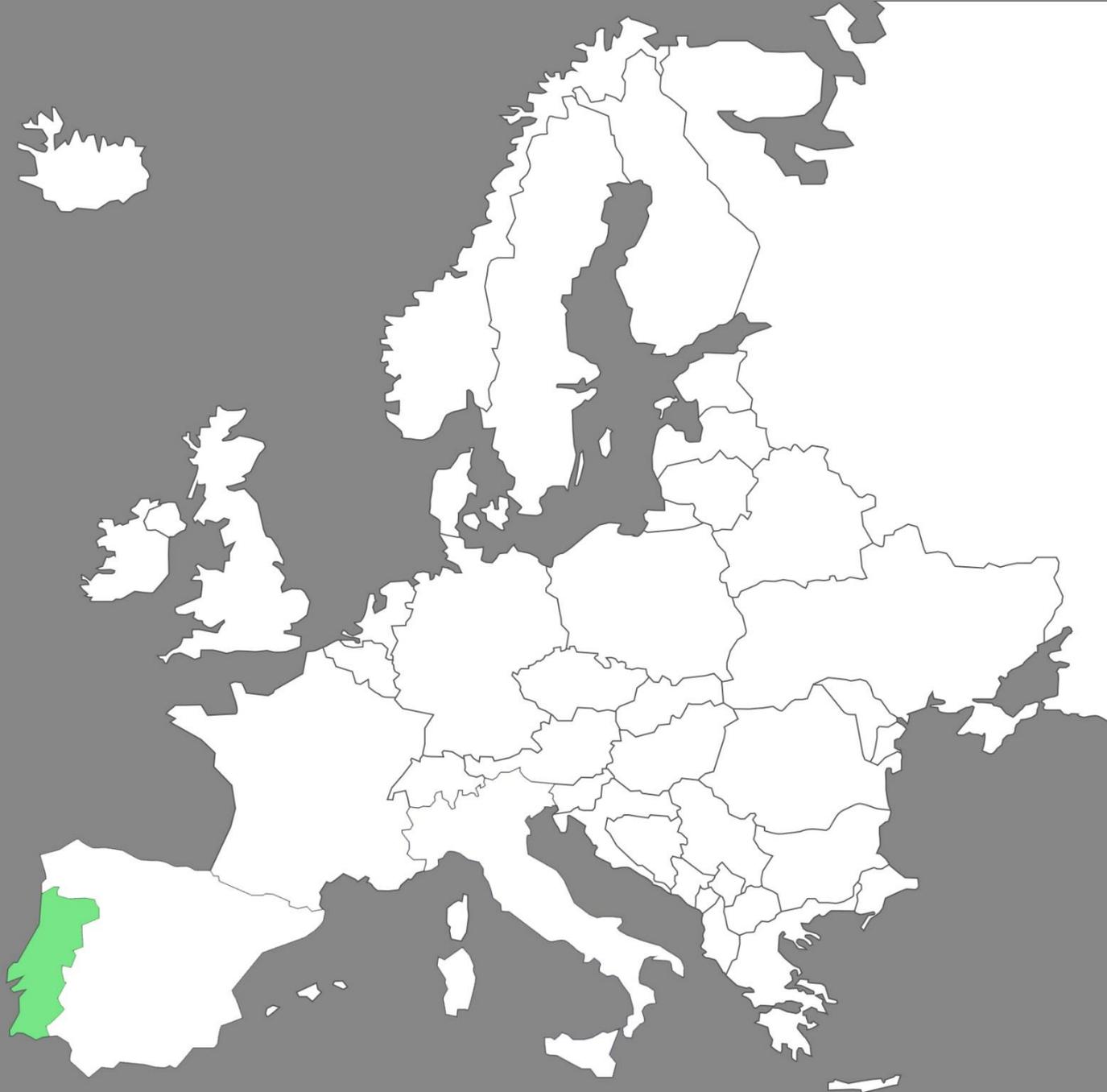


# Tr@ck-in Public employment services tracking effectiveness in supporting rural NEETs



## WP 2 - MAPPING Overview on rural NEETs - PORTUGAL

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There are two overall objectives: reduction of economic and social disparities in Europe, and to strengthen bilateral relations between the donor countries and 15 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics.

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## Preface

This report is an output of Track-IN | Public employment services tracking effectiveness in supporting rural NEETs whose aim is to deliver an evaluation model of the effectiveness of Public Employment Services (PES) tracking support types. The goal is to respond to the challenges of the mismatch between broadband policy package aims and the needs of NEETs in rural areas and contribute to a greater visibility of the constraints and needs that young people face in rural areas.

The Track-IN project comprises a comparative 6-country case study (Portugal, Italy, Estonia, Lithuania, Spain, and Bulgaria), approached by three studies. In Work package 2 (WP2) the propose is to map the best practices in tracking young people aged between 25-29 years old, living in rural areas, and who are currently in a NEET situation (not in employment, education, or training). Methodologically, WP2 includes a comparative case study of different PES tracking support types programs foreseeing several steps: mapping (identifying all rural PES across the beneficiary countries, using Eurostat Labour Force Survey (2018) collapsed by degree of urbanization to delimit the territorial research scope); Screening (through a short survey, to target rural PES tracking practices fitting the project); Data collection (including in-depth analysis of selected cases using a multi-informant approach (PES administrative data; program documentation analysis; interviews with PES managers; world-café sessions with NEETs).

This report is the result of the phase of WP2 – mapping - an overview on rural NEETS, outlining in detail the situation of rural NEETs aged between 25 and 29 years old, over the last decade (2011-2021) in each beneficiary partner country. The overview will include indicators on youth population, youth employment and unemployment, education, and NEETs distribution. The characterization of all indicators will adopt the degree of urbanization as a central criterion, enabling proportional comparisons between rural areas, towns and suburbs, and cities. These analyses are further collapsed into age subgroups and, when possible, in sex groups for greater detail.

The statistical procedures adopted across the different selected dimensions where: descriptive longitudinal analysis; using graphical displays (e.g., overlay line charts); and, whenever relevant, the calculation of proportional absolute and relative changes between 2011, 2015 and 2021, and finally 2011 and 2021. These time ranges were chosen to capture the indicators evolution before and after the economic and financial crisis which hit European countries in the beginning of the decade and, more recently, to capture the impact of COVID19 pandemic crises. All data was extracted from Eurostat public datasets.

Ana Sofia Ribeiro and Tatiana Ferreira (ICS-ULisboa)

# Introduction

This report aims to characterise the situation of young people neither in Employment nor in Education/Training (NEEF), aged between 25 and 29 years, over the last decade (2011-2021), in Portugal.

The report comprises three parts:

- ✓ an introductory contextualisation with the most relevant information about the Portuguese social, economic and political situation in the last decades and key youth policies based on a review of relevant literature and relevant outline resources. This part of the report is based on the national report prepared in the framework of COST Action (CA18213): Rural NEET Youth Network. Modelling the risks underlying rural NEETs social exclusion (Simões et al, 2020), namely the Portuguese contextualisation. The contextualisation presented in this report is then an adaptation of that information, having been updated with information on the impact of the pandemic crisis resulting from COVID19 namely by the closing of schools, and a dimension on social inclusion was also added.
- ✓ a methodological note explaining data selections criteria's and extraction process;
- ✓ data analysis divided in the main indicator dimensions: population; employment, education and NEETs.

# Contextualization

## Geographical characterisation

Portugal is a sovereign state in southwestern Europe, located on the Iberian Peninsula and covering two island groups in the northern Atlantic Ocean (Azores and Madeira). The total area of its territory is 92,090 km<sup>2</sup> and it borders Spain to the north and east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west and south.

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Figure 1- Map of Portugal, by NUTS II regions



Source: [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Comunidades\\_intermunicipais.png](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Comunidades_intermunicipais.png) (CC BY-SA 4.0)

## Population

In 2021, the country had an estimated population of 10,352.042 individuals, of which 542.243 have 25-29 years old. (INE/Pordata, 2020).

In the last two decades, Portugal faced a double aging process: The number of elderly people increased, while the proportion of young people decreased, leading to a progressive population decline. This led to a reconfiguration of the demographic structure with an increase in life expectancy, a low fertility rate, and an exodus of the young population, especially during the economic and financial crisis after 2008 (Simões et al., 2020; Vieira et al., 2017).

## Administrative structure of the country

Considering political governance, the state administrative structure relies on a central government supported by a national parliament. Due to their geographical characteristics, the Azores and Madeira archipelagos have their own regional government and parliament.

### Youth

Youth policy has a centralised structure in the form of a State Secretariat for Youth and Sport. Since 2015, this structure has been integrated into the Ministry of Education for policy-making purposes. Previously, the sector was under the supervision of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (European Commission, 2020). This government body dedicated to youth was created in 1985. This was a political recognition of the importance of designing and developing a youth policy that went beyond just education policy (Ferreira et al., 2019). In 1986, Portugal joined the European Economic Community, which opened access to EEC funds and special financial packages for youth.

In Portugal, youth policies were developed and implemented based on a participatory approach to youth. This means that solutions to youth problems are developed considering the participation of youth as people with rights. This is achieved primarily through youth organisations and representative structures. To tackle problems such as high unemployment rates, poverty risk or school failure, interministerial coordination and interdepartmental policy measures are usually taken, involving the departments of education, social affairs or health, among others. The area of youth policy has been established and strengthened over the years. In 2018, the first National Youth Plan was launched, derived from European priorities and the needs of Portuguese youth (European Commission, 2020).

Some sectoral policies have had a direct impact on Portuguese youth in recent decades. Regarding employment, the minimum legal age for entering the labour market is 16, provided that the youth has completed (or is enrolled in) secondary school (Código do Trabalho, artigo 68o). In the field of employment and under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, there is a network of public services

that implements policies in this area. Interministerial cooperation is also mobilised to address challenges such as youth unemployment or precariousness. This coordination takes place, for example, within the *Garantia Jovem* (Youth Guarantee) programme, which involves sectors such as Employment, Education, Economy, Youth, Foreign Affairs (for international mobility) and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, in which the General Directorate for Local Authorities is integrated. The development of strategies and the search for solutions to the challenges of youth are carried out through a social dialogue involving the relevant social partners.

This participation takes place through the Standing Committee for Social Dialogue and other tripartite bodies. Non-governmental organisations are also actively involved and contribute to various areas. For example, the National Association of Young Entrepreneurs and the Youth Foundation are particularly active in the field of entrepreneurship. The Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) acts as a national mechanism for non-discrimination in the labour market.

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## Education system

Education in Portugal is universal, with a large and dominant public sector, although private educational institutions are also offered. The architecture of the education system is roughly divided into six levels: Preschool (ISCED 0); Elementary (1st to 4th grade - ISCED 1); Lower Middle School (5th and 6th grade - ISCED 2); Upper Middle School (7th to 9th grade - ISCED 2); Secondary (10th to 12th grade - ISCED 3-4); and Higher Education (ISCED 5-8) (*Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo no 237/1986*). An important policy decision was the increase of compulsory education from 9 to 12 years of schooling starting in 2009. In addition, over the last decade, the state has presented several legislative packages to improve conditions for equal access to education and training (e.g., the National Program to Promote School Success) or to promote the modernisation, qualification and diversification of higher education. These legislative initiatives have also ensured greater investment in education and training for youth and adults through specific programs such as the *Qualifica* program. This provides offers in the field of training and dual certification, targeting, among others, young NEET and based on the Youth Guarantee framework (European Commission, 2020).

## Labour market structure

During this period (2008-2014), Portugal was imposed an austerity programme by international creditors (the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and experienced profound political and economic changes. This had a strong impact on the structures and dynamics of the

Portuguese labour market, which is characterised by high unemployment, especially among young people, and job insecurity.

The Portuguese labour market has specific features, making it particularly vulnerable, for example, to economic and financial crisis. Despite the expansion of compulsory education in 2009, Portugal remains one of the European countries with the lowest average level of education among the labour force.

In addition, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises make up most of the productive structure in Portugal. Many of them are family businesses that hire less educated workers (Ferreira & Vieira, 2018).

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## Social inclusion

The main policies in the field of social inclusion of young people are defined in the Operational Program for Social Inclusion and Employment (POISE) in coordination with the Europe 2020 strategy. This framework includes a multi-level governance and subsidiarity approach to steer instruments for person-centred and flexible interventions based on a proximity approach and knowledge of local realities. The successful implementation of the policy therefore depends on a clear link between the different national plans, programs, and strategies in the areas of youth employment, sport, gender equality, citizenship, health, migration and disability. There is also coordination with the National Reform Plan (PNR) to link youth social inclusion policies with the National Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In line with this approach, the State implements specific programs to promote the social inclusion of youth, such as the Choices Program (Programa Escolhas). This program aims to promote the social inclusion of children and youth from the most vulnerable socioeconomic backgrounds, especially descendants of immigrants, ethnic minorities (Roma communities) and Portuguese emigrants. It relies on local initiatives and uses youth workers (European Commission, 2020).

## Covid19 pandemic crisis

The Portuguese Government decreed the first confinement in history in March 2020, with the State of Emergency being declared on 18 March. To contain the epidemiological situation a set of measures were announced restricting the freedoms and movement of individuals, which included, among others, the establishment of mandatory home confinement, the establishment of sanitary fences in some localities with active outbreaks, or the closure of commercial establishments and educational institutions. Teleworking has been decreed in the professional activities where this is possible.

In May 2020 the Government establishes a gradual reopening of confinement, with the end of some restrictions, transitioning the country from a State of Emergency to a State of Calamity.

In the following months several transitions between periods of calamity and emergency followed, with the introduction of different public health measures that had an impact on the recovery of the economy, especially in the summer period, with a major impact on tourism, one of the country's main economic activities.

At the beginning of 2021, due to the worsening of the epidemiological situation the, following high number of cases recorded at the end of 2020, a new State of Emergency is decreed and a new set of measures restricting the movement of people and the exercise of some economic activities.

Considering public policies, some socioeconomic support measures were implemented, targeting the citizens and companies and employees more affected by the impact of COVID19 restrictions.

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## Schools closure

The Portuguese Government decreed the closure of all public and private schools for the first time on 16 March, two days before the State of Emergency was declared. This first period of closure of educational establishments, for most cycles of education, lasted until the end of the school year. During the period of suspension of classroom activities, the teaching activities took place at a distance.

A set of resources were developed to support schools in the promotion of distance learning methodologies and the provision of devices to the neediest students. For parents who were not teleworking and with children under 12 years old, a monetary support was created (Vieira and Ribeiro 2021).

The 2020/2021 school year opens with some restrictions and at the end of January 2021, due to the worsening of the epidemiological situation, classes are suspended for 15 days. Teaching activities would resume on 8 February in the distance learning regime, with the return to face-to-face teaching only taking place on 19 April.

## Methodological note

The Portuguese national report uses information gathered by the ICS-ULisboa team (working package2 coordinator) of the **Track-IN** project via the Eurostat platform. The main data presented and analysed in this report are from the following Eurostat database:

- Population Statistics: [yth\_demo\_020];
- EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS): [lfst\_r\_pgauwsc]; [lfst\_r\_ergau]; [lfst\_r\_urgau]; [edat\_lfs\_9913]; [edat\_lfse\_30]; [edat\_lfse\_29]; [edat\_lfse\_34]; [trng\_lfs\_14].

Selected indicators were extracted from the different databases according to two criteria:

**Time range:** the previous decade (2011-2021) to have a sufficiently long period of time to capture the main changes and continuities in young people's trajectories in education, training, and employment and to capture the impact of the economic and financial crisis that hit Europe in 2008 and the first impact of the pandemic crisis.

**Age group:** 25-29 years old (the target group) and other age groups (15-24; 25-29; 30-34 years old) to make a comparable analysis within age groups - according to available data in each indicator.

In addition to a descriptive analysis, and to compare the main data changes and continuities in different time periods, absolute and relative change were calculated by considering the 3 main time points that were selected, namely 2011, 2013 and 2021. Absolute change refers to the simple difference in the indicator over two periods in time and is expressed in percentage points (pp). Relative change expresses the change of a value of an indicator during an earlier period and is expressed in percentage terms.

# Data analysis

## Youth population

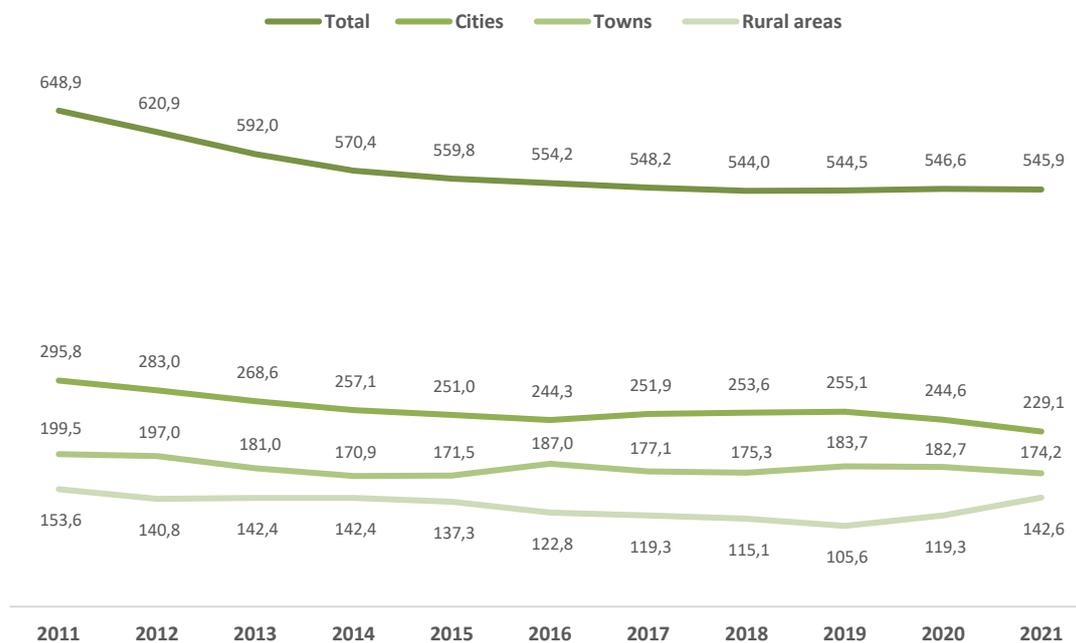
In recent decades, there has been a continuous decrease in the youth population, which is also observed in the age group of young adults aged 25 to 29 years.

As Chart 1 summarises, from 2011 and 2021, the young population between 25 and 29 years decrease from 648.900 young people to 545.900 young people in 2021, translating into a negative growth rate of 15.9%, that means, a loss of 103.000 young people in this age group (table 1).

An analysis by degree of urbanisation shows the existence of differences between urban and rural areas. In fact, the proportion of young people aged 25 to 29 years is higher in cities, for example, in 2021 there would be 86,500 more young people in cities compared to the number of young people living in rural areas - 229 100 young people in cities compared to 142.600 young people in rural areas.

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**Chart 1-Youth population (25-29 years) 2011-2021, by degree of urbanisation (thousands)**



Source: Eurostat (Ifsa\_pgauws) – data extracted on 9.05.2022

However, despite the higher number of young people in cities and towns, since 2020 there has been a growth in the population of 25-29-year-old in rural areas, contrasting with the decrease in cities and towns.

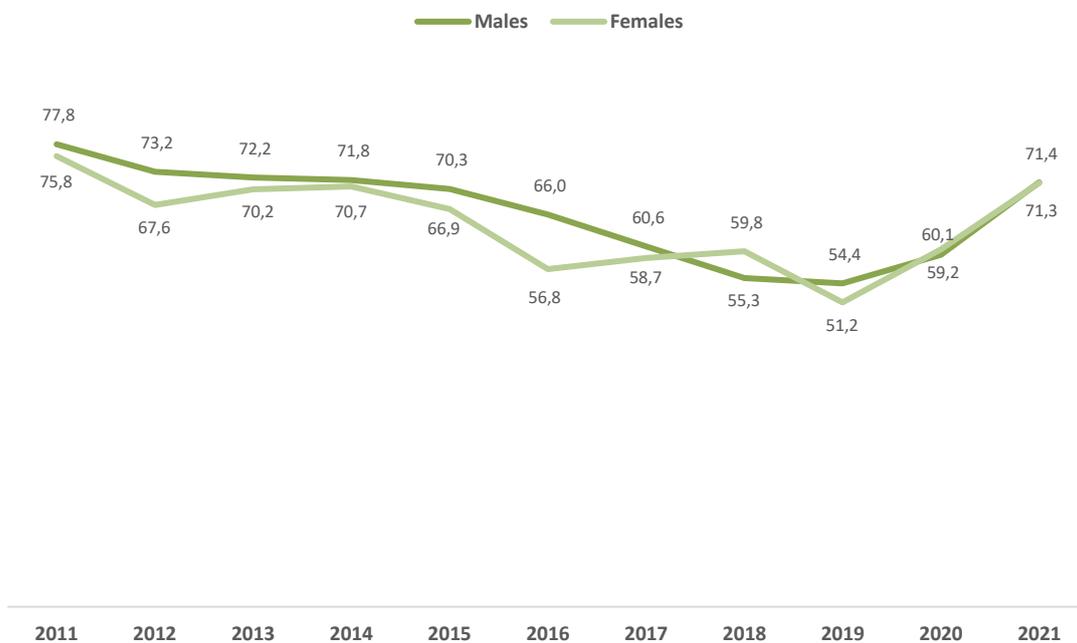
**Table 1 - Youth population in rural areas, absolute and relative change, by age (2011-2015, 2015-2021, 2011-2021)**

	2011	2015	2021	Absolute change 2011-2015 Relative change 2011-2015	Absolute change 2015-2021 (Relative change 2015-2021)	Absolute change 2011-2021 Relative change 2011-2021
15-19	562.6	554.7	547.4	-7.9 (-1.4%)	-7.3 (-1.3%)	-15.2 (-2.7%)
20-24	582.0	545.9	563.4	-36.1 (-6.2%)	17.5 (3.2%)	-18.6 (-3.2%)
25-29	648.9	559.8	545.9	-89.1 (-13.7%)	-13.9 (-2.5%)	-103 (-15.9%)
30-34	764.1	651.3	566.7	-112.8 (-14.8%)	-84.6 (-13%)	-197.4 (-25.8%)

Source: Eurostat: yth\_demo\_020 – data extracted on 9.05.2022

An analysis by gender shows that the youth population was continuously higher among men until 2018, when the proportion of women aged 25 to 29 years (59.8%) exceeded the proportion of men of the same age (55.3%), although there was a reversal the following year, with men again outnumbering women (chart 2).

**Chart 2-Youth population (25-29 years), by sex, 2011-2021 (thousands)**



Source: Eurostat [yth\_demo\_020] - data extracted on 9.05.2022

In 2021, the proportion of men (71.4%) and women (71.3%) aged 25 to 29 was almost identical.

*In the last decade there has been a continuous decrease in the youth population between 25-29 years, although since 2019, there has been a significant increase in the population of young people aged 25 to 29 in rural areas. Youth population in this age group it's been higher amongst men, but the difference was reversed in 2018, when the population of women was higher. Currently the proportion of men and women in this age group are almost identical.*

## Employment and unemployment

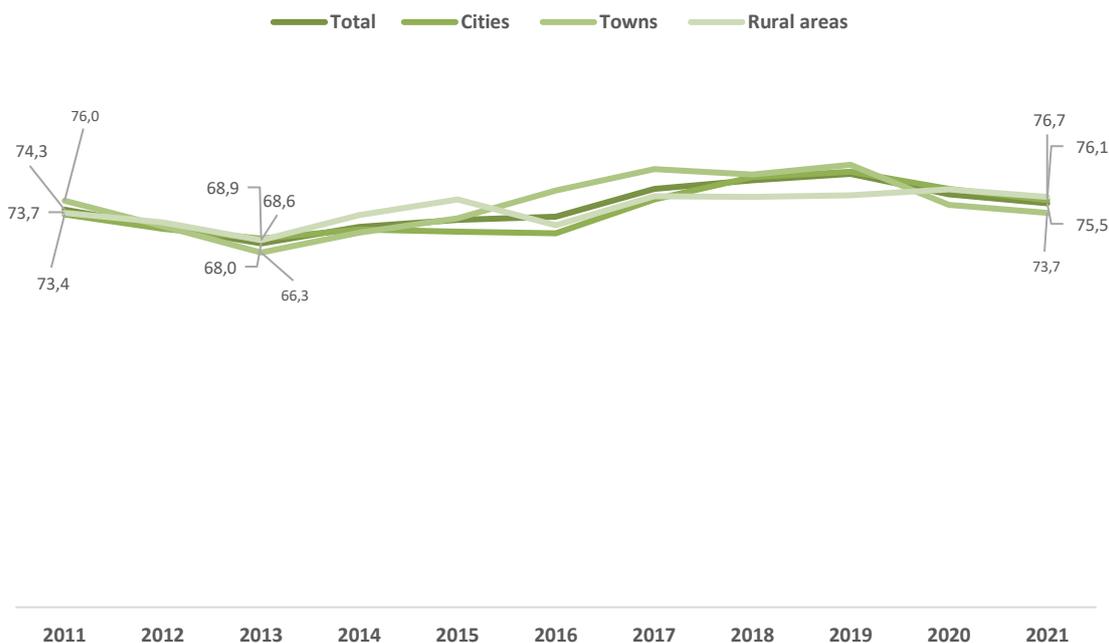
### Youth employment

**Chart 3** represents the youth employment rates of young people between 25-29 years old by degree of urbanisation. There are no significant differences in the employment rate between the different degrees of urbanisation, although the rate is slightly higher in rural areas – in 2021 hit 76.7%, comparing to the 73.7% in towns and 76.1% in cities. In the last decade it has thus registered a growth of 4.1%, rising from 73.7% in 2011 to 76.7% in 2021 (table 2).

In terms of evolution, the impact of the two crises that hit Europe and, especially Portugal in the last decade is visible, with a fall in the employment rate in 2013 resulting from the economic, and financial crisis and subsequent recovery in the following years. In 2020 the employment rate fell again, in all degrees of urbanisation, due to the pandemic crisis arising from COVID-19, a decrease that is still visible in 2021.

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**Chart 3 - Youth employment, by degree of urbanisation, 2011-2021 (%)**



Source: Eurostat [lfst\_r\_ergau] – data extracted on 8.05.2022

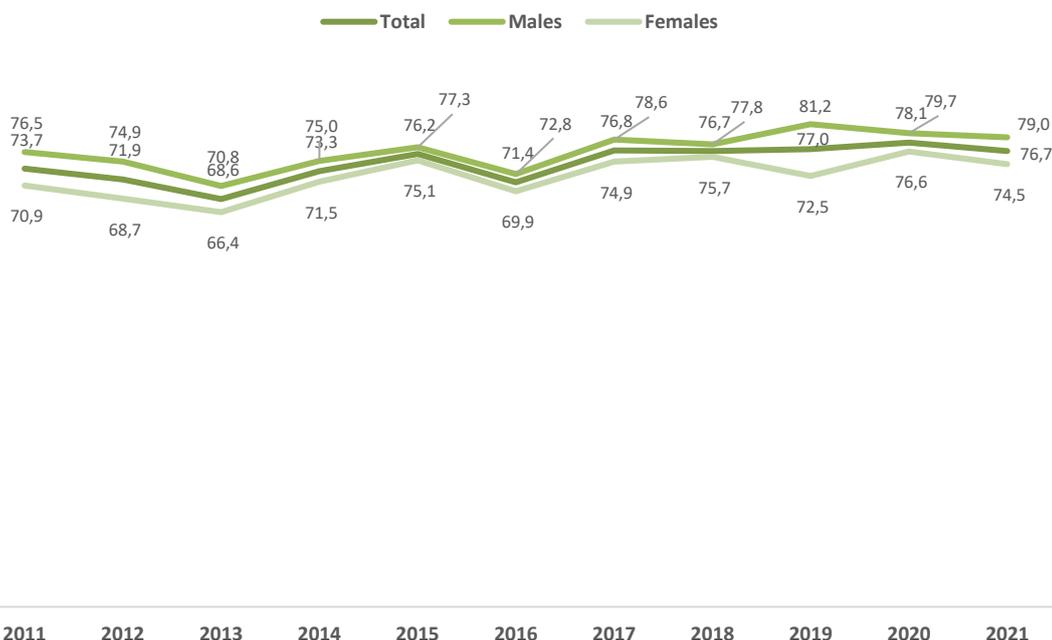
Table 2-Youth employment, absolute and relative change, by age (2011-2015, 2015-2021, 2011-2021)

	2011	2015	2021	Absolute change 2011-2015 Relative change 2011-2015	Absolute change 2015-2021 (Relative change 2015-2021	Absolute change 2011-2021 Relative change 2011-2021
<b>Country</b>						
<b>Overall</b>	63.8	63.9	70.1	0.1 (0.2%)	6.2 (9.7%)	6.3 (9.9%)
<b>15-19</b>	6.8	5.7	4.4	-1.1 (-16.2%)	-1.3 (-22.8%)	-2.4 (-35.3%)
<b>20-24</b>	45.7	40.2	40.2	-5.5 (-12%)	0.0 (0.0%)	-5.5 (-12%)
<b>25-29</b>	74.3	72.4	75.5	-1.9 (-2.6%)	3.1 (4.3%)	1.2 (1.6%)
<b>30-34</b>	80.9	82.4	84.0	1.5 (1.9%)	1.6 (1.9%)	3.1 (3.8%)
<b>Cities</b>						
<b>Overall</b>	63.0	63.6	70.6	0.6 (1%)	7.0 (11%)	7.6 (12.1%)
<b>15-19</b>	5.8	4.3	3.4	-1.5 (-25.9%)	-0.9 (-20.9%)	-2.4 (-41.4%)
<b>20-24</b>	44.8	38.2	38.2	-6.6 (-14.7%)	0.0 (0%)	-6.6 (-14.7%)
<b>25-29</b>	73.4	70.2	76.1	-3.2 (-4.4%)	5.9 (8.4%)	2.7 (3.7%)
<b>30-34</b>	80.1	82.2	83.7	2.1 (2.6%)	1.5 (1.8%)	3.6 (4.5%)
<b>Towns</b>						
<b>Overall</b>	64.4	64.6	70.9	0.2 (0.3%)	6.3 (9.8%)	6.5 (10.1%)
<b>15-19</b>	7.9	6.5	5.3	-1.4 (-17.7%)	-1.2 (-18.5%)	-2.6 (-32.9%)
<b>20-24</b>	47.0	42.0	42.6	-5.0 (-10.6%)	0.6 (1.4%)	-4.4 (-9.4%)
<b>25-29</b>	76.0	72.7	73.7	-3.3 (-4.3%)	1.0 (1.4%)	-2.3 (-3%)
<b>30-34</b>	81.8	83.6	84.6	1.8 (2.2%)	1.0 (1.2%)	2.8 (-3.4%)
<b>Rural</b>						
<b>Overall</b>	64.5	63.6	68.3	-0.9 (-1.4%)	4.7 (7.4%)	3.8 (5.9%)
<b>15-19</b>	7.2	7.3	5.1	0.1 (1.4%)	-2.2 (-30.1%)	-2.1 (-29.2%)
<b>20-24</b>	46.0	41.4	40.3	-4.6 (-10%)	-1.1 (-2.7%)	-5.7 (-12.4%)
<b>25-29</b>	73.7	76.2	76.7	2.5 (3.4%)	0.5 (0.7%)	3.0 (4.1%)
<b>30-34</b>	81.2	81.1	84.1	-0.1 (-0.1%)	3.0 (3.7%)	2.9 (3.6%)

Source: Eurostat [lfst\_r\_ergau] – data extracted on 8.05.2022

An analysis by gender shows that there are no significant differences, even though in the last decade, the employment rate is consistently higher among men. For example, in 2021 the employment rate was 4.5 percentage points higher for men. It is also important to highlight that in both genders the economic and financial crisis that hit Portugal in 2013 had more impact in the increase of unemployment rates than the recent pandemic crisis. Although, in 2013 the impact was higher for men and in 2020-2021 for women (chart 4).

Chart 4-Rural youth employment (25-29 Years), by sex, 2011-2021 (%)



Source: Eurostat [lfst\_r\_ergau] – data extracted on 8.05.2022

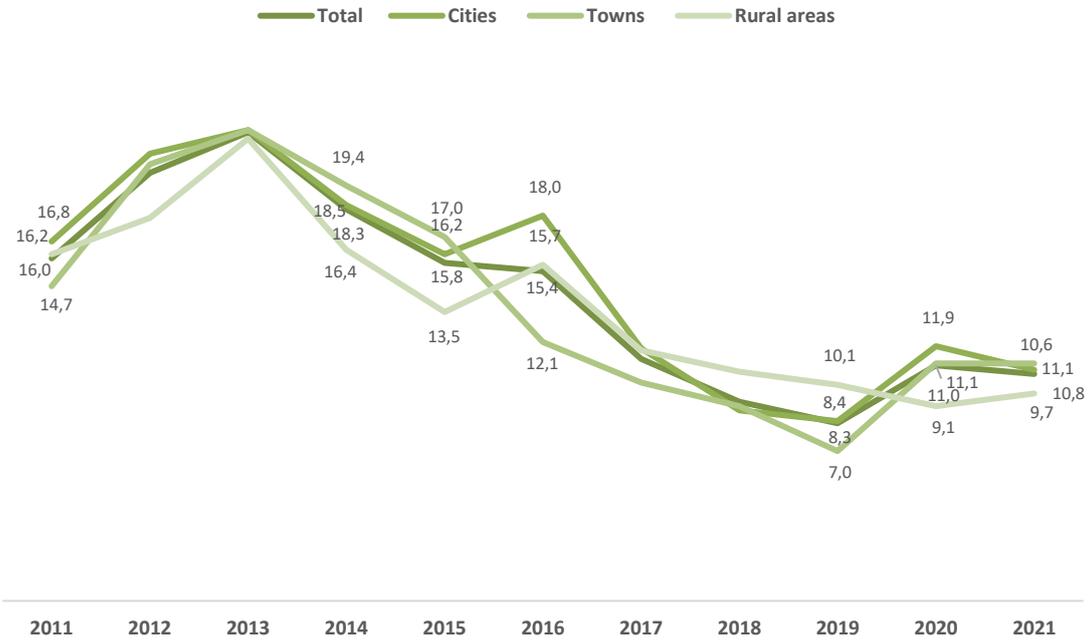
*The employment rate has fluctuated over the last decade and is susceptible to the impacts of economic crises, during which time it falls significantly. The employment rate among 25-29-year-olds is slightly higher in rural areas. In the last decade, the employment rate is consistently higher among men.*

### Youth unemployment

Chart 5 highlights the unemployment rates of young people aged 25-29 years by degree of urbanisation.

In all degrees of urbanisation, the youth unemployment in age group 25-29 years old increase between 2011 and 2013 and registered a decreased after that year with a slight increase in 2016. In 2020, the effects of the covid19 pandemic had an impact on the unemployment rate, registering a new increase, although not as significant as the one registered during the economic-financial crisis of 2013. Exception for rural areas, where the unemployment rate has been continuously decreasing after 2016 and registering in 2021 the lower unemployment rate among all degrees of urbanisation (9.7%).

Chart 5-Youth unemployment (25-29 Years), by degree of urbanisation, 2011-2021 (%)



Source: Eurostat [lfst\_r\_urgau] - data extracted on 9.05.2022

Moreover, it is in rural areas that there has been the greatest decrease in the unemployment rate of young people aged 25 to 29 years old over the period of a decade (40.1%), compared with the fall observed in cities (35.7%) and towns (24.5%) (table 3).

Table 3-Youth unemployment, absolute and relative change, by age (2011-2015, 2015-2021, 2011-2021)

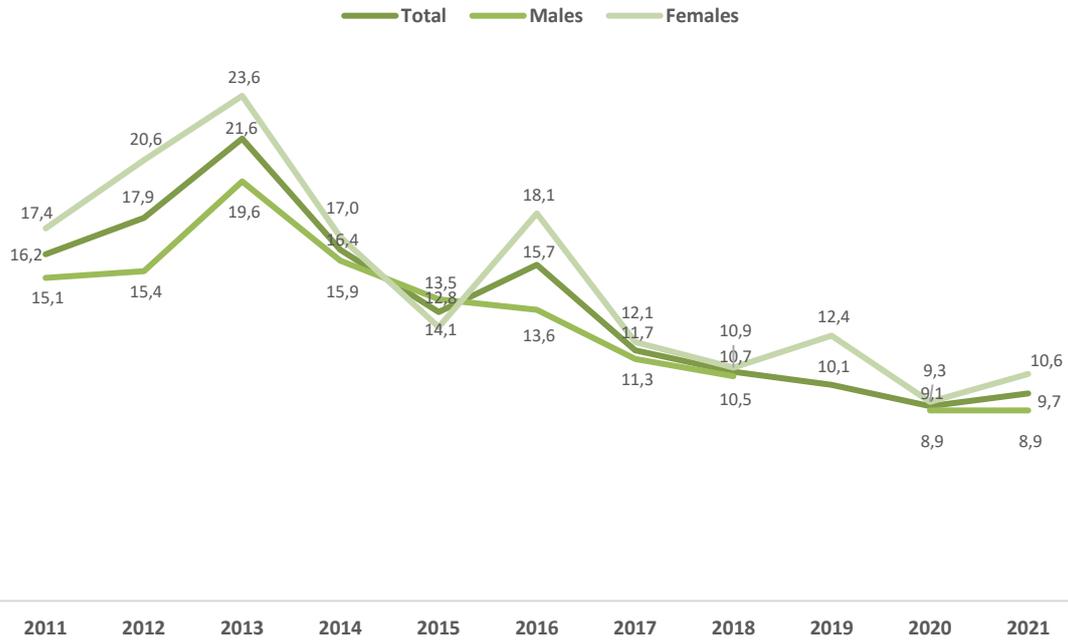
	2011	2015	2021	Absolute change 2011-2015 Relative change 2011-2015	Absolute change 2015-2021 Relative change 2015-2021	Absolute change 2011-2021 Relative change 2011-2021
<b>Country</b>						
15-19	49.3	45.7	35.5	-3.6 (-7.3%)	-22.3 (-22.3%)	-28.0 (-28%)
20-24	26.2	29.4	21.9	3.2 (12.2%)	-25.5 (-25.5%)	-16.4 (-16.4%)
25-29	16.0	15.8	10.6	-0.2 (-1.3%)	-32.9 (-32.9%)	-33.8 (-33.8%)
30-34	12.5	10.9	7.9	-1.6 (-12.8%)	-27.5 (-27.5%)	-36.8 (-36.8%)
15-64	13.3	12.9	6.7	-0.4 (-3%)	-48.1 (-48.1%)	-49.6 (-49.6%)
<b>Cities</b>						
15-19	54.9	52.9	39.9	-2 (-3.6%)	-24.6 (-24.6%)	-27.3 (-27.3%)
20-24	27.8	29.8	25.1	2 (7.2%)	-15.8 (-15.8%)	-9.7 (-9.7%)
25-29	16.8	16.2	10.8	-0.6 (-3.6%)	-33.3 (-33.3%)	-35.7 (-35.7%)
30-34	13.9	11.2	10.4	-2.7 (-19.4%)	-7.1 (-7.1%)	-25.2 (-25.2%)
15-64	14.8	14	7.3	-0.8 (-5.4%)	-47.9 (-47.9%)	-50.7 (-50.7%)
<b>Towns and suburbs</b>						
15-19	44.9	40.9	:	-4 (-8.9%)	:	:
20-24	26.0	28.4	18.5	2.4 (9.2%)	-34.9 (-34.9%)	-28.8 (-28.8%)
25-29	14.7	17.0	11.1	2.3 (15.6%)	-34.7 (-34.7%)	-24.5 (-24.5%)
30-34	11.1	10.6	5.8	-0.5 (-4.5%)	-45.3 (-45.3%)	-47.7 (-47.7%)
15-64	12.8	12.5	6.1	-0.3 (-2.3%)	-51.2 (-51.2%)	-52.3 (-52.3%)
<b>Rural areas</b>						
15-19	46.2	42.2	:	-4 (-8.7%)	:	:
20-24	23.8	29.8	21.2	6 (25.2%)	-28.9 (-28.9%)	-10.9 (-10.9%)
25-29	16.2	13.5	9.7	-2.7 (-16.7%)	-28.1 (-28.1%)	-40.1 (-40.1%)
30-34	11.5	10.7	5.8	-0.8 (-7%)	-45.8 (-45.8%)	-49.6 (-49.6%)
15-64	11.4	11.4	6.5	0 (0.0%)	-43.0 (-43%)	-43.0 (-43%)

Data from towns and suburbs (2021) and rural areas (2021) is not available

Source: Eurostat [lfst\_r\_urgau] – data extracted on 8 May 2022

Unemployment rate by sex registers relevant differences between women and men. While women rates follow the same trend and oscillations as the total youth unemployment in this age group, men rate have been continuously decreasing since 2013, registering the rate of 8.9% in 2021 (chart 6).

Chart 6-Youth unemployment (25-29 Years), by sex, 2011-2021 (%)



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Data from Males (2019) is not available

Source: Eurostat [lfst\_r\_urgau] – data extracted on 8 May 2022

*Unemployment rates among young people 25-29 years old were lower in 2021 than they were in 2011, but there have been several oscillations in the last decade, with some differences between degrees of urbanisation. In 2021 the unemployment rate was lower in rural areas than in cities and towns. Young men in this age group have lower rates of unemployment.*

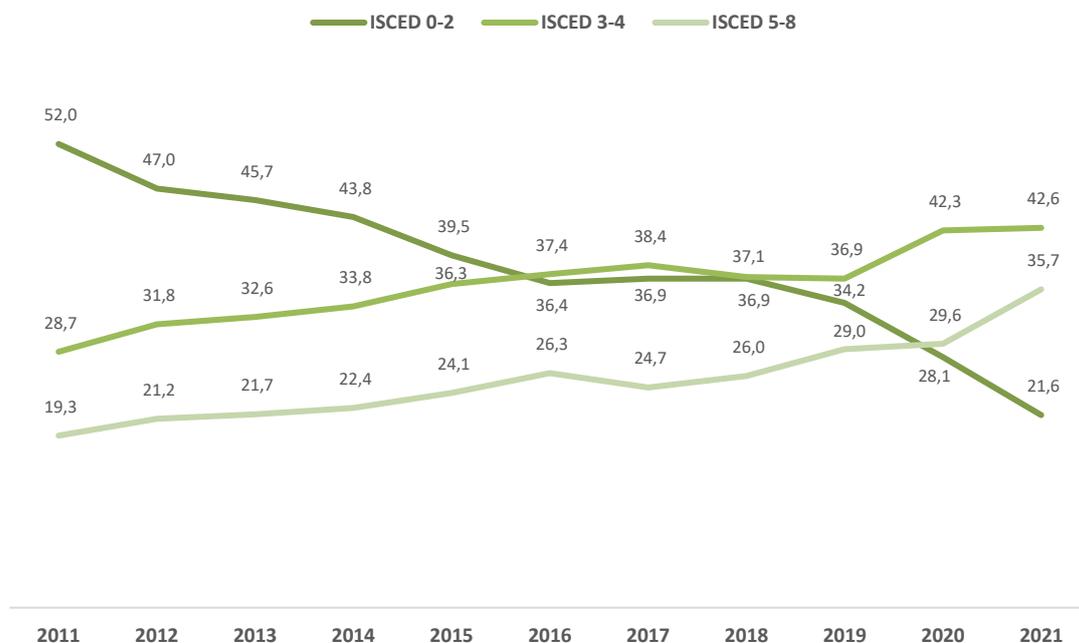
## Education

In the last decade there has been a change in the education levels trends, with a significant decrease of young people with lower qualifications and, in contrast, an increase of young people with higher levels of education.

Although more slowly, the same trend has been observed in rural areas (Chart 7). Analysing the evolution of the qualification levels of young people aged 25-34 years living in rural areas, we can observe that between 2011 and 2021 there was a significant decrease in the proportion of young people with lower qualifications (ISCED 0-2) and a significant and continuous increase in the proportion of young people with higher qualification levels, especially at the intermediate qualification level (ISCED 3-4).

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**Chart 7-Population by educational attainment in rural areas (25-34 years), by educational level, 2011-2021 (%)**



Source: Eurostat [edat\_ifs\_9913] – data extracted on 8.05.2022

Although with a slower growth, it is also significant the increase of young people between 25 and 34 years of age, living in rural areas, with the highest qualification level (ISCED 5-8) – 35.7%, with an increase of 85% between 2011 and 2021 (table 3). In contrast, we can observe a decrease of 58.5% in the proportion of young people in this age group with lower qualifications – a decrease from 52% young people with ISCED 0-2 in 2011 and 21.6% in 2021 (table 4).

Table 4-Youth population (20-34 years), by ISCED levels and degree of urbanisation, absolute and relative change (2011-2015, 2015-2021, 2011-2021)

	2011	2015	2021	Absolute change 2011-2015 Relative change 2011-2015	Absolute change 2015-2021 Relative change 2015-2021	Absolute change 2011-2021 Relative change 2011-2021
<b>Country</b>						
ISCED level 0-2	44.0	33.3	16.7	-10.7 (-24.3%)	-16.6 (-49.8%)	-27.3 (-62%)
ISCED level 3-4	28.5	33.6	35.9	5.1 (17.9%)	2.3 (6.8%)	7.4 (26%)
ISCED level 5-8	27.5	33.1	47.5	5.6 (20.4%)	14.4 (43.5%)	20.0 (72.7%)
<b>Cities</b>						
ISCED level 0-2	39.1	28.0	14.4	-11.1 (-28.4%)	-13.6 (-48.6%)	-24.7 (22%)
ISCED level 3-4	27.7	31.5	32.1	3.8 (13.7%)	0.6 (1.9%)	4.4 (15.9%)
ISCED level 5-8	33.2	40.5	53.5	7.3 (22%)	13.0 (32.1%)	20.3 (61.1%)
<b>Towns and suburbs</b>						
ISCED level 0-2	39,9	30,0	15,4	-9,9 (-28,4%)	-14,6 (-48,7%)	-24,5 (-61,4%)
ISCED level 3-4	29,6	34,5	36,0	4,9 (16,6%)	1,5 (4,3%)	6,4 (21,6%)
ISCED level 5-8	25,0	29,5	47,9	4,5 (18%)	18,4 (62,4%)	22,9 (91,6%)
<b>Rural areas</b>						
ISCED level 0-2	52.0	39.5	21.6	-12.5 (-24%)	-17.9 (-45.3%)	<b>-30.4 (-58.5%)</b>
ISCED level 3-4	28.7	36.3	42.6	7.6 (26.5%)	6.3 (17.4%)	13.9 (48.4%)
ISCED level 5-8	19.3	24.1	35.7	4.8 (24.9%)	11.6 (48.1%)	<b>16.4 (85%)</b>

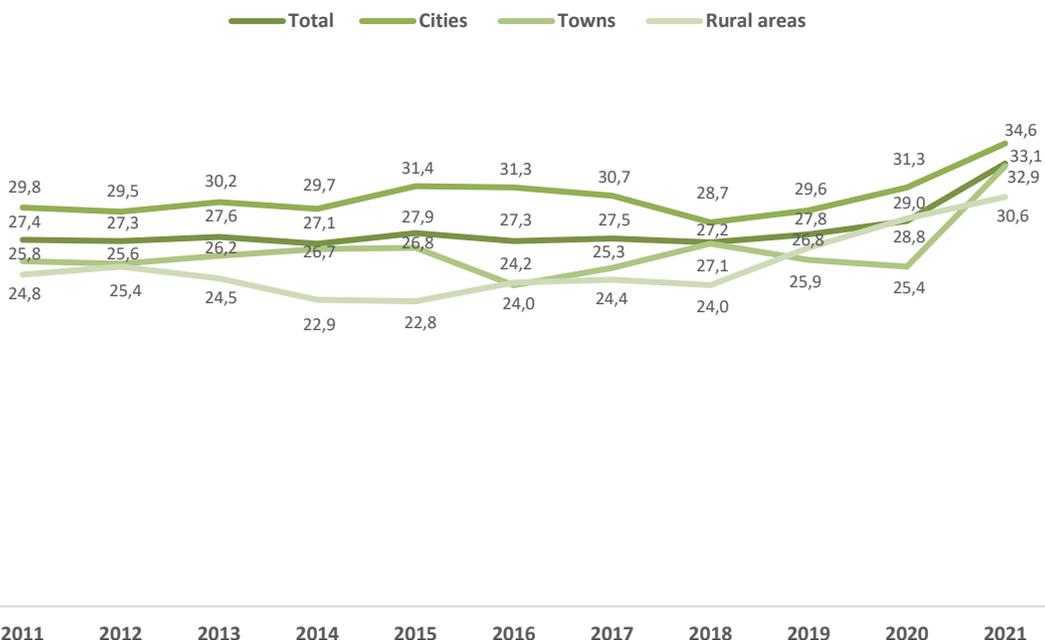
Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfs\_9913] – data extracted on 8 May 2022

*Although the proportion of young people aged 25-34 years with higher education levels (ISCED 5-8) is higher in cities, in rural areas there has been a continuous grow of young people with higher education levels and, in contrast, a decrease in the proportion of young people with lower educational levels.*

The participation of 20–34-year-olds in education did not change much over the last decade, with a participation rate of around 27% up to 2018, rising slightly to 33.1% in 2021 (chart 8).

An analysis by degree of urbanisation shows that although the participation rate is higher in cities (34.6%) in 2021, the difference for towns and rural areas is not significant (32.9 and 30.6%, respectively). In all degrees of urbanisation, the participation rate fell slightly in 2014 (29.7%), after the economic and financial crisis of 2013.

Chart 8-Participation in education or training in previous 4 weeks (%) 2011-2021 in Portugal, by degree of urbanisation (20-34 Years)

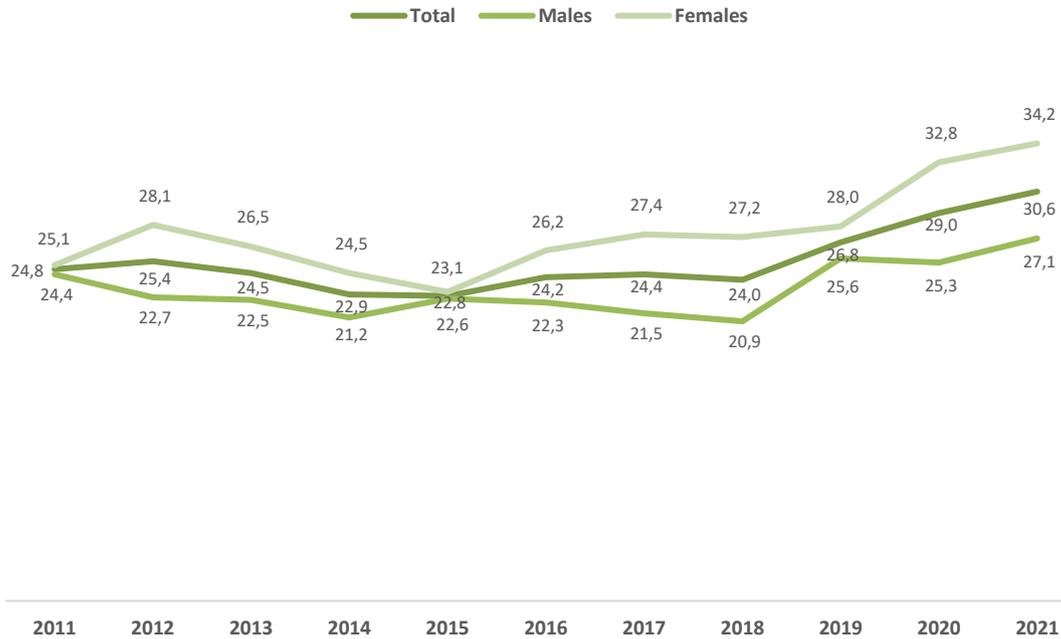


Source: Eurostat [trng\_lfs\_14] - data extracted on 8 May 2022

*Participation rates in education and training has been continuously increasing in rural areas since 2018, reaching the rate of 30.6% in 2021.*

An analysis by gender, allows us to verify that the rate of participation in education and training among 20-34-year-olds, has been consistently higher among women. It is also among women that the increase has been more significant, in 2011 the participation rate among women was 25.1% increasing to 34.2% in 2021, registering a growth rate of 36.3%. Although there has also been an increase among men, this was only 11.1% in the period between 2011 and 2021 (chart 9).

Chart 9-Participation in education or training in previous 4 weeks (20-34 Years), by sex, 2011-2021 (%)



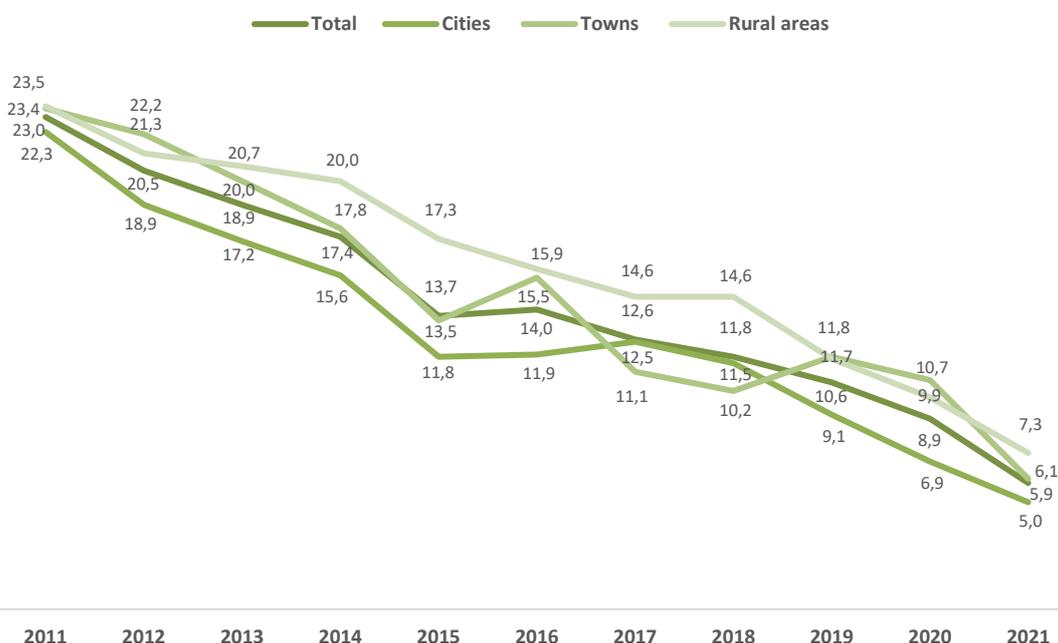
Eurostat [trng\_lfs\_14] - data extracted on 8.05.2022

### Early leavers from education and training

Early leavers from education and training rate in Portugal has been decreasing sharply and continuously in recent decades (chart 10), reaching in 2021 the rate of 5,9%.

As part of the Europe 2020 Strategy, defined by the EU for the period 2010-2020, a target of reducing the early school leaving rate to 10% by 2020 has been projected. Portugal reached the target rate below 10% in all areas, except in Towns, where in 2020 the Early leavers from education and training rate was 10.7%, succeeding to decrease to 6.1% in 2021.

Chart 10-Early school leavers from Education or training, 18-24 Years - by sex and degree of urbanisation, 2011-2021 (%)



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Source: Eurostat [edat\_ifse\_30] - data extracted on 8 May 2022

In rural areas the rate decreased from 23.5% in 2011 to 7.3% in 2021, with a negative growth rate of 68.9%, but still lower than that achieved in cities (77.6%) and towns (73.9%) (table 5).

Table 5-Early school leavers from Education or training, 20-34 Years - absolute and relative change (2011-2015, 2015-2021, 2011-2021)

	2011	2015	2021	Absolute change 2011-2015	Absolute change 2015-2021	Absolute change 2011-2021
				Relative change 2011-2015	Relative change 2015-2021	Relative change 2011-2021
Total	23.0	13.7	5.9	-9.3 p.p. (-40.4%)	-7.8 p.p. (-56.9%)	-17.1 p.p. (-74.3%)
Cities	22.3	11.8	5.0	-10.5 p.p. (-47.1%)	-6.8 p.p. (-57.6%)	-17.3 p.p. (-77.6%)
Towns and suburbs	23.4	13.5	6.1	-9.9 p.p. (-42.3%)	-7.4 p.p. (-54.8%)	-17.3 p.p. (-73.9%)
Rural areas	23.5	17.3	7.3	-6.2 p.p. (-26.4%)	-10.0 p.p. (-57.8%)	-16.2 p.p. (-68.9%)

Source: Eurostat [edat\_ifs\_30] – data extracted on 8 May 2022

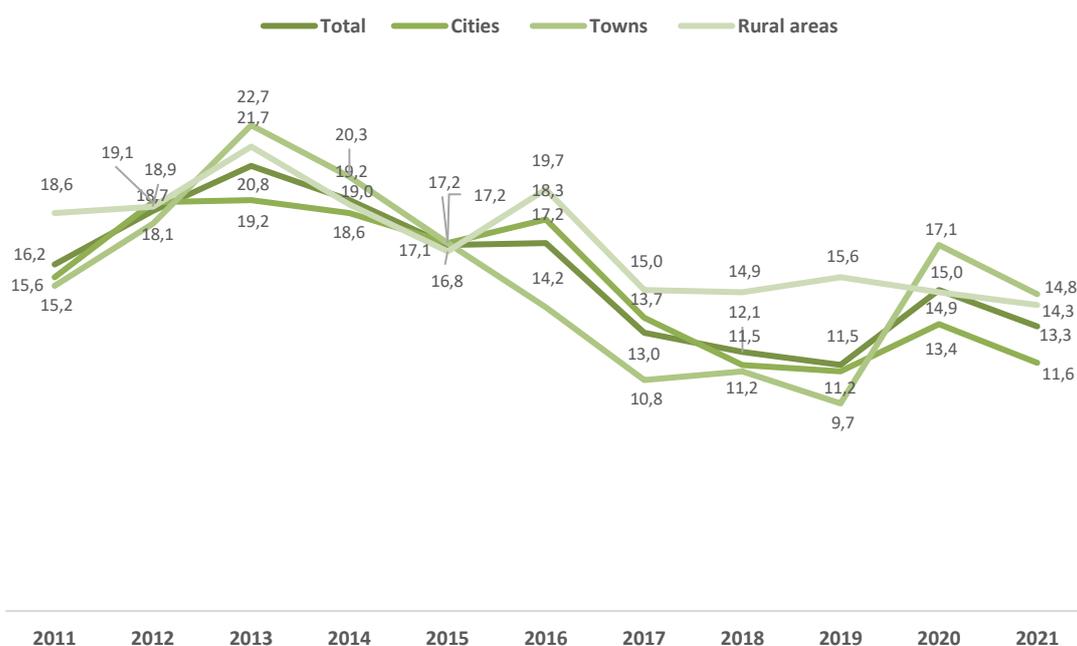
The Early school leavers from Education or training rate is higher in rural areas, but it was continuously decreasing in the last decade, and in 2020 reached 9.9%, lower than the 10% targeted by the Europe 2020 Strategy to be reached in 2020 by all state members.

## NEETs

Young people neither in employment nor in education and training in the age group 25-29 years, in the last decade, it's been higher in rural areas, with exception in the crisis years. Indeed, NEET rates were higher in towns in two periods: between 2013 and 2015, active years of the economic-financial crisis and its aftermath and in the last two years, effect of the pandemic crisis. For example, in 2019 the NEET rates was 9.7% in towns and 15.6% in rural areas, in the following year, it decreased to 14.9% in rural areas and increased to 17.1% in cities (chart 11).

It is also relevant to note that it was in the rural areas that there was a greater decrease in the NEET rates in the last decade - in 2011 it was 18.6% and in 2021 it was 14.3% with a decrease of 22.8% between the two periods. In contrast, the smallest decrease (2.2%) was in cities, from a rate of 15.2% in 2011 to a rate of 14.8% in 2021.

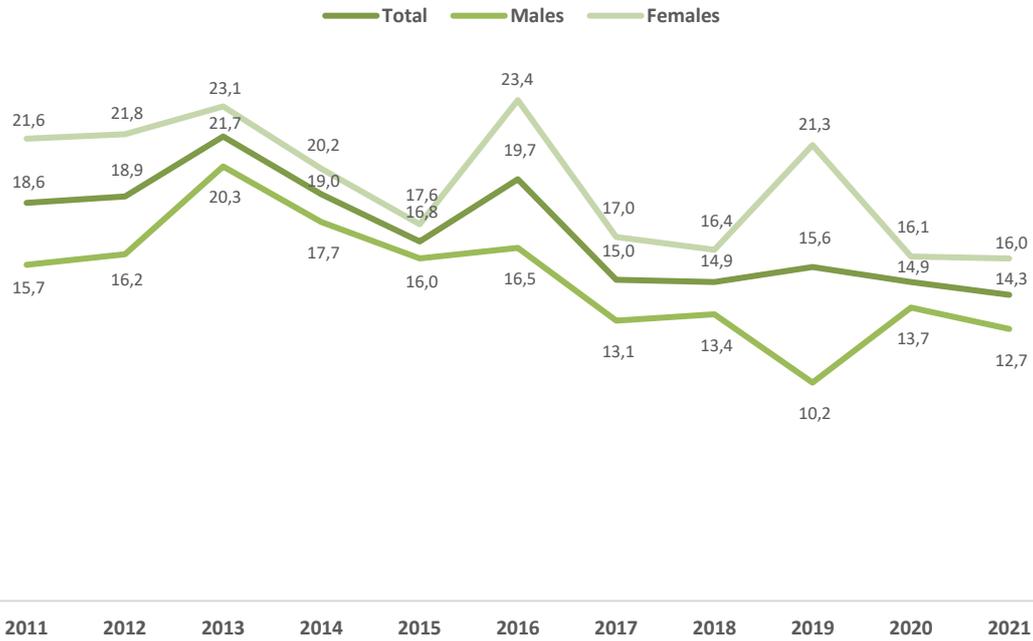
Chart 11- Youth NEET rate (25-29 Years), by degree of urbanisation, 2011-2021 (%)



Source: Eurostat [edat\_lfs\_29] – data extracted on 8.05.2022

An analysis of the NEET rates of 25-29-year-olds by gender shows that the rate of young NEETs has always been higher among women. For example, in 2021 the NEETs rates was 12.7% for men and 16% for women (chart 12). However, the decrease in the youth NEET rate in this age group was higher among women - in 2011 the rate among men was 15.7%, decreasing by 19.1% over a decade (2021-12.7%). Among women it decreased from 21.6% in 2011 to 16% in 2021 (a decrease of 25.9%).

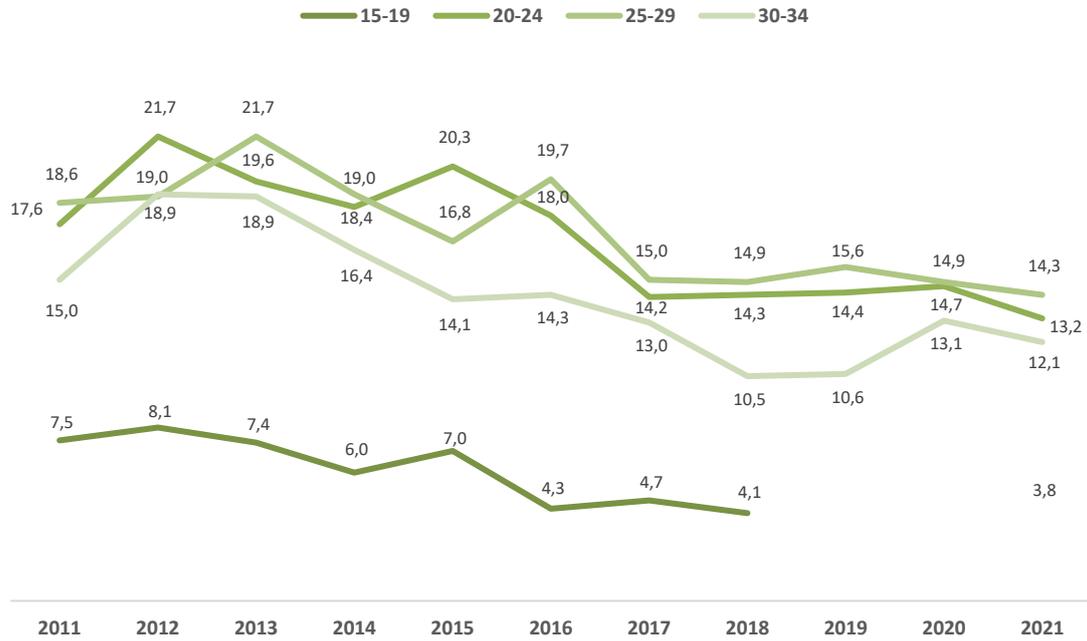
Chart 12-Youth NEET rate (25-29 Years), by sex, 2011-2021 (%)



Source: Eurostat (edat\_ifs\_29) – data extracted on 8.05.2022

Comparing with other age groups living in rural areas, in 2021 the NEETS rates were higher in young people between 25-29 years – 14.3% comparing with 13.2% in 20-24 years-old and 12.1% in 30-34 years-old (chart 13).

Chart 13-Youth NEET rate (25-29 Years) in rural areas, by age group, 2011-2021 (%)



Source: Eurostat (edat\_ifs\_29) – data extracted on 8.05.2022

*The NEET rate is higher in rural areas, with the exception of the crisis periods (2013 and 2020), where it reached higher values in towns.*

*The NEET rate in rural areas tends to be higher among women and young adults aged 25-29.*

## Conclusions

**Youth population** | In the last two decades, Portugal faced a double aging process: The number of elderly people increased, while the proportion of young people decreased, leading to a progressive population decline (Vieira et al., 2017). The proportion of young people 25-29 years is higher in cities and towns than in rural areas. Although, while in cities and towns there has been a significant decrease on youth population in the last decade, in rural areas, after the pandemic crisis, the youth population 25-29 years has increased.

**Youth unemployment** | Youth unemployment in Portugal is systematically higher among young people than in the population in general. Young people are particularly affected by the conjunctural conditions of the country, namely the economic-financial crisis of 2013 and the recent pandemic crisis due to COVID19. In these two time periods the unemployment rate rises significantly, especially in 2013, when it reached the peak of 21.9%. The effects of the pandemic crisis will also be felt in 2020 and 2021, although with less impact than in 2013. Rural areas were an exception, insofar the unemployment rate continuously decreased after 2016 and registered in 2021 the lower unemployment rate among all degrees of urbanization (9.7%).

**Educational attainment** | The education levels of young people aged 25 to 29 years old has increased considerably in the last decade, translated into a progressive increase in the proportion of young people with ISCED 3-4 and ISCED 5-8 and a decrease in the proportion of young people with lower qualification levels (ISCED 0-2). The recovery is slower in rural areas, but it's been constant in the last decade. Although the proportion of young people aged 25-34 years with higher education levels (ISCED 5-8) is higher in cities, in rural areas there has been a continuous grow of young people with higher education levels. Finally, even if the early school leavers from education and training rate is higher in rural areas, it reached the target rate of 10% in 2020, with a 9.9% rate.

**NEETs** | In Portugal the NEET rates follows the trend of the unemployment rate, being higher in periods of crisis, with a particularly pronounced impact during the economic and financial crisis of 2013. Although the NEET rate tends to be higher in rural areas, in these two crises periods, the NEET rates were higher in cities and towns. In rural areas, NEET rate tends to be higher among women and young adults aged 25-29.

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## Important links

### **National Plan for youth (2022-2024)**

<https://ipdj.gov.pt/plano-nacional-para-a-juventude>

### **Youth Guarantee**

<https://www.garantiajovem.pt/>

### **National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (2013)**

<https://dre.pt/dre/legislacao-consolidada/resolucao-conselho-ministros/2013-176884946>

### **National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (2021)**

<https://dre.pt/dre/detalhe/resolucao-conselho-ministros/188-2021-176811777>

### **Youth wiki – Portuguese national youth policies**

<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/portugal/overview>