

# ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL TIME IN THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY







# **ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL TIME IN THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY**



T A N K F O R C E  
H U M A N R E S O U R C E S  
E D U C A T I O N  
T R A I N I N G  
Y O U T H

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## FOREWORD

The organisation and use of school time is one aspect of the more general problem of improving the quality of education and combating school failure. In effect, we now know the extent to which attempts to match the management of school time to children's natural bio-rhythms can have a positive influence on pupils' performance in school and contribute to the general effectiveness of the education system.

Several Member States are currently undertaking studies into the possibility of reorganising the school year, taking more account of the natural seasonal bio-rhythms. On the other hand, the pressure of certain socio-economic phenomena such as the increase in the female participation rate in employment is obliging some countries to make arrangements for the care of children in school both before and after school hours.

Aware of Member States' interest in this question, the Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth of the Commission of the European Communities has supported the production of information on it by EURYDICE.

In producing this document, the EURYDICE network wished to present basic information which could contribute to a better understanding of the situation as regards the management of the time pupils spend in school at primary and secondary level in the Member States of the EC - the duration of compulsory education and the organisation of the school year, week and day.

In view of the frequency with which changes are made in the organisation of school time, EURYDICE will ensure that this document is regularly updated so that it meets the needs of the education world for reliable information.

Luce Pépin  
Director of the EURYDICE European Unit  
December 1993



## SYNOPSIS

### Compulsory education

In most countries of the European Community, the starting age for compulsory education is 5 or 6 years. In Northern Ireland, compulsory primary education now starts at age 4, and in Luxembourg it has recently been made compulsory for 4-year-olds to attend nursery school. At the other extreme, in Denmark, as in the other Scandinavian countries, compulsory education does not start until age 7.

In general, compulsory education lasts 9 or 11 years. It is shortest (8 years) in Italy and Spain (before the reform introduced under the law of 1990 - *LOGSE*). It lasts 12 years in Northern Ireland and in Belgium, taking into account the years of compulsory part-time education in the latter country. In the Federal Republic of Germany, compulsory education usually also lasts 12 years, comprising 9 or 10 years of full-time schooling in general education schools and, in as far as pupils do not attend school full-time after these 9 or 10 years, 3 years of part-time schooling in vocational schools. The Netherlands provides the longest compulsory education, between the ages of 5 and 18 years, including again the years of part-time education.

### The school year

There are differences between the education systems in the European Community as regards the distribution of school time and holidays over the year, the point of time at which pupils start a new school year, and whether or not the holiday periods are fixed at central government level.

The annual number of days of teaching officially prescribed in the Member States varies from 175 in Greece to 240 in the Netherlands. This figure is not, however, very meaningful, as it can include both whole days and half days. In this respect, comparison of the number of half-day sessions, as defined in England and Wales (380) and in France (316 to 350) appears more relevant.

Similarly, calculation of the annual number of hours of teaching gives more strictly comparable information about the time pupils spend in school in the European Community. At the level of primary education for which it was calculated, it appears that the annual teaching time of pupils in one Member State can be up to double that in another. Some countries have a shorter day for the youngest pupils at the start of their schooling. This is true in Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, where the number of periods varies according to the age of the pupils. In the Federal Republic of Germany, where the school day is shorter in the first years, 6-year-old pupils are in class for about 564 hours (average teaching time, with a range from 479 to 648 hours, depending on the *Land*), while in Italy their contemporaries are in school for 1080 hours. Comparison reveals considerable variations between these two extremes. The range is however slightly less wide in the course of primary education.

After the summer holidays, schools reopen over a period of 6 weeks, running from the beginning of August (in certain of the German *Länder* and Denmark) to the second fortnight of September (in Spain, Italy and Portugal). Moreover, in some Member

States (such as Denmark, Greece, Ireland and Luxembourg), all pupils return to school on the same day, while in others there can be a variety of dates within the same country.

The summer holidays vary between about 6 weeks (in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, England and Wales, and Scotland) and 12 or 13 weeks (in Greece, Spain and Ireland). In certain Member States, the summer holidays are longer at secondary level. This is the case in Spain, Ireland and the Netherlands.

In the course of the school year, pupils in all Member States have about 2 weeks' holiday at Christmas. In most of them, the long first term is broken by a week's holiday in the autumn, towards the end of October or the beginning of November, except in those southern countries in which schools resume later.

The picture is however more varied in the second term of the school year. Greek, Irish, Italian and Scottish children have no consistent holiday in this term. In the other Member States, there is a holiday in the month of February or March. This may, moreover, be very short (1 to 3 days) or longer (1 to 2 weeks).

There is traditionally a longer holiday at Easter, except in the Netherlands and France, where this holiday does not necessarily coincide with the movable date of Easter proper. This is a recent change based on a desire to give children a more balanced distribution of periods of teaching and holidays over the year.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg and England and Wales, the third term is also broken by a week (from 1 to 12 days in the *Länder*) at Whitsun.

### **The school week**

In all countries of the European Community, Sunday is free of lessons. The most common pattern of school week is 5 days, except in Luxembourg where it is still 6 days. In some countries, schools may choose between a 5-day week and a 6-day week, depending on the local situation and after consultation with parents. Where the 5-day week operates, children generally attend school from Monday to Friday, except in France, in the primary schools, where pupils are off all day on Wednesday and attend school on Saturday morning.

There are several methods of determining the weekly number of hours of teaching in primary schools. Either a set or minimum number of class periods is prescribed, or regulations stipulate the overall daily total of teaching time. The length of the teaching period is left to the teacher's discretion or varies from 40 minutes to an hour, depending on the country.

In contrast, at secondary school level, the organisation of school time is generally more structured and its division into periods approximates to a weekly average of 30 periods of from 40 to 50/55 minutes, depending on the country. Italy is out of line with this trend, with lessons one hour long. Ireland and the United Kingdom also share one characteristic which should be mentioned - lessons are shortest (35 to 40 minutes), but they have the greatest number of them. In upper secondary education, the maximum number of periods per week varies depending on the group of subjects being studied and is generally higher in the technical and vocational branches.

## **The school day**

The pupil's school day varies greatly from one Member State to another. There are basically two quite different patterns, both of which may be found in the same country. Some countries have chosen half-day schooling, with all lessons given in one half of the day. This is typical of the Federal Republic of Germany, Portugal, Greece and some regions of Italy. Here, classes are usually held in the morning. The provision of education to different groups of pupils in the morning and in the afternoon, on a shift basis, is resorted to in Greece and Portugal where there is a shortage of accommodation. Whole-day schooling with a break in the middle of the day is found mainly in Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. The length of the lunch break is another respect in which the systems differ; it may be quite short or last several hours. Depending on the country, the two-session pattern applies either on all 5 days of the school week (Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom) or on 4 days out of 5, with one day reduced to a morning. In Luxembourg, the week is organised on the basis of alternate whole days and mornings.

Another distinguishing feature of the European school systems is the time at which pupils start their day. In effect, while classes start between 8.15 a.m. and 9 a.m. in several countries, in some *Länder* of the Federal Republic of Germany, they may start earlier (e.g. between 7.30 a.m. and 8 a.m. depending on the choice of the school), whereas in Portugal the school's education council can set the starting time for classes between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m.

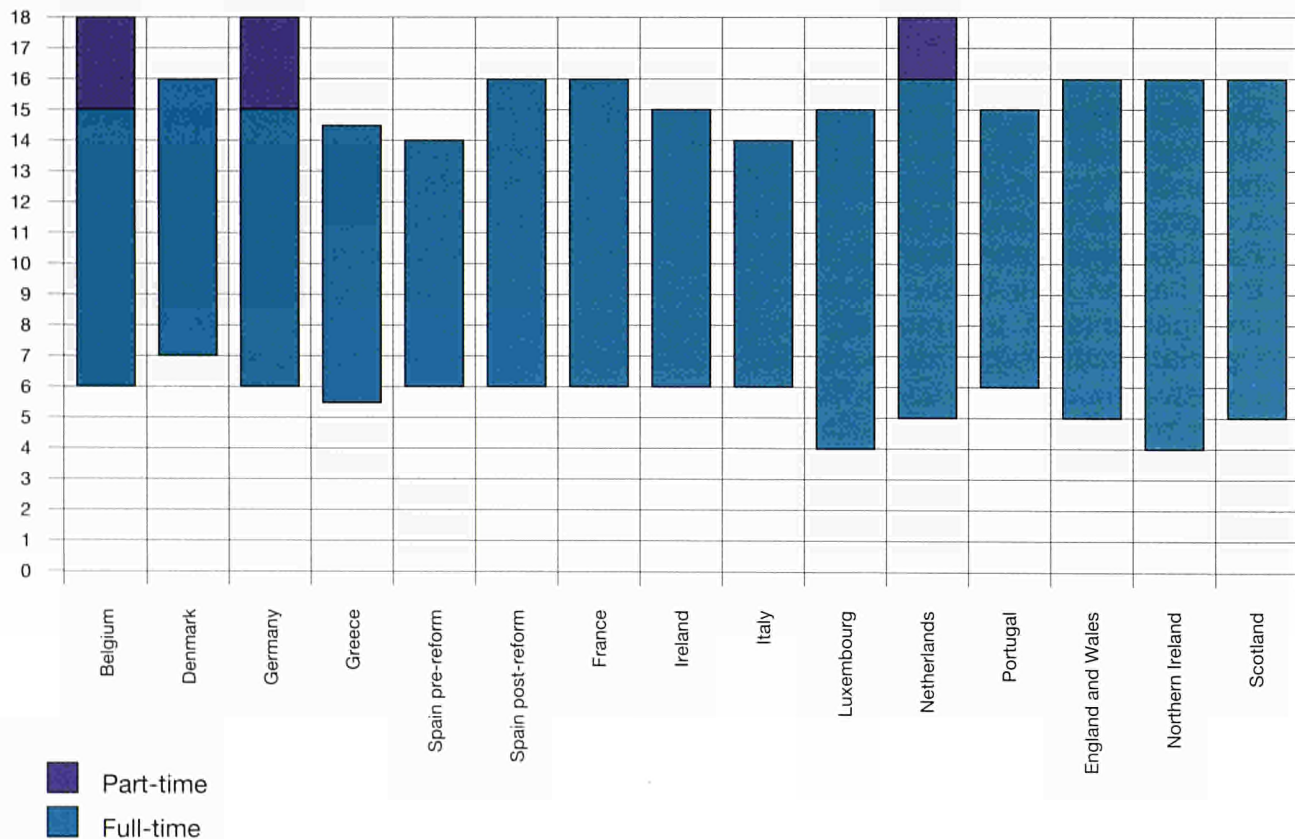
## **Provision for pupils out of school hours**

With the increasing number of families in which both parents work, primary schools are increasingly finding themselves called upon to provide care and supervision for children outside of school hours. Analysis of the opening hours of schools and child-minding services indicates considerable diversity in the types of organisation chosen by the Member States in this area. Few regulations have been introduced, and where services are organised, they are often left to the initiative of the schools. For this reason, various types of provision may be found within the same country. In most cases, schools open a short time before classes begin. In four countries (Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany and Greece), children can be looked after in the school for more than half an hour before classes begin. In Ireland and Scotland, there are no such arrangements in the morning. In several Member States, particularly in Belgium, Denmark and France, it is possible for children to remain after school for either homework classes or some form of care and supervision in their own school. Such arrangements are exceptional in Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg and Scotland.

**TABLE I**  
**AGES BETWEEN WHICH FULL-TIME EDUCATION**  
**IS COMPULSORY**

MEMBER STATE	AGES
<b>BELGIUM</b>	6 to 15/16 year (1)
<b>DENMARK</b>	7 to 16 years
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b>	6 to 15/16 years (2) (3)
<b>GREECE</b>	5 1/2 to 14 1/2 years (4)
<b>SPAIN</b>	6 to 14/16 years (5)
<b>FRANCE</b>	6 to 16 years
<b>IRELAND</b>	6 to 15 years
<b>ITALY</b>	6 to 14 years
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	4 to 15 years (6)
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	5 to 16 years (7)
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	6 to 14/15 years (8)
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>	
– England and Wales	5 to 16 years (9)
– Northern Ireland	4 to 16 years (9)
– Scotland	5 to 16 years (10)

**DURATION OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION**



- (1) Compulsory schooling is full-time until the age of 15 or 16 at the most 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 until the age of 18.
- (2) For the *Länder* of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen and North Rhine-Westphalia, 10 years' compulsory full-time general education.
- (3) For those who do not remain at school full-time after the first 9 or 10 years of schooling, part-time vocational education is compulsory (3 years on average, depending on the length of the training period for a recognized trade or other occupation, entry to which is by way of apprenticeship).
- (4) Compulsory education lasts 9 years and therefore covers the age group between 5 1/2-6 and 14 1/2-15 years. However, by law, a pupil who does not successfully complete lower secondary school by 14 1/2, is obliged to stay on until the age of 16.
- (5) The education reform law of 1990 (Basic Law on the General Structures and Organisation of the Education System - *LOGSE*) provides for extending compulsory education by raising the minimum school leaving age to 16. However, the old provisions will remain in force until the new structure under the *LOGSE* is in place; this will be phased in over a period initially set at 10 years.
- (6) The first two years of compulsory education relate to pre-school education; primary education starts at age 6. The lowering of the compulsory starting age from 5 to 4 years applies from the beginning of the 1993/94 school year.
- (7) Every child must attend school full-time from the first school day of the month following its fifth birthday; however, nearly all children attend school from the age of four. Education is compulsory until the end of the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of 16 or has completed at least 12 full years of schooling. A pupil who has not reached the age of 18 (a minor) is still bound to attend part-time compulsory schooling for one year.
- (8) The provisions relating to the raising of the school leaving age to 15 years apply to pupils enrolled in the first year of basic education in the 1987/88 school year and to those who first enrol in the following school years (Comprehensive Law on the Education System - 1986).
- (9) In England and Wales, statutory school age is from 5 to 16 years, which generally means from the beginning of the school term next after the child's fifth birthday until the school-leaving date appropriate to his/her sixteenth birthday. A child who reaches school-leaving age (16) in the five months September to January inclusive, must stay at school until the end of the following spring term. A child who reaches that age in February to August inclusive must stay at school until the Friday before the last Monday in May.  
In Northern Ireland, the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 lowered the age for the beginning of compulsory education from 5 years to 4 years.  
In Northern Ireland also, with effect from the 1992/93 school year, pupils who reach the age of 16 on or before 1 July may leave school on 30 June of that year. Those who reach the age of 16 between 2 July and 31 August must remain at school for the whole of the following year, that is, until 30 June.
- (10) There are two statutory leaving dates in the school year. Those pupils whose 16th birthday falls between 1 October and the last day of February may leave at the end of the first term, i.e. at the start of Christmas holidays. Those who are 16 between 1 March and 30 September may leave on 31 May of that year.

**TABLE II (a)**  
**LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**

MEMBER STATE	PRIMARY EDUCATION (*)		SECONDARY EDUCATION	
	Beginning	End	Beginning	End
<b>BELGIUM</b> - French and Flemish Communities - German-speaking Community	1 September end of August	30 June beginning of July	1 September end of August	30 June beginning of July
<b>DENMARK (1)</b>	around 15 August	around 20 June	around 15 August	around 20 June
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (2)</b>	1 August	31 July	1 August	31 July
<b>GREECE</b>	11 September	15 June	1 September (3)	30 June
<b>SPAIN</b>	1st fortnight of September	2nd fortnight of June	1 October	30 June
<b>FRANCE</b>	1st fortnight of September	beginning of July	1st fortnight of September	beginning of July
<b>IRELAND (4)</b>	1 September	end of June	1 September	end of May
<b>ITALY (5)</b>	10 September	30 June	10 September	30 June
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	around 15 September	15 July	around	15 July
<b>NETHERLANDS (6)</b>	1 August	31 July	1 August	31 July
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	2nd week of September	end of June	2nd fortnight of September	end 2nd week of June
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> - England and Wales (7) - Northern Ireland (7) - Scotland (8)	1st week of September beginning of September 3rd week of August	3rd week of July end of June beginning of July	1st week of September beginning of September 3rd week of August	3rd week of July end of June beginning of July

\* Primary and lower secondary education in Denmark (*Folkeskole*) and Spain pre-reform (*E.G.B.* - Basic General Education). In Portugal, first "cycle" of "basic education".

- (1) Officially, the school year runs from 1 August of one year to 31 July of the following year. The local education authorities are free to fix their school holidays, with the exception of the first day of the summer holidays.
- (2) In the Federal Republic of Germany, the summer holidays (of about 6 weeks) in the individual *Länder* are staggered over the period between the end of June and mid-September. The dates are fixed in a long-term agreement by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder*. Consequently, the actual beginning and end of the school year vary in the *Länder*.
- (3) Includes the examination periods.
- (4) Officially, the school year runs from 1 September of one year to 31 August of the following year (primary education) and from 1 August to 31 July (secondary education).
- (5) Officially, the school year runs from 1 September of one year to 31 August of the following year. Actual teaching, including time spent on assessment and examinations, takes place between 10 September and 30 June (with the exception of the final upper secondary examination which may also be held in the month of July). The effective dates of the start of classes are those fixed by the regional, national or local authorities.
- (6) The dates of the beginning and end of the summer holidays are fixed by the Minister; they vary according to region, based on the principle of staggering school holidays.  
For example, for 1993 :

NETHERLANDS	PRIMARY EDUCATION		SECONDARY EDUCATION	
• North Region	24 July	5 September	17 July	5 September
• Central Region	3 July	15 August	3 July	22 August
• South Region	10 July	22 August	10 July	29 August

- (7) In England and Wales, officially, the school year runs from 1 September of one year to 31 August of the following year. The teaching year normally runs from the first week in September to the third week in July, giving about six weeks' holidays in the summer.  
In Northern Ireland, the school year runs from the beginning of September to the end of June.  
The precise dates of school opening are left to the discretion of the local education authorities or the school governing bodies in England and Wales and the Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland; there is therefore variation between schools and regions. There is however little variation from one year to another.
- (8) The starting date of the school year is a matter for local education authorities to agree, according to local conditions, customs and climatic requirements.

**TABLE II (b)**  
**STARTING DATES OF SCHOOL YEAR IN 1992/93 AND 1993/94**

MEMBER STATE	1992/93	1993/94		
<b>BELGIUM</b>				
- French and Flemish Communities	1/9	1/9		
- German-speaking Community	1/9	30/8		
<b>DENMARK</b>	10/8	9/8		
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b>				
Baden-Württemberg :	17/8	16/8		
Bavaria :	15/9	7/9		
Berlin :	10/8	5/8		
Brandenburg :	10/8	9/8		
Bremen :	10/8	2/8		
Hamburg :	3/8	16/8		
Hesse :	3/8	6/9		
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania :	24/8	16/8		
Lower Saxony :	6/8	2/8		
North Rhine-Westphalia :	31/8	23/8		
Rhineland-Palatinate :	3/9	25/8		
Saarland :	7/9	30/8		
Saxony :	21/8	26/8		
Saxony-Anhalt :	31/8	26/8		
Schleswig-Holstein :	3/8	16/8		
Thuringia :	24/8	13/9		
<b>GREECE</b>	11/9	13/9		
<b>SPAIN * MEC</b>	<i>EGB</i> between 14/9 and 16/9	<i>BUP**</i> 1/10	<i>EGB</i> between 13/9 and 20/9	<i>BUP</i> between 27/9 and 30/9
AC - Basque Country	not before 7/9	not before 28/9	13/9	27/9
AC - Andalusia	15/9	28/9	15/9	at latest 28/9
AC - Valencia	14/9	1/10	13/9	1/10
AC - Catalonia	15/9	28/9	15/9	at latest 27/9
AC - Canary Islands	16/9	5/10	15/9	4/10
AC - Navarre	14/9	14/9	13/9	24/9
AC - Galicia	16/9	28/9	15/9	27/9
<b>FRANCE</b>	10/9		7/9	
<b>IRELAND</b>	1/9		1/9	
<b>ITALY</b>	between 14/9 and 23/9 (according to region)		between 15/9 and 22/9 (according to region)	
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	15/9		15/9	
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	North Region : primary : 24/8 secondary : 1/9 Central Region : primary : 17/8 secondary : 24/8 South Region : primary : 7/9 secondary : 7/9		primary : 6/9 secondary : 6/9 primary : 16/8 secondary : 23/8 primary : 23/8 secondary : 30/8	
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	between 14/9 and 21/9		between 15/9 and 20/9	
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>				
- England and Wales	between 1/9 and 7/9		between 1/9 and 7/9	
- Northern Ireland	1/9		30/8 or 1/9	
- Scotland	between 18/8 and 25/8		between 18/8 and 25/8	

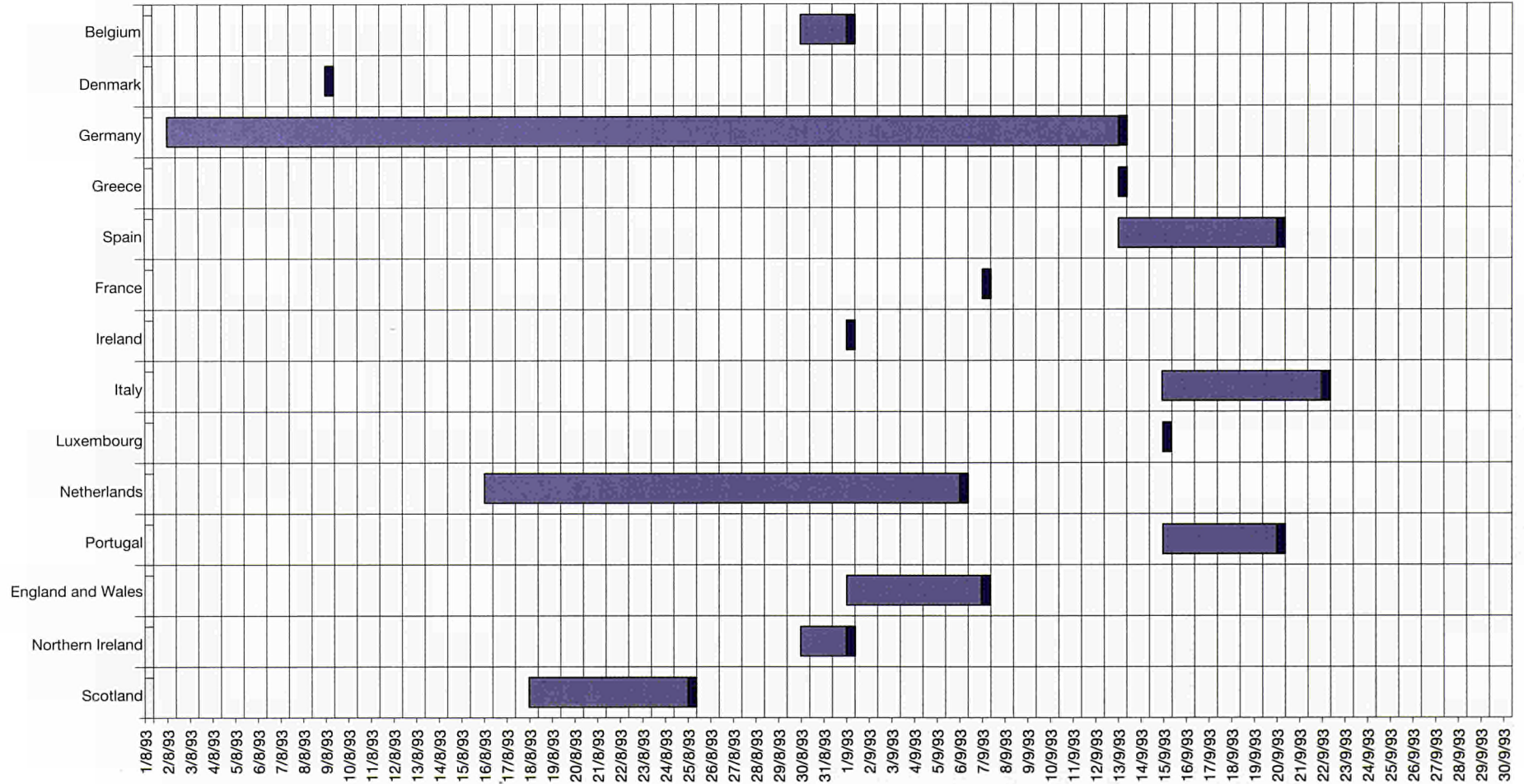
\* MEC : under the responsibility of the Education Ministry.

AC : Autonomous Community.

\*\* BUP : *Bachillerato Unificado Polivalente* (Integrated Upper Secondary Education).

**BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR 1993/94  
RANGE OF DATES**

**Primary Schools**



**TABLE III**  
**NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR**

<b>MEMBER STATE</b>	<b>PRIMARY EDUCATION (*)</b>	<b>SECONDARY EDUCATION</b>
<b>BELGIUM</b>	182	182
<b>DENMARK</b>	200	200
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b>	188 (1) 208 (1a)	188 (1) 208 (1a)
<b>GREECE</b>	175	175 (3)
<b>SPAIN</b>	175 (4)	170
<b>FRANCE</b>	180 (5)	180 (5)
<b>IRELAND</b>	184	180 (1) 200 (2)
<b>ITALY</b>	minimum 200	minimum 200
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	212	216
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	200	200 (6) 195 (6)
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	184	172 (1) 203 (2)
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> – England and Wales – Northern Ireland – Scotland	minimum 190 (7) minimum 190 (8) 190	minimum 190 (7) minimum 190 (8) 190

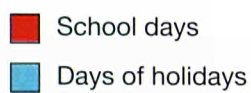
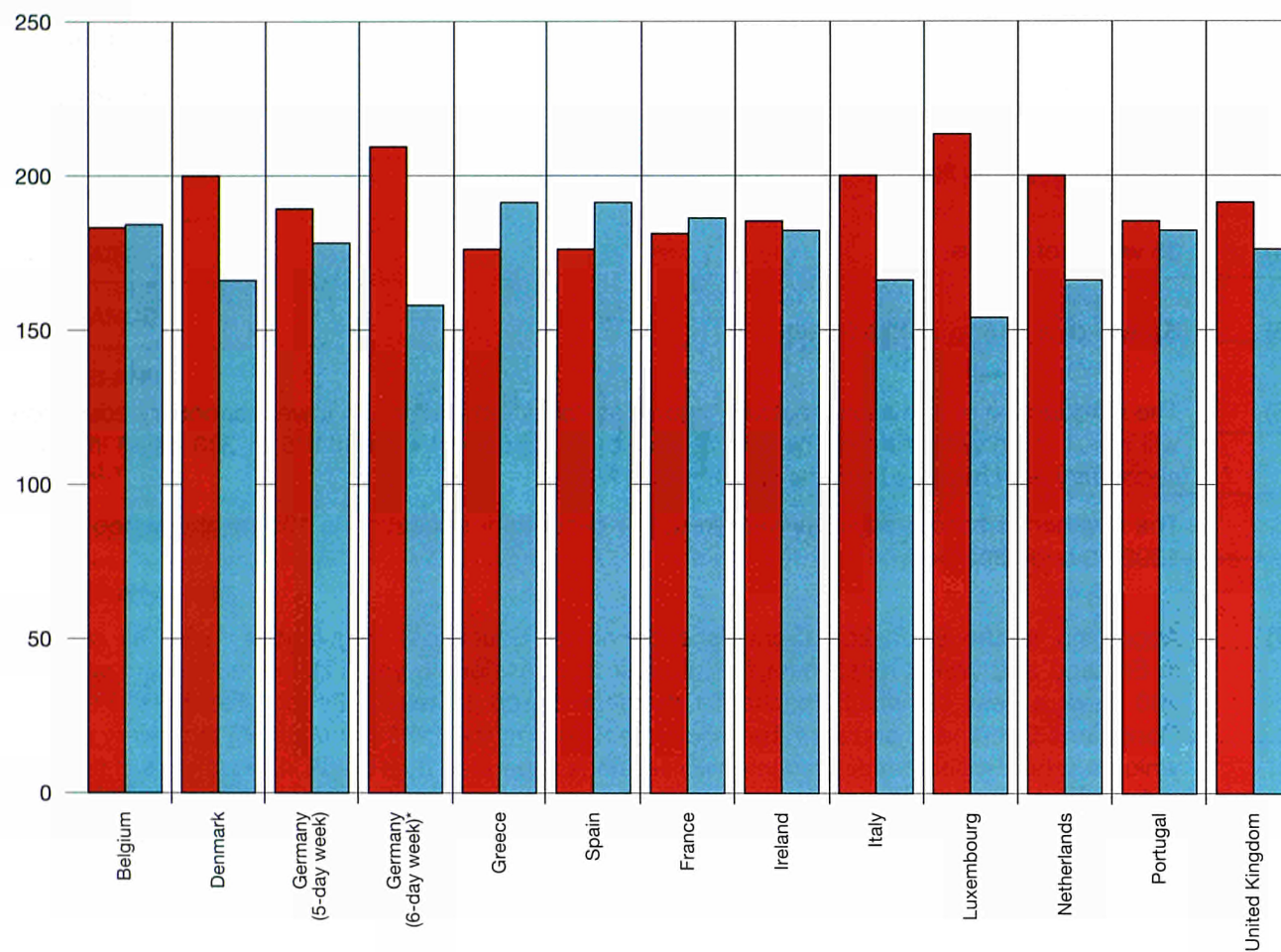
\* Primary and lower secondary education in Denmark (*Folkeskole*) and Spain pre-reform (*E.G.B.* - Basic General Education). In Portugal, first cycle of basic education.

- (1) 5-day week system.
- (1a) 6-day week system. The total of 208 days' teaching is arrived at on the basis of every other Saturday being free. The annual total number of hours of teaching is however the same under the 5-day and the 6-day week systems, as the teaching not given on Saturdays is distributed over the other days of the week.
- (2) 6-day week system.
- (3) Not including time spent on examinations and school visits.
- (4) 35 weeks of 5 days.
- (5) Spread over 316 to 350 half-days.
- (6) The introduction of a revised structure, known as "basic education", in lower secondary education will result in an extension of the school year by 5 school days (from 195 to 200 days) in lower secondary education as from the school year 1993/94 .  
The number of school days per year in upper secondary education is 195 for the school years 1992/93 and 1993/94.
- (7) According to the Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations 1981, all schools in England and Wales must meet for 380 half-day sessions a year. This is consistent with the 190 days a year on which teachers may be required to teach (School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document) and with the requirement (also in the 1981 Regulations) that every day on which a school meets be divided into two sessions separated by a break in the middle of the day, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Teachers are also required to be available for other duties, e.g. in-service training, for another five days. Hours must be sufficient to teach the National Curriculum.
- (8) 200 days, of which up to 10 may be taken as occasional holidays.

## DIVISION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AS BETWEEN SCHOOL DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

### Primary Schools

Number  
of days

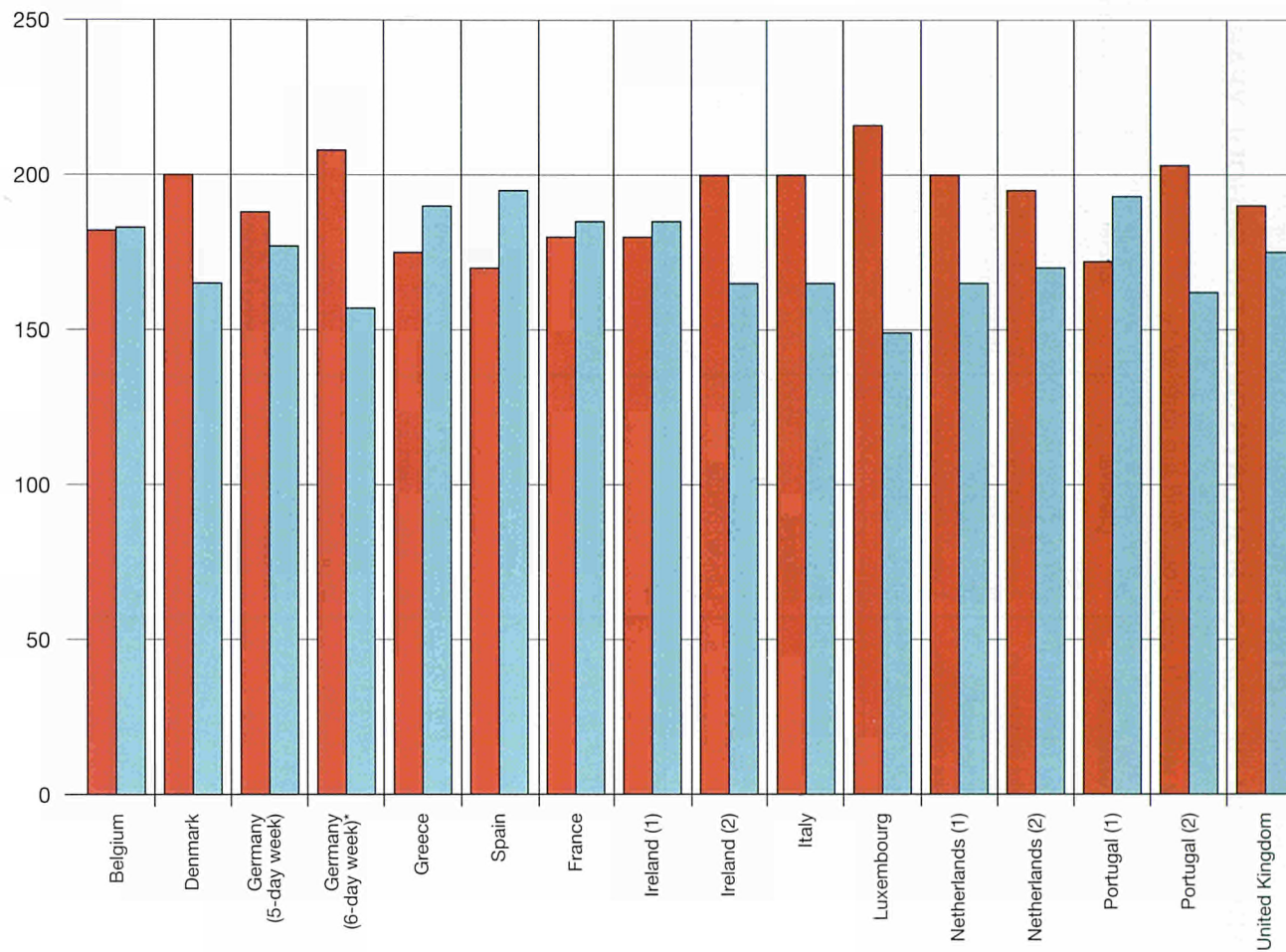


\* These data correspond to a 6-day week where lessons take place on every other Saturday.

## DIVISION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AS BETWEEN SCHOOL DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

### Secondary Schools

Number of days



■ School days  
■ Days of holidays

\* These data correspond to a 6-day week where lessons take place on every other Saturday.

**TABLE IV**  
**LENGTH AND DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL HOLIDAYS OVER THE SCHOOL YEAR**

MEMBER STATE	Summer Holidays	Autumn	Christmas	Carnival	Easter	3rd term	Other
<b>BELGIUM</b> - French and Flemish Communities  - German-speaking Community	Around 9 weeks (1/7 to 30/8).  Around 8 weeks (beginning of July to end of August).	1 week (starting on the Monday of the week of 1 November).  1 week (starting on the Monday of the week of 1 November).	2 weeks (starting on the Monday of Christmas week).  2 weeks (starting on the Monday of Christmas week).	1 week (starting on the 7th Monday before Easter).  1 week (starting on the 7th Monday before Easter).	2 weeks (from the 1st Monday of April).  2 weeks (from the 1st Monday of April).		Around 5 public holidays + 1 optional day (sec. education) + 2 optional days (prim. education).  Around 5 public holidays + 2/3 optional days (primary and secondary education).
<b>DENMARK</b>	Around 7 weeks (mid-June to mid-August).	1 week.	2 weeks.	1 week in mid-February <sup>1</sup> (Winter holidays).	2 weeks.		3 public holidays between Easter and the summer holidays.
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b>	6 weeks ((staggered between mid-June and mid-September).	1 to 12 days <sup>2</sup> .	8 to 17 days <sup>2</sup> .	1 to 7 days <sup>2</sup> (not in all <i>Länder</i> ) (Winter holidays).	3 to 17 days <sup>2</sup> .	1 to 11 days <sup>2</sup> (Whitsun).	15 days of national, religious or local holidays, depending on the <i>Land</i> .
<b>GREECE</b> - Primary education  - Sec. education	Around 12 weeks (16/6 to 10/9).  Around 10 weeks (1/7 to 10/9) <sup>3</sup> .		2 weeks.		2 weeks.		Around 10 days of national or local religious holidays.
<b>SPAIN</b> - Primary education  - Sec. education	Around 11 weeks (end of June to the first fortnight of September).  Around 13 weeks (end of June to October).		Around 15 days.	3 days in February.	Around 10 days.		Around 9 public holidays per year.
<b>FRANCE</b>	Around 9 weeks (staggered between end June/beginning July and first fortnight of September).	1 week.	2 weeks.	2 weeks (Winter holidays).	2 weeks (staggered between April and May) (Spring holidays).		5 public holidays between Easter and the summer holidays.
<b>IRELAND</b> - Primary education  - Sec. education	Around 9 weeks (end of June to 1 September).  Around 13 weeks (end of May to 1 September).	Approximately 1 week <sup>4</sup> (end of October).	Around 10 days.		Around 10 days.		13 bank and religious holidays <sup>5</sup> .

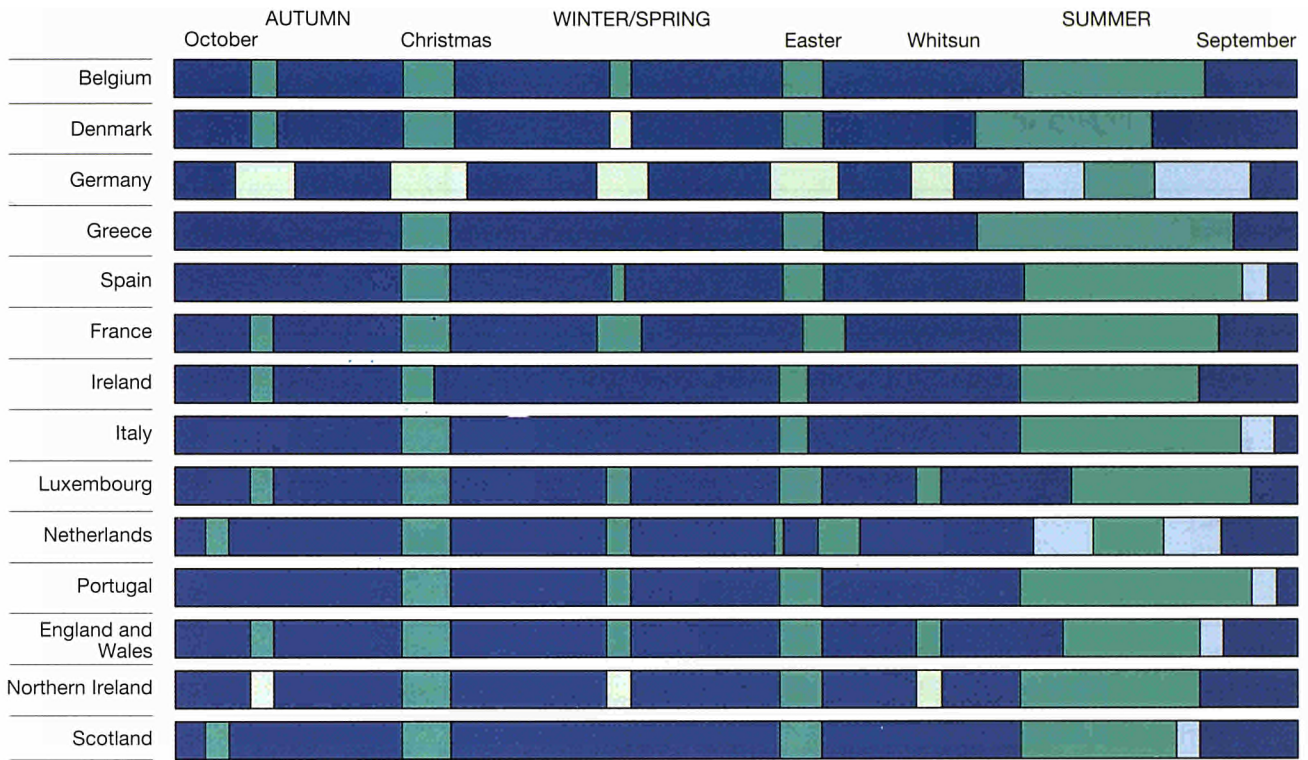
<b>ITALY</b>	Around 9 weeks (30 June to 1st September) <sup>6</sup> .		Around 2 weeks.		Around 1 week.		5 public holidays.
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	Around 9 weeks (from mid-July to mid-September).	1 week.	2 weeks.	1 week.	2 weeks.	1 week at Whitsun.	3 public holidays between Easter and summer holidays.
<b>NETHERLANDS</b> - Primary education	6 weeks (staggered between beginning July and beginning September)	1 week in October.	2 weeks.	1 week in February or 1 week in March (spring holidays).	Easter Monday.	1-2 week(s) end April/beginning May.	10 public holidays.
- Sec. education	7 weeks (staggered between beginning July and beginning September)	1 week in October.	2 weeks.	1 week in February or 1 week in March (spring holidays).	Easter Monday.	1-2 week(s) end April/beginning May.	10 public holidays.
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	Around 10 weeks		2 weeks.	1 week.	2 weeks.	1 week.	Around 10 public holidays.
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> - England and Wales	6 weeks.	1 week (end of October).	2 weeks.	1 week.	2 weeks.	1 week in May.	<sup>7</sup>
- Northern Ireland	8 weeks.	Varies.	2 weeks.	Varies.	2 weeks.	Varies.	
- Scotland	6 weeks.	1 week (mid-October).	2 weeks.		2 weeks.		Around 8 days (local/bank holidays, long week-ends).

- (1) Depending on the schools.
- (2) The length of the shorter holiday periods in each year is fixed by the individual *Länder* within the total number of 75 days of holiday per school year. The figures in the table refer to the school year 1993/94.
- (3) From 1/9 to 10/9 - examination resits.
- (4) Most schools take a mid-term break of one week's duration towards the end of October. This is usually arranged around one public holiday (last Monday in October) and one religious holiday (1st November).
- (5) Includes public and religious holidays which occur during school holidays, e.g. first Monday in August (bank holiday) and 15th August (religious holiday). With effect from May 1994, Ireland will have one extra bank holiday (1 May), bringing the total to 14.
- (6) Including the examinations period, but excluding the *Maturità*.
- (7) All public holidays fall during school holidays with the exception of the May Day holiday (first Monday in May).



## DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL HOLIDAYS OVER THE YEAR IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (1993/94)

### Primary Schools



- Holidays
- Regional variations
- School time
- Range of dates of beginning and end of school year

**TABLE V**  
**LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL WEEK**

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

\* Primary **and** lower secondary education in Denmark (*Folkeskole*) and Spain pre-reform (*E.G.B.* - Basic General Education). In Portugal, first cycle of basic education.

- (1) The teaching time per week determined by the Ministries of Education of the *Länder* for the individual types of school may be distributed over 5 or 6 days at the request of the school. Schools operate on the basis of either a regular 5-day week, or a 6-day week but with no classes on one or two Saturdays in the month. In some *Länder*, the regular 5-day week has been introduced in all schools by the Ministry of Education.
  
- (2) Or 9 to 10 half-days.
  
- (3) Following the reorganisation of primary education, in force since the 1990/91 school year, schools may choose, in consultation with parents, to provide education on 5 or 6 days a week, on the basis of one of the following formulae :
  - 6-day timetable, mornings only;
  - 6-day timetable also including one afternoon;
  - 5-day timetable including several afternoons;

The 6-morning formula is tending to disappear, partly because of the increasing desire of parents to leave their children at school in the afternoon and partly because of the increase in the number of subjects taught in the primary school.
  
- (4) In lower secondary education, the full-time formula is gradually being replaced by the extended timetable, the main feature of which is that it is the same teachers who teach the curricular and extra-curricular subjects. The teachers responsible for the curricular subjects also organise the extra-curricular courses, either with teachers of other classes or with those in different subject areas.

At upper secondary level, there are always classes 6 days a week.
  
- (5) Where there is a shortage of accommodation.

**TABLE VI**  
**NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK**  
**DURATION OF ONE LESSON**

**1. PRIMARY EDUCATION (\*)**

MEMBER STATE	NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK	DURATION OF A LESSON
BELGIUM	28	50 minutes (1)
DENMARK	minimum from 20 to 28 (2)	45 minutes
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	from 17 to 28 (3)	45 minutes
GREECE	from 23 to 32	40 - 50 minutes
SPAIN	25	flexible
FRANCE	26	at the teacher's discretion
IRELAND	22 (4)	flexible
ITALY	27 to 30 (5)	at the teacher's discretion
LUXEMBOURG	30	18 lessons of 55 minutes 12 lessons of 50 minutes
NETHERLANDS	minimum 22 (6) minimum 25 (7)	60 minutes (in general)
PORTUGAL	25	at the teacher's discretion
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>		
- England and Wales	Age 5-7: 21 Age 8-11 : 23 1/2 (8)	(9)
- Northern Ireland	(10)	(10)
- Scotland	(11)	(11)

\* Primary and lower secondary education in Denmark (*Folkeskole*) and Spain pre-reform (*E.G.B.* - Basic General Education). In Portugal, first cycle of basic education.

- (1) Belgium - French Community :  
During the first two years of primary education, the length of a lesson should rarely exceed half a period, or 25 minutes.  
  
Belgium - Flemish Community :  
During the first four years of primary education, the 50-minute lesson is divided into 2 periods of 25 minutes.
- (2) Applies to the whole period of compulsory schooling, i.e. increasing progressively from a minimum of 20 lessons per week in the 1st year to a minimum of 28 lessons per week in the 9th year. Normally, the actual number of lessons is greater.
- (3) Increasing from the 1st to the 4th year. In two *Länder* (Berlin and Brandenburg), primary education comprises 6 years with from 17 to 30 lessons per week (increasing from the 1st year to the 6th year).
- (4) In addition to religious instruction (5 lessons of half-an-hour), National Schools are required to provide 4 hours and 10 minutes of secular instruction (3 hours and 10 minutes in the case of infants).
- (5) Pupils may spend up to 37 hours per week at school. The additional hours comprise, in addition to meal times, educational activities to enrich and extend knowledge of the subjects studied.
- (6) During the first four years of primary education, a minimum of 880 hours per year.
- (7) During the last four years of primary education, a minimum of 1000 hours per year.
- (8) These are the suggested minimum weekly lesson times in the guidelines given in Circular No 7/90, "Management of the school day". These figures exclude assemblies, religious education and tutor periods. In some schools, the total number of hours will be greater.
- (9) The day is rarely divided in this formal way. There must be a break in the middle of the day, and all schools have mid-morning breaks. Further division of the day is at the discretion of the head teacher and class teacher, according to the subjects of study.
- (10) In Northern Ireland, at primary level, pupils aged under 8 must receive daily 3 hours' education plus 30 minutes' religious instruction. Those aged 8-11 must receive 4 hours 30 minutes' education plus 30 minutes' religious instruction.
- (11) Fixed by each education authority; each head teacher is at liberty to determine the number and the duration of lessons, in consultation with staff. The integrated day in primary school results in a much less structured timetable than that of secondary.

**TABLE VI**  
**NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK**  
**DURATION OF ONE LESSON**

**2. LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

MEMBER STATE	NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK	DURATION OF LESSON
<b>BELGIUM</b> - French Community - German-speaking Community - Flemish Community	minimum 28, maximum 32/34/36 (1)  minimum 32, maximum 34 minimum 32, maximum 32/36 (1)	50 minutes  50 minutes 50 minutes
<b>DENMARK</b>	(2)	(2)
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b>	minimum 26, maximum 36 (3)	45 minutes
<b>GREECE</b>	minimum 30, maximum 32	40 - 45 minutes
<b>SPAIN</b>	(2)	(2)
<b>FRANCE</b>	25 1/2 to 30 (4)	55 minutes
<b>IRELAND</b>	45	35 - 40 minutes
<b>ITALY</b>	30 (5)	60 minutes
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	30	50 minutes
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	32	50 minutes
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	2nd cycle of Basic Education : 31 3rd cycle of Basic Education : 31 (7th year) 32 (8th year) 31 or 34 (9th year) (6)	50 minutes
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> - England and Wales - Northern Ireland - Scotland	35 to 40 (7) 35 to 40 (7) 35 to 40 (8)	35 - 40 minutes 35 - 40 minutes 40 minutes

- (1) Belgium - French Community :
- In general education, maximum 32 periods (plus 2 possible remedial periods).
  - In technical, artistic and vocational education, maximum from 32 to 34 periods (plus 2 possible remedial periods) up to 36 periods depending on the options taken.
- Belgium - Flemish Community :
- In general education, maximum 32 periods.
  - In technical, artistic and vocational education, maximum 36 periods.
- (2) Not applicable; see table VI 1. (Number of lessons per week - Primary schools).
- (3) Increasing from the 5th/7th years to the 9th/10th years.
- (4) Depending on the options taken.
- (5) Under the extended timetable, pupils may spend up to 40 hours per week at school. The additional hours include, in addition to lunchtime, educational activities to enrich and extend knowledge of the subjects studied.
- (6) Depending on the options taken.
- (7) These are average figures (no legal requirements). The detail of the daily timetable is a matter for the head teacher of each school.
- (8) Fixed by each education authority; each head teacher is at liberty to determine the number and the duration of lessons within the individual school, in consultation with the teaching staff.

**TABLE VI**  
**NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK**  
**DURATION OF ONE LESSON**

**3. UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION**

MEMBER STATE	NUMBER OF LESSONS PER WEEK	DURATION OF LESSON
<b>BELGIUM</b> - French Community  - German-speaking Community  - Flemish Community	General education : minimum 28, maximum 32 Art/technical/vocational education : minimum 28, maximum 32/34/36 (1)	50 minutes
	General education : minimum 32, maximum 36 Technical education : minimum 32, maximum 36 Vocational education : minimum 32, maximum 32/36 (1)	50 minutes
		50 minutes
<b>DENMARK</b>	from 30 to 32	45 minutes
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b>	General education : minimum 30, maximum 33 Technical/vocational education : minimum 30, maximum 36 (2)	45 minutes
<b>GREECE</b>	General <i>Lykeia</i> : minimum 30, maximum 32 Comprehensive <i>Lykeia</i> : minimum 34, maximum 36 Technical/vocational <i>Lykeia</i> : minimum 34, maximum 36	45 minutes
<b>SPAIN</b>	<i>BUP</i> and <i>FP</i> (3) : 29 Secondary Education (4) : 30	50 minutes
<b>FRANCE</b>	from 29 1/2 to 31 1/2 (5)	55 minutes
<b>IRELAND</b>	45	± 35 - 40 minutes
<b>ITALY</b>	Classical <i>Liceo</i> : minimum 27, maximum 29 Scientific <i>Liceo</i> : minimum 25, maximum 30 Technical institute : minimum 31, maximum 38 Vocational institute : minimum 31, maximum 40 (6)	60 minutes
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	General secondary : 30 Technical secondary : minimum 32, maximum 38	50 minutes
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	minimum 28, maximum 32	50 minutes
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	General secondary (7) : minimum 31, maximum 32 (10th, 11th year) minimum 41, maximum 42 (12th year) Technical secondary : minimum 31, maximum 32 (10th, 11th year); minimum 30, maximum 32 (12th year)	50 minutes
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> - England and Wales - Northern Ireland - Scotland	35 - 40 (8)	± 35 - 40 minutes
	35 - 40 (8)	± 35 - 40 minutes
	35 - 40 (9)	40 minutes (9)

- (1) Belgium - French Community :
  - In general education, maximum 32 periods (plus 2 possible remedial periods).
  - In technical, art and vocational education, the maximum number of periods is from 32 to 34 periods (plus 2 possible remedial periods) to 36 periods according to the options taken.Belgium - Flemish Community :
  - In general education and in the third year of the third stage of art education, maximum 32 periods.
  - In technical, art and vocational education, maximum 36 periods.
- (2) Under the “dual system” (*Berufsschule* and on-the-job training), at least 12 periods of part-time education per week.
- (3) System in operation until the establishment of the new structure provided for by the reform law (*LOGSE*).
- (4) Post-reform system.
- (5) In the last two years, depending on the options chosen by the pupil, the maximum can go up to 35.
- (6) In view of the high number of hours of courses in technical and vocational establishments, the school councils often ask to have the duration of lessons reduced to 55 or even 50 minutes. Permission is given by the *Provveditore agli studi* (provincial education authority) after consideration of the reasons given. This is most often in order to make school hours compatible with public transport timetables, since upper secondary schools are found only in relatively large towns and they accept pupils coming from a wide geographical area.
- (7) Courses mainly leading to higher education.
- (8) These are average figures. Details of the timetable within the day are a matter for the head teacher of each school.
- (9) Fixed by each education authority; each head teacher is at liberty to determine the number and the duration of lessons within the individual school, in consultation with the teaching staff.

**TABLE VII**  
**NUMBER OF CLASS HOURS PER YEAR**

**1. PUPILS APPROX. AGE 6**

<b>MEMBER STATE</b>	<b>Weekly load</b>	<b>Number of days / week</b>	<b>Daily load</b>	<b>Number of days / year</b>	<b>Annual load</b>
<b>BELGIUM</b>	28 x 50' 1400'	5	280'	182	50 960' 849 hrs 20'
<b>DENMARK (1)</b>	20 x 45' 900'	5	180'	200	36 000' 600 hrs
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (2)</b>	20 x 45' 900'	5/6	180'/163'	188/208	33 840' 564 hrs
<b>GREECE</b>	23 x 45' 1035'	5	207'	175	36 225' 603 hrs 45' (4)
<b>SPAIN</b>	25 hrs 1500'	5	300'	175	52 500' 875 hrs
<b>FRANCE</b>	26 hrs 1560'	5	312'	180	56 160' 936 hrs
<b>IRELAND</b>	23 hrs 20' 1400'	5	220'	184	40 480' 674 hrs 40'
<b>ITALY</b>	27 hrs 1620'	5/6	324'/ 270'	200	64 800' 1080 hrs
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	18x55'+12x50' 1590'	6	265'	212	56 180' 936 hrs 20'
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	22 hrs 1320'	5	264'	200	52 800' 880 hrs
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	25 hrs 1500'	5	300'	184	55 200' 920 hrs
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>					
– England and Wales (3)	21 hrs 1260'	5	252'	190	47 880' 798 hrs
– Northern Ireland	17.5 hrs 1050'	5	210'	190	39 900' 665 hrs
– Scotland	22.5 hrs 1350'	5	270'	190	51 300' 855 hrs

- (1) Data apply to pre-school classes in accordance with the new Act on the *Folkeskole* which will come into effect in August 1994. These figures do not however take into account other classes provided for pupils (e.g. leisure-time courses and activities provided by the schools themselves, by leisure centres or by "municipal schools for young people").
- (2) Average number of hours of teaching time in the first year in all *Länder* (see also notes (1) and (1a) on page 17).
- (3) These figures do not include the time spent on religious education classes, the daily act of worship or support teaching. The total number of hours will be greater.
- (4) Or 805 lessons of 45 minutes.

**TABLE VII**  
**NUMBER OF CLASS HOURS PER YEAR**

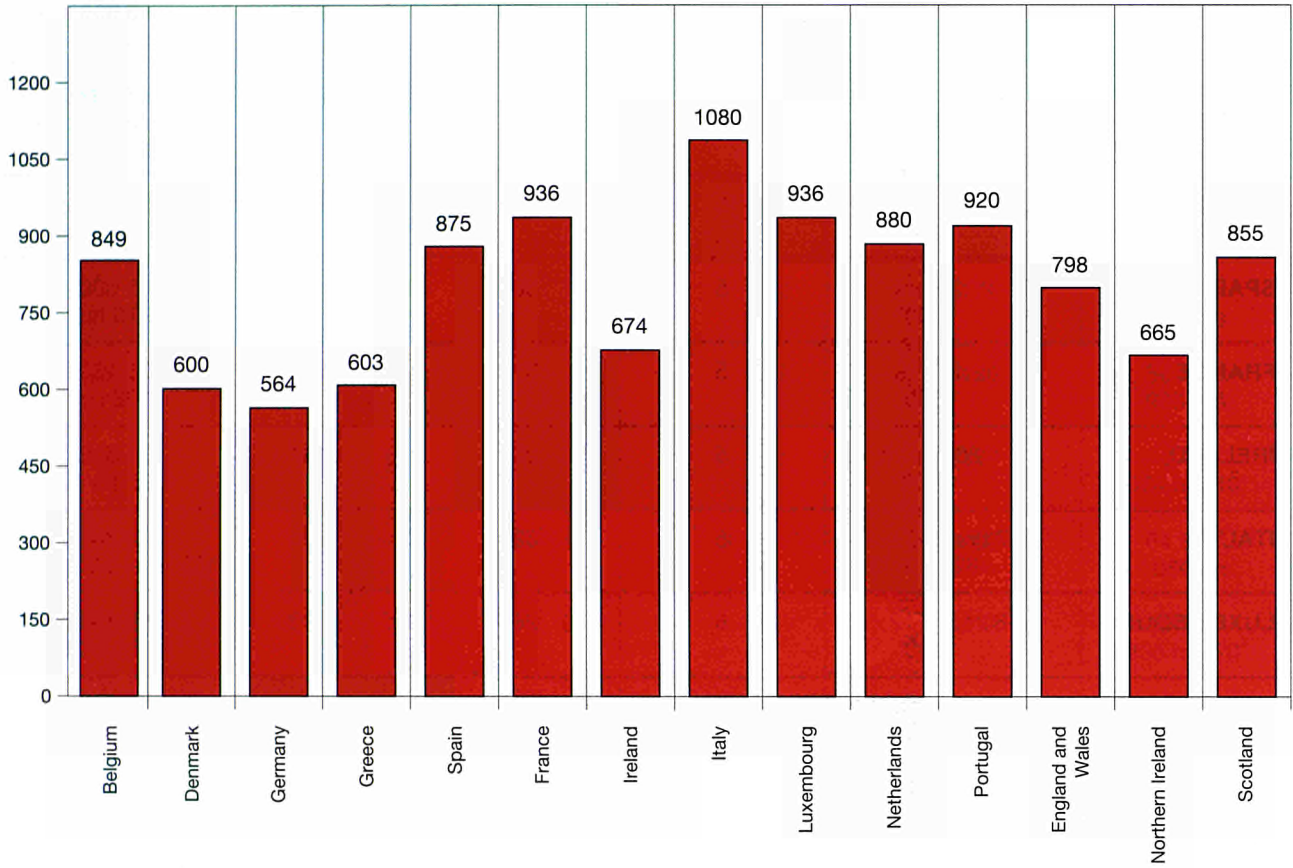
**2. PUPILS APPROX. AGE 9**

MEMBER STATE	Weekly load	Number of days / week	Daily load	Number of days / year	Annual load
<b>BELGIUM</b>	28 x 50' 1400'	5	280'	182	50 960' 849 hrs 20'
<b>DENMARK (1)</b>	22 x 45' 990'	5	198'	200	39 600' 660 hrs
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (2)</b>	25 x 45' 1125'	5/6	225' / 203'	188 / 208	42 300' 705 hrs
<b>GREECE</b>	32 x 45' 1140'	5	288'	175	50 400' 840 hrs (5)
<b>SPAIN</b>	25 hrs 1500'	5	300'	175	52 500' 875 hrs
<b>FRANCE</b>	26 hrs 1560'	5	312'	180	56 160' 936 hrs
<b>IRELAND</b>	23 hrs 20' 1400	5	280'	184	51 520' 858 hrs 40'
<b>ITALY</b>	27 hrs / 30 hrs (4) 1620'/1800'	5	324'	200	64 800' 1080 hrs/1200 hrs (4)
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	18 x 55' + 12 x 50' 1590'	6	265'	212	56 180' 936 hrs 20'
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	25 hrs 1500'	5	300'	200	60 000' 1000 hrs
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	25 hrs 1500'	5	300'	184	55 200' 920 hrs
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>					
– England and Wales (3)	23.5 hrs 1410'	5	282'	190	53 580' 893 hrs
– Northern Ireland	25 hrs 1500'	5	300'	190	57 000' 950 hrs
– Scotland	25 hrs 1500'	5	300'	190	57 000' 950 hrs

- (1) Data apply to 3rd year classes in accordance with the new Act on the *Folkeskole* which will come into effect in August 1994. These figures do not however take into account other classes provided for pupils (e.g. leisure-time courses and activities provided by the schools themselves, by leisure centres or by "municipal schools for young people").
- (2) Average number of hours of teaching in the 4th year in all *Länder* (see also notes (1) and (1a) on page 17).
- (3) These figures do not include the time spent on religious education classes, the daily act of worship or support teaching. The total number of hours will be greater.
- (4) The weekly load increases to 30 hours (1200 hours per year) where pupils take a foreign language course.
- (5) Or 1120 lessons of 45 minutes.

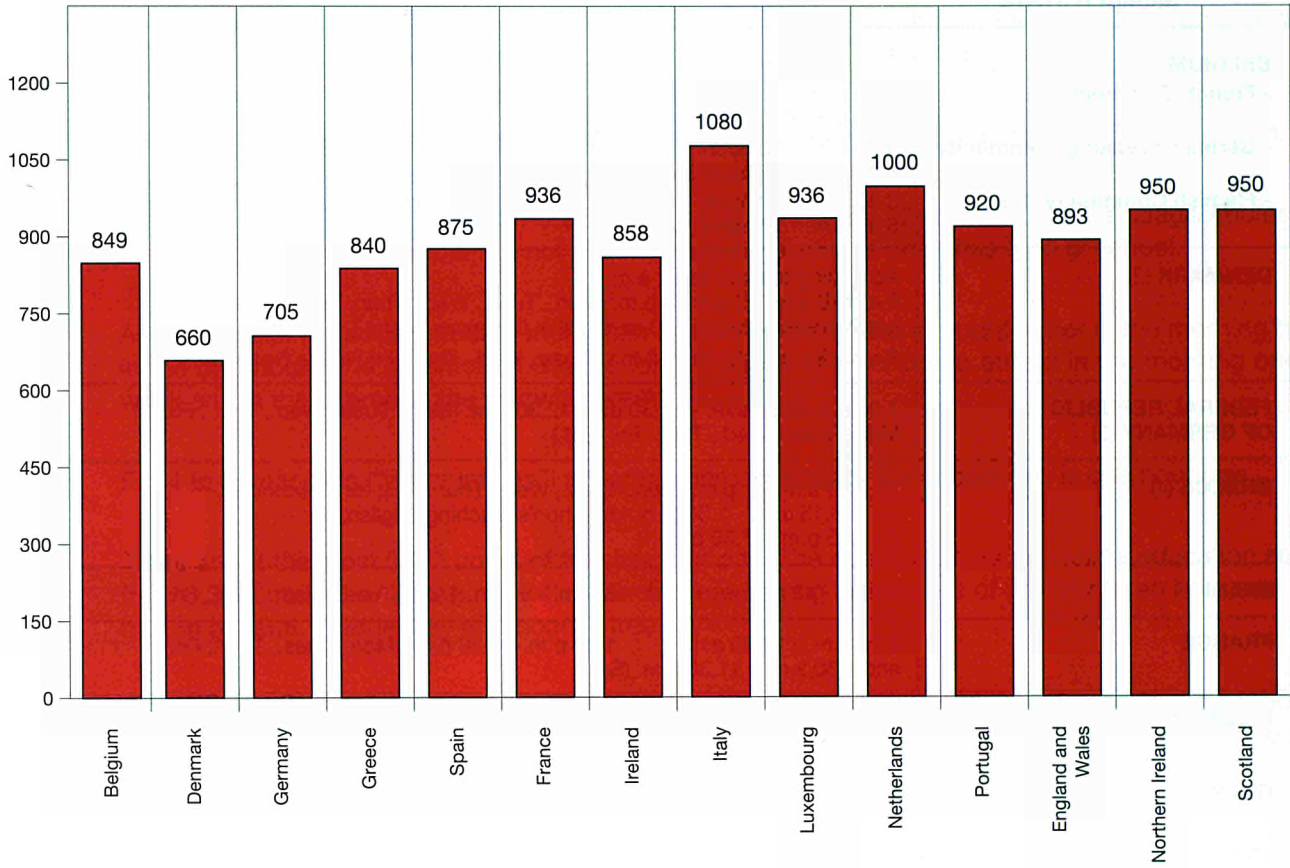
**ANNUAL TEACHING TIME (in hours)  
IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**At the beginning of schooling (about age 6)**



## ANNUAL TEACHING TIME (in hours) IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

At a later stage (about age 9)



**TABLE VIII**  
**TEACHING TIME IN THE SCHOOL DAY**  
**PRIMARY EDUCATION**

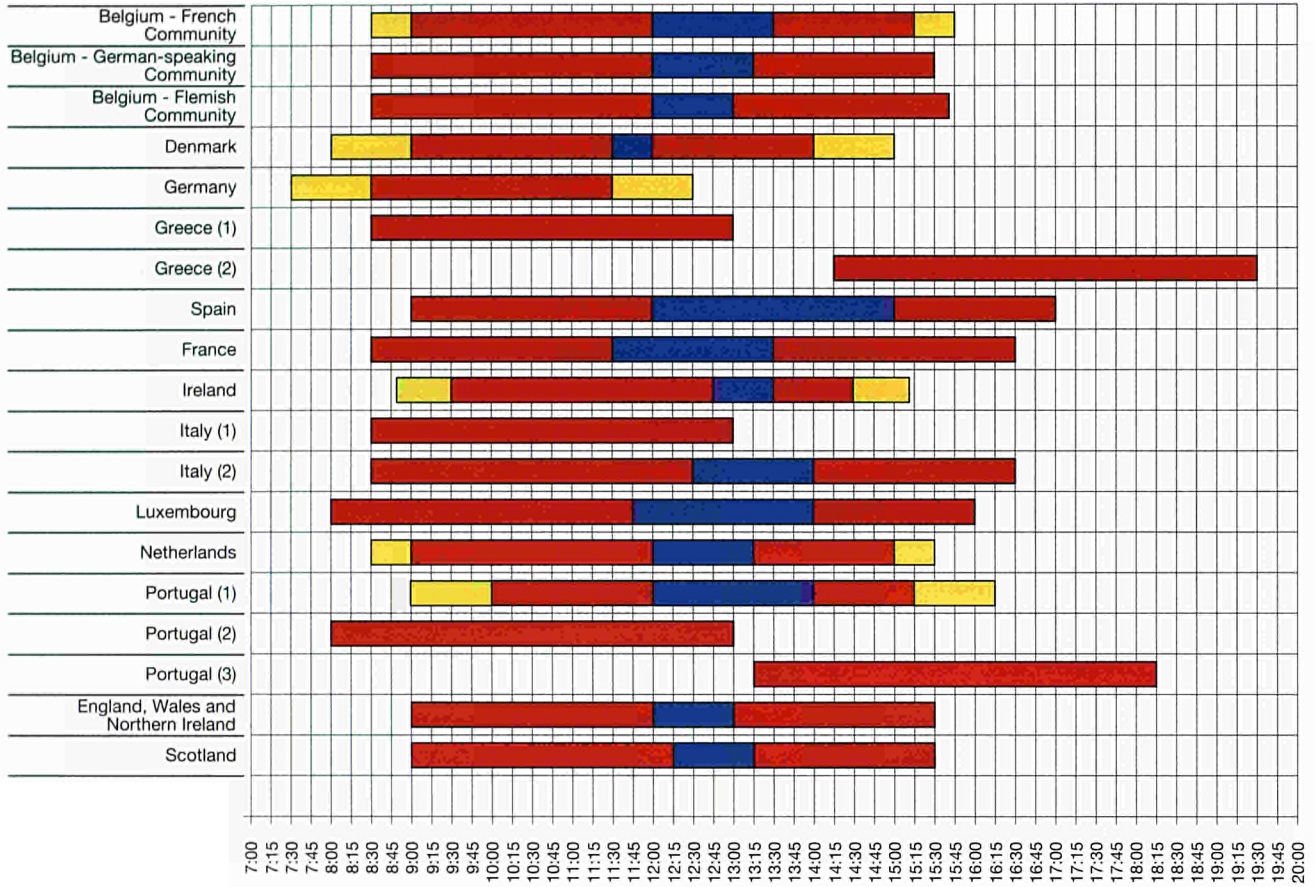
This table aims to give a general idea of the organisation of the school day and the distribution of teaching time; the information given is for guidance only, since the situation may vary from one school to another.

MEMBER STATE	
<b>BELGIUM</b> - French Community - German-speaking Community - Flemish Community (1a)	8.30 a.m./9 a.m. - 12 noon      1.30 p.m. - 3.15 p.m./3.45 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) 8.30 a.m./9 a.m. - 12 noon (Wed.) 8.30 a.m. - 12 noon      1.15 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) (1) 8.30 a.m. - 12 noon (Wed.) (1) 8.30 a.m. - 12 noon      1 p.m. - 3.40 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) 8.30 a.m. - 12 noon (Wed.)
<b>DENMARK</b> (2)	According to class level; e.g. 8 a.m./9 a.m. - 2 p.m./3 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.) (with a short lunch break of around 20 minutes) in the upper years; 8 a.m./9 a.m. - 12 noon (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.) in the first years.
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b> (3)	7.30 a.m./8.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m./12.30 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri. or Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri., Sat.)
<b>GREECE</b> (4)	1) 8.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.); for all schools, or 8.15 a.m. - 1.30 p.m. for schools teaching English; or 2) 2.15 p.m. - 7.30 p.m.
<b>SPAIN</b>	9 a.m. - 12 noon      3 p.m. - 5 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.)
<b>FRANCE</b>	8.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.      1.30 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) and 8.30 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. (Sat.)
<b>IRELAND</b>	8.50 a.m./9.30 a.m. - 12.45 p.m.      1.30 p.m. - 2.30 p.m./3.10 p.m. (5) (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.)
<b>ITALY</b>	1) 8.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. for 6 days; or 2) 8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. for 5 days, with lunch at school compulsory (condition to be observed if this timetable is chosen); or 3) 8.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. for 5/6 days, with courses in the afternoon on 1/2/3 day(s).
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	8 a.m. - 11.45 a.m.      2 p.m. - 3.45 p.m. (Mon., Wed., Fri.) 8 a.m. - 11.45 a.m. (Tues., Thur., Sat.)
<b>NETHERLANDS</b> (6)	In the first four years : 8.45 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.      1.15 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) and 8.45 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. (Wed.) In the last four years : 8.45 a.m. - 12 noon      1.15 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) and 8.45 a.m. - 12 noon (Wed.) (Example of a primary school in Zoetermeer)
<b>PORTUGAL</b> (7)	1) Simple system (8) :      9 a.m./10 a.m. - 12 noon 1 p.m./2 p.m. - 3.15 p.m./4.15 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.); or 2) Shift system (9) :      8 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.); or 3) Shift system (9) :      1.15 p.m. - 6.15 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.)
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> - England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Scotland	9 a.m. - 12 noon      1 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.) (10) 9 a.m. - 12.15 p.m.      1.15 p.m. - 3.30 p.m. (11)

- (1) May vary by about 10 minutes depending on school transport arrangements.
- (1a) The governing body fixes the times when the school day starts and finishes. However, the Ministry of Education recommends following the most appropriate timetable, i.e. from 8.30 a.m. until 12 noon in the morning and from 1.30 p.m. until 4 p.m. in the afternoon.
- (2) Schools are free to determine their timetables as long as they fall within the period 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- (3) Traditionally, the standard system is one of half-day schooling. All-day schools (*Ganztagsschulen*) are quite rare, and the *Länder* are not planning a general extension of this type of school.
- (4) As most buildings accommodate more than one school, pupils are taught either in the morning or in the afternoon. It is common in Greece for the pupils of a school to attend in the morning one week and in the afternoon the following week.
- (5) For 4 to 6-year-olds ("junior infants") attending primary school, the school day is one hour less.
- (6) There are at the most 5 1/2 hours of teaching per day. The opening hours in primary education are from 8.30 a.m. to 3 or 3.30 p.m., with a lunch break lasting an average of an hour to an hour and a half. In general, Wednesday afternoon is free.
- (7) The timetable for the first "cycle" of "basic education" (lower primary) depends on the accommodation available. Classes are held either all day (single system) or on two half-days in the schools operating the shift (double) system.
- (8) Regardless of the duration of the school year, the education council can modify the standard timetable provided that the following conditions are met :
  - morning classes start between 9 and 10 a.m.;
  - the mid-day break is at least one hour and at the most 2 hours;
  - afternoon classes do not start before 1 p.m. and the afternoon session is of 2 hours;
  - the total length of breaks (i.e. 20 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon) is not altered; breaks may be divided up according to the needs of the various classes.
- (9) Regardless of the length of the school year, the education council may :
  - vary the timetable of each of the two sessions by a maximum of 15 minutes, but must provide the obligatory break of 10 minutes between the morning and the afternoon sessions;
  - from November until the end of February, reduce to 20 minutes the total length of the breaks in both sessions and shorten the lessons by 15 minutes at the start of the morning and the end of the afternoon.
- (10) There are local variations.

## LESSON TIME DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

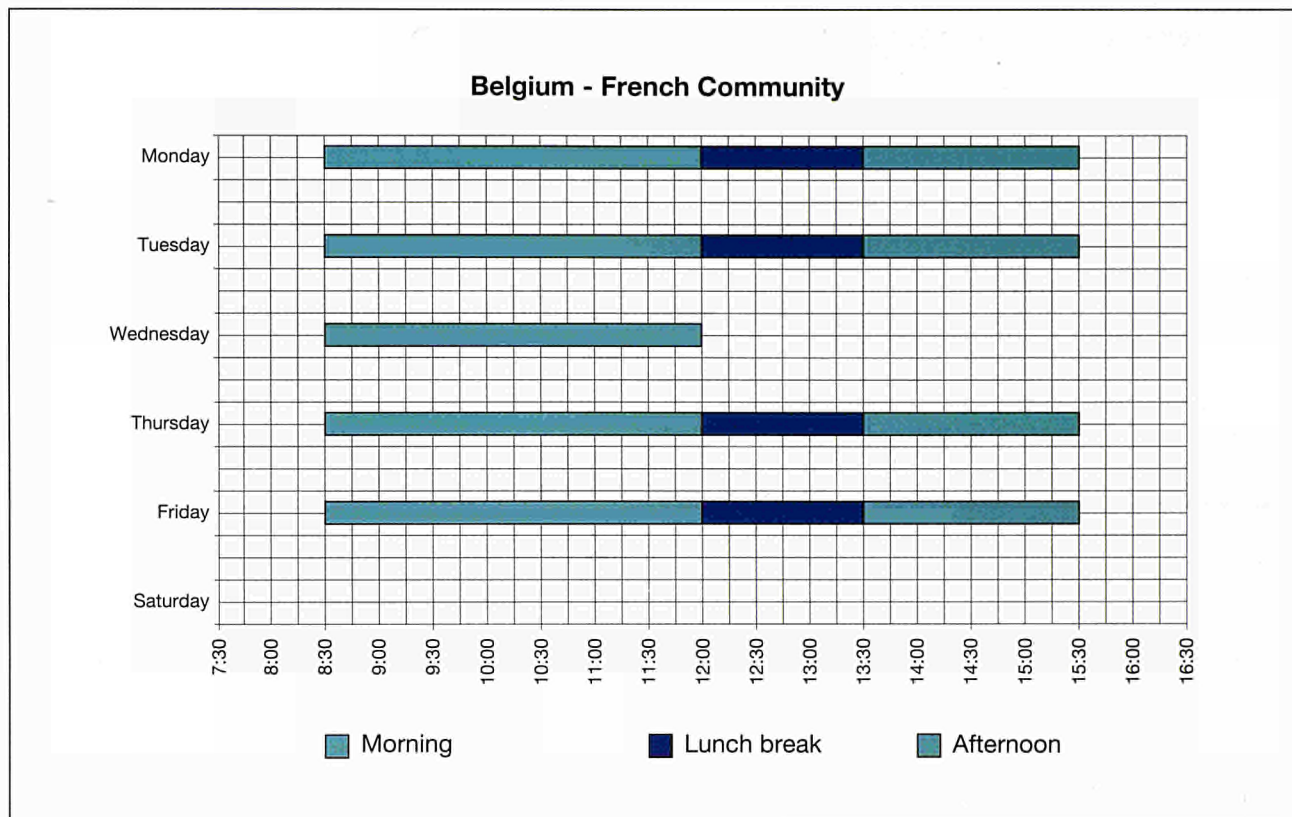
### Primary Schools



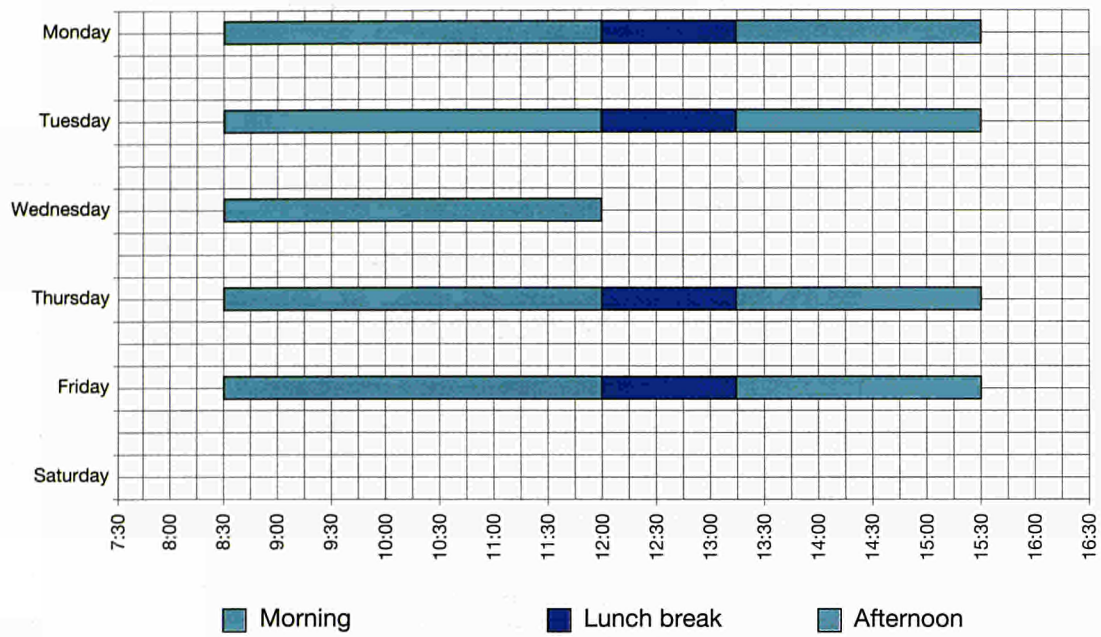
- Lessons - morning
- Lunch break
- Lessons - afternoon
- Starting and finishing times variable

## LESSON TIME DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

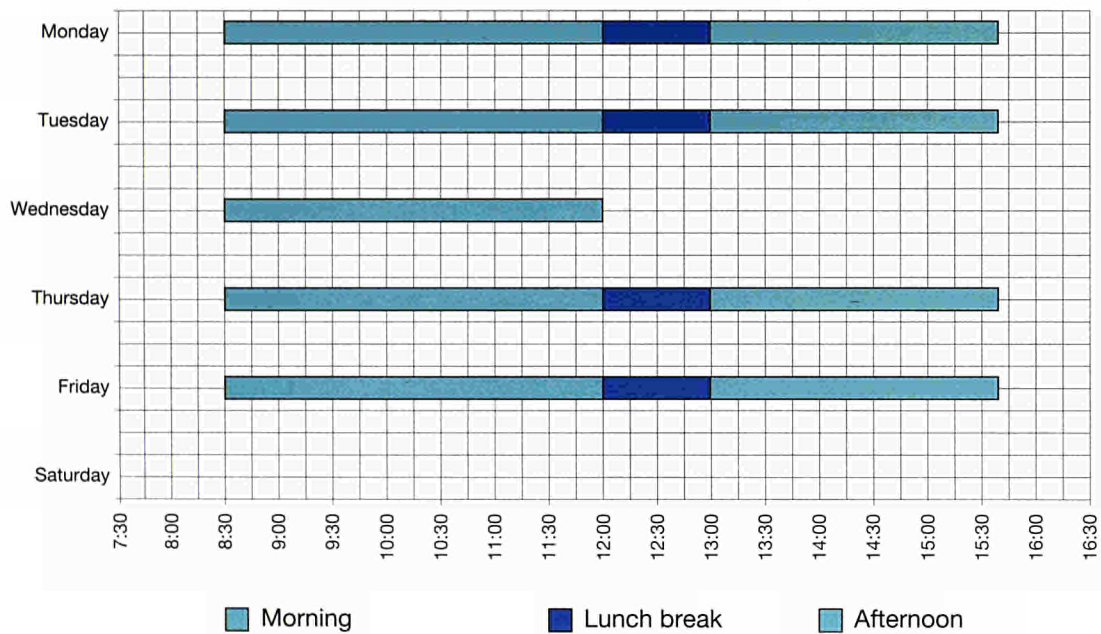
### Primary Schools

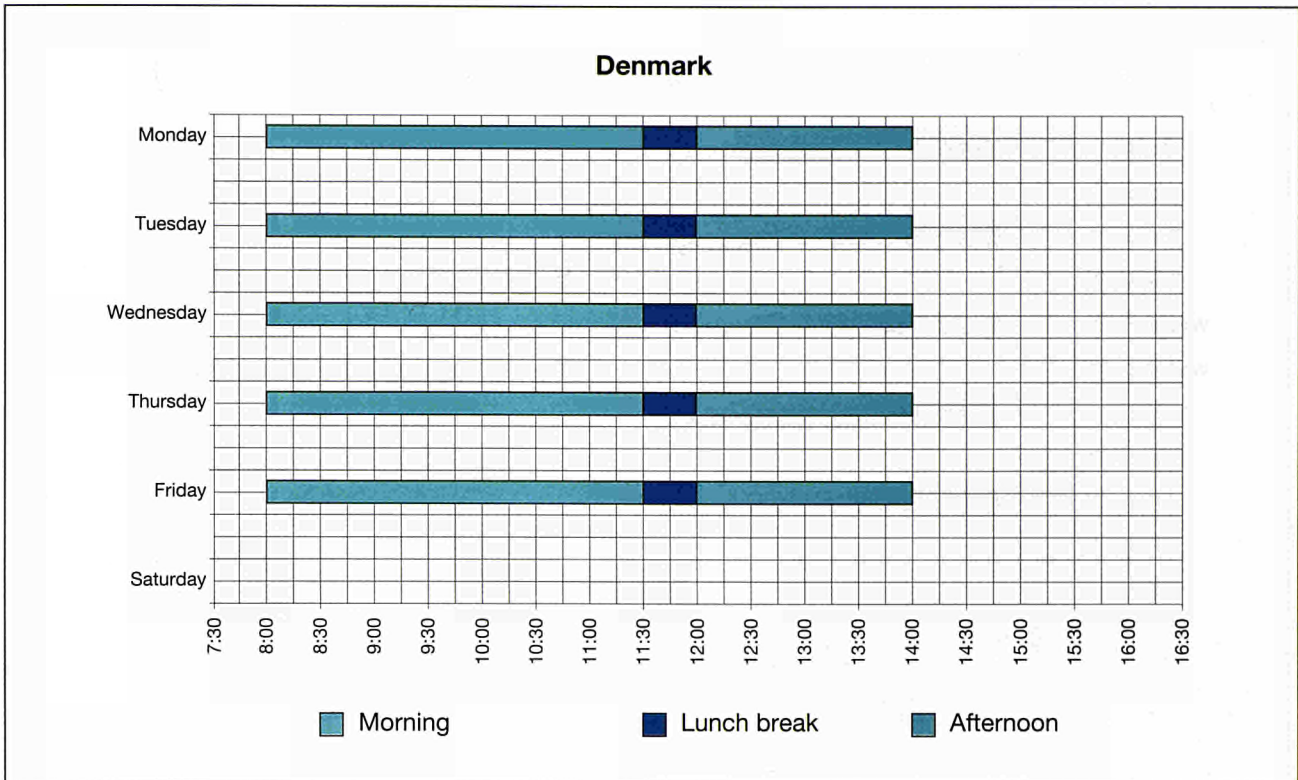


### Belgium - German-speaking Community

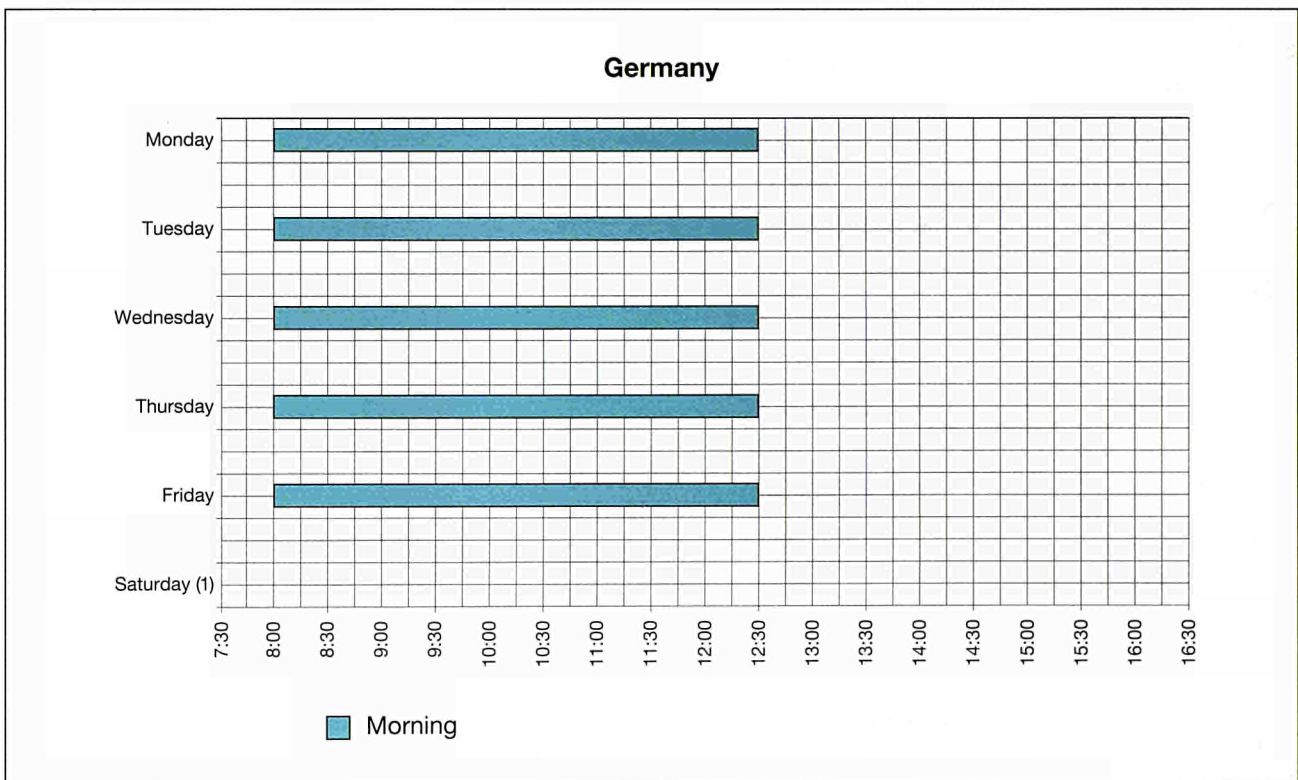


### Belgium - Flemish Community

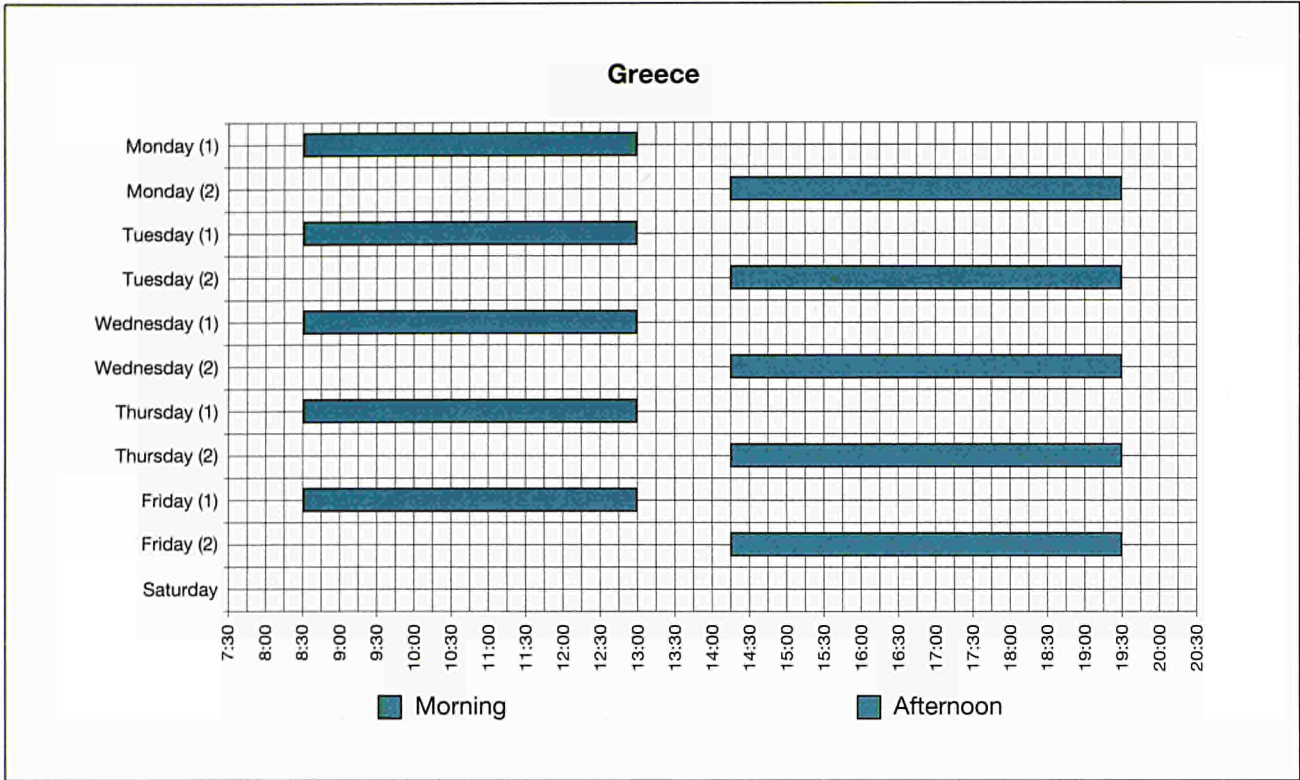




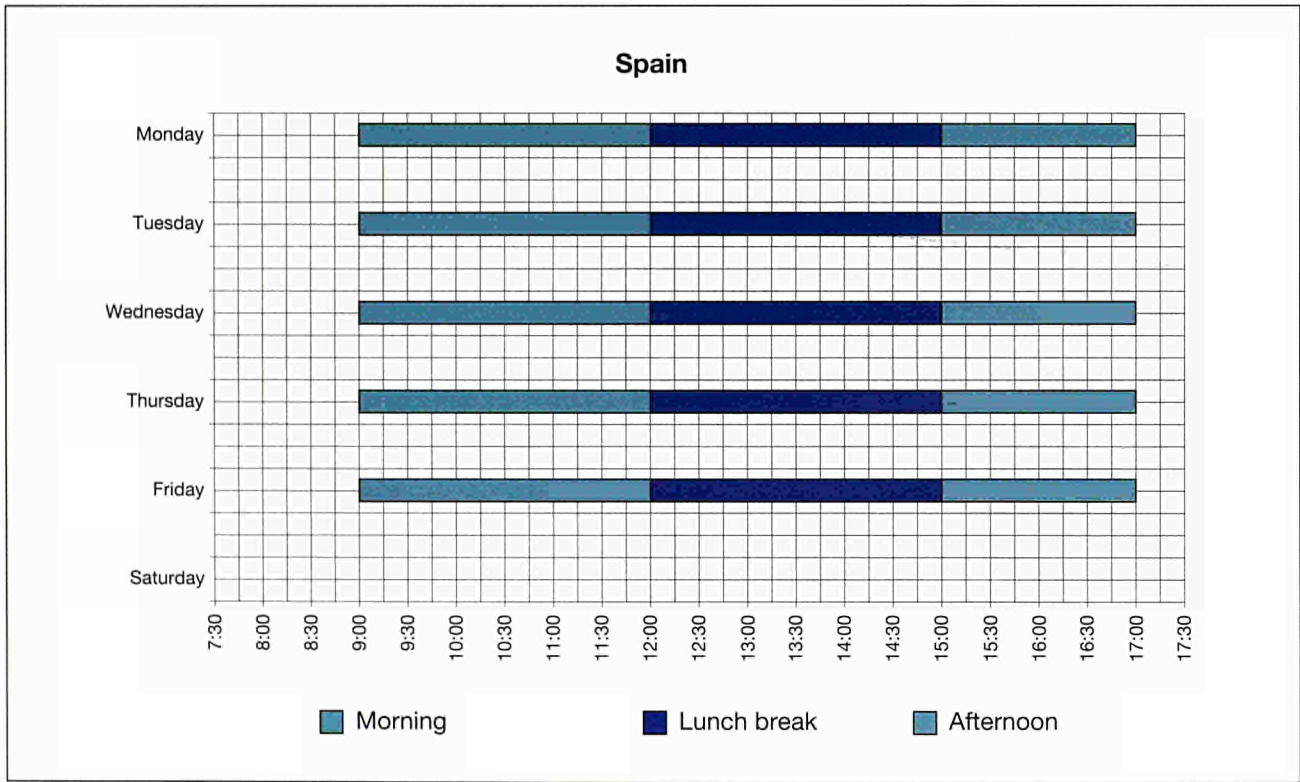
This diagram shows the position in the senior classes.



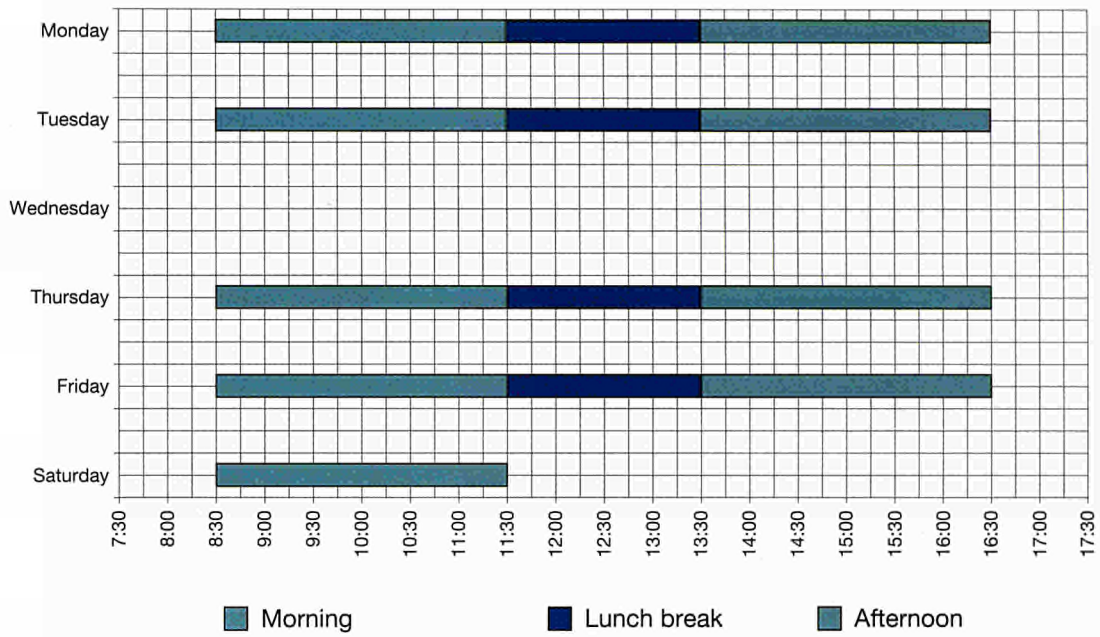
(1) In *Länder* with the 6-day week system, classes may be held on one or more Saturday mornings in the month.



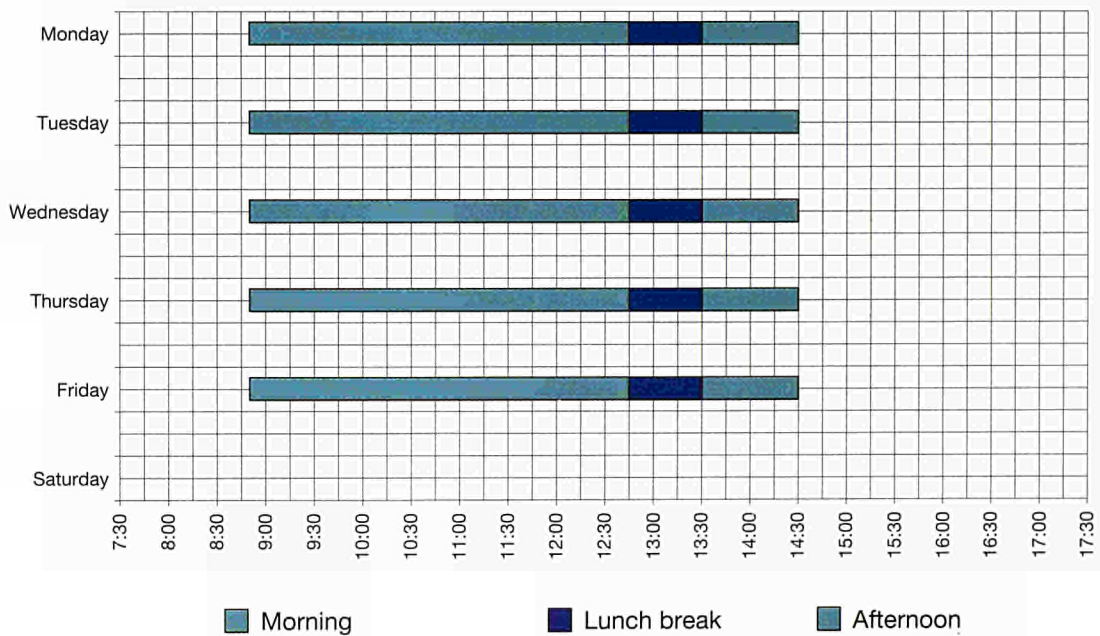
Two-shift system : pupils attend school in the morning (1) or the afternoon (2).

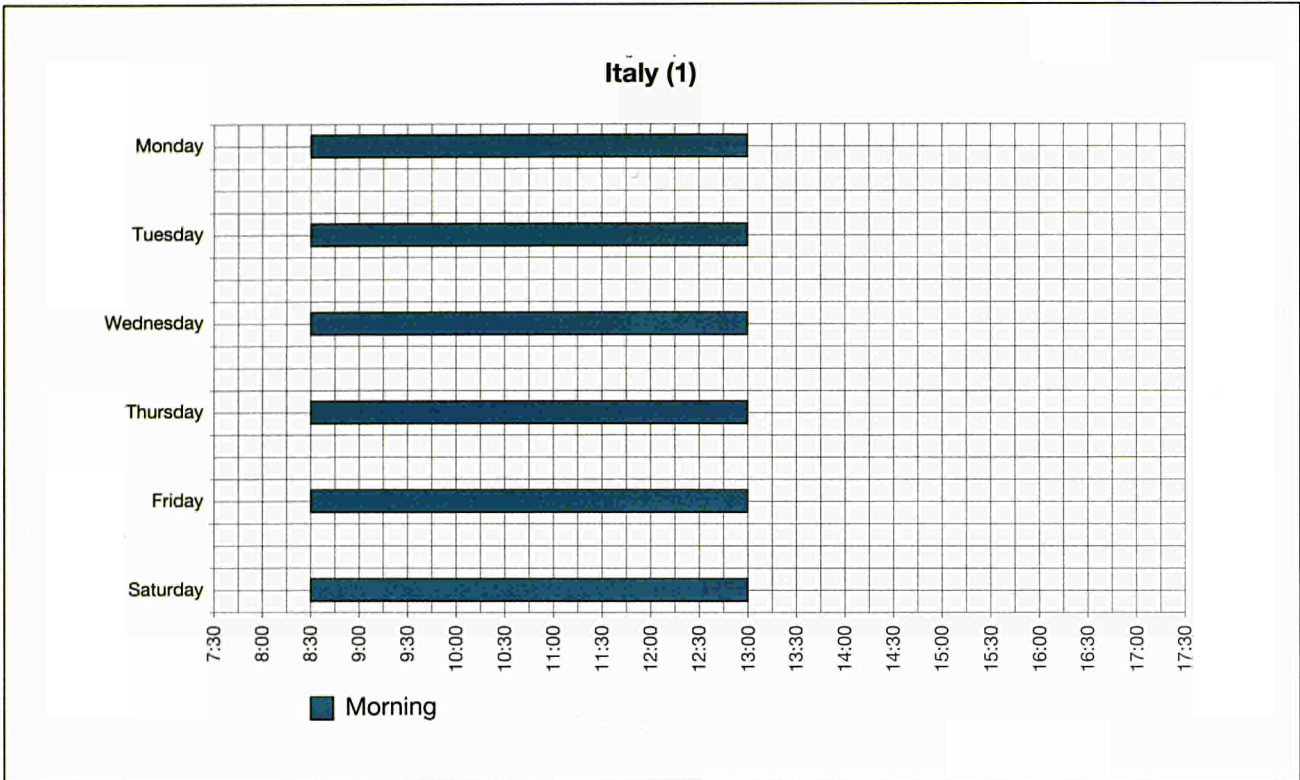


### France

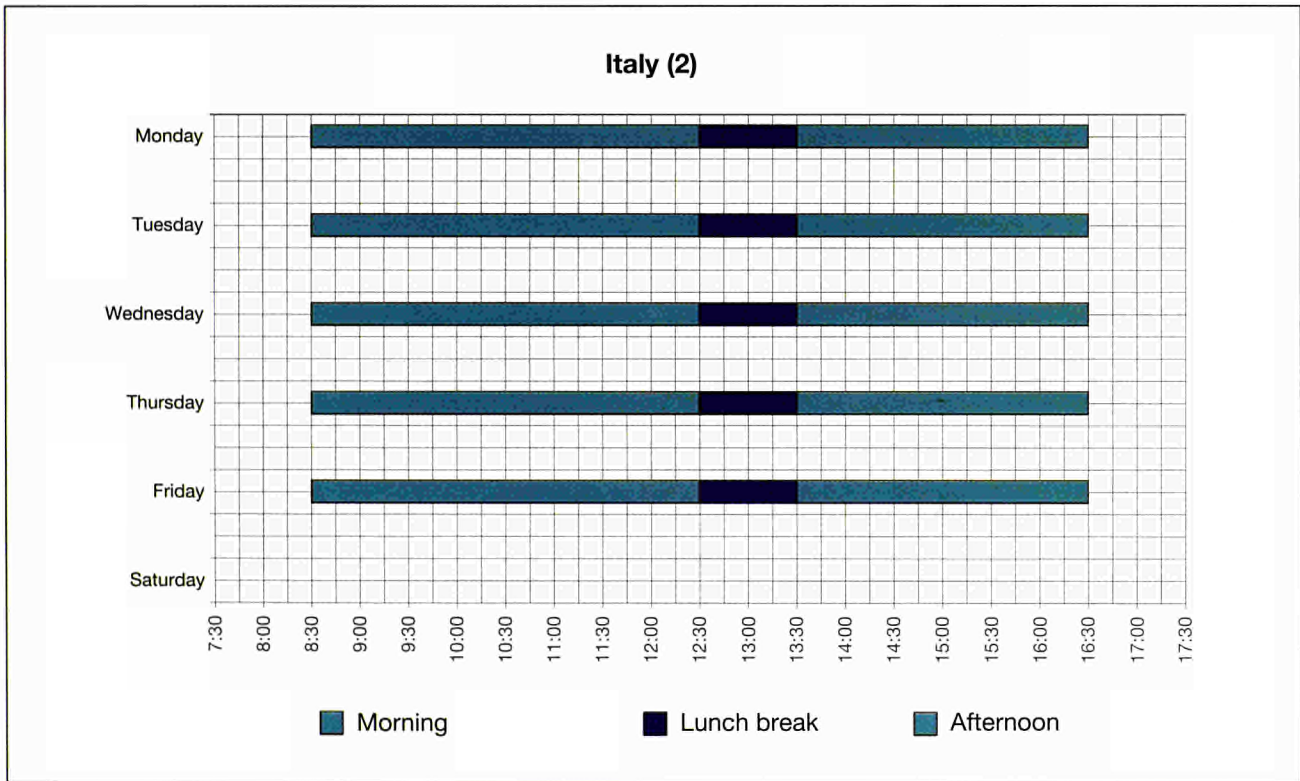


### Ireland



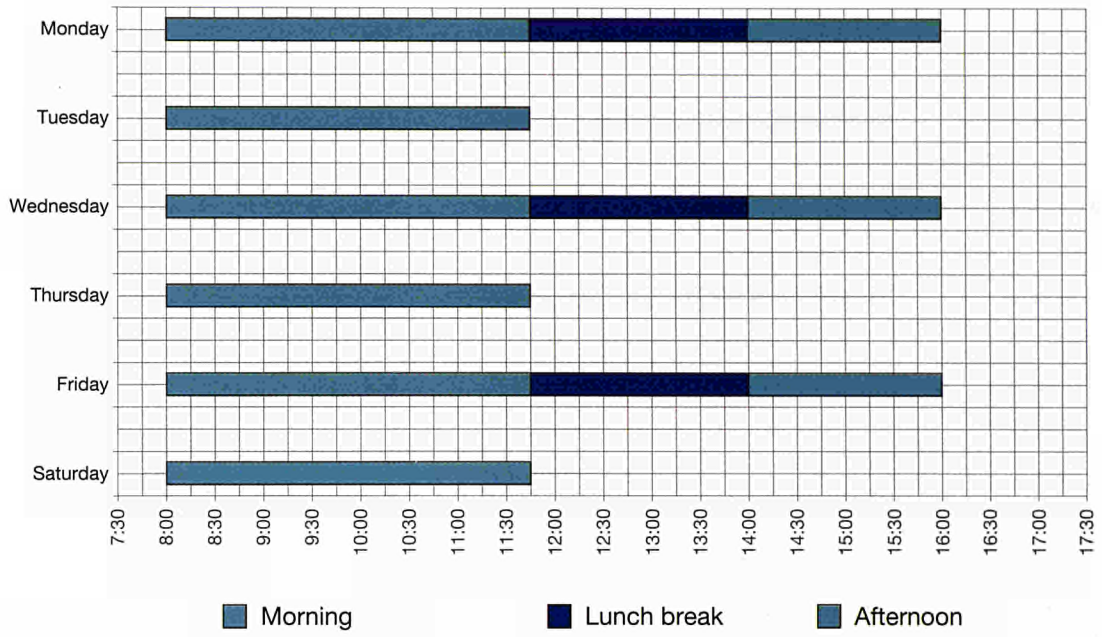


(1) Half-day school system, 6-day week.

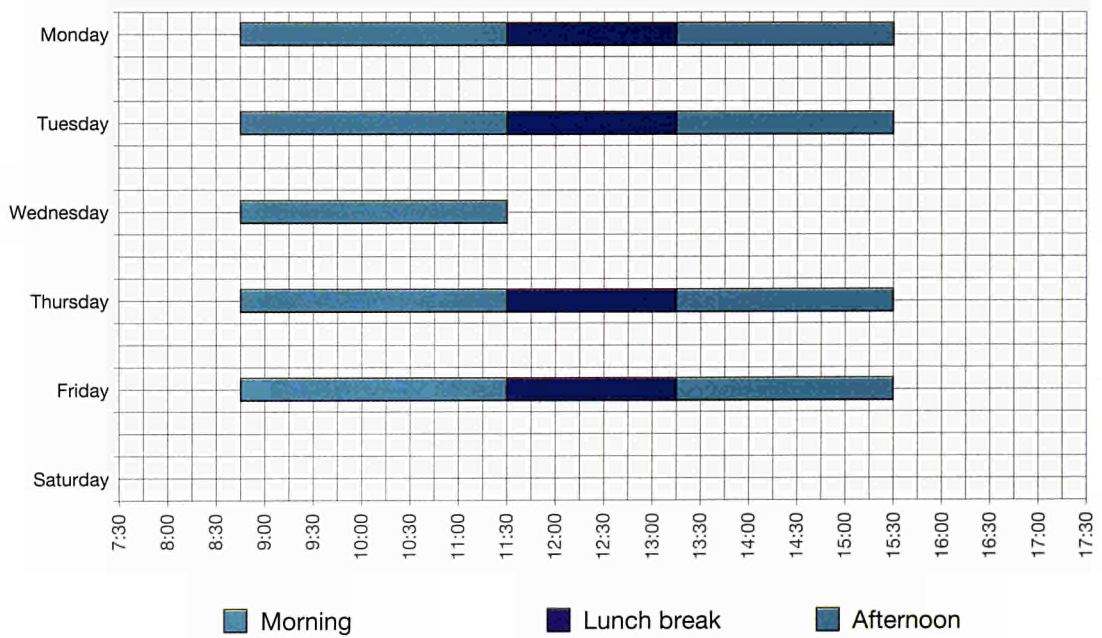


(2) Extended timetable, 5-day week.

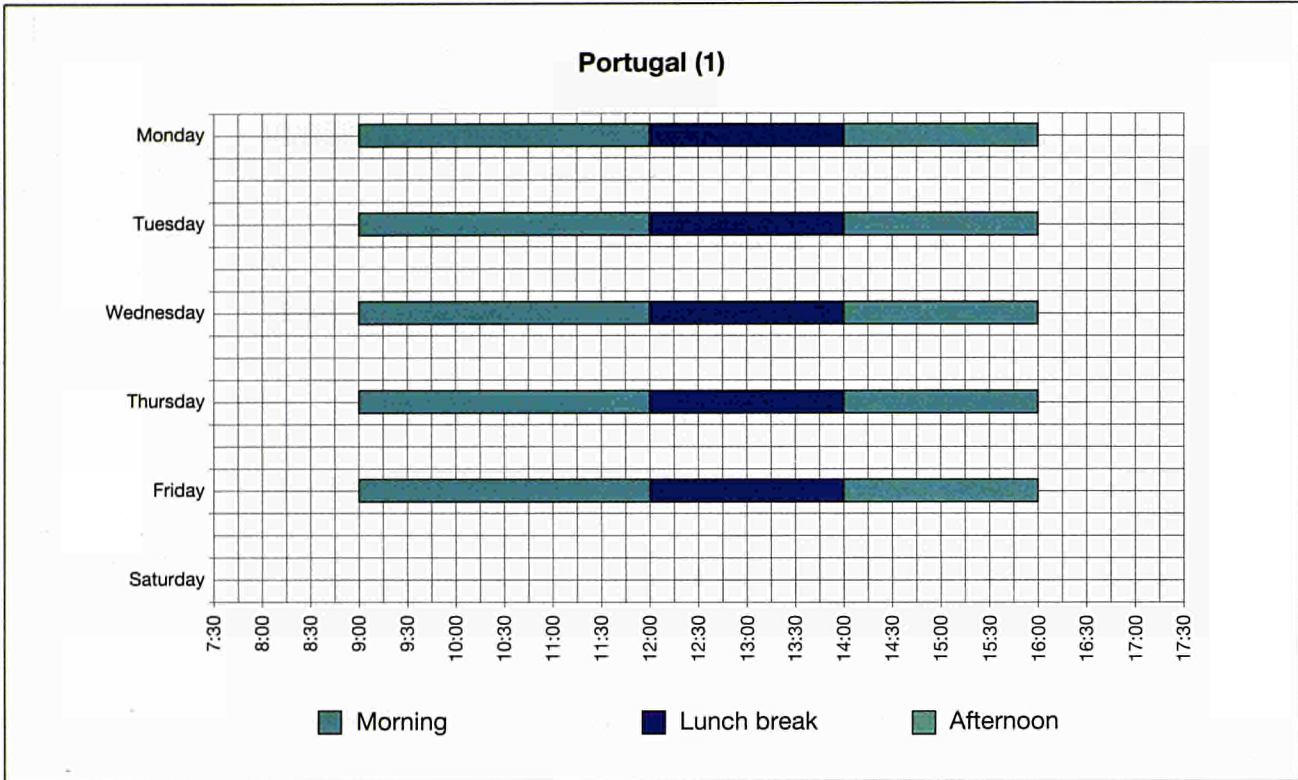
### Luxembourg



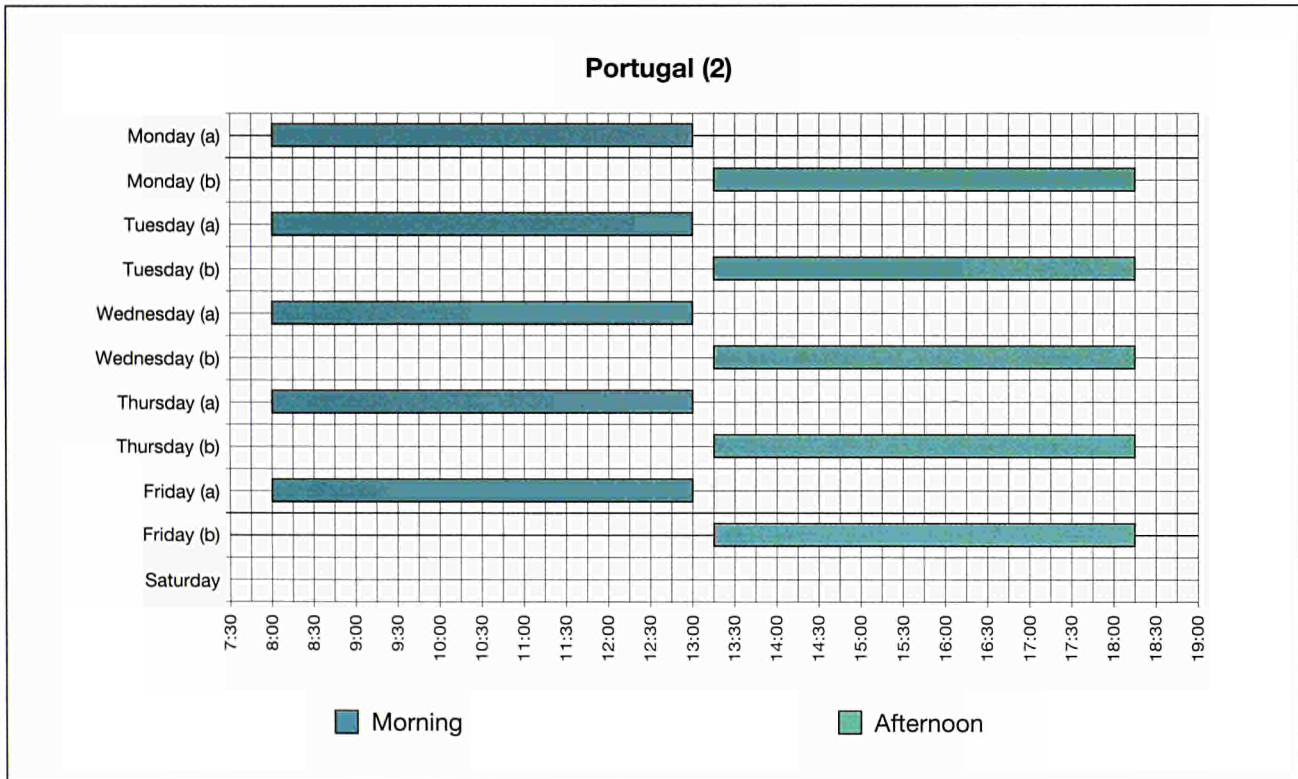
### Netherlands



This diagram shows the position in the first four years of primary school.

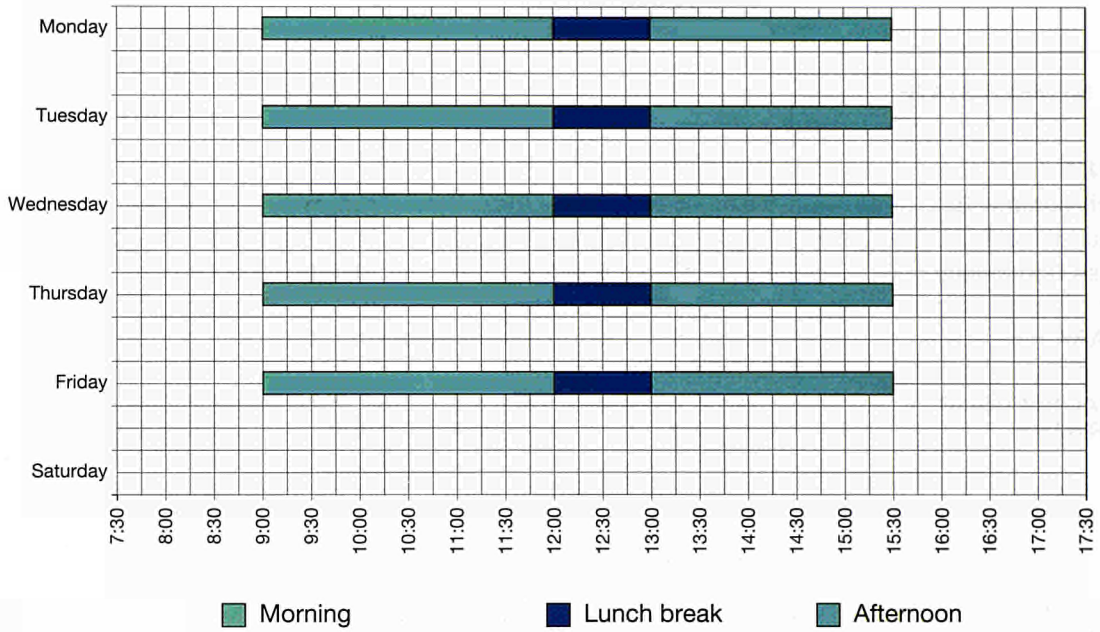


(1) Single-shift system, 5-day week.

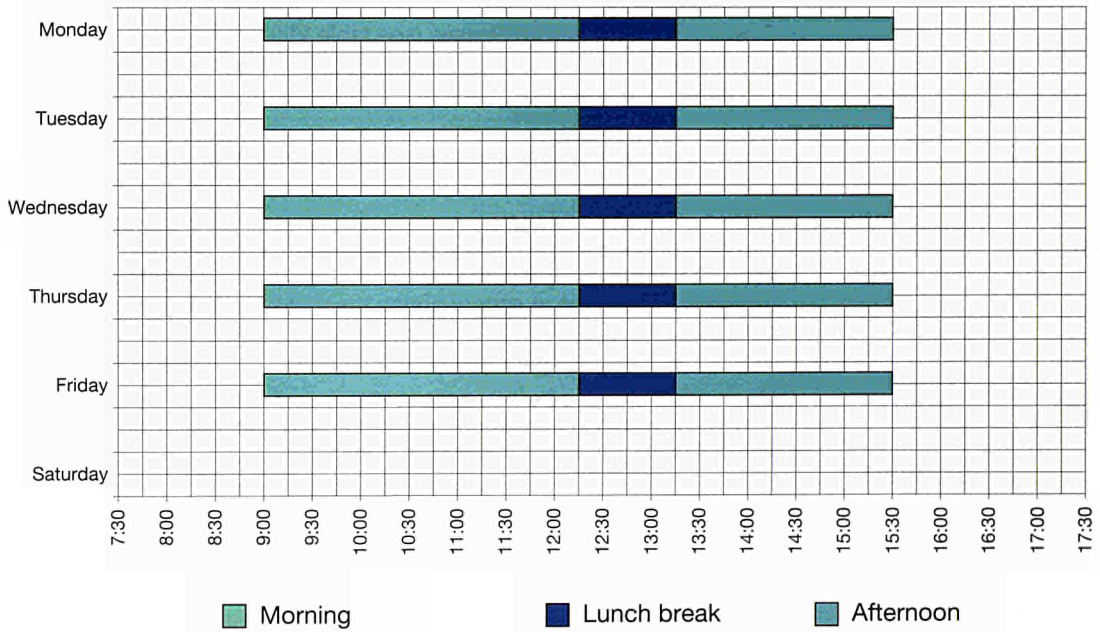


(2) Two-shift system, pupils attend school in the morning (a) or the afternoon (b).

### England, Wales and Northern Ireland



### Scotland

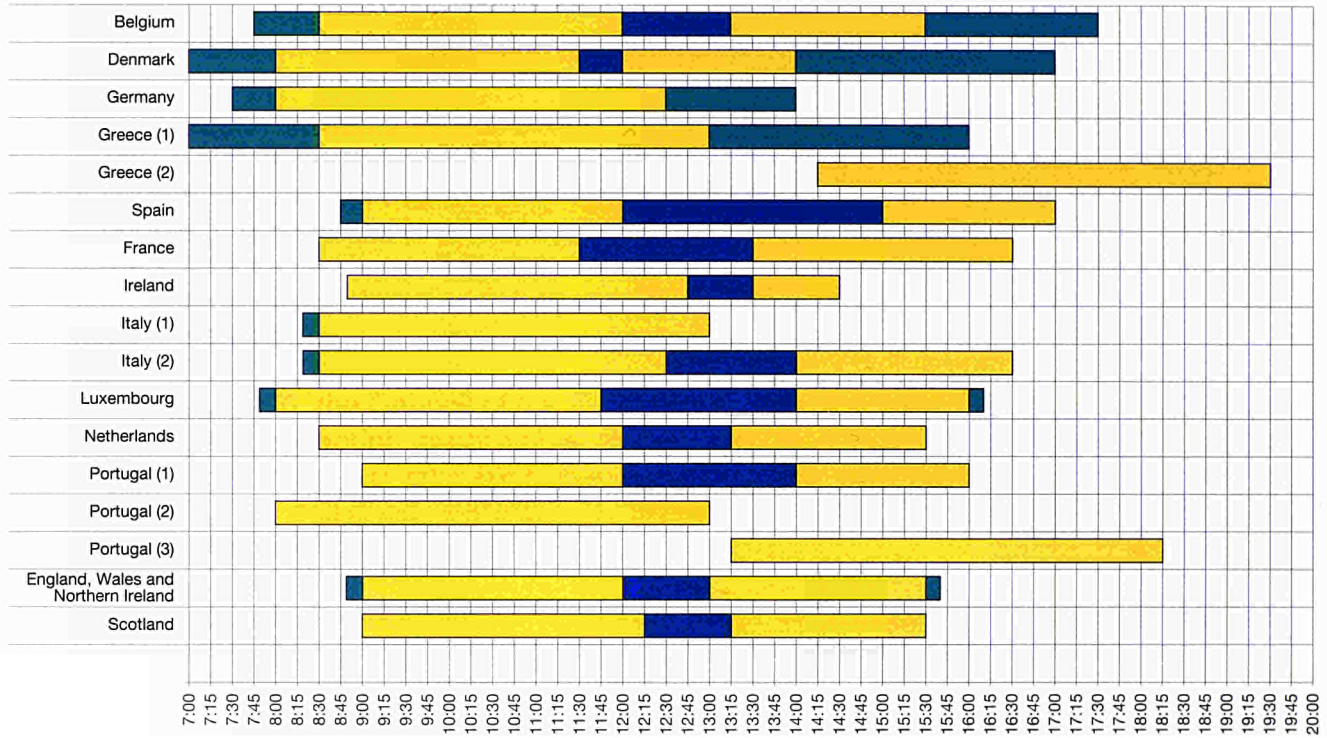


**TABLE IX**  
**OPENING HOURS OF SCHOOLS**  
**PRIMARY EDUCATION**

MEMBER STATE	
<b>BELGIUM</b> - French Community - German-speaking Community - Flemish Community	8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.) 8 a.m. - 17 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) and 8 a.m. - 12 noon (Wed.) 7.30 a.m. - 6 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thur., Fri.) and 7.30 a.m. - 12 noon (Wed.)
<b>DENMARK</b>	7 a.m. - 5 p.m./6 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.)
<b>FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY</b>	7.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. / 2 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri./Sat.) Opening hours are under the responsibility of the schools and are fixed in cooperation with school or outside-school centres providing supervision and care after teaching time. All <i>Länder</i> are currently engaged in expanding arrangements for supervision and care for pupils after school hours (e.g. fixed opening hours between 7.30 a.m. and 1 p.m./2 p.m. or until 4 p.m./5 p.m.).
<b>GREECE</b>	7 a.m. - 4 p.m. (creative activities organized before and after classes, i.e. from 7 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. or from 12 noon to 4 p.m. twice a week for pupils in the first two years).
<b>SPAIN</b>	Opens 15 minutes before classes start (see table VIII).
<b>FRANCE</b>	Under the responsibility of the local authorities ( <i>Communes</i> ).
<b>IRELAND</b>	8.50 a.m./9.30 a.m. - 2.30 p.m./3.10 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri.).
<b>ITALY</b>	Open 10 minutes before classes (see table VIII). Under the responsibility of the local authorities, out-of-hours provision may be arranged in some schools.
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	Open 10 minutes before classes and 10 minutes after they finish (see table VIII).
<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	Opening hours are fixed by the competent authority and vary from one school to another. If parents so wish, the competent authority must offer the possibility of staying at school during the midday break (see also note 6, table VIII).
<b>PORTUGAL</b>	Open a few minutes before classes start (see Table VIII). Out-of-hours care may be provided in some schools under the responsibility of the local authorities or parents associations.
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> - England and Wales - Northern Ireland - Scotland	Open 10 minutes before classes start and 10 minutes after they finish (see table VIII). Open 10 minutes before classes start and 10 minutes after they finish (see table VIII). Not applicable (see table VIII).

## SCHOOLS' OPENING HOURS

### Primary Schools



- Lessons - morning
- Lunch break
- Lessons - afternoon
- Out-of-hours provision (in Germany, only in some schools)



# **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 historical 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<sup>1</sup> and agreed amongst other things to set up an information network. This information network, known as EURYDICE, is designed therefore to underpin educational cooperation within the European Community.

It was recognised in 1990 as the chief instrument for providing information on national and Community structures, systems and developments in the field of education<sup>2</sup>.

Each Member State has, in accordance with its own distinctive education structures, designated at least one Unit to participate in the network and the Commission of the European Communities has set up the EURYDICE European Unit.

The functioning of EURYDICE is based on cooperation among all the Units. In addition, the European Unit coordinates and stimulates the network.

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<sup>1</sup> Official Journal C 38, 19.2.1976, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> Official Journal C 329, 31.12.1990, p.23.

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**BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND**

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**Eurydice Informationsstelle der Länder**

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