

Foreign Studies
Чуждестранни изследвания

AN OVERVIEW ON FORMAL SCHOOLING SYSTEM IN SEVEN COUNTRIES

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Abstract. The following article is an overview on the formal schooling systems in Romania, Greece, Turkey, Czech Republic, Croatia, Portugal and Italy. It provides an informational basis for teachers who

wants to make comparative analysis between different structural approaches of the formal education system or intends to understand how these work.

Keywords: schooling, education, formal education

1. Introduction

In a rapidly changing and increasingly interconnected world of fast economic and technological growth, assuring quality and openness in education and training systems has become a focal point in the political agendas of every European Member

State. This is rightly so since European citizens are now more than ever called upon to demonstrate a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes critically important for personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship and competitive presence in the economic and labour market.

Embracing the fact that effective education and training is of vital importance to their economic growth and social cohesion, the EU Member States work together in a mutually complementary way to improve the quality of education and training provided. This collaboration is framed by the Strategic Framework for Education and Training (ET2020), whereby common strategic objectives are set and progress is assessed against key indicators and European benchmarks which correspond to common challenges and problem areas. Member States set priorities, learn from each other, share good practices and are supported to further develop their educational and training systems, thus providing their citizens with better means to build on their potentials and acquire the competences needed to ensure sustainable economic prosperity and employability.

If knowledge is power, school is the cradle in which this power is nurtured, shaped and enhanced. It is the role of school, as a leading social institution, to equip the students with the means of tackling the challenges of our society of knowledge, technology and multiculturalism.

2. Schooling system in Romania

According with national law of education nr.1 from 5th January 2011 (with all actualizations) pre-tertiary educational system in Romania has four levels²⁾:

1) Early education for children between 0 to 6 years old (articles 23, 27, 28-Nr.1 Law of national education, revised in May 2015). This one has 2 forms:

- the **ante-preschool level** for children between 0 to 3 years old;
- **preschool education** for children between 3 to 6 years old with 3 age groups: small, middle and large.

The ante-preschool education is organized as: nurseries, kindergartens and day care centers. During preschooling education it is organized as kindergartens with normal, extended or weekly programme.

2) Primary education with two levels: preparatory class and I to IV classes (articles 23, 29-Nr.1 Law of national education, revised in May 2015). Primary education is organized with morning program.

3) Secondary education (articles 23, 31-Nr.1 Law of national education, revised in May 2015) with two continuing cycles:

- **Lower secondary education** or **gymnasium** with V – VIII classes;
- **Upper secondary education** with IX-XIII classes in these formula:
 - High School with Theoretical, Vocational or Technological branches;
 - Professional school with minimum 3 years of studies.

Secondary education is organized with fréquence program (daily fréquence), but also can be with reduced fréquence.

4) Post-secondary education as Non-university tertiary education (articles 23, 44-Nr.1 Law of national education, revised in May 2015).

Post-secondary education is organized for professional qualifications listed in the National Register of qualifications established by the Ministry of Education.

Age	Class/ Group	Code	Educational level	Qualification level
Up to 19		6 5	University level	5 4
18	XIII	3	Technological high school	3
17	XII	3	Theoretical High school/Vocational high school/Technological high school	3
16	XI	3	Theoretical High school/Vocational high school/Technological high school	3
			Year for completing the studies	2
15	X	2	Theoretical High school/Vocational high school/Technological high school School for arts and crafts	1
14	IX	2	Theoretical High school/Vocational high school/Technological high school School for arts and crafts	1
13	VIII	2	Comprehensive education	
12	VII	2	Comprehensive education	
11	VI	2	Comprehensive education	
10	V	2	Comprehensive education	
9	IV	1	Comprehensive education	
8	III	1	Comprehensive education	
7	II	1	Comprehensive education	
6	I	1	Comprehensive education	
5	Big/large	0		
4	Middle	0		
3	Small	0		

Fig.1. The system of formal education in Romania
(translation by Romanian language-Source¹⁾)

In Romania there are also educational services for children and students with special educational needs as special or special integrated education. If they are integrated into

mainstream education, they have supplementary educational support by specialized teachers or itinerant teachers (articles 48,51-Nr.1 Low of national education, revised in May 2015). On the other hand, in Romania, students who are gifted and capable of high performance are supported in schools, but also in some Centers for excellence (article 57-Nr.1 Low of national education, revised in May 2015).

Romanian system of formal education is already flexible and permissive because has open borders and are legally validated also the possibilities of private education and confessional education. After schools programmes, School after schools programmes for disadvantaged groups or alternative education forms as Step by step, Waldorf and other.

If we can compare the educational borders with European real borders between European countries, we can say that Romania has a flexible schooling as system and it is already in Schengen space.

3. Schooling system in Greece

The Greek Ministry for National Education and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH) exercises authority and administration on education policy at a national level. The Greek educational system consists of three successive levels: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education.(Official Government Gazette 167/30-10-1985, Law n. 1566).

Following the International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED, determined by UNESCO in 1997, the Greek educational system is structured as follows:

a) ISCED Level 0 – Pre-school education

From the age of 2,5 years children may attend private or public institutions called “Paidikoi Stathmoi” (Day Care Centers). Attendance is optional for this age group. Children aged 4 may attend “Pronipio” in “**Nipiagogeia**”(Kindergartens) and at the age of 5 pre-primary attendance at “Nipiagogeia” is made compulsory. “Oloimera Nipiagogeia: (All-day Kindergartens) operate with an extended timetable (8 hours). The goal of the “Nipiagogeia” is to create learning experiences that reflect the modern theories on the learning and development of children of this age, focusing on their emotional, social, linguistic/communicational, cognitive and physical development. There is also Special Nipiagogeia for pupils with special educational needs.

b) ISCED Level 1 – Primary education

Primary Education is provided in “**Dimotiko**” (Primary Schools) to children aged 6 to 12 years. Attendance is compulsory and lasts six years. Greek Primary School Education is based on the aims to successfully adapt the educational system to the dictates of the times so that schools may contribute to more effective conquest of unitized knowledge (S.Alachiotis Paidagogical Institute, 2003). In this direction, the Pedagogical Institute designed the *Cross Curriculum Framework* (OGG 303B/13-13-2003, OGG304B/13-03-2003) and the educational materials

(teaching packages and supporting material) under the interdisciplinary approach to knowledge (Matsaggouras, 2002). This approach involves a balanced distribution of curriculum material from class to class, in a new single framework curriculum, without unnecessary repetitions and the possible horizontal interconnection of individual subjects (Alahiotis, 2002).

All-day primary schools (OGG.50/226/143572/Γ1/10-9-2014) operate also in Primary Education, with extended timetable and enriched curriculum. There are also Special Education School Units and Introduction Courses available for students with special educational needs and learning difficulties as well as Cross-cultural Education Schools and Minority Schools designed to meet the educational needs students with a particular cultural and religious identity.

c) ISCED Level 2 – Lower secondary education

Compulsory (lower) Secondary Education is provided in **Gymnasia** for students aged 12 to 15 and constitutes the three final years of compulsory education. The interdisciplinary approach to knowledge, as the holistic achievement of knowledge, is further developed here. The students are enabled to establish a set of Knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to develop their personal opinions and their own worldview (Alahiotis, 2002, Lawton et al, 2000).

Apart from the typical lower secondary schools, there are also other types of schools (Ecclesiastic Schools, Minority Schools, Cross-cultural Education Schools, Music Schools, Experimental Schools, Art Schools, Special Education Schools and Introduction Classes, Second Chance Schools, Vocational Training Schools and Evening Gymnasiums).

Assessment (Scale 1-20) is based on oral test, short written tests and written examinations in the end of school year. Repeat examination in September is offered to students who fail in certain subjects. The students who fail repeat examination must repeat a year, while students who fail in the final year can retake the final exams. At the end of the third year, students are given a certificate which enables them to continue to the higher secondary education level or to Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) where they can obtain Vocational Training Certificates.

d) ISCED Level 3 – Higher secondary education

Post-Compulsory (upper) Secondary Education is provided for students aged 16 to 18 years in **Unified Lyceums** (ΓΕΛ) and **Vocational Lyceums** (ΕΠΙΑΛ). Besides day schools there are also Evening Lyceums and Vocational Lyceums offering four-year courses for students who work. There are also Unified Musical Lyceums, Ecclesiastical Lyceums, Unified Lyceums with a sports department, Unified Lyceums for multicultural education as well as Special Unified Lyceums for students with special education needs. Vocational Training Schools operate during the day which together with Vocational Lyceums makes up secondary Vocational Education. In State compulsory and post-compulsory Secondary Education, attendance and textbooks are provided by the state, free of charge.

Unified Lyceum consists of three classes. At the end of class 2 and 3, students take examination at school and national level in order to obtain the Unified Lyceum Leaving Certificate which provides them access to a) Universities (AEI) and Technological Educational Institutes (TEI) after sitting the annual national examinations in five general knowledge subjects and four orientation subjects) b) Public or private Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) and c) to the Greek Open University.

Attendance lasts up to three years and consists of two cycles of studies a) Secondary Cycle of Studies and b) Post-secondary Cycle of Studies.

In the Secondary Cycle of the Day Vocational Lyceums, holders of Gymnasium Certificates are able to enroll at Class A without entrance exams. Class B accepts students who have completed 1st Class of Unified or Vocational Lyceum. Class C accepts students who have completed Class B of Vocational Lyceum.

Post-Secondary Cycle (Apprenticeship Class) is optional for certificate holders of the Secondary Cycle, lasts for one year and it involves workplace training, specialized courses and certification preparatory courses. Evening Vocational Lyceums are available for workers aged up to 50 who wish to improve their career or job prospects. Upon completing Vocational Lyceums, students are given a Lyceum Leaving Certificate or a Level three Qualification Certificate and may access a) Higher Technological Educational Institutes (ATEI) after sitting the annual national examinations in two general knowledge subjects and two orientation subjects) b) Public or private Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) and c) to the Greek Open University. Unified Lyceum and Vocational Lyceum students with learning difficulties are entitled to free remedial teaching within the school. There are also special education Vocational Schools.

e)ISCED Level 4 – Post- secondary, non-university education

Post-compulsory Secondary Education, non-tertiary education includes the **Vocational Training Institutes (IEK)**, which provide formal initial and further vocational education and training. These Institutes are not classified as an educational level, because they accept both Gymnasium (lower secondary school) and Lyceum (upper secondary school) graduates according to the relevant specializations they provide. Graduates can receive a Certificate or a Diploma of Vocational Training equivalent to that of the Vocational Lyceum (ΕΠΙΑΛ) with professional rights, enabling access to the labor market in public and private sectors.

4. Schooling system in Turkey

a) Education population and language of Instruction

According to the results of 2011 Address Based Census, the population of Turkey is 73 722 988. 0-14 age group constitutes 30 % of the country population, 15-64 age group 64 % of the whole population, while age group over 65 is 6 %. The population in compulsory education (6-14 ages) is 13 473 000. Instruction

language in all education levels is Turkish. However, foreign language education (mostly English, French and German) is provided to all students from 4 grade of primary education to the end of higher education. Additionally, some secondary and higher education institutions provide education in a foreign language partly or fully. Some schools are permitted to offer education in their minority languages.

b) Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education is an optional education stage covering the education of children between 36 and 72 months. However, a pilot project which started in 2010 is continuing to take all 5 years old children to pre-school education. Main pre-primary education providers are MEB, some public and private institutions. All pre-primary education institutions (named as *anaokulları, uygulamalı an sınıfları* and *ana sınıfları*) are under the supervision of MEB.

In the 2010/11 school year, the enrolment rate in pre-primary education is 35% for 2-4 age, 43 % for 4-6 age. Aside from a parental contribution to expenditure on meals and cleaning materials, all public pre-primary institutions are free of charge. Private pre-primary education institutions charge fees.

c) Compulsory education

(a) Phases-Primary School (*İlköğretim Okulu*) Grade 1–8 Ages 6–14. The duration of compulsory education in a single primary school (*İlköğretim Okulu*) is eight years for the children between ages of 6 and 14. Net schooling rate in primary education is 98.6 % net in 2011/12 school year.

(b) Curriculum control and content

The curriculum is determined at national level by Turkish Board of Education (*Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu–MEB*). In primary schools, courses are determined by grades. They can be categorised as follows:

– Compulsory core courses including Turkish, Mathematics, Sciences, Science and Technology, Social Sciences, Civic, History, Foreign Languages, Religion and Ethics, Drawing, Music, Physical Education, Traffic and First-aid Training and Miscellaneous Individual and Various Activities.

– Elective courses such as Computer Education, Drama, Speech and Writing, A Second Foreign Language, Tourism, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, and Local Handicrafts. Textbooks are determined by Turkish Board of Education (*Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu*). Teachers are given no freedom for textbook selection. Although teachers are free to choose the way they teach, the selected approaches available in the textbooks force them to stick to certain instruction styles in accordance with the approaches utilized in the textbooks employed.

(c) Assessment, progression and qualifications

Being parallel to the changes in curricula in 2006, assessment and evaluation methods have changed and ‘process-based assessment’ has been put into practice.

Achievement of primary schools students at the end of each school year are assessed by teachers individually considering their performance (projects, exam scores, performance homework, classroom participation, attendance, behaviours etc.) during the entire year. Students who are successful according to a required level move to the next stage. Repetition is possible for underachieved students. Pupils receive the diploma of primary education (İlköğretim Diploması) upon successful completion of eight year compulsory education.

d) Post-compulsory education/upper secondary and post-secondary level

Education is compulsory until the age of 18. Full-time secondary education is described in the previous section, while secondary dual vocational education and training is presented below, as well as non-higher post-secondary education (CITE 4).

(i) Types of education/institutions

General Secondary Education

- General High School (Genel Lise)
- Anatolian High School (Anadolu Lisesi)
- Science High School (Fen Lisesi)
- Social Science High School (Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi)
- Fine Art and Sports High School (Güzel Sanatlar ve Spor Lisesi)
- Anatolian Teacher High School (Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi)
- Multi-Programmed High Schools (Çok Programlı Liseler)

Technical Secondary Education

- Technical and Industrial Vocational Schools (Teknik Lise ve Endüstri Meslek Lisesi)
- Technical and Industrial Vocational Schools for Girls (Kız Teknik ve Meslek Lisesi)
- Hotel and Tourism Vocational High School (Otelcilik ve Turizm Meslek Lisesi)
- Business High School (Ticaret Meslek Lisesi)
- Health Vocational High School (Sağlık Meslek Lisesi)
- Special Education Vocational Schools (Özel Eğitim Meslek Lisesi)

In general, secondary education is provided at a variety of institutions including vocational and technical education institutions offering four years of education for those who have completed primary education. In 2011/12 academic year, net schooling rate in secondary education is 69.33 %.

(a) Assessment, progression and qualifications

Progression to the next grade is based on students' achievement in all courses or the average annual level of attainment. Their performance is measured in terms of the results obtained in written or oral examinations, practical examinations, homework, and project activities during or outside normal school hours. Assessment is done by individual teachers. The average score for a course in a semester is calculated on the basis of the average of all course marks obtained during that semester. The

averages of two semesters of a specific lesson result are given at the end of each year. Successful students in every lesson and students who attain a predetermined level of achievement from all lessons move to the next grade. Students who have more than two lessons underachieved are required to repeat the same grade.

The Secondary School Diploma (Lise Diploması) is awarded to students on the successful completion of secondary education in accordance with the MEB regulations concerning relating to the type of secondary school or courses concerned. The Secondary School Diploma (Lise Diploması) is the prerequisite for entry into higher education.

5. Schooling system in Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, schools are administered in the frame of general administration. The responsibility is distributed among the central government, regions and communities.

The **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** preserves and determines the integrated state educational policy. Regions are responsible for education on their territory. They are organising bodies for upper secondary schools and tertiary professional schools. The communities are responsible for pre-primary education and compulsory schooling. All schools have the status of legal entities. Public higher education institutions are established by law.

The contemporary **system of education** in the Czech Republic has several levels and in fact it allows people to continue to increase the extent of their knowledge for their whole life. Most children attend state school, but there are also newly established private and church schools. Education in our country includes these stages: pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary.

a) ISCED Level 0–Pre-school education is provided by crèches for children up to 3 years and nursery school for children from 3 to 6. Attendance is optional for this age group. The goal of these institutions is to get children got used groups and helps ensure a smooth start at school.

b) ISCED Level 1–Primary education and c) ISCED Level 2–Lower secondary education are provided by basic schools to children from 6 years of age and is spread over nine progressive grades. For the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a possible ten-year study program. Basic schools are divided into five-year 1st stage and four-year 2nd stage. Pupils and students are evaluated by marks from 1 to 5. At the end of each term pupils get their school report. Pupils can at each stage of basic school to repeat only once. Within the first stage of primary school is also possible to use so-called Individual education. Talented students can go to the grammar schools, after they have passed entrance examination, to six-year grammar school after the end of the 7th year of basic school, to eight year grammar school after the end of the 5th year of basic school. After the 9th year of basic school pupils can choose among a variety of secondary schools and continue in education.

c) ISCED Level 3 -Higher secondary education is provided for students aged 15 to 19 years:

1. Grammar schools and lyceums

These represent the most demanded types of secondary schools. Their students take the school leaving exam and, thanks to the knowledge they have acquired, they are well prepared for studies at universities or colleges.

2. Secondary vocational schools

These have witnessed a drop in demand recently. These educational institutions prepare their students for the performance of a certain vocation. They are suitable for students who are manually skilful rather than academic types or for those who purposefully focus on a particular practical field. The studies at secondary vocational schools may be completed either by an examination resulting in the acquisition of a vocational certificate which authorises the holder to perform a certain craft or by the school leaving examination.

3. Conservatories and artistic schools

Pupils also show a relatively keen interest in the study at secondary schools completed by a diploma examination, i.e. artistic schools and conservatories. These are intended solely for children with dramatic, musical, dancing or fine-art talent. The admission procedure involves talent examinations where the student is required to demonstrate his or her talent for the selected field. Secondary education lasts for 4 years. At grammar and specialized schools it is finished with a school-leaving examination which is required by all universities and colleges. This examination is taken in 4 subjects at grammar schools /Czech, a foreign language and 2 optional subjects: foreign languages, science subjects or humanities. It is held in May and is mostly oral except Czech in which an essay is written about a month before. After the graduates have passed their school - leaving exam they receive the School-Leaving Certificate and they can apply for study at universities and colleges.

d) ISCED Level 4-Follow-up courses are organized in vocational schools for students with a vocational certificate who want to pass school-leaving examination or shortened study in which the graduates with school-leaving examination or apprenticeship certificate gain qualification in a different field. Follow-up studies last two or three years full-time courses

6. Schooling system in Croatia

The Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MZOS) is responsible for passing and implementing laws regarding education in the Republic of Croatia. The Croatian education system consists of four successive levels: preschool, primary, secondary and higher education.

The structure of the Croatian Education System is:

a) Preschool activity was regulated as a subsystem of education in 1997. The education system today begins with preschool institutions that comprise public

kindergartens and private kindergartens (of natural persons, religious communities and associations) and institutions which implement preschool programmes and shorter programmes such as libraries, various associations and primary schools.

Kindergartens are responsible for full-day or half-day programmes of education, social welfare, health care and nutrition of children from the age of 6 months to school age.

b) Primary education is regulated under the Primary and Secondary Education Act (Official Gazette 87/2008). Education begins by enrolling in first grade. It is compulsory for all children, generally from seven to fifteen years of age. This applies to all children resident in the Republic of Croatia, regardless of their nationality. Children who turn six before the first of April of the current year are enrolled in first grade, as well as those who were not enrolled the previous year, due to various reasons.

Primary education lasts eight years and it is divided into two parts:

- a) Lower primary school (from 1st to 4th grade) with classroom teachers
- b) Upper primary school (from 5th to 8th grade) with subject teachers.

The reform of education is expected over the next two years after which the primary education should last nine years.

c) Secondary education

After primary school, it is possible to continue education in optional secondary schools (secondary education). Secondary education is performed by secondary institutions and other legal persons, and it includes different types and forms of education, training and development realised in accordance with the regulations under the Primary and Secondary Education Act (Official Gazette 87/08).

Students who finish primary education in regular online education system receive electronic identity from the AAI@EduHr system, i.e. a username and a password with which they can log into the system. In order to apply for admission, based on tenders published by high schools, students sign up via the website of the National Information Admission System for Secondary Schools (NISpuSŠ). NISpuSŠ service facilitates students significantly in their application and enrolment in secondary education programmes. The system covers the entire process, from the search of educational programmes according to desired criteria, through the application for selected programmes and insight into the results of these programmes, to the realisation of the right of admission to a secondary school. This provides students with a quick and direct access to personal data, ratings and special accomplishments achieved during basic education which may be essential in their application; it provides them with a detailed calculation of their grade points for each registered educational programme under the conditions given by high schools, and with an insight into the position they occupy on the list for each educational programme they sign up for.

A list of all educational programmes available in the Republic of Croatia can be found on www.upisi.hr, along with the conditions of application and enrolment. In addition to the website www.upisi.hr, useful information about the overall e-procedure can be found on the website of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

Secondary education programmes are:

- programmes for acquiring secondary school qualifications;
- programmes for acquiring vocational qualifications;
- programmes for acquiring lower vocational qualifications;
- vocational education and training programmes.

Programmes for acquiring secondary school, vocational and lower vocational qualifications enable students to develop competences for working or for continuing their education.

Vocational education and training programmes complement the acquired knowledge, abilities and skills for working in the respective fields.

Secondary schools, depending on the type of curriculum they implement, are:

- Grammar schools (general or specialised) last four years and with their completion the student gets secondary school diploma.
- Vocational schools (technical, industrial, trade, etc., determined by the type of curriculum) lasting from one to five years, after which the student gets secondary school diploma; after completing the programme lasting from one to two years, the student acquires lower vocational qualifications.
- Art schools (music, dance, art, etc., determined by the type of curriculum) last four years and with their completion the student gets secondary school diploma.

Secondary education for adults includes special programmes for acquiring secondary education or vocational qualifications, semi-skilled training, retraining and training programmes.

With the implementation of the Article 82 of the Primary and Secondary Education Act (Official Gazette 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 16/12 and 86/12), secondary education is completed by passing the state graduation exam (the Matura exam). Students in vocational and art programmes, which last at least four years, end their secondary education by submitting and orally defending their graduation papers. Students of four-year vocational and art schools can also take the state graduation exam, if they want to.

All other applicants who have at least four years of secondary education in the Republic of Croatia and foreigners who have completed secondary education equivalent to a four-year programme in Croatia can take the state graduation exam. The Matura exam was conducted for the first time in the academic year 2009 / 2010. It is a set of exams in certain subjects taught during secondary education. The goal of the state graduation exam is to evaluate students' knowledge and abilities gained through education in accordance with the prescribed general education curricula.

Mandatory subjects which must be evaluated within the state graduation exam are general education subjects that students attended during high school, and those are: Croatian, mathematics and English language. The compulsory part of the state graduation exam can be taken at one of the two levels: higher (A) and basic (B) level. Students themselves choose subjects for the optional part of the state exam, with the maximum of six optional subjects. The National Centre for External Evaluation of Education publishes the list of optional subjects for each school a year before the date of the exam, with the approval of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports.

Each of the state exams is carried out at the same time throughout the country, with the same test materials and in the same way for all applicants. This produces results comparable to each other, which makes the selection procedure in admission to institutions of higher education fairer and more transparent. The content, conditions, method and procedure of the national exams and the state graduation exam are prescribed by the Regulations on State Matura Exams (Official Gazette 01/13).

The difference from the previous system of graduation is that examinations and assessments are not carried out by teachers at schools, but by a public institution. State graduation does not only ensure greater objectivity in assessing students' school achievements at the national level, but is also an incentive for teachers to teach better in primary and secondary schools, and for students to learn harder and thus improves the quality of education.

7. Schooling system in Portugal

As a result of the posterior period to the April Revolution of 1974, which put an end to the Fascist Regime that ruled in Portugal since 1926, there have been a lot of changes, not only in a sense of its democratization and massification, but also in the sequence of its different political orientation of the different governments. These have been one of the biggest problems we've been facing in other words, the lack of stability in the system. Nowadays, this is the current structure:

1. Pre-School, compulsory education starting at the age of 5, however most of the children between 3 and 5 years old are already being a part of it. The Kindergarten provides a regime with a flexible schedule, with 5 daily hours of educative component, from the educator's responsibility, as well as hours dedicated to animation and family support activities. These Establishments are open until half past 5pm and for a minimum of 8 daily hours. However, some Kindergartens/Nurseries offer a larger schedule, with the Town Hall support, adapted to the family's needs.

2. Basic Teaching

Divided in 3 cycles, with a duration of 9 scholar years, compulsory for children since 6 years old until the end of the cycle. LBSE determines that basic teaching is made of three sequential cycles, being the first one of 4 years, the second one of 2 years, and the third one organized in the following terms:

– **1st cycle**, between 6 and 10 years old. This teaching is global, with a duration of 4 years (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year), and with the responsibility of only one teacher, that can be supported in specific areas. Portuguese in a minimum of 7 hours; Mathematics–minimum of 7 hours; Environment Study; Expressions; Project Area; Citizenship Education; Accompanied Study; Total of 25 hours:

– Note 1: As an option, 1 hour per week of Moral and Religious Education;

– Note 2: Starting in the next school year (2015/16) 1 hour of English, compulsory in the 3rd and 4th year.

– **2nd Cycle** (10 / 12 years)

The present curricular matrix, as reference and illustrative effects, shows the weekly schedule organized in periods of 45 minutes, referring its weekly distribution and schooling years of an indicative character of schools, inside the established limits–Minimum per course and total per year or cycle.

(f) Offering required to the school, of optional frequency to the students, being required by the class counsel and obtained the permission of parents.

– **3rd Cycle** (13 / 15 years)

The present curricular matrix, as reference and illustrative effects, shows the weekly Schedule organized in periods of 45 minutes, referring its weekly distribution and schooling years of an indicative character of schools, inside the established limits–Minimum per course and total per year or cycle.

– **Secondary** (16 / 18 years)

The Scientific – Humanistic Courses to progress studies:

– Science and Technology (ex: Medicine; Nursing; Engineering; Biology; Chemistry; Psychology);

– Economic Science (ex: Economics; Management);

– Languages and Humanities (ex: Law; History; Languages; Sociology; Philosophy) ;

– Visual Arts (ex: Architecture; Designer; Painter; Sculpture).

The following matrix organizes the weekly schedule in periods of 45 minutes, referring its weekly distribution by schooling years of an indicative character of Schools. The totals should be respected as so the global maximum indicated for each school year.

a) Weekly schedule organized in periods of 45 minutes, referring its weekly distribution by school years of an indicative character of Schools. The totals should be respected as so the global maximum indicated for each school year.

(b) The student chooses one foreign language. If the student learned only one language in basic teaching, he will start a new one in secondary.

(c) The student chooses two biennial courses.

(d) (e) The student chooses 2 annual courses, one of them being required of the group d).

		Weekly Schedule	
Formative Components		10th	11th
General	Portuguese	4	4
	Foreign Language I – II ou III b)	4	4
	Philosophy	4	4
	Physical Education	4	4
Specific	Triennial	6	6
	Options (c): Biennial 1 Biennial 2	6 or 7 6 or 7	6 or 7 6 or 7
	Options (d) Annual 1	-	-
	Options (e) Annual 2 (f)	-	-
	Religious and Moral Education (g)	(2)	(2)
Time to Accomplish		34 to 36	34 to 36
		(36 to 38)	(36 to 38)

Fig. 2. Weekly Schedule

(f) Offer depending on the school's educative project—Set of courses learned in general.

(g) Course of optional frequency, in the terms of the article 19th, with fixed 2 × 45 minutes.

(h) Weekly schedule in function of the options present in the diverse courses.

Note 1: In the 4th, 6th and 9th years students do Portuguese and Math Exams. In 11th and 12th years they do exams on the specific course disciplines.

Note 2: In 2nd and 3rd cycles there are Vocational Courses, of a more practical character for students with difficulty in learning.

Note 3: In Secondary Teaching there are Professional Courses, of a practical character in which part of the formation takes part in a working context of an enterprise.

Note 4: Students with learning difficulties associated to development problems and cognitive deficit have the support of specialized teachers.

Note 5: The number of students per class varies in an average of 26 and 30, except those with cognitive deficit students, not being able to exceed 2 per class, 20 in total.

Note 6: The students attending the Musical Conservatory are part of a modality called Articulated Teaching (Musical area combined with traditional cognitive area).

8. Schooling system in Italy

According to INDIRE¹⁾, the education system in Italy is based on the principle of schools autonomy. Schools are autonomous for didactic, organization, research as well as development activities²⁾.

During the last years, the Italian school system has been marked by an important and sometimes difficult process of change, in order to bring the Country in line with European standards. The institutional actors involved in the process were the Parliament, the Central Government, Regional authorities and the whole educational community, including single schools with their teachers, students and parents³⁾.

The ground of the Italian school system is that education is freely offered to every student, regardless of nationality. Education is compulsory for 10 years, from 6 to 16 years of age. From 3 to 6 years of age children attending the Italian education system can start with the *Scuola dell'Infanzia* also known as *Scuola Materna* (nursery school). The attendance in preschool is not compulsory but is important because of its role of vehicle for educational and social promotion.

The first ground of compulsory school is called *Scuola primaria* (or “elementare”), that is to say primary school. It begins when the pupil is six and it continues for five years. Class sizes generally run about twenty five children per class with a minimum of ten students. In particularly needy areas it is possible to find *Pluriclassi*, or mixed-level classes, which have between six and twelve students. In primary school, schooling and textbooks are free. The single municipalities organize transportation and school meals, most often asking for contributions but making exceptions for needy families. Enrolment and attendance are compulsory. School time may span up from 30 hours of instruction per week, to 40 hours per week (in “full time” school). From 2009 every class has got a three teachers team. The national curriculum is nationally determined but it is also adapted to local needs by each school. The curriculum includes: Italian, English, Geography, History, Math, Science, Technology, Music, Art, Physical Education, Information Technology and Religion.

The next level is known as *Scuola media*, that is to say secondary school level of first degree, where students study until they turn fourteen years old. While schooling is free, at the secondary level books must be purchased. Class size is about 21 students per class. The curriculum includes: Italian, English, an alternate foreign language (French or Spanish), History, Geography, Science, Math, Technology, Information technology, Art, Music and Physical education, Religion. Students must make a choice about their education at the end of *Scuola media* and choose the higher secondary school they will attend. Pupils can then choose:

– To continue their studies in the **upper secondary school** for 5 years (*Licei, istituto tecnico, istituto professionale*) ending with the *esame di stato* examination enabling pupils to enter higher education.

– To enrol for **vocational training** under the aegis of the regions for 3 years in order to prepare a vocational qualification (*Certificato di qualifica professionale*). This

enables them to start working or to go to upper secondary school to continue their studies or specialise in a post-qualification course. This specialisation gives students the possibility to join the IFTS (*Istruzione Formazione tecnica superiore*/ non-university higher technical training) and the ITS (*Istituti tecnici superiori*).

– To enrol in **vocational training which alternates between work experience and the classroom** and allows young people to acquire basic knowledge plus skills they will be able to put into practice on the job market.

Horizontal mobility in both directions is possible between the mainstream education system and vocational training.⁴⁾ According to this, the last step of Italian school system is *Scuola superiore* (upper secondary school). Students attend higher secondary school years, until they are 18 or 19 years old. The higher secondary schools are voluntary from 16. The lower secondary level of education is compulsory, which means that enrolment and attendance are free of charge. Families are required to pay for the textbooks although exemptions may also be granted according to the family income. Financial aids are foreseen both by the state and regional legislation. The State foresees grants to be awarded with priority to low income families; financial aids provided by the Regions, are for example financial contributions to purchase textbooks, free-of-charge transport and canteen services, etc.⁵⁾

There are many types of upper education. Education offered by the *licei* aims at preparing students for university studies and for other post-secondary pathways. The classical and scientific Liceo have a unified structure (lasting five years) which are split into two and three year sections. In the **classical lyceum**, the teaching is predominantly classical and humanistic (literature, philosophy, history, latin and ancient greek). The **scientific lyceum** places the emphasis on scientific training, particularly during the last three years (math and scientific subjects such as chemistry, biology, computer science). The **modern languages lyceum** is based on foreign languages (English, Spanish, French, German and in last years Romanian, Portuguese, Chinese). In the **social sciences lyceum** pupils can learn in particular philosophy, pedagogy, sociology, social legislation, socio-pedagogic research methodology. **Arts institutes** prepare pupils for work and artistic production, according to local industries and materials. They take into account many sectors: printing and engraving, textiles and decorations, jewellery, metals, furniture, ceramics, painting, glass, set design, etc.

The main purpose of **technical education** is to give pupils specific theoretical and practical preparation for skilled tasks (vocational education) and preparation for work and artistic production (artistic education) in various sectors, with particular attention to the requirements of the local labour market. There are different types of technical colleges: agricultural, commercial, touristic, surveying, industrial, company experts and correspondents in foreign languages, naval, aeronautic and social activities. Each offers several branches and specialisations.

Vocational colleges cover the following vocational studies: agriculture and rural development, industry and crafts, services, restauration catering and hospitality, auxiliary sanitary and the special sector (health and social care). During the initial two-year cycle in vocational insitutes, the curriculum of the technical colleges includes the following subjects, which are common to all specialisations: Italian, History, Chemistry, Geography, Foreign language, Mat, Physics, Natural sciences, Biology, Law and Economics, Physical education and Religious education or alternative subject (optional). The only difference concerns specific subjects corresponding to the branch chosen and the practical exercises belonging to each branch. During the second cycle, which lasts three years, the general subjects are common to all specialisations. The other subjects vary according to the branch chosen. A considerable part of the curriculum is devoted to practical exercises in specialised fields⁶.

Secondary cycle ends with a national exam. The certification earned after passing this exam (*diploma di maturità*) is compulsory if a pupil wants to enroll into any University. Students who have not reached the necessary standards may be required to repeat the year.

9. Conclusions

Formal education in the above mentioned European Countries and Turkey as associate member, is coherently structured and systematically organized by the state (through the Ministries of Education), which sets specific rules for curriculum content, entrance age, duration of studies and assessment procedures. There are three main models of organization within compulsory education in European countries (Eurydice-Facts and Figures 2014): *Single structure education* (ISCED1+ISCED2) where education is provided with no transition between primary and lower secondary education, and with general education provided in common for all pupils, *Common core curriculum provision* (ISCED 2), where students, after successfully completing primary education, progress to lower secondary level where they follow the same common core curriculum, and *Differentiated lower secondary education* (ISCED 2), where after successful completion of primary education, students follow distinct educational pathways or specific types of schooling, either at the beginning or during lower secondary education.

NOTES

1. “Indire” is the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research in Italy. It is the oldest research institute of the Ministry of Education. It accompanies the evolution of the Italian school system by investing in education and innovation and supporting the process of school improvement.

2. http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice///sintesi_sistema_educativo_italiano_EN.pdf cit. pag 1
3. http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/italy_NR08.pdf cfr. pag. 2
4. <http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr/en/initial-vocational-education-and-training-in-europe/italy/>
5. http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice///STRUTTURE_2009_2010_EN.pdf
6. http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice///STRUTTURE_2009_2010_EN.pdf cit. pg. 24
7. Educational Guide for Kindergarten Curriculum.(2011) Athens: Pedagogical Institute Ministry of Education. Website: www.pi-schools.gr
8. The Structure of the European Education Systems 2014/15.November 2014. Eurydice-Facts and Figures. Website: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>
9. Act n.2525/1997-OGG 188A “High School, access of its graduates to higher education, evaluation of teaching work and other provisions”. Athens: Ministry of Education. http://www.pischools.gr/preschool_education/nomothesia/2525.pdf
10. Act 4186/2013-OGG 193/2013 “Restructuring of Secondary Education and other provisions” Athens: Ministry of Education.
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11. Eurybase – Banca dati della rete Eurydice sui sistemi educative europei (Italia, a.s. 2008/2009, 2014/2015), consultabile online alla pagina seguente: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/eurybase_full_reports/IT_IT.pdf
12. Official Newsletter 50/226/143572/Γ1/10-9-2014 “Operation of All Day Primary Schools for the school year 2014-2015”. Athens: Ministry of Education.
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13. Official Government Gazette 167/30-10-1985, Law n. 1566) “Structure and function of the primary and secondary education and other provisions” http://www.pischools.gr/preschool_education/nomothesia/1566_85.pdf
14. Official Government Gazette 303B/13-13-2003, 304B/13-03-2003 “Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework and Detailed Curriculum for Dimotika and Gymnasia”
<http://www.et.gr/index.php/2013-01-28-14-06-23/2013-01-29-08-13-13>
15. Legislation in Portugal in Education area:
Law 49/2005 of the 31st August
Law 85/2009 of the 27th August

- Decree-Law 139/2012 of the 5th July
Legislative Order No.° 24-A/2012 of the 15 September
Ordinance 225/2012 of 30th July
Decree -law 91/2013 of the 10th July
Decree-Law 137/2012 of the 02th July
Legislative Order No. 6/2014 of the 26th
16. Legislation in Romania in Educational area:
Law 1/2011 of 5th January (revized in May 2015)

INTERNET RESOURCES

- <http://www.edu.ro/index.php/articles/c215/>
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<http://www.ekep.gr>
<http://www.minedu.gov.gr>
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<http://www.europaed.cz/> Oficiální web České republiky [online].
<http://www.czech.cz/cz/prace-studium/chci-studovat/vzdelavaci-system/vzdelavaci-system-v-cr/>
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<http://croatia.eu/article.php?id=35&lang=1>
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<http://www.indire.it>
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