



## *COMPARATIVE REPORT OF COUNTRY FINDINGS*

### *FH JOANNEUM, Austria*

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## Content

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<i>Introduction</i> .....	3
1.1 <i>Leadership</i> .....	4
1.2 <i>Willingness to explore</i> .....	5
1.3 <i>Ability to Plan</i> .....	6
1.4 <i>Ability to take decisions</i> .....	7
1.5 <i>Ability to Prioritize</i> .....	8
1.6 <i>Creativity</i> .....	9
1.7 <i>Taking Initiative</i> .....	10
1.8 <i>Digital Competences</i> .....	11
1.9 <i>Competitiveness</i> .....	12
1.10 <i>Ability to think critically</i> .....	13
1.11 <i>Expert Opinion</i> .....	14
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	14

## ***Introduction***

The “I SEE YOU” project aims to develop the entrepreneurship skills and competences of unemployed young people from seven European countries (Austria, Ireland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom), who have an interest in creating their own social business and have an affinity for IT – one of the most important business sectors in the EU.

### **Main objectives of the I SEE YOU project:**

- To promote entrepreneurship education among unemployed youth, especially in countries with a high youth unemployment rate, which will lead to new business creation and employability and ultimately assist them in building a future for themselves
- To create a transnational European identity among participating young people to embrace active citizenship and provide a new perspective
- To facilitate innovative learning practices in entrepreneurship education by developing and implementing trainings, workshops and other approaches to increase the labor market relevance of young people

In this report, a summary of all country reports is provided. As diverse as the countries are that are participating in this project, are the results obtained in each report. However, it was necessary to reach a comparison point among all the different country reports that were provided.

For this, each of the 10 key competences were revised in 4 common aspects:

- Value in society
- Competence being taught in Education
- Differences in terms of Gender
- Extent of Competence in Young Entrepreneurs

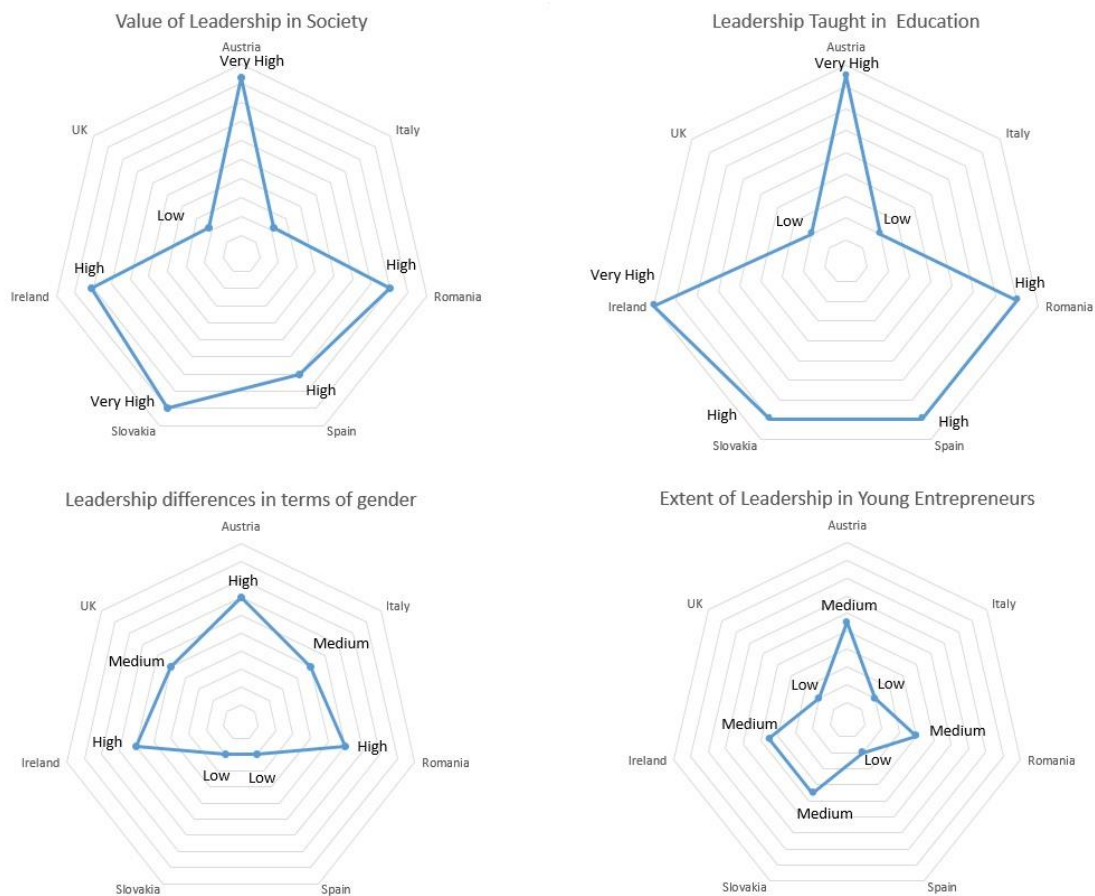
In order to provide a visual comparison of these aspects, each aspect was evaluated per country, taking into consideration the information provided by each report within a 5 item scale (very low, low, medium, high, and very high). With this scaling done, it was possible to graph all countries in a spider graph at the same level and evaluate the perceptions regarding these issues.

Analysis and comparison of the results of all countries were provided after each graph for the 10 key competences. To include all aspects in the summary, the conclusions drawn from the entrepreneurship experts contacted in each country, are summarized and the main 5 key competences common in all countries lacking in young people are highlighted.

Finally, general conclusions of the report analysis are provided.

## Summary of Key Competences

### 1.1 Leadership



For the first key competence, 4 aspects were selected to represent how leadership varies within the participating countries. Within most of the countries, leadership is valued at a high or medium level, being clear that for both England and Italy it is not relevant in terms of society, education and entrepreneurs.

Most countries consider leadership as something relevant to be delivered through education, integrating this into the curriculum of their students from a young age and fostering entrepreneurship programs and support networks. However, leadership tends to differ strongly in terms of gender for most countries, as most of the entrepreneurs are male and with a background of higher education in some cases. Otherwise, they tend to have some sort of entrepreneurial formation that may differ broadly from country to country, from small workshops to specialized courses and entrepreneurial support.

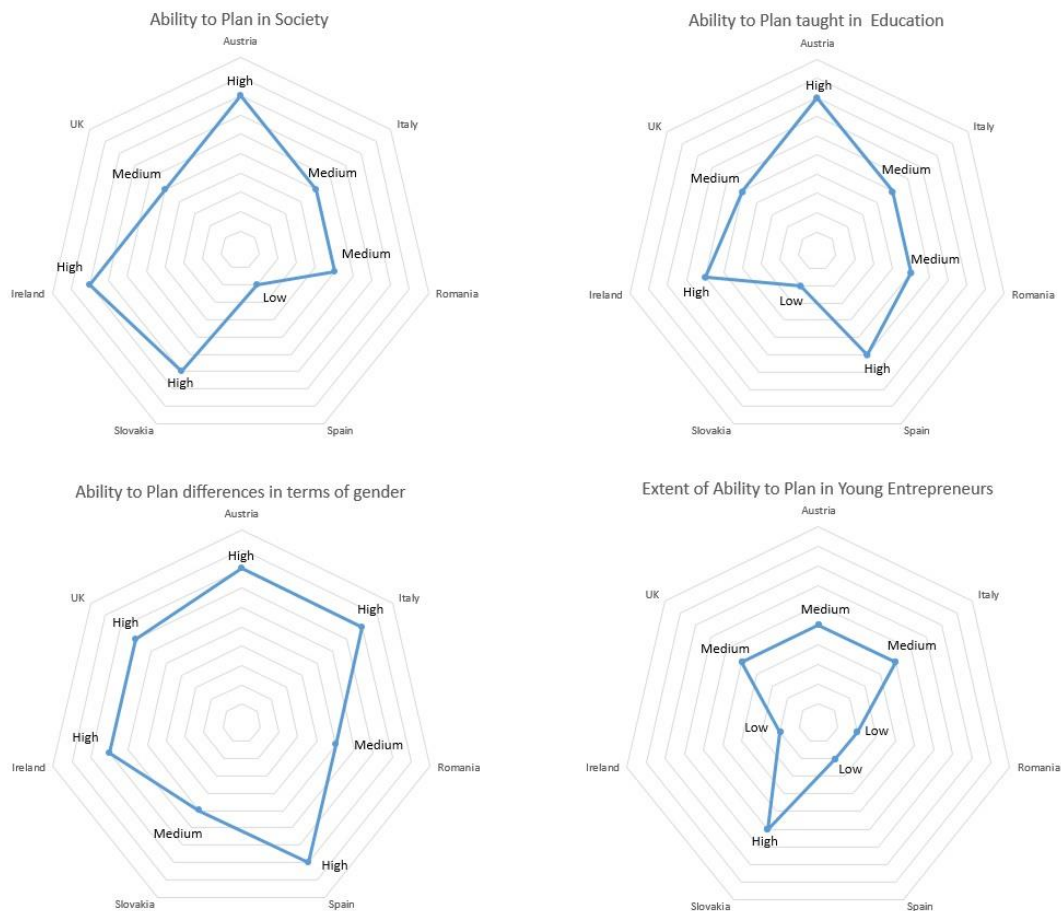
Young entrepreneurs seem to be well respected in all the studied countries, however, not every country has a similar level of “willingness” in the entrepreneurial participation. It seems that although it is well respected, it is still considered as “high risk” to opt for an entrepreneur life. Therefore, the leadership of the young entrepreneurs, although it is highly supported by several of the mentioned nations, it is considered low or medium, similar to the level of actual entrepreneurs within these countries.

## 1.2 Willingness to explore



For the competence “Willingness to Explore”, different approaches are visible. For innovative nations like Austria and Slovakia, it is highly important to explore, as part of the search for innovation. For the UK and Ireland exploring has an importance attached, as it is considered to be “well-embedded” in Ireland and considered in the UK, but not as relevant as in the former mentioned nations. For Italy, Romania and Spain, it is considered low, as for Italians, security is more relevant. In the case of Romanians, they are not explorers culturally, for which this is considered low. The “Willingness to Explore” is considered as part of the education in most of the nations. Here it is important to highlight that, although Slovakia ranked high in the previous indicator, here is considered low, as there is no evidence of this factor within their educational programs and just as elective courses, similar is the case of Romania for this aspect. In the case of Austria and Spain, both countries have developed programs to teach this competence, the first due to its innovative approach, the latter in response to the crisis. UK and Ireland rank again medium, as there is some work done, but not as thorough as in the case of Austria and Spain. In terms of gender, the willingness to explore is differentiated again, in relation to cultural background and openness of society, varying from low to high, in relation to entrepreneur gender percentage and society. Finally, the willingness to explore of young entrepreneurs is also related to security factors (low for Spain and Ireland), medium for Austria and Romania, and high for UK, Slovakia and Italy. This is also in relation with the variable support provided by local institutions for young entrepreneurs.

### 1.3 Ability to Plan

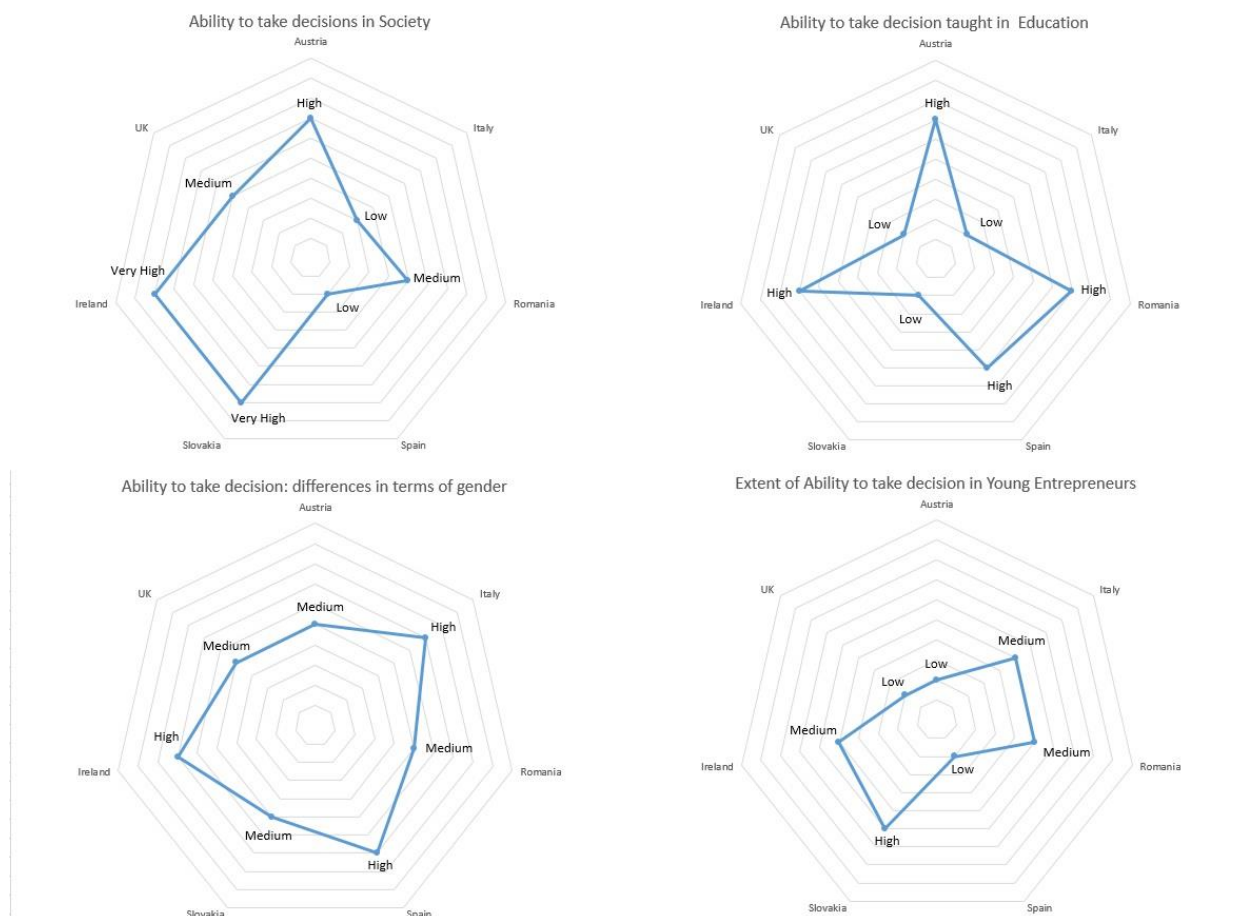


In the case of the competence “Ability to Plan”, countries differ broadly in the perception of planning. Countries like Austria, Ireland and Slovakia appreciate the competence as they perceive, that in order to be a good entrepreneur, you have to be good at planning. In the case of UK, Italy and Romania, planning is relevant for entrepreneurs, but not as much in a societal context. Romanians for instance prefer immediate results rather than planning something at a “longer term”. In the case of Spain, planning is not valued within the society. In education, most countries have either a medium or high level of integration of this key competence in their educational systems and training offers. For the ones that have a high level (Spain, Austria, Ireland), established methods and programs are provided to support the learning of this competence, and for the ones in medium level (UK, Italy and Romania), there is the realization of a need to integrate the competence, therefore programs are being changed and courses are being added to provide this competence. Only Slovakia appears low in this aspect, as no reference is given regarding the integration of this key competence in education.

In terms of gender, most countries show a high level of difference between the genders and the ability to plan. In most countries, men are seen as better planners, except Italy, where women take this part. Slovakia and Romania are ranked in the middle, as planning is not so integrated in their culture. Finally, for young entrepreneurs, the ability to plan is not so commonly seen, as most countries ranked either medium or low, except for Slovakia, where entrepreneurs plan more their businesses and are willing to interact more with other entrepreneurs.



## 1.4 Ability to take decisions



The competence “Ability to take decisions” for the selected countries is congruent with the prior competences and their results. In society, countries such as Ireland, Slovakia and Austria consider it is important to take decisions as part of their societal culture and structure. For Romania and UK, taking decisions is relevant individually but not so much at a societal level. Finally, for Italy and Spain, the fear of failure and the lack of decision makes this competence irrelevant for their society. Within the educational system, there is a clear difference among the countries, creating two groups. The first one encourages and has integrated the development of this competence in their educational programs and trainings, such as Austria, Romania, Spain and Ireland. The second group has no mention of this competence in their education (Italy, Slovakia and UK). In the case of gender, some countries express not so many differences among males and females for taking decisions, such as Austria, Romania, Slovakia and UK.

However, there is also the group of countries that differ in a broader manner regarding gender differences, where in some cases males have more power (most common) and in other females rule. For the first is the case of Spain and Ireland, for the latter, Italian women take better decisions. Finally, due to the fear of failure, young entrepreneurs have low or medium level of ability for decision making in most cases. Only Slovakia stands out, as their young entrepreneurs are considered to be more ambitious and risk takers than the other countries.

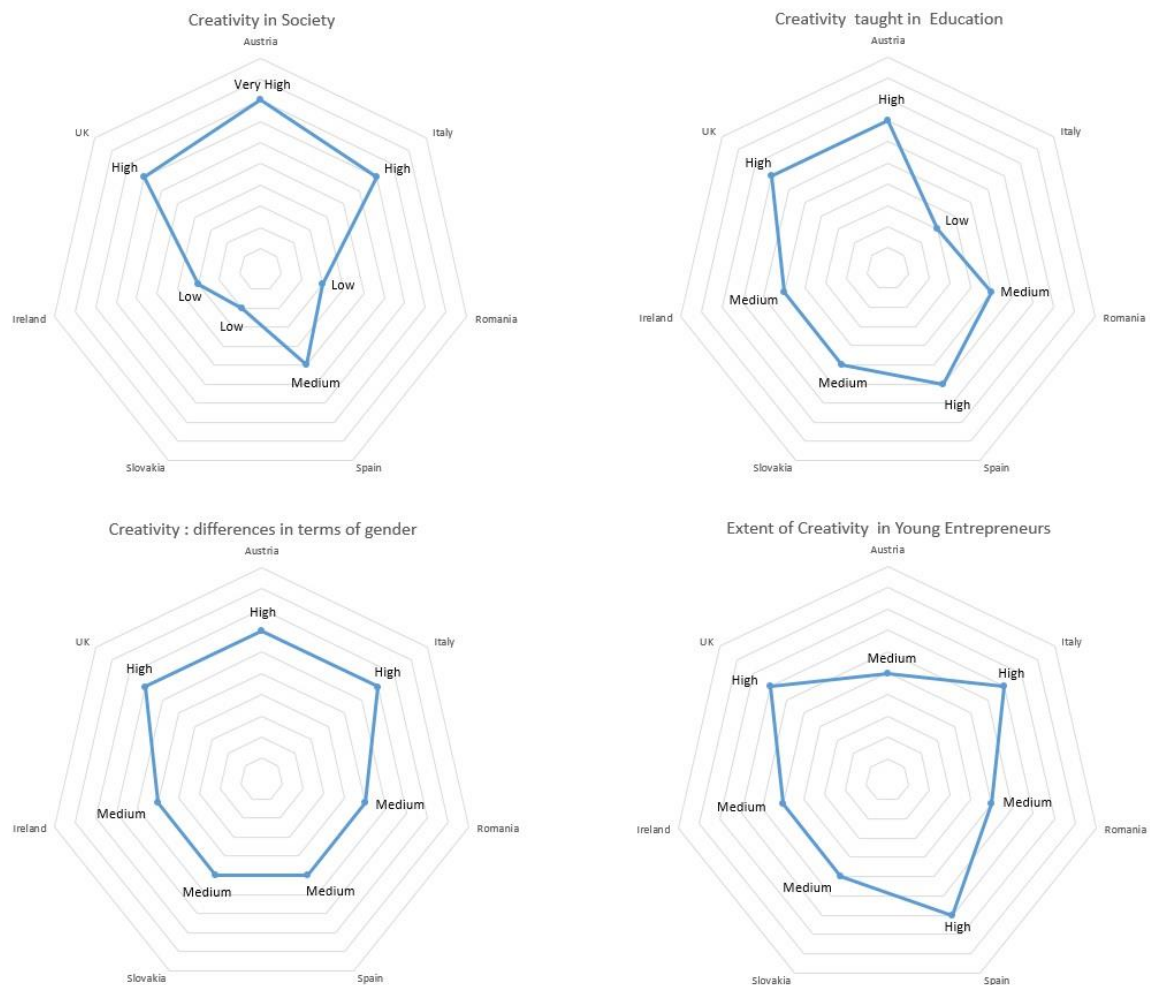
## 1.5 Ability to Prioritize



The competence “Ability to Prioritize” has different perceptions for each aspect in the study. In the case of the societal vision, the competence is seen as fairly important in most of the studied countries. Austria and Ireland consider it highly relevant among society to prioritize their actions, the rest of the countries is in the middle with this competence, as it depends mostly on the value that society gives to planning (which is related to prioritize) and to the future. Slovaks are low in this, even though they can plan, they have issues prioritizing and that is not something that is integrated in their society. Regarding this competence and education, to prioritize is something that is integrated in most of the educational systems. In Slovakia, it is a little bit higher due to compulsory courses in VET education. However, for countries like Italy and UK, no evidence of support on learning to prioritize was found. In terms of gender, we can see that there are some evident differences among genders in countries like Italy, Ireland and UK, where there is still some gender-task preference. In the first case, Italian women prioritize better than men, while in the two other cases, men are considered to be better at prioritization. For the other countries, there is mostly equality in terms of gender performance, hence the medium level of the indicator. Lastly, this ability for young entrepreneurs is somewhat diverse. Romanians rank low as they do not plan long-term. The rest is mostly medium, as their prioritization skills are still in development, except for Slovaks, who are more engaged and motivated to learn how to prioritize in a better way.

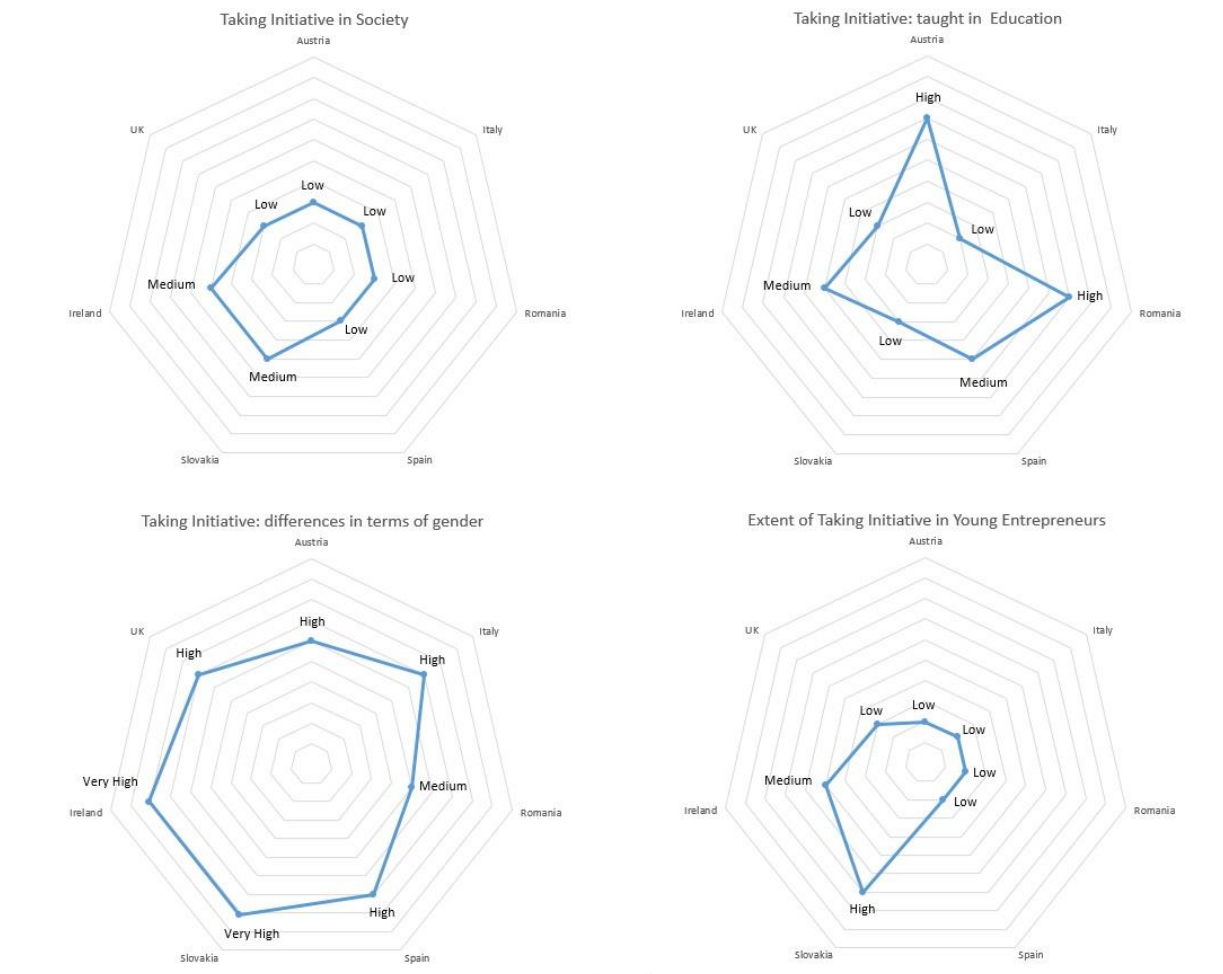


## 1.6 Creativity



For the competence “Creativity”, there is a marked difference in the appreciation given by the countries’ societies. Austria, UK and Italy reckon creativity as something important inside their society and culture, as it has to do with the development of their country, as well as with the image of their people (in the case of Italians that boast of being creative). Spain is embracing now creativity, as part of the changes that they had done in their education system and new industries that are being developed. Romania, Slovakia and Ireland do not give so much value to creativity. In education, we can see that countries such as Austria, UK and Spain are promoting the teaching of this competence, in the medium ranked nations, the competence is taught at some level and finally in the low ranked nation (Italy), it is taught but at a very low level. In terms of gender, we can appreciate two groups, the first one with no gender differences, ranking medium in this aspect (Ireland, Slovakia, Spain and Romania), and the other with gender differences, in which in some cases, one gender is considered stronger than the other, like for Austria and UK, males are considered more creative. For Italy the case is that women are reprimanded if they do not follow the common social roles, therefore the gender difference. Lastly, in the case of young entrepreneurs, and consistently with the education, higher creativity relates to those countries with better support, however, medium ranked countries also deliver certain level of creativity in their entrepreneurial propositions, but not as often as the high level countries.

## 1.7 Taking Initiative



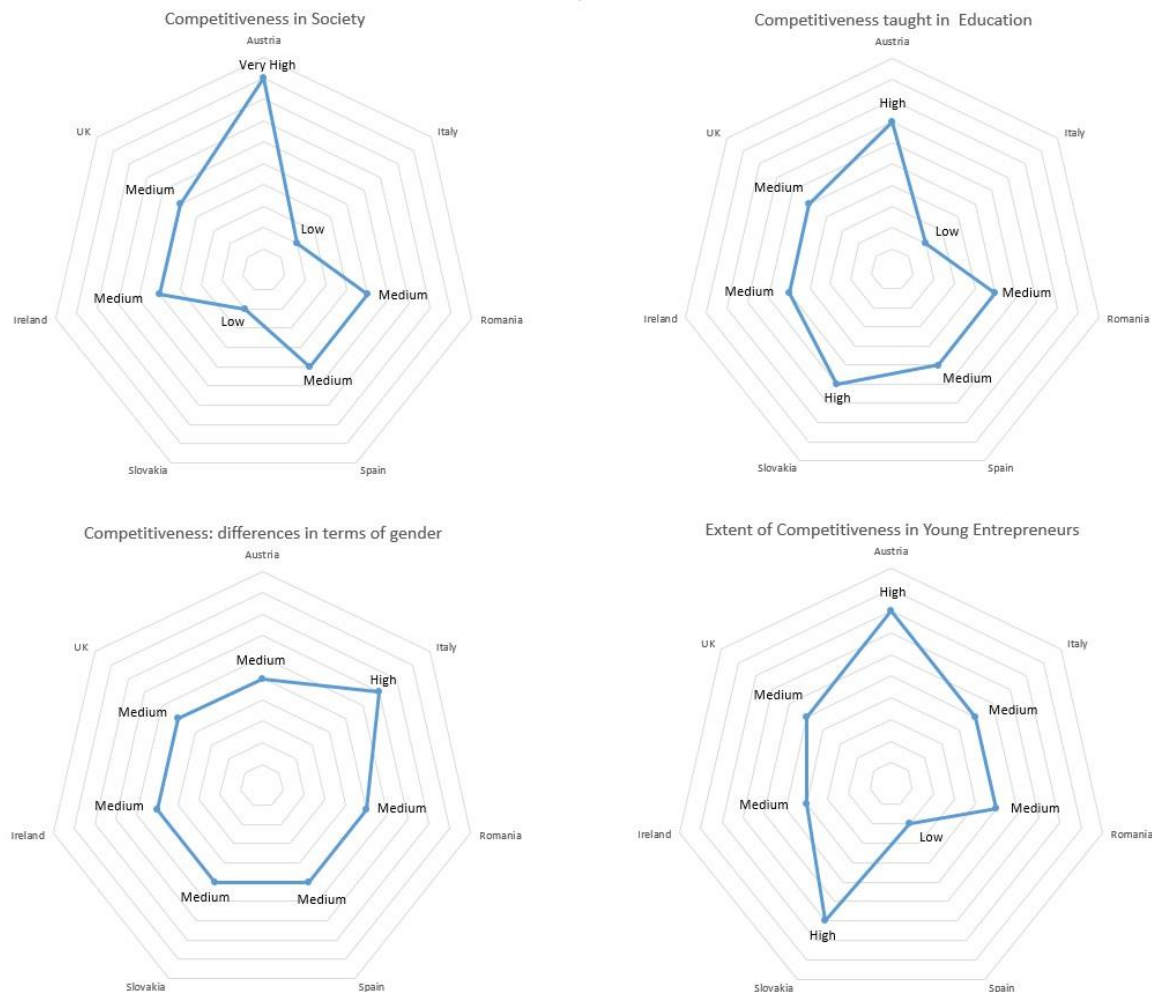
For the competence “Taking Initiative”, the value that society gives for this competence is considered in most cases low, as the motivations to take initiative are more personal. In the case of Slovakia and Ireland, as there is a better perception of entrepreneurship, there is a better relation to “taking initiative”. In the case of education, the competence is taught in many educational systems at a high and medium level, Austria and Romania have it integrated as part of their curriculum, both in school and VET education. Same happens with Spain and Ireland, but in more recent times. The countries marked as low (Italy, Slovakia and UK) do not have this competence integrated in their educational system or at a very low level. In terms of gender, most countries have differences regarding how genders are performing in this competence. In Austria, UK and Spain, males are perceived as better for this competence, and in Italy, women are discriminated if they are “too entrepreneurial”, hence, the gender difference. For the cases of Ireland and Slovakia, very strong differences are seen. In Ireland, men are strongly perceived as better entrepreneurs than women and few women trust their entrepreneurial capabilities. In Slovakia, men take the initiative up to two times more than women. Finally, the extent of the competence in young entrepreneurs is considered low in most cases, due to the lack of findings and in the case of Ireland, there is some level of initiative taking, but not as high as in Slovakia, where entrepreneurial behavior is high.

## 1.8 Digital Competences



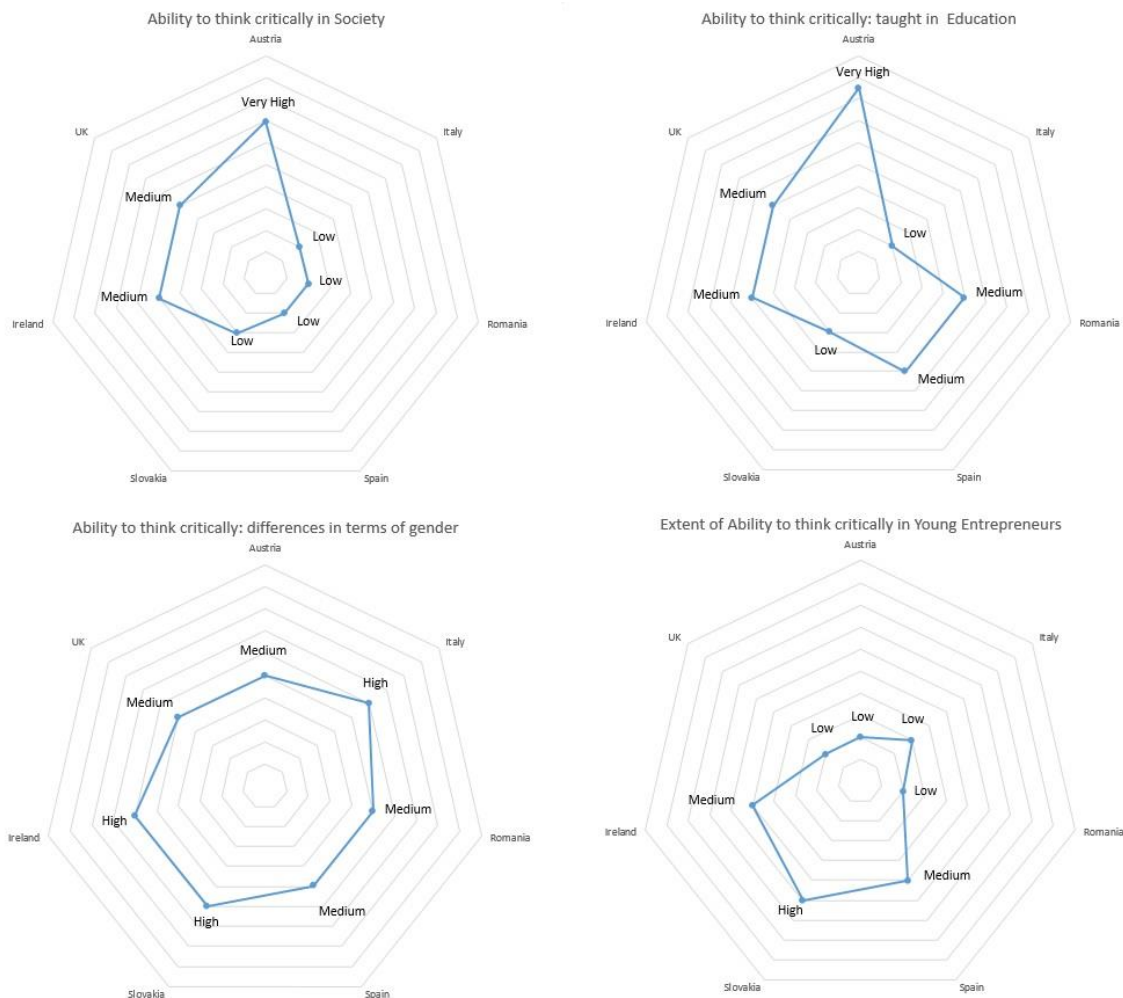
In the case of the “Digital Competences”, there is a medium to high level of importance of these competences in society. Countries like Austria, Romania, Slovakia and Ireland see digital competences as an important factor for the development of their society and thus, give a higher value. For Italy, Spain and UK, there is the conception that the competence is relevant, but less strong than the former countries. In education, digital competences are considered relevant for the development of the students, this is integrated at a high level in Austria, Slovakia and Ireland. UK, Romania, Spain have also some programs in relation with digital competences but at a lower degree. In the Italian case, there is little information about this integration to education. Gender differences are in a high and very high levels for this competence. Especially in Italy, where most males take the roles related to this competence. It is similar for most countries, except for Spain and Slovakia, where there is a better leverage of the competence level between males and females. Lastly, in the case of the extent of digital competences in young entrepreneurs, there are different results. Romania and UK score high, as entrepreneurs use this competence intensively. Other countries score medium, as it depends more on the entrepreneur and its motivation, in how much he/she uses the competence. Finally, for Spain, this competence is low, as no specifics could be found for this case.

## 1.9 Competitiveness



In regards to the “Competitiveness”, societal views on this competence are different. Austria is the country that highlights competitiveness, as an innovative nation, and values greatly this competence. The rest of the countries rank middle mostly, as the competence is relevant, but not as much as other competences. Italy and Slovakia rank low, as no evidence regarding the importance of this competence for its society could be found. In education, this competence is integrated in most of the educational programs at a European wide level. This competence is especially strong in Austrian and Slovakian education. Italy is the exception, showing low participation of this competence in its program. For gender differences, one can find that besides Italy, the rest of the countries have a fairly similar attitude regarding gender and the competence. It is then irrelevant the gender for this competence. Finally, competitiveness in relation with young entrepreneurs is mostly in a middle level, due to the risk factor and the experience level of the entrepreneurs, being competitive is a must to survive. In the case of Austria, it is high thanks to the strong entrepreneurial and business environment. For Spain it is low due to the fact that no relevant information was found in relation with this factor and the entrepreneurs.

### 1.10 Ability to think critically



For the competence “Ability to think critically”, societal opinions differ from country to country. In Austria, it is important to be able to think critically, as part of the innovative and creative approach of the country. Also in the UK and Ireland, this is important, but on a lower level. In the other countries, either this competence is not relevant, or no information was found, for which they were marked low. In education, Austria stands again as the most concerned country in teaching this competence. Romania, UK, Spain and Ireland have certain degree of integration of this competence into their educational offering, while Italy and Slovakia do not promote the development of this competence. In terms of gender, half of the group has no gender differences for the competence (namely Austria, Spain and Romania), and the other half is affected by strong gender differences like Italy, Slovakia and Ireland. Here most of the time, males lead the competence. Finally, in the case of young entrepreneurs, this competence is not widely spread, quite the opposite. Most of the countries rank low, which means that entrepreneurs from the UK, Austria, Italy and Romania are not so encouraged to use this competence. For Spain and Ireland, there are some effects due to recent changes in relation with the competence and lastly, Slovakia motivates to create a unique offering, in order to survive in the limited marketplace.



### 1.11 Expert Opinion

For each of the country reports, the national entrepreneurship experts were asked to answer a standardized set of questions to determine the practical application of the key competences. The aim was to discover the lacking competences that should be improved in the country.

Additionally, the theoretical input from the desk research was entered into a standardized weighting and ranking table, in order to sort the competences according to importance. In order to rank the competences, the quality of the used sources, as well as their relevance and actuality of the sources were considered.

After revising all reports and expert opinions, all the consulted experts agreed on the following 5 “lacking competences” that need to be improved in all participating countries:

1. Ability to prioritize
2. Ability to take decisions
3. Ability to take initiative
4. Critical Thinking
5. Willingness to Explore

After the previous summary of each of the key competences, it is clear that the experts are delivering an informed opinion, which reflects on the graphs for each of the key competences indicated as “lacking”. In each of these, there is a cluster of “low” evaluations, as well as certain countries that repeat themselves throughout the analysis of the key competences.

Working on these lacking key competences will enhance the possibilities of each of these countries of improving the potential of entrepreneurship in youth and increase the competitiveness of the country as a whole.

## Conclusion

To summarize, the “Country Reports” allow to have a look inside each entrepreneurial situation for each of the participating countries. It is important to highlight that the competences studied foster entrepreneurship, and that is key that each of the countries reach a proper level for these competences. Both the experts opinion and the research analysis are congruent in delivering a group of competences that should be improved, as they are seen as lacking, which reflects on their ranking throughout the graphic evaluation done for the 4 main aspects (in society, education, gender differences, young entrepreneurs). These 5 lacking competences should be the key of future strategies and program development to foster social entrepreneurship and help the development of young entrepreneurs.