



Unequal use of childcare services in the EU

**OECD/Unicef child well-being consultation
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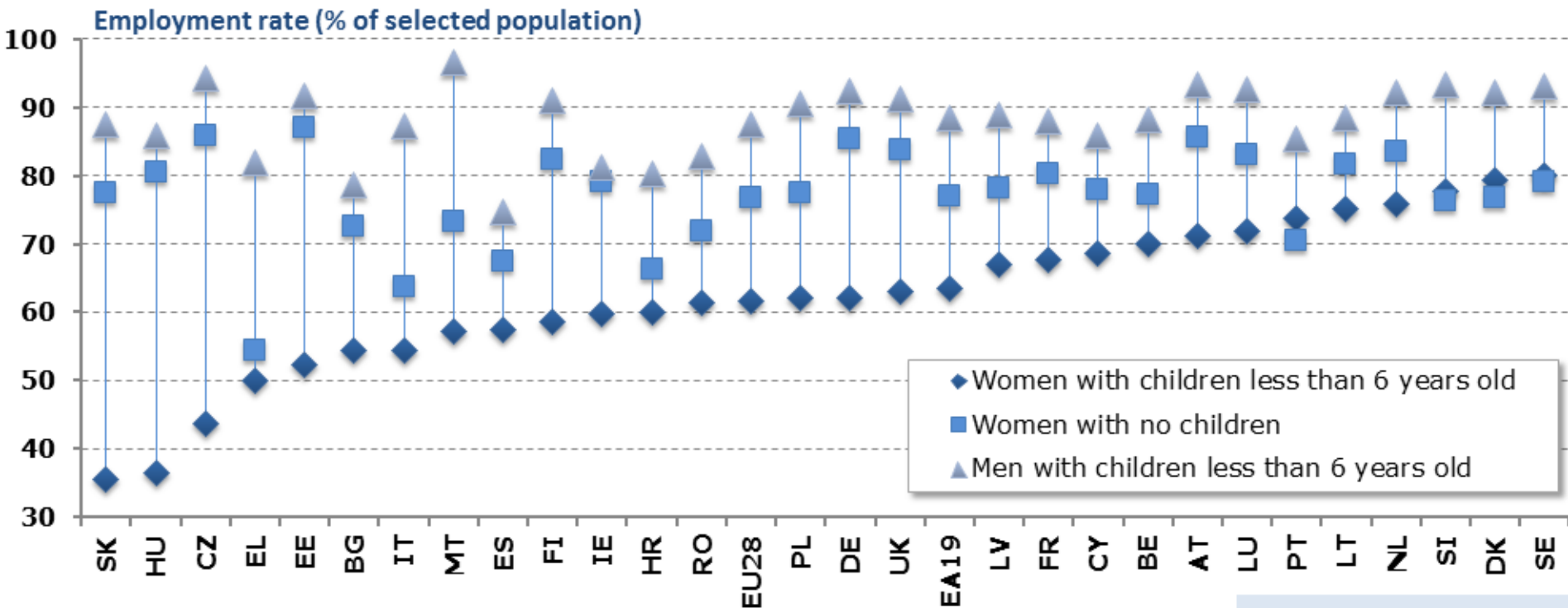
EU context

- *Europe 2020*
 - **75% employment rate**
 - **Reduction in poverty and social exclusion**
 - **Reduction in school drop-outs**
- *Barcelona targets on ECEC*
 - **33% of children below 3 years old**
 - **90% of children above 3 years old**
- *Social Investment and Recommendation on Investing in Children*
- *Gender equality*
- *Country-specific recommendations*

Reasons for childcare

- 1. Childcare enables parents to work, and**
- 2. Childcare provides children with stimulating environment to develop various psychosocial and cognitive skills**

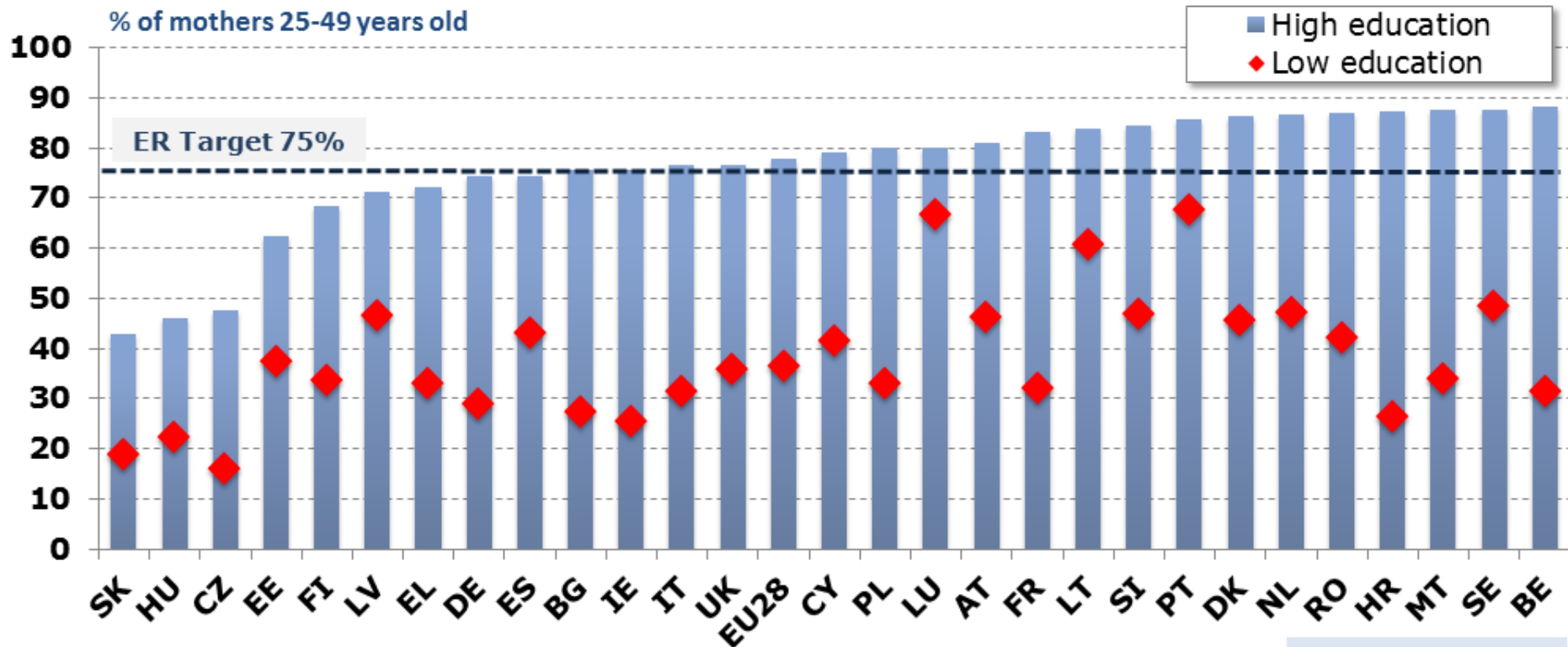
Mothers' employment rate compared to other women and fathers (people aged 25-49 years), 2013.



Source: Eurostat, LFS

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Employment rate of mothers by education level, 2014



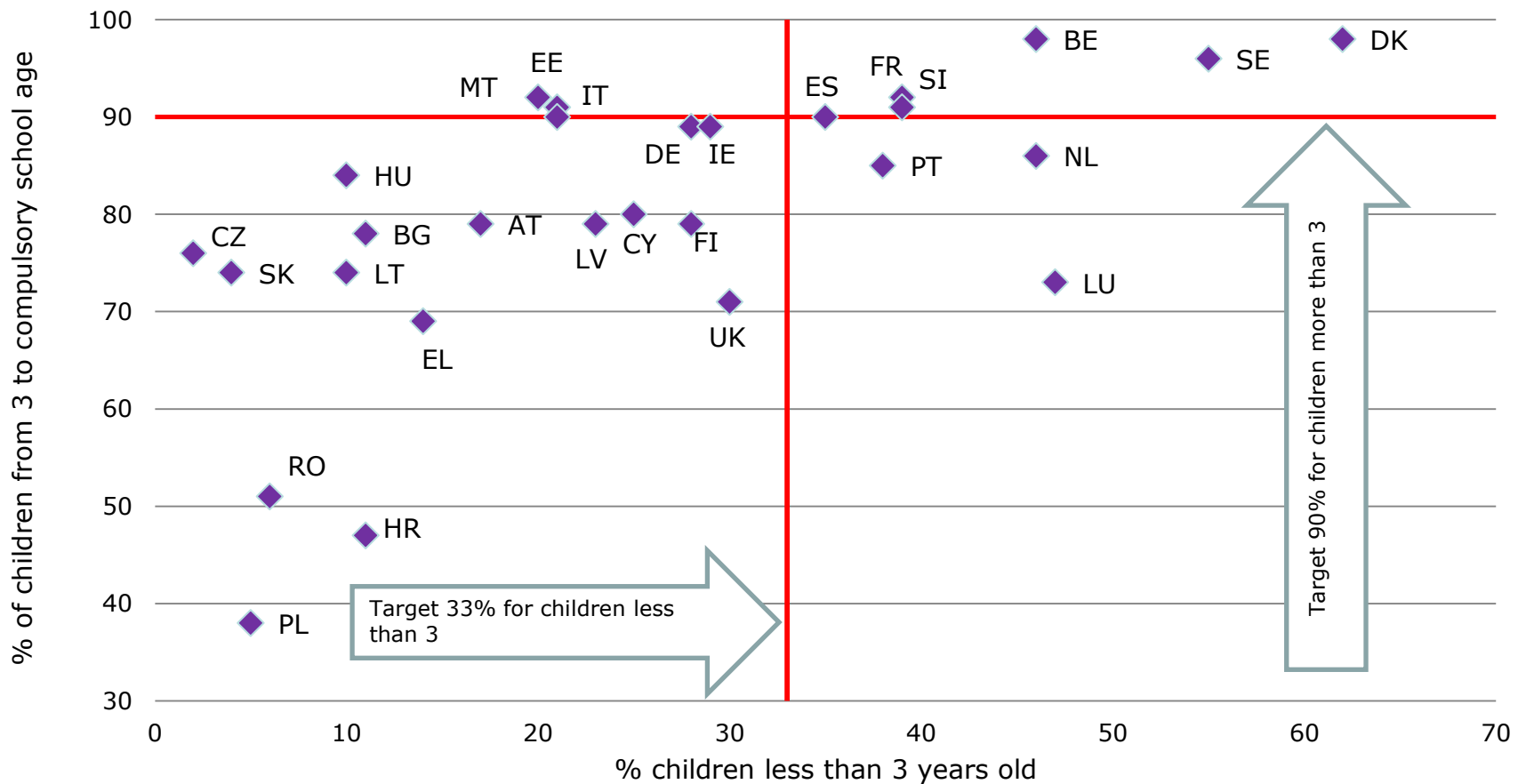
Source: Eurostat, LFS [lfst_hheredch], Lithuania refers to 2009 data

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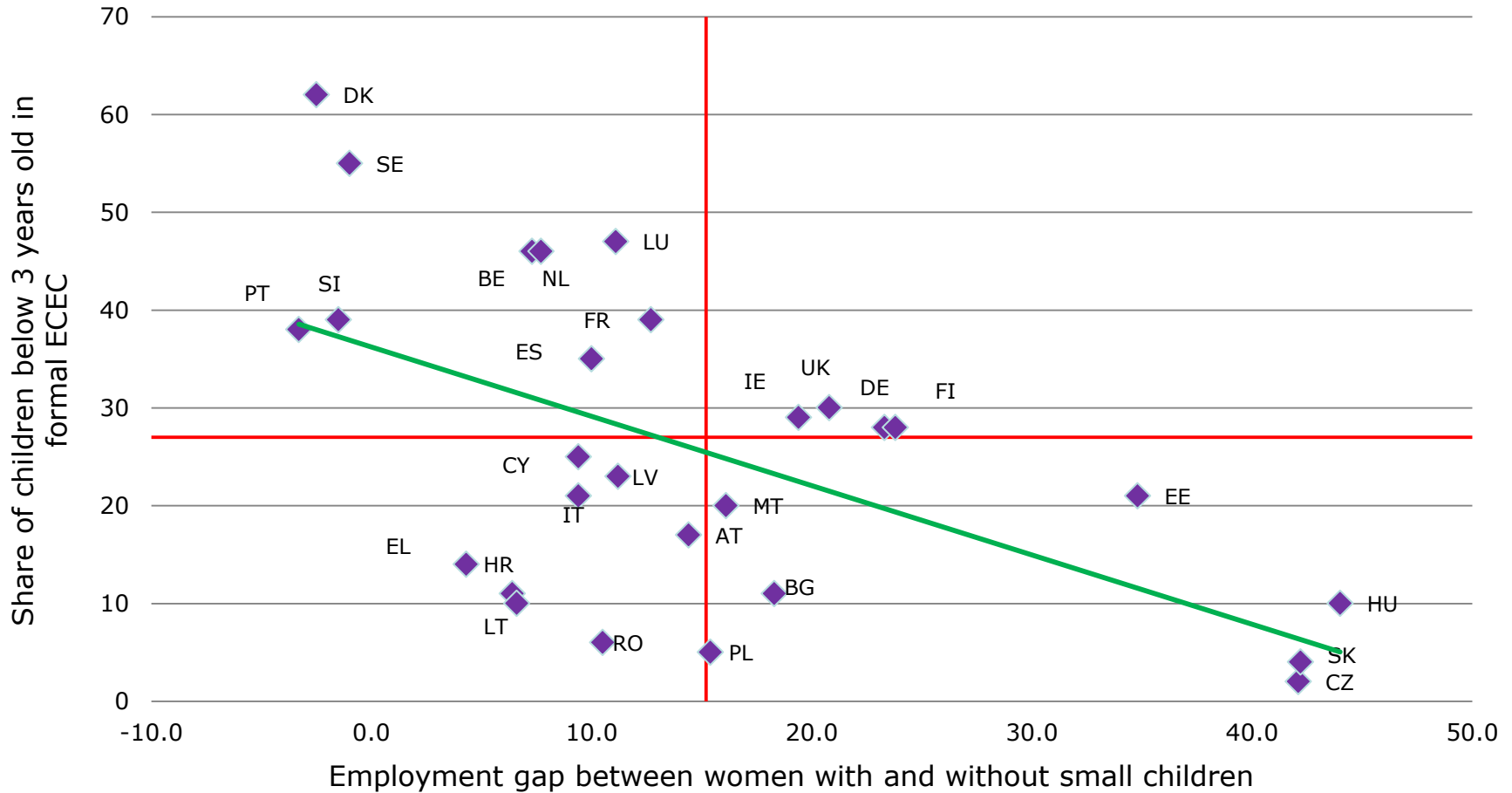
Data

- **EU-SILC**
 - Education at pre-school
 - Childcare at centre-based services
 - Childcare at day care centre
 - Professional child-minders
- **EU-SILC 2016 ad hoc module**
 - Unmet needs for childcare
 - Affordability of services

Achieving the Barcelona targets of childcare



Use of childcare and mothers' work



More evidence needed: What is the relationship between the use of childcare services and child well-being?

Two dimensions:

1. Equal *access* to services

- Parents' employment

2. Equal *use* of services

- Social investment

Equal access to ECEC services

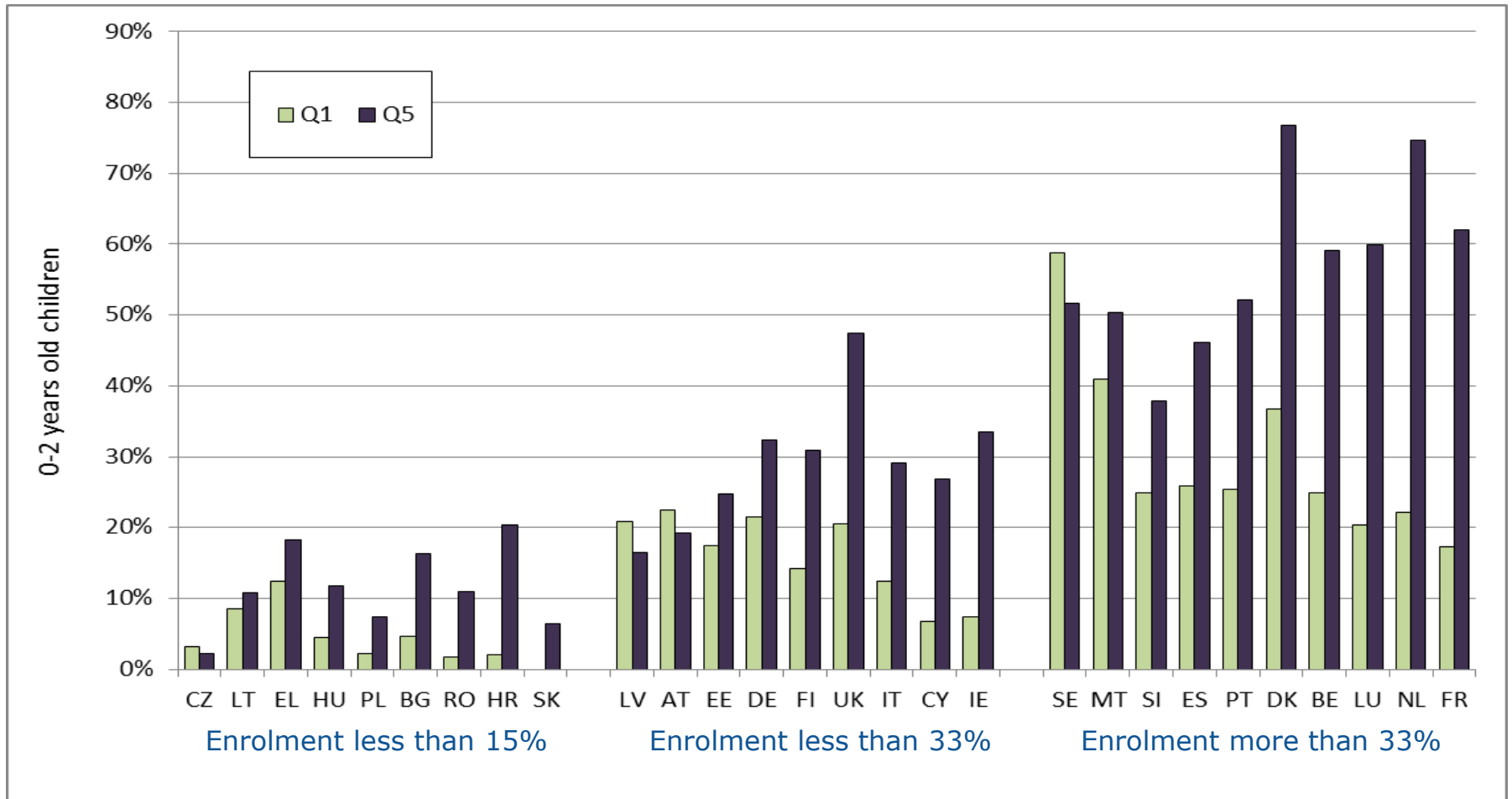
- **Availability**
- **Affordability**
- **Good quality**

→ Better work incentives, improved family income and living standards, strengthening gender equality

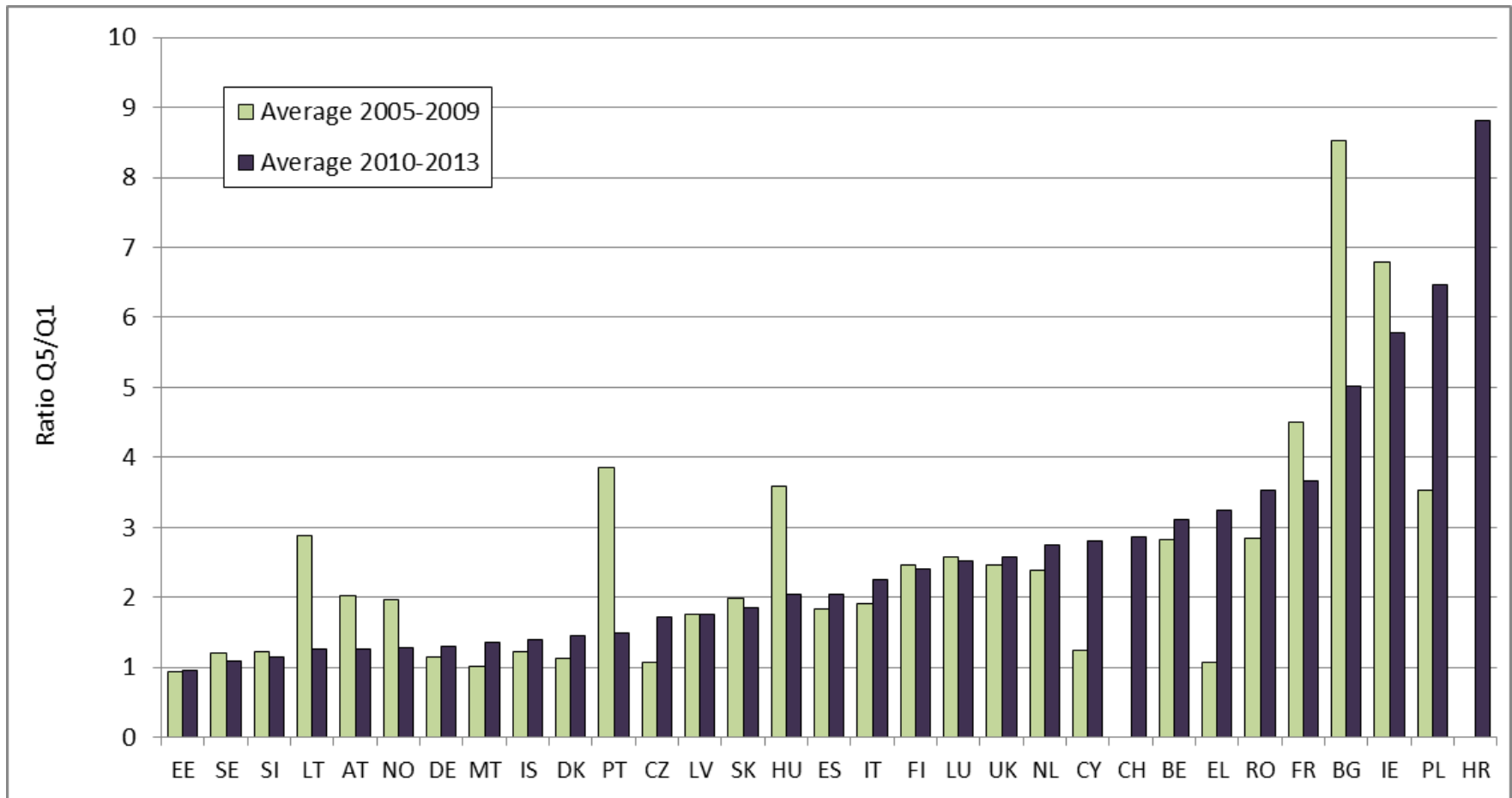
Equal use of ECEC services

- **High overall participation**
- **Distribution of use**
 - To be interpreted together with leave arrangements and other cash benefits as well as labour market options
 - Breaking the cycle of disadvantage, focus on children's rights

Unequal use of childcare (2013)



Recent changes in equality of use



Alternatives to childcare

- *Care allowance*
- *Family care and other informal care*
- *Subsidies for purchasing care services*

- *What implications "freedom to choose" can have?*

Conclusions: analytical issues

- *What obstacles there are to use ECEC?*
- *How to improve access of low SES children?*
- *Solving the chicken-and-egg problem*
- *What is the causal relationship between childcare use and income? And how do these relate to child well-being and development?*
- *Cost-effectiveness of childcare policies, how to study them (RCTs, quasi-experimental designs)*

Conclusions: data issues

- *Private financial cost of childcare for parents*
- *Other costs related to childcare (opportunity cost)*
- *Quality of childcare*
- *Well-being of children in childcare*

Conclusion: policy issues

- *Can there be conflicts between children's interests and parent's work?*
- *How to solve these potential conflicts?*
- *How to assure that more spending in ECEC increases participation of children from low SES?*

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