

# Better skills, better jobs, better lives



## Findings from the OECD Survey of Adult Skills

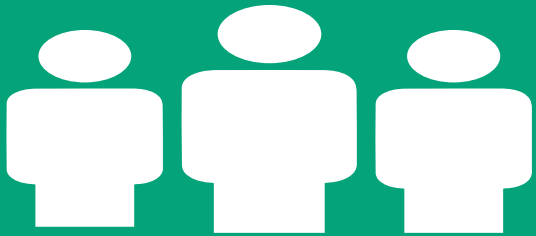
OECD Global Parliamentary Network

Andreas Schleicher, Director for  
Education and Skills





## 2023 Survey of Adult Skills



160 thousand adults...

representing 673 million 16-65 year-olds in 31 countries and economies

Assessment of literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem solving.



Also collects information on social and emotional skills,  
skill use at home and work and adult learning.



The assessment was administered via tablets.





# Assessment domains

## Literacy

**Access, understand, evaluate and reflect on written texts.**

**To:** Achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential and participate in society.  
**Literacy encompasses a range of skills:** Accessing text, understanding and evaluating.

## Numeracy

**Access, use, reason critically with mathematical content, information and ideas represented in multiple ways.**

**To:** Engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in life.

## Adaptive Problem Solving

**Achieve goals in a dynamic situation, in which a method for solution is not obvious.**

**Requires to:** engage in cognitive and metacognitive processes to define the problem, search for information, and apply a solution in a variety of information environments and contexts.

A woman with long dark hair and glasses is sitting at a desk, writing in a notebook. She is wearing a light-colored sweater. The background is a blurred bookshelf filled with books. The text is overlaid on the image.

# **What adults know and can do**

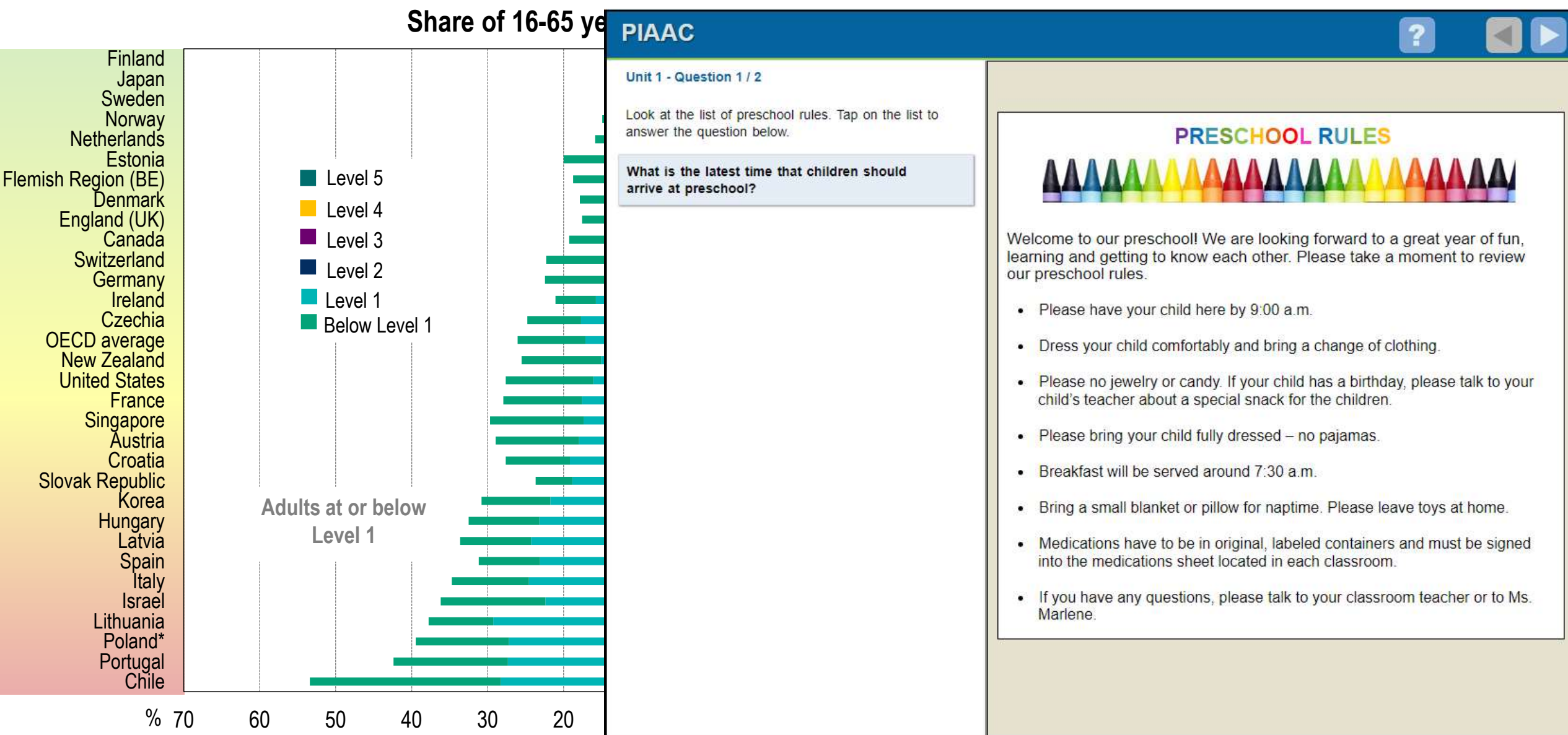
**Literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem-solving**





# Literacy proficiency among adults

Figure 2.2

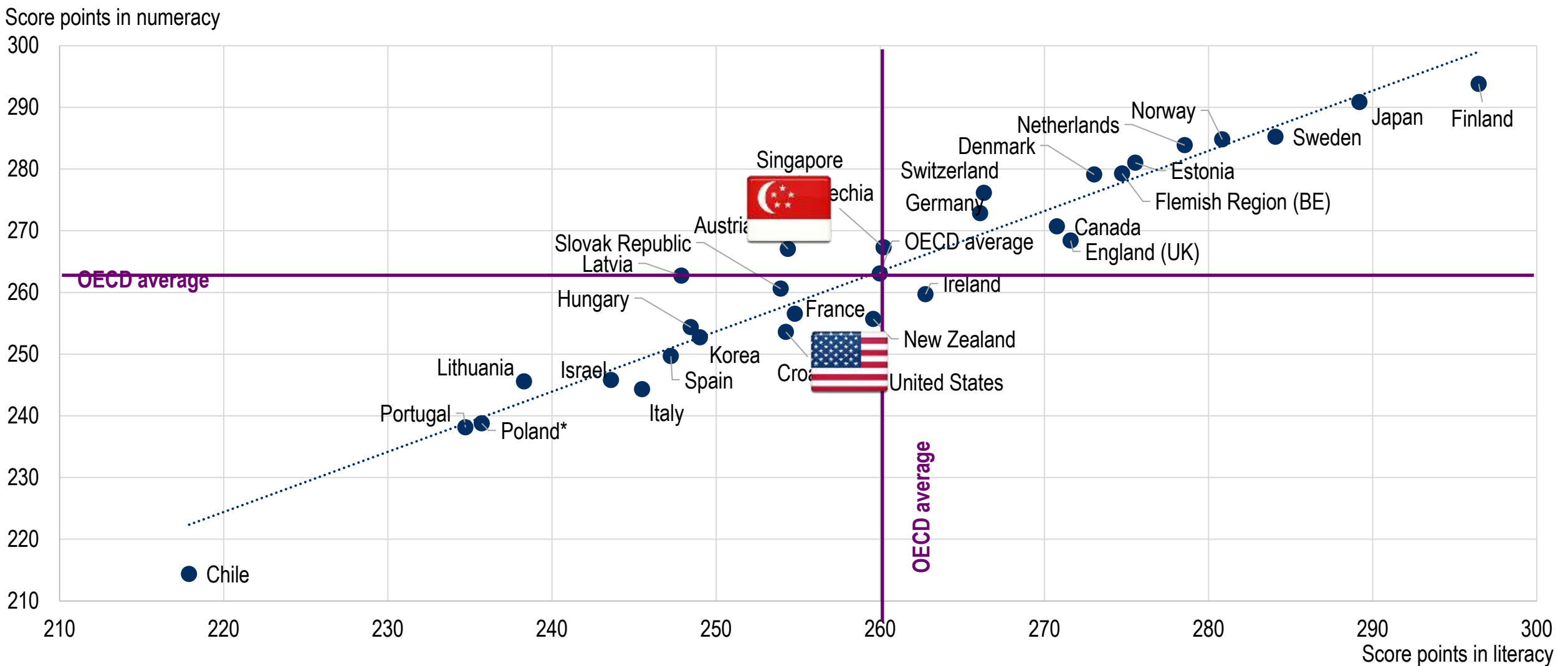




# Literacy and numeracy tend to go together

Figure 2.1

## Comparison of countries' and economies' average proficiency in literacy and numeracy

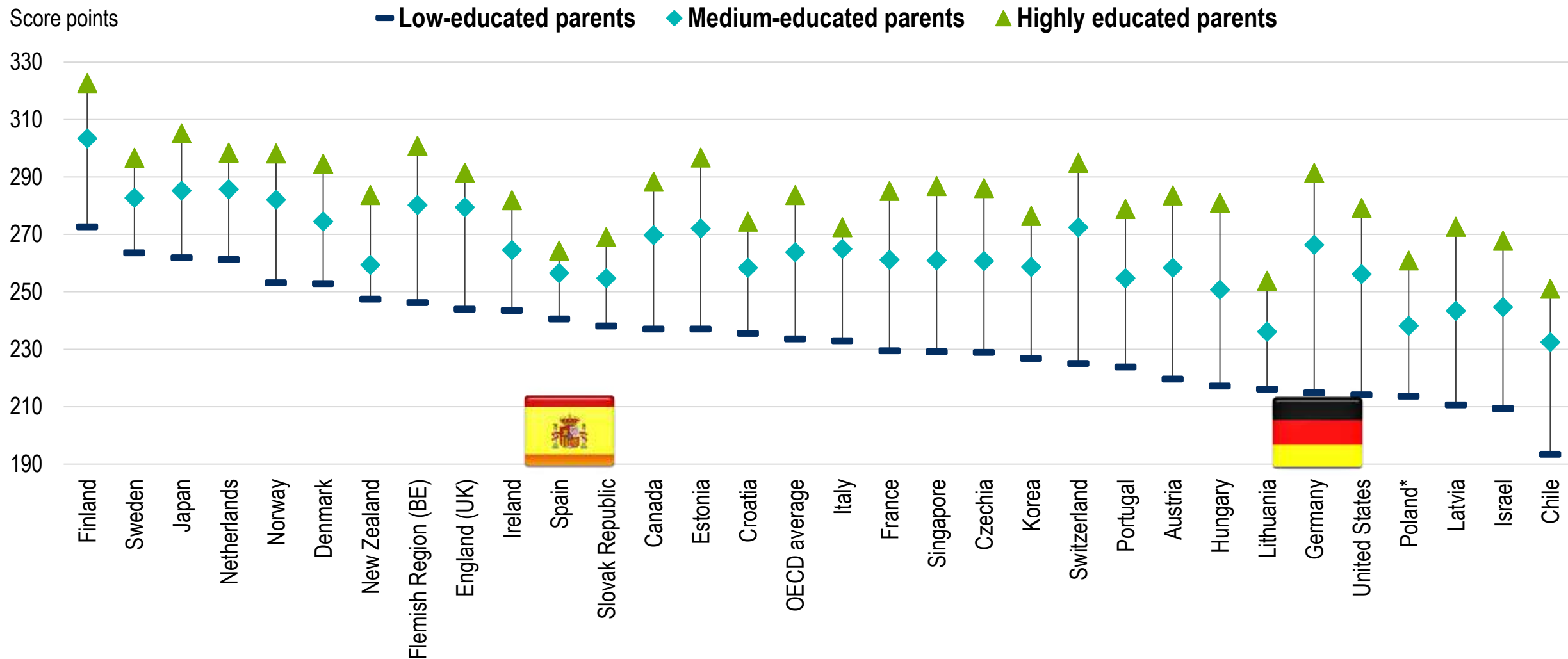





# Family strongly affects skills proficiency

Figure 2.19 (L)

## Average proficiency in literacy, by parental education





# **How things have changed**

Trends in outcomes

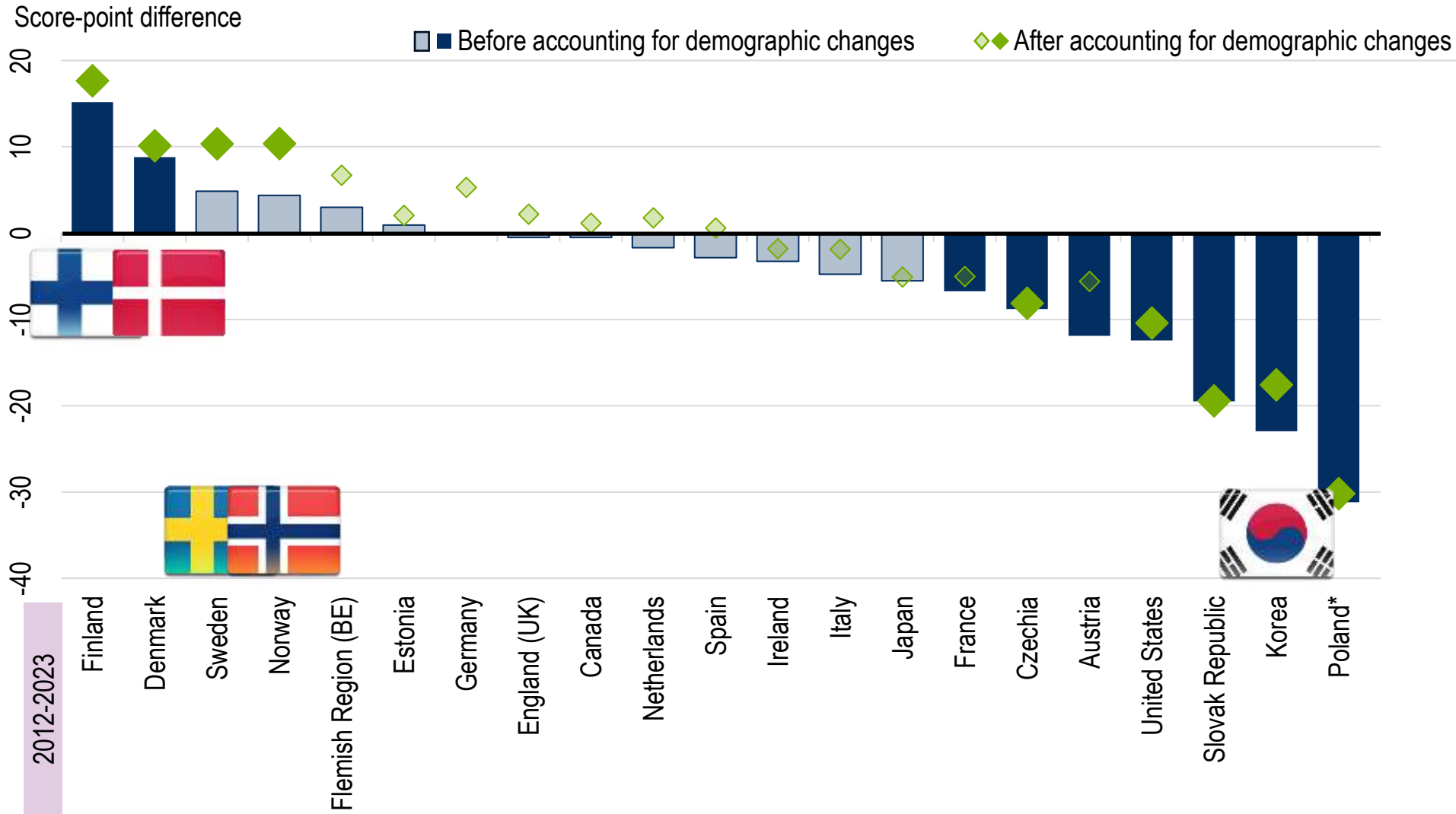




# Average literacy has stagnated or declined in most countries/economies

Figure 3.1 (L)

Difference in literacy scores between assessments, after reweighting 2023 data to match earlier distribution of age, immigrant background and gender



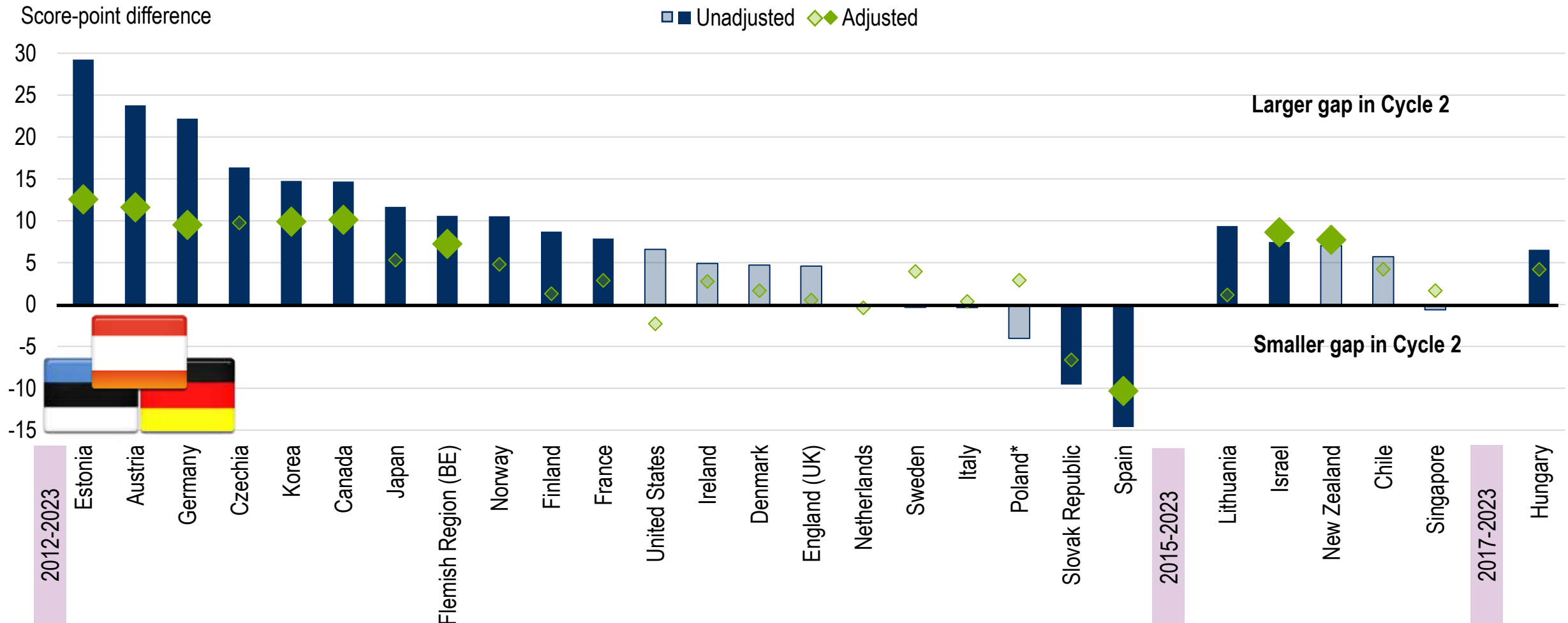


# The socio-economic gap in literacy proficiency widened

Figure 3.23

## Change in the gap in literacy proficiency between adults with highly educated and low-educated parents

Adjusted and unadjusted change between cycles in the mean score difference between adults with at least one tertiary-educated parent and adults whose parents have below upper secondary education (Cycle 2 minus Cycle 1)

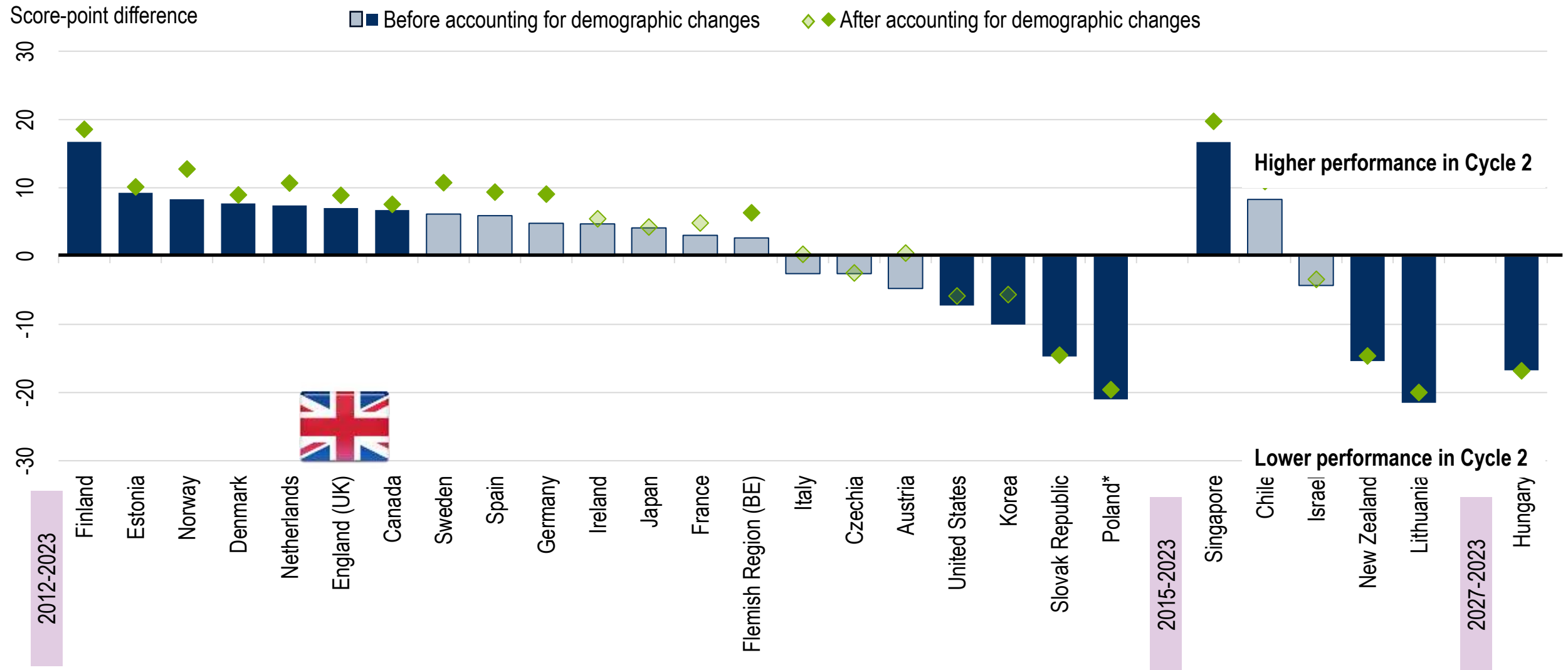




# Changes in numeracy have been more favourable

Figure 3.1 (L)

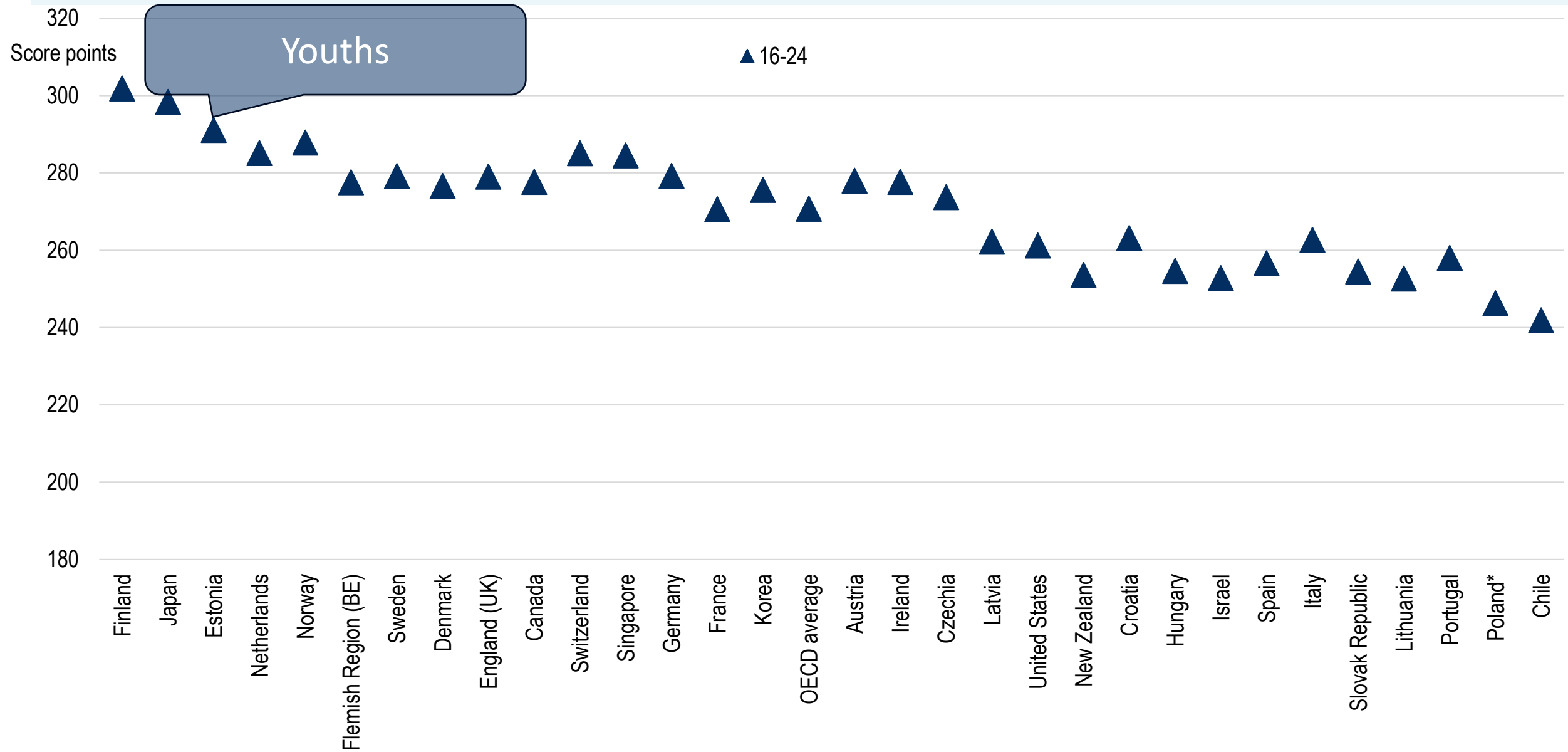
Difference in mean numeracy scores between cycles, after reweighting 2023 data to earlier distribution of age, immigrant background and gender





# Average proficiency in literacy, by age

Figure 2.7 (L)

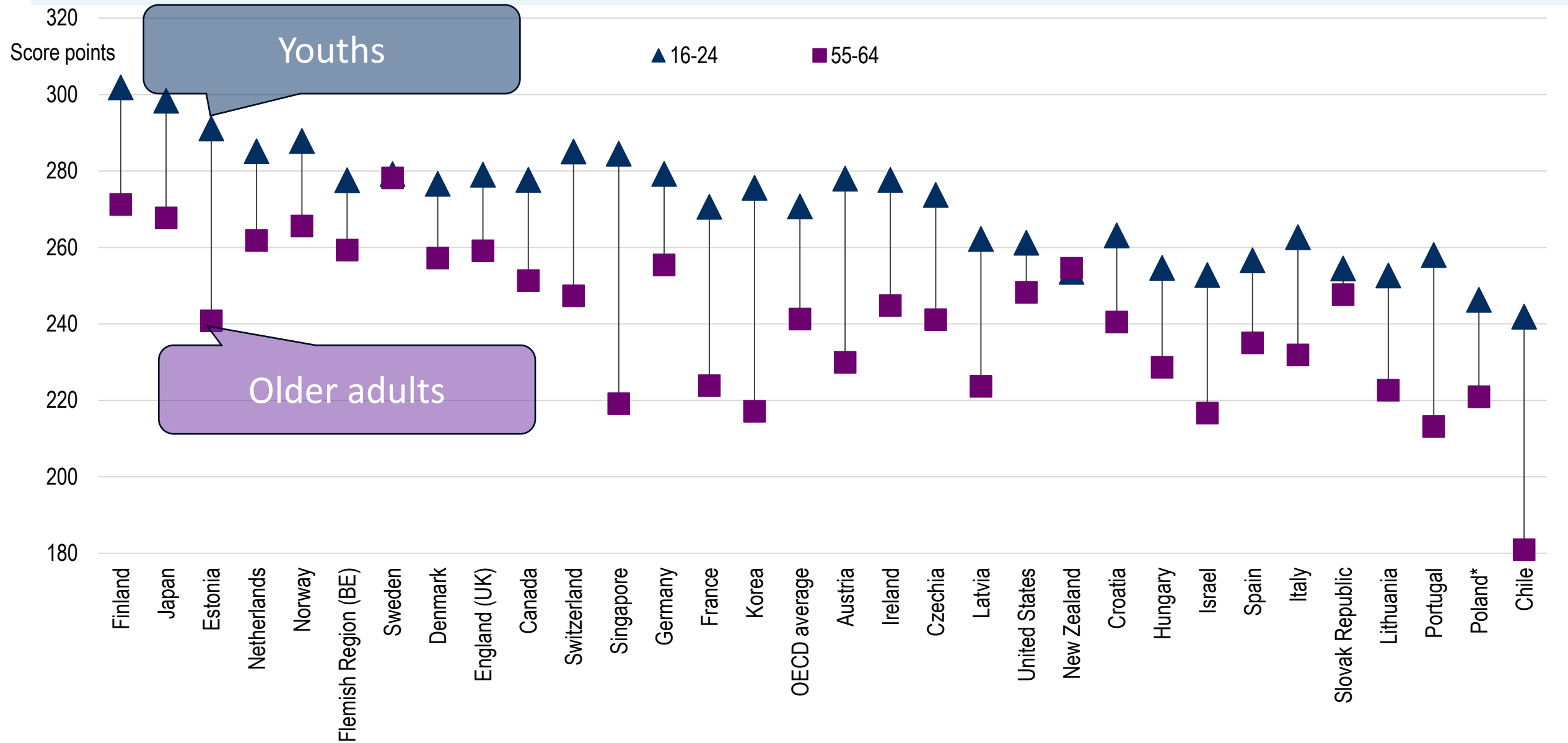






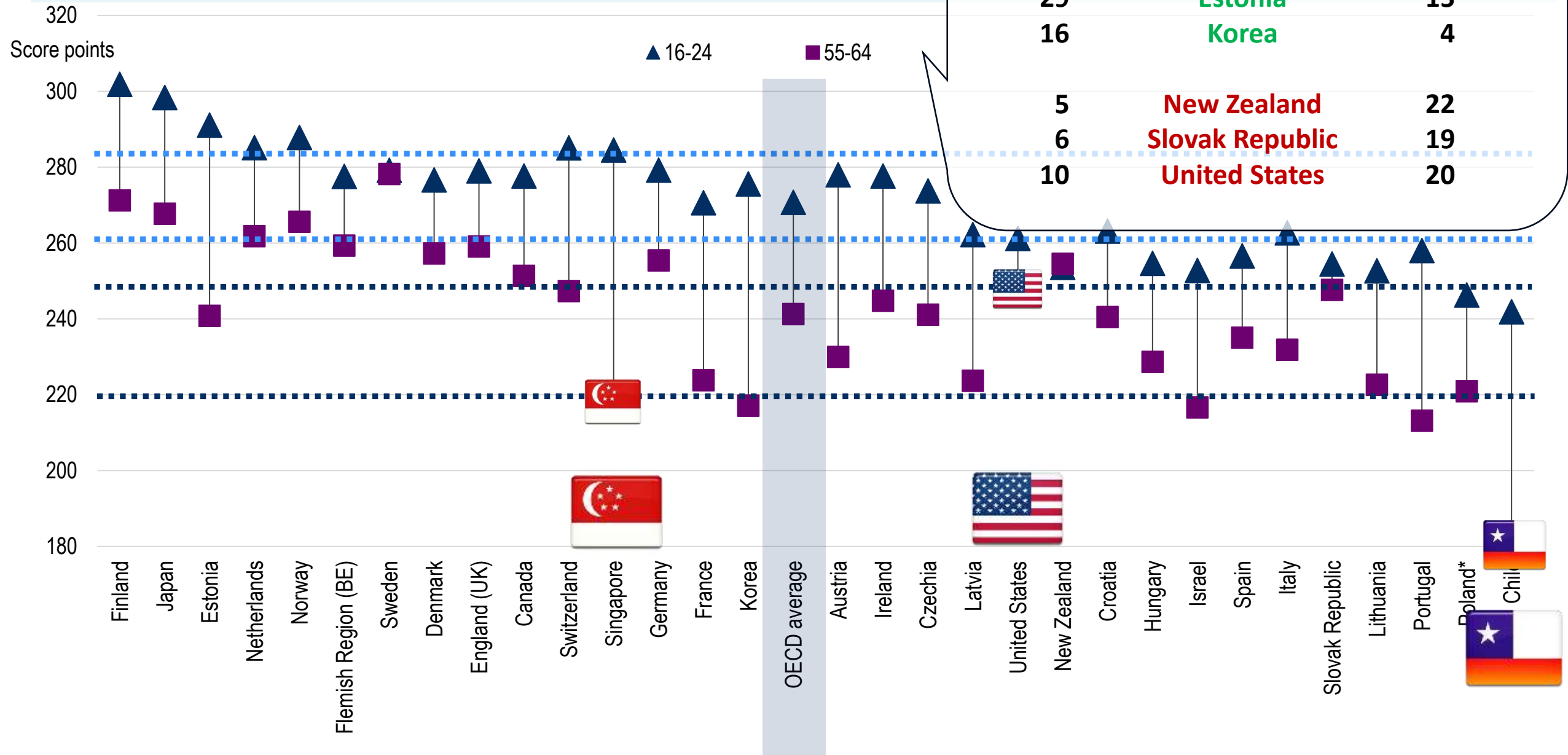
# Average proficiency in literacy, by age

Figure 2.7 (L)





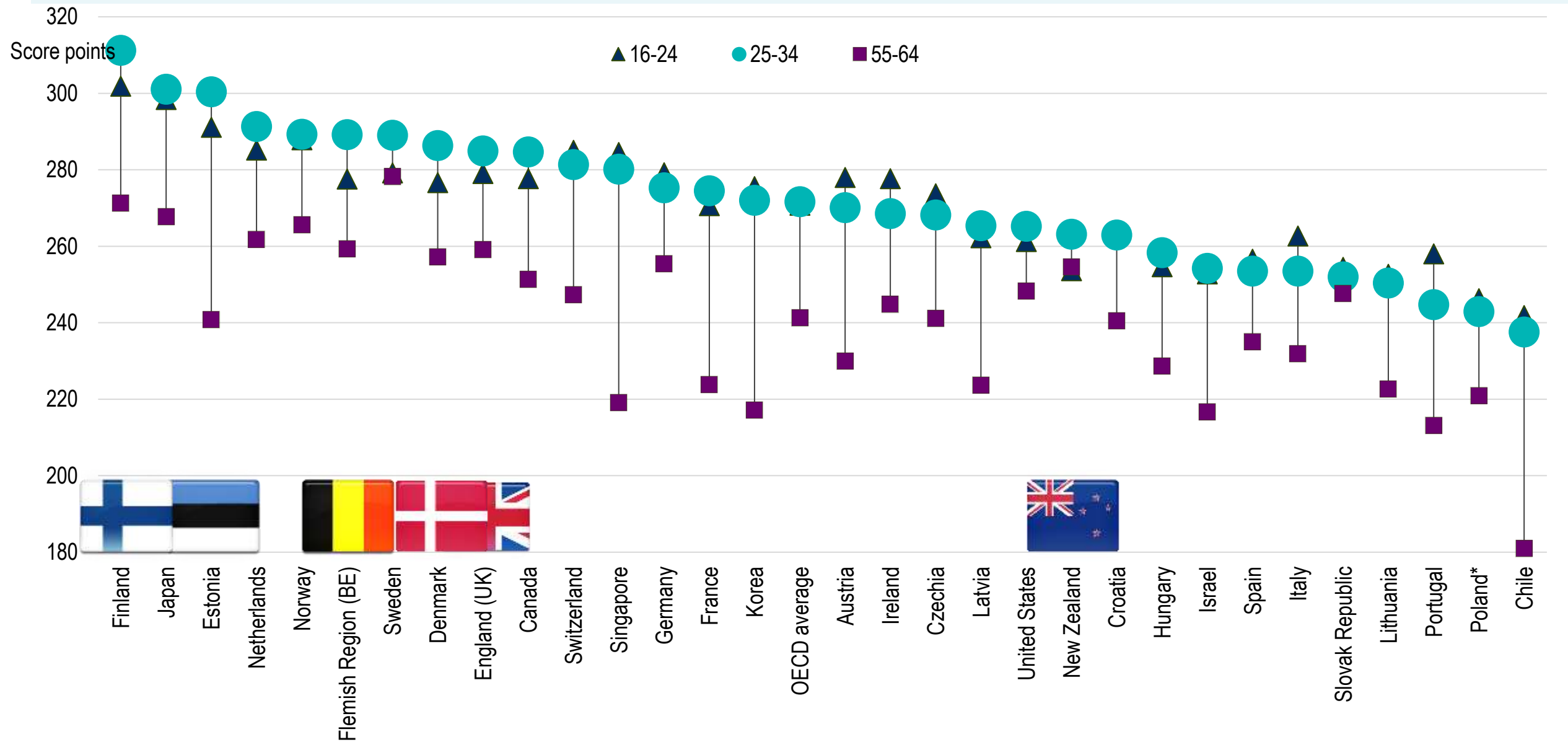
# Average proficiency in literacy, by age





# Average proficiency in literacy, by age

Figure 2.7 (L)



A blurred background image of a modern classroom. A female teacher stands at the front, facing a group of diverse students seated at their desks. The students are engaged in various activities like writing, using a laptop, and looking at papers. The room features bookshelves, a clock, and large windows letting in natural light.

# Education

Qualifications and skills are not the same



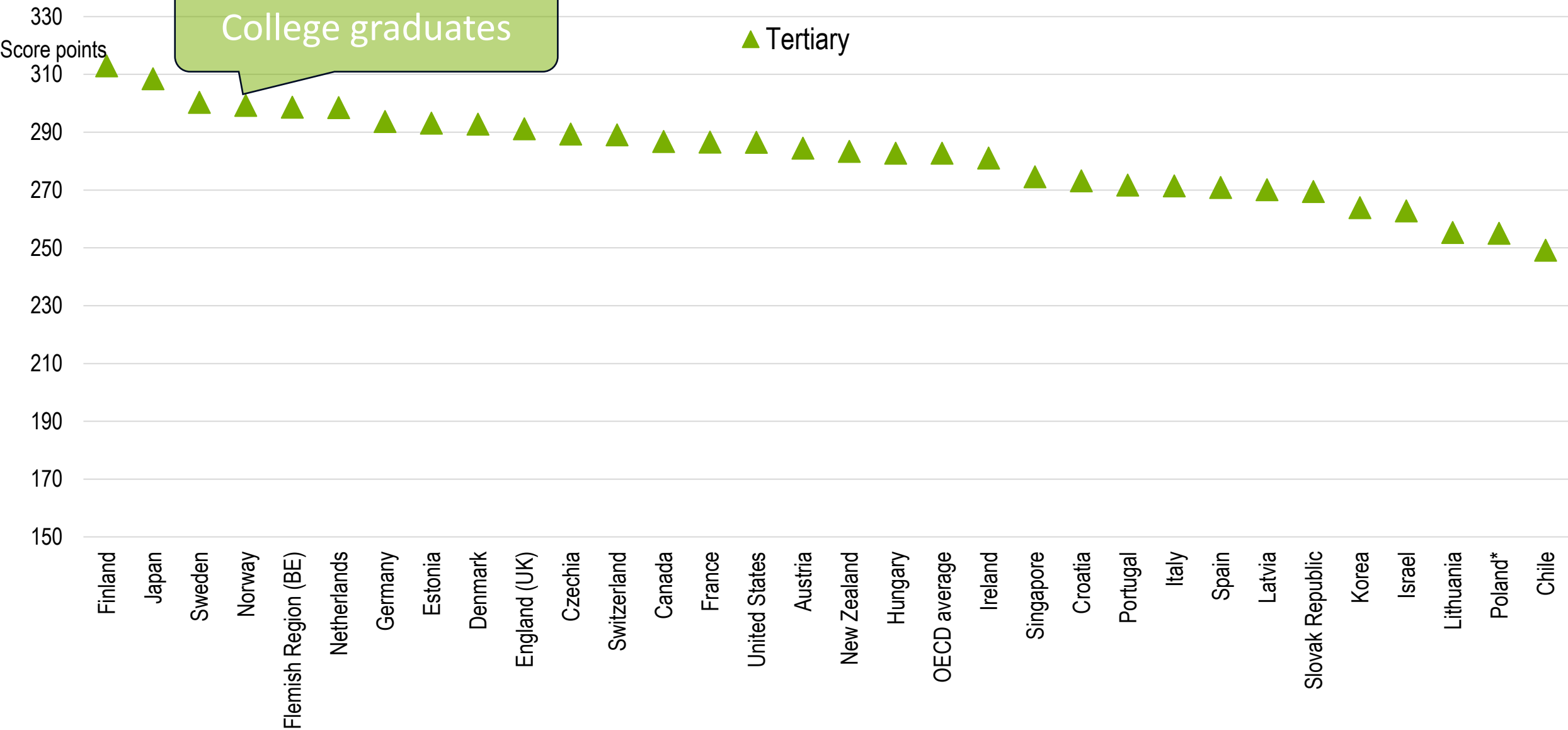


# Educational attainment and literacy

Figure 2.8 (L)

College graduates

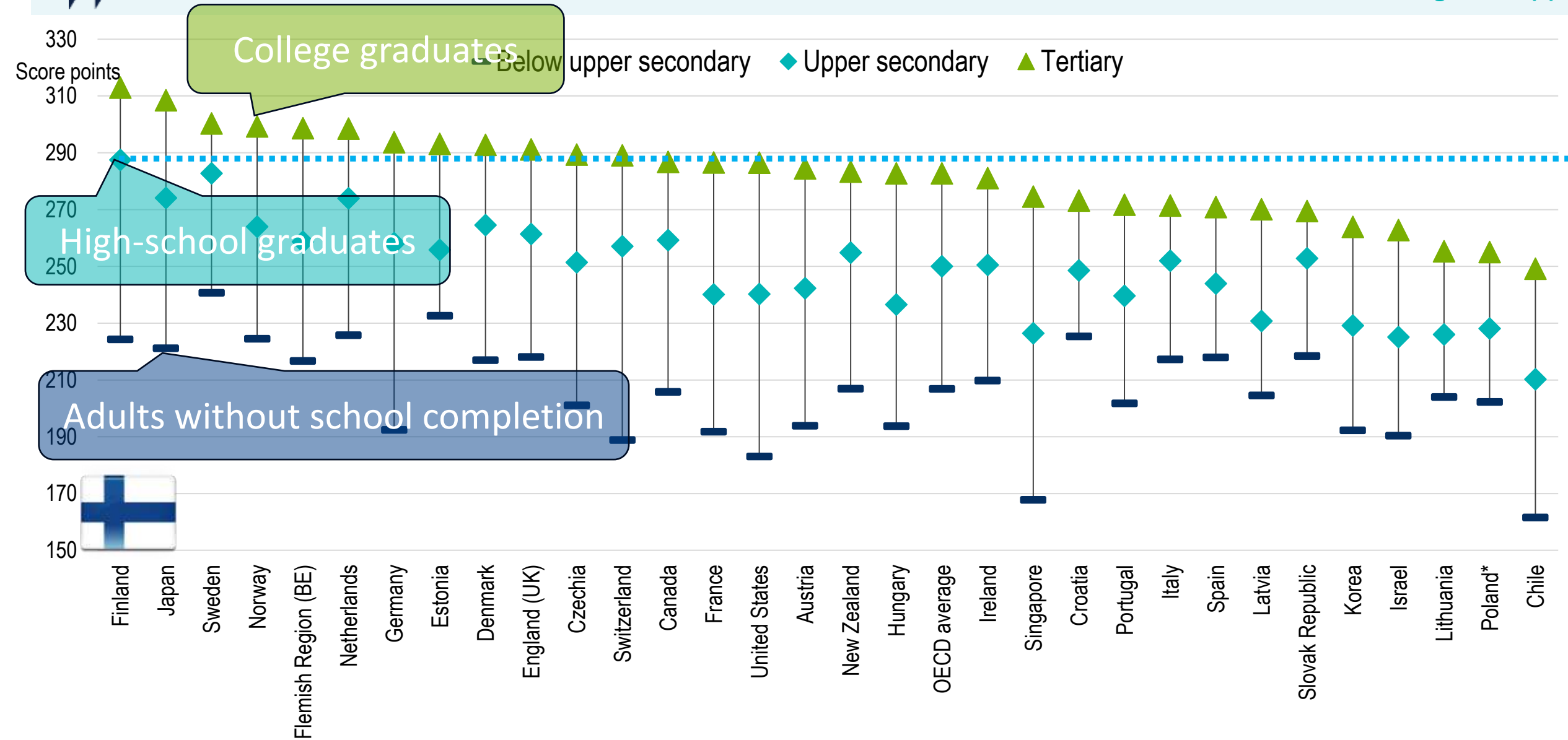
▲ Tertiary





# Educational attainment and literacy

Figure 2.8 (L)





# Gender differences

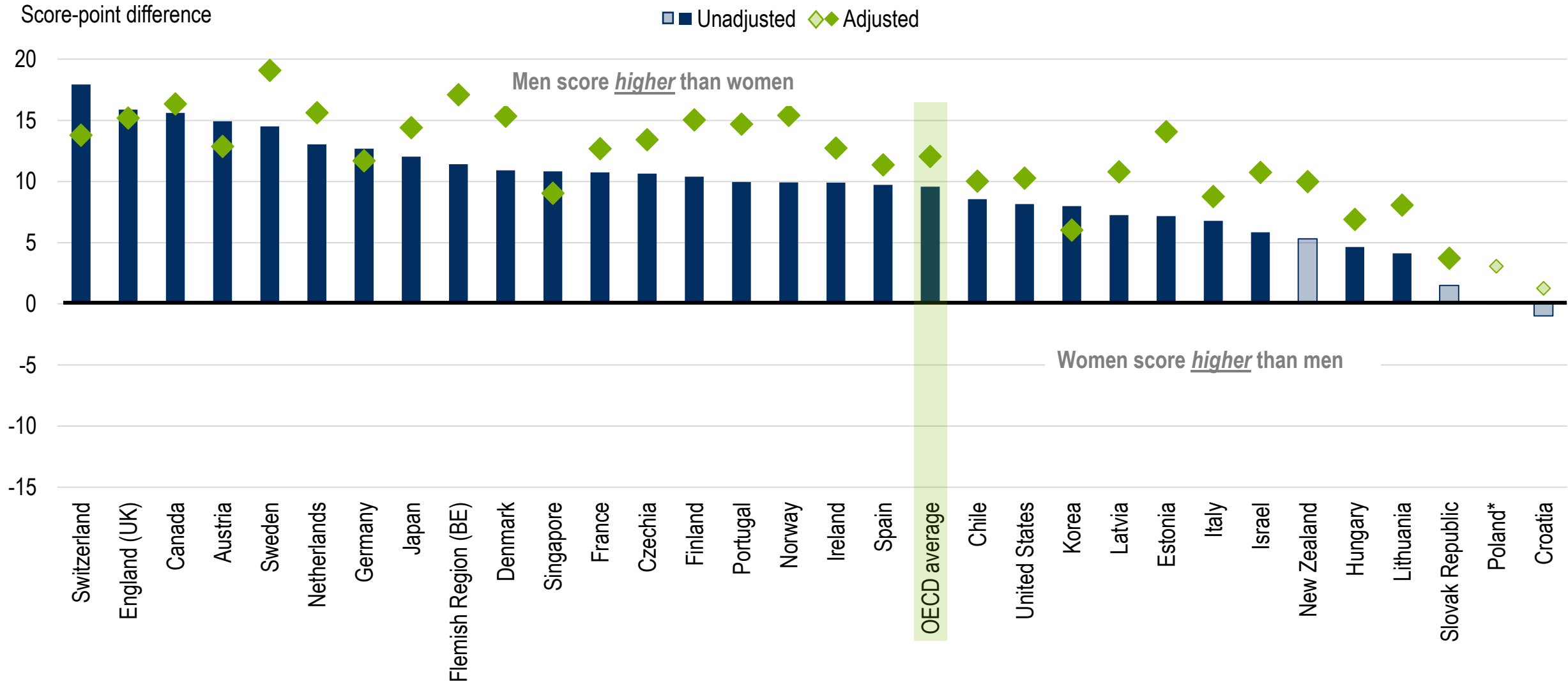
Participation and outcomes



## Gender gaps in numeracy

Figure 2.14 (N)

Adjusted and unadjusted differences in average **numeracy** scores between men and women (men minus women)



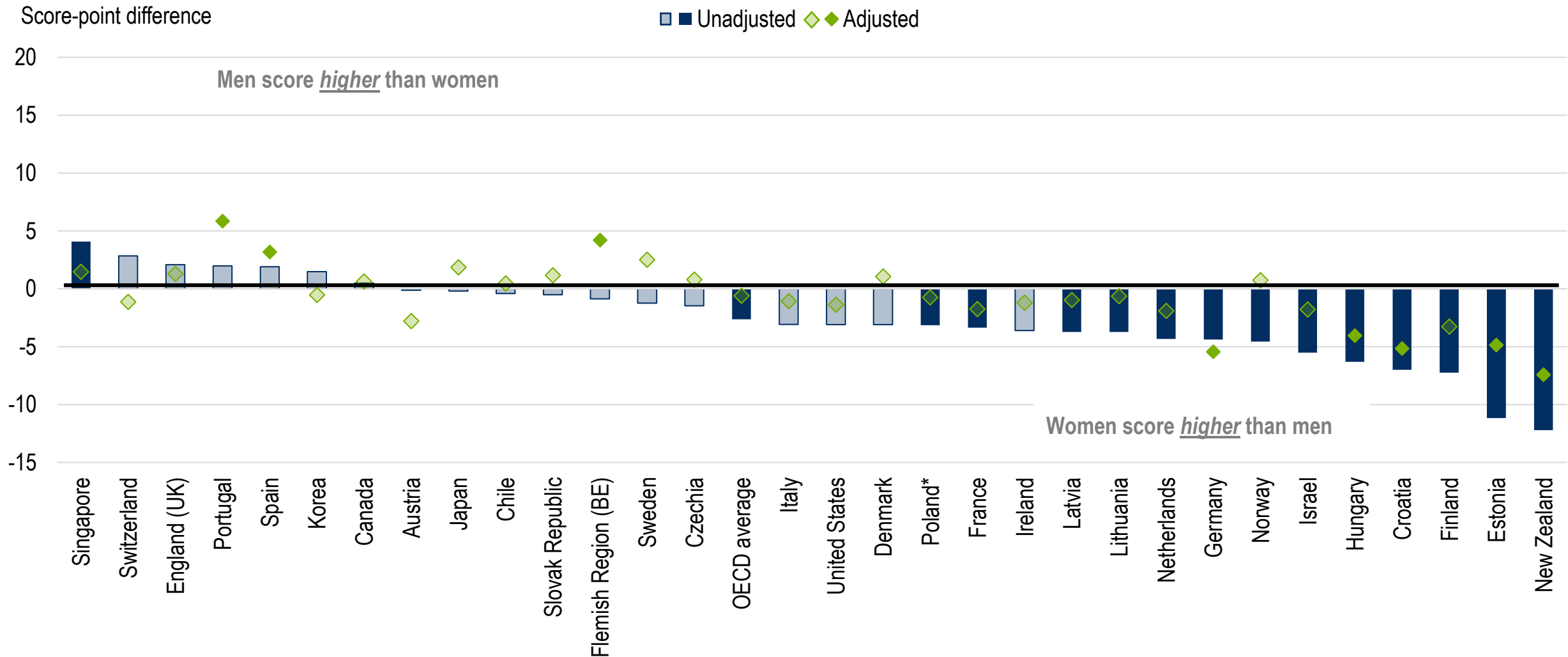




# Gender gaps in literacy

Figure 2.14 (L)

Adjusted and unadjusted differences in average literacy scores between men and women (men minus women)





# Immigration

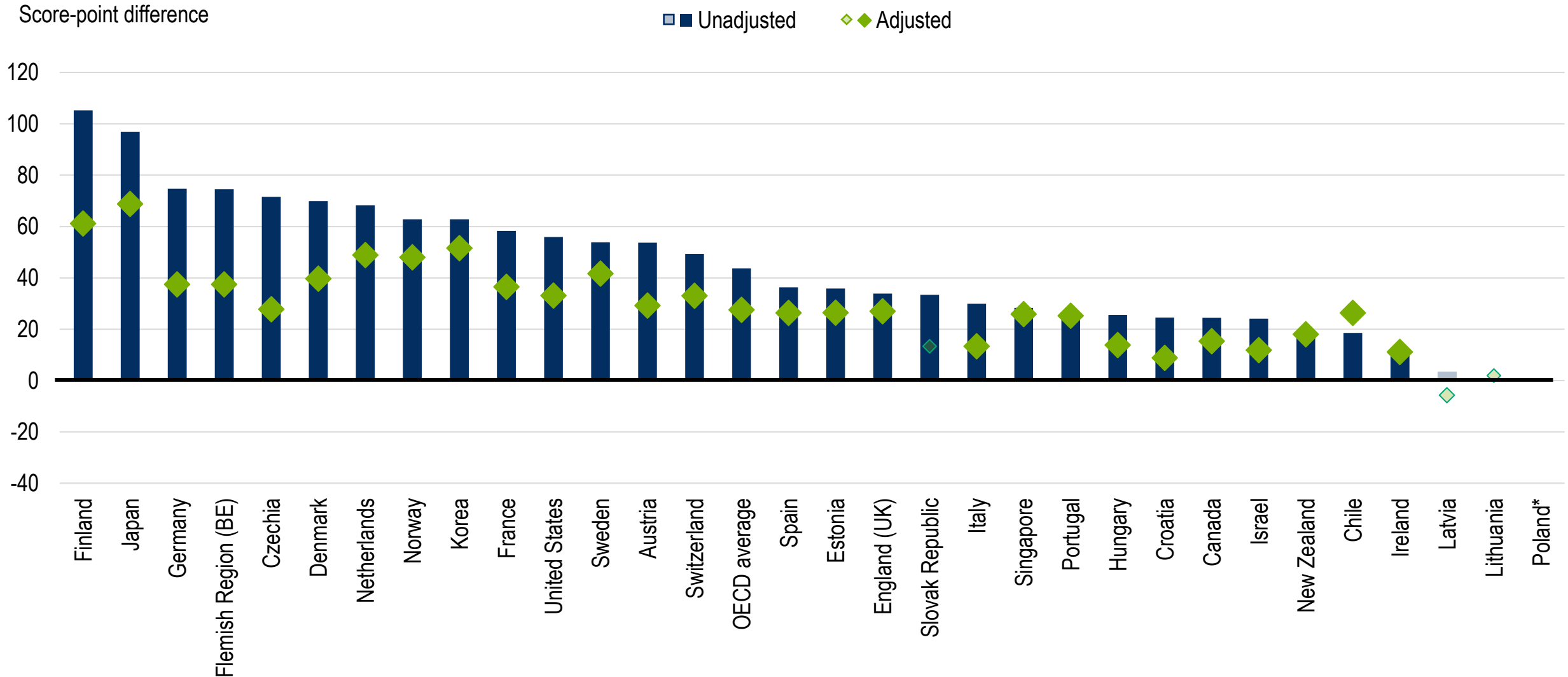
Participation and outcomes



# Literacy skills of adults with different immigrant backgrounds

Figure 2.17

Adjusted and unadjusted differences in average literacy between immigrant groups  
(native-born adults of native-born parents minus foreign-born adults of foreign-born parents)

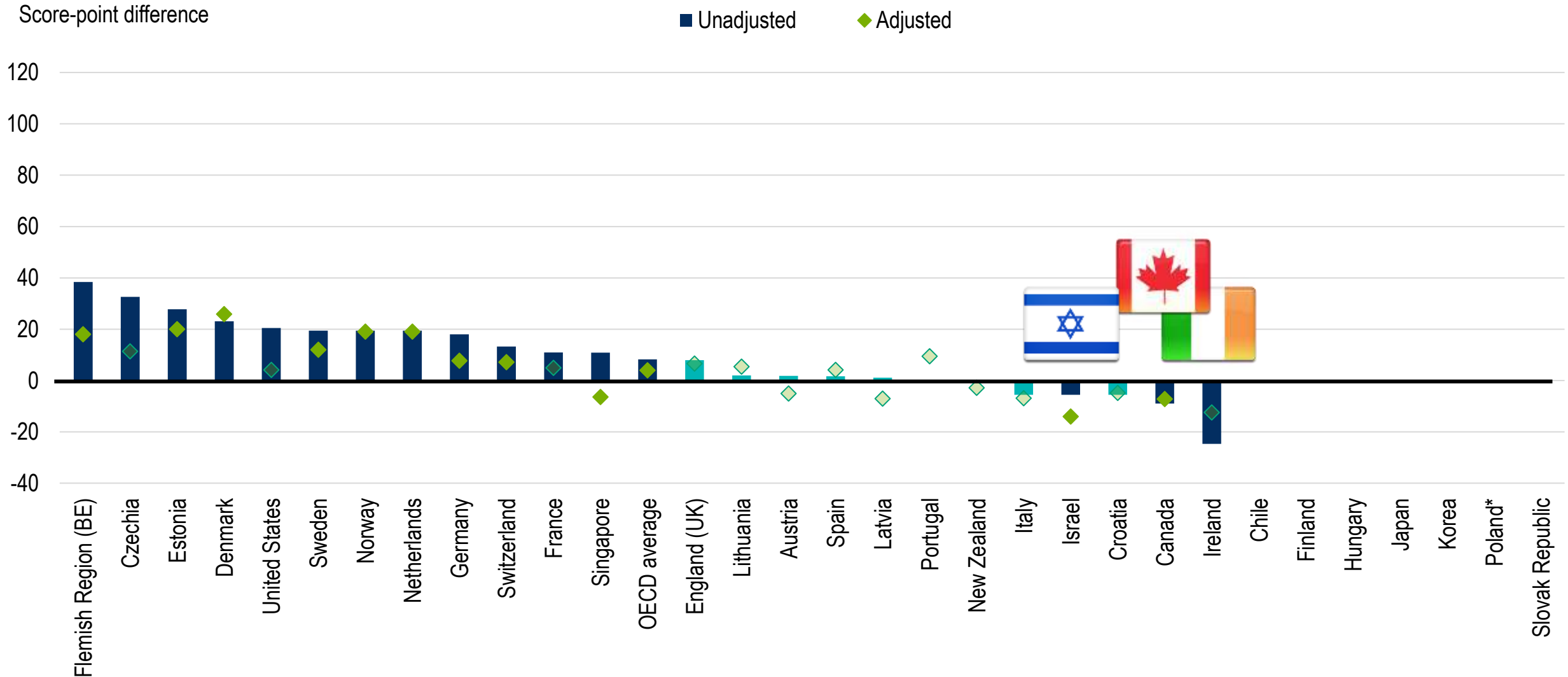




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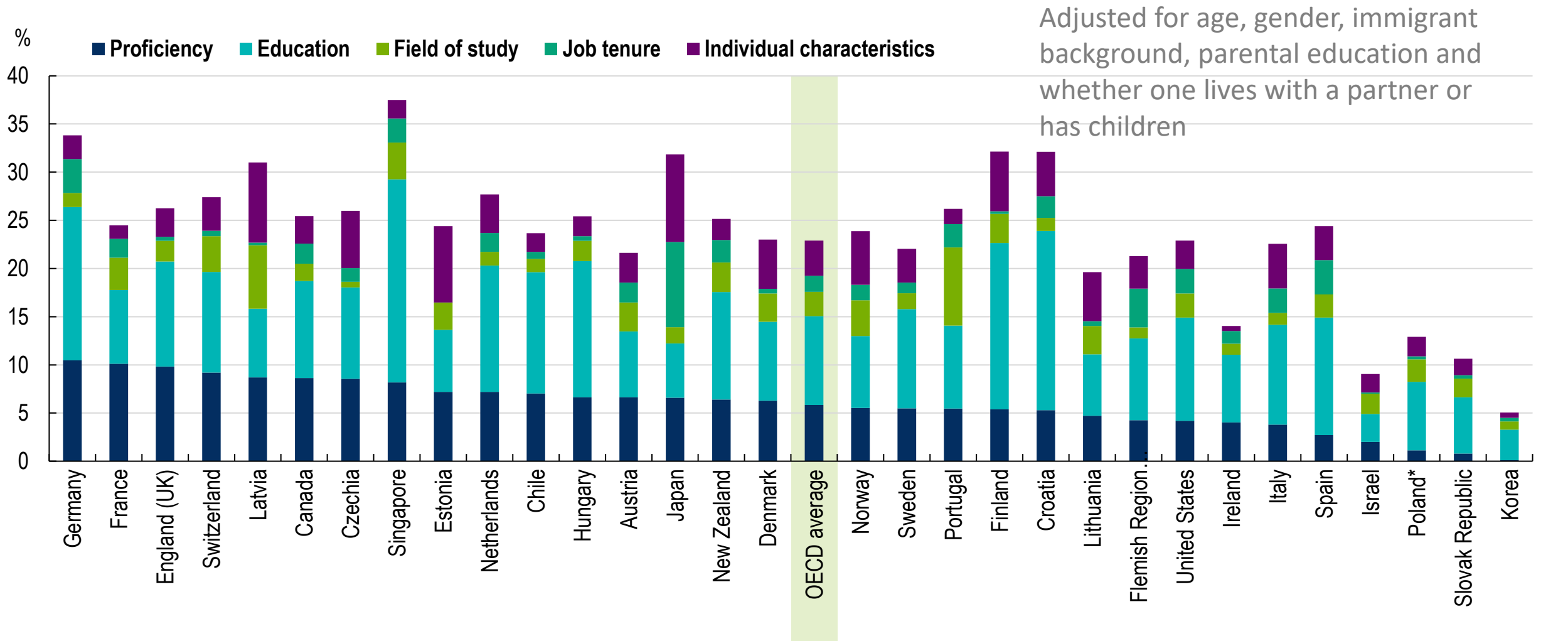
A conceptual image showing a hand in a dark suit sleeve offering a fan of Euro banknotes (including 100 and 50 Euro notes) to a gloved hand in a light-colored work jacket sleeve. The background is white.

# **Outcomes of investments in skills**

**Employment, earnings, social outcomes**



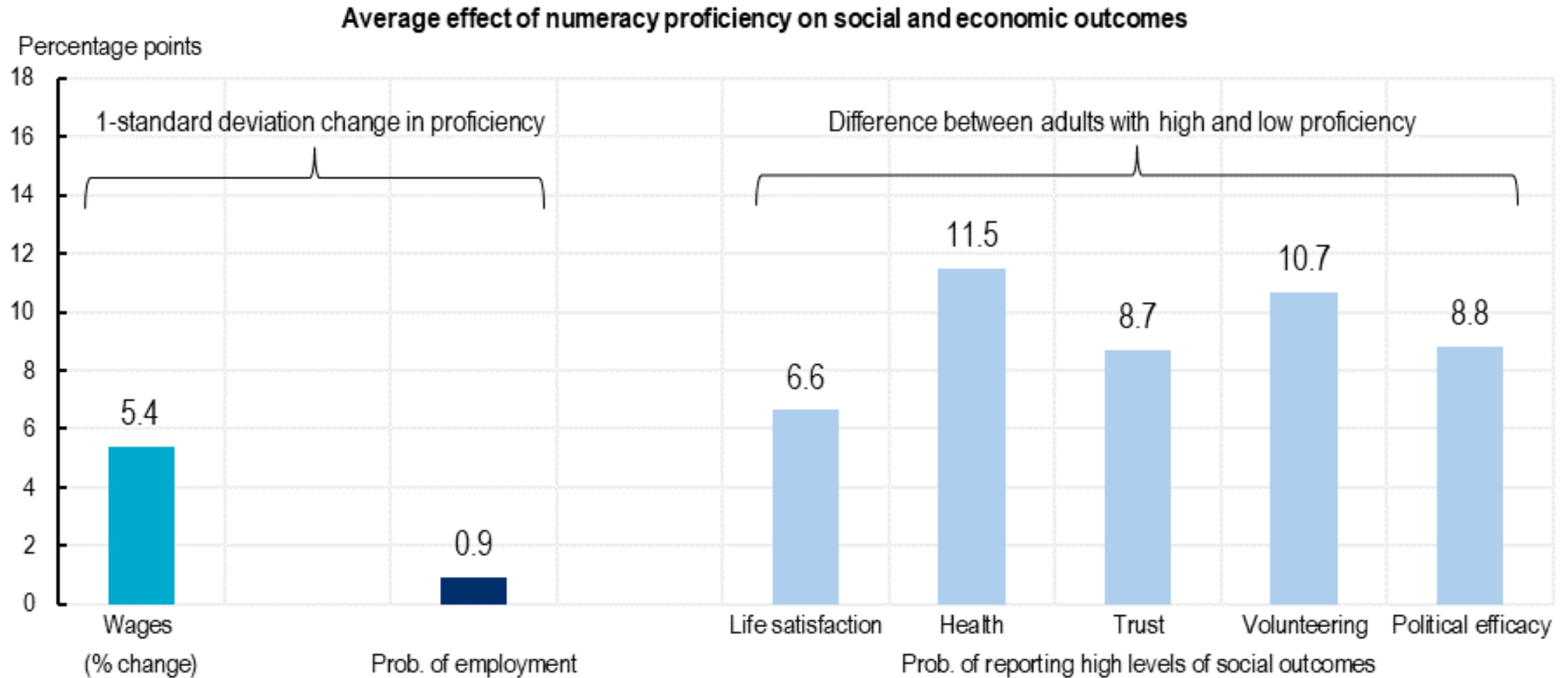
## Percentage of variation in wages explained by observable characteristics



Employed adults aged 25-65 not in formal education



## Skills, economic and social outcomes (PIAAC)



\* Averages refer to the participating OECD countries and economies.

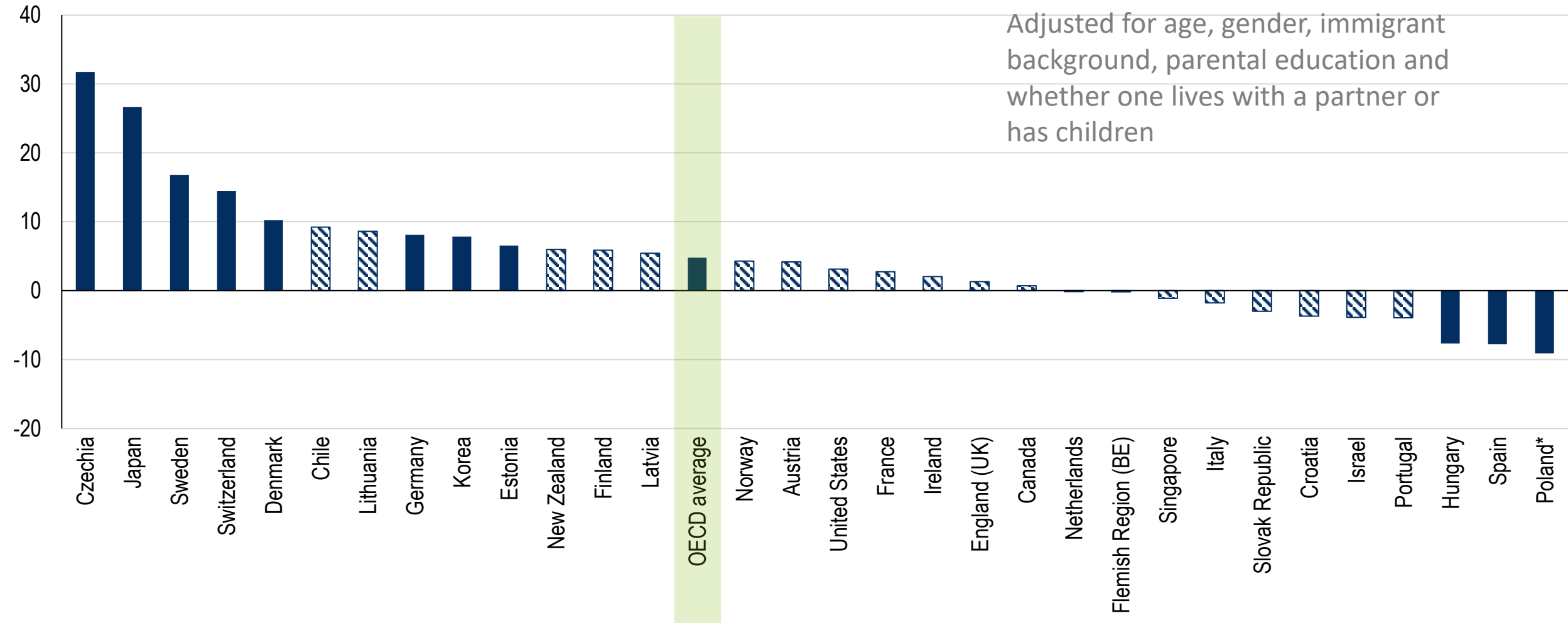


## Skills can be positively or negatively associated with political efficacy

Figure 4.12

### Difference in likelihood of reporting high political efficacy (high minus low proficiency)

Percentage points

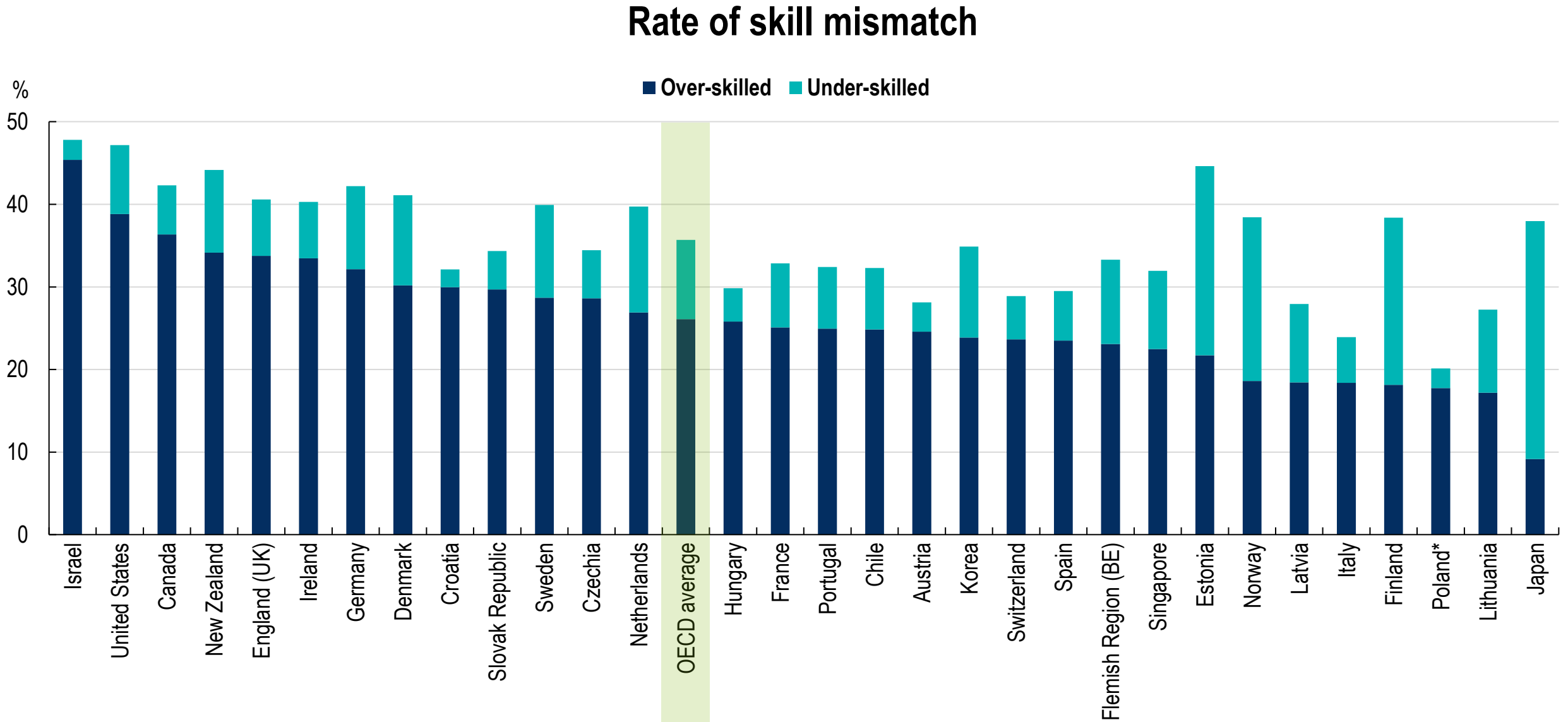


Adults aged 25-65



# Mismatch between the skills people have and what they need

Figure 4.13



Employed adults aged 25-65 who are not self-employed

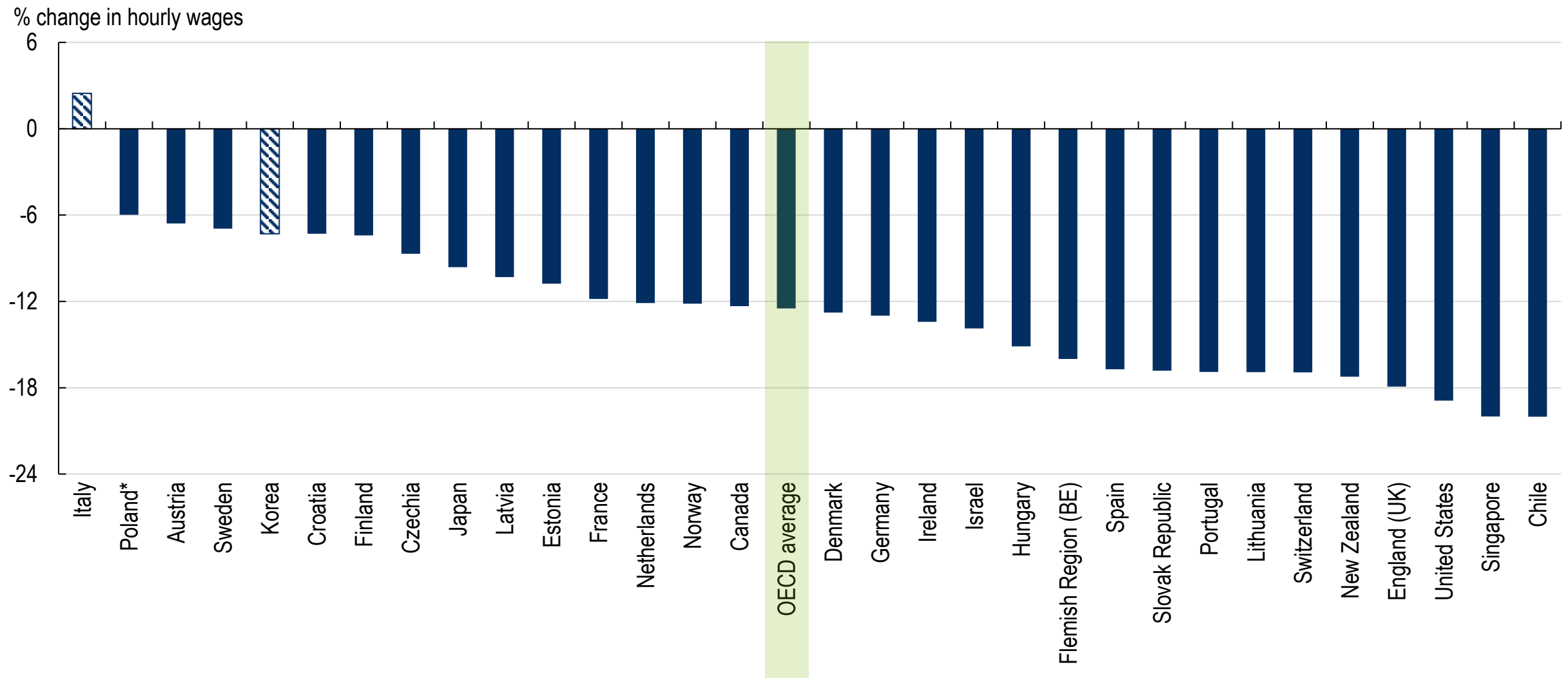




# Over-qualified workers face a 12% wage penalty

Figure 4.19

## Effect of over-qualification on wages



Employed adults aged 25-65 who are not self-employed



# Do Adults Have the Skills They Need to Thrive in a Changing World?

SURVEY OF ADULT SKILLS 2023



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