



Education at a Glance 2025

United Kingdom

Andreas Schleicher

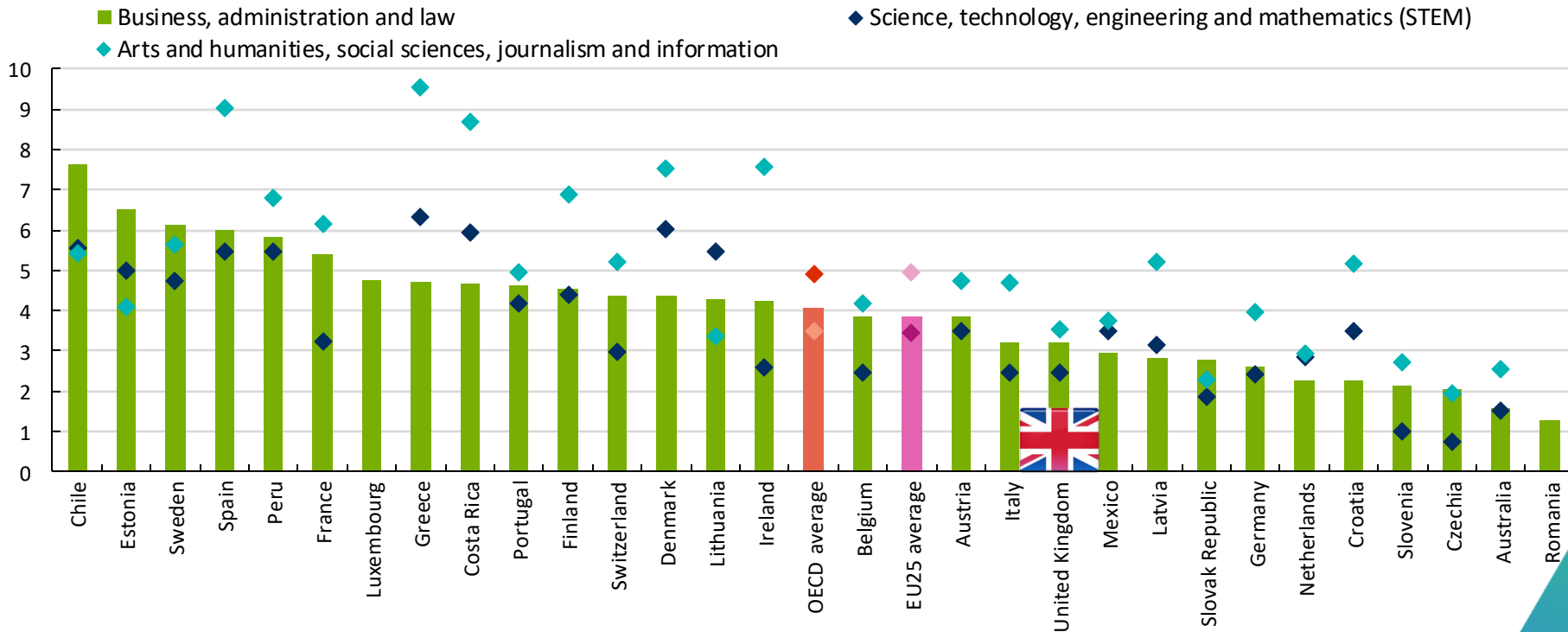
9 September 2025

Education pays



Unemployment for tertiary graduates is low

Unemployment rates of tertiary-educated adults, by field of study (2024)





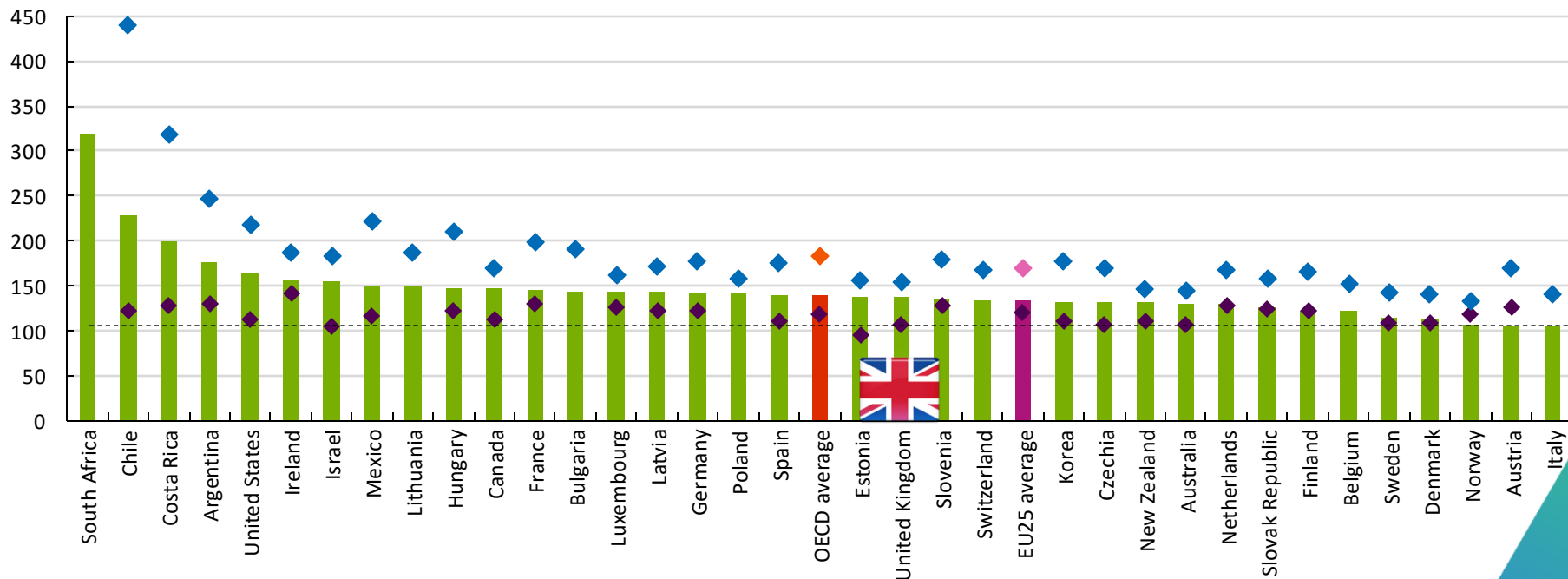
Tertiary qualifications pay higher earnings

Relative earnings of tertiary-educated workers, by level of educational attainment (2023)

■ Bachelor's

◆ Short-cycle tertiary

◆ Master's and doctoral

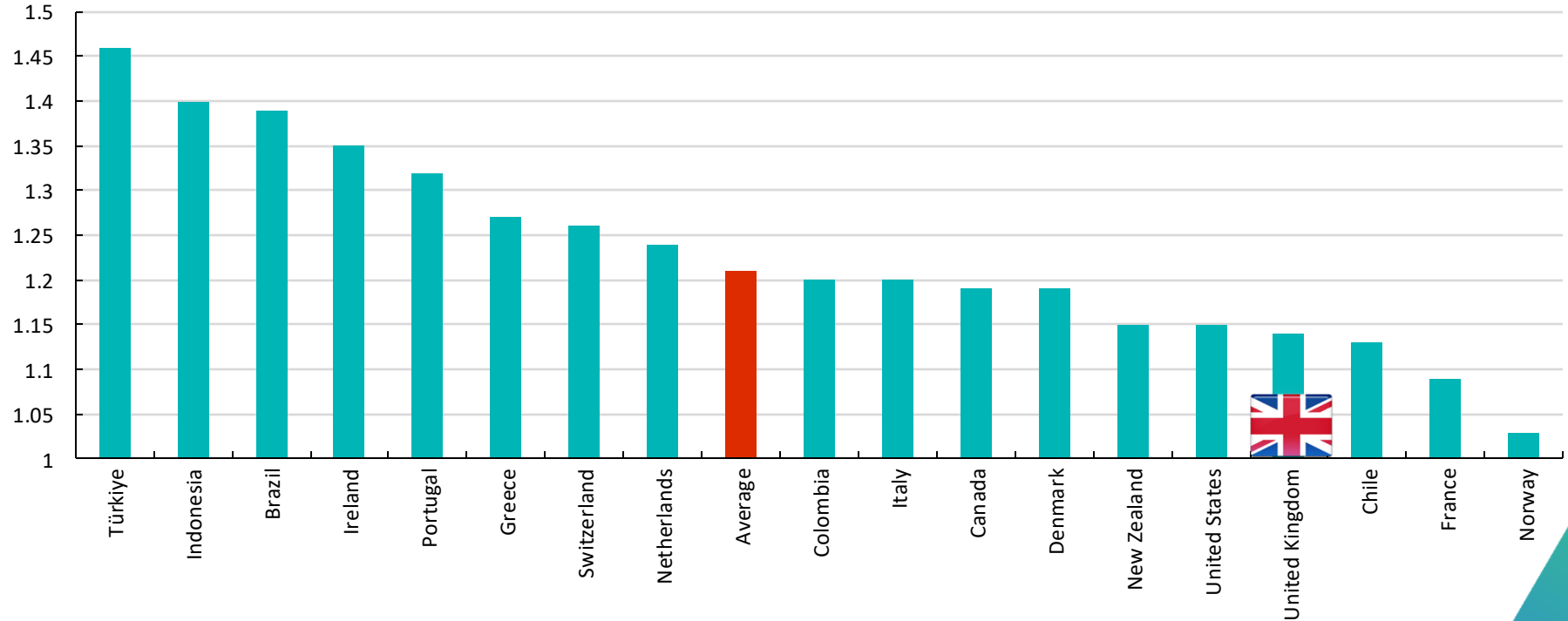




Doctorates provide an additional boost to earnings

Relative earnings of doctorates holders (2023)

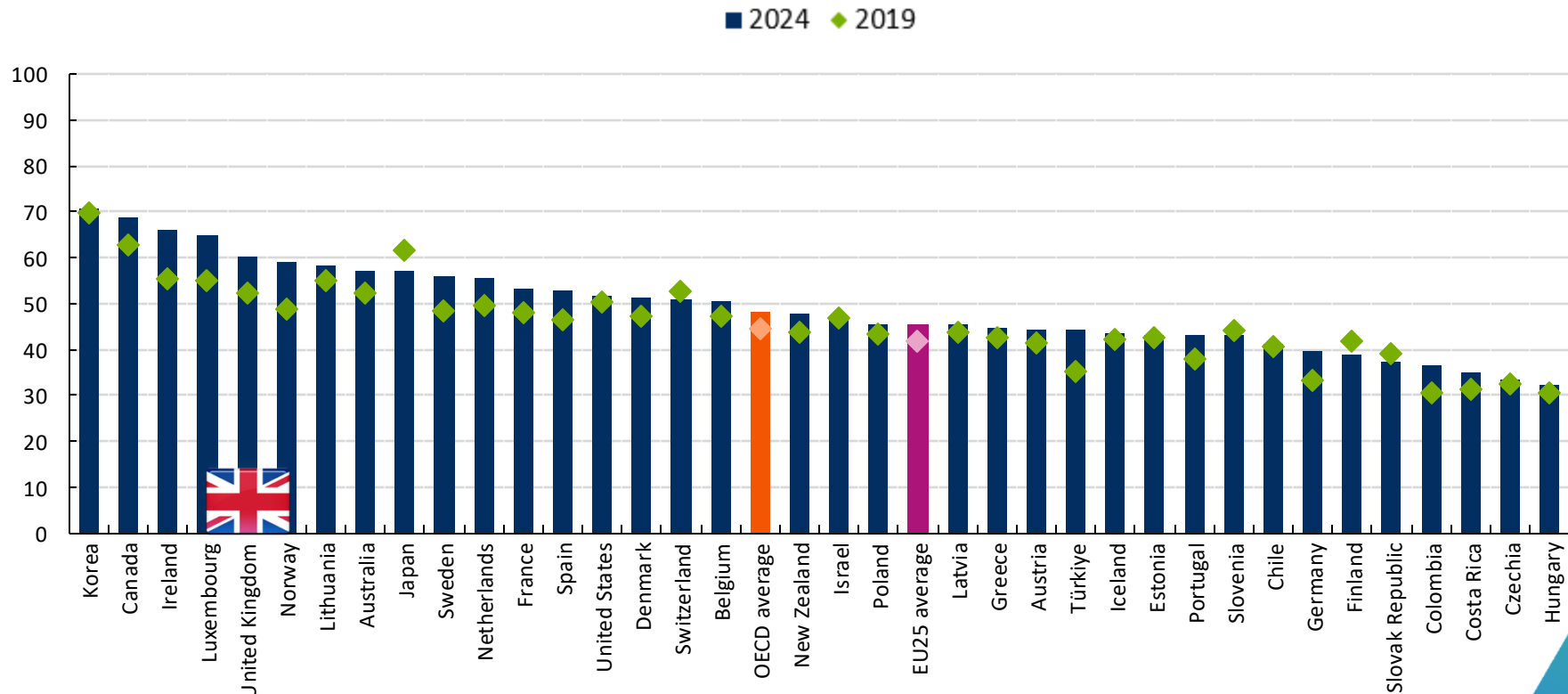
Ratio of the average gross annual earnings of employed doctorate holders to those of employed master's degree holders





Tertiary attainment in the UK is high and keeps rising

Trends in the share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (2019 and 2024)





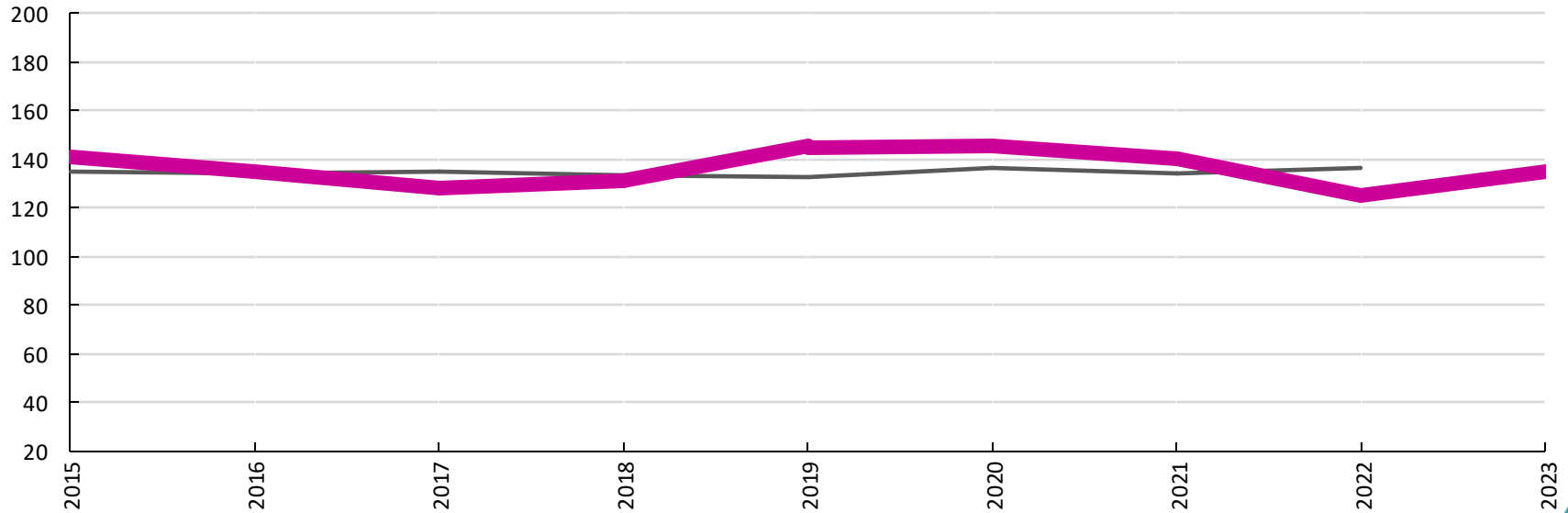
Stable earnings advantage of young adults in the U.K.

Relative earnings of young adults (2015 – 2023)

25-34 year-olds; full-time full-year workers; earnings of adults with upper secondary attainment = 100

— OECD average tertiary

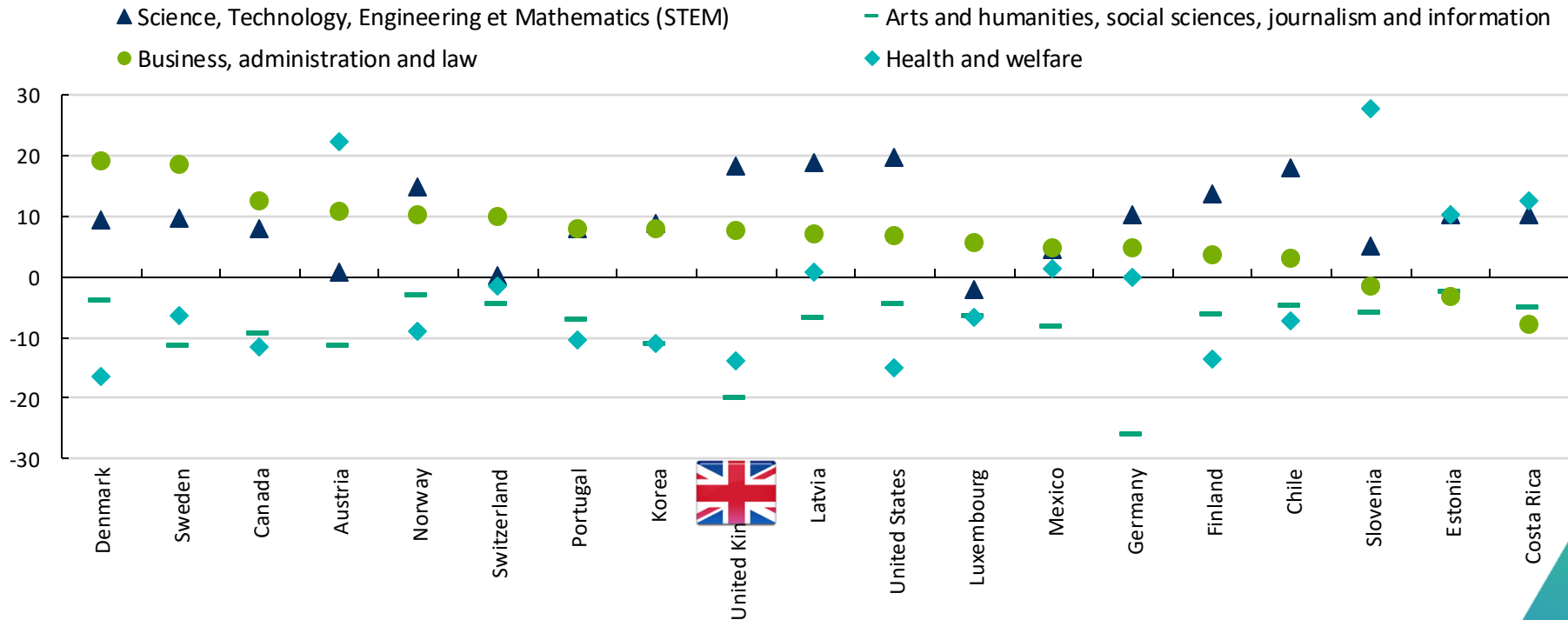
— U.K. tertiary





Fields of study have strong effects on earnings

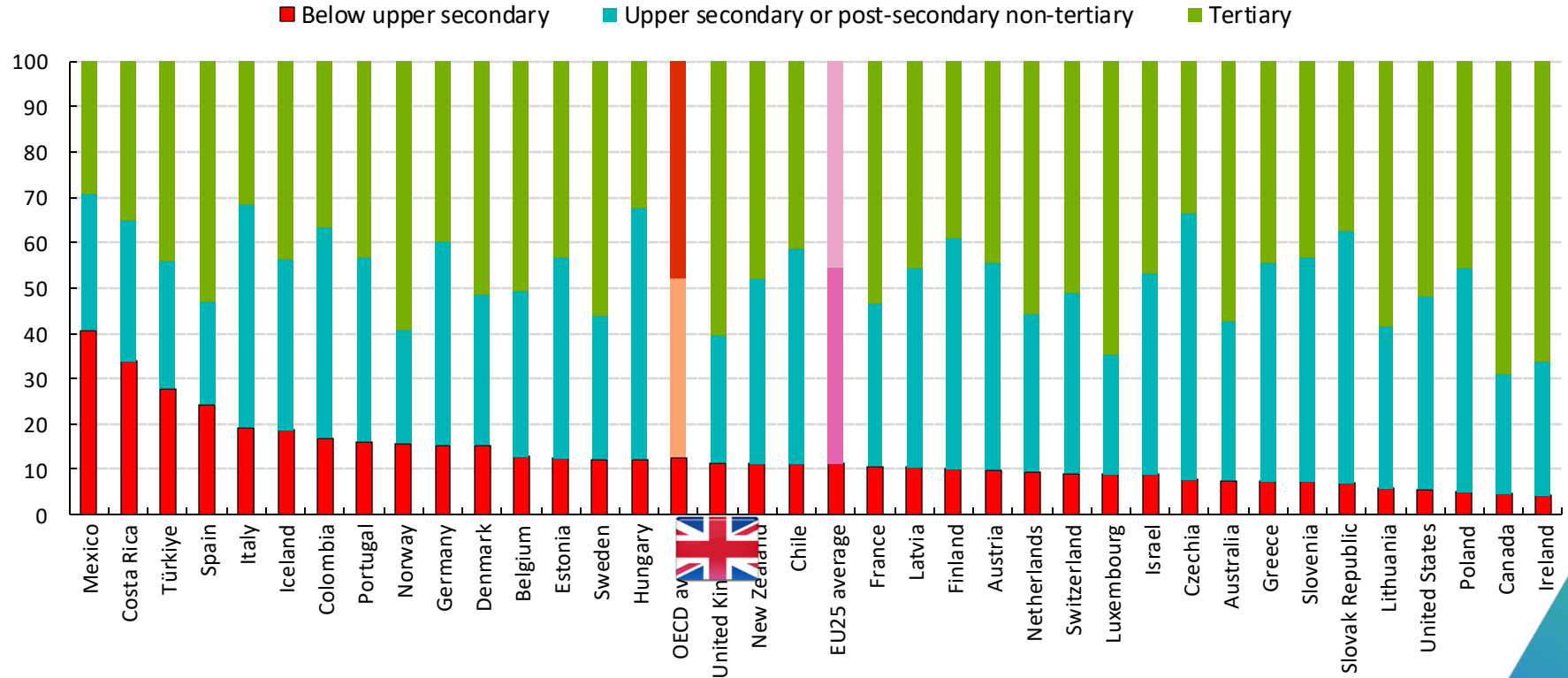
Relative earnings of tertiary-educated adults, by field of study (2023)





12% of young adults do not have an upper secondary qualification

Distribution of educational attainment among 25-34 year-olds (2024)



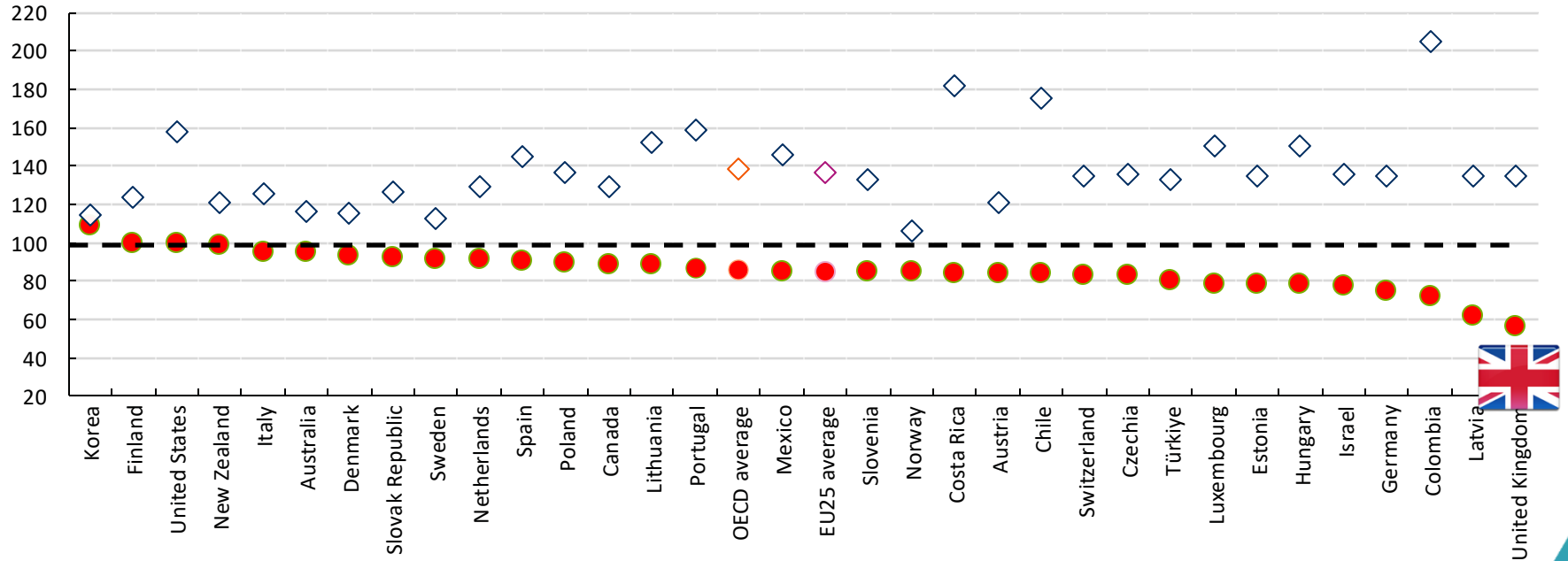


Relative earning for young adults with below upper secondary attainment are very low and declining

Relative earnings of young adults, by level of educational attainment (2023)

Earnings of adults with upper secondary attainment = 100; 25-34 year-olds

● Below upper secondary ◆ Tertiary



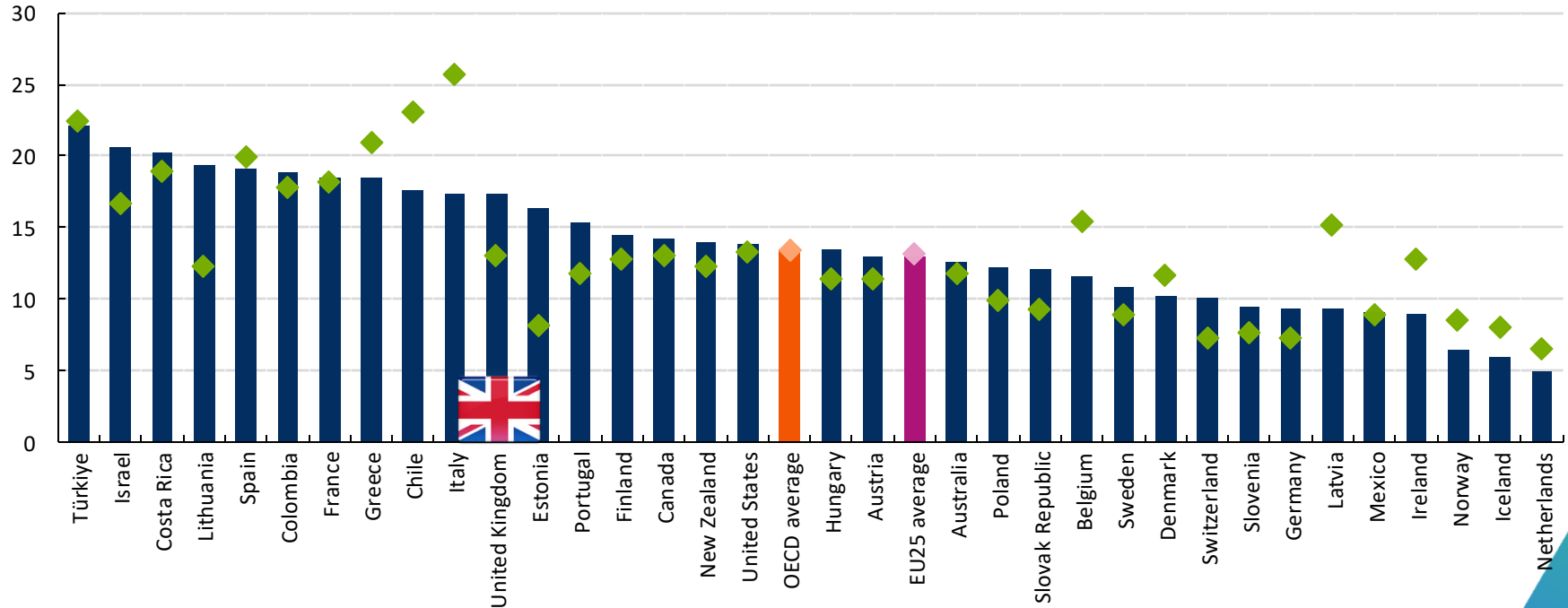


NEET rates among young men have been increasing

Trends in the share of 18-24 year-old NEET men (2019 and 2024)

■ 2024

◆ 2019

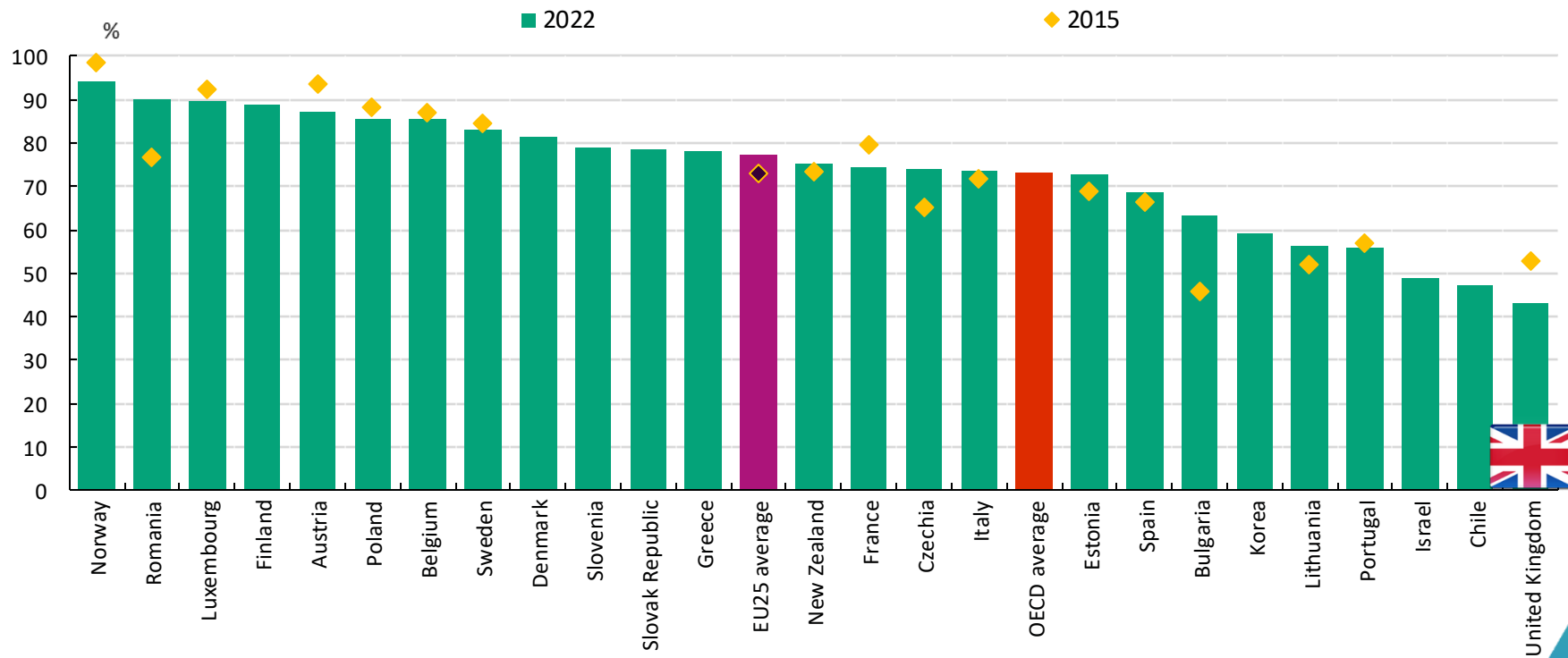


Who pays for tertiary education?



Split between public and private funding in tertiary education

Trends in the share of expenditure coming from government sources in bachelor's, master's and doctoral or equivalent programmes (2015 and 2022)



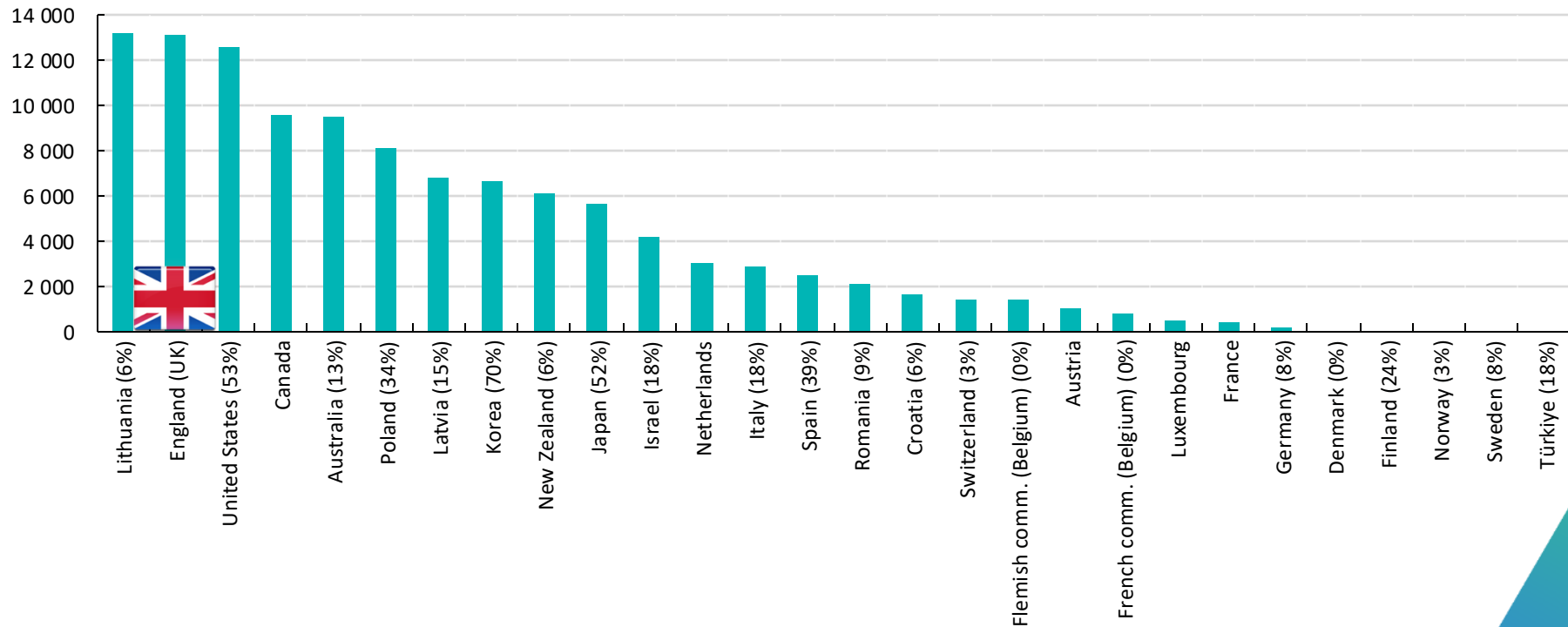


High tuition fees for master's programmes

Annual average tuition fees charged to national students for master's or equivalent programmes, by type of institution (2022/23)

USD converted using PPPs

Public institutions

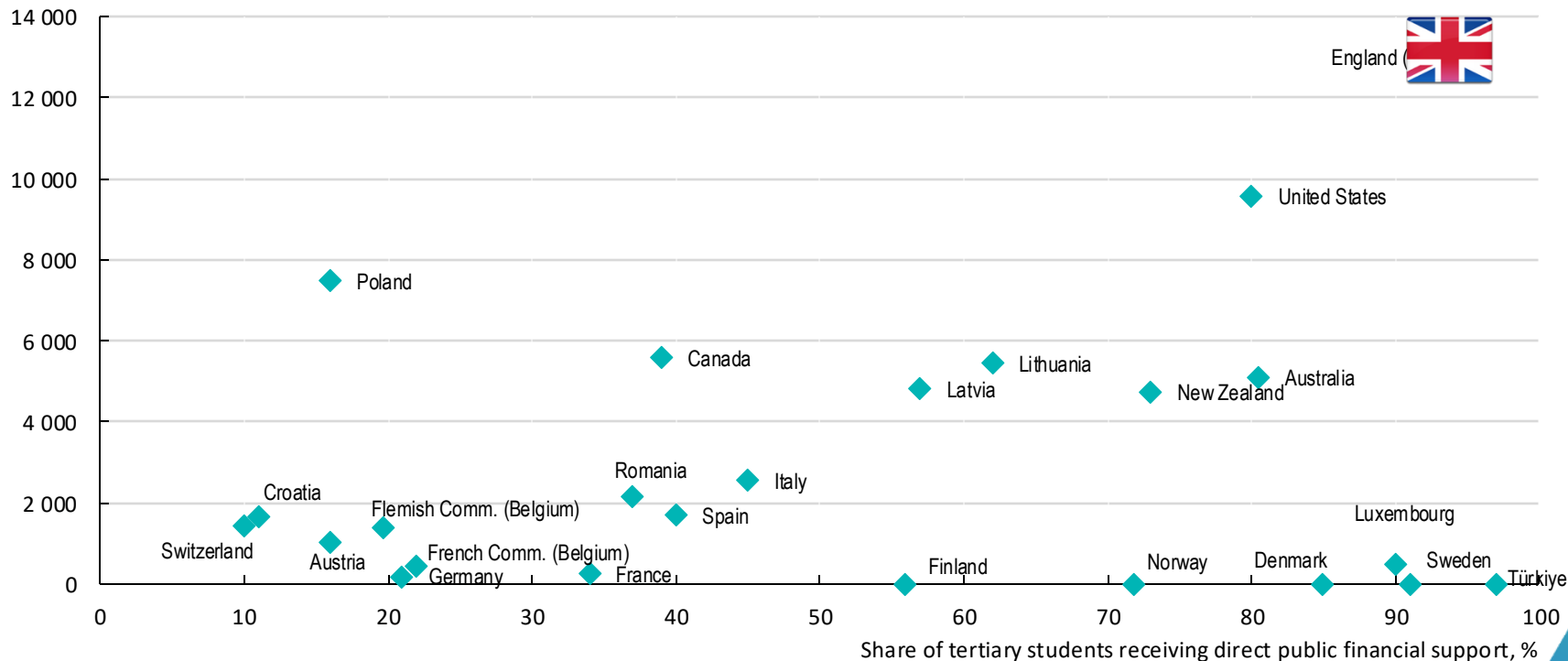




Countries with higher tuition fees often provide more financial support

Annual average tuition fees charged by public institutions to national students enrolled in bachelor's programmes and share of national students benefiting from direct public financial support (2022/23)

USD converted
using PPPs

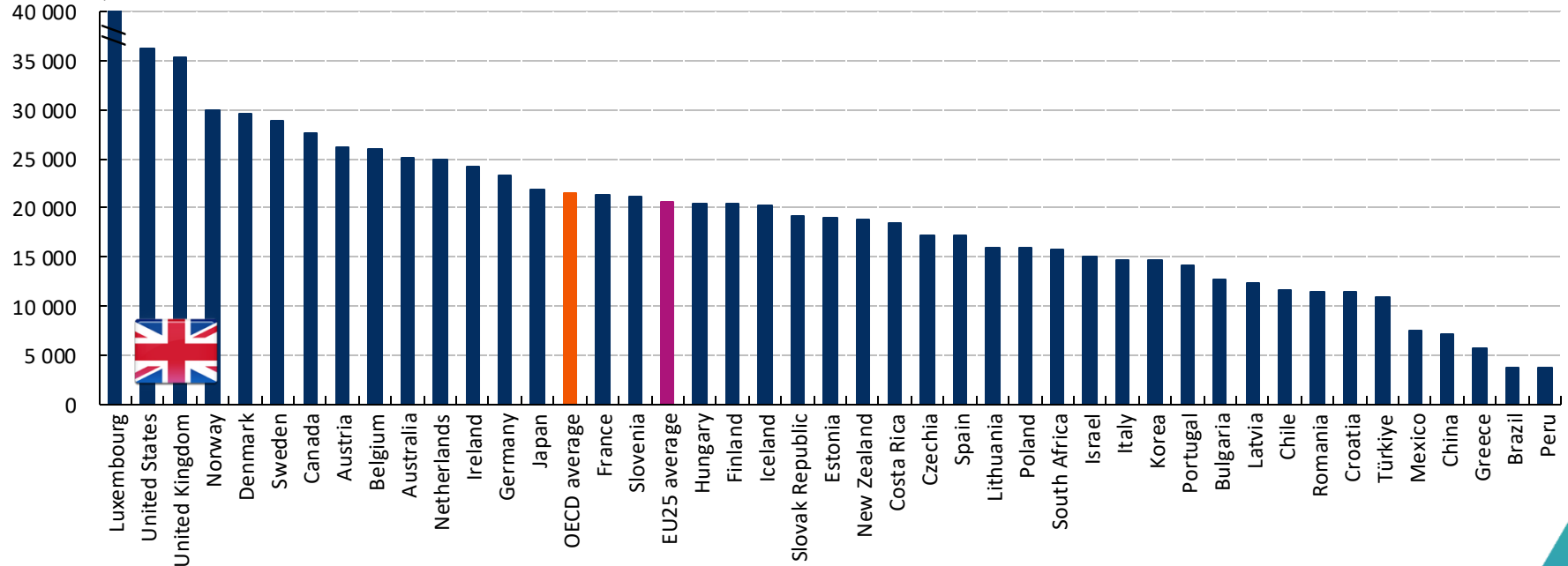




Expenditure per student is high in the UK, especially at tertiary level

Total expenditure per full-time equivalent student (including R&D), tertiary level (2022)

USD converted
using PPPs
60,979



Equality of educational opportunity

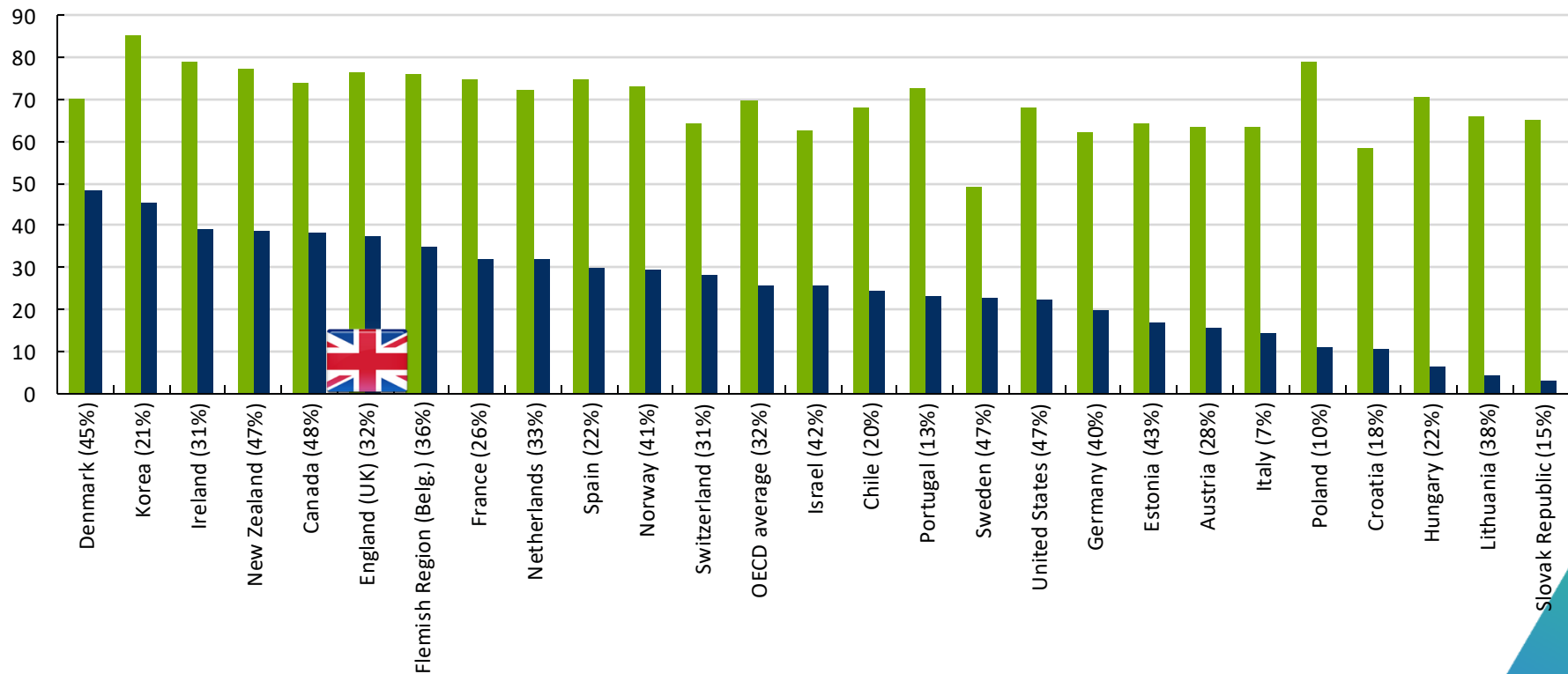


Access to tertiary education is more equitable in the UK than elsewhere

Share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education, by parental educational attainment (2023)

■ At least one parent attained tertiary education

■ Neither parent attained upper secondary education

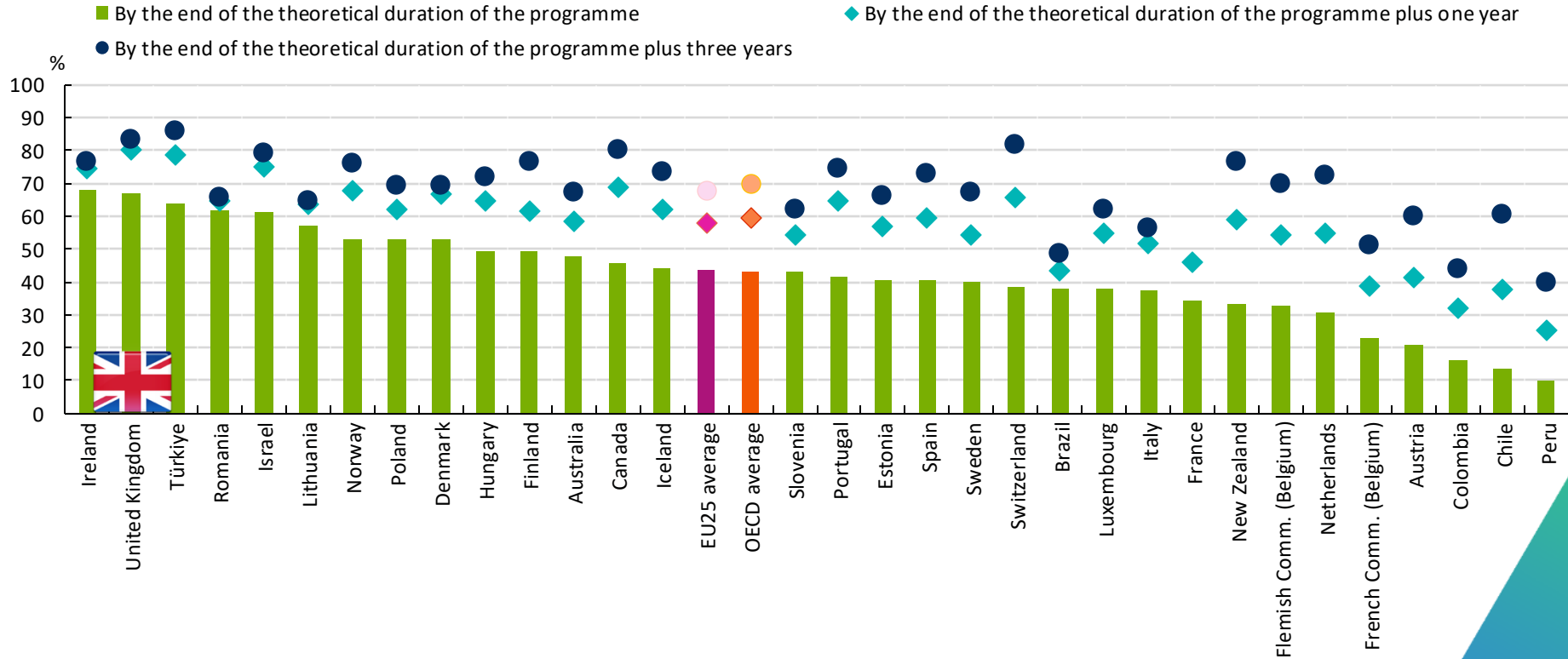


Completion of tertiary programmes



Comparatively good completion rates

Completion rates of new entrants to bachelor's programmes, by timeframe (2023)

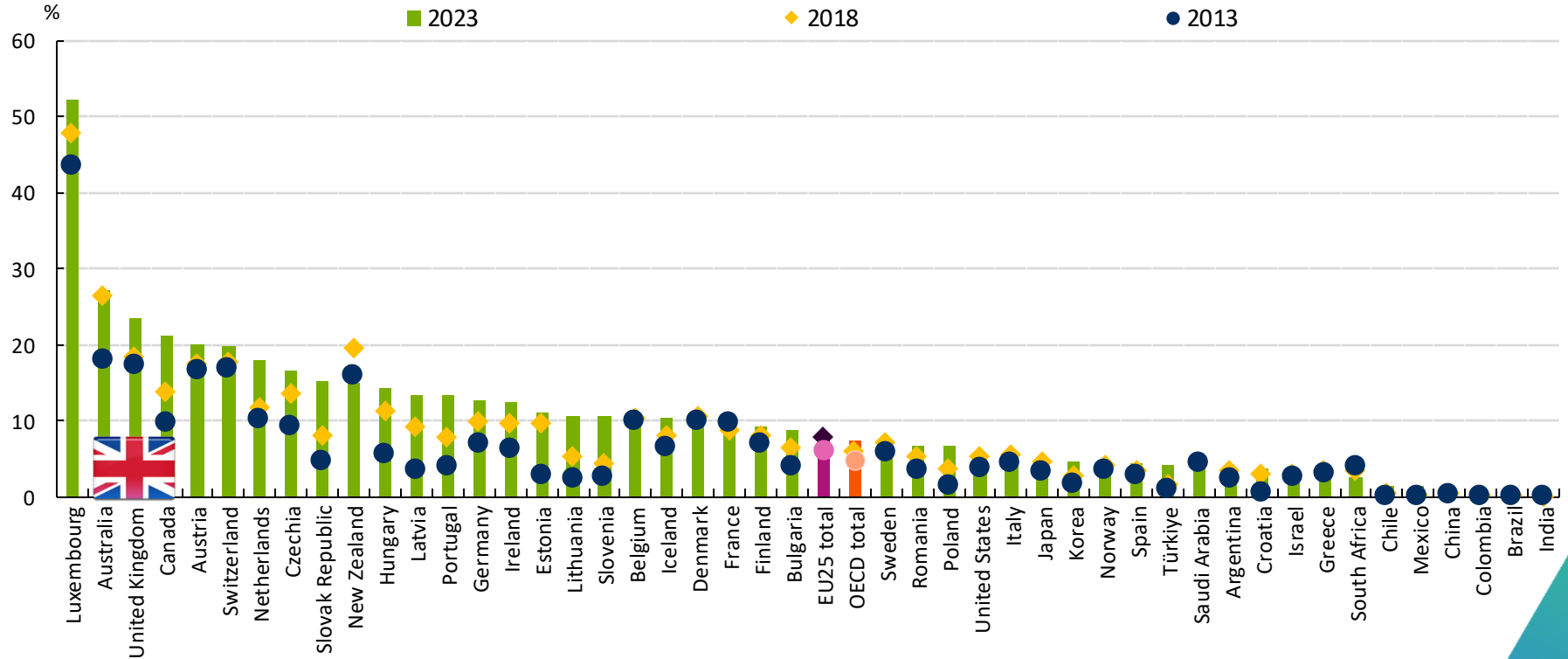


International student mobility



International student mobility continues to increase almost everywhere

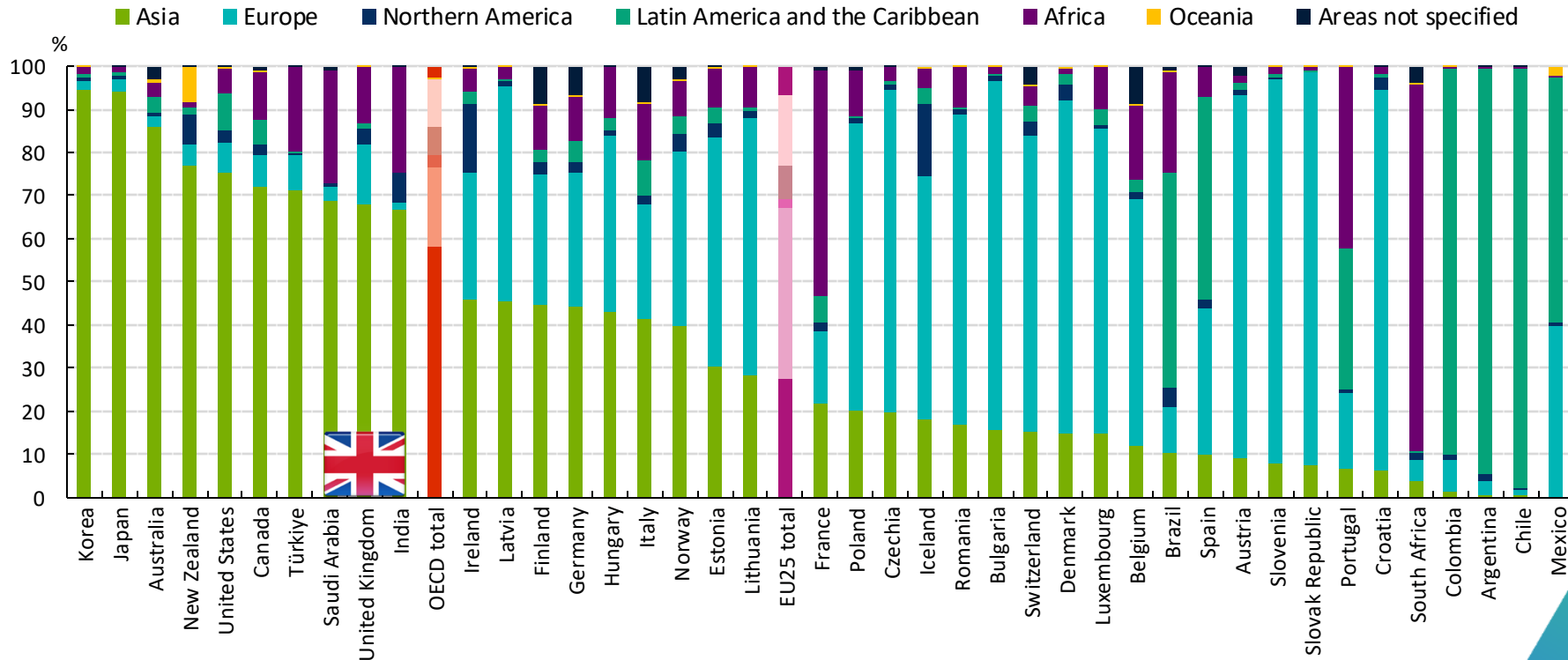
Trends in the share of international or foreign students in tertiary education (2013, 2018 and 2023)





Strong inflow from Asia

Distribution of international or foreign students studying in OECD countries, by region of origin (2023)



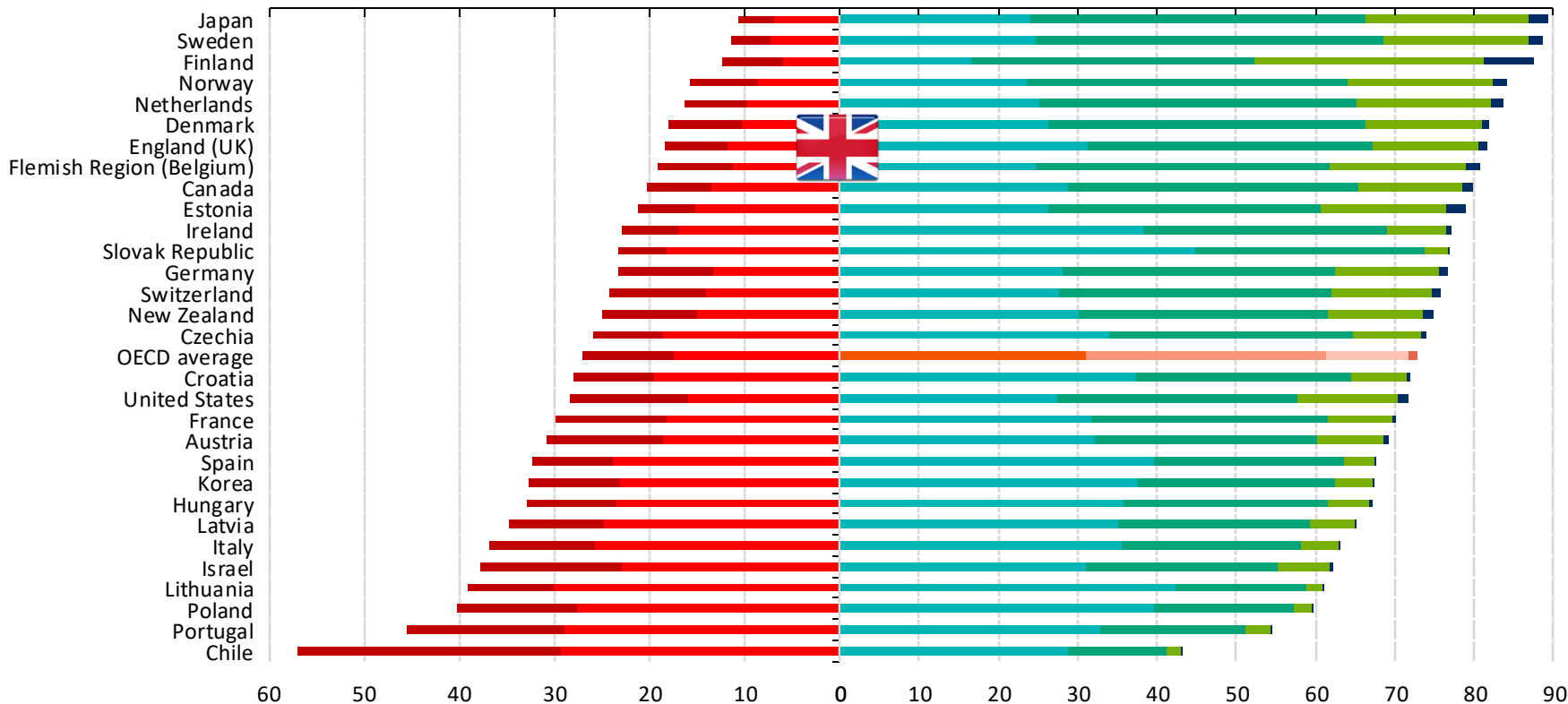
Degrees and skills are not the same



A large share of adults has low literacy skills

Proficiency in literacy among adults (2023)

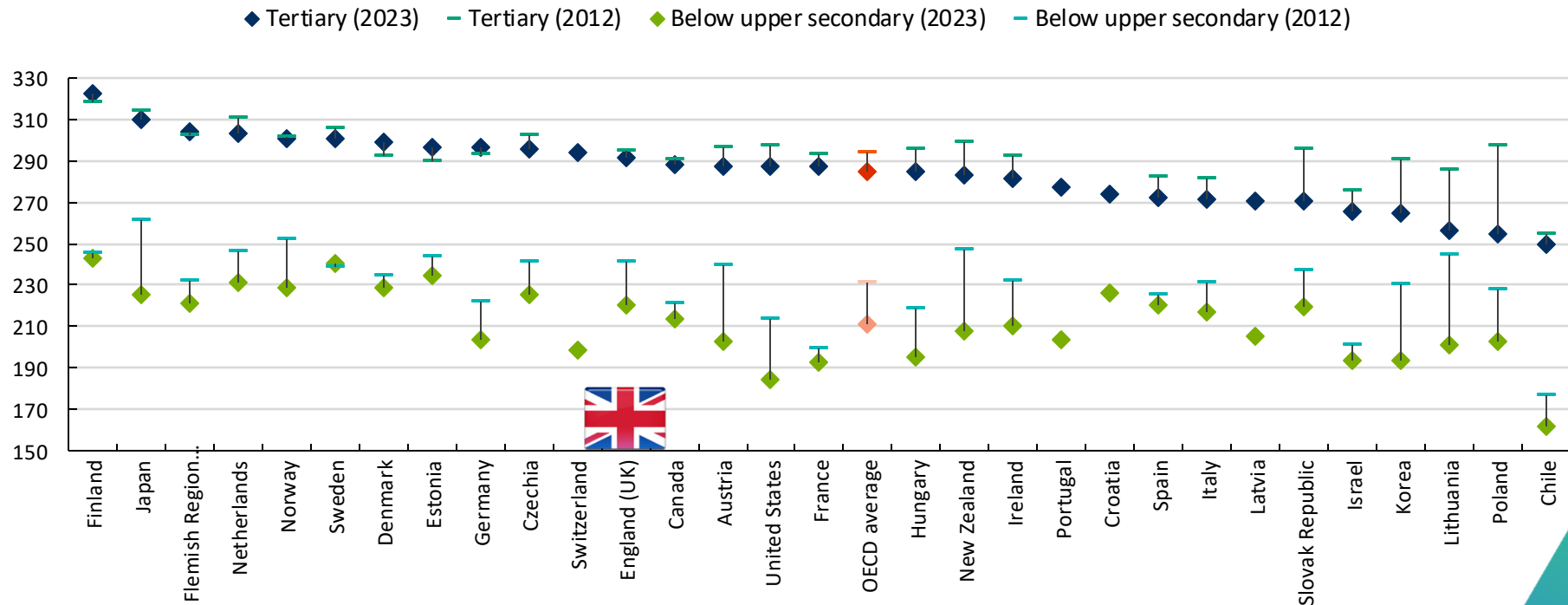
Below level 1 Level 1 Level 2 Level 3 Level 4 Level 5





Skill levels have been declining among adults with low attainment

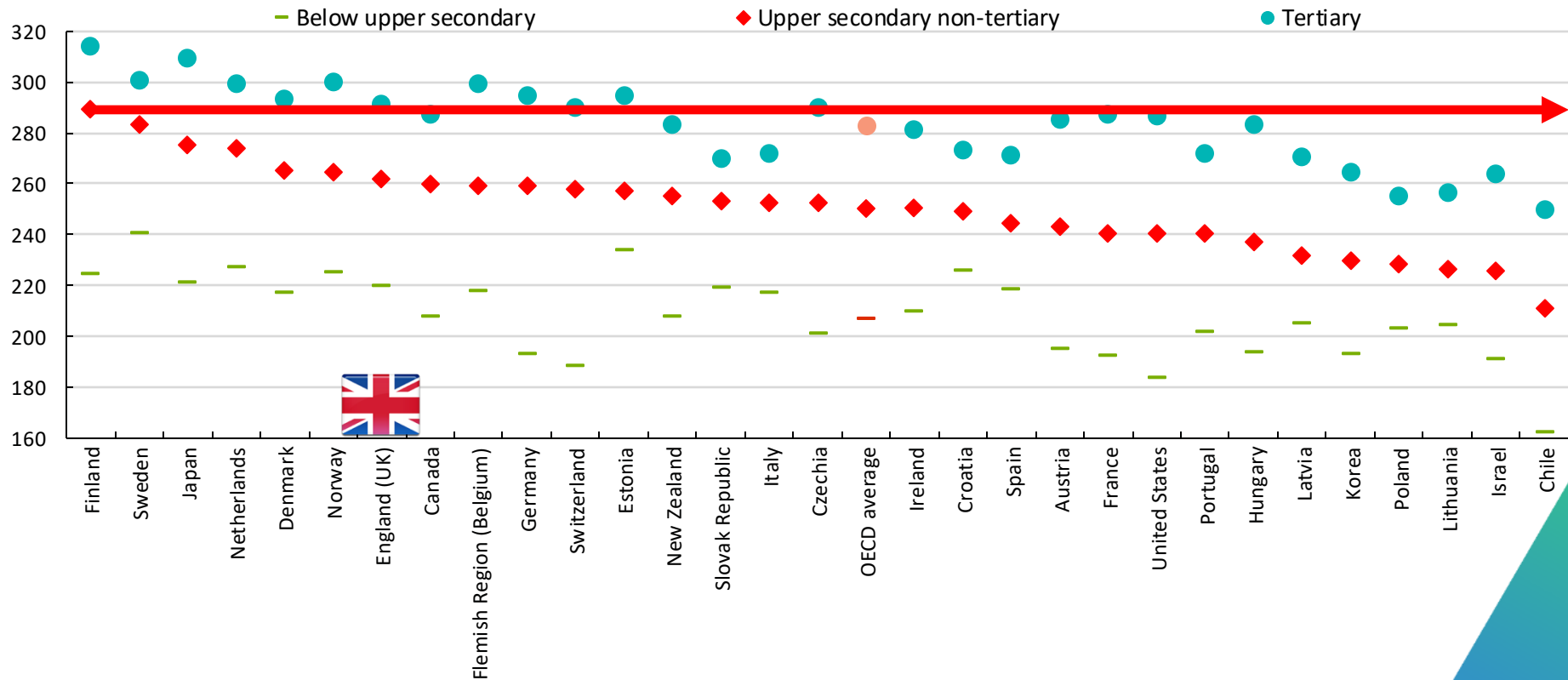
Trends in adults' mean literacy proficiency, by educational attainment (2012 and 2023)





The skills value of qualifications varies across countries

Adults' mean literacy proficiency, by educational attainment (2023)

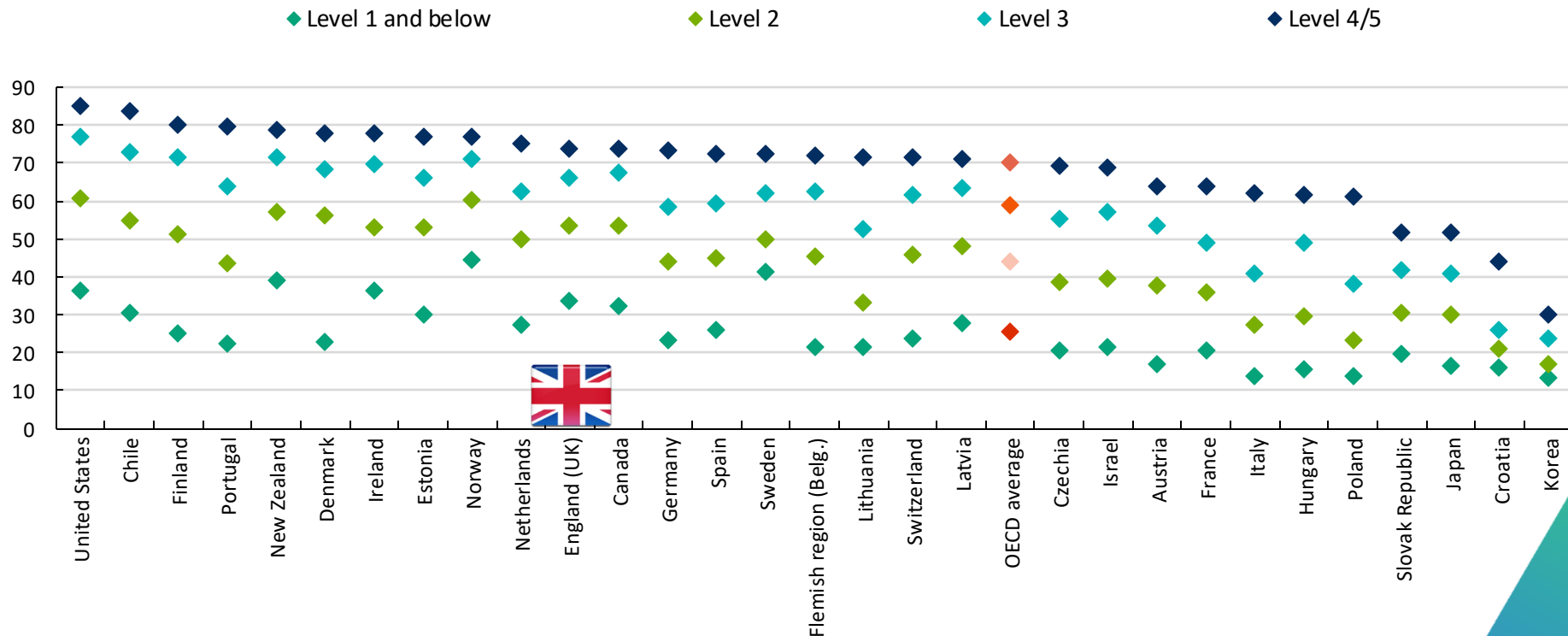


Participation in lifelong learning



Those who need lifelong learning most get the least of it

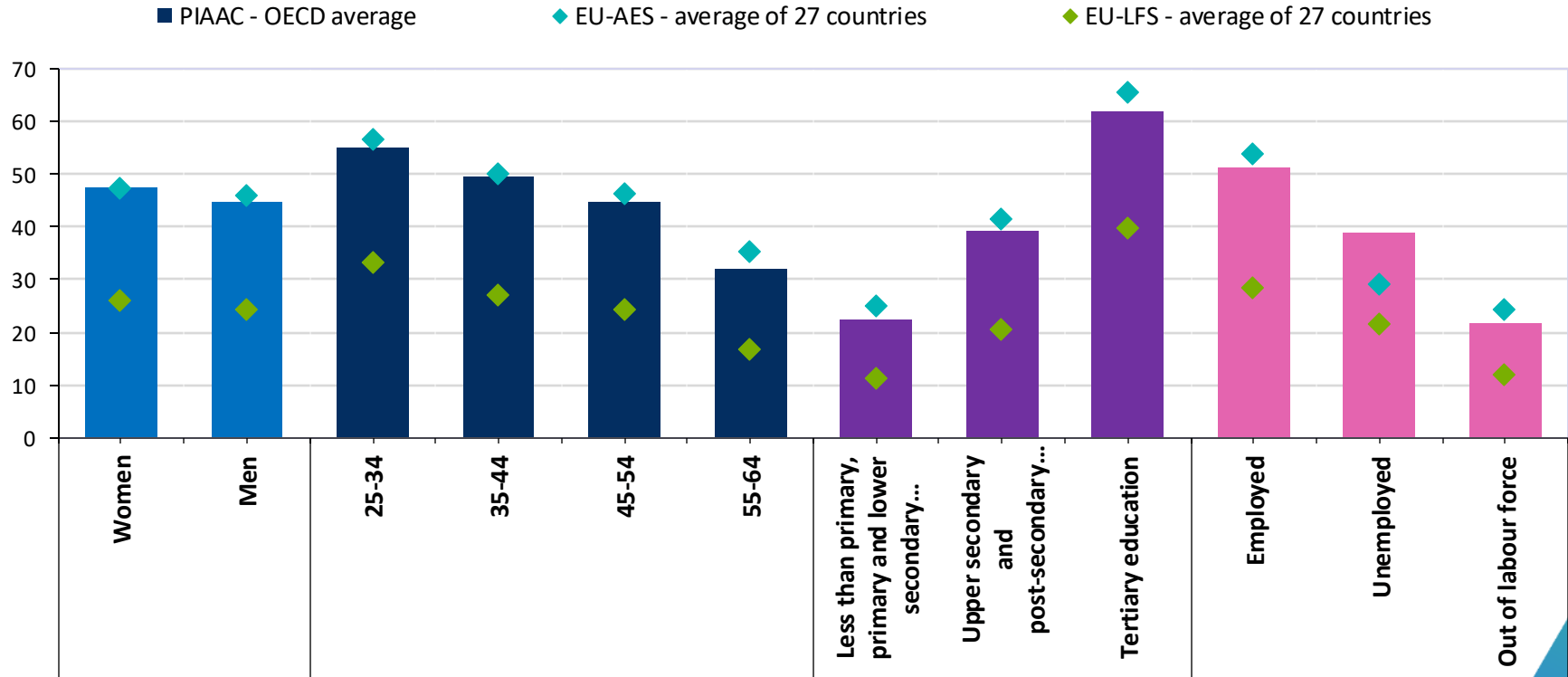
Participation in education and training, by literacy proficiency level (2023)





Patterns of lifelong learning

Average participation in education and training, by survey, gender, age group, educational attainment and labour force status

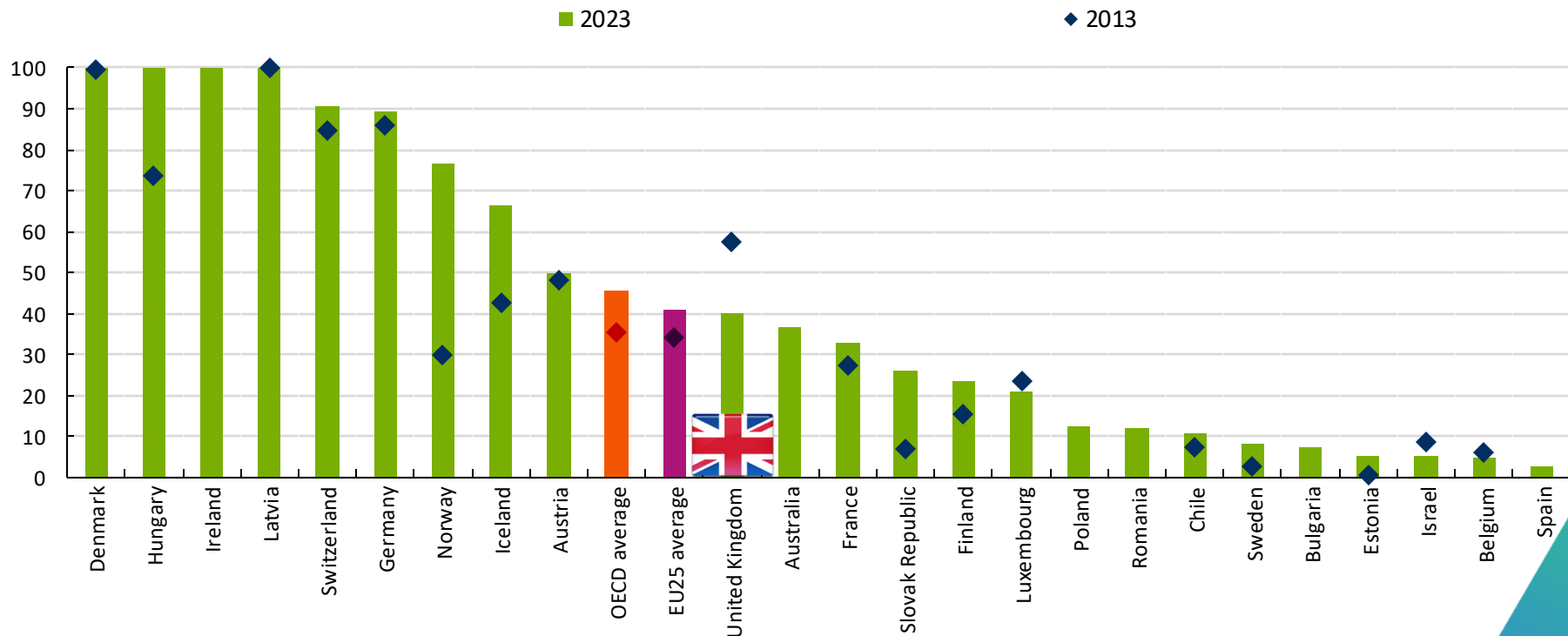


Work-based learning



School and work-based VET programmes

Trends in the share of upper secondary vocational students enrolled in combined school- and work-based programmes (2013 and 2023)

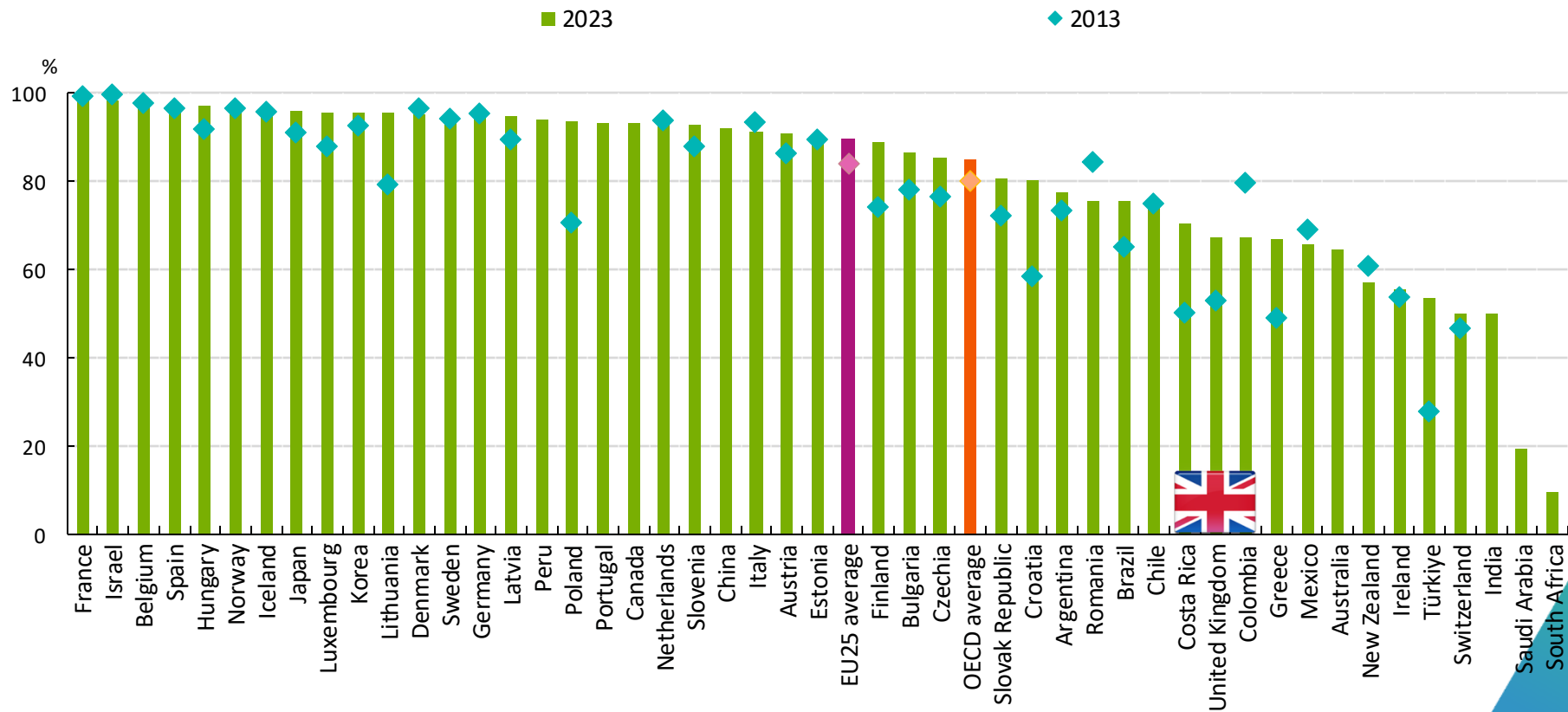


Early childhood education and care (ECEC)



Progress in enrolment in the early years

Trends in enrolment rates of 3-5 year-olds in early childhood education (ISCED 0) (2013 and 2023)





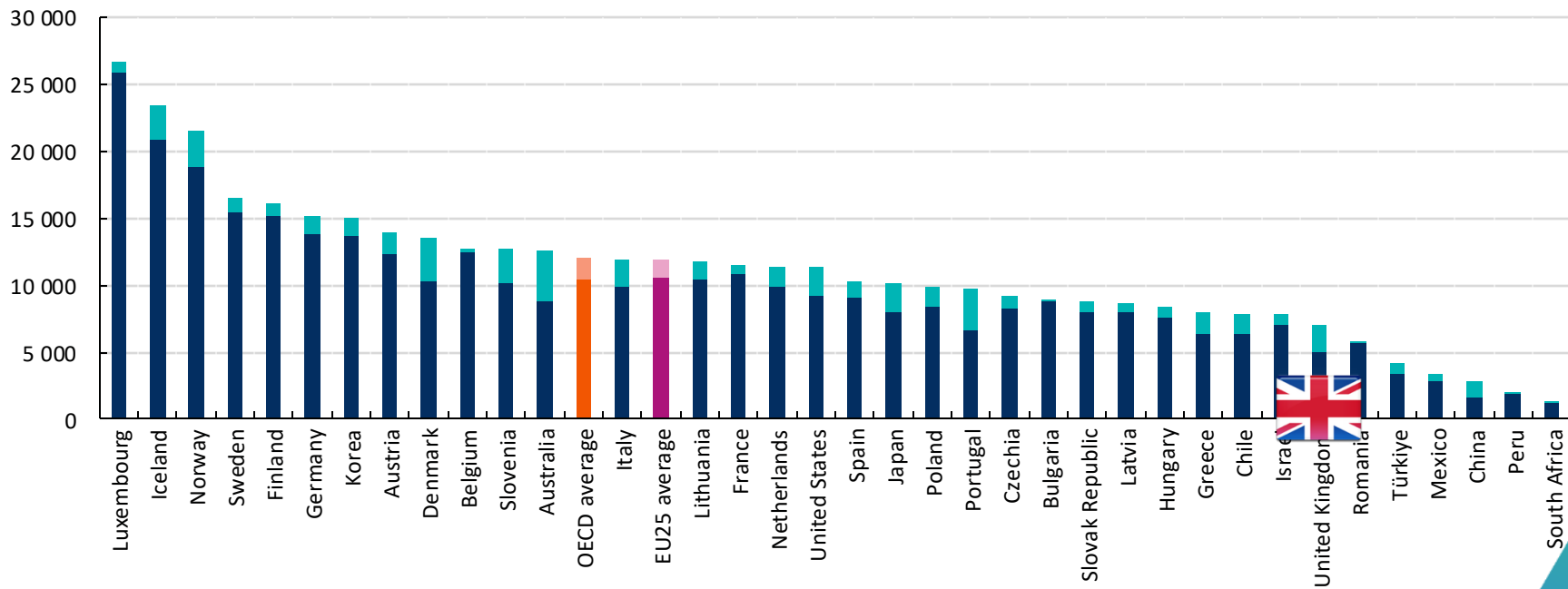
Low spending per child in pre-primary education

Government and private expenditure per child in pre-primary education (2022)

USD converted
using PPPs

■ Government expenditure

■ Private expenditure



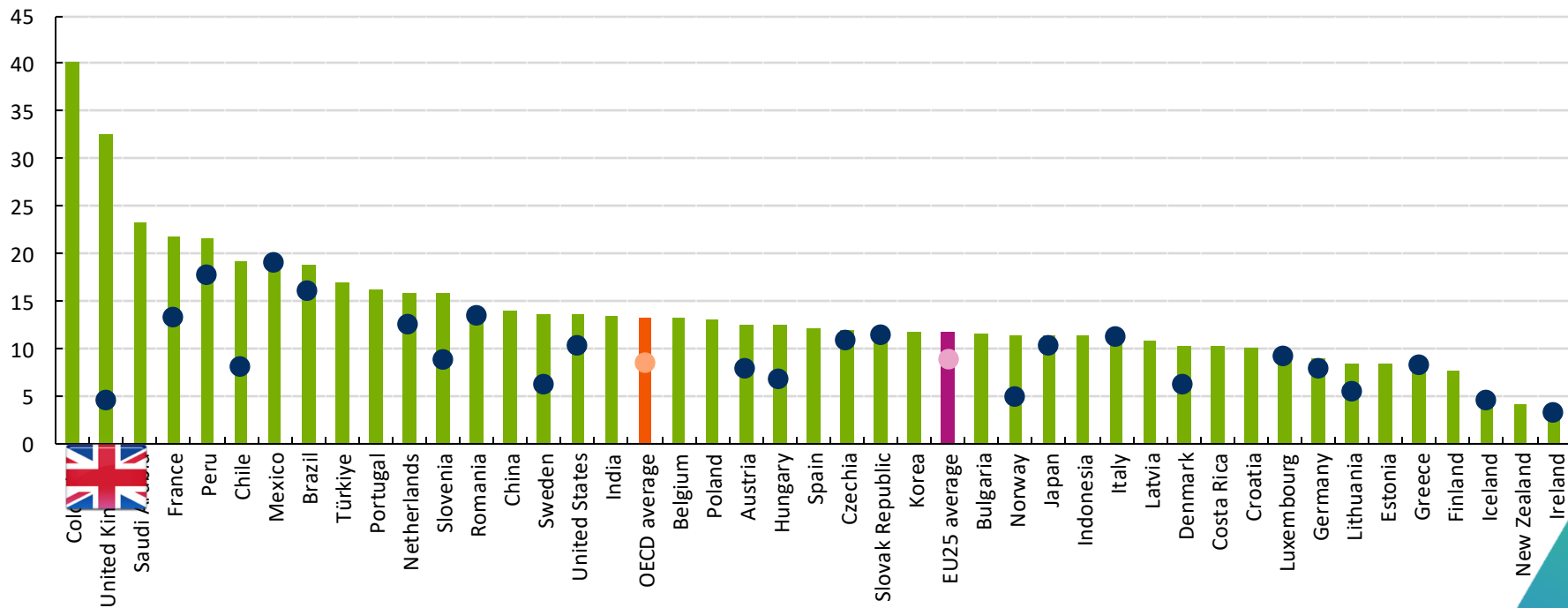


More staff but fewer teachers in the early years

Trends in the ratio of children to staff in pre-primary education (2013 and 2023)

■ Children to teaching staff - 2023

● Children to contact staff (teachers and teachers' aides) - 2023

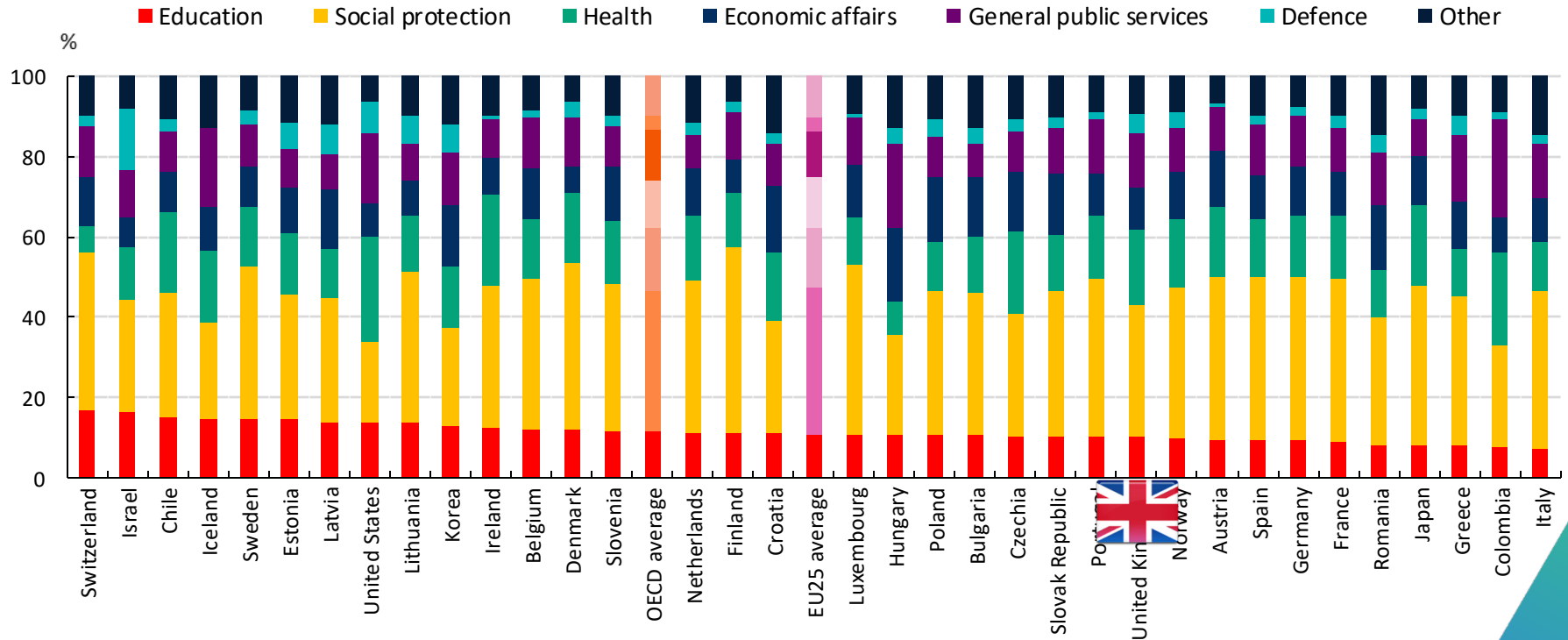


Investment into education



In some countries, education is one of the most important items of government expenditure

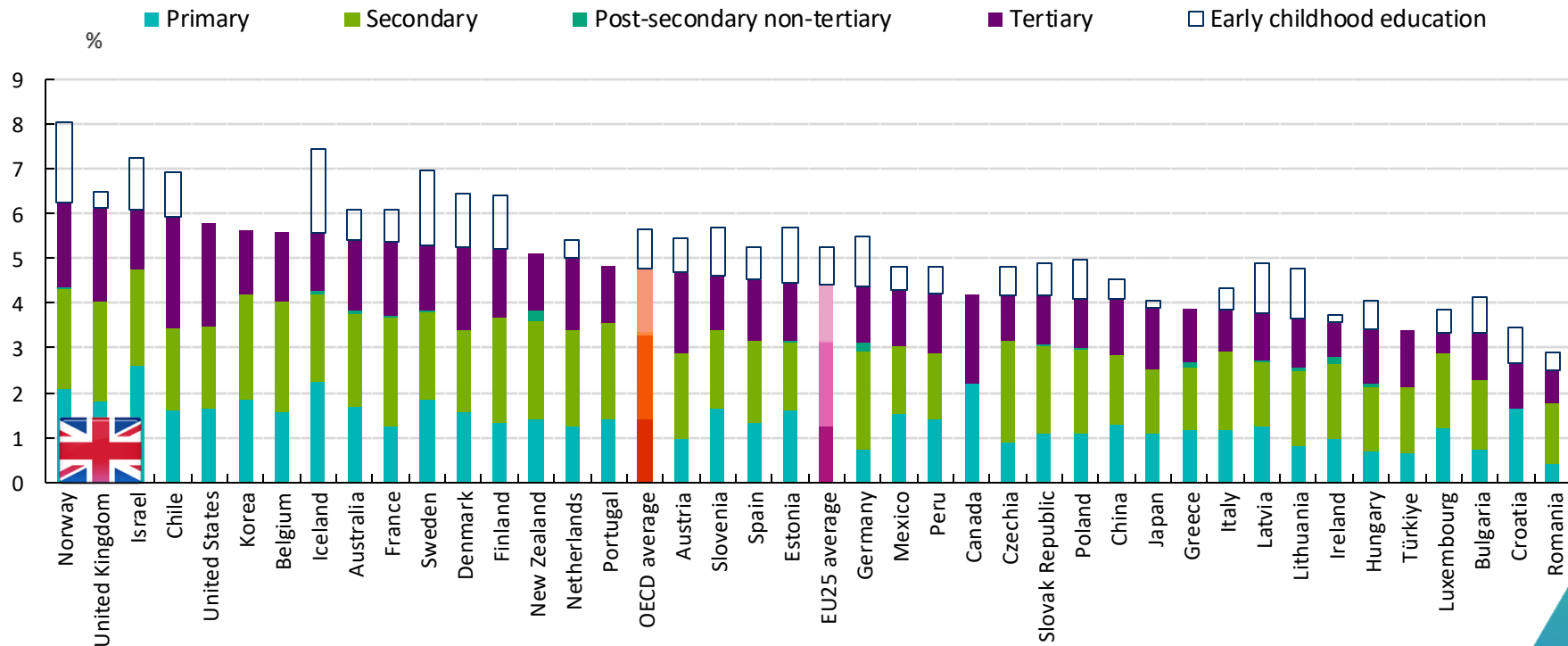
Distribution of government expenditure by function (2023)





A high share of GDP invested into education

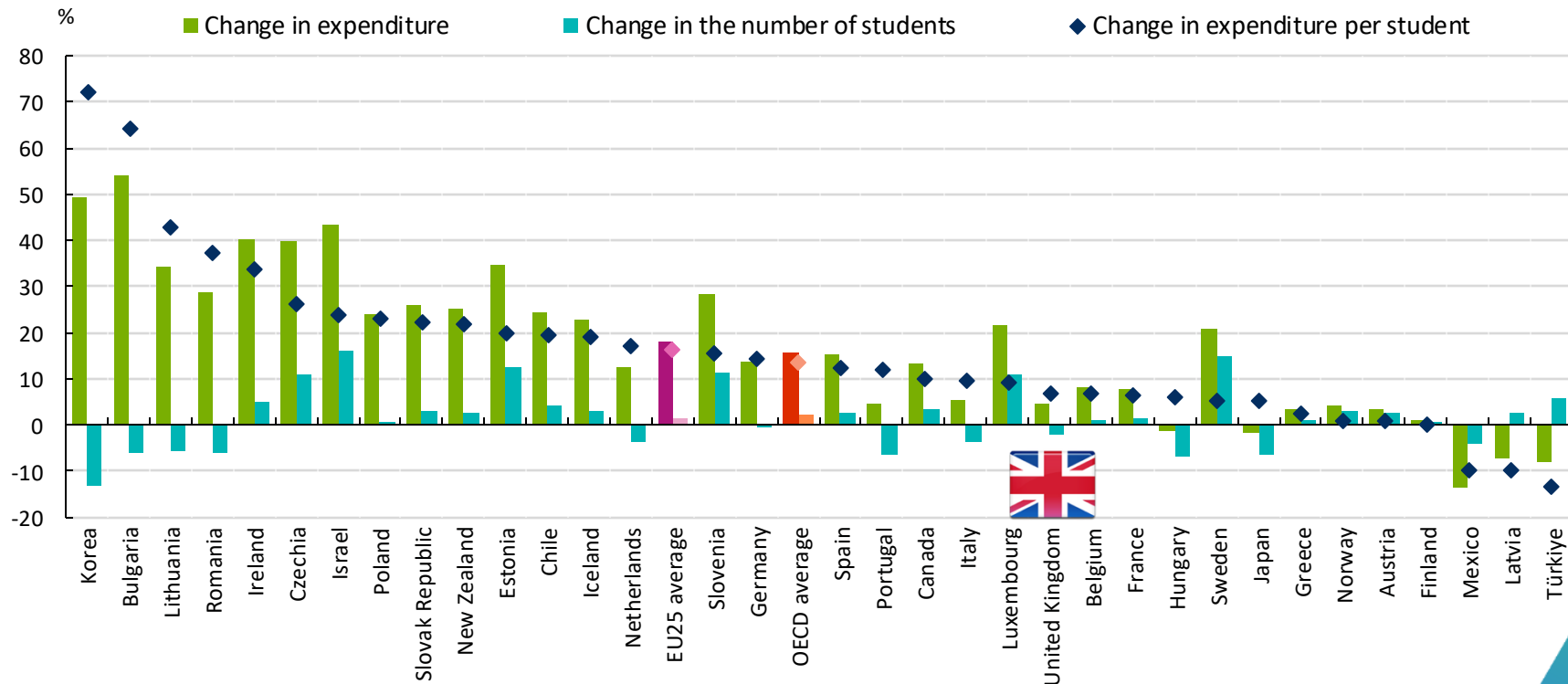
Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP, by level of education (2022)





Trends in expenditure per student depend on changes in student numbers and in expenditure

Change in the number of students, expenditure on primary to post-secondary non-tertiary educational institutions and expenditure per student (2015 to 2022)



Class size and student/staff ratios

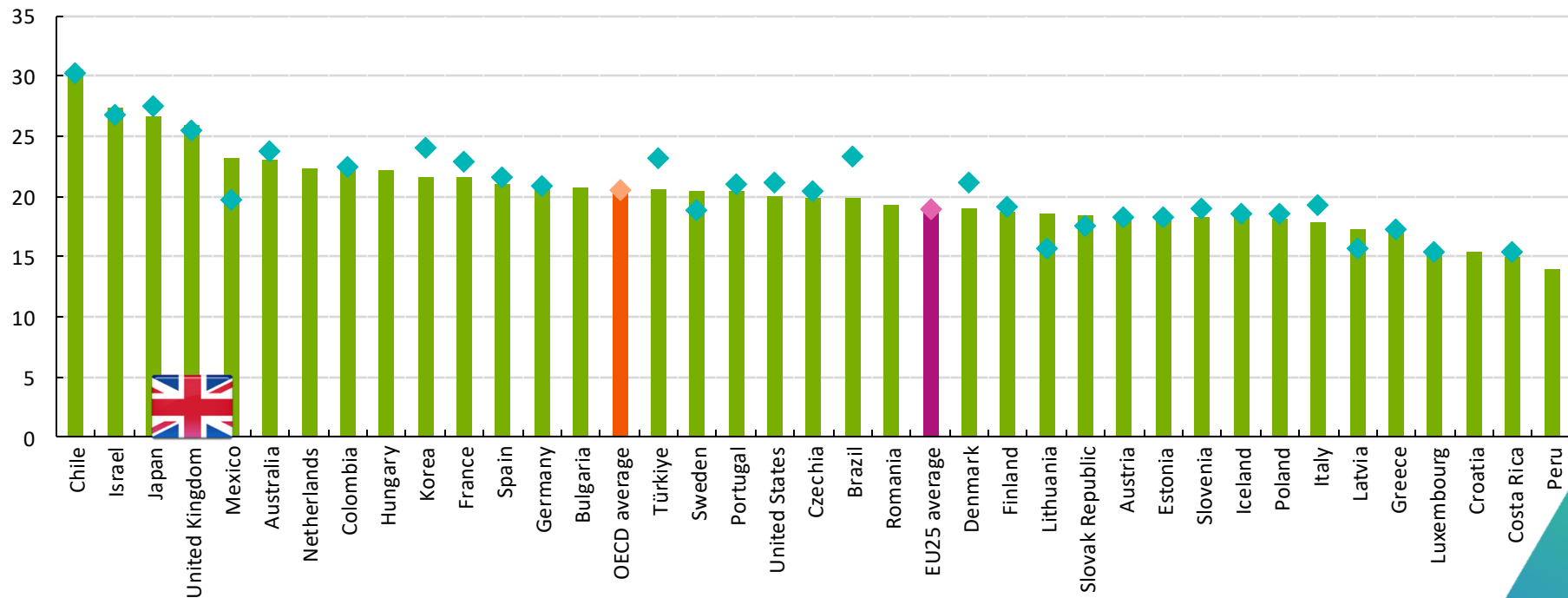


Class sizes in primary education

Trends in average class sizes in primary education (2013 and 2023)

■ 2023

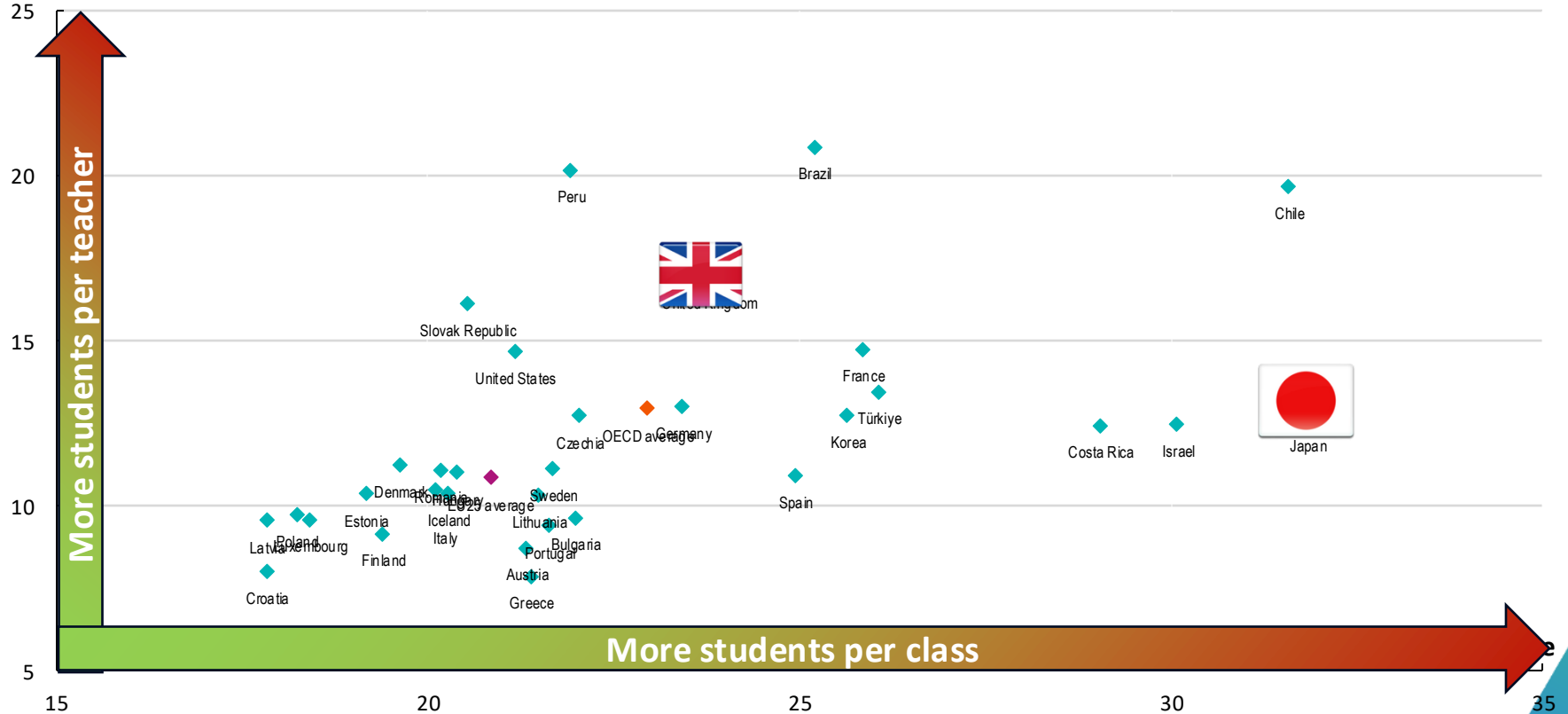
◆ 2013





Smaller classes or better teachers in secondary education?

Student-teacher ratio



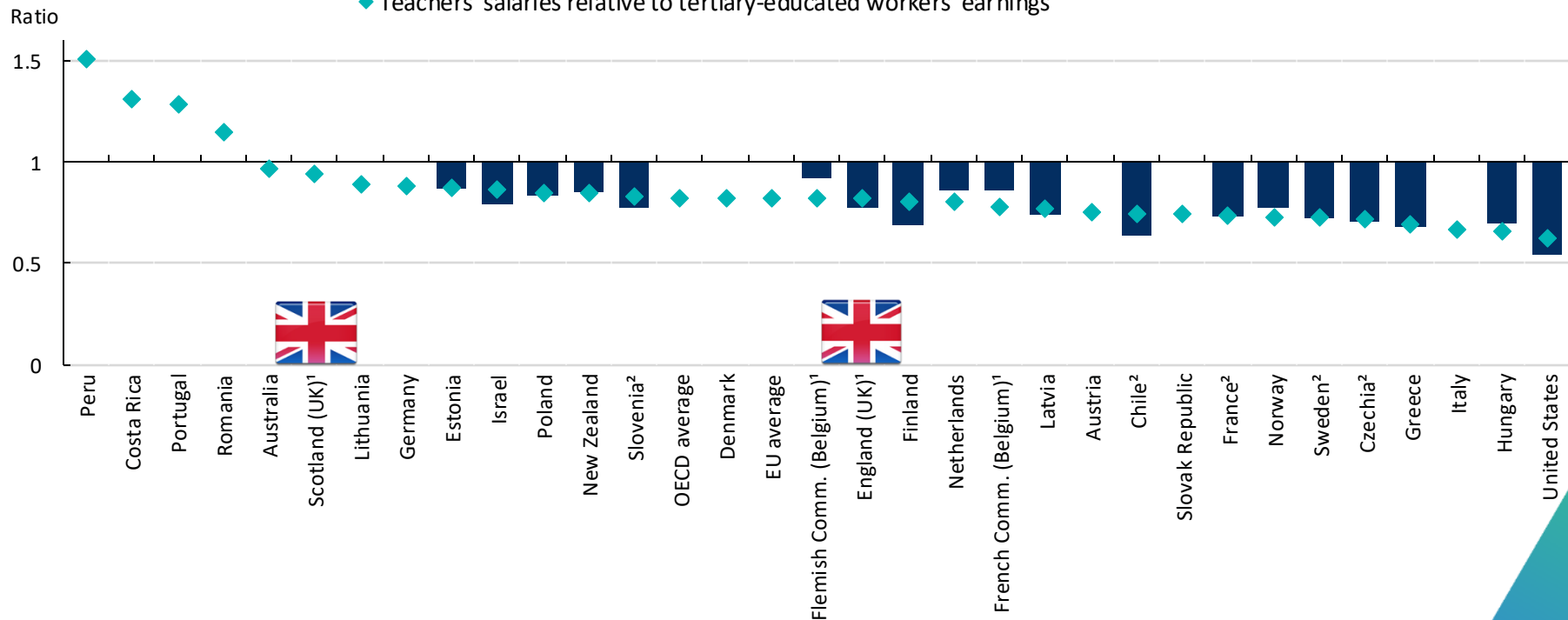
Teacher salaries



In most OECD countries, teacher salaries are lower than the average salaries of tertiary-educated workers

Actual salaries of primary teachers relative to earnings of tertiary-educated workers (2024)

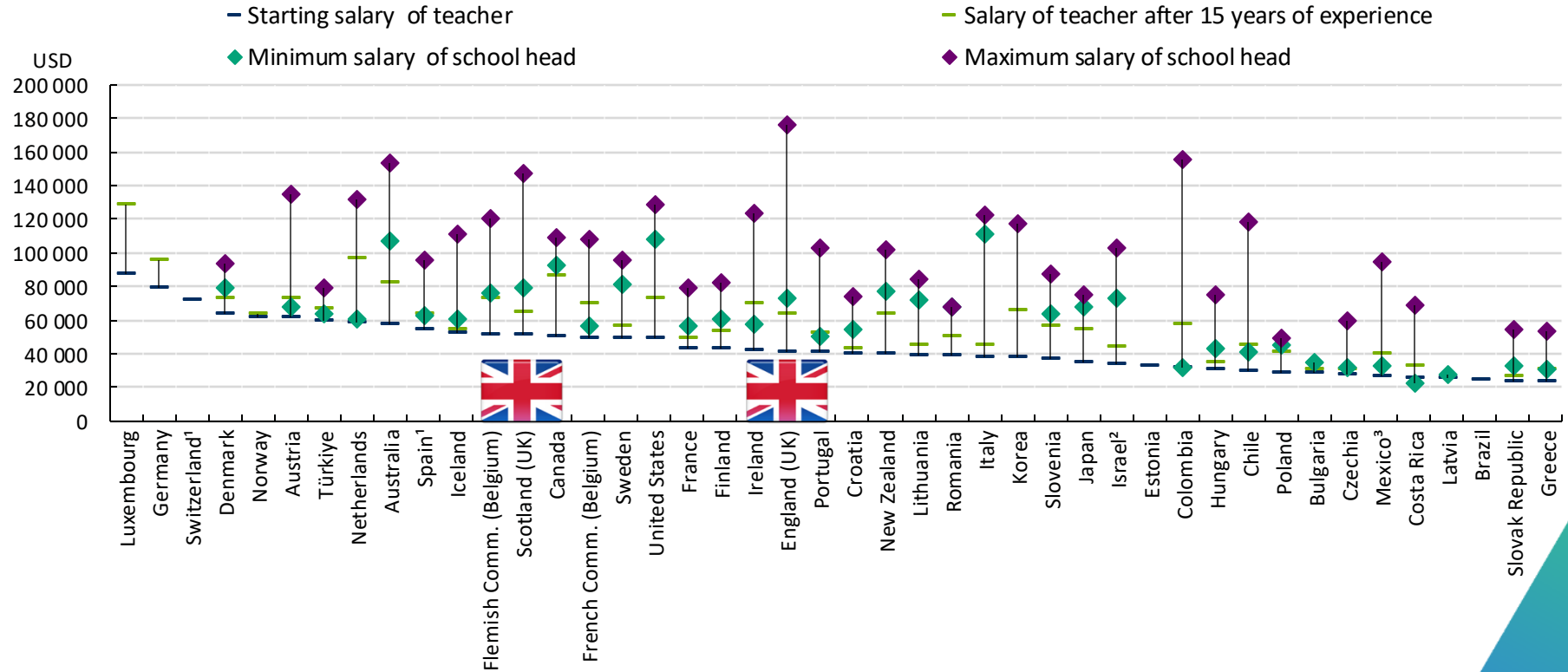
- Teachers' salaries relative to similarly educated workers' earnings (weighted averages)
- ◆ Teachers' salaries relative to tertiary-educated workers' earnings





Salary progression of teachers

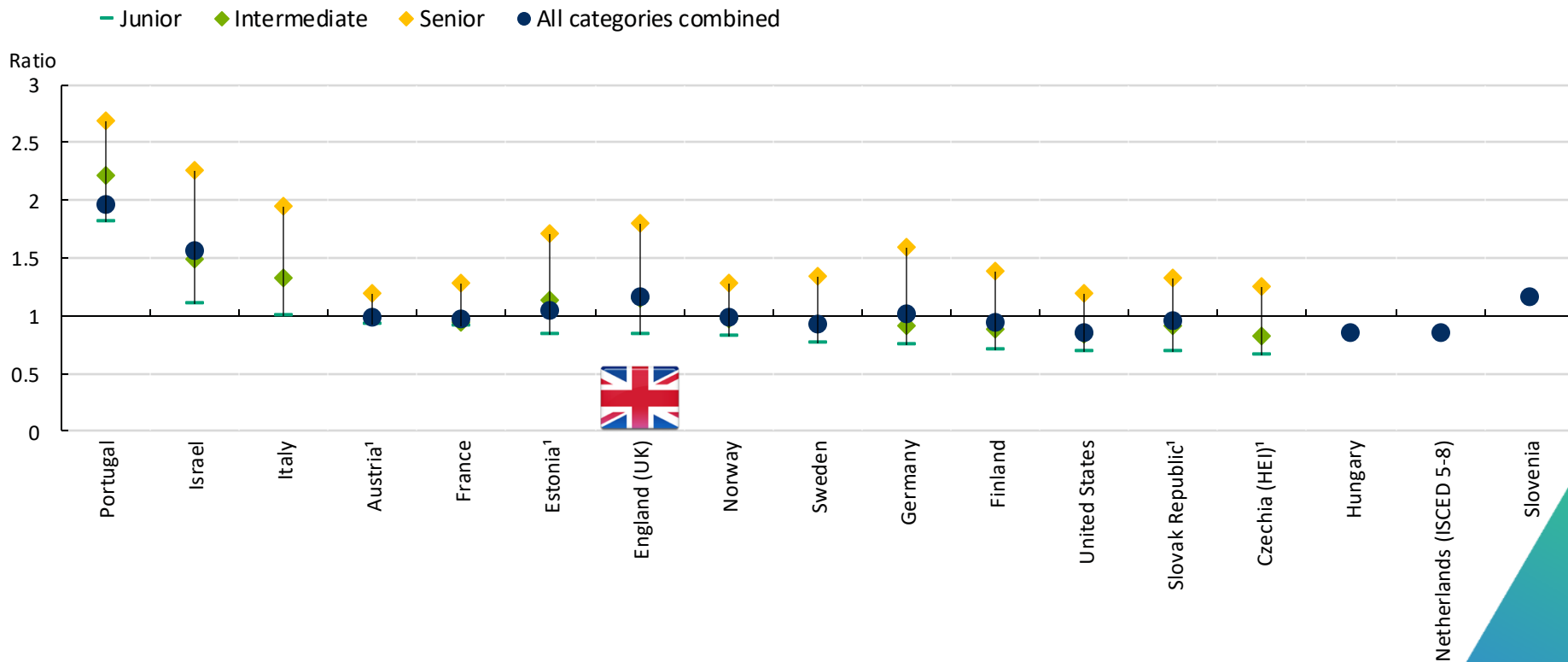
Statutory salaries of teachers and school heads at primary level (2024)





Most senior academic staff earn more than other tertiary-educated workers

Average actual academic staff salaries relative to earnings of tertiary-educated workers, by seniority (2023)

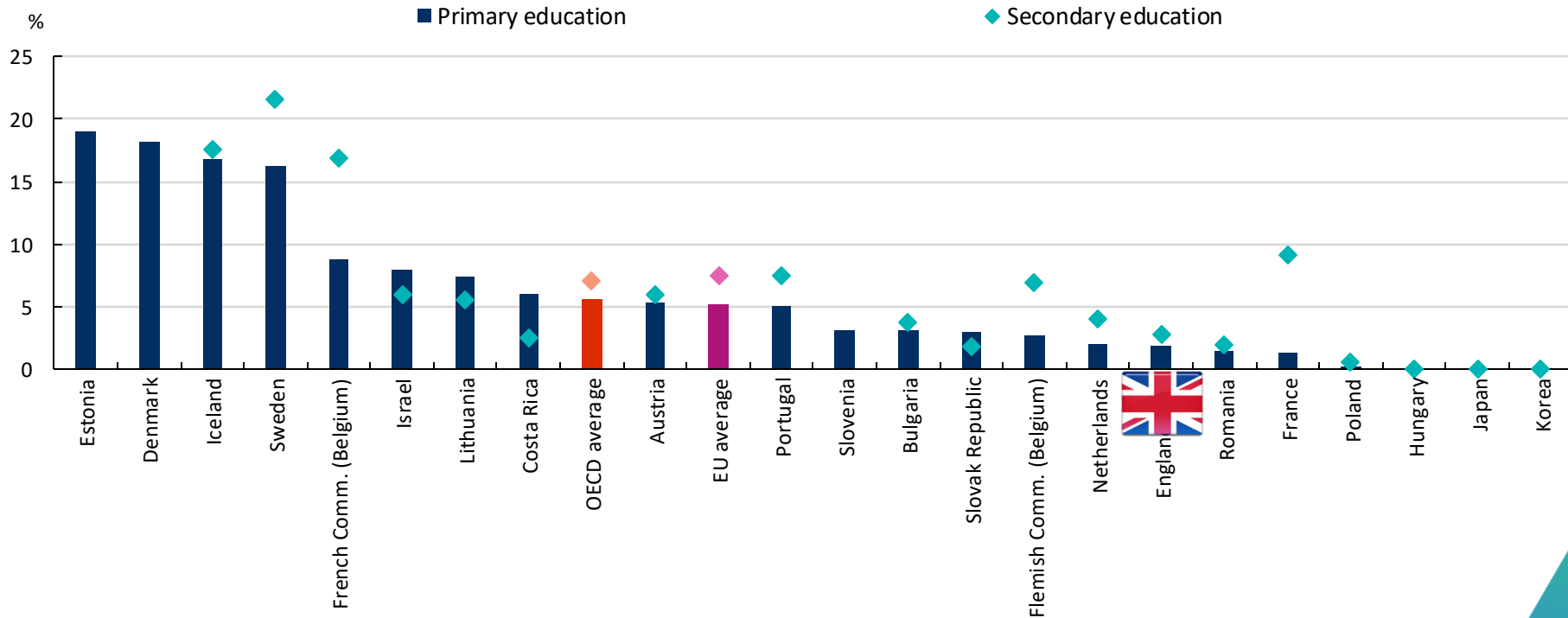


Teacher shortages



Share of non-fully qualified teachers

Share of non-fully qualified teachers, by level of education (2022/23)

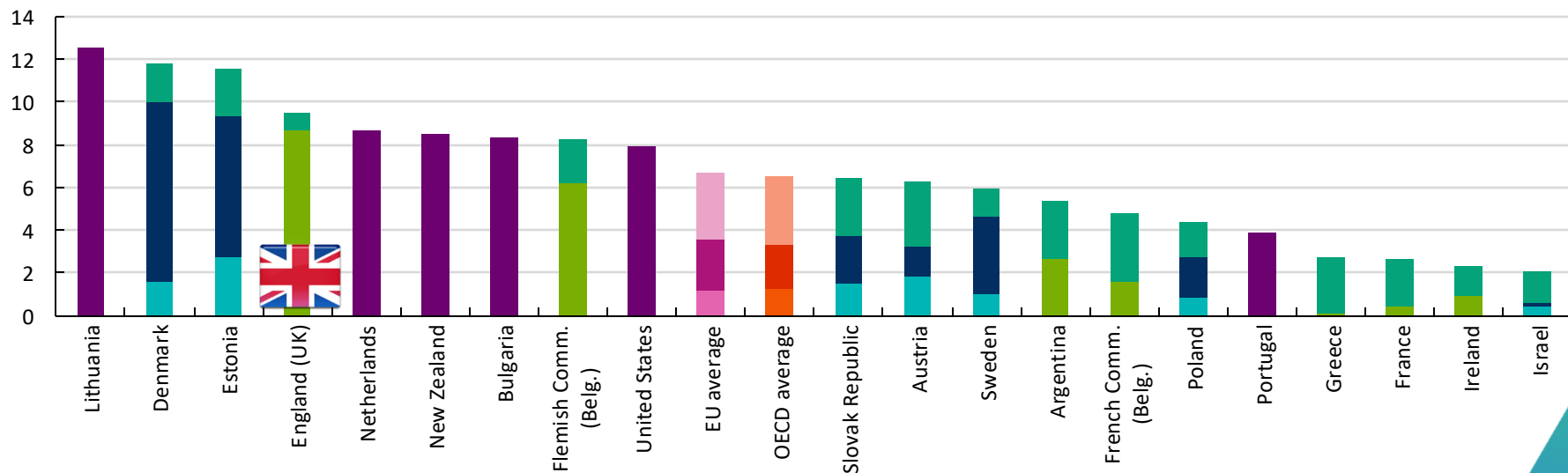




Turnover among teachers is high in the UK, with close to 10% of all teachers leaving the profession annually

Share of fully qualified teachers who left the profession by resigning or retiring in pre-primary, primary and secondary education (2022/23)

- All teachers who have resigned or retired from the profession (no breakdowns between those who resigned and those who retired)
- All teachers who have retired from the profession
- All teachers who have resigned from the profession (no breakdowns by seniority)
- Teachers with more than 5 years of experience who have resigned from the profession
- Teachers with less than 5 years of experience who have resigned from the profession





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Thank you