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## **CROATIAN**

**The Croatian language in education in Austria**  
| 2nd Edition |

| Regional Dossier series |





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## Foreword

**background** Regional and minority languages are languages that differ from the official state language. The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning uses the following definition for these languages, as stated in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML):

Regional and minority languages are languages traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants.

The Mercator European Research Centre aims to acquire, apply, and circulate knowledge about these regional and minority languages in education. An important means to achieve this goal is the Regional Dossier series: documents that provide the most essential features of the education system of regions with a lesser-used regional or minority language.

**aim** The aim of the Regional Dossier series is to provide a concise description of minority languages in education, mainly in Europe but also in other parts of the world. Aspects that are addressed include features of the education system, recent educational policies, main actors, legal arrangements and support structures, as well as quantitative aspects such as the number of schools, teachers, and pupils, and financial investments. Because of this fixed structure, the dossiers in the series are easy to compare.

**target group** The dossiers serve several purposes and are relevant for policy-makers, researchers, teachers, students, and journalists who wish to explore developments in minority language schooling in Europe. They can also serve as a first orientation towards further research, or function as a source of ideas for improving educational provisions.

- link with Eurydice** The format of the Regional Dossiers follows the format of Eurydice—the information network on education in Europe—in order to link the regional descriptions with those of national education systems. Eurydice provides information on the administration and structure of national education systems in the member states of the European Union.
- contents** Every Regional Dossier begins with an introduction about the region in question, followed by six chapters that each deal with a specific level of the education system (e.g. primary education). Chapters 8 and 9 cover the main lines of research into education of the minority language under discussion, and the prospects for the minority language in general and in education in particular, respectively. Chapter 10 provides a summary of statistics. Lists of (legal) references and useful addresses regarding the minority language are given at the end of the dossier.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AHS</b>	Academic Secondary School ( <i>Allgemein bildende höhere Schule</i> )
<b>BAfEP</b>	Higher vocational education college for elementary pedagogy ( <i>Bundesbildungsanstalt für Elementarpädagogik</i> )
<b>BG</b>	Federal academic secondary school ( <i>Bundesgymnasium</i> )
<b>BHS</b>	Higher vocational education ( <i>Berufsbildende höhere Schule</i> )
<b>BMBWF</b>	Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research ( <i>Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung</i> )
<b>BMS</b>	Intermediate Vocational Education ( <i>Berufsbildende mittlere Schule</i> )
<b>BORG</b>	Federal academic secondary school with emphasis on science, Upper Cycle ( <i>Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium</i> )
<b>BRG</b>	Federal academic secondary school with emphasis on science ( <i>Bundesrealgymnasium</i> )
<b>DOGH</b>	Association for Adult Education of Burgenland Croats ( <i>Društvo za obrazovanje gradišćanskih Hrvatov</i> )
<b>HAK</b>	Secondary College of Business Administration ( <i>Handelsakademie</i> )
<b>HKD</b>	Croatian Cultural Organisation ( <i>Hrvatsko kulturno društvo</i> )
<b>HKDC</b>	Croatian Cultural and Documentation Centre ( <i>Hrvatski kulturni i dokumentarni centar</i> )
<b>HNVŠ</b>	Adult Education Centre of Burgenland Croats ( <i>Narodna visoka škola Gradišćanskih Hrvatov</i> )
<b>HLW</b>	Secondary College for Economic Professions ( <i>Höhere Lehranstalt für wirtschaftliche Berufe</i> )
<b>HŠtD</b>	Croatian Press Association ( <i>Hrvatsko štamparsko društvo</i> )
<b>KUGA</b>	Cultural association ( <i>Kulturna zadruaga</i> )
<b>MS</b>	Secondary school ( <i>Mittelschule</i> )
<b>ORG</b>	Academic secondary school with emphasis on science, Upper Cycle ( <i>Oberstufenrealgymnasium</i> )
<b>ÖSZ</b>	Austrian Centre for Language Competence ( <i>Österreichisches Sprachen Kompetenz Zentrum</i> )
<b>PHB</b>	University College of Teacher Education Burgenland ( <i>Pädagogische Hochschule Burgenland</i> )
<b>ZIGH</b>	Scientific Institute of Burgenland Croats ( <i>Znanstveni Institute gradišćanskih Hrvatov</i> )

## 1 Introduction

### language

The glottonym Croatian in Austria covers two linguistic realities, namely the recognised minority language of Burgenland Croats and the Croatian standard language as a migrant language of the recent past, which is often subsumed as B/C/S together with Bosnian and Serbian. This dossier will focus on the first issue but also briefly mention connections to the latter, where needed. The Burgenland Croatian variety, *gradišćanskohrvatski*, was developed as an independently codified language form in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After a migration process in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when a mostly peasant population moved from regions in central parts of present-day Croatia and north-west Bosnia to former Western Hungary and with only rare connections to other Croatian speaking territories throughout history, this Croatian population developed a very specific regional sense of identification, which was also reflected in their linguistic choice. After the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, most of the Croatian-speaking population in the mentioned territory was incorporated into the newly established Austrian province of Burgenland, and some hamlets alongside the border became part of Hungary or Czechoslovakia. Various attempts at incorporating this minority group into the language codification process of standard Serbo-/Croatian failed, and Burgenland Croats remained committed to their local idioms. Based on an autonomous literary production since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Burgenland Croatian variety was finally codified based on a Čakavian dialect, which differs from the Serbo-/Croatian standard language derived from Štokavian. Important codification publications include normative dictionaries from 1982, *Deutsch-Burgenländischkroatisch-Kroatisches Wörterbuch* (German-Burgenland Croatian-Croatian dictionary) and 1991, *Gradišćanskohrvatsko-hrvatsko-nimški rječnik* (Burgenland Croatian-Croatian-German dictionary), a grammar book encompassing all important linguistic areas published in 2003, *Gramatika gradišćanskohrvatskoga jezika* (Burgenland Croatian Grammar), and an orthography manual *Pravopis gradišćanskohrvatskoga književnoga jezika* (Orthography of Burgenland Croatian written language) from 2009.

**Figure 1.***Settlement of Burgenland Croats / Villages with Croatian-Speaking Population.*

Note. Adapted from Pavetich (2020), compiled for this dossier.

## population

In the latest census of 2001, Austria for the first time differentiated Burgenland Croatian and Croatian as two separate options, which led to strong protests by minority organisations that urged minority members to indicate both options. According to these numbers, more than 16,000 people in Burgenland and around 2,500 people in Vienna reported Burgenland Croatian as their colloquial language, together with some 700 more people in the remaining Austrian provinces. The numbers for Croatian are somewhat higher in regard to Vienna and Austria in general, with almost 26,000 people indicating Croatian as colloquial language (Statistik Austria, 2007). However, Croatian minority



organisations and the Austrian Minorities Centre estimate unofficial numbers around 50,000 Burgenland Croats in both Burgenland and Vienna. According to the Austrian regulation on bilingual topography from 2000, 47 villages and hamlets in Burgenland count as Croatian-German bilingual, premised on a 25% share of the indicated Croatian-speaking population.

**language status** Minority language rights in Austria follow the territorial principle and apply only in what is considered as “autochthonous” territory of settlement. Therefore, the Croatian language is legally protected only in six out of seven districts (Neusiedl am See, Eisenstadt Umgebung, Mattersburg, Oberpullendorf, Oberwart, and Güssing) in the federal province of Burgenland, but not in other federal provinces or the Austrian capital, Vienna, where a considerable number of Burgenland Croats also live. The first important legal text was the Austrian State Treaty of 1955 (*Staatsvertrag, betreffend die Wiederherstellung eines unabhängigen und demokratischen Österreich*), which includes minority rights for the Slovene minority in Carinthia and Styria as well as the Croatian minority in Burgenland in Article 7 of the treaty. In 1976, the *Volksgruppengesetz* (Ethnic Groups Act) was enacted, which was no longer limited to the aforementioned minorities. This law regulates the implementation of minority advisory boards and funding, as well as linguistic rights. The execution of linguistic rights stemming from both legal texts, however, prolonged for decades, especially regarding minority languages as official languages and bilingual topography. In Burgenland, the use of Croatian as the second official language was finally implemented by a regulation in 1990, after minority activists fought for their rights in the Austrian Constitutional Court. The legal decree determined authorities and municipalities where Croatian might be used as an official language, with only Austrian citizens being entitled to these rights. The issue of bilingual topography was solved only in 2000, after ongoing struggles on this topic, particularly in Carinthia and German-Slovene bilingual topography. In summer 2000, 47 German-Croatian bilingual place-name signs were erected in Burgenland. Moreover, road signs in bilingual municipalities had to be put up in Croatian and

German after an amendment to the *Volksgruppengesetz* in 2012. Austria signed and ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of Minority Rights in 1995 and 1998, respectively, as well as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which Austria signed in 1992 and ratified in 2001.

**status of  
language  
education**

Until the end of the Habsburg monarchy, Croatian language education was closely linked to the church, as it was implemented through denominational schools or Catholic village schools, with local priests often acting as teachers. After the federal province of Burgenland was incorporated into Austria in 1921, Austrian school laws could not be implemented immediately. Rather the Hungarian school laws together with various regional regulations applied until the composition of a federal province school law, which only happened in 1937 (Kinda-Berlakovich, 2005, p. 77). Therefore, Croatian language education in Austria was first regulated by the regional Burgenland School Act from 1937 (*Burgenländisches Landesschulgesetz*), which guaranteed Croatian as the language of instruction in primary education (which covered the first eight grades at that time), in municipalities with a minority population of more than 70%, and bilingual German and Croatian tuition in all municipalities with a minority population of at least 30%. In communities with a minority population of less than 30%, Croatian could be taught as a non-obligatory subject. Importantly, this law also regulated the implementation of inspection for Croatian education. Due to the political situation after 1938 and World War II, this law was not entirely implemented (Kinda-Berlakovich, 2005, p. 81). Following the annexation of Austria by the Third Reich, all schools were nationalised and teaching in minority languages was generally abolished until 1945. The Austrian State Treaty of 1955 included Article 7 on the rights of the Slovene and Croat minorities and in paragraph 2 stated the right to primary education in both minority languages as well as a proportional number of secondary schools (Staatsvertrag 1955, 7.2.). However, the term "proportional number" was not further specified. In 1962, a new school law at the federal level was issued and

the school system restructured, cutting primary school from 8 to 4 years (see education system, p. 10), which was important for minorities, as Croatian language tuition was now only regulated for the first four grades. This led to the abolition of Croatian language education after the age of 10.

Only in 1994 was a new Minority School Act for Burgenland passed (*Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland*), which is organised in eight sections, covering general regulations, regulations on primary schools, secondary schools and polytechnic schools, academic secondary schools, teacher education, specific language teaching offers and school inspection, and final clauses, regarding both minority languages in Burgenland, namely Croatian and Hungarian, as well as Romani. The act generally enables either primary schools with Croatian as the language of instruction—such schools, however, practically do not exist—or primary schools with Croatian and German as the languages of instruction. In lower secondary level education, the law does not actually mention bilingual schools, but either with Croatian as the instruction language or specific Croatian classes within schools that use German as the language of instruction. This act, however, enabled schools that by that time offered bilingual tuition as a “school experiment” to continue as a proper bilingual school in the act’s legal framework. School inspection for Croatian teaching was extended throughout the education system and a specific section for minority education was created within the schooling department of the provincial government. Since 1994, bilingual school certificates can be issued to pupils attending bilingual schools. One major difference in respect to the Burgenland School Act of 1937 was the possibility to demand tuition in the Croatian language notwithstanding census numbers for municipalities in Burgenland. The possibility of Croatian education was linked to the number of pupils who required this, with seven per class necessary for such a demand. This change was by all means appreciated. However, the minority school law of 1994 also enabled parents to opt out of bilingual education, whereas until then, all pupils in bilingual municipalities had to attend bilingual schooling, which

is interpreted as a change for the worse rather than an improvement by minority activists.

Besides Croatian as a minority language, or the Burgenland Croatian variety, Croatian is also integrated into the system of *muttersprachlicher Zusatzunterricht*, native language education as elective classes, which was designed especially for bilingual children regardless of their nationality, therefore specifically addressing descendants of younger migration processes, such as migrations from former Yugoslavia and later on Croatia during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in particular. It is important to note that in this case, Croatian is only provided in the combination of Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, as a result of Austrian language policy following the disintegration of Yugoslavia and Serbo-Croatian. The current situation is based on a decision from 1996, which opposes ethnic segregation based on language use and urges teachers to support all three varieties (BMBWF, 2020e). This solution has been continually criticised as outdated and is discussed repeatedly, especially by Croatian representatives, as it does not reflect contemporary political and linguistic realities.

#### **education system**

In Austria, compulsory education starts at the age of 6 and is mandatory for nine grades. Grades 1 to 4 (age 6–10) are covered by primary school (*Volksschule*), followed by lower secondary level (I), which can either be four grades of secondary school (*Mittelschule* [MS], which replaced secondary school/*Hauptschule* from 2012) or academic secondary school lower cycle (*Allgemein bildende höhere Schule*; AHS; *Unterstufe*). In the upper secondary level (II), AHS offers four more years of Upper Cycle (grades 9–12), ending with a school leaving examination/general qualification for university entrance (*Matura*). Higher vocational education (*Berufsbildende höhere Schule*; BHS) covers five grades (9–13) and is concluded with a diploma examination for a professional qualification in addition to Matura. Intermediate Vocational Education (*Berufsbildende mittlere Schule*; BMS) covers three grades (9–11). Part-time dual vocational education and apprenticeship/training cover the ninth and last grade of compulsory education (Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).

**private and public** Besides the public school system, private schools of mostly religious and alternative or independent character (e.g. Montessori and Waldorf) are granted public status if they follow the Austrian curriculum. The organisational status is regulated by the Private School Act from 1962 (with various amendments until 2020). In regard to minority language schooling, private school is relevant only for the Czech and Slovak minorities with the Komenský School Society in Vienna offering bilingual education in a private school with public status from kindergarten up to grade 12 (Matura).

Although not part of the general educational system, the *Hrvatski centar* (Croatian centre) in Vienna covers language education on a private and voluntary basis for Burgenland Croats in Austria's capital, due to the lack of official bilingual schooling institutions. Courses are provided for school children and adults from the minority group and to any other interested people.

**bilingual education forms** According to the Department of Education in Burgenland, immersion as an innovative attempt to bilingual education is a current focus and project (*Abteilung Minderheitenschulwesen in der Bildungsdirektion Burgenland*). Recently, such immersive education models have been developed and are currently in a testing phase under scientific observation in primary schools in central and southern parts of Burgenland. After a positive evaluation, immersion should be implemented as a teaching method in bilingual education throughout Burgenland.

**administration** The education and school systems in Austria are generally under the authority of the federal government, specifically of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung*; BMBWF), which is responsible for teacher training and education. Practical maintenance of public schools at the compulsory education level are a competence of the federal provinces. Academic secondary schools and intermediate and higher vocational education are maintained by the federal ministry. In each federal province, a Department of Education (*Bildungsdirektion* since

2019, formerly *Landesschulrat*) is subordinated to the ministry, under which the school administration and management is organised. Within the Department of Education in Burgenland, a sub-department for the minority school sector (*Abteilung Minderheitenschulwesen*) is the responsible authority regarding issues of bilingual education, also including inspection.

**inspection**

The Department for the Minority School sector in Burgenland is responsible for the inspection of all schools and classes organised under the Minority School Act in Burgenland. From 1990, Edith Mühlgaszner was Head of the Department for the Minority School sector in Burgenland, who was succeeded by Karin Vukman-Artner in 2012. She is not only head of the department, but also responsible for the bilingual federal Gymnasium Oberwart and coordination and inspection of Croatian education.

**support  
structure**

The aforementioned Department for the Minority School sector is the most important organisation and authority regarding the introduction and maintenance of the Croatian minority language in the education system. The department is responsible for publishing teaching material and schoolbooks as well as teacher training (Kinda-Berlakovich, 2005, p. 186). Additionally, various cultural organisations such as *Hrvatsko kulturno društvo* (Croatian cultural organisation; HKD) and *Hrvatski kulturni i dokumentarni centar* (Croatian cultural and documentation centre; HKDC) actively support the preparation of teaching material such as language-learning games, songbooks, and audio and video material, or appear as publishers. The *Hrvatsko štamparsko društvo* (Croatian press association; HŠtD) also publishes various materials, such as children's literature, in the Burgenland Croatian variety. In their weekly published newspaper *Hrvatske novine*, articles and information, especially for school children, can be found in various article series published in irregular intervals.

According to available reports on the funding line for minorities in Austria by the Austrian Federal Chancellery, project funding

for the Croatian minority in the education sector consisted of 150,000 euros in 2018, which was 14% of the overall funding budget (Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, 2019, p. 17). This amount of funding roughly stayed the same from 2014 onwards, namely between 13–15% of the overall funding budget (Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, 2015a, p. 14; 2016, p. 14; 2017, p. 14; 2018, p. 14).

## 2 Pre-school education

### target group

Pre-school in Austria is generally organised as kindergarten for children up to the compulsory school age, which is 6 years old. Children may attend kindergarten starting from the age of 3, with some kindergartens also offering care for younger children. Generally, children aged up to 3 years may attend a nursery school (*Kinderkrippe*), if provided. Childcare can also be extended with day nursery (*Hort*). Kindergarten attendance is optional until the age of 5, whereas the last year of kindergarten has been obligatory since 2010 and has to cover attendance of at least 20 hours per week from September to June before compulsory schooling starts. The obligatory year is free of charge for parents (Euroguidance Österreich, 2020; Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, n.d.).

A pre-school year is intended for children who have turned 6 years old and therefore are of compulsory school age, but who are attested not yet ready for school. The same applies to children whose early admission to the first grade has been revoked. The social integration of disabled children must be considered. This pre-school stage may be offered separately or together with other school stages (Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).

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### structure

Pre-school education is not part of the Austrian national education system but is regulated by the federal states individually. Therefore, structures and costs may vary. Most kindergartens are run by municipalities. Private kindergartens and nursery schools, which are called *Kindergruppe*, are mostly run by parent organisations and associations or church congregations. The federal state of Burgenland is responsible for minority pre-school education in Croatian. A department for pre-school education within the state government is responsible for respective task areas, including a pedagogical supervisory board (Land Burgenland, n.d.-b). Since the early 1980s, one supervisor has also been responsible for bilingual education (Croatian and Hungarian in Burgenland). Kornelia Berlakovich currently undertakes this task. There is no specific curriculum for



nursery schools and kindergarten; however, the latter should prepare children for their entry into compulsory education.

A private integrative bilingual nursery was established in Vienna in 1993 by a parents' initiative and association. The nursery *Viverica* (The squirrel) is located within the premises of the Croatian centre in a central part of Vienna (Hrvatski centar, 2020c).

#### legislation

The regulation currently applicable is the Burgenland Child Education and Care Act passed in October 2008 (Burgenländisches Kinderbildungs- und Betreuungsgesetz, 2009). In §7, 32 municipalities are named where Croatian has to be admitted as the second educational language in educational and care institutions. This Act also regulates the possibility to include Croatian as a second language in pre-school institutions in municipalities besides the legally named, if at least 25% of parents make such a demand. The Burgenland Child Education and Care Act was amended in autumn 2019, making pre-school education and nursery free of charge, which before the amendment had to be paid by parents.

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The establishment of the private integrative children's group *Viverica* in Vienna in 1993 was legally covered by the Viennese Child Day Care Act, which enabled such initiatives if they met specific conditions and requirements.

#### language use

The Burgenland Child Education and Care Act from 2008 prescribes at least 12 hours of Croatian language use per week in bilingual institutions. However, the amount of bilingual education at pre-school level highly depends on the language knowledge of the children as well as the competence of pre-school teachers, and might vary from effective bilingual education to only transmitting folk songs and counting rhymes (HKD, 2020a). At pre-school level, mostly colloquial language and/or a local dialect is spoken.

The private integrative bilingual children's group *Viverica* in Vienna works with a different approach and uses Croatian

as the only medium of communication between teachers and children. Both the Burgenland Croatian variety as well as the Croatian standard language are used, with each variety covered by one teacher. Children may also use German in conversation. A similar approach is used in another initiative based at the Hrvatski centar, namely *Jezična hiža* (language room), which offers language courses each Monday and Saturday for children from the age of 3 upwards. Both Croatian varieties are used, and children are encouraged to combine creative work with language training (Hrvatski centar, 2020a, 2020c).

**teaching  
materials**

Teaching materials for Croatian or bilingual education in pre-school are mostly provided by various organisations, such as the HKD, who re-edited the educational material folder *Hrvatski za dicu* (Croatian for children) in 2020, and the HKDC, which provides teaching materials in a folder “JaDuOnSielchTiErOna” (MeYouHeShe). Moreover, the Adult Education Centre of Burgenland Croats (*Narodna visoka škola Gradišćanskih Hrvatov; HNVŠ*) provides picture books such as *Hoćeš biti moj prijatelj* (Do you want to be my friend) or *Ste vidili naša jaja?* (Have you seen our eggs?), as well as the Association of Social Democrats mandatary of Croatian and bilingual communities, such as *Ana, Luka i Mara kanu biti zdravi* (Ana, Luka and Mara want to be healthy), and *Kokoš Klara na seljačkom dvoru* (Chicken Clara on the farm). Nursery and kindergarten teachers also prepare their teaching materials individually or collaboratively in working groups together with the supervisory board of the kindergarten department and possibly the aforementioned organisations. One such working group is the *Beirat für mehrsprachige Kindergartenpädagogik* (Advisory board for multilingual kindergarten education), founded in 2009 (UMIZ, 2021). They provide trilingual children’s books, including Hungarian, Croatian and German, such as *Kotlós mama és az óriástojás – Mutter Henne und das Riesenei – Mama kokoš i orijaško jaja* (Mama hen and the gigantic egg).

**statistics**

There are no official statistical data on Croatian bilingual pre-school education. According to the website of the respective

department in the Burgenland state government listing all child care institutions, 28 might be classified as bilingual kindergartens, five as bilingual day nurseries, and eight as bilingual nursery schools (Land Burgenland, n.d.-a). The estimated number of children in these pre-school institutions is around 1,600, of whom only around 15% are declared as Croatian native speakers/bilingual speakers. Most probably a high number of parents do not declare their children as Croatian-speaking, even though they are native speakers. Nevertheless, all children in the pre-school organisations classified as bilingual learn Croatian, if parents do not express contrary intentions. The private kindergarten/children's group in Vienna offers childcare and pre-school education for up to 15 children.

### 3 Primary education

**target group** Primary education in Austria covers grades 1 to 4 and is organised in primary schools (*Volksschule*). Pupils generally start schooling at the age of six and attend primary school until the age of ten. Pupils who are not attested to be ready for schooling at the age of six may attend a pre-school year. Early entrance into primary education is also possible if the child is attested ready for schooling (Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).

**structure** Primary school aims to provide all children with a basic and balanced education in social, emotional, intellectual, and physical personal needs. Primary schools must provide elementary education to all pupils, also including the social integration of disabled children. In 2016, the transition from kindergarten to primary school was reorganised considering competences and language skills of children. Starting from the school year 2019/2020, a compulsory transfer form needs to be delivered, providing information on a child's strengths and areas to support (BMBWF, 2020h).

Primary school education comprises elementary level I, containing grades 1 and 2 as well as the pre-school year if necessary, and elementary level II, containing grades 3 and 4. The number of hours taught per week is 20–23 at the first level and 22–25 at the second level. The total number of hours for all four grades is 90. Each class is taught by a class teacher, covering all subjects (except religious education, mostly). The curriculum contains German, mathematics, music education, religious education, local history and geography, arts, textile and technical work, and physical education. Furthermore, the curriculum includes one modern foreign language (English, French, Italian, Croatian, Slovak, Slovene, Czech, or Hungarian) as well as road safety as mandatory subjects. In addition, optional subjects such as choral singing, performing arts, and similar activities can be chosen. If the class teacher determines a need for support, pupils are obliged to attend corresponding support lessons. Pupils' assessment is based on marks

from 1–5 (1 – *Very good*, 2 – *Good*, 3 – *Satisfactory*, 4 – *Sufficient*, 5 – *Not sufficient*) together with a written explanation. Alternatively, classes may decide to introduce an alternative assessment of performance up to the end of the first semester of grade 2. After grade 4, guardians are informed about the recommended further transfer from primary school to secondary education, which requires the successful completion of grade 4 and registration (BMBWF, 2020i).

**legislation**

Primary education is regulated by the School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*) generally at the federal level and regarding minority language use by the Minority School Act for Burgenland from 1994 (*Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland*), Section 2, at the federal state level. The latter requires at least seven children to be enrolled for a bilingual class to be installed, and also dictates that there must not be more than 20 pupils per class. Several legal acts at the state level also regulate that, starting from 2017/2018, parents are provided more freedom of choice regarding school attendance and are not tied to specific districts (*Sprengelflexibilisierung*). Moreover, schools granted more autonomy in decisions regarding classes comprising more than one grade (Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).

The legal responsibility for primary education is divided between federal and state authorities (*Bund und Länder*), with the BMBWF at the federal level and the Department of Education Burgenland (*Bildungsdirektion Burgenland*) at the state level. School maintenance is mostly the responsibility of communities.

**language use**

Twenty-three primary schools in Burgenland are indicated as bilingual, with both Croatian and German as languages of instruction. The practical role of both languages as a medium of education highly depends on individual factors in these schools and classes, such as the language competence of both pupils and teachers. Most schools state to consider the knowledge of pupils and take it into account regarding the usage of both languages in class. Out of these 23 primary schools, four (Großwarasdorf/Veliki Borištof, Neuberg/Nova

Gora, Oslip/Uzlop, Unterpullendorf/Dolnja Pulja) specifically state to teach in the Burgenland Croatian variety, but the term “Croatian” is generally a synonym for this variety at the primary school level in Burgenland, as it is the regional language form used and taught. Two primary schools in Güttenbach/Pinkovac and Neuberg/Nova Gora specifically state to use immersion as their language education concept, with one day teaching only in Croatian, as stated for Neuberg/Nova Gora. The primary school in Nikitsch/Filež, which is an institution for practical training in teacher education, uses both Croatian and German equally in class, according to their own information. The primary schools in Eisenstadt/Željezno, Großpetersdorf/Veliki Petarštof, St. Michael/Sveti Mihalj, and Oberwart/Borta offer one or two Croatian classes, even though they are not bilingual schools; the bilingual school in Parndorf/Pandorf also offers one class of Croatian as a second language. Information on all primary schools and also the languages offered may be accessed via a school guide database on the webpage of Bildungsserver Burgenland (Bildungsnetzwerk Burgenland, 2020).

A curriculum reform for primary schools with Croatian or Croatian and German as languages of instruction switched from “bilingualism” as the principle of education, as stated in the 1966 curriculum, to “intercultural education”, which does not automatically imply minority language acquisition. The reform also reduced the number of hours to teach Croatian as a subject from 4–5 hours per week to 3–4 hours per week. German is taught as a school subject for 5 to 6 hours per week (Kinda-Berlakovich, 2005).

Since 2000, the initiative *Košić* (little basket) by HKD has offered afternoon care for primary school pupils in several municipalities, where children can play and interact in Burgenland Croatian after school time supervised by teachers. In the beginning, such *Košićs* were installed in several villages in all parts of Burgenland. Currently, only three villages in the central part offer such afternoon care. The school of Neudorf/Novo Selo in northern Burgenland asked for a *Košić* to be installed again,

but due to a lack of teachers, HKD could not meet this need. In Vienna, the course project *Jezična hiža* (language room) offers creative work and language training to children aged 3 to 15 in both Burgenland Croatian and standard Croatian twice a week (Monday and Saturday) to at least partly replace missing bilingual school classes (Hrvatski centar, 2020a).

**teaching  
materials**

Teachers may use language course books as recorded in *Schulbuchaktion*, which lists all school books approved by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. Literacy training is most likely taught with the exercise book *Početno čitanje i pisanje* (Reading and writing for beginners), which was developed by a group of primary school teachers. In 2013, new teaching materials were presented, such as the regional language portfolio for both minority languages in Burgenland (Croatian and Hungarian) and a textbook with audio material and exercises presented by the HKDC. All materials were developed and elaborated by teachers, also in cooperation with the University College of Teacher Education Burgenland (*Pädagogische Hochschule Burgenland*; PHB) and the minority department of Austrian public service broadcaster ORF. The most recent publications are *Hrvatski kroz ljeto* (Croatian throughout the year), an exercise book for grades 2–4 of primary school, and a relaunch of *Memo računa* (Memo calculates) in 2017 for teaching mathematics in Croatian. A magazine for primary school kids, *Moj novi minimulti* (My new minimulti), is designed as additional material for teaching bilingual or Croatian classes, but may also be used by parents. It is published in six volumes per year and is compiled by teachers, also in collaboration with pupils, and contains didactic games, playful elements, and language exercises. All volumes may also be accessed online via Bildungsserver Burgenland, an online platform with news, information, and further links regarding the school system in Burgenland in three languages (German, Croatian, and Hungarian). The platform *skooly*, which can be accessed via Bildungsserver Burgenland, also offers online and e-learning materials. Various teachers from bilingual schools are currently working on an e-learning book for the

Burgenland Croatian variety covering all grades of primary school. The project started in 2019 and is expected to be available on *skooly* in the near future. The *Sprachwerkstätte* at PHB continuously works on and publishes new teaching materials. Furthermore, various minority institutions publish work portfolios and language games for primary education .

#### statistics

According to statistical data provided by the Department for the Minority School sector in Burgenland, 1,345 pupils attended 23 bilingual schools with German and Croatian as the languages of instruction in Burgenland in the school year 2019/2020 (Bildungsdirektion Burgenland, 2020). Such schools may be found in the following six out of seven districts in the federal province:

- 3 schools in the district of Neusiedl/Niuzalj (Neudorf/Novo Selo, Pama/Bijelo Selo, Parndorf/Pandorf), attended by a total of 297 children.
- 7 schools in the district of Eisenstadt/Željezno (Hornstein/Vorištan, Klungenbach/Klimpuh, Oslip/Uzlop, Siegendorf/Cindrof, Steinbrunn/Štikapron, Trausdorf/Trajštof, Wulkaprodersdorf/Vulkaprodrštof), attended by a total of 661 children.
- 2 schools in the district of Mattersburg/Matrštof (Antau/Otava, Draßburg/Rasporak), attended by a total of 121 children.
- 6 schools in the district of Oberpullendorf/Gornja Pulja (Großwarasdorf/Veliki Borištof, Kaisersdorf/Kalištof, Kroatisch Minihof/Mjenovo, Nikitsch/Filež, Unterpullendorf/Dolnja Pulja, Weingraben/Bajngrob), attended by a total of 130 children.
- 2 schools in the district Oberwart/Borta (Dürnbach/Vincjet, Weiden bei Rechnitz/Bandol), attended by a total of 56 children.
- 3 schools in the district of Güssing/Novi Grad (Güttenbach/Pinkovac, Neuberg/Nova Gora, Stinatz/Stinjaki), attended by a total of 80 children.



Four schools with German as the language of instruction offer bilingual classes (in Eisenstadt/ Željezno, Großpetersdorf/Veliki Petarštof, St. Michael/Sveti Mihalj and Oberwart/Borta), which are attended by a total of 56 pupils. Additionally, there are two schools in Hirm/Hirman and St. Michael/Sveti Mihalj where Croatian may be taught as a compulsory subject. Croatian can be chosen as an elective subject or optional lesson, such as music education in Croatian, in 27 primary schools all over Burgenland (also including the aforementioned bilingual schools). There is no such school or class with only Croatian as the language of instruction.

## 4 Secondary education

<b>target group</b>	Secondary education covers education for children aged 10 to 18, thus grades 5 to 12, with grades 5 to 9 being compulsory. Secondary education is organised on two levels, starting with four grades of lower secondary (I) for children aged 10–14, followed by either upper secondary (II) for pupils aged 14–18 (grades 9–12), or one more year of pre-vocational school (grade 9, age 14/15), in order to meet compulsory education (Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).
<b>structure</b>	Secondary education consists of secondary school ( <i>Mittelschule/MS</i> ) and academic secondary school ( <i>Allgemein bildende höhere Schule/AHS, Gymnasium</i> ). As of the school year 2020/2021, MS replaces New Secondary School ( <i>Neue Mittelschule, NMS</i> , which replaced <i>Hauptschule</i> from 2012) as the compulsory school for 10–14-year-olds (grades 5–8). All primary school pupils can attend MS after having successfully completed primary school. The task of MS is to enable pupils to transfer to secondary and higher schools and/or to prepare them for pre-vocational school and vocational training, depending on the pupils' interests, aptitudes, talents, and abilities. Pupils attending MS may change to one year of pre-vocational school before switching to vocational training in order to fulfil compulsory schooling, or to other vocational education schools and colleges. Pupils receive targeted advice based on their strengths to ensure further decisions of either switching to educational or vocational training at the end of grade 8 in MS. The secondary education curriculum is organised with a focus on four areas: language and humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, economy and life science, and music and creativity. Additionally, there are specific secondary schools that focus on music and sports (BMBWF, 2020g; Euroguidance Österreich, 2020). AHS is organised into a lower secondary level/cycle (I, <i>Unterstufe</i> ) for grades 5–8 and an upper secondary level/cycle (II, <i>Oberstufe</i> ) for grades 9–12. Admission to AHS requires pupils to have completed grade 4 of primary school and that the subjects German and mathematics have been finished with “Very good” (1) or “Good” (2). In case of an assessment as

“Satisfactory” (3), a recommendation from the school conference is mandatory for admission to AHS. Furthermore, pupils may take an entrance examination. Pupils who have successfully completed the lower cycle can attend the upper cycle, and those with a specific performance level may also transfer from MS to the upper cycle of AHS. AHS ends with a school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung/Matura*), which counts as a general qualification for university entrance and entitles students to study at universities, teacher training colleges, universities of applied sciences, academies, and higher vocational colleges. Regarding the curriculum, AHS may either have a focus on languages and humanities (*Gymnasium*), a focus on natural sciences and mathematics (*Realgymnasium*), or on economics and life sciences (*Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*). Specific forms of AHS may have a focus on music or sports, and AHS for linguistic minorities are also covered by this (BMBWF, 2020a; Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).

#### legislation

The legal responsibility for AHS is at the federal level and for MS at both the federal and state levels. Secondary education is regulated by the School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*) generally at the federal level. The Minority School Act for Burgenland from 1994 (*Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland*) states in Section 3 the possible implementation of Croatian or bilingual secondary schooling and according to Section 4, an academic secondary school is required in Burgenland for the Croatian minority with bilingual education (Croatian and German equally).

#### language use

The only bilingual academic secondary school (AHS) was established in 1991 in Oberwart/Borta, in the southern part of Burgenland—*Zweisprachiges Bundesgymnasium* (ZBG). The school is divided into two bilingual groups, German-Croatian and German-Hungarian. The declared aim of ZBG is to provide tuition in German and a minority language, either Croatian or Hungarian, to ensure a high level of language competence, so that pupils can finish their school leaving examination in both languages. With Croatian as a compulsory subject from the first

grade with 4 hours per week in the lower circle and 3 hours per week in the upper circle, pupils are expected to gain sufficient language knowledge to be educated in both languages. Classes in geography, biology, physics, chemistry, philosophy, history, religion, physical education, arts, and technical work are taught in both German and Croatian; important terminology and topics of each subject must be acquired in both languages. Additionally, minority music traditions such as *tamburica*, a string instrument highly representative for the Burgenland Croat minority, or folk dance, may be attended as elective classes. In 1987, the academic secondary school “Franz Liszt” in Oberpullendorf/Gornja Pulja (combining BG, BRG, and BORG) installed a “*Pannonischer Zweig*” (panonian branch) in the lower circle with Croatian (or Hungarian) as a second language to the extent of 3 hours per week, with the possibility to continue with the language in the upper circle. Language education is organised in small groups with native and non-native speakers. A *tamburica*-orchestra is integrated in the school and offered as an elective class, and minority broadcasting as obligatory exercises, where pupils compose radio features in Croatian as language use training. Unfortunately, in the school year 2020/2021, no such class was established, as the minimum applications of 12 pupils had not been reached. At the BG/BRG/BORG Eisenstadt/Željezno, such a class with Croatian as a second language in the lower circle was introduced in 2012/2013, also with at least 12 registrations. Croatian as a subject is taught 2 hours per week in the first year, 3 in the second, 4 in the third, and again 3 hours per week in the fourth year of the lower cycle. In the upper cycle, pupils may switch to *Gymnasium* with Croatian as a second foreign language to the extent of 4 hours in the first year and 3 hours in the remaining three grades until the school leaving examination. Additionally, pupils with a humanistic focus in the lower circle may choose Croatian as a third language in the upper cycle. The BG/BRG Mattersburg/Matrštof offers Croatian as an elective subject in all eight grades of academic secondary schooling, with the possibility to choose it as a subject for the oral part of the school leaving examination. The academic secondary school

*Gymnasium der Diözese Eisenstadt Wolfgarten* offers Croatian as a second foreign language and as an elective subject in the upper circle. It is also possible to choose Croatian as a subject for the school leaving examination.

The MS Großwarasdorf/Veliki Borištof is a bilingual secondary school, where both German and Croatian are languages of instruction. Until the Minority School Act from 1994, the use of both languages was seen as an experiment, which afterwards was implemented in the educational programme. Teachers assess language competences of their pupils regarding both languages. Croatian is taught as a subject with 3 hours a week throughout all four grades, and the mandatory course Croatian–creative covers 1 hour per week. This school maintains an orchestra with the traditional instrument *tamburica*, as well as elective folk dance classes, and offers bilingual German-Croatian music classes. The NMS St. Michael/Sveti Mihalj provides bilingual classes for Croatian, as well as the secondary school with music focus in Großpetersdorf/Veliki Petrštof, where a bilingual German-Croatian music-class is installed. For all mentioned bilingual classes, it can be stated that the actual usage of both languages is hardly definable, as teachers need to consider the language competences of their pupils individually. Within such classes, Croatian is taught as a subject to the extent of 3 hours a week. The MS Oberpullendorf/Gornja Pulja also focuses on minority languages and offers Croatian as a subject for 3–4 hours a week, with an additional 1 hour of creativity teaching, mostly including music in Croatian (“Croatian-creative”). At the MS Siegendorf, Croatian is provided in the first two grades as an elective exercise without grading for 1 hour per week, and from the third and fourth grades as a second foreign language, where either Spanish or Croatian can be chosen.

Information on all secondary schools and also the languages offered may be accessed via a school guide database on the webpage of Bildungsserver Burgenland (Bildungsnetzwerk Burgenland, 2020).

**teaching  
materials**

Teachers may use language course books of their choice, following the Austrian *Schulbuchaktion*, which lists all school books approved by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. For MS and AHS lower circle, where the Burgenland Croatian variety is taught, the respective teaching materials are either *Dobro raćenje* (Bon appetit) consisting of a course-book as well as an exercise and grammar book for a two-year programme, or *Na putu* (On the way), also with two volumes. Both are indicated for the first or second grade of secondary education. The school book *Čitaj, piši i povidaj* (Read, write and tell) also consists of two volumes, with volume 1 for the first and second grades and volume 2 for the third and fourth grades of secondary education. An exercise book for enhancing competence in oral conversations titled *Pominajmo se!* (Let's talk!) is indicated for all four grades. All school books have been compiled by changing workgroups of local teachers. Additionally, a regional linguistic portfolio for Burgenland, *RePort – Das regionale Sprachenportfolio für das Burgenland – Sekundarstufe 1* (RePort - Regional language portfolio for Burgenland. Secondary education 1), helps to document minority language knowledge of pupils and supports teachers. For MS and AHS lower circles, where standard Croatian is taught as a second foreign language in the third and fourth grades, volumes 1 and 2 of the teaching book *Dobar tek* (Bon appetit) are used, compiled by the same authors as *Dobro raćenje* (Bon appetit). Additionally, for AHS, the exercise book *Dobro došli* (Welcome), composed by Croatian authors specifically for foreign language learners, is listed. Mirko Berlakovich published a Burgenland Croatian grammar book specifically for teaching purposes in 1995, which is still used in AHS lower circle. A new practical grammar book for Burgenland Croatian written in the German language, *Praktische Grammatik der burgenländischkroatischen Sprache* (Practical grammar book for Burgenland Croatian), was published in 2017 by Ivan Rončević, and is also used in MS and AHS lower circles. In AHS upper circle, only the Croatian standard language is taught. For this purpose, teachers may use teaching materials compiled for foreign language learners, such as *Ja govorim hrvatski* (I speak Croatian) by Ana Bilić, or

*Dobro došli* (Welcome) and *Učimo hrvatski* (We learn Croatian) by various Croatian authors.

In regard to knowledge of the history and culture of Burgenland Croats as a minority in Austria, HKD published a school book in 2018, *Povijest gradišćanskih Hrvatov* (History of Burgenland Croats), intended for the third and fourth grades of AHS and MS. Concerning minority literature, *Književnost gradišćanskih Hrvata od 1921. do danas* (Literature of Burgenland Croats from 1921 until today) by Nikola Benčić provides a comprehensive overview and is also used in both aforementioned grades. The book was first published in 2000, and a second edition appeared in 2010.

#### statistics

Statistical data for the school year 2019/2020 provided by the Department for the Minority School sector in Burgenland indicated that 51 pupils attended the only bilingual secondary school in Großwarasdorf/Veliki Borištof (Bildungsdirektion Burgenland, 2020). Moreover, 114 children attended bilingual classes at secondary schools in St. Michael/Sveti Mihalj and Großpetersdorf/Veliki Petarštof. A further 151 pupils learned Croatian as an additional compulsory subject or elective subject in six schools. Within academic secondary schools, 64 children enrolled in the lower circle of the only German-Croatian bilingual AHS in Oberwart/Borta, and 46 in the upper circle; a further 14 took Croatian as an optional subject. Croatian as an elective subject was taken by 16 pupils in the lower circle and five pupils in the upper circle at BG/BRG Mattersburg/Matrštof, as well as six pupils in the lower circle at *Gymnasium der Diözese Eisenstadt Wolfgarten*. Croatian as an alternative compulsory subject was offered to 28 pupils in the lower and 21 pupils in the upper circle at BG/BRG/BORG Oberpullendorf/Gornja Pulja, 69 pupils in the lower and 33 in the upper circle at BG/BRG/BORG Eisenstadt/Željezno, and 14 in the upper circle at ORG Theresianum Eisenstadt/Željezno.

## 5 Vocational education

**target group** Vocational education may start at age 14 and, depending on the type of schooling, last until the age of 19.

**structure** If vocational education is accomplished by dual training, pupils must have finished the compulsory 9 grades and start their training at the age of 15. This ninth grade is covered by polytechnic school (*Polytechnische Schule*) as basic vocational training, with a curriculum focused on basic skills and key qualifications, promoting individual talents of the pupils, who may choose a subject area according to their professional interest (metalwork, electrical, woodwork, construction, trade, service, and tourism). This practice-oriented dual training, starting after grade 9, combines an in-company apprenticeship with part-time vocational schooling (covering 20–25% of training time), and finishes with an apprenticeship examination. The duration of dual training depends on the chosen profession (BMBWF, 2020c; Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).

Vocational education can be completed at schools for Intermediate Vocational Education (*Berufsbildende mittlere Schule*; BMS), starting from grade 9. BMS mostly cover three grades and are organised based on their professional focus, for example technical, economic, fashion, tourism and gastronomy, social work, health care, and similar fields. Pupils finish with a leaving exam and initial professional qualification, and can enter the labour market. The colleges for higher vocational education (*Berufsbildende höhere Schulen*; BHS) also start at grade 9 and cover five years of education (grades 9–13). BHS combine general education and higher vocational training and are also organised based on their professional focus as mentioned above. Importantly, pupils finish BHS with a degree for higher professional qualification and a school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung / Matura*), which counts as a general qualification for university entrance and entitles them to study at universities, teacher training colleges, universities of applied sciences, or academies (BMBWF, 2020b; Euroguidance Österreich, 2020).



**legislation** The legal responsibility for BMS and BHS is at the federal level, and for other forms of vocational education at the federal and state levels. Dual training with apprenticeship and part-time vocational school is regulated by the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz*). Intermediate and higher vocational education is regulated by the School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*) at the federal level and regarding minority language use, by the Minority School Act for Burgenland from 1994, (*Minderheitenschulgesetz für das Burgenland*), Section 3, at the federal state level.

**language use** Within vocational education, the Croatian language is part of the curriculum at the Higher Vocational Education College for Elementary Pedagogy for Burgenland in Oberwart (*Bundeshochschule für Elementarpädagogik*; BAfEP), where pre-school teachers for bilingual kindergartens are trained. The elective subject “Croatian as a minority language” is covered for 2 hours weekly, where the Burgenland Croatian variety is taught, as used in bilingual kindergartens. The Croatian standard language can be chosen at Secondary Colleges of Business Administration (*Handelsakademie*; HAK) in Burgenland. The HAK Eisenstadt offers Croatian as a second foreign language besides French and Spanish with 8 hours a week in five grades in total (weekly hours taught might differ from 0–3 hours per grade), as well as the HAK Stegersbach, where either Croatian or Italian is offered as a second foreign language with 2–3 hours weekly per grade. The HAK Mattersburg offers Croatian only as an elective subject.

Information on all vocational schools and also the languages offered may be accessed via a school guide database on the webpage of Bildungsserver Burgenland (Bildungsnetzwerk Burgenland, 2020).

**teaching materials** Teachers may use language course books of their choice, following the Austrian *Schulbuchaktion*, which lists all school books approved by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. For BAfEP, where Burgenland Croatian is taught, the

teaching material *Dobro raćenje* (Bon appetit) is used, just as for MS, consisting of a coursebook as well as an exercise and grammar book for a 2 year programme, which was compiled by *ARGE Kroatisch*, a workgroup of teachers. Additionally, a regional linguistic portfolio for Burgenland *RePort – Das regionale Sprachenportfolio für das Burgenland – Sekundarstufe 1* (RePort - Regional language portfolio for Burgenland. Secondary education 1) helps document language knowledge of pupils and supports teachers. For HAK, where the Croatian standard language is taught, teachers can choose between various text, exercise and grammar books for teaching Croatian as a foreign language, such as *Dobro došli* (Welcome), *Učimo hrvatski* (We learn Croatian), and *Ja govorim hrvatski* (I speak Croatian). Additionally, for HAK specifically, the *Schulbuchaktion* offers a teaching book on business communication in Croatian (*Poslovne komunikacije*). Teachers also create teaching materials themselves, such as exercise sheets.

In the school year 2019/2020, a total of 62 students took Croatian as an elective subject in three HAKs (Oberpullendorf/ Gornja Pulja, Eisenstadt/Željezno, Mattersburg/Matrštof), and an additional 85 students chose Croatian as a compulsory subject at three Colleges for Higher Vocational Education (BHAK/BHAS and HLW in Eisenstadt/Željezno, BHAK/BHAS Stegersbach/Santalek). Twenty-eight students enrolled in Croatian as an elective subject at BAfEP in Oberwart/Borta (Bildungsdirektion Burgenland, 2020).

## 6 Higher education

- structure** The Austrian higher education system is organised into four sectors that differ in legal regulation, financing, content, and profile of education. There are 22 public universities, 21 universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*), 14 university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschule*), and 16 private universities. Almost 75% of students study at public universities. Since the reforms of the Bologna process, Austria also successively adjusted curricula and switched to the bachelor's, master's, and PhD programmes (BMBWF, 2020d).
- legislation** Higher education institutions are the responsibility of the BMBWF. The legal regulation differs depending on the aforementioned sectors. Public universities are granted autonomy by the Austrian Federal Constitution, with the latest University Act (*Universitätsgesetz*, UG) implemented in 2002. Since 1999, it has been possible to establish private universities, which are regulated by the Private University Act (*Privatuniversitätsgesetz*, PUG). A legal foundation for instituting universities of applied sciences was implemented in 1993; they are regulated by the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (*Fachhochschulgesetz*, FHG). University colleges of teacher education are essentially regulated by the University College Act (*Hochschulgesetz*, HG) of 2005. Additionally, Section 5 of the Minority School Act for Burgenland regulates teacher education in Croatian at the state level (BMBWF, 2020d, 2020f).
- language use** The Croatian standard language can be studied in the combination of Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian at the Departments of Slavonic Studies (and at the Translation Department) of the University of Vienna, the University of Graz, and the University of Klagenfurt. The Viennese Department of Slavonic Studies regularly offers a language course as well as didactic training for the Burgenland Croatian variety, together with a seminar on the minority with changing perspectives (language history, literature, and culture). The Slavic languages department at the University of Graz also recurrently offers a seminar on the Burgenland Croat minority.

The University of Applied Sciences Burgenland offers Croatian language courses with an economic focus on Central and East Europe. The PHB was established in 2008/2009 as a regional didactic centre with a focus on minority languages. It is important to note that in the academic year 2017/2018, the PHB installed a chair for Croatian and Burgenland Croatian, which has since then been held by Andrea Zorka Kinda-Berlakovich.

Scientific publications in the Burgenland Croatian variety are mostly published by the Scientific Institute (*Znanstveni institut gradišćanskih Hrvatov*; ZIGH), but also by other institutions. The most current publication is the first volume on regional Croatian language and dialect documentation in Burgenland, published by the Croatian cultural and documentation centre (HKDC).

#### **teacher training pre-school training**

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Pre-school teachers are trained at colleges for higher vocational education covering five grades, finishing with both a degree for higher professional qualification and a school leaving examination. Students must have finished grade 8 and passed a practical entrance examination. Moreover, pre-school teachers are trained in higher education with 2 year college training. The only higher vocational education college for elementary pedagogy for Burgenland is in Oberwart (*Bundesbildungsanstalt für Elementarpädagogik, BAfEP*) and offers, as an addition to five-year vocational education, a 3 year vocational educational programme for pre-school teacher assistants. "Croatian as a minority language", meaning the Burgenland Croatian variety, is offered as an elective class at both levels and is taught 2 hours weekly throughout all five or three grades, respectively. The PHB offers programmes for elementary pedagogy of six semesters finishing with a bachelor's degree, with "Burgenland Croatian" language classes, also with a focus on immersion, as part of the advanced curriculum.

#### **primary training**

Primary education teachers are trained at university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*). After com-

pleting the eight-semester programme, students finish with a Bachelor of Education (BEd), which entitles them to teach grades 1–4. The PHB offers a new curriculum for bilingual education in primary schools with German and Croatian as the languages of instruction as well as Croatian language education in primary schools, which was implemented in 2019. Students can choose this curriculum within the bachelor's programme. The curriculum design was based on the needs of the Minority School Act for Burgenland and covers 45 ECTS in six semesters. The language of interest is the Burgenland Croatian variety. After finishing the BEd, students may enrol in a master's programme for two semesters in order to be employed as a primary school teacher permanently. Within the master's programme, students also need to choose a focus on teaching methodology, with "Croatian" being one out of four possibilities.

#### **secondary training**

Teacher education for secondary schools is organised twofold: teachers for secondary schools (MS) and vocational education are trained at university colleges of teacher education and teachers for academic secondary schools (AHS) and higher vocational education (BHS) need to finish teacher training at a university. As is also the case with primary teacher training, the PHB offers an eight-semester programme in secondary teacher training, from which students graduate with a BEd. Afterwards, a master's programme of four semesters can be followed to become employed as a secondary school teacher. Besides basic training and education, students need to choose two subjects as a focus. The school subject "Burgenland Croatian/Croatian" is currently offered at PHB only at the bachelor's level. Teacher training for AHS and BHS within universities is also organised with a combination of bachelor and master's programmes. Likewise, students need to choose two subjects for their training. Croatian as such can only be studied in the combination of Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian as a school subject at the University of Vienna and the University of Graz.

**in-service training**

Teachers in compulsory schooling are obliged to follow 15 hours of practical training each year. Such training related to bilingual education is organised in cooperation with the Department for the Minority School Sector at the *Bildungsdirektion Burgenland* and the PHB. Seminars currently focus on the improvement of language competence and immersion as a didactic concept. Schools also ask for internal training sessions with speakers and experts on specific issues and focuses.

**statistics**

According to the numbers provided by the directorate of studies at the Department of Slavonic Studies at the University of Vienna, there are currently 79 students enrolled in the BA and eight students enrolled in the MA for Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian as a teaching subject (E. Kelih, & K. Wieserová, personal communication, August 19, 2020). Since 2014, enrolment rates per year have differed from four to 19 in the BA programme, and there has been a rise in the number of students following the MA programme. Students mostly combine Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian with German, English, Russian, or History as teaching subjects, as they have to choose a combination of two. Courses on Burgenland Croats and the Burgenland Croatian variety are mostly seminars with a range of five to 20 students, depending on the topic. At the Slavic languages department at the University of Graz, there were 14 students enrolled in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian as a teaching subject in the academic year 2019/2020; seminars on Burgenland Croats offered every four semesters are attended by approximately five students per course (D. Gramshammer-Hohl, personal communication, September 8, 2020). Numbers provided by the University College of Teacher Education Burgenland indicate 38 students for Croatian and Burgenland Croatian, with 21 enrolled in the primary teacher training programme with a focus on multilingualism, nine students in the secondary teacher training programme including Burgenland Croatian, and eight in the courses for Croatian (E. Gröstenberger, & B. Piller, personal communication, September 9, 2020).

## 7 Adult education

### structure and language courses

Several associations and various institutions and organisations offer adult language courses, which are mostly organised on weekday evenings during the winter and summer terms (September/October–January and March–June). Language courses are paid for by the participants, with costs ranging from around 40 to 120 euros.

Two specific adult education institutions were developed in 1984 and 1991. The Adult Education Centre of Burgenland Croats (HNVŠ) was founded 1984 and is located in the regional capital Eisenstadt. The HNVŠ offers a language course for beginners and one for advanced speakers (HNVŠ, 2020), and provides teaching material and publications for language education. The Association for Adult Education of Burgenland Croats (*Društvo za obrazovanje gradišćanskih Hrvatov*; DOGH) is located in Trausdorf/Trajštof, also in Northern Burgenland, and was founded in 1991 as an education organisation to maintain the language, culture, and traditions of Burgenland Croats. The DOGH organises language courses, but also music, dancing, and singing courses for adults imparting traditional minority culture in the Croatian language (DOGH, 2020). Various manifestations and lectures for adult education in the Croatian language are organised by the HKD, covering educational topics such as minority history and literature, but also health issues, for example (HKD, 2020b). The cultural association KUGA (*Kulturna zadruža*) in Großwarasdorf/Veliki Borištof in Central Burgenland offers one Croatian language course for beginners (KUGA, 2020). The *Hrvatski centar* in Vienna provides language courses for both beginners and advanced learners for both Burgenland Croatian and the Croatian standard language (*Hrvatski centar*, 2020b).

*Hrvatski akademski klub* (Croatian academic organisation; *HAK*) published the language coursebook *Gradišćanskohrvatski glasi* (Burgenland Croatian voices) in 1997/1998, consisting of three volumes containing colloquial text exercises, grammar exercises, and a dictionary, as well as a CD with audio samples. The

coursebook was prepared specifically for adult learners to be used either within language courses or as a self-learning tool. The publication was financed by, amongst others, the regional Burgenland government, the Austrian Federal Chancellery, and the Commission of the European Communities.

**language use** Language courses are provided for both the Burgenland Croatian variety as well as the Croatian standard language, with the minority language being the medium of instruction at advanced levels. Several institutions also organise workshops and courses on different topics specifically in the minority language, such as health care or gardening, but also traditional culture.

**statistics** Language courses generally take place throughout the semester. Starting from five participants, each language course has approximately five to 10 participants. Due to the quite diverse providers and structures of adult language education courses, it is hardly possible to give reliable statistical data, as the structure of courses may also vary from semester to semester.



## 8 Educational research

Several master's and PhD theses have been written on various aspects of Croatian and bilingual education in Burgenland, either with a local focus on specific municipalities or as a comprising overview of specific characteristics. The aforementioned associations and minority organisations have organised numerous evaluations and conferences on educational research questions regarding the Croatian minority in Burgenland, with publications following mostly in the 1990s.

One of the most important scientific publications is Andrea Zorka Kinda-Berlakovich's dissertation on Croatian as an education language in Burgenland, in which she not only offers an overview of bilingual compulsory education from 1921 to 2001, but also shows results of a number of interviews with teachers of Croatian in Burgenland, giving insights into methodology and didactics as well as language policy. The research was published in 2005 as a monography. A study conducted by communication scientist Petra Herczeg (2006) on growing up bilingual also includes questions of education. With the newly established chair for Croatian and Burgenland Croatian at the PHB, educational research on Croatian as a minority language has also become a focus here. The Department of Education Burgenland conducts research on different education types and their implementation, such as an ongoing research project on immersion in primary education. Moreover, it works on the development of curricula and teaching materials. Most projects are a cooperation between the two latter mentioned institutions, which are mostly financed by the BMBWF. A current focus is the development of digital and interactive teaching materials as well as teaching materials generally for implementing immersion as a didactic approach.

Croatian is also regularly represented within research on minority languages and language policy, as well as on bilingual education in Austria generally, by the Department of Linguistics at the University of Vienna.

In 1989, the conference of Austrian universities launched a broad study on the status of minority languages in the country, which also included the education sector. The Democracy Centre Vienna (*Demokratiezentrum Wien*) developed, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Education, an exhibition on minority education in Austria, which is accessible online too. The Federal Ministry also commissions research on bilingual education in Austria in cooperation with various partners, such as the Austrian Centre for Language Competence (*Österreichisches Sprachen Kompetenz Zentrum; ÖSZ*), where Croatian in Burgenland was also a focus of interest. In 2015, for instance, the ÖSZ organised a conference on the future of minority education in Austria, which focused on continuous language education (ÖSZ, 2015).

## 9 Prospects

The Burgenland Croatian variety as a minority language in Austria faces several challenges. Most importantly, the declining number of native speakers of Burgenland Croatian, as well as that of pupils learning and teachers instructing in the language, must be stressed. This leads to very inhomogeneous classes and groups regarding language competence, with few native speakers, children with a passive knowledge of Croatian, and children with no language competence at all. This situation poses a very specific challenge to teachers at all levels.

As for pre-school education, there is undoubtedly a lack of training regarding bilingual didactical competence and language competence, as the first is not part of the curriculum at all, and the latter only with too few hours training to guarantee reasonable language transmission and education. Therefore, it is not guaranteed that children finish pre-school education with enough language knowledge in both languages to continue their education at bilingual primary schools. There is also a general lack of trained bilingual kindergarten teachers, which means that existing positions may remain vacant. Given the inhomogeneous language competences already present in kindergarten, the problem only increases in primary school and beyond. With intercultural learning as the general principle in the curriculum from 1991/1992, teachers need more training with a specific focus on minority languages, and methodology and didactics for handling and balancing heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds and language competences. Regarding teacher training, a slight decline can be observed in the numbers of students at pedagogical colleges and universities. According to directorates of these institutions, the main challenge is finding possibilities for internships and training opportunities that include accompanying teachers of Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian as a school subject, which is an integrative part of the curriculum. Generally, there is a lack of trained teachers for bilingual education, especially for the primary education level, but language education initiatives outside the

school system also have problems finding language instructors and educators.

Declining numbers of pupils also need to be stated as a huge challenge for bilingual schooling, as German-Croatian bilingual classes or Croatian as a subject are tied to a specific number of pupils in order to be installed. In the school year 2020/2021, for instance, a class with Croatian as a focus within the “Pannonian branch” at AHS Oberpullendorf could not be opened for the first time in 30 years.

Minority activists generally criticise that Austria signed the ECRML (ratified 2001) as well as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ratified 1998), sticking to “autochthonous” settlement areas in Burgenland, which does not reflect the present-day situation. Following this, one major demand, though, by minority organisations and activists in Vienna for years now has been for the establishment of a Croatian school system in Vienna. It would consequently be outside what is considered to be the “autochthonous” and legally protected area of settlement, namely the federal state of Burgenland. Already in 2011, a working group elaborated a project model for a bilingual private school within the regular school system together with representatives of the Hungarian minority in Vienna, intending to provide continuous Croatian-German bilingual education from kindergarten until *Matura* in Vienna. The bilingual Komenský-school (Czech/Slovak-German) served as a model here, together with the bilingual AHS in Oberwart, as well as the legal base for bilingual schooling in Burgenland. This project has, however, been unsuccessful thus far. A “structured policy for the protection and promotion of all minority languages, especially in Vienna” (Committee of Experts, 2018, p. 34), nevertheless, is regularly the first recommendation by the committee of experts on the application of the ECRML. In prior reports, they also encouraged Austrian authorities to solve vague formulations of language standards in primary education and to ensure a better continuation of bilingual schooling in secondary education (Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, 2015b, pp. 69, 73).

Already in earlier reports, one such recommendation was to ensure a broader knowledge and consciousness of minorities in Austria. The 2017 touring exhibition on the minority school system in Austria is an example of an attempt to strengthen awareness and identification of minority members as well as to broaden and enhance knowledge and understanding within Austrian society in general. The exhibition was compiled by the Democracy Centre Vienna (*Demokratiezentrum Wien*), on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Education and was organised in ten panels. Topics such as the history of the minorities in Austria and their rights and protection were likewise discussed as concepts such as identity, minority-majority, and multilingualism, as well as the minority school system. The exhibition was designed specifically for school children, together with a companion volume for teachers, and toured to various educational institutions in Austria and might be requested further on.

The Croatian standard language as a language of younger migration processes to Austria faced possibilities in Austria to finally become a teaching subject itself, dissolving out of the combination of Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian. A parliamentary citizens' initiative, initiated by a teacher from Vorarlberg, started in mid-June 2020, asking the Austrian National Council to recognise Croatian as an independent language regarding native supplementary education (*Muttersprachlicher Zusatzunterricht*), and not being taught in combination with Bosnian and Serbian. A majority of the National Council, however, voted in March 2021 to complete the initiative by only taking notice of it and not proceeding further with its application; therefore, it was unsuccessful (Parlamentsdirektion, 2021).

## 10 Summary of statistics

Table 1.

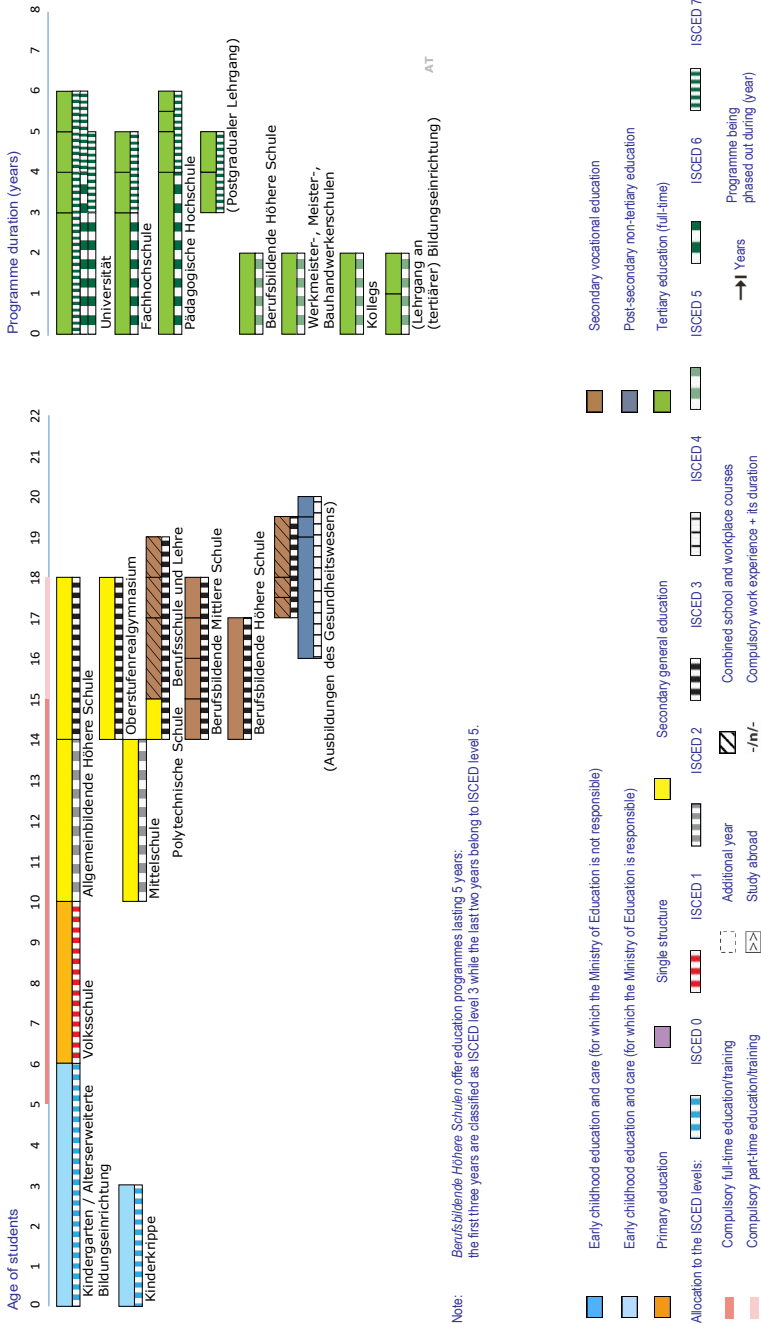
*Number of Schools, Classes, and Pupils for Every Educational Level, Divided by School Type in the School Year 2019/2020*

		Schools	Classes	Pupils
<b>Pre-school education</b>	Bilingual (German and Croatian) day nursery (Burgenland)	4		
	Bilingual (German and Croatian) nursery school (Burgenland)	8		
	Bilingual (German and Croatian) kindergarten (Burgenland)	8		
	Overall number of children			~ 1.600
	Bilingual (German and Croatian) children group (Vienna)	1		~ 15
<b>Primary education</b>	Bilingual (German and Croatian) primary school (Burgenland)	23	102	1345
	Primary school with specific bilingual (German and Croatian) classes (Burgenland)	4	5	56
	Primary school with Croatian as possible compulsory subject (Burgenland)	2	3	29
<b>Secondary education</b>	Bilingual (German and Croatian) Secondary school (Burgenland)	1	4	51
	Secondary school with specific bilingual (German and Croatian) classes (Burgenland)	2	9	114
	Secondary school with Croatian as elective or alternative compulsory subject (Burgenland)	6		151
	Bilingual (German and Croatian) academic secondary school (Burgenland)	1		110
	Academic secondary school with Croatian as (alternative) compulsory subject (Burgenland)	3		165
	Academic secondary school with Croatian as elective subject (Burgenland)	2		27
	Academic secondary school with Croatian as optional lesson (Burgenland)	1		14
<b>Vocational education</b>	Vocational education college with Croatian as elective subject (Burgenland)	3		62
	Vocational education college with Croatian as (alternative) compulsory subject (Burgenland)	3		85
	Vocational education college for elementary pedagogy with Croatian as elective subject (Burgenland)	1		28

Note. Adapted from Bildungsdirektion Burgenland (2020)

### Education system in Austria

The structure of the education system in Austria in 2020/2021



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**Bildungsserver Burgenland** (offers information and materials for bilingual schooling in German, Croatian, and Hungarian)  
W: www.bildungsserver.com

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## Other websites on minority languages

- Mercator European Research Centre** [www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)  
 Homepage of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. The website contains the Regional Dossier series, a database of experts, a bibliography, information on current activities, and many links to relevant websites.
- Mercator Network** [www.mercator-network.eu](http://www.mercator-network.eu)  
 General site of the Mercator European Network of Language Diversity Centres. It gives information about the network and leads you to the homepages of the network partners.
- European Commission** <http://ec.europa.eu/languages>  
 The website of the European Commission gives information about the EU's support for language diversity.
- Council of Europe** <http://conventions.coe.int>  
*European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) and *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995). European Treaty Series 148 and 157, Strasbourg.
- Eurydice** <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>  
 Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.
- European Parliament Committee – supporting analyses database** <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/home>  
 In this database, you will find research papers produced by the European Parliament's research service. A study for the CULT Committee, conducted by the Mercator European Research Centre, was published in 2017: *Minority Languages and Education: Best Practices and Pitfalls*.



**NPLD**

**<http://www.npld.eu/>**

The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) is a European-wide network working in the field of language policy & planning for Constitutional, Regional and Small-State Languages (CRSS) across Europe.

**FUEN**

**<https://www.fuen.org/>**

The Federal Union of European Nationalities is the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities/ethnic groups in Europe and represents the interests of European minorities at the regional, national, and European levels.

**ELEN**

**<https://elen.ngo/>**

The European Language Equality Network (ELEN) is a non-governmental organisation that has as its goal the promotion and protection of European lesser-used (i.e. regional, minority, endangered, indigenous, co-official, and smaller national) languages, to work towards linguistic equality for these languages, and multilingualism, under the broader framework of human rights, and to be a voice for the speakers of these languages at all levels.

## About the Mercator European Research Centre

**mission & goals** The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning addresses the growing interest in multilingualism and endeavours to promote linguistic diversity within and outside Europe. The centre focuses on research, policy, and practice in the fields of multilingualism and language learning. Through the acquisition, application, and circulation of knowledge regarding of language learning at school, at home, and through cultural participation, the Mercator European Research Centre aims to provide for language communities' increasing need to exchange experiences and to cooperate, not only in the European context, but also beyond the borders of Europe. Although the main focus lies in the field of regional and minority languages, immigrant languages are topics of study as well.

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### **partners**

The Mercator European Research Centre is the leading partner of the European Mercator Network, which was initiated by the European Commission in 1987. The Mercator Network partners are the following: Mercator Media, hosted at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David; Mercator Legislation, hosted at the CIEMEN Foundation; the University of Barcelona; Stockholm University in Sweden; and the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Hungary. The Mercator European Research Centre also works closely with a large number of research organisations and universities. This cooperation includes partners in the province of Fryslân and other parts of the Netherlands, as well as partners across Europe and beyond. The main funding body of the Mercator European Research Centre is the provincial government of Fryslân. The EU and regional authorities in Europe also regularly fund projects and activities.

### **research**

The research activities of the Mercator European Research Centre focus on various aspects of bilingual and trilingual education such as language proficiency in different languages, interaction in the multilingual classroom, and teachers' qualifications for working in a multilingual classroom. Latest developments

look at how educational models for minority languages can also cater for pupils with a migrant background. Whenever possible, research is carried out in a comparative perspective. Results are disseminated through publications and conferences, often in collaboration with Mercator European Research Centre's partners.

**conferences**

The Mercator European Research Centre organises conferences and seminars on a regular basis. The main target groups are professionals, researchers, and policymakers from all member states of the Council of Europe and beyond. Themes for the conferences are assessment & best practice, educational models, development of minimum standards, teacher training, and the application of the Common European Framework of Reference.

**q&a**

If you have any questions, please contact us at [mercator@fryske-akademy.nl](mailto:mercator@fryske-akademy.nl)



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