

Brussels, 14 October 2009

Report on arts and cultural education at school in Europe

This Report, which is based on the work of the Eurydice network, presents up-to-date, comprehensive and comparable information on arts education policy in 30 European countries. It gives a detailed picture of the aims and objectives of arts education, its organisation, the provision of extra-curricular activities as well as initiatives for the development of such education at school. It includes information on pupil assessment and teacher education in the arts. The annex presents the planned reforms in the field.

As the learning objectives show, arts education has the potential to develop in pupils not only all dimensions related to creativity, but also different personal and social skills and attitudes. However, to bear fruit, arts education has to overcome certain challenges, such as a proportionally low level of taught time, particularly at lower secondary education, and specific difficulties related to assessment. Creating partnerships between the world of art and schools seems to be a good way forward in order to meet these challenges and more generally to promote arts education in schools.

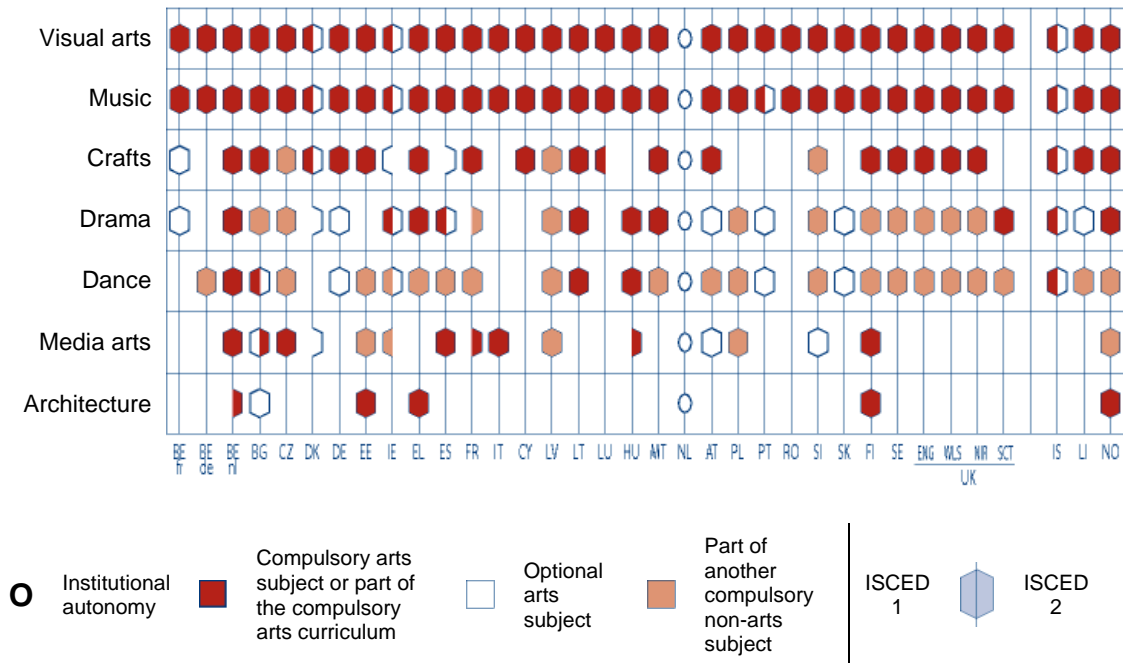
The findings of this study are intended, *inter alia*, to contribute to the 2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

The study covers mainly full-time compulsory education and the data refers to school year 2007/2008.

Music and visual arts taught to all pupils in Europe

Music and visual arts are taught in all European countries at one point during compulsory education. Craft, drama and dance are also compulsory subjects in a great majority of countries. The latter two are usually taught as part of another compulsory non-arts subject, namely literature and physical education. In a dozen countries, the curriculum offers media arts. Very few propose architecture.

Figure 2.2: Status of different arts subjects in the national curriculum, ISCED 1 and 2, 2007/08



Source: Eurydice.

In terms of time to be devoted to the arts according to official documents, approximately half of the European countries dedicate between 50 and 100 hours per year to the arts at primary level. At lower secondary level, the taught time is slightly lower, with around half of the countries dedicating approximately 25 to 75 hours per year to the arts. At primary level, this is certainly less than the time allocated to the language of instruction, mathematics or sciences (natural and social sciences taken together), but the majority of countries devote more time to arts education than to teaching foreign languages or to physical education. However, at lower secondary level, the time allocated to arts subjects also decreases in comparison to the other subject areas. At this level, the majority of countries not only devote less time to arts education than to the language of instruction, mathematics, natural and social sciences (taken together or separately), and foreign languages, but also to physical education. This study confirms previous research results on the lack of time allocated to the arts at secondary level.

The general objectives of arts education are, on the whole, quite similar among the countries: all or nearly all countries mention "artistic skills, knowledge and understanding", "critical appreciation", "cultural heritage", "individual expression/identity", "cultural diversity", and "creativity" as objectives. Quite surprisingly however, "arts and lifelong learning/interest" is only mentioned in 15 curricula. In a great majority of countries, arts education also aims at personal and emotional development as it promotes social skills and self-fulfilment through experiencing pleasure and satisfaction.

Assessment criteria are usually defined at school level

Previous research has highlighted how challenging it can be to assess pupils' work in the arts. Several types of support can be provided to arts teachers. In a minority of countries, the national education authorities define assessment criteria which can help teachers identify the different levels of pupils' performance. Assessment criteria are generally created by teachers themselves on the basis of the learning objectives set by the curricula or the guidelines produced by education authorities. At school level, teachers can get some support from their colleagues through working groups whose aim is to establish assessment criteria.

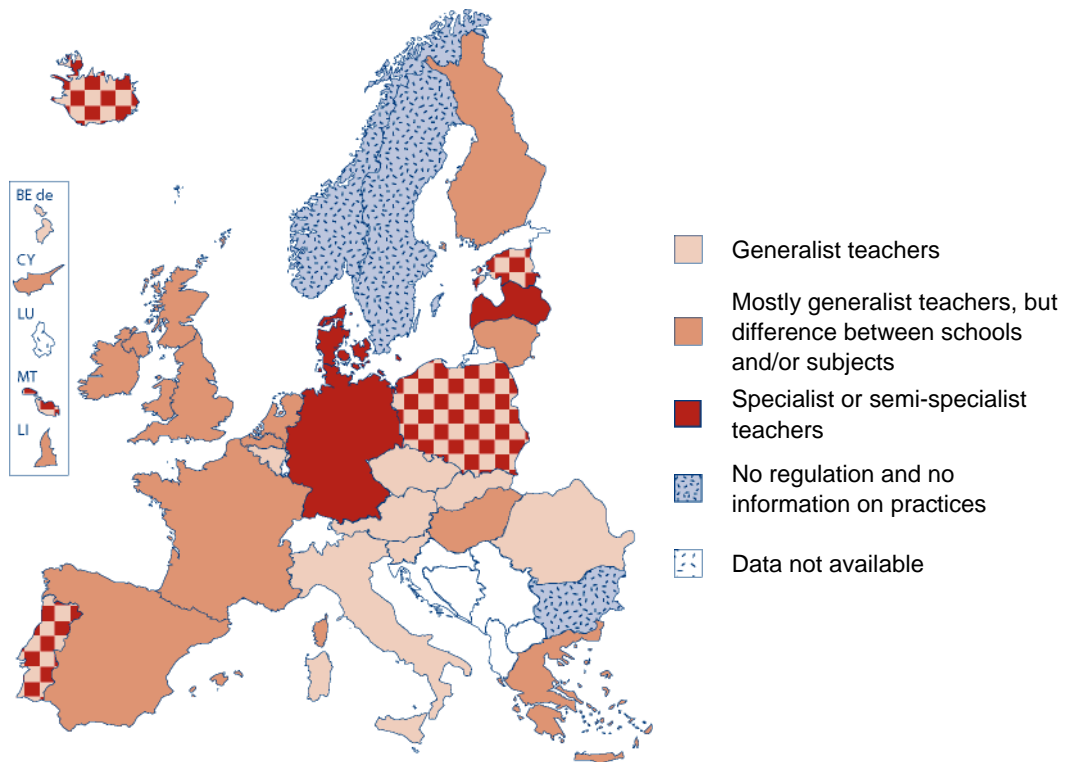
In only three countries (Ireland, Malta and United Kingdom (Scotland)), all pupils have to take a standardised national test in the arts at least once during their compulsory schooling. The results of these tests, as well as those of school inspections and surveys, are also used to monitor arts education in general. The most common findings of these national reports corroborate previous research: the lack of time allocated for arts learning, the lack of training of the teachers as well as the difficulty of assessing pupils' progress.

Professional artist rarely teach their art(s) in schools

Professional artists are not often involved in actual teaching at primary and lower secondary level. In most countries, in order to teach the arts subjects in schools, professional artists have to complete professional teacher training. However, there are certainly exceptions to this rule: several countries allow professional artists to teach without the required teaching qualifications or teacher training on a temporary basis.

At primary level, arts teachers are usually generalist teachers. This means that they teach all or most of the curriculum subjects. In the majority of countries, they receive training in more than one arts subjects, most often visual arts and music, which are compulsory subjects in all European school curricula at primary level. At secondary level, arts education is taught by specialist teachers for whom demonstrating arts skills in (a) specific arts subject(s) before becoming an arts teacher is usually a requirement.

Figure 5.1 Specialist and generalist arts teachers in primary education, 2007/08



In **Estonia, Poland, Portugal** and **Iceland**, the pattern is mixed because specialist teachers usually teach the arts subjects after a few grades already at ISCED level 1.

Source: Eurydice.

Partnerships with the artistic world and extracurricular activities: Common way to promote artistic and cultural education

The report highlights quite a number of initiatives and projects involving artists and arts institutions, with the aim of encouraging arts education in educational settings. In Belgium (French-speaking and Flemish Community), Denmark, Ireland, Malta, The Netherlands, Austria and Norway national organisation and networks have been specifically set up to promote arts and cultural education. In several countries, cultural visits, such as going to museums, theatres, concert halls, are formally included in the curriculum. Although professional artists rarely teach their arts in schools, the latter, in some countries, are encouraged to establish partnerships with them so that pupils are more directly connected to the world of arts and culture.

Several countries (Czech Republic, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom (England and Wales) have statutory recommendations for schools and other organisations in relation to the provision of extra-curricular arts activities (learning activities outside of normal curriculum time). Extra-curricular activities may be offered in a number of art-forms, although music appears to be particularly well represented. Obstacles can however exist to pupils accessing such activities, particularly in terms of funding and availability. Belgium, Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Austria, Portugal and Finland provide full funding of or a subsidy towards extra-curricular arts activities by either national or local governments.

The full study *Arts and cultural education at school in Europe* available in French and English as well as detailed National Descriptions can be found:

- on the Eurydice website: www.eurydice.org
- on the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency website: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eurydice/index_en.htm

Printed copies of the study in English and French will be available from the beginning of December 2009. The German translation will be available shortly afterwards.

Background information on the Eurydice network

The Eurydice Network provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies. It produces regular studies on various aspects of European education systems and provides detailed descriptions of the systems in each participating country. It consists of 35 national units based in all 31 countries participating in the EU's Lifelong Learning programme (27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey) and is coordinated and managed by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels, which drafts its publications and databases.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php

See also:

[IP/09/1517](#)