

Education trends 2000-2009

From 10 to 20 pupils per teacher in primary education across Member States in 2009

At primary level, the number of pupils per teacher varies significantly between Member States. In 2009 they ranged from around 10 pupils on average per teacher in **Malta, Lithuania, Denmark** and **Poland** to nearly 20 pupils per teacher in **France** and the **United Kingdom**. In the **EU27**, there were on average 15 pupils per teacher in 2009.

The number of pupils per teacher in primary education fell between 2000 and 2009 in eighteen of the 22 Member States for which data are available. The most significant falls were recorded in **Malta** (from 19 pupils per teacher in 2000 to 9 in 2009), **Lithuania** (from 17 to 10), **Latvia** (from 18 to 11) and **Ireland** (from 22 to 16). It is important to note that the decrease in this ratio does not necessarily mean that more teaching time is directly allocated to pupils.

These data come from a report¹ published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, on trends in education over the last decade. While this release illustrates some aspects of pre-primary and primary education, the report covers all stages of education from when children start school until they leave.

Nearly half of primary teachers in Germany, Sweden and Italy are aged over 50

At primary level, teaching is dominated by women, with on average 86% of primary teachers in 2009 being women in the **EU27**. More than 95% of primary teachers were women in the **Czech Republic, Slovenia, Lithuania** and **Hungary**. Only in **Denmark** (69%), **Spain** and **Luxembourg** (both 74%) was the share below three quarters.

On average across the **EU27** in 2009, 29% of primary teachers were aged over 50. The proportion of teachers in this age group was particularly high in **Germany** (49%), **Sweden** (48%) and **Italy** (45%). The lowest shares of teachers aged over 50 were recorded in **Cyprus** (3%), **Poland** (13%) and **Slovenia** (18%).

92% of children in pre-primary education in the EU27 in 2009

In the **EU27** in 2009, 92% of children from 4 years old to the starting age of compulsory education participated in early childhood (pre-primary) education², compared with 86% in 2000. In 2009, 95% or more of children in this age group attended pre-primary education in eleven Member States, already meeting the 2020 education and training benchmark³. In addition, significant progress towards the benchmark level was observed in **Latvia** (from 65% to 90%), **Cyprus** (from 65% to 86%), **Lithuania** (from 61% to 80%), **Finland** (from 55% to 72%), **Romania** (68% to 82%) and **Poland** (from 58% to 71%).

Pre-primary and primary education

	% of children between the age of 4 and start of compulsory primary education participating in pre-primary education*		Primary education			
			Pupil/teacher ratio		% of women teachers	% of teachers older than 50
	2000	2009	2000	2009	2009	2009
EU27	86	92	14.8	14.5	86.0	28.6
Belgium	99	99	:	12.5	80.6	20.8
Bulgaria	73	78	16.8	17.4	93.7	26.0
Czech Republic	90	90	21.0	18.4	97.6	26.9
Denmark	96	92	10.7	9.9	68.6	37.6
Germany	83	96	19.8	17.4	85.0	49.3
Estonia	87	96	14.9	16.2	93.5	32.4
Ireland	75	73	21.5	15.9	84.7	27.3
Greece	69	:	13.4	:	:	:
Spain	100	99	14.9	13.3	74.3	31.7
France	100	100	19.5	19.7	82.6	21.6
Italy	100	98	11.0	10.7	94.0	44.8
Cyprus	65	86	18.1	14.5	82.6	3.1
Latvia	65	90	18.0	11.4	93.0	31.1
Lithuania	61	80	16.7	9.7	96.7	31.6
Luxembourg	95	95	:	11.6	73.6	23.2
Hungary	94	95	10.9	10.7	96.1	25.5
Malta	100	94	19.1	9.4	88.7	22.8
Netherlands	100	100	16.8	15.8	84.4	34.7
Austria	85	91	:	12.6	89.6	36.2
Poland	58	71	12.7	10.2	83.7	13.4
Portugal	79	88	12.4	11.3	79.6	27.4
Romania	68	82	:	16.4	85.9	31.9
Slovenia	85	91	13.4	16.7	97.5	18.2
Slovakia	76	78	18.3	17.7	89.2	25.5
Finland	55	72	16.9	13.6	78.5	27.7
Sweden	84	95	12.8	12.1	81.6	48.1
United Kingdom	100	97	21.2	19.9	80.8	25.6
Iceland	92	95	12.7	11.3	80.3	31.4
Liechtenstein	69	86	:	10.3	75.6	28.7
Norway	80	97	:	:	73.9	35.7
Switzerland	:	78	:	:	81.1	33.7
Croatia	:	69	:	18.1	:	:
former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia	17	28	21.5	19.5	77.5	25.8
Turkey	12	32	30.5	25.8	50.4	:
USA	70	66	15.8	14.9	86.7	32.4
Japan	96	98	20.9	19.4	:	:

Source: UOE (UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat data collection on education and training systems). Country specific notes on the data are available in the Statistics in Focus.

: Data not available

* The age range for each Member State varies depending upon the age of entry to compulsory education. See the Statistics in Focus for more details.

1. **Eurostat**, Statistics in Focus, 54/2011, "**Trends in European education during the last decade**", available free of charge in pdf format on the Eurostat web site.
2. **Pre-primary education** (International Standard Classification of Education - ISCED - level 0): Preceding primary education, not compulsory in most countries. Data refer to education-oriented programmes that recruit staff with specialised qualifications in education.
Primary education (ISCED - level 1): Depending on the country, primary education begins at between 4 and 7 years of age and generally lasts 5 to 6 years. Programmes are designed to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other subjects.
3. See http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm

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