



# Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe

2023 edition | Eurydice report



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# Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe 2023 edition

Eurydice report

European Education and  
Culture Executive Agency

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

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## FOREWORD



A famous philosopher once said: “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world”. But when your language becomes two languages, three languages, or ten languages, then the limits really begin to blur. In languages, we think, feel, imagine, and plan. They dictate how we communicate our knowledge, belief, experience, desire. Language is how we reveal ourselves and how we understand others. After all, we use languages to bring change in society and to invent our future.

Languages are thus central to our lives and play a fundamental role in education. Europe is a linguistically diverse continent. Language diversity is also an actuality in many of our

schools. This reality brings rich opportunities to all students, notably by fostering their interest in the wide world and developing their intercultural skills. Nevertheless, we have to pay attention to properly support students learning at school in another language than their home or first languages.

Supporting language diversity and language learning has been a constant policy line of the European Union (EU). Europe’s own linguistic diversity and the EU’s early ambition to create a common space where people can freely circulate across borders sensibly called for strong commitments in promoting language learning.

In education, more specifically, our goal is to build a European Education Area where all young people receive quality education. In that context, the mastery of languages is a key competence that opens doors to unrivalled learning experiences in Europe, and beyond. In fact, for many years, we have been pursuing a policy that encourages all young people to acquire foreign language competences from an early age, so that by the end of secondary education they are capable to master two languages, in addition to the language of schooling. Efforts must continue and even accelerate in this direction.

To succeed in providing quality language education in schools, we advocate for a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning languages. Our approach embraces multilingualism in schools and promotes the development of general language awareness among educators. For instance, it encourages collaborative teaching between language teachers and other teachers, using innovative, inclusive and multilingual teaching approaches, and promoting learning experiences abroad for students and teachers, through the Erasmus + programme.

This report provides data and comparative analyses for an instructive insight into language teaching in European countries. For instance, you can discover that across the EU, students in primary education are learning a foreign language from a younger age than ever before. And English is the most learned foreign language with over 98% of lower secondary education students learning it at the EU level.

However, regarding the second foreign language more efforts are required as we do not see a noticeable improvement.

I am confident that this report will be of great support to education policy-makers and stakeholders, designing and implementing policies in the field and working, ultimately, towards the improvement of language teaching in our schools and an active promotion of linguistic diversity.

Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner responsible for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

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## CODES AND ABBREVIATIONS

### Country codes

EU European Union	IT Italy	<b>European Free Trade Association and candidate countries</b>	
	CY Cyprus		
<b>Member States</b>	LV Latvia		
BE Belgium	LT Lithuania		
BE fr Belgium – French Community	LU Luxembourg		
BE de Belgium – German-speaking community	HU Hungary		
BE nl Belgium – Flemish Community	MT Malta		
BG Bulgaria	NL Netherlands		
CZ Czechia	AT Austria		
DK Denmark	PL Poland		
DE Germany	PT Portugal		
EE Estonia	RO Romania		
IE Ireland	SI Slovenia		
EL Greece	SK Slovakia		
ES Spain	FI Finland		
FR France	SE Sweden		
HR Croatia			
			AL Albania
			BA Bosnia and Herzegovina
			CH Switzerland
		IS Iceland	
		LI Liechtenstein	
		ME Montenegro	
		MK North Macedonia	
		NO Norway	
		RS Serbia	
		TR Türkiye	

### Other codes

(:) or : Data not available

☒ Not participating in the data collection

(-) or - Not applicable

### Abbreviations and acronyms

CEFR Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CLIL Content and Language Integrated Learning

CPD continuing professional development

ECTS European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

ISCED International Standard Classification of Education

ISO International Organization for Standardization

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ITE	initial teacher education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
VET	vocational education and training

## INTRODUCTION

Languages are a part of culture. As such, they fully contribute to building personal and collective identities. In fact, each language offers a specific vision of life. Therefore, language diversity is valued and cherished in democratic societies. Languages are also sophisticated tools enabling human beings to engage in meaningful relationships with one another and relate to the world in general. Being proficient in languages is therefore a true gateway to more enriching experiences and opportunities in life.

Europe is a linguistically diverse continent. This diversity includes not only official languages of countries but also regional or minority languages spoken for centuries on European territory, not to mention the languages brought by migrants. From the beginning, respect for linguistic diversity has been seen as a key principle of the European Union and is inscribed in its most fundamental law, the Treaty on European Union (1).

## POLICY CONTEXT

Language learning has an essential role to play in making the European project come true. Effective competences in more than one language directly influence European citizens' ability to benefit from education, training and work opportunities across Europe (2). Language learning can also strengthen the European dimension in education and training: it develops learners' interest in, understanding of and appreciation of other cultures and, ultimately, fosters a European identity that is inclusive and open to other cultures.

Language competences are at the heart of the vision of a European Education Area set out in the European Commission's communication 'Strengthening European identity through education and training'. In line with this inspiring outlook, Europe should be a place where 'learning, studying and doing research [is not] hampered by borders. A continent ... where, in addition to one's mother tongue, speaking two other languages has become the norm' (3). Fostering language learning and multilingualism is also part of the vision for high-quality education and key for mobility, cooperation and mutual understanding across borders.

Literacy and multilingual competences are indeed among the eight key competences for lifelong learning, included in the European reference framework (4).

Ensuring that all students benefit from the teaching of two foreign languages from an early age is an ambitious objective that was formulated for the first time in 2002 by the Heads of State or Government gathered in Barcelona (5). This objective was recently reiterated in the Council recommendation of May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages. More precisely, the recommendation invites Member States to '[e]xplore ways to help all young people to acquire before the end of upper secondary education and training – in addition to the languages of schooling – where possible, a competence level in at least one other European language which allows them to use the language effectively

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1 The Union 'shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced' (Article 3(4))

2 'Competences are defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes' (Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ C 189, 4.6.2018).

3 Commission communication – Strengthening European identity through education and culture, COM(2017) 673 final, p. 11.

4 Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ C 189, 4.6.2018.

5 Presidency Conclusions – Barcelona European Council 15 and 16 March 2002, C/02/930.

for social, learning and professional purposes, and to encourage the acquisition of an additional (third) language to a level which allows them to interact with a degree of fluency' <sup>(6)</sup>.

In fact, the 2019 Council recommendation takes the objective a step further, as it aims to change the mindset of policymakers and education practitioners, inspiring them to adopt comprehensive language education policies, and innovative and inclusive language teaching methods and strategies. The objective is enhancing the overall language competences of students, that is, their competences in the language of schooling, foreign languages <sup>(7)</sup> and home languages in the specific case of children with a multilingual background.

This comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages can be achieved notably by supporting the development of language awareness in schools, which requires the engagement of all school staff in continuous reflection on the language dimension in all facets of school life. Language-aware schools should provide an inclusive framework for language learning, valuing the linguistic diversity of learners and using it as a learning resource while also involving parents, other carers and the wider local community in language education.

More recently, the Council resolution on a new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021–2030), adopted in February 2021 <sup>(8)</sup>, identified the support of language teaching and learning and multilingualism as a concrete action for European cooperation in order to ensure quality, equity, inclusion and success in education and training.

Finally, the recently adopted Council recommendation on pathways to school success <sup>(9)</sup> is aimed at promoting better education outcomes for all students, irrespective of their particular circumstances (e.g. socioeconomic background), and well-being at school. In this context, the specific needs of students from migrant backgrounds, notably in terms of language learning support, are highlighted.

## CONTENT OF THE REPORT

This fifth edition of *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe*, which, naturally, builds on the previous edition, provides reliable data on many issues related to the teaching of languages in schools in Europe. Foreign languages are the focal point of this publication, even though other languages (regional or minority languages, classical languages, etc.) are also considered. The focus of the investigation is the policy framework in which actual foreign language teaching takes place. However, when available, statistical data help to provide a more grounded picture.

This report includes 51 indicators. Each of them contains graphics, explanatory text and a heading summarising the main finding. Indicators are organised in five chapters:

- 
- 6 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 17.
  - 7 The European Union survey on students' competences in foreign languages showed that only 42 % of 15-year-old students tested attained 'independent user' level (B1/B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) in the first foreign language learnt and 25 % reached this level in a second foreign language. Furthermore, a significant number of students (14 % for the first foreign language and 20 % for the second foreign language) did not reach the 'basic user' level (i.e. pre-A1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (European Commission, 2012).
  - 8 Council resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European education area and beyond (2021–2030), OJ C 66, 26.2.2021.
  - 9 Council recommendation of 28 November 2022 on pathways to school success and replacing the Council recommendation of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce early school leaving, OJ C 469, 9.12.2022.

Chapter A starts by outlining all official languages in Europe and continues by discussing linguistic diversity in today's classrooms.

Chapter B discusses foreign language provision in the curriculum. The first section focuses on the number of foreign languages provided, while the second outlines the specific languages that are provided.

Chapter C focuses on students' rates of participation in language learning. The first section investigates the number of foreign languages learnt by students according to education level and pathway, while the second explores which foreign languages students learn.

Chapter D is devoted to (foreign language) teachers. The first section addresses a series of issues related to teachers' qualifications, their degree of subject specialisation and the training opportunities they have. The second section looks at foreign language teachers' transnational mobility.

Chapter E starts by investigating the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages and expected learning outcomes of the first two foreign languages students learn. It also looks at language testing and support measures for migrant students in mainstream education.

The chapters are accompanied by a glossary that explains the key concepts used. The annexes provide complementary information on various aspects of the report.

## DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The main source of data for this report is the Eurydice Network, which provided qualitative information on policies and measures in the area of (foreign) language teaching in schools. This information was collected through a questionnaire completed in January and February 2022 by national experts/re-presentatives of the network. The prime source of information is regulations/recommendations, curricula and other steering documents issued by top-level education authorities. The reference year is the school year 2021/2022. Information from the joint 2020/2021 Eurydice–Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data collection on instruction time was also used (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2021a).

The Eurydice data are complemented by Eurostat data and data from two international surveys carried out by the OECD: the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). The Eurostat statistical data, with 2019/2020 as a reference year, provide information on students' rates of participation in language learning in schools. The student questionnaire for the 2018 PISA was used to compute the proportion of students who speak a language at home other than the language of schooling. The teacher questionnaire for the 2018 TALIS was used to give some insight into (foreign) language teachers' transnational mobility and their opportunities to train to teach in multilingual schools.

This report focuses mainly on primary and general secondary education. However, some indicators cover pre-primary education and vocational secondary education. In most cases, only public schools are included (except for Belgium, Ireland and the Netherlands, where government-dependent private schools are taken into account).

The report covers 39 education and training systems in the 37 member countries<sup>(10)</sup> of the Eurydice Network (the 27 European Union Member States and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye).

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10 The number of education and training systems is higher than the number of countries. This is because Belgium counts as three education and training systems (French Community of Belgium, Flemish Community of Belgium and German-speaking Community of Belgium).

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

During the school year 2021/2022, which is the reference year for most indicators, specific measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the organisation of schooling in many European countries. Measures of a temporary nature are not reported in this publication, which presents the 'normal' context in which students are learning (foreign) languages.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Linguistic diversity is part of Europe's DNA. The mosaic of European languages includes not only countries' official state languages but also the regional or minority languages spoken for centuries on European territory, not to mention the languages brought by migrants. Against this background, learning languages is a necessity for many people; what is more, it is an opportunity for all, leading to new work or opportunities to study. In addition, as part of culture, languages contribute to building personal and collective identities. In fact, each language offers a specific vision of life. Therefore, language diversity is valued and cherished in democratic societies.

Language learning has an essential role to play in making the European project come true, particularly in the achievement of the European Education Area <sup>(11)</sup>, a genuine common space for high-quality education and lifelong learning for all, across borders. In this context, multilingualism is acknowledged as one of the eight key competences needed for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion, as outlined in the Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning <sup>(12)</sup>.

The 2019 Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages is aimed at enhancing the overall language competences of students. Improving specifically foreign language learning in schools is also a major objective. In view of this objective, the recommendation invites Member States to 'help all young people to acquire before the end of upper secondary education and training – in addition to the languages of schooling – where possible, a competence level in at least one other European language which allows them to use the language effectively for social, learning and professional purposes, and to encourage the acquisition of an additional (third) language to a level which allows them to interact with a degree of fluency' <sup>(13)</sup>.

The 2023 edition of *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe* is the fifth edition of the report. Naturally, it builds on the four previous publications. As with the past editions, this new edition intends to contribute to the monitoring of the policy developments in the field of (foreign) language teaching in schools in Europe. While foreign languages are at the centre of the investigation, other languages are also considered (regional or minority languages, classical languages, etc.).

More specifically, this report includes 51 indicators covering a wide range of topics relevant to (foreign) language policy at European Union (EU) and national levels, such as:

- the provision of (foreign) languages in the curriculum;
- the number and range of languages studied by students;
- the instruction time dedicated to foreign language teaching;
- the expected levels of attainment for the first and second foreign languages;
- language support for newly arrived migrant students and home-language teaching;
- foreign language teachers' profiles and qualifications;
- the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers.

The main data source of the report is the Eurydice Network, which provided qualitative information on policies and measures in the area of (foreign) language teaching in schools <sup>(14)</sup>. The Eurydice data are complemented by Eurostat data and data from two international surveys carried out by the Organisation for

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11 For more information on the European Education Area, please consult the Commission's website (<https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea> ).

12 Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, OJ C 189, 4.6.2018.

13 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 17.



Economic Co-operation and Development: the 2018 Programme for International Students Assessment and the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey <sup>(15)</sup>.

The report covers 39 education systems in the 37 member countries <sup>(16)</sup> of the Eurydice Network (the 27 EU Member States and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye).

### **Compared with nearly two decades ago, students in primary education are learning a foreign language from a younger age in the vast majority of education systems**

In the majority of education systems, all students have to start learning a foreign language between the ages of 6 and 8 years. In six education systems (the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Greece, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta and Poland), this requirement is imposed even earlier (see Figure B1). Over the last two decades, about two thirds of education systems have increased the duration of compulsory foreign language learning by 1 to 7 years. In all cases, this increase is due to the lowering of the starting age at which the first foreign language is a compulsory subject (see Figure B2). This trend reflects the call made by the European Council at its meeting in Barcelona in 2002, which invited EU countries to take actions to ‘improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age’ <sup>(17)</sup>.

The obligation to learn at least one foreign language from the early years of primary education (or even pre-primary education) in most education systems explains the very high percentage of primary education students at EU level learning at least one foreign language (86.1 %) in 2020 (see Figure C1a). Compared with 2013, this is an increase of 6.7 percentage points (see Figure C2). In 2020, fewer than half of all students attending primary education learnt at least one foreign language in only three education systems (the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium and the Netherlands) (see Figure C1). In these education systems, learning a foreign language as a compulsory subject starts relatively late in primary education (see Figure B1). This explains why the proportion, which concerns students in the whole of primary education, is relatively low.

### **Learning a second foreign language usually starts at the end of primary education or in lower secondary education**

In 2020, at EU level 59.2 % of students in the whole of lower secondary education were learning two foreign languages or more (see Figure C3). Students start learning a second foreign language as a compulsory subject in the late years of primary education or in the early years of lower secondary education in most education systems (see Figure B1). However, other patterns exist, which may partly explain the relatively low overall rate of students studying at least two foreign languages at this level of education at EU level. For instance, in eight education systems (Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Liechtenstein, Norway and Türkiye) learning two foreign languages becomes compulsory for all general education students only when they reach upper secondary level. Furthermore, in seven education systems (the French Community of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Croatia, Sweden and Albania), there is no policy making the learning of two foreign languages a requirement for all students (see Figure B1).

### **In some countries, learning two languages is an entitlement rather than an obligation**

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14 The reference year is 2021/2022, except for data on instruction time, for which it is 2020/2021. These data mostly concern general education.

15 For Eurostat statistical data, 2019/2020 is the reference year, except for time series, for which the reference years are 2012/2013 and 2019/2020. Eurostat statistical data provide information on language learning participation rates of students in schools. The contextual questionnaires of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development surveys were used to address the issues of students speaking a language other than the language of schooling at home (Programme for International Students Assessment) and (foreign) language teachers’ transnational mobility and opportunities to train to teach in multilingual schools (Teaching and Learning International Survey).

16 The number of education and training systems is greater than the number of countries. This is because Belgium has three education and training systems (French Community of Belgium, Flemish Community of Belgium and German-speaking Community of Belgium).

17 Presidency Conclusions – Barcelona European Council 15 and 16 March 2002, C/02/930, p. 19.

Instead of making two foreign languages compulsory for all students, national curricula may provide other ways of ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn two or more foreign languages. For instance, in Spain, Croatia and Sweden learning two foreign languages is never a requirement for all students. However, all general education students are entitled to do so during their schooling. This opportunity is first provided at the beginning of lower secondary education (in Spain) or at the end of primary education (in Croatia and Sweden) (see Figure B4).

### **Between 2013 and 2020, at European Union level there was hardly any change in the percentage of students learning at least two foreign languages in lower secondary education**

At EU level, the proportion of students learning at least two foreign languages in lower secondary education only increased by 0.8 percentage points between 2013 and 2020. The difference was less than 10 percentage points in the majority of countries. Among those countries (i.e. with a difference of less than 10 percentage points), slightly more than half displayed a percentage that was still lower than 90 % in 2020, which suggests room for improvement in the participation rates of students learning two or more foreign languages (see Figure C4).

In three education systems, namely the Flemish Community of Belgium, Czechia and France, the percentage grew by at least 15 percentage points. In another two countries (Slovenia and Slovakia), the trend was the opposite: the proportion of lower secondary students learning two or more foreign languages decreased by more than 25 percentage points<sup>(18)</sup>. Different reasons for those changes can be identified. For instance, in Slovakia the decrease may be related to the removal of the requirement for every student to learn two foreign languages during lower secondary education (see Figure B3).

### **Vocational education and training students do not have the same opportunities to learn two foreign languages as their counterparts in general education**

In 2020, at EU level the proportion of vocational education and training (VET) students in upper secondary education who were learning two languages or more was 35.1 %. This is nearly 25 percentage points less than their counterparts in general education (60.0 %). In general upper secondary education, at least 90 % of students learnt two or more foreign languages in 13 education systems, while in vocational upper secondary education, this percentage was only reached in Romania. Similarly, there is only one country where more than 30.0 % of students across the whole of general upper secondary education do not learn any foreign languages (Portugal), versus six in vocational upper secondary education (Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Lithuania and Iceland) (see Figure C5). Compared with 2013, the percentage of VET students in upper secondary education who were learning two languages or more remained rather stable in the majority of countries (see Figure C6).

These statistics give a true reflection of the differences in language provision as set out in official curricula for general education students, on the one hand, and VET students, on the other hand. In fact, in 19 education systems, by the end of secondary education VET students will have learnt two languages as compulsory subjects for fewer years than their counterparts in general education (see Figure B6).

### **English, as a foreign language, is one of a kind**

In almost all European countries, English is the foreign language most learnt by students during primary and secondary education (see Figure C8). In 2020, more than 90 % of students learnt English in at least one education level (i.e. primary, lower or upper secondary education) in almost all European countries. In 11 countries, more than 90 % of students learnt English in all the levels of education covered (see Figure C9).

The high percentage of students learning English relates to the fact that English is a mandatory foreign language in 21 education systems at primary and/or lower secondary level (see Figure B7). In even more education systems, it must feature in the curriculum at specific education levels in all schools (see Figure B8a).

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18 In Poland, there was also a significant decrease in the proportion of lower secondary students learning two or more foreign languages. This decrease is due to a reorganisation of school grades across education levels, with lower secondary education now consisting of four grades, out of which two include no compulsory second foreign language learning. However, the starting grade and the number of years of compulsory second foreign language learning remain unchanged (see Figure C4).

### **Between 2013 and 2020, there was a substantial increase in the participation rates of students learning English in primary education**

In 2020, at EU level the percentage of students learning English was 98.3 % in lower secondary education and 95.7 % in general upper secondary education. Back in 2013, in the vast majority of education systems 90 % or more students in lower and general upper secondary education also learnt English. This means that, in these two education levels, rates of students learning English are both stable and high (see Figures C12b and C12c).

In primary education, the picture is slightly different: in only around one third of education systems did at least 90 % of all students learn English in both 2013 and 2020. Between these two reference years, in eight education systems (Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden) the learning of English increased by at least 10 percentage points (see Figure C12a). This increase may be explained by two facts mentioned above: students start learning a foreign language at an earlier age and English is the most learnt foreign language in nearly all countries.

### **In 2020, at European Union level French and German were the most popular choices for the second foreign language**

French and/or German must be provided in the school curriculum in around one quarter of education systems (see Figure B8a). Moreover, certain education systems make French and/or German mandatory (see Figure B7). This is notably the case in multilingual countries where they are state languages, for example in Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland (see Figure A1). Official documents also commonly refer to French and/or German among those languages that schools can decide to include in their learning provision (see Figure B8b).

In 2020, at EU level French was the second most learnt foreign language in primary and lower secondary education. It was learnt by 5.5 % and 30.6 % of students in these two levels, respectively. German was the second most learnt foreign language in the EU in upper secondary education, with 20.0 % of students taking it as a subject (see Figure C10).

Compared with 2013, the percentage of students learning French or German remained stable in the majority of countries (see Figures C13 and C14).

### **In 2020, Spanish was the second most learnt foreign language in five countries**

Education authorities in most European countries put less emphasis on Spanish than on English, French or German. Indeed, no European country specifies Spanish as a compulsory foreign language for all students during at least one school year (see Figure B7), and only two countries (Sweden and Norway) require that all schools at specific education levels provide students with the opportunity to learn Spanish (see Figure B8a).

In 2020, at EU level Spanish was learnt by 17.7 % of lower secondary education students and 18.0 % of upper secondary education students. It was the second most learnt foreign language (with at least 10 % of students learning it) in lower secondary education in Ireland, in upper secondary education in Germany, and in both lower secondary education and upper secondary education in France, Sweden and Norway (see Figure C10).

Like the observed trends for the learning of French and German, the percentage of students learning Spanish also remained stable in the majority of countries compared with 2013 (see Figure C15).

### **In 2020, foreign languages other than English, French, German and Spanish were learnt much less often in Europe**

In 2020, languages other than English, French, German and Spanish were commonly studied in only a few countries, mostly for historical reasons or due to geographical proximity (see Figure C11). Italian (in Croatia, Malta, Austria and Slovenia), Russian (in Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia), Danish (in Iceland), Dutch (in the French Community of Belgium), Estonian (in Estonia) and Swedish (in Finland) were the only other foreign languages learnt by a minimum of 10 % of students in primary or general secondary education in any European country (see Figure C11).

However, in several countries the curriculum specifies other languages that schools may provide, such as Chinese, Arabic, Turkish, Japanese and Portuguese. The range of specified foreign languages is the highest in general upper secondary education (see Figure B8b). Moreover, at that education level national tests in less-learnt languages that lead to a certificate exist in several countries across Europe. This is, for instance,

the case for the Chinese language, for which a national test leading to a certificate is available in about one quarter of the countries. France, Norway and Germany are the three countries with the highest number of foreign languages for which there is such a national test: 60, 45 and 24, respectively (see Figure E7).

### **In primary education, instruction time dedicated to foreign languages is a small proportion of total instruction time in most countries**

In primary education, in most education systems, the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects represents between 5 % and 10 % of the total instruction time allocated to teach the whole compulsory curriculum. This proportion reaches 10 % to 19 % in the compulsory grades of general secondary education, during which students learn one or sometimes two foreign languages (see Figure E4).

In primary education, the number of hours dedicated to teaching foreign languages as compulsory subjects is between 30 and 69 hours per notional year in most education systems (see Figure E1a). The relatively low number of hours observed in some education systems can be partly explained by the fact that foreign language teaching is not compulsory in all grades of primary education.

In the compulsory grades of general secondary education, the number of taught hours per notional year ranges from around 75 hours (in Croatia, Albania and Norway) to around 185 hours (in Bulgaria, Denmark, France and Liechtenstein (*Gymnasium*)) (see Figure E1b). With 373 hours, Luxembourg (enseignement secondaire classique) is an outstanding case: French and German, two of the three state languages, which are learnt by students from an early age (see Figure B1), are considered foreign languages in the curriculum.

### **Between 2014 and 2021, notable changes in the instruction time devoted to foreign languages occurred in only a minority of countries**

Between 2014 and 2021, the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects remained relatively stable in most education systems. In primary education, among education systems with differences between the two reference years, the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages increased in most cases. The largest increases, greater than 50 %, are found in Denmark and Finland (see Figure E5).

When looking at the compulsory grades of general secondary education, the number of countries with a noticeable change in the number of taught hours is quite similar to the number of countries with no or hardly any change. Among the countries with a difference, no clear trend emerges. In addition, the differences are smaller than those in primary education. Denmark is the only country with a particularly large increase (100 %) (see Figure E5). In this country, the study of a second foreign language has become compulsory for all students, while before it was optional (see Figure B3).

### **Students are expected to reach level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in their first foreign language by the end of general secondary education**

Nearly all countries use the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, established by the Council of Europe to set internationally comparable attainment levels for foreign languages. For the first foreign language, most countries require students to reach level A2 at the end of lower secondary education and level B2 at the end of general upper secondary education. The curricula in Greece and Iceland set level C1 as the highest level of attainment at the end of general upper secondary education. For the second foreign language, in most countries the minimum requirements are level A2 at the end of lower secondary education and level B1 at the end of general upper secondary education. Only Italy and Iceland set the minimum requirement at a higher level than B1 for general education students at the end of their schooling (B2 and C1, respectively) (see Figure E6).

When comparing students' levels of attainment for the first and the second foreign languages, attainment is generally expected to be higher for the first foreign language than for the second. In only a minority of countries are expected outcomes for the first and second languages identical at the same reference point. This difference in attainment levels between the first and second foreign languages is not surprising, as the second foreign language is learnt for fewer years in all education systems (see Figures B2 and B3). Instruction time for the second foreign language is also lower (see Figure E2).

### **In many countries, regional or minority languages and classical languages also feature in the curriculum**

In most European countries, legislation officially recognises at least one regional or minority language (see Figure A1). This official recognition often requires the promotion of the use of these languages in different

fields of public life, including in education. However, some countries, such as France, do not recognise regional and minority languages as official languages, and yet they make provision for these languages in their top-level steering documents related to education (see Figure B9). Furthermore, in nearly half of the countries Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programmes include regional or minority languages as languages of instruction alongside state languages (see Figure B12).

Based on the content of the curriculum, the teaching of classical Greek and/or Latin mostly takes place in general upper secondary education. These languages are very rarely compulsory subjects. Classical Greek is only compulsory for all students in Greece and Cyprus in lower and general upper secondary education. Latin is a compulsory subject for all students in Romania (lower secondary education) and in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia (general upper secondary education). In a number of additional education systems, classical Greek and/or Latin are compulsory only for students following specific educational pathways (see Figure B10).

### **At European Union level, about one in seven 15-year-old students attend a language-heterogeneous school**

Language-heterogeneous schools, defined for the purposes of this report as schools where more than 25 % of students speak a different language at home from the language of schooling, are quite common in many European countries. In 2018, at EU level 13.3 % of 15-year-old students attended language-heterogeneous schools (see Figure A4). This can partly be explained by the national language context: some countries have several state languages and/or regional, minority or non-territorial languages (see Figure A1). This finding is also closely linked to the proportion of students from migrant backgrounds who do not speak the language of schooling at home (see Figure A3).

In 2018, only a minority of teachers at EU level reported that they had been trained to teach in multilingual classes during their initial teacher education (24.5 %) or continuing professional development (20.1 %). Cyprus had the highest proportion of teachers who trained to teach such classes during initial teacher education (48.0 %) and continuing professional development (37.7 %) (see Figure D3).

### **Home-language teaching is promoted or financially supported by a minority of countries**

Many top-level education authorities in Europe are taking measures to support language learning for newly arrived migrant students in primary and lower secondary education. The most popular measure is additional classes in the language of schooling; those are promoted or financially supported in nearly all education systems (see Figure E9). Diagnostic tests of the language of schooling at the end of pre-primary education or the beginning of primary education are recommended or required by top-level education authorities in a little fewer than half of education systems. In a slight majority of those, these recommendations or requirements concern the whole school population and not just specific groups of pupils (newly arrived migrant students, those speaking at home a language that is different from the language of schooling, etc.) (see Figure E8).

Promoting or financially supporting classes of the mother tongue of newly arrived migrant students is much less common than additional classes in the language of schooling, as slightly more than one third of countries do so (see Figure E9). In a smaller number of countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Austria, Slovenia, Sweden and Norway), students from migrant backgrounds are entitled, with conditions, to home-language teaching (see Figure B11).

### **The need for competent foreign language teachers in primary education and Content and Language Integrated Learning programmes has led to various policy responses across Europe**

Over the last two decades, foreign language teaching has gained ground in primary education (see Figure B2). Therefore, the issue of primary teachers' competences in teaching foreign languages has arisen in many countries. This issue notably concerns the degree of specialisation of those teaching foreign languages, as traditionally generalist teachers (i.e. those teaching all or most subjects) deliver the curriculum at that level.

Across Europe, there are three approaches to assigning teachers to teach foreign languages in primary education; each of them is found in around one third of countries. First, the responsibility for teaching foreign languages is assigned to specialist teachers (i.e. those specialised in teaching a limited number of subjects)

only. Second, this responsibility is placed in the hands of generalist teachers. Finally, both general teachers and specialist teachers may teach foreign languages (see Figure D1).

In about two thirds of countries providing CLIL programmes where at least some subjects are taught in a foreign language, teachers delivering this type of programme need to hold specific (additional) qualifications. Most commonly, these teachers must prove that they have sufficient knowledge of the language in which the CLIL programme is delivered. The minimum foreign language proficiency required usually corresponds to either level B2 or level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (see Figure D2).

### **Between 2013 and 2018, at European Union level the percentage of foreign language teachers who have been abroad for professional purposes rose by 14.6 percentage points**

Studying or teaching abroad is an enriching experience for any teacher or prospective teacher. It is even more so for foreign language teachers, as visits abroad contribute to the development of their language skills and their knowledge and understanding of the culture of the country where the language they teach is spoken.

In 2018, at EU level around 70 % of foreign language teachers teaching in lower secondary education reported having been abroad at least once for professional purposes during initial teacher education or while in service. Spain, the Netherlands and Iceland had the highest proportions of mobile foreign language teachers, with more than 80 % of them reporting transnational mobility (see Figure D6).

In all countries, this proportion increased compared with 2013. At EU level, it rose by 14.6 percentage points. The greatest increase was seen in the Netherlands (26 percentage points) (see Figure D6).

### **At European Union level, the transnational mobility of more than one in four mobile foreign language teachers has been supported by a European Union programme**

EU programmes play a major role in the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers. In 2018, in the majority of education systems the percentage of mobile foreign language teachers in lower secondary education who went abroad for professional purposes through an EU programme was significantly higher than the percentage of those who went abroad through a national or regional programme. At EU level, these percentages were 27.4 % and 15.7 %, respectively (see Figure D8).

In contrast to this trend, the contribution of EU programmes and national or regional programmes to the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers in lower secondary education was roughly similar in the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Croatia, Cyprus and Hungary (see Figure D8).

### **At European Union level, teaching abroad is reported as a professional reason to go abroad by one third of mobile foreign language teachers**

In 2018, at EU level the main professional reasons to go abroad (reported by more than half of mobile lower secondary foreign language teachers) were 'language learning', 'studying as part of their teacher education' and 'accompanying visiting students'. Other less common professional reasons for going abroad (reported by about 40 % or fewer lower secondary foreign language teachers), were 'establishing contact with schools abroad', 'teaching' and 'learning of other subject areas' (see Figure D9).

In 2018, in almost all countries a majority of mobile foreign language teachers reported staying abroad for fewer than 3 months (i.e. short stays). Spain, France and Italy are exceptions to that pattern, as the majority of mobile foreign language teachers stated that they stayed abroad for longer (see Figure D10).

## CHAPTER A: CONTEXT

Europe is characterised by a rich mosaic of languages, each of them embodying a specific cultural history. Languages may be spoken across entire countries, or they may have a regional basis within countries. It is also common for countries to share languages with their neighbours around their borders, thus reflecting their shared history.

Europe's multilingual nature may be approached from different angles, one of which is the official recognition of languages by European or national authorities. This chapter therefore starts by outlining all official languages of the 37 European countries participating in this report (see Figure A1). This information is based on the data supplied by the Eurydice Network.

To highlight further language diversity in Europe, the chapter also looks at the percentage of students across European countries who do not speak the language of schooling at home (see Figures A2 and A3) and the degree of language heterogeneity across schools in Europe (see Figure A4). These indicators are based on data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 <sup>(19)</sup>. They display data for all the countries participating in this report except Liechtenstein, which did not take part in the 2018 PISA survey.

### **ALONGSIDE THEIR STATE LANGUAGE (OR LANGUAGES), MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES OFFICIALLY RECOGNISE ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES**

The European Union (EU) has 24 official languages, all of which are state languages in at least one of its Member States <sup>(20)</sup>. Regulations and other documents of general application are drafted in the 24 official languages. There are fewer official EU languages than Member States, as some share common languages: German, Greek, English, French, Dutch and Swedish are official state languages in more than one country. Alongside the 24 official EU languages, two additional languages are state languages in the EU Member States (Turkish is one of the two state languages in Cyprus, and Luxembourgish is one of the three state languages in Luxembourg). Thus, the EU Member States have altogether 26 state languages.

In most European countries (EU Member States and non-EU countries <sup>(21)</sup>), only one language is recognised as a state language (Figure A1). Ireland, Cyprus, Malta and Finland each have two state languages. In Belgium, Luxembourg, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are three state languages. However, in Belgium the state languages are used in delimited linguistic areas and are not recognised as administrative languages across the whole territory of the country (only Brussels-Capital Region is bilingual, using Dutch and French). Similarly, although Switzerland has four official state languages, most of its cantons are monolingual. German is the only official language in 17 Swiss cantons, 4 cantons are French speaking and 1 canton is Italian speaking. In addition, 3 cantons are bilingual (German and French), while 1 is trilingual (German, Italian and Romansh).

More than half of the countries covered by this report officially recognise regional or minority languages within their borders for legal or administrative purposes. The presence of these languages (and their number) depends on a variety of factors, such as the cultural and political history of each country, its geographical position, its size and/or its number of state languages. The status of officially recognised regional or minority language is normally granted to languages within a certain geographical area – often a region – in which they are widely spoken. Commonly, a certain proportion of the population must speak the minority language for the language to be classed as an official language. For example, in Slovakia and Serbia a minority language is officially recognised and can be used for legal and administrative purposes in any local administrative unit where the minority population accounts for at least 15 % of the total number of inhabitants. In Poland, Romania and North Macedonia, the threshold is set at 20 %. In Hungary, if the minority population exceeds 10 % the local minority self-governing authority can require that the minority language is used in addition to

19 For details of the PISA survey, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

20 Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, German, Finnish, French, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

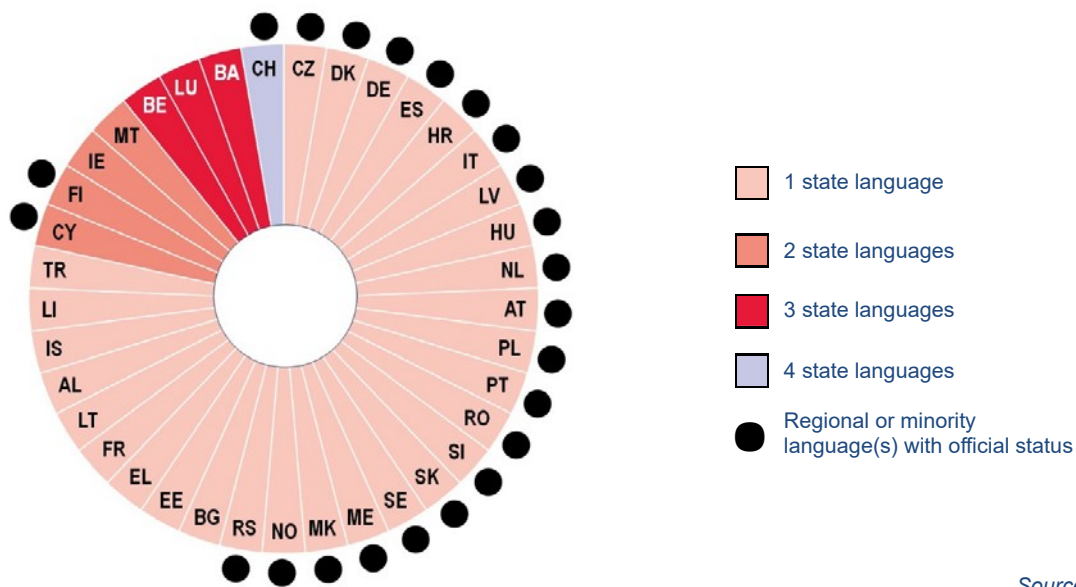
21 The country coverage of this report goes beyond the EU countries. For details of the country coverage, see the introduction to the report.

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

the state language on local government decrees, official forms and public notice boards, and in the local media. If the minority population exceeds 20 % of the total number of inhabitants, additional rights may be granted on request. For example, local public officers who speak the minority language may be employed.

The number of officially recognised regional or minority languages varies from one country to another. Latvia, the Netherlands and Portugal each have only one official regional language. In contrast, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Serbia have more than 10 official regional or minority languages. Some regional or minority languages are officially recognised in several countries. More specifically, some Slavic languages (Czech, Croatian, Polish, Slovak and Ukrainian) as well as German and Hungarian are recognised as regional or minority languages in more than three EU countries.

Another part of the language picture in Europe is the existence of non-territorial languages, that is, ‘languages used by nationals of the state which differ from the language or languages used by the rest of the state’s population but which, although traditionally used within the state’s territory, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof’ (Council of Europe, 1992). Romany is a typical example of a non-territorial language. It is an officially recognised language in 11 European countries, namely Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, North Macedonia and Serbia.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 1 Figure A1 : State languages and regional, minority or non-territorial languages with official status, 2021/2022



Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	State language(s)	Regional and/or minority language(s) with official status		State language(s)	Regional and/or minority language(s) with official status
BE	German, French Dutch		PL	Polish	Belarusian, Czech, Kashubian, German, Hebrew, Armenian, Karaim, Lithuanian, Romany, Russian, Slovak, Tatar, Ukrainian, Yiddish
BG	Bulgarian		PT	Portuguese	Mirandese
CZ	Czech	German, Polish, Romany, Slovak	RO	Romanian	Bulgarian, Czech, German, Greek, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Romany, Russian, Slovak, Serbian, Turkish, Ukrainian
DK	Danish	German, Faroese, Greenlandic	SI	Slovenian	Hungarian, Italian
DE	German	Danish, Frisian, Low German, Romany, Sorbian	SK	Slovak	Bulgarian, Czech, German, Croatian, Hungarian, Polish, Romany, Rusyn, Ukrainian
EE	Estonian		FI	Finnish, Swedish	Romany, Sami
IE	English, Irish		SE	Swedish	Finnish, Meänkieli, Romany, Sami, Yiddish
EL	Greek		AL	Albanian	
ES	Spanish	Catalan, Valencian, Basque, Galician, Occitan	BA	Bosnian, Croatian Serbian	
FR	French		CH	German, French, Italian, Romansh	Francoprovençal, Yenish
HR	Croatian	Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Slovak, Serbian			
IT	Italian	Catalan, German, Greek, French, Francoprovençal, Friulian, Croatian, Ladin, Occitan, Slovenian, Albanian, Sardinian	IS	Icelandic	
CY	Greek, Turkish	Cypriot Arabic, Armenian	LI	German	
LV	Latvian	Liv (Livonian)	ME	Montenegrin	Bosnian, Croatian, Albanian, Serbian
LT	Lithuanian		MK	Macedonian	Bosnian, Romany, Albanian, Serbian, Turkish
LU	German, French Luxembourgish		NO	Norwegian (two forms: Bokmål and Nynorsk)	Finnish, Kven, Sami
HU	Hungarian	Bulgarian, German, Greek, Croatian, Armenian, Polish, Romany, Romanian, Rusyn, Slovak, Slovenian, Serbian, Ukrainian	RS	Serbian	Bosnian, Bulgarian, Czech, Montenegrin, Croatian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Romany, Romanian, Rusyn, Slovak, Albanian
MT	English, Maltese		TR	Turkish	
NL	Dutch	Frisian			
AT	German	Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, Romany, Slovak, Slovenian			

*Figure A1 (continued): State languages and regional, minority or non-territorial languages with official status, 2021/2022*

**Explanatory notes**

This figure groups regional, minority and non-territorial languages with official status under the heading ‘regional or minority languages with official status’.

Languages in the table are listed in alphabetical order according to their International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 639-3 code (see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>, last accessed: 27 June 2022). Languages that have no ISO 639-3 code are specified in the country-specific notes.

For definitions of ‘non-territorial language’, ‘official language’, ‘regional or minority language’ and ‘state language’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr, BE nl), Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Norway and Türkiye: all these countries have granted official language status to their sign language(s).

Belgium: different state languages are only used in delimited areas.

Spain: the state language Spanish coexists with other languages in some autonomous communities (see the languages listed in the table) and shares with them the status of official language. The co-official languages are also languages of schooling. In addition to the languages listed, Asturian, a language that does not have official status, is protected by law. It is taught in primary and general secondary education in the autonomous community of Asturias (see Figure B9).

Hungary: Boyash, a dialect of Romany, is also an officially recognised language.

Austria: the regional/minority language Croatian refers to Burgenland Croatian.

Poland: in addition to the languages indicated in the table, Lemko is also an officially recognised minority language.

Slovakia: in addition to the languages indicated in the table, Russian and Serbian were officially recognised in 2014–2015. However, these two languages have not yet been added in the key legal framework on the use of languages of national minorities (Act 184/1999) and, therefore, are not displayed in the table.

Finland: Finnish law does not recognise official minority languages, but Romany and Sami (see the languages listed) have protected status in various legal documents.

Switzerland: different state languages are only used in delimited areas. When it comes to regional and minority languages, in addition to the languages indicated in the table, Frainc-Comtou is also an officially recognised minority language.

The mosaic of European languages would not be complete without mentioning sign languages. At present, most countries covered by this report officially recognise their sign language(s) <sup>(22)</sup>. In countries with no such recognition, there are commonly legal frameworks establishing the right for people with hearing or speech impairments to communicate in a sign language (e.g. Poland and Serbia).

## AROUND ONE IN TEN 15-YEAR-OLDS IN THE EU DO NOT SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF SCHOOLING AT HOME

The PISA survey allows the evaluation of the percentage of 15-year-old students who speak (and do not speak) the language of the PISA test at home, which is considered a proxy for speaking the language of schooling.

At EU level, 88.5 % of 15-year-old students mainly speak the language of schooling at home, while 11.5 % speak a different language.

Figure A2 shows the percentages of 15-year-old students across European countries (EU Member States and non-EU countries) who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling.

Among the countries with the highest percentage (20 % or more) of 15-year-old students speaking at home a language that differs from the language of schooling, Luxembourg and Malta have the greatest proportion of students who do so. In Luxembourg, 82.9 % of 15-year-old students do not speak the language of schooling at home. In this country, 40.3 % of the students indicate that at home they mainly speak Luxembourgish <sup>(23)</sup>, a Germanic language that is one of the three official languages of Luxembourg (see Figure A1) but is not used in schooling. In Malta, which is a bilingual country, all students took the PISA test in English, one of the two languages widely used in the context of schooling. However, 82.8 % of the students speak a different language at home. Most students (75.2 %) speak Maltese at home.

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22 See the country-specific notes related to Figure A1.

23 The percentage of students speaking specific languages at home presented in the text is based on information provided by the PISA survey (for the link to the PISA database, see the section ‘Statistical databases and terminology’). These data are not displayed in the figure or Annex 1.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

Switzerland also has a relatively high percentage of 15-year-olds who mainly speak a language at home that is different from the language of schooling (27.0 %). In this multilingual country, most students who speak German, French or Italian (or their dialects) speak the same language at home and at school. Still, many students speak at home a language that differs from the language of schooling.

Other countries (or education systems) where 20 % or more of 15-year-old students mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling are the German-speaking Community of Belgium (24.1 %), Cyprus (22.3 %), Spain (20.6 %) and Austria (20.5 %). They are followed by the two other Belgian education systems (the French and Flemish Communities), Germany and Sweden, where 17 % to 18 % of students mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling.

In contrast to all the above countries, Poland has an especially language-homogeneous 15-year-old population, with only 1.7 % of students speaking a different language at home from the language of schooling. The percentage is also relatively low – below 5 % – in Croatia, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Albania and Montenegro.

In more than half of the countries with data (20 countries), between 5 % and 15 % of 15-year-old students mainly speak at home a language that differs from the language of schooling.

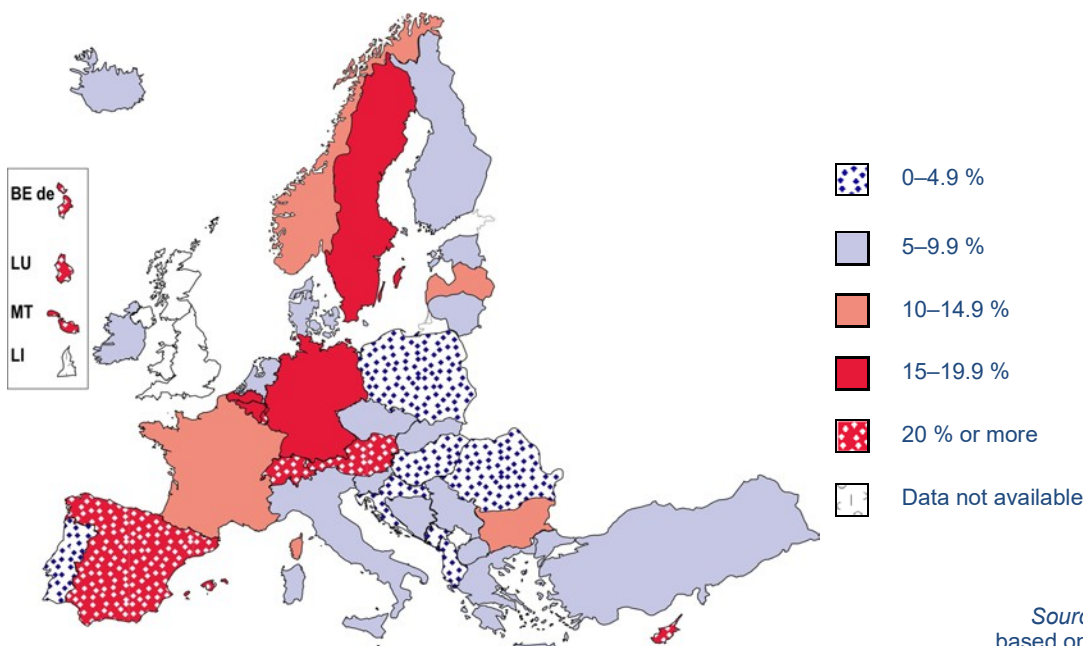


Figure 2 Figure A2: Percentage of 15-year-old students who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling, 2018

## Explanatory notes

Data are calculated based on the PISA survey question ‘What language do you speak at home most of the time?’ (ST022Q01TA). The survey category ‘Language of the test’ (Language 1) is used as a proxy for speaking the same language at home as at school.

Speaking a dialect of a certain language at home is considered speaking the standard language. This approach has been used in most countries participating in the PISA survey. As the approach has not yet been applied to the German-speaking Community of Belgium and Italy, dialects have been recoded accordingly.

See Annex 1 for the data and standard errors (S.E.s). For further information on PISA, see the section ‘Statistical databases and terminology’.

Looking at the evolution between 2003 and 2018, the percentage of students who mainly speak a language at home other than the language of schooling increased most substantially – by 14.9 percentage points – in Switzerland (see Annex 1). The increase was also notable – around 10 percentage points – in the French Community of Belgium, Germany and Sweden. In most of these countries, the increase mainly took place between 2003 and 2015. In Germany, however, the percentage of students who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling increased by 4.1 percentage points between 2003 and 2015, and by 6.0 percentage points between 2015 and 2018. This can be explained by the fact that the country received over 1 million asylum seekers – mainly people fleeing war in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria – in 2015 and 2016.

## STUDENTS WHO DO NOT SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF SCHOOLING AT HOME ARE NOT ONLY FOUND AMONG THE IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS

Identifying the populations that do not speak the language of schooling at home may help in providing more appropriate language support measures. Figure A3 shows the percentages of students speaking, and not speaking, the same language at school and at home among the immigrant and non-immigrant populations. Immigrant and non-immigrant populations are defined based on the birthplace of parents. A student is defined as an ‘immigrant’ if both of his/her parents were born abroad. Immigrant students can be either born in their country of residence (second-generation immigrants) or foreign-born (first-generation immigrants). A student is considered a ‘non-immigrant’ if at least one of his/her parents was born in their country of residence.

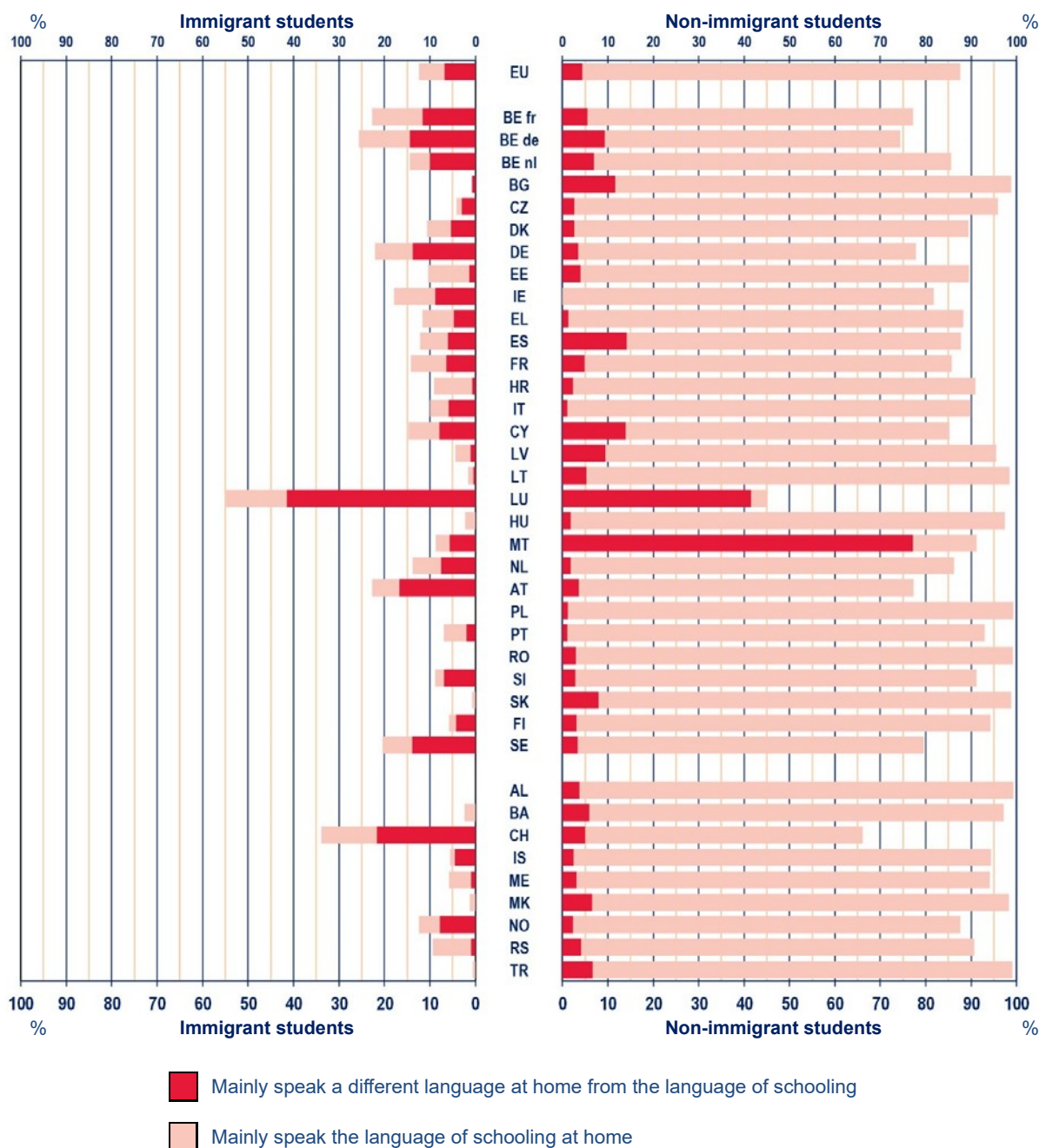
As the figure shows, having parents who were born abroad does not inevitably mean that the student does not speak the language of schooling at home. At EU level, 5.6 % of 15-year-old students are immigrants who mainly speak the language of schooling at home (data in light red on the left side of the figure). Just a slightly higher percentage of 15-year-old students – 6.9 % – are immigrants who do not speak the language of schooling at home (data in dark red on the left side of the figure). In other words, about half of the 15-year-old students in the EU whose parents were born abroad indicate that they speak the language of schooling at home.

Conversely, being a non-immigrant does not necessarily mean that the student speaks the language of schooling at home. At EU level, 4.4 % of 15-year-olds are non-immigrants who do not speak the language of schooling at home (data in dark red on the right side of the figure).

Moving from EU-level data to country-level data, the figure demonstrates that country situations vary greatly when it comes to the proportions of immigrant students in the student population (total of the two categories on the left side of the figure). In a number of countries (or education systems), 20 % or more of 15-year-old students are immigrants (the French and German-speaking Communities of Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria, Sweden and Switzerland). In all these countries, at least half of all immigrant students speak a different language at home from the language of schooling (compare data in light red and dark red on the left side of the figure). In countries with lower percentages of 15-year-old students from migrant backgrounds (less than 20 %), situations vary. For example, in Estonia, Croatia and Serbia, in which around 10 % of the 15-year-old student population are immigrants, almost all immigrant students speak the language of schooling at home. In contrast, in Slovenia, which has a comparable share of immigrants in the student population, the majority of immigrant students (around 80 %) speak a different language at home from the language of schooling.

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When it comes to non-immigrant students (on the right side of the figure), Luxembourg and Malta have the most extreme patterns. In Malta, 77.2 % of 15-year-old students are non-immigrants who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of the PISA test. This is because most students in Malta speak Maltese at home, whereas at school they use English and Maltese, the former being the language in which they took the PISA test (for further details, see the analysis related to Figure A2). In Luxembourg, 41.5 % of 15-year-olds are non-immigrants mainly speaking a different language at home from the language of schooling (for further details, see the analysis related to Figure A2). Other countries with relatively high percentages of non-immigrant students speaking a different language at home from the language of schooling (more than 10 %) are Bulgaria, Spain and Cyprus.



Source: Eurydice, based on PISA 2018.

Figure 3 Figure A3: Percentages of immigrant and non-immigrant 15-year-old students, by language spoken at home, 2018

### Explanatory notes

Data are calculated based on the PISA survey question ‘What language do you speak at home most of the time?’ (ST022Q01TA). The survey category ‘Language of the test’ (Language 1) is used as a proxy for speaking the same language at home as at school.

Speaking a dialect of a certain language at home is considered speaking the standard language. This approach has been used in most countries participating in the PISA survey. As the approach has not yet been applied to the German-speaking Community of Belgium and Italy, dialects have been recoded accordingly.

The category 'immigrant students' corresponds to students whose parents were born abroad. This category merges two distinct PISA categories of immigrant students, namely (1) the student and both parents were born abroad (i.e. first-generation immigrants); and (2) the student was born in the country of the test, but both parents were born abroad (i.e. second-generation immigrants).

See Annex 1 for the data and S.E.s. For further information on PISA, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

### Country-specific notes

Bulgaria, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Türkiye: at least one category of students is not shown in the figure because the sample was insufficient (contained fewer than 30 students). See Annex 1 for details of the category or categories concerned.

## EUROPEAN COUNTRIES DIFFER GREATLY WHEN IT COMES TO THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN LANGUAGE-HETEROGENEOUS SCHOOLS

Teaching and learning in language-heterogeneous contexts can provide an opportunity for students to become aware of other languages and cultures, and can therefore enrich the school experience. However, at the same time, language diversity in the student population can be a challenge for teachers, students and, more generally, the education systems concerned. Specific measures may be needed to support students in mastering the language of schooling and to support teachers in managing multilingual and, in some cases, multicultural classes.

Language heterogeneity in schools, defined here as more than 25 % of students speaking a different language at home from the language of schooling, varies between countries (see Figure A4). This can partly be explained by the national language context: some countries have several state languages and/or regional, minority or non-territorial languages (see Figure A1). It is also closely linked to the percentage of students from migrant backgrounds who do not speak the language of schooling at home (see Figure A3). Further factors that may influence language heterogeneity in schools include, for instance, urban planning (with or without residential segregation) and policies related to school choice.

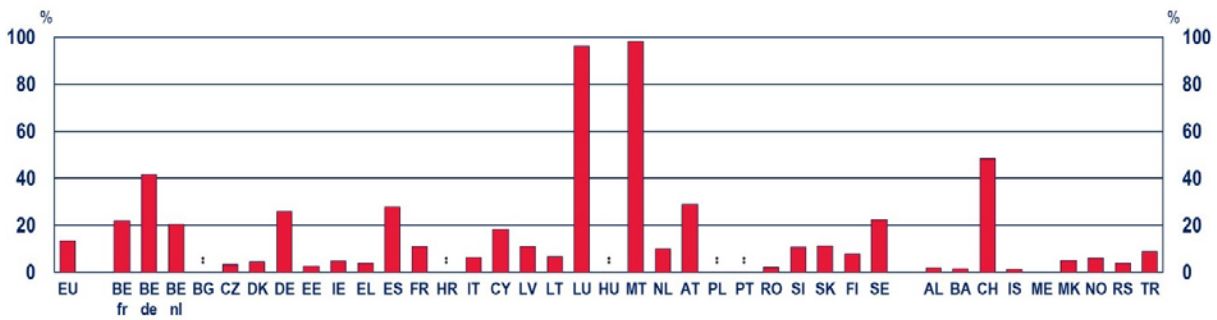
At EU level, 13.3 % of 15-year-old students attend language-heterogeneous schools.

Luxembourg and Malta have the highest percentages of 15-year-old students attending language-heterogeneous schools (96.2 % and 98.0 %, respectively). In Luxembourg, many students speak Luxembourgish at home, which is one of the three official languages of Luxembourg (see Figure A1) but is not used in schooling (see the analysis related to Figure A2). In Malta, most students speak Maltese at home, whereas at school they use English and Maltese, the former being the language in which they took the PISA test (see the analysis related to Figure A2).

In addition to Luxembourg and Malta, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Austria, Sweden and Switzerland also register relatively high percentages of 15-year-old students in language-heterogeneous schools (more than 20 %).

In contrast, in a number of European countries fewer than 5 % of 15-year-old students attend language-heterogeneous schools (Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Romania, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Serbia).

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition



Source: Eurydice, based on PISA 2018.

Figure 4 Figure A4: Percentage of 15-year-old students attending schools where more than 25 % of students mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling, 2018

**Explanatory notes**

Data are calculated based on the PISA survey question ‘What language do you speak at home most of the time?’ (ST022Q01TA). The survey category ‘Language of the test’ (Language 1) is used as a proxy for speaking the same language at home as at school.

Speaking a dialect of a certain language at home is considered speaking the standard language. This approach has been used in most countries participating in the PISA survey. As the approach has not yet been applied to the German-speaking Community of Belgium and Italy, dialects have been recoded accordingly.

See Annex 1 for the data and S.E.s. For further information on PISA, see the section ‘Statistical databases and terminology’.

**Country-specific notes**

Croatia, Hungary, Poland and Portugal: the sample was insufficient (contained fewer than 30 students and/or fewer than five schools).

Austria and Slovenia: the sampling unit is a programme within a school, not the whole school.



## CHAPTER B - ORGANISATION

### SECTION I – STRUCTURES

Language competences are crucial for mobility, cooperation and mutual understanding within Europe. They also play a major role in the building of the European Education Area, a genuine common space for high-quality education and lifelong learning across borders <sup>(24)</sup>. In 2002, the EU Heads of State or Government gathered in Barcelona called for further action to ‘improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age’ <sup>(25)</sup>. The objective that all young people acquire competences in two languages in addition to the language of schooling by the end of their upper secondary education was recently reiterated in the Council recommendation of May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages <sup>(26)</sup>.

This section focuses on foreign language provision at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, as set out in national curricula or other top-level steering documents. It sheds light on the number of foreign languages compulsory for all students and on how long they are compulsory for. It first looks into the age from which all students in pre-primary, primary and general secondary education must start learning a first and a second foreign language (see Figure B1). It discusses the number of years during which the first and the second foreign languages are compulsory for all students to learn, and explores the changes in this duration since 2003 (see Figures B2 and B3). It completes the picture of foreign language provision in primary and general secondary education by highlighting the entitlement of all students to choose foreign languages as part of their optional subjects in the curriculum (see Figure B4).

This section ends by discussing the differences between vocational education and training (VET) students and general education students with regard to the compulsory learning of foreign languages. More specifically, it looks at the difference in the number of years for which students in general education / VET must study one or two foreign languages (see Figures B5 and B6).

All indicators in this section rely on data collected through the Eurydice Network, covering 39 education systems in 37 countries <sup>(27)</sup>.

#### **LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES BECOMES COMPULSORY BEFORE 6 YEARS OLD IN SIX EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

Figure B1 displays the starting age of the first and second foreign languages taught as compulsory subjects to all students in primary and general secondary education. In some cases, the scope is extended to pre-primary education.

In most education systems, the starting age of the first foreign language taught as a compulsory subject ranges from 6 to 8 years old, which corresponds to the first year or years of primary or compulsory education. In six education systems, the first foreign language is introduced before the age of 6 years: at the age of 3 years in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Luxembourg and Poland, at the age of 4 years in Greece, and at the age of 5 years in Cyprus and Malta. In these countries, with the exception of Malta, the requirement to learn the first foreign language starts in pre-primary education and applies to all children at this education level <sup>(28)</sup>.

24 For more information on the European Education Area, please consult the Commission’s website (<https://education.ec.europa.eu/about-eea>).

25 Presidency Conclusions – Barcelona European Council 15 and 16 March 2002, C/02/930, p. 19.

26 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 8.

27 For details of the country coverage of this report, see the introduction to the report.

28 In this report, if all children start learning a foreign language in pre-primary education at some point, the starting age is considered the age at which either pre-primary education is compulsory or a place in publicly subsidised pre-primary settings is guaranteed for all children. For example, in Greece and

Schools in Estonia, Sweden and Iceland have some freedom to determine the grade in which the first foreign language is introduced as a compulsory subject. Top-level education authorities define an age (or grade) bracket for the introduction of foreign languages: between 7 and 9 years old in Estonia and Sweden, and between 6 and 9 years old in Iceland. Schools in Estonia (see Figure C1b) and Iceland <sup>(29)</sup> most commonly start foreign language teaching when students are 9 years old. In Sweden, foreign language learning usually starts at age 7.

The latest ages at which all students must start learning a foreign language is 10 years old. This is the case in some parts of the French Community of Belgium and in the Flemish Community of Belgium.

Ireland is the only country where learning a foreign language at school is not compulsory. In Ireland, all students learn English and Irish, neither of which is viewed as a foreign language.

In most education systems (32 out of 39), it is compulsory for all students in general education to learn two foreign languages at the same time at some point during their schooling.

In the majority of cases, the starting age for learning a second foreign language as a compulsory subject ranges from 11 to 13 years old. This corresponds to the end of primary education or the beginning of secondary education. Students in Greece, Latvia, Switzerland and Serbia start learning a second foreign language earlier, from the age of 10 years, corresponding to the second half of primary education. Luxembourg stands out, as all students have to learn a second foreign language from the age of 6 years. At the other end of the scale, in Norway learning a second foreign language becomes compulsory for all students at upper secondary level, when they are 16 years old. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Liechtenstein and Türkiye, two foreign languages are also only compulsory for all general education students at upper secondary level, from the age of 14 or 15 years.

In Estonia and Iceland, as is the case with the first foreign language as a compulsory subject, central education authorities require schools to introduce the second foreign language within a defined age range (10–12 years old). In Iceland, according to available national statistics, students usually start learning a second foreign language at age 12 <sup>(30)</sup>.

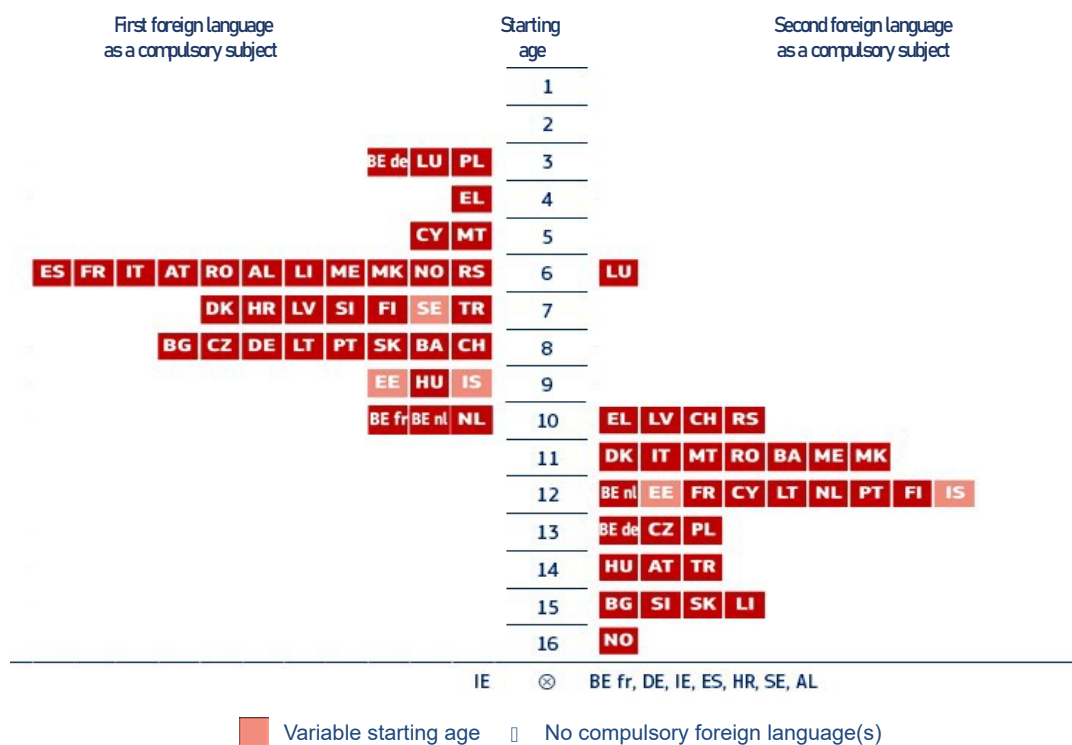
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Cyprus pre-primary education is compulsory from the ages of 4 and 5 years, respectively. Meanwhile, in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Luxembourg and Poland, a place is guaranteed for all children from the age of 3 years (or even earlier in the case of the German-speaking Community of Belgium). For more information, see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice (2021b).

29 [https://px.hagstofa.is/pxen/pxweb/en/Samfelag/Samfelag\\_skolamal\\_2\\_grunnskolestig\\_0\\_gsNemendur/SKO02110.px/?rxid=832f99cd-f008-441f-bbe9-d5f251db3ce9](https://px.hagstofa.is/pxen/pxweb/en/Samfelag/Samfelag_skolamal_2_grunnskolestig_0_gsNemendur/SKO02110.px/?rxid=832f99cd-f008-441f-bbe9-d5f251db3ce9)

30 [https://px.hagstofa.is/pxen/pxweb/en/Samfelag/Samfelag\\_skolamal\\_2\\_grunnskolestig\\_0\\_gsNemendur/SKO02110.px/?rxid=832f99cd-f008-441f-bbe9-d5f251db3ce9](https://px.hagstofa.is/pxen/pxweb/en/Samfelag/Samfelag_skolamal_2_grunnskolestig_0_gsNemendur/SKO02110.px/?rxid=832f99cd-f008-441f-bbe9-d5f251db3ce9)

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 5 Figure B1: Starting ages at which the first and second foreign languages are compulsory subjects for all students in pre-primary, primary and/or general secondary education (ISCED 0–3), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

This figure deals primarily with languages described as ‘foreign’ (or ‘modern’) in the curriculum. Regional and/or minority languages (see Figure B9) and classical languages (see Figure B10) are included only when the curriculum designates them as alternatives to foreign languages.

The starting ages reflect the normal age of students when foreign language teaching begins (students’ notional age); they do not take into account early or late entry to schooling, grade repetition or other interruptions to schooling.

‘Second language’ means a language learnt by students in addition to the first, which results in students learning two different languages at the same time.

Information is based on the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level education authorities.

For definitions of ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, ‘language as a compulsory subject’, ‘steering documents’ and ‘top-level education authorities’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): in only Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon communes with specific language status, students start learning the first foreign language as a compulsory subject from age 8, while in the other parts of the French Community of Belgium they start from age 10. Following an ongoing curricular reform, the starting age for learning the first foreign language will be 8 years for all students as of 2023/2024, while a second foreign language will become compulsory for all students at the ages of 13 and 14 years as of 2027/2028.

Belgium (BE de): although students are not legally required to learn two foreign languages, in all general secondary schools students must start learning English in addition to their first foreign language (French) from age 13 at the latest.

Germany: in six Länder, students must start learning the first foreign language from age 6.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

Estonia, Sweden and Iceland: the figure shows the age at which students most commonly start learning the first and/or second foreign language.

Spain: the figure presents the most widespread situation across Spain. In some autonomous communities, learning two languages is compulsory from age 12 (e.g. Galicia and País Vasco) and age 10 (e.g. Andalucía and Canarias).

Netherlands: it is compulsory to learn a foreign language during primary education. In practice, this occurs between the ages of 10 and 12, but schools can organise this provision at an earlier stage.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: the figure presents the situation in the Republika Srpska entity. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Brčko District, some students start learning their first foreign language as a compulsory subject from the age of 6 or 7, and their second from age 10.

Switzerland: three cantons have a different starting age for the second language, that is, 12 years old.

### **STUDENTS LEARN THE FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR AN INCREASING NUMBER OF YEARS**

Figure B2 illustrates the number of years during which students in pre-primary, primary and general secondary education must study one foreign language. It also shows the difference in the number of years between 2002/2003 and 2021/2022.

In 2021/2022, the duration of learning at least one foreign language as a compulsory subject varied from 7 to 16 years across European countries. The main factor that determines the duration of compulsory foreign language learning is the age from which language learning is compulsory, which ranges from 3 to 10 years old. Indeed, once compulsory learning has started, the requirement that all students study a foreign language usually continues until the last or the penultimate year of upper secondary education. The only exception is in Malta, where the requirement to study a foreign language stops at the end of compulsory education.

Three main groups of education systems can be identified based on the duration of learning at least one foreign language. Most commonly, students have to learn a foreign language for 11 to 13 years. This concerns two thirds of the education systems. In those education systems, students start learning a foreign language between the ages of 6 and 8 years (except in Cyprus and Malta) and finish at 18 or 19 years old (except in Malta). In a second and smaller group of eight education systems, students study a foreign language for 7–10 years. This group includes all the education systems where the learning of a foreign language becomes compulsory for all students once they are either 9 or 10 years old (the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, the Netherlands and Iceland), and Switzerland and Portugal. Finally, the learning of a first foreign language lasts more than 13 years in only four countries: 16 years in Luxembourg and Poland, 15 years in the German-speaking Community of Belgium and 14 years in Greece. These are also the only education systems where the learning of a first foreign language starts before 5 years old.

As Figure B2 shows, over the last two decades about two thirds of education systems for which there are data have increased the duration of compulsory foreign language learning. In all of these education systems, the duration was increased by lowering the age at which the learning of a first foreign language becomes compulsory compared with the beginning of the 21st century. Since 2003, the most considerable changes have taken place in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Poland, where the period of compulsory foreign language learning was lengthened by between 4 years (in Cyprus) and 7 years (in Poland). In these countries, with the exception of Italy, students must now begin learning a foreign language in pre-primary education, whereas 20 years ago they only began learning one in primary education. Italy is the only country where the increase in the duration of compulsory foreign language learning is the result of not only the lowering of the starting age, but also the lengthening of foreign language learning until the end of general secondary education.

Since 2003, nine other education systems (Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Liechtenstein) increased the duration of foreign language learning by 2 or 3 years by changing the starting age of this learning to between 6 and 8 years. In the Flemish Community of Belgium and Luxembourg, the number of years spent studying the first foreign language as a compulsory subject has also increased by 2 and 3 years, respectively, since 2003. However, in the Flemish Community of Belgium the current starting age (10 years old) is still higher than in most education systems, while in Luxembourg it is lower (3 years old).

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition



	Starting age if different from 2021/2022	Finishing age if different from 2021/2022	Not available for 2002/2003
2002/2003	○	●	☐

Source: Eurydice.

Figure 6 Figure B2: Period during which learning a foreign language was compulsory in pre-primary, primary and/or general secondary education (ISCED 0–3) in 2021/2022, and differences from 2002/2003

### Explanatory notes

This figure deals primarily with languages described as ‘foreign’ (or ‘modern’) in the curriculum. Regional and/or minority languages (see Figure B9) and classical languages (see Figure B10) are included only when the curriculum designates them as alternatives to foreign languages.

Information is based on the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level education authorities.

For definitions of ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, ‘language as a compulsory subject’, ‘steering documents’ and ‘top-level education authorities’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): in only Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon communes with a specific language status, foreign language learning is compulsory for 10 years. In the other parts of the French Community of Belgium, it lasts 8 years.

Following an ongoing curricular reform, the starting age for learning the first foreign language will be 8 years for all students as of 2023/2024.

Belgium (BE nl): the difference from 2002/2003 reflects the situation of the Flemish Community except in Brussels, where the number of study years decreased in line with the regulations in place in the rest of the Community.

Denmark: there is a break in the time series due to a change in the methodology used to establish the age at which compulsory foreign language learning finishes.

Estonia and Finland: in 2002/2003, the education authorities specified only that pupils had to start learning a foreign language as a compulsory subject between the ages of 7 and 9. This was still the case in Estonia in 2021/2022. In Finland, since 2021/2022 this age flexibility (i.e. starting age between 7 and 9) has been replaced by a fixed starting age (7 years old).

Ireland: foreign language teaching is not compulsory. The official languages, English and Irish, are taught to all students.

Spain: the figure presents the most widespread situation across Spain. Since 2006, autonomous communities have been able to decide to make the learning of a foreign language compulsory for children attending pre-primary education.

This has increased the duration of foreign language learning in some of them.

Netherlands: it is compulsory for students to learn a foreign language during primary education. In practice, this occurs between the ages of 10 and 12, but schools can organise this provision at an earlier stage.

Sweden: in 2002/2003, the education authorities specified only that students had to start learning a foreign language as a compulsory subject between the ages of 7 and 10, and in 2021/2022 between the ages of 7 and 9.

Finally, over the last two decades the duration for which the learning of the first foreign language is compulsory was also lengthened by 1 year in Czechia, Lithuania and Iceland.

A total of 10 education systems have not increased the duration of compulsory foreign language learning since 2003. However, in the majority of them there are particular circumstances related to the age at which learning a foreign language becomes compulsory for all students. In 2003, in Spain, Malta, Austria and Norway, students were already obliged to learn a language at an early age (at either 5 or 6 years old). In Estonia, the Netherlands and Sweden, schools enjoyed some flexibility in determining the year when students had to start learning a foreign language.

Lowering the age at which students start learning foreign languages was an essential part of the recommendation on foreign language teaching, issued by the EU Heads of State or Government gathered in Barcelona in 2002<sup>(31)</sup> and reiterated in the Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages<sup>(32)</sup>. As discussed above, all education systems that have extended the duration of the learning of the first foreign language since 2003 did so by lowering the starting age. In the majority of cases, these changes took place between 2003 and 2011<sup>(33)</sup>.

## **DURATION FOR WHICH THE LEARNING OF THE SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS COMPULSORY INCREASED IN ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES OVER TIME**

Figure B3 illustrates the number of years during which students in primary and general secondary education must study two foreign languages simultaneously. It also shows the difference in the number of years since 2003.

In 2021/2022, in most education systems all students in general education learnt two foreign languages simultaneously at some point during their schooling (see Figure B1). As Figure B3 shows, the most common situation is a requirement to learn two foreign languages for 5–9 years. Students study two foreign languages for fewer than 5 years in 11 education systems. These include Cyprus, as well as the education systems where this compulsory learning takes place only at lower secondary level (Italy and Portugal) or only at upper secondary level (Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Liechtenstein, Norway and Türkiye). At the other end of the scale, students in Luxembourg must study two foreign languages for 13 years, throughout the whole of their primary and secondary education.

Since 2002/2003, in a majority of education systems, the duration for which the learning of a second foreign language is compulsory has not increased. Indeed, during that period, about a third of education systems for which there are data have introduced reforms to strengthen the learning of a second foreign language as a compulsory subject. These reforms can be put in two categories. First, in three education systems (Denmark, Italy and Türkiye) learning a second foreign language has become compulsory for all. Second, in nine education systems the period during which the learning of two foreign languages simultaneously is compulsory has been lengthened. The most substantial increases have taken place in France (by 5 years) and Greece (by 4 years). Depending on the education system, the duration was increased by lowering the starting age (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Czechia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland and Finland), postponing the finishing age (Liechtenstein) or both (Greece and France).

In contrast, between 2002/2003 and 2021/2022 Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania and Iceland introduced reforms that reduced the number of years during which all students must study two foreign languages at the same

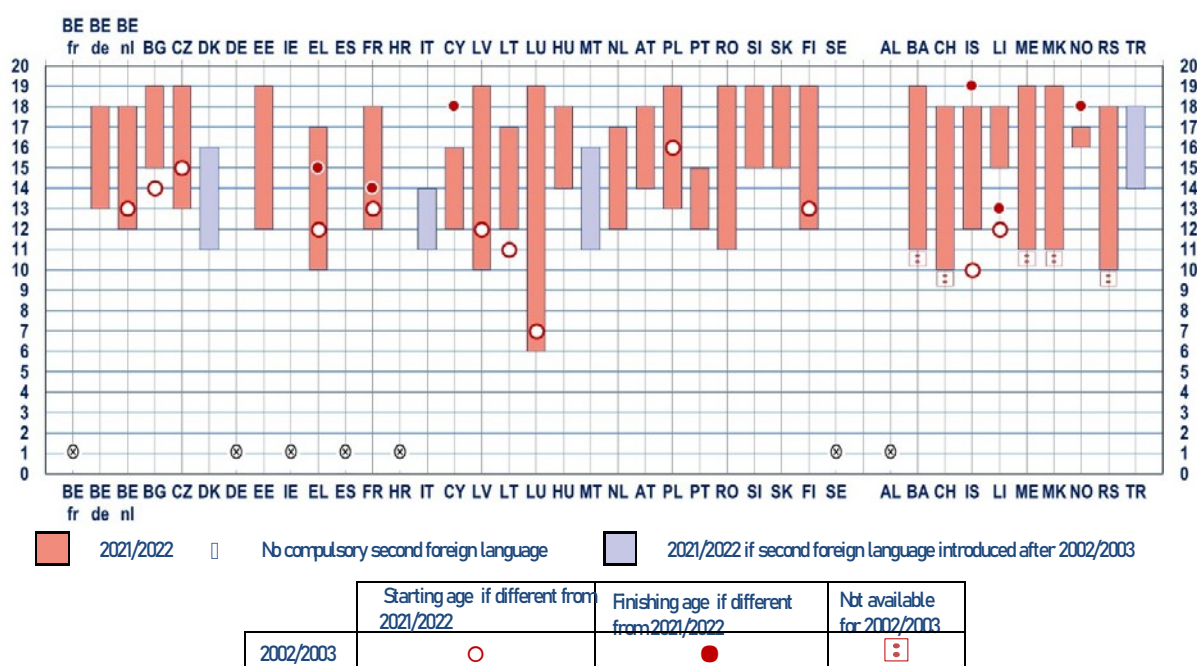
31 Presidency Conclusions – Barcelona European Council 15 and 16 March 2002, C/02/930.

32 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019.

33 For country-specific information for 2010/2011, see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice (2017), pp. 32–33.

time. For instance, in Cyprus, since 2015/2016, the second foreign language has not been compulsory for all students in the second and third years of general upper secondary education. In Iceland, since 2015/2016 it has not been compulsory for students to study a second foreign language for one school year from the age of 18. Moreover, the starting age for learning a second language was changed in 2014/2015 from 10 years to an age bracket of 10–12 years.

In eight education systems (the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Estonia, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia), the number of years during which students learn two foreign languages at the same time remained the same between 2002/2003 and 2021/2022. In two of them, however, particular circumstances of changes regarding the learning of a second foreign language are worth mentioning. In Slovenia, in 2011 a reform making the second language compulsory from the age of 12 was introduced, but it was put on hold in November of the same year and has never been further implemented since then. In 2021, the requirement to learn two foreign languages applied only to students aged 15 and over. In Slovakia, in 2008/2009 the study of two foreign languages became compulsory in lower secondary education. However, in September 2015 top-level education authorities removed the obligation for all lower secondary education students to learn two foreign languages simultaneously up to the age of 15 years. At the same time, they granted individual school autonomy to decide on the matter.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 7 Figure B3: Period during which learning two foreign languages was compulsory in primary and/or general secondary education (ISCED 1–3) in 2021/2022, and differences with 2002/2003

### Explanatory notes

This figure deals primarily with languages described as ‘foreign’ (or ‘modern’) in the curriculum. Regional and/or minority languages (see Figure B9) and classical languages (see Figure B10) are included only when the curriculum designates them as alternatives to foreign languages.

‘Second language’ means a language students learn in addition to the first one, which results in students learning two different languages at the same time.

Information is based on the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level authorities.

For definitions of ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, ‘language as a compulsory subject’, ‘steering documents’ and ‘top-level education authorities’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

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Belgium (BE fr): following an on-going curricular reform, a second foreign language will become compulsory for all students at the ages of 13 and 14 years as of 2027/2028.

Spain: the figure presents the most widespread situation across Spain. A second foreign language is compulsory for all students in some autonomous communities (e.g. Andalucía and Canarias from the age of 10, and País Vasco and Galicia from the age of 12).

Estonia (in 2002/2003 and 2021/2022) and Iceland (in 2021/2022): top-level education authorities specified only that pupils had to start learning the second foreign language as a compulsory subject between the ages of 10 and 12.

Hungary: there is a break in the time series due to a change in the methodology (change in the ISCED categorisation of secondary education programmes).

Netherlands: the duration of the learning of two languages varies according to the pathway students follow.

Norway: there is a break in the time series due to a change in the methodology (change in how the teaching of the second foreign language as a compulsory subject for all is reported).

### **IN A THIRD OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, ALL STUDENTS ARE ENTITLED TO CHOOSE FOREIGN LANGUAGES AS OPTIONAL SUBJECTS**

In addition to the languages in the curriculum that are compulsory for all, students may be entitled to learn foreign languages as optional subjects. This entitlement increases students' opportunity to learn more languages than the compulsory provision and, in some cases, to study two foreign languages if only one is compulsory.

Figure B4 focuses on foreign language learning as an entitlement for all students in primary and general secondary education. It only displays countries with such provision. It also includes information on the number of foreign languages that are compulsory subjects for all (see Figure B1), which provides a more comprehensive picture of foreign language provision. This indicator contributes to the discussion relating to the Council recommendation addressed to EU Member States on the learning of two languages in addition to the language of schooling (see the introduction to this section).

As the figure shows, in 13 countries schools must include foreign languages within the set of optional subjects they have to propose to all students in primary and/or general secondary education.

The entitlement of all students to choose foreign languages as part of their optional subjects applies at secondary level only, except in Croatia, Slovenia and Sweden, where it concerns students in both primary education and general secondary education. In primary education in Croatia and Sweden, all students from age 10 and 12, respectively, can choose to learn an optional foreign language. In Slovenia, all 6-year-old students can choose to start studying a foreign language a year before foreign language learning becomes compulsory for all. This opportunity is provided again for all students from the age of 9 years.

The duration for which foreign languages are offered as optional subjects to all students ranges from 7 years in Sweden to 1 year in France. In France, this concerns all students at the age of 15 in general upper secondary education (lycée général and technologique) and continues for some of them from 16 years old.



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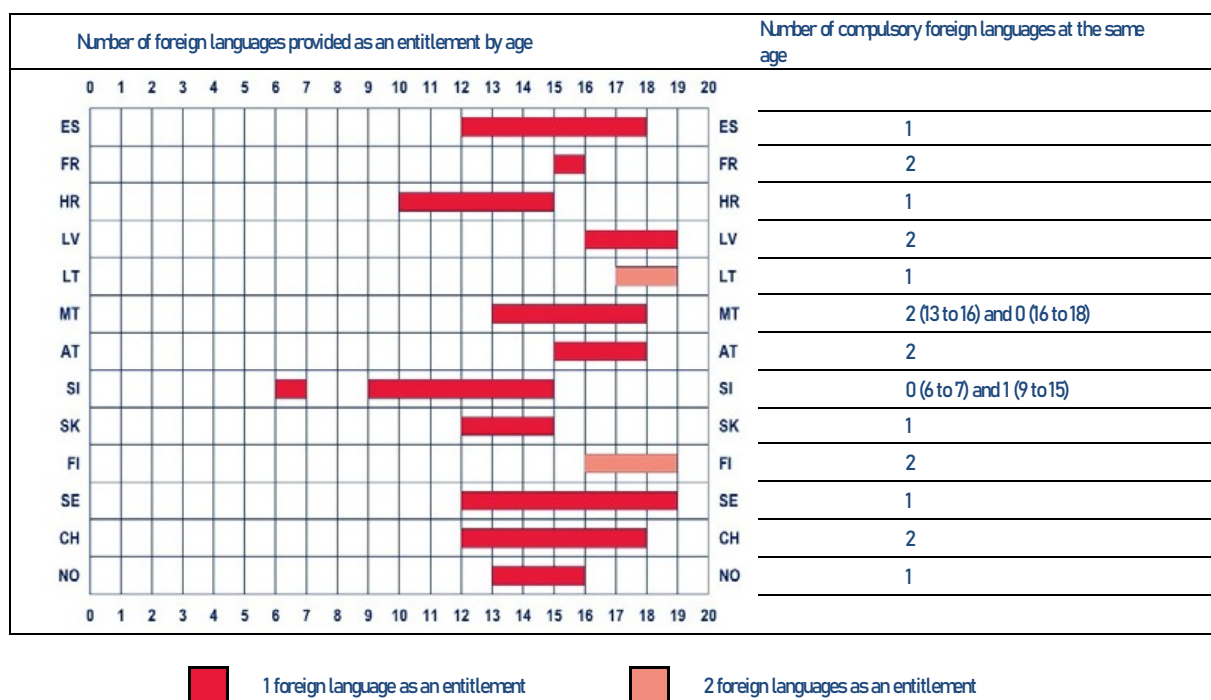


Figure 8 Figure B4: Foreign languages provided as an entitlement and as compulsory subjects for all students in primary and/or general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

No foreign languages provided as an entitlement for all: BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, IT, CY, LU, HU, NL, PL, PT, RO, AL, BA, IS, LI, ME, MK, RS, TR.

### Explanatory notes

This figure deals primarily with languages described as ‘foreign’ (or ‘modern’) in the curriculum. Regional and/or minority languages (see Figure B12) and classical languages (see Figure B13) are included only when the curriculum designates them as alternatives to foreign languages.

Information is based on the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level education authorities.

For definitions of ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, ‘language as an entitlement’, ‘steering documents’ and ‘top-level authorities’, see the Glossary.

In seven countries, providing foreign languages as an entitlement gives all students in primary and/or general secondary education the opportunity to study two foreign languages simultaneously, although only one of them is a compulsory subject (see Figure B1). Indeed, in Spain, Croatia and Sweden, where only one foreign language is compulsory for all students during their schooling, an additional language is offered to them as an entitlement at some point in primary and/or general secondary education. In the remaining four countries, the provision of foreign languages as an entitlement takes place either before the school years during which two foreign languages are compulsory for all (Slovenia, Slovakia and Norway) or after (Lithuania).

In six countries (France, Latvia, Malta, Austria, Finland and Switzerland), the provision of foreign languages as an entitlement gives all students the opportunity to study more than two foreign languages at some point in their general education. In those countries, students are entitled to choose foreign languages as optional subjects during a period of general secondary education (lower and/or upper secondary) when it is already compulsory for them to study two foreign languages. In most cases, students can take one foreign language as an optional subject. In Finland, however, all schools must provide two foreign languages as optional subjects in addition to those that all students learn as compulsory subjects.

Two countries recently introduced reforms relating to foreign languages provided as an entitlement. In Greece, since 2020/2021 the subject 'foreign languages' is no longer offered as an entitlement to all students in the third grade of general upper secondary education alongside compulsory foreign language learning. This reform is related to an increase in the number of years during which all students must study two foreign languages (see Figure B3), introduced in 2020/2021. In Latvia, since the introduction of the new curriculum for upper secondary education in 2020 all schools have had to offer a third foreign language as an entitlement in the 3 years of this level of education.

In many countries, foreign language provision is not limited to foreign languages as compulsory subjects or optional subjects that all schools must offer. Indeed, in a great number of countries schools enjoy some autonomy enabling them to offer the teaching of additional foreign languages. This teaching may be part of specific options selected by individual schools. However, curriculum provision designed at school level and initiatives launched locally are not reported in this section, which focuses on the top-level regulations defining the minimum foreign language provision for all students. Chapter C contains complementary data, as it gives information on the rates of participation in language learning of students in primary and secondary education.

### **IN MOST COUNTRIES, VET STUDENTS WILL HAVE LEARNT ONE FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR THE SAME NUMBER OF YEARS AS THEIR PEERS IN GENERAL EDUCATION**

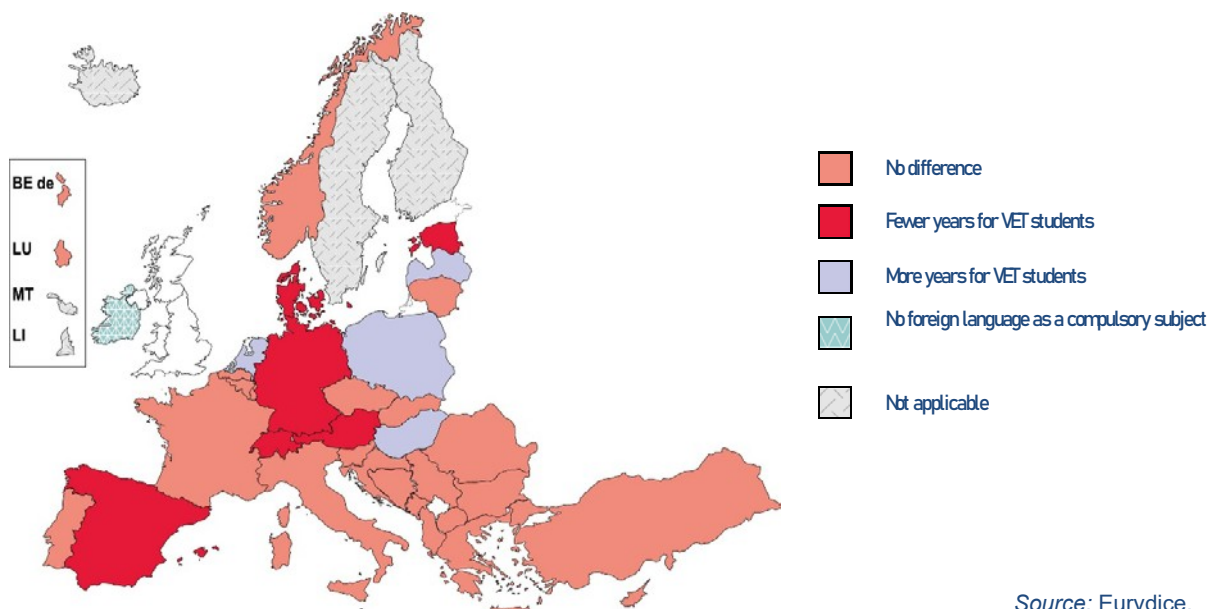
The previous four indicators focus on foreign language provision in general education. Figure B5 compares the provision of the first foreign language as a compulsory subject in general education and VET. More specifically, it looks at the number of years students in vocational and general secondary education spend learning one foreign language as a compulsory subject<sup>(34)</sup>. For comparability purposes, only VET pathways giving access to tertiary education are considered here.

In the vast majority of European countries (21 out of 31), all students in vocational and general secondary education are required to learn one foreign language for the same number of years by the end of their studies. However, in a few cases (six countries) at least some VET students will have learnt one foreign language for a lower number of years by the end of secondary education. In Denmark, Germany, Spain and Switzerland, it is not compulsory for all VET students to learn a foreign language; this depends on the education and training programme they follow. Consequently, the requirement for every student to learn one foreign language only applies to students before they start their VET programme, that is, before they are 15 or 16 years old depending on the country. In Estonia, foreign language learning is compulsory for all students during the first year of VET studies, whereas in general education it is compulsory until the end of upper secondary level. Finally, in Austria the shorter duration of the VET programme (1 year less) in upper secondary education accounts for the difference.

Conversely, in Latvia, Hungary, the Netherlands and Poland, VET programmes are longer, so VET students study a language for a year longer than their counterparts in general education.

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34 The number of years considered for VET students is the whole period during which all students in VET have to study (at least) one foreign language, including during their attendance of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 9 Figure B5: Difference between general education students and VET students in the number of years spent learning one foreign language as a compulsory subject, 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

Given the complexity of VET and the high number of pathways in some countries, only the programmes providing direct access to tertiary education (i.e. ISCED-P 354) are considered in this indicator. In addition, within this defined scope the information is based on the most representative programmes, excluding those delivered in institutions dedicated to very specific fields (e.g. fine art and performing arts). Adult education programmes, special needs education programmes, or pathways with a very low number of students are also excluded. Within this scope, when vocational programmes are of a different duration the shortest one is considered to indicate the end age. For more details on the ISCED classification, please see ISCED 2011 (UNESCO UIS, 2012).

This figure deals primarily with languages described as ‘foreign’ (or ‘modern’) in the curriculum. Regional and/or minority languages (Figure B9) and classical languages (Figure B10) are included only when the curriculum designates them as alternatives to foreign languages.

For more information on the learning of one foreign language as a compulsory subject in general education, please see Figures B1 and B2.

No foreign language as a compulsory subject: no obligation for all students to learn one foreign language.

Information is based on the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level education authorities.

For definitions of ‘curriculum’, ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, ‘language as a compulsory subject’, ‘steering documents’ and ‘top-level education authorities’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Croatia and the Netherlands: there are differences in the length of vocational programmes and the figure represents the shortest one.

Malta, Sweden and Iceland: there are no VET pathways within the scope of the indicator.

Finland: following a reform introduced in 2018, the duration of foreign language teaching is not centrally regulated for VET students. It varies according to the requirements for the qualification concerned, the student’s prior learning and the student’s personal competence development plan. Two foreign languages are among the competence requirements for all qualifications.

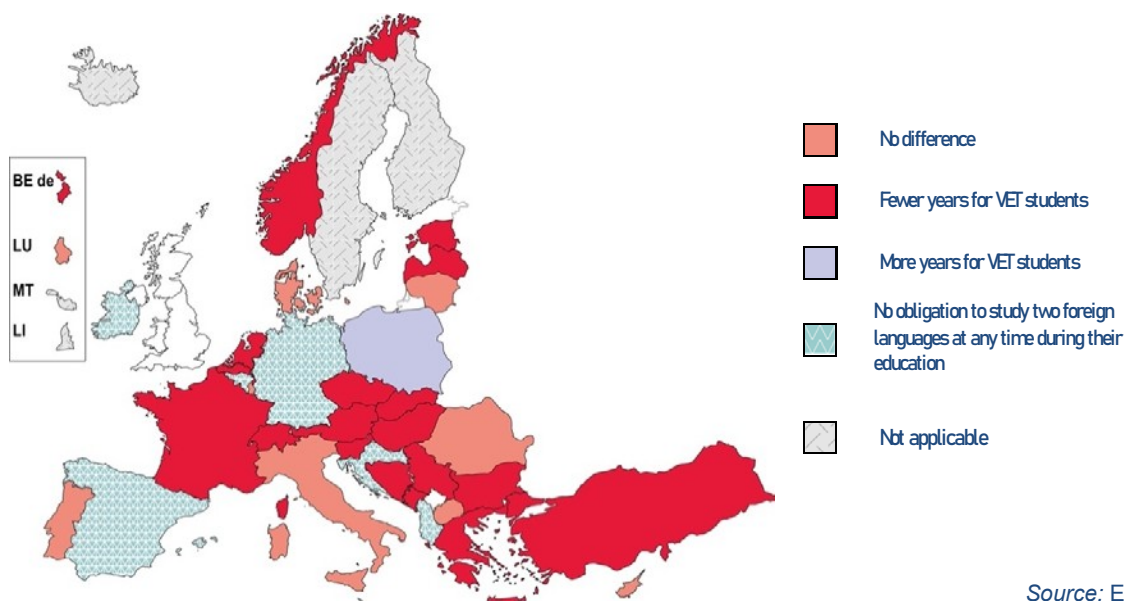
Liechtenstein: the school-based part of the VET programmes is provided in Switzerland.

## IN MOST COUNTRIES, VET STUDENTS WILL HAVE SPENT FEWER YEARS LEARNING TWO LANGUAGES THAN THEIR PEERS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

While in a majority of countries all VET students learn a foreign language for the same number of years as their peers in general education (see Figure B5), the same comparison for the second language reveals

larger differences between VET students and general education students (Figure B6). Figure B6 is based on the lowest requirements in terms of the compulsory learning of two foreign languages for all students across the numerous individual pathways in VET and general education <sup>(35)</sup>. Students' rates of participation in foreign language learning in the two educational programmes are available in Chapter C (see Figure C5).

In 19 education systems, there is a difference in the time spent learning two foreign languages between the two types of education programmes to the detriment of VET students. In most cases, it is 3 or 4 years. However, the difference is 2 years in Bulgaria and Greece and 1 year in the Netherlands and Norway.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 10 Figure B6: Difference between general education students and VET students in the number of years spent learning two foreign languages simultaneously as compulsory subjects, 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

See the explanatory notes for Figure B5.

For more information on the learning of two foreign languages as compulsory subjects in general education, please see Figures B1 and B3.

### Country-specific notes

Malta, Sweden and Iceland: there is no VET pathway within the scope of this indicator.

Finland: following a reform introduced in 2018, the duration of foreign language teaching is not centrally regulated for VET students. It varies according to the requirements for the qualification concerned, the student's prior learning and the student's personal competence development plan. Two foreign languages are among the competence requirements for all qualifications.

Liechtenstein: the school-based part of the VET programmes is provided in Switzerland.

In most of the education systems with lower requirements for VET (the German-speaking and Flemish Communities of Belgium), Czechia, Estonia, Greece, France, Latvia, the Netherlands, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Montenegro and Serbia), VET students start learning a second foreign language as a compulsory subject before upper secondary education, when basic education is still common for all. At upper secondary education, this learning is no longer compulsory for all students in VET programmes

<sup>35</sup> For comparability purposes, only VET pathways giving access to tertiary education are considered here. The number of years provided for VET students is the whole period during which all students in VET have to study (at least) two foreign languages, including during their attendance of primary and lower secondary education.

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(though some may continue to learn two foreign languages), while it remains compulsory for those in general education. In Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Norway and Türkiye, the second foreign language as a compulsory subject solely concerns all students in general upper secondary level. Finally, in Bulgaria all VET students study two compulsory foreign languages for 2 years, while for their counterparts in general education they are compulsory for 4 years, until the end of upper secondary education.

In eight countries (Denmark, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and North Macedonia), there is no difference between the two types of educational programmes. In other words, this means that by the end of secondary education VET and general education students will have learnt two languages simultaneously for the same number of years.

Finally, in the French Community of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Croatia and Albania there is no requirement for all students to study two languages either in basic education or in upper secondary education.

In Poland, the longer duration of VET programmes explains the additional year spent on language learning by VET students.

## SECTION II – DIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES OFFERED

The previous section concentrated on the number of foreign languages that are compulsory for all students and the period for which students have to learn foreign languages. This section focuses on the specific languages taught in schools in Europe.

The section starts by looking at languages that are compulsory for all students during at least one school year (see Figure B7). It then continues by discussing the foreign languages that all schools must provide and those from which schools may choose when creating their foreign language curriculum (see Figure B8). The section then examines languages that curricula sometimes consider alternatives to foreign languages, namely regional and minority languages, and classical languages (see Figures B9 and B10). Another area of investigation is the provision of home-language teaching (i.e. languages spoken by students at home) to students from migrant backgrounds (see Figure B11). Finally, the picture of specific languages taught at schools is completed by an overview of languages used to deliver Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), that is, the provision of learning in which a language different from the language of schooling is used to teach various subjects (see Figure B12).

All the indicators in this section are based on the data collected through the Eurydice Network. They therefore cover 39 education systems in 37 countries <sup>(36)</sup>.

### **A COMPULSORY FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR ALL IS SPECIFIED IN MORE THAN HALF OF ALL EUROPEAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS: IT IS MOST OFTEN ENGLISH**

Learning a foreign language is compulsory in almost all European countries (see Chapter B, Section I). Figure B7 examines whether top-level education authorities define a specific foreign language (or specific foreign languages) that all students must study for at least one school year. The focus is on students in primary and lower secondary education.

As the figure shows, in more than half of the education systems surveyed (22 out of 39 education systems) all students must study a specific foreign language (or specific foreign languages). In the other systems, students or schools can choose which language or languages are studied. Top-level education authorities often guide this choice by defining several languages from which schools and/or students must choose (see Figure B8).

In most education systems with specific compulsory languages, official documents define only one language that is compulsory for all. Two specific foreign languages that are compulsory for all are defined in the German-speaking and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Cyprus, Switzerland and Iceland. In Luxembourg, there are three specific compulsory foreign languages.

English is compulsory in almost all education systems that define a specific compulsory foreign language: 21 out of 22 education systems (all except Finland). In most of these systems (15 systems), English is the only specified compulsory foreign language.

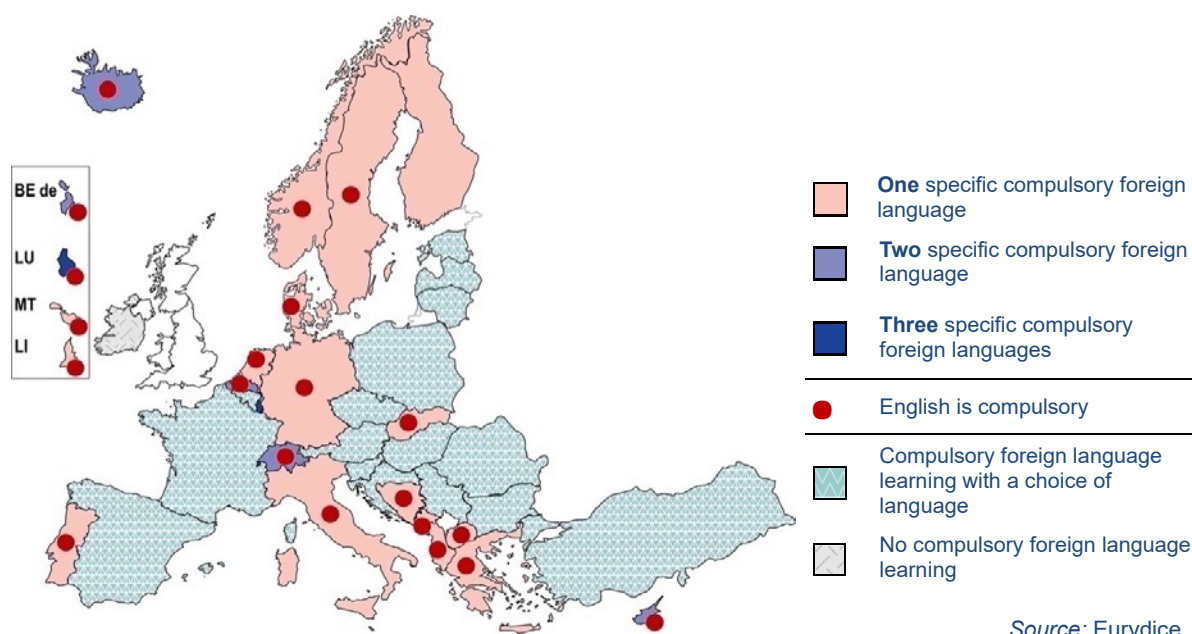
Languages other than English are compulsory for all students only in a few countries.

French is compulsory for all students in the German-speaking and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg and some cantons in Switzerland. In the two Belgian Communities and Luxembourg, French is the first foreign language that all students must study. In Cyprus, it is the second compulsory foreign language, after English. In Switzerland, the order varies: in the cantons defining French as a compulsory foreign language, it is sometimes the first and sometimes the second compulsory language (see the country-specific notes for Figure B7 for details). It is noteworthy that French is compulsory mainly in countries where it is one of the official state languages (all the above countries except Cyprus; see Figure A1).

Similarly, German is compulsory in countries where it is one of the state languages, namely in Luxembourg and in all non-German-speaking cantons in Switzerland.

Finland and Iceland specify some Nordic languages as compulsory for all students. In Finland, the second state language (Swedish or Finnish, depending on the school's main language) is compulsory. In Iceland, alongside English, Danish is compulsory (Norwegian or Swedish can replace it in certain circumstances).

36 For details of the country coverage of this report, see the introduction to the report.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 11 Figure B7: Specific foreign languages compulsory for all students in primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1–2), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows whether the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level (education) authorities specify compulsory foreign languages that all students in primary and/or lower secondary education must learn during at least one school year. If that is the case, the number of compulsory languages is shown. When it comes to details on which foreign languages are compulsory for all, only English is displayed. Languages other than English are specified in the associated text.

For definitions of ‘curriculum’, ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, ‘language as a compulsory subject’, ‘steering documents’ and ‘top-level (education) authority’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): only Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon municipalities known as ‘the language border’ (Comines-Warneton, Mouscron, Flobecq and Enghien) have a specific compulsory language, which is Dutch. In other parts of the French Community of Belgium, there is no specific foreign language that is compulsory for all students.

Belgium (BE de): French is the first foreign language. Only in schools where French is the language of instruction is German the first foreign language. English is not defined in top-level steering documents as a compulsory foreign language. However, in practice, all general secondary schools require students to learn English. Therefore, the figure refers to two specific compulsory foreign languages and identifies English as compulsory.

Germany: in nine Länder, English is compulsory as the first foreign language. French is compulsory in Saarland.

Ireland: all students must study the two state languages: English and Irish. However, neither of them is regarded as a foreign language by the curriculum.

Spain: English is a specific compulsory language in only a few autonomous communities (e.g. Valencia, Rioja and Castilla-La Mancha).

Finland: Swedish is compulsory in schools where Finnish is the language of schooling, and Finnish is compulsory in schools where Swedish is the language of schooling.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: the approach to data collection was different from other countries. The 2021/2022 information is based on a survey of cantonal regulations. In most cantons, English is compulsory.

Switzerland: two foreign languages are compulsory for students. The specified compulsory languages include all state languages (French, German, Italian and Romansh) and English. The order depends on the canton. Usually, either a national language is specified as the first compulsory foreign language and English as the second foreign language or

English is specified as the first compulsory foreign language and one national language as the second. More specifically, in most German-speaking cantons the first compulsory foreign language is English and the second is French (in some cantons, the order is reversed). In French-speaking cantons, the first foreign language is German and the second is English. In the Italian-speaking canton, the first compulsory foreign language is French and the second is German.

Analysing the development of compulsory foreign language learning over time reveals that policies on compulsory languages are rather stable in Europe. However, some changes have taken place in recent years. In the EU, Luxembourg adopted, in 2017, a reform introducing French into early childhood education from the age of 3 years. This implies that children now learn French before they start learning German, which they begin when they are 6 years old (prior to the reform, German was the first compulsory language, followed by French). As before the reform, English is the third language that all students in Luxembourg must learn. Outside the EU, in Montenegro, a 2017 reform introduced English as a compulsory foreign language for all students from the first grade of primary education. Considering the longer period that has been mapped throughout different editions of this report (covering the last two decades), some other countries (e.g. Italy, Portugal and Slovakia) implemented reforms introducing English as a compulsory subject (for details, see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2017, p. 44).

The information on languages that steering documents define as compulsory can be complemented by data on the actual proportions of students studying different languages. Such data are provided in Chapter C, Section II.

### **IN SLIGHTLY MORE THAN ONE THIRD OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS, TOP-LEVEL STEERING DOCUMENTS SPECIFY AT LEAST TWO FOREIGN LANGUAGES THAT ALL SCHOOLS MUST PROVIDE**

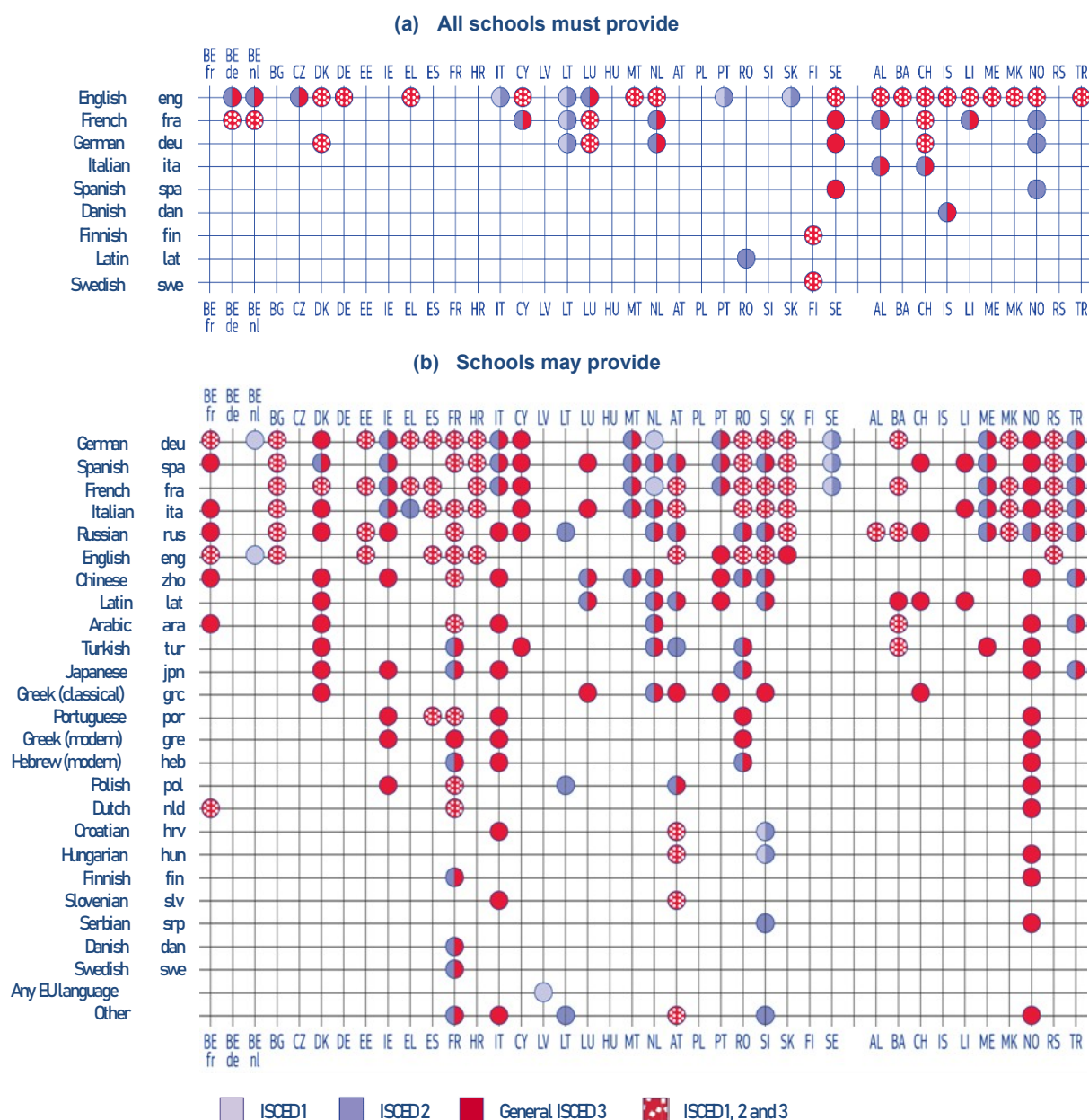
The foreign languages that students learn (see Chapter C, Section II) depend on the language provision stipulated in the curriculum. Figure B8 shows the specific foreign languages provided in schools according to top-level steering documents. It contains two parts: part (a) indicates specific foreign languages that all schools must provide; part (b) illustrates foreign languages that schools may choose to provide to students.

In nearly all countries, top-level steering documents specify the foreign languages that schools must provide or may provide (or both) for at least one education level. In addition, they may allow or encourage schools to offer languages other than those specified. In some cases, steering documents make explicit reference to school autonomy with regard to the languages that they may provide while specifying those that they must provide (in the German-speaking Community of Belgium and in Finland). In other cases, steering documents specify neither the languages that schools may provide nor those that they must provide, giving schools full autonomy to decide on this (in Hungary and Poland).

In the majority of countries, top-level steering documents specify one or more foreign languages that all schools must provide. In most cases, those languages are English followed by French and/or German. When other languages are specified, they are often official state languages (Finnish/Swedish in Finland and Italian in Switzerland) or a language of a neighbouring country (Italian in Albania). In many cases, especially at primary education level, it is mandatory for students to learn the specified foreign languages (see Figure B7). Moreover, Figure B8 shows that the number of specified foreign languages increases at secondary level. In Sweden, Switzerland and Norway, four specific foreign languages should be provided in all schools in lower and/or general upper secondary education, depending on the country.



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Source: Eurydice.

Figure 12 Figure B8: Foreign languages specified in top-level steering documents for primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

**Explanatory notes**

This figure shows specific foreign languages provided in schools according to the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level education authorities. Part (a) indicates the foreign languages that all schools must provide; part (b) shows the foreign languages that schools may choose to provide. In some cases, schools are allowed or encouraged to offer additional languages to those specified.

For one or more education levels, the curriculum or top-level steering documents may not specify the foreign languages that schools must or may provide. In some cases, they may make explicit reference to school autonomy in this policy area.

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This figure and the country-specific notes do not specify whether the languages that are indicated should be provided as first, second or third languages.

Classical languages (i.e. classical Greek and Latin) are included only when the curriculum or top-level steering documents designate them as alternatives to foreign languages.

In each part of the figure, languages are listed in descending order according to the number of education systems that include them in their curriculum or top-level steering documents. The ranking does not take into account the education level(s) for which foreign language provision is recommended/required. If several languages are listed in the same number of education systems, they are ordered alphabetically according to their ISO 639-3 code (see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>, last accessed: 13 July 2022).

Official EU languages are displayed when they are provided in at least two education systems; all other languages are shown when they are provided in at least three education systems. All languages that are not displayed are marked as 'other' in the figure and specified in the country-specific notes.

For definitions of 'curriculum', 'foreign language', 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)' and 'steering documents', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): in Brussels-Capital Region and in the Walloon communes with special linguistic status alongside the Flemish Community of Belgium, all schools must provide Dutch in primary and general secondary education. In the Walloon communes with special linguistic status alongside the German-speaking Community, schools must provide German in primary and general secondary education. From September 2022, (French) sign language can be offered in general upper secondary education.

Germany: in nine Länder, all schools must provide English. All schools must provide French in Saarland.

France: 'Other' languages include Armenian, Cambodian and the regional languages Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Creole, Melanesian languages, Occitan and Tahitian in general secondary education. In lower secondary education, Korean, Vietnamese, and the regional language Gallo, the regional languages of Alsace and the regional languages of Moselle can also be offered. In general upper secondary education, Norwegian, Persian, Tamil and the regional languages Wallisian and Futunian can also be offered.

Italy: 'Other' languages include Albanian and Serbian/Croatian, considered Serbo-Croatian.

Lithuania: 'Other' languages include Latvian.

Netherlands: all schools in the Friesland province must offer Frisian.

Austria: 'Other' languages include Czech, Slovak and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian taught as one language.

Slovenia: 'Other' languages include Macedonian and (Slovenian) sign language in lower secondary education.

Finland: Swedish must be provided in schools in which the language of schooling is Finnish and Finnish must be provided in schools in which the language of schooling is Swedish.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: schools in the Sarajevo canton may choose to provide Arabic and Turkish.

Switzerland: the foreign languages to be provided differ according to the linguistic regions and cantons: French-speaking cantons must provide German and English, German-speaking cantons must provide French and English, and Italian-speaking cantons must provide German, French and English in primary and general secondary education. Italian must be provided in general secondary education in all French- and German-speaking cantons. Romansh must be provided in the German-speaking part of the Graubünden canton.

Norway: 'Other' languages include Albanian, Estonian, Icelandic, Amharic, Bosnian, Dari, Filipino, Cantonese, Korean, Kurdish (Sorani), Oromo, Punjabi, Persian, Somali, Tamil, (Norwegian) sign language, Thai, Tigrinya, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Besides foreign languages that schools must provide, top-level steering documents often mention foreign languages that schools may choose to provide. In addition to English, French and German, the most often specified foreign languages are Spanish, Italian and Russian. Then comes Chinese, followed by Latin, Arabic, Turkish, Japanese, classical Greek and Portuguese. In several countries, classical languages (i.e. classical Greek and Latin) feature in top-level steering documents as foreign languages that schools may provide. In other words, they are alternatives to modern foreign languages and can be studied instead of them. Finally, according to top-level steering documents, schools in a minority of countries may provide a few other European languages.

As expected, the number of specified foreign languages that schools may choose to provide increases in general secondary education, particularly in general upper secondary education. When students reach that level of education, they must often study more than one foreign language or are given the opportunity to study several foreign languages as optional subjects (see Figures B3 and B4). Therefore, foreign language provision in the curriculum reflects the requirements for students outlined in the curriculum.

The number of specified foreign languages that schools may provide is very high in France and Austria at all three education levels. This number is also particularly high in lower and general upper secondary education in Hungary, Romania and Slovenia. In some countries, the curriculum specifies a high number of foreign languages that schools may provide in general upper secondary education more specifically. This is the case in Denmark, Ireland, Italy and Norway.

## **AROUND HALF OF ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES SPECIFY REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES IN OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS RELATED TO EDUCATION**

Across Europe, alongside official state languages, regional or minority languages are spoken in parts of countries' territories. While the legal status of and the number of people who speak these languages vary greatly, many have in common some degree of precariousness (Gerken, 2022). In most European countries, legislation officially recognises at least one regional or minority language (see Figure A1) and promotes its use in different fields of public life, including public administration, legal services, education, media, culture, and economic and social life.

Figure B9 focuses on the inclusion of regional or minority languages in education. It indicates whether official (steering) documents issued by top-level education authorities – such as national curricula or education programmes, national assessment or examination documents, or regulations that require schools to provide tuition in specific languages – refer to the provision of regional or minority languages and, where this is the case, it displays the languages covered.

As the figure shows, in around half of the education systems surveyed, steering documents issued by top-level education authorities specifically refer to the provision of certain regional or minority languages. The number of languages covered ranges from one or two (Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Albania) to 10 or more (France, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Serbia).

In some countries, all officially recognised regional or minority languages (see Figure A1), and only these regional or minority languages, are specifically mentioned in steering documents issued by top-level education authorities. This is the case in Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, Montenegro and Norway. In Poland, for instance, all officially recognised regional or minority languages have a core curriculum and schools are obliged to provide regional or minority language instruction if certain conditions are met (e.g. a minimum number of students apply to study the language). In the Netherlands, where Frisian is an officially recognised minority language, all students in primary and lower secondary education in the Frisian area have to study this language (consequently, all schools in this area have to provide it). Besides the provision of instruction, steering documents may refer to the provision of examinations in regional or minority languages. For example, in Hungary students can take their final upper secondary school leaving examination (érettség) in any of the officially recognised regional or minority languages.

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	BEfr	BEde	BEnl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
No reference																			
Asturian	ast																		
Belorussian	bel																		
Bosnian	bos																		
Breton	bre																		
Bulgarian	bul																		
Catalan	cat																		
Valencian	cat																		
Czech	ces																		
Corse	cos																		
Kashubian	csb																		
Danish	dan																		
German	deu																		
Greek	ell																		
Basque	eus																		
Faroese	fao																		
Finnish	fin																		
Meänkieli	fit																		
Kven	fkv																		
French	fra																		
Franco-Provençal	frp																		
Frisian	fry																		
Friulian	fur																		
Galician	glg																		
Hebrew	heb																		
Croatian	hrv																		
Hungarian	hun																		
Armenian	hye																		
Italian	ita																		
Greenlandic	kal																		
Keraim	kdir																		
Lithuanian	lit																		
Ladin	lld																		
Macedonian	mkd																		
Low German	nds																		
Occitan	oci																		
Picard	pcd																		
Polish	pol																		
Oreole	rof																		
Romany	rom																		
Romanian	ron																		
Rusyn	rue																		
Aromanian (Mach)	rup																		
Russian	rus																		
Slovak	sik																		
Slovenian	slv																		
Sami	sme																		
Albanian	slg																		
Sardinian	srđ																		
Serbian	srp																		
Tahitian	tah																		
Tatar	tat																		
Turkish	tur																		
Ukrainian	ukr																		
Sorbian	wen																		
Yiddish	yid																		
Other																			

Figure 13 Figure B9: Regional or minority languages specifically referred to in top-level steering documents for primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR	
No reference	●				●							●	●	●	●					●	
Asturian	ast																				
Belorussian				●																	
Bosnian	bos															●				●	
Breton																					
Bulgarian	bul					●														●	
Catalan																					
Valencian	cat																				
Czech				●	●															●	
Corsican	cos																				
Kashubian				●																	
Danish	dan																				
German				●	●	●															
Greek	ell									●											
Basque																					
Faroese	fao																				
Finnish										●										●	
Meänkieli	fit									●											
Kven																				●	
French	fra																			●	
Francoprovençal																					
Frisian	fry	●																			
Friulian																					
Galician	glg																				
Hebrew				●	●																
Croatian	hrv		●			●										●				●	
Hungarian			●			●	●	●												●	
Armenian	hye			●																	
Italian						●	●														
Greenlandic	kat																				
Keraim				●																	
Lithuanian	lit			●																	
Ladin																					
Macedonian	mkd										●									●	
Low German																					
Occitan	oci																				
Picard																					
Polish	pol																				
Oreole																					
Romany	rom		●	●	●	●	●	●									●		●		
Romanian																					●
Rusyn	rue							●												●	
Aromanian (Mach)																	●		●		
Russian	rus			●				●													
Slovak				●	●																●
Slovenian	slv		●																		●
Sami										●	●									●	
Albanian	sqi															●	●		●		
Sardinian																					
Serbian	srp					●										●	●				
Tahitian																					
Tatar	tat			●																	
Turkish						●											●				
Ukrainian	ukr			●	●	●															●
Sorbian																					
Yiddish	yid			●						●											
Other				●																●	

Source: Eurydice.

Figure 14 Figure B9: Regional or minority languages specifically referred to in top-level steering documents for primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

## Explanatory notes

The figure shows the regional or minority languages mentioned in the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level (education) authorities. No distinction is made between education levels, educational pathways or types of schools. In some countries, the languages mentioned may be offered in schools in some regions only.

The term 'regional or minority languages' as used within the figure includes the concept of 'non-territorial languages'.

Languages in the table are listed in alphabetical order according to their ISO 639-3 code (see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>, last accessed: 27 June 2022). Languages that have no ISO 639-3 code and groups of languages are marked as 'other' and are specified in the country-specific notes.

For definitions of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', 'non-territorial language', 'regional or minority language', 'steering documents' and 'top-level (education) authority', see the Glossary.

## Country-specific notes

France: 'Other' means Gallo, Kibushi, Shimaore (Mayotte), Melanesian languages, Polynesian languages (Wallisian and Futunian), West Flemish, and the regional languages of Alsace and Moselle (known as Alsatian and Moselle Franconian dialects).

Hungary: 'Other' means Boyash (a dialect of Romany).

Poland: 'Other' means Lemko.

Slovakia: educational standards for four additional languages (Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian and Polish) were adopted in September 2022, that is, at the beginning of the 2022/2023 school year.

Serbia: 'Other' means Bunjevac.

In some other countries, legal frameworks recognise only one official (state) language (see Figure A1) but steering documents issued by top-level education authorities promote the provision of regional or minority languages. This is the case in Bulgaria, Greece, France, Lithuania and Albania. In France, for instance, French is the only official language, but in the areas where regional or minority languages are spoken students should be able to study them at all levels of education, in particular as optional subjects in secondary education. Similarly, in the areas of Albania inhabited by Macedonian and Greek minorities primary and secondary education students should be able to study, alongside Albanian, their home language. In Greece, steering documents cover the teaching of Turkish, which takes place in some minority schools. In Bulgaria, in 2017, top-level education authorities approved curricula for the study of Hebrew, Armenian, Romany and Turkish, which, if students wish to, they can study for 2 hours a week for 7 years.

A contrasting group consists of countries that grant official status to regional or minority languages (see Figure A1) but do not make specific reference to these languages in steering documents issued by top-level education authorities. This applies to Czechia, Cyprus, Latvia, Portugal and Switzerland. However, a broader reference to these languages may exist. For example, in Czechia members of national minorities have the right to be educated in their own language.

Finally, some countries neither officially recognise regional or minority languages (see Figure A1) nor refer to these languages in steering documents issued by top-level education authorities (Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Türkiye).

## **CLASSICAL LANGUAGES ARE COMPULSORY FOR AT LEAST SOME UPPER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN ALMOST HALF OF ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

In order to provide the full picture of language learning across Europe, it is important to consider the provision of classical languages. Indeed, national curricula often do not consider classical Greek and Latin 'foreign languages' and, therefore, the languages in question are not included in the other indicators in this section. Hence, to complement data presented previously, this indicator examines the provision of classical languages regardless of how the curriculum categorises them. The focus of the indicator is on the provision of classical languages in lower and general upper secondary education.

Figure B10 concentrates on two types of regulations regarding the provision of classical languages. The first type of regulation establishes classical languages as compulsory subjects, meaning that students are required to study classical Greek and/or Latin. Such a requirement may apply either to all students during at

least one part of their secondary schooling (e.g. one school year) or to some categories of students only. The second type of regulation establishes an entitlement for (all or some) students to study classical Greek and/or Latin, which means that students can decide whether they will study these languages, while education providers must ensure that the language provision corresponds to students' choices. In each of the above cases, classical Greek and/or Latin may be studied as subjects in their own right or within subjects covering wider areas (e.g. 'classical studies').

As part (a) of Figure B10 shows, in lower secondary education, steering documents rarely establish a requirement for all students to study classical languages. Romania is the only country where all students in lower secondary education have to study Latin, which is included in the seventh-grade subject 'Latin and Romanic culture'. Greece and Cyprus are the only countries where all students in lower secondary education have to study classical Greek.

In a few additional countries (or education systems), the requirement to study classical languages in lower secondary education applies only to students on specific pathways (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany, Croatia, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Liechtenstein). For example, in Germany classical Greek and Latin are compulsory for students who want to attain the qualification *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* in *Gymnasium* specialising in classical languages. In Liechtenstein, during the lower years of *Gymnasium* studies, all students have to study Latin. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, Croatia and Switzerland, students in lower secondary education can specialise in classical studies and, therefore, classical Greek and/or Latin become an integral part of their curriculum.

In four countries (Germany, France, Luxembourg and Austria), students in lower secondary general education are entitled to choose classical Greek and/or Latin as optional subjects. In France, this entitlement applies to all students in lower secondary education and covers both classical Greek and Latin. In Germany, Luxembourg and Austria, the entitlement concerns only students on specific pathways. For example, in Luxembourg students who study in the 'classical track' can choose Latin, classical languages (classical Greek and Latin) or Chinese. In Germany, the first foreign language for *Gymnasium* students has to be either a modern foreign language or Latin.

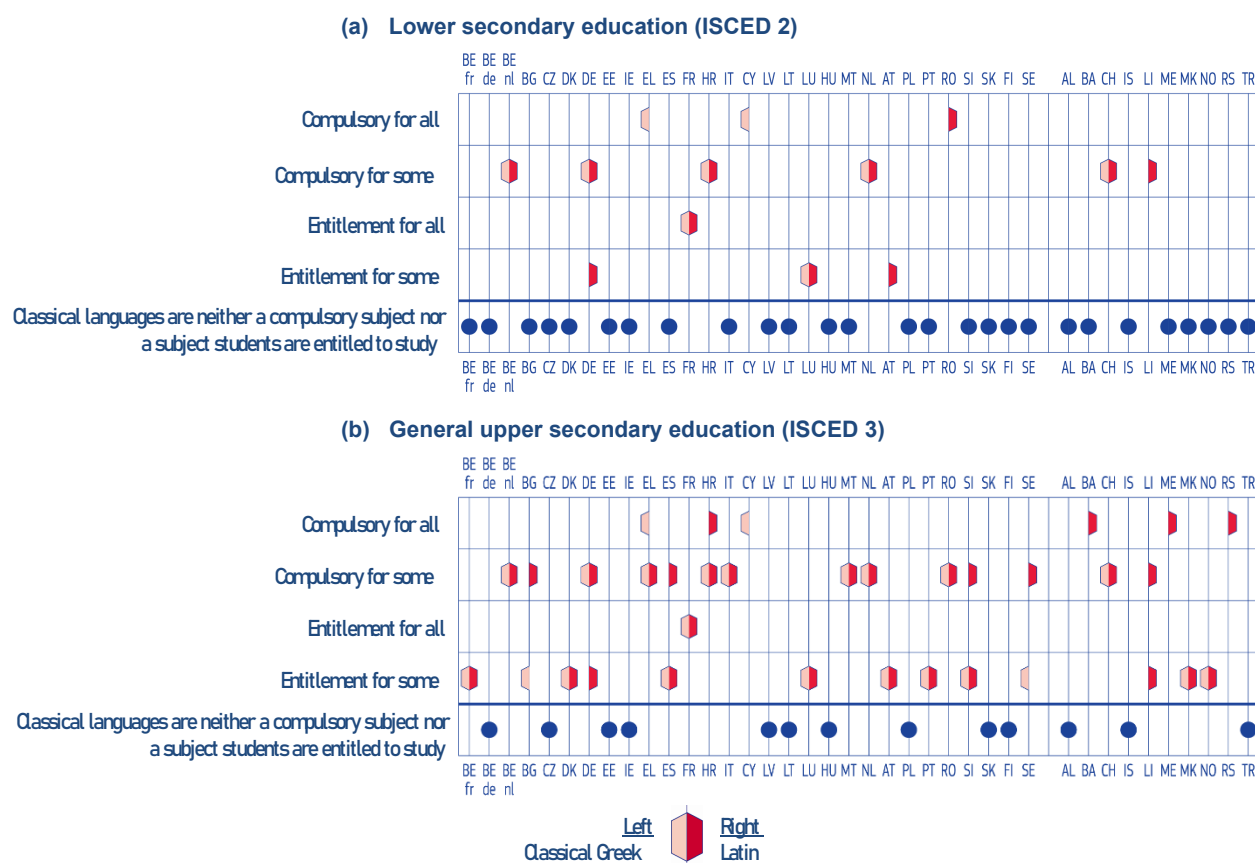
The number of countries that have in place a requirement or an entitlement for students to study classical languages is much higher in general upper secondary education than at lower secondary level.

All students in general upper secondary education in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia have to study Latin during at least one school year. In Croatia, beyond the minimum requirement for all students to study Latin for 1 year, those on the 'classical programme' have to study Latin (and classical Greek) for the entire duration of (lower and upper) secondary education. In a further 13 education systems, Latin is compulsory only for students on some pathways. As the above example of Croatia shows, these pathways sometimes start in lower secondary education.

Classical Greek is compulsory in general upper secondary education in fewer education systems than Latin. All students in Greece and Cyprus have to study this language at the beginning of their upper secondary studies. In Greece, upper secondary students may further specialise in classical studies, and, for students on this pathway, classical Greek (together with Latin) is compulsory beyond the period when it is compulsory for all students. In eight additional education systems, classical Greek is compulsory only for students on specific pathways. For these students, classical Greek is commonly compulsory together with Latin.

In France, in general upper secondary education, as in lower secondary education, all students are entitled to study classical languages as optional subjects. In several other European countries, general upper secondary education students are entitled to study classical languages, but only on some pathways. More specifically, in 11 education systems students on some pathways are entitled to study Latin and in 11 systems students on some pathways can choose to study classical Greek. These two groups of education systems largely overlap, as both classical Greek and Latin are commonly among optional subjects. For example, in Portugal both classical Greek and Latin are optional subjects for students who are on the 'languages and humanities' pathway.

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Source: Eurydice.

Figure 15 Figure B10: The studying of classical Greek and Latin in general secondary education (ISCED 2–3), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows whether classical Greek and Latin are compulsory for (all or some) students and whether (all or some) students are entitled to study these languages. The information is based on the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level (education) authorities.

Classical Greek and/or Latin may be studied as subjects in their own right or within subjects covering wider areas (e.g. 'classical studies'). The figure considers both situations.

For definitions of 'classical language', 'foreign language', 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', 'language as a compulsory subject', 'language as an entitlement', 'steering documents' and 'top-level (education) authority', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific note

Belgium (BE fr): following an ongoing curricular reform, Latin will become a compulsory subject during the first 2 to 3 years of lower secondary education (ISCED 2) as of 2028.

Overall, considering both education levels surveyed, countries where students are required or entitled to study classical languages in secondary education are often those where the state language directly stems from classical Greek or Latin and/or those where general secondary education consists of different study specialisations, including very academically oriented pathways.

It is also noteworthy that, when countries' regulations do not establish a requirement or an entitlement for students to study classical languages, schools may still be able to provide these languages. For example, in



Poland a regulation that has been in force since 2021/2022 allows head teachers of upper secondary schools to decide which optional subjects – from a list of subjects that includes Latin – they will provide. As there is for other optional subjects, there is a state curriculum for Latin. Moreover, in Poland upper secondary schools sometimes provide the subject ‘Latin and ancient culture’, for which there is also a curriculum. Similarly, in Slovakia upper secondary schools may choose to provide Latin, and if they do so they use the state curriculum for this subject. In the French Community of Belgium and Slovenia, Latin can be included in the set of optional subjects provided in lower secondary education, and in Finland Latin can be included as an optional subject in both lower secondary education and general upper secondary education. In the Flemish Community of Belgium and Hungary, schools’ autonomy to provide classical languages concerns both classical Greek and Latin, and it applies to both lower secondary education and upper secondary education. This selection of examples shows that students in general secondary education may have the opportunity to study classical languages even when there are no top-level regulations requiring and/or entitling them to do so.

## **STUDENTS FROM MIGRANT BACKGROUNDS ARE ENTITLED TO HOME-LANGUAGE TEACHING IN VERY FEW COUNTRIES**

In Europe, language provision in the curriculum takes various forms. In addition to the language of schooling, the curriculum may include foreign and ancient languages (see Figures B8 and B10). Regional and minority languages, which are spoken by smaller groups of nationals of a state who have been settled in that state for generations, are also present in schools in many countries (see Figure B9).

Figure B11 focuses on home-language teaching. More precisely, it examines whether, according to top-level steering documents, students from migrant backgrounds who do not speak the language of schooling at home are entitled (with conditions) to home-language teaching.

Home languages spoken by students from migrant backgrounds should not be confused with regional or minority languages. In contrast to ‘regional or minority language’ speakers, speakers from migrant backgrounds have not been settled in their host country for generations. Furthermore, they may not be nationals of their host country, particularly in the case of newly arrived migrant students.

As Figure B11 shows, students from migrant backgrounds are entitled to home-language teaching in only six countries, which are mostly situated in northern Europe. This entitlement only exists with conditions.

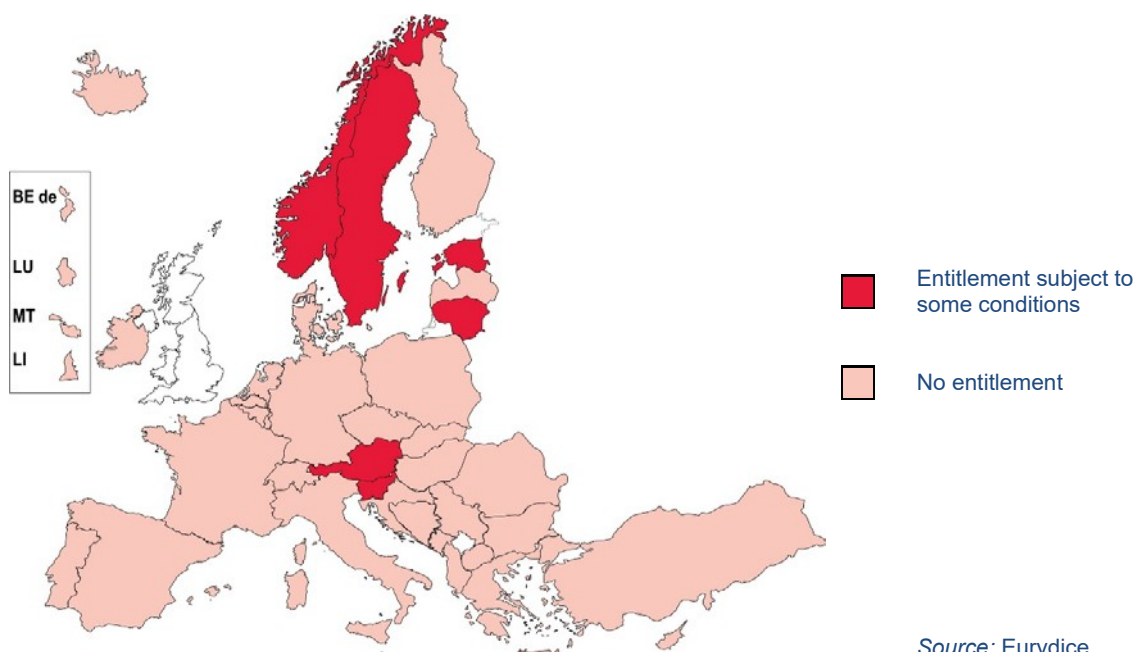
A minimum number of interested students is often a prerequisite for home-language lessons to be organised. This number is 5 in Sweden and Lithuania, 10 in Estonia and 12 in Austria. Interested students may come from different classes and/or schools.

The availability of teachers determines whether home-language teaching can be provided in Lithuania, Austria, Sweden and Norway. In Sweden, when teacher applicants do not have the required formal qualifications to teach, head teachers decide whether they have the necessary competences to teach home languages. In Norway, when suitable staff are not available the municipality needs to search for alternative options, such as distance learning.

Other conditions apply specifically to students. In Sweden, the language concerned should be a language that students use in their daily communication at home, which implies that students should already have some knowledge of the language.

Finally, in Slovenia schools can apply for specific public funds to support the provision of home-language lessons. Home-language lessons are provided by stakeholders external to the schools on the condition that there is sufficient interest and that teachers are available.

In four countries (Austria, Finland, Sweden and Norway), top-level education authorities’ commitment to home-language teaching is also demonstrated by the provision of specific syllabuses or curricula for that teaching.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 16 Figure B11: Entitlement to home-language teaching for students from migrant backgrounds in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows whether, according to top-level steering documents, students from migrant backgrounds who do not speak the language of schooling at home are entitled to home-language teaching.

The entitlement as shown in the figure refers to policy conditions/frameworks that establish the right of students from migrant backgrounds to home-language teaching. The concept of a 'right' implies that the students in question are systematically enabled to access / take part in home-language teaching. When this right is subject to certain conditions (a minimum number of interested students, etc.), these are expressed in steering documents (and specified in the analysis related to Figure B11). The provision of home-language teaching may take place within or outside formal school settings and/or school hours.

The provision of home-language teaching organised or financially supported by the country of origin of students and/or by non-governmental organisations is excluded from the scope of the figure.

Since in all the countries where students are entitled to home-language teaching specific conditions need to be met, the figure displays only two categories: 'entitlement subject to some conditions' and 'no entitlement'.

For definitions of 'home language', 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', 'students from migrant backgrounds' and 'steering documents', see the Glossary.

Students from migrant backgrounds may take advantage of some language policy measures or legislation targeting specific languages. For instance, in the French Community of Belgium the languages concerned (Chinese, Spanish, Greek, Italian, Moroccan, Turkish, Tunisian, Portuguese and Romanian) are those of the nine countries with which the French Community of Belgium has established some partnership. Parents must submit a request to the school for their children to benefit from the language courses. In Ireland, according to the national foreign language strategy, which has been in place since 2017, the languages most spoken by students from migrant backgrounds (Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese) can be made part of the curriculum and studied for state examinations. In these two education systems, the abovementioned language courses are available to all students, that is, not only those from migrant backgrounds.

Finally, according to the 1977 Council directive on the education of children of migrant workers, EU Member States should take 'appropriate measures to promote the teaching of the mother tongue and of the culture of the country of origin' for the 'children for whom school attendance is compulsory under the laws of the host

State’ and ‘who are dependents of any worker who is a national of another Member State’<sup>(37)</sup>. Some countries, such as Denmark, include children who are citizens of the European Economic Area countries that are not part of the EU, that is, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

A few countries (Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden) monitor home-language teaching, that is, they systematically gather data related to this area and analyse them to inform policymaking. In Germany, a survey conducted by Mediendienst Integration, an information platform on migration and discrimination launched in 2012 by the Council for Migration, shows that 140 000 students from migrant backgrounds studied their home languages in 2021/2022<sup>(38)</sup>. In Austria, an official report indicates that, in 2018/2019, 26 languages were taught as home languages to 31 173 students from migrant backgrounds<sup>(39)</sup>. In Slovenia, according to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 511 students attended home-language lessons in 2020/2021<sup>(40)</sup>. In Finland, in 2020, 42 636 students learnt home languages in compulsory education. Courses were provided in 57 languages<sup>(41)</sup>. Finally, in Sweden official statistics show that 187 000 students received home language tuition in 2020/2021. The most studied languages were Arabic (58 700 students) and Somali (17 200 students)<sup>(42)</sup>.

## **IN ADDITION TO FOREIGN LANGUAGES, REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES ARE OFTEN USED TO DELIVER CLIL**

CLIL refers to bilingual or immersion education, where at least some subjects – for example, mathematics, geography and natural sciences – are taught in a different language from the language of schooling. The objective of this type of provision is to enhance students’ proficiency in languages other than the language of schooling.

Figure B12 investigates the existence of CLIL programmes in primary and general secondary education, and the status of languages used to deliver CLIL. The figure is complemented by an annex (Annex 2), which provides details of CLIL provision in each country surveyed (languages used to deliver CLIL and education levels covered).

As the figure shows, CLIL programmes are in place in virtually all European countries. Only Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Türkiye do not provide CLIL programmes.

The most widespread type of CLIL programme, which is in place in 29 education systems (out of 35 with CLIL programmes), consists of teaching some subjects in the language of schooling (the state language) and other subjects in a foreign language. Most education systems with this type of CLIL programme have in place up to three different language combinations (e.g. state language and English, state language and French, and state language and German). However, in some education systems the number of language combinations exceeds 10 (see information for Germany and France in Annex 2). Considering specific foreign languages in which CLIL is delivered, English, French and German, and to a lesser degree Spanish and Italian, are the most commonly used languages.

The second most widespread type of CLIL programme, which is in place in 18 education systems, consists of teaching some subjects in the state language and other subjects in a regional or minority language. Just as for the previous type, the number of language combinations that students can choose from differs across education systems. They can choose from between one language option (e.g. state language and Polish in Czechia) and more than 10 options (in France, Hungary and Romania).

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37 Council Directive 77/486/EEC of 25 July 1977 on the education of the children of migrant workers.

38 [https://mediendienst-integration.de/fileadmin/Dateien/Factsheet\\_Herkunftssprachlicher\\_Unterricht\\_2022.pdf](https://mediendienst-integration.de/fileadmin/Dateien/Factsheet_Herkunftssprachlicher_Unterricht_2022.pdf)

39 [https://pubshop.bmbwf.gv.at/index.php?article\\_id=9&search %5Bcat %5D=4&pub=824](https://pubshop.bmbwf.gv.at/index.php?article_id=9&search %5Bcat %5D=4&pub=824)

40 <https://www.gov.si/teme/jeziki-v-vzgoji-in-izobrazevanju/>

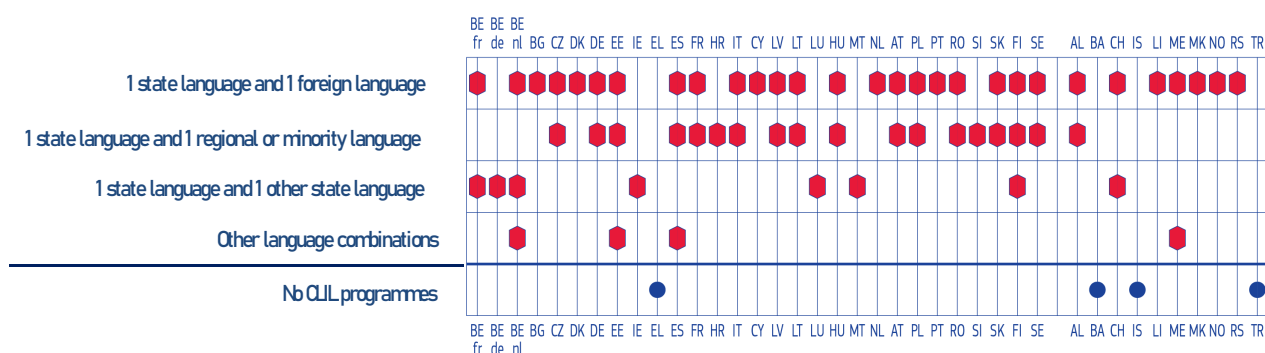
41 [https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/Omana\\_aidinkielenä\\_opetetut\\_kielet\\_ja\\_opetukseen\\_osallistuneiden\\_määrätvuonna\\_2020.pdf](https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/Omana_aidinkielenä_opetetut_kielet_ja_opetukseen_osallistuneiden_määrätvuonna_2020.pdf)

42 <https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.7f8c152b177d982455e15bc/1616397146883/pdf7920.pdf>

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Another type of CLIL programme is found in countries with several state languages (see Figure A1), which often have in place programmes delivering different subjects in two state languages. This type of CLIL programme exists in Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Finland and Switzerland.

A limited number of countries provide CLIL programmes that do not fall into the above categories. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium some CLIL programmes involve teaching, in parallel, in more than two languages, specifically two or all three state languages (see Figure A1) and a foreign language. Similarly, in Spain there are CLIL programmes involving more than two languages and, in addition, programmes where some subjects are taught in a regional language and some are taught in a foreign language (the state language – Spanish – is used in these programmes only within the subject Lengua Castellana y Literatura). This type of CLIL programme is also found in Estonia and Montenegro, where some schools offer programmes delivering some subjects in a minority language (Russian in Estonia and Albanian in Montenegro) and others in a foreign language (English in both countries).



Source: Eurydice.

Figure B12: Existence of CLIL programmes and status of languages used in CLIL in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows the language combinations that are used in CLIL as specified in the curriculum or other steering documents issued by top-level (education) authorities (exceptions where the languages are not specified in these documents are listed in the country-specific notes in Annex 2).

The provision displayed covers at least one education level in the range ISCED 1–3. The figure does not specify the level. This information is provided in Annex 2.

The term ‘regional or minority language’ as used within the figure includes the concept of ‘non-territorial languages’. The figure considers regional or minority languages both with official status and without official status. The figure does not cover:

- education programmes provided in students’ mother tongue for students whose mastery of the language of schooling is not sufficient (see Figure E9);
- programmes in international schools.

For definitions of ‘Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)’, ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, ‘language of schooling’, ‘non-territorial language’, ‘regional or minority language’, ‘state language’ and ‘top-level (education) authority’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes at the end of Annex 2.

While none of the education systems surveyed provides all (four) types of CLIL programme displayed in Figure B12, four have in place three types of programme (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Estonia, Spain and Finland). In 16 education systems, two types of CLIL programme are found. Most education systems with two types of CLIL programme provide programmes delivered in the state language and a foreign language, and in the state language and a regional or minority language (Czechia, Germany, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and Albania). In 15 education systems, only one type of CLIL programme is in place. This most commonly involves the state language and

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a foreign language (Bulgaria, Denmark, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Portugal, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway and Serbia). Other arrangements in education systems with one type of CLIL programme include programmes with two state languages (the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg and Malta) and those combining the state language with a regional or minority language (Croatia and Slovenia).

There is no indication that CLIL programmes are concentrated in any particular education level. Indeed, in most European countries CLIL programmes exist in all education levels surveyed, that is, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. However, countries often provide specific language options only at specific education levels. This means that not all CLIL options that exist in a country are available at all education levels (see Annex 2 for details).

## CHAPTER C PARTICIPATION

### SECTION I – NUMBER OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES LEARNT BY STUDENTS

Ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn foreign languages is a European policy objective. In 2002, at the European Council meeting in Barcelona, policymakers agreed on the importance of ‘teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age’<sup>(43)</sup>. The 2019 Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages<sup>(44)</sup> reiterated this objective by inviting Member States to help all young people to acquire, by the end of upper secondary education, competences in two languages other than their language of schooling. Young people should be able to use one of these two languages effectively for social, learning and professional purposes, and the other one to interact with others with a degree of fluency.

Considering the above objective of equipping young people with competences in two foreign languages, this section presents data on the number of foreign languages learnt by students, according to education level and pathway. More specifically, it focuses on the percentage of students learning one foreign language at primary level (see Figure C1) and two or more foreign languages at lower secondary level (see Figure C3). Differences in those percentages between 2013 and 2020<sup>(45)</sup> are also discussed (see Figures C2 and C4, respectively). Furthermore, this section examines the differences in foreign language learning between students in general education and students in VET at upper secondary level in 2020 (see Figure C5) and compares them with 2013 (see Figure C6). Finally, it shows the average number of foreign languages learnt by students in primary and secondary education (see Figure C7).

The section uses data from the Eurostat/UOE data collection on the number of languages learnt by students at given reference years. Most of the data presented consider the student population at a specific education level, namely primary, lower secondary or upper secondary education<sup>(46)</sup>. Therefore, the data do not reveal what languages and the number of languages students learn during each year of schooling at each education level but provide an overall picture of the languages that students learn (and how many they learn) across all grades in an education level in a given reference year. However, one indicator in the section (shown in Figure C1b) provides age-related data and, therefore, enables a better understanding of the number of languages students learn at a particular age.

The Eurostat/UOE data collection includes only languages regarded as foreign languages in the curriculum drawn up by the top-level education authorities. Regional or minority languages are only included when the curriculum designates them as alternatives to foreign languages. The study of languages offered in addition to the basic curriculum is not included. The data on non-nationals studying their native language in special classes or those studying the language of schooling of their host country are also excluded.

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43 Presidency Conclusions – Barcelona European Council 15 and 16 March 2002, C/02/930.

44 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 17.

45 The reference years are the school years 2012/2013 and 2019/2020, respectively.

46 Eurostat data used as a basis for Chapter C cover students following formal education programmes at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. Depending on the country and the organisation of its education system, data may (or may not) include students outside the typical age range associated with these levels. For example, ‘second chance’ adult education may be included, if it is part of the formal education system at these education levels. Information on whether the country data include adult education programmes can be found in the national quality reports, Section 6.3.1. (see Eurostat’s website ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/educ\\_uoe\\_enr\\_esms.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/educ_uoe_enr_esms.htm))). Furthermore, when referring to (upper secondary) VET, Eurostat data refer to all (upper secondary) VET programmes that exist in a country, while Eurydice data consider only programmes with ISCED code 354 (see Figures B5 and B6). Therefore, Eurostat data cover a wider range of (upper secondary) VET programmes than Eurydice data.

Since the Eurostat/UOE data collection does not cover all education systems for which information is available from Eurydice, data in this section are systematically missing for the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye.

## **AT EU LEVEL, 86 % OF PRIMARY STUDENTS LEARN AT LEAST ONE FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

In all countries except Ireland <sup>(47)</sup>, students learn foreign language(s) as compulsory subject(s) in primary education. This learning usually starts between the ages of 6 and 8 years, or sometimes earlier (see Figure B1). As shown in Figure C1a, 86.1 % of primary education students at EU level learn at least one foreign language. However, at country level participation rates in foreign language learning among the primary school population may vary substantially, depending on the age when foreign language teaching becomes compulsory.

In 15 countries, at least 96 % of students in primary education learn one or more foreign languages <sup>(48)</sup>. In all of them, the learning of a foreign language becomes compulsory in the first year of primary education at the latest, which corresponds to the age of 5 years in Malta; 7 years in Croatia, Latvia and Poland; and 6 years in the remaining 11 countries.

At EU level, 13.9 % of students in primary education are not learning a foreign language at school. In three education systems, at least half of students are not doing so. In some parts of the French Community of Belgium and in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the age at which the learning of a foreign language becomes compulsory is 10 years, that is, when students are in the fifth (of the six grades) of primary education (see Figure B1); in the Netherlands, schools have the flexibility to decide when primary education students have to start learning a foreign language (see Figure B1).

Learning a second foreign language often becomes compulsory at the beginning of lower secondary education or at the end of primary education (see Figure B1). The percentage of primary students learning two or more foreign languages is therefore rather small. At EU level, it is 7.2 %. However, around 30 % of students in primary education learn two or more foreign languages in Denmark, Estonia and Greece, and the percentage is much higher in Luxembourg (83.2 %), where the learning of a second language becomes compulsory at the age of 6 years.

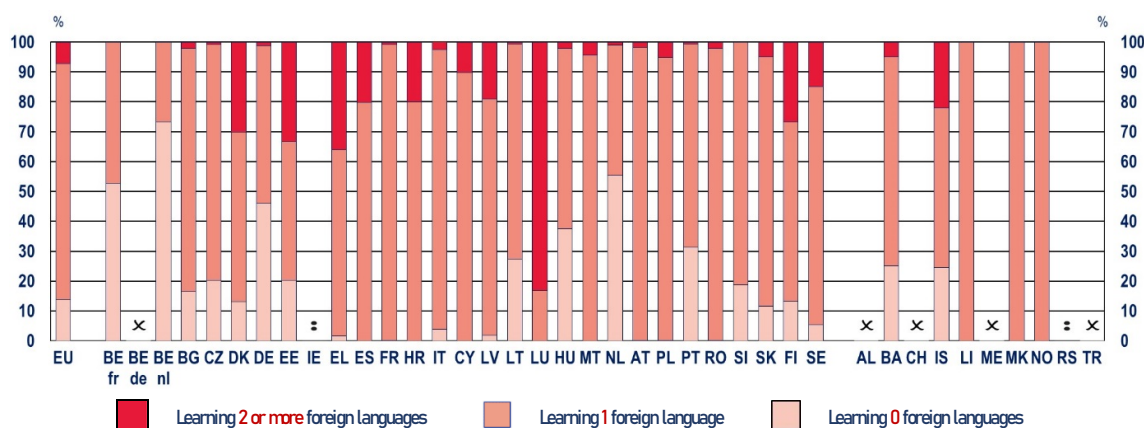
Figure C1b presents, by age, the percentage of students learning a foreign language in primary education. This information is, however, not available for all the education systems shown in Figure C1a.

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47 In Ireland, there is no foreign language teaching in primary education. Students must study the two state languages: English and Irish. However, neither of them is regarded as a foreign language by the curriculum.

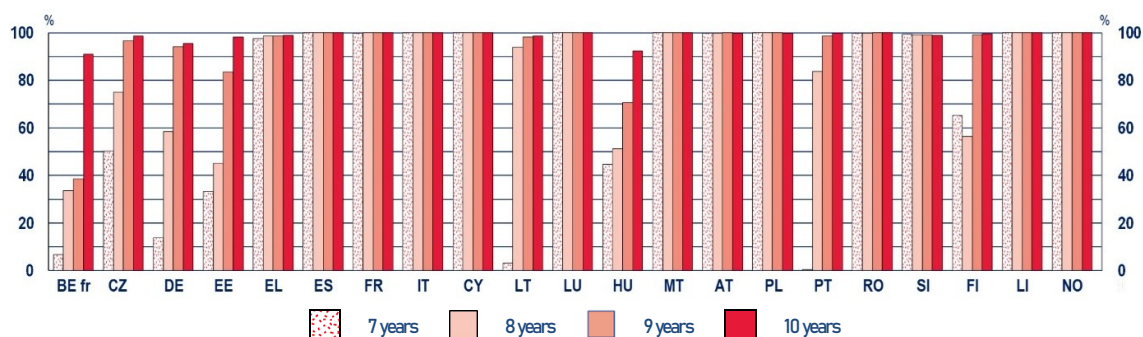
48 EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LV, LU, MT, AT, PL, RO, LI, MK and NO.

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Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Figure 18 Figure C1a: Percentage of students learning foreign languages in primary education (ISCED 1), by number of languages, 2020



Source: Eurydice calculations, based on non-published Eurostat/UOE data (last updated 29 September 2022).

Figure 19 Figure C1b: Percentage of students learning at least one foreign language in primary education (ISCED 1), by age, 2020

### Explanatory notes

The percentage of students learning 0, 1 or 2 (or more) foreign languages is calculated with regard to all students in all years of ISCED 1 (Figure C1a) or of a specific age in ISCED 1 (Figure C1b), even when foreign language learning does not begin in the initial years at this level. More concretely, the number of students learning 0, 1 or 2 (or more) foreign languages is divided by the sum of students learning 0, 1 and 2 (or more) foreign languages in all years of ISCED 1 (Figure C1a) or of a specific age in ISCED 1 (Figure C1b).

Participation in the collection of data on age is voluntary. Therefore, fewer education systems are covered.

Data are available in Annex 1. For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to this chapter.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02].



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Belgium (BE nl): the reference year of the data in Figure C1a is 2019 (2020 data were not available on the data extraction date).

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Ireland: the source data for Figure C1a were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Luxembourg: the source data for Figure C1a for '0 languages' were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Serbia: this country is included in the UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02], but no data are available.

In Figure C1b, the age mentioned corresponds to the actual age of students and not to their notional age (the age a student is supposed to be in a specific grade). This may lead to some discrepancies between the regulations regarding the starting age for learning foreign languages and actual participation in language learning, because some students may not be in the grade they are supposed to be in. For instance, in the French Community of Belgium all students should have started learning a foreign language at the age of 10 years (notional age) (see Figure B1), that is, in the fifth grade of primary education. However, 9.1 % of students aged 10 (actual age) are not yet learning a foreign language. The fact that some 10-year-old students may not yet be in the fifth grade of primary education may partly explain this. Nevertheless, Figure C1b mostly illustrates strong relationships between the official starting age for learning foreign languages (see Figure B1) and actual participation in language learning.

In 13 out of 21 education systems, almost all students (at least 97 %) learn a foreign language in each age category. In 12 of these education systems, foreign language learning becomes compulsory before the age of 7 years, while in Slovenia it becomes compulsory at the age of 7 years (see Figure B1).

In most education systems where the compulsory age for learning a foreign language is later, there is a clear take-off in the age category corresponding to the compulsory starting age. This take-off happens at the age of 8 years in Czechia, Germany, Lithuania and Portugal; at the age of 9 in Hungary; and at the age of 10 in the French Community of Belgium. This correlates with the age at which foreign language learning becomes compulsory for all students in the respective countries in 2021/2022 (see Figure B1).

In 2020 (the reference year of the data), schools in Estonia and Finland could decide on the starting age within an age range (between 7 and 9 years old), in accordance with top-level regulations. The percentage of students learning a foreign language clearly took off at the age of 9 years in both countries. While in Estonia this flexibility continues to apply, in Finland it was withdrawn as of 2021/2022 in favour of a fixed starting age (7 years old) (see Figure B2).

Figure C1b also shows that in several countries schools introduce foreign languages into the curriculum before the compulsory age. For instance, in Hungary, where all students must start learning a foreign language at the age of 9 years, at least 40 % of them do so at the ages of 7 and 8. Likewise, in Czechia 50 % of students start learning a foreign language 1 year earlier than the age at which it becomes compulsory. This means that schools offer language provision earlier than required.

In addition, in the French Community of Belgium more than 30 % of students learn a foreign language 2 years before it becomes compulsory for all students at 10 years old. This result could be explained by the differences in legislation across the territory: in some parts of the French Community of Belgium, students start learning the first foreign language as a compulsory subject from age 8 (see Figure B1).

## **BETWEEN 2013 AND 2020, THE PERCENTAGE OF PRIMARY STUDENTS LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY IN EIGHT COUNTRIES**

At EU level, 86.1 % of students in primary education were learning one or more foreign languages in 2020, compared with 79.4 % in 2013. Figure C2 shows three different trends during this period.

In the biggest group of education systems (21 education systems), the situation remained relatively stable (a difference of less than 10 percentage points). In 12 of these, more than 90 % of primary students were learning at least one foreign language in both reference years (in Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus,

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Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Poland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia and Norway). In the other nine education systems, the situation remained relatively stable too, although with lower participation rates (in the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovakia).

In a second group of eight countries, the proportion of primary students learning foreign languages increased by at least 15 percentage points between 2013 and 2020. The increase is between 15 and 25 percentage points in Greece, Latvia, Finland and Sweden, and at least 30 percentage points in Denmark, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia. In many cases, the increase can be explained by changes in the age at which students must start learning their first compulsory foreign language (see Figure B2). In Finland and Sweden, where schools had the flexibility to decide the starting age in 2013 and 2020 <sup>(49)</sup>, the increases could reflect the fact that primary schools were introducing foreign languages earlier in 2020 than in 2013.

Finally, in Germany the opposite trend can be observed, as the proportion of students learning at least one foreign language decreased by 13.5 percentage points, from 67.9 % in 2013 to 54.4 % in 2020 (however, as the country-specific note associated with the figure suggests, this could partly be related to methodological changes).

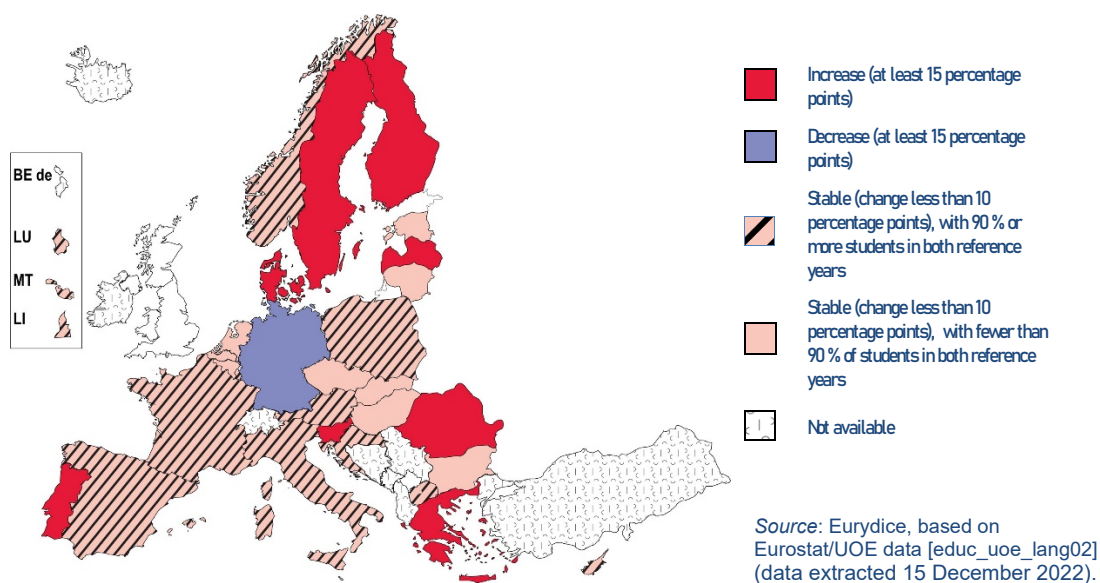


Figure 20 Figure C2: Trends in the percentage of students learning at least one foreign language in primary education (ISCED 1), 2013 and 2020

### Explanatory notes

The percentage of students learning at least one foreign language is calculated with regard to all students in all years of ISCED 1, even when foreign language learning does not begin in the initial years of this level. More concretely, the number of students learning 1 or 2 (or more) foreign languages is divided by the sum of students learning 0, 1 and 2 (or more) foreign languages in all years of ISCED 1.

The country-specific notes refer to breaks in time series only if they occurred in 2013 or 2020. Breaks in time series between these two reference years, which may have occurred in some countries, are not indicated.

Data are available in Annex 1. For a methodological note related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uoe\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uoe_enr_esms_an4.xlsx).

For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to this chapter.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

49 This is still the case in Sweden, while it has stopped since 2020 in Finland (see Figure B2).

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Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02].

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year of the data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data were not available on the data extraction date).

Germany: the source data for 2013 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link given in the explanatory notes.

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Ireland: the source data for 2013 and 2020 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Bosnia and Herzegovina: data for 2013 are not available.

Serbia: the country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02], but no data are available.

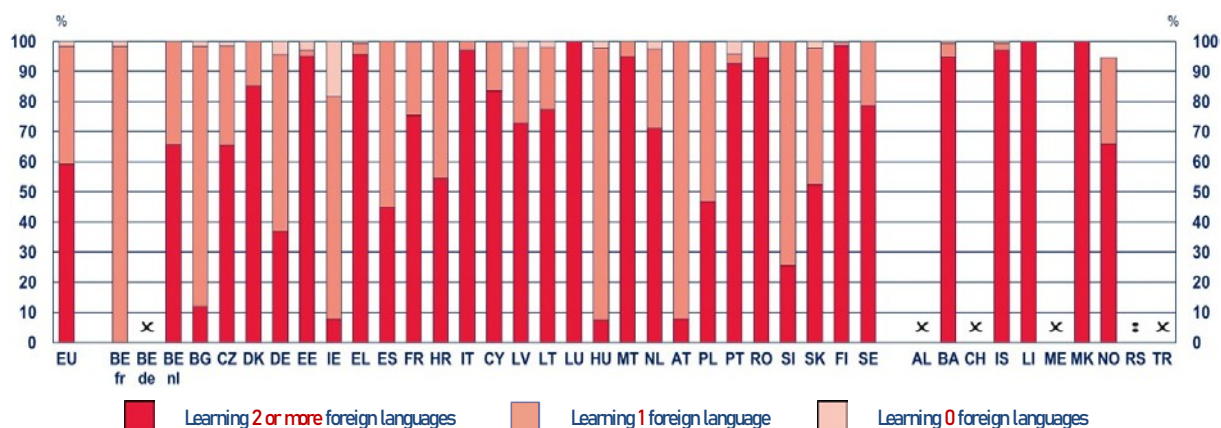
### **60 % OF STUDENTS LEARN AT LEAST TWO FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

In most of the countries, learning a second language becomes compulsory at the beginning of lower secondary education at the latest (see Figure B1).

At EU level, 59.2 % of lower secondary education students learn two or more foreign languages. Moreover, in 12 education systems more than 90 % of students learn two or more foreign languages (Estonia, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Finland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein and North Macedonia). Conversely, in five education systems fewer than 15 % of students learn two foreign languages or more. This is the case in the French Community of Belgium, where no provision for learning a second foreign language exists at this education level; in Ireland, where the learning of a second foreign language is not compulsory; and in Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria, where learning a second language only becomes compulsory in upper secondary education. Six other education systems where only one foreign language is compulsory during lower secondary education offer all students the opportunity to take an additional foreign language at this level of education (see Figure B4). In these education systems (Spain, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden and Norway), at least a quarter of students have opted to learn two foreign languages at lower secondary level, with participation rates ranging from 25.6 % in Slovenia to 78.6 % in Sweden.

Figure C3 also shows that 98.4 % of lower secondary students in the EU learn at least one foreign language. Only in Ireland does the proportion of students not learning any foreign language in lower secondary education exceed 5 %. In this country, the relatively high proportion (18.1 %) can partly be explained by the fact that learning a foreign language is not compulsory in school education but all students learn English and Irish, the two official languages.

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Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Figure 21 Figure C3: Percentage of students learning foreign languages in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), by number of languages, 2020

### Explanatory notes

The percentage of students learning 0, 1 or 2 (or more) foreign languages is calculated with regard to all students in all years of ISCED 2. More concretely, the number of students learning 0, 1 or 2 (or more) foreign languages is divided by the sum of students learning 0, 1 and 2 (or more) foreign languages in all years of ISCED 2.

Data are available in Annex 1. For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to this chapter.

For a definition of ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02].

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Luxembourg: the source data for Figure C3 for ‘0 languages’ and ‘1 language’ were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’).

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02], but no data are available.

## BETWEEN 2013 AND 2020, THE PERCENTAGE OF LOWER SECONDARY STUDENTS LEARNING TWO OR MORE FOREIGN LANGUAGES REMAINED STABLE IN MOST COUNTRIES

At EU level, almost two thirds of lower secondary students were learning two or more foreign languages in both 2013 and 2020 (58.4 % in 2013 compared with 59.2 % in 2020). Figure C4 shows the changes at country level between the two reference years.

In the vast majority of education systems where data are available (25 out of 31), the difference between 2020 and 2013 is minor (a difference of less than 10 percentage points). In 11 of these education systems, the proportion of lower secondary students learning a minimum of two foreign languages was above 90 % in at least one reference year (Estonia, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Finland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and North Macedonia). In 14 other education systems, fewer than 90 % of students were

studying two languages in both reference years (Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Norway).

The difference between 2013 and 2020 in the percentage of students learning two languages is more substantial in six education systems. In three of them, the proportion of students in lower secondary education learning two or more foreign languages increased by at least 15 percentage points. The increase was just above 15 percentage points in the Flemish Community of Belgium, while it slightly exceeded 20 percentage points in Czechia and France. In the other three education systems with a substantial difference between 2013 and 2020 (Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia), the proportion of lower secondary students learning two or more foreign languages decreased by more than 25 percentage points. Different reasons for those changes can be identified. For instance, in Slovakia the decrease may be related to the removal of the requirement for every student to learn two foreign languages during lower secondary education (see Figure B3). In Poland, the decrease is due to a reorganisation of school grades across education levels, however the starting grade and the number of years of compulsory second foreign language learning remain unchanged<sup>(50)</sup>.

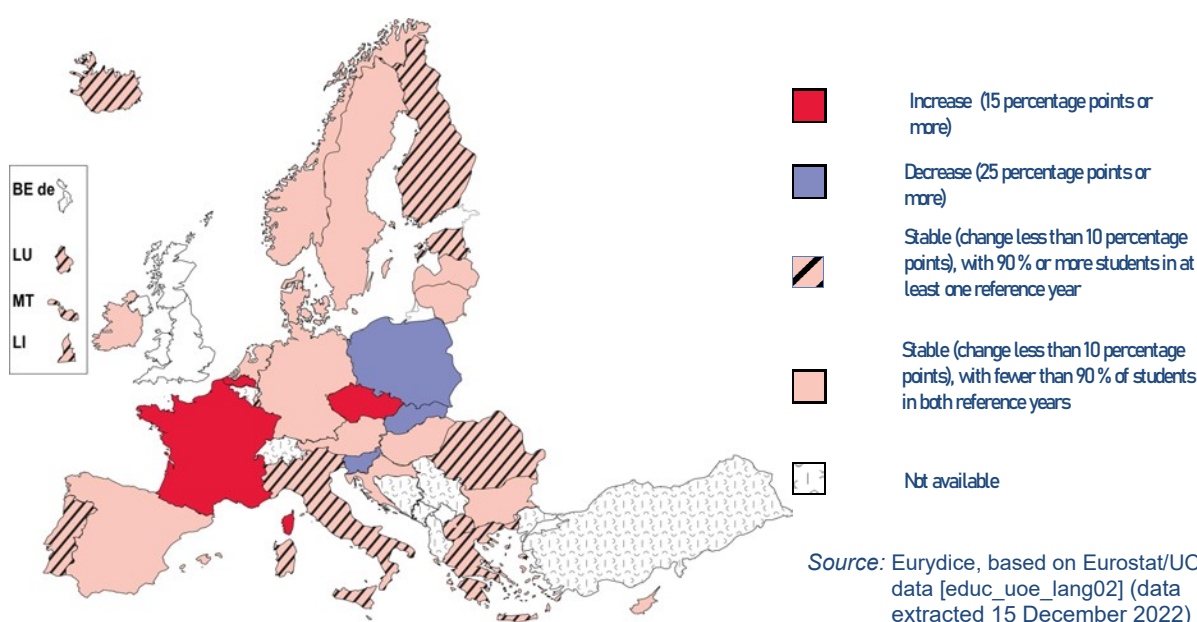


Figure 22 Figure C4: Trends in the percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), 2013 and 2020

### Explanatory notes

The percentage of students learning two (or more) foreign languages is calculated with regard to all students in all years of ISCED 2. More concretely, the number of students learning two (or more) foreign languages is divided by the sum of students learning 0, 1 and 2 (or more) foreign languages in all years of ISCED 2.

Country-specific notes refer to breaks in time series only if they occurred in 2013 or 2020. Breaks in time series between these two reference years, which may have occurred in some countries, are not indicated.

Data are available in Annex 1. For a methodological note related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an4.xlsx). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to this chapter.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

50 From 2016, grades 5 and 6, where learning a second foreign language is not compulsory, have been transferred from primary education to lower secondary education. Meanwhile, the obligation to learn a second foreign language still starts in grade 7 and lasts for the same number of years. For more information on the changes in the structure of Poland's education system, see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice (2017).

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr) and Bosnia and Herzegovina: the data for 2013 are not available.

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02].

Germany: the source data for 2013 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02], but no data are available.

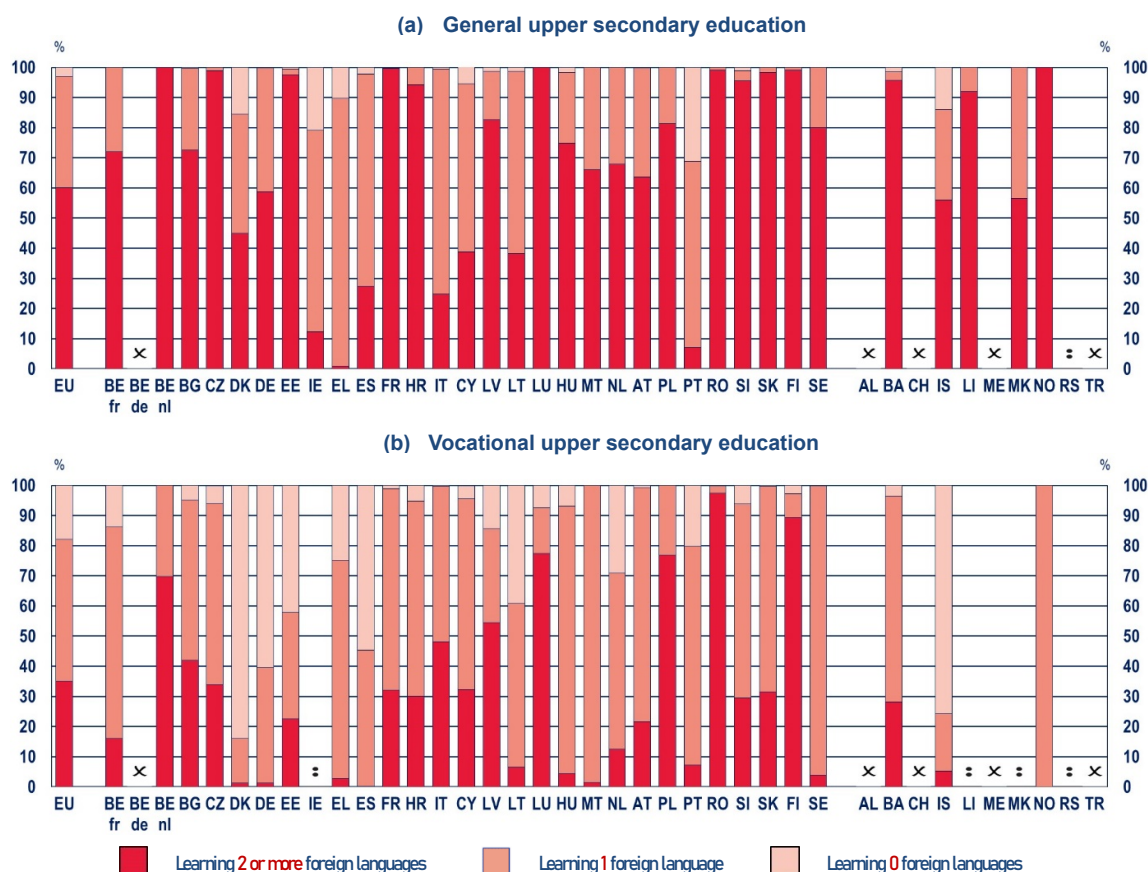
## **STUDENTS IN GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION ARE MORE LIKELY TO LEARN LANGUAGES THAN THOSE ON VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS**

In upper secondary education, students may study either in general education, usually leading to higher education, or in vocational education, leading to more work-oriented studies or directly to the labour market. The educational programmes associated with these pathways are, consequently, often rather different at upper secondary level. Therefore, the situations in general and vocational upper secondary education are presented separately for this indicator and the next. At EU level, almost half of all upper secondary students (48.7 %) are on vocational programmes <sup>(51)</sup>. The highest shares of upper secondary students enrolled on a vocational programme (65 % or more) are in Czechia, Croatia, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro and Serbia. Conversely, fewer than one third of upper secondary students are enrolled on a vocational programme in Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta and Iceland.

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51 [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EDUC\\_UOE\\_ENRS05/default/table?lang=en&category=educ.educ\\_part.educ\\_uae\\_enr.educ\\_uae\\_enrs](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EDUC_UOE_ENRS05/default/table?lang=en&category=educ.educ_part.educ_uae_enr.educ_uae_enrs) (data extracted 14 September 2022). Data are for 2020.

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Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Figure 23 Figure C5: Percentage of students learning foreign languages in upper secondary education (ISCED 3), by number of languages, 2020

### Explanatory notes

The percentage of students learning 0, 1 or 2 (or more) foreign languages is calculated with regard to all students in all years of general ISCED 3 (Figure C5a) or vocational ISCED 3 (Figure C5b), even where the language learning does not continue until the end of the level (see Figures B2, B3, B5 and B6). More concretely, the number of students learning 0, 1 or 2 (or more) foreign languages is divided by the sum of students learning 0, 1 and 2 (or more) foreign languages in all years of general ISCED 3 (Figure C5a) or vocational ISCED 3 (Figure C5b).

The EU aggregate for vocational ISCED 3 is flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'.

Data are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the EU aggregate and country data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to this chapter.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02].

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Hungary: the source data for general and vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'break in time series' and 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

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Luxembourg: the source data for 0 languages and 1 language were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Iceland: the reference year for general and vocational ISCED 3 data is 2019 (2020 data were not available on the data extraction date).

Liechtenstein: the source data for vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

North Macedonia: no breakdown between general ISCED 3 and vocational ISCED 3 is available. ISCED 3 data feeding into the figure cover both general education and vocational education.

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02], but no data are available.

Figures C5a and C5b indicate that students' chance to learn foreign languages depends in many education systems on the pathway they follow. This reflects the differences in the requirements in terms of the compulsory learning of foreign languages between general education students and vocational education students; the requirements are often lower for VET students (see Figures B5 and B6). In particular, in a majority of education systems the number of years spent learning two foreign languages is lower for VET students than for their peers in general education.

At EU level, the percentage of students not learning foreign languages is six times as high in vocational education as in general education (18.0 % and 2.9 %, respectively). As already mentioned, the percentage of upper secondary students not learning a foreign language is calculated based on the total population of students in this level. In general upper secondary education, only Portugal has more than 30 % of students not learning a foreign language in the reference year. In contrast, in vocational upper secondary education, about 30 % of students or more are not learning a foreign language in seven countries (Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Iceland). Of these, the percentage is highest in Denmark (84.0 %) and Iceland (75.8 %). The fact that in Denmark, Germany, Estonia and Spain students in vocational pathways giving access to tertiary education are not all required to learn at least one foreign language may partly explain these rates (See Figure B5).

When examining the data on the learning of two or more foreign languages, there are also significant differences between general education and vocational education at upper secondary level. At EU level, 60.0 % of students learn at least two foreign languages in general upper secondary education versus 35.1 % in vocational upper secondary education. In 13 education systems, at least 90 % of students learn two or more foreign languages in general upper secondary education. Only Romania has such a high percentage of students learning two languages in vocational upper secondary education. Conversely, two education systems in general education (Greece and Portugal), compared with 11 in vocational education, have fewer than 10 % of students learning two or more foreign languages at upper secondary level.

### **BETWEEN 2013 AND 2020, THE PERCENTAGE OF UPPER SECONDARY STUDENTS LEARNING TWO OR MORE LANGUAGES INCREASED IN VERY FEW COUNTRIES**

Figures C6a and C6b show the changes that occurred between 2013 and 2020 in the percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages in general and vocational upper secondary education.

In general upper secondary education, at EU level 60.0 % of students were learning two or more foreign languages in 2020, which is very similar to the percentage in 2013 (58.4 %). As previously mentioned, the percentage of students by number of languages learnt is calculated based on all students in all grades of this level of education.

In almost all education systems where data are available (27 out of 31 education systems), the share of general education students learning at least two foreign languages remained stable between 2013 and 2020 (i.e. a difference of less than 10 percentage points). In 10 of these education systems, the proportion of students learning two or more foreign languages is above 90 % for both reference years. In the 17 other education systems, the proportion of students learning two or more foreign languages is less than 90 % in both reference years.

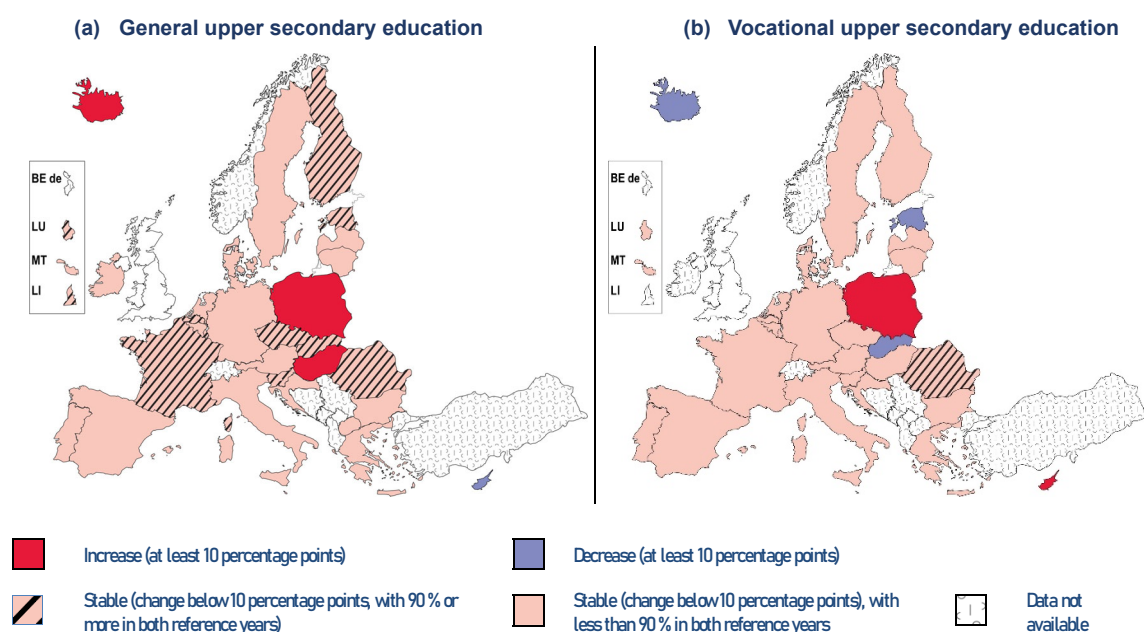
Unlike the predominant picture of stability, three countries registered a difference of at least 10 percentage points in the proportion of students learning at least two foreign languages in general upper secondary



education between 2013 and 2020. This proportion decreased in Cyprus (by 45 percentage points), while it increased in Poland (by 12.2 percentage points) and Iceland (by 37.6 percentage points). The change in the participation rate in Cyprus may be explained by a reform that lowered the age at which learning a second foreign language is no longer compulsory (see Figure B3).

In vocational upper secondary education, slightly over a third of students were learning two or more foreign languages in both 2013 and 2020 (34.1 % in 2013 compared with 35.1 % in 2020). As in general education, in the vast majority of education systems where data are available (23 out of 28) there was a minor difference in the shares of students learning at least two foreign languages in vocational education recorded in 2013 and 2020 (i.e. less than 10 percentage points). With the exception of Romania, these proportions were less than 90 % for both reference years.

However, between 2013 and 2020 in five countries there was a substantial difference (at least 10 percentage points) in the proportion of vocational education students learning at least two foreign languages. In Cyprus and Poland, the proportion increased; in Estonia, Slovakia and Iceland, it decreased (by 39.7, 35.0 and 10.6 percentage points, respectively).



Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uoe\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Figure 24 Figure C6: Trends in the percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages in upper secondary education (ISCED 3), 2013 and 2020

### Explanatory notes

The percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages is calculated with regard to all students in all years of general ISCED 3 (Figure C6a) or vocational ISCED 3 (Figure C6b), even when the learning does not continue until the end of this level. More concretely, the number of students learning two or more foreign languages is divided by the sum of students learning 0, 1 and 2 (or more) foreign languages in all years of general ISCED 3 (Figure C6a) or vocational ISCED 3 (Figure C6b).

Country-specific notes refer to breaks in time series only if they occurred in 2013 or 2020. Breaks in time series between these two reference years, which may have occurred in some countries, are not indicated.

Data are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uoe\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uoe_enr_esms_an6.xlsx) (2020) and [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uoe\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uoe_enr_esms_an4.xlsx) (2013). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to this chapter.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02].

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Ireland: the 2013 source data for vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Hungary: the 2020 source data for general and vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'break in time series' and 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: data for 2013 are not available.

Iceland: reference year for general ISCED 3 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data are not available).

Liechtenstein: the 2013 and 2020 source data for vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

North Macedonia: no breakdown for general and vocational ISCED 3 is available. ISCED 3 data feeding into the figure cover both general education and vocational education.

Norway: the 2013 source data for general and vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value data cannot exist').

Serbia: this country is included in the UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang02], but no are data available.

In most education systems, the trend is the same in general and vocational upper secondary education. The proportion of students in upper secondary education learning two or more foreign languages remained stable (i.e. a difference of less than 10 percentage points) between 2013 and 2020 in 21 education systems<sup>(52)</sup>. It increased by at least 10 percentage points in both types of education programme in Poland.

In only a few cases, differences across time in the participation rates of students learning at least two foreign languages differ according to their education programme (i.e. general or vocational upper secondary education). In two countries (Estonia and Slovakia), the proportion of students in vocational education learning two or more foreign languages decreased by more than 10 percentage points while the situation remained stable in general education. In Iceland, this proportion increased in general education but decreased in vocational programmes; the opposite holds true in Cyprus, where it decreased in general education and increased in vocational programmes.

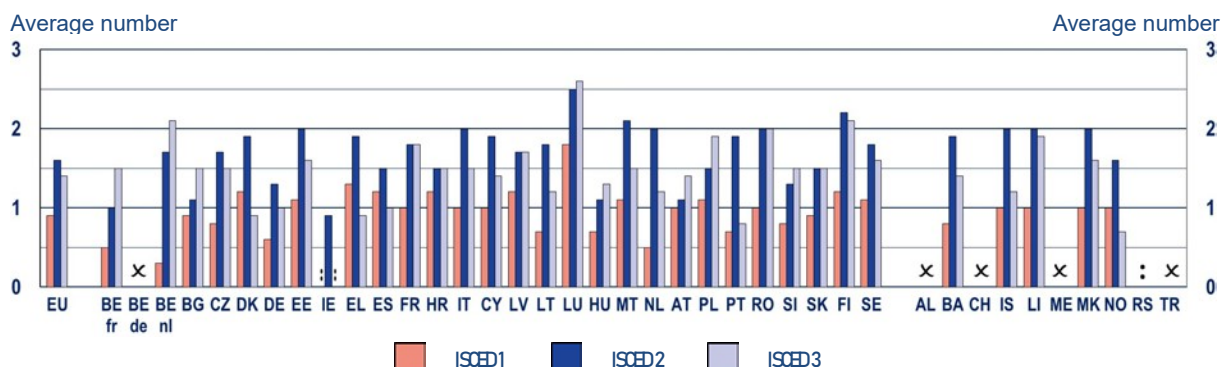
## **THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES LEARNT BY STUDENTS REACHES TWO MORE OFTEN IN LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

The calculation of the average number of foreign languages learnt by the whole school population at a given education level allows a clear comparison to be made between countries. This information is presented by education level in Figure C7, with upper secondary education including students in both general education and vocational education.

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52 BE fr, BE nl, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, AT, PT, SI, FI and SE.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition



Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang03] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Figure 25 Figure C7: Average number of foreign languages learnt per student in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020

### Explanatory notes

The average number of foreign languages learnt is calculated with regard to all students in all years of the education level concerned, regardless of whether they are learning one or more foreign languages in all grades.

The 2020 EU aggregate for ISCED 3 is flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'.

Data are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx).

For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to this chapter.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang03].

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year for ISCED 1 is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 1 are not available).

Germany: the source data for ISCED 2 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Greece: the source data for ISCED 3 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Ireland: the source data for ISCED 1 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Hungary: the source data for ISCED 3 were flagged as 'break in time series' and 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang03], but no data are available.

The teaching of a second language often starts at the end of primary education or the beginning of lower secondary education (see Figure B1). This explains why the average number of foreign languages learnt in European education systems is systematically below 2.0 in primary education, although it usually ranges from 0.5 to 1.2. The average is the highest in Luxembourg (1.8), where the age at which children start learning their second foreign language is the youngest (at 6 years old). Conversely, the lowest number of

foreign languages learnt in primary education is in the Flemish Community of Belgium (0.3), where learning a first foreign language becomes compulsory at the age of 10 years.

In both lower secondary education and upper secondary education, the average number of foreign languages learnt is between 1.0 and 1.9 in the majority of the education systems. Furthermore, this number is at least at 2.0 for both lower secondary education and upper secondary education in only three education systems (Luxembourg, Romania and Finland). In eight other education systems, it reaches 2.0 or more for one of the two education levels. In seven of those education systems, the number reaches an average of 2.0 only in lower secondary education (Estonia, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Iceland, Liechtenstein and North Macedonia). Conversely, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the average reaches 2.0 only in upper secondary education. The lowest averages, below 1.0, are observed for upper secondary education in Denmark, Greece, Portugal and Norway, and for lower secondary education in Ireland.

## SECTION II – FOREIGN LANGUAGES LEARNT BY STUDENTS

Valuing linguistic diversity is one of the core principles of the EU. Indeed, the EU, with its 27 Member States, has 24 official languages. Additional languages come into play when considering all the countries covered by this report, that is, 37 European countries<sup>(53)</sup>. Moreover, most European countries officially recognise regional or minority languages within their borders for legal or administrative purposes (see Figure A1).

Bearing in mind the language diversity in Europe, this section examines which foreign languages students in primary and (lower and upper) secondary education learn (see Figures C8–C11). Furthermore, the section discusses the changes in the percentages of students learning English, French, German and Spanish between 2013 and 2020 (see Figures C12–C15), and the differences in foreign language learning between students in general upper secondary education and students in vocational upper secondary education (see Figure C16).

The data source is the Eurostat/UOE data collection, which means that the introduction to this data collection presented in the first section of this chapter also applies to this section.

### ENGLISH IS THE MOST LEARNT FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACROSS EUROPE

Figure C8 shows that English is unquestionably the most learnt foreign language in Europe. Indeed, in almost all European countries, English is the language learnt by most students during primary and (lower and upper) secondary education. This mirrors regulatory frameworks analysed in Chapter B, which in many countries specify English as a compulsory subject (see Figure B7) and/or a subject that all schools must include in their learning provision (see Figure B8a).

There are very few countries where a foreign language other than English is learnt by most students. Ireland, as an English-speaking country, is one of them, with French as the most learnt foreign language. In Luxembourg, German is the most learnt foreign language in primary and upper secondary education (closely followed by French), while in lower secondary education, all students learn both German and French. In Liechtenstein, all students in lower secondary education learn French and English (in primary and upper secondary education, English is the predominant language). In Belgium, students commonly learn the languages of the other Communities. More specifically, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, French is the most learnt language in all the levels of education covered. In the French Community of Belgium, Dutch predominates in primary education (in secondary education, English predominates)<sup>(54)</sup>.

The proportions of students learning the most common foreign language vary across countries and education levels (see data in Annex 1). These variations can partly be explained by differences in the duration of compulsory foreign language learning (see Chapter B, Section I).

In primary education, in Spain, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia and Norway, all or almost all students (99–100 %) learn the predominant foreign language. In contrast, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, where French is the most learnt language, only 26.1 % of students in primary education take it as a subject. The percentage is similar in the French Community of Belgium, where 33.1 % of students in primary education learn the most common language, that is, Dutch. The percentages are also relatively low in the Netherlands and Hungary, where fewer than half of all primary education students (44.6 % and 45.9 %, respectively) learn the most common foreign language (English). In all the education systems with lower proportions of primary education students learning the predominant foreign language, foreign language learning becomes compulsory relatively late (see Figures B1 and B2 for details of starting ages).

In lower secondary education, in almost all European education systems, the vast majority of students – more than 90 % – learn the predominant foreign language. There are only a few education systems with lower percentages of students learning the predominant language. One of them is Ireland, the country with

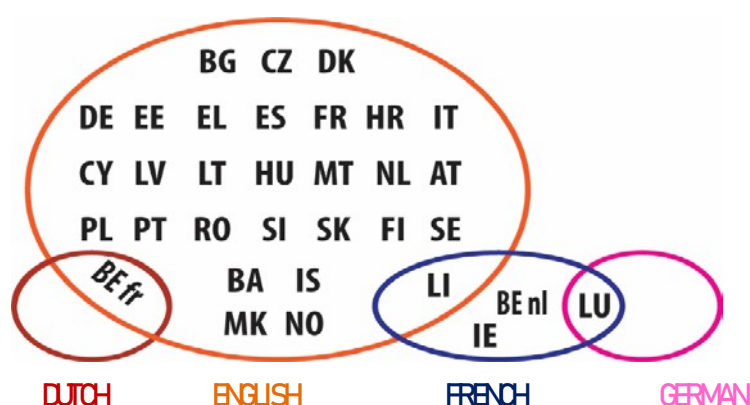
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53 For details of the country coverage of this report, see the introduction to the report.

54 The Eurostat/UOE database does not provide data for the German-speaking Community of Belgium. For details of regulations, see Chapter B, Figure B7 and the related country-specific notes.

no compulsory foreign language learning (see Figures B1 and B2), where 49.2 % of lower secondary education students learn French. In the French Community of Belgium, 49.7 % of lower secondary education students learn English, which predominates in this education level (English is closely followed by Dutch, which is learnt by 47.3 % of students). The percentage of lower secondary education students learning the most common foreign language is also lower (below 90 %) in Hungary, where 74.6 % of students learn English.

The percentage of students learning the predominant language is lower in upper secondary education than in lower secondary education (see the EU average in Annex 1). This is partly because some students, especially those on vocational pathways, do not learn any foreign languages (see Figure C5) and partly because a greater variety of foreign languages are available to study (see Figure B8). Nevertheless, in around half of all European countries more than 90 % of students in upper secondary education learn the predominant foreign language. The lowest proportions are in three Nordic countries, namely Denmark, Iceland and Norway, where only between 40 % and 60 % of upper secondary education students learn the predominant foreign language (English); and in Ireland, where 50.8 % of students in general upper secondary education learn the predominant foreign language (French).



Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).  
 Figure 26 Figure C8: The most learnt foreign language in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020

### Explanatory notes

Countries where the same language is learnt by most students in all the education levels covered are shown in the main area of the relevant language oval. Countries where the foreign language learnt by most students varies according to the level of education are shown in the intersection of the relevant language ovals. The latter approach is also used when the same percentages of students in the same education level learn two different languages.

Data by ISCED level are available in Annex 1. For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium: the official state languages are Dutch, French and German (see Figure A1). However, these languages are used in delimited linguistic areas and are not recognised as administrative languages across the whole territory of the country. Notably, French is considered a foreign language in the Flemish Community of Belgium, and Flemish (Dutch) is considered a foreign language in the French Community of Belgium.

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01] (and are therefore not displayed in the figure).

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year for ISCED 1 data is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 1 are not available).

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

Ireland: the source data for ISCED 1 (all the languages surveyed) were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist'). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 1. Moreover, for ISCED 3, the figure considers general education only. This is because no aggregated data are available on (general and vocational) ISCED 3.

Luxembourg: although the official state languages are French, German and Luxembourgish (see Figure A1), for the purpose of education statistics French and German are counted as foreign languages.

Malta: English is an official language alongside Maltese (see Figure A1), but for the purpose of education statistics it is counted as a foreign language.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01], but no data are available (and therefore it is not displayed in the figure).

### **MORE THAN 90 % OF STUDENTS LEARN ENGLISH IN AT LEAST ONE EDUCATION LEVEL IN ALMOST ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

As shown in the previous figure, English is widely learnt in Europe. At EU level, 84.1 % of students in primary education learn English. The percentage is even higher in lower secondary education, where virtually all the students (98.3 %) learn English. In upper secondary education, the EU-level figure decreases by around 10 percentage points, to 88.1 %. This can be explained by lower proportions of vocational education students learning foreign languages (see Figure C5) and by a greater variety of foreign languages being provided by upper secondary schools (see Figure B8).

Figure C9 shows the countries where high proportions of students (more than 90 %) learn English and indicates the number of education levels with such high proportions. The figure also shows the countries where the proportions of students learning English do not reach 90 % in any level of education considered.

In 11 countries (France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Austria, Poland, Sweden, Liechtenstein and North Macedonia), more than 90 % of students learn English in all the levels of education considered, that is, from the beginning of schooling until upper secondary school graduation. In two of these countries (Malta and Liechtenstein), all students (100 %) learn English for the entire period of schooling. In a further nine countries (Czechia, Greece, Spain, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Norway) more than 90 % of students learn English in two education levels, and in eight countries (Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Iceland) in one level. When more than 90 % of students learn English in only one education level, it is always in lower secondary education (see Annex 1 for details).

In contrast, in three European countries, namely Belgium, Luxembourg and Hungary, the proportion of students learning English does not reach 90 % in any level of education considered. As outlined previously, in Belgium and Luxembourg, students commonly learn different state languages (see Figures A1 and C8), which explains the lower percentages of students learning English. Nevertheless, even in the three above countries, English is learnt by more than 70 % of students in at least one education level (specifically, upper secondary education in Belgium and Luxembourg, and lower and upper secondary education in Hungary).

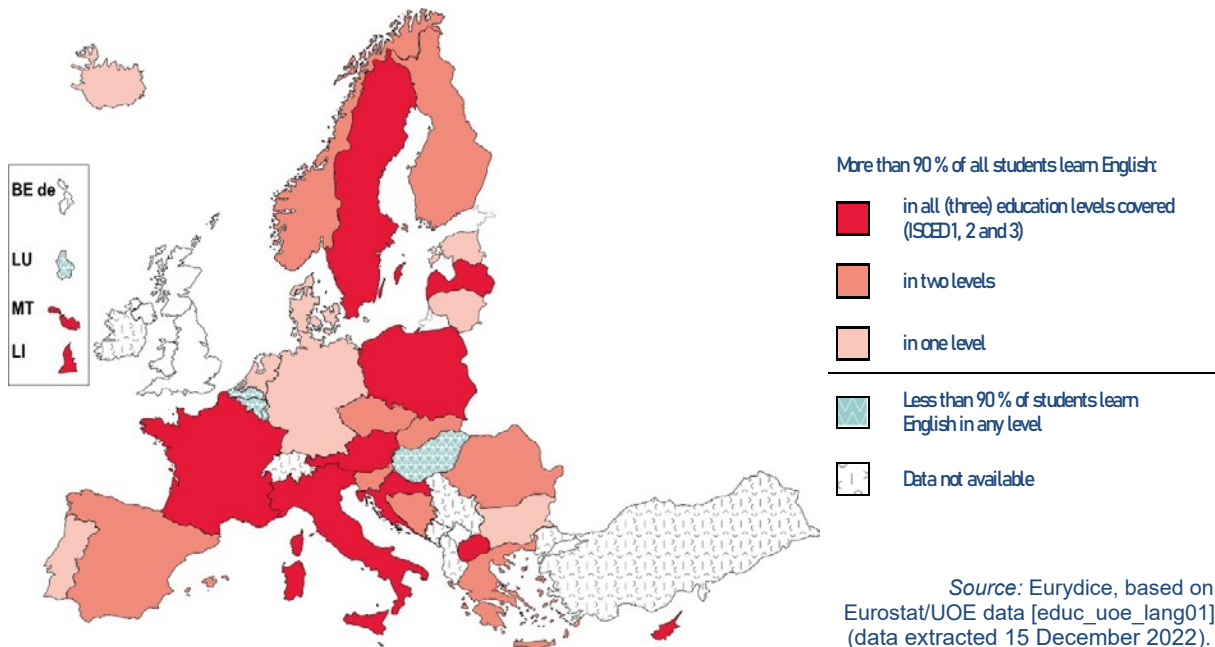


Figure 27 Figure C9: Countries with a high percentage of students (more than 90 %) learning English in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020

### Explanatory notes

Data by ISCED level are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01].

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year for ISCED 1 data is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 1 are not available). Moreover, source data for ISCED 2 were flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Germany: the source data for ISCED 2 were flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Ireland: the source data were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’).

Greece: the source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Hungary: the source data for ISCED 3 were flagged as ‘break in time series’ and ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Malta: English is an official language alongside Maltese (see Figure A1), but for the purpose of education statistics it is counted as a foreign language.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01], but no data are available.

## AT EU LEVEL, FRENCH AND GERMAN ARE THE MOST POPULAR FOREIGN LANGUAGES AFTER ENGLISH

Figure C8 showed that in almost all European countries English is the most learnt foreign language in primary and secondary education. Figure C9 demonstrated that in almost every country covered by this report, in at least one education level, more than 90 % of students learn English. Building on the two



previous figures, Figure C10 shows which language is the second most learnt foreign language across European countries.

At EU level, French is the second most learnt foreign language in primary education and lower secondary education. It is learnt by 5.5 % and 30.6 % of students in these two levels, respectively. It is also a popular subject in upper secondary education (18.9 % of students learn it at EU level), just after German. French is particularly popular in many central and southern European countries. It is the second most learnt foreign language in at least one education level (with at least 10 % of students learning it) in Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Romania and Liechtenstein. Learning French is less common in the eastern European countries (except Romania) and in the Nordic countries (see Annex 1).

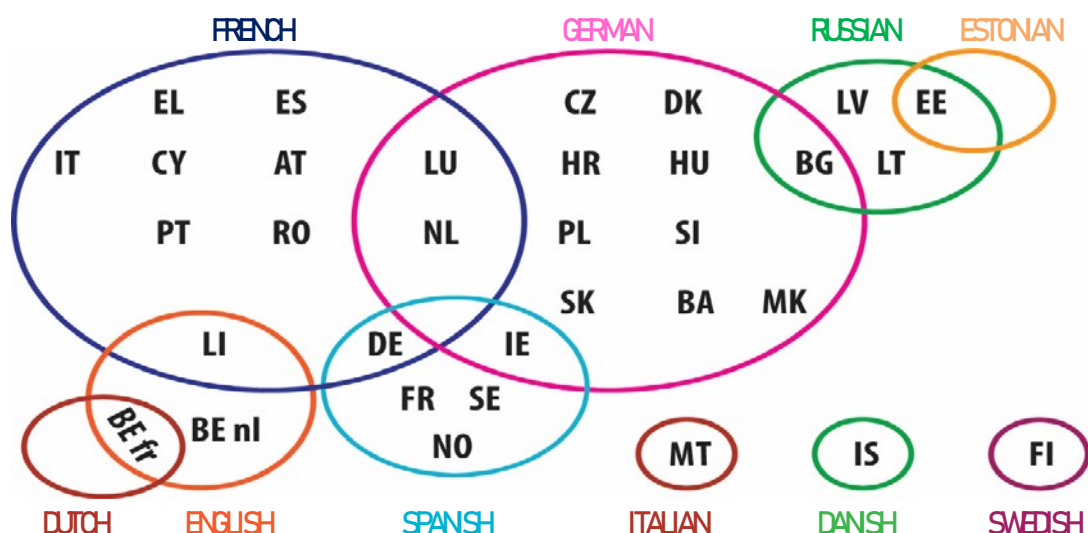
German is the second most learnt foreign language in the EU in upper secondary education, with 20.0 % of students taking it as a subject. This language is widely learnt in central and south-eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia), and in Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. German is less popular in southern European countries (Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Portugal) and in the French Community of Belgium and Finland, where fewer than 10 % of students learn it in any education level considered.

At EU level, Spanish is learnt by 17.7 % of lower secondary education students and 18.0 % of upper secondary education students. It is the second most learnt foreign language (with at least 10 % of students learning it) in lower secondary education in Ireland, in upper secondary education in Germany, and in both lower secondary education and upper secondary education in France, Sweden and Norway.

Compared with the above languages, Russian is less commonly learnt when considering the EU as a whole: only 2.2 % of lower secondary education students and 2.7 % of upper secondary education students learn it. However, Russian is still the second most learnt foreign language in at least one education level in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. For example, in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, around 60 % of lower secondary education students learn Russian.

Generally, English is the second most learnt language in education systems where it is not the first foreign language (see Figure C8), namely in the French Community of Belgium (in primary education) and the Flemish Community of Belgium (in secondary education). In Liechtenstein, all students in lower secondary education learn both English and French (and therefore these languages are displayed in both Figure C8 and Figure C10). In Luxembourg, English is the third foreign language, after German and French (and therefore it is not shown in Figure C10).

Several less widely spoken languages are learnt in some countries either for historical reasons or due to geographical proximity. For example, in Finland, where the second state language (Swedish or Finnish, depending on the main language of schooling) is mandatory (see Figure B7), Swedish is the second most learnt foreign language in all the levels of education covered. In Iceland, Danish is the second most learnt foreign language, which can be explained by the fact that, alongside English, Danish is compulsory in Iceland (see Figure B7). In the French Community of Belgium, Dutch, which is one of the three state languages of Belgium, is the second most learnt language in secondary education. In Malta, Italian is a popular foreign language, coming after English: 55.1 % of lower secondary and 25.4 % of upper secondary education students learn it. Finally, in Estonia, due to the large Russian-speaking population, 20.7 % of students learn Estonian as a foreign language in primary education, making it the second most learnt foreign language at this level of education.



Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Figure 28 Figure C10: The second most learnt foreign language in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020

### Explanatory notes

The figure only takes into account languages learnt by more than 10 % of students (and the related education levels).

Countries where the second most learnt foreign language (with more than 10 % of students learning it) is the same in all the education levels covered are shown in the main area of the relevant language oval. Countries where the second most learnt foreign language varies according to the level of education are shown in the intersection of the relevant language ovals.

Data by ISCED level are available in Annex 1. For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium: the official state languages are Dutch, French and German (see Figure A1). However, these languages are used in delimited linguistic areas and are not recognised as administrative languages across the whole territory of the country. Notably, French is considered a foreign language in the Flemish Community of Belgium and Flemish (Dutch) is considered a foreign language in the French Community of Belgium.

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01] (are therefore not displayed in the figure).

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year for ISCED 1 data is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 1 are not available).

Denmark: the source data for ISCED 1 (all the languages surveyed except English, which is displayed in Figure C8, and 'unknown') were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist'). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 1.

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Ireland: the source data for ISCED 1 (all the languages surveyed) were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist'). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 1. Moreover, for ISCED 3, the figure considers general education only. This is because no aggregated data are available on (general and vocational) ISCED 3.

Luxembourg: although the official state languages are French, German and Luxembourgish (see Figure A1), for the purpose of education statistics French and German are counted as foreign languages.

Finland: Swedish is an official language alongside Finnish (see Figure A1), but for the purpose of education statistics it is counted as a foreign language.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01], but no data are available (and therefore it is not displayed in the figure).

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN AND SPANISH ARE RARELY LEARNT

Figure C11 highlights the countries where the foreign languages other than English, French, German and Spanish are learnt by at least 10 % of students in primary or secondary education. In the case of upper secondary education, the figure focuses on general education in order to present the most variety. This is because vocational education students tend to learn fewer foreign languages (see Figure C5).

Only six languages other than English, French, German and Spanish are learnt as foreign languages by 10 % or more students in at least one education system and one education level. These are Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Italian, Russian and Swedish.

At EU level, 3.4 % of general upper secondary education students learn Italian (the percentages are lower in primary and lower secondary education). More than 10 % of students learn Italian in lower secondary and/or general upper secondary education in Croatia, Malta, Austria and Slovenia. Italian is especially popular in Malta, where 55.1 % of students in lower secondary education and 34.6 % of those in general upper secondary education learn it.

Russian is learnt at EU level by 3.0 % of students in general upper secondary education (the percentages are lower in primary and lower secondary education). This language is learnt by more than 10 % of students in at least one education level in Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia. Russian is a rather common choice in the Baltic countries, where around 60 % of lower secondary education students learn it.

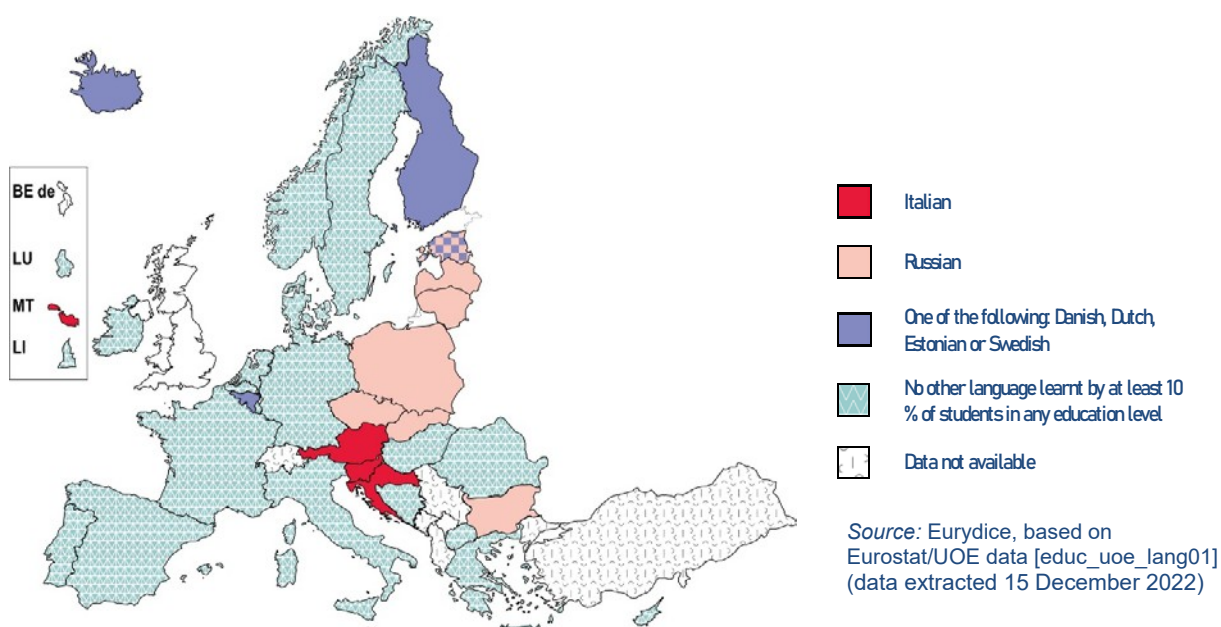


Figure 29 Figure C11: Foreign languages other than English, French, German and Spanish learnt by at least 10 % of students in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020

### Explanatory notes

The figure only takes into account languages other than English, French, German and Spanish learnt by at least 10 % of students.

Data by ISCED level are available in Annex 1. For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium: the official state languages are Dutch, French and German (see Figure A1). However, these languages are used in delimited linguistic areas and are not recognised as administrative languages across the whole territory of the country. Therefore, Flemish (Dutch) is considered a foreign language in the French Community of Belgium.

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01].

Estonia: in cases where Estonian is taught as a second language, Estonian is counted as a foreign language for statistical purposes.

Finland: Swedish is an official language alongside Finnish (see Figure A1), but for the purpose of education statistics it is counted as a foreign language.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

North Macedonia: no breakdown between general ISCED 3 and vocational ISCED 3 is available. ISCED 3 data feeding into the figure cover both general education and vocational education.

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01], but no data are available.

Some languages are widely learnt only in one education system. More specifically, Dutch is widely learnt in the French Community of Belgium, Swedish is learnt by many students in Finland and Danish is widely learnt in Iceland (see also Figures C8 and C10). In Estonia, due to the large Russian-speaking population, around one fifth of students in each education level study Estonian as a foreign language.

## MORE AND MORE STUDENTS ARE LEARNING ENGLISH, ESPECIALLY IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

In almost all European countries, English is the predominant foreign language in primary and secondary education (see Figure C8). This mirrors regulatory frameworks analysed in Chapter B, which in many countries specify English as a compulsory subject (see Figure B7) and/or a subject that all schools must include in their learning provision (see Figure B8a).

At EU level, between 2013 and 2020, the percentage of students in primary education learning English increased by 6.9 percentage points, from 77.2 % to 84.1 %. The increase was less notable in lower secondary education and general upper secondary education: 1.6 and 1.9 percentage points, respectively (see Annex 1 for details).

Figure C12a shows the changes at country level in the proportions of students learning English in primary education. The change was especially substantial in Romania, where in 2013 fewer than half of all students in primary education (45.3 %) were learning English, whereas in 2020 the percentage was 88.2 % (increase of 42.9 percentage points). The increase in the percentage of primary education students learning English was also significant in Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Portugal and Slovenia, all with an increase of between 23 and 34 percentage points, and in Finland and Sweden, where the percentages increased by 16.7 percentage points. The increase in the above countries can be explained by an increased proportion of primary education students learning at least one foreign language (see Figure C2) and the fact that the first foreign language learnt is often English (see Figure C8).

Figure C12a also shows that 11 European countries – namely Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Austria, Poland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia and Norway – already had very high percentages of students in primary education learning English (more than 90 %) in 2013. In contrast, in the Flemish Community of Belgium and Luxembourg students generally do not learn English in primary education (they learn other languages, which are displayed in Figure C8) and this pattern remains stable over time (see Annex 1).

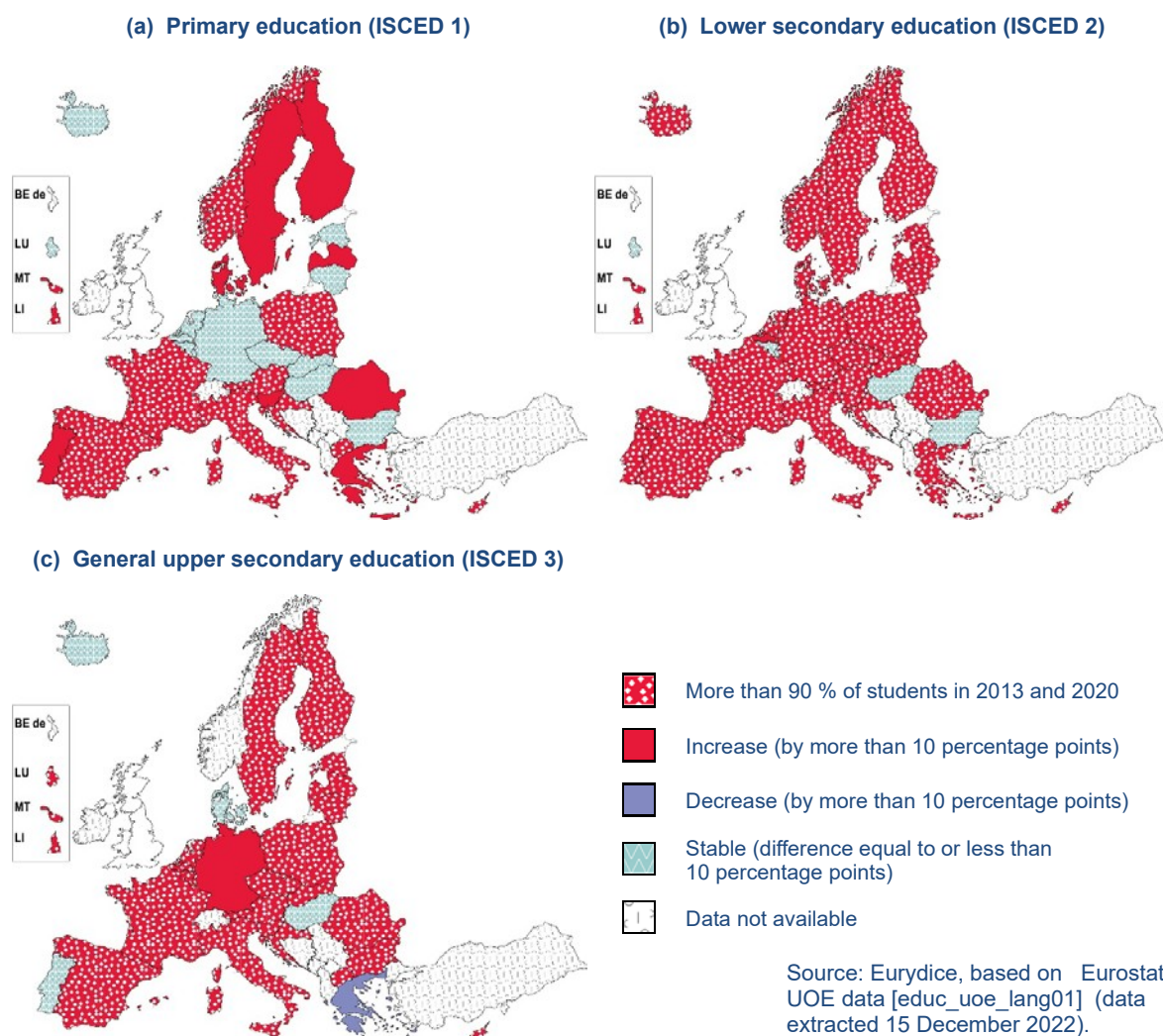


Figure 30 Figure C12: Trends in the percentages of students learning English in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2013 and 2020

### Explanatory notes

Country-specific notes refer to breaks in time series only if they occurred in 2013 or 2020. Breaks in time series between these two reference years, which may have occurred in some countries, are not indicated.

Data by ISCED level are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx) (2020) and [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an4.xlsx) (2013). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01].

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year for ISCED 1 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data on ISCED 1 are not available). Moreover, the 2020 source data for ISCED 2 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Germany: the 2013 source data (all levels covered by the figure) and 2020 source data (ISCED 2) were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the links provided in the explanatory notes.

Ireland: the source data (all levels covered and both reference years) were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Greece: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Hungary: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as 'break in time series' and 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Malta: English is an official language alongside Maltese (see Figure A1), but for the purpose of education statistics it is counted as a foreign language.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

Bosnia and Herzegovina: data are not available for 2013.

North Macedonia: no breakdown between general ISCED 3 and vocational ISCED 3 is available. ISCED 3 data feeding into the figure cover both general education and vocational education.

Norway: the source data for general ISCED 3 (2013 and 2020) were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uoe\_lang01], but no data are available.

Figures C12b and C12c outline the trends in learning English in lower secondary education and general upper secondary education, respectively.

In lower secondary education, there was almost no change between 2013 and 2020. This is mainly because in almost all European countries, more than 90 % of students were learning English already in 2013. The Flemish Community of Belgium is the only education system with a notable change – an increase of 16.4 percentage points – between the two reference years. This increase can partly be explained by a regulatory change that has strengthened the learning of the second foreign language (see Figure B3 for details of the evolution of regulations and Figure C10 for details of the second most learnt foreign language).

Like in lower secondary education, in general upper secondary education, in the vast majority of countries with data, more than 90 % of students were learning English already in 2013. Germany is the only country that registered a notable increase – 10.2 percentage points – in the proportion of general upper secondary education students learning English between the two reference years. Greece, in contrast, registered a significant decrease – 12.9 percentage points – between 2013 and 2020 (however, as the country-specific note associated with the figure suggests, this could be partly related to methodological changes).

## **BETWEEN 2013 AND 2020, THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS LEARNING FRENCH FELL SLIGHTLY IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES**

At EU level, French is the second most learnt foreign language in primary and lower secondary education (see data for Figure C10 in Annex 1). In around one third of European countries, regulations specify that all schools must provide French in at least one education level (see Figure B8a), and in a few countries, all students must learn French during at least 1 year of compulsory education (see Figure B7).

Figure C13 shows the changes at country level (exceeding 5 percentage points) in the proportions of students learning French in primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary education between 2013 and 2020. The changes are displayed if they have taken place in at least one of the education levels considered.

During the period considered, 10 European countries (Czechia, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Austria, Slovakia, Liechtenstein and North Macedonia) registered a decrease of more than 5 percentage points in the proportion of students learning French. In Ireland and Cyprus, the decrease took place in two

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education levels: lower and general upper secondary education. In the other countries with a decrease exceeding 5 percentage points, only one level was affected: lower secondary education in Italy, Malta and North Macedonia, and general upper secondary education in Czechia, Denmark, Austria, Slovakia and Liechtenstein. In most of the above countries, the decrease was rather moderate, between 5 and 10 percentage points. Only Ireland and North Macedonia registered more substantial decreases: 12.4 and 11.7 percentage points, respectively (both in lower secondary education).

Between 2013 and 2020, two European countries (Spain and Portugal) registered an increase of more than 5 percentage points in the proportion of students learning French. In Spain, the increase (of 13.7 percentage points) occurred in primary education and in Portugal it took place in lower secondary education (7.9 percentage points).

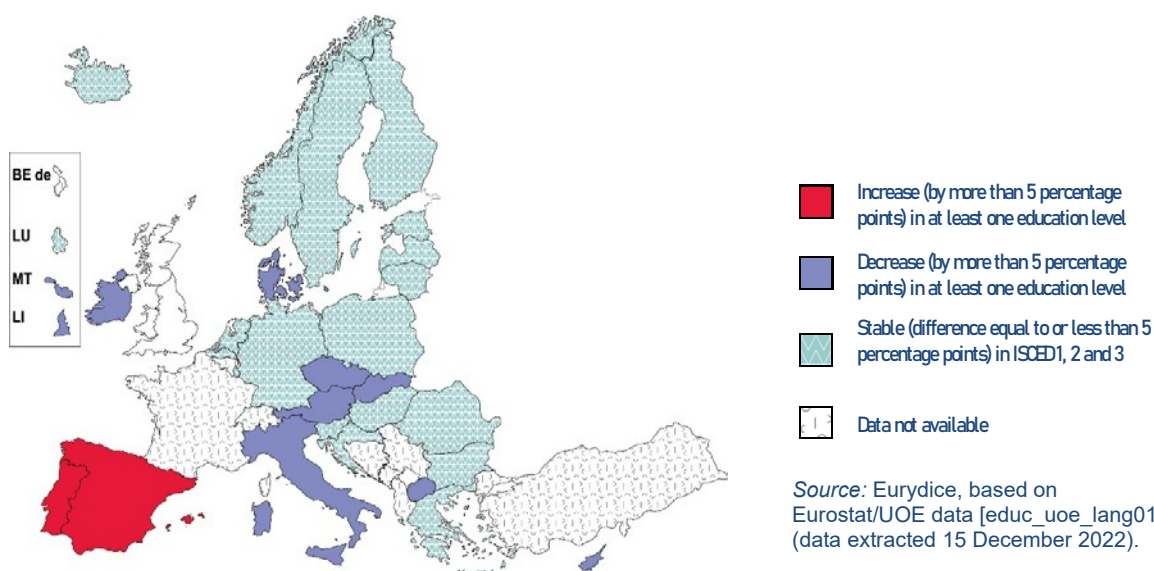


Figure 31 Figure C13: Trends in the percentages of students learning French in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2013 and 2020

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows a change in any education level (ISCED 1, ISCED 2 and/or general ISCED 3).

Country-specific notes refer to breaks in time series only if they occurred in 2013 or 2020. Breaks in time series between these two reference years, which may have occurred in some countries, are not indicated.

Data by ISCED level are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx) (2020) and [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an4.xlsx) (2013). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium: the official state languages are Dutch, French and German (see Figure A1). However, these languages are used in delimited linguistic areas and are not recognised as administrative languages across the whole territory of the country. Therefore, French is considered a foreign language in the Flemish Community of Belgium.

Belgium (BE fr) and France: the source data (all levels covered and both reference years) were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’).

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01].

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year for ISCED 1 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data on ISCED 1 are not available).

Denmark and Ireland: the source data for ISCED 1 (2013 and 2020) were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 1.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

Germany: the 2013 source data (all levels covered by the figure) and 2020 source data (ISCED 2) were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the links provided in the explanatory notes.

Greece: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Luxembourg: although the official state languages are French, German and Luxembourgish (see Figure A1), for the purpose of education statistics French and German are counted as foreign languages.

Hungary: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as 'break in time series' and 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Netherlands: the 2013 source data for ISCED 1 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist'). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 1.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: data are not available for 2013.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

North Macedonia: no breakdown between general ISCED 3 and vocational ISCED 3 is available. ISCED 3 data feeding in the figure cover both general education and vocational education.

Norway: the 2013 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist'). Therefore, the figure does not consider general ISCED 3.

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uoe\_lang01], but no data are available.

### **OVER TIME, THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS LEARNING GERMAN REMAINS SIMILAR IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES**

German is yet another popular foreign language across European countries. At EU level, it is the second most learnt foreign language in upper secondary education (see data for Figure C10 in Annex 1). In several countries, in at least one education level, all schools must provide an opportunity for students to learn German (see Figure B8a).

Figure C14 shows the changes at country level (exceeding 5 percentage points) in the proportions of students learning German in primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary education between 2013 and 2020. The changes are displayed if they have taken place in at least one of the education levels covered.

During the period considered, no European country registered a notable change in the percentage of students learning German in primary education. Seven education systems registered changes exceeding 5 percentage points in lower and/or general upper secondary education.



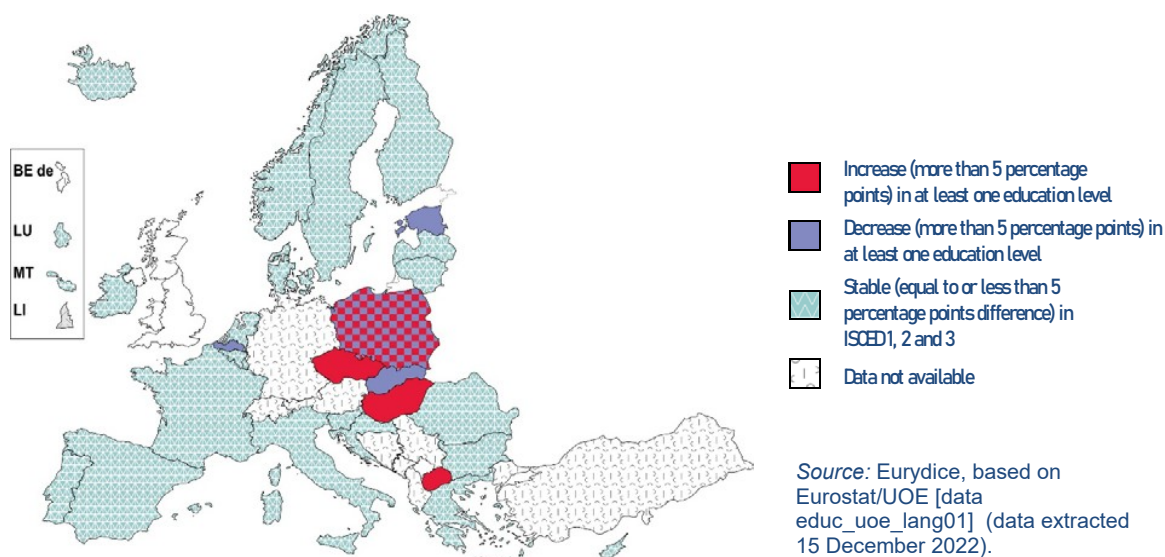


Figure 32 Figure C14: Trends in the percentages of students learning German in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2013 and 2020

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows a change in any education level (ISCED 1, ISCED 2 and/or general ISCED 3).

Country-specific notes refer to breaks in time series only if they occurred in 2013 or 2020. Breaks in time series between these two reference years, which may have occurred in some countries, are not indicated.

Data by ISCED level are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx) (2020) and [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an4.xlsx) (2013). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01].

Belgium (BE nl): the reference year for ISCED 1 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data on ISCED 1 are not available).

Denmark and Ireland: the source data for ISCED 1 (2013 and 2020) were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 1.

Germany and Austria: the source data (all levels covered and both reference years) were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’).

Greece: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Luxembourg: although the official state languages are French, German and Luxembourgish (see Figure A1), for the purpose of education statistics French and German are counted as foreign languages.

Hungary: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as ‘break in time series’ and ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Netherlands: the 2013 source data for ISCED 1 were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 1.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

Bosnia and Herzegovina: data are not available for 2013.

North Macedonia: no breakdown between general ISCED 3 and vocational ISCED 3 is available. ISCED 3 data feeding into the figure cover both general education and vocational education.

Norway: the 2013 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist'). Therefore, the figure does not consider general ISCED 3.

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01], but no data are available.

In Czechia and North Macedonia, there was an increase in the percentage of students learning German in both lower secondary education and general upper secondary education. The increase in these countries was more significant in lower secondary education, where the proportions increased by around 15 percentage points (see Annex 1 for details). In Hungary and Poland, the increase (10 and 6.9 percentage points, respectively) occurred in general upper secondary education.

The most notable decreases in the percentage of students learning German were registered in lower secondary education in Poland and Slovakia: 28.4 and 25.4 percentage points, respectively. In Poland, the decrease can be explained by a reorganisation of school grades across education levels, with lower secondary education now consisting of four grades, out of which two include no compulsory second foreign language learning (see the analysis related to Figure C4 for details). However, despite these decreases, in both Poland and Slovakia, German remains the second most learnt foreign language in this education level (see data for Figure C10 in Annex 1). The Flemish Community of Belgium and Estonia also registered decreases in the percentage of students learning German, which occurred in general upper secondary education (8.9 and 10.2 percentage points, respectively).

## **BETWEEN 2013 AND 2020, THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS LEARNING SPANISH INCREASED IN SIX COUNTRIES AND DECREASED IN ONLY TWO**

Education authorities in most European countries put less emphasis on Spanish than English, French or German. Indeed, no European country specifies Spanish as a compulsory foreign language for all students during at least one school year (see Figure B7), and only two countries (Sweden and Norway) require that all schools in specific education levels provide an opportunity for students to learn Spanish (see Figure B8a).

As shown previously in this section, Spanish is in no European country the most learnt foreign language (see Figure C8), and is the second most learnt foreign language in at least one education level (with at least 10 % of students learning it) in only five countries (Germany, Ireland, France, Sweden and Norway) (see Figure C10).

Figure C15 examines changes (exceeding 5 percentage points) in the proportions of students learning Spanish in lower and general upper secondary education between 2013 and 2020. The changes are displayed if they have taken place in at least one of the two education levels considered.

As the figure shows, during the period considered, six European education systems registered an increase of more than 5 percentage points in the proportion of secondary education students learning Spanish. The increase was most notable in lower secondary education in France: 17.6 percentage points. Poland registered the second greatest increase, of 11.9 percentage points, in general upper secondary education. The increases in the remaining four education systems (the French Community of Belgium, Ireland, Malta and Austria) were between 5 and 7 percentage points.

In two countries (Cyprus and Portugal), the proportion of secondary education students learning Spanish decreased by more than 5 percentage points between 2013 and 2020. In Cyprus, the decrease took place in general upper secondary education (14.7 percentage points), and in Portugal it occurred in lower secondary education (5.3 percentage points).

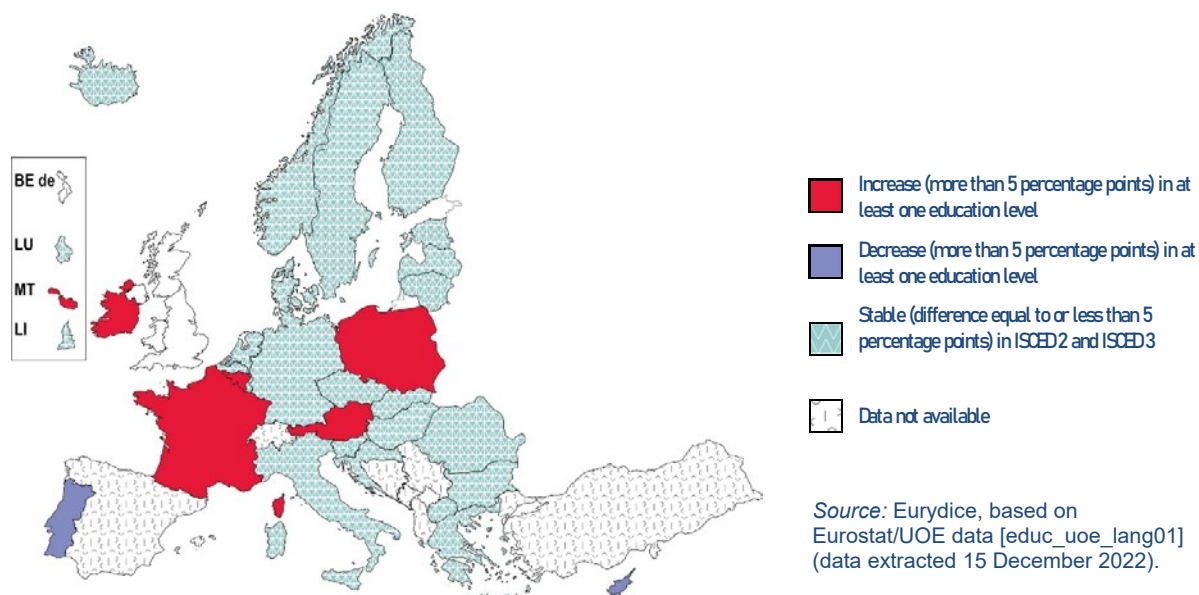


Figure 33 Figure C15: Trends in the percentage of students learning Spanish in general secondary education (ISCED 2–3), 2013 and 2020

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows a change in any education level (ISCED 2 or general ISCED 3). Primary education (ISCED 1) is not considered, as at this level Spanish is rarely learnt.

Country-specific notes refer to breaks in time series only if they occurred in 2013 or 2020. Breaks in time series between these two reference years, which may have occurred in some countries, are not indicated.

Data by ISCED level (ISCED 2 and ISCED 3) are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx) (2020) and [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an4.xlsx) (2013). For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr) and Denmark: the source data for ISCED 2 (2013 and 2020) were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’). Therefore, the figure does not consider ISCED 2.

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01].

Germany: the 2013 source data (both levels covered by the figure) and 2020 source data (ISCED 2) were flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the links provided in the explanatory notes.

Spain: the source data (both levels covered and both reference years) were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’).

Greece: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Hungary: the 2020 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as ‘break in time series’ and ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Iceland: the reference year for ISCED 3 data is 2019 instead of 2020 (2020 data on ISCED 3 are not available).

Bosnia and Herzegovina: the data are not available for 2013.

North Macedonia: no breakdown between general ISCED 3 and vocational ISCED 3 is available. ISCED 3 data feeding into the figure cover both general education and vocational education.

Norway: the 2013 source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as ‘not applicable’ (i.e. ‘missing value; data cannot exist’). Therefore, the figure does not consider general ISCED 3.

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uae\_lang01], but no data are available.

## **THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH IS COMMONLY HIGHER IN GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN IN VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS**

In upper secondary education, two main types of programmes are distinguished: general and vocational. As discussed previously (see Figure C5 and the related analysis), almost half of all students in upper secondary education are on a vocational programme. Students in general and vocational programmes commonly follow rather different curricula. It is therefore worth analysing whether there are differences in the foreign languages learnt.

In almost all the countries covered by this report, the most learnt foreign language in upper secondary education is English (see data related to Figure C8 in Annex 1). This applies to both general upper secondary programmes and vocational upper secondary programmes<sup>(55)</sup>.

Considering that English is the most learnt foreign language in almost all European countries, Figure C16 focuses on the difference in the percentage of students learning English in general upper secondary education and vocational upper secondary education.

At EU level, 95.7 % of students in general upper secondary education and 79.2 % of students on vocational pathways learn English (see Annex 1).

Several European countries register substantially higher percentages of students learning English in general upper secondary education than on vocational pathways. The difference is especially significant – at least 50 percentage points more in general education – in Denmark, Germany, Spain and Iceland. Among these countries, Denmark registers the largest gap between students on different pathways: 78.0 % of students in general upper secondary education learn English, but only 15.4 % of students on vocational pathways do so (a difference of 62.6 percentage points). Additional education systems registering substantial differences between general education and vocational education (20 to 43 percentage points) are the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In most of these education systems, VET students have to learn foreign languages for a fewer number of years than students in general education (see Figure B5).

In contrast, equal or similar proportions of students (i.e. no difference or difference less than 5 percentage points) learn English in general upper secondary education and vocational upper secondary education in Bulgaria, France, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden.

The proportions of vocational students learning English are at least 5 percentage points higher than in general education in only two countries: Portugal and Norway (11.3 and 7.3 percentage points difference, respectively).

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55 Figure C8, which displays foreign languages most learnt by students, refers to primary, lower secondary, and general and vocational upper secondary education (aggregated data). Separate data on general and vocational upper secondary education are published on Eurostat's website (data code: [educ\_uae\_lang01]).

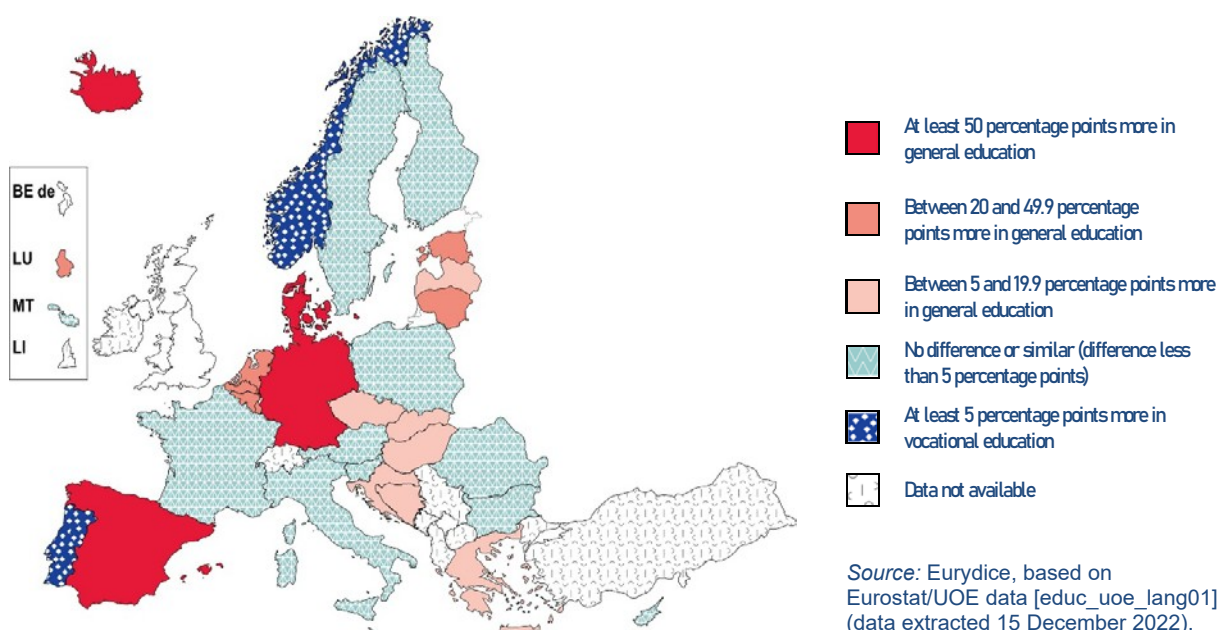


Figure 34 Figure C16: Differences in the percentages of students learning English in general and vocational upper secondary education (ISCED 3), 2020

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows the difference between the percentages of students learning English in general upper secondary education and vocational upper secondary education (ISCED 3).

Data are available in Annex 1. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uoe\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uoe_enr_esms_an6.xlsx).

For information about the scope of the Eurostat/UOE data collection, see the introduction to Chapter C (Section I).

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de), Albania, Switzerland, Montenegro and Türkiye: these countries are not covered by the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uoe\_lang01].

Ireland: the source data were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

Greece: the source data for general ISCED 3 were flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Hungary: the source data for general and vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'break in time series' and 'definition differs, see metadata'. Therefore, please refer to the link provided in the explanatory notes.

Malta: English is an official language alongside Maltese, but for the purpose of education statistics it is counted as a foreign language.

Iceland: the reference year for the data is 2019 (2020 data are not available).

Liechtenstein: the source data for vocational ISCED 3 were flagged as 'not applicable' (i.e. 'missing value; data cannot exist').

North Macedonia: no breakdown between general ISCED 3 and vocational ISCED 3 is available.

Serbia: this country is included in the Eurostat/UOE data collection [educ\_uoe\_lang01], but no data are available.

## CHAPTER D TEACHERS

### SECTION I – QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Teachers play a key role in developing students' skills in foreign languages. It is therefore important to examine their qualifications, their degree of subject specialisation and the training opportunities they have.

The first indicator in this section investigates the degree of subject specialisation of those teaching foreign languages in mainstream schools (see Figure D1). The second indicator focuses, more specifically, on teachers who deliver CLIL and examines their qualifications (see Figure D2). The third indicator outlines the training received by teachers to teach in multilingual settings (see Figure D3). The fourth and final indicator examines the presence of continuing professional development (CPD) activities associated with the concept of 'language awareness in schools' (see Figure D4).

Most of the indicators in this section rely on data collected through the Eurydice Network, covering 39 education systems in 37 countries<sup>(56)</sup>. The third indicator uses a different data source, namely data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018. This indicator covers fewer countries than indicators based on Eurydice data<sup>(57)</sup>.

#### **ACROSS EUROPE, GENERALIST AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Teachers delivering foreign language instruction can have different profiles in terms of their subject specialisation. They can be qualified to teach all (or almost all) subjects in the curriculum, or they can specialise in teaching a limited number of subjects (generally up to three subjects). Teachers in the first category are designated in this report as 'generalist teachers', while those in the second one are considered 'specialist teachers'. Generalist teachers may also be referred to as 'class teachers', as they are responsible for a particular group of students in a school.

Based on the content of recommendations issued by top-level (education) authorities, Figure D1 examines the degree of subject specialisation of foreign language teachers in primary education.

The figure highlights three approaches, each found in around one third of education systems with top-level recommendations on the degree of subject specialisation of foreign language teachers. In 14 education systems, the responsibility for teaching foreign languages in primary education is assigned to specialist teachers (only). A contrasting approach, which is in place in 11 education systems, involves allocating this responsibility to generalist teachers. In the remaining education systems with relevant top-level recommendations (10 education systems), both specialist teachers and generalist teachers may teach foreign languages in primary education.

When top-level recommendations refer to both generalist teachers and specialist teachers, they sometimes do not provide further specifications. This means that generalist (class) teachers and subject specialists can teach foreign languages interchangeably, depending, for instance, on the foreign language skills of individual generalist teachers. In some countries, however, official documents include further guidelines or requirements. For example, in Poland both generalist teachers and specialist teachers may teach foreign languages during the first 3 years of primary education, but from the fourth year onwards the responsibility is assigned to subject specialists. In Sweden, generalist teachers are expected to teach the subject 'English', while specialist teachers should teach the subject 'Modern language', which includes foreign languages other than English. Other specifications refer to the training that generalist teachers should complete in order to teach foreign languages. In Bulgaria and Slovenia, for instance, generalist teachers may teach foreign languages in primary education alongside subject specialists, but they need to complete a supplementary language study programme.

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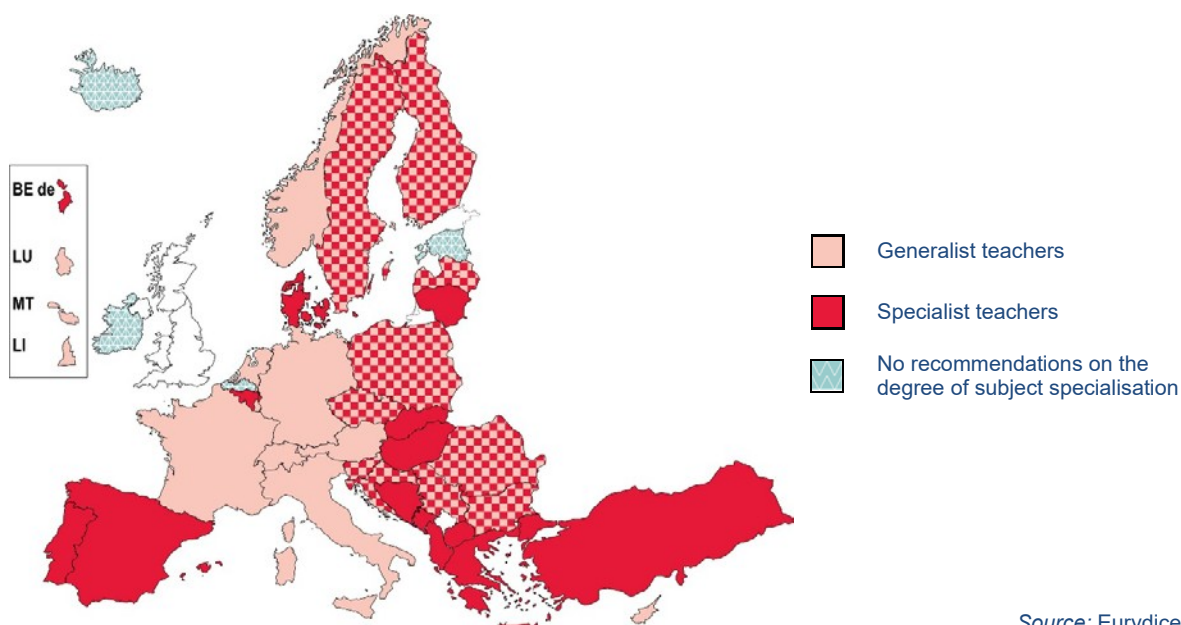
56 For details of the country coverage of this report, see the introduction to the report.

57 For details of TALIS and its country coverage, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

In the countries where specialist teachers teach foreign languages in primary education, commonly other curricular areas are taught by subject specialists. The most typical areas – apart from foreign languages – are physical education, music and arts (and religion, ethics, and information and communications technology, when the primary education curriculum includes these subjects). The exceptions in this regard are Portugal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, where foreign languages are the only subject area in primary education taught by specialist teachers.

There are no top-level recommendations on the degree of subject specialisation of foreign language teachers in primary education in only four education systems: the Flemish Community of Belgium, Estonia, Ireland and Iceland. In the Flemish Community of Belgium and Iceland, generalist teachers commonly teach foreign languages in this education level.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 35 Figure D1: Degree of subject specialisation of foreign language teachers in primary education (ISCED 1), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows the degree of subject specialisation of foreign language teachers in primary education as specified in recommendations issued by top-level (education) authorities.

Only general mainstream education is covered by the figure (i.e. special classes with extended foreign language teaching are not taken into account).

For definitions of 'foreign language', 'generalist teacher', 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', 'specialist teacher' and 'top-level (education) authority', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific note

Denmark: teachers qualified to teach in single-structure primary schools (Folkeskolen; ISCED 1 and 2) should be able to deliver any subject. However, alongside their generalist profile, prospective Folkeskolen teachers need to specialise in a limited number of subjects (generally two or three subjects). The Folkeskole act specifies that, in principle, the teachers should teach the subjects in which they have specialised. Therefore, the figure refers to 'specialist teachers'.

As pupils progress towards higher grades, the picture shown in Figure D1 changes. In lower secondary education, in almost all the countries with top-level recommendations on the degree of subject specialisation of foreign language teachers, only subject specialists should teach foreign languages. The exceptions are Croatia and Latvia, where both generalist teachers and specialist teachers may be involved; and Norway, where the responsibility is assigned to generalist teachers. In upper secondary education, across the whole of Europe, only specialist teachers teach foreign languages.

## TEACHERS DELIVERING CLIL USUALLY NEED TO PROVE THEIR FOREIGN LANGUAGE ABILITIES

Most countries have in place bilingual or immersion education, where at least some subjects – for example, mathematics, geography and natural sciences – are taught in a foreign language (see Figure B12). In this report, this type of provision is referred to as 'CLIL type A' (see the Glossary).

Ideally, in order to teach a subject in a foreign language, teachers need to have a very good knowledge of both the subject and the language in which it is taught. Moreover, they should be familiar with the requirements of the CLIL methodology.

Figure D2 summarises the requirements set by top-level (education) authorities for teachers delivering CLIL type A programmes. It shows that in around two thirds of the education systems with CLIL type A programmes (19 out of 29 systems), regulations refer to specific (additional) qualifications. In around one third of the systems with CLIL type A programmes (10 education systems), there are no specific top-level requirements for teachers beyond normal teaching qualifications.

In the majority of education systems with regulations referring to specific qualifications for providing CLIL, the requirements stipulated apply to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target foreign language. These teachers commonly need to prove that they have sufficient knowledge of the language in question. The minimum foreign language proficiency required usually corresponds to either level B2 or level C1 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) <sup>(58)</sup>. Depending on the country, different types of certificates or diplomas are accepted as proof of foreign language proficiency (e.g. the Cambridge English certificate in Denmark or the State Language Examination in Slovakia).

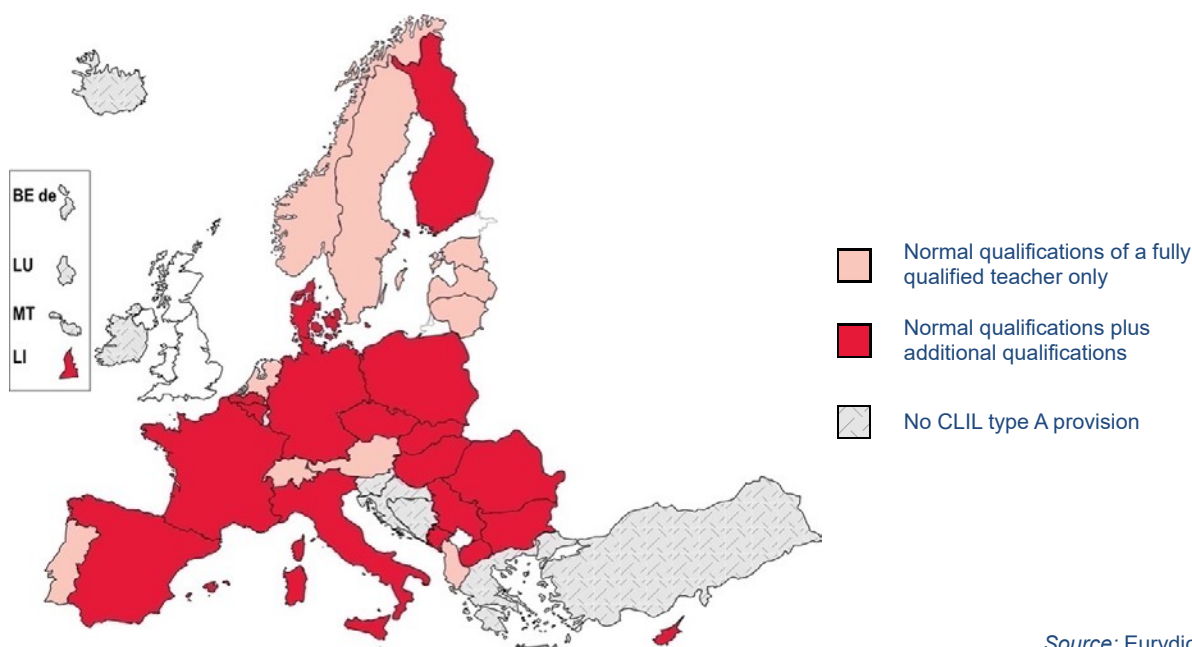
In a limited number of countries, the requirements go beyond knowledge of the target foreign language. For example, in France prospective CLIL teachers need a qualification that proves both their ability to use the target foreign language and their understanding of the specificities of CLIL teaching. In Spain, in some autonomous communities, teachers need to participate in training courses on CLIL methodology. A comparable requirement is in place in Italy, where the CLIL methodology training can be completed either as part of initial teacher education (ITE) (60 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits) or as part of CPD (20 ECTS credits).

It is also noteworthy that when top-level regulations do not specify additional requirements for delivering CLIL, teachers may still need to prove their skills and competences in the field. Indeed, depending on the distribution of responsibilities for teachers' recruitment, specific requirements may be defined at levels below the highest decision-making level, for instance, by regional authorities or by schools.

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58 For details of the CEFR, see the Council of Europe's website (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>).





Source: Eurydice.

Figure 36 Figure D2: Qualifications required to work in schools providing CLIL type A instruction in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

#### Type of additional qualifications required

- BE fr - Qualifications obtained in the target language; or  
- Certificate (awarded based on an examination) proving thorough knowledge of the target language.
- BE nl Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of C1.
- BG Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of B2 (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).
- CZ Knowledge of the target language at a minimum CEFR level of C1 (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).  
— Bachelor’s degree in the target language; or
- DK — Cambridge English certificate; or  
— Proof of written and oral proficiency in the target language (e.g. completion of non-language studies at a British or American university).
- DE Proof of proficiency in the target language usually at a minimum CEFR level of C1 (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).
- ES Certificate and/or examination proving thorough knowledge of the target language (required in most autonomous communities). The minimum level required is usually CEFR level B2, but there is some variation across the autonomous communities (e.g. Aragón, Navarra, Madrid and Valencia require CEFR level C1). Moreover, some autonomous communities (e.g. Navarra and Madrid) require the linguistic capability certification (acreditación/habilitación en lenguas extranjeras) issued by official schools of languages (Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas) or other official institutions. Some other autonomous communities (e.g. Cataluña and Extremadura) require specific training in CLIL methodology.

The following are examples of the requirements in two autonomous communities.

- Cataluña: teachers must be proficient in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of B2 and have undergone 90 hours of training in CLIL methodology.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Extremadura: teachers must receive specific accreditation in CLIL education, which includes proficiency in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of B2, and have either at least a year of previous experience in CLIL or at least 50 hours of specific training in CLIL methodology in an official teacher training centre.</li></ul>
FR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Qualifications proving teachers' ability to use the target foreign language in the context of the subject to be taught (proficiency at a minimum CEFR level of B2) and their understanding of the specificities of CLIL teaching.</li><li>— For international sections, teachers also need to speak the two languages of the section as native speakers.</li><li>— Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of C1; and</li></ul>
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— The completion of a 1-year university course in CLIL methodology (60 ECTS credits) that can be undertaken as part of ITE; or</li><li>— The completion of a course in CLIL methodology (20 ECTS credits) that can be undertaken as part of in-service teacher training.</li></ul>
CY	Completion of an intensive in-service training course focusing on CLIL methodology.
HU	Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of C1 (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Higher education degree awarded in a country where the target language is an official language; or</li></ul>
PL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of B2; or</li><li>— Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a level recognised as equivalent to CEFR level B2 (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).</li></ul>
RO	Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a minimum CEFR level of B2.
SK	Passing of the State Language Examination in the target language (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Official language qualification; or</li></ul>
FI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Completion of higher education studies in the target language; or</li><li>— Completion of ITE in a country where the target language is an official language.</li></ul>
LI	Certificate showing proficiency at a minimum CEFR level of C1 (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).
ME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Knowledge of English at a minimum CEFR level of B2; and</li><li>- Training in CLIL (initially 20 modules; reduced to 10 modules).</li></ul>
MK	Certificate showing proficiency in the target language (applies only to CLIL involving French).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Certificate showing proficiency in the target language at a minimum of CEFR level B2, with a requirement to attain CEFR level C1 within five years through CPD; or</li></ul>
RS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>— Other certificates or diplomas showing proficiency in the target language (with the secondary education diploma the lowest possible level of proof of language proficiency); or</li><li>— Certificate showing proficiency at a minimum CEFR level of B1 for those who teach alongside a qualified foreign language teacher (applies only to teachers who do not hold an academic degree in the target language).</li></ul>

## Explanatory notes

The figure shows qualifications required by top-level (education) authorities to work in schools providing CLIL type A instruction. The requirements displayed cover at least one education level in the range ISCED 1–3.

In the figure, ‘additional qualifications’ refers to qualifications/certificates that teachers should obtain in addition to full teaching qualifications obtained in their home country. Higher education degrees obtained in the target language country are mentioned when official documents list them among possible proof of qualifications.

For definitions of ‘CLIL type A’, ‘CLIL type B’, ‘Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)’, ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’ and ‘top-level (education) authority’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Switzerland: central regulations state that cantons have to ensure adequate qualifications are obtained with regard to foreign languages and CLIL methodology.

Montenegro: data refer to a pilot CLIL project involving English.

## TRAINING TO TEACH IN MULTILINGUAL CLASSES IS NOT COMMON AMONG TEACHERS IN EUROPE

In Europe, many teachers work in heterogeneous linguistic and cultural environments shaped by country-specific linguistic and cultural contexts and/or the presence of migrants (see Chapter A). The co-existence of various languages in schools is certainly an asset<sup>(59)</sup>. However, it also requires teachers to be able to value the rich linguistic repertoire of their students. Teacher training in ITE and in CPD has a major role to play in equipping all teachers with the competences they need to embrace linguistic and cultural diversity in their classrooms.

Figure D3 presents the percentage of lower secondary teachers who received training in managing multilingual and multicultural classes as reported in the OECD TALIS 2018. This figure concerns teachers of all subjects and shows data for training in both ITE and CPD.

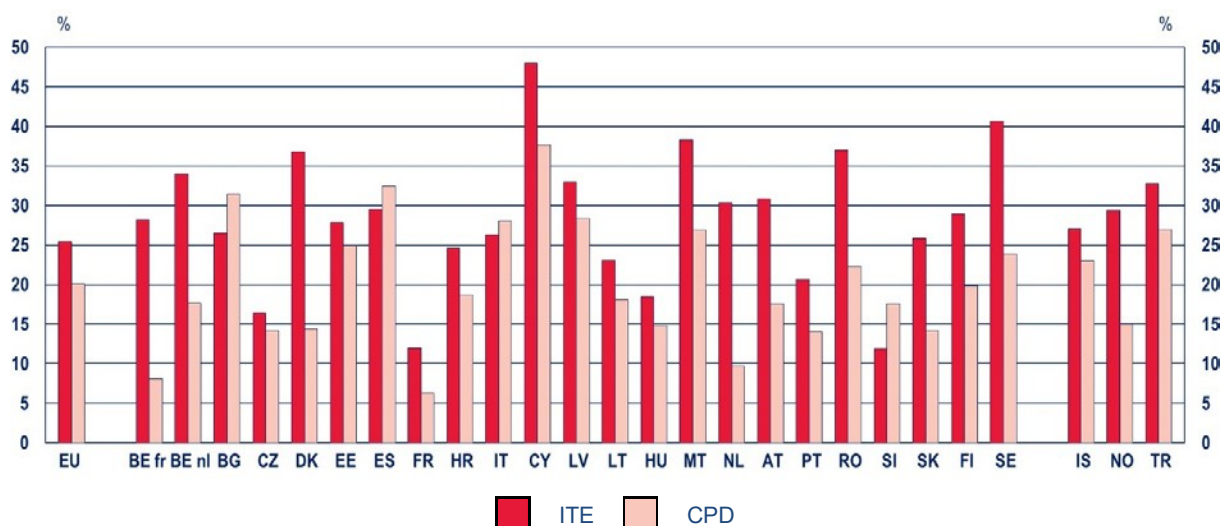
Data presented in Figure D3 are based on only two of the different topics included in ITE and CPD that were addressed by the OECD TALIS 2018<sup>(60)</sup>. Teachers’ replies show that ‘teaching in multicultural and multilingual classrooms’ were among the least often addressed topics in their ITE, and in the CPD activities they undertake. In contrast, ITE and CPD activities related to teachers’ subject fields were most common. For instance, regarding ITE, ‘content of some or all subject(s) I teach’, ‘pedagogy of some or all subject(s) I teach’ and ‘classroom practice in some or all subject(s) I teach’ were among the most frequently recurring responses (OECD, 2019a, p. 129).

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59 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019.

60 For instance, regarding the content of ITE, the other elements addressed in TALIS 2018 were: ‘Content of some or all subject(s) I teach’; ‘Pedagogy of some or all subject(s) I teach’; ‘General pedagogy’; ‘Classroom practice in some or all subject(s) I teach’; ‘Teaching in a mixed ability setting’; ‘Teaching cross-curricular skills (e.g. creativity, critical thinking, problem solving)’; ‘Use of ICT (information and communication technology) for teaching’; ‘Student behaviour and classroom management’; ‘Monitoring students’ development and learning’; ‘Facilitating students’ transitions from ISCED 2011 level 0 to ISCED 2011 level 1’; and ‘Facilitating play’.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition



Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

Figure 37 Figure D3: Percentage of teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have had training in teaching in multilingual or multicultural settings, 2018

### Explanatory notes

The figure is based on teachers' answers to questions 6 and 23 of TALIS 2018: 'Were the following elements included in your formal [education or training]?' and 'Were any of the topics listed below included in your professional development activities during the last 12 months?' The length of bars shows the percentage of teachers who answered 'yes' to 'Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting', option (f) in question 6 (category 'ITE' in the figure) and (j) in question 23 (the category 'CPD' in the figure).

EU includes respondents from all countries currently in the EU who participated in TALIS in 2018.

See Annex 1 for data and S.E.s. For further information on TALIS, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

For definitions of 'continuing professional development (CPD)', 'initial teacher education (ITE)' and 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

As the figure shows, in EU countries around a quarter of teachers (25.4 %) received training on how to teach in a multilingual setting during their ITE. In a majority of countries, however, the proportion is significantly higher than the EU level. It is the highest in Cyprus (48.0 %), where almost one in two teachers were trained to manage linguistic diversity in their classrooms. In contrast, in Czechia, France, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal and Slovenia, the percentage of prospective teachers who were trained in that area is less than the percentage for the EU. The two lowest percentages (around 10 %) were reported by teachers in France and Slovenia.

In all education systems with a relatively high percentage of 15-year-old students who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling (at least 15 %; see Figure A2), teachers' participation in ITE for teaching in multilingual settings is commonly above the EU level. This applies to the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Cyprus, Spain, Malta, Austria and Sweden.

In the vast majority of countries, young teachers are more likely to have completed an ITE course that addressed the issue of teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting. This positive trend emerges from the comparison of the percentage of young teachers (younger than 35 years old) with the percentage of older teachers (35 years old or over) reporting having completed such a course: 35.3 % at EU level for the former compared with 23.4 % for the latter (see Annex 1). The difference is therefore 11.9 percentage points in

favour of the younger generation. The difference is the highest in Norway, at 32.6 percentage points in favour of the younger generation.

Moving on from ITE to CPD, Figure D3 shows that in the EU one fifth of teachers (20.1 %) took part in CPD activities on teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting in the 12 months prior to the survey. The highest percentage of teachers who completed CPD activities on this topic was, as for ITE, in Cyprus, with 37.7 % teachers reporting it. In contrast, 10 % or fewer lower secondary teachers have undertaken CPD activities on the topic in the French Community of Belgium, France and the Netherlands.

## **IN SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, TEACHERS CAN UNDERTAKE IN-SERVICE TRAINING ACTIVITIES ON LANGUAGE AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS**

While focusing on the improvement of the teaching of modern languages in schools, the 2019 Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages is also aimed at enhancing the overall language competence of students. Such overall language competence involves skills in different types of languages, including the language of schooling and languages spoken at home by children with a multilingual background. To achieve this, the Council recommendation invites EU Member States to take a more comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, notably by supporting the development of language awareness in schools <sup>(61)</sup>.

Language awareness in schools is a notion that refers to a multilingual and whole-school approach that entails a comprehensive languages strategy involving continuous reflection on the language dimension in all facets of the school life; it also involves an overarching approach to the teaching of all languages in schools (the language of schooling, home languages, foreign languages, dead languages, etc.). More concretely, language-aware schools value the linguistic diversity of their learners, recognise their initial language skills and use them as a learning resource. Language-aware schools support all teachers in addressing the use of content-specific language in their respective subject areas, including by raising awareness of different language registers and vocabulary (European Commission, 2018).

The questionnaire used to gather Eurydice information for this report included a series of questions enquiring about CPD activities related to language awareness in schools for teachers or head teachers in primary and general secondary education. CPD refers to formal in-service training allowing staff members to broaden, develop and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout their careers. CPD activities may be provided in different formats, such as courses, seminars, peer observation and support from networks of practitioners. CPD is a professional duty in nearly all countries (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2021c). CPD activities are therefore a good way to reach out to all in-service staff to help them familiarise themselves with new teaching practices.

The purpose of the investigation was to gather information on the extent to which the relatively new teaching approach of promoting language awareness in schools is being disseminated to school staff through CPD activities. Data providers of the 39 investigated education systems had the opportunity to provide up to three examples of CPD activities related to language awareness in schools. The data collected include only CPD activities accredited, financially supported or organised by top-level education authorities (alone or in cooperation with international organisations) <sup>(62)</sup>.

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61 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019.

62 The questionnaire included the above-cited definition of 'language awareness in schools' and used semi-structured questions with open boxes, allowing data providers to describe CPD activities. In addition, it provided the following examples of specific learning objectives of CPD activities relating to language awareness in schools:

- how to implement a comprehensive language strategy in schools (i.e. an overarching approach to the teaching of all languages in schools and, beyond that, a language dimension that reflects in all facets of school life);
- how to value linguistic diversity in schools;
- how to assess students' linguistic repertoire;

The content analysis of the examples of CPD activities provided (their short descriptions) highlights some key thematic areas related to the concept of language awareness in schools. These thematic areas can be clustered into three categories that partly overlap: (1) promoting linguistically sensitive teaching<sup>(63)</sup>, (2) embracing linguistic and cultural diversity in multilingual classrooms, and (3) teaching the language of schooling in multilingual classrooms.

The first thematic area – promoting linguistically sensitive teaching – can be illustrated by CPD activities provided in Germany, France, Austria and Finland. In Germany, one in-service teacher training activity targeting mathematics teachers was aimed at helping teachers design lessons during which mathematical and linguistic knowledge were co-constructed. This could be, for instance, achieved through content-specific discussions during which students learned to formulate clearly mathematical problems and ideas, using the right technical terms, in a structured and comprehensible speech<sup>(64)</sup>. In France, the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports offers training opportunities to teacher trainers, head teachers and inspectors enabling them to understand the language dimension in teaching and learning, and more generally in school life<sup>(65)</sup>. In Austria, language-sensitive teaching was one of the topics addressed in a training module available as part of ITE and CPD activities<sup>(66)</sup>. Other topics included language acquisition, diagnostic language assessment, language(s) and identity. Some other inspiring examples of CPD activities related to linguistically sensitive teaching can be found in Finland. For example, an in-service teacher training course mainly targeting upper secondary teachers is aimed at enabling participants to develop and implement a comprehensive project relating to linguistically sensitive teaching in schools<sup>(67)</sup>.

The second thematic area – embracing linguistic and cultural diversity in multilingual classrooms – relates to the fact that multilingual classrooms are a reality for a substantial number of students (see Figure A4). Helping teachers embrace multilingualism and support plurilingual students, notably by helping them reach a high level of proficiency in the language of schooling, is therefore an important objective. For example, Luxembourg has three official languages and a substantial proportion of students who do not speak the language of schooling (see Figures A1 and A2). In this context, one CPD activity targeting teachers at all education levels intends to provide participants with a better understanding of what it means to be multilingual and how to teach multilingual students<sup>(68)</sup>. Switzerland also has a particularly diverse linguistic landscape (see Figure A1). One CPD activity in particular aims to help participants teach in multilingual classrooms and address specific issues relating to the language of schooling. Moreover, this activity

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— how to value students' skills in various languages;

— how to use students' skills as a learning resource;

— how to teach in multilingual classrooms;

— how to help students develop academic language skills (i.e. advanced skills in the language of schooling as opposed to everyday language skills used in basic interpersonal communication).

Figure D4 and the associated text are essentially built on descriptions of CPD activities provided in open-ended questions.

63 Linguistically sensitive teaching is an umbrella term that refers to both a concept and teaching practices. It acknowledges the linguistic dimension in education and the 'role of languages in learning, identity growth, and well-being at both individual and collective levels' (Bergroth et al., 2022, p. 13). As linguistically sensitive teaching concerns all languages taught at school and spoken by the students, it leads to the valorisation of multilingualism. Therefore, linguistically sensitive teaching is a concept that is very close to the concept of language awareness in schools, advocated by the 2019 Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages.

64 <https://www.akademie.rub.de/zertifikatskurse/mathematikunterricht-sprachsensibel-gestalten/#tab-19c35bca6dd135c9ea5>

65 [https://magistere.education.fr/local/magistere\\_offers/index.php?v=formation](https://magistere.education.fr/local/magistere_offers/index.php?v=formation)

66 [http://oesz.at/OESZNEU/UPLOAD/016/Basiskompetenzen\\_sprachliche\\_Bildung\\_FINAL.pdf](http://oesz.at/OESZNEU/UPLOAD/016/Basiskompetenzen_sprachliche_Bildung_FINAL.pdf)

67 <https://www.laurea.fi/koulutus/taydennyskoulutukset/kielitetoinen-opetus-toisella-asteella/>

68 <https://ssl.education.lu/ifen/liste-formationen?dispDomaine=101&idSsDomaine=1622>

specifically trains teachers to support allophone students by drawing on students' own (learning or linguistic) resources <sup>(69)</sup>.

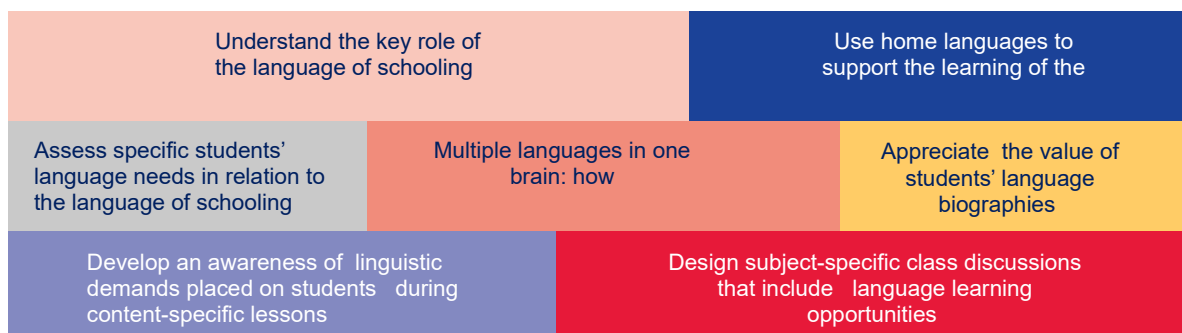


Figure 38 Figure D4: Examples of key terms describing CPD activities related to 'language awareness in schools', 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

This figure includes examples of key terms used to describe CPD activities related to languages awareness in schools, accredited, financially supported or organised by top-level education authorities (alone or in cooperation with international organisations), and targeting teachers or head teachers in primary and general secondary education. These examples are taken from the CPD activities reported in the text associated with the figure.

For definitions of 'continuing professional development (CPD)' and 'language awareness in schools', see the Glossary.

The third and last thematic area – teaching the language of schooling in multilingual classrooms – while still embracing multilingualism, focuses more specifically on the language of schooling and its key role in learning. For instance, in Ireland teachers providing support to learners who are not proficient in the language of schooling are offered training in how to assess students' level of English and how to use students' home languages to support the development of their English.

69 <https://www.hep-bejune.ch/fr/Formations-continues/Formations-postgrades/CAS/education-Plurilinguisme-Bildung-Mehrsprachigkeit/CAS-education-Plurilinguisme-Bildung-Mehrsprachigkeit.html>

## SECTION II – TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

Developing the transnational mobility of teachers during their studies or careers has been a long-standing priority of the EU. In 2009, the Council of the EU's conclusions on the professional development of teachers and school leaders highlighted the need to gradually expand transnational mobility, notably for teachers, with a 'view to making periods of learning abroad – both within Europe and the wider world – the rule rather than the exception' <sup>(70)</sup>. More recently, the Council conclusions of May 2022 on enhancing teachers and trainers' mobility calls for a range of actions to foster the European mobility of teachers as part of their initial and in-service training <sup>(71)</sup>.

Considering the abovementioned priority, this section focuses on the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers, as student teachers or as practitioners. First, it investigates whether top-level education authorities recommend that prospective foreign language teachers spend a period in the target language country during their initial education (see Figure D5). Then, it provides the percentage of lower secondary foreign language teachers going abroad for professional purposes and compares these data over time (see Figure D6). This section also presents the top-level funding schemes available to support the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers (see Figure D7). In addition, it compares the percentages of foreign language teachers going abroad with the support of EU programmes versus national/regional programmes (see Figure D8). Finally, this section sheds some light on the main reasons why foreign language teachers go abroad and the time they spend on professional trips in other countries (see Figures D9 and D10).

As the trends presented in this section refer to the period 2013-2018, it is worth bearing in mind that they may have been temporarily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Four indicators in this section are based on data from TALIS <sup>(72)</sup>. They cover 22 European countries (EU Member States and non-EU countries). The remaining two indicators present information based on the data supplied by the Eurydice network, which includes 37 countries.

### TOP-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS RARELY REFER SPECIFICALLY TO THE CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY OF PROSPECTIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Spending a period in the target language country during ITE is especially important for prospective foreign language teachers. This may considerably improve their proficiency in the language they will teach. It may also provide them with first-hand experience of the culture of the target language country.

Figure D5 displays the presence of recommendations issued by top-level (education) authorities on the content of ITE for foreign language teachers and, where such recommendations exist, provides information on the guidelines regarding stays in the target language country.

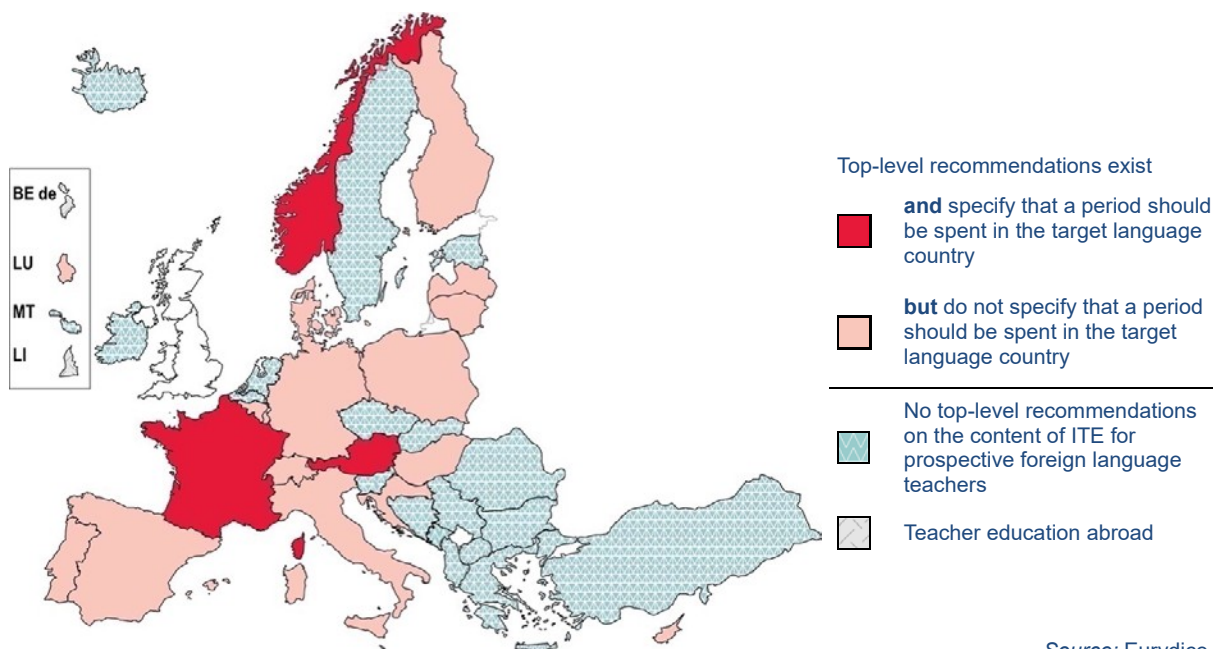
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70 Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET2020'), OJ C 119, 28.05.2009, p. 3.

71 Council conclusions of 21 April 2022 on enhancing teacher's and trainer's mobility, in particular European mobility, during their initial and in-service training, OJ C 167, 21.04.2022.

72 For details of TALIS, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.





Source: Eurydice.

Figure 39 Figure D5: Existence of top-level recommendations on the content of ITE for prospective foreign language teachers and the period to be spent in the target language country, 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

Where top-level recommendations on the content of ITE exist for at least one type of foreign language teachers (i.e. generalist or specialist teachers; see Figure D1 for details) or one education level (ISCED 1–3), the country is classified, depending on its situation, under one of two main categories (dark red or light red).

Where foreign language teachers spend a period in a country or region in which the language to be taught (target language) is spoken, this may include time spent in a school (as an assistant), at a university (attending courses) or on a work placement. The aim is to give prospective teachers direct contact with the language they will teach and the culture of the country concerned.

For definitions of ‘foreign language’, ‘initial teacher education (ITE)’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’ and ‘top-level (education) authority’, see the Glossary.

As the figure shows, in around half of the countries surveyed, top-level education authorities do not provide any recommendations regarding ITE for prospective foreign language teachers. When such recommendations are in place, they address various aspects of ITE, including, for instance, the organisation of theoretical courses, in-school foreign language teaching placements and/or stays in the target language country.

Among the countries that provide some recommendations on the content of ITE, only three recommend that prospective foreign language teachers spend a certain period in the target language country before completing their teaching qualification. In Austria, a period of one semester abroad is recommended. In France, it is recommended that specialist foreign language teachers spend a period in the target language country, but the duration is not specified. A similarly general recommendation exists in Norway, where the national guidelines for primary and lower secondary teacher education indicate that, because they will teach foreign languages, generalist teachers should undertake a stay abroad during their studies. The country of the stay is not specified, but English is a compulsory subject for pupils in primary and lower secondary education (see Figure B7) and generalist teachers are expected to teach it (see Figure D1).

With regard to the recommendations studied, Ireland represents a specific case. In this country, training institutions are free to decide on the content of the ITE they offer to foreign language teachers (i.e. no top-level recommendations are shown in the figure). However, in order to be employed the teachers need to be registered with the Teaching Council (which enables individuals to teach in state-funded schools). To be

registered, prospective foreign language teachers in lower and general upper secondary education must have spent at least 6 months in the target language country (as of 2023, the period has been reduced to 3 months).

While the number of countries with the relevant recommendations remains limited, two additional aspects related to student teachers' cross-border mobility need to be considered. First, in countries with no specific top-level recommendations, individual higher education institutions may still specify that prospective foreign language teachers must undertake part of their studies in the target language country. Second, countries' top-level recommendations nowadays commonly stipulate that all students – that is, not only prospective foreign language teachers – should have the opportunity to complete a part of their studies abroad. Therefore, the cross-border mobility of prospective foreign language teachers may be stimulated through recommendations that go beyond those displayed in Figure D5.

## **THE TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS HAS INCREASED OVER TIME**

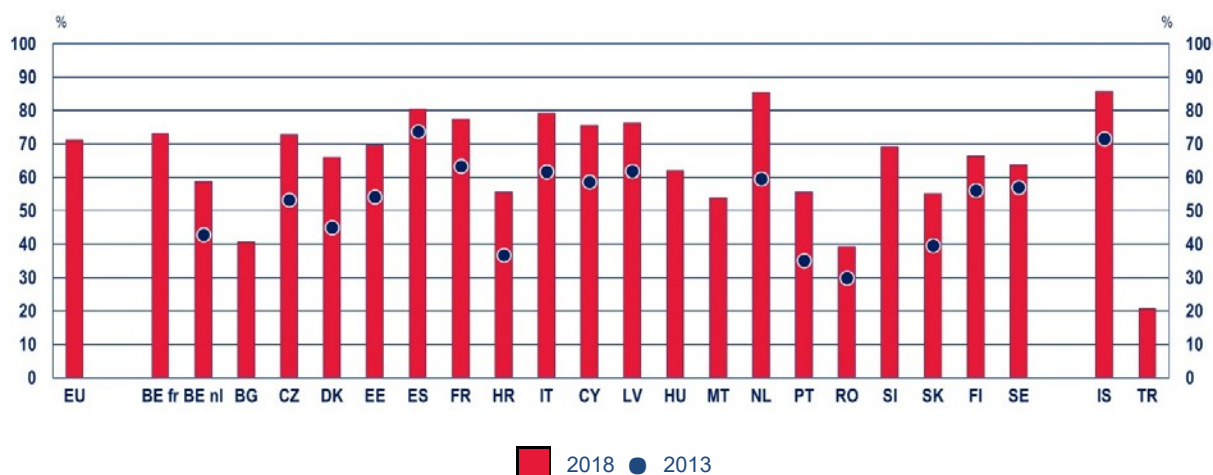
Figure D5 examined top-level recommendations on ITE in relation to the transnational mobility of prospective foreign language teachers. It shows that few countries have introduced recommendations in this area. Figure D6 also shows the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers, but from a different perspective. It considers actual transnational mobility practice as reported by teachers in TALIS 2018. More specifically, it displays data on the percentage of foreign language teachers in lower secondary education who reported that they had gone abroad during their studies or career for professional purposes. It also compares the transnational mobility practices of foreign language teachers in 2018 and 2013.

As Figure D6 shows, in 2018 about 70 % of foreign language teachers in the EU went abroad at least once, as a student, as a teacher, or as both. Spain, the Netherlands and Iceland have the highest percentage of mobile foreign language teachers, with more than 80 % of them reporting transnational mobility.

In comparison, teachers of other subjects are much less mobile: at EU level, only 36.0 % of them went abroad during their education or training, or in their career as a teacher (see Annex 1). Cyprus and, again, Iceland have the greatest proportion of teachers of other subjects who are mobile (63.5 % and 80.1 %, respectively).

Foreign language teachers obviously need to train and practise the language they teach. They also need to experience close contact with one of the countries where the language they teach is spoken, in order to gain a deeper cultural insight to share with their students. Therefore, for foreign language teachers more than for those of other subjects, transnational mobility seems to be a professional need. Yet almost 30 % of modern foreign language teachers surveyed in the EU have never been abroad for professional purposes, which may have a bearing on the quality of foreign language teaching. In Bulgaria, Romania and Türkiye, only a minority of foreign language teachers have been mobile. This percentage is the lowest in Türkiye, where only 20.7 % of foreign language teachers have ever been abroad as a practising teacher or during their ITE.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition



Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018 and 2013.

Figure 40 Figure D6: Percentage of modern foreign language teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have been abroad for professional purposes, 2013 and 2018

### Explanatory notes

The figure is based on teachers' answers to questions 15 and 56 of TALIS 2018 and questions 15 and 48 of TALIS 2013: 'Do you teach the following subject categories in the current school year?' and 'Have you ever been abroad for professional purposes in your career as a teacher or during your teacher education/training?'

The length of the bars and the position of the blue circles show the percentage of teachers who chose option (e) for question 15 and answered 'yes' to at least one of the mobility situations (options (a)–(e) in 2018 and options (b)–(f) in 2013, respectively).

EU includes respondents from all countries currently in the EU who responded to the mobility-related questions of TALIS in 2018.

See Annex 1 for data and S.E.s. For further information on TALIS, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

Trends over time can be observed based on the 17 European education systems<sup>(73)</sup> that responded to the questions on transnational mobility in both rounds of TALIS. The comparison of the data from TALIS 2013 and 2018 reveals that in those education systems more foreign language teachers had been abroad for professional purposes in 2018<sup>(74)</sup>. The proportion of foreign language teachers who had been abroad was 14.6 percentage points higher in 2018 than in 2013, increasing from 57.6 % to 72.2 % (see Annex 1). Foreign language teacher mobility increased in all the 17 education systems that responded to the mobility-related questions in both 2013 and 2018. The greatest increase was in the Netherlands, with an increase of 26.0 percentage points. The smallest increase was in Sweden, with only 6.7 percentage points more in 2018 than 2013.

73 BE nl, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LV, NL, PT, RO, SK, FI, SE and IS.

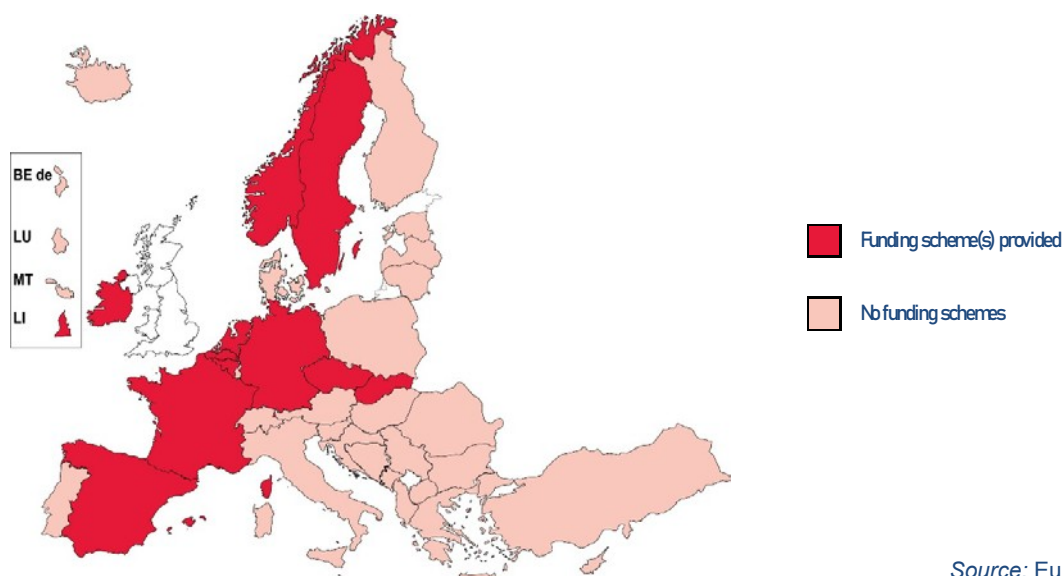
74 Regarding the validity of the comparison, readers should know that the questions on mobility were slightly different between the 2013 survey and the 2018 survey. In 2013, the questions on mobility were introduced by a filtering question ('Have you ever been abroad for professional purposes in your career as a teacher or during your teacher education/training: yes/no?'), while in 2018 there was no filtering question. Despite this difference in the mobility-related questions between 2013 and 2018, and although the impact of this difference is unknown, it can nevertheless be assumed that the increase is not solely due to the changes in the questionnaire.

The increase in foreign language teacher transnational mobility is not an isolated phenomenon. Indeed, the proportion of teachers of other subjects who spent time for professional purposes in another country also grew to a similar extent between 2013 and 2018, increasing from 20.0 % to 36.3 % in the EU (see Annex 1).

## NATIONAL FUNDING SCHEMES FOR THE TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS MAINLY EXIST IN WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Some countries have top-level funding schemes to support the transnational mobility of their foreign language teachers. The objective of these funding schemes is to support teachers wishing to spend some time abroad for professional purposes. Figure D7 focuses on schemes supporting teachers' transnational mobility in 2021/2022, although in practice, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, less teachers benefited from them than before the pandemic. Although no country reported that specific top-level funding schemes supporting mobility had been abolished since 2020, some schemes were not provided in 2020, 2021 and/or 2022, while others shifted to online formats.

As Figure D7 shows, funding schemes supporting the professional transnational mobility of primary and general secondary teachers exist in a dozen countries, mainly in Western Europe. The funding schemes may apply to all teachers, irrespective of the subject they teach, or may target foreign language teachers specifically. These schemes support both primary teachers and general secondary teachers, except in the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Ireland and Norway, where only secondary teachers may benefit from them.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 41 Figure D7: Funding schemes provided by top-level authorities to support the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

The map shows whether funding schemes that support the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers in primary and general secondary education are provided by top-level education authorities.

The funding schemes may be utilised by teachers of all subjects or specifically by those teaching foreign languages. Only funding schemes that operate throughout the whole country / education system or a significant geographical area are considered (those restricted to a particular geographical location are therefore excluded). Funding schemes should cover the transnational crossing of geographical borders and be intended as long-term elements of the education system, covering several consecutive years (initiatives with short-term project-based funding covering only 1 or 2 years are excluded).

Funding schemes supporting teachers to move abroad to attend a conference or a workshop, to complete a PhD or to teach in a school in their country of origin (when it differs from the country where they work) are not considered here. Similarly, binational education programmes and international funding schemes, such as the EU's Erasmus+ programme and the Nordplus programme, and language assistant programmes for novice teachers or graduate student teachers are also excluded from the scope of the figure.

Eurydice data providers were invited to report up to three funding schemes.

For definitions of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)' and 'top-level authorities', see the Glossary.

A closer look at the funding schemes reported by Eurydice data providers shows that these schemes have different objectives, for instance improving teachers' language and teaching skills, or developing cultural awareness in foreign language teaching. They may also achieve these objectives in different ways, including through study visits, training courses, job shadowing, internships or periods of teaching. The length of mobility periods supported by national schemes also varies. Most commonly, teachers go abroad for a short period, usually 1 or 2 weeks.

The number of destination countries also varies across the funding schemes. Some funding schemes target teachers teaching a specific foreign language: they provide those teachers with the opportunity to spend time in the country where the language they teach is spoken. This is, for instance, the case in Norway, where French language teachers have the opportunity to attend further education courses or individual programmes (job shadowing) in France for 2 to 21 days.

In Spain, France, Sweden and Liechtenstein, the reported funding schemes target many different countries. In Spain, the Professional Visits (*Estancias Profesionales*) scheme provides primary and general secondary teachers, irrespective of the subject they teach, with the opportunity to spend 2 weeks abroad for study and observation visits in schools in 14 different countries. In France, foreign language teachers in general secondary schools (including those involved in schools providing CLIL) may take part in language, pedagogical and cultural development activities (*stages de perfectionnement linguistique, pédagogique et culturel*) abroad for 2 weeks in six to eight destination countries. In Sweden, the Atlas Partnership scheme, which aims to promote international collaboration between teachers and schools, provides all teachers with the opportunity to participate in teacher exchanges in all non-EU countries. In Liechtenstein, as stated in the 2004 decree on teaching services <sup>(75)</sup>, the state funds professional trips of foreign language teachers to the countries where the languages they teach are spoken.

The three Communities of Belgium, with three different languages of schooling (French, Dutch and German), signed an agreement in April 2015 that is aimed at promoting opportunities for foreign language teachers of each Community to teach in one of the other two Communities for a period of at least 1 year. Although not transnational per se, this trans-community initiative is also worth mentioning. The objective of the initiative is to enable schools to provide language courses with native speakers as teachers. Similarly, in Switzerland exchanges of French, German and Italian language teachers are organised between the different language regions. These language teachers have the opportunity to spend a short (up to 5 weeks) or long (up to 12 months) stay in another language region as a class assistant. The purpose is to help teachers develop their language and teaching competences and establish cooperation between schools across language regions.

## **EU PROGRAMMES PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

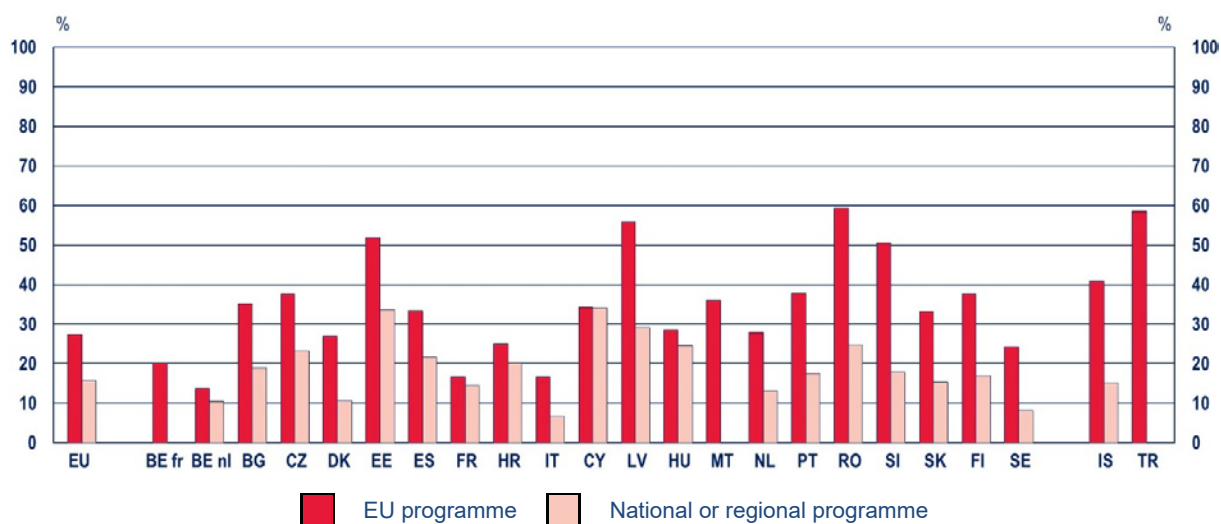
Figure D8 shows the percentage of mobile foreign language teachers in lower secondary education who reported that they had been abroad for professional purposes with the support of transnational mobility programmes. It specifies the type of mobility scheme (an EU programme, such as Erasmus+, or a national/regional programme) with which they have travelled abroad. This figure only concerns the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers during their career.

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75 <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/2004092000>

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In the EU, the percentage of mobile modern foreign language teachers who benefited from EU funding is on average close to twice the percentage of those who benefited from funding from a national or regional programme. The share of mobile foreign language teachers who had been abroad for professional purposes through an EU programme is 27.4 %, compared with 15.7 % in the case of national or regional programmes. In 10 education systems (Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and Iceland), this trend was even more marked, with at least twice as many teachers going abroad with EU funding than with national or regional funding. In contrast, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Croatia, Cyprus and Hungary, the impact of both funding sources was roughly the same.



Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018

Figure 42 Figure D8: Percentage of mobile modern foreign language teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have gone abroad for professional purposes with the support of a mobility programme, 2018

### Explanatory notes

The figure is based on teachers' answers to questions 15 and 56 of TALIS 2018: 'Do you teach the following subject categories in the current school year?' and 'Have you ever been abroad for professional purposes in your career as a teacher or during your teacher education/training?' The length of the bars shows the percentage of teachers who answered 'yes' to option (b) 'as a teacher in an EU programme' and/or (c) 'as a teacher in a regional or national programme'. Teachers may have used both types of programmes.

Foreign language teachers are those who chose option (e) for question 15. Mobile teachers are those who answered 'yes' to at least one of the options (a)–(e) in question 56.

EU includes respondents from all countries currently in the EU who responded to the mobility-related questions of TALIS in 2018.

See Annex 1 for data and S.E.s. For further information on TALIS, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific note

Belgium (BE fr), Malta and Türkiye: the sample was insufficient (fewer than 5 different schools or 30 teachers) for the category 'national or regional programmes'.

Compared with 2013, the proportion of mobile foreign language teachers who were part of EU programmes did not change significantly, while the proportion who were part of national or regional programmes increased by 4.3 percentage points (S.E. 0.86) (see Annex 1). Consequently, in European countries the relative contribution of EU programmes to foreign language teachers' mobility compared with the relative contribution of national or regional programmes was on average slightly higher in 2013 (25.1 % (S.E. 0.89) versus 11.1 % (S.E. 0.53)) than in 2018 (27.2 % (S.E. 0.71) versus 15.4 % (S.E. 0.67)).

## **MORE THAN TWO THIRDS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS GO ABROAD FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND AS PART OF THEIR INITIAL EDUCATION**

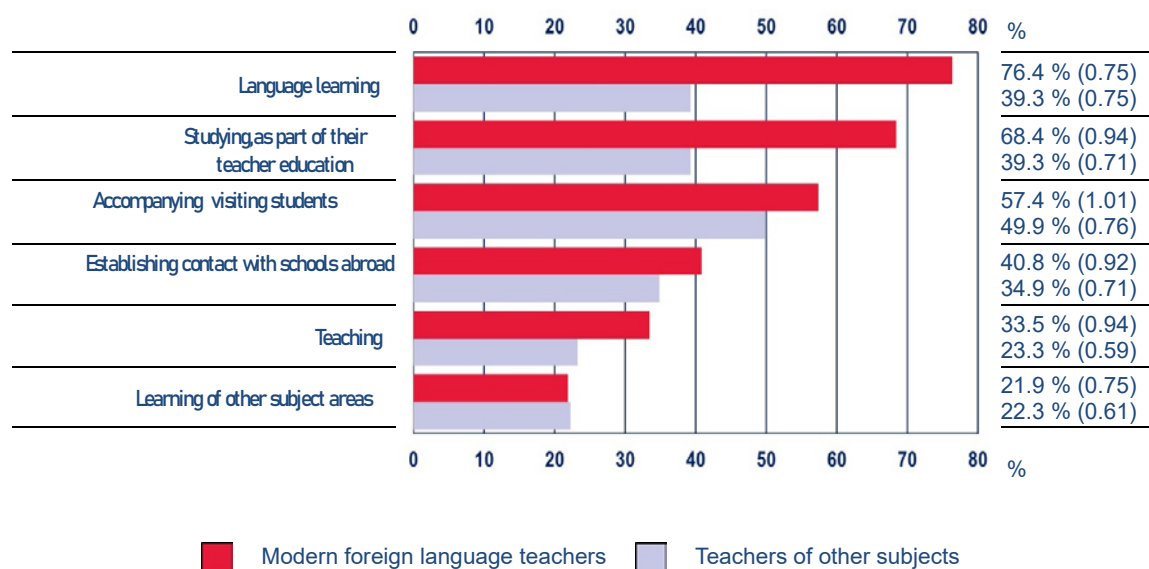
Figure D9 outlines the purposes for which foreign language teachers in lower secondary education spend periods in another country during their studies or career. More precisely, it shows the percentage of transnationally mobile teachers, as an EU average, by professional purpose of going abroad. This percentage is displayed for foreign language teachers and teachers of other subjects.

As Figure D9 shows, professional purposes for going abroad differ to some extent between the two categories of teachers.

In the EU, the main reason for going abroad reported by foreign language teachers is for language learning (76.4 %). In Spain, Italy and Hungary, more than 80 % of mobile foreign language teachers indicated this as their reason for travel (see Annex 1). Indeed, one of the most effective ways for teachers to improve their proficiency in the language or languages they teach is to visit one of the countries in which they are spoken. This specific reason for transnational mobility is therefore very closely work related. In comparison, at EU level only 39.3 % of mobile teachers teaching other subjects have reported language learning as a professional purpose for going abroad.

At EU level, almost 70 % of mobile foreign language teachers have studied abroad as part of their teacher education, although only a few countries have recommendations in this area (see Figure D5). Variations between countries are quite substantial: around 80 % of mobile foreign language teachers in Spain and Italy have studied abroad as part of their teacher education, while fewer than 50 % have done so in Croatia, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia, Iceland and Türkiye. In comparison, at EU level only 39.3 % of teachers teaching other subjects have reported studying abroad as part of their education.

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Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

Figure 43 Figure D9: Percentage of mobile teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), by professional reason for going abroad, EU level, 2018

### Explanatory notes

The figure is based on teachers' answers to questions 15 and 57 of TALIS 2018: 'Do you teach the following subject categories in the current school year?' and 'Were the following activities professional purposes of your visits abroad?' Teachers were asked to provide as many answers as possible.

Foreign language teachers are those who chose option (e) for question 15. Teachers of other subjects are those who did not choose option (e) for question 15 but chose any other option from (a) to (i). Mobile teachers are those who answered 'yes' to at least one of the options (a)–(e) in question 56.

EU includes respondents from all countries currently in the EU who responded to question 57 of TALIS in 2018: Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Türkiye.

Reasons for having been abroad are presented in descending order according to the percentage of foreign language teachers reporting them.

See Annex 1 for the country-specific data and S.E.s. For further information on TALIS, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

Teachers may also play a role in supporting both real student mobility and virtual student mobility. Teaching staff may accompany students travelling abroad and may also establish the basis for future cooperation between schools, for example, by preparing transnational mobility programmes or developing common projects where new technologies will support exchanges between students. The percentage of mobile foreign language teachers who have already accompanied visiting students is 57.4 % in the EU, slightly more than for teachers of other subjects (49.9 %). Mobile foreign language teachers have also been abroad to establish contact with schools more often than teachers of other subjects (40.8 % and 34.9 %, respectively).

At EU level, teaching abroad is not as common as language learning among mobile foreign language teachers (33.5 %), but it is still slightly more common than for teachers of other subjects (23.3 %). 'Teaching' was most commonly given as the reason for foreign language teachers' mobility in Romania (indicated by



68.3 % of foreign language teachers). More than 40 % of mobile foreign language teachers in Spain and France report having taught abroad. Conversely, fewer than 15 % of them in Croatia and Portugal have done so.

Finally, travelling abroad to learn about other subjects is not a common reason for mobility, with similar and low percentages of both mobile foreign language teachers (21.9 %) and teachers of other subjects (22.3 %) reporting that they went abroad for this purpose.

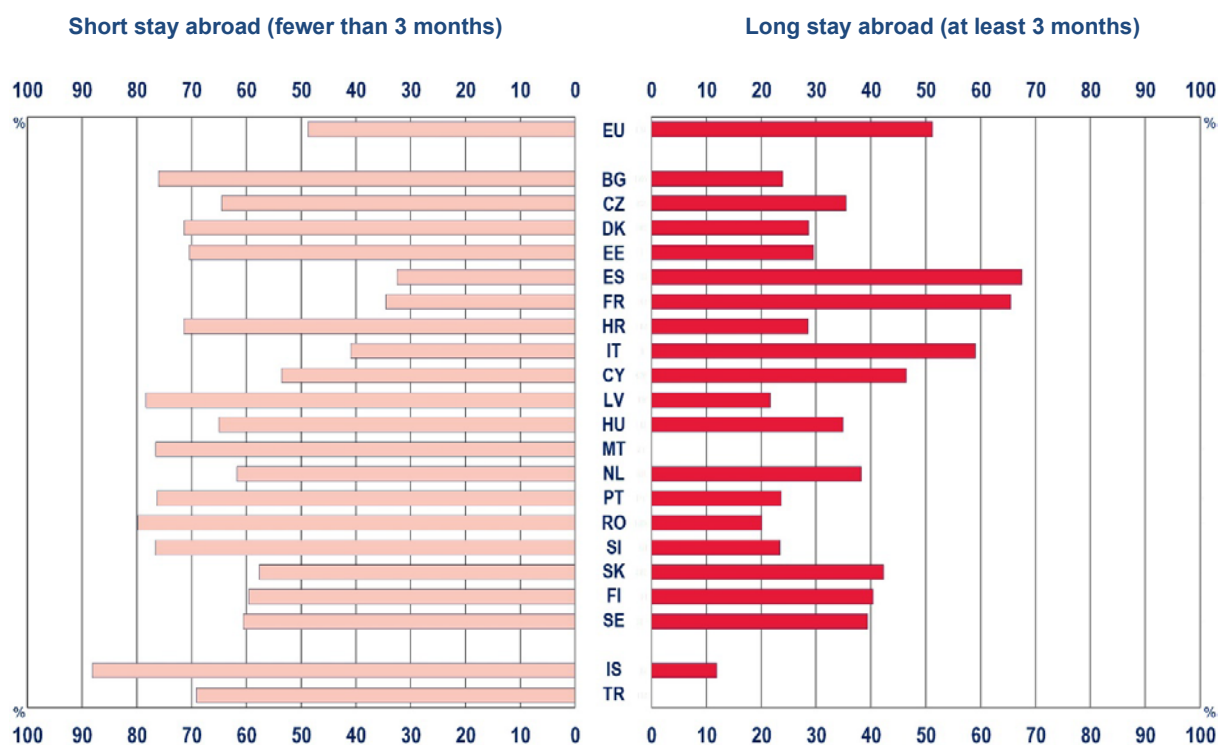
Data from TALIS 2013 (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2017) show that the trend in purposes for foreign language teachers' transnational mobility has remained steady over time. The ranking from the most to the least common reasons why foreign language teachers go abroad for professional purposes is the same for 2013 and 2018, despite the increase in foreign language teacher mobility in all countries (see Figure D6).

### **THE DURATION OF STAYS ABROAD OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS DIFFERS GREATLY BETWEEN COUNTRIES**

Figure D10 shows the duration of mobile foreign language teachers' stays abroad during their ITE and career. This duration corresponds to all periods spent abroad added together. More precisely, Figure D10 distinguishes between stays abroad of fewer than 3 months (short stays) and stays abroad of at least 3 months (long stays).

As Figure D10 shows, at EU level the percentage of mobile foreign language teachers reporting short and long stays abroad is roughly similar (48.8 % and 51.2 %, respectively).

However, when individual countries are considered, in almost all of them a majority of mobile foreign language teachers had spent fewer than 3 months abroad in total (short stay) during their studies and career. This is particularly noticeable in Bulgaria, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Iceland. However, in Spain, France and Italy the situation is the opposite: in these countries, more than half of mobile foreign language teachers reported long stays abroad (67.5 %, 65.5 % and 59.1 %, respectively).



Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

Figure 44 Figure D10: Percentage of mobile foreign language teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) on long and short stays abroad, 2018

### Explanatory notes

The figure is based on teachers' answers to questions 15 and 58 of TALIS 2018: 'Do you teach the following subject categories in the current school year?' and 'In total, how long have you stayed abroad for professional purposes?' Answers 'for three to twelve months' (option 2) and 'for more than a year' (option 3) were merged together to make the 'longer stay' category.

Foreign language teachers are those who chose option (e) for question 15. Mobile teachers are those who answered 'yes' to at least one of the options (a)–(e) in question 56.

EU includes respondents from all countries currently in the EU who responded to question 58 of TALIS in 2018.

See Annex 1 for the data and S.E.s. For further information on TALIS, see the section 'Statistical databases and terminology'.

For a definition of 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr, BE nl): the question was not administered in the country.

Malta and Türkiye: the sample is insufficient (fewer than 5 different schools or 30 teachers) for the 'long stays abroad' category.

## CHAPTER E TEACHING PROCESSES

### SECTION I – INSTRUCTION TIME AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This section, which includes six indicators, mainly discusses the instruction time allocated to teaching foreign languages as compulsory subjects in full-time compulsory general education <sup>(76)</sup>. More precisely, it examines how much time schools are required to devote to the teaching of foreign languages, as set by top-level education authorities <sup>(77)</sup>. Instruction time outside this framework is not reported (e.g. foreign languages taken as optional subjects or taught as part of the curriculum decided at school level).

The issue of instruction time is considered from different angles, including the difference between the time spent on the first and second foreign languages (see Figure E2), the relationship between the instruction time dedicated to the first foreign language and the number of years spent teaching it (see Figure E3), the relative weight of foreign language teaching within the curriculum (see Figure E4), and finally the changes across time in the number of hours dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages (see Figure E5). In addition, this section includes information on expected minimum attainment levels for the first and second foreign languages at two reference points: the end of lower secondary education and the end of general upper secondary education (see Figure E6).

All indicators in this section rely on data collected through the Eurydice Network, covering 39 education systems in 37 countries <sup>(78)</sup>. Indicators on instruction time show data on individual educational pathways in Luxembourg <sup>(79)</sup> and Liechtenstein <sup>(80)</sup>, allowing the comparison of 42 education systems / educational pathways.

#### INSTRUCTION TIME DEDICATED TO FOREIGN LANGUAGES IS SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER IN SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Figure E1 displays the minimum number of hours dedicated to teaching all foreign languages taught as compulsory subjects during a notional year (i.e. the total teaching load for a given education level divided by the number of grades of that education level) <sup>(81)</sup>. This figure includes two bar charts, providing data for primary education and full-time compulsory general secondary education separately.

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76 The foreign languages concerned are those that are compulsory for all students in a given grade or education level. Furthermore, the scope excludes pre-primary education, even if in some education systems some grades of that education level are compulsory for children to attend.

77 The data are collected jointly by Eurydice and the OECD Network for the Collection and the Adjudication of System-Level Descriptive Information on Educational Structures, Policies and Practices (NESLI) on a biennial basis. The data presented in this report come from the 2020/2021 data collection. For additional information on instruction time in schools in Europe, please consult the biennial Eurydice report on this topic (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2021a).

78 For details of the country coverage of this report, see the introduction to the report.

79 *Enseignement secondaire classique* (classical secondary education) and *enseignement secondaire général* (general secondary education).

80 *Gymnasium* (school type with advanced requirements), *Oberschule* (school type with basic requirements) and *Realschule* (school type with intermediate requirements).

81 The number of grades included in full-time compulsory general education varies substantially across education systems. In some cases, full-time compulsory general education stops at the end of lower secondary education; in other cases, it partly or completely includes upper secondary education (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020). In order to remove the variation resulting from the differences in the number of grades in full-time compulsory general education, most indicators on instruction time present the minimum number of taught hours per notional year.

At the level of primary education, the number of hours per notional year dedicated to teaching foreign languages as compulsory subjects varies between 13 hours (in Hungary) and 407 hours (in Luxembourg). Despite this wide range, the number of taught hours is between 30 and 69 hours in most education systems (27 education systems). In the compulsory grades of full-time general secondary education, the number of taught hours per notional year in all education systems / educational pathways considered ranges from 74 hours (in Norway) to 373 hours (in Luxembourg (*enseignement secondaire classique*)).

Two key factors may explain the lower number of taught hours in primary education. The first relates to the age at which learning a foreign language becomes compulsory. Instruction time is relatively low in the French Community of Belgium (31 hours), Germany (37 hours), Portugal (36 hours), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (32 hours), where the learning of foreign languages becomes compulsory after the second grade of primary education, unlike in most other education systems (see Figure B1).

The second factor relates to the structure of education systems. Usually, the number of hours allocated to teaching foreign languages increases when students progress through the school grades (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2021a). Therefore, when the duration of primary education is relatively short (for instance, 4 years), such as in Germany (37 hours) and Austria (30 hours), children exit this stage of education at a younger age, meaning that they receive fewer hours of foreign language instruction at this stage of education than children in education systems where primary education lasts longer.

The two aforementioned factors also apply to Hungary, in which a particularly low number of hours are allocated to teaching foreign languages (13 hours). In Hungary, there are four grades in primary education, and the learning of foreign languages becomes compulsory in the last one. However, depending on the school, students may start learning a foreign language earlier and therefore receive additional teaching time.

The number of hours dedicated to teaching foreign languages in primary education is more than 69 hours in six education systems (the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and Malta). The education systems of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and Malta share the following common feature: CLIL is used as a teaching approach during some grades (or nearly all grades in Luxembourg's case) of full-time compulsory general education. This specific teaching approach, according to which curriculum subjects are taught in (at least) two languages (see Figure B12), might partly explain the comparatively high number of hours dedicated to teaching foreign languages in those education systems. The number of hours is highest in the German-speaking Community of Belgium (101 hours), Luxembourg (407 hours) and Malta (112 hours).



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primary education or full-time compulsory general secondary education, those grades are excluded in the calculation of notional years. This applies to the French Community of Belgium and Portugal in primary education.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): there is horizontal flexibility in grades 3 and 4.

Bulgaria: in the last two grades of full-time compulsory general education, which correspond to the first 2 years of upper secondary education, the figure shows data for the pathway providing intensive foreign language learning.

Germany: the data represent the weighted average instruction times for the teaching of foreign languages calculated by the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder based on the numbers of students enrolled in the different types of schools.

Ireland: foreign language teaching is not compulsory. The official languages, English and Irish, are taught to all students.

Spain: the data represent the weighted averages of national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/2021). Statistics on the number of students per grade and autonomous community reported by the statistics office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (reference year 2018/2019) were used to calculate the weighted averages.

Italy: the data for the last two grades of full-time compulsory general secondary education concern the liceo scientifico.

Luxembourg: LU1 corresponds to *enseignement secondaire classique* (classical secondary education); LU2 corresponds to *enseignement secondaire général* (general secondary education).

Hungary: in grades 9 and 10, the last two grades of full-time compulsory education, data correspond to Gimnázium.

Austria: there are no data for the last grade of full-time compulsory general education.

Austria and Liechtenstein: the data do not include instruction time for grades 1 and 2 for Austria and grade 1 for Liechtenstein, as foreign languages are taught through other subjects and not as standalone subjects. Therefore, the data presented underestimate the instruction time allocated to foreign languages.

Poland: there is horizontal flexibility in the first three (out of four) grades of primary education.

Portugal: in the last two of the six grades in primary education, there is horizontal flexibility. In the first three grades of full-time compulsory general secondary education, there is horizontal flexibility for the first and second foreign languages as compulsory subjects, while in the last three foreign language learning is not compulsory.

Sweden: for full-time compulsory general secondary education, data include instruction time for the second language, which is not a compulsory subject for all students (see Figure B1).

Liechtenstein: LI Gym corresponds to Gymnasium (a type of school with advanced requirements); LI Obs corresponds to *Oberschule* (a type of school with basic requirements) and ; LI Reals corresponds to Realschule (a type of school with intermediate requirements).

Switzerland: no standard curriculum and no standard instruction time are defined at national level. Curricula and intended instruction time are determined by the 26 cantons at regional level.

As mentioned previously, in the compulsory grades of full-time general secondary education the range of taught hours per notional year in all education systems / educational pathways considered is quite broad (from 74 to 373 hours). Within this wide range, four groups of education systems / educational pathways with a relatively comparable number of taught hours can be identified.

The first group comprises 15 education systems / educational pathways where between 74 hours (Norway) and 108 hours (Poland) per notional year are dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages as compulsory subjects; the second contains nine education systems / educational pathways allocating between 120 hours (Türkiye) and 139 hours (Italy) per notional year to the compulsory teaching of foreign languages. Most education systems / educational pathways fall into these two groups.

Eleven education systems / educational pathways compose the third group, where the instruction time allocated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects ranges from 157 hours (in Sweden) to 191 hours (in Liechtenstein (*Gymnasium*)). Finally, the two pathways of general education in Luxembourg (*enseignement secondaire général* and *enseignement secondaire classique*) provide by far the highest number of taught hours (317 hours and 373 hours, respectively, per notional year).

A more detailed comparison between the instruction time allocated to foreign languages in primary education and the instruction time dedicated to these subjects during the compulsory grades of general secondary education shows that the number of taught hours per notional year is higher in the compulsory grades of general secondary education in nearly all education systems / educational pathways (Luxembourg is an exception). In most of them, the number is at least double, and it is three (or more) times higher in a little more than one third of them. All the education systems with a significantly lower number of taught hours in primary education very substantially increase students' opportunities to learn foreign languages by providing much more instruction time in the compulsory grades of secondary education. This is particularly the case in Hungary, where the number of hours per notional year is eight times higher.

## THE FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMANDS THE LARGEST SHARE OF INSTRUCTION TIME FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN ALL COUNTRIES

Figure E1 presented the minimum instruction time for all foreign languages taught as compulsory subjects in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education. Figure E2 compares the minimum number of hours allocated to the teaching of the first and second foreign languages as compulsory subjects. It covers the whole of full-time compulsory general education. To remove the variation resulting from the differences in the number of grades in full-time compulsory general education, it provides instruction time per notional year, that is, corresponding to the total amount of taught time in full-time compulsory general education divided by the number of years in that period of education.

Unlike other curriculum subjects, such as mathematics, foreign languages are not taught as compulsory subjects in all grades of full-time compulsory general education (see Figure B2). Furthermore, the learning of a second foreign language is not compulsory in some education systems (see Figure B3). These specific features of foreign languages as curriculum subjects must be considered when comparing instruction time between education systems.

Instruction time for the first foreign language as a compulsory subject ranges from 39 to 114 hours per notional year in nearly all education systems / educational pathways. Those in which instruction time is at the bottom of this range, that is, those with the six lowest values (between 39 and 54 hours per notional year), include Cyprus, Hungary, Sweden, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, North Macedonia and Serbia. Education systems with instruction times at the top range, that is, with the four highest values (between 105 and 114 hours per notional year) are the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain and Malta. In Luxembourg, the instruction time dedicated to the teaching of the first foreign language is well outside this range (199 hours in *enseignement secondaire général* and 223 in *enseignement secondaire classique*).

In education systems / educational pathways in which learning a second foreign language is compulsory, the number of hours per notional year spent studying it is rather limited in nearly all education systems, ranging from 6 to 39 hours. Education systems with instruction times at the bottom of the range, that is, with values below 10 hours per notional year, are Bulgaria and Slovakia (6 and 8 hours, respectively). Education systems with instruction times at the top range, that is, with values equal to or greater than 35 hours per notional year, are Denmark, Estonia, France, Romania, Sweden, Iceland and Liechtenstein (*Gymnasium* and *Realschule*).

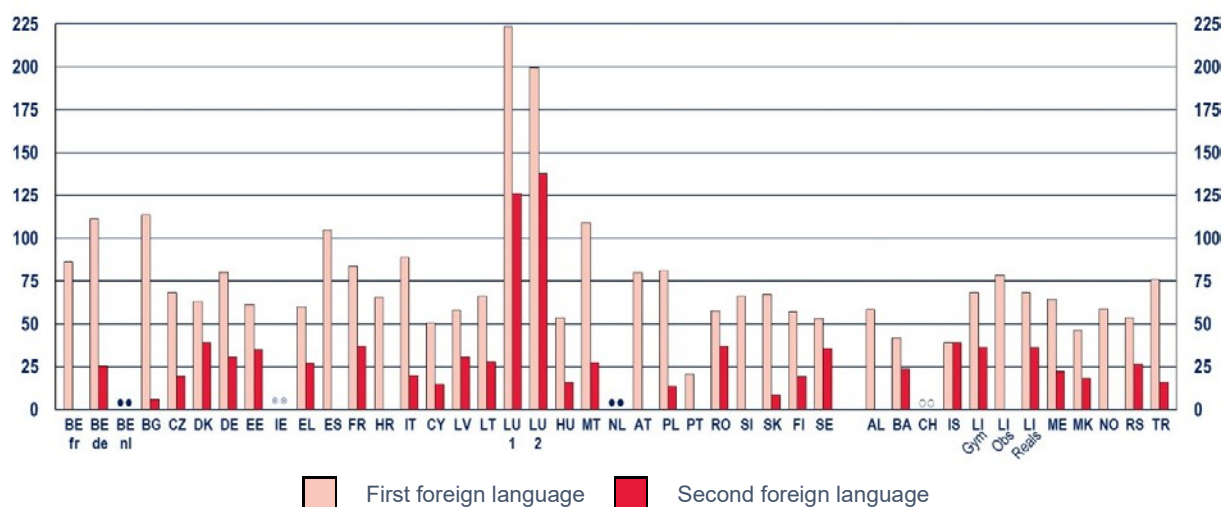
The instruction time dedicated to the second foreign language is, again, comparatively remarkably high in Luxembourg (126 hours in *enseignement secondaire classique* and 138 hours in *enseignement secondaire général*) and by far surpasses all other countries. In Luxembourg, French and German, which are taught as foreign languages, are alternatively used as languages of instruction in education (CLIL provision).

Differences in the grade at which learning a second foreign language becomes compulsory often explain the variations in instruction time between education systems / educational pathways. In Europe, students usually start learning a second foreign language as a compulsory subject in lower secondary education; a minority of them start earlier, in primary education, or later, in a grade that is beyond compulsory education (see Figure B1).

In nearly all education systems / educational pathways considered in this section (Iceland is an exception; see the country-specific note), the number of taught hours per notional year is systematically higher for the first compulsory foreign language than for the second. The difference ranges from 17 hours (in Sweden) to

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108 hours (in Bulgaria). In education systems where the difference is greatest, that is, above 81 hours (the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Bulgaria (pathway providing intensive foreign language learning), Luxembourg (*enseignement secondaire classique*) and Malta), the first foreign language students learn is used as a language of instruction at some stage in education (CLIL provision).



● Horizontal flexibility ○ Instruction time defined at canton level □ No compulsory foreign language

(Hours)	EE fr	EE de	EE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU 1	LU 2	HU	MT
First foreign language	86	111	●	114	68	63	80	61	□	60	105	84	66	89	50	58	66	223	199	54	109
Second foreign language	0	25	●	6	20	39	31	35	□	27	0	37	0	20	15	31	28	126	138	16	27
	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI Gym	LI Obs	LI Reals	ME	MK	ND	RS	TR
First foreign language	●	80	81	20	58	66	67	57	53	58	42	○	39	68	78	68	64	46	59	54	76
Second foreign language	●	0	14	0	37	0	8	19	36	0	24	○	39	36	0	36	22	18	0	27	16

Source: Eurydice.

Figure 46 Figure E2: Number of hours per notional year allocated to teaching the first and second foreign languages as compulsory subjects in full-time compulsory general education, 2020/2021

### Explanatory notes

This figure shows the minimum recommended instruction time for the first and second foreign languages taught as compulsory subjects to all students, as set by top-level education authorities.

Instruction time per notional year in full-time compulsory general education corresponds to the total amount of taught time for that period of education divided by the number of grades in full-time compulsory general education.

Horizontal flexibility: top-level education authorities determine the total instruction time for a group of (or all) subjects within a specific grade. Schools / local authorities are then free to decide how much time to allocate to individual subjects. When this applies to half or more than half of the grades in full-time compulsory general education, the specific symbol ● is used. When horizontal flexibility applies to fewer than half of the grades in full-time compulsory general education, those grades are excluded in the calculation of notional years. This applies to the French Community of Belgium, Poland and Portugal (for additional information see the country-specific notes below Figure E1).

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes below Figure E1.

France: top-level education authorities define instruction time for the first and second foreign languages together in the last grade of full-time compulsory general secondary education. In this case, this amount of time has been divided by two, and the result of the division allocated to the first and second foreign languages equally.



Iceland: top-level education authorities define instruction time for the first and second foreign languages together for all grades. In this case, this amount of time has been divided by two, and the result of the division allocated to the first and second foreign languages equally.

### **THE COUNTRIES WHERE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING LASTS LONGEST DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE THE HIGHEST AMOUNT OF INSTRUCTION TIME**

Figure E3 displays the relationship between two factors that greatly affect foreign language teaching at school: the minimum instruction time allocated to foreign languages and the duration in terms of school years that the teaching lasts. More precisely, Figure E3 shows the relationship between instruction time for the learning of the first foreign language as a compulsory subject and the duration of this learning. Only instruction times for the grades for which data are available are reported <sup>(82)</sup>.

Overall, the figure indicates that there is a positive relationship, albeit a relatively weak one, between the two factors. However, a more detailed analysis reveals that although some countries teach the first foreign language as a compulsory subject for the same number of grades, they differ significantly in terms of the total amount of instruction time they allocate to teaching it. The difference is particularly noticeable in the case of countries with 10 years' provision: in Norway, the instruction time allocated to the first foreign language is 588 hours, while in Spain this number reaches 1 050 hours.

Conversely, the countries that allocate similar amounts of instruction time may do so over quite a different number of years within compulsory education. For example, in Hungary and North Macedonia instruction times of 536 hours and 509 hours, respectively, are recommended for the first foreign language as a compulsory subject. The provision lasts 7 years in Hungary and 11 years in North Macedonia.

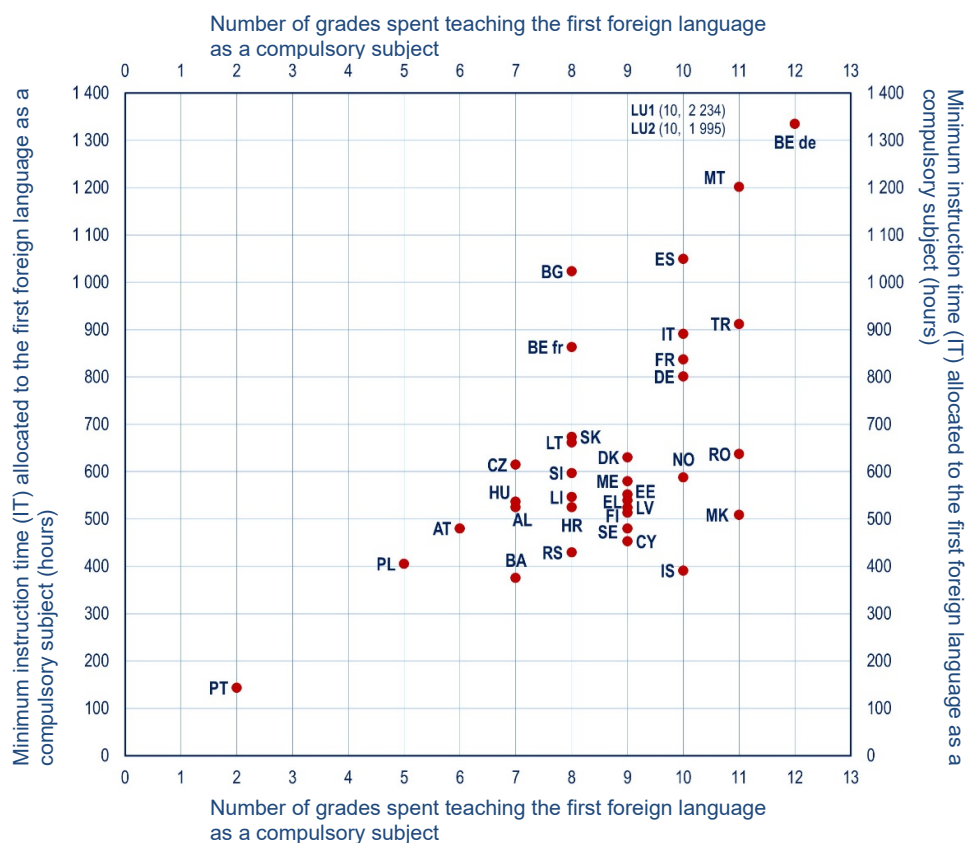
Figure E3 also shows a cluster of 11 countries (Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Liechtenstein and Montenegro) with a similar profile; they allocate between 700 and 500 hours to the teaching of the first compulsory foreign language over 8–9 school years.

In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Luxembourg and Malta, where the first foreign language taught is also a language of instruction, the instruction time allocated to this language is the highest across Europe. The official curricula in these three education systems prescribe 1 335 hours over a period of 12 years in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, 2 234 and 1 995 hours (for *enseignement secondaire classique* and *enseignement secondaire général*, respectively) over 10 years in Luxembourg, and 1 201 hours over 11 years in Malta.

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82 For further information, please see the explanatory note. Specific information on the duration of the teaching of the first foreign language is available in Figure B2

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Hours	BEfr	BEde	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU1	LU2	HU
IT	863	1335	1023	614	630	801	551	539	1050	837	525	891	452	524	662	2234	1995	536
	MT	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	IS	U Gym	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
IT	1201	480	405	143	637	597	673	513	480	525	375	391	546	580	509	588	429	912

Source: Eurydice.

Figure 47 Figure E3: Relationship between the instruction time for the first foreign language and the number of grades during which this language is taught in full-time compulsory general education, 2020/2021

### Explanatory notes

The data present the minimum instruction time (in hours) recommended for the first foreign language as a compulsory subject for all students in relation to the number of grades spent teaching this compulsory foreign language during full-time compulsory general education.

The number of years spent teaching the first foreign language as a compulsory subject depends on two factors: the number of grades during which the first foreign language is taught as a compulsory subject and the length of full-time compulsory general education, which varies between education systems.

For some education systems (the French Community of Belgium, Austria, Poland, Portugal and Liechtenstein), the displayed number of hours relates to the number of grades for which it is possible to show data. For instance, the grades (and their taught hours) in which horizontal flexibility applies have not been considered. Further explanations are provided in the country-specific notes. For more information on the duration of the teaching of the first foreign language as a compulsory subject, please see Figure B2.

Horizontal flexibility: top-level education authorities determine the total instruction time for a group of (or all) subjects within a specific grade. Schools / local authorities are then free to decide how much time to allocate to individual subjects.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): there is horizontal flexibility in grades 3 and 4.

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Belgium (BE nl): the figure does not include data for this education system, as horizontal flexibility applies to all grades of full-time compulsory general education.

Bulgaria: for the last two grades of full-time compulsory general education, which correspond to the first two years of general upper secondary education, the figure shows data for the pathway providing intensive foreign language learning.

Germany: the data represent the weighted average instruction times for the teaching of foreign languages calculated by the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder based on the numbers of students enrolled in the different types of schools.

Ireland: foreign language teaching is not compulsory. The official languages, English and Irish, are taught to all students.

Spain: the data represent the weighted averages of national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/2021). Statistics on the number of students per grade and autonomous community reported by the statistics office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (reference year 2018/2019) were used to calculate the weighted averages.

Italy: the data for the last two grades of full-time compulsory general secondary education concern the liceo scientifico.

France: top-level education authorities define instruction time for the first and second foreign languages together in the last grade of full-time compulsory general secondary education. In this case, the amount of time has been divided by two, and the result of the division allocated to the first and second foreign languages equally.

Luxembourg: LU1 corresponds to *enseignement secondaire classique* (classical secondary education); LU2 corresponds to *enseignement secondaire général* (general secondary education).

Hungary: in grades 9 and 10, the last two grades of full-time compulsory education, data correspond to Gimnázium.

Netherlands: the figure does not include data for this country, as top-level education authorities do not specify the minimum instruction time for each curriculum subject, but for all curriculum subjects together per education level.

Austria: for secondary education, data correspond to *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (academic secondary school). Students learn the first foreign language as a compulsory subject for 9 years, that is, the whole duration of compulsory education. This figure shows instruction time for 6 years only. No data could be provided for the first 2 years (the first foreign language is taught through other subjects and not as a standalone subject) and the last year (missing data).

Poland: the first foreign language is taught as a compulsory subject during the whole of full-time compulsory education (eight grades). However, data can only be provided from grade 4 onwards, as before that horizontal flexibility applies.

Portugal: the first foreign language is a compulsory subject in 7 of the 12 years of full-time compulsory general education (from grade 3 to grade 9). However, data could only be provided for grades 3 and 4, as for the others horizontal flexibility applies.

Iceland: top-level education authorities define instruction time for the first and second foreign languages together for all grades. In this case, the amount of time has been divided by two, and the result of the division allocated to the first and second foreign languages equally.

Liechtenstein: in secondary education, data correspond to Gymnasium (the highest level of secondary education). Students learn the first foreign language as a compulsory subject for 9 years, that is, the whole duration of full-time compulsory general education. This figure shows instruction time for 8 years only. No data could be provided for the first grade (the first foreign language is taught through other subjects and not as a standalone subject).

North Macedonia: the leaving age for full-time compulsory education varies, which means that the duration for which students learn the first foreign language also varies (between 11 and 13 years).

Switzerland: the figure does not include data from this country, as no standard curriculum and no standard instruction time are defined at national level. Curricula and intended instruction time are determined by the 26 cantons at regional level.

### **THE SHARE OF INSTRUCTION TIME ALLOCATED TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER IN SECONDARY EDUCATION THAN IN PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Figure E4 captures the weight of foreign language teaching in the curriculum for primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education. To do so, it examines the minimum number of taught hours dedicated to foreign languages compulsory for all students, as a proportion of the total instruction time allocated to teaching the whole compulsory curriculum.

In nearly all education systems / educational pathways, the proportion of time allocated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects in relation to the total instruction time dedicated to teaching the compulsory

curriculum is (much) higher in the compulsory grades of full-time general secondary education than in primary education. In 10 education systems / educational pathways the difference is equal to or higher than 10 percentage points (the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, France, Lithuania, Hungary, Sweden, Iceland and Liechtenstein (*Realschule* and *Gymnasium*)).

Against this trend, *enseignement secondaire général* (general secondary education) in Luxembourg is the only educational pathway where the percentage of instruction time dedicated to foreign languages is higher in primary education. The specific language education context in Luxembourg, in which the first and second foreign languages are used as languages of instruction, may explain this (see Figures E1 and E2). Furthermore, in three education systems / educational pathways (Spain, Croatia and Luxembourg (*enseignement secondaire classique*)), the difference between primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education is limited to less than 1 percentage point.

Looking more specifically at the time dedicated to foreign language teaching as a share of the time spent delivering the whole curriculum in primary education, the teaching of foreign languages as compulsory subjects represents between 5 % and 10 % of total instruction time in most education systems. In a few education systems, namely the French Community of Belgium, Hungary, Austria and Portugal, the proportion of total instruction time devoted to the teaching of foreign languages as compulsory subjects is less than 5 %. In Austria, in the first 2 years of primary education foreign languages are taught through CLIL provision, which is not reported here. In the other three education systems, the learning of foreign languages becomes compulsory relatively late in primary education (see Figure B1).

At the other end of the spectrum, foreign language teaching accounts for about 11 % of total instruction time in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Latvia and Montenegro, and 14.9 % in Malta. Luxembourg stands out, with 44.0 % of total instruction time dedicated to foreign languages.

Differences between education systems may be explained by structural factors, already highlighted previously (see Figures E1 and E2), such as the number of grades in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education, or by factors specifically related to foreign languages (i.e. the number of compulsory foreign languages and the starting age for learning them, and their weight in the curriculum).

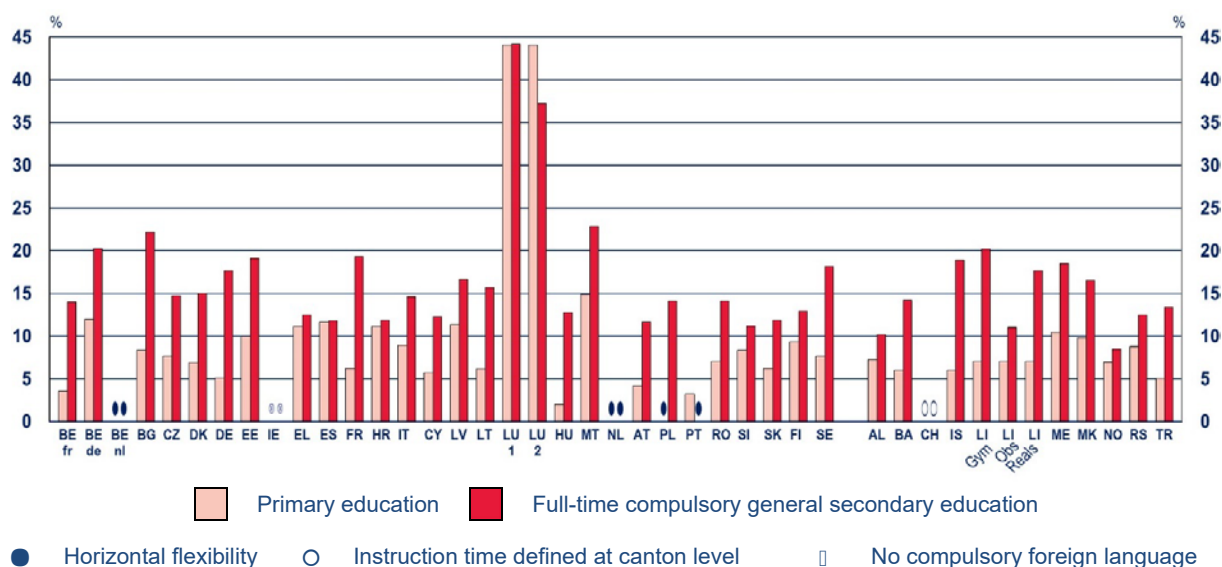
With regard to full-time compulsory general secondary education, the percentage of instruction time dedicated to foreign languages ranges from 10 % to 19 % in most education systems. There is, therefore, a greater variation than in primary education. The percentage for Albania is at the bottom of the range (10.2 %), while those for Estonia (19.1 %) and France (19.3 %) are at the top.

Only a few education systems are outside that range. Norway has the lowest proportion of time allocated to foreign languages (8.5 %). In that country, only one foreign language is compulsory in full-time compulsory general education, which may at least partly explain the low figure. Education systems with the highest proportions, that is, 20 % and above, adopt CLIL as a teaching approach in all schools at all or some grades of full-time compulsory general secondary education (the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Bulgaria<sup>(83)</sup>, Luxembourg and Malta). An exception to this is Liechtenstein (*Gymnasium*) (20.1 %), where CLIL is not provided in those grades. As in primary education, Luxembourg stands out: 37.2 % (*enseignement secondaire général*) and 44.2 % (*enseignement secondaire classique*) of total instruction time is dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages.

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83 In the last two grades of full-time compulsory education, which correspond to the first 2 years of upper secondary education, data refer to the pathway providing intensive foreign language learning.

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%	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU 1	LU 2	HU	MT
Primary	3.6	11.9	●	8.3	7.6	6.9	5.1	9.9	□	11.1	11.6	6.3	11.1	8.9	5.7	11.3	6.1	44.0	44.0	20	14.9
Secondary	14.0	20.2	●	22.2	14.8	15.0	17.7	19.1	□	12.5	11.8	19.3	11.9	14.6	12.3	16.7	15.7	44.2	37.2	12.8	22.8
	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI Gym	LI Obs	LI Reals	ME	MK	ND	RS	TR
Primary	●	4.2	●	3.2	7.0	8.3	6.3	9.4	7.7	7.2	6.0	○	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	10.5	9.8	6.9	8.8	5.0
Secondary	●	11.7	14.1	●	14.1	11.1	11.9	12.9	18.1	10.2	14.2	○	18.9	20.1	11.0	17.6	18.5	16.5	8.5	12.5	13.3

Source: Eurydice

Figure 48 Figure E4: Instruction time allocated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects, as a proportion of total instruction time in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education, 2020/2021

**Explanatory notes**

Data correspond to instruction time (as set by top-level education authorities) allocated to all foreign languages as compulsory subjects taught to all students, divided by the total instruction time for all subjects of the compulsory curriculum, multiplied by 100.

Horizontal flexibility: top-level education authorities determine the total instruction time for a group of (or all) subjects within a specific grade. Schools / local authorities are then free to decide how much time to allocate to individual subjects. When this applies to half or more than half of the grades in primary and/or full-time compulsory general secondary education, the specific symbol ● is used. When horizontal flexibility applies to fewer than half of the grades in primary education or full-time compulsory general secondary education, those grades are excluded in the calculation of notional years. This applies to the French Community of Belgium and Portugal in primary education.

**Country-specific notes**

See the country-specific notes below Figure E1.

**ACROSS EUROPE, INSTRUCTION TIME DEDICATED TO FOREIGN LANGUAGES REMAINS RELATIVELY STABLE OVERTIME**

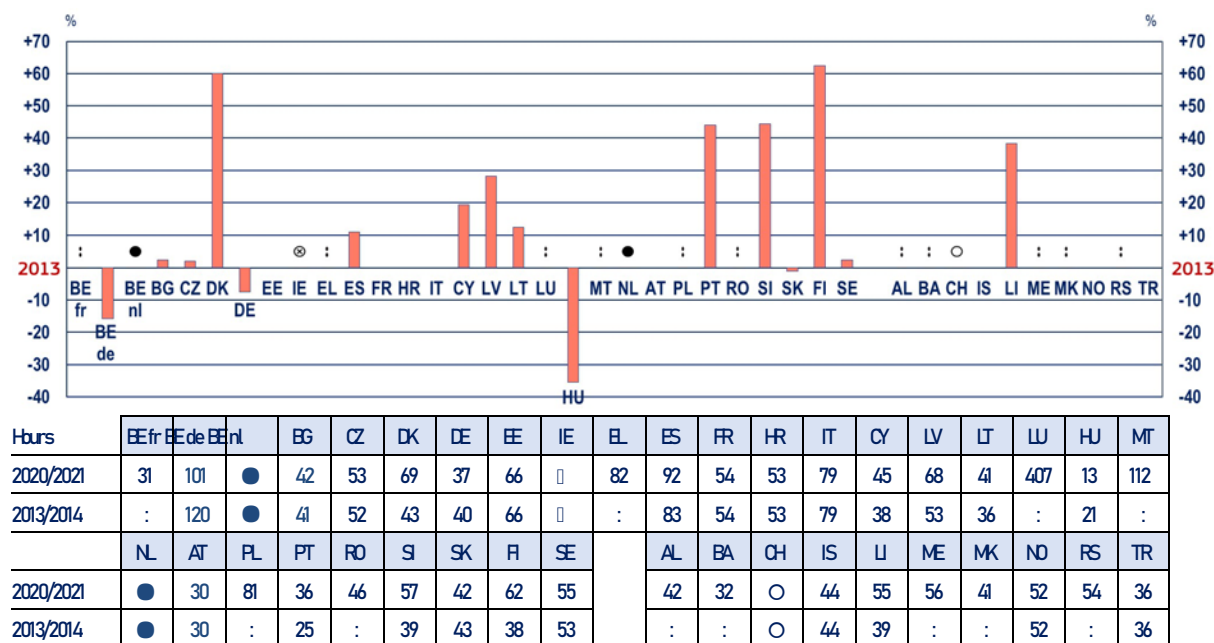
Figure E5 shows the changes (in percentages) to the recommended minimum instruction time per notional year<sup>(84)</sup> allocated to foreign languages taught as compulsory subjects to all students in 2020/2021 compared with 2013/2014, used as a baseline. This figure focuses on primary education and full-time compulsory general secondary education. A comparison between the two reference years can only be undertaken for slightly fewer than two thirds of education systems; country-specific explanations on comparability issues are provided in the notes below the figure.

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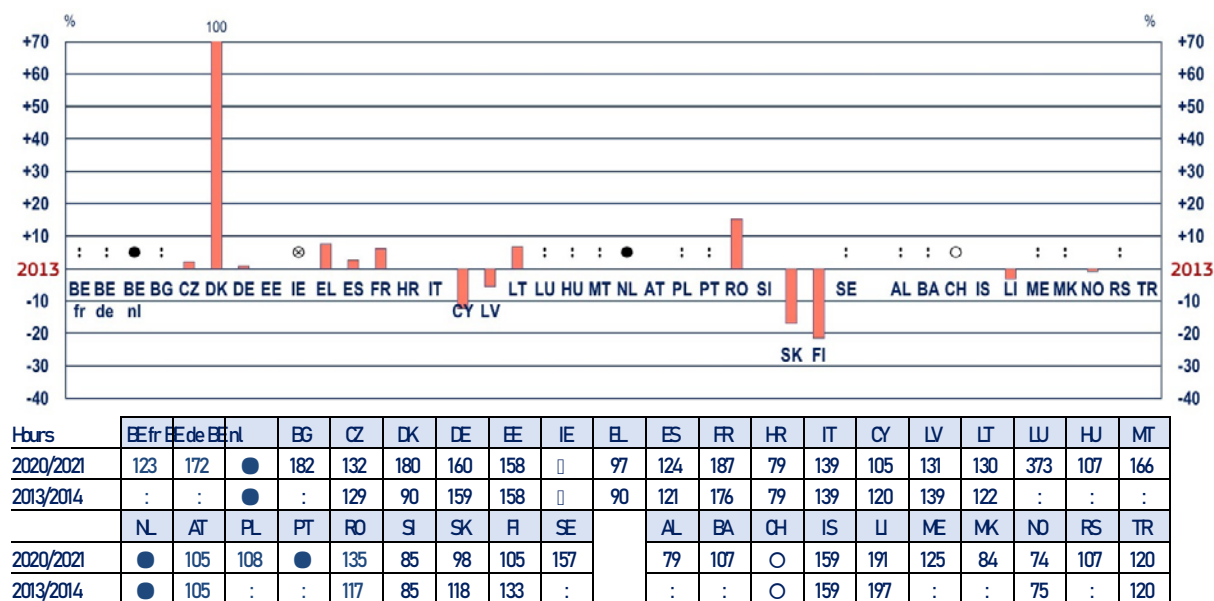
84 The total amount of taught time per notional year corresponds to the total amount of taught time for primary education / full-time compulsory general secondary education divided by the number of grades in primary education / full-time compulsory general secondary education.

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(a) Primary education



(b) Full-time compulsory general secondary education



● Horizontal flexibility    ○ Instruction time defined at canton level    □ No compulsory foreign language

Source: Eurydice.

Figure 49 Figure E5: Changes (in percentages) to the recommended minimum instruction time per notional year allocated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects between 2013/2014 and 2020/2021

Explanatory notes

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

This figure shows the difference, expressed as a percentage, between the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects in 2020/2021 and the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects in 2013/2014, used as a baseline.

Data tables under the figures present the number of hours dedicated to the teaching of foreign languages as compulsory subjects per notional year in 2020/2021 and 2013/2014. Instruction time per notional year in primary education/full-time compulsory general secondary education corresponds to the total amount of taught time in that period of education divided by the number of years in primary education/full-time compulsory general secondary education.

A comparison cannot be undertaken between all education systems due to missing data in 2013/2014 or differences in the methodology used to gather data between the two reference years. In both cases, the symbol ':' is shown for 2013/2014 in the tables and figure, and detailed information is provided in the country-specific notes <sup>(85)</sup>.

Horizontal flexibility: top-level education authorities determine the total instruction time for a group of (or all) subjects within a specific grade. Schools / local authorities are then free to decide how much time to allocate to individual subjects. When this applies to half or more than half of the grades in primary and/or full-time compulsory general secondary education, the specific symbol ● is used. When horizontal flexibility applies to fewer than half of the grades in primary education or full-time compulsory general secondary education, those grades are excluded in the calculation of notional years. This applies to the French Community of Belgium and Portugal in primary education in 2020/2021.

### Country-specific notes

The country-specific notes below mostly concern comparability issues between the two reference years. Additional country-specific notes on more general issues are available below Figure E1.

Belgium (BE fr): there is a difference in the methodology (different coding).

Belgium (BE de) and Sweden: there is a difference in the methodology (different coding for reporting full-time compulsory general secondary education).

Belgium (BE nl) and Netherlands: horizontal flexibility applies.

Bulgaria: there is a difference in the methodology (different coding for reporting subjects in full-time compulsory general secondary education).

Greece: since 2016/2017, there has been only one single type of all-day primary school. The distinction between schools implementing the regular curriculum and schools implementing the unified revised curriculum has been eliminated. The daily timetable and the number of hours of instruction have also changed. Therefore, comparison is not possible at the level of primary education.

Luxembourg: there is a difference in the methodology (different coding for national languages).

Malta: there is a difference in the methodology (different approaches used to report the winter and summer timetables).

Hungary: there is a difference in the methodology (different scope).

Poland: there is a difference in the methodology (substantial changes in the structure of education). Horizontal flexibility applies (in several grades) in 2013/2014 and 2020/2021.

Portugal: in 2020/2021, in full-time compulsory general secondary education there was horizontal flexibility in the first three grades and no foreign languages were taught as compulsory subjects in the last three grades. Therefore, no comparison can be made with 2013/2014 data.

Romania: there is a difference in the methodology (change in the reporting of a school period in primary education).

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia: there are no data for 2013/2014.

Liechtenstein: data correspond to Gymnasium in full-time compulsory general secondary education.

In primary education, there is no or hardly any change in about half of education systems for which comparison is feasible. Very small variations may simply result from the fluctuations in the number of instruction days, depending, for instance, on when the holidays fell throughout the year and the specific arrangement of the school year.

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85 For complete data on instruction time in schools for 2013/2014, please consult the 2015 Eurydice report on this topic (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2015).



Among countries with differences between the two reference years, in most of them the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages increased. The increase ranged from about 10 % to 20 % in Spain, Cyprus and Lithuania; in Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia and Liechtenstein the increase ranged from about 30 % to 45 %; finally, in 2020/2021, in Denmark and Finland instruction time dedicated to foreign languages had increased by more than 50 % compared with 2013/2014.

Instruction time decreased in only three education systems (the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Germany and Hungary). In Hungary, the national curriculum underwent substantial changes, resulting notably in more instruction time being allocated to flexible subjects selected by individual schools, which are excluded from the scope of this analysis. However, the German-speaking Community of Belgium remains among those providing the most instruction time for teaching foreign languages in primary education (see Figure E1).

In full-time compulsory general secondary education, similarly to what was observed for primary education, the number of countries with a noticeable change (i.e. equal to or greater than 3 %) is quite similar to the number of countries with no or hardly any change. However, when noticeable differences exist, they are generally smaller than those in primary education. The number of countries increasing or decreasing instruction time for teaching foreign languages in full-time compulsory general secondary education is roughly similar.

In Cyprus, Slovakia and Finland, the decrease in the instruction time dedicated to foreign languages as compulsory subjects ranges from about 10 % to 20 %. The instruction time allocated to foreign language learning increased noticeably in five countries (Denmark, Greece, France, Lithuania and Romania). There was a particularly strong increase (100 %) in Denmark. In that country, it has become compulsory for all students to learn a second foreign language, while before learning a second language was identified as optional by the curriculum (see Figure B3).

Few countries show the same trend at both education levels. Among them, the most substantial change occurred in Denmark, where instruction time increased. Conversely, in Cyprus, Latvia and particularly Finland the number of taught hours dedicated to foreign language teaching increased in primary education while decreasing in the compulsory grades of general secondary education.

## **AT THE END OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTAIN LEVEL B2 IN THE FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LEVEL B1 IN THE SECOND**

The CEFR is a framework for language learning, teaching and assessment developed by the Council of Europe. The CEFR describes foreign language proficiency on a six-point scale: A1 and A2 (basic users), B1 and B2 (independent users), and C1 and C2 (proficient users). The scaled descriptions of the communication competences (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are accompanied by a detailed analysis of communicative contexts, themes, tasks and purposes. This framework makes it possible to compare tests and examinations across languages and national boundaries. It also provides a basis for recognising language competences and qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility (Council of Europe, 2020). The 2019 Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages recommends that the use of the CEFR is strengthened 'especially for inspiring developments in language curricula, testing and assessment' <sup>(86)</sup>.

Figure E6 shows the expected minimum attainment levels for the first and second foreign languages as compulsory subjects (for all students) at two reference points: the end of lower secondary education and the end of general upper secondary education. Currently, about two thirds of European education systems where foreign language learning is compulsory use the CEFR to establish the minimum attainment levels in foreign language proficiency at these two reference points. This commonly applies to both the first compulsory foreign language and the second compulsory foreign language.

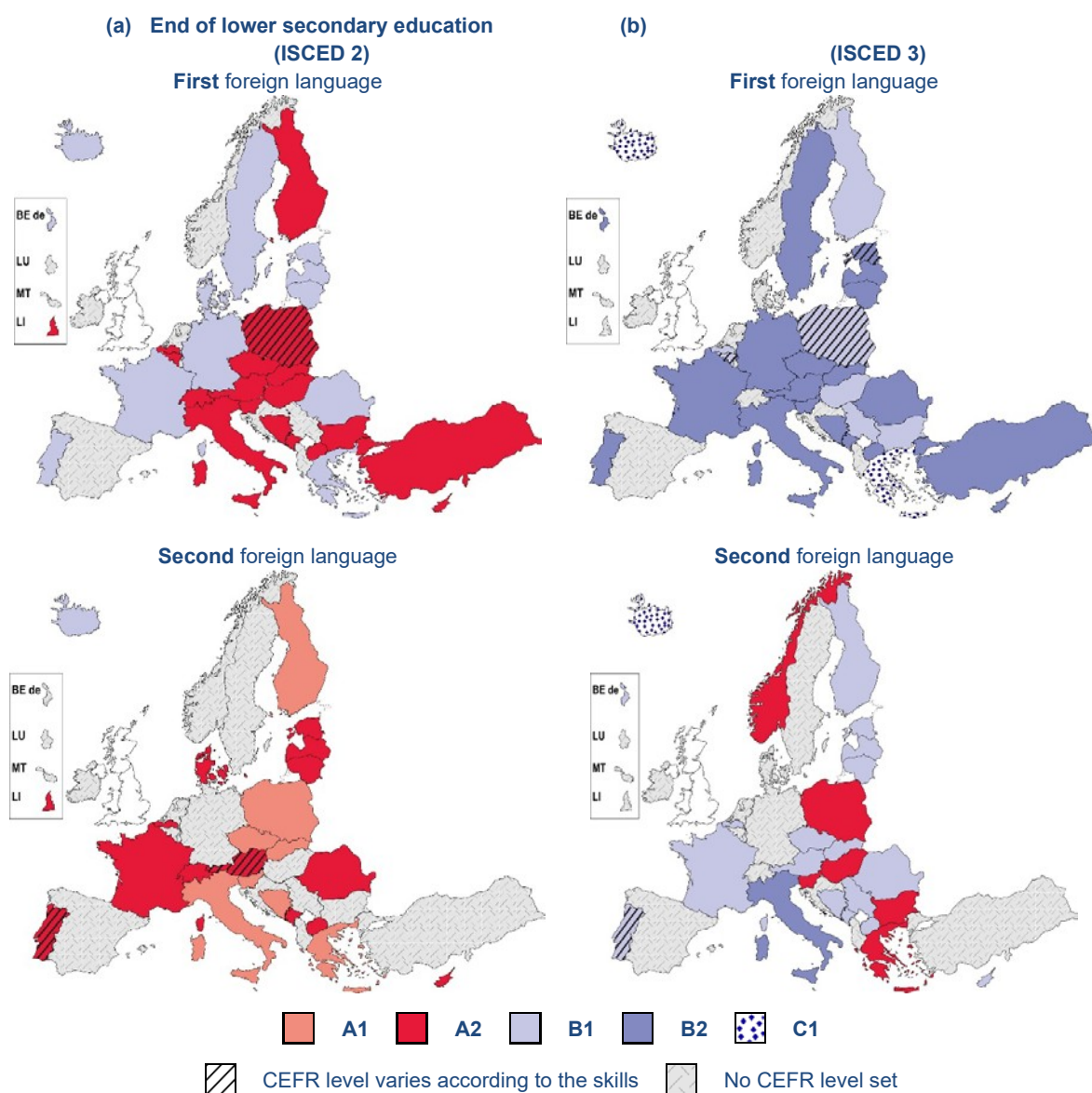
When comparing the levels of attainment of the first and the second foreign languages at the same reference point, student attainment is generally expected to be higher for the first foreign language than for the second. At the end of lower secondary education, the minimum level generally varies between A2 and B1 for the first

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86 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 18.

language and between A1 and A2 for the second in nearly all education systems. At the end of general upper secondary education, most European countries define B2 as the minimum level of attainment for the first foreign language and B1 as the minimum level of attainment for the second foreign language. For the second language (at the end of general upper secondary education), language attainment levels range more widely across Europe: from A2 in Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Norway to C1 Iceland. Only two countries set the minimum attainment level at advanced or proficient language user levels (C1 or C2): Greece, for the first foreign language (C1), and Iceland, for both the first foreign language and the second foreign language (C1).

In some education systems, the expected outcomes for the first and second languages are identical at the same reference point. This is the case in eight education systems (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Cyprus, Austria, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro and North Macedonia) at the end of lower secondary education. A similar trend is found in six education systems (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Italy, Romania, Finland, Iceland and Serbia) at the end of general upper secondary education.



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 50 Figure E6: Expected minimum level of attainment for the first and second foreign languages at the end of lower and general upper secondary education (ISCED 2–3), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

This figure shows the expected minimum level of attainment for the first and second foreign languages as compulsory subjects. More precisely, it covers the minimum level of attainment set as a learning outcome by top-level education authorities. The CEFR is used to express the attainment levels. Only the six main levels (i.e. A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) are covered; sublevels are not considered.

When the CEFR level varies according to the four major skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking), the attainment level set for the majority of the four skills is reported in the figure; when the attainment level for two major skills (e.g. reading and listening) differs from the one set for the two remaining major skills (e.g. writing and speaking), the minimum level of attainment is shown in the figure. In all these cases, complementary information is provided in the country-specific notes.

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No CEFR level set: this category covers three different situations: (1) foreign language learning (first and/or second foreign language) is not compulsory in lower and/or general upper secondary education; (2) the CEFR is not used to define the level of attainment; and (3) no minimum level of attainment is defined in the curriculum. Country-specific information is provided in the text.

For definitions of 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)', 'foreign language' and 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE fr): at the end of general upper secondary education, for the first foreign language the CEFR levels vary according to the four major skills: B1 for listening, writing and speaking skills; and B2 for reading skills.

Estonia: at the end of general upper secondary education, for the first foreign language the CEFR levels vary according to the four major skills: B2 for reading, listening and speaking; and B1 for writing.

France: at the end of lower secondary education, for the second foreign language, A2 is the expected level of attainment in at least two of the language skills.

Austria: at the end of lower secondary education, for the second foreign language, different levels are set for two types of speaking skills: A2 is set for speaking production while A1 is required for speaking interaction. At the end of general upper secondary education, the CEFR level varies depending on how many years for which students have learnt their second compulsory foreign language (4 or 6 years), and/or the major skill concerned (after 6 years, B2 for reading and B1 for listening, speaking and writing; and after 4 years, B1).

Portugal: at the end of lower secondary education, for the second foreign language students are expected to achieve A2 in French and German; in Spanish, the level depends on the skill (B1 for reading and listening; and A2 for speaking and writing).

Poland: the CEFR levels vary according to the four major skills for the first foreign language: A2 for speaking and writing skills and B1 for reading and listening skills at the end of lower secondary education; and B1 for speaking and writing skills and B2 for reading and listening skills at the end of general upper secondary education.

A comparison of the minimum levels of attainment set for learners of foreign languages at the end of lower secondary education and general upper secondary education shows, as might be expected, that there is a common tendency for the levels of attainment to be higher at the end of general upper secondary education than at the end of lower secondary education. There is a general expectation that students will make further progress with further study. This applies to both the first foreign language and the second foreign language.

Most countries set the same minimum standards for the four main communications skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). However, in the French Community of Belgium, Estonia, Austria, Poland and Portugal, different minimum levels of attainment are assigned to specific skills (see the country-specific notes). No clear trend emerges from this diversity. For instance, at the end of general upper secondary education the French Community of Belgium sets the level of attainment at B1 for listening, writing and speaking skills and B2 for reading skills for the first foreign language, while in Estonia it is set at B2 for reading, listening and speaking and B1 for writing.

Variations in the minimum attainment level may also depend on the languages studied. This is the case in Portugal and Finland. In Portugal, students may study French, German or Spanish as a second language. At the end of lower secondary education, students are expected to achieve A2 in French and German, while in Spanish the level students are expected to achieve depends on the skill (B1 for reading and listening, and A2 for speaking and writing). In Finland, the minimum attainment level for English learnt as a first foreign language is higher than for other languages (i.e. B1 at the end of lower secondary education and B2 at the end of general upper secondary education).

Three main reasons may explain why no CEFR attainment level is set in some education systems.

First, foreign language learning (for the first and/or second foreign language) may not be compulsory in lower and/or general upper secondary education. This is the case in Ireland, where no foreign languages are compulsory subjects. It also applies to the French Community of Belgium, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Sweden and Albania, where at no point of secondary education is a second foreign language compulsory for all students. In Bulgaria, Hungary and Norway, a second foreign language is compulsory for all only in general

upper secondary education, while in Denmark it is compulsory only in lower secondary education. In Malta, no foreign languages are compulsory subjects in the last two years of general upper secondary education.

Second, the CEFR may not be used to define the level of attainment. This applies to Spain and Croatia, where only one foreign language is compulsory, and to Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands, where two foreign languages are compulsory. In Norway and Türkiye, the use of the CEFR to define attainment levels depends on the foreign language concerned (the second for Norway and the first for Türkiye). A similar mixed approach is found in Denmark, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Serbia, where the use of the CEFR depends on the education level (it is used at the end of lower secondary education in the first three countries and at the end of general upper secondary education in the last one).

Finally, in Albania, for the first compulsory foreign language no minimum level of attainment is defined in the curriculum (there is no second compulsory foreign language).

## SECTION II – TESTING AND LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORT MEASURES

The instruction time allocated to foreign languages, a topic that is discussed in Section I of this chapter, is the time dedicated to providing formal learning opportunities for students in a school context. Testing and adopting language learning support measures, which are the focus of this second section, are other important dimensions of the learning/teaching process.

Testing can take many forms, which are largely shaped by their purposes: it can be diagnostic, formative or summative <sup>(87)</sup>. The 2019 Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages supports the ‘use of a mix’ of these three forms of assessment <sup>(88)</sup>.

This section looks at summative foreign language tests leading to a certificate at the end of general secondary education (see Figure E7). The discussion focuses on the diversity of foreign languages for which those tests are available. This is closely related to Figures B7 and B8 in Chapter B and Section II of Chapter C. This section also concerns the diagnostic assessment of languages at the end of pre-primary education or the beginning of primary education. It focuses on the assessment of the language of schooling, which may be a foreign language to some students (e.g. newly arrived migrant students) (see Figure E8).

The language learning support measures discussed in this section (see Figure E9) are limited to those targeting newly arrived migrant students in primary and lower secondary education, which corresponds to compulsory education in most countries. The 2019 Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages acknowledges the specific needs of this specific group of students, notably in relation to the language of schooling <sup>(89)</sup>.

All indicators in this section rely on data collected through the Eurydice Network, covering 39 education systems in 37 countries <sup>(90)</sup>.

### NATIONAL TESTS FOR BETWEEN 6 AND 12 FOREIGN LANGUAGES EXIST IN MOST COUNTRIES

Figure E7 displays the foreign languages that are tested through national tests that lead to a certificate at the end of general secondary education. National tests are standardised tests/examinations set by top-level education authorities and carried out under their responsibility. As the figure shows, most countries use national tests. The tested foreign languages can be grouped in three main categories.

The first category includes English, French and German, which are tested through national tests (when they exist) in the vast majority of education systems, closely followed by Russian, Spanish and Italian, which are also tested in most of them. The second category comprises Chinese, Latin, classical Greek <sup>(91)</sup>, Japanese, Portuguese, Arabic, modern Greek, Hungarian, Polish and Turkish. These languages are tested through national tests in between 5 and 10 education systems. The last category contains languages that are tested

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87 Diagnostic assessments are pre-assessments that provide instructors information about learners’ prior knowledge, understandings, and misconceptions before [the] introduction of a new concept or activity. The diagnostic assessment may also be used to set a baseline for how much academic growth has occurred by the time the lesson is complete.’ ‘Summative assessments are student evaluations ... that occur often (but not always) at the end of a course, module, or unit to measure how well the students have met the goals of instruction.’ ‘Formative assessment refers not to the type of student evaluation, but to the timing of that evaluation’ (McComas, 2014). They take place during instruction. They provide feedback to students and teachers on the teaching/learning process with a view to improving it and helping students improve their academic performance.

88 Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, OJ C 189, 5.6.2019, p. 21.

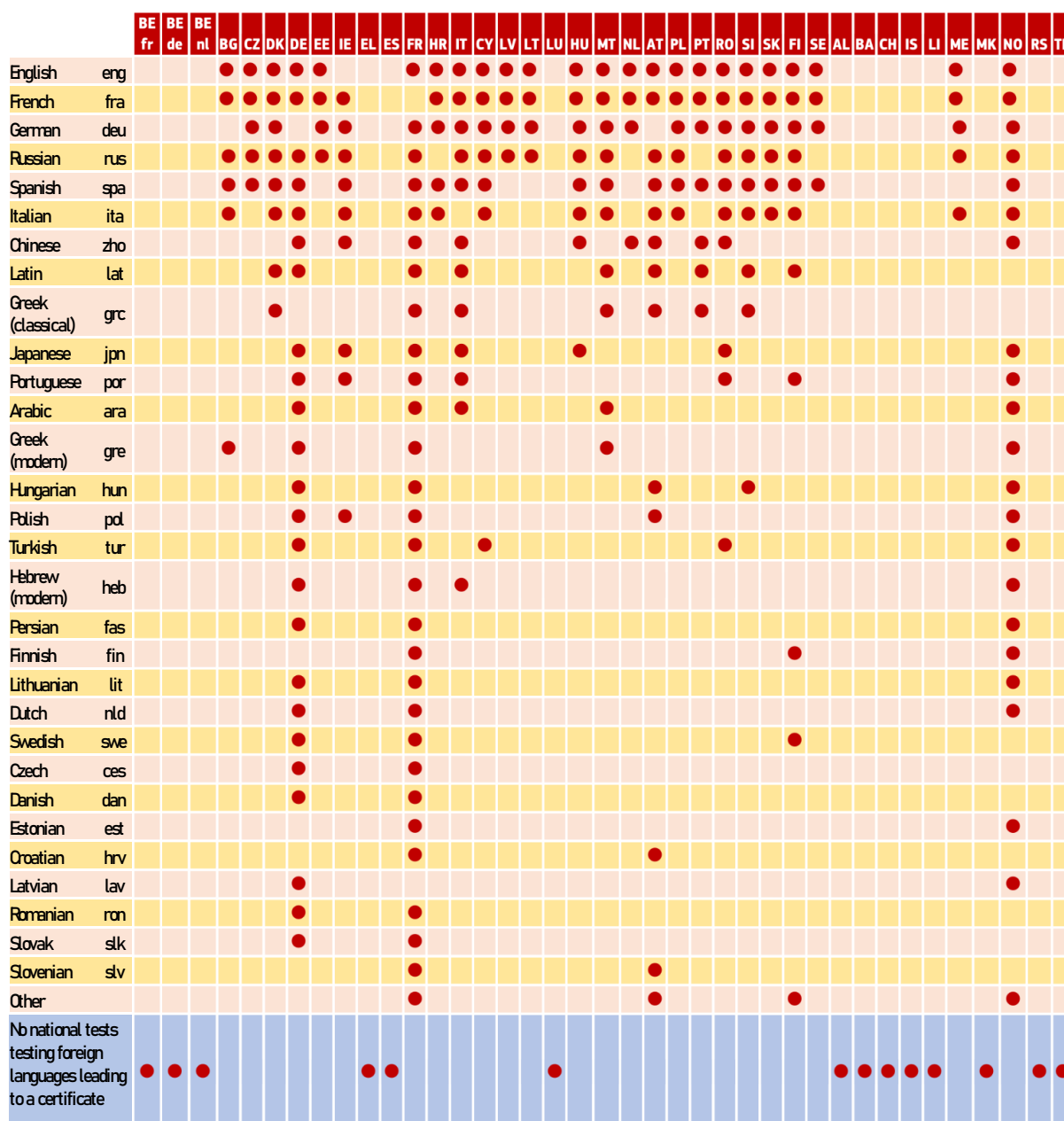
89 Ibid.

90 For details of the country coverage of this report, see the introduction to the report.

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in fewer than five education systems. This is, for instance, the case for modern Hebrew (four education systems), Persian, Finnish, Lithuanian, Dutch and Swedish (three education systems).

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Source: Eurydice.

Figure 51 Figure E7: Foreign languages tested through national tests in general upper secondary education (ISCED 3), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

This figure's scope only concerns national tests that lead to a certificate at the end of general secondary education. The listed foreign languages may not concern the whole school population at this education level, as foreign languages tested through national tests may differ according to educational pathways.

Foreign languages are listed in descending order, according to the number of education systems that test them through national tests. When the number of listed languages is the same, languages are ordered according to their ISO code (ISO 639-3) (see <https://iso639-3.sil.org/>, last accessed: 11 July 2022).

Official EU languages are displayed when they are tested in at least two education systems; all other languages are shown when they are tested in at least three education systems. All languages that are not displayed are marked as 'other' in the figure and specified in country-specific notes.



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For definitions of ‘foreign language’, ‘International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)’ and ‘national test’, see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE de): there is no national test, but all students in the last year of upper secondary education take part in the *diplôme d'études en langue française* (study diploma in the French language) exam and receive a certificate if they pass the test.

Germany: the *Abitur* (general higher education entrance qualification) examinations are set by top level education authorities in almost all *Länder*. Languages may vary between the *Länder*.

France: ‘Other’ includes Albanian, Amharic, Armenian, Bambara, Basque, Berber Tashelhit, Berber Kabyle, Berber Riffian, Breton, Bulgarian, Catalan, Cambodian, Corsican, Creole, Fula, Gallo, Hausa, Hindi, Indonesian-Malaysian, Korean, Laotian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Melanesian languages, Norwegian, Occitan, regional languages of Alsace and Moselle (known as Alsatian and Moselle Franconian dialects), Swahili, Tahitian, Tamil, Vietnamese, Wallisian and Futunan.

Hungary: any language taught at school can be tested in the *matura exam* (national test at the end of secondary education). The listed foreign languages are those that were tested in 2020/2021.

Austria: ‘Other’ includes Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian.

Finland: ‘Other’ includes Sami languages (Northern, Skolt and Inari).

Norway: ‘Other’ includes Albanian, Amharic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Dari, Filipino, Hindi, Icelandic, Korean, Kurdish (Sorani), Lule Sami, North-Sami, Oromo, Panjabi, Pashto, Serbian, sign language, Somali, South Sami, Tamil, Thai, Tigrinya, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Most countries with national tests leading to a certificate at the end of general secondary education test between 6 and 12 foreign languages. In three countries, namely Germany, France and Norway, the number of foreign languages tested is exceptionally high: 24, 60 and 45 foreign languages, respectively.

## A RECOMMENDATION OR REQUIREMENT TO TEST YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE OF SCHOOLING EXISTS IN SLIGHTLY FEWER THAN HALF OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Mastering the language of schooling is key for any student to perform well at school. Furthermore, it is now acknowledged that to learn successfully students need to develop language competences that ‘go beyond the spontaneous and generally informal language used in everyday social life’ (Council of Europe, 2015, p. 10). The specific language used in academic settings, often referred to as ‘academic language’, differs from the everyday language in many ways, featuring, for instance, specialised vocabulary or complex sentences with clause connectors. While developing a high level of proficiency in the language of schooling may be challenging for all students, it is particularly so for those who do not speak the language of schooling at home (see Figure A2).

There is also a growing awareness that considering students’ linguistic and cultural realities, when those differ from the main language (and culture) of the school, has a positive effect on students’ well-being and achievement in school, notably in relation to the language of schooling (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2019). Various concrete support measures, such as organising mother tongue classes (see Figure E9) can help value students’ specific linguistic and cultural circumstances and, more generally, contribute to the improvement of their school achievement (Siarova, 2022).

The Commission staff working document accompanying the proposal for a Council recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages strongly advocates for ‘breaking down the silos of language learning’ (European Commission, 2018, p.24), by taking a more comprehensive approach to language learning and teaching at school. In this innovative and all-inclusive perspective, the assessment (and validation) of students’ language competences (i.e. assessing all the languages that students may (partly) know is also recommended.

Across European countries, there is currently no recommendation given or requirement imposed by top-level education authorities for schools to carry out diagnostic tests of students' full language repertoire, that is, their language of schooling, mother tongue, foreign languages, etc. Existing diagnostic tests focus exclusively on the language of schooling.

The purpose of Figure E8 is to show whether top-level education authorities recommend or require that schools carry out diagnostic tests of the language of schooling at the end of pre-primary or the beginning of primary education (map (a)). It also shows whether top-level education authorities have designed or endorsed assessment tools to carry out these tests (map (b)). The end of pre-primary education and the beginning of primary education are critical points in education, as they often correspond to the period when the teaching of literacy begins. Both maps also indicate whether diagnostic tests and assessment tools concern all pupils or only specific groups, for instance newly arrived migrant pupils or those with dyslexia.

As the figure shows (map (a)), top-level education authorities in 16 education systems (out of 39) recommend or require that schools carry out diagnostic tests of pupils' competences in the language of schooling at the end of pre-primary education and/or at the beginning of primary education. Half of them test all pupils, while the other half test only specific groups of pupils. In Malta and Sweden, schools are recommended (or required) to assess the whole pupil population and specific pupil categories as well.

Newly arrived migrants and/or those who do not speak the language of schooling are the most tested groups of pupils (Czechia, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Sweden and Switzerland). Other specific categories of pupils targeted by diagnostic tests surveyed are pupils in schools where more than 30 % of the school population come from vulnerable areas (Denmark); those identified as vulnerable groups, for instance, pupils from the Roma community or Greek returnees (Greece); pupils with dyslexia (Hungary and Sweden); and pupils older than the expected school age (North Macedonia).

Top-level education authorities in most education systems in which testing pupils' competence in the language of schooling is a recommendation or a requirement have also designed or endorsed specific assessment tools. Exceptions are Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Switzerland and Norway (map (b)). Conversely, while there is no recommendation or requirement to carry out diagnostic tests at the end of pre-primary education and/or at the beginning of primary education (map (a)), top-level education authorities in the German-speaking Community of Belgium and the Netherlands have designed or endorsed assessment tools. They target pupils whose proficiency in the language of schooling is below CEFR level A2 (German-speaking Community of Belgium) and 3- to 4-year-old pupils (the Netherlands).

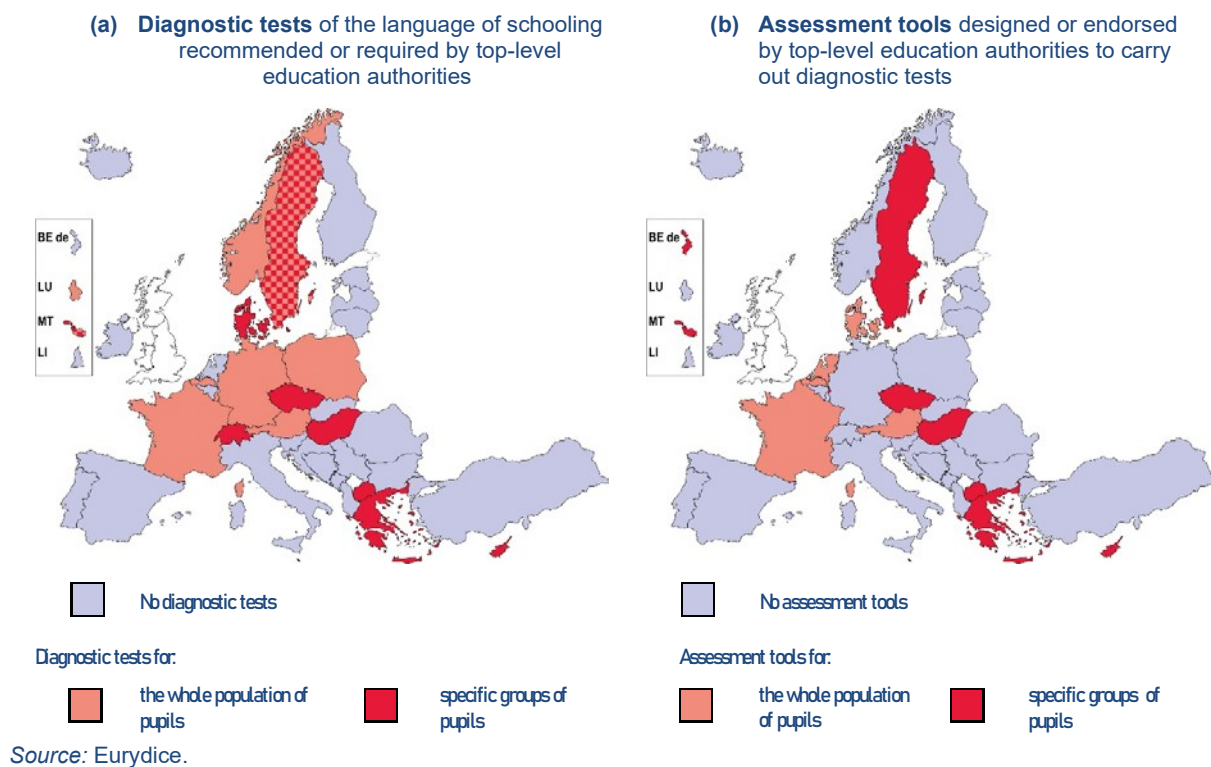


Figure 52 Figure E8: Testing of the language of schooling at the end of pre-primary education (ISCED 0) and/or the beginning of primary education (ISCED 1), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

Tests focusing on reading skills only are excluded from the scope of the figure. 'The whole population of pupils' refers to the whole school population of a given age.

For definitions of 'diagnostic test', 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)' and 'top-level (education) authority', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific note

Belgium (BE nl): the target pupil population of the KOALA test is the whole 5-year-old pupil population except newly arrived migrant pupils.

## A MINORITY OF COUNTRIES PROMOTE OR FINANCIALLY SUPPORT THE TEACHING OF NEWLY ARRIVED MIGRANT STUDENTS' MOTHER TONGUE

Newly arrived migrant students are a specific group of students who face a certain number of challenges. These relate to the migration process (e.g. leaving the home country and adapting to new rules in the host country), the general socioeconomic and political circumstances of the host country (e.g. resources dedicated to education), and participation in education (e.g. inappropriate grade placement or language provision, and lack of social and emotional support). To tackle these challenges, research advocates for a comprehensive approach to providing support – including language learning support measures – that considers the academic, social and emotional needs of newly arrived migrant students (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2019).

Nevertheless, in the context of this report, which focuses on language learning, the emphasis is on language learning support measures, in particular those promoted or financially supported by top-level education

authorities. Language learning support measures, which contribute to developing language-rich learning environments, are beneficial not only for newly arrived migrant students, who often do not speak the language of schooling, but also for the whole school population (European Commission, 2018).

As Figure E9 shows, top-level education authorities in nearly all countries either financially support or promote at least one of the following language learning support measures:

- additional classes in the language of schooling
- an adapted curriculum (i.e. a curriculum whose standard requirements have been modified)
- mother tongue classes
- teaching assistant in class
- bilingual subject teaching (mother tongue and language of schooling).

The most widespread language support measure, which is in place in almost all European countries, is the provision of additional classes in the language of schooling during school hours. Usually, the provision of such classes is limited in time. In Finland, it is of a particularly long duration: students can benefit from it for 6 years from the day they start school. Only Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Albania, North Macedonia and Norway do not report such provision. However, these countries, except Albania and Norway, organise additional classes in the language of schooling outside school hours.

The provision of additional classes in the language of schooling outside school hours is a language support measure promoted or financially supported in slightly fewer than two thirds of education systems. In some of them, language learning support is provided during summer. This is, for instance, the case in Malta. The summer language course 'Language to Go', organised by the Migrant Learners' Unit, specifically targets newly arrived migrant students and those with learning difficulties in Maltese and/or English.

In several education systems, top-level education authorities fund the provision of additional classes in the language of schooling without specifying whether they should be organised during or outside school hours. This is, for instance, the case in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Estonia, Latvia and the Netherlands. In Austria, the chosen arrangement for additional classes depends on students' results in the German language competence test: those requiring a lot of support are taught outside school hours, while those in need of moderate support receive additional lessons within school hours.

In addition to supplementary classes in the language of schooling, the introduction of an adapted curriculum is another support measure widely available for newly arrived migrant students across Europe. It is in place in slightly more than half of the countries surveyed.

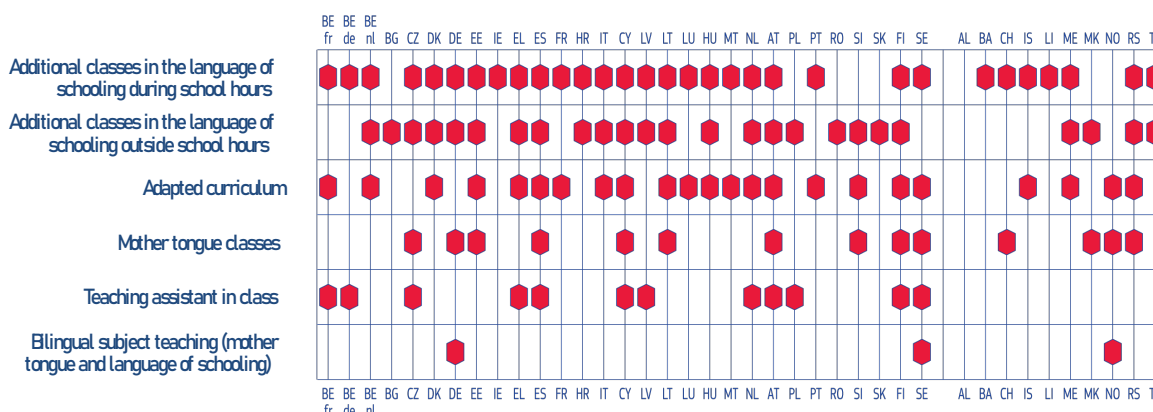
With slightly more than one third of countries reporting promoting or financially supporting the teaching of newly arrived migrant students' mother tongue, it is a less popular measure. In some cases, this provision depends on students' country of origin and/or the existence of bilateral agreements between the host country and the country of origin (e.g. Czechia and North Macedonia). In Cyprus, mother tongue classes are offered through a national project funded by EU structural funds. In Germany and Spain, the availability of mother tongue provision depends on the Länder and the autonomous communities, respectively.

In slightly fewer than one third of education systems, teaching assistants are used in classrooms to facilitate newly arrived migrant students' learning. It is also noteworthy that teaching assistants' work is not necessarily limited to helping newly arrived migrant students; it may be available for all students in need of support. This is, for instance, the case in Finland.

Finally, few countries – only Germany, Sweden and Norway – provide bilingual subject teaching, including students' mother tongue and the language of schooling.

When considering all the support measures analysed, only one country – namely Albania – does not report any measures.

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Source: Eurydice.

Figure 53 Figure E9: Language learning support measures for newly arrived migrant students in primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1–2), 2021/2022

### Explanatory notes

The figure shows whether top-level education authorities promote or financially support any of the listed language learning support measures for newly arrived migrant students.

When newly arrived migrant students attend additional classes during school hours, they do not take part in the lessons scheduled at that time for delivering the standard curriculum to their peers.

When newly arrived migrant students attend additional classes after school hours, they attend these classes after the lessons scheduled for delivering the standard curriculum to their peers (and themselves).

An adapted curriculum refers to a curriculum whose standard requirements have been modified to respond to the particular needs and circumstances of newly arrived migrant students.

When top-level education authorities fund the provision of additional classes in the language of schooling without specifying whether these additional classes should be organised during or outside school hours, both options are shown in the figure.

For definitions of 'language of schooling', 'International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)', 'newly arrived migrant students' and 'top-level (education) authority', see the Glossary.

### Country-specific notes

Germany: the provision of support measures depends on the Länder. The displayed information represents the most common support measures across the 16 Länder in the country.

Spain: support measures for newly arrived migrant students are decided by the autonomous communities. The figure displays the measures that can be found across Spain, but not necessarily in each autonomous community.

Netherlands: schools receive specific funds when they accommodate students from migrant backgrounds. They decide how to spend these funds. These funds are available for the period for which migrant status lasts, that is, 4 years.

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## GLOSSARY

**Academic language:** specific language form that differs lexically and grammatically from everyday language, often featuring specialised vocabulary or particular grammatical structures (e.g. clause connectors) and used for various specific purposes, such as summarising, comparing and contrasting. Students need to develop their academic language skills in order to successfully learn the content of the ► curriculum.

**Certificate:** official proof of a qualification awarded to a student following completion of a particular stage or a full course of education or training. The award of certificates may be based on various forms of assessment; a final examination is not necessarily a prerequisite.

**Classical language:** an ancient language, such as classical Greek or Latin, that is no longer spoken in any country and is therefore taught for purposes other than communication. The learning objectives may include to acquire a deeper knowledge of the roots of a modern language that emerged from the classical language in question, to read and understand original texts in ancient literature, or to become familiar with the civilisation that used the language. In some curricula, classical languages are regarded as ► foreign languages.

**Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):** framework for language learning, teaching and assessment developed by the Council of Europe. Its main aim is to facilitate transparency and comparability in the provision of language education and qualifications.

The CEFR provides a comprehensive description of the competences necessary for communication in a ► foreign language, the related knowledge and skills, and the different contexts of communication.

The CEFR defines six levels of proficiency from 'basic user' to 'proficient user':

- A1 ('breakthrough'),
- A2 ('waystage'),
- B1 ('threshold'),
- B2 ('vantage'),
- C1 ('effective operational proficiency')
- C2 ('mastery').

It enables the progress of foreign language learners and users to be measured (Council of Europe, 2020).

**Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL):** a general term to designate different types of bilingual or immersion education. Two types of CLIL have been defined based on the status of the languages used to teach different subjects (other than languages and their literature/culture).

**CLIL type A:** provision where different subjects are taught in a language designated in the ► top-level ► curriculum as a ► foreign language. The number of subjects taught in the foreign language may vary. In some instances (case 1), all subjects (other than languages) are taught in the foreign language. In others (case 2),



some subjects (other than languages) are taught in the foreign language and others are taught in the main ► language of schooling in the country.

**CLIL type B:** provision where different subjects are taught in a ► regional or minority language, a ► non-territorial language or a ► state language (in countries with more than one state language), and other subjects (other than languages) are taught in a second language, which may be any other language. Unlike CLIL type A (case 1), in CLIL type B, subjects other than languages are always taught in at least two languages. Alongside the method including two languages, in some rare cases three (or more) languages are used to teach different subjects (e.g. a state language, a regional or minority language and a foreign language).

**Continuing professional development (CPD):** in the context of this report, CPD refers to formal in- service training undertaken by teachers and/or head teachers throughout their career that allows them to broaden, develop and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It includes both subject-based training and pedagogical training. Different formats are offered such as courses, seminars, peer observation and support from networks of practitioners. In certain cases, CPD activities may lead to supplementary qualifications.

**Curriculum:** an official ► steering document issued by ► top-level authorities detailing programmes of study and/or any of the following: learning content, learning objectives, attainment targets, guidelines on pupil assessment or syllabuses. More than one type of steering document may be in force at any one time in an education system and these may impose different levels of obligation on schools to comply.

**Diagnostic test:** ‘A test whose purpose is to evaluate a learner’s strengths and areas for development. ... [It is] a means of discovering what level of support or challenge the learner will need. A diagnostic test is often a first step in developing an individual learning plan. It is usually carried out when the learner enters their course of study, and its results are sometimes referred to as the learner’s “entry behaviour”, or starting point’ (Wallace, 2015). Diagnostic tests can be national/standardised or can be defined by the schools and teachers themselves.

**Educational pathway:** in some countries, students must choose a specialist area of study from a range of options at secondary level; for example, they may be required to choose between literary and scientific studies, or between different types of school, such as *Gymnasium* or *Realschule* in Germany. This concept only applies to mainstream schools. It does not attempt to describe very specific types of educational provision, such as ► CLIL, experimental schools and music schools.

**Foreign language:** a language described as such in the ► curriculum set out by ► top-level education authorities. The description used is based on an education-related definition, unrelated to the political status of a language. Thus, certain languages regarded as regional or minority languages from a political perspective may be included in the curriculum as foreign languages. In the same way, certain ► classical languages may be considered foreign languages in certain curricula. Foreign languages may also be referred to as ‘modern languages’ (to clearly distinguish these languages from classical languages), or the ‘second or third language’ (as opposed to the ‘first language’, which may be used to describe the ► language of schooling in countries with more than one ► state language).

**Generalist teacher:** a teacher (usually in primary education) who is qualified to teach all (or almost all) subjects in the curriculum, including ► foreign languages. Such teachers may provide foreign language teaching irrespective of whether or not they have received training in the field.

**Home language:** the language often spoken at home by ► students from migrant backgrounds. It differs from the ► language of schooling. In many cases, the student’s home language is their mother tongue.

**Initial teacher education (ITE):** period of study and training during which prospective teachers attend academic subject-based courses and undertake professional training (either concurrently or consecutively) to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be a teacher. This period ends when prospective teachers qualify as teachers.

**International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED):** the reference international classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by levels and fields. It was developed to facilitate the comparison of education statistics and indicators across countries based on uniform and internationally agreed definitions. The coverage of ISCED extends to all organised and sustained learning opportunities for children, young people and adults, including those with special educational needs, irrespective of the institutions or organisations providing them or the form in which they are delivered.

The current classification – ISCED 2011 (UNESCO UIS, 2012) – has nine levels, which start at ISCED 0 (early childhood education) and extent to ISCED 8 (doctoral or an equivalent level).

This report covers four ISCED levels (ISCED 0–3), with ISCED 1–3 at the centre of the investigation. The key characteristics of the levels in question are as follows.

#### **ISCED 0:** early childhood education

Early childhood education programmes are typically designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and introduce young children to organised instruction outside the family context.

ISCED 0 programmes target children below the age of entry into ISCED 1. There are two categories of ISCED 0 programmes: early childhood educational development and pre-primary education. The former has educational content designed for younger children (in the age range of 0 to 2 years), while the latter is designed for children from age 3 to the age at which they start primary education.

#### **ISCED 1:** primary education

Primary education provides learning and educational activities typically designed to enable students to develop fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy). It establishes a solid foundation for learning and a sound understanding of core areas of knowledge, and fosters personal development, thus preparing students for lower secondary education. It provides basic learning with little, if any, specialisation.

The customary or legal age of entry is usually not below 5 years old or above 7 years old. This level typically lasts 6 years, although its duration can range from 4 to 7 years. Primary education typically lasts until age 10 to 12.

#### **ISCED 2:** lower secondary education

Programmes at ISCED 2 level, or in lower secondary education, typically build on the fundamental teaching and learning processes that begin at ISCED 1. Usually, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and personal development, preparing students for further educational opportunities.

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Programmes at this level are usually organised around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects.

Some education systems may offer vocational education programmes at ISCED 2 to provide individuals with skills relevant to employment.

ISCED 2 begins after 4 to 7 years of ISCED 1 education. Students enter ISCED 2 typically between the ages of 10 and 13 (age 12 being the most common).

### **ISCED 3:** upper secondary education

Programmes at ISCED 3 level, or in upper secondary education, are typically designed for students completing secondary education in preparation for tertiary or higher education, or to provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programmes at this level offer students more subject-based, specialist and in-depth programmes than in lower secondary education (ISCED 2). They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available.

ISCED 3 programmes may be either general or vocational. Some ISCED 3 programmes allow direct access to ISCED 4, and/or ISCED 5, 6 or 7.

ISCED 3 begins after 8 to 11 years of education from the beginning of ISCED 1. Pupils enter this level typically between the ages of 14 and 16. ISCED 3 programmes usually end 12 or 13 years after the beginning of ISCED 1 (or around age 17 or 18).

**Language as a compulsory subject:** any language designated as a compulsory subject in the ► curriculum or other ► steering documents drawn up by the ► top-level education authorities. The expression may be used to refer to situations where all students on a specific education programme or in a specific grade must learn a language, or in the particular context of specific curricula for different ► educational pathways.

**Language as an entitlement:** any language specified in the ► curriculum or other ► steering documents drawn up by the ► top-level education authorities that students are entitled to choose as an optional subject. The entitlement implies that schools must ensure they provide what the student chooses. In the context of foreign and classical languages, the expression may be used to refer to situations where all students on a specific education programme or in a specific grade are entitled to choose a language, or in the particular context of specific curricula for different ► educational pathways.

**Language awareness in schools:** notion that refers to a multilingual and whole-school approach that entails a comprehensive languages strategy involving continuous reflection on the language dimension in all facets of school life and proposing an overarching approach to the teaching of all languages in schools (the ► language of schooling, ► home languages, ► foreign languages (including ► classical languages), etc.). This approach is expected to engage all teachers and school leaders and involves parents, other carers and the wider local community. In concrete terms, language-aware schools value the linguistic diversity of their learners, recognise their prior language skills and use them as a learning resource. Language-aware schools support teachers in addressing the use of specific languages in their respective subject areas, including by raising awareness of different language registers and vocabulary (European Commission, 2018).

**Language of schooling:** a language that is used to deliver the content of the ► curriculum and, more broadly, for communication inside the school and outside the school, with stakeholders such as parents and education authorities.

**National test:** a standardised test/examination set by ► top-level public authorities and carried out under their responsibility. Standardised tests/examinations are any form of test that (1) require all test takers to answer the same questions (or questions selected from a common bank of questions) and (2) are scored in a standard or consistent way. International tests or surveys such as SurveyLang are not within the scope, nor are tests designed at school level, even if they have been developed based on a centrally designed framework of reference (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2015).

**Newly arrived migrant students:** students born outside their current country of residence to parents also born outside their host country who are of school age or below (according to the national regulations for compulsory education) and subsequently enter formal education in their host country (European Commission, 2013).

**Non-territorial language:** a language ‘used by nationals of the state which differ[s] from the language or languages used by the rest of the state’s population but which, although traditionally used within the territory of the state, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof’ (Council of Europe, 1992). For example, Romany is a non-territorial language.

**Official language:** a language used for legal and public administration purposes within a specified area of any given state. The official status can be limited to part of the state or extend over its entire territory. All ► state languages are official languages but not all languages with official language status are state languages (for example, Danish, which has official language status in Germany, is a ► regional or minority language and not a state language).

**Regional or minority language:** a language that is ‘traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population’; it is different from the ► state language(s) of that state (Council of Europe, 1992). As a general rule, these are languages of populations that have their ethnic roots in the areas concerned or have been settled in the regions concerned for generations. Minority/regional languages can have the status of an ► official language, but by definition this status will be limited to the areas in which they are spoken.

**Specialist teacher:** a teacher qualified to teach a limited number of subjects (generally up to three subjects). This includes either ► foreign languages only, or one or more foreign languages and (an)other subject(s).

**State language:** any language with official status throughout an entire country. Any state language is an ► official language.

**Steering documents:** different kinds of official documents containing regulations, guidelines and/or recommendations for educational institutions.

**Students from migrant backgrounds:** students who attend school in a country other than their country of origin, or the country of origin of both their parents. These terms of reference encompass several legally distinct situations, including those of refugees, asylum seekers, children of migrant workers, children of third-country nationals with long-term residency status, children of workers from non-EU countries who are not long-term residents, children who are irregular residents and children of immigrant origin who do not necessarily benefit from legal provisions relating specifically to education. This definition does not take account of linguistic minorities that have been settled in countries for over two generations.

**Students’ notional age:** in the school system, the normal age of students when they start or finish a particular grade or level of education. Early or late entry to schooling, grade repetition or other interruptions to schooling are

not taken into account.

**Top-level (education) authority:** the highest level of authority with responsibility for education in a given country, usually at national (state) level. However, for Belgium, Germany and Spain, the administrations of the communities, *Länder* and autonomous communities, respectively, either are wholly responsible or share responsibilities with the national level for all or most areas relating to education. Therefore, these administrations are considered the top-level authorities for the areas where they hold the responsibility, while for the areas for which they share responsibility with the national level both are considered to be top-level authorities.

## STATISTICAL DATABASES AND TERMINOLOGY

### The PISA 2018 international database

The PISA is an international survey conducted under the auspices of the OECD to measure the performance levels of 15-year-old students in reading literacy, numeracy and scientific literacy. The survey is based on a representative sample of 15-year-old students, who are in either lower secondary or upper secondary education (ISCED 2 or 3), depending on the structure of the system. Besides measuring performance, the PISA international survey includes questionnaires to identify variables in the school and family context, which may shed light on the survey findings. All indicators cover both public schools and private schools, whether grant aided or otherwise.

PISA surveys are conducted every 3 years. The first survey took place in 2000; the following rounds were conducted in 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018.

Among the countries participating in this report, only Liechtenstein did not take part in the collection of data for PISA 2018.

The sampling procedure involved selecting schools and then students. It sought to offer each student the same probability of being selected irrespective of the size or location of the school he or she attended. For this purpose, schools were selected with a probability proportional to the number of 15-year-old students. Within a school, a fixed number of students were sampled. This procedure is designed to limit the variability of the probability of a student being part of the sample.

Where data are taken to apply to the entire population of a country, it is essential to comply with certain strict requirements, such as S.E. analysis (estimation of sampling-related errors). As a result of this, a perceptible difference between two items of data may be considered insignificant in statistical terms (see also the explanations under 'Statistical terms').

The EU values (population estimates) presented in this report are weighted averages of the population estimates of the EU countries/regions that participated in the PISA survey in 2018. This means that each country's contribution to the estimation of the statistical indicator at European level is proportional to the country's size, that is, the number of 15-year-old students with non-missing values. The PISA 2018 database is available on the OECD's website (<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/>).

The PISA 2018 questionnaires are also available on the OECD's website (<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2018database/>).

### The TALIS 2018 database

TALIS is an international survey conducted under the auspices of the OECD that focuses on the working conditions of teachers and the learning environments in schools. The main topics covered are school leadership; teacher training; appraisal and feedback to teachers; teachers' pedagogical beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices; teachers' reported feeling of self-efficacy; teachers' job satisfaction and the climate in the schools and classrooms in which they work; and, lastly, teachers' transnational mobility.

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The survey mainly focuses on teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2). It is based on teachers' and head teachers' questionnaires. All indicators cover both public schools and private schools, whether grant aided or otherwise.

The first round of the survey took place in 2008, and the second was conducted in 2013. The most recent data come from the third cycle of the survey (2018). The OECD is currently preparing TALIS 2024.

This report uses data on teacher training and teachers' transnational mobility. Data on teacher training cover 26 education systems in 25 countries participating in this report that took part in TALIS 2018. Data on teachers' transnational mobility are available in a more limited number of education systems (23). This report also presents trend data based on the 2013 and 2018 cycles of TALIS. Trend data refer to the 17 education systems that took part in both cycles.

The standard sampling procedure involved selecting 200 schools per country and 20 teachers (per school) teaching at lower secondary level (ISCED 2).

Where data are taken to apply to the entire population of countries, it is essential to comply with certain strict requirements, such as S.E. analysis (estimation of sampling-related errors), as a result of which a perceptible difference between two items of data may be considered insignificant in statistical terms (see also the explanations under 'Statistical terms').

The EU values (population estimates) presented in this report are weighted averages of the values of the EU countries/regions that participated in TALIS in 2018. This means that each country's contribution to the estimation of the statistical indicator at the European level is proportional to the country's size, that is, the number of ISCED 2 teachers with non-missing values.

The TALIS 2018 data are available on the OECD's website (<https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-data.htm>).

The TALIS 2018 questionnaires are also available on the OECD's website (<https://www.oecd.org/education/school/talis2018questionnaires.htm>).

## Statistical terms

**International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED):** see the Glossary.

**Standard error (SE):** the PISA 2018 survey and TALIS 2018, just like any other large-scale education surveys (the OECD's previous PISA surveys and TALISs, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study surveys, etc.), only look at a representative sample of the target populations. Generally, an infinite number of possible samples exist for any given population. Therefore, from one sample to another estimates made for a population parameter (an average, a percentage, a correlation, etc.) can vary. The S.E. associated with any estimation of a population parameter quantifies this sampling uncertainty. Based on this estimated parameter and its respective S.E., it is possible to construct the confidence interval, which reflects by how much the value calculated from a sample may vary from one sample to another sample. Accordingly, supposing an estimated average of 50 and an S.E. of 5, the confidence interval, with a type I error of 5 %, is equal to  $[50 - (1.96 \times 5); 50 + (1.96 \times 5)]$ , that is, approximately [40; 60]. Therefore, it may be said that there are only 5 chances out of 100 of being wrong if the population's average is said to be in this interval.

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All the S.E.s recorded in this report were calculated using resampling methods and following the methodology of various technical documents of the PISA survey and TALIS.

The S.E.s of the survey data are listed in Annex 1.

**Statistical significance.** Refers to the 95 % confidence level. For example, a significant difference means that the difference is statistically significantly different from zero with a 95 % confidence level.



# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1: DETAILED STATISTICAL DATA

### Chapter A

	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LX	LT	LU	HU
% 2018	11.5	17.4	24.1	17.4	12.9	5.8	8.1	17.8	5.4	9.1	6.2	20.6	11.5	3.3	7.1	22.3	10.5	5.9	82.9	2.2
S.E.	0.21	0.85	2.28	1.33	1.17	0.51	0.39	0.95	0.40	0.59	0.47	0.76	0.66	0.28	0.37	0.53	0.70	0.41	0.42	0.23
Δ 2003-2015	:	10.5	0.7	-7.4	:	3.8	3.8	4.1	:	4.8	2.6	2.9	1.8	:	3.9	:	1.7	:	-8.0	1.7
S.E.	:	1.56	2.50	1.75	:	0.38	0.59	0.96	:	0.86	0.72	1.76	0.98	:	0.48	:	1.42	:	0.59	0.26
Δ 2003-2018	:	10.2	6.9	-5.5	:	4.8	4.2	10.1	:	6.7	3.0	4.8	4.8	:	5.1	:	2.2	:	-9.6	1.6
S.E.	:	1.11	2.70	1.84	:	0.54	0.62	1.11	:	0.79	0.61	1.64	1.00	:	0.45	:	1.31	:	0.58	0.26
Δ 2015-2018	:	-0.4	6.2	1.9	4.2	1.0	0.4	6.0	-0.4	1.8	0.4	1.9	3.1	0.2	1.1	:	0.5	0.5	-1.6	-0.1
S.E.	:	1.63	3.05	1.79	1.50	0.60	0.53	1.22	0.71	0.90	0.77	1.24	0.92	0.45	0.56	:	1.0	0.62	0.60	0.33

	MT	ML	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
% 2018	82.8	9.8	20.5	1.7	3.1	3.1	9.9	8.7	7.6	17.6	4.0	6.5	27.0	7.2	4.2	7.2	10.2	5.2	7.0
S.E.	0.54	0.76	0.90	0.29	0.34	0.55	0.39	0.74	0.49	1.03	0.53	0.44	1.20	0.45	0.25	0.39	0.55	0.58	0.91
Δ 2003-2015	:	-7.4	9.8	0.9	1.4	:	:	4.9	3.1	8.2	:	:	14.0	4.0	:	:	3.9	:	5.4
S.E.	:	1.42	1.20	0.18	0.35	:	:	1.00	0.57	1.28	:	:	1.38	0.43	:	:	0.80	:	1.26
Δ 2003-2018	:	-4.8	11.5	1.5	1.7	:	:	4.8	4.7	10.0	:	:	14.9	5.5	:	:	5.1	:	5.2
S.E.	:	1.49	1.17	0.30	0.40	:	:	1.07	0.54	1.25	:	:	1.39	0.50	:	:	0.77	:	1.17
Δ 2015-2018	:	-4.9	2.6	1.7	0.6	0.2	0.4	2.3	-0.1	1.6	:	:	0.9	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.1	:	-0.2
S.E.	0.74	0.98	1.31	0.33	0.44	0.62	0.60	0.97	0.72	1.48	:	:	1.69	0.58	0.35	0.52	0.81	:	1.37

Δ Difference between specific reference years

Source: Eurydice, based on PISA 2018, 2015 and 2003.

**Table 1: Percentage of 15-year-old students who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling, 2018 (data for Figure A2) and differences between 2003 and 2015, 2003 and 2018, and 2015 and 2018**

### Explanatory notes

Data calculated based on PISA survey question 'What language do you speak at home most of the time?' (ST16Q01(31) in PISA 2003, and ST022Q01TA in PISA 2015 and 2018). The category 'Language of the test' is used as a proxy for speaking the same language at home as at school.

When considering differences between 2003 and 2015, 2003 and 2018, and 2015 and 2018, values that are significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) from zero are indicated in bold.

See also the explanatory notes for Figure A2 in Chapter A.

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%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
A	6.9	11.7	14.4	9.9	0.7	2.9	5.4	13.8	1.3	8.8	4.8	6.1	6.5	0.7	5.9	8.0	1.0	0.5	41.5	:
S.E.	0.18	0.83	1.96	0.89	0.11	0.33	0.28	0.85	0.19	0.58	0.42	0.31	0.49	0.11	0.34	0.45	0.17	0.08	0.64	
B	5.6	11.1	11.2	4.5	:	1.2	5.2	8.3	9.1	9.0	6.9	6.1	7.8	8.3	4.1	6.7	3.4	1.1	13.4	2.2
S.E.	0.16	0.88	1.75	0.49		0.17	0.30	0.50	0.45	0.55	0.45	0.29	0.66	0.48	0.30	0.30	0.27	0.11	0.42	0.30
C	4.4	5.5	9.4	7.0	11.6	2.7	2.6	3.5	4.0	:	1.3	14.2	5.0	2.4	1.1	14.0	9.4	5.3	41.5	1.8
S.E.	0.12	0.36	1.33	0.68	1.13	0.30	0.24	0.29	0.32		0.23	0.69	0.39	0.24	0.13	0.33	0.66	0.42	0.61	0.23
D	83.1	71.7	65.0	78.6	87.2	93.2	86.8	74.4	85.6	81.8	87.0	73.6	80.8	88.5	88.9	71.3	86.1	93.2	3.6	95.6
S.E.	0.30	1.43	2.50	1.41	1.16	0.54	0.52	1.26	0.55	0.91	0.67	0.87	1.02	0.57	0.50	0.60	0.76	0.44	0.25	0.39

%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
A	5.7	7.6	16.7	:	1.9	:	6.9	:	4.3	13.9	:	:	21.7	4.6	1.0	:	7.8	1.0	:
S.E.	0.38	0.66	0.92		0.27		0.31		0.36	1.01			1.08	0.36	0.13		0.49	0.16	
B	3.0	6.2	6.0	:	5.0	:	1.9	0.7	1.5	6.5	:	2.3	12.2	1.0	4.8	1.2	4.6	8.3	0.6
S.E.	0.31	0.65	0.43		0.42		0.18	0.13	0.19	0.50		0.30	0.69	0.18	0.28	0.19	0.43	0.40	0.12
C	71.2	1.9	3.6	1.2	1.1	3.0	2.8	8.0	3.1	3.3	3.8	5.9	5.0	2.5	3.2	6.5	2.3	4.2	6.7
S.E.	0.57	0.25	0.27	0.18	0.14	0.65	0.31	0.73	0.38	0.25	0.52	0.43	0.43	0.28	0.22	0.40	0.21	0.50	0.89
D	14.1	84.3	73.7	98.2	91.9	96.3	88.3	90.9	91.1	76.2	95.6	91.3	61.1	91.9	91.0	91.9	85.3	86.5	92.5
S.E.	0.51	1.24	1.12	0.30	0.62	0.67	0.41	0.74	0.56	1.36	0.51	0.54	1.50	0.47	0.34	0.46	0.80	0.63	0.91

- A Immigrant students who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling
- B Immigrant students who mainly speak the language of schooling at home
- C Non-immigrant students who mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling
- D Non-immigrant students who mainly speak the language of schooling at home

Source: Eurydice, based on PISA 2018.

Table 2: Percentages of immigrant and non-immigrant 15-year-old students, by language spoken at home, 2018 (data for Figure A3)

**Explanatory notes**

See the explanatory notes for Figure A3 in Chapter A.

**Country-specific notes**

See the country-specific notes for Figure A3 in Chapter A.

	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	E	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
%	13.3	21.8	41.4	20.5	16.6	3.1	4.5	25.8	2.6	4.7	3.7	27.8	10.8	:	6.4	18.1	10.8	6.6	96.2	:
S.E.	0.50	2.79	0.61	2.80	2.27	0.93	0.58	2.48	0.84	1.70	0.99	1.05	1.60		0.85	0.39	1.39	0.84	0.03	

	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
%	98.0	10.1	29.0	:	:	2.0	10.5	11.0	7.8	22.5	1.8	1.6	48.3	1.2	0.0	5.1	6.1	3.9	8.9
S.E.	0.03	2.29	2.44			0.84	0.49	1.29	1.51	2.59	0.91	0.68	3.32	0.11		0.11	1.52	0.97	1.80

Source: Eurydice, based on PISA 2018.

Table 3: Percentage of 15-year-old students attending schools where more than 25 % of students mainly speak a different language at home from the language of schooling, 2018 (data for Figure A4)

**Explanatory notes**

See the explanatory notes for Figure A4 in Chapter A.

**Country-specific notes**

See the country-specific notes for Figure A4 in Chapter A.

## Chapter C, Section I

%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
≥ 2 FL	7.2	0.0	X	0.0*	2.0	0.8	30.2	1.3	33.4	:	35.9	20.2	0.9	20.0	2.7	10.2	19.0	0.7	83.2	2.1
1 FL	78.9	47.3	X	26.7*	81.5	79.0	56.7	52.8	46.3	:	62.4	79.8	99.0	80.0	93.5	89.8	79.2	72.0	16.8	60.3
0 FL	13.9	52.7	X	73.3*	16.4	20.2	13.1	45.9	20.3	:	1.7	0	0.1	0.0	3.9	0.0	1.8	27.3	:	37.6

%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
≥ 2 FL	4.4	1.0	1.7	5.1	0.6	2.1	0.0	5.0	26.8	15.0	X	4.9	X	22.0	0.0	X	0.0	0.0	:	X
1 FL	95.6	43.6	98.1	94.8	68.1	97.7	81.2	83.4	59.9	79.6	X	69.9	X	53.4	100.0	X	100.0	100.0	:	X
0 FL	0.0	55.4	0.2	0.1	31.3	0.2	18.8	11.6	13.3	5.4	X	25.2	X	24.6	0.0	X	0.0	0.0	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 4: Percentage of students learning foreign languages (FL) in primary education (ISCED 1), by number of languages, 2020 (data for Figure C1a)**

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the calculations and data, see the explanatory notes for Figures C1a and C1b in Chapter C.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figures C1a and C1b in Chapter C.

%	BE fr	CZ	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LT	LU	HU	MT	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	FI	LI	NO
7 years	6.8	50.3	13.7	33.2	97.4	100.0	99.8	100.0	100.0	3.2	100.0	44.8	100.0	99.8	100.0	0.5	99.7	99.3	65.3	100.0	100.0
8 years	33.6	75.0	58.4	45.1	98.6	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	93.9	100.0	51.3	100.0	99.8	100.0	83.8	99.8	99.1	56.5	100.0	100.0
9 years	38.6	96.6	94.1	83.5	98.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.3	100.0	70.7	100.0	99.9	99.9	98.6	100.0	99.1	99.2	100.0	100.0
10 years	90.9	98.6	95.6	98.2	98.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.6	100.0	92.3	100.0	99.9	99.8	99.7	100.0	98.8	99.6	100.0	100.0

Source: Eurydice calculations, based on non-published Eurostat/UE data (last updated: 29 September 2022).

**Table 5: Percentage of students learning at least one foreign language in primary education (ISCED 1), by age, 2020 (data for Figure C1b)**

### Explanatory note

For the explanation regarding the calculations and data collection by age, see the explanatory notes for Figures C1a and C1b in Chapter C.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figures C1a and C1b in Chapter C.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
2020	86.1	47.3	X	26.7*	83.6	79.8	86.9	54.1	79.7	:	98.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	96.1	100.0	98.2	72.7	100.0	62.4
2013	79.4	50.0	X	28.6	82.9	71.9	56.9	67.9	77.0	:	75.5	99.6	98.8	99.9	99.7	100.0	73.1	74.9	100.0	59.1
%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
2020	100.0	44.6	99.8	99.9	68.7	99.8	81.2	87.6	86.7	94.6	X	74.8	X	75.4	100.0	X	100.0	100.0	:	X
2013	100.0	52.2	99.9	97.3	35.2	56.5	49.8	84.8	68.8	77.9	X	:	X	:	100.0	X	100.0	100.0	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 6: Percentage of students learning at least one foreign language in primary education (ISCED 1), 2013 and 2020 (data for Figure C2)**

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the calculations and data, see the explanatory notes for Figure C2 in Chapter C.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C2 in Chapter C.

%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
≥ 2 FL	59.2	0	X	65.7	12.0	65.5	85.1	36.9	95.2	7.8	95.7	45.0	75.5	54.6	97.0	83.7	73.0	77.4	100.0	7.4
1 FL	39.2	98.4	X	34.3	86.4	33.0	14.9	58.9	1.9	74.1	3.8	55.0	24.3	45.4	3.0	16.1	25.0	28.8	:	98.4
0 FL	1.6	1.6	X	0.0	1.6	1.4	0.0	4.3	2.9	18.1	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	2.0	1.8	:	2.2
%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
≥ 2 FL	95.0	71.1	7.9	46.7	92.7	94.6	25.6	52.6	98.7	78.6	X	94.9	X	97.1	100.0	X	100.0	66.1	:	X
1 FL	5.0	26.3	92.1	53.2	3.3	5.4	74.4	45.2	1.0	21.4	X	4.6	X	2.3	0.0	X	0.0	28.6	:	X
0 FL	0.0	2.6	0.1	0.1	4.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.4	0.0	X	0.5	X	0.6	0.0	X	0.0	0.0	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 7: Percentage of students learning foreign languages (FL) in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), by number of languages, 2020 (data for Figures C3 and C4)**

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the calculations and data, see the explanatory notes for Figure C3 in Chapter C.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C3 in Chapter C.

%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
≥ 2 FL	58.4	:	X	49.3	17.4	43.1	81.7	37.1	95.6	8.5	95.0	41.6	54.0	52.4	98.5	91.6	71.8	81.0	100.0	6.0
%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
≥ 2	96.5	73.7	9.7	93.6	86.8	95.6	53.9	79.8	98.3	78.2	X	:	X	97.5	97.2	X	98.1	69.9	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 8: Percentage of students learning two or more foreign languages (FL) in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), 2013 (data for Figure C4)**

### Explanatory note

For the explanation regarding the calculations and data, see the explanatory notes for Figure C4 in Chapter C.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C4 in Chapter C.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
≥ 2 FL	Gen	60.0	72.1	X	100.0	72.6	98.8	45.0	58.7	97.6	122	0.9	27.4	99.6	94.3	24.7	38.8	82.6	38.3	100.0	74.9
	Voc	35.1	16.0	X	69.7	42.0	33.9	1.2	1.3	22.6	:	2.8	0.2	32.1	30.0	48.1	32.2	54.4	6.5	77.4	4.5
1 FL	Gen	37.1	27.9	X	0.0	27.1	1.2	39.6	41.2	1.9	66.9	88.8	70.3	0.3	5.7	74.8	55.8	16.1	60.4	:	23.5
	Voc	44.9	70.2	X	30.3	53.1	60.1	14.8	38.3	35.2	:	72.4	45.1	66.7	64.7	51.6	63.3	31.3	54.3	15.2	88.6
0 FL	Gen	2.9	0.0	X	0.0	0.3	0.0	15.4	0.1	0.5	20.9	10.3	2.3	0.1	0.0	0.5	5.8	1.3	1.3	:	1.6
	Voc	18.0	13.8	X	0.0	4.9	5.9	84.0	60.4	42.2	:	24.8	54.7	1.3	5.3	0.3	4.4	14.3	39.2	7.4	6.9
	%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
≥ 2 FL	Gen	66	67.9	63.6	81.3	7.1	99.1	95.5	98.4	99.0	80.1	X	95.8	X	55.9*	91.9	X	56.6	100.0	:	X
	Voc	1.4	12.4	21.6	76.8	7.3	97.4	29.4	31.5	89.3	3.8	X	28.2	X	5.2*	:	X	:	0.0	:	X
1 FL	Gen	34.0	32.1	36.3	18.7	61.8	0.9	3.3	1.6	1.0	19.9	X	2.8	X	30.1*	8.1	X	43.4	0.0	:	X
	Voc	98.6	58.4	77.6	23.2	72.6	2.4	64.4	68.2	7.9	96.1	X	68.3	X	19.0*	:	X	:	100.0	:	X
0 FL	Gen	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	31.1	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	1.4	X	14.0*	0.0	X	0	0.0	:	X
	Voc	0.0	29.2	0.8	0.0	20.1	0.2	6.2	0.3	2.8	0.1	X	3.5	X	75.8*	:	X	:	0.0	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 9: Percentages of students learning foreign languages (FL) in general (gen) and vocational (voc) upper secondary education (ISCED 3), by number of languages, 2020 (data for Figures C5 and C6)**

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the calculations, EU aggregate and country data, see the explanatory notes for Figure C5 in Chapter C.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C5 in Chapter C.

	%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
≥ 2 FL	Gen	58.4	78.3	X	99.9	73.3	93.9	49.7	55.6	92.7	6.2	2.7	31.2	97.2	86.9	24.1	83.8	81.9	41.2	100.0	46.1
	Voc	34.1	14.4	X	68.5	48.9	34.3	5.4	1.7	62.3	:	0.1	0.4	30.9	23.1	41.7	21.8	46.1	11.8	67.7	0.7
	%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
≥ 2 FL	Gen	68.0	69.7	64.1	69.1	5.1	98.7	95.5	98.7	99.0	81.2	X	:	X	60.1	100.0	X	52.6	:	:	X
	Voc	0.0	12.7	22.3	64.9	9.2	96.6	32.6	66.5	88.6	11.3	X	:	X	15.8	:	X	:	:	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang02] (data extracted 15 September 2022).

**Table 10: Percentages of students learning two or more foreign languages (FL) in general (gen) and vocational (voc) upper secondary education (ISCED 3), 2013 (data for Figure C6)**

### Explanatory notes

EU aggregate for vocational ISCED 3 was flagged as 'definition differs, see metadata'. For methodological notes related to the data, see [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an4.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an4.xlsx).

For the explanation regarding the calculations, see the explanatory notes for Figure C6 in Chapter C.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C6 in Chapter C.

## Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

Average nr	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
ISCED1	0.9	0.5	X	0.3*	0.9	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.1	:	1.3	1.2	1	1.2	1	1	1.2	0.7	1.8	0.7
ISCED2	1.6	1	X	1.7	1.1	1.7	1.9	1.3	2	0.9	1.9	1.5	1.8	1.5	2	1.9	1.7	1.8	2.5	1.1
ISCED3	1.4	1.5	X	2.1	1.5	1.5	0.9	1	1.6	:	0.9	1	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.2	2.6	1.3
Average nr	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED1	1.1	0.5	1	1.1	0.7	1	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.1	X	0.8	X	1.0	1	X	1	1	:	X
ISCED2	2.1	2	1.1	1.5	1.9	2	1.3	1.5	2.2	1.8	X	1.9	X	2.0	2.0	X	2.0	1.6	:	X
ISCED3	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.9	0.8	2	1.5	1.5	2.1	1.6	X	1.4	X	1.2*	1.9	X	1.6	0.7	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uoe\_lang03] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 11: Average number of foreign languages learnt per student in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020 (data for Figure C7)**

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the calculations, EU aggregate and country data, see the explanatory notes for Figure C7 in Chapter C.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C7 in Chapter C.

## Chapter C – Section II

%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
ISCED 1	eng 84.1	ind 33.1	X	fra* 26.1*	eng 77.2	eng 79.1	eng 86.9	eng 57.4	eng 72.6	:	eng 98.2	eng 99.6	eng 96.6	eng 93.3	eng 95.5	100.0	eng 96.9	eng 72.4	deu 100.0	eng 45.9
ISCED 2	eng 98.3	eng 49.7	X	fra 100.0	eng 91.2	eng 98.2	eng 100.0	eng 100.0	eng 95.7	fra 49.2	eng 99.2	eng 99.2	eng 99.4	eng 98.0	eng 100.0	eng 100.0	eng 97.5	eng 97.8	deu fra 100.0	eng 74.6
ISCED 3	eng 88.1	eng 77.6	X	fra 94.4	eng 87.8	eng 93.5	eng 54.1	eng 68.6	eng 81.5	(fra) (50.8)	eng 78.3	eng 83.0	eng 99.0	eng 92.4	eng 99.8	eng 99.9	eng 92.4	eng 86.8	deu 86.3	eng 79.4

%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED 1	eng 100.0	eng 44.6	eng 99.6	eng 98.8	eng 68.3	eng 88.2	eng 79.4	eng 85.1	eng 83.0	eng 94.6	X	eng 73.5	X	eng 75.4	eng 100.0	X	eng 100.0	eng 100.0	:	X
ISCED 2	eng 100.0	eng 97.4	eng 99.8	eng 98.8	eng 97.3	eng 100.0	eng 99.8	eng 97.0	eng 99.5	eng 100.0	X	eng 100.0	X	eng 99.4	eng fra 100.0	X	eng 100.0	eng 94.7	:	X
ISCED 3	eng 100.0	eng 79.8	eng 99.3	eng 95.9	eng 66.7	eng 99.5	eng 96.8	eng 93.3	eng 97.0	eng 100.0	X	eng 91.8	X	eng* 57.7*	eng 100.0	X	eng 99.9	eng 42.5	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Table 12: The most learnt foreign language and percentages of students learning it in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020 (data for Figure C8)

### Explanatory notes

When referring to languages, the table uses ISO 639-3 codes.

The EU aggregate shows the percentage of students learning a foreign language out of all students at a given ISCED level. It is based on the reference population of all students in the EU, excluding the country (or countries) where the given language is not considered as a foreign language.

2020 EU aggregate for ISCED 3 was flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please see methodological notes related to the data: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uae\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uae_enr_esms_an6.xlsx).

Languages other than English are shaded.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

Data in brackets cover general upper secondary education only.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C8 in Chapter C.

%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
ISCED 1	84.1	13.3	X	0.0*	77.2	79.1	86.9	57.4	72.6	:	98.2	99.6	96.6	93.3	95.5	100.0	96.9	72.4	0.0	45.9
ISCED 2	98.3	49.7	X	65.7	91.2	98.2	100.0	100.0	95.7	:	99.2	99.2	99.4	98.0	100.0	100.0	97.5	97.8	54.3	74.6
ISCED 3	88.1	77.6	X	88.8	87.8	93.5	54.1	68.6	81.5	:	78.3	83.0	99.0	92.4	99.8	99.9	92.4	86.8	84.4	79.4

%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED 1	100.0	44.6	99.6	98.8	68.3	88.2	79.4	85.1	83.0	94.6	X	73.5	X	75.4	100.0	X	100.0	100.0	:	X
ISCED 2	100.0	97.4	99.8	98.8	97.3	100.0	99.8	97.0	99.5	100.0	X	100.0	X	99.4	100.0	X	100.0	94.7	:	X
ISCED 3	100.0	79.8	99.3	95.9	66.7	99.5	96.8	93.3	97.0	100.0	X	91.8	X	57.7*	100.0	X	99.9	42.5	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Table 13: Percentages of students learning English in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020 (data for Figure C9)

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the EU aggregate, see the explanatory notes in this annex related to data for Figure C8.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C9 in Chapter C.

%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	
ISCED 1	fra	eng	X	00*	rus	deu	:	fra	est	:	fra	fra	deu	deu	deu	fra	rus	deu	fra	deu	
	5.5	13.3	X	00*	4.3	1.1	:	2.6	20.7	:	19.2	19.1	3.1	20.4	1.9	2.3	13.3	0.4	83.2	18.9	
ISCED 2	fra	nld	X	eng	rus	deu	deu	fra	rus	spa	fra	fra	spa	deu	fra	fra	rus	rus	deu	fra	deu
	30.6	47.3	X	65.7	10.1	47.6	76.5	23.1	64.7	21.3	47.8	41.3	54.6	44.1	60.4	82.7	58.1	59.3	100.0	29.1	
ISCED 3	deu	nld	X	eng	deu	deu	deu	spa	rus	(deu)	fra	fra	spa	deu	fra	fra	rus	rus	fra	deu	
	20.0	59.2	X	88.8	26.8	37.8	17.2	11.9	44.9	(79.0)	3.8	18.0	59.3	34.9	23.5	25.5	51.8	24.8	85.4	41.0	

%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR	
ISCED 1	ita	deu	slv	deu	fra	fra	deu	slk	swe	spa	X	deu	X	dan	0.0	X	0.0	0.0	:	X	
	2.4	0.6	0.7	5.0	0.4	10.7	2.1	6.0	18.4	8.6	X	5.8	X	20.7	0.0	X	0.0	0.0	:	X	
ISCED 2	ita	fra	fra	deu	fra	fra	deu	deu	swe	spa	X	deu	X	dan	eng	fra	X	deu	spa	:	X
	55.1	55.3	3.8	40.6	71.2	80.3	21.3	32.3	92.5	45.9	X	76.5	X	95.7	100.0	X	59.6	31.2	:	X	
ISCED 3	ita	deu	fra	deu	spa	fra	deu	deu	swe	spa	X	deu	X	dan*	fra	X	deu	spa	:	X	
	25.4	21.4	15.2	62.9	7.2	85.0	37.0	36.8	89.4	28.6	X	38.1	X	24.9*	91.9	X	30.8	11.7	:	X	

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Table 14: The second most learnt foreign language and percentages of students learning it in primary and secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020 (data for Figure C10)

### Explanatory notes

When referring to languages, the table uses ISO 639-3 codes.

For the explanation regarding the EU aggregate, see the explanatory notes related to the data for Figure C8 in this annex.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

Data in brackets cover general upper secondary education only.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C10 in Chapter C.

%	BE fr	BG	CZ	EE	HR	LV	LT	MT	AT	PL	SI	SK	FI	IS	
ISCED1	nld	–	–	rus	est	–	rus	–	–	–	–	–	swe	dan	
	33.1	–	–	15.5	20.7	–	13.3	–	–	–	–	–	18.4	20.7	
ISCED2	nld	rus	rus	rus	est	ita	rus	rus	ita	–	–	rus	swe	dan	
	47.3	10.1	13.4	64.7	22.0	10.6	58.1	59.3	55.1	–	–	12.9	92.5	95.7	
General ISCED3	nld	rus	rus	rus	est	ita	rus	rus	ita	ita	rus	ita	rus	dan*	
	72.7	24.2	11.4	67.0	18.1	22.7	56.7	29.9	34.6	15.0	11.5	10.6	18.1	91.9	32.4*

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Table 15: Percentages of students learning languages other than English, French, German and Spanish (where at least 10 % of students learn other languages) in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2020 (data for Figure C11)

### Explanatory notes

When referring to languages, the table uses ISO 639-3 codes.

The table displays countries where at least 10 % of students (in at least one education level) learn foreign languages other than English, French, German and Spanish. Other countries are not displayed.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C11 in Chapter C.



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		% EU																												
		BE fr	DE de	EL	ES	FR	GR	IT	LT	LU	NL	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	SE	IE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	
ISCED1	2020	84.1	13.3	X	0.0*	77.2	79.1	86.9	57.4	72.6	:	98.2	99.6	96.6	93.3	95.5	100.0	96.9	72.4	0.0	45.9									
	2013	77.2	11.4	X	0.1	73.5	71.2	56.9	62.4	68.9	:	74.6	99.0	92.2	92.3	98.8	98.0	71.2	73.7	0.0	40.4									
ISCED2	2020	98.3	49.7	X	65.7	91.2	98.2	100.0	100.0	95.7	:	99.2	99.2	99.4	98.0	100.0	100.0	97.5	97.8	54.3	74.6									
	2013	96.7	42.5	X	49.3	86.8	96.5	100.0	97.8	97.1	:	99.0	99.4	98.4	97.6	100.0	99.7	95.8	97.1	53.2	68.5									
General ISCED3	2020	95.7	90.7	X	100.0	90.3	99.9	98.0	97.0	98.5	:	80.6	97.3	99.9	99.8	97.3	100.0	98.0	97.0	100.0	89.1									
	2013	93.8	91.1	X	99.9	90.6	95.1	82.8	86.8	96.0	:	93.5	98.1	99.7	99.4	95.9	91.4	98.6	94.4	97.1	81.8									

		% EU																			
		MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED1	2020	100.0	44.6	99.6	98.8	68.3	88.2	79.4	85.1	83.0	94.6	X	73.5	X	75.4	100.0	X	100.0	100.0	:	X
	2013	100.0	52.2	100.0	94.0	34.9	45.3	48.0	81.0	66.3	77.9	X	:	X	71.5	100.0	X	100.0	100.0	:	X
ISCED2	2020	100.0	97.4	99.8	98.8	97.3	100.0	99.8	97.0	99.5	100.0	X	100.0	X	99.4	100.0	X	100.0	94.7	:	X
	2013	100.0	96.6	99.9	96.3	93.4	99.2	100.0	94.9	99.4	100.0	X	:	X	99.8	100.0	X	99.9	100.0	:	X
General ISCED3	2020	100.0	100.0	99.8	98.4	62.3	99.4	98.5	98.7	99.7	100.0	X	98.6	X	72.7*	100.0	X	(99.9)	38.7	:	X
	2013	100.0	100.0	99.9	94.0	59.2	99.6	98.0	98.8	99.9	100.0	X	:	X	70.8	100.0	X	(98.4)	:	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 16: Percentages of students learning English in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2013 and 2020 (data for Figure C12)**

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the EU aggregate, see the explanatory notes related to data for Figure C8 in this annex. Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

Data in brackets cover both general education and vocational upper secondary education.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C12 in Chapter C.

		% EU																													
		EU	BE fr	DE de	EL	ES	FR	GR	IT	LT	LU	NL	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	SE	IE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	
ISCED1	2020	5.5	:	X	26.1*	0.8	0.1	:	2.6	1.4	:	19.2	19.1	:	0.6	0.8	2.3	1.4	0.2	83.2	0.3										
	2013	3.6	:	X	28.6	1.2	0.1	:	3.7	1.6	:	14.8	5.4	:	0.6	0.9	2.0	0.8	0.2	83.8	0.3										
ISCED2	2020	30.6	:	X	100.0	1.3	2.6	9.3	23.1	2.6	49.2	47.8	41.3	:	1.2	68.4	82.7	2.2	4.6	100.0	0.5										
	2013	33.9	:	X	99.6	3.1	3.3	9.1	24.4	2.7	61.6	49.4	38.7	:	1.4	68.7	90.0	1.0	3.4	100.0	0.5										
General ISCED3	2020	21.8	:	X	100.0	9.5	11.5	7.8	20.9	5.6	50.8	4.6	24.8	:	4.5	14.8	29.4	5.9	2.7	100.0	8.0										
	2013	23.6	:	X	99.9	12.2	17.5	15.0	24.2	6.4	58.9	4.6	28.7	:	3.6	17.7	37.2	5.8	3.2	100.0	5.8										
		% EU																													
		MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR										
ISCED1	2020	2.2	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.4	10.7	0.0	0.2	2.1	3.0	X	0.0	X	0.6	0.0	X	0.0	0.0	:	X										
	2013	1.1	:	0.3	0.2	0.1	10.8	0.0	0.1	2.0	2.2	X	:	X	0.6	0.0	X	0.2	0.0	:	X										
ISCED2	2020	28.1	55.3	3.8	1.3	71.2	80.3	1.4	1.0	4.6	14.4	X	2.3	X	1.8	100.0	X	38.7	10.7	:	X										
	2013	35.1	57.8	5.1	3.7	63.3	85.0	3.2	2.6	5.9	15.6	X	:	X	1.8	97.2	X	50.4	14.0	:	X										
General ISCED3	2020	18.2	28.1	29.7	12.3	3.0	80.8	7.2	9.0	8.8	15.8	X	6.6	X	9.0*	91.9	X	(22.4)	7.4	:	X										
	2013	23.1	32.7	35.5	8.1	2.6	84.9	11.2	14.8	12.0	18.3	X	:	X	11.3	100.0	X	(27.2)	:	:	X										

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 17: Percentages of students learning French in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2013 and 2020 (data for Figure C13)**

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the EU aggregate, see the explanatory notes related to data for Figure C8 in this annex. Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

Data in brackets cover both general education and vocational upper secondary education.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C13 in Chapter C.

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		%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	NO
ISCED1	2020	3.4	0.9	X	0.0*	2.2	1.1	:	:	3.2	:	16.7	1.2	3.1	20.4	1.9	0.0	5.0	0.4	100.0	18.9	
	2013	3.7	1.0	X	0.0	2.6	1.3	:	:	3.9	:	12.0	0.6	5.7	20.2	2.0	0.0	4.7	0.6	100.0	20.4	
ISCED2	2020	21.4	1.4	X	0.0	5.0	47.6	76.5	:	9.9	19.3	46.6	4.8	15.2	44.1	9.4	1.7	13.2	13.8	100.0	29.1	
	2013	22.6	1.6	X	0.1	7.2	32.4	73.6	:	14.5	20.9	44.9	3.1	14.4	42.7	8.6	1.3	11.3	11.4	100.0	31.7	
General ISCED3	2020	21.4	5.2	X	42.3	34.3	64.1	27.4	:	19.4	19.0	4.4	2.9	20.8	62.1	9.2	1.4	26.5	6.7	98.8	55.4	
	2013	21.5	5.6	X	51.2	34.2	55.7	28.0	:	29.6	15.4	2.5	2.1	22.0	62.1	7.7	5.3	28.9	10.2	100.0	45.4	
		%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED1	2020	1.4	0.6	:	5.0	0.1	2.6	2.1	1.7	3.9	3.3	X	5.8	X	0.0	0.0	X	0.0	0.0	:	X	
	2013	0.6	:	:	6.7	0.1	1.5	1.7	1.8	3.7	2.2	X	:	X	0.0	0.0	X	1.7	0.0	:	X	
ISCED2	2020	13.7	49.4	:	40.6	1.3	13.6	21.3	32.3	9.3	18.4	X	76.5	X	1.0	0.0	X	59.6	24.0	:	X	
	2013	9.1	51.7	:	69.0	0.7	10.3	19.1	57.7	10.5	19.3	X	:	X	2.5	0.0	X	44.9	24.4	:	X	
General ISCED3	2020	9.2	42.2	:	53.9	1.4	16.3	66.2	57.6	14.6	19.6	X	78.1	X	20.9*	0.0	X	(30.8)	23.0	:	X	
	2013	5.0	42.4	:	47.0	1.0	12.5	63.4	58.8	17.6	22.2	X	:	X	22.3	0.0	X	(22.5)	:	:	X	

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Table 18: Percentages of students learning German in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1–3), 2013 and 2020 (data for Figure C14)

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the EU aggregate, see the explanatory notes related to data for Figure C8 in this annex.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

Data in brackets cover both general education and vocational upper secondary education.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C14 in Chapter C.

		%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	NO
ISCED2	2020	17.7	:	X	0.0	2.1	3.0	:	6.2	0.1	21.3	0.1	:	54.6	0.1	25.0	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.2	
	2013	12.6	:	X	0.0	1.5	1.7	:	3.7	0.3	14.4	0.1	:	37.0	0.1	21.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	
General ISCED3	2020	26.8	7.4	X	2.2	10.6	14.0	17.9	22.5	4.0	18.3	0.0	:	73.1	4.5	15.3	4.0	2.5	0.9	5.8	6.1	
	2013	21.9	0.7	X	2.5	9.6	11.9	20.5	18.9	4.1	14.0	0.1	:	70.0	3.2	12.0	18.7	1.1	0.8	5.4	2.9	
		%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CH	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
ISCED2	2020	14.0	1.9	1.2	3.6	18.8	0.6	2.5	0.9	3.7	45.9	X	0.0	X	2.4	0.0	X	0.0	31.2	:	X	
	2013	7.5	1.9	1.2	1.4	24.1	0.4	2.4	0.7	1.7	43.5	X	:	X	2.9	0.0	X	0.0	31.0	:	X	
General ISCED3	2020	9.1	5.7	21.5	15.2	9.1	2.6	15.7	12.6	12.9	41.4	X	0.0	X	24.2*	0.0	X	(0.0)	24.1	:	X	
	2013	5.3	4.8	15.7	3.3	8.4	2.5	12.3	10.0	13.4	39.9	X	:	X	21.7	0.0	X	(0.4)	:	:	X	

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uae\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

Table 19: Percentage of students learning Spanish in general secondary education (ISCED 2–3), 2013 and 2020 (data for Figure C15)

### Explanatory notes

For the explanation regarding the EU aggregate, see the explanatory notes related to data for Figure C8 in this annex.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

Data in brackets cover both general education and vocational upper secondary education.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C15 in Chapter C.

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%	EU	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU
General	95.7	90.7	X	100.0	90.3	99.9	78.0	97.0	98.5	:	80.6	97.3	99.9	99.8	97.3	100.0	98.0	97.0	100.0	89.1
Vocational	79.2	59.9	X	79.7	85.4	91.1	15.4	38.8	56.3	:	73.5	45.3	96.9	89.1	100.0	95.6	83.6	56.2	76.9	69.7

%	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	AL	BA	CN	IS	LI	ME	MK	NO	RS	TR
General	100.0	100.0	99.8	98.4	62.3	99.4	98.5	98.7	99.7	100.0	X	98.6	X	72.7*	100.0	X	(99.9)	38.7	:	X
Vocational	100.0	68.9	99.2	93.7	73.6	99.6	96.1	90.6	95.0	99.9	X	89.8	X	20.9*	:	X	:	46.0	:	X

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data [educ\_uoe\_lang01] (data extracted 15 December 2022).

**Table 20: Percentages of students learning English in general and vocational upper secondary education (ISCED 3), 2020 (data for Figure C16)**

### Explanatory notes

2020 EU aggregate for vocational ISCED 3 flagged as ‘definition differs, see metadata’. Therefore, please see methodological notes related to the data: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ\\_uoe\\_enr\\_esms\\_an6.xlsx](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/educ_uoe_enr_esms_an6.xlsx).

For further details of the EU aggregate, see the explanatory notes related to data for Figure C8 in this annex.

Data with asterisks are from 2019 (instead of 2020).

Data in brackets cover both general education and vocational upper secondary education.

### Country-specific notes

See the country-specific notes for Figure C16 in Chapter C.

## Chapter D, Section I

%	EU	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	
A Total	25.4	28.2	34.0	26.5	16.4	36.8	27.8	29.5	12.0	24.6	26.3	48.0	33.0	
	S.E. 0.36	1.25	1.21	0.95	0.68	1.22	1.51	0.95	0.68	1.04	0.94	1.71	1.91	
B < 35 years old	35.3	33.1	47.7	35.0	29.2	59.2	48.7	45.8	17.7	26.5	36.0	57.3	38.9	
	S.E. 0.79	1.76	1.85	3.35	1.97	3.41	3.11	2.88	1.50	1.71	3.21	4.70	3.26	
C ≥ 35 years old	23.4	25.1	25.4	25.5	13.5	31.3	24.9	27.3	10.3	24.0	25.3	46.9	32.1	
	S.E. 0.38	1.68	1.28	0.97	0.80	1.35	1.57	0.89	0.68	1.23	0.94	1.54	2.07	
AB-C	11.9	8.0	22.2	9.5	15.6	27.9	23.8	18.5	7.4	2.5	10.7	10.4	6.8	
	S.E. 0.83	2.39	2.08	3.47	2.26	3.87	3.12	2.84	1.56	2.06	3.26	4.07	3.54	
	LT	HU	MT	NL	AT	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	NO	TR
A Total	23.0	18.5	38.3	30.3	30.8	20.6	37.0	11.9	25.9	28.9	40.6	27.1	29.3	32.7
	S.E. 0.97	1.07	1.70	2.28	0.73	0.74	1.15	1.04	0.84	1.14	1.03	1.30	0.88	0.89
B < 35 years old	29.9	26.9	52.3	36.7	52.9	37.9	42.3	16.9	26.6	49.2	52.3	47.1	56.2	35.6
	S.E. 2.61	2.58	2.29	2.67	1.54	4.61	2.84	2.81	2.07	2.76	2.52	4.17	1.99	1.42
C ≥ 35 years old	22.4	17.5	26.1	27.7	23.1	20.2	35.6	11.2	25.7	24.7	38.5	24.2	21.6	29.7
	S.E. 0.99	1.07	1.53	2.63	0.86	0.73	1.23	0.98	0.95	1.18	1.11	1.36	0.75	1.19
AB-C	7.5	9.3	26.2	9.0	29.8	17.7	6.7	5.7	0.9	24.4	13.8	22.9	32.6	5.9
	S.E. 2.69	2.51	2.80	3.12	1.83	4.60	3.09	2.62	2.33	2.79	2.73	4.47	2.06	1.92

Δ Difference between specific age groups

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

**Table 21: Percentage of teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have completed ITE that included teaching in multilingual or multicultural settings, total and by age group, 2018 (data for Figure D3)**

### Explanatory notes

Data based on teachers’ answers to the question 2, ‘How old are you?’, and question 6 (option (f)) of TALIS 2018, ‘Were the following elements included in your formal [education or training]?’. Answers to question 2 were sorted by age group. When considering the total percentage of teachers in lower secondary education who completed ITE that included

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teaching in multilingual or multicultural settings, statistically significant differences from the EU value are indicated in bold.

When considering differences between the two age groups (< 35 years old and ≥ 35 years old), values that are significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) from zero are indicated in bold.

EU includes respondents from all countries currently in the EU who participated in TALIS in 2018.

%	EU	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	
CPD	20.1	8.1	17.6	31.4	14.2	14.4	24.9	32.5	6.3	18.7	28.1	37.7	28.4	
S.E.	0.32	0.86	1.28	1.47	0.95	1.46	1.60	0.84	0.74	1.25	1.27	2.15	1.79	
	LT	HU	MT	NL	AT	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	NO	TR
CPD	18.1	14.8	26.9	9.7	17.6	14.0	22.3	17.6	14.2	19.9	23.9	23.0	15.0	27.0
S.E.	0.83	1.08	2.08	0.79	0.80	0.80	1.05	1.68	0.72	1.24	0.94	1.18	0.93	0.88

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

**Table 22: Percentage of teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who attended CPD activities focused on teaching in multilingual or multicultural settings, 2018 (data for Figure D3)**

### Explanatory notes

See the explanatory notes for Figure D3 in Chapter D.

## Chapter D, Section II

	EU	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY
Foreign language teachers	71.2	73.2	58.7	40.6	72.8	66.0	69.8	80.5	77.6	55.6	79.3	75.7
S.E.	0.72	2.55	2.32	3.09	1.70	2.02	2.12	1.60	2.38	3.01	1.77	3.71
Teachers of other subjects	36.0	33.5	38.4	28.9	40.7	50.1	55.5	38.4	33.1	29.4	27.9	63.5
S.E.	0.48	1.27	1.36	1.29	1.24	1.84	1.46	1.10	1.30	1.43	1.03	1.97
	LV	HU	MT	NL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	TR
Foreign language teachers	76.2	62.1	54.0	85.5	55.6	39.3	69.2	55.3	66.3	63.9	85.8	20.7
S.E.	3.36	2.20	3.75	2.80	2.11	2.21	3.05	1.79	1.94	2.43	1.97	2.22
Teachers of other subjects	55.7	31.4	29.3	56.5	33.9	32.0	47.3	28.7	48.7	39.0	80.1	8.9
S.E.	1.76	1.33	1.37	1.81	1.07	1.82	1.65	1.18	1.73	1.66	1.86	0.71

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

**Table 23: Percentage of teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have been abroad for professional purposes, 2018 (data for Figure D6)**

### Explanatory notes

Data based on teachers' answers to questions 15 and 56 of TALIS 2018: 'Do you teach the following subject categories in the current school year?' and 'Have you ever been abroad for professional purposes in your career as a teacher or during your teacher education/training?'

Foreign language teachers are those who chose option (e) for question 15. Teachers of other subjects are those who did not choose option (e) for question 15 and marked any other option(s) (a)–(i). Mobile teachers are those who answered 'yes' to at least one of the mobility situations (options (a)–(e)).

EU includes respondents from all the countries currently in the EU who responded to the mobility-related questions of TALIS in 2018.

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	Average 17	BE nl	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT
2018	72.2	58.7	72.8	66.0	69.8	80.5	77.6	55.6	79.3
S.E.	0.74	2.32	1.70	2.02	2.12	1.60	2.38	3.01	1.77
2013	57.6	43.0	53.3	45.1	54.2	73.7	63.3	36.8	61.7
S.E.	0.82	2.77	1.96	2.27	2.08	2.02	2.07	2.03	2.33
Δ2018–2013	14.6	15.8	19.5	20.9	15.5	6.8	14.2	18.8	17.6
S.E.	1.11	3.61	2.59	3.04	2.97	2.58	3.16	3.64	2.92
	CY	LV	NL	PT	RO	SK	FI	SE	IS
2018	75.7	76.2	85.5	55.6	39.3	55.3	66.3	63.9	85.8
S.E.	3.71	3.36	2.80	2.11	2.21	1.79	1.94	2.43	1.97
2013	58.6	62.0	59.5	35.1	30.0	39.6	56.2	57.1	71.6
S.E.	3.79	3.04	3.24	2.23	2.26	1.76	2.20	1.86	2.65
Δ2018–2013	17.1	14.2	26.0	20.5	9.3	15.7	10.0	6.7	14.2
S.E.	5.30	4.53	4.28	3.07	3.16	2.52	2.94	3.06	3.30

Δ Difference between specific reference years

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018 and 2013.

**Table 24: Differences between 2018 and 2013 in the percentage of modern foreign language teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have been abroad for professional purposes (data for Figure D6)**

### Explanatory notes

'Average 17' refers to the 17 countries (or education systems) with respondents for the questions on transnational mobility in TALIS 2013 and 2018.

See also the explanatory notes for Figure D6 in Chapter D.

	Average 17	BE nl	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT
2018	36.3	38.4	40.7	50.1	55.5	38.4	33.1	29.4	27.9
S.E.	0.51	1.36	1.24	1.84	1.46	1.10	1.30	1.43	1.03
2013	20.0	21.1	21.2	30.4	35.5	24.1	15.3	10.4	13.2
S.E.	0.37	0.94	1.20	1.54	1.26	1.06	0.78	0.72	0.89
Δ2018–2013	16.3	17.4	19.4	19.6	20.0	14.2	17.8	18.9	14.7
S.E.	0.63	1.66	1.73	2.40	1.93	1.53	1.52	1.60	1.36
	CY	LV	NL	PT	RO	SK	FI	SE	IS
2018	63.5	55.7	56.5	33.9	32.0	28.7	48.7	39.0	80.1
S.E.	1.97	1.76	1.81	1.07	1.82	1.18	1.73	1.66	1.86
2013	36.5	37.5	32.7	15.6	17.2	17.4	37.3	31.8	70.9
S.E.	1.35	2.43	1.78	0.96	1.21	1.25	1.36	1.40	1.49
Δ2018–2013	27.0	18.2	23.8	18.3	14.8	11.3	11.4	7.2	9.2
S.E.	2.39	3.00	2.53	1.44	2.19	1.72	2.20	2.17	2.38

Δ Difference between specific reference years

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018 and 2013.

**Table 25: Differences between 2018 and 2013 in the percentage of teachers of other subjects in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have been abroad for professional purposes (data for Figure D6)**

### Explanatory notes

See the explanatory notes under the previous table in this annex as well those for Figure D6 in Chapter D.

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	EU	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY
EU programme	27.4	20.1	13.7	35.2	37.6	26.9	51.8	33.3	16.6	25.0	16.7	34.2
S.E.	0.66	3.20	2.14	4.24	2.18	2.93	3.25	2.09	2.22	3.28	2.07	4.84
National or regional programme	15.7	:	10.5	18.9	23.4	10.5	33.6	21.6	14.5	20.1	6.6	34.1
S.E.	0.64	:	2.00	3.42	1.59	1.60	2.19	1.55	2.11	2.41	1.27	5.76
	LV	HU	MT	NL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	TR
EU programme	55.8	28.5	36.0	27.9	37.7	59.3	50.5	33.2	37.6	24.2	40.9	58.5
S.E.	5.63	2.73	4.66	3.69	2.45	3.40	4.40	2.36	2.55	2.43	3.19	6.27
National or regional programme	29.1	24.6	:	13.2	17.5	24.8	17.9	15.3	17.0	8.2	15.1	:
S.E.	3.46	2.48	:	2.10	2.37	3.01	3.06	2.04	1.96	1.69	2.38	:

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

Table 26: Percentage of mobile foreign language teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have gone abroad for professional purposes with the support of a mobility programme, 2018 (data for Figure D8)

**Explanatory notes**

See the explanatory notes for Figure D8 in Chapter D.

**Country-specific notes**

See the country-specific notes for Figure D8 in Chapter D.

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	Average 17	BE nl	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT
2018 EU programme	27.2	13.7	37.6	26.9	51.8	33.3	16.6	25.0	16.7
S.E.	0.71	2.14	2.18	2.93	3.25	2.09	2.22	3.28	2.07
2013 EU programme	25.1	17.1	37.5	24.3	41.1	35.2	9.3	12.7	15.2
S.E.	0.89	2.85	2.31	2.33	2.44	2.51	1.81	2.52	1.88
Δ2018–2013	2.1	-3.4	0.1	2.7	<b>10.8</b>	-1.8	7.2	<b>12.3</b>	1.5
S.E.	1.13	3.56	3.18	3.74	4.06	3.27	2.86	4.14	2.80
2018 national or regional programme	15.4	10.5	23.4	10.5	33.6	21.6	14.5	20.1	6.6
S.E.	0.67	2.00	1.59	1.60	2.19	1.55	2.11	2.41	1.27
2013 national or regional programme	11.1	:	13.2	:	26.1	19.9	:	22.2	:
S.E.	0.53	:	1.43	:	2.59	1.76	:	2.75	:
Δ2018–2013	4.3	:	10.2	:	7.5	1.7	:	-2.1	:
S.E.	0.86	:	2.13	:	3.39	2.34	:	3.66	:
	CY	LV	NL	PT	RO	SK	FI	SE	IS
2018 EU programme	34.2	55.8	27.9	37.7	59.3	33.2	37.6	24.2	40.9
S.E.	4.84	5.63	3.69	2.45	3.40	2.36	2.55	2.43	3.19
2013 EU programme	40.7	61.2	27.3	45.6	49.7	25.8	38.8	21.0	29.0
S.E.	4.64	3.10	3.92	4.56	3.97	2.24	2.78	1.93	2.24
Δ2018–2013	-6.5	-5.3	0.6	-7.9	9.6	7.4	-1.2	3.3	11.9
S.E.	6.71	6.42	5.38	5.17	5.23	3.25	3.78	3.10	3.90
2018 national or regional programme	34.1	29.1	13.2	17.5	24.8	15.3	17.0	8.2	15.1
S.E.	5.76	3.46	2.10	2.37	3.01	2.04	1.96	1.69	2.38
2013 national or regional programme	:	22.6	:	:	:	12.7	13.5	:	20.1
S.E.	:	3.64	:	:	:	1.81	2.03	:	2.59
Δ2018–2013	:	6.6	:	:	:	2.6	3.5	:	-5.0
S.E.	:	5.02	:	:	:	2.72	2.82	:	3.52

Δ Difference between specific reference years

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018 and 2013.

**Table 27: Differences between 2018 and 2013 in the percentage of mobile foreign language teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2) who have gone abroad for professional purposes with the support of a mobility programme, (data for Figure D8)**

### Explanatory notes

Data based on teachers' answers to questions 15 and 56 of TALIS 2018 and 15 and 48 of TALIS 2013: 'Do you teach the following subject categories in the current school year?' and 'Have you ever been abroad for professional purposes in your career as a teacher or during your teacher education/training?', option (b) in 2018 and (c) in 2013, 'as a teacher in an EU programme', and (c) in 2018 and (d) in 2013, 'as a teacher in a regional or national programme'. Teachers may have used both types of programmes.

Foreign language teachers are those who chose option (e) for question 15. Mobile teachers are those who answered 'yes' to at least one of the options (a)–(e) in question 56 in 2018 and (b)–(f) in 2013.

'Average 17' refers to the 17 countries (or education systems) with respondents to the questions on transnational mobility in TALIS 2013 and 2018.

When considering differences between 2018 and 2013, values that are significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) from zero are indicated in bold.

### Country-specific notes

Belgium (BE nl), Denmark, France, Italy, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden: the sample was insufficient (fewer than 5 different schools or 30 teachers) for the category 'national or regional programmes' in 2013.

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	EU		CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV
A	76.4		77.4	49.6	58.1	89.1	75.3	70.6	91.6	57.3	62.7
S.E.	0.75		1.78	2.72	2.63	1.36	2.69	2.92	1.35	5.68	3.89
B	68.4		56.0	54.8	70.3	80.0	58.8	38.7	83.1	77.1	44.4
S.E.	0.94		2.27	3.12	2.62	2.12	2.92	4.65	1.76	4.83	5.16
C	57.4		73.9	55.2	60.6	60.9	84.9	38.8	41.3	57.8	53.0
S.E.	1.01		1.80	2.89	2.92	2.07	2.17	3.94	2.16	6.47	4.41
D	40.8		45.3	40.3	61.2	46.5	34.3	37.6	25.2	33.5	61.4
S.E.	0.92		2.18	3.16	3.28	1.80	2.87	3.93	1.91	5.90	3.88
E	33.5		25.5	38.0	27.0	41.9	42.8	12.8	23.7	35.8	33.7
S.E.	0.94		1.62	2.14	2.51	2.08	3.05	2.20	2.03	5.31	3.68
F	21.9		33.7	15.4	19.1	30.3	12.0	11.4	15.7	44.4	:
S.E.	0.75		1.88	1.62	2.19	2.40	2.11	3.61	1.95	6.12	:
	HU	MT	NL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	TR
A	82.2	68.7	59.0	51.4	36.9	68.7	70.9	62.3	59.5	33.1	:
S.E.	2.05	3.32	4.95	2.39	3.42	3.59	2.45	2.20	2.80	3.15	:
B	70.8	62.5	63.1	47.7	56.6	41.9	62.5	54.5	66.0	38.6	36.4
S.E.	2.29	5.38	4.27	3.26	4.02	3.06	2.61	2.06	2.53	3.41	5.42
C	35.7	46.9	46.6	74.2	49.8	53.8	35.7	55.0	35.3	:	38.4
S.E.	3.22	5.60	5.08	2.40	3.78	3.50	2.58	2.30	2.74	:	4.76
D	55.2	37.3	44.7	51.6	65.7	59.1	43.2	53.6	41.2	43.5	50.0
S.E.	3.00	4.73	4.07	2.18	3.90	3.20	2.53	2.18	2.73	3.01	5.77
E	27.0	25.6	26.2	10.3	68.3	30.7	23.4	22.4	33.2	31.6	32.7
S.E.	2.54	5.28	3.25	1.70	3.21	3.33	2.40	2.47	2.81	3.18	4.92
F	36.4	35.3	18.3	20.0	15.0	32.1	24.1	39.6	28.8	27.9	79.2
S.E.	2.50	5.30	3.00	2.41	2.04	3.83	2.43	2.43	2.57	2.76	5.05

A Language learning    B Studying, as part of their teacher education    C Accompanying visiting students    D Establishing contact with schools abroad    E Teaching    F Learning of other subject areas

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

**Table 28: Percentage of mobile foreign language teachers in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), by professional reason for going abroad, 2018 (data for Figure D9)**

**Explanatory notes**

See the explanatory notes for Figure D9 in Chapter D.

**Country-specific notes**

Belgium (BE fr, BE nl) and Bulgaria: the question was not administered in these countries.

Latvia, Iceland and Türkiye: one category is not displayed in the table because of the insufficient sample (fewer than 5 different schools or 30 teachers).



Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition

	EU		CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV
A	39.3		35.5	10.2	32.5	65.1	30.5	32.3	62.4	23.1	28.7
S.E.	0.75		1.71	1.62	1.49	1.72	1.74	2.04	1.66	1.41	1.84
B	39.3		32.0	48.3	63.9	48.5	21.6	28.8	50.5	64.0	20.4
S.E.	0.71		1.54	2.54	1.55	1.76	1.56	2.27	1.97	2.23	2.31
C	49.9		64.4	54.5	51.5	47.9	78.9	42.8	31.5	50.1	48.3
S.E.	0.76		1.80	2.64	1.64	1.72	1.85	2.78	1.96	2.24	2.42
D	34.9		44.5	36.2	60.7	30.8	24.0	45.0	18.4	35.6	55.1
S.E.	0.71		2.03	2.81	1.86	1.47	1.88	2.49	1.42	1.97	1.99
E	23.3		25.0	32.0	24.0	24.3	18.7	12.1	16.6	25.9	27.3
S.E.	0.59		1.69	2.73	1.39	1.69	1.75	1.28	1.28	2.41	1.48
F	22.3		37.0	15.2	20.6	28.5	4.9	15.5	26.9	40.2	15.2
S.E.	0.61		1.89	2.02	1.48	1.50	0.88	1.51	1.62	2.25	1.37
	HU	MT	NL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	TR
A	42.4	13.3	9.3	20.9	30.2	29.3	25.6	18.7	13.7	10.1	29.3
S.E.	2.31	1.81	1.42	1.57	1.86	1.66	2.07	1.77	1.96	1.47	3.55
B	44.0	40.9	38.3	29.7	46.1	27.9	42.0	29.8	36.1	36.8	32.2
S.E.	1.76	2.76	1.86	1.60	2.09	1.93	2.58	2.00	2.17	1.99	3.96
C	24.8	41.6	35.1	66.4	45.8	55.3	29.1	50.9	39.0	7.2	37.5
S.E.	1.56	2.71	2.48	1.73	2.88	2.29	2.17	1.83	2.36	1.27	3.82
D	53.2	43.5	38.1	42.8	63.1	56.0	44.8	51.0	41.4	34.5	44.8
S.E.	1.87	2.97	2.33	2.00	2.41	2.36	2.31	1.89	2.19	2.05	4.13
E	17.5	36.1	22.5	10.2	52.7	19.9	21.1	24.2	41.6	38.2	35.2
S.E.	1.55	2.55	1.54	1.12	2.63	1.33	2.05	1.79	2.48	2.12	4.04
F	36.2	26.7	19.9	23.3	19.9	21.9	23.9	38.8	29.6	31.9	64.5
S.E.	2.31	2.05	3.31	1.60	2.67	1.45	2.14	1.85	2.60	1.86	4.06

A Language learning    B Studying, as part of their teacher education    C Accompanying visiting students    D Establishing contact with schools abroad    E Teaching    F Learning of other subject areas

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

Table 29: Percentage of mobile teachers of other subjects in lower secondary education (ISCED 2), by professional reason for going abroad, 2018 (data for Figure D9)

**Explanatory notes**

See the explanatory notes for Figure D9 in Chapter D.

**Country-specific note**

Belgium (BE fr, BE nl) and Bulgaria: the question was not administered in these countries.

	EU	BG	CZ	DK	EE	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV
Fewer than 3 months	48.8	76.0	64.5	71.3	70.4	32.5	34.5	71.5	40.9	53.6	78.3
S.E.	0.90	0.00	3.86	1.65	2.33	2.60	2.89	2.60	4.10	2.27	4.80
At least 3 months	51.2	24.0	35.5	28.7	29.6	67.5	65.5	28.5	59.1	46.4	21.7
S.E.	0.90	0.00	3.86	1.65	2.33	2.60	2.89	2.60	4.10	2.27	4.80
	HU	MT	NL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	IS	TR
Fewer than 3 months	65.0	76.6	61.7	76.4	79.9	76.6	57.7	59.6	60.6	88.1	69.1
S.E.	2.47	3.66	3.33	2.72	3.13	2.69	2.53	2.37	2.64	2.18	6.52
At least 3 months	35.0	:	38.3	23.6	20.1	23.4	42.3	40.4	39.4	11.9	:
S.E.	2.47	:	3.33	2.72	3.13	2.69	2.53	2.37	2.64	2.18	:

Source: Eurydice, based on TALIS 2018.

**Explanatory notes**

See the explanatory notes for Figure D10 in Chapter D.

**Country-specific notes**

See the country notes for Figure D10 in Chapter D.

## ANNEX 2: CLIL IN PRIMARY AND GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Instruction through different languages and the ISCED levels concerned			
	Language status	Languages	ISCED level
BEfr	1 state language +1 foreign language	French + English	1-3
	1 state language +1 other state language	French + Dutch/German	1-3
BEde	1 state language +1 other state language	German + French	1-3
BEnl	1 state language +1 foreign language	Dutch + English	2-3
	1 state language +1 other state language	Dutch + French/German	2-3
	1 state language + 1 other state language +1 foreign language	Dutch + French/German + English	2-3
	1 state language + 1 other state languages +1 other state languages +1 foreign language	Dutch + French + German + English	2-3
BG	1 state language +1 foreign language	Bulgarian + English/French/German/Italian/Russian/Spanish	3
CZ	1 state language +1 foreign language	Czech + English/German	1-3
		Czech + French/Italian/Spanish	2-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Czech + Polish	1-3
DK	1 state language +1 foreign language	Danish + English	1-3
DE	1 state language +1 foreign language	German + Chinese/Czech/Dutch/English/French/Greek/Italian/Polish/Portuguese/Romanian/Spanish/Turkish	1-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	German + Danish/Sorbian	1-3
EE	1 state language +1 foreign language	Estonian + German	2-3
		Estonian + English	3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language without official language status	Estonian + Russian	1-3
	1 regional/minority language without official language status +1 foreign language	Russian + English	1
IE	1 state language +1 other state language	English + Irish	1-3
EL	—	—	—
ES	1 state language +1 foreign language	Spanish + English/French/German/Italian/Portuguese	1-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Spanish + Basque/Catalan/Galician/Occitan/Valencian	1-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status +1 foreign language	Spanish + Basque + English/French/German Spanish + Catalan + English/French Spanish + Galician + English/French/German/Portuguese Spanish + Aranese (Occitan) + English/French Spanish + Valencian + English/French	1-3
	1 state language +1 foreign language +1 other foreign language	Spanish + English + French/German/Italian	1-3
	1 regional/minority language with official language status +1 foreign language	Basque + English/French Catalan + English/French	1-3
FR	1 state language +1 foreign language	French + Arabic/Chinese/Danish/Dutch/English/German/Italian/Japanese/Korean/Polish/Portuguese/Russian/Spanish/Swedish	1-3
		French + Vietnamese	2-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language without official language status	French + Alsatian/Basque/Breton/Catalan/Corsican/Ocreole/Gallo/Melanesian/Mosellan/Occitan/Polynesian languages	1-3
HR	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Croatian + Hungarian/Serbian	1-2
		Croatian + Czech	3

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Instruction through different languages and the ISCED levels concerned			
	Language status	Languages	ISCED level
IT	1 state language +1 foreign language	Italian + English/French/German/Spanish	3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Italian + French/Friulian/German/Ladin/Slovenian	1-3
CY	1 state language +1 foreign language	Greek + English	1
LV	1 state language +1 foreign language	Latvian + English/German	2-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language without official language status	Latvian + Polish/Russian/Ukrainian	1-3
		Latvian + Belarusian	1-2
		Latvian + Lithuanian	2-3
Latvian + Estonian	1		
LT	1 state language +1 foreign language	Lithuanian + English/French/German	1-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language without official language status	Lithuanian + Belarusian/Polish/Russian	1-3
LU	1 state language +1 other state language	Luxembourgish + German/French	1-3
HU	1 state language +1 foreign language	Hungarian + English/German	1-3
		Hungarian + Chinese	1-2
		Hungarian + French/Italian/Russian/Slovak/Spanish	2-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Hungarian + Boyash/Bulgarian/Croatian/German/Greek/Polish/Romanian/Romany/Serbian/Slovak/Slovenian	1-3
MT	1 state language +1 other state language	Maltese + English	1-3
NL	1 state language +1 foreign language	Dutch + English	1-3
		Dutch + German	2-3
AT	1 state language +1 foreign language	German + Arab / Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian / English	1-3
		German + Spanish	1-2
		German + French	1
		German + Chinese/Polish	2
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	German + Croatian (Burgenland Croatian)/Hungarian/Slovenian	1-3
		German + Czech/Slovak	1-2
PL	1 state language +1 foreign language	Polish + English/French/German/Italian/Spanish	2-3
		Polish + Russian	2
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Polish + Kashubian/German	1-2
		Polish + Ukrainian	1-3
		Polish + Russian	2
Polish + Belarusian	3		
PT	1 state language +1 foreign language	Portuguese + French	2-3
		Portuguese + English	1-2
RO	1 state language +1 foreign language	Romanian + English/French/German/Italian/Portuguese/Spanish	3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Romanian + Bulgarian/Croatian/Czech/German/Greek/Hungarian/Italian/Polish/Romany/Russian/Serbian/Slovak/Turkish/Ukrainian	2-3
SI	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Slovenian + Hungarian	1-3
SK	1 state language +1 foreign language	Slovak + English/French/German/Italian/Russian/Spanish	1-3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Slovak + German/Romany/Rusyn	1-2
		Slovak + Ukrainian	1-3

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Instruction through different languages and the ISCED levels concerned			
	Language status	Languages	ISCED level
FI	1 state language +1 foreign language	Finnish + English/French/German/Russian	1-3
		Finnish + Chinese/Estonian/Spanish	1-2
	1 state language +1 non-territorial language with official language status	Finnish + Sami	1-2
	1 state language +1 other state language	Finnish + Swedish	1-2
SE	1 state language +1 foreign language	Swedish + English	1-2
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language with official language status	Swedish + Finnish	1-2
	1 state language +1 non-territorial language with official language status	Swedish + Sami	1
AL	1 state language +1 foreign language	Albanian + Italian	3
	1 state language +1 regional/minority language without official language status	Albanian + Greek/Macedonian	3
BA	—	—	—
CH	1 state language +1 foreign language	German + English	3
		French + English	3
	1 state language +1 other state language	French + German German + French Italian + German Romansh + German	1-3
		French + Italian German + Italian German + Romansh	3
IS	—	—	—
LI	1 state language +1 foreign language	German + English	1-3
ME	1 state language +1 foreign language	Montenegrin + English	1 and 3
	1 regional/minority language with official language status +1 foreign language	Albanian + English	1
MK	1 state language +1 foreign language	Macedonian + English/French	3
NO	1 state language +1 foreign language	Norwegian + English	2-3
		Norwegian + French/German	3
RS	1 state language +1 foreign language	Serbian + English/German/French/Italian/Russian/Spanish	1-3
TR	—	—	—

### Explanatory notes

See the explanatory notes related to Figure B12.

Within a country, a single language may be part of different CLIL programmes (see Italy, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia).

### Country-specific notes

Italy: since 2010, all students in the last year of upper secondary education have had to learn one non-language subject through a foreign language. Those on the 'language pathway' must learn one non-language subject through a foreign language from the age of 16 and a second non-language subject through another foreign language from the age of 17.

Luxembourg: all instruction is provided in a language other than Luxembourgish, mostly in French or German.

Hungary and Poland: there are no regulations concerning languages for CLIL. Data refer to actual CLIL provision in the school year 2021/2022.

Slovakia: regulations concerning languages for CLIL cover only primary education. Data on education levels above primary education refer to actual CLIL provision in the school year 2021/2022.

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Sweden: regulations concerning languages for CLIL cover only primary and lower secondary education. Data refer to these two levels only. CLIL in upper secondary education may exist but is unregulated.

Montenegro: data refer to a pilot CLIL project.

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## **Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe – 2023 edition**

Eurydice report

The 2023 edition of Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe depicts the main education policies related to the teaching of languages in schools in 39 European education systems. It answers questions about the number and range of foreign languages studied by students, the instruction time dedicated to foreign language teaching, the language support provided for newly arrived migrant students, the transnational mobility of foreign language teachers as well as many other topics.

The report contains 51 indicators that are organised in five different chapters: Context, Organisation, Participation, Teachers and Teaching Processes. A variety of sources were used to build the indicators, and these include the Eurydice Network, Eurostat, and the OECD's PISA and TALIS international surveys. Eurydice data cover all countries of the European Union as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye.

The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is coordinated by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

For more information about Eurydice, see: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/>



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