021)**

16-74 year-olds; in per cent



**Note:** The percentage in parentheses represents the share of adults who used software that limits the ability to track their activities on the Internet, regardless of educational attainment.

1. Break in the series compared with the previous year.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the share of adults with tertiary attainment who have used tracking-limiting software.

**Source:** OECD (2023), Table A6.3. For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source sections* and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[6]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/jshwxc>

There are other aspects to consider when analysing privacy and the measures individuals take to protect personal data. More individuals report reading privacy policy statements than using software that limits the ability to track activities on the Internet. On average across OECD and accession countries taking part in the EU-ICT survey, 36% of individuals claim to read privacy policy statements before providing personal data regardless of educational attainment. This precaution is followed by 27% of those with below upper secondary attainment, 36% of those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary attainment and 44% of those with tertiary attainment. A similar pattern can be found with limiting access to a profile or content on social networking sites or shared online storage. Individuals with tertiary attainment are more likely to report taking this precaution than those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary

attainment, who in turn are more likely to do so than individuals with below upper secondary attainment (Table A6.3, online columns).

## Definitions

**Age group:** Adults refer to 25-64 year-olds.

**Educational attainment** refers to the highest level of education successfully completed by an individual.

**Levels of education:** See the *Reader's Guide* at the beginning of this publication for a presentation of all ISCED 2011 levels.

**Perception of democracy:** the European Social Survey defines perception of democracy as citizens' attitudes to democracy and meaning that people attach to the word in different countries. It conveys the importance of free and fair elections, equality before the law, the delivery of social outcomes and opportunities for citizen participation. The meaning covers four dimensions of democracy: the electoral dimension, the liberal dimension, the social dimension and the direct democracy dimension. This definition of democracy is based on Morlino (2009<sup>[34]</sup>) and Kisis (2015<sup>[35]</sup>).

**Civic engagement** is any individual or group activity addressing issues of public concern.

## Methodology

Table A6.4, Table A6.5, Table A6.6, Table A6.7 and Table A6.8, available on line, combine data from different sources which could compromise cross-country comparability in certain cases. Refer to table notes and (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>) *Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes*, (<https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en>) for country-specific information.

For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

## Source

Data on civic engagement and governance, both for the perception of democracy and behaviour indicating civic engagement for all countries assessed are taken from the European Social Survey, Round 10 survey. These data have been compiled by the OECD Labour Market, Economic and Social Outcomes of Learning (LSO) Network. Data for Canada are drawn from the General Social Survey-Social Identity (GSS SI), Cycle 35, 2020 and the General Social Survey-Giving Volunteering and Participating (GSS SI), Cycle 33, 2018 for Tables A6.2 and A6.3.

Data on personal safety and individuals' measures to protect their personal data online are drawn from the EU-ICT survey, conducted by Eurostat. For Tables A6.3, A6.6 and A6.7, the Canadian Internet Use Survey (CIUS) 2020 was used.

## References

- Adler, R. and J. Goggin (2005), “What do we mean by “civic engagement”?”, *Journal of Transformative Education*, Vol. 3/3, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344605276792>. [10]
- Alemán, E. and Y. Kim (2015), “The democratizing effect of education”, *Research and Politics*, Vol. 2/4, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168015613360>. [7]
- Burns Ed., T. and F. Gottschalk Ed. (2020), *Education in the Digital Age: Healthy and Happy Children. Educational Research and Innovation*. [4]
- Campbell, D. (2006), “What is education’s impact on civic and social engagement?”, in *Measuring the Effects of Education on Health and Civic Engagement: Proceedings of the Copenhagen Symposium*, OECD, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/37425694.pdf>. [2]
- De Coninck, D. et al. (2021), “Beliefs in conspiracy theories and misinformation About COVID-19: Comparative perspectives on the role of anxiety, depression and exposure to and trust in information sources”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 12, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.646394>. [21]
- Douglas, K. et al. (2015), “Someone is pulling the strings: Hypersensitive agency detection and belief in conspiracy theories”, *Thinking & Reasoning*, Vol. 22/1, pp. 57-77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13546783.2015.1051586>. [26]
- Ecker, U. et al. (2022), “The psychological drivers of misinformation belief and its resistance to correction”, *Nature Reviews Psychology*, Vol. 1/1, pp. 13-29, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-021-00006-y>. [31]
- Freeman, D. and R. Bentall (2017), “The concomitants of conspiracy concerns”, *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, Vol. 52/5, pp. 595-604, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-017-1354-4>. [27]
- Goertzel, T. (1994), “Belief in conspiracy theories”, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 15/4, p. 731, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791630>. [28]
- Hauser, S. (2000), “Education, Ability, and Civic Engagement in the Contemporary United States”, *Social Science Research*, Vol. 29/4, <https://doi.org/10.1006/ssre.2000.0681>. [6]
- Hill, J. (2022), “Policy responses to false and misleading digital content: A snapshot of children’s media literacy”, *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 275, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1104143e-en>. [32]
- Hitman, G. (2021), “More divided than united: Israeli social protest during Covid-19 Pandemic of 2020”, *Cogent Social Sciences*, Vol. 7/1, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1994203>. [16]
- Jolley, D. and K. Douglas (2013), “The social consequences of conspiracism: Exposure to conspiracy theories decreases intentions to engage in politics and to reduce one’s carbon footprint”, *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 105/1, pp. 35-56, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12018>. [22]

- Kahne, J. and B. Bowyer (2019), “Can media literacy education increase digital engagement in politics?”, *Learning, Media and Technology*, Vol. 44/2, pp. 211-224, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2019.1601108>. [19]
- Kahne, J., N. Lee and J. Feezell (2012), “Digital media literacy education and online civic and political participation”, *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 6/1. [18]
- Khenkin, S. (2020), “Spain: Modern trends of mass protest”, *World Economy and International Relations*, Vol. 64/9, <https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2020-64-9-73-82>. [15]
- Kriesi, H. et al. (2013), *Democracy in the Age of Globalization and Mediatization*, Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century, Palgrave Macmillan, London, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2015.1066594>. [36]
- Lamberty, P. and D. Leiser (2019), “‘Sometimes you just have to go in’ – The link between conspiracy beliefs and political action”, <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/bdrxc>. [23]
- Mancosu, M., S. Vassallo and C. Vezzoni (2017), “Believing in Conspiracy Theories: Evidence from an Exploratory Analysis of Italian Survey Data”, *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 22/3, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2017.1359894>. [29]
- Mayer, A. (2011), “Does education increase political participation?”, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 73/3, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238161100034X>. [12]
- McCloughan, P. et al. (2011), *Participation in Volunteering and Unpaid Work*, Eurofound, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2011/quality-of-life-social-policies/participation-in-volunteering-and-unpaid-work>. [20]
- McNair, B. (2012), *Journalism and Democracy: An Evaluation of the Political Public Sphere*, Taylor Francis, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203021286>. [9]
- Melo, D. and D. Stockemer (2014), “Age and political participation in Germany, France and the UK: A comparative analysis”, *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 12/1, pp. 33-53, <https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2012.31>. [13]
- Michels, A. and L. De Graaf (2017), “Examining citizen participation: Local participatory policymaking and democracy revisited”, *Local Government Studies*, Vol. 43/6, pp. 875-881, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2017.1365712>. [3]
- Morlino, L. (2009), “Legitimacy and the quality of democracy”, *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 60/196, pp. 211-222, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2451.2010.01717.x>. [34]
- Nieuwelink, H., P. Dekker and G. ten Dam (2019), “Compensating or reproducing? Students from different educational tracks and the role of school in experiencing democratic citizenship”, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 49/3, pp. 275-292, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2018.1529738>. [1]
- OECD (2023), *Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d7f76adc-en>. [5]
- Oleksy, T. et al. (2021), “Content matters. Different predictors and social consequences of general and government-related conspiracy theories on COVID-19”, *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 168, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110289>. [24]

- Pranggono, B. and A. Arabo (2021), “COVID-19 pandemic cybersecurity issues”, *Internet Technology Letters*, Vol. 4/2, <https://doi.org/10.1002/itl2.247>. [33]
- Prewitt, K., C. Mackie and H. Habermann (2014), *Civic Engagement and Social Cohesion: Measuring Dimensions of Social Capital to Inform Policy*, National Academies Press, Washington, DC, <https://doi.org/10.17226/18831>. [11]
- Rojon, S. and A. Rijken (2021), “Referendums: Increasingly unpopular among the ‘winners’ of modernization? Comparing public support for the use of referendums in Switzerland, the Netherlands, the UK, and Hungary”, *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 19/1, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41295-020-00222-5>. [8]
- Schofer, E. and J. Meyer (2005), “The worldwide expansion of higher education in the Twentieth Century”, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 70/6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240507000602>. [14]
- UNESCO (2022), *Addressing conspiracy theories: what teachers need to know*, UNESCO, <https://doi.org/10.54675/qgae9102>. [25]
- van Prooijen, J. (2016), “Why education predicts decreased belief in conspiracy theories”, *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, Vol. 31/1, pp. 50-58, <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3301>. [30]
- Yates, L. (2011), “Critical consumption: Boycotting and buycotting in Europe”, *European Societies*, Vol. 13/2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2010.514352>. [17]
- Zisis, I. (2015), “Democracy in the age of globalization and mediatization”, *European Politics and Society*, Vol. 16/4, pp. 613-615, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2015.1066594>. [35]

# Indicator A6 Tables

## Tables Indicator A6. Indicator How are social outcomes related to education?

<b>Table A6.1</b>	Average score for the perception of democracy; by educational attainment (2020)
<b>Table A6.2</b>	Share of adults who reported the following behaviour indicating civic engagement, by educational attainment and programme orientation (2020)
<b>Table A6.3</b>	Percentage of Internet users taking precautions to protect the privacy of their personal data, by type of precaution and educational attainment (2021)
<b>WEB Table A6.4</b>	<i>Average score for the perception of democracy; by gender, educational attainment and programme orientation (2020)</i>
<b>WEB Table A6.5</b>	<i>Average score for the perception of democracy, by age group, educational attainment and programme orientation (2020)</i>
<b>WEB Table A6.6</b>	<i>Share of Internet users taking precautions to protect their privacy of personal data, by type of precaution, gender and educational attainment (2021)</i>
<b>WEB Table A6.7</b>	<i>Share of Internet users taking precautions to protect the privacy of their personal data, by type of precaution, age group and educational attainment (2021)</i>
<b>WEB Table A6.8</b>	<i>Share of adults reporting they agree or strongly agree with the following statements, indicating belief in conspiracy theories (2020)</i>

StatLink  <https://stat.link/2d8ysb>

Cut-off date for the data: 15 June 2023. Any updates on data can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-data-en>. More breakdowns can also be found at <http://stats.oecd.org/>, *Education at a Glance Database*.

Table A6.1. Average score for the perception of democracy, by educational attainment (2020)

European Social Survey (ESS) Round 10; 25-64 year-olds

**Reading column 1:** in Austria, adults with below upper secondary attainment consider the importance of the statement “National elections are free and fair” with a score 8.4 out of 10.

**Reading column 4:** in Belgium, adults with below upper secondary attainment evaluate the statement “National elections are free and fair” with a score 6.2 out of 10.

	National elections are free and fair						Citizens have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums					
	Importance of the statement			Evaluation of the extent to which the statement applies			Importance of the statement			Evaluation of the extent to which the statement applies		
	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
<b>OECD countries</b>												
Austria	8.4	9.0	9.6	7.4	7.9	8.3	8.3	8.1	7.6	4.8	5.0	4.6
Belgium	7.8	8.3	9.3	6.2	6.9	7.9	7.3	7.5	7.0	4.1	4.1	3.2
Czech Republic	8.8	8.9	9.0	7.1	6.6	7.1	7.9	8.1	7.8	5.3	5.7	5.1
Estonia	9.0	9.2	9.5	6.7	6.6	8.0	8.1	8.2	7.8	4.4	4.3	4.7
Finland	9.3	9.7	9.8	9.1	9.3	9.5	7.9	7.8	7.2	6.7	6.6	5.6
France	8.3	8.6	9.3	6.9	6.6	7.7	7.7	8.1	7.5	4.0	3.6	3.6
Germany	7.5	8.9	9.5	7.0	7.8	8.5	7.5	7.9	6.8	4.8	4.2	3.6
Greece	9.0	9.2	9.2	7.2	7.3	7.5	7.9	7.6	8.1	3.7	3.6	4.0
Hungary	8.7	8.8	9.0	5.7	5.4	5.8	8.0	7.9	8.2	5.3	5.4	5.2
Iceland	9.2	9.5	9.7	8.1	8.0	8.4	8.0	8.4	7.7	5.4	5.6	4.6
Israel	6.5	8.9	8.9	6.1	6.6	7.1	5.6	7.2	7.0	5.1	3.8	3.4
Ireland	8.1	8.3	9.1	6.9	7.2	8.0	8.1	8.0	8.6	6.2	6.6	6.7
Italy	8.4	8.7	8.8	5.6	6.4	6.2	7.9	8.2	7.8	4.3	4.7	4.3
Latvia	8.8	8.1	9.0	4.6	5.7	6.7	8.0	7.9	8.2	4.7	4.8	5.0
Lithuania	8.3	7.9	8.9	5.8	5.8	6.7	7.9	8.2	8.2	4.9	5.1	5.7
Netherlands	8.9	9.5	9.6	7.8	8.0	8.8	7.3	7.5	6.0	5.0	4.6	3.9
Norway	9.1	9.3	9.7	8.9	9.1	9.3	8.2	8.1	8.0	7.1	7.0	6.2
Poland	9.3	9.3	9.6	8.0	8.7	8.4	8.6	8.7	8.5	4.4	3.4	4.3
Slovak Republic	8.4	8.0	8.8	6.9	6.5	7.4	7.9	7.5	7.8	4.3	4.2	4.9
Slovenia	9.1	9.0	9.5	7.0	6.8	7.9	8.8	8.7	8.9	5.7	5.4	5.7
Spain	9.2	9.6	9.8	7.3	7.4	7.5	8.4	8.7	8.4	4.6	3.6	3.3
Sweden	8.9	9.2	9.6	8.1	8.4	8.9	7.8	7.7	7.3	5.8	5.4	5.2
Switzerland	8.7	9.0	9.4	8.1	8.3	8.7	8.5	8.5	8.5	7.7	7.5	7.9
United Kingdom	8.2	9.1	9.5	7.9	7.9	8.3	8.0	8.0	7.5	6.5	6.1	5.4
<b>Accession countries</b>												
Bulgaria	9.2	9.1	9.0	3.5	3.5	3.7	8.4	8.3	8.1	2.4	2.2	2.5
Croatia	8.7	8.8	9.1	5.5	5.5	5.8	8.6	8.7	8.5	4.3	3.9	3.9
<b>Average</b>	8.6	8.9	9.3	6.9	7.1	7.6	7.9	8.1	7.8	5.1	4.8	4.7

**Note:** See StatLink and Box A6.2 for the notes related to this Table.

**Source:** OECD (2023). For more information see *Definitions, Methodology* and *Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/zp2sgt>

**Table A6.2. Share of adults who reported the following behaviour indicating civic engagement, by educational attainment and programme orientation (2020)**

European Social Survey (ESS) Round 10 or national surveys; 25-64 year-olds

	European Social Survey (ESS) Round 10											
	Boycotted certain products						Posted or shared anything about politics on line, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter					
	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary			Tertiary	All levels of education	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary			Tertiary	All levels of education
		General	Vocational	Total				General	Vocational	Total		
(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	
<b>OECD countries</b>												
Austria	27	50	34	36	59	45	23	34	20	22	28	24
Czech Republic	5	12	8	9	17	11	14	17	14	14	19	15
Estonia	3	10	7	8	14	11	18	11	8	9	20	15
Finland	38	51	37	39	48	44	10	35	17	19	28	24
France	20	31	26	27	43	33	11	18	18	18	25	20
Germany	17	51	44	44	58	50	15	26	19	19	24	21
Greece	13	17	20	18	23	19	5	24	26	25	31	25
Hungary	1	2	2	2	6	2	2	11	7	8	19	10
Iceland	19	37	27	31	41	34	15	24	19	21	28	24
Israel	16	33	32	33	40	38	10	26	17	23	29	27
Italy	7	11	12	11	17	12	11	22	16	19	27	20
Latvia	4	19	12	13	18	16	23	19	16	17	16	17
Lithuania	8	2	5	4	9	7	8	12	13	13	25	18
Netherlands	4	19	11	12	26	18	16	21	17	17	20	19
Norway	31	23	27	26	33	30	15	20	21	21	30	26
Poland	11	22	23	23	36	26	8	15	15	15	26	18
Portugal	1	3	12	4	14	6	7	10	17	11	25	13
Slovak Republic	c	8	10	10	13	10	6	17	20	20	16	18
Slovenia	5	24	6	8	22	14	5	23	13	14	18	15
Spain	22	30	30	30	38	32	25	32	31	32	37	32
Sweden	40	43	50	49	55	51	17	25	23	23	23	23
Switzerland	19	26	25	25	41	32	11	17	16	16	27	21
United Kingdom	21	18	19	19	38	30	13	36	25	27	36	30
<b>Accession countries</b>												
Bulgaria	1	3	4	4	10	6	3	10	11	11	21	14
Croatia	3	12	8	8	16	10	2	8	8	8	14	9
<b>Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>National surveys</b>											
	<b>Boycotted certain products</b>						<b>Posted or shared anything about politics on line, for example on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter</b>					
	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary			Tertiary	All levels of education	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary			Tertiary	All levels of education
		General	Vocational	Total				General	Vocational	Total		
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
<b>OECD countries</b>												
Canada <sup>1</sup>	15	24	28	25	39	32	11	18	18	18	20	18

**Note:** See StatLink and Box A6.2 for the notes related to this Table.

**Source:** OECD (2023). For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/hqyrxa>

**Table A6.3. Percentage of Internet users taking precautions to protect the privacy of their personal data, by type of precaution and educational attainment (2021)**

EU Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals (EU-ICT) or national surveys; 16-74 year-olds

EU Survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals (EU-ICT)												
	Use software that limits the ability to track their activities on the internet				Read privacy policy statements before providing personal data				Restricted or refused access to their geographical location			
	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	All levels of education	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	All levels of education	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	All levels of education
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
<b>OECD countries</b>												
Austria	10	19	28	21	37	46	55	48	26	41	55	44
Belgium	33	48	55	47	12	20	27	21	22	40	62	44
Czech Republic <sup>1</sup>	8	10	25	13	21	30	45	32	27	34	54	37
Denmark	26	25	26	26	28	36	38	34	49	60	74	62
Estonia	20	17	21	19	41	35	42	39	41	39	48	43
Finland	23	24	22	23	45	51	53	50	54	64	70	64
France	17	23	27	23	17	23	26	23	35	52	75	56
Germany <sup>1</sup>	12	17	25	18	28	40	44	39	21	34	49	36
Greece	4	19	30	18	14	40	55	37	13	33	56	34
Hungary	10	16	29	19	27	40	53	42	20	33	55	37
Iceland	26	25	28	26	39	39	39	39	68	75	85	77
Ireland <sup>1</sup>	11	23	32	27	13	32	42	37	23	48	70	59
Italy	6	14	19	12	23	43	53	37	19	41	56	35
Latvia	12	8	16	11	39	37	58	44	34	29	52	38
Lithuania	17	10	18	14	29	29	45	36	29	23	44	32
Luxembourg	18	21	26	22	15	19	31	22	25	44	67	48
Netherlands	24	30	34	29	39	43	40	41	61	75	85	74
Norway	30	31	45	38	39	45	45	43	57	59	75	67
Poland	16	14	33	19	18	23	47	29	29	26	56	35
Portugal	9	23	27	18	25	48	51	38	32	69	79	55
Slovak Republic	10	18	29	20	20	37	52	39	15	31	58	36
Slovenia	13	16	26	18	17	27	34	27	22	23	52	31
Spain	8	15	22	15	28	43	49	40	35	58	67	53
Sweden	28	25	28	26	27	35	33	32	45	58	74	61
Switzerland <sup>1</sup>	16	17	27	21	37	43	47	44	48	61	75	65
Türkiye	2	7	13	5	18	43	51	30	12	32	46	24
<b>Accession countries</b>												
Bulgaria	5	8	16	9	15	34	57	34	8	18	37	20
Croatia	3	20	32	18	17	48	61	43	11	41	52	36
Romania	5	7	28	10	16	30	58	32	13	20	48	23
<b>Average</b>	16	20	27	21	27	36	44	36	33	45	63	48
National surveys												
	Use software that limits the ability to track their activities on the internet				Read privacy policy statements before providing personal data				Restricted or refused access to their geographical location			
	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	All levels of education	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	All levels of education	Below upper secondary	Upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary	Tertiary	All levels of education
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
<b>OECD countries</b>												
Canada <sup>2</sup>	50	69	82	66	m	m	m	m	37	56	70	53

Note: See StatLink and Box A6.2 for the notes related to this Table.

Source: OECD (2023). For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

StatLink  <https://stat.link/jkbglc>

## Box A6.2. Notes for Indicator A6 Tables

### **Table A6.1. Average score for the perception of democracy, by educational attainment (2020)**

1. Year of reference 2018 from column 19 to 24.

The score ranges from 0-10. The columns showing the "importance of the statement" correspond to the view items in the ESS Round 10 questionnaire. A score of 0 means respondent do not think the statement is important at all and a score of 10 means respondent think it is essential. The columns showing the "Evaluation on the extent to which the statement applies" correspond to the evaluation items in the ESS Round 10 questionnaire. A score of 0 means respondent think that the statement does not apply at all in the country and a score of 10 means it applies completely. Additional data on statements about governing parties being punished in elections, government measures to reduce differences in income levels, the will of the people and media freedom are available for consultation on line (see StatLink).

### **Table A6.2. Share of adults who reported the following behaviour indicating civic engagement, by educational attainment and programme orientation (2020)**

Additional data on civic engagement are available for consultation on line (see StatLink).

1. Year of reference 2018 from column 19 to 24 (web version of Table)

### **Table A6.3. Share of Internet users taking precautions to protect the privacy of their personal data, by type of precaution and educational attainment (2021)**

Note that the average differs from the one published by Eurostat as this is an unweighted average and the country coverage is different. Additional data on limiting access and use of data, checking whether websites were secure or asking administrators to update personal data are available for consultation on line (see StatLink).

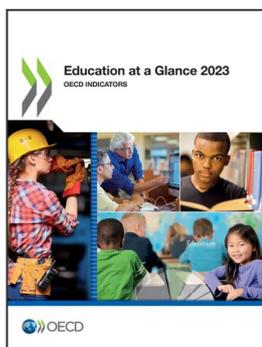
1. Break in the series compared with the previous year.

2. Year of reference: 2020.

For more information see *Definitions, Methodology and Source* sections and [Education at a Glance 2023 Sources, Methodologies and Technical Notes](#) (OECD, 2023<sup>[5]</sup>).

Data and more breakdowns are available in the *Education at a Glance Database* (<http://stats.oecd.org/>).

Please refer to the *Reader's Guide* for information concerning symbols for missing data and abbreviations.



**From:**  
**Education at a Glance 2023**  
OECD Indicators

**Access the complete publication at:**  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2023), “How are social outcomes related to education?”, in *Education at a Glance 2023: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/192b44ac-en>

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.