



**IRAAL**

Cumann na Teangeolaíochta Feidhmi  
Irish Association for Applied Linguistics

# Identifying Future Skills Needs: issues and challenges for languages

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**FÁS**

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Expert Group on  
**Future Skills Needs**



# **PRESENTATION OUTLINE**

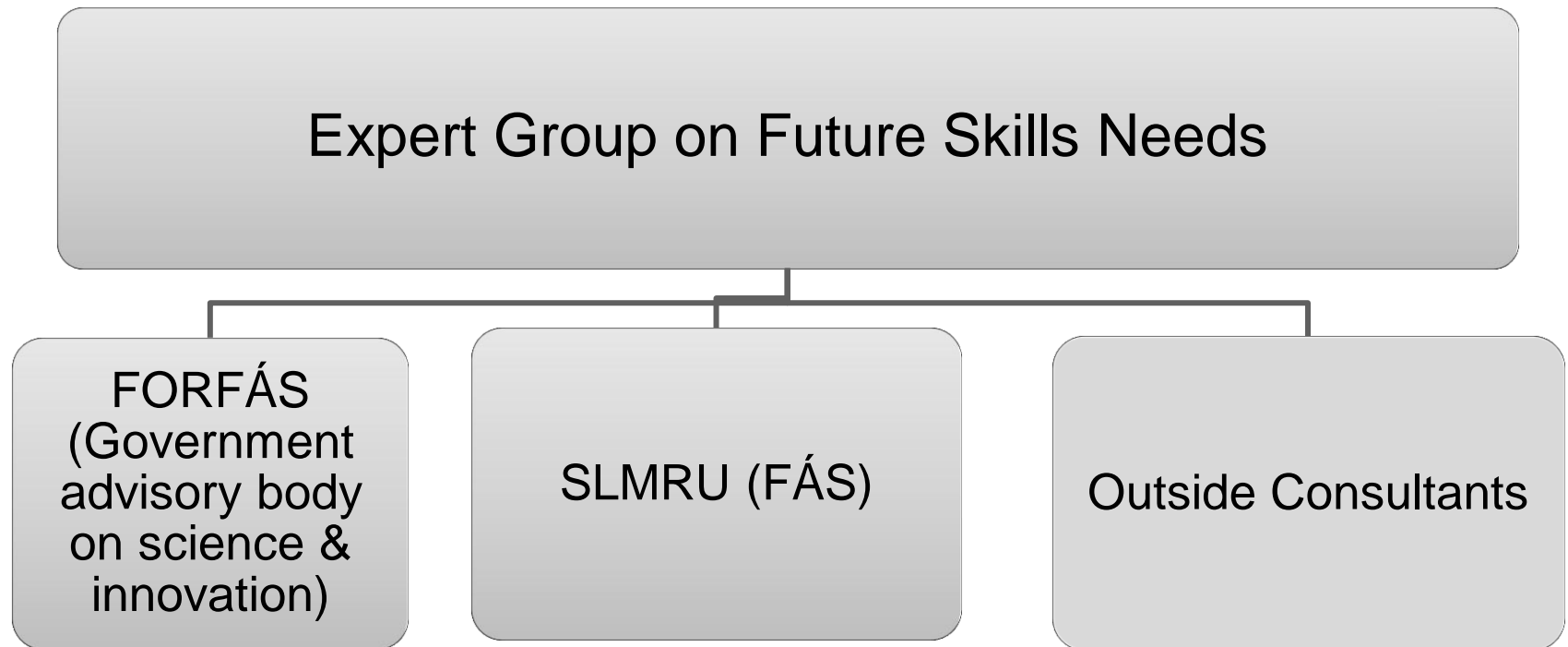
**Background**

**Examples of what the data tells us**

**Languages – what we know**

**Issues & challenges that arise in identifying language skills needs in Ireland's labour market**

# BACKGROUND: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK



# **DATA SOURCES**

**Central Statistics Office (Census data; QNHS data)**

**Education Providers**

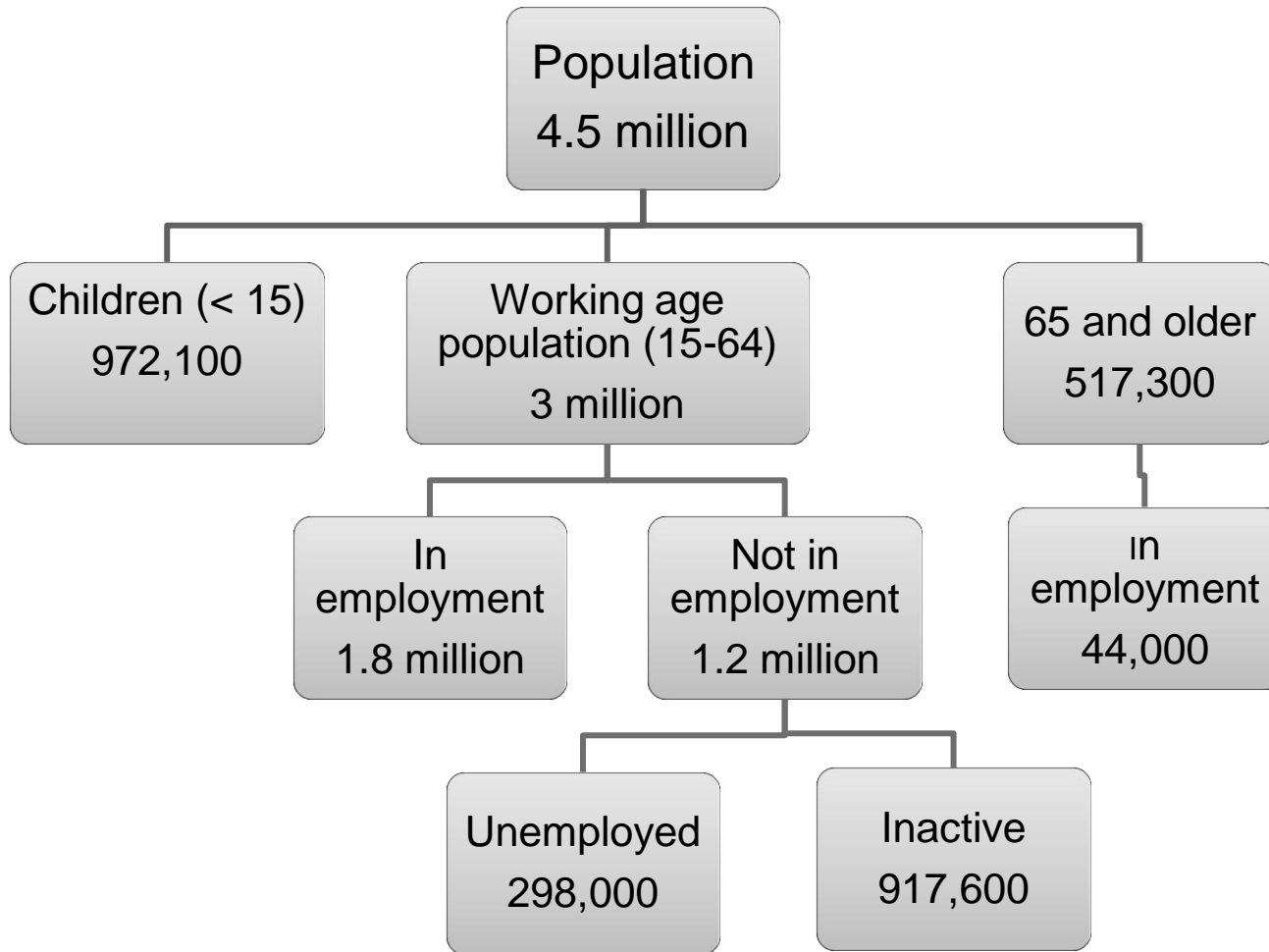
**Job Vacancy Data**

**ESRI/FAS Occupational Forecasts**

**Other**

- Immigration data
- Announcements in media (jobs, possible future expansion)
- SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey

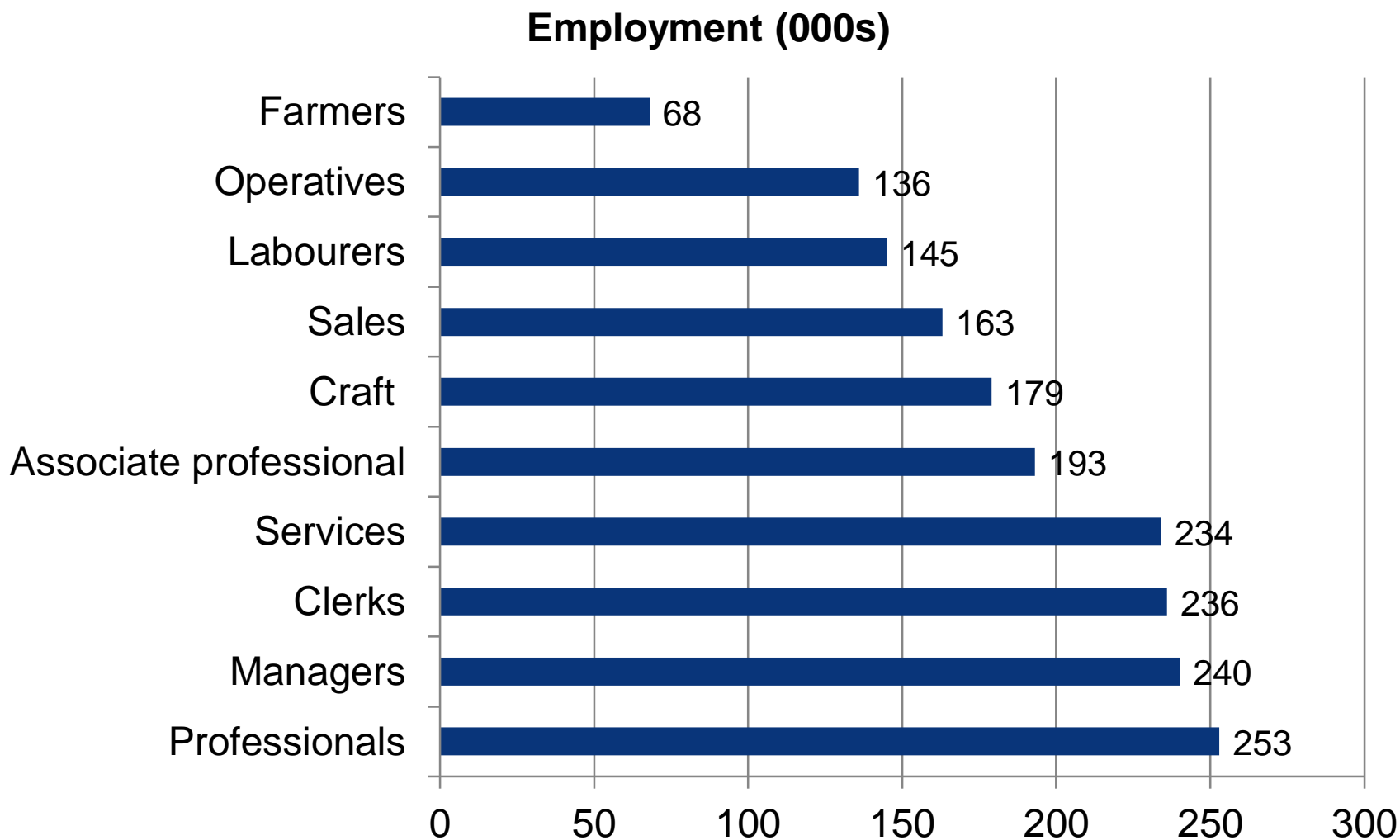
# EXAMPLE: POPULATION BY AGE AND LABOUR STATUS, QUARTER 4 2010



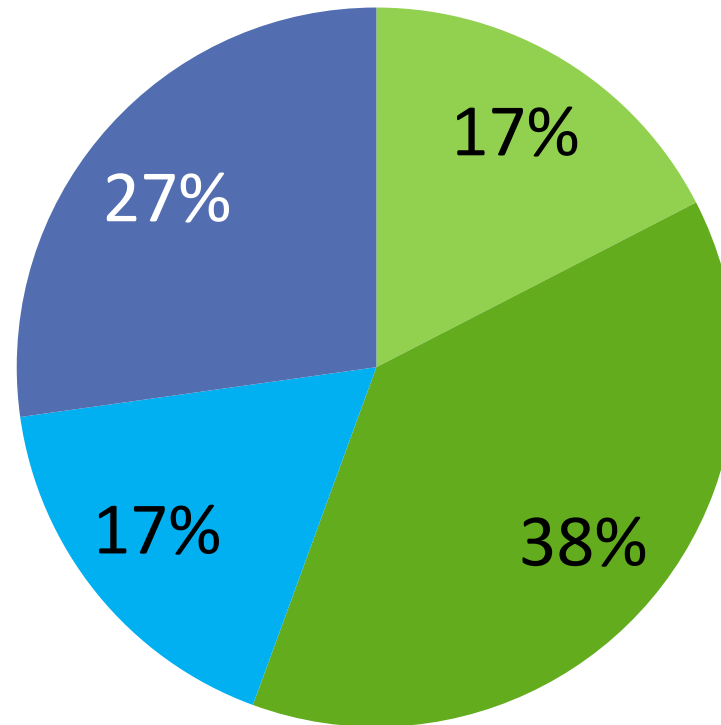
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (QNHS) data

# What jobs do people do?

## Employment by broad occupation 2010

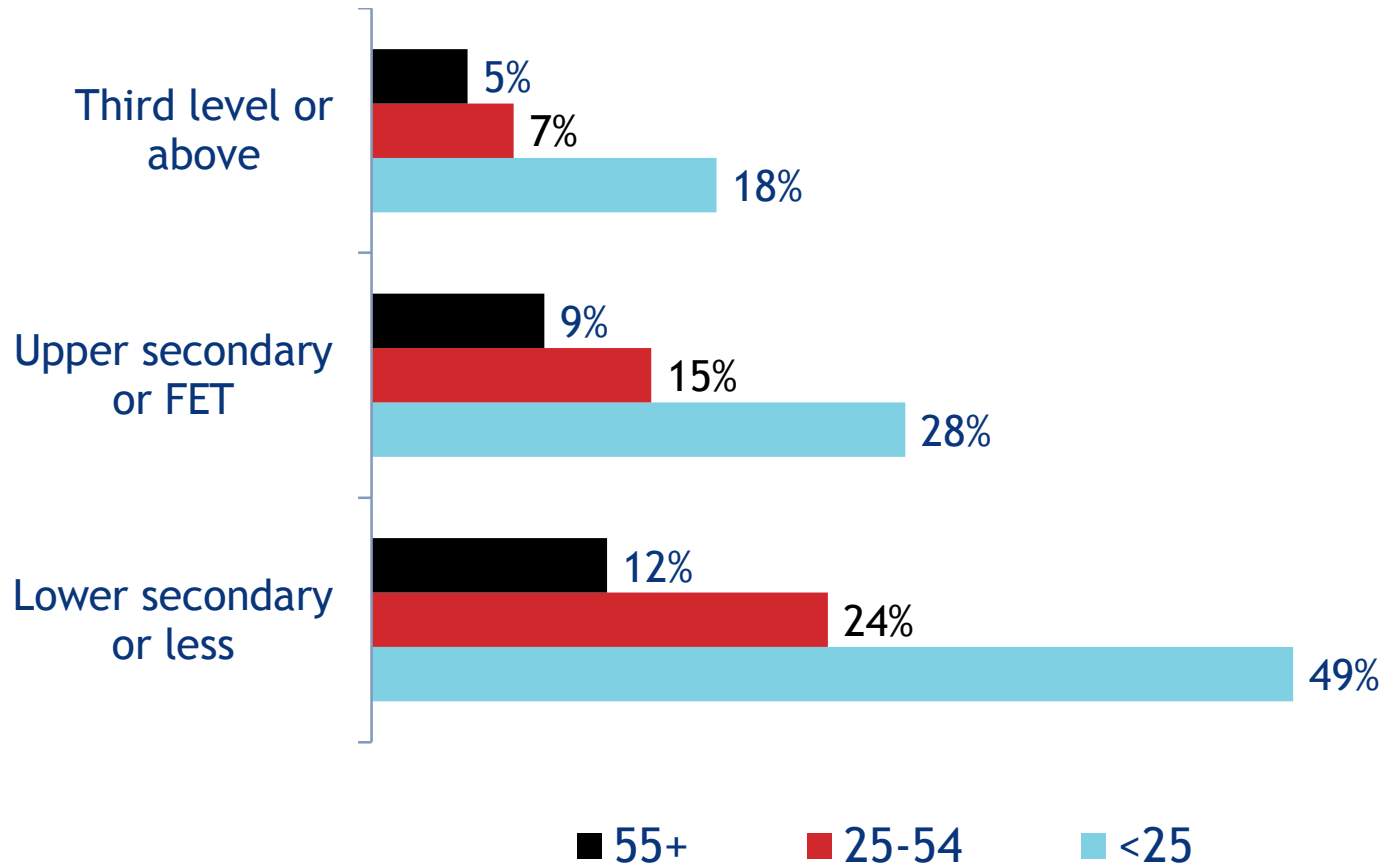


# EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATION, QUARTER 4 2010



- Lower Secondary and Below
- Upper Secondary/FET
- Third Level Certificate/Below Honours Degree
- Third Level Honours Degree or Above

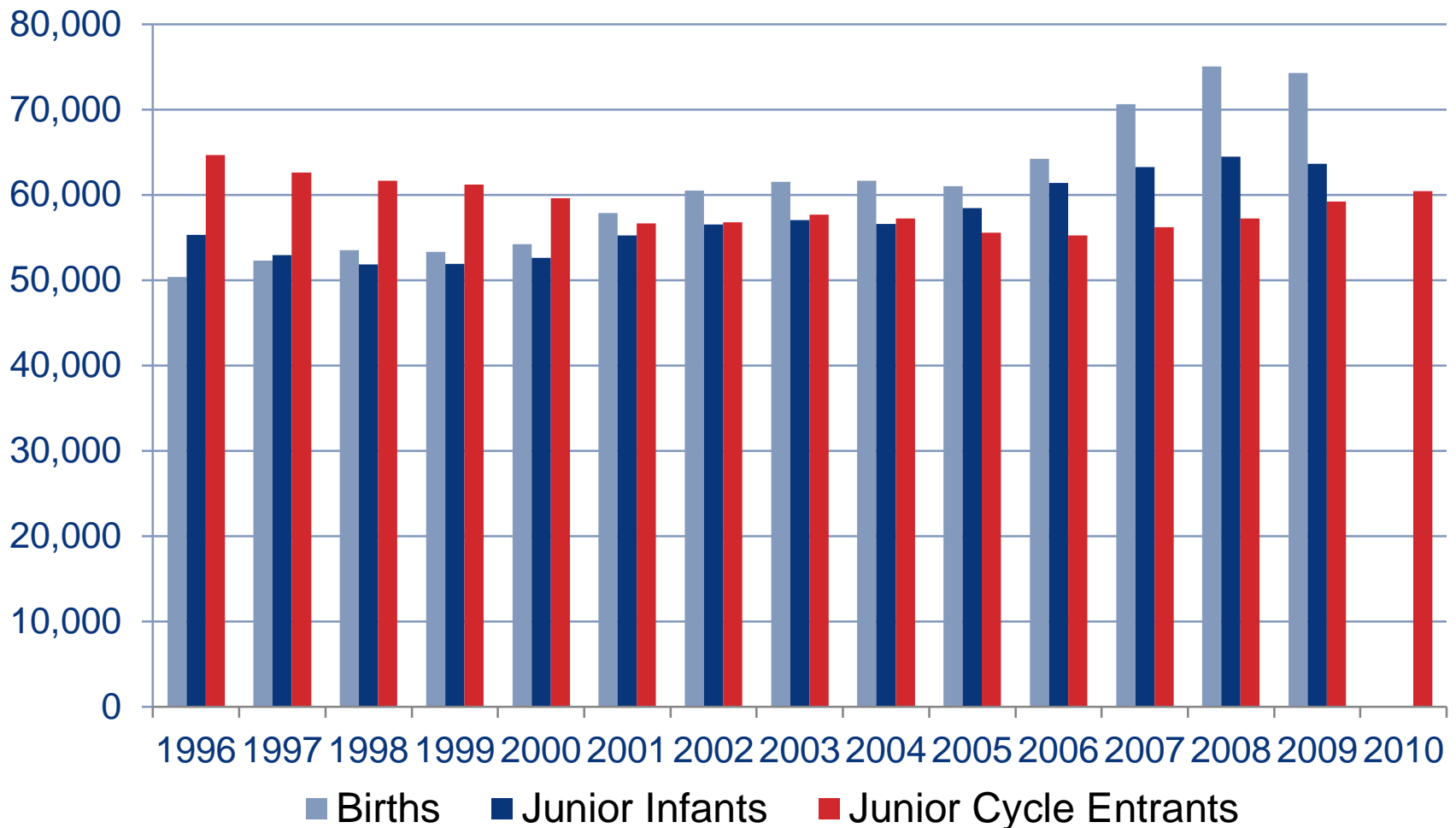
# UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE AND EDUCATION



Source: SLMRU Analysis of CSO (QHNS) Data



# Education System: Inflows

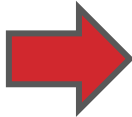




Data on births refers to calendar year; junior infant & junior cycle data refers to academic year (i.e. Sept-June)

Source: CSO; DES

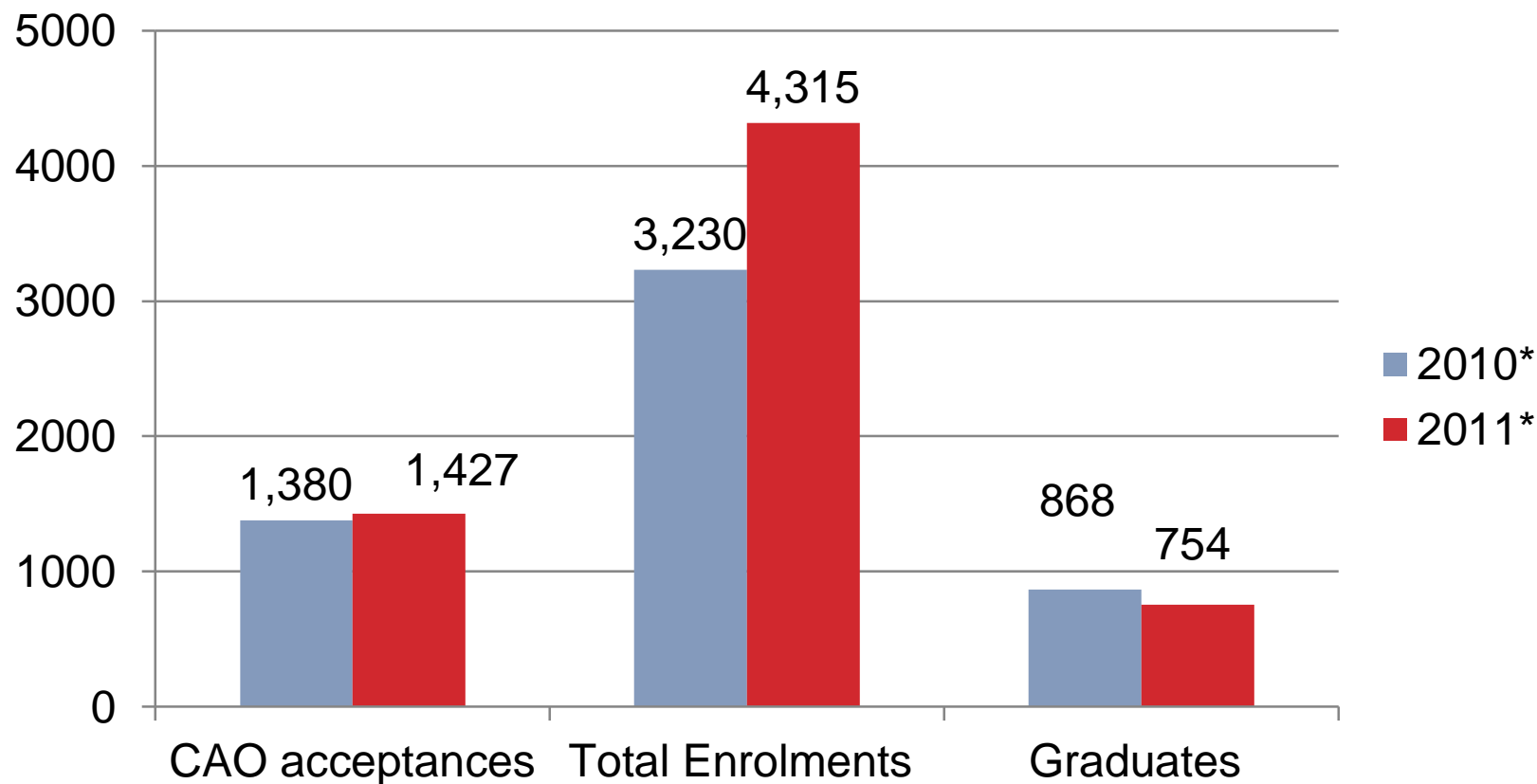
# Full-time Enrolment Projections (DES)

**Rising enrolments across all sectors, even with large-scale emigration and a fall in fertility rates**

Primary Level	+31,000		536,500 by 2014
Second Level	+15,000		331,900 by 2014
Higher	+29,000		190,000 by 2014

Source: DES (2011) Projections of Full-time Enrolments : Primary, Second & Higher Level, 2011-2031

## EDUCATION: INFLOWS & OUTFLOWS (Computing Courses – NFQ 8)



\*CAO Data = 2010 & 2011

Enrolment data (HEA) = 2008/2009 & 2009/2010

Graduate data (HEA) = 2009 & 2010

## **CURRENT DEMAND: VACANCIES IN 2011**

- **The overall number of *newly advertised vacancies* in 2011 was higher than in 2010 for both FÁS and Irish jobs.ie (although significantly lower than at the peak in 2007)**
- **There were initial (albeit small) signs of a recovery in the number of jobs advertised for some occupations (e.g. managers, professionals)**

# **CURRENT DEMAND: VACANCIES IN 2011**

## **Vacancies were most frequent for:**

### **Sales, marketing and customer service**

- business associate professionals (e.g. sales accounts and business development managers)
- sales occupations (e.g. retail sales assistants)
- customer service occupations

### **Science and engineering professionals**

- IT professionals (e.g. programmers/software developers, IT business analysts, web designers, IT specialist managers)
- design and development engineers
- process engineers

### **Business professionals**

- financial project management professionals, chartered accountants, management consultants and business analysts, regulatory professionals, quality control professionals

# **CURRENT DEMAND: VACANCIES IN 2011**

**Administrative occupations**

**Science and engineering associate professionals**

- IT associate professionals
- engineering technicians
- laboratory technicians

**Corporate managers and directors**

# CURRENT DEMAND: VACANCIES IN 2011

**A third level qualification was required for a significant share of all newly advertised vacancies**

**The data suggests that the demand is mostly limited to experienced candidates**

## **Language skills**

- a prerequisite for many newly advertised vacancies, particularly in **sales customer care activities**, but also at **professional level** (e.g. ICT, engineering, finance)
- a variety of languages were in demand, predominantly **German, French and Nordic languages**

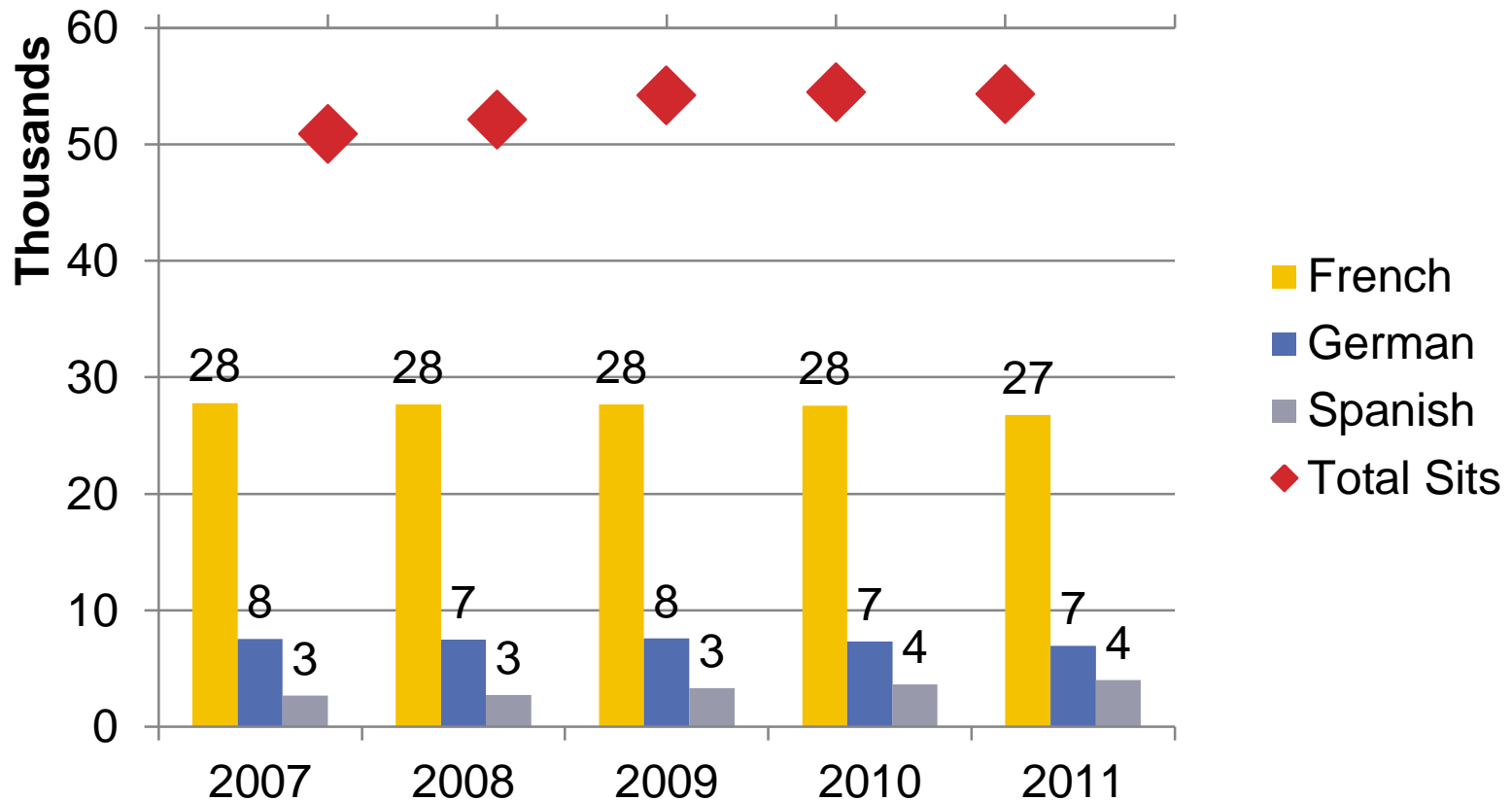
# CURRENT DEMAND: SHORTAGES

The results from the recruitment agency survey suggest that difficult to fill vacancies exist for a number of occupations, e.g.

- **ICT professionals** (e.g. software and web development, gaming technology, mobile technology)
- **engineering experts** (e.g. production/process, quality control, industry regulatory compliance specialists, research and design, electrical)
- **scientists** (e.g. microbiologists, chemists, biological analysts)
- **finance specialists** (senior auditors, analysts (financial, risk and recovery), regulatory affairs specialists)
- **healthcare professionals** (e.g. doctors, senior specialist nurses, geriatric nurses)



# LEAVING CERT SITS FOR LANGUAGES 2007-2011



Source: State Examinations Commission

# WHAT IRISH LEAVING CERT STUDENTS LEARN

Language	Leaving Cert Sits 2011*	% of all Leaving Cert Sits** 2011	2007 %
Total LC Sits in 2011	54,000	100%	
French	27,000	49%	55%
German	7,000	13%	15%
Spanish	4,000	7%	5%
Italian	400	1%	1%

Source: State Examinations Commission

\*Numbers have been rounded

\*\* Leaving Certificate Established and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes

\*\*\*

## STUDENTS SITTING 2 OF THE FOLLOWING LC FOREIGN LANGUAGES (2010)

	French	German	Spanish	Italian	Russian	Japanese	Total
French	-	<b>319</b>	<b>249</b>	50	95	44	757
German	<b>319</b>	-	56	20	43	12	450
Spanish	<b>249</b>	56	-	24	15	12	356
Italian	50	20	24	-	1	2	97
Russian	95	43	15	1	-	2	156
Japanese	44	12	12	2	2	-	72

Source: State Examinations Commission

## NON-CURRICULAR\* LANGUAGE SITS

	2007 Sits	2011 Sits
Polish	53	574
Lithuanian	61	254
Romanian	25	115
Others**	40	122
Latvian	32	111
Portuguese	27	57
Dutch	16	29
Total	254	1,262

Source: State Examinations Commission

\*Not part of the LC curriculum but students from an EU member state and who speak the language as a mother tongue may opt to be examined in that language.

\*\* Others: Slovakian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Swedish, Danish, Czech, Modern Greek, Finnish, & Estonian

## **LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**2009/2010 enrolments (foreign languages) =  
c1,400?**

**Only includes those who study foreign languages  
only**

**Excludes those who combine a language with  
another subject such as history, economics or  
computing**

**2009/2010 enrolments (total enrolments) ?**

# ERASMUS STUDENTS

Outgoing students on Erasmus = 1,836

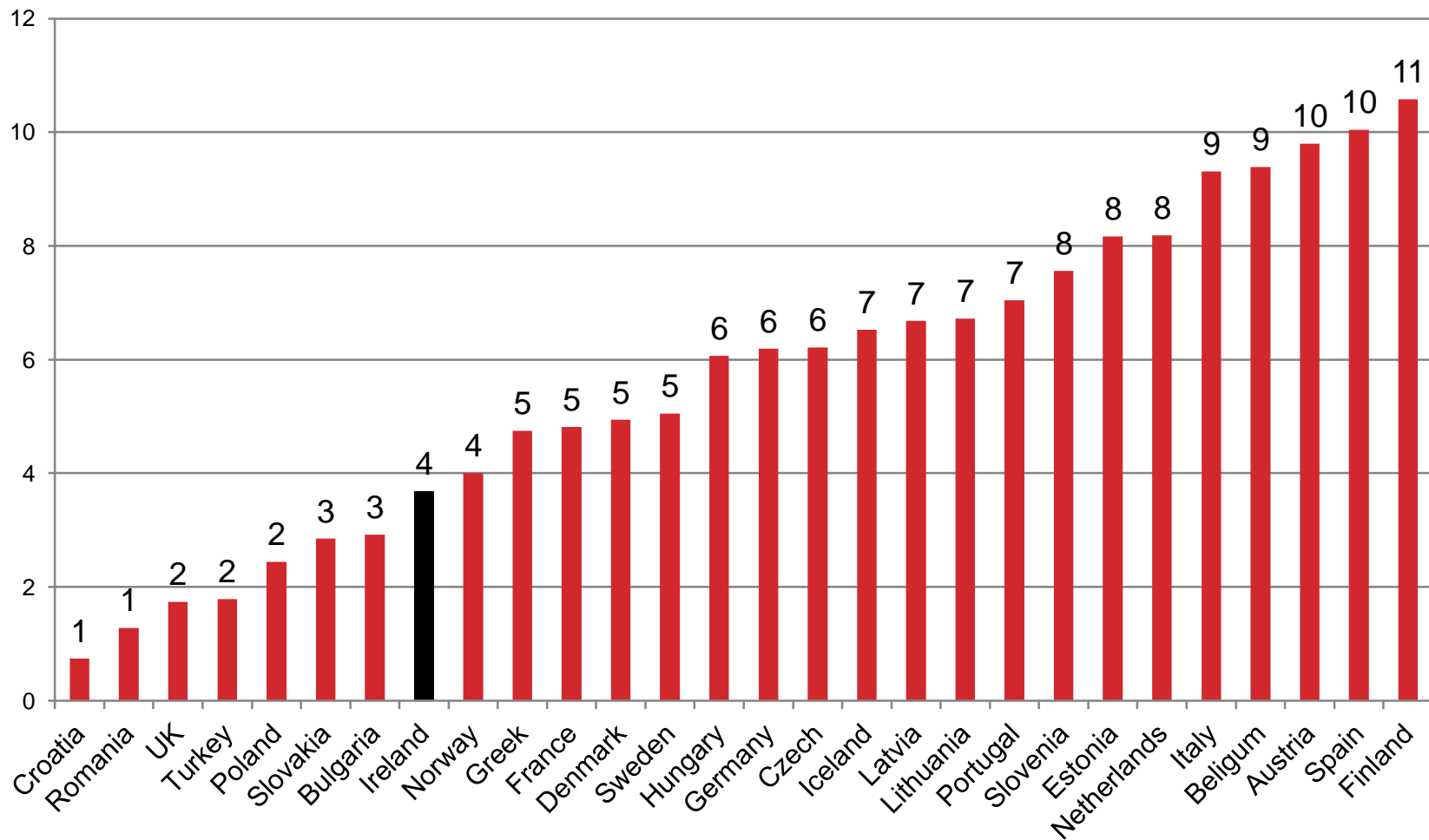
Destination Country	2008/09*
France	473
Spain	316
Germany	252
UK	224
Netherlands	86
Italy	84
Others**	401
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,836</b>

Source: European Commission

\*Numbers include students going abroad to higher education institutions *and* on work placements.

\*\*Includes: Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Finland, among others.

# ERASMUS STUDENTS AS A SHARE OF GRADUATES, 2009 (%)



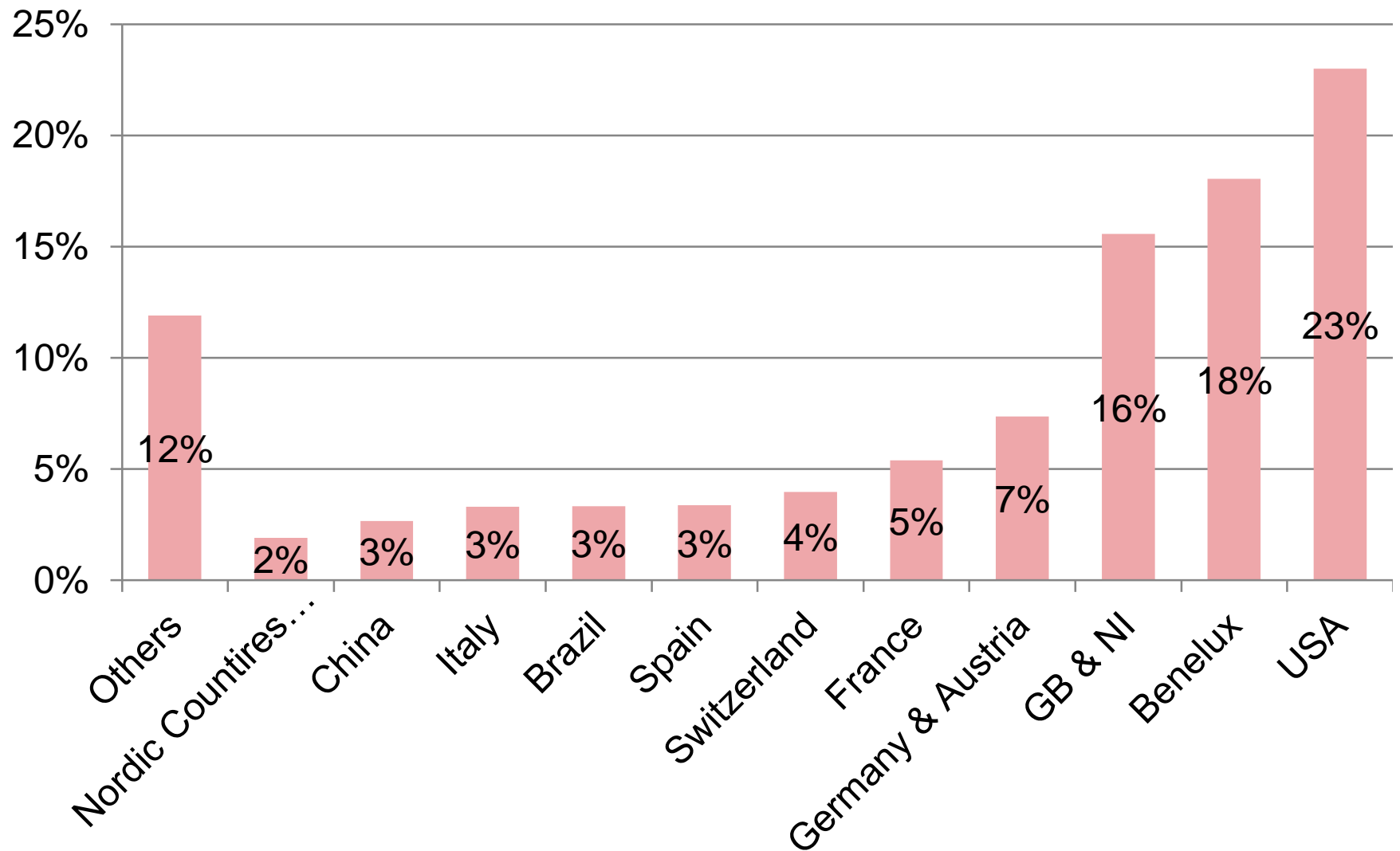
Source: European Commission

## **JOB VACANCIES WHICH SPECIFIED LANGUAGE SKILLS IN OCT. 2011**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Share of Irishjob.ie Vacancies with Language Skills (10%)</b>	<b>Share of Irish Times Vacancies with Language Skills (5%)</b>	<b>Share of FÁS Vacancies with Language Skills (5%)</b>
<b>German</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>48%</b>
French	23%	26%	21%
Nordic (Swedish, Danish & Dutch)	14%	14%	5%
Italian/Spanish	14%	-	17%
2+ Languages	6%	-	2%
Others/Unspecified	16%	29%	8%



# LARGEST GOODS EXPORT COUNTRIES\* 2011



Source: CSO (March 2012)

\*in terms of value share

# **ISSUES: CHICKEN AND EGG SCENARIO**

**What is the reality of the situation?**

**Is it that ....**

**Ireland does not export to foreign language markets because they do not have language skills**

**or**

**Irish people don't learn languages because Ireland does not export to those markets**

*EGFSN report 2005 : The demand and supply of foreign language skills in the enterprise sector*

# **THE FUTURE: LANGUAGE SKILLS ALONE ARE INSUFFICIENT**

**If almost 50% of the population have a degree, graduates will need something 'extra'**

**Need to look beyond the academic qualification**

- Study/work abroad (e.g. Erasmus) – valued by employers
- Develop a skills mix is important
  - ICT with business (e.g. entrepreneurship skills) and/or language
  - Marketing with languages and/or ICT skills
  - Engineering with business and/or languages
  - Science with business, innovation and/or languages

**A language module compulsory in higher education? It is the case in most European countries (except UK)**

**Compulsory study abroad? (note number going to the UK or taking English modules in some countries)**

# LANGUAGES: CHALLENGES

## 1. Improve data capturing/reporting mechanisms on the supply side to establish

- Numbers studying languages
- Level achieved – comparable across institutions and internationally
- Applies especially to higher education
- But also further education, where it occurs

# LANGUAGES: CHALLENGES

## 2. On the demand side, identify the level of proficiency required for jobs and to differentiate between the jobs

- To do business abroad
  - Cultural awareness sufficient? (e.g. engineering/ICT)
- To sell products abroad (including contact centres)
  - A very high level of foreign language
- To create a market for products abroad
  - Irish made products in foreign markets, especially by SMEs?
- To interact with and facilitate tourists to Ireland

## 3. Identify the languages needed

- We export comparatively little beyond Anglophone countries and the EU, but will this always be the case?

# THE CHALLENGE

**4. Quantify the number of individuals required with language skills**

**5. Match this need to what the education system can realistically provide**

- Some languages are more difficult to learn (compare Chinese and Italian)
- China, Italy, Spain and Brazil each accounted for 3% of the value of Ireland's exports (goods) last year – which one to learn, if any?
- To provide language education, language teachers are required
  - Primary Level
  - Second level?

# THANK YOU

Further Information on [www.skillsireland.ie](http://www.skillsireland.ie)

***EGFSN Forthcoming: Skills for Ireland to Trade Internationally***

## **Annual Publications (FÁS/EGFSN):**

- National Skills Bulletin
- Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply
- Vacancy Overview