

**INITIAL TRAINING OF  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS**



Eurydice



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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

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**EURYDICE European Unit  
Rue Archimède 17/ Bte 17  
B - 1040 BRUSSELS**

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## INTRODUCTION

The European Unit of EURYDICE was requested to compile this document briefly describing the initial training of foreign language teachers within the context of the preparation of the LINGUA programme.

LINGUA was adopted on 28 July 1989 by a Decision of the Council of the European Communities. Its principal objective is to promote a quantitative and qualitative improvement in foreign language competence with a view to developing communication skills within the Community.

LINGUA includes measures to promote foreign language learning in universities, in particular to develop the initial training of foreign language teachers. For this reason the document attempts to indicate, inter alia, whether it is possible to determine which foreign language students intend to become teachers.

In most Member States initial teacher training for primary level takes place over a 3 or 4-year period in a teacher training institution. In this case it is possible to determine which students intend to become teachers.

Initial teacher training for secondary level often varies depending on whether the student intends to teach in lower secondary or upper secondary education. Lower secondary teachers are trained either in a teacher training institution or a university, usually over a 3 or 4-year period. In the former case it is possible to determine which students intend to become teachers. In the latter it is only possible when the university course includes pedagogical training, which is by no means the case in all Member States. When the university course does not include pedagogical training, in order to become a teacher students may follow a 1 to 3 year postgraduate course.





Upper secondary teachers are almost always trained in universities, usually over 4 to 6 years. Again, only when the university course includes pedagogical training is it possible to determine which students intend to become teachers, and when the university course does not include pedagogical training, in order to become a teacher students may follow a 5-month to 3-year postgraduate course.

Prepared by J. Martin-Bletsas  
of the EURYDICE European Unit

September 1989



## BELGIUM

Primary: Teachers for primary level receive initial training in a non-university teacher training institution ("école normale primaire/lagere normaalschool") for 3 years. This includes academic and pedagogical training and teaching practice. Language teachers have a general primary school teacher qualification and a diploma sanctioning tests passed in the language(s) to be taught. In theory all those successfully completing training may become teachers.

Lower secondary: Teachers for lower secondary level receive initial training in a non-university teacher training institution ("école normale moyenne/middelbare normaal-school") for 3 years. This includes academic and pedagogical training and teaching practice. Teachers of Dutch, English, French and German have a lower secondary teaching diploma and specialize in the language(s) to be taught. In theory all those successfully completing training may become teachers. Teachers of Spanish and Italian are university graduates (see Upper Secondary).

Upper secondary: Teachers for upper secondary level follow an academic language training in a university for 4 years in 2 languages and 2 years of pedagogical training including teaching practice in the latter. The 2 years of pedagogical training may be carried out at the same time as the 4 years of academic training or afterwards. The 4 years of academic training lead to a university degree; the 2 years of pedagogical training lead to an upper secondary teaching diploma and thus the possibility to become a teacher.

## DENMARK

Primary and Lower secondary: Teachers for primary and lower secondary level ("Folkeskole") receive initial training in a non-university teacher training college for 4 years. This includes academic and pedagogical training and teaching practice. All teachers are specialized in two compulsory subjects (this may include languages - English, German or French) but are qualified to teach all compulsory subjects. In theory all those successfully completing training may become teachers. It would, however, be difficult to determine which are definitely to teach languages.

Upper secondary: Teachers for upper secondary level ("Gymnasium" and "higher preparatory course") follow an academic training in a university for 6 years (one major and one minor subject) and 5 months' pedagogical training including teaching practice. During the 6 years of university it is not possible to determine which students intend to become teachers. In theory all those successfully completing pedagogical training may become teachers.



## FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

In most Länder, the initial training of foreign language teachers for standard educational establishments is geared to the type of institution involved : common elementary ("Grundschulen") and lower secondary schools ("Hauptschulen"), intermediate schools providing education up to 10th grade ("Realschulen"), lower and upper secondary grammar schools ("Gymnasien") or upper secondary vocational schools. Since teacher training related to a specific level of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) or bridging two or more levels (primary and intermediate or intermediate and upper secondary) is the practice in only certain of the Länder, the following description is based on initial teacher training by type of school or college. Irrespective of the type of college or higher education institution involved, a pass in the university entrance examination, or "Abitur", generally on completion of the 13th grade, is a condition for the admission of intending foreign language teachers.

Moreover, all teacher training courses consist of two periods of study : academic study at a college or higher education institution ("Hochschule") and practical pedagogical training at a training college and study seminar. Academic study at the college or higher education institution includes education studies and specialist academic studies in at least two subjects for all categories of teachers at the initial training stage. The first state examination ("Staatspruefung") diploma is a condition for admission to the second stage of initial teacher training (18-24 months) which is very largely practice-oriented and ends with the second state examination for the award of the teaching qualification. Land legal provisions determine whether it is possible to obtain a teaching qualification in a foreign language in combination with another subject or in 2 foreign languages. Differences arising with regard to possible subject combinations concern in particular the less widespread languages. Content requirements for specialist knowledge in the field of foreign language teaching depend on the education content and aims of the type of school at which the teacher is qualified to teach. It is strongly recommended that future foreign language teachers spend at least 1 or 2 semesters in a country whose language they intend to teach, whether as a student or as a foreign language assistant in a school. In one Land, the Saarland, proof of such time spent abroad is a condition for admission to the first state examination.

Elementary and lower secondary schools : Training takes place at universities, or at comprehensive higher education institutions ("Gesamthochschulen") in the case of North Rhine-Westphalia and Hessen, or colleges of education ("Paedagogische/Erziehungswissenschaftliche Hochschulen") in the case of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Rhineland-Pfalz and Schleswig-Holstein. Academic studies normally last between 3 and 4 years, depending on the Land; while the second stage, following the first state examination, lasts between 18 and 24 months.

# THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. From the first settlers to the present day, the nation has evolved through various stages of development. The early years were marked by exploration and the establishment of colonies. The American Revolution led to the birth of a new nation, and the subsequent years saw the expansion of territory and the growth of industry. The Civil War was a pivotal moment in the nation's history, leading to the abolition of slavery and the strengthening of the federal government. The 20th century brought significant social and economic changes, including the rise of the industrial revolution and the emergence of the United States as a global superpower. Today, the United States continues to face new challenges and opportunities, and its history remains a source of inspiration and guidance for the future.

The early years of the United States were characterized by a sense of adventure and discovery. Explorers like Christopher Columbus and John Cabot opened up new worlds, and settlers like the Pilgrims and Puritans established communities in the New World. The American Revolution was a defining moment, as the colonies fought for independence from British rule. The resulting Constitution established a framework for a new government, and the nation began to take shape. The years following the Revolution were marked by westward expansion and the growth of the frontier. The Civil War was a period of intense conflict, as the nation grappled with the issue of slavery. The war ultimately led to the abolition of slavery and the strengthening of the federal government.

The 20th century was a period of rapid change and progress. The industrial revolution transformed the economy, and the United States emerged as a global superpower. The Great Depression and World War II were defining moments, and the Cold War era saw the United States and the Soviet Union in a tense standoff. The 1960s brought significant social and cultural changes, including the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. The 1970s and 1980s saw economic growth and technological advancement, and the United States continued to play a leading role in the world. Today, the United States faces new challenges, including climate change, terrorism, and economic inequality, but its history remains a source of strength and inspiration.

Intermediate school ("Realschule") : Training for teachers at "Realschulen" also takes place at universities, or at "Gesamthochschulen" in the case of North Rhine-Westphalia and Hessen, or colleges of education in the case of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Rhineland-Pfalz and Schleswig-Holstein. Here too, academic studies normally last between 3 and 4 years, depending on the Land, with a preparatory stage of between 18 and 24 months.

Grammar school ("Gymnasium") : Teachers of 1 or 2 foreign languages at grammar schools are trained at universities, or "Gesamthochschulen" in the case of North Rhine-Westphalia and Hessen. Academic studies normally last between 4 and 5 years and the preparatory stage again lasts between 18 and 24 months.

Vocational school : Training of vocational school teachers may also - except in the case of certain Lander - cover foreign language teaching as well as specialist vocational training. Training takes place at universities, technical colleges and "Gesamthochschulen". Academic studies normally last between 4 and 5 years and the second stage between 18 and 24 months. In addition to academic studies and the second stage, trainees have to complete a 12-month specialist practical training course (vocational training), generally 6 months before the commencement of studies. The practical vocational training course, which is completed by the time of the first state examination, is intended to further knowledge of the particular field of vocational training involved (e.g. economics).





## GREECE

Primary: Foreign languages have only recently been introduced into certain primary schools on an experimental basis (English in 80 schools and French in 44 schools from the 1987-88 school year) and in most cases teachers have been transferred from nearby secondary schools for this purpose.

Secondary: Teachers for secondary level (lower-"Gymnasium" and upper-"Lyceum") follow an academic training in a university for 4 years. This includes teacher training in the 4th year of studies. As this training is a compulsory part of the course all students follow it. However, not all students intend to become teachers.

## SPAIN

Primary: Teachers for "primary" level - general basic education ("EGB") - receive initial training in a university institute for teacher training of "EGB" teachers for 3 years. This includes academic and pedagogical training and teaching practice. In theory all those successfully completing training may become teachers.

Secondary: Teachers for secondary level follow an academic training in languages in a university for 5 years and 1 year of pedagogical training in a postgraduate teacher training institute. It is not possible to determine which (language) students intend to become teachers during the 5 years at university. In theory all those successfully completing the postgraduate teacher training course may become teachers.



## FRANCE

Primary: Only a limited number of schools teach foreign languages experimentally at the initiative of the local authorities. Teachers for primary level follow an academic training in a university for 2 years leading to a "1st cycle" university diploma which may include language studies and then 2 years of academic and pedagogical training in a non-university teacher training institution ("école normale").

Secondary: The teaching of languages, as of other subjects, is carried out by either "professeurs certifiés" or "professeurs agrégés" specialized in a single subject. "Professeurs certifiés" follow an academic training in a university for 3 years leading to a "2nd cycle" university degree ("licence") and, following a recruitment examination for the CAPES (aptitude certificate for secondary teachers), 1 year in a regional teacher training centre ("Centre Pédagogique Régional"). "Professeurs agrégés" follow an academic training in a university for 4 years leading to a "2nd cycle" university degree ("maîtrise") and, following a recruitment examination for "agregation", 1 year in a regional teacher training centre. Not all those with specialist language degrees and certainly not all language students intend to become teachers.

At lower secondary level ("collège") language teaching may also be carried out by "PEGC" (general lower secondary teachers) who teach French and one foreign language. Since 1986, however, "PEGC" training no longer exists.

## IRELAND

Primary: Officially no foreign language is taught at primary level, although both English and Irish are compulsory. Teachers follow an academic and pedagogical training for 3 or 4 years in a university level College of Education.

Secondary: Teachers for lower and upper secondary level follow an academic training in language and literature in a university for 3 years, followed by 1 year of pedagogical training, including teaching practice, in the education department of the university. It is not possible to determine which students intend to become teachers during their 3 years at university. In theory, all those successfully completing the teacher training course may become teachers.



## ITALY

Primary: Teachers for primary level follow an academic and pedagogical training for 4 years in a non-university primary teacher training school ("istituto magistrale"). Courses in foreign languages are at present given during the first 2 years at the "istituto magistrale". With the introduction of foreign language teaching in the New Primary School Programmes from the 1987/88 school year teachers in service should receive a specialized training in foreign languages if they intend to teach them.

Secondary: Teachers for lower and upper secondary level follow an academic training for 4 years in a university in language and literature. It is not possible to determine which students intend to become teachers during this time. Indeed most students do not receive any initial teacher training before taking part in the national examination for entry to the teaching profession. Those who are successful in this examination are appointed "in ruolo" and admitted to 1 year of pedagogical/practical training which makes up for this.

## LUXEMBURG

Primary: Teachers for primary level follow an academic and pedagogical training, including teaching practice, for 3 years in a non-university level teacher training institute : "Institut supérieur d'études et de recherches pédagogiques (ISERP)". All students successfully completing this training may become teachers. Since all Luxembourgers follow bilingual French and German education from age 6/7, all primary school teachers are qualified to teach, and to teach in, these two languages.

Secondary: Teachers for lower and upper secondary level follow an academic training of at least 4 years in a university and then teacher training comprising 1 year of academic and theoretical pedagogical training plus 2 years' practical pedagogical training, including teaching practice. Since 1980 foreign language students spend the first year of the 4 years at university at the Luxembourg University Centre and then 3 years in a foreign university. For those studying English, French or German, this must be in a country where the respective language is spoken. All those successfully completing teacher training may become teachers.



## NETHERLANDS

Primary: Teachers for primary level follow an academic and pedagogical training, including teaching practice, for 4 years in a non-university primary teacher training college ("pedagogische academie voor het basisonderwijs"). At this level teachers are qualified to teach all subjects in the curriculum, including English, the only foreign language taught. In theory all those successfully completing the training may become teachers.

Secondary: Teachers for general secondary, technical/vocational secondary and lower secondary pre-university education are specialists in languages and follow an academic and pedagogical training, including teaching practice, in non-university higher education institutes, either part-time for 4 years ("tweedegraads deeltijdopleidingen leraren voortgezet onderwijs algemene vakken - DAV II") or full-time for 4 years. Teachers for upper secondary pre-university education are specialists in languages and follow either 4 years' academic training and 1 year pedagogical training, including teaching practice, in a university or 7 years academic and pedagogical training part-time in a non-university higher education institute (4 years DAV II + 3 years DAV I). It is not possible to determine which students intend to become teachers during the 4 years of academic training at university. In theory all those successfully completing pedagogical training may become teachers. Teachers qualified for upper secondary level may teach in all types and levels of secondary education.





## PORTUGAL

Primary: Teachers for primary level receive initial training at non-university higher education institutions (Higher Schools of Education and Integrated Centres of Teacher Training) specialized in teacher training. Training comprises academic, pedagogical and practical elements. However, no foreign languages are taught at this level.

Intermediate (Preparatory education) : The initial training of foreign language teachers at this level may be gained through :

- a) Honours or Ordinary Degrees in Romance or Germanic Languages, received after 5 and 3 years of study respectively at a State university or, currently, following the restructuring of the courses at these universities, an Honours Degree in Modern Languages and Literature, received after 4 years of study. Holders of these Degrees may have access to the teaching profession before undergoing a specific course of teacher training : the latter may vary but always includes teaching practice. At present it consists of a course in education science, given by the Higher Schools of Education and the Integrated Centres of Teacher Training, and supervised teaching practice, lasting a total of 2 years. Access to training is subject to the needs and resources of the education system and to public examination.
- b) Honours Degree in Education, obtained at a university, comprising, from the first year, an academic training in languages and pedagogical training, with teaching practice in the final year, lasting a total of 5 years.
- c) Ordinary Degree in Education, obtained at a Higher School of Education and Integrated Centre of Teacher Training, comprising an academic training in languages and teacher training, acquired simultaneously over 8 semesters.

At this level of education pupils are taught only one foreign language, either French, English or German.

Secondary (General Unified Course and New Complementary Course): Foreign language teachers at this level receive the same training as teachers in preparatory education referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) above, and also through :

- Honours Degrees from the Department of Education in the Arts Faculties of the Universities of Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra and from the "Universidade Nova" of Lisbon. These were introduced in 1987 and therefore there are as yet no teachers trained under this system. Students who enrolled in the 1987/88 academic year receive a training similar to that offered by the Honours Degree in Education, lasting a total of 5 years.



Within the context of these Honours Degrees there are also two other ways of receiving initial training :

- An Honours Degree in Modern Languages and Literature, followed by 2 years' training in education science and teaching practice, lasting a total of 6 years.
- An Honours Degree in Modern Languages and Literature, with the option of following, from the third year, a combination of disciplines including a theoretical pedagogical training, lasting a total of 4 years. Students may then enrol in a second stage of practical training which lasts 1 year.

Two foreign languages are compulsory, French, English or German, in the General Unified Course : the languages studied depend on the choice made in preparatory education. In the New Complementary Course the languages to be studied depend on the other subjects taken by pupils.



# UNITED KINGDOM

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## UNITED KINGDOM (except Scotland)

Intending teachers have two avenues of initial training open to them. In both cases, students attend an establishment of higher education (university, polytechnic or other institution) for 3 or 4 years. The degree course requires most foreign language students to spend at least 6 months in the country where the language they are studying is spoken.

The first type of initial teacher training involves the concurrent study, for a period of 4 years, of a main subject and the theory and practice of education, both of which are assessed at first degree standard. The course includes a minimum of 12 weeks' teaching practice. Students who are successful in all three parts of the course receive a Bachelor of Education degree (BEd).

The second type of initial teacher training involves those students who have obtained a first degree (e.g. Bachelor of Arts) after 3 years' university level study. These students undertake a 1-year course leading to a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE). The PGCE course concentrates on the theory and practice of education, with specific reference to the student's degree subject, and includes 2 periods of teaching practice.

In the case of students taking a first degree in foreign languages, it is not possible to determine which, if any, intend to become teachers. Those who have successfully completed teacher training (whether BEd or PGCE) are qualified to teach in primary or secondary schools. Their choice of school largely depends on whether they prefer to teach a range of subjects to younger children, or to specialize in the teaching of 1 or more specific subjects to older pupils. Consequently, even those foreign language specialists who are qualified teachers may opt to teach general subjects (excluding the foreign language) in an infant or junior school.

However, it should be noted that there are no longer any courses leading to the BEd which include a foreign language and therefore future foreign language teachers will need to obtain a first degree, followed by a PGCE.

Primary : There are currently few primary schools where a foreign language (almost invariably French) is taught and therefore most foreign language specialists are appointed to secondary schools. Those teachers who do teach French are likely to have specialized in French during their initial training, or they may have undertaken in-service training to help them apply their skills to the teaching of French. When French was introduced into primary schools in the 1960s, a number of teachers attended intensive courses in France.

Secondary : Most teachers in secondary schools are subject specialists, and consequently foreign languages are usually taught by those who have specialized in this field during their initial training (see above). There is likely to be an increasing demand for modern language specialists as the proposals for the national curriculum (whereby modern languages should form a part of the curriculum for all pupils aged 11-16) are implemented.



UNITED KINGDOM (Scotland)

Primary: There is little teaching of foreign languages at primary level.

Secondary: Teachers for secondary level follow an academic training in languages in a university for 3 or 4 years and 1 year of pedagogical training, including teaching practice, in a Scottish College of Education (teacher training institution). It is not possible to determine which students intend to become teachers during the 3 or 4 years of academic training. All modern language teachers (who are usually qualified in 2 languages) must spend 1 school year in the country of their main language and 1 term (+/- 3 months) in the country of their second language before being qualified to teach. In theory, all those fulfilling this requirement and successfully completing pedagogical training may become teachers.





# **Eurydice The Education Information Network in the European Community**

## **Educational cooperation in the Community**

The educational systems in Community countries vary considerably and this variety, which is the result of historic and cultural factors, itself constitutes a great wealth which should be preserved.

On the other hand it is in the interest of everyone to draw benefit from the experiences and projects of partner countries within the Community.

Educational policy makers in the European Community have long been aware of the value of information concerning innovations and changes introduced in other Member States in order that their own decisions might be well founded on the knowledge of alternative possibilities of practice, and the Member States agreed to promote close cooperation in the field of education at Community level.

In February 1976 the Council of the European Communities and the Ministers of Education adopted an action programme in the field of education. They agreed among other things to set up an information network in order to increase and improve the circulation of information in the area of education policy\*.

This information network, known as EURYDICE, is designed therefore to underpin the developing programme of educational cooperation within the European Community.

The Education Committee of the European Community, which has the task of coordinating and monitoring the action programme, recommended that the use of Eurydice should in the first phase be limited to those in policy making positions. The Education Committee consists of representatives of the Member States and of the Commission.

In accordance with their own distinctive education structures, each Member State has designated at least one National Unit to participate in the network and the Commission of the European Communities has arranged with the European Cultural Foundation the establishment of the Eurydice European Unit, which is part of the network and assists the Commission's Education Service.

Eurydice is based on the mutual cooperation of the National Units and the European Unit. In addition the latter coordinates and animates the network.

\* Official Journal n°C38, 19.02.1976. P1



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**Μονάδες του Δικτύου Πληροφοριών Ευρυδική**  
**Unidades de la Red Eurydice**  
**Unidades da Rede Eurydice**

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY**

The Eurydice European Unit  
Rue Archimède 17/B 17  
B-1040 Bruxelles  
Tel.: 230.03.82/230.03.98  
Telex: 65398 eurydi b  
Telefax: 230.65.62

**BELGIQUE/BELGIE**

Unité francophone d'Eurydice  
Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale  
Organisation des Etudes  
Boulevard Pacheco 34  
B-1000 Bruxelles  
Tel.: 219.45.80 (poste 175 + 102)

**Nederlandstalige dienst van Eurydice**

Ministerie van Onderwijs  
Informatie- en documentatiedienst  
Departement van onderwijs  
Koningsstraat 138, 3<sup>e</sup>, lokaal 326  
B-1000 Brussel  
Tel.: 219.34.20 (ext. 221)  
Telefax: 210.53.72

**DANMARK**

Eurydice's Informationskontor i Danmark  
Undervisningsministeriet  
Frederiksholms Kanal 25 D  
DK-1220 København K  
Tel.: 92.52.01  
Telex: 22275  
Telefax: 92.55.47

**BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND**

Eurydice Informationsstelle beim  
Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft  
Heinemannstrasse 2  
D-5300 Bonn 2  
Tel.: 57.21.91  
Telex: 885666  
Telefax: 57.20.96

**Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder**

Nassestrasse 8  
D-5300 Bonn 1  
Tel.: 50.12.70  
Telex: 886587  
Telefax: 50.13.01

**ESPAÑA**

Unidad Nacional de Eurydice  
Centro Nacional de Investigación  
y Documentación Educativa  
Ciudad Universitaria s/n  
E-28040 Madrid  
Tel.: 449.66.81/449.77.00  
Telefax: 243.73.90

**FRANCE**

Unité Nationale d'Eurydice  
Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de la Jeunesse et des Sports  
D.A.G.I.C./8  
110, rue de Grenelle  
F-75007 Paris  
Tel.: 45.39.25.75 (poste 3799 + 3585)  
Telex: 270925  
Telefax: 45.44.57.87

**HELLAS**

Evyrdiki  
Ypourgio Paidias ke Thriskevmaton  
Diefthinsi Evropaikis Kinotitas  
Mitropoleos 15  
GR-10185 Athens  
Tel.: 323.74.80  
Telex: 216270  
Telefax: 322.52.59

**IRELAND**

National Eurydice Unit  
Department of Education  
Room 210  
Marlborough Street  
EIR-Dublin 1  
Tel.: 73.47.00  
Telex: 31136  
Telefax: 72.95.53

**ITALIA**

L'Unità Nazionale di Eurydice  
Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione  
Biblioteca di Documentazione Pedagogica  
Palazzo Gerini, Via Buonarroti, 10  
I-50122 Firenze  
Tel.: 241.187/241.188  
Telefax: 242.884

**LUXEMBOURG**

Unité Nationale d'Eurydice  
Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Jeunesse  
Boulevard Royal, 6  
L-2910 Luxembourg  
Tel.: 46.802.551  
Telex: 3311 MENJ LU  
Telefax: 46.09.27

**NEDERLAND**

Nationale dienst van Eurydice  
Centrale Directie Documentatie  
Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen  
Postbus 25.000  
NL-2700 LZ Zoetermeer  
Tel.: 53.19.11 (poste 3497)  
Telex: 32636  
Telefax: 51.26.51

**PORTUGAL**

Unidade Nacional de Eurydice  
Ministério da Educação  
Gabinete de Estudos e Planeamento  
Av. Miguel Bombarda, 20  
P-1093 Lisboa Codex  
Tel.: 73.60.95/76.20.66  
Telex: 63553 GEPME P  
Telefax: 73.45.38

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Eurydice Unit London  
National Foundation for Educational Research  
The Mere, Upton Park  
GB-Slough, Berks SL1 2DQ  
Tel.: 74.123  
Telefax: 69.16.32  
  
Eurydice Unit Edinburgh  
Scottish Council for Research in Education  
15 St John Street  
GB-Edinburgh EH8 8JR  
Tel.: 557.29.44  
Telefax: 556.94.54

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