

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION - A DISCIPLINE AT SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE

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## **Abstract**

*Not only do physical education, physical activity, and extracurricular activities in school contribute to the good physical condition and health of students, but it also helps teenagers to better practice and understand it, which will have positive repercussions for them in the future and throughout their lives. Even more than that, the concepts of fair play, team spirit, and respect for the opponent, which are developed through physical education and sports in school, assist in the development of social awareness and self-awareness, and provide a general understanding of the rules of the sport. These are abilities that student can later use in their advantage in other school subjects or in real life situations. The encouragement of physical exercise has garnered a lot of attention in recent years, particularly in Europe and across the world, as a result of the many advantages that it provides.*

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## **1. Introduction**

The legal foundation to act for the European growth of what sport is and to contribute to the promotion of all that affects sport in Europe was provided by the Treaty of Lisbon, which was ratified by the European Union in 2009 as part of the EU. A study titled "Physical Education and Sport at School in Europe" was compiled by the Eurydice network with the goal of providing readers with a better understanding of the current state of physical education throughout Europe.

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This report's objective is to provide a description of the present situation of physical education and sporting activities in the classrooms of thirty different European nations. This study may be seen as the European Commission's first effort to highlight both the region's strengths and deficiencies with respect to the provision of physical education in schools throughout Europe [1].

## **2. Cross-curricular approaches by the Universities in Europe**

Every nation in Europe acknowledges the significance of include physical education in the curriculum of schools. The topic is included in all of the core curricular frameworks, and its study is required as part of the primary and lower secondary education of students throughout Europe. Countries have also emphasised the significance of engaging in physically challenging activities and sports as a healthy way to spend one's free time. About two-thirds of education systems are committed to large-scale programs, while about half of education systems have national policies to encourage the growth of physical education and physical exercise. It is abundantly obvious that there is a political will to cultivate and support activities of this kind as a factor in determining both physical and social well-being. The physical, personal, and social development of pupils are listed as three of the primary goals of physical education in the coordination papers dealing to the subject. In spite of the fact that health and leading a healthy lifestyle are often addressed in national objectives and learning outcomes for physical education, health education is still only recognised as a distinct academic field in a minority of nations. In some nations, participation in certain activities is mandated by law, while in others, schools have complete autonomy in determining the kinds of physical education classes they provide. In a few nations, the autonomy of schools coexists with required extracurricular activities.

## **3. Sports games and gymnastics, compulsory activities practiced at school**

Walking, running, jumping, and throwing are only few of the fundamental motor exercises that have been included into the curriculum of the initial years of primary school in a number of different nations thanks to the efforts of central authorities. These fundamental abilities are honed and their scope of application is broadened during the course of the education to include more difficult sporting modalities.

In the following table, which also covers those nations where schools have the power to pick whether activity is optional or obligatory, you will find a list of the most frequent activities that are required to be participated in. The majority of the time spent in school participating in required physical education exercises is spent playing sports games, particularly ones involving a ball [2].



● = Autonomie școlară

Stanga ISCED 1 Dreapta ISCED 2

*Sursa:* Eurydice.

ISCED 1 = International Standard Classification of Education, Primary education  
ISCED 2 = International Standard Classification of Education, Lower secondary education

#### 4. Physical education - dedicated amount of time compared to other disciplines

There are significant disparities across nations with respect to the recommendations for the bare minimum amount of time that should be spent teaching physical education. The amount of time spent instructing students who are required to take classes ranges from fifty to eighty hours annually, an allotment that has stayed about the same over the course of the last five years. There is very little variation in this amount of time. Despite this, the allocation is still somewhat low when measured against those of other fields of study. In most cases, this amounts to less than ten percent of the overall amount of time spent teaching, which is about equivalent to fifty percent of the time spent on mathematics.

The subject matter that is covered by physical education differs from nation to nation and from one level of education to the next no matter where you go to school. For the 2011-12 school year, for instance, the prescribed amount of time for students in primary school varied from 37 hours in Ireland to 108 hours in France. This was the case on average. In Spain, Malta, and Turkey, the prescribed term for secondary school was between 24 and 35 hours, whereas in France and Austria, it was between 102 and 108 hours. The fact that the amount of time suggested from the central level for physical education is smaller than the amount of time allotted to



other disciplines demonstrates that the topic of physical education is often considered to be of lower importance. This discrepancy is particularly obvious in the elementary school system. At this school, the amount of time devoted to physical education is equivalent to approximately half of the time that mathematics takes up. Since the 2006-2007 academic year, there have not been any significant alterations made to the allotted amount of time that is devoted to physical education [3].

In the countries of the Czech Republic, Germany, and Norway, the rules of the road for walkers and bicycles are taught as an essential component of the curriculum for physical education.

- Students in the Nordic nations are taught how to use maps and other means of individual direction in the natural environment, according to reports from those countries.

- It has been shown that it is essential for adolescents in the Czech Republic, Greece, and Poland to be acquainted with the values and symbols of the Olympic Games. These countries include Poland, Greece, and the Czech Republic.

- There is a policy in place in Slovenia that encourages instructors of topics other than physical education to take a minute out of their courses to participate in something termed a "health minute." The children take advantage of this break to engage in some physical activities and activities designed to help them relax for a few minutes.

### **Evaluation in physical education**

Evaluation is carried out in the same fashion as it does in the other fields of study. In a lot of nations, the progression of students in physical education is assessed in the same way that they are evaluated in other disciplines of study.

Lower-level schools in Ireland are required to provide parents with updates on their children's progress in the various physical education programmes they attend. Evaluation methods are another component that teachers are required to include into their lessons.

In Cyprus, the assessment is based on the student's attitude towards physical education, which accounts for 20% of the total, the amount of development gained over a certain time period, which accounts for 50%, and active and progressive involvement, which accounts for 30%.

In Spain, it is considered to be the acquisition of healthy habits, the implementation of what has been learned, the level of self-solicitation, the ability to overcome difficulties, the development of physical skills, teamwork, collective development, participation in sporting activities, involvement, theoretical and practical knowledge, and critical thinking skills [4].

Nearly every nation conducts some kind of review of a person's personal development and performance in physical education; however, in the early years of school, the evaluation is not explicitly marked. The elementary and lower secondary levels of education make use of both formative and summative forms of assessment, with summative evaluation being found somewhat more often. The grading method



for this topic is typically the same as that used for the other required courses. A progression scale for the national level of performance assessment in physical education has been developed in Malta, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom (England and Wales), and Iceland. In the school year 2012–2013 in France, a new national assessment scale is being piloted for the very first time. This kind of standardised tool serves a dual function in that it helps instructors with their evaluations while at the same time it lays the groundwork for conducting nationwide comparisons of students' levels of achievement in various subjects. The first country in Europe to provide a national exam in physical education was Slovenia in 2009.

### **5. Teaching the necessary self-control**

It is possible for the instructor to be an educator, a teacher (generalist), or a specialist in order to provide assistance for the Physical Education programs. When students are studying a subject at a higher level of school, they often have the assistance of a teacher who specialises in that subject.

When it comes to the criteria of a professional certification, the majority of specialised instructors in elementary education possess a bachelor's degree. This is the case in most cases. Teachers at the secondary level typically have a bachelor's degree, but in 15 countries, they also have a master's degree in addition to their undergraduate credential. Throughout their careers, both generalist and specialist educators have access to opportunities for continuing their professional development in their respective fields.

Activities outside of the classroom that focus on physical fitness and sports are popular throughout Europe. Extracurricular activities are those that take place outside of the normal school day and include things like contests and health-related activities. These events are arranged with the purpose of making physical education exercises more approachable and appealing to adolescents. The primary objective of these extracurricular activities is to expand or augment the physical education classes that are offered during the regular school day. At the national, regional, municipal, and most importantly, the school level, there is an organisation of extracurricular physical activities. All pupils, including those with impairments or special educational requirements, are given the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. Even when classes are in session, students may participate in certain extracurricular physical activities. In point of fact, in some nations, physical education is not confined to the courses that make up the core curriculum; rather, it is included into the day-to-day activities that the school is responsible for. Students at Danish schools, for instance, participate in something called "morning running" before beginning their academic work. In certain nations, breaks are lengthened so that workers may participate in more strenuous activities, such as playing sports or going to the gym.



There is a national sports calendar in Bulgaria that offers information on a variety of different forms of extracurricular activities. The provision of extracurricular physical activities is statutorily mandated to be controlled in Cyprus. To supplement the required amount of time spent on physical education, primary schools in Portugal are permitted by law to provide extracurricular activities.

## 6. Conclusions

Lessons in physical education, as well as sports and other forms of physical activity, are an essential component of educational requirements. The development of strategies at the national level that seek, within the framework of educational programs, to develop and strengthen the share of physical activities among children and schoolchildren beginning at a young age can be supported by physical education's contribution to increasing the attractiveness of schools and to improving school results. Physical education also lends support to the development of strategies that aim to increase the attractiveness of schools and improve school results.

In addition to being a tool for health care that is useful from infancy all the way to old age, physical activities in schools are crucial for the psychological and physical development of even the youngest children.

## Authors' Contributions

All authors have equally contributed to this study and should be considered as main authors.

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