Foreign language learning in the European Union [1]

What proportion of students learn two or more foreign languages?

School and other educational institutions provide the main opportunity for the vast majority of people to learn languages, while linguistic diversity is actively encouraged within many further education establishments and workplaces.

This article presents statistics on language learning in primary and secondary schools of the European Union’s (EU) Member States as well as in the United Kingdom, EFTA and candidate countries and forms part of an online publication on education and training in the EU.

Currently there are 24 official languages recognised within the EU which has been the situation since the accession of Croatia. In 1958, legislation specified German, French, Italian and Dutch as the official and working languages of the EU’s predecessor, the European Communities.

There have always been fewer official languages than EU Member States, as some EU Member States share common languages, for example in Belgium where the official languages are Dutch, French and German, while in Cyprus the majority of the population speaks Greek.
There are also a number of indigenous regional and minority languages (such as Catalan, Galician and Basque in Spain) found within the EU, as well as many other languages that have been brought into the EU by migrant populations, notably Arabic, Turkish and Chinese.

Some regional languages, such as Catalan, have gained a status as co-official languages of the EU and the official use of such languages can be authorised on the basis of an administrative arrangement concluded between the Council and the requesting Member State.

Read more [2]

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