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ITALIAN

The Italian language in education in Switzerland

| Regional dossiers series |

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Marlous Visser has been responsible for the publication of this Mercator Regional dossier.

Contents

Glossary	2
Foreword	3
1 Introduction.....	5
2 Pre-school education.....	14
3 Primary education	16
4 Secondary education.....	19
5 Vocational education	25
6 Higher education	28
7 Adult education.....	37
8 Educational research.....	38
9 Prospects.....	40
Education system of Switzerland.....	42
References and further reading.....	43
Addresses	50
Other websites on minority languages	54
What can the Mercator Research Centre offer you?.....	56
Available in this series	58

Glossary

EBA	<i>Eidgenössisches Berufsattest</i> – Swiss Professional Certificate
EDK	<i>Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren</i> – Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education
EFZ	<i>Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis</i> – Swiss Certificate of Professional Competence
EKUD	<i>Erziehungs-, Kultur- und Umweltschutzdepartement Kanton Graubünden</i> – Grisons Department of Education, Culture and Environment
HarmoS	<i>Harmonisierung der obligatorischen Schule</i> – “Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonization of the Compulsory School” (HarmoS Concordat)
HFKG	<i>Koordination im schweizerischen Hochschulbereich</i> – Coordination of the Swiss Tertiary System
ikg	<i>Institut für Kulturforschung Graubünden</i> – Grisons Institute for Cultural Research
OLSI	<i>Osservatorio Linguistico della Svizzera Italiana</i> – Linguistic Observatory of Italian-speaking Switzerland
PGI	<i>Pro Grigioni Italiano</i> – Promotion of Italian in Grisons
PHGR	<i>Pädagogische Hochschule Graubünden</i> – University of Teacher Education of Grisons
SBBK	<i>Schweizerische Berufsbildungsämter-Konferenz</i> – Federal Conference of Vocational Training in Switzerland
SDK	<i>Schweizerische Direktorinnen- und Direktorenkonferenz der Berufsfachschulen</i> – Swiss Conference of Vocational Directors
SUPSI	<i>Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana</i> – University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland
WBF	<i>Eidgenössisches Departement für Wirtschaft, Bildung und Forschung</i> – Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research

Foreword

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

“Regional and minority languages are languages traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants”. The Mercator Research Centre aims at the acquisition, application and circulation of knowledge about these regional and minority languages in education. An important means to achieve this goal is the Regional dossiers series: documents that provide the most essential features of the education system of regions with a lesser used regional or minority language.

3

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

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

link with Eurydice The format of the Regional dossiers follows the format of Eurydice – the information network on education in Europe – in order

to link the regional descriptions with those of national education systems. Eurydice provides information on the administration and structure of national education systems in the member states of the European Union.

contents

Every Regional dossier begins with an introduction about the region concerned, followed by six sections that each deals with a specific level of the education system (e.g. primary education). Sections eight and nine cover the main lines of research into education of the concerned minority language, the prospects for the minority language in general and for education in particular. The tenth section gives a summary of statistics. Lists of regulations, publications and useful addresses concerning the minority language, are given at the end of the dossier.

1 Introduction

language

Italian is one of the four national languages in Switzerland, along with German, French and Romansh (since 1938). The Italian-speaking territories that form the *Svizzera italiana* are the canton of Ticino and the *Grigionitaliano*, that is, the traditionally Italian-speaking regions of *Mesolcina*, *Calanca*, *Bregaglia* and *Poschiavo* in the canton of Grisons. All Italian-speaking areas show geographical contiguity with Italy.

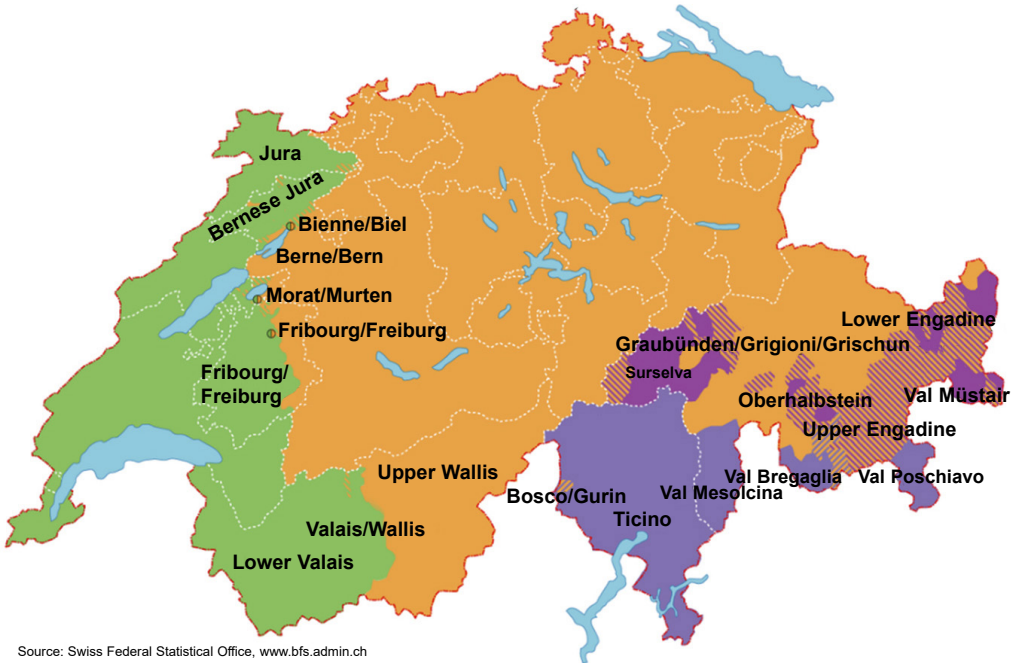
Of the 26 member cantons of Switzerland, one – the canton of Ticino – has Italian as its only official language, whereas the canton of Grisons is officially trilingual (German, Romansh and Italian). Three other cantons are bilingual (German-French), 17 are German-speaking and four are French-speaking.

Figure 1, on the next page, shows the traditional geographical diffusion of the four Swiss national languages.

Swiss multilingualism is rooted in the history of Switzerland. Starting with the territories that gradually became aggregated or were conquered from 1291, the Francophone territories and the Italian-speaking territories were acquired from a German-speaking nucleus, first as bailiwicks "*baliagg*" (the canton of Ticino was a bailiwick of the central cantons). Both Ticino and Grisons joined the Swiss Confederation in 1803, with the creation of the Helvetic Republic after the French Revolution. Since then, and with the first Helvetic Constitution in 1848, the Swiss territory thus consists of territories that speak different languages.

Italian is considered as a weakly pluricentric language, due to the fact that the Swiss Italian standard variety displays some peculiarities – mainly of lexical nature – that differentiate it from the standard variety of Italian used in Italy. The political border separating Switzerland from Italy, the official language status, dialectal influences as well as contact phenomena with German and French contribute to create a partially independent standard with regard to Italian of Italy.

Geographical distribution of the languages of Switzerland (2000)



Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office, www.bfs.admin.ch

- German
- French
- Italian
- Romansh
- bilingual areas and cities*

* Areas with changing majorities, traditionally strong minorities of other official languages (over 30%) and officially bilingual communities

Officially bilingual are the cantons of

- Berne/Bern (German majority)
- Fribourg/Freiburg (French majority)
- Valais/Wallis (French majority)

Officially trilingual is the canton of

- Graubünden/Grigioni/Grischun (German majority)

De facto bilingual are the cantons of

- Jura (French majority)
- Ticino (Italian majority)

Figure 1: Switzerland and its four national languages. From Marco Zanoli - Swiss Federal Statistical Office; cenStuds. of 2000.

population 8.2% of Switzerland's 8.3 million inhabitants – approximately 678,000 people – indicate Italian and/or a dialectal variety of Italian as their main language. The main languages that are most diffused in Switzerland are German (63% of the population) and French (23%), whereas 0.5% declare Romansh as their main language.

The majority of Italian speakers live outside of the traditional Italian-speaking territory (53%). The situation of Italian within the Italian-speaking area is quite stable, whereas the number of Italian speakers in the rest of Switzerland varies significantly depending, among others, on migration fluctuations. The peak of 11.1% of Italian speakers reached in 1970 is an effect of a wave of immigration from Italy; the subsequent drop to 6.8% (2000) is a consequence of the phenomenon of naturalization or return home of immigrants.

In the traditionally Italian-speaking territories of Ticino and *Grigionitaliano*, the dialect is still very vital: 30.7% of the Ticino residents and 60.8% of the Grisons Italophones declare to speak (also) a dialectal variety of Italian.

In addition to the people indicating Italian as their main language, a 2014 survey on languages in Switzerland states that approximately one third of the resident population aged 15 and older – some 2.2 million people – has at least some (receptive) knowledge of Italian.

With the exception of French, the percentages of people speaking a national language have fallen slightly between 1970 and 2017. At the same time, the number of people declaring (also) a non-national language as their main language has increased, reaching 24% in 2017. This is mainly due to the fact that since 2010 more than one main language can be declared in the survey. As a consequence, even the percentage of the Swiss population declaring Italian as their main language increased from 6.8% (2000) to 8.4% in 2010. Today, the two most frequently mentioned non-national languages are English (5%) and Portuguese (4%).

language status Italian enjoys a broad legal protection on the national level. The status of German, French, Italian and Romansh as national and official languages is defined in Articles 4 and 70 of the Swiss Federal Constitution. Since 1848, the main legal texts and official documents are translated and published in Italian as well. Furthermore, the Constitution defines two fundamental principles of Swiss language policy: Article 18 recognises the principle of linguistic freedom, even for linguistic minorities, while Article 70

defines the duty of the State to defend and promote national linguistic minorities, namely Italian and Romansh, by supporting initiatives by the cantons of Ticino and Grisons (see also the Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities).

According to the territoriality principle, anchored in Article 70 of the Federal Constitution, every canton declares its own official language(s). Italian has official status only in two cantons, Ticino and Grisons, as stated by the respective cantonal constitutions. Switzerland signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on 8 October 1993. The Federal Council decided to ratify it on 31 October 1997. Switzerland has defined Italian and Romansh as lesser used official languages within the Charter and has outlined guidelines for their promotion.

**status of
language
education**

8

At compulsory school, Italian is taught as a first language (L1) and used as a medium of instruction in two cantons, Ticino and Grigioni (Italian-speaking part), as stated by the respective cantonal education laws. Italian is taught as obligatory first foreign language (L2) in the German-speaking parts of Grisons. In the rest of Switzerland, Italian as a foreign language can be either an obligatory elective or an elective subject (for further details see the following chapters).

**education
system**

Within the federalist state of Switzerland, the cantons have the primary responsibility for the education system, as stated by the Federal Constitution (article 62). The education article also charges the federal education authorities to supervise the basic mandatory education in Switzerland. These have been entitled to harmonise the goals of the school by the revised education article, adopted by the Swiss electorate and all the cantons on 21 May 2006. The "Intercantonal Agreement on the Harmonization of the Compulsory School" (HarmoS Concordat, enforced on 1 August 2009) regulates important benchmarks in the area of compulsory education, especially the national educational objectives and the duration of educational levels. In order to harmonise the national educational objectives, the three main linguistic regions have each developed a curriculum:

the *Lehrplan 21* for the German-speaking and multilingual cantons, the *Plan d'études romand* (PER) for the French-speaking ones, and the *Piano di studio della scuola dell'obbligo ticinese* for the canton of Ticino. All three language-specific curricula share some general parameters, in accordance with the HarmoS Concordat: they are competence-oriented; they are structured in three levels (I: first three years of compulsory school; II: 4th to 6th grade; III: 7th to 9th grade); the subjects are articulated in five subject areas (languages; mathematics and natural sciences; human and social sciences; music and arts; movement and health). For all levels, the children – depending on skills and personal maturity – go through the levels faster or slower.

Article 4 of the HarmoS Concordat states that teaching of two foreign languages is compulsory, beginning at primary school: another national language different from the medium of instruction, and English. In the regions where a minority language is spoken, either Italian or Romansh (that is, in Ticino and Grisons, except the German-speaking regions), a third foreign language (national language) is compulsory.

As for the *Lehrplan 21*, there are different cantonal versions of the same curriculum. The *Lehrplan 21* for the canton of Grisons is available in three versions, one for each cantonal language. In this context, Italian appears either as a language of instruction – L1 (Italian-speaking part), as a first foreign language from the second cycle – L2 (German-speaking part), or as an optional language in the third cycle – L3 (Romansh-speaking part). Table 1 shows the specific case of diversity in language teaching within the canton of Grisons.

Table 1 *Languages offered as school subjects in Grisons, according to the linguistic region (2018).*

	German-speaking region	Italian-speaking region	Romansh-speaking region
Language of instruction in primary and secondary I school (1st to 9th grade)	German	Italian	Romansh
Second and foreign languages in primary and secondary I school (1st to 9th grade), as core subjects	- Italian or Romansh (from 3rd grade) - Romansh already possible from 1st grade - English (from 5th grade)	- German (from 3rd grade) - English (from 5th grade)	- German (from 3rd grade) - English (from 5th grade)
Secondary level I, as electives	Romansh or Italian French	French	Italian French

Note: Adapted from Amt für Volksschule und Sport (2018).

private and public

In Switzerland, schools are run by the state, the canton and the municipalities. There is, however, a considerable number of private schools. Some of these schools, which are primarily aimed at Swiss clients, are firmly integrated into the public system and therefore receive public funding. Others are primarily aimed at international clients and have no connection to Switzerland’s public education system. Mixed forms also exist between these two extremes; in some cases even the curricula of the same school differ. There is a sporadic offer of instruction in Italian at private schools located in the German- and French-speaking regions.

There is no nationwide public service system to control the seriousness and quality of private education providers. Schools that are not integrated into the public system or supervised by public authorities have a different, but not worse, quality. Some of the private schools operating in complete autonomy of the public sector in Switzerland enjoy high prestige. The users and the labour market judge the quality of education, not so much the state – in particular for offers from private schools which are primarily aimed at an international audience.

bilingual education forms

In addition to traditional foreign language teaching, other forms of contact with foreign languages have undergone development in recent years. In particular, various forms of bilingual or immersive teaching play an increasingly important role. In

bilingual classes, the subjects are taught in the local language and in a foreign language. There are bilingual schools with Italian and German in Maloja and in Chur (Grisons). If the lessons are taught entirely or predominantly in a foreign language, this is usually referred to as immersive teaching. The learners are given the opportunity to broaden and deepen their language skills. In the compulsory school since the 1990s, especially the bilingual and multilingual cantons offer bilingual courses. In basic vocational education, the Federal Government and the Swiss Vocational Training Conference (SBBK) promote and recommend bilingual education. At secondary level II, the amendment to the 1995 “Matura Recognition Regulation” in particular has helped the bilingual courses to develop. Currently more than 85% of all recognised high schools offer a bilingual course.

administration According to the Federal Constitution, the Confederation and the cantons work together to ensure the high quality and permeability of Switzerland as an educational area within the scope of its responsibilities. One instrument for fulfilling this task is the Education Monitoring Switzerland, which is the responsibility of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research WBF and the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education EDK. In Switzerland, the main responsibility for education and culture lies with the cantons. They coordinate their work at the national level. The 26 cantonal ministers of education form a political body to carry out this work: the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK). Legally binding, intercantonal agreements (known as concordats) form the foundation for the work of the EDK. The EDK has a secondary function and fulfils tasks that cannot be performed by the regions or cantons. The EDK programme of activities describes the current projects of the Conference.

inspection The Federal Constitution (Article 61a) stipulates that the Confederation and the cantons have the task of ensuring high quality in the education system. In this context, they have jointly set

up a national education monitoring process which provides a basis for the observation and further development of the Swiss education system. A key instrument is the Swiss Education Report, which includes data and information from statistics, research and administration, regarding the education system and the educational levels. It is released once every four years. The findings of the Swiss Education Report are intended to aid decision-making in education administration and education policy. With the “2011 Declaration” the Confederation and the cantons have defined mutual education policy objectives for the field of education in Switzerland. From these objectives, the Confederation and the cantons are deriving measures for their respective areas of responsibility. The achievement of these objectives and the effectiveness of the measures taken are to be reviewed in the next Education Report.

In 2004, the VSP (*Verband Schweizerischer Privatschulen*; Association of Swiss Private Schools) made the pioneering and historic decision for the future of the private school system organised in the VSP to certify all the association’s schools with a market-tested and nationally and internationally recognised quality system. Schools without certification until the mentioned date are threatened with exclusion from the association. This step will greatly increase the trustworthiness of all member schools, both to parents and students and to government agencies.

**support
structure**

In Switzerland, education is a governmental responsibility (cantonal and/or federal) from the beginning of compulsory education up to and including tertiary level (universities and professional education and training). Responsibility for education lies primarily with the 26 cantons. The cantons and the federal government each have their own responsibilities for post-compulsory education (general education schools, vocational and professional education and training, universities) and thus bear responsibility for these levels of education together. The cantons and their local municipalities finance 90% of public expenditure on education.

Pedagogical support for teachers is mostly guaranteed by the

various cantonal education departments. There are also supra-cantonal structures (e.g. EDK) which offer different platforms for networking, exchange and update on school and didactic issues.

The Forum for Italian in Switzerland is a federation of organisations that are engaged in the promotion and enhancement of the Italian language and culture in Switzerland. It was established in 2012 in Zurich and was initiated by the cantons of Ticino and Grisons. The aim of the Forum is to promote the Italian language and culture within the framework of Swiss multilingualism and Swiss language policies. Currently, 37 organisations have joined the Forum (including the *Pro Grigioni italiano*, founded in 1918).

2 Pre-school education

target group	In Switzerland, children attend pre-school (kindergarten) from 3 to 6 years, with some differences between cantons.
structure	<p>Each canton is responsible for this educational level. That is why there is a variation from canton to canton. By law, the government has ruled that all cantons in Switzerland offer kindergarten with varying durations from 1 to 3 years. Two years of nursery school or the first two years of an entry level are included in compulsory schooling in the majority of cantons starting in the 2015/16 school year. These first years of schooling can be organised as a (compulsory) nursery school or as an entrance level (e.g. basic level). The majority of the cantons have made the 2-year kindergarten offer obligatory, with Obwalden, Schwyz and Zug opting for a 1-year and the Canton Ticino for a 3-year offer. 8 cantons have a 1-year obligatory kindergarten (Appenzell Innerrhoden, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Lucerne, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schwyz, Uri, Zug), whereas in the canton of Grisons kindergarten is voluntary (EDK, 2017).</p> <p>The content of the curriculum follows the instruction of the <i>Lehrplan 21</i>, the <i>Plan d'Etudes Romand (PER)</i> and the <i>Piano di studio della scuola dell'obbligo ticinese</i>: no detailed contents prescriptions are given, since the curriculum is competence-oriented.</p>
legislation	The Federal Constitution warrants that the cantons provide free primary schooling for all children. The cantons are responsible for all regulations and supervision of kindergartens.
language use	Pre-school children in Ticino and in the Italian-speaking territories of Grisons are instructed in Italian. In the Grisons there are two public bilingual kindergartens in Maloja and Chur using a bilingual/immersive teaching approach in Italian/German. In the remaining Swiss cantons Italian is not taught in public kindergartens.

teaching materials Teachers provide their own teaching materials. There is no official teaching material on kindergarten level in the cantons of Ticino and Grisons.

statistics In the year 2017/18, there were 8,669 children in kindergarten in Ticino and Grisons with Italian as language of instruction.

Table 2 *Number of public nursery schools with Italian as language of instruction and number of children attending them, in Switzerland, in 2017/18.*

Region	Number of nursery schools	Number of children
Ticino	194*	8,305*
Grigionitaliano	10	317
Grisons: Bilingual kindergartens German-Italian	2 (4 sections)	47

Note: Data adapted from Amt für Volksschule und Sport Graubünden (2019).

* Data from 2016/17.

3 Primary education

target group Depending on the canton, children in Switzerland attend primary school from their 6th to their 12th year.

structure In the canton of Ticino, primary school starts at the age of 6 and lasts five years (1st to 5th grade). In the French-speaking area (comprising the cantons of Fribourg and Wallis) primary school lasts four years, from 8 to 11. In all other cantons, the pupils start primary school at the age of 7 and usually finish at the age of 12 (1st to 6th grade). The content of the curriculum follows the instruction of the *Lehrplan 21*, the *Plan d'Etudes Romand* (PER) and the *Piano di studio della scuola dell'obbligo ticinese*: no detailed contents prescriptions are given, since the curriculum is competence-oriented. The primary school's contents are based on the goals of cycles 1 and 2.

legislation Primary schools are run by the municipalities. Italian as L1 is taught in primary school in the cantons of Ticino and the Grisons exclusively. Grisons' education law of 21st March 2012 (as of 01.01.2016; BR 421.00) reflects the education on elementary school level. Article 33 of the cantonal school law deals with bilingual schools. The canton of Ticino is responsible for obligatory regulations concerning teaching Italian (art. 1 cpv. 3 Cost. TI). In the canton of Uri, the educational department constitutes the curricular aspects of the elective of Italian as L2, starting in 5th grade.

language use Italian is the language of instruction (L1) in the canton of Ticino and in the Italian-speaking territories of Grisons. In Ticino, Italian is taught exclusively as L1; there are also Italian language courses aiming at integrating immigrant pupils, an offer which stretches over the whole of primary education. The first L2 taught in primary school in Ticino is French (from 3rd grade), whereas in the *Grigionitaliano* the L2 is German (from 3rd grade) and the L3 (second foreign language) is English (from 5th grade).
In the German-speaking part of Grisons, Italian is taught as L2

starting in 3rd grade. There is no L2 Italian in the Romansh-speaking areas.

To further promote the cantonal languages, schools can offer bilingual tracks or bilingual classes, as the schoolhouse Rheinau in Chur, in the German-speaking region, which currently runs two bilingual classes (German-Italian). The primary school in Maloja (Grisons) is run bilingually. In the canton of Uri, Italian is an additional elective subject starting in the fifth year.

In addition to the regular teaching in primary school, the Italian embassies provide courses in language and culture for primary school pupils all over Switzerland. This offer stretches over the nine years of compulsory education and can be completed with a certificate.

teaching materials

The government is responsible for the choice of teaching material. It provides the necessary teaching materials in Italian for the Italian-medium primary schools. For the L1 instruction in the canton of Ticino there is no obligatory teaching material, there are only recommendations.

In the canton of Grisons, the Grisons Department of Education, Culture and Environment (*Erziehungs-, Kultur- und Umweltschutzdepartement*, EKUD) decides on the didactic materials and runs its own publishing house for didactic materials. A listing of the teaching material is published yearly for the obligatory part of the elementary levels in Grisons. The listed materials are in line with the German Swiss *Lehrplan 21* and the curriculum of the obligatory and recommended teaching material.

For L2 Italian instruction in the Grisons and Uri, teaching material *Grandi amici 1 e 2* and *Amici d'Italia 1* are used. There are supplementary materials such as the planned teaching material for Italian as a foreign language in the 5th and 6th grade in Uri.

statistics

In the school year 2017/18, an overall of 15,747 pupils attended public primary school with Italian as language of instruction.

Table 3 *Number of public primary schools having Italian as language of instruction and number of pupils attending them, in Switzerland, in 2017/18.*

Region	Monolingual schools		Bilingual schools	
	Number of primary schools	Number of pupils	Number of primary schools	Number of pupils
Grigionitaliano	10	732	2	11 (Maloja) 229 (Rheinau Chur)
Ticino	147*	14,775*	-	-

Note: Data adapted from Office of Statistics, Canton Grisons, 2018.

* Data from 2016/17.

4 Secondary education

target group Secondary school is divided into two levels: lower secondary school (Secondary I), compulsory for pupils from 12 until the age of 16, and upper secondary school (Secondary II), which is attended by pupils from 16 to the age of 20.

structure Primary school is followed by the secondary I level. These two school levels form the compulsory education. Students typically start secondary school I at the age of 12 (in Ticino at 11). This level lasts three years, with the exception of Ticino, where it lasts four years due to an exempt regulation according to HarmoS Concordat. As for the passage from primary to secondary I school, the report cards, the teachers' recommendations – mostly including the parents – as well as a possible admissions exam (depending on the cantons and models) decide on the allocation to a certain level of performance. Teaching is conducted on different levels of performance in various models (divided, cooperative and integrated). Each canton can decide to introduce an overall model or leave the decision concerning models to the municipalities. The content of the curriculum at secondary I level follows the instructions of the *Lehrplan 21*, the *Plan d'Etudes Romand (PER)* and the *Piano di studio della scuola dell'obbligo ticinese*.

After their obligatory school time, young people move up to secondary II level, which is articulated in a general and a vocational track.

The general track consists of grammar schools and technical secondary schools; these schools are non-professional and prepare students for tertiary levels. Cantonal laws regulate the admission to these schools. Grammar schools last for at least four years; they are concluded by maturity exams, which allow to obtain a maturity diploma, enabling access to higher education. Technical secondary schools last three years (full-time programme); students graduate with an accredited Swiss certificate, enabling admission to higher learning in said professional area. Admission to universities and universities of teacher education is permitted with a 1-year professional maturity (transition year).

On the other hand, vocational education programmes prepare students for their future jobs; these are mostly administered by companies offering apprenticeships along with the respective theoretical approaches (school), but it is also possible to attend school with a full-time programme (see chapter 5: “Vocational education”).

The majority of Swiss youth (around two thirds) opts for vocational education. In Ticino, a proportionally high rate chooses to attend grammar schools. Approximately 90% of 366,000 young people overall, aged 18 to 19, complete their secondary II education obtaining a final certificate.

legislation

The Federal Constitution (Art. 19 and 62) warrants sufficient teaching for all youths at secondary I level, which is free of charge in public schools. The cantons are responsible for regulations and supervision of the obligatory upper level; they are also responsible for grammar schools and technical secondary schools. The state government and the cantons are both responsible for the general recognition of grammar school diplomas (maturity), while there are intercantonal regulations for the recognition of technical secondary schools and their diplomas.

language use

secondary level I

On secondary I level, Italian is the language of instruction (L1) in the canton of Ticino and in the *Grigionitaliano*. French (from primary school), German and English are taught as foreign languages in Ticino; in the *Grigionitaliano* the foreign languages are German and English (from primary school; see Table 1).

On secondary I level, Italian as L2 is an obligatory subject only in the German-speaking part of the Grisons. Six cantons offer Italian as an obligatory elective (Basel-Land, Basel-Stadt, Berne, Jura, Vaud, Uri). Almost all cantons offer Italian at least as an elective (as second or third foreign language, L3 or L4). Usually, Italian is offered with one to three lessons per week. Obwalden and Wallis have no offer of Italian at secondary I level.

The EDK collected data of pupils attending Italian classes (L3/L4) at secondary I level (school year 2017/18) for approximately half

of the cantons. In the cantons of Aargau, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Vaud and Uri, around 10-15% of the students attend Italian classes. In the cantons of Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Schwyz, Freiburg/Fribourg, Schaffhausen, Lucerne, Neuchâtel and Nidwalden, 5% or less attend Italian classes.

Table 4 shows the overview of the offer of Italian as L3 or L4 in non-Italian-speaking regions.

Table 4 *Offer of Italian as L3/L4 at secondary I schools in non-Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland in 2017/18.*

Canton	Obligatory subject	Obligatory Elective	Elective
Aargau			x
Appenzell Ausserrhoden			x
Appenzell Innerrhoden			x
Basel-Land		x	x
Basel-Stadt			x
Berne (German- and French-speaking)		x	x
Freiburg (German- and French-speaking)			x
Geneva			x
Glarus			x
Grisons (German-speaking)	x		
Grisons (Romansh-speaking)			x
Jura		x	
Lucerne			x
Neuchâtel			x
Nidwalden			x
Obwalden			
St. Gallen			x
Schaffhausen			x
Solothurn			x
Schwyz			x
Thurgau			x
Uri		x	x
Vaud		x	x
Wallis (German- and French-speaking)			
Zug			x
Zurich			x

Note: Data adapted from Federal Office for Statistics (2018).

secondary level II

At secondary II level (general educational tracks: grammar schools and technical secondary schools), instruction is rendered in Italian only in the canton of Ticino and at the Grammar School Chur in Grisons (some classes). In all other Swiss cantons, Italian is taught either as a second foreign language (L3) or as an elective (cf. statistics).

Swiss grammar schools administer their curricula according to the maturity recognition regulation MAR (regulation for the recognition of school leaving exams). The offer of language courses can vary from canton to canton and the respective linguistic distribution; linguistic subjects can be offered as a major, basics, additional subjects or elective. It is recommended that all cantons promote the Italian language as a possible selection for graduating in Italian. Moreover, the cantons are required to promote bilingual tracks (immersive models) with the third official language. There are bilingual tracks in various cantons: at the *Liceo Artistico* in Zurich, at some grammar schools in the canton of Berne and at the private institution *Liceo Pareto* in Lausanne, to name just a few.

At technical secondary schools, the first language, a second national language and a third language (either a third official language or a foreign language) are studied.

Through *Movetia*, the national agency for exchange and mobility, the Federal Government promotes the organisation of exchange programmes and language stays in Switzerland, including the Italian-speaking regions. The government supports the efforts of the cantons to further promote Italian at grammar schools through innovative projects.

teaching materials

In Ticino, the teaching materials for Italian on the secondary I and II level are chosen by the single schools and/or teachers. In the other cantons, the cantonal education department usually suggests or decides which teaching materials are to be used in schools. In the cantons of Grisons and Uri the currently used schoolbook on secondary I level is *Amici d'Italia*, along with additional didactic support.

statistics

Approximately a third of Swiss youth (according to the Federal Office of Statistics 365,559 in 2016/17) attend a general school such as a grammar school or a special technical secondary school after obligatory education. The remaining two thirds opt for a dual vocational education, which enables them to directly start their jobs, to transfer to a higher learning institution or to continue at tertiary level (universities).

Table 5 shows the overview of Italian instruction at secondary II level (grammar schools and technical secondary schools) in Switzerland. Ticino, where Italian is the language of instruction, is not included. The data in the table refer only to those cantonal schools which provided data. The number in brackets shows the total of secondary II schools in the respective canton.

EDUCATION AND LESSER USED LANGUAGES

Table 5 Overview of Italian instruction at grammar schools and technical secondary schools in Switzerland (without Ticino) in 2017/18.

Canton	Grammar schools and technical schools	Schools with Italian	Studs. Italian as L3	Studs. Italian plus	Elective	Exchange programmes and language stays
Aargau	4 (6)	4	222	53	301	no
Appenzell Ausserrhoden	1 (1)	1	69	0	n.n.	yes
Appenzell Innerrhoden	1 (1)	1	0	0	15	yes
Basel-Land	2 (5)	2	0	15	0	no
Basel-Stadt	1 (9)	1	0	37	0	yes
Berne	10 (16)	8	230	472	264	yes (in 6 schools)
Fribourg	5 (7)	5	485	494	337	yes (in 4 schools)
Geneva	1 (13)	1	177	37	n.n.	yes
Glarus	0 (1)	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.
Grisons	5 (8)	5*	460	0	66	yes (in 2 schools)
Jura	0 (1)	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.
Lucerne	6 (9)	4	177	118	5	yes (in 3 schools)
Neuchâtel	2 (4)	2	2*	80	0	yes (in both schools)
Nidwalden	1 (1)	1	0	4	0	yes
Obwalden	1 (2)	1	0	0*	n.n.	no
St. Gallen	4 (10)	4	0	150	75	yes
Schaffhausen	0 (1)	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.	n.n.
Solothurn	1 (2)	1	7	45	23	no
Schwyz	2 (6)	0	0	0	0	no
Thurgau	2 (6)	2	20	17	7	yes (in both schools)
Uri	1 (1)	1	0	7	n.n.	no
Vaud	1 (9)	1	0*	24	n.n.	no
Wallis	2 (2)	2	297	179	n.n.	yes (in both schools)
Zug	3 (3)	2	98*	13	10	yes (in one school)
Zurich	17 (30)	15	943	1618	523	yes (in 9 schools)

Note: Data collected by PHGR (2019).

* Grisons: a total of 56 pupils attend courses of Italian as an L1. Two schools of the canton of Grisons offer a bilingual track (German/Italian) either for grammar or technical secondary school.

Neuchâtel: in addition to these students, there are 47 pupils attending courses of Italian as L2.

Obwalden: starting in 2019/20, Italian plus will be offered at the grammar school in Sarnen.

Vaud: in addition to this, 166 students are following courses of Italian as an L2.

Zug: in addition to this, at the cantonal grammar school of Menzingen 13 pupils are studying Italian as an L2.

5 Vocational education

- target group** As is the case with upper secondary education, vocational education is for young adults from 16 to 20 years.
- structure** This form of education is characterised by the “dual approach”, in which private companies and public vocational schools cooperate. This combined education takes three to four years. In addition to their professional training (apprenticeship, including school and continuing education) students can achieve the certificate of vocational training, in parallel or in a post-training approach.
- Professional education preparing students for their future jobs is rendered in two tracks: a two-year training including a Swiss professional certificate for weaker students, and a three- or four-year professional education with a Swiss certificate. This educational track can also be completed full time.
- legislation** The legal principles for the promotion of foreign language teaching in vocational education are rooted in the Federal Constitution. The law for vocational education in the Federal Constitution (Art. 1 BBG) is a joint organisation between the Federal Government, cantons and professional institutions creating the legal framework for teaching in a second official language. Whether foreign language teaching should be a substantial part of the respective professions lies within the various professional organisations. Said legal prerequisites postulate a second language, either a second national language or English. Vocational schools should provide these offers. The legal framework concerning Swiss vocational maturity (BMV, Art. 3 and Art. 8) demands a second national language and a third language, with the cantons deciding. In about half the cantons there are vocational schools offering bilingual tracks.
- language use** Foreign language teaching is an integral part of vocational education and is mandatory for all students aiming at the acquisition of Swiss competence certificates (*Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis*, EFZ, or *Eidgenössisches Berufsattest*, EBA)

in the case that the professions to be learnt require knowledge of other languages.

In Swiss vocational schools outside Ticino and Grisons, there is a limited offer of Italian. Italian is taught in some optional courses (cf. statistics chapter); however, these courses frequently do not reach the required number of students and are thus not offered. Several vocational schools have abandoned Italian.

The trade (commercial) school Samedan is the only vocational school outside of Ticino where Italian is taught (also) as L1; students can obtain a vocational maturity in Italian as core subject.

**teaching
materials**

There is no obligatory teaching material for Italian in vocational schools. The choice lies in the hands of the teachers or the cantonal officials. See table 6 for further information about teaching materials used in vocational schools.

statistics

According to the Swiss conference of vocational directors (SDK) there are 125 vocational schools in Switzerland. All 125 were contacted and interviewed by the PHGR for the present survey; 80 of them answered.

21 out of these 80 vocational schools have Italian courses. Six schools have language courses as continuing education programmes; these are not represented in this publication. Table 6 summarises the collected data.

THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND

Table 6 Overview of the offer of Italian courses in 15 vocational schools in Switzerland.

School	Italian offered	Teaching materials
Bildungszentrum Emme (Burgdorf)	Optional subject for apprentices	n.n.
Vocational trade school Berne	Elective course	<i>Azzuro, Azzurro più, Tracce Compact grammar Italian</i>
Goldau vocational school	Optional subject	n.n.
Vocational school Ziegelbrücke	Language courses at night	n.n.
Weinfelden vocational school for economy	Optional subject	<i>Nuovo Progetto italiano</i> for German-speaking learners
Aarau vocational school	Optional subject for medical assistants	n.n.
Juventus School Zurich	Only for students with vocational maturity	n.n.
Vocational school Chur	Obligatory for students with vocational maturity and mediamatics students	<i>Chiaro (A2)</i> <i>Nuovo Espresso (A1, A2)</i>
Vocational school St. Gallen	Italian is offered as second national language for students with vocational maturity	<i>Azzurro (A2)</i> <i>Durchstarten Italienisch</i> workbook (Bd. 1)
Continuing education Zurich	Voluntary night courses	<i>Con piacere (A1-B1)</i>
Trilingual vocational school Samedan	Students can use Italian in all subjects as L1. Language of instruction, however, is German. Optional course	<i>Con piacere</i>
Vocational commercial school Samedan	Italian is offered as L1 and as a foreign language	<i>Chiaro (A1-B2)</i>
Tourism school Passugg	Elective for students on tourism and communication	<i>L'italiano per la gastronomia</i>
Vocational school for medical and social jobs Weinfelden	Optional course	n.n.
Brugg continuing education	Elective in the economics branch	<i>Azzurro</i>

Note: Data collected by PHGR (2019).

6 Higher education

structure

The tertiary level in the Swiss educational system is structured in universities (12), universities of applied science (9) and universities of teacher education (16). All three enable to obtain a Bachelor's and Master's degree (and a PhD degree, in case of universities). There is also a programme of higher professional education apart from universities, which combines teaching and professional practice, allowing to obtain a federal diploma or a federal professional certificate.

legislation

The subsidiary principle is a decisive characteristic of higher learning in Switzerland, with the Federal Government being responsible for the technical universities of Zurich and Lausanne, and the ten universities being governed by the respective cantons. Since 2015, the Federal law for the promotion of universities and the coordination of Swiss higher learning (HFKG) has provided the legal framework for a close cooperation between the Federal Government and the cantons regarding state universities and the promotion of quality in research and teaching. At the same time swissuniversities, a joint organisation comprising all rectors of universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education, was founded. This cooperation does not restrict the independence of cantonal universities. The institutions of higher learning and the cantons decide autonomously on the offer and status of Italian as a subject and/or as a language of instruction.

language use

Ticino is the only canton in Switzerland offering an Italian-based curriculum at university level, at the *Università della Svizzera italiana* (USI) and the *Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera italiana* (SUPSI).

It is possible to graduate in Italian Studies (Italian linguistics and literature, Italian culture), both at bachelor's and master's level, at the universities of Basel, Berne, Zurich and St. Gallen (German-speaking part of Switzerland), in Fribourg, Geneva and Lausanne (French-speaking part of Switzerland), as well as in Lugano (*Università della Svizzera Italiana*).

The Technical University Zurich (ETH) hosts a yearly visiting professorship (*Cattedra De Sanctis*) on Italian literature and culture. This programme has existed since the 19th century and enables students to earn credits for their studies. This is also possible for students at the University of Zurich.

Since 2011 the University of Geneva has also featured an Italian track for translation studies (*Facoltà di traduzione e interpretazione FTI*).

The University of St. Gallen is a case in point integrating “Italian Studies” into their *School of Humanities and Social Sciences*. The interdisciplinary approach in St. Gallen is also based on the premise that students enrol in 25% of the humanities and social sciences, with the majority of the courses being held in English. Due to the geographical vicinity to Ticino, the University of Lucerne has seen specific interest in Italian-speaking students. Apart from language courses, students can enrol in Italian-based law school classes, culture, and social studies.

Italian is used as the language for research activity and for scientific publications in the humanities, but not only for that. Due to their international appeal, Swiss universities attract young Italian researchers who actively develop networks on national and international level. The departments for Italian Studies organise over a hundred conferences and events on various aspects of Italian language and culture every year.

Eleven out of twelve Swiss universities feature a language department offering courses in Italian as a foreign language from the level A1 to C2. The University of St. Gallen offers a course labeled “Italian in Law and Economy” (B1 to C1).

teacher training Italian language teachers are trained either at nine universities of teacher education or at university. It is important to distinguish between Italian as a medium of instruction (L1) and Italian as a foreign language (L2), both for obligatory school (kindergarten, primary and secondary I) and for secondary II.

Until recently, the University of Teacher Education in Lucerne ran a programme for Italian language and culture. Due to a lack of applications, the programme had to be abandoned.

Italian as L1 teachers are trained at the SUPSI/DFA and at the PHGR. SUPSI offers teacher training for all school levels, the PHGR for kindergarten, primary school and – from 2020/21 – secondary I level. SUPSI also offers a track for Italian as a second language (for non-native speakers).

Students can enrol in teacher training for Italian as L2 at several universities or universities of teacher education, depending on the school level (see below).

The PHGR is the only university that offers Italian as L1 and L2 in their kindergarten and primary track. At the PHGR, students can earn a bilingual diploma (Italian/German or German/Italian); in this case they are tested orally and in writing in their weaker language. If they do not pass these tests, they have the possibility to continue their studies in the monolingual curriculum. In order to obtain the final diploma, students in the monolingual curriculum must provide a C1 certificate for each foreign language before completing their studies. To promote the choice of Italian as a foreign language, a B2 certificate is sufficient to teach it as a second foreign language. Italian-speaking students have to provide a C1 certificate in German before they begin the formation, since they have to attend modules in German.

Except for the Pädagogische Hochschule St. Gallen (PH St. Gallen) (C1 level), all the PHs require a diploma on the C2 level for the secondary I and II levels. The PH Berne has developed their own certificate on a C1 level.

In addition to this, students have to complete language stays in an Italian-speaking region for several weeks. Only the PHGR and the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (FHNW) offer language courses which do not warrant any credits.

pre-school training

The kindergarten programme lasts three years; students earn a Bachelor's degree.

Italian as L1 and L2 at kindergarten level is covered by the PHGR and SUPSI. In the modules for foreign and second languages at the PHGR and SUPSI the focus is on awareness for languages and cultures and multilingual teaching methodologies. Integration of kids with foreign languages (Italian as a second language) plays a vital role, too.

primary training

The diploma for teaching Italian (as L1 or L2) at primary school is offered exclusively by the PHGR and SUPSI. The PHGR is the only teacher training institution offering a programme for Italian as an L2 at primary school, also with a bilingual track. SUPSI is the only institution offering Italian for non-native speakers, that is, children living in the Italian-speaking region who have another mother tongue.

secondary training

On secondary I a teaching licence for Italian as L1 and as a foreign language (for non-native speakers living in the Italian-speaking region) can be acquired only at SUPSI.

Italian as L2 is offered predominantly on secondary levels. Secondary school teachers for L2 Italian are trained either at the universities of Zurich and Fribourg, where they can choose between the German and French Department of teacher training, or at the following universities of teacher education: Haute école pédagogique du canton de Vaud (HEP VAUD), Pädagogische Hochschule Berne (PH BERN), Pädagogische Hochschule St. Gallen (PHSG), Pädagogische Hochschule Zurich (PHZH), Pädagogische Hochschule Thurgau (PHTG), Pädagogische Hochschule der Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz (PH FHNW), Haute école pédagogique des cantons de Berne, du Jura e de Neuchâtel (HEP BEJUNE).

Depending on the institution, Italian can be chosen as single teaching subject or in combination with one or more teaching subjects. The PH St. Gallen offers Italian only in combination with another foreign language (French or English). All other PHs do not have this restriction concerning the selection of languages.

To earn a teaching licence for secondary level, students have to earn a Master's degree; this study usually lasts 9 semesters. The study plans for secondary I levels are based on the approach of integrated multilingualism, with a focus on task-based and communicative principles. At the PHGR and PHSG, some modules are taught in more than one language.

Apart from the didactic background and the professional

linguistic competences, the students deal with selected aspects of Italian literature, general and historical linguistics, geography and history.

In 2019, starting in the fall semester, the PHGR and the PHSG offer a secondary I joint Master's programme with the option to qualify to teach Italian as a medium of instruction and/or as an L2.

The track for secondary II qualifies to teach on maturity levels (pupils aged 16-20). Apart from the didactic education, students acquire competences in literature, language and culture of the Italian-speaking world.

On secondary II it is currently possible to earn a teacher's diploma for Italian as L1 either at SUPSI/DFA or at the University of Fribourg. The teaching licence for Italian as L2 can be earned at the universities of Fribourg and Zurich as well as from these PHs: HEP VAUD, PH BERN, PHTG, FHNW and HEP BEJUNE. To be admitted to the programme students must provide a language certificate on the C1 level. The PHTG additionally requires a 4-month language stay.

in-service training

Every university of teacher education provides in-service training on several subjects, granting a Master's degree, a Master of Advanced Studies (MAS), a Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) or a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS). Specific courses for Italian language teachers are provided by SUPSI/DFA, the PHGR and, occasionally, by some other associations, for instance ASPI, *Associazione svizzera dei Professori e delle Professoressa d'Italiano*.

statistics

Table 7 displays the offer of university courses in Italian and the number of enrolled students.

Table 7 *Overview of the offer and the number of students in Italian Studies and/or Italian language courses at Swiss universities (fall semester 2018).*

	Offer	Number of students*	Remarks
University of Basel	Italian Studies «Letteratura e Linguistica»	64 (36 BA, 28 MA)	2 chairs: Literature and Linguistics
	Language course Italian	127	Courses offered: 17 Courses held: 11 (Data: fall semester 2018)
University of Berne	Italian Studies «Letteratura e Linguistica»	n.n.	2 chairs: Literature and Linguistics
	Language course Italian	n.n.	
University of Fribourg	Italian Studies	192	3 professors
	Language course Italian	n.n.	
University of Geneva	Italian Studies	58 BA, 15 MA	4 professors (Data: December 2018)
	Translation and Interpretation Studies	83 (Language A) 53 (Language B)	Bachelor in Multilingual Communication, Master in Technical Translation, Master in Conference Interpreting Language A: active – mother language Language B: passive or source language
	Language course Italian	n.n.	
University of Lausanne	Italian Studies	n.n.	3 professors: Italian Literature and Philology, Contemporary Literature, History of Romance language and Philology
	Language course Italian	n.n.	
University of St. Gallen	Italian Studies	50 (24 BA, 26 MA)	The chair is integrated in the «School of Humanities and Social Sciences» (SHSS)
	Language course Italian in law and economy	B1: 56 B2: 108 C1: 10	(Data: 2018/19)
University of Zurich	Italian Studies	102 (major) 23 (minor)	4 chairs: Linguistics and Literature
	Language course Italian	210	UZH+ETH, level A1: 147 UZH+ETH, level A2: 143 UZH+ETH, level B1: 47 UZH+ETH, level B2-C1: 10 (Data: spring semester 2018)
Università della Svizzera italiana	Italian Studies	135	2 professorships: Faculty of language, literature and Italian society
	Language course Italian	638	Courses from level A0 to C2. 394 certificates (Data: 2016/17)
ETH Zurich	Cattedra De Sanctis	49	Course for ETH and University of Zurich
	Language course Italian	137	See programme UZH
University of Lucerne	law school	n.n.	The department offers Italian language courses. Italian students are supported by staff with remedial Italian courses alongside German courses, which is the language of instruction. (Data: fall semester 2018)
	Culture and Social Studies	37	
Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne	Language course Italian	n.n.	Level A1 to C2
University of Neuchâtel	No offerings since 2004		

Note: Data collected by PHGR (2019). * Students enrolled in Bachelor, Master's and Ph.D. programmes.

Table 8 shows the universities of teacher education offering Italian as a teaching subject (either as L1 or as L2, for the different school levels).

Table 8 *Offer of Italian as a teaching subject at universities of teacher education in Switzerland.*

	Level	L1	L2	For non-native speakers	Bilingual Diploma Italian/German or German/Italian	Immersive teaching sequences
PHGR	Kindergarten and primary	x	x	(x)	x	x
HEP VAUD	Sec I and II	-	x	-	-	x
PH BERN	Sec I and II	-	x	-	-	x
PHZH	Sec I	-	x	-	-	x
PHSG	Sec I	-	x	-	-	x
PHTG	Sec II	-	x	-	-	x
FHNW	Sec I and II	-	x	-	-	x
HEP BEJUNE	Sec II	-	x	-	-	x
SUPSI	all levels	x	-	x	-	x

Note: Data collected by PHGR (2018).

Table 9 shows the number of students having earned a licence to teach Italian as L1 in various school levels between 2013 and 2018.

Table 9 *Overview of the development of teacher training students who have earned a teaching licence for Italian as L1 in various school levels (years 2013-2018).*

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
SUPSI DFA						
Kindergarten (KG)	16	22	15	13	18	21
Primary school (PS)	28	30	34	27	52	59
Sec I	14	13	5	14	13	9
Sec II	10	-	-	4	-	-
PHGR, bilingual diploma Italian/German						
KG	2	1	5	0	1	1
PS	15	9	8	5	6	4
PHGR, monolingual diploma						
KG	4	8	0	4	8	4
PS	0	7	1	9	1	6
University of Fribourg (French- and German-speaking section)						
Sec I, French-speaking section	n.n.	0	1	1	0	0
Sec II, both sections	3 completed the programme since 2015					

Note: Data collected by PHGR (2019).

Table 10 provides an overview of the students who have completed a teacher training for Italian as L2 in various school levels between 2013 and 2018.

As for the PHGR, the number of students enrolled in Italian curricula is quite higher, but many of them cannot produce a B2/C1 diploma in the foreign language at the end of their studies, so they are not allowed to teach this language. Some supply their language diploma later and are then allowed to teach the language.

Table 10 *Overview of the development of teacher training students who have earned a teaching licence for Italian as L2 in various school levels (years 2013-2018).*

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
SUPSI DFA						
Sec I	-	-	-	-	-	5
PHGR						
KG	7	2	3	3	1	1
PS	18	9	13	15	8	5
HEP_VAUD						
Sec I	10 on average per year					
Sec II	Max. 4 on average per year					
PH Bern						
Sec I	4-6 on average per year					
Sec II	6 on average per year					
PHZH						
Sec I	2	2	1	8	3	4
PHSG						
Sec I	2	2	2	3	0	0
PHTG						
Sec II	15 for the span of 5 years					
(PHLU)						
all levels	15 students enrolled since 2015. Programme abandoned					
PH FHNW						
Sec I	3 completed the programme					
Sec II	22 completed the programme					
HEP BEJUNE						
Sec II	2-4 on average per year					
University of Fribourg (French- and German-speaking section)						
Sec I, French-speaking section	n.n.	0	0	0	2	0
Sec I, German-speaking section	2	0	0	0	0	1
Sec II, French-speaking section	n.n.	2	3	2	2	1
Sec II, German-speaking section	2 completed the programme since 2015					
University of Zurich						
Sec II	1	6	2	9	2	2

Note: Data collected by PHGR (2019).

Table 11 shows the number of students attending Italian courses in the nine universities of applied science (spring semester 2019).

Table 11 *Overview of the students attending Italian courses at various universities of applied science in Switzerland in 2019.*

SUPSI	no courses in 2018/19
BFH University of Applied Science Berne	16 students
FHNW University of Applied Science	20 students
FHO University of Applied Science	no courses offered
HES-SO Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale	378 students
HSLU University of Applied Science	126 students
ZFH University of Applied Science	not specified
ZHAW University of Applied Science	87 students
Kalaidos University of Applied Science	not specified

Note: Data collected by PHGR (2019).

The data provided directly by the schools give the absolute figures; this does not allow any percentage or statistical interpretation. Reflections can be made on the specific field of study; this allows, for example, to understand the importance of knowledge of Italian in sectors such as economics, business or tourism. Another aspect to note is how much the Italian language proves to be interesting for the formations related to translation and interpretation.

7 Adult education

structure and language courses

Adult education in Switzerland is very complex and heterogeneous. The legal aspects and the organisation of adult education differ from canton to canton, as well as contents, levels, methodological approach, regulations and financing.

Language courses are the most frequent form of adult education in Switzerland. Both cantons and private institutions offer Italian language courses for all levels of competence and with various goals, partly as a preparation to internationally recognised language certifications. Some courses might focus exclusively on receptive skills, whereas other programmes aim at extending communicative competences. Thus, the picture regarding Italian courses for adults in Switzerland is very diverse.

Since around 80% of the adult courses are provided by private institutions, where a centralised control mechanism is missing, it is not possible to provide a reliable overall picture.

language use

Regardless of level and pillars of a course, Italian can be acquired as the language of the course or improved as L1.

statistics

There are no statistics in Switzerland providing a valid overview of course offerings for Italian in adult learning. The only data, collected by the Swiss Federal Office of Statistics in 2014, inform about the number of respondents (aged 14 and more) who declare to have attended a language course in the previous twelve months (language courses attended in their training are not considered). Approximately 163,000 people residing in Switzerland have attended or were attending a language course in Italian, mostly for non-professional reasons.

8 Educational research

Italian-oriented educational research is institutionally represented by the following institutions: the University of Teacher Education of Grisons (Department of Research, Development and Services) and the recently installed Specialised Professorship for Integrated Didactics of Multilingualism with a focus on Italian and Romansh; the *Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana/Dipartimento Formazione e Apprendimento* (SUPSI/DFA) and the *Università della Svizzera italiana* (USI) in Ticino; the *Institut für Kulturforschung Graubünden* (ikg); the Institute of Multilingualism in Fribourg.

Research at the University of Teacher Education of Grisons (PHGR) is tripartite: School in alpine regions, multilingualism and school, and technology. The research focus is on educational development, didactics of multilingualism, L1 and L2 teaching, designing teaching material and the evaluation of bilingual schools. Trilingualism means conducting research in all three cantonal languages. The PHGR is part of the national scientific network of multilingualism with its focus on educational and sociological topics in Grisons.

SUPSI is involved in several projects concerning Italian as the language of school instruction or as a foreign language. Research in this area targets the metalinguistic dimension of language teaching (e.g. punctuation in writing) and the development of the *Curriculum minimo di italiano*, a didactic concept aimed at the promotion of teaching Italian outside the Italian-speaking region. The project *Tlscrivo* analyses and exploits Italian texts by kids and youths with didactic purposes. Another project, titled *Sgrammit*, produces worksheets on Italian grammar for Ticino and the *Grigionitaliano*.

The *Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana* (OLSI) in Bellinzona is an important research institution conducting basic research on Italian in Switzerland, although not directly involved in didactics. The *Forum per l'italiano in Svizzera*, founded 2012

by the cantons of Grisons and Ticino, is worth mentioning: its aim is to promote the Italian language and culture in institutions, education and the public throughout Switzerland.

The Institute of Multilingualism in Fribourg, the ikg and the Department of Multilingualism and Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Fribourg are conducting research on the Italian language and culture, independently, through third party initiatives and school evaluations.

There is an intensive cooperation between the above-mentioned institutions, legally bound by contracts.

The project *Centro di didattica della lingua e della letteratura italiana* (CDLLI) is the result of the cooperation between the PHGR, SUPSI/DFA, USI and the Istituto Universitario Federale per la Formazione Professionale (IUFPF). The aim of the project is to develop a Master's programme in Didactics of Italian Language and Literature, to publish a journal on the didactics of Italian and to promote a Ph.D. programme in Didactics of Italian.

One of the four subprojects of the CDLLI project, titled *Didattica del plurilinguismo e dell'italiano come lingua straniera*, is directed by the PHGR; it deals with multilingualism and didactics of foreign languages, with a special focus on Italian.

There are also intercantonal cooperations, involving non-Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland. The project "Plurilingual and intercultural curricular scenarios" has been carried on by the PHGR, SUPSI/DFA, PHVS and PHFR; it aims to develop a bi- or multilingual didactic university concept, mainly in teacher education. The teaching practices of the bi- and trilingual universities of teacher education in Grisons, Wallis and Fribourg formed the basis to further develop concrete and innovative possibilities for action.

Another exchange project is *AlpConnectar*. With the help of digital media exchange activities between different linguistic regions (Ticino, Grisons and Wallis) were planned and administered.

9 Prospects

The turning event that made the Swiss Italian-speaking population aware of the possible wave that was breaking down on the teaching of Italian outside the territory in which it is traditionally spoken was the decision of the University of Neuchâtel in 2004 to eliminate the chair of Italian studies. This awareness has set in motion reactions that have been politically realized with the approval of the Federal Law on National Languages and the Understanding between the Language Communities (LLing) in 2010; their declared objectives are:

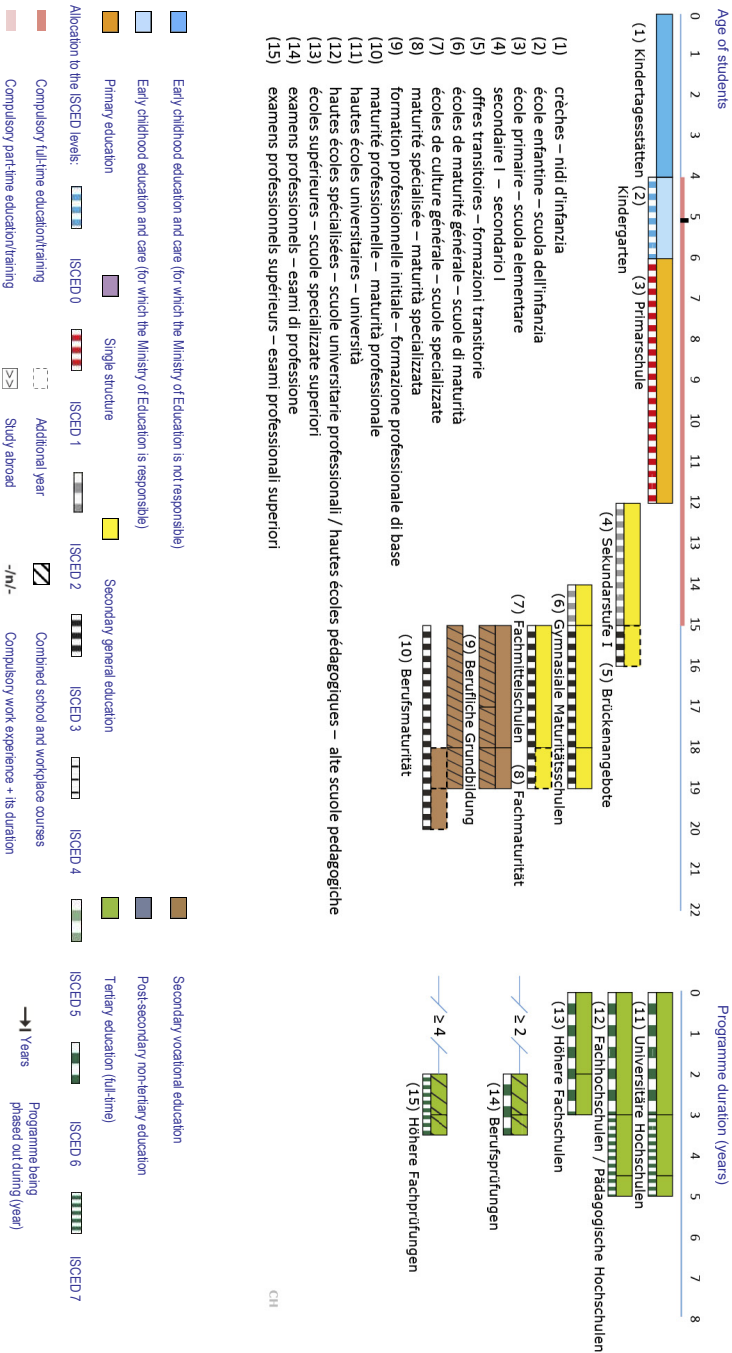
1. Improve the linguistic situation within the federal administration by creating the position of a federal delegate for plurilingualism.
2. Promote the understanding and exchanges between linguistic communities.
3. Support the plurilingual cantons (Berne, Fribourg, Grisons, Wallis).
4. Safeguard and promote the Italian and Romansh language and culture in the cantons of Ticino and Grisons.

The monitoring of the teaching of Italian in the complex Swiss school system has led, on the one hand, to intensive research (carried out by the Linguistic Observatory of Italian-speaking Switzerland, OLSI) and, on the other, to the creation of materials to support teaching with appropriate teaching methods for each school order, whether paper-based or digital. Italian as a functional language in the workplace has been particularly emphasized; this is a sector that has seen a considerable change concerning the number of users in the last fifty years.

The political outcomes mentioned above were realised thanks, above all, to the fundamental work carried out by the linguistic associations over time. Born at the turn of the First World War, some of these have been fighting for the status of Italian in Switzerland for more than hundred years. An example of this is the work carried out by the PGI (*Pro Grigioni Italiano*). Through their demands, *Rivendicazioni*, they constantly made the minority voice be heard in the different political fora. The role and importance of these associations has never

diminished; there has been an even greater recognition and highlighting with the creation in 2012 of the Forum for Italian in Switzerland, which contains 37 organisations involved in the promotion and development of Italian language and culture in Switzerland.

The structure of the education system in Switzerland in 2018/2019



Source: Eurydice (2018/2019).

References and further reading

regulations

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tables & figures

Figure 1

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Table 1

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Table 2

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Table 3

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Table 5

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Table 6

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Table 7

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Table 8

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Table 9

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Table 10

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Table 11

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Addresses

Official bodies **Erziehungs-, Kultur- und Umweltschutzdepartement Graubünden**
Dept. of Education, Culture and Environment Protection (Grisons)
Quaderstrasse 17
CH-7000 Chur
T +41 81 257 27 02
E ursina.maissen@ekud.gr.ch
W www.ekud.gr.ch

Amt für Kultur Graubünden
Dept. of Culture (Grisons)
Loëstrasse 26
CH-7001 Chur
T +41 81 257 48 08
E info@afk.gr.ch
W www.afk.gr.ch

Dipartimento dell'educazione, della cultura e dello sport
Dept. of Education, Culture and Sport (Ticino)
Piazza Governo 7
CH-6501 Bellinzona
T + 41 91 814 44 50
W www.ti.ch/decs

Divisione della cultura e degli studi universitari
Dept. of Culture and University Education (Ticino)
Viale Stefano Franscini 30a
CH-6501 Bellinzona
T +41 91 814 13 00
W www.ti.ch/dcsu

Education **educa.ch – Bildungssystem Schweiz**
Schweizer Medieninstitut für Bildung und Kultur Genossenschaft
Swiss Institute for Media Education and Culture Association
Erlachstrasse 21
CH-3012 Bern
T + 41 31 300 55 00
E info@educa.ch
W www.educa.ch

Amt für Volksschule und Sport Graubünden
Dept. of Primary School and Sport (Grisons)
Quaderstrasse 17
CH-7001 Chur
T +41 81 257 27 36
E info@avs.gr.ch
W www.avs.gr.ch

Amt für Höhere Bildung
Dept. of Higher Education
Postfach 24
Gäuggelistrasse 7

CH-7001 Chur 1
T +41 81 257 61 65
E info@ahb.gr.ch
W www.ahb.gr.ch

Amt für Berufsbildung

Dept. of Vocational Education
Quaderstrasse 17
CH-7001 Chur
T +41 81 257 27 68 or +41 81 257 27 69
E info@afb.gr.ch.

Schulinspektorat Graubünden

Dept. of Supervision
Quaderstrasse 17
CH-7001 Chur
T +41 81 257 30 51
E andrea.caviezel@avs.gr.ch
W www.avs.gr.ch

Pädagogische Hochschule Graubünden

University of Teacher Education Grisons
Scalärastrasse 17
CH-7000 Chur
T +41 81 354 03 02
E info@phgr.ch
W www.phgr.ch

Divisione della scuola

Dept. of School
Viale Portone 12
CH-6501 Bellinzona
T +41 91 814 18 11
W www.ti.ch/ds

Divisione della formazione professionale

Dept. of Vocational Education
Via Vergiò 18
CH-6932 Breganzona
T +41 91 815 31 00
W www.ti.ch/dfp

Dipartimento formazione e apprendimento

Dept. of Teacher Education
Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana (SUPSI)
University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland
Piazza San Francesco 19
CH-6600 Locarno
T + 41 58 666 68 00
E dfa@supsi.ch
W www.supsi.ch/dfa

University of Italian-Speaking Switzerland
Via Buffi 13
CH-6900 Lugano
T +41 58 666 40 00
E info@usi.ch
W www.usi.ch

swissuniversities
Effingerstrasse 15
Postfach
CH-3001 Bern
T +41 31 335 07 40
W www.swissuniversities.ch

Link to the Curriculum on Education 21
www.lehrplan.ch

Cultural centres and associations **Forum per l'italiano in Svizzera**

Forum for Italian in Switzerland
c/o Diego Erba
Casella postale 322
CH-6604 Solduno
E diego.erba@bluewin.ch
W www.forumperlitalianoinsvizzera.ch

Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana
Linguistic Observatory of Italian-speaking Switzerland
Viale Stefano Franscini 30a
CH-6501 Bellinzona
T +41 91 814 15 10
E decs-olsi@ti.ch
W www.ti.ch/olsi

Pro Grigioni Italiano
Promotion of Italian in Grisons
Sede centrale
Martinsplatz 8
CH-7000 Coira
T +41 81 252 86 16
E info@pgi.ch
W www.pgi.ch

National organisations **Bundesamt für Kultur**
Federal Office of Culture
Hallwylstrasse 15
CH-3003 Bern
T +41 58 462 92 66
E info@bak.admin.ch
W www.bak.admin.ch

Bundesamt für Statistik
Federal Office of Statistics
Espace de l'Europe 10

CH-2010 Neuchâtel
T +41 58 463 60 11
E info@bfs.admin.ch
W www.bfs.admin.ch

Movetia

Dornacherstrasse 28A
CH-4500 Solothurn
T +41 32 462 00 50
E info@movetia.ch
W www.movetia.ch

Schweizerische Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren (EDK)

Swiss Conference of Cantonal Directors of Education
Haus der Kantone
Speichergasse 6, Postfach
CH-3001 Bern
T +41 31 309 51 11
E edk@edk.ch
W www.edk.ch

Schweizer Medieninstitut für Bildung und Kultur Genossenschaft

Swiss Institute for Media Education and Culture Association
educa.ch
Erlachstrasse 21
CH-3012 Bern
T +41 31 300 55 00
E info@educa.ch
W www.educa.ch

Institut de plurilinguisme (Université de Fribourg / Haute École pédagogique Fribourg)

Institut für Mehrsprachigkeit (Universität Freiburg / Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg)

Dept. of Plurilingualism
Rue de Morat / Murtengasse 24
CH-1700 Fribourg / Freiburg
T +41 26 305 61 71 / 73
E susanne.obermayer@unifr.ch
W www.institut-mehrsprachigkeit.ch

Centre scientifique de compétence sur le plurilinguisme (Institut de plurilinguisme)

Wissenschaftliches Kompetenzzentrum für Mehrsprachigkeit (Institut für Mehrsprachigkeit)

Competence Center for Plurilingualism
Rue de Morat / Murtengasse 24
CH-1700 Fribourg / Freiburg
T +41 26 305 61 71 / 73
E susanne.obermayer@unifr.ch
W www.zentrum-mehrsprachigkeit.ch

Other websites on minority languages

Mercator www.mercator-research.eu

Research Centre Homepage of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. The website contains the series of Regional dossiers, a database with organisations, a bibliography, information on current activities, and many links to relevant websites.

Mercator www.mercator-network.eu

Network General site of the Mercator European Network of Language Diversity Centres. It gives information about the network and leads you to the homepages of the network partners.

European <http://ec.europa.eu/languages>

Commission The website of the European Commission gives information about the EU's support for language diversity.

54

Council of <http://conventions.coe.int>

Europe *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). European Treaty Series 148 and 157, Strasbourg.*

Eurydice <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>

Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.

European Parliament Committee – supporting analyses database

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/supporting-analyses-search.html>.

In this database you will find research papers produced by the European Parliament's research service. A study for the CULT Committee, conducted by Mercator, is published in 2017: *Minority Languages and Education: Best Practices and Pitfalls*.

NPLD

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

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

FUEN

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

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

ELEN

<https://elen.ngo/>

The European Language Equality Network (ELEN) is a non-governmental organisation that has as its goal to promote and protect European lesser-used languages, (RMLs), to work towards linguistic equality for these languages, and multilingualism, under the broader framework of human rights, and to be a voice for the speakers of these languages at all levels.

What can the Mercator Research Centre offer you?

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

partners

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

research

The research activities of the Mercator Research Centre focus on various aspects of bilingual and trilingual education such as language proficiency in different languages, interaction in the multilingual classroom, and teachers' qualifications for working in a multilingual classroom. Latest developments look at how educational models for minority languages can also cater for

immigrant pupils. Whenever possible, research is carried out in a comparative perspective. Results are disseminated through publications, conferences and publications in collaboration with Mercator's partners.

conferences

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

q&a

If you have any questions, please contact us at:
mercator@fryske-akademy.nl

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European Research Centre on
Multilingualism and Language Learning



THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND



c/o Fryske Akademy
Doelestrjitte 8
P.O. Box 54
NL-8900 AB Ljouwert/Leeuwarden
The Netherlands

T 0031 (0) 58 - 234 3027
W www.mercator-research.eu
E mercator@fryske-akademy.nl