



European
Commission

Compulsory Education in Europe

2017/18

Eurydice – Facts and Figures



Compulsory Education in Europe 2017/18

Eurydice – Facts and Figures

*Education
and Training*

This document is published by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA, Education and Youth Policy Analysis).

Please cite this publication as:

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017. *Compulsory Education in Europe – 2017/18*. Eurydice Facts and Figures. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

ISBN 978-92-9492-627-2 ISSN 2443-549X doi:10.2797/579346 EC-AP-17-001-EN-N

Text completed in November 2017.

© Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2017.

Reproduction is authorized provided the source is acknowledged.

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
Education and Youth Policy Analysis
Avenue du Bourget 1 (J-70 – Unit A7)
BE-1049 Brussels
Tel. +32 2 299 50 58
Fax +32 2 292 19 71
E-mail: eacea-eurydice@ec.europa.eu
Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN EUROPE – 2017/18

This publication provide concise information on the duration of compulsory education/training in 43 European education systems covering 38 countries participating in the EU's Erasmus+ programme (28 Member States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Turkey).

Full-time compulsory education/training, as defined in this publication, refers to a period of full-time educational/training attendance required of all students. This period is regulated by the law and usually determined by the students' age. In general, full-time compulsory education/training is provided in formal institutions/schools. However, in some education systems, certain compulsory education/training programmes can combine part-time school based and part-time workplace courses. In such cases, students are evaluated for both parts. In most countries, under certain conditions, compulsory education/training can be provided at home.

Additional compulsory part-time education/training means that after the end of full-time compulsory education/training period and until a defined age the minimum formal requirement for all young people is to participate in part-time education/training.

Starting age refers to the age at which students start compulsory education/training.

Leaving age refers to the age at which students are expected to complete compulsory education/training.

In most European education systems, compulsory education/training starts at the beginning of primary education (ISCED 1), usually at the age of 6. In 16 education systems, attendance at last year(s) of pre-primary education, usually at the age of 5, is already compulsory. Hungary has reported the earliest school starting age referring to 3. By contrast, in Estonia and Sweden, compulsory education starts at the age of 7.

In most European education systems, full-time compulsory education/training lasts 9-10 years ending at the age of 15-16. In Belgium, Germany (12 *Länder*), Luxembourg, Portugal, the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) and Turkey, the duration of full-time compulsory education/training is 12 years, while in Germany (5 *Länder*), Hungary, the Netherlands and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 13 years' attendance is mandatory. Compulsory education/training period usually covers primary and lower secondary education levels (ISCED 1 and 2) and corresponds to the full-time school attendance. In Belgium, Germany, the Netherland, Portugal and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, it is compulsory to stay in education/training until age of 18-19. However, in these countries, between ages 15-16 and 18-19, students can attend compulsory education/training programmes combining part-time school based and part-time workplace courses. Only programmes where students are evaluated for both school based and workplace courses are considered as 'full-time compulsory education/training' ⁽¹⁾.

In Austria, Poland and the United Kingdom (England), after the official school leaving age students still have to remain in education or training until their 18 birthday. However, the full-time attendance is not mandatory. Students can fulfil this obligation by participating in either full-time education or training, work-based learning or part-time education or training.

⁽¹⁾ For more details on main organisational models and structure of compulsory education please see: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Compulsory_Education_in_Europe_%E2%80%93_2016/17

Duration of compulsory education/training and student's age-groups, 2017/18

	Full-time education/training											Duration (in years)	Additional compulsory part-time Ending age
	Starting age					Leaving age							
	3	4	5	6	7	14	15	16	17	18	19		
BE fr				6						18		12	na
BE de				6						18		12	na
BE nl				6						18		12	na
BG			5		7			16				11	na
CZ			5	6			15					10	na
DK				6				16				10	na
DE (12 Länder)				6						18		12	na
DE (5 Länder)				6							19	13	na
EE					7			16				9	na
IE				6				16				10	na
EL			5	6			15					10	na
ES				6				16				10	na
FR				6				16				10	na
HR				6	7		15					9	na
IT				6				16				10	na
CY		4y8m	5y8m				15					10	na
LV			5		7			16				11	na
LT				6	7			16				10	na
LU		4		6				16				12	na
HU	3			6				16				13	na
MT			5					16				11	na
NL			5	6						18		13	na
AT			5	6			15					10	18
PL				6	7		15					9	18
PT				6						18		12	na
RO				6					17			11	na
SI				6			15					9	na
SK				6				16				10	na
FI				6	7			16				10	na
SE					7			16				9	na
UK-ENG			5					16				11	18
UK-WLS			5					16				11	na
UK-NIR		4						16				12	na
UK-SCT			5					16				11	na
AL				6				16				9	na
BA				6			15					9	na
CH (1 cantons)				6			15					9	na
CH (8 cantons)			5	6			15					10	na
CH (17 cantons)		4		6			15					11	na
FY*			5y7m								19y6m	13	na
IS				6				16				10	na
LI				6			15					9	na
ME				6			15					9	na
NO				6				16				10	na
RS			5y6m	6y6m		14y6m						9	na
TR			5y6m						17y6m			12	na

ISCED 2011 level 0

ISCED 2011 level 1

na Not applicable

FY*: see 'Country codes'.

Explanatory notes

In countries where compulsory education starts at pre-primary level (ISCED 0), the starting age of primary education (ISCED 1) is also indicated.

The starting and leaving ages presented in this report are notional; early or late entry, grade retention or other interruptions to schooling are not taken into account.

Country-specific notes**Germany**

- 12 *Länder*: Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bayern, Hamburg, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen (at *Gymnasium*), Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt and Schleswig-Holstein.
- 5 *Länder*: Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Nordrhein-Westfalen (at other lower secondary education institutions apart from *Gymnasium*) and Thuringen.

Switzerland

- 1 canton: Graubünden.
- 8 cantons: Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Lucerne, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schwyz, Uri and Zug.
- 17 cantons: Aargau, Bern, Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, Fribourg, Geneva, Glarus, Jura, Neuchâtel, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Solothurn, Thurgau, Ticino, Valais, Vaud and Zurich.

COUNTRY CODES

BE	Belgium	CY	Cyprus	UK	United Kingdom
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	LV	Latvia	UK-ENG	England
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	LT	Lithuania	UK-WLS	Wales
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	LU	Luxembourg	UK-NIR	Northern Ireland
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary	UK-SCT	Scotland
CZ	Czech Republic	MT	Malta	AL	Albania
DK	Denmark	NL	Nederland	BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
DE	Germany	AT	Austria	CH	Switzerland
EE	Estonia	PL	Poland	FY*	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
IE	Ireland	PT	Portugal	IS	Iceland
EL	Greece	RO	Romania	LI	Liechtenstein
ES	Spain	SI	Slovenia	ME	Montenegro
FR	France	SK	Slovakia	NO	Norway
HR	Croatia	FI	Finland	RS	Serbia
IT	Italy	SE	Sweden	TR	Turkey

* FY*: Code recommended by the legal service of the Council of the European Union.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EDUCATION, AUDIOVISUAL AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY

Education and Youth Policy Analysis

Postal address:
Avenue du Bourget 1 (J-70 – Unit A7)
BE-1049 Brussels

(<http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>)

EURYDICE NATIONAL UNITS

ALBANIA

Eurydice Unit
European Integration and International Cooperation
Department of Integration and Projects
Ministry of Education and Sport
Rruga e Durrësit, Nr. 23
1001 Tiranë

AUSTRIA

Eurydice-Informationsstelle
Bundesministerium für Bildung
Abt. Bildungsentwicklung und -reform
Minoritenplatz 5
1010 Wien

BELGIUM

Unité Eurydice de la Communauté française
Ministère de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
Direction des relations internationales
Boulevard Léopold II, 44 – Bureau 6A/008
1080 Bruxelles

Eurydice Vlaanderen
Departement Onderwijs en Vorming/
Afdeling Strategische Beleidsondersteuning
Hendrik Consciencegebouw 7C10
Koning Albert II-laan 15
1210 Brussel

Eurydice-Informationsstelle der Deutschsprachigen
Gemeinschaft
Autonome Hochschule in der DG
Monschauer Strasse 57
4700 Eupen

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Ministry of Civil Affairs
Education Sector
Trg BiH 3
71000 Sarajevo

BULGARIA

Eurydice Unit
Human Resource Development Centre
Education Research and Planning Unit
15, Graf Ignatiev Str.
1000 Sofia

CROATIA

Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i sporta
Donje Svetice 38
10000 Zagreb

CYPRUS

Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education and Culture
Kimonos and Thoukydidou
1434 Nicosia

CZECH REPUBLIC

Eurydice Unit
Centre for International Cooperation in Education
Dům zahraniční spolupráce
Na Poříčí 1035/4
110 00 Praha 1

DENMARK

Ministry of Higher Education and Science
Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education
Bredgade 40
1260 København K

ESTONIA

Eurydice Unit
Analysis Department
Ministry of Education and Research
Munga 18
50088 Tartu

FINLAND

Eurydice Unit
Finnish National Agency for Education
P.O. Box 380
00531 Helsinki

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

National Agency for European Educational Programmes
and Mobility
Porta Bunjakovec 2A-1
1000 Skopje

FRANCE

Unité française d'Eurydice
Ministère de l'Éducation nationale / Ministère de
l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de
l'Innovation
Direction de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la
performance
Mission aux relations européennes et internationales
61-65, rue Dutot
75732 Paris Cedex 15

GERMANY

Eurydice-Informationsstelle des Bundes
Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e. V. (DLR)
Heinrich-Konen Str. 1
53227 Bonn

Eurydice-Informationsstelle der Länder im Sekretariat der
Kultusministerkonferenz
Taubenstraße 10
10117 Bonn

GREECE

Eurydice Unit
Directorate of European and International Affairs
Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs
37 Andrea Papandreou Str. (Office 2172)
15180 Maroussi (Attiki)

HUNGARY

Hungarian Eurydice Unit
Educational Authority
19-21 Maros utca (room 517)
1122 Budapest

ICELAND

Eurydice Unit
The Directorate of Education
Víkurbær 3
203 Kópavogur

IRELAND

Eurydice Unit
Department of Education and Skills
International Section
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1 – DO1 RC96

ITALY

Unità italiana di Eurydice
Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e
Ricerca Educativa (INDIRE)
Agenzia Erasmus+
Via C. Lombroso 6/15
50134 Firenze

LATVIA

Eurydice Unit
State Education Development Agency
Valņu street 1 (5th floor)
1050 Riga

LIECHTENSTEIN

Informationsstelle Eurydice
Schulamt des Fürstentums Liechtenstein
Austrasse 79
Postfach 684
9490 Vaduz

LITHUANIA

Eurydice Unit
National Agency for School Evaluation of the Republic of
Lithuania
Geležinio Vilko Street 12
03163 Vilnius

LUXEMBOURG

Unité nationale d'Eurydice
ANEFORÉ ASBL
eduPôle Walferdange
Bâtiment 03 – étage 01
Route de Diekirch
7220 Walferdange

MALTA

Eurydice National Unit
Research and Policy Development Department
Ministry for Education and Employment
Great Siege Road
Floriana VLT 2000

MONTENEGRO

Eurydice Unit
Vaka Djurovica bb
81000 Podgorica

NETHERLANDS

Eurydice Nederland
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap
Directie Internationaal Beleid
Etage 4 – Kamer 08.022
Rijnstraat 50
2500 BJ Den Haag

NORWAY

Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education and Research
AlK-avd., Kunnskapsdepartementet
Kirkegata 18
P.O. Box 8119 Dep.
0032 Oslo

POLAND

Eurydice Unit
 Foundation for the Development of the Education System
 Aleje Jerozolimskie 142A
 00-551 Warsaw

PORTUGAL

Unidade Portuguesa da Rede Eurydice (UPRE)
 Ministério da Educação e Ciência
 Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência
 (DGEEC)
 Av. 24 de Julho, 134
 1399-054 Lisboa

ROMANIA

Eurydice Unit
 National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field
 of Education and Vocational Training
 Universitatea Politehnică București
 Biblioteca Centrală
 Splaiul Independenței, nr. 313
 Sector 6
 060042 București

SERBIA

Eurydice Unit Serbia
 Foundation Tempus
 Ruze Jovanovic 27a
 11000 Belgrade

SLOVAKIA

Eurydice Unit
 Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation
 Křížkova 9
 811 04 Bratislava

SLOVENIA

Eurydice Unit
 Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
 Department of Educational Development and Quality
 Masarykova 16
 1000 Ljubljana

SPAIN

Eurydice España-REDIE
 Centro Nacional de Innovación e Investigación Educativa
 (CNIIE)
 Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte
 c/ Torrelaguna, 58
 28027 Madrid

SWEDEN

Eurydice Unit
 Universitets- och högskolerådet/
 The Swedish Council for Higher Education
 Box 450 93
 104 30 Stockholm

SWITZERLAND

Eurydice Unit
 Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education
 (EDK)
 Speichergasse 6
 3001 Bern

TURKEY

Eurydice Unit
 MEB, Strateji Geliştirme Başkanlığı (SGB)
 Eurydice Türkiye Birimi, Merkez Bina 4. Kat
 B-Blok Bakanlıklar
 06648 Ankara

UNITED KINGDOM

Eurydice Unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
 National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)
 The Mere, Upton Park
 Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2DQ

Eurydice Unit Scotland
 c/o Education Scotland
 The Optima
 58 Robertson Street
 Glasgow G2 8DU

Compulsory Education in Europe – 2017/18

This publication focuses on the duration of compulsory education/training in Europe. It highlights the starting and leaving ages and distinguishes the notions of full-time and part-time compulsory education/training. The information is available for 43 European education systems covering 38 countries participating in the EU's Erasmus+ programme.

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 EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see <http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice>.

