

SCHOOL MEALS IN EUROPE

Report by the Polish Eurydice Unit



INTRODUCTION

Debates over food provided for children at schools have recently taken place all around Europe. In this context, it is worth taking a look at solutions regarding school meals provision in different countries.

Data for this report was collected via the Eurydice Network Question&Answer Forum in 2015. It is based mainly on fourteen countries' replies to the Polish question. Also, selected national contributions to the question from Turkey on the distribution of milk, fruit and vegetables in schools (mostly in the *Good practice* section at the end of this report) were included.



DISTRIBUTION AND SERVICE

Responsibility for provision of school meals lies with local authorities or schools themselves that have to ensure that meals are distributed and served to pupils. In **England**, schools must provide meals for pupils where requested and decide what form the food provided takes, whereas in **Finland**, municipalities and other school governing bodies are responsible both for the provision of school meals and the allocation of resources for school catering. In **France**, meals are to be organized by the local authority responsible for the school building (ISCED 1 – *école élémentaire*: municipality; ISCED 2 – *collège*: *Départements*; ISCED 3 – *lycée*: *Régions*).

In some countries, however, schools **do not provide** meals at all or, alternatively, do it to a very limited extent. In **Greece**, no school meals are provided, except for Music and Art Schools, under municipal responsibility, whereas in **the Netherlands**, although schools have a great amount of autonomy and can decide if and how they want to provide school meals, it is not common at all for them to do it. In **Cyprus**, public secondary education schools do not provide meals at the school premises but they offer free snacks to students considered economically deprived, especially during the economic recession.

Provision of meals at school is usually organized in line with relevant CENTRAL REGULATIONS, which specify the scope of responsibility and form the basis for school meal practices.

- In **Finland**, education acts and decrees along with national core curriculum and local curricula are central documents governing school meals. The curricula also describe the objectives for education in health, nutrition and manners. The health-related and social role of school meals, the objectives of nutrition education and learning of manners as well as the recreational aspect of lunch breaks is taken into account when arranging school meals and snacks offered during the school day.
- In **England**, school governing bodies must ensure that school meals meet mandatory school food standards. Introduced in January 2015 under the School Food Plan¹, they set out how often and which types of food should be served in schools. Full details of the regulations governing food in school and of school governing bodies' obligations are set out in the Department for Education (DfE) guidance.
- In **Slovakia**, school canteens are founded by local government authorities and, as school facilities, they are registered in the school network. A school canteen is defined by the School Law as a school facility founded for preparation, serving and consumption of food and drink. School canteen diners are defined as pupils and

¹ A wide initiative to improve the quality and take-up of school meals and education about growing, cooking and eating good food.



school employees. Other people can get their meals in school canteens if approved by the founder and the competent regional public health care authority.

- In **Spain**, the school canteen is a complementary educational service whose existence and recognition are laid down in the 1990 Act on the General Organisation of the Education System and in the 2006 Education Act. It is a service provided by education authorities and it contributes to improving the quality of education. School canteens are integrated into the school life and organisation through their planning, development and assessment being a part of the yearly programme of the school.
- In **Slovenia**, according to the regulation on school meals, pupils can make healthy nutritional choices and develop healthy eating habits. The Act specifies the organisation of school meals from the start of basic school to the completion of the upper secondary school and the right of pupils to subsidy: the amount of subsidy, as well as conditions and procedures for subsidies. The act requires schools to determine the content, amount and education and training activities related to meals and encouraging the food culture in the annual working plan. Therefore, the school has a significant role in developing knowledge about healthy food and eating habits, food culture and teaching students about a responsible attitude towards themselves and their health. In preparing food, kindergartens, schools and other institutions must follow professional guidelines set by the National Council of Experts for General Education and determine the educational and health aspect of the school meals. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the school meals system is established and implemented in the framework of the national and regional institutes of public health that provide schools with the counselling. The system of school meals supports the goals of the Resolution on the Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2013-2023.

As far as the **PREPARATION** of food is concerned, it may take place at school premises or outside of them. School governing bodies or local authorities are responsible either for equipping the school with kitchen facilities, in case food is prepared there, or contracting an external catering company that would deliver food regularly.



- In **France**, distribution modalities vary from one local authority to the other. Most of the time, meals are prepared in the educational institution by its staff. However, in some cases, it may be provided by a catering company. Meals are then prepared in a central kitchen and dispatched, delivered cold or hot.
- In **Spain**, schools organize the provision of meals in two ways: either the school has its own kitchen or commissions an external private company to provide a catering service.
- In **Germany**, local authority decides, in agreement with the headmaster and the school board, which caterer will get the task of offering school meals to a particular school.
- In **Finland**, school meals are organized in cooperation between the school and the personnel responsible for meals and their preparation.
- In **England**, school governing bodies decide how to organise school meals, including the timing and duration of the meal break. The School Food Plan [website](#) provides a range of guidance and good practice advice.
- In **Portugal**, the provision of meals in school canteens can be provided directly by school clusters or schools or by contracting a concession to a catering company.
- In **Slovakia**, there are two types of school canteen facilities: school canteens where food and drink are prepared, served and then consumed by diners and distributing school canteens, where food and drink are served and consumed. Distributing school canteens provide food weighted and distributed in hygienic conditions. They may also complete the relevant technological processing of supplied pre-made meals and drinks. School canteens can prepare food and drink for distributing school canteens. School canteens can operate as one shift or all-day facilities.

Schools meals are DISTRIBUTED AND SERVED differently in various countries.

- In **Austria**, all-day schools organize the school day into an instruction part and an extra-curricular part, either consecutively or in alternate. In schools where the instruction part and the extra-curricular part are clearly separated, students are provided with a midday meal after morning classes, and afternoon supervision until 4 p.m. (at the latest: 6 p.m.).
- In **Portugal**, schools should provide lunch and, with the sufficient number of students enrolled, the school should also provide dinner during evening classes.
- In **Germany**, distribution of meals and their consumption are organized by caterers. As a rule, meals are served between 12.30 and 2 o'clock, depending on the end of the fifth lesson in the morning. The minimum length of the meal break is 60 minutes, but it may take up to 90 minutes.
- In **England**, there is no requirement that lunches should be hot, however a hot lunch should be served if possible to ensure all pupils are able to eat at least one hot meal on school days. Schools may also provide food as part of breakfast clubs or after school clubs or in tuck shops, mid-morning break snacks or vending machines. All are subject to regulation.



- In **Lithuania**, it is compulsory to provide hot food for lunch. Lunch is provided during the long break. The time for lunch may differ from school to school and is dependent on internal school rules.
- In **Slovakia**, the schedule of food and drink service in school catering facilities is defined by the (distributing) school canteen's operational rules. Most schools canteens serve food from 11:30 to 2:30 (in case of secondary schools even until 3:00). Meals must be served within 3 hours from the time they were prepared.
- In **Cyprus**, the snacks are provided through regular lesson breaks. No extra time for meals is provided.
- In **Spain**, there is lunchtime between 12:00 and 1:00 pm and, depending on the school, it lasts 30 to 60 minutes. After the lunch and before the beginning of afternoon lessons it is a leisure time.
- In **France**, meal break should be at least 30 minutes long, excluding waiting for the meal.
- In **Slovenia**, schools have to provide at least one meal (mid-morning snack) for all pupils, but basic schools, in general, provide up to four meals a day: breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack.



FOOD QUALITY NORMS

The production process of school meals provided to pupils, regardless of whether they are prepared at school or by an outside catering company, is required to comply with the **QUALITY NORMS**.

- In **Portugal**, quality and variety norms to be met concerning meals served in school canteens are defined by guidelines issued by the General Directorate-General of Education, in conformity with general rules of hygiene and food safety and in accordance with EU regulations. It is the Regional Education Departments that support and monitor the introduction and compliance with principles and norms. The school head is responsible for the compliance with the rules on food supply in schools, regarding the buffet and the cafeteria, in particular with regard to the quantity and quality of the products served.
- In **Germany**, the caterer in conjunction with the local health authority is responsible for the quality of school meals.
- In **Lithuania**, an organizer of school meals (a school itself or any other establishment which has concluded an agreement for provision of school meals) is responsible for the quality of the food.
- In **Slovakia**, the head of the school canteen and the chef are responsible for the quality of food served at school.
- In **Cyprus**, the quality of breakfast snacks is guaranteed by a general mechanism regulating the quality of services provided by school canteens.
- In **France**, nutritional quality of school meals is defined by the 2011 central order. In order to achieve the nutritional balance of the meals served in educational institutions, they have to include: 4 or 5 different dishes for each meal, with at least one main dish including a side dish, and a dairy product; respect the minimal standards for variety of served dishes; portions sizes are adapted to the age and needs of the pupils; water is provided without restriction; bread has to be freely accessible; salt and sauces are served with the dishes.
- In **Spain**, if the school has its own kitchen, it is responsible for ensuring high quality of food prepared. If an external catering service is contracted, the company is the one responsible.
- In **Finland**, legislation, norms and recommendations require that operations concerning food provision are developed and evaluated at the school level. The implementation, quality and effectiveness of school catering should be monitored continuously as part of the overall evaluation of education. It is also important to give students the chance to actively participate in the evaluation and pay attention to their feedback and suggestions. Means of monitoring pupils' individual nutritional needs are agreed on in cooperation between the pupils concerned, their parents and school health care staff. Students' allergies, ethics and religion are taken into consideration when planning school activities and meals. The objective is to ensure the basic diet suits as many students as possible. More information available [here](#).
- In **Slovenia**, to ensure low-quality food is not available for pupils, in 2010 snack and beverage vending machines were banned from school environments.



FEES

It seems very uncommon for school governing bodies or local authorities to provide school meals for all the pupils for **free**. Only in **Finland**, from among those surveyed, each pupil and student from pre-primary to upper secondary education can enjoy a free school lunch and that means nearly 830 thousand pupils entitled to it. In addition to this, around 60 thousand children taking part in before- and after-school activities enjoy a snack. Some education providers also offer a snack to children taking part in school clubs.

Even if not serving free meals for all the pupils, other countries still SUPPORT the provision of food in schools in terms of organization and financing.

This support may take the form of:

- partial financing of meals for selected age groups, usually the youngest;
- partial subsidy for the operation of school canteens or other services related to meal provision;
- national health-promoting programmes or campaigns that enable schools to serve free food products such as milk or fruit (more details and examples in the section *Good practice* in further part of this report).
- In **Scotland**, from January 2015, all children in primary school, grades 1 to 3 (ages app. 5-7) across Scotland will have the option of taking a free school meal every day.
- In **England**, since September 2014, all infant school pupils (aged 4 to 7) are entitled to free school lunches – Universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) – under the Children and Families Act 2014. Further details of this new entitlement are available in [DfE guidance](#) to schools.
- In **Slovakia**, school canteens provide meals for children and pupils for partial compensation of the expenses, which is paid by the child's legal representative in the amount corresponding to the expenses for purchase of food according to age categories of diners in relation to the recommended nutritional dose. The municipality or the self-governing region – the founders – can determine whether the fee will also



include the overhead costs connected with canteen's operation. The fee is determined by the head teacher of the school to which the canteen belongs or by the school facility director – however, the fee must not be higher than 7.5 per cent of the subsistence minimum for a dependent child. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport publish financial categories defining the expense range for the purchase of food per meal according to diners' age categories.

- In **Spain**, the Autonomous Communities grant aid for certain services which are ancillary to teaching, such as the school canteen.

In most countries, free meals or snacks are guaranteed for pupils entitled to SOCIAL BENEFITS on grounds of family low-income or/and other disadvantage:

- In **Portugal** children supported by social welfare are entitled to daily distribution of milk; provision of free or partly subsidized meals; activities in the scope of education and food hygiene.
- In **Germany**, parents with a low income get financial assistance from the local social authority.
- In **England**, children whose parents, carers or guardians receive certain state benefits are entitled to free school meals throughout compulsory schooling and post-16 education in schools and, since September 2014, in further education institutions. Full details of eligibility are available from the government website.
- In **Lithuania**, school meals are free of charge for children from low-income families.
- In **Slovakia**, children in material need are treated exceptionally due to the support from the Centre of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and they pay only minimal fees for their meals. If at least 75 per cent of school's diners fall into this category, all pupils in this school pay only the minimum fee for their meals.
- In **Cyprus**, the snacks are provided to supported pupils by the school canteen and the cost is paid by school boards. This project is financed by the ministry of education through public donations granted to the ministry for this specific purpose and the church of Cyprus which donates directly to school boards.
- In **Scotland**, parents can claim free school lunches for their children if they are receiving certain benefits.
- In **France**, families can receive aid to pay for school meals.
- In **Slovenia**, lower secondary school pupils may apply for state funds to cover one mid-morning snack per pupil per day. Basic school pupils whose income per family member amounts to 53 per cent net of the average income are entitled to the full refund of a school meal. Funds to cover the full price of the lunch in basic schools are available to those children whose income per family member is below 18 per cent net of the average income. Upper secondary students whose income per family member amounts to 42 per cent net of the average income are entitled to the full refund of a school meal. Upper secondary students whose income per family member amounts 42 per cent to 53 per cent net are entitled to 70 per cent price refund for a school meal and those from 53 per cent to 64 per cent net are entitled to 40 per cent price refund for a school meal.



Apart from the abovementioned groups, in most countries pupils, as a rule, are **CHARGED** for the meals they have at school. The system of payments and the fees differ not only between countries or regions, but even between schools and are often set by the food provider:

- In **France**, schools meals are not free of charge. The price is set by the local authority that governs the school (*école élémentaire*: municipality; *collège*: department; *lycée*: region). The local authority can decide to apply a family income-based adjustment.
- In **Scotland**, local authorities determine the cost of school meals. They must charge every pupil the same price for the same quantity of the same item.
- In **Portugal**, the price of the meals to be provided to students in school canteens of pre-school, primary and secondary education establishments as well as additional rules on the payment are defined by the Dispatch issued by the Government member responsible for education, published in the Official Gazette, after consulting the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities. It is important to note that in any case, the provision of meals in school canteens has a profit purpose.
- In **Serbia**, school meals are available as an option and parents have to pay the fee (except for low income families).
- In **Slovenia**, the minister of education determines the price for the mid-morning snack (0.80 euro in basic school and 2.42 euro in upper secondary school). Lower prices in basic schools are due to lower energy content of the snack – that is because children take lunch in the school as well. Secondary schools offer lunches less often.



NUTRITION EDUCATION

Apart from organizational and financial aspects of serving food for children, schools incorporate nutrition education into teaching programmes so that pupils can acquire knowledge and skills on healthy diet and gain recommended food habits. Frequently, NUTRITION EDUCATION is a component of curricula for specific subject areas or is integrated in different contexts of teaching programmes.

- In **Portugal**, school activities should promote healthy eating habits with the active participation of students.
- In **Germany**, nutrition education is part of “Consumer Education” at ISCED levels 1 and 2. It concerns the topics “healthy lifestyle”, “quality of food and its labelling”, “avoiding food waste”.
- In **England**, under the new National Curriculum which was introduced in primary and secondary schools in September 2014, ‘Cooking and Nutrition’ is included under the programme of study for design and technology for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (pupils aged 5 to 14 years). The programme of study states: “As part of their work with food, pupils should be taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. Instilling a love of cooking in pupils will also open a door to one of the great expressions of human creativity. Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life. Pupils should be taught to:
 - at Key Stage 1: use the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet to prepare dishes and understand where food comes from;
 - at Key Stage 2: understand and apply the principles of a healthy and varied diet, prepare and cook a variety of predominantly savoury dishes, using a range of cooking techniques; understand seasonality, and know where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed;
 - at Key Stage 3: understand and apply the principles of nutrition and health, cook a repertoire of predominantly savoury dishes so that they are able to feed themselves and others a healthy and varied diet; become competent in a range of cooking techniques (for example, selecting and preparing ingredients; using utensils and electrical equipment; applying heat in different ways; using awareness of taste, texture and smell to decide how to season dishes and combine ingredients; adapting and using their own recipes); understand the source, seasonality and characteristics of a broad range of ingredients.”
- In **Ireland**, nutrition is dealt with comprehensively in Irish primary and post-primary schools and is part of core learning at ISCED 1 and 2. Children learn about the importance of food for their development, they explore topics such as food preferences and the importance of healthy eating for physical and mental well-being. Schools are encouraged to adopt whole-school approaches to health promotion. In cultivating healthy eating attitudes, most primary schools operate a healthy eating policy.



At ISCED 1, nutrition is reflected in the Primary School Curriculum in Science and in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE):

- one hour per week is allocated to the teaching of Science which includes a topic of nutrition. The science curriculum enables pupils to develop an understanding of food and nutrition including the importance of food for energy and growth, and the importance of a balanced and healthy diet;
- 30 minutes each week is allocated to the teaching of SPHE. Nutrition features at all class levels. The curriculum fosters an understanding of food and nutrition, and promotes healthy eating and initiatives that support healthy living. For example, at infant level, pupils become aware of the importance of food for growth and development, explore food preferences and their role in a balanced diet, and discuss some qualities and categories of food. By fifth and sixth class, they should appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and staying healthy, realise and accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices, recognise some of the important nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet, and explore and examine some of the illnesses associated with food intake.

At ISCED 2, nutrition is reflected in the Junior Cycle curriculum for all in SPHE, and in two optional subjects: Science and Home Economics. The learning at the core is that all students understand the importance of food and diet in making healthy lifestyle choices:

- all students study SPHE, either in a 60 hour course or a new 100 hour course, during which some time is given to nutrition education. In the former, students are made aware of the elements of and importance of healthy diet for physical and mental well-being, enabled to audit their own eating habits, examine the consequences of poor eating habits and, where appropriate, plan for change. Concepts are integrated with decision-making and communication. In the latter, students evaluate how diet, physical activity, rest and hygiene contribute to self-esteem and wellbeing;
- science is studied by almost all (approximately 90 per cent) students for 240 hours during which some time is given to nutrition education. Students learn about the contents of food products, food as a source of energy and as a growth material for the body and a balanced diet;
- Home Economics is studied by a significant minority (approximately 38 per cent) of students for 240 hours during which they learn about nutrition in relation to health, culinary skills, consumer competence, food labelling and decision-making in the purchase of food.

At ISCED 3, nutrition is reflected in the Senior Cycle curriculum of two optional subjects: Biology: the 180 hour biology syllabus includes the principles of human nutrition and digestion; and Home Economics: the 180 hour home economics syllabus includes the relationship of nutritional needs to the health of the individual and the community.

- In **Slovakia**, nutrition education is not taught as an individual subject. Topics related to eating and nutrition education are taught within compulsory subjects such as natural sciences (ISCED 1), biology (ISCED 2, 3) and manual training (ISCED 1). When



preparing the school education programme, schools can use optional hours to strengthen the teaching of an existing subject or introduce a new subject, which thus becomes compulsory for the pupils. Within these optional hours, schools can introduce a subject dealing with nutrition education. The subject „Cooking and food skills“ (including nutrition education) are taught at vocational upper secondary schools with specific orientation (cook, waiter and hotel academy).



- In **Cyprus**, nutrition education is part of specific lesson curricula and is also promoted through events organized as out-of-class activities.
- In **Scotland**, in the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, all teachers have a responsibility to develop, reinforce and extend learning in health and well-being in all curriculum areas. The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 and the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2008 set out nutritional standards for school lunches. The new statutory basis for school food also introduced requirements to consider sustainability when purchasing food, a duty to increase uptake of school meals and, in order to eliminate any stigma.
- In **France**, nutrition education starts in both pre-primary and primary schools (ISCED 0 and 1), where children acquire their first eating habits. Teachers have a key-role in teaching pupils rules of good eating manners and to let them know the effects



of food on health. Schools programmes address issues such as meals regularity and composition (from pre-primary to 2nd grade) and the positive or negative effects of eating habits (from 3rd to 5th grade).

- In **Spain**, thanks to their autonomy that educational institutions have in the design of their school development plans, schools can provide nutrition education implementing specific activities, such as thematic days or weeks, through agreements with institutions or companies. At the national level, nutrition education is present in the curriculum within health education, either through cross-curricular elements or in the content of specific subjects. Thus, for Primary Education (ISCED 1) this is laid down in the [Royal Decree](#), establishing the basic curriculum for primary education and for secondary education (ISCED 2) and *Bachillerato* (general upper secondary education – ISCED 3) in the [Royal Decree](#) establishing the basic curriculum for compulsory secondary education and general upper secondary education.

Since 2005, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (MECD, *Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte*) has a collaboration framework agreement with the [Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality](#) (MSSSI, *Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad*) for health education and its promotion in schools. MECD takes part in a Working Group of the NAOS Strategy, which has been implemented through the [Spanish Agency for Consumption, Food Security and Nutrition](#) (AECOSAN, *Agencia Española de Consumo, Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición*), an agency of the MSSSI.

This is an initiative aimed at children aged 6 to 12 years in order to raise awareness and provide information about healthy lifestyles and therefore contribute to the prevention of overweight and obesity in children. MECD is also part of the Jury and contributes to spread the NAOS Strategy awards, whose aim is the promotion of physical activity and healthy diet.

On the other hand, AECOSAN, whose aim in collaboration with education authorities is to promote knowledge and sensory experiences related to food, nutrition and healthy eating habits among pupils, and to implement nutritional and culinary education programmes, has undertaken several activities, among which the following stand out:

- [PERSEQ](#) Programme: it is a pilot school programme against obesity, for health and exercise. Its main aim is to promote the learning of healthy eating habits and to encourage regular physical activity among schoolchildren, in order to prevent obesity and other diseases. It consists of a collection of simple school interventions aimed at children between the ages of 6 and 10. It also addresses both the school canteen and families in order to facilitate the choice of the healthiest options.
- [ACTIVILANDIA](#): at the end of 2013, AECOSAN developed *Activilandia* as an informative communication activity for children aged between 6 and 12, their families and teachers. A virtual theme park has been created through the use of the new media in order to promote healthy eating, varied physical activity through active leisure and other healthy habits such as hygiene and sleep.
- PLAN CUIDATE + (“Take Better Care of Yourself” Plan): this awareness and sensitivity action was developed between 2011 and 2012 by AECOSAN and aimed at people over 18. It stressed the importance of reducing the intake of salt and saturated



fats to prevent hypertension, hypercholesterolemia and chronic cardiovascular diseases. It also offered a range of healthy recipes and personal advice to promote healthy lifestyle and the regular physical activity among the population. The contents of the Plan are available on the [web page](#) as well as a downloadable mobile application for tablets and smartphones where, after a simple registration, users receive daily notifications in the form of newsflashes on diet, physical exercise and healthy habits.

In addition, in 2014 the Spanish Ministry of Education signed a [collaboration agreement](#) with the Royal Academy of Gastronomy (RAG, *Real Academia de Gastronomía*) and the Spanish Nutrition Foundation (FEN, *Fundación Española de la Nutrición*) in which the three parties agreed to work together towards the promotion of food education. In this context, a pilot project named Taste Workshops is being developed in Ceuta and Melilla. Its aim is to teach pre-primary and primary schoolchildren aspects related to nutrition, food and gastronomy, encouraging them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Several Spanish chefs have taken part in this project through the RAG, with families, pupils and form teachers. At present, the materials used in the Pilot Project are being recorded in order to make them known to the entire educational community and turn them into a Teacher Training Course.

- In **Slovenia**, a national project "[Traditional Slovenian breakfast](#)" was introduced in 2011, at the initiative of the Slovenian beekeepers' association. The goal of the project is to educate children, youth, and public, inform and raise awareness of the importance of healthy breakfast, local self-sufficient supply, local food production and processing, the importance of agricultural activities and the beekeeping. The project also aims at making the youth aware of the meaning of the healthy life style, exercise and sports. On the day, schools serve breakfast made of Slovenian food exclusively, donated by primary producers and food companies. It is an example of an excellent inter-sectoral cooperation between agriculture, education and health sectors.



GOOD PRACTICE - PROGRAMMES FOR MILK, FRUIT AND VEGETABLE DISTRIBUTION

Many countries implement specific arrangements, programmes or initiatives that aim at improving eating habits and support appropriate nutrition among children. Among them, programmes ensuring MILK as well as FRUIT AND VEGETABLES are available in schools.

- In **Turkey**, free milk is distributed to all students in pre-primary and primary education since 2012 within the framework of the “School Milk Programme”. The aim of this programme is to ensure that students acquire the habit of drinking milk and to contribute to their sufficient, well-balanced nutrition and healthy growth. There are plans for extension of the programme through distributing raisins or other dried fruit to students at ISCED levels 0, 1 and 2 free of charge.
- In **Austria**, kindergartens and schools offer milk and milk products supported and price-regulated by the EU. For example, a school snack (for the big break) composed of fresh fruit and vegetables is financed (75 per cent) from the EU funds. Responsibility lies with the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture. The programme is administered by the agency [AMA Austria](#). More details [at the website](#).



- In **England**, free milk is provided to children under the age of 5 at participating schools under the [Nursery Milk Scheme](#). Schools may also take part in the [EU School Milk Subsidy Scheme](#). As far as fruit and vegetables are concerned, children aged 4 to 6 years in primary school are entitled to a free piece of fresh fruit or vegetable every school day (190 days per year) through the [School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme](#)¹ (SFVS) administered by the National Health Service (NHS) for the Department of Health. Raisins may be distributed for the first day of a new school term before deliveries of fresh fruit and vegetables resume. There is no statutory requirement for schools to participate in the scheme. Background [information](#) on the development of the scheme and its evaluation, is available from the Government's National Archives.
- Schools in **Scotland** can also provide free milk to children under the age of 5 under the [Nursery Milk Scheme](#). Schools may also take part in the [EU School Milk Subsidy Scheme](#). All children in Primary 1-3 (age 5-7) are now (as of January 2015) entitled to a free school lunch. Older children whose parents are eligible for certain benefits are also entitled to a free school lunch. Some local authorities and schools use the powers that they have to provide free breakfasts, free fruit or free milk to some children and young people for whom they are responsible. More details [at the programme website](#).
- In **Germany**, parents and their children may choose whether they want milk on a regular basis at school (ISCED-level 1 only) or not. If they order milk, they must pay for it, but exceptions are made for families with a low income. The distribution is supported by the EU School Milk Programme. The distribution of fresh fruit and vegetables at ISCED-level 1 is an option in some Länder in Germany. Individual schools may decide to participate or not. The whole institution is bound to participate and will get fresh fruit and vegetables by a supplier for three days per week. The distribution is free of charge and is also supported by the EU. Further information in German available in the [example](#) of the Land of Northrhine-Westphalia.
- In **France**, since 1976, milk has been provided to school children in different ways and for different purposes. Initially created as a means to fight malnutrition and to promote milk-drinking to children, this programme (*Lait aux écoliers*: milk for schoolchildren) has continued for both educational and public health purposes. However, it has recently been under attack for being unsuccessful, obsolete and even dangerous to public health. Milk distribution is aimed towards preschool, primary school students and lower secondary students (ISCED 0, 1 and 2), either before school, as a midday snack, or during school lunch. However, most milk is distributed in preschools (ISCED 0). Furthermore, 1800 milk fountains have been installed in secondary schools nationwide in the past 10 years as a means to promote adolescent milk consumption. This distribution (which includes other dairy products, such as yogurt and cheese) may be subsidized by the [EU Milk Scheme](#), if institutions request such subsidies. Further national subsidies may be awarded, especially in high-need schools (*zone d'éducation prioritaire*). In 2012, nearly 14 million Euros were allocated in school milk subsidies to

¹ Please note this is a national initiative not connected to the [EU School Fruit Scheme](#) which the UK does not participate in.



7 million students, 1.2 million Euros of which came from our national budget. More details at [Questions sur le lait en milieu scolaire](#).

As far as fruit distribution is concerned, France participates in the EU School Fruit Scheme through the “[Un Fruit pour la récré](#)” programme. Established in 2008, and applied as of September 2009, it reaches over 500 thousand children in towns across the country, who receive at least 3 free portions of fresh fruits per month. The programme is not mandatory (schools interested have to apply), and covers ISCED 0 to 3. The EU Fruit Scheme financed 76 per cent of this programme in 2014. The choice of the distributed products is up to the participating schools. It can be done either with 100 per cent fresh fruits OR with 2/3 of fresh fruits and the last third with processed products (cooked, mashed, stewed, etc.) or dried fruit (apricots, raisins, etc., excl. nuts and alike). “*Un Fruit pour la récré*” goes with a pedagogical support programme intended to change eating habits of children *in fine*. The support programme allows children to discover fruit and vegetable diversity, different regional products and production methods, seasonality and policies for food safety and traceability.

- In **Cyprus**, since 2011, there has been a programme towards the students' sufficient, well-balanced nutrition and healthy growth. More particularly, all primary school pupils have a fruit or vegetable (apple, pear, strawberries, grapes, carrot) once a week. In 2012, there was an attempt to offer a small pack of dried nuts or raisins instead of a fruit. Pupils, however, showed their preference to fresh fruit instead of raisins so fruits prevailed. During the last two years, fruit has been served in the school canteens. Each school is funded according to the number of students. As far as secondary education is concerned, students with economic deprivation are provided with free snacks accompanied by orange or other fruit juice or milk.
- In **Portugal**, in the scope of the School Milk Programme (*Programa de Leite Escolar*), children attending pre-school and first cycle education (first four years of schooling) are given a pack of milk daily and for free, throughout the school year, usually during a morning break. There are also some programmes aiming at improving healthy eating habits:



- EU School Fruit Scheme
The School Fruit Scheme is an EU-wide voluntary scheme that provides school children with fruit and vegetables, aiming to encourage good eating habits among young people. Besides providing fruit and vegetables the scheme requires participating Member States to set up strategies including educational and awareness-raising initiatives.
- Educational Channel by FIPA
The channel developed by FIPA (Federation of Portuguese Agri-Food Industries) and validated by the Directorate-General of Education and the Portuguese Association of Nutritionists aims to provide the educational community with information and documents that may be the basis for healthy lifestyles in the classroom or in the development of projects on the subject. It provides content and activity sheets on various topics related to healthy eating adapted to students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education.
- Nestlé Healthy Kids Programme
The Nestlé Healthy Kids Programme is a project developed by Nestlé Portugal directed to 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle of basic education schools, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science, in particular with the Directorate-General of Education. It has the objective to create and raise awareness regarding good nutritional practices, healthy cooking habits and greater physical fitness among adolescents, as well as provide pedagogical resources for this purpose. The RFE applies to students attending the 1st cycle of basic education in public schools and is coordinated by the Ministries of Agriculture and the Sea (MAM), of Health (MoH) and Education and Science (MEC).
- In **the Netherlands**, there are 'School milk programme' and 'School fruit programme'. These are implemented by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland), which is a part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The programmes cover both primary and secondary schools, whereas the school milk programme is also for children in day care (up to the age of primary education) and playgroups. The aim is to promote healthy eating habits among students in primary and secondary education and to promote the marketing/sales of dairy products and vegetables and fruits in the long term. The EU grant for school milk is for the provision of dairy products (with or without fruit), and various types of cheese. In the Netherlands only dairy products are provided (for example low-fat milk, buttermilk, yoghurt and Optimel). The subsidy is granted for a maximum of 0.25 litre of milk per day per student/pupil. Schools receive fruits and vegetables for 20-28 weeks (during the school year). During this period schools are obligated to carry out activities that contribute to the promotion of healthy eating habits, teach children about the production of fruits and vegetables and bring them into contact with farms. Only schools that have registered, receive fruit and/or milk. From the school year 2015/2016, the separate programmes/regulations (for milk and fruits) are integrated into one single regulation. More information in Dutch [at the website](#).



- In **the Czech Republic**, there are two programmes running – for supplying milk and for supplying fruit and vegetables to schools. Both programmes are supported by the state and from the EU funds. The pupils of basic schools (ISCED levels 1 and 2) are entitled to milk and milk products for subsidised prices. Fruit and vegetables are available free of charge to pupils of the first stage of basic schools (ISCED 1) if the schools entered into a contract with one of the approved suppliers. These schools then receive regular supplies of products. The aim of these measures is to improve pupils' eating habits. In the case of fruit and vegetables, the measure should also help to make these more popular among children, increase the consumption, help to enhance the children's health and fight overweight among them. More information in Czech is available on the [websites of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports](#).
- In **Slovenia**, up to 90 per cent of Slovenian basic schools provide extra fruit and vegetables to all the children aged 6 to 15 years ([EU CAP School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme](#)).
- **Greece** does not have a national programme/ practice of free milk or dried fruit distribution to pupils. However, the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs along with the Ministry of Health keeps in line with the National Nutrition Policy. The NNP has set priorities for the protection and promotion of children's health and school environment that encourages healthy eating habits and prevents and reduces the scale of nutrition-related disorders, like obesity. Therefore, school canteens sell healthy food at reasonable prices. DIATROFI, the pilot programme has been implemented by the Institute of Preventive Medicine Environmental and Occupational Health, Prolepsis, since 2012, with main funding from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. It is executed under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs. DIATROFI supports students in primary and secondary public schools in socioeconomically vulnerable areas throughout Greece and serves a dual purpose: a) it provides food-aid through the distribution of a free, daily, healthy and nutritious meal to all students in the participating schools; b) it promotes healthy eating through



educational material and activities aimed at the students and their families. More information on the programme available on the [website](#).

Within the same framework, Greek municipalities offer free meals in primary schools and early education centres. The programme is expected to reach 50 thousand students from socioeconomically underprivileged areas of Greece, and aims to reduce the food insecurity experienced by thousands of families as a result of the ongoing economic crisis.

- In **Spain**, as regards the distribution of fruit, at national level the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA) are taking part in the [Plan for the consumption of fruits and vegetables in schools \(*Plan de consumo de fruta y verdura en las escuelas*\)](#), an EU co-financed Plan which has been in place since 2009. For the school year 2015/16, the Plan has a budget of € 15.2 million (11.5 co-financed by the EU) and is addressed to 6,500 educational establishments in 14 Autonomous Communities that represent 1 and a half million students. Its aim is twofold: first, to stabilise markets stemming the downward trend in the consumption of fruits and vegetables, especially pronounced in children and, second, to contribute to the strategy to combat obesity and associated diseases, encouraging healthy consumption habits in children.

Although managed by the Autonomous Communities, which develop their own regional strategies and finance their implementation, MAGRAMA cooperates and participates in the development of the accompanying measures, developing the [website \[www.alimentacion.es\]\(http://www.alimentacion.es\)](#) and teaching materials which are available to the Autonomous Communities on the [web](#). The consumption plan will be extended from 1 August 2014 until 31 July 2015, and the aid will go to the distribution of products to pupils who regularly attend nursery schools and other preschool centres, or to primary or secondary education establishments.

Different regional strategies may adopt, within the age range included in the previous framework, more limited and specific target groups, according to factors such as their demographic distribution, the organisation of their education system and other aspects determined by their regional strategy. Although it is true that each Autonomous Community has developed its own regional programme, the age distribution of children is, in general, from 6 to 12 years of age. The selected products are: fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, minimally processed vegetables, and fruit juice. The time of distribution during the school day is established by [different strategies of the Autonomous Communities](#), although in general it should not overlap with lunch at the canteens.


As regards dairy products, again the MAGRAMA launched in 2013 a campaign for the promotion and consumption of milk named "[#IlikeMilk \(#megustalaleche\)](#)" which, along with dairy sector and food distribution associations and companies, developed promotional activities between 10 June and October 2013.



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Editor in chief: Beata Maluchnik
Editing cooperation: Magdalena Górowska-Fells
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Polish Eurydice Unit
Foundation for the Development
of the Education System
ul. Mokotowska 43, 00-551 Warszawa



www.eurydice.org.pl
tel. 22 463 13 70
eurydice@frse.org.pl