

Tables on the

SCHOOL YEAR

**in the Member States
of the European Community**

1990



Eurydice

*Published for the Commission of the European Communities
Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth by the
European Unit of EURYDICE*

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

This document presents a series of tables relating to different aspects of the school calendar in the Member States of the European Community. Its aim is to provide an instant general reply to certain basic questions frequently put to EURYDICE, the Education Information Network in the European Community.

It should be considered along with more detailed publications already issued by EURYDICE, such as "The Structures of the Education and Initial Vocational Training Systems in the Member States of the European Community" and "Regulations concerning Compulsory Schooling in the Member States of the European Community".

The information covers the 12 Member States of the European Community. For the United Kingdom, bearing in mind the differences that exist regarding the organization of the education systems, a distinction has been made between England, Wales and Northern Ireland on the one hand, and Scotland on the other.

The data given in the tables apply to pupils, and are not necessarily valid for teachers as well.

For the table relating to upper secondary education, separate information has been given for general education and vocational education where this was applicable.

The information given in the tables has been validated by the National Units of the EURYDICE network, and we would like to thank them for their co-operation.

Document compiled at the
EURYDICE European Unit
by A. BARRIUSO-DE CEUSTER

1990

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TABLE I. COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGES

BELGIUM	6 to 18	(1)
DENMARK	7 to 16	
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	6 to 15 - 16	(2) (3)
GREECE	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 16	(4)
SPAIN	6 to 14	
FRANCE	6 to 16	
IRELAND	6 to 15	
ITALY	6 to 14	
LUXEMBOURG	5 to 15	(5)
NETHERLANDS	5 to 16	(6)
PORTUGAL	6 to 14-15	(7)
UNITED KINGDOM	5 to 16	(8)
- England, Wales, Northern Ireland		
- Scotland	5 to 16	

- (1) Compulsory schooling is full-time until the age of 15 and includes at least six years primary education and at least the first two years of full-time secondary education. Full-time compulsory education is followed by a period of part-time compulsory schooling.
- (2) For the Länder of Berlin, Bremen and North Rhine-Westphalia 10 years of compulsory full-time schooling in general education.
- (3) For those who do not continue after 9 or 10 years of full-time schooling part-time vocational education is compulsory.
- (4) Compulsory education lasts 9 years and therefore covers 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 14 $\frac{1}{2}$. However, by law, if a pupil does not successfully complete lower secondary school by 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ he/she is obliged to stay up to the age of 16 in order to do so.
- (5) The first year of compulsory schooling takes place in Pre-primary schools; primary education begins at 6 years of age.
- (6) The child can attend primary school from 4 years of age, while compulsory schooling begins on the first day of the month following the month in which the child reaches the age of 5. It is completed at the end of the school year in which the pupil reaches 16. A pupil who leaves full-time day-time education then is still bound to attend part-time compulsory schooling.
- (7) The provisions relating to the extension of compulsory schooling to 15 years of age apply to pupils enrolled in the first year of basic education for the 1987-1988 school year and to those who enrol for the following school years.
- (8) Attendance is compulsory from the beginning of the term which follows the child's fifth birthday, which includes a term beginning on his fifth birthday, to the end of the spring term (for those born before 31 January) or to the Friday before the last Monday in May (for those born between 1 February and 31 August) of the academic year in which pupils reach the age of 16.

TABLE II. LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL WEEK

COUNTRY	PRIMARY EDUCATION (*)	SECONDARY EDUCATION
BELGIUM	5 days	5 days
DENMARK	5 days	5 days
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	5 days/6 days (1)	5 days/6 days (1)
GREECE	5 days	5 days
SPAIN	5 days	5 days
FRANCE	9 half days spread over 5 days	5 days/6 days (2)
IRELAND	5 days	5 days/6 days
ITALY	5 days (3)/6 days	6 days
LUXEMBOURG	6 days	6 days
NETHERLANDS	5 days (4)/6 days	5 days
PORTUGAL	5 days/6 days (5)	5 days/6 days (5)
UNITED KINGDOM		
- England, Wales, Northern Ireland	5 days	5 days
- Scotland	5 days	5 days

* Primary and lower secondary education in Denmark (Folkeskole) and Spain (E.G.B. - Educación General Básica).

- (1) The instructional time per week determined by the Ministries of Education of the Länder for the individual types of school may be distributed over 5 days at the request of the school. Either a regular five-day week may be introduced or alternatively one or two Saturdays per month may be free from lessons.
- (2) "Collèges / Lycées"; 9 to 10 half-days.
- (3) "Tempo pieno" system.
- (4) Usually.
- (5) When there is a lack of premises.

TABLE II bis LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

COUNTRY	PRIMARY EDUCATION (*)		SECONDARY EDUCATION	
	beginning	end	beginning	end
BELGIUM	1 Sept.	30 June	1 Sept.	30 June
DENMARK (1)	around 15 Aug.	around 20 June	around 15 Aug.	around 20 June
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (2)	1 Aug.	31 July	1 Aug.	31 July
GREECE	1 Sept.	21 June	10 Sept. / 10 June (3)	20 May (4)
SPAIN (5)	15 Sept.	20 June	1 Oct.	30 June
FRANCE (6)	10 Sept.	6/8 July	10 Sept.	6/8 July
IRELAND	1 Sept.	31 Aug. (7)	1 Aug.	31 July (7)
ITALY (8)	1 Sept.	30 June	1 Sept.	30 June
LUXEMBOURG	around 15 Sept.	15 July	around 15 Sept.	15 July
NETHERLANDS (9)	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)
PORTUGAL	18-30 Sept.	22 June - 6 July	18-30 Sept.	22 June - 6 July
UNITED KINGDOM				
- England, Wales, Northern Ireland (10)	1st week Sept.	3rd week July	1st week Sept.	3rd week July
- Scotland (11)	end Aug.	end June	end Aug.	end June

* Primary and lower secondary education in Denmark (Folkeskole) and Spain (E.G.B. - Educación General Básica).

- (1) Officially the school year runs from 1st August of one year to 31 July the following year. With the exception of the first day of the summer holidays local education authorities are free to elaborate their holiday plan.
- (2) In the Federal Republic of Germany the summer holidays in the individual Länder (as a rule about 6 weeks) are spread over the period between end of June and mid-September. The dates are fixed in a long-term agreement by the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder. The actual beginning and end of the school year varies accordingly in the Länder.
- (3) Lower secondary.
- (4) Upper secondary.
- (5) The dates of the beginning and end of actual teaching activities.
- (6) Years 1990 to 1992.
- (7) In practice, pupils normally attend classes from the beginning of September until the end of June (primary education) / end of May (secondary education).
- (8) The dates of the beginning and end of school activities must be between September, 1st and June 30th; however, the dates vary and are determined at the regional level every year.
- (9) The dates of the beginning and end of summer holidays are fixed by the Minister; they vary by region and according to the principle of staggering school holidays.
For example, for 1991 :

NETHERLANDS	PRIMARY EDUCATION		SECONDARY EDUCATION	
- North Region	29 June	11 August	29 June	18 August
- Middle Region	6 July	18 August	6 July	25 August
- South Region	20 July	1 Sept.	1 July	1 Sept.

- 10) Officially the school year runs from 1 September of one year to 31 August the following year. The teaching year normally runs from the first week in September to the third week in July, giving about six weeks vacation time in the summer. However, these dates and the duration of the holiday period do vary slightly from one local education authority to another.
- (11) Actual dates are left to the discretion of the education authorities.

TABLE III. NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR

COUNTRY	PRIMARY EDUCATION (*)	SECONDARY EDUCATION
BELGIUM	182	182
DENMARK	200	200
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	200 (1)	200 (1)
GREECE	175	175
SPAIN	185	170
FRANCE	180	from 180 to 216 (3)
IRELAND	min. 184	180 (2) (4) 200 (1) (4)
ITALY	min. 200	min. 200
LUXEMBOURG	216	216
NETHERLANDS	200 (2) 240 (1)	195
PORTUGAL	181 (2) 206 (1)	181 (2) 206 (1) (preparatory educ.) 181 (2) 206 (1) (gen.unified course) 167 (compl. course)
UNITED KINGDOM		
- England, Wales, Northern Ireland	190/200 (5)	190/200 (5)
- Scotland	190	190

* Primary and lower secondary education in Denmark (Folkeskole) and Spain (E.G.B. - Educación General Básica).

- (1) This figure refers to a six-day week system. In the case of a five-day week the number of days is lower.
- (2) 5-day week system.
- (3) Including public holidays outside school holidays.
- (4) Includes 12 days during which public examinations are held.
- (5) 400 sessions of which 20 can be subtracted for occasional holidays. Each day consists of 2 sessions.

**TABLE IV. NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK
DURATION OF ONE LESSON**

1° PRIMARY EDUCATION (*)

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK	DURATION LESSON
BELGIUM	28	50 minutes(1)
DENMARK	from 15 to 22; from 15 to 23 from 18 to 23; from 20 to 27 from 23 to 29; from 24 to 30 from 24 to 34 (2)	45 minutes
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	from 20 to 30	45 minutes
GREECE	from 23 to 30	45 to 50 minutes
SPAIN	25	flexible
FRANCE	26/27 (3)	at the initiative of the teacher
IRELAND	22 (4)	30 to 60 minutes
ITALY	27 to 30 (3) (5)	at the initiative of the teacher
LUXEMBOURG	27 (3)	max. 60 minutes
NETHERLANDS	min. 22 (6) min. 25 (7)	max. 60 minutes
PORTUGAL	25	at the initiative of the teacher
UNITED KINGDOM - England, Wales, Northern Ireland - Scotland	min. 20 (8) 25 (3), (9)	± 35 - 40 minutes (9)

* Primary and lower secondary education in Denmark (Folkeskole) and Spain (E.G.B. - Educación General Básica).

- (1) Belgium : French speaking area.

At lower secondary level (2 first years) the duration of a lesson should rarely exceed a half-period, or 25 minutes.

- (2) In the first year; in the second year; in the third year; in the fourth year; in the fifth year; in the sixth and seventh years; in the final classes.

- (3) Real number of hours of schooling per week; 26 hours from 1991-1992; 27 hours except in 33 pilot departments testing 26 hours.

- (4) Religious instruction not included (5 lessons of one half-hour duration).

- (5) Following the adoption of the "Law on the reform of primary education" (5 June 1990) the week revolves around 27 hours of lessons, 30 hours with the teaching of a language or for a justified educational purpose; the new system is being implemented progressively from the 1990-91 school year.

- (6) During the first 4 years of primary education.

- (7) During the last 4 years of primary education.

- (8) Varies according to schools; local authorities and schools are free to adapt their timetable as long as children under eight receive a minimum of three hours of secular instruction per day, divided into two sessions; children aged eight and over receive a minimum of four hours of secular instruction per day.

- (9) Fixed by each education authority; each head teacher is at liberty to determine the number and the duration of lessons within his own school.

TABLE IV. NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK
DURATION OF ONE LESSON

2° LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK	DURATION OF LESSON
BELGIUM	32 / 34 (1), (2)	50 minutes
DENMARK	(3)	(3)
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	from 30 to 35 (4)	45 minutes
GREECE	from 23 to 30	40 to 45 min.
SPAIN	(3)	(3)
FRANCE	from 27 to 30,5 (5)	60 minutes
IRELAND	40 - 45	35 - 40 - 45 minutes
ITALY	30 (6)	60 minutes
LUXEMBOURG	30	50 minutes
NETHERLANDS	28/32	50 minutes
PORTUGAL	30 (preparatory educ.) 25 (TV education) 30 - 34 (gen.unified courses)	50 minutes
UNITED KINGDOM - England, Wales, Northern Ireland - Scotland	from 35 to 40 (7) 27 ½ (6) (8)	± 35 - 40 minutes (8)

- (1) Belgium - French speaking area.
32 (+ possible remedial periods).
34 (+ 2 possible remedial periods) in technical, music and vocational branches.
- (2) Belgium - Dutch speaking area.
34 for the second common year of general education and the second year of vocational education.
- (3) Not applicable, see table IV, 1°.
- (4) The instructional time per week varies according to the type of school and the individual grades as well as among the Länder.
- (5) Depending on the options.
- (6) Real number of hours of schooling per week.
- (7) Varies according to the schools; local authorities and schools are free to adapt their timetable as long as children aged eight and over receive a minimum of four hours of secular instruction per day; divided into two sessions.
- (8) Fixed by each education authority; each head teacher is at liberty to determine the number and the duration of lessons within his own school.

TABLE IV. NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK
DURATION OF ONE LESSON

3° UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK	DURATION OF LESSON
BELGIUM -french speaking area	Type 1 (1) : 32/34/36 Type 2 (2) : 28/32 Technical/vocational: 32/34/36	50 minutes 50 minutes 50 minutes
-dutch speaking area	Type 1 (1) : 32 Type 2 (2) : 32 Artist./technical/ professional : 36	50 minutes 50 minutes 50 minutes
DENMARK	from 30 to 32	45 minutes
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	from 30 to 35 (3)	45 minutes
GREECE	Classical : 30 (4) General : 30 (4) 24 (5) Comprehensive/technical : 34	45 minutes
SPAIN	Bachillerato : 29 (6) Vocational training : 29 (7)	55/60 minutes
FRANCE	from 30 to 38 (8)	60 minutes
IRELAND	40 - 45	35 - 40 - 45 minutes
ITALY	Classical lyceum: 27 to 29 Scientific lyceum: 25 to 30 Technical institutes: 31 to 38	60 minutes
LUXEMBOURG	30	40 minutes
NETHERLANDS	28/32	50 minutes
PORTUGAL	Complementary second. 30 Technical/Vocat. : 34	50 minutes
UNITED KINGDOM - England, Wales, Northern Ireland - Scotland	40 (9) 27 ½ (10), (11)	± 35 - 40 minutes (11)

- (1) "Renovated" education - general.
- (2) Traditional education - general.
- (3) According to the type of school for general or vocational education. Within the Dual System (Berufsschule and on-the-job training) up to 12 lessons of part-time schooling per week.
- (4) Day-time education.
- (5) Evening education.
- (6) From the 1988-89 school year, the minimum number of compulsory class hours for all Bachillerato pupils is fixed at 29 by the Decree of 19 May 1988 which amended the Decrees of 22 March 1975 and 11 September 1976.
- (7) For the level 1 vocational training courses, the timetables valid until the beginning of the 1987-88 school year (28 hours per week in the 1st year and 30 hours per week in the 2nd year) have been amended by the Decree of 19 May 1988.
- (8) Depending on the sections.
- (9) Varies according to schools; local authorities and schools are free to adapt their timetable as long as children aged eight and over receive a minimum of four hours of secular instruction per day, divided into two sessions.
- (10) Real number of hours of schooling per week.
- (11) Fixed by each education authority, each head teacher is at liberty to determine the number and the duration of lessons within his own school.

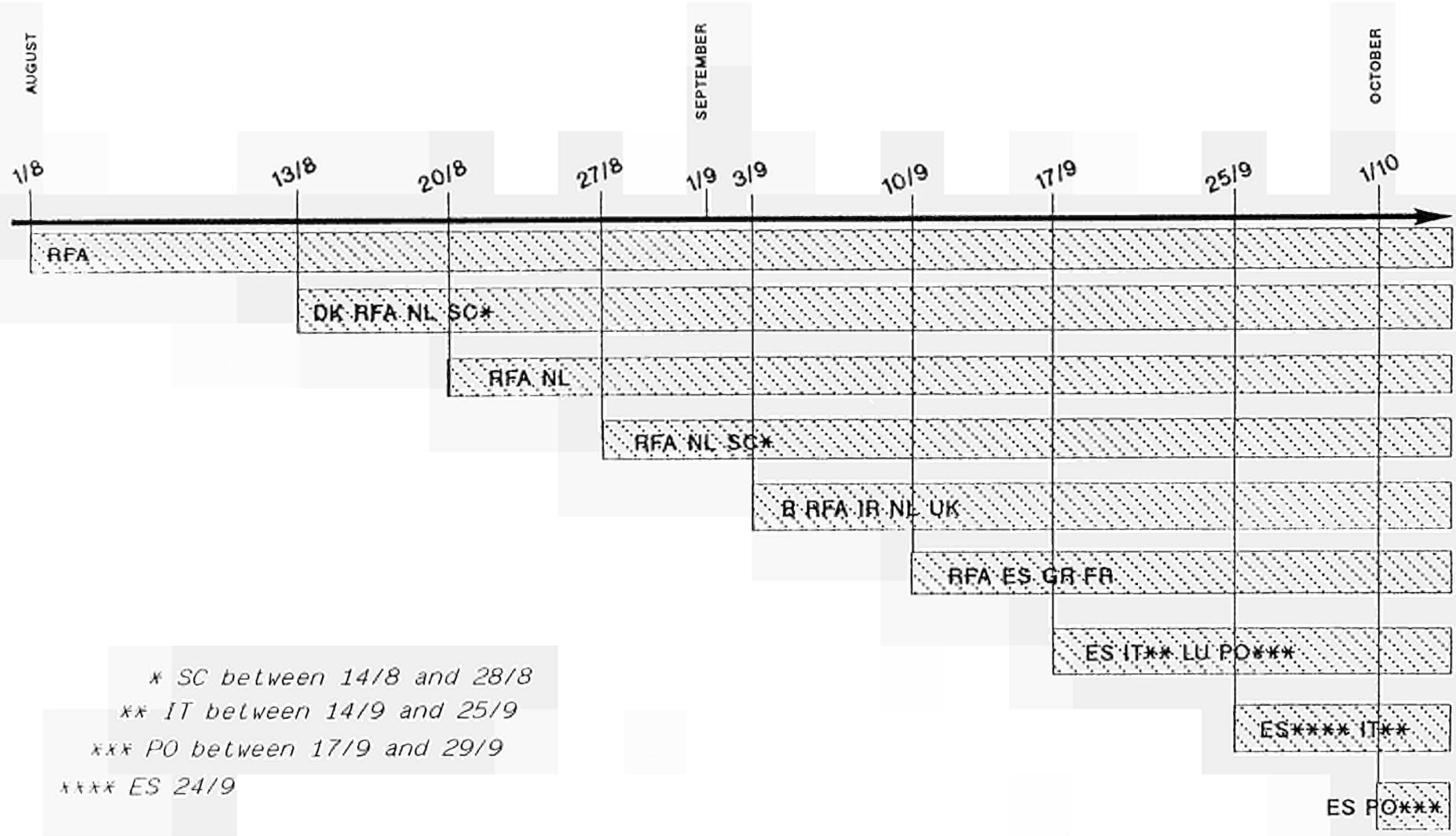
EURYDICE - SCHOOL YEAR

Starting dates for the 1990-1991 school year

BELGIE/BELGIQUE	3/9	
DANMARK	13/8	
BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND	Baden-Württemberg: 3/9 Berlin: 27/8 Hamburg: 20/8 Niedersachsen: 23/8 Rheinland-Pfalz: 9/8 Schleswig-Holstein: 20/8 Bayern: 10/9 Bremen: 23/8 Hessen: 20/8 Nordrhein-Westfalen: 1/8 Saarland: 13/8	
HELLAS	10/9	
ESPAÑA *	EGB	BUP
MEC	between 10/9 and 17/9	1/10
CA - País Vasco	10/9	1/10
CA - Andalucía	17/9	1/10
CA - Valencia	17/9	1/10
CA - Cataluña	17/9	24/9
CA - Canarias	17/9	1/10
CA - Navarra	10/9	
FRANCE	10/9	
IRELAND	± beginning of September	
ITALIA	between 14/9 and 25/9	
LUXEMBOURG	17/9	
NEDERLAND	Northern region: primary: 13/8	secondary: 20/8
	Central region: primary: 3/9	secondary: 3/9
	Southern region: primary: 20/8	secondary: 27/8
PORTUGAL	between 17/9 and 29/9	
UNITED KINGDOM	± beginning of September	
SCOTLAND	between 14/8 and 28/8	

* MEC: under the responsibility of the Education Ministry.
CA: Autonomous Community.

EURYDICE – SCHOOL YEAR
 START OF THE 1990-1991 SCHOOL YEAR



* SC between 14/8 and 28/8
 ** IT between 14/9 and 25/9
 *** PO between 17/9 and 29/9
 **** ES 24/9

EURYDICE

The Education Information Network in the European Community

Educational cooperation in the Community

The education systems in the twelve EC Member States vary considerably and this variety, which is the result of historic and cultural factors, is itself a source of wealth.

In order to ensure that this diversity does not become an obstacle to the free movement of people, it is essential to provide effective information on the operation and structures of the education systems.

It is also vital for each country to benefit from the experience of its Community partners and thus contribute to the development of European educational cooperation.

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 (1).

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

It was recognized in 1990 as the chief instrument for providing information on national and Community structures, systems and developments in the field of education (2).

In accordance with their own distinctive education structures, each Member State has designated at least one Unit to participate in the network and the Commission of the European Communities has arranged the establishment of the EURYDICE European Unit, which is part of the network.

EURYDICE is based on the mutual cooperation of all the Units. In addition the European Unit coordinates and animates the network.

(1) Official Journal n° C38, 19.02.1976, p.1.

(2) Official Journal n° C329, 31.12.1990, p.23.

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