



In a nutshell

# Social Justice in the EU and OECD

## Index Report 2019

Thorsten Hellmann, Pia Schmidt, Sascha Matthias Heller



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# EU and OECD Social Justice Index 2019





# I. In a nutshell

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With the onset of the economic and financial crisis, social justice has deteriorated – on average – in the OECD and EU countries surveyed by the SJI.<sup>1</sup> While the Social Justice Index shows a slight but ongoing upward trend since economic recovery began in 2014, the overall score remains below the pre-crisis level. In addition, there are still striking discrepancies with regard to available opportunities to participate in society in the 41 countries surveyed.

## 1. Key findings, by country

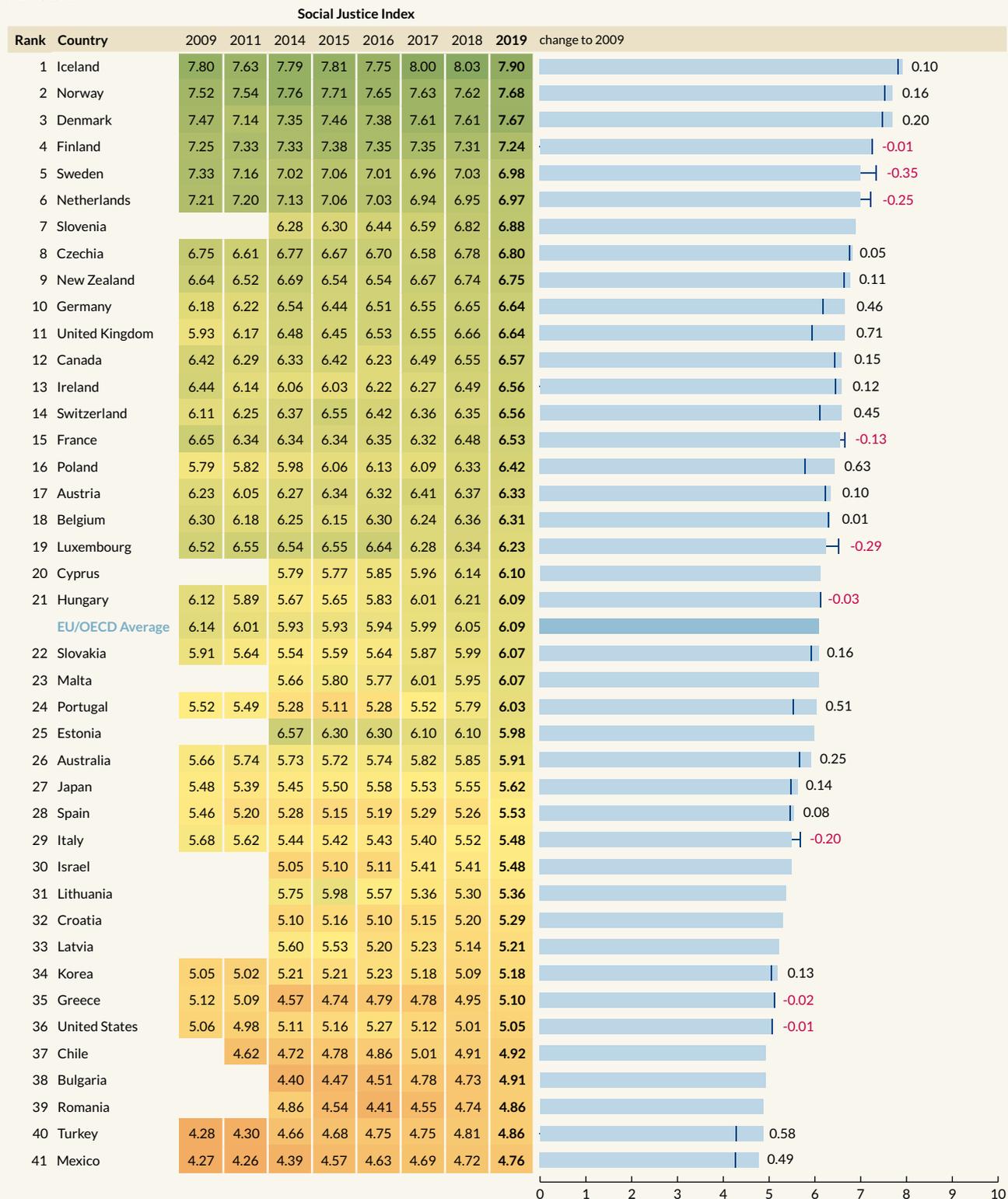
### **Nordic countries still set the standard, but Sweden is losing ground in some areas**

Topping this year's Social Justice Index are Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, five countries from northern Europe. The success registered among Nordic countries is broad-based, as Iceland, Finland, Norway and Denmark are among the top 10 in the dimensions of poverty prevention, equitable education, social inclusion and non-discrimination, and intergenerational justice. Iceland also ranks first in terms of labor market access and 7<sup>th</sup> in terms of the health dimension. Sweden, which is currently ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the overall ranking, has lost considerable ground in some areas over the last ten years. Since 2008, the risk of poverty among the Swedish population rose from 7.2% to 9.5% (rank 18) and increased significantly from 7.9% to 12.3% among children. Also striking is the country's ongoing poor performance in terms of labor market access, landing Sweden at rank 30. Although employment is high and the share of low-income earners is low, in addition to the relatively high unemployment rate (6.5%, rank 29), there are clear weaknesses in the integration of young people (rank 31), the low-skilled (rank 36) and foreigners (rank 41) into the labor market. However, the country continues to take the lead in terms of intergenerational justice. The Nordic countries overall work hard to take account of younger generations' concerns in today's politics, particularly in the areas of environmental protection and climate change.

<sup>1</sup> For the first time, the Social Justice Index includes not only EU but also OECD member states. As a result, we had to revise the set of indicators used, which means the findings for the SJI 2019 are not comparable with previous editions.

FIGURE 1 Social Justice Index 2019 (weighted)

Unit: Score



Source: Social Justice Index.

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FIGURE 2 SJI 2019 Rankings



Country	Overall	Poverty Prevention	Equitable Education	Labor Market Access	Social Inclusion and Non-discrimination	Inter-generational Justice	Health
Australia	26	30	22	8	16	21	8
Austria	17	16	36	25	20	17	12
Belgium	18	14	26	29	15	32	21
Bulgaria	38	33	28	31	41	19	39
Canada	12	25	4	10	6	25	14
Chile	37	36	27	35	34	11	38
Croatia	32	29	17	34	31	27	32
Cyprus	20	17	19	32	23	39	30
Czechia	8	4	40	4	22	14	26
Denmark	3	2	1	12	2	2	10
Estonia	25	28	10	11	17	5	24
Finland	4	3	6	26	10	4	20
France	15	7	35	38	21	20	4
Germany	10	15	14	15	18	22	13
Greece	35	22	31	41	29	41	19
Hungary	21	9	39	17	33	30	37
Iceland	1	1	5	1	3	6	7
Ireland	13	10	29	21	14	29	18
Israel	30	40	8	9	32	9	9
Italy	29	26	25	39	27	40	5
Japan	27	32	24	2	38	38	15
Korea	34	38	21	19	40	16	28
Latvia	33	34	12	27	30	10	41
Lithuania	31	37	18	20	25	12	33
Luxembourg	19	24	30	23	4	28	2
Malta	23	19	34	18	24	36	31
Mexico	41	39	32	24	36	15	40
Netherlands	6	6	20	16	5	26	17
New Zealand	9	23	9	3	7	8	3
Norway	2	5	2	13	1	3	1
Poland	16	12	13	22	28	31	34
Portugal	24	20	33	28	11	34	23
Romania	39	35	38	33	35	23	35
Slovakia	22	11	37	36	26	35	27
Slovenia	7	8	7	14	19	13	25
Spain	28	27	23	40	9	33	6
Sweden	5	13	3	30	8	1	11
Switzerland	14	21	15	7	12	7	16
Turkey	40	31	41	37	39	18	36
United Kingdom	11	18	11	5	13	24	22
United States	36	41	16	6	37	37	29

Source: Social Justice Index.

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### **Germany, United Kingdom and France among the top third, but there are still large gaps among them**

Three of Europe's most influential countries, Germany, the United Kingdom and France, are ranked 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> respectively in the overall ranking. Whereas Germany and the United Kingdom were able to expand inclusive opportunities in the past ten years, France is more or less stagnating in this regard. In addition, a closer look at the individual aspects of social justice shows us that there are grave differences between the three states. While Germany ranks in the (upper) midfield on all six aspects of social justice, the United Kingdom and France vary considerably on all fronts here. France, for example, ranks fourth in the dimension of health and seventh in the area of poverty prevention. By contrast, however, urgent action in both areas of education (rank 35) and labor market access (rank 38) is needed. Social selectiveness in the French educational system accounts in large part for the country's poor performance in equitable education. The country ranks last on both indicators that measure the link between students' socio-economic background and their learning outcomes. In the dimension of labor market access, France is among the low performers on almost all indicators. At 9.1%, the country's unemployment rate is outperformed in negative terms only by the crisis countries of Greece, Italy, Spain and Turkey.

### **Southern European crisis countries: Progress in Portugal; Greece continues to grapple with a dramatic labor market situation**

Of the countries in southern Europe that were hit particularly hard by the economic crisis, only Portugal has managed to show clear improvement since before the crisis. In Spain, Italy and Greece, the total score has roughly reached the level of the SJI 2009. For the current SJI 2019, Portugal ranks 24<sup>th</sup>, while Greece only manages 35<sup>th</sup> place. Particularly in the labor market access dimension, Portugal clearly stands out from the other crisis countries at rank 28. Italy, Spain and Greece lag behind in this dimension. While a slight but steady upward trend has been evident in Italy and Spain since the SJI 2015, labor-market conditions in Greece remain distressing. Although the employment rate has risen since 2013, and the unemployment rate has declined, Greece still records by far the highest unemployment rate (19.5%) and the second-lowest employment rate (54.9%) in the sample. Moreover, despite having made some headway since 2013, Greece, Spain and Italy still feature the highest youth unemployment rates and by far the highest long-term unemployment rates among the countries surveyed. The southern countries also show clear weaknesses in the area of intergenerational justice. These countries maintain extremely high levels of debt and their unsustainable pension systems are creating a heavy cross for younger generations to bear. This is particularly true for Greece and Italy, which rank at the bottom of the countries surveyed in this area. On a positive note, Italy and Spain rank among the top nations in the health dimension, delivering good performances in this area.

### **Giving rise to both hope and caution in Eastern Europe: Czechia and Slovenia among the top 10, Bulgaria and Romania at the bottom**

A look at the opportunities for societal participation in the Eastern European states reveals serious differences. While Slovenia (rank 7) and Czechia (rank 8) are among the top ten countries, Romania (rank 39) and Bulgaria (rank 38) are at

the bottom end of the ranking. Czechia scored particularly well with a low at-risk-of-poverty rate of 4.4% (2<sup>nd</sup> place) and the lowest unemployment rate among the surveyed countries (2.3%). The country's poor performance in terms of equitable education is what kept it from ranking even higher. In fact, since the SJI 2016, Czechia's performance in this dimension has worsened, bringing it down to second-to-last place. The high degree of social selectiveness in the education system is largely to blame here. Slovakia, Hungary and Romania also number among the five countries with the least equitable distribution of educational opportunities, whereas Slovenia and Poland are in the top third in the field of education. Romania also records the highest child poverty risk in the countries surveyed for the SJI. At 24%, this is almost six times as high as Finland's child poverty rate (4.2%). These countries also struggle considerably with combating discrimination. Governments in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia and Hungary do nothing to counteract hostilities directed at Roma minorities and the massive marginalization they face.

### **Baltic States losing ground**

In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania we observe a more or less continuous downward trend in terms of social justice. On the one hand, the Baltic states have made significant progress in terms of ensuring access to the labor market, and they are also doing well in terms of providing fair educational opportunities. On the other hand, however, we see dramatic increases in at-risk-of-poverty levels among the elderly in all three countries. The SGI country experts attribute this to the low pension levels found in each country. The most drastic increase is in Latvia, where the poverty risk rate of those over 65 has increased from 6.5% in 2013 to 29.4% in 2018, marking a near five-fold increase. Only Korea has even more elderly people at risk of poverty. Latvia also ranks last in the SJI 2019 health ranking.

### **North America: Canada among the top third, the United States among the bottom-ranked**

While Canada is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the overall ranking, the United States just manages to achieve the rank of 36<sup>th</sup>. In fact, the United States' score has worsened even further since the SJI 2016, while a slight upward trend can be observed in Canada. Significant differences between the two North American countries can be seen above all in the dimensions of poverty prevention (Canada rank 25, USA rank 41) and social inclusion and non-discrimination (Canada rank 6, USA rank 37). At 17.8%, the United States has the second-highest share of people at risk of poverty of the countries surveyed, while the poverty risk in Canada is much lower at 12.1%. The differences in the risk of poverty for the elderly are even more pronounced, with the United States (23.1%) featuring a rate more than twice that of Canada's rate (12.2%). Integration policy in the United States has also suffered considerable setbacks. In the SJI 2009, Canada and the United States were top performers in this regard, each receiving 9 out of 10 possible points for this indicator. Today, however, while Canada has maintained its strong record in integration and continues to set an example for others, the United States has fallen to rank 24, receiving only 5 points for this indicator. The scope of educational opportunities for the foreign-born population in the United States, for example, has drastically narrowed. Currently, the share of the foreign-born population in the United States without an upper secondary degree is more than three times as high as that of the native-born population (rank 40). Canada and the United States both face a long

road ahead in terms of catching up on issues of intergenerational justice. Both countries have done little to ensure a fair ecological legacy, as is evinced by their extremely high greenhouse gas emissions.

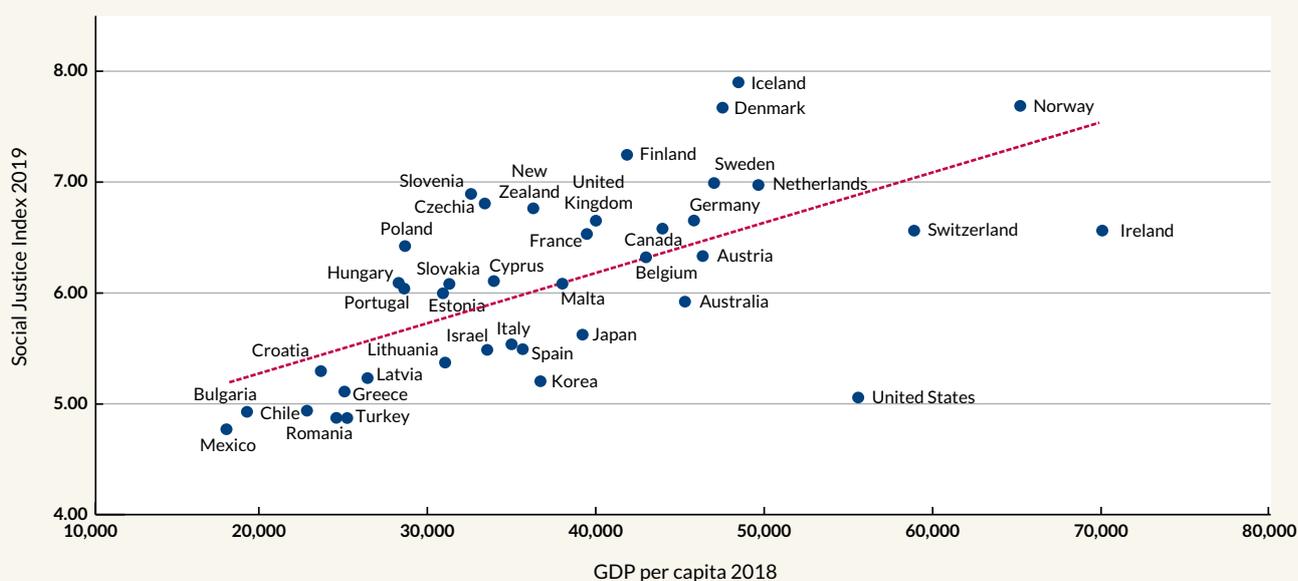
### Weak opportunities for participation in Chile, Mexico and Turkey

In addition to Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, Turkey (rank 40) and the South American countries of Chile (rank 37) and Mexico (rank 41) each offer the least in terms of opportunities for social participation, despite having recorded slight improvements in recent years. All three states are among the 10 worst countries in terms of poverty prevention, social inclusion and non-discrimination, and health. In terms of intergenerational equity, however, they number among the middle ranks. Yet we see major differences among them when it comes to ensuring labor market access. In Mexico, the unemployment rate is only 3.4% (rank 4) and youth unemployment 6.9% (rank 5), while the corresponding figures in Turkey are about three times as high at 11.1% (rank 39) and 20.2% (rank 34), respectively. Moreover, given that Turkey takes last place in the educational ranking and education is a key condition for access to the labor market, it seems unlikely that we will see any notable improvement in the country's labor market situation anytime soon. Currently, 62.6% of 25–64 year-olds in Turkey have no upper secondary degree, while in Lithuania, the best country for this indicator, this is true of only 5.2% of the population. The share of PISA low performers in all subjects is also enormously high in Turkey at 31.2% (rank 40). Perhaps most dramatically, Mexico and Turkey both have high infant mortality rates and receive by far the lowest scores for this indicator.

### (Not only) money does matter

FIGURE 3 Social Justice 2019 and GDP per Capita 2018

Unit: Social Justice Index score/GDP per capita, PPP



Source: Own calculations.

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A comparison of the economic performance of the 41 surveyed OECD and EU countries with the existing opportunities for participation in society shows a correlation between the two (cf. Fig. 3). Social justice tends to be stronger in those countries that have greater economic potential, as measured by their real GDP. The countries featuring the greatest opportunities for social participation – Norway, Denmark and Iceland – are among the wealthier nations, while poorer countries such as Mexico or Bulgaria are at the end of the social justice ranking. However, Figure 3 also shows that economic performance alone is not the only determining factor. A comparison between the United States and the Netherlands, for example, shows that the opportunities for social participation are much better in the Netherlands – with a lower GDP – than in the United States. Measured by its economic performance, the United States is a clear underperformer in terms of social justice.

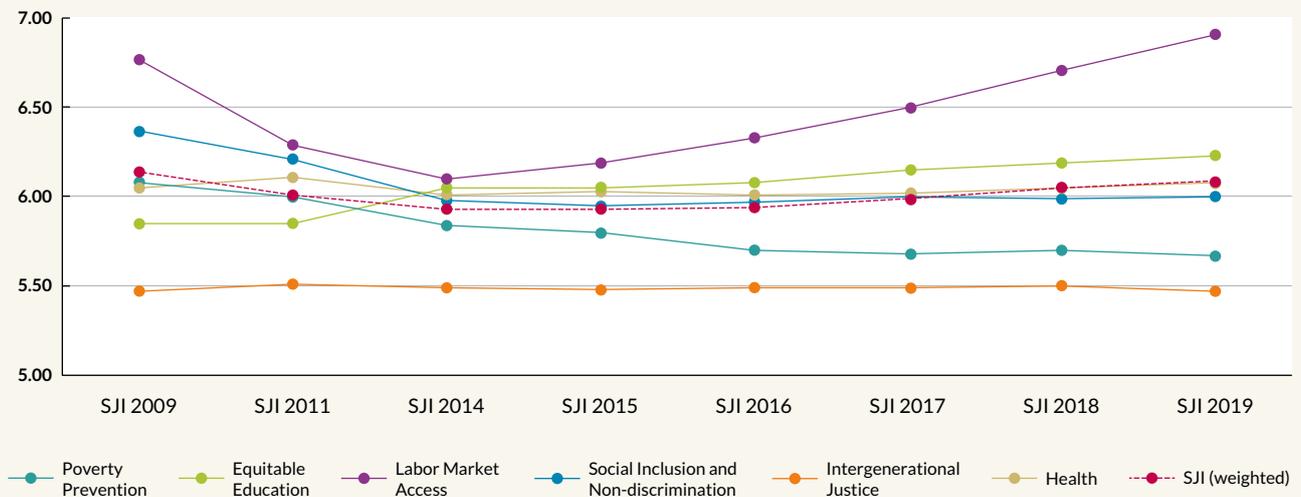
## 2. Key findings, by dimension

### Continued improvements in the labor market increases opportunities for participation

In this year’s edition of the SJI, we see that for many, the continued upward trend in the labor market has brought about slight improvements in opportunities for participation. In 38 of the 41 countries included in the survey, job opportunities have improved compared to the previous year. The average score of 6.91 for access to the labor market shows that the pre-crisis level (SJI 2009: 6.77) was for the first time surpassed. The same is true of the average unemployment rate among the OECD and EU countries, which is below pre-crisis levels (5.7%) and has fallen to 5.3% after having peaked at 8.4% in 2010. Nevertheless, striking differences remain among the 41 countries surveyed. The employment rate ranges between

FIGURE 4 The Dimensions of Social Justice, SJI 2009–SJI 2019

Unit: Score



Source: Social Justice Index.

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85.1% in Iceland and 52% in Turkey, and unemployment in Greece is at 19.5%, which is more than eight times higher than that seen in Czechia (2.3%).

Another encouraging sign is that youth unemployment has continued to decrease in most countries. This applies as well to those countries hit hardest by the crisis in southern Europe. After peaking at almost 60% in 2013, unemployment in Greece has fallen to a current rate of 39.9%. In Spain, where youth unemployment reached a similarly high rate of 55.5% in 2013, youth unemployment is now at 34.3%. Nevertheless, young people in Spain, Greece and Italy continue to struggle with finding a job and run the risk of facing social exclusion. While Italy, Spain and Greece remain at the bottom of the labor market rankings, Iceland, Japan and New Zealand top the list.

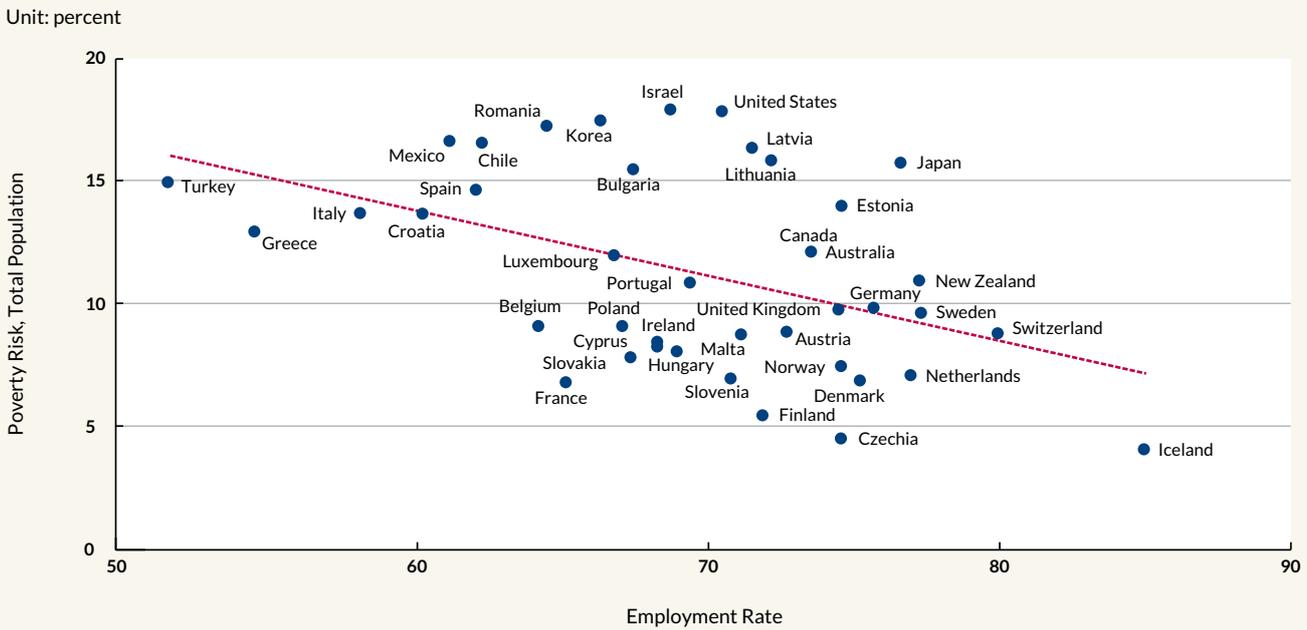
### **Despite improving job outlooks, numbers of those at risk of poverty have declined in only 16 countries**

The increase in job opportunities is clouded by the fact that not all social groups benefit equally from this upward trend in the labor market. What's striking here is that in many cases, these increasing employment figures are not accompanied by a decline in the risk of poverty. Despite the fact that since 2013 in 40 of the 41 countries significantly more people are in employment, only 16 countries have been able to reduce their relative poverty rates. This troubling finding is particularly evident in the example of Lithuania, where the employment rate rose from 63.7% in 2013 to 72.4% in 2018, while the rate of the total population at risk of poverty rose from 13.1% to 15.8% for the same period.

Israel (17.9%), the USA (17.8%) and Korea (17.4%) are the worst performers in the poverty ranking. Each state has considerable problems in terms of protecting its population from poverty and thereby ensuring full social inclusion. On the other hand, poverty risk rates are lowest in Iceland and Czechia. In both countries, the already low at-risk-of-poverty rate for the total population was reduced further to 4% and 4.4%, respectively.

The growing dualization of labor markets is one factor that accounts for the fact that improving employment rates in many countries are not ushering in a reduction in the risk of poverty. For example, most country experts report that gaps in income and job quality have grown, which often results in a narrowed scope of opportunity to participate in society. One reason for this is the flexibilization of labor markets underway in almost all countries. While this trend has contributed significantly to the increase in employment, it also involves an increase in atypical, non-regular employment relationships, such as part-time work or fixed-term employment. For example, in 23 of the 41 countries surveyed by the SJI since 2008, the share of involuntary part-time work vis-a-vis total part-time work has increased, and in some cases, substantially so. This is true particularly of the crisis countries in southern Europe. In Greece, for example, the share of people working part-time involuntarily increased by 26 percentage points since 2008 to 70.1% (2018). In addition, in some countries, many people work in the low-wage sector, which means they are particularly susceptible to poverty. While the employment rate in the United States, for example, has risen slightly in recent years, rather than falling, the rate of those at risk of poverty has increased to 17.8%. One reason for this could be that almost a quarter of employees in the United States are in the low-wage sector.

FIGURE 5 Poverty Rate and Employment Rate



Source: Own calculations.

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**In 27 countries, the risk of poverty is higher for children and youth than it is for the elderly – social welfare systems must nevertheless do more to counter the growing risk of poverty in old age**

Those groups particularly at risk of poverty include the elderly, children and youth. Whereas the risk of poverty among children has fallen in about half of the countries since the SJI 2009, the prospects of social inclusion for children and youth in the other half are significantly worse than before the crisis. Child poverty remains alarmingly high in many countries. The situation is particularly dramatic in Romania, where 24% of children are affected by poverty. In Turkey and Israel, the share is similarly high, with almost one in four children being at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Notably, in 27 of the 41 countries surveyed, more children and youth are affected by poverty than those over 65. In many countries, including those with a strong welfare state such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark, child poverty is considerably higher than old-age poverty. Among the remaining 14 countries are Australia, Latvia, Estonia and Korea, where the situation for the older generation looks significantly worse in some cases. In Korea, where poverty among the elderly is by far the highest at 43.8% and child and youth poverty rates are also high, we nonetheless see a near 30-point spread between the two age groups. Even though in many cases old-age poverty did not worsen significantly during the crisis years (and in some cases even fell below pre-crisis levels), there have been clear signs in many countries of an increase in old-age poverty over the past one-to-two years as a result of growing demographic pressure. In Luxembourg, for example, old-age poverty doubled within one year from 3.3% (2015) to 6.7% (2016) and has reached 8.8% in 2018. While pensions in many countries have remained relatively

high even in times of crisis, pension systems are now subject to profoundly intensifying pressure. In order to ensure a sustainable future, however, social welfare system reforms must be able to secure the standard of living of today's older generation while taking into account the interests of younger generations.

In addition to children and the elderly, the risk of poverty is also considerably higher among migrants and ethnic minorities than it is among other social groups. Poverty among Israel's Arab minority, for example, is visibly greater than it is among the rest of the population, and our country experts for Czechia and Slovakia also point to high poverty rates among the Roma in these two countries. These are just a few examples of several reports highlighting the markedly reduced opportunities for participation that are found among migrants and members of ethnic minorities.

### Stalled development in intergenerational justice

The overall average score for intergenerational justice, which is well below that of the other five dimensions, remains at a standstill. In nearly every country included in the SJI, we see no progress being made in this area. In fact, compared to the previous year, more than half of the 41 OECD and EU states have even recorded slight setbacks in terms of intergenerational justice. In addition, we see large gaps in the findings for individual countries. While Nordic countries such as the absolute frontrunners Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, are best at integrating the interests of younger and future generations into contemporary policymaking, Italy and Greece by far have the most difficulty in terms of intergenerational justice.

The lack of progress is worrying given the fact that, in all countries, low birth rates and increased life expectancy are increasing the percentage of people who are no longer of working age. Part of the challenge for these 41 countries is to meet the growing (monetary) demands on social security systems without imposing immense financial burdens on younger generations. And while the Nordic countries tend not to balk at introducing the necessary reforms for a sustainable family and pension policy, many other countries find it difficult to cope with demographically induced changes.

A large number of countries have once again been able to significantly reduce their debt levels since the crisis, thereby creating the financial breathing room needed for present and future generations. Nonetheless, we observe continued high levels of debt, particularly in Japan, the United States and the crisis-stricken countries of southern Europe such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and Cyprus. In Greece, for example, the country with the second highest debt level of 183.3% of GDP, we see an increase of 4 percentage points compared to previous year. With an extremely high national debt of 237.1% of GDP, Japan's debt level is heavy burden weighing in on future generations. Considered within the context of its demographic structure, Japan's high public debt draws even greater concern when the debt is calculated for each child. In that case, the debt currently amounts to 816.000I\$ per child. As it turns out, politically, the financial scope of action available to present and future generations in these countries is severely limited. In stark contrast to this is Estonia, which ranks at the top in terms of intergenerational justice with a debt ratio of only 8.1% of GDP. Equally diverse is the picture of R&D expenditure, which can potentially contribute to intergenerational equity by fostering innovations nec-

essary for competitiveness. In addition to the top performers of Israel and Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark and Germany feature comparatively high expenditures on R&D in an effort to advance innovation and develop solutions to urgent problems. As in all 41 countries, private spending on R&D in these countries is significantly higher than government spending. In contrast, Bulgaria, Romania, Malta and Cyprus land at the bottom of the ranking with less than 0.3% of GDP being spent on research and development in the public sector.

The environmental legacy being passed on to younger generations is of grave concern. Although many of our country experts point to a growing tendency in politics to take environmental concerns more seriously, no quantum leap has been achieved in advancing environmental sustainability. The sad truth is that in 19 of the 41 countries assessed, greenhouse gas emissions have actually increased since the previous year. Australia, the United States and Canada, which continue to emit nearly 20 metric tons of greenhouse gases per capita, are among the biggest polluters. As in the overall ranking, we see a large divide when it comes to climate change and environmental protection policymaking. On the one side, we have ambitious countries such as Sweden, which has steadily reduced its carbon footprint to 5.24 metric tons per capita and is expanding its share of renewable energy, and on the other, we have those countries that do too little to curb the impact climate change and environmental degradation are destined to have on future generations. The latter are clearly in the majority, because only three of the 41 countries included in the sample obtain more than 50% of their energy needs from renewable sources. In addition, only eight countries feature a carbon footprint small enough to allow for a biocapacity able to bear the consumption of renewable resources.

#### **Once again, little progress made on social inclusion and non-discrimination**

On average, little has been done to advance social inclusion and non-discrimination in recent years. However, the fact that many countries have recorded slight improvements in gender equality gives rise to hope. Since the SJI 2018, 16 countries have increased their share of women in parliament, and only two countries saw a decrease. Women are most strongly represented in Mexico and Sweden, which have 48 and 46 women out of 100 seats, respectively. The ratio of women to men employed in the workforce has also been further equalized in some countries. Nonetheless, achieving genuine equality between women and men continues to demand greater effort. In nearly half of the countries examined, the representation of women in legislatures remains extremely low, with less than 25% of their representatives being female. In countries such as Turkey and Mexico, the percentage of women in paid employment remains only half that of men in paid employment. The lack of gender equality is seen clearly in the absence of equal pay for equal work and is even more damning when the hours for unpaid work such as care work are factored in.<sup>2</sup> The country experts report that in countries such as Austria, Czechia, Poland and Hungary, where traditional concepts of the family often dominate, the governments themselves are actually standing in the

<sup>2</sup> Although gender pay differentials and the number of hours in unpaid work are not included in the SJI 2019 calculation as a result of insufficient data, these factors are essential to gender equality. In the SGI country reports on social inclusion and non-discrimination policy, the experts address specific issues relating to gender equality policy. These reports are available at [sgi-network.org](http://sgi-network.org).

way of advancing equality between women and men. In Hungary, for example, the country experts report that the populist Fidesz government actively promotes discrimination against women in the world of work.

Populist governments are also responsible in many cases for discrimination against migrants, refugees, Muslims or other religious minorities, ethnic minorities, and supporters of the LGBTQ community. According to reports by our country experts in Austria, Italy, Hungary and Poland in particular, discrimination against these groups has continued to grow. Negative attitudes are often reflected in a failed integration policy. These countries, like the United States, continue to lose ground in terms of integration. Notably, model nations such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland are increasingly faltering in terms of counteracting social polarization and exclusion. This is manifest in the fact that while comparatively fair, income distribution in these countries has grown increasingly unequal in recent years. Encouragingly, however, many of the 41 countries are closing in on their pre-crisis levels and income inequality has declined in 20 countries since the SJI 2009. Slovakia and Slovenia lead the ranking, while income in Bulgaria, Turkey, Chile and Mexico is very unevenly distributed by comparison.

#### **Slight improvement in fair educational opportunities**

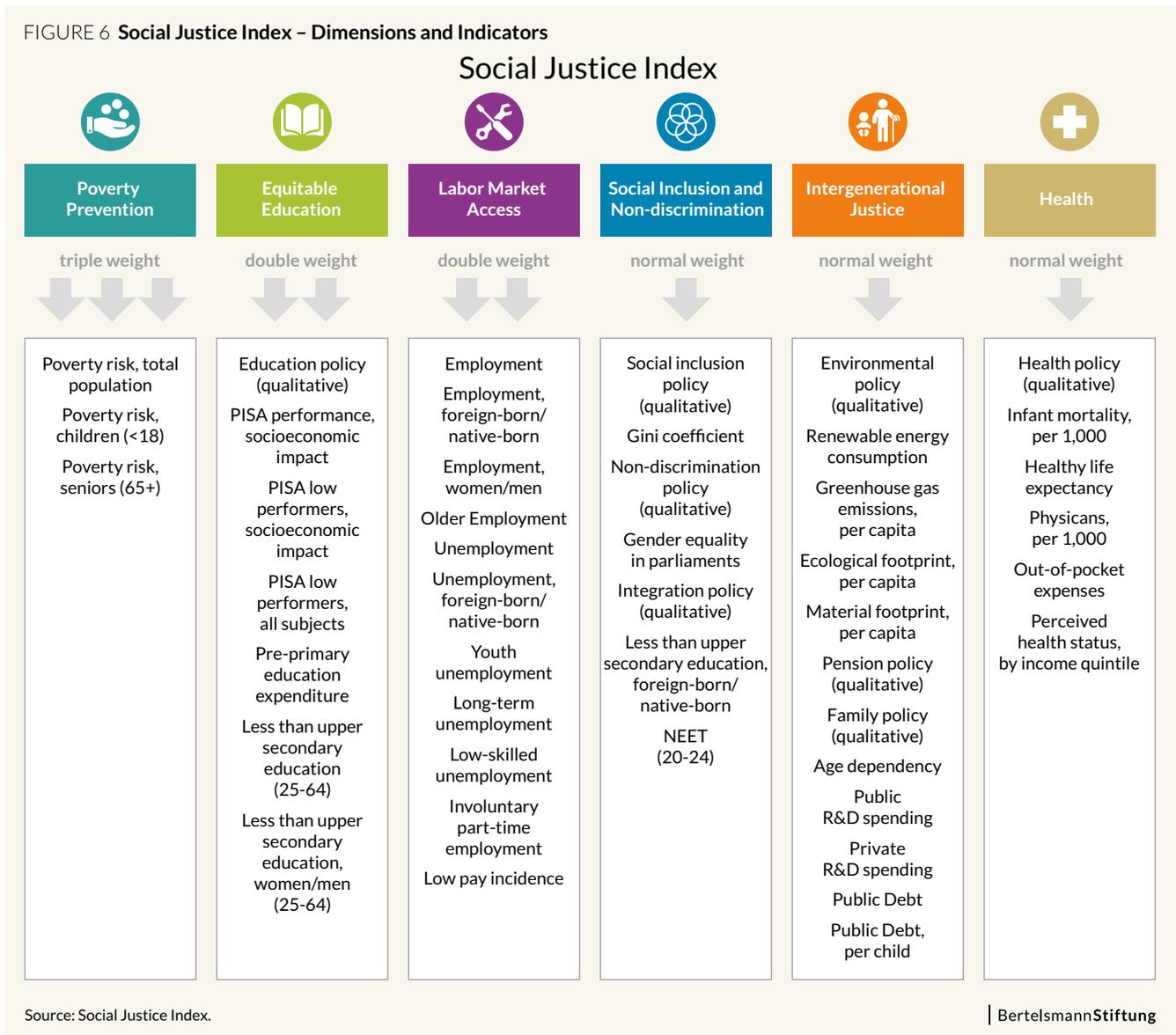
OECD and EU countries have recorded a slight improvement in educational justice compared to previous years. For example, in almost all countries, the share of people with less than upper secondary education has declined, in some cases significantly. Nonetheless, countries continue to record significant differences in this indicator. While the share is below 8% in Lithuania, Czechia and Poland, the share remains very high in Mexico and Turkey, with each recording nearly 62%. However, the long-term trend remains positive in these countries as well. There are also remarkable discrepancies in educational attainment levels in terms of gender. While in Czechia, Korea and Austria the share of women without upper secondary education is more than 50% higher compared to men, in the Baltic states, the share of men is almost 40% higher than among women.

Unsurprisingly, the Nordic countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden top the equitable education ranking. However, as is the case in the rest of the sample, socioeconomic background continues to have an impact on the educational success of students in these countries. In 18 countries, this influence has actually increased since the SJI 2009. This unequal distribution of opportunities draws concern in so far as educational success has a clear impact on labor market opportunities and thus also on social inclusion. There is an urgent need for action in this respect, particularly in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary and France. In these countries, socioeconomic background has the strongest effect on student performance. Iceland, which features an education system that provides children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families near-equal opportunities as those provided to their counterparts from more well-off families, achieves the highest value for this indicator.

# II. SJI 2019 – Measuring Social Justice in international comparison

The Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Social Justice Index investigates opportunities for participation in society in 41 EU and OECD countries on the basis of 46 quantitative and qualitative criteria. The Index examines six dimensions of social justice: Poverty Prevention, Equitable Education, Labor Market Access, Social Inclusion and Non-Discrimination, Intergenerational Justice and Health. The Social Justice Index 2019 is based on internationally available data published before 28 October 2019.

FIGURE 6 Social Justice Index – Dimensions and Indicators



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