



Eurydice key data and Eurobarometer on Europeans and their languages – what do they tell us?

ECML-EC Think tank – Fostering motivation in language education: what
role for decision-makers and educators?

Graz, 4 December 2024

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Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages – adopted in May 2019



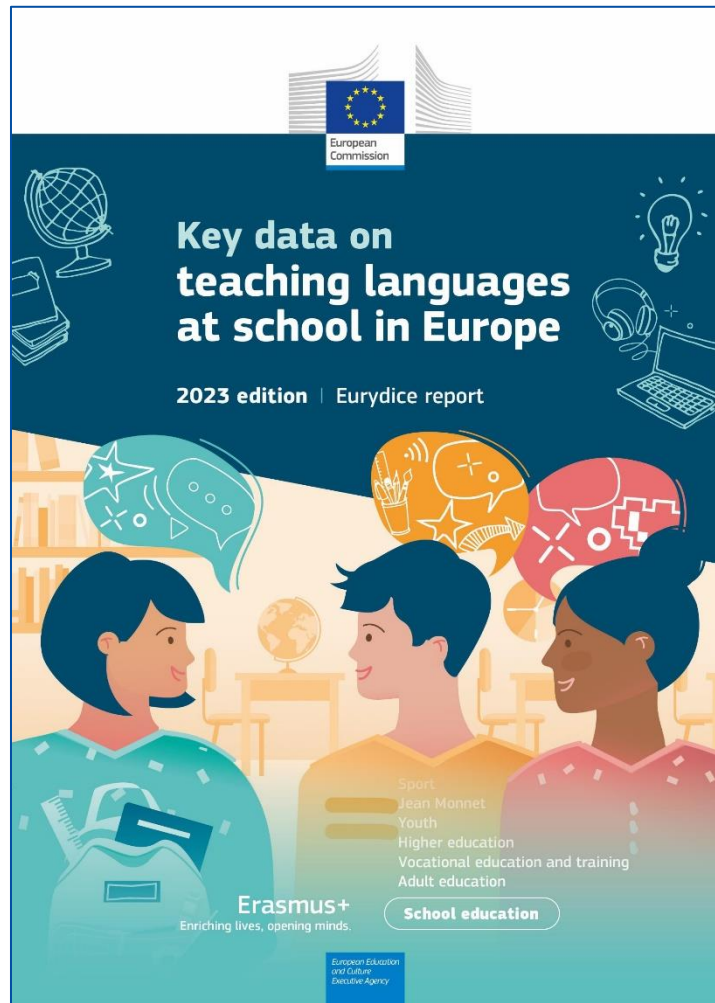
At the end of upper secondary school, young people should be able to...

1. Fully use the language of schooling
2. Confidently use another European language
3. Use a third language with a degree of fluency

Language awareness

- Value linguistic diversity, using it as a learning resource

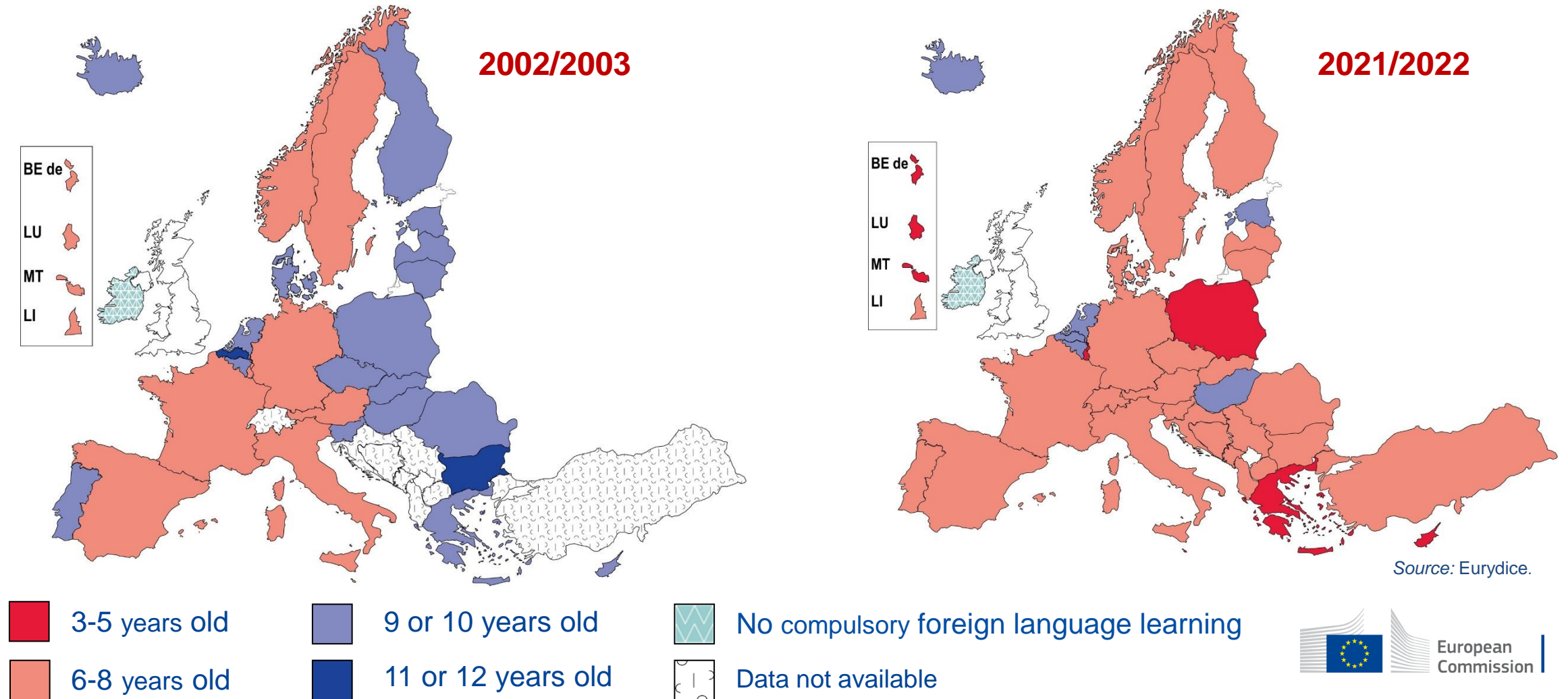
Eurydice report on language teaching in Europe



- Produced by the **Eurydice Network**
- Data on the teaching of languages in schools in **39 European** (EU and non-EU) **education systems**
- **51 qualitative and quantitative indicators** based on data provided by the Eurydice Network, Eurostat, and the OECD's PISA and TALIS surveys

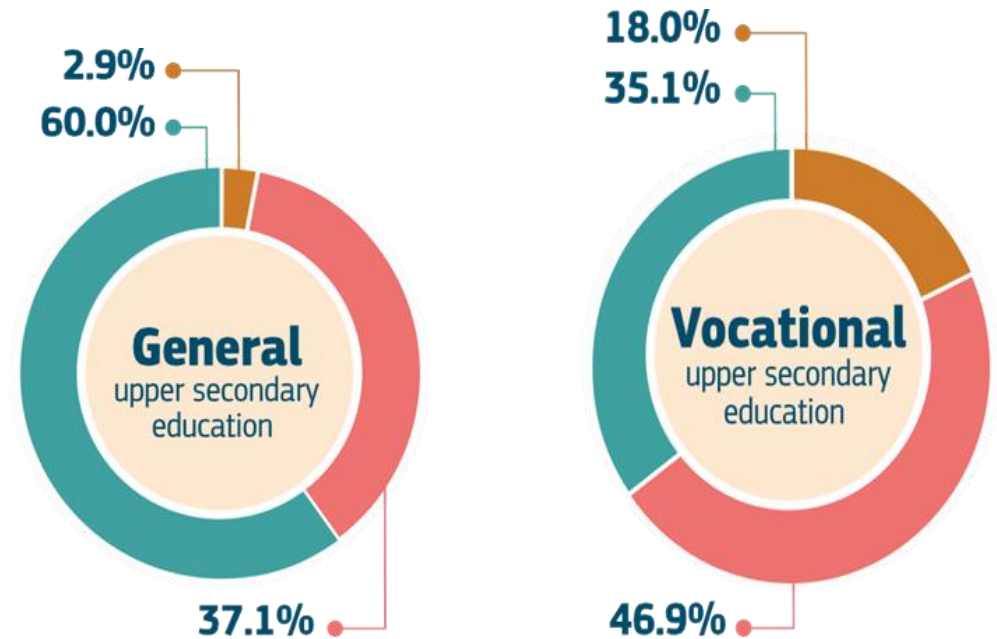
Starting age for the first foreign language

...as a compulsory subject for all students



The learning of two foreign languages

- In **2020**, at EU level, **59.2%** of students in lower secondary education were learning two or more foreign languages
- In **2013**, at EU level, **58.4%** of students in lower secondary education were learning two or more foreign languages
- In the EU, students in **vocational** education and training learnt fewer languages than those in **general** education

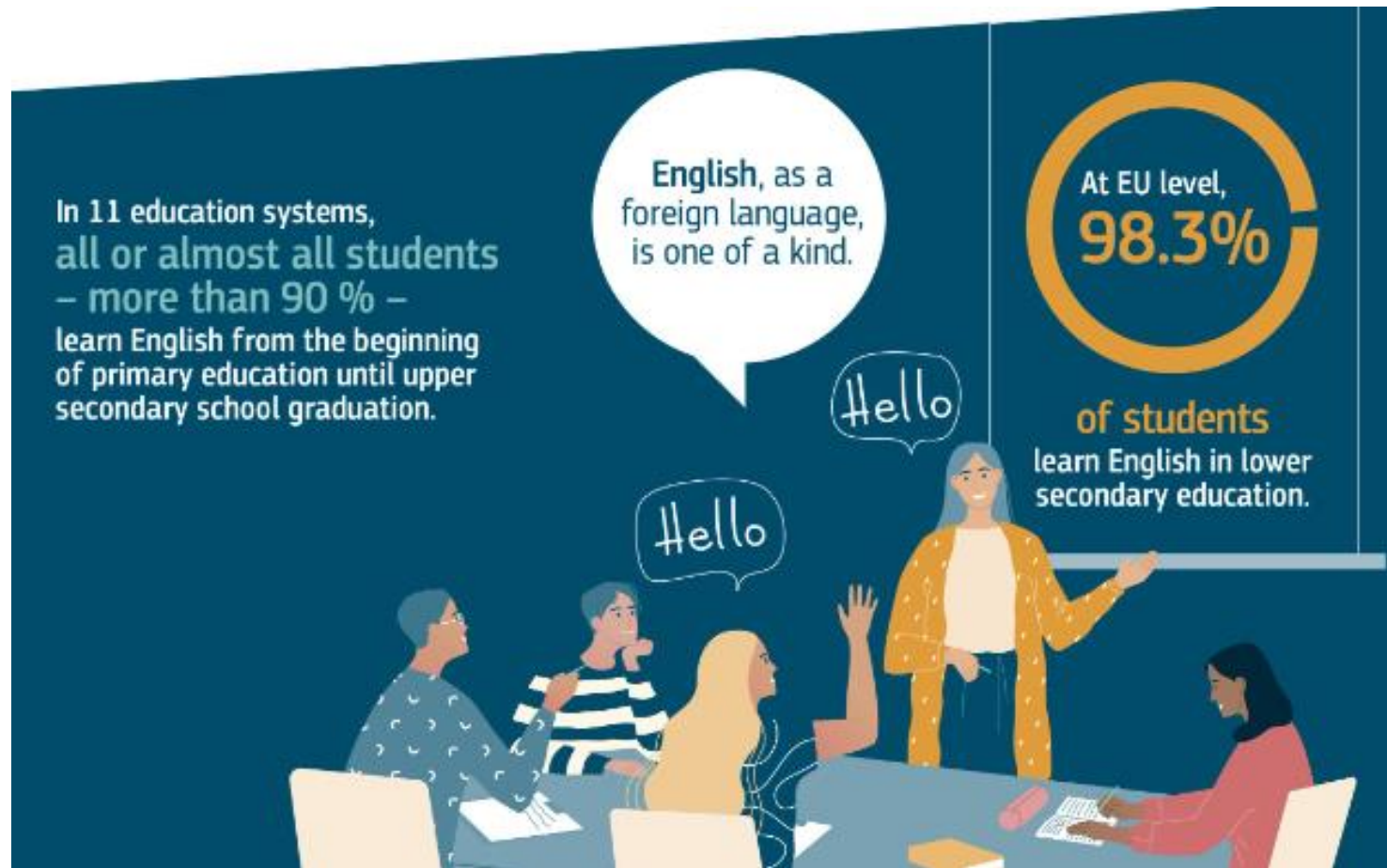


% of students learning:

- 0 foreign language
- 1 foreign language
- 2 or more foreign languages

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data

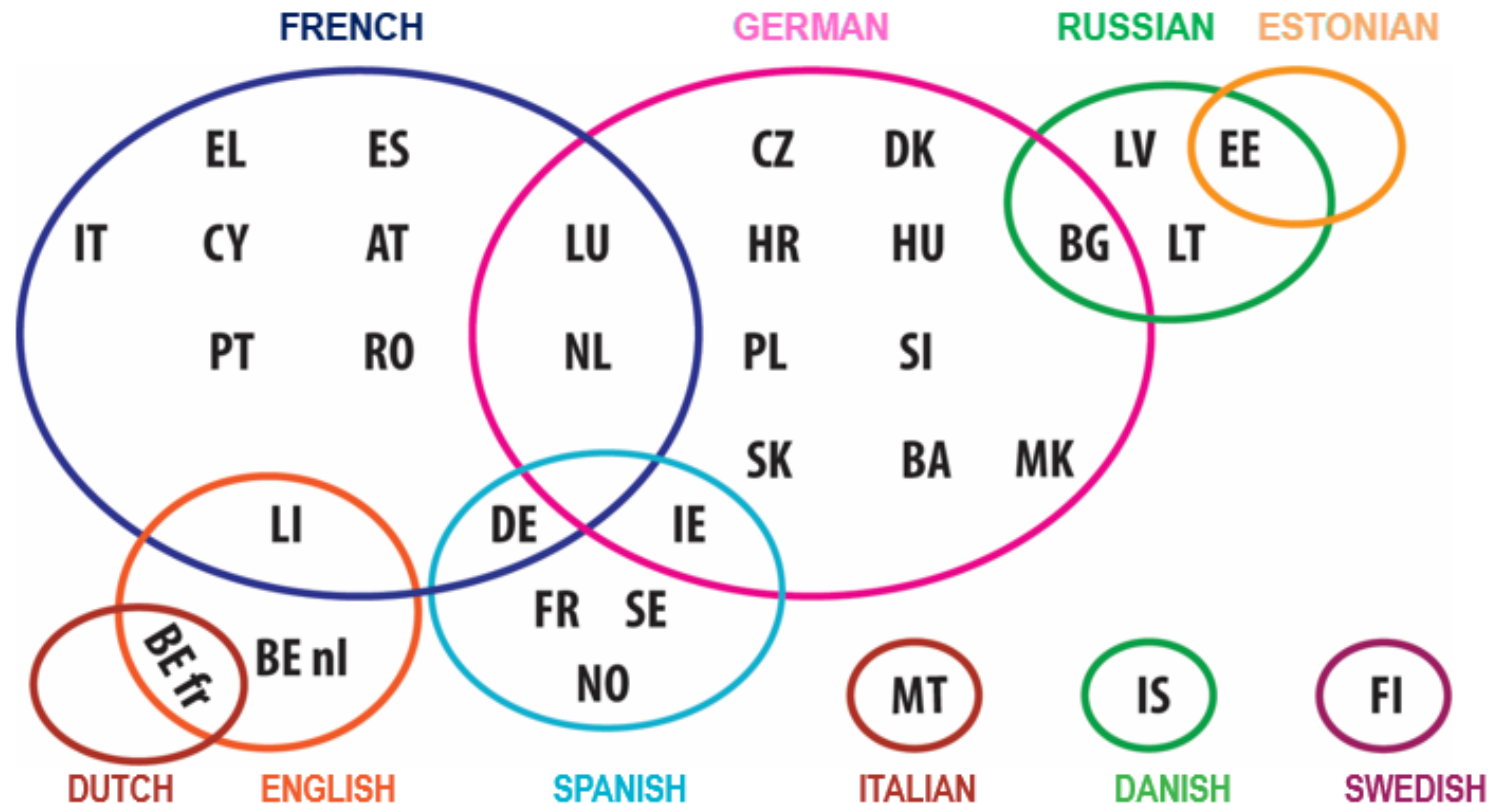
English is one of a kind



Source: Eurydice.

The second most learnt foreign language

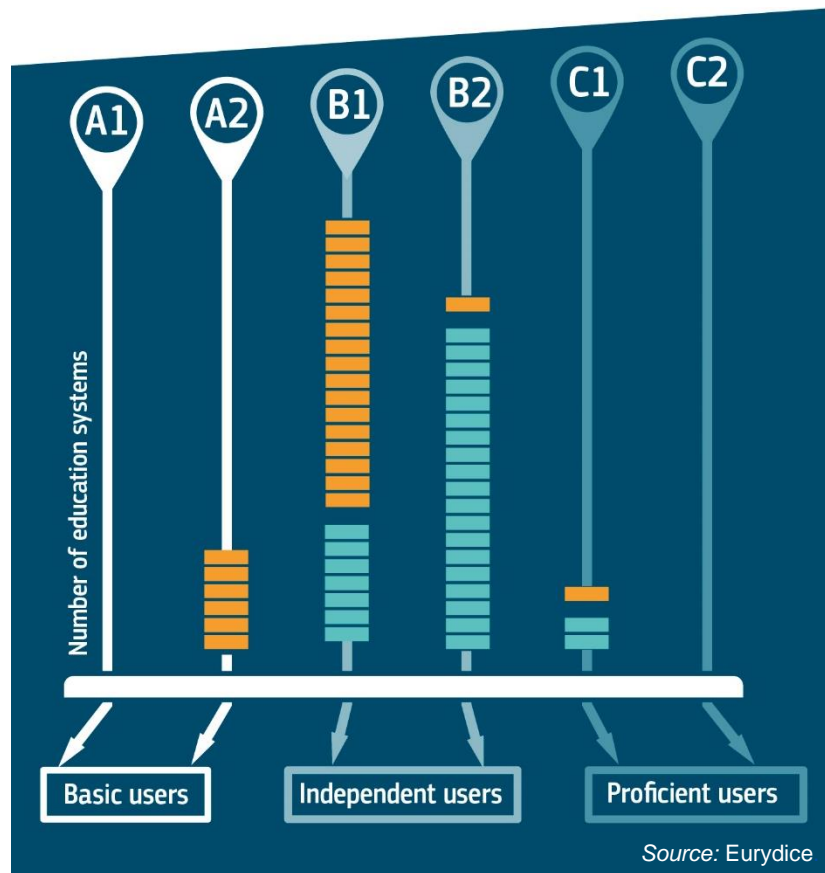
...in primary and secondary education, 2020



Note: The figure only takes into account languages learnt by more than 10% of students.

Source: Eurydice, based on Eurostat/UOE data.

Expected foreign language proficiency



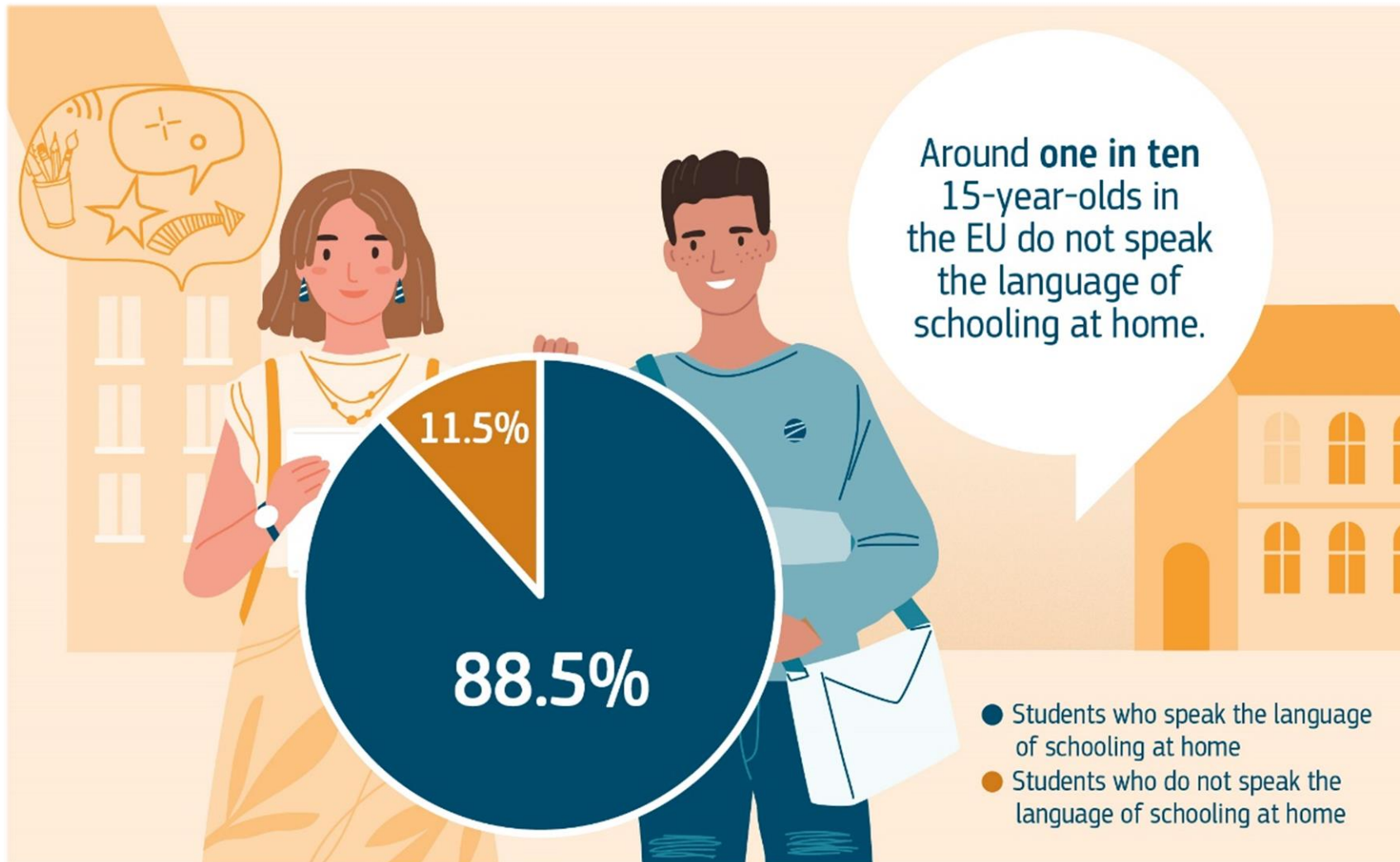
Minimum level of attainment expected at the end of general secondary education for:

- Teal bar: first foreign language
- Orange bar: second foreign language

In most education systems, at the end of general upper secondary education, students are expected to attain:

- **level B2** of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in the **first foreign language**
- **level B1** in the **second foreign language**

Language heterogeneity in schools





- published in May 2024
- Re-run of the special Eurobarometer on Europeans and their languages of 2012
- Comprehensive survey of the language knowledge of Europeans, covering languages, skills, use of languages (frequency and situation of use), attitudes towards languages (advantages of learning a language, most useful languages, barriers to learning)
- General public from age 15

Attitudes towards multilingualism



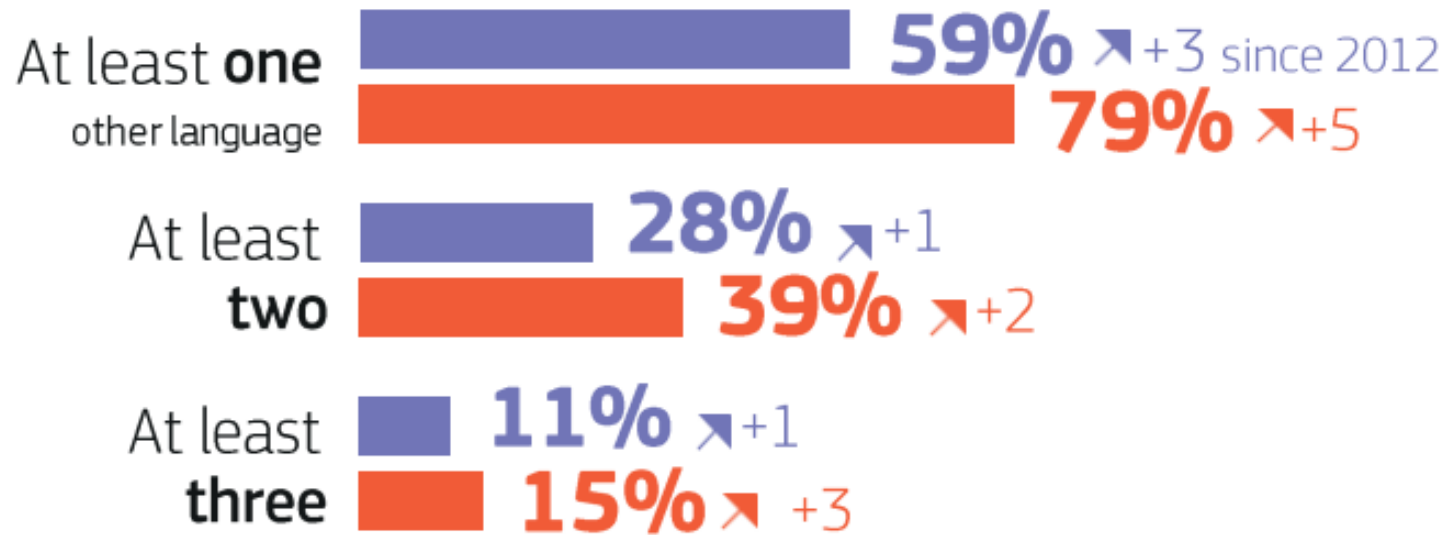
Most Europeans support the **promotion of multilingualism**

■ TOTAL AGREE ■ TOTAL DISAGREE ■ DON'T KNOW



NUMBER OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES SPOKEN




























■ ALL EUROPEANS ■ EUROPEAN YOUTH (15-24 YEAR OLDS)



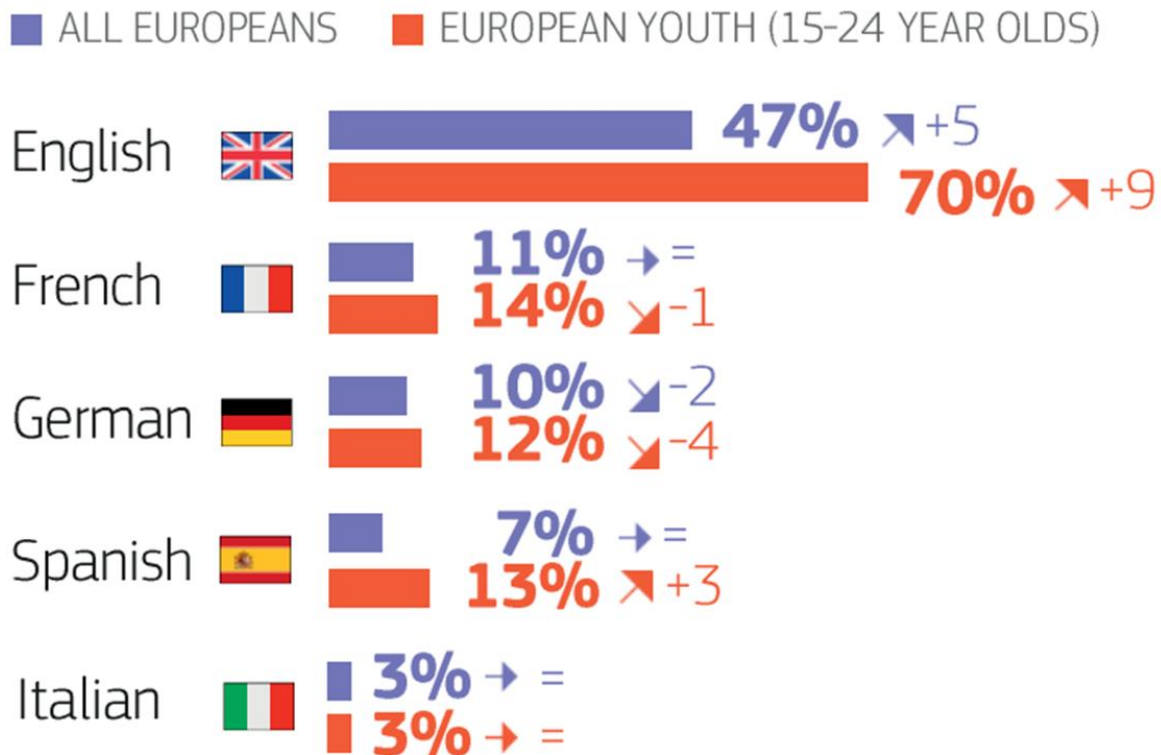
2024 Eurobarometer – one other language

... AND THERE ARE VERY LARGE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COUNTRIES

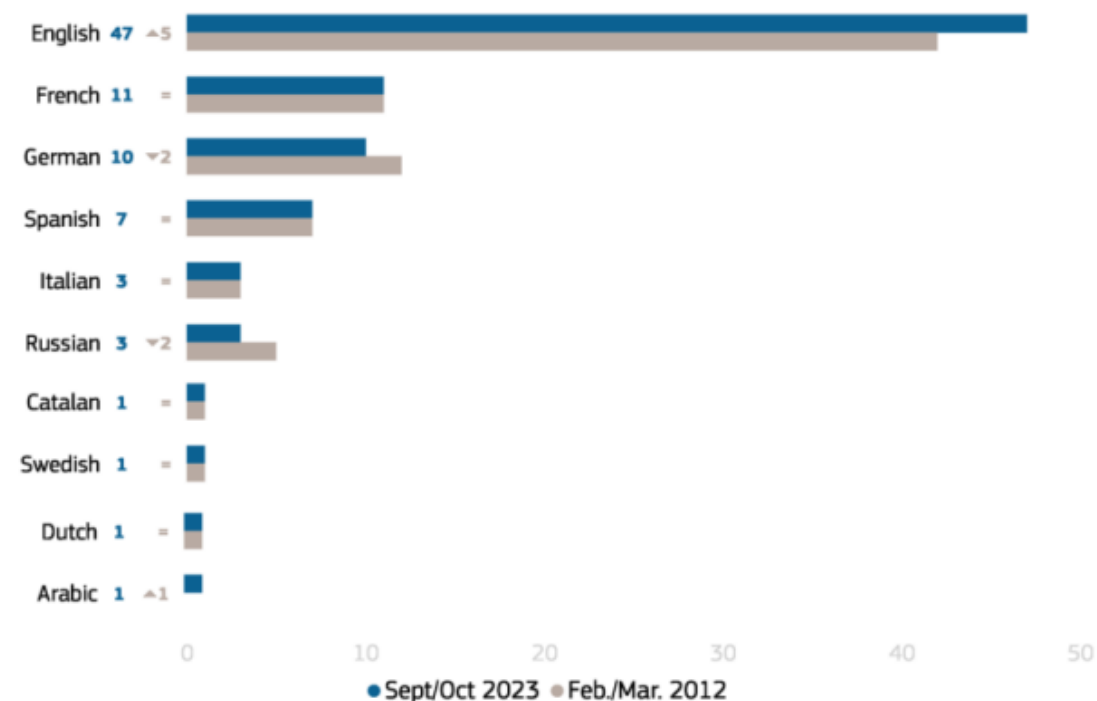


LU  99%	EE  86%	CZ  63%	PT  46%
NL  97%	LT  85%	AT  61%	IT  44%
SE  96%	FI  85%	ES  59%	IE  40%
LV  95%	CY  78%	EL  57%	HU  38%
DK  93%	BE  76%	HR  57%	RO  34%
SI  92%	DE  74%	BG  54%	PL  33%
MT  90%	SK  73%	FR  53%	

Most learnt languages



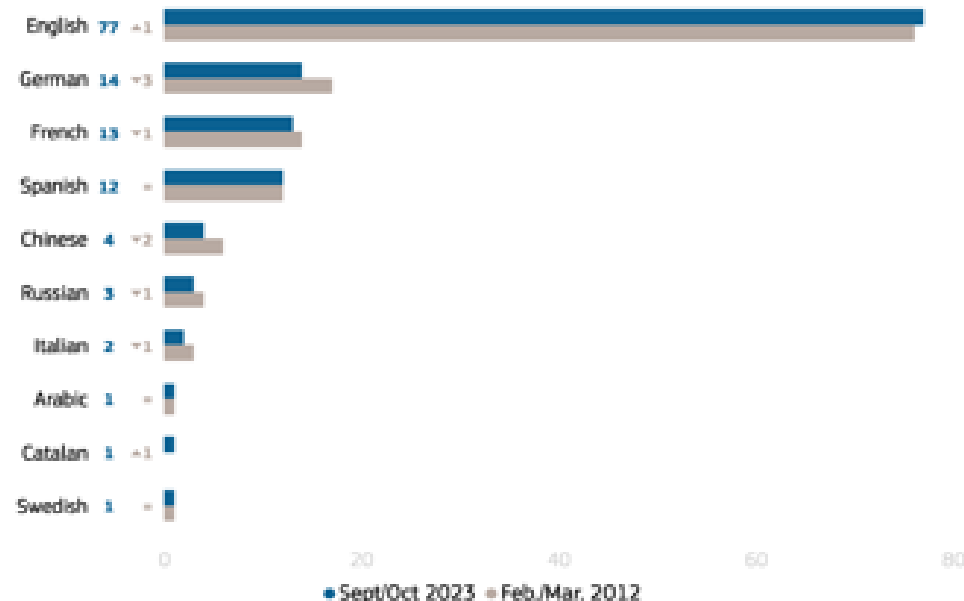
D48.otherlang. And which other language, if any, do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation? - First, second, and third other language (EU27) (%)



English stands out

English (77%, +1) is the foreign language Europeans consider most useful for personal development, followed by German (14%, -3)

QB1a. Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN – DO NOT READ OUT – MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)

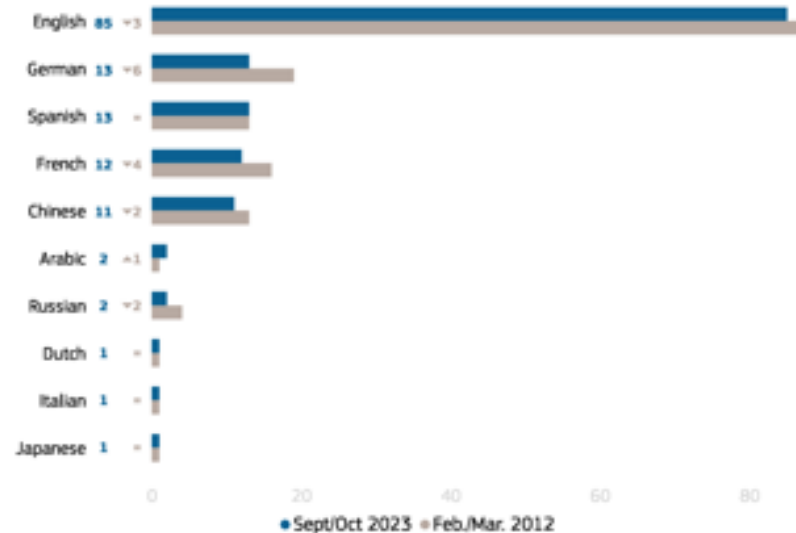


Base: All respondents excluding those who answered the same language as their first mother tongue

English stands out

English (85%, -3), is also the language perceived as most important for children to learn, followed by Spanish (13%, =) and German (13%, -7)

QB1b. And for children to learn for their future? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN – DO NOT READ OUT – MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



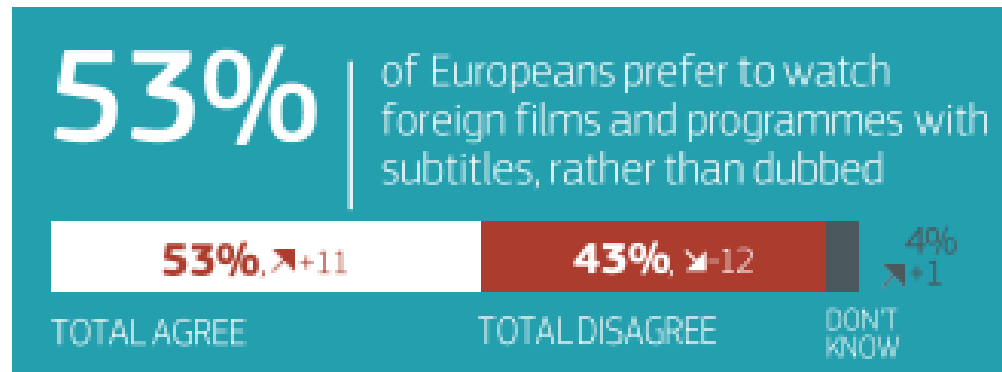
Base: All respondents excluding those who answered the same language as their first mother tongue

2024 Eurobarometer – some results

THE MAIN ADVANTAGES OF LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE ARE...*



AMONG VARIOUS POSSIBLE WAYS OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, EUROPEANS MOSTLY USED...



2024 Eurobarometer – some results

... AND AMONG THE METHODS THEY USED, THEIR FAVOURITE ARE



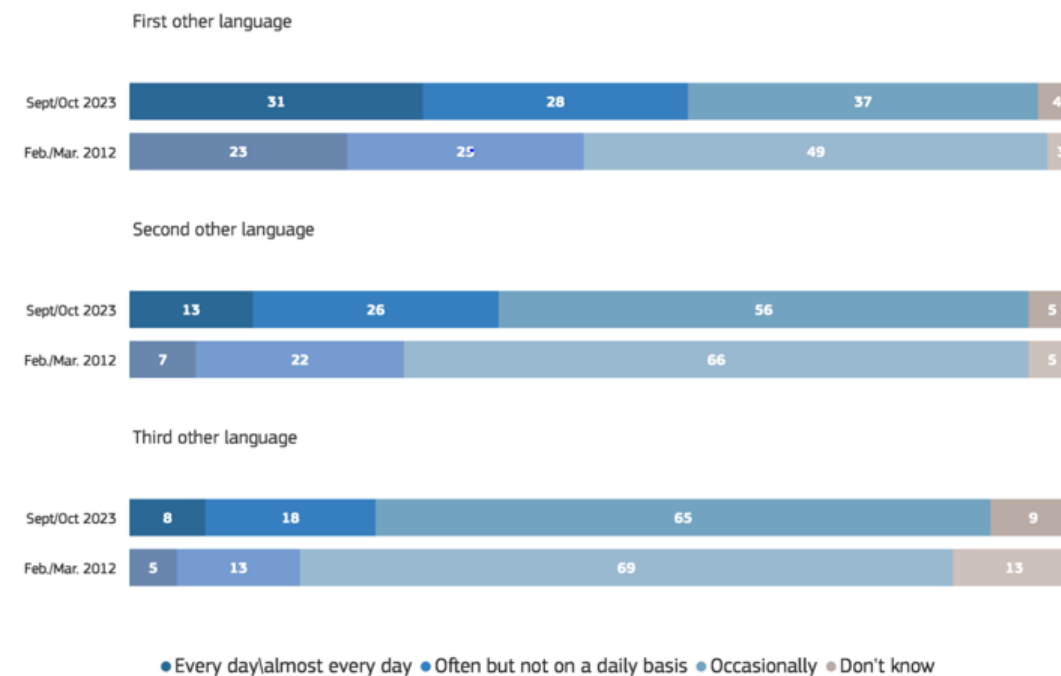
SECOND LANGUAGES ARE MOSTLY USED WHEN...*



2024 Eurobarometer – some results

31% of Europeans use their first other language daily, as opposed to 13% and 8% who use their second and third daily

SD3. How often do you use your...? (EU27) (%)

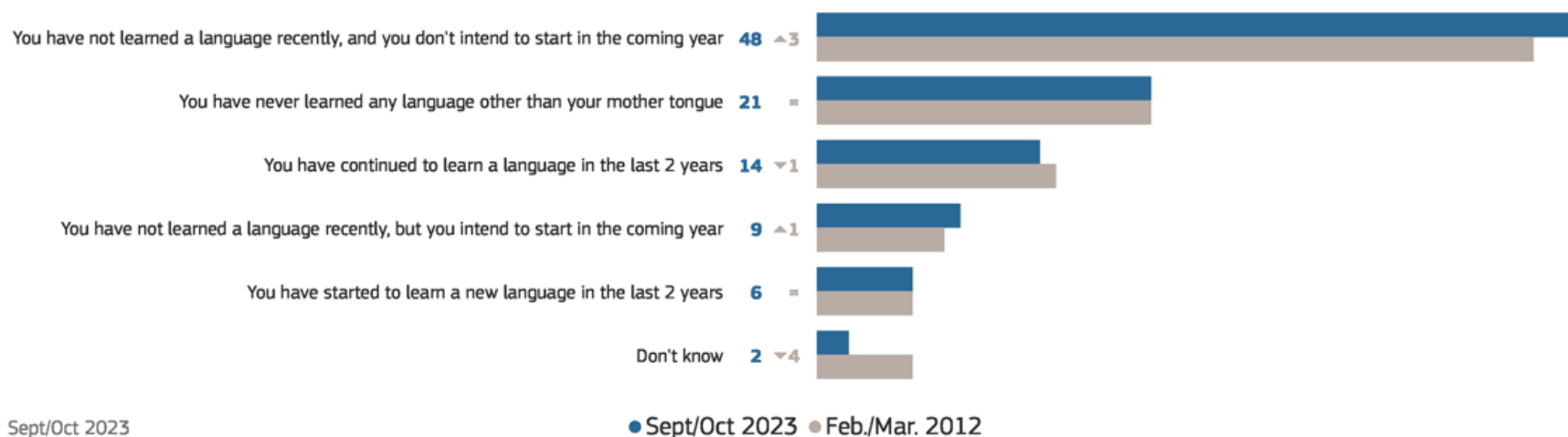


Base: respondents who can have a conversation in one, two, or three languages other than their mother tongue

2024 Eurobarometer – some results

21% of EU citizens have never learned any language other than their mother tongue ; 48% haven't recently and don't intend to this year

QB3. Which of the following situations apply to you? (EU27) (%)



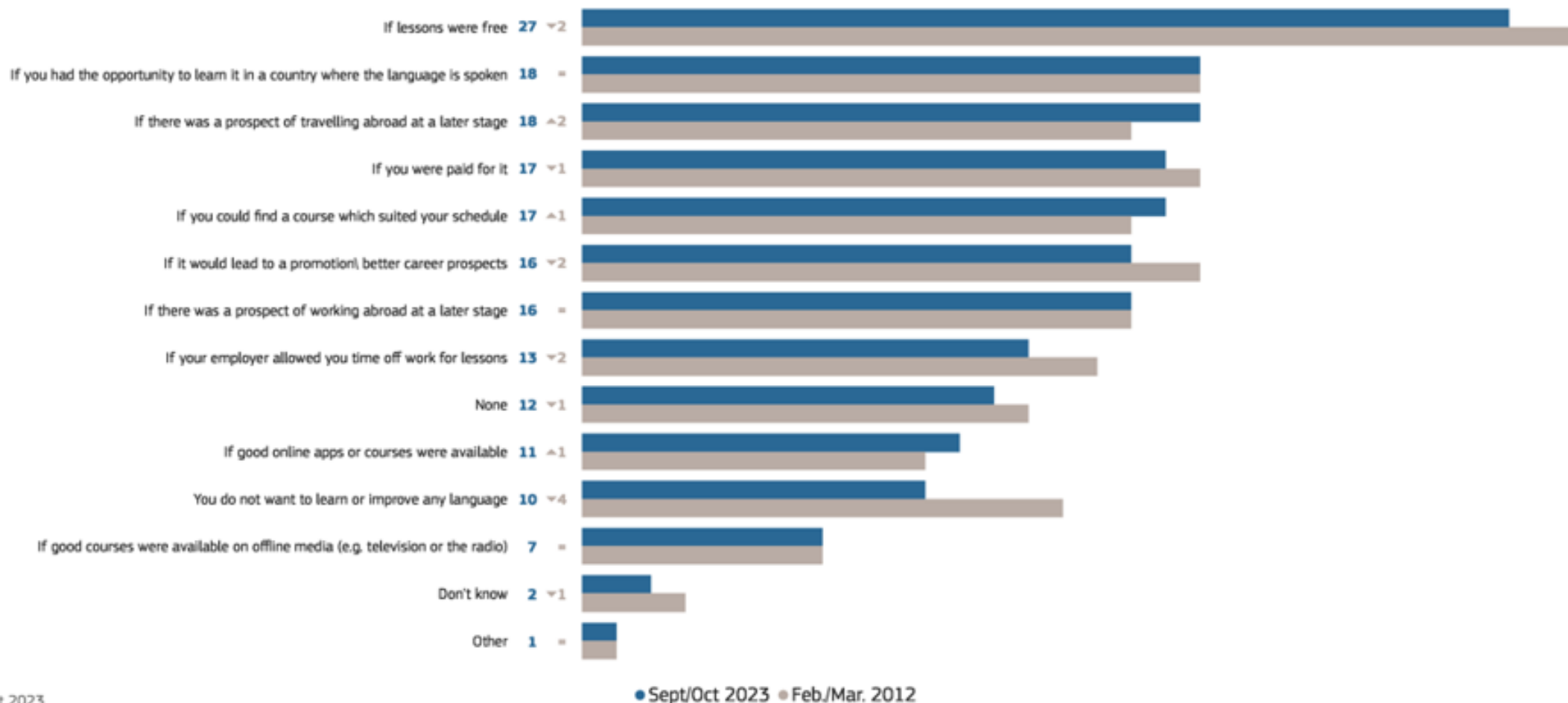
Sept/Oct 2023

● Sept/Oct 2023 ● Feb./Mar. 2012

Base: All Respondents (26523)

2024 Eurobarometer – motivations

QB6. Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (EU27) (%)

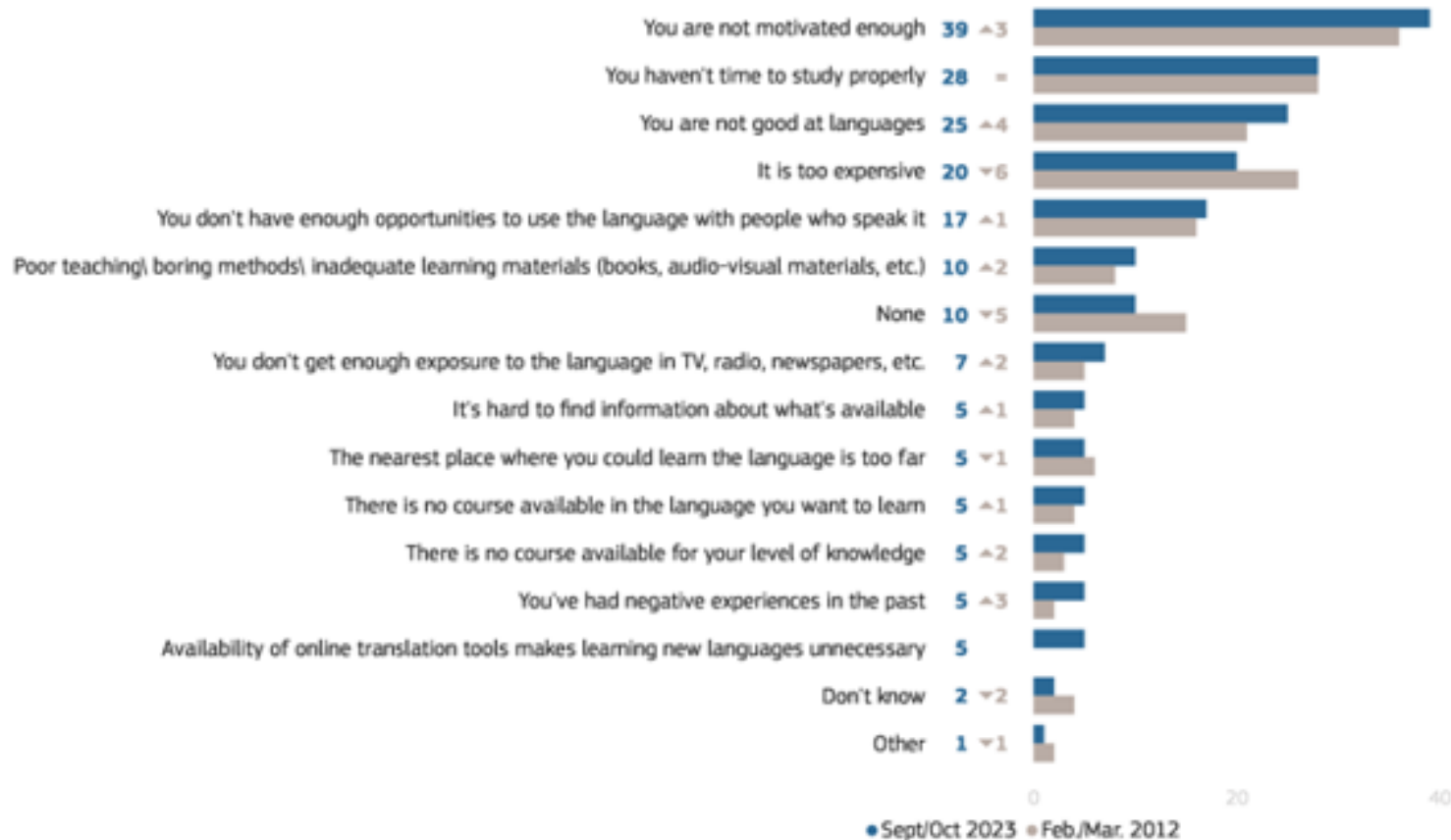


Sept/Oct 2023

Base: All Respondents (26523)

Reasons that may discourage people from learning another language

QB5. I am going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these reasons would apply to you?(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (EU27) (%)

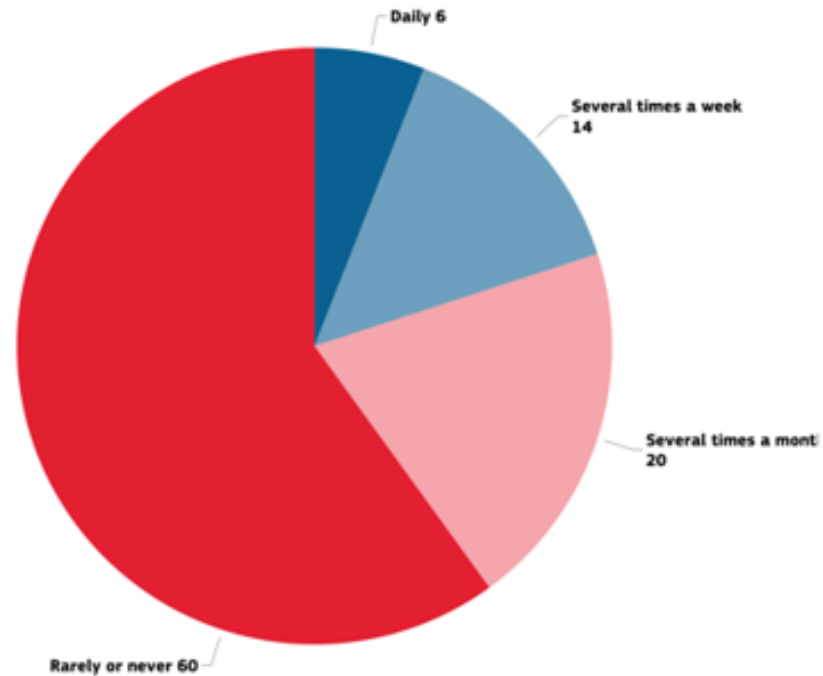


Sept/Oct 2023

Base: All Respondents (26523)

2024 Eurobarometer – use of machine translation

QB8. How often do you use online machine translations? (EU27) (%)



Sept/Oct 2023

Base: All Respondents (26523)

Some conclusions and points for reflection

- **Citizens believe multilingualism is an important skill and value language diversity**
- **Good evolution towards early language learning and learning of English as a foreign language**
- **Need to progress further on other languages than English**
- **Utilitarianism vs cultural understanding**
- **Influence of language technologies and AI on motivation to be closely monitored**



