European Commission

Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe

2020/21

Eurydice – Facts and Figures

European Education and Culture Executive Agency

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INTRODUCTION

The amount of instruction time available to students is an important factor in their learning process. Existing evidence suggests that the quality of instruction and the time available for learning can have a positive effect on student achievement and can compensate for weaknesses in other areas such as students' capabilities or willingness to learn ([1]). Research has also shown how the increase in the amount of instruction time allocated to a specific discipline can help to raise students' interest levels in that subject, and subsequently improve performance ([2]).

The correlation between instruction time and performance is not, however, unequivocal as other important elements must be factored into the equation; these include the quality of instruction and the time available for learning outside school. The positive relationship between increased instruction time and student achievement is, in effect, more apparent when the increase is accompanied by other support measures and directed at disadvantaged students, for instance, those who have a less favourable home learning environment.

Lavy (2015) examined the correlation between the PISA test scores of students from the same school in different subjects and the instruction time spent on those subjects. He found that the differences between subjects in student achievement were associated with differences in the available school instruction time for each subject, particularly with respect to pupils from families with low levels of education and the children of second-generation immigrants ([3]). Dobbie and Fryer (2013) observed that an index of five policies (increased instructional time, frequent teacher feedback, the use of data to guide instruction, 'high-dosage' tutoring and high expectations) could explain around 45 % of the variation in students' results and schools' effectiveness in charter schools in New York ([4]). Moreover, Battistin and Meroni (2016) analysed the impact of increasing instruction time in low achieving schools in Italy within the framework of the Quality and Merit Project, concluding that the intervention raised scores in mathematics for students from the least advantaged backgrounds. In contrast, targeting the best students with extra activities in language came at the cost of lowering their performance in mathematics ([5]). Aucejo and Romano (2016) observed that gains in maths and reading scores were more significant when intervening to reduce absenteeism (and, therefore, levelling the amount of learning time students received) than when increasing the number of instruction days in the school year ([6]).

([1]) Gettinger, M, 1985. Time allocated and time spent relative to time needed for learning as determinants of achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77, pp. 3-11. Carroll, J. B., 1989. The Carroll Model: A 25-years retrospective and prospective view. *Educational Researcher*, 18 (1), pp. 26-31. Kidron, Y., and Lindsay, J., 2014. The effects of increased learning time on student academic and non-academic outcomes: Findings from a meta-analytic review (REL 2014-015). Washing-ton, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs.

([2]) Traphagen, K., 2011. Strengthening science education: The power of more time to deepen inquiry and engagement. Washington, DC: National Center on Time and Learning. Blank, Rolf K., 2013. Science instructional time is declining in elementary schools: What are the implications for student achievement and closing the gap? *Science Education*, 97, pp. 830-847. Fitchett, P.G.; Heafner, T.L., Vanfossen, P., 2014. An analysis of time prioritization for social studies in elementary school classrooms. *Journal of Curriculum & Instruction*. 8 (2), pp. 7-35.

([3]) Lavy, V., 2015. Do differences in schools' instruction time explain international achievement gaps? Evidence from developed and developing countries. *The Economic Journal*, vol. 125(588), pp. F397-F424. https://www.nber.org/papers/w16227.pdf.

([4]) Dobbie, W. and Fryer R. G., 2013. Getting beneath the veil of effective schools: Evidence from New York City. *American Economic Journal*: Applied Economics 2013, 5(4), pp. 28-60.

([5]) Battistin, E. and Meroni, E. C., 2016. Should we increase instruction time in low achieving schools? Evidence from Southern Italy. *Economics of Education Review,* 55, pp. 39-56.

([6]) Aucejo, E. and Romano, T. F., 2016. Assessing the effect of school days and absences on test score performance. *Economics of Education Review*, 55, pp. 70-87.

This report concerns the recommended minimum instruction time in full-time compulsory general education (i.e. from the first year of primary education until the end of full-time compulsory education for all students) in the school year 2020/21 in 39 European education systems ([7]). Data have been collected jointly by the European Commission's Eurydice and the OECD's NESLI networks. Secondary education programmes with vocational profiles and programmes specifically designed for students with special needs are out of the scope of this study.

For the Netherlands, Austria and Liechtenstein, the information is broken down into the different pathways or programmes that start at lower secondary level in general education ([8]). In the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Turkey, data for upper secondary education (ISCED level 34) only refer to the general programme in which the largest proportion of students are enrolled.

This publication focuses on the recommended minimum instruction time for the compulsory curriculum specified in the regulations or policy documents of the education authorities, i.e., the minimum instruction time normally received by students. However, in certain countries, this minimum time may not apply to all schools or geographical areas. Furthermore, in some countries, schools may be required to make available additional instruction time, but students are free to decide whether or not to take advantage of it. This additional time is often offered in the form of programmes aimed at disadvantaged or low-achieving students. The non-compulsory curriculum is beyond the scope of the comparative analysis but further details can be found in the appendix and the country-specific notes of the countries concerned.

This report is organised as follows:

Part I consists of a comparative analysis on the recommended minimum annual instruction time and its distribution across the curriculum subjects, with a special focus on reading, writing and literature, mathematics, natural sciences and social studies. These areas have been selected in the context of the benchmark set by the Council of the European Union for reading, mathematics and science, which states that by 2020 the proportion of 15-year-olds with low achievement should be less than 15 % ([9]). Furthermore, the Council's recent recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching includes, as priorities, the promotion of citizenship education, democratic values, civic participation and an understanding of the origins and working of the European Union; these elements of the curriculum usually belong to the area of social studies ([10]).

The comparative analysis comprises eight sections:

- Section 1 shows how the minimum instruction time within compulsory education is related to the number of years concerned.
- Section 2 compares the recommended annual instruction time across countries by education level.
- Section 3 describes the main changes that have taken place over the last year.

([7]) Although one or more grades of pre-primary education are compulsory in 17 European countries, this education level is beyond the scope of this data collection (see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019. *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe – 2019 Edition*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union).

([8]) In secondary education in the Netherlands, there are three different pathways, VWO, HAVO and VBMO. In Austria, the data for secondary education concerns the *Mittelschule* (compulsory secondary school, MS) and *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (academic secondary school, AHS). Also at secondary level, there are three pathways in Liechtenstein, *Gymnasium*, *Oberschule* and *Realschule*.

([9]) Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'). 2009/C 119/02: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:en:PDF.

([10]) Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching. Brussels, 17/01/2018. COM(2018) 23 final: https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/recommendation-common-values-inclusive-education-european-dimension-of-teaching.pdf.

- Section 4 looks into the flexibility that local authorities and schools have in allocating the recommended instruction time across grades and/or subjects, or to choose the subjects that they offer.
- Section 5 examines the minimum instruction time for reading, writing and literature in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education.
- Section 6 focuses on the minimum instruction time allocated to mathematics in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education.
- Section 7 looks into the minimum instruction time recommended for natural sciences in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education.
- Section 8 examines the importance of social studies in the curriculum in terms of instruction time,

Part II is divided into five sections. Section 1 consists of a reading guide to the diagrams (national data sheets), including a list of the acronyms and abbreviations used. The diagrams are shown in Section 2 (Instruction time by country) and Section 3 (Instruction time by subject). Section 4 contains an appendix with the diagrams for some subject categories (i.e. languages 4 and 5) and for the non-compulsory curriculum. The country-specific notes are available in Section 5.

The definitions and the codes used can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.

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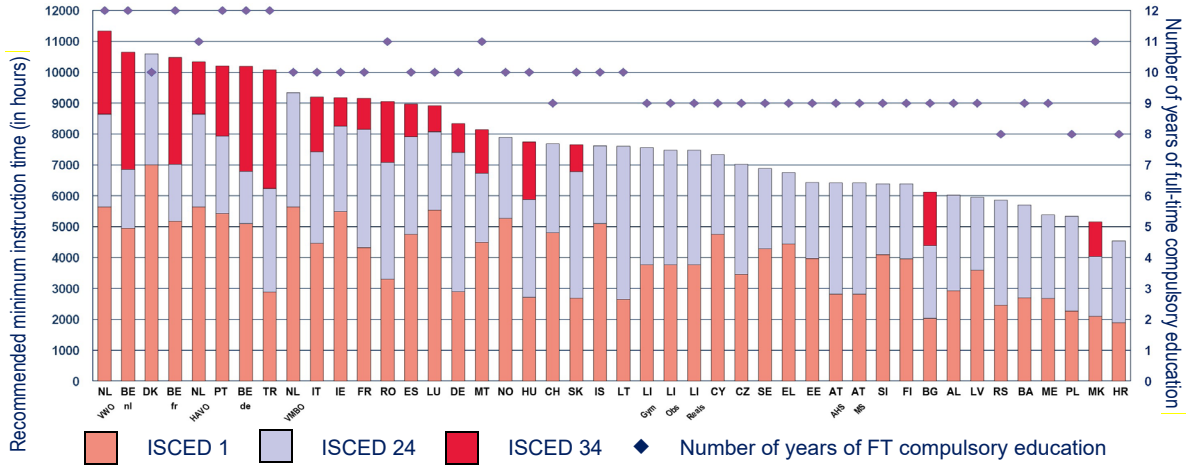
1. The minimum instruction time for compulsory education is related to the number of grades covered

Full-time compulsory general education (as defined in this study) lasts from 8 to 12 years depending on the country. In 21 education systems, it covers primary and general lower secondary education (i.e. ISCED levels 1 and 24). In 18 education systems, it also includes one or more grades of general upper secondary education or ISCED level 34. In the Netherlands, the number of levels depends on the pathway (ISCED 1 and 24 for VMBO and ISCED 1, 24 and 34 VWO and HAVO). The total instruction time recommended for the whole of full-time compulsory general education in each country is usually related to the number of grades involved: the more grades covered, the higher the number of hours (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of years of full-time compulsory education (in primary and secondary education) and total recommended instruction time (in hours) for the compulsory curriculum, 2020/21



Source: Eurydice.

Minimum instruction time in hours for the compulsory curriculum for each education level, 2020/21

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV
ISCED 1	5 180	5 096	4 947	2 028	3 452	7 000	2 900	3 964	5 490	4 437	4 750	4 320	1 890	4 455	4 760	3 589
ISCED 24	1 850	1 699	1 902	2 367	3 569	3 600	4 502	2 468	2 772	2 317	3 167	3 832	2 651	2 970	2 570	2 359
ISCED 34	3 453	3 397	3 804	1 728			932		924		1 060	1 008		1 782		
	LT	**LU**	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**			**AT**		**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**
ISCED 1	2 646	5 544	2 712	4 494	5 640			2 820		2 268	5 429	3 300	4 091	2 693	3 962	4 283
ISCED 24	4 957	2 535	3 168	2 236	3 000 HAVO	3 700 VMBO	3 000 VWO	3 600 AHS	3 600 MS	3 066	2 505	3 778	2 298	4 095	2 423	2 607
ISCED 34		845	1 869	1 412	1 700		2 700				2 268	1 972		870		
	AL	**BA**	**CH**	**IS**	**LI**			**ME**	**MK**	**NO**	**RS**	**TR**				
ISCED 1	2 927	2 700	4 801	5 100	3 767			2 682	2 099	5 272	2 457	2 880				
ISCED 24	3 098	3 008	2 884	2 516	3 795 Gym	3 713 Obs	3 713 Reals	2 698	1 940	2 622	3 407	3 360				
ISCED 34									1 113			3 840				

Source: Eurydice.

Country-specific notes

Germany: The data represent the weighted average instruction time for the compulsory core curriculum subjects, calculated by the Secretariat of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* based on the number of students enrolled in the different types of school (reference year 2019/20).
Spain: The data on intended instruction time are based on national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/21). To calculate the weighted averages, statistics on the numbers of students per grade and autonomous community from the Statistics Office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were used (reference year 2018/19).
Austria: Data for grade 9 are not available, even though this grade is part of full-time compulsory general education.
Switzerland: Except for a minimum number of lessons for physical education, no standard curriculum and no standard instruction time are defined at national level. Curricula and intended instruction time are determined by the 26 Cantons. The figures represent weighted averages of the cantonal requirements for each grade and the total instruction time, as provided in cantonal timetables (*Stundentafeln* / *grilles horaires*).

The total number of recommended hours in full-time compulsory general education is below 7 700 in 22 education systems and, in almost all of these, full-time compulsory general education spans only eight or nine years. In Croatia, Poland and Serbia, it spans eight years. In 15 education systems, it spans nine years. Of these, the lowest number of recommended hours are found in Montenegro, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia, Albania and Bulgaria. Lithuania, Slovakia and Iceland also recommend fewer than 7 700 hours, although full-time compulsory general education spans 10 years. Finally, in North Macedonia, the length of full-time compulsory education is 11 years for the school population taken as a whole, 13 years for those in general education programmes and in four-year vocational education.

In 13 of the education systems where full-time compulsory general education spans 10 years, between 7 603 and 10 600 hours of instruction time are recommended. Denmark clearly stands out, with an instruction time of 10 600 hours, which is 1 260 hours more than the next highest instruction time in the Netherlands (VMBO – 9 340 hours).

In the remaining education systems/pathways where full-time compulsory general education spans 11 or 12 years, between 5 152 hours (North Macedonia) and 11 340 hours (the Netherlands – VWO) of instruction are the norm.

Primary education usually covers more years and includes more instruction time than lower secondary education

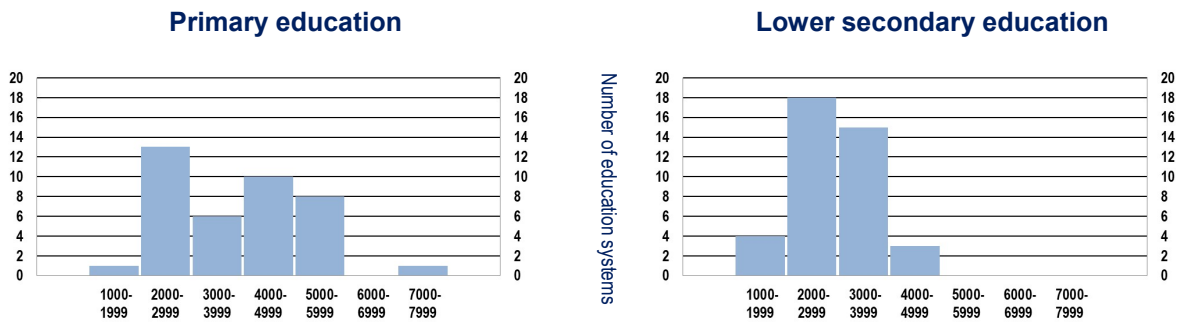
Primary education tends to cover more years than lower secondary education and the total instruction time provided is consequently higher in many countries.

Primary education spans from four to seven years depending on the country, covering five or six years in two thirds of the education systems. In contrast, lower secondary education spans four years or less in all but three education systems.

In line with this, primary education covers 4 000 hours or more in half of the education systems, while lower secondary education includes 4 000 hours or more in only two education systems. On average, primary education covers at least 4 082 hours of instruction and general lower secondary education covers at least 2 858 hours of instruction.

As Figure 2 shows, the variation between countries in the recommended instruction time is greater for primary than for lower secondary education. The recommended instruction time for compulsory general lower secondary education ranges from 2 000 to 4 000 hours in the majority of education systems, with only seven outside this range. At primary level, the variation in the number of hours of instruction time is much larger.

Figure 2: Distribution of the education systems according to the total instruction time (hours) allocated at primary and lower secondary level, 2020/21



2. Compulsory general secondary education tends to have more annual hours of instruction than primary education

Even though primary education usually includes more instruction time overall, the annual instruction time is often higher at secondary level. General lower secondary education tends to span a fewer number of grades, but these grades usually include more hours of instruction than at primary level. This is also the case at upper secondary level in countries where this level encompasses one or more grades of full-time compulsory general education. This suggests a tendency in education policy to increase learning time according to students' age, with younger students spending less time in class. Indeed, the first grades of primary education often include fewer hours of instruction.

Figure 3 shows the minimum instruction time per notional year, which is calculated by dividing the total instruction time recommended for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education by the number of years covered by each education level.

In primary education – the lowest of the three education levels – the average minimum instruction time per notional year is 723 hours. The annual instruction time ranges from below 500 hours in countries such as Croatia and North Macedonia, to more than 900 hours in Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal. In more than three quarters of the education systems, the recommended instruction time per notional year is less than 864 hours.

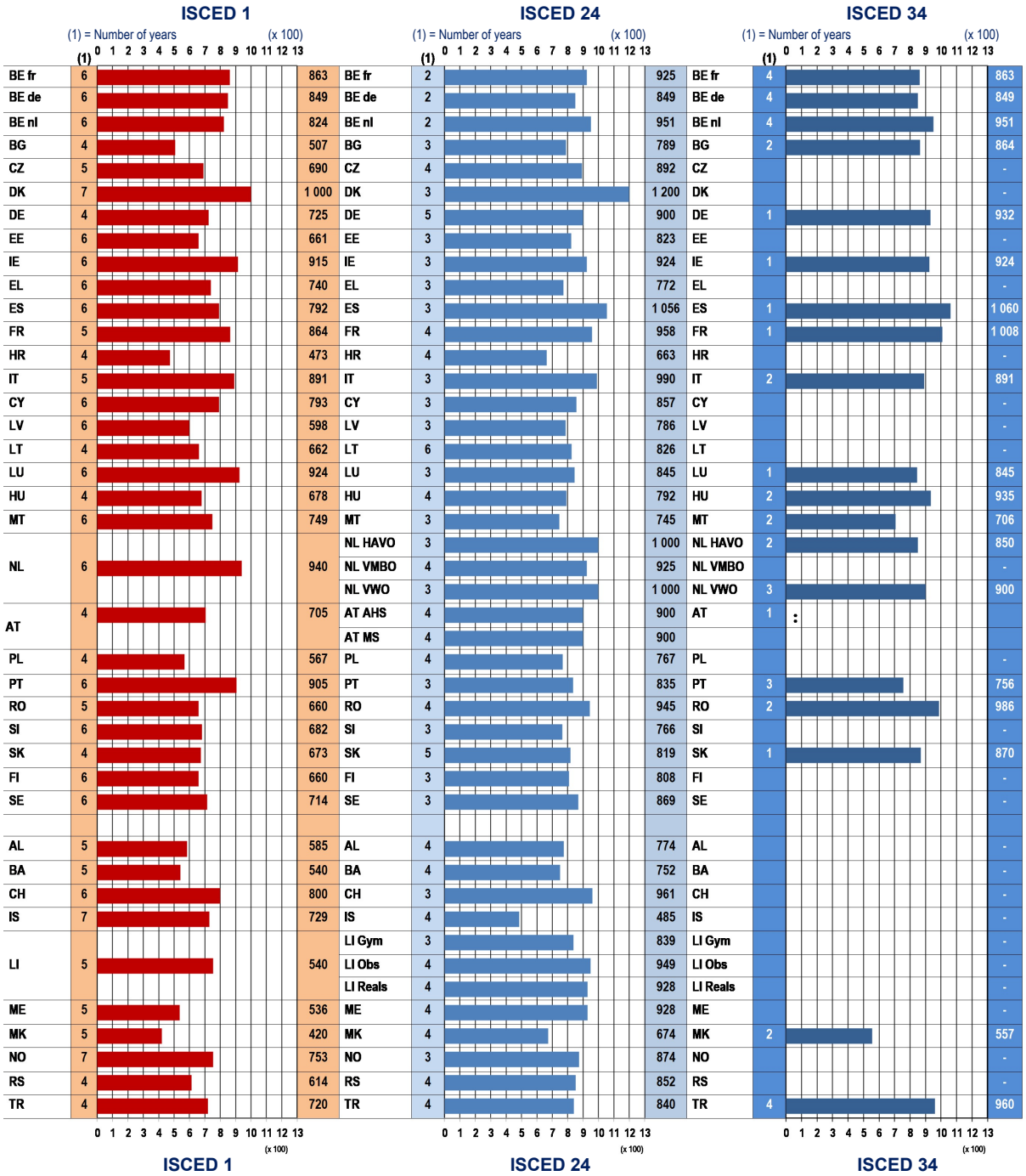
In general lower secondary education, the average minimum instruction time per notional year is 862 hours, ranging from 485 hours in Iceland and 663 hours in Croatia to 1 000 hours or more in Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands (HAVO and VWO). In about half of the countries, the recommended annual instruction time (per notional year) is more than 864 hours.

In nearly all education systems, the minimum instruction time per notional year in lower secondary education is higher than in primary education. The difference is more than 260 hours in Bulgaria, Spain and Romania; only in Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands (VMBO) and Portugal, is the recommended annual minimum instruction time slightly higher in primary education than in lower secondary education. In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the minimum instruction time is the same at both education levels.

In 18 education systems, at least one grade of ISCED level 34 (which normally coincides with general upper secondary education) is compulsory. The average recommended instruction time per notional year at this education level is 884 hours, ranging from 557 hours in North Macedonia to over 1 000 hours in Spain and France ([11]).

([11]) Austria is not included in the calculations. For the Netherlands, only VWO is included in the calculations.

Figure 3: Recommended minimum instruction time for the compulsory curriculum, in hours, per notional year and by ISCED level, 2020/21



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The bar chart shows the recommended minimum instruction time (number of hours) per notional year. For each country, the minimum instruction time in hours for the compulsory curriculum for each ISCED level has been divided by its duration in years. The number of compulsory years per education level is shown before each bar for the three education levels.

This figure covers only primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education. Grades at pre-primary level are excluded, even if they are part of full-time compulsory education.

The column for ISCED 34 captures information only for the countries where full-time compulsory general education includes one or more grades of upper secondary education.

Country-specific notes

Germany: The data represent the weighted average instruction time for the compulsory core curriculum subjects, calculated by the Secretariat of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* based on the number of students enrolled in the different types of school (reference year 2019/20).

Spain: The data on intended instruction time are based on national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/21). To calculate the weighted averages, statistics on the numbers of students per grade and autonomous community from the Statistics Office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were used (reference year 2018/19).
Austria: Data for grade 9 are not available, even though this grade is part of full-time compulsory general education.
Switzerland: Except for a minimum number of lessons for physical education, no standard curriculum and no standard instruction time are defined at national level. Curricula and intended instruction time are determined by the 26 Cantons. The figures represent weighted averages of the cantonal requirements for each grade and the total instruction time, as provided in cantonal timetables (*Stundentafeln* / *grilles horaires*).

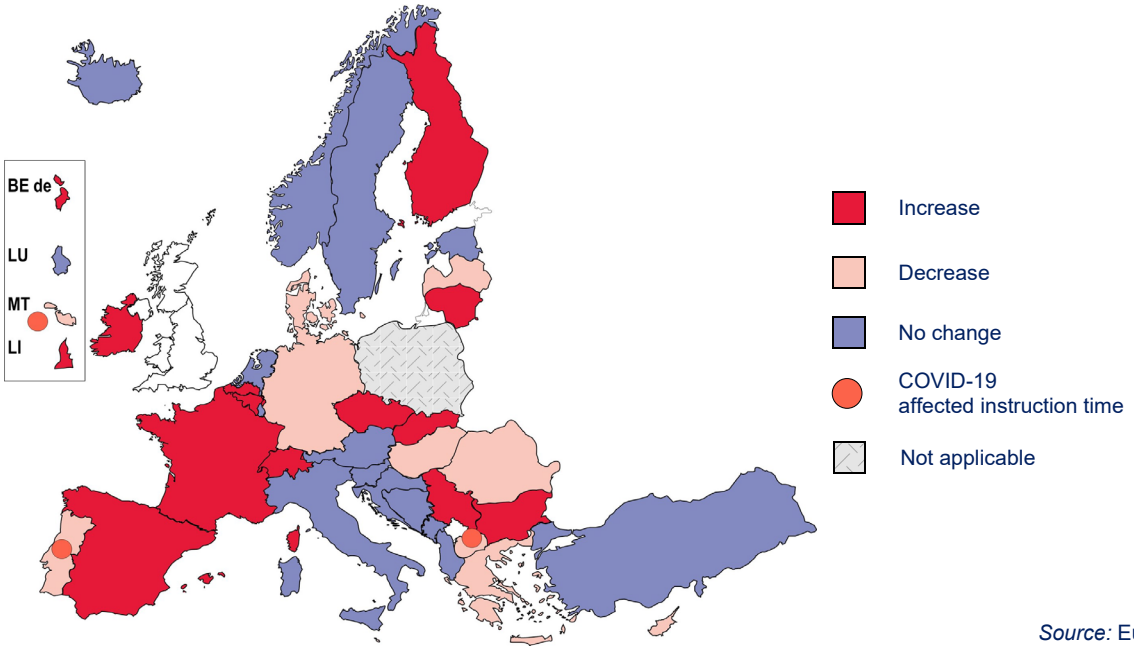
3. The minimum instruction time changed in the majority of countries between 2018/19 and 2020/21. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had repercussions for instruction time in a few education systems

More than half of the education systems changed their minimum instruction time between 2018/19 and 2020/21. In 14 education systems, there were no changes in the minimum instruction time (Figure 4). Broad curriculum reforms account for the changes in the recommended instruction time in Hungary and Liechtenstein (increase) and Poland (decrease).

In a few other countries, minor changes in the minimum instruction time were due to fluctuations in the number of instruction days, depending, for instance, on when holidays fell throughout the year and the specific arrangement of the school year. In 2020/21, an extra day or more of instruction was included in Belgium (all Communities), Czechia, Slovakia and Finland. Therefore, the total instruction time increased in these countries. Conversely, there were fewer instruction days in the school year – and the instruction time slightly decreased – in Cyprus (ISCED 1) and Hungary.

Data for Germany, Spain and Switzerland consist of weighted averages, which tend to vary every year. In most other countries where changes occurred, they were due to minor changes in the curriculum.

Figure 4: Changes in the recommended minimum instruction time for full-time compulsory general education between 2018/19 and 2020/21 and the effect of COVID-19



Source: Eurydice.

Variation in the number of hours of instruction time between 2018/19 and 2020/21

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	IE	EL	ES	FR	CY	LV
ISCED 1	224.0	56.0	31.1	78.7	17.7	-360.0	3.4	60.0	-51	0.1	0.0	-112.0	0.7
ISCED 24	-38.0	18.7	11.9	0.0	18.3	0.0	-24.1	0.0	-57	6.8	48.0	0.0	-22.7
ISCED 34	149.3	37.3	23.7	0.0			-4.3	0.0		6.9	-28.0		
	LT	**HU**	**MT**	**PL***	**PT**	**RO**	**SK**	**FI**	**CH**	**LI Gym**	**LI Obs**	**MK**	**RS**
ISCED 1	204.8	-57.4	-633.5	*	-30.3	-60.0	14.4	57.0	19.0	27.3	27.3	-997.2	-54
ISCED 24	41.6	-35.4	-291.5	*	-249.2	-22.4	21.9	0.0	48.0	0.0	27.3	-964.2	93
ISCED 34		-48.0	-192.5		-146.7	23.2	4.6					-507.0	

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

The map shows the overall change for all ISCED levels. Changes of less than 1 hour are not shown. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is shown if the change in instruction time was included in legislation before the start of the school year. (*) denotes a break in series.

Country-specific notes

Germany and **Spain**: The data correspond to the weighted averages of the minimum instruction time defined by each of the *Länder* and the autonomous communities, respectively. These vary from one year to another because of fluctuations in the student population.
Latvia: The decrease is caused by methodological difficulty to include in the data vertical flexibility that will be gradually introduced for 3-year periods starting on grades 1, 4 and 7 from 2020/21. All grades (1—3, 4—6 and 7—9) will be part of vertical flexibility from 2022/23 onwards.
Poland: Due to the substantial reform of the education system, it is impossible to compare data from one year to another. In the previous system, primary education (ISCED 1) included six years of schooling, and lower secondary education (ISCED 24), included three years of schooling. After the reform, primary education (ISCED 1) corresponds to grades 1−4 of single structure education (ISCED 1+24) and lower secondary education (ISCED 24) corresponds to grades 5−8 of this single structure. Hence, "break in series" is marked in the table.
Switzerland: The intended instruction time is based on the 26 cantonal timetables (*Stundentafeln* / *grilles horaires)* for ISCED 1 and 24 in 2020/21. The calculation is provided by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected education systems in 2020 and 2021. According to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), by 10 March 2021, almost 145 million learners across the world were affected by school closures, representing 8.3 % of the total number of enrolled pupils. Moreover, 26 countries around the world faced country-wide school closures ([12]).

In Europe, three education systems reported a reduction in the recommended minimum instruction time as a direct result of the pandemic (see Figure 4 and the explanatory note).

In Malta, the 2020/21 school year started later than usual. In addition, the opening of the school year was staggered over six school days, with different grades starting on different days. In Portugal, the school calendar for 2020/21 included an initial period of compensatory learning (a type of catch-up during the first five weeks of the first term), which did not interfere with the work schedule for the new school year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary switch to distance education, the Government decided in February 2021 to have more instruction days and postpone the start of the summer holiday.

In North Macedonia, the start of the school year was postponed from 1 September 2020 to 1 October 2020 and therefore the number of instruction days was reduced from 180 to 159. Moreover, the length of lessons was shortened by ten minutes to ensure the safe operation of classes when transferring between them, thus also reducing the total instruction time.

The number of instruction days was reduced in five education systems because of the pandemic, but this is not visible in the instruction time data. In Belgium, decisions were made after the school year had started to lengthen the autumn holiday in November by four days (French Community) and 3.5 days (Flemish Community). In the German-speaking Community, the holiday was lengthened by four days for ISCED 1 and two days for ISCED 24. In Slovenia, the autumn holidays were lengthened by

([12]) UNESCO, 'Education: from disruption to discovery' (https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse, accessed on 10 March 2021).

five days. In Ireland, the Christmas break was extended by three days and the instruction finished five days early on 28 May, at lower and upper secondary level thus resulting in eight fewer instruction days at these levels. In Czechia, the autumn and Christmas holidays were also lengthened by four days in total.

4. In some countries, schools have the flexibility to allocate the recommended time across subjects and/or grades

In most countries, the official steering documents define how the recommended minimum instruction time should be allocated across grades and subjects. In some countries, however, there are fewer centrally defined requirements, and local authorities and schools enjoy greater flexibility in deciding on the amount of instruction time to devote to the different compulsory subjects or even in choosing which subjects to offer. This flexibility gives schools some scope to tailor education to the specific needs of their students. It may also reinforce the need for better coordination across grade levels and disciplines. This section examines the type and degree of flexibility that schools and local authorities are granted for allocating instruction time across grades (vertical flexibility) or across subjects (horizontal flexibility) and for teaching subjects of their own choice (subject flexibility).

Vertical flexibility occurs when central education authorities indicate the total number of hours to be allocated to a specific subject to be taught across more than one grade, without specifying how these hours should be distributed. The minimum instruction time for all subjects is defined in this way in Estonia, Lithuania (primary education), the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway (Figure 5). In Lithuania, at secondary level, about a third of the recommended instruction time is subject to vertical flexibility. In Czechia, at primary and secondary levels, vertical flexibility applies to more than 80 % of the recommended instruction time.

Vertical flexibility does not always operate in the same way. In some cases, the total instruction time is indicated for a complete level of education; in others, it applies to a group of grades within a level. In Czechia and the Netherlands, the instruction time is indicated for a complete level of education. In Estonia, Iceland and Sweden, at primary level (ISCED 1), the grades are split into two groups. In Lithuania, the minimum instruction time is given for each group of two grades at both primary and secondary levels. In Finland and Norway, the number of grades that are combined depends on the subject ([13]).

In the new education system in Poland, the minimum instruction time is given by grade (and no longer by groups of grades, as was the case previously). In Ireland, education reform is gradually introducing vertical flexibility in lower secondary education, but this will not be reflected in the data provided until the new system has been completely phased in.

There are differences in the way that vertical flexibility is applied in countries in terms of whether it is mandatory to teach particular subjects in every grade in a group.

In **Czechia**, some subjects, in which vertical flexibility is applied, must be taught in all grades (reading, writing and literature; mathematics; natural sciences; social studies; and arts education), whereas other subjects (namely, ICT and technology) do not have to be taught in all grades.

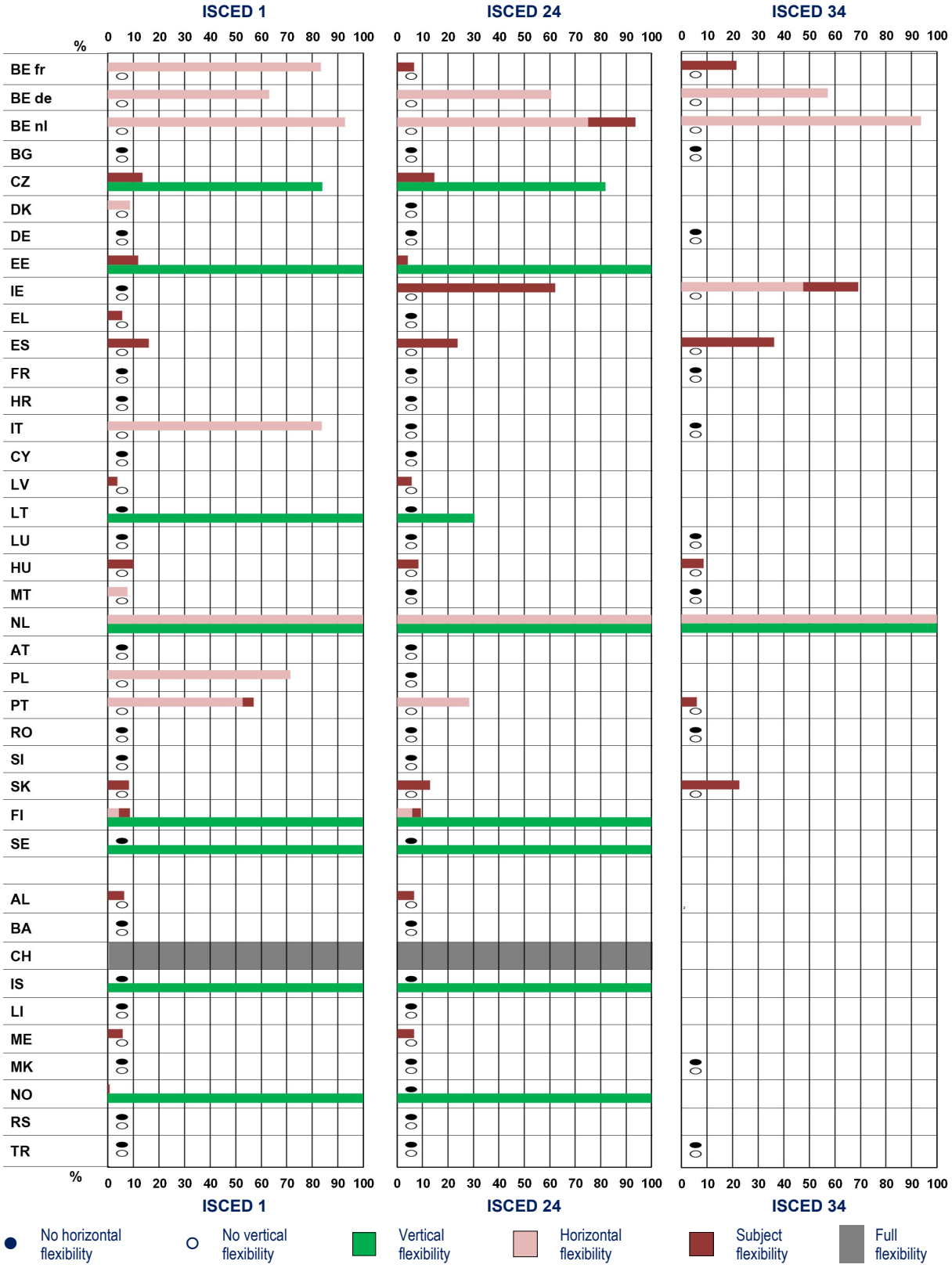
In the **Netherlands**, schools have the discretion to determine which subjects to teach in each grade.

In **Finland**, schools can start teaching any compulsory subject using vertical flexibility from grade 1, but they must introduce the first foreign language by the spring term of grade 1 at the latest; the second foreign language by grade 6; social studies by grade 4; and home economics, guidance and counselling (practical and vocational skills) by grade 7.

([13]) Additional information on the subjects affected by vertical flexibility in the different education systems can be found in Part II: National diagrams, Section 2. More detailed descriptions are provided for some countries in country-specific notes, Section 5.

In **Sweden**, the minimum instruction time is recommended/guaranteed for *Lågstadiet* (lower stage), *Mellanstadiet* (middle stage) and *Högstadiet* (higher stage) in compulsory education and schools decide how to distribute the instruction time within each stage, but with some limitations. The number of hours for a subject or group of subjects may be reduced by at most 20 % to accommodate school options at each stage, except for English, mathematics, Swedish and Swedish as a second language.

Figure 5: Time and subject flexibility, % of the total instruction time per ISCED level, 2020/21



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Vertical flexibility: Central education authorities indicate the total instruction time for a certain subject for several grades, for a whole level or for the whole period of full-time compulsory education. Schools / local authorities are then free to decide how much time to allocate to each grade.

Horizontal flexibility: Central education authorities indicate the total instruction time for a group of subjects within a specific grade. Schools / local authorities are then free to decide how much time to allocate to individual subjects ([14]).

Subject flexibility: Regional/local authorities or schools choose their own subjects (in some cases from a list defined by central education authorities) and allocate the time defined by the central authorities for this purpose ([15]).

Full flexibility: Central education authorities do not define the minimum instruction time. Regional authorities, local authorities or schools are free to decide how much time to allocate to individual subjects and grades.

The figure shows subject flexibility only when the subjects are compulsory. Instruction time dedicated to subjects offered as options are not shown in the figure. Similarly, the figure does not show subject flexibility when the subjects chosen by schools are subject to horizontal flexibility.

Country-specific note

Latvia: Vertical flexibility is being gradually introduced from 2020/21 for 3-year periods, starting with grades 1, 4 and 7. Vertical flexibility will apply to all grades (1–3, 4–6 and 7–9) from 2022/23 onwards. Vertical flexibility is not shown in the figure as only one grade at each level (ISCED 1, ISCED 24 and ISCED 34) is affected during the first year of the transition.

Horizontal flexibility occurs when the central education authorities set a total number of teaching hours for a combination of compulsory subjects within the same grade. The local authorities or the schools themselves can then decide how much time to allocate to each subject. The Netherlands has full flexibility with respect to time allocation (horizontal and vertical). The minimum requirements for instruction time are set per education level, and schools have full flexibility in allocating time across subjects and grades.

Schools have horizontal flexibility in allocating a significant proportion of the centrally defined minimum instruction time across compulsory subjects in the French Community of Belgium and Italy (primary education) and the German-speaking and Flemish Communities of Belgium (full-time compulsory education). In Portugal, the extent of horizontal flexibility varies depending on the grade. Horizontal flexibility is possible only in grade 1 in Denmark and in grades 1–3 in Poland. In Ireland, horizontal flexibility applies to many subjects in grade 10 (upper secondary education) ([16]).

In a few other cases there is some horizontal flexibility, but this affects a small proportion of the curriculum. At primary level in Malta and at secondary level in Romania, in addition to the minimum instruction time established for each subject, schools have the flexibility to allocate a few additional hours across the compulsory subjects. In Finland, schools can distribute some additional centrally defined time between music, visual arts, crafts, physical education and home economics.

Schools can also be granted some flexibility to provide instruction time for subjects of their own choice or from a predefined list. In comparison with vertical and horizontal flexibility, **subject flexibility** usually applies to a relatively small percentage (less than 23 %) of the total instruction time. It is found in 14 education systems. Schools can use this additional flexible time defined by the education authorities to provide more instruction time for compulsory and elective subjects, offer subjects of their own choice, such as sports, foreign languages, religious and moral education, ICT and other technology subjects, or organise special weeks around particular themes. The examples below show how subject flexibility has been applied in different education systems.

In the **French Community of Belgium**, secondary schools have some flexibility to decide which elective subjects to offer to students.

([14]) This corresponds to the category 'compulsory subjects with flexible timetable' in Part II: National diagrams.

([15]) This corresponds to the category 'compulsory flexible subjects chosen by the school' in Part II, National diagrams.

([16]) Additional information on the subjects affected by horizontal flexibility in the different education systems can be found in Part II: National diagrams, Section 2. A more detailed description is provided in country-specific notes, Section 5.

In **Czechia**, schools can use flexible subject time to increase the instruction time for compulsory or elective subjects, start teaching a foreign language in grades 1 and 2, teach a second foreign language or swimming in primary education or teach additional foreign languages.

In **Estonia**, schools usually use their flexible subject time to provide religious and moral education and ICT.

In **Ireland**, the phasing in of the new specifications for the junior cycle (lower secondary education) has meant increased flexibility for schools in terms of designing their own programmes of learning.

In **Greece**, flexible subject time is used to implement cross-thematic programmes (e.g. on the environment, health, culture and arts) at primary level.

In **Spain**, flexible subject time is allocated by the autonomous communities to subjects of their choice (normally from a predefined list).

In **Latvia**, the education authorities recommend that schools devote additional flexible subject time to sports.

In **Hungary**, the instruction time included for the compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools (see 'Glossary') can be used by schools to increase the time allocated to the prescribed subjects or for new subjects (with framework curricula adopted by the minister responsible for education) of their choice. In addition, schools must include the subject 'homeland and people' between grade 5 and grade 8 (one lesson per week).

In **Slovakia**, schools can use flexible subject time to increase the instruction time for compulsory subjects or provide a second or third language, technology education or other subjects such as transport education, sex education and minority languages.

In **Finland**, schools can use flexible subject time to offer any subject.

In **Albania**, flexible subject time can be used to provide subjects chosen by schools, such as environment education at primary level and foreign languages at secondary level.

In **Montenegro**, flexible subject time includes the 2-week instruction time that schools devote to culture, technical activities, sports, outdoor education and school trips.

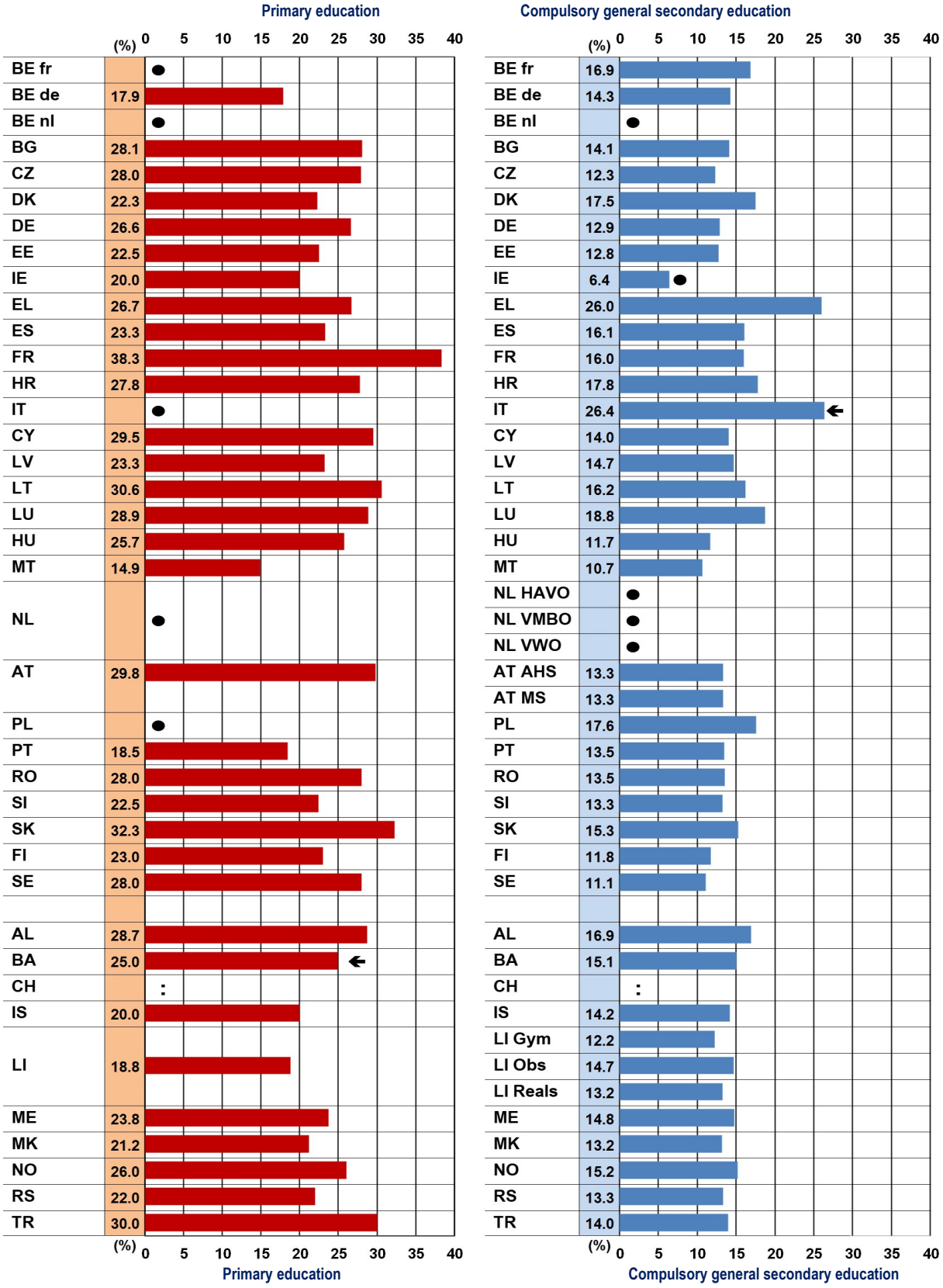
The highest degree of local decentralisation and school autonomy can be found in Switzerland. At national level, only education standards (basic competences) for core subjects are defined. There is no standard curriculum and no predefined instruction time (except for a minimum number of hours for physical education) at national level. Within the framework of the education standards, at regional level, the Cantons are free to determine the curricula (at the level of language regions) and intended instruction time (at cantonal level).

5. Reading, writing and literature takes up the largest proportion of the curriculum, especially in primary education

This section examines the relative importance of reading, writing and literature (in the main language of instruction or language 1) ([17]). The bar chart in Figure 6 shows the proportions of total instruction time allocated to this subject area in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education by country. The numbers of hours allocated by education level and country are provided in the table below.

([17]) In this comparative analysis, as in the rest of the document, reading, writing and literature pertains to language 1, which is the language of instruction. Additional languages learnt by students are categorised as language 2, language 3, language 4 and language 5. These usually refer to foreign languages but could also be official languages in some countries. In this report, 'other languages' refers to languages other than language 1.

Figure 6: Percentage of the recommended minimum instruction time allocated to READING, WRITING AND LITERATURE in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education, 2020/21



Source: Eurydice.

Minimum instruction time in hours as defined centrally for reading, writing and literature, per education level, 2020/21

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV
Primary	●	910	●	569	965	1 560 ●	771	893	1 098	1183	1 107	1 656	525	●	1 405	835
Secondary	894	728	●	579	439	630	701	315	238●	603	680	774	473	1 254🡐	361	347
	LT	**LU**	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**			**AT**		**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**
Primary	810	1 601	698	670	●			840		●	1 002	924	919	870	912	1 200
Secondary	805	634	590	390	● HAVO	● VMBO	● VWO	480 AHS	480 MS	540	643	778	305	757	285	290
	AL	**BA**	**CH**	**IS**	**LI**			**ME**	**MK**	**NO**	**RS**	**TR**				
Primary	840	675🡐	:	1 020	710			638	445	1 372	540	864				
Secondary	525	453	:	357	464 Gym	546 Obs	491 Reals	399	403	398	453	1 008				

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

This figure concerns reading, writing and literature as a compulsory subject in general education. The percentages were obtained by dividing the total time allocated to this subject area in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education by the minimum total instruction time provided for the respective education level (and multiplying by 100).

Where it is a compulsory subject with flexible timetable (see 'Glossary'), the instruction time is not reported for the grades or levels concerned (see also the country-specific notes).

Left arrow: The instruction time for other subjects is included in the time for reading, writing and literature for one or more grades (see the country-specific notes).

Country-specific notes

Denmark: In grade 1, reading, writing and literature is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility and the instruction time for this grade is therefore not included.
Germany: The data represent the weighted average instruction time for the compulsory core curriculum subjects, calculated by the Secretariat of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* based on the number of students enrolled in the different types of school (reference year 2019/20).
Ireland: In practice, schools provide more instruction time for reading, writing and literature than the time they have at their discretion to distribute across the compulsory subjects. At secondary level, data refer only to ISCED 24. In grade 10 (ISCED 34), English is a compulsory subject with time flexibility and the instruction time for this grade is therefore not included.
Spain: The data on intended instruction time are based on national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/21). To calculate the weighted averages, statistics on the numbers of students per grade and autonomous community from the Statistics Office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were used (reference year 2018/19).
Italy: In grades 6–8, the instruction time for social studies is included in the time for reading, writing and literature.
Austria: Data for grade 9 are not available, even though this grade is part of full-time compulsory general education.
Poland: In grades 1—3 of primary education, reading, writing and literature is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility. In the last (4) grade of ISCED 1, the curriculum defines instruction time for this subject area.
Portugal: In grades 5 and 6 of primary education, reading, writing and literature is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility and the instruction time for these grades is therefore not included.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: In grade 1, reading, writing and literature includes the instruction time for mathematics.

Reading, writing and literature is the subject area that generally accounts for the largest proportion of instruction time at all education levels, being especially dominant in primary education. At this level, the minimum instruction time recommended for this subject area covers, on average, 25 % of the curriculum, ranging from 15 % to 38 % depending on the country ([18]). In the German-speaking Community of Belgium (18 %), Ireland (20 %), Malta (15 %) and Liechtenstein (19 %), the percentages are relatively low compared with those in other countries, but the teaching of a second language also takes up a similar share of the curriculum at primary level – and it is significantly higher than in other countries. In all other education systems, it covers more than 20 % of the curriculum at this education level. In France, Lithuania, Austria, Slovakia and Turkey, it accounts for 30 % or more of the curriculum.

In full-time compulsory general secondary education, reading, writing and literature covers an average of 14 % of the curriculum, which is similar to the weight of other core subject areas such as mathematics and natural sciences. Only in Greece does it account for more than 20 % of the total instruction time at this education level.

([18]) Only the education systems for which the minimum instruction time is centrally defined for this subject area have been included in the calculations. In addition, when reading, writing and literature includes instruction time for another subject or, alternatively, is included in the instruction time for another subject in more than one grade of an education level, these data are excluded when calculating the European average. At primary level, BE fr, BE nl, IT, NL, PL, PT and CH are excluded. At the level of full-time compulsory general secondary education, BE nl, IT, NL and CH are excluded (see country-specific notes).

In **Ireland**, in grade 10, the last grade of full-time compulsory education, English is a compulsory subject with time flexibility; instruction time is therefore not reported in Figure 6.

In **Italy**, in grades 6–8, the minimum instruction time recommended for reading, writing and literature includes the teaching of social studies.

Reading, writing and literature is the subject area to which the largest number of hours is allocated at primary level in nearly all countries. On average, 938 hours of instruction are allocated to this subject area across the whole of primary education, ranging from 445 hours in North Macedonia to 1 656 hours in France. In half of the education systems (where a minimum instruction time is defined for this subject area), the recommended instruction time includes at least 893 hours. Countries where primary education spans fewer years tend to be among the countries with the lowest number of hours allocated.

On average, 537 hours are allocated to reading, writing and literature for the whole of full-time compulsory general secondary education. Part of the reason for the substantial difference in allocated hours between primary and secondary education is because primary education usually spans more years. Nevertheless, generally, there is less emphasis on this subject area in the curriculum at secondary level.

6. Mathematics takes up the second largest proportion of the curriculum in primary education, but its relative importance decreases in compulsory general secondary education

Mathematics is a compulsory subject and represents the second largest proportion of instruction time in primary education. As with reading, writing and literature, its proportion of the curriculum also decreases at secondary level in favour of other subjects, such as natural sciences and foreign languages.

In primary education, around 18 % of the minimum instruction time is allocated, on average, to mathematics, varying from 13 % in Denmark and 14 % in Greece to 22 % in Croatia and Serbia (Figure 7). In Denmark, in grade 1, mathematics is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility and, consequently, instruction time for that grade is not reported in Figure 7 ([19]).

In about two thirds of the education systems, mathematics covers between 17 % and 19 % of the curriculum. Its weight in the primary education curriculum is especially high in Germany, France, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (20 % or more).

In full-time compulsory general secondary education, mathematics covers between 10 % and 16 % of the total instruction time recommended for this education level in nearly all countries. Within this narrow range, the highest percentages are found in Croatia, Latvia and Sweden and the lowest in Hungary. There are, however, a few exceptions to this pattern.

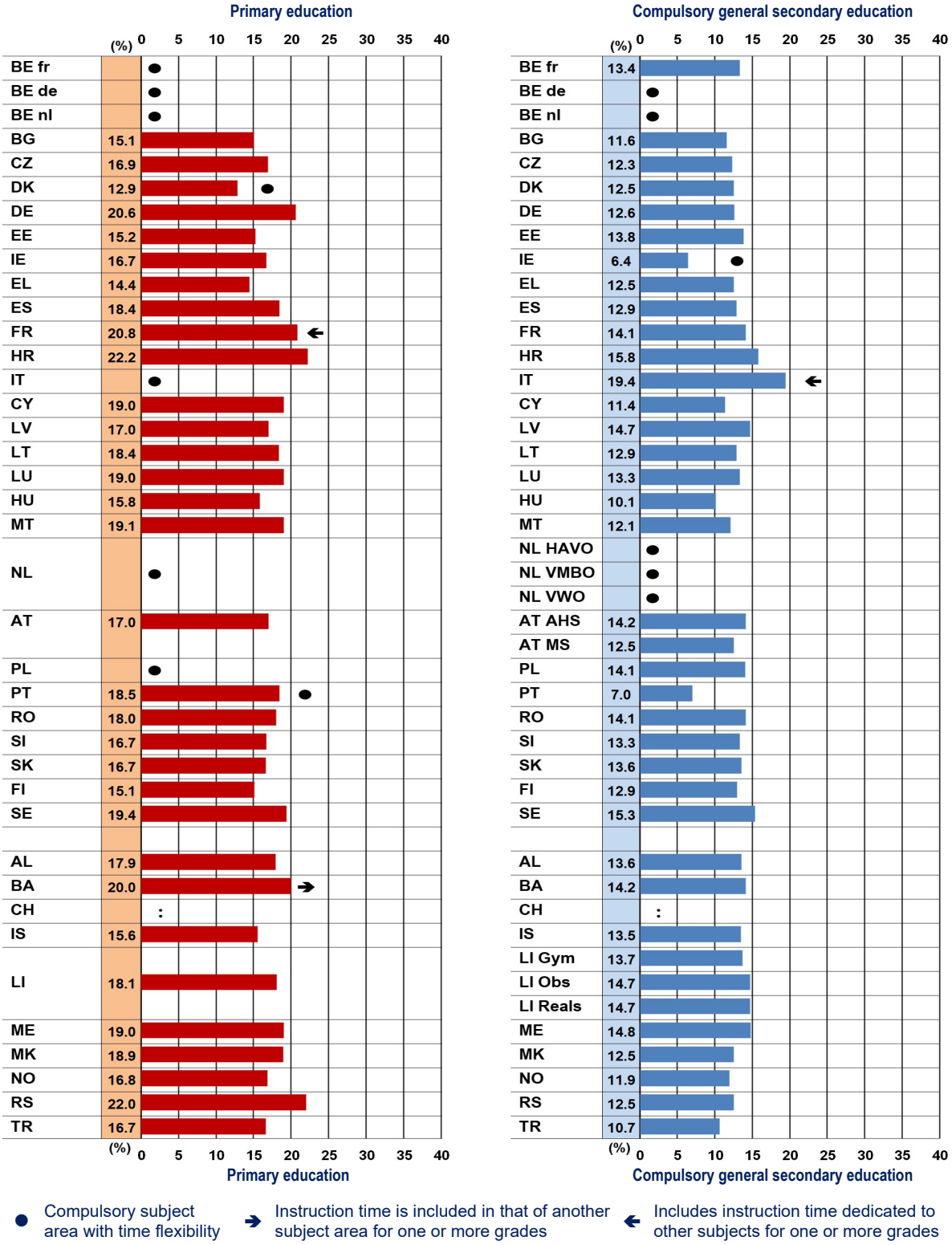
In **Ireland**, mathematics is a compulsory subject with time flexibility in the last grade of full-time compulsory education (grade 10).

In **Portugal**, in upper secondary education, mathematics is compulsory for students in two tracks/pathways (science & technology and socioeconomics), covering around 75 % of students, but it is optional in the other two (arts and humanities). In **Italy**, the instruction time reaches 19 % of the curriculum because, at lower secondary level, it includes the teaching of natural sciences (grades 6–8) and ICT (grades 9 and 10).

([19]) Only the education systems for which the minimum instruction time is centrally defined for this subject area have been included in the calculations. In addition, when the time allocated to mathematics includes instruction time for another subject, or mathematics is included in the instruction time for another subject in more than one grade of an education level, these data are excluded when calculating the European average. At primary level, BE, FR, IT, NL, PL, PT and CH are excluded. At the level of full-time compulsory general secondary education, BE de, BE nl, IT, NL and CH are excluded (see country-specific notes).

On average, nearly 639 hours are allocated to mathematics in primary education, 299 hours fewer than are allocated to reading, writing and literature. The number of hours allocated ranges from 305 hours in Bulgaria to 1 056 in Luxemburg. In a little more than half of the education systems (where there is a minimum instruction time defined for this subject area), the recommended instruction time is at least 600 hours. At secondary level, 467 hours are allocated on average to this subject area, 70 hours fewer than are allocated to reading, writing and literature.

Figure 7: Percentage of the recommended minimum instruction time allocated to MATHEMATICS in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education, 2020/21



Source: Eurydice.

Minimum instruction time in hours as defined centrally for maths, per education level, 2020/21

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV
Primary	●	●	●	305	585	900●	598	604	916	641	875	900🡐	420	●	907	609
Secondary	709	●	●	474	439	450	686	341	238●	290	545	684	420	924🡐	293	347
	LT	**LU**	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**			**AT**		**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**
Primary	486	1 056	430	856	●			480		●	1 002●	594	683	449	599	830
Secondary	638	451	509	442	● HAVO	● VMBO	● VWO	510 AHS	450 MS	432	334	812	306	673	314	400
	AL	**BA**	**CH**	**IS**	**LI**			**ME**	**MK**	**NO**	**RS**	**TR**				
Primary	525	540🡒	:	793	683			510	398	888	540	480				
Secondary	420	426	:	340	519 Gym	546 Obs	546 Reals	399	382	313	426	768				

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

This figure concerns mathematics as a compulsory subject in general education. The percentages were obtained by dividing the total time allocated to this subject area in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education by the minimum total instruction time provided for the respective education level (and multiplying by 100).

Where it is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility (see Glossary), the instruction time is not reported for the grades or levels concerned (see also the country-specific notes).

Right arrow: The instruction time for mathematics is included in that for another subject area for one or more grades (see the country-specific notes).

Left arrow: The instruction time for other subjects is included in that for mathematics for one or more grades (see the country-specific notes).

Country-specific notes

Denmark: In grade 1, mathematics is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility and the instruction time for this grade is therefore not included.
Germany: The data represent the weighted average instruction time for the compulsory core curriculum subjects, calculated by the Secretariat of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* based on the number of students enrolled in the different types of school (reference year 2019/20).
Ireland: At secondary level, data refer only to ISCED 24. In grade 10 (ISCED 34), mathematics is a compulsory subject with time flexibility and the instruction time for this grade is therefore not included.
Spain: The data on intended instruction time are based on national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/21). To calculate the weighted averages, statistics on the numbers of students per grade and autonomous community from the Statistics Office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were used (reference year 2018/19).
France: The instruction time for mathematics includes the teaching of ICT in grades 4 and 5 at primary level.
Italy: The instruction time for mathematics includes the teaching of natural sciences in grades 6–8 (lower secondary education) and the teaching of ICT in grades 9 and 10.
Austria: Data for grade 9 are not available, even though this grade is part of full-time compulsory general education.
Poland: In grades 1—3 of primary education, maths is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility. In the last (4) grade of ISCED 1, the curriculum defines instruction time for this subject area.
Portugal: In grades 5 and 6 of primary education, mathematics is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility and the instruction time for these grades is therefore not included. At secondary level, data refer to lower secondary education. In grades 10–12, mathematics is a compulsory option that students may choose.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: In grade 1, instruction time for mathematics is included in that devoted to reading, writing and literature.

7. Natural sciences represent a small proportion of the curriculum in primary education but become more important at secondary level

Natural sciences include subjects such as science, physics, chemistry, biology, environmental sciences and ecology. In many countries, the minimum instruction time devoted to this subject area often includes time for other subjects, such as social studies, technology and ICT, particularly at primary level.

The minimum instruction time recommended for natural sciences includes the teaching of social studies in eight countries: **Czechia** (grades 1–5), **France** (grades 1–3), **Croatia** (grades 1–4), **Austria** (grades 1–4), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (grades 1–4), **Liechtenstein** (in primary education and in secondary education except in grade 9 in *Gymnasium*), **Montenegro** (grades 1–3) and **Serbia** (grades 1–4).

In seven education systems, it includes the teaching of technology: **Ireland** (grades 1–6), **France** (grades 1–6), **Cyprus** (grades 1–4), **Malta** (grades 1–6), **Austria** (grades 1–4), **Liechtenstein** (grades 6–8 in *Gymnasium*, grades 6–9 in *Oberschule* and *Realschule*) and **Montenegro** (grades 1–4).

In **France**, it includes the teaching of ICT (grades 1–3).

In contrast to the areas of reading, writing and literature and mathematics, the teaching of natural sciences becomes more important in compulsory general secondary education. On average, 7 % of the minimum instruction time provided for primary education is allocated to this subject area, while this percentage rises to 13 % at secondary level (similar to that for mathematics) ([20]) (Figure 8).

In most education systems, natural sciences represents 7 % or less of the curriculum in primary education. In contrast, natural sciences takes up between 10 % and 12 % of the primary curriculum in Greece and Finland. In other countries where the percentage is also 10 % or more (Czechia, Croatia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Liechtenstein), this area includes the instruction time for other subjects such as social studies and technology.

In compulsory general secondary education, the proportion of instruction time for natural sciences in the curriculum increases considerably, representing 8 % or more of the curriculum in all countries. In more than half of the education systems, it accounts for 12 % or more of the curriculum. At this education level, the importance of natural sciences is especially high in Estonia, at 21 % of the curriculum, followed by Romania, Slovenia and Czechia.

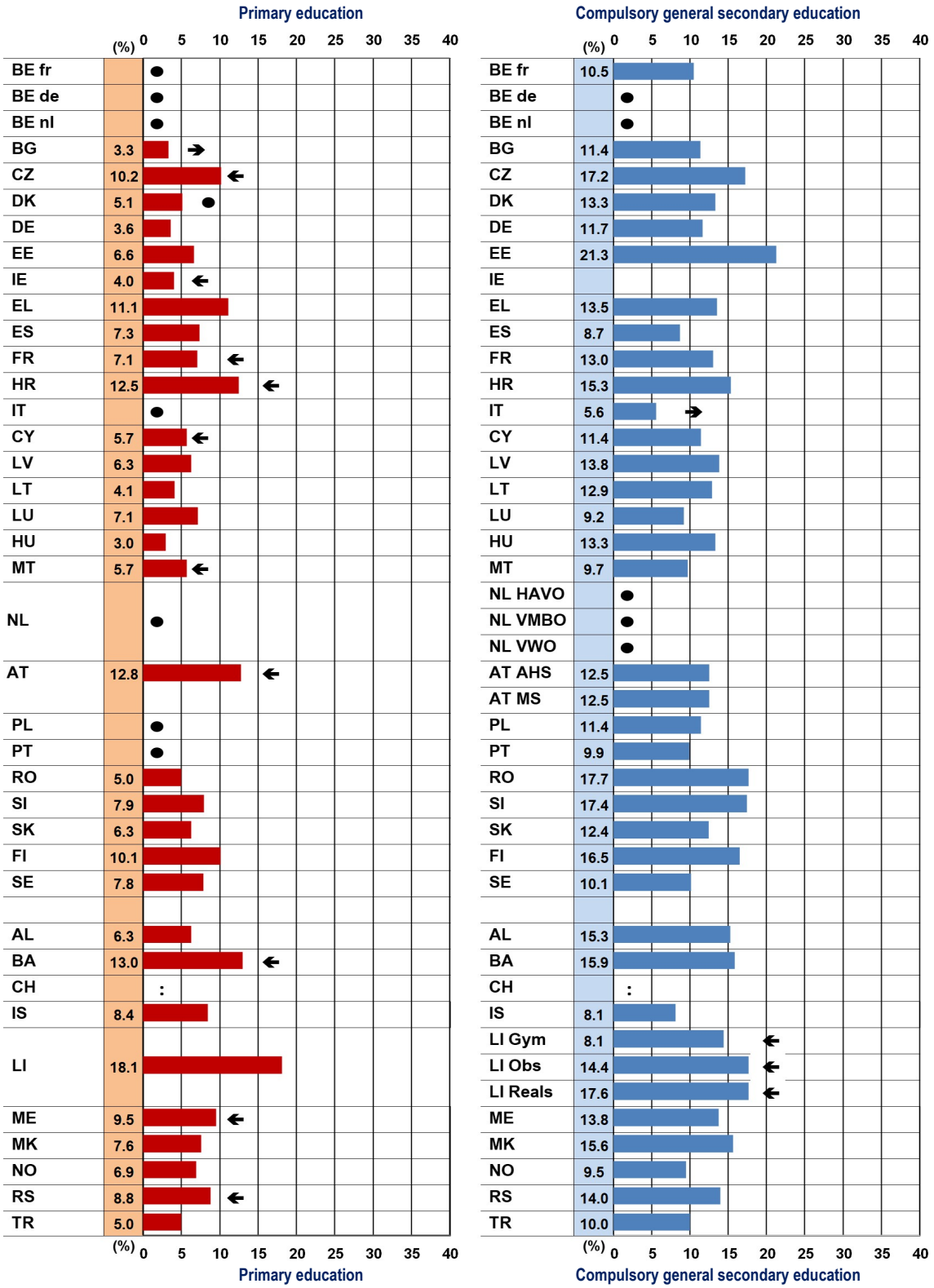
In **Spain**, according to the curriculum, natural sciences is not a compulsory subject in year 10, but belongs to the 'core option subjects', which regional authorities or schools can decide whether to introduce into their curriculum. Data for this grade are therefore not reported, although this subject is taught in this grade in a great number of Spanish schools.

In **Italy**, where instruction time for natural sciences represents less than 7 % of the curriculum, natural sciences is included in the instruction time for mathematics in grades 6–8.

On average, 266 hours of instruction are provided for natural sciences across the whole period of primary education, which is less than one third of the average time spent on reading, writing and literature, and less than half of the average time spent on mathematics. However, at secondary level, the number of hours allocated to this subject area is similar to that for mathematics and only slightly lower than that for reading, writing and literature.

([20]) Only the education systems for which the minimum instruction time is centrally defined for this subject area have been included in the calculations. In addition, when the time allocated to natural sciences includes instruction time for another subject or natural sciences is included in the instruction time for another subject in more than one grade at an education level, these data are excluded when calculating the European average. At primary level, BE, BG, CZ, IE, FR, HR, IT, CY, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, BA, CH, LI, ME and RS are excluded. At the level of full-time compulsory general secondary education, BE de, BE nl, IE, IT, NL, PT, CH and LI are excluded (see country-specific notes).

Figure 8: Percentage of the recommended minimum instruction time allocated to NATURAL SCIENCES in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education, 2020/21



● Compulsory subject area with time flexibility

➔ Instruction time is included in that of another subject area for one or more grades

🡐 Includes instruction time dedicated to other subjects for one or more grades

Source: Eurydice.

Minimum instruction time in hours as defined centrally for natural sciences, per education level, 2020/21

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV
Primary	●	●	●	67➔	351	360●	105	263	220🡐	493	348	306🡐	236🡐	●	272🡐	225
Secondary	555	●	●	465	614	480	634	525		314	368	630	407	264➔	293	325
	LT	**LU**	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**			**AT**		**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**
Primary	108	396	81	256🡐	●			360 🡐		●	●	165	323	168	399	336
Secondary	638	310	669	354	● HAVO	● VMBO	● VWO	450 AHS	450 MS	351	473●	1 015	401	617	399	264
	AL	**BA**	**CH**	**IS**	**LI**			**ME**	**MK**	**NO**	**RS**	**TR**				
Primary	184	351🡐	:	431	683 🡐			255🡐	159	366	216🡐	144				
Secondary	473	477	:	204	546 Gym	655🡐 Obs	655🡐 Reals	371	477	249	477	720				

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

This figure concerns natural sciences as a compulsory subject in general education. The percentages were obtained by dividing the total time allocated to this subject area in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education by the minimum total instruction time provided for the respective education level (and multiplying by 100).

Where it is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility (see Glossary), the instruction time is not reported for the grades or levels concerned (see also the country-specific notes).

Right arrow: The instruction time for natural sciences is included in that for another subject area for one or more grades (see the country-specific notes).

Left arrow: The instruction time for other subjects is included in that for natural sciences for one or more grades (see the country-specific notes).

Country-specific notes

Bulgaria: Instruction time for grades 1 and 2 is included in that for social studies.
Czechia, Croatia and **Serbia**: At primary level, the instruction time for natural sciences includes that for social studies.
Denmark: In grade 1, natural sciences is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility and the instruction time for this grade is therefore not included.
Germany: The data represent the weighted average instruction time for the compulsory core curriculum subjects, calculated by the Secretariat of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* based on the number of students enrolled in the different types of school (reference year 2019/20).
Ireland: At primary level, the instruction time for natural sciences includes that for technology. At secondary level, natural sciences is either a compulsory flexible subject chosen by schools (grades 7–9) or a compulsory option chosen by students (grade 10) (see Glossary).
Spain: The minimum instruction times are based on national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/21). To calculate the weighted averages, statistics on the numbers of students per grade and autonomous community from the Statistics Office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were used (reference year 2018/19).
France: In grades 1–3, the instruction time for natural sciences includes that for social studies; in grades 1–6, it includes the teaching of technology; in grades 1–3, it includes the teaching of ICT.
Italy: Data in this figure refer only to ISCED 34. Instruction time for ISCED 24 is included in that for mathematics.
Cyprus and **Malta**: The instruction time for natural sciences includes that for technology in grades 1–4 and grades 1–6, respectively.
Austria: At primary level, the instruction time for natural sciences includes that for technology and social studies. Data are not available for grade 9, even though this grade is part of full-time compulsory general education.
Poland: In grades 1—3 of primary education, natural sciences are a compulsory subject area with time flexibility. In the last (4) grade of ISCED 1, the curriculum defines instruction time for this subject area.
Portugal: In grades 1–6, natural sciences is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility. In grades 10–12, it is compulsory in science & technology track (students may choose two between biology, geology, physics and chemistry), but not in the remaining three tracks
Bosnia and Herzegovina: In grades 1–4, instruction time for natural sciences includes that for social studies.
Liechtenstein: The instruction time for natural sciences includes that for social studies except for grade 10 in *Gymnasium*.
Montenegro: In grades 1–3, the instruction time for natural sciences includes that for social studies; in grades 1–4, it includes that for technology.

8. Instruction time for social studies is combined with that for another subject in one or more grades at primary level in about one third of education systems

Social studies includes subjects such as history, geography, community studies, social and political instruction, philosophy and civic education. Citizenship education is generally included in this subject area as a separate subject or is integrated into one or more of the other subjects ([21]).

In about half of the education systems, at primary level, a specific amount of instruction time is not allocated for social studies. In some cases this is because there is time flexibility and in other cases it is because the time allocated covers a broader range of subjects. There may also be differences between grades.

In **Belgium (French, Flemish and German-speaking Communities),** the **Netherlands** and **Portugal**, social studies are a compulsory subject area with time flexibility for the whole of the primary level. In **Poland**, this is the case in the first three years of primary education.

The instruction time for social studies is combined with that for natural sciences at primary level in **Czechia, Croatia, Austria, Liechtenstein** and **Serbia**. This is the case for specific grades in primary education in **France** (grades 1–3), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (grades 1–4) and **Montenegro** (grades 1–3). In **Luxembourg**, the instruction time for social studies is combined with that for religion/ethics and moral education (grades 1–4).

In the remaining half of the education systems, the percentage of time spent on social studies is between 3 % and 13 %. It is below 5 % in Denmark, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Finland. Sweden and Turkey stand out, with over 10 % of time spent on social studies ([22]) (Figure 9).

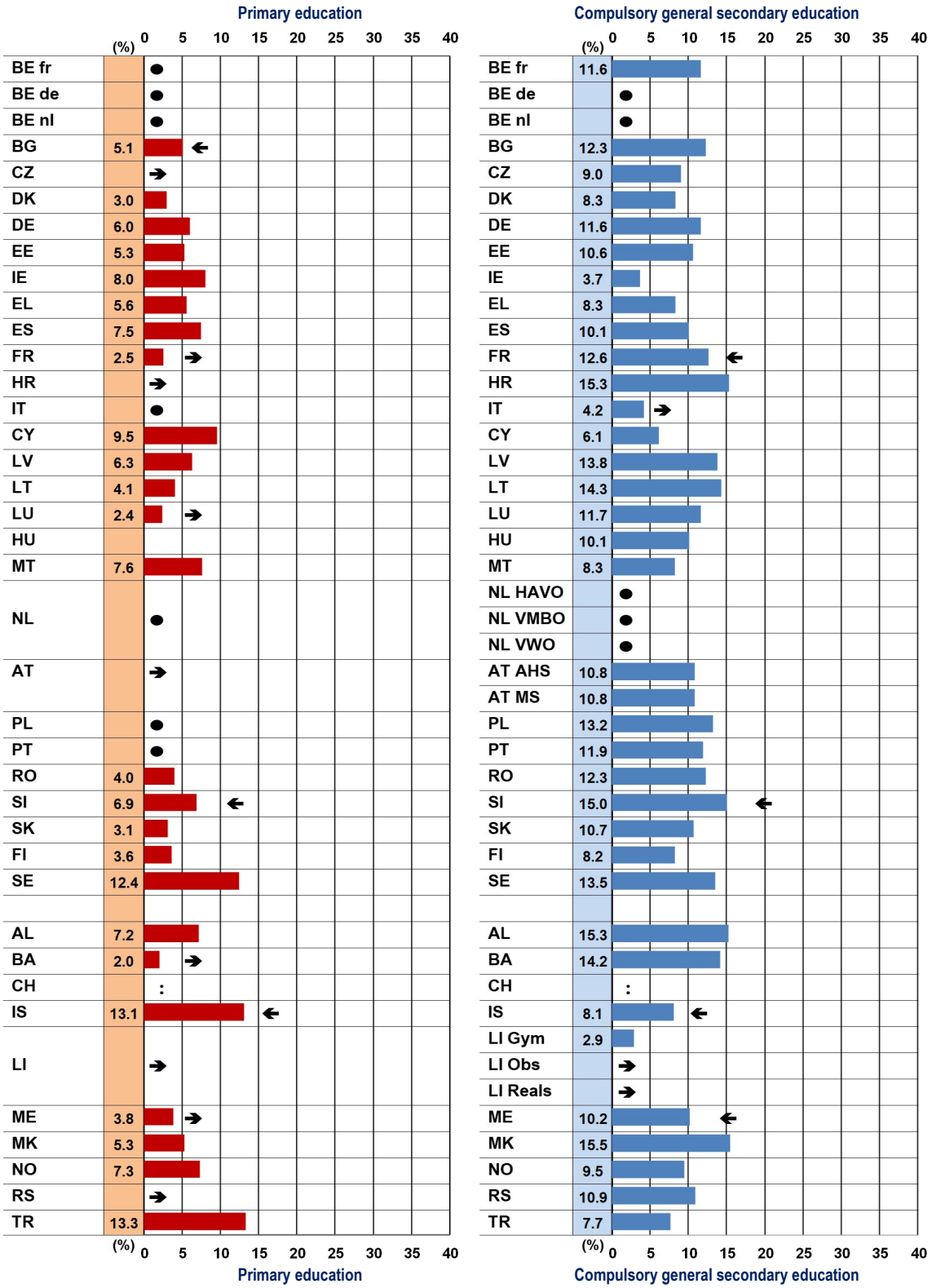
The importance of social studies increases at secondary level, but the time allocated to this subject area is still lower than that devoted to mathematics or natural sciences. In more than two thirds of the education systems with a defined minimum instruction time for social studies, it takes up 10 % or more of the total instruction time for compulsory general secondary education. In Ireland and Cyprus, it represents less than 7 % of the total instruction time. In Ireland, history is a compulsory subject in grade 7 and in the future will be a compulsory subject for lower secondary education (ISCED 24, grades 7–9). Civic, social and political education is a compulsory subject for ISCED 24 (grades 7–9). Croatia, Albania and North Macedonia are the countries where social studies is given relatively more importance in terms of instruction time at this education level, at 15 % of the total.

On average, 255 and 407 hours are provided for social studies for the duration of primary education and compulsory general secondary education, respectively.

([21]) European Commission, Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, and Eurydice, *Citizenship Education at School in Europe – 2017*, Eurydice report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017.

([22]) Only the education systems for which the minimum instruction time is centrally defined for this subject area have been included in the calculations. In addition, when the time allocated to social studies includes instruction time for another subject or social studies is included in the instruction time for another subject for more than one grade at an education level, these data are excluded when calculating the European average. At primary level, BE, BG, CZ, FR, HR, IT, LU, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, BA, CH, IS, LI, ME and RS are excluded. At the level of full-time compulsory general secondary education, BE de, BE nl, FR, IT, NL, SI, CH, IS, LI (*Oberschule* and *Realschule*) and ME are excluded (see country-specific notes).

Figure 9: Percentage of the recommended minimum instruction time specifically allocated to SOCIAL STUDIES in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education, 2020/21



● Compulsory subject area with time flexibility

➔ Instruction time is included in that of another subject area for one ore more grades

🡐 Includes instruction time dedicated to other subjects for one ore more grades

Source: Eurydice.

Minimum instruction time in hours as defined centrally for social studies, per education level, 2020/21

	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR		IT	CY	LV
Primary	●	●	●	103 ←	●	210	175	210	439	247	354	108 →	→		●	453	226
Secondary	617	●	●	503	322	300	631	263	135	193	426	612 ←	407		198 →	158	325
	LT	**LU**	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**			**AT**		**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**		**SK**	**FI**	**SE**
Primary	108	132 →		342		●		→		●	●	132	282 ←		84	143	533
Secondary	711	394	509	301	● HAVO	● VMBO	● VWO	390 AHS	390 MS	405	570 ●	709	345 ←		533	200	352
	AL	**BA**	**CH**	**IS**	**LI**			**ME**	**MK**	**NO**	**RS**	**TR**					
Primary	210	54 →	:	669 ←		→		102 →	111	385	→	384					
Secondary	473	426	:	204 ←	109 Gym	→ Obs	→ Reals	276 ←	472	249	372	552					

Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

This figure concerns social studies as a compulsory subject in general education. The percentages were obtained by dividing the total time allocated to social studies in primary and full-time compulsory general secondary education by the minimum total instruction time provided for the respective education level (and multiplying by 100). In some countries, the minimum instruction time for the education level covers all the grades but specific instruction time is defined for social studies for only a few grades.

Where it is a compulsory subject area with time flexibility (see 'Glossary'), the instruction time for the grades or level concerned is not reported (see country-specific notes).

Right arrow: The instruction time for social studies is included in that for another subject area for one or more grades (see the country-specific notes).

Left arrow: The instruction time for other subjects is included in that for social studies for one or more grades (see the country-specific notes).

Country-specific notes

Bulgaria: Instruction time for grades 1 and 2 includes that for natural sciences.
Czechia, **Croatia** and **Serbia**: In primary education, social studies is integrated into natural sciences.
Denmark: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 4–7. No instruction time is defined for this subject area in grades 1–3.
Germany: The data represent the weighted average instruction time for the compulsory core curriculum subjects, calculated by the Secretariat of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* based on the number of students enrolled in the different types of school (reference year 2019/20).
Greece: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 3–6. No instruction time is defined for this subject area in grades 1 and 2.
Ireland: At secondary level, data refer only to ISCED 24. In grade 10 (ISCED 34), History and Civic, Social and Political Education are compulsory subjects in the last grade of full-time compulsory education.
Spain: The data on intended instruction time are based on national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/21). To calculate the weighted averages, statistics on the numbers of students per grade and autonomous community from the Statistics Office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were used (reference year 2018/19).
France: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 4—5. In grades 1—3, social studies are integrated into natural sciences. In lower-secondary education (grades 6—9), the instruction time for social studies includes religion/ethics/moral education.
Italy: Data in the figure refer only to ISCED 34. In grades 6–8, the instruction time for social studies is included in that for reading, writing and literature.
Luxembourg: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 5 and 6. In grades 1–4, social studies is integrated into religion, ethics and moral education.
Hungary: There is no instruction time defined for social studies at primary level (grades 1–4), but other subjects include certain elements of social studies.
Austria: Data for grade 9 are not available, even though this grade is part of full-time compulsory general education.
Poland: In grades 1–3 of primary education, social sciences are a compulsory subject area with time flexibility. In the last (4) grade of ISCED 1, the curriculum defines instruction time for this subject area.
Portugal: In grades 10–12, social studies is compulsory in social & economics track. Students may choose two between economics, history, and geography – and other social sciences in grade 12. Only history is compulsory in humanities track.
Romania: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 4 and 5. No instruction time is defined for this subject area in grades 1–3.
Slovenia and **Iceland**: In full-time compulsory general education, the instruction time for social studies includes religion, ethics and moral education.
Slovakia: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 3 and 4. No instruction time is defined for this subject area in grades 1 and 2.
Finland: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 4–6. No instruction time is defined for this subject area in grades 1–3.
Bosnia and Herzegovina: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grade 5. In grades 1–4, social studies is integrated into natural sciences.
Liechtenstein: In primary education and in *Oberschule* and *Realschule*, social studies is integrated into natural sciences except in grade 9 in *Gymnasium*.
Montenegro: At primary level, the minimum instruction time for social studies refers to grades 4 and 5. In grades 1–3, social studies is integrated into natural sciences. In full-time compulsory general education, the instruction time for social studies includes religion, ethics and moral education.

PART II: NATIONAL DIAGRAMS

Section 1. Reading guide to national data sheets and acronyms and abbreviations

National data sheets present data on recommended minimum instruction time in two ways: by countries (Section 2) and by curriculum categories (Section 3). With Section 2, the reader is able to compare annual instruction time in hours of 60 minutes between curriculum categories in each country and for each grade. Section 3 allows a comparison between all countries for each curriculum category and for each grade.

Grades are shown on the vertical axis of each diagram. Those in **red** are part of full-time compulsory general education. The horizontal axis indicates the number of hours (in hours, i.e. 60 minutes) per year devoted to curriculum subjects or curriculum categories.

The diagrams also show specific features of instruction time allocation:

- Responsible education authorities do not specify instruction time for each subject, but only indicate instruction time schools have to provide for a group of subjects or for the whole curriculum. Hence, schools have the autonomy to decide how to allocate instruction time between curriculum subjects. This 'horizontal' flexibility enjoyed by schools is indicated by a **black bullet**.
- Responsible education authorities specify instruction time for curriculum subjects for several grades together, one education level or the whole of full-time compulsory education. Schools are thus free to decide how to allocate instruction time across the grades. This 'vertical' flexibility given to schools is represented by a **vertical black bar**.
- One single value for instruction time is provided for two curriculum subjects together. This is the case when two subjects (social studies and natural sciences for example) are integrated into one single subject in the national curriculum. It might also be the case that one particular subject, ICT for example, is taught when teaching another subject, natural sciences for instance. The value for instruction time for these two subjects is allocated to the subject area for which the biggest value is expected, and a reference to this subject (following an arrow symbol) is made in the other subject concerned.

For three countries, instruction time is provided for different education programmes.

- **The Netherlands**: a) primary school + *Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs*; b) primary school + *Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwjis*; c) Primary school + *Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs*.
- **Austria**: a) *Volkschule* (primary school – grades 1–4) + *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (AHS; academic secondary school – science branch: *Realgymnasium* – grades 5–8); b) *Volkschule* (primary school – grades 1–4) + *Mittelschule* (compulsory secondary school – grades 5–8).
- **Liechtenstein**: a) primary school + *Gymnasium*; b) primary school + *Realschule*; c) primary school + *Oberschule*.

Acronyms, abbreviations and symbols

The following table contains all the **acronyms and abbreviations** used in the National Data Sheets.

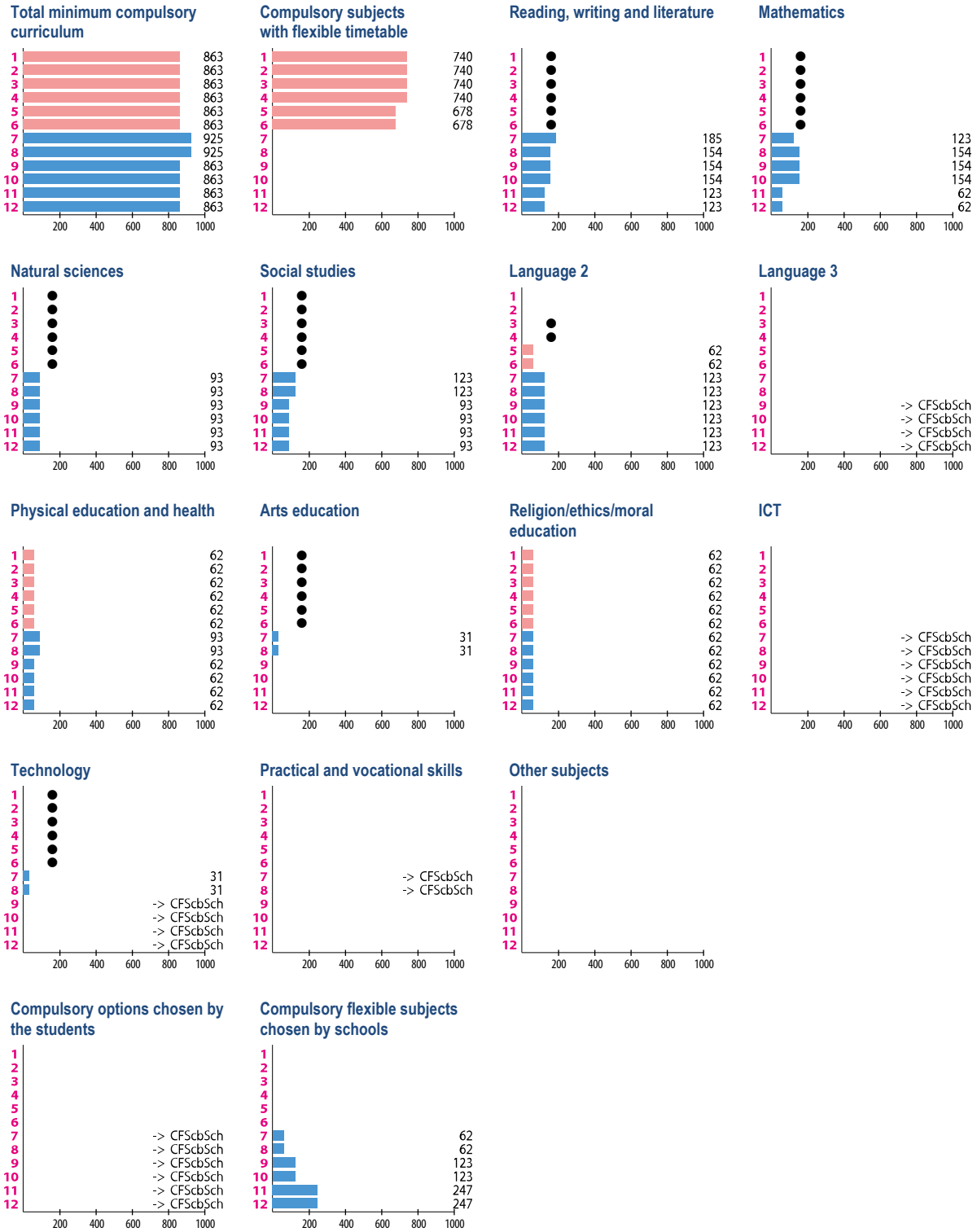
Codes	Subjects
RWL	**R**eading, **W**riting and **L**iterature (L1)
Math	**Math**ematics
NatSc	**Nat**ural **Sc**iences
SocSt	**Soc**ial **St**udies
Lg (+ number)	**Languages (L 2–5)**
PhysEd_H	**Phys**ical **Ed**ucation and **H**ealth
ArtsEd	**Arts Ed**ucation
Rel_ethics	**Rel**igion/**ethics**/moral education
ICT	**I**nformation and **C**ommunication **T**echnologies (ICT)
Tech	**Tech**nology
P_Vs	**P**ractical and **V**ocational **s**kills
Others	Other subjects
TMinCCurr	**T**otal **Min**imum **C**ompulsory **Curr**iculum
COcbS	**C**ompulsory **O**ptions **c**hosen **b**y the **S**tudents
CFScbSch	**C**ompulsory **F**lexible **S**ubject **c**hosen **b**y the **Sch**ools
CSwFT	**C**ompulsory **S**ubjects **w**ith **F**lexible **T**imetable

Abbreviations and symbols	
VWO	*Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs*
HAVO	*Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwjis*
VMBO	*Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs*
Volkschule +AHS	*Volkschule* (primary school – grades 1–4) + *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (academic secondary school – science branch: *Realgymnasium* – grades 5–8)
Volkschule + MS	*Volkschule* (primary school – grades 1–4) + *Mittelschule* (compulsory secondary school – grades 5–8)

Section 2. Instruction time by country

Belgium – French Community 34
Belgium – German-speaking Community 35
Belgium – Flemish Community 36
Bulgaria 37
Czechia 38
Denmark 39
Germany 40
Estonia 41
Ireland 42
Greece 43
Spain 44
France 45
Croatia 46
Italy 47
Cyprus 48
Latvia 49
Lithuania 50
Luxembourg 51
Hungary 52
Malta 53
Netherlands – Primary and HAVO 54
Netherlands – Primary and VMBO 55
Netherlands – Primary and VWO 56
Austria – *Volksschule* and AHS *(Realgymnasium)* 57
Austria – *Volksschule* and *Mittelschule* 58
Poland 59
Portugal 60
Romania 61
Slovenia 62
Slovakia 63
Finland 64
Sweden 65
Albania 66
Bosnia and Herzegovina 67
Switzerland 68
Iceland 69
Liechtenstein – Primary and *Gymnasium* 70
Liechtenstein – Primary and *Oberschule* 71
Liechtenstein – Primary and *Realschule* 72
Montenegro 73
North Macedonia 74
Norway 75
Serbia 76
Turkey 77

BELGIUM – FRENCH COMMUNITY



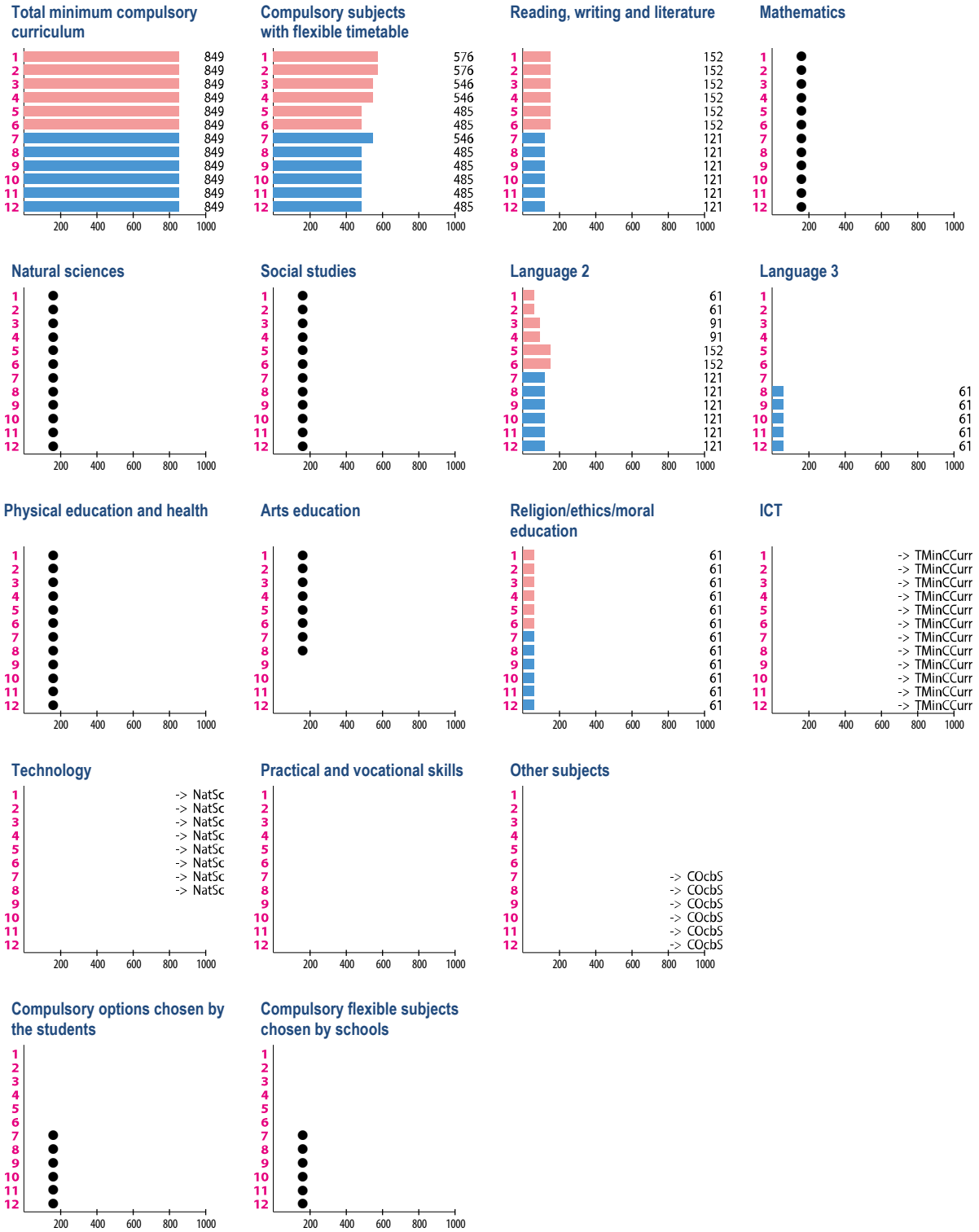
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

BELGIUM – GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY



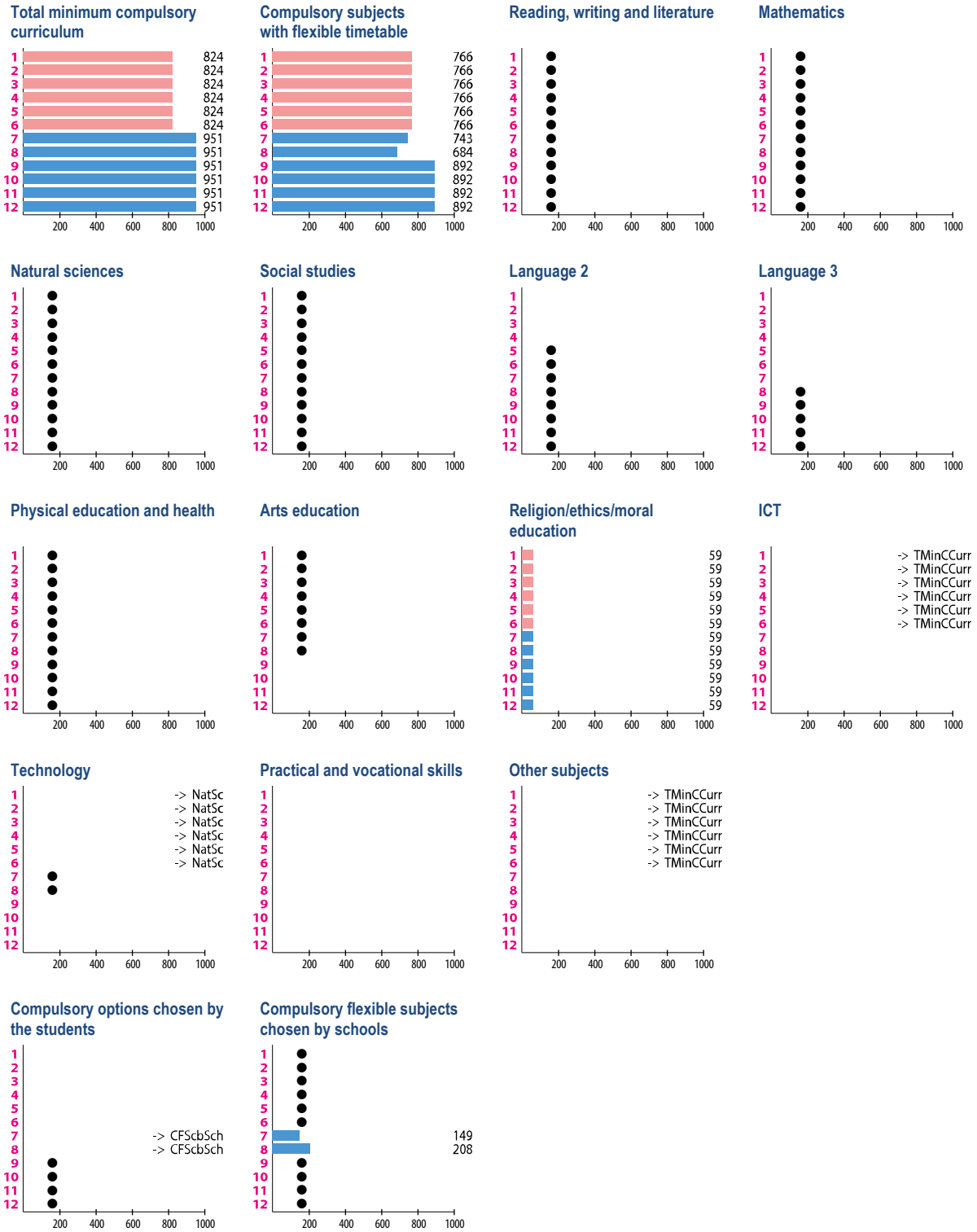
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

BELGIUM – FLEMISH COMMUNITY



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

BULGARIA

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

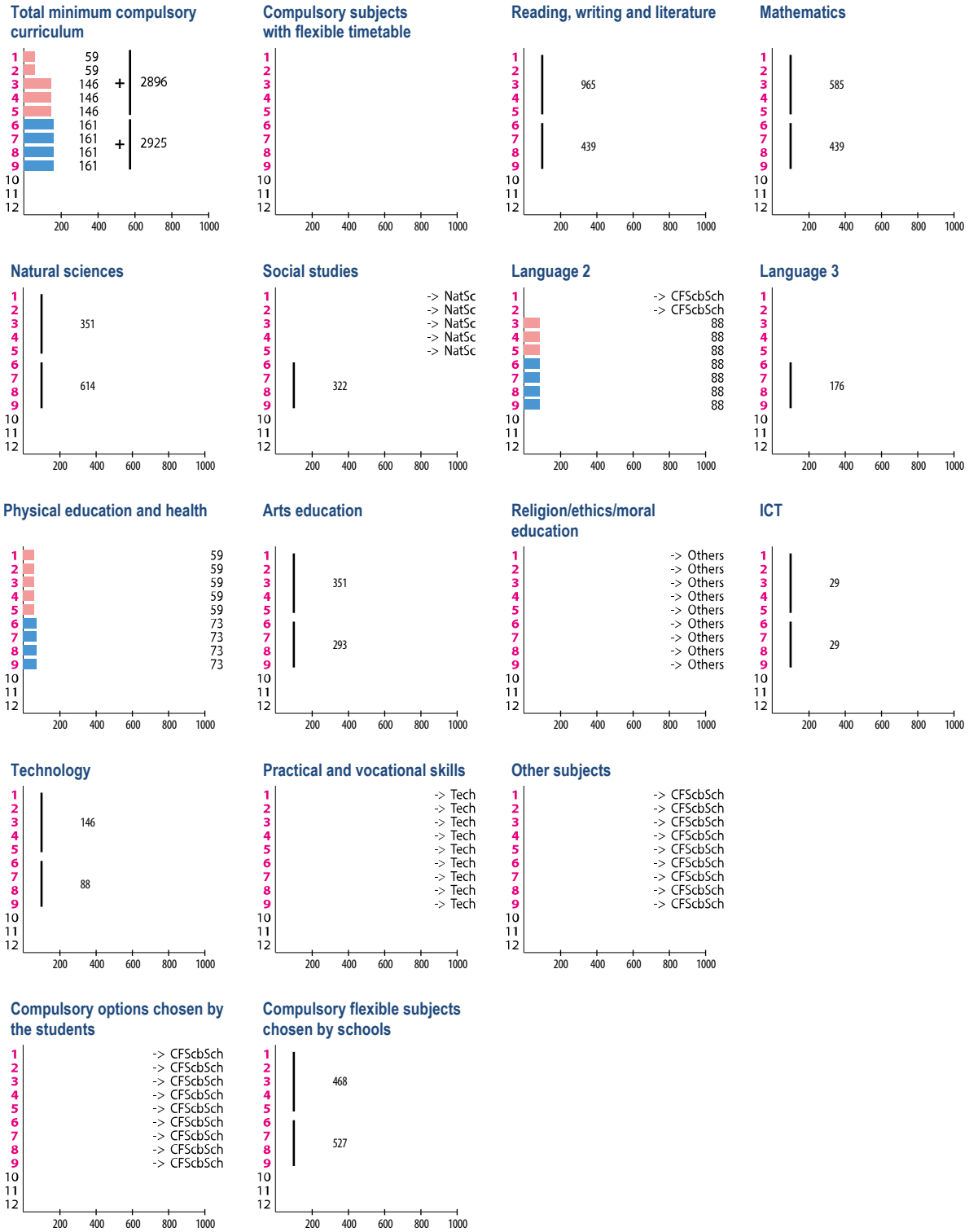
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

CZECHIA



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

DENMARK

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

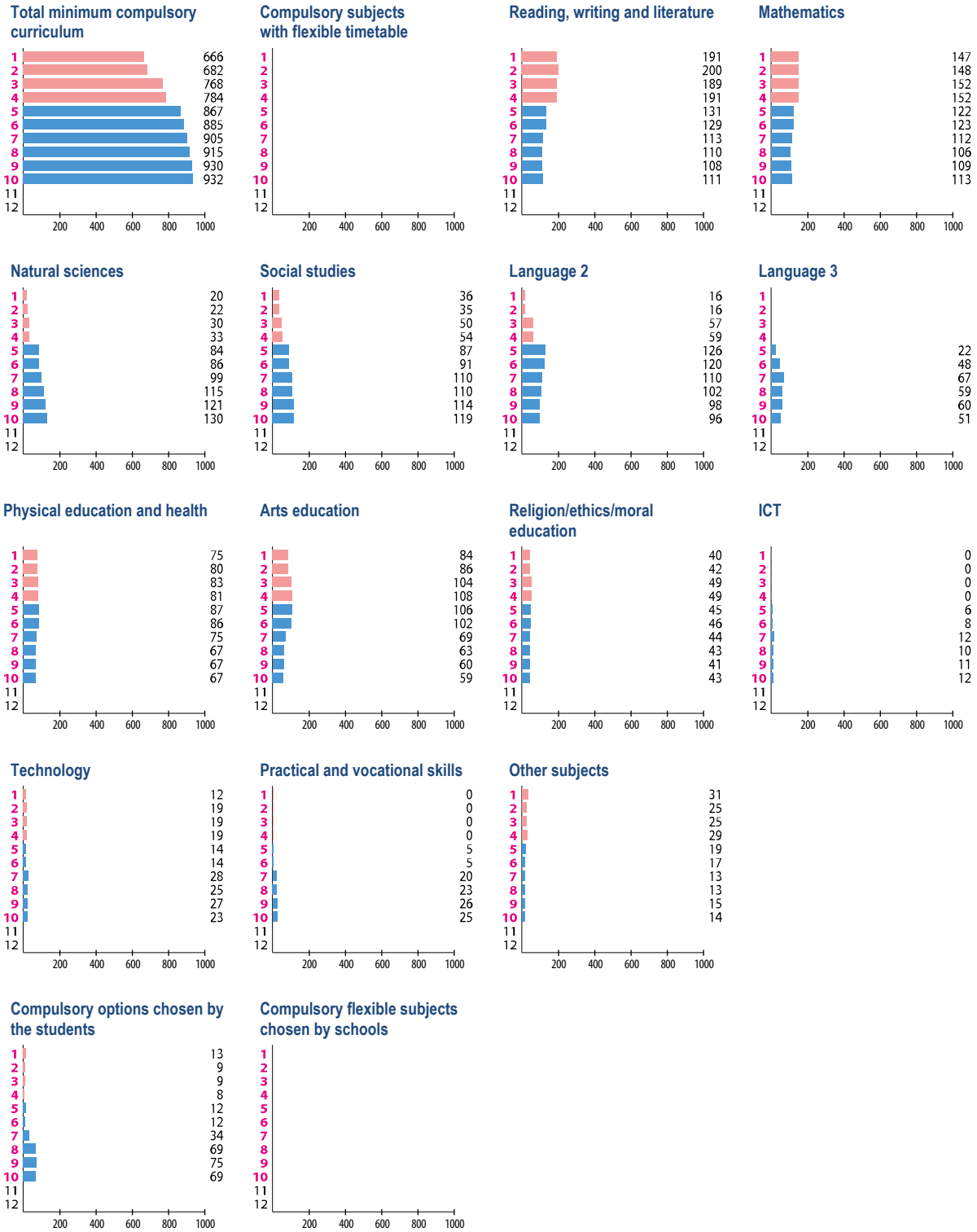
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

GERMANY



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

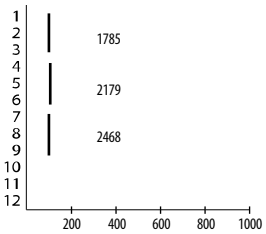
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

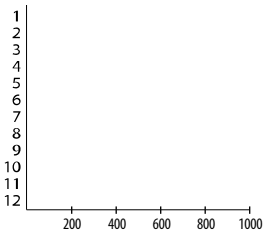
-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

ESTONIA

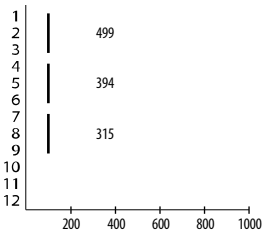
Total minimum compulsory curriculum



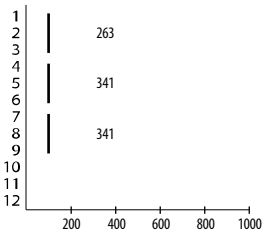
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable



Reading, writing and literature



Mathematics



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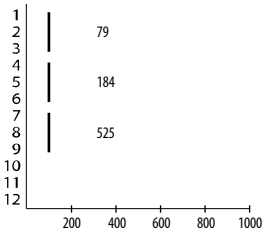
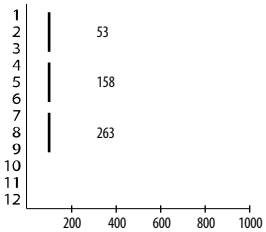
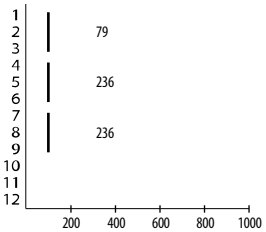


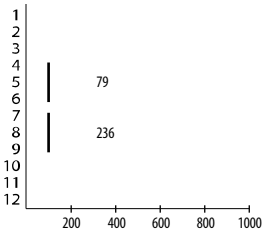
Social studies



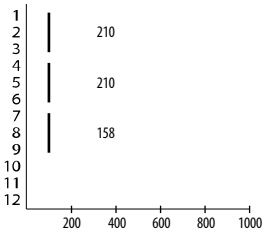
Language 2



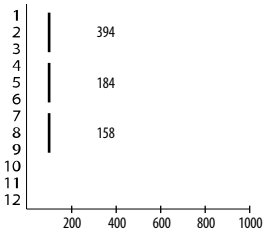
Language 3



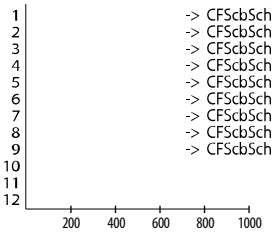
Physical education and health



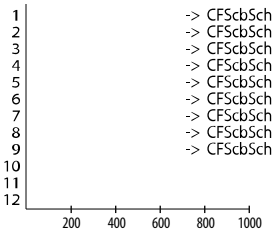
Arts education



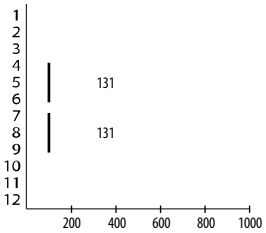
Religion/ethics/moral education



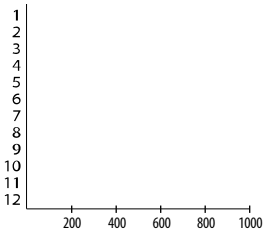
ICT



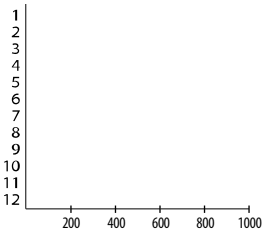
Technology



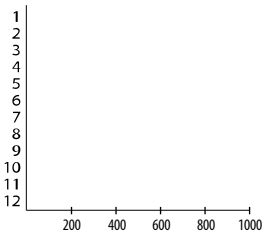
Practical and vocational skills



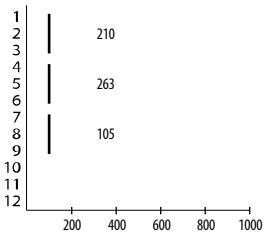
Other subjects



Compulsory options chosen by the students



Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

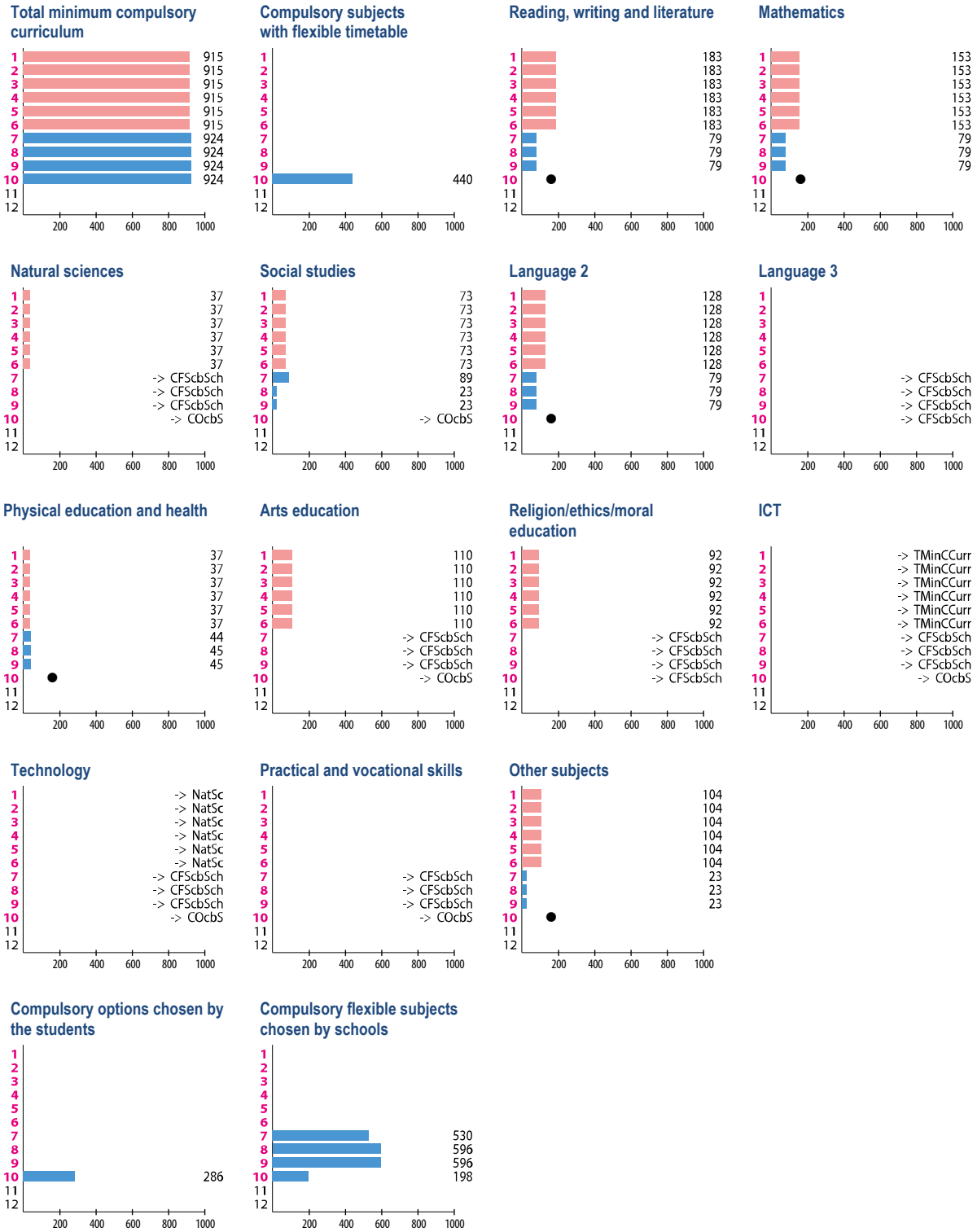
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

IRELAND



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

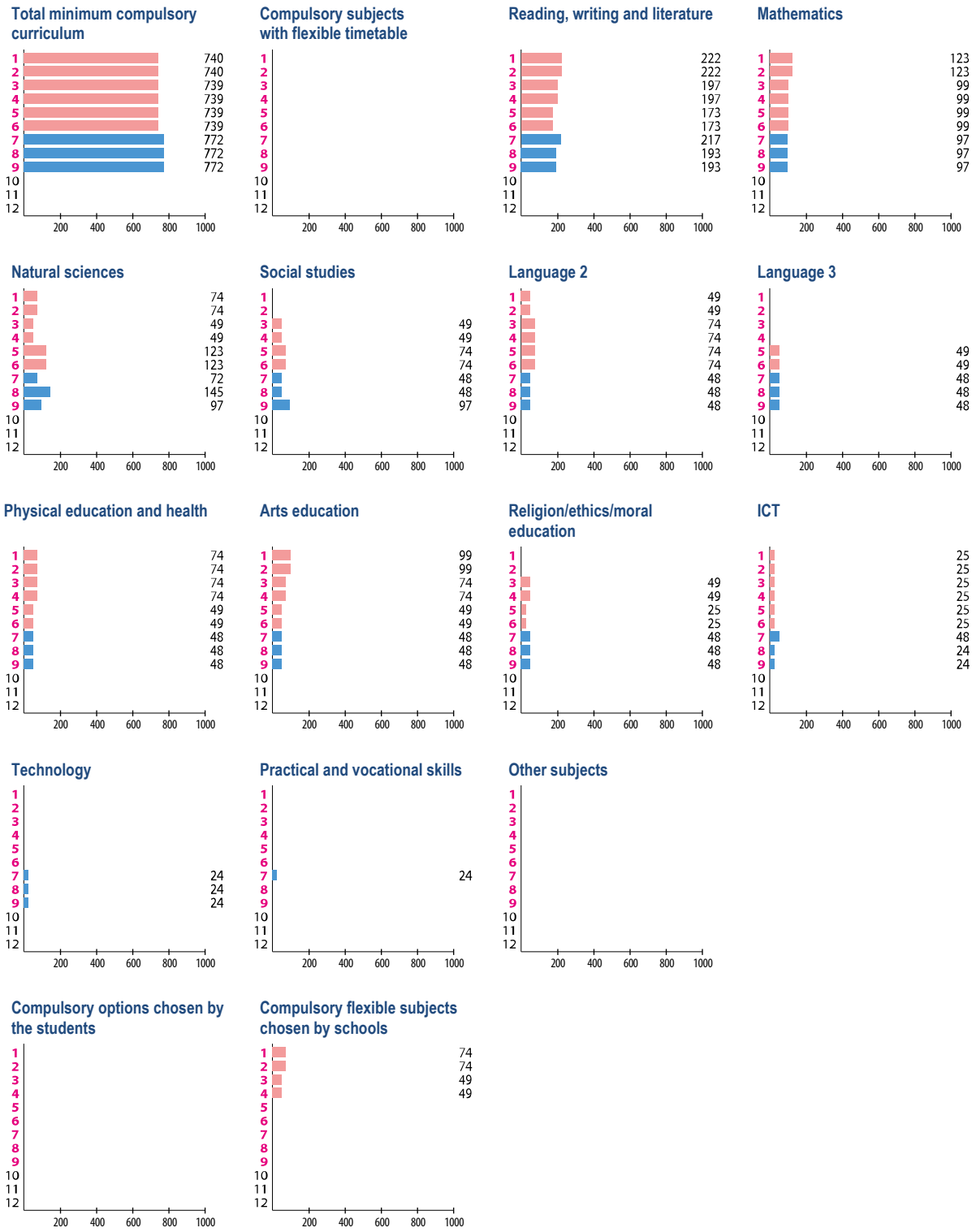
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

GREECE



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

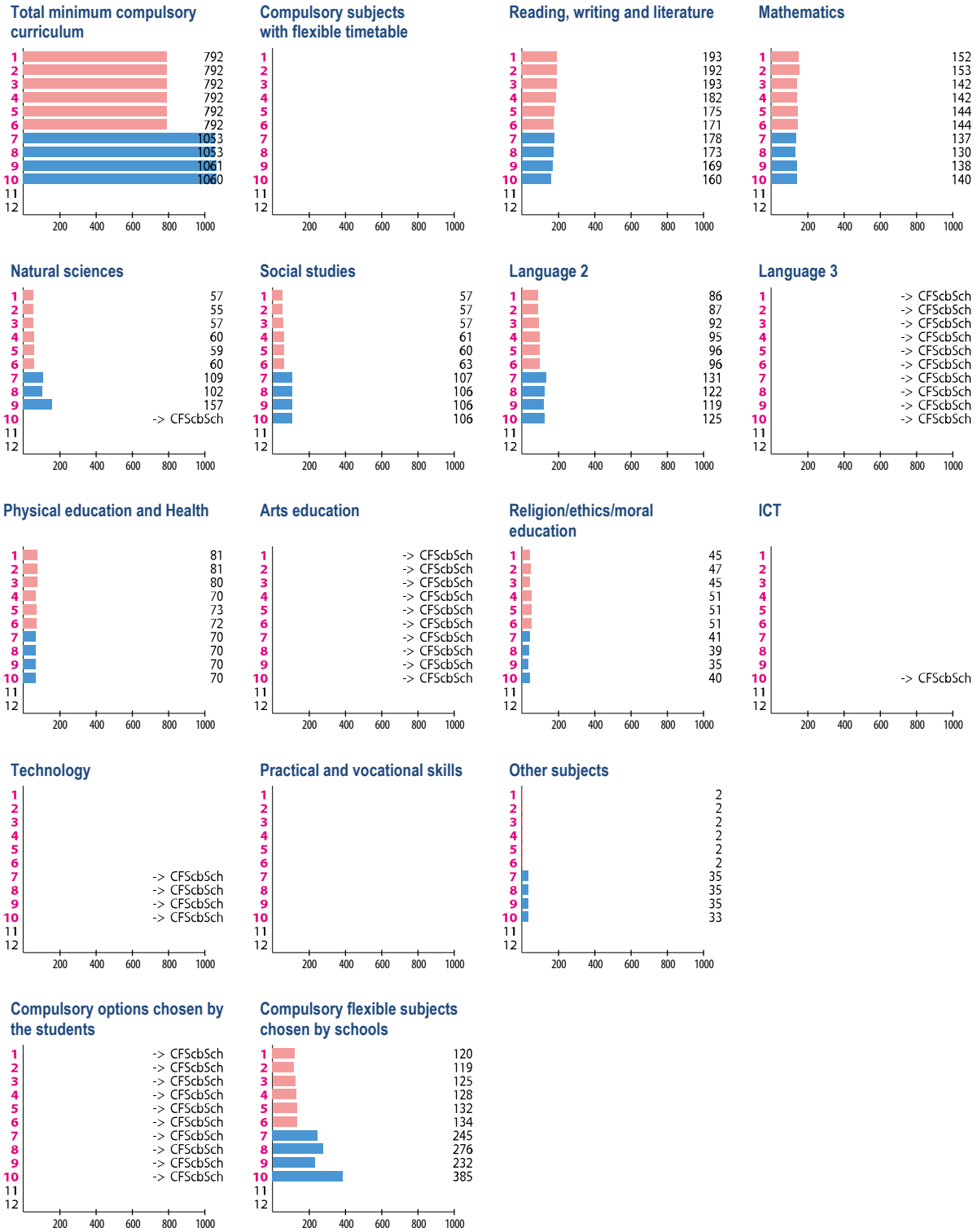
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

SPAIN



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

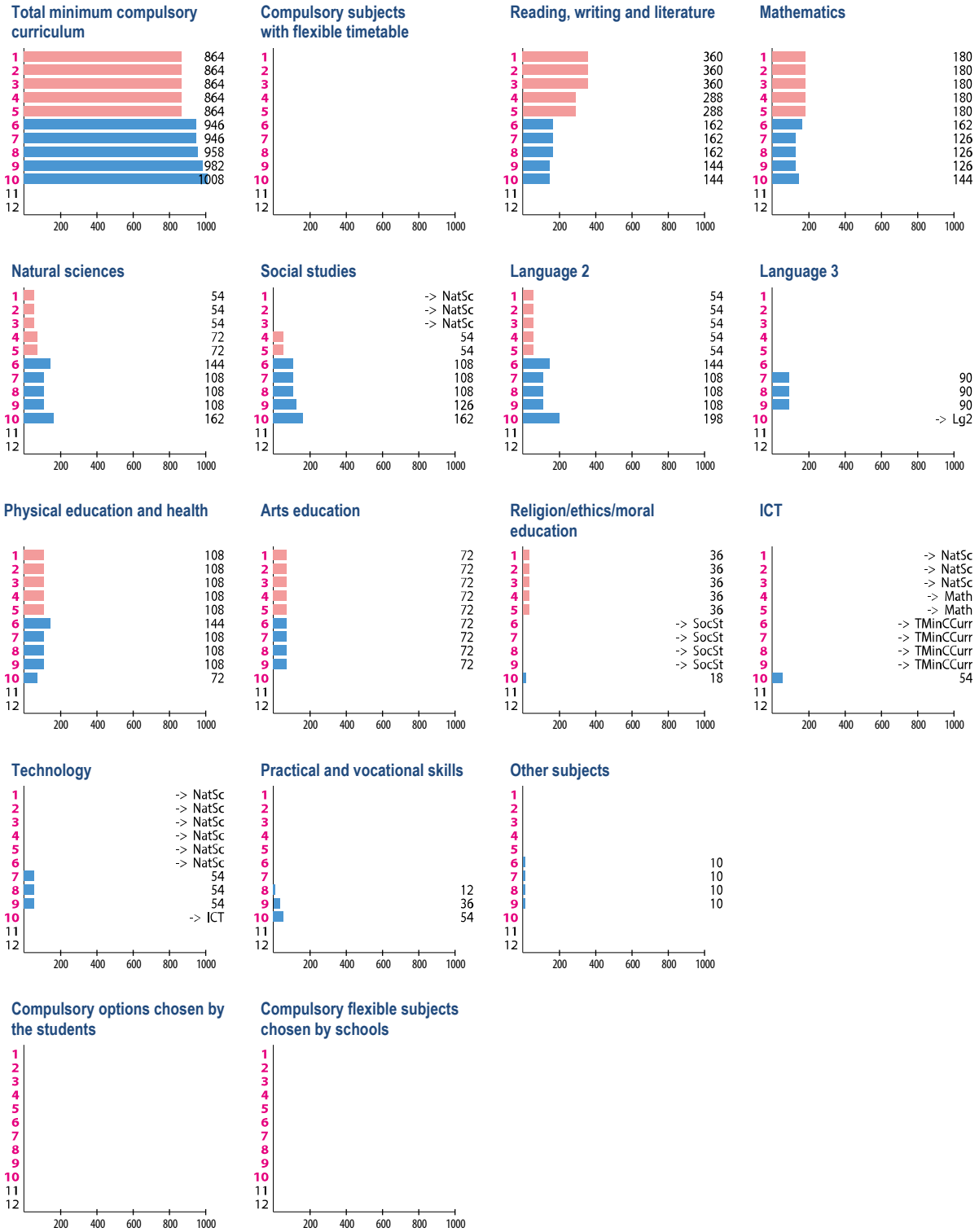
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

FRANCE



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

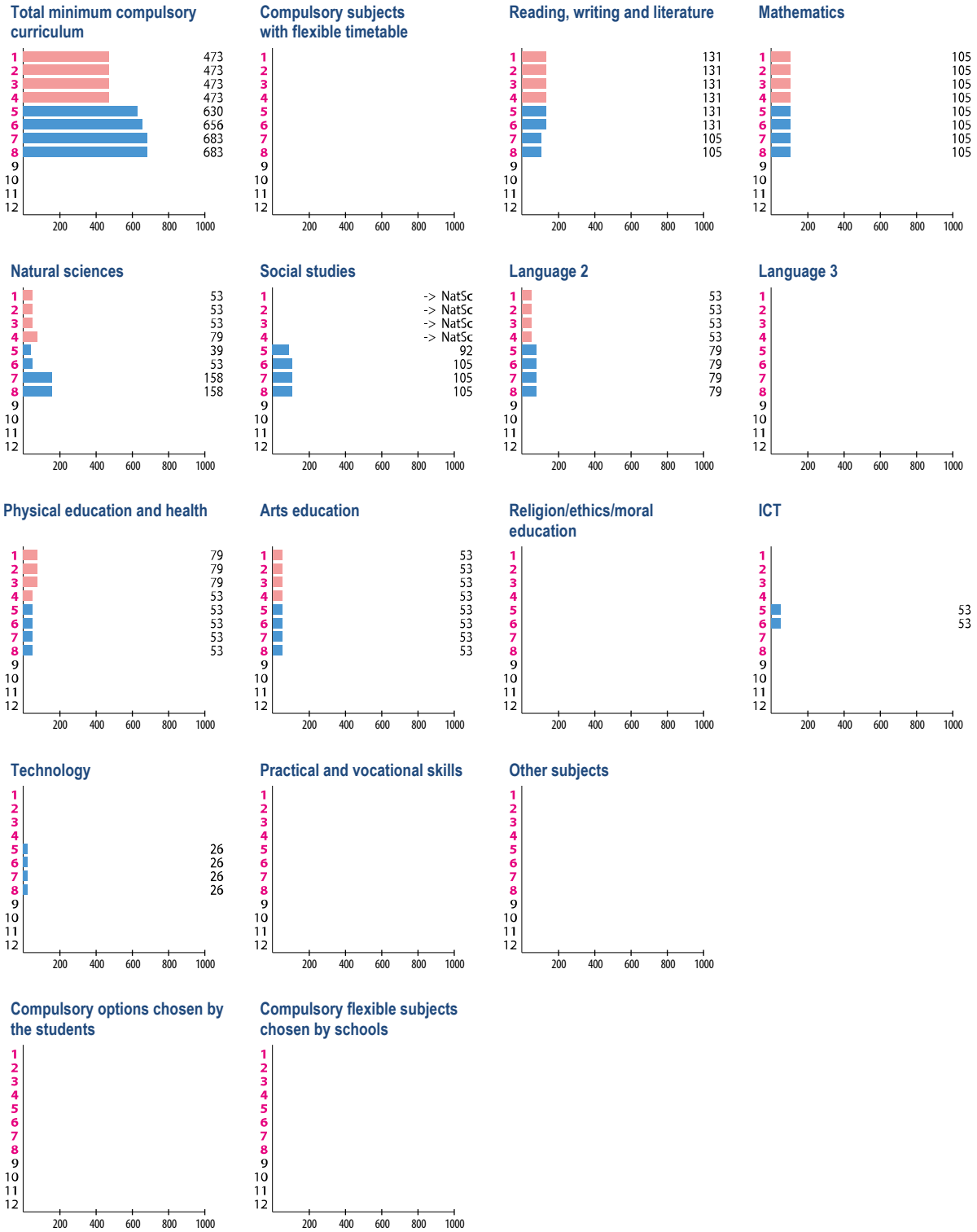
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

CROATIA



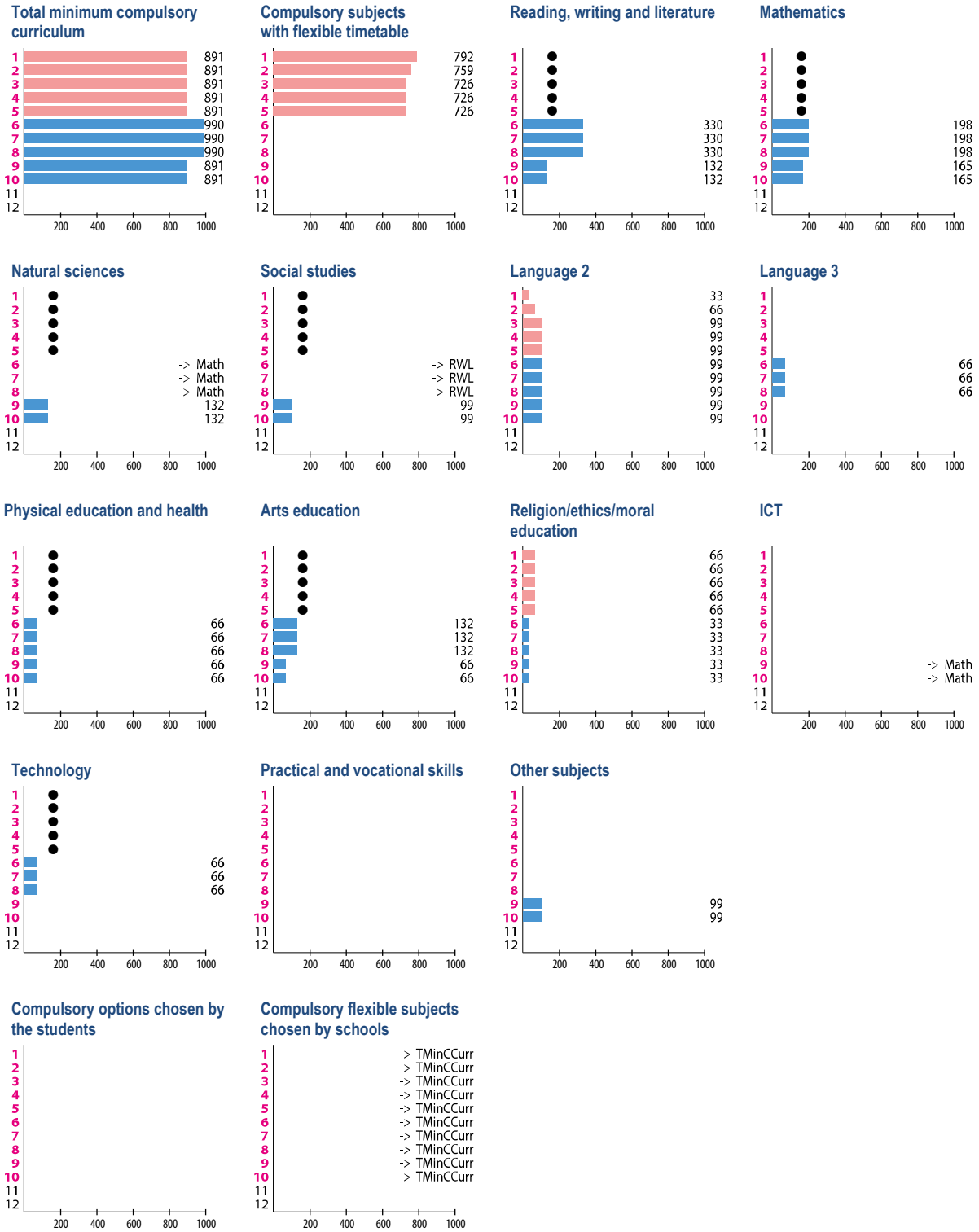
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

ITALY



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

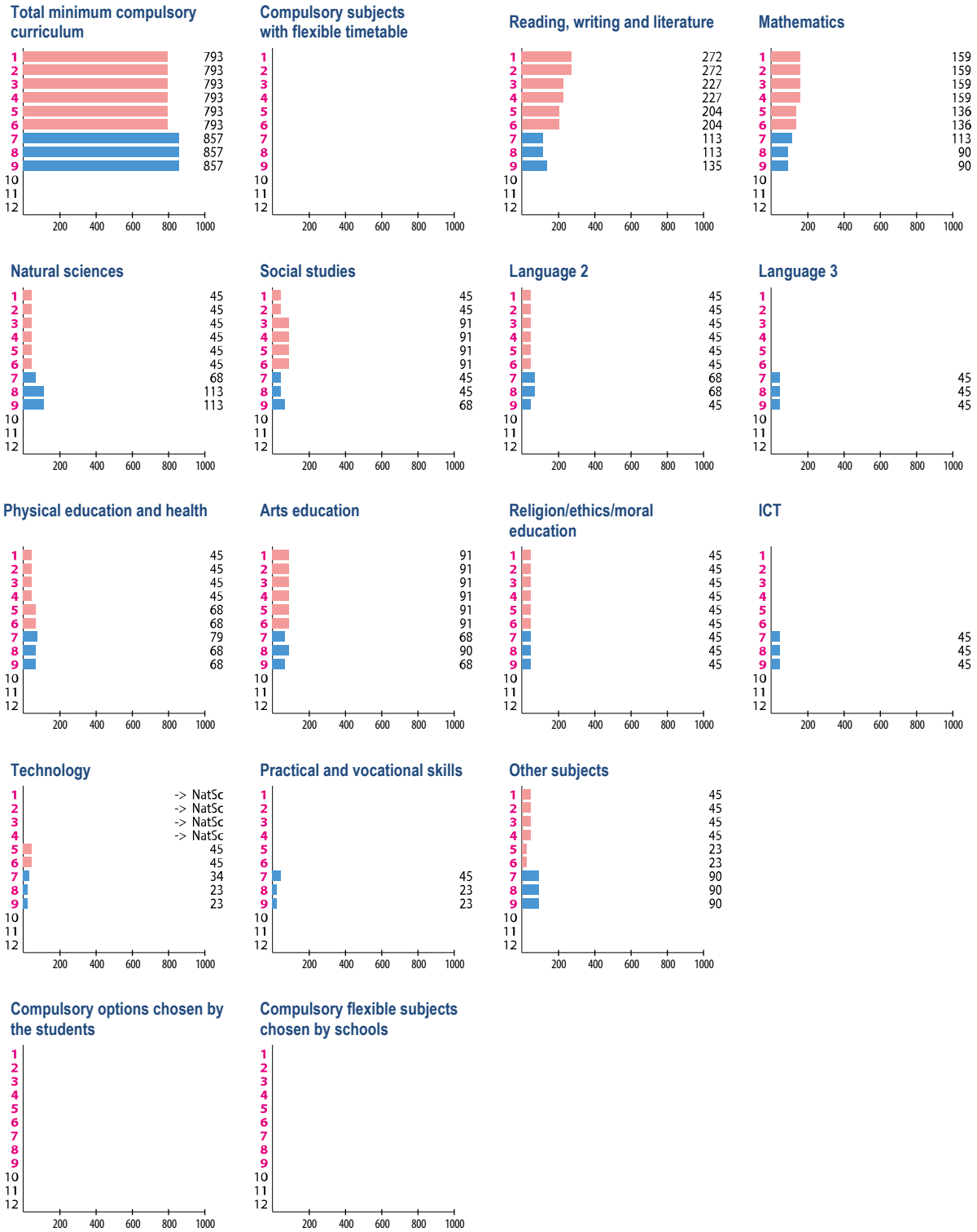
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

CYPRUS



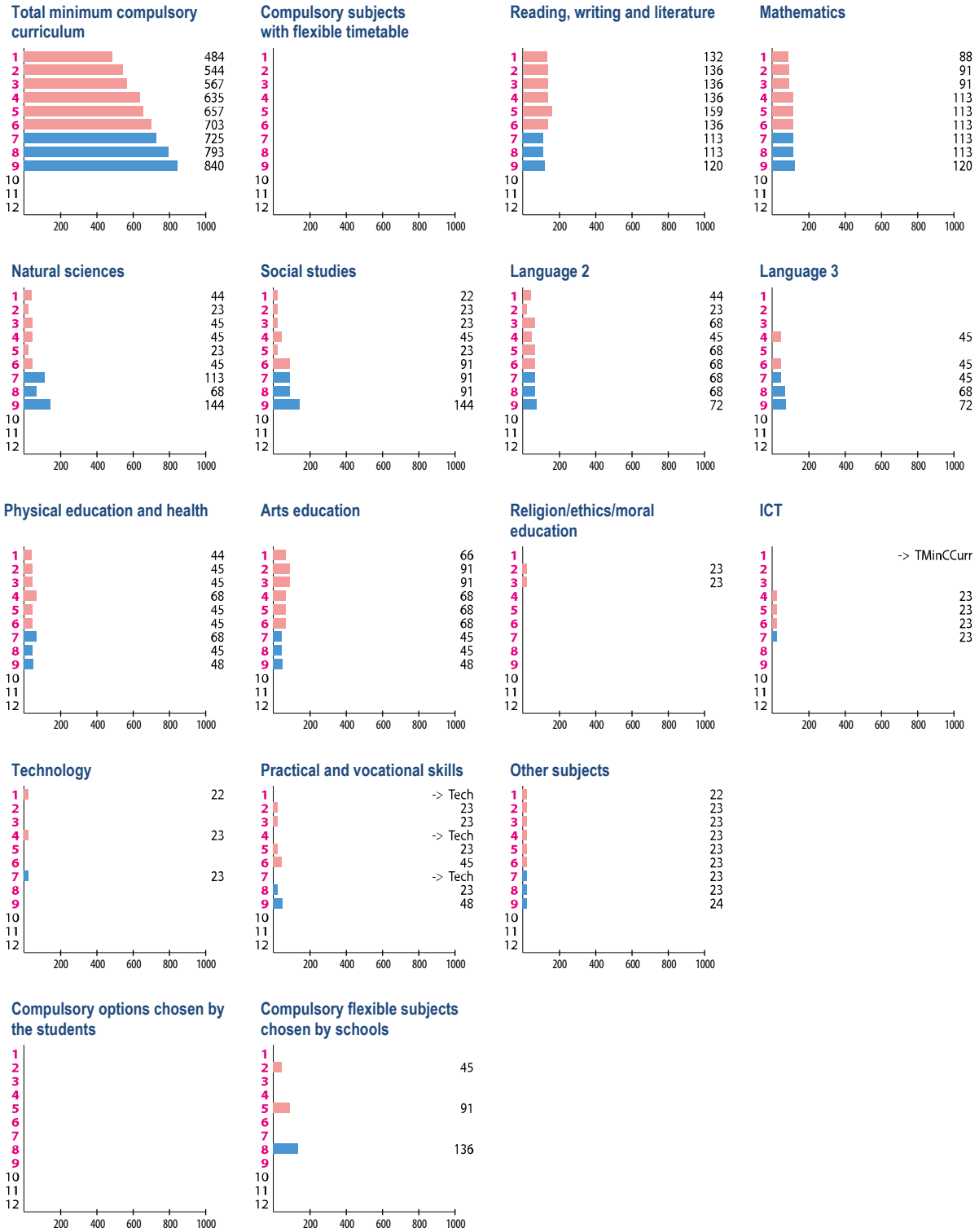
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

LATVIA



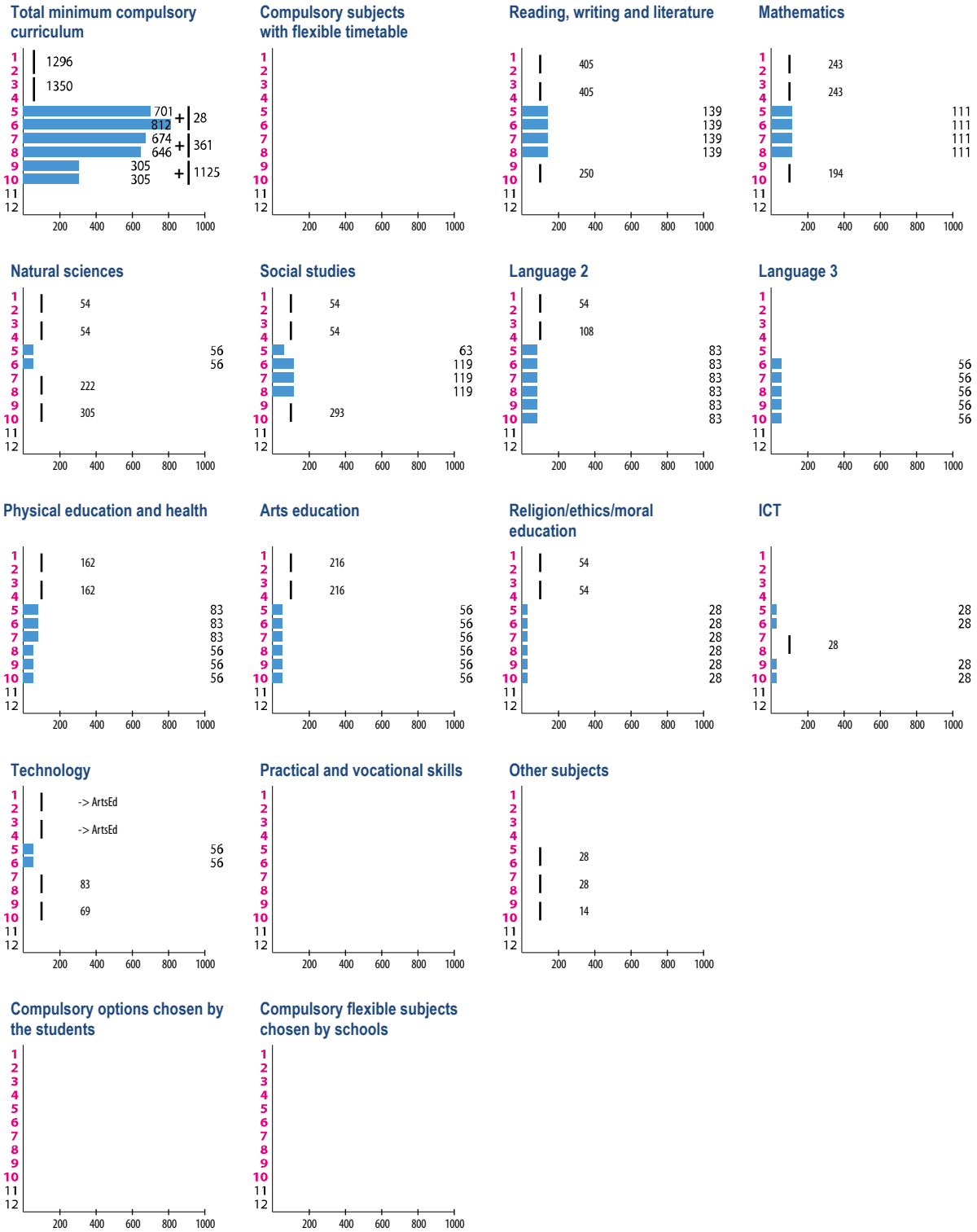
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

LITHUANIA



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

LUXEMBOURG

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

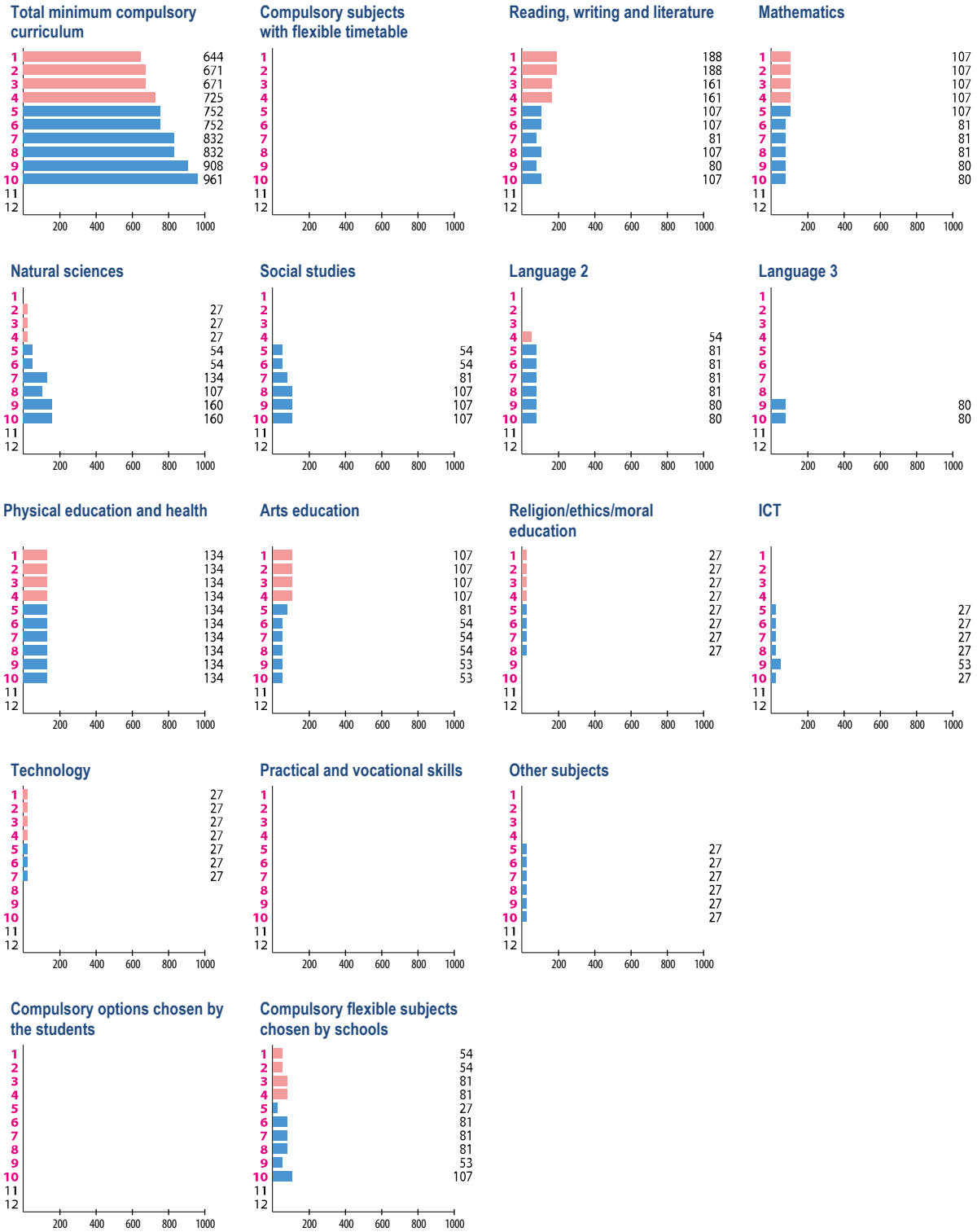
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

HUNGARY



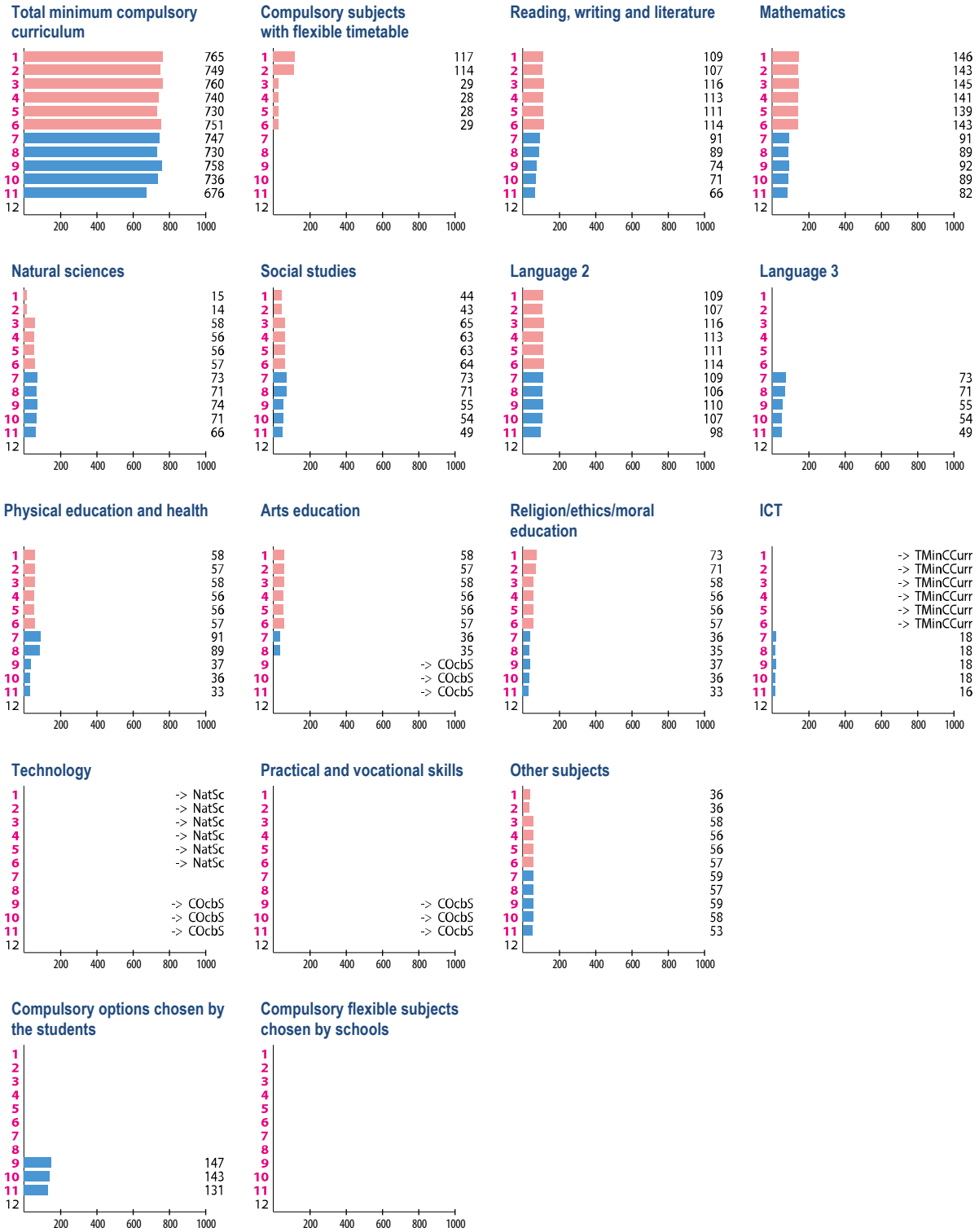
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

MALTA



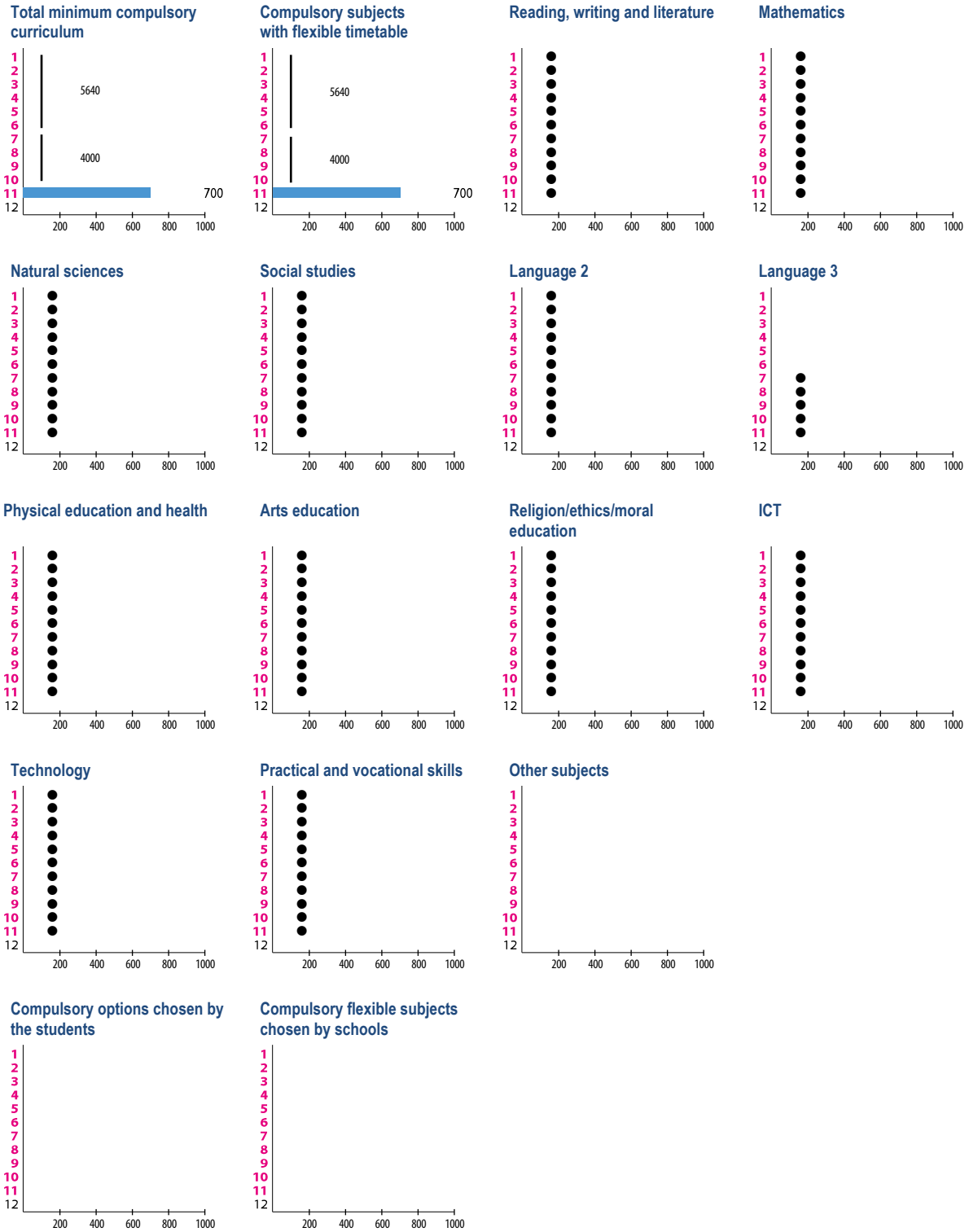
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

NETHERLANDS – PRIMARY AND HAVO



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

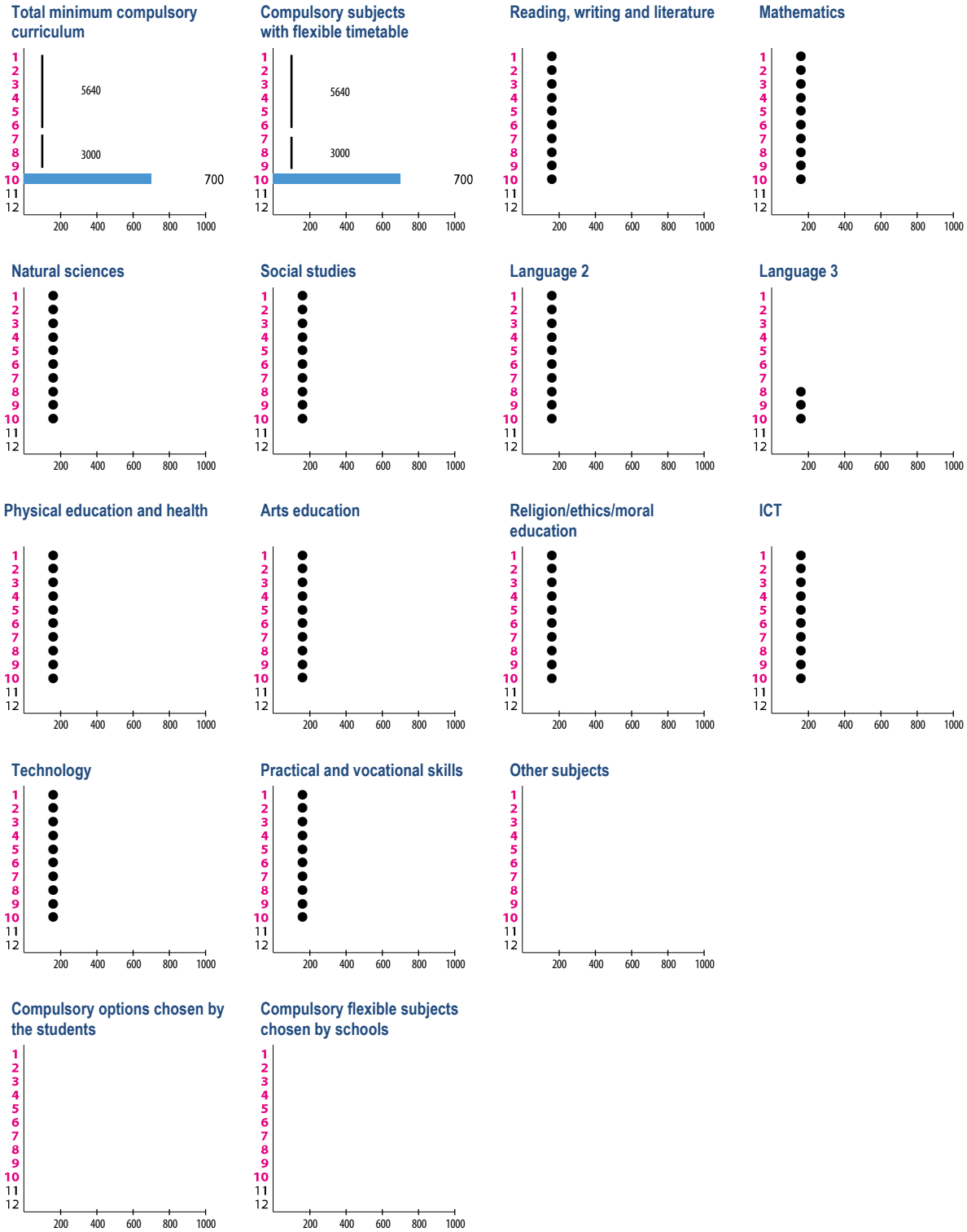
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

NETHERLANDS – PRIMARY AND VMBO



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

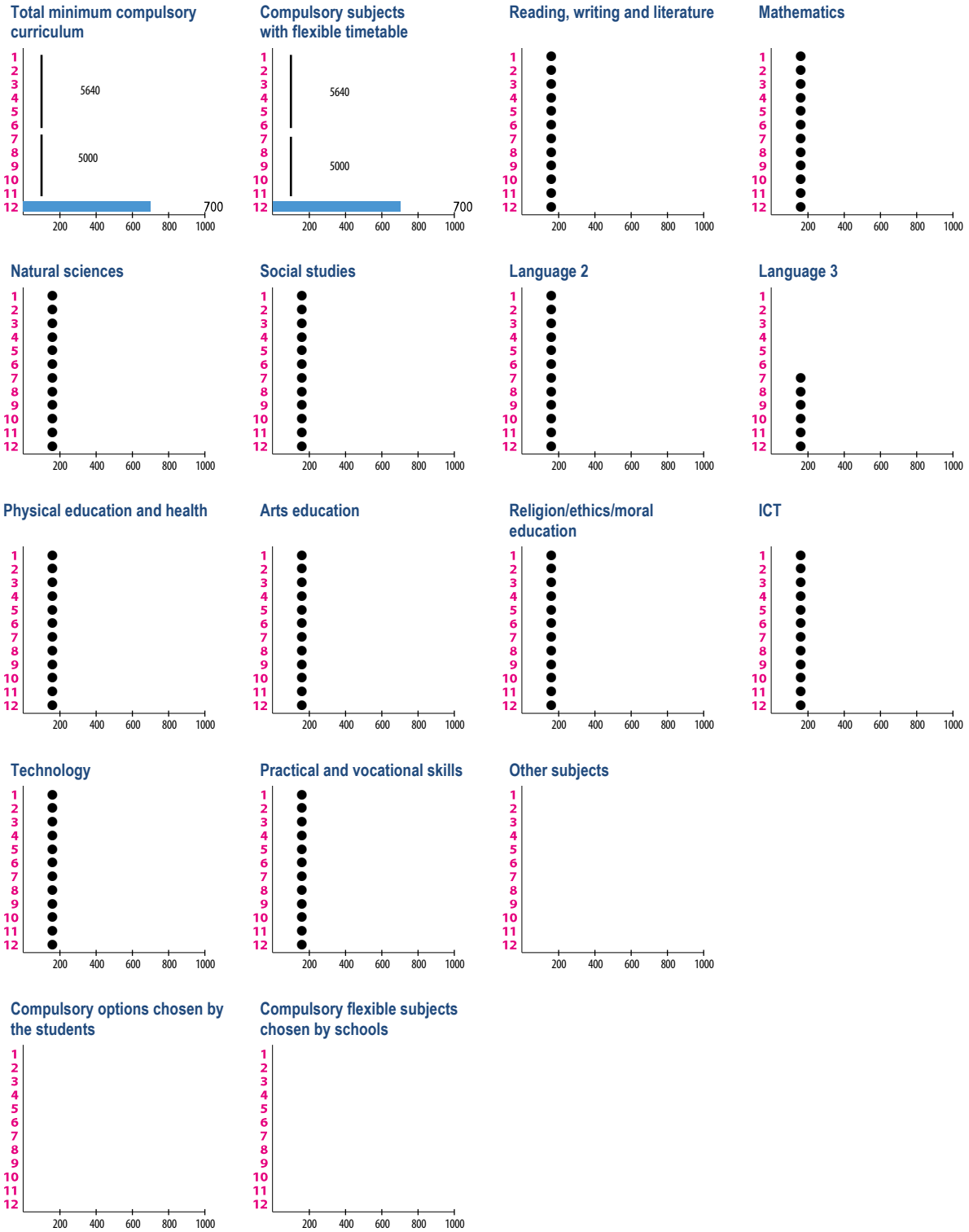
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

NETHERLANDS – PRIMARY AND VWO



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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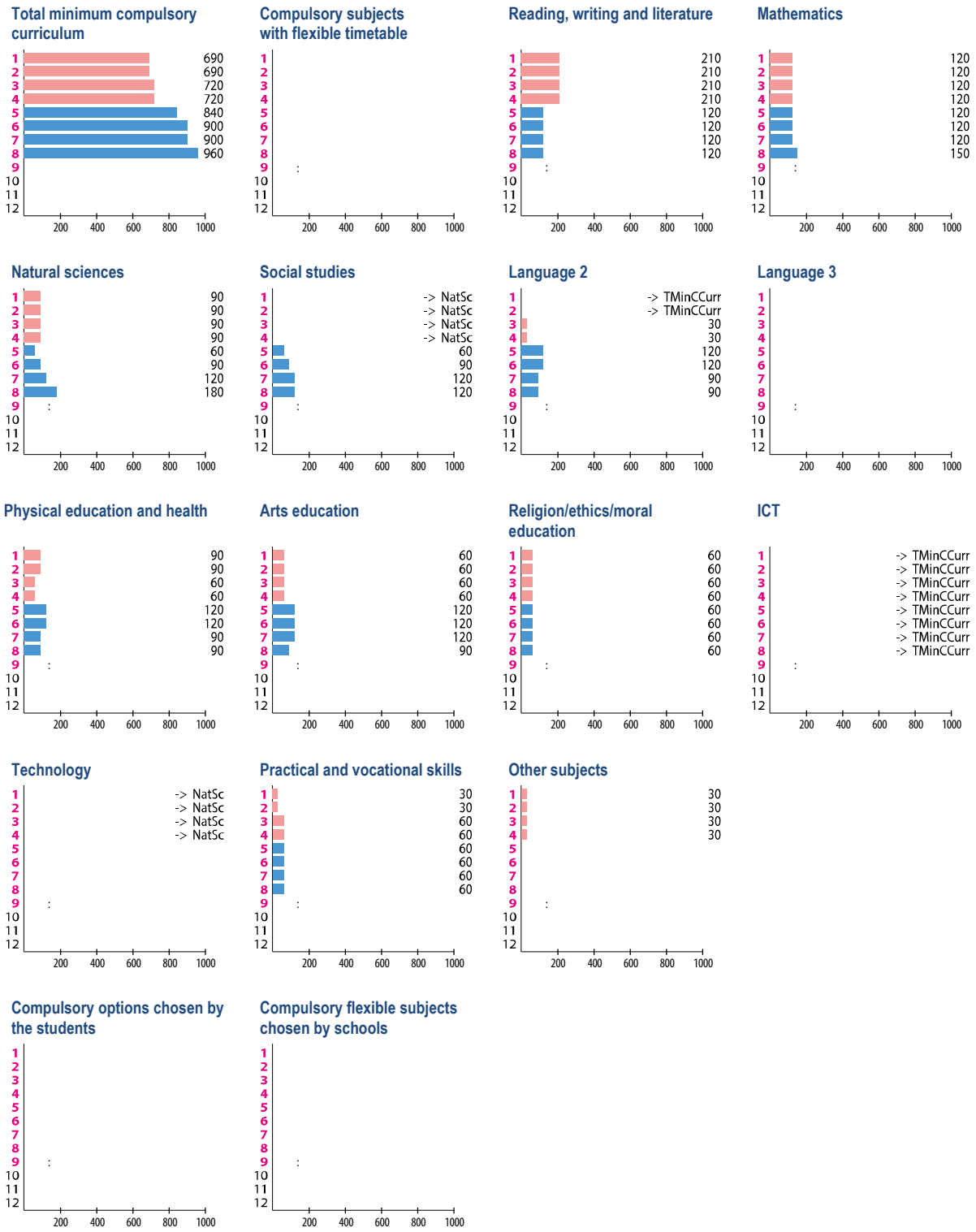
Source: Eurydice.

AUSTRIA – *VOLKSSCHULE* AND AHS *(REALGYMNASIUM)*



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

AUSTRIA – *VOLKSSCHULE* AND *MITTELSCHULE*

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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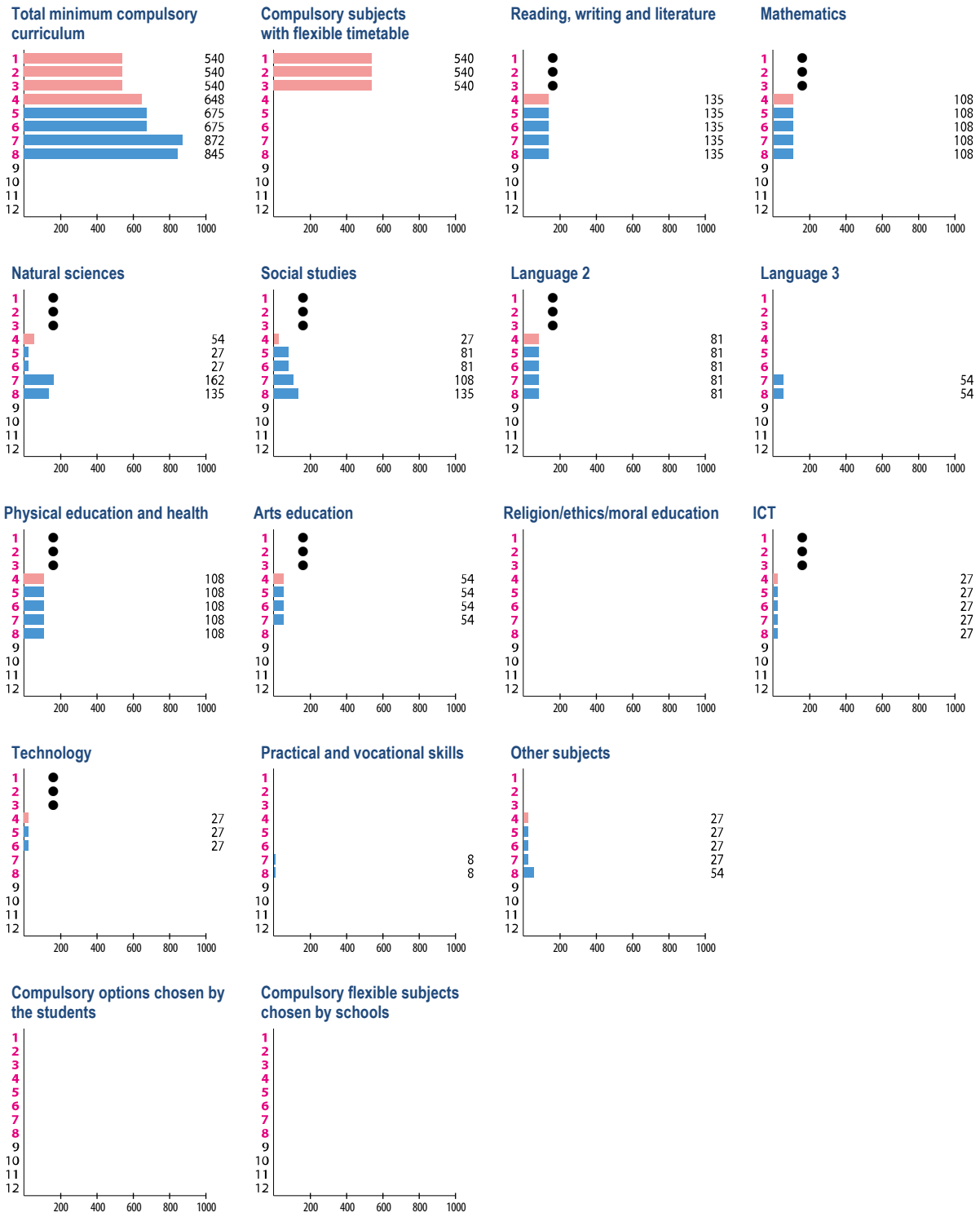
POLAND



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

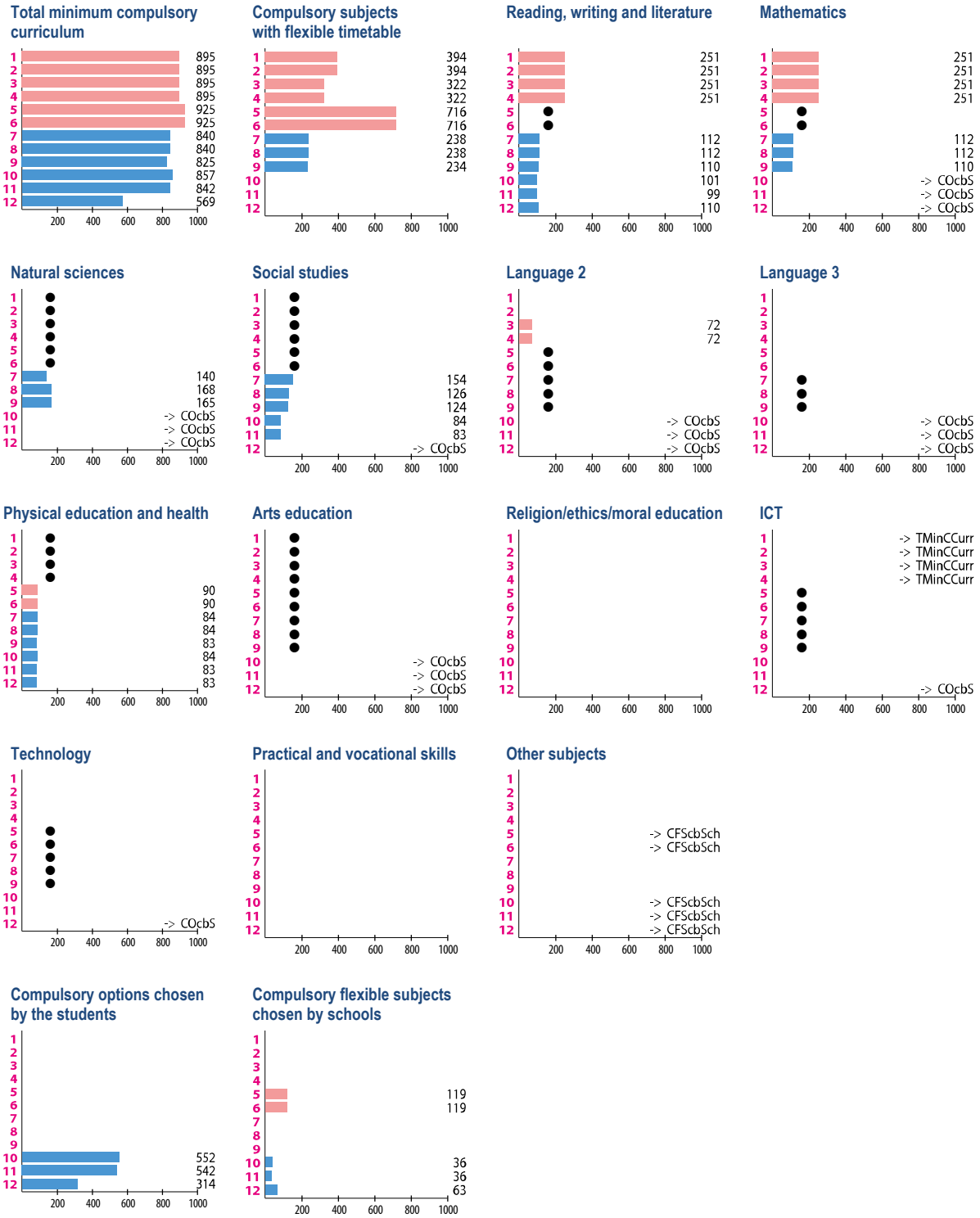
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

PORTUGAL



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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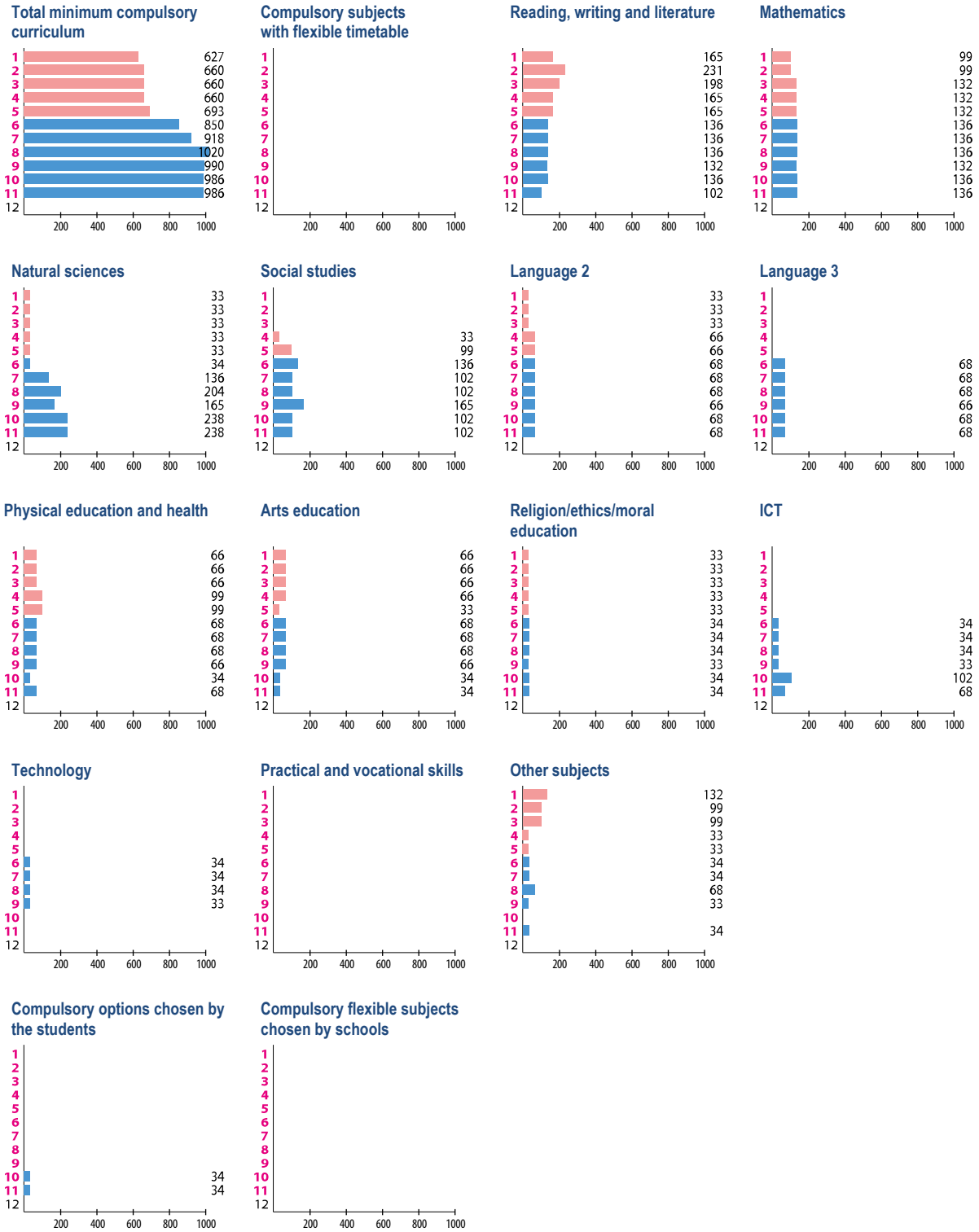
ROMANIA



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Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

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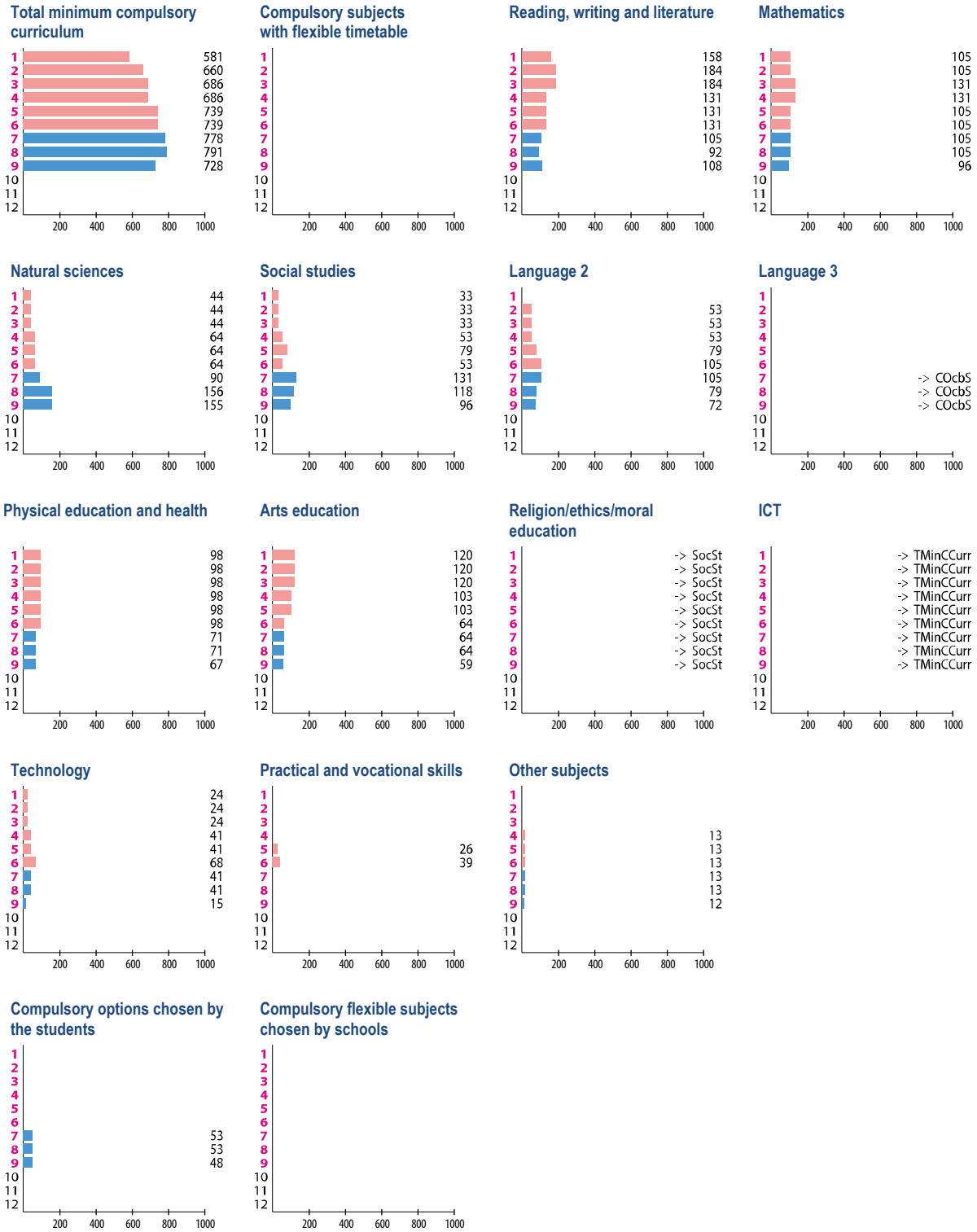
Source: Eurydice.

SLOVENIA



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Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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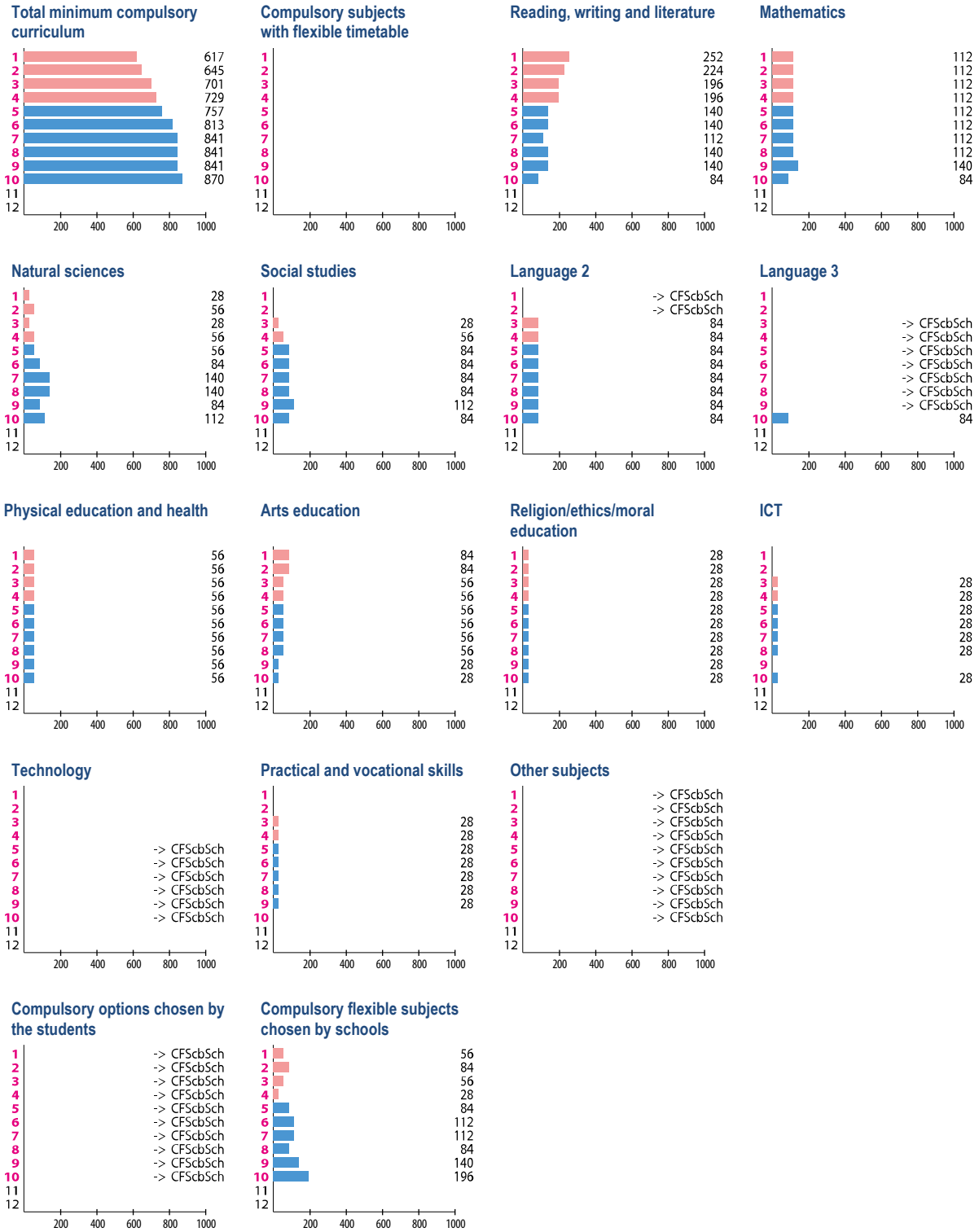
SLOVAKIA



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

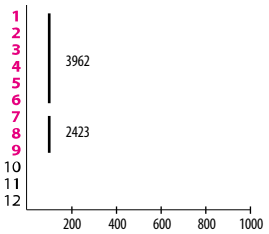
Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) x Number of hours distributed between various school years

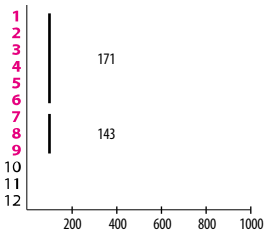
Source: Eurydice.

FINLAND

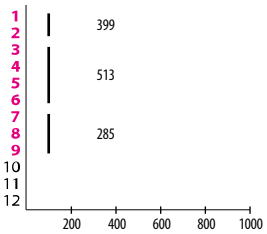
Total minimum compulsory curriculum



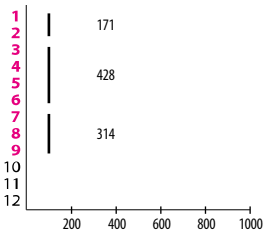
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable



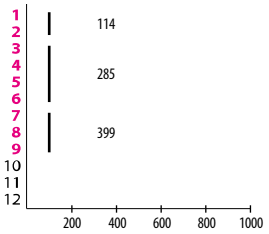
Reading, writing and literature



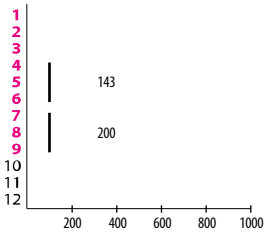
Mathematics



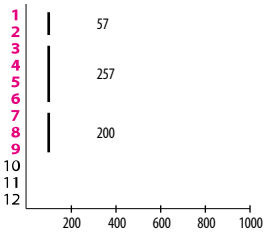
Natural sciences



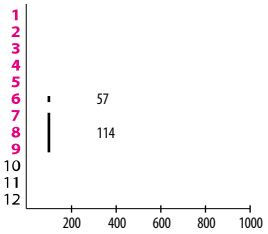
Social studies



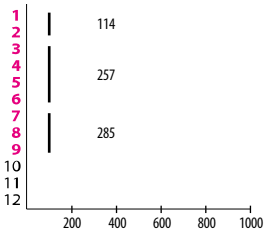
Language 2



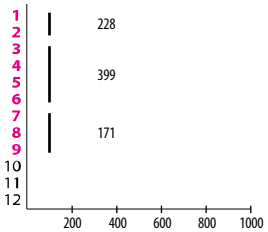
Language 3



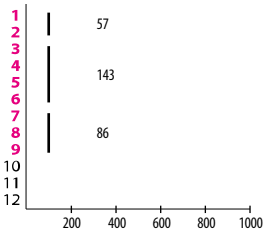
Physical education and health



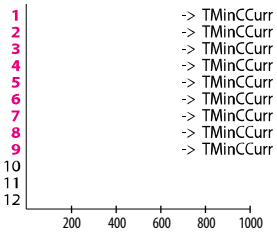
Arts education



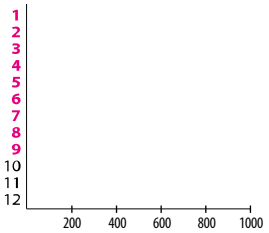
Religion/ethics/moral education



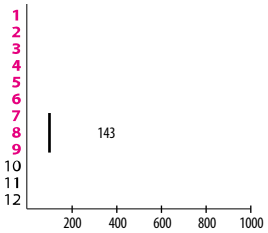
ICT



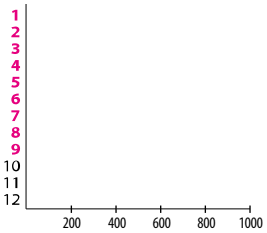
Technology



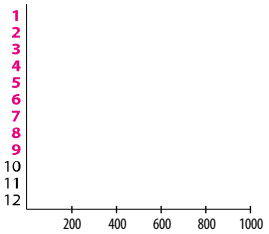
Practical and vocational skills



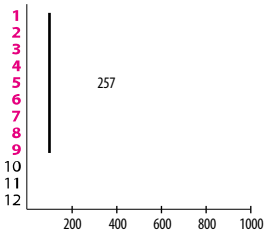
Other subjects



Compulsory options chosen by the students



Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

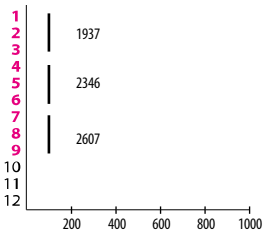
Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

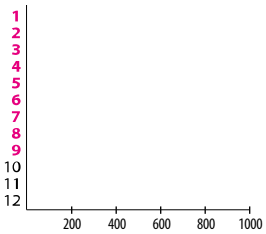
Source: Eurydice.

SWEDEN

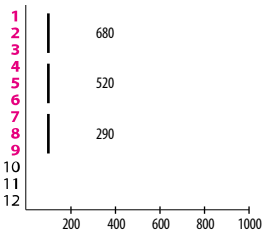
Total minimum compulsory curriculum



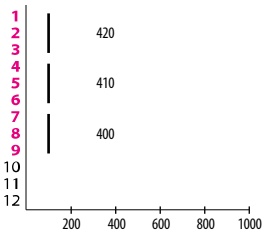
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable



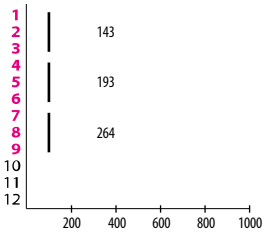
Reading, writing and literature



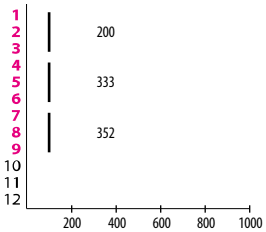
Mathematics



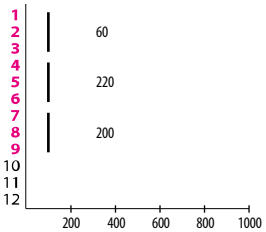
Natural sciences



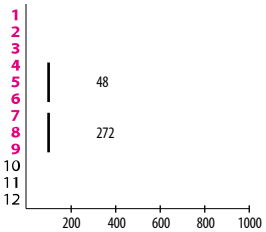
Social studies



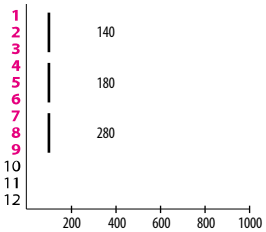
Language 2



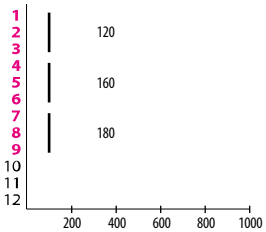
Language 3



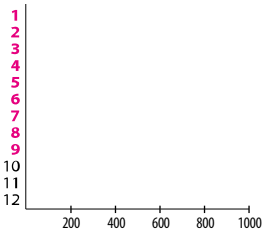
Physical education and health



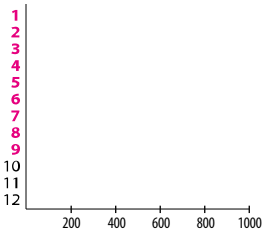
Arts education



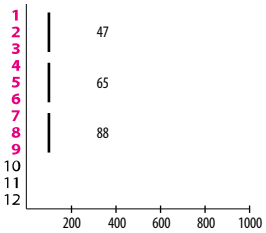
Religion/ethics/moral education



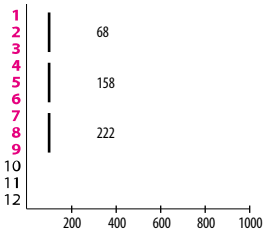
ICT



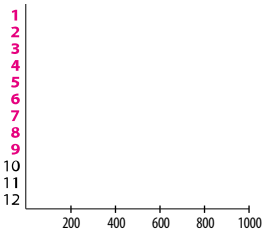
Technology



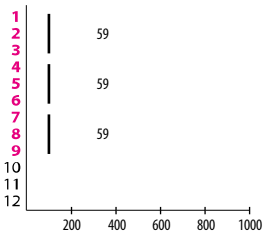
Practical and vocational skills



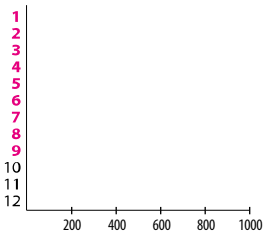
Other subjects



Compulsory options chosen by the students



Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

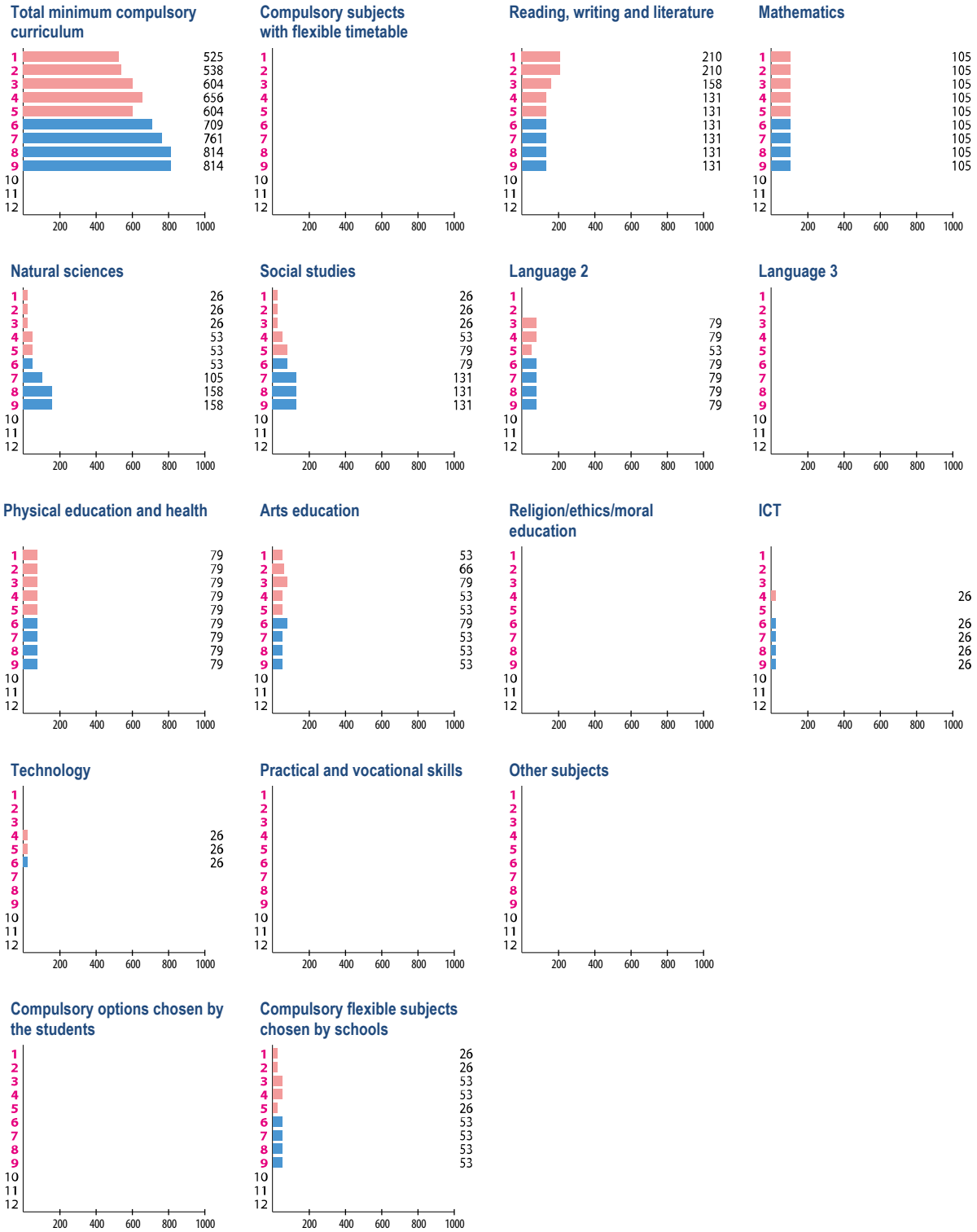
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

ALBANIA



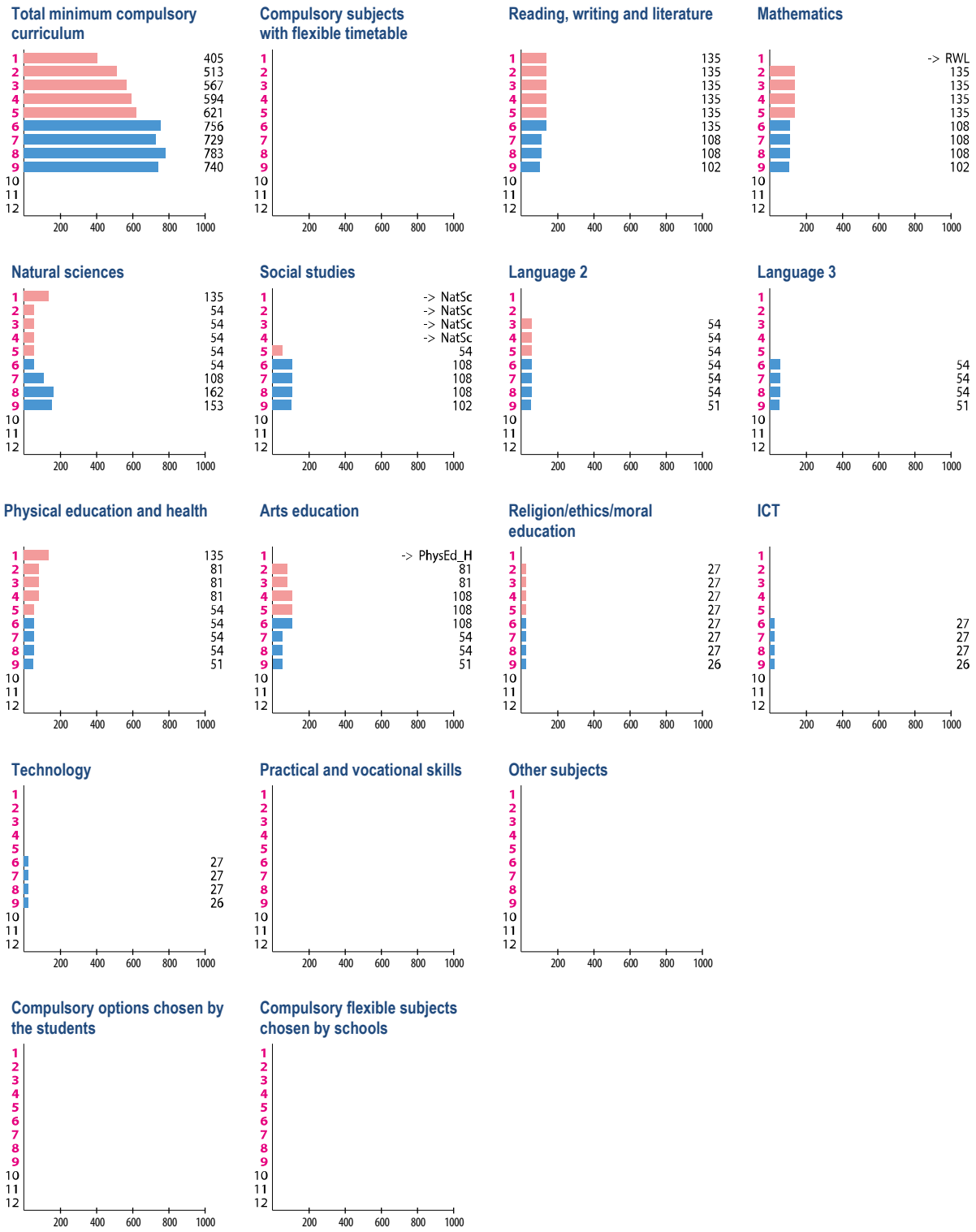
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

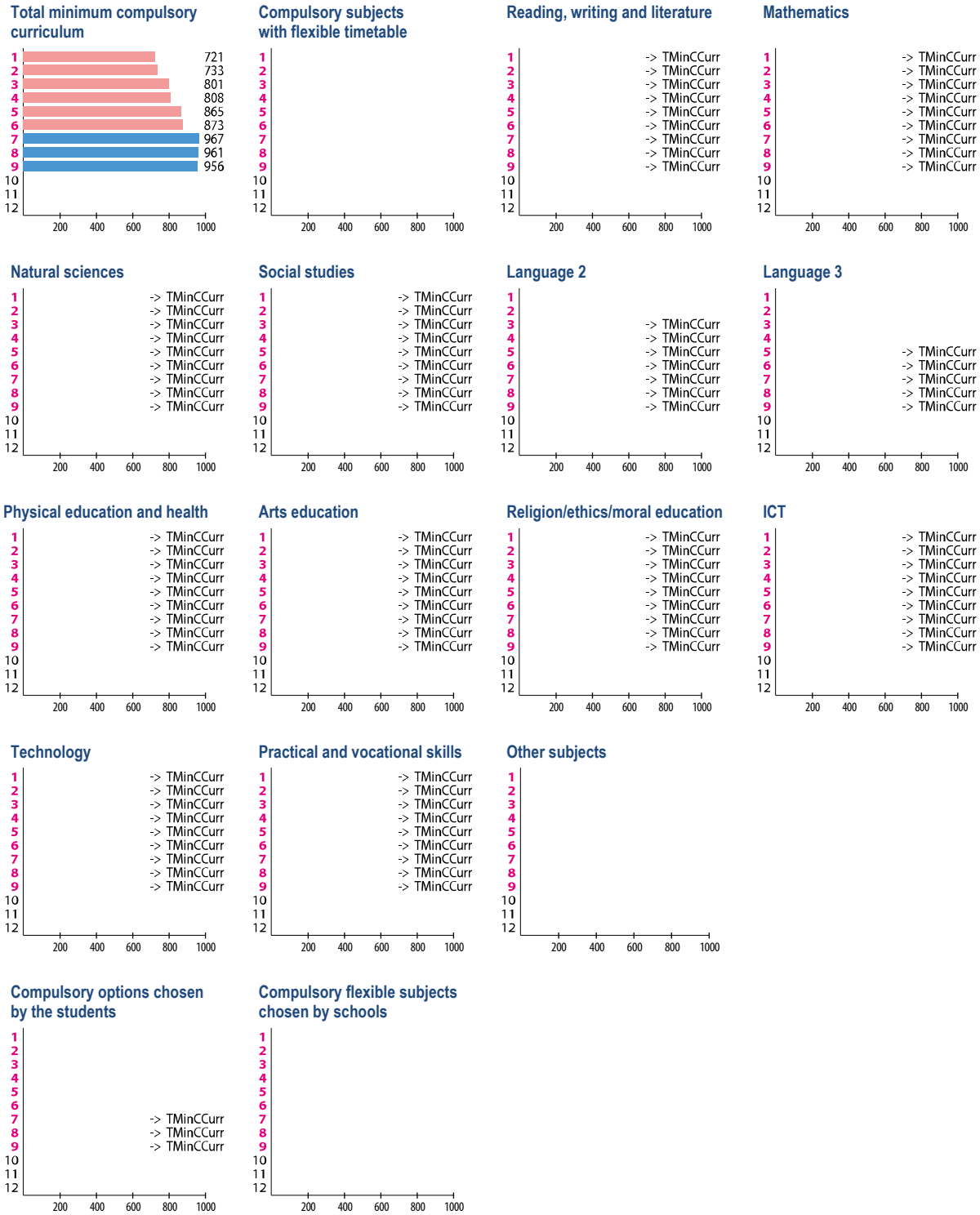
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

SWITZERLAND



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

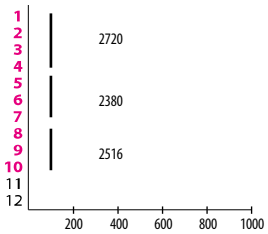
Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) x Number of hours distributed between various school years

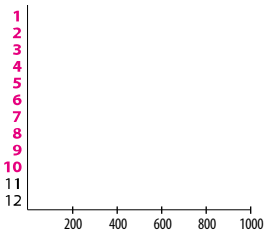
Source: Eurydice.

ICELAND

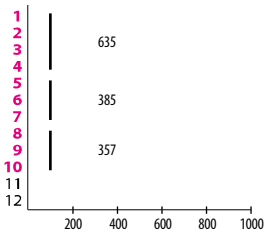
Total minimum compulsory curriculum



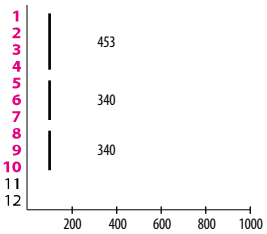
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable



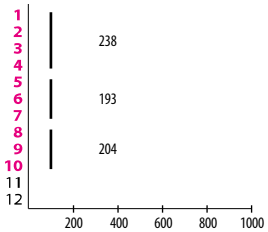
Reading, writing and literature



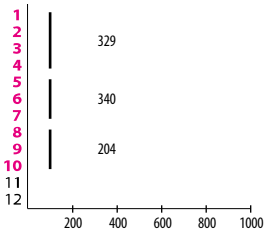
Mathematics



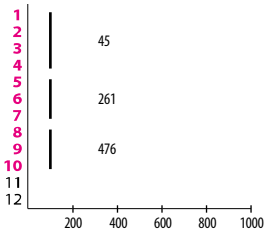
Natural sciences



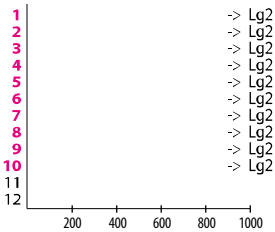
Social studies



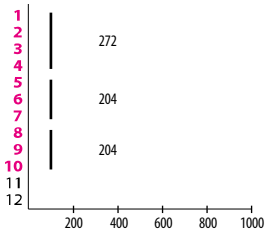
Language 2



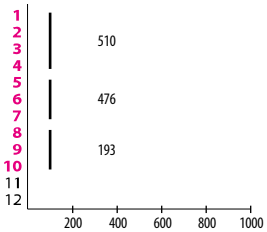
Language 3



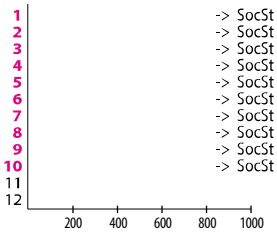
Physical education and health



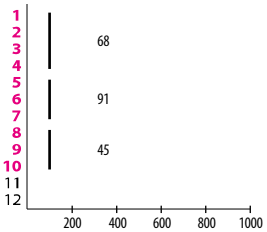
Arts education



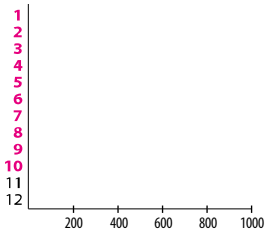
Religion/ethics/moral education



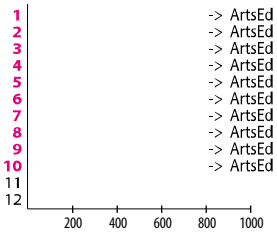
ICT



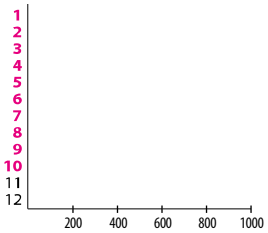
Technology



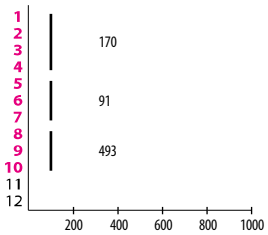
Practical and vocalional skills



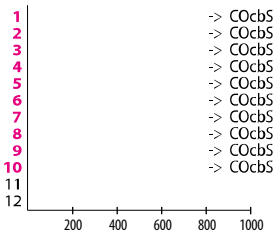
Other subjects



Compulsory options chosen by the students



Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

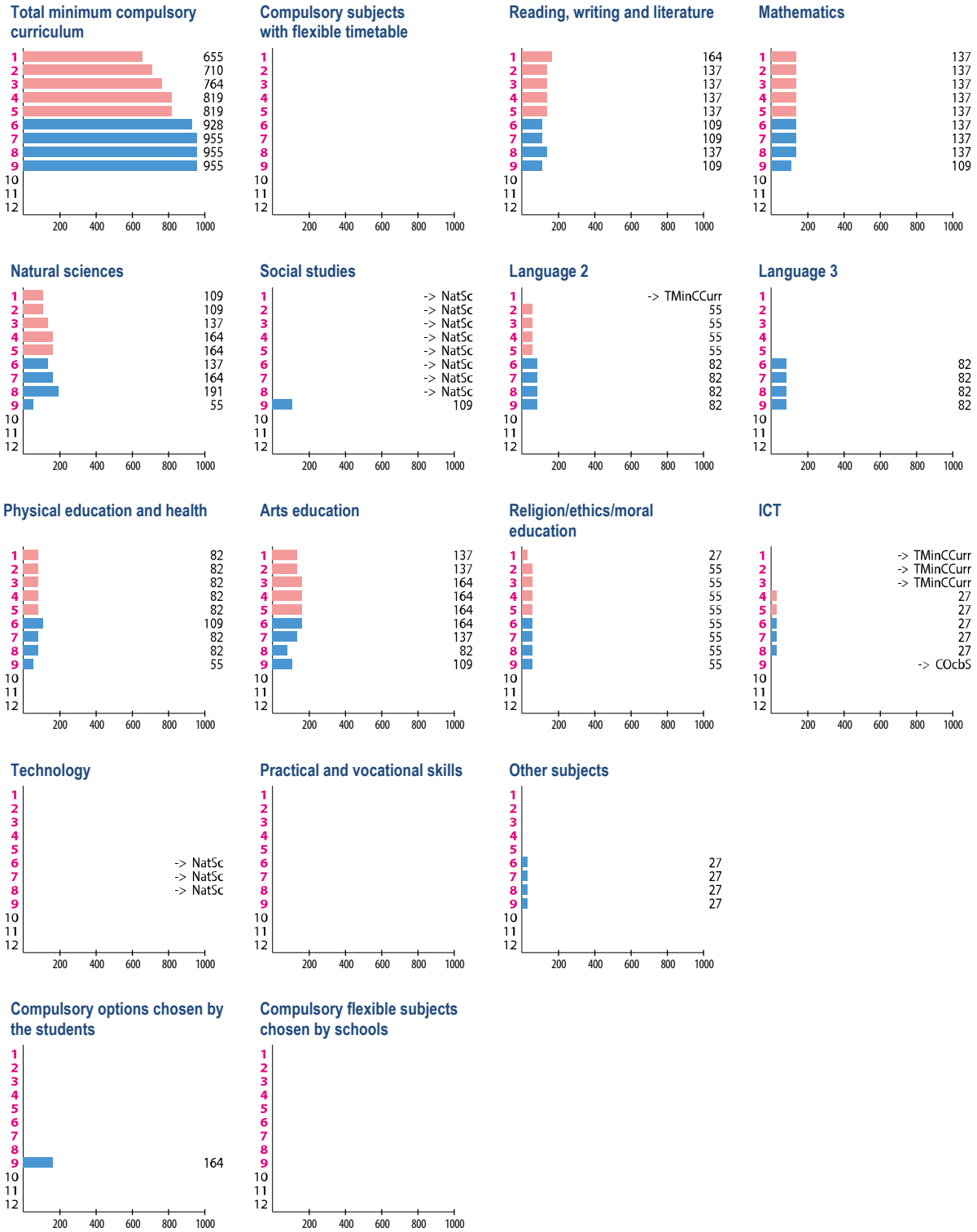
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

LIECHTENSTEIN – PRIMARY AND *GYMNASIUM*



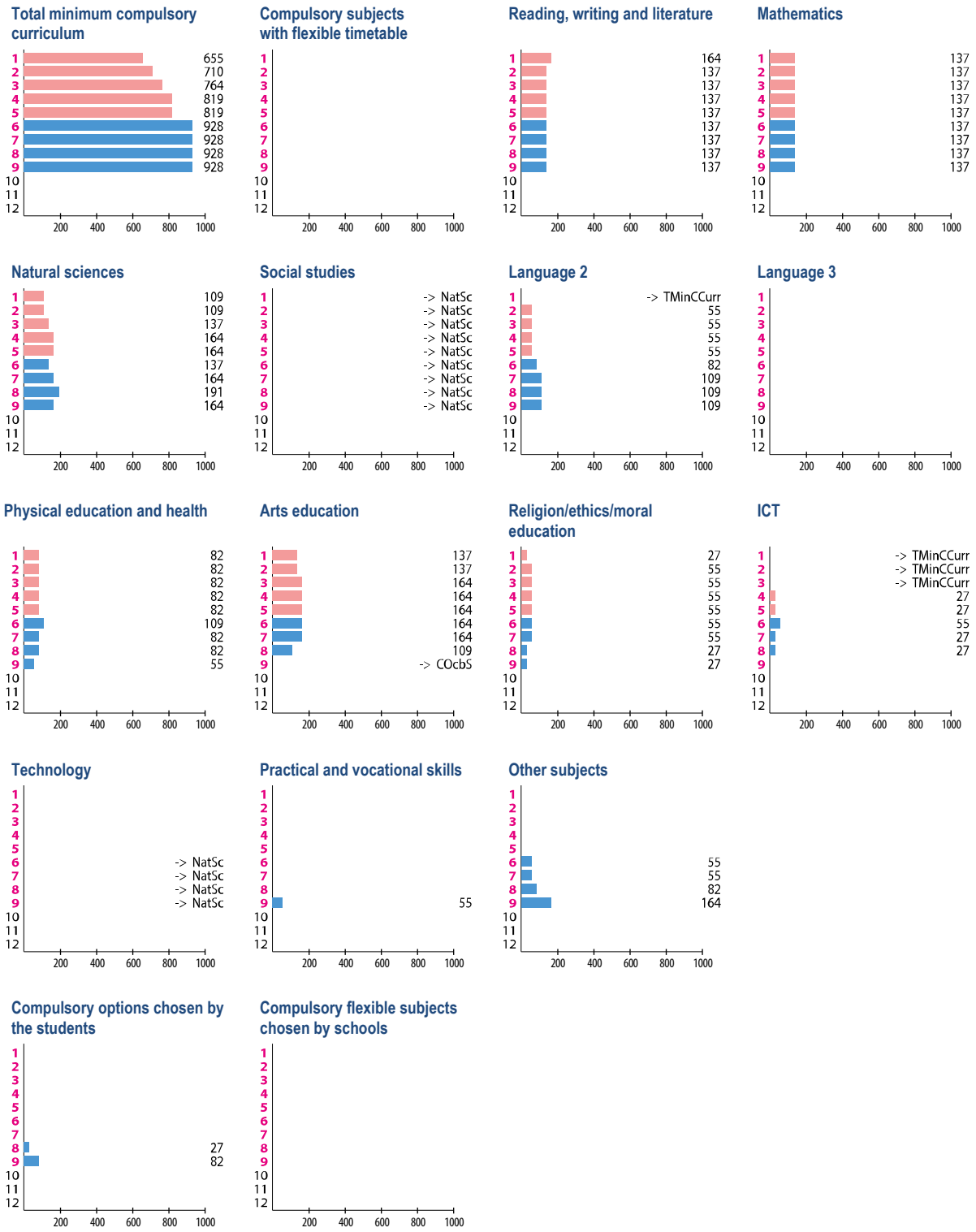
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

LIECHTENSTEIN – PRIMARY AND *OBERSCHULE*



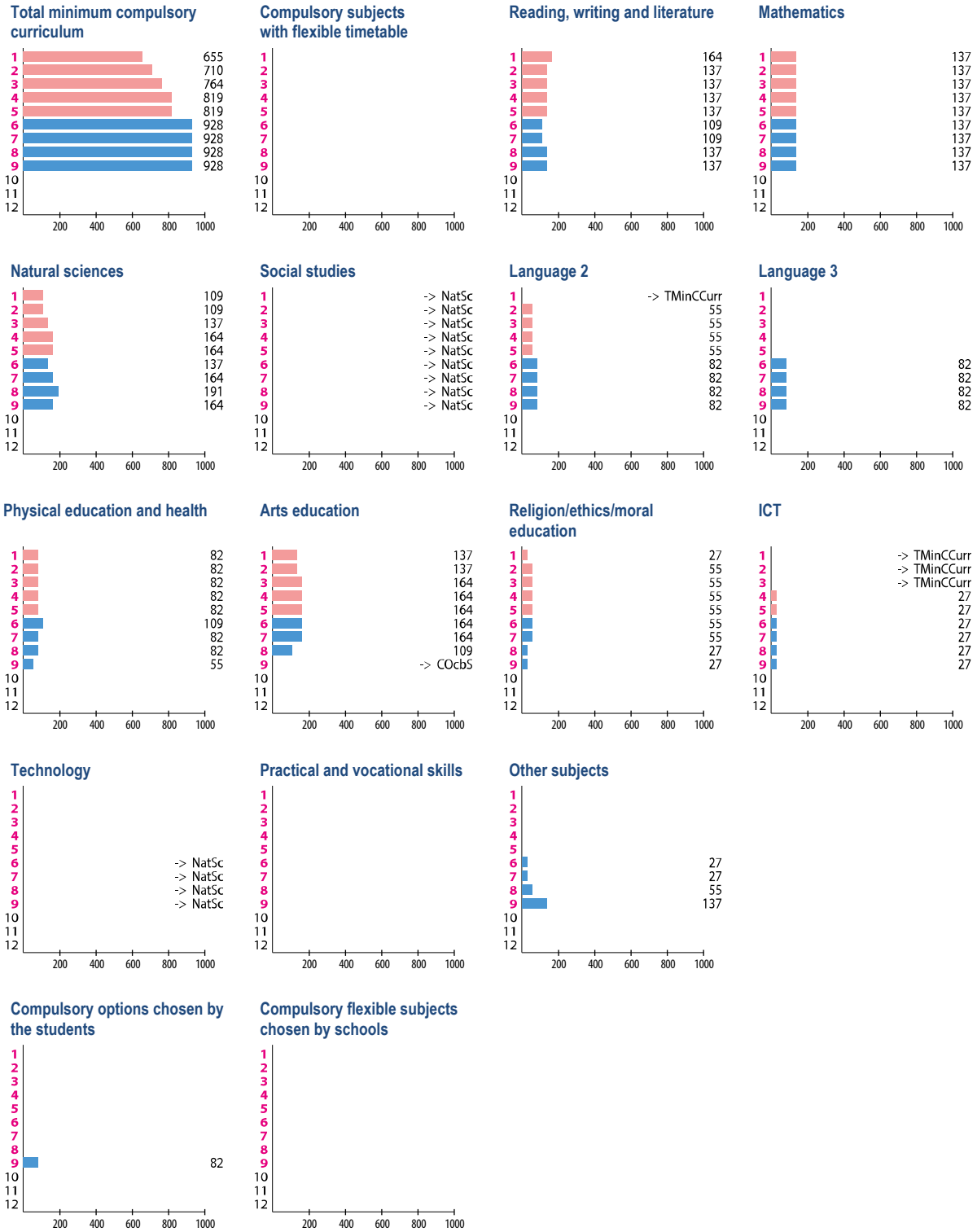
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

LIECHTENSTEIN – PRIMARY AND *REALSCHULE*



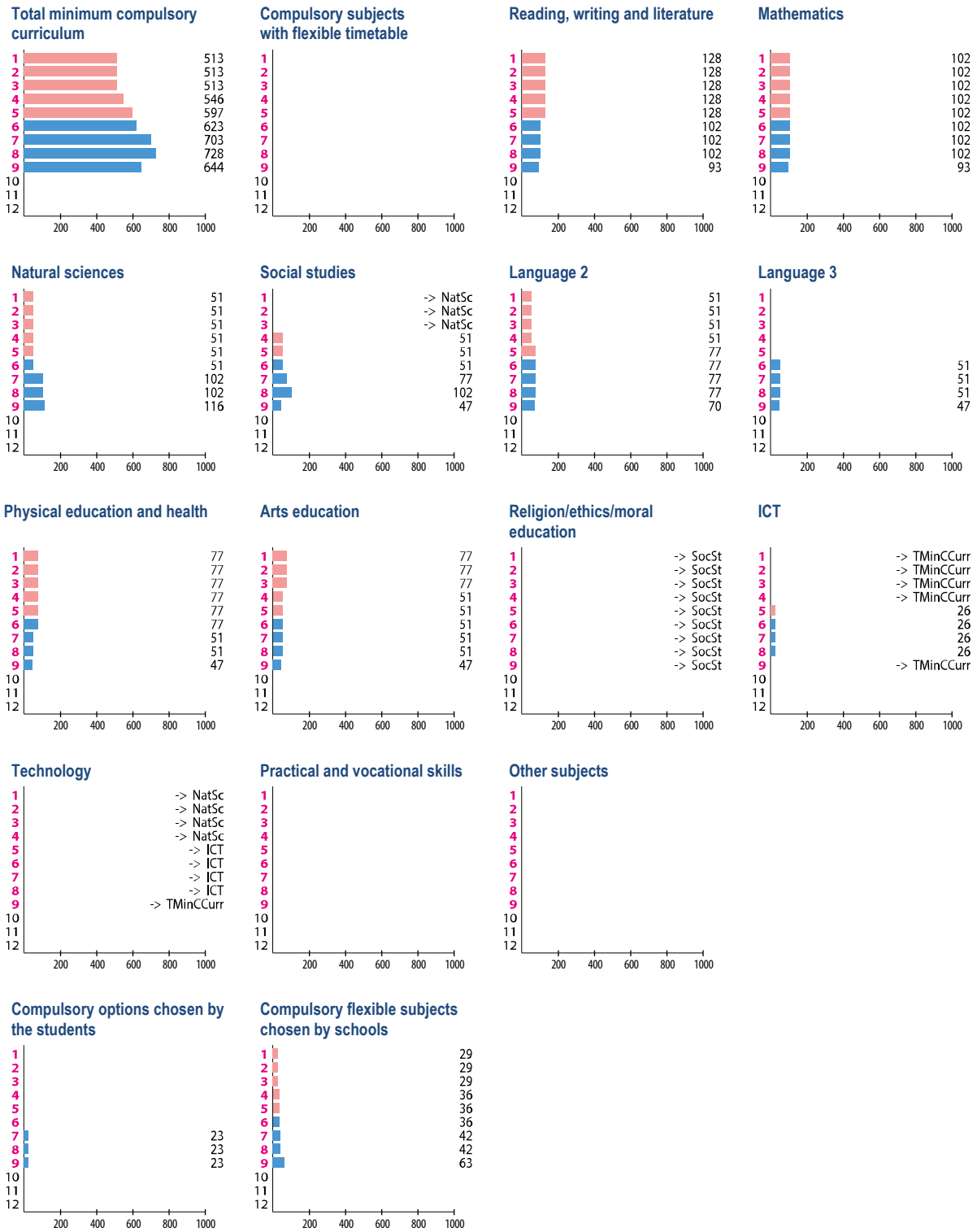
For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

MONTENEGRO



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

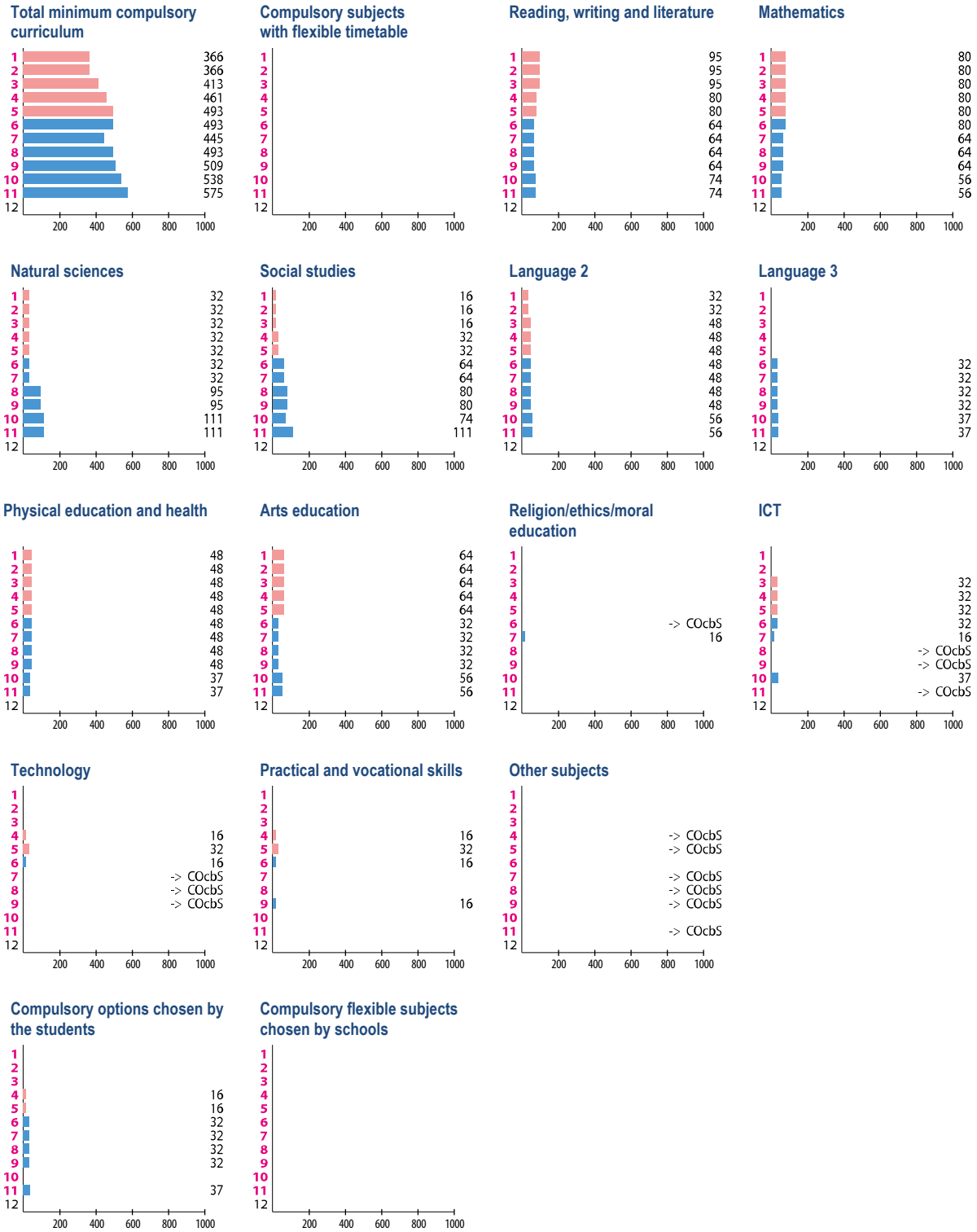
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

NORTH MACEDONIA



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

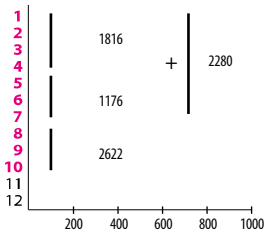
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

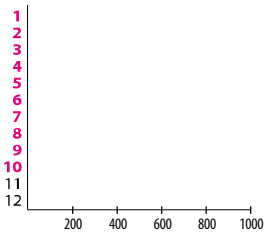
-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.

NORWAY

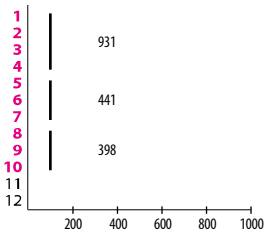
Total minimum compulsory curriculum



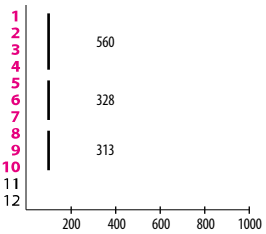
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable



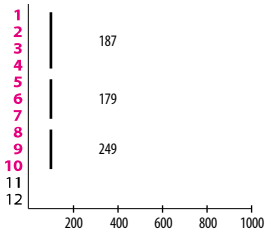
Reading, writing and literature



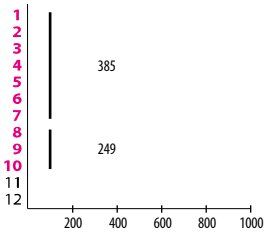
Mathematics



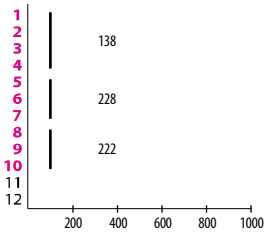
Natural sciences



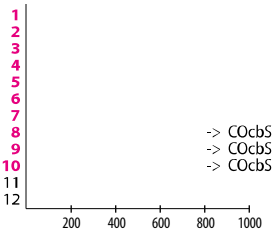
Social studies



Language 2



Language 3



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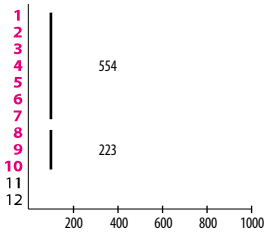
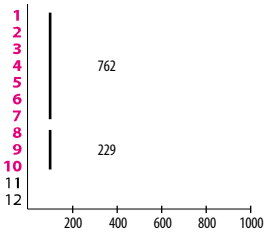
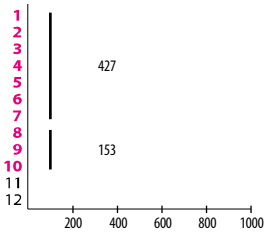


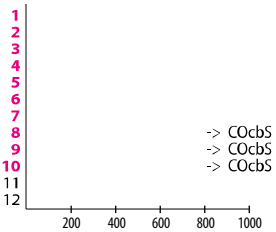
Arts education



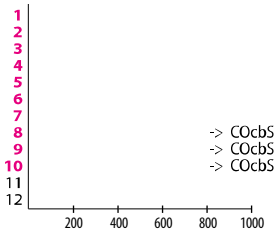
Religion/ethics/moral education



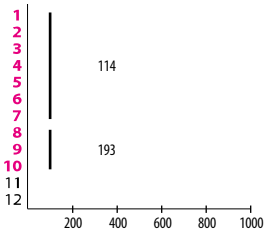
ICT



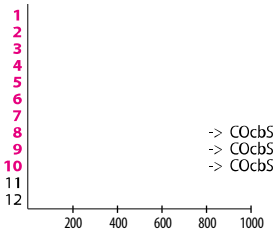
Technology



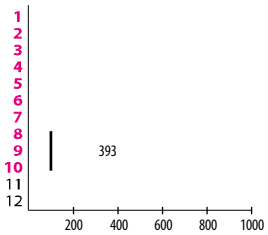
Practical and vocational skills



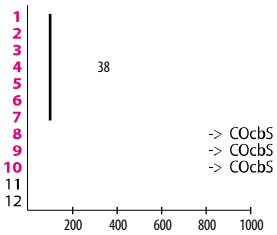
Other subjects



Compulsory options chosen by the students



Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

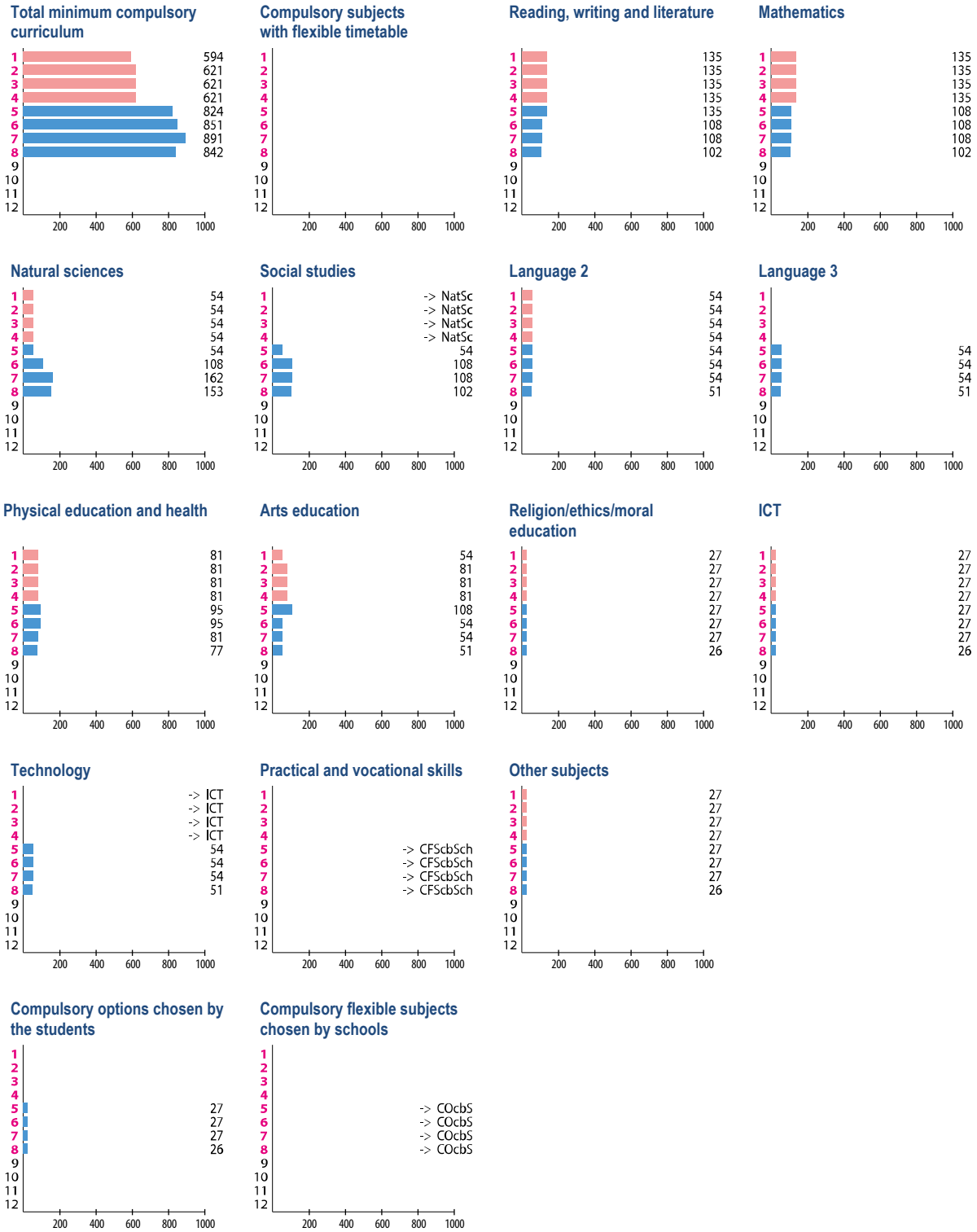
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

SERBIA



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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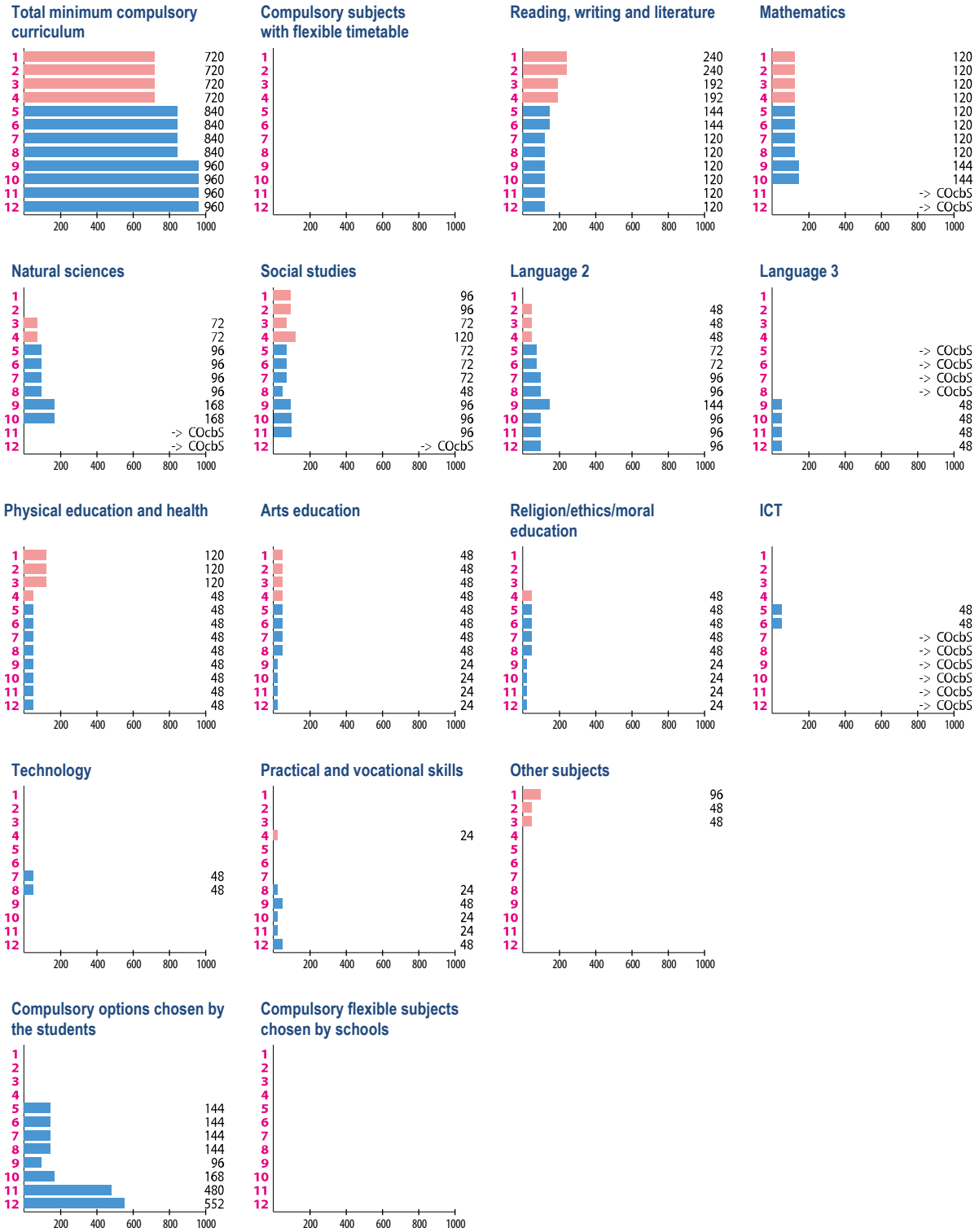
TURKEY



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

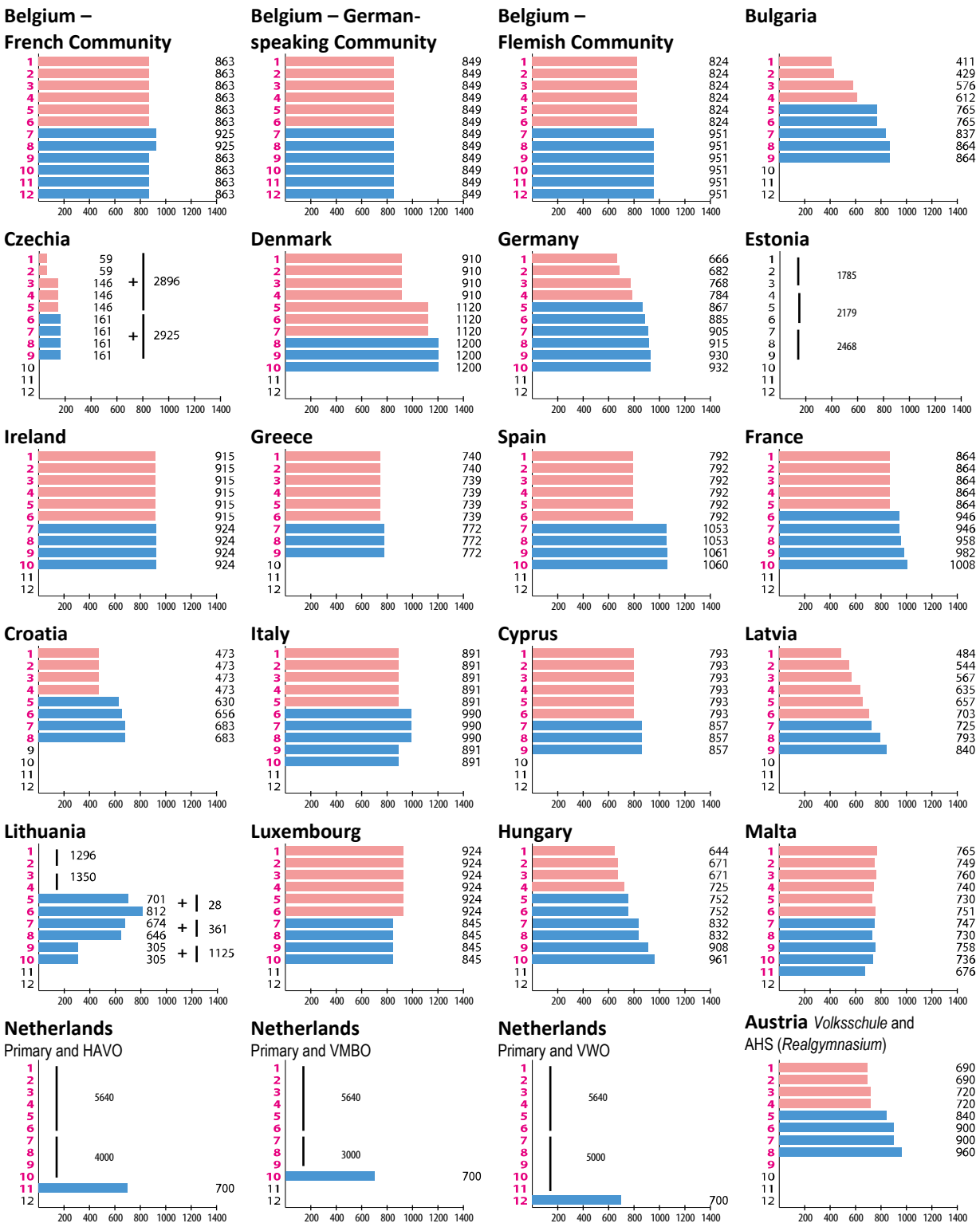
-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

Section 3. Instruction time by subject

Total minimum compulsory curriculum	80
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable	82
Reading, writing and literature	84
Mathematics	86
Natural sciences	88
Social studies	90
Language 2	92
Language 3	94
Physical education and health	96
Arts education	98
Religion/ethics/moral education	100
ICT	102
Technology	104
Practical and vocational skills	106
Other subjects	108
Compulsory options chosen by the students	110
Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	112
Language 4 (compulsory curriculum)	114
Language 5 (compulsory curriculum)	115
Non-compulsory curriculum	115

TOTAL MINIMUM COMPULSORY CURRICULUM



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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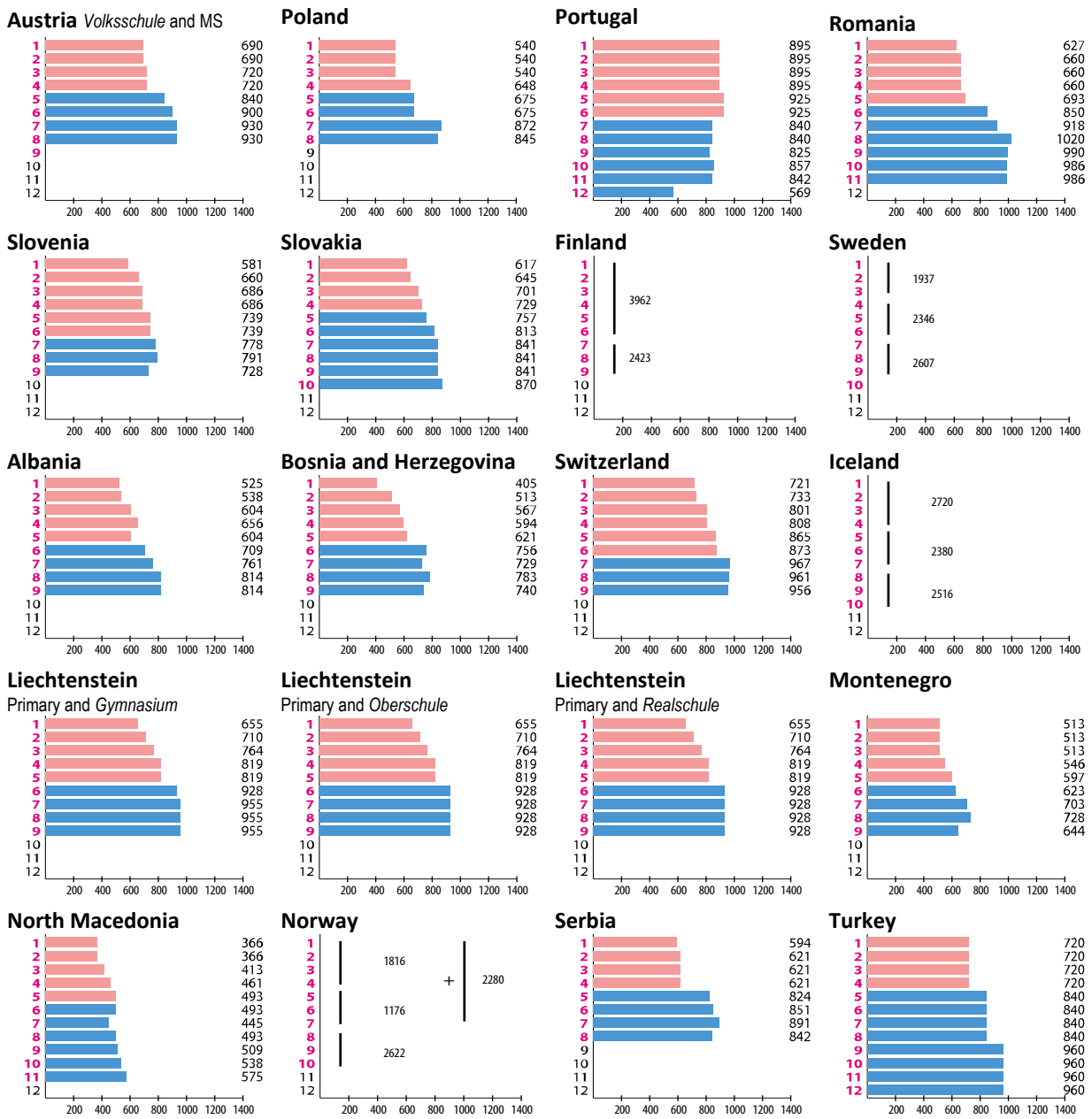

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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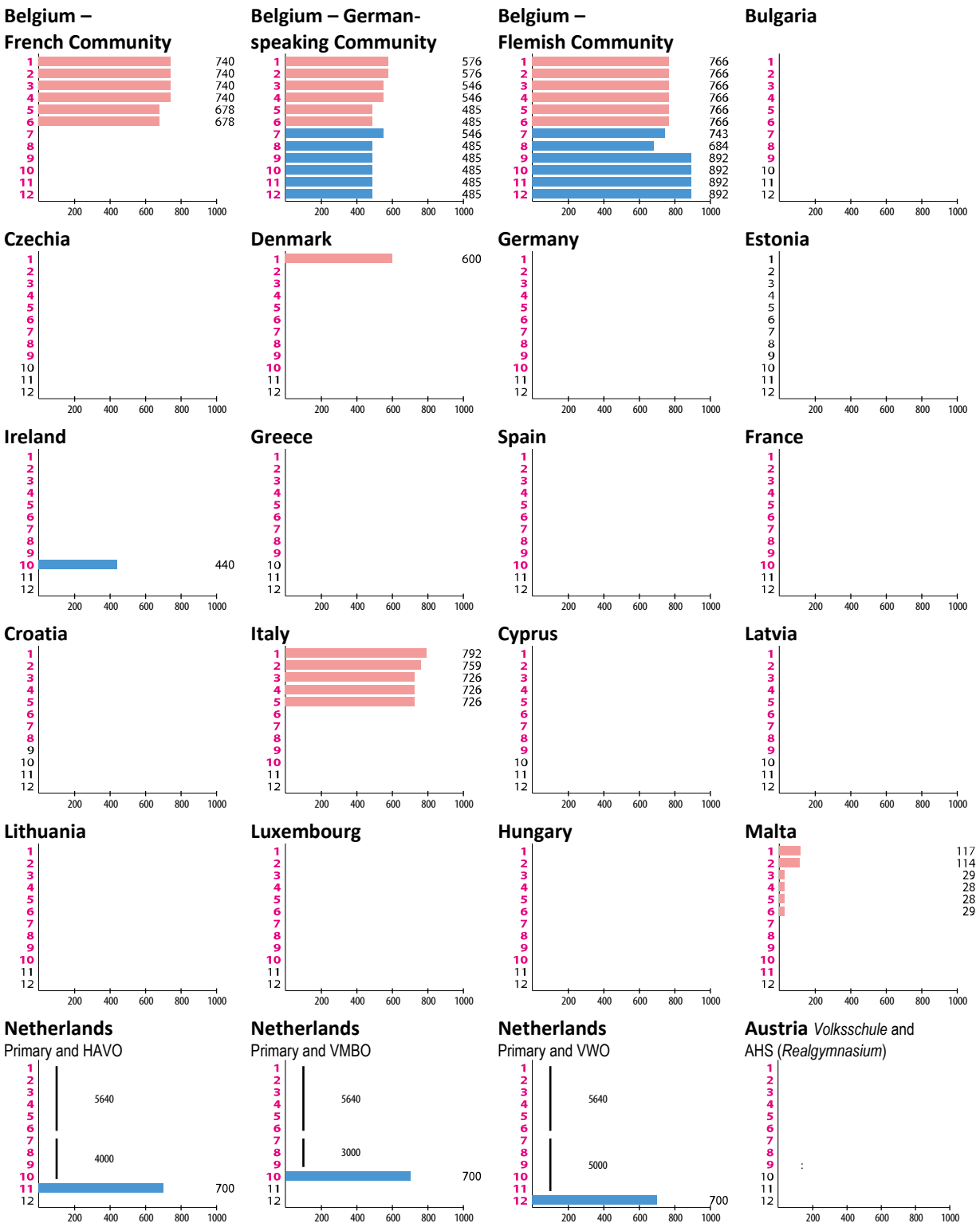
COMPULSORY SUBJECTS WITH FLEXIBLE TIMETABLE

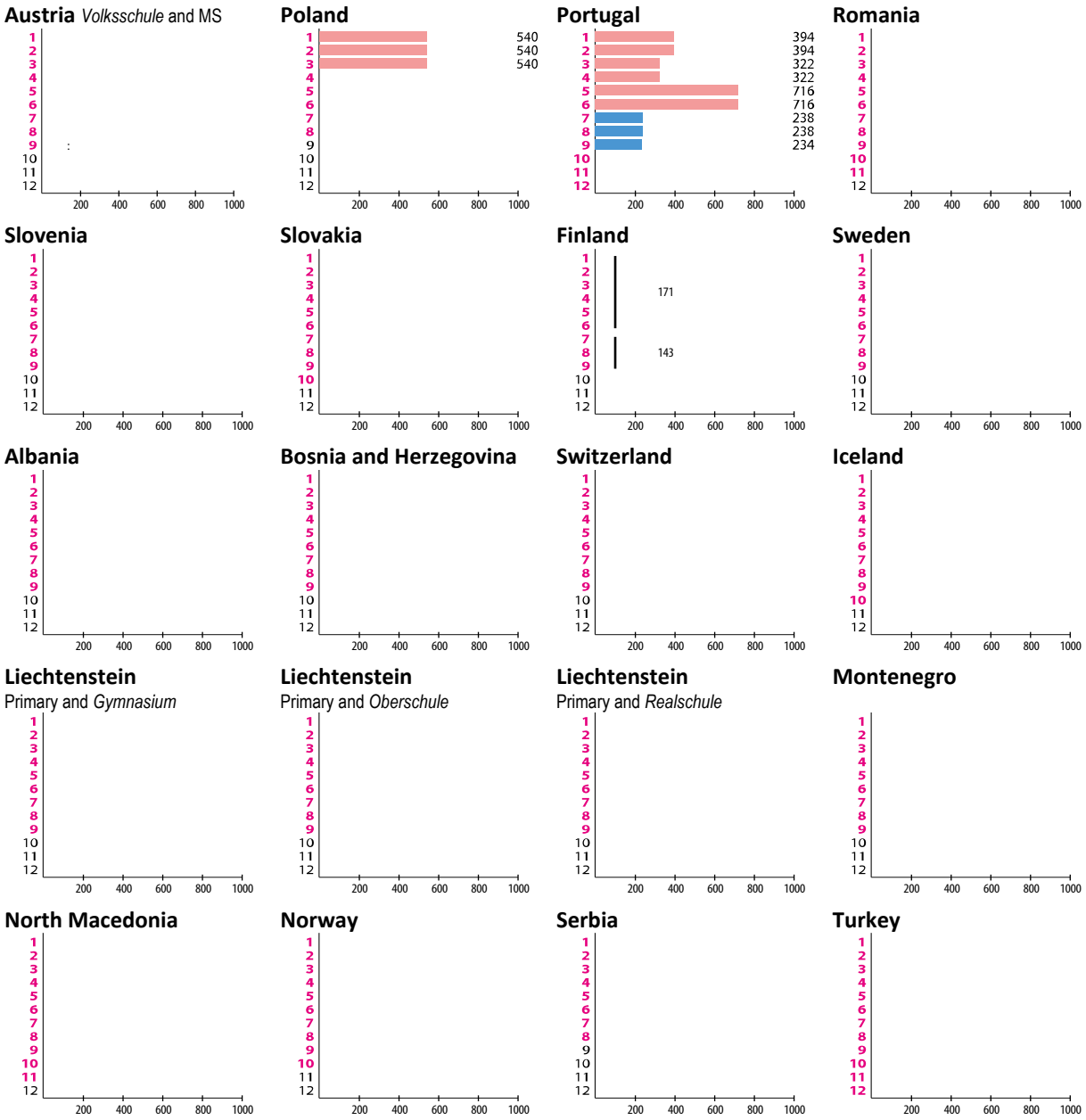


For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

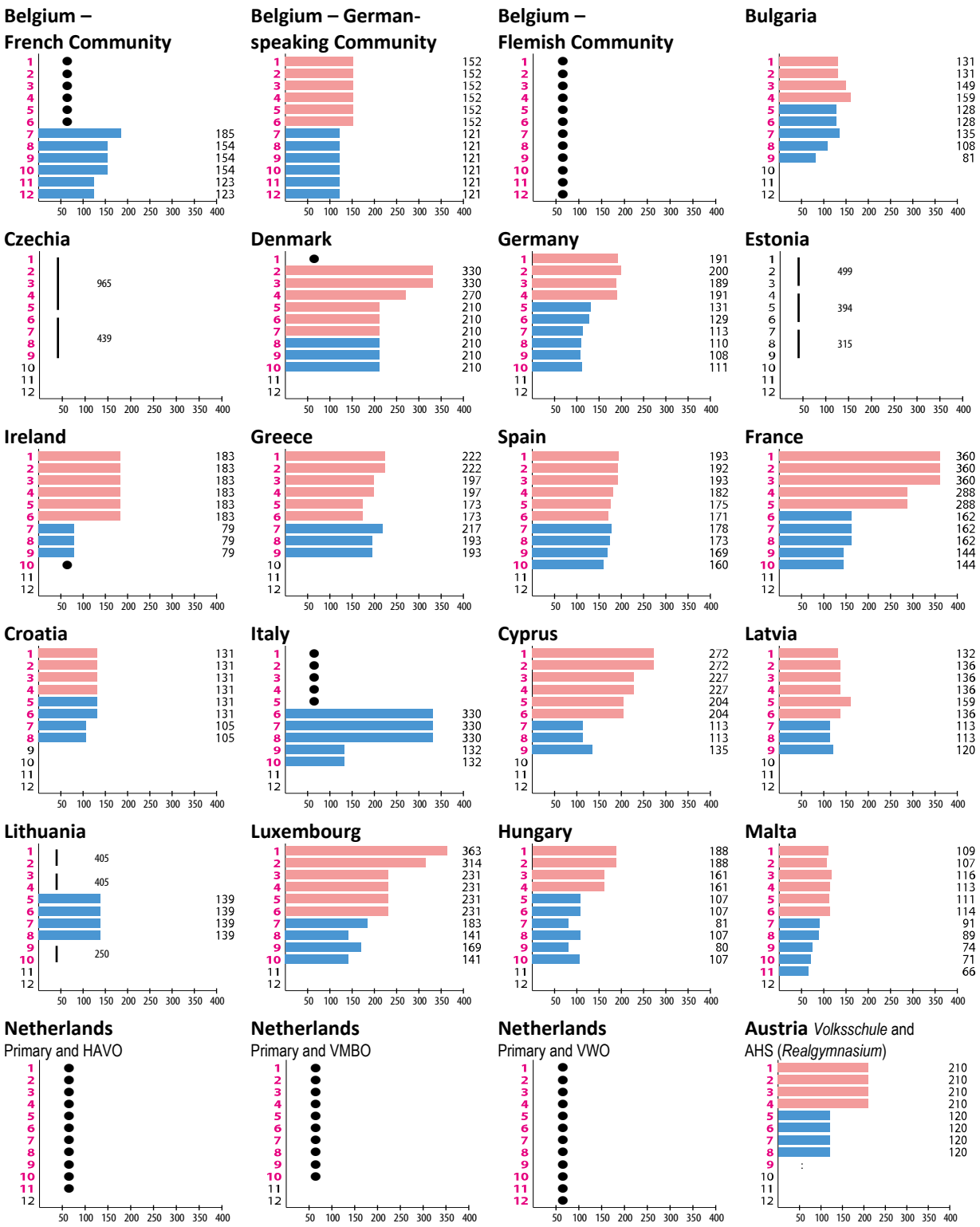
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

READING, WRITING AND LITERATURE



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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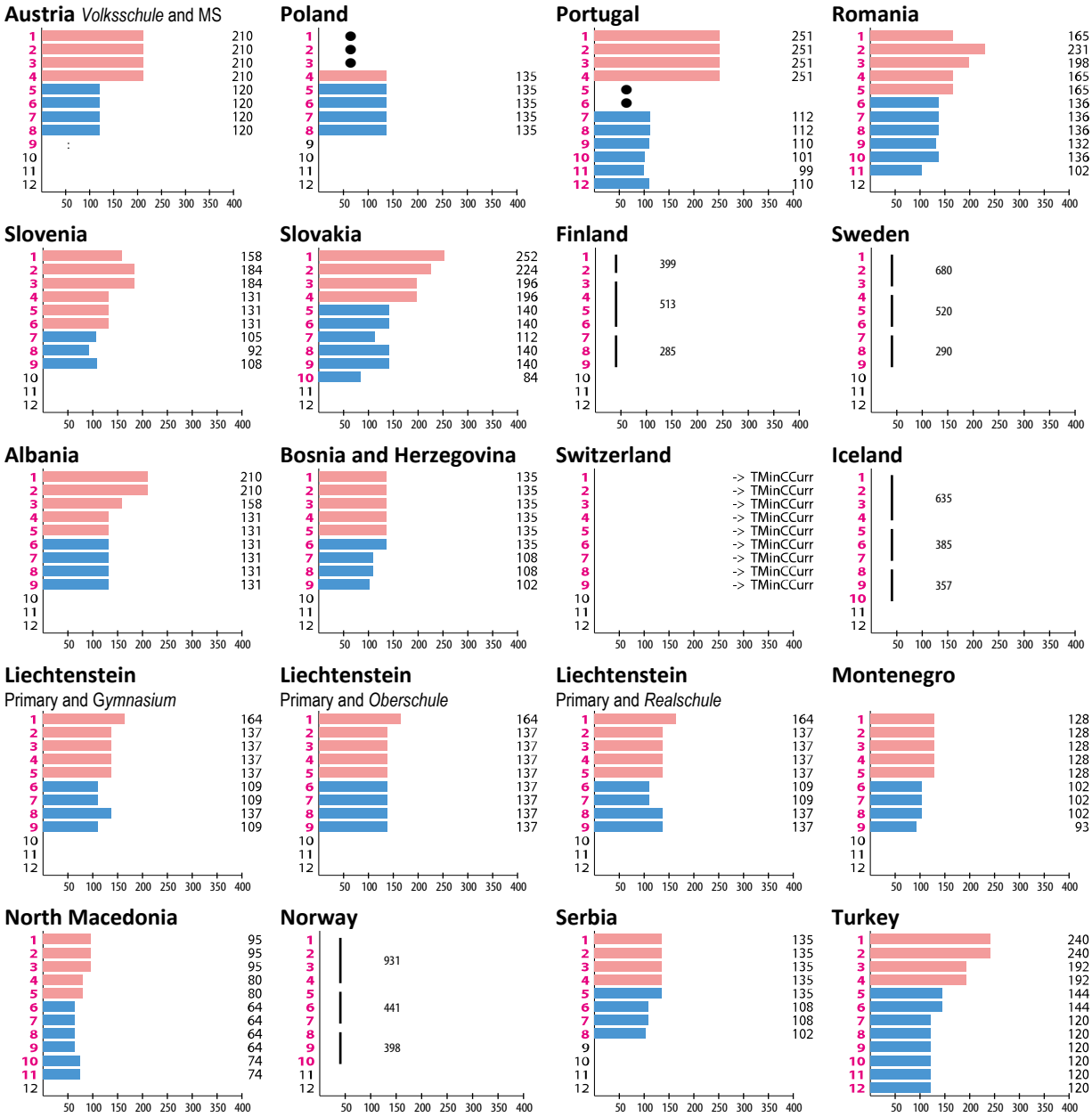

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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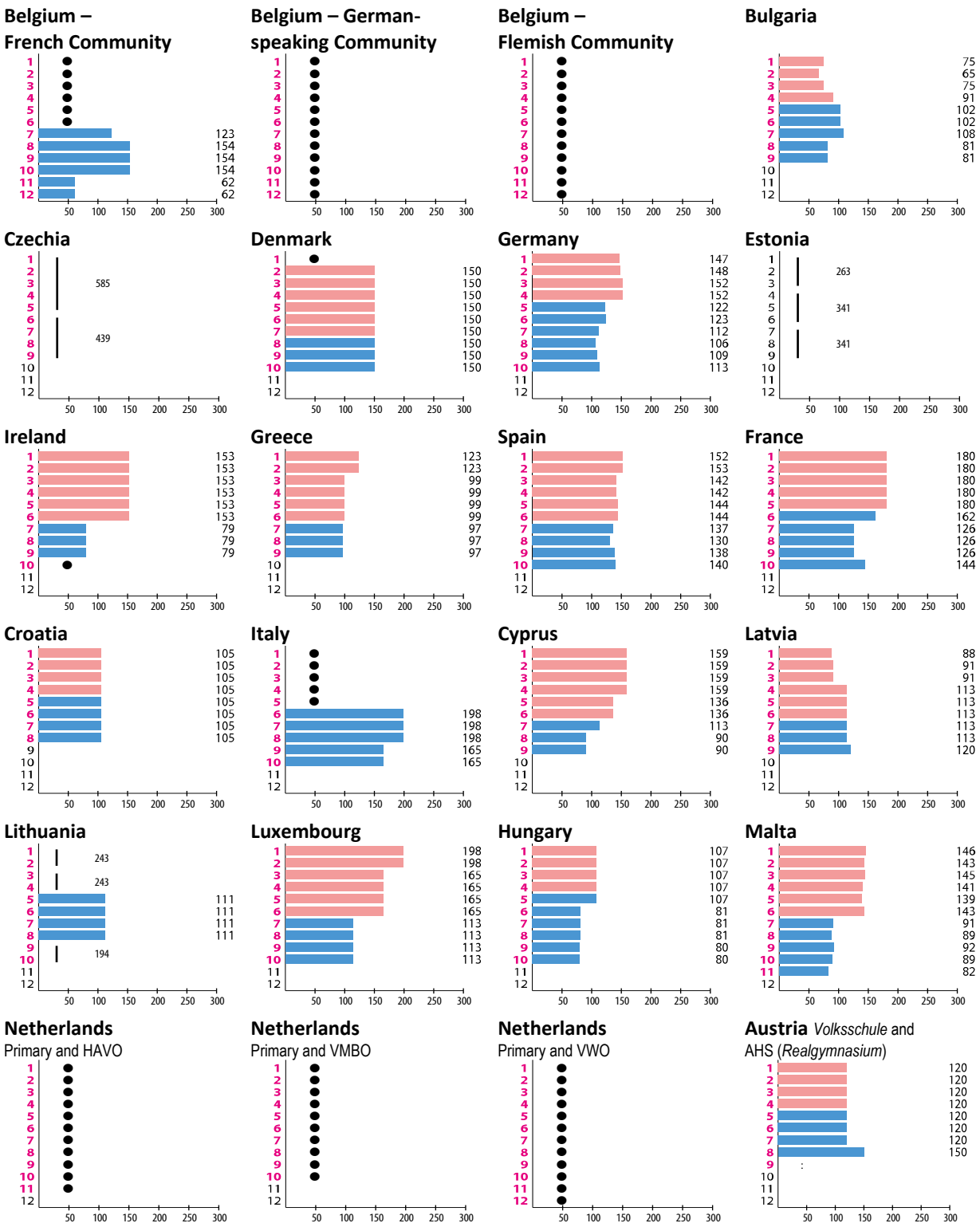
MATHEMATICS

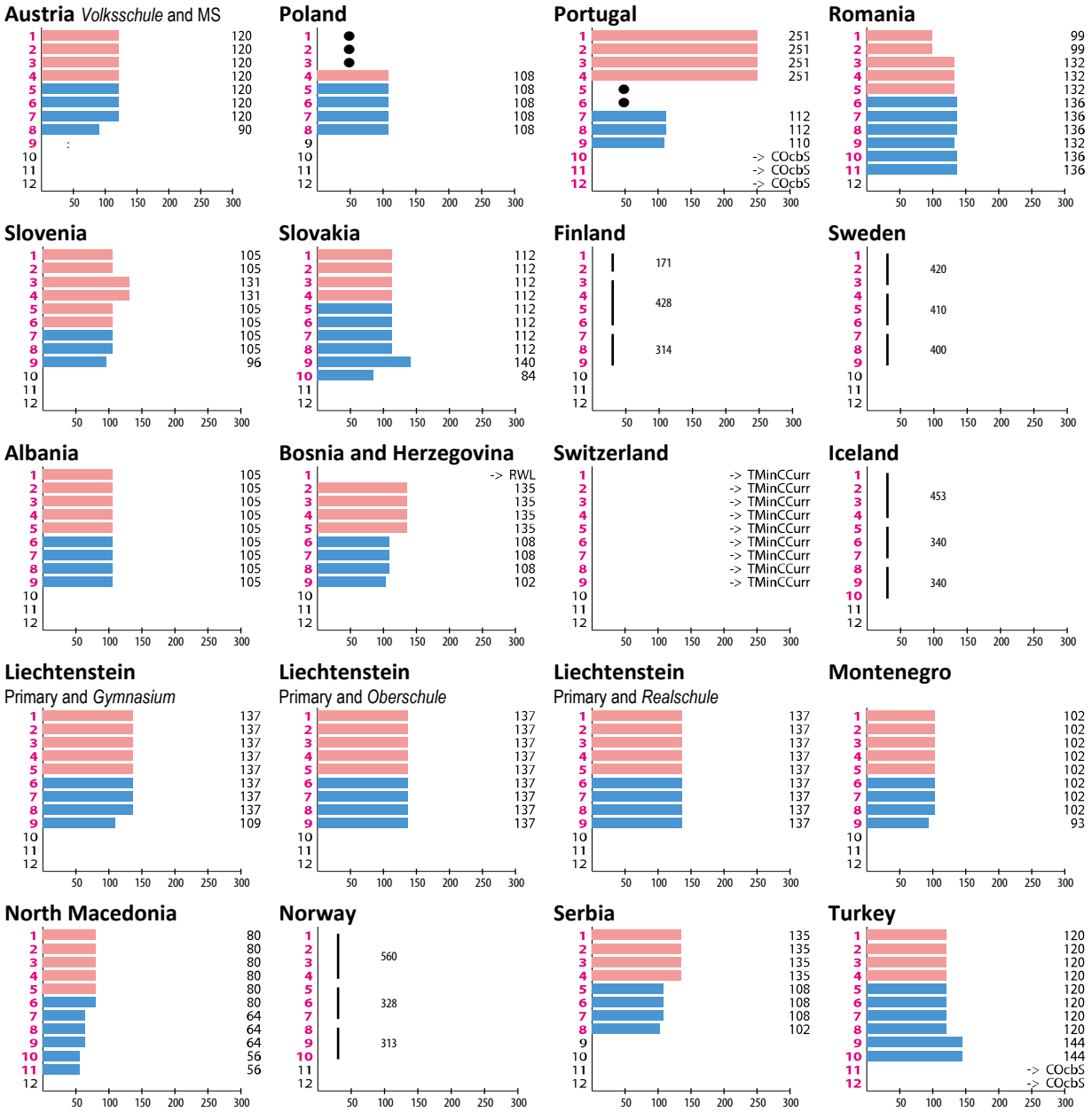


For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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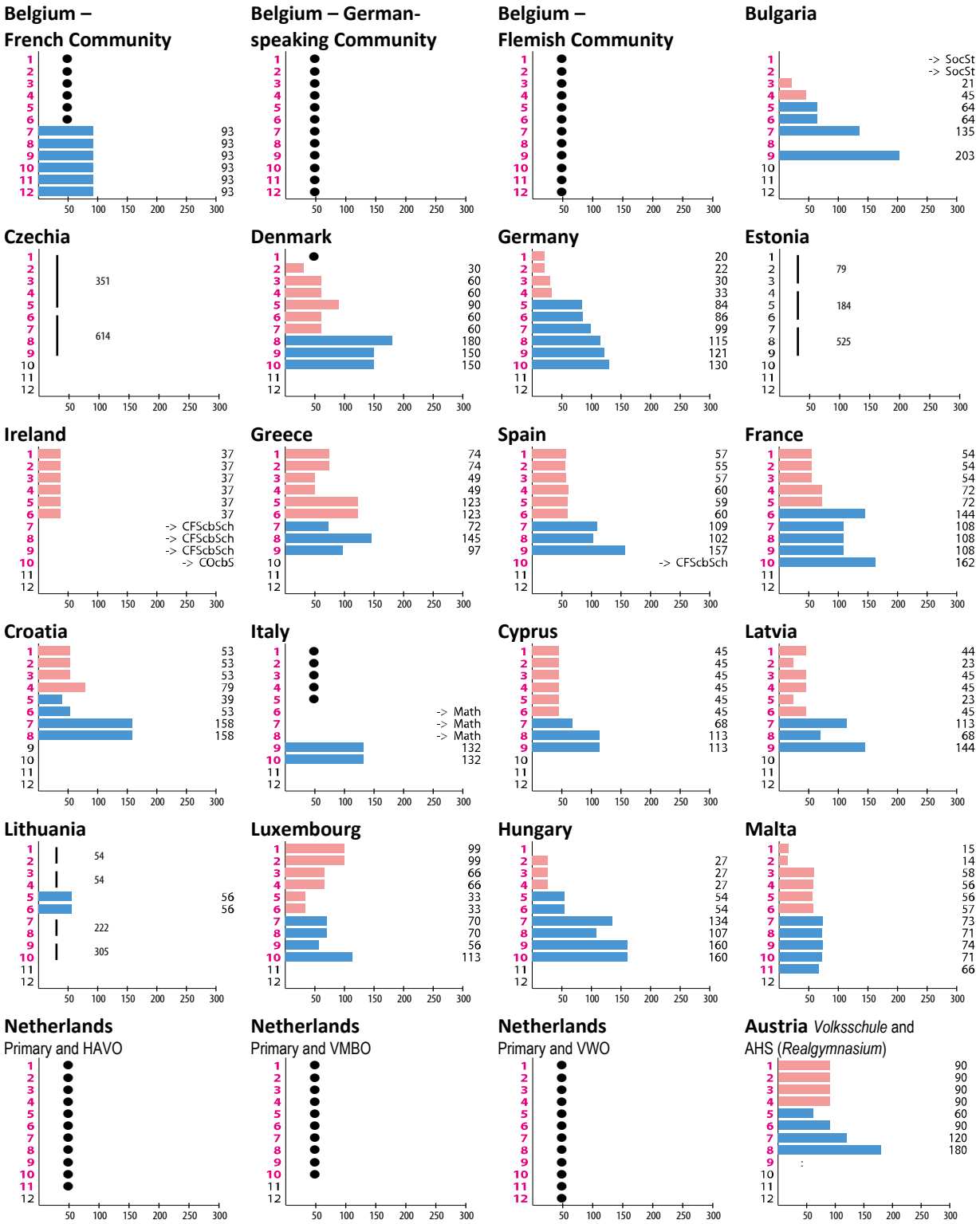
NATURAL SCIENCES



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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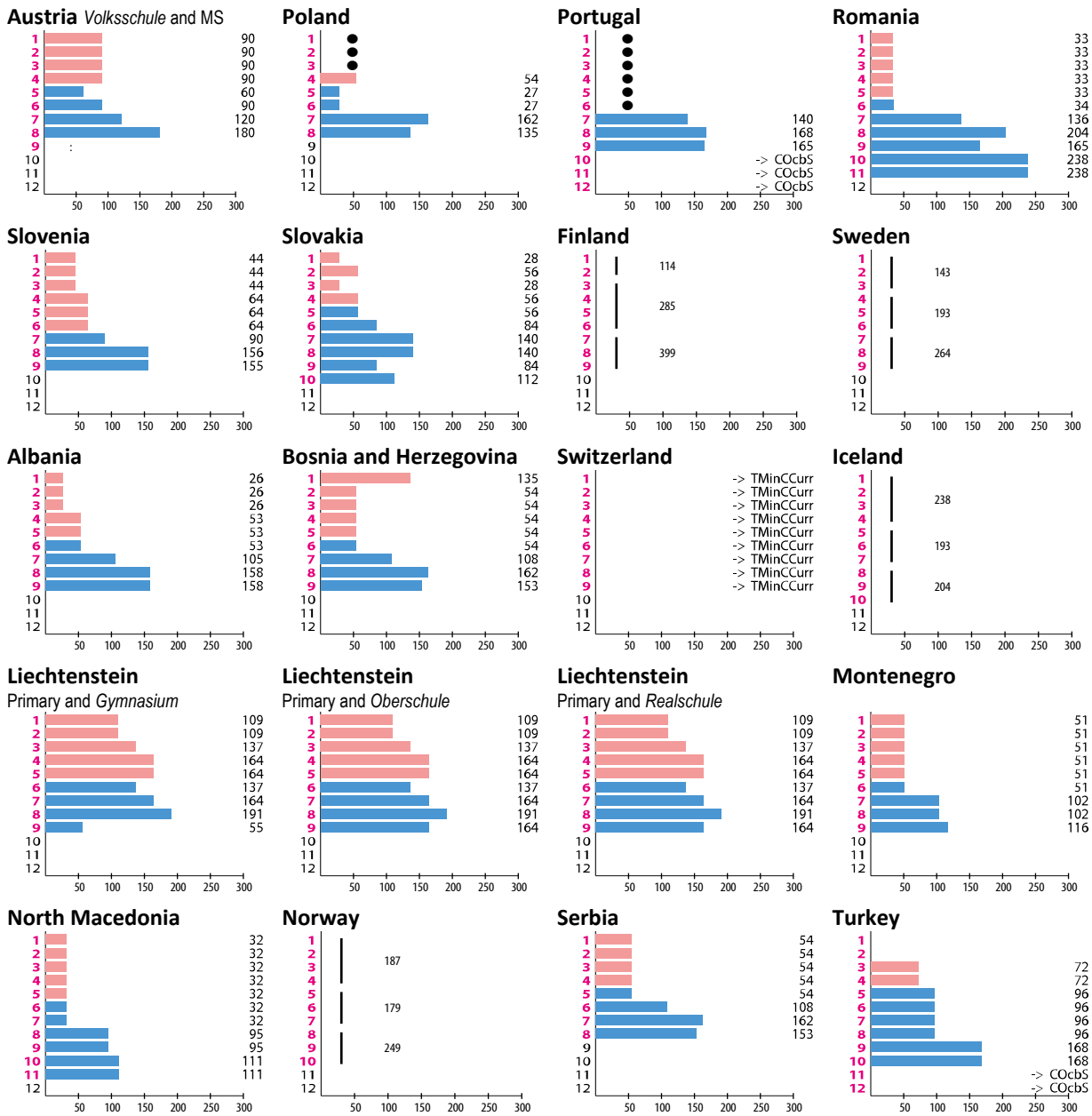

Country-specific notes

German–speaking Community of Belgium: Data include instruction time (⊂ IT) for technology in grades 1–8. **Flemish Community of Belgium**: ⊂ IT for technology in grades 1–6. **Czechia**: ⊂ IT for social studies in grades 1–5. **Ireland**: ⊂ IT for technology in grades 1–6. **France**: ⊂ IT for social studies and ICT in grades 1–3 and for technology in grades 1–6. **Croatia**: ⊂ IT for social studies in grades 1–4. **Cyprus**: ⊂ IT for technology in grades 1–4. **Malta**: ⊂ IT for technology in grades 1–6. **Austria**: ⊂ IT for social studies and technology in grades 1–4. **Sweden**: ⊂ IT for technology in grades 1–9. **Bosnia and Herzegovina**: ⊂ IT for social studies in grades 1–4. **Liechtenstein**: ⊂ IT for social studies (primary education *Oberschule* and *Realschule*). **Montenegro**: ⊂ IT for social studies in grades 1–3 and technology grades 1–4. **Serbia**: ⊂ IT for social studies in grades 1–4.

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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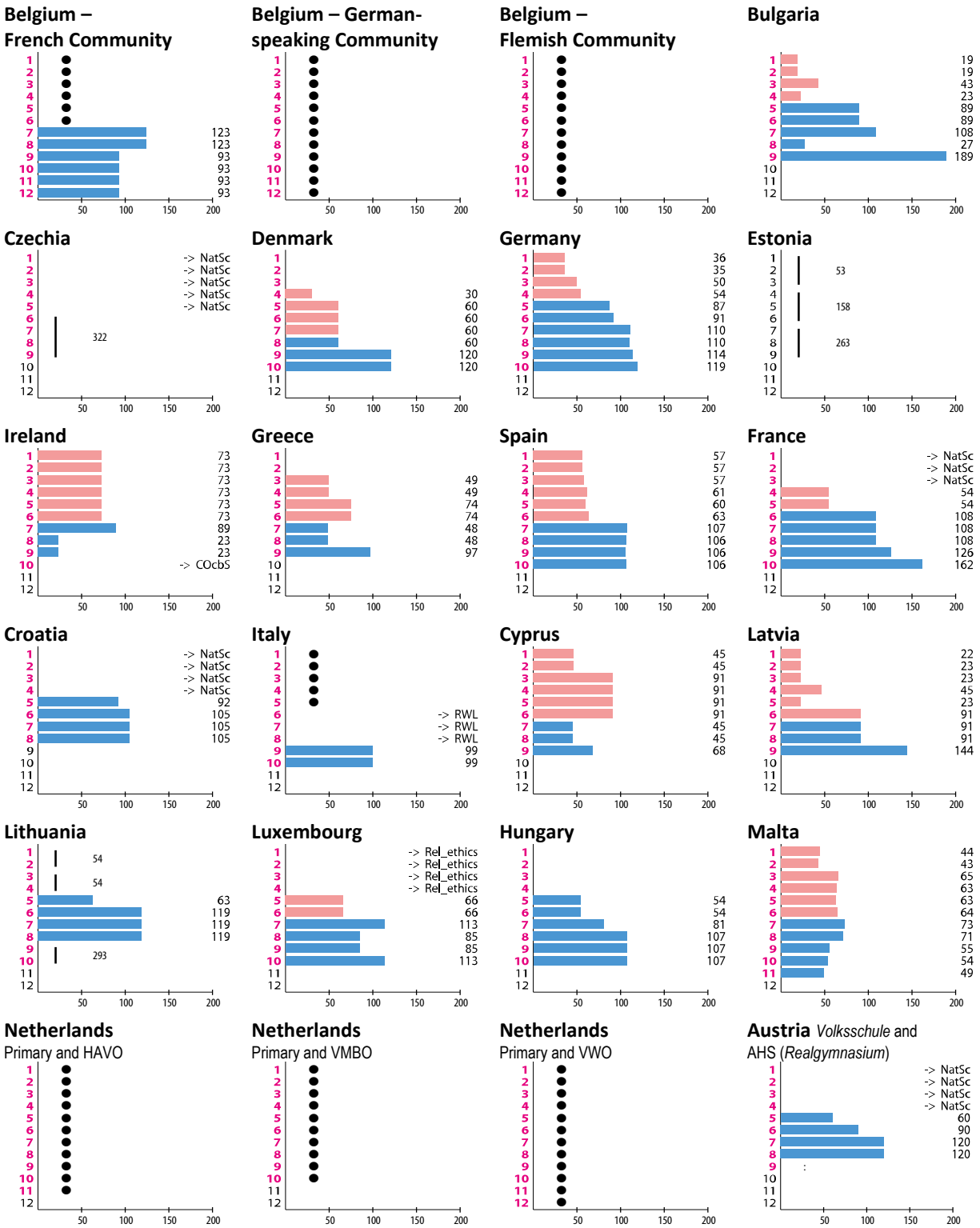
SOCIAL STUDIES



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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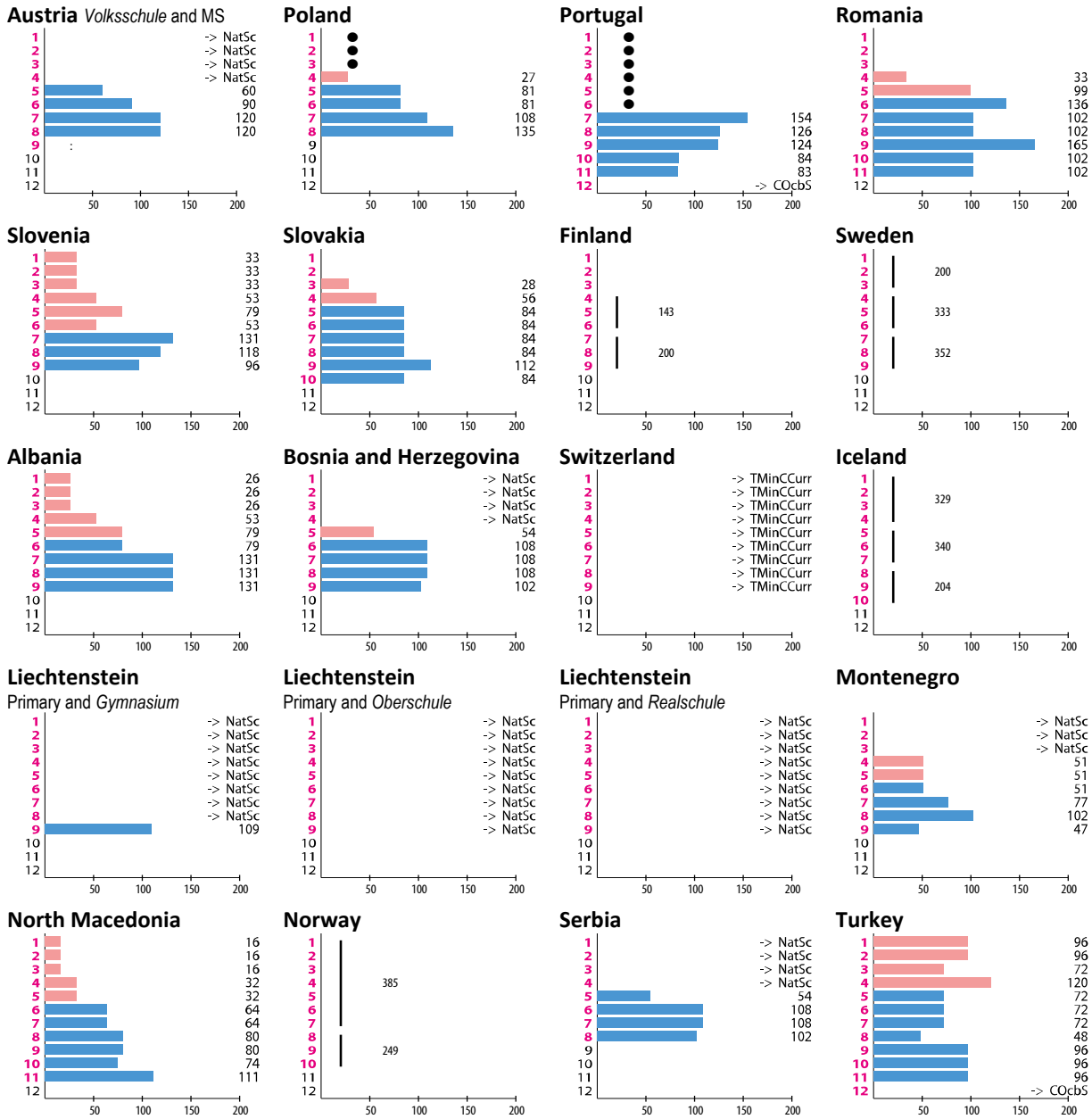

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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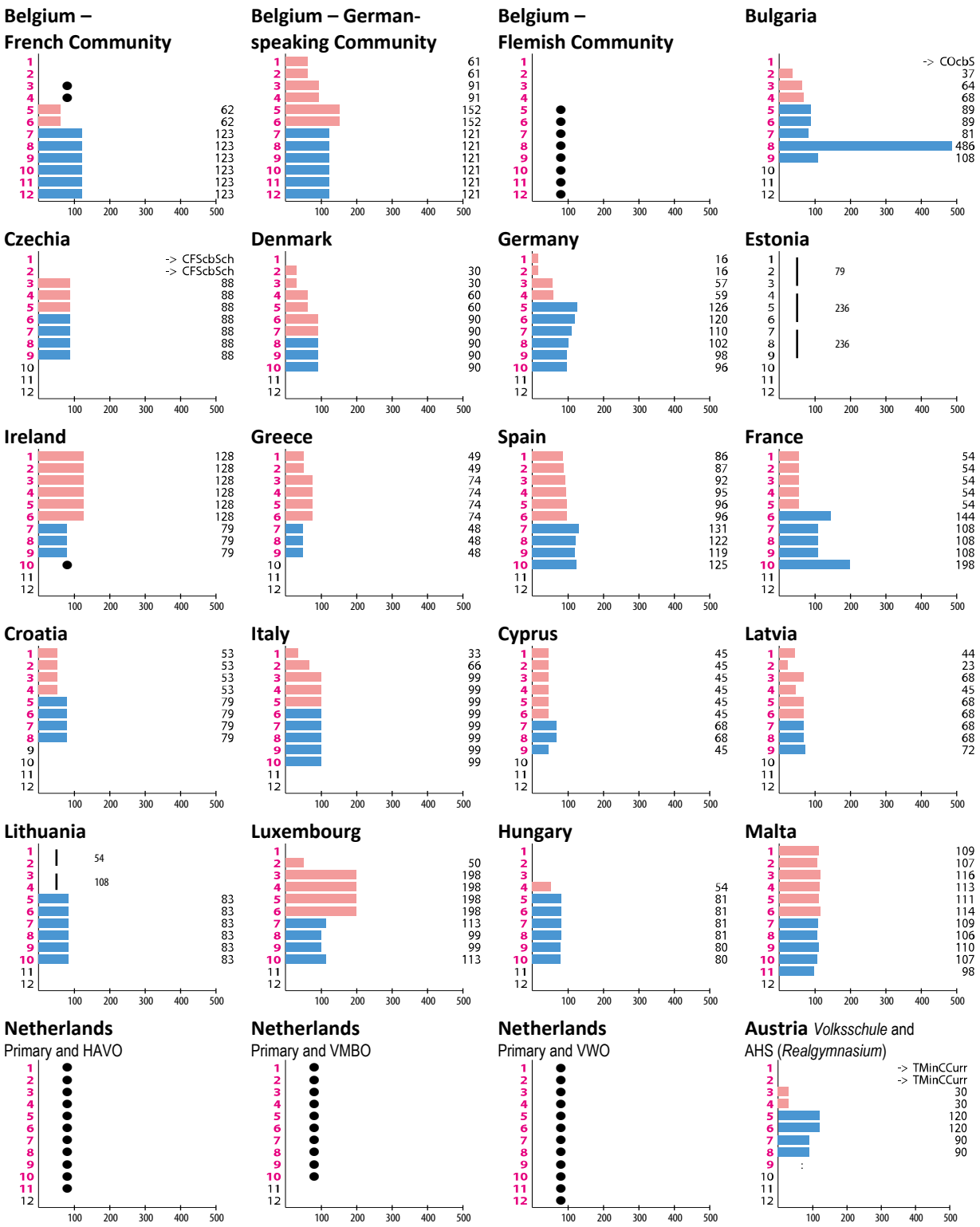
LANGUAGE 2



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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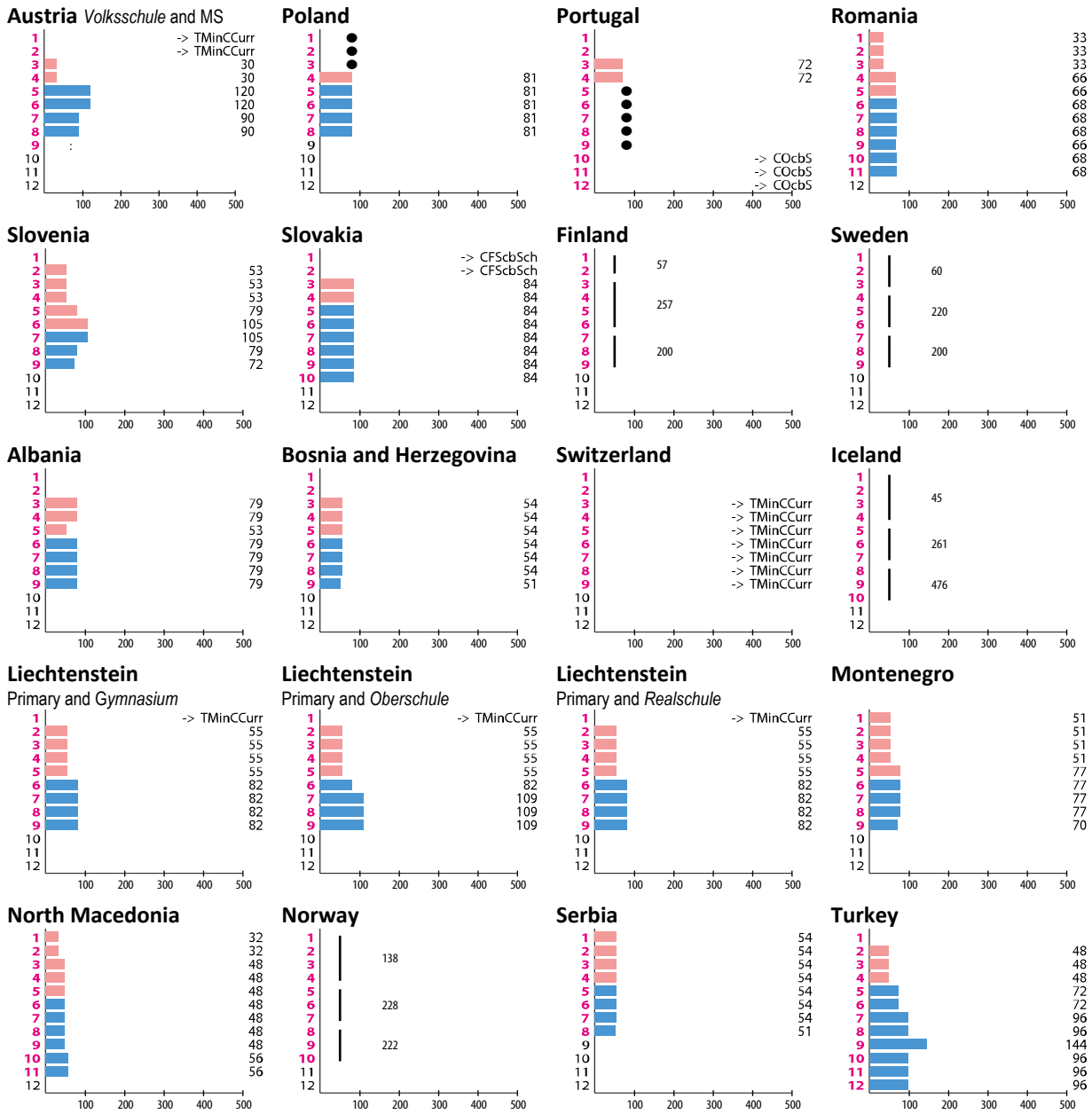

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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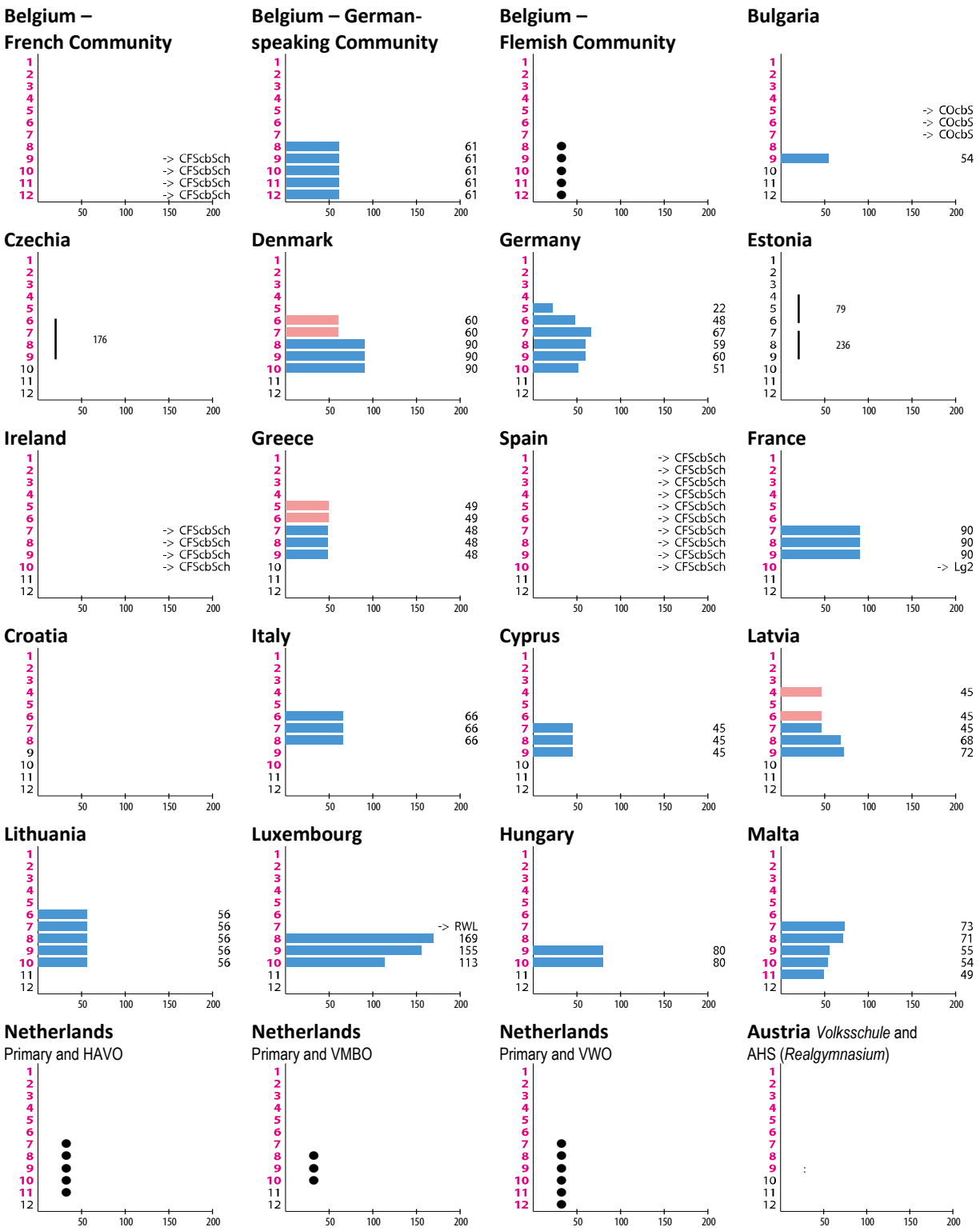
LANGUAGE 3



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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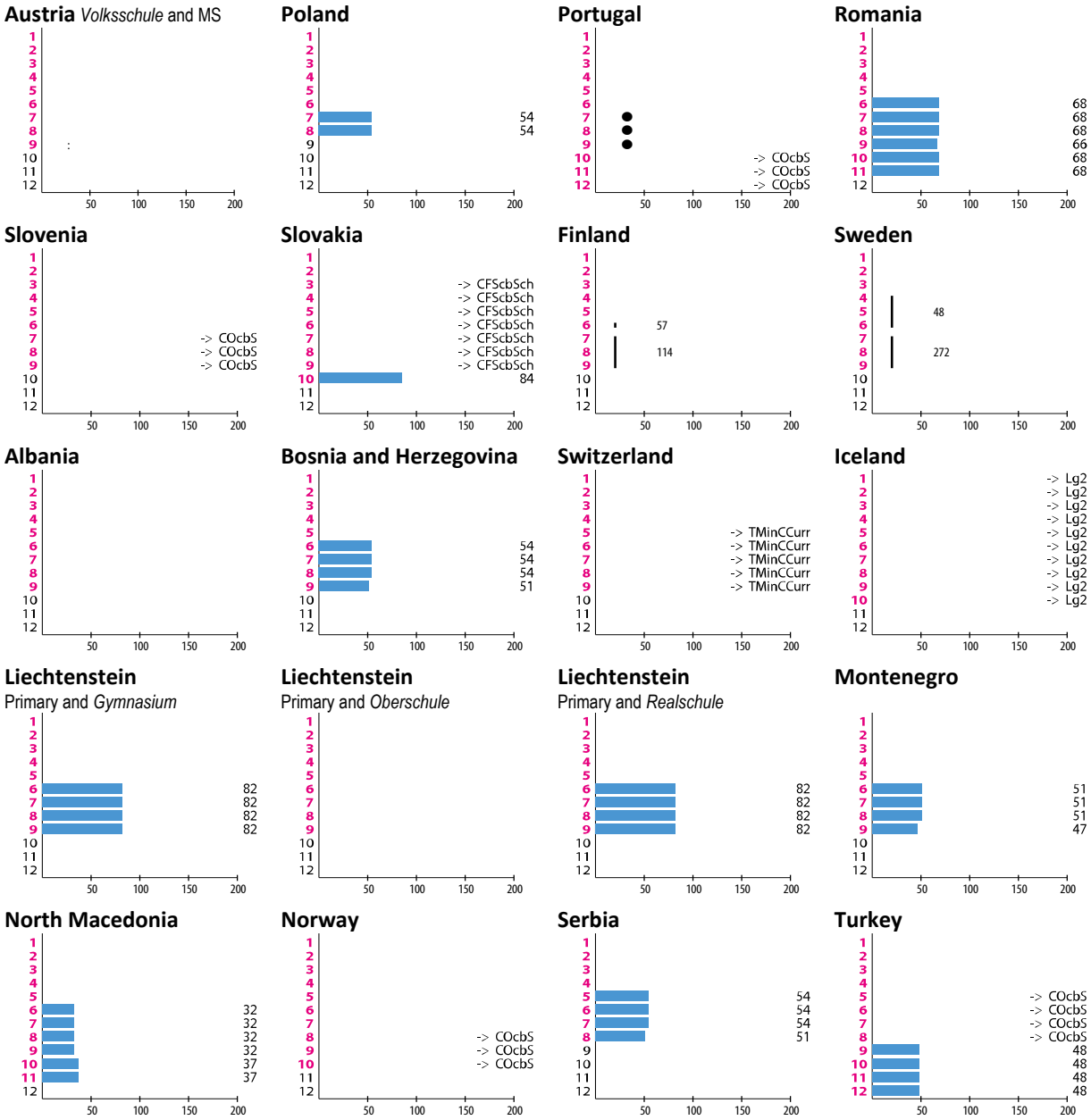

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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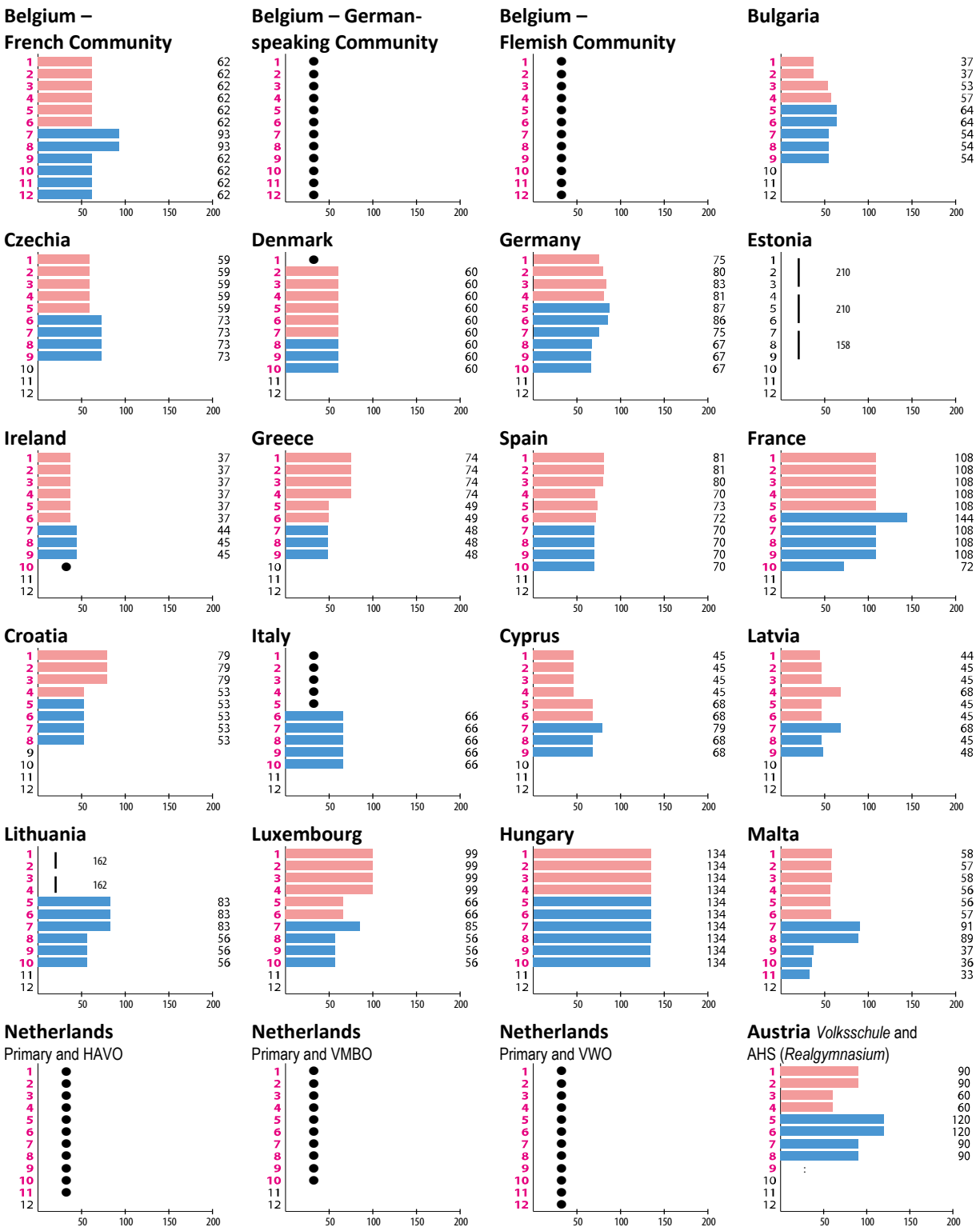
PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTH



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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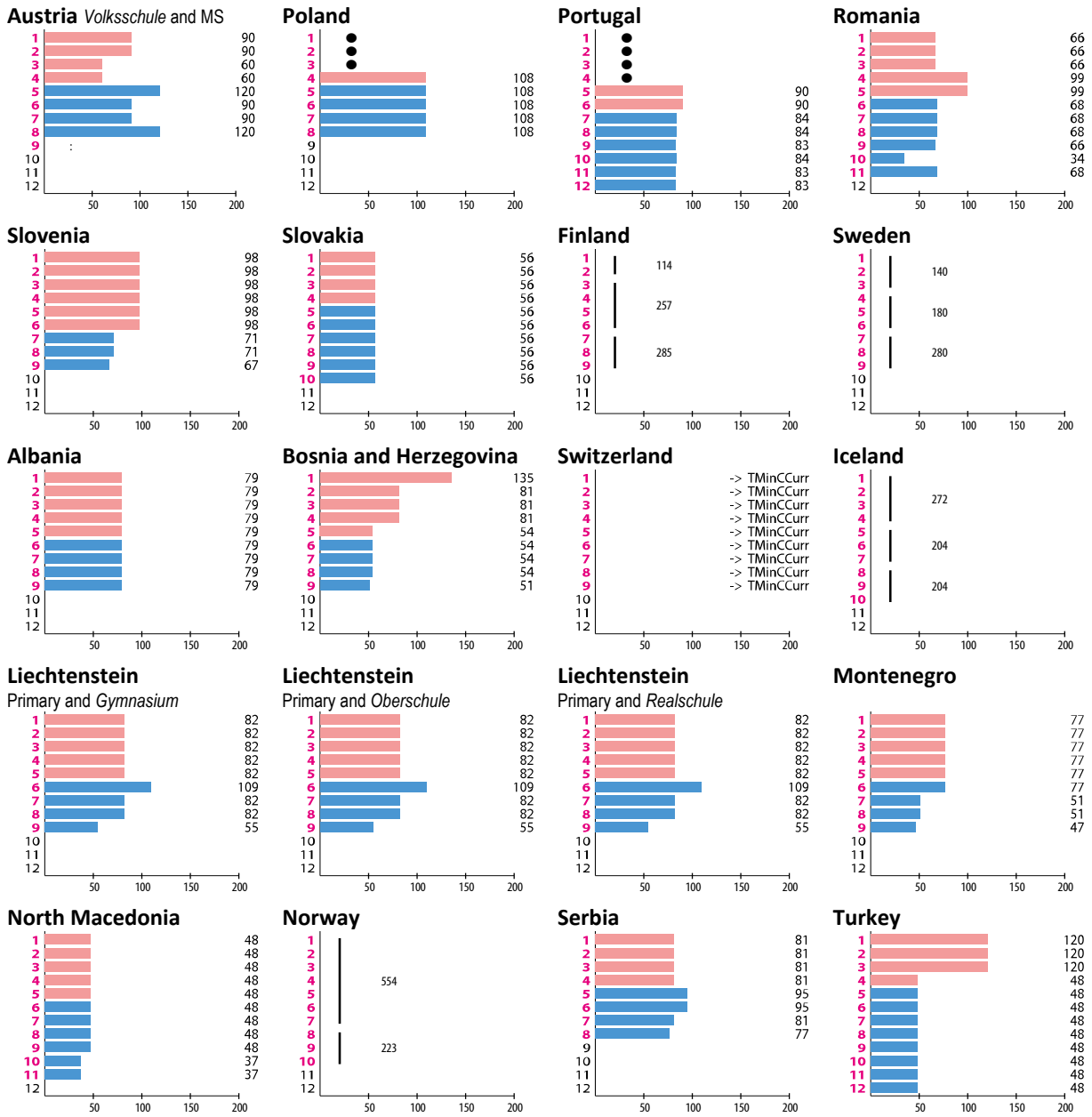

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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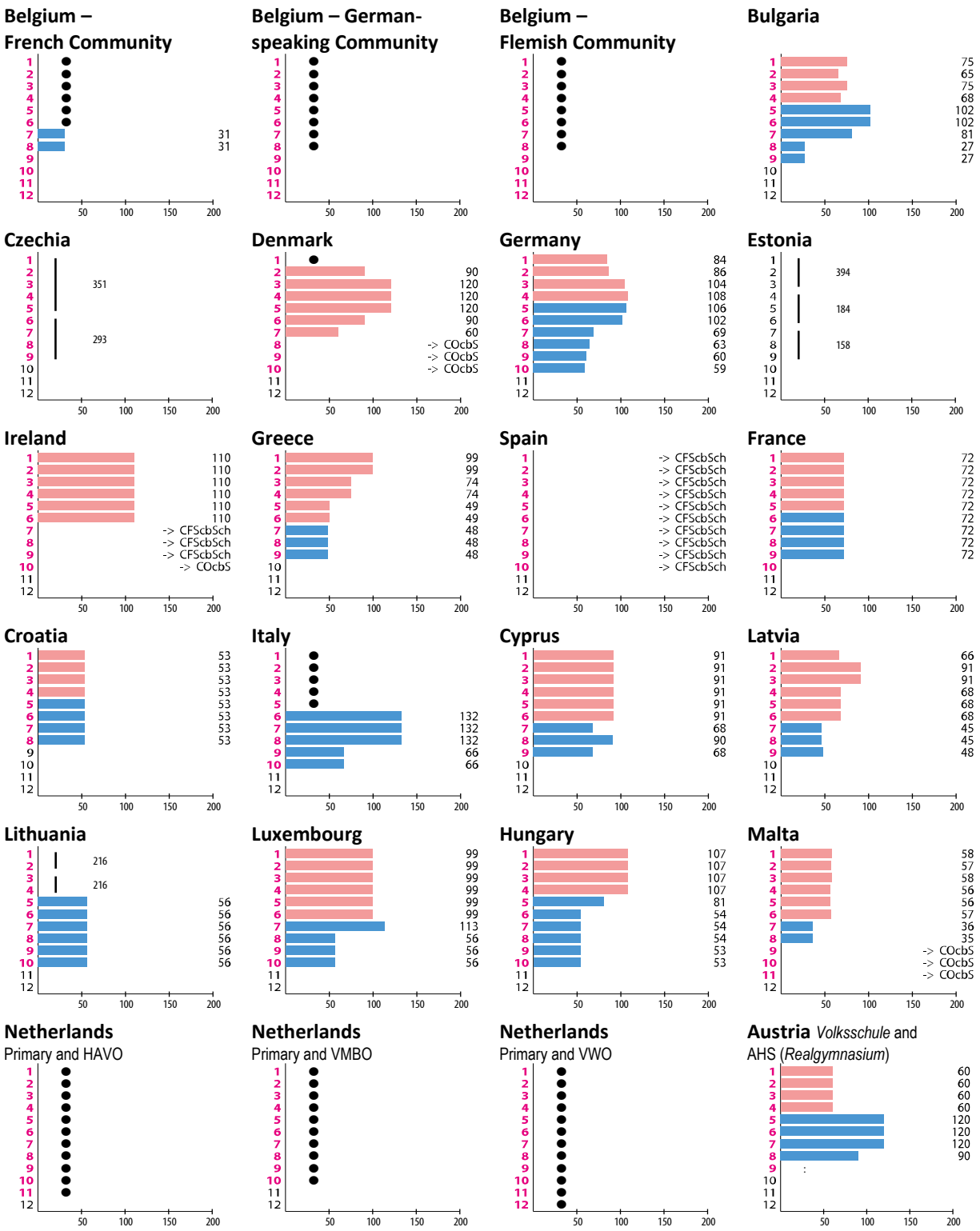
ARTS EDUCATION

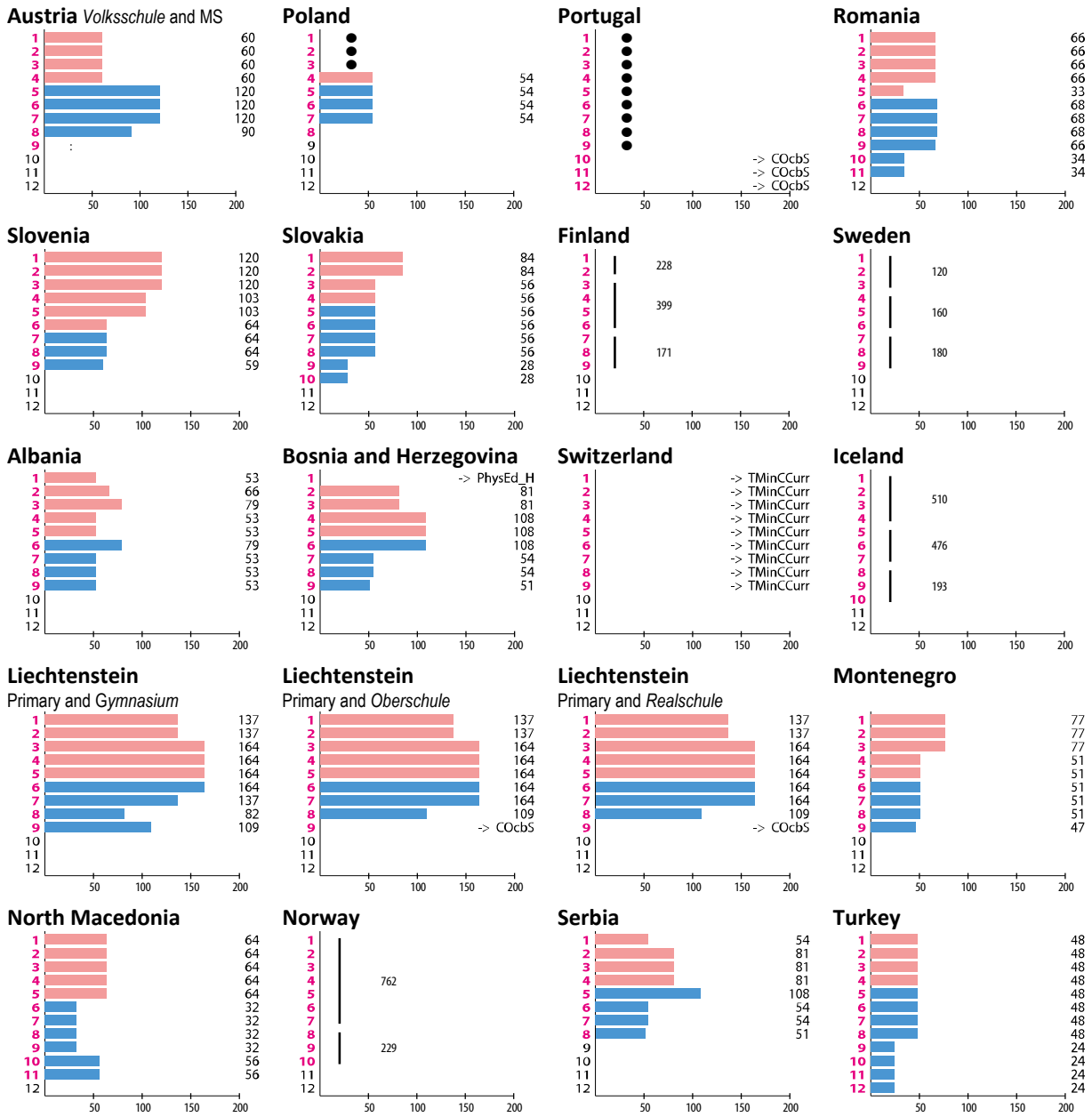


For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

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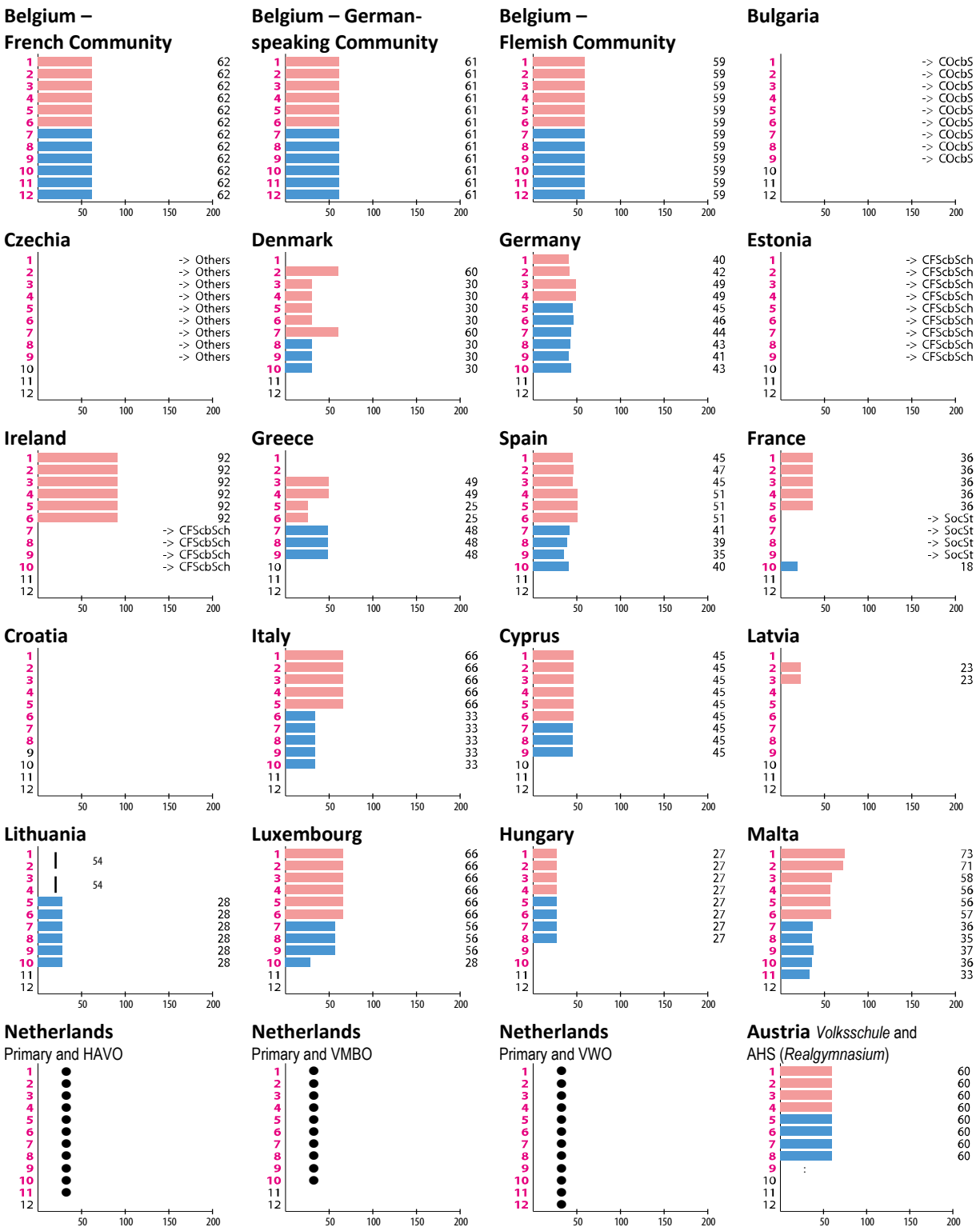
RELIGION/ETHICS/MORAL EDUCATION



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

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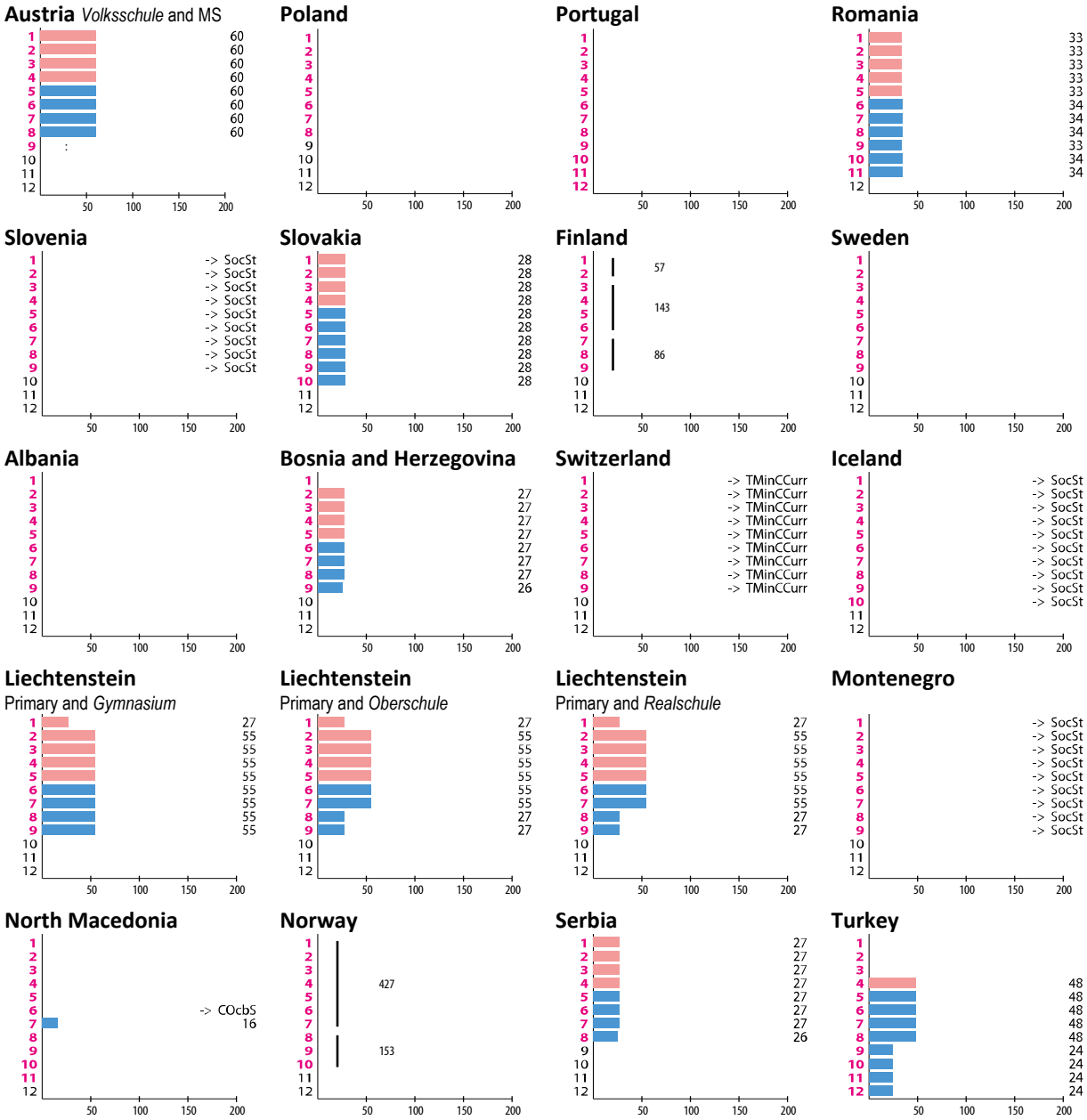

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

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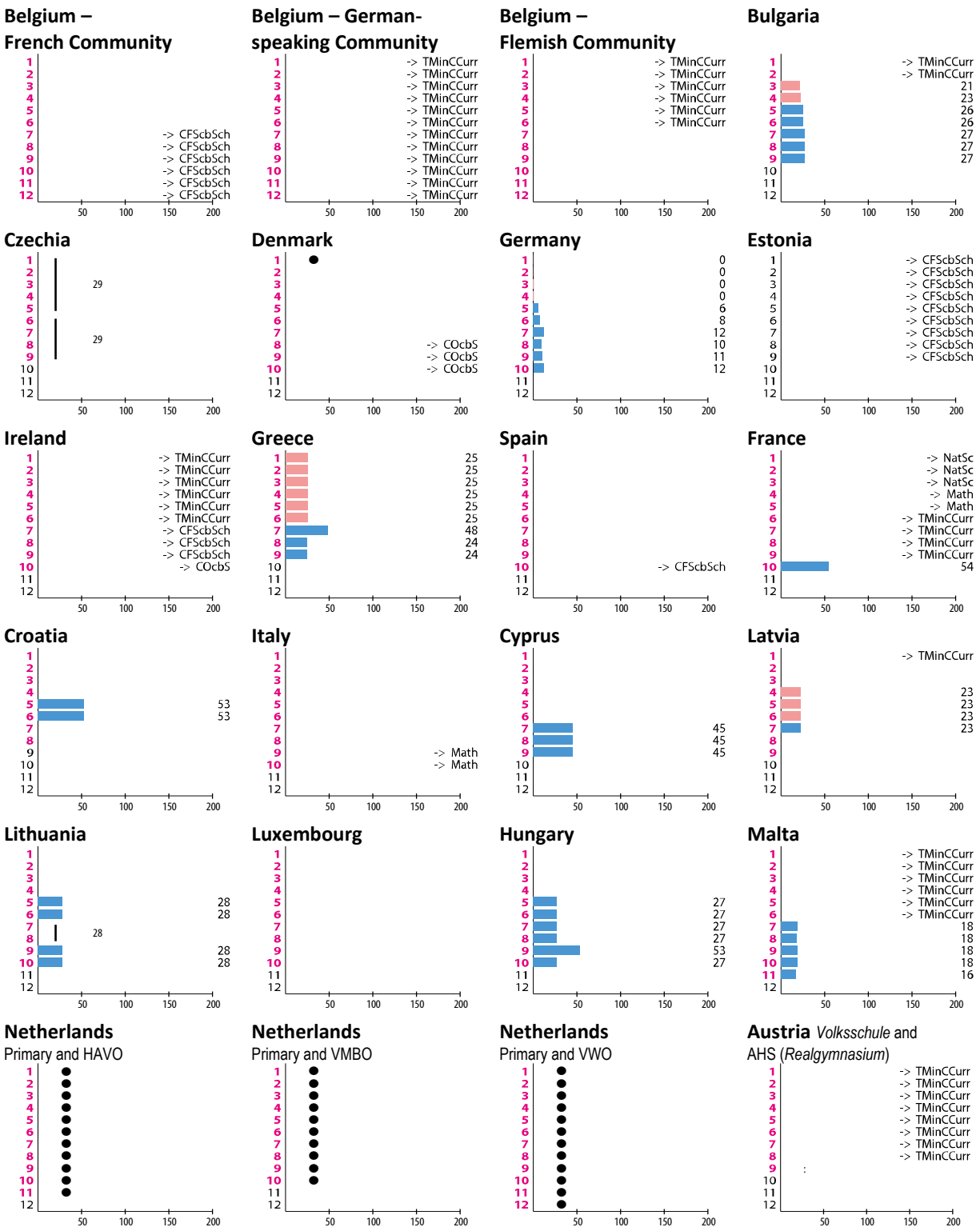
ICT



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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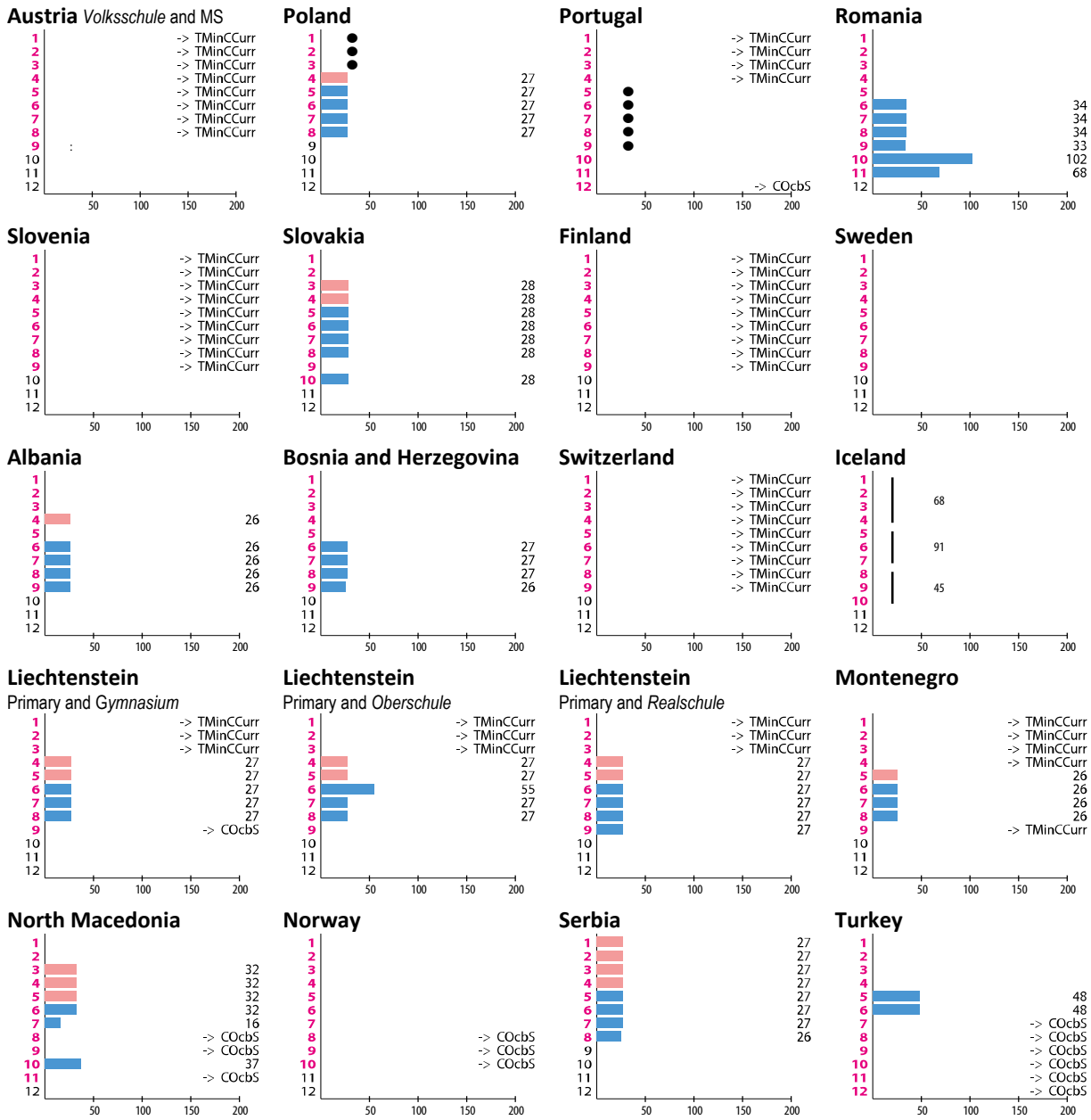

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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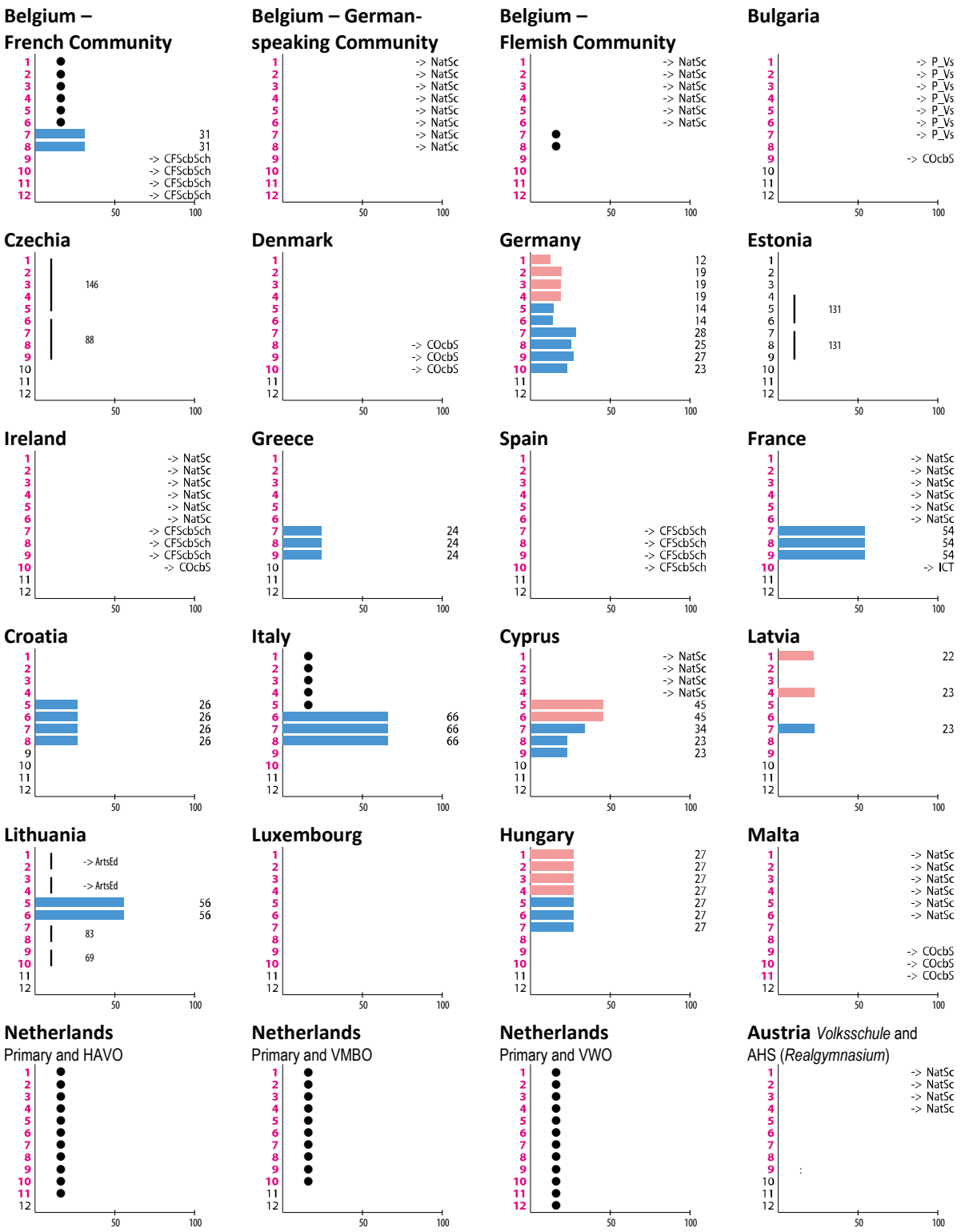
TECHNOLOGY



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

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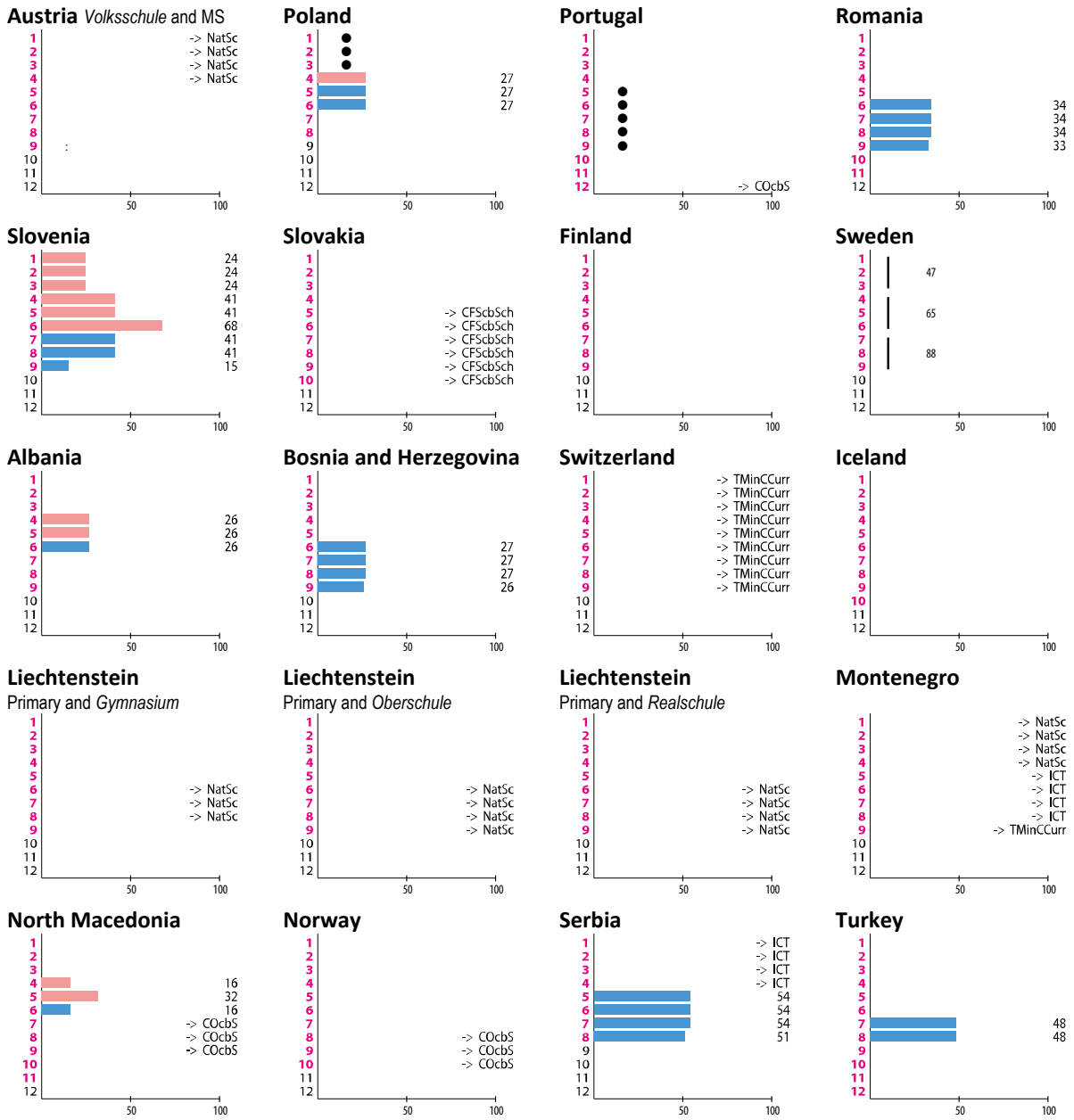

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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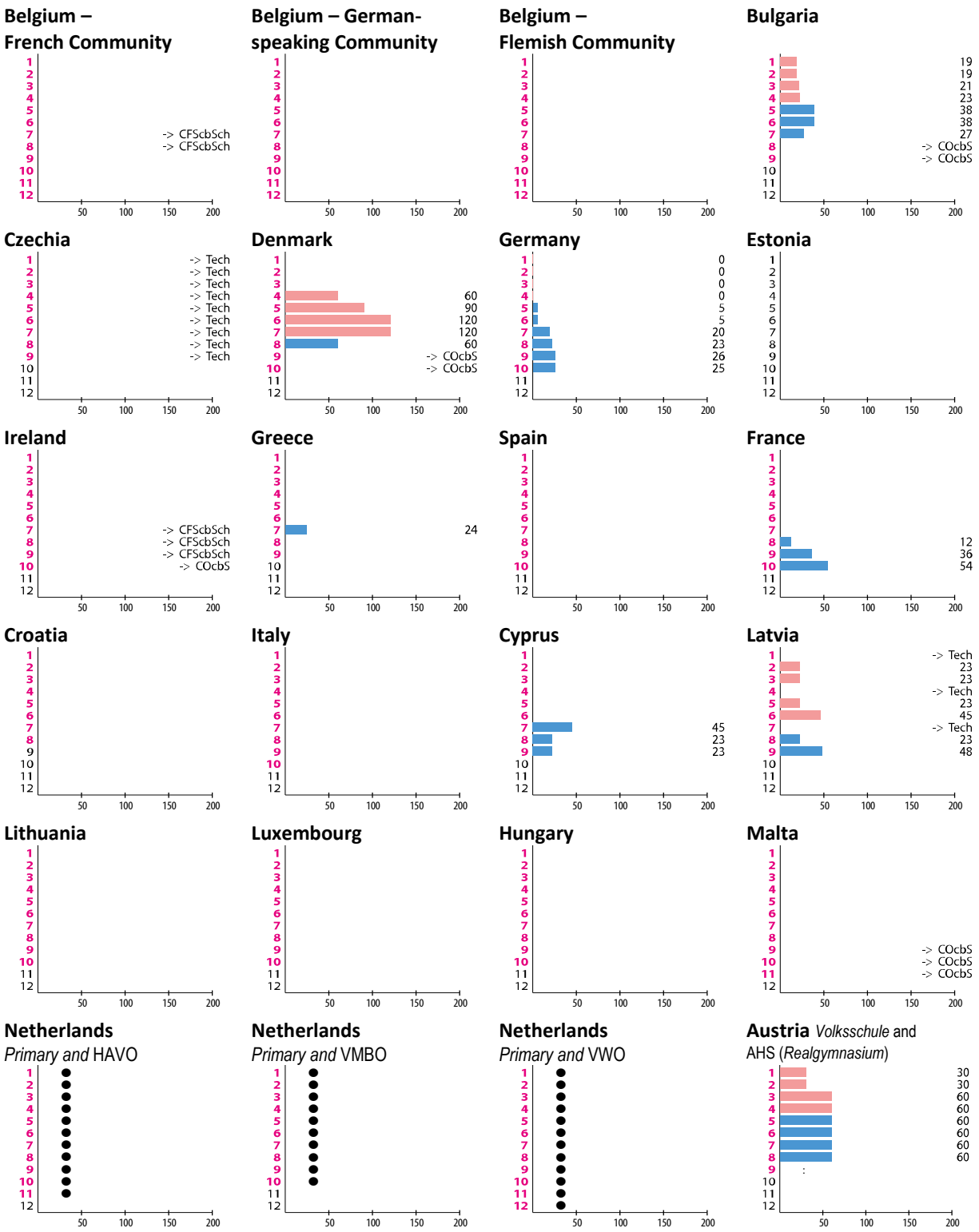
PRACTICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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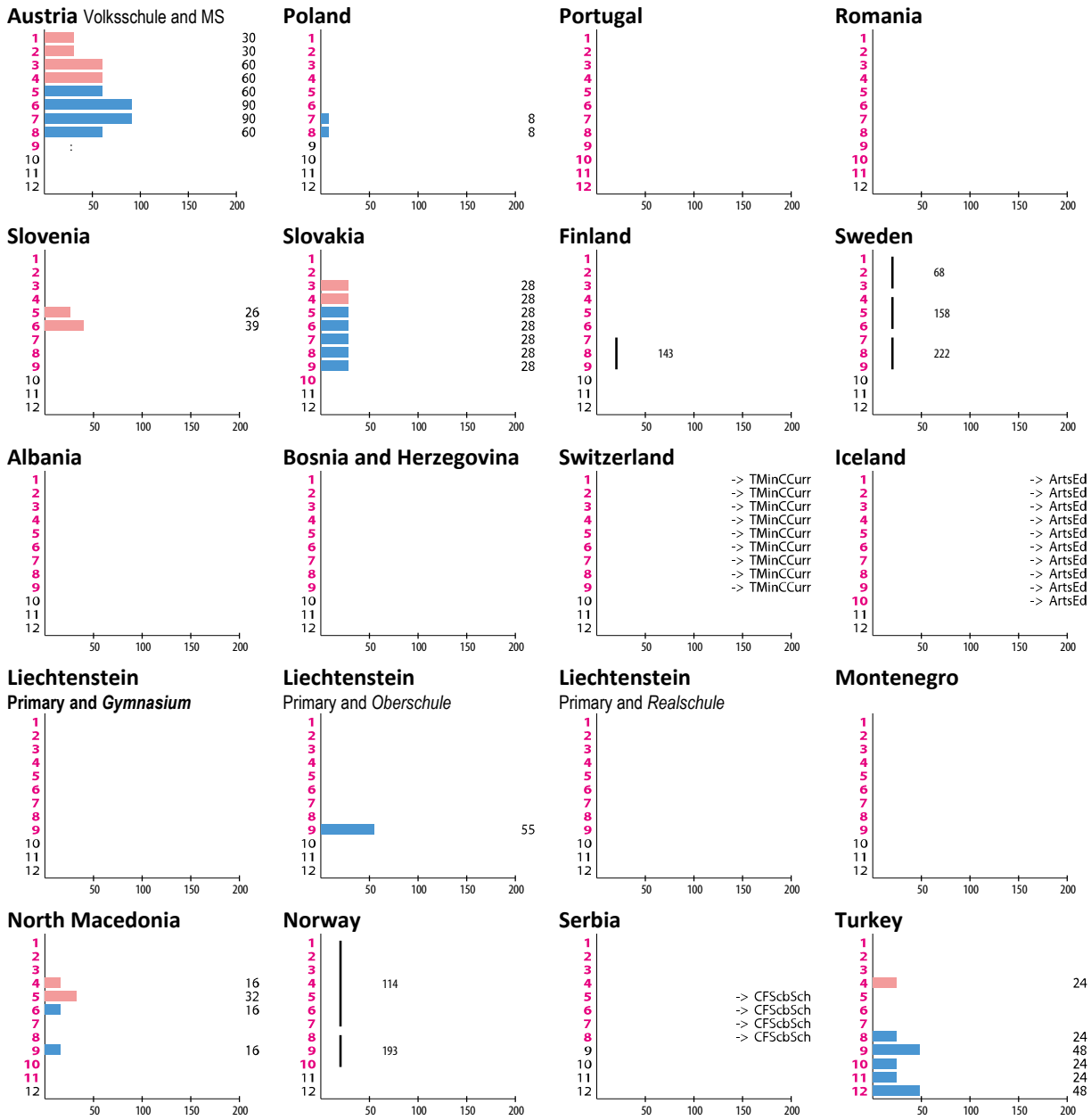

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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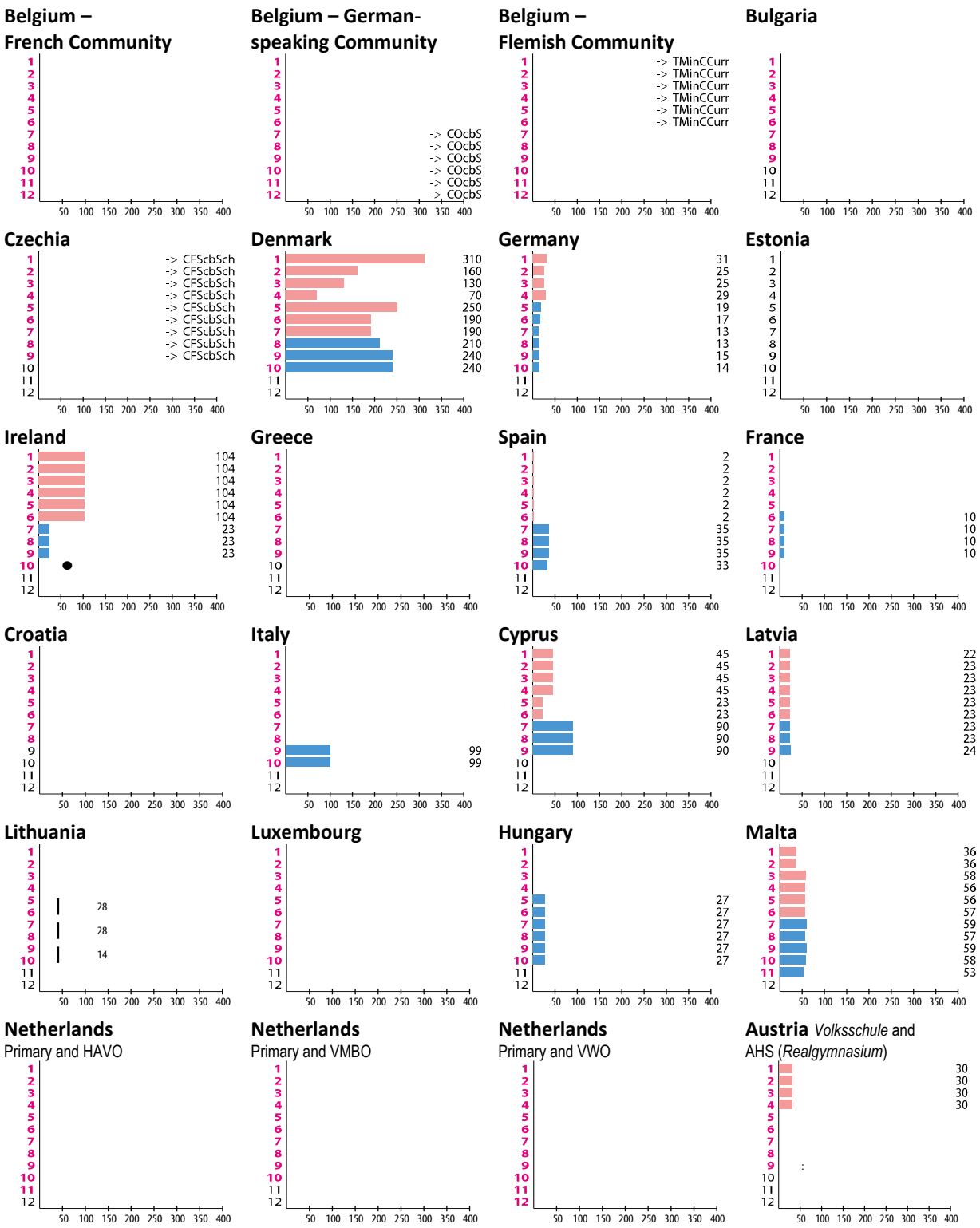
OTHER SUBJECTS

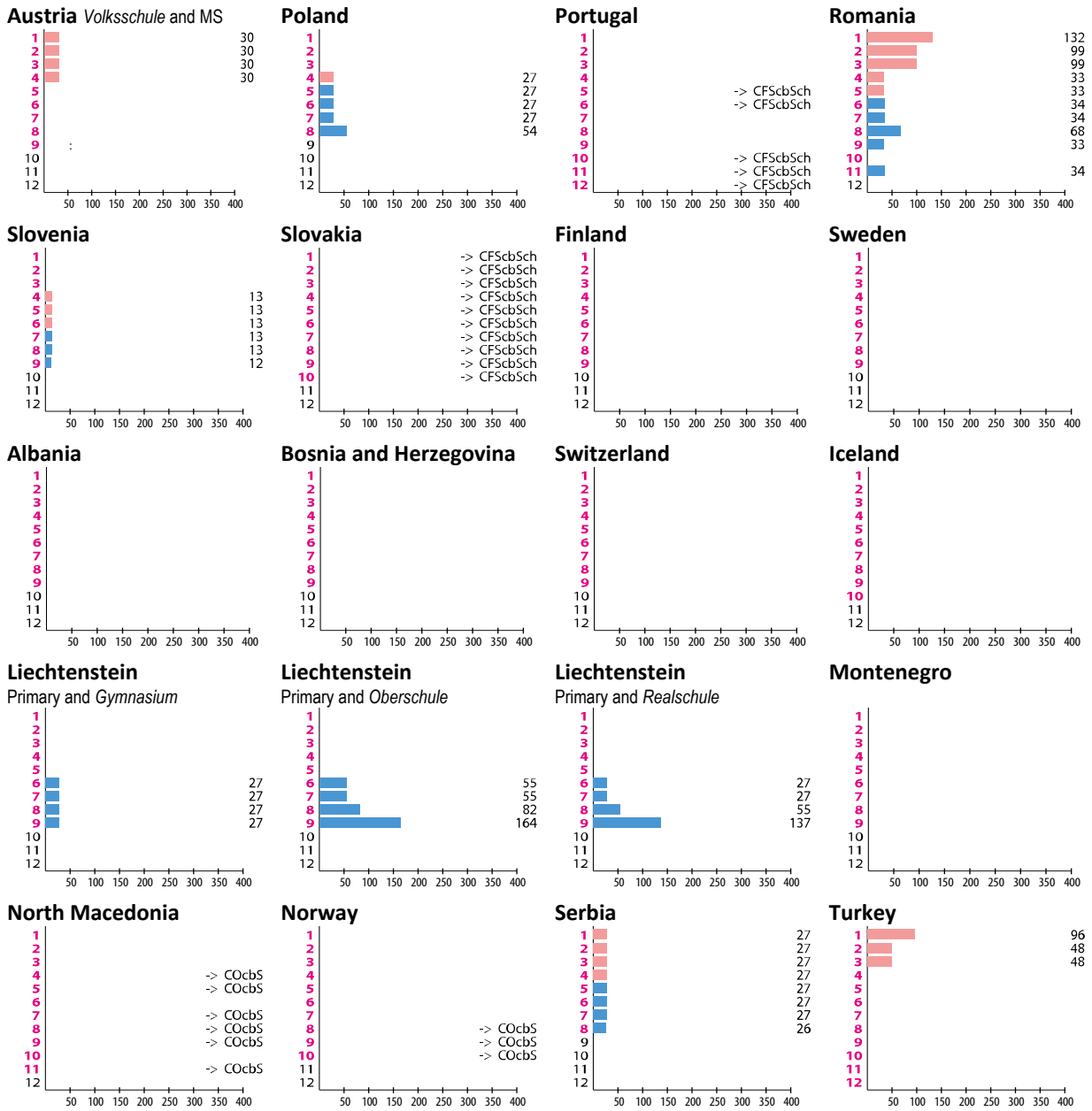


For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) | x Number of hours distributed between various school years *Source:* Eurydice.



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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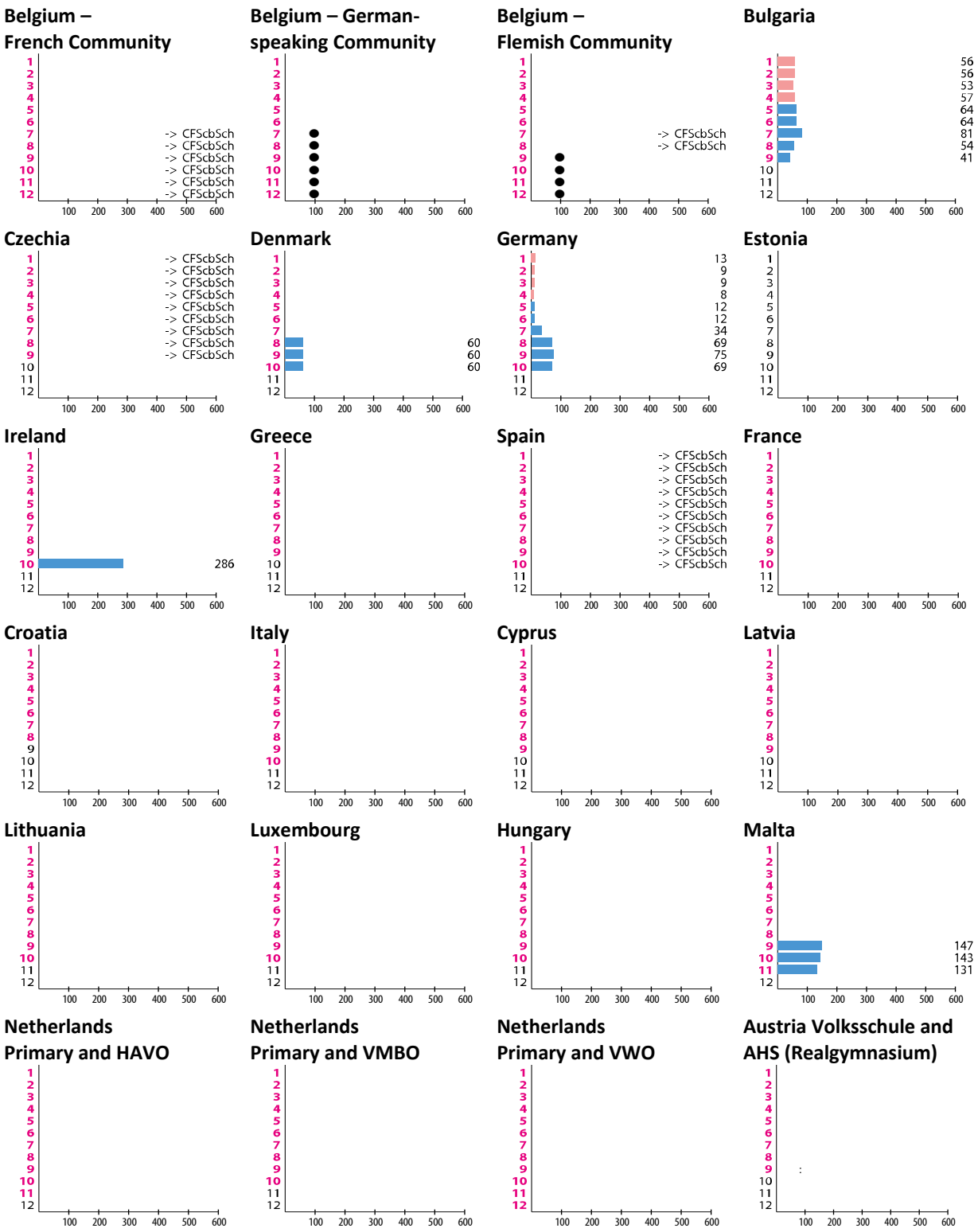
COMPULSORY OPTIONS CHOSEN BY THE STUDENTS



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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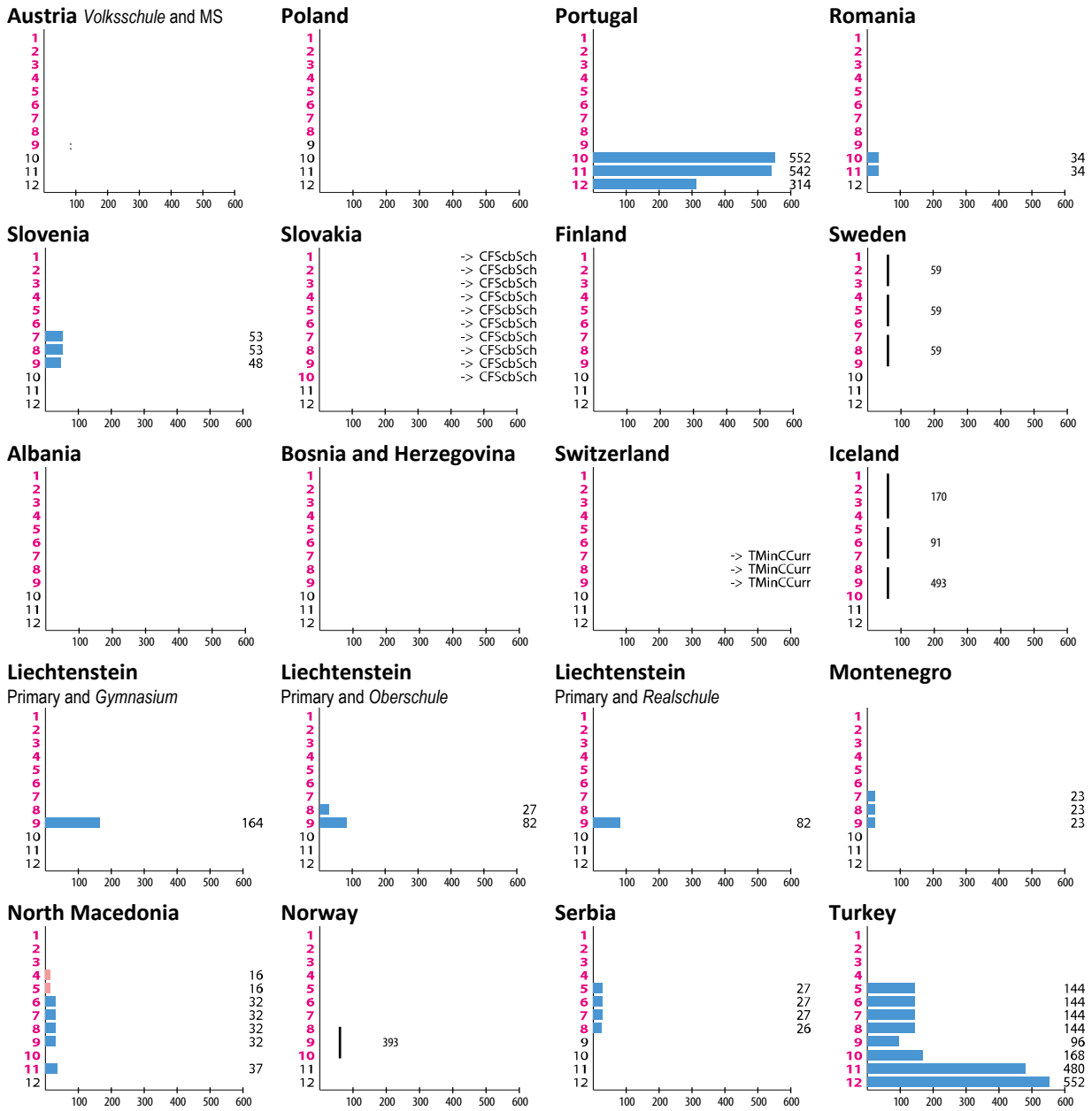

For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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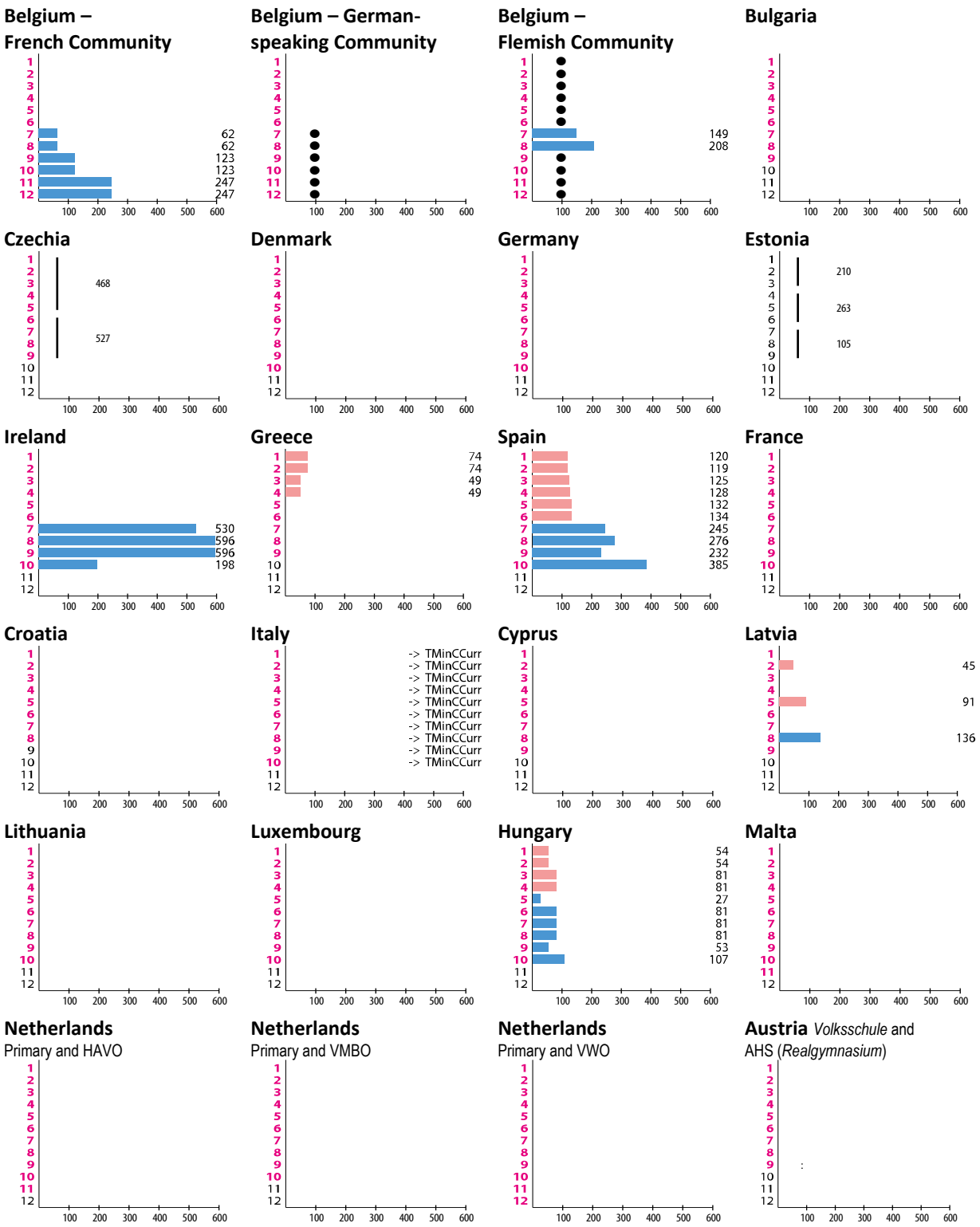
COMPULSORY FLEXIBLE SUBJECTS CHOSEN BY SCHOOLS



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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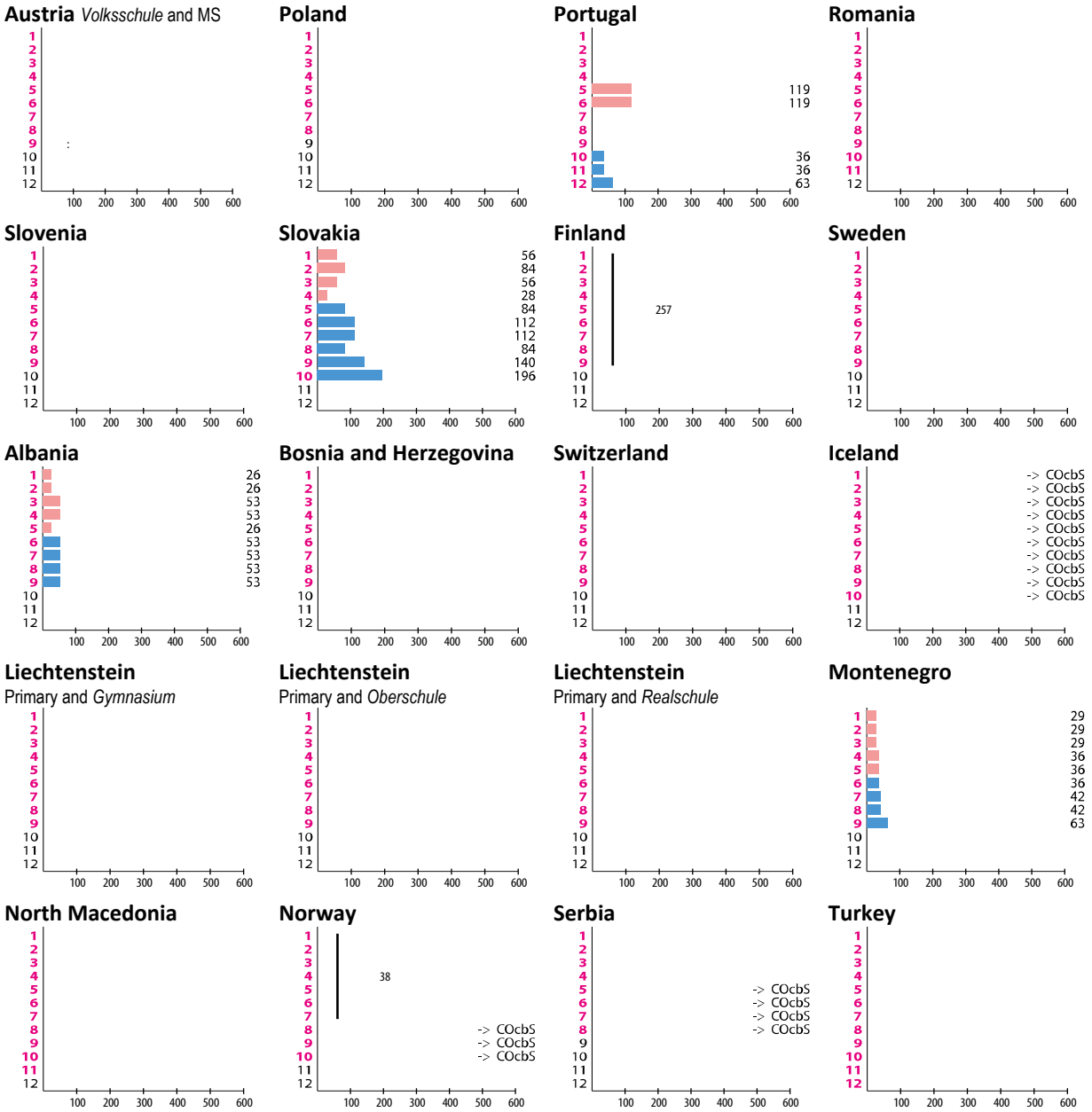

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Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

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-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

Section 4. Appendix

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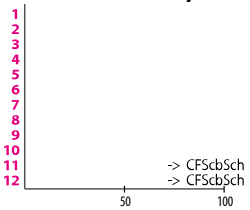
Language 5 (compulsory curriculum) 115

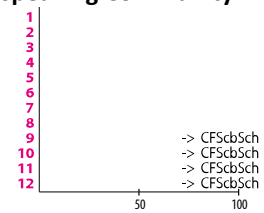
Non-compulsory curriculum 115

LANGUAGE 4 (COMPULSORY CURRICULUM)

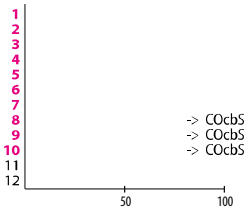
Belgium – French Community



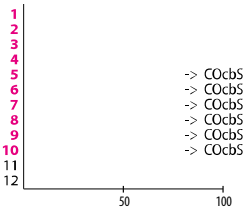
Belgium – German-speaking Community



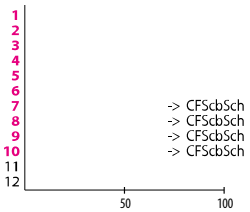
Denmark



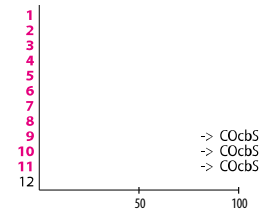
Germany



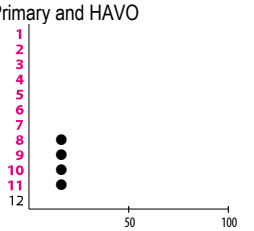
Ireland



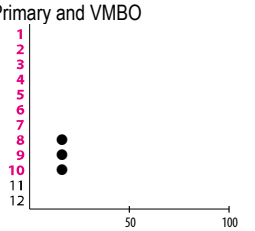
Malta



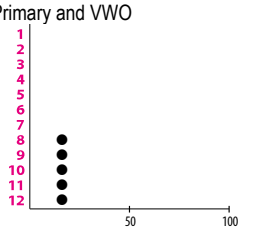
Netherlands
Primary and HAVO



Netherlands
Primary and VMBO



Netherlands
Primary and VWO



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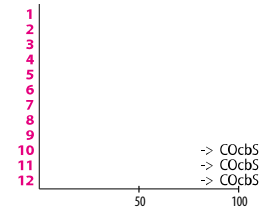
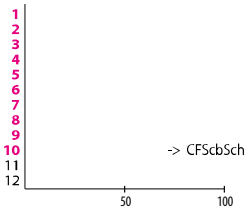
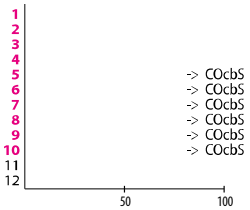


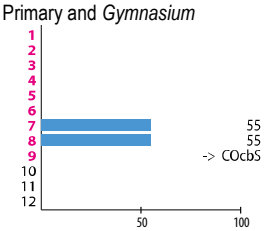
Slovakia



Iceland



Liechtenstein
Primary and *Gymnasium*



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

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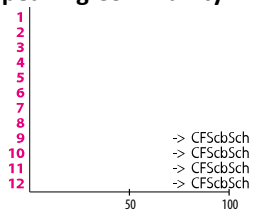
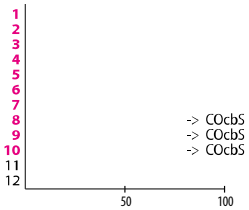
LANGUAGE 5 (COMPULSORY CURRICULUM)

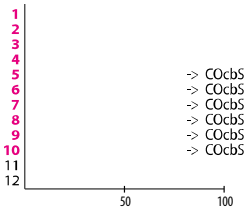
Belgium – German-speaking Community



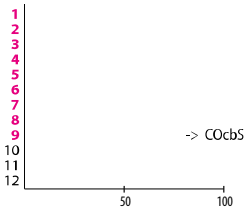
Denmark



Germany

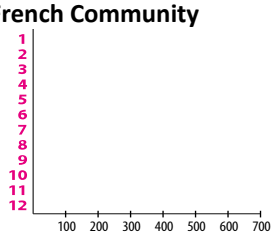


Liechtenstein
Primary and *Gymnasium*

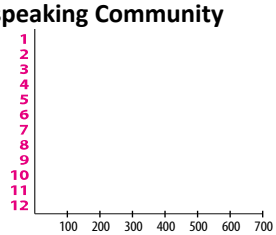


NON-COMPULSORY CURRICULUM

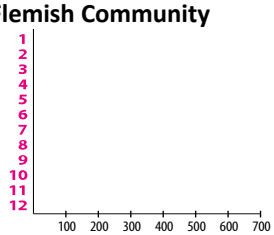
Belgium – French Community



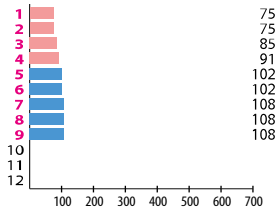
Belgium – German-speaking Community



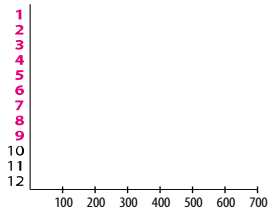
Belgium – Flemish Community



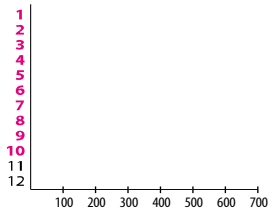
Bulgaria



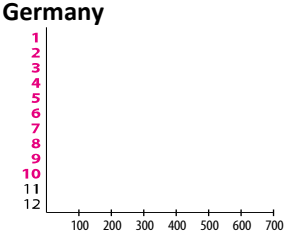
Czechia



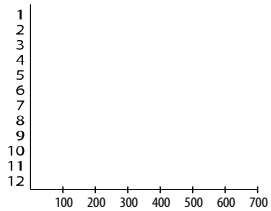
Denmark



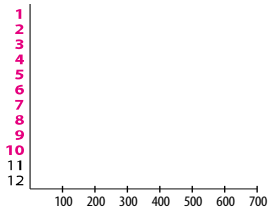
Germany



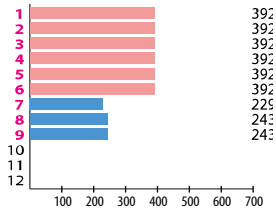
Estonia



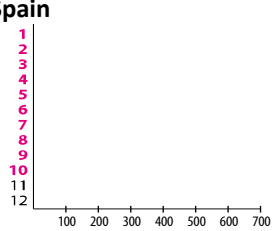
Ireland



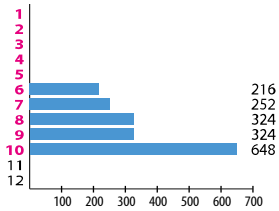
Greece



Spain



France



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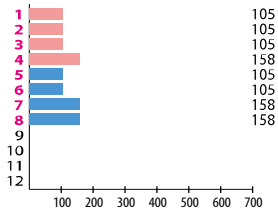

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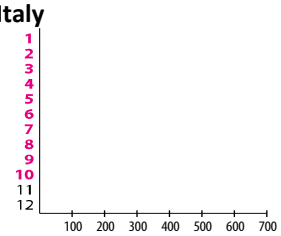

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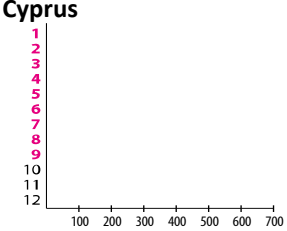

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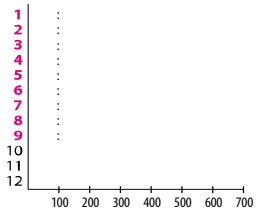


For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

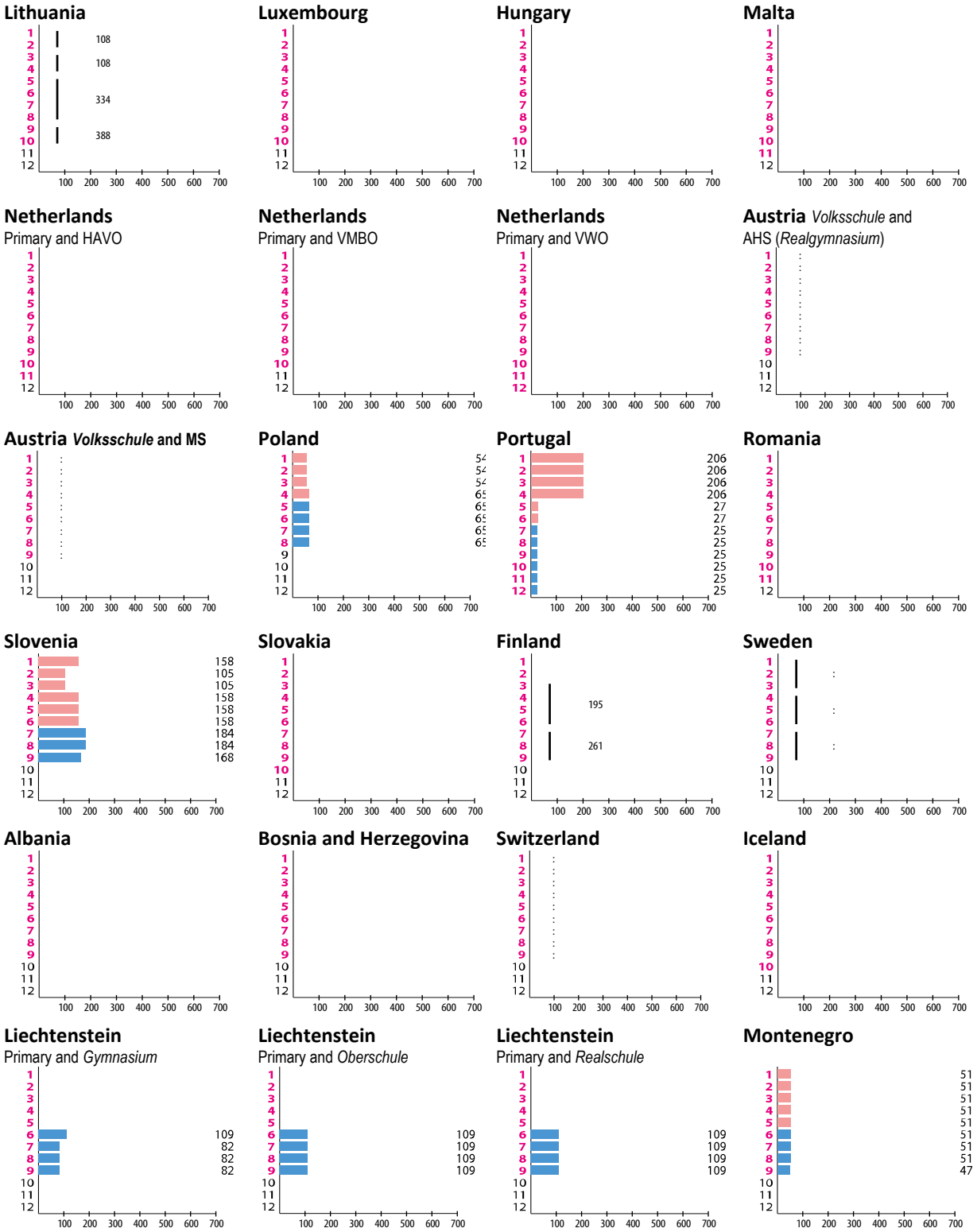
Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

NON-COMPULSORY CURRICULUM



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Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n Grades in FTCG

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

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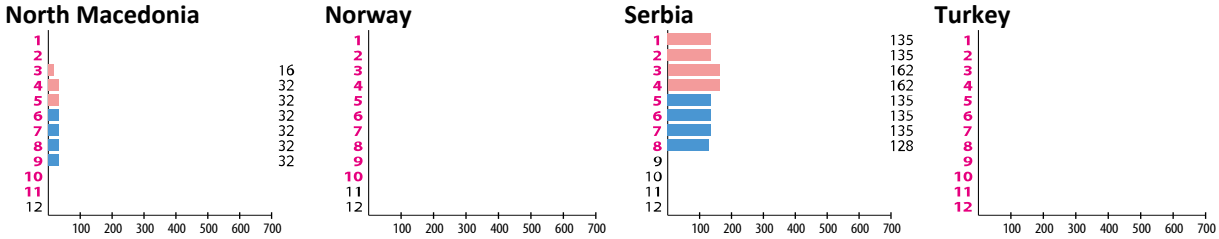
Source: Eurydice.

NON-COMPULSORY CURRICULUM



For specific national information, see Part II, Section 5: Country-specific notes.

Full-time compulsory general education (FTCG): Primary level Secondary level n **Grades in FTCG**

Horizontal axis: Number of hours per school year **Vertical axis:** Grades ● Flexible time

-> category Instruction time included in another category (see Reading guide) ▌ x Number of hours distributed between various school years

Source: Eurydice.

Section 5. Country-specific notes

Belgium (French Community)

The scope includes both public and government-dependent private institutions. The programmes in these two types of institutions differ only slightly; therefore, the data show the minimum number of hours only in public institutions. Compulsory education lasts until the age of 18. However, in vocational education, from age 15, school-based learning is compulsory only part-time. Students may opt for a structured learning path that combines part-time vocational education at school with part-time training in the workplace.

Since 2002, education authorities have prescribed three days for the professional development of teachers. These have been deducted from the number of instruction days in the school year, but the recommended minimum instruction time is the same as in previous years. Legislation provides a maximum number of examination days, but not a compulsory number of examination days. These days have therefore not been deducted.

In primary education, the legislation stipulates a combined total instruction time for reading, writing and literature, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, arts education and technology. A first foreign language (language 2) can also be part of this combined total instruction time. It is left to schools' discretion as to how this time is allocated between the different subjects. In grades 5 and 6, in the Walloon Region, schools must provide at least two periods (one period = 50 minutes) per week of a second language, which can be Dutch, English or German. However, in the 19 municipalities of Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon communes with special linguistic status, the first foreign language must be taught for at least three periods per week in grades 3 and 4, and five periods per week in grades 5 and 6. In the Brussels Capital-Region, the first foreign language must be Dutch.

In lower secondary education (grades 7 and 8), the compulsory options chosen by students include French (Latin, drama, introduction to the ancient world, etc.); a foreign language (conversation, culture, etc.); sciences and mathematics (informatics, sciences, mathematics, logic, etc.); social studies (economic matters, civic life, etc.); artistic activities (music, arts, etc.); and sports activities.

General education (*enseignement de transition*) has two pathways: *enseignement général (de transition)* and *enseignement technique et artistique (de transition)*. The vast majority of students (85.75 %) at ISCED level 34 are on the *enseignement général* pathway. Only this track is reported in this publication.

In grades 9–12, students must choose at least one foreign language, with four periods of instruction a week.

Since 1 September 2016 for primary schools, and 1 September 2017 for those secondary schools providing a choice between religion and moral studies, at least one of the two lessons per week allocated to these subjects should be devoted to philosophy and citizenship. Instruction on this subject is part of the compulsory curriculum. In the other schools, the content and objectives of philosophy and citizenship must be acquired through all subjects.

Belgium (German-speaking Community)

The scope includes both public and government-dependent private institutions. Compulsory education lasts until the age of 18. However, in vocational education, from age 15, school-based learning is compulsory only part-time. Students may opt for a structured learning path that combines part-time vocational education at school with part-time training in the workplace.

Education authorities prescribed three days for the professional development of teachers in 2020/21. These have been deducted from the number of instruction days in the school year, but the recommended minimum instruction time is the same as in previous years. For many subject areas, the legislation stipulates only the total instruction time (compulsory subjects with flexible timetable). It is left to the discretion of schools as to how this time is allocated between the different subjects.

In grades 1–8, technology is integrated into natural sciences. ICT is integrated into all other subjects in all grades.

In secondary education, schools must provide between 28 and 36 hours of instruction a week. The minimum, i.e. 28 hours a week, has been reported for the compulsory curriculum, although most schools provide more instruction time. Schools can provide different programmes with different instruction times for different subjects. The total number of hours of instruction varies across programmes. Students can decide which programme to follow. Schools can also provide 'other subjects' such as Latin and economics. The non-compulsory curriculum reflects the difference between the minimum and maximum instruction time that students can receive, depending on the options that they choose.

Belgium (Flemish Community)

The scope includes both public and government-dependent private institutions. Compulsory education lasts until the age of 18. In vocational education, from age 15, students may opt for a structured learning path combining part-time school-based education with part-time training in the workplace.

For many subject areas, the legislation stipulates only the total instruction time (compulsory subjects with flexible timetable). It is left to the discretion of schools as to how this time is allocated between the different subjects. The reform of the first two years of secondary education (ISCED 24) in 2019/20 introduced changes in the distribution of the total compulsory instruction time.

In grade 7, the total compulsory instruction time is divided between a basic curriculum and five periods (of 50 minutes) of differentiation. According to legislation, the basic curriculum is no longer linked directly to each subject (e.g. mathematics, science, etc.) but instead is linked to the minimum goals that children must achieve at the end of each grade. These goals are strongly linked to the subjects within the autonomy of school boards. Differentiation can be linked to the same goals.

In grade 8, the minimum compulsory instruction time (1 hour = 50 minutes) is 32 hours, divided between: a) basic curriculum of minimum 25 hours for the A-stream and minimum 20 hours for the B-stream; b) basic formation of exactly 5 hours for the A-stream and exactly 10 hours for the B-stream; c) a differentiation part of minimum 2 hours for the A-stream and minimum 2 hours for the B-stream.

The hours of differentiation and of basic formation are combined in 'Compulsory flexible subjects' because the choice of the differentation and basic formation consists of a mix of options the school provides and the student selects.

In grades 1–6, technology is integrated into natural sciences. Schools can also offer the following 'other subjects': learning to learn and social skills. These subjects and ICT are integrated into the rest of the subjects. There are no deductions for examination days because there are no national or other officially regulated examination days in Flanders.

Bulgaria

From the 2018/19 school year, newly enacted legislation for the new school curriculum resulted in changes in instruction time in grades 3, 7 and 9. In grade 3, coding is now introduced as a separate subject. In grades 1 and 2, natural sciences and social studies are taught as an integrated subject. In

grades 1–4, ICT is integrated into all subjects. In grades 1–7, technology is integrated into practical and vocational skills.

The compulsory options chosen by students are a foreign language in grade 1; religion in grades 1–9; a second foreign language (language 3) in grades 5–8; practical and vocational skills in grades 7–9; and technology in grade 9. Subjects in the non-compulsory curriculum are usually the same as in the compulsory curriculum but can also include subjects such as folk dance and robotics.

Czechia

In grades 1–5, instruction time for social studies is integrated into that for natural sciences. Instruction time is set for the educational area 'people and the world' in the framework educational programme (FEP). In grades 6–9, geography is integrated into natural studies (reported in the category 'natural sciences').

In grades 1 and 2, the first foreign language (language 2) is a compulsory flexible subject chosen by schools. From grade 3, it is a compulsory subject for all students. A minimum instruction time for the second foreign language (language 3) is given for grades 6–9. A second foreign language is taught from grade 8 at the latest, but it can also be taught in lower grades.

At primary level (grades 1–5), two lessons per week are allocated for physical education in each grade. This time allocation can be extended in the two following years by providing compulsory swimming lessons, using the lessons available from the compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools. At this level (grades 1–5), health education is integrated into natural and social sciences ('people and the world'). At lower secondary level (grades 6–9), two lessons per week are allocated for physical education in each grade. Health education can either be provided as a subject in its own right or be integrated into other subjects such as natural sciences or physical education. Two more lessons per week are designated for the whole of the educational area 'people and health'. These may focus on various topics from the area of health education, or the time for physical education can be increased. Schools decide in which grades the individual topics are included. For the purposes of data collection, instruction time dedicated to health education and physical education has been combined and this time has been distributed equally between the four grades. Figures for intended instruction time show an average of 2.5 periods per grade for physical education and health.

Physical education was restricted from 18 November 2020 for all pupils attending face-to-face learning. Physical education was also restricted from 5 October 2020 for grades 6–9. Sports activities were not allowed but they could have been replaced with outdoor walks and/or theoretical learning. These days are not excluded from the reported numbers of instruction days. From 10 May, outdoor sports activities are allowed in all regions, from 24 May indoor sports activities are allowed with some hygienic restrictions.

Practical and vocational skills are integrated into the area of technology (grades 1–9).

'Other subjects' include the cross-curricular subjects: personal and social education; education for democratic citizenship; education towards thinking in the European and global context; multicultural education; environmental education; and media studies. Religion, ethics and moral education are also included here, although they are not part of the compulsory curriculum defined at national level. Schools can offer ethics as a compulsory, optional or non-compulsory subject. Religion is taught as a non-compulsory subject in schools established by a municipality or a union of municipalities if at least seven pupils in the school request it.

The compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools include the flexible periods established by the FEP, which must be provided by all schools to increase the time allocated to any subject. They can be used to teach the first foreign language in grades 1 and 2, swimming within physical education at

ISCED level 1, elective subjects and subjects belonging to the 'other subjects' category. Schools can also offer a second foreign language at ISCED level 1 and a third and a fourth foreign language at ISCED levels 1 and 2, although this is not included in the FEP.

There are two types of vertical flexibility. Some subjects, in which vertical flexibility is applied, must be taught in all of the related grades (reading, writing and literature, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies and arts education), whereas for other subjects (namely, ICT and technology) this obligation does not exist.

Denmark

In grades 1–10, 'other subjects' include exercise and physical activity, assisted learning activities and free class. Forty-five minutes of exercise and physical activity must be organised every day as part of the other compulsory subjects or the assisted learning activities. Assisted learning activities and the free class aim to develop pupils' receptiveness to teaching by working with them on their social competences, individual development, motivation and well-being, and by helping them develop a better approach to work in the future.

In grades 8–10, the compulsory options chosen by pupils include the third and fourth foreign languages (German, French and Spanish, and immigrant languages for pupils with appropriate prior knowledge of the language), arts education (fine art, media, film knowledge, drama, music) and practical and vocational skills (craft and design, working knowledge and *Madkundskab* – food knowledge).

Germany

The data represent the weighted average instruction times for the compulsory core curriculum subjects calculated by the Secretariat of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* based on the numbers of students enrolled in the different types of school.

The 'other subjects' category includes instruction time devoted to learning skills and competences that are important for living and working in society, such as social skills. In some *Länder*, this category may also include instruction time for integrated subjects (a combination of two or three subjects).

The second foreign language (language 3) is compulsory only for education courses leading to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification). For some *Länder*, data on the instruction time for compulsory 'foreign' (or modern) languages may also include instruction time for Latin and ancient Greek.

Estonia

The first foreign language (language 2) must be taught from grade 3 at the latest, but schools may start teaching this language in grades 1 and 2. The second foreign language (language 3) must be taught from grade 6 at the latest, but schools may start teaching this language in grades 4 and 5.

In schools where the language of instruction is not Estonian, students must study Estonian as language 2 and English, German or French as language 3 (Russian is excluded from the list of foreign languages in Russian-speaking schools).

With regard to reading, writing and literature, Estonian or Russian language and literature (as the language of instruction) begins in grades 4–6.

Religion, ethics and moral education and ICT are often compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools.

Ireland

At ISCED level 1 the tables refer to the six years of compulsory education. The two years of primary education for four- and five-year-olds, which are not compulsory, are not included in the data collection.

At ISCED level 1, technology (designing and making) is integrated into natural sciences and visual art education. At this level, the 'other subjects' category includes social, personal and health education (SPHE) and the time allocated for school assembly and roll call.

At ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3, both English and Irish as national languages are taught to all students, although some students with special educational needs, students who received their primary education outside the state and students living abroad up to the age of 12 years may receive an exemption from studying Irish, in line with Department Circulars 0052/2019 and 0053/2019.

English is regarded as the first language (language 1) and Irish as the second language (language 2) in English-medium schools, while, in Irish-medium schools, language 1 is Irish and language 2 is English. The 'reading, writing and literature' category includes time for either English or Irish, depending on the first language of the school; the instruction time for the other language is included under language 2.

Because a half-day closure is recorded in official returns to the Department of Education as a full instructional day, this does not have any implications for the actual instruction time available for pupils. At the beginning of the 2020/21 school year, teachers were asked to prioritise SPHE, physical education, language (English and Irish) and mathematics. The focus on well-being as a foundation for learning was the rationale for prioritising these areas of the curriculum. Teachers were required to amend their timetables as they got to know their pupils' specific needs and made judgements around current priority learning needs. In most cases, it was anticipated that, following the October mid-term break, pupils should be ready to experience the more typical and broader curriculum and more usual timetabling. However, teachers were advised that the time frame should be decided considering the needs of the pupils in the class; in some circumstances, additional time might still be needed for priority learning areas.

Curriculum reform at ISCED level 24 commenced in 2014 and is being implemented on a phased basis up to 2021/22. This curriculum reform provides for vertical flexibility within individual subjects across the 3 years at this level. It is only when the reform is fully implemented in 2021/22 that it will be possible to accurately represent the vertical flexibility envisaged.

The reform gives schools considerable flexibility to design their learning programmes at ISCED level 24 in accordance with 24 statements of learning, while taking account of the school's circumstances and the students' learning needs and interests. At ISCED level 24, a greater proportion of time is now reported under compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools.

At ISCED level 24, new specifications for Irish (with separate specifications for English-medium and Irish-medium schools), English and mathematics provide for a minimum of 240 hours of instruction time per subject over 3 years. As there is now a prescribed minimum instruction time for Irish, the instruction time for this subject is specified under language 2.

In addition, at ISCED level 24, new specifications have been introduced for the following subjects for all 3 years; science, business studies, modern foreign languages (languages 3 and 4), visual arts, music, geography and home economics. The specifications provide a minimum instruction time of 200 hours and these subjects are now included as compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools.

A new specification for history has been introduced in all 3 years at ISCED level 24. The new specification provides for a minimum instruction time of 200 hours over the 3 years. History was initially categorised as an optional subject but was changed to a compulsory subject for year 1 at ISCED level 24 in 2020/21. Therefore, history is included under social studies in year 1 at ISCED level 24 and under compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools in year 2 and year 3.

In addition, new specifications for year 1 and year 2 at ISCED level 24 have been introduced for technology subjects (technology, wood technology, engineering and technical graphics), classics, Jewish studies and religious education. These new specifications will be implemented in all three year groups by the end of 2021/22. They provide for a minimum instruction time of 200 hours over 3 years and the subjects are included as compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools.

While the curriculum reform at ISCED level 24 gives schools considerable flexibility in the design of their programmes, English (language 1 in the majority of schools), Irish (language 2 in the majority of schools), mathematics and well-being are compulsory in all schools. As part of the new compulsory well-being subject, with its minimum provision of 300 hours over the 3 years of ISCED level 24, schools are required to include provision for physical education (135 hours minimum over the course of 3 years), civil, social and political education (CSPE; 70 hours minimum) and SPHE (70 hours minimum). The required minimum instruction time for physical education has now been reduced to 1.35 hours per week at ISCED level 24 for all 3 years. Physical education continues to be reported under physical education and health; instruction time for CSPE continues to be included in social studies; and SPHE continues to be included in ‘other subjects’. Students who take one or more of the well-being short courses (CSPE, SPHE and physical education) may, in addition, take up to four short courses in other areas of the curriculum.

The first year of ISCED level 34 is also the last year of compulsory education for most students. Many students take a transition year at this point, with less emphasis on academic subjects and more time given to practical and self-directed learning. Every school is free to develop its own transition year programme and decide which subjects are offered; hence, the data provided for the transition year are indicative only. The transition year programme usually includes a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, such as educational tours, field trips, work experience, musicals and drama performances. Many of these have been curtailed in the 2020/21 school year because of public health restrictions and, consequently, many schools have reimagined and redesigned their transition year programmes for the current academic year.

Schools at ISCED level 1 are typically required to be open to pupils for a minimum of 183 days.

At ISCED levels 24 and 34, schools are typically required to be open to students for a minimum of 167 days. No school closures for continuous professional development took place during the first term of 2020/21.There were two optional whole-school closures in the second term, which reduced the total days in school from 167 to 165 for some schools.

Greece

In the 'Unified All-day Primary School', the programme of sessions taught per subject/per week pertains to primary schools that have at least six class teachers (Ministerial Decision Φ12/657/70691/Δ1/26-04-2016, G.G. 1324/B/2016, as modified by (a) Presidential Decree 79/2017 par. 1, ch. A, art. 11, G.G. 109/A/1-8-2017, (b) Law 4559/2018, art. 23, G.G. 142/A/2018, (c) Law 4589/2019 art. 79, G.G 13/A/2019, and (d) Law 4692/2020, art. 3 G.G. 111/A/2020).

In grades 5 and 6, geography is included under natural sciences. Social studies covers history and civic and social studies.

English has been taught in all grades (1–9) of compulsory education from 2017/18. Students can choose between French and German as a second foreign language in grades 5–9. In grades 7–9, Italian is also offered in a few schools.

In grade 7, practical and vocational skills covers home economics.

In primary education, the compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools refer to cross-thematic teacher-initiated programmes, which can include activities related to environmental education, health education, culture and arts. In lower secondary education, this covers the thematic week, for which schools are expected to organise their own learning activities around a list of proposed themes.

All-day primary schools can include an all-day school programme (a morning session from 07.00 to 08.00 and an afternoon session from 13.20 to 16.00); the daily compulsory timetable is from 08.10 to 13.15. Parents must apply to enrol their children in the all-day programme at the beginning of the school year (Ministerial Circular 71858/Δ1/3-5-2017). This instruction time is captured under the non-compulsory curriculum category and, at primary level, covers subjects such as ICT, English, physical education, art, music, drama and cultural activities. In lower secondary school, the non-compulsory curriculum includes remedial instruction in mathematics, modern and ancient Greek, physics, chemistry and English, as well as project-based activities on culture, ecology, health issues, career options and entrepreneurship. For reasons of comparability, special measures taken exceptionally due to the COVID-19 pandemic are not included in this report.

Spain

Data on intended instruction time are based on national and regional regulations on the curriculum and school calendars (reference year 2020/21). To calculate the weighted averages, statistics on the number of students per grade and autonomous community reported by the Statistics Office of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were used (reference year 2018/19).

The General Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education (2013; LOMCE) introduced changes affecting instruction time, including a higher degree of autonomy at regional level in the allocation of time to different subjects. These changes were introduced in grades 1, 3 and 5 (primary education) in 2014/15; in grades 2, 4 and 6 (primary education) and grades 7 and 9 (secondary education) in 2015/16; and in grades 8 and 10 (secondary education) in 2016/17. Each autonomous community regulates the instruction time for different subjects and the degree of autonomy of schools. In the 2020/21 school year, new regulations in some autonomous communities have resulted in changes in the instruction time of some subjects.

The ‘reading, writing and literature’ category includes the instruction time for the co-official language in the autonomous communities, where applicable.

With regard to religion, ethics and moral education, in primary education (grades 1–6), students must choose between religion and social and civic values, and, in secondary education (grades 7–10), students must choose between religion and ethical values. In some autonomous communities, some subjects related to civic education and human rights have been allocated to the ‘compulsory subjects chosen by schools’ category.

In grades 7–10, the ‘other subjects’ category includes a weekly group tutorial session that is compulsory for all students. Tutoring is also included in grades 1–6 when it is specifically mentioned in regional regulations.

Arts education includes music and visual arts. According to the LOMCE, arts education, a second foreign language, ICT and technology are ‘specific subjects’ regulated by the regional administrations. These subjects have been allocated to the ‘compulsory subjects chosen by schools’ category.

Compulsory options chosen by students. In primary education (grades 1–6), students must choose at least one of the specific subjects proposed by the education authorities in order to comply with the specified total instruction time. In secondary education (grades 7–9), students must choose a number of specific subjects and subjects proposed by the autonomous communities. In grade 10, students must choose a number of core subjects, specific subjects and subjects proposed by the autonomous communities. All of these subjects are included in the 'compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools' category.

Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools. The reported data reflect the numbers of hours that autonomous communities have allocated to the chosen subjects in order to comply with the specified total instruction time. According to the LOMCE, in primary education (grades 1–6), arts education and a second foreign language are the optional specific subjects defined by central education authorities that regional authorities or schools can choose from. In secondary education (grades 7–9), classical culture, arts, visual and audiovisual education, music, introduction to entrepreneurial and business activity, and technology are the optional specific subjects. In grade 10, the academic core subjects, biology and geology, economics, physics and chemistry, and Latin, and the applied core subjects science applied to professional activity, introduction to entrepreneurship and business activity, and technology are the optional core subjects defined by central education authorities that regional authorities or schools can choose from. Performing arts and dance, scientific culture, classical culture, plastic, visual and audiovisual education, philosophy, music, a second foreign language and ICT are the specific subjects defined by central education authorities that regional authorities or schools can choose from.

France

From September 2019, instruction has been compulsory from the age of 3 in France (compulsory pre-primary education lasts for 3 years).

In grades 1–3, the category 'natural sciences' refers to 'questioning the world', which covers notions of science, history/geography, technology and ICT. This subject also includes civic and moral education, although this instruction time has been captured in the 'religion, ethics and moral education' category. In grades 4–6, natural sciences includes technology.

In grades 4–10, social studies covers history/geography and civic and moral education (although in grades 4, 5 and 10, this time has been captured in the 'religion, ethics and moral education' category). In grade 10, it also includes social and economic studies.

ICT is integrated into natural sciences in grades 1–3 and in mathematics (including notions of computer science (programming)) in grades 4 and 5. In grades 6–9, ICT is mainly integrated into technology and mathematics, but it can be taught as part of any compulsory subject. Technology is integrated into natural sciences in grades 1–6 and in ICT in grade 10.

Practical and vocational skills includes careers guidance in grades 8–10.

The 'other subjects' category includes form time (*vie de classe*) in grades 6–9.

In grade 10, the second foreign language (language 3) and language 2 are reported together. With regard to the compulsory curriculum, in grades 6–9, *accompagnement personnalisé* and interdisciplinary projects (*enseignements pratiques interdisciplinaires*) are included in compulsory instruction time and integrated into all subjects. In grade 8 or 9, the total compulsory curriculum also includes a 5-day work shadowing placement; this was introduced in 2005/06 and takes place during instruction time – no additional time is mentioned. In grade 10, the compulsory curriculum includes form time (*vie de classe*) – no additional time is mentioned – *and accompagnement personnalisé* – time determined according to the students' need.

With regard to the non-compulsory curriculum, it is possible to combine several optional courses within the limits of what a school can offer, the limits imposed by the timetable and the limits of the teaching hours each school is allocated.

In grade 6, the non-compulsory curriculum includes two hours a week of choral singing, two hours a week of a second foreign or regional language – when combined with the first foreign language, this cannot exceed six hours per week (each school is free to distribute the six hours according to its needs) – and two hours a week of an introductory course on a regional language (regional languages and cultures).

In grade 7, the non-compulsory curriculum includes two hours a week of choral singing, one hour a week of languages and cultures from antiquity (Latin and ancient Greek), two hours a week of a regional language (regional languages and cultures) and two hours a week of a European languages and culture course based on one of the two foreign languages studied.

In grades 8 and 9, the non-compulsory curriculum includes two hours a week of choral singing, three hours a week of languages and cultures from antiquity (Latin and ancient Greek), two hours a week of a regional language (regional languages and cultures) and two hours a week of a European languages and cultures course based on one of the two foreign languages studied.

In grades 6–9, the non-compulsory curriculum also includes the 'homework done' programme for students who want to do their homework under supervision.

In grade 10, students can choose one or two additional subjects (*enseignements optionnels*). The first can be chosen from a list of general education subjects (three hours per week), including a third modern language (foreign or regional language), ancient languages and cultures (Latin and/or Greek), French Sign Language, arts education (visual arts, film / audiovisual media, dance, history of art, music or drama), physical education, or circus arts (six hours per week). The second can be chosen from a list of technological education subjects (1.5 hours per week), including management, health and social studies, biotechnologies, sciences and laboratory skills, engineering sciences, technological creation and innovation, an artistic workshop, and creation and culture – design (six hours per week). Ancient languages and cultures (Latin and/or Greek) can also be chosen in addition to the two optional subjects. Depending on the additional optional subjects chosen, instruction time can increase by up to 648 hours per year (theoretical maximum limits). In practice, the instruction time for the additional optional subjects is unlikely to exceed 216 hours per year.

The percentages of students attending non-compulsory courses in public schools in the 2019/20 academic year) were as follows:

- grade 6 (in public and private schools): a second foreign or regional language – 15.5 %,
- grade 7: Latin – 17.2 %, introductory course to Latin and ancient Greek – 0.8 %,
- grade 8: Latin – 16.5 %, ancient Greek – 0.2 %, introductory course to Latin and ancient Greek – 0.7 %,
- grade 9: Latin – 14.7 %, ancient Greek – 2.2 %, introductory course to Latin and ancient Greek – 1 %,
- grade 10 (in public and private schools):
    - General education optional subjects: third modern language – 7.6 %, Latin – 4.5 %, physical education – 4.3 %, visual arts – 3.7 %, drama – 1.9 %, film / audiovisual media – 1.6 %, ancient Greek – 1.2 %, music – 1.1 %, history of art – 0.6 %, dance – 0.3 %, French sign language – 0.2 %
    - Technological education optional subjects: engineering sciences – 5.3 %, sciences and laboratory – 4.5 %, management – 4.3 %, health and social studies – 2.4 %, technological creation and innovation – 1.9 %, biotechnologies – 1.5 %, creation and culture – design – 0.6 %.

Croatia

Based on the Curriculum decision for informatics in primary and general secondary education in the Republic of Croatia (*Odluka o donošenju kurikuluma za nastavni predmet Informatike za osnovne škole i gimnazije u Republici Hrvatskoj*, *Official Gazette*, 22/2018), in the 2020/21 school year, informatics (part of the ICT subject area) was introduced as a non-compulsory subject at ISCED level 1 (grades 1–4), increasing the instruction time for the non-compulsory curriculum.

The instruction time for religion, ethics and moral education is included in the non-compulsory curriculum (grades 1–8). The non-compulsory curriculum also includes the instruction time for a second foreign language (grades 4–8) and ICT (grades 1–4 and grades 7 and 8).

In addition to the minimum instruction time reported for subject teaching, there is also further direct contact time with students as part of the non-compulsory curriculum. This includes 'form time' (*sat razrednika*). Each class teacher develops their own form time programme and chooses appropriate teaching methods based on the ages and needs of the students. Form time can cover topics such as health education, children's rights and prejudices. In addition, students can participate in additional tuition (*dopunska nastava*), additional lessons for gifted students (*dodatna nastava*) and extracurricular activities (*izvannastavne aktivnosti*). The above-mentioned activities are delivered over 35 teaching sessions per year, with one teaching session of 45 minutes per week. Students in grades 1–4 (ISCED 1) take a maximum of 25 lessons per week, which are evenly distributed across the week; these include compulsory lessons, tutor time and non-compulsory education (optional subjects, additional tuition, additional lessons for gifted students, extracurricular activities). Students in grades 5–8 (ISCED 24) take a maximum of 30 lessons per week, which are evenly distributed across the week. Information is based on the Primary and Secondary School Education Act (*Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi*, *Official Gazette*, 89/2008, 86/2010, 92/2010, 105/2010, 90/2011, 5/2012, 16/2012, 86/2012, 126/2012, 94/2013, 152/2014, 07/2017, 68/2018, 98/2019, 64/2020) and the state pedagogical standard of primary education system (*Državni pedagoški standard osnovnoškolskog sustava odgoja i obrazovanja*, *Official Gazette*, 63/2008, 90/2010). Citizenship education, Personal and Social Development, Health, Sustainable Development, Learning to Learn, Entrepreneurship, Use of ICT are taught as a cross-curricular topic.

Italy

In grades 1–5 (ISCED 1), the reported instruction time corresponds to a weekly timetable of 27 hours over 33 weeks (891 hours); this timetable applies to 36.89 % of students. The other possible weekly timetables are 24 hours (0.57 % students), 28–30 hours (24.89 %) and 40 hours (37.65 %).

In grades 6–8 (ISCED 24), the reported instruction time corresponds to a weekly timetable of 30 hours; this applies to almost 89.27 % of students at this level. This timetable also applies to students following the music pathway (7.96 %), with their timetable including an additional hour per instrument studied (students can learn up to three instruments). Social studies is integrated into reading, writing and literature, and natural sciences is integrated into mathematics. The instruction time for the second foreign language (language 3) can be used for teaching the first foreign language.

In grades 9 and 10 (ISCED 34), there are six types of *liceo*, which are devoted to arts subjects, classical studies, scientific studies, foreign languages, music and dance, and human sciences. The information reported for grades 9 and 10 is for the *liceo scientifico* (in which the highest percentage of students is enrolled, i.e. 28.1 %). In these grades, ICT is integrated into mathematics (but it is taught as an independent subject in the applied sciences option of the *liceo scientifico*). The 'other subjects' category includes Latin and literature.

At all ISCED levels, schools have the autonomy to modify up to 20 % of the annual timetable by changing the allocation of instruction time across subjects or by introducing new subjects.

In primary and lower and upper secondary education, 'civic education' in the 'social studies' subject category is a transversal subject (the instruction hours are distributed across the total compulsory curriculum). Although this subject is transversal, the allocated instruction hours (33 hours per year) must be respected and it is assessed as a separate subject.

Cyprus

Geography is included in social studies in grades 1–6 and in natural sciences in grades 7–9.

In grades 1–4, design and technology is included in natural sciences. In grades 5 and 6, design and technology includes life education. First aid is included in physical education.

The 'other subjects' category includes life education in grades 1–4; environmental education – education for sustainable development in grades 5 and 6; instruction time dedicated to consolidating skills in and knowledge of curriculum subjects in grades 1–6; and classical studies and ancient Greek in grades 7–9.

Latvia

The reported curriculum refers to the basic education programme, which is followed by 73 % of students in public schools. The other 27 % of students (reference year 2019/20) mostly follow the basic education programme for ethnic minorities, which includes the teaching of the ethnic minority language in grades 1–9. Schools with ethnic minority education programmes can decide to teach subjects in the Latvian language if these subjects comprise at least 80 % of total instruction time per year'.

The 'other subjects' category includes form time, which is devoted to discussing values, communication culture, civic education, road safety, healthy lifestyles, personal development, leadership, critical thinking, creative thinking, financial literacy, entrepreneurship skills and career guidance.

In addition, schools must offer optional lessons for groups of pupils on a voluntary basis (e.g. choir, dance, drama, sports or a foreign language), individual lessons and prolonged-day groups. These are included in the 'non-compulsory curriculum' category.

Vertical flexibility is being gradually introduced from 2020/21 for 3-year periods, starting with grades 1, 4 and 7. Vertical flexibility will apply to all grades (1–3, 4–6 and 7–9) from 2022/23 onwards.

Lithuania

The reported curriculum refers to schools where the medium of instruction is Lithuanian; these schools enrol over 90 % of all students. The remaining students attend schools where instruction is provided in the language of one of the national minorities.

In order to improve student achievement, the school year has been extended in primary education. Since 2019, the duration of the school year has been 175 days. School administrations may further extend the duration of the school year by 5 days.

In grades 1–4, natural sciences and social studies are taught as an integrated subject. To calculate the minimum instruction times for natural sciences and social studies, the total instruction time for the integrated subject was divided by two. Technology and art education are also taught as an integrated subject.

In grades 7 and 8, natural sciences includes biology, chemistry and physics. Schools must allocate 166.5 hours between physics and biology. In grade 8, 55.5 hours are devoted to teaching chemistry. A school implementing a basic education programme may decide to organise the study of one science subject in grades 7 and 8 instead of separate science subjects – biology, chemistry, physics – without

reducing the number of biology, chemistry and physics lessons during the school year (according to the General Teaching Plans of the Basic and Upper-Secondary Education Curricula for 2019–2020 and 2020–2021, No V-417, 15 April 2019, point 77).

In grades 9 and 10, social studies includes history, citizenship, geography, economics and business. History must be taught for a minimum of 55.5 hours in each grade. Schools have the autonomy to decide how to distribute 166.5 hours of instruction time among the other social studies subjects.

In grades 5–10, 7.5 hours per year are devoted to civic education. This instruction time is included in the total number of hours allocated for social studies.

The 'other subjects' category covers human safety.

Students can choose additional lessons from the non-compulsory curriculum, which varies across schools. These lessons can be used to provide teaching support for low achievers and for personalised teaching and learning for talented students. Schools often use these lessons to provide extra literacy and mathematics.

When implementing educational programmes by remote organisation of the teaching process, the school ensures that at least 60 % of the time in the educational process and no more than 40 % of the time in asynchronous education (per week, month, school year) is allocated to synchronous education. The maximum duration of continuous synchronous education is 2 hours. A school whose regulations (statutes) legitimise distance learning may decide to implement part of the educational process by distance learning: school year, and up to 30 % for grades 9–10 and grades I–IV in gymnasium.

Luxembourg

In grades 1–6, German and Luxembourgish are both languages of instruction and both are included in reading, writing and literature. French is considered to be language 2.

In grades 7–10, French is the medium of instruction, German is language 2 and English is language 3. In grade 10, the data include only 30.6 % of students – those following the general secondary education programme (approximatively 60 % follow a vocational secondary education programme and 10 % are in preparatory classes; in both education programmes, the curriculum varies depending on the classes attended).

Hungary

According to the Act on Public Education, students who started grade 9 in 2011/12 or earlier had to finish their compulsory education at the end of the school year in which they turned 18. However, this no longer applies and compulsory education now ends at age 16; grades 11 and 12 are therefore excluded from this report. The compulsory time frame is defined in cycles of 2 years but, because of the phasing-in system and for better representation, a yearly time frame, recommended in the national core curriculum, is used. The 'other subjects' category includes form time.

The instruction time included for the compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools can be used by schools to increase the time allocated to the prescribed subjects or for new subjects (with framework curricula adopted by the minister responsible for education) of their own choice. In addition, schools must include the subject 'homeland and people' between grade 5 and grade 8 (one lesson per week). Ministerial Decree No 27/2020 (VIII. 11.) (*EMMI rendelet*) stipulates the number of school days for the school year. For ISCED level 34, the data in this report refer to upper secondary schools (*gimnázium*).

Malta

The scope includes both public and government-dependent private institutions. These country-specific notes apply to state schools in Malta, which cater for 59 % of the student population, and might not reflect the situation in government-dependent church schools, which cater for around 28.5 % of the student population. In state schools, the five-year secondary cycle is made up of two distinct phases: during the first two years students attend middle school, while during the last three years they attend secondary school. The secondary cycle of government-dependent church schools is made up of one single five-year phase.

During the month of June, schools open for half-days, and the total instruction time for each grade in compulsory education amounts to 17.5 hours per week.

In years 1 and 2, the 4 hours per week that schools must devote to handwriting, storytelling, reading sessions and 'talk about sessions' are included in the 'compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools' category. In grades 3–6, this category includes 1 hour per week for consolidating learning. This time is usually used for literacy, mathematics and language 2.

In years 1–6, science and technology are integrated into one subject, with the emphasis being on science.

The 'other subjects' category includes the daily 15-minute morning assembly in years 1–6; personal, social and career development in grades 3–6; and personal, social and career development and a daily 10-minute morning assembly / form period in years 7–11.

In grades 9–11, students must choose two of the following subjects (depending on teacher availability at the school they are attending): Arabic, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, biology, chemistry, geography, art, music, European studies, history, social studies, business studies, accounting, computer studies, engineering technology, health and social care, hospitality, information technology, agribusiness, design and technology, graphical communication, home economics, media literacy, fashion and textiles, retail and physical education. These options are included in the 'compulsory options chosen by students' category.

Netherlands

The total compulsory instruction time for pre-primary and primary education (8 years) is 7 520 hours. It is left to the discretion of schools as to how these hours are distributed between the grades. For this report, the instruction time for grades 1–6 was calculated as follows: 7 520/8 × 6 = 5 640.

After grade 10 of VMBO and grade 11 of HAVO, students normally continue their education in a vocational school or university of applied sciences. As vocational education is outside the scope of this report, data for these grades are not provided. As it was not possible to show vertical flexibility for grades 10–12, the instruction time for this cycle was artificially divided into three.

In grade 7 (VMBO), a second foreign language (language 3) is compulsory for students following three of the four available programmes (middle-management vocational programme, combined programme and theoretical programme). A second foreign language (language 3) is not compulsory in the basic vocational programme. This means that, in the Netherlands, 80 % of students (VMBO) take a second foreign language (language 3) as a compulsory subject.

Austria

Compulsory schooling starts for all children on 1 September following their sixth birthday and lasts for nine years. Students can choose from different programmes of study for year 9. As these programmes could not all be presented, no data for that particular year are included.

In primary school (*Volksschule*; grades 1–4), social studies and technology are part of an integrated subject called *Sachunterricht*, which covers introduction to natural sciences.

In grades 1 and 2, modern foreign language teaching (32 periods of 50 minutes) is integrated into the 'other subjects' category and is reported under the total minimum compulsory curriculum. ICT is taught as an integrated subject in grades 1–4. Compulsory instruction time for remedial education is included in the 'other subjects' category.

For secondary education, the data refer to the curricula for *Mittelschule* (compulsory secondary school) and *Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (academic secondary school, AHS). In academic secondary schools, grades 5 and 6 are common, whereas in grades 7 and 8 there are three branches: the scientific branch (*Realgymnasium*), the grammar school branch (*Gymnasium*) and the economics branch (*Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*). This report shows data for the scientific branch. Compulsory secondary schools and academic secondary schools can opt to follow a discretionary school timetable, which provides more autonomy to decide which subjects to offer. Technical and textile work (*Technisches und textiles Werken*) is included in practical and vocational skills, although certain aspects of this subject refer to arts education. ICT is integrated into all subjects at all grades in all pathways.

Poland

A new school system began to be phased in in the 2017/18 school year. In the old system, general full-time compulsory education comprised six years of primary education and three years of lower secondary education, with instruction time defined in cycles of three years (i.e. there was vertical flexibility). The new 8-year primary school system was fully implemented in 2020/21. In the new system, general full-time compulsory education consists of eight years in one single structure covering both ISCED level 1 and ISCED level 2. In the new system, instruction time is defined by grade; there is no longer vertical flexibility.

In grades 1–3 of primary school (educational stage I – integrated early school education), the total number of hours of instruction for each grade is distributed among the individual compulsory educational activities (classes) (including Polish language, mathematics, social education, natural sciences, art education, technology, ICT, music and a modern foreign language) by the teacher responsible for early school education who teaches some of these subjects. In the case of art education, ICT, music, physical education and modern foreign languages, classes are taught by teachers with relevant qualifications, as specified in the regulations, rather than the teacher responsible for early school education. The weekly number of hours allocated for these classes is as follows: art education, ICT and music – one hour in each grade; physical education – three hours in each grade; modern foreign languages – two hours in each grade.

The 'other subjects' category includes form time in grades 4–8 and 'education for safety' in grade 8. Practical and vocational skills includes vocational guidance in grades 7 and 8. The non-compulsory curriculum includes 'education for family life' in grades 4–8 and religion and/or ethics in grades 1–8.

School governing bodies, at the request of school heads, may additionally grant up to three hours a week to each class in a given school year to enable a periodic or annual increase in the number of hours of instruction for selected compulsory subjects. This regulation allows school heads to influence the actual number of compulsory teaching hours. These hours are not reported.

Portugal

The figures show the minimum instruction times in primary education. In grades 1–4, the weekly instruction time is 25 hours. The non-compulsory curriculum consists of five hours of instruction a week. In grades 10–12, the minimum instruction time varies according to the particular education pathway. The figures show the lowest of all the minimum instruction times.

A maximum and minimum instruction time are set for each subject. Each school chooses the time to allocate to each subject within the established limits: the minimum per subject and the total per year.

Current legislation (Decree-Law No 55/2018, of 6 July; Ministerial Implementation Order No 223-A/2018, of 3 August; and Ministerial Implementation Order No 226-A/2018, of 7 August) defines programmes for basic and secondary education and establishes rules that give schools more autonomy to make decisions that will help students achieve the skill set in the student profile for compulsory education. The student profile for compulsory education defines the skills that students should achieve by the end of grade 12 and is the guide that schools use to organise their planning, teaching, learning and assessment. Schools can manage up to 25 % of the school programme timetable by school year, provided they comply with the syllabuses, the core curriculum competences, the curriculum learning outcomes and the curriculum guidelines, in each grade and for each subject. This allows schools to ensure the development of essential learning – the knowledge, skills and attitudes that schools decides students must obtain and develop in each school year, which can be further developed, reinforced and enriched – and the skill set in the student profile. Schools have greater autonomy to establish the area of citizenship and development, according to the national strategy for citizenship education; decide on necessary support for studying and artistic education (second cycle); create areas of curricular autonomy by combining subjects; integrate school projects into the curriculum; alternate one subject periods with multiple subject periods; develop practical or experimental work by splitting classes or organising them in alternative ways; organise how subjects are run (by term or in some other way); and enable upper secondary school students to change subjects in order to create their own educational pathway. Thus, schools have more freedom to run their school programmes and can adapt programmes to specific contexts and the needs of their students, to promote quality learning for all.

The above mentioned Decree-Law took/will take effect from the school year of:

- 2018/19 for grades 1, 5, 7 and 10
- 2019/20 for grades 2, 6, 8 and 11
- 2020/21 for grades 3, 9 and 12
- 2021/22 for grade 4

All schools can develop *atividades de desenvolvimento curricular* (curricular enrichment activities) as permitted by their scope and educational plans. In the first cycle (grades 1–4), five non-compulsory weekly hours are allocated to these activities. In some cases, schools may withdraw one hour to allocate to *educação moral e religiosa* (moral and religious education).

The introduction of both ICT and *cidadania e desenvolvimento* (citizenship and development) in the curriculum (grades 1–9) is also highlighted. These subjects are transversal in primary education (grades 1–4) and become compulsory in grades 5–9. In upper secondary education, schools decide how to implement the compulsory component of citizenship and development.

Educação física (physical education) is included in the curriculum in primary and secondary education. Attendance at *educação moral e religiosa* (moral and religious education) is optional in primary and secondary education.

The compulsory options chosen by students in upper secondary education vary according to the particular education pathway followed. In grades 10–12, they can include mathematics, natural sciences, foreign languages (languages 2, 3, and 4), art education, social studies (only in grade 12), and technology and ICT (only in grade 12).

In upper secondary education, students must be given the opportunity to create their own personal pathway by being allowed to choose options from different school pathways.

Romania

In Romania, general compulsory education consists of 11 grades. It includes primary education (the preparatory grade and grades 1–4), lower secondary education (*gimnaziu*; grades 5–8) and the first two years of upper secondary education (grades 9 and 10). Grade 1 in the figures corresponds to the preparatory grade in the Romanian education system, grade 2 to grade 1, etc. At ISCED level 34, the instruction time and subjects vary between the different pathways. Data in this report refer to the scientific pathway.

The framework plan approved in 2013 for primary education, is being progressively implemented. In the 2020/21 school year, all grades in primary education are now based on this framework plan. Schools have the option to provide one additional period per week.

The framework plan for lower secondary education (grades 6–9; grades 5–8 in the Romanian system), approved in 2016, began to be implemented in 2017/18 in grade 6, in 2018/19 in grade 7, in 2019/20 in grade 8 and in 2020/21 in grade 9. The following changes have been introduced in grade 6: introduction to the compulsory subject informatics and ICT (one hour a week); an increase of one hour a week in the number of hours allocated to social studies; and introduction of a compulsory subject to be chosen by students. Students can choose from subjects proposed by the school or by local or top-level education authorities. Nevertheless, this provision was amended in 2018 (ORDER no. 4.828 of 30 August 2018 amending and complementing the Order of the National Education and Scientific Research Minister no. 3.590/2016 on the approval of the framework curricula for lower secondary education), and consequently it is no longer obligatory for pupils to choose an optional subject.

The ‘other subjects’ category includes music and movement in grades 1–5 (preparatory grade and grades 1–4 in the Romanian system); personal development in grades 1–3 (preparatory and grades 1 and 2); counselling and personal development in grades 6–9 (grades 5–8); elements of the Latin language and Romanic culture in grade 8 (grade 7); and entrepreneurship education in grade 11 (grade 10).

Slovenia

Compulsory education is provided in a single structure that covers nine years. The reported curriculum is followed by 95.1 % of pupils. In areas where Italian and Hungarian ethnic minorities live, schools implement adapted curricula, which include two more lessons per week and a slightly different allocation of the instruction time between subjects, as students have to learn two languages – Slovenian and Italian or Hungarian. The adapted curriculum is followed by 3.9 % of pupils.

In grades 1–3, ‘learning about the environment’ (3 lessons a week) encompasses natural sciences (1.25 lessons a week), social studies (1.25 lessons a week) and technology (0.5 lessons a week). In grades 4 and 5, three lessons a week are devoted to natural sciences, of which two lessons are devoted to ‘natural science’ and one lesson a week to ‘technology’.

In grades 7 and 8, ‘patriotic and citizenship culture and ethics’ (one lesson per week) is reported under social studies. The annual compulsory additional 15 days of activities in the arts, natural sciences, physical education and technology have been included in the respective categories.

In grades 1–9, religion, ethics and moral education are integrated into social studies. In grades 7–9, this can also be a compulsory option. ICT is integrated into all subjects in grades 1–9. In grades 6–8, it is integrated into technology and, in grades 7–9, it can also be a compulsory option.

The 'other subjects' category includes form time.

The compulsory options in grades 7–9 include subjects in the fields of social sciences and humanities and natural sciences and technology, such as ICT, technology, language 3, language 4, religion, ethics and moral education, social studies, physical education, practical skills, arts education and natural sciences. Schools have to offer at least three subjects from each field, including a mandatory foreign language, rhetoric, and religion and ethics in the field of social sciences and humanities. Students can be exempted from taking compulsory options if they attend a music school within an accredited programme.

Schools must provide the following non-compulsory subjects: a first foreign language in grade 1 (taken by 92.1 % of students); a second foreign language (21.1 % of students), arts (6.6 % of students), ICT (18.4 % of students), physical education (21.2 % of students) and technonology (attended by 11.1 % of students) in grades 4–6; a foreign language (5.4 % of students) in grades 7–9; and an additional lesson of compulsory options in grades 7–9. The non-compulsory curriculum (grades 1–9) also includes student interest activities, supplementary lessons and remedial education. In grade 1, 74.0 % of students also attend morning care, and, in grades 1–5, 82.0 % of students are enrolled in after-school activities, which are implemented according to official guidelines and are taught by qualified teachers.

Slovakia

The state education programmes, in force since 2015/16, set the minimum instruction time for primary and lower secondary education per grade. However, the instruction time for ISCED level 34 is prescribed for the four years of upper secondary education (vertical flexibility). Given that only the first year (grade 10) is compulsory, a quarter of this time has been included in each subject category.

The compulsory flexible subjects that schools can offer are, at the same time, compulsory options for students. They include a second and third language, technology and 'other subjects', such as transport education, sex education and minority languages. Schools can also offer additional lessons for some compulsory subjects.

Finland

Schools and education providers can start teaching any compulsory subject using vertical flexibility from grade 1. They are obliged to introduce the following subjects by the grades specified: the first foreign language by the spring term of grade 1; the second foreign language by grade 6; social studies by grade 4; and home economics, guidance and counselling (practical and vocational skills) by grade 7.

Instruction time for geography is included under instruction time for natural sciences.

The compulsory subjects with a flexible timetable include music, visual arts, crafts, physical education and home economics.

The compulsory subjects chosen by schools can include any subject.

The non-compulsory curriculum refers to an optional foreign language.

Sweden

The scope includes both public and grant-aided independent schools (*fristående skola*).

The minimum instruction time is recommended/guaranteed for *lågstadiet* (lower stage), *mellanstadiet* (middle stage) and *högstadiet* (high school) in compulsory education; schools decide how to distribute the instruction time in each stage, although with some limitations. The number of hours devoted to a subject or group of subjects may be reduced by at most 20 % in each stage to accommodate school options; however, English, mathematics, Swedish and Swedish as a second language are excluded from this.

The compulsory options chosen by students include the 'pupil's choice' (*elevens val*); this has an instruction time of 177 hours. In the 'pupil's choice', the pupil can deepen or broaden their knowledge of one or more subjects. The hours allocated to this compulsory option can be freely distributed between the three different school stages; for comparability reasons, the hours allocated to the 'pupil's choice' have been equally distributed across each stage.

The total amount of instruction time for the second foreign language (language 3) (*språkval*) is 320 hours. The steering documents set out that schools should not start teaching a second foreign language later than grade 6. Pupils who do not choose a second foreign language can study Swedish, Swedish as a second language (provided that they have already received education on this subject), English, sign language or mother tongue tuition. The instruction time for the second foreign language is 320 hours, but this is distributed between the middle and higher stages: 48 hours in middle stage and 272 hours in high stage.

With regard to practical and vocational skills, 'home and consumer studies' has a total instruction time of 118 hours – 36 hours in primary and middle school and 82 hours in high school. For comparability reasons, 36 hours has been allocated to middle school for home and consumer studies. Practical and vocational skills also consists of 330 hours of handiwork – 50 hours in the lower stage, 140 hours in the middle stage and 140 hours in the higher stage.

Natural sciences consists of three subjects in the middle and higher stages: biology, physics and chemistry. In the middle stage, each subject has a minimum instruction time of 55 hours. The remaining 28 hours can be distributed freely between the three subjects in the middle stage. In the higher stage, pupils are guaranteed a minimum instruction time of 75 hours for each subject. The remaining 39 hours can be distributed freely between the three subjects.

Social sciences consists of four subjects in middle and high school: geography, history, religion and civic education. Middle stage pupils are guaranteed a minimum teaching time of 70 hours in each subject. The remaining 53 hours can be distributed freely between the four subjects. In the higher stage, pupils are guaranteed a minimum teaching time of 75 hours in each subject. The remaining 52 hours can be distributed freely between the four subjects.

The non-compulsory curriculum includes mother tongue tuition for children with a mother tongue other than Swedish. Municipalities can decide how to organise this tuition and how long it lasts.

Pupils who started grade 9 in the 2020/21 school year follow the old rules for instruction time (see the previous report for the 2017/18 school year). Pre-school (which is the last year of ISCED 02) becomes compulsory in the year a child turns six and lasts for one year.

Albania

The compulsory subjects chosen by schools include modules on the environment and other activities at elementary level / grades 1–5, and usually a second foreign language, e.g. German, French or Italian, at grades 6–9.

The non-compulsory curriculum, 'currriculum by choice' in classes 3–5 and 6–9 include second foreign language as well as other extra-curricular hours offered within grades (6–9), including education for human rights, environmental education etc.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

There are three official languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina and classes are held in one of those languages.

In grade 1, mathematics is integrated into reading, writing and literature (and 'creation') and arts education is integrated into physical education and sports.

In grades 1–4, social studies is integrated into natural sciences.

Switzerland

With the exception of a minimum number of lessons for physical education, no standard curriculum and no standard instruction time are defined at national level. Curricula and the intended instruction time are determined by the 26 cantons at regional level. The definition and the number of both compulsory and non-compulsory subjects, as well as the total instruction time and its distribution between subjects, vary considerably across cantons. Therefore, only data on the total instruction time per grade and ISCED level can be presented. The total compulsory instruction time for the six years at primary level varies between a minimum of 4 484 hours and a maximum of 5 155 hours between cantons. The total compulsory instruction time for the three years at lower secondary level varies between a minimum of 2 603 hours and a maximum of 3 063 hours.

The scope includes only public institutions. The figures present weighted averages of the cantonal requirements for each grade and the total instruction time as provided in the cantonal timetables (*Stundentafeln* / *grilles horaires*). The averages are weighted by the number of students per canton in primary education (six years) and lower secondary education (three years) in 2018/19. For Ticino, with five years of primary education and four years of lower secondary education in 2020/21, calculations are based on six years of primary and three years of lower secondary education for reasons of comparability. The instruction time provided for lower secondary education is the mean of the different pathways (basic and advanced requirements; not including baccalaureate schools in grade 9).

Compulsory education includes two years of pre-primary education (ISCED 02) and lasts for 11 years in total.

The length of holiday periods and the number of public holidays also vary between cantons. The number of instruction days per school year is presented as an average of the number of school weeks per year (varying between 36.5 and 40 weeks) minus an estimated average of five public holidays. Teacher development days are at the discretion of the school and therefore cannot be excluded. The length of a period varies between 45 minutes (in the majority of the cantons) and 50 minutes.

Iceland

In grades 1–10, practical and vocational skills is integrated into arts education, and religion, ethics and moral education are integrated into social studies.

According to the national curriculum for compulsory schools, two foreign languages are compulsory, English and Danish. English is defined as the first foreign language (language 2) and Danish (in some cases Norwegian or Swedish) as the second foreign language (language 3). Schools are free to decide how much time should be assigned to the first and second foreign languages (languages 2 and 3), within the limits of the intended curriculum for foreign languages. Additional foreign language instruction is included in the 'compulsory options chosen by students' category. The national

curriculum guidelines allocate time for compulsory options. All schools use this time for extra teaching time for compulsory subjects and other subjects that pupils may choose.

The compulsory options chosen by students include elective subjects chosen by individual schools. Schools may offer elective subjects that are the same as the core subjects, e.g. languages and mathematics, if they want to provide more extensive education in these subject fields. The guidelines instruct schools to keep a balance between academic and more vocational subjects. It is recommended that schools offer subjects in the arts and practical/vocational subjects, especially in grades 8–10.

Liechtenstein

In grade 1, English is taught as an integrated subject. It is up to teachers to decide how this is done. It is reported as one lesson integrated into the total instruction time.

Social studies is integrated into natural sciences in grades 2–5. In *Realschule* and *Oberschule*, social studies is also integrated into natural sciences in grades 6–9. In grades 6 and 7, technology is integrated into arts education in all pathways.

The 'other subjects' category includes (in the three pathways) life sciences and 'class hour' (which addresses topics such as personal development, sex education, career guidance and form time). In *Oberschule* and *Realschule*, the 'other subjects' category also includes home economics.

In grade 9, the compulsory options chosen by students in *Gymnasium* depend on the track they choose and include Latin; Spanish; Italian and Latin; art, music and pedagogy; economics and law; mathematics; and natural sciences. In *Realschule* and *Oberschule*, the compulsory options include technical drawing, crafts and design, arts, music, physical education, a second foreign language (language 3; French), 'other subjects' / life sciences / school projects (in *Realschule*) and vocational education (in *Oberschule*).

In *Oberschule* and *Realschule* (grades 6–9), schools offer additional non-compulsory lessons for remedial teaching (including additional lessons in German for migrants) and specific support lessons for high achievers to prepare them for moving to a different type of school. In grade 9, they are used particularly to prepare students (individually) for further general or vocational education. In *Gymnasium*, the non-compulsory subjects aim to promote topics across different subjects (interdisciplinary) and students' individual interests.

Montenegro

Social studies is integrated into natural sciences in grades 1–3.

Religion, ethics and moral education are integrated into social studies throughout compulsory education.

Technology is integrated into natural sciences in grades 1–4 and into ICT in grades 5–8. In grade 9, both technology and ICT are integrated into the compulsory subjects. As well as being studied as a separate subject, ICT is integrated into all other subjects.

In schools where the Montenegrin language is taught as a non-mother tongue language, the number of lessons is higher. In addition to studying their mother tongue (four lessons a week), children have two additional lessons of Montenegrin language a week in grades 1–9.

One period per week (of the recommended instruction time per year) must be devoted to form time.

In grades 7–9, students must choose one compulsory subject (one lesson per week). Schools are obliged to offer a minimum of five subjects from a list of 20 approved by the National Council for Education.

The compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools cover two weeks of instruction time that schools devote to culture, technical activities, sports, outdoor education and school trips.

The non-compulsory curriculum includes student interest activities and extra time for compulsory subjects and options.

Norway

Instruction time per subject for the 10-year compulsory education programme is mainly established for primary schooling (ISCED 1) as a whole (grades 1–7) and for lower secondary schooling (ISCED 24) as a whole (grades 8–10).

In primary education, the instruction time for the core subjects reading, writing and literature, mathematics, natural sciences and the first foreign language (language 2) is prescribed for grades 1–4 and for grades 4–7. Schools can decide how to distribute this time between the relevant grades. Schools must provide 38 additional hours per year for compulsory subjects of their own choice, based on what is most advisable according to local needs.

At primary and lower secondary levels, schools may reallocate up to 5 % of the total ordinary instruction time for each subject to other curriculum subjects. For instance, each school may allocate 5 % of the intended instruction time in mathematics for grades 1–4 (0.05 × 560 hours = 28 hours) to other subject(s), for example natural sciences. Subject time can be reallocated only within the individual main grades, i.e. 1–4, 5–7 and 8–10.

With regard to compulsory options chosen by students, in grades 8–10 of lower secondary education (ISCED 24), students can choose between 16 subjects (from 2019/20, the subject ‘practical crafts’ was introduced) for a total of 171 hours. Students in lower secondary education (ISCED 24) with sufficient knowledge may choose subjects from the upper secondary (ISCED 34) curriculum as part of their compulsory options. Every school must offer at least two different subjects as compulsory options. In addition, students can choose between a second foreign language (language 3) and in-depth studies or work-related training for a total number of 222 hours. The in-depth studies give students the opportunity to develop their competences in English, reading, writing and literature, Sami, mathematics or work-related training, instead of learning a new foreign language. Schools can decide which subjects to offer as in-depth studies and how to organise them, but they must offer at least one in addition to language 3. In 2017/18, 73 % of the students chose language 3 while only 15 % chose in depth-studies in other languages and 12 % chose in-depth studies in mathematics or work-related training. In 2019/20, 71 % of students chose language 3 while only 15 % chose in depth-studies in other languages and 14 % chose in-depth studies in mathematics or work-related training.

Serbia

Municipalities with an official minority language can organise classes in this language. Schools in which Serbian is the language of instruction can offer a minority language with national culture elements as a non-compulsory subject, which students from minority populations can choose or not (72 lessons a year).

In grades 1–4, social studies is integrated into natural sciences, and technology is integrated into ICT.

In grade 1, students must choose between religion and civic education (both 36 lessons a year; 34 lessons in grade 8). These subjects are categorised as religion, ethics and moral education. Students can follow the same subject during grades 2–8 or switch in grade 5.

The ‘other subjects’ category includes form time (classroom meeting).

In grades 5–8, school offers at least three compulsory flexible subjects and students must choose one. These subjects can be related to the following topics: nature conservation, everyday life in the past, drawing, painting, sculpting, choir and orchestra, chess, etc.

The non-compulsory curriculum consists of supplementary classes, additional classes and extracurricular activities (volunteering, humanitarian activities, cultural activities, sports, etc.). The minority language with national culture elements is another optional subject for students from minority populations.

North Macedonia

Primary education is compulsory, lasts nine years and is organised in three educational stages: grades 1–3, grades 4–6 and grades 7–9. According to the ISCED classification, this level of education is equivalent to ISCED level 1 (primary education) and ISCED level 23 (lower secondary education). Primary education is provided by municipal and state primary schools. Education in North Macedonia has been compulsory from the start of primary to the end of upper secondary education since 2008.

The subject ‘innovations’ is included in practical and vocational skills in grade 9.

In grades 4 and 5, ‘creative handicraft’ is included in the ‘other subjects’ category. In grade 6, pupils must choose one of the following elective subjects: ethics of religions, introduction to religions, or classical culture of European civilisation. In grades 7–9, pupils must choose one of the following elective subjects: homeland culture, environmental education, research on our homeland, folk dance, projects in music, projects in fine arts, technical education, projects in informatics, sport, health or skills for living. In grades 8 and 9, one additional subject is added to the list of electives, computer programming. In grades 3–9, students can decide to follow (with parental approval) one of the following non-compulsory subjects: language and culture of Aromanians, language and culture of the Roma people, or language and culture of Bosnians.

Secondary education is part of compulsory education and is provided in either public secondary schools (municipal or state secondary schools) or private high schools. According to the ISCED classification, this level of secondary education is equivalent to ISCED level 3 (upper secondary education). Although the law on secondary education does not stipulate the minimum number of years to be spent in secondary education (it can be from two to four years in vocational education schools or four years in general secondary schools), ISCED level 3 is mandatory for all students. When considering the student population as a whole, the minimum number of years of compulsory education is 11 years. However, it lasts 13 years for those students following the general secondary education programme.

General secondary programmes at ISCED level 34 are provided in *gymnasiums*. Upper secondary general education in *gymnasiums* lasts for four years.

The data in this report show only the first two years (grades 10 and 11) of upper secondary general education. For the third year or grade 12, the minimum instruction time for the total compulsory curriculum is 621 hours (108 hours for reading, writing and literature; 162 hours for natural sciences; 81 hours for mathematics, the first foreign language, and physical education and health; and 54 hours for the second foreign language and social studies). For the fourth year or grade 13, the minimum instruction time for the total compulsory curriculum is 540 hours a year (108 hours for reading, writing and literature; 81 hours for mathematics, social studies, the first foreign language, and physical education and health; and 54 hours for the second foreign language and business and entrepreneurship). This description refers to the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Turkey

Instruction time provided for ISCED level 34 in this report relates only to Anatolian high schools. There are four general education programmes at ISCED level 3 in Turkey: Anatolian high schools (80 % of students), high schools (11 %), science high schools (5 %) and Anatolian teacher training high schools (4 %). High schools and Anatolian teacher training high schools are gradually being transformed into Anatolian high schools. High schools still enrol approximately 40 % of students in grade 12. The curricula of high schools and Anatolian high schools in this grade are very similar, with the main exception being the instruction time for foreign languages, which is lower in high schools.

In grades 1–3, the 'other subjects' category includes free activities.

In grades 5–8, students must choose three subjects per grade. Compulsory options include subjects relating to religion, ethics and moral education, reading, writing and literature, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, arts education, sports and foreign languages. ICT is a compulsory option in grades 7–12. In grades 9–12, schools can offer the following subjects as compulsory options: language, Turkish literature, mathematics, geometry, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, psychology, sociology and a foreign language.

GLOSSARY

Definition of instruction time

The intended instruction time includes the time a public school is expected to provide instruction to students on all the subjects of the compulsory and non-compulsory curriculum in the school premises or in out-of-school activities which are formal parts of the compulsory programmes. The instruction time excludes:

- Breaks between classes or other types of interruptions.
- Non-compulsory time outside the school day.
- Time dedicated to homework activities.
- Individual tutoring or private study.
- Days when schools are closed for festivities, such as national holidays, and days when students are not expected to be at school because of teacher development days or examination periods.

National data sheets (Part II, Sections 2 and 3) present data as **annual instruction time in hours of 60 minutes per grade**, taking into account the number of instruction days per week and per year and the number and length of periods ([23]). When the data collected from the national policy document is provided in periods (usually between 35 and 50 minutes), per week or per year, calculations are done in order to obtain standard annual data in hours.

Definition of subject categories

The subjects taught during full-time compulsory education in Europe vary across countries. In order to be able to compare the information, it is necessary to group them according to more general subject categories. Most subject categories cover several subjects (e.g. natural sciences: physics, chemistry or biology).

The category 'reading, writing and literature' is associated with 'language 1'. Additional languages learnt by students – usually but not necessarily foreign languages, are referred to as 'language 2', 'language 3', 'language 4' and 'language 5'.

The following table defines the subject categories which are included in the national data sheets.

([23]) All figures are rounded up to the next complete number and for this reason some non correspondence between individual subjects and total annual figures might exist. For more information on ISCED classifications, see: http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf

Subject categories	Definitions
Reading, writing and literature (L1)	Covers skills such as spelling, reading, and writing in the language of instruction and includes subjects such as grammar, language of instruction and literature. It can be considered as the first language taught to students. If there are two languages of instruction in almost every public school, then hours allocated to reading, writing and literature in both languages of instruction should be reported.
Mathematics	Covers all numeracy skills and subjects such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, statistics, etc.
Natural sciences	Includes subjects such as science, physics, chemistry, biology, environmental sciences and ecology.
Social studies	Includes subjects such as history, geography and all related studies. May also include community studies, social and political instruction, philosophy or civics education.
Languages (L 2–5)	Includes subjects that develop students' knowledge of a language viewed in the curriculum as 'foreign' (or modern) languages, other national languages and/or regional and minority languages. This definition of languages in the curriculum is educationally based and unrelated to the political status of languages.
Physical education and health	Includes subjects such as education in sports and health enhancing physical activities, as well as time devoted to instruction in competitive and traditional games, gymnastics, swimming, athletics, dance or other activities that develop pupils' physical and social competences (including knowledge, skills, psychomotor coordination, cooperation and leadership) and an active healthy lifestyle.
Arts education	Includes subjects such as arts, history of arts, music, visual arts, drama, music and dance performance, photography, and creative handicraft.
Religion/ethics/ moral education	Includes subjects whose aim is to teach the principles and history of one or more religions, and subjects such as ethics whose aim is to determine how to live and behave in accordance with human and social principles.
Information and communication technologies (ICT)	Includes subjects such as informatics, information and communication technologies or computer science. These subjects include a wide range of topics concerned with the new technologies used for the processing and transmission of digital information, including computers, computerised networks (including the Internet), microelectronics, multimedia, software and programming, etc.
Technology	Includes subjects that provide knowledge on the practical use of scientific or technological discoveries that use specific instruments and processes. For example, construction, electricity, electronics, graphics and design, etc.
Practical and vocational skills	Includes vocational skills (preparation for a specific occupation), accountancy, business studies, career education, clothing and textiles, driving and road security, home economics, nursing, secretarial studies, tourism and hospitality, woodwork, metalwork and sewing.
Other subjects	This category includes different subjects that cannot be classified within the other groups or which specifically reflect national concerns. In this category, the following types of subjects may be included: classical languages and minority languages which the curriculum does not consider to be other languages, personal development/well-being.

Definition of curriculum categories

The intended instruction time might be composed of a compulsory curriculum and a non-compulsory curriculum. The compulsory curriculum refers to the amount and allocation of instruction time that has to be provided in almost every public school and must be attended by almost all public sector students.

The compulsory curriculum contains compulsory subjects defined as such by central education authorities and taught to all pupils. It may also be flexible in various ways as local authorities, schools, teachers and/or students may have varying degrees of freedom to choose the subjects and/or the allocation of compulsory instruction time.

The following table defines the curriculum categories which are included in the information presented in the national data sheets.

Curriculum categories	Definitions
Compulsory subject	Subject that must be studied by all students.
Compulsory options chosen by the students	Includes the total amount of instruction time for subjects that are chosen by students, where there is a list of subjects that school must offer and each student must choose one or more from the list.
Compulsory flexible subjects chosen by schools	Includes the total amount of compulsory instruction time indicated by the central authorities, which regional authorities, local authorities, schools or teachers allocate to subjects of their choice (or subjects they chose from a list defined by central education authorities). For example, schools may be able to choose between offering religious education or more science, or art, etc., but to offer one of these subjects is compulsory for the school and students must study it.
Compulsory subjects with flexible timetable (total time devoted to …)	Includes the total amount of instruction time indicated by the central authorities for a given group of subjects, which regional authorities, local authorities, schools or teachers allocate to individual subjects. There is flexibility in the time spent on a subject, but not in the subjects to be taught. For example, central authorities may define the total number of hours that students should be studying reading, writing and literature, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages per year and schools may choose how to distribute this time between these individual subjects.
Non-compulsory curriculum	Includes the total amount of instruction time to which students are entitled beyond the compulsory hours of instruction and that almost every public school is expected to provide. Subjects can vary from school to school or from region to region and take the form of elective subjects. For example, students may have the possibility to take a mathematics enrichment course or to study an additional language, above the compulsory hours of instruction. Students are not required to choose one of these elective subjects, but all public schools are expected to offer this possibility.

Country codes

EU/EU-27	European Union	**NL**	Netherlands
BE	Belgium	**AT**	Austria
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	**PL**	Poland
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community	**PT**	Portugal
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	**RO**	Romania
BG	Bulgaria	**SI**	Slovenia
CZ	Czechia	**SK**	Slovakia
DK	Denmark	**FI**	Finland
DE	Germany	**SE**	Sweden
EE	Estonia		
IE	Ireland	**EEA and**	**Candidate countries**
EL	Greece	**AL**	Albania
ES	Spain	**BA**	Bosnia and Herzegovina
FR	France	**CH**	Switzerland
HR	Croatia	**IS**	Iceland
IT	Italy	**LI**	Liechtenstein
CY	Cyprus	**ME**	Montenegro
LV	Latvia	**MK**	North Macedonia
LT	Lithuania	**NO**	Norway
LU	Luxembourg	**RS**	Serbia
HU	Hungary	**TR**	Turkey
MT	Malta		

Statistical codes

: Data not available

(–) Not applicable

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Recommended Annual Instruction Time in Full-time Compulsory Education in Europe – 2020/21

One of the key elements in the learning process is the instruction time available to students. In fact, not only the quality of instruction but also the time spent for learning can have a positive effect on students' learning process. This instruction time report analyses the recommended minimum instruction time in full-time compulsory general education in 39 European education systems for the year 2020/21. Special attention is paid to reading, writing and literature, mathematics, natural sciences and social studies. The report outlines how reading, writing and literature are the subject areas that take up the largest share of instruction time, especially in primary education. Mathematics represents the second largest share of instruction time. The report also briefly examines whether the COVID-19 crisis has affected total instruction time. In addition to the comparative analysis, the report also includes national diagrams that illustrate data by country and subject, collected jointly by the Eurydice and the OECD NESLI networks.

The Eurydice Network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is co-ordinated by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

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