Paper 1/2 - Who are the students at risk of ESL in Spain? Preliminary results from a survey in Catalonia

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Early school leaving affects a higher proportion of Spanish young people (24.9%) than in many other European countries, competing only with some other Mediterranean states (Eurostat, LFS 2012). In spite of its extent throughout the country, no wide-scale survey focusing on ESL has been conducted to tackle relevant risk and protective factors in the experiences and trajectories of those students who are most likely to leave the education system after lower secondary level.

Drawing on data gathered in 50 high schools in the first wave of a large survey (N=2664) within the RESL.eu FP7 comparative project, this paper will analyse social, systemic/structural and individual variables with the aim to produce an initial typology of student profiles in relation to the risk of ESL according to socioeconomic status, immigrant background, gender and family language(s). This mapping will include comparative results from two previously-defined age cohorts (15/16 and 17/18 years old) that in the Spanish system correspond to students still in compulsory schooling on the one hand, and students in post-compulsory options of upper-secondary education on the other. The survey was conducted in two areas of Catalonia (Vallés Occidental and Maresme) with significant social, economic and demographic differences as well as diverse labour market opportunities. These preliminary results will be discussed in the light of a policy analysis carried out in the same areas in a previous stage of the same research project and other key literature on ESL in Spain.