The organisation of school time in Europe

Primary and general secondary education 2022/2023

Eurydice – Facts and Figures

Sport
Jean Monnet
Youth
Higher education
Vocational education and training
Adult education

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

School education

European Education and Culture Executive Agency
The organisation of school time in Europe
Primary and general secondary education

2022/2023

Eurydice – Facts and Figures
INTRODUCTION

This report gives an overview on the start of the school year and its length as well as the timing and length of school holidays. It covers both primary and general secondary education. The information is available for the 37 countries participating in the EU's Erasmus+ programme (27 EU Member States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Türkiye). The reference year is 2022/2023.

KEY POINTS

The school year generally starts at the beginning of September

In the majority of the European education systems, the school year starts in September. In 15 of them, students begin the school year on 1 September (¹). Students in Malta are the last to return to school at the end of September. In eight education systems, school starts in August (²). It may start as early as 8 August in Denmark. In some countries, the date for the start of the school year varies across the country (³). In Germany and the Netherlands, students may return to school in August or September (see Figure 3).

In the majority of countries, students are on holiday between 100 and 120 days per year

In primary education, the minimum cumulated length of holidays varies between countries. It lies between 100 and 120 days in the majority of countries. It exceeds 120 days in seven countries (⁴), with a maximum at 135 days in Malta. In six countries, students have less than 100 days holidays (⁵), with a minimum of 87 days in Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway.

In general, the minimum cumulated length of holidays is the same in primary and secondary education, but there are a few exceptions: in three countries, students have more holidays in primary than in secondary education: two days in Bulgaria, one week in Serbia and two weeks in Lithuania. In the same way, students in basic education (ISCED 1-2) in Denmark have two more days than those in upper secondary education.

Conversely, in three countries, students have more holidays in secondary education: five days in Cyprus, more than two weeks in Portugal and one month in Ireland. It is the same for general upper secondary education in two other countries: one day for Norway and eight for Iceland.

¹ In Belgium (German-speaking and Flemish Communities), Czechia, Estonia, Ireland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia.
² In Belgium (French Community), Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
³ In Denmark (ISCED 3 only), Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Iceland, Montenegro and Norway.
⁴ In Estonia, Greece, France, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Romania.
⁵ In Bulgaria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Liechtenstein and Norway.
Excluding the summer holidays, the minimum cumulated length of holidays varies between 30 and 49 days in the majority of the education systems. It is less than 30 days in eight education systems (6) and 50 or more in six other ones (7) (see Figure 1).

The length of the summer holidays varies a lot across Europe

In Europe, the summer holidays generally start between the end of May and the second half of July. In the majority of the education systems, students have between 9 and 12 weeks.

However, the length of the summer holidays varies significantly between countries (see Figure 2). They last maximum 6 weeks in Denmark, some German Länder, the Netherlands, some Swiss cantons and Liechtenstein. At the opposite, students are on holidays for 13 weeks in most Italian regions, Latvia and Malta.

In some countries, the length of the summer holidays varies depending on the level of education. In Denmark, students in basic education have two more days than those in general upper education. In Lithuania, students in primary education have two more weeks than those in general secondary education.

At the opposite, in Cyprus, students in primary education have one week less for the summer holidays than those in general secondary education; in Portugal, two weeks less; and in Ireland, one month less. It is the same in Iceland for students in basic education who have one week less than those in general upper secondary education (8).

Regional and local variations in school holidays exist within some countries

The periods and dates of school holidays may vary within a country. In some countries, such as Germany (6), Spain (10), Italy, Austria and Switzerland, the decision is taken at regional level. In Sweden and Norway, the responsibility lies with the municipalities. However, in general, the number of days of instruction is fixed at central level.

In Czechia, France, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, the central authorities fix different dates for some periods of holidays according to the geographical area.

---

(6) In Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Türkiye.
(7) In Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), France, Luxembourg, Romania and Liechtenstein.
(8) However, all ISCED levels are in the same category in Figure 2.
(9) However, the summer holidays in Germany are determined by the Standing Conference.
(10) The Spanish autonomous communities are in charge, but there are also variations by provinces (Andalucia), municipalities (Región de Murcia) or schools (Pais Vasco and Navarra).
Figure 1: Minimum number of holidays (in days) during the school year in primary education (ISCED 1), 2022/2023

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note
See Figure 3.

Country-specific notes
Germany, Spain and Switzerland: the length of holiday periods varies across regions (see Figure 3). The minimum cumulated length therefore does not provide an accurate picture of the situation. In Germany, according to the Agreement of the Länder on the Common Basic Structure of the School System and the National Responsibility of the Länder in Central Questions of Educational Policy, the cumulated length of holidays is 75 days including 12 Saturdays.

Spain, France, Croatia and Malta: the exact dates for the start of the school year in 2023/2024 are not yet available. The summer period is calculated with the assumption that students will come back to school at the same time as in 2022/2023.

Figure 2: Length of summer holidays (in weeks) in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1-3), 2022/2023

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note
See Figure 3.

Country-specific notes
Denmark, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Norway: the distinction is made between primary and lower secondary education (single structure) on one hand and upper secondary on the other hand.

Spain, France, Croatia and Malta: the exact dates for the start of the school year in 2023/2024 are not yet available. The summer period is calculated with the assumption that students will come back to school at the same period as in 2022/2023.
Figure 3: Length of the school year and distribution of holidays in primary and general education (ISCED 1-3), 2022/2023

Source: Eurydice.
The Organisation of school time in Europe. Primary and general secondary education – 2022/2023

Figure 3 (continued): Length of the school year and distribution of holidays in primary and general education (ISCED 1-3), 2022/2023

Source: Eurydice.
Explanatory note (Figures 1-3)

Beginning of the school year: the first day when students are meant to resume school activities, usually after the longest holiday period. It is the day that is indicated in official documents even if it is not an instruction day.

Holiday period: days when students are not required to be present at school (compared to usual school week). This includes public holidays. Examination periods (even if taken outside the schools), school trips when some or all students are not present at school are not considered, even if only some students are required to attend.

When there is a holiday period immediately before a weekend, the days of the weekend that follows are included as part of the holiday period.

When a holiday period lasts for a week or more, the weekends during the holiday period and at the end of the holiday period are included. However, the weekend before is not included even if the holiday period is starting on a Monday. When a holiday period lasts for less than a week and starts on a Monday, the weekend before this Monday is not included.

The figure does not take into account specific minimum number of days for students in the final grade of an education cycle. Longer holiday periods for specific regions or tracks, indicated as ‘maximum duration’ in Figure 3, are not considered.

The figure does not take into account specific minimum number of days for students in the final grade of an education cycle.

Country-specific notes (Figure 3)

Denmark, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Norway: the distinction is made between primary and lower secondary education (single structure) on one hand and upper secondary on the other hand.

Spain, France, Croatia, Malta and Sweden: the exact dates for the start of the school year in 2023/2024 are not yet available.

The summer period is calculated with the assumption that students will come back to school at the same period as in 2022/2023.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE
EXECUTIVE AGENCY

Platforms, Studies and Analysis

Avenue du Bourget 1 (J-70 – Unit A6)
B-1049 Brussels
(https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/)

Managing editor
Peter Birch

Author
Marie-Pascale Balcon

Graphics and layout
Patrice Brel

Production coordinator
Gisèle De Lel
EURYDICE NATIONAL UNITS

ALBANIA
Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education and Sport
Rruga e Durrësit, Nr. 23
1001 Tirana
Contribution of the Unit: Egest Gjokuta and Anila Ferizaj

AUSTRIA
Eurydice-Informationsstelle
Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung
Abt. Bildungsstatistik und –monitoring
Mirontenplatz 5
1010 Wien
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility

BELGIUM
Unité Eurydice de la Communauté française
Ministère de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
Direction des relations internationales
Boulevard Léopold II, 44 – Bureau 6A/001
1080 Bruxelles
Contribution of the Unit: Joint responsibility

Eurydice Vlaanderen
Departement Onderwijs en Vorming/
Afdeling Strategische Beleidsondersteuning
Hendrik Consciencegebouw 7C10
Koning Albert II-laan 15
1210 Brussel
Contribution of the Unit: Noël Sanne and Rana Mizrak

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Ministry of Civil Affairs
Education Sector
Trg BiH 3
71000 Sarajevo
Contribution of the Unit: BA Eurydice Unit in cooperation with representatives of competent institutions

BULGARIA
Eurydice Unit
Human Resource Development Centre
Education Research and Planning Unit
15, Graf Ignatiev Str.
1000 Sofia
Contribution of the Unit: Marchela Mitova and Nikoleta Hristova

CROATIA
Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes
Frankopanska 26
10000 Zagreb
Contribution of the Unit: Maja Balen Baketa

CYPRUS
Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
Kimonos and Thoukydidou
1434 Nicosia
Contribution of the Unit: joint responsibility

CZECHIA
Eurydice Unit
Czech National Agency for International Education and Research
Dům zahraniční spolupráce
Na Poříčí 1035/4
110 00 Praha 1
Contribution of the Unit: Andrea Turynová and Petra Prchlíková

DENMARK
Eurydice Unit
Ministry of Higher Education and Science
Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science
Haraldsgade 53
2100 Copenhagen Ø
Contribution of the Unit: the Ministry for children and Education

ESTONIA
Eurydice Unit
Strategic Planning and Communications Department
Ministry of Education and Research
Munga 18
50088 Tartu
Contribution of the Unit: Inga Kukk

FINLAND
Eurydice Unit
Finnish National Agency for Education
P.O. Box 380
00531 Helsinki
Contribution of the Unit: Hanna Laakso

FRANCE
Eurydice Unit
Directorate of Evaluation, Forecasting and Performance Monitoring (DEPP)
Ministry of School Education and Youth Affairs
61-65, rue Dutot
75732 Paris Cedex 15
Contribution of the Unit: Anne Gaudry-Lachet in cooperation with the competent education authorities

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 Berlin
Contribution of the Unit: Thomas Eckhardt
### GREECE
Hellenic Eurydice Unit  
Directorate for European and International Affairs  
Directorate-General for International and European Affairs, Hellenic Diaspora and Intercultural Education  
Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs  
37 Andrea Papandreou Street (Office 2172)  
15180 Amarousion (Attiki)  
Contribution of the Unit: Eirini Gyftaki

### HUNGARY
 Hungarian Eurydice Unit  
Educational Authority  
19-21 Maros Str.  
1122 Budapest  
Contribution of the Unit: joint responsibility

### ICELAND
Eurydice Unit  
The Directorate of Education  
Víkurhvarf 3  
203 Kópavogur  
Contribution of the Unit: Kristian Guttesen and Hulda Skogland

### IRELAND
Eurydice Unit  
Department of Education and Skills  
International Section  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1 – D01 RC96  
Contribution of the Unit: Yvonne Carroll and Caroline Curran

### ITALY
Unità italiana di Eurydice  
Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa (INDIRE)  
Agenzia Erasmus+  
Via C. Lombroso 6/15  
50134 Firenze  
Contribution of the Unit: Erica Cimò

### LATVIA
Eurydice Unit  
State Education Development Agency  
Vaiņņu street 1 (5th floor)  
1050 Riga  
Contribution of the Unit: joint responsibility

### LIECHTENSTEIN
Informationsstelle Eurydice  
Schulamt des Fürstentums Liechtenstein  
Austrasse 79  
9490 Vaduz  
Contribution of the Unit: Belgin Amann, the Office of Education Liechtenstein

### LITHUANIA
Eurydice Unit  
National Agency for Education  
K. Kalinausko Street 7  
03107 Vilnius  
Contribution of the Unit: joint responsibility

### LUXEMBOURG
Unité nationale d’Eurydice  
ANEFORE ASBL  
eduPôle Walferdange  
Bâtiment 03 - étage 01  
Route de Diekirch  
7220 Walferdange  
Contribution of the Unit: national expert: Xavier Kamphaus and Charlotte Mahon; Elisa Mazzucato (from the Service de coordination de la recherche et de l’innovation pédagogiques et technologiques (SCRIPT) of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth)

### MALTA
Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation  
Great Siege Road  
Floriana VLT 2000  
Contribution of the Unit: Gary Lee Doublet Meagher

### MONTENEGRO
Eurydice Unit  
Vaka Djurovica bb  
81000 Podgorica  
Contribution of the Unit: Zora Bogicevic

### NETHERLANDS
Eurydice Nederland  
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap  
Directie Internationaal Beleid  
Rijnstraat 50  
2500 BJ Den Haag  
Contribution of the Unit: joint responsibility

### NORTH MACEDONIA
National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility  
Boulevard Kuzman Josifovski Pitu, No. 17  
1000 Skopje  
Contribution of the Unit: joint responsibility

### NORWAY
Eurydice Unit  
The Directorate for Higher Education and Skills  
Postboks 1093, 5809 Bergen  
Contribution of the Unit: joint effort by the Norwegian team

### POLAND
Polish Eurydice Unit  
Foundation of the Development of the Education System  
Aleje Jerozolimskie 142A  
02-305 Warszawa  
Contribution of the Unit: Michał Chojnacki in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Science

### PORTUGAL
Portuguese Eurydice Unit  
Directorate-General for Education and Science Statistics  
Av. 24 de Julho, 134  
1399-054 Lisbon  
Contribution of the Unit: Isabel Almeida and Margarida Leandro; outside the Unit: Joaquim Santos
Getting in touch with the EU

IN PERSON
All over Europe there are hundreds of local EU information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest to you at: europa.eu/contact

ON THE PHONE OR BY EMAIL
Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:
– by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
– at the following standard number: +32 2299696, or
– by electronic mail via: europa.eu/contact

Finding information about the EU

ONLINE
Information in all the official languages of the European Union is available on the Europa website: europa.eu

EU PUBLICATIONS
You can download or order free and priced EU publications from EU Bookshop at: http://bookshop.europa.eu. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see http://europa.eu/contact).

EU LAW AND RELATED DOCUMENTS
For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu

OPEN DATA FROM THE EU
The EU Open Data Portal (http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.
The organisation of school time in Europe.
Primary and general secondary education – 2022/2023

This report provides an overview of the school calendars for primary and general secondary education in 37 European countries. It presents information on the start of the school year and its length as well as the timing and length of school holidays.

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 co-ordinated by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

For more information about Eurydice, see: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/.