Starting age for learning the first foreign language as a compulsory subject:

- Between 3-5 years old: in 6 education systems;
- Between 6-8 years old: in 26 education systems;
- Between 9-10 years old: in 6 education systems.

Key message:
In the majority of education systems, all students have to start learning a foreign language between the ages of 6 and 8 years.

Starting age for learning the first foreign language as a compulsory subject:

- General upper secondary education:
  - 0 foreign language: 2.9%, 60.0%
  - 1 foreign language: 37.1%
  - 2 or more foreign languages: 18.0%

- Vocational upper secondary education:
  - 0 foreign language: 46.9%
  - 1 foreign language: 35.1%
  - 2 or more foreign languages: 18.0%

Key message:
In the EU, students in vocational education and training learn less languages than those in general education.
Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe — 2023 edition

In most education systems, students are expected to attain level B2 in the first foreign language and level B1 in the second at the end of general secondary education.

Minimum level* of attainment expected at the end of secondary education for the:
- first foreign language
- second foreign language

* Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) of the Council of Europe

In most education systems, the instruction time dedicated to foreign language teaching represents between 5 % and 10 % of the total instruction time in primary education. This proportion reaches 10 % to 19 % in compulsory general secondary education.
Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe — 2023 edition

At EU level, 13.3% of 15-year-old students attend language-heterogeneous schools*.

Around one in ten 15-year-olds in the EU do not speak the language of schooling at home.

*Schools where more than 25% of students speak a different language at home from the language of schooling.
Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe — 2023 edition

In 11 education systems, all or almost all students — more than 90% — learn English from the beginning of primary education until upper secondary school graduation.

English, as a foreign language, is one of a kind.

At EU level, 98.3% of students learn English in lower secondary education.

The purpose is to show the percentage of foreign language teachers who have been abroad for professional purposes, at EU level, in 2013 and 2018.

- In 2013: 57.6%
- In 2018: 72.2%

Key message: At EU level, the percentage of foreign language teachers who have been abroad for professional purposes rose by 14.6 percentage points (p.p.) between 2013 and 2018.

57.6%
2013


72.2%
2018
Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe — 2023 edition

While most education systems provide additional classes in the language of schooling, only a minority of them promote or financially support the teaching of newly arrived migrant students’ mother tongue.

Number of education systems promoting or financially supporting six language learning support measures:

- Additional classes in the language of schooling during school hours: 31 education systems;
- Additional classes in the language of schooling outside school hours: 25 education systems;
- Adapted curriculum: 23 education systems;
- Mother tongue classes: 14 education systems;
- Teaching assistant in class: 12 education systems;
- Bilingual subject teaching (mother tongue + language of schooling): 3 education systems.

Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe — 2023 edition

Full report is available on our website: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/