

Education at a Glance 2025

United States

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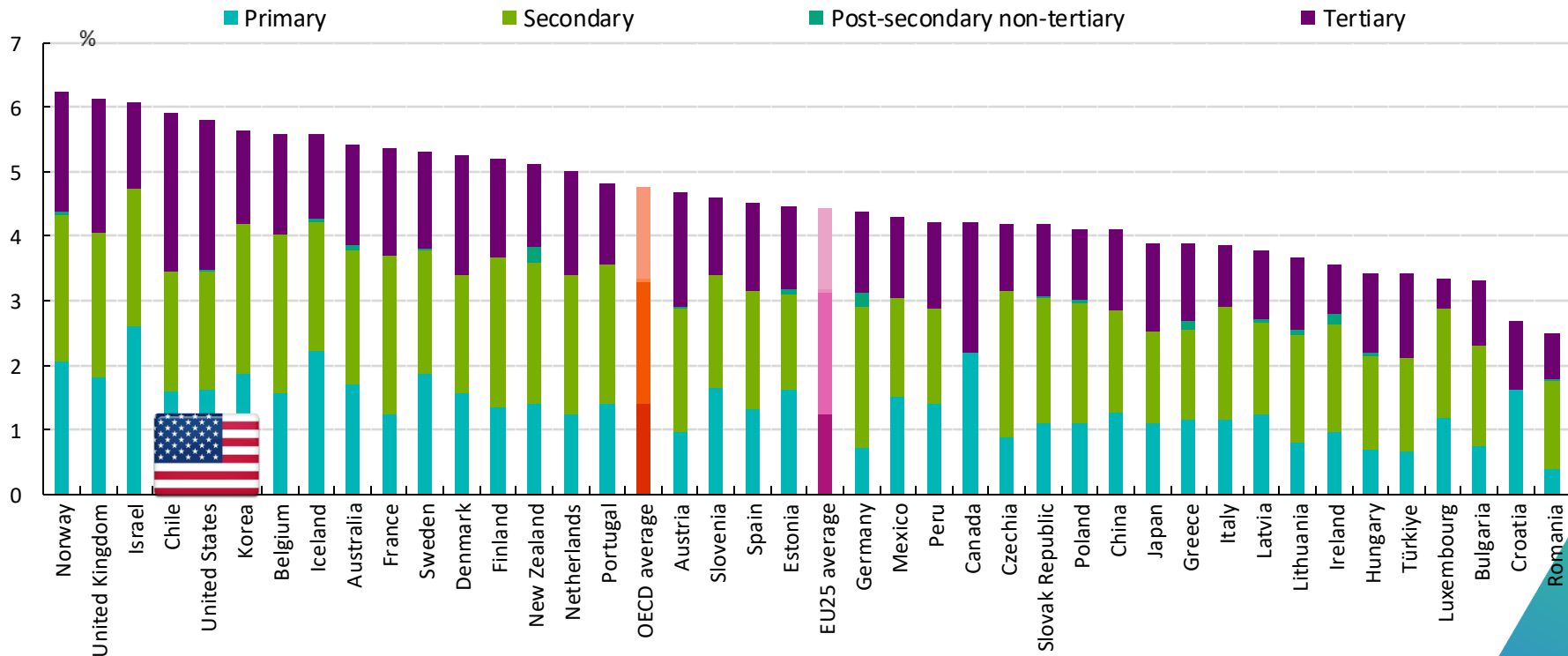
Investment in education and value for money





A comparatively large share of US national income goes into education

Expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP, by level of education (2022)

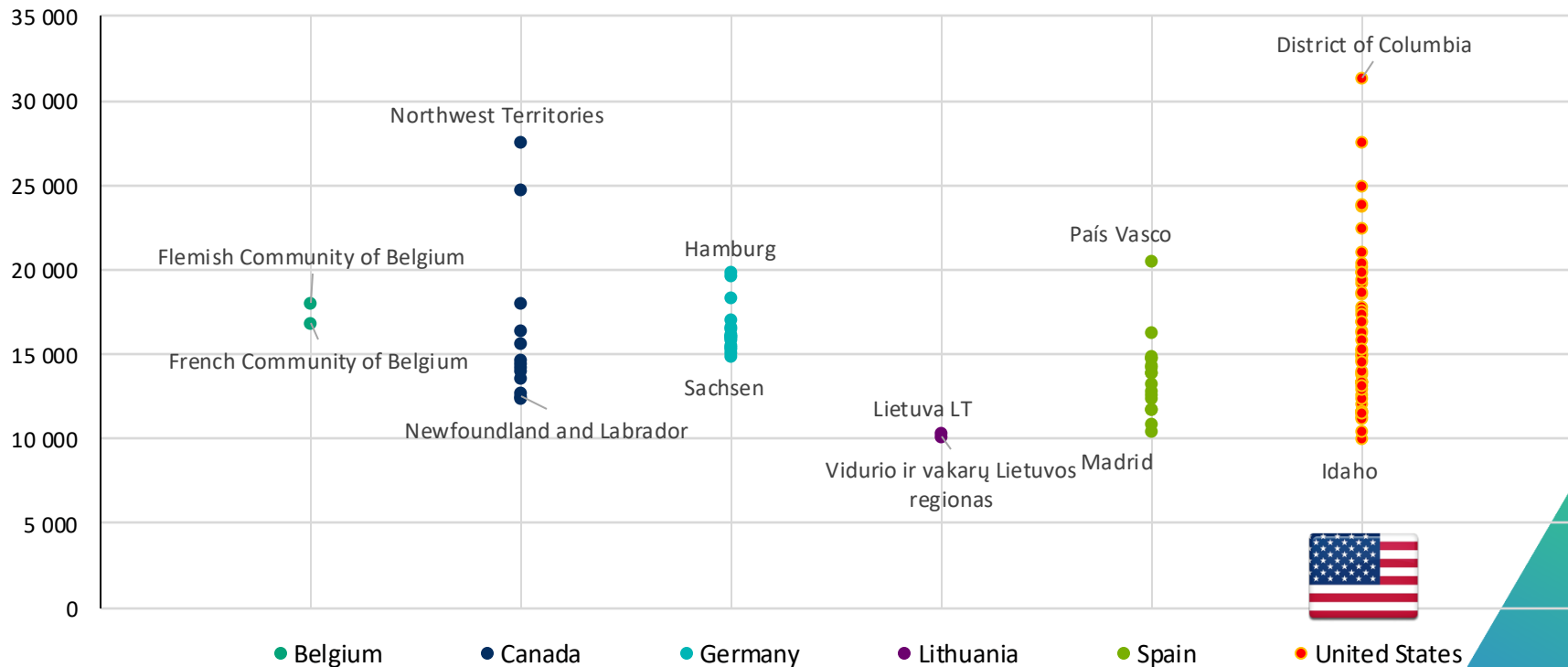


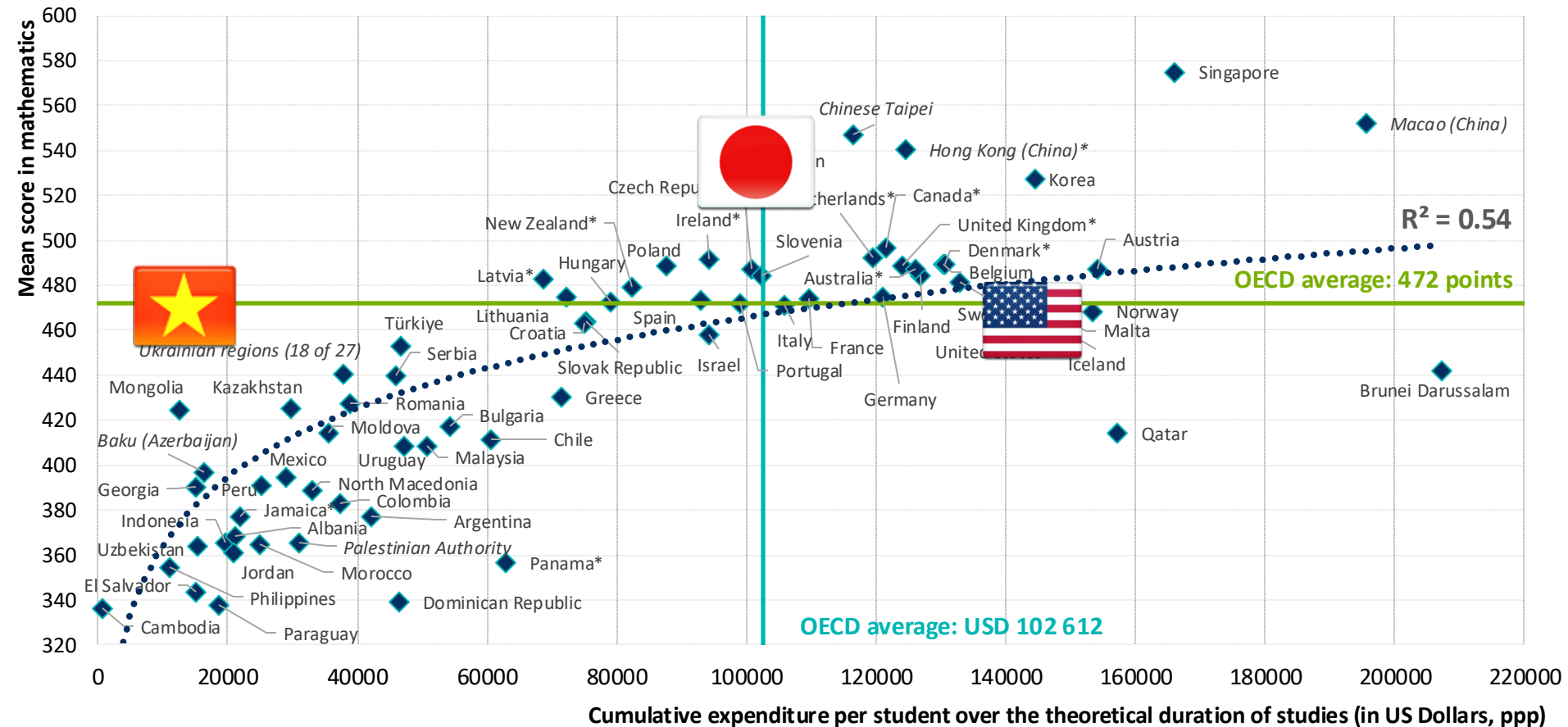


Expenditure per student varies widely across States

Regional variation in expenditure on educational institutions per full-time equivalent primary and secondary student (2022)

USD converted using PPPs

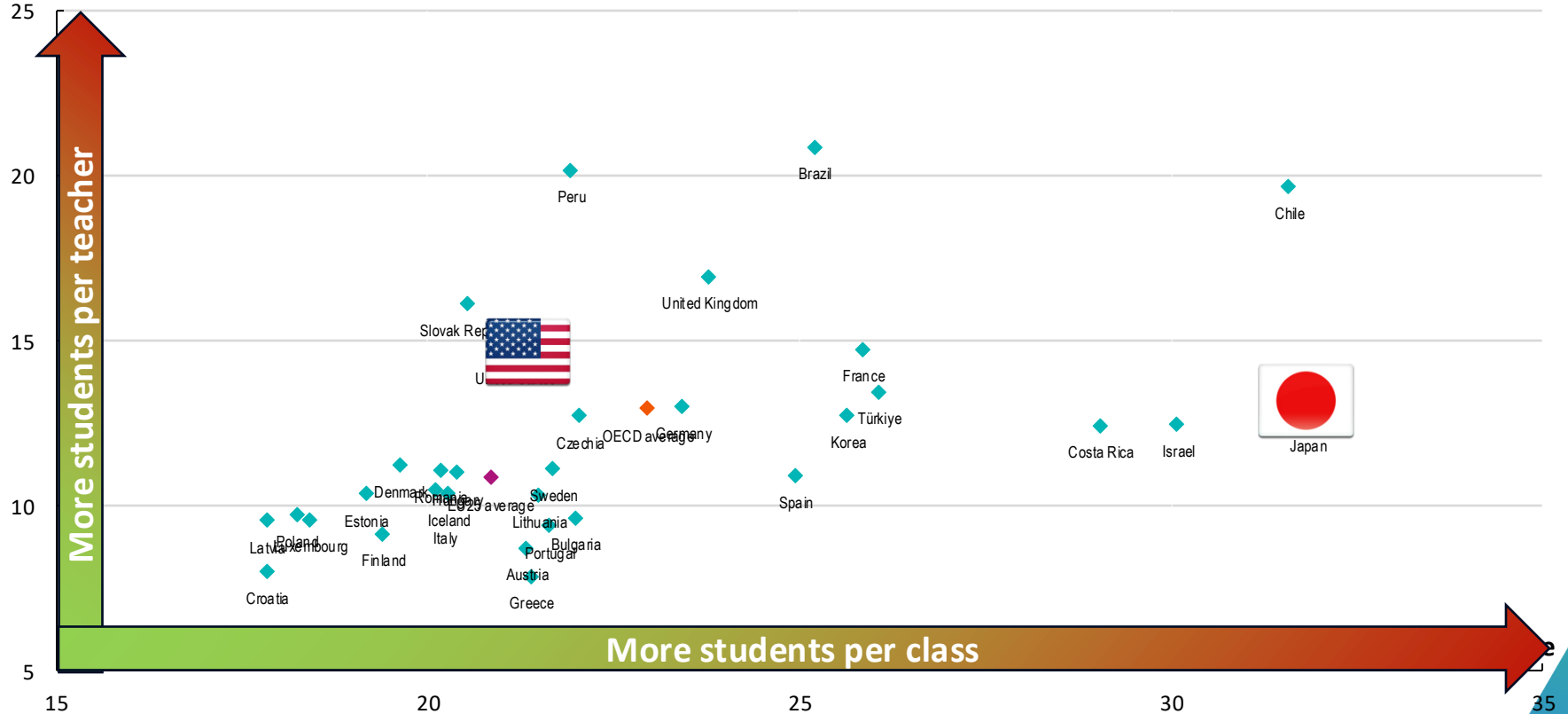






Smaller classes or better teachers?

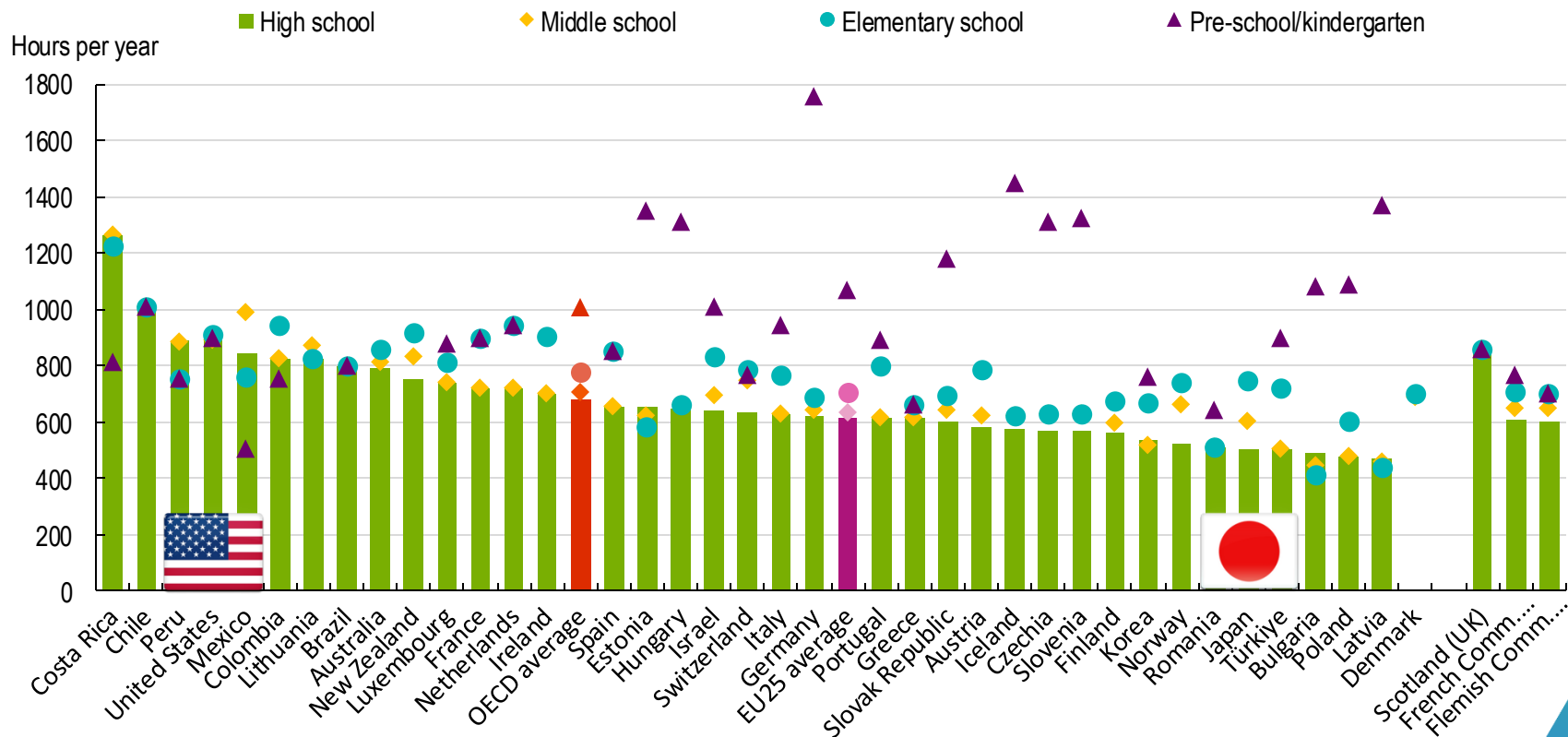
Student-teacher ratio





US teachers teach a high number of hours annually

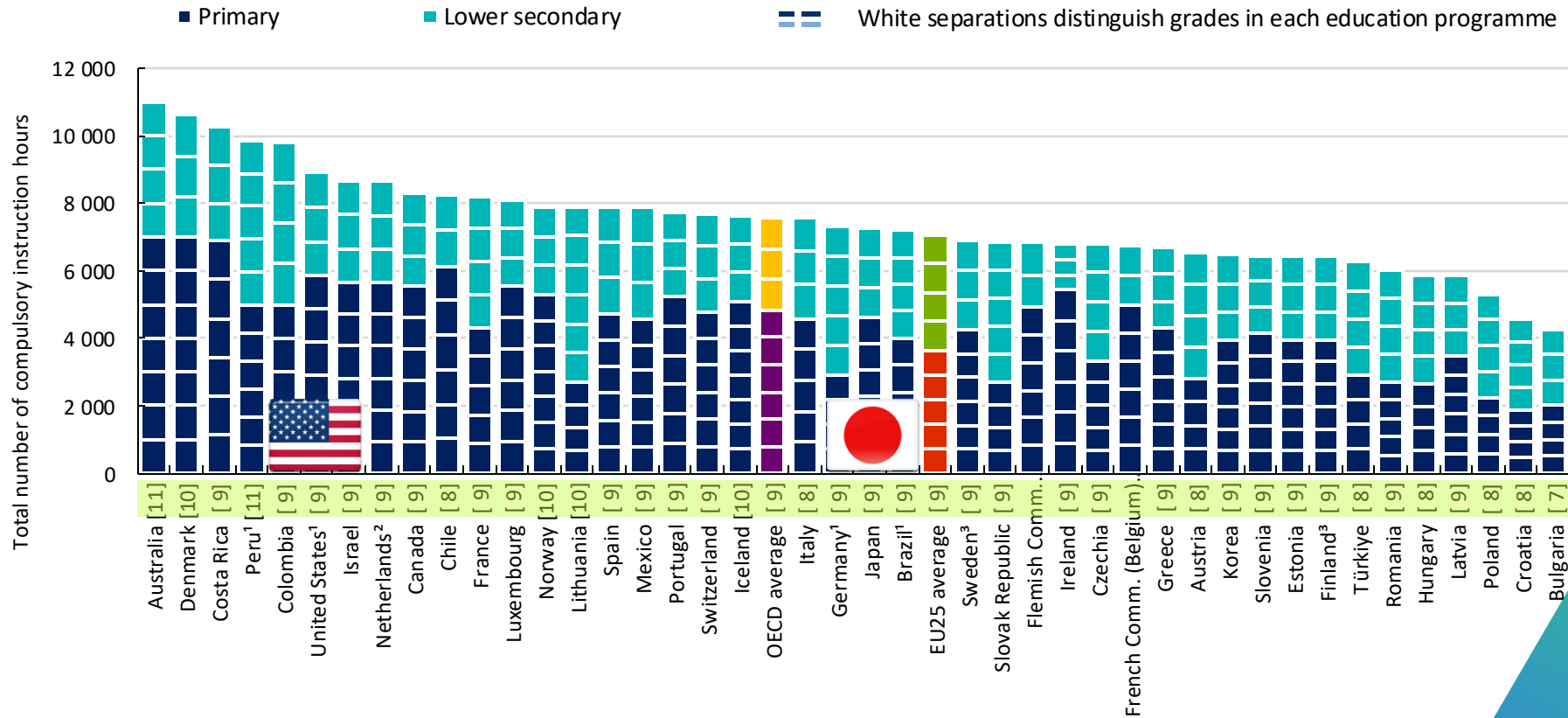
Teaching time of teachers, by level of education (2023)





Schools days in the US are long (compulsory instruction time)

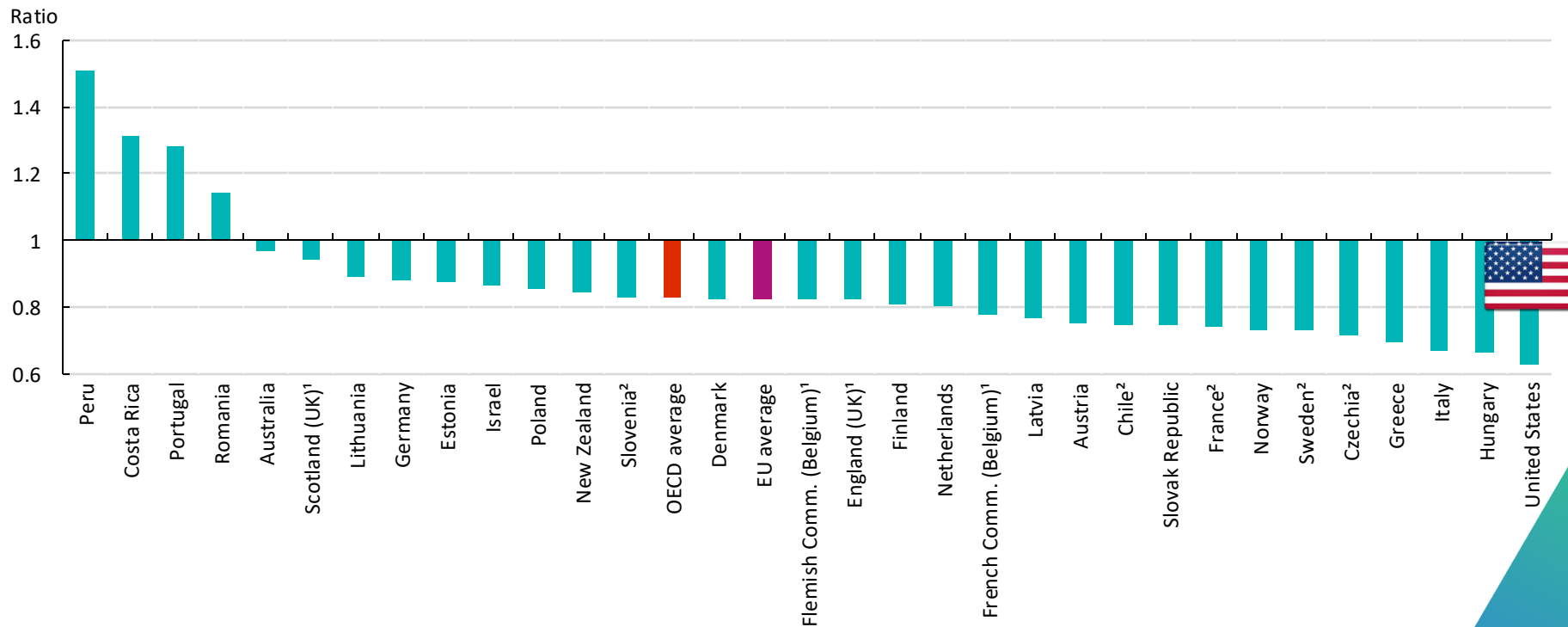
Compulsory instruction time in general education (2025)





Teacher salaries in the US are low compared to similarly educated workers

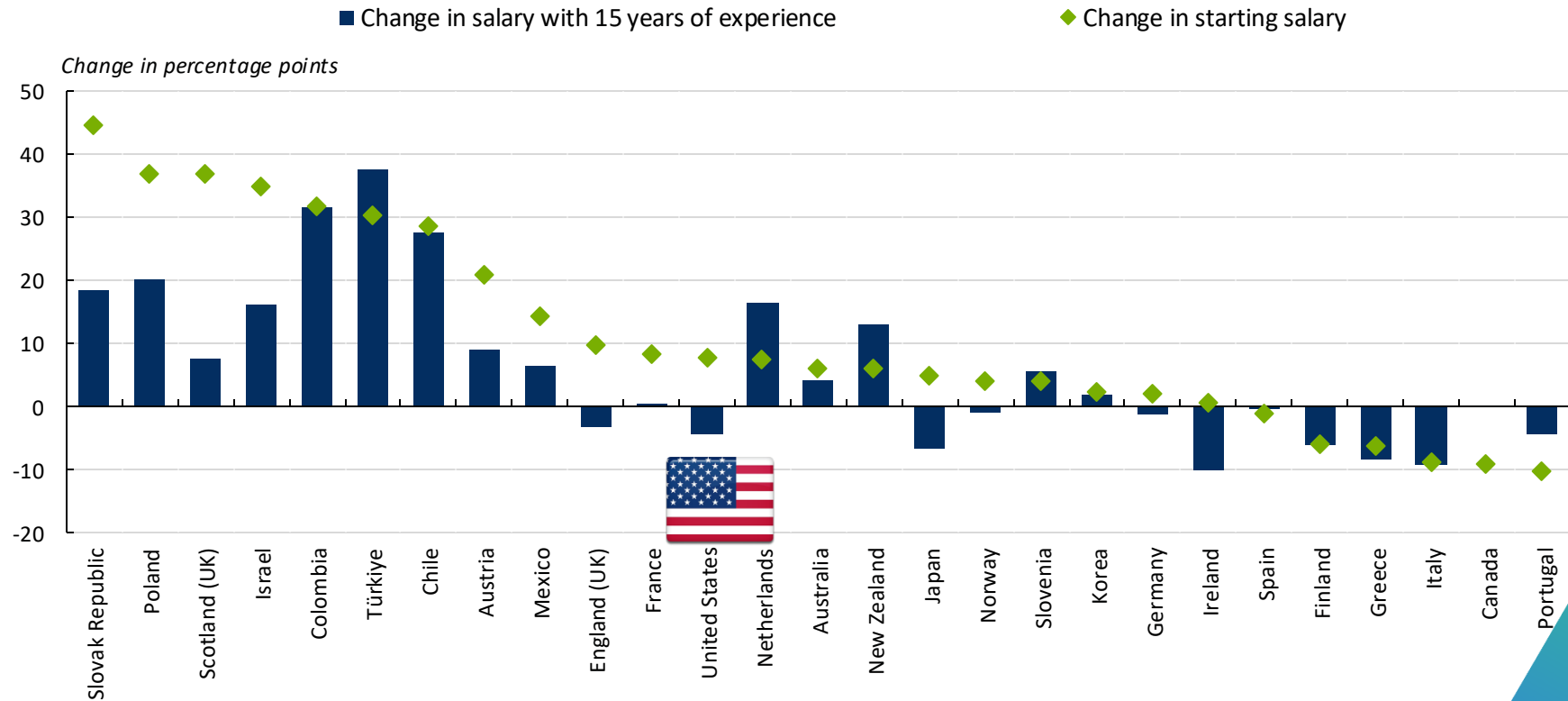
Actual salaries of primary teachers relative to earnings of tertiary-educated workers (2024)





Changes in teacher salaries

Change in primary teachers' statutory salaries between 2015 and 2024 (most prevalent qualifications after 15 years)

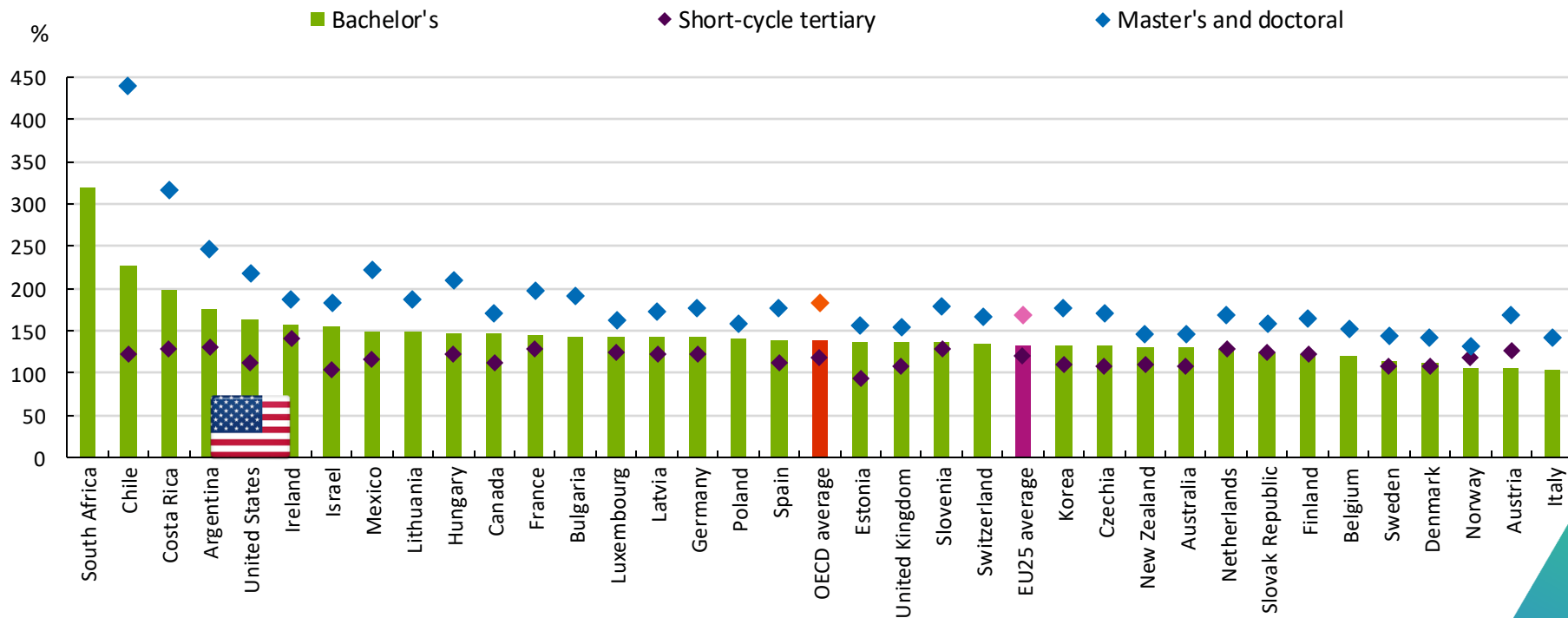


The benefits of college education are high but opportunities are unequal



Higher levels of tertiary qualifications are associated with higher earnings

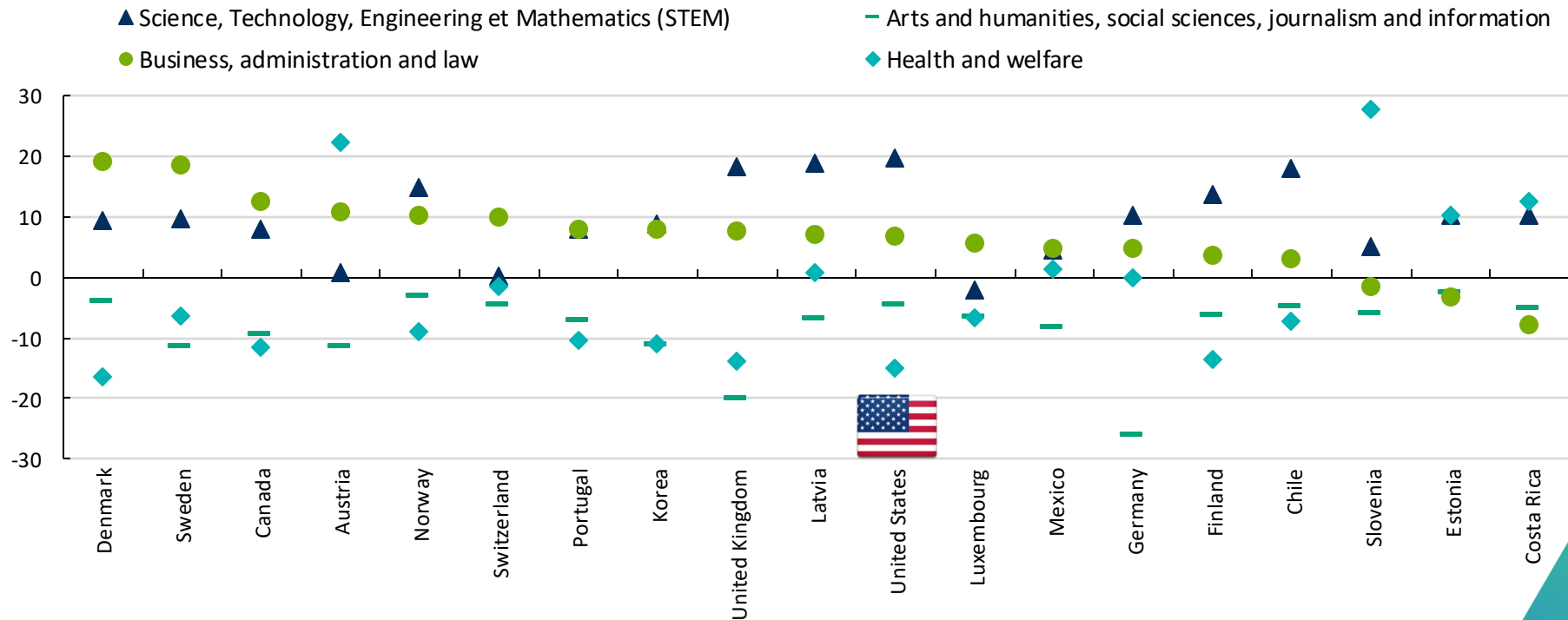
Relative earnings of tertiary-educated workers, by level of educational attainment (2023)





Fields of study have strong effects on earnings

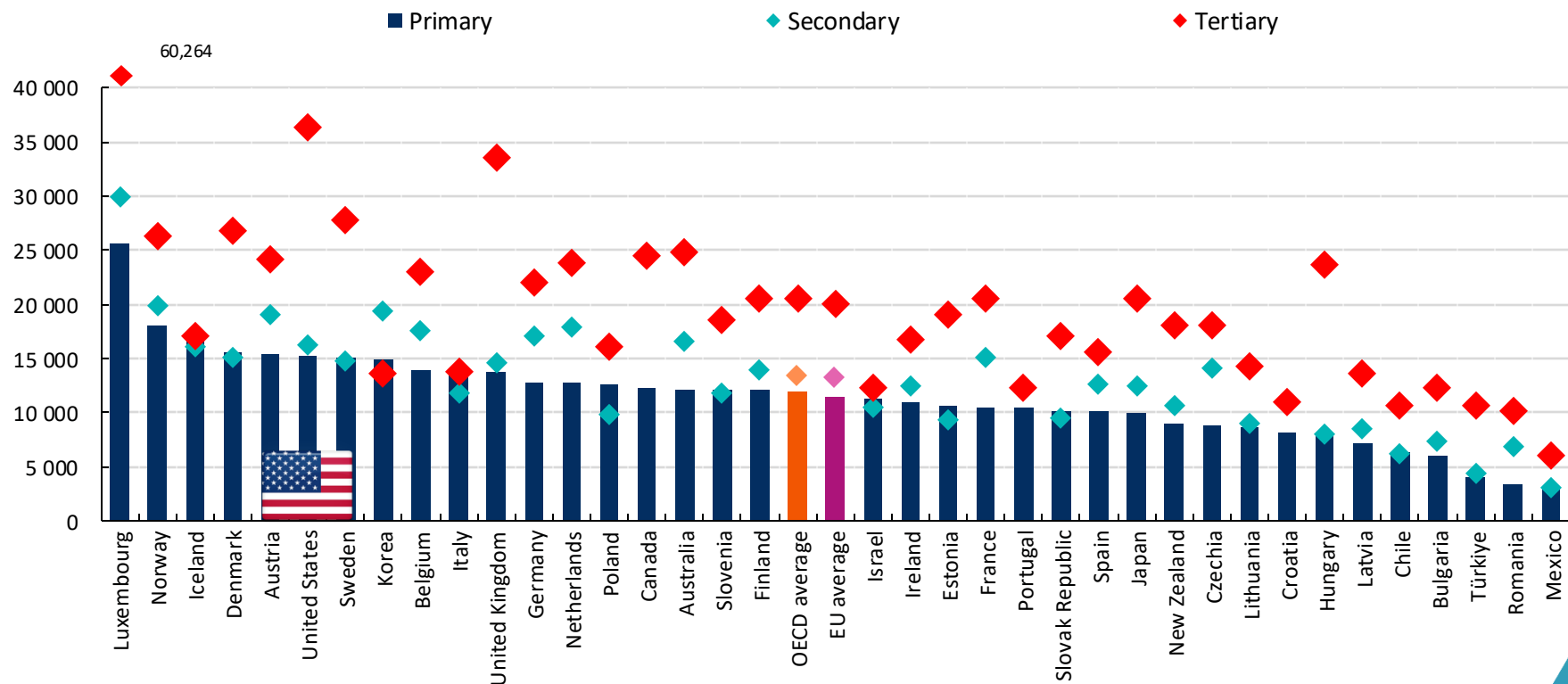
Relative earnings of tertiary-educated adults (25-64-year-olds), by field of study (2023)





Expenditure per student is high in the US, especially at tertiary level

Total expenditure per full-time equivalent student in primary, secondary and tertiary education (2021)



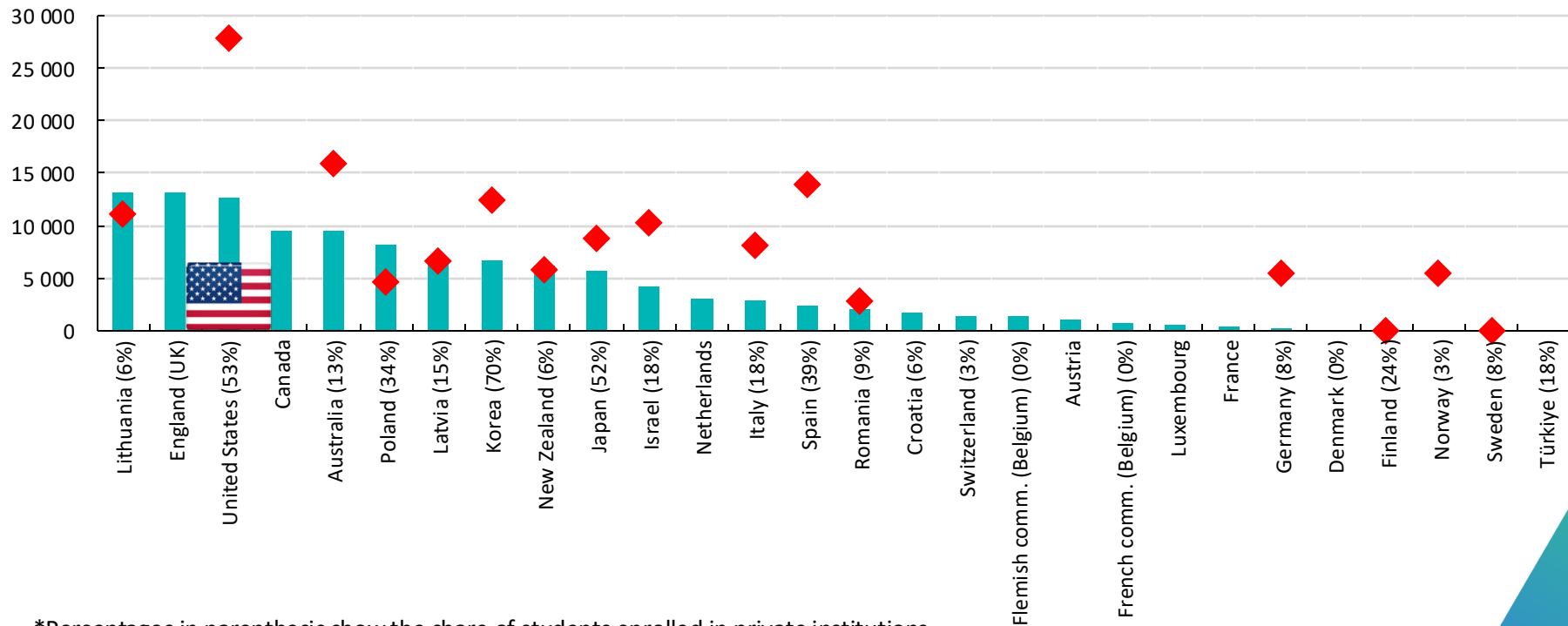


Tuition fees are very high in the US

Annual average tuition fees charged to national students for master's or equivalent programmes, by type of institution (2022/23)

USD converted using PPPs

■ Public institutions ◆ Independent private institutions



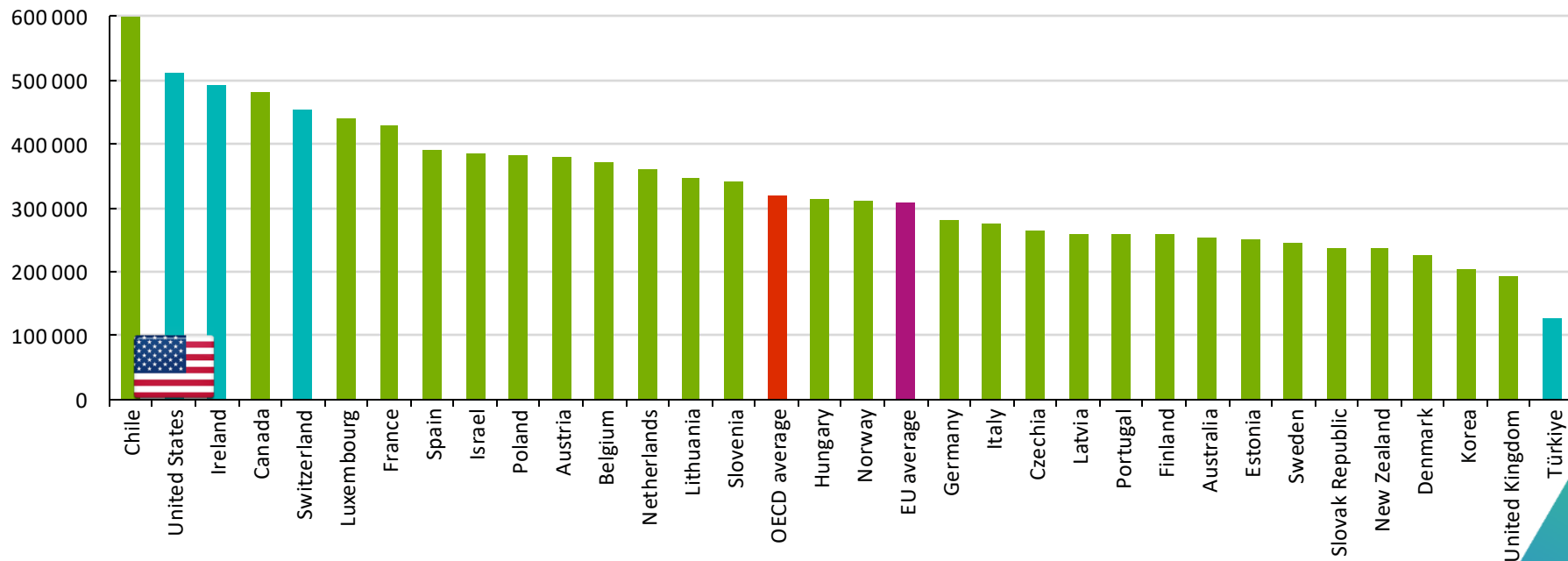
*Percentages in parenthesis show the share of students enrolled in private institutions



Despite high tuition, lifetime financial returns remain high in the US

Private financial returns for a woman attaining a short-cycle tertiary degree or a bachelor's or higher degree (2022)

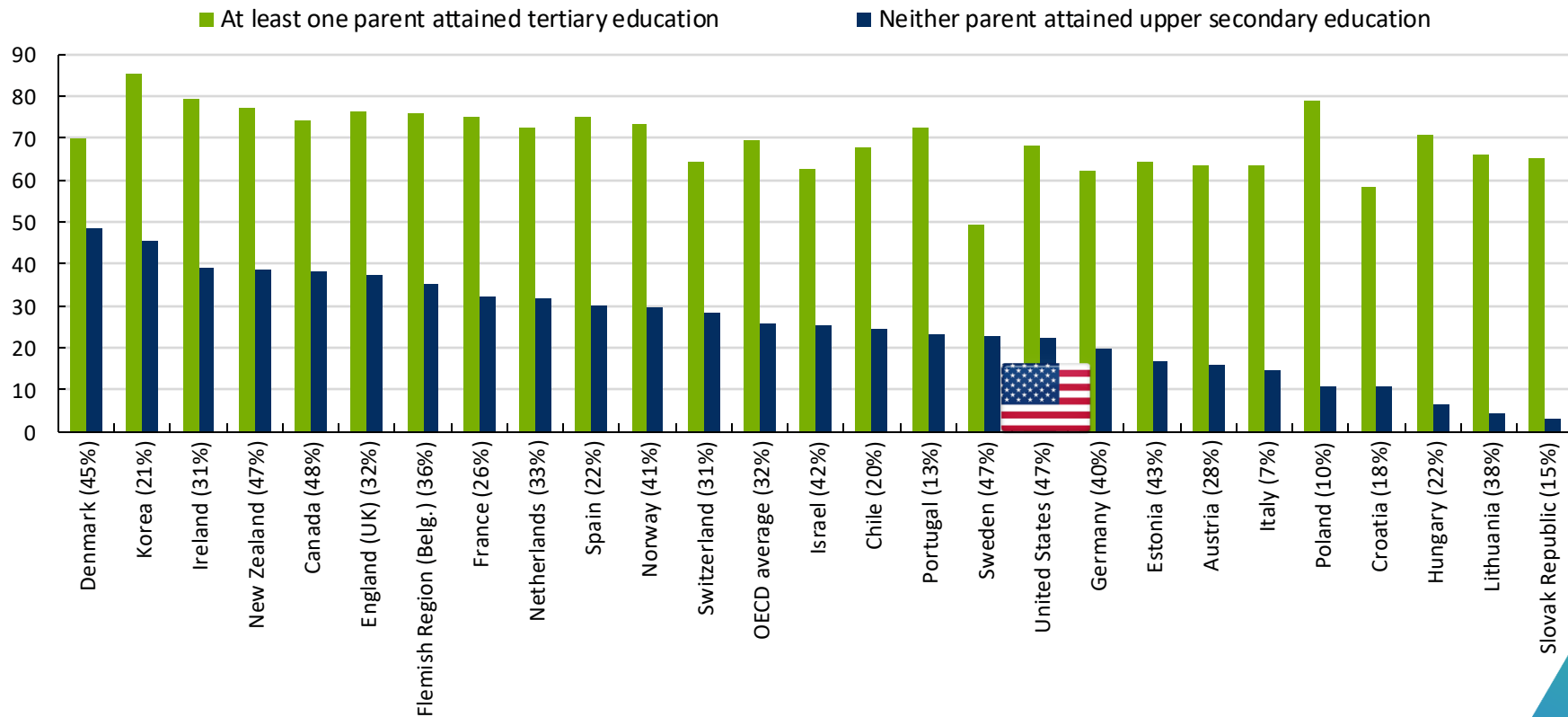
■ Bachelor's, master's and doctoral ■ Tertiary programmes (all combined)





The chances for youth without college-educated parents to get a degree are much lower

Share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary education, by parental educational attainment (2023)



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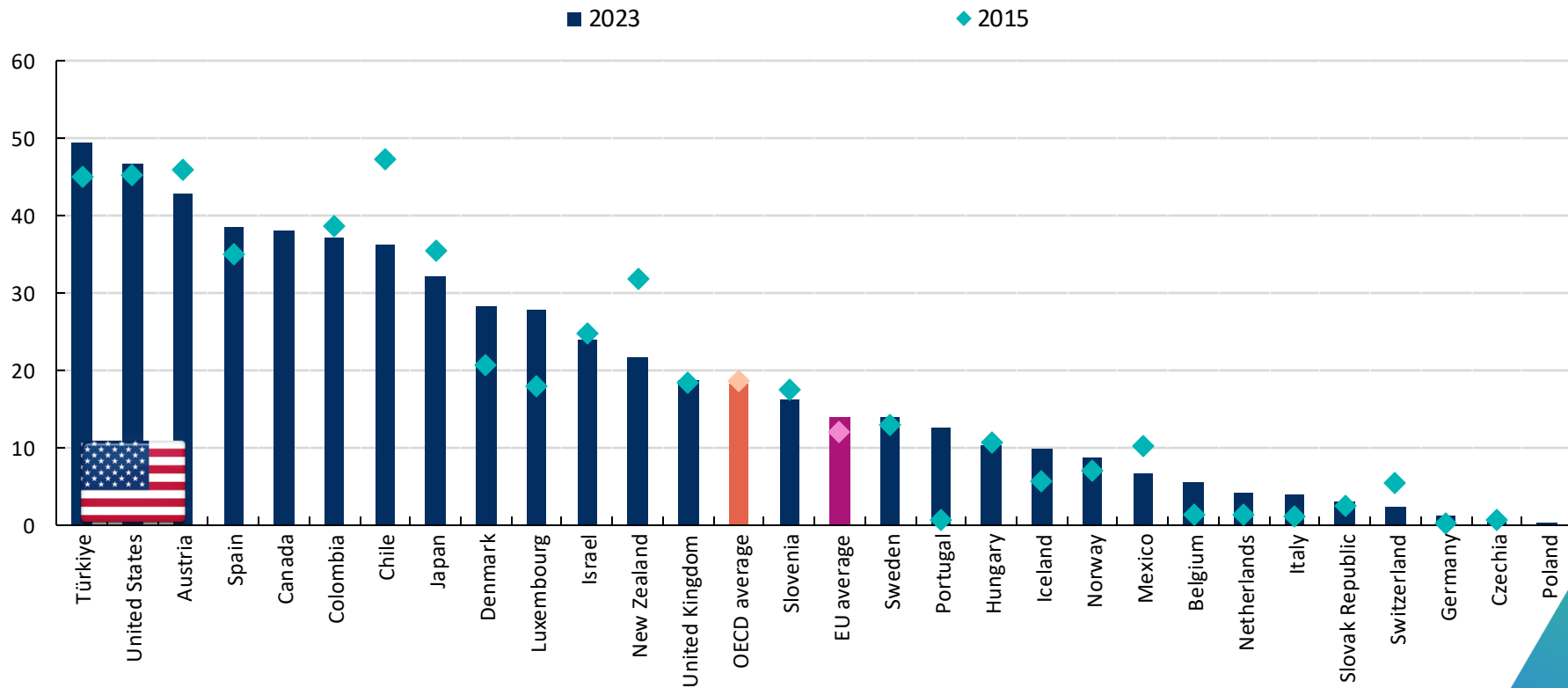
**Many countries have well-paid career pathways
for those without a bachelor's degree**





Short-cycle tertiary programmes are common in the United States...

Share of short-cycle tertiary programmes among all first-time tertiary entrants (2015 and 2023)



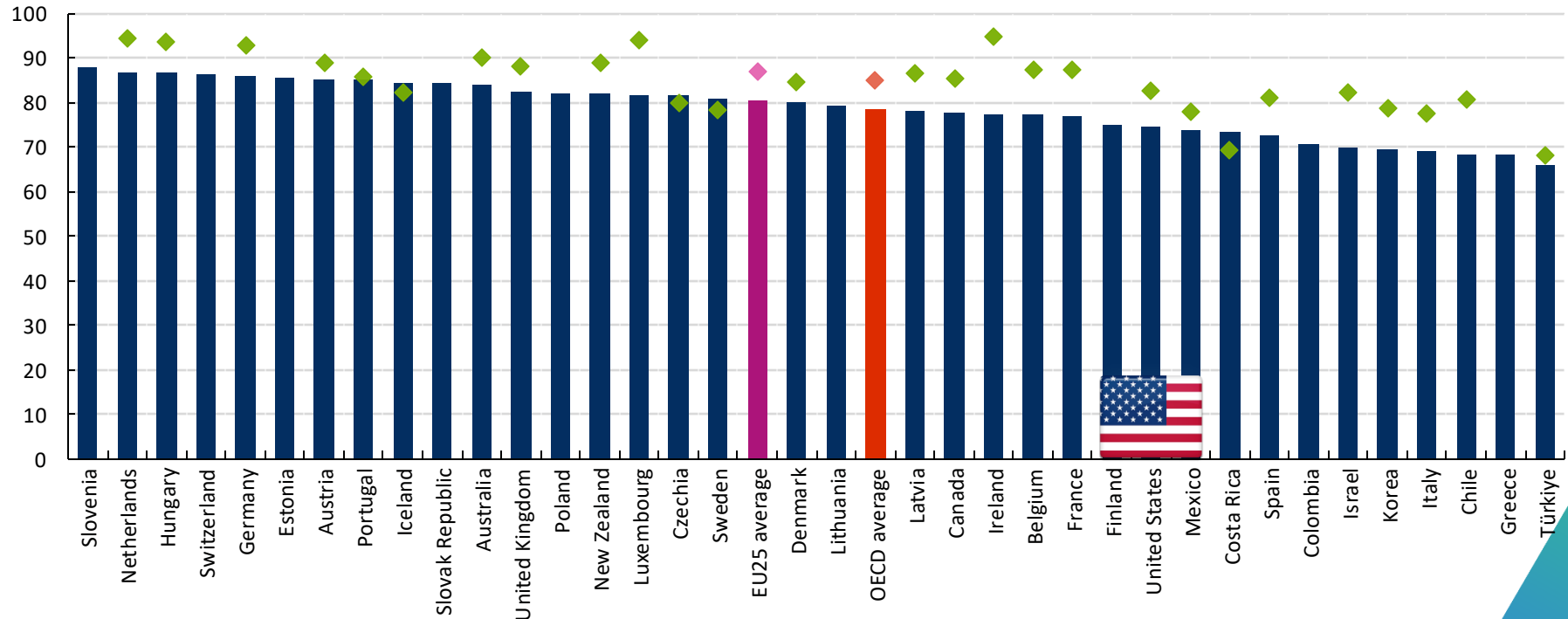


...but employment rates of short-cycle programmes are low

Employment rates of 25-34 year-olds, by educational attainment (2024)

■ Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary

◆ Short-cycle tertiary

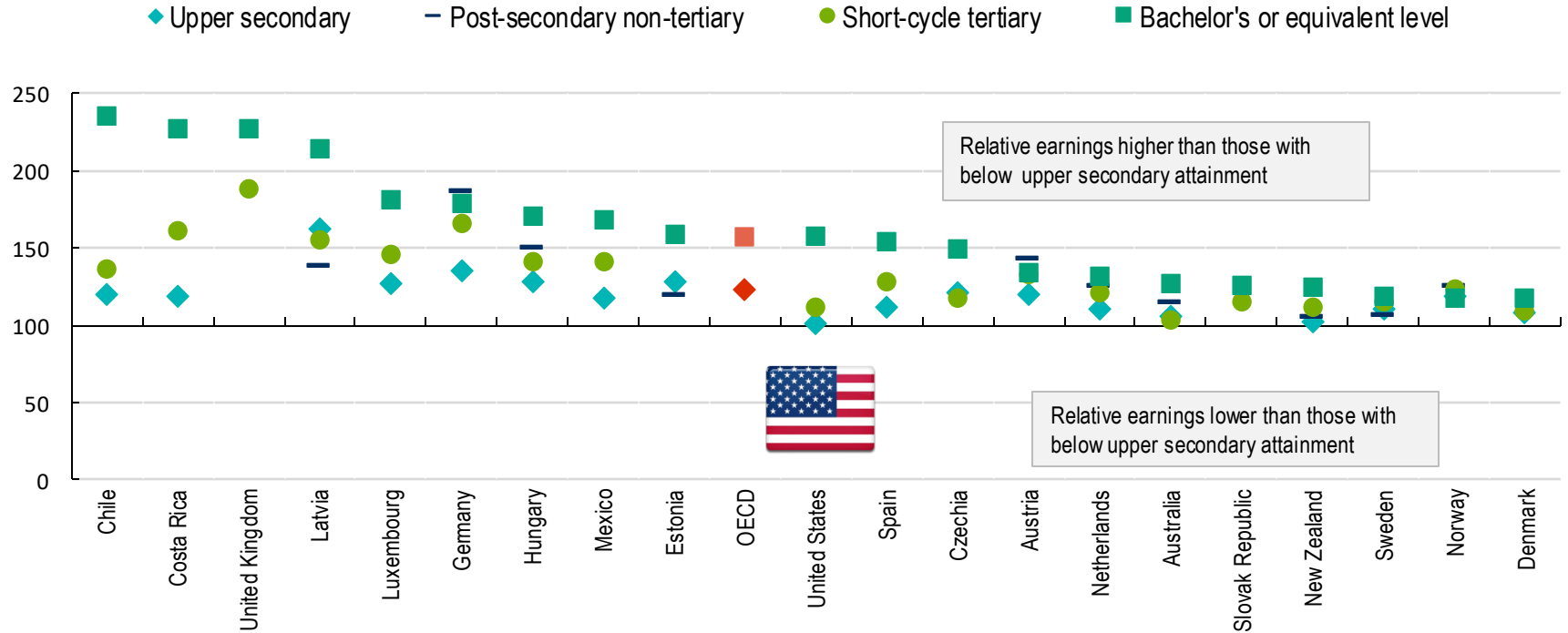




Few well-paid jobs without a bachelor's qualification in the US

Earnings of workers relative to the earnings of workers with below upper secondary attainment (2023)

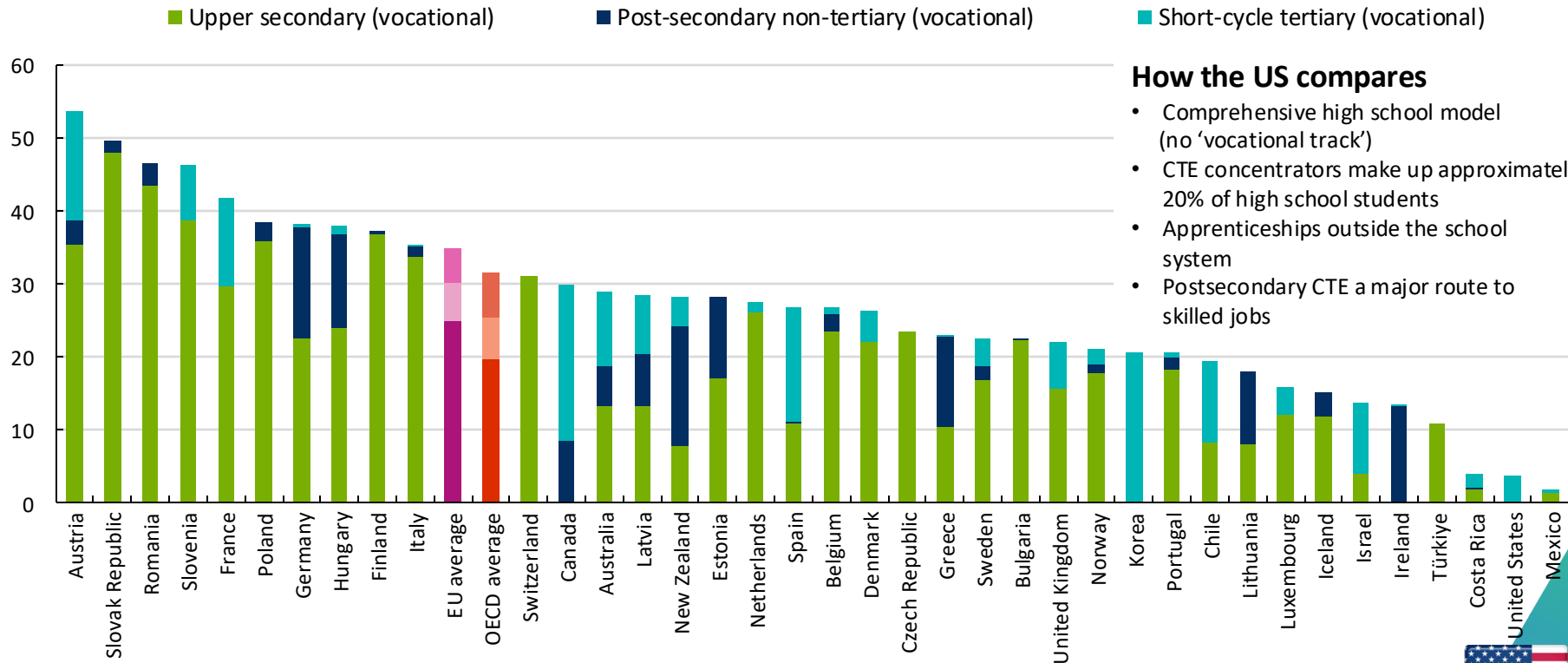
In per cent; 25-34 year-olds





Dedicated career and technical programs are nearly absent in the US at the upper secondary level

Share of 25-34 year-olds whose highest level of education has a vocational orientation, by level of educational attainment (2022)



How the US compares

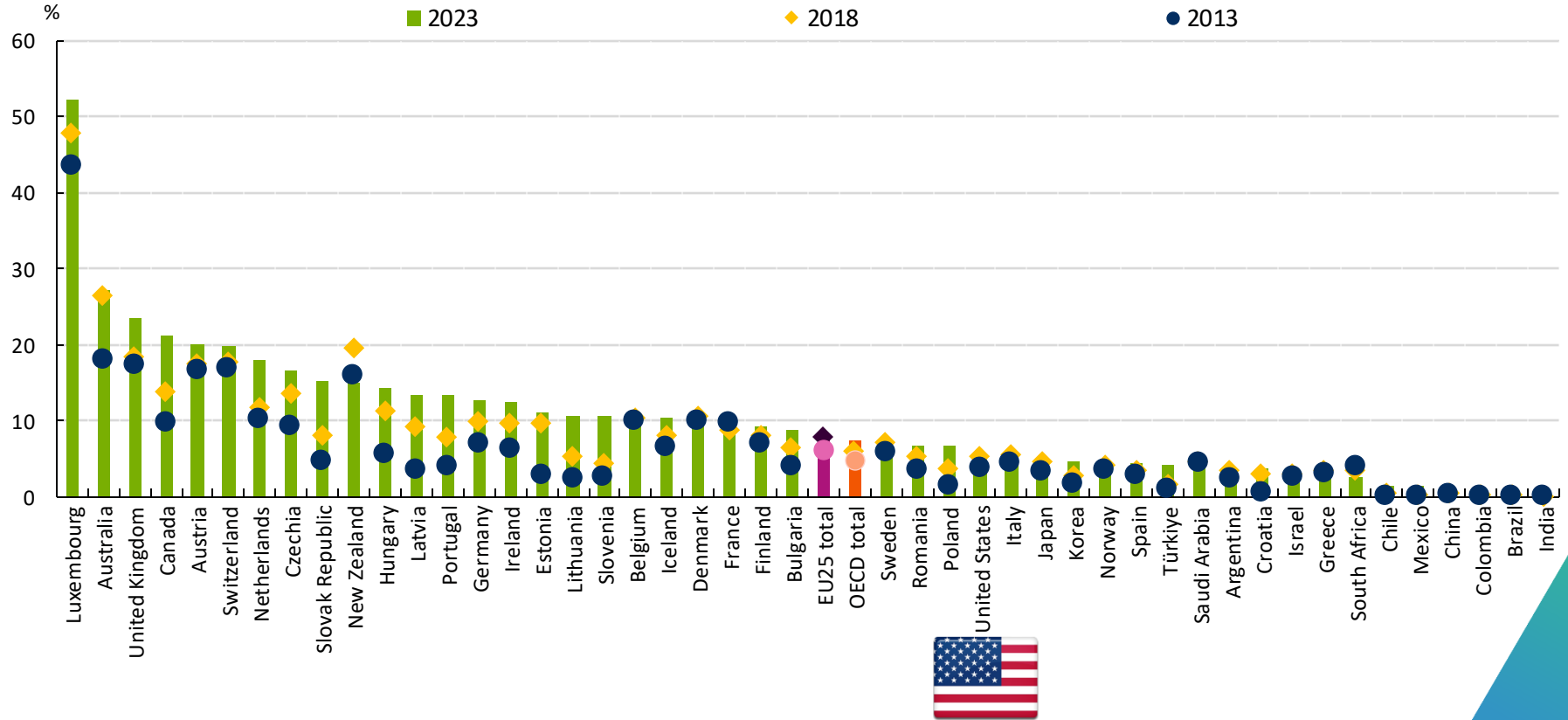
- Comprehensive high school model (no 'vocational track')
- CTE concentrators make up approximately 20% of high school students
- Apprenticeships outside the school system
- Postsecondary CTE a major route to skilled jobs





International student mobility continues to increase almost everywhere

Trends in the share of international or foreign students in tertiary education (2013, 2018 and 2023)



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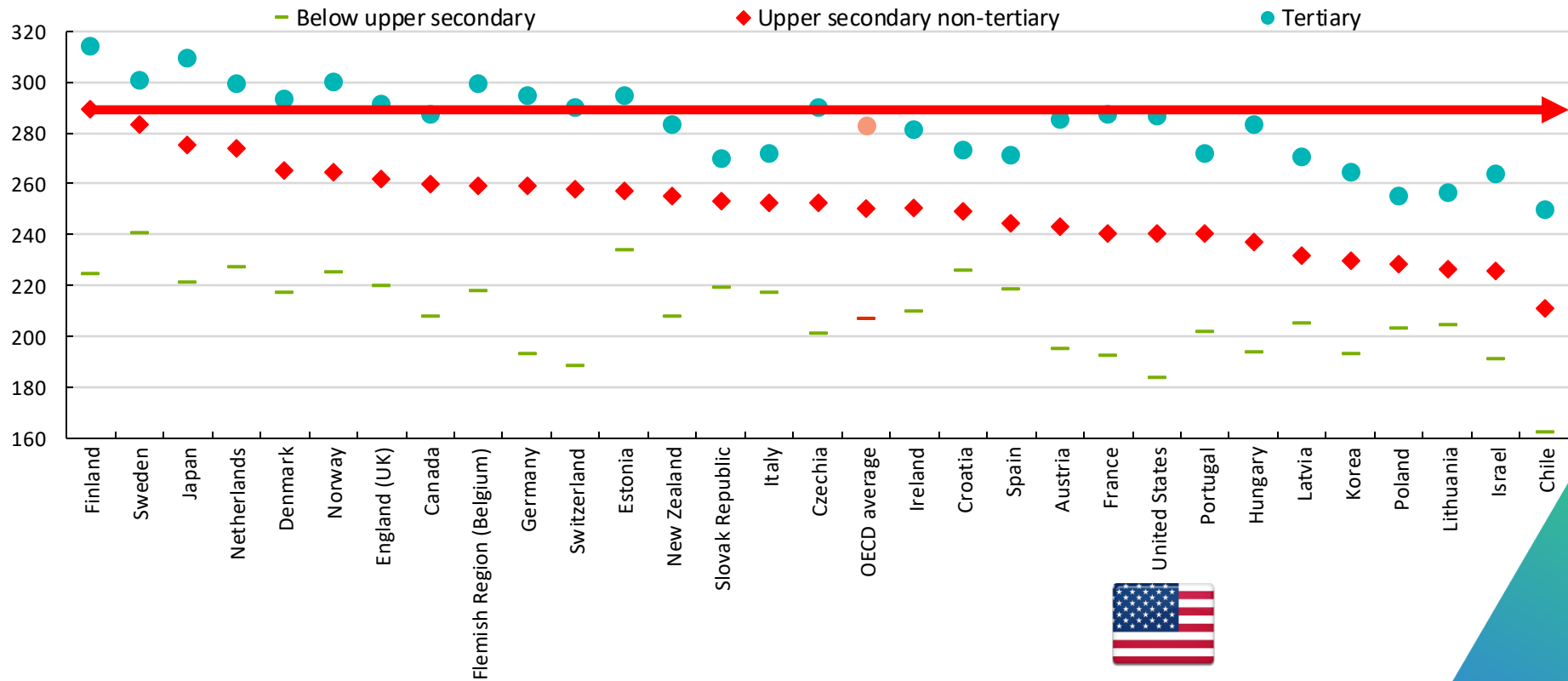
Degrees do not always equal skills





The skills value of qualifications varies across countries

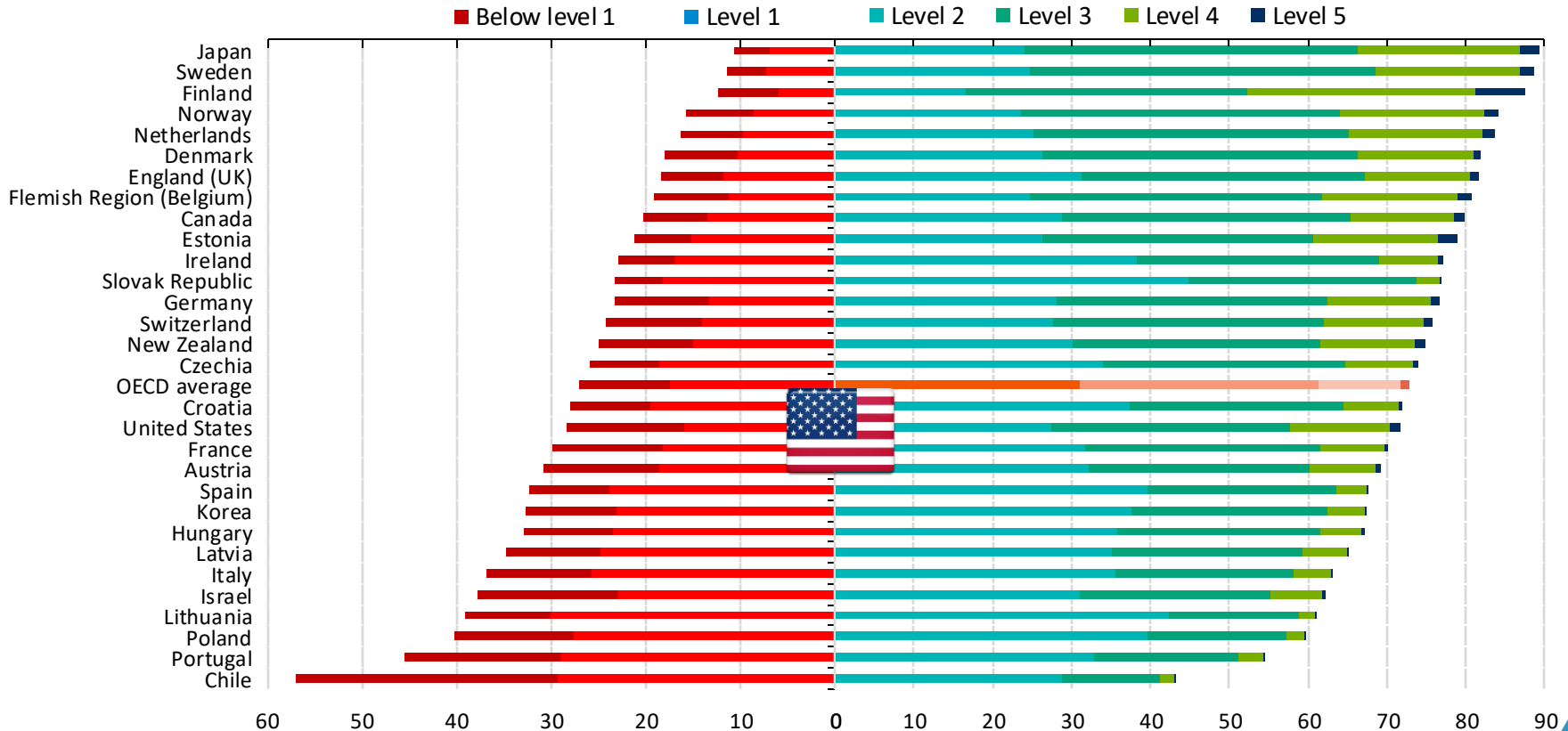
Adults' mean literacy proficiency, by educational attainment (2023)





A large share of adults has very low literacy skills

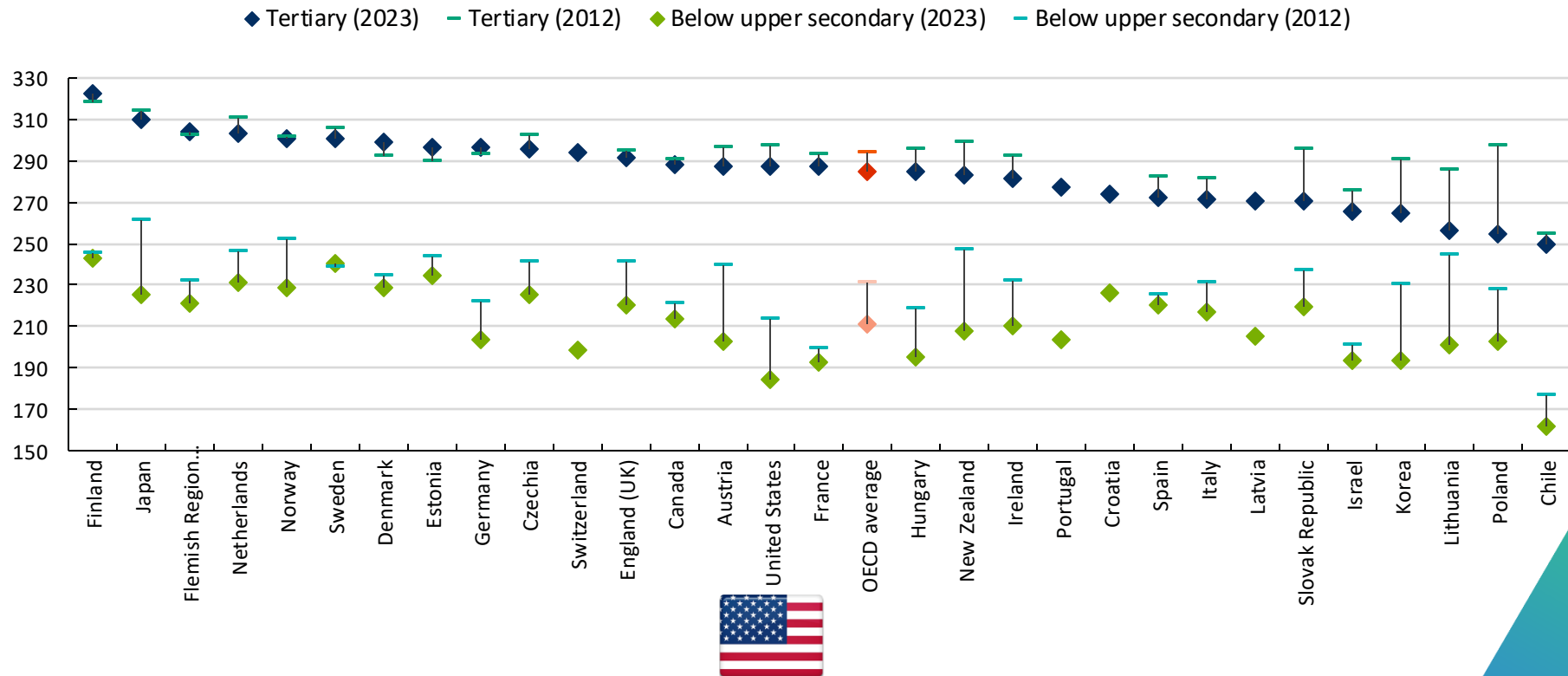
Proficiency in literacy among adults (2023)





Skill levels have been declining among adults with low attainment

Trends in adults' mean literacy proficiency, by educational attainment (2012 and 2023)



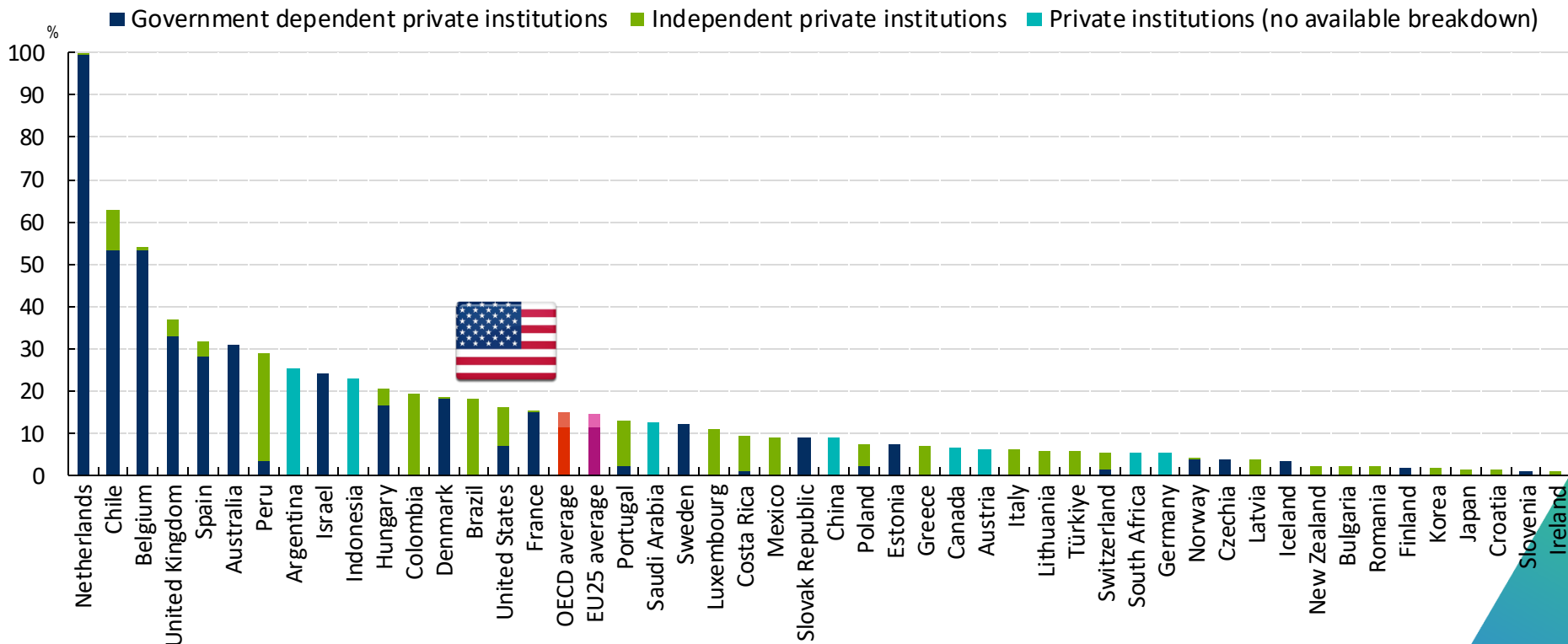
Private schools are less common in the U.S.
than in some other countries





Private schools are not as common in the US as in some other countries

Share of students enrolled in private institutions in primary education, by type of institution (2022)



* Enrolment in government dependent private institutions in the US includes charter schools (Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=30>)

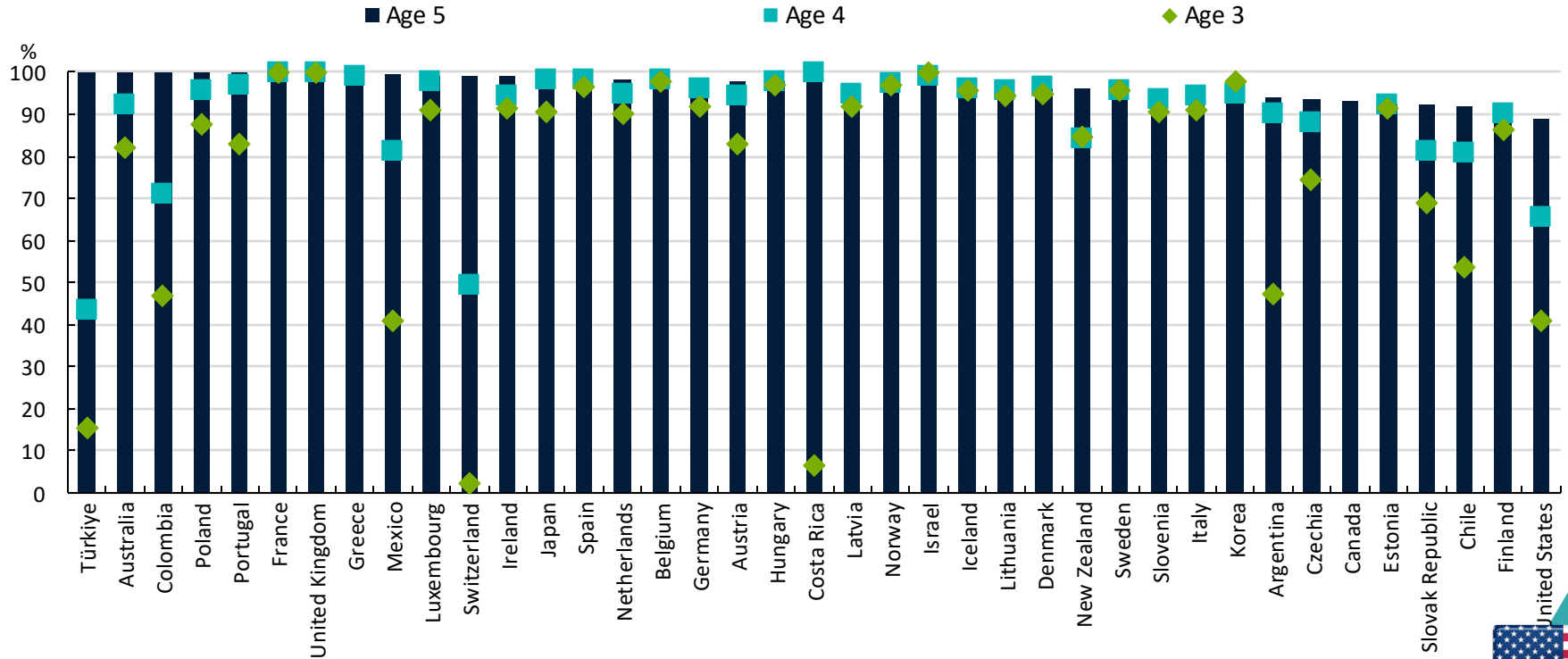
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Enrolment in pre-primary education is nearly universal in most countries – but not the US



Enrolment in early childhood education in the US is low

Enrolment rates of young children, by age (2023)





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