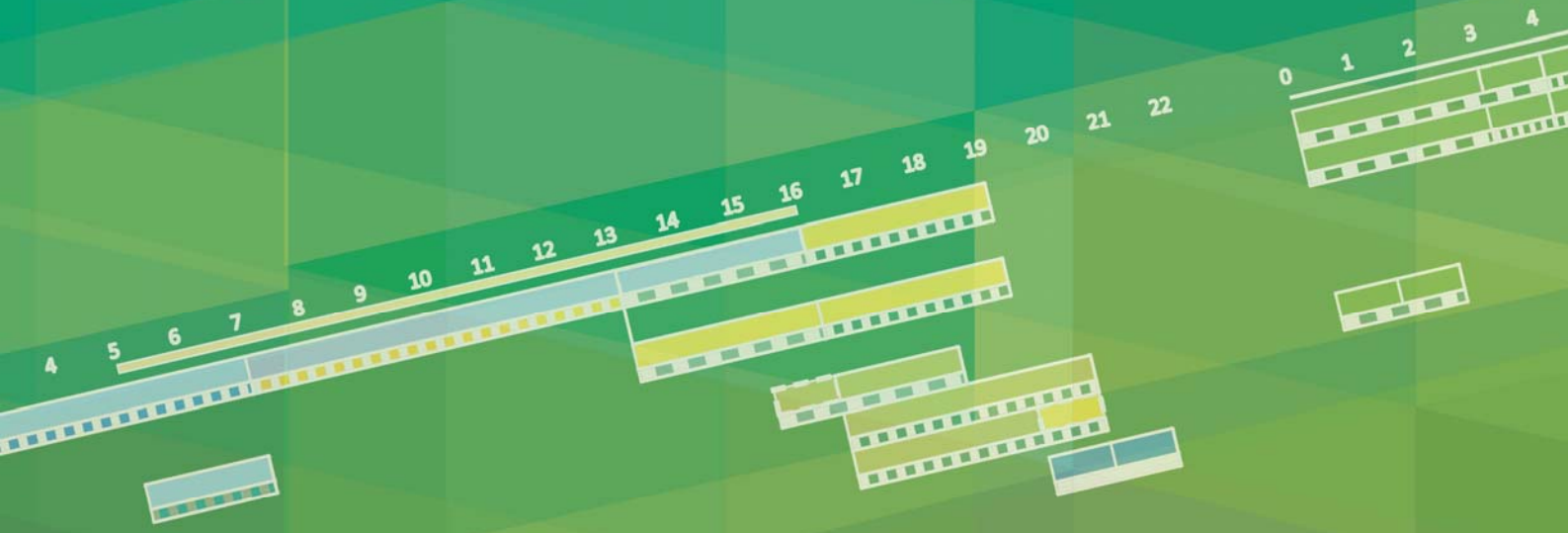
European Commission

The Structure of the European Education Systems 2017/18

Schematic Diagrams

Eurydice – Facts and Figures



Education and Training

The Structure of the European Education Systems 2017/18

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Eurydice – Facts and Figures

Education and Training

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

Compulsory education: organisational models 5

GUIDE TO READ THE DIAGRAMS 6

Scope 6

Graphic layout 6

Age of students and programme duration scales 6

Levels and types of education 7

Text 7

Connections between programmes 7

Compulsory education/training 7

Key 8

Compulsory work experience and its duration 8

Programme being phased 8

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) 8

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAMS 11

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 33

INTRODUCTION

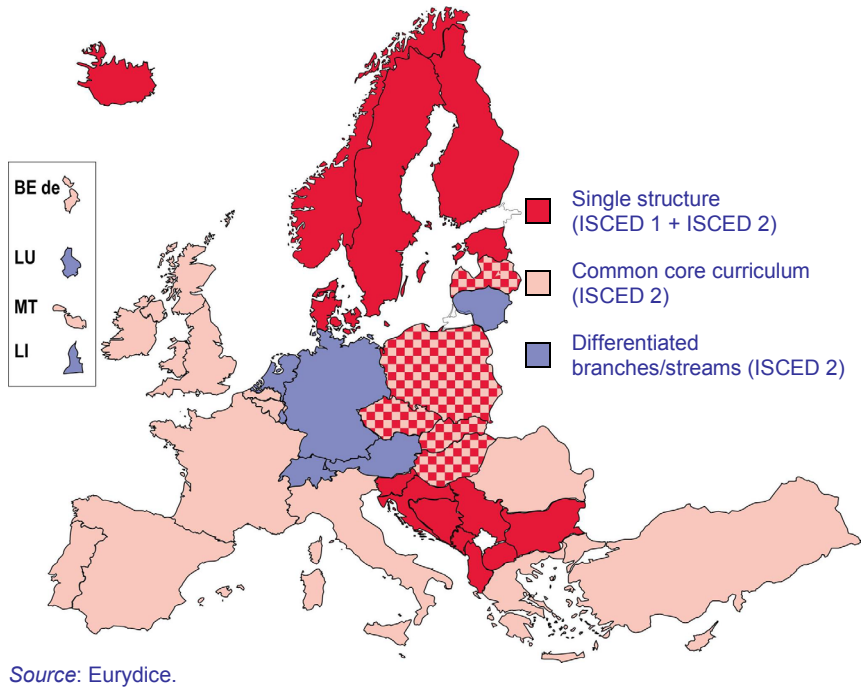
This report focuses on the structure of mainstream education in European countries from pre-primary to tertiary level for the 2017/18 school and academic year. Forty-three education systems are included covering 38 countries participating in the EU's Erasmus+ programme (28 Member States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Turkey). The first section of the report sets out the main organisational models of primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1-2). The second one provides a guide on how to read the diagrams. The national schematic diagrams are shown in the third section.

Main organisational models of primary and lower secondary education

The diagrams reveal three main organisational models of primary and lower secondary education (ISCDE 1 and 2) which are part of compulsory education in all European education systems.

- **Single structure** education. Education is provided from the beginning to the end of compulsory schooling, with no transition between primary and lower secondary education, and with general education provided in common for all pupils.
- **Common core curriculum** provision. After successful completion of primary education (ISCED 1), all students progress to the lower secondary level (ISCED 2) where they follow the same general common core curriculum.
- **Differentiated** lower secondary education. After successful completion of primary education, students are required to follow distinct educational pathways or specific types of schooling, either at the beginning or during lower secondary education. In some countries students follow different tracks in vocational, technical or general education. In others, they are enrolled in different types of general education. At the end of studies they receive different levels of certificate.

Main models of primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1-2) in Europe, 2017/18



Source: Eurydice.

Note: In the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary and Slovakia, compulsory education is organised in a single structure up to ages 14 to 16. However, between ages 10 and 13, students in these countries can, at certain stages in their school career, enrol in separate establishments providing both lower and upper secondary education.

In Poland: due to the progressive restructuration of the school system, the organisational model of full-time compulsory education is switching toward single structure model.

GUIDE TO READ THE DIAGRAMS

The Guide to read the diagrams provides necessary information to understand and correctly interpret the content of the diagrams. It includes terminology, definitions, meaning of colours and symbols used for the graphic layout and short description of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011).

Scope

The diagrams show the mainstream educational programmes considered to be the most representative in each country. They **encompass**:

- Early childhood education and care provided in publicly subsidised and accredited centre based settings for children from the youngest age of enrolment.
- Primary and secondary education programmes including the period of compulsory education.
- Post-secondary non-tertiary programmes.
- Tertiary level main programmes.

The diagrams **do not show**:

- Educational provision intended exclusively to adults with low formal educational attainment and/or a low level of basic skills. The diagrams cover only the courses allowing adult to turn back to school or to gain further qualifications which are incorporated in mainstream educational programmes. Usually, these courses are integrated in the programmes providing competence-based qualifications at secondary educational level or allowing access to tertiary education (post-secondary non-tertiary educational level) ([1]).
- Separate provision outside mainstream education for children and young people with special educational needs.
- At tertiary level, doctoral studies, as well as the specialised studies for the regulated professions such as medicine and architecture.

Graphic layout

The graphic layout of the diagrams is divided in two parts. The first part (left side bar) shows educational programmes from pre-primary to post-secondary non–tertiary levels. The second one (right side bar) explains the main programmes at the tertiary level.

Age of students and programme duration scales

The **'age of students'** scale shows the age of pupils and students when they start each level of education from pre-primary onwards (ISCED levels 0 to 4). These ages are notional and give an indication of the official age at which children might begin early childhood education and care or compulsory education. Early or late entry, grade retention or other interruptions to schooling as well as adult learning are not taken into account.

([1]) For more information on main type of educational provision for adults, see European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015. Adult Education and Training in Europe: Widening Access to Learning Opportunities. [Online] Available at: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Adult_Education_and_Training_in_Europe:_Widening_Access_to_Learning_Opportunities

The **'programme duration'** scale applies to tertiary level programmes and refers to the standard number of years necessary to complete studies at different stages on a full-time basis. The duration of part-time studies or individualised study patterns is not shown.

Levels and types of education

The main bars of the diagrams show the national educational systems; different colours represent the different levels and types of education. The small vertical lines within the levels represent the division into cycles or key stages for primary and secondary education, as well as the duration of qualifying programmes in post-secondary and tertiary education. A second thin bar with coloured stripes indicates the corresponding levels of education as defined by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) (see description below).

Text

All terms are provided in the official national language(s) of the country. For most of the countries the type of institution is indicated. For other countries, where the same educational programme(s) can be provided by different types of institution, the type of education or programmes is specified. All country notes are in English.

Connections between programmes

The diagrams also show the stages at which students may move to a different type of school or education, either within a level or on completion of a level or programme. These transition points are shown by the vertical lines linking to the programmes. However, as the number of possible transition routes increases in some countries as students' progress through the system, the pathways from secondary/post-secondary education to tertiary education programmes are not represented. Therefore, the conditions of entry to tertiary education, even in the case of automatic progression, are not shown.

Compulsory education/training

Full-time compulsory education/training refers to a period of full-time educational/training attendance required of all students. This period is regulated by the law and usually determined by the students' age. Usually, full-time compulsory education/training is provided in formal institutions/schools. However, in some education systems, certain compulsory education/training programmes can combine part-time school based and part-time workplace courses. In such cases, students are evaluated for both parts. In some countries, under certain conditions compulsory education/training can be provided at home.

Additional compulsory part-time education/training means that after the end of full-time compulsory education/training period and until a defined age the minimum formal requirement for all young people is to participate in part-time education/training.

Key

Levels and types of education

- Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education **is not responsible**)
- Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education **is responsible**)
- Primary education
- Single structure
- Secondary general education
- Secondary vocational education
- Post-secondary non-tertiary education
- Tertiary education (full-time)

Allocation to the ISCED 2011 levels (see definitions below)

ISCED 0 ISCED 1 ISCED 2 ISCED 3 ISCED 4 ISCED 5 ISCED 6 ISCED 7

Other keys

- Compulsory full-time education/training
- Compulsory part-time education/training
- Combined school and workplace courses
- Possible additional year
- >> Study abroad
- →| year — Programme being phased out during (year)
- -/n/- — Compulsory work experience + its duration (in years)

Compulsory work experience and its duration

The diagrams highlight the countries in which compulsory work experience is required to move to the next educational level or to begin a particular qualification and show its minimum required duration where applicable **(-/n/-**).

Programme being phased

The Diagrams show the possible current and/or forthcoming changes in the structure of the national education systems and point out the programmes being phased out (→| year).

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is an instrument suitable for compiling statistics on education internationally. It covers two cross-classification variables: levels and fields of education with the complementary dimensions of general/vocational/pre-vocational orientation and education-labour market destination. The last version, ISCED 2011 distinguishes eight levels of education. Empirically, ISCED assumes that several criteria exist which can help allocate education programmes to levels of education. Depending on the level and type of education concerned, there is a need to establish a hierarchical ranking system between main and subsidiary criteria (typical entrance qualification, minimum entrance requirement, minimum age, staff qualification, etc.).

For the full details on each ISCED level, please consult:

UNESCO, Institute for Statistics, 2012. *International Standard Classification of Education. ISCED 2011*. Available at: http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf

ISCED 0: Early childhood education

Programmes at this level are typically designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and introduce young children to organised instruction outside of the family context. ISCED level 0 refers to early childhood programmes that have an intentional education component.

ISCED 1: Primary education

Programmes at this level are typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy) and establish a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge, personal and social development, in preparation for lower secondary education.

Age is typically the only entry requirement at this level. The customary or legal age of entry is usually not below 5 years old or above 7 years old. This level typically lasts six years, although its duration can range between four and seven years.

ISCED 2: Lower secondary education

Programmes at this level are typically designed to build on the learning outcomes from ISCED level 1. Students enter ISCED level 2 typically between ages 10 and 13 (age 12 being the most common).

ISCED 3: Upper secondary education

Programmes at this level are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Pupils enter this level typically between ages 14 and 16.

ISCED 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education

Post-secondary non-tertiary education provides learning experiences building on secondary education, preparing for labour market entry as well as tertiary education. Programmes at ISCED level 4, or post-secondary non-tertiary education, are typically designed to provide individuals who completed ISCED level 3 with non-tertiary qualifications required for progression to tertiary education or for employment when their ISCED level 3 qualifications do not grant such access. The completion of an ISCED level 3 programme is required to enter ISCED level 4 programmes.

ISCED 5: Short-cycle tertiary education

Programmes at this level are often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competencies. Typically, they are practically based, occupationally-specific and prepare students to enter the labour market. However, these programmes may also provide a pathway to other tertiary education programmes. Entry into ISCED level 5 programmes requires the successful completion of ISCED level 3 or 4 with access to tertiary education.

ISCED 6: Bachelors' or equivalent level

Programmes at this level are often designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. Entry into these programmes normally requires the successful completion of an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme with access to tertiary education. Entry may depend on subject choice and/or grades achieved at ISCED levels 3 and/or 4. Additionally, it may be required to take and succeed in entry examinations. Entry or transfer into ISCED level 6 is also sometimes possible after the successful completion of ISCED level 5.

ISCED 7: Master's or equivalent level

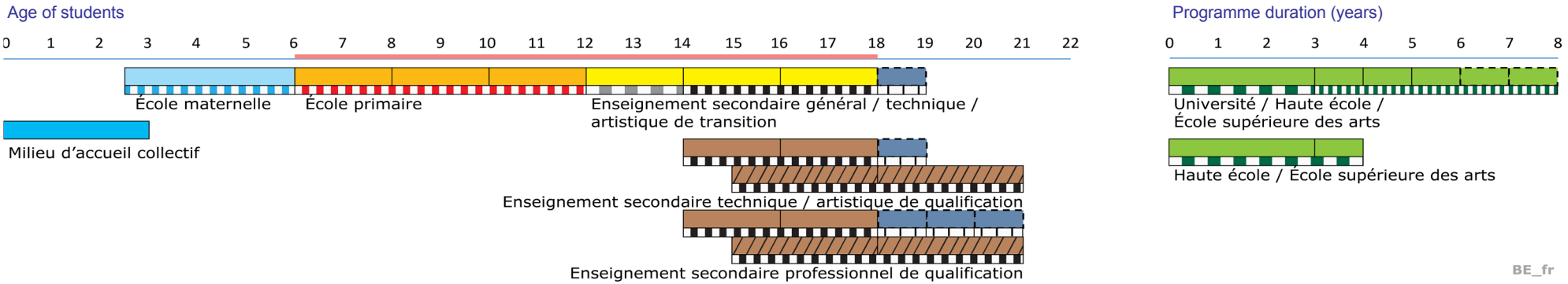
Programmes at this level, are often designed to provide participants with advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a second degree or equivalent qualification. Typically, programmes at this level are theoretically-based but may include practical components and are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice. They are traditionally offered by universities and other tertiary educational institutions.

Entry into ISCED level 7 programmes preparing for a second or further degree normally requires the successful completion of an ISCED level 6 or 7 programme. In the case of long programmes that prepare for a first degree equivalent to a Master's degree, entry requires the successful completion of an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme with access to tertiary education. Entry into such programmes may depend on subject choice and/or grades achieved at ISCED levels 3 and/or 4. Additionally, it may be required to take and succeed in entry examinations.

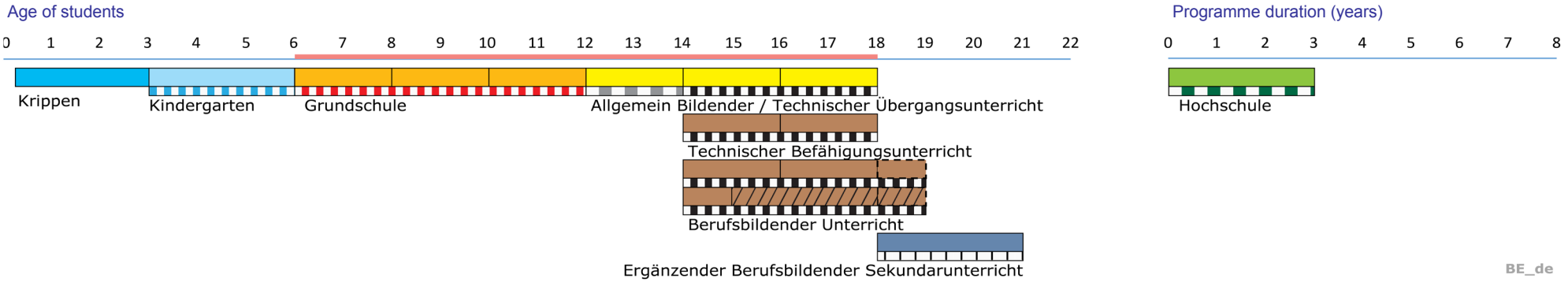
SCHEMATIC DIAGRAMS

Belgium – French Community	12	Poland	23
Belgium – German-speaking Community	12	Portugal	24
Belgium – Flemish Community	12	Romania	24
Bulgaria	13	Slovenia	24
Czech Republic	13	Slovakia	25
Denmark	14	Finland	25
Germany	14	Sweden	26
Estonia	15	United Kingdom – England	26
Ireland	15	United Kingdom – Wales	26
Greece	16	United Kingdom – Northern Ireland	27
Spain	16	United Kingdom – Scotland	27
France	17	Albania	28
Croatia	17	Bosnia and Herzegovina	28
Italy	18	Switzerland	29
Cyprus	18	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	30
Latvia	19	Iceland	30
Lithuania	19	Liechtenstein	30
Luxembourg	20	Montenegro	31
Hungary	20	Norway	31
Malta	21	Serbia	32
Netherlands	22	Turkey	32
Austria	22		

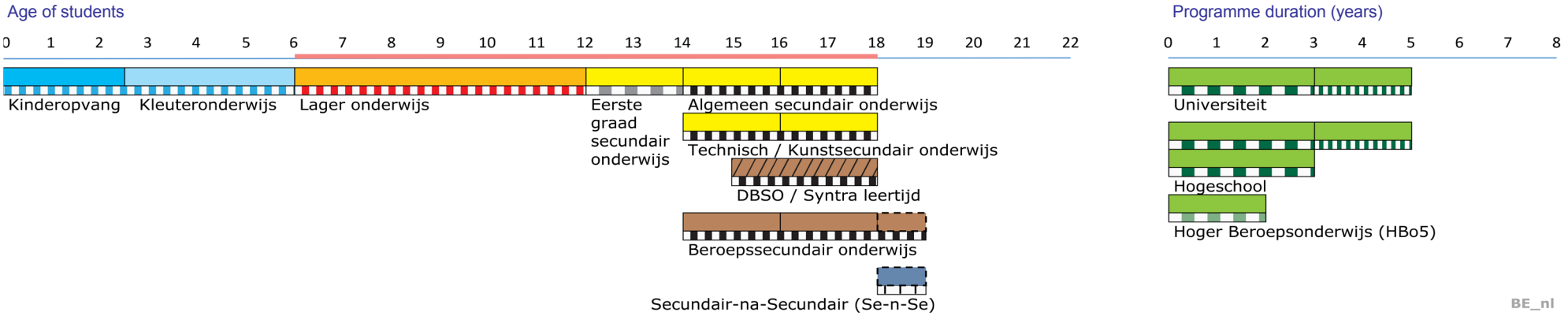
Belgium – French Community



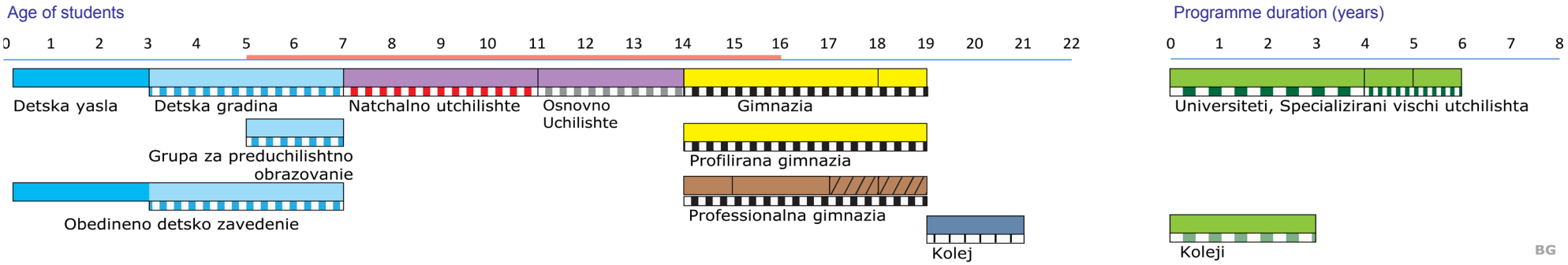
Belgium – German-speaking Community



Belgium – Flemish Community

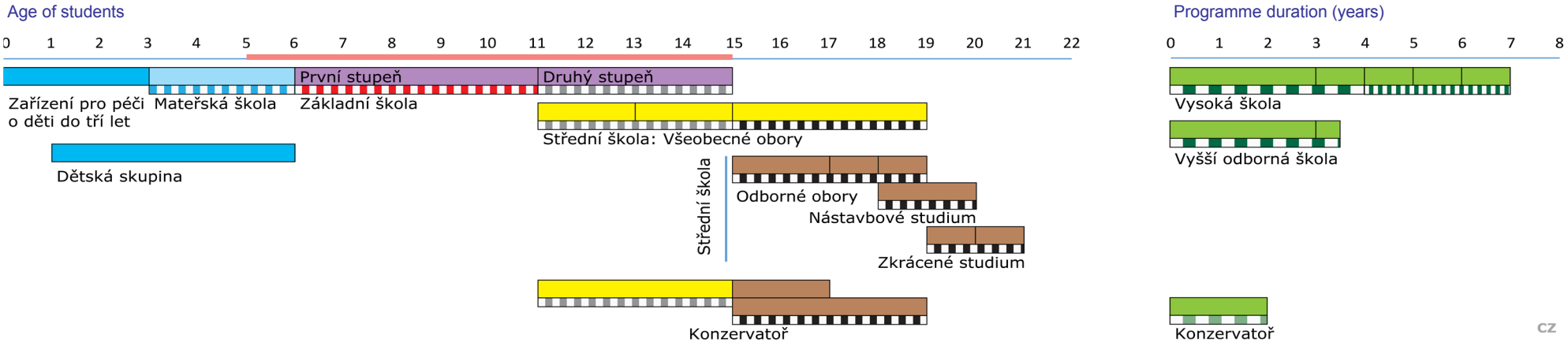


Bulgaria



BG

Czech Republic



CZ

Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is not responsible)

Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is responsible)

Primary education

Single structure

Secondary general education

Secondary vocational education

Post-secondary non-tertiary education

Tertiary education (full-time)

Allocation to the ISCED levels: ISCED 0 ISCED 1 ISCED 2 ISCED 3 ISCED 4 ISCED 5 ISCED 6 ISCED 7

Compulsory full-time education/training

Compulsory part-time education/training

Additional year

Study abroad

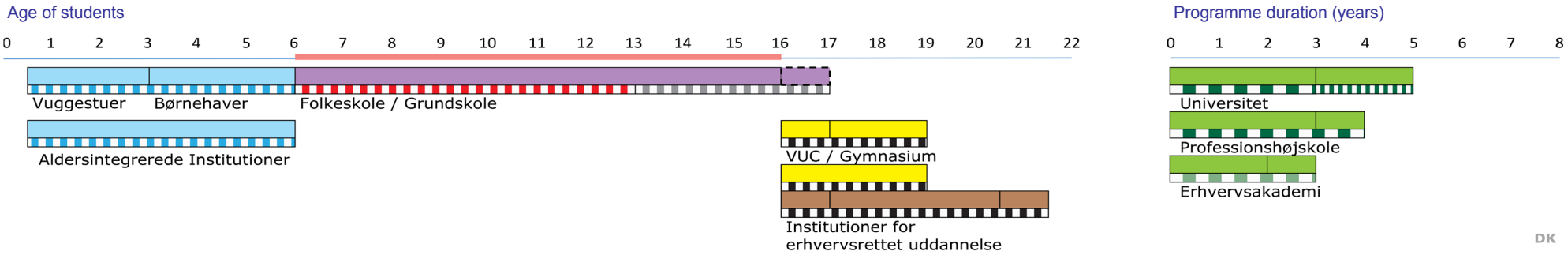
Combined school and workplace courses

-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration

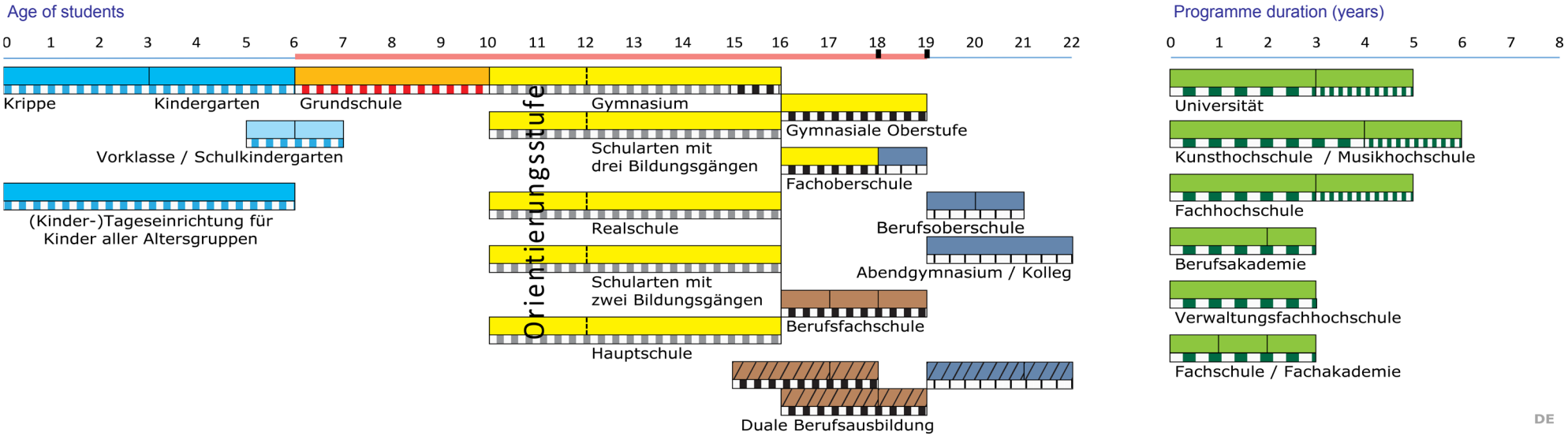
Years

Programme being phased out during (year)

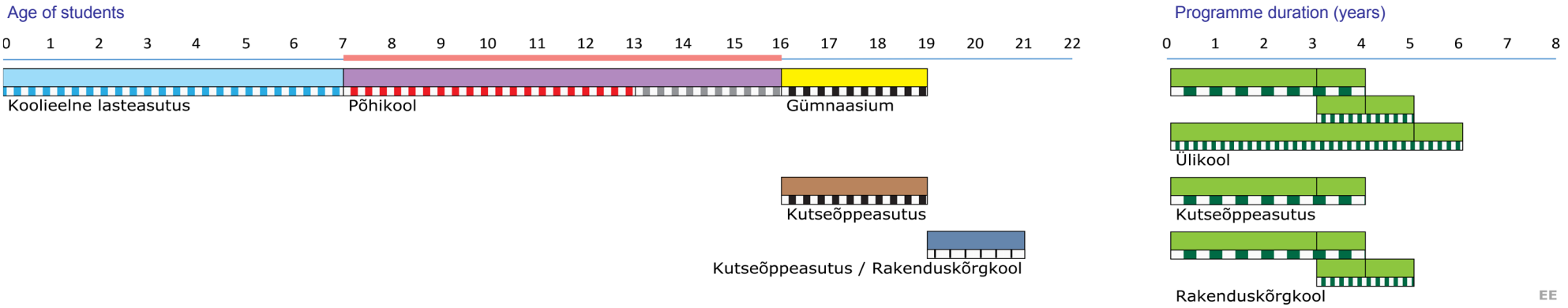
Denmark



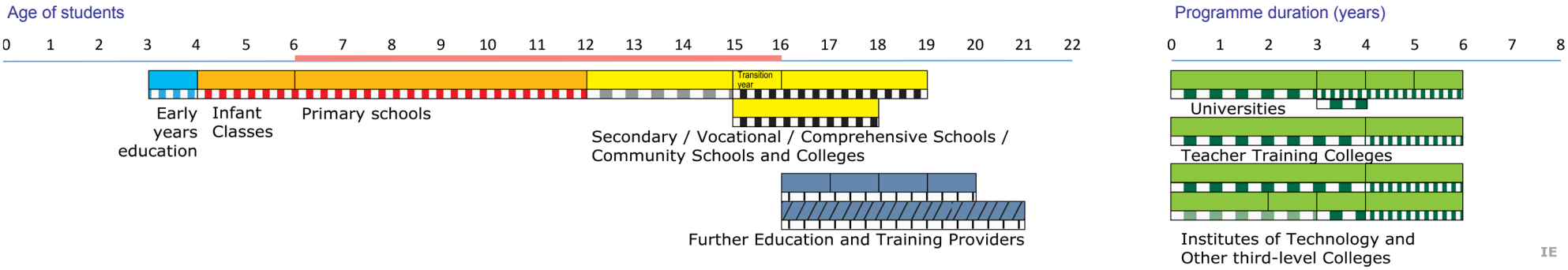
Germany



Estonia



Ireland



Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is not responsible)

Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is responsible)

Primary education

Single structure

Secondary general education

Secondary vocational education

Post-secondary non-tertiary education

Tertiary education (full-time)

Allocation to the ISCED levels: ISCED 0 ISCED 1 ISCED 2 ISCED 3 ISCED 4 ISCED 5 ISCED 6 ISCED 7

Compulsory full-time education/training

Compulsory part-time education/training

Additional year

>> Study abroad

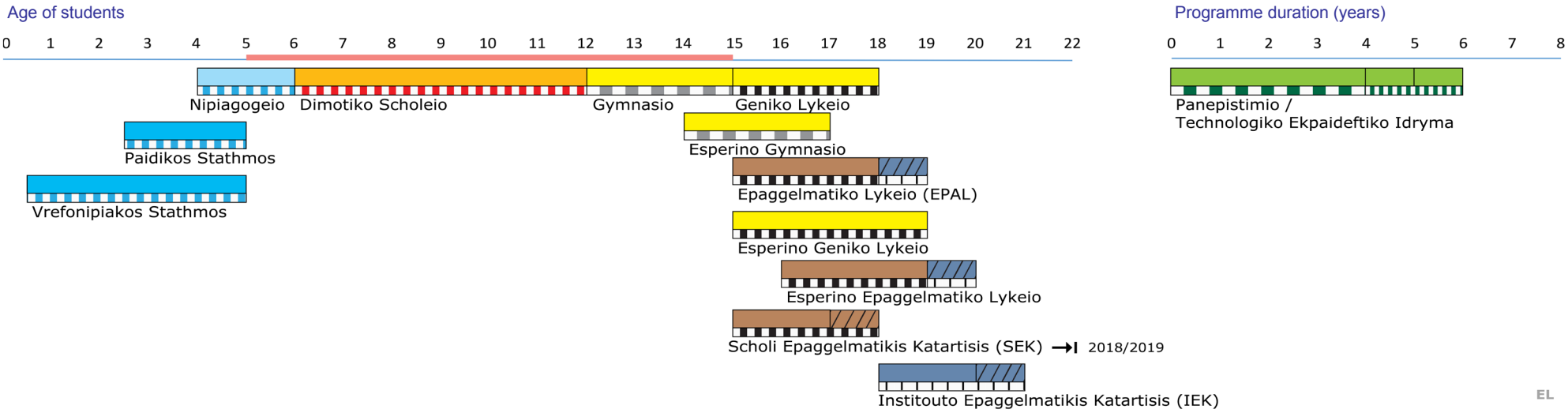
Combined school and workplace courses

-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration

Years

Programme being phased out during (year)

Greece

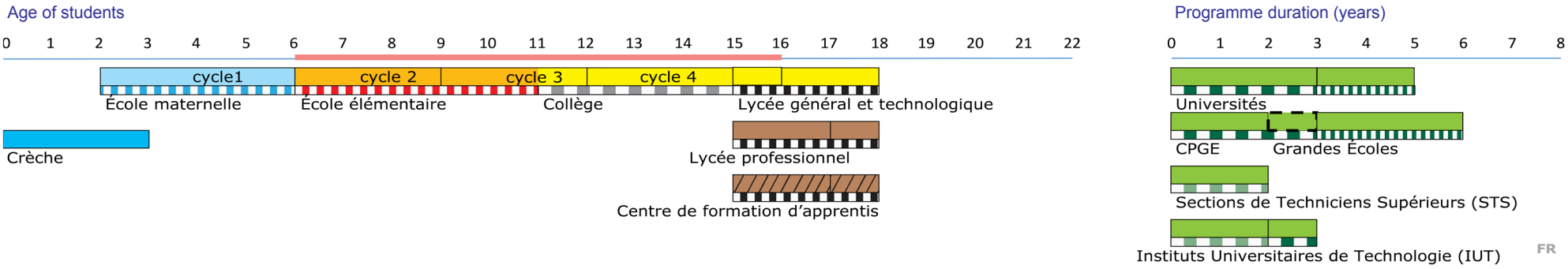


EL

Spain

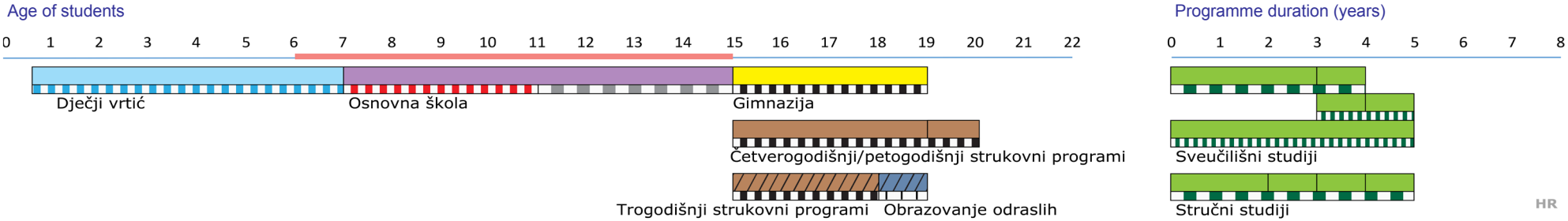
ES

France

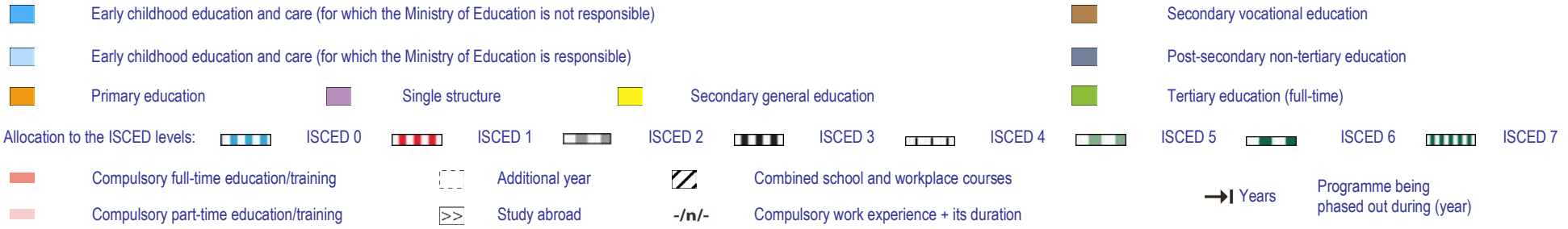


Note: Additional year (see Key) for university or IUT/STS students who want to integrate the *Grandes Écoles* via «parallel admission» (i.e. students are admitted to the *Grandes Écoles* on record and after taking a competitive exam and/or an interview, without going through the CPGE stage).

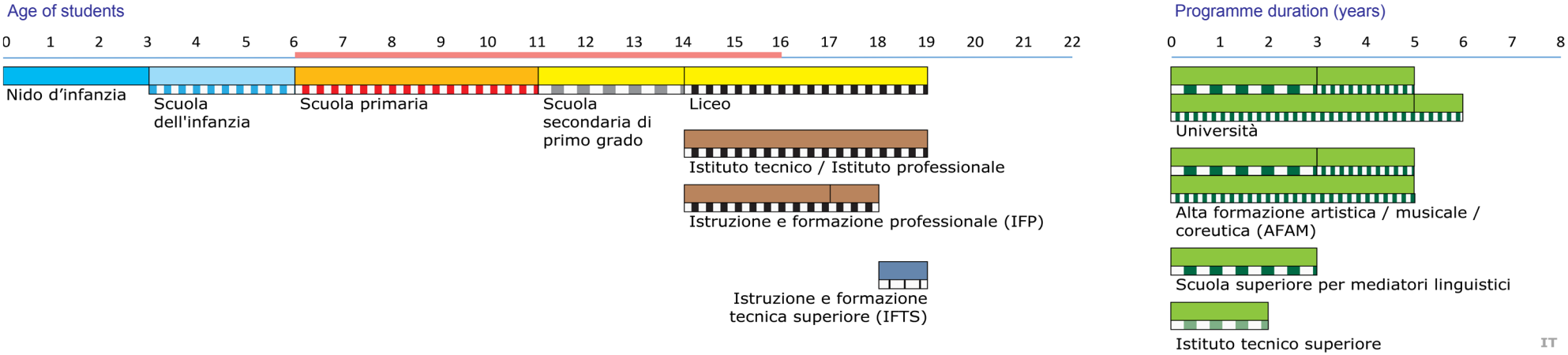
Croatia



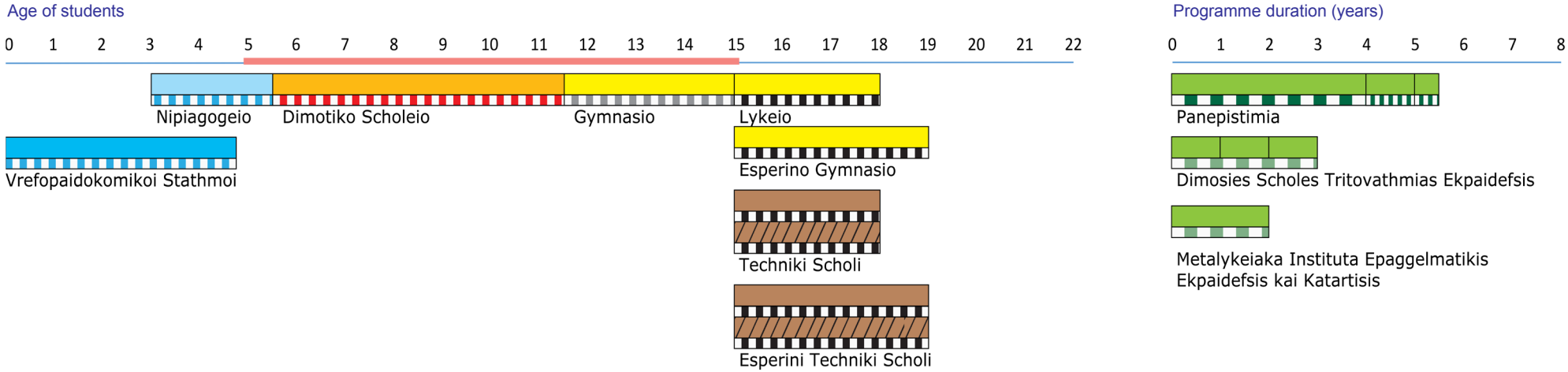
Note: Start of primary education (ISCED 1) depends on child's birthday. Children born between January and April start primary school in calendar year in which they turn 6, those born from April to December when they are 7 years old.



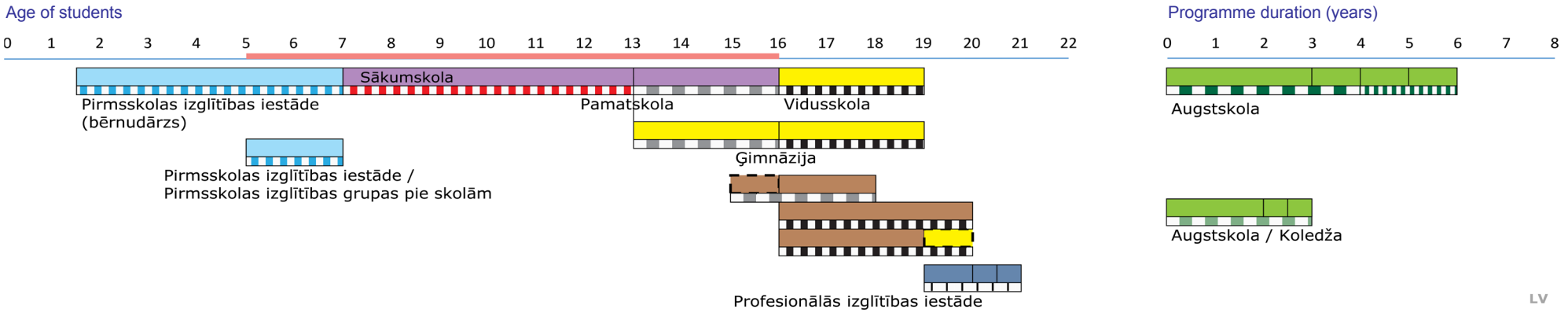
Italy



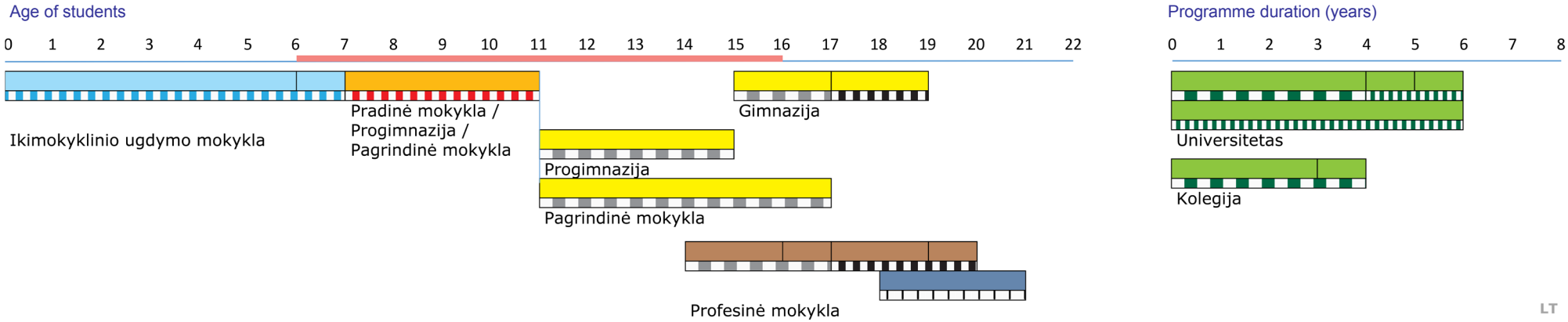
Cyprus



Latvia



Lithuania



Note: *Gimnazija* might cover primary education programme (ISCED 1) and basic educational programmes.

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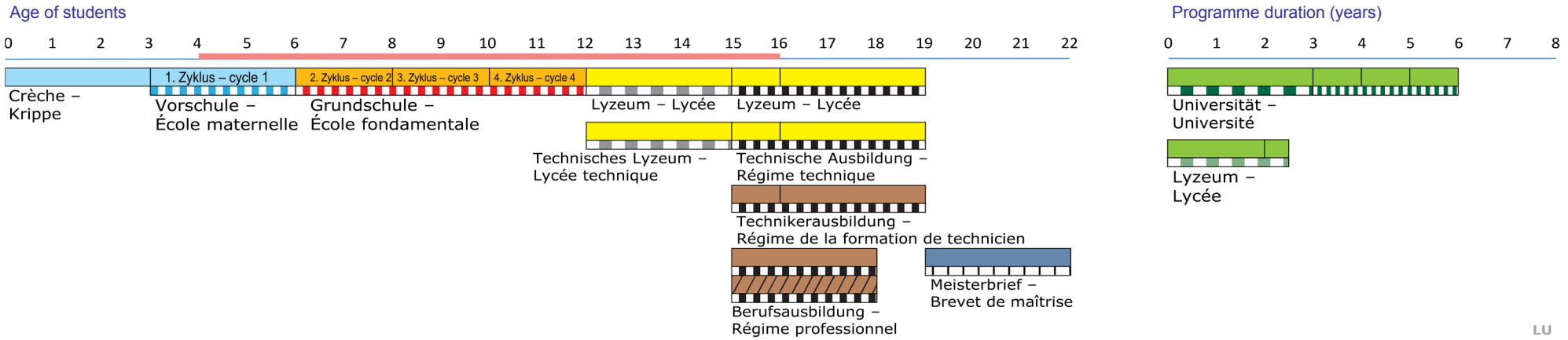
- Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is responsible)
- Primary education
- Single structure
- Secondary general education
- Secondary vocational education
- Post-secondary non-tertiary education
- Tertiary education (full-time)

Allocation to the ISCED levels: ISCED 0 | ISCED 1 | ISCED 2 | ISCED 3 | ISCED 4 | ISCED 5 | ISCED 6 | ISCED 7

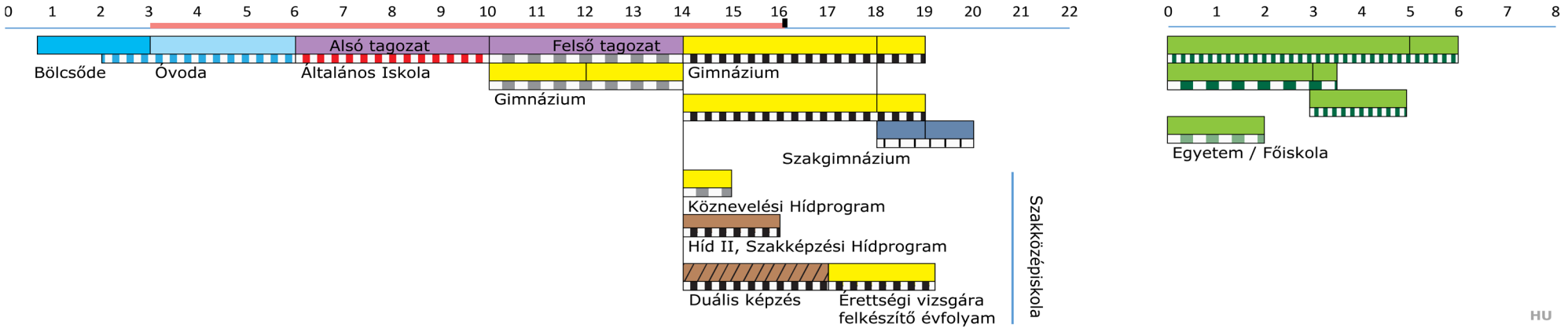
- Compulsory full-time education/training
- Compulsory part-time education/training
- Additional year
- >> Study abroad
- Combined school and workplace courses
- -/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration
- → Years
- Programme being phased out during (year)

Luxembourg



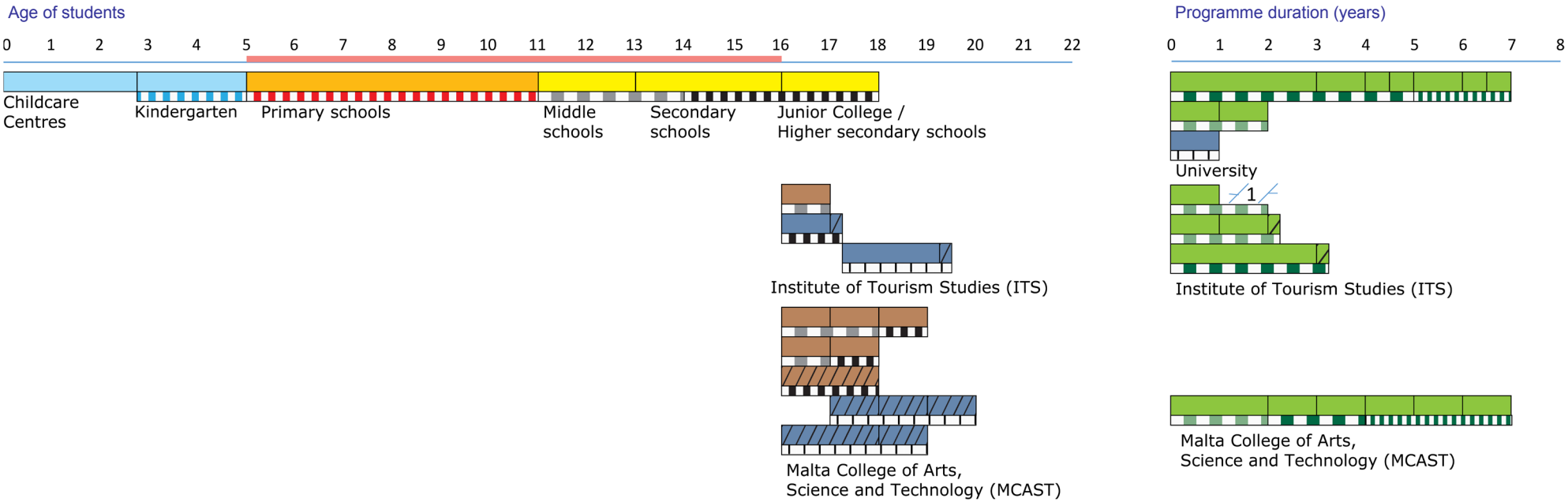
Note: The optional year from age 3 to 4 is called *'Früherziehung – Éducation précoce'*.

Hungary



Note: HÍD II may start in grade 7; HÍD I may start in grade 9 but the theoretical starting age is 14 in both cases.

Malta



Note: To emphasise the possibility of one continuous pathway between different levels, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has introduced three colleges during 2016: The Foundation College, The Technical College and The University College.

Early childhood education and care (for which the Ministry of Education is not responsible)
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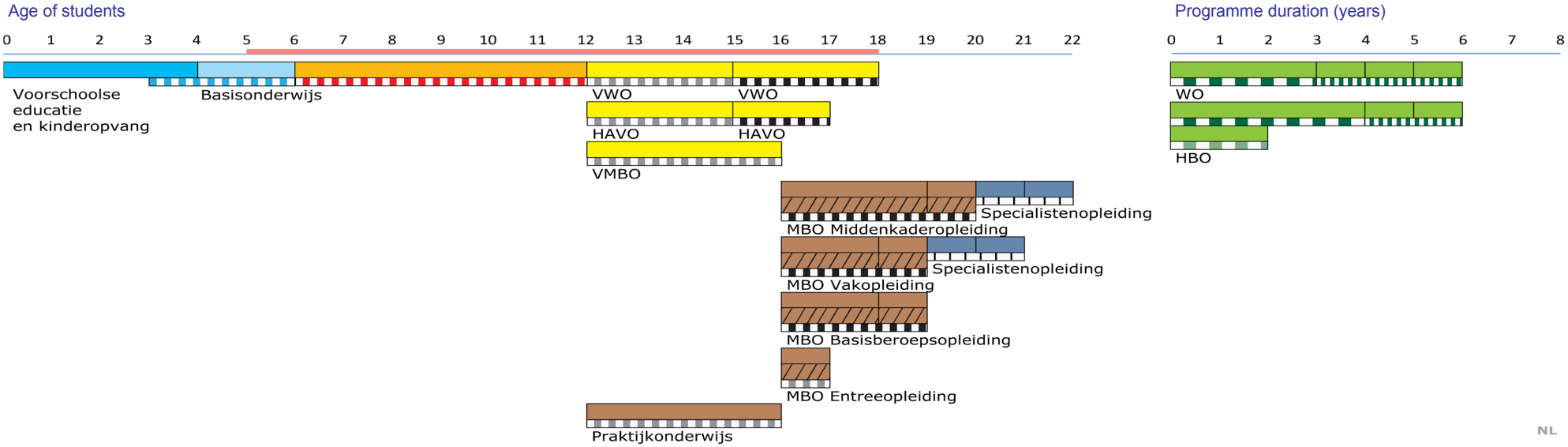
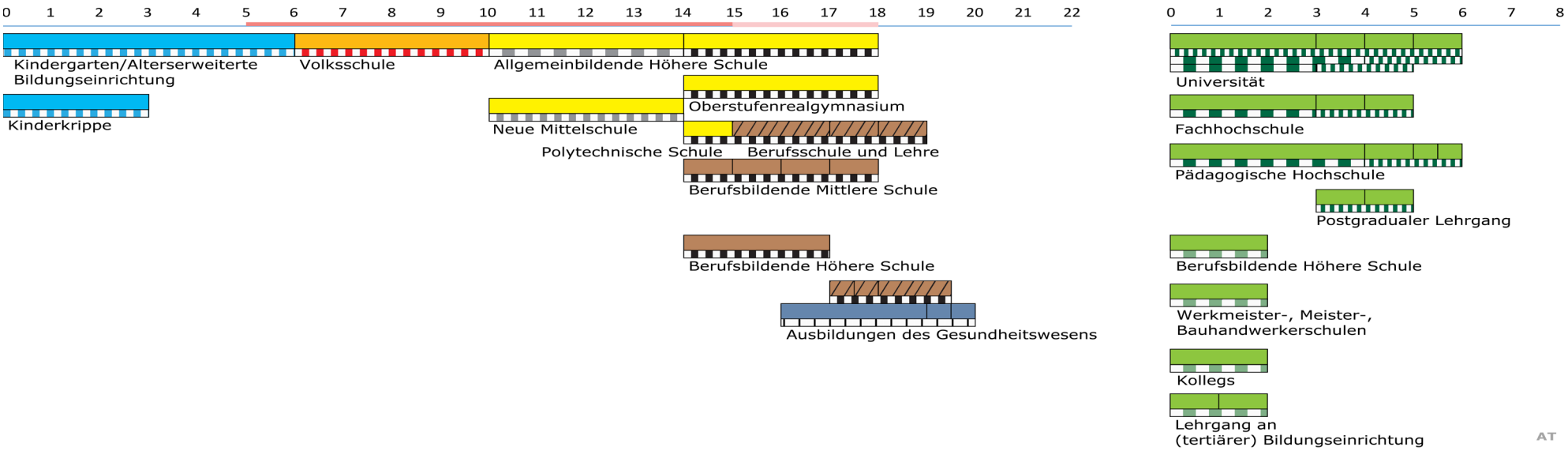
Additional year
>> Study abroad
Combined school and workplace courses
-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration
Years
Programme being phased out during (year)

Netherlands

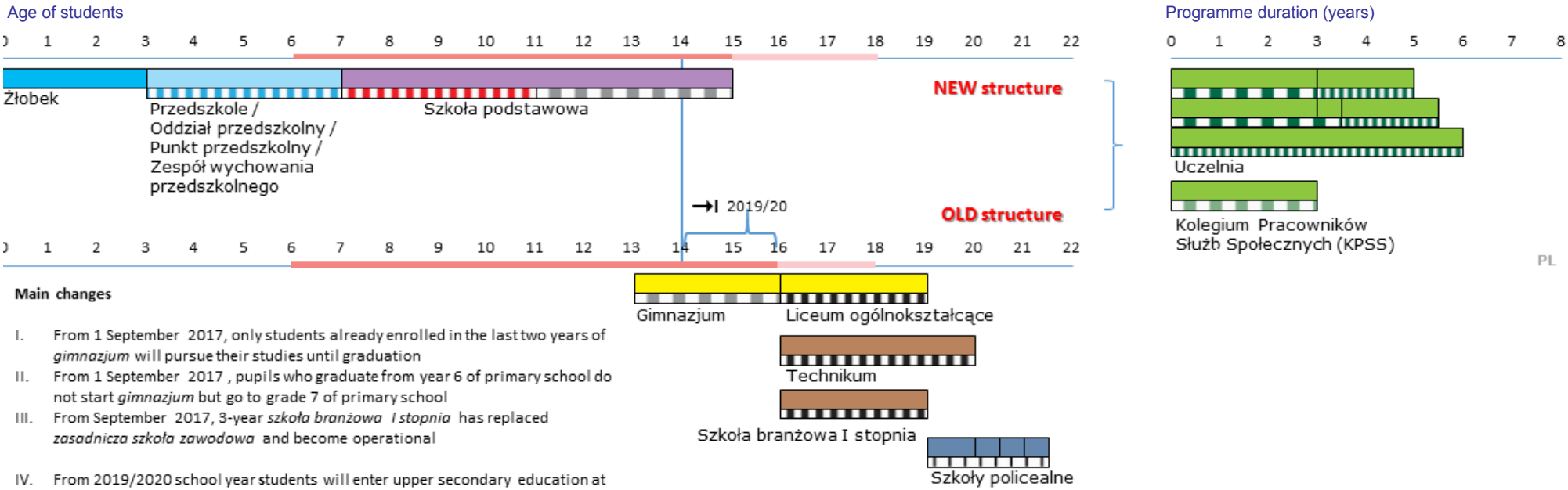


Austria



Note: *Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen* deliver continuous programmes i.e. 1st to 3rd year followed by 4th and 5th year.

Poland



Main changes

I. From 1 September 2017, only students already enrolled in the last two years of *gimnazjum* will pursue their studies until graduation
II. From 1 September 2017 , pupils who graduate from year 6 of primary school do not start *gimnazjum* but go to grade 7 of primary school
III. From September 2017, 3-year *szkoła branżowa I stopnia* has replaced *zasadnicza szkoła zawodowa* and become operational
IV. From 2019/2020 school year students will enter upper secondary education at the age 15
V. From 2019/2020 school year ,new types of upper secondary schools (4-year *liceum ogólnokształcące*, 5-year *technikum*) will be operational .
VI. From September 2020 , 2-year *szkoła branżowa II stopnia* (upper secondary school) will be operational.

Note: Major changes at different education levels will gradually take place between 1 September 2017 and the school year 2022/23 (Act of 14 December 2016 'Law on School Education' and an Act 'Legislation introducing the Act – Law on School Education'). This diagram shows only the first main changes that will start as of 1 September 2017.

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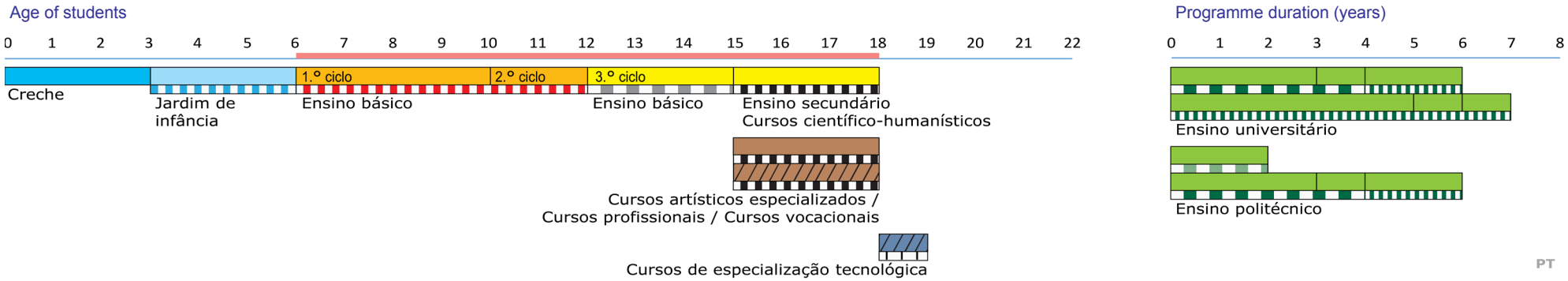
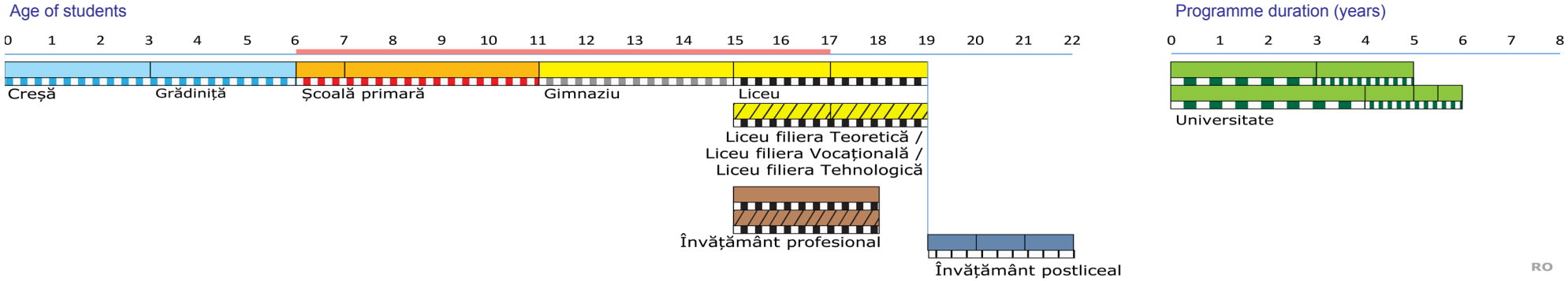
Compulsory part-time education/training
Additional year
>> Study abroad
Combined school and workplace courses
-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration
Years
Programme being phased out during (year)

Portugal

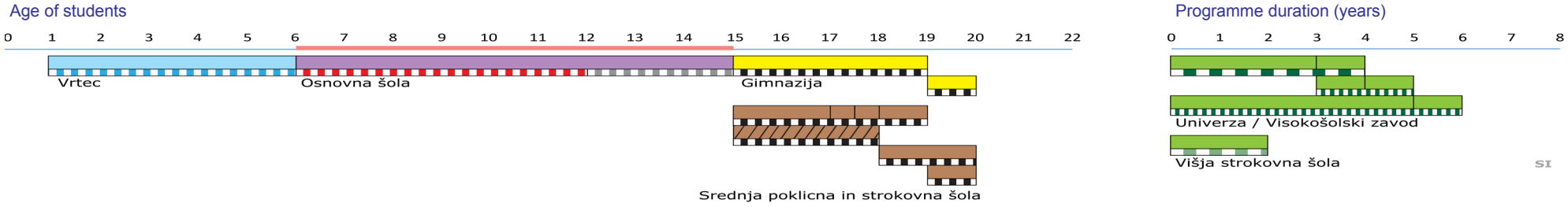


Romania

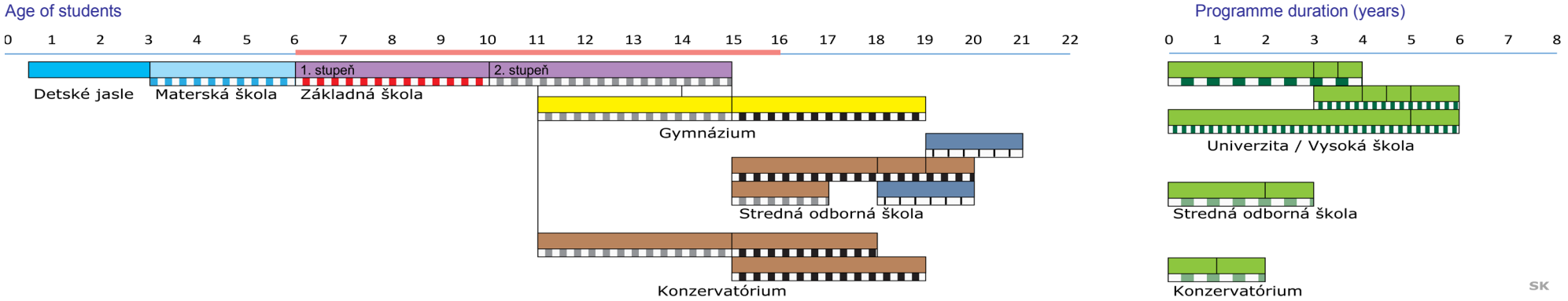


Note: According to the Law of National Education No 1/2011 with completions, at the art. 23(1), e), *Invatamant postliceal* is defined as non-university tertiary education (*învățământ terțiar non-universitar*). According to the International Standard Classification on Education (ISCED), *Invatamant postliceal* is defined as ISCED 4 level.

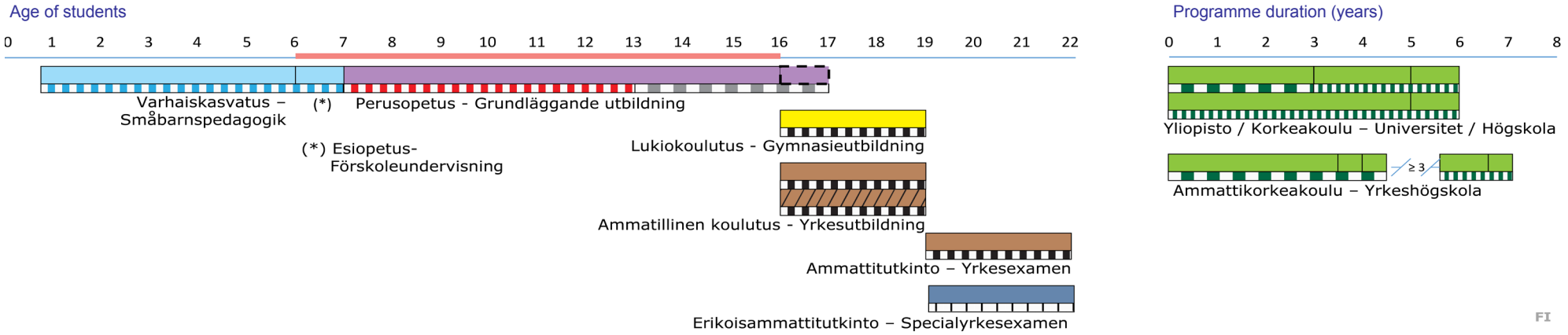
Slovenia



Slovakia



Finland



Note: Students can joint ISCED 4 programmes at different ages.

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Compulsory full-time education/training

Compulsory part-time education/training

Additional year

>> Study abroad

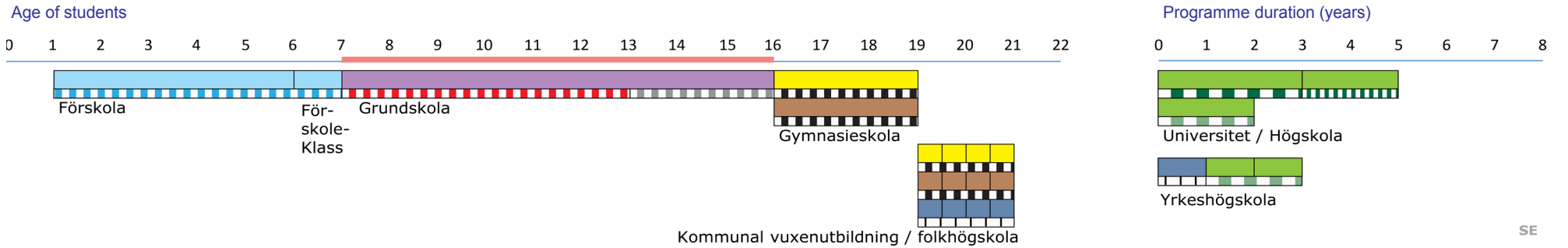
Combined school and workplace courses

-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration

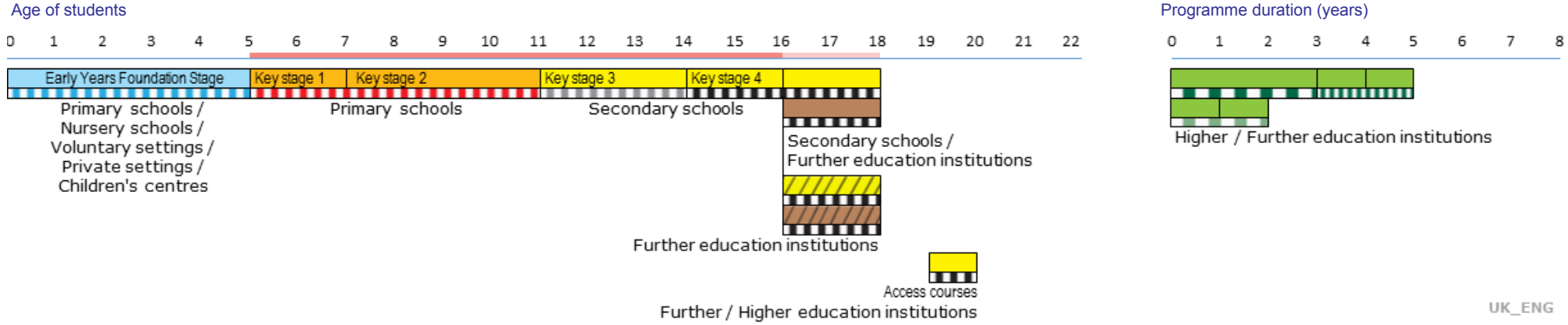
→| Years

Programme being phased out during (year)

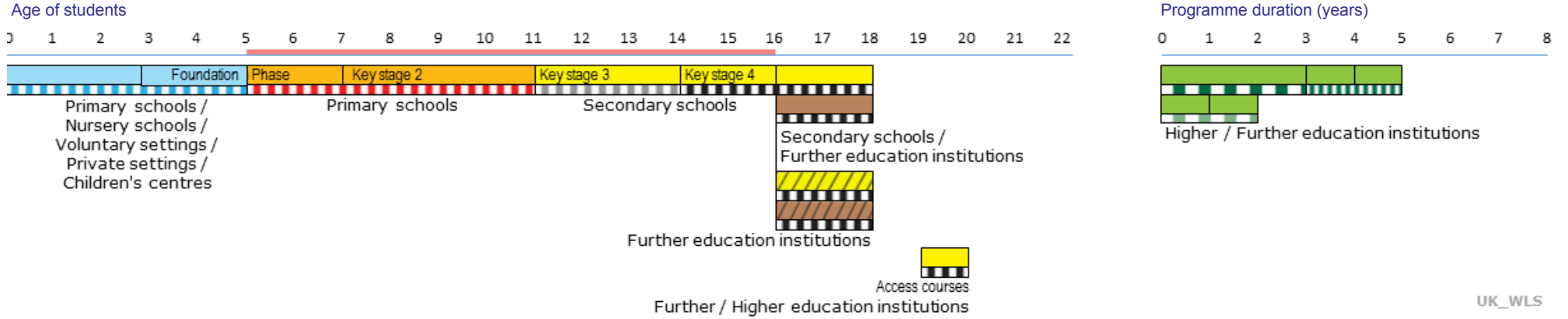
Sweden



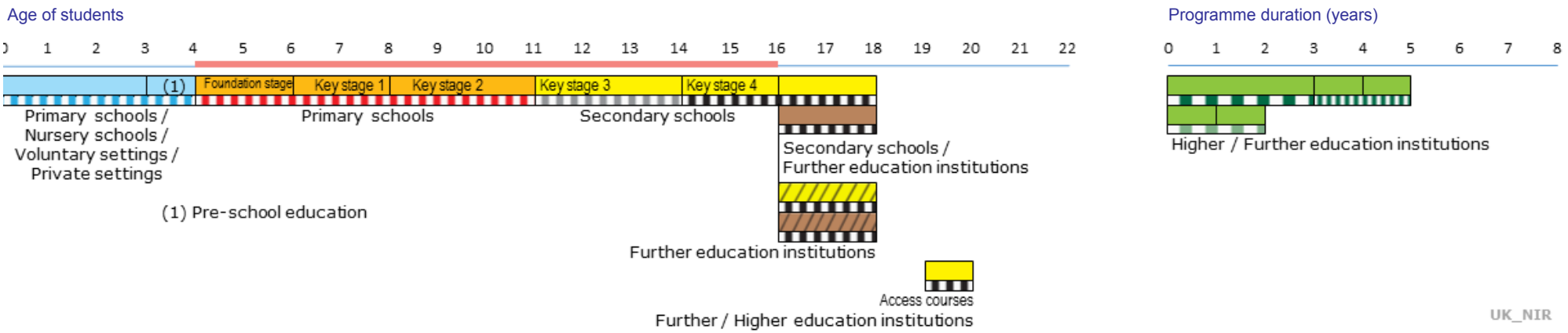
United Kingdom – England



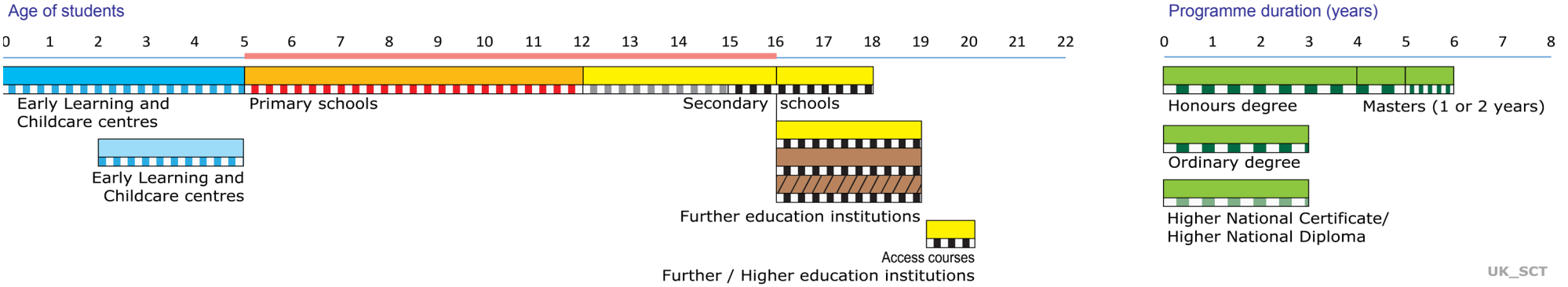
United Kingdom – Wales



United Kingdom – Northern Ireland



United Kingdom – Scotland



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Additional year

Study abroad

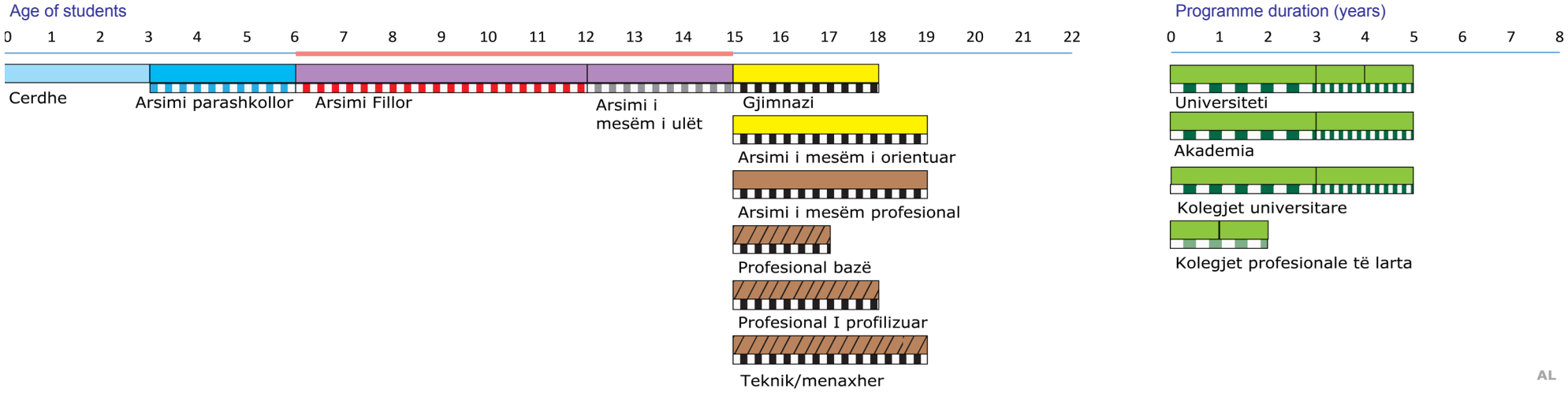
Combined school and workplace courses

-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration

Years

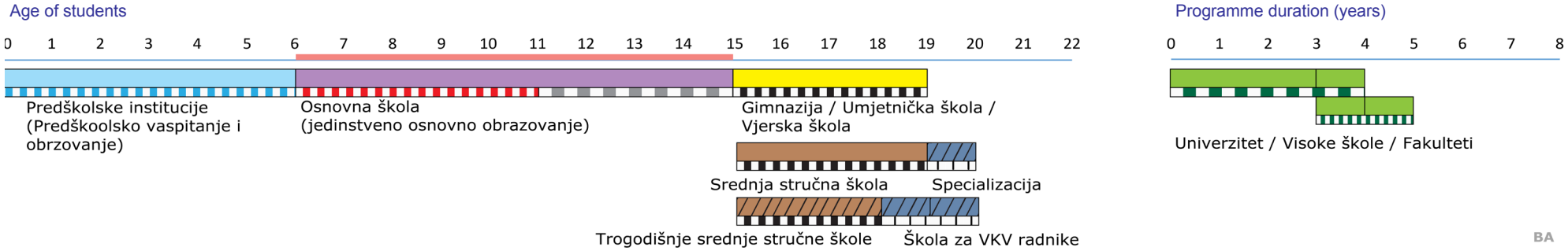
Programme being phased out during (year)

Albania



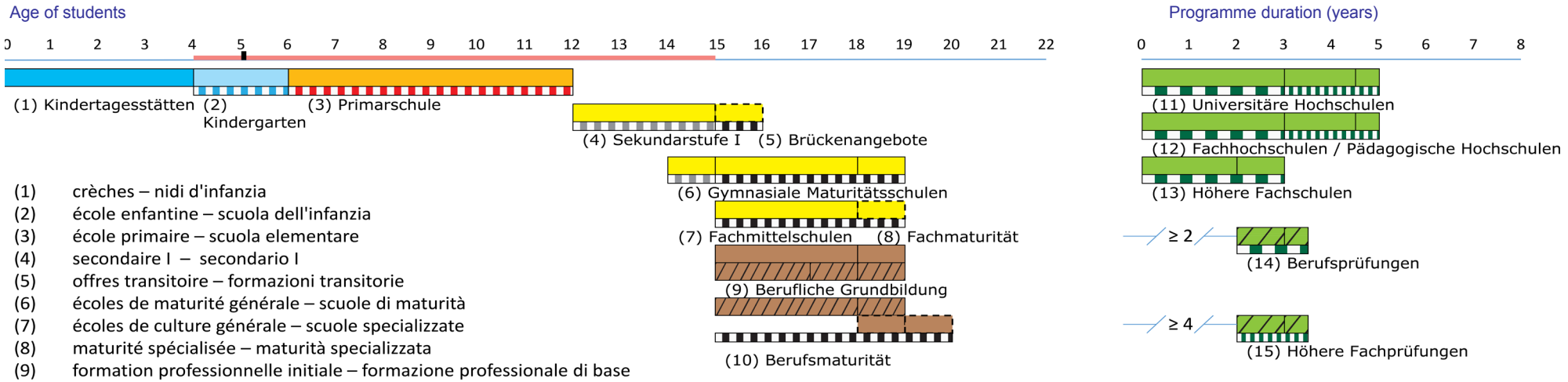
AL

Bosnia and Herzegovina



BA

Switzerland



(1) crèches – nidi d'infanzia
(2) école enfantine – scuola dell'infanzia
(3) école primaire – scuola elementare
(4) secondaire I – secondario I
(5) offres transitoire – formazioni transitorie
(6) écoles de maturité générale – scuole di maturità
(7) écoles de culture générale – scuole specializzate
(8) maturité spécialisée – maturità specializzata
(9) formation professionnelle initiale – formazione professionale di base
(10) maturité professionnelle – maturità professionale
(11) hautes écoles universitaires – università
(12) hautes écoles spécialisées – scuole universitarie professionali / hautes écoles pédagogiques – alte scuole pedagogiche
(13) écoles supérieures – scuole specializzate superiori
(14) examens professionnels – esami di professione
(15) examens professionnels supérieurs – esami professionali superiori

CH

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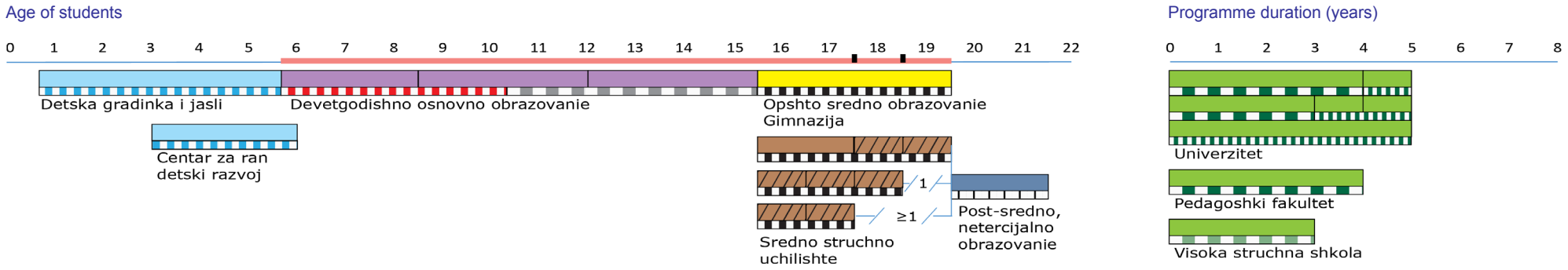
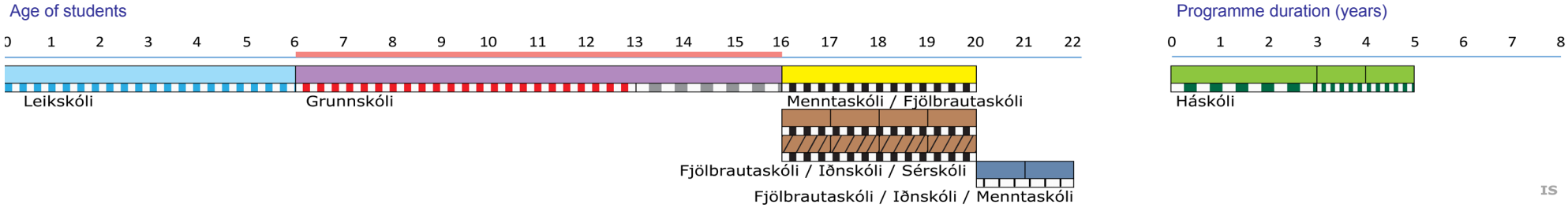
-/n/- Compulsory work experience + its duration
Years
Programme being phased out during (year)

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

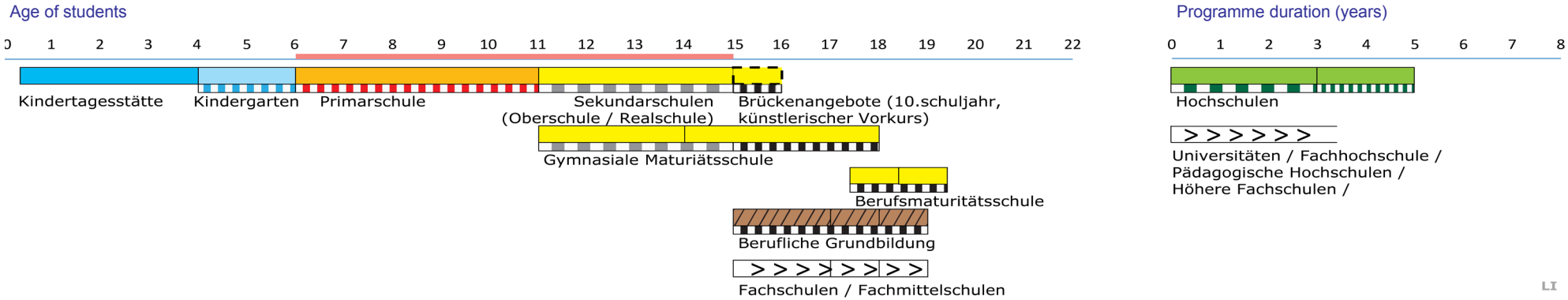


Note: The leaving age for compulsory education may vary from 17 to 19 years and 6 months depending on the type of programme. The lowest leaving age (17) applies to students attending the two years vocational programme *strucno osposobuvanje* while the ending age of 18 applies to those attending the three years vocational programme *strucno obrazovanie za zanimanja*. The highest leaving age of 19 years and 6 months applies to students attending general secondary education (*gimnazisko obrazovanie*) or a four years programme of vocational education (*chetirigodishno struchno obrazovanie*).

Iceland

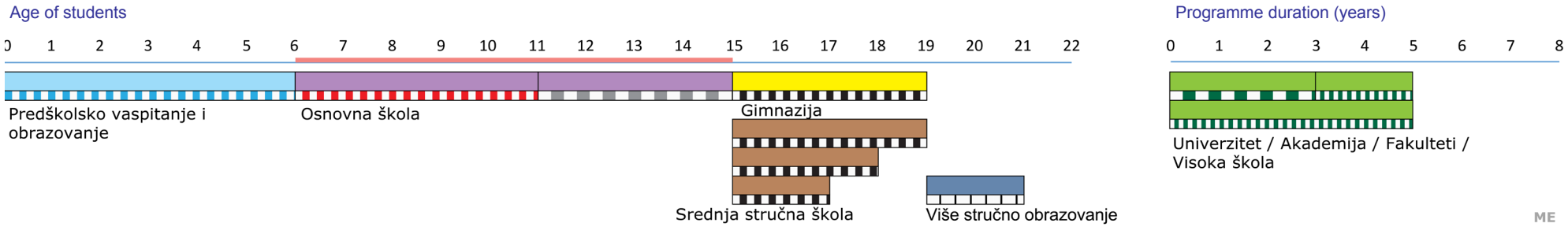


Liechtenstein



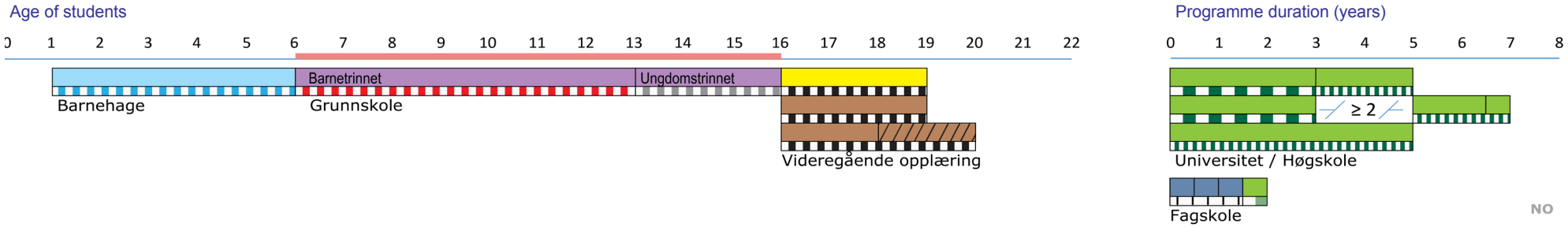
Note: Students in vocational education and the majority of students in higher education attend educational institutions in Switzerland.

Montenegro



(*): Starting from the academic year 2017/18, public HEIs will enrol perspective undergraduate students in 3+2(+3) (undergraduate + master + PhD) study programs (private institutions no later than in 2020/21). All HEIs will harmonize their study programs by the end of 2019/20 academic year. Please refer to the 2016/17diagram for the old structure of tertiary level programmes.

Norway



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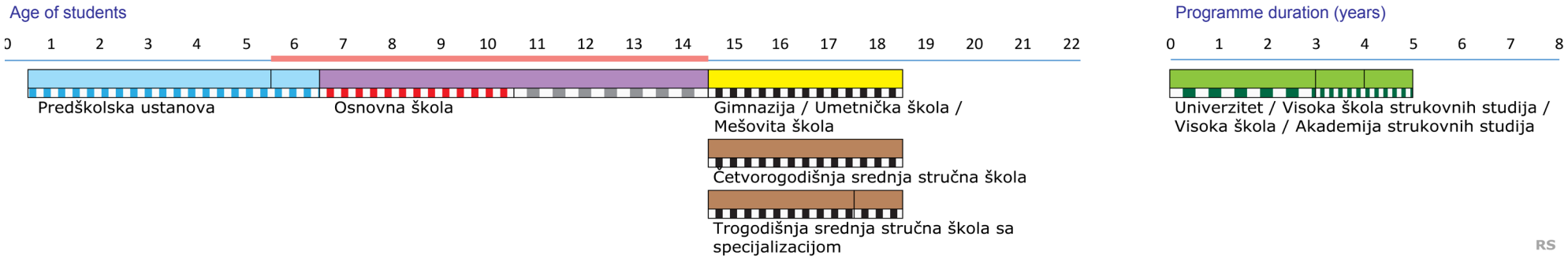
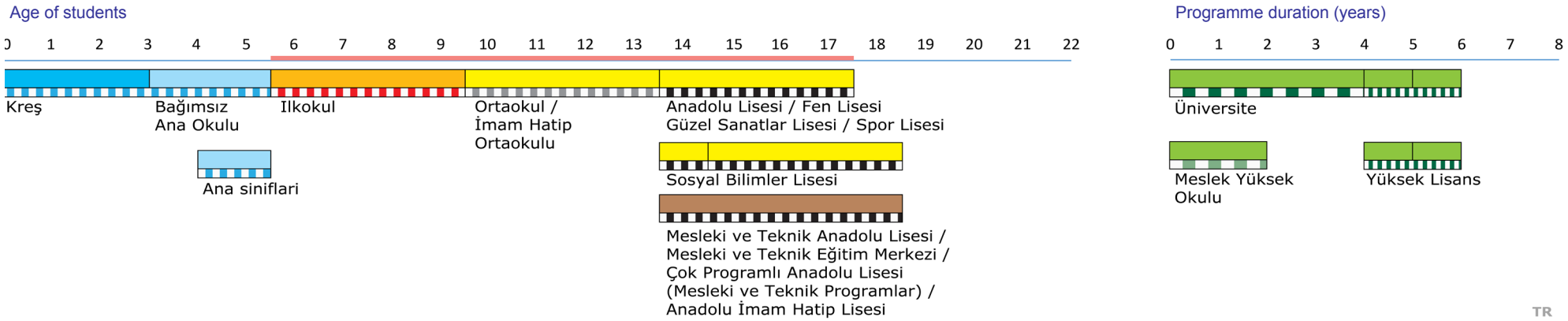
Years

Programme being phased out during (year)

Serbia



Turkey



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Programme being phased out during (year)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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58 Robertson Street
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The Structure of the European Education Systems 2017/18:
Schematic Diagrams

This report provides information on the structure of mainstream education in European countries from pre-primary to tertiary level for the 2017/18 school and academic year. It includes national schematic diagrams, an explanatory guide and a map showing the main organisational models of compulsory education. The information is available for 43 European education systems covering 38 countries participating in the EU's Erasmus+ programme.

The Eurydice network's task is to understand and explain how Europe's different education systems are organised and how they work. The network provides descriptions of national education systems, comparative studies devoted to specific topics, indicators and statistics. All Eurydice publications are available free of charge on the Eurydice website or in print upon request. Through its work, Eurydice aims to promote understanding, cooperation, trust and mobility at European and international levels. The network consists of national units located in European countries and is coordinated by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. For more information about Eurydice, see http://ec.europa.eu/eurydice.

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