



The European Higher Education Area in 2020

*Bologna Process
Implementation Report*



Education,
Auditorate
and Culture
Executive Agency

Current status of RPL: What progress have we made in the EHEA?

**RPLip: Recognition of Prior Learning in
Higher Education**

**David Crosier
EACEA A6 Erasmus+ Education and Youth
Policy Analysis**

Education
and
Training
Training

Online
16 March 2021

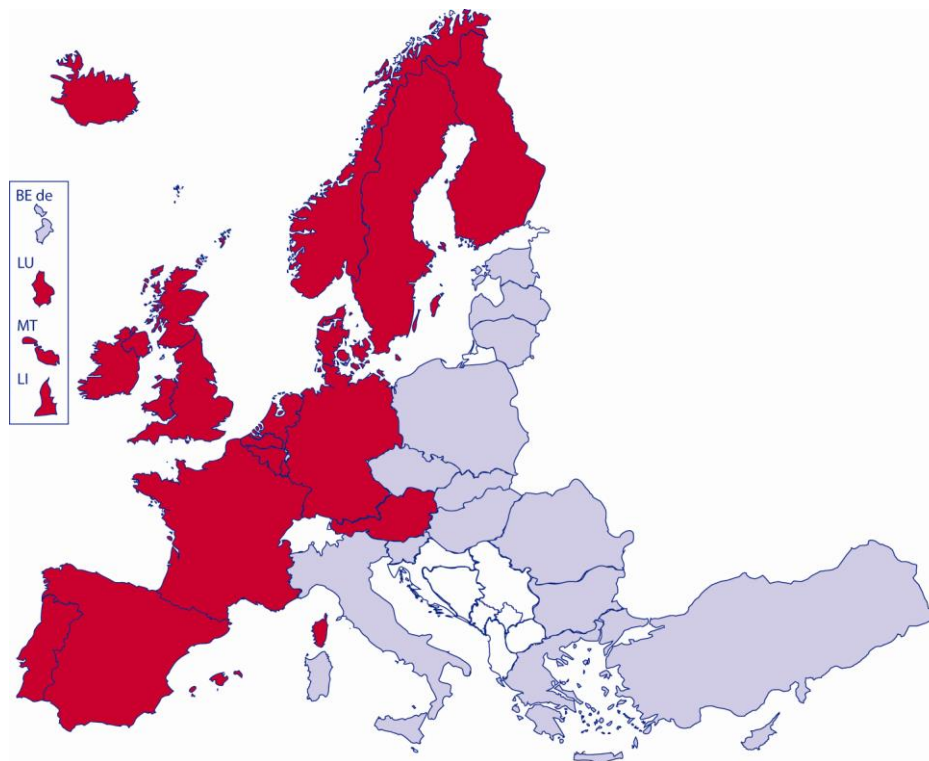
Overview

- **Changes over the last decade**
- **Extent of use of RPL in higher education**
- **Questions: what should be done?**



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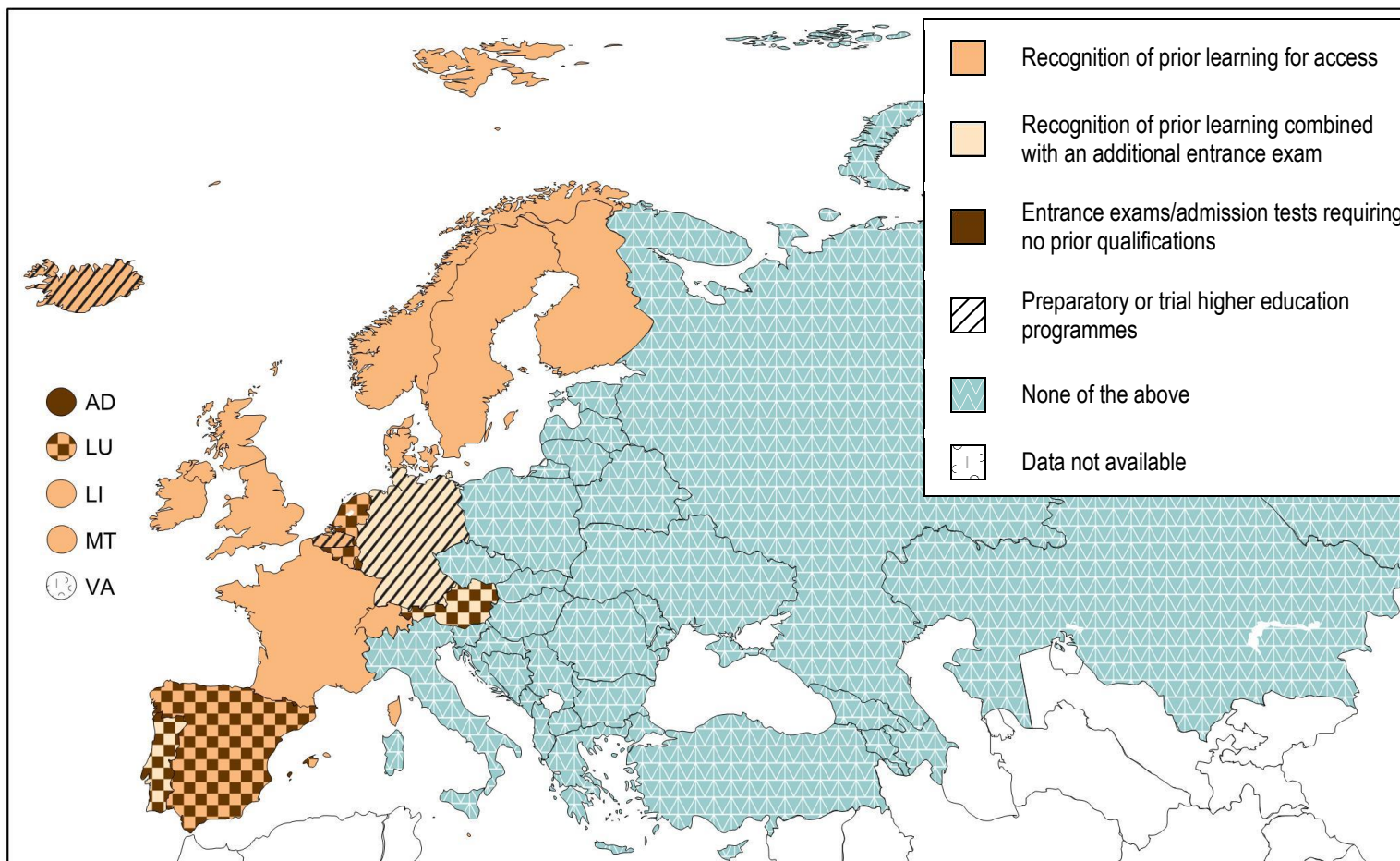
Provision of alternative routes to higher education in 2010





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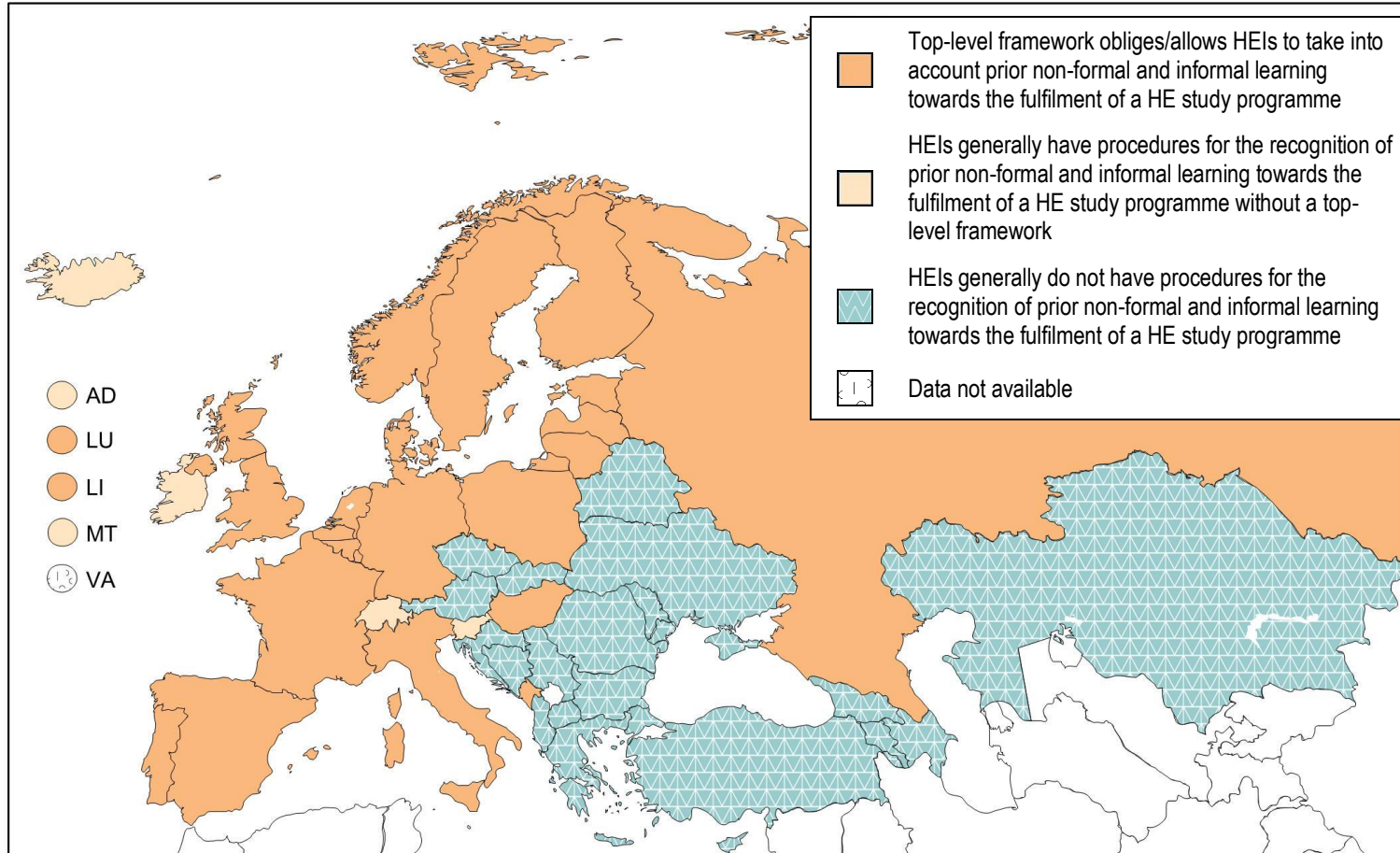
RPL for access, 2016/17





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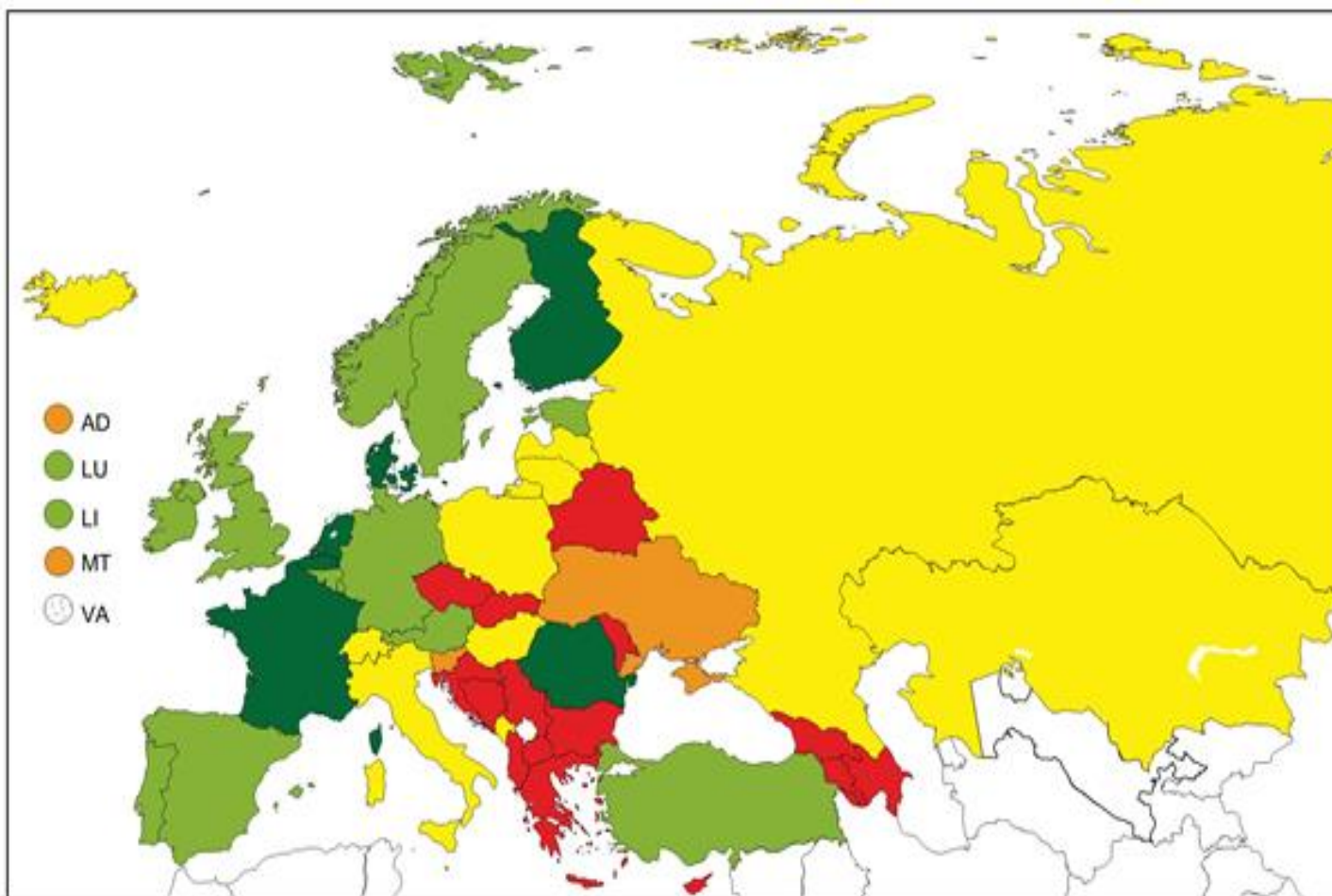
RPL for progression, 2016/17





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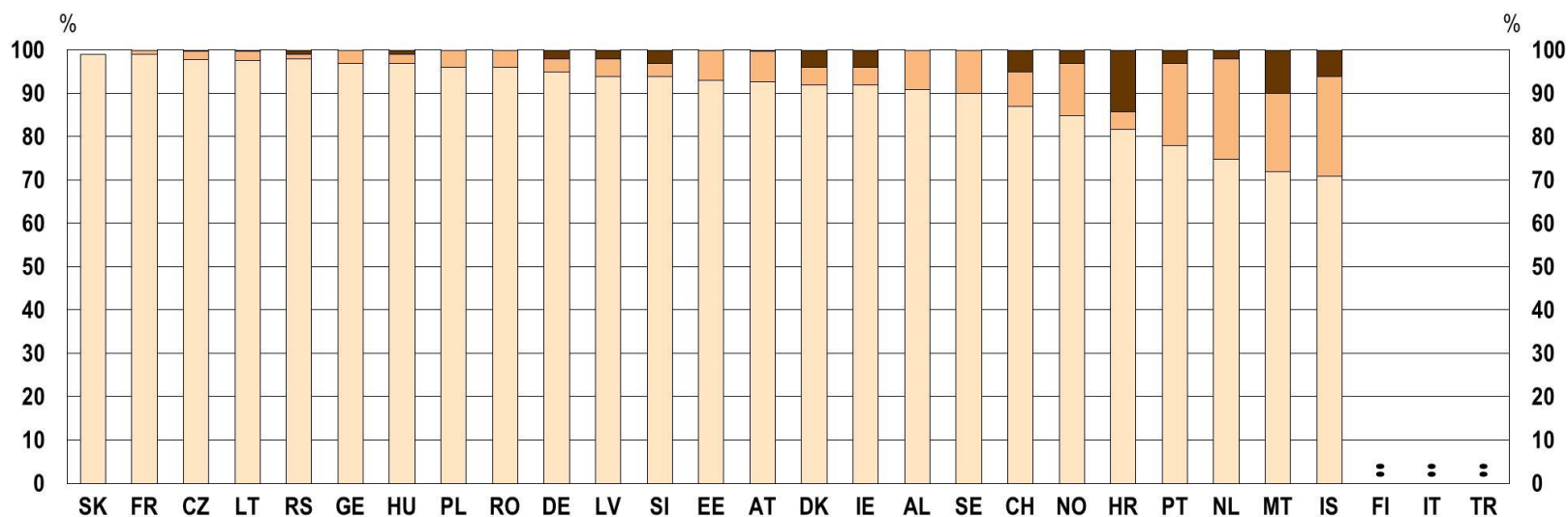
RPL in 2018/19





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% entering through standard and alternative routes (Eurostudent VI)

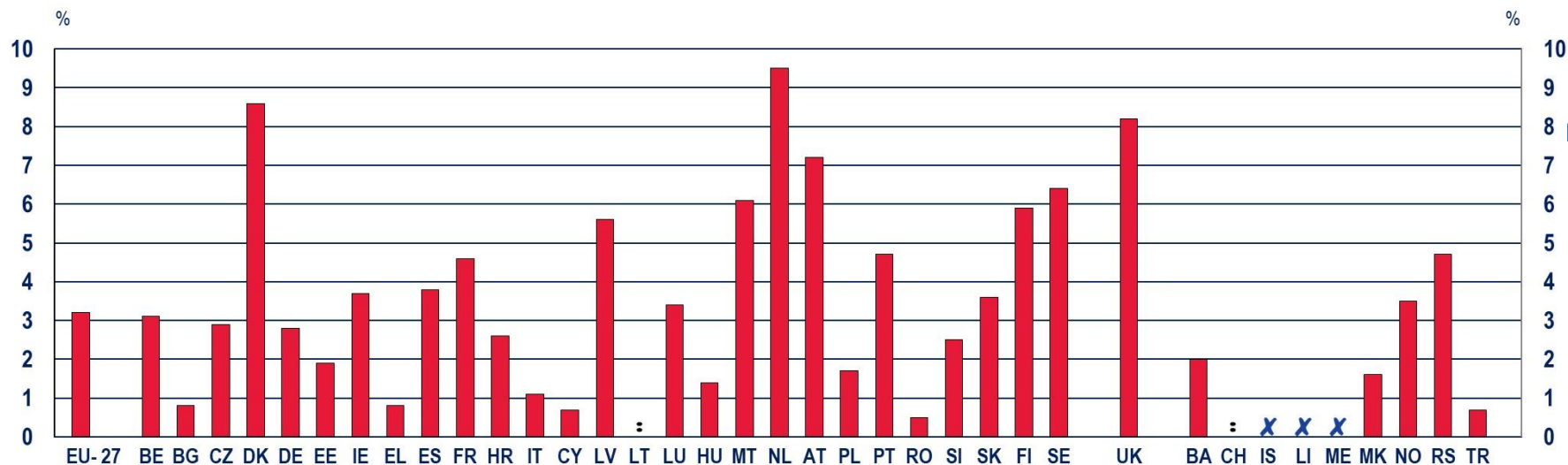


- Standard route: entry with the standard upper secondary qualification
- Delayed route: entry with the standard upper secondary qualification obtained later
- Alternative route: entry without the standard upper secondary qualification



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Adults (25 -64) who received assessment of skills and competences, 2016



Eurostat: Adult Education Survey: includes all levels of education, and labour market

Summary of information

- Legal frameworks have opened up to RPL in some countries..
- Limited possibility to benefit from RPL for access (especially) and also progression in higher education.
- Even when RPL is legally possible, higher education is making less use of it than other education levels (VET, adult education) and the labour market
- Trend of slow improvement.. How can it be accelerated?

Why have countries been slow to open up RPL?

- Little political advantage to be gained (from people likely to benefit directly)
- Lack of lobbying from higher education or other stakeholders
- Perception that higher education is already sufficiently inclusive
- Governments don't understand the societal benefits that may come from RPL
- Other

Why are so few citizens taking advantage of RPL when it is possible?

- Attitude in universities: « this is something for other HEIs but not for us »
- Perception that higher education is already sufficiently inclusive
- HEIs don't understand the societal benefits that may come from using RPL
- Potential students are unaware of RPL
- Other

One potential « other » explanation

In EHEA c18 million additional students between 2000 and 2020

Increasing student numbers in most (not all) higher education systems

At the same time, governments have been cutting (in real terms) public investment in higher education: EHEA average = 0.95% GDP.

HEIs that may be struggling to meet current demand(s) may be reluctant to initiate more...