

## CO4.4: Bullying at ages 11, 13 and 15 by gender

### *Definitions and methodology*

This indicator uses data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey 2013/14 to provide information on the prevalence of bullying among school-age children in OECD and EU member countries. Data are presented through two main measures:

- *Proportion (%) of 11-, 13- and 15-year-olds who report having been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months, by gender*, that is, the proportion of children who, when asked how often they had been bullied at school in the past couple of months, responded with at least two or three times. Data are presented separately for 11-, 13- and 15-year-olds and, within each age group, for boys and girls.
- *Proportion (%) of 11-, 13- and 15-year-olds who report having bullied others at school at least two or three times in the previous couple of months, by gender*, that is, the proportion of children who, when asked how often they had taken part in bullying (an)other student(s) at school in the past couple of months, responded with at least two or three times.

To highlight differences in bullying and of being bullied across socio-economic groups, this indicator also presents information on differences in the two measures between children whose families score ‘high’ and ‘low’ on the HBSC’s ‘Family Affluence Scale’ (FAS). The FAS is a composite measure calculated for each surveyed student based on their response to questions about various household possessions. Children with ‘low’ and ‘high’ scores on the FAS are those who score in the bottom and top 20% for their country, respectively, with those in the middle 60% classified as ‘medium’ affluence (see Inchley *et al.* (2016) for more information).

### *Key findings*

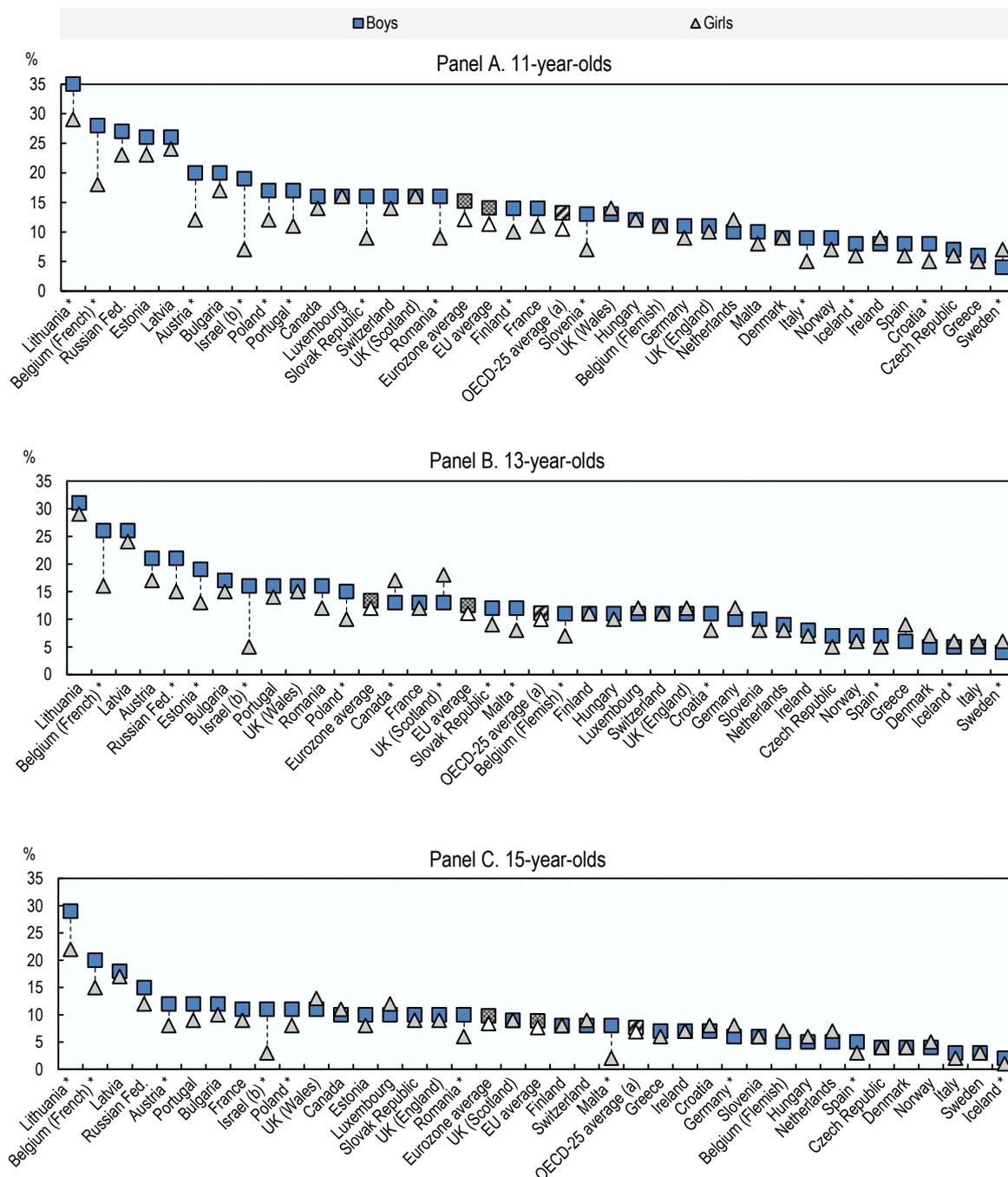
In many OECD countries, the share of school-age children that report having been bullied decreases with age (Chart CO4.4.A). On average across OECD countries with available data, around 13% of 11-year-olds boys and 11% of 11-year-old girls report having been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months (Chart CO4.4.A, Panel A), compared to averages of 11% and 10% respectively for 13-year-olds (Chart CO4.4.A, Panel B), and 8% and 7% respectively for 15-year-olds (Chart CO4.4.A, Panel C). Decreases with age are especially large in Estonia, where the proportion of both boys and girls that report they have been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months decreases by roughly 15 percentage points between the ages of 11 and 15.

Across countries and age groups, boys are slightly more likely than girls to report being the victim of bullying, but gender differences in general are fairly limited (Chart CO4.4.A). Significant gender differences are seen in around a third of OECD countries and sub-national regions, with in most cases it being boys that are significantly more likely to report having been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months. Only Canada (13-year-olds), Germany (15-year-olds), Iceland (13-year-olds), Sweden (13- and 15-year-olds) and Scotland (13-year-olds) see a significantly higher share of girls reporting having been bullied. The largest gender differences are found in the French-speaking regions of Belgium – where, for both 11- and 13-year-olds, boys are about 10 percentage points more likely to report having been bullied than girls – and in Israel, where, again for both 11- and 13-year-olds, the share of boys that report having been bullied at least at least two or three times in the previous couple of months is around 11-12 percentage points higher than the share of girls.

Other relevant indicators: CO1.10: Life satisfaction among children; and CO3.4: Satisfaction with school life.

**Chart CO4.4.A. Being bullied at ages 11, 13 and 15 by gender, 2013/14**

Proportion (%) of 11-, 13- and 15-year-olds who report having been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months, by gender



Note: In countries marked with an \*, differences between groups are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . 0 mean less than  $\pm 0.5$ .

a) The Eurozone average excludes Belgium, and the OECD-25 and EU averages exclude Belgium and the United Kingdom

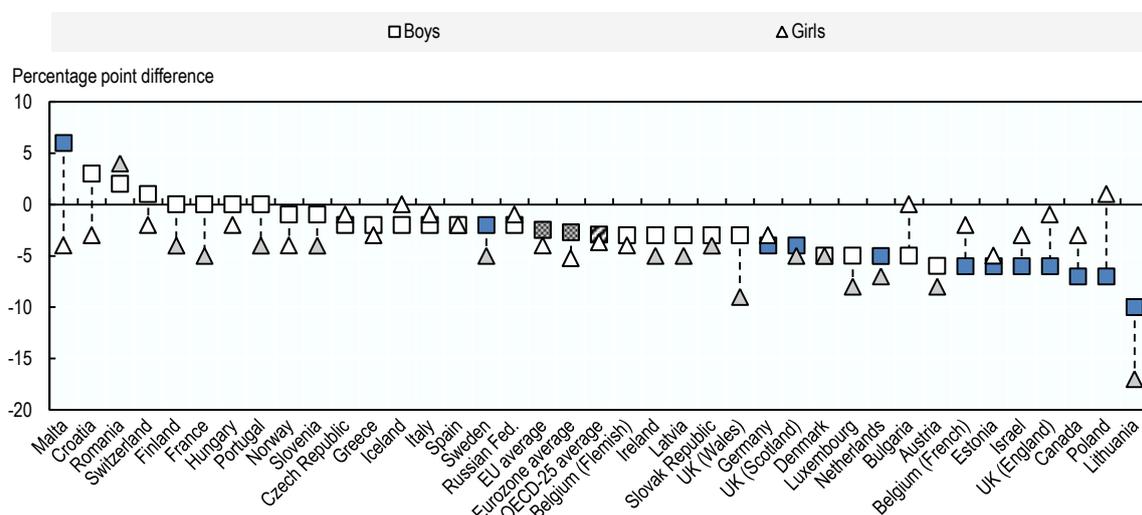
b) The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Sources: [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\) study 2013/14, accessed through the European Health Information Gateway](#)

In several OECD countries, school-aged children from relatively less affluent families are more likely to report being the victim of bullying than children from more affluent families (Chart CO4.4.B). For boys, ten OECD countries and sub-national regions see statistically significant linear trends across the HBSC's family affluence groups in the prevalence of being a victim of bullying, while fourteen see a significant trend for girls. In almost all of these cases, those with a low FAS score are more likely to report having been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months than those with a high FAS score. In Poland, for instance, boys with low FAS scores are about seven percentage points more likely to report being then victim of bullying than those with high FAS scores. Likewise, in Wales (UK), the share of girls with low FAS scores that report having been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months is nine percentage points higher than the share of girls with high FAS scores.

### Chart CO4.4.B. Being bullied at ages 11-to-15 by gender and family affluence, 2013/14

Percentage point difference between high and low family affluence groups in the proportion (%) of 11-to-15-year-olds who report having been bullied at least two or three times at school in the previous couple of months, by gender



Note: Shaded markers represent statistically significant linear trends across family affluence groups ('low', 'medium' and 'high') at  $p < 0.05$ . Non-shaded markers represent no statistically significant linear trend across family affluence groups at  $p < 0.05$ . 0 mean less than  $\pm 0.5$ .

a) The Eurozone average excludes Belgium, and the OECD-25 and EU averages exclude Belgium and the United Kingdom

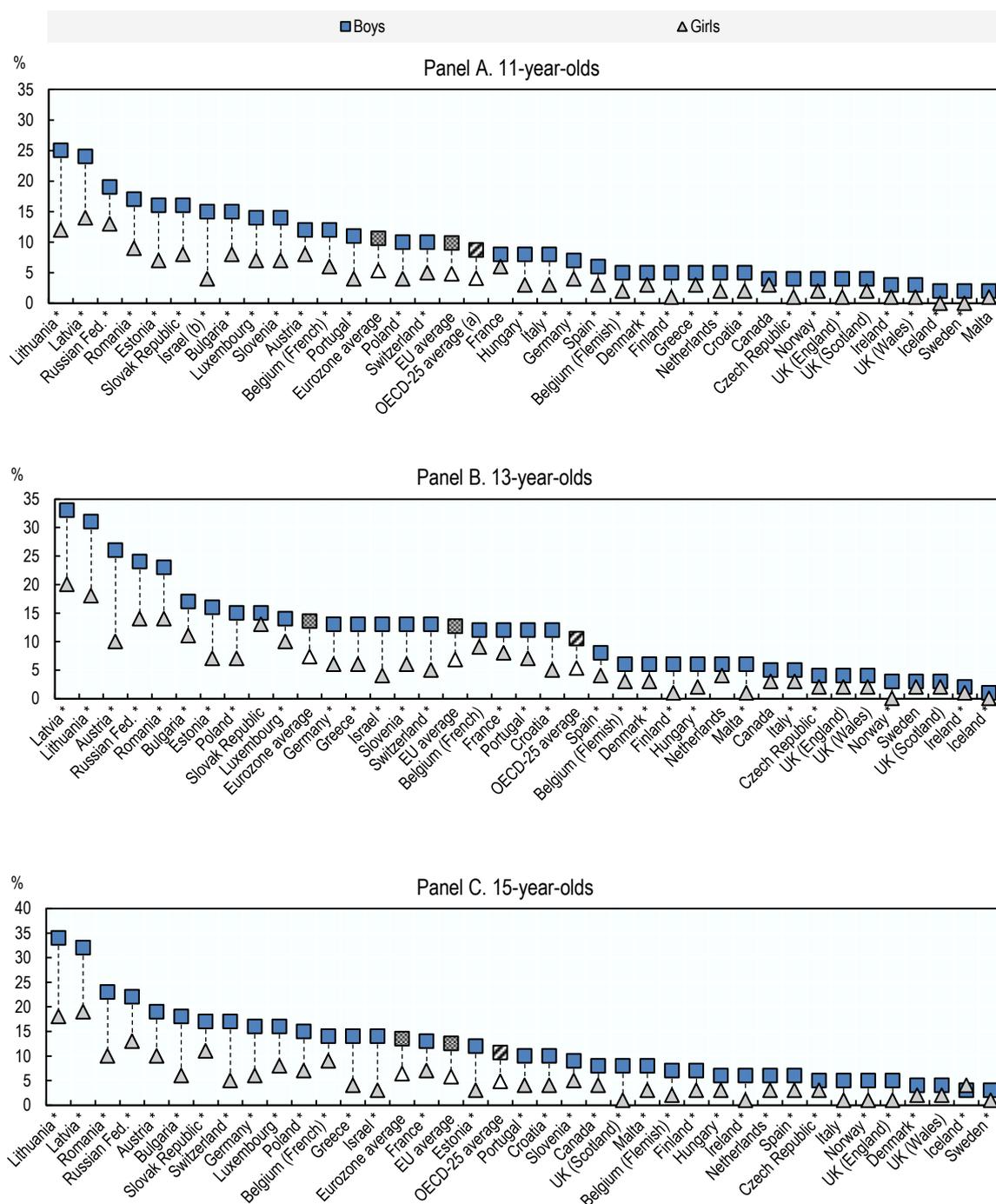
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Patterns in the share of children that report bullying others differ somewhat from those for the share of children who report being the victim of bullying. In many countries, the share of children who report having bullied others at school at least two or three times in the previous couple of months *increases* (rather than decreases) with age (Chart CO4.4.C), with the average across OECD countries with available data rising from around 9% for 11-year-old boys and 4% for 11-year-old girls to around 11% for both 13-year-old and 15-year-old boys and roughly 5% for both 13-year-old and 15-year-old girls. There are also considerable gender differences too, with boys generally far more likely than girls to report bullying others across all three age groups. In Latvia, for example, in all three age groups, the share of boys that report bullying others is at least 10 percentage points higher than the share of girls. No OECD countries see *no* statistically significant gender difference across all three age groups.

### Chart CO4.4.C. Bullying others at ages 11, 13 and 15 by gender, 2013/14

Proportion (%) of 11-, 13- and 15-year-olds who report having bullied others at school at least two or three times in the previous couple of months, by gender



Note: In countries marked with an \*, differences between groups are statistically significant at p < 0.05. 0 mean less than +/- 0.5.

a) The Eurozone average excludes Belgium, and the OECD-25 and EU averages exclude Belgium and the United Kingdom

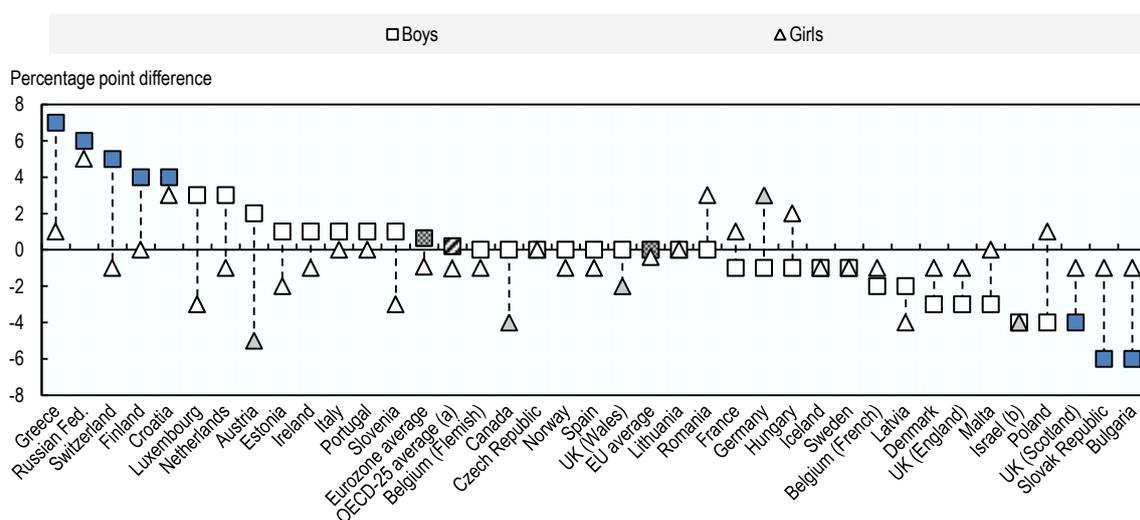
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Sources: [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\) study 2013/14, accessed through the European Health Information Gateway](#)

Differences in the prevalence of bullying others across socio-economic groups are mixed (Chart CO4.4.D). Five OECD countries or regions see statistically significant linear trends across family affluence groups for boys (Finland, Greece, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, and Scotland), and five see significant trends for girls (Austria, Canada, Germany, Israel, and Wales), but the direction of the trend varies from country to country. In Finland, Greece and Switzerland, for instance, boys with a high FAS score are more likely to report bullying others. In Scotland and the Slovak Republic, the opposite is true. Similarly, in Germany, girls with a high FAS score are more likely to report bullying others, but in Austria, Canada, Israel and Wales it is girls with a low FAS score that are more likely to report having bullied others at school at least two or three times in the previous couple of months.

#### Chart CO4.4.D. Bullying others at ages 11-to-15 by gender and family affluence, 2013/14

Percentage point difference between high and low family affluence groups in the proportion (%) of 11-to-15-year-olds who report having bullied others at school at least two or three times in the previous couple of months, by gender



Note: Shaded markers represent statistically significant linear trends across family affluence groups ('low', 'medium' and 'high') at  $p < 0.05$ . Non-shaded markers represent no statistically significant linear trend across family affluence groups at  $p < 0.05$ . 0 mean less than  $\pm 0.5$ .

a) The Eurozone average excludes Belgium, and the OECD-25 and EU averages exclude Belgium and the United Kingdom

c) The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Sources: [Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\) study 2013/14, accessed through the European Health Information Gateway](#)

#### Comparability and data issues

Self-reported data on bullying others and being the victim of bullying are taken from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey (HBSC) 20013/14. The last data collection included all OECD countries except Australia, Chile, Japan, Korea, Mexico and New Zealand, Turkey and the United States, although data for Belgium and the United Kingdom are published only after disaggregation by region – for Belgium, data are published separately for Flanders and for the French-speaking regions (Wallonia and Brussels), while for the United Kingdom data are published separately for England, Scotland and Wales (data for Northern Ireland is not included). Sample sizes do vary across countries (the smallest among the OECD countries is in Norway, where the total number of respondents is 3072, and the largest is in Canada, with 12931) but in most OECD countries the sample totals somewhere between 4000 and 6000 respondents.

The HBSC survey is a confidential survey of young people, and data may be subject to response bias. Sample selection methods differ across countries, and because sample sizes are generally reasonably similar across countries and population sizes differ markedly, the potential for error in sample-representativeness is much larger in, for example, Germany than in the Netherlands.

*Sources and further reading:* Inchley, J. *et al.* (2016). Growing up unequal: gender and socioeconomic differences in young people's health and well-being. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2013/2014 study. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen.