

ASPECTS OF NON-PARTICIPATION OF ADULTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

The contexts of the future labor market can be complex, but also uncertain. Thus, the acquisition of the most comprehensive competencies can be achieved by applying measures to renew educational practices. The article presents an analysis of participation in education and training for people aged between 25 and 34, respectively for people aged between 55 and 64. Reasons are also given for non-participation of adults in education and training programs. The analysis also presents the main obstacles that people in the two age groups (25-34 years, respectively 55-64 years) face when they want to attend education and training programs.

KEYWORDS: *adults, education and training, European Union, programs*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Automation of production processes means that certain jobs are being cut. Under these conditions, personnel policies should focus more on acquiring new skills for employees affected by these cuts. Thus, their retraining can be a solution. Adult participation in vocational education and training programs improve working life. Also, regardless of age, active participation in the workforce is encouraged. Both working and living environments are changing thanks to new technologies.

In order to stimulate sustainable regional growth, both in rural and urban areas, measures are needed to increase the level of education of the adult population. Thus, the difference in approach in terms of updating the skills of the population can make one region more developed than another. Adult participation in vocational education and training programs leads to the reduction of developmental gaps. At the same time, those skills that the labor market requires can be acquired.

Technological changes pose new challenges in terms of skills development (Angheluță et al., 2021). Thus, conventional skill models should be rethought. At the same time, a rethinking of the ways in which skills are acquired must be considered. It is proven that any development of a society is based on the development of skills (Rădulescu et al., 2020). However, even if the development of skills is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient for the evolution of a society (McGrath, 2002).

In recent years, education and training have undergone various reforms. However, measures are needed to increase learning in the workplace (Seitamäa & Hakoköngäs, 2022).

It is found that people who have inadequate or no access to information and communication technology (ICT) are prevented from participating in the development of a society (Burlacu et al., 2021). The development of this field has led to the increase of the quality of life, to the

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improvement of their social position (Ladaru et al., 2022). Marginalization may have an indirect cause of lack of access to these technologies (Soomro et al., 2020). A solution that can be applied in terms of increasing participation in education and training programs is given by the application of e-learning methods that meet the needs of students, their different learning styles (Rădulescu et al., 2021). Such a learning method, which should be adapted to the learners, could lead to an increase in their degree of involvement (El-Sabagh, 2021).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The contexts of the future labor market can be complex, but also uncertain (Belostecinic et al., 2022). Thus, the acquisition of the most comprehensive competencies can be achieved by applying measures to renew educational practices (Sarbu et al., 2021). It is desirable in practice to promote those learning outcomes that are based on relevant skills in professional life (Kleimola & Leppisaari, 2022).

For educators in the field of ICT, an improvement of the education process also involves increasing the degree of acquisition of specific and practical knowledge, leading to the acquisition of various technical skills (Holenko Dlab et al., 2021).

Such specific conditions of the learning process may include actions to promote cooperation, communication and exchange of information (Lnenicka et al., 2020).

The performance of the various tasks by the employees presupposes that they have the necessary skills and competences (Bodislav et al., 2021). Currently, the performance of non-routine tasks involves highly qualified employees. In this way, employees become more productive in performing analytical and interactive tasks (Burlacu, 2010). For these reasons, employees with medium qualifications do not identify and cannot access jobs in those companies that have a high share of non-routine tasks (Friedrich, 2021).

Social change has led to the idea of a competence-based learning and teaching approach (Burlacu & Jiroveanu, 2009). The professional development of many people depends on the appropriate and efficient use of ICT (Basilotta Gómez Pablos et al., 2022).

A considerable impact on a society can be the development of competencies related to entrepreneurship education (Rădulescu et al., 2020).

Decreasing the level of education leads to disturbances of the socio-economic environment of a community (Rădulescu et al., 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Through this article, an analysis of participation in education and training was carried out for people aged between 25 and 34, respectively for people aged between 55 and 64 for the member countries of the European Union. The comparative situation of the reasons why adults do not participate in vocational education and training programs is also analyzed. The analysis carried out also presents the main obstacles encountered by people from the two age groups (25-34 years, respectively 55-64 years) when they want to follow professional education and training programs.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study starts by analyzing participation in education and training. Thus, in the Table 1 is presented the comparative situation of participation rate in education and training for formal and non-formal education and training, for 2007, respectively for 2016 (%).

Table 1. Comparative situation of participation rate in education and training, 2007-2016

Countries	From 25 to 34 years		From 55 to 64 years	
	2007	2016	2007	2016
European Union	42,2	52,2	18,5	31,6
Belgium	56,3	59,3	23,5	29,2
Bulgaria	44,7	29,6	20,3	14,7
Czechia	44,1	51,9	21,7	29,1
Denmark	57,2	61,0	28,6	37,0
Germany	53,3	57,4	28,2	43,9
Estonia	52,5	52,9	27,5	30,4
Ireland	29,2	63,5	16,4	40,3
Greece	22,7	28,8	5,1	5,8
Spain	39,7	55,6	17,0	29,1
France	48,2	61,1	16,2	35,1
Croatia	33,5	44,0	9,0	15,7
Italy	30,5	49,8	11,8	33,0
Cyprus	53,2	57,9	20,1	29,9
Latvia	39,0	56,9	21,8	34,1
Lithuania	42,7	36,1	19,0	19,2
Luxembourg	81,4	58,5	49,4	29,8
Hungary	15,8	63,2	2,5	38,2
Malta	50,4	48,5	16,2	19,8
Netherlands	59,7	73,9	28,7	51,4
Austria	47,1	69,3	25,4	41,3
Poland	34,1	33,8	6,8	13,4
Portugal	40,3	60,3	10,9	28,6
Romania	14,0	13,9	2,5	1,5
Slovenia	52,1	56,4	22,2	27,3
Slovakia	51,0	54,3	23,8	30,3
Finland	66,0	67,6	37,8	34,3
Sweden	81,0	69,7	60,6	54,7

Source: made by the authors based on existing data on the EUROSTAT website (2022)

Considering the existing data on the Eurostat website, it is observed that, at European level, for the age group 55-64 years, in 2016 compared to 2007, participation rate in education and training increased by 13.1%. For the same time period, for the age group 25-34 years, participation rate in education and training increased by 10.0%.

Also, for the age group 55-64 years, in 2016 compared to 2007, participation rate in education and training decreased in 5 countries: Bulgaria (-5.6%), Luxembourg (-19.6%), Romania (-1.0%), Finland (-3.5%), Sweden (-5.9%). The largest increases were recorded in: Ireland (+23.9%), France (+18.9%), Italy (+21.2%), Hungary (+35.7%), Netherlands (+22.7%).

At the same time, for the 25-34 age group, in 2016 compared to 2007, the participation rate in education and training decreased in 7 countries: Bulgaria (-15.1%), Lithuania (-6.6%), Luxembourg (-22.9%), Malta (-1.9%), Poland (-0.3%), Romania (-0.1%), Sweden (-11.3%). Significant increases were: Ireland (+34.3%), Italy (+19.3%), Hungary (+ 47.4%), Austria (+22.2%), Portugal (+20.0%).

In 2016, at the level of the European Union, the participation rate in education and training for the 25-34 age group was 52.2%. The highest values were registered in: Netherlands (73.9%), Austria (69.3%), Finland (67.6%), Sweden (69.7%). The lowest values were: Bulgaria (29.6%), Greece (28.8%), Romania (13.9%). For the age group 55-64 years this indicator had the value of 31.6%.

The highest values were registered in: Netherlands (51.4%), Germany (43.9%), Sweden (54.7%). The lowest values were: Bulgaria (14.7%), Greece (5.8%), Poland (13.4%), Romania (1.5%). In each country there were reasons why adults did not attend education and training programs. Thus, for 2016, the Table 2 shows the weights in which the population encountered various difficulties.

Table 2. The comparative situation of the weights in which the population encountered various difficulties (2016)

Countries	Wanted but encountered difficulties		Wanted but encountered difficulties for personal reasons		Wanted but encountered difficulties which were not due to personal reasons		Did not want	
	From 25 to 34 years	From 55 to 64 years	From 25 to 34 years	From 55 to 64 years	From 25 to 34 years	From 55 to 64 years	From 25 to 34 years	From 55 to 64 years
European Union	26.0	12.1	7.8	5.6	15.7	5.6	73.3	87.4
Belgium	33.3	14.7	10.0	7.0	20.7	4.8	66.7	85.3
Bulgaria	13.3	2.5	:	:	11.0	:	83.7	95.5
Czechia	15.9	4.9	10.5	3.1	5.4	1.7	84.1	95.1
Denmark	32.4	15.6	:	:	:	:	67.2	83.9
Germany	14.9	7.5	5.3	3.2	8.0	3.9	84.8	92.3
Estonia	46.5	22.5	13.4	7.6	25.2	11.5	53.3	77.2
Ireland	34.3	21.4	14.7	12.7	18.6	7.6	65.6	78.2
Greece	21.6	7.3	4.4	3.4	17.1	3.7	76.7	91.8
Spain	22.5	11.5	4.5	4.8	17.5	6.2	73.0	85.2
France	33.6	11.7	:	:	:	:	66.3	88.3
Croatia	27.3	12.2	:	4.0	21.5	8.2	72.7	87.8
Italy	30.4	19.0	7.6	9.8	22.4	8.6	69.6	81.0
Cyprus	58.4	36.7	28.6	20.2	29.9	16.5	41.6	63.3
Latvia	39.6	21.7	13.4	7.5	26.3	14.2	58.9	78.1
Lithuania	13.4	3.0	5.4	:	8.0	:	86.6	97.0
Luxembourg	40.0	14.2	11.3	7.2	24.3	4.8	56.3	79.4
Hungary	19.9	8.8	6.3	3.0	12.6	4.9	80.1	91.2
Malta	28.8	20.9	10.8	10.5	17.5	9.8	70.1	78.9
Netherlands	38.4	16.1	:	:	:	:	61.6	83.9
Austria	35.4	17.1	12.8	8.3	19.9	8.2	64.6	82.9
Poland	27.3	8.1	13.2	4.0	12.8	3.5	72.7	91.9
Portugal	47.8	28.7	10.7	11.9	37.1	16.8	52.2	71.3
Romania	26.6	12.8	5.1	7.4	19.8	3.2	73.4	87.2
Slovenia	16.8	2.8	:	:	11.8	:	82.3	96.8
Slovakia	22.6	8.4	10.3	4.7	12.4	2.7	77.4	91.6
Finland	39.1	15.7	12.8	:	24.1	10.5	60.5	83.9
Sweden	33.0	20.2	11.2	8.7	17.6	10.1	62.1	78.0

Source: made by the authors based on existing data on the EUROSTAT website (2022)

It is noted that for most countries, regardless of the age group analyzed, there was no will for adults to attend education and training programs. For the age group 25-34, very high values were: Bulgaria (83.7%), Czech Republic (84.1%), Germany (84.8%), Lithuania (86.6%). For the 55-64 age group, very high values were registered in: Bulgaria (95.5%), Czech Republic (95.1%), Lithuania (97.0%), Slovenia (96.8%).

The motivation of some difficulties (whether for personal reasons or not) did not constitute high weights in non-participation in education and training programs.

For 2016, at the level of the European Union, the following figure presents the comparative situation of the motivation of the population from the two age groups regarding the non-participation of adults in education and training programs.

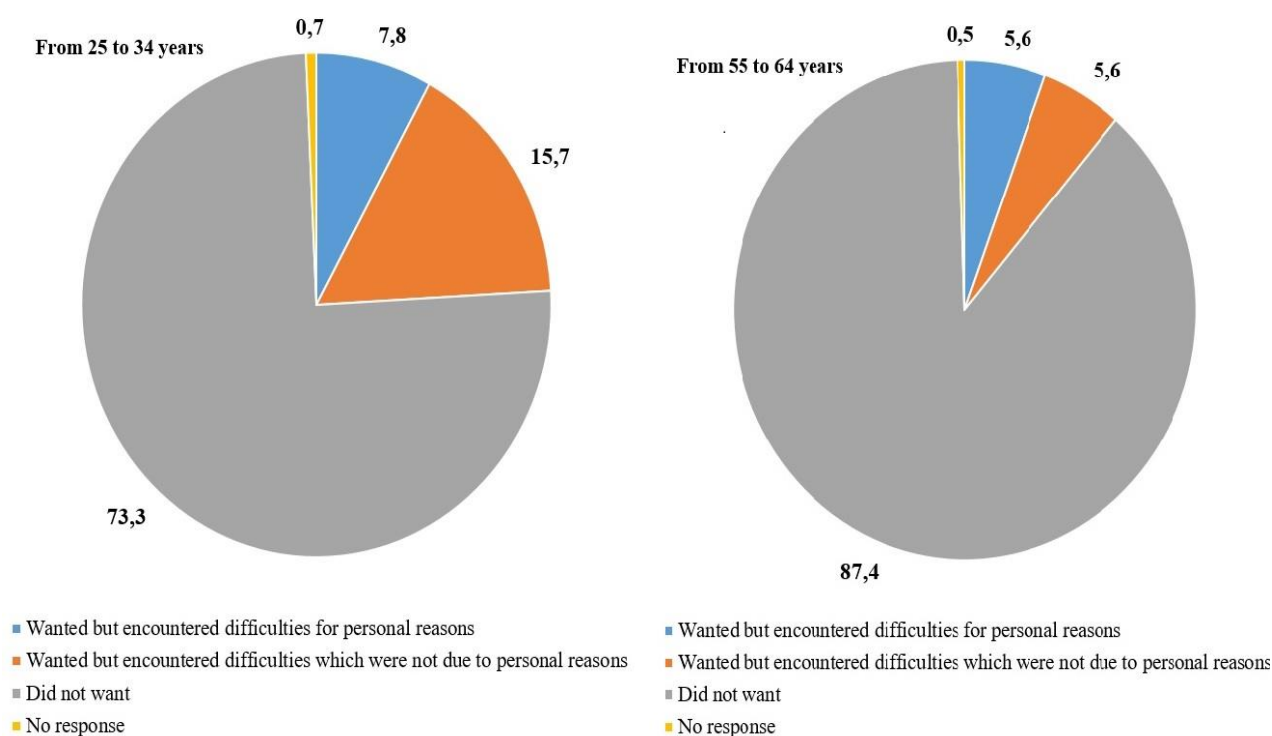


Figure 1. Comparative situation of the motivation of the population from the two age groups regarding the non-participation of adults in education and training programs

Source: made by the authors based on existing data on the EUROSTAT website (2022)

From the previous figure, it is observed that, for the 25-34 age group, at European level, 73.3% of the population did not want to participate in training programs. For the 55-64 age group, 87.4% of the population did not want to participate in training programs.

Depending on the desire to follow education and training programs, the Table 3 presents the comparative situation of the values of the weights in which the persons who participated in education and training programs still want or not to participate in other programs. Also, the weights of the people who did not participate in training programs and want to participate, respectively do not plan to do so in the next period are presented.

It is observed that, at European level, after a participation in an education and training program, there is a certain reluctance regarding the participation in a second such program. Compared to 2007, in 2016, the values increased by +10.4%. For 2016, the highest values were recorded in: Czechia (39.0%), Germany (42.0%), Hungary (49.1%), Netherlands (49.4%), Sweden (42.5%).

Table 3. Comparative situation of the weights of participation / non-participation decisions

Countries	Persons who participated but wanted to participate more		Persons who participated and did not want to participate more		Persons who did not participate but wanted to participate		Persons who did not participate and did not want to participate	
	2007	2016	2007	2016	2007	2016	2007	2016
European Union	9.1	13.4	19.6	30.0	11.5	11.0	56.3	44.9
Belgium	15.3	22.0	24.5	23.2	16.4	13.1	39.2	41.8
Bulgaria	7.2	4.6	29.2	19.6	5.4	5.1	58.2	68.7
Czechia	11.3	7.1	25.6	39.0	12.7	5.6	49.1	48.3
Denmark	33.1	29.9	16.8	20.1	12.5	12.3	22.3	36.9
Germany	12.3	9.2	37.4	42.0	5.6	5.6	43.9	42.1
Estonia	14.7	18.7	27.4	25.0	12.5	20.4	45.3	35.4
Ireland	18.7	18.9	5.6	34.9	55.1	13.5	15.4	32.4
Greece	5.1	5.5	7.8	10.2	16.4	12.5	63.4	69.7
Spain	8.3	9.2	22.4	33.3	8.4	9.8	60.0	44.6
France	9.3	19.9	25.8	31.3	10.0	11.4	54.9	37.2
Croatia	7.4	9.7	10.0	22.1	14.0	14.1	63.0	54.1
Italy	6.1	16.2	16.0	25.4	19.2	15.2	52.0	43.3
Cyprus	30.5	32.7	10.1	15.4	32.8	27.4	26.5	24.4
Latvia	16.4	24.5	16.1	22.7	12.0	16.9	54.1	35.1
Lithuania	12.2	4.6	21.7	23.3	10.6	5.1	55.5	67.0
Luxembourg	36.9	27.4	23.6	20.5	11.3	14.4	11.5	34.5
Hungary	0.6	6.4	8.3	49.1	9.2	5.7	81.8	38.6
Malta	15.1	14.4	20.8	21.6	15.3	16.5	48.8	46.7
Netherlands	7.1	14.7	33.0	49.4	9.6	9.1	36.1	26.8
Austria	10.9	21.5	23.4	38.4	8.5	10.3	48.9	29.7
Poland	12.7	12.8	9.1	12.7	9.0	13.0	69.2	61.5
Portugal	7.8	26.5	18.7	19.6	6.5	21.1	67.0	32.9
Romania	1.4	2.9	4.8	4.1	7.9	17.9	74.2	75.2
Slovenia	17.9	21.7	22.6	23.2	13.1	5.7	46.4	47.9
Slovakia	26.6	11.5	15.0	34.5	9.7	8.0	48.7	45.9
Finland	19.9	15.1	35.1	38.8	11.4	12.8	33.4	32.9
Sweden	32.1	19.5	40.8	42.5	7.7	10.2	18.4	24.8

Source: made by the authors based on existing data on the EUROSTAT website (2022)

Compared to 2007, in 2016, the weights increased in: Ireland (29.3%), Hungary (40.8%), Netherlands (16.4%), Austria (15.0%), Slovakia (19.5%). The desire to continue participating in other education and training programs is observed by comparing the data from 2007 with those from 2016. Thus, an improvement of values was manifested for: France (10.6%), Italy (10.1%), Austria (10.6%), Portugal (18.7%).

Regarding people who did not participate in training programs, but want to do so, compared to 2007, in 2016, there are increases for Estonia (7.9%), Portugal (14.6%), Romania (10,0%).

However, most people who have not attended an education and training program do not want to participate in any. Compared to 2007, in 2016, the situation improved significantly only in: Bulgaria (+10.5%), Denmark (+14.6%), Ireland (+17.0%), Lithuania (+11.5%), Luxembourg (+23.0%).

The decision whether or not to participate in training programs for the population of the European Union, for 2016, is shown in the following figure.

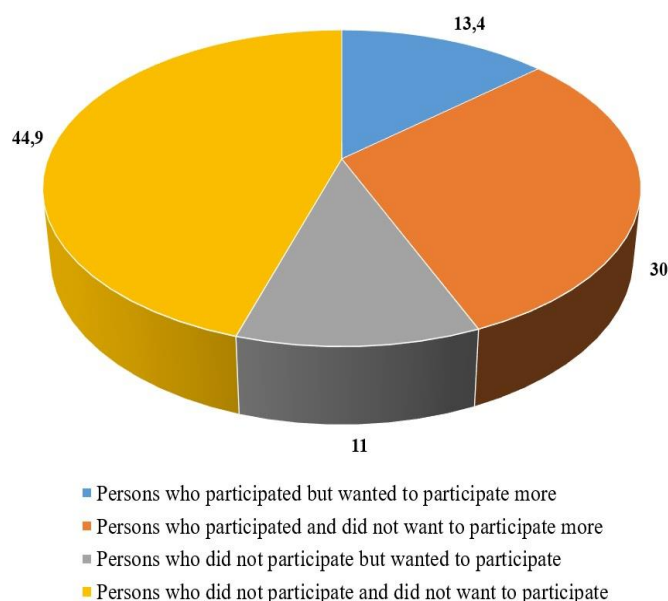


Figure 2. The comparative situation of the weights of the decisions to participate or not in training programs

Source: made by the authors based on existing data on the EUROSTAT website (2022)

There are high weights for people who no longer want to attend education and training programs. However, identifying solutions for public participation in education and training programs can start from the motivation of non-participation of people who want to follow a program.

Table 4. Comparative situation of population weights wanting to attend education and training, by reason for not participating

Countries	Distance		Costs		Family reasons		Schedule		Lack of support from employer or public services	
	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years
European Union	16,1	14,5	37,3	24,5	27,3	26,8	41,0	32,4	24,1	18,7
Belgium	15,6	11,5	24,0	10,4	28,8	20,8	50,9	24,8	12,8	9,1
Bulgaria	20,7	:	46,5	34,2	20,6	:	61,5	37,8	:	:
Czechia	11,4	12,5	23,2	25,4	38,3	16,1	21,4	15,6	8,6	:
Denmark	4,6	:	25,0	18,4	19,0	9,6	28,7	18,7	14,1	13,5
Germany	17,2	11,1	38,8	22,9	30,1	27,7	38,5	33,7	42,0	29,2
Estonia	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Ireland	7,3	8,5	38,9	17,3	36,0	32,5	28,3	25,3	:	:
Greece	24,7	25,8	54,8	36,6	26,1	57,5	37,5	31,2	14,5	:
Spain	22,1	19,5	51,0	31,7	32,2	36,9	57,0	38,7	32,0	26,9
France	13,6	11,4	31,4	21,4	15,6	5,9	33,4	27,9	35,5	28,9

Countries	Distance		Costs		Family reasons		Schedule		Lack of support from employer or public services	
	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years	25-34 years	55-64 years
Croatia	15.4	20.4	48.6	32.4	20.2	23.2	51.2	30.5	:	:
Italy	21.7	17.1	44.5	30.5	27.7	46.4	44.6	41.0	16.2	14.1
Cyprus	15.6	17.1	46.2	22.9	48.2	56.0	40.8	27.8	:	:
Latvia	23.1	32.1	55.7	50.4	35.2	16.5	49.8	38.3	17.6	19.4
Lithuania	:	:	44.1	:	36.5	:	44.7	:	:	:
Luxembourg	14.0	11.3	34.8	16.8	24.0	14.9	46.6	22.2	20.6	:
Hungary	29.6	34.0	44.1	34.6	33.0	16.4	56.7	32.7	15.2	13.8
Malta	:	:	29.1	:	42.3	56.4	73.7	61.4	:	:
Netherlands	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Austria	16.9	22.4	42.7	20.2	33.4	32.2	52.7	42.0	32.5	14.2
Poland	3.4	5.4	23.3	16.7	35.4	20.5	29.7	20.8	12.7	7.4
Portugal	26.7	22.6	48.4	26.5	25.4	23.6	62.3	43.5	31.6	21.6
Romania	20.9	8.7	49.2	22.1	25.3	23.8	42.1	12.8	20.1	6.6
Slovenia	15.0	14.8	41.1	32.5	29.3	18.0	37.4	30.3	8.4	:
Slovakia	:	:	35.6	25.2	34.4	:	50.3	29.5	:	:
Finland	23.1	22.0	30.1	13.2	22.4	:	38.9	29.5	20.4	23.1
Sweden	15.3	14.7	23.9	19.8	26.9	16.8	33.6	31.6	18.3	20.7

Source: made by the authors based on existing data on the EUROSTAT website (2022)

Thus, in the previous table, are presented the main obstacles that people from the two age groups (25-34 years, respectively 55-64 years) face when they want to follow education and training programs. For both age groups, the first reasons refer to the schedule (41% for 25-34 years, respectively 32.4% for 55-64 years). Costs are the following reasons that negatively influence participation in population training programs. Also, family reasons raise the values of the weight of non-participation. From the data presented, these are the main reasons for most countries in the European Union. Distance and lack of support from employer or public services are the following reasons for non-participation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis performed, at the level of the European Union, it is found that, in 2016 compared to 2007, both for the age group 55-64 years and for the age group 25-34 years, participation rate in education and training has increased. For the 25-34 age group, in 2016, values of over 60% were registered in: Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, France, Hungary, Portugal. It is noted that for most countries, regardless of the age group analyzed, there was no will for adults to attend education and training programs, respectively they did not want. Motivation for difficulties (whether for personal reasons or not) did not constitute high weights for adults not to attend education and training programs.

It is also noted that, at European level, after participating in an education and training program, there is a certain reluctance to participate in a second such program. Most people who have not attended an education and training program do not want to participate in any.

With regard to the main obstacles faced by people in both age groups when they want to attend education and training programs, the first reasons relate to the schedule. Costs are the following reasons that negatively influence participation in population training programs. Also, family reasons raise the values of the weight of non-participation.

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