

# The impact of the Covid-19 crisis on young people

*Transitions throughout the life course*

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# The COVID19 crisis: like a modern Kerberos



# The COVID19 crisis, a three-headed hound

- The COVID19 pandemic started in March 2020 and quickly became a **health, economic and social crisis**.
- Like a **modern Kerberos**, the gigantic three-headed hound and guardian of Hades, these three faces of the crisis are affecting the various demographic groups in our societies very differently.
- Age-specific trends in **Coronavirus deaths** have been clear since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Conversely, **younger generations and women** are much more exposed than the older population to the wider consequences of **restrictive measures** implemented by governments to control the virus.

# Youth and COVID-19

- Youth are more resilient to COVID19 than other cohorts
- They are more vulnerable to the economic and social implications of restrictive measures (NPI).
- COVID-19 had multidimensional impact on youth which will affect their life course transitions.



# Documenting the impact of the crisis.

- *Living, Working and COVID19*
- The Eurofound large-scale online survey across the European Union and beyond.
- Three Waves plus one:
  - Spring 2020
  - Summer 2020
  - Spring 2021
  - Autumn 2021 (panel)
- More than 150,000 responses.



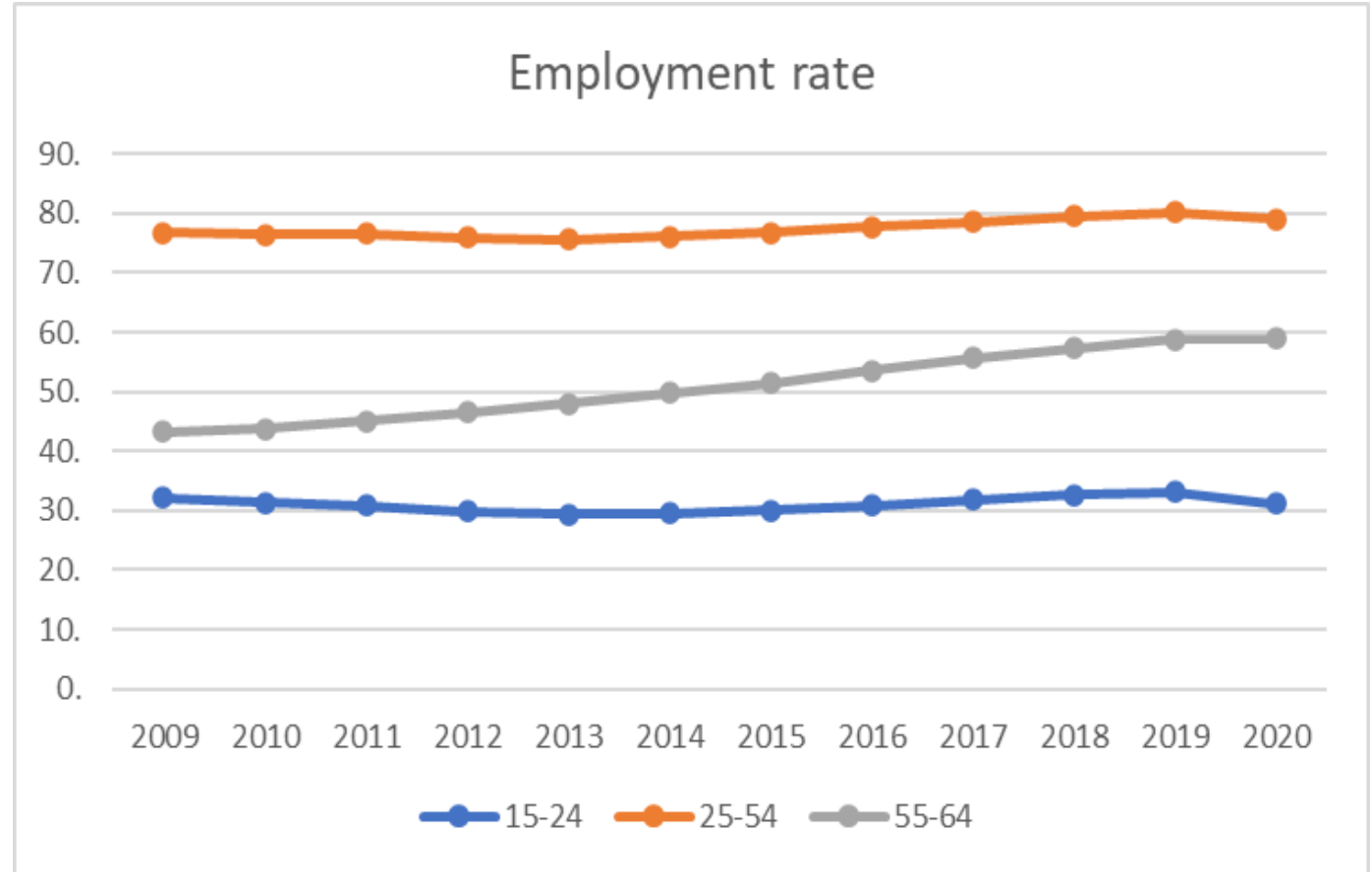
# EMPLOYMENT





# Employment: Is history repeating itself?

- The 2008-2013 recession revealed the additional vulnerability of youth in regard to labour market participation.
- Young people are among the possible victims of the COVID19 crisis.
- EU27 employment rate we see that this might be the case also this time:
  - **15-24 yrs old: - 2.1%**
  - **25-54 yrs old: - 0.8%**
  - **55-65 yrs old: +0.3%**

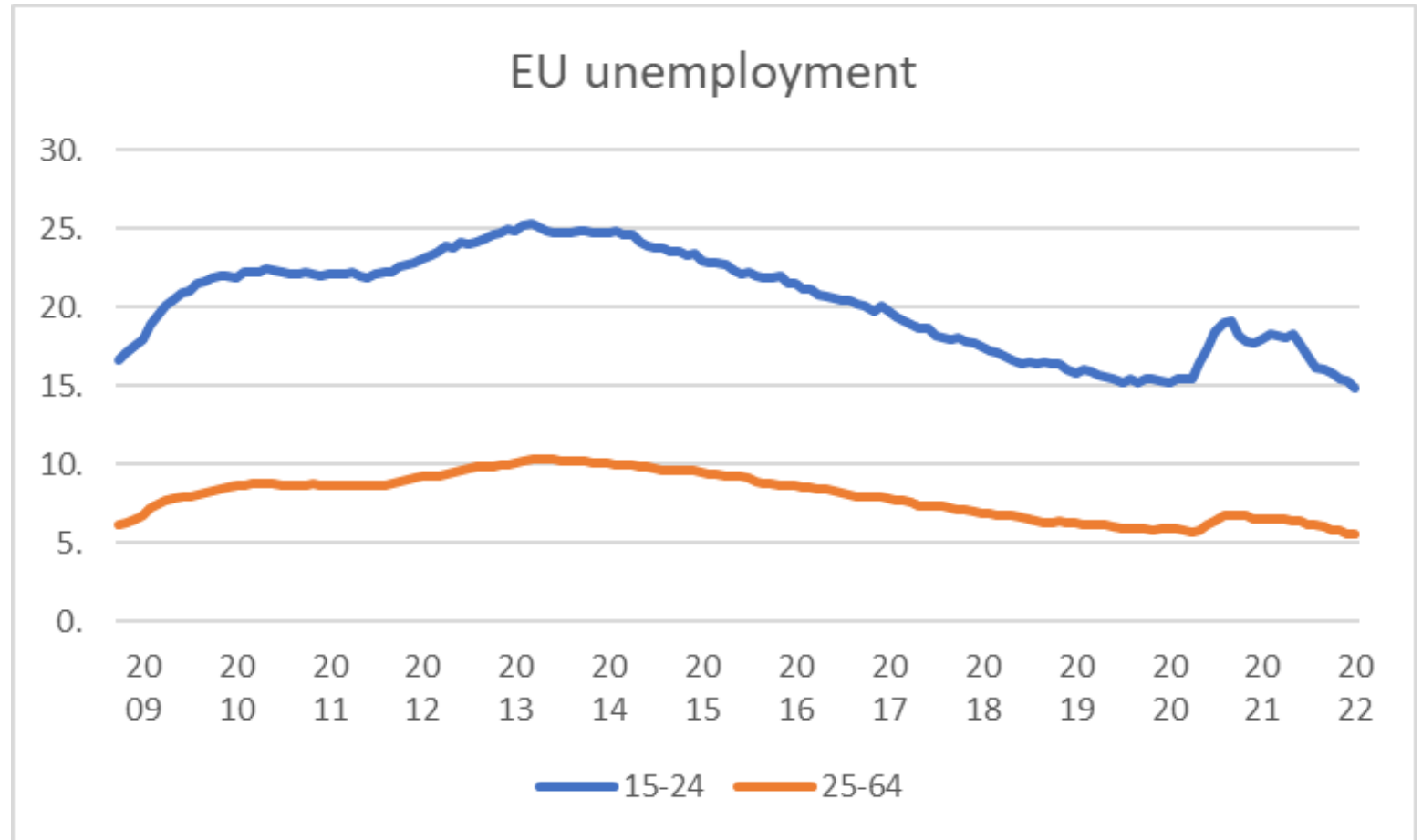


# Trends in unemployment

However, there has not been the impact that happened in 2008.

The surge in unemployment was more consistent for youth than for the rest of the population.

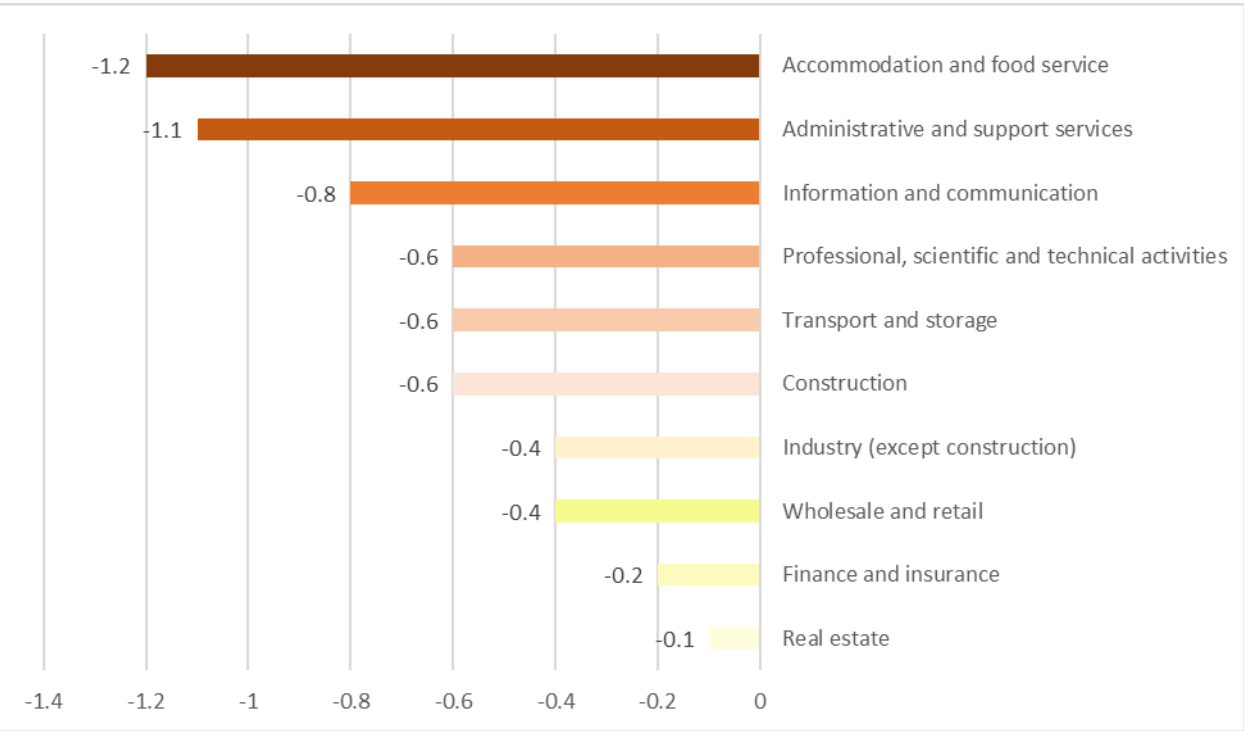
Still it was re-absorbed during 2021





# Youth employment was overrepresented in sectors most affected by the pandemic

Decrease in the job vacancy rate between 2019 and 2020 by sector, EU27 (percentage points)

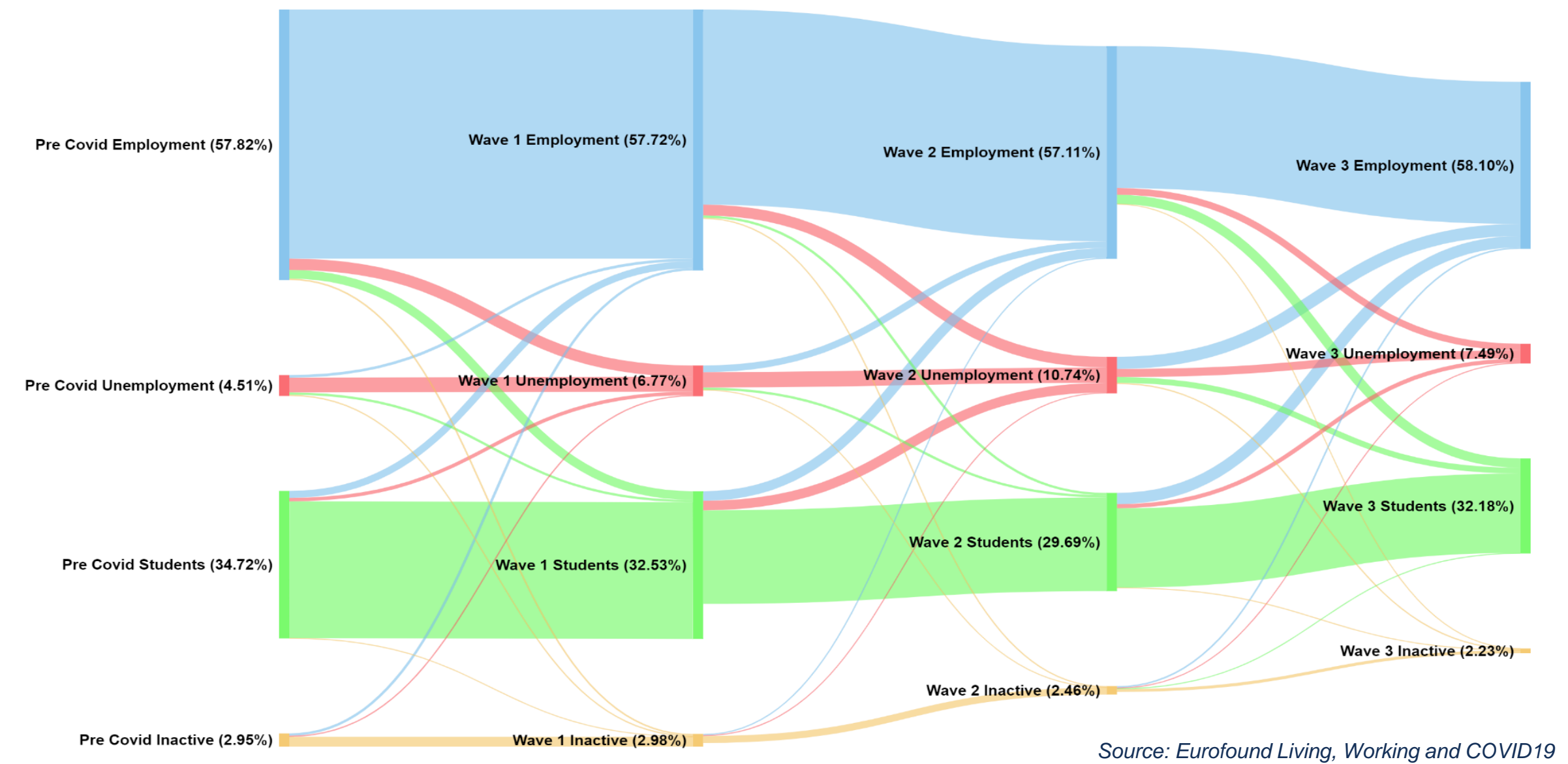


Proportions of workers aged 15–29 and aged 30+ employed by sector, 2019 (%)

Sector	15–29	30+
Agriculture , forestry and fishing	9	13
Industry (except construction)	4	5
Construction	3	3
Wholesale and retail	11	9
Transport and storage	3	2
Accommodation and food service	13	5
Information and communication	4	3
Finance and insurance	1	1
Real estate	1	2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	5	8
Administrative and support services	8	8
Public administration	3	4
Education	9	11
Health and social work	11	12
Arts, entertainment and recreation	10	7
Other services	4	4
Other	1	2

- Young people were also more often working with less secure, temporary contracts that were easier to terminate, part time and/or for low wages, all of which put them at higher risk of job loss and social exclusion.

# Employment transitions of young people in the Living, Working and Covid-19 panel



## Youth transitions to unemployment during the pandemic in the survey panel (cont.)

- Job loss: 12% of panel sample, highest in the Mediterranean countries (particularly Greece and Spain), followed by Ireland
- The younger age class (18-24) had significantly higher probability of job loss
- In the panel, no sig. differences were found by gender or education
- Students transitioning to unemployment (12% total) was most common in Ireland (15%)
- Young people aged 18-29 were much more likely to suffer job loss than older groups, and this gap increased as the pandemic progressed.

Survey round	Job loss	
	18-29	30+
Spring 2020	7%	5%
Summer 2020	11%	8%
Spring 2021	17%	9%

# The surge of telework

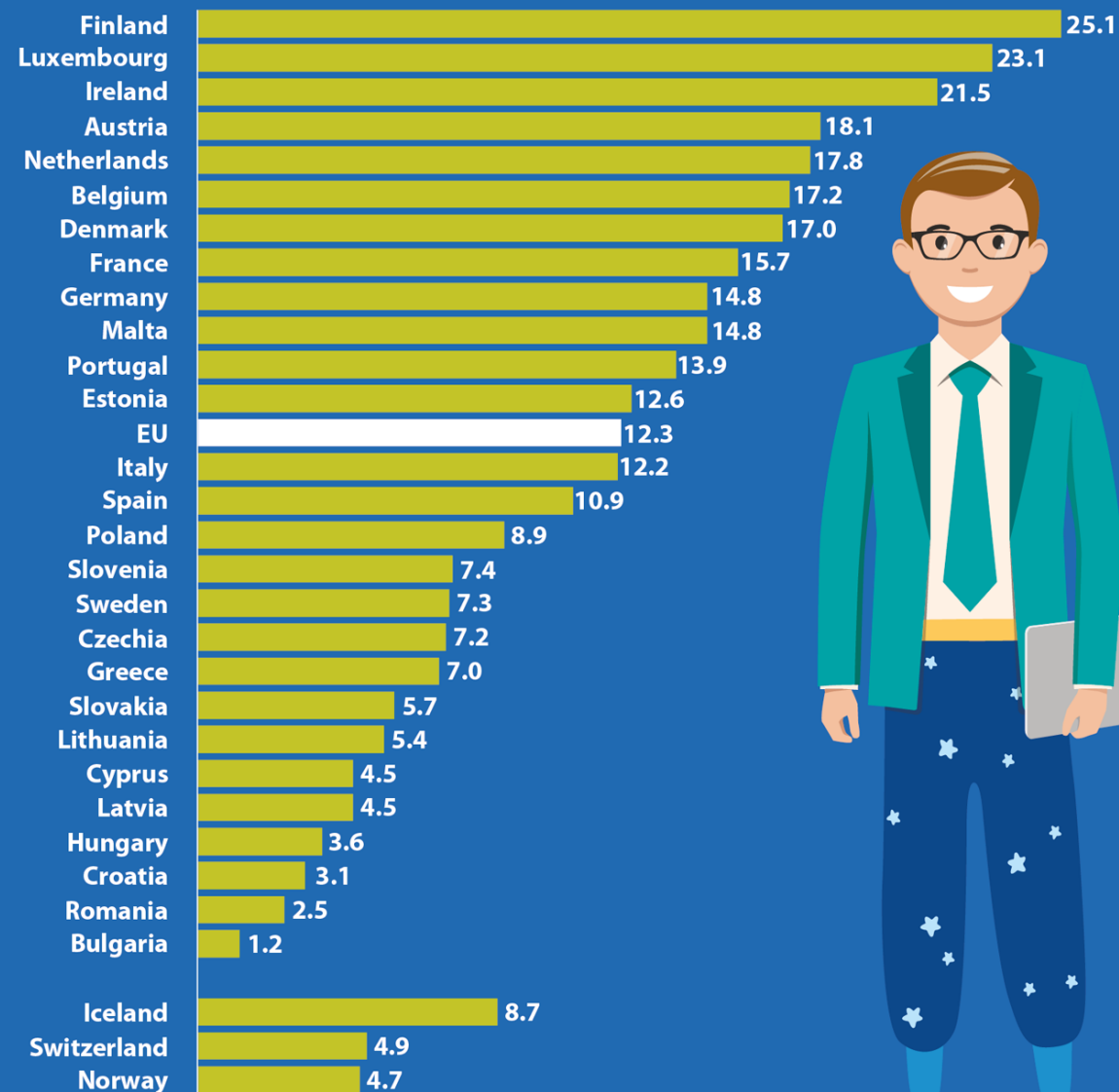
The social distancing measures that were introduced as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic forced many people to work from home.

In 2020, 12.3% of employed people aged 15-64 in the EU usually worked from home, although this share had remained constant at around 5% over the past decade.

Compared with other age groups, younger people were less likely to work from home in 2020: only 6.3% of those aged 15-24 reported that they usually worked from home, compared with 13.0% of those aged between 25-49 and 12.4% of those aged 50-64.

## People usually working from home, 2020

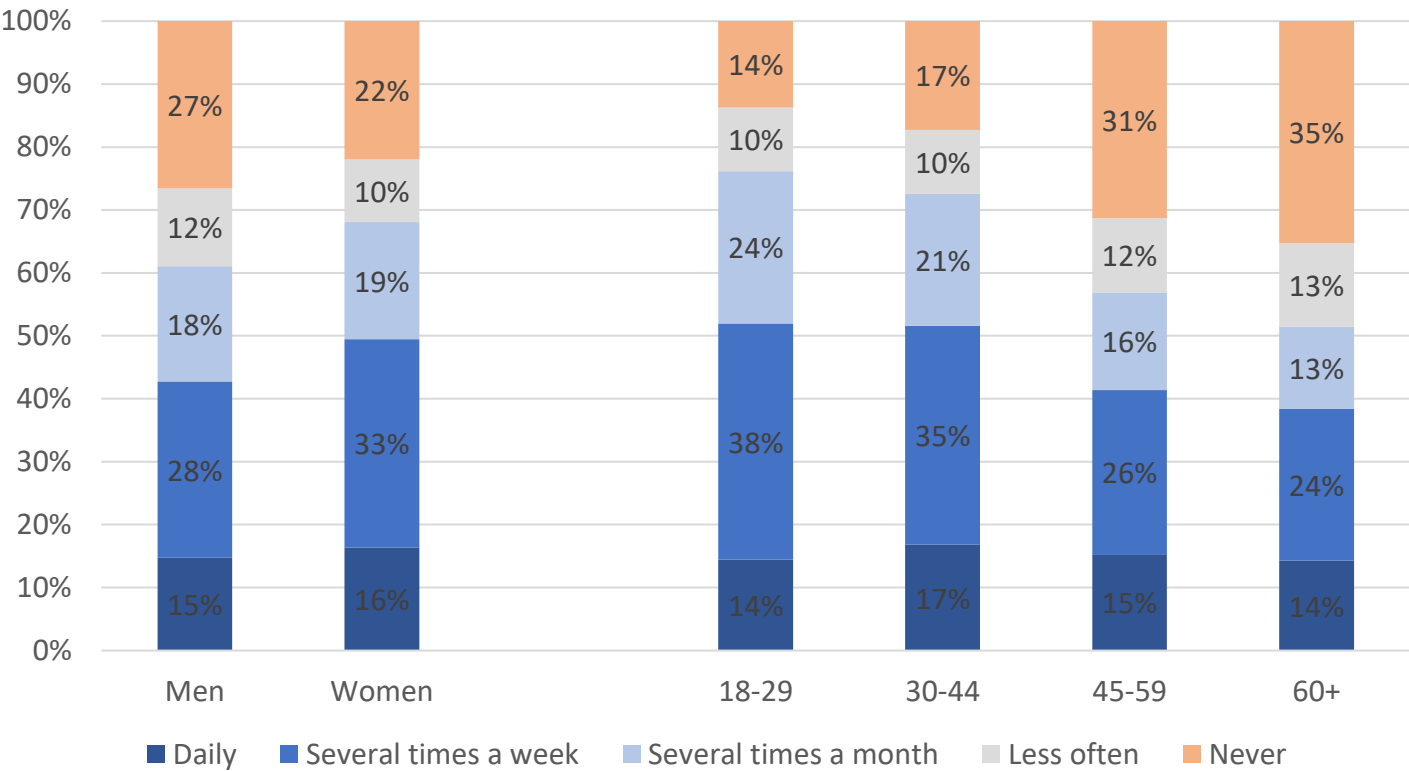
(% of employed people aged 15-64)



Germany: provisional data with low reliability.

# Working from home preferences by age and gender

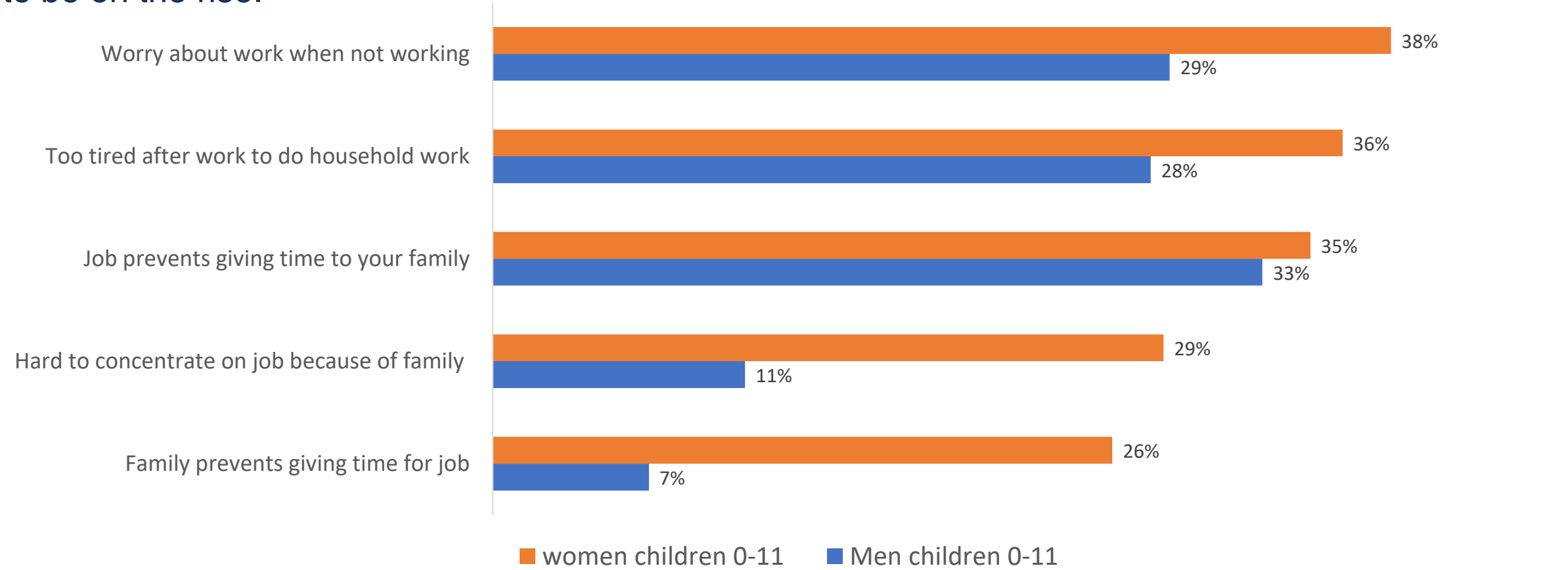
If you had the choice, how often would you like to work from home if there were no restrictions due to COVID-19?



Source: Living, Working and Covid-19 survey, Round 3 - spring 2021

# Work-life balance of men and women with young children

Concentration of activity in the home also means that conflicts between work and home life are sure to be on the rise.





# Education



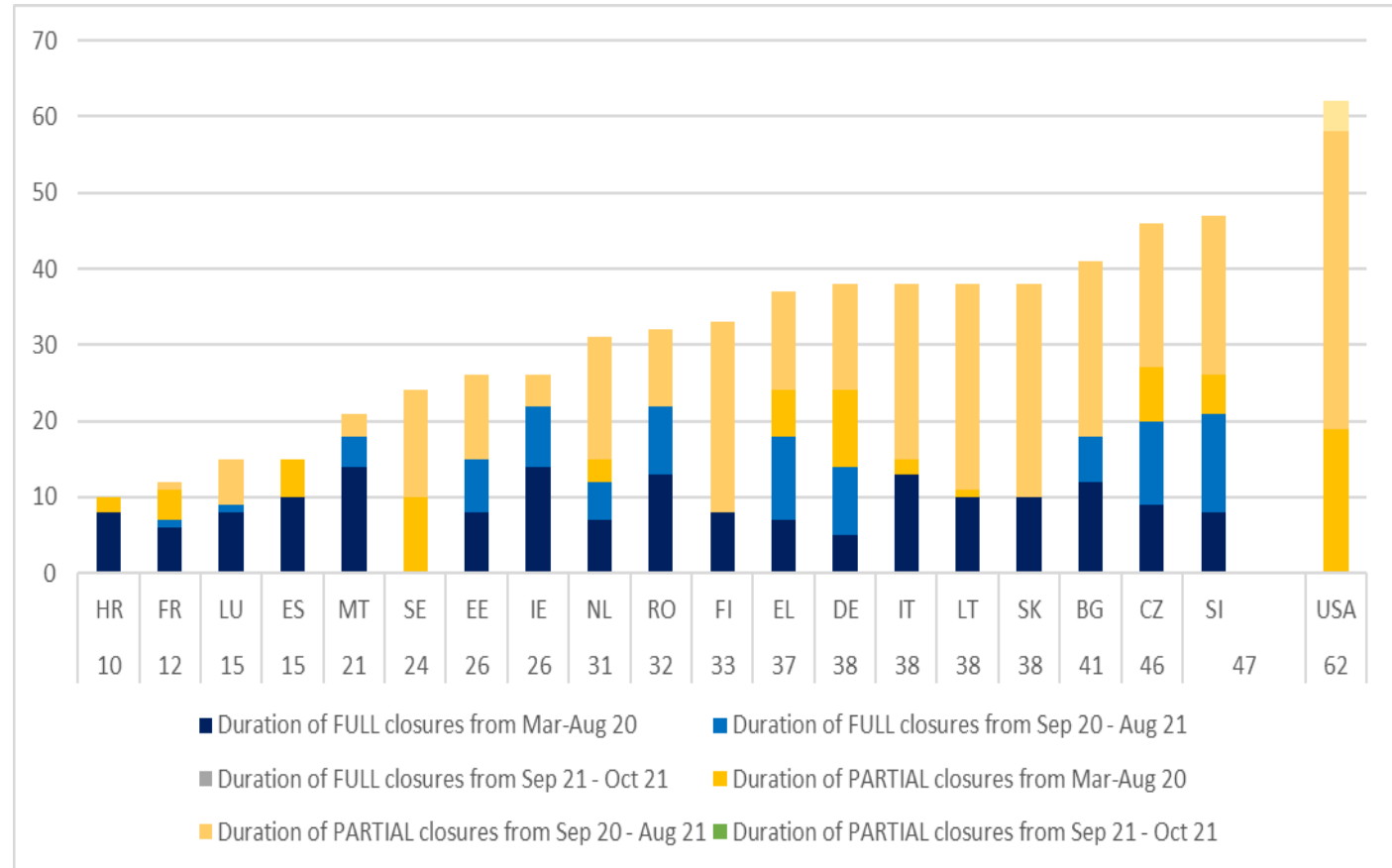


# The impact on education

- The global lockdown of education institutions caused a major (and likely unequal) interruption in students' learning with major implications in their human capital accumulation.
- Teaching and school assessment moved online in an untested and unprecedented scale with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty from everyone.
- It placed burden on parents' shoulders, especially on (working) women with young children.

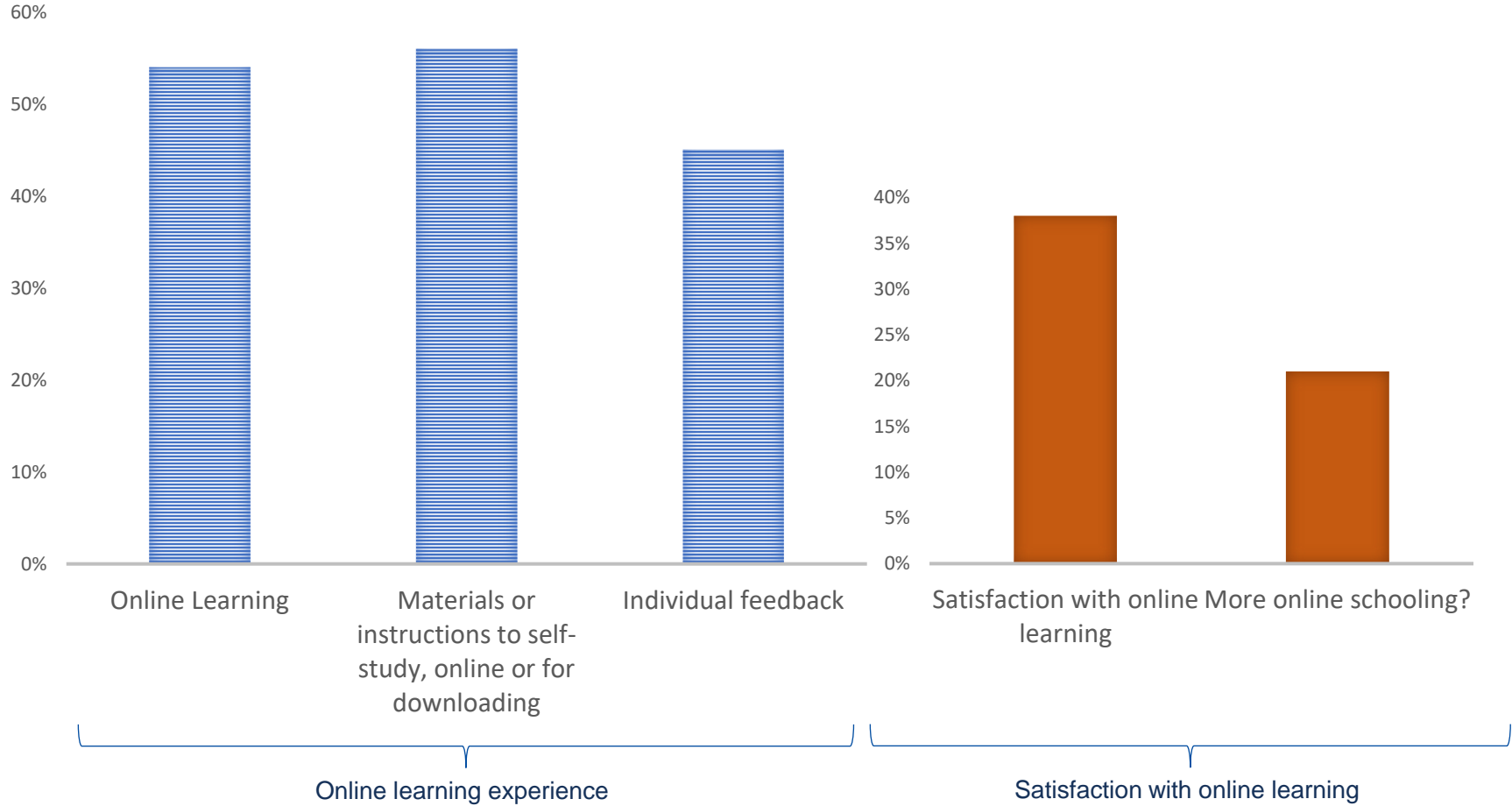
# Impact on education

- Closure of school was often partial and not continuous.
- A direct impact on young people and their human capital accumulation.
- Scientific literature correlated schools attendance with skills accumulation
- Exacerbation of inequalities: different level of support, different level of equipments.



Source: : UNESCO Global monitoring of school closures caused by COVID-19

# Online schooling during the pandemic in Europe

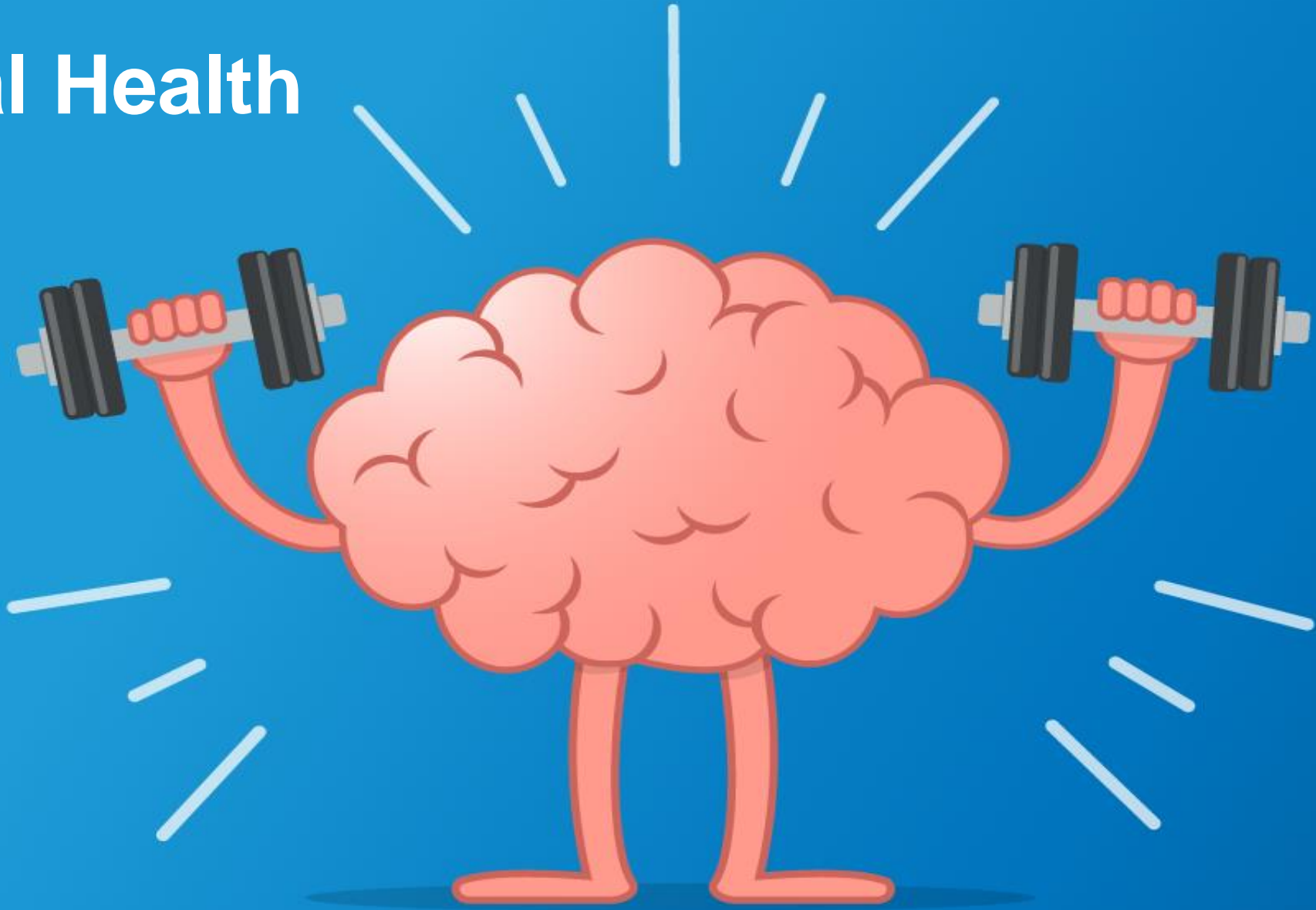


Source: Eurofound – Living, working and COVID19 survey – wave 2 -spring 2020

# The impact of schools interruptions

- Closure of schools has been not just be a short-term issue, but have also have long-term economic and social consequences for the affected cohorts of young people and of parents.
- Most importantly, they are likely to increase inequalities between cohorts and within cohorts.
- *Fuchs-Schündeln et al, 2021* investigates the impact of school closures in the United States and dramatic results:
  - Average lifetime earnings: -2.1%
  - School drop out: + 16%
  - Reduction of college degree: -7%
  - Children age 6 higher welfare loss: -1.57%
- While we are not aware of similar studies in Europe, results calls for a policy action to avoid lifelong scar in human capital.

# Mental Health

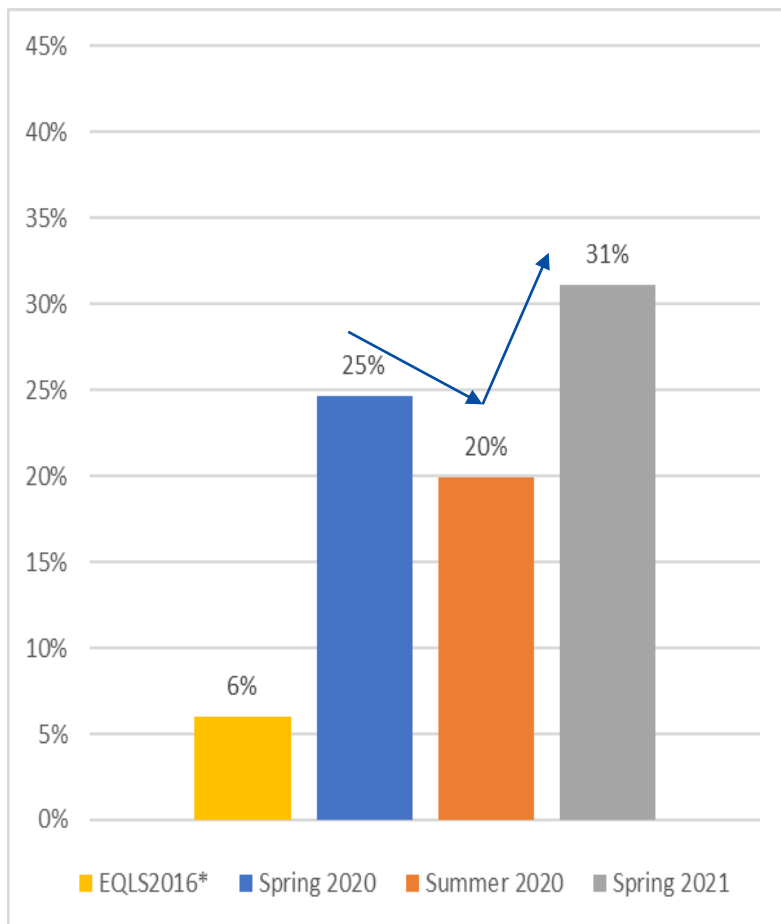


# The impact on mental health.

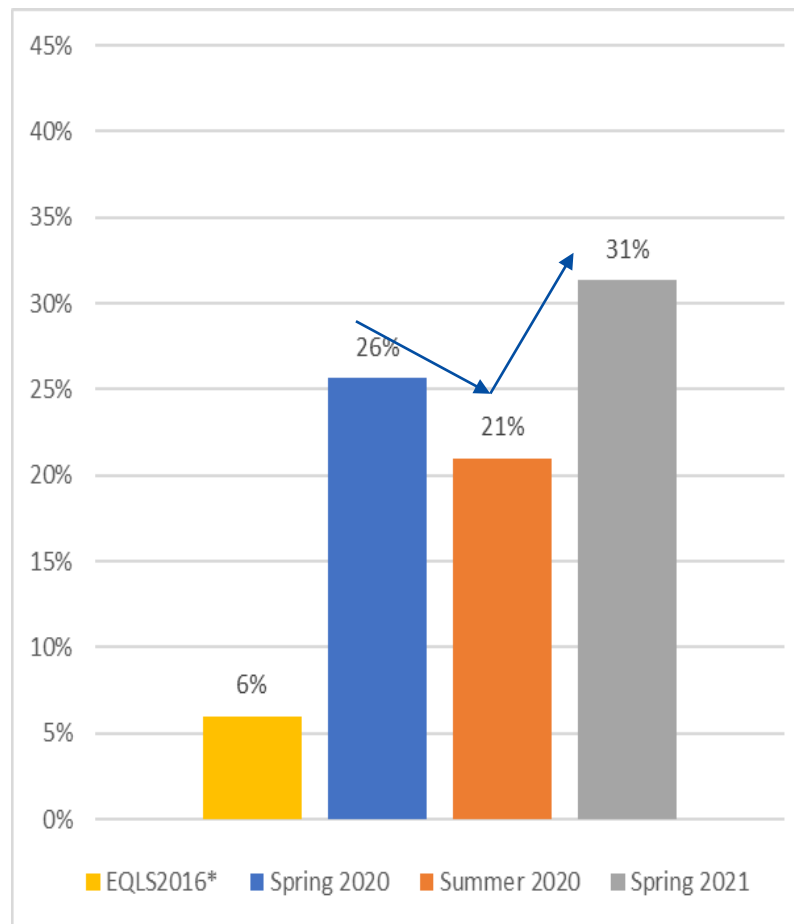
- Besides causing disease and death, COVID-19 has generated a '**parallel epidemic**' of mental health. The effects here could linger long after the pandemic has subsided.
- There is increasing evidence for a surge in mental health problems, greater vulnerability and alarming implication for emotional and social functioning.
- Pandemic-related distress stems from the **fear of the illness, economic hardship, and uncertainty** about the real impact of the crisis.
- It is also a result of **social isolation** and **tensions** (within families) in lockdown together as a **result of restrictions** (NPI) that most governments have deployed to contain the pandemic

# The impact on Mental Wellbeing.

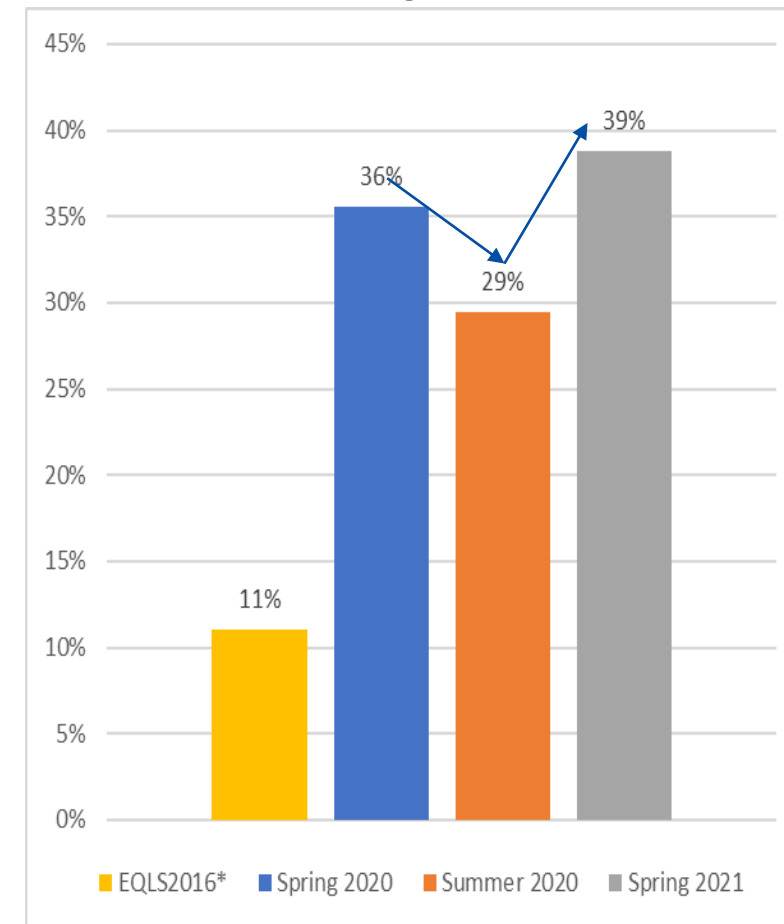
*Feeling downhearted and depressed*



*Feeling lonely*



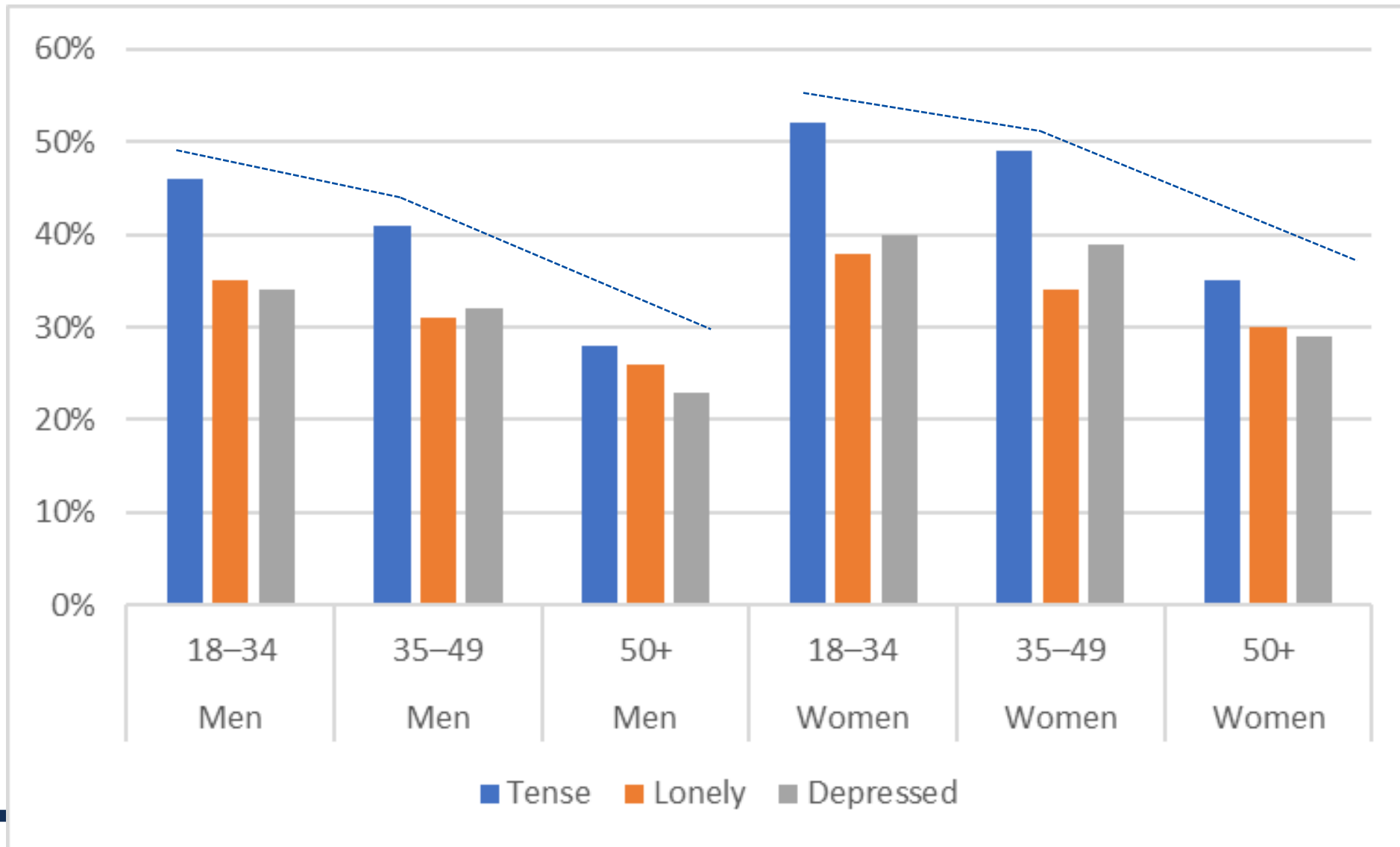
*Feeling tense*



Source: Eurofound Living, Working and COVID19 survey



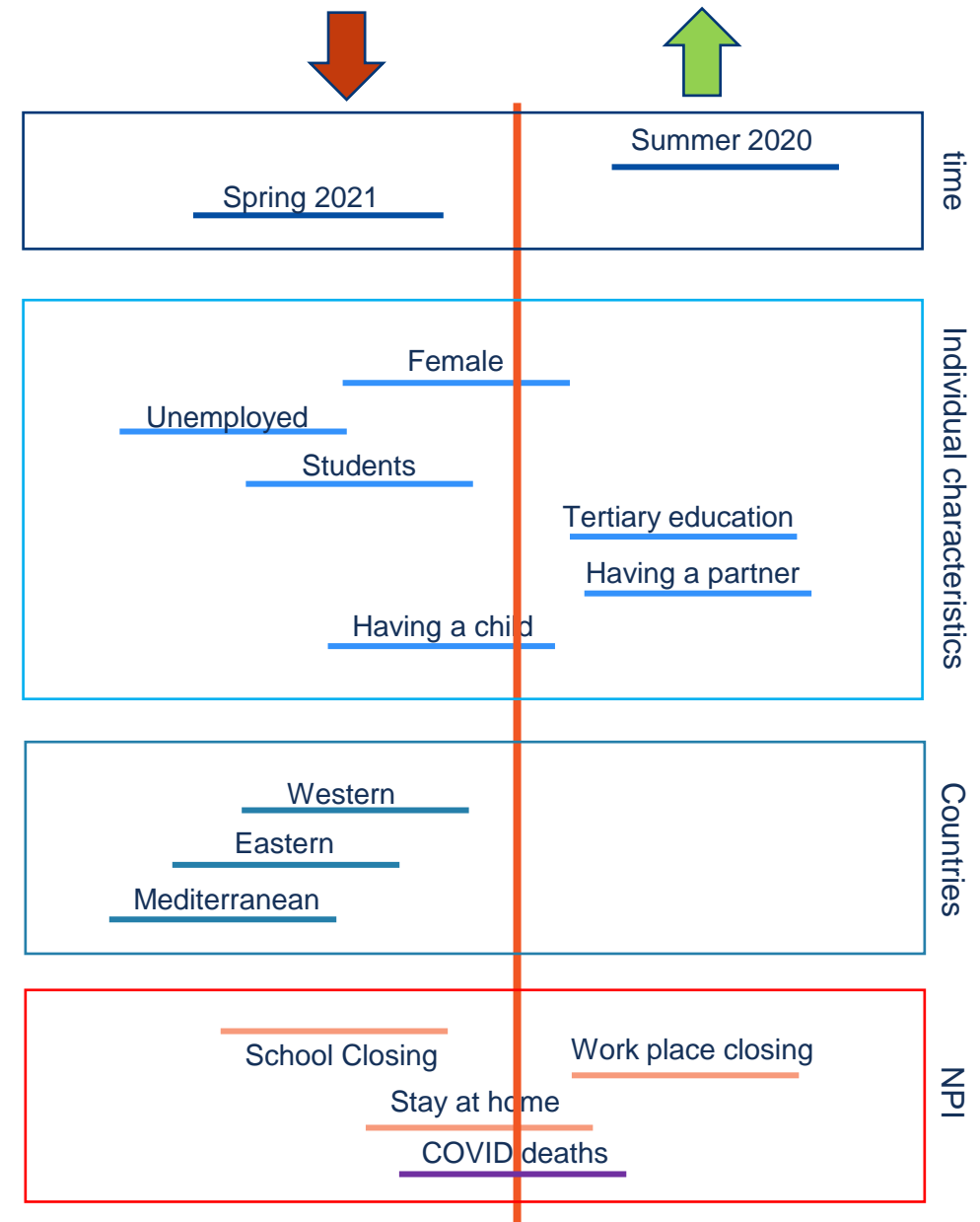
# Not everyone is affected the same way



Source: Eurofound Living, Working and COVID19 survey

# The case of young people.

- Young people have been among the mostly affected by COVID19 crisis in terms of mental health.
- According to EQLS2016, young people had higher mental wellbeing than other age groups.
- Data collected during the pandemic show the opposite.



# Conclusions



- The COVID crisis is like **Kerberus**, a three headed hound!
- As modern **Herakles**, governments should fight this crisis by aiming at defeating the three heads at once and avoid the explosion of inequalities and that vulnerables will bring the brunt of the crisis.
- While EU policy responses allowed a quick recovery, it is important to timely act in order to reduce long term scar on young people, their employment perspectives, human capital accumulation and addressing possible mental health issues.
- Youth still trust in institutions, more than other age categories. An asset which should not be squandered and timely initiatives should be put in place in order to meet youth expectations.