



Figure B7: Specific foreign languages which are either mandatory or may be offered in full-time compulsory education, according to documents issued by the central education authorities, 2002/03

| | BE | | BE | BE | CZ | DK | DE | EE | EL | ES | FR | IE | IT | CY | LV | LT | LU | HU | MT | NL | AT | PL | PT | SI | SK | FI | SE | UK | | IS | LI | NO | BG | RO | | | |
|----------------|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|--|--|
| | n | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | |
| Arabic | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Czech | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Danish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| German | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Greek | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| English | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spanish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Estonian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Finnish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| French | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Irish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gaelic | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Modern Hebrew | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Croatian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hungarian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Italian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Japanese | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Latvian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dutch | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Norwegian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Polish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Portuguese | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Romany | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Russian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Slovak | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Slovene | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Swedish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Turkish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Urdu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chinese | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ancient Greek | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ancient Hebrew | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Latin | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------|---|
|  | Specific mandatory foreign language | 1 2 3 | These numerals indicate the order in which the specific mandatory foreign languages have to be learnt |
|  | Foreign languages on offer | n | Number of languages compulsory for everyone |

Source: Eurydice.

Additional notes

Belgium (BE fr): Pupils in Brussels have to learn Dutch as a first foreign language.

Belgium (BE de): The French-speaking minority who are taught in French in primary education are obliged to learn German as a first foreign language.

Germany: The regulations may differ from one *Land* to the next. Generally, pupils can choose English or French when they first have to learn a foreign language, but they are obliged to study English at some stage during compulsory education.

Estonia: Schools in which Russian is the language of instruction have to teach Estonian from the first year of primary education.

Spain: There is no self-contained list and, in principle, schools may offer any language. The languages indicated are examples of those that may be taught in secondary education.

France: Curricula also refer to the following languages: Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Creole, Gallo, the Melanesian languages, the regional languages of Alsace, the regional languages of Moselle, Occitan and Tahitian.

Ireland: The official languages of English and Irish are taught to all pupils, but are not foreign languages. During the first year of upper secondary education (the final year of compulsory education), Arabic, Japanese and Russian may also be offered.

Italy: Since 2003/04, pupils have been obliged to learn English from the first year of primary education onwards.

Latvia: The data relate to schools with Latvian as the language of instruction.

Lithuania: In addition to the languages referred to, schools are free to offer any other language as the second compulsory foreign language.

Hungary and Bulgaria: No precise list of foreign languages is provided. Theoretically, schools may offer any language.

Netherlands: VWO pupils are obliged to learn English, French and German. Pupils who attend the VWO *gymnasium* also have to learn ancient Greek and Latin (neither of which however are regarded as foreign languages in the curriculum).

Austria: In *Allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen*, pupils learn Latin as a second compulsory foreign language but many schools now teach a second modern language at this stage.

Slovenia: Schools are obliged to offer at least two of the languages referred to: the first as a compulsory subject and the second as a core curriculum option.

Finland: The legislation does not prescribe the range of foreign languages to be offered. The second state language (Swedish or Finnish depending on the mother tongue of the pupil concerned) has to be learnt as a compulsory subject.

Sweden: The ordinance for compulsory education states that any other language in addition to those referred to may be offered by schools, provided that it remains on offer in upper secondary education.

United Kingdom (ENG/WLS): The *National Curriculum* requires schools at secondary level to offer at least one of the official working languages of the European Union. (Since August 2004 in England, the nine new official languages of the European Union have been included.) Only then may they offer other languages as a choice. Pupils may study any modern foreign language that the school offers. In Wales, all pupils must learn Welsh. The curriculum does not consider Welsh to be a foreign language.

United Kingdom (NIR): The Northern Ireland Curriculum requires schools at secondary level to offer at least one of French, German, Italian or Spanish; only then may they offer Irish as a choice. Pupils must learn at least one of these five languages.

Iceland: Swedish and Norwegian may be offered in place of Danish, outside school hours, for pupils who have lived in Sweden or Norway or whose parents are from these countries.

Norway: Pupils of Finnish origin living in the two northernmost counties are entitled to learn Finnish as a second foreign language.

Explanatory note

This Figure deals only with languages described as 'foreign' (or 'modern') in the curriculum/official documents. Regional or ancient languages are included solely when the curriculum regards them as alternatives to foreign languages.

Languages are listed in accordance with the alphabetical order of their ISO 639 code (see the list of codes and abbreviations).

In the case of specific mandatory languages, only situations applicable to all pupils, irrespective of their area of study, are shown in the Figure. Where foreign languages are indicated in official documents as those on offer, all these languages are indicated, regardless of the ages or areas of study of the pupils concerned.

Where no numeral in white print is shown, either the language concerned is the only specific mandatory language, or the order in which it and other specific mandatory languages have to be learnt is not specified.

The small numerals in row **n** correspond to the maximum number of compulsory foreign languages that any one pupil will be obliged to study simultaneously at any given point in compulsory education.

Specific mandatory foreign language: See definitions.

A specific foreign language has to be learnt in almost half of all countries

In over half of the EU-15 Member States, the first foreign language that pupils study as a compulsory subject is a specific mandatory language. No other language can therefore be chosen. Some countries insist that two or – in the case of Luxembourg – even three such specific languages have to be learnt. This trend is not characteristic of central and eastern Europe, and only in Latvia are pupils required to learn a specific language. In the great majority of countries, this language is English. In most cases, French is more commonly a second mandatory foreign language. Several countries insist on the study of certain languages for historical or political reasons as for example in Belgium (in the German-speaking and Flemish Communities), Luxembourg, Finland and Iceland.

In the EU-15, the great majority of languages referred to in official documents, which may theoretically be offered by schools, belong essentially to the Germanic group (English, German and much less frequently Dutch) and the Latin (Romance) group (with first and foremost French followed by Spanish and Italian). Official documents in some countries also refer to Russian. Furthermore, several countries include ancient languages, such as Latin and ancient Greek, in their foreign language curricula. In relation to these specifications, two particularities are characteristic of countries in central and eastern Europe. First, Russian is included in most curricula and, secondly, ancient languages are rarely regarded as alternative options to foreign languages.

Over and above these general trends, the curricula of some countries offer a fairly wide variety of languages. Regional or minority languages, or those in neighbouring countries feature in some curricula, as in the case of Czech in Germany and Austria, Dutch in France, Croatian in Slovenia, and Finnish in Norway. Languages of immigrant populations are also sometimes specified in official documents. Examples are Arabic in the French Community of Belgium, France and the Netherlands, Turkish in Germany and the Netherlands, and Urdu in the United Kingdom (Scotland). Curricula in Germany and France also refer to languages such as Chinese and Japanese. These languages, which according to the curriculum may be taught in principle, are not always offered by schools because of inadequate human and financial resources, or lack of interest on the part of pupils. Neither is each school necessarily required to offer all languages referred to in curricula since these are drawn up for an entire area in which contexts and needs may vary from one region to the next.

In Spain and Sweden, and Lithuania in the case of the second compulsory foreign language, and in the United Kingdom (England and Wales) provided certain conditions are complied with, schools may in principle offer those languages they wish. And in Hungary, Poland, Finland and Bulgaria, curricula or official documents relating to full-time compulsory education contain no list of specific foreign languages.

Provision for foreign languages in the curriculum offers a basis for considering the issue of linguistic diversity in education. Certain statistical data (Figures C4 and C7) also provide information of special interest on this matter by enumerating the percentages of pupils learning foreign languages. A general overview of indigenous languages taught inside or outside the normal school curriculum in primary and general secondary education is given in the 'Supplementary Information'. In some cases such languages have to be learnt, as in the case of Welsh in Wales. They vary enormously in number from one country to the next in a way that depends first and foremost on linguistic circumstances in each country, and more particularly on whether it is home to regional or minority languages.

Supplementary Information

| Main indigenous languages taught in European education systems, 2002/03 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|--|
| | BE fr | BE de | BE nl | CZ | DK | DE | EE | EL | ES | FR | IE | IT | CY | LV | LT | LU | HU | MT | | |
| Belorussian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | B1 | | | | be | |
| Bulgarian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | bg | |
| Breton | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | br | |
| Catalan | | | | | | | | | B2 | B1 | | B2 | | | | | | | ca | |
| Valencian | | | | | | | | | B2 | | | | | | | | | | cat | |
| Corsican | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | co | |
| Creole | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | cpf | |
| Czech | | | | A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | cs | |
| Kashubian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | csb | |
| Welsh | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | cy | |
| Danish | | | | | A | B2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | da | |
| German | B1 | A | | B1 | B1 | A | | | | | | B2 | | | B1 | A | B1 | | de | |
| Greek | | | | | | | | A | | | | B2 | A | | | | | | el | |
| English | | | | | | | | | | | A | | | | | | | | en | |
| Castilian | | | | | | | | | A | | | | | | | | | | es | |
| Estonian | | | | | | | A | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | et | |
| Basque | | | | | | | | | B2 | B1 | | | | | | | | | eu | |
| Finnish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | fi | |
| French | A | B2 | B1 | | | | | | | A | | B2 | | | | A | | | fr | |
| Frisian | | | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | fy | |
| Irish | | | | | | | | | | | A | | | | | | | | ga | |
| Scottish gaelic | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | gd | |
| R. L. of Alsace | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | ger | |
| L. Moselle reg. | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | ger | |
| Galician | | | | | | | | | B2 | | | | | | | | | | gl | |
| Croatian | | | | | | | | | | | | B2 | | | | | | B1 | hr | |
| Hungarian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | hu | |
| Icelandic | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | is | |
| Italian | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | | | | | | it | |
| Letzeburgesch | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | | lb | |
| Lithuanian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | A | | | | lt | |
| Latvian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | | | | lv | |
| Maltese | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | mt | |
| Dutch | B1 | | A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | nl | |
| Norwegian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | no | |
| Occitan | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | B2 | | | | | | | oc | |
| Polish | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | B1 | B1 | | | | pl | |
| Portuguese | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | pt | |
| Romanian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | ro | |
| Mirandês | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | roa | |
| Ladin | | | | | | | | | | | | B2 | | | | | | | roa | |
| Romany | | | | | | | | | | | | | | C1 | | | C2 | | rom | |
| Russian | | | | B1 | | | B1 | | | | | | | B1 | B1 | | | | ru | |
| Slovak | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | sk | |
| Slovene | | | | | | | | | | | | B2 | | | | | B1 | | sl | |
| Sami (Lapp) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | smi | |
| Serbian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | sr | |
| Swedish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | sv | |
| Turkish | | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | A | | | | | | tr | |
| Ukrainian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | | B1 | | uk | |
| Ruthenian | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ukr | |
| Sorbian | | | | | | B2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | wen | |
| | BE fr | BE de | BE nl | CZ | DK | DE | EE | EL | ES | FR | IE | IT | CY | LV | LT | LU | HU | MT | | |
| A | State language | | | | | | | | | Source: Eurydice. | | | | | | | | | | |
| B1 | Recognised minority/regional language without official language status | | | | | | | | | C1 | Non-territorial language | | | | | | | | | |
| B2 | Recognised minority/regional language with official language status | | | | | | | | | C2 | Non-territorial language recognised as a minority language | | | | | | | | | |



| Main indigenous languages taught in European education systems, 2002/03 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|-------------------|----|----|----|----|-----------------|
| | NL | AT | PL | PT | SI | SK | FI | SE | UK ENG | UK NIR | UK WLS | UK SCT | IS | LI | NO | BG | RO | |
| be | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Belorussian |
| bg | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | Bulgarian |
| br | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Breton |
| ca | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Catalan |
| cat | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Valencian |
| co | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Corsican |
| cpf | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Creole |
| cs | | B2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | Czech |
| csb | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Kashubian |
| cy | | | | | | | | | | | B2 | | | | | | | Welsh |
| da | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | Danish |
| de | | A | B1 | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | German |
| el | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Greek |
| en | | | | | | | | | A | A | A | A | | | | | | English |
| es | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Castilian |
| et | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Estonian |
| eu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Basque |
| fi | | | | | | | A | B1 | | | | | | | | | B1 | Finnish |
| fr | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | French |
| fy | B2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Frisian |
| ga | | | | | | | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | Irish |
| gd | | | | | | | | | | | | B2 | | | | | | Scottish gaelic |
| ger | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | R. L. of Alsace |
| ger | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | L. Moselle reg. |
| gl | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Galician |
| hr | | B2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | Croatian |
| hu | | B2 | | | B2 | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | Hungarian |
| is | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | | | Icelandic |
| it | | | | | B2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | Italian |
| lb | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Letzeburgesch |
| lt | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Lithuanian |
| lv | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Latvian |
| mt | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Maltese |
| nl | A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Dutch |
| no | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | Norwegian |
| oc | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Occitan |
| pl | | | A | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | Polish |
| pt | | | | A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Portuguese |
| ro | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | Romanian |
| roa | | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Mirandês |
| roa | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Ladin |
| rom | | C2 | C1 | | C1 | C1 | C1 | C2 | | | | | | | | C1 | C1 | Romany |
| ru | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Russian |
| sk | | B2 | B1 | | | A | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | Slovak |
| sl | | B2 | | | A | | | | | | | | | | | | | Slovene |
| smi | | | | | | | B2 | B1 | | | | | | | B2 | | | Sami (Lapp) |
| sr | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | Serbian |
| sv | | | | | | | A | A | | | | | | | | | | Swedish |
| tr | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | Turkish |
| uk | | | B1 | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | B1 | Ukrainian |
| ukr | | | B1 | | | B1 | | | | | | | | | | | | Ruthenian |
| wen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Sorbian |
| | NL | AT | PL | PT | SI | SK | FI | SE | UK ENG | UK NIR | UK WLS | UK SCT | IS | LI | NO | BG | RO | |
| A | State language | | | | | | | | | | | | Source: Eurydice. | | | | | |
| B1 | Recognised minority/regional language without official language status | | | | | | | | | | C1 | Non-territorial language | | | | | | |
| B2 | Recognised minority/regional language with official language status | | | | | | | | | | C2 | Non-territorial language recognised as a minority language | | | | | | |

Additional notes

Belgium: There are three linguistic regions (**Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and German-speaking**) each with a **single** 'state language' and a region (Brussels-Capital) which is officially a bilingual linguistic region with French and Dutch as 'state languages'. The minority languages referred to by each of the Communities only have official status (i.e. regulated by law) in the German-speaking Community and a few communes in the French and Flemish Communities, in accordance with a list drawn up by the linguistic legislation of 1963.

Spain: According to the Constitution, the languages that have joint official status with Spanish in their Autonomous Communities are Basque, Catalan, Galician and Valencian.

Malta: Even though English is a state language, it is not an indigenous language in the strict sense.

Sweden: In the case of Finnish, Tornedalen Finnish (*meänkieli*).

Explanatory note

By taught languages are meant languages – whether the language of instruction or a foreign language – taught inside or outside the normal school curriculum.

Languages are listed in accordance with the alphabetical order of their ISO 639 code (see the list of codes, abbreviations and acronyms).

State language; indigenous language; non-territorial language; minority or regional language; official language:
See definitions.